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Oral history interview with Dorothy Norman, 1979 May 31-1979 June

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Dorothy Norman on May 31, 1979. The interview took place in East Hampton, NY, and was conducted by William McNaught for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Interview

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: This is William McNaught, the date is May 31, 1979. I'm in East Hampton talking to Dorothy Norman. We may as well begin at the beginning, where you were born and when.

DOROTHY NORMAN: Philadelphia, 1905. Do you want the date? March 28. I lived in Philadelphia until I was 20, at which point I was married. I married Edward A. Norman and I moved to New York, which is where he lived.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Going back a bit, where did you -- had your family been from Philadelphia?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Several generations?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Not several generations. My mother had been born there and her parents had been born in Germany. But she had been born in Philadelphia. My father came over as a boy from Austria. So it was just second generation, I suppose you'd say, depending upon which generation we're talking about, first, second, third.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Did you go to school in Philadelphia?

DOROTHY NORMAN: I went to public school in Philadelphia, and I was extremely dissatisfied by the education I was receiving and I kept begging to go away to boarding school because when I went to camp in summers I found that a number of the girls I came to know did go to boarding school and it seemed such an exciting idea, above all to be away from Philadelphia. Because I think I was fairly typical of most girls of that time; I felt dissatisfied by the lives that were being lived by most of the people around me. They hadn't had the opportunities that I was in the process of having and I didn't understand that. So that I was just impatient with the kind of restricted horizons of everyone around me.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: It was something you just sort of sensed?

DOROTHY NORMAN: I sensed it; I didn't know anything about why I felt this until sometime later. And I did very much want to go away to boarding school because I loved the outdoors and I loved playing tennis and I loved other sports. And I loved the idea of being on my own. And I liked so much what the girls who went to boarding school told me. I went to camp, first in Massachusetts, near Lenox, and then in Maine and I fell in love with New England and my idea was to go to a New England boarding school. But my parents objected to my going away. They thought I was too serious and that I should stay home and go to parties and grow up to learn to play bridge and fit into a social order which was anathema to me. I did get permission to go to school in Washington, D.C., because some children of friends of my parents were going there and it wasn't as far away, in their view, as New England. So I was permitted to go there at the age of 15. But it was a non-college preparatory school and although it was quite marvelous being in Washington for a year, it wasn't my idea of what I wanted from a boarding school. I begged and begged and begged to go away to a New England school. In fact, the following year I entered myself in a New England school when my parents were in Europe, which, when they came home, they found outrageous. They said, "Young women, young girls do not enter themselves in boarding schools." And I said, well, I had a counselor chaperone me and my English teacher in Washington had told me about Miss Wheeler's School in Providence where she had wanted to teach. But the climate was too cold so she'd had to settle for Washington, too. I did get into Miss Wheeler's School, although I applied very late. That was very wonderful because --

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: How old were you?

DOROTHY NORMAN: I was 16 when I went to Miss Wheeler's. Although the school was a very good one, I still felt restless and as though I was not learning what I wanted to know. I can't tell you why I felt so restless. I suppose it was because I was most interested in literature at the time and in music. In the senior yearbook it says -- I have a copy of it -- that I was always seen carrying a book of modern poetry under my arm, which is a slight exaggeration.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Were there classes in modern poetry?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Not at all, not at all. Every course I took ended with the 19th century, including history, literature, anything.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: So you still weren't satisfied.

DOROTHY NORMAN: No, I still -- there was something -- I tell you, I objected to the idea of growing up in Philadelphia because it seemed so restricted. Every time I went to New York I felt the air was different, the atmosphere was different.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Did you go often, as a child growing up?

DOROTHY NORMAN There were girls at camp who lived in New York, as well as in various cities throughout the country. I would visit them. Also, my parents went to New York quite often and as I became more than a young adolescent, they would take me with them at times during vacations. And I would go to theaters. I didn't go to museums very much. I did go to the Metropolitan. I'll tell you about that in another context. But being away from home and going to symphonies --there were symphonies that came to Washington and to Providence, where Miss Wheeler's school was, and I went to the Philadelphia Orchestra as often as I could. It was when I was 15 that under Stokowski I first heard Stravinsky. I also loved the classical music that was played by great symphony orchestras. And certainly, Stokowski was one of the most innovative conductors of the time. I think he was the only conductor, when I was about 15, who played Stravinsky. I had the advantage of hearing a good deal of modern music in Philadelphia. Then I was ill at the end of my first year at Smith. I had decided to go to a New England college, of course. I know why I was in love with New England; I suppose it was related to this room [in East Hampton]. I loved the architecture, the spirit of New England. I went to Boston a great deal. I had camp friends who invited me there and I was invited to football games and would go to Cambridge and loved it.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: So you knew something of New England by that time?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes, I did. And I really fell in love with it.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: How did you choose Smith?

DOROTHY NORMAN: I was going to go to Wellesley because I knew some girls who went there. And the campus was very beautiful but while I was at boarding school all of my best friends were going either to Vassar or Smith. I didn't want to go to Vassar because I felt it was too near New York and wasn't sufficiently New England. My roommate was going to Smith and various girls persuaded me not to go to Wellesley but to Smith. I went to Smith and I found that it was more frustrating than my senior year at Miss Wheeler's School.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: You still hadn't found that --

DOROTHY NORMAN: No, I had not. There was something about my senior year at Miss Wheeler's that had been good. I had a marvelous English teacher and although hers was a kind of survey course that went from Beowulf to 19th century authors, we read everything too fast and it was very frustrating because some of the books we read were marvelous. And the teacher was an extraordinary person and she encouraged me to write. I had a great desire to write but I thought I wasn't ready. We had to write themes for our English class. I found that the girls -- I was a new girl, I was a senior as a new girl -- so it was difficult. The others were used to writing "literary" themes. I rebelled against that.

[RECORDING INTERRUPTION]

The girls in the class who had been in the school before seemed to me to write very high-flung poetry. And I was very much interested in the modern movement in its directness, or subtlety.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Was music your first real introduction to the arts and to something modern?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Well, to something that released something in me. To something I realized I had been waiting for. Modern music and literature and art wiped out all the artifice and the overdone quality of the 19th century art that I saw. It was fresh, it was alive, it contained the elemental quality of life that I found so lacking around me. When I heard Stravinsky it was the first time I felt related to the --to what was happening, to the music, to the folk quality and the originality of the aliveness -- the primordial aspect -- that was Stravinsky for me.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: It must have been exciting for you.

DOROTHY NORMAN: It was terribly exciting. And listening to the Philadelphia Orchestra was a marvelous thing. I realized it when I moved to New York. Stokowski taught Philadelphians -- this is very strange because it sounds

as though I'd lived in the 16th century -- but in the early 1900s people would clap at the end of a movement of a symphony. And Stokowski would wheel around and lecture the audience. And then the audience never clapped until the end of a composition. He also would do something that some people hated him for doing, but of course others did not. There was a great suburban population, as you know, in Philadelphia. And I went to the Friday afternoon concerts -- I'm sure he did this on Saturday night as well. But you could feel toward the end of a concert, there would always be some people who would get up before the last number was played. And when a rustling in the audience would be heard, Stokowski would wheel around and glare at the audience and say, "If you have to leave before the end of the concert to catch your train for the suburbs, you had better not come at all." He really trained the Philadelphia audience in a way that was superb. When I would go to other cities and people would do the same thing the Philadelphia audience had done and they weren't told not to do it, I felt it extraordinary. Stokowski really educated a whole city about how to behave at a concert.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: I think people were educated like that on (inaudible).

DOROTHY NORMAN: Well, then I got sick at the end of my year at Smith, which I found very frustrating because I -- I don't mean because I got sick, I did want to go back to Smith because I did want to be out of Philadelphia. But I couldn't help this particular situation because I had an attack of appendicitis. I was winning a tennis tournament and had a terrible pain and went to the infirmary and they diagnosed it badly. So I was then rushed to Philadelphia just before finals and was in the hospital during finals. So I would have had to tutor or something because I would have to take the exams in the autumn to get credit for my freshman year. My parents took me to Europe and kept me there until October because they were determined I would not go away to college again.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: They were not happy when you went to Smith?

DOROTHY NORMAN: They were not happy when I went to boarding school, they were not happy when I went to Smith, for the same reasons I mentioned before. So there was no choice. I couldn't go to Bryn Mawr because I hadn't taken physics and you had to have physics as part of your entrance requirement at that time. And I didn't particularly want to go to Bryn Mawr, again because it was so near Philadelphia. But I had to settle for going to the University of Pennsylvania. And just as at Smith, where I'd had to take required courses as a freshman, now, although they gave me credit for my Smith work, I had to take required courses all over again. My English teacher at Smith was particularly upsetting to me. I had a habit of going to a certain bookstore and there were beautifully printed books by contemporary authors there. Books printed on paper that had a sort of handmade look to them. I found a book by Sherwood Anderson, of whom I had never heard, and one by Katherine Mansfield, of whom I'd never heard either. Just from glancing at a few pages and from the feel of the books, I bought them. I bought *The Triumph of the Egg*. I didn't know who Sherwood Anderson was and I'd never heard of *The Triumph of the Egg* It had just come out. We were asked to write a theme in the manner of some contemporary author in our English class and my teacher gave me an A- for my paper on Sherwood Anderson. She put a note on the theme that said, "I would like to see you after class." She said to me, "How could you use such a second-rate author to write in the manner of?" I said I didn't think he was second-rate, I thought he was marvelous. This was the kind of thing that seemed to happen to me all the time. Since English was what I wanted to major in, it was clear to me that if the teaching was going to be like that, there would be no opportunity to develop in college.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Extraordinary that you didn't just meet, say, one teacher who thought the way you did and at least appreciate more modern things the way you did. But it seemed you had not much luck in terms of your English teachers.

DOROTHY NORMAN: Well, at Miss Wheeler's School, although the teacher stopped at the 19th Century, she did encourage me to write. And the first thing - what I wrote was, you know, not good, really, in any way. It just was simple. And she encouraged me to write and it was the first thing I ever had printed in the school magazine of course. But it was she who, pretty much, I think, influenced the tenor of the magazine. At Smith it was the reverse. I had to write a composition on religion and I was very much against all organized religion. I was attracted by none. And I wrote a very pantheistic kind of composition and again the teacher gave me A- and a note, "Would you please see me after class." This was at Smith. She was horrified. So then I went to the University of Pennsylvania.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: You really didn't mind not going back to Smith?

DOROTHY NORMAN: I really didn't. I did and didn't. I was furious I was going to go to Pennsylvania because it was in Philadelphia, in the city and I was a day student. I had to take the history of education, theory of education, practice of education. I would sit in the big stuffy halls -- the books we had to read were rather large, so I'd always have a book behind the book we were supposed to read. I really got a great deal of reading done. There was a marvelous bookstore nearby and I bought secondhand books from the local classical library. I think I really got the best education behind those books better than I ever had in a formal setting.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: You didn't stay long at Penn. Did you go there two years?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Two years. And then I just couldn't take it. My parents were delighted. But I then took courses not for credit. I took many more courses than I had taken as a student at Penn. And that is when, by pure accident, because somebody showed me some lines in a catalogue, about the Barnes Foundation being open to Penn. students for the first time that I took its course on modern art. I didn't know what the Barnes Foundation was and I didn't know what modern art was. I had never heard the term. But I had free time at just the hours when the course was given. When I walked into the Barnes Foundation I really had a sense that I had, at last, come home. I don't know, it was as though a whole new world, an extension of the world of Stravinsky, had opened up for me. I was greatly excited. I knew two people in the class; they were both older. We became warm friends without really talking to each other very much, just because they, too, had the same joyous response I had. I knew no one else to whom I could talk about what was happening inside of me. And at just about the same time I met Edward Norman and we fell in love and got married that June.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: This is 1925?

DOROTHY NORMAN: '25. And I moved to New York.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Could we go back a minute to the class at the Barnes Foundation? I think it would be fascinating to know a bit more about that from someone who attended it. Were there large classes? How were the students selected? Were the classes right there at the Foundation? Could you look at the paintings?

DOROTHY NORMAN: I'll have to give you an exact account. All you did was sign up if you were a student at the University of Pennsylvania. There were also older people there, I don't know how they came to be there. I suppose they knew somebody who knew somebody who was responsible for their being there. I can't tell you that; I just know that I signed up and went. We went to the Barnes Foundation building and we were told to go and stand in front of a particular picture and not to look at any other picture except that one. We would have to wait to see the other pictures until they were explained to us, as the first picture would be explained in the first class. This was rather astonishing because I remember so distinctly standing in front of the one picture and feeling as though I'd go to jail if I looked at another. I kept my eyes glued to the picture. And then after a while I discovered that the teacher -- you asked me how many people were there, I don't remember there being more than 20, perhaps. And, as I say, they were mostly older. But, in any event, the teacher would look at you in passing; his eyes would go across the phalanx of students. I discovered that if I waited until his eyes passed mine, I could shoot a glance at the picture next to the one in front of me without his seeing me. In this way, it was really quite fascinating to see masses of pictures. The range of modern art at the Barnes Foundation was great, as was the way the pictures were hung. It became a kind of marvelous search to get to know which picture was by which artist. And your eyes became trained by using the strategy of looking -- darting a glance -- at one picture and then coming back to it again and again. Let me just explain to you what we were told. We were told about line, form and color.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: This is all based on the Barnes method?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes. You had to know the picture through hearing the explanation that was given to you. Nothing else mattered except that you understand the picture through being told what you were told, which had to do with line, form and color. The question of line was that the line of -- let's take a Renoir --the line of an arm would follow the line of a teacup, would follow the line of the tablecloth, would follow the line of the knee, something of that sort. That was line. And form! I remember there was one African sculpture and the form of the chin and the form of the breast and the form of the stomach and the form of the knee -- that was all really the same thing -- form. Then we were taught that shadows were now blue, no longer grey, as they had been. And that was color. And all of this --

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WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: William McNaught, interviewing Dorothy Norman, tape one, side two. You were talking about the class at the Barnes Foundation. You mentioned line, form and color.

DOROTHY NORMAN: The opportunity of seeing these fantastic pictures changed my life. Because at last I began to realize that there was a revolution taking place, which was, I suppose, the revolution I had been waiting for without knowing I was waiting for it. I felt that the combination of modern writing, modern music, modern art, depicted the world in which I belonged, and to which I wanted to dedicate myself. So that when I did marry and moved to New York my husband was primarily interested in consumers' cooperatives. He felt that they could revolutionize the whole economic structure of the world. And, by so doing, we could avoid all the pitfalls of totalitarian government or government control or capitalist control. People would take their lives into their own hands through taking responsibility for the grocery at the corner, consumer cooperatives, everything. People could finally create producers cooperatives that would serve consumers' cooperatives and you would have a whole system in which each person would have one vote and would take responsibility for seeing that the

middleman would be cut out, that vast profits would be cut out. The movement was growing in Europe as well as America. My husband also was interested in all "good works." I had a split within myself between my caring about the arts and feeling that I must take responsibility towards those who were less fortunate. It wasn't really a split, it was simply a dual desire to function in terms of improving the lot of mankind at an aesthetic, economic and social welfare level, whatever you want to call it -- the whole fabric of the social order.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: This was something --

DOROTHY NORMAN: It had nothing to do with art, but it had everything to do with art, I finally discovered.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: This was something else that was sort of there in you.

DOROTHY NORMAN: Brewing, yes.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: That whole time. In terms of your family, they had no interest in art?:

DOROTHY NORMAN: No. Nor in --

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: I was going to ask you too -- later on, your interest in social conscience, shall we say, came from your family as well? But it sounds like --

DOROTHY NORMAN: No, it didn't. I told you about my taking classes not for credit when I left Penn. I became so involved with talking about the arts to you, that I neglected to say that the other branch of study in which I took a course had to do with sociology. Because I --you see, my family and everybody I knew were interested in charities. But that struck me as being too little. In the sociology course we read the *Survey Magazine*. Aside from the *Survey* it was a rather cold course. It had to do with criminology and all kinds of ologies, all of which were very important. But they didn't have any connection with the vast arena of things I felt had to be done to help people. The *Survey* magazine covered housing and race relations and a thousand subjects about which I became aware for the first time. When I met my husband -- rather I met him before he became my husband -- I asked him what he did. He lived in New York. He told me he worked for the *Survey* magazine. I really could not believe it. You know, I was 19 at the time. And the fact that a human being was standing in front of me who actually was involved with that magazine, was overwhelming. The *Survey* changed, just as had the Barnes Foundation, my life.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: I see. So these were two --

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes, they were two mainstreams. They always have been, a dual kind of mainstream. And also, they have caused a conflict within me, in terms of how best to use my time. I did feel that when I examined the work of various organizations in New York that the Civil Liberties Union appealed most to me, because it kept the doors open in all fields. It was against censorship, it was for the whole spectrum of civil liberties.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Was this something you discovered shortly after moving to New York in 1925?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: And so you became an advocate in the American Civil Liberties Union?

DOROTHY NORMAN: I did volunteer to work for them.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Right at the beginning?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes. And I rather suppressed my interest in the art, in favor of this for the time being. Both because of my husband's main interests and subjects that became more and more of interest to me. The Civil Liberties Union, as I say, represented something marvelous, because it involved the rights of labor, the separation of church and state, freedom of speech and conscience --it was for everything in which I believed. And it was an education in itself to work for it because I did research and became familiar with what was involved through working for it instead of just studying about it.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: It must have been marvelous, because you were still very young.

DOROTHY NORMAN: I was just 20. And Roger Baldwin was, therefore, my first boss, as it were. His stand in World War I as a conscientious objector was such an inspiring thing to me. It helped, really, to mold my attitude towards war, and towards the protection of those who differed, because of matters of conscience, from the majority. And then it was when I was going to have a baby in 1927 and I was not allowed by my doctor to take the subway down to the Civil Liberties Union and to work there that I began to go to see art again. The doctor said I needed more rest and a less regular schedule involving things for which I was responsible.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Where were you living at that time?

DOROTHY NORMAN: You mean the address? In Manhattan, on East 52nd Street. Between Lexington Avenue's bus and 3rd Avenue's elevated trains. I slept badly with the elevateds coming at us from one side and the buses coming at us from the other. It was terrible -- I mean, it was a marvelous location but a terrible place for me. I've always slept badly. So we moved away in two years. As for the fact of having a child and being pregnant and not being allowed to go to the Civil Liberties Union, my guilt lifted about going to see art exhibits. In the afternoons I made the rounds of all the galleries in New York. I felt there that must be some unknown Van Gogh or some equivalent in America. I mean, all artists couldn't be French or dead or live in Paris. I had a burning desire to be of some help to the things that meant so much to me. I went around to all the galleries and I just never saw any American art that seemed equal to what I had seen at the Barnes Foundation. This both puzzled me and made me curious to find something of meaning if possible.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: It's fascinating that you were seeking this.

DOROTHY NORMAN: I really was. And then by chance I walked into a little shabby room called the Intimate Gallery because it was on a list I had torn out of a newspaper. I walked in, not knowing what it was, and there were pictures on the walls. I didn't know what they were, but I simply fell in love with them, one in particular. There was a man standing in the room, talking. And he didn't stop talking. I had just been given a birthday present. It was the first money I ever had that was my own, and I wanted to know what the price of the one picture was, because I thought here is an unknown artist's painting -- I'd never heard of him before -- maybe I can buy it. I saw the signature and it said Marin and I thought, oh, this man is probably French since his name is Marin. I was disappointed that he wasn't American. But I couldn't get a word in, so I left.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: You couldn't get a word in?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Edgewise, because the man was talking continuously. But I was captivated by the pictures so I went back. There was a pause -- again there were people there --and he was talking to them. But there was a pause for a moment and so I asked about the picture I was especially in love with. The answer was that it had been acquired. I thought, how strange it is, in every other art gallery you go into if you show the slightest interest in anything people fall all over themselves to help you and to sell something to you. Yet, this man acted as though one didn't exist. Well, I was bound and determined that I would find out about the Marin pictures. The next time I went in, they had come down, and the work of another artist was up. The man was not talking to anybody but a young girl started to ask him some questions. She asked him what the pictures meant and he said to her that as she went through life, if she kept on asking people what pictures meant, she would have to make up her own mind in the long run, so, she was just was wasting her time asking what pictures meant. If the artist himself could explain what his picture meant, he wouldn't have had to paint it. He said various other things that were direct and simple, and he refused to discuss art in terms of any "ism." This was, again, what I had been waiting for in the world without knowing it. I discovered that the man's name was Alfred Stieglitz. I had never heard of him and I had never heard of Marin, nor had I ever heard of the other artists he showed. But I kept on going to the exhibitions at the Intimate Gallery and Stieglitz and I started to talk. Everything he said was what I had been waiting for, just as I had been waiting for the whole modern movement. I had been waiting too for, I suppose, an older person who had the experience of life that I didn't -- the authority of experience, not "authority" in an academic sense. Then Stieglitz showed me some of his own work. I had never seen any first-rate photography except that I'd been taken to the home of Paul Strand and seen his work. Strand's photographs were the first, first-rate photographs I'd seen. (I did not know there were first-rate photographs of the kind.)

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: How did you respond to Strand's work?

DOROTHY NORMAN: I thought they were absolutely extraordinary. I had never seen anything like them. They were so extraordinary and I was so overwhelmed by their quality that I made the stupid error of saying to him, "What kind of a camera do you use? These are so marvelous." He looked at me hostilely and he said, "It is not the camera." And I said to myself, "Oh, the hell with it." I felt what a stupid fool I was. But it was a strange experience and I felt uncomfortable. I found his photographs absolutely marvelous but curiously, I wasn't moved by them. But I was impressed by them in a way that I had never been impressed by anything before. And I didn't know anything about Strand except that my husband and I were taken to him. I had no idea he had been shown by Stieglitz as long ago as 1915 or thereabouts. When Stieglitz took out his own work, it was daylight. There were no lights focused on the prints as there had been at Strand's. Stieglitz just very simply put out his prints without saying anything. This was not terribly long after I'd seen the Strands but the situation was so different and the approach to the photographs was so direct and human and simple and there was no effort to get the best light on them or anything of the kind. What I was being shown -- I didn't know the word "equivalent" for Stieglitz's cloud pictures -- but I knew I'd never seen anything like the photographs I was being shown. I presumed the prints must be by Stieglitz, because of the wordless way in which he had brought them out. And I was speechless before them because there was something so tender and so unspectacular about them. I thought that I'd never seen anything like them in the world. The sensitivity of the prints -- their mystery and

quality deeply touched me. As we began to talk I discovered that it was Stieglitz who had introduced modern art to America as long ago as 1908. I had presumed it was Barnes who had introduced modern art to America. As we talked and Stieglitz began to tell me about his life, about the evolution of what he had done and the spirit of the way in which he had done it, I began to take down what he said. I was moved and interested. I decided I wanted to write about him. Rather, I wanted to write him down. I began to read what had been written about him and the period. I read the books of Paul Rosenfeld and Waldo Frank and then I began to meet the writers who were involved in the whole process of the development of what Stieglitz had been doing. William Carlos Williams and, of course, Sherwood Anderson came in. The "world" -- that is the world that had been releasing me -- began to walk into my vision, into my sight, into my life. The first work I bought was a Lachaise because I could not get the first Marin I had wanted.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: I remember your saying that, yes. It must have been a terribly, terribly exciting time for you to have all this you had felt for so many years had to be there, all of a sudden to know it was.

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes. And there was the American art that I had been dreaming of. I realized Stieglitz took no compensation for what he did. I realized too that the artists were having a hard time and I wanted to help what Stieglitz was doing, as well as to write him down. Then, by 1929, the Intimate Gallery had to come to an end because the building was supposed to be torn down. Stieglitz said he was not going to have another gallery, but O'Keeffe and Strand, in particular, and I felt that he had to have another gallery and we, I must say -- I had a hard time convincing him that I should try to raise money for what he was doing because he had a feeling that he never wanted to ask anyone for anything. Even though we were offering to raise funds it was difficult for him to accept monetary help. Just as it was difficult for me to buy pictures after we got to know each other because he felt -- he hated to have money introduced in our relationship. He gave me some of his prints and the second work of art I bought was a Marin.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: You did get your Marin?

DOROTHY NORMAN: I did get my Marin. The first year when I couldn't get my Marin I bought a Steinway piano with my birthday money. The next year -- I was given a birthday present again, from my father-in-law -- I bought the Lachaise, and then the next year a Marin.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: How many years, say, had gone by now? How long did you visit the Intimate Gallery? Did you go there weekly or --

DOROTHY NORMAN: Quite often. I went quite often. I no longer went to work for the Civil Liberties Union regularly.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: That would be after you had the baby?

DOROTHY NORMAN: After the first couple of years I still did do some things for them and I already had been given the job of reading the press of the whole country to find whether there were any civil liberties cases that the Union should be working for.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: But it was not the focus of your life?

DOROTHY NORMAN: It was not the only thing I did any more. By then [1927-28] we'd gone to the New School for Social Research and taken various courses. I began to be asked to be on social welfare committees. The first committee I really did a lot of work for was the New York Urban League because it was -- its watchword was "not alms but opportunity." It worked for the Negro, for the rights of the Negro at all levels. And it dovetailed with the work that I was doing at the Civil Liberties Union. Of course, there was an anti-race discrimination aspect of its work that complemented the work of the NAACP and ACLU. It was agreed that the three organizations would together cover the whole field of civil liberties. The NAACP would focus on the Negro. And the Urban League, also. The ACLU would do its work separately. But everything overlapped.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Did your worlds overlap? Were any of the artists that you came to know interested in the ACLU?

DOROTHY NORMAN: No, not many and this --

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: (Inaudible)

DOROTHY NORMAN: Well, this also became a problem for me for a while. It was a great problem, because of my desire to encompass work for the artist and for freedom. Then also, I wanted to write and of course we had two children and there was my marriage. I had a very difficult time trying to keep things straight for myself. It bothered me that the artists were not more interested in the Civil Liberties Union because their freedom depended on the success of an organization of just that kind. One had to keep a watchful eye on every aspect of

censorship, on anything that would try to suppress freedom to experiment, to break new ground in the arts. At the same time, I found it frustrating because although I admired the lawyers and other workers in the civil liberties field, I couldn't discuss with them or share with them my feelings about the arts. This became a great problem for me. In the thirties, it led to my doing Twice a Year to make some sense out of this particular paradox or conflict in life. Also, as I began to work for organizations helping to fight discrimination against the Negro or any other minority group, and as I began to be on committees having to do with social welfare in general and political liberalism in particular, I still had a passion for the arts. I still had to make some sort of order in my own life in terms of how I was going to use myself best for the two aspects of life that were so important to me.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Are you still speaking about the period of the late twenties?

DOROTHY NORMAN: The late twenties. And then I skipped, for a moment, and said it was because I had to rethink all of my positions that I finally did a magazine called *Twice a Year* which was dedicated to literature, the arts and civil liberties. But actually it was devoted to --

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: That didn't begin until the late thirties, did it?

DOROTHY NORMAN: That's right. But during the thirties, with the rise of Mussolini and Hitler and the Spanish war, I had to rethink my position about pacifism that I thought I'd held firmly, because of my admiration for Roger Baldwin and other conscientious objectors and writers like Randolph Bourne, et cetera, who also had been against World War I. At that time, one called it simply "the War" because there had not been World War II. So World War I was just the War. It had no numeral after it so one always just spoke of the War. Then after World War II one spoke of World War I, also. In the period between the first war and the second war of our time, I found I was in sympathy with those who went to fight on the side of the Loyalists. I began to feel that if there were a war against Mussolini and Hitler, our government couldn't avoid taking action. We couldn't go along with Munich and fearing Communism more than Hitler. I found myself on the side of those who were going to oppose the Nazis and Fascists. By the time I did Twice a Year, what I really came to believe was that just as in civil liberties itself, each case has to be decided on its own merits all over again, so I decided that I had to make up my mind about the merits of each case involving war all over again. I couldn't believe in just one ism. This made me really oppose all isms, doctrines, dogmas. Everything that attracted me was as much against dogmas and doctrines and isms as I was. Democracy was really what I was in love with and the Civil Liberties Union was for me, microcosm, a symbol of what democracy is all about. So I printed Twice a Year in order to make clear what was happening inside of me. I tried to put the two parts of my life into a proper relationship. I also realized I had been judging people in terms of whether they were doing everything, instead of recognizing that the spirit of modern art and the spirit of those who wanted to keep the doors open for all fresh, revitalizing attitudes, was all part of the same battle, and that no one person could do everything. I finally came to terms with what had been a conflict or a dualism. I finally saw how what interested me fitted into a whole vision. I think that kind of compassionate attitude toward what strikes one as creative and wonderful is something one has to learn all over again every minute, too. Because one can tend to become intolerant until one realizes one's own limitations. A Zen Buddist friend of mine -- one day I asked her how she would define enlightenment and she said she felt enlightenment came to one when one recognized one's own inadequacies. I found that that was a marvelous definition.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Getting back to the chronology of your life, the period of the late twenties, you were married in '25, met Stieglitz a couple of years later --

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes, '26, '27.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: And you explained how you had your marriage, you had two children, you were doing some work with various organizations and were interested in looking at galleries. During the late twenties you were becoming a good friend of Stieglitz and the other artists around him. Why don't you talk about that a bit, specifically. Just Stieglitz and his artists and your relationship to them during this period of the twenties. You said you wrote down what Stieglitz said to you. You visited the gallery fairly regularly and had conversations with him. Then you would go home and write down what he said, or would you sometimes take notes while he was there?

DOROTHY NORMAN: I would do both.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Did he know you were writing down what he was saying?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes. I did ask his permission to do that. Also, I wrote down not only our conversations but his conversations with other people. And I asked him whether he minded my taking notes and he said, "You do anything you want. You're part of this place. I trust you completely and you just don't need to ask permission to do anything. You do what you feel." When An American Place was founded and there was enough space so it was possible to go through and put in order his vast correspondence over the years, I did that. I put it in order. I

had read some of the Marin letters before and then when I put them all in order I felt so excited by them I said they ought to be published. Then O'Keeffe read them and she felt the same way about it and Stieglitz then published Marin's letters. Herbert Seligmann edited that edition in 1931. Then I was asked by a publisher to bring it up to date in 1949.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: When did you first meet Marin? Did you meet Marin at the time you finally bought one of his pictures?

DOROTHY NORMAN: No, I met Marin and Lachaise at Bertram at just about the time I knew Stieglitz. Hartman was the artist who took us to see Strand. He and his wife had a party, Lachaise had done a lovely little figurine of Mrs. Hartman. It was just before I bought the Lachaise. I met Lachaise and Madame Lachaise just after I'd bought the Lachaise sculpture. I saw Marin mainly at the Intimate Gallery and sometimes we would walk and we talked a great deal. We went to the Metropolitan together and to several other art exhibits, later also to concerts.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: You became quite good friends?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes, very good friends. And he invited us out to his house in New Jersey. I really saw more of Marin than anybody around the Place except Stieglitz.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Did you see Stieglitz also at his house or did he come to your house or was it mainly at the gallery?

DOROTHY NORMAN: It was mainly at the gallery, but he came to my house, too, and I to his.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: And he'd been married to O'Keeffe at this time?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes, they were married in 1924. She began to go to the Southwest for a half a year, beginning in 1929.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Did you know her?

DOROTHY NORMAN: I never have known her very well. At the beginning I saw her, she was around. And we went to various things, you know, to the opera and such. But then very soon she was out in the Southwest a lot of the time. Her work interested me. Her earlier work interested me. But it was Marin, Stieglitz, Lachaise and Demuth who meant most to me. I loved Demuth's work. He did not have very many exhibitions at Stieglitz's after I came along. But I loved his work, as I loved Lachaise. These were the four I really loved.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: And of those artists is Stieglitz the one you were closest to?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Oh, yes.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: And then Marin and then Lachaise?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Well, Lachaise and Demuth died in '35. So I felt most, after Stieglitz, for Marin. I remember the Lachaises invited my husband and myself to dinner. I had a great struggle in our family in terms of my loving modern art and nobody else in the family being interested. So when I --I could buy the work of an artist who was poor, that was all right to do. Because that was charity. And that infuriated me, because that meant you didn't buy a work because you loved it but because the artist was poor. It did not infuriate me to help the artist --

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Certainly.

DOROTHY NORMAN: But it infuriated me to get pictures mixed in with charity. And one of the first letters, well, I had some money left over after I'd paid for the Lachaise so that was mine, I could do with it what I wanted to. I sent it to Stieglitz to help with the Intimate Gallery. I did not know what that meant, because I did not know what it was being used for.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: You just knew that you wanted to help.

DOROTHY NORMAN: To help.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: He accepted it as that?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes, not for himself. I was sending it to the Intimate Gallery. But if Stieglitz had used it for himself, that would have been quite all right. But he didn't ever.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: It was probably --

DOROTHY NORMAN: No, it was for the artists. And the rent for the Intimate Gallery, which was very little. A certain percentage was taken from what was sold, what was acquired, for upkeep. And Stieglitz took nothing. If one artist was having a bad year and the other artists were having a better year, something more was taken from them for the rent. That was all understood. There was never any discussion about it. Everybody trusted everybody. When the American Place was founded it had more space, the rent was higher, and it meant raising a rent fund.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT What year was that?

DM 1929, it was founded then.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT By the time the Intimate Gallery ended you were really part of it, you knew them all well and --

DOROTHY NORMAN That's right. And Stieglitz said that. Those are the very words that he used. So when I would ask about could I put the letters in order, he said, "Read anything you want. I give you carte blanche to do what you want." I'd show him what I had taken down in order to get things absolutely straight. And he encouraged me to keep a journal when I started to write, and I'd bring the journal to him to read. He had an enormous effect on my life. He always encouraged me. He, how shall I say it, changed my way of seeing the art world. His attitude toward art was a sacred one. He felt the artist was the true spiritual guide, that he set the standards. He was dedicated to art in a way I have never seen anyone else be dedicated. He was ready to be at his Places from 6 o'clock in the morning until 12 o'clock at night or until 6 o'clock the next morning if necessary. His feeling about clean walls, the cleanliness of a picture, the way it was seen through, hung, framed, was not precious. But he did care about seeing things through with utmost care.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: So things were done right.

DOROTHY NORMAN: That is what he meant by setting standards, by being the true guide. To do the best job of which you were capable and then to go even beyond that. He used the image, often, of hitting not only the target, but the center of the target and the center of the center of the target and then the point even beyond that. It was that feeling that fit into my own ideal picture of how life should be.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: It must have been a marvelous time for you.

DOROTHY NORMAN: It was. It was. Stieglitz just opened up life for me.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: When the move came, the Intimate Gallery closed and the American Place opened in '29, did the same spirit of the gallery remain?

DOROTHY NORMAN: It was even more marvelous.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: How was that?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Because, you see, the Intimate Gallery was a shabby little room. It didn't make any difference that it was shabby, because the pictures just shone. I was just going to say like jewels but this morning -- I must tell you this just because I was so flabbergasted, I didn't quite know how to answer for a moment. The telephone bell rang and the voice said this is the Jewel Corp. And I said, "pardon me, I didn't quite understand what you said." And he said, "This is the Jewel Corp." And I said, "I'm terribly sorry, I don't quite understand." And he said, "Jewelry Company." And I said, "Yes?" and he said, "I called you to ask your permission to use some Stieglitz photographs from your book, Alfred Stieglitz, an American Seer." And I said, "Use them for what?" And he said, "Well, we put out a brochure and we make the pictures of the jewels in color and we wanted some dramatic black and white photographs to place opposite them." I could not believe my ears. I just -- I had to tell you that because it happened just today. So I stopped when I said it was a shabby room but the pictures were -- I was just about -- and I had to stop. An American Place was white, painted white. It was the first absolutely simple, undecorated -- I would call it modern -- gallery in New York -- except it wasn't meant to be modern, it was just naturally using the materials at hand. It was in an office building. And the walls were painted white -- some were pale gray. The place was painted different shades of gray for the different parts, so that pictures would be freely seen. The floors were painted gray. The pictures were hung beautifully. There was a small space, but it had no door to close it off. That was Stieglitz's office --there was no office furniture. Just a simple wooden table. And when Stieglitz started having heart attacks I got him a little army cot, one he could lie on when he got tired. This when he was in his 70's. The Place was larger and there were articles written about it. More people came. Stieglitz never advertised, though. And neither the name of the Intimate Gallery nor that of An American Place was ever listed in the phone book.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: But did lots of people come?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes, lots of people came. It was much more alive. Although when we started to raise the rent fund for it, it was just at the time of the Crash and I was afraid we couldn't raise it. It was '29, in the autumn. But we raised the fund and the place was opened a little before the first of the year, although it was announced as being about to open in 1930, but it was ready in December.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: How did you go -- was the idea for the rent fund yours?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Well, we had many joint discussions. Stieglitz was very much against our raising a fund because, again, it was a question of money. He did not want to know the names of the donors. I was going to say "accepting something" but it wasn't for him, personally, it was for the rent fund. He did not want to know the names of the donors, he did not want to have to do any favors for anybody and not be free to behave in any way in which he believed. In fact, everything he did in a way was done intuitively --there was no master plan, it was just an intuitive way of life. He wanted to be free to say what he had to say. He didn't feel that he was trying to sell anybody anything or that anybody was buying anything. It was a kind of standing guard over what was there. And the person who acquired something, in Stieglitz's view, must guard it in the same spirit. The Modern Museum was founded the same time as An American Place. The Museum opened with four -- to Stieglitz -- French Old Masters. In a way, that made Stieglitz want to have An American Place --

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Even more, I suppose.

DOROTHY NORMAN: More, exactly. Because he felt that his work was not yet fully done.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: So it really was the only place?

DOROTHY NORMAN: It was the only alive place for me and it supported living American artists. It was the only gathering place of people who mattered to me. For example, when the Group Theater was formed, Harold Clurman and other members of the group came to see Stieglitz. They were influenced by him. The whole idea of the group, and the no-star system, was partly stimulated by the experience of Stieglitz. There were so many things that came out of that space -- the books that were written as a result of conversations with Stieglitz, the books that were dedicated to him, the letters that were written to him. One of the last issues of Camera Work Number 47 -- of the sequence of 50 issues -- was called, "What is 291." "What is 291" didn't say "What is Alfred Stieglitz." But the articles were about 291 where modern art was introduced. Almost nobody who wrote in that issue failed to attribute the spirit of the place to Stieglitz. When we did a book called *America and Alfred Stieglitz* -- which curiously is just being reprinted -- when we did that in '34, Lewis Mumford and Waldo Frank, Paul Rosenfeld, Harold Rugg and I were the co-editors. The response to our saying that we wanted to do a book in honor of Stieglitz's 70th birthday was warm. He had done things throughout his life for those who were alive, he didn't wait until they were dead and famous to back them. We didn't want to do a book of tributes, but the book was really a tribute to Stieglitz that would be ready for his 70th birthday. His influence on our time was really greater than people now know. Carl Van Doren, who was head of the Literary Guild of that time, wrote on the jacket copy, that there was bound to be a book on the age of Stieglitz. When he came to America in 1915, Varese, the composer told me that he went straight to 291 when he arrived, because Marcel Duchamp had told him to go there, he would feel at home there. And Duchamp often came to see Stieglitz, that is where I first met Duchamp. That was at An American Place. And Hart Crane came in one day when he was just finishing *The Bridege* He had written to Stieglitz that he had played a great role in the creation of *The Bridge*. The list of those who contributed to the '34 book is of interest.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: What did Crane mean?

DOROTHY NORMAN: He meant that Stieglitz's vision had meant so much to Hart Crane that the whole idea of *The Bridge* was, in great part, inspired by him.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: It must have been hard not to have gone every single day.

DOROTHY NORMAN: It was hard.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Did you go several times a week or --

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes, I did.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Or just when you had free time?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Well, I had such a full schedule, but I went whenever I could. I tried at the beginning to stay away, because first I felt shy about going and about being as interested as I was. Because, after all, it was small gallery. But very soon I did not feel shy because, as Stieglitz said and as I felt, I was a part of the place. And it was as natural for me to walk in the door there as it was to walk into my own door. It was a kind of spiritual home.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: And meeting more of the people all the time.

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes. You never knew what was going to happen.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Who might be there.

DOROTHY NORMAN: Everything happened as naturally as my own walking in.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Well, at this time you were involved in all these things. Again, the family and your work with the other organizations and very much involved with Stieglitz and still taking notes and writing. But you were also doing your own writing at this time because it was around this time, in '33, that Stieglitz published a book of your poems?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes. I wrote those in 1932 and would send them in letters to Stieglitz. I was amazed that he wanted to publish them because actually, you know, when I put down these poems, I wasn't thinking of myself as a writer, I just did them as naturally as walking into An American Place.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Those poems were part of your American --

DOROTHY NORMAN: Well, I wrote them during the summer, that summer of '32. And I sent them, as I say, in letters to Stieglitz. He read them aloud to the people who were there. I have a marvelous letter about them from Paul Rosenfeld, whom I still miss, the way I still miss Stieglitz. Paul Rosenfeld was an extraordinary person. I think he was the best music critic of that period and he wrote about all of the other arts so well. We would share everything. I mean, we would telephone one another after we'd been to a concert or been to an exhibition that mattered to us. And we went to many things together. And the fact that Stieglitz died one weekend, Paul Rosenfeld the next and Gertrude the next in 1946 was the most shocking week I think I've ever lived through. Because it felt like the end of an era.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: It was. When did you first begin to do photography yourself?

DOROTHY NORMAN: In '31. We had insisted that there be a darkroom at The Place -- which Stieglitz had not had in New York.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: How did it happen? You said early on that you loved his photographs. And was that your first real interest in photography?

DOROTHY NORMAN: In photography, yes. But I had traveled somewhat with my parents. I'd been to Europe twice with them and then my husband and I went to Europe, not on our honeymoon but the next year. And I lived through my eyes so tremendously that I constantly took photographs with a Brownie -- I forget what they were called, not the square Brownies but the oblong ones that had an extension. And I was always disappointed in what I photographed. But I fell in love with everything as I traveled that struck me as extraordinary, or simple and beautiful. Stieglitz started to photograph me in '30, '31 .... At the Intimate Gallery I was too shy to bring my stupid camera and take my stupid, miserable photographs. But I don't know why I had enough courage to take my camera with me to An American Place, because by then I had seen a great deal in the field of photography, and of course I'd looked at *Camera Work*, which Stieglitz had shown me. He gave me some issues, and then I bought some whenever I found them. Stieglitz tried to make up a set of *Camera Work* for me and I have some photographs I took before I got a Graflex. The way I acquired a Graflex was this: I was so much interested in photographing people, and Stieglitz had a four by five Graflex. He said to me one day, use my camera and I'll show you what to do. It was very heavy, but it was marvelous to be able to look into the ground glass and really see what you were doing. But the camera was too heavy for me. This was during the Depression -- '31 and I was scared to ask my husband to have one bought for me because they were quite expensive. I thought my husband would think I was mad, but Stieglitz bought a 3 1/4 x 4 1/4 camera, he thought it was perfectly fine. Stieglitz sent for the Graflex and bought it for me. He said, "You can pay me back when you can." So that was decided in a split second, like that. Then he said, "I'll show you what to do." What he told me was to shut down as far as possible, take as long exposures as possible and then just go ahead and photograph, photograph, photograph. I have a number of the first photographs I took, which I would send to Stieglitz. And he would write about them -- I have a whole portfolio. He put on the back of them, "Lovely, perfect, beautiful." But they were awful, just awful. Yet his encouragement was so important. Then he said he would show me how to develop and print.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: I was going to say, who printed them?

DOROTHY NORMAN: I did. But let me tell you what he did. He bought a bottle of developer and he read from it: three parts, whatever it was called -- one part of whatever it was called and three parts water, and keep shaking your negatives at such and such a temperature. Well, there was no way you could measure the temperature and the time was not always accurate. Because when you were in the darkroom and you started to develop your negatives they looked fine while they were wet. And then when you took them out to daylight they were just

miserable. So it was up to me to learn what to do. But Stieglitz did show me the first elements and he'd stand over me in the darkroom and watch and say, "I'd leave it in a little longer." And his doing that meant a great deal. But I learned more from looking at his photographs in terms of quality, not in terms of what I would photograph, than from anything else. And it was extremely helpful, his encouragement, and initial instructions. But I did not go to a school of photography and I did not know the chemistry of photography. So that I was terribly fortunate, as I was in terms of writing, to keep on just writing, writing, writing, just the way I kept right on photographing.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Was your work ever shown?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: At An American Place?

DOROTHY NORMAN: No. Stieglitz was going to have an exhibition there but it became rather complicated, so he did not have it. But the Museum of Modern Art included my work. I think they were the first to include my work in an exhibition and then various other museums did. Also galleries.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: (Inaudible)

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes. There's an exhibition at the Light Gallery now, in South Hampton. I don't really know what's in the exhibition and I haven't seen the gallery. It's brand new. My exhibition will open it.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: The opening is next week?

DOROTHY NORMAN: It's next week. I had to stop photographing in the fifties because I was using my eyes too much. I was editing -- I had been editing *Twice a Year* for ten years, and I wrote a column for the *New York Post* for seven years. And I was reading reports and I had no assistance in proofreading and so forth in *Twice a Year*. Then I was writing other things and I was doing my own photographic printing. Photographing and photography required tremendous concentration of the eye. In focusing as well as in printing, so that I just had been using my eyes too much. Now, of course, in these last few months it has been discovered that I have cataracts in both eyes so even my writing and reading are hampered greatly thereby. I can read typescript fortunately, if the ribbon is dark. I can do that. And I can read the headlines of the newspapers. It saves a great deal of time. (Laughter)

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: (Inaudible)

DOROTHY NORMAN: I did have to stop photographing in about '55.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: It obviously included what you had to do most, what you wanted to do most. Between your writing and your photography, you chose --

DOROTHY NORMAN: To write. Well, it chose me.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: It really did.

DOROTHY NORMAN: I could not print anymore. It was too painful. Being in a darkroom is a great strain. Earlier it didn't matter at all -- I could do anything when I was younger, but then suddenly I just could not --

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: But your career as a photographer was really 20, 25 years, is that right?

DOROTHY NORMAN: That's all, that's right. Yes. I should say that at the beginning I was involved in American social work and good works in general. But when the period of Fascism and Nazism had evolved and of course Communism --I never was a Communist because I always detested the idea of totalitarian control -- so I never had the experience of most of the so-called intellectuals of the time. There were splits between the Stalinists and the anti-Stalinists and Trotskyites and anti-Trotskyites. All the splits -- I never went through the splits, because I never went through being a Communist. My husband and I were both congenitally opposed to all forms of dictatorship. And so I was spared that. However, when I was against Nazism and Facism, beginning in the thirties I also -- or really, in the late thirties, I became interested in anti-imperialism, which led to my being asked to be on the India League when it was formed in 1940, '41. I'd already published some things in Twice a Year about the abrogation of civil liberties in India under imperialism. And then in the forties I became more and more interested in fighting, in any way I could, for the freedom of India and Indonesia, and so forth. Because by then, first of all, we were in the war. Everybody was anti Fascist and anti-Nazi. But it was curious, in the organizations in which I did work on foreign policy, it was almost impossible to get people interested in anti-imperialism.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Really?

DOROTHY NORMAN: They just could not encompass it. I mean, when I worked in the Union of Democratic Action which became Americans for Democratic Action, their slogan was anti-fascism, anti-Nazism, anti-Communism, but not anti-imperialism.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: You weren't in (inaudible)?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Louie Fischer and I finally dropped out of the ADA together when there was no interest in fighting imperialism.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: It really was not until the Second World War was over --

DOROTHY NORMAN: No, it was later than that that the ADA wasn't interested. Pearl Buck was the wife of Richard Walsh, the publisher who was head of the India League. And she was the only other woman on the League. She lived out in the country so I was the only woman on the Board in New York. I became, of the few in the city who received the Indians who came over. Louis Fischer was a great friend and he awakened me to the evils of imperialism in the early forties. We talked a great deal and became great friends. When Nehru's Pandit nieces came over in '42 Louis had just been in India and had written "A Week With Gandhi." One of the first days after they arrived he was to have them for lunch and he invited me to come and meet them. The next day, Mai Mai Sze, a Chinese writer and painter, a marvelous person invited me to tea with the Pandit girls. Mai Mai had been the first Mayling Sung Scholarship student at Wellesley. Now one of the Pandit girls was to have the same scholarship. So by the end of the second meeting I felt as though we were old friends. I wrote a piece about the Pandits for the New York Post and I wrote about India for the Post too, in other ways, although I wasn't supposed to write about foreign affairs.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: You started writing for the Post in '42?

DOROTHY NORMAN: '42, yes. I think it was the beginning of '42.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Was it in 1937 you began to publish *Twice a Year* and that your writing really began to take up most of your time? I mean, in the earlier days, you had more time to visit An American Place and things like that. Now your life probably became much --

DOROTHY NORMAN: Well, it became rather complicated, yes. But of course, Stieglitz was 82 when he died in '46.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: (Inaudible) so he was in his seventies when he (inaudible).

DOROTHY NORMAN: Politics always interested me in the same sense as did the Civil Liberties Union. It was the core of what interested me and my work for India was really done in the same spirit as my earlier political work.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: (Inaudible) session on --

[RECORDING INTERRUPTION]

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: This is William McNaught talking to Dorothy Norman, our second session. Today is June 1st, 1979. I'm at Dorothy Norman's house in East Hampton. This is tape two, continuation of side one. Yesterday we spoke about you as a writer, only a very little, mentioning the poems that were published by Stieglitz in 1933. I thought today we might expand a bit more on Dorothy Norman as writer, as editor, and end with just a review of the books that you've published in the last 10 or 15 years. So I wonder if you might begin with talking about your writing in the thirties. You didn't stay writing poetry, as I understand.

DOROTHY NORMAN: I did write more poetry. But essentially, during the thirties, as I mentioned, after the poems came out, Lewis Mumford, Paul Rosenfeld, Waldo Frank, Harold Rugg and I edited a book which was published by Doubleday Doran, and was a Literary Guild selection. It was called *America and Alfred Stieglitz*. That was my first job of editing. I was much younger than the other editors and when they asked me to be a co-editor and contribute to what then evolved as a book that had 25 contributors, I felt very shy about it, because I had never written a long piece for publication before and I had never edited. But I worked mainly with Waldo Frank because we were both on Cape Cod and the other editors were scattered elsewhere. Waldo Frank was an excellent editor. He had been editor of the *Seven Arts* and it was so natural to work on the book with him that everything came as naturally to me as anything else I'd ever done. I'd always done things that seemed right for me. I mean, I wasn't ever trying to do something that didn't come from inside. So that was a great experience. When I wrote my first piece, which was the chapter on An American Place, it was extraordinary having the other editors approve it. Mumford and Rosefeld were two of the editors of the *American Caravan* and they asked me to be an editor of that. But it was in the mid-thirties, toward 1937, that the idea of *Twice a Year*, a journal that I published for ten years, was beginning to mature in my mind. And I said, with some regret I couldn't become an editor of the *Caravan*. It was again a very natural decision. I said I was evolving plans for a publication that would, for me, have to go beyond just literary pieces, which is what they were publishing. Because I couldn't

separate art and action -- in fact, I called the last number of *Twice a Year*, "Art and Action," as the 10th anniversary issue. I believe that what I was talking about yesterday should be clarified. I spoke of the two parts of my interest, and my necessity to understand why at first they seemed separate. Also, I spoke about the fact that with the rise of Mussolini and Hitler, and fighting of the Spanish war, a world war was obviously brewing, building. So it was necessary for me to rethink my attitude about war, but also about art and action. When the exiles began to come over from Italy and Germany, I was very active with them. I had meetings for them, to raise funds for one cause or another. The same thing happened with the Free French. So that all of the extraordinary people who were coming over from Europe became friends because we were working together toward a common aim. Many of the anti-Fascists and those who were anti-everything that was totalitarian, were intellectuals of a high order. They had risked their lives, had gone to jail because of their ideas, and then had to flee or die. Many of the people who came over were writers, and put me in touch with other writers who were still in Europe, people like Silone who had escaped from Italy and gone to Switzerland, but who felt his place was there.

DOROTHY NORMAN: So he didn't come to the United States. It was natural for me to print these people Twice a Year. It all became a kind of network. I could not just become an editor of a purely literary magazine when my heart was so filled with wonder at the quality of the writing of those who had come over from Europe. The subject matter about which they wrote was of great importance to me. And my work in the Civil Liberties field made me feel there had to be a record of what was happening and a protest against tyranny, both abroad and at home. I was interested in young, unknown writers, as well as established writers when they happened to be writing about what moved me. And then there was work from the past that kept coming to my attention that I felt was apropos of what was happening, but had soon forgotten. So I printed work from the past of work by Vico and DeSanctis and Haine[?] and others who were writing about the same kinds of problems with which we were being faced. It all became kind of chorus of voices for me. I felt that it was important to have an organ for these voices. Exiles could publish in certain intellectual magazines but they couldn't write at length in most liberal journals. I tried to make Twice a Year as flexible as possible, so that writers could send rather long pieces to me and not have them cut into little shreds.

[RECORDING INTERRUPTION]

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Tape two, side two. You were talking about the opportunity of giving these writers a place to publish at length.

DOROTHY NORMAN: An American Place was a center for me in terms of Stieglitz and the artists there, but it did not satisfy the whole of my need for a center at this time. What happened was that through having so many meetings for one cause after another at home, our house became a meeting place, and I had a number of gatherings there for the causes I cared about -- anti-totalitarian, anti-discrimination, civil liberties issues, and exiles, etc. My husband was interested in the creation of a free Palestine and he rather specialized in that after he became a bit -- not disillusioned with consumers' cooperatives, but felt that rural resettlement had to start from the ground up, too, in this country as well as in Palestine. That was before it became Israel. I approved very much of the ideas for which he was working, although they were not the ones that I felt closest to, but I felt it was rather wonderful that our work dovetailed.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Had your interest in the world of art, your time with Stieglitz at An American Place, had that interested your husband? Had he got to know the same artists?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Oh, yes, he did get to know them. But it wasn't his central interest, just as his interests were not my central interests.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: But as you say, they did dovetail.

DOROTHY NORMAN: We were both interested in what the other was doing.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: And they dovetailed more in the area of social welfare?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes, they did. They did dovetail and as a matter of fact, I was asked to be on a number of committees that had to do with fighting discrimination not only against Jews in particular, but discrimination in general. But I felt that Negroes were so much worse off in this country than Jews I spent most of my time for them. There were no Chicanos at that period, there were no other minority groups that were that much discriminated against. We were both interested in the American Indian and contributed to organizations that were working for the betterment of the life of the American Indian. We were interested in the whole spectrum of minorities. So that when the exiles from Germany began to come over, Alvin Johnson formed the University of Exile at the New School, my husband was on the board and I worked for it, too. I was one of the Associate Members Committee at the New School. The exiles, of course, used the New School to a great extent because other universities were not as hospitable or farsighted as Dr. Johnson about what was happening to the intellectuals in almost all the countries of Europe, including Russia. The Free French played a role in the freedom

movement of Europe and I worked closely with the Free French group here, too. I published material in Twice a Year relating to DeGaulle and what was happening when the Petainists and all the other pro-Fascist, pro-Nazi forces fought against the forces of freedom. From 1937 to 1948, "Twice a Year" played a great role in my life. I wrote the editorials for it and Mary Lescaze was the assistant editor and I checked everything with her that came in. She really was somebody with whom I worked in great harmony. And her reaction to things meant a great deal to me.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Did you set it up yourself, once you got the idea that you would like to have a place where people --

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes, I did.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: And you set it up and financed it yourself?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes, I did.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: And decided that it would be called *Twice a Year* and --

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes. I was going to call it the *American Quarterly* but, as I tried to explain, I really had no money of my own. It was always a question of asking permission to do this and that and sometimes I was granted the permission to do certain things and sometimes not.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: From your parents?

DOROTHY NORMAN: No, from my husband. But then his mother died in '38, which was after I began to --after I began to plan *Twice a Yea*r and she left me a small legacy, which I used for *Twice a Year*. And there had been some wedding presents that had never been put in a separate account and I was allowed to use something of that money for the very beginning of *Twice a Year*. Then when I went to work for the Post, what I earned there I used for *Twice a Year.*

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Were you able, then, to pay the contributors?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Very little. At that time all the so-called "little magazines" or literary magazines paid about the same, a cent a word. And what amazed me most about *Twice a Year* was that it came into existence! I had never edited a magazine and neither had Mary Lescaze.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: But it worked.

DOROTHY NORMAN: People, I mean really great writers, responded and sent us work. I've just been trying to write my memoir, I've been going over *Twice a Year* and also the correspondence that kept coming in. People like Havelock Ellis and Thomas Mann and Dorothy Richardson show great interest. The response was incredible to me. People undertook to the translations. Mrs. W. W. Norton was beginning to translate some letters of Rilke and in the very first issue I had a huge section of his wartime letters that had never been published. And I obtained permission to publish Randolph Bournes's letters that had never been published, and all kinds of other material when I want it. It was an astonishing experience. It helped clarify many of the problems with which I'd been struggling. And it also proved to be a needed publication, the duplicate of which did not exist.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Exactly, because the mere fact it combined, as I think it was called, a journal of literature, the arts and civil liberties --

DOROTHY NORMAN: Right.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Was something extraordinary.

DOROTHY NORMAN: And that was commented on by many great writers.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: I'm sure. Because its very impressive list of Camus, Thomas Mann you mentioned, Sherwood Anderson --

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes, we printed Sartre's play called "The Respectful Prostitute" and Richard Wright wrote the introduction.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: So obviously these people -- I mean, by this time you knew a great many people and the word was obviously passed around --

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes, to begin with when we began, as I said, I started to call it *American Quarterly*, because I didn't want a fancy title. Then I realized I did not have enough money to publish anything that could have any

meaning four times a year. I realized that life goes so fast, students are away in the summers, and a quarterly would never catch up with them. So one day I just said (Stieglitz was writing out the titles for me for the cover --)

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: I noticed it was in his handwriting.

DOROTHY NORMAN: So one day I said, "Why don't I just call it *Twice a Year* and bring it out twice a year. And he started to write it out and it was so beautiful I said, "All right, that's its title." So then I designed the cover with Stieglitz's writing as the heading, and it became *Twice a Year* instead of an *American Quarterly*. That's how that happened. As for other writing of that period, I did do some articles on Stieglitz and Marin for *Art Magazine* and a few book reviews. But I still felt I was not ready to present the life of Stieglitz. It wasn't until after he died, that I could really have time to research the period before I had known him. Because, after all, he had already had a photographic career before I knew him, he had had 291 and I'd only come in at the Intimate Gallery. So I had to do a good deal of research about the earlier years and try to put together the evolution of the career, which is what I did in --

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: That book came out in 1960.

DOROTHY NORMAN: That was the first, that was sort of the introduction. But the big book didn't come out until a few years ago.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: In '73. This was Alfred Stieglitz -- An American Seer.

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes. It went through various stages because various people wanted to publish it. But no one was ready to give me the quality of reproductions that I really wanted until *Aperture* undertook to produce the book and then Random House decided to publish it and distribute it.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: I noticed in *Twice a Year*, going back just a second, you did publish photographs.

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes, I did. I published photographs and I tried to get really good reproductions of photographs. There was no journal that was -- no journal that had to do with literature and the arts as such that published photographs together with painters and so forth at the time. Stieglitz approved of the reproductions of his work that were in *Twice a Year*. Except during the war when I couldn't get paper which I'd been accustomed to use -- I used not great paper, but it was good paper, and it wasn't too expensive.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: *Twice a Year* had, I should think, an enormous impact during the war. I know reading some of the things, I mean the reports that you published of the atrocities and things like that.

DOROTHY NORMAN: There wasn't any publication that went into as much detail as *Twice a Year.* I got hold of the Rosselli journals, for example. The Rossellis were really among the first of the anti-Fascists who were killed. And we published Silone, who was one of the first wonderful anti-Fascist Italian writers. And then as time went on we included works from many countries. My interest in India really began with my meeting Coomaraswamy. Although he was a traditionalist, he happened to have found Stieglitz the greatest artist in America. He told me this the first time I met him, which was in 1929. It startled me because I had come to the same conclusion as a young person in a Western nation, who was interested in the modern movement. That an older person who came from a traditional background should have come to the same conclusion, was rather extraordinary and surprising to me. When I spoke of Strand and my first meeting with him, I did not mean to imply that he was not an extraordinary photographer because I think his late work is really stupendous. I feel that he is the only person who is a second to Stieglitz in this country. I think his late work, as well as his earliest works, are extraordinary. But Coomaraswamy was interested only in Stieglitz.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: He met Stieglitz through you?

DOROTHY NORMAN: No. He asked to meet Stieglitz after he saw his photographs in 1923 or '24 at the exhibitions Stieglitz held before he had the Intimate Gallery, at the Anderson Galleries. They got on famously. It was Coomaraswamy who was curator of Mohammedan and other Eastern arts at the Boston Museum, who was responsible for having the Boston Museum acquire Stieglitz photographs in 1924. The Boston Museum was the first great museum to show photographs on the same basis as work in other media. This is an extraordinary thing. When I read The Dance of Siva in 1928, I had no idea who Coomaraswamy was. I liked the feel of the book when I saw it at the Weyhe Gallery. I'd never really looked at Indian art. I opened the pages and there were some reproductions. Again, the book had a wonderful feeling. I bought it and read it. I was absolutely overwhelmed by it. *The Dance of Siva* was a concept that spoke to me directly in a way that no other symbolical art had ever meant anything. And by chance, we went to Cape Cod in the summers and my best friend there was a woman who lived a short distance from Woods Hole, where we went. I walked into her house, which was a small, early American house, and there on her table lay *The Dance of the Siva*. I had never seen the book anywhere except in my own hand. I said, "How extraordinary." She called over to her niece who was staying with her and she said, "Margie, Dorothy has been reading *The Dance of Siva* and thinks it's wonderful." Her niece,

whose name was Margaret Fairbanks, was Coomaraswamy's assistant at the Boston Museum.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Oh, really?

DOROTHY NORMAN: I didn't know whether Coomaraswamy had lived in the 15th century or when he had written. I just had opened the book without looking at the front pages. Margaret said, "Come to Boston and I'll show you the Indian art there and Coomaraswamy is coming for dinner, and you must meet him." My husband and I went to Boston, and we went to dinner at the Fairbanks. There was a long, lean man there -- Coomaraswamy. We talked, and then when he would come to New York he would get off the train --I think it was called the Midnight Owl from Boston then. A voice would come over the telephone, "This is Ananda Coomaraswamy. I shall see you at 2:00 o'clock today." And I'd break any appointment. It was like a command from on high. We talked and talked. When he'd come to New York he'd come to see me and then I saw him on the Cape one summer. And whenever I went to Boston he invited me to his house -- he married in 1932. Then he and his wife would invite me for lunch and dinner. And we'd sit and talk and talk and talk. Very often, when there would be a football game, a Yale-Harvard, or Harvard-Princeton game in Cambridge we'd go to Boston. I hate football games and I would go and talk to Coomaraswamy instead. It was extraordinary.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Did you see a great deal of him during those years or --

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes, in a way. I mean, as I look back at it, it was rather often. And I have quite a lot of letters from him. When I was doing *Twice a Year* I asked him to contribute an article. He found it very, very strange, indeed, to contribute to a periodical of that nature, because he always wrote for very specialized publications. But he did do it, yes, and it was all right for him because he wrote about traditional art. So everything came together. My first interest in India was by way of Coomaraswamy. Then one day Roger Baldwin had a party. It was in 1938 or 1939. This was before the influx of Indians who were fighting for the freedom movement. At the party at Roger Baldwin's there was a woman lawyer, an Indian. I began to ask her questions about the abrogation of civil liberties in India. She was extremely well informed, extremely learned. I asked her to do a piece for *Twice A Year*. And she did. Then the war broke out and I never could send proofs to her because there was no way. But she did send the article and I read the proofs at least a thousand times to make certain there were no errors. That was the first thing I published about what was happening in India.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: What year was this?

DOROTHY NORMAN: I think it was ordered in '39 and it must have been in the '40 issue -- '40 or '41. Because it took her some time to write it and the war broke out. But I met her before the war broke out and asked for the piece then. That was the beginning of my really learning what the situation was in India.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: You had never been to India before the war?

DOROTHY NORMAN: No. But there was the India League experience. As I mentioned, I wrote some articles in the *New York Post* -- in my column there (1942-1949), interviews and some special articles on the situation in India. And I was seeing the British information office people about other matters and I began to see them about India too. I published a number of interpretations of what they were saying and what I felt the situation really was. As for my writing during that period, when I was doing *Twice A Year* I published some of my poems in it. Stieglitz was going to do another book of my poems but then he became ill at various times and I felt it was sort of too much for him to do. But I wrote other things for *Twice A Year*, and also for other periodicals.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: But at this same time you began writing for the Post "A World to Live In." That was the name of your column.

DOROTHY NORMAN: It covered all of the social welfare activities in which I was interested.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: And that began in '42, four years after --

DOROTHY NORMAN: And also politics.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Was your understanding with the Post that you could write about any --

DOROTHY NORMAN: Well, what happened was -- this again was walking into something or having it walk into you. I told you this, that because of what I was doing for the Citywide Harlem Committee, the Post asked me to write about not only race relations, but all kinds of other things that were wrong in the city as well as in the state. Ted Thackney who had just become the publisher and married the owner, Dorothy Schiff (whom I'd known before), hired me. I gave him a long list that had enough ideas for articles really for a year. He said, "Just write what you want." And I said, "Well, I don't want to come down to the Post to write. I have young children." He said, "That's all right." I said, "You know, I don't type." He said, "That's all right, you have a secretary, put what is typed for us on your expense account." I said, "Well, if the children are ill I don't want to have to write every

day. How often do you think I should write articles?" He said, "Oh, three times a week or something like that." I felt like Alice in Wonderland. I wrote my first piece and they said, give it to the rewrite man. I didn't know what a rewrite man was. What it meant was that I came in and dictated the story I'd gotten about the Fair Employment Practices Committee being about to be terminated because there weren't enough funds. (Then I wrote my own stories.) The person who telephoned me and told me this story just before I began to work for the Post was somebody I had printed in Twice a Year, John Beecher, who was one of the Beechers from the Beecher Stowe family. I'd printed some other things he'd written, too, about civil liberties and discrimination. Since he had told me the story I had to call him to get the exact facts. So again, everything dovetailed. Nobody ever told me what to write for the Post and after I was there for about three months I was called in and asked whether I wanted to do a column. I said, what would that entail? The managing editor said, "You could say things on your own instead of having to get someone to quote." I said, "You mean I can save all of that time, not looking for someone well known to say what I want to say." He laughed. At the beginning I felt rather frightened because I was saying everything completely on my own. I wasn't quoting the head of the FEPC or someone else important. But it really did save an enormous amount of time. And I became confident and just wrote what I knew was the truth -- I mean, the facts about a particular issue.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: And you did that for seven years.

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes. I became quite involved in city politics and state politics and I was offered political positions and I was asked to run for Congress. But it wasn't right for me.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: You never accepted any --

DOROTHY NORMAN: I knew I never --

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: It wasn't the right thing?

DOROTHY NORMAN: It just was wrong. I could not compromise. I discovered this by being a member of the Liberal Party, when I was one of its directors. (It was founded in 1944.) There just wasn't any way I could function. There are other people in the world who are made to have power and to use power and to do that is right for them. This just wasn't right for me. And I just could not become a political functionary. However, I learned a great deal about what was going on in the city. It was extremely helpful in writing my column because I could write about things I knew firsthand. Then in the forties, as I said, different individuals began to come over from India and I sort of inherited the Pandit family -- Mrs. Pandit being Nehru's sister. I met his other sister, too, Mrs. Hutthusing.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Had you met Nehru?

DOROTHY NORMAN: No. Nehru came to America in 1949. Again, it was like walking into something I really was already involved in. The whole Pandit family had stayed at our house and we had all become friends. Nehru was a great hero of mine because of his books and because of his actions about freedom and about being an anti-Fascist, anti-Nazi. I am sure Gandhi was the really greatest man in India. He was a pacifist throughout the war and although Nehru was a follower of Gandhi, his writings and actions were quite independent. I felt closer to Nehru's position than to that of Gandhi. I understood how all of this had happened after I got to know him. I didn't understand it before I met him, but I had sensed it. Nehru was a heroic figure for me. When he came to New York in '49, it never occurred to me he had any idea who I was. I was asked to go to the airport with others to meet him and then on his first evening there was a reception for him. There was to be a literary tea for him the next day, to which I was not invited. It was for all the great writers of America to meet Nehru and for Nehru to meet them. At the end of the first evening reception I saw Mrs. Pandit talking to Nehru and she beckoned to me. I couldn't imagine what was up. I went over and she said, "Would you wait until the others have all gone? My brother wants to ask you something." So my husband and I stood there, next to Nehru and Mrs. Pandit. People came up and said good night to Mr. Richard Walsh and Pearl Buck who had given the reception. So there we were; the four of us, and the host and his wife who were going to give the literary tea for Nehru the next day. All the quests left and Nehru turned to me. The Walshes were standing perhaps four feet away and he turned and lowered his voice, took out a sheaf of papers with his minute by minute schedule for his time in New York and said, "Look, there's tea being given for me tomorrow and there are no young progressive writers on the list -- just a lot of people I've either read or who are old fogies. Could you do something about getting some younger people?" Mrs. Pandit had been at our house often when I'd had gatherings of young, progressive people. So Nehru said, "See what you can do." I was awfully upset, "What do you mean, I wonder, asking me to do this? First of all, Pearl Buck, as hostess, will be outraged. And I haven't even been invited to the tea." Nehru said, "If you can't get enough people invited you think would be of interest to me" -- he looked at his papers and added, "I have three-quarters of an hour free the day after. If you can't get enough people added to the Walsh tea, Nan says you have gatherings, that you know everybody, so you might have a gathering for me. Then I can meet interesting, younger, progressive editors, publishers and writers?" I thought, in 24 hours? And I'm supposed to go to all of the banquets in honor of you? I wanted to say, this is the most absurd thing I've ever heard of. But

since it was Nehru, I was going to do just what he asked me to. So I called Pearl Buck. I thought -- I suppose I woke up at 6 o'clock, not wanting to miss Nehru, because he said he would be free just at 9:30, so I should call then. Just as we were saying good night he said, "Oh, yes, there's just one more thing I'd like to ask you. It seems to me a lot of time is going to be wasted in the morning with ceremonies. Nan says you know the Mayor very well." Which I did, because of all the political work I was doing. "Would you ask him to cut his ceremony to the minimum?"

[Laughter]

I did call the Mayor every morning at 8:30 because he had asked me to, to keep him informed about what he should do about social welfare, etc.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT You called the Mayor every morning?

DOROTHY NORMAN At 8:30. So that was all right. You know, that fit in.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT Who was the Mayor then?

DOROTHY NORMAN O'Dwyer. I couldn't call Pearl Buck earlier than 9:00, because I thought she'd be exhausted from the reception. I did happen to have her private number in New York because we worked together so often. So I called and she told me to wait a moment; I spoke to her husband. And I felt like such an idiot. I said, "This is the most dreadful thing I've ever had to do and please forgive me but you have to understand that I must call Nehru by 9:30 and he thought the list was wonderful but he wondered whether some younger writers, some more progressives, could be added." I suggested that Auden be asked and Lewis Mumford and, you know, quite obvious other people who weren't on the list read to me. Everything was fine until I got to Max Lerner. I could feel a resistance. It was getting so late I knew I had to stop talking anyway. So I was asked, would I please come to the tea. I said, under no circumstances would I come; I hadn't been invited. And they said, oh, please help us with Nehru. It was getting so late I had to say, all right, yes, I'll come, thank you. And I thought, well, this is just all too dreadful. I called Nehru and I told him that I really hadn't been terribly successful, I had been successful with getting the Mayor to cut the ceremonies -- he said he'd do anything for you, he thinks you're great. But I didn't get very far with the additions to the tea. So he said, "Well, then you have a gathering tomorrow for the other people." I was supposed to be down at city hall at the ceremony for Nehru at 11 o'clock. And, you know, I was not a civil servant with a retinue at my beck and call to organize things. I thought, everybody will be teaching or writing or out of town and nobody will come. So that was the beginning of my knowing Nehru. From then on, I saw him every day in New York because there were various events. And he asked me to go on his private trip to Boston. For one day he was given a Mrs. presidential airplane and we went to Boston, also Indira Gandhi, and his sister Pandit. I'd never flown before because I'd been scared to and because my family flew all the time, I thought one of us ought to stay on earth. Nehru interested me tremendously from the moment I met him, as he naturally would. And then after the time in New York I was asked to come to India and to be a guest at the prime minister's house during the Republic Day ceremonies. The founding of the Indian Republic took place in January 1950, which was shortly after the October visit here. So I went to India and that, of course, was a tremendously important event in my life. It was the first of my trips to South and Southeast Asia. I was moved by India in so many ways. I was particularly upset by the poverty and the country's lack of food. I decided when I came home that I would do anything in the world to try to help with anything that could be done to get food for India. The Indians had to ask for food because the Congress in this country can't take action on anything unless another country is going to want what they take action on. You can't pass a bill for aid to India and then have India say sorry, we don't want it. So India had to ask --

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: So were you to act as the go-between?

DOROTHY NORMAN: I finally had to, but at the beginning I kept telling the Indians, for heaven's sake, ask for food because America is ready to give it to you. But, you see, they had been so hurt by colonialism they were afraid they might again fall under the power of another "empire." Finally, in 1951, conditions were so bad in India that Nehru did ask for food aid. Since I'd gone to the State Department, I'd gone to the UN people in New York who were the heads of the Indian delegation, and I had spoken to the Indian Embassy people about aid for India, it was really quite strange that each, in turn, telephoned me the day Nehru's cable came and each said, "Don't tell anybody we've called you, but now you can get busy doing what you've talked about." Of course, the State Department could take no action of a political nature because of the separation of powers. I had to keep their call secret.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: That action had to be taken by Congress?

DOROTHY NORMAN: It was the job of Congress to do political action, just as the executive and judiciary are separate, the legislative part of our government is separate. I decided that the news I had learned was of no value unless it would be followed up with a news story immediately. So I decided to form a citizen's committee to get aid for India and to call a press conference in its name at once.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Was this your American Emergency Food Committee?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes. And at first there wasn't any committee. I called up a few people and they came as the basis of the committee. I sent telegrams to all the big labor leaders and the big church organizations and said, there will be a meeting and I hope you will be on the committee, there's going to be a press conference at my house. I tried to get together all the facts for the press conference and that was a hard job to do so quickly. I only had a part-time secretary and I was doing all kinds of other things as well. So there was a press conference and the Emergency Food Committee for India was born! I had my secretary typing releases just up to the moment the press arrived. There were big articles in the press the next day. Everybody wanted to be on the committee. And then it was necessary to raise a certain amount of money for it. I only succeeded in having one person give any real funds to it, the others gave $10 or $25. Literally, the whole operation -- I paid for whatever I did -- I think the sum total of what was spent was $3,000 for this enormous effort that was made. And then it had to be done twice because I had thought India should have a grant. But, again pride, and having been hurt by imperialism made India fear the possibility of being under the control of somebody else again after we worked for a gift, India decided it wanted a loan. So we succeeded in getting letters written to Congress by thousands of members of churches and labor unions, they were really the "mass representative" on our committee. They could get their members to write letters and send telegrams. And we got people to testify before the Foreign Relations Committee, also. This part of my India "experience" was quite separate from the personal meaning of Indian art and symbolism for me.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: (Inaudible) a bit now about India after the early fifties and the food. Did you stay friendly with Nehru and go to India often?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes, I went in '50, '52 and '59. In '52 I was asked by the State Department to go on some sort of grant, I forget the name of it, and to lecture about Indo-American cultural relations. Actually, one of my major interests at the time was Indo-American political relations. Things were going badly politically between India and America at that time. It was very difficult for people in Washington to understand Nehru, who was a very proud, very learned, very distinguished person. Truman was president, and for Truman to understand a Nehru was virtually impossible. I kept feeling that since I knew many Indian leaders very well by then, anything I could do to be of help to their being friendly to America might be of value. Nothing worked very well with regard to Indo-American relations, really. They never have been very good and they aren't very good now.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: How well did you know Mrs. Gandhi?

DOROTHY NORMAN: I knew her very well and liked her very much at first and we became great friends. She stayed with me, and we traveled in Europe together and all that. But when she called the emergency in '75, from that moment on I have absolutely had nothing to do with her. I was so upset about what she did. As a matter of fact, I had meetings at my house for Indian dissidents. People who were as upset as I was. I called together Americans to issue a manifesto against the emergency which meant a great deal to the dissenters in India. We heard of it afterwards. Then when the dissenters had to leave India, I had one of the Pandit girls, who was a dissenter, and by then a political writer of great independence stay at our house. I said at one of the meetings, "I used to have meetings for the freedom of India, now I'm having meetings for the freedom of Indians. It's all the same to me. I thoroughly disapprove of what Indira Gandhi is doing." Of course, everyone in the room was equally upset. The Indians present were dissidents. They, again, refused to knuckle under, and certainly didn't want to go to jail for this "cause." It's quite different to go to jail for the freedom of your country, but just for your own freedom, its different. The way people were put in jail was terrible. I broke off my relationship with Indira completely. She knows very well that I had meetings against her and we still have mutual friends in India. I know she knows how I feel. I simply can't countenance anything she has done. I just hope she won't be prime minister again, but she will be. There is more than a possibility, of course. The first leaders in India and the U.S. were very great and marvelous. Now people have to go through a political process that is very different from the way the first leadership of a free country was elected. But I never have had an experience like this.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: A very disappointing one.

DOROTHY NORMAN: Indira's actions have been so startling. I don't understand them.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Well, should we get back to -- this sort of covers your relationship with India as to the political situation. What about the effect -- you first had knowledge of Indian art and Indian culture -- had on you in the way you thought about --

DOROTHY NORMAN: Well, may I say first that Nehru himself became of such interest to me; I felt very much about him, although very, very differently from the way I felt about Coomaraswamy. I felt that Nehru's writings were very, very great, but that they were not in any chronological order that could make sense to a young reader. There was no logical sequence of events that ever had been put together. So I did edit and write

commentary for a two volume edition on Nehru. That was, I think, in '63.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: 1965?

DOROTHY NORMAN: '65, yes.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Nehru, the First 60 Years.

DOROTHY NORMAN: That's right. I did not agree with certain aspects of his foreign policy and I did not like Krishna Menon. That was one thing I found it difficult to understand. I was going to do the volumes up to '59 but then I decided to do the first 60 years only, which were so great. There were too many documents that were still secret so I felt there was no point in writing about anything after 1950. As for art -- Coomaraswamy died in '47. I met, in India, in 1950, the woman who is probably the greatest writer and interpreter of Indian art since Coomaraswamy. Her name is Stella Kramrisch, Dr. Kramrisch. She was invited, just after I came back from India in '50, to the University of Pennsylvania and to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. I found that she was even more knowledgeable in some ways than Coomaraswamy, about both art and myth, symbolism, tradition. I continue to find her more knowledgeable than anyone else, except Coomaraswamy.

DOROTHY NORMAN: Dr. Kramrisch and I became great friends. I have learned a great deal from her. I wrote about her when I came back from India, that is, I wrote an interview I had with her, and then it was published. I wrote about Indian art, to some extent. And it played a great role in my understanding of symbols and traditional art. So that when I wrote about The Hero, my friendship with Natacha Rombova and with Stella Kramrisch and Richard Ettinghausen (who unfortunately died recently) and with other experts in the field, played a great role in my life. They were all very helpful too, when I was preparing The Heroic Encounter

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Did the book The Hero which was published in '69, grow out of The Heroic Encounter?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes, it did.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Which was done in 1958.

DOROTHY NORMAN: That's right.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: In an exhibition you did for Marian Willard.

DOROTHY NORMAN: And the American Federation of Art.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: And the American Federation of Art, yes.

DOROTHY NORMAN: The exhibition travelled for a couple of years.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Did you want to talk about that exhibition, how you got the idea and --

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes. I had been in India twice. And I had been in Egypt and Greece and so forth on my first trip to the East in 1950, and in Turkey and various other countries in '52. Then I went to Europe in '54, and I attended the Jungian Eranos conference. The Eranos conference in Ascona was Jungian in its basic outlook, but included other facets or interpretation of symbols. There I met Eric Nuemann, a great disciple of Jung and who wrote "The Great Mother" and "The Origins and History of Consciousness." Also John Layard who wrote about primitive civilization and Eliade[?] and many of the great experts on different aspects of symbolism, myth and tradition. That was in '54. I went to the Conference again in '58. Dr. Suzuki was there, too. I had come to know him in New York, and his interpretation of the Zin Ten oxherding series made a great impression on me. I'd also learned so much about Egypt from Natacha and about Indian from both Coomaraswamy and Kramrisch.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: I don't think we've talked on the tape about Natacha.

DOROTHY NORMAN: No, I started to talk about her.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Let me change the tape before we continue.

DOROTHY NORMAN: Right.

DOROTHY NORMAN: One day I said to myself, I cannot give the Stieglitzes I have to the Steichen Center. I have nothing against Steichen as such, but I could not give the work of such a great master to the Steichen Center. I knew the people at the Met, but they did little about the photographs they had. They never showed them; they were in the basement. I went to see them.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: (Inaudible)

DOROTHY NORMAN: Now, of course, photography is "in," so many museums do things to promote photography. But way back then they didn't do much. I thought, I come from Philadelphia, the Arensberg Collection is there, the Duchamps are going there, the Gallatin Collection is there and Zigrosser prepared an intelligent Stieglitz show in 1944. If Evan Turner understands the difference between Stieglitz and everyone else in the photographic world, and if he will establish a Stieglitz Center and call it the Alfred Stieglitz Center, and establish great exhibitions of photography, and show photographs with works in other mediums, I will give my Stieglitz and other photographs to the Philadelphia Museum. It was just a gamble that he would understand. So I called him up --

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: When was this, in the early '60s?

DOROTHY NORMAN: It was in the '60s, yes. (Photography was not in at the time.) Anyway, Turner came over to see me, he looked around the room --I had many more photographs there then, than now, of course. I've given most of them -- in fact, I've given almost everything except what's on the walls to Philadelphia already, and the rest will go to them. I've talked to the children about all this and they are willing for me to do this. And Turner just understood at once. And I knew he did. I mean, he had an inner enthusiasm and -- I don't know, a "brain" was working the whole time, and he was understanding. And so I did it, and he did it.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Terrific.

DOROTHY NORMAN: And now the new center is built -- the space is finished and he's no longer there. That makes me sad.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: (Inaudible) the physical part of the museum called the Alfred Stieglitz Center exists.

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes, and --

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: That was just finished recently?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes, it was just finished. Turner asked me who should be the consultant for it and do the photographic exhibitions at the museums. I said Michael Hoffman, who does Aperture. This was agreed upon, although he wasn't a museum person. And he began to do the most splendid exhibitions, not of Stieglitz, but of others. And then all the other museums began to have more good photography exhibits.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: And not --

DOROTHY NORMAN: Whether it was the right thing to do, I don't know, but I'm sure it's as right as anything else I could have done. It was logical.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Is it a surprise to you that this surge of interest in photography is, as you stated, "in" now?

DOROTHY NORMAN: You know, it's very much like what I said about everything really happening before the public awakens to it. When I saw Stieglitz' work and Strand's, and then began to see Ansel Adams and other things, I felt it was healthy.

DOROTHY NORMAN: Before I went to India in 1950, Alfred Salmony, who was a great scholar on Chinese art as well as Indian art, and Mrs. Coomaraswamy both told me to make a special effort to look up Stella Kramrisch when I went to India. And, while I was in India, I met the archeology people at the top, at the National Museum and so forth -- and they were all extremely well informed. But they were not Coomaraswamy, and did not have the scope of vision about symbolism that he had had. When I got to Calcutta, which is where I understood Dr. Kramrisch was, although I was staying at Government Housing and had all the help possible to look her up, it was very difficult to locate her. Through the museum, we finally found her home address. We drove for miles around Calcutta in one of the poorest sections of the district, near the airport. It was impossible to find where she lived. Finally, we went into practically a jungle of orchids which was very mysterious and beautiful, but one scarcely expected to find a house in this district -- but we drove on, and we finally came to a little stone house -- it was very hot -- and indeed, it was the home of Dr. Stella Kramrisch. She was on the second floor. As one went into this very cool, wonderful little stone house, there was Stella Kramrisch. Her apartment was so absolutely beautiful, it was unlike anything else I had seen in India. Everybody had, in a sense, a kind of English house with English furniture, except one or two artists whom I had met, who lived in Benares, and with whom I stayed there. One of them who was the photographer for Stella Kramrisch's great book on the Hindu temple, about which I knew nothing at that moment. The other was our art historian. I started to ask questions. Dr. Kramrisch was very kind, and answered them. I wrote down what she said, and I was moved for the first time by what she said, and I was moved for the first time by what she said in the same sense in which I'd been moved by Coomaraswamy. Her knowledge was extraordinary, her articulate way of summing up certain essential meanings of traditional art in India, were so marvelous and profound and convincing that I felt it to be one of my most memorable experiences in India. Shortly afterwards, she was invited to come to the University of

Pennsylvania, and to the Philadelphia Museum of Art -- and there, again, there was this tremendous coincidence of her being in Philadelphia where I had grown up, and I had gone to the University Museum and to the university, as a girl, and had of course, gone to the Philadelphia Museum. There, where I was born, was the other really great authority on Indian art. So that everything happened in this most natural and most extraordinarily coincidental, or magic way -- and we have been friends ever since.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: We were going to talk about another person who helped you bring about The Heroic Encounter. That was Natacha Rambova, who you said was Valentino's --

DOROTHY NORMAN: Rudolph Valentino's wife. She was very beautiful -- she looked like an intellectual Garbo, when I first met her.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: When was that?

DOROTHY NORMAN: It was in the mid-forties. It was then that a crucial turning point in my life occurred when I knew that I was not made for public office and politics, nor was I meant to be involved in social welfare work. The arts and writing had been suppressed too long again.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: For a long time.

DOROTHY NORMAN: I had been publishing Twice a Year for almost 10 years, Stieglitz died in '46, I had been doing my column for the Post since '42 and I felt I should not be doing certain of these things any longer. I'd outgrown the need for that kind of education because everything I did was a kind of self education, which I shared in a sense, through Twice a Year, through committees and through writing. But I wanted to do the book on Stieglitz after his death, and that was going to take research into his earlier career, before I'd met him. I wanted the book to be as authentic and as complete as possible a document of the evolution of his career. I wanted to do that book, and I knew that would take time. Symbolism and myths, through my talks with Natacha, in particular, and with Stella Kramrisch were taking on greater and greater meaning for me. When I went to Europe, to the Eramos conferences, certain things began to come together for me, and the myth of the hero seemed to be the myth of the development of each of us. The myth of the hero became for me the story of man's development, our necessary development of the potential within each of us. It became more and more of a personal drama that was translated back and forth for me in terms of myth itself and in terms of what I was going through in terms of the development of my own life. The quest of the heroic aspect of man against all tyranny. I felt that pictures and words could be combined to create an exhibition that would communicate to everyone something in terms of a collective experience that just reading a book separately by oneself wouldn't communicate. Although I wanted to write about the hero, I kept seeing what I wanted to do in terms of images and words together. This evolved into an exhibition because of the feeling that words and pictures have to be merged and that through the messages -- modern and ancient -- one could see how what was involved were both a universal and eternal quest; a quest that had to be undertaken by each generation anew, and by each individual anew. So my idea, which I suggested in the first panel of the exhibition, was something that had to be observed afresh in terms of our universal and eternal problem -- a problem that each of us has to face. We must develop the potential in ourselves and in our civilization against all obstacles presented by the tyrant. So here again, my whole life was coming into focus at a new level. "Civil liberties" was symbolically the fight against the tyrant. It was the fight against censorship, against repression, against everything that would thwart the creative, evolving potential in man. As this theme became, let me say, intensified into a major statement, the pictures and the words began to speak to me, instead of my trying to fit them into what I was thinking about. I said to Stella one day, "Nobody thought this was going to work, nobody gave me any encouragement, they said it's not possible to do this." I stayed away from Natacha, because she said, "Dorothy, this is a terribly subtle and difficult thing to do," and I replied, "All right, Natacha, I have to do it." I said, "I am not going to come to see you during this period. I am going to do this completely on my own." Of course, I did go to see any number of people to check different parts of what I was using and saying -- but I didn't go near Natacha while I was working on The Heroic Encounter. I had talked with Marian Willard, who was very much interested in symbols. We had become great friends. As I talked to her about my ideas, she said she would do the exhibition. I began to design it out here in East Hampton. At the time, Alexy Brodovitch of Harper's Bazaar, who had had such a great influence of the makeup of magazines, became terribly much interested in what I was doing, and he said, "Let me design it for you." That was so extraordinary. I said, "Oh, Alexy, that is wonderful; I have no way of paying you." There he was, the editor of a big and flourishing magazine, and he was offering to design my exhibition for nothing. "I'll do it," he said, "as a labor of love, just as you're doing it as a labor of love." And we sat down, and I started to tell him what I wanted to do. Then he became quite ill, and it was impossible for him to design the exhibition. Somehow, the design of the exhibition became clearer and clearer to me, and I began to lay it out on the floor in East Hampton myself. One section began to flow into another and so the exhibition evolved. I had the photographs I collected blown up, and I had them placed as I felt they should be. Then I decided to make a catalog book of the exhibition, because it was too bad just to let it disappear. The exhibit was going to be distributed by the American Federation of Art. The book is a photograph of the exhibit plus text. When the exhibition was hung at Marian Willard's gallery, I telephoned Natacha and said, "Natacha, would you come to

see the exhibit?" The catalog wasn't ready yet, because I had decided quite late that the exhibition must be made into a permanent thing. I said, "Would you come to see the exhibition before it opens?" She came, and we walked around the room which was quite large, and she read every word, and she looked at every image. We kept going. I didn't ask her any questions. She didn't say anything. I thought, "This is really a trying experience, just agonizing." We got to the last panel, and her eyes filled with tears. She threw her arms around me and said, "Dorothy, you have done it. I congratulate you." She burst into tears and embraced me, which for Natacha was so unusual, it was fantastic. I felt like flying on wings, because it'd been a very difficult thing to do and to get ready on time for the announced date of the exhibition. And now Natacha said everything was right! It was a miracle.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Was this 1957?

DOROTHY NORMAN: '58.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: '58.

DOROTHY NORMAN: Then, that summer, I went to Ascona again, and various people at the conference had seen the book. In fact, one of the greatest disciples of Jung wanted to raise money to bring it over to Switzerland.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: The exhibition?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes. That was a real switch! You know, Americans raise money to bring everything to America, but in Switzerland, nobody ever raised money to bring things over. But it became too complicated, because the exhibit was traveling, and it was booked for two years or more.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Around America for two years?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Can I go back to one thing about Natacha and her influence. How did she become expert in this whole field? I mean was it an interest of hers or was she an expert? I don't know enough about her -- perhaps I should.

DOROTHY NORMAN: I think a book is going to be written about her very soon; in fact, the person who is hoping to do it has come here, and we've had long talks about her life. When she left Valentino in the '20s she already had been doing stage designing and other, call it, work in the arts in terms of design and so forth. She always was interested in myth. She told me the story of her early life. She was brought up in Europe, and went to museums all over the continent. It was hoped that she would become an interior decorator or something of that sort, which her mother had also become. Her mother made a second marriage to Richard Hudnut, the great cosmetic king, and Mrs. Hudnut did a great deal of decorating. I saw her work in Salt Lake City in the museum. Natacha was born in Salt Lake City. Her real name was Winifred -- I think it was Winifred Shaunessey. During her time in Europe, she had certain professors who were interested in Indian symbolism mainly, and she became more and more involved in studying the tradition of Egypt, too, which suited her own temperament perhaps more closely than any other great tradition -- although she was interested in all of them. When I introduced Stella Kramrisch to her after Stella came to America, we had several meetings. A few other people who were interested in symbolism also came to Natacha's talks. She had already become an editor of the Bollingen Foundation series of Egyptian volumes and had made symbolism her special study. She helped edit the great books on Egyptian art that Bollingen published, and she wrote a rather extraordinary piece in one of the volumes -- the book on the mythological papyry of Egypt. She was taken very seriously.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Now I didn't mean to backtrack, but she did become an influence on you.

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes. She was particularly interested in three aspects of symbolism. She was interested in numbers, animals and body parts. Also the symbolism of the signs of the zodiac. There was a feeling among some people that she became rather over-committed to the meaning of the symbolism of numbers. You will find in various traditions that numbers play a great role in the symbolism of the Bible and much else. I mention the Bible because the numbers 12, 7, 40 and various others show up all the time. But the same numbers don't always mean the same thing in all traditions. Her intuition and her knowledge about body part symbolism and animal symbolism was fantastic. She did a great deal of writing about these subjects that has not been published. She went so far into symbolism that I think very few people understand what it is that she was really writing about. But I think eventually some of it will be published. She knew so much, and she translated her knowledge into human terms so that it meant a great deal to me, although I did not use a great deal of the material she went into, because it was not for me. I did not know as much as she did, and also it was hard for me to accept many things that she believed.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: But it was still marvelous to have her reaction to your feelings.

DOROTHY NORMAN: It was marvelous. That's right. Before I did the book, The Hero, she died. Also she had moved out of New York to the country, and she became quite ill. But I saw her before she died, and I saw her at the hospital. But that's another story. The myth of the hero, as I said, meant the release of creative energy in man and opposition to the tyrant. After I did The Heroic Encounter, I could see how it applied to myth after myth. The Heroic Encounter was only one aspect of the myth of the hero.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: And then all of your other thinking about it became, 10 years later, the book, The Hero.

DOROTHY NORMAN: It grew gradually. As I penetrated the meanings of one aspect of the hero, other aspects would suddenly become as clear as day to me, and I couldn't understand why I hadn't seen everything before, but seeing was a process.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: How fantastic. Let's talk about that in our next meeting and go further.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: This is Saturday, June 2nd, William McNaught, talking to Dorothy Norman at her house in East Hampton. This is a continuation of Tape 3, Side 1. When we finished yesterday, we were talking about The Hero. Shall we continue about that?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes. I think that I did mention that after I had understood the labors through which such heroes as Hercules had to go, and after I began to see that what they had to do was fight against tyrannical forces, as well as give up the past that had been outgrown, I began to understand other myths and other labors related to the labors of Hercules and the meaning of Hercules as a heroic figure. I mentioned that Psyche had to go through related trials before she could understand what love really was, what Eros was, what maturity was. She had to go to Hades, to go through hell -- an inner hell -- before she came through and learned what each of us has to learn about love and trust, and lack of envy. I discovered that in all of the labors and struggles of the hero, he is really fighting the demon, the tyrant that is truly within ourselves, as well as in the world. I discovered too that my interest in civil liberties was really at a secular, everyday level in the outer world, preoccupied with precisely the same struggle as the hero has to go through in fighting the tyrant -- it's always the tyrant who destroys one's freedom to grow, to create -- in other words, the tyrant can be censorship or the tyrant can be the status quo that is fighting against labor wanting to improve its status or opportunity in life. And, race discrimination is suppression of someone because of his color, not for any rational reason, and so forth. So that what I had been preoccupied with was the fight against the tyrant in the outer world, and I did not realize when I began to listen to Natacha talk about the heroes of ancient myth that what was being referred to was also our inner struggle. It was simply a counterpart of the outer struggle, and in ignoring our inner struggle or the faults we have as we grow up in ignorance and with a lack of experience, we can't truly understand what we have to do until a crisis arises in our lives. Then, we have to see that we can no longer go on as we have been, because we simply have to outgrow what we have not yet understood, and to give up what was comfortable and easy. We must give up the "mother," give up protection, give up all the things that are given to us, if we're fortunate, during our youth. We have to put them aside and face the world at a new level; with new understanding about what it is that we have to give up inside, as well as in the outer world. Thus the hero became the focus of a preoccupation. I was seeing Natacha and learning much from hearing the myths told in a living way, rather than from an academic or historical point of view. I began to see what was happening inside of me and what it was I was going to have to do to bring about the creative development of my life, instead of continuing my painful struggle against the forces that were trying to push me back into the past I had already outlived and given up. I didn't realize that I would have to make certain decisions and certain sacrifices in order to get on with life and the struggle against being committed to a way of life in which I had been brought up. There was a struggle not to hurt anything around me, but there was another struggle for my own inner growth and, therefore, my own inner survival, this became a new focus for me --and it made clear to me that what I called the "heroic encounter" had to do with the need to fight against everything that was making one cling to the past, to the outgrown past. (That's what incest is really all about in myth.) The Mother Goddess sets the problems that we have to resolve, for the Mother Goddess is both terrible and benign. In her terrible aspect, the Mother Goddess, which is really the great life force in the world, is in one sense the older generation. The older generation has lived, experienced, learned the lessons that we must still learn. But it is telling us what we cannot hear, because we are young. We cannot understand -- we think that the mother (or father) is putting every obstacle in our path, when it is life and ourselves that must be confronted. It is ourselves who are the "problem." We blame our mothers, we blame our fathers for whatever it is we do -- we blame our fate on the outside world, when it really is a question of what we have to go through and what we have to learn. So that as we see the hero learning to face the problems that, let us say, symbolically the Mother Goddess has set, we penetrate the core of all of the great myths. If one thinks about great myths -- whether of Oedipus and his father or Orestes and his mother, or Hercules and the Lion or Hercules and the Agean Stables -- it all has to do with our having to clear up what has gone wrong, what we have done that has gone against the gods. In Greek drama, the hero goes against the laws of the gods. In our world, we go against the tradition of our time, because the traditions of our time are those of a more or less secularized society. This means that we're going against man-made laws. At least we think they are man-made, and therefore we rebel against them, thinking we can change them at will; that we can break all the laws, and nothing will happen to us because we no longer believe that the

wrath of the gods will come down upon us. We see everybody else breaking all the laws too, and think that that's what freedom is. But then we discover that it isn't freedom at all, it's simply that we've made the same blunders that were made by the heroes of ancient times when the laws of the gods were broken. For the gods are within ourselves, our own conscience. So that then the hero has to learn that he must go through all the traditional labors in order to grow and to take responsibility. What shall I say -- make the social order function, and make the individual function. So that it's all tragic, yet it is all the beginning of affirming beyond the tragic, which is what art is about and what myth is about. I discovered in working on The Heroic Encounter, that it dealt with the tyrants that the hero must overcome. I used heroic figures from various traditions. Then the myth of the Great Mother or the great round, was another way of seeing what we must deal with. We see that all of this relates to our own inner development. As I looked at myth, in terms of many civilizations, I found that it boiled down pretty much to the myth of the Great Mother and the myth of the Hero. In one case, our own inner development is involved; in the second instance, we're faced with the great round of life. We begin at birth and end as adults. We become the mother, we become the older generation, and we become what sets the problems that we still have to solve by ourselves anew, at every moment anew. It's all a progressive process. As I did the book, The Hero, as a result of having done The Heroic Encounter, I found again and again that part of the growth of the hero is bound up with the process that involves the "great round" of life. I haven't yet done the Great Round; I did include some of the material for it in The Hero, and some of it will come into the book on which I am working now. But it was extraordinary to find this new kind of depth, these new dimensions added to life. These new perceptions that provided clues about what the purpose of life really is -- in terms of what myths and ancient symbols have always been telling us. At first, I was in great conflict about what was happening in the world of art around me. This created a great problem. I found much that I had felt was marvelous in modern art was beginning to disintegrate. Stieglitz was perhaps the one contemporary artist who understood what the essence of art is. In his works, especially in his work that he called Equivalents, he constantly realized that he was face to face with the conflict in life and the chaos in life, and when there was a point of light in the outer world that was an equivalent of his own mastering the chaos in himself -- the conflict in himself -- he made a portrait of it. By way of a face or cloud or anything he photographed. Stieglitz died at exactly the point when I was beginning to cope with the problem or the solution that is the hero. I moved from my tremendous preoccupation with contemporary art in one way, to the art of all time. I see that certain artists are doing the same thing today. They are trying to cope with precisely the same battle that was evident in ancient art. I include some modern artists in The Hero, and use what contemporary artists have said. In modern or contemporary terms, the same thing is being said today that was being asserted in the myth of the heroes in ancient times. All of this was wonderful, because it brought the past and the present together in a new way for me, and it clarified my feelings about contemporary artists. The one artist after Marin who meant something to me, but I was beginning to know him better and to see more of his work and spend more time with him, was Morris Graves. It may be because he lived in the western part of America that he was nearer to the East than we in the East are. All this made all such words as East and West become meaningless. But we use them for our convenience. Graves was in touch with myth, and I found he had gone to see Coomaraswamy before he went to India. He went to him intuitively to see how he might learn more from India. Coomaraswamy said to him, "When you go to India, what you will learn is that you are Christian." Graves didn't quite understand this at the moment. We discussed it, and we understood exactly what Coomaraswamy meant. In one of my first talks with Coomaraswamy he said to me, "You can neither be a Protestant nor can you be a convert --because all great traditions are one. It is just a question of where you stand on the river of life. You can't go from one tradition to another, because if you really understand they are all one. Therefore, to be converted is impossible; to be a Protestant is impossible. If your tradition has run down, become diluted, become useless, then you have to purify it from within." That is what Coomaraswamy had begun to teach me back in 1929 when I wasn't ready to hear him. Yet The Hero was closely related to The Dance of Siva which was where I had begun in my reading about myth.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: I think it'd be interesting. You said that before you had --

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes, I read Coomaraswamy in '28, and I didn't meet Natacha until '46. But I suppose the reason Coomaraswamy so interested me was that he challenged every belief I had at that time. Then as I grew older, I began to understand that what had attracted me about The Dance of Siva was really just a beginning of understanding what life was all about. But, as I grew through experience, I began to see much more of its content and meaning -- and I felt Coomaraswamy's The Dance of Siva was great because as I became more involved with having to understand myth, I understood that The Dance of Siva was a very, very typical myth. When I say "typical" I mean that it was part of the great tradition of which the myth of the hero is a part, and The Dance of Siva is a part. As a matter of fact, I think it was Lewis Mumford who told me, or I read it, that Sir Patrick Geddes, the great pioneer of modern architecture, said that according to his way of thinking (he was an early mentor of Mumford), "When the building goes up, the institution goes down." I agree, because when anything becomes rigidified and ism-ed and doctrined, it loses all of its meaning for me. I can identify with the beginnings of all of the great religions or the purifications of decadent religions -- Christ was a purification of what he found, just as the Buddha was a purification of Hinduism and so forth. The beginnings are always the birth of the hero -- because they really are the birth of a release of creative energy, because the hero has to go

against the rigidified and the tyrant. I don't know whether you want me to talk about this any more or whether we should go back to --

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Well, I wondered if you feel you have covered how all the myths of the hero and your writing on The Heroic Encounter sprang from what you call the crisis in your own life -- can you talk about that?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes, because I think it's curious -- Suzuki told me that he went to Zen because of a crisis in his life, and he said, "Zen can have no meaning to anyone until he is at a point of crisis." And various people have said similar things to me. I know that this happened to me: that it was not until my life was in a state of crisis because I had to do what was right for me and I was being stopped from doing it. Maybe it's the artist in people --I hate to call it the artist, because it sounds pretentious. But I think there are certain laws that artists in life have to break or have to part with. I think freedom is not freedom to go out and kill somebody, but freedom is becoming mature or creative in one's own life in the way one has to. I think that there is so much talk today about freedom for women or freedom for this or freedom for that. I don't believe that freedom is different for one person or another, in terms of our creative inner life. Whether you are a mother or a painter or writer or architect or whatever. It doesn't matter. It's a question of how you can cope with your life, and at the same time, add to it in some way that serves others. I think that freedom doesn't just mean freedom for yourself; it means producing some atmosphere, some form, some way of life that will release others -- whether it's the person you love or if it's your children or whether it's the person who passes you on the street and you talk to him or her for five minutes. Something goes out from you that is positive and that produces something positive in anyone with whom you are in contact. So that I won't deal with that any more because I think that is the essence of being alive. I mean, we heard about existentialism for a long time in the late forties, about how we're all alone. We're not alone -- we're just one fragment of the totality, and anything we do affects everybody, or maybe just one other person, it doesn't matter. But it can't be just one's own self one is preoccupied with. So that even when the artist says, "I paint for myself" -- I mean some artists say that -- that is all right in terms of the measure of what the artist means. But if something is true for you, it will be true for others -- it will be of creative value. So that if I wanted to sum up what I mean by the myth of the hero and by the crisis in my own life, they had to do with growing beyond the values I had held as a young person. I rebelled against being pressed back into a mold that I had already outlived. I couldn't do it anymore. It was like a slow murder being committed of my inner life, and my inner life took over -- and that was the crisis. The having to face those around me.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: When was this?

DOROTHY NORMAN: This was in the mid-forties. It happened for totally uncontrollable reasons. As I think many things happen in our lives. We don't know what is happening because we don't want to admit that it is happening, but we really do know they are happening. We don't know what to call it. Society, when I was growing up, had many prohibitions against things that today are permitted -- are part of the mores of our civilization. That wasn't true when I was growing up. And when I did the Myth of the Hero, although it's an age old myth with age old connotations, we still as a civilization are too much involved in the modern movement to be in touch with such a myth and its meaning. I think by now people are much more open to the great myths; it isn't only through interest in archeology. I think the interest in archeology is a kind of intuitive need of this time for what is found in the digs, what is involved in the meaning of the work that is unearthed in the digs that everybody wants to be a part of -- without knowing, I think, what it is they're going to find. The crisis in my life was like a gift, really, if one looks at it from other than a purely personal level. And crisis is hell to go through -- but in myth, it's curious, when the hero or heroine is three quarters of the way through the labors he or she has to perform, it's very interesting that in almost all myths, just before the end, something comes along to help the hero or the heroine. If you think about fairy tales or myths, in almost all of them, at a certain point along the way, when an effort has been made, something comes along as though to help the hero perform the final act he must undergo. I think that the terribleness of the crisis some people have to go through is terrifying. The crisis itself is knowing what the crisis is. This the beginning of understanding -- because we never understand anything fully -- but I think the beginning of understanding is the gift that helps us pull through the crisis. Knowing what it is we have to do is itself a kind of clarity that we're looking for. So that to leave the crisis for a moment and just say perhaps a little more in a more concentrated way about what I think the myth of the hero is really all about. It is the growth of ourselves to a point where we not only recognize the tyrant outside, but we are ready to recognize the tyrant or the shadow, as it was been called, in ourselves, as well as the world. And we have to transcend it. It is known that this is going to happen by anybody who is mature, but youth never sees it. For example, if you take the myth of Christ, if you take it as a myth, rather than as a revealed religion or in India if you consider the myth of Drishna, who is a great heroic, mythical figure in India, just as the birth of Christ has been prophesized as the one who will lift the burdens of the earth, so the evil King Kansa in India is told that one will be born who will lift the burdens of the earth that have become too terrible to bear. So that King Herod has all the children -- all the babies -- slaughtered because he won't recognize Jesus. The artist is even the swifter of eye, so in myths, in the great works of art of the whole world, the story teller is always swifter of eye than anyone else. So the Christ is foretold, the birth of Christ is foretold, just as the birth of Krishna is foretold and evil King Kansa kills the newborn, just as does Herod.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: William McNaught talking to Dorothy Norman on June 2, 1979 at East Hampton. This is Tape 3, side 2.

DOROTHY NORMAN: So that when the Christ child is born and Krishna is born, subterfuges have to be gone through so that the true hero is not killed, because the tyrant cannot recognize which of these children he's slaying is the hero, because he is insensitive and he is incapable of recognizing who is the hero. Just as in modern art -- the people who were the great masters were never recognized at first, they were always fought against. And then they became classics very quickly, so that when Krishna was born, a subterfuge is waged so that he is exchanged for another infant so that he can live. And when the Christ child is born, he has to be taken to Egypt so that he won't be killed. But the tyrant is outwitted by the hero from the very beginning, because the tyrant is the past that has to be gotten rid of. And the health of a society is renewed whether it happens to be by way of recognition of the modern artist as the true leader or guide of his time, or whether it is a mythological hero, it doesn't matter. It's all the same story and all the same event. Krishna and the Christ child both become what they were supposed to be. They were supposed to lift the burdens of the earth that had become too overwhelmingly trying. And society had to renew itself; they were the great renewers. I found that the myth of the hero was in effect, the history of civilization. When a Hitler comes, it means that the barbarism that has besieged a particular civilization has to be wiped out --and whether we are true heroes when we have wiped out Hitler, we can't say. We don't see a perfect world right now, and we won World War II. But that deed, apparently, had to be done. And similar deeds must be done at each moment anew. I said that the other great myth that runs through all of civilization was the myth of the Great Mother --whatever you call it, it doesn't matter. If you call it the dance of Siva, it's just as appropriate and just as correct as to call it the Great Mother, because when you think of what the dance of Siva is, it's a dance that goes through creation, preservation and destruction -- and it comes out as a great round. There is a demon yet unborn, an infant, at the foot of Siva. There is the great round with the element of fire, which is the element of energy and of life, they symbolize the eternal struggle that surrounds Siva in his dance. And the demon infant, the unborn infant at the base of the figure of Siva -- in the iconography of the dance of Siva -- is really forgetfulness or what has not yet been born. It is what has not yet reached consciousness. It is the potential in life, and because Siva is the great creative force, as he makes the great round from what is healthy and creative, to what is destructive, the touch of his foot revives the fire and the energy of life. He revivifies the world. At the moment he touches the unborn infant or a civilization that has become decadent and has not yet been revitalized, the infant and tradition are reborn. Forgetfulness of tradition is the little demon's ignorance. For in India ignorance is considered the greatest sin. As the great god Siva retouches the life process back into real life, the circle begins again. The creative process in life is liberated to begin again. So that whenever anything becomes decadent -- when society becomes decadent, when we become decadent -- either we die and there is a negation of life, or a crisis -- split second in which life in its creative aspects is reborn. That rebirth is what the great god is, what the hero is, as symbol. So, it is all one process and the discovery of this, the penetration of this in my own life, and in the life of all society -- was a tremendous moment for me.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: It culminated in the publication of your book, The Hero.

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Now the decade of the sixties was extraordinary in terms of your publications of various things that had touched your life -- because in the book on Alfred Stieglitz in 1960, the book on Nehru in 1965, and then The Hero in 70 --

DOROTHY NORMAN: That's right, and the first aspect of that was The Heroic Encounter, just before, in '58.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: And then you did the other book on Stieglitz.

DOROTHY NORMAN: While I was doing The Hero, put aside the Stieglitz, the big Stieglitz that I had been working on, I had to get some distance from it before I could complete it. I had done all my research and all that. But there was something -- I suppose I needed to go through a crisis and understand what I'd been living through in the work on The Hero, in order to be ready to complete the Stieglitz book, which had been in me the whole time.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: And that was published in 1973.

DOROTHY NORMAN: That's right.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Now of other thing that you published -- you mentioned earlier John Marin's letters, a group of which were edited by Seligmann and published by Stieglitz in 1931. You did a book on the selected writings of John Marin in 1949.

DOROTHY NORMAN: That is right.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: As Marin was the first modern American artist that caught your eye, and as you did this

book in '49, can we talk a bit about John Marin and how well you knew him and how you came to publish his writings, or edit his writings in 1949?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Well, since he was, as you say, the first American artist other than Stieglitz who quickened me, who aroused my interest immediately -- I had already met him, but we did not say a word to one another. At our first meeting, it was rather wonderful --we just looked at one another and smiled, and I knew not to say anything. There was something about that face of Marin's which has been much photographed -- I know, I've photographed it myself. Stieglitz made, of course great portraits of him. He had an extraordinary face. It was the face of an outdoor man, a person who was in touch with nature but who also loved New York, who loved the city, loved the energy, loved the life of the city -- but he was essentially an outdoor man. As I began to take walks with him in New York and he talked about architecture, one of the first things he said to me was that the reason one didn't fall in love with the Empire State Building was because the top of it was rounded -- at that time, it was rounded. He said, no great mountain height comes to a rounded apex; it comes to a point. And it can't satisfy you to see a rounded tall building. His perception of why a boat was a good boat, why a chair was a good chair, why a work of art was a good work of art, always came back to some great natural principle. So that it was quite wonderful to be with him. He never spoke a non-essential word. Everything he said was somehow cryptic, it was spoken in some cryptic language -- if you didn't get the clue to the rather special language, I could see people just -- either Marin would keep quiet, or people would be mystified, and if you had a clue, every word he uttered was the work of an artist. There was no one to whom he could write his wonderful letters, really, except to Stieglitz because there was some unspoken great bond in terms of art and a whole way of life, that Stieglitz understood from the very beginning of seeing Marin's work. He left Marin free to develop the way he had to develop. And, as I mentioned, when I began to put the written material in order in Stieglitz's files, I was allowed to read everything -- and I read the Marin letters way back in 1930. I felt they should be published, and at that time, of course, I was by no means ready to edit them. And Herbert Seligmann who came to the Intimate Gallery and then to the Place for several years quite regularly -- Stieglitz asked him to edit the letters, and Stieglitz published them. By 1949, of course, Stieglitz was dead, and there were many writings of Marin's that had been done in the interval between '31 and '49. A publisher came to me and asked me whether I would edit a book of what Marin had written, both before the book of letters which was not copyrighted -- Stieglitz never copyrighted anything --and after. I was very happy to do the book, and I included not only letters he had written since '31 and before, but other writings for catalogs and publications that had come out in the interim. I did an introduction which traces the evolution of Marin's life, which had not been done in any publication up to that time.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: And he cooperated?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Oh yes, thoroughly. We were very great friends, and after Stieglitz died, O'Keeffe and Marin wanted to keep an American Place going, so I continued to take out the lease for it and continued to be the go-between in that, but they only did that for a few years. But during that period, I had a lot of correspondence myself with Marin, who was in Maine part of the time and I was on Cape Cod. I have quite a number of letters from Marin that I didn't put in the book, and that I received since the book, too. But we had become great friends, and he remained in that period the painter to whom I felt most closely related. He was so perceptive about the different elements of nature, he spoke of this in his writings.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Do you think that since Marin, the painter that you feel closest to is Morris Graves?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes. Graves is an artist whose work has really moved me.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Where did you meet him? Did you meet him through Marian Willard?

DOROTHY NORMAN: I met him in the fifties. I didn't meet him in the forties -- I saw his work first at the Marian Willard Gallery in the forties, and I bought a bird. His work was very little bought at that time and very little known, but I loved it. I didn't meet him until the late 50s. I had invited Marian Willard Johnson and her husband Dan Johnson to dinner and Marian asked whether she might bring Morris Graves, and I said, of course. When he walked in -- since I had never met him but had loved his paintings for so many years, I said to him, "You actually exist! It's wonderful." And he was very, very beautiful and had a very sensitive face. He didn't speak very much that first evening. But I felt a great rapport with him. And then I began to have pneumonia and bronchitis and flu every winter until my doctor insisted that I go to a warm place. By then, I knew Morris' work much better, of course, and I knew him much better, and John Cage, whom I had known for some years, had been asked to write the text for a book that the Drawing Society was publishing on Graves' work. We all were talking, and it was decided that we would all go to Cuermavaca. I had to take a house, and they -- John Cage, Morris Graves and Marian Willard -- visited me. We all sort of worked on the book, and it was finished. John Cage finished the text, and we all listened to Morris who was trying to put into words a number of things he had to write for the book about the different paintings. It was a marvelous period, and we all cooperated and we were all in sympathy with what Morris and John were doing. It became a habit -- we all spent the winter together for several years in Cuernavaca. It was really quite marvelous. Then the altitude became too high for me, and I couldn't go back.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: How had you first met John Cage?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Oh, I suppose in the thirties or early forties. He told me that Edwin Denby brought him to a party at our house -- Edwin Denby was perhaps the best dance critic of the period. John said Edwin Denby had brought him to a party at the house, and we became immediate friends. We both attended Dr. Suzuki's lectures at Columbia, and we used to drive down in the same taxi. But long before that, he had invited me to come to hear his prepared piano one evening at his beautiful apartment on the East River --on Monroe Street and the river. I was very much interested, always, in modern music, and I knew Copland and Cage and the whole group of composers -- I met Ernest Bloch with Stieglitz because Bloch had been a great fan of Stieglitz's photographs. And when I did the music issue for Twice a Year I asked Bloch to contribute to it, and I had various pieces about Varese in Twice a Year also. But I saw more of Cage, beginning in the period in which we were all at Cuernavaca, although I had seen him before. We became great friends. He's come out here. As I say, we came back to Cuernavaca every year until I couldn't go there anymore, and there's no place like Cuernavaca in America. It's kind of an international place, it was really quite marvelous; there were extremely interesting individuals there.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: We mentioned Marin and Graves, both of whom you knew well, and you owned -- I hesitate to say you collected their work.

DOROTHY NORMAN: No, I know.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: You mentioned Lachaise, but did you know him well?

DOROTHY NORMAN: I knew him. I can't say I knew him well. I came to know his wife much better. He died, as I mentioned, young. But I did see quite a lot of Madame Lachaise, and I found her extremely beautiful -- I photographed her quite a lot, and we had long talks. This was after Lachaise's death. I'll tell you one rather marvelous story. The first time the Lachaises invited us for dinner was shortly after I had bought his sculpture. The other sculpture I own I bought from Madame Lachaise after Lachaise and Stieglitz were no longer alive. Shortly after I bought the first Lachaise, they invited my husband and myself to dinner. I was having a great struggle, as I mentioned, in being able to buy works of art that I loved. I explained what a terrible struggle I had to buy works of art, that I had been offered a mink coat, I had been offered pearls, and I didn't want them --but if only someone had offered me works of art -- and Madame Lachaise -- remember they were quite poor at that time -- and Lachaise really worked under dreadful conditions in his cold studio. I thought of them being in great need of money, which is one of the reasons I bought the figurine, the other reason being that I loved it. At that time most artists were poor, or at least in need of money --not all, but the ones around Stieglitz, except for Demuth, yet he, too, needed it. But I told of my terrible problem in not being allowed to buy art, but being offered mink coats and so forth, and Madame Lachaise looked at me, quizzically, and said, "My dear child, if I were to be offered an ermine wrap or a Matisse, believe me I would take the ermine wrap!" I was so startled, it took me quite a while to get over that.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Which photographers did you know best? We talked of Strand. Were there others who were working in your immediate circle or whom you knew well?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Minor White, after Stieglitz died, asked me to do the Stieglitz book for Aperture -- well, it wasn't a book -- Duall, Sloan and Pierce published it as a book after I did it for Aperture. What was wonderful -- he was one of the best editors I've ever worked with. I knew Minor White very well, but not until after Stieglitz died. Actually, I didn't know any other photographers while Stieglitz was alive, because I saw Strand and Stieglitz sort of naturally, in my daily work and life. And it's curious -- that whole group -- well, I knew Ansel Adams, that is true, and I knew Eliot Porter during the Stieglitz days because he exhibited them, and we became friends, and particularly, I knew Ansel Adams very well, beginning in the thirties. I knew Steichen and did the captions for his This Family of Man. But other than that, at that time, Walker Evans appeared and George Platt Lynes -- but they were in a very different tradition. It wasn't until Henri Cartier Bresson came over from Europe that we became friends. I really loved his work. We became great friends, he and his wife too, who is partly Indonesian, Elly. We became great friends -- they came up to visit us at Woods Hole and then in the fifties when I started going to Europe, I saw a great deal of them, I consider Henri, as I consider Ansel and Minor, really great friends.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: But none of these -- well particularly now, you mentioned the fifties and photography. But none of them could be seen as an influence on your work.

DOROTHY NORMAN: Nobody was an influence except Stieglitz, and as I said to you, I was careful not to photograph what he did, and my photographs took on a different cast, really. I think you could tell I was influenced by Stieglitz, but the subject matter is very different, also the portraits, very different.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Speaking of photography in the fifties, did the captions --

DOROTHY NORMAN: For the Family of Man --

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: How did that happen?

DOROTHY NORMAN: I seldom saw Stiechen while Stieglitz was alive because he didn't come around after he went to work for Vogue and the whole period of his doing advertising and so forth. He did come in to an American Place once or twice. I did see him there. I had met him when I was raising the Place rent fund too. He was one of the people I went to -- I didn't know him. And he did not contribute to the rent fund although he told me he would do anything in the world for Alfred Stieglitz, but nothing for the artists he showed. Which was odd, because he had introduced Marin to Stieglitz originally.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Where was that?

DOROTHY NORMAN: In Paris, originally. Stieglitz had already given Marin a show, but he met Marin with Steichen. I saw Steichen at Stieglitz' funeral and we went to Marin's funeral together. By then he had gotten over a sense of guilt, because he went to work for an advertising company, and what he did was so different from the work that had aroused Stieglitz' original interest in him. Also, it was a real problem for him. He had to make a living, and he was a very good photographer; he was probably one of the best commercial photographers who ever lived. I mean, his work was outstanding, but it was in a different tradition. He felt edgy about Stieglitz, but he never lost his respect and love for the man. I met him a couple of times at An American Place, and I photographed him and Stieglitz together. He came in, he said to see Marin, and the Marins weren't up, so Stieglitz took out boxes of Marins to look through, and I photographed the two men. Stielitz was very old at that time, and not well. He died shortly after. The photographs are extremely revealing. After Stieglitz died, I went to his funeral, of course, and as I walked up to Campbell's -- it was a strange day, terrible. I'm sure I was weeping. As I came to the corner, Stiechen got out of a cab with a hugh pine branch -- he had brought branches and leaves to put in a big brass bowl at 291, and now he came with this great pine bow, which was marvelous, somehow, you know, instead of a bunch of flowers, and he threw his arms around me and we just stood at the corner, weeping. That somehow brought us close and after Stieglitz' death, Steichen began to come to see me, and we had long talks, and I asked him, of course, about the early days. In any event, I went to India in '50, and again in '52, and in '52 Steichen was beginning to think about the Family of Man. We had talks about it. I begged him to make it a horizontal show and not a vertical one; that is, to show how universal certain themes were, not to do this country and then that country. He said that this had a great effect on him and he wanted to record it, but he never did, and I'm not sure that I had much of an effect, although he said I did. He asked me to keep an eye out for good photographs for the exhibition while I was traveling -- which I did, and somebody who photographed India had some photographs in the show, and that was all I found. I didn't have time to find anything that everybody didn't know. Shortly before the exhibition -- as a matter of fact, one month before the exhibition -- Steichen telephoned me in a panic, and said we're putting up the photographs in sections, and it's dead. The exhibition needs words to pull it all together. Will you do the captions? I can't tell you how much I had to do at that point, how many deadlines, how many things I had to do -- I had just come home from Europe, my mother was ill, my daughter-in-law was ill, and I had many commitments. He said, "I'm afraid it's just a month you have. " And I said, "What do you mean, captions? I don't know captions for what. We've talked about the themes, but I don't understand what you mean now exactly." So he said, "Come over to the museum." So I went over and saw small, glossy copy prints of the prints to be used. Steichen said, "We want to start with creation" -- you know, 'Let there be Light,'" and I said, "Well, we have the caption for that, all right!" And then we came to Love, and I said, "That would have to be the end of Ulysses" -- its "Yes, yes, yes." But Steichen said, "Oh, we can't use that," and several people who were standing there said, "Oh, we can't use that!" I replied, "Well, you asked me to do the captions --that's what I would do, so you'd better know what I would do." I went around looking at the copy prints and off the top of my head I knew certain things that would fit. But as we went around, I knew that I would have to find many other quotations. So I really worked at night on the captions. And I was ready ahead of time. Which I couldn't quite believe. I went to the exhibition several times, and I could hear people saying the Joyce quote "Yes, yes, yes" more than any others and I was told that that particular quotation somehow had more effect on people than anything else, which made me so happy, because I think it's one of the great affirmations of love in all literature. Nobody knew the show would be such a success, so popular. Then, of course, Steichen was invited to bring the show to India and Russia, and he said, "Girl, you'll have to go with me," and so forth. But then in the end, he took Carl Sandburg. Sandburg played his guitar.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: So you didn't go?

DOROTHY NORMAN: No. Things never were quite what they were said to be. It was curious. I wrote a piece for Aperture -- they asked me to write a piece about working with Steichen on The Family Of Man, and having worked with Stieglitz. It was really fantastic, the difference between working with the two men. I put it down in that article. I saw Steichen quite a lot after that for a while. I was asked to come to his funeral and to his house. There was a gathering of mainly photographers.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: You mentioned briefly Hartley. Did you know him?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Oh yes, I knew him quite well. But I had a problem with Hartley. First of all, I thought his

writing was quite marvelous -- I've printed some of it -- published some of it in Twice a Year, and I thought he wrote very well indeed. He had problems about his art and about his life -- he always had a feeling that Marin and O'Keeffe were favored by Stieglitz over himself, which was not the way things happened at An American Place. People walked in to the Place because they wanted to, not because Stieglitz pulled them in. They bought pictures not because Stieglitz tried to sell them, for he made it as hard as possible to buy a picture. He was always more interested in proving something about the sacredness of art, and always felt that people didn't really understand the need to support artists and have faith in them. But Hartley felt that Stieglitz favored Marin and O'Keeffe. Even though the point was that the public favored them; Stieglitz had nothing to do with it. So Hartley often tried to show his work at other places, other galleries, which made it impossible for Stieglitz, because if you show at one gallery and you charge one price for your things at one gallery, and somebody else is working to get a higher price for you, which Stieglitz was always trying to do, then people would be more apt to buy a Hartley someplace else because they could get it more cheaply. This was not Stieglitz' way of operating. He really was dedicated to getting the most for the artist. But Hartley would come into An American Place every day he was in New York. One day he said to me, "This is the only place I feel at home." I never had the same kind of relationship with Hartley I did with Marin. But we always got on very well.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: What about Demuth?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Well, Demuth died in '35. I photographed him. I loved his work, but it was very expensive. I never could buy the ones I cared about. I liked his watercolors most. I loved Demuth -- but it was only really after An American Place was founded that I saw more of him than I had during the Intimate Gallery days, although that was where I met him. I liked his work. As I said, I liked his work and Marin's and Stieglitz' at that time (of people at The American Place) most. And I liked Strand's work and Lachaise's. But I never really knew Demuth terribly well.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: We talked about your going to the Barnes Foundation when you were young and how that opened, in a sense, the world of modern art to you. But we didn't talk about Mr. Barnes.

DOROTHY NORMAN: Well, Dr. Barnes, when I was a student, came into our classes very seldom, and when he did he struck me as a portly, rather frightening man. He was more apt to stop before a painting he didn't like, which he said he had there to show what he didn't like. That is what I remember most about meeting him or seeing him at that time. I didn't really know him when I was young. In the years after I took the classes there, you weren't allowed to come to the Barnes Foundation again, unless you came during a lecture at which you were told how to see the pictures -- even if you had been a student. I came upon a letter from the Barnes Foundation telling me I could come on a certain day - this was after I had moved to New York. I couldn't come that day, so at that time I didn't see the work again for some years. I met Barnes at Stieglitz' An American Place at one point when he bought a picture and then returned it. So it was not a happy relationship between Barnes and Stieglitz, I thought. But when I did the Stieglitz Memorial Portfolio, which I did after Stieglitz death, I thought I should write to Barnes and let him contribute to the portfolio, which contained Stieglitz' pictures and what anybody wanted to write whom I invited, or who knew I was doing it and voluntarily sent in contributions. When I wrote to people -- what I thought was a logical list -- Barnes' contribution to the portfolio was the first one that came in, and it was completely laudatory. He said it was Stieglitz who introduced modern art to America, not himself. It was a most generous and most loving kind of tribute. I was so glad I had written to him. Then, shortly after that, a student who knew my son came to us in Woods Hole and said he had seen the work of an artist in Germany who had hidden out during the war, and who had known Rudolph Steiner and had been a student of his and of Klee. The boy said he was totally unknown. I was working for the New York Post at that time. I though it would be fine to write an article about such a man, who was unknown, who had been anti-Hitler, who had hidden, and who was in a tradition that I admired. So I asked, "Where could I see the paintings, or how could I get in touch with the artist?" And the young man said a GI had gotten hold of some of the paintings and that he had given them to Dr. Barnes to look at. I thought, well, how extraordinary -- I ought to at least try to get in touch with Dr. Barnes and see if I could see them. So I wrote a note, thinking nothing will come of this. But I have the correspondence that followed, and he wrote back and said I should come at a certain time, and gave me his private number and said he would have me met if I would let him know the train I was taking. It was all most friendly. I went over, and Dr. Barnes took me around the whole place by himself, and we sat and talked for hours and I looked at the German's paintings -- he got them all out for me. I didn't think they were that extraordinary, but I thought they were worth a story, because the painter obviously a talented man, and he had gone through a lot. So I said to Barnes that I would like to write a piece about the artist and how could I get information about him? He said that Alltripp -- that was his name -- was coming over to America soon and he would advise me to wait until he came so that I could get the story at first hand. I should interview him for the piece when he came. Barnes couldn't have been more friendly. I mentioned this to the editor of the Post, and it was the only thing I ever mentioned that they said was not interesting! That so infuriated me -- I was having lunch with Allene Talmey, the feature editor of Vogue, and I told her what the feature editor of the Post had said to me. She said, "I'll publish the piece in Vogue." I said, "Well, I haven't written it yet, he hasn't arrived yet." Then she said, "Be sure to give it to me." So I interviewed Alltripp when he came, and I gave her what I wrote. Then she said, "Fine, we'll do reproductions of his work, too." Then she said, "Why doesn't Vogue do a big story about the whole Barnes Foundation?" No

magazine has been permitted to do a story. She had never been at the Barnes Foundation -- she had wanted to go but couldn't. So I saw this as helping Alltripp and my story was written, and she had it. So I said, "Well --

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: You called Dr. Barnes about it, then?

DOROTHY NORMAN: I suggested Allene's idea to him. He blew up! "I wouldn't let anybody from any magazine in the country come into the Barnes Foundation. They're all a bunch of so and so's, and my only experience with them has been horrible. They get everything wrong, they have no feeling, they have no understanding. I wouldn't let anybody come from Vogue or another magazine of the kind." So I called up Allene and said, "He won't do it." Barnes had told me I could come any time I wanted to. He asked my advice about where Alltripp should show in New York, and he said he was arranging a show at the Ferargil Gallery. I said, "That's not the place where he should show. He should show at Curt Valentin's - he's the only interesting dealer in New York who has German art and other good art." He was German and I thought he'd be interested. Barnes said Curt would never do it; that he had never had good relations with Curt. He knew he wouldn't do it. I said we'd be very foolish not to try, and I thought he was very foolish not to do the Vogue piece because they'd taken my Alltripp piece. All this will help Alltripp, Allene Talmay is a superb editor and perfectly trustworthy. So Barnes let her come over. And she got the story, and they did a spread in color of some things at the Barnes Foundation. Barnes asked me to come to the opening of the Alltripp exhibition; he asked about two people, some people from the Barnes Foundation and Alltripp. I said to let Curt come when Allene came over and he said to ask him. So Allene and I got on the train and we decided what car we'd meet Curt in and so forth. Curt didn't show up on the train -- it was raining very hard and he missed the train. And Barnes was sending his car to meet us. And we got to the Barnes Foundation, no Curt with us, and Barnes looked at me with a knowing look of, "I told you so!" About an hour later (because of the trains going on the hour every hour) in walked a man with his overcoat on, a briefcase in one hand, his umbrella in the other -- nobody made any effort to help him off with his coat, he had rubbers on and he was dragging the rain in, and he has his umbrella, and had no hand with which to shake Barnes' hand. Barnes was sitting down talking to Allene and me. He never stopped talking, he never got up to greet Kurt. The whole thing with Kurt was extraordinary. I decided it was just too much of a mystery for me. Finally, he acknowledge Curt's existence, and I don't know where Curt put his -- I guess he put his umbrella in his hand or had the briefcase, and shook his hand, and they really had no exchange in any way. And Curt did not respond to the pictures, or, rather, maybe he responded and he was so embarrassed that he couldn't say he responded. Anyway, Curt was a very fine person. But he had the exhibition at Ferargil Galley.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Weren't Curt and (inaudible) Marion Willard, the dealers that you knew best?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Well, I knew most of the dealers, but they were both in the same building, and I remember that when I went to the Willard Gallery, I went to the Valentin Gallery, too and I knew Curt quite well, and I respected him very much.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: We were talking about Philadelphia and the Barnes Foundation, and I'd like to talk for a minute now about Philadelphia and the Alfred Stieglitz Center, which is being established, or has been established, at the Philadelphia Museum.

DOROTHY NORMAN: What happened was that after Stieglitz died, I realized that I had over 200 of his photographs, and I refused to sell them. I wouldn't sell them, and one day, it struck me -- I should not break up this collection. In '49, O'Keeffe divided Stieglitz' painting collection among various museums, and other work that Stieglitz had. And then she gave a master set of photographs to the National Gallery. So various big museums each had some Stieglitz, in some cases they had ones that I had. So I decided to give those to my children. Evan Turner had become the Director of the Philadelphia Museum. I knew Carl Zigrosser, who was head of the print department there, very well. When The Family of Man was done, the museum asked me to come and speak at a dinner on the exhibition. My relationship with the museum was friendly -- not great, but very friendly. I knew many people there. Then Zigrosser moved to Europe and a new head was appointed. Dr. Evan Turner, whom I did not know, but I had heard some rather good things about him. I felt I could not give my Stieglitz's to the Steichen Center.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: This is tape four, side one. You were saying about --

DOROTHY NORMAN: The exhibitions --

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: The exhibitions and then about modern art.

DOROTHY NORMAN: Well, I feel that the first -- it has always worked the same way -- the initial pioneers have always seemed to me to be the greatest. Then their disciples or copiers appear, and the creative impulse is diluted and something else happens. The same thing happened in modern art. It seemed to me that something began to be decadent when there was a proliferation of art galleries, and everybody was an artist. The same thing happened with photography. Once standards were lowered, everybody was a photographer, everybody was an artist. People did more and more vulgar things in the name of freedom of expression, and they were "in."

I felt that -- well, Szarkowski at the Museum of Modern Art seemed to me never quite to understand Stieglitz, and that his direction at the Museum of Modern Art has been one that's quite different from Steichen and Stieglitz. It's his own of course. He has his particular vision of things. Aperture was much more in the tradition of Minor White and Adams and Stieglitz to begin with. And of course, Minor White died and Michael Hoffman was the assistant; he really did Aperture completely in the last year of Minor's life. I felt that I did not want to have at the Stieglitz Center an academic person or somebody who was in the tradition of one of the other museums. At the time there was almost nobody properly trained. I took a great gamble and suggested Michael Hoffman, and they hired him to be the consultant in Philadelphia. And he did extraordinarily fine exhibits. He understood about the Stieglitz Center and he fought for it, and fought for it. And had a good deal to do with the choice of the final space and it's design and so forth.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Did you endow his center as well as --

DOROTHY NORMAN: I did for ten years. I said I would for ten years give a rather substantial sum, and then it would have to take over on its own. But I'm giving all the photographs I have. In those ten years a photography group has grown up in the museum. People have contributed funds to buy other photographs.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: It couldn't have been started at a better time.

DOROTHY NORMAN: It was just weird, it started too soon, which was just right. If it had started a little later, it would have attracted just the wrong everything. So now we'll see. This week I met the new head of the museum and if I'm well enough, I'm going to New York next week and she's coming over and she will see the things I have. I've kept some of the great Stieglitzs, and then there's a plan -- two publishers have come to me to do -- see to the portraits of me. And I haven't given them, except a few portraits of me to the --

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Do you have an example of that big portrait he did of you?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Yes, I do.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: How many are there?

DOROTHY NORMAN: I think there are some that I consider study prints, they're not in my view among the best. But I've given them to them just as study prints. I think there are about 200 or so.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Are you going to allow a book to be done?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Well, I will decide that next week.

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Next week.

DOROTHY NORMAN: Because --

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: It's one of your many projects.

DOROTHY NORMAN: The trouble is that the best prints -- there's nobody in this country who can do it, because they can't just be done as the Stieglitz book was done, and it has to be a special sort of very well done thing. And everything I've seen in this country so far has lacked some quality. But there's one printer in Europe --but it means that the photographs would have to --

WILLIAM MCNAUGHT: Would have to be sent abroad?

DOROTHY NORMAN: Well, not sent, but taken. And I have to decide whether I'm willing to have that happen. Or -- and I have to decide whether there is anybody in this country who can do it. Anyway, next week is the week of some decisions.

END OF INTERVIEW

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