



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

Oral history interview with Marcelle Labaudt,  
1964 Sept. 16

Funding for the digital preservation of this interview was provided by a grant from the Save America's Treasures Program of the National Park Service.

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# Transcript

## Interview

**ML:** MARCELLE LABAUDT

**MM:** MARY MCCHESENEY

**MM:** I'd like to ask you, Marcelle, first about your husband. Where was he born?

**ML:** He was born in Paris, May 14, 1880.

**MM:** And where did he get his art school training?

**ML:** He didn't have any art school training. He started by learning dressmaking because his mother had been a dressmaker, and had a big dressmaking establishment in Paris and then the two boys, she had two, both went into that line of work, although the father didn't want it anyway. So he learned [learned] this when he was fourteen years old as we used to do in those days. You learn a trade; you learn it from the beginning. Then he went into the army when he was eighteen, as all French boys had to do in those days. He went early because he saved his mother some time by going earlier so he enlisted for two years. Then after his service, he stopped at, well... I don't know exactly where it was but he was head of a department in, I forgot the name of the town somewhere in France. Then from there he went to London and he was head designer in one of the dressmaking establishments in London. Of course, I don't remember which one it was. Maybe Pacquin. It was one of the French houses and he used to be dressed up in a hat and coat and go and see the ladies in their homes. Then he left England. He spoke English, of course, since he was a child because his mother had a partner who was English so the children went vacationing in England and the others went to France one exchange so that's why he didn't have a handicap when he went to London, you know. He could speak English. So then he came to America, New York. And, of course, the life in New York was altogether different than England. It's freer, you know, more like Paris and you wear ordinary clothes like everybody else. And so, let me think...

**MM:** Had he done any painting before he came to New York?

**ML:** Not yet. Not yet. Then he was sketching, fashion sketching so he had some sketches in the old, what was the name of that magazine?

**MM:** "Vanity Fair"?

**ML:** Oh, no. Before that \_\_\_\_\_ Harpers Bazaar and another one in New York, I forget the name, but he was doing fashion sketches for them and then, of course, in New York he began to do free-lance work. He did sketches and patterns and sold them, you know. That's the way he did. Then from there, he got married there in New York and he went to Nashville, Tennessee, of all places. (I shouldn't say that.) And then his first child was born there and they -- his wife was also a dressmaker -- opened an establishment there but he couldn't stand it. They were very successful but it was very hard because they had problems with the workers, you know, and all that so they came -- that's when he started painting. He saw a painting of Cezanne. Of course, he was always sketching, you know, and he was intrigued by that painting of Cezanne. Then he studied. He began to read all about Cezanne and that's how he studied, that is where he learned to paint -- not from schools but on his own. Then the fire happened in San Francisco in 1906. That was about two years after or three years after. He just had to come to San Francisco thinking that after the fire there would be rebuilding and there would be lots of room for decoration because he was also decorating, you know. He was a creative person so he could do anything. But he arrived here and he was disappointed, you know, that San Francisco is always a little bit behind and it was very much behind in those days. And there was nothing to do in decoration. So he started working again on dressmaking. He was head of the department of the City of Paris for a while. In those days they had custom made. It was different from today. Today they don't have those things any more but in those days they had custom made things. So then he quit the City of Paris and opened his own establishment across the street on Stockton street where he was doing only creative work, creating dresses, not for models but creating one dress for each customer. And that's how he carried his business always in dressmaking. But dressmaking was getting too small for him so he began to do theatre things -- costumes and all those things and he still had the workshop to do it. Then he started painting. Of course, he had been painting on the side, you know, and then in 1916 or '17 he started exhibiting his paintings and in 1918 he made one of my portraits that I have still here. In 1918 because I went to work for him then.

**MM:** Was that when you came to this country, in 1918?

**ML:** I came in 1916 but the second year I went to work for him which I was very happy about because it was a little bit like the French places, you know. The other, I worked in another place in which I was very unhappy because it was too strict. I mean too much like prison, you know. You have to work and no smile or anything but anyway -- So after, I mean, I worked with him and I went with him into the theatre and into the costumes. We made all the big balls of the twenties. You know, they have the big ball, society balls, and we just make all the costumes and our costumes had the first prizes because they were made not like costumes as costumers make them but as dressmakers would make them, you know. More like evening dresses with big headdresses and things and, we worked very hard but it was lots of fun. We had not much money, I mean, because he was such a creator that when he decides, designs something, he knew exactly how it was going to be finished. Then if in the making of it, it came higher than he had expected, he wouldn't reduce his design and therefore he never made very much money. Because he was too... You know ... his idea was the most important thing. Then when the depression came...

**MM:** Besides the costumes, did you make backgrounds?

**ML:** Oh, yes, yes, yes. More later on but not for those big balls. He didn't do scenery but he did no scenery for the Art balls, of course. He did all the Art balls, you see, the Fine Arts balls. You had to have a big Pavilion and he's the one who did everything. He did all the costumes and everything. He gave three months of his time for nothing to the art of San Francisco.

**MM:** That was later, in the thirties?

**ML:** Yes. No. Well he started in '27, 1927. But anyway let me see now, I was in the twenties...

**MM:** Then you said during the depression...

**ML:** Then the depression came and naturally there were not more balls and. No more costumes because they couldn't pay the prices. But he had, in the meantime, started a school of dressmaking on the side, you see, because some of his friends had asked him to teach some of their daughters. One architect had asked him to teach his daughter so he started that way with one and from there built up a school. So we had the dressmaking and also the school started. Then, finally, when the depression came, we gave up the shop completely and only had the school. Then he had more time for his painting because, you see, I was teaching and he was teaching part time and he was painting. That's when he started painting really seriously. I mean all the time. That was already his love anyway so nothing counted. He worked every minute. All these paintings that you see here have been done mostly at night and on Sundays because he never could give all his days to a painting. He had a family to support, you know, and so on.

**MM:** What was the name of the art school that he had?

**ML:** California School of Design.

**MM:** And where was it located?

**ML:** On Powell St. Where our shop was, Powell and Sutter. And then when we built this house here in 1940, that was for the school. That's why I have the place for a gallery, you see. That was for the classrooms. But anyway... let me see, where I am now.

**MM:** He began painting seriously.

**ML:** Then he began to do some theater sets. I believe in 1923 he did a set for Margaret Anglin. A play, a modern play at the Curran. He did the set and he did the costumes for her. And then, one other thing. Of course, she's dead now but, she was a marvelous actress in those days, she was the biggest dramatic actress.

**MM:** How do you spell her last name?

**ML:** Anglin.

**MM:** Anglin and Margaret was her first name.

**ML:** Yes. I have to think twice with "G" and "J" on account of my French. And so Margaret Anglin was just wonderful. She came one day in 1923, I think. We made costumes for Los Angeles... (phone) ... the twenty-fifth anniversary of the motion picture, you know, from the start and it was a great big pageant in Los Angeles and we made costumes and there were oh... we made costumes from the Indians to the Monroe Doctrine. All different periods, you see. Then the Monroe Doctrine, you know, they had those great big skirts, you know, dresses and the men had those stripped pants and top hats and vests. You know -- nice. We made all those in

felt and she came into the studio, we had all ... it was so many, you see. We had them all over the place. Even in the fitting rooms and all and she was very impressed by the costumes so then she asked Lucien to made the costumes for "The Great Lady Dedlock", which was that same period, so we made them. That was our first start and then from then on, we made lots of things for her and she used to come over to see us and she used to say to me, "This is the only place where I get satisfaction about my costumes. When I go to, when I have a play and I go to new York to the big houses they bring me models but who am I to decide what I should wear. I'm an actress but I don't know what I should wear. I come here, I give Lucien the book. He reads it and then I don't have to worry about anything." We used to bring the materials on the stage to look at the colors under the lights and everything and then make the costumes and that was satisfactory, you see. And so she used to come, every time she came to San Francisco, she always came to see us, you know, because she was so thankful about that. And that's true, you see. It's very seldom, you see, unless you have -- I guess in a movie it's different, they have the designer right there, you know -- but if you want to go to the stores and buy a dress for a play, you have to know yourself what you want and that's very difficult for the actress, you see. She said, "I know how to act but I don't know how to select my costumes." Well, anyway, that was that. Then, that's what started him with the theatre, you see, with margaret Anglin. Then he made a modern play. I forgot the name of it. I have it somewhere, but anyway it doesn't make any difference. He had a letter from the author thanking him for how well he had interpreted because in those days, that was in 1923, modern scenery was not done, you know, so he had made a -- it was a very modern play, and it was happening on a penthouse in New York -- so Lucien had made the background, you know, and he had shown the buildings of New York all sideways from the window, you know, and that was very well received here. Then, of course, he also did an opera from the opera company. He did "Naughty Boy's Dream", and he made the modern costumes, too, you see for it. Of course, it was only shown that time. They never showed it again. I don't know what they did with it but anyway that was very successful. I mean, by the press, well received also. Then when the WPA started work here, did be start out first there? I don't know.

**MM:** Well, the PWA started first.

**ML:** First he did the PWA -- then he did the Coit Tower then.

**MM:** What was it he did at Coit Tower?

**ML:** The stairs. He did the stairs, Powell Street, going up the stairs. Did you ever see it?

**MM:** It's been a long time. I should go back and look at it again.

**ML:** It has been just remodeled because the children, you see, the ones which would be on the stairs, the children used to go up and scratch it all over and, you know, write their names on it and everything. So they had to close it. It was closed for a long time so what's her name?

**MM:** Dorothy Puccinelli Cravath had fixed them up, all the frescos, you see. I mean the ones that the artists were not here to do and the artists that were here fixed them up themselves, like Victor Arnavtoff fixed his own. So then, he loved that and that was the most wonderful thing for the artists at the Coit Tower. You know that, all that big family, you know, all happy there working. They didn't make much. They were not paid very much but it was something that was to be used, you know, things to do, so they put the portrait of each other in different places, you know. Lucien is in one, I think, where he washes a cow, you see, or something.

**MM:** In the mural at the Coit Tower?

**ML:** Yes, at the Coit Tower, yes.

**MM:** You don't remember whose it was?

**ML:** Oh, gosh, I can't remember his name now. I can see the mural alright -- it was farms.

**MM:** Oh Ralph Stackpole.

**ML:** No No No No. It was. . .

**MM:** Or Maxine Al\_\_\_\_\_?

**ML:** No, no, that wasn't him. No, that was a man. I can't think of his name but its -- oh, gosh, I see it. I could go and show you where it is but I don't know his name. But it was. . . they had so much fun there. I mean, they were working happily, you see -- all happy to do something. Then, of course, after that. . .

**MM:** Could I ask you a few questions about Coit Tower first?

**ML:** Yes.

**MM:** Who first contacted Lucien to ask him to do the tower?

**ML:** That's one I don't know.

**MM:** Oh, you don't know that.

**ML:** That I don't know. I don't know how it came about but I know that he had it and that's it. But I really don't know at that time what happened. I know all the artists got together, I guess, and they heard about it or something was sent to them and they applied or something. I have no idea how it was done.

**MM:** And this mural was all on canvas?

**ML:** Oh, no, it was fresco. All fresco.

**MM:** Where did he learn fresco?

**ML:** On his own.

**MM:** Oh yes. Had he done any before he did the Coit Tower?

**ML:** No. Well, he started it and, you know, studied it on his own and he never. . . you see, everything he did, he never studied it. He just got it from books. He studied very much from books, you know, and practiced, you know, experimented himself. I think I still have somewhere in the garden a piece of experiment, of fresco, you know. And then after he did the Coit Tower. . . of course, the more he was doing the better he got, you know. I forgot who was making the plaster for that. There must have been someone. I think maybe it was Matthew Barnes.

**MM:** He worked with plaster.

**ML:** Yes, because he did all the plaster for Lucien at the Beach Chalet later.

**MM:** Oh he did?

**ML:** Yes.

**MM:** What was the subject matter of Lucien Labaudt's mural at Coit Tower? Could you describe it for us?

**ML:** That's Powell Street. Going up Powell Street, with all the street cars, on each side of the \_\_\_\_\_, it's Powell Street. Exactly as Powell Street it. . .

**MM:** Oh, it's a street scene?

**ML:** A street scene. And then people coming down Powell Street and then down in the corner, Moya Del Pino coming down with his first baby who is now married. And Otis Oldfield, Ralph Stackpole and some others. Then below that is Mrs. Roosevelt and what was the name of the man who was in charge? Gee whiz, I can't think. . . it would be the whole group who had really fostered that project, you see.

**MM:** Walter Heil?

**ML:** No, no, no, that was from Washington.

**MM:** Oh, from Washington. \_\_\_\_\_

**ML:** From Washington, the group of people down there and then, of course, there is the Powell Street car, of course, going up and down along on each side and there is, \_\_\_\_\_ we were on Powell Street ourselves then, and so on one side, you know, there's the University Extension, you know, where it was on Powell Street and then next door to it, there's a little house, you know, and that's where we were. So it's in the Coit Tower; it's our school, you see. And then I'm coming down the stairs with two of our students, you know, coming down the stairs there on Powell Street. So I'm on all the murals, you know. He enjoyed that very, very much. He worked very hard, you know, long hours. You see the thing with an artist, is that he doesn't look at the hours for what they are paid for. They just do what they want to do regardless and especially there at the beginning, when you are not so \_\_\_\_\_. He used to go early in the morning. Sometimes at five o'clock in the morning and work until ten or eleven at night because he had to work while the plaster was wet. But, of course, afterwards when he did more of it, he could go faster. You know how it is. It's like everything else. But then he worked hours and hours. I used to go and bring him his lunch there. He didn't ever go out for lunch or anything. But he enjoyed every minute of it. Then after that, there was nothing for a while I guess until the WPA started. Now the WPA, of course, well, it was not very far after because the Roosevelt administration again started the same thing as the

PWA. . . and then there was paid ninety-four dollars a month but given the walls. That's what he was happy about. That he could do what he wanted on walls. And then he worked for three years on that mural there.

**MM:** At the Beach Chalet?

**ML:** At the Beach Chalet but he worked from morning until night and he enjoyed it. It was the best of his life, I think. He was always, you know, right at the beach there and wore just shorts and nothing else and would go out on the beach. Oh, he had a wonderful time, and worked very hard. He had two helpers. I can't remember their names now.

**MM:** This was the Beach Chalet which is located down on the Great Highway at the western end of Golden Gate Park in San Francisco.

**ML:** Yes.

**MM:** Right across from the beach?

**ML:** That's right.

**MM:** Yes. And he did all the murals?

**ML:** All the murals, yes, the whole building.

**MM:** How large is the building?

**ML:** Well, it's -- I can tell you how many feet because I have it here in my book. ....

**MM:** We were just talking about the Beach Chalet murals all done by Lucien Labaudt in San Francisco and Marcelle looked up the figures and the total mural space was two thousand square feet. These were several murals: one long one. . .

**ML:** Two long ones and one, two, three, three medium and four small ones, four like this.

**MM:** Those are long panels.

**ML:** So there's two like this, three like this and three like this.

**MM:** Those real long ones are about forty feet long, aren't they?

**ML:** Yes.

**MM:** Would you like to describe this one mural?

**ML:** This one is Golden Gate Park, and then there are all kinds -- you see, there is MacLaren, the one who built Golden Gate Park was still alive at that time and Lucien put him in there, see.

**MM:** Oh, yes. How do you spell his name?

**ML:** MAC L-a-r-e-n. And he's here sitting down and they are presenting him with the redwood that someone has given him to put in the park. You see, so Lucien took that and some of his helpers are here. Now here, of course, is Gaskin. . .

**MM:** That's William Gaskin, who was a director in San Francisco of the WPA.

**ML:** And this is, what's her name, you know. . .

**MM:** Dorothy Collins?

**ML:** Dorothy Collins. This one, I don't know his name. \_\_\_\_\_ was one working in the project at the same time as here. But I don't know his name.

**MM:** It's not George Post, is it?

**ML:** No. This is Mr. Mackey.

**MM:** Oh, Spencer Mackey?

**ML:** Spencer Mackey. And this is Cunningham. That is Ben Cunningham. This is Beatrice Judd Ryan.

**MM:** Oh, Beatrice Judd Ryan.

**ML:** She was also with the WPA.

**MM:** She was one of the directors of exhibitions, I believe.

**ML:** That's right. This is one of the men from the WPA taking the photography and this was one of Lucien's students, I don't know her name now. And this dog here, this big Saint Bernard used to come every day to have a drink in the Beach Chalet, you know, they have a big fountain there. So Lucien said, "Well, as long as you come everyday, I'm going to put you in the mural." So he put him in the mural, you see, and that Mr. Mackey is holding the dog. And the other day I received a phone call from a man who was something important in the park that is \_\_\_\_\_ now and he called me and told me that Lucien had given him a sketch of this dog and he was, he was retiring now, and he thought maybe I wanted that dog. I said, "No he gave it to you' you just keep it", because you know, it is his. That was very nice of him, you know, to think of calling me to find out in case I wanted it. Then here, there is Lorser and Helen Feitelson, two artists from Los Angeles here, and those are some of the members of the Bohemian Club. This old man this man here, I forget his name now. I saw his name the other day. But anyway, he's dead now. It's a long time ago, you see, those things. So many of those people are disappeared. Mr. Mackey is gone too. This small panel here represented the city hall with Arthur Brown, who was the architect of the city hall. So Lucien put him with the city hall behind.

**MM:** He was the architect who did Coit Tower too?

**ML:** He did Coit Tower too. And then this is Fisherman's Wharf, of course, but here those mean are not fishermen. They're artists'. This one is a one who was doing a mosaic, I don't remember his name.

**MM:** Oh, Renaldo Cuneo?

**ML:** No No No. He was a mosaic man. An Italian but a mosaic man but I don't know, and I don't know who this one is, you see. I didn't know them all, you know, because I was busy at the shop because we had the shop yet at the same time; the school, too, and I was carrying the school. But. . .

**MM:** On the other side of the building. . .

**ML:** Then on the other side, there is the beach. That's down -- what do you call that beach?

**MM:** The Golden Gate Bridge is on it?

**ML:** Yes, the Golden Gate Bridge is just started. Just the beginning of the Golden Gate Bridge, not all done, you see. They were building it at that time and then that's. . . what's the name of that beach down there? It's not China beach but it's the one next to China beach. But anyway, and so there is all kinds of people that we know in there. Of course, I don't have. . . I have a photograph somewhere here -- I can't remember now.

**MM:** I remember the photograph of the painting of you sitting on the beach.

**ML:** Yes, I'm sitting there and he's (Lucien) sitting there, too, reading the paper.

**MM:** Oh.

**ML:** And then there are all kinds of girls in bathing suits around him and everybody was kidding him because they knew he wouldn't be reading the paper if he had so many girls around him. And there is his daughter out there too and a few things. A sculptor is here.

**MM:** Ralph Stackpole?

**ML:** No, No. The tall one, Adeline Kent's husband.

**MM:** Oh, Robert Howard.

**ML:** Robert Howard, you see. I'll get there somehow. Yes, Robert Howard is there and then, of course, his assistants are both there but, gosh, if I can remember his name. I will remember after I'm through, you know, but not I can't remember.

**MM:** What were these other longer, narrower panels?

**ML:** Then in another one, there is a young girl in the plaza across from the St. Francis Hotel, Union Square? And then, it's one of our girls who was working at knitting there, sitting there knitting.

**MM:** Oh, yes, I remember that panel.

**ML:** Then there's another panel, where there is an old man feeding the pigeons. Oh, yes, I got the man feeding the pigeons at Union Square and all this is in some other, I don't know what. And then there is also Chinatown in another one of the panels. The background is Chinatown and then the policeman that was on horseback in the park is in the panel. He used to come and visit Lucien all the time when he was painting so he put him in the mural. And then on the other side of Fishermen' Wharf -- . It's. . . what do they call it? You know, where the boats arrive?

**MM:** Oh, the embarquedero.

**ML:** The embarquedero with the men working on the bridge because they were building the Oakland - Bay Bridge then. And then some of the men going and then there is one man pushing a hand cart. Of course, I don't think it's him, but people say it's Bridges, pushing the thing. IT might be him; I don't know for sure.

**MM:** Harry Bridges, the Longshore leader.

**ML:** Yes. But there are the longshoremens there anyway. And so you see a little bit of everything. Then there on the other corner, there is looking toward the Presidio. It's a very small panel but you see, from down below, the Legion of Honor there, you look down through the Presidio. There is Mrs. Ryan again and me and Dorothy \_\_\_\_\_. She's in the back you see; she's at the back of it. And that's about all in that panel. Oh, yes, and in one of the panels, there is Piazzoni Gottardo. That was just, I guess, about when they were opening the Golden Gate Bridge. Because Piazzoni had a big celebration. I don't know if you remember when they opened the Golden Gate Bridge. They had the big Spanish celebration and then the children were all dressed as cowboys with guns hanging so Lucien put Piazzoni talking with two little children with guns on the side, you know. And that's the last panel there.

**MM:** Gottardo Piazzoni was a very well know painter in San Francisco.

**ML:** Oh, yes, yes, wonderful man yes. Very, very wonderful man. One of the best.

**MM:** What was his first name?

**ML:** Gottardo. Oh, he was a wonderful man. Lucien liked him very much. He did those beautiful. . . murals in the library here. He used to do the hills of \_\_\_\_\_ -- county. These very beautiful hills and with very little details, just maybe a little church on top of the hill, you know, the little church in \_\_\_\_\_. Remember that little church on top of the hill? That's what he did almost all the time and he was a very good painter and he was teaching at the art school too in those days. So, I guess that's all I can say about that. But I wish I could remember the names of those two helpers.

**MM:** So he worked on this project for a three year period?

**ML:** Three years. And he enjoyed every minute of it. Then after that, he did other murals but that was something else. That had nothing to do with this, with the government. When WPA stopped, he went on the treasury project.

**MM:** Well, we should go into that next then because the Beach Chalet was the last WPA project.

**ML:** Yes, then he started on the treasury department. And, you see, there were contests for the treasury department so they sent you the data and the measurement and you had to make a sample. He did every one of them but he won once and he got the Los Angeles post office. So he did for the Los Angeles post office one panel and the ceiling.

**MM:** Was that the first one that he did?

**ML:** For the treasury, yes. But he made about 15 contests, you know.

**MM:** This Los Angeles post office -- is that fresco?

**ML:** No. It's on canvas. It's wax, wax something.

**MM:** Encaustic?

**ML:** No, it was wax. He was using wax to paint; I don't know exactly how.

**MM:** On canvas?



**ML:** On canvas. Because, you see, they were afraid if they moved the post office, if the post office was torn down, then they would not preserve the murals. Then the ceiling is the same thing. It's on canvas. It's a beautiful ceiling. I still have the telegram that they sent him from Washington, that they sent him when he sent in his design, that it was inspired. They were so pleased with it. It's about the aviation so he selected the four birds that have given the inspiration for that, you know, that they have studied for aviation. He had the four birds like this, as a cross, and then around it there is a saying. They had to. . . of course, it was given to them. . . so he had an awful hard time to find a saying that went with it and that was American. Because all the sayings he could find at the library were always English, you see. So he finally went to the library and the lady in charge of the reference room said, "Oh, do you want that one of \_\_\_\_\_ . . ." What's his name? It's a long name. It's two names.

**MM:** William Jennings \_\_\_\_\_?

**ML:** Yes, that's it. Something, it's "who \_\_\_\_\_ . . ." It's a beautiful sentence. So he put that on. And then in the corners, you had to fill the corners. There were four corners so he put some parts of airplanes. And it's a beautiful thing. I'll show it to you. I have a slide of it here.

**MM:** Is it still in place there?

**ML:** Oh, yes.

**MM:** About how large is it?

**ML:** It's. . . oh gosh. Maybe I have it here. Yes. Two hundred and twenty-five -- wax fresco -- two hundred and twenty-five feet.

**MM:** That's in square footage.

**ML:** Yes.

**MM:** And there's the ceiling and then another panel?

**ML:** And the old ranches of southern California. That's the name of the painting there. Wax fresco, two hundred and forty-four square feet.

**MM:** What was the subject of the other painting?

**ML:** The old ranches of southern California.

**MM:** Oh. What was that like?

**ML:** I have a picture someplace. It represents the beginning of Los Angeles. You see, it was an old rancho, you see, and then there is a barrel and a Spaniard with a big \_\_\_\_\_, you know, and a "yanqui" is buying it, buying the rancho for a barrel of wine and something. I mean, it's a real romantic story. All of those things you have to do the research. You cannot just put anything you want. You have to \_\_\_\_\_ history. Then, on the other side, there is, oh, the life of those days. The cattle and things like that; I forget exactly what. Because I see it myself. . . because he did it here and then he brought it there to be put on.

**MM:** Did you go down with him to have it installed?

**ML:** Oh, yes. We went back and forth and back and forth because, you see, he had to have special people, of course, to install it. They have a special name, a special glue or something, I don't know. And the ceiling was the hard one. But he had professional men do that, of course, because he couldn't do it himself. And the ceiling is made in eight pieces. That's why it was divided because each bird was like a light. You couldn't see it was a drawing because it was part of the design but it was a thing that you had to think of also in doing it because you couldn't do it. So that was, oh, that was very. . . he enjoyed that too. But that's the only one that he won. Then he made sketches for others. I put the sketches of his murals in the show, you know, and I still have some from the project that he sent that have come back. See, for the Rincon post office, you know; he had made the whole twenty-seven panels. Five in color and the others in black and white. And they're still beautiful so I usually show them here at the show each year, the five in color. He had studied the history of California from the beginning, you know, starting with the Indians that were here and then all the Spanish coming in and all those things. It was quite a job. I'm telling you it took months to study those things. But, of course, he didn't get it. I guess if he had gotten it, he would be here because he wouldn't have been able to go to the other project. But that's the way it was, you see. You know you can't change those things.

**MM:** Maybe I should explain that every year Marcelle has a memorial show of her husband's paintings in her gallery here in San Francisco to open her season of painting and that's what she was referring to when she said

she showed the mural designs. And what was the next project? After he finished the Los Angeles post office?

**ML:** That was the last.

**MM:** I thought he did the George Washington High School? \_\_: Oh, yes. Oh, I was going to forget that one. Yes! Oh, yes, and he did more than that school, of course! What's the matter with me! Yes, this is the George Washington High School.

**MM:** It's a fresco and that's here in San Francisco.

**ML:** Yes.

**MM:** One hundred and twenty feet long.

**ML:** Yes.

**MM:** The advancement of knowledge through the printing press. Was this a treasury project?

**ML:** No, no. City. . . a city project because when they built the building, you see, they gave him the job to do the mural. And this was his problem. This clock had to be there in the middle of the place. So he had to build around this and so that's how it was. You know, he had, at that time, a very hard time getting this accepted because he had put the main persons in big and the other people in regular size. He had to, you know, make that thing in full size drawings to be accepted. And if you could see it today, of course, it's so normal. Because this, you see, is the inventors, the inventors and writers, and here it's history, you see, on this side. This is Smith, you know. What's his name. . .? That is his boat coming here. Oh, I forgot the first name, you know me, I'm not. . .

**MM:** Sir Francis Drake?

**ML:** No No NO. Smith. But i don't know who it is. And this is, of course, George Washington with the flag and then Jefferson with the Louisiana purchase.

**MM:** Oh, yes. Coming down here.

**ML:** And then Lincoln with the Negroes, you see, and then Father Serra with California, you see, the missions. And then here is Edgar Allen Poe. This is, of course, the Goddess of poetry and this is Evangeline and who was the writer of Evangeline?

**MM:** Longfellow.

**ML:** Longfellow. This is Longfellow and this is Whittier with the barefoot boy and this is, of course, Edgar Allen Poe with the raven. \_\_\_\_\_ And this is the inventor of anesthesia. I forgot his name. And this, of course, is Franklin with --

**MM:** Kite?

**ML:** Not the kite, the . . . if I can find the word. . . Well, anyway, whatever, you see, he used. . .

**MM:** Oh, the key and the kite. The electricity.

**ML:** Thunder, yes, thunder. I mean, not the thunder, you know, but the fire from the thunder.

**MM:** Lightning.

**ML:** Lightning. I couldn't think. And this one is, yes, that's him, this is Edison with the lights, you see. The electric light. And then so he had, for this composition, you see, he had this here so he put this from the Smithsonian Institute. He's studying the birds. And then, of course this is Guttenberg and the man feeding the press and the knowledge coming out here and this is a family of today having, the benefit, reading, the benefit of all this work. But, oh, I want to see it. One day I'll go and feel it's just beautiful as the first day he did it. You know, he didn't budge on the design. They like it very much at the school, too.

**MM:** What part of the school, what part of the building is it in?

**ML:** Library.

**MM:** It's in the library?

**ML:** Yes. So it's really very nice. Then, of course, after that. . . let me see, I don't want to forget any others. . .

**MM:** But this was not done under the WPA. This was done under the city? The city. Yes, that was project he had from the architect, I guess it was, the architect of the building and so he proposed him. Now he did murals at the fair. The Golden Gate fair here in thirty-nine. \_\_\_\_\_ international exhibition at Treasure Island. That's the

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**ML:** At Treasure Island. he did two buildings, the California State building and an auditorium. And that was thirteen thousand seven hundred and fifty feet. That was all the outside of the two buildings. But, of course, he didn't paint it himself. He made all the plans and the drawing and everything and color plates. I still have them. I showed them the other day. Then he had regular painters there that do scaffold painting because he was there directing everything all the time. So they were beautiful things. It was all in orange and one side, it was agriculture and the other side was industry. And there was one figure on each panel that was fifteen feet high. And so they were on each side of the walk. There was like an alley, you see, and the Federal building was at the end. There was a lake here and those two buildings on each side and that drawing was reflecting at night in the lake. It was just the most beautiful sight. It was really very nice. That's what he did. And. . .

**MM:** What kind of paint did he use?

**ML:** Just ordinary paint.

**MM:** House paint.

**ML:** House paint but it was destroyed after the fair, you see, because those buildings, they just don't stay. And, well, and then he made another fresco but it is in a private home in Redwood City.

**MM:** What was that?

**ML:** In the dining room of Mr. and Mrs. R. K. Davis in Redwood City, he did a fresco and that was the last. And then the war came and he went to the shipyard to work in the shipyard. He was the first artist to go work in the shipyard so he got all the other ones to come after him. He was always a leader, you know. He was always getting everybody to follow him. And that's when he got his appointment to go and paint the scenes of the war in Burma. There were twelve of them, twelve artists, that were going to different places, quite a number of them so naturally he was very happy in this assignment and he selected Burma because all his life he had wanted to go to India. That was his dream since he was a little boy. And then but, of course, he started, you know, he was going. He was in New York for three months getting ready for it. And then all of a sudden, of course, the government stopped the project so he was there; all those artists were there ready but no project.

**MM:** Oh, I didn't realize that.

**ML:** "Life", "Life", magazine took over and so he went for "Life" magazine when he was on the project and, of course, which ended badly because when he was on his way to Burma, his plane crashed in Assam.

**MM:** Earlier, what shipyard was it that he worked in? Was it shipyard No. 2 over is Richmond?

**ML:** Well, he worked first in the Moore drydock, first, and then after, he worked in the shipyards here. And. . .

**MM:** Salsalito? Marine Ship?

**ML:** Salsalito, Marine Ship. That's where he was. That's where he was working when he left. The Marine Ship.

**MM:** When he left to be the war Correspondent.

**ML:** Yes.

**MM:** Or artist correspondent.

**ML:** Yes.

**MM:** There was a liberty ship that was named after him.

**ML:** Named for him, yes. Three months after he was gone, March Maslin who was a writer in the Call Bulletin, put a little notice in the Call Bulletin saying that they should name a ship for Lucien and so people begin to write. I mean he was saying that people should write to somebody and this man said to a friend of mine that he knew very well, \_\_\_\_ Of all the ships that have been named for a man that was the one that received the most letter asking him to do it. He said it was fantastic. The letters were coming by twenty-five a day or something like that. Because, you see, he was so well-known here and he had done so much and always was very generous with his time to the students as well as to anybody who asked him. He used to give lectures and everything always for nothing, you know, because he loved it so. He wanted to give it to other people. So, I think, he did his part for

San Francisco during those years that he was here.

**MM:** I think he certainly did too. Did he ever talk to you about the work he did on the WPA? What do you think his impressions of WPA were?

**ML:** Oh, he wrote a wonderful article. Oh, he loved it. I have it. I found an article the other day that he wrote for the Art ASSOCIATION MAGAZINE> Oh, yes, he thought this was the most wonderful thing that had happened in America and was hoping that it would keep up. Oh, yes, he was all for it! My goodness. Gee whiz, I wish, well \_\_\_ that wouldn't do you any good to get the article but I know, I saw it the other day. I saw it here in the closet. It would be. . .

**MM:** That's the one that he wrote about the WPA?

**ML:** That was all about the WPA. Yes, it's a very, very nice article. Would you, you stop it and maybe \_\_\_ I look . . . \*\*\*\*\*

**MM:** We were looking for an article by Lucien Labaudt about the WPA days and we've located it and Marcelle is going to read a section of it.

**ML:** "The San Francisco Art Association Bulletin", October, 1937. This is an excerpt from "An American Renaissance" by Lucien Labaudt. "Surrounded with works of art in all public buildings, the people will develop an art consciousness and the young generation, knowing that art is a function of life, will take to the profession with the desire to be useful, willing to work under masters until they can express themselves and be given projects of their own. The title of "master" once more will have a real meaning. We are living too close to all this, too close to realize what has happened. But we do know that there has been created a functional and national art, maybe international or better universal."

**MM:** And you were saying this expressed very well Lucien's thoughts.

**ML:** Absolutely because that's what he taught and that's what he preached all the time, you know. That was his idea.

**MM:** Thank you very much for giving us the time for the interview, Marcelle.

**ML:** Well, you're very welcome. I hope I did what you wanted me to do.

**MM:** You did very well. \*\*\*\*\* END OF INTERVIEW