



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Marian
Kendall, 1965 Aug. 26

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Marian Kendall on August the 26th, 1964. The interview took place in San Diego and was conducted by Betty Lochrie Hoag McGlynn for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This interview is part of the Archives of American Art's New Deal and the Arts project.

The original transcript was edited. In 2022 the Archives retranscribed the original audio and attempted to create a verbatim transcript. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —don't understand it either.

MARIAN KENDALL: Well, some people said that I talked down their throat. Some said that I slurred my [they laugh] words.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: We'll see how you—

[Recorder stops, restarts.]

This is Betty Lochrie Hoag on August 26, 1964 interviewing the weaver Marian Kendall, which is spelled M-A-R-I-O-N—M-A-R-I-A-N Kendall, K-E-N-D-A-L-L in her home in San Diego. I have been looking forward to interviewing Ms. Kendall for over a year because she was one of the most interesting artists on all of our California Project. Being a weaver and having done some very lovely tapestries which were designed—five of them—which—at least two were designed by the sculptor Donal Hord. And I don't know about the other ones. We're going to find out. Ms. Kendall, before you tell us about the Project work—which is mainly the reason I'm here—I'd like to ask you about your own life. Would you tell us when you were born, if you care to, and where you were born?

MARIAN KENDALL: Oh, I don't mind telling my age. [Laughs.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Some women do. [Laughs.]

MARIAN KENDALL: I was born in North Carolina, November 12, 1891.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: In what town?

MARIAN KENDALL: It was a little place—it was just a—it was called McFarlan, North Carolina. It was just a large place in the road. It wasn't a town. [Laughs.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative], mm-hmm [affirmative]. Were your parents farmers in the area?

MARIAN KENDALL: My parents were farmers. My father had a college education, and my mother was even better educated because she read so much.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well that's interesting.

MARIAN KENDALL: But she was a weaver, and she could spin and knit. And I've never been able to knit one stitch.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well isn't that strange with all the weaving you do.

MARIAN KENDALL: But I learned when I was seven years old to do carding and spinning. And I used to help her gather the dyes that she used out of the woods and in the fields. And I've been experimenting and using vegetable dyes and other dyes for many, many years.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You've spent your whole life working with these things then.

MARIAN KENDALL: Almost.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Isn't that interesting. Where had she learned this?

MARIAN KENDALL: Well—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: It's rather unusual for a woman to know—

MARIAN KENDALL: —in North Carolina, we were all very poor after the war.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: And we had to make our own clothing.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see.

MARIAN KENDALL: And our own shoes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: And we made the slaves' clothes. And our slaves wouldn't leave us. They came back time after time.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: My heavens.

MARIAN KENDALL: And so we had to make their clothing. And they helped us. And the entire plantation was a very wonderful, cooperative sort of thing.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: And my grandfather came with Captain John Smith—my great-grandfather. And we had to try to live up [laughs] to something that was good.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes, that would've been in Roanoke, Virginia, wasn't it? Isn't that where Smith came? That's a very nice ancestry to have, all right.

MARIAN KENDALL: And my mother's people were French and Welsh. And she was the most talented person. She could sing and dance. And she worked day and night for her numerous family.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. She had big—many children?

MARIAN KENDALL: Yes. There were eight that lived.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Inaudible.] Yeah.

MARIAN KENDALL: And I was the oldest. And because my mother died when I was less than 17 and I had all the rest of the children to look after and help, and I tried to take her place.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: I even made my father's shirts and all sorts of things for—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Good heavens.

MARIAN KENDALL: —the family. And—

[00:05:00]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Great responsibility for a child, really. Which you were at the time.

MARIAN KENDALL: Well, I helped her when I was seven years old. And she said she couldn't've raised the family without me. And my second sister was a brilliant person mentally. And she was a good mathematician, but she used to fall over her own feet and drop the babies [they laugh] and—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: She was no help to you at all.

MARIAN KENDALL: No help to us, no. But my mother said that when she was a young person, her aunt raised her. And she said, Now, there's one acre of cotton. You can do

whatever you want to it. They planted it and my mother took care of it. She picked the cotton, and they took the seed out. And she carded and spun it and they [airplane engine noise] knitted cotton stockings at that time. And she had one [inaudible] handwoven bedspread and her blue and white ones were made of—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Just a minute. That's too much for us for a minute. Now it's all right, thank you.

MARIAN KENDALL: The blue and white winter coverlets were made from wool mostly. Some of them were cotton and wool.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: And the ones—the white ones were made from pure cotton. And they were the summer bedspreads. And I remember she used to say well, this is the honeycomb weave. She said, That's what we use in the summer. And the winter ones were not only wintery, they were warm.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: And I—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Inaudible.]

MARIAN KENDALL: I did not have a loom when I was a child. But I did have cards and a spinning wheel.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: But my father had to make a platform so that I could walk up to—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: To reach it?

MARIAN KENDALL: —to reach the wheel. It was called a great wheel.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Uh-huh [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: And some people have a little song that they sing as they go up, and then another one as they come back. But I didn't know any songs. In fact, I let my mother do all the singing. She sang beautifully. When I started to college, many years later, I found Mrs. Vanderbilt sponsoring the people in the western part of North Carolina.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Hm.

MARIAN KENDALL: And she was also giving scholarships to this little Presbyterian college.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: What was the name of it?

MARIAN KENDALL: It was called the Normal and Collegiate Institute.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Thank you. Did you win a scholarship?

MARIAN KENDALL: Yes. I had one for two years. And that paid for my tuition and my books. But I had to do some extra work to earn my room and board. And I was the bread girl, I baked bread.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh really? [Laughs.]

MARIAN KENDALL: I loved baking bread. I still do.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Coughs.] Excuse me. Did you go all four years there?

MARIAN KENDALL: No. I went two years and I worked one summer for Mrs. Vanderbilt, and she wanted me to go two more years. But I was frightened to death of mathematics.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Aw. What a shame.

MARIAN KENDALL: When I got my first position in Baltimore, it was almost the beginning of

the war.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: It was 1915. And I stayed in Baltimore seven years.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: What kind of position was it?

MARIAN KENDALL: Well, I was a companion to a wealthy lady whose husband had died.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: And Mrs. Gorman [ph] wanted me to go back to college, and I decided that I would. And I had saved my money. And then when I took this position in the bank—the men had to go to the war and there was an opening in a bank. And she didn't particularly need a companion.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: So I was a Burroughs bookkeeper in the Merchant-Mechanics First National Bank.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh. A what kind of bookkeeper?

[00:10:00]

MARIAN KENDALL: Burroughs machine.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, Burroughs machine, yes.

MARIAN KENDALL: It was an IBM.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes. Excuse me just a minute. So you were a—

MARIAN KENDALL: My people all think that I've lost my accent. But when I come back here, well, they say it's worse than ever. [They laugh.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well I was sure it was southern. Did you stay on at the bank all through the war?

MARIAN KENDALL: Only two years.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: Then I was prepared to go back to college. And I had saved my money. And I was going to be able to have my two years in college without having to pay debts. And — [They laugh.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Excuse me, we'll have to wait for the plane. They do come over every five minutes, don't they?

MARIAN KENDALL: Do you want all this detail—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Thank you.

MARIAN KENDALL: —about my father and mother?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes, yes.

MARIAN KENDALL: Well, my father was farming, and my seven younger sisters were staying there and helping him. And my second sister wrote and said, Dad has only six weeks to live. Because this epithelioma on his face is beginning to be inoperable. And she said, If you could take him to Johns Hopkins and see what they can do there. That was right there close to me. And I telegraphed for them to send him in, and he came on the next boat. And I was there at the boat to meet him. He was standing on [laughs] the very end where he wasn't supposed to, trying to locate me.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Aw.

MARIAN KENDALL: And he looked very small but I recognized him. And you know, he lived 42 years after the operation.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Why, how perfectly wonderful.

MARIAN KENDALL: And they said, when he was ready to leave, Now if you never smoke anymore, or chew any tobacco, or use tobacco in any form you'll live to be an old, old man. And he never touched it again.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh—

MARIAN KENDALL: And they said that was the cause. And that was 1916.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Good heavens. That's amazing. Did this keep you from going back to school? Is that why you didn't finish, then?

MARIAN KENDALL: That's why I couldn't. Because I used up—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Because you helped him with the operation?

MARIAN KENDALL: —all of my money. Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

MARIAN KENDALL: But it made me work harder in some other ways. I took courses at different places in different colleges. But I didn't have enough money to even pay a registration fee or to get my credits.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: And I knew that if I studied and got the information that I needed, that I didn't have to. But it would've been much wiser. And I knew it was, but—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: But you couldn't do anything about it.

MARIAN KENDALL: I bummed my way to Santa Barbara. [Laughs.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Aw.

MARIAN KENDALL: After I came to California with some friends, and I sat on the Dean's doorstep for about four hours. And she came home, and I said I was just thinking maybe you wouldn't come home. And I had 50¢ and I wasn't sure whether I was going to spend it at the YW for a bed, or whether I was going to spend it on something to eat.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Aw. [They laugh.]

MARIAN KENDALL: And she said, Come in, we'll eat. [They laugh.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Aw.

MARIAN KENDALL: And her cook had gone away because her mother was ill. And that was my first job. I cooked for her and for six months I studied weaving in Santa Barbara with a marvelous person.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, who was that?

MARIAN KENDALL: It was Miss Camp [ph].

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Now was this a branch of the university at that time?

MARIAN KENDALL: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: And she says—

[Cross talk.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And were you working for—

MARIAN KENDALL: —You've learned to weave before someplace, haven't you? And I said, No. And I said I've never seen anybody weave.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

MARIAN KENDALL: And she said, Impossible. She said you can spin and card, but how about—I said my mother was a wonderful weaver. And she said Oh, that's it.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

MARIAN KENDALL: You inherited it. And so I think I must've inherited it. Because everything in the weaving was so marvelous that I felt that I had done it before.

[00:15:01]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: So in some other life, I had been a weaver. [Laughs.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You probably had. Were you working toward a degree in the six months at Santa Barbara? Or just taking the course to learn?

MARIAN KENDALL: No, I was—I was just learning something that I wanted to do. And I decided I'd rather starve than to do something I didn't like.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: And I felt that since I was here for my health, I'd better have psychical health and spiritual health. And do something that I loved. And when I was in my second year at Asheville, Mrs. Vanderbilt used to have handwoven materials and suits and things that she had ordered for her friends left at the college. And I delivered them and touched them [Betty Hoag McGlynn laughs] and loved them. And that was when I was bitten with the weaving bug. In 1914.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You wanted that so much. After six months at Santa Barbara, had you learned to do it enough to—

MARIAN KENDALL: Well, I had—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —use it as a profession?

MARIAN KENDALL: I had learned certain techniques, and I had to get out of my cook's job because the lady came back. And then I took care of some children that were to be left in my care from about six o'clock to 12 o'clock at night. Because the parents were in the Little Theater. He was the director of the Little Theater. And it was very interesting and I enjoyed it so much. But I felt that I had to get busy at something pertaining to my work.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: And I came back to Pasadena, I hadn't moved to San Diego. I stayed in Pasadena and Los Angeles for two years after I came. And then I moved down here.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And you've been in San Diego ever since, [inaudible]—

MARIAN KENDALL: There was no weaving here. And there was weaving in Pasadena and other places.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Now, I don't understand—I don't understand anything about your field so if I—

[Cross talk.]

MARIAN KENDALL: Well, hand—that's all right.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —ask questions, be patient.

MARIAN KENDALL: Hand-loom weaving was just beginning on this coast. And it had been revived and some places it had never died.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see.

MARIAN KENDALL: In the East and the Middle West even. But it had just begun to take hold out here. And not very quickly, either.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Hm. Were you working independently teaching or making things in Pasadena?

MARIAN KENDALL: I was part of the time doing anything I could. Babysitting, nursing.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: I had more nursing jobs than anything else. And then I would weave with some friends that had looms and—is this some other thing that's interesting for you?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: No, this is very fascinating. I was—excuse me.

MARIAN KENDALL: —boat called the *Star of India* down here.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh really? The one that the historical society has on display? Now, did you mend the sail on that?

MARIAN KENDALL: No—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Is that how you happened to have the piece canvas?

MARIAN KENDALL: No, they wanted to put this in the showcase because it was the first sail.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Isn't that [inaudible].

MARIAN KENDALL: And it had the date woven in it. And it was too big to go in the space.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: And they kept cutting it down. They kept the date and a little piece of the weaving. And this old sailor that was on the first voyage was the curator at the time they had it in another portion of the bay.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well isn't that [inaudible].

MARIAN KENDALL: And he gave it to me.

[00:19:58]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I want to interject for the tape at this point, Miss Kendall has a most interesting profession today. She repairs all kinds of woven things for the art association and the museum—the Museum of Man. And—I suppose you tell me some more about it, because I don't even know all of the things that you do. But for instance—

MARIAN KENDALL: This—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —repairing the sail was one thing.

MARIAN KENDALL: This first repair was sponsored when the government was—well, after it had closed the weaving project. Then my best tapestry weavers—and it takes a very expert weaver to be a re-weaver.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Hm.

MARIAN KENDALL: And it takes 10 times longer.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Is that right?

MARIAN KENDALL: And you can't just be a re-weaver and not know how to weave.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: And we—there were four of us and we spent three years. The tapestry was a Flemish tapestry that was made in the 1600s. And it was very frail and filled with holes. And we took pictures, and after it was finished we took other pictures. And Mr. Reginald Poland was our director then. And he felt that we should do it as they do in France. Because he didn't approve of the method that we used out west here, of letting every stitch show.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: He wanted nothing to show. He wanted us to fix that tapestry so it looked like it did originally. And we had not only to do an expert job of re-weaving, I had to dye—and I spent a great deal of my time dyeing. And that was still too brilliant.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Hm.

MARIAN KENDALL: I couldn't quite get it to look old. But I had a brainstorm one night, and the next day I soaked my dyed materials with a little Lux soap. And I didn't rinse it out and I put it on the roof of the art gallery. And the sun faded it down [laughs] to the right spot.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: My, how interesting.

MARIAN KENDALL: And after that, everything looks as if it had never had a needle put in it. And it took four of us three years.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: My.

MARIAN KENDALL: Of course, we didn't work eight-hour days. We only worked six-hour days. And we worked five days in the week.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Miss Kendall, I have two questions now. One—Reginald Poland was director of the San Diego Fine Arts Gallery, is that right?

MARIAN KENDALL: Yes, and he sponsored that work.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes, and he also—

MARIAN KENDALL: And the government paid our wages.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, this was part of the Federal Art Project, then?

MARIAN KENDALL: Oh yes, it was.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And were these three women working with you the women who had worked with you on the tapestries you'd done earlier on the Project?

MARIAN KENDALL: Two of them were.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Which two were those, do you remember?

MARIAN KENDALL: Mrs. Manchester was the only one that had gone away.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: She went to Texas. And the others were Mrs. Schulz [ph], and Thelma—I can't think of Thelma's [laughs] last name.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: That's all right. It's been a long time.

MARIAN KENDALL: But she's married in the meantime and her name is McKay [ph] now.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: We've kind of jumped the gun, I guess, chronologically then. So—because this was toward the end of the Project period. So, let's go back again to when we stopped. When you were in Pasadena—

MARIAN KENDALL: Oh, oh I see.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —and you were telling about reviving the industry of weaving on the West Coast and that you were part of this.

MARIAN KENDALL: Well, I felt that—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Go on yes.

MARIAN KENDALL: —if I came down here, and being the only weaver, I would probably be able to make a living.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: And I made part of my living with it. And in those days, they gave me a studio in Balboa Park and I didn't even pay the electric bill. I just—

[00:25:02]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Really?

MARIAN KENDALL: —enjoyed a little space in one of the buildings.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Did you have demonstration—

MARIAN KENDALL: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —classes at that time?

MARIAN KENDALL: Yes. And at one time, I carded, spun, and wove for school children two days a week. And the zoo used to give me camel's hair and all kinds of interesting fur and hair so that the children would really be enthusiastic. And they certainly were. You could hear a pin drop. And it was at the time that a lady was very enthusiastic about taking children to the zoo and telling them about these animals. And then when she came to my studio, she was able to point out the fibers that the animals produced.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Hm.

MARIAN KENDALL: And did you know that in the European countries where they had camels that have fur for the commercial trade are not just the burden bearing camels? They are specially raised for fur.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: No, I didn't know.

MARIAN KENDALL: Oh, yes. [They laugh.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Do they look like a different kind of camel?

MARIAN KENDALL: No, they look the same, but their fur is much finer.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Is this from diet?

MARIAN KENDALL: Well—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I wonder, how do they—

MARIAN KENDALL: —that's one way. And they're in a colder climate. That's one reason. And they've been bred to produce fine fibers.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: And there are so many hundred and hundreds of fibers that we don't use, that we could use. But because it doesn't pay, we don't even know the names of them. But—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Inaudible] Chilkat Indians, I believe in British Columbia, use dog hair and mountain goats.

MARIAN KENDALL: Some of the Indians—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: That sort of thing.

MARIAN KENDALL: Yes, some of the Indians down here use dog hair. I use dog hair yet.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Really?

MARIAN KENDALL: Yes. There are three breeds of dogs that have good spinning fiber. The white Samoyed—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, yes.

MARIAN KENDALL: —is one that you see the most of. And the other is this little French poodle that has [airplane engine noise] wonderful fine hair. One of the ladies made a piece of cloth and she learned to spin, and she wove it and made a hat. Another lady had a yen [ph] for a hat. And she made a beautiful hat but she had bought the yarn. And—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Uh-huh [affirmative]. [Laughs.]

MARIAN KENDALL: —she wore it away from here when she went to Chicago to stay permanently. And I hadn't seen it. She had it tailored by a real milliner. And it was most becoming and beautiful thing you ever saw.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

MARIAN KENDALL: I know that I should have a place in the community, because hand-loom weaving is something that we should do for three different reasons.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: What are those?

MARIAN KENDALL: One reason: it's utilitarian. And it doesn't wear out the next day. And you know, synthetic material, which is the fourth kingdom of fibers,

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: —it is cold in the winter and hot in the summer.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: That's true, yeah.

MARIAN KENDALL: And the natural fibers are not like that.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: You could even wear a woolen fiber in the summer, and it wouldn't be as hot as the synthetic ones. But it's interesting to know about different fibers. They discovered in, Egypt, around a mummy, some material that they thought was either cotton or linen. But they couldn't quite name it. And later it was named ramie and it originally came from China. It was called "poor man's linen."

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Isn't that interesting?

MARIAN KENDALL: And the—do you want me to name those four—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes.

MARIAN KENDALL: —four fibers?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You named one of the points—

MARIAN KENDALL: Oh. Well—

[00:29:59]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh the fibers, yeah.

MARIAN KENDALL: Well, the cotton and the linen and ramie all belong to the vegetable kingdom. And a thousand others.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: And the goat's hair and the wool and the camel's hair. And the three

South American camels, the little fellows that—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Llamas?

MARIAN KENDALL: The largest and coarsest is the llama.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah.

MARIAN KENDALL: The next is the guanaco. It's a little coarse and I don't use it very much. But then there is a third.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Vicuña, would that be?

MARIAN KENDALL: That is the finest of all. The vicuña is the smallest. And it weaves up like silk.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: They didn't have silk in Peru. I went to Peru to study. And I stayed six months down there. And it was against the law to kill a vicuña.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Good.

MARIAN KENDALL: And the Indians were spinning with their small spindles. They'd come along the streets spinning away, and then sit down and spin. They'd nurse their babies and spin. And they were always spinning. And I would ask them if they would lend me their spindle. And they'd say, Who are you [they laugh], to know how to spin? Well—

[Cross talk.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Then you would—

MARIAN KENDALL: —when I—when I—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —surprise them when you took it, I bet.

MARIAN KENDALL: —spun, and surprised them. Oh, they wanted to adopt me.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Aw.

MARIAN KENDALL: And the—I wanted to stay and the government did offer me a job. And I said that I had sabbatical leave of a tiny little class in Chula Vista. [They laugh.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

MARIAN KENDALL: And they told me that I could come back if I came back within five years.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, I wish you had.

MARIAN KENDALL: I wish I had too. But it takes money to get down there and I didn't have it.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah.

MARIAN KENDALL: And I—by that time I was too old to get any scholarships or any anything. So I counted what money I had and I didn't have half enough. And then I sold everything but my virtue and [they laugh] I had enough to get there.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Uh-huh [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: And they paid me a dollar a month for the use of my looms and a lady taught the class. And so I was able to earn enough just being absent to get back home.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well [laughs], that must've been a wonderful experience for you though.

MARIAN KENDALL: Oh, it was. And the people were so very nice to me. And you—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: We have to change the reel, excuse me just a moment.

[END OF TRACK AAA_kendal65_8719_m.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: This is Betty Lochrie Hoag on August 26, 1965, interviewing Marian Kendall, reel number two. Miss Kendall, I do wish you'd tell that over for the tape, that in Peru the emperor's clothes are made of vicuña and bat hair?

MARIAN KENDALL: They shaved the hair from the bat, and mixed it with the vicuña yarn and that's the finest of the fibers.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, that is very interesting.

MARIAN KENDALL: The vicuña is—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Who catches the bats? [Laughs.]

MARIAN KENDALL: I don't think they're very hard to catch. But you know, there is a fiber that comes from a shellfish and there's another—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: From a shellfish?

MARIAN KENDALL: Yes, it's very rare. It seems like silk when it's woven up. And the other fiber is from the spiders. They're large spiders and some have yellow and some have green. The people care for them to a certain extent. Then when they are ready to spin their yarn, they're a little lazy and they don't spin a great deal. So, the children tickle them with a long straw or something and they rush and run up a tree or some place and then they reel up their little fiber. And they spin it, and it makes a very good material.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Does it have elasticity to it? [Cross talk.] Or strength of any kind?

MARIAN KENDALL: Well, I've never seen it. I just know a Frenchman that saw this in Sumatra. And it is mentioned in the encyclopedia.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And where's the shellfish found I wonder?

MARIAN KENDALL: In the Mediterranean.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: The Mediterranean?

MARIAN KENDALL: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, that's just fascinating. We probably should begin to talk about the Project period. I think it would be a good time to—

MARIAN KENDALL: Oh, the Project really is a marvelous thing that the government thought of.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Where were you when you first heard about it? How did you start?

MARIAN KENDALL: I was here in San Diego. I was staying in my studio two days, and I had three or four pupils. And the other part of the time I was babysitting and nursing and doing anything that came along so that I could pay my rent. But they didn't charge me at that time for my studio. And I remember the first—I mean, the last fair that they had in San Diego, Balboa Park, I demonstrated weaving on a small foot treadle loom. And I wove for quite a while, and I demonstrated to people passing by. And then I blindfolded thoroughly so that I couldn't see a wink. And I finished the day doing the same sort of weaving, and some people said that my blindfolded weaving was better than the weaving that I did with my eyes open.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: My goodness.

MARIAN KENDALL: And I was glad that I did it because [laughs] I've always felt of fibers with my fingers. If I wasn't sure of the grist, the size. When you are checking, you have to twist your fiber real tight and put it around your finger. And then the one that comes after, you twist that and put to the side of it, and you look at it. But if it's a dark and a light, you can't tell because you have optical illusions. But if you close your eyes and you put your fingers across a couple of times, you can tell whether one of them is bigger than the other one.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: My goodness.

MARIAN KENDALL: And I teach my pupils that. And they think it's fascinating because they really find that it's true in most instances. Some people can't grasp that, but others do. And weaving is innate in every human being. But it sometimes takes a long time to bring it to the surface. And when we were working on the Project, we were asked to make dozens of utilitarian things to be turned over to the county welfare.

[00:05:08]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, you were?

MARIAN KENDALL: To one [ph] thing that was considered a piece of art.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: Oh yes, sometimes we did a hundred rugs, and we turned it over to the county. And they gave it to the welfare—what do they call the recipients?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I don't know. The county welfare society, I think.

MARIAN KENDALL: No, it's part of the Project to—they're just called clients. County welfare clients. And we made all sorts of materials. We made a man's coat and tailored it. And a woman's suit. And we made 10 books of samples and swatches. And we even made a very fine weave to bind the backs of those books.

And this is the strangest thing that ever happened. I was going to give a talk to a group of weavers, and I said I would bring a book from the library that we used, and we gave to the library some years ago. And I walked across the street to the library to get the book and they said, "It's kept in a locker, and you'll have to pay a five-dollar deposit." And I said, "Oh my." I said, "I gave this to the library." And they said, "That doesn't matter." [Betty Hoag McGlynn laughs.] "You'll have to pay a deposit of five dollars." And I said, "I don't have five dollars, and I'm sure that I won't be able to get it right quickly." And I said, "Isn't there any way that I could, well—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Use my book back? [They laugh.]

MARIAN KENDALL: "Use my book?" And I said, "I'll sign papers saying that I will give you five dollars if I mar it or destroy it in any way." And she said, "No, I'm sorry." Very adamant. And so, I had to tell the girls. But they were quite amused because they did value it.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes.

MARIAN KENDALL: So, I've been happy ever since. [Betty Hoag McGlynn laughs] And you can get it, but they still want a five-dollar deposit. [They laugh.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, that is funny.

MARIAN KENDALL: And I think that a great many people that were so worried at the time about earning a living, and they not only were able to earn a living, they were able to do this craft and a great many of them used it in their homes. And it's taught them several things. It teaches them that you can do your uninteresting job and yet you can have a creative outlet. That you can use an old picture frame, you can make a little tapestry on it, or you can have a small loom, or you can have an Indian-type loom that has a long warp. And I have invented ways of adjusting this warp so that you can make a stole on a small little loom that is maybe a third the size of your stole. And—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. I remember that, only one—

MARIAN KENDALL: I used to be able to give University credit to the people that studied that —

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, is that right?

MARIAN KENDALL: —were going at that time. But since then, they have made another rule that doesn't allow credits for weaving, for some reason or other.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Miss Kendall, you were—you kept using the plural when you were talking about the work that you did on the Project. How many people were on the weaving project here?

MARIAN KENDALL: Well, part of the time there were 30.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: 30? My.

MARIAN KENDALL: And some of the time they would lay off people and then they would put them back on as they found the need.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Were you in charge of it?

MARIAN KENDALL: I was in charge of it. And I had the fun of taking out a few things at night and putting them back so I wouldn't discourage my new pupils. But—

[00:10:09]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You mean taking the work out and doing it over for them?

MARIAN KENDALL: Yes. [They laugh.]

When they made mistakes, they didn't see the mistakes. But when a person was able to do fairly good work, I always let them work on the good materials. We made five beautiful Indian rugs for the county fair once, the first fair that they had in Del Mar, and they were very well received.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Who designed those?

MARIAN KENDALL: We designed them.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You designed your own?

MARIAN KENDALL: Yes. But Donal Hord designed the last one entirely and he helped with the others. I designed them to a certain extent but I'm not a good draftsman. And he corrected a few things and made it more artistic. We had the first three tapestries in the making for quite a number of years, two or three years.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, really?

MARIAN KENDALL: There were five tapestries in all. One was made from silk stockings and only cost the city 75¢ for the warp. And that one has had more prizes than the ones that were made with imported yarn that the city gave us later.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Where is it now?

MARIAN KENDALL: It's in the storeroom.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, you have it here?

MARIAN KENDALL: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: What is the subject of?

MARIAN KENDALL: Well, it's a stylized peacock. It's a true weaving design. And I added some other designs that are really Peruvian for the outer borders. And there were 900 pairs of stockings, and I dyed 400 pairs and the others were different shades of browns and golds and tans that people had given us. And then we even had someone from the paper to interview the project and I told them that we needed some more stockings. And ladies would send their chauffeurs with bags full of silk stockings [they laugh] that had a hole in one pair and nothing in the other.

And then we used two different techniques. If you want to have a various smooth thread—like silk thread from your stockings—you cut it from the hem to the toe. And if you want it sort of nubby and it has a very interesting texture, then you make a spiral all the way around. And we used to cut with scissors, and by and by I bought a little cutter that you could just grind away and it would cut perfectly and fast and accurately.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Like a can opener, you mean? That type of thing?

MARIAN KENDALL: Yes. [They laugh.] It wasn't a can opener, but it was made specially to cut the carpet rags and we had all sorts [inaudible]—

[Airplane flies overhead; conversation halted.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: That was a loud one, wasn't it? You had all kinds of what?

MARIAN KENDALL: We used all kinds of soft, ragged clothing and we had some curtains once that were ripping apart just after we washed them. And yet I said, Use it and put your carpet warp close together and we'll see. And some of those rugs lasted 20 years, even when they were falling apart but of course the carpet warp was always new. And the city bought our carpet warp for us, and we made things with rags and then when we were restoring things at the art gallery and the Museum of Man, they gave us the kind of materials that we needed.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:15:09]

MARIAN KENDALL: And I had to use a Navajo spindle when I was restoring Navajo rugs because my spinning wheels would spin too fine. I couldn't get it coarse enough.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Did you go out on the reservation to study, to learn from them?

MARIAN KENDALL: When you know the principle of the thing you don't need to—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You do not need to—

MARIAN KENDALL: No. There's only three things that you can do to fibers to turn them into threads. You twist them, and then you fix it so that it won't untwist, and then you wind it or use your needle and keep twisting a little bit so that it will have the same twist. And a five-year old child has done very good spinning and weaving. And I had one pupil that was 107, and she was a brilliant pupil. And she had wanted me to teach her for seven years and I didn't have time to teach her, but—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Imagine being 100 and wanting to start learning something.

MARIAN KENDALL: Oh, she was—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: How brilliant.

MARIAN KENDALL: —a brilliant person and she kept up with all of the political angles and she knew more about what was going on in the world than her daughter who was a music teacher. [They laugh.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Just for the tape I want to say Miss Kendall has been sitting here carding while were talking. Isn't that what you were doing? Carding?

MARIAN KENDALL: Spinning. I was carding and spinning. I have—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, I didn't know the difference.

MARIAN KENDALL: The Navajo spindle is a much larger spindle than the one that I used in Peru. And they spin opposite most of the people of the world. In Persia they spin half of their yarn with a sunwise or clockwise twist. And the other half was a counterclockwise twist, because the Persian fabrics are so beautiful and fine that they said if they used all of the fibers with clockwise thread that it would be ugly, and they couldn't endure it. They couldn't sleep and dream beautiful dreams if their [they laugh]—if their fibers were all turning in the same direction. So, one turns left and one turns right.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Does that give them more strength?

MARIAN KENDALL: More beauty and more interesting.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Inaudible.]

MARIAN KENDALL: But it doesn't give them more strength. And in Peru and Mexico and all the other places that I visited—I was in Alaska and in Europe—everybody that I saw spinning goes clockwise. And the reason the Navajos' go counterclockwise, I'm sure, is because they learned surreptitiously. Because they learned from the Mexican Indians. And if they had been taught by the Mexican Indians, they would spin exactly the same way. And I've talked to several archeologists, and I explained this thing and they said, You're right, they learned surreptitiously. And they said that that was worth putting down in the book. And I think that the Museum of Man director, Mr. Rogers, probably put it in his book.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Interesting little piece for the history of mankind and archeology, isn't it?

MARIAN KENDALL: Well, I hope so.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Something that would help piece it together. Miss Kendall has just been showing me this perfectly beautiful rug which was designed—the last one of the ones on the Project.

MARIAN KENDALL: It wasn't a rug; it was a tapestry.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: A tapestry, I'm sorry.

MARIAN KENDALL: Gobelin technique.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And that, to me at least, means that all of your threads are loose on the back. Would you be good enough to explain technically what it really means?

MARIAN KENDALL: Well, in France, they called it beard and they are hanging down four or five inches. But it isn't really loose, it has a fastening.

[00:20:01]

But it's done for two reasons, we no longer have stone walls to wear the tapestry like they did in France in the beginning. But it's a much quicker ending. If you end it and you make it like the Scandinavians make their tapestries—and at one time the Gobelins used to send to Italy and to Scandinavian countries designs they wanted carried out, and they came back beautifully done but they were exactly the same front and back. [They laugh.] And they didn't want them that way. But you can tell the French tapestries that were made in the other countries because [laughs] of that.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You said when you worked on this one that you did the work from the back. And—

[Cross talk.]

MARIAN KENDALL: Yes, all tapestries—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —the design then comes out all done on the front.

MARIAN KENDALL: —that are made in the French manner, and the Gobelin technique, you use a mirror to check to see if you've left a thread out or if have a special reason for correcting something. But you shouldn't unroll your tapestry. It shouldn't be undone until it's entirely finished. And you check with a mirror. You can lie down under the loom and look at it if you want to. We just checked with a mirror. And we laid down on the loom once and took a picture.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

MARIAN KENDALL: Oh, we had all sorts of things happen. We were working in the basement of the veterans building over there on the last one and Mr. Field [ph] came in and laid his hat in the middle of it and I grabbed it so fast that it didn't do any harm and—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: What might it have done?

MARIAN KENDALL: Well, you can't put a handkerchief down on a very important work without stretching it a little.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh really? And it would make a difference?

MARIAN KENDALL: Then Mr. Wright had charge of the Project.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Stanton Macdonald [Stanton Macdonald-Wright].

MARIAN KENDALL: S. Macdonald.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes.

MARIAN KENDALL: And he had a heavier briefcase, and I wasn't watching him, and he laid it down and it took me five days of stretching my warp unmercifully till I got it so that it would be like the rest of the warp that had been stretched accidentally. [They laugh.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, I hope he never found out what he had done. [Inaudible.]

MARIAN KENDALL: Oh, I bawled him out good and proper. [Laughs.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, you did?

MARIAN KENDALL: Yes, I did. [They laugh.] But—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I don't think many people have done that to Mr. Wright.

MARIAN KENDALL: He didn't resent it.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: No, he's very sweet.

MARIAN KENDALL: He's very nice, and I've heard from him since. He writes a lovely letter. And I feel—well, really, I'm nothing and nobody as far as weaving is concerned now with one pupil. And all my ambition of weaving another tapestry is sort of buried deep now.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Inaudible.]

MARIAN KENDALL: And I'm happy knowing that this chief blanket is valuable. And you do have to be a good weaver to do re-weaving.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: This is something you're doing for the Museum of Man.

MARIAN KENDALL: Yes, it is.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Was it torn or ripped and you're—

MARIAN KENDALL: Well, during the World War number II somebody took a knife and whacked a big place in it. And it is very frail and one corner, about—well, I'll say it was four feet on one edge that was badly worn and then the corner of the red and two black stripes about 12 inches. And that is really done properly. And I know that the opposite end that has to be done entirely across, it's 72 inches wide. A chief blanket is always quite large. And it had so many holes that it pays to put the entire border in.

[00:25:02]

And it takes a long time to spin on an Indian spindle, that's the main thing that is difficult. I love doing it, but it makes it a long time in the making.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes.

MARIAN KENDALL: And nobody these days understands. And when you make tapestry and it's \$100 a square foot nobody thinks anything about it. But when [laughs]—when you re-weave at it takes three times that long it does seem terrible.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, I know they appreciate what you can do. I was over there—

MARIAN KENDALL: Oh, oh, yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —this afternoon and they told me how wonderful it was that you could repair these things for them.

MARIAN KENDALL: They appreciate it. And the Fine Arts Gallery every so often brings out this 12 and half foot wide 16th century tapestry and it's on exhibit sometimes for three or four months, and then they put it away again.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I wanted to get back to this one we started to talk about that was done on the Project because you told me some interesting things before we were on the tape that I want you to tell again if you will. And one was the fact that you were speaking of having to do things on the reverse and also when it's lettering upside down and across the top. And so, when it's folded over—

MARIAN KENDALL: Oh, we had to use mirrors. We printed these names: the WPA and Donal Hord's name and—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Let me read it off as it is. May I? For the tape? Just as it reads across here, so we'll have an exact record for the Archives. Yes.

MARIAN KENDALL: "D. Hord Federal Art Project, WPA 1939, M. Kendall, U. Kelly, F. Manchester."

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Good.

MARIAN KENDALL: And Mrs. Manchester drew those all and we then used the mirror to make our—it's called a cartoon.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see. And you said it took you as long to do that as it did all of the rest of the tapestry.

MARIAN KENDALL: No, not quite. [They laugh.] No, it—

[Cross talk.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Almost.

MARIAN KENDALL: It did take us a tremendous long time. But—

[Airplane engine noise.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: We have another plane, we'll have to wait. [Laughs.] This tapestry is called *The Fruit of the Earth*. Isn't it?

MARIAN KENDALL: What?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: *The Fruit of the Earth*?

MARIAN KENDALL: *Fruits of the Earth*. The people and the grain and the fruit, and Donal didn't name it, we named it.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, did you?

MARIAN KENDALL: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: But he did the original design and you had you had to vary it. You said you put in the [inaudible]—

MARIAN KENDALL: We changed it four times, and I had to move the fruit away from the head because it didn't look right. And they say a good weaver weaves all day and when she sees that there's something wrong after a day's work is done, she takes it all out and starts the next day and puts it in properly.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Goodness.

MARIAN KENDALL: And I have had some wonderful weavers. And when we were working on the restorations in the art gallery Thelma Wolcott [ph], and Emma Schulz, and Ora Dobbs [ph] helped me. And Emma Schulz.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Emma Schulz, thank you.

MARIAN KENDALL: S-C-H-U-L-Z.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Thank you. Who was responsible for the color selection in the tapestry?

MARIAN KENDALL: I had to do all of that, and I also did the dying.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Actually making the yarn that color?

MARIAN KENDALL: We had silk and wool and we had a mixture of linen and wool for the warp. And the fading of the dyed material was something that I dreamed at night and tried out and it worked. No one told me. And it was so perfect a match that Mr. Poland looked at it when it was all finished and he said, "Do you mean to tell me that—Why," he said, "Well it doesn't look as if you put a needle in it. All these three years and you can't tell that you did a thing."

[00:30:20]

And I said "Mr. Poland, here's the proof." I said, "Here are the pictures." And he said, "I was just teasing." But he did appreciate the fact that we took pictures before and after. And—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I hope you have some photographs that we can borrow for microfilming showing this. I think we have, in Mr. Field's [ph] things, a newspaper picture of this tapestry you have here. And I think of another one done in 1939 that was exhibited in the Los Angeles Museum, that was Indian mother and child.

MARIAN KENDALL: Oh, this is it.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Is that it?

[Cross talk.]

MARIAN KENDALL: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Because I have—

MARIAN KENDALL: Only one—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —that's the *Fruit of the Earth* for that one. Or is that just another name for it?

MARIAN KENDALL: Well, Mother and Child is what they called it up there probably, but this is the only one.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, and you said that you told Mr. Hord that—

MARIAN KENDALL: The one—the one at Los Angeles was the first one, *The Peacock*.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, that was?

MARIAN KENDALL: That's the one that got first honorable mention in the art gallery exhibit of weaving.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: The second—or, I mean the last one that you did, the *Fruits of the Earth*, was for the fine art project and the newspaper article—this was *San Diego Evening Tribune* for June of 1939—said that it was a decoration for the mayor's office in the civic center. Was it hung there for some time? Because you have the original right here now. I wondered.

MARIAN KENDALL: Right, they were hung in the mayor's office, and we had an oriental rug that we made and that was on the floor for many years. But the mayor changed, and the tapestries were not—they weren't wanted. They didn't want anything on the walls.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: A change of style or something?

MARIAN KENDALL: And they belonged to the city of San Diego, and they were given to the Fine Arts Gallery for taking care.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Uh-huh [affirmative]. And—

MARIAN KENDALL: And they have loaned them, and I have taken them all the way across the continent and back.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh really?

MARIAN KENDALL: I had them insured and I think the city paid for the insurance. I'm sure it did. And when I sent them without me to different places—up in the state of Washington and in Northern California—they paid the insurance and the freight. But when I talked to three different art groups in Texas—one was the university and the other one was a private college, and the other one was the children's museum in Fort Worth, and I talked in Atlanta, and I talked in Jacksonville. And there were two or three other places that were more or less private exhibits.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And you are showing these as you talked to illustrate, probably, what you had done.

MARIAN KENDALL: Yes, I did.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: What were the names—

MARIAN KENDALL: And it was an inspiration to a great many people. And they did not believe that Americans could be good tapestry weavers because in France the tapestry weaver is not allowed to even have a job unless his father and grandfather and his great grandfather were good tapestry weavers. [Laughs.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: And my pupils were so enthusiastic that they just worked so hard and so happily, and I finally invented the loom where three of my people could work at one time. As it was, we started out by having a four by five-and-a-half-foot plan. And we had our warp. And the loom was plenty big. And everything was working fine. You don't need a beater when you make tapestry. But we used the reed just to keep the threads apart.

[00:35:14]

And then I had this brainstorm again, and I cut my harnesses in three places. And I staggered them, two in the back and one in the front so that everyone—oh, and I put two extra treadles—I put treadles for the right hem harness and for the middle one and for the left, so that I could have three sitting on the stools, and they were working at the same time. And that's what speeded up this last one so, and the next to the last one.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And the last one you said it took 100 hours to do a square foot—

MARIAN KENDALL: No—

[Cross talk.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —in the beginning—

MARIAN KENDALL: In the beginning, no. In the beginning of the tapestry, which was the Discovery of San Diego, there were three, San Diego: The Discovery, and The Mission period, and Modern San Diego.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: That accounts for all of—

MARIAN KENDALL: Modern San Diego has a technique that's almost like this. We were gradually—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh. Gobelin.

MARIAN KENDALL: Yes, it's the Gobelin.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Gobelin.

MARIAN KENDALL: And yet people said because it was such a simple design that the Gobelins would turn over in their graves. But it's the technique. I didn't have any intention of using their sort of designs.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You weren't imitating—

MARIAN KENDALL: I don't believe in it in the first place.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah.

MARIAN KENDALL: A weaver should design her own. But we were not allowed to, and they still don't allow you in France to design your own. Unless you just do something for yourself. And those famous artists, the ones that sent their weaving here to this country lately, have the name of the designer, the famous artist, but nothing to tell you that there was a weaver.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh really?

MARIAN KENDALL: Nothing at all.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Isn't that a shame?

MARIAN KENDALL: Most of them are horrible designs of modern—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Abstractions?

MARIAN KENDALL: Abstractions. And some of them, of course, are flowers and seascapes and things, but it's carried out with colored threads, and it looks like a painting. The Mortlake tapestries from England looked like etchings and that is the wrong thing. Only the Peruvians and the Egyptians knew what they were doing when they were designing.

The French people were wonderful weavers and some of them were not able to carry out the entire cartoon that the artist made. And they simplified it and changed it so that a weaver could live and produce something. And it takes 10 times longer. It takes so long to produce one of those tapestries that artists designed and to what end? I don't know.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: The artist should stay art and painting paint and the tapestry is a different thing.

MARIAN KENDALL: It should be. And I've heard lectures to that effect.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, really?

MARIAN KENDALL. Yes. And the assistant art director when Mr. Poland was our director gave a talk and he had looked it up in some books that proved that I was correct and that his theory was the same as mine. And we were just buddies after that. [They laugh.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I'll bet that was fun. In your weaving have you ever met a woman who used to be our—she's from Montana, we used to know her, Mary Meigs Atwater.

MARIAN KENDALL: Yes, I know her.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: She's written, I believe, some definitive books on weaving. She died, I think, a couple of years ago.

MARIAN KENDALL: Four years ago.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: She had a daughter who was my age and in high school I visited in her home. She had a beaver ranch up in the mountains where they raised beavers commercially, and she had a place to do her weaving and spinning. The dining room consisted of a bridge that went over a mountain stream, and she could sit there and do her work and eat her lunch and throw her orange peelings in the stream [they laugh] and they'd go away, and she wouldn't have to stop her work. It was a wonderful set up for an artist. [They laugh.]

[00:40:30]

But I noticed in the paper that she had died and that her library, I believe, came down here to San Diego. Did she leave it here, or Laguna Beach, I've forgotten which.

MARIAN KENDALL: I don't know.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: So I just supposed she'd probably gotten down here in her work.

MARIAN KENDALL: She taught down here.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

MARIAN KENDALL: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I haven't seen her for 30 years, but I do remember weaving when—

MARIAN KENDALL: Mrs. Atwater's first cousin was the one that I studied with, Miss Kent.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, is that right?

MARIAN KENDALL: And Miss Kent—is this being recorded?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Do not want to say what you were going to say?

MARIAN KENDALL: Well, it's—I'd rather not say it for the record.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, let's turn it—[Recorder stops, restarts.]—was one of the last tapes I made which was with June Wayne [ph] who has revived the lithography, the art of lithography, in this country. She has a studio in Hollywood and it's most interesting. She felt it with a dying art. And she got a Ford Foundation grant and has a thriving business there, has artists from all over the United States coming, and they have learned all of the techniques and have put lithography back in the market with painting as a fine art product.

MARIAN KENDALL: It should be.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And a wonderful thing. And so, I'll tell the tape that you were just telling me that only two women in this country have done anything about reviving native arts, and one was—

MARIAN KENDALL: No. No, not native arts, a technique—a lost technique of weaving.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Good. Well, tell the tape what you told me. You could do it much better.

MARIAN KENDALL: Well, the lost technique of Atta Lowel's [ph] revival was Indian belts. And there was some of the belts that were not so difficult, and people could weave them, but Atta Lowel's [ph] revival took her many, many months. And she is a wonderful weaver. And she taught a class in San Diego of belt weaving, and she gave a lecture for the San Diego County children. And she sometimes taught privately. And some of weaving teachers used to go to Hollywood to study in the summer with her. And she's really appreciated.

And Mrs. Gertrude Howells was the one that revived a very important dead technique. I have two of the original samples that were just dripping apart, and they had been photographed and they are in a book that I borrowed from the art gallery in Balboa Park. And the technique is an open technique that is used in Peru and other countries. But this particular one had been dead for hundreds of years.

And there was a lady that was writing this book about the Spanish weaves and laces and embroideries, and Mrs. Bynes was a personal friend of Mrs. Howells. And Mrs. Bynes' book fascinated me. But I never dreamed that I would ever see the person that had had a hand on one of the pieces of material that was so old. But one day a lady came in, and I had met her once before, and she said, I have a letter here. And they said find some weaver that is going to always weave whether she eats or whether she doesn't, because I want that person to come to me and let me teach them this technique because I might die sometime.

[00:45:04]

And she said, I've written to her about you, and she said, Are you going to always weave? And I said, "As long as I live." And she said, "All right." Well, she didn't say here's a ticket to Las Cruces, New Mexico. [They laugh.] And I had 50¢ and it didn't take me very far. And I had met a very charming and beautiful woman from Kentucky, and I just fell in love with this person. And she had plenty of money, but I had never asked for a loan. And I was 30 some odd years old, and I felt that I didn't ever want to borrow anything. But I couldn't hike to Las Cruces. And it was Easter vacation, and I met this lady in the store one afternoon, about the

middle of vacation. And I told her that I'd been invited, and I had this letter and I showed it to her. And she said, You are cordially invited to come down and learn this technique that I revived. And she said I'll hope you can come soon because this is vacation. And I looked at her and she looked at me and she said, "You want to borrow the fare, don't you?"

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

MARIAN KENDALL: I said yes. And she said, "Let me see. I'll call you up in the morning and I'll let you know." The next morning, she said, "Yes I have it." She said, "Grab your clothes and put them in a suitcase and hurry over." And she gave me the money for a round trip ticket to Las Cruces. And I—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, wonderful.

MARIAN KENDALL: —got the bus immediately. And Mrs. Gertrude Howells, whose husband was a diplomat, and Mrs. Bynes' people were also in the diplomatic corps—and they were living in Europe at that time. She was living with her daughter at the time and her husband was the professor of romance languages at the University of New Mexico when I was there. And the Feathers [ph] are still my friends. Her daughter wants me to write this book.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I think you should too. I certainly think you should.

MARIAN KENDALL: And I've written it. It has 10 full pages. And the rest should be swatches of our technique that Mrs.—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Atta Lowel [ph]?

MARIAN KENDALL: No, Mrs. Howells taught me. Mrs. Howells taught me. And I was her only pupil.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, this book certainly should be written.

MARIAN KENDALL: And Mrs. Atwater got in touch with Mrs. Howells and borrowed some of her things and photographed them and wrote a book about it and didn't give Mrs. Howells any credit whatsoever. And I put up such a howl that she finally corrected herself.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Good. [They laugh.] Well, I think having been her student that somehow, sometime, you must write the book. It certainly should be—and transmitted for other people—

MARIAN KENDALL: Well, it's written—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —[inaudible] it's very important.

MARIAN KENDALL: —and this is the funny part of it. Mrs. Howells was not a weaver at all.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Really?

MARIAN KENDALL: And she and Mrs. Bynes went all over Spain trying to find some old lady that would teach them how to do this particular weave. And they said, No, that wasn't done in Spain. We're sure it wasn't. Spanish people don't do fine work like that, they do a courser work. And it proved out that that was right. But she went to Germany, and they had never heard of the technique in Germany. They went all over Europe. They even went up in the mountains of Spain in a little donkey cart, and one old woman looked at it and she said That's been dead for hundreds of years. Why don't you let it stay dead? [Betty Hoag McGlynn laughs.]

[00:50:01]

And they said, We want to weave this technique. And finally. Mrs. Bynes came back to the United States and Mrs. Howells was going on a vacation to the Scandinavian country. And she went to one of the finest weaving schools in all of the Scandinavian countries and she brought her samples out and she went to the school that she felt was the very best. And it was sponsored by the government. And they said, We don't know that technique, we've never seen these things before. And we have been teaching 10 months and we just simply can't be bothered anymore. We'd have to leave at once. And she said, Oh, and to think that this is dead and has been for such a long, long time. And Mrs. Howells said, I'm going to get

a room across the street from here and I'll run over to see you in the morning, maybe you'll have a change of heart. And they said "Do you weave? Are you a weaver?" And she said, "I know nothing about weaving. I want to learn." "Oh," they said, "Isn't that terrible? You want to do a technique that's been done hundreds of years ago—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Without knowing how to weave.

MARIAN KENDALL: —and you don't know how to weave?" And they tore their hair, but they threaded up a little loom, a little foot treadle loom. And the next morning when she came in they said, Here's a studio key. We don't know you, but we know you won't touch anything. And here is your loom and it's all threaded, and any numbskull can throw a shuttle back-and-forth. And since you want this revived, you revive it. [They laugh.] And she said that she felt like breaking down and weeping right then and there because she felt that she was alone in a wilderness. And that those two people were the only ones that could save her. But she said that when they gave her the key and said goodbye, she told them goodbye. And [laughs] that was that.

And she went over every day, and she took her samples with her and those little swatches that were just about ready to fall into dust. And she unraveled some of the best ones and she couldn't still see what it was all about. She thought that maybe she could. And then she'd weave away, plain weaving, and she wove and wove and wove. Just plain tabby. Well, that was just what she should have done. And every night she said she'd go to bed thinking about that technique, and, well, weeks later she woke up one morning knowing something had happened in the night. And she went across to the studio and she threw her shuttle forward a little ways and then she threw it back and that seemed to mean something.

And yet, she couldn't seem to get any further. And oh, she said a prayer that no weaver ever said before. And she locked up the studio and went back to her room. She ate. She went to sleep. And nothing happened the next day, and nothing happened the next night. But the third night she knew that she knew the technique. And the next morning she didn't wait to dress, she threw a bathrobe on, and she scuttled across this main street of the town very early in the morning with her robes flying out the back and she got to the studio and opened the door and she started throwing her shuttle. And she had it. She had it. And she said—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Quiet a story [laughs].

MARIAN KENDALL: Shea said, "Now don't tell my daughter."

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Why?

MARIAN KENDALL: She said—I've never told her in all these years. "Don't tell my daughter. Because," she said, "she wouldn't believe me. She believes that I unraveled and got it." And she said, "A good weaver could do that, but," she said, "I couldn't." [Betty Hoag McGlynn laughs.] She said it was ESP, extra sensory perception. And the fact that all people have an innate knowledge of weaving. Everybody. Every human being. It's the same as light. Or rhythm. Or sound.

[00:55:27]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You just open yourself to it and let it come to you.

MARIAN KENDALL: If you know, and you let go and let God, it's possible to do wonderful weaving. One of my pupils met a scientist and his wife in Washington when they had a Weaver's Guild meeting, she went all the way across the continent. And this scientist and his wife became so interested in weaving that they finally quit teaching in the college where they had good, well-paid jobs, there in Washington. And they've been teaching weaving and making patterns and doing all sorts of creative work with weaving. And they've done more than anybody, I would think. And they said that you can spend an entire lifetime weaving and you won't scratch the surface. You can always, always invent something. And make something beautiful and make different combinations. And there's no end to it because it's a fundamental principle of the universe.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: No wonder you enjoyed dedicating your life to it. When I came to see you [Marian Kendall laughs] earlier this afternoon you were showing me dyes that you'd just made using mulberry. Now was this—[cross talk] do you pick your own mulberry?

MARIAN KENDALL: Oh, I just suddenly thought about it.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Really?

MARIAN KENDALL: One of my friends brought me a half gallon of mulberry juice and I drank mulberry juice for several days and then it started fermenting. And the only thing I could think of was to use it for dye. And—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, the color is beautiful on the silk. The color you get.

MARIAN KENDALL: The first thing I did was to take a white silk blouse and dye it. And it came out exactly the color of the mulberry juice. And then I thought, oh, I must wash it with soap if it has its own mordant. And it didn't fade. And I wore it for years and it never faded. And now I find that you can boil it a little longer and you get a different dye and a different shade, and you can put vinegar in it and you can get still a different shade. And you can use all sorts of mordants, and each mordant has its own shade. A mordant is something that you usually soak the fibers or you soak the material and soften it a little so that dye will penetrate when you put it in the hot die.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see, mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: And it is a remarkable thing. And I would never know one-tenth of what I've told you if the government had not sponsored my work. And the good that I did then was immediate. And it helped 30 people besides me. And I've made friends and I've done something that will stay for a long time. They say that tapestries last longer than sculpture and paintings.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, is that right?

MARIAN KENDALL: But I don't know. That is one of the things that I'd like to prove. I just know that those curtains that were dripping apart when we fished them out of the water and put them in our loom, you can make a material that has the weft that covers up the warp. And you can have that that has some of the warp showing and little tufts of rag sticking between each warp, and then you can also have a warp-faced fabric that is made with rags, and it's soft, and it keeps your shoe from wearing it out too fast. But the warp—when the warp wears, you have no rug unless you just keep repairing it. But 20 to 30 years is the average life of a rag rug that's washed once every month.

[01:00:14]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: The washing is important to preserve it.

MARIAN KENDALL: Yes, the sand wears it out.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: The dirt would cut it, uh-huh [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: And do you know that we import rag rugs from Sweden?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: No, I didn't [laughs].

MARIAN KENDALL: And some interior decorators do do it. And one lady says, "I have Swedish modern decorations with rag rugs on the floor." And I saw that they were lovely. And they weren't sewn together. She staggered the colors and she had three-yard-wide runners instead of a wall-to-wall carpet or a large drugget. And she says, "When these wear," she says, "I'm afraid I won't be able to import any more rag rugs." I said, "All right. You run down to San Diego and I'll make you anything you want." [They laugh.] And I said, "If I'm not there any of my pupils will be glad to help you."

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Miss Kendall, before our tape runs out, I wanted to ask you the question I asked all the artists and actually, you've already answered it, about whether you think the Federal Arts Project was worthwhile to, in your case, weaving. Certainly, you've already answered that you thought it was a wonderful thing for you personally and for the industry in California.

MARIAN KENDALL: Well, it taught the value of things. And it also revived something that belonged to the first people that came over that wove from necessity. And in the South, we wove from necessity, and we wove our own clothing and the clothing of the slaves because,

well, Sherman's army came through and burned us out, you see. [They laugh.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You had to weave something to put on your back.

MARIAN KENDALL: Mrs. Vanderbilt revived it where she was told that it hadn't died out. And that's why she started in Asheville, North Carolina, to revive weaving. But there were some other little isolated places in New England and in the Middle West that were still doing weaving. And so altogether we have created something that helped a great many people still. Because it keeps your equilibrium, when you hate the thing that you are having to earn your living and you want to do creative work. You can do a little weaving every day. Or you can do any kind of artwork every day. But the average person doesn't do artwork. And the average person does not do sculpture. But the average person really does bite into weaving and enjoy it tremendously.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You've certainly left me with a desire to try to learn some. It's been just fascinating.

MARIAN KENDALL: The Federal Art Project didn't know that they were doing such a lot of good when they were first to doing it. They were trying to do something immediately to keep people from starving. And a lot of them were. I had fallen on my face faint from hunger.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Really?

MARIAN KENDALL: And a woman dragged me into her house and gave me something that I'd hated all my life, but it tasted wonderful. It was codfish that had a lot of salt in it. [They laugh.]

But—excuse me—soon after that somebody sent for me. I don't remember who it was. But they asked me if I knew how to weave. And I said, I don't know much else except weaving, and housework and nursing. And I'd had, oh, six months in one hospital, and six months in another, and I found that everybody in hospitals want to learn to weave.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, well [laughs].

MARIAN KENDALL: And they have people go around to the hospitals. And at one time the government didn't know that I was working on a weaving project. And they sent for me to go to Pasadena and invent looms and invent ways of helping the soldiers that had only one arm or one leg, or that had mental kinks, that should be able to walk and use their arms, but they had a mental block. And I knew how to do it.

[01:05:05]

And I knew how to invent looms and other people didn't, because I'd invented looms for my weavers. And I'd invented those that you could roll up your material and it wouldn't hurt to move them. The loom folded up and tied tight so that it didn't take up much room and it protected the cloth.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Was this part of the Project? Doing it for the hospital?

MARIAN KENDALL: I was doing it for the Project. But when I got to Pasadena, they said I was too old.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Too old?

MARIAN KENDALL: And then they sent for me again and I was too old still.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, for heaven's sake.

MARIAN KENDALL: And they advised me to tell—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: But you weren't very old at that time.

MARIAN KENDALL: Yes, I was past that age, and they said that they would excuse me. First, I had a long interview with two or three people and they asked me all these questions. And I answered them right, evidently. And they kept on and they sent me to somebody else and I answered those questions right. And when I finally was asked if I could invent looms for each person's needs, and I said I'd be glad to and that I could and I would. And they said, Just the

person we need. And you don't have to study. You don't have to take any preliminaries. You go to work tomorrow. And you have your commission to start with the day you start to work. And my dear, I would not tell that I was a different age.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, I—

MARIAN KENDALL: I told just what I was.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Good for you. [They laugh.] [Cross talk.] Take you or leave you.

MARIAN KENDALL: [Laughs.] And they said, Well, it shouldn't matter but it does for the government, and we'll have to tell you goodbye.

[END OF TRACK AAA_kendal65_8720_m.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: This is Betty Lochrie Hoag on the August 26, 1965, interviewing Marian Kendall, reel three. We were talking about the benefits of the Federal Arts Project. And you said there was something you wanted to say about the government's part in this thing.

MARIAN KENDALL: Well, they, of course, did it to help us in the Depression.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: And they certainly accomplished what they started out to do.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: And they accomplished a great deal more. They made the artist feel that he was important who had never been important but was a good artist. And he did his best for more than one reason, because he knew that the government was going to sponsor him and feed him while he did this. And he could do it with great verve. And he could do something that would last for many years. And we have need of such things in this country that wouldn't have been done if the government had not sponsored it. And a lot of people have looked down on artists, and it made them feel that the government wasn't looking down them and recognized them for what they were. And they have examples of so many of the artists that have passed on. And it's sort of in line with the—with the European, especially Scandinavian countries, that sponsored the best craftsman, the best artists. And not only that, in the Scandinavian countries, they sponsor a weaving school. They sponsor a weaver. They sponsor them to—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Isn't that wonderful.

MARIAN KENDALL: —a great extent. And they not only give them orders to make some one thing like the government did. We made two oriental rugs and five tapestries. Well, the governments in Sweden, for instance, that I particularly know—and also in Norway—they not only sponsored them and sponsored their schools, but they gave them orders to make sheets and pillowcases and towels for hospitals and all kind of public institutions. And it kept them busy. And it caused them to earn a living that they wouldn't. And that would be one of the things that remind you of the WPA.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: It certainly does.

MARIAN KENDALL: And I think it's a wonderful thing. And I've always been proud of the fact that I was able to work for the government on my work. And I never would have built these tapestries. I would've had maybe one. But I never would have been able to go across the continent. Of course, I paid my own expense and took these things. But I was invited to go to the art departments of universities in different places that I—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: It's been a wonderful experience.

MARIAN KENDALL: —I never would have done if I had been doing this on my own. I wouldn't have—I wouldn't have gotten outside of San Diego.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Miss Kendall, were all 30 people working on your project women?

MARIAN KENDALL: No.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Were some of them—

MARIAN KENDALL: I had—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —men weavers?

MARIAN KENDALL: —I had—I had three men weavers. And—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Did you?

MARIAN KENDALL: —I had a man that did the janitor work. So, I had four men besides my 30 women. And the deaf-mute that was a weaver was one of the best weavers I had. And he was so quick. And, oh, because he was stone deaf and born that way, while the weavers— they just talked amongst themselves and paid no attention to him, because he wove so fast that they didn't think that he even knew that they were there. But half of the time, [laughs] he knew what they were saying, because he could read their lips.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

MARIAN KENDALL: And he knew everything that was going on. [Betty Hoag McGlynn laughs.] And—[they laugh]—

[00:05:03]

And he had a lot of fun. And he helped to keep the looms in repair. And he did so many things that were not weaving. And I had one Italian cabinetmaker that enjoyed weaving. And he built half a dozen looms, I think. And there was one old English gentleman, Mr. Shuttleworth [ph], that was so thrilled with the weaving that he wanted to—but that was when I was teaching under the government. It was ESP. It wasn't producing things for the government. I was teaching under the government.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Uh-huh [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: And this Mr. Shuttleworth [ph] was so thrilled that he decided that he would build spinning wheels and looms and things. And he would study during the day, and he'd go home and build these things. And he's only 103 now. And he recognizes me when I go down to the—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Really?

MARIAN KENDALL: —rest home to see him.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh. Have most of these—did most of these people go on with weaving? Have they since that time?

MARIAN KENDALL: A great many of them did. And some of them—the younger ones got married, and they had things that they show their children. And some of them had mothers that came from foreign countries that brought a few samples of their own weaving. And so, they're teaching their children to appreciate the craftwork and the artwork that came down through them and their mothers from—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: That's a marvelous thing.

MARIAN KENDALL: —other counties.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes.

MARIAN KENDALL: And we, of course, do weaving that's more like the Scandinavian and the German. And the weaving that comes from Mexico and Egypt and Peru is much finer, very fine. And it's not practical. The weaving in those countries was done by people that were the cream of the country's young people, with strong, wonderful eyes and physiques. And they would give—they were sort of like prisoners, they were kept in a compound.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, really?

MARIAN KENDALL: And they did nothing else but weave. But they were treated like kings and queens. And they were given food and drink and sometimes servants to wait on them.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Sounds like the queen bee, doesn't it?

MARIAN KENDALL: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: In a hive.

MARIAN KENDALL: At one time in civilization, weavers were appreciated. And weavers are very versatile. And the government could sponsor me, and I would study all over the world, because, in my spite of my 73 years, I still want to write an adequate book with all these things that I've told you, as well as the little one about the lacy weave that we—that we—that I studied under Mrs. Howells.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah.

MARIAN KENDALL: And the daughter lives in Italy, Mrs. Feather [ph]. But I hear from her, and she keeps asking me, When is the book to published?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, you certainly should publish it.

MARIAN KENDALL: And I never would've done any of these things if the government—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Inaudible] the government.

MARIAN KENDALL: —hadn't have inspired me in the beginning. And I was nothing and nobody. And now, I feel that I'm something. And I hope to be somebody yet. [They laugh.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You—

MARIAN KENDALL: I—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —are indeed already. I thank you so much for our interview. I can't tell you how I've enjoyed it. It's been an—

MARIAN KENDALL: Oh, well, it's been wonderful.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —interesting thing to hear about.

MARIAN KENDALL: And I'll think of a thousand things that I wanted to tell you that—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah. Maybe they'll renew my grant, and I can come back [they laugh] because we haven't finished with all the talking, I'm sure.

MARIAN KENDALL: Well, I'm so happy that you were not too tired listening to my—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I've enjoyed it, Miss Kendall.

MARIAN KENDALL: —excitement about weaving.

[00:10:00]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I've loved it. And thank you so much.

MARIAN KENDALL: You're very welcome.

[Recorder stops, restarts.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: We have an addendum for the tape. And I don't know what it is. We were mentioning the Smithsonian is all.

MARIAN KENDALL: The lady that I was working for was the widow of Jay Hambidge.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, really?

MARIAN KENDALL: And—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Dynamic symmetry man?

MARIAN KENDALL: —we used dynamic symmetry in our weaving in—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

MARIAN KENDALL: —in the Jay Hambidge Art Foundation in—[Audio break.] [The tape didn't record in here. -Ed.] Mostly spinning—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: —not much weaving. And I enjoyed going up to her house, because she lived and breathed dynamic symmetry into everything that she wove—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Really? Huh.

MARIAN KENDALL: —for herself. But this month-long exhibit was a very successful sort of thing for our people. And they kept a count of how many people came there. And I had known Dr. Fuchs [ph], an older director. And I felt that I wanted to do something for the government that the Jay Hambidge Foundation was not able to do.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: And I wouldn't have been able to do it if the government hadn't sponsored my work. And guess what it was?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I can't imagine. What did you do?

MARIAN KENDALL: I took an old 200-year-old shuttle that they got when they were measuring the Parthenon in Greece. And I spun from the time the doors opened. I carted my wool, and I used this distaff to hold my wool in place. And I used both of my hands. And I let this little old Greek shuttle spin from the time they opened—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

MARIAN KENDALL: —until after they closed. And it was the day after Thanksgiving. And Mrs. Hambidge appreciated it. And she was taking her stuff down while I entertained the people. And they all were so fascinated. And about every 20 minutes, they changed. Those people went on, and I rested a few minutes. And then, I talked for 20 minutes again. And I demonstrated this all day long. I didn't know I was hungry at noon, and I didn't know anything was happening until the guard said, "It is five o'clock, lady." And I was so glad that I could do one thing that the Jay Hambidge people appreciated and that the people in the Smithsonian thought was worthwhile. And there were thousands of people that passed in front of my little platform.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: What year was that? Do you remember at all?

MARIAN KENDALL: Oh, that was six years ago, I think.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, just six years ago?

MARIAN KENDALL: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh. Hm.

MARIAN KENDALL: And while I was there, a man that was working with the blind came along. He said, "Could you answer questions?" And I said, "I'd be very happy to in about five minutes, if you'll just sit there and wait for me." And he said, "I have taught my people to spin on spinning wheels." And he says, "I can't sell the material." And I said, "Oh, yes, you can, when you spin the nubby homespun-y sort of thing that Mrs. Hambidge does."

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: And he said, "But what sort of work does she do?"

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I said, "I'll show you some that they've spun." So, I showed them hanks that they'd already spun.

MARIAN KENDALL: And they said, "Well, ours looks so perfect that the people that would buy it say it's made in a factory."

[00:15:07]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Sure. It lacks that homemade look.

MARIAN KENDALL: "And it doesn't look right. It doesn't feel right. We think it's made in a factory." And he says, "I watch them while they're doing it." And I said, "They are perfectionists." And they're not—they don't see what they're doing—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: —but their soul is doing it perfectly." And it comes out perfectly.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Are these blind people?

MARIAN KENDALL: And they were entirely blind people.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

MARIAN KENDALL: And I can spin when I'm blind and I can weave when I'm blind.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You knew what it was—

MARIAN KENDALL: And I've thought—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —that they were doing.

MARIAN KENDALL: —many times that I would have to weave when I'm blind because I've had trouble with my eyes. And I taught the blind people here in San Diego that were teaching the blind—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah.

MARIAN KENDALL: —the blind teacher that taught the blind.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIAN KENDALL: And I didn't charge her for it. And I was so happy that I was able.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Isn't that wonderful?

MARIAN KENDALL: And Mrs. Mack [ph] taught the blind. And they earned their living, indirectly—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah.

MARIAN KENDALL: —of course. And I couldn't have done it if the government hadn't been sponsoring my weaving school.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, that's another wonderful thing that came from it.

MARIAN KENDALL: Isn't it?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I wondered also if perhaps you did any demonstration weaving at the Fair in San Francisco in 1939 or '40.

MARIAN KENDALL: No, I was invited—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: So many of us did.

MARIAN KENDALL: —to come up there and—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I thought—

MARIAN KENDALL: —and demonstrate.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —probably you would have.

MARIAN KENDALL: They wanted me to demonstrate tapestry weaving at the fair, but I couldn't go. And it's—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I thought maybe you just forgot—

MARIAN KENDALL: —very difficult—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —to bring it up.

MARIAN KENDALL: —to do demonstrations on tapestry. It's so slow that people don't want to look at it even.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see.

MARIAN KENDALL: And if you did it very coarse and very quickly, you could—
you could demonstrate Navajo weaving better than you could tapestry weaving.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah.

MARIAN KENDALL: But I keep thinking back—if it wasn't for the government, I wouldn't have had all these experiences. I wouldn't have ever worked at the Jay Hambidge Art Foundation. I never would have demonstrated how the Greeks used to spin on their little spindles. And I have a friend now that's going to bring me a spindle from Greece, and a distaff. And when I was spinning here to demonstrate at the art gallery once, I spun seven different ways. And I hadn't touched a great wheel since I was seven years old. And I was 37. And I intended to take this old wheel down and oil it—I mean, put some Vaseline on the—[Betty Hoag McGlynn laughs] on the places where we put oil, and use it several days. But I couldn't. I was tied up so tight, I couldn't practice. And when I did everything else in the way of spinning, and I got to my great wheel, I didn't have a shuck.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

MARIAN KENDALL: So, I tore off a little piece of newspaper and wrapped it around my spindle and I started in. And it happened that this great wheel had been kept in very good order.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Wow.

MARIAN KENDALL: And my dear—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Good.

MARIAN KENDALL: —I spun with a lapse of seven years to 37. So, there was 30 years between.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And you were still able. It came back to you.

MARIAN KENDALL: It came back beautifully. And—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Isn't that a dream?

MARIAN KENDALL: —I've never let it happen again. I spin every day nearly.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

MARIAN KENDALL: And if there's ever a time in your life that you're afraid you're going to have a nervous collapse or things go wrong that you can't help, if you spin or weave, it will straighten out everything for you. It will even keep you from being hungry if you happen to be hungry. [They laugh.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, it sounds like great therapy. I'm awfully—

MARIAN KENDALL: Oh, it's marvelous.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —glad you remembered that to add to the tape. Thank you so much.

MARIAN KENDALL: Oh, well—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: It's interesting.

MARIAN KENDALL: —I'm sorry to take up so much time, but—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, no. I— it's all been fascinating.

MARIAN KENDALL: I still have pupils that study with me just one or two at a time. And I know that my latest pupil wants to go to Peru and study weaving there, but she doesn't want to go unless she knows all of the fundamental principles of spinning and carding and weaving. And she—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You're teaching her first.

[00:20:03]

MARIAN KENDALL: —is in her last year in Berkeley. And she's an art major. And she's been abroad one year studying. And now, she's studying me. And next year, she hopes to have a fellowship of some kind, so she can study in Peru.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Wouldn't it be nice if you could go with her?

MARIAN KENDALL: Oh, I'd love it.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Wouldn't it be fun?

MARIAN KENDALL: I'd just love it.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Laughs.] Well, I do thank you again.

MARIAN KENDALL: My dear, I thank you for coming.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh. I was so lucky to find you here.

MARIAN KENDALL: Well—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: This was short notice, you know.

MARIAN KENDALL: —thank you so much.

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[END OF INTERVIEW.]