



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Bena Frank
Mayer and Ralph Mayer, circa 1964

Contact Information

Reference Department
Archives of American Art
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C. 20560
www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions
www.aaa.si.edu/

Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Bena Frank Mayer and Ralph Mayer circa 1964. The interview took place at an unknown location and was conducted by Harlan B. Phillips 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.

Poor audio throughout parts of the interview led to words and phrases being inaudible; the original transcript was used to clarify passages. Additional relevant information from the original transcript has been added in brackets with an -Ed. attribution. The current transcript is the result of a combination of the original transcript created and edited in the 1960s, a verbatim transcript created in 2021 from the digitized sound recording, and an audit of the 2021 transcript compared to the original transcript using the digitized sound recording as reference.

Interview

RALPH MAYER: But we knew what was going on all that time.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, I think, you know—

[Cross talk.]

RALPH MAYER: In the late 20s, yeah.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: —a rapier way to get at this is to put it in its context—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Freshen his drink for him.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: No, I'm all right.

RALPH MAYER: He's got it.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: A rapier way to get at this is to put it back in the context out of which it emerges. So sketch for me, if you can, the nature of the art market, New York, the American artist, as you remember in the late '20s.

RALPH MAYER: General condition of the artist and so forth?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Right. So as far as you remember, in the late '20s.

RALPH MAYER: Well—

BENA FRANK MAYER: He can help with that.

RALPH MAYER: —in the late '20s when—especially after 1929—well, the early '30s, everybody was in a more or less desperate situation, and artists for—well, people tried to do things for artists at one time. They'd start little individual things. And everybody was clutching at straws. There was a—let's see. There was a—before the WPA started, there was sort of preliminary—

BENA FRANK MAYER: The TRA—

RALPH MAYER: No, there was a preliminary official—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Is this is an outgrowth of the Gibson committee?

RALPH MAYER: No, Audrey McMahan was in charge of that.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: College Art Association.

RALPH MAYER: Yeah, it was the College Art Association, yeah.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

RALPH MAYER: Harry Knight. That was Harry Knight's introduction to the thing—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. Yeah.

RALPH MAYER: And they [inaudible]—

[Cross talk.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: Was that the meeting they opened with prayer?

RALPH MAYER: No, no, that's another thing. [Laughs.] They started—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: What?

RALPH MAYER: [Laughs.] Yeah, wait a minute.

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Inaudible.]

RALPH MAYER: No, this is something else. There was a—

BENA FRANK MAYER: I hope that's bribery for you [laughs].

RALPH MAYER: Well, I was on that. I got a job helping decorate a synagogue under another artist, Alfred Crimi. And this went on for—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Well, tell him what—

RALPH MAYER: —oh, perhaps four, five, or maybe six months. And then the WPA came along and went over to that. Someone started a society known as the Friends of Needy Artists. [They laugh.] And there was a meeting.

BENA FRANK MAYER: In a hotel.

RALPH MAYER: No—yes, an artist named Russell.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Walter Russell?

RALPH MAYER: There was a place called—yeah, Walter. No, there's a place called The Russell Hotel. It's now the Sheraton Russell, I think. On Fifth—Park Avenue.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Did you know about this?

RALPH MAYER: He owned that building. He had inherited it from his family and he was an artist—

BENA FRANK MAYER: He was very sorry for the artists.

RALPH MAYER: —and he used to—sort of a dilettante. He'd travel around the world painting, and he'd—so he wanted to do—so he started this thing. And there was a meeting down there.

BENA FRANK MAYER: It opened with prayer.

RALPH MAYER: I remember clergymen got up and opened it with a prayer before it started. And they were discussing ways and means to help the artist.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: How did they collect this—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Most of the painters you know, you know, around were there.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: How did they collect the idea, you know, to paint a synagogue? How was this handled?

RALPH MAYER: You know, well, I imagined they looked around [cross talk] for projects to do.

BENA FRANK MAYER: It was a strange synagogue. Tell him what kind of synagogue.

RALPH MAYER: And this was a little—a new place in the Financial District. And it was on the second floor in a loft building.

BENA FRANK MAYER: A do-it-yourself synagogue.

RALPH MAYER: An ancient building. And we just painted the whole place blue and then put some decorations on it.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BENA FRANK MAYER: Do you know Alfred Crimi?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: No, but I've heard—

RALPH MAYER: Well, he was the artist in charge. There were two or three of us working under him. And—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: There were a number of things like this [cross talk], painting pews in churches—

RALPH MAYER: Yeah, yeah. [Under the College Art -Ed.]—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Here and there.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. Was this headed up under John Huston?

RALPH MAYER: —firsthand experience with.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Was this headed up on the John Huston? Is that a name to you? Or is this, Harry Knight?

RALPH MAYER: No, John Huston doesn't ring a bell at all.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Uh-huh [affirmative].

BENA FRANK MAYER: What about the TRAP? The thing—

RALPH MAYER: That was—

BENA FRANK MAYER: It started at the Whitney Museum.

RALPH MAYER: No, that—

BENA FRANK MAYER: That Harry Knight had charge of first.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Oh, that was the PWAP.

BENA FRANK MAYER: The PWAP.

RALPH MAYER: PWAP.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: There was a TRAP in Washington—

RALPH MAYER: And then I remember Vernon Porter, who is now director of the National Academy was instrumental in starting up the Washington Square show [Washington Square Outdoor Art Exhibit of 1931]. That was a thing designed to help artists and bring it to the fore. Of course, it developed into something completely different after a while, but that got its start under the same impetus: people that wanted to alleviate the condition of artists.

[00:05:25]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: He used just the proper word. This is where John Huston's society for alleviation of the poor, I think. Initially downtown. But in any event this—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Was that an art project?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yes. There was some financier by the name of Gibson who—

BENA FRANK MAYER: The name rings a bell.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: —who collected funds, which Harry Knight, in part, dispersed. These were for small things like the painting of churches—

BENA FRANK MAYER: It must have been pre-WPA.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Right. I think this grew into what was called locally at any event, the mayor's committee under the Temporary Emergency Relief Administration. This is a little bit before the—

BENA FRANK MAYER: The Gibson Committee sounds familiar.

RALPH MAYER: Yeah. I think I do remember—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Isn't Harry able to—to tell you—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. But the interesting thing, he couldn't think of any illustrations as to what kind of work was done, and you brought up this—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Russell.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. This synagogue upstairs, this do-it-yourself—

BENA FRANK MAYER: There wasn't just one, there were lots of things like—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

RALPH MAYER: Yeah, I think that was called the downtown synagogue, and it was a short-lived thing. But it was a regular-going concern. I remember they were doing charitable work, a lot of used clothing would come in there, and they would wrap it up in bundles and send it out. And he had people—he had a couple of men on the telephone calling up people for subscriptions. So, it was a regular thing.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: When the PWAP came along, this was floated in Washington under—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Roland [ph]?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Edward Bruce and Ed Rowan.

RALPH MAYER: Yeah.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yes. And I think under what was called a Civil Works Administration.

RALPH MAYER: Yes. Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: It paid more than the WPA.

RALPH MAYER: Well, this—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: I think it was, frankly, the decoration of public buildings, and not conceived as a—

RALPH MAYER: Yes. There was a law that had never—that been had been dormant. No one had taken advantage of it. That one—something like this—one percent of the cost of a public building can be devoted to its decoration and embellishment of some sort. Some sort of words like that. Someone discovered this thing, and that started the whole thing going.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. Well, in New York City, it was centered at the Whitney Museum under Mrs. Force. I—

BENA FRANK MAYER: That's where I got the Whitney Museum.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: That's where you got to the Whitney Museum?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes.

RALPH MAYER: Oh, you mean that's why you mentioned it before?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. Well, were you involved in the—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes, I was [telephone rings]—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Oh, dear.

RALPH MAYER: Excuse me.

BENA FRANK MAYER: You've got to turn that off [inaudible]. It's a long distance.

[Audio break.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: We got to the PWAP at the Whitney Museum. Were you part of this episode?

RALPH MAYER: Well, Bena was a member of the original Whitney Studio Club.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Oh?

RALPH MAYER: And we used to go to all the affairs there. We knew Mrs. Force quite well, so that we were there anyhow. And [inaudible]—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BENA FRANK MAYER: You know what, I did one large painting for the—and the library had—

RALPH MAYER: Oh, that's right.

BENA FRANK MAYER: For the library.

RALPH MAYER: That was the New York Public Library took it.

BENA FRANK MAYER: It was a good painting, [if I do say so -Ed.].

RALPH MAYER: And then they sent it to the 23rd Street branch after a while because it was a picture of Gramercy Park.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Uh-huh [affirmative].

RALPH MAYER: And they had it in there for years on the wall. They remodeled the building, I don't think it's on exhibition now.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Did they do this under the PWAP?

RALPH MAYER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BENA FRANK MAYER: This is a wonderful period.

RALPH MAYER: And the rule was that only one member of a family could be on this thing, so I was never officially—

BENA FRANK MAYER: He was writing his book at the time.

RALPH MAYER: —in the [inaudible]—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, how did it operate?

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: The PWAP.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm. From an artist's point of view, how did it operate?

BENA FRANK MAYER: It was a very free thing.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Was it?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Which—there was a lot of faith. And I suppose the artists were chosen, perhaps. And it was a wonderful period of productivity because, uh, those [inaudible]—

[00:10:03]

RALPH MAYER: But it supplied a lot of administrative experience so that by the time that WPA started, they hadn't—they knew what many of the problems were, and—

BENA FRANK MAYER: It was a kind of fraternity.

RALPH MAYER: —they learned how to make laws and rules and regulations and so forth from that.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, did you know Harry Knight before this? Did you know Harry Knight?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Where did I meet Harry?

RALPH MAYER: Yes, we knew Harry before it started—

BENA FRANK MAYER: I don't even remember where I met him.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: You don't? But I mean, he was with—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Probably in Woodstock. [Cross talk.] Through friends—

RALPH MAYER: No, through the Hirschs [ph] and the bowling club. There was a very active artist bowling club—

BENA FRANK MAYER: I've known them for a heck of a long time [laughs].

RALPH MAYER: —around the corner from us, [in Germania Hall -Ed.].

BENA FRANK MAYER: Do you know about that?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Laughs.] [Inaudible].

RALPH MAYER: And we were charter members of that.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Oh, [inaudible]. [Laughs.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: Adolf Dehn.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Was there. And Kuniyoshi.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, did you work at home or was there—

BENA FRANK MAYER: At home.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: You did work at home?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Well, I had a studio.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: In your own studio?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yeah.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

RALPH MAYER: And I remember—

BENA FRANK MAYER: They worked very hard. I think all the artists on the Project worked very hard. They considered it an opportunity. And nobody wasted the chance to paint. To

really dig in and—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

RALPH MAYER: Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: —and discover and develop. It was a wonderful thing.

RALPH MAYER: There were a lot of rules and regulations that grated on the artists, and they would try to circumvent them and do little things here and there. There was this sort of war going on in a minor way.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Very minor things, like going away, on weekends—

RALPH MAYER: But in general, and then overall—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Not coming back on Monday morning.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, rebellion against constituted authority is the great tradition [laughs].

BENA FRANK MAYER: But they were most conscientious, and they were—

RALPH MAYER: You'd have to collect your pay every week. By [inaudible]—

[Cross talk.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: Like Moses Soyer—I think a lot of people used to go away for weekends. They had little places in Woodstock.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: And then they had supervisors who were sort of like sub policemen. You know, didn't understand—

RALPH MAYER: Most of them were artists or in that crowd themselves, and were very sympathetic—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Not the super—[Cross talk.]

RALPH MAYER: But occasionally—

BENA FRANK MAYER: —no, I mean the supervisors—the timekeepers, not—

RALPH MAYER: Oh, the timekeepers. [Inaudible.] They were just—

BENA FRANK MAYER: I don't mean supervisor, I mean timekeepers [laughs].

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Administrative personnel, yeah.

RALPH MAYER: Well, there was just anonymous civil service personnel.

BENA FRANK MAYER: And they'd come to ring your doorbell at odd times—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: See if you were working?

BENA FRANK MAYER: —to see if you were up and about.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: They didn't know that artists had the widest variety of habit and approach.

BENA FRANK MAYER: No, I didn't mean supervisors.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: The supervisors are fine.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well this wasn't under the PWAP at the Whitney—

[Cross talk.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: No, we're talking about the whole—

RALPH MAYER: We're talking about the WPA.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: The PWAP was short-lived. It lasted, whatever it was, three months.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Short-lived. And much smaller.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: And it the occasion of not a little street furor in front of the Whitney Museum on the part of artists who—or maybe not artists. Interested parties who wanted to extend and broaden it. I know Mrs. Force, I think, announced that the Whitney Museum was going to be closed six weeks ahead of schedule because somehow or other—

RALPH MAYER: I remember that.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: —making the headquarters the Whitney Museum, that wasn't a very good image for the Whitney Museum, to have this furor up and down the—

RALPH MAYER: I remember that. Yes, that one incident made her shy away from the whole thing.

BENA FRANK MAYER: I have a slide of my painting, and—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: That you did? Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: I have it [inaudible].

RALPH MAYER: On the PWAP.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes. Sometimes people say, Why don't you paint like that now [laughs]?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Laughs.] For real? Well, they—

BENA FRANK MAYER: It'd put you ahead in your work and develops [inaudible]. It was a great thing.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, wasn't Lloyd Goodrich in on the—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: —sort of managerial side of it?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes, he was.

RALPH MAYER: He was—

BENA FRANK MAYER: I'm trying to think of a mural supervisor. It was Diller [ph].

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Later, yeah. And Lou Block, in the hospitals, in the—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Ralph has a movie of one of the murals.

RALPH MAYER: Yes, they did a very good documentary-type professional movie of making a fresco.

BENA FRANK MAYER: He uses it at Columbia.

RALPH MAYER: And—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Really?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yeah.

[00:15:00]

RALPH MAYER: It was fresco—

[Cross talk.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: Very important, as a record and as a movie.

RALPH MAYER: —that was in the Evander Childs High School in the Bronx.

It was done by an artist named [James] Michael Newell, who was one of the Rivera—

BENA FRANK MAYER: You know him?

RALPH MAYER: —crowd.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. I talked to Burgoyne Diller. And Michael Lenson in New Jersey.

RALPH MAYER: Yes, he was—yeah, I know.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Who also said something about the use of camera, motion picture.

RALPH MAYER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Which disclosed the process of a mural, you know, so there was an educational [inaudible], which was marvelous.

[Cross talk.]

RALPH MAYER: Yes, well this thing [inaudible]—tried to get hold of it; it was lost for many years. And finally, I discovered it.

BENA FRANK MAYER: It was wonderful. The whole thing. Very complete.

RALPH MAYER: And the negative and one print were in the custody of the Metropolitan Museum. So, I wanted to borrow the print for my course at Columbia.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RALPH MAYER: And after some—they didn't want to let me have it at first. And then through the people at Columbia, they did, and I used it for a few years. And then I wanted a copy of it, and they said, well—they were very careful about it. You know, they said, This is not our property. We have the custody of it for the government, which was sort of silly because everything else was just burned up. And so, I asked the dean to write them a letter. And they gave me permission to have a print made of it, which I did. And I have this print. Recently, I thought it would be a good idea to revive it and have it copied, and a soundtrack put on it, and sort of update it a little. And when I went into it, I found out that the material is too old, physically too old, it wouldn't—taken at the wrong speed would be an impossible job.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: But what a novel approach for its time, you know, to take a motion picture out of this process.

RALPH MAYER: And it was done very well by a man who has since become very prominent in that field, Leo Seltzer.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Leo Seltzer. Yeah.

RALPH MAYER: This was one of the WPA projects, too.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Didn't you just mention [inaudible]—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: No, Michael Lenson. He—I'm not sure that it was Seltzer. A fellow by the name of Smith. I don't know why—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Herndon Smith?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah, who was a scriptwriter and who had a—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Herndon? Not Herndon.

RALPH MAYER: Herndon Smith was another supervisory figure on the Project, too.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Do you know about him?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: No, except that just—

RALPH MAYER: He was one of the upper echelons.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. Well, it was just that—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Lloyd Rollins, you know about him.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Where is Lloyd Rollins? Does anybody know?

BENA FRANK MAYER: California.

RALPH MAYER: He's in San Francisco.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: He is in San Francisco?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes. And we exchange Christmas cards.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, he's been on my list for a long time. But I haven't been able—
somebody said California—

BENA FRANK MAYER: I have his address if you—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Oh, marvelous. Marvelous. Well, he's [inaudible]—

RALPH MAYER: We visited him when we were out there.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Very much so.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: I think he handled allocations. Didn't he?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes.

RALPH MAYER: Yes, at one time.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: For the PWAP?

RALPH MAYER: Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: For the WPA.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Also, yeah.

RALPH MAYER: He was a hardworking, conscientious man—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Very nice man.

RALPH MAYER: —I think he would—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Very friendly to most of the artists; helpful.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Even Vernon Porter was on the PWAP at the Whitney Museum.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Wasn't he?

BENA FRANK MAYER: But Rollins functioned particularly on the WPA.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Oh, did he?

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Inaudible.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: And this is—

BENA FRANK MAYER: For years.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: —like the negotiation with the [inaudible]—

RALPH MAYER: He would know all about the PWAP now [telephone rings].

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. My but you're a popular man.

BENA FRANK MAYER: This is—

RALPH MAYER: This is something special. [Harlan B. Phillips laughs.]

[Audio break.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Inaudible] stop calling [inaudible] people want to sell things.

RALPH MAYER: I thought it was one of the artist societies.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh.

RALPH MAYER: Bena's vice president of the New York Society of Women Artists, and they're having an exhibition now. And there's been a lot of business going on this week.

BENA FRANK MAYER: He's trying to get another book. Not in techniques, but something terribly important. It's a secret. [They laugh.] It's a new publisher, and there's lots of phone calls. And looking at this, I just thought of James McCreary [ph]. Did you have his name?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: No.

RALPH MAYER: James McCreary [ph] was the supervisor of the Index of American Design.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh, very good name.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Is he still here?

RALPH MAYER: Oh, I don't know.

BENA FRANK MAYER: He lives in Brooklyn.

RALPH MAYER: I've seen the name. I saw the name recently somewhere.

BENA FRANK MAYER: He's sort of a magic realist, terrific.

[Cross talk.]

RALPH MAYER: He's one of these very precise—

BENA FRANK MAYER: I mean, my work is very free. And this is what he got me to do, which was very good for me.

[00:20:00]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RALPH MAYER: There were very, very rigid rules about—

[Cross talk.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: I never did anything so—

RALPH MAYER: —you had to use a certain kind of paper, and nothing but pencils.

BENA FRANK MAYER: —so precise before or since.

RALPH MAYER: Couldn't touch it with anything but a pencil. And every one of these photographic effects had to be done in different grades of pencils.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Uncompromising, very good at it. And didn't he have something to do with the—

RALPH MAYER: Continually rejecting things, and they had to go back to be fixed up—

BENA FRANK MAYER: What's that book, the Index of American Design?

RALPH MAYER: I don't think so.

BENA FRANK MAYER: He had a lot to do with supervising that drawing.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: He was a supervisor of the Index?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Supervisor of the Index. One of the supervisors.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

RALPH MAYER: The supervisor of the drawings, paintings.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BENA FRANK MAYER: And Tillie Shahn [ph]. Tell him about Tillie Shahn [ph].

RALPH MAYER: What was Tillie Shahn [ph]?

BENA FRANK MAYER: He was a supervisor too.

RALPH MAYER: In the Index?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RALPH MAYER: Yeah.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, this was initially—and we're talking about the Index now. Is that set up under Frances Pollock?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh, yeah.

RALPH MAYER: Oh, she was close to Audrey McMahan—

BENA FRANK MAYER: That's right.

RALPH MAYER: —she was one of her friends.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yes. Yes.

BENA FRANK MAYER: The same breed [laughs].

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, you know, I never—

BENA FRANK MAYER: I don't say that disparagingly.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: No, no, no, I understand. I mean the—you know, at a given moment, society throws up certain kinds of people, you know, and your guess is as good as mine as to what their interest is. I'm not entirely sure that Frances Pollock remained—

BENA FRANK MAYER: I don't think she—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: —for continuity.

BENA FRANK MAYER: —was there very long, it seems to me.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Because I think there was some problem in the Index of American Design. Or at least the distinction of the approach that was taken in Boston, as opposed to the approach that was taken in New York City. I'm not sure about this—

BENA FRANK MAYER: That reminds me of something.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: —but maybe this will spur a memory.

BENA FRANK MAYER: A chain of thought. It reminds me of Boston.

RALPH MAYER: Yes. Yeah. [Cross talk.]

I started off on that and I rejected it [inaudible]—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Jack Levine? Jack Levine and—

RALPH MAYER: I had something to do with the Boston Project.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Oh did you?

BENA FRANK MAYER: You're not interested in that, oh. [Ralph Mayer laughs.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Of course.

BENA FRANK MAYER: The world is your—

RALPH MAYER: Paint testing and research laboratory.

BENA FRANK MAYER: We have papers on that.

RALPH MAYER: I have—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Materials. Did you give it to Bruce?

RALPH MAYER: No, I got that back. That's the thing I told them they could keep, and they sent back.

BENA FRANK MAYER: He's an awfully nice man. Gosh, I'm trying to think. There must be records of the artists—who the artists—there are not?

RALPH MAYER: So, that was [inaudible]—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Doesn't Harry know where they would be?

RALPH MAYER: That Massachusetts Project developed into this. Quite valuable.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: A reexamination of the quality of the material [inaudible]—

[Cross talk.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: Ralph is chairman.

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: The artists made him the chairman. Very interesting.

RALPH MAYER: One of the big things that has plagued the entire creative art world, among artists and so forth, is the lack of any standardized knowledge on materials and techniques.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RALPH MAYER: It's been completely neglected. And no one has ever spent any money on doing modern laboratory work on the subject, and all kinds of things that were very vague about. So, two people in Boston started this idea. And the WPA took hold of it. And they established a testing and research laboratory that was going to—

BENA FRANK MAYER: A workshop.

RALPH MAYER: —dig in and get after some of the fundamental facts instead of going by hearsay, the way everybody had before that. [At Harvard. -Ed.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Who were these people?

RALPH MAYER: This was Rutherford J. Gettens—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Frank Sterner.

RALPH MAYER: —and Frank Sterner.

BENA FRANK MAYER: And Ralph.

RALPH MAYER: And—well, I was called in later.

BENA FRANK MAYER: He's so modest. [Laughs.] And that red-headed man.

RALPH MAYER: No, [inaudible]. Who, Frank?

BENA FRANK MAYER: No. At the Boston museum.

RALPH MAYER: Oh, that wasn't—no. He wasn't instrumental in it. He was just someone that they got to come in from Connecticut. Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Would you like to put the papers—

RALPH MAYER: No, the papers relate to the establishment of this—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: But this was—

RALPH MAYER: —[inaudible] standard.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Right, but this was an outgrowth of the WPA.

RALPH MAYER: Yes, I have letters from them, and the stationary. It is the WPA.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yes. Well, what's his name? Richard Morrison mentioned the fact that —

BENA FRANK MAYER: Jack Levine was on it.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah, well, he was—what—in Boston?

[00:25:01]

RALPH MAYER: He was—he was a painter on the—from Boston.

BENA FRANK MAYER: He was from Boston.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yes. But Morrison ran the New England show. Richard Morrison.

RALPH MAYER: Yeah, I have letters signed by him, yes.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: But he indicated that steps were taken to substitute knowledge for guesswork so far as materials were concerned.

RALPH MAYER: Yes.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: The government, generally—the old-line government—had no notion of what you did when you bought X numbers of gallons of X, you know, paint. And the government went by certain specific specifications which the artists couldn't provide. Do you import barrels of this? You know, this kind of question.

RALPH MAYER: Yeah, that's right.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Which led to an internal appraisal of materials since materials were going to be made available by the government anyway. What kind of quality do you want? And wasn't the shop also a research laboratory? Maybe not called that—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: —in the manufacturer paints—

[Cross talk.]

RALPH MAYER: Not that I know of, no.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Not the manufacturer. It was non-noncommercial.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mixing of paints or new pigments or—

RALPH MAYER: Oh, uh, no—one of the people on the WPA here branched off into it for a while but never did very much. It was done in a sort of haphazard, un-scientific way

BENA FRANK MAYER: Was his name Doktor?

RALPH MAYER: No, I think the Doktor was just—I—no.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Does that name ring a bell?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: I just thought that there was some [inaudible]—

RALPH MAYER: Doktor was the head of the supply department for a while, and—Raphael Doktor.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Right.

BENA FRANK MAYER: That's right.

RALPH MAYER: And I think he went into—yes, I think he was in that, but it never got anywhere.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: It never did, no.

RALPH MAYER: It was a minor part of the thing. This was toward the end. And—

BENA FRANK MAYER: But the Boston workshop, that workshop—

RALPH MAYER: No, the painter's workshop is something they started after the Project ended. And—

[Cross talk.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: They wanted desperately to start.

RALPH MAYER: —I was up there at the Fogg Museum, joined in some lecture courses, and they started the school on this subject there. And I used to go up there and lecture. And then the three of us got together on establishing this thing.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BENA FRANK MAYER: Standards.

RALPH MAYER: And we had a meeting at the Museum of Modern Art in which all the representatives of the manufacturers and everybody in the art—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh, I've got something for you.

RALPH MAYER: —the college people got together, and wrote this thing up in rough form. And then the Bureau of Standards helped out with it. And it finally came out like this in 1942. Then it was revised in 1961. This is March, '62.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well, was the camouflage laboratory in Boston an outgrowth of this concern for standards and paints? Because ultimately—

RALPH MAYER: I don't know much about that at all; I never had anything to do with the camouflage activity.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

RALPH MAYER: My uncle was one of the higher-ups in that, a paint manufacturer he was. But I never had anything—

BENA FRANK MAYER: I've got something for you.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Laughs.] What? What is this?

RALPH MAYER: I've got some things in there.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Oh, yeah.

RALPH MAYER: What's that? I went down there and—when I went to Washington, I stepped in and saw him.

BENA FRANK MAYER: You know, Ralph is now director of the Artists Technical Research Institute. You know—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yes.

BENA FRANK MAYER: —started by Huntington Hartford [ph]. [I mean, financed. -Ed.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: This is a long continuity, this—

[Cross talk.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Laughs.] Long, long way home.

RALPH MAYER: Here's the subway project. The WPA subway project. It got publicity all over the country. And we had an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. [Inaudible.] Where's the catalog of the exhibition?

BENA FRANK MAYER: I'll get it.

RALPH MAYER: Oh here's more on it. It's in here, I think.

BENA FRANK MAYER: There it is.

RALPH MAYER: Exhibition and subway murals. Here it is. There's the museum. The idea was that the Project was going to supply the artists, and the city was going to pay the cost of materials. And it was all at this date when this stuff came out. It was all set and ready to go. And then the Project suddenly ended.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

RALPH MAYER: Just—

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Who's he, I don't remember. -Ed.]

RALPH MAYER: No.

[00:30:00]

BENA FRANK MAYER: All these nice guys. Guys and dolls.

RALPH MAYER: Well, I hadn't looked at that. So about 30 artists got together and painted sample pictures in these two new techniques—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RALPH MAYER: —that would withstand the subway conditions. Went to a lot of work over it. Now this is as far as that goes.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: In short, it was [laughs]—good old Mike Quill.

[Cross talk.]

RALPH MAYER: Mike Quill.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Isn't that wonderful? Doris Kravis [ph], remember her? She was very active.

RALPH MAYER: She was active in organizing the artists. Do you know about the Artists' Union?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah, that is its existence, which is a rather anachronistic thing, given the individualistic [they laugh] artists, to have a collective group.

[Cross talk.]

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh, but they were wonderful.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Inaudible.]

RALPH MAYER: A union can only survive as long as there are jobs. So, as soon as these jobs ended, there wasn't any more union.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Need for it.

BENA FRANK MAYER: They had a sit-in, you know?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: With the teachers, didn't they?

BENA FRANK MAYER: No, the artists.

RALPH MAYER: They were all dragged away to jail, you know—called the police.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: 219 arrested. Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: It was very thrilling.

[Cross talk.]

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible] museum—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Paul Block [ph] was one of the main leaders.

RALPH MAYER: —that's typical problem, dubiously.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Afterwards he died in Spain.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Wonderful young man.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, the subway approach was along toward the end, wasn't it?

RALPH MAYER: Yes, it—just as it got to the point where they were ready to start, the Project ended. And they were going to put these murals on the walls in the Sixth and Eighth Avenue subway, the independent subway. On the other side of the tracks where the public wouldn't get at them.

BENA FRANK MAYER: And I still think it's a good idea.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: It is, yeah. It's a staggering thing.

RALPH MAYER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: That's a possibility. Well, you know, I noticed in here, this—what is it—the Public Use of Arts Committee?

RALPH MAYER: This was a crowd—[cross talk] sort of offshoot of the artists union.

BENA FRANK MAYER: You know something, I think you're getting quite a bit of material here [laughs].

[Cross talk.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Inaudible] artists. Public Use of Arts—

RALPH MAYER: Public Use of Arts Committee, it was a crowd of artists that got together and instigated this. And they—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Doris Kravis was active in that.

RALPH MAYER: A crowd of artists got together and thought it was a good idea and instigated it. And they called themselves that.

BENA FRANK MAYER: And Chris Klein [ph]—do you know Chris [inaudible]?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. Was he in this too? The Public Use of—

RALPH MAYER: Well, he was her—Doris Kravis' husband.

BENA FRANK MAYER: —later became her husband. He was—

RALPH MAYER: He changed his name to Chris Cross.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: I didn't know that.

RALPH MAYER: When he went into Madison Avenue.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Laughs.] But I did run into this, and the use—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh, you know about this?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: The committee was used by Tony Velonis and [cross talk] Hy Warsegar —

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: —to float the—

RALPH MAYER: Silk-screen—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Silk-screen process.

RALPH MAYER: Yes. Well, this [inaudible]—

[Cross talk.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: In short, Audrey McMahon was open to conviction but she needed the pressure—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Was Doris Meltzer there? Was she?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Inaudible.]

[Cross talk.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: Doris Meltzer—

RALPH MAYER: No, I think she came into the silk-screen business later on.

BENA FRANK MAYER: —had something to do with the silkscreen—Harry Shokler, I think was —

RALPH MAYER: Well, he was one of the artists.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. Yeah. There's a lot of women artists that I hope you know their whereabouts.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Elizabeth Olds.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Ruth Cheney.

RALPH MAYER: Well, Ruth Cheney.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Does she teach at Wellesley?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Now this I don't know. Where her current whereabouts I haven't the vaguest idea.

BENA FRANK MAYER: We have—yes. We—

RALPH MAYER: We used to know her quite well.

BENA FRANK MAYER: I can find out for you.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Because she was in this [inaudible]. Clara Mall [ph]?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Claire Mall [ph].

RALPH MAYER: Claire Mall [ph].

BENA FRANK MAYER: Claire Mall [ph].

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

RALPH MAYER: She was in my class at Columbia [inaudible]—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yeah.

RALPH MAYER: I don't know [inaudible].

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Riva Helfond?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh, Riva Helfond's in Plainfield. [Cross talk.] She has an art gallery.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Is she?

RALPH MAYER: —running an art school—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Plainfield?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes.

RALPH MAYER: —in Plainfield, New Jersey. [Bena Frank Mayer laughs.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Great. Great.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Anymore [laughs]?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, I got a whole list of them. Really, I do. Those are the ones I could think—Elizabeth Olds, is she in town?

BENA FRANK MAYER: I think so. She was at Yaddo when we were there, not long ago.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: We have some of her work. Harry Shokler's in Londonderry—

RALPH MAYER: Vermont.

BENA FRANK MAYER: —Vermont.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Good for him.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yeah.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Inaudible.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: Married to Doris Martin, a writer.

[00:35:00]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: That's a grand place to be from since I come from—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Londonderry?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: —Vermont stock. No [laughs].

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: No.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Good for you. I'm a Virginian.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Are you?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yeah. Same thing.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Just the same feeling, isn't it? [Bena Frank Mayer laughs.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. Well, when the WPA came along, did you get on the Index project itself?

RALPH MAYER: Not right away, no.

[Cross talk.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: No, easel—

RALPH MAYER: —was on the easel project—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Mostly.

RALPH MAYER: This was toward the end. Toward the end, she—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh, they had another—a teacher's project?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Right.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Wait a minute, wasn't Tillie Shahn [ph] on the—

RALPH MAYER: I don't think so.

BENA FRANK MAYER: No, she was on the Index.

RALPH MAYER: The teaching project, you never were on it, really.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes, I was, for a short while. I taught children at the Grand Street Settlement.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: This was then part of it?

BENA FRANK MAYER: It was wonderful. It was a wonderful experience.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BENA FRANK MAYER: I've got—I still have a lot of their paintings. We did wonderful work.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: What, with the kids?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes. Gee, I wish I could get some out.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, this was a novel approach. Had you taught before?

BENA FRANK MAYER: No, but I'm intelligent. [Laughs.]

[Cross talk.]

RALPH MAYER: I'll tell you what they did. She and another painter went in there and started an art class—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: I didn't mean—

BENA FRANK MAYER: We kept case histories, children that didn't speak began to articulate and—

RALPH MAYER: They had—they had them freely splash away. —

BENA FRANK MAYER: They did the most wonderful work you ever saw in your life. It was a

very rich experience; I wouldn't take anything for it.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Uh-huh [affirmative]. This was Lincoln Rothschild.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes, that's right. Yes.

RALPH MAYER: Lincoln Rothschild was in that.

BENA FRANK MAYER: He was a supervisor.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Supervisor, yeah. Well, that's great. And then from the teaching, you then went on to the easel?

BENA FRANK MAYER: No, I was on the easel first.

[Cross talk.]

RALPH MAYER: All the way through—

BENA FRANK MAYER: All the way through, I'm an easel painter.

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible]—teaching project and, um, didn't like it—didn't want to be on—

BENA FRANK MAYER: It began to make cuts and move people around and got very difficult.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: The quota reduction thing.

BENA FRANK MAYER: It got very difficult.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Tell me about Colonel Somervell. He had a—

RALPH MAYER: [Laughs.] All I know about Colonel Somervell is there were demonstrations against him. That's all I know.

BENA FRANK MAYER: And Ritter. "Get rid of Ritter was a favorite slogan" [laughs]. Do you know it?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yes. Get rid of Ritter. [Bena Frank Mayer laughs.] Great. Boy, it says a lot, doesn't it? [Ralph Mayer laughs.] Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Sommer—what's his name?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Somervell.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Somervell was a very reactionary non-artist. [Laughs.] And of course—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: And knows—yeah, he was dealing with—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Cold and—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: —so you were dealing with—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Non-creative.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: —fungible goods like peas in a pod.

BENA FRANK MAYER: That's right. Like [cross talk] having a job in a shoe store or something like that.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: What do you expect from military [inaudible]—

RALPH MAYER: Yes, he was a supply man.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: And a genius at supply. A real genius at supply, but not at humans. I've heard stories of artists who attended meetings or conferences with him, and his concept of granting a hearing was to listen to you and then dismiss you. You know, and you couldn't stay and hear what the others had to say [laughs]. Incredible. Undemocratic.

BENA FRANK MAYER: That sounds—terribly—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Oh, oppressive.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Not the kind of person to talk to artists.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Oh, no. And I'm sure he had a preconceived notion as to what art was and what artists were, what they must be. Of course, the Artists' Union didn't help him any. But, you know, that's all part of the scene.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yeah.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Organization was in the air.

BENA FRANK MAYER: I was on the jury—civil jury—for the first time three weeks ago. And the lawyer asked me what I did, and I said I was an artist. He said, What does that mean? I said, I paint creatively. He said, Oh, and accepted that. [They laugh.]

[Inaudible.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, were you part of the organization of artists in the town? In the city?

RALPH MAYER: In those days, we belonged to everything that was going on, I think.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: It was social, wasn't it? That is—

RALPH MAYER: Well, it was a whole life. You know, it was part of life and everybody—

[Cross talk.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: The fraternity between the artists was really wonderful.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Wasn't it? Everyone has commented about this. The sense of [inaudible]—

[Cross talk.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: Marvelous.

RALPH MAYER: Yes, it was in the air. And—

BENA FRANK MAYER: And the artists flourished because they were doing their own work. You know? Such a rare thing for an artist to be able to just paint.

[00:40:07]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: And they all made progress. Works progress in—

RALPH MAYER: And this relief status that they had was repugnant to everybody. And—

BENA FRANK MAYER: It was dreadful. Getting on the Project—

[Cross talk.]

RALPH MAYER: Trying to—and in spite of that, they didn't let—

BENA FRANK MAYER: It was humiliating and depressing.

RALPH MAYER: —but they didn't let those things stop them at all. They just took everything in their stride, went through all the difficulties—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Most artists have a lot of humor. You know [laughs]? And—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Sure.

BENA FRANK MAYER: They sort of greet one another, nowadays even.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, the spirit of essentially being in the same boat economically. You

know, having a common employer, the government, lent itself to organization, to pressure, to maintain a vested interest [inaudible]—

BENA FRANK MAYER: And they came from all parts of the country.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Sure.

BENA FRANK MAYER: It didn't matter who their families were.

RALPH MAYER: Well, since that time, all attempts at making a general, all-inclusive artists society have never done very well. They always sort of—they had the artist—[Cross talk.]—and they had Artists' Congress—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Artists Equity, for instance.

RALPH MAYER: —and then the Artists Equity.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

RALPH MAYER: And they usually split up through—

BENA FRANK MAYER: It's too bad because we need an Artists Equity very badly—

RALPH MAYER: —differences, you know, instead of banding together regardless of their own political ideas or anything else. Instead of that, they all sort of—well, something always happened to break it up.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Their problems are manifold now, but on a different level. Dealers—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, the whole scene has changed. I mean, for the American artists—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Many of them are prosperous.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: But back in the '20s, in the late '20s, they were not. The number of galleries that were handling modern American art were—, you know, you could count on a single hand. Now you have an army of galleries—

BENA FRANK MAYER: And still count them on [laughs] a single hand.

RALPH MAYER: You mean the good ones.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: But, you know, the emphasis has changed.

RALPH MAYER: But the—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: The market has changed, interest has been broadened, you know, and this is good—

BENA FRANK MAYER: We can tell that by the sales of Ralph's book. [They laugh.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Which is, you know—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Isn't that, right?

RALPH MAYER: Sales of everything connected.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Well, everybody paints.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Sure. Yeah. But, you know, to see a fellow I talked with some length, Stuart Davis, attending meetings.

BENA FRANK MAYER: I know Stuart Davis very well.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Running an organization. You know, you don't anticipate this. But the times, you know, created the challenge. And I suspect the WPA, or the government, created the opportunity. And suddenly there was a role to play, and he filled it.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Did you speak to Roselle Davis?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: I saw her briefly when I was talking with him. I haven't seen her since, no.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh, you've been doing this for some time?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BENA FRANK MAYER: It's a wonderful thing to do.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, you know—

BENA FRANK MAYER: It's a big job, too.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah, and I—what is the relationship—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Any way that we can help you, we'd be delighted.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: What is the relationship of Ruth Reeves to the Index of American Design?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Ruth Reeves is back.

RALPH MAYER: Oh, she is?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes. She taught with you at Columbia for a while.

RALPH MAYER: Yes, but I'm trying to think of what she did there.

BENA FRANK MAYER: A designer—a textile designer. Did they have—

RALPH MAYER: I don't think they had anything like that.

BENA FRANK MAYER: You sure she was on the Project?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: I don't know that she had any position at all. I was thinking in terms of the idea that she'd not had a little continuity with textile design, even before the '30s. I just don't know.

BENA FRANK MAYER: We could find out for you.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: The origins of the Index of American Design are shrouded somewhat in mystery. Nobody seems to know how it developed.

[00:45:01]

[Cross talk.]

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: It developed out of—

RALPH MAYER: —Lou Block?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: I've talked with Lou Block.

RALPH MAYER: Does Lou Block know?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Drawing still life I think. I think I grew out of that.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Initially—

RALPH MAYER: It was a definite idea. It crystallized [inaudible]—Eddie Cahill had a lot to do with that.

BENA FRANK MAYER: But it grew into—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: It grew into the one national program and—

BENA FRANK MAYER: —antique dictionary.

RALPH MAYER: Edith Halpert. Do you know Edith Halpert?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yes, I do. Does she have a—

RALPH MAYER: I think she would know of the beginning. She was very close to Holger Cahill at the time. And this thing grew out of their ideas and experiences. She claims to be the—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Didn't it grow out of a drawing project?

RALPH MAYER: No, it—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Still-life drawing project.

RALPH MAYER: —American primitives.

BENA FRANK MAYER: I thought it grew out of the desire to give an artist experience and practice in drawing still life—

RALPH MAYER: Well, they were looking around for things for artists to do. That was part of—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yes.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes.

RALPH MAYER: —the Project. But the idea of the thing, I'm pretty sure that—

BENA FRANK MAYER: I don't think it had a definite—

RALPH MAYER: Yeah, I'm pretty sure that Edith Halpert would know all about it from the beginning.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, the reason I raise it is this, that initially it was organized in New York under Frances Pollock.

RALPH MAYER: Yeah.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: And it became more of a historical writing project than it did an art project. Whereas in Boston, there was a woman—

RALPH MAYER: Later, maybe, yes, but while it was going on, the main thing was the production of these reproductions.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, not initially. Initially, apparently, there was a healthy emphasis upon the historical background. And this lent itself to a kind of writers' group in New York. Then Eddie Cahill did take hold of the Index of American Design as an idea, in an effort to create standards under it throughout the country, wherever it was being done. Because the discrepancies between the work that was being done in Boston and the work done in New York showed that Boston had the better renderings, while New York had the better historical background. So there was an effort to—what is it—jack up the standards? Who was it? Cook Glassgold [ph] was sent down to Washington to be a kind of—

RALPH MAYER: Coordinator.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah, in the event that there were conflicting interests from Boston, let's say, and San Francisco.

BENA FRANK MAYER: That's right.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: He could say, well, Boston has other things to do, and let San Francisco—

RALPH MAYER: He traveled on that.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: —this sort of thing.

RALPH MAYER: Yes, he used to travel.

BENA FRANK MAYER: That's right.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: And so, that, you know, there was an effort to make of the Index the national project, whereas I think you quite correctly inferred that looking for things for artists to do was to tailor-make the programs to fit what it is you found on the relief rolls. And this would help different Michigan, Kentucky, you know, Iowa, and New York also, because there were a lot of commercial artists. There were a lot of people who weren't necessarily creative artists who were on the rolls and what to do with them. Then this finding a project was—the Index lent itself to this.

BENA FRANK MAYER: But it grew into something quite spectacular.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Marvelous.

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Laughs.] Yes.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Just marvelous. Well, you pointed out something—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Those things do grow.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. That you had here.

BENA FRANK MAYER: [That was his. -Ed.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah, which was—

BENA FRANK MAYER: It's my own bowl, which came over on the *Mayflower*. [They laugh.] Oh, there's the— isn't that the—no, that's not—

RALPH MAYER: That's the second one.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Something like that.

RALPH MAYER: That's the [inaudible] collection says New York Public Library on it.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh, that is the painting I have a slide of. Great big huge—

RALPH MAYER: I have the painting—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: And this was the PWAP painting.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. Yeah. Well, when you got onto the Index of American Design was —

BENA FRANK MAYER: It was just for that one drawing.

RALPH MAYER: That was a small—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: That's the one drawing itself?

RALPH MAYER: Yes, that was a small part of her experience there. The main thing was on the easel project under Lloyd Rollins, and John Lonergan—

BENA FRANK MAYER: John Lonergan [laughs].

RALPH MAYER: You knew John Lonergan, does that [inaudible]?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Oh, yeah. She indicated that he was somewhat crusty.

RALPH MAYER: I was wondering whether you have heard anything good about him?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Other than that? [They laugh.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: Since I'm on tape, I don't like saying anything bad about it.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Why? It won't help me understand what it is you lived with unless you do. Um, I met him this morning—

[00:50:02]

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh, you did?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: —from Mr. Reinhardt, who was for—

BENA FRANK MAYER: You met John Lonergan this—oh.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: That is, met a view of Lonergan, from Mr. Reinhardt.

RALPH MAYER: What Reinhardt is that?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Ad—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Ad Reinhardt.

RALPH MAYER: Oh, Ad?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Does his feeling agree with mine, or is mine purely feminine?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: He said it didn't present a problem for him. That he was off in another world. And you know, [inaudible]—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh, I was too [inaudible]. But I don't think he approved so much of women on—married women on the Project.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: It's possible.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Something like that.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, for example, Audrey McMahon was breaking new ground as an administrator. There hadn't been very many women administrators, you know.

[Cross talk.]

RALPH MAYER: Well, he was—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: It was a man's world.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Since I had Ralph, you see—

RALPH MAYER: He was an exception.

BENA FRANK MAYER: —[inaudible] project, something like that.

RALPH MAYER: He was an exception to the way most of them were. He was—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Dour [ph]? Sour?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Dour [ph].

RALPH MAYER: Yeah, he was very harsh and strict. And like an army sergeant, more or less. [Bena Frank Mayer laughs.] And that was his—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Maybe not with the boys.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: I see.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Something like that.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: I see.

BENA FRANK MAYER: But we all worked very hard. That was the main thing I could say about the Project, was that we all worked as hard as we could.

RALPH MAYER: That's Van Wyck Brooks and Gladys Brooks, and Morton Zabel.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, do you have a view about the effect of the WPA on you?

BENA FRANK MAYER: [It put me ahead in my work by giving me -Ed.] peace and time to just do nothing but paint.

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible] see if there's anything in here about the—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Of course, I painted continually anyhow, but a sense of security—
[Cross talk.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: It's a—yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: —to be able to go on painting next week and the week after.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: With continuity, right.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes. And I accomplished a great deal.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Was there much—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Everybody did.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Was their much discussion among artists as to—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Was it? Did you get in on this—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: —discussions—aesthetic discussions as to what you were doing and what you weren't doing?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh, endlessly. [They laugh.] Sit around, have coffee. Oh, yes. In the studio and—what are you looking for, darling?

RALPH MAYER: I'm looking for some of that early Boston correspondence.

BENA FRANK MAYER: That's not in my book.

RALPH MAYER: No, this is mine.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh. No, you have it in your file.

RALPH MAYER: Yeah. I had a whole file of that stuff.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Would you like some of that?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Oh, if they haven't got it at Detroit [ph]—

BENA FRANK MAYER: I'm just wondering what else I can tell you that's really constructive and would add to it. You seem to know a great deal about it already.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: You can't help but pick up things. You can't help but reflect. At least I can't help but reflect a sum of all the views that had been presented. And it's interesting enough; there's uniqueness in all the views that are presented.

BENA FRANK MAYER: We went to an opening day before yesterday at Bertha Schaefer's. You know, the gallery?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BENA FRANK MAYER: And there are a number of painters there. They all, you know—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: It was like old home week.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes, from the—artists for the Project. So, the comradery. They're all doing very well.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: This is another thing, it kept at least the skill alive. It didn't—it gave

opportunities to—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh, it developed intellectually and creatively.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, do you view it as a frankly experimental period? In your own case. Was it an experimental period?

BENA FRANK MAYER: You mean with my work?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes. Whatever it needed to be. It was completely an honest growing period.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BENA FRANK MAYER: And that's wonderful, free, creative time. Of course, we all went on anyhow, but it was—and together with that, there was a fraternity among the artists. Nowadays you don't meet so readily, because distances are great—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Sure.

[00:55:11]

BENA FRANK MAYER: —and everybody's very busy, and married and teaching and so on.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: You don't run into each other so much.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well down in 20th Street where you had the studio—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes, that was a little better. But now I think artists live all over New York. Their studios have been torn down, and they have had to scatter. Harry Gottlieb lives on 84th Street, Norman Carton lives on 86th Street, and Strauss [ph] and Bandino [ph] are here. Central Park West. You probably know—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: They are scattered. Yeah, they sure are.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Further uptown, further downtown, as far as Grand Street and the Bowery and all the way down. And east and west.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, Davis indicated, for example, that but for the fact that the building in which he had a studio was going to be torn down, he would've still been there. You know, but this—

BENA FRANK MAYER: On Seventh Avenue?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah, that this—the changing face of New York forced him to look elsewhere. This sort of thing.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Well, I took some lessons from him once.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Oh, did you?

BENA FRANK MAYER: When I lived on 39 West 67th Street. I was married from 39 West 67th Street. Then he came up there to give me these lessons. Gosh, that was after the WPA. And he said someday I'm going to have this studio. [They laugh.]

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: He took my studio.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Oh, did he?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yeah.

RALPH MAYER: I haven't recovered from the archives yet. All my papers are all in—

[Cross talk.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: They went like this to [inaudible]—

RALPH MAYER: —[inaudible]. I was careless in selecting things and putting them—

BENA FRANK MAYER: There's so much stuff here.

RALPH MAYER: —all together and keeping them separate. And look what's here.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Is that Eisenhower?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Oh, yeah. [Laughs.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: You could—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, how did you find him as a teacher?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Wonderful, for me.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Was he? Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: I had known him as a friend before that, in Gloucester.

RALPH MAYER: Who is this?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Stuart Davis.

RALPH MAYER: Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: I have an eggbeater painting that we painted together [laughs].

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Really?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yeah.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Inaudible] I met him much later.

BENA FRANK MAYER: He's a very penetrating, very brilliant man.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Incisive as can be, yeah. Yeah.

RALPH MAYER: When did the Project end?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, let's see—

BENA FRANK MAYER: '41, wasn't it?

RALPH MAYER: It was going in '39?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yes.

RALPH MAYER: I've got some [inaudible]—

BENA FRANK MAYER: '41, I think.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Actually, Mildred Holzhauer was in Chicago, at a warehouse in Chicago handling allocation as late as 1943. But I think to all intents and purposes, with the advent of the war, the handwriting was on the wall in '39 or earlier, '38. Congress was never happy with the WPA as an idea, or as an approach to the problem. Partly I suspect, because Federal Project Number One was something they couldn't get their hands on. And it was only in '39, I believe, that Congress, in expressly excluding the Theater Project from funds—Hallie Flanagan's marvelous productions had embarrassed some senators because [laughs] she quoted them correctly.

BENA FRANK MAYER: They were marvelous.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Laughs.] Yes. Well, they express—

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Laughs.] Never been equaled.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: No.

RALPH MAYER: No, none of his letters are on Massachusetts Project stationary; they're all on Harvard University. But he mentioned—the first one I picked up [inaudible]—

BENA FRANK MAYER: I've seen—you did send some down. There was work—

RALPH MAYER: —signed by that man you mentioned.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Morrison?

RALPH MAYER: Yes.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: You could make a little list of things that you'd like us to look up for you if you'd like?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, anything with continuity in terms of idea in this period.

BENA FRANK MAYER: You will make the continuity [laughs] probably.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, you know, I can go to Michigan, and I know that as of a given time they had to design furniture, so they imported a designer. I mean, where do they import them from? New York.

[01:00:00]

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh. Was Dick Flosheim [ph] a supervisor?

RALPH MAYER: No, he came after—

BENA FRANK MAYER: He did?

RALPH MAYER: I don't think he's that old. He was—in 1940, he was 21, I think, when he wrote me that first letter.

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Ralph's first fan. -Ed.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Was this a youth project?

BENA FRANK MAYER: No. Why?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: I wondered. They varied in age all the way, didn't they?

RALPH MAYER: They had quite elderly people on that. Remember? Some old-timers, people were shocked—

[Cross talk.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: All kinds. All kinds.

RALPH MAYER: —to see them on the Project because they had such a big name and were so well known?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Young and old.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: All the way. Yeah. How did you react to the press commentary about the Art Project?

RALPH MAYER: Well, if there was anything disparaging, we would just feel like fighting it. [Inaudible.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: There was one—

RALPH MAYER: Blind allegiance to it.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: There was one, in particular, *the Mirror, the New York Mirror*, published a Sunday supplement in which they tore the Project apart.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh, it's always being torn apart.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: This was a vicious thing—

BENA FRANK MAYER: We're always being viciously torn apart.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: You could read in 1965, and it's a vicious thing.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: But I suspected this is one of the things that the Artists' Union—

RALPH MAYER: Dennis W. Delaney [ph], administrator.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: In Boston?

RALPH MAYER: Yeah.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. Yeah.

RALPH MAYER: Tell you what that letter refers to—here's a letter from Audrey's husband.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh, yeah? Let's see. He was a lovely man.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: What kind of view do you have about her as the director?

RALPH MAYER: I don't know.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Benevolent despot?

RALPH MAYER: Yeah, they were—there was a continual conflict between the administration and the artist, as is bound to happen [Bena Frank Mayer laughs] in anything. And they—I think—

BENA FRANK MAYER: I think she loved the artists.

RALPH MAYER: She was like one of the family. I think everybody would have defended her from an outsider.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RALPH MAYER: But she had to handout some—

BENA FRANK MAYER: I think, on the whole, I would say she was good.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, she did—she had a very difficult path to walk between Somervell and the Artists' Union.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes. [Laughs.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: That's not a happy place to find yourself [laughs].

RALPH MAYER: Turn of the tape recorder—

BENA FRANK MAYER: She was very friendly with Harry.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Laughs.] That's not fair.

BENA FRANK MAYER: What'd you say?

RALPH MAYER: I said turn off the tape recorder, and I'll tell you what somebody called her. [Bena Frank Mayer laughs.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, I'm sure—

[Cross talk.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh, yes.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Put it this way, I'm sure anything—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Turn it off for just a bit.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: —anything you could say about her would be so.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Lavender [ph] and old face, was— [They laugh.] Delete that, please. [They laugh.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: No, but it's—but she had a certain continuity with the College Art Association.

RALPH MAYER: Definitely.

BENA FRANK MAYER: This is her husband. He's a fine man.

RALPH MAYER: He's a professor at New York University.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

RALPH MAYER: Did Walter—his pal, Walter Cook [ph], have anything to do with it?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: I've never run into the name. No.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh, Walter Cook's [ph] is a very erudite person. An art historian, wasn't he?

RALPH MAYER: Yes.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Friend of Dr. McMahon, Audrey.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, I've talked to Audrey McMahon. She still is a firebrand with respect to this period.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Really?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Oh, boy.

RALPH MAYER: Well, she ought to know everything that went on.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Is she for or against it?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Inaudible.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Laughs.] His gestures are so graphic.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: No, but I think she thinks that the world came to an end when the Project terminated. That it was a very serious wrench. Well, hey, you have to balance this by the fact that she was an ambitious woman, an able woman, capable woman.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yeah.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: And she was operating in an age which hadn't really outgrown the notion that the woman's place was in the home, and here she was handling this fantastic Project.

[01:05:00]

BENA FRANK MAYER: Here's a marvelous letter, from David Smith.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Oh? Well, David Smith, what part did he have—

BENA FRANK MAYER: You know David Smith.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yes.

RALPH MAYER: Well, David Smith was on it. And—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Wasn't he an advisor in techniques?

RALPH MAYER: Well, he was a regular worker for a while—

BENA FRANK MAYER: I thought he was an artist?

RALPH MAYER: No, he became put in charge of the stock room, the supplies, and so forth. And he got very much interested in artist materials through that and sort of made a study of it.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: This is the Smith I had reference to earlier. You mentioned the testing laboratory and the—

BENA FRANK MAYER: David Smith?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah, that he became interested in materials, and there were all kinds of problems as to how to size a wall, what to do with a canvas, how to make it.

RALPH MAYER: I think they had—toward the end, I think they were writing up some—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Materials of design.

RALPH MAYER: —guides or booklets for that purpose.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, Velonis published a little brochure [cross talk] on the silk-screen process.

RALPH MAYER: Yes, I have those here. Which I've—

BENA FRANK MAYER: David Smith is mentioned in the *Artist's Handbook*.

[Cross talk.]

RALPH MAYER: I worked with that silk screen group—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Did you?

RALPH MAYER: —the serigraph group, afterward. Yeah.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

RALPH MAYER: And got together and got them some good material at one time.

BENA FRANK MAYER: The base.

RALPH MAYER: This was after those days, yes.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Doris Meltzer had some—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah, but this would show kind of continuity, a kind of outgrowth of the WPA was the experimentation that certainly went on in the graphic arts.

RALPH MAYER: Yes.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Which was enormous.

RALPH MAYER: Yeah.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Because they had available materials, they had an idea. They were full of vinegar. They wanted to try all kinds of things, and they had the opportunity to.

RALPH MAYER: Serigraph process is completely due to that.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Graphic—it was a graphic project.

[Cross talk.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Fritz Eichenberg—

RALPH MAYER: What's his name—Von Grosswich [ph]—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Von Grosswich [ph], Yeah.

RALPH MAYER: Yeah.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. So, then, you know—

BENA FRANK MAYER: We saw him not long ago.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Oh, did you? He was in Pittsburgh, I believe.

[Cross talk.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: Where'd we see him? At a meeting.

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible] Museums Association. Maybe—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yeah. In—

RALPH MAYER: —in Philadelphia.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, this gives you a range of the excitement of which you were a part.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Well, I'm fully aware—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. It must have been as stimulating as can be.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Fabulous, yes.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Not the least of it be—and everyone's—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Very important.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Hm?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Very important.

RALPH MAYER: David Smith is in my book.

BENA FRANK MAYER: I just told Dr. Phillips.

RALPH MAYER: Here.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Uh-huh [affirmative]. Yeah. Well, a number of artists have indicated that when they came upon problems—how'd they put it—if you had never painted a mural before, you'd never would have had the chance to have a wall to play with.

RALPH MAYER: That's right.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Suddenly, the very fact that you hadn't done it became the condition that you should do it.

RALPH MAYER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Then you had the opportunity to.

RALPH MAYER: Well, I'll tell you, the—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: And when problems came up if you had someone to whom you could turn for aid and assistance, and David Smith was the kind of person that you go in and talk things over with—

RALPH MAYER: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: —as to what you should do or what you should try, or what was, you know—

BENA FRANK MAYER: And Ralph.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. But the whole nature of standards was yet to come out of it, you see—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Ralph was writing his book at the time. And his book grew out of the questions that artists continually asked. One day Ralph's brother said, Why don't you take three weeks off and write—[laughs] write a book and get rid of—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Take three weeks.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Get rid of these artists so you can sit down and do some work. And eight years passed.

RALPH MAYER: Before I became a painter, I was originally educated as a chemist. [Phone rings.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Oh, were you?

RALPH MAYER: To go into the family paint factory. So, I had about eight years' experience in the factories, see.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Oh, I see. And he had a technical background.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh, yes. He's the nephew of Dr. Maximilian Topp [ph].

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: But as a chemist.

BENA FRANK MAYER: He is a chemical engineer.

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Do you want to go—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Excuse me, just a second.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Laughs.] [Inaudible.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: He'll be right—

[Recorder stops, restarts.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, you indicated that your background is one of a chemical engineers'.

RALPH MAYER: Yeah. And then when I gave it up and became a painter, I didn't throw it overboard completely but kept up an interest in it, was a sort of advisor to artists. And I'm about the only one who specializes in artists' materials.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[01:10:11]

RALPH MAYER: You see, industrial paint chemistry is something completely different, although fundamentally, you have to know the same thing.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: But this was a way in which, when problems did emerge as to the nature of materials, you had the tool and [inaudible] understanding to make it work [inaudible]—

[Cross talk.]

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible] if I weren't a painter myself, I wouldn't have been able to write that book. It would just be a bald chemical account.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Right. Which made a difference, 'cause you combine the two? Combine the two. Well was any effort made to relate the Project to preparedness?

RALPH MAYER: Let me see.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, I know the Artists' Union, for example, is one of the earliest organizations on record against the ill-winds from abroad, both Hitler and Mussolini. And it was, you know, it seemed in retrospect, now that this was what was going to happen. It shifted the whole thinking scene in America. Remember the debate that took over between the America First Committee and the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies? You know, this kind of debate.

RALPH MAYER: I'm trying to recall something like that. I don't remember much about that. [Cross talk.] I don't remember any opposition preparedness.

BENA FRANK MAYER: *Time* magazine [inaudible]—subway—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: You don't remember any—

RALPH MAYER: No, I remember artists were getting jobs in defense industries.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: They were.

RALPH MAYER: Welcoming it because—well, probably after the war started. When the bottom fell out of everything else, and they had nothing to do or nowhere to go.

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Inaudible.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: And then toward the end, things got pretty sticky too, with the quota reduction problem.

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HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Somervell announcing in the -Ed.] press that we were going to cut 30 percent on—

BENA FRANK MAYER: A very nervous period.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. That is to say it had no criteria, for example.

RALPH MAYER: You probably remember more about that than I do. I have a dim recollection of that, [inaudible]—

[Cross talk.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: You mean when it was being cut—

RALPH MAYER: When it was being cut down, yeah.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: All of the artists were shaking for fear of getting a pink slip in the mailbox.

RALPH MAYER: Oh, yes. I remember the pink slip, yeah. [They laugh.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: But it's a part of the facts of life, I think, given 1938 and '39. What efforts were made locally with reference to the World's Fair that was going to open in Flushing Meadow?

RALPH MAYER: They had an exhibition in there. And how'd I get them? I don't remember getting a hold of a whole bunch of frames, and prints and frames, along with the stamp of the project at the World's Fair. [Inaudible]—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Silk-screen prints. -Ed.]

RALPH MAYER: Yeah. That was the first recognition of the serigraph too. You know, they were [inaudible].

BENA FRANK MAYER: There were some enterprising dealers who got a hold of a lot of WPA

paintings [inaudible]. [Inaudible] Canal Street. [Cross talk.]

RALPH MAYER: On Canal Street there was sort of a secondhand dealer. And—it was supposed to be destroyed.

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Inaudible.]

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible.] He got a whole truckload of paintings and prints down there, and was selling them for five [dollars] and \$10 apiece.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, I heard that someone in the plumbing supply industry bought up, the pound, old canvases that were going to be used as insulation. Well, this would indicate, I think, in part that preparedness had come. There was a need for space for whatever, bundles for Blue Jackets [ph] or whatever. And there was this storehouse of existing WPA materials, which was simply sold as scrap.

RALPH MAYER: None of the people that had anything to do with running the Project had anything to do with disposing of it.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Right.

RALPH MAYER: There was no effort was made to see whether they could have cashed in on it or do something with it.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Of course, you know in hospitals and schools and other public buildings had easel paintings.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Oh, sure. But, you know, there was a—what was it? I mean, there was a lot of work being done, you know.

BENA FRANK MAYER: And then they still have a lot.

RALPH MAYER: Yes, there was a whole department or committee or something to arrange for—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Well, I think Lloyd Rollins—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. Yeah, allocations.

RALPH MAYER: Yeah. [Inaudible.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well did you get a chance on the WPA to show the work? Did you have that kind of sense?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Uh, yes.

RALPH MAYER: There were no other exhibitions.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, this is part of the artist's flavors. Their desire to—
[Cross talk.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Inaudible.] I haven't thought about that for years.

RALPH MAYER: There were exhibitions at first, and then there were difficulties connected with it. They couldn't include everybody. And they had to slight some people. And—

BENA FRANK MAYER: I don't remember where they were. Do you?

RALPH MAYER: As I recall it, just because of that, I think they stopped it.

BENA FRANK MAYER: I don't remember where they were. Do you?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, early, I think it was '35.

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Inaudible.]

RALPH MAYER: I think it was very early in the years, there too much unwieldiness about the

whole thing. They couldn't include everybody, and they would have to slight other people. Again, getting into difficulty.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. That is internal arguments as to who—

[Cross talk.]

RALPH MAYER: —who was to pick out what was good and what wasn't good.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Inaudible.] Yes, that's the criteria. Yeah. I think quite early, the Artists' Union proposed or lobbied with Mayor LaGuardia for a gallery or a museum to be run by artists. For the purpose of showing.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh, did you speak to Edward Laning?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: No. No, he had—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Didn't he—[inaudible]. Yes.

[Cross talk.]

[00:05:00]

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: —murals at the library.

RALPH MAYER: He did the murals in the public library.

BENA FRANK MAYER: I know that.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: On the third floor.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. But I was thinking of the pressure that was brought to bear by the Artists' Union, the organization.

BENA FRANK MAYER: [La Guardia -Ed.] was there at the—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Inaudible.]

RALPH MAYER: Do you think he had something to do with—

BENA FRANK MAYER: La Guardia was there at the—

RALPH MAYER: La Guardia was there when they unveiled [inaudible]—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: I know that they never—the Artists' Union was never successful in getting a gallery, a city gallery that could be run by the artists. Which, I think, was—

RALPH MAYER: I don't remember that.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: There was a parade at city hall. Gorky and the rest of them carrying signs for—

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible.] It was the kind of thing that was going on every day.

BENA FRANK MAYER: There was a lot of activity.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, was there interest I think in getting an opportunity to show? [Inaudible]—

[Cross talk.]

RALPH MAYER: —big parties and balls or anything under that'd come later.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes, they had parties, you know.

RALPH MAYER: At Webster Hall.

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Inaudible] parties.

RALPH MAYER: I mean, [inaudible] everybody had parties but I mean—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Were they fundraising parties? Auctioned off our pussy cats.

RALPH MAYER: That was for individual causes.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh. Our cat had 75 children [and we had an auction on the -Ed.] kittens.

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: Our cats—kittens, whatever it was, were all over the Project. [Laughs.]
—

RALPH MAYER: I'm trying to think—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Everybody on this Project had [one of our kittens -Ed.].

RALPH MAYER: Whether there weren't any outside meetings, whether they weren't any large gatherings connected with the Project, I just can't recall.

BENA FRANK MAYER: There were, actually. [Inaudible] [laughs] self-conscious.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, don't you have a sense that during the early period of WPA, PWAP, there were conjuries of groups of interested artists meeting in cafeterias—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh, yes.

[Cross talk.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: —shop, no matter where.

RALPH MAYER: Meetings in studios.

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Rothbaum? Do you know Rothbaum? -Ed.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. Yeah. All that sort of thing was going on. It was symptomatic.

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Jack Tworkov. -Ed.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. They were all in on this.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Everybody. [Cross talk.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Suddenly they had a viable [inaudible]—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Everybody. We met those four guys at Bertha Schaefer's the other evening. [Inaudible.] Mike—

RALPH MAYER: Michael [Wolfe -Ed.].

BENA FRANK MAYER: Michael [Wolfe -Ed.].

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: He was there [inaudible]. And Joe [Conzor -Ed.].

RALPH MAYER: Yeah, people we've drifted away from.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Inaudible.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: We don't get together anymore.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, there was a rich variety in those days anyway, wasn't there? There was. I mean, you know what strikes me as almost anachronistic is the fact that artists would get together, hire a loft, and ostensibly argue over the question of sick pay benefits, you know? [They laugh.] We went to Washington, DC on sick pay. On retroactive sick pay or something like that.

RALPH MAYER: I remember once we started a society called the Society of—the New York Society of Southern-born Artists.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh, that's right [laughs].

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Oh, did you?

RALPH MAYER: —letterheads printed—

[Cross talk.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes.

RALPH MAYER: —[inaudible] this was to act on the Southern congressman to support the thing. [About three quarters of the members were Negroes. -Ed.]

[Cross talk.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Inaudible.] [My family would turn over in their grave. -Ed.]

RALPH MAYER: —[inaudible] with all these very impressive-sounding names. And the people that got these letters, didn't know that most of them were Negroes. The idea was to promote the value of art.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RALPH MAYER: Any measure that ever came up in Congress [inaudible] [was always hooted down -Ed.]—

[Cross talk.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: [And I'll tell you who was active in it, George Fry. -Ed.] George Fry.

RALPH MAYER: It was always hooted down and any measure like that that came up in Congress was—

BENA FRANK MAYER: [And Frank Smith. -Ed.]

RALPH MAYER: Yeah. [Inaudible.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, is Gwendolyn Bennett a name to you?

RALPH MAYER: Yes. Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Inaudible.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: I think she ran the Harlem arts center. There was what was called the Harlem—I don't know, artists guild?

[00:10:09]

RALPH MAYER: We had a meeting up in Harlem [cross talk]—remember that name.

BENA FRANK MAYER: [We used to go to Harlem to dance. -Ed.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Inaudible.]

RALPH MAYER: Augusta Savage's studio.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Augusta Savage, right.

RALPH MAYER: We had that meeting. The first meeting of this Southern-born artists

[inaudible]—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Laughs.] That's remarkable, Charles Alston. Charles Alston was part of the Harlem Artists Guild. He did the mural in the hospital.

BENA FRANK MAYER: You must have been around a lot, to get all this stuff. [Laughs.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: No, but I wondered about the degree of communication. The artists are always way ahead, you know, in regard for the intrinsic and nothing else. And this organization of Southern-born artists is a real showcase item to disclose the nature of communication and how it can be used tactically and strategically with reference—

[Cross talk.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: I don't know that we accomplished very much.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Just the birth of an idea like that, you know. I mean, who else would have thought about it? [Laughs.] It's wonderful.

RALPH MAYER: And their immediate—when they asked them to join, their immediate reaction was, they didn't care to join in, didn't have any strong feelings for the South [Harlan B. Phillips laughs] and politely that they—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Understandable.

RALPH MAYER: And then when it was explained what it was all about [they all joined -Ed.].

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: That's marvelous [laughs]. In the sense of pressure, you know.

BENA FRANK MAYER: We were always getting out bulletins, weren't we? [I mean, the whole -Ed.] Project.

RALPH MAYER: Yeah.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, is there a difference between the logic behind the Artists' Union and than that behind the Artists' Congress? Or is one simply a larger tent to take—

RALPH MAYER: No, I think the Artists' Congress was formed to have a more adult—I don't know the word to use for it—a more general art organization, a more influential one than the Artists' Union, which was tinged with the relief attitude. Who are they, anyway? Just a bunch of lowly artists. And the Artists' Congress was—

BENA FRANK MAYER: More pretentious.

RALPH MAYER: No, it was actually exclusive. Everybody didn't belong to it. You had to qualify. And you had to be a professional artist, with a gallery, with a dealer. I wouldn't say it was an outgrowth. It was—

[Cross talk.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: New need.

RALPH MAYER: —different kind of org—[inaudible] an organization of more prestige. The people were the same. They were the same people, more or less.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RALPH MAYER: No, I wouldn't say that. There were many people active and leading in the Artists' Congress that weren't on the Project.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yes, I thought it was like much larger tent—

RALPH MAYER: It was a larger and more professional—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yes.

RALPH MAYER: —outfit.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Of course, the Union was dollars and cents initially interested in what was going on, and what was available, and how to protect our own. This kind of thing.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh, yes. Very militant.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah [laughs]. Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: There was a lot of joy around among the artists during this period.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: There was.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yeah.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Do you see a difference in the attitude of—oh, from the early days, '35 through, say, '38. And '38 on to '41?

RALPH MAYER: Tremendous. The people of that age were completely different than in the '40s and '50s and '60s.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Like when they—

RALPH MAYER: Well, kids in art school and the young artists starting out, they're completely —

BENA FRANK MAYER: Now, you mean?

RALPH MAYER: Yeah.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, was there any growing disenchantment with the WPA?

[00:15:00]

RALPH MAYER: There was such a strong urge to keep it going in spite of anything—

[Cross talk.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Inaudible] it was important as an idea—

RALPH MAYER: —[inaudible] they could chip away at us and make it almost impossible—

BENA FRANK MAYER: It's very important as an idea for the government.

RALPH MAYER: —[inaudible] they would just politely [inaudible] —

BENA FRANK MAYER: —[inaudible]. As a matter of fact, the present [inaudible]. Don't you think [inaudible]—

RALPH MAYER: The two are related. The Communist influence was very strong. And so, Communism was more respectable in those days—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, these were the days of the Popular Front.

RALPH MAYER: Yeah. And the Communists themselves were tickled to death to have any state-operated things like that. And they would be [inaudible]—

BENA FRANK MAYER: It has gone on since. And they've never given up, actually. The Artists Equity [inaudible]—

RALPH MAYER: The Artists' Congress split up on the—

BENA FRANK MAYER: The new art bills?

RALPH MAYER: On a Communist—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Finland.

RALPH MAYER: —break [ph].

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

RALPH MAYER: And something of the same sort happened to Artists Equity too, you know. Not— I don't know if it was actual Communists as such, but sort of leftist sympathies, sympathizing with other organizations. And that irritated other people that didn't like to go into any political venture. They figured it was necessary to have a strong, inclusive artists' society that could work for the benefit of artists. And well, if anything drastic happened, there'd be a group to do something about it.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RALPH MAYER: And so, that's why Artists Equity was started. Maybe prosperity killed it.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, that's [inaudible]—

[Cross talk.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: A lot of prosperity [among artists -Ed.]—

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible]—a lot of the higher members dropped out the same way.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah, yeah. Well, you know, it's 1965. But I can think in 1965, as I did back then, that we as a nation should have been in Spain, and on the Republican side, no matter what the Johnson Act said. You know [laughs]? I had the feeling then, and it was a sort of argument that never got—or reached the level of a debate on a governmental level, as it did down below. As it did, for example, in these organizations of ours who were sensitive to what was going on and could recognize this thing. And whether they understood what the rationale of dialectical materialism is—you know—I doubt it, because [what the devil -Ed.], they were all projections of America, whatever it was in the '20s, and so on. And they can have an idealized view as to what might obtain. But the notion that to be for Republican Spain was necessarily an Abraham Lincoln Brigade and Communist position is nuts. Because I believe that we should have been in there.

You know, even now, this late day. It might have made a difference in the balance of history. We missed the boat as a nation. We missed freedom's call. So, I don't look upon it—or don't judge it by a McCarthy-type era at all. And I suspect that most of the organizations that artists attended were social rather than political, you know. This isn't to say that there weren't some that had political orientation—

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible] 100 percent social, practically, in their operation.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

RALPH MAYER: Yeah, it was—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Well, would you call Artists Equity social?

RALPH MAYER: No, professional.

BENA FRANK MAYER: No.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: But it was a place to meet, [cross talk] a place to exchange. A place to talk.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Artists were alive and fighting though. They were very militant.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Sure. Sure.

BENA FRANK MAYER: They were going to hang—they had this lovely thing. It was precious.

RALPH MAYER: Yeah, but the getting together—

BENA FRANK MAYER: A place to paint, they were going to hang on to it.

RALPH MAYER: Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Getting together, we all saw each other all the time.

RALPH MAYER: Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: When we went to get our checks—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Inaudible] stand in line—

BENA FRANK MAYER: —signed in.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Right.

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Laughs.] After we got our checks.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [The Jumbo Shop to cash them. -Ed.] Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Sterne's. -Ed.]

RALPH MAYER: Yeah.

I would say that most of the political activity went on outside of that, in groups.

[00:20:08]

BENA FRANK MAYER: It didn't matter what family. Nobody knew who anybody was, actually. [Ralph came from a -Ed.] rich family, but they wouldn't help. [And I came from a -Ed.] very nice Southern family [inaudible] WPA [inaudible] ostracized—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Oh, yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: And [inaudible]. [Harlan B. Phillips laughs.] —horrified.

RALPH MAYER: Who was this artist who was quite active in leading, and he quit to go home to Wisconsin to run for Congress?

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Laughs.] He was on the Project?

RALPH MAYER: Yeah.

Oh, I forget his name. He came back again later.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, you know, most of the questions were really up for grabs.

BENA FRANK MAYER: There's just no money.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, we hadn't decided as a nation that men have the right to organize yet. We hadn't decided—

[Cross talk.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Inaudible] painting. Nobody had a right to paint.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Right. Or we didn't decide that as a legal question from 1937, with the Johnson Laughlin Steel Company case. So, it was all open as to whether men can organize and bargain collectively, or whether they could find a collective voice, or whether they could exert pressure as a vested right in the job.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yeah, that's right.

RALPH MAYER: Wasn't it recognized on the Project? Didn't they have—or was that just—

BENA FRANK MAYER: No.

RALPH MAYER: —committee of some—

[Cross talk.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Inaudible.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Inaudible.]

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible.] Wasn't there a regular periodic thing, that they presented grievances?

BENA FRANK MAYER: To Audrey.

RALPH MAYER: I don't know.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: They were exciting times.

BENA FRANK MAYER: And very alive. These were fabulous times, too, completely different.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, the kind of, you know, rub shoulders association that you had just standing in line—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: —you know.

RALPH MAYER: I remember when an investigator came around once, and we were scared of our beautiful studio there with the terrific layout [inaudible]—

[Cross talk.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: [A lovely -Ed.] studio.

RALPH MAYER: And the rent was very low. That was our—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Our cleverness [ph]. [Laughs.]

RALPH MAYER: Our cleverness[ph], yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: We designed the place.

RALPH MAYER: And he looked around.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Designed for the landlord.

RALPH MAYER: He looked all around and he said, Is that horses down in the backyard that I saw, horses downstairs? And I said, Yes. He said, Imagine people having to live in with horses. That's terrible. [They laugh.] [Cross talk.] [He was just as sympathetic as anybody. - Ed.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Inaudible]. [Inaudible] having to live in a stable

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: And I covered the phone up.

[Cross talk.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: You weren't supposed to have a phone?

BENA FRANK MAYER: No. And—

RALPH MAYER: It was a mark of [inaudible]—

BENA FRANK MAYER: When he left, he went out, and he said, Well, I'll call you. [They laugh.]

RALPH MAYER: And another thing, you weren't allowed to have any insurance—any life insurance.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: You were not?

[Cross talk.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Oh, that was really the hard part of it. -Ed.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Inaudible].

RALPH MAYER: You were supposed to cash in on everything. And if you had any relatives that could help support you [that was another thing you had to go through -Ed.],

BENA FRANK MAYER: Well, that was [inaudible] [laughs]. He was his millionaire uncle, you know [Dr. Todd -Ed.].

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RALPH MAYER: [Well it amounted to the same thing. -Ed.] [They laugh.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: Convinced—they all thought we were crazy. A lot of people had families like that.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. Yeah, I guess—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Of course, we were quite young.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: You were quite—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Young.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: That's not enough—I mean, it's one thing to wash your hands in public because somebody has gone against the grain.

RALPH MAYER: And [this law about -Ed.] two members of the same family—

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Laughs.] Yes.

RALPH MAYER: —not being on the Project was a great deterrent to marriage, too. [They laugh.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: People used to separate so they could both get—

RALPH MAYER: Married people would have a separate address. You know, they could say they were separated, and others would live together. [They laugh.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Life went on.

RALPH MAYER: Yeah.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: But the main thing was the work.

[00:25:00]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah, opportunity with continuity to work.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Did they get their materials?

RALPH MAYER: Yes, we got—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yes. You know.

RALPH MAYER: Yeah, they were quite generous with—it was everything you needed, really.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

RALPH MAYER: They were careful in keeping track of the inventory and everything. Everything had to be accounted for. And you were supposed to turn in the brushes Bena Frank Mayer laughs] at the end when you were through with them. And one of the artist's

materials storage in New York bought up that whole big supply of used brushes. And had them on sale for a while.

BENA FRANK MAYER: I don't remember that.

RALPH MAYER: Yeah, [inaudible].

[Inaudible] bought nothing but the very best brushes. The one thing you can't skimp on.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Don't you have a list of all the people who were on the Project?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: No. The only thing I obtained was from Vernon Porter. A list of all the work that was done for the WPAP. Had the names of all the artists, he had a record of that. But for the WPA, no.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Don't we have some kind of a list?

RALPH MAYER: Do you know Frank Sterner [ph] still has all the materials, [inaudible] he had when we were up there from that Massachusetts workshop? All the books and papers and—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: The records?

RALPH MAYER: —samples of tests that were made.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RALPH MAYER: And all the different things they did, he offered to give them to me. And we had planned to [inaudible]—

[Cross talk.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: [We were at MacDowell, you know the MacDowell Colony? -Ed.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RALPH MAYER: He came over there and visited us. He lives in West Acton, Massachusetts.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And he has all of the papers of that—

RALPH MAYER: He had them then, in 1961. He was going to give them to me [inaudible]—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, you know, most of the paperwork was destroyed.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Why?

RALPH MAYER: Well, all the office papers, yeah, but this. I don't know—probably he hasn't got any files of anything. He wouldn't have that, nobody has a [inaudible] ledgers and books and laboratory work.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: But even a typescript copy of who was on the Project?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Harry would know.

RALPH MAYER: Is there anything left of the Artists' Union?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, I don't know. I have to talk with what's his name. Tom Dunne [ph], isn't it? President of the Artists' Union? Is that the right name or [inaudible]—

BENA FRANK MAYER: Have you talked to Harry Gottlieb?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: No, but I'm going to.

BENA FRANK MAYER: He would know a lot.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RALPH MAYER: Yeah, he was active.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Also, in graphics, too.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yeah.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. Yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Inaudible.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Those were great days, weren't they? [Laughs.] What?

RALPH MAYER: They're back in the in the [dim and -Ed.] distant past now.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Inaudible.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Inaudible.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: But the present, you know?

BENA FRANK MAYER: This is fabulous too. [We live three separate lives -Ed.] now. You know, Ralph had a column in the *American Artist*. And he gets tons of mail from artists, every day.

RALPH MAYER: I got letters from 50 states, so I know what's going on, technically.

BENA FRANK MAYER: All the time, it's real contact with these artists. But I mean all kinds of people who paint, not necessarily artists.

RALPH MAYER: [They're all serious about it enough or they wouldn't -Ed.] write the letters.

BENA FRANK MAYER: And—

RALPH MAYER: And another surprising thing, I thought they would be concentrated in certain sections of the country, a lot from New York.

BENA FRANK MAYER: See, this was about the—

[Cross talk.]

RALPH MAYER: [They're not. They come equally from the -Ed.] 50 states.

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Inaudible.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: They do?

RALPH MAYER: [They keep up a steady—about 25 to 30 a month. -Ed.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Let me see if I can get some current whereabouts of some women artists.

[00:29:590]

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Would you be bored if I showed you -Ed.]—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: What?

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Inaudible.] If you make a little list of—

[Cross talk.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Elizabeth Olds.

BENA FRANK MAYER: —things that I can help you with—

RALPH MAYER: She ought to be in the phone book.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Give me a little list and I'll find out some things for you.

RALPH MAYER: Did you try her in the phone book?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah, but I couldn't find her.

[Cross talk.]

RALPH MAYER: [Didn't she have to give up that studio? -Ed.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Inaudible] talked to her not long ago, she called you for something.

RALPH MAYER: Yes, she didn't [inaudible]—

BENA FRANK MAYER: What was it?

RALPH MAYER: —that studio.

BENA FRANK MAYER: What was it she called you for?

RALPH MAYER: It was something about going up to MacDowell.

BENA FRANK MAYER: About two months ago. I can find out easily enough.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: And this other one was Ruth Chaney.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yeah, I remember Ruth Chaney. Her brother is in design, you know that.

RALPH MAYER: He might know where she is, Stuart Chaney.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Florence Kent?

RALPH MAYER: I remember the name, that's all.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Nan Lurie?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Nan Lurie? [Inaudible.] Harry knew her. Nan Lurie. Wasn't she at Woodstock?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: This I don't know.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Put it on a little piece of paper and I'll look—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Beatrice Mandelman?

BENA FRANK MAYER: [The name is very familiar. -Ed.] Carol—you know, Carol what-you-call-her? That—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Carol?

BENA FRANK MAYER: No, [inaudible].

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: How about Mildred Rackley?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Mildred Rackley? I think she's a member of our society. [To Ralph -Ed.] Would you get the national—

RALPH MAYER: I'll get the national and the [inaudible].

BENA FRANK MAYER: Don't trip over—W, Wrackley [ph]?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mildred.

BENA FRANK MAYER: W-R—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: R-A-C-K-L-E-Y.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh. That National Association of Women Artists catalog is marvelous.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: What about Doris Meltzer?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh, Doris Meltzer? You know where she is?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Where?

BENA FRANK MAYER: She's got a gallery. [Inaudible.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, I'll be darned. I never associated the name.

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Inaudible.] Mildred Rackley, I know that name. Let me look, I know—

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: I know [inaudible] but the list of exhibitors [inaudible]—

RALPH MAYER: This is [inaudible]. Just the complete membership list.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: How about Carol Weinstock?

BENA FRANK MAYER: That's what I was trying to say [laughs].

[Cross talk.]

RALPH MAYER: That's the Carol you meant.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Every time I go to Lord & Taylor's I meet her. She's got a 15-year-old daughter. She's married. Look up Elizabeth Olds. [Phone rings.] Look, if anybody wants to sell anything, I'm not interested.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah, let's see, Sylvia Wald?

BENA FRANK MAYER: Oh, Sylvia Wald used to live on Knott [ph] Street. [She's around. -Ed.] I think she's a member of the national—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Sarah Berman?

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Inaudible]—yes?

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible.]

[Recorder stops, restarts.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Sarah Berman?

RALPH MAYER: Yes. She knows Sarah. If she's still alive.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah, I think so.

RALPH MAYER: Did I take that book away with me?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: I think so.

RALPH MAYER: [She must be a member of that group. I think Bena will probably know where she is. -Ed.] Who else is there?

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: We went through Carol Weinstock, Sylvia Wald.

RALPH MAYER: Sylvia Wald, [One Road, Croton-on -Ed.] -Hudson, New York.

[00:35:05]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: A woman by the name of Harari.

RALPH MAYER: H-A-R-A-R-I [Hananiah Harari]. There was a man by that name. [Inaudible] I remember the name—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. [Inaudible.] How about Richard Floethe? F-L-O-E-T-H-E. [Inaudible.]

RALPH MAYER: [I've heard the name, that's all -Ed.]—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: I think he was supervisor of the graphics division.

RALPH MAYER: I've heard that name [but I don't recall anything about him -Ed.].

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: What about Gertrude Goodrich?

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: A man by the name of Mervin Jules [ph]?

RALPH MAYER: Oh, yeah, Mervin Jules [ph]. He was with the Museum of Modern Art for a while. They had a school [inaudible] for children.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

RALPH MAYER: Something like that. But [he's around, I think. Bena will -Ed.] know about him. He taught somewhere else, I'm trying to think of it. If he's still around, he's probably teaching. I don't know. [Inaudible.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Loren MacIver?

RALPH MAYER: Loren MacIver is a very prominent painter. [I guess you can reach her. -Ed.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. Yeah. Was she local in New York City?

RALPH MAYER: Well, yes, we met her. Where'd we meet her recently? I think it was at one of the openings at the Hartford Museum. She had something there. She isn't in the phone book.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: No.

RALPH MAYER: I don't think she belongs to this outfit. [Her name is famous. -Ed.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: How about Marion Greenwood?

RALPH MAYER: Marion Greenwood. Is she in the phone book? We have her address. [Seventh Avenue South. -Ed.] Yeah. [I thought I had it—wrong book. She's been here. -Ed.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [She has been? -Ed.]

RALPH MAYER: I don't think she belongs to this thing, either. [Inaudible.]

[00:40:00]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Inaudible.] Well, she also has Lloyd Rollins' address [who was important -Ed.].

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible.] We visited—were in San Francisco about five years ago, six years ago. [He was not in good health and he was talking about moving -Ed.] to Mexico [and living there -Ed.]. Lloyd Rollins, 7 Buena Vista Avenue, East, San Francisco 17 [ph].

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Great days, weren't they?

RALPH MAYER: Yes.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Inaudible.] Now, you weren't, you know, on the Project, were you?

RALPH MAYER: No, I never was officially on. I was in charge of the techniques on it in some way.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RALPH MAYER: And did a few little things for them if they asked. I gave a talk on materials a couple of times at Mrs. McMahon's request. [When I gave this she got the idea of having a project for restorers, there were restorers that needed jobs, and a lot of work owned -Ed.] by the city that needed restoration.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RALPH MAYER: And never got anywhere with it. [There was a little officiousness into it in the

city departments that -Ed.] was hard to work with. We had lined up three or four good men with experience, good people. But in the end, [I don't know -Ed.], someone else took the idea. And they hired a couple of people that didn't know anything [and they worked. I don't think they did much. -Ed.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible.] There was a big project with the fire department and firefighters. Huge paintings, small ones, historical pictures of great fires and famous fire chiefs—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RALPH MAYER: —back in the '60s and '70s. I don't think anything was ever done about it.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: No. Well, is this along toward the end?

RALPH MAYER: Yeah.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

RALPH MAYER: In the end. I should say it was well established, anyhow.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RALPH MAYER: Municipal Art Commission had charge of it.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Inaudible.]

RALPH MAYER: There was a certain amount jealousy or something like that. They really had tried to [inaudible] thing. [Inaudible] occasionally called in regular commercial restorer firms, [and wanted to continue doing that -Ed.], even though they didn't have any funds at the time.

[00:45:01]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: But the sort of idea that sparked Audrey McMahon's interests because it would have made work, you know—

RALPH MAYER: Yes.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah.

RALPH MAYER: She was [quite anxious to see it go through -Ed.].

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. I suppose she wanted it to continue forever and a day.

RALPH MAYER: The people on the Municipal Art Commission wouldn't work with it.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: No. It was hard job of education so far as murals were concerned. Educating the Art Commission and [inaudible]—

RALPH MAYER: Well, the mural painters were quite [snooty -Ed.] about it because they considered themselves as sort of superior human beings than the ordinary easel painter. [They were a sort of caste -Ed.]—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Really? Within the [inaudible].

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yeah. Yeah.

RALPH MAYER: Yes, but mural painting was the great showcase [inaudible].

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: But they're more difficult because there's a concept of what was acceptable came into play because it was a necessity of negotiating with a sponsor. Where on the easel painting there wasn't any—

RALPH MAYER: I saw one of the murals [inaudible] in September when we were in New Jersey. [In a small town there we walked into the post office and there was one of the WPA murals, it was a rather new building, it was just building at the time -Ed.]—[inaudible]. And there was a mural by—what's his name? [Frank Shapiro, he is now teaching at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Mr.—what's his name? The man -Ed.] in charge of drawings on the Index.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Oh, the fellow from Brooklyn.

RALPH MAYER: McCreary [ph].

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: McCreary [ph].

RALPH MAYER: I think it was McCreary [ph]. He did a mural while he was—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: For the Index?

RALPH MAYER: In his studio, I guess. [But it's nice. -Ed.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

RALPH MAYER: [That's an awfully long call long distance. -Ed.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Inaudible.]

RALPH MAYER: I thought I had some letters and papers in the file there. Various things that were going on at the time. I didn't find them at first glance. I thought I may come across them. [Inaudible.]

[Bena has returned from phone. -Ed.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Inaudible.]

RALPH MAYER: Do you know Marion Greenwood's address?

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Inaudible] Ninth Street.

RALPH MAYER: I thought it was Seventh Street. [Inaudible.]

[Cross talk.]

BENA MAYER: [Inaudible] glasses [inaudible]—[person is very mad at me because I haven't written -Ed.]—

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: When you left you were about to tell me something about Sarah Berman.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Didn't she die? Didn't Sarah Berman die?

RALPH MAYER: I was saying the same thing.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Inaudible.]

RALPH MAYER: I gave him Lloyd Rollins' address.

BENA FRANK MAYER: Well, I wanted to bore you for a minute.

[00:50:00]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Shoot.

BENA FRANK MAYER: I can't see without—Ralph, will you find my glasses, darling? This won't take more than five minutes. This is Hal Lawrence [ph], this is 1930—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Inaudible.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Inaudible.] You know Grace Blick [ph]? [Inaudible.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Oh yeah.

BENA FRANK MAYER: But she wants [this. I'm getting this up for her. -Ed.] She's an art critic. She wants a dossier on Ralph. [Inaudible.] It's a terrible job to pick out the salient points [in his career where -Ed.] it has direct influence on the advancement of art techniques. [Inaudible] vast amount of materials. I picked out these. These people [inaudible] Ralph since 1930, that's a heck of a long time ago. [Going through papers on Ralph's career. -Ed.] [Inaudible.] I have to put them in order. [Inaudible.] Did you find my glasses?

RALPH MAYER: No, I [inaudible].

BENA FRANK MAYER: I think maybe in the bedroom, where I was talking.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [Inaudible.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: Boiled down, it's almost oversimplified.

RALPH MAYER: [Would you like one of these? -Ed.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: Wait a minute, darling. Let me finish, please.

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: [Inaudible.] Wait a minute.

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: [She asked you to get this together? -Ed.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: Yes. Yes. [She's a good friend, she was up here for the galleries. -Ed.] I have to put them in order [inaudible].

[00:55:03]

She took us out to dinner and [we had a long talk -Ed.].

RALPH MAYER: [Inaudible.]

BENA FRANK MAYER: Just a second. Just a second.

[END OF TRACK AAA_mayer64_265_m.]

[END OF INTERVIEW.]