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# Oral history interview with Katherine Schmidt, 1969 December 8-15

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## Transcript

### Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Katherine Schmidt on December 8 & 16, 1969. The interview took place in New York City, and was conducted by Paul Cummings for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

### Interview

DECEMBER 8, 1969

[session l]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Okay. It's December 8, 1969. Paul Cummings talking to Katherine Schubert.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Schmidt. That is my professional name. I've been married twice and I've never used the name of my husband in my professional work. I've always been Katherine Schmidt.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, could we start in 0hio and tell me something about your family and how they got there?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Certainly. My people on both sides were German refugees of a sort. I would think you would call them from the troubles in Germany in 1848. My mother's family went to Lancaster, Ohio. My father's family went to Xenia, Ohio. When my father as a young man first started out in business and was traveling he was asked to go to see an old friend of his father's in Lancaster. And there he met my mother, and they were married. My mother then returned with him to Xenia where my sister and I were born.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You have just one sister?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. There are just the two of us. The only interesting thing about Xenia –- it was a very small town –- I suppose it still is –- when we were quite young, I suppose we were about eight or nine or ten years old ( we're just a year apart ) every Sunday a young man used to have lunch with us, which was really Sunday dinner. He was attending Columbia University and getting his Ph.D. His name was Arthur. It turned out that he was Arthur Schlesinger, the historian.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really! Isn't that marvelous.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Occasionally my mother would hear something from Arthur. His father and my grandmother were great friends. Well, long after -- this is in the 1930s when my present husband and I were married -- we had a house on Twelfth Street. Early one morning around nine o'clock the doorbell rang. We had been to a party the night before and I was very reluctant to get up and get going. Our evening clothes were all scattered around the floor. Irvine went to the door and said in a very angry voice, "What do you want?" And it was Arthur Schlesinger. He said he had been to his publisher's, Macmillan, and he had asked his editor if he knew me. The editor said, "Yes. She lives right down the street."

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who was the editor, do you know?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I really don't know. But we had known some of the people at Macmillan. Putnam was the man that we particularly knew. So there was Arthur Schlesinger. He stayed all morning. I hadn't seen him, you see, since I was a child. We had a very nice talk. Then he started writing me. He would send me little essays that he had written and little notes on this or that. And – I don't know – those years were such hectic years. I was very interested in artists' to do's and we had a great deal of company and we entertained a great deal and there were people in the house constantly and I was trying to work all the time. I really just couldn't keep up with Arthur. He was much too friendly and nice. And I think he got sick and tired of sending me little notes and essays that he had written. But I never met his son. He had two sons -- one who is now well known. By that time I think he had not written The Age of Jackson but I'm not sure. That was his first important book. The other son I think was not in the history business. So that's all that relates to Xenia, Ohio.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Is your sister interested in art?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: No. My sister went to Barnard. I went to art school. At Barnard she became interested in dancing and in the theater and became associated with the Neighborhood Playhouse. When she was young she was quite well-known. She was in the group I think of Cagney, Aline Bernstein; there was a whole group of people that started in the Neighborhood Playhouse.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Meizner and all those.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Those people. Then she married and had a daughter. And in the theater it's extremely difficult to ... and in those years especially so. She was in The Grand Street Follies and The Green Hat, and oh, I don't know, any number of things.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What name did she use?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Ann Schmidt. Both of us kept our maiden name -- not that it was a particularly interesting one but it was ours.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What was it like growing up out in a little town in Ohio?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, actually my memory of Xenia was that it was rather lonely because we weren't allowed to play with the children across the street.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why was that?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: There was a great flat across the street with millions of kids. It was the same kind of old brick house that had been turned into apartments, a rundown old house, and the place was just teaming with children. But we weren't allowed out of our yard. And while we had swings and sand boxes and various things -- we were comfortable but not very well-to-do. We were not allowed to play with the children across the street. But we had each other. In the summers we would go back to Lancaster and spend our summer vacations there with our other grandmother. And there were cousins there a little different in age but there was variety. We had no friends that I can remember in Xenia.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What kind of school did you go to?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: We went to a new school. I think it was called the McKinley School. We had a lovely first grade teacher. I still don't remember her name --Miss Morrow. I remember liking school very much. My father's mother was a wonderful grandmother to my sister and me. She adored us. She had had only men around her. She had two sons and her stepchildren were boys -- men; they were as old as she. So she was delighted with two little girls that she could take care of.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you have things like music around the house? Or
pictures? Or books?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: No. I was named after my aunt Kate. She was a Katherine, mother's favorite sister. She was the only, only member of the family --there were four or five beautiful girls, my mother being one of them -- and Aunt Kate painted ictures. I remember as a child looking -- and I simply adored her -- I remember there was a picture of a barn that she painted and some trees and some jonquils in a little vase. This used to fascinate me. And because I was Katherine I suppose identified with her. I loved the pictures.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How old were you when you started to notice the pictures?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: It was always there. I grew up with them. I was born in that house. But there were no children; I can't remember any friends at all to play with. You know, children want playmates.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, yes. All the time. Was anyone in your family interested in literature?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: No. My mother played the piano. While we were growing up we read, you know, Five Little Peppers and How They Grew. Louisa M. Alcott, and all the usual things. And when I was about eight we came to New York. My father came first and then after they found an apartment my grandmother brought my sister and me here. We've been here ever since.

PAUL CUMMINGS Oh! So you really had only a few years in Ohio?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Up until the time I was about eight.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you like coming from a small town to a giant city?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, it was exciting and thrilling. It was freedom. We had one whale of a time from the beginning. From the time we landed in New York nobody paid any attention to us. We could go out on the street and skate with whomever we liked. We went to school and met all kinds of strange people that we liked. And, oh, it was enormous freedom. In that little town there wasn't any. Now, of course, there was a difference of age. By the time you're eight your mother doesn't have to watch you all the time. And also at first we lived around Columbia University. Then my father and mother decided it was too shut in there -- somebody had to take us to the park, Central Park. Then they moved up to Washington Heights which was then half bare lots, you see. Oh, there was a fire engine on our street and fire horses used to be walked up and down. The firemen were awfully

nice. They'd allow the children --they'd put a child up on the horse for a ride when they'd exercise the fire horse. And roller skating. Oh, that was our delight. We skated up and down Washington Heights. Then we moved to Riverside Drive. And the Drive had hardly a car on it then. We used to play cops and robbers and we'd play hockey every afternoon.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Very athletic.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, we were. Both of us were.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's marvelous. I'm just adding up the numbers here. That was 1916. That was getting on to the time of World War I.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, no, I was born in 1898.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But I mean after you came to New York, you know, it was getting on towards . .

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. When I first went to the Art Students League, as I remember, there used to be long arguments about the probability of the Germans . . . While nobody liked the Kaiser and his way of doing things, I, having German grandparents, always felt the Germans were wonderful. There were different kinds of Germans.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did your family take to your going to the Art Students League?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Unkindly!

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you pick the League?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, this was all my own enterprise. I don't quite know how I got onto it. From the minute we got here -- I don't know what my sister's recollections are -- but I remember growing my own legs very fast. I went to the public library constantly. I began to read Ibsen before I was out of grammar school. Every time I heard a name I would go after it. I don't know what made me so enterprising.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What school did you go to when you first came to New York?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: We went to public school, P.S. 186. It was on 145th Street. That is now completely a colored neighborhood. At that time they had children from the Jewish Orphan Asylum; there were some Negro children. In other words, it was a great potpourri. One of my friends came from the Jewish Orphan Asylum. There were all kinds of people. It was a very cosmopolitan, very easy-going, middle-class community. There were no racial differences that I could see, or that I knew of. We had friends of all sorts and varieties.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That must have been a tremendous change from Ohio.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: It was indeed. And I've always had that love -- New York means to me freedom and escape from small constricted towns.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Where everybody knows what you're doing and you can't move.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: You can be very private here; you can be very sociable here. There's a choice.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You said you were reading Ibsen. Do you remember other authors that you read?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, you're going to think this is awfully funny. But my first year at the League my friend there was Heidi Eames. I have some other friends that I've written down too who were artists but Heidi didn't continue inthe art world. She was the niece of Emma Eames, the opera singer. And her sister was Clara Eames who became very famous actress. Heidi and I used to sit at her feet; she was very beautiful. She married Sidney Howard, who was one of the good American playwrights. Anyway, Heidi and I got awfully interested in religion. I read Swedenborg. I still have some books on Swedenborg, The True Christian Religion and Heaven and Hell. I don't know what it's all about now. But at any rate we went to the Greek Orthodox Church. We used to go down to St. Marks on the Bowery, we went to all different kinds of things. The only thing we seem to have not had anything to do with was Catholicism. I don't know whether that was an unconscious prejudice, whether she had it, or whether I had it -- I don't know. But we investigated all other kinds of things.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What sparked that interest, do you think?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I don't know. Adolescence, I suppose. But Heidi was interested too. I didn't see her after . . . She was from Cleveland and she went back to Cleveland and then returned again but didn't go near anyone in the art world. She went on the New Yorker. Then she married someone and went out West; had a ranch. I never saw her again after that. But she was a wonderful girl.

PAUL CUMMINGS: To go back and to high school and then going to the League, at that time there were not too many galleries around, were there?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, no, no, no!

PAUL CUMMINGS: There was Montross, Macbeth, well, I remember those two. Then Stieglitz and Daniel were the first to start with American things. But I was thinking about the friends in high school. Marjorie Muir was one. She married a man named Worthington later and was known as Marjorie Worthington. She also married Willie Seabrook who wrote --I've forgotten but he was quite known. My other friend in high school was very literary also. She was Eleanor Kilmer who was the niece of the World War I poet Joyce Kilmer. You know, "I think that I shall never see a poem lovely as a tree." But we three were very highbrow, you see, compared with our other friends. We considered them very lowbrow; say I. I had one or two other friends. I still remember, a girl named Rosalie Epstein. I don't know what she is doing now. Also there was a girl named Marian Spitzer. I think she went into writing for the movies. She did some kind of work in Hollywood. In other words, we were not just . . . well, for that time I suppose . . . well, we weren't wearing our hair in curls and doing that kind of thing.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So through school and after you left Ohio you continued your interest in painting?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: When did you start painting?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Heaven only knows. I remember the first paint box I was given and a picture that my mother bought for me, you know, one of those little prints to copy. And I worked very hard copying that. I made an awful mess all over the house because I had never used oils before. Then they let me -- I say "let me" because my father wanted me to take piano lessons and I simply loathed the piano and didn't want to take lessons. I wanted to study art. Well they finally allowed me to go to Saturday classes. For some reason or other I looked up the League. There were Saturday classes at the League. I went there I think the last year in grammar school and my years in high school.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really? That young?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: And the only things you were allowed to draw were casts. Nothing else.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I didn't know they ever took students so young.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Saturday class was for the young. And it was there that I met my friend Ann Rector who was really very talented. I was not the least bit talented. I hadn't a glimmer of talent. But Ann was really gifted. Her family had been friends with a very well-known sculptress. Ann went to Saturday classes and I used to be agog at the marvelous things she did. And all the time I was going to the Saturday class occasionally over weekends she'd come and stay at my house or I would go down to stay at her house. Her father was an inventor. Her mother was a very southern lady from West Virginia. Ann is still alive. She went into the decorating business. She married Edmund Duffy, who was the cartoonist on The Baltimore Sun and they were great friends of Henry Mencken. I used to visit Ann in Baltimore were I met Mencken.

PAUL CUMMINGS: He was a tough old guy, wasn't he?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, he always kidded the pants off us -- off me at any rate. He referred to what we did as "hand-painted oil painting."

PAUL CUMMINGS: How old were you when you got the paint box as a gift, do remember? Was it in high school? Or before?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, it must have been the last year of grammar school or the first year high school.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Had you made drawings before?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: There wasn't anybody to train me. My family was not associated with anything like that. Ann's family was. And she did have someone who could steer her. But also she was gifted. I don't think I had any talent. I just had the appetite, but it certainly was there.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, obviously you're still working at it.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. I work very hard.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How was the League in those days? You studied with all kinds of people, I've found out. The first class was drawing casts -- right?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, in the Saturday class you went in and you drew casts. First you drew a man; it was a block figure, just to block out the general planes of the face with charcoal. Then the instructor would come in, rub it out, and say, "No. This is the way you do it." But she was a nice woman --Agnes Richmond. I was very fond of her. Then occasionally I would go over to see her. I was just thrilled. She was a great friend of the Sloans and of the Winters. Then the summer while we were still in high school my mother allowed Miss Richmond to chaperon my sister; a girl from Cleveland who was a friend of Heidi's -- Kitty -- I've forgotten her last name; and I think it was Marjorie Worthington; and me in Gloucester. And we weren't allowed to meet a single solitary person. Well, can you imagine one woman with a bevy of girls!

PAUL CUMMINGS: It must have been difficult.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I should say so. I'm very sympathetic now. All we did was paint. A morning and afternoon swim. The highlight of the summer was some friend of Miss Richmond had a musician give a group of us lectures on Bulgarian themes. Oh, that was thrilling. We were able to see something else.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, that was also your first time away from home for any length of time, wasn't it?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: No. I've forgotten something. Because before that I went to Woodstock for two weeks with a friend and stayed in boarding house. Miss Richmond recommended a place that she thought was all right. And I got messed up with a man named Shamus O'Shield. I was too young to know what anything was about. He had a wife and two children. And, oh, he wrote me and sent me books. My family didn't care for it very much.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But it was an interesting experience.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, well, I thought it was interesting.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you meet any other people up there?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: No, I was too young. This man used to eat at the same boarding house. As a matter of fact, he was a very sweet man. All this was very innocent. But I think older men should stay away from young girls.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How long were you in Gloucester then -- that whole summer?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I think I was there for two summers. Miss Richmond would rent this apartment. It was a second floor in East Gloucester. I've never been there since. There were rooms for all of us. We would get our supper; there was a kitchen of some sort. And there was wonderful swimming. East Gloucester, of course, was not crowded then. The dunes were lovely.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It must have been lots of fun.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: We enjoyed it. I enjoyed it very much.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How much time did you spend there? -- the whole two months?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I can't remember. It was the school vacation -- I don't know -- maybe six weeks or whatever. Girls always have to be fitted with shoes and clothes and things before starting back to school in the Fall. Although we were not very clothes-y. We insisted on wearing middy blouses and skirts. At least I did until I went to the League, and even went to the League in a middy blouse and skirt.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I'm curious about the classes at the League and how you progressed.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: After high school I went to the League. My mother liked Miss Richmond and Miss Richmond recommended F. Louis Maurer. I went there in the afternoon. I can't remember anything except being thrilled with the whole thing. I had friends, of course. Molly Luce came in. She's a painter. She came into the class the same day I did. She hung up my hat as I couldn't reach the hook. She had very long arms. At any rate, Louis Maurer was the most gracious, pleasant, nice human being; very nice to everyone in his class. It wasn't the least bit like today. We used to be invited down to his studio on occasion. Everybody behaved themselves extremely well. And there was a lunch room. There you got to know other people. I think it was Reginald Marsh who said he came in and saw this bevy of girls and was scared to death of them.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Were there lots of girls studying there at that time?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, the classes were divided then into boys' classes and girls' classes. There were not mixed classes until later. I was in the women's life class taught by Louis Maurer. The first year I think I went only in the mornings. I would walk home from 57th Street to 151St Street on the Drive.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh! That's a good walk.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I loved it. On the Drive then there were no cars as compared to now. In those years, too, there was a very good bridle path and we'd rent horses and ride on the Drive. Then the next year I really got my feet wet and I decided . . . Oh! I met Bellows. Again, Bellows was a wonderful person as a human being, and a very warm person to young people; he loved them. And it didn't make any difference whether or not you were in his class. He used to have lunch with us in the lunch room. If he liked you were always invited to sit at his table. Although I wasn't in his class I was always invited to have lunch at his table.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did the teachers usually have lunch there?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: No. Bellows also came from Ohio, from Columbus, I think it was. And he would invite me when he invited his class. I'm sure I wasn't the only outsider who was invited but I remember that I was invited. Well, I wanted very much to get into his class. I'd had enough of Louis Maurer, nice as he was. This was much more exciting and more in tune with the things that were going on. Bellows was beginning to be somebody. American art was just beginning to be something. You don't realize what a struggle it was. There was only the Academy, Speicher, Dasburg. A whole group of people was coming up. And there were people that I didn't know then but I knew them later. But there was a ferment going on there because people had been in France and had been influenced by the Impressionists and also later developments. At any rate there was a ferment. The Independents were started here. Sloan also was a wonderful person; very friendly. Well, at any rate, I wanted to get into Bellows class. And, as I told you, my parents were not enthusiastic. They didn't make my life miserable but my father used to say to me, "If you would be exactly like your mother that's all I would require of you." Somehow or other I just didn't want to be that way. Well, at any rate, my father neglected to send a check for my tuition because it really didn't interest him that much. I don't think he did it out of malice. And when I went to get into the Bellows class I was not in it. I think that was my first terrible sorrow; I mean really grim disappointment. I had so set my heart on it. So I took the class next door as being about as near as I could get to Bellows class

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who was teaching that?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Kenneth Hayes Miller. And I never loved him after that. Then the next year I was in the Miller class in the morning - no, I took Bridgman life drawing in the afternoon I began to get ideas that I wanted to learn how to draw and I went to Sloan's class at night. I don't think I did it consistently but I think I did it for about two years off and on.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How do you think Maurer influenced you? Or what did he do for you as a student?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I love nice people and he was a lovely human being. He couldn't have been kinder to his students. But I never learned a single solitary thing from him.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You didn't find him an exuberant teacher?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: No. I found Miller very demanding and very exacting and also very interesting. And much as I loved Bellows . . . he recommended a summer place for me to go -- Matinicus. And again I took one of the girls from the Miller class up there with me. And really two girls alone shouldn't have gone there. It's a small island.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I don't know where that is.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: There's a whole chain of islands and there's one that's much better known. But he had gone there and painted.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Is this up in Maine?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: It's off Rockland, Maine. We took a boat from Rockland to Matinicus. It's about 25 miles out at sea I think. We stayed with -- what was his name? He had a very interesting first name -- the last name was Young. There were only two or three families on the island.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Was it Mahonri Young?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, no. Mahonri is another friend. This was a fisherman. The girl that I went up with wouldn't make any accommodation to this rough life so we didn't get on at all. It was a very rough life. The fisherman fished for lobsters. He had a plot of ground on which he planted five kinds of potatoes. There were even black potatoes. I had never seen one before. He had two cows that gave the most marvelous milk. I think they were Jersey or Guernsey. We had cream with everything. Potatoes, cream, fish and lobster. When I came home my mother said I looked as if I had been blown up.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's a very tiny island, isn't it?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: A very tiny island.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you get a lot of painting done?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I painted a picture every morning and one every afternoon.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That was a lot of work for the summer.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: And they were terrible. Simply awful!

PAUL CUMMINGS: What did you do on an island like that for the summer?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Nothing. But just being so preoccupied with the thoughts of art and trying so hard, if you work as hard as that and you have to walk and find subjects, carry an awful lot of stuff, you're quite willing to go to bed early. You haven't very much appetite for other things.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, after that you came back to the League, right?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. And at that time I think the Miller class combined. You see, then we began to develop friends who remained our friends. Of course in the Miller class I had met Molly Luce who later married Alan Burroughs. And I had met Dorthy Varian. And Ann Rector who had been my friend at the League in the Saturday class. Then I met Alexander Brook and Peggy Bacon, and they became very good friends of Yas and myself (I had met Kuniyoshi then). By the end of that year we had become very close; I was very interested in him.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you meet Kuniyoshi?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: In the class. And Peggy Bacon met Alex in the class. And who else met whom else? Everybody married somebody else, more or less. And then there was Lloyd Parsons who was a very good friend of mine. And Arnold Blanch and Lucille Blanch. Lloyd Goodrich had been in the Miller class and would come back occasionally. I met him there. And after he married I became very fond of his wife. They're still very intimate friends of ours.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I just realized I never met his wife.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, she's awfully nice. A very capable woman, too. She helps him a great deal in his work. She's a lovely person.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Does she paint? Was she is student there?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: No. She's never been a painter. In the early years she devoted herself mostly to the raising of her two children. She has a son and a daughter. And after the children went away to school -- the son went to Yale and the daughter, Madeleine, went to Smith. She married an English Australian and is now living in Geneva. Both children are very attractive. Then I met Reginald Marsh whom Lloyd brought down from Yale. We became fast friends, very good friends. He had not yet married his first wife, Betty Burroughs. And I had become a very good friend of Bet. With Reg and me it was friendship. But he fell for her. As a matter of fact, it was very interesting because the men that we married, that was it right away, more or less. Then I remember the first time I ever saw Henry Schnakenberg. He was still in army uniform. He had come back from France. It was first time I heard the expression -- what is it? -- sixteen horses and thirty men?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, yes. The forty and eight thing.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Forty and eight or whatever it is. I had never heard that before. Then there was a marvelous person in the Miller class, David Morrison, who was one of Alex Brook's best friends; became one of my best friends; was one of Yas's best friends; and Peggy's, too. He was the son of missionary people who had been missionaries in India for generations it seemed to me, his grandparents, his parents. And he studied for the ministry and had been ordained and then decided that social work was of greater importance. He was living and working in a settlement house up on the East Side in a very poor section. He was always getting boys out of jail or helping them in trouble. I remember he staged prize fights and things that would be helpful. And he painted very nice pictures. As a matter of fact, I saw one of his pictures this summer. I did have one; I don't know where it is now. He died the year that Yas and I were married; I think it was that year. He had a bad heart. But he was a lovely human being, an all-around person. We all would go up to the settlement and watch these various things that he would provide for the people of the neighborhood. Then later Audrey Buller came down from Montreal and Lloyd Parsons fell in love with her -- they both had come from Montreal but they did not know each other in Montreal; they met in New York apparently. And they were married. Lloyd died just last year. You know, I sound like -- do you know the end of the Proust -- the last long monologue I think it is of Shaunus as he's sitting in the

park or something. He refers to everybody's name. Dead. So and so, dead. So and so, dead. I sound just like that. And then Isabel Bishop came into the class. She came a little later than the others.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I wonder if we could go back for a second here.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Certainly.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I want to talk about some of them. You mentioned something about Miller as a teacher.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, Yes. He was very good.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did he work as a teacher?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, he was a very strange rather tight man with a gimlety blue eye and a long nose. He seemed to smell your painting. And was rather inclined towards intellectual pronouncements and aphorisms. But they always had some meaning. It was so strange. You see, my love for Bellows and my wanting to be in his class…but after I started working with Miller I had absolutely no appetite at all to go into either Henri's or Bellows' classes or any of that. This was both emotionally and intellectually more demanding. You see, we didn't all work the same way at all. And we haven't. I think that the class was very interesting. Kuniyoshi's work is no more like mine. Alex Brook's work is no more like Peggy Bacon's work. All of us were enormously different. But I think Miller's object really was to bring out in you what was best for you to do; also to help you understand the precepts upon which painting is built as he understood them.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. So he really wasn't teaching what he knew? He was trying to make you discover your own talent.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: He did both.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But some teachers say, "This is the way to do it because that's the way I do it."

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, no, no. Not at all.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, he was very aware of European painting and what was going on.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: My husband and I have just commissioned a book that's being done by Lincoln Rothschild for the Whitney on Kenneth Hayes Miller.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

[BEGIN TAPE 1 SIDE B]

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: It's in the process. I hope it comes through all right. He was a very original character. An even in the League days -- I told you there was a great ferment going on in the art world -- but there was a great division between those who were influenced by the French School and what I call good old American corn. And it occurred with all of us. Some of us went one way; some of us went another. Now Yas was much more intrigued by the French because Pascin was a friend of ours; and his talent, everything about his talent was sensuous.

PAUL CUMMINGS: All those curves and colors.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. And also temperamentally he had an affinity for the French things. I remember we used to argue who was the really key influence -- Cezanne or Renoir? And we divided just in two. Some for Renoir; some for Cezanne. I have always felt that Renoir is a very much greater painter. It's now becoming apparent I think.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's interesting. Was there a great deal of interest among the students or the teachers in Renoir at that time?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, yes!! Why, we'd hang around Durand Ruel. I could have bought a Renoir for $350 if my parents would have given me the money. I could have bought a Cezanne for $175, a Cezanne watercolor at the Montross.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's incredible. It's funny -- I met Durand Ruel's granddaughter last night.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Is that so?

PAUL CUMMINGS: She lives here on West 88th Street or something like that.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: As I remember, they were very nice to us. Oh, I used to haunt that place because I loved

the paintings so.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did that compare to things that you saw, say, at MacBeth or Stieglitz and places like that?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I remember MacBeth was much more dominated by the Arthur B. Davis kind of thing at that time. Although I think Ryder had exhibited there. But he had more of the American Hudson River School, that sort of thing. And Montross had begun to get things like Cezanne watercolors and certain other things. Then Stieglitz had also through the Henri --I don't whether it was because I was too young then to be a participant in this -- but Stieglitz was much more interested in the effects I think of the French, the Cubists. Although he was always interested in Yas.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, he showed Matisse and Picasso.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you go to his gallery often?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, yes. But it was rather painful. He was rather difficult.

PAUL CUMMINGS: In what way?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, I think he really would like to have got Yas as an artist. Yas didn't care for him very much.

PAUL CUMMINGS: He was a rather singular personality I've gathered from people who knew him.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, I think we were rather puritanical (although we weren't), but we were. I remember our first trip to Europe in 1925. All our friends are gone before that time, had been there in the twenties previous to 1925. We were there for one year. And we went with friends, Camby Chambers, Esther Andrews, and Sue Lawson who was the wife of the playwright Howard Lawson. They were going over to meet Hemingway. They were very good friends of his. Yas and I were really shocked. We thought these people lived too high, you know, drank too much wine, did too much . . . and we couldn't afford it. We had a very hard time. You see, my family disowned me when I married Yas. So that we had a hard time earning a living. I had never done a thing. I didn't know what to do with a carrot when I was first presented with one. But I soon learned. We had to earn a living and at that time it was very hard to do so.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You were about twenty when you married?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. I was married in 1919.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That was very young, wasn't it? Or was it not in those days?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I don't know.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How long had you known Kuniyoshi before you married him?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: About two years, two and a half years.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So it wasn't really that speedy.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, no, no. We were married in Ogunquit, Maine. Yas had met Hamilton Easter Field . . . there's another man who is very important and really something should be done about him before all the memories fade. Hamilton Easter Field was a very important influence in American Art. He started the arts --he was very influential in founding The Independents. He was the amateur par excellence. He was a musician. He wrote well. He painted. He really was the first to go after American primitive art in Maine. And I know it. He was very generous to people that he liked. He thought Yas was very talented and invited him to Ogunquit. He had a school; he had many buildings that he rented. And in exchange for Yas's helping him he paid him a little bit of money, gave him a place to work, and gave him materials to work with. And Yas did some of his first things there. One of the paintings that he did was just recently sold at Parke-Bernet. I'd love to have had that painting. It belonged to a friend of mine who had bought it -- Elmer Rice. It's Boy Fishing. It brought a good stiff price. But it was Field who encouraged Yas. And that's how I happened to go to Ogunquit, because Yas had been there the year before. So my sister and I went to Qgunquit for the summer and rented a studio there.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Wasn't there a theater up there?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, my, this was years before. Way before Ogunquit was nice. It must be terrible now. Oh, it was something real then. There were artists. There were cartoonists. And everybody was serious. Now there's

something so, you know, the affluence of the country . . . the more neurotic and sick you are the more you can paint.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You don't believe that?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I certainly don't.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's a good hard job to develop one's talents and skills. The other day I was doing an interview with a dealer and he had been talking over the phone to one of his artists. He put the phone down and said, "It's terrible today. The artists want so much money so fast. It's just taking all the spirit out of everything."

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, we're getting the kind of art that the culture . . . As a matter of fact, I think art serves a real purpose. I say this over and over again, though my friends don't like it. I think it's a part of therapy now. It's always been connected with something: religion, philosophy, social comment, something. And now I think it's part of therapy. It keeps people from going crazy. Every old lady paints. Stockbrokers paint.

PAUL CUMMINGS: There are so many questions that I'd like to ask about the League and about Ogunquit. You've talked about Miller; you studied with him for how long?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, I became a friend of his. Oh, I was in the class perhaps for two or three years. But then, you see, since I married Yas we both had to work. Field at first had given us a studio in Ogunquit as a wedding present. But this was typical of Field: in the middle of the winter he came to us and said (he stuttered)"K-K-K-Katherine and Yas-u-o, you know, unfortunately I need that studio this summer. I have to rent it." Well, that was a great shock to me because I believed that when people said something they meant it. Yas and I had a talk. And he didn't agree with me. But I said, "I will not take another penny from this man. We are going to pay him rent. And I am going out and get a job. I've never had one but I'll get one. And I think we both ought to do the same thing and be free. Who wants to be at the beck and call of somebody who is going to change his mind every fifteen minutes?" It just didn't suit my temperament.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you get a job then?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I did. I got a job running the lunch room at the League. I wasn't very good at it. I kept it for two years, though. Dot Varian had done it the year before and then she went to Europe. So I asked for it and got it. But, my heavens, it paid only I think eighteen dollars a week; maybe I didn't get that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: A couple of dollars a day.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: It wasn't very much. And you know my hours were . . . I used to get up at five o'clock in the morning. I'd paint until . . . We had just one room at that time and I'd paint at one end of the couch and Yas would paint the other. But there was a certain amount of house work to do. Then I had to be at the League at ten o'clock. Then there was the lunch. I had to sit at the cash register. I had to order food. I had to plan the menu for the next day. Then I had a few hours off in the afternoon when I could go out for a walk. Then there was dinner at night. We lived in Brooklyn and we'd go back to Brooklyn in the evenings.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It was a long day.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: It was a long day. And it was a very hard day.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How many days a week did you work there?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I guess it was the regular five.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Not on Saturdays?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I don't think so. Because the classes were different on Saturday.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Whereabouts in Brooklyn did you live?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: In the Field house on Columbia Heights. You see, not only had he given us as a wedding present this studio to use for the rest of our lives but also a room in one of his houses on Columbia Heights. He had two houses in Columbia Heights. He was a wonderful man in spite of the oddities.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's very interesting. I know there were so many people that he did things for. In a number of the interviews people have talked about him. But nobody has ever been able really to define him.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh. Well, he was the amateur. His background was half -- I think his mother was a Haviland. They had been extremely rich. But he was cultured American family of wealth. He had all kinds of very

beautiful things. This house on Columbia Heights was a beauty. Abraham Poole's brother wrote The Arbor or something. It's a book about, you know, when the houses, the backyards were the roofs of the houses on Firman Street.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I don't know about that.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, it's all been torn down. Robert Laurant would -- Robert Laurant was the son of his cook. And Robert brought back his bride -- Robert inherited all his property, you see. And the year that Yas and I were married -- the first party that Mimi, Robert's wife, went to was our wedding party.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What kind of party was that? Lots and lots of people? Or was it a quiet party?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: They were all our friends. I'll tell you the people who were there in Ogunquit. This is a little homework I did. Betty and Niles Spencer were in Qgunquit. And they became very, very close to us. Then there was Adelaide Lawson whose father was a -- you've heard me speak of John Howard Lawson?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: She had two brothers. One had died (had killed himself, as a matter of fact). The father had brought the three children up and Adelaide had never been taught to wash her ears and neck. But everybody who knew her loved her. She was just a wonderful human being. And free as a bird. Her father bought her a house on 41st Street. She was a great friend of Dos Passos. And when Dos Passos would come up to Ogunquit there would be a whang bang party. We'd all bring something, do something, prepare something. But in those years we didn't have liquor because we couldn't afford it. There would be tea or something --I don't know what. But then Karfiol was in Ogunquit. He had come back from abroad. He had two teenage children. Then Dot Varian came up. I think Yas and I brought a lot of people there from the League. And Dotsie Greenbaum who I had met at the League. And Izzie Howland. And Maria Rawter had a place. Then there was Henry Strater whom I did not know before. He came from someplace else. And then Wood Gaylor. Wood Gaylor eventually married Adelaide Lawson. And then there was Alice Newton who came from the class at the League. She was much older than we were -- or than I was, at any rate. And Frank Osborne who was a friend of Niles Spencer's. Niles had known him in Europe. And they met in Ogunquit and were married. They're both dead. Frank collected and he had the most beautiful Demuths that I think there are. He bought the set -- I've forgotten -- I think it's the illustrations for one of the James' stories. And Carl Zigrosser became very friendly with Alice after Frank died and helped her I think with the collection. They had built a place in Manchester, Vermont. A house made out of marble. And Alice left her collection to the Pennsylvania Museum. Carl came to see me about a year -- well, just after I . . . I've had a terrible illness. I think he thought all his friends were going to die . . . He was writing his memoirs. I had just recovered from my second bout with lung cancer. I'm fine now. But Carl came. I was awfully glad to see him. He told me of Alice's gift to the Pennsylvania Museum. Carl was a curator there, you see, of prints.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: He's another wonderful person.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. He's in Iowa now, isn't he? Or somewhere?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, no. He's still in Philadelphia. I'm seventy-one. He must be eighty, or near it. But he is a most interesting and also a creative person. Then there are the Burroughs. I haven't said one word about them. I met Bet at the League; and I met Alan. Bet's mother had just died and Bet became the mistress of the house. They had a lovely old house in Flushing. He was curator of paintings at the Metropolitan Museum. You see, we had a great deal of warmth from older people and the older people shared. Everybody was so anxious to help. They really were.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's very interesting how the teachers at that time seemed to be very involved in the lives of their students, and they ask them into their homes.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, yes! They gave generously, you see.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And it just doesn't happen anymore.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: And we all helped each other. Now the first of this group to be really successful was Alexander Brook. Brummer took up Alexander Brook; and Alex had his first show there. It was when Brummer first built the 57th Street... Well, Alex would go out of his way to try to sell pictures for Yas, or do anything that he could do. Again, Bryson Burroughs was just extraordinary. He was so generous with his daughters' friends. Yas took to frame making and then to photography to make a living; and then finally to teaching. But in those days practically everybody had to teach. And, as a matter of fact, except for a few I think the same thing is true

now.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, yes.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: You have to teach or have some kind of a side profession.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. There are so many things to talk about. What was your trip to Europe like? In what year?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: It was 1925-1926.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you decide that year?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: All our friends had been to Europe, you see. We were the only ones who had not been. And we were very anxious to go. Also Pascin had always thought -- as a matter of fact, it became a more important issue later -- that Yas was very stupid to stay in this country; that he'd do much better in Paris.

PAUL CUMMINGS: For what reason, do you think?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, there was Foujita who was making a darn good living in Paris. And it was easier to live there. In those years there was a great deal of anti-Japanese feeling in this country. And if you were married to a Japanese you were quite aware of this feeling.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really? I didn't know that.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, boy, yes!

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's very interesting. What did that stem from, do you think?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, they were just looked upon as inferiors. I remember Molly Luce"s wedding. I said I didn't want to participate in it. And Yas certainly didn't want to. Then the bridesmaid my size got sick and Molly pleaded with me. So I went out, and Yas, too; it was a church wedding. And the lights went out in the house and her grandmother's voice could be heard saying, "It's that Chink in the house!"

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, boy. That's amazing. Well, was it expensive to go to Europe at that time?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Now let me tell you: we had saved -- we worked very hard during the winter at our jobs. And then during the summer we painted. We each of us had a show, one one year, and one the other year. And we would sell and we saved whatever we sold. We saved $1,200. That was one year's living abroad for the two of us and passage. Now imagine doing that kind of thing now!

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's incredible. Apropos of the shows and selling, you started exhibiting rather early at the Whitney Studio Club.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: 1923. Again, Mrs. Force is another of the great contributors to my warm memories, and also to certain aspects of American art. She'd buy something every year. The pictures were not expensive -- a hundred dollars or a hundred and fifty dollars.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Would you sell many things out of an exhibition in the 1920s?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: As a master of fact, it took quite a long time. Yas is so well-known now. I'm not anymore because I've had other problems and I haven't exhibited as much. But it took him until the 1930s before his work started to sell. Now with Reginald Marsh it was the same thing; during his lifetime he sold moderately but he was known mostly I think for illustrations. Although his wife wouldn't care to hear me say this. And as a teacher. The Whitney Museum didn't give him a show until after he was dead. But Reg had money, you see.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really? I didn't know.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: He had an income. He had a very rich grandfather who had trust funds for the grandchildren. And then his mother died and his brother died and left him money. So that Reg was very well-to-do.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I see. I was curious about what the market was like, or how many pictures one would sell, and the kind of things people bought in those days.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I don't know.

PAUL CUMMINGS: For example, would you sell many pictures from a show?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, four or five maybe. Oh, a couple I'd say. But they would be mostly people who knew us who would buy. It wasn't until later that somebody from out of the blue would come and buy something.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How about the newspaper and magazine criticism? Did that have an effect on you?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, yes. I used to keep a scrapbook. I don't do it anymore. (Looking through scrapbook) My first notations: Henry McBride, 1923 Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings at the Whitney Studio Club. And I was reviewed by Jewell on the Times. And reviews by Forbes Watson. And he also played a very important role in this. This appeared in Charm. You see, these were the artists, the women.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I see, right.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: There is O'Keeffe. And this is Sal Friedman -- she's somebody else now. I've forgotten what her name is. That's Peggy. And myself. O'Keeffe was very nice to me. She wrote me several times about my shows. I always liked her. I always thought she was an original and interesting artist but I've never understood why she liked anything of mine.

PAUL CUMMINGS: She always seems to be rather distant.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: She wrote me -- you know, I used to be very careless about -- I had no sense that -- you know, we were all painting for posterity, of course, but somehow or other I didn't keep anything to prove anything about this.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Let's go back to the trip to Europe. You went to Europe –- what? -- in the summer? Or fall?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: No, we left just after January, after the first of the year. And Yas had Japanese friends and they got us a studio out near the Porte de Versailles. It was a famous old building. Elmer Rice came to see us out there, and years later he took someone out there and the building still was there. It was a fire trap if there ever was one. It was right near the abattoir where they killed the horses for the horsemeat. We went through these wooden things, up shaky wooden steps to the top of this building. I think it was a Japanese friend of Yas's who had gone away and let us have this studio. It was absolutely crawling with bed bugs. So much so that . . . Yas was very susceptible to bedbugs -- they didn't bother me -- but they made his life absolutely miserable. And although we paid for the studio we decided that we simply couldn't stay there. We decided that I would use it as a workplace. And through another friend – I've forgotten who it was that said there was someone going away on the Rue Premier and we could have that studio. So we took it. We had planned to go to Italy in the fall and to be in the south of France in the winter. Because Yas was doing lithographs. We went to Italy with the David Vaughans. David had inherited money from an aunt had bought an enormous Cadillac. His idea was to get the Cadillac out of France and into Italy and then bring it back so he wouldn't have to pay any duty on it. It was an American car. I don't quite know how this works. But at any rate when they heard the we were going to Italy we thought it was a great idea to go with them, with David and his English wife. But it proved to be a very difficult trip because, to begin with, we couldn't keep up with the Cadillac by any manner of means. David had the money to; but we couldn't. And the minute people saw the Cadillac the prices would go up every place. We got so that Hilda and I would walk on these dusty roads into a town to get us lodgings. The boys would sit with the car because the kids would want to steal everything and run all over it. In other words, the Cadillac was an elephant that we were carting around with us. But they always knew who we were when we arrived to arrange lodging --I don't know how they knew. It was a difficult trip. And we ended up by not being as friendly, although we stayed with the Vaughans. It's awfully difficult when you are in two different economic strata and one wants to do one thing and one wants to do the other. Well, at any rate, that was our first trip to Italy. And I must say it was really simply marvelous. We got a great deal out of it. And we were very serious. We went to the museum every morning and every afternoon. We looked at everything.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you make drawings or sketches?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, no. No, when we traveled to look at pictures we did nothing but look at pictures. Then we'd settle down. We came back and settled in the South of France, got an apartment also filled with bedbugs. But then they burned candles or something -- I don't know. There was an American artist who was there that I was fond of but Yas didn't like. Hudson Walker had bought most of his work. He paints Maine

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, Hartley?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Hartley, right. Hartley used to come in practically every afternoon for tea and he would give Yas such a pain in the neck.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What was so difficult about him?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, he was a little bit -- oh, I don't know –- precious, I suppose, would be the word. I liked

him very much. I'll tell you a story about Marsden. Niles had got himself a brand-new sports jacket. And it had long whiskers; it was just beautiful; it was so English and whiskery. And he met Hartley on University Place. Hartley looked at this jacket and felt the lapel and he looked at Niles and said, said "Pretty." Niles never got over it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Hartley was quite a wild fellow, I understand.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, I don't know...I liked him. I always like people that I can talk to. But he wasn't any fun for Yas. There wasn't any rapport. Although once he did go with us. There was new wine at a little village -- Saint Germain? -- I've forgotten the name of the little village -- and you walked over -- it was quite a long walk -- and drank the new wine. And we drank plenty of it. And then walked home.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you know French?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, again, this was an awkward thing. I had taken French in school and I knew a little bit. Yas never made any effort to learn any French. But there were an awful lot of Americans there. There had been the war and there were a lot of GI's around. And also there was a whole group of Americans --again I tell you we were so puritanical we looked at them with amazement and horror. They were more French than the French. These Americans would buy workingmen's clothes, you know, these big pants and bicycle clip things at the ankles and they wore berets. And they learn to say all the cafe things, "l'addition," all these things, with these beautiful accents. And they swaggered so in their French style. We knew darn well that they couldn't speak very much French. But they were such poseurs. My instinct was to speak very American French if I spoke any whatsoever, or keep quiet and not say anything. Although out near the Porte de Versailles you simply could not get along without French. I used to do marketing out there because we used to cook our own dinner very often. I'd have to go to market and you had to be able to speak French. I'd take the subway out every morning.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you get to know many French people, French artists while you were there?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Never. Pascin was our friend. Occasionally he would have a party. But all the artists were Romanians, Russians; heaven knows -- I don't think I ever met a French artist. Swedes, Japanese; there were a lot of Japanese there, by the way.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What was Pascin like?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, again, he was another . . . You'll think I'm an awful bore. He was a most cultivated, sensitive, sophisticated European. He was a cosmopolitan. He could go anywhere. He had only one I think really dreadful fault. After a certain point he wanted to get himself into a terrible fight and get you into a terrible fight. In other words, he liked to go from café to café. We used to go up to Harlem quite often and it was really dangerous because he would pick fights. One of his friends said to us, "We thought that he was looking for death." Well, he killed himself you know. He lived next door to me. Yas was abroad at one time, maybe he was in Japan, but Pascin would come in very often. We were still living in the Field building, in Field's own house. Field had died by then and Robert rented the lower floor, the parlor floor, and then he and his family occupied the rest of the house. This was a very big house. And Pascin would come in. He always wanted me to go to Harlem with him. And although I was terribly fond of him, we'd have tea or I'd prepare something. We didn't drink very much in those days. Then he would coax me. But something told me not to go. I never did go with him. He loved the general melee. I remember one evening in Paris we started out at his studio. There were number of us. We went from place to place, and each time he got a little bit worse. I mean the men at the bar -- he would start something going. We'd all sit down at tables and be chatting away. And then there'd be some commotion. People would began coming up to the table. There was always something to worry about when you were with him in this kind of situation. He was an awfully good artist, by the way, according to my lights. I think that his work is going to remain with us. Very French. Oh! Also he did something to us. We were going to Marseilles. Pascin knew Marseilles very well. Dos (Passos) had told us of a restaurant to go to. It was a very good restaurant for bouillabaisse and fish things. And then Pascin said to be sure to go up the street -- it was a street were all the whorehouses were -- and turn certain corners and do certain things. Well, innocently, up we go. And we began to be followed by a group of women who began to pull at me and finally they'd take Yas's hat and run into a bar with it. Well, that was very dangerous. And we were very glad to get out of there.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What was his point in doing that?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Again, some kind of a melee was his idea of . . . And he'd laugh if you told him this. You see, they knew him well, all these people because he did a great deal of his work at these places. He would sketch there. But I really was frightened by all that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes, that's a strange experience.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well we didn't follow his advice any further.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Where did you go in Italy on that trip?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: We started in the north. We drove across to the Italian Riviera and then down. I think the first stop was -- well, the first great city that we went to -- we didn't go to Milan -- we headed toward the eastern coast because we wanted to go to Venice. We went to Venice and from there to Ravenna. Irvine and I took this trip not too long ago but we did so many more things than we did on the first trip. Ravenna was very thrilling to us. I just shook all over when I saw Venice. It is unbelievable, it's so beautiful.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes, the light and the water and the buildings.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, the whole thing is so incredibly beautiful. The only thing that was difficult was that it was in the fall and it smelled to high heaven. And it was filled with mosquitoes. I've always been there in the fall. It's a nice time to be there. When we were over we were staying at a very good hotel, the Gritti. We had a beautiful room and it's in a nice section and there are no smells in the Gritti. Then Florence was very exciting. We went as far south as . . . There were certain artists that we wanted to see. We wanted to see Piero della Francesca. Irving and I, I think, tracked down every Piero della Francesca this last time except the one in Urbino. We had to miss that. We had to make a choice between two. I'm glad we saw the one we did -- my memory is so bad – I've forgotten where it is at any rate. But they were very thrilling. And, well, all the Italian art, the early Italian art... We had no idea of the wealth and beauty of it. We stayed in Florence. We went to the Pitti and, oh, all the churches. There's an awful lot to see there. Then we were going up the west coast to Siena. But by the time we got to Siena we were all so tired -- we had done nothing but go to museums every morning and afternoon -- that all we did was walk around the Square and go into the churches. We didn't even go into the museum in Siena. And then we headed back to the South of France. We stayed in the South of France until -- I can remember the dates exactly.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you remember where you stayed in the South of France?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, yes, At Vence. Vence was a very small, nice place then. Susan Glaspell and her husband were there. Bet and Reg came over. There were always a lot of friends around.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's interesting, you know, that everywhere you go there seem to be a group of people that you know.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. And also at that time there was a very much closer connection between artists and writers. I knew as many writers then almost as I did painters. Almost, but not quite. There were many things that we shared in common. And only the ones that flew too high, like Fitzgerald and Hemingway, did we avoid. We could have known them. But we thought that they were much . . . well, they were, you see . . . We were very poor.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who were some of the writers that you knew?

[Session 2]

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, I just referred to Susan Glaspell. And her husband was a writer; I forgotten his name. Not the first husband. She was married twice. I saw a great deal of Elmer Rice in Paris.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You seemed to have known him for a long time?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: From 1925. He was a very close friend of mine until he died. He died just last year. His first wife died, too, shortly before he did. And his second wife, Betty Field, the actress, became a very good friend of the ours. And then he married again. But from our point of view that ended him because he was too old to get married. But he was so lonely, you see. Betty and he had been divorced. He was terribly lonely and he married this buxom girl; I think she was a little too buxom for him. He had a heart attack on the boat and died. But I don't know whether he died from one thing or another.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Lots of reasons, I guess.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Kenneth Miller had cancer for eight years but he died of pneumonia.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: But this is what happens, you see.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So you spent how much time in the South of France?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: A whole winter. And I didn't like it there. I had gone down there to paint landscape. I would walk for miles looking for something to paint. Everything was the wrong proportion. There wasn't a barn

that looked right to me. verything looked wrong. The olive trees were so beautiful but they weren't apple trees.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It wasn't American?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: It wasn't America.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's interesting. So you really were attuned to American surroundings and ambience and objects.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, you see, returning to Pascin, he started to argue with us about the fallacy of returning to this country, to the barrenness you see, to the bourgeoisie and barrenness of life here. And I made up my mind that I would never after that trip live abroad ever. We went again to Europe in 1927 -- 1928. At that time Yas was very restless. And Pascin was absolutely after him all the time; told him that he would be making a great mistake to come back here. So I left. I said, "Yas, I will not stay here. It would just kill me. I'm an American. I don't care whether we're bourgeoisie or what we are. I belong here. I don't feel comfortable living abroad." So I came back. And Yas stayed there through the fall and then decided he couldn't stay there either, and he came back.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What was it about Europe that you found unrewarding or disturbing or unsettling?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, again, this is a very curious thing. As I said, I would go out and walk for miles and never find anything to paint. The idiom was wrong. It didn't look natural. It wasn't right. You know, olive trees are the most beautiful things if you're just sitting on a terrace with a glass of sherry or something in your hand and looking at them (although you don't drink sherry in France; you drink vermouth) and see the silvery light. Most beautiful. But it isn't anything that I want to paint. I like to take something that isn't beautiful, like my leaves. They look like old dried up things until I can see something in them that's rewarding.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's very interesting. The American quality of picking things like that that are difficult.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, I told you earlier that there's been a cleavage, I think, between the French influenced and American corn. And I certainly belong to American corn.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What's your definition of American corn? How would you describe it?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, we're not very well-trained. Do you know Thomas Nast?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I think he's just as great as Daumier is, but he isn't known to be such. But will be in time. I've got a
great many of them.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, yes. I'm a great admirer of Nast. Reg and I used to haunt 4th Avenue to pick up the old ones.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's fascinating.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I've given . . .I don't like keeping things in portfolios. I still have a lot hanging in our house in the country. I could show you some -- I have them hanging in the bathroom here, in my bathroom, in Irvine's bathroom; I've got them everywhere. But that is what I call American corn. He trained himself. And, you see, there is that strain. Kenneth was that too, although he wouldn't admit that he was corny. But I admit it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What about Marsh? What would he say about someone like that?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, you see Marsh was the son of a painter, an accomplished mural painter. Now artists who are the children of artists are already sophisticated. Take the artist who is so successful, and deservedly so -- Wyeth -- who paints the Pennsylvania rather dry things. He is a beautiful painter. He is the son of a painter. And his son is a painter. They start with a sophistication. I'm a little girl from Ohio; I don't start with any sophistication. I start exactly the opposite.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But still you had all those people of the League that you were involved with.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. But nobody trained me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. That's interesting. What about Bridgman? Because you mentioned him at the League.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, I liked him very much.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did he work as a teacher?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, you know, you had to do things by formula with him; you did this and this. And I resented that and always rather balked at this formula idea. He always called the girls "Miss." He stopped me in the hall one day and said "Miss, I really don't want you to think of me as an old fogey. I know better, but this is the easiest way to make you learn." He was an intelligent man. He knew how to teach people. His best pupil I think was Edmund Duffy, the cartoonist on the Baltimore Sun. He studied with no one but Bridgman.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Duffy loved Boardman Robinson.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So what did Bridgman have to say to you?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, it was just that he didn't want me to think that he was such an old fogey, but that this was one way of teaching. And again, I suppose at the League we belong to what would be known as the swinging group; I mean we were the first of the younger group to have shows, and so on. You see, there was quite a group in that period of the early 1920s or just before the twenties; it was before the twenties because we were all out by that time.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So you started about 1917? 1918? And how about Sloan? Did you get to know him.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Now, again, I loved Sloan. I think that the people he did the most for were the people that had learned to paint in the Academy fashion with La Grippe and Drew, and he would tear into their work and just put them on their feet, you know. Nothing superficial, or no tricks of turning over your brush for paint or any of that kind of nonsense. You had to be sincere. And the people that he loved most were the butchers and bakers and candlestick makers who came to the evening classes after working hard all day. He would work so hard over them. They were very naive. He loved their sincerity.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's very, very interesting about him.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: He'd come up to me and say, "Just keep on going the way you are. You're all right." Well, he didn't help me very much.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who was important to you as a teacher at the League?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Miller was the most important.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you think that knowing him personally had an effect on you? I mean outside of school.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, yes. Yas was Kenneth's pupil, too, you see. But then, as with fathers and sons once a certain point is reached they break and want to have nothing to do with one another. Yas got so that he just didn't want to have anything to do with him. That was very difficult for me. I used to go to his Wednesday afternoons.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What were they?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, these were tea parties that he had every Wednesday afternoon. And, by George, you were supposed to turn up.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Where did he have them?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: In his studio. This was after he moved from 23rd Street. He had a studio on 14th Street. And there would be everybody there from Dreiser to Sterritt to -- what is his name? -- he's a writer -- well, I don't know . . . friends, relatives from Kenwood, his students, a lot of lady artists.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But it was a salon kind of idea that he had, wasn't it?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, no. If you knew Kenneth and saw the Morris chair, the rubber plant, the mission table -- it had style all its own. It had nothing to do with a salon.

PAUL CUMMINGS: No, but the continuity of every Wednesday afternoon.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. But, again that doesn't fit in with American corn. No American has a salon.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's marvelous. Where did you get the idea of the American corn?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, I always think up crazy ideas.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But I think it's very interesting, the divisions that you're talking about.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: It may not be valid. But I think of it as being that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who else do you see in that line other than Nast and -- you know, what are the qualities that . . .

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, Ryder was a very original artist; completely without any European influences whatever. And then there are earlier figures that are also in that class. I'm not an art historian. Actually I ought to do more than I do about . . .

PAUL CUMMINGS: I mean people that you know about and have an interest in.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, I think Bellows belongs to that. He was a Henri pupil. But except for Velazquez I don't think Henri paid any attention whatsoever to any European influences. You see, the dominant influence today has been the French from the French Impressionists on, and there had been no pictures painted before the French Impressionists. Do you know that?

PAUL CUMMINGS: It happens sometimes that way.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Mr. Frick had bought them all. And Mr. Morgan.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. What painters interested you besides the early Italians?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: My great enthusiasm was Titian, Rubens, Bellini. Bellini especially. Well, he is a little later. I always loved Bellini, and Mantegna. But I pay very little attention to that now. I keep a Rubens sketch usually in the studio where I can have something to remind me of what I like to look at. But now it seems more of . . . Unfortunately, I don't have too much energy now; but it seems to me it's enough for me to get done just what I can do. And I've limited the scope and tried to see the world, in other words, a microcosm in a macrocosm getting down to . . . no big grand subjects. I never think of anything grand anymore.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But I'm curious, you know, in the 1920s or when you were a student, who were the painters who interested you particularly?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Renoir I loved. I still love Renoir.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What is it that attracts you to him?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, to begin with, he's a very beautiful painter and beautiful artist both. Cezanne was never a beautiful painter. He painted adequately. I think the great Renoirs have much greater design than anything Cezanne ever thought of. I remember in Boston they had a Rogier van der Weyden, a Renoir, The Dancing Couple, a Velazquez, and something else, hanging in four corners. The Renoir stood up with all of them. You know, he did a pair of dancing couples and this was one of them.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's a very interesting collection of pictures together

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: It's in a rotunda or something and there are just these corner situations where these pictures are shown. Your eye takes them all in. And the Renoir stood up.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Are we going on too long for you?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: We can do a little more, I guess.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you get involved with showing at the Whitney Studio Club? That was in 1923.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. I got in there, but how it came about I really don't know. I can't remember. So many of us just gravitated in that direction. There was probably no place else to go -- I don't know.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's where everybody went?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, that was Juliana Force?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you meet her the first time? Do you remember?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: There.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It was there?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. And, you know, I worked for her for quite a while.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, did you? I didn't know that.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. I ran the sketch class for the Club for a couple of years. And Hopper was my pal in the sketch class. He never missed.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really! What was he like in those days?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Sour as always. I was very fond of him. But he was very laconic and had not much to give. But he always turned up for sketch class. And I used to do odd jobs for Mrs. Force. Mrs. Whitney would be assigned different projects. I remember one especially because it took me a whole winter to do it. Anne Morgan asked Mrs. Whitney to do something for the American Women's Association. And Mrs. Force asked me to think of something to do. So I scratched my head and I thought of something. It meant having lectures and getting the four experts in the field and coordinating this with time and so forth. It took me all winter to do that. It wasn't well paid, but I didn't need too much money. As a matter of fact, we used to be rather contemptuous of people with money.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why was that?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well -- I don't know -- art was so much more important. I don't feel that way now.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I think it's interesting in talking to people who were growing up and painting in the 1920s and being very involved in that kind of thing, their attitude was quite different in the sense of their interest either in the tradition of American painting or European painting. I keep coming back to the American corn business, trying to find out who else you'd include in that, you know, trying to develop that idea.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, as I just said, I don't even know that it's valid.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But obviously it's a term that you find useful for defining various people; that's their bailiwick. Who else would you say fits in that for you?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, now, there's an exhibition at the Whitney. think Heade probably is a very good example of that. But he seems like quite a well-trained artist. I don't know where he got his training. And, strangely enough, Eakins, although I think Eakins started with the Munich School -- I'm not sure exactly where he -- he was abroad for a short time.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I think he started in Philadelphia.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: But he has that quality of being intrinsically his own man.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I'd like to talk about all the exhibitions. We have about 20 minutes of tape. Is that too much for you? We can do it another day for an hour or so if you'd rather.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, I'm getting tired to tell you the truth.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's five o'clock.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, well, we can go on if it's only five.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Okay.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I want to see if I've left anybody out. Oh, I haven't said a word about the cartoonists in Ogunquit. And Walt Kuhn and the Dicky Bird Club.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The Dicky Bird Club? What's that?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I'd forgotten about it; haven't thought about it for years. This summer I had a birthday and my husband said, "What do you want for your birthday?" I said, "Oh, I don't know, -- I don't think I want anything." And he said, "Well, I'll tell you; I'll give you a check and whenever you see something you want get it." Well, we had made a study for him and we had to get a new lamp. We'd gone over to New Bedford. There's a wonderful antique dealer there. And we bought a very nice old lamp from him. But the top row of crystals was

wrong and he had promised to get me some new ones. I went over to get the new ones, and when I got there I saw those two green lusters. You see them over there. And I said, "That is going to be my birthday present. But the only trouble with it is that it certainly is Dicky Bird." "Dicky Bird?" Irvine said, "What in the heck is Dicky Bird?" And I explained that Walt Kuhn -- and all the rest of us, too -- used to call everything that wasn't art, ornaments. Now those are really very beautiful ornaments -- but to him they'd be Dicky Bird. You see, it wasn't art; it's decoration, ornamentation of some sort. Now he was a "corny" character and very shrewd, very able man. We saw a great deal of him in Ogunquit. He had a house there. But that is Dicky Bird.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I wonder where he got the term or if he made it up.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I don't know. He had real wit. And after we all got married the boys and girls used to divide up. Kuhn, Louis Bouche, Emil Ganso, Yas and I guess Niles had a club that they called the Dicky Bird Club.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really? I've never heard anything about that.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Pascin would go to it. And they would make drawings. And sometimes they would make naughty drawings. Spend the whole evening doing nothing but that. Or they might get a model and draw. They had a whale of a good time.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It was just the boys?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Just the boys. I wish Louis were still here -- but he's just left us; he's gone now. But Louis was a great Dicky Bird Club character at times.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's marvelous. And it was just that group?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: There was an awful lot of fun. I wish I could remember more of it. I just happened to remember this Dicky Bird thing.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I wonder where he got that idea? In a way it's almost the way they use "camp" today.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes, but his category was so . . .

PAUL CUMMINGS: There was art and there was everything else.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well that's a nice little aside. Do you remember the years you were at the sketch class? Would it be the 1920s, or the 1930s?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: It was in the late 1920s and maybe up until 1930. When Irvine and I were married in the early 1930s Mrs. Force became very fond of him. And I got started on a New York State art bill. It took about two years for me to get it going. I finally convinced Mrs. Force and got her to act as chairman. I think she's been one of the most creative people we've had in our field of American Art in putting American Art on its feet. But she was a very neurotic woman in certain ways. She liked to be surrounded by men. She didn't want too many women around and she didn't want anyone around who could talk also. I love to talk. Although she loved to have me work for her. We were very good friends. But the minute we got the State art bill going she kept Elizabeth Olds. Elizabeth is a very good friend of mine. She's a very mousy little character for the most part; I don't mean that she really is but she doesn't hold forth. And Mrs. Force put me off. Then Irvine stayed and worked with her on this New York State art bill. And Lloyd Goodrich worked on it, too.

PAUL CUMMINGS: When was that?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: In the early 1930s.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's interesting. It's another one of those bills. It's amazing.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: That was the first one. We never could get by Thomas Dewey. Irvine had a lot of friends in Albany. The chief judge of -- what is it? The Appellate Court -- the highest court in the state -- was one of Irvine's friends. He went on a committee and helped a great deal. To get one of these things through you have to have some political support. Artists couldn't do it alone.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, yes. Going back to the exhibitions here. We're really jumping around but I guess it works all right. You had two exhibitions at the Whitney Studio Club?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I can't remember. Well, maybe I had two. Okay, we'll call it two.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And they were in the 1920s. Then you showed at Daniel?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Then I went to Daniel, yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you happen to join that gallery?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, Yas was there. And Niles was there. And Peter Blume, who was younger than we, had become a friend. And he was there. And then I was there.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How was Daniel? I haven't been able to find out much about it.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Daniel loved painting. He hadn't any real intellectual grasp. And he wasn't a promoter in the real sense. He just loved it. But it was Hartpence who was the taste department and the intellectual department of the Daniel Gallery.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who is he?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Hartpence -- I've forgotten what his first name was. He was a little man with a kind of a . . . But he was very important. Daniel used to have a bar. And I think Hartpence came in. That's how they happened to team up. And Daniel sold his bar and got into the art business.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Isn't that interesting.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yas went with him when he still had his first gallery on 47th Street. Then Niles went with him. And, by the way, in those years it was very hard for women to get any place, too. Because, naturally, women get married, they have families, they have to give up their work. You see it happen often enough. So why invest? You see, it's a certain investment.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Were people aware of investment in pictures at that time, do you think? I mean, say, paying a couple of hundred dollars for a painting in the 1920s?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, it wasn't the thing that it is now. I think it was the war and the refugees who were able to save themselves; other things being valueless and paintings becoming valuable. As a matter of fact, I think now a great many things are overvalued. Not that you or anyone else cares what I think; but I think this is so.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I think so too. It's incredible. Were your exhibitions at Daniel successful?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, you know -- (looking through scrapbook) --let's see, Daniel Gallery, April 13, 1929; that's probably the last one. And then I went to the Downtown Gallery and I had several shows at the Downtown Gallery. No, excuse me, I had an exhibition in 1930.

PAUL CUMMINGS: With Daniel?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: It's headed "Daniel Gallery. 1931."

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did he do much for you as far as selling paintings goes? They were just up on the wall and people could look at them?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, I sold some. But it was just about the way Yas was selling and the way people we knew were selling. And none of our friends had large houses and a place to . . .

PAUL CUMMINGS: To show them. Well, I think we're almost out of tape. Why don't we stop?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Okay.

PAUL CUMMINGS: This is Reel 2. It's December 15, 1969. We were talking about your trip to Europe in 1927 -- 1928. Why don't you just talk about that period?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. Well, Dos Passos had told us of a little hotel on the Rue de Verneu (that isn't the correct pronunciation; no American can say it) on the Left Bank off, oh, the Rue Jacob I think -- I'm not sure -- or Rue Bonaparte. And all the artists stayed there thereafter. Reginald Marsh and his wife came over. Each of us had a room which we used to paint in, you see, and do our work in. Then we would meet for breakfast. We'd go to the Deux Magots for breakfast usually. I don't think they had any food in the hotel, but sometimes we'd have a croissant there. Then we'd go out for lunch and for dinner. That was a famous old place when I think of it. We sent the Goodrich's there much later. I think all the artists of that period went to the Hotel du Pavilion. It was very central. It was an easy walk to the Louvre, an easy walk to almost any place. And we did walk a great deal

in those days. At any rate, I came back in the fall. I've forgotten exactly when we went. I stayed, oh, perhaps for four or five months. Yas thought that he would like to stay; he had about made up his mind that Pascin was right. And I said, "No, not for me." I was coming back to America. There wasn't any break in our relationship; it was just that I would not live in Europe. So I came home. Yas's letters began get more and more dismal by the week. And he found that it was not an atmosphere that was congenial to him fundamentally; that, without knowing it, he had become more American than he thought he had; and that he missed America very much. So then he came back. And he settled down with the idea that he never would live in Paris. And this was just as well because the war was not too far away. Another twelve years and there it went again.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What was it like getting into 1929 and the period of the Crash?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Strangely enough, I was thinking about that today. Having had such a hard time -- at least it was hard for me because I had had no experience with this sort of thing -- I think there was not a great deal of difference between the early 1920s and the later period for me or for Yas either. That year we bought a house in Woodstock -- in or about 1928 or 1929. Again we had saved our money. And I had inherited a little dab of money. And we put it into building a house. Which Sara Mazo (Yas's wife)now has. We built it on Ohio Mountain. We each had a work place. We worked very hard over the house. We did a lot of the finishing ourselves. Yas loved Woodstock. He had a lot of friends there. I did, too. Everyone welcomed us. The older artists: Speicher, McFee, there was a sculptor who was very kind to us. They made a big fuss over Yas.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who are some of the people that you saw a great deal of in Woodstock?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: We saw -- well, they were our old friends, you see: Dot Varian, Isabella Howland; we were very good friends of Carl Walters and his wife; of Arnold Blanch and his wife. Then there were new people that we met like the Speichers -- although we had known them before -- and they were a good deal older than we were. As I say, they were all very kind. Since we were younger artists they were all very anxious to help us. We had nothing but friendly assistance from most of the people we knew. This house we built was only a summer house. We had to put in a well. It was on a mountain and there is a great water problem building on a hill like that. We couldn't afford to go down any deeper than we did so that having a garden was quite a problem to me. I love gardening. But we couldn't waste the water on it. At a rate, I found that living in that kind of atmosphere – I being the woman of the house -- the responsibilities of providing food, having people come up for weekends. For me every weekend was a nightmare. Because who knew who was driving up from New York. People would drive up and there they were. They simply appeared. And getting dinner -- well, it still takes me a whole day, or a day and a half to prepare a proper dinner. And then a day to clean up. And while I was a very strong, healthy young woman I resented all the time that had to be spent this way. And then the entertaining that went on outside of our friends turning up -- people who lived elsewhere. But the entertaining in Woodstock . . . everything was very sociable. It still is I think. We're now in a little community and it's exactly the same. Wherever you are, especially in the country, it's more or less the same.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. It's more relaxed and people have time and the pressures are less.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Some people have time. You see, if you are an artist and you are a man you have wife. But I was the wife of the family. Now Yas did a great deal; he always helped. But I was responsible and I had to learn to cook and I had to learn to do this, that, and the other thing. Not the I minded in a sense because I loved to cook. But I minded the amount of time that this took week in, week out. It wasn't that it would be just a seasonal thing. So I found that I liked Woodstock less and less because of this. And especially because of the unexpected guests who would turn up over weekends. We were still seeing a great deal of Peggy and Alex Brook. The Bouche's, I remember. Niles Spencer and -- not his wife then -- but the woman he later married, who was a great friend of Dorothy Miller's and Dorothy Dudley's -- Katherine Brett. She ran, and still may, a school for subnormal children. They're called children but they're people with handicaps. At any rate, to answer your question, 1929 and the 1930s, while they were awful because the people around us suffered a great deal, to me didn't seem very different because I had the same job at the Whitney. I ran the sketch class, as I told you, and I did work, odd jobs, for Mrs. Force

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who else was in the sketch class? You mentioned that Hopper was there.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I still see a friend who used to come to the sketch class. This is Lincoln Rothschild. As a matter of fact, he had been in college with my husband. There weren't too many of our friends who came to the sketch class.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Were they people who wanted to be professional artist?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: They were people who were associated with the club. I would get the model. I think there was a small fee -- I'm not sure -- at any rate it didn't amount to a row of pins. But this was something that the club did. And if you didn't have any money it didn't make any difference. I can't remember any problem about that at all.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, you've spoken a little bit about the things that you did for Mrs. Force.

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KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I think I've told you the one thing that stands out in my memory because I had to put so much time and energy into it besides doing other things for her. But there would be all kinds of little jobs. For example, Mrs. Whitney would have promised to appear or do something; she couldn't do it; and would I take care of it. And I would take care of it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you get to know Mrs. Whitney?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: No. Strangely enough, I never did. There was no particular opportunity to do so. Mrs. Force was the person that I saw. Mrs. Whitney was further removed. She had a studio in the back, and she had a whole entourage. I would see them at Christmastime. There would be a party, and they gave everyone who worked for them a very generous Christmas present. There would be a cocktail party and it would seem to me that the floor boards would open up from under them. There would be sculptors of all sizes and shapes, writers, all kinds of people that I never knew were any place near in the building. But they were in her building. First is was the club, then it was the gallery; then it was the museum; that was the procession, you see. At one point Mrs. Force thought I could run the gallery, or wanted me very much to. I declined because again it wasn't any kind of job for me. She got Alexander Brook to do it. Now I'm all mixed up as to when the WPA turns up in this.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That was the end of the 1930s.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, was it?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. You know, I like very much what you just said about Woodstock and the life there and the people. How would you describe the Whitney Studio Club in terms like that?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, it was so gay! I remember our younger years as always being spring. Everybody met to dance and have fun. Everyone was so alive. You did not have to be so careful of your opinions. You could say, "I don't like this" very flatly and expect the other person to say, "I do" and have it out. But without any ill feeling. Now it's a matter of you're my enemy and I don't . . .

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. Very partisan.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: It had a much more childlike, innocent quality of fervently held beliefs. I think I told you the terrible arguments that went on about who was the greatest artist, Cezanne or Renoir. And we'd practically pull each other's hair out over that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Were any of these people interested in abstract painting?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Now, this again . . . I think I've told you that my mother had let my sister and me go to Woodstock with the teacher of the Saturday class, Agnes Richmond, and two other girls. Miss Richmond chaperoned us. Stuart Davis was at Woodstock with his family. But we weren't allowed to have anything to do with Stuart. He was older than we were. It was a problem for Miss Richmond to have this bevy of girls on her hands. So I'd known Stuart Davis since that time; which is quite a long time. But it wasn't until Niles Spencer (my friend, and Yas's) came to New York . . . Niles had been a great friend of Stuart's. And Stuart became interested in abstract art almost from the moment he encountered it. As a matter of fact, in this book I ran across a letter the I'd written to The New York Times in defense of abstract art, and for some reason or other they published it. In other words, there was no animus against abstract art. I had none. You've heard the line, "This is a free country. Let him say what he thinks." I was in agreement with that line. The great advantage to art was that there were so many different kinds of thinking that one should defend the right of anyone to do what he wanted to do.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Most of the people who went to Woodstock were not involved with abstract painting, were they?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: No. When we were there around 1927, 1928, 1929 the most successful people were Speicher and McFee. Dasburg had been there before them.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The Rehn Gallery people?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Exactly. The Rehn Gallery people. And there was very little abstract art. The dominant influence I think was a trickle of Cezanne and a trickle of Renoir. But the other aspects of French painting didn't make any dent.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I've always had the feeling that that group was very interested in the old masters.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, Henri, you see, who was a friend of theirs, was very interested in Velazquez; but not interested in the old masters. The teacher who was interested in the old masters per se was Kenneth Miller. I don't think Henri was remotely interested in the Italians or Rubens.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's interesting because in some of the things I've listened to and talked about with these people it always seems they were interested in the Italians and things like that. Maybe it came through Miller.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: It may have come through Miller. But I didn't encounter it in any of the people that . . . But, as I told you, I never was a student of any of them except Sloan. And Sloan was much more interested in the naive, sincere effort of a person to create something. He didn't give a hoot about the tradition as far as I could see.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you like the increasing abstraction that was going on towards the late 1930s? Or didn't you know any -- or get involved with those artists?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, Stuart Davis became a very, very close friend of ours. As a matter of fact, on December 7, 1941, he and Irvine were at a football game. Stuart and Roselle were going to have dinner with us and Roselle had come over earlier with the terrible news of Pearl Harbor. And at the football game Irvine and Stuart had heard a prominent government official being paged over the loudspeaker, and, of course, they wondered what was up. Then all our Japanese friends began to call us and we began to worry about them. We thought they might be in terrible trouble. As it turned out, on the East Coast they were not in trouble although they were subjected to a certain amount of unpleasantness. All Yas's cameras were taken away. And his belongings were gone through. And a number of Japanese had to make reports of one kind or another. We had some odd things happen. For instance, people bringing us all their money and wanting us . . . I remember one day I was going to the dentist's. We were living then in the house on Twelfth Street. I was going down the stairs and there was this Japanese whom I knew very slightly. He was a friend of Isuye's. He had all the money he had in the world with him, and he wanted me to just take it. I said, "I can't just take it without . . . But come back and we'll work out something." And I don't know --Irvine did what he could. He was still a lawyer. Later he became an executive in the Sheraton Corporation. And we did everything that was possible to help these Japanese. But they did not have real trouble here. But on the West Coast they were put in concentration camps. It was most unpleasant

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. It was very bad. One of the things that I'm interested in that we really haven't mentioned is the Museum of Modern Art, which was founded in 1929.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. Yas was asked to show there, much to his surprise and delight. It was in the Heckscher Building. There was just a big floor there. His pictures looked very well and we were very pleased that he had been asked.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Which do you think, the Whitney or the Modern, was the most influential in American painting, say, through the 1930s?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I think the Whitney was more important in the beginning in maintaining, buying, supporting people. But the Modern, as far as influenced goes, is far the greater influence and is more meaningful as an expression of the time.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, now it is. Because they, I've always felt, were so uninvolved with American art during the 1930s and really up until the late 1940s. They did shows here and there but they were so involved with showing European things and posters and dishes and good design and all that sort of thing.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. Well, they were following the . . . You know, there are certain trends and waves. Barr, I think, was very sensitive in knowing in which direction the trend was going. I think in its time it will run itself out. And I think that most of the things that they encouraged will not be found to be as valuable as they think they are. But I do think that it has had a meaning as far as architecture and interior design and that kind of thing. The decorative arts. It's had a great influence. And with the nouveau riche it has been very important because how can they spend their money except in this way?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, they're all getting involved in the Whitney now, too.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, I know it!

PAUL CUMMINGS: They want to fill their offices full of material. I just want to figure out some more things into the 1930s here. You have mentioned Elmer Rice a number of times. You met him very early?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, yes. In 1925 in Paris. He had taken his family, his wife and Peggy and Bobby with him and they had taken an apartment in Paris. They were there when we first went there. Incidentally, I ran across a

photograph of Elmer and Hazel and Yas and me when we went to Versailles. We went together to Versailles and saw it for the first time. There were a lot of people that Elmer knew. Do you know Louis Galaier? Irvine and I were talking about him this morning in connection with something else. And I said I remembered him coming out of Morgan-Hodges. He was in some bank; I don't know whether he was in Morgan-Hodges. He was primarily literary in his tastes. But he did work in a bank. Now for years he's been connected with –- the Voice of America? -- I don't know -- it is something I think connected with the U.S. Information Agency or the CIA Intelligence.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, you really got to know all the Americans that were in Europe in the 1920s, didn't you?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: No, we didn't. Because there were a lot that we thought were flying much too high for us and we avoided them. And it's just as well we did. But on the theatrical side I remember Aline Bernstein being there. Do you know who she was?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: She was a friend of my sister's. And she was also a great friend of Elmer Rice's. This was in 1925-1926. I think her daughter had been in college with my sister. That's how they knew one another quite well. I enjoyed her. At that time I think she was very closely connected with Thomas Wolfe.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Everything locks in eventually, doesn't it?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes, it does indeed.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's amazing. Getting back to the early 1930s here, you spent the summers in Woodstock?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes, several summers.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And where did you live in the winters?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: We lived in Columbia Heights in the Field house. We lived there from the time we were married until we separated. I guess it was in 1932 that I decided to leave Yas. I came over and got an apartment on Eighth Street, a small apartment of two rooms. Then in 1933 I married Irvine. I thought I was never going to get married again but you never know about these things. It happens without your knowing it. Although I'd met him before. But I hadn't seen him again. I had met him at a party and we had a very pleasant time talking. The year that I got this apartment on Eighth Street he said to this friend who was also our doctor -- the husband who was a college friend of his, "You know, I would like to see Mrs. Kuniyoshi again." And he said, "That can easily be arranged." They had a dinner party and invited both of us. And Irvine took me home. Then I saw him off and on more and more through the winter. And then we were married.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's a long marriage.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: It is. Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How long did you live in the Village then? What was it like living there in those days?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: From the time Irvine had got out of college he had lived downtown in the Village. And I had this apartment on Eighth Street. The Village was very nice in those days. We both loved it. And when we decided to get married we rented a house first outside of Westport. It's a small place near Westport but has another name. And we found an apartment on Eleventh Street. We lived there for four years. I painted in the living room. But, you know, painters have to have so much claptrap; you have to have an easel, you have a paint table. I loved to do still life, always had; and it takes up so much room. We had a great deal of company in those years. We had a wonderful maid. People would call up and if I happened to be out when I came home she'd say, "Oh, Mrs. Schubert, so and so and so and so are coming for dinner. I knew that you'd want to see them so I invited them. And I put your dinner in the icebox and ordered something else. She was with us about twelve years or more; until the war.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who were most of the people that you saw toward the late 1930s?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Very good friends were Niles and Betty Spencer, Dotsie and Eddie Greenbaum, Peggy and Alex Brook, the Bouches.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The same people you saw at Woodstock kept on and on and on?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. We kept on. And we still see the same people, those who are alive. And Christmas now has become quite a to-do because we send out 150 cards. And mostly these are not business associates per se at all; but are old friends who we do not see anymore, who live here, there, and everywhere, or are ill.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I think it would be interesting, since you were involved with Field for so long, to talk a little more about him. You did mention a couple of things and the kind of things he would do for people.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, he was a wonderful person. He did a great deal but I think the interesting thing is a pattern of what he was. He was a great amateur, a dilettante; but a gifted dilettante. Now there are very few of those today because they want to be known as artists per se, you see. But he wrote well, he was somewhat of a musician, he understood music, he painted, he collected, and certainly in everything that he did there was a strain of originality. The kind of things he collected had never been collected before, a kind of folk art. He was one of the first, if not the first to do this. I understand there was a woman somewhere along the East Coast who was somewhat original in collecting. He bought tavern tables and all kinds of things that in those years . . . The barns in Maine used to be filled with them. We used to go antiquing. We thought it was awful if we spent $2.50 on anything.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, what got him going to Maine? How did he get involved with that?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: That I don't know. But he owned a great deal of property. He bought what was known as "The Club." I understand the Riverside Hotel is still there. But Ogunquit used to be a place where the academicians from Boston went -- a few of them. The people who painted a wave and who knew how to put white on one side of the brush and green on the other and they'd paint the green and then turn it over and the white would make the foam. I think Stanley Woodward was the name of one. That's how we met the Spencers in Ogunquit. And Field bought an island. His mother had lived to be quite an old lady. I think she died just the year before I knew him, or maybe even before Yas knew him. It was a Quaker family but very well-connected, very staid in many ways. And yet there was a strange, odd -- he was a great big man - who had rather odd tastes in many ways. But I think fundamentally one of the most interesting and creative of, well, that kind of dilettante figure. Now in Boston there was Mrs. Jack Gardner. Of course, her wealth was very great and she was more flamboyant. But Fields was not unlike that. Now, apparently she had no talents; she didn't pretend to have any. But she was a woman. And she attracted people. There was a scandal about F. Marion Crawford apparently and Mrs. Gardner. And her husband picked her up and put her under his arm and took her off to Asia I think on an Eastern trip. She was a very good friend of Sargent's. But she had a talent for friendship. And she had a beautiful eye for things. Field had the same thing. but he was more gifted in that he could do more than she could. He could do things himself.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I wonder where he got the ideas for all the projects he had going, like having the house for the artists and all the studios?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I don't know. There it was. As a matter of fact, when we knew him I think his income was declining. There's one story about him that I will never forget. This happened just before he died. He was terribly sick with this cold. I think I told you I had this job working at the League running the restaurant. One evening Yas and I came home and there was Field sitting in the hall at the back. He just wanted to see people when they came in. We heard him coughing. He said, "Hi." Then he started to laugh, "Ho! Ho! Ho! Ho! Ho! Guess what Sloan called me tonight. Guess what Sloan called me. He called me ‘Hamilton Easter egg.' Ho! Ho! Ho!" He wasn't the least bit insulted. He thought it was terribly funny. He and Sloan were having some kind of a fight over the Independents, you see. There was something going on there, a split of opinion.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's very funny.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I thought so, too. Then he got pneumonia and died.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you know Henry McBride?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Very well.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What was he like?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, again he was not so very . . . But fundamentally he was a quiet man. I think I've told you about the Burroughs. Bryson Burroughs was one of his old friends. Henry was a very good friends Mrs. Bryson Burroughs and of Bryson. I think they had all gone to school together, or to the League together -- I'm not sure -- but I think so. Practically every Sunday in the spring we would go out to Flushing to the Burroughs house to spend the day. I can't remember going out there so much in the winter, but the garden was so lovely in the spring. They'd serve a beautiful lunch. They had marvelous help when I first knew them, a French couple I think; and then when they left there was a colored cook. But they always had guests on Sunday. They included the young and old, you see. Henry McBride was there very often. We were good friends.

PAUL CUMMINGS: He was a very perceptive critic of younger artists, wasn't he?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, I think so because he was so nice to us.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I'm very curious because he destroyed all of his papers, you see.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh! That I didn't know.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. All of his notes, everything. So that the only thing one can have about him is what people remember about him, stories and conversations.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, anybody who kept a scrapbook has lots of his writings. He was very good to all of us. He encouraged us. And I think he did it because he really believed in it. This wasn't for any other reason. The last time I saw him was quite a few years later. Betty Burroughs had married Reginald Marsh. They were divorced, and then she married an Englishman named Tom Woodhouse whom she had met through us in Woodstock. He had been in the Gallipoli campaign and had been very badly shot up. He was an awfully nice person and a very intelligent person. They had two sons; she had had a son by Reginald, and Betty and Tom Woodhouse had two sons. When Woodhouse died suddenly -- although he was ailing --we were very worried about Betty. As a matter of fact, a group of us had helped to send him to Saranac for a year. He had tubercular problems. When he came back he had improved but it wasn't enough. And he died of a heart attack. But when he died I was very worried about how Bet was going to manage with those two boys. She didn't complain. She was very heroic. She went out and got a job teaching. And somehow or other she got those boys grown up and every one of them went to a good college. Caleb went to Yale; and the two younger boys, Brian and Hillary, went to Harvard. Well, at any rate, in the beginning my husband said, "Don't worry about her because she has everything it takes." But I went to see Henry McBride in his miserable little room at the Herald Square Hotel where he lived. I went for the reason that the Burroughs had many, many rich, influential friends whom I did not know but whom I had heard of. They were in the background. And I thought that there might be somebody in the background there who would be interested in helping Bet. Or, since Bryson Burroughs was very good at recommending and buying pictures (he had a very good eye) I thought they might want to return his generosity by doing something for Bet. But I was awfully sorry I went to see Henry about this. I think it depressed him beyond words. He wasn't able to do anything for her. (Of course I wasn't asking him to. My question was addressed to an entirely different point.) But I think he felt badly that that family should be reduced or that Bet should be reduced to this. Well, she came out very well. But that was the last time I ever saw him. He was quite old and not well. He had lived in the Herald Square Hotel for years. It was near his paper. Socially he was very much sought after because he was a courtly, pleasant human being. I imagine he was always out for dinner or lunch, so I don't think he minded too much living there.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's interesting about him. I'm just trying to think about all the things you said about Kuniyoshi. Are there any other things that you'd like to talk about him specifically?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, no, except that he was a very talented person. Also he never did lose -- and that I think was the difficulty between us -- the fundamental Japanese point of view. Although he had become so Americanized he became more American than some Americans, you know, slang and dirty stories, and he always got dirty stories a little wrong: it didn't seem to make any difference to him. You know, we were close to him until he died. He was very dependent on Irvine and myself in many ways. While he was dying I went to the hospital every day. He wanted me to be there; I felt that he did. And also I felt that I was helpful to Sara, I mean to sit through that long, awful business. There was Sara, Karl Fortess and me. And often they would come back and have dinner with us at night. It was a grueling business because, you know, that kind of cancer is painful and, well, it's long-lasting. It was miserable and just before he died . . . We had taken Sara back with us. Karl might have been with us, too, but I don't remember Karl so well in this particular instance. But the telephone rang. It was the nurse calling us. Would we returned to the hospital immediately. Yas wanted to talk to us. So we went back. He knew he was dying. He had the nurse bring out a pint of whiskey and he had a tablespoonful and we all had a drink with him. He said goodbye to us.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's fantastic.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, it was, in a way.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Everything seems to have been done with a certain flair or style.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, he was a bad boy, too. He was very good in many ways.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What's the fundamental Japanese point of view that was so difficult? How would you define it?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, I think I can sum it up best by relating this incident. He went to Japan to see his father who was dying. He had come here as a child; I think he was thirteen years old when he came here. This was the first time he had been back. And it was through the Greenbaums that he was able to make this trip. He came back and he said to me, "You know, Katherine, Japanese women walk three steps in back of a man."

PAUL CUMMINGS: And they still do.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: And I guess they still do. And that is one reason I did not want to go to Japan with him because, you know, I'm irrepressible and it would be very unusual for me to assume that kind of role.

PAUL CUMMINGS: In 1934 you had a show at the Downtown Gallery?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: That's right.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you get along with Edith Halpert?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: We were very good friends. We visited her in Newton. She used to come to our house for dinner. There was one bone of contention with Edith, and that was that goddamned little dog that she had. The Levis were here for dinner about two weeks ago and I told the story again. Adam was the most neurotic dachshund I've ever met in my life. And Edith spoiled him. You know how the ceilings were rather high and we had a marble fireplace and that couch was yellow brocade and it sat beside the fireplace and we had flowered carpeting, wall-to-wall carpeting. And every time Adam came he would leave a large pile behind that couch. And then he would run upstairs. We never saw him do. He would lift his leg against all the tables. But Almeda fixed him -- you see, Edith wouldn't let you touch him, you couldn't spank him – but Alameda gave him a whack so that he never went upstairs and tried again. Our dining room and kitchen and my studio were upstairs in that house. Almeda gave him a whack so he had to stay downstairs. The Levis suffered even more because they had a female dog. When Edith came for dinner there'd be puddles all over the floor. One night, to make Edith see what was going on -- I think Irvine was in on this -- every time they saw a puddle they'd put a piece of white paper towel on top of it. The house was covered with paper towels. But Edith never saw them.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's incredible. How did you find her as a dealer? Did she sell things for you?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: No, she didn't. But that I don't think was her fault, I must say. I think she had a thing about women but I don't think it was her fault that she didn't sell things. Because I think the tide was running another way. And in our experience she didn't sell things for the men either. The work sold itself. We could see it happening. Collectors would run toward this. She sold great deal of Max Weber at one time. She sold a great deal of certain artists at a certain time. She sold practically nothing of Yas's up to a certain point, and then the work began to sell itself. So I couldn't blame her. I sold, but it would be the way I'd sold before; she didn't do it for me. And strangely enough, I'd forgotten this – I found it in the book -- I had a show there, in 1934. I had a show there in 1936 of drawings. And then another show I guess in 1939. Three exhibitions there.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's very interesting. Well you didn't exhibit very much then between then and when you went with Isaacson, did you? Durlacher.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: No. Something happened to me. I was dissatisfied with my work. Oh! We missed something very important here. I think we've mentioned it, the Doerner book.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, yes, yes. That's not on the tape so talk about that again.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, in 1933 Kenneth Miller, Reginald Marsh and Isabel Bishop had gone to Europe to study and go to museums. They met this pupil of Doerner's and brought back Doerner's book in German, which nobody could read except my husband. So we had evenings. Irvine would translate and we read the book "kiver to kiver." And all of us would take notes. Well, it was an eye opener.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What was the title of the book?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: The Secret of the Old Masters -- or something like that. As a matter of fact, I had a terrible time finding it; I finally found it in the wrong bookcase. You see how dog-eared it is.

PAUL CUMMINGS: (Looking through book) Oh, this, yes, yes. Materials of the Artist.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. Now this picture I guess is from 1937 or 1938, I don't know which. I was dissatisfied. I'm very critical of my own work. I didn't go into this game to make money or for any other reason except that I wanted to be a good artist if I ever could be one. I looked at one of these pictures of this period and had a theory of doing a certain undertone and then painting on top of the undertone. And I looked at it and I said to myself, "That just isn't right. It looks like tweed. It doesn't have the right ring to it." But I didn't know what was wrong, and I didn't know what was wrong about the design that displeased me. There were a number of things. I began to feel very disturbed, and dissatisfied. I remember doing the same thing over and over and over and over again to see if I could find out what was wrong. You know, you get caught up in a kind of a game like this. And then I didn't care whether I showed or not. And I had a lot of other problems. My mother was very ill. I was running three houses.

PAUL CUMMINGS: A lot of time was taken up away from the studio.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: You bet. Well, I could have managed if I had only had some kind of help. Yas tried awfully hard to snap me out of it. He would say, "I want you to send to this exhibition." Oh, yes, I had a few very serious disappointments, too, of things that I thought should have won a prize here or there or the other place because it seemed to me that they were quite worthy of it. I saw the way that they looked with the other things. And I suppose I began to get discouraged. And that lasted for quite a while. Well, then I studied techniques very hard. This was in the 1940s, in the 1950s.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Was this with somebody?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: No. By myself. And, again, most of the people that I knew were doing things that I really didn't approve of so I couldn't discuss it with them either. And although I was seeing a great deal of Stuart Davis I didn't want to be an abstract artist. We bought one of Stuart's things. Then we were buying another one on the installment plan when I had a fight with him and that was the end of Stuart. I don't think he missed me, although they kept saying, "Oh, why don't we see each other?" I don't know –- but I was awfully cross at him. Well, I think people go through periods like that. I went through it. And then I began to work on these papers things by accident. One day I washed my hands. My waste basket wasn't right there so I threw the paper towel down on the table. Later when I went back into this little room I had in the country, there was this piece of paper lying there. I thought, "Oh, my, that's beautiful." And I painted it. I took it out very carefully and put it down on my table where I could look at it. By the way, Robert Isaacson owns that. It's the first one I ever did. I don't know whether you've seen any of those paper things.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: There's one in the dining room. They take an awful long time to do. They don't mean a darn thing unless you construct them and do the complete drawing. And sometimes I'd spend as much as five months on one thing.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Could you work on a number of things at a time? Or just one at a time?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: No, because of paper is too -- the difficulty of keeping it is one of the problems, too. Some paper doesn't hold up; and accidents happen; somebody comes in and puts something down or knocks it off or something.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What kind of problem would you set yourself when you start a painting?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: It has to mean something to me. It's just the way I do the leaves. I pick up thousands of them and I have boxes of them. The thing has to say something to me. I can't tell you any more than that. It has to mean something to me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It catches your imagination and that's it?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. And it means something. And they always have a private title like, oh, -- I don't know -- silly things like The Way Home. I mean The Way Home meant something quite different than the way home. That was the way I felt about that picture. That was the first one of the small leaves that I've been doing that I sold. Then I had two in my last show. Mrs. Havens, Lloyd Goodrich's sister-in-law, bought that one. And Reginald Marsh's wife bought the other one. And that I call Native Dancer because it did look like him. It suggested that to me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And how did you meet Isaacson?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: An accident, again. It was kind of accidental. We had friends for dinner –- Paul Cadmus, Jerry French, Margaret, Edward, and Mary Laning. We were then living at the Park Sheraton. Oh, by the way, part of the reason that I found working difficult was because owning the house on Twelfth Street was really a terrible chore for me. You couldn't get any help. You see, during the war equipment would break down. Finally I had to learn something about the oil burner because there was no other way of keeping house. There wasn't enough heat to begin with. It was a chore, a terrible chore. My husband was so busy. He was out-of-town most of the time, and was home only weekends. He could not help in this. I had to do it. Then my mother was the ill and I had to take care of her all summer. Well, life was very complicated. Now why am I telling you this story? I'm telling it for a very good reason. Oh, how I've met Isaacson. Well, at any rate, I had started doing these papers things. And they interested me. I didn't care what anybody else thought of them. I think my husband thought I was crazy. Every morning I was anxious to get to work on one of them once I got one started. So we sold the house on Twelfth Street and we moved into the Park Sheraton Hotel. Irvine was senior vice-president of the Sheraton Corporation. This apartment had just been vacated on the 25th floor. We moved in there. It made life very easy for me because I didn't have to run any help. I didn't have to have any equipment fixed. It ran itself. So it was very nice to have people for dinner whenever I wanted to. On a particular evening we were entertaining guests. It was a very gay, pleasant evening. By that time I had given up my studio on 59th Street

and I had a room up on the 27th floor of the Park Sheraton -- it had been an alcove. The management closed it off for me so I didn't have to go outside to work. After dinner I'd serve coffee -- and we'd had brandy. Just suddenly on an impulse I said, "Would you like to come up and see what I'm doing?" And I never did that. Nobody had ever been in that little room before except me and, of course, Irvine. So they went up. Paul and Jerry were very interested in these things. The next day Paul called me and said, "Would you mind if Lincoln Kirstein came to see this work? I'd like very much to have him see your papers things." Lincoln called me in due time -- not immediately. I had met him before but I didn't know him well; I had just met him. So he came and with him was a man, Robert Isaacson. I don't think he even introduced him. They just came in and I took them up to the 27th floor. And neither one of them ever opened their mouths. They didn't say a word. I didn't know what to think. We shook hands all around and they left. Then I guess Lincoln called me up and said, "When will you have a show?" I said, "I don't want a show." I didn't have enough things for show. Then every year for about three years Robert Isaacson would call me. By then I knew who he was. I knew it was the Isaacson Gallery. As a matter of fact, I had gone there and we had chatted a little bit. And he would call me about once every year for about three years, "When will you have a show?" So the last time he called I said to myself, either fish or cut bait; you stop this nonsense; you pull yourself together. I thought I didn't have enough stuff but I really did. Then I was very glad that I had.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Was it the Isaacson Gallery then?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: It was the Isaacson Gallery and Lincoln was more or less out of it. I think that Robert and Lincoln did not get on too well towards the end. I don't know what the problems were. They weren't discussed with me. And then problems arose with Jerry French. Jerry has lived in Italy most of the time, and Isaacson also handled his work. Oh, now I know how I had seen more of Lincoln. It had been the Hewitt Gallery.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: And that is how I knew Lincoln or saw as much of him. Because I remember he had a big party. I think it was still the Hewitt Gallery when one of the -- what is their name? -- the English poet -- there are two brothers and the family portrait was done by Sargent – Sitwells! One of the Sitwells was here and Lincoln had a huge party for him, and he invited Irvine and me to come. Well, at any rate, Robert took over the gallery. I don't know what the problems were with Lincoln. I haven't the remotest idea. And I really don't know what the problems were with Jerry either -- it was some kind of personal thing that developed between them. And after planning the show, it almost didn't come off. It was a very unhappy business I think for Jerry and for Robert.

PAUL CUMMINGS: When did you meet Cadmus?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I knew Cadmus from the time he came into the art world. He's younger -- Jerry and Margaret and Paul are about at least ten years younger than I am. They were at the League and they became friends of Kenneth Miller and the group.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You know John Koch also, don't you?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, yes! I saw his first show but I didn't meet him until Reg died.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really. Isn't that strange?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I remember his first show very well at Kraushaar's. But for some reason or other we didn't . . . except for one friend in common. I think I told you that while I was in high school I knew a girl named Marjorie Muir who later became Marjorie Worthington and wrote a book on Louisa M. Alcott and some other things.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, yes.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, she was a friend of John Koch's.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Have you ever been over. He's finished his apartment now.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's an incredible place.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, yes. He simply adores all that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I know he does. And he fits so well into it.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. Perfectly. This last show of his I thought was very good. The show before that I didn't care for as much as I've liked other ones. But this last show I thought had many, many handsome . . . Well, there

were many beautiful things in the one before, but there was a different tone to this last show that interested me. He's a very gifted person. Oh, it just runs out of his ears he's so gifted.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, yes. Constantly. You've mentioned the WPA at the end of the 1930s.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: That was a wonderful thing!

PAUL CUMMINGS: Were you ever involved with that ever? Did you have anything to do with it?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Most of my friends were. And I worked very hard to support it. Eddie Cahill on occasion . . . I remember one thing and we might as well settle on one thing. There was a conference in Washington that was held really to try to keep the appropriations for the Art Project. Alfred Barr, Paul Manship. the sculptor, and, oh, I've forgotten the others, and myself went down to Washington to testify. I did an awful lot of work. Hearings were held before someone – I've forgotten who. But I looked up a lot of things. I enjoyed very much doing that kind of thing. I had been freed from a lot of responsibilities and I had the time to do it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What kind of person was Cahill? He was a writer, wasn't he?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Eddie was very gifted. He was an old friend. I knew him before he married Dorothy Miller. And Dud (Dorothy Dudley) at the Modern Museum is a friend of mine. She is now Mrs. Gimley. And Sara is still at the Modern. Sara was here just the other night. We haven't separated from any of our old friends. We just keep them all going as long as they stay around, live in the same city and stay alive.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's marvelous. You have mentioned that you joined Painters and. . .

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh. The Painters, Sculptors and Engravers was very interesting historically because it was formed really to help American art grow its own legs; and also to counteract the terrible influence of the Academy. All these people that formed it were in the Academy but by and large the coloration of the Academy was always screwball Right. On any appropriation or any government things always the Right, Right nuts got the jobs. The people who formed the Painters, Sculptors and Engravers were on an entirely different level. I've been asked to join the Academy several times -- Kroll was a good friend of mine. But I never would join because of that reason. And I must say the way things worked out --how can you know how things are going to work out -- well, it didn't make any difference because I don't think I would have been happy there. I don't fit in very well to that kind of thing.

PAUL CUMMINGS: There's something so difficult about the Academy it seems for the last three or four decades. They just don't seem to be involved in this century or something.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: But they're involved in the money and in getting the jobs. All the sculptors that have gotten the big jobs have gotten them through being Academicians.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, that was up to maybe ten years ago. It's beginning to change radically.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, I'm sure it's changed now. I analyzed the Academy's setup; I said it was a screen having about five panels. The National Academy of Design and the National Sculptors League were the main centers. Then the American Watercolor Society and the Society of Etchers -- I'm not sure that's the correct name –- were parts of this screen. Then they took one another -- they worked behind another group, the Audubon Society. They tried to put over a dual jury system where there would be abstract artists on one jury and realistic painters on the other. I didn't agree with that at all. I thought if a work is good . . . I love Klee and there are a lot of abstractions that are . . . and that are fitting, too. But you know, to plunge from one to the other -- there's nothing productive in that. They were much smarter and slier than we were by a long shot.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. They're good politicians.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Very, very. And some of them are sweet old things really.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. Well, every country has its National Academy which is the official art or something.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And I suppose they've used that no end.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. Well I think the Modern Museum will begin to play that role very soon. Don't you think so?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. For very avant-guard things: if it hasn't already.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The Whitney is giving it a little competition now.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: We withdrew from The Friends of the Whitney –- rather I did -- my husband is kinder. When they formed The Friends of Whitney we became members. When I saw what they bought with the money we were giving them I said we can do better ourselves.

PAUL CUMMINGS: In what way? What did you object to?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I really was horrified. To begin with, why buy an automobile tire that has been cast in bronze or something. I don't know -- I just don't want to have anything to do with that. Not a thing. I don't believe in it. And it seems stupid for me to participate in something that I definitely am as much against as I am of that. That isn't abstract art per
se.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's Dada and Surrealism and that kind of thing. The Friends are going through great changes still it seems.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, I think that it's become a great bore. This is my opinion. Like the Sculls. I think that their vulgarity is beyond belief. You know the man who wrote Making It? This is one way to make it, to become a collector of some piece of junk. It doesn't make any difference what.

[Session 4]

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you go to Woodstock anymore? Have you been there to visit people?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, we went up after Yas died -– wait a minute -– well, I went up with Sara to bury Yas. But before that Irvine and I went . . . it was while the Carnegie man . . . what was his name? He was so nice. Homer St. Gaudens was coming to Woodstock and Yas wanted us to come up and help with the entertaining. You see, we used to be tabbed for a party. And Sara and Yas had been tabbed for one of the parties for Homer, so they wanted us to come and help. We have photographs of that party, some of them very amusing.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You haven't had a show since when? Durlacher in 1965?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, I've been having other adventures. You see, I had a lung cancer operation in 1964. And that was really a major blow. And then a little over year later I developed cancer in the lobe of the other lung, before really I'd recovered. That was inoperable and I had cobalt treatments for that. And while I've recovered, I'm not strong. I work about two and a half or three hours in the morning. Occasionally I can work in the afternoon. But I need to rest. I'm perfectly well now, but it's a major blow. I mean that kind of an illness; or two of them together was a major blow for me. And I've been very lucky to get over it at all. It was discovered by accident. It was caught in time.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you, or did you, make lots of drawings?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, yes. I draw all the time. And now I spend an awful lot of time on the leaf drawings.

PAUL CUMMINGS: For a painting like that would you make drawings as a study for the paintings?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. I have some of them.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And then develop compositions? That kind of thing.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes, That's right. I don't know whether you've seen the leaves. I do them as things in themselves. The drawing is for the sake of doing the drawing. And the paintings are done first in a grisaille and then I paint. I have a rather complicated method of doing them. They take quite a long time to do. And sometimes I spend as much as three weeks on a drawing. An oak leaf is particularly slow because there isn't very much to see; you really have to peer at it to see its construction. But I love doing them. Also I'd love to be able to do people. But to handle people you have to be stronger than I am now. Although I've thought that maybe in another year I would be able to. I've thought of getting girls maybe from Hunter College to pose. I never have liked to work from my imagination. I like to work from a fact, and I will try to make something out of the fact. I enjoy that most. And I do my best work when I do that. I don't know whether it's just because I put it out of my mind that I don't like to make things up. Some artists are marvelous at just fantastic inventions. But I love the smell and the feel of life. You have to follow your appetites. You don't choose to be what you are. You are what you are.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. I wonder if we could talk about this Peggy Bacon drypoint?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Certainly. I'd love to. Well, I've told you about all the people in there.

PAUL CUMMINGS: This is practically all the people you knew. I mean you know all the people on there.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. There are few that are not there -- but in those years.

PAUL CUMMINGS: This is . . . when?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: This is in the 1920s. It must be in the 1920s.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And it was a bowling club that you all belonged to?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: It was a bowling place over on Third Avenue. I think it was a beer hall that had bowling. And we all drank beer then. Well, there's Adelaide Lawson, there's Reginald Marsh, that's Emil Ganso, this is Dave Morrison, this is Mrs. Ganso, that's Betty Spencer, this is Peggy Bacon, this is Dotsie Greenbaum, that is Yas, that is Bernard Karfiol, that is myself, this is Wilbur Law.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You've got the best spot there, haven't you?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: She did that to me several times. Maybe she thinks I'm funny enough looking. That may be it, too. Robert and I think this is Frank Osborne, and this would be Alice Newton, who is Frank Osborne's wife. There are one or two that I don't remember. Now this face looks familiar; and who this is I don't know; and who this is I don't know.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: And don't you think it's a beautiful etching – drypoint rather. It isn't an etching. And, strangely enough, I've never seen this one of hers. And it's a beauty.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you think that group of people was ever together like that?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, yes, we were!

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, you'll bump into somebody who'll tell you of the thing that sealed -- oh, I don't know what they were called. All of us were in that. I can't think of the name of it. Well, you'll bump into more explanations of it. Oh, the name is Salons of America.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Salons of America, yes.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: The Independents had to-dos of various kinds, the people connected with the Independents. Salons of America had various to-dos. And the same group of people. Well, we all more or less belonged to the same age group. Now you don't find my friend Paul Cadmus or that group here. And then there were some of the other artists who also belong to . . . Well, Lloyd Parsons and his wife Audrey Buller.-- Lloyd was older than I. They went to some of the things but not all of them. Then Isabel Bishop is about four or five years younger than I am. She didn't come into the League really until after I was out, although I knew her very well and she's a very good friend.

PAUL CUMMINGS: All these people stem from the League, don't they? I mean that's the source?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. Exactly. That's the source. And the various places that we were.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Like Woodstock.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: No, we went to Ogunquit first. And then we went to Woodstock. And then Niles and Betty went to Provincetown. Now Hudson Walker is in Provincetown. And Zorach went to Provincetown at first but then he went up into Maine. Then there's Gaston Lachaise whom we haven't spoken of at all. Yas and I were very fond of him and admired his work a great deal. Madeleine was a little difficult.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What kind of a fellow was he?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, he was very nice. He was friendly. He was a very hard worker. And very much an artist's artist. Madeleine used to have lunch at Longchamps. He'd eat at some little counter around the corner. She was very, very fancy indeed.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. Wore long earrings and had a grand manner. But she was an intelligent woman. I think he had been Manship's assistant for long time.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. For long time.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: He was a very true artist. He worked very hard. I remember they wanted to exchange. Sara has the exchange piece. They visited us and Yas and I visited them. And finally they picked out something of Yas's, and Yas picked out something of theirs. We used to do that a great deal, exchange work with each other.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's interesting. It went out of fashion for awhile; now it's coming back again.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I just did it recently. This little mushroom here, which I love, is from Frances Lamont. She had been in Ogunquit the first year that I was there. She wanted one of my drawings and I said I'd swap her a small piece of sculpture for one of the drawings. So she has a drawing and I have that sculpture which I admire very much. It's very nice. Let me see, what other swaps have I got here? Isabel and I swapped. That was a swap. This we bought. And the Niles Spencer we bought. It happens that we bought all these things. In the country I have a Kantor that I swapped with him. He wanted a drawing of mine. Again, we had visits back and forth with him and his wife. I chose one of his drawings. This was before he went into abstract. And he chose one of my drawings. And I have a Julian Levi. He has a drawing of mine, and I have one of his. We also bought a little painting of his. What else have I got? Well, there are number of artists that we've swapped things with. I think it's a nice way to do. As a matter of fact, we couldn't change this room. One of my friends who was here said, "Why don't you take down all this old junk?" I like it. "Why don't you put up something new?" Well, this is a memory of my life and I'm not going to discard it. That's a sketch Henry Schnakenberg made of me. Reg and Henry and I one winter had a session of -- Henry posed once; Reg posed for a picture; and I posed for picture.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How marvelous.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: And this is the picture that Henry did of me. Then the one that Reg did of me he gave to me. One night we had a party and I brought it out. And Betty Spencer saw it and was so horrified by it that she took her lipstick and absolutely ruined it. That was the end of that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How terrible!

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, it wasn't one of Reg's very good things at any rate. Then I did one of Reg that I thought was awful. I wouldn't have given it to anybody. I destroyed it. But I'm very glad to have that one that Henry did. Henry is a wonderful person. He was out of the League by the time I got there, but he's been a good friend of mine all my adult life. He's quite an old man now I guess. I'm seventy-one and he's at least eight or nine years older than I am; or perhaps more.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I think more. Are there any other areas that you'd like to talk about that we haven't gone into?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: No. I made a note. The importance of the WPA. But I don't have the material and it would be very difficult for me to talk about it. The reading of the Doerner book was very important personally to me. It took me years to understand the technique really, I mean the meaning of it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You mean all the materials and everything?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. Because you can read about it and know that if you do this and that -- but you don't always have to do the same thing. But it's the understanding of what the technique means. Certain techniques will always produce a static formula. It doesn't make any difference what you do with it. I think mostly that's true of the egg techniques. Although Reg didn't do so badly with them. Then, you see, to combat the Academy various groups were formed. The Painters, Sculptors and Engravers was by far the most important. They had Wildenstein's for their show. It had the greatest meaning fundamentally. It was a much more important show than any show that the Academy ever had. And then there was a group called the American Group.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Was that in the 1940s

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, no, I think during the 1930s it got going. There were many good artists in that. Julian Levi worked very hard in that. Yas did, too. My friend Elizabeth Olds was in that. Fred Knight. There are many other people whose names I can't recall offhand. My memory is so poor I'm sorry to say.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I think it's fascinating that there is this group of people who were students and are still involved with each other, and still work.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: And see each other.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And still carry on a whole area of tradition.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. I don't know whether the younger group or, say, the people that developed with de

Kooning (I hate his work so). I don't know whether they have a group that is as cohesive as the group that we came out of.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Once they moved out of Manhattan they really separated quite a bit.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: We used to see them on occasion while we were living downtown on Twelfth Street before the Lafayette vanished. Niles lived there in the last few years of his life before he married Katherine and we'd go over there for drinks in the afternoon and then have dinner. Or else we'd go out for dinner and come back to the Lafayette. And there was a whole group of people who would meet there. The Lafayette would close at twelve o'clock and the marble tables were washed and out we would go to the bar across the street, the Cedar Bar. And all these gloomy Guses would be sitting there looking at us as we walked in. They were all just facing the door. They weren't talking to each other. I never saw a gloomier group in my life. Many of them were this younger group.

PAUL CUMMINGS: On University Place?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: On University Place, the Cedar Bar. And we saw the same thing in Paris. There was a bar down from the Deux Magots. And they'd sit facing out, not talking to each other. But just gloomy, looking to see who's who, who's coming along. We couldn't have done that any more than the man in the moon.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Does your group write letters to each other? Or did you at one point?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: No, unfortunately, we don't. Occasionally we use the telephone. But at Christmastime I've been very busy. I send a card on which I've written something to all the old friends that I don't see. But many of them have died. Reg is dead. Karfiol is dead. Why go into it? You know.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. But was there a point where people wrote to each other?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: When we were young we did. And I think I told you that I had these great boxes of things. I remember Reg wrote me a long letter when his brother died, a younger brother that he was very fond of. That upset him so. And he wrote when his mother died. And I would write him the same way. This was when we were much younger. Niles was never a letter writer. Reg was. And occasionally I would be. Then there would be other people. There would be long letters from Betty. Occasionally I still get a long letter from Betty Spencer; that's Niles Spencer's first wife. A long, long letter from her. She lives up in Provincetown. And when I have a show it's very interesting. I'll get a response from someone or other that I haven't thought of for a long time. This is always a pleasure to me. We saw Peggy Bacon when she had her show. We just got a card from her this morning. She'd like very much for us to come to Maine but I'm still not able to travel that far. I'd have to go by car. And I wouldn't be able to go up there. Of course, we have made two trips. We went to New Orleans to see Frances Lamont and her sister Charlotte. And last summer we went over to Martha's Vineyard to see the Greenbaums. We have a house in Little Compton and we drove from there. Elizabeth Olds now spends the summer in New Hampshire. Kamela, I think that's the name of the place. That's easily a five-hour or five-and-a-half-hour drive. That's a little too far for me and I don't like automobiles anyway. But it's too tiresome. Maybe this next summer I'll be better. There's nothing wrong with me. I just get tired. It's just the wear and tear of being bounced around.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you read now with the extra time?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, you know, this is very interesting. I don't have any extra time. We have very little help. We have somebody who cleans the house for us, keeps it beautifully clean. We love her. She's an elderly Negress named Elvira Oxley who is a wonderful, dependable human being. She keeps us as clean as pins. But then I'm the cook. And I happen to like doing it fairly well, but it takes time. I'm supposed to get a walk in when the weather is good in the afternoon. But often I'm too tired. And at night I go to bed quite early.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And the weather is getting bad.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. I went down to see Hudson Walker two or three weeks ago and I got caught in the rain. I couldn't get a cab. And I couldn't get on a bus. I just couldn't manage with that crowd that was trying to get on. And the young women are really worse than the men. When I saw how it was I came back. I had to walk from 48th Street in the pouring rain up here to 65th Street. And by the time I got here I was simply exhausted. Irvine was away in Florida. I thought I wasn't going to make it. But, you know, if you have to do something you do it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: There's always that little extra there.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. You can do it. There's no question about it, you can do it. But it took me about five days to get over that. I just seem to be fundamentally so tired than I could hardly move.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, I don't really have a lot more questions here.I think we've covered about everything.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: There's only one other thing I've put down: the trip to England in 1935. My husband represented a group of Russian claims. Before he and I met he had been in Paris trying to settle these claims. Then in 1935 the group of English claims came up and he had to go to England.

PAUL CUMMINGS: These were claims for . . . ?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Burberry had a business in Russia. These were claims resulting from the liquidation of business; they were legitimate business claims against the present regime in Russia for payment of business. We went to England. And it was Elmer Rice who said,. "Don't take the boat train up to London. And have a good time." We got off in--not Southampton, what is the other big port? It's further to the West. It's further away. And it's in the most beautiful country.

PAUL CUMMINGS: There's one down by Cornwall.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, this wasn't Cornwall. We got off there and we sent our bags up to London and just carried a small piece of luggage. We went from town to town by bus. We had the most wonderful time. We went out of our way a little bit. We went to Bath. It took us about ten days to get up to London. It was such fun, and the English were so pleasant. We saw cathedrals. We were mad about Wells Cathedral. And I had hoped to see Mrs. Force, who had a house outside of London near Oxford.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really? I didn't know that.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: We telephoned her when we got to London and were told that she was in Italy. Irvine concluded his business. I went to the museums. We enjoyed our visit in London very much. And we went down to the south of England to Swanwich because I wanted to see Llewellyn House before he died. He had been a friend. We didn't want to stay in the same town because we knew that both he and Alyce were not well. So we went to Swanwich where we could walk over to see them. The minute we got down there cables began to arrive: other business had developed and Irvine had to go right back to London. So I called Mrs. Force. She was back. And she said, "Come for dinner this evening." I said, "We can't do that but we'll be in London tomorrow." So she arranged to have lunch with us--or dinner perhaps--in London. I said I was sick of being in cities and I was tired also, but she had a house guest. She had been in Italy arguing with Mussolini. The American Pavilion was not supposed to have a picture of Marion Davies in the entryway. But when Mrs. Force got there, there was the picture of Marion Davies in the entryway, and then you went into the American Pavilion. Well, she tried to get it out. She had absolutely no luck, and she came back mad as a hatter.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I wonder why it was there in the first place?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I think because William Randolph Hearst had loaned Mussolini a great deal of money. My husband would know the reason. But it was something like that. The picture of Marion Davies couldn't be moved, and Mrs. Force didn't win. But when she got mad she really got mad! She fussed and fumed. Well, at any rate, she went back to -- I've forgotten the little town she lived in. We went to Hadnum to this beautiful old inn. Every day she'd send her car over and I would go over and spend the day with her. Irvine would take the train into London and do his business. And then when her house guest left we went over and stayed with her until we left. But it was so interesting to see her in that setting. She had made friends. Her especially good friends in that area were people named Boycott. The word boycott comes from this name. They were Irish-English gentry. We had a wonderful time with them because they had a cocktail party for us. The man said to Irvine, "You Americans have to have cocktails. You know, I know how to make a cocktail." And Irvine said there was an assemblage of bottles. He put rum, he put brandy, he put whiskey, he put gin, he put everything in this. And this was an American cocktail. He knew all about American cocktails.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's marvelous. I didn't know she had a house in England. Did she have family there?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: No. She had a beautiful little thatched house, the most beautiful little place you ever saw. With the most exquisite white fur rugs on the floor. And the thatched roof. I forgot what she did for servants. She had some servants I didn't see. She always had servants. And then -- what was the name of the African explorer who was a companion to Mrs. Force for years? Mungo Park. I think her name was Irene Mungo Park, but we all called her Mungo. Mungo stayed with Mrs. Force. The day before we left Mrs. Force had to go to London for some reason. We loved walking. So Mungo took Irvine and me on a long walk. I never have gotten so soaked in my life! In England when it rains it really rains!

PAUL CUMMINGS: It pours. That's true. How much time did she spend there? The summers?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: She would go there, then she'd travel around. Mrs. Whitney had a place in France—-I don't know where it was. But Mrs. Force liked England. I'm so glad I didn't miss that visit. She was charming. The place

was charming. We had a lovely time with her. And seeing the English countryside and the people in it was interesting, too. They were putting up little public housing, one of the first we had ever seen. It really was something to see because you're looking at the upper crust and the lower crust at the same time. It seemed to me that great mass of people in England, the working people, at least the ones we happen to see, the bus starters were on quite a level. We could discuss all kinds of things with them as you waited for your bus.

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We enjoyed that. The trip was in 1935. I had never seen Mrs. Force in that kind of situation and I was awfully glad that we did see her there. Also she had a place somewhere in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. It was a very beautiful place. I never went down there to see her; I could have, but just didn't. I think that place was afterwards bought by one of the theatrical people.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I knew that she had a place in the country around here but I didn't know about the one in England.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, the one in England was just beautiful. She had a genius about doing houses. John Koch's house is very elegant. He loves the rococo elegance.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, yes. The frames and the furniture and the carpets and all the little goodies.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. But Mrs. Force's was very personal. Every time she did anything her name was written all over it. And while it was very elegant, it wasn't just elegance per se. But it was so very personal. And so much like her. And it was rather Victorian.

PAUL CUMMINGS: She had a great deal to say about what happened in the Whitney Studio and the Museum, didn't she?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Everything! Everything to say. She was a very creative person. We were told by one of our friends that she was a person who really could deal with the generals, you know, when Mrs. Whitney would get a commission. She did a great many monuments and things of that sort and it was Mrs. Force who could just twist them around her finger.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's interesting.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: She was witty and brilliant. And so quick. Every party that she had just sparkled. She dressed beautifully. She was a very homely person, but that made her even more interesting I thought. She had a funny, huge nose. When I first knew her I was so innocent I said, "What beautiful auburn red hair you have." Well, it came right out of a bottle. She was so disgusted with me. When I said, "How pretty your hair is today! You must have just washed it!" She looked at me and said, "Well, Katherine, you ought to have more sense than that."

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's very funny.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, I think we're about talked out, don't you?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. Just about.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I got out these things to see if I could remember any more things of people. Oh, I haven't mentioned Jack Levine or Mitch Siporin. These were friends of ours. We don't see Mitch. He's teaching at Brandeis. We do see Jack Levine and Ruth on occasion. But we don't see as much of them as we used to. And I haven't said anything about Raphael Soyer or Rebecca either. We don't see very much of them any more. I never knew his brother very well, but we are very fond of Raphael. But, you see, this illness has meant a different kind of life for me. I don't go out as much. I don't go to openings very often. Occasionally I do go but not very often.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you go to them frequently before?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, I used to be so much a part of it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. It's one of the things that one did always.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. I never even thought about it. Now there's an opening today, you see, at the Whitney. I'm not in that show. If I want to be in a show now I have to call up and say, "I would like to show." They just don't automatically ask me because I don't . . .

PAUL CUMMINGS: They did for years, didn't they? Once you were in an Annual every year they'd ask you.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I used to always be in the shows. But, again, you have to consider that somebody has to move on. Young people come up. You can't have the same people all the time. I don't feel resentful about that so much. I'd like to be asked more often. But when I really want to show something, I call up and say, "I would like to show." They're really awfully nice to me. They usually let me show. The only thing that happened the last time I'd did -— I ought not to put all this on tape, but this is the way I feel. There are a lot of young smarty pants characters now in the art world. I wanted to show one of the paintings of a leaf that I had done. I thought it was a good one. And they hung it. There was a space below it. It wasn't that it was a picture that had to be below it. Everything was on eye level; and they hung this way above eye level. Now this is what I call smarty pants. What was the point, you see? A leaf in the wind. But that has nothing to do with the visual arts. That's a literary . . .

PAUL CUMMINGS: There's lots of that these days.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. And that made me rather cross. I didn't say anything about it because actually somebody had to take the responsibility of hanging the show and that's the way he hung it. That's all there was to it. I hesitate now to send any small thing.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, everybody has enormous canvases.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Yes. And mine are very small. I don't feel badly about that. One of the finest pictures I ever saw in my life was about that big. It's a Van Eyck. I saw it once and I'm awfully glad I did. It's owned by a museum in Australia. It's one of those beautiful little Madonna's. It's one of the very good ones. It's an early one. But you have to be . . .

PAUL CUMMINGS: Eighteen feet long.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: No. And this I think has to do with the fact that I think there is a meaning to modern art besides the fact that everybody can do it. You really don't need to be trained to do it. It's a therapeutic asset to our society. Also I think it is a meaningful asset to the architecture. You see, everything is engineered; it's so engineered it hurts.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Anonymous. Yes.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: And the touch of a dirty human hand is worth a great deal on these great empty walls. It brings them alive.

PAUL CUMMINGS: All, the architects will hate that. They love that big articulated space.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: But it isn't articulated. It's a completely vacuous, engineered, blank wall. And I have a friend, it's Elmer Rice's daughter, who has done several books. She was an editor of one of the specialty magazines. I don't know which--architectural or medical or something. And they had offices in one of these new buildings on Park Avenue. No window could be opened. You couldn't even see out very well. And every corridor was just a long empty corridor to a door. She said she couldn't keep that job. It almost drove her mad. Not a breath of fresh air. Now this kind of modern architecture I love. I love being able to sit here and look out these windows.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And see the G.M. Building.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, no. The G.M. Building I call the monster. Don't you think that's a monster? It is a monster. And look at that hideous thing (except for the lights) with the bandage around its top.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, the Gulf & Western. Yes.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Don't you think that's the ugliest thing you ever saw in your life? Imagine putting that bandage around the top of it!

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, maybe they put the machinery up there or something.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I can understand machinery being up there. But why emphasize a circle, a ring? It's like a Bandaid on the building. But I love the lights. Now the apartments are dull on Fifth Avenue. The rich don't stay home. They're in Palm Beach or someplace else running around. Or in Tunis.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Everybody is going to Tunis this year.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: I just heard that a friend died there recently. It was kind of shocking. We were thinking of perhaps doing something like that. But I don't know. The last trip we took was to Sweden. I think I told you about it. We went to see the city of Stockholm and museum.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really? No, you didn't mention that.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Oh, we had a marvelous time.

PAUL CUMMINGS: When was this?

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Two or three years ago. It was when I was first able to do anything. And we didn't do too much. We weren't gone too long. The son of a friend of ours was in Stockholm making movies. We went to the museum and we enjoyed the city very much. We went outside the city just a little. Then we went to Copenhagen. The Burrough's grandson, -- Bet's child – Caleb Woodhouse -- who has a Ph.D. in history, was teaching in Copenhagen. We saw him there and we enjoyed visiting him. But Copenhagen doesn't have very much for the artist. It was pleasant because Caleb was there. Then we went to Vienna. And, oh, the museum!

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's marvelous, yes.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: We went to Salzburg and saw the last two performances at the opera. I've never heard such music! We heard Mozart's The Magic Flute and a new production of Boris Gudonov. It was simply marvelous. Then we got a car and a driver and drove up through the Berchtesgaden area -- not that we wanted to go to Berchtesgaden but I wanted to see the mountain country around there. Then we went to London and got our first good dose of terrible hippies. We arrived in London at night. It rained the next day. Naturally we went to the National Gallery first thing. It doesn't open until afternoon. But nobody was looking at the pictures. There were these young people in Civil War costumes. They were dressed in every period, traipsing up and down looking at each other. And instead of enjoying this -- well you couldn't see the pictures to begin with. I thought they were the most . . . Well it was a rainy day and they had nothing else to do, I suppose. And they were strolling around. Then we went to Carnaby Street so I could buy something for my grandniece. I felt that that would be the only thing thrilling I could do for my family. And she was thrilled with it. But we were very glad to get home again. We're thinking that this time we might go to Spain. Irvine has never been there, and I haven't been since Yas and I were there in the 1920s. That's a long time ago, and everything is very different now. Even the Prado is different, because they've brought pictures from the Escorial now into the Prado. And I've never seen the Moorish and the Alhambra. We would never be bothered with just looking at a beautiful city. We always went to places where there were museums. But I think if we went Irvine would like to get a picture of Spain. We might do that. We're waiting to hear from the man who usually can tell us about the country. I don't want to freeze to death. I don't think I could stand if it were too cold.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I've never been to Spain. I don't know what it's like there.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Well, now it's very different from what it used to be. And I think it's more expensive now than it was a few years ago. When Yas and I were there we went down in a third class carriage. Those were the years that we've read about in Hemingway. There weren't too many Americans around, and no one spoke one single, solitary word of English; nor a word of French either. It was very hard going. We had to really be tough, too, to survive that kind of traveling.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Okay, well, we're just about out of tape here.

KATHERINE SCHMIDT: Good! I don't have to talk anymore.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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