



Smithsonian
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Oral history interview with Edwin and
Isabelle Churchman, 1965 August 27

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Edwin and Isabelle Churchman on August 27, 1965. The interview took place in Pacific Beach, California, and was conducted by Betty Lochrie Hoag McGlynn for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This interview is part of the Archives of American Art's New Deal and the Arts project.

The original transcript was edited. In 2021 the Archives created a more verbatim transcript. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Now, would both of you say just anything so I can see if it's picking it up?

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: Well, this is more difficult than saying something. [They laugh.]

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: I don't know what to say.

[Recorder stops, restarts.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: This is Betty Lochrie Hoag on August the 27th, 1965, interviewing a husband-and-wife team of artists. Edwin Churchman, that's spelled E-D-W-I-N C-H-U-R-C-H-M-A-N, and Mrs. Churchman, who is Isabelle Schultz Churchman, spelled I-S-A-B-E-L-L-E, Schutlz, S-C-H-U-L-T-Z, in their home in Pacific Beach, which is just out of San Diego. The Churchmans met each other on the Project, so I know that's one thing they're going to say was wonderful about it. They were both in the diorama section in San Diego, and I'm not sure what Mr. Churchman is doing now, but I know that Mrs. Churchman is doing some beautiful sculpturing, because I saw two of her pieces in Balboa Park yesterday, which were very interesting, and I hope we'll have time to talk about them on the tape.

But before we talk about the Project period, which is what I'm mainly supposed to be finding out about from you, I'd like to ask you a little about your own lives. Mrs. Churchman, would you tell me when and where you were born?

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: I was born in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1896. [laughs.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: What is your birth date?

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: April 20th. And I came to California—well, I studied back east. I came to California with three degrees.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: You did?

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: One from Teacher's College, Columbia University, and I had also a B. S. degree from there, and then after that, I studied sculpture at the Rinehart School of Sculpture in Baltimore, and won a travelling scholarship from there for six weeks in Europe. Then came—I had a teaching job in Baltimore, but decided I'd come to visit my aunt and uncle in San Diego. And I fell in love with San Diego and decided to stay. Unfortunately, however, it was the beginning of the Depression, and I found that none of my degrees were of any value. [Laughs.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Even teaching?

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: Even teaching in the public schools, because they required two years of residence, and I didn't have two years. [Laughs.] And also, an extra degree, and an extra course.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah, for education.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: Education. So, I was out of luck as far as public schools, and private

schools, I did get a little position with the Balmer School in La Jolla.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Palmer?

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: Balmer, B-A-L-M-E-R.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Thank you.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: I taught the fifth grade [laughs] and art in that little school. Now quite a large school, but at that time, we only had about five children in the fifth grade, and the second year I was here, they could not afford another year of fifth grade, so they reduced me to the art, which was quite a very small salary. I was really down in depression. I did babysitting and waiting on the tables at the Wind and Sea Hotel, at times, and also helped people in any way I could. Took in ladies who needed sort of home care. I cooked for them and took them in, so I had a little home, just in the—near here, in Bird Rock, and sort of made my way that way. But when I came to not having any money for the rent, [they laugh] someone from the Project stopped by and said, Well, why don't you come down with us?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, that must have been a godsend.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: It was. It was just a godsend. I went down there, and here were all of my friends. I hadn't known anything about this. So, here were all my friends, and I got into this lovely artwork and enjoyed it. Had enough to eat, [laughs] and—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Now, did you present your own work to be accepted? Was this the way it was done here?

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: Well, they knew my work, and they [cross talk] interviewed me as to my financial status, and they found out I needed the project very badly, [laughs] so they took me on.

[00:05:06]

And I did lovely work with dioramas. I made little figures, something like I'm making now, eight inches. And these were for the classrooms, for the educational building. They were replicas, what size, one-eighth of life-size, weren't they? I made these little figures in various actions: a teacher at the blackboard and the children in the desks and the little girls at the typewriters and the little children on the playground. I made innumerable little figures out of clay mixed with Papier-mâché.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Did you make those, or did they [inaudible]. [Cross talk.] [Inaudible due to loud airplane noise.] Excuse me just a minute, the airplane.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: Yes, the airplanes are always bad here.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: When I was interviewing Ivan Messenger, he told me about watching a lady who was tearing up paper all day and couldn't imagine what she was doing, and it was for Papier-mâché, and probably for your dioramas.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: There were two of us making these little figures, and Celeste and I worked together, and it was just very interesting.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Who was Celeste?

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: Celeste Batiste.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Batiste, I haven't found her.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: She had been—no, she's gone. She died about two years ago. She was older than I, quite a bit, and she had been a Canadian. But I think she was, of course, a naturalized citizen. And she lived in La Jolla near me for quite some time, and I was—I knew her quite well, but I hadn't known that she was on the Project. She might've told me sooner. [Laughs.] I would've eaten better if I had known about it sooner. But anyway, from then on, I was perfectly happy and wonderfully taken care of. Not that we made more than \$40 a month, but that—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: In those days, that was good.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: That was a great deal, it was good. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. So, finally, I was taken off the project to teach at Francis Parker School, which is our best progressive school. Belle Baranceanu is there now.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes, I recognize the name.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: In the position that I used to have. And I knew her all the time I'd been in San Diego, too.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Then you met Mr. Churchman when you were working on the dioramas?

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: We met, yes. You see, these little figures that I made for the classrooms had to have furniture, and someone said we both—it was Martha Farnam [ph] was my immediate boss. She said, We'll bring you in a model-maker so that you and he can collaborate on the [laughs] furniture for these little figures.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: He [modelled your life (ph)]. [They laugh.]

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: In came Mr. Churchman, Edwin Churchman. And we began collaborating. You see, I had a certain amount of shrinkage in my little figures, and I had to allow for that, and then he had to decide how large to make his little chairs and tables and typewriters and desks and so on, to go with my little figures. So, we did have some collaborating to do. [Laughs.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, maybe we should bring him up to date, then, since we have you at this point, too. Would you tell me when and where, and where—

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: Well, I'm a native Californian. I was born up in the bay region, in Vallejo, and didn't remain there very long, as my folks went to the Coachella Valley, that is in Riverside County.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Excuse me, Mr. Churchman, do you want to give me your birth date? You don't have to.

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: My birth date, March 8, 1904.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Thank you. You moved to Riverside?

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: Yeah, Riverside County, and then we were there for a few—a couple of years, the main incident in my life was falling into a well the day after the San Francisco earthquake, and might be my first memory, but no disaster. Soon after that—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Did that have any connection with the earthquake? Had it been [inaudible] or anything? Broken open?

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: Well, the excitement of the earthquake and all was partly to blame for it. I wasn't being properly supervised. [They laugh.]

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: His aunt had been in the earthquake, and they hadn't heard from her, so it was naturally a situation.

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: And—but soon after, we left there and went up near Los Angeles for a few weeks, and then came to San Diego and have been here ever since.

[00:10:06]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Did you go to school in either Los Angeles or—

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: No, all [inaudible] to the schools here in San Diego. Yes, to be in San Diego now since 1907 makes me really a San Diegan.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Certainly does.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: Native son.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Right when all the people from Iowa came.

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: Right, and so, I went to school, I went to school here at the old Florence School, and to the San Diego High School for a while, until a ruptured appendix interrupted things. And then, I went to the San Diego Army and Navy Academy, and later to San Diego State College.

And I had hoped to be a botanical or entomological artist, but I didn't know that I was partially colorblind. So, that limited me to black and white. And then, with the Depression, I did, with my biological background, I was on artwork for the state in the quarantine work. But that was only part-time, and so I went on the project at the Lincoln School, where I met Isabelle.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mr. Churchman, was this quarantine for fishes or people or—

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: No, this is the plant quarantine for the inspection work that is done at the state line to prevent the introduction of various plant pests and diseases.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Where they stop the wetbacks on the road, always you see?

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: Well, no, these were at the state line plant quarantine stations, or inspection stations.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: They also have it on ships.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, do they?

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: Produce coming in from other countries.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Wonderful protection. Well, I don't understand any place where you—in all of this, where you had learned to do these little figures.

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: Well, I had taken art in college, and I had always been interested in drawing, from the time I was in kindergarten, all through. And back when I was in kindergarten, my work was taken to educational conventions, because of an outstanding child's work. So, I went on at varying times, but didn't have any chance to study while I was in school.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes. What about sculpture? San Diego State education?

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: No, I just picked that up. There was no one here to teach that, at all.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: See, he was on the Project as a model maker, that is, furniture, little, small. He made the most wonderful ships to scale. Looking as if they were exactly in the ocean.

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: And I have had great interest in marionettes and puppets, and so woodcarving there.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Did you do any of them for the Project?

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: No.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Or just your own?

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: They were done on my own.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Were a lot of these models historical? I know they were used for the schools.

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: There were some that were historical. I made ship models of the varying types of ships around here, [inaudible] and navy boats, and as much information as I could on one of the Manila galleons.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, do you know what Mrs.—who's the lady—Kendall, showed me yesterday that she has a piece of the Star of India's sail?

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: Oh, does she?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: When it came in, they wanted to cut down the piece for display. I mean the sail itself to be displayed. It was too big to go in the case. And they had her do this modelling repair job of trimming it to size so they would have the pieces shown that have the actual date and the name of it, and she has a little strip [ph] of it on her table. It was kind of exciting to notice. [Cross talk, inaudible.] Didn't mean to digress, but—

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: Well, that's [inaudible] project.

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: Of course, around the Project, it was a general meeting of all those who were interested in art, because that was the main thing for the artists here at that time. There was no sale of art, so you—everyone who was anything of consequence in art around here—it seemed like, was on one of the Projects.

[00:15:03]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: It must have been a wonderful group, from what others have told me.

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: It was, and it did things for the people, I think, that had the concern of existence. And when that was removed, it seemed to give a spurt of vitality and interest and the work that a lot of the people did was really something.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And has it continued in the community?

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: Well—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Inaudible] most of them have gone on?

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: Well, San Diego is not a very good town to support artists. And practically all your artists here who are anything have had to resort to teaching.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: But the friendships [cross talk] that were established, and the collaboration that was established has gone on, I think.

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: The wartime situation disrupted a great deal of what had been. Of course, practically all of the artists became involved in the illustration work of the aircraft companies around here then.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: They'd gotten a lot of experience on curriculum work and—

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: Yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —project work to prepare them for it [inaudible].

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: And so, that was the way I ended up.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: In the aircraft?

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: Yes, I stayed with it until recently, and having been involved in so much of the development work and working with classified material, I have no examples of what—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: To be shown. You were so kind to get a lot of the curriculum books out for me, and I appreciate it very much. As I've told you, I've seen them—

[Cross talk.]

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: [Inaudible.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —we did microfilm them for—

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: Oh, wonderful.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —and I'll check to be sure that we've done all that you have here. But I wanted to ask you, did you write any of them, or just illustrate?

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: Well, I was involved, mostly, in model building, there.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: But didn't you do the one about oranges [ph]? Didn't you illustrate that?

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: No, I didn't. No. And then, having been handy, I was served as an advisor on materials.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see.

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: So, it's—and then, I became actively employed by the state, and so, I left.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Now, what do you mean? What were you doing?

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: I was working as a plant quarantine inspector.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, this was after the Project?

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: Well, it stopped. I left the Project and went on to this. And I did work for the county at the exposition. Did some very special dioramas. I don't know whether they are still in existence or not.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: The Hall of Man?

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: No, these were later installed at the Chamber of Commerce. They were on the activities of San Diego. The fishing industry, mining in the backcountry here, agriculture, and the activities centering around the harbor.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I wonder if the ones that you both worked on that were used for the schools are still being used. Have you had a chance to see?

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: They are not, because that building, you see, was burned. But they were used for years afterwards. They would appear at the county fair every year. [Laughs.] The little figures and the furniture that Ed had made. And they'd have two or three examples of them at the country fair every year until the fire.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, then, the fire was fairly recent?

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: No, that was in, well—

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: No one ever told me when it happened.

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: I've forgotten just what year it was. But it was in the official education headquarters, where they had all these things stored. And they were able to salvage a lot of the photographic material, because that could be treated and brought back. But as I understand, most of the other material, like some of the beautifully costumed dolls that Mr. Buderahl [ph] did were lost.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: Do you remember how to spell his name? [Laughs.]

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: No, I don't.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I think I have him in my notes. Funny Norwegian name.

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: Yes. [Cross talk.] He had been an actor, and as years went on, he became a costume manager, and, having to work with costumes, he had learned to sew. And he made these beautifully costumed—authentically costumed dolls.

[00:20:00]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Is he still around?

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: No. This is—that's one thing. With the passage of years, a lot of these individuals that were there were not young people, and so, time has taken its toll.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Of course it has. Why—

[Recorder stops, restarts.]

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: —surprising, when you—and then, the war scattered so many people here, and contacts, and then, with the growth—the influx of population, diluted the existing population so that we've lost contact with a lot of people. And then of course, they shifted around.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: They certainly have. I have the southern California area, and we have so many people in Los Angeles who have come from New York and added considerably to the great number of artists we already had there.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: Yes, I would say. I came from there. [Laughs.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes. You have a plaque here, which I wanted to read to the tape. Helen Bess, now that was Mrs. Clarke before she was married?

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: No.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Helen Bess Clarke? Jim Clarke's wife?

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: Oh, she—now that you—

[Cross talk.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Inaudible.]

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: —I knew her when she was Helen Strand. Well, now, Helen Strand Bess Clarke, then. [They laugh.]

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: Oh, yes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: This is from the San Diego City School's Curriculum Project: "Resolution of congratulations, May 9, 1936, whereas Miss Isabelle Schultz and Mr. Edwin T. Churchman"—I'm sorry, what's that T for? I should've asked.

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: Theodore.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Theodore.

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: You know, who was president when I was born. [They laugh.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: "This day joined in the holy bonds of matrimony have been highly valued members of our happy family, and whereas we all enjoyed having them with us and appreciating their very worthwhile efforts, the excellence of their art, and their painstaking workmanship, be it therefore resolved that we unite in wishing these two long life and happiness, and in assuring them of our continued friendship and good wishes through all the coming years."

Well, isn't that nice? And it was not only Mrs. Clarke, but Leslie Quirk, whom they told me about on the tape, and Lotta Terry [ph], who was art superintendent at—

[Cross talk.]

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: Supervisor.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Had a great deal of influence on the mural decisions in the community. And Martha McIntosh, coordinator, whom I have not been able to find, and I think she is still someplace around. Well, that's very nice. Was yours the only romance on the Project?

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: I think so. [They laugh.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Inaudible.]

[Cross talk.]

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: Lasted on and on.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I always like to ask people what they feel the value of the project has been to American art, and I get to San Diego, I feel silly with the question, because it

was obvious it did so much for the community, and through the curriculum, and all these educational things.

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: Yeah. [Cross talk.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Any other—

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: In various public buildings around, you see, time to time, work that was produced by the artists here at that time.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: I—afterwards did the war memorial for the Russ Auditorium.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Now, what is the war memorial?

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: It's—here it is, a picture of it.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, good.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: You can take it with you, if you like.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: For microfilming? Wonderful.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: It's the Four Freedoms.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Isn't that lovely?

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: This was an indirect result, I think, of the contacts I made at that time.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: It was not done for the Project? But for the auditorium.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: Not for the Project, but afterwards, for the school, for the San Diego High School, and it's still there in the Russ Auditorium.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Very beautiful. Is it redwood?

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: It's mahogany. Honduras mahogany. And just carved by hand. The only carving I've ever done on wood. I've done other things in stone, but mostly I work in bronze.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: This is where Reiffel mural—

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: His are on—in the auditorium. These are in the foyer.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: Yes, they were many years before this, you see.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: [Inaudible.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And then you followed on with your sculptural work, didn't you?

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: And then, recently, I've decided to go back to these little figures, which I always had sort of a flair for, and Mr. Churchman subsidized me for a year or so to get them cast in bronze, and now, I'm selling them.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, isn't that darling.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: Quite well at Newport Beach.

[00:25:00]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Do you specialize in children? Because in Balboa Park yesterday, in the art gallery—although, that isn't the name of that group. What is it?

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: It's the San Diego Art Institute.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Art Institute. I saw a head of a little girl, and one of a young girl, she was on a dolphin, and with a fish, and you'd just won prizes for both of them.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: Well, honorable mentions. [Laughs.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: But do you usually do children?

[Cross talk.]

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: She's sympathetic with children.

[Cross talk.]

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: I like children, and I also like oceans, and that is just what clicked with the people at Newport Beach. They love children, and they love anything connected with the ocean, and so our little interests sort of clicked, and they are selling them quite well. They sold out my two years of work in a few months, and now I'm reproducing and doing new things all the time. Also, I'm doing a series of music figures. I'm just starting now.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Are these commissioned for someone, or just because you—

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: No, they're just because I'm interested, and because I think they're fun to do. Other people think they're fun to own, apparently. [Laughs.] They're buying them.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: A good combination.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: Yes, so, at 65, it seems as if my life has begun, as far as being an artist and success at selling things.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, isn't that exciting?

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: So, I'm of interest, in a way, to the old-timers [laughs] and the senior citizens, because I've been 65 several years now.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mr. Churchman is showing me a bronze plaque that is colored. Now, how—

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: That's vitreous enamel.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: This is enamel on bronze. I had been doing it on copper for quite some time, but I thought I would try it on bronze. And I was told it couldn't be done, but finally, with experimenting, I know the old Chinese used to do it, and I thought it could be. So, I found, in a pottery kiln, with very slow firing, it could be done, and I've been doing some of that.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Effective, lovely, because it isn't as shinily glazed as it is on the copper, is it? You get some of the texture coming through, which gives it kind of a highlight that's very nice.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: Yes, it's different and interesting in a way.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mr. Churchman, do you help with this, too? Do you help her fire it, or—

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: No, I have to do the stronger work. She has the tiny hands, and I have the brawn.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: And this is heavy.

[Cross talk.]

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: And yet, I do smaller work than she does, with the size of my hands.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Isn't that strange?

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: His eyes are better, too.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Even if he can't see the color? Or you see a different color?

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: I don't do the—I do enamel work, but I follow more or less by number, and roughly by color. I'm not extremely colorblind. I'm just a portion of the red-green. But it

interferes with doing realistic painting, especially from the illustrative standpoint that I was especially interested in.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: What about the flower painting here?

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: This is by Martha Jones.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, the lady at Bird Rock. [Laughs.]

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: Yeah, she was on the Project.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I've heard about her. [Cross talk.]

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: And this was the type of flower study that she did for the Project.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: This is an oil on paper.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: No, it's tempura.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: My goodness, it's built up so it looks almost like an oil painting.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: Yes, no, that's opaque watercolor.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I had heard her work was beautiful and isn't it.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: It's very exquisite. She did a great deal of oil, but that was on her own more than for the Project. This was to reproduce and keep the Californian flora, you might say.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: What were these used for? Do you know? Her flower paintings?

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: Well, all of the things that were done, like that, were studies that could be put in the school or in the classroom were illustrative of different features of this area. Some did a series of, I think, fish, and others on plants of the back country, and then the trees, and it was, to a great degree, things that couldn't be obtained elsewhere in books.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: Another project that Celeste and I worked on were animals, native animals of California. There was a young man, do you remember the young man that helped us with the casting of these things? I don't remember his name at all. But we made just horses and various native animals, and these were to be borrowed by the schools.

[00:30:10]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Mr. Clarke told me about an aunt of his who did animals at Griffith Park, did sculptures of them. Did you remember her?

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: No, I didn't know her.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: She was quite an elderly lady at the time, I believe, and she had done things like this—

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: Oh, yes?

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Inaudible] project [inaudible].

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: Well, I didn't do so many of those because the fair came in, and then the dioramas, and that stopped that.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I was going to ask you about if the dioramas were used by [inaudible] schools, like San Diego State College, or any of the museums?

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: No, they were used by the city schools. But as I said, ones that were done by some other individuals also were lost in the fire, so it was rather catastrophic for a lot of material, it turned out.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yes. Well, I'm—

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: Excuse me.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: We could find out the date of that, if you'd like.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, it's probably in the newspaper clippings I have. I just forget. Well, you were both so dear to take me in on the wing, as it were, this morning. [They laugh.] I'm so glad I got to—

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: It's interesting.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: —interview you for the archives.

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: It's rather strange, what you take for granted at the time later on becomes of interest to people, and they wish that they had more on various subjects.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, this whole period has just been neglected in our history, because I think it was a sad time in general, as far as people. I mean, everybody was poor, and they were just struggling along, and a lot of people didn't keep records of it at all. But we're just beginning to realize the importance of it and the influence of these things on the young artists who are today becoming someone.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: Yes.

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: Well, a lot of those—it was a shot in the arm, so to speak, the assistance that they got. And it relieved them of a lot of concern, so that they really put everything that they had into it.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Yeah. They might never have done it, otherwise. They might've siphoned off into other fields and never come back to art.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: That's true. I might've turned into a teacher, and that would be it, because teaching takes your efforts and everything you have.

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: As it was, I left for steady employment with the state and was on quarantine inspection for a number of years, but I did keep an interest in that, and so, I did this little piece, which was put at the station, how I did the California grizzly.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Isn't that nice?

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: And that's blight [ph], and that was done in 1940.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: [Inaudible.]

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: And so many tourists have stood by it and placed their hand on it to have their picture taken that it is polished smooth in the spot. [They laugh.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, isn't that interesting? Limestone probably doesn't polish that easily usually, does it?

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: No, but if enough people do like that, it's surprising what a concerted effort like that becomes.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Like in Rome—

[Cross talk.]

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: The pope [inaudible]. [They laugh.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I'm trying to think if it's St. Peter or the Pope that's completely gone from rubbing. [They laugh.]

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: St. Peter's, too, yeah, maybe.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I don't know. Oh, that's interesting. I hope we can borrow these for microfilming. Very much appreciate—

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: Yes, here's another one taken of Mr. Churchman on the Project.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Oh, what was your articulating machine?

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: Well, that was a—it moved. That was a model to illustrate what went on in a gasoline—an automobile engine, for a class on the automobile.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: I see. It was like a science and industry, at the museum today, only much, much earlier, the idea of teaching.

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: And the interview, I was certainly misquoted [laughs]. Or things were very much garbled there in the write-up.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Is there anything that should be rectified on the tape to go with it?

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: Well, it doesn't matter. [They laugh.]

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Anything serious?

EDWIN CHURCHMAN: It isn't that serious.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: Well, I have to run, and I thank you both so much.

ISABELLE CHURCHMAN: Thank you.

BETTY HOAG MCGLYNN: We appreciate being able to talk to you.

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[END OF INTERVIEW.]