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Oral history interview with Eleanor M. Garvey, 1997 February 28-June 13

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Contact Information
Reference Department
Archives of American Art
Smithsonian Institution
Washington. D.C. 20560
www.aaa.si.edu/askus

Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Eleanor Garvey on February 28, May 2, May 23 and June 13, 1997. The interview took place in [Place], [State], and was conducted by Robert Brown for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

The reader should bear in mind that he or she is reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose. This is a rough transcription that may include typographical errors.

Interview

February 28, 1997

ROBERT BROWN: Yes. This is beginning an interview with Eleanor Garvey at her office in Houghton Library in Harvard University. This is February 28, 1997, with Robert Brown, the interviewer.

Maybe we could just talk a bit about some of your early memories, your childhood, your family background, a little bit of that. You grew up in Worcester?

ELEANOR GARVEY: I grew up in Worcester. I was born there. And both of my parents were born there, too. And it was -- you know, it was sort of an average, middleclass child's upbringing, I think. I'm an only child. Always wanted a brother and sister, but it didn't seem to happen.

MR. BROWN: Did you live right in the city?

MS. GARVEY: Yes. Worcester is a funny city. It's never been attractive to just go through it. But it has some wonderful neighborhoods. And it is said -- no, not pattern. But it's said to have the slight resemblance of being built on seven hills, like ancient Rome. So from the center of the city no matter where you go, you quickly go up a hill, and then it will flatten out. I lived on the west side of the city a few miles from the town of Paxton, which was just a little town then, and now I think is quite suburban, probably.

MR. BROWN: Were your family in professions or certain things of that sort?

MS. GARVEY: My father was a civil engineer. And he had been with a company that failed. And he ended his career working for the City of Worcester. In his early life, he had -- I guess he must have been involved with the city or the county early and then had gone -- was with this business called the Hasson Company, which failed. And he was involved in building a lot of the reservoirs in Worcester County. There's the Metropolitan Boston system that feeds -- that's in Cambridge and Boston. But then Worcester -- in those days, I don't know what it's like now -- had its own small reservoirs.

And they were the most beautiful little preserves. I don't know whether you've ever driven through Boyleston and West Boyleston. That's the metropolitan city. Well, in miniature, this is what some of these Worcester County

MR. BROWN: You mean beautiful on the dams? The buildings?

MS. GARVEY: Yes. Just a small gatehouse, not much in the way of building, but the way that the land had been excavated and dug for the reservoirs. And the planting around them was also beautiful.

And I remember he had some keys, although he was long since separated from the system. But he had retained a couple of keys. And we would go on family picnics sometimes in there, knowing that we were perfectly isolated and quiet. It was really nice.

MR. BROWN: Was childhood basically a pretty tranquil time for you?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah, it was just like everybody else -- you know, nothing particularly special. I went to public school. I went to a wonderful grammar school called Midland Street School, which was in walking distance. And then I went to Worcester Classical High School, which no longer exists. And there were five of us from my class that went to Wellesley. So it had high academics.

MR. BROWN: What would be your training or your studies typically in a classical high school?

MS. GARVEY: Literature, history, language, and science -- the sort of distribution thing that, when you come to college, you realize what that pattern was.

MR. BROWN: And was it fairly rigorous?

MS. GARVEY: Yes, it was. It was.

MR. BROWN: Lots of homework?

MS. GARVEY: Yes. I do remember lots of homework, a certain number of extracurricular activities. And I think I became a baseball groupie when I was in grammar school. And there were, you know, low-keyed but varied teams we took very serious in baseball, basketball, and football. The girls had hockey, which I was never physically very interested in group sports. And I hated the sort of gym we had. And it wasn't till I got to college when I discovered that you could do dance instead of gym that I found something that I was fitted for, you know.

MR. BROWN: So the gym then was just basic calisthenics.

MS. GARVEY: Jumping over horses and things like that.

[Laughter]

MR. BROWN: That was not for you.

MS. GARVEY: That was not for me.

MR. BROWN: That's funny. The sports interest and the way things were played and done?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah.

MR. BROWN: That was of interest to you?

MS. GARVEY: Well, I used to love to go to these things and had friends on these various teams.

MR. BROWN: Were you showing, say, at the high school level certain particular interests?

MS. GARVEY: No. I always assumed, as I think in my generation 60 percent of the women anyway assume, especially when they worked on the school paper as I did, that they were going to be English majors when they went to college. That was a common mindset, I think, that a lot of us entered college with. And I found art history when I got to Wellesley.

MR. BROWN: When you got to college?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah, um-hm.

MR. BROWN: What made you go to Wellesley or what -- was it a place of particular interest? Or did you look around?

MS. GARVEY: Not an awful lot. It was local. And although --

MR. BROWN: You know, only a few -- 30 miles or so?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. Exactly. And there were just a lot of us that grew up with this in our -- my mother hadn't gone. My mother wanted to go very much to Radcliffe, actually. But she came from a sizeable family, and it just wasn't possible. She explored scholarships and so on, but there was not enough to get her over the hump, you know. But she didn't steer me to Radcliffe at all

MR. BROWN: Did your mother have a bit of an intellectual bent?

MS. GARVEY: Both my parents did. My father hadn't gone to college either. He had apprenticed with an engineer. And they started taking me to museums when I was a small child. And they were all right, but I didn't make any connection with my -- with any possible career. And I was always taken to concerts and plays. They were great theatergoers. Worcester had a theater in those days. And then we'd come to Boston. And they were both great readers.

MR. BROWN: And would you go to Boston, too?

MS. GARVEY: Sometimes. Not at the beginning. You know, I was too small. But later on.

MR. BROWN: But museums, you -- they were art museums?

MS. GARVEY: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Then the Worcester?

MS. GARVEY: The Worcester Art Museum. And went into Boston to the Gardener and the Yem Manifey [phonetic]. And I remember being taken to the Bush Risingol [phonetic], you know, when it was over in its own little Baroque building, which it was until fairly recently, of course.

MR. BROWN: Yes, it was. Well, I have to say -- these art museums, were there things that particularly interested you?

MS. GARVEY: No. I didn't latch on to anything in particular.

MR. BROWN: No? Well, when you got to Wellesley, did you think you were just going to go on and major in English and be a writer or a teacher?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, yes, yes, of course. You know, a magazine editor job, of course. Hundreds of women think they're headed in that direction. At least they were then.

MR. BROWN: Well, this was then in the '30s, too. So actual --

MS. GARVEY: It was 1936 I entered Wellesley, yeah.

MR. BROWN: -- job prospects were -- well, you probably didn't think too much of it. But I assume that prospects were still rather grim, weren't they?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, they were terribly grim, yes. And they were until the war came along. And I had graduated in'40. And then it was the following year that things changed.

MR. BROWN: So a place like Worcester, which was heavily industrialized, it must have been reasonably hard-hit, wasn't it, by the Depression?

MS. GARVEY: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Do you recall lots of people were sort of on the street?

MS. GARVEY: I don't remember that, particularly, nothing like the kind of street person scene you have today.

MR. BROWN: No.

MS. GARVEY: But one was aware, you know, that things were tight.

MR. BROWN: Had you been to Wellesley, visited it?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, yes, many a time.

MR. BROWN: Oh, you had?

MS. GARVEY: Um-hm, yeah.

MR. BROWN: To friends you had there?

MS. GARVEY: Not especially, I think. There were a couple of girls, as we called ourselves, ahead of me in high school who had gone there. But it -- I'm sure that its beauty as a campus had a lot to do with many of us getting interested. I think that's still true even now.

And of course, in a funny way, it was far less isolated from Boston than it is now because public transportation was so much better. And you couldn't have a car until the spring term of your senior year at Wellesley. I mean, it was like a prep school in many ways in that generation. And the train ran all the time, as I remember. When you'd go on a -- you had a museum paper to write, you scarcely looked up the schedule, you know. You just walked down to the vil. And they were frequent.

MR. BROWN: Just walked down to the vil, you say?

MS. GARVEY: The village. The village where there was this Richardson Station there in those days, yes, yes, yes. And I also remember the famous 11:50 train. We had parietal hours in those days. We had to be back -- well, you could stay out till 1:00 o'clock, but you had to sign in advance when you did that. Otherwise, to tell you the truth, I can't remember what the hour was.

But there were -- I remember many, you know, a Cambridge date. And there would be this exodus from Cambridge to the South Station, with your dates, to catch that 11:50 train. It was loaded. It was just -- it was not surprising you didn't -- of course, some of your dates had cars. But if you didn't, there was always masses of company. And everybody did these trips. The Wellesley girls would ride out on the 11:50 train. So that means you got to Wellesley around 12:30 or something like that.

And as I think of it now, the phalanxes would walk home to the dormitories together. It's a very different thing. It was really funny.

MR. BROWN: [Laughter]

MS. GARVEY: But we didn't feel isolated from Boston. And now you talk to young women who say, "Oh, I think Wellesley would be wonderful. But I would be isolated. I wouldn't want to go near it." It's a loss, as well as a gain, you know.

MR. BROWN: But then you felt fairly integrally part of the larger city?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, very much so. You know, even a bunch of girls going to the theater together and so on, and expensive meals in town.

MR. BROWN: It was good theater, wasn't there?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, it was wonderful. The Theater Guild was in business in those days.

MR. BROWN: And that brought what, Broadway?

MS. GARVEY: That brought Broadway, first companies, many an English star, and saw lots of great names. Saw John Gielgud's Hamlet.

MR. BROWN: Before there was an Olivier?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah, I was trying to think. There was an actor who was very famous in his day named Maurice Evans. Oh, and Leslie Howard, those three -- I remember seeing those three Hamlets, you know, within a year of each other or something like that. And of course, that's when the opera used to come to Boston. But that came for a long time.

MR. BROWN: You mean it had a long stay?

MS. GARVEY: No, I mean for years and years --

MR. BROWN: For years and years.

MS. GARVEY: -- it came for a week in the spring in the old opera house on Huntington Avenue, which is a great loss, you know.

MR. BROWN: Well, at the college itself, what was --

MS. GARVEY: Oh, much -- a concert series of outside stars. And lots of plays that -- the Barn Swallows was the group that did plays.

MR. BROWN: This was a student group?

MS. GARVEY: Student group, yeah.

MR. BROWN: Were you involved with --

MS. GARVEY: No. I did a little work on stage. I never was an actor.

MR. BROWN: Well, did you have at least two years of general curriculum at Wellesley?

MS. GARVEY: Yes. And then you got into your major.

MR. BROWN: And by then, what did you think you wanted?

MS. GARVEY: That was when I had discovered art history in my sophomore year.

MR. BROWN: How did you discover it?

MS. GARVEY: I just took a course, you know, the beginning survey course, which permits you to go further. There was also a survey course for people who were already into other majors, but wanted this background somewhere.

MR. BROWN: Who was your teacher or teachers?

MS. GARVEY: Two noted ones were there at that time. Sirarpie Der Nersessian, the great -- the Armenian scholar who was a great Byzantine specialist and then left Wellesley to head up Dumbarton Oaks. Or as somebody I was talking to yesterday -- oh, I know, it was Roger who referred to a copy of a book that wasn't here, but it was a Dum Oaks, which I thought was rather interesting. [Laughter]

MR. BROWN: Roger?

MS. GARVEY: Stoddard, that was it.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: And so she was, shall I say, world famous. Born in Constantinople, it still was then. And her -- I believe her uncle was the patriarch of the Armenian church there. And then after World War I, they went to France. And so she had a totally French education, except her girlhood must have been in Constantinople, as I say, until 1920 or so when it was changed.

And the other person, the other very noted person -- I had them both in survey courses -- was Alexander Campbell, the famous Sandy Campbell, who was in charge of those Princeton digs in Antioch. He was an archeologist.

MR. BROWN: So they were both then -- well, one was Byzantine, the other was ancient?

MS. GARVEY: The other was ancient, yeah. And a Campbell -- Wellesley has some of those mosaics. In fact, one of their biggest one has been installed now on the wall of the Davis Museum.

MR. BROWN: [Inaudible]

MS. GARVEY: And Worcester has a number of those, too, because they were Worcester, Princeton, Wellesley -- I don't know who else were contributors to supporting these digs. And then I had graduated just when the war came. And Sandy Campbell went off -- I suppose it was kind of OSS because he knew the Middle East very well. And he was in service on whatever level there. And then I think he stayed on with ARAMCO, you know, the Arabian-American oil company. They have both gone, of course. Yeah.

And Agnes Abbott, the painter. She was there. And I got to know -- I got to know Sirarpie and Agnes very well because Sirarpie was the faculty person in the dormitory I lived in. And Agnes -- well, then when I went back to work, I got to know her very well. She was a --

MR. BROWN: What was Agnes -- what would she teach?

MS. GARVEY: Watercolor and painting.

MR. BROWN: Watercolor?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah.

MR. BROWN: Did you all -- if you were to be an art major or an art history major, would you have --

MS. GARVEY: Wellesley had this wonderful system that began here at Harvard.

MR. BROWN: At Harvard.

MS. GARVEY: With Edward Forbes and Arthur Pope. And at Wellesley, amusing -- what the system consisted of was that in almost all your art history courses you had to handle technique. And at Wellesley, it was called Lab, not Studio. And I discovered later that the reason they called it that was a way to get it in the curriculum because somehow it was considered a little frivolous in 1875 when Wellesley was founded, you know, to have a studio. I mean, you didn't do that. But all the sciences had lab. And so if you called it "lab," where you worked with your brushes instead of your Bunsen burner, you know, it was okay. So for years it was known as lab.

And Agnes, over and above her watercolor, specialized in historic techniques. And I never took her techniques course. You know, you think back and think, "Why didn't I do that? You know, learn all these things?" And in the old art building, which was an absolute wreck, the Farnsworth Building, when I was there was already -- well, 1875, it was already a little feeble. And it had been remodeled and didn't adapt terribly well.

And all the studios were down in the basement, which were like cellar walls, you know. They had been whitewashed, but they were very, very thick.

MR. BROWN: They were stone walls?

MS. GARVEY: Yes. And that was where the people who took these techniques courses learned fresco. They just plastered a flat section, and they all learned fresco. And they experimented with fresco and secco and what some of the binding media were, because Agnes was very interested in this. And then they also did mosaics. And there was -- I think they saved some of those by digging them out when the building was torn down for the Jewett Arts Center. And it was -- there were two marvelous heads found there, one of Justinian and one of Theodora, made with a little Tesserie.

And Theodora's Byzantine crown was studded with pearl buttons that came from the Davis, little Davis department store that's now gone a little trendy in the village. But it used to have those -- I don't know whether you ever saw any or not, but the cashboxes ran on little electrical wires. You know what I'm talking about?

MR. BROWN: Um-hm, um-hm.

MS. GARVEY: Okay. Well, Davis still had those.

MR. BROWN: I see.

MS. GARVEY: And I remember girls from Manhattan, whom I always thought were the essence of sophistication, would bring their parents into Davis's so they could see this antique system, you know. It was a little cashbox, and it went up to the cashier, who sent the cash back. And that's where you bought your lamp and your chair and all those things, you know, for your college room.

MR. BROWN: And somebody got pearl buttons.

MS. GARVEY: And somebody got all these pearl buttons, which they used in the mosaic class, which I thought was a very ingenious approach.

MR. BROWN: So it sounds as though you might feel you missed a bit of fun by not taking this class?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, I think so.

MR. BROWN: Instead you --

MS. GARVEY: But I never had any particular gifts for this.

MR. BROWN: But your survey course then was taught by two rather eminent people?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, yes. And I think you'll find that the survey course is still divided up. And one person doesn't have to take a full semester.

MR. BROWN: It wasn't just some very junior faculty?

MS. GARVEY: No, it was not.

MR. BROWN: [Inaudible]

MS. GARVEY: Some of the younger faculty did their stint in it. But we also had these, you know, really great people. And I hope -- I think that's a smart idea because it helps to hook you when you can be lectured to, and it was strictly lecture, plus the lab. It wasn't give-and-take.

MR. BROWN: There wasn't a question -- you could go up and speak to them after class, though?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah, yeah. But I think at that stage, I still think the old lecture system is good.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: You hear from the top.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. And you could sense that these people were -- well, you knew they were famous?

MS. GARVEY: I knew they were famous, yes, yes. And then Ms. Avery, who had long since retired but came back to fill in --

MR. BROWN: That's Martilla?

MS. GARVEY: Martilla. And the church in Rome that she worked in so much was known as Santa Martilla Antiqua. [Laughter] Santa Maria Antiqua was known to the inside group as Santa Martilla Antiqua.

MR. BROWN: Is that where she was an historian of?

MS. GARVEY: Yes, yes, yes, yes, of early Christian?

MR. BROWN: Did she come back?

MS. GARVEY: She did come back, to fill in at one point. She must have been living locally. Yes.

MR. BROWN: So by the time you decided to major, you were pretty excited that this was an area that would be of interest?

MS. GARVEY: Yes. It had absolutely no practical application in my life. And I didn't worry about that.

MR. BROWN: Did your parents worry about that?

MS. GARVEY: If they did, they never said that. They never said so.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. But I couldn't get a job.

MR. BROWN: So then after the survey, what were some of the other courses you would have had?

MS. GARVEY: I took a lot of architecture courses. And I had Kenneth Colin, you know, from -- who was filling in for somebody.

MR. BROWN: He was at Harvard?

MS. GARVEY: He was at Harvard. And that was a marvelous experience. I don't think that you could have written a syllabus for it or anything like that. And he jumped around tremendously in what he did. But you realized after awhile, I learned the most invaluable thing from him, which was how to look at things and how to look at architectural space.

From some of the other courses I had had, I could draw you all those sima moldings and things like this, which I no longer could from Medieval churches from a course in Gothic architecture. But that's left me. But Kenneth Colin's view of space and light and all those things that make architecture, that's never left.

MR. BROWN: How would he express this? How would he convey this?

MS. GARVEY: He showed slides. He had enormous enthusiasm. And he lectured nonstop. You know, and again, it wasn't give-and-take really at all. And so I often feel that you can learn just as much from those nonstop lectures as you can from chatting it back and forth.

MR. BROWN: Yeah. He was able to convey the feeling of architecture?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, yes. And at that time he was working at Clooney, which is he was involved in all that restoration. And he just had an extraordinary, you know, sense of the big picture, as we call it today. But of course, he worked with the small things, too, because he, working as an archeologist as a place like Clooney, which now has a Rue Kenneth Colin in it.

MR. BROWN: Because he was also an architect by training, I think?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, that's right. Yes, yes, yes.

MR. BROWN: Maybe it was that fact that enabled him to be so eloquent in expressing --

MS. GARVEY: It perhaps was, yeah. But I've always been so -- you know, so grateful that I had that. And of course, and then later on, as I was here, I got to know him just slightly. I'll never forget one morning he came in.

He was a good friend, and his wife was Helen Willard, who was curator of the theater collection, which was downstairs in those days. And he came in, and she wasn't there. And so he just sat down and killed a little time. And he showed me something. He said, "I have brought a little theater memorabilia for Helen, because I was going through some old things. And I have a program here from Wisconsin," where he grew up, from the first grade, I think it was. And he said, "Alfred Lundt was my leading lady."

And I listened to this. And then I said, "What did you say?" [Laughter] "That Alfred Lundt was your leading lady?" And they were in a school play when they were little tikes, yeah. So he had a fascinating background.

MR. BROWN: And he had a warmth and an enthusiasm.

MS. GARVEY: Oh, tremendous, yeah. Absolutely tremendous.

MR. BROWN: Then would you have to -- a good deal on painting as well or was that assumed?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, yes. I took all the courses I could in Italian painting.

MR. BROWN: Was the faculty fairly large in that department?

MS. GARVEY: Fairly.

MR. BROWN: Who would have done the later work?

MS. GARVEY: Bernard Hyle [phonetic] was the person I had in Italian painting. And oddly enough, I didn't take a course in prints. I regret that. But I guess I caught up with that. And someone came out from Fogg for that, I think. There always was a lot of to-ing and fro-ing at Wellesley with the Fogg, if there was a substitute needed for somebody's leave or for whatever reason, you know.

MR. BROWN: So you felt, in that sense, close to the Fogg or to Harvard in some degree?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. Not personally, really, until later on.

MR. BROWN: No, but I mean institutionally?

MS. GARVEY: Yes, oh yes, yeah.

MR. BROWN: You had another way in which you did not at all feel isolated at Wellesley?

MS. GARVEY: That's true. And your museum papers were always sending you here and to the MFA.

MR. BROWN: Did the museum papers consist of looking at several objects?

MS. GARVEY: Looking at objects, yeah.

MR. BROWN: Comparing them or --

MS. GARVEY: Right, yes. And looking, looking, looking. And see, I've been -- had a -- were you going to ask me something?

MR. BROWN: [No audible response]

MS. GARVEY: Oh. Had a connection with the art department all these many years because then in '47 I went back and worked in the art library and the museum. And it's been fascinating, you know, to see in a sense the changing emphasis because of the specialties that come with the different faculty. But also that sense of the object. Despite all the theory today, Wellesley has never lost that. And I think that's very interesting. In fact, it has intensified, if anything, I would say.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. With the present museum and the [inaudible]?

MS. GARVEY: Yes, yes. And when I went back to work there, John McAndrew was there and Sydney Friedberg. And they both emphasized that to a very, very strong degree.

MR. BROWN: When you graduated in 1940 --

MS. GARVEY: Um-hm.

MR. BROWN: -- jobs? There weren't?

MS. GARVEY: Nonexistent.

MR. BROWN: Did you go back to Worcester?

MS. GARVEY: I went back to Worcester. And my father became quite ill at that point. And I think he died in '45. He had had a stroke. And I really felt that I couldn't leave.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: And so I went out to Clark University and explored getting a masters degree in the education department. And they permitted me to take a couple of courses at the museum. I took a couple of courses in drawing and painting, where I had absolutely no skills. But at least it got me in. It kept me in the field a little bit.

MR. BROWN: What was Clark University like? You must have known a good deal about it since it was the local university.

MS. GARVEY: It was known as nothing but geography in those days. And it -- I think it's its famous psychology department, you know, where Stanley Hall and there's that famous picture of Jung and Freud and Adler, and G. Stanley Hall where the conference hall ran in the teens, or whatever. That was pretty much only a tradition, I think, by then. But I think it's -- Clark has picked up enormously. The president in those days was Wallace Atwood. And he was a geographer. And it was a small school and everything -- we all joked about everything being in geography.

But then of course, I mean, there were these disciplines that have risen again. And science was certainly one of them. I think that was always basically there. And, you know, Goddard, the rocket man, had taught at Clark early in his career. So they had had a gift of getting very significant people, who must have left their mark on many a student.

MR. BROWN: Well, how about the course of study you pursued?

MS. GARVEY: Well, I think it was bored to extinction because they were courses in education, which, you know, I never --

MR. BROWN: Which were what? How to -- theories of teaching?

MS. GARVEY: Yes. And statistics and things that I didn't want to. But I had some very sympathetic faculty. And I wrote -- I persuaded them to let me do a thesis, not in tests and measurements, but on Charles Elliot Norton. And so I did have -- they were willing to be flexible, which was nice.

MR. BROWN: Did you work out of Norton's papers or anything of that sort?

MS. GARVEY: No. I have to tell you, for their requirements, I did all secondary sources.

MR. BROWN: Norton, you were aware of through various teachers [inaudible]?

MS. GARVEY: I guess so, and my own reading and so on.

MR. BROWN: A seminal figure?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, yes indeed. And who deserves a really good biography. Something has been written about him, which I read years ago, that came out. And it lacked a lot to be desired. And of course, his books are here.

MR. BROWN: But you said, though, that you did take a couple of art courses at the school, the Worcester Art Museum?

MS. GARVEY: At the museum. A man named Herbert Barnet was the head of the school in those days.

MR. BROWN: And although you said you weren't particularly adept or gifted with your hands in art, you liked that, did you?

MS. GARVEY: To a degree, except I knew my limitations, so that you get bored when you find those out, I think.

MR. BROWN: What did he have that set you [inaudible]?

MS. GARVEY: We drew and painted from the figure and from still life's and so on.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: And I think that was only, you know, a once-a-week seminar.

MR. BROWN: Well, then you --

MS. GARVEY: There was no art history at Clark in those days, but there is now, quite a bit, I think. And I think they work closely with the museum.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. But the museum was a place, certainly when you were back there, living there, that you must have gotten to know very well.

MS. GARVEY: Oh, yes, yeah. And then it was through Clark that I got the job there.

MR. BROWN: Oh, at the art museum?

MS. GARVEY: At the museum, yeah.

MR. BROWN: And that was what, about 1942?

MS. GARVEY: '42. And that was on a strictly personal level, that Charlie Sawyer, who was the director, was having dinner with somebody, one of my professors at Clark. And the grapevine, he called me up the next day and said, you know, "Come and see me about this." And there was a woman who had -- I hadn't known her -- well, I think I'd vaguely known her at Wellesley, who was working in the education department. And she was not well. But she was a young woman, but whatever it was -- I guess maybe she was the kind of a young woman who -- with whom a job didn't agree very well, too, you know, one of those. There are still some of those in that generation. And she sort of faded away and took a leave and then decided not to come back. So there was this opening in the education department. And I was just lucked out of it.

MR. BROWN: What was the education department in those days? What was its mission?

MS. GARVEY: Being a docent to every sixth grade in the city. And other groups would come in, too. That was what you mostly did. But then we worked on exhibitions. And because -- so I think the best experience you can have in any such job is to be in a place that's understaffed, if you will be flexible, because you get borrowed by other departments. And they were doing this great New England craft show in the early '40s. That's where I first heard of Blue Hill and all these places, you know.

MR. BROWN: You mean contemporary --

MS. GARVEY: Oh, yes, contemporary. And there was a British craft show, too. And any of us who were around would help out in installation. And then you had to do gallery talks. And it was a wonderful experience. And of course, the great Louisa Dresser was there.

MR. BROWN: She was?

MS. GARVEY: She was the curator of American art. And then Charlie went off to the army, she was the acting director. She was a fabulous person, you know.

MR. BROWN: What was she like?

MS. GARVEY: No edge, no side, no pretense at all to Louisa. A tremendously hard worker -- too hard. She injured her health. Louisa was famous for eating a hard-boiled egg at midnight in the gallery because she wouldn't go home. And she didn't, as we would say now, treat her body very well. She overworked like anything. And I don't think you kill yourself that way. But she didn't have enough rest. And she developed arthritis. That was after I left.

MR. BROWN: That's right.

MS. GARVEY: And she just drove herself so. She had an enormous sense of responsibility. And she had fantastic taste. It was traditional taste at the Worcester Art Museum, but it was the best of its kind.

MR. BROWN: What would you say her taste was? What sort of things did she favor?

MS. GARVEY: Well, Old Masters and Old Masters in her own field of American painting, which was still a young field then, you know. And she -- they had some wonderful American painting shows while I was there. And I remember, you know, a Blackburn being reattributed as a Copley during that session, and things like that. But I mean, in installation, her taste was very sure. It was to simplify and to clarify. And those were before the days of the great long labels, which I have mixed feelings about. And just the gallery's -- part of its good housekeeping, you know. Everything was beautifully kept up.

MR. BROWN: Did you talk with her a great deal? Was she a very outgoing person?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, yes, a lot because I was very honored to -- when I hadn't been there very long, she asked me to be editor of the little museum bulletin. And I always went over my copy with her, and that was a great experience, too. I learned a lot, and I learned to work with printers, which -- that's really, I guess, where my interest in printing arose, because you'd trot down to the Commonwealth Press on the way to work, with your copy. And I got to go through the presses and, you know, see how everything worked, which was wonderful for me. Yeah.

MR. BROWN: Well, Sawyer, what was he like, Charles Sawyer? He left early in your career.

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. But then he came back. He was a very shy man, and it wasn't easy to get to know Charlie Sawyer. He came from the Addison Gallery to Worcester. And he was Yale. And he was one of those -- I've known a good many -- who came to Harvard to go to law school or B school. It was law school in his case. And after a year or less or that, he found his way to the Fogg. Yeah. There have been a number of people who've started out in another discipline and found it wasn't where they wanted to spend their lives.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MS. GARVEY: And coming from Addison, he was strong in American art, too. And I couldn't tell you whether -- what his particular specialty in art history was. But he was the one who reached out for pre-Columbian for Worcester.

MR. BROWN: That was a rather unusual field?

MS. GARVEY: Yes. Yes, it was.

MR. BROWN: In which [inaudible].

MS. GARVEY: Now, of course, Yale has a lot of anthropology strength down there. Whether that was where he was introduced, I don't know. And he may have still been there when they began getting into photography, but I'm not sure about that. Because I hadn't -- I left in '45, and shortly -- well, he left that year, too. And George Stout came on. Yeah. So I guess it was somebody else who got into photography.

MR. BROWN: Were you there for awhile after Stout came in?

MS. GARVEY: No.

MR. BROWN: No?

MS. GARVEY: No, he came just about as I left.

MR. BROWN: You hardly knew him?

MS. GARVEY: I knew him. A good friend of mine on the staff, Jean Bigelow, who was the registrar, she got to know the Stouts very well, so I sort of got to know them through them. And as a matter of fact, Jean ended her career in the registrar's office at winter tour, because I know she knew Frank Sommer [phonetic] very well when I visited her down there.

MR. BROWN: Well, did you get -- Stout, what was he like as a personality? Do you recall? Was he somewhat like Sawyer?

MS. GARVEY: Well, in a different way. That's a vague word, I know. But he was also a very reserved man, I think. But charming to meet and talk with. But I never worked with him, so I don't know.

MR. BROWN: He was in art conservation and restoration, wasn't he?

MS. GARVEY: Yes, of course. And that of course -- I think that's when they began to build that up. There was a Swiss, delightful, very shy man named Edmond Debeaumot [phonetic] who was the conservation person and the photographer when I was there. And of course, conservation was not anything like the subject or discipline it is now. I think Edmond probably went to -- trained in Europe. And then they got him an assistant, and then I guess it took off from there. I don't know who is in conservation there now.

MR. BROWN: You mentioned also knowing at Worcester Perry Cock?

MS. GARVEY: Perry Cock. Well, I never knew Perry well because he was off in the navy. And he was in the Monuments Commission, as it was called. And then he came back very briefly, and he went to the National

Gallery. So I never worked with him. And Charlie Sawyer, who I remember seeing in a private's uniform -- he was a tall man, too, and he looked rather ludicrous in it -- but he was on that Roberts Commission, which was the --

MR. BROWN: The commission headed by Justice Owen Roberts?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah.

MR. BROWN: To recover --

MS. GARVEY: To recover --

MR. BROWN: -- looted art.

MS. GARVEY: -- looted art. Because I remember visiting a navy friend in Washington during the war and going to see Charlie, whose office was in the National Gallery. And whether Perry was working there then, I don't know. But I know that was one of his specialties.

MR. BROWN: Would you like to have been in some of that work during World War II? [Inaudible]

MS. GARVEY: You know, it never occurred to me at the time. But as you look back on it, you think, but I don't think there was a woman that was, Bob.

MR. BROWN: No.

MS. GARVEY: I doubt it. I grant you that, as time passes, we get these memoirs of women that were doing something. But I doubt very much if there were any women in the field.

MR. BROWN: And then what a woman did was quite distinct from what a man was going to do, right?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, sure. She started as a secretary. Now, that doesn't mean some secretary jobs didn't cover other things.

MR. BROWN: Exactly.

MS. GARVEY: But now, if Louisa's sister Franny was Charlie Sawyer's secretary when he was in the Roberts Commission in Washington. And when he came back to Worcester, she returned to Worcester with him.

MR. BROWN: How do you suppose Louisa got such eminence? She was still fairly young at that time. She had only been there about 10-15 years?

MS. GARVEY: She was in her 30s. Yeah.

MR. BROWN: Of course, she was also from Worcester.

MS. GARVEY: She was from Worcester from a very distinguished family. They had this wonderful house that was moved. It was moved. It wasn't torn down. It was the Lincoln mansion. Her mother's name was Lincoln, Rose Lincoln. And there had been a Governor Lincoln of Massachusetts. And this was a great neo-classic Greek revival house with a colonnade -- oh, it was spectacular -- on Elm Street. And it's down at -- it's not in Sturbridge Village, but there was a shop in it the last time I was aware of it, Country Curtains or something like that. At least the house is not -- didn't disappear.

And it may have been built by Elias Carter, who built some of the Salisbury houses in a much simpler, but also neo-classic vein.

MR. BROWN: The Salisburys were an eminent early family?

MS. GARVEY: Steven Salisbury founded the museum. They are having their centennial any moment now. I don't know whether you've talked to any of those people.

MR. BROWN: Well, that was a wonderful time except that it was wartime. But you suggested that being understaffed, as many places were during the war, was a good thing?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, I think it's a wonderful thing, personally. This is true at the Houghton Library, too. Although this kind of understaffing, people have tended, I think, to be a little more confined to their own departments because we don't reach out to the public.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: At least, we didn't. We're trying a little harder now because we need support. But as something like a museum that's always reaching out through the schools, particularly, and then through the members program. Minnie Levinson, who was head of education -- one of Minnie's big interests was films. She was always going down to the Museum of Modern Art. And we had wonderful foreign films for the members.

MR. BROWN: Were there adult education classes at -- you mentioned the schools?

MS. GARVEY: Mostly -- there was an evening class in drawing and painting, too. And there were lectures. But there were none of these, you know, courses in the Italian Renaissance at 6:00 o'clock at night. No. I'm sure they have those now. But there was drawing and painting for outsiders. I don't think you had to be a member. I don't really remember.

MR. BROWN: Do you think they reached out to a broad spectrum of the community?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, yes, especially --

MR. BROWN: [Inaudible] workers as well as the middleclass people?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. And especially in the school things. And I hasten to say that those began in the early '20s, I understand, that it -- there was an Englishman named Henika Heaton [phonetic], but I don't think it was he. He was an American whose name eludes me at the moment who had -- you know, so long since gone. And he started this children's education with children Saturday morning classes. And they worked with the galleries very often, you know.

And there was a wonderful woman who died prematurely named Dorothy Crookshank. And Dorothy headed up those children's classes. And she was a very frail woman, you know, who never had had good health. And she died in her 40s. And she was a whiz-bang with children, working in the galleries and then bringing them into the painting studios and so on.

MR. BROWN: So what they now call outreach was a very, very --

MS. GARVEY: That's right. It was always a part --

MR. BROWN: -- pronounced part of the museum?

MS. GARVEY: -- of the picture. Yes, yes, very --

MR. BROWN: [Inaudible] What about the relation to its art school? You must have, since it was a small staff --

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. Or we --

MR. BROWN: -- or small one way or another.

MS. GARVEY: But we knew all those people. And two or three of them were -- of the faculty were good friends of mine.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. You had mentioned Herbert Barnet.

MS. GARVEY: Herbert Barnet. There was a man named Leon Honsepian [phonetic] and a woman named Mary Murphy. And I always remember --

[Off the record]

MR. BROWN: Mary Murphy?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah, Mary Murphy, who taught freshman painting, as I recall, was an interesting painter herself. She used to delight in telling about setting up still life's. Worcester is in the Lincoln Square area. And it is quite -- in those days, it was quite a distance from anywhere to get lunch. There was a diner -- it had famous truck-driver pies -- that we used to go to. And then there was still a couple of markets in that neighborhood, and people would stop on their way home, you know, to pick up things. And Mary would go to one of these markets and pick up the fresh fruits and vegetables for a still life.

And she had a wonderful tale about picking up a cabbage and some onions and lemons and a turnip and apples and oranges and murmuring, "Oh, that will make the most wonderful combination." And the man at the fruit counter was terrified as to what she was going to do.

[Laughter]

MS. GARVEY: And she was a very good teacher. She was a wonderful teacher for people, you know, beginning. And then some of those students would help in the evening classes, very much so.

MR. BROWN: Did you take any work at the art school while you were there?

MS. GARVEY: Not while I was there, but before I got the job when I was out at Clark, I went with an old friend. He had just graduated from Brown. And I don't know what got him into this. But we -- before he went in the navy, we used to go down to those evening classes. And which life drawing was the chief thing that they really specialized in.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. It was a good solid training [inaudible]?

MS. GARVEY: Very good. Yeah, the traditional.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: The traditional training. I don't think it exists anymore. I'm not sure. Isn't that terrible? Whether it really exists anymore. They are going strong with the children's classes and with high school with, I mean, quote "young adult" kind of things.

MR. BROWN: Yeah. Well, the art schools are.

MS. GARVEY: It's still there? Oh, that's good. I'm delighted to know that.

MR. BROWN: Highlights of your time there. I mean, you've mentioned several exhibitions with the New England Handicraft show. That was a rather important --

MS. GARVEY: Oh, that was a trailblazer. And Louisa was very much --

MR. BROWN: She was the --

MS. GARVEY: The spark plug, I think, that started that. They brought in an outside curator named Max Sullivan. And Max had taught at Gratin [phonetic]. And I think maybe he'd been trained as a craftsman at one point. But he had a very good overall picture. And people like Mary and Edwin Shire, the potters, marvelous stuff. I discovered years later they worked in Mexico, too, as the time went by, that town where so many people go for crafts in the winter. You know the one I mean?

MR. BROWN: Guadalajara?

MS. GARVEY: Hm?

MR. BROWN: Guadalajara or Casco [phonetic]?

MS. GARVEY: No, no, I don't think so. But anyway, it's in that area of Mexico, I think. And there was embroidery, there was church embroidery, you know. And absolutely marvelous things.

MR. BROWN: I guess there was rather a mix of traditional plus what would think of now as artists? They were craftsmen.

MS. GARVEY: Yes, yes, yes. Right.

MR. BROWN: Mixing handicrafts and --

MS. GARVEY: I would say it was strong on the artist-craftsman, really -- really, people who were going their own way.

MR. BROWN: Now, would large crowds come to such shows?

MS. GARVEY: Yes, I think so. I remember that as being a very successful venture. And that was when -- in the days when the shop consisted of black-and-white postcards, you know. I mean, there was no attempt to merchandize anything, which you'd probably do today in that situation like that. It was still art. It wasn't commerce, even though you did get the message that these things [inaudible].

I remember that led me to my first visit to the Boston Society of Arts and Crafts. They were very helpful in -- naturally in identifying the craftsman. And --

MR. BROWN: And I think Louisa Dresser was quite involved with them?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, she was.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: Very, very much so. Um-hm.

MR. BROWN: What led you to leave? You left in '45, or was it '47?

MS. GARVEY: No, it was seven. It was seven, that's right. Oh, I just felt I'd been there five years. Yeah, from two to seven, that's when I was there, '42 to '47.

MR. BROWN: Did you think it would be good to get out of your hometown? Or did you feel any kind of constraints there?

MS. GARVEY: Well, partly that. And I thought I'd taken the last six-grade child in Worcester. [Laughter]

MR. BROWN: A bit tired of that?

MS. GARVEY: I wanted to get working with objects on a different level.

MR. BROWN: Yeah, yeah.

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. And you know, when you're young you feel, "Okay, five years. That's it, you know. I don't need to stay any longer." And I've always been very glad that I, you know, made that break. I went to Wellesley and worked -- actually, I wasn't working with objects right away. I was head of the art library, with no library background. And then I -- when there was an opening, I did a double-barrel thing of being curator of the museum, too.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. Yeah. The prospects at Worcester were that you would be teaching schoolchildren more or less forever, right?

MS. GARVEY: Yes, because I wasn't in a curatorial department. I mean, I think education is a great way to begin. And Minnie was very, very forward-looking and imaginative on these things.

MR. BROWN: But it wasn't going to challenge you?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. I was ready for something -- when you're in your 20s, you're always ready for something else.

[Off the record]

May 2, 1997

MR. BROWN: Continuing the interviews with Eleanor Garvey. This is May 2nd, 1997. And I thought we would continue. Last time we talked about your time at the Worcester Art Museum, where you had to do a little bit of everything. But you had the privilege or great advantage of being around some remarkable people, such as Charles Sawyer, George Stout, Louisa Dresser.

Did you feel you were fairly well set therefore when you left Worcester? I mean, did you feel that perhaps a museum courier [sic] was what you were going to go for?

MS. GARVEY: Yes. But when I -- the actual job that I was notified of at Wellesley was a slight -- it sounded like a slight detour, but things began to fuse. It was as art librarian. And like a lot of places at that time, before things became so highly structured in museums, it didn't matter that I had never set foot in the library school or had any such training because it was the subject matter that I thought they wisely wanted. And the people who catalog books and oversaw that kind of thing were in the main college library.

We were a separate building, where all the classes and all the research and all the studying was done, in the old Farnsworth Art Museum, which dated back to -- maybe the -- the college was opened in 1875 -- perhaps the 1880s. It's now torn down.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. But a perfectly adequate library even then. You started in 1947?

MS. GARVEY: Right.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: I was a very, very -- a good one. In fact, I remember one of the faculty saying to me that -- see,

that was before the Fine Arts Library at Fogg, before all the art books were focused at Fogg, evidently here at that time --

MR. BROWN: The Fogg, um-hm.

MS. GARVEY: -- a lot of them were still in Widener.

MR. BROWN: In the main college -- university library?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah, yeah. And then the very specialized things were at Fogg. That's been changed now. Practically everything was at Fogg.

And the comment was made at that time in '47 that the Wellesley library was more complete than the Fogg one in the sense that everything was concentrated [inaudible].

MR. BROWN: What was your job? What was your --

MS. GARVEY: Well, I was called art librarian.

MR. BROWN: And were you to solicit suggestions from faculty and to keep your eye out?

MS. GARVEY: Yes, and to order books and see that the daily running was as smooth as it could be. And all the advanced courses had their individual study ones, and they would use the reserve book system in there. And to make sure -- I had a colleague who was nominally under me, but who was really totally independent. He was in charge of slides and photographs. And then we had two assistants on deck all the time, and then the occasional student help. Because it was a big volume.

MR. BROWN: A big?

MS. GARVEY: Volume of books going in and out and every day and being used in the study room. And all these little tricks of hiding the reserve books, you know, in a back drawer someplace. So every morning there was a concerted search, as I recall, to find somebody's favorite book that they couldn't come in until 11:00 o'clock to work on, you know.

MR. BROWN: But they squirreled their book away [inaudible].

MS. GARVEY: Exactly. Yeah.

MR. BROWN: Did you spend a good deal of time scanning book lists and publishers' notes?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, yes, yeah.

MR. BROWN: And then you'd make the recommendation? Were you under or part of the art department? Would that be --

MS. GARVEY: No.

MR. BROWN: No. You were part of the library.

MS. GARVEY: We were really independent, but everybody was very, very close.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: Partly because the physical space was limited. And also because it was a small stock, and everybody was at that time very congenial.

MR. BROWN: Who were some? Maybe you can describe and talk about some of the people.

MS. GARVEY: Bernard Hyle [phonetic] was the chairman while I was there. Sirarpie Der Nersessian, who had been chairman when I was an undergraduate, had just left to go to Dumbarton Oaks. And the two most colorful members of the department, who became my very close friends, were John McAndrew and Sydney Friedberg. And I was fascinated that having been in touch with that department, you know, for so many years, that the people who taught when I was there -- the approach had evolved in different ways of -- I guess I probably mentioned to you before that with Sirarpie Der Nersessian and Sandy Campbell, both of whom taught in -- well, they -- Sandy had been in the field as an archeologist on the Princeton digs. And it was in the -- oh, and Ms. Avery, Martilla Avery, who had done so much with early Christian in -- it was a more archeological approach.

MR. BROWN: Yeah. And Sirarpie's approach was also?

MS. GARVEY: Sirarpie -- yes. She wasn't, quote, "in the field," but a very traditional approach. Her degree was from the Sorbonne. And she'd been born in Constantinople, but it was Constantinople, and had, you know, been trained in that field, should we say, over there.

And of course, we had our museum trips. But they were on our own, usually. We'd come into Boston and Cambridge. But there was perhaps less emphasis on the individual object, which became so emphasized, I felt, with this next crowd. You know, you -- and that's when John was director of the museum.

MR. BROWN: John McAndrew?

MS. GARVEY: John McAndrew. And I then had the double-barrel job of working for him as museum curator. And he built up that collection as a study collection.

MR. BROWN: The museum collection?

MS. GARVEY: Their museum. And it was such a direct connection between the classes and the study of objects.

MR. BROWN: Well, was this attributable to the fact that Friedberg and McAndrew had each been trained in connoisseur fashion?

MS. GARVEY: I think so. I think so, really, because McAndrew had been a curator -- he was, I think, the first curator of architecture at the Museum of Modern Art, a very, very close friend of Alfred Barr's. And Sydney was a close friend of Alfred's, too, who had taught at Wellesley, actually, you know, when he was just beginning, when he was still a graduate student over here, I think.

MR. BROWN: Here at Harvard?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah.

MR. BROWN: Yeah. Who knew?

MS. GARVEY: And then Sydney was with his -- long, and then he picked it up and was at the Fogg. Yes, I think it was very much came from that.

MR. BROWN: What was John McAndrew's specialty? What did he particularly teach?

MS. GARVEY: Architectural history. But then also, he knew a lot about northern painting. And he gave courses in that. And Spanish painting because he'd spend a lot of time in both Spain and Mexico. And so he had a -- he was a very wide-ranging kind of person. But his advanced degree was in architecture. And he did the occasional building [inaudible]. He had some friends in -- no, some cousins in Connecticut. He built a wonderful house for them down there. And he was very good at remodeling.

And there was -- oh, before they built the Jewett Art Center, they talked for years and years and years about how they could remodel the existing building, which came to naught. But he was in the advanced guard of that, you know.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm, um-hm. So he was very object oriented then?

MS. GARVEY: Very, very, and had a wonderful eye and a very catholic eye, I guess you could call it. Very wide of range.

MR. BROWN: Now, in his course, say, in northern European painting, were objects brought in? Or how was that taught? [Inaudible]

MS. GARVEY: No, but he acquired one or two paintings.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: He was very good at cultivating [inaudible], too.

MR. BROWN: Well, you said that he knew everybody.

MS. GARVEY: Yes, he did.

MR. BROWN: Tremendous circle of friends.

MS. GARVEY: He had an enormous social term and was very easy with people. He was funny. He was witty, too, you know, the kind of person people like to be around.

MR. BROWN: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: He was also a very staunch friend to all his friends. You could always count on that friendship. And I don't -- speaking of the objects, I don't remember whether when we were talking about my undergraduate days I ever remembered -- I ever mentioned his strong visual and optic sense he had in teaching architectural principles, even about the delmon pendentes [phonetic]?

MR. BROWN: Um-um.

MS. GARVEY: I always loved that. So, I mean, who else would think of this? I mean, the delmon pendentes is the concept that, it's not easy to grasp, really.

MR. BROWN: No.

MS. GARVEY: You read about it and you point to things on the side. He would bring in a grapefruit and an orange. He'd slice the grapefruit in half and set it down, so it sat on its flat bottom then. And he sliced off four edges of it. So this became a different shape. And he sliced off the top. And then he sliced the orange in half and put it on top of the sliced -- there the pendentes. It was perfect.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: Of course, it was Hagia Sophia that was the building that brought this to a head. And I always had -- I have these visions of generations of Wellesley girls when they get to Istanbul, into Hagia Sophia, saying, "The orange and the grapefruit. That's the way it works." But this was so brilliant.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: A quick, almost Quixotic way, you know, of doing things. And I'm sure people never, never forgot the brilliant visual way that this was brought to them.

MR. BROWN: So he was very effective as a lecturer in this?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, totally, totally. And I remember his -- a good friend of mine who would come back and was doing some graduate work. I remember his saying was, you know, "When I lecture, if I stop to look at faces, almost everybody is going like that." And he said, "But not Natalie. She's going like this." [Laughter]

MR. BROWN: What's that?

MS. GARVEY: She wasn't disagreeing with what he was saying.

[Laughter]

MR. BROWN: And?

MS. GARVEY: Well, she became a good friend of his. In fact, she taught drawing and painting.

MR. BROWN: This was Natalie?

MS. GARVEY: Natalie Park, her name was.

MR. BROWN: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: Then she taught at Windsor later. And he was very good with students. And he had an ability, I think, to cut through the ones who were really interesting and interested and the ones who tended to fawn over attractive professors, you know. There was always a lot of that in [inaudible].

MR. BROWN: Um-hm, um-hm. Well, was he quite actively involved in scholarly things as well at this time?

MS. GARVEY: Yes. He was working on a book on Mexican colonial architecture, The Open-Air Churches of New Spain, I think it was called. And he kept a flat in Mexico for a long time. He used to go down there and, you know, turn off or sabbatical or something like that.

MR. BROWN: Did he have family?

MS. GARVEY: No. He married while I was there, in his 40s, I would say, to a woman named Betty McAndrew, who was an old Bostonian family. And they traveled a great deal together. He sort of gave up Mexico around that time. Well, he had completed his project -- and then switched to Italy.

MR. BROWN: Spent a lot of time in Venice?

MS. GARVEY: In Venice, yeah. Yeah, he was the one who started that To Save Venice.

MR. BROWN: Yes, that's what I was going to say.

MS. GARVEY: That organization, yeah. And then did a wonderful book on Venetian architecture.

MR. BROWN: Well, the other colleague you mentioned in those years at Wellesley was Sydney Friedberg.

MS. GARVEY: Sydney Friedberg, yeah.

MR. BROWN: And what was he like then?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, well, Sydney had -- did you ever know him?

MR. BROWN: [Inaudible]

MS. GARVEY: Because there's a faÃ§ade there, as you know, very much of a faÃ§ade.

MR. BROWN: Tell me. What --

MS. GARVEY: Well, you know, a bit of an accent that was acquired who-knows-when, and a great formality of manner and dress and everything else. But there were many, many other sides. And as a colleague, when you were thrown together every day, you know, you just forgot about that faÃ§ade because -- and he had a surprising side that certainly wasn't called into operation very often.

But I shall never forget once, coming back from lunch, we had a lot of typewriters that the people who were doing book labeling and, you know, the mundane work, and the letters used. And somebody was not at her typewriter. And he -- they would -- the faculty -- I don't think any of them owned a typewriter -- you know, could use our typewriters when they weren't in demand. And there was Sydney, elegant Sydney, in his shirtsleeves, repairing a typewriter. He had been using it, and it didn't work. And he very quietly kind of knew what to do in some way.

And so there were many facets to this man.

MR. BROWN: What was he like when he was informal, apart from that? In conversation? Or what were his interests, broadly speaking, apart from his formal art history? Did he have his casual interest in life?

MS. GARVEY: Well, yes, indeed. But I think they were not as wide as John McAndrews, probably. And he liked to take his stance that, you know, he disdained the outdoors. And, you know, he disdained anything that -- what it amounted to was what he didn't really have a handle on.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: But that was [inaudible] you know.

MR. BROWN: I see. John McAndrew was more of the -- well, outdoorsy or prep school kind of figure?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, yeah. Oh, he loved gardening. He knew a great deal about gardens, now a whole subject. But he -- they had a little house -- it was [inaudible] on Dover Road, which actually I used to take over in the summer very often when they were in Italy. And --

MR. BROWN: Out in Wellesley?

MS. GARVEY: In Wellesley. And there was a tiny, tiny little garden behind it, which he had transformed, with some labor, help, into a little Italian garden, you know, with little [inaudible] stone obelisks and a lovely little nymph that was not significant sculpture at all, but it was delightful, you know, in the garden. And I remember they had a wonderful terrace for -- it was great to spend a lot of time there. And that hurricane just blew down a gorgeous old tree that had shaded the terrace.

And John built a gazebo with slats that he had calculated so that the sun -- the slats would go in a direction that would protect the terrace at certain times of the day. It protected it most of the time. And so he was always turning his hand to solving problems of daily living because this was an architect who worked with his hands as well.

MR. BROWN: He was a man then of continual intellectual and visual curiosity about things?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, total, total. Yeah, very adventurous. And with a marvelous visual memory, too.

MR. BROWN: Wow. How did that come out, for example?

MS. GARVEY: He would remember pictures he'd seen years ago and where they were, and that sort of thing.

MR. BROWN: Now, this was in undergraduate school. How did these men, who were each eminent scholars as well, how did they divide -- did they divide their lives between teaching beginners and their own very advanced studies?

MS. GARVEY: Research. And also -- I get mixed up on the terminology between Harvard and Wellesley, so I'm trying -- I think the individual studies, advanced individual studies for seniors who wanted to get into an honors program, I think the course was called 350. And you worked very, very closely with your advisor.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MS. GARVEY: And Sydney had a number of students who worked with him on Italian painting. And that was the [inaudible] especially of sixteenth century, not the fifteenth century. And that sixteenth century and mannerism, was just coming into respectability as an academic study.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MS. GARVEY: And so he had two or three students each year.

MR. BROWN: In this newly respectable field?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. A great many of them went on to graduate work, either in New York or here.

MR. BROWN: Yeah. So you're saying that a good part of McAndrew's and Friedberg's work there was with these advanced or advancing students in seminars [inaudible]?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. And I think even ones who didn't get into advanced studies were very -- I think the taste was, you know, very much shaped by both these men. And whether they got into collecting, I don't know. But just the general, you know, view of the world. And I find it interesting now with somebody like Jim O'Gorman, who has gotten -- well, of course, American art is now respectable. John was all for American art. Sydney wouldn't look at it.

MR. BROWN: Oh, he wouldn't?

MS. GARVEY: And Jim is more a grass -- has brought in a grass-roots approach. For instance, Wellesley is structured differently now, doesn't have the two semesters. It has one of those mini ones right after Christmas, because they have exams before Christmas. And I don't quite know how that works, but I think people tend to go off and do interesting things, or if faculty is around, they do continue working.

And I know he had a small seminar when he was first there, and he was living in Rockford or Gloucester.

MR. BROWN: You mean Jim O'Gorman?

MS. GARVEY: Jim O'Gorman. And they worked on Gloucester art history. Well, there's a wide range there. But it struck me that this was a wonderful thing for women who would never go into the field at all, but can find themselves in who-knows-what part of the country in a place maybe they never thought they'd ever see after their marriage, you know, and would have a sense of how to get into local arts and history, you know.

MR. BROWN: Which he certainly did. [Inaudible]

MS. GARVEY: Which he does. And as I said, I've been fascinated to watch all these different approaches, all of which are very valid.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: But as the times change, the approaches have changed, too.

MR. BROWN: Would McAndrew have sent students out on case studies like that?

MS. GARVEY: To a lesser degree, because things were more structured. But I do remember his very first paper that he gave to these unwitting students in some architecture course, which was not from the books at all. In those days, [inaudible] we had one of the Richardson stations, which got torn down, and this little two-by-four post office went up there. I don't know how that happened, but obviously it did. And the little old Richardson

station, looking terribly shabby, so it wasn't appealing, is not unlike the one in Northeastern and the one-story little one. There are still a couple of them around.

He would have them compare that. And I don't know if you recall, as you drive out to the village on Route 16, it's now the -- town offices are up in a great big former mansion that I believe belonged to Dr. Morton, who discovered ether.

MR. BROWN: Yeah. Ether, yeah. Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. And it's kind of the fairy-tale-castle type of house, you know. He'd send these unwitting students, telling them nothing, to compare these two buildings -- to sharpen the eye, you see. To make you look.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: And so he was very much in the advanced guard at that.

MR. BROWN: Uh-huh.

MS. GARVEY: But didn't really have the opportunity to develop it too much. But he would take them to the Gropius house and around and about.

MR. BROWN: [Inaudible]

MS. GARVEY: And he was very much aware of the current scene.

MR. BROWN: Well, you were his curator at the museum as well?

MS. GARVEY: Yes, yeah.

MR. BROWN: So you worked very close with him on other matters?

MS. GARVEY: That's right, on acquisitions for the museum, and so on.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. What would that entail for you?

MS. GARVEY: Sort of a behind-the-scenes kind of role. I was just kind of learning the ropes. But he was a person who was very frank and outgoing in talking to you. So just -- you know, he'd come back from a weekend in New York, having seen every show that he could squeeze in. And he would get the most vivid reaction to these things. And I think he shaped the taste of many, many people that way.

MR. BROWN: So he was looking, not only at older art, but at presumably contemporary?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, very contemporary, yeah.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: And he knew a lot of the contemporary dealers, too. Pity you didn't, you know, have a chance to tape somebody like him.

MR. BROWN: No, no. Did you then eventually go on some of these trips?

[END OF DISK 1]

MR. BROWN: Or would you be followed through?

MS. GARVEY: No, I never did. Never do [inaudible].

MR. BROWN: But your own, would you agree to be in New York?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, yes, yes.

MR. BROWN: On your own or through him, through such-and-such dealers?

MS. GARVEY: No, on -- but -- no, I never had any personal contact through dealers. Unless, you know, he'd bring -- if they would come to visit and so on, you would get to know them. And other museum colleagues. He gave a joint show to Pat and Ann Morgan when they were still a pair.

MR. BROWN: Oh, yes.

MS. GARVEY: And Pat was teaching at Andover. So I got to know the Morgans through him.

MR. BROWN: What was Patrick Morgan like?

MS. GARVEY: He was a very jaunty character.

MR. BROWN: And she? Was she painting regularly at that point?

MS. GARVEY: She was beginning to paint, I would say. I think they had children. I'm not clear about that.

MR. BROWN: Yes, I think so.

MS. GARVEY: So that, you know, with her generation, she was very involved in that, too. And -- but then it was very interesting as the years went by that she -- of course, he died some years ago -- that she seemed to come to overshadow him. And I think she's become an icon for younger women.

MR. BROWN: Oh, yes.

MS. GARVEY: In all areas.

MR. BROWN: Yes. That's right. It's very true right now, over the last decade or so.

MS. GARVEY: Um-hm.

MR. BROWN: The museum itself at Wellesley, what was it like at that time? You said that John McAndrew built it up a great deal. It was a study collection primarily.

MS. GARVEY: It had the famous Wellesley athlete, which is a polyclidon [phonetic] male, polyclidon jayquier [phonetic]. It had a couple of early Tuscan panels. It had -- it has a -- I don't know if it's still controversial, but a picture I grew up with, which is a small Italian Pero landscape. It has -- authenticity has come into question there from time to time, but it always seems to die down completely. And he added a few northern pictures, not always attributed, but then I think later on may have. He was good friends with Arthur Solomons, and the Solomons gave a couple of pictures.

Oh, and he had a great eye for modern. He got a Clay. And I think a Cezanne watercolor, as I remember it. Yeah, very wide ranging.

MR. BROWN: Was the museum visited quite a bit by the outsiders, or was it primarily --

MS. GARVEY: Not so much. It was primarily in-house. That's something that's developed.

MR. BROWN: In special exhibitions, were they the exception? Were there mainly just regroupings of the collections now and then?

MS. GARVEY: Yes, and the occasional loan exhibition. But there was absolutely no budget.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: And we just never got into that sort of things. We'd have little corners where we'd put special things up, you know, for courses and so on. Or if a loan exhibition came the way.

Oh, I'll tell you an artist, a wonderful artist who was a good friend of his in New York -- Lauren McIver [phonetic]. And we did have a big show of her work. And this again was chiefly because she was his good friend. And I can't remember who her dealer was. But we must have gotten it through the dealer, you know. Beautiful stuff.

Now, she's -- he would be over in -- he was born in 1904. And she was, you know, in his generation. I don't know how old she is, but quite advanced. And I don't know if she's still working or not. But I came to love her work very much. He bought a Prendergast for the collection of watercolor.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. So you had really admired John McAndrew in all respects?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, yes. Yes, yes. And he was just such a good, fun friend, you know. Yeah.

MR. BROWN: You'd learned quite a lot while you were at Wellesley?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, tremendous, tremendous, yeah. Well, like Worcester -- when you have a very small staff, by golly, you get to do everything. And that's the way you learn.

MR. BROWN: And you told me earlier that you felt that McAndrew's approach to things, to museum work was very different from that of Louisa Dresser.

MS. GARVEY: Yes, because he was Museum of Modern Art trained. Louisa was more the, you know, traditional. John was very asymmetrical in hanging and so on. And when I brought a little of that here, I was very much frowned on.

MR. BROWN: When you brought it to the Houghton?

MS. GARVEY: Yes, yes, yes. It didn't go here at all.

[Laughter]

MS. GARVEY: But he had been so influenced by Arthur Barton. It's very interesting the way these --

MR. BROWN: Did you get to know Alfred Barr?

MS. GARVEY: Not to know him, really. I met him, met him. That was all.

MR. BROWN: What about Dorothy Miller?

MS. GARVEY: Yes, well, Dorothy was a very, very close friend of his. And then when I went on to the Newark Museum, I knew Dorothy a little bit. I'd see her occasionally in New York. She [inaudible].

MR. BROWN: When you went to the Newark Museum in --

MS. GARVEY: '52, I think.

MR. BROWN: Was it right after Wellesley?

MS. GARVEY: Right after Wellesley, yeah.

MR. BROWN: What led to that? Was there an opening? And did John encourage you to go there?

MS. GARVEY: There was an opening -- no, he didn't at all.

MR. BROWN: How did it happen?

MS. GARVEY: But I had a good friend from Worcester days who was working there, Margaret Werber [phonetic].

MR. BROWN: Werber?

MS. GARVEY: Werber. She was head of education. And she told me about this and urged me to come. Oh, I felt that the kind of job I had at Wellesley, the way Wellesley was at that time, was really a kind of a dead-end, you know. There was -- it was pretty static, and I enjoyed it very much. But I just felt -- you know, I think I had the bug. I wanted to try New York, if I could, you know.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MS. GARVEY: And failing that -- so, yeah, I did Newark, which I didn't like.

MR. BROWN: You didn't like that?

MS. GARVEY: This applied to a year.

MR. BROWN: What was Newark Museum at that time?

MS. GARVEY: Well, it's a three-pronged -- I guess it probably still is -- art, science, and industry, with these idealistic goals. And they did enormous good work with the schools. In fact, I left Newark before it blew up in the time of the riots.

MR. BROWN: Sure.

MS. GARVEY: But I was -- made very good friends there that I've kept in touch with. And I remember their telling me that when the city wanted to cut down on the aisles of the museum and the library to save money, that it was actually people from the black neighborhoods and from the very group of people they'd been trying to reach -- it showed that they had succeeded -- that these were the people that came out and petitioned, "You can't do this. Our kids have to have this," you know.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MS. GARVEY: So they were very successful. To a great extent, it was partly the personnel. Ms. Catherine Cawfee [phonetic] was the director, a very rigid person.

MR. BROWN: Very rigid?

MS. GARVEY: Rigid. And her assistant, Mrs. Baker --

MR. BROWN: Mrs. Baker?

MS. GARVEY: Baker, um-hm. She had been married to -- I guess he was Mr. Baker. But that was well before my time. And she had a different married name when I was there. But Baker had been an artist, perhaps, way back when WPA and that sort of thing. She would have been somewhat younger than a WPA artist, I think. But she was one of these ageless-looking people. And that name, I think, was very useful to her.

MR. BROWN: Oh. I see. So how much -- well, you there about a year, I believe?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah.

MR. BROWN: 1952, maybe into '53. What were you able to do in that year? What was your job?

MS. GARVEY: I was co-curator of painting and sculpture. And I worked on exhibitions. But you never were independent there. That Mrs. Baker was always right there leaning over you. And she was very much a prima Donna. And there was a terrible power struggle going on between her and Ms. Cawfee who was so rigid and much less experienced in the art world and in the world, I would say, than Mrs. Baker. And I think [inaudible] staff suffered.

MR. BROWN: Sure.

MS. GARVEY: Because of this. And we were a restless bunch. And we were treated as children. You treat grownups as children, they behave like children. And that's exactly what happened.

For instance, Bob, you were not allowed to open your own mail. They opened it and stamped it. They might even tell you how to answer it. And you did not -- you had a secretary. I mean, I shared a wonderful woman that we were all crazy about. And I loved my colleagues. And two or three of us shared this secretary. And she typed the letters out. And you didn't sign them until they went through the head office. And then you were allowed to sign them, or you were asked to do the letter over. I just couldn't survive that.

MR. BROWN: Oh, no. No.

MS. GARVEY: I just couldn't survive it. And as I say, there were little roguish things that were being done all the time, understandably.

MR. BROWN: Sure.

MS. GARVEY: It was sheer frustration. When I look back on it, it was funny. And then Dorothy Miller told me that -- she was trained there, too. See, it's got a very good track record, especially Dorothy's generation.

MR. BROWN: Yeah, because John Cotton Dana --

MS. GARVEY: John Cotton Dana [inaudible]. And she told me that in her day -- and did you ever know she was a very beautiful woman? A great classic beauty. And that Newark is a hot spot in the summer. And you know, basically, dress was very conservative. But they would wear little what we now call shifts, you know, simple summer sleeveless dresses because it was so hot. They were forced to -- I don't know whether they had some dressmaker or what. But anyhow, the museum furnished these little cambric sleeves that they had to put on. Whether they thought the children would be corrupted by their arms or not -- but anyway, she said when they were leaving the building at 5:00 o'clock, they would stand and strip, which to me is far more suggestive than going around with bare arms, you know?

[Laughter]

MS. GARVEY: And it was just a very strange set of rules that no one had ever walked at.

MR. BROWN: Oh, my. No, no.

MS. GARVEY: Because -- I don't know what it -- I can't imagine John Cotton Dana was like that.

MR. BROWN: No.

MS. GARVEY: There was another woman who got the rap for having developed this. And it just -- it stifled initiative, is what it did.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm, um-hm. And there was no appeal to them. You couldn't go around them.

MS. GARVEY: No one would dare.

MR. BROWN: No. What about the collections they had that you supervised?

MS. GARVEY: They were strong on American painting, which I really learned somewhat about. And they had some very good eighteenth century pieces. They were strong on local artists, which was an interesting way to go. And, you know, the Great Masters were not in any abundance at all. They had a lot of special collections, each with their own curator. There was a wonderful collection of Tibet, Tibetan artifacts. And ancient glass -- a family named Schaffer, who was local, who was given this ancient glass. And that was really a wonderful collection. Very, very good techniques of display. I learned a lot about that. They had a whole exhibitions department that, for this small museum, you know, was busy.

MR. BROWN: Which is evidently more imaginative and less rigid than the management.

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. And they were allowed a lot more freedom than any of the curators. But they worked with the curators. And there was a woman in that department that was a little tough. There was a man who was much less so. But by and large, things went pretty well, I think, you know. And I mean, everybody has an installations department now.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. Perhaps it pioneered?

MS. GARVEY: Yes. You see, Newark pioneered an awful lot. It pioneered things like -- I don't know -- half the inflation -- useful objects under five dollars sort of thing, you know, which I think maybe John Cotton Dana may even have done. In other words, carrying a visual sense into daily life, you know. That's very Museum of Modern Art, of course, you know.

MR. BROWN: Yeah, yeah.

MS. GARVEY: But the roots of it came from Newark. They really did, yeah, with people like Dorothy Miller and [inaudible]. But it had stultified.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: Which was very sad to see. And Sam Miller, who succeeded, I guess -- I may have met him, but I certainly don't know him. But I was in Princeton one weekend and got to Newark to see the new building, which I think is quite fascinating. Have you seen it?

MR. BROWN: No, no.

MS. GARVEY: It's -- I like it. Now of course, I had only a few hours there. But I thought it solved this problem of all these diverse collections that they had that appealed to different clienteles, you know. There were these unexpected little pavilions. And I thought it worked very well, just give the true due to these collections.

MR. BROWN: Because you described the collections -- even when you were there, they were very disparate, progressive.

MS. GARVEY: Very, very. And physically hard to fit in, you know.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: And they had a little old schoolhouse. They had a nice garden and a little old schoolhouse. And I think they may have preserved that.

MR. BROWN: You mean a very old one? Sort of an historical preservation?

MS. GARVEY: Yes, yes, a one-room schoolhouse from early Newark sort of thing.

MR. BROWN: As a city, what was it like for you?

MS. GARVEY: It was terrible.

MR. BROWN: It was pretty bad?

MS. GARVEY: It was very uninteresting.

MR. BROWN: Did you, though -- you said, "Oh, I'll be near New York." Did you in fact get to New York?

MS. GARVEY: A lot.

MR. BROWN: A lot?

MS. GARVEY: A lot, but less than I thought I would, you know that old bit. But in those days, it was -- well, there was the train and there was the bus. And you know, it was safe to go to these bus terminals. You'd come back late at night from Manhattan. Even -- I think I might even have done it alone two times. Usually, you were with others. But there was none of that fear that has developed, which may have made Newark even more insular, in a way. I don't know.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MS. GARVEY: And those are the days that the ferries still existed to New York, to the Christopher Street ferry and so on.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: And so that New York was very accessible, if you weren't too busy to go.

MR. BROWN: Well, in terms of the art world in New York, can you recall any experiences you had at that time?

MS. GARVEY: Well, I used to -- I think there was a big Cezanne show at the Met. And there were -- I'm afraid I've lost some of the special shows that were there. But I was always interested to see shows at the Museum of Modern Art and at the Met, chiefly -- occasionally, the Whitney.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MS. GARVEY: Um-hm. What about as you began to go to dealers, to commercial galleries?

MR. BROWN: A little bit, um-hm.

MS. GARVEY: [Inaudible] Ballantine was still there.

MR. BROWN: How nice.

MS. GARVEY: Yeah.

MR. BROWN: Pretty interesting modern European works --

MS. GARVEY: Oh, yes, yes. Because Newark was interested in building up a few things in that area. I remember a Modigliani head that we acquired.

MR. BROWN: Then you had a bit of an acquisition budget, then, at Newark?

MS. GARVEY: Yes. But it was never made clear to me exactly what it was, sort of thing, you know?

[Laughter]

MS. GARVEY: That was Mrs. Baker's domain, yes.

MR. BROWN: You had the tedious procedures then.

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. You know, I think you had better X out the business of Mrs. Baker's name because I have a feeling I got it wrong there. I think the name of the artist that she had been married to in the '20s, maybe she used as a middle name. Either I or you would have to do a little research on that. I wouldn't want that to go down as misinformation.

MR. BROWN: Okay. That can be taken out for you. I'm going to stop.

[Off the record]

[END OF DISK 2A]

May 23, 1997

MR. BROWN: This is a third interview with Eleanor Garvey at her office in the Houghton Library, Harvard. And this is May 23, 1997, Robert Brown, the interviewer.

We talked most recently about your time at Wellesley College and then your brief not-altogether-happy year at the Museum of Newark, New Jersey. Now I thought we could begin with what became the major part of your career; that is, your time here at the Houghton Library, where you came in 1953.

What led you to come here? Was there some particular attraction? Were there certain friends here?

MS. GARVEY: I have to admit I had expressed my dissatisfaction with the Newark picture to various people. And one of those people to whom I had expressed it was John McAndrew, whom we have spoken about as a good Wellesley colleague. And he was a good friend of Phillip Hofer's. And it was just sort of, you know, talking around.

MR. BROWN: Now, Philip Hofer had been here at the Houghton for some time by then?

MS. GARVEY: We -- did you tape him, by the way?

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MS. GARVEY: Okay. So you probably have the facts. But he left New York in 1938 and was one of the rare book specialists over in the so-called treasure room of Widener. And Houghton was built in 1942. So that was when he took up residence.

MR. BROWN: He brings a rare book background?

MS. GARVEY: Yes. He had been at the Morgan Library in New York and at the Spencer collection of the New York Public, and had been a private collector ever since college days, which was the class of 1921.

MR. BROWN: Here at Harvard?

MS. GARVEY: Um-hm.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MS. GARVEY: And he brought with him his own collection, which was housed, not at home, but here in Houghton. And he gradually gave a great deal of this. But there were moments of certain confusion, especially on the part of readers because he was generous in showing his books in Houghton exhibitions, for instance. And side by side might be one that was indeed housed in Houghton, but still private collection, and the other one would be a gift of Philip Hofer. But the labels didn't always clarify this.

And I have to say, when attempted to pacify certain indignant readers that says, "You have published this in a Houghton Library catalog. I don't see why I can't see it." And so there were rather sensitive areas there. And it was really not until his death when the relatively few books, though of enormous significance, that he hadn't given -- because he had given so many -- came as bequests. Now, they are separately labeled with a different bookplate in the stacks.

Excuse me, Bob. I just want to show you.

[Off the record]

MS. GARVEY: So the books are labeled in various different fashions.

MR. BROWN: Why did certain things remain in his collection? Just because -- did he ever say why?

MS. GARVEY: Because he was a private collector, and he had a feeling that some of these were his, you know. And although he -- toward the end of his life, he sold a few things in order to raise money to endow a book fund in the library. He did not put the collection on the market or any portion of it after his death. He didn't leave things that way.

And yet he -- one of the motivating forces, I think, for his always keeping those reserves, which he knew he was going to give to Harvard -- but he often said to young and not-so-young collectors, he said, "You know, even although I have always been in institutions" -- I'm quoting him -- "and when you are curator, you long to see special items and collections come into your collection," he said, "On the other hand, a few things should be available on the market for the next generation of collectors." And, you know, there's a certain wisdom in that.

MR. BROWN: Well, how did he -- did you know him before, through John McAndrew?

MS. GARVEY: I'd met him. But I didn't really know him.

MR. BROWN: How did he strike you when you first met him and worked with him? You began working with him in '53?

MS. GARVEY: In '53, yeah.

MR. BROWN: As an assistant. And he was head of the department of printing?

MS. GARVEY: He was Curator of Printing and Graphic Arts. And a very interesting thing is that he was so identified with it, that department, which was, quote, "his," and so identified in his own mind with it that whenever he was persuaded to make a loan to another institution and so on, the credit line he always insisted on was never, "Gift of Philip Hofer," or anything like that; it was always "Department of Printing and Graphic Arts," which is very interesting.

He had a great sense of his own ability and importance in the field, but did not use the name as an ego trip. It was very much "Department of Printing and Graphic Arts." He'd get quite irate if some lender left that line off. And so he always filled out the wrong forms, but not his own name, which was very interesting I think.

MR. BROWN: Well, how was he to work with when you began with? Wasn't he quite a demanding person?

MS. GARVEY: He could be very, very difficult. He was a man of great authority. He projected that. He also had many friends with whom he had an extremely affectionate friendship through many, many years. He also had his enemies, most of whom I think were probably acquired professionally because of the need, as we all know, to say no to people about certain things and so on.

He could be irascible. And so as a quick-tempered person, you know, he did have his detractors and his opponents.

MR. BROWN: But day to day working with him, how did he function for you? Apart from -- your formal job, I suppose, was to help him in some ways.

MS. GARVEY: Yes.

MR. BROWN: But did he also --

MS. GARVEY: Well, I even acted as a secretary for him at first, doing letters and things like that. I'd type papers for him and so on and so forth.

MR. BROWN: Was he a bit of a mentor? Did he take that role on?

MS. GARVEY: Yes. He didn't do it -- a formal, "Now, let me teach you this." But he was very generous in introducing you to august colleagues from other institutions, to dealers, and showing you things, you know, after I got to know him. And he had a phenomenal knowledge of his field, a very retentive memory, and a fantastic eye. The French [inaudible], the dean of the Paris booksellers now -- I think he died before Mr. Hofer did -- George Elbre [phonetic], who called him the Prince of the Eye, the [inaudible], you know, because he had such a sure eye.

MR. BROWN: And you would be working so closely with him that you began absorbing these standards and this sensitivity?

MS. GARVEY: Right. Yes. And then of course, then I began reading in this field, which was somewhat different from the ones I had worked in. Because -- oh. The areas -- calling the department Printing and Graphic Arts, it concerned itself with, quote, "illustrated books, fine printing, illuminated and calligraphic manuscripts." So the fine printing and the calligraphy was a new area, to me.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MS. GARVEY: And I think he was a real pioneer in collecting and urging this on the art world. See, he'd graduated -- you probably have this from talks with him -- graduated from Harvard in 1921. Is from Cincinnati, Ohio. Family interest in coal mines. And he hated it.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MS. GARVEY: He was one of the Middle Westerners who, when he came to the East, this was where he wanted to

be. And he also belonged to a generation that in larger number perhaps than subsequently followed parental wishes. And when they said, "Okay, Phil, you come back, you know, after you graduate from Harvard" -- oh, he did go to the B school.

MR. BROWN: He went to the business school?

MS. GARVEY: "But you're needed here." And so I'm sure rather grudgingly he did precisely that. I think he did very well, too. And then he left and went to Europe. I haven't got all the steps in the correct order, perhaps. But he came back. And he enrolled in the museum courses, we used to call it, at the Fogg, and got his degree, his masters, I think in '29. He was there when Agnes, of course, was there.

MR. BROWN: Agnes Mongan.

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. Hans Lodenski [phonetic], he overlapped.

MR. BROWN: Hans Lodenski?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. I think Perry Rathburn [phonetic]. That whole generation of museum directors that I think Americans who helped to make the museum a significant factor in American culture and so on and so forth -- they were all there.

He could be a very gregarious man, too, and seemed to make friends very easily. And he began collecting then. And what he saw in books was, in a sense, what the European print rooms didn't make a distinction necessarily between books and prints. For instance, Dura, the British Museum, the Kaiser Freidrich, the Bibliotheque Nationale -- that's already a library. But by and large, the role of books recording major artists and major movements, even with, quote, "minor" artists, he saw that that was an area that was not emphasized in collecting in museums over here. And I think associating with these fellow students, all young in those days, you know, that he saw the role that the book could play. He began collecting prints as young collectors do that are interested in graphic art.

MR. BROWN: You mean "the book," the artist's book, books by artists or about artists?

MS. GARVEY: Well, the books that contain original graphic work like the Dura Apocalypse was issued as a book with a text, and this kind of thing. The print rooms all had them. And he began to see that there were many, many more books that the print rooms didn't have that complemented what they already did have. And so that was the focus of his collecting. He had such a catholic taste. He loved drawings, and he always collected drawings, not for this department, unless they were for book illustration. They usually went to Fogg [inaudible].

MR. BROWN: But he was a pioneer or practically was?

MS. GARVEY: I believe so.

MR. BROWN: In elevating the esteem for the artist-illustrated book.

MS. GARVEY: That's right. And I think you will find now that many, many print rooms are collecting books and not just the loose sheets of prints.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. And was this a pulpit, that is, the treasure room at the Widener and then the Houghton, a very powerful place from which he could preach?

MS. GARVEY: I think so, because he published a lot.

MR. BROWN: He published a lot.

MS. GARVEY: Now, he brought independent means to this institution. And some of the publishing funds -- they were not endowed funds, but his money had started them in the first place -- they were rollover funds. We paid for publications out of them. We put the proceeds right back in. So in publishing catalogs or even -- well, he liked to do little ephemeral booklets. I would say he had a great influence and reached a lot of people because of his Fogg connections. And he was Secretary with a capital S for many, many years at the Fogg. And I don't know if I remembered to put that in my CV, but I succeeded him.

MR. BROWN: You did.

MS. GARVEY: Okay.

MR. BROWN: And what role was that?

MS. GARVEY: Mostly publications.

MR. BROWN: Ah.

MS. GARVEY: Um-hm. It was really kind of an editorial function. You brought out the annual report, and so on. Through those connections and his close friendship with faculty over there, he always had the graduate students fine arts club, whichever order those words come in. They'd come over once a year at least, and so on, and he'd bring out this variety of, quote, "treasures." And I've heard people say -- people who went on to distinguished museum careers -- you know, "I was turned on to manuscripts," or "I was turned on to something by seeing Philip Hofer in action," as it were.

And one thing he used to tell the graduate students club was, "All was by nothing by nobody." In other words, use your eye. Now, he brought a lot -- oh, I'm sorry.

MR. BROWN: No [inaudible].

MS. GARVEY: He bought a lot of something by somebodies, too. I mean, he had some wonderful Italian drawings.

MR. BROWN: By recognized figures?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, very, very much so.

MR. BROWN: But his point was, look first.

MS. GARVEY: But his point was, don't read the label, you know. Look. And he'd go on a buying trip or he'd go on a holiday upstate New York, and he'd come back with a marvelous -- there's a landscape one, and I can't give you the artist's name right now. But a book that -- and an artist that was totally unfamiliar, even to him. But he knew that this had significance, you know. And so that was a very exciting part of working with him.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm, um-hm.

MS. GARVEY: So he broadened the taste of anybody who was in any connection with him at all.

MR. BROWN: And you were involved to some degree with these visits by the graduates, the fine arts students?

MS. GARVEY: Sometimes, yes.

MR. BROWN: Certainly in later years you were?

MS. GARVEY: Yes, yeah.

MR. BROWN: You mentioned the ephemera, he loved doing small ephemeral publications?

MS. GARVEY: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Now what would they be? Just --

MS. GARVEY: Well, they were often of a very, very personal nature. Sometimes they would be on collecting sometimes a reminiscence of a certain area or episode from his vast travels, you know. Reminiscences were really what they were.

MR. BROWN: You suggested that these had a way of raising awareness generally of the importance of what he was doing?

MS. GARVEY: I think so.

MR. BROWN: But also of the material that he was gathering

MS. GARVEY: Yes. And of course he had a network of European connections through dealers. And, well, I think, don't you, that there's a great fraternity of, say, picture dealers and certainly of book sellers, and so on? And they are often people from whom one can learn so very much. And of course, the opportunities come from them.

MR. BROWN: Who were some of those that you recall? You've mentioned --

MS. GARVEY: Well, George Elbera [phonetic] in Paris. He was very close to him. I think the person -- there were many in New York. But the one he perhaps respected the most and dealt a lot with was Lucian Goldschmidt, who had a gallery on Madison Ave, who -- I think he closed the gallery before his death. But he died, oh, half-a-dozen

years ago. And then a man named Walter Schatzki, whose gallery closed, oh, 20 years ago or something like that. He was, like so many of them, a Viennese émigré.

And Hofer, who had a -- there were a lot of dualisms in his nature. He had a great sense of the importance of rank and birth in society, but also he could cut through that absolutely. I've seen him befriend students who were very important families, and I've seen him befriend students that he knew nothing about, but he recognized something there.

MR. BROWN: Hm. So there was a duality?

MS. GARVEY: Yes, there was. Yeah.

MR. BROWN: Did you feel after you'd been here a year or two that this was the place for you, the Houghton?

MS. GARVEY: It took me more than a year or two, I have to admit to you, because it was -- well, with all the task forces and all the personnel attention they have these days, I look back. I won't say that I think it's better now. I think it's more complicated now. But women in the Houghton Library were absolutely hardly there. And I had at places like Worcester and Wellesley and Newark -- I know Wellesley is a women's college -- but there was a much freer and more informal relation among all the staff. That was nonexistent here. It was very striated, very, very hierarchical. And this troubled me a lot at the beginning. And then I got used to it, and it began to loosen up a little.

MR. BROWN: Now, the Department of Printing and Graphic Arts, was one of several, which when they formed the Houghton they brought together several [inaudible]?

MS. GARVEY: Well, there's the librarian's office, and W. A. Jackson was the first librarian and was there when I came. And he was the great book man. So traditionally, the experts on printed books have worked as the librarian or the assistant or whatever out of that office. Then Printing and Graphic Arts, and then the Manuscript Department -- and the Manuscript Department here consists of both the literary and historical manuscripts, and then where they overlapped with Printing and Graphic Arts, the illuminated and calligraphic manuscripts.

MR. BROWN: Was that overlap an easy one? I mean, did it [inaudible]?

MS. GARVEY: It was because of the personnel at that time. W. H. Bond was the manuscript curator, who became librarian. Rodney Dennis succeeded him. And we all got along extremely well. And I think that was partly because of the people who were involved in it.

MR. BROWN: What was the origins of the treasure room, which [inaudible]?

MS. GARVEY: The so-called rare books, I guess, at Harvard, the ones that needed special protection. You are aware of the vulnerability of the Widener stacks, which were even more accessible in those days, I think, than they are now. So that, quote "treasures" were locked up. I think it was in the basement of Widener in something called Room D. But I don't really know. And when it was established, I don't know.

But there was a man named George Parker Winship who was the curator of that. And there was a -- there are a lot more tie-ups in some ways than now, even though we have more interdisciplinary opportunities. And George Parker Winship taught a fine arts courts. It might have been called Fine Arts 13, but I'm not sure of the number. And it was on rare books. And of course, Hofer took that as an undergraduate. And I think you'll find a lot of Harvard men, as it was in those days, who went on to be collectors were Winship products.

And so there was already a feeling that there were many overlaps between art and books, you know. And I think he was a very influential person.

MR. BROWN: Was there an acquisition program as well?

MS. GARVEY: Under the treasure room?

MR. BROWN: Yeah. Or --

MS. GARVEY: I can't answer that.

MR. BROWN: Well, when you came to -- by the time you came to Houghton in the early '50s, what, 11 years after its move to this building --

MS. GARVEY: Oh, there were very definite funds. And I can visualize the printouts, you know, from the financial office that gave you the reports on the funds and the purchases month by month so you could track your balance.

MR. BROWN: Yeah. Sounds good.

MS. GARVEY: And of course, no -- maybe I should think about that, how I should say it. The Houghton budget is zero for acquisitions. Everything is out of endowed funds. Yeah. And this is where Hofer would endow the fund. So that's one of the reasons of confusion as to which person he bought it from, you know, his own and gave it, or whether it was a fund he'd endowed, in which case his name wouldn't necessarily appear in the fund. It would be called a Printing and Graphic Arts fund, you see.

And then our funds were quite separate, by and large, from the funds of the librarian's office. It was a certain amount of dickering. I can see Jackson with his tall thin man, with those long legs, striding down about 10 o'clock in the morning sometimes after he'd read the mail, which used to come early, and the dealers' catalogs, and saying, "Phil. Have you got this book?" Well, out would come the little box. And he'd check, because, you see, if it had not been given to Harvard, Jackson would have checked to see if Harvard had this book. No, no record. So he'd come down: "Phil, do you happen to have this?"

Sometimes he'd say, "Yes, of course, I have it." Or, "No. Let me check." And then there would be a little persuasion from Jackson. "Don't you think this would fit into your collection awfully well? Aren't you interested in getting it?" "No, Bill. I'm really not. I think if it's something that seems important to you, you know, you can put it on thus-and-such a fund." But sometimes, you know, there would be yielding. It was very amusing to hear this dickering.

MR. BROWN: Oh, yeah.

MS. GARVEY: And he spoke very good German. At least, I think it was good. It's not one of my languages. But Hofer spoke fluent German. Cincinnati, which is the German belt, and he had a fraulein when he was a little boy. And so he learned German early. It was William H. Schob [phonetic], another Viennese émigré in New York, still in business with his son. The son carries [inaudible] carries it on. And they had a certain rivalry, but a real respect for each other. And I remember that the level of the voices seemed to get rather hot, but it was very good natured. But they would argue and dicker in German. And they had a wonderful time doing this.

[Laughter]

MR. BROWN: And there was a rather congenial relation here?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, very.

MR. BROWN: Between Jackson and Hofer and Bond?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, yes, yes. Because I think Bond had come in right out of the navy right shortly after Houghton was founded, probably, and maybe even before. I'm not sure whether he was one of the treasure room crowd. And he was very much -- Jackson was very much his mentor, even though Jackson was the printed person and Bond was the manuscripts.

And then a very significant figure in this department, although he was never a formal part of it, was William Bendix Smith, who indeed had been shaped in his collecting by Hofer. And Hofer steered Bendix Smith, whose original interest was in the printed word because he wrote a lot of historical material and had been on the Boston Globe as a young cub reporter, I think. And Hofer steered him into type specimens and not into calligraphy, which Hofer pretty much kept as his own subject.

And Bendix Smith put his books on deposit here. And then after I came, and maybe it was in the late '50s or early '60s, and then gave them. And he was --

MR. BROWN: But he was a figure you [inaudible] --

MS. GARVEY: Oh, yes, and he was a very good personal friend and was wonderfully supportive of me. I remember when -- I don't remember the date the book came out. But Jasper Johns, Samuel Beckett book -- it's a bilingual text called *Foirades*, or *Fizzles*. And oh, it was at least 15 years ago, I should think, that that came out. It came out with a list price of $5000. It's probably multiplied by five today if you could get a copy.

And I was curator. And I felt it was very important that we get this. It was a period that we had great problems with budgets of all kinds. And we just didn't have that reserve to buy it. And Roger Stoddard was very helpful in showing me how you could beg. And the kind of letter you wrote --

MR. BROWN: Now, Roger Stoddard was also here?

MS. GARVEY: Yes. I'll come back to Roger if you want. But he showed me, you know, the kind of letter you could write, and people could turn you down and you still remain good friends, and so on and so forth. I got the five.

And Bill came over to look at the book. He knew I really wanted to get this.

MR. BROWN: This is William Bendix Smith?

MS. GARVEY: Bendix Smith -- that it would be an important addition. And he was absolutely wonderful. He said -- he had basically a conservative taste. He said, "I don't like it at all. I really don't like it at all. But you think it's important. I'll give you $1000." He was that kind of a friend. He understood collecting and how thing -- how there was a certain pattern that I could never articulate really. But that he would support a professional.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm, um-hm.

MS. GARVEY: And that, I found very important in my role at Wellesley as a member of the National Committee of the Friends of Art, because it was one very, very controversial purchase that was made. And it was unveiled to the friends, who hit the roof. And I can't say that -- you know, if I were there, the person who was searching for an acquisition at this point, that would not --

MR. BROWN: That would not have been the one?

MS. GARVEY: I didn't really like it. I thought it was amusing. But anyway, it certainly wasn't my taste.

MR. BROWN: Was it a contemporary work?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, very contemporary. And I found myself, and I don't always speak out at meetings -- I found myself, you know, standing -- yeah. Oh, go ahead. I was standing up and defending the curator's choice. Because I said, "I think our role -- we're not an advisory acquisitions committee, you know. But we're -- I feel that the professionals, if they've made a selection, never mind our personal taste, but as a group we need to support them, yes." And so that was such a wonderful example from Bill, who is a very warmhearted person and very funny and natural.

MR. BROWN: Yeah. Yeah. Now, Roger Stoddard, you mentioned earlier.

MS. GARVEY: Roger is a Brown graduate. And he is our current great book man. I think he's called curator of printed books or something like that. And he was very much shaped by Bill Jackson. And then he went off briefly into the trade. He worked for George Goodsby. And so he got that part of the background. And then I think after Jackson's very premature death in his late 50s of a heart attack, and then when Bond took over as librarian, I believe it was he who had great respect for Roger, who brought him back as a kind of assistant. And he's one of the strongest people in the country in rare books.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MS. GARVEY: He has great knowledge of literature and rare imprints and the history of printing. And he's in Europe right now on a buying trip. And he knows my interest in Italian books. And he'll say, "Well, there are only three books known from this printer up in Udenay, you know. And I've got two of them, and I may be on the track of the third one," you know. He just knows so much. I couldn't tell you that there were three imprints from this printer in Udenay, you know. So he's a wonderful colleagues. And everyone learned so much from Roger.

MR. BROWN: Were you the only woman on staff for some time?

MS. GARVEY: Carolyn Jakeman was the famous head of the reading room. And there was a woman named Mabel Steele, who was curator of the Keats collection , but did not really figure in the group so much. Mabel may have been part-time. I'm not sure. Her office was up here off the Keats room. And she was not as much of a presence, for instance, as Carolyn Jakeman was.

MR. BROWN: Well, Carolyn Jakeman was the person you met first as a reader, I believe. Or she presided over the reading room?

MS. GARVEY: She presided over the reading room. And she was a formidable figure.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: She was a wonderful person, too. And I've always felt that the feeling of intimidation that some readers had from Carolyn -- she ran a very tight ship -- was partly because she was so afraid that something could happen or something would be stolen or a leaf slipped out. You know, I think that she watched people like a hawk and gave them small amounts of material because of her great awareness of security, before it became a national subject in museums and libraries.

MR. BROWN: Was the consequence that very little was damaged or lost?

MS. GARVEY: To my knowledge. I think sometimes the -- unless you're on a committee or something, you don't even know about these things. But my feeling is that it was absolutely minimal.

MR. BROWN: Right. Was it the policy with Jackson -- beginning under Jackson's policy to make the Houghton available, broadly available to scholars, to students?

MS. GARVEY: I don't think that --

MR. BROWN: Ad hoc criteria?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. I'd say it was pretty much ad hoc in those days because the pressures on institutions like this to justify themselves really were not present the way they developed later. He and Hofer had really quite aristocratic views, as I've indicated about Hofer. And because of their connections, there was a trail of scholars who were colleagues in other institutions, a trail of Europeans as well. But Hofer and Jackson both did some undergraduate teaching. And so that, without their trying to open up the doors, that automatically did to a degree. But Houghton has always been misunderstood on that level. I mean, there's a mythology out there that no undergraduate can step inside the door. And that's never been true. But we make more of an effort to make that clear now, to be all a part of the family.

This every tub on its own bottom philosophy -- we were, to a certain extent, isolated. We didn't realize we were. But we weren't making these outreaches, you see. We just assumed people know we were here to be used. But then we discovered that you -- it's not as simple as that, perhaps.

MR. BROWN: What did Jackson teach?

MS. GARVEY: It was a course called Bibliography. And then Bond took it over from him. And then Hofer would do some sessions within it. At the time I knew him, he didn't have a separate course. He may have before that, mostly for Fogg students, through the museum course, probably.

MR. BROWN: Now, your titles changed over, let's say, in your first phase. You started out as an assistant.

MS. GARVEY: Where I did a lot of typing, among other things.

MR. BROWN: And then through '75, you arose to be associate curator for Printing and Graphic Arts. And did that effectively mean you were practically Hofer's full colleague?

MS. GARVEY: Sort of right hand by then. We actually -- you know, we had a separate secretary in those days. So I didn't have to do all that stuff.

MR. BROWN: Were there others in the department during those years who came and left, didn't stay as long as you did?

MS. GARVEY: No, not anybody official. There were -- I think there were a few volunteers who would come and go who had knowledge of a special subject.

MR. BROWN: Right.

MS. GARVEY: And although he wasn't a volunteer -- he'd left before I arrived -- there was Fernando Zobel. I don't know whether I ever mentioned him -- Zobel.

MR. BROWN: No. No.

MS. GARVEY: Fernando was from the Philippines, was one of those Spanish Filipino families that went back and forth and had huge holdings in the Philippines. Came to Harvard as an undergraduate, probably -- oh, certainly in the '40s, and I think maybe it was right after the war. I'm not sure. And he was one of those who, under family pressures, I believe, went to law school and really didn't care about law school. I think it was law and not business. And found his way here, became an intimate friend of Bill Bond, particularly, had an enormous facility as a draftsman, could do funny caricature little things, and you know, depictions, realistic depictions -- but developed into an abstract painter whose work I like enormously.

And he came on our visiting committee and was an very generous donor to the Printing and Graphic Arts, which I think he felt was his home. It was where he found himself, really. More so than at the Fogg, he told me. And there is a town north of Madrid called Kowinka, which has a museum of abstract art. And that's Fernando's doing. The whole town is practically -- was his, I think. And he died prematurely. Well, maybe 10 years ago -- maybe more, I don't know. Yeah.

MR. BROWN: You had other -- were there other assistant curators under you?

MS. GARVEY: No.

MR. BROWN: Through the '70s or in the '60s?

MS. GARVEY: No, not until I became curator. And then I had an assistant. And I always felt if I could had the whole three of them at once, we could have accomplished great things because we were always understaffed.

MR. BROWN: And you became curator in 1975?

MS. GARVEY: Right, um-hm.

MR. BROWN: But there were, for example, special projects like the H.H. Richardson architectural drawings?

MS. GARVEY: That's right.

MR. BROWN: Were additional people brought in to assist with that? That would be a good example.

MS. GARVEY: That was after Hofer's leaving -- I mean, after his retirement. We -- that was -- Peter Wick and I did that. I mean, Peter was really the --

MR. BROWN: Peter Wick was on staff?

MS. GARVEY: Peter Wick.

MR. BROWN: You hadn't mentioned him.

MS. GARVEY: Oh, I'm sorry. Peter came in as an associate, I guess, and then became curator. And Peter and I had talked about this huge Richardson archive so much. And we decided that it was time to do a show. It just sort of evolved. And we got Jim -- John Coolidge said, "You should talk to Jim O'Gorman." And he volunteered his services to do that catalog. And I must say that, in recent years, my successor Anne Anninger, who has been very effective in getting grants, she got a wonderful grant to shape up all the Richardson material, and it's now on -- you know, computer indexed and everything else. And a lot of conservation has been done.

MR. BROWN: Special conservation, very elaborate, yes.

MS. GARVEY: Yes. And so she -- that was after I left. In many ways, I felt I had to tread cautiously while Hofer was still here because he kept an office in the basement after he retired.

MR. BROWN: He retired in the '60s, and it was Peter Wick [inaudible]?

MS. GARVEY: Then Peter, yeah. I'd have to check those dates out.

MR. BROWN: And then Peter brought what? He'd had a background at --

MS. GARVEY: MFA.

MR. BROWN: MFA?

MS. GARVEY: And Fogg.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: So he and I had very similar interests. But both of us, I think, felt, with Hofer in the building, that we were more preserving his legacy than going off into anything new. Also, grants were not nearly so much a part of the picture in those days as they later became. And I did get one or two for catalogs, you know.

MR. BROWN: But by and large, you relied on --

MS. GARVEY: But by and large, we relied on the good old Hofer revolving publications fund.

MR. BROWN: Right.

MS. GARVEY: And we worked very hard -- because postcards came under that, and we did them all -- to keep that fund viable. And I think we succeeded because it was always enough to at least start the next project. And because it wasn't an endowed thing, we had more flexibility in deficit spending if we could project that this was going to be all right. And it always was.

MR. BROWN: To what degree did you venture into twentieth century contemporary art? I know you did later.

MS. GARVEY: Well, the whole project of the artist in the book was Hofer's idea. And that was his title, which I think was a very, very good one because it wasn't defining anything by saying, "This is illustration." It was the relation, the various relations of artists to books.

Oh, he had -- his catholic eye embraced modern art. And he was also a patron of contemporary artists. And I've even heard him say -- he bought some pictures of local artists that I liked very much. But I've often heard him say, "You know, I feel I have a responsibility to encourage some of these people," never through the gallery system. He'd get to know these people. And there was an artist named Tom Francioawy [phonetic] just died rather recently. I think Hofer's son Miram [phonetic] had all that kind of material. You tended to keep that at home, you know.

And Andrew Wyeth, who needed no patronage from him, was a very old and close friend. And Wyeth did two dry-brush portraits, one of Philip and one of Bunny, which Hofer was a very hard man to get a good likeness of. He had a fine sort of Roman head, but he -- animation was the thing that made him in your memory, you know. And to sit like this, it just never worked somehow. And I never felt that Andrew Wyeth got the essence of him at all.

MR. BROWN: Would Wyeth come around occasionally?

MS. GARVEY: He dropped in from time to time with the black cape, yeah.

MR. BROWN: Was he a rather reticent man?

MS. GARVEY: I just really met him, you know. I don't -- but the two of them would talk away. The Wyeths, you know, go to Maine in the summer. And the Hofers had a house in Rockport. And I forget where Wyeth is, but --

MR. BROWN: It's very near that.

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. And Hofer was a close friend of Betsy Wyeth, Andy's wife's father, Merl James. And I think that's how it all got together. Of course, Andy is now such an American icon.

MR. BROWN: Oh, yes. We have that.

MS. GARVEY: Yeah.

[Off the record]

June 13, 1997

MR. BROWN: Continuing interviews with Eleanor Garvey in her office at the Houghton Library, Harvard. This is June 13, 1997. In our last session we began to talk about your long tenure here at the Houghton, rising to be -- I think in 1975 -- the Curator of Prints and Graphic Arts.

MS. GARVEY: Printing and Graphic Arts.

MR. BROWN: Excuse me -- and Graphic Arts.

MS. GARVEY: That was a distinction that Mr. Hofer always made.

MR. BROWN: And you insist on that [inaudible] book?

MS. GARVEY: Printing and Graphic Arts -- right, um-hm, because it embraces typography, which was a very important collecting interest of Philip Hofer's. And we have a great collection of type specimens.

MR. BROWN: And had that been begun under him and you continued it?

MS. GARVEY: To the best of my knowledge, it was begun under him. And then I can't remember whether we mentioned William Bendix Smith.

MR. BROWN: You began talking about him. Could you say anything more?

MS. GARVEY: Yes, because he comes right into this typography interest. I think he, after the -- I'm not sure the order. I was going to say "after the war." At some point he worked briefly for the Boston Globe, I think as a reporter. He was a good writer and Harvard historian, too. And I cannot remember whether that may have been right after his graduation in 1937, or whether after he got out of the navy in '45 he did something with that.

By the way, his Harvard class is 1937. And they always have referred to themselves as the working class because, you see, it was still in the Depression and so on.

MR. BROWN: Ah, yes. Yes.

MS. GARVEY: And I'd always loved that, that 1937 is the working class.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: He got interested in the appearance of books and journals, which an awful lot of writers never do. You know, even art historians don't really look at the printed page sometimes.

MR. BROWN: But he did, early on?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, he did early on. And he got to know Mr. Hofer. And wait a minute, I have an arm here. And he -- Hofer steered him into collecting typography, which was a combination of typographic manuals and printers, catalogs really, which are sales catalogs, to a degree, and then also examples to some extent of very fine topography. And of course that can, with the manuals, it can range from almost a job printer's little gathering of the samples that you can use if you come to his shop, or that he will use for you, to these great Bedoni volumes and so on and so forth.

MR. BROWN: That were issued much more elaborately?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, fantastic ones, yes, on thick paper sometimes and great folio volumes. And then writing volumes -- I'm going to stand up for a sec -- showing you this catalog, which I had nothing to do with, but David Becker, my first assistant, the exhibition that's just closed, The Practice of Letters, it's called, the Hofer collection of writing manuals. But it was very interesting, and David was reminding me and we were talking about this, that Hofer tried to steer Bendix Smith away from the writing manuals. He wanted that for himself. And I guess Bendix Smith bought one very significant one, which Hofer persuaded him to give to the collection, and hands-off after that. He was going to stay with typography.

And through the years, he deposited some of his books here and then at some point, just gave them --

MR. BROWN: Bendix Smith?

MS. GARVEY: Bendix Smith did, yeah. And it's called the Bendix Smith Collection of -- I'm not sure it's Typography or Typographic Books. And he along the way bought a wonderful wooden sign from a German, maybe seventeenth century printer's office, which shows a Griffin, I guess it perhaps is, a neuralgic beast, anyway, with the two leather ink-balls. Only the whole thing is carved in wood. And this was the sign, you see, outside the shop. And then a woodcut was made of that, and it's on the bookplate. It's really very nice.

MR. BROWN: Was he very nice to work with?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, he was a wonderful person. And he was President Pusy's assistant for many, many years.

MR. BROWN: Oh, you mean he had an administrative job?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, yeah, the administrative -- after he left journalism. Oh, well, he was editor of the Bulletin, the Harvard magazine as it's now known. It used to be the Alumni Bulletin. He was editor of that for some time. And then Pusy persuaded him to join the administrative staff. But he kept his hand in, not the Bulletin, necessarily, but he knew everybody on it through the years and I'm sure gave advice.

And then wrote -- pulled together a couple of Harvard anthologies, and also did a history of Charles Coolidge, who was the Harvard College librarian, the Widener librarian, maybe in the teens. I'd have to check that out. And was the person who really made it an internationally significant library and is collecting --

MR. BROWN: He was the key.

MS. GARVEY: Charles A. Coolidge, yes.

MR. BROWN: Well, was --

MS. GARVEY: So Bill always had a great interest in the library and its history and its content.

MR. BROWN: The Harvard anthologies, what would they have consisted of [inaudible]? I take it there have been a number of these?

MS. GARVEY: There were at least a couple. They were pieces about Harvard written through the years by various writers, starting -- I can't tell you exactly when.

[Simultaneous conversation]

MS. GARVEY: But early examples, and then going up to a very funny one by Norman Mailer, and things like that -- and George Punchen and that -- very up-to-date.

And then there is a volume that I shouldn't even try to speak of. It's an old Harvard publication called Sibley's. Sibley edited it on Harvard graduates and their careers.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: And Bill was, I think, at the time of his death still working on an update of that. He had an assistant who worked with him.

MR. BROWN: So that was connected also of the interests of the one-time Harvard -- the curator of the archives, wasn't he, or creator --

MS. GARVEY: Oh, yes, yes.

MR. BROWN: Shipton.

MS. GARVEY: Shipton, yeah, um-hm. So he was into every phase of --

MR. BROWN: What about here in his --

MS. GARVEY: Well, he was an honorary curator.

MR. BROWN: So he [inaudible] much time here?

MS. GARVEY: He didn't keep an office here. But since he was -- after his retirement, he was over at 70 and Quinsy Street.

MR. BROWN: Which is?

MS. GARVEY: Which is what used to be the president's house, now called Lobe House because the Lobes have endowed it or whatever. And he had an office there. So he is back and forth here, you know, all the time. And at that point, everyone knew him. And he knew us so well that sometimes when -- we'd send catalogs over to be checked and so on. "Is there something that I should be interested in from this catalog?" So we kind of worked together in the later years of his collecting.

MR. BROWN: He was then a very good patron?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, very, very --

MR. BROWN: Particularly of type design and --

MS. GARVEY: And very, very generous. And peripheral things to type, I may have told you. I always thought it was such a wonderful example of a good friend and patron being willing to support a curator. The Jasper Johns book *Fizzles/Foirades*, with the Samuel Beckett text, came out over -- it's more than 10 years ago, I would say -- came out at a list price of $5000, which was way above that now, you can imagine. And I felt we should have it. And by no means could we afford it because it was a period of very constricted budgets.

And there was no way we could get it. Roger Stoddard was very, very helpful to me. I learned how a curator could go out begging and --

MR. BROWN: Now, Stoddard was also a curator?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. He was a colleague here. Could go out begging, and people could turn you down, and you'd still remain very good friends, and that you could go back to them and they would still support you, sort of thing. I mean, he taught me the nitty-gritty of that. And Bill was one of the people I went to. And he came over to see the book. And he looked at it, and he said, "I don't like it." He had a very classical, basically conservative taste. But he was open to looking at anything. And he said, "I don't like it. But you think it's important. I'll give you $1000." So as I say, what a wonderful friendship.

MR. BROWN: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: He retained his independence. But -- and it taught me a lot on the Wellesley Friends of Art board I was on. I remember a -- I guess you'd call it a very radical piece that was not to my personal taste at all, I have you tell you, especially at the price that was asked for it. It was a young German woman artist. And it was

composed of objects, you know. It wasn't a painting. [Inaudible] so on and so forth. And had I been a curator, I'm sure I wouldn't have gone for it.

And some of the board was rather displaced by this. And they wanted to -- no. And I realized that this was not for us to decide, you see. It was the curator's -- the museum director's job, actually. And she wanted to go for it, you know. That was up to her to do. So it was interesting the way these things are clarified when you overlap in functions sometimes.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. He then was active right down to the --

MS. GARVEY: Oh, yes. Yeah.

MR. BROWN: And in memory of Philip Hofer, he and -- you mentioned that other friend.

MS. GARVEY: Charlie Rheault.

MR. BROWN: Charlie Role?

MS. GARVEY: Rheault, R-h-e-a-u-l-t, Charles Rheault, who for years was at the Riverside Press. So he had a hands-on acquaintance with printing and knows a lot. And after he -- well, of course, Riverside closed. And then Charlie started something called microglyphics. And I'm not sure whether he's still with it. But it was into the new technologies of printing. And he's always been very active in the society of printers.

And he and Bill and a man named Melvin -- we always called him Mel -- Seiden, S-e-i-d-e-n, who is in New York finance here and an alumnus -- he's been on our visiting committee, the library visiting committee, and also the Fogg visiting committee, other museums, the Harvard Museum's Visiting Committee, as it's now called. And he, the three of them, stepped out to endow the position because there was frankly the --

[END OF DISK 2B]

MS. GARVEY: And he, the three of them, stepped out to endow the position because there was frankly the apprehension that, you know, when I would retire, with budgetary constraints, would that department be absorbed in another, or would it have an independence?

MR. BROWN: And they didn't feel it should be? Is that right?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, no, no. They felt it should have its independence.

MR. BROWN: Did you feel that way, too?

MS. GARVEY: Very much so. Hofer didn't endow the department. But the thing he focused on, which is very characteristic, was to endow a very, very good purchasing fund, you see. And he felt that he'd done all he could with that. And, you see, he still wanted the object, and he wanted the collection to be built up. And I don't think he really ever worried so much about the future of the department itself as the rest of us did. I think he was aware. But he put all his energies into acquisitions.

And so these three stepped in. And to a great extent, it was their own generosity. But it was a fund-raising effort. And I believe that the administration, which of course has to clear all of these things, was very dubious that they could do it. And they did it within a year or a year-and-a-half. Said you can never do that. He's well known in his field, but he isn't well known on a broad enough basis to complete a drive.

MR. BROWN: But they were able to endow the positions?

MS. GARVEY: But they -- approved the -- yeah.

MR. BROWN: So that's made it a much more stable proposition.

MS. GARVEY: Oh, of course it has, yes. And given my successor Anne Anninger, you know, a confidence that's terribly important if you're going to accomplish anything.

MR. BROWN: Sure. But you in all of your years here then, endowments have been a bit -- there was an uncertainty looming in terms of funding for the position?

MS. GARVEY: Well, we weren't aware of that.

MR. BROWN: No?

MS. GARVEY: Until really after Bill Bonds' retirement from Houghton. And the whole picture of this kind of an

institution -- you speak of your systems people and so on.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: The emphasis has gone on to a very different area because the Houghton Library is a part of the Harvard College Library. It's the librarian is not an independent person. Well, it's true of the Fogg, you know. Although the Fogg doesn't -- the Fogg reports directly to the administration. The Houghton Library reports to the --

MR. BROWN: To the librarian.

MS. GARVEY: -- librarian of Widener, to the college library. And so there is a layer in between.

MR. BROWN: And those staffs are now much more technically aligned.

MS. GARVEY: That's right. They are more technically aligned. That's right.

MR. BROWN: And are less -- apt to be less generous with highly specialized libraries; is that right?

MS. GARVEY: I think so. Yes, yeah.

MR. BROWN: Fortunately here, through the special fund raising drive, they were able --

MS. GARVEY: For that particular one, I think you would find that the other departments that they hope to endow here at Houghton, they're probably still working on that, manuscripts, for instance, and theater collection. They see theater as part of that.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MS. GARVEY: And, oh, the reading -- well, you know, every museum, every time you turn around, somebody is the blankety-blank curator or librarian or whatever.

MR. BROWN: That's right.

[Laughter]

MR. BROWN: I wanted to talk perhaps a bit about exhibitions and publications. And I know you've mentioned some to me, and I think there are some several that you wanted to talk about.

MS. GARVEY: Well, the one that happens to be --

MR. BROWN: [Inaudible] sort of a chronological --

MS. GARVEY: [Inaudible] and I'd say the chronology. The first one anyway is the most important one. And that was Philip Hofer's idea to have a joint exhibition with the Boston Museum. He was a trustee of the MFA and a very strong supporter of the Prints, Drawings, and Photographs, as it now is. He was not only on the visiting committee, but he was a close colleague of Eleanor's -- well, say, of Henry Rossiter.

MR. BROWN: The curator of prints?

MS. GARVEY: The curator of prints, and then Eleanor Sayer. And he and Eleanor shared a very specific interest in Goya.

MR. BROWN: [Inaudible]

MS. GARVEY: And he had a fabulous Goya collection. And so she, you know, they worked back and forth on that a lot. So he was, you know, a known figure at the MFA. And he wanted to -- he had collected for years what we call the Livre de Pantre [phonetic], the illustrated -- well, "illustration" is a word we tried not to use. But anyway, the book with original graphic art by artists whose fame first came in painting or sculpture, what the French call le pantre [inaudible]. You know, men got into printmaking, and men were harnessed in various ways, usually through a publisher, to produce these remarkable volumes.

And I'm sure he had found it. I certainly have run across some very sophisticated collectors who will have, say, a Picasso etching, especially a cubist one because there are not very many of them. And lo and behold, they come from books. And even sophisticated collectors before all the bibliographies of Picasso poured out -- the Catalog Resone -- didn't realize, you know, that these were part of another and larger project. And Hofer was very quick to, you know, see things like this.

MR. BROWN: So this led to this exhibition?

MS. GARVEY: Yes.

MR. BROWN: About when was that?

MS. GARVEY: It was in 1961. And I think Peter Wick was the curator. Yes, I think he succeeded Henry Rossiter.

MR. BROWN: Who was then at the MFA?

MS. GARVEY: At the MFA, yeah. And then after he left -- and he went to Fogg for awhile -- then that's when Eleanor Sayer came in. So it was Peter he worked with. And he was very interested in all of this. And we did the catalog, but I think we had a committee that used to meet with Peter and other curators for the selection.

MR. BROWN: What was the title of [inaudible]?

MS. GARVEY: Well, this is where I think Hofer was so clever and so wise. It was called The Artist and the Book, 1860 to 1960, which is not tipping your hand. It's just saying what role he played. And a lot of people have criticized that project, saying, "Well, some of these artists, the publisher just had them do a plate, and they really had nothing to do with it." Well, so the title isn't saying how much they did have to do it, you see.

MR. BROWN: Was this typical of Hofer to not show his hand, as they said?

MS. GARVEY: No. I just think it was a brilliant --

MR. BROWN: Make some amusement?

MS. GARVEY: It was a brilliant solution because it gave the people organizing the exhibition a certain latitude, you see, and say, "Oh, look," you know. "This is something -- did you realize that Corbet appears in this book with an original picture?" or something. Well, all right. So Corbet may or may not have had a lot to do with the conception of putting a plate by him in the book, but it is there.

And so I think that he didn't want to use the word "illustrated," because that to a lot of fine arts people has had a kind of knock-down quality, you know. "He's just this painter. Yeah, he's clever, but he's just an illustrator," sort of thing.

MR. BROWN: But the exhibition and the publication also covered what we now called artists books, right? Books conceived by artists [inaudible]?

MS. GARVEY: Yes, although that genre of what I call the artists books that's so proliferating today, that was just about beginning then.

MR. BROWN: It was just beginning in 1961?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah, yeah.

MR. BROWN: What was the reaction to the [inaudible]?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, I think it was very positive, by and large.

MR. BROWN: [Inaudible]

MS. GARVEY: I think so. And I think it turned a lot of people on to collecting this genre. And Peter had a marvelous eye for installation. And he was very bold. And a book show can be very dull. You get a crick in your neck looking down at these things. And he was wise enough -- he dared to take it out of the book context, in some cases, like Matisse jazz and things like that -- fly it, put it up on the walls, you know. So it made a strong visual impact on people.

And the catalog was -- Karl Zahn designed it.

MR. BROWN: He was the graphic designer for the MFA.

MS. GARVEY: For the MFA. And so I worked closely with him. And then I think Thomas Todd printed it.

MR. BROWN: [Inaudible]

MS. GARVEY: So it was a very local project. And it's gone through about three editions.

MR. BROWN: So what was your role in this?

MS. GARVEY: Well, I wrote the catalog.

MR. BROWN: You wrote the catalog?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah, um-hm. In those days, your name didn't get put on the title pages if you wrote catalogs, as you well know. But it was -- I'm not sure it ever appeared on the title page, but it may have been added to a hard title when we went into later editions.

MR. BROWN: Was it part of the exhibition here at the Houghton, or was it --

MS. GARVEY: No, it was all over there. Yeah. We didn't split it.

MR. BROWN: Was that quite an unusual exhibition at that time for an art museum?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, I think so. Yes, yeah, um-hm. And of course, the MFA print room, like the Metropolitan Museum, has quietly collected great books through the years. And so the tradition was there. But it wasn't realized by a lot of people. And I think it broadened the view of both book collectors and print collectors and other museums. I notice when I go to print council meetings now and they say -- people submit an annual list of highlights of new acquisitions sort of things, you know. Books are there. And they never used to be. It's very interesting, I think, yeah.

So I think that was really a seminal project. And he's the one -- I did the slave work, but I loved doing it. But he's the one who had the ideas. Sorry I keep [inaudible].

MR. BROWN: Phil Hofer?

MS. GARVEY: Phil Hofer, yeah.

MR. BROWN: And you did that [inaudible] in one of your earlier substantial projects, right?

MS. GARVEY: That's right. Yeah, um-hm. And he gave me the opportunity.

MR. BROWN: What was the audience at that time, would you say? Was it collectors, mostly? Some scholars?

MS. GARVEY: Yes. Well, you know, like any museum show, they make a bit pitch for your, quote, "average museum visitor," and so on.

MR. BROWN: Sure.

MS. GARVEY: But we quickly were aware of the repercussions that this was cultivating a whole new audience for books. This was -- the book collectors, a lot of them hadn't been aware of the role of the -- you know, the school of Paris, which it essentially was, but other things, too -- in the book. And I think it opened a lot of eyes to this. And we cut it off. It's also limited. It's in Western Europe and the U.S. And we cut it off at 1960. Well, I mean, an awful lot has happened since then.

MR. BROWN: You almost brought -- well, you brought it up the president?

MS. GARVEY: To the then-president, that's right.

MR. BROWN: But there was only the merest glimmer of what we now think of as [inaudible] you said the artists books.

MS. GARVEY: What I call artists books.

MR. BROWN: For example, American artists doing --

MS. GARVEY: No, we were hard-pressed. But we -- Hofer had bought that wonderful Antonio Prosconi [phonetic]. Have you got him on tape, by the way?

MR. BROWN: No.

MS. GARVEY: Because he's still living. And he was teaching at Sumy at Purchase, New York. And Marilyn Simms at the Cooper-Hewitt, she's done some catalogs on Prosconi. But it's a lorca [phonetic] item on the Guardia Civil in Spain in the Spanish Civil War -- and only four copies because he told me once he couldn't afford to buy anymore paper when he was doing it in the early '40s.

We had that. And we had a very interesting publication, *21 Etchings and Poems*. The New York studio that kept up Italia 17 when Haiter [phonetic] moved to New York during the war -- an artist named Peter Grippe who I think taught at Brandeis later, he started this project. And there were 21 artists who had worked as printmakers in studio in Italia 17. Funny, no one ever says Italia di cet, they always say Italia 17 in New York. [Laughter]

But anyway -- and with the poets who were interested in the visual expression. And the poets wrote out with transfer paper their texts, and they were etched. And then they are on facing pages. And that was really quite a radical experiment.

MR. BROWN: And this sort of thing was given some prominence in [inaudible]?

MS. GARVEY: Yes, it was.

MR. BROWN: And you were quite new in doing that, weren't you?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, very much so. Yeah.

MR. BROWN: Did you have a role in the installation? You said Peter [inaudible]?

MS. GARVEY: Yes. Peter basically masterminded it, but I remember going over it, you know, the last couple of days, the usual frantic final closing of putting something together, yeah.

MR. BROWN: Well, after that, did pause for a moment or did you [inaudible]?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, yes, very much so, I think.

MR. BROWN: [Inaudible]

MS. GARVEY: And then the Dallas Public Library, which is a slightly different spin on some similar books -- a friend of Peter's in Dallas was very active on the board of the public library and was so intrigued by this that she persuaded us to sort of moonlight and do a show for the Dallas Public Library.

MR. BROWN: And was that -- when was that?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, 1970, yeah. It was just within the decade.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: We called that The Arts of the French Poet. And then I think the next one that really did have some influence on a subsequent exhibition, certainly, was the one we called The Turn of the Century, 1885 to 1910. And there were three of us who did the text. We shared that with Peter and I and Ann Smith. Did you know Ann?

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. You knew she died. The service is next Saturday, next week Saturday.

MR. BROWN: And that was about -- when was that?

MS. GARVEY: That was -- don't tell me -- 1970. [Inaudible]

MR. BROWN: And at that time Peter Wicks was here?

MS. GARVEY: He was here, yeah, um-hm. And we were all very interested in, you know, the art nouveau Jugendstil kind of thing. And nobody was much publishing on that at that time. There has been an abundance of material since then. And so this was just trying to sort of call it to attention. And we had very limited exhibition space here. So you couldn't make a splash.

I also remember that it was -- opening date was the time of the student strikes. And it was the time of Kent State. And I mean, there was such a pall on every campus.

MR. BROWN: Uh-huh.

MS. GARVEY: That was -- well, also security questions. And we didn't have -- we canceled the opening. We had a closing in the following October, I think. The show ran through the summer. And so a lot of people dared to come out and look at it, you know. So it's tied up forever in my mind with the troubles.

MR. BROWN: Was this something that in that way affected you -- otherwise, did it affect you while you were here?

MS. GARVEY: You'll be interested. It's a sexist story on one level -- that the male staff here was very much affected in their daily life by this because the whole yard was locked up at 5 o'clock.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MS. GARVEY: It was a tense period. And frankly, there were worries about security of the catalog, not so much the collections in Widener as the records. And Houghton is a vulnerable building with all its long windows and things like that. And the mail staff, for about a week -- they can tell you better than I -- they took turns on, I think, all-night duty, actually. And everyone was, as I say, very, very concerned because everything was [inaudible].

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: There were the threats from firebrands, you know, and things like that, which happily never, never developed. And may I tell you one of my -- my only funny recollection of that period? And I really cherish it.

Okay, 5 o'clock, you trotted out right away. You got out of the yard because they were locking the gates. And I'm sure there was one open for people who lived within the yard, of course. But it was probably someone was on duty.

MR. BROWN: Somebody guarding?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. And it was one of the few years I can remember that we really had spring. I mean, it was just beautiful weather. And I always felt that if we hadn't had such good weather, there wouldn't have been quite so much visible activity out in the yard, and so on and so forth. And then it coincided with exams, and people always looked their grungiest at that time, you know.

And I was walking out one night at 5 o'clock, and all these grungy people were -- who were overlaid with political concerns at that point, and studying and sitting in the yard and looking absolutely wretched -- that was the sad part about it. Of course, the street people began to come in at that period, too, you see. So you've got all of that picture as well.

And a freshman came out of one of the freshman houses, and he was tall and thin and elegant. And he had -- well, he had white ducks. That's what he had on. I mean, white flannels even, I think it was, and a spanking fresh shirt, which was probably colored. And he had an old-fashioned boater hat on. And in one hand, he had a glass. And in the other hand, he had a bottle of gin. And it was straight out of Fitzgerald, you know. And I'm sure he -- of course, that's why he was doing it.

And these people --

[Laughter]

MS. GARVEY: And I think I burst out laughing, you know, because it was the one bright spot I can remember from a couple of very tense weeks there. And I often wondered who he was and what happened to him, whether he's gone through life very blissfully since then, or whether that was his moment of statement, you know. I don't know. But I cherish that.

MR. BROWN: So the show --

MS. GARVEY: So we ran it through the summer.

MR. BROWN: Ran it through, but in these times.

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. And then we did have a closing.

MR. BROWN: And that -- what was in The Turn of the Century Show? What sorts of things? You mentioned Jugendstil [inaudible].

MS. GARVEY: Jugendstil, yeah. It was along that stylistic period that we felt so much of this was not a dead end, but some of the artists involved, it led into, quote, "more modern" art. And now, of course, eyes and tastes change so that you can look at these things for themselves and not just as as leading into something else, yeah. And of course, there's so much interest in it now.

MR. BROWN: And would this illustration -- not illustration. Were these things connected with books for the most part?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, it was all books.

MR. BROWN: All books.

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. I mean, there would be the occasional print. And Peter was wonderful in -- as I've said, in installation. And I think he quoted Henry Rossiter when he said, "You must always have a little hardware to brighten things up." And he went to New York --

MR. BROWN: What did he mean by that?

MS. GARVEY: He got a Tiffany lamp. He went to Lillian Nassau, who was the source of all those back-gallery kind of thing at that time. And he got a little silver and that sort of thing. So that was, you know -- I would have stuck with the flatware, as it were. And, you know, it was a brilliant idea to bring in the dec arts as well.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: He was very good at that. And he had a very good eye for it. And something I guess I never did put down, because I doubt if my name appears in it -- I'm not sure. But speaking of the hardware reminds me of the H.H. Richardson catalog that Jim O'Gorman, who now teaches at Wellesley -- did.

MR. BROWN: And that came out in the, what, mid-70s?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. Probably '74 or something like that.

MR. BROWN: And your role in that was what?

MS. GARVEY: Well, Peter and I pulled it all together. And that was at the Fogg because we felt that -- he borrowed a clock from the Albany Statehouse. Richardson actually didn't do the final statehouse in Albany, but he was high in the competition, and he did design furniture, his Italia did. And we had from Worcester the a la Farge stained glass piece and so on, and a rug. So that was at the Fogg. But that, you see, the Houghton Library has a huge collection of Richardson drawings. And we felt that --

MR. BROWN: And that's what this was -- the Fogg?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. It was. I don't have a copy of the catalog up here -- of drawings by Richardson and, of course to some degree, by the studio. And we wanted to make that visible. There had been a lot of work done before either one of us was on the scene of cataloging these drawings. So Jim didn't have to start from scratch. They had been sorted. They had been -- by building, by city and by building, and Price -- a man named Charles Price --

MR. BROWN: Yes, in the '60s, he had done that?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. So there was indeed basic work done. But Printing and Graphic Arts was the only department that really was interested in this material. Other people weren't. They saw it as kind of a stray collection. And my successor Anne Anninger has done a brilliant job of getting grants, which were not so available, it seemed to me, at that time when we were working on it.

Grants to have much conservation done, and it's now computer cataloged, and it is house, you know, impeccably. And so perhaps that's partly because it was called to such attention. And of course, we have masses of architectural historians and architects coming in to look at these.

MR. BROWN: This exhibition, did that carry to a new plateau?

MS. GARVEY: I believe it did, yes.

MR. BROWN: It wasn't here and you couldn't see it, but [inaudible]. What was the theme at the time?

MS. GARVEY: That's when I met you.

MR. BROWN: Yes, it was.

MS. GARVEY: When we went to Northeastern.

MR. BROWN: What was the feedback from this show? As far as you know, was it played to a wide audience?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, I think it did, yes. And of course, one of the interesting things about the whole archive is that any time there's any remodeling of any of these existing buildings, such as exist, people find very useful information. Like Trinity Church and all the suit that --

MR. BROWN: Exactly, which came out when they build a high-rise building.

MS. GARVEY: Which came -- the John Hancock.

MR. BROWN: Hancock.

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. And I believe it was settled out of court, but there were settlements. And I believe that our vast drawings of Trinity helped to clarify some of the problems.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. Well, this is a very wider collaboration than you usually did, right? The Fogg people, James O'Gorman from the outside?

MS. GARVEY: Right. Um-hm.

MR. BROWN: And you and --

MS. GARVEY: And then we also worked -- we had regular meetings with Shepley Bulfinch.

MR. BROWN: Oh, the successor firm?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah, James Clapp, Jim Clapp, who was the senior partner.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MS. GARVEY: And Jean Paul Carlion [phonetic], who was very interesting because his taste was totally Bozart, you know. And I don't think he really liked Richardson terribly much. [Laughter] But we had an interesting time.

By the way, are you aware of --

MR. BROWN: Do you want me to turn it off now?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. Just --

[Off the record]

MS. GARVEY: But as I said, I guess I never got the HHR down here. I should look at the entry.

MR. BROWN: Sure --

[Simultaneous conversation]

MS. GARVEY: -- because I do think that was -- because I've always been interested in architecture and him as an architect, and so --

MR. BROWN: Those drawings, the Richardson drawings, were under the supervision of your department; is that right?

MS. GARVEY: We sort of fell heir to them. They didn't have our number, our identifying TYP.

MR. BROWN: How did they come to Houghton rather than to the library generally?

MS. GARVEY: I believe it was, as the old days we referred to, Bill Jackson, who was the first librarian of the Houghton Library, was talking to Hugh Shepley at a dinner.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm, the architect.

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. And that's the way that -- and I'm not sure that Jackson had any particular interest in the material itself. But he was willing to house it here. And of course, there are a great many Harvard buildings that appear on this, in this archive. There's quite a bit for the law school, very little for Emerson Hall, which I think is a wonderful building. But it relates. It's part of social history, too.

MR. BROWN: Sure.

MS. GARVEY: It's interesting that the head of the New Haven -- sorry, the Boston and Albany railroad was a classmate of --

MR. BROWN: Richardson's.

MS. GARVEY: -- of Richardson's.

MR. BROWN: Right.

MS. GARVEY: And so that it's a story of patronage in many ways.

MR. BROWN: Yeah. And Jackson took a very broad view of what the Houghton might have [inaudible].

MS. GARVEY: Yes, yes. I don't think that any such material, because of limits of space, would come in again. It's a different kind of archive that would come in now.

MR. BROWN: Right.

MS. GARVEY: But I think it's a great addition to this.

MR. BROWN: But that was very enlarging for you, the project?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, it was wonderful. It's how I got to know Jim O'Gorman very well. And he, of course, was one of the spark plugs for this current show at Wellesley.

MR. BROWN: The arts and crafts show?

MS. GARVEY: The arts and crafts show, yeah.

MR. BROWN: But did he work very systematically, or how was he as a person to work with?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, he was just wonderful to work with. Yes, I would say quite systematically. He was teaching at BU at the time.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MS. GARVEY: But maybe only one or two courses. I don't know what his appointment was because he went from there to Wellesley. And his students were always dropping in to see him. He'd sort of have an office hour here. And I was most impressed with his work with students. I mean, he gave them so much time and energy. And I just learned so much about the period and more about Olmsted and so on.

Wellesley is having an Olmsted -- photographs of Olmsted properties in the fall. It's going to be there.

MR. BROWN: Good. Well, did this lead to something, anything similar? Or were you always working on some other things, toward some other exhibitions or publications?

MS. GARVEY: No. It was -- I think each one I've been in has been really a unit in itself.

MR. BROWN: [Inaudible]

MS. GARVEY: But I've got all sorts of personal interest, you know, that developed from these things.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: And then I think -- I'm skipping a little bit. But the one that, again, had led to other things, not professionally for me, but for her, Nancy Finley, who jumped sort of a little more than halfway down, Artists of the Book in Boston.

MR. BROWN: You know, that's --

MS. GARVEY: Yeah, which Nancy and I -- she wrote the catalog, but we essentially did, you know, the show together, and I guess you could say edited it.

MR. BROWN: But this is in line with an interest that you had developed in the '50s when you were first interviewed?

MS. GARVEY: That's right. Yeah. It spins out of the turn of the century catalog. And --

MR. BROWN: Were you involved to a lesser degree, then, in the book Artists in Boston?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. I didn't write any of the entries. But I was very involved in the whole concept.

MR. BROWN: As curator, you were?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah, and shaping it up. And Wellesley had her do the book section of this arts and crafts show, and she was one of the speakers last week.

MR. BROWN: At this special [inaudible].

MS. GARVEY: Yes. Of course, Houghton Library is very strong in this kind of material because it's a collection of New England authors, and so on and so forth. And we now have, I think, much of the Houghton-Mifflin archive and Little Brown.

MR. BROWN: The business archive?

MS. GARVEY: Yes, yes. And some came in just as I was retiring, so I never got into it. But there may also be some graphic material that I think someone else may have worked on it, but I did not get involved.

MR. BROWN: So this Artists of the Book project went back for quite a ways and then came forward till fairly recent material as well, is that right? The Artists of the Book in Boston?

MS. GARVEY: No, it was 1890 to 1910.

MR. BROWN: So that was [inaudible] parallel.

MS. GARVEY: It was really what you feel that that, quote, "style" is dying down.

MR. BROWN: Yeah. Was that an era that you were interested in in, say, in Boston or in American publishing?

MS. GARVEY: Well, I got interested in it when we did the art nouveau Jugendstil, you know, show. And then realized that there was a lot of American stuff we didn't have time to really explore. And then it's all prefeminist, but it's terribly interesting that so many women would be illustrators. And it could be, to a degree, a cottage industry for them, working not necessarily in anybody's office, but working at home. And there are some very gifted women.

I mean, like Ethel Reed and Sara Wyman Whitman and people who are now really highly regarded, you know.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

[END OF DISK 3A]

MR. BROWN: Talk now about the research you're continuing with, the eighteenth century Venetian -- I shouldn't say illustrations [inaudible].

MS. GARVEY: Yes, I think -- well, I simply say eighteenth century Italian books. And I use the word "illustration" because it really is illustration at that time.

MR. BROWN: Yeah. And how did that arise? Is that [inaudible]?

MS. GARVEY: I just got interested in the subject; that's all. And Hofer was buying it like crazy at one point, which called my attention to it as I would unpack the bundles that came in. And realized that when you try to check a book against existing information, there was very little existing information. And that I got very interested in this, but never got very far with it.

MR. BROWN: I'm ignorant of this. But was Venice a major center of production of great books?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, Venice was a major center of printing, but all over Italy wonderful books were coming out. And one of the things I find more interesting about Italy than France in the eighteenth century was the very fact that Italy was so fractured and had -- there was no Italian government. There were just the individual either city-states like Venice, or royal possessions like Naples. And so stylistically, everything is totally different. There is a thread, of course, of the period that runs through it. But they're more intriguing.

In Paris, you have a court style. And everybody is pretty much within that. And this I find much more intriguing. And it's not necessarily great art. There are great artists like Tiepolo and Pietzeta [phonetic] that appear in these books. But there are these wonderful little genre books. And despite Venice's reputation as the pleasure capital of Europe, which in many ways it was, yeah, there were all these wonderful scientific books and architectural books and histories and little genre reviews that were not published for the tourists, but were published for the Venetians, who were great readers. And I found this very intriguing.

And I have a lot of preliminary stuff that, at the moment I'm really trying to revise. But I'm glad now I didn't try to publish what would have been prematurely because more people in institutions are getting interested in it, and there's a little bit more work to do.

MR. BROWN: Yes. But more is coming out.

MS. GARVEY: But more --

MR. BROWN: [Inaudible]

MS. GARVEY: -- coming out. And I don't -- as a footnote to this, I say I don't know whether you ever knew Joaquin Gada [phonetic], a Medievalist who taught at the Fogg and at Brandeis. And we ran into each other at one of Elmar Sybel's [phonetic] Christmas parties after we both retired.

MR. BROWN: [Inaudible]

MS. GARVEY: Yes, after we both retired. And each one said, "Ooh, haven't seen you for so long. What are you doing now? What are you doing now?" And he had the perfect answer. He laughed and said, "I'm working on a posthumous publication."

[Laughter]

MS. GARVEY: So I said -- you know. For years I've tried to put a name to what I'm doing. It embarrasses me I'm so pokey about it. So now that's what I say I'm doing, working on a posthumous publication.

MR. BROWN: Well, that's only part of what you do, though. I mean, you're involved, aren't you, in various kinds of seminars?

MS. GARVEY: Well, yes, I have been. And I taught -- after I -- what year was it? Maybe '92 or something like that, I taught for the book arts summer school that Terry Bowinger, who was at Columbia -- it was then at Columbia. He now has an appointment at the University of Virginia. And that's where the courses are given. And since I have always worked with original material, it was hard enough to do it in New York. It was an intense week of, you know, five hours a day for one week.

MR. BROWN: It really was covering some particular topic?

MS. GARVEY: I did modern -- I did nineteenth and twentieth century books. And I found it hard enough to work with slides. But then half a day I would take them either to the Met -- we went to the Met. We went to the Museum of Modern Art. We went to the New York Public. I took them to Bob Blackman's print studio so they could see how things got put together, how they were printed and how they got put together. And that was fascinating.

But I have allowed myself to be pulled off, you know, by some of these things like the Wellesley symposium, and so on.

MR. BROWN: Is that what you've just done?

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. Now I have to get back to the eighteenth century when I [inaudible].

MR. BROWN: But these seminars are something that you participate in practically every year?

MS. GARVEY: I've never been in a Wellesley one before.

MR. BROWN: No, but I mean the ones to do with the book arts, in New York and at the [inaudible]?

MS. GARVEY: I've only done the one. I've only done the one.

MR. BROWN: These are --

MS. GARVEY: But they've been fascinating, and I found that the preparation is just very exacting because I had to go to New York and spend a week at these institutions figuring out what I would request for us to see when we went down in the summer, sort of thing, you know. But I've enjoyed them.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. Would you -- as you look back, do you feel the course you've cast is the one you're very happy that you did?

MS. GARVEY: Yes. It was --

MR. BROWN: It sort of crept upon you.

MS. GARVEY: It was all serendipitous, yes.

MR. BROWN: You know, because after the years at Worcester, and then the one unloved year at Newark --

MS. GARVEY: At Newark, yeah, um-hm.

MR. BROWN: Do you attribute a good deal of your feelings today that you've been doing something you love for a very long time is owing partly to your own sense of curiosity and asking a lot of questions?

MS. GARVEY: I think so. I never saw myself as a particularly aggressive person or had that kind of a success that comes with it. But I guess I have a lot of interests that had developed, some of which have dropped by the wayside, I may say, um-hm. And I always -- oh, I've had -- I do want to mention the three wonderful assistants I had here at the Houghton Library.

The first one was David Becker. And then David at one point was at the Boston Museum. He's a free-lance scholar now, but based in Portland, Maine. But we --

MR. BROWN: Did he bring to this some art history and [inaudible] training?

MS. GARVEY: Oh, yes, Bowdoin. And he's a first-rate collector of drawings and prints. And he carried on that Hofer tradition of the -- he was really a Hofer protégé on an informal basis, you know. And that's how he -- that's why we were aware of him when I became curator. And David Becker and Roger Wick -- and I didn't mention Roger's catalog on late Medieval and Renaissance illuminated manuscripts because I'm not a manuscript person. But I'm very proud of that that came out on my watch, shall we say. And Roger, he's now at the Morgan Library. And Nancy Finley -- all with different specialties.

And I always said, if we could have had the three of them at once and had a real department going, you know, what we could have accomplished, you know. But I -- it isn't so much taking credit as feeling that they did get some good training and exposure here. And they were all people who would just take it and run with it. I mean, they were all self-starters. And I'm really proud of them. And all worked very happily together.

MR. BROWN: As a mentor, how did you think you projected things? Were you most informal?

MS. GARVEY: Very.

MR. BROWN: Fairly directive?

MS. GARVEY: Very informal. You learned by doing. And you're probably familiar with that wonderful phrase of the Harvard indifference that has broken many a person's spirit. But it's assumed that you're a grownup and that people are quickly going to learn whether you can do the job or not. And I felt right away that each one of these in turn was, you know, very, very capable.

And they were all -- I could almost say deferential, considerably younger than I, but had a sense -- they're still of a generation, the baby boomer generation -- man, I can't believe they're approaching 50-somethng. Still of a generation and personal backgrounds, perhaps, where if they had a boss, they didn't try to break out of that situation. They were willing to take directions and work on things. And then quickly I find out that they can be very independent.

But they all still had to do the nitty-gritty, like run the little sales desk downstairs; do the accounts sometimes, you know, and things like that. And they never balked. I mean, we all balk at times about these things. But we stayed in harmony. Let's put it that way. And they were -- you know, I'm good friends with all of them still, which I cherish.

MR. BROWN: And their careers, then beginning a generation later than yours, nevertheless in many ways have paralleled, have they?

MS. GARVEY: That's right.

MR. BROWN: And you had to be a jack of all trades, as you've described in our interview.

MS. GARVEY: And of course, I think that's the best way you learn. If you're in an understaffed institution, it's an opportunity if you can only -- you may not see it at the moment. But the minute you leave you realize what opportunities you had.

MR. BROWN: We have a cliché [inaudible]. It's so rich, and yet why -- you've mentioned there were years of financial stringencies here at the Houghton Library. Is that because of the policy, you must take care of yourself, the self-reliance?

MS. GARVEY: Every tub on its own bottom, yes. Of course, as you know, for us and all such institutions, including museums, your purchase funds have nothing to do with the college administration. They are things that have been given to you.

MR. BROWN: Right.

MS. GARVEY: So it's a question of trying to develop those. And then as the generational changes -- and we've mentioned the systems people that have, of necessity, of course, had to have very important roles in institutions. And a lot of the funding has gone to those kinds of jobs. And there was a period when libraries and museums felt rather besieged at Harvard, as everywhere else, I think. And so more than one assistant was out of the question. And there were times, not just my department. I think I was fairly lucky. But things would be put on hold if anyone left.

And these were basically internship jobs. It wasn't expected any of these people would stay indefinitely. And I think the picture may be under Richard Wendorf's administration, I think --

MR. BROWN: Who succeeded [inaudible].

MS. GARVEY: Well, no, you see, Larry Dowler, who is a systems person. And Richard had more interest in the collection than Larry and the programs, the intellectual development. And I think that things -- he was agreeable to work with him. Everybody --

MR. BROWN: Sure.

MS. GARVEY: An awful lot of exhibitions, which I had nothing to do with, went on, lots of important things, because I was retiring. Now, there's a search going on. So it will be very interesting to see --

MR. BROWN: [Inaudible]

MS. GARVEY: -- what the future brings.

MR. BROWN: Do you think you've sort of thrived, in a sense, having to always be rather imaginative and scrambling now and then for a thing? I mean, rather than if you had been in a great, heavily endowed, amply staffed --

MS. GARVEY: Oh, that's hard to say because you offer such a temptation there, you know. [Laughter] But it's the only way I have ever worked, you know.

MR. BROWN: You didn't [inaudible].

MS. GARVEY: No, no. and also, the relatively small staff in the institutions I've been. I think personally, perhaps I thrived more in that than I would have in the huge Metropolitan Museum bureaucracy. My assistant Roger Wick had been an intern there. And then David went on to -- had a Chester Dale fellowship down there. And, boy, they both found those hierarchies very, very difficult, that hierarchy at the Met very difficult to thrive under.

MR. BROWN: So you're going to spend most of your time on Venice?

MS. GARVEY: Yes, yes.

MR. BROWN: No kidding?

MS. GARVEY: There was a Venetian from Daccione Chine [phonetic] here a few weeks ago. Roger and I had met him, so we just know him slightly but we were having lunch.

MR. BROWN: Roger Stoddard [inaudible]?

MS. GARVEY: Yes, who is the major book person and scholar here now. And he mentioned an interesting exhibition they had. It's something that we Americans haven't had to do, really. They were having a 200th anniversary show of the fall of Venice. It was in the spring of 1797.

MR. BROWN: 1797, um-hm.

MS. GARVEY: That the Napoleonic forces, you know, took over. And the conversation was such I never did find out what was in the show.

MR. BROWN: [Laughter]

MS. GARVEY: But can you imagine, you know, doing -- Boston didn't have to do that with its revolutionary celebration.

[Laughter]

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. But that was kind of an intriguing thought. And remember that sort of phony invasion of Venice that took place?

MR. BROWN: Oh, yes, about a month ago.

MS. GARVEY: Well, I think that was a prank connected with it in some way. But I'd never seen it spelled out.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm, um-hm. Sounds like you'd like to get into some more exhibitions and projects of that sort, something like that.

MS. GARVEY: Well, you know, sometime there may be an exhibition of eighteenth century. I did a small one here once, but it didn't have a catalog or anything. It was just a summer show, you know.

MR. BROWN: Now, the book arts show, the one that came up to almost modern, the book arts show -- you were involved in that, weren't you, to some degree?

MS. GARVEY: You mean the real artists books one a few years ago?

MR. BROWN: No.

MS. GARVEY: No, that's strictly Anne's.

MR. BROWN: [Inaudible]

MS. GARVEY: Although I will say that I was the person who started collecting artists books, which I was not an instant convert to them, I have to say. The first ones I saw, I stood at some distance.

MR. BROWN: What did you think? Were these peripheral, pretty --

MS. GARVEY: Yeah. I thought, you know, What is this all about? And I can't tell you when I crossed over, but I began to look and think about it a little, and so on.

MR. BROWN: What do you think their merit is in general? I mean, what is it that converted you?

MS. GARVEY: I think -- there's a tremendous range. But I think that the best of them are -- and I can't stop to define the best of them, but I guess it's what a curator responds to -- that some of them are very fresh and original and imaginative. I think the weakness of some of them is that they do have great ideas, but they are poorly -- the craft is not there. Because they don't have to rely on the printer or anybody who knows a craft. They can slap it together. And sometimes they do. But I think that the best of it is very intriguing.

By the way, there's a show at Portland, Maine, this summer. Do you know about that one?

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MS. GARVEY: Because David brought me this little --

MR. BROWN: [Inaudible]

MS. GARVEY: -- a flyer for me. Yeah, so it's a subject that's really proliferate. And it's a whole Wellesley symposium devoted to it, which I think opened a lot of eyes.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm, um-hm.

MS. GARVEY: And of course, Smith has done a lot with this kind of thing. Do you know Elliot Offner? He's a sculptor.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MS. GARVEY: And he's done a Brigart [phonetic] course for years. And he told me once that -- I don't think I misquote him in saying that he was respectable because he was a sculptor. And it was then he got into the printed page, you know. Oh, his girls -- his girls -- have turned out some wonderful things. And a couple of his students have gotten into Yale Fine Arts in the studio, you know.

MR. BROWN: Yeah.

MS. GARVEY: And that is a very hard nut to crack that art school.

MR. BROWN: Yeah. On the strength of their work [inaudible]?

MS. GARVEY: To a degree, yes. I mean, it shows you how strong that their work was, yeah.

MR. BROWN: Well, that must be very nice to have something that you became converted to some years ago proliferating?

MS. GARVEY: Yes. And colleagues in New York, Debbie Wye, who is at the Museum of Modern Art, who succeeded Riva Castleman -- I used to know Debbie slightly when she was at the Fogg. She worked for the drawings department. And much to my amazement, well, eight or nine years ago, she said, "You know, I think it's wonderful you're the only person who's collecting these things institutionally." Evidently, even a little bit before the Museum of Modern Art got into it -- and so that surprised me a little. But I'm glad that, you know, Anne picked it up right away, Anne Anninger. And she's really interested in it, yeah.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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