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Oral history interview with Edith Gregor Halpert, 1965 Jan. 20

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Transcript

Interview

HP: HARLAN PHILLIPS
EH: EDITH HALPERT

HP: We're in business.

EH: I have to get all those papers?

HP: Let me turn her off.

EH: Let met get a package of cigarettes, incidentally. [Looking over papers, correspondence, etc.] This was the same year, 1936. I quit in September. I was in Newtown; let's see, it must have been July. In those days, I had a four months vacation. It was before that. Well, in any event, sometime probably in late May, or early in June, Holger Cahill and Dorothy Miller, his wife -- they were married then, I think -- came to see me. She has a house. She inherited a house near Pittsfield, Massachusetts, and on the way back they stopped off and very excited that through Audrey McMahon he was offered a job to take charge of the WPA in Washington. He was quite scared because he had never been in charge of anything. He worked by himself as a PR for the Newark Museum for many years, and that's all he did. He sent out publicity releases that Dana gave him, or Miss Winsor, you know, told him what to say, and he was very good at it. He also got the press. He wrote very well, and so on. But he was not an organizer. And I was a little disturbed. I didn't say anything, but I urged him to take the job because he knew a good many artists and so on, and he was an honest guy and whatnot, and he needed a job desperately. You know, he had no income at all except when he worked, and he didn't get odd jobs except those that I gave him. In 1936, I put him in charge of the municipal art exhibition which had been completely organized and completed long before he got there. He was there two days, went to the hospital, and that was the end of it. He drew the salary, but he didn't do any work. I would go to the hospital; I'd write a letter inviting all the dealers to have a day when they could invite their clients before the official opening so that LaGuardia -- I had to get everybody's permission -- LaGuardia could announce the sales, you know, before the opening, and so on. I wrote the letter, had it done on plain white paper. There were no letterheads there, and took it to Eddie in the hospital, I think it was Saint somebody/something hospital way up near Fordham University, and I'd have him sign them. I think that's the only thing he did on the entire job. In any event, I urged him to do it. He took the job, and I think he'd been on the job about one month, or two months when he sent me an S.O.S. I came out there; I was on my way to the West Coast. I was tired. It was a most terrible period for the gallery, and I was dead broke, the artists were broke. There was something in San Francisco, or Los Angeles, where I thought I could accomplish something special. There were several collectors there I thought I might get to buy things, you know, package deals of some kind, to help the artists. On my way to California I stopped off and I went to that office, and I almost dropped dead! The incoming mail basket was drooling. It was overflowing to the point were the whole desk was covered. It had just slipped off, you know, it wasn't in order. The whole end of the desk was untouched incoming mail, and everybody was floating around. Nobody knew what to do. There was no order of any kind, and so I went over the thing. I said I'd stay a few days and start him off because I was an organizer in my business life, and I knew I could set order. I asked who the employees were, and then I saw Tom Parker and talked with him. He had everything that the project needed. He didn't know very much about art. He was an architect, I believe . . .

HP: Yes.

EH: . . . but he was an executive type. So I suggested that Eddie turn over everything to Tom and, meanwhile, some of the things had been coming in from various Projects. They had to make deliveries. They were standing in crates unpacked, and so on, from Chicago, from Boston, from various Projects. Nothing was happening. So he asked me whether I'd stay, and I said I'd stay a week. I had to sign all sorts of documents, and so on. I've forgotten what I was getting, and then I went to the business office, and they all asked me to stay. I stayed on at so much per day. I went back to New York weekends to attend to some business and I used to write out my own fare ticket. Everybody did, you know, you wrote out your own ticket, and I'd fly back and forth unless it was bad weather. And I had everything unpacked and started working these things out. Then there was Dan Defenbacker, who was on the Project in some other capacity, and Tom and I talked it over and decided he was . . . he too knew very little about art, but he was a charm boy of the old school, you know, really hot stuff. He could win his way through anything. So I started arranging these various exhibitions in the different classifications. Of course, in certain localities the children's show, children's work, would be a pushover. Everybody likes children, even non-married people. And so I started a whole series of shows, and I have all the schedules here, which

amazes me, with my beautiful chart. I just had all of those photostated to send to Washington at the request of Roger Stevens. They're working on the WPA project now. And I'm mailing all of these. There are six separate charts outlining the various exhibitions and where they went. for instance, here's one: Colombia, South Carolina; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, I just want you to note that these are places where they never saw an original work of art, or but rarely; Mobile, Alabama; Jacksonville, Florida; Knoxville, Tennessee; Chapel Hill, North Carolina; Raleigh, Greenville, Nashville, Tennessee; Oklahoma city, Chattanooga, St. Paul, Raleigh, and so on. And they went on, and all these charts indicate various other places. Now I also have a list of the artists and how many objects went, and whether they were oils, or watercolors, or graphics. These were all separate shows. They are numbered 200, 201, and so on, sculpture, ceramics, Index of American Design, children's paintings, American folk art, and so on. As works came from the artists -- you know, serious artists, because most people think there were 5,200 artists employed -- but many inept artists who were chosen in a locale where they had very few artists were used as teachers. Others were photographers. Good craftsmen were used for the Index of American Design, which fortunately hs been saved and it's in the National Gallery and has been used consistently not only for shows but designers, and so on. It's a very valuable asset that the government can be proud of. Now, incidentally, just by accident I got the . . . who gave me a list of where the Stuart Davis's are?

HP: I did.

EH: You did. You gave me a list of the Stuart Davis's in New York City. So far I've written to all five of the schools which you mentioned, and the National Collection of Fine Art -- I'll never get that N.C.F.A. -- this is the new setup, the entire committee selecting the Davis show was terrible excited about this. So I said I'd take care of it. I wrote to all the schools. so far I've received two replies, and they haven't the slightest notion where the objects are.

HP: Oh, God!

EH: I've not heard from the other three, but I'm afraid they either don't answer because they don't know where they are and they don't want to admit it, or they know that they don't know. I'll probably get a pause. I'll follow up. I'll telephone these people. The first two said . . . you know, the Dean wrote and said he's been there only since 1957, but he's checked with everybody in the various offices, and nobody has any notion where those things are. I said they were valuable in my letter, thinking that that would encourage them to locate them. They would be credited to the schools. I gave them all the schmaltz, but so far I've had the two replies, and they don't know where they are. Now these exhibitions kept going on, and I had no idea. I just discovered in going through these papers that I continued after I quit, I had to go back at the end of September. I had to reopen the gallery, sales or no sales. Fortunately, I owned the building; I didn't have to pay any rent. So I went back. And then I find bills, my bills, and a letter saying that I would get ten dollars per diem, and I was to work only ten days a month, or something like that. So obviously I continued at least through December because I found some bills, and they go all the way to December. Then I trained a young boy there as my . . . well, first I trained him as an assistant, and then I put him in charge of the entire job. And here I have a letter or report that I sent. I'm reading from the original. This is dated September 2. This is addressed to Cahill. I was at Studio House. The Phillips -- Duncan Phillips let us use Studio House, which was used as a school by him previously, but he turned it over to the Project. First we were in . . . who had the biggest diamond in the word?

HP: The McLean Mansion.

EH: The McLean Mansion. We were in it, and it was very inadequate. They remained there, but we began getting so many pictures that I needed a separate place. I was all alone in this Studio House where the allocations took place, as well as where all the shows were organized, and I was there all alone until I got this young Crofut. When I was leaving I trained him, and he continued. But I have letters from him that continued right on through the following year, outlining exhibitions. Evidently I kept going there from time to time making selections, and he would report where the exhibitions were going. As far as I know, Cahill never entered the place. All these shows went on, went out, cleared through Tom Parker, you know, for all the official papers. Dan Defenbacker would make arrangements in advance, and he made arrangements in the most extraordinary places. Good. But if there was no official place he could have the show, he would go . . . the one that I remember specifically was Winston-Salem, which was the Republican town of all towns, and he got the bank, the biggest bank there, to give a whole floor for an exhibition of these wildmodern things. The President and the Vice-President were both Republicans, and I remember I took him out for a drink, because to me it was the most extraordinary feat; he was absolutely brilliant in placing shows. Where they were in museums, it was much easier, although the museums never showed that type of thing before in most places. But he'd get schools; he'd get stores, and so on. And the attendance was always tremendous because it was news, and the papers might talk about boondogglers, or they might write very, very nasty reviews about the crazy pictures that were being made, but the selections were always carefully considered for the various towns and that's why so many of the children's shows went out to places where they couldn't scream about that. That they adored, and the folk art they adored, and the Index of American Design they adored, and there'd be exhibitions of landscapes, there'd be theme shows, but bringing all the various states so that no one was played down. Everybody . . . all the artists would get into something all the time. Well, this letter I wrote to Cahill on September 2. He was on the road all the

time, as you know, doing a splendid job of inspiring the museum directors, or the committee selecting the artists and the works and so on, and taking the artists out, and pepping them up, inspiring them. He really was a great salesman in that direction, inspiring various of the so-called employees. And so here it is: [reading letter she wrote to Holger Cahill] "I am attaching several exhibition schedules. Number One indicates exhibitions which have actually cleared through Studio House since the beginning of July when I started my association with the Project. Number Two indicates exhibitions which have not been shipped but have already been arranged and will be ready for shipment before I leave. Number Three includes circuit exhibitions for North Carolina, Florida and Tennessee, which have already been scheduled, and are now being arranged for shipment. Exhibition Numbers 102 and 103 have already been assembled and shipped. Number Four indicates shows which are to be planned in Florida, Oklahoma, South Carolina. The requirements for these galleries were sent to us by the directors and I am now working on this group. I have also sent you the allocation report. You will note that, during the month of August, we allocated 201 items and also the same quantity during the preceding month." Now somewhere there is an itemized list which I sent with this. I don't have it, where the actual works were. I remember Congressmen coming in, and schools in the vicinity, and schools writing from various other parts of the country, museums and what not. That came later. I believe you know when I went back after September, and everybody was apprised of the fact that they could get works of art for the institutions, they naturally were all tax-exempt institutions that were included in the original arrangement. Now, everybody wishes they could find those lists. I don't know how many have been discovered. Then I continue: "From the many letters of acknowledgement in which the directors and other consignees express their enthusiasm for the shows, and for the results achieved through such exhibitions, I think it is imperative not only to continue the work but to extend such activities on a larger scale. It has been most difficult to function at Studio House with the continuously increasing work. It is important to have the proper facilities not only for storing all the paintings, sculpture, ceramics and prints, but also to have large enough rooms for receiving, unpacking, and checking the packing and shipping. The ideal space for such work would be a floor through with possibly some space on the floor above for the office force. The large crates coming and going cannot be properly handled except from a street floor level as the express company objects to any other carting arrangements. As you will note from the Report, 1087 items have already been sent out in less than two months with additional arrangements for 575 items to be shipped shortly." Now I'll cut in with . . . . Many of these went to 3, 4 and 5 locations; they were circulated because they were all ready. The crates were available, just repack them and send them to another city. Sometimes one show traveled for one solid year. And so this covered . . . I'd say this number could be multiplied by at least five. [Continue reading.] "In order to get out this large quantity of material, it is necessary to assemble many more items than incoming shipments have totalled, in the thousands, insofar as individual items are concerned. Of all the places I've seen, I feel the Garfinkel Annex is by far the best. It is now occupied by the WPA accounting offices which can possibly be moved." I don't know how they would have felt about it. "Space meets all of our requirements. It is on the street floor centrally located, has excellent light and can be partitioned for our specific needs. I shall be glad to draw up the floor plans including designs for racks in the stockroom divisions, the framer's shops, receiving and shipping rooms. As you well know, it is most important to have this matter taken care of immediately as we have to give up Studio House on September 15, and many valuable works of art will have to be moved and properly filed to avoid any possible damage. Also, since the Federal art galleries throughout the country now depend on us entirely for their exhibitions, we cannot afford to hold up any selections and shipments. I feel that the fine exhibitions which can be assembled from the works produced by the Federal Art Project artists will prove of incomparable value in the education program. The exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art alone will be a manifestation of what has been produced under the Project and how much exhibitions of this type are needed in this country, not only the artists but the American public will benefit tremendously through a continuing program of outstanding exhibitions, which the Project can provide." That's the end of that letter. And I have a great many more, which I won't read, but it is interesting to see how well Crofut followed through.

HP: What's his full name?

EH: S. F. Crofut. I have his name. I have personal letters that he sent me in another file that have nothing to do with the Project. He organized the first artmobiles in Richmond subsequently. That has nothing to do with the Project. He came to see me frequently about that and to borrow paintings from the gallery. So I can get the name. I'd love to locate him because he was really a very brilliant guy. Well, here he's enclosing: [Reading letter from S. F. Crofut] "September 28. Enclosing copies of four letters containing information which I thought best to forward to you, not knowing when you next visit will take place." You see, I obviously continued it for a long time. "Also, a list of 38 Index plates for the Newark show. Please note that none have been selected from New York City as yet. Otherwise there is nothing very urgent aside from the alarming fact that none of the regional directors' promises to supply fresh material have produced anything so far." That was also a problem getting the directors in various states to ship things promptly. In many cases these were people that were not trained in this field at all and they just didn't know the urgency and so on. He continued here: "Following your suggestion, we sent letters to all of them, all the exhibitions are out including Number 200." Those are some of the shows that had been prepared before on the charts that I have here. "First off, St. Petersburg where it is due October 7. Parker thought I had best limit them to 40 pieces in all. I still have enough material to make this an interesting show as well. I picked out all the mural sketches I could find and have had them framed and set aside. Are you

interested in going to the expense involved in providing glass for the very large series of six panels depicting children's activities?" This is this question -- this is not in the letter -- is an amusing one. I could not get money for glass, mats and so on. We had nobody to do the work. Finally some workman from another project was transferred to do framing, and they got lumber, but couldn't get the glass. So I paid for the glass all through that Project period, so even then he asked whether I would be interested in going to the expense of providing glass. Then: "Mrs. Robison has already disposed of approximately half of the state fair group. It appears as though Wichita will have to take the leavings. The two are now in direct communication with each other on the matter and so on. I am making plans to supply the Gibbs Gallery with about 60 watercolors in all for the period October 19 through November 9, as requested by Mr. Andrews. Parker says it is worth a good show." See, Parker really followed through very, very well. He ran that office brilliantly. "Johnson is with us for keeps." He was the framer and the porter and so on that I borrowed. He liked me or something. Where, you know, the heat in that place, no air-conditioning, he'd mop up the floor all the time; I was dripping constantly. "John is with us for keeps and we are doing very well. I'm having him frame as many watercolors as possible. Harris is already an expert at the cards." We had to make out complete cards, you know, with the title and all the information. "We're getting good service from nearly every direction. Please let us know when to expect you." And so on. I was very surprised . . . see, I've forgotten a great deal of this . . . that I continued for a long, long time, because there are many other letters and more charts and so on. And he continued. Then I came across something which rather surprised me. That's May 17, I wrote a letter to Nelson Rockefeller, which I have here, and which is also photostated. I'm sending that letter on to . . . I don't want to confuse the issue. It's '36 and '37 -- I want to jump to '39 at the moment, but I'll send that on to Roger Stevens as well, to show that Nelson Rockefeller really took a great interest and did things at that time and because he really worked at this. However, I sent him a letter on May 17 calling his attention -- it's a long letter; I won't read it -- calling his attention to the fact that -- or I say: "You may have heard the persistent rumors regarding the possible dissolution of the Federal Art Projects as an unimportant part of the WPA program." Maybe I'd better read it, huh? "Although I have no connection with it, I feel, as do many others, that the Project has been the greatest single factor nationally in developing the present high quality and enthusiasm in native art. I feel too that it would be a great tragedy to kill this remarkable impetus. . ." Not very good English. " . . . to say nothing of the many artists throughout the country who would be homeless and hungry. Early next week the Congressional Committee will meet for final discussion regarding the art projects. Of course those directly concerned will put up a fight to convince the Committee that the Project must continue. However, there are no politicians in the art group, and most Congressmen find no voting returns among the long-haired dreamers. Mr. Cahill, as Director of the Federal Art Projects, will hardly be an effective witness if he is to appear with his personal and official interest in the Project. The sum involved is so small relatively in the large WPA program, but it will be hard to convince the Committee that this country is getting back much more than the investment is proved by the extraordinary results in the easel, mural, sculpture, Index of American Design . . . " And then in parenthesis, I say "One of the greatest contributions in our history!" ". . . the teaching, and the Federal gallery projects. I am sure that Mr. Roosevelt's address for the historic Museum of Modern Art opening had very little effect on Congressmen, . . ." He gave the opening speech at the Museum or something. ". . . although the President expressed what all cultured Americans felt. I am writing to you only because the cause is so vital. Cultural America and even official America know what the Rockefeller family has contributed to the aesthetic development, to say nothing of others, in this country. I have been a personal witness to the humane as well as the aesthetic interest expressed by you in concrete form quietly, unobtrusively, but oh how effectively. I feel certain that you are the one person who can save art in America by writing a letter to Mr. Edward T. Taylor, Chairman of the Subcommittee in the WPA of the House Appropriations Committee. If you will do this merely to state your interest in what the Project has accomplished, in the fine work produced by its artists, some of whom are represented in your collection, it would be most effective. The fact that you chose an ex-WPA artist, Rene Bennett, for the Venezuela job is also significant of the quality produced by the Project. None of these artists could possibly have achieved the standard of work and the rapid recognition if not for the Project. It is also important that in the present exhibition of American art at the World's Fair so many of the paintings are by WPA artists, and that the Museum of Modern Art in its purchase of nine pictures from that exhibition chose six by WPA boys. In the event that you are willing to write to the Subcommittee, I can give you more information which will have bearing on the matter." And then I talk about Bennett. Then he answered me -- yes, he asked me to write a letter which he could present and I sent him a letter on May 31, which I thought he would use for reference, and this is sent to him -- up here -- it's addressed to: "The Honorable Edward T. Taylor, Chairman. "Dear Sir:" Well, it's a long, long letter.

HP: Well, it's the basis of the letter that he wrote?

EH: No, the amusing thing is he sent the letter as is. He had it retyped on his stationery and he wrote me on June 1st. I have his original letter here: [Reading letter from Nelson Rockefeller to Edith Halpert] "Thanks loads for the suggested form of a letter to the Honorable Edward T. Taylor. It was fine. I sent it to him this morning, with a copy to President Roosevelt and Colonel Harrington. With very best wishes" and so on. Then I have a letter dated June 8 from Tom Parker on Works Progress Administration stationery. [Reading letter from Tom Parker to Edith Halpert] "Dear Edith: Many thanks for the N.R. letter." [That's Nelson Rockefeller] "It is certainly a masterpiece and we owe you a big vote of thanks for your cooperation in getting it forwarded to the Committee."

Well, it didn't do any good in spite of the fact that they both thought it was a good letter, because the Project was disbanded at that time. I also find some transcripts of radio talks in which a number of us participated, Cahill and Miss Winsor for Newark Museum and others, and now I'm trying to do something about it. Well, nothing was accomplished. But there's no question about the fact that it is still the effect of the Project itself. What did Stuart Davis say that's been quoted over and over again? Do you remember what he said about the Project? I have it here somewhere in an article. It was printed recently ". . . that they could eat and work" and that is true. It was the first time in our history and the last time in our history to date, unless this new organization, the N.C.F.A., does something along those lines. It's the first time that an artist had an opportunity of doing anything he liked. That's the most important thing. They were not being done for sale, so they weren't self-conscious. They didn't give a damn what the current best-seller was, as they are today. Today, as you know, if black on white sells, everybody starts painting black and white. When it's opt, they start to be a big opt exhibition and you can go to any commercial art school where they teach book jacket design, and so on, and you find a great deal of that, or opt art right there, and so on. But everybody's doing it because there's going to be a show. It's been announced, and all the so-called critics are writing about it and artists, like most people today, are opportunists. There's no question about it. Whatever the public image is, they fall right into it. But during the WPA, we had the purest art produced in our history because anybody in any area could do anything he pleased. He didn't see what was going on, and nobody was writing about the last word. The museums showed only, you know, established artists. They would pick the cream of the established artist's work, and they didn't take things hot off the griddle, as they do. Just recently in Buffalo last year, a very important museum person spoke, and I still remember the words because there were some smart cracks made. I was sitting between Noguchi and Stamos when this man emoted about what is modern, what is contemporary, and he said, "Noting is contemporary unless the picture is still on the easel, and you can smell the breath of the artist." I think I said, "BB." There's no question but a number of new movements, and they weren't national movements necessarily, but new ideas came through. I mean that was actually the beginning of social realism, of the American scene, and other movements that carried on for some time but with only a limited number of artists who felt that way; who felt that that was their form of expression, and a great many artists developed in various other directions and so on. And there isn't a show of major importance that doesn't even today have a number of artists who started out on the WPA. And the show at the Modern Museum, which incidentally I have been resenting for years, the fact for years that it was credited to somebody else. The records show that I had selected the exhibition for the Phillips Gallery, and I finally found an actual so-called catalogue, a check list. No one seems to have it, and I found it in my papers, of the show held there and that show was expanded considerably for the Modern Museum, and I added the various paintings and sculptures, drawings, and so on, for the Modern Museum. And I'm getting a little bored, which is an understatement, about the credit being switched to somebody who just came out toward the end when the show was all prepared, came out a day or two before to look it over. It was an expansion of the Phillips exhibition, which was naturally much smaller space, and that show was incredible, seeing it well-hung as it was -- the Museum hangs shows very, very well -- and seeing a great many very large shows. Here's the catalogue, "New Horizons in American Art" and Holger Cahill and Alfred Barr wrote excellent forewords and comments of all kinds. Just looking through it now, it looks good for the type of work that was produced at the time and that was available. Here is a picture that now belongs to the Metropolitan Museum -- see it right here -- and so on. What happened to most of them I don't know, but a good many -- they were all given away at one time or another -- but they were used for exhibitions for a long period even after that show. Fortunately the murals remained in many instances. Going back to the Index of Design -- that is complete. I'm sending that too. We had a show -- here's that catalogue. We had a show down on 13th Street at the Downtown Gallery. We had the Index plates together with the original objects at an exhibition of American folk art combining the actual objects from which the plates were made, and the drawings, the original drawing and the press just went to pieces about that -- nobody could complain about dead artists. But they were superbly done, the Index, and Ruth Reeves did a fabulous job of supervising it and there was another, who else was on that?

HP: Cook Glassgold?

EH: Cook Glassgold, yes.

HP: Was a kind of . . . . He went to Washington as a kind of coordinator of the whole thing when they required standards. I think there was a difference in the procedures which were followed in Boston and New York. Boston was spending more time on the historical background . . . . Oh, no, New York was spending more time on the historical background and just producing sketches at best, whereas Boston had plates.

EH: Well, also Pennsylvania . . . .

HP: Did marvelous things.

EH: Some of the quilts you could feel the hand-stitching in them -- those plates. After all, they were supposed to be realistic. They were not to be imaginative. They made the most fabulous copies of these things, and a hooked rug was practically hooked, not only art objects, but there were also the craft objects. I remember some of those metal utensils, the painted, the Pennsylvania German, they were just incredible. And I have a catalogue of the

show and the publicity on that was tremendous. [END OF THIS SIDE OF THE TAPE] TAPE-RECORDED INTERVIEW WITH EDITH HALPERT DOWNTOWN GALLERY, NEW YORK CITY, NY INTERVIEWER: HARLAN PHILLIPS

HP: HARLAN PHILLIPS

EH: EDITH HALPERT

EH: I'm eager to have her come to America.

HP: Yes. She's in India, maybe she was driven there.

EH: Okay. Now, obviously . . . oh, I found this from Assistant Director of Exhibitions. I was still the Director of Exhibitions as consultant, and he reports to me, you know, what all the shows that he's working out, and where he's sending them, and asking me for advice about others, and making plans to supply the Gibbs Gallery with about sixty watercolors and arts for the period of October 19 as requested, and so on. And Parker says it's worth a good show. And then he added, "I'm coming out again to see him." a few days later to check on it.

HP: Who is that?

EH: He's the young guy who took over. I trained him for some months -- S. F. Crofut (C-R-O-F-U-T). He was young, and he's the one who subsequently started the first artmobile down in Richmond, Virginia, which had nothing to do with the Project.

HP: No. Southern boy? Virginia, Richmond?

EH: No, he doesn't come from . . . I don't know where he comes from. I don't remember. I've some personal letters from him. He sent me a card once.

HP: The only interest is that . . . this, for example . . . ?

EH: Well, this is a project . . . . He continued with the exhibitions with me and then completely on his own and did a very good job, and he says Parker liked what he did and so on. He reported to Parker. Nobody reported to Eddie. Now here's someething I came across that stunned me. I don't know what all happened, but evidently the Project was dead or dying. And in May, on May 17 I wrote for help. The original letter is in N.R. file. This is a copy. I have the original letter in the Rockefeller file. [Reading letter she wrote to Nelson Rockefeller] "You may have heard the persistent rumors regarding the possible dissolution of the Federal Art Project." Am I on?

HP: Yes, you are.

EH: I don't want to waste this.

HP: Go ahead.

EH: It's long though. Do you mind?

HP: Not at all.

EH: [Continuing to read the letter] ". . . Federal Art Project as an unimportant part of the WPA program. Although I have no connection with it now, I feel like many others that the Project has been the greatest single factor nationally in developing the present high quality and enthusiasm in native art. I feel too that it will be a great tragedy to kill this remarkable impetus . . ." Very bad English. ". . . to say nothing of the many artists throughout the country who will be homeless and/or hungry. Early next week the Congressional Committee will meet for final discussion regarding the art projects. Of course those directly concerned will put up a fight to convince the Committee that the Project must continue. However, there are no politicians in the art group, and most Congressmen find no voting returns among the long-haired dreamers. Mr. Cahill, as Director of the Federal Art Projects, will hardly be an effective witness, if he is to appear, with his personal and official interest in the Project. Although the sum involved is so small relatively in a large WPA program, it will be hard to convince the Committee that this country is getting back more than the investment as proved by the extraordinary results in the easel, mural, sculpture, Index of American Design, one of the greatest contributions in our history . . ." That's Ruth Reeves I credit. ". . . the teaching, and the Federal gallery projects. I am sure that Mr. Roosevelt's address for the historic Museum of Modern Art opening had very little effect on Congressmen, although the President expressed what all cultured Americans felt. I am writing to you only because the cause is so vital that I take courage in making this plea . . . to make this plea. Cultural America and even official America know what the Rockefeller family has contributed to the aesthetic development in this country. I have been a personal witness to the humane as well as the aesthetic interest expressed by you in concrete form quietly, unobtrusively, but, oh, how effectively." I was in their home so much, I saw what was cooking all the time. "I feel certain that you are the one person who can save art in America by writing a letter to Mr. Edward T. Taylor, Chairman of the

Subcommittee on the WPA of the House Appropriation Committee. If you will do this merely to state your interest in what the Project has accomplished, in the fine work produced by its artists, some of whom are represented in your collection: Bennett, Bryan, Fenetti (?), Guglielmi, Prestopino, Lewandowsky, it would be most effective. The fact that you chose an ex-WPA artist, Rene Bennett, for the Venezuela job, the Standard Oil Company, is also significant of the quality produced by the Project. None of these artists could possibly have achieved the standard of work and the rapid recognition if not for the Project. It is also important that in the present exhibition of American art at the World's Fair so many of the paintings are by WPA artists, and that the Museum of Modern Art in its purchase of nine pictures from the exhibition chose six by WPA artists. In the event that you are willing to write to the Subcommittee I can give you more information which will have specific bearing on the matter." And then I talk about Bennett, and so on. I sent a copy of this letter to Tom Parker, yes, here it is. Well, I don't know what happened. This was May 17, and he evidently phoned me -- Nelson Rockefeller. Then I got in touch with him on May 31 and said: [Reading letter she wrote to Nelson Rockefeller] "I advised Miss Phillips" That's his secretary. "the Committee hearing is postponed. I finally received from Washington an outline of what was required and am enclosing my draft for your consideration. Since it now past midnight I decided not to rewrite the enclosed and hope that you will forgive my poor craftsmanship. It was a difficult letter to compose, and I sincerely trust that you will find possibilities in it. It was suggested by Mr. Parker that copies of your letter be sent to the President and to Colonel F. C. Harrington, Administrator, Works Progress Administration, Washington, D.C. I find it difficult to properly express my thanks for your consent to act in behalf of the American artists and the American public. I wish I could proclaim publicly what you and your mother have done and are doing for them, but possibly the realization of what it accomplishes is a source of reward to you. Maybe it is true . . . " Oh, I can't quote that, "virtue is its own reward." Phooey! "If there is any additional information needed, please call on me. I want to be of some help too." Now this is the letter -- the draft -- I sent him: "To the Honorable Edward T. Taylor:" Mr. Phillips called and asked me to write the letter that I said I would -- the draft -- from which he could choose some material. "My deep interest . . ." This is to be over his signature. ". . . interest in contemporary American art and native culture prompts me to express my sincere appreciation for the work accomplished by the Federal Art Projects of the Works Progress Administration and to make a plea for its continuance on its present basis." Paragraph. "The now historic exhibition aptly called, "New Horizons in American Art" held at the Museum of Modern Art some three years ago was my first contact with the Project in all its manifestations. The quality of the paintings, sculpture, graphics, mural sketches, Index plates, and other exhibits displayed surprised and impressed me tremendously. They reveal the vital force of the new relationship established between the artists and the public, the summing up of the scattered creative efforts of this country into a truly significant art movement. Many hitherto unknown names appeared as signatures on works of art of real aesthetic value. Subsequently I purchased examples by several of these artists produced on their own time and enjoy these paintings in my private collection." Paragraph. "From time to time I see these names listed among prizewinners in museums or as Guggenheim fellows. Last year when Mr. Conger Goodyear, former President of the Museum of Modern Art, arranged the exhibition of American art for the French government at the Musee de Jeu du Paume in Paris, many of the artists were represented in the limited selection. And project names appear in the official contemporary art exhibitions in both the San Francisco and the New York World Fairs. Moreover, I recently learned that six of the nine artists whose paintings were purchased in the latter exhibition by the Museum were Project artists. These facts alone are sufficient, I believe, as evidence of the high quality of the art produced in the easel division, and the contribution in the fields of mural painting and architectural sculpture are very well known. However, I am equally impressed with the extraordinary achievements in the rest of the highly-diversified program maintained by the Federal Art Projects. The work carried on in Colonial Williamsburg brought to my attention the former lack of documentation of American material of former days. This gap is being ably filled by the Index of American Design, which museum officials and critics have acclaimed with much enthusiasm. Future generations will find in the plates produced by artists engaged in the Index Division the richness and variety of our cultural background. The great work in recording our art heritage in all its branches, in addition to its permanent historic value, has given artists, professionals, and the general public their first knowledge and appreciation of the contribution made by our ancestors to architecture, furniture and textile design, folk art, et cetera, and will continue to function for all time and for all the people. It will exert a profound influence as the easel project has in removing artists and artisans from the effects of all European influence. It will certainly succeed in establishing an American flavor and meaning that may be easily understood and appreciated by this generation and those that follow. While I have not come into personal contact with the Community Centers' activity, I have indirectly observed the valuable effect of the art teaching program in creating a popular background for art and supplying a new audience for the creative efforts in this country. The entire Federal Art Projects program emphasizes the human need for its amazing accomplishments. To discontinue, or even to restrict the great all-embracing activities of the Federal Art Projects at the present time would be, I believe, a measure of extremely short-sighted economy, both from the human and cultural points of view. In spite of what has already been accomplished in the short period of three and a half years, it is safe to assume that we have uncovered only a fraction of the vigor and richness of American talent, that we have merely tapped the surface of our cultural resources. Sudden cessation, or change in the Federal sponsorship would inevitably stop in mid-stream a movement that has the greatest possibilities of future development, a movement that has won the confidence of critics and the public in all parts of our nation, to say nothing of the esteem abroad. The Federal Art Projects represent a public investment which more than amply

repays the public and will continue to pay dividends to all future Americans." Jesus! I should have gone into politics instead of wasting my time. Then I got a letter from Tom Parker June 8. No -- I got a reply from Nelson -- he was in New York -- Room 5600: "Dear Mrs. Halpert: Thanks loads for the suggested form of a letter to the Honorable Edward T. Taylor. It was fine and I sent it to him this morning with a copy to President Roosevelt and Colonel Harrington. Very best wishes." and so on. He used the whole . . . that long thing. I have the original upstairs. I'll find it. I thought he'd cut it down to about half a page, you know, it sounded so schmaltzy. Then Tom Parker wrote: "Many thanks for the N.R. letter. It certainly is a masterpiece, and we owe you a big vote of thanks for your cooperation in getting it forwarded to the Committee. Would it be all right for us to have it released to the press? Do you think Mr. N. R. would have any objections? It is certainly the swellest testimony for the Project and I should like to see it in print rather than buried in the files of the Subcommittee. I hope they will include it in the Congressional Record. With warmest regards." You know, just about two or three years ago I heard a wonderful term.

HP: What's that?

EH: In Yiddish, I know very little Yiddish unfortunately. I know enough to get along in the Gallery with my theatrical clients, but somebody called somebody else a "cochlefel." Well, it's so much like German that I asked whether it's -- it's a stirring spoon, you know, a cooking spoon that you use for stirring pots, and somebody who stirs a lot of pots at the same time is called a "cochlefel." When I read this, I sure think I was a cochlefel.

HP: But this was in answer to a need. In 1939, at the opening of the Fair, they were going to have the theater project. You know, they built a huge theater, an open air theater out there, but the Congress expressly excluded funds from the Theater Project because of 'one-third of a nation" ad infinitum, where they quoted Senators correctly on the nature of housing and so on. Do you remember? So that all the Projects, Federal Art Projects Number One, which included the four, were placed in jeopardy, simply because Hallie . . . .

EH: Well evidently nothing happened, did it? Because he did send the letter. I mean Nelson -- obviously, he said he sent the letter as is, he just had it retyped.

HP: But Congress continued Art, Music and the Writer's Projects, but discontinued the theater project.

EH: Should have had somebody write a letter to somebody. But he's really, you know, he's really been awfully good that way, because with my little unfortunate experience with Eisenhower and Moscow. After Eisenhower said he was replacing a Jack Levine in the show going to Moscow, then Dondero came along and said there were 38 artists who were Communists, and by this time, I was, you know, ready to collapse because I'd been working about twenty hours a day rewriting the catalogue and all that, and being kicked out of Connecticut and Newtown because I was a "red" -- I called the President a moron, or something. When this Dondero thing came out, I dashed into Danbury because we don't have in Newtown -- we don't have a telegraph office and I wrote in longhand two telegrams, one to Secretary Dillon, who I knew through his brother-in-law was opposed to Mr. Dondero, and sent a much longer telegram to Nelson Rockefeller. I know I paid $48 for the two telegrams.

HP: Good God!

EH: It must have been long. It just went on and on, and, you know, Nelson came through. I got a reply from him. He wasn't where I sent it. I think I sent it to Pocantico. He was in Seal Harbor, or something, but he sent a reply, and he said, "All I know is that the show went to Moscow complete." Now whether he alone, or Dillon and he, did this, I don't know, but those were the only two people who did anything, who would have done anything because everybody else just gave up, the whole committee, everybody. I don't think he's a good governor, but he's an awfully nice guy, because I didn't realize . . . . I had, you know, I forgot all about this thing . . . about his writing to Taylor. It just came to me -- these copies, the originals are in the Rockefeller file. Evidently it was effective to some degree. They didn't cancel out completely, immediately.

HP: What the correspondence shows is that the person in the seat in Washington who was running affairs is Tom Parker.

EH: Well, he was wonderful, or course. You see I sent him a copy of this.

HP: Yes, but he is, you know, the respondent too, that is, he replies . . . .

EH: He ran the whole thing.

HP: Right.

EH: There's no question about it. He ran the entire project. Eddie was the spokesman; he did a wonderful job. He did a wonderful job in an entirely different direction, keeping the artists pepped up, and that was important.

HP: Sure.

EH: Getting better quality work from them. He'd look at their work and I think to this day he wouldn't know -- while he worked at the Newark Museum for a long time, he was just the PR guy.

HP: Yes.

EH: He really didn't have any visual sense, none at all. And he aped what he heard, but he did make a contribution. On the other hand, he took -- instead of taking credit for the contribution that he did make, because he was the schmaltz guy in between, now he buttered up . . . I shouldn't use German . . . he buttered up, that's greasing up, schmaltz is grease . . .

HP: What you're saying in effect is that, so far asthe continuing business of the office was concerned, he was a lieftmensch. Right?

EH: Right. He never entered the place, you know; Crofut would write me, and he'd always get Baker, I mean he'd get Parker's okay. He never mentions Cahill.

HP: No.

EH: Parker ran the entire project in Washington, unquestionably. And he also wasn't too familiar with art, but he left the choice of the shows entirely to me. I mean I picked every single show, and he approved it. Defenbacker did all the road work, and he could win over . . . he was a very charming guy. He won over two very rich wives later; no, he was really a very charming guy, and he was a wonderful salesman.

HP: The paper's dropped.

EH: Oh, I thought somebody was tapping on the door. He would take the shows and he would always call up and say this is a territory that is not too knowledgeable, and so on. And I'd, based on what he said, I'd use my judgment not to send very extreme things. He'd give me some description of the locale, and where children's shows were always a terrific hit. It was some little burg, "Send a children's show," and the Index of Design people were crazy mad about that. Modern art went all though the South. I am convinced that many museums that opened in those areas were the result of the shows that were held there, and he got them into every area of the United States.

HP: Yes.

EH: He worked like a son-of-a-gun. He really . . . . You know, when he'd come back to Washington, you know, I'd give him these lists. We had a very efficient system. Each show was numbered with the number pasted on each picture that went into it, lA and so on. Many of the shows toured from one place to another. We tried to cut expenses that way, and in most instances the showing places paid part of the expenses. They'd put up the show and even got out catalogues sometimes, and it went all over the United States. I didn't realize that it even went to Honolulu.

HP: Yes. How long did Crofut remain?

EH: He remained until the Project ended.

HP: Well, that's interesting.

EH: He stayed there and we consulted. I have a private correspondence file with him which continued after it was over. Then he went to Richmond, probably because he got to know people there, and he started this wonderful idea, the artmobile.

HP: You are the first person who mentions his existence in the office.

EH: Well, a lot of people aren't mentioned in this, in a great many projects in all fields. But I can't see why people can't afford to give credit to others. You know, for instance, when the Radio City Music Hall was about to go up, Mr. Rockefeller asked me to suggest . . . . Well, I spent a great deal of time at their home, you know. I made up the whole Williamsburg collection despite what anybody else has said. A few individual items were purchased here and there. She'd [Mrs. Rockefeller] get letters, but she'd always ask me to look at the things. Some very good things were offered to her occasionally, but the whole Project, until, you know, it was -- well, until she died almost. The museum, the new museum is in her memory, a period much later. But there were a number of people who contributed. I mean nobody, no collector, ever made a great collection all by himself. I mean Katherine Dreyer -- when you consider the collection at Yale, which is one of the most important collections, well, she never even mentioned the fact that she was responsible for it. She always gave credit to . . . oh, my God, it's a name I know every day of the year, the one who did "Nude Descending the Stairs."

HP: Duchamp.

EH: Marcel Duchamp worked with her and he was vice president of Societe au Nimes and he helped her select the collection. She always credited him with it. Dr. Barnes had an artist help him. Glackens worked, started him off, and he credited him until he got cocky later on. But every great collection has somebody, and when Mrs. Rockefeller was interviewed by Time magazine -- she was a cover girl in the Thirties -- and I. V. Lee came to see me. He said, "Please don't let her be interviewed without you being there. I can't appear." She stated very definitely in this article -- I didn't appear with her, we had a long talk. You know, I told her they'd trick her into saying the wrong things because I had more experience in the art field that I. V. Lee -- Not Ivy League. As a matter of fact, I. V. Lee told me I was the most underpaid. When he came to see me, he said, "You've accomplished more with a hundred thousand dollars for the Rockefellers that I have with millions," because they got into all the humane and aesthetic areas and so on. She said very definitely I was her agent. This is quoted, and she had always told people that I helped her, just as Electra Webb did, and so on. But I don't know why there's been all this -- did I talk about that Williamsburg thing that happened?

HP: What Williamsburg?

EH: You know, when this wire went out saying that I had nothing to do with the collection; it was Eddie Cahill.

HP: No, no, no. You told me that, but that has a deeper background. That's related to the flowers that grow outside your window at Newtown. And that story . . . don't you remember, the return to lavender?

EH: No, no, this has to do with Eddie taking . . . .

HP: Yes, but it came in . . . .

EH: Look, Mrs. Rockefeller was dead.

HP: I know that.

EH: Oh, that other thing was also Dorothy's saying . . . .

HP: I know that, but . . . .

EH: But she refused to give, to advance any money . . . .

HP: But the single person in this story is Alfred Barr. Alfred Barr is . . . .

EH: No, Alfred Barr was only a tool of Dorothy . . . .

HP: A means, yes.

EH: No question about it. I mean Lloyd, when I told Lloyd the whole story, when I cried on his shoulder . . . . You know, the other day I gave him a Max Weber book by Eddie Cahill. We hired him to write those books. We paid him for it, and the Pop Hart book. I gave those two books. He laughed. He said, "Your pal who was cutting your throat." And I said, "Those books are very good books."

HP: They are.

EH: He did a beautiful job. He did such a good job that Pop Hart was going to sue him, say that he didn't write the book, that Pop wrote the book. Pop couldn't write a sentence, but it was so convincing, it sounded just like Pop. It was wonderful I think that's wonderful.

HP: Yes, a sponge.

EH: And he did a very good sponge thing with Weber. He had to be much more careful, but that's the time . . . .

HP: He never knew that those books are in the walls, did he.

EH: Neither did Weber.

HP: That's marvelous.

EH: I told that story the other day when they were working on the Davis show, and suddenly they both wanted autographed books. I said, "I didn't write the books. How do you autograph a book you didn't write? Love and kisses? I get books like that." "No, we want your autograph." In Lloyd Goodrich's book I put down, "To the most wonderful father confessor with love," and when Harry Low looked at that he said, "What in the hell does that mean?" I said, "That's a little secret between us." When I was accused by the Modern Museum of stealing all the

credit from Holger Cahill on the Williamsburg project, and I was almost convinced, I called in Lloyd. Lloyd Goodrich is the only person in America that I could discuss this with. I showed him the letter. I got the original letter written by Alfred Barr from the Director of the Williamsburg Museum, who was horrified. He didn't know anything. I mean he was just there, what in the world is his name: He's director in Denver now. He was down in Fort Worth, Texas. He's had several jobs . . . I know so well. I can't remember his name. But in any event, Lloyd knew about it because Mrs. Force was very angry with me. She was a collector of folk art, and Mrs. Rockefeller became a bigger collector, and Lloyd worked with Mrs. Force, you know, so he knew that too. Everybody knew it. I mean there was no question about it. Mrs. Rockefeller wrote dozens of letters to me, and she said that publicly constantly. But I was beginning to believe it because that was . . . . I got a photostat of the letter from the director of the Williamsburg Museum, who was told to send the telegram by Mr. Rockefeller. What happened was he received a letter from Alfred Barr saying that my name should be withdrawn from the catalogue written by . . . well the new catalogue of the Williamsburg, of the new Williamsburg, the . . . named Abby Rockefeller Collection. When the moved to a new building, it was renamed. Instead of Paradise House, it was right next to the Inn, and it's called the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Museum. And it's a very wonderful person wrote the book, the catalogue, and she worked here for weeks and weeks. I gave her all . . . . We have all the material here, and she worked on it and she credited me with the collection and so on. The telegram was sent to stop all the publicity releases. Alfred Barr sent the letter rather, to this character who was the Director, the first Director of the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Museum, saying that my name should be deleted from the catalogue and from all the press releases, to send out a telegram immediately saying that there was a mistake made, that Holger Cahill made up the collection and I had nothing to do with it. At that time . . . . God, I wish I hadn't been hit on the head. All the names have disappeared, but the editor of a small magazine came in . . . . I wouldn't have known anything about it, but this man came in and showed me the telegram. He said, "You're a phony according to the telegram that was sent out from Williamsburg, Your name is to be deleted. But I used to hang around 13th Street. I even bought a Schimmel eagle (?) from you once. I was there many times. Mrs. Rockefeller was buying and I'd watch it. You'd just bring out things for her to look at and so on, and she'd say, "I'll take them." or what not. And he said, "I was there so many times. This is a lie." He did write something in the magazine saying that he is a personal witness or whatever. But in any event, I got in touch with Alfred Barr, and he said that . . . . I said, "You know better than anyone else that I gave Eddie the job. You know I took him in because he was desperate and I took him in and he took some trips with me." But so did many others. I couldn't ride alone in the car because I had the thing loaded in those days. In a half hour I had it loaded with five weathervanes, or something, that might have been stole. So I had to . . . the person who was with me always sat in the car. I did the buying because, unless we had just started . . . . but there were at least twenty people who traveled with me over a period of years. A lot of them didn't want to do it again because I used to get stuck in the mud, and so on. I'd go to private homes because in those days they didn't have antique shops, folk art shops, and so on. And I said, "You know all about that." He said, "Well, the man is in the hospital with a bad heart, and you'll kill him by this." I said, "You mean if I expose him, I'll kill him? If that's what he needs, it's the best thing that can happened to him because I've reached the point where I'm getting awfully sick of having Dorothy Miller and her husband call me a phony; you know, usurping all my so-called accomplishments because I was fool enough to let them use their names on different occasions." Well, then I wanted to find out how it all happened. I got in touch with the Director of the Williamsburg museum, and he said he heard too from the people right there, the minister, they all knew me. I was there putting the things up and fussing and explaining it to people, talking to the press. I was there for weeks at a time. And so he said, "Well, I think I owe it to you," and he sent me a photostat of the letter that Alfred Barr sent, and this I couldn't understand. He said he got a cable from Nelson Rockefeller saying that anything Barr said is okay with him. He didn't see the letter. He had to send out this telegram. He explained it to me and then, oh, less than a year later, he came up . . . . Oh, I've got to get his name, for God's sake. He called up and said he was coming to New York; he had to see me. Well, I said I'd be delighted, and he came and he said, "I have something to tell you, something to show you, and I'd like to do it outside the gallery. How about a drink?" We went over to the Ambassador -- or Sheraton East, as it's called; I still remember it as the Ambassador -- for a drink, and he pulled out a check. I'm not sure. I was so excited -- I can tell because I have a bill, so I'm not sure whether it was $30,000 or $50,000. He showed me a check. He said Mr. Rockefeller -- Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., came with a new Mrs. John D. Rockefeller. He thought it would be bad taste for him to come to the opening of the building, and he came later, and he looked around. There had already been a tremendous amount of publicity on the collection, on the Museum, and so on, and there had been for years all over. When the show went to Paris there was a big to-do and so on. As a matter of fact, when Conger Goodyear sent that show over in 1938 -- the All-American show -- the French for two reasons talked of the folk art as the most interesting part because contemporary art was competitive. They didn't invent folk art so they , you know, theirs is a different kind entirely, and they could say that our weathervanes were based on theirs, which was true, but ours were better and so on. He realized that it was very important. By that time I had kidded him once on the elevator, one time Mrs. Webb, the Webbs lived in the same building as the Rockefellers, so one day coming up . . . I was coming back with Mrs. Webb from something, and he came to the elevator, and she said, "Well, my competitor . . ." referring to him because she always got second best with Mrs. Rockefeller, and he said, "Yes, I keep hearing of folk art as important." And I said, "Yes, Mr. Rockefeller, I remember the days when you said I was an evil influence in the home, that I was misleading Mrs. Rockefeller." He said, "I do." I said, "Do you know, if you want to sell your collection now, the entire collection, you could retire on that, on the increased

valuation." Of course Mrs. Webb laughed. They both laughed. She said, "You damn fool, what a thing to say to him!" I said, "He could be kept for a while on all that money." Well, in any event, this director, who is nameless for the moment . . .. We'll have to fill that in, I can't remember, I'll find out. I know him so well. He showed me this check made out to me, and I said, "What is this?" He said, "Well, Mr. Rockefeller brought the new Mrs. Rockefeller in and she was so enthusiastic about the collection, and so enthusiastic about the whole atmosphere that had been created by this Museum in the right place . . . You know, away from Williamsburg proper." Mr. Rockefeller turned to me and said, 'Say, whatever happened to Mrs. Halpert, who used to infuriate me with this funny stuff, this second-hand stuff that she brought in? Now I realize that it's really very valuable. What is she doing?' He said, 'She still has a gallery.' Mr. Rockefeller said, 'How would you like to go to New York and show her my appreciation by buying with this $30,000 or $50,000, or whatever it was?'" And when he told me that . . . once we discussed, you know, belief in the hereafter, and so on. I said, "Oh nonsense!" We both lifted our glasses, and he said, "Let's make a toast." I said, "Yes, to God. I believe now . . . you know, so that's the full cycle." Only I didn't have that much art. I think it was $50,000, and I could find only enough outstanding things that I wanted to get about that they needed amounted to $30,000. But that really reasserted my beliefs in human beings.

HP: Did Alfred Barr ever talk to you about the letter?

EH: No, I never brought up the subject again. I still have great admiration for what he did, and what he's doing, and Lloyd Goodrich said very distinctly that the letter was not written by Alfred. It didn't sound like Alfred. He was sure it was written by Dorothy Miller, who, you know, plays a very important part in the Museum. She's his assistant and she covers a lot of territory for him.

HP: That's a very weird thing.

EH: Well, it was so weird that I really began to believe that I was a phony, and when I called Lloyd Goodrich's home, and Edith, his wife, answered, I said, "May I talk to Lloyd?" She said, "He hasn't come home as yet." It was after six o'clock. He hadn't come home from the Whitney, and she said, "What is it? Is there anything I can do?" I said, "No, I need him desperately." She said, "What for?" "I want to cry on his shoulder." She said, "That'll be the day." He called about ten minutes later. He had just arrived and he said, "What is it?" I said, "It's imperative for me to talk to you. Will you have an opportunity?" He said, "I'll be right over. I said, "You'd better have a snack because I'm in no condition to do anything about food." He was over here . . . I know they live on Lexington Avenue, 80th Street, in about ten minutes flat, and I showed him the telegram, the letter, the copy of the letter, and so on. I pulled out my files with the letters from Mrs. Rockefeller, which I have over a period of a great, great many years. You know, when she wasn't in New York where she could telephone, she always wrote and, oh, we discussed all sorts of things. I showed him the letters. I showed him the bills, the actual bills. I had all the . . . . I have the catalogue. I stayed up two nights to do that, in the catalogue of the new Museum I have the date and the price at which I sold each object, and by this time they had been adding considerably, but about eighty percent of the collection that they had then came from the American Folk Art Gallery. I have the bills, and I showed him. I went downstairs and brought up . . . . He didn't look at all the bills, but he saw the package, and all the dates are right in my catalogue as evidence. I couldn't stay here. I was really in a state of, well, I think if I were a suicidal type, I would have committed suicide. I called for help for the first time in my life, and it was. So I said, "I'll go downstairs and when you're ready, just, you know the gallery is right below." I said, "Just tap on the floor several times." I waited and waited, and there was no tap, and finally I came and sneaked in and he beckoned for me to go down again. He was here about three hours, looking over the material, the publicity releases that I wrote for them and so on, and the letters that I got from Captain somebody, and from the minister and from everybody in Williamsburg, and so on. He looked. He went through the material almost completely. I came back, and he really felt that I should make a complete expose of this. He said that he would be my witness, he'd get a committee. He's very friendly with Barr, but he felt that the greatest injustice had been done. I convinced him that I didn't want any scandal. All I wanted was a conviction that I wasn't a crook. And I think it's the first time in about forty years that a couple of tears . . . . He put his arm around me and said that this was an outrage, that he didn't need the evidence, but he had and would like to review it as a matter of fact . . . . [END OF INTERVIEW]