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Oral history interview with Susan Peterson, 2004 March 1

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Susan Peterson on March 1, 2004. The interview took place in Carefree, Arizona, and was conducted by Paul J. Smith for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This interview is part of the Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America.

Susan Peterson and Paul Smith have reviewed the transcript and have made corrections and emendations. The reader should bear in mind that he or she is reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written prose.

Interview

Susan Peterson, 2004. Photograph by Paul J. Smith

PAUL J. SMITH: This is Paul Smith interviewing Susan Peterson for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. The interview is taking place at Susan's home and studio in Carefree, Arizona, on Monday, March 1, 2004. This is disc one, and our first emphasis will be on Susan's formative years.

Susan, when and where were you born and, if you could, to reflect on your early days, your family and your upbringing.

SUSAN PETERSON: Okay, Paul. You want me to tell you my name again? My whole name?

MR. SMITH: Yes.

MS. PETERSON: Susan Annette Harnly Peterson-Schwarz, which I never use, you know. I've been Susan Peterson for a long time, so-I was born July 21, 1925, in McPherson, Kansas. My parents were both from McPherson, Kansas, but my father was principal of a high school in Grand Island, Nebraska, which of course gave him free summers and other holidays. So they always returned back to what they called home in McPherson, Kansas; so I was born in McPherson, Kansas, because it was a summer holiday.

My parents and all my family on both sides were Dunkard Brethren Amish Mennonite kind of people, so that I grew up with a lot of long beards and black hats and little bonnets and the accoutrements that went with those kind of people, and I had-even my great-grandmother, who was over 100 years old-I had grandparents on both sides and great-grandparents on both sides and a lot of relatives, because Mennonites had a lot of children generally.

My mother was one of nine children, all of which were brothers except for her. So that in-she grew up on a ranch in western Kansas, and when she was ready to go to high school, her father decided she needed to be near a more urban town, so he moved the family to McPherson. He became the first Ford dealer in Kansas, and my mother had the first Ford car in Kansas. And she went to the academy-McPherson College, of which my grandfather was president. McPherson was a Dunkard Brethren school and it had an academy, a high school, with it, so my mother went to that as well.

She was a painter. She became a painter early in her life. When she was 16, she went on a train to Chicago Art Institute [Art Institute of Chicago, IL]. I really never thought enough about my mother. My mother had Parkinson's the last 10 years of her life, and when I really should have been asking her questions about her life, I couldn't ask anymore, so that I really failed to get all the information. She went to Chicago Art Institute as a young woman and came back and went to McPherson College, graduated in 1923, when she and my father were married that year.

And my father had been a Mathematics major and he had taken a Mathematics master's degree at KU [University of Kansas, Lawrence]. He wanted to be a mathematician, but he finally decided he wasn't smart enough to be a really good mathematician, so he decided to become an educator instead, and he enrolled at Columbia [Columbia University, New York City] to take his Ph.D. in-he began the summer that they were married, 1923. So he went to Columbia, because that's where John Dewey and Alfred North Whitehead and what's his name Terman were-what were-Lewis Terman. They were all three there, and they were creating a great new philosophy of education.

So my father went there to study and intended to take his degree every summer at Columbia, but as it turned out, he only went that one summer because Whitehead and Terman moved to Stanford [Stanford University, Stanford, CA], and my father felt that they were the two most important, even though Dewey was the articulator of so-called progressive education. Daddy said he generally came to school in his top hat from having had a long

night out on the town and he wasn't always so articulate in the lectures. So my father liked Terman and Whitehead better, and he went to California, to Stanford.

So what was interesting for me was that because my father was an educator, he had summers free. Every summer we traveled. All the time that I lived at home, we went somewhere every summer, and for quite a while, five or six summers, we went to California for him to do his studying. So I was-at that time we lived in Palo Alto. There was a wonderful children's theater person there, whose name right now I can't remember. Robinson, I think, was her last name. She was a very famous children's theater person, and I, every summer, was in the children's theatre. So I thought I was going to be a movie star. [Laughs.]

MR. SMITH: What-where did you go to elementary school?

MS. PETERSON: I went to elementary school-and my father was principle of this high school in Grand Island, Nebraska, so after I was born, that year, 1925-summer, of course, they went back to Grand Island for the fall. So I went to elementary school, Wasmer Elementary School on Koenig Street in Grand Island, Nebraska. That's where I went to elementary school. I remember in kindergarten that my kindergarten teacher put up my picture of tulips on the wall and criticized it, because I had made tulips of every color and the stems different colors, not green. So that's a very early memory of mine about my art, my beginning art-

MR. SMITH: When you became interested in art, I expect your mother was an influence.

MS. PETERSON: So I-because my mother was so involved herself in-but she was also Dunkard Brethren Amish Mennonite and women, of course, were not going out in the world doing-those kind of women anyway. They were supposed to be at home taking care of the children and cooking and all that. So that she really could have had a career but didn't have a career, because she was really a homemaker, but that interest for me-as soon as I was aware of anything, my mother was painting with a paintbrush in hand, and she belonged to-in Grand Island-a sketch club, so they went out doing sketching.

And as soon-when my father got his doctorate, which he received, I think, in 1939 or '40, anyway we-I know I was in Palo Alto '39 because that was the World's Fair. We had watched Treasure Island being built. We watched the Golden Gate Bridge being built and the Oakland Bay Bridge being built, and so I know we were there in '39. Maybe he graduated in '40 -

MR. SMITH: That was in the summer?

MS. PETERSON: -Ed.D.-it was in the summer, yep, every summer. He took his degree in four summers, and I think the fifth summer with the orals and the thesis and all of that. My father was one-he was the first Ed.D. in the state of Nebraska and he was very important in secondary school education. He belonged, of course, to the North Central Association of Secondary Schools, Principals and Administrators, and then he was on a number of committees in Washington. At that time we didn't have a cabinet secretary of education, but they had conferences, symposia, committees. My father was always among them, and eventually, you know, he was chosen to go to Japan with Douglas MacArthur in the occupation, to democratize the Japanese schools, which for him was a mind-blowing experience, because it was very difficult to do that with the Japanese traditions.

But that again gave me an early sense, even though I-by then, by the time he was there, I knew about ceramics and I knew about [Shoji Hamada, I knew about [Bernard] Leach, but I didn't really know anything about Japan. So I learned a lot about Japan from my father when he came back from that year.

MR. SMITH: Did you take art classes in elementary school and in high school?

MS. PETERSON: In elementary school we had an art-we had an art teacher and we really did have art every day in elementary school, and also I went to junior high, seven, eight, ninth grade. Then in senior high school, 10, 11, 12-at that time 10, 11, 12-in senior high school we had a really good art teacher. I mean, I remember her very much, and in senior high school I-she had me register for the National Scholastic Magazine competition for-they gave one scholarship to Carnegie Institute of Technology it was called then [now called Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA]. They gave one scholarship in the country. They had regional winners and then they had national, and I was a regional winner and then I was the national winner for this Scholastic Magazine-the Scholastic Magazine contest.

So I won that, which was a four-year, full tuition, board and room at Carnegie Institute, but my father, who was an academician, decided that he had to know whether it was okay to go to an art school instead of a university. So he wrote letters to every artist that he knew about or could find an address for-Grant Wood; I remember Grant Woods' letter but my father read it to me. Anyway, these were all men; none of them were women, and when he got the answers, all of them, everyone he wrote to, had not ever been educated, or if had-I mean, in a university, and some of them had not gone beyond second or third grade, and some of them had gone to art school. All of them said that they wished they'd had a liberal arts background, an academic background. So that

was the end of Carnegie Tech for me, and he insisted that I now find a university or a -

MR. SMITH: Were you the only one that ever received a scholarship -

MS. PETERSON: As far as I know, and because I didn't take it, there was a runner-up-whoever-I remember there was in the newspaper articles, you know, I remember runner-up somebody, and the runner-up was the one who took the scholarship. Whether they did that every year or not, I don't know, and it was my high school art teacher who told me to do it. In order to do it, you had to send a portfolio of everything you had done. In the kitchen there's a painting that I did when I was-I graduated at 16, so when I was 16, that particular painting that's hanging in the kitchen was one of the paintings that was sent. We sent watercolors, oils, drawings, charcoal, pencil. None of it was three-dimensional. It was all two-dimensional work at that-that's all I was doing.

MR. SMITH: Obviously your talent was surfacing already at a very early age. What were some of your biggest influences in those early years?

MS. PETERSON: Well, aside from my mother-I mean, definitely my mother, but also my grandmother. My father's mother-my father's mother also painted, but she painted from the Old Masters. She painted *Blue Boy* [Thomas Gainsborough, ca. 1770] and *Pinky*-so I-but I remember her with her easel and her oil paints and her photographs-or in a book, the things that she was copying.

So I think I had some art in the background all the time, which is not so like Dunkard Brethren Amish Mennonite. Then they are not-they're more-if they are academic at all-and they aren't exactly academic, those kind of people; they are scientifically inclined and not artistically inclined. You know, they don't wear makeup. They don't wear jewelry. So the fact that I had some art in my family was a little unusual.

Okay, so also from the time when my father got his Ph.D. in education, he was then called upon because he was [a] well-known secondary school educator, to go to a university in the summer and teach graduate education courses for people who were getting their Ph.D.s, so that every summer we went to some university. I could name them if you want them, if you want me to, but anyway every summer we went to a university; from the time I was 12 or 13 we were doing that.

My mother was always enrolled in the painting class, so my father would figure out how to get me enrolled in the painting class too, so that I was taking college painting courses in the summer before-when I was really a young, young, young person. And I painted along with-most of these summer professors were really from New York. They were painters who came out from Art Students League to Wyoming, Montana, Missouri, Colorado, Wisconsin. Those men, they were of course always men -

MR. SMITH: Who were some of the important names that you studied with?

MS. PETERSON: The one that I really remember was Charles Chapman, N.A., National Academy, and he was the-a teacher, and then George Grosz, who, of course, later I knew how well-known he was. Chapman was primarily a portrait painter, so that the landscape-we did landscape with him. Every day we were out somewhere doing landscape. But he did that because he was so interested-being from Manhattan and being a portrait painter, he was so interested in the landscape, and he was just-he was a big-he was very charismatic. He was a beautiful, handsome man. It was just a lot of fun to be with him when I was-what?-14 or 15 in that particular summer.

And Grosz was important because, I think, my mother studied with Birger Sandzen. She was a Sandzen and that picture on top of the fireplace in there is one of hers, which is quite like a Sandzen. Anyway, her-she was focused down a particular path, and in the summers with these different professors we were both opened up to other kinds of ideas. Grosz particularly because his work was so free, so much more different than any I had ever studied with at that point.

MR. SMITH: Sounds like you were always going to school or studying. Did you ever have fun and play and enjoy being a teenager?

MS. PETERSON: I used to say-I used to say that I really never had any fun, because we were always gone in the summer. My birthday was in the summer. I never had a birthday party in my life until in Idyllwild [Idyllwild School of Music and the Arts (ISOMATA), Idyllwild, CA]. I mentioned to Francoise Gilot and Jonas Salk that I'd never had a birthday party, and they gave me a surprise birthday party when I was, you know, a big grown adult and all that.

Anyway, of course I had fun, but I-my-definitely the ethic of Puritan Dunkard Brethren, et cetera, is work, and if you sit down a little bit, that's really not what you're supposed to do. You should always be actively engaged in something or other. So I think I really-that was drummed in early on.

MR. SMITH: You graduated from high school with honors, as I recall.

MS. PETERSON: Yeah, well, I was valedictorian, and, of course, my father was principal of my high school, and the assistant principal called two of us in-my friend Mary Maxine Jarrell and myself-into a classroom after school one day. We had no idea what for. And she began writing things on the blackboard and what she did was show us which one of us was the valedictorian and which was the salutatorian. And I was the valedictorian, but she was making it evident to the other girl what the scores were. So I was the valedictorian and I was supposed to be giving the valedictory speech and-at the graduation.

I graduated in 1943; the war was, of course, 1941. So already some of my fellow students had gone or had been drafted and had gone to war. Some had even been killed, and so my valedictory speech was greatly about war and hatred and training for killing. I remember distinctly what I talked about. Anyway, we had-we were-we had a little clique of important kids in the senior class and we had put out a little newspaper prior to graduation. George Petty was a famous illustrator at that time in *Esquire* magazine, and I had drawn a George Petty drawing-a George Petty-like drawing-for my friends Jeff and Marynette, who were running for president and vice-president of the senior class. And I-my byline under the picture was, "There's something in it for you if you vote for Jeff and Sunny" and the Petty woman had the-had hardly any clothes on and a telephone. And of course we mimeographed this and handed it out all over the school, and this was not to be condoned by the principal and the vice principal.

So the little group of us who had done this-we were not allowed to wear cap and gown. We were not allowed to sit on the stage. We had to sit in the audience, and when I gave my talk, I was invited up to the podium from down below. So everybody could see that we were really not up there. We were not-so I-I've never forgotten that one. [Laughs.]

MR. SMITH: After high school you went on to advanced education; so where did you go and what was the reason for going there?

MS. PETERSON: When-because the war was going and also my father had very little salary and I had a brother who was three years younger than I, I had taken solids-all six solids all the time I was in high school. So by the time I had finished the first semester my senior year, I had accumulated all the credits necessary for graduation. So my father one day said, now you're going to go to college. You're going to go Hastings College [Hastings, NE], 30 miles away. I would have to get on the bus every morning and travel to Hastings.

Hastings College was a Presbyterian school, and I was to do my freshman year in that semester and the summer session, so that with the-I took enough credits in the summer to account for another semester. So that by the time I entered Monticello College, I-which was a two-year, AA-degree woman's college in Godfrey, Illinois-that I entered as a so-called junior because it was a two-year college, but really I was a sophomore, but they called it-I mean, I was a-I came in as a second-year student because I had finished enough credits, 30 units at Hastings.

MR. SMITH: Why did you choose Monticello College, which was in Illinois?

MS. PETERSON: Well, my father wanted me to go to University of Kansas as he had done, besides it was cheaper, and-but I went to-all these colleges even in those days were sending representatives around, and I went to every one that came to Grand Island High School. A Monticello College person came and I was very taken by what he said about the art department at Monticello, and I went to KU for a weekend. I did visit there but I decided-they gave me a date with a high school kid because all the boys were off at war. So I decided it was okay to go to a woman's college, because there weren't any men anyway at the university.

And I was really impressed with what this man said about the art department-the questions that I asked him about the art at that school. And it turned out Hillis Arnold, who was a well-known sculptor in the Midwest-he actually was blind but he was a very well-known sculptor, and Vladamir Rousseff, who was the painter-they were both very well-known in the Midwest, and I was able to take classes with both of them in my so-called junior year-no, pardon me, my senior year because I only went one year to Monticello. I graduated in '44, so I was really-it was a two-year school. I graduated in '44. So I was only there one year, but those two men were very-again influential for me.

I took-I had taken biology in high school. In Monticello I took chemistry. I loved chemistry and I also liked the professor very much, very interesting woman, and I told her that I thought I was going to change my major from art to chemistry because I wanted to be a doctor. I wanted to go-I had decided I wanted to be a doctor. And she told me that my math was very poor, that I wasn't good enough in math and therefore I wouldn't be able to do the advanced chemistry and I shouldn't be a doctor. So I kept on with my art idea.

MR. SMITH: After graduating from Monticello College, where did you go next?

MS. PETERSON: Then I went to Mills College in Oakland, California, and one reason I went to Mills College-my mother had had hanging on the wall in her bedroom an etching by Roi Partridge, done in about 1914 or '15, called the *Beggar Girl*, a little woman standing in front of Notre Dame, which I still have hanging on the wall. But

I had always liked that etching, and my mother knew that Roi Partridge was at Mills College.

So I really-we had been to California when I was very young, you know, when I was six, seven, eight, nine, ten, something like that. I'd never been back to California, so when I went to Mills, it was pig in the poke. I had-I applied and I was accepted and I got a scholarship. It was a private school so it was more money than my father wanted to spend, but he somehow figured out how to send me there, and I went on a troop train from Kansas to Mills.

By then my father-as soon as I graduated from high school, my father had wanted to move out of Grand Island and take a better, more responsible job, but my mother and I wouldn't let him because we liked Grand Island, Nebraska, very much and it was a cosmopolitan town. It had the art activities my mother wanted. It had the kinds of activities I liked. We had a big air base there, so that even as high school girls we were dating the airmen. The B-17s and the B-29s flew off from Grand Island, Nebraska, to the Pacific. So-go ahead.

MR. SMITH: When you went to Mills, it was a very important move for you. What age were you?

MS. PETERSON: Well, I graduated from high school, when I was 16 but, of course, because my birthday was in July, in the summer, I would have been 17 by the time I went to Monticello. So I would have been 18 by the time I went to Mills, but I wasn't 21 before I graduated. I couldn't get a drink at the Top of the Mark. [Laughs.]

MR. SMITH: Well, Mills College, of course, was a prestigious school and a very important faculty, so that must have been a marvelous opportunity. Tell me about your days at Mills and a bit about being in Northern California in the mid-'40s.

MS. PETERSON: Of course I was a painting major, but my father had told me that I had to take a secondary school credential if I was-he was sure I couldn't make a living as a painter and I would really need to teach. Mills didn't offer a credential, so I did take my credential through the state of California, which meant that I had to follow the prescribed curriculum. So it threw me into a lot of philosophy and psychology and other kinds of courses, academic courses-history, so I got a really varied background, and I took at least 40 credits every year, if not 50. I took as many classes as I could fit in to a schedule, because I really loved all the things that I was learning.

It was just great, but this is 1944 that I go-that I go to Mills, and by 1945 the war is beginning to be over, and so my senior year-I graduated in June of '46-so my senior year, especially that last semester, I cut class all the time, went to San Francisco, sat in the Opera House, watched the United Nations being born, listened to all those famous people at the time from all over the world talk about the world order.

So that-although Brethren people are very international and the Church of the Brethren during the first war and during the second war, they sent all kinds of cows and food to Europe and to wherever, so that I-I came from an internationally minded family, but it had never been so important as really sitting in that Opera House listening to those speeches day in and day out.

And how I got to be a Phi Beta while I was cutting all these classes, I don't know. And when I got the Phi Beta Kappa invitation, I didn't know what that meant, and I called up my father and I said, "What is Phi Beta Kappa? Should I take-should I do this?" because it was an invitation you had to accept, and he told me what it was and he said, "Yes! You have to do that!" Mills did not offer anything but an A.B. degree and universities only give Phi Beta to A.B. degree. So if you had taken a B.F.A. you weren't eligible for Phi Beta Kappa. So I was a Phi Beta because I had the A.B. degree, and had I been somewhere with a B.F.A., couldn't have done that.

MR. SMITH: Talk about the faculty at Mills and the people you studied with -

MS. PETERSON: Yeah, the faculty was fantastic as-the whole faculty at that time. Aurelia Henry Reinhardt, who had been president for 20 or 30 years, had really built this into a famous academic institution, and her follower-I came in just the year that she had retired, and the first year of Lynn T. White, Jr., who was a historian from Stanford but who became a well-known educator of women at Mills College. So Aurelia had built this fantastic faculty and Lynn T. White continued it. We had Darius Milhaud and [Igor] Stravinsky in music

In the art program, William Gaw, who was the painting professor, was well-known on the West Coast. Dong-I mean, William Gaw was oil painting. Dong Kingman was watercolor, and he was a little more famous because he did the San Francisco Chinatown things. Puccinelli was the sculptor, and again he was-and Benny Buffano was around part of the time.

Imogen Cunningham, who was married at one time to Roi Partridge-the two of them had come to Mills unmarried and Aurelia Henry Reinhardt told them they had to get married, so Imogen and Roi got married and then they got divorced immediately and they had three children. But anyway, she was teaching photography. She was a big influence, not-I mean, I wasn't a photographer then. Later on I became so much more interested in

photography, but she was an influence because of her sense of design and what she talked about in terms of how she took a photograph.

And Roi Partridge, of course, was my big mentor. He talked a great deal about [Wassily] Kandinsky and [Lyonel] Feininger-I mean, Partridge was a line-he was an etcher, so he was concerned with line. So I learned a lot from him in what we might classify as design technique.

Claire Falkenstein was the drawing teacher. Falkenstein was eventually run out of the country because of her communist leanings and really had to leave the United States for some time, but I had her for two years at Mills. She introduced me to Laszlo Maholy-Nagy, to [Gyorgy] Kepish, to Le Corbusier, names I'd never heard of or encountered until I met her, and she also was-my drawing had been-at Monticello from-and even in high school-from plaster casts or from still lifes, and Falkenstein told you to take the end of your thumb and draw that, and she'd give you a piece of paper, three foot by four foot, and you would-you were to draw that on this. I mean, concepts that had never been a part-my vocabulary was very traditional, landscape, portrait, life drawing.

So I-and I knew Falkenstein for many years in California. We renewed our acquaintance later on when she came and lived in Venice, California, and I, through somebody who knew her very well, was reintroduced. Oh, I remember you, Susan Harnly. I kept one of your drawings, said she. So we really were friends over a long period of time, and she had such a struggle as a woman artist. She really-I didn't associate her struggle with my own struggle because I had a struggle, too.

MR. SMITH: That's a very impressive faculty, but didn't you study with Carlton Ball?

MS. PETERSON: Oh, yes, but I-the painting majors had to take one semester of ceramics before graduation. So the last semester of my senior year I take ceramic class from Carlton Ball. He was in his-he had come to Mills in 1939. This is now '46. He had taught himself how to throw. He had built a potter's wheel from a picture in a German book of a treadle wheel, which he had turned into an electric wheel but which was not variable speed. It went 60 rpms all the time, so you had to slow it down with your foot on a flywheel, and you had to make it go faster by kicking, even though it was electric and run with a belt. So he had designed and built this potter's wheel. He was the first person to have a potter's wheel west of the Mississippi, he said, and I think that was true.

So that he was the only one who was teaching throwing. What I started to say was he was himself pioneering at that time. He was learning as doing. He learned to throw by taking a job at the World's Fair in '39-throwing demonstration with his newly built potter's wheel, but he figured out how to keep the crowd about 100 feet away so that they wouldn't know whether he was doing it right or wrong. He said Maria Martinez was sitting on the ground next to him coiling her pottery, 1939.

So when I got to Carlton in '46, he was fairly new at this whole business. So we were using California fire clays, which are high-temperature clays at cone 07. He didn't know that it should be fired high. There weren't any good kilns. We had a Denver Fire Clay Company kiln with muffles-updraft with muffles. Nobody was building kilns on the West Coast as they were on the East Coast. So that in the beginning Carlton was very charismatic, very full of life, very full of experimentation, and I was taken by this man and by the feel of that clay on that potter's wheel.

MR. SMITH: Was that the first time that you worked with clay?

MS. PETERSON: Yeah, yes.

MR. SMITH: And you related to it?

MS. PETERSON: Related to it immediately. I had never-we didn't have clay in elementary school; we had soap. We carved soap, but we-I had never touched clay. So I didn't have clay-the, what's his name in Monticello? Hillis Arnold, the sculptor -we worked in plaster-so that we worked in plaster or stone. So I really had never handled a plastic material like-certainly nothing like clay. Even mud pies I don't think I ever made as a kid in the sandpile, I don't remember.

So it was-that was a real revelation to me. Somehow I knew that that's what I wanted to do, but now I'm graduating. Furthermore, I won the Ella Pierce traveling fellowship. I'm supposed to go to Europe that summer and use the fellowship. I also won the outstanding art student, who then was given a two-year full tuition, board and room graduate fellowship to do my master's degree there at Mills, but along came Dr. John Fox one day from Hawaii, who was coming to this country because Hawaii wasn't a state. He was coming here looking for a faculty for Punahou School [Honolulu, HI].

MR. SMITH: During your days at Mills you had studied with all of those famous people.

MS. PETERSON: Yeah.

MR. SMITH: That was really a marvelous opportunity. What was it like being in the Bay Area at that time? Were you aware of other studio craft activity or organizations?

MS. PETERSON: What I was really aware of, because I had-my sociology professor was Dr. George Hedley, and he was a member of the California School of Labor. He was also the chaplain of Mills College. He was an ordained Episcopal minister and he was the soc professor. I went to chapel every Sunday. I listened to his lectures there and he was an influence in my life, but what he did was he took us-he made us in the soc class go to the California School of Labor meetings in San Francisco. And those meetings were the ones-it was the time of the McCarthy witch hunts, and the guys-the 10 blacklisted people-and I remember those blacklisted people were there at the California School of Labor speaking and haranguing, and it was-I really didn't understand what I was listening to but that, plus the U.N. thing.

So I really wasn't much into the craft, however, Marguerite Wildenhain had already come to Pond Farm. She sought out Carlton Ball because he was the only one that knew anything about ceramics or-in the vicinity. So she came to Carlton, asked him to help her. So Carlton did help her with the clay, with the glazes that he had developed, but she, coming from Bauhaus, knew about high-temperature, which he didn't yet know about. So she took his glazes and his clay, and she fired them higher, and that's how she got her iron specks coming through Carlton's "tizzy" glaze that we fired at 07; she was firing at cone 5.

But Marguerite-we went to Pond Farm our student-our class went to Pond Farm because Carlton was helping her and she had a big show, a big exhibition. I remember the full-page ad in the *[San Francisco]Chronicle* for her exhibition at Gump's [Gump's Gallery, San Francisco, CA]. She had a big exhibition at Gump's while I was in school. So if any-if I saw any craft that-it was Wildenhain.

MR. SMITH: Did you know Marguerite?

MS. PETERSON: Oh yeah. No, I-later, of course, I did know her really quite well. She also came through USC [University of Southern California, Los Angeles] one day-[laughs]-okay, I'll tell you that later. But I-but I really wasn't-Tony Prieto, I don't think had come to California, Oakland College of Arts and Crafts we called it then. Then it became California College of Arts and Crafts. I don't think Prieto was there yet so that Carlton was really the only-and Carlton was a jeweler and a silversmith as well as a potter and a really a very good silversmith. So he was important in the Bay Area for that as well.

MR. SMITH: Were you aware of the program at the College of Arts and Crafts?

MS. PETERSON: Only surface-wise. Yeah. And more aware-who was the guy who was the jeweler there? I forget his name, but he was the one who was more important at that school than anybody.

MR. SMITH: Did you practice jewelry making?

MS. PETERSON: No, no. It was down the road, but I really-and I did go there one time, but probably taken by an art teacher.

MR. SMITH: So continuing, you graduated from Mills, again with honors.

MS. PETERSON: Yeah, I did.

MR. SMITH: -and then you decided to pursue your interest in ceramics and you wanted to study somewhere further for your M.F.A. Am I correct?

MS. PETERSON: That's what I had in the back of my head, until Dr. John Fox appeared on the Mills campus from Honolulu Punahou School, and because he went to John-he came to Stanford and Mills. He was going to tour the country. He needed 50-50 new teachers, because Punahou had been taken over by the army during the war. So he was a new superintendent of Punahou, came from Connecticut. He was now building a faculty for Punahou School, the only college preparatory school in the Islands.

And he came to Mills looking for teachers, and White said, "We don't have any teachers here," and John Fox apparently said to White, "What? You have nobody studying?" And he said, "Well, we do have a few." And he knew that I was taking my-and there were a couple of elementary early childhood-we did have early childhood training at Mills, so elementary types, and Punahou was from five years to high school graduation, a boarding school as well as a day school.

[END TAPE 1, SIDE A.]

And so I was called out of a class by Dr. White and told to come to his office and I did, and around his office were 20-by-240inch photographs of palm trees, ocean, moon. It-literally all around the office he'd put up these big photographs, and this is where we were being interviewed, in the president's office. He offered me the job

immediately in-the art job, and I said well, I just don't know. I have these other opportunities. So he then invited me to dinner at the St. Francis Hotel that night, and as I left the room, the next person is coming in-there were only three or four who could be-and I was the only secondary school person. The others were elementary. So only one other person, Barbara Johnson-he also invited her to be an elementary school teacher. She told him the same thing, so he invited her to dinner to the St. Francis.

So we both went to dinner that night at the hotel with Dr. John Fox, and the important thing about that evening was, first of all, he convinced us we should go to Punahou School, but as we were sitting in the patent leather room with this, kind of, gorgeous guy with white hair, maybe 50 years old, great stock of white hair, beautiful blue eyes, handsome man and these two cute young girls. So there's a guy sitting at the bar who sends over a note to Dr. Fox asking if he could join us, and Fox reads the note and then he says to us, "Now I don't want you to tell him who I am; tell him I'm an executive of Hawaiian Pine and I'm going to invite him over." So he did and that person-then, of course, buying us another round of drinks also ordered a table, a band, a room. This was J. Paul Getty, who lived at the St. Francis Hotel.

So that evening was so memorable that both Barbara and I signed on. However, I then called my father and said that I was-that I had been offered this job and I thought I wanted to take it. One thing about my life is that my parents were so supportive, but they were also absolutely-they made me be independent. They made me think for myself. So that on the telephone, I was really calling to ask my father, should I take this job? And he said, "How is the weather there? Is it raining?" He refused to talk to me about it. He said, "I can't-I will only tell you I cannot put you through graduate school if you give up this fellowship that'll give you your degree, because I will have your brother to put through college. So I can't give you a graduate degree. So if you go to Hawaii, you'll have to figure out how to get your own graduate degree, and you shouldn't teach without a graduate degree."

So he had told me two things. I'm going over to teach and I don't have a graduate degree yet, but anyway I went and so did Barbara, and that again was a huge experience because this is the first year after the war. There still was a war-no, '46, Japan was-the war was over, '46, right? Yeah. The fleet comes in. I saw the fleet come in. Admiral Nimitz, I saw that come in under the Golden Gate Bridge. I happened to know Admiral Nimitz' aide, so I was invited to a cocktail party on-

MR. SMITH: This wasn't in Hawaii?

MS. PETERSON: This was in Mills. This was in Mills, still before I graduated. So I'm just trying to remember that, yes, the war was over. So I get to Mills-I mean, I get to Hawaii, and this Punahou School is the only college preparatory school in the Islands. We are now starting again from after the soldiers had been all during the war. So even-they had cut up the oriental rugs. They were having to rebuild a lot of the campus. They had never had art at Punahou School, but the new superintendent, Dr. John Fox from Connecticut, wanted art.

So now we had to build an art building-I mean, we had to build art rooms. I was given these Japanese carpenters, who, of course, didn't speak any English, and I learned early on about Japanese always say yes when they mean no and always say no when they mean yes, but I had to build the room. I had to build easels and make a room that was two-dimension art because that's all I knew and that's what they wanted their drawing and painting.

MR. SMITH: This was your first job. That must have been a big challenge.

MS. PETERSON: Yeah, it was my first job-first job. I got $1,500 salary and-for the whole year, and, of course, I went over-there were no airplanes yet; I went over on the *Matsonia*, on the boat, and I flew back on one of the first flights of United Airlines from Hawaii to the mainland.

It was a great time to be in Hawaii because it was still old Hawaii. There were three hotels on Waikiki only. Today there are hundreds. From Punahou, which was on a hill, you could roll down green grass all the way to the sand, to the beach. Today, of course it's totally built up. There weren't any department stores. There were-if you wanted to buy you a dress, there were little shacks down at Waikiki where a woman would hang a dress on the outside. You could have-you could come in and be measured for that particular dress.

Doris Duke, is that who-yeah, who had the big pink wonderful villa on Diamond Head-entertained-Punahou faculty was important because it was an important school in the Islands. So we were often frequently entertained at her place, where we met-oh, God, what was his name, the very famous archaeologist at the Bishop Museum [Sir Peter Buck]? Iolani Luahene, who was the famous Hawaiian dancer. So we had-we were embededded-I had Duke Kahanamoku's kids in class; he was the famous Olympic swimmer.

The-we learned a lot about old Hawaii. There were no inter-island flights or boats even at that time. My friend Barbara Johnson and I chartered a plane at Christmastime and flew to the island of Hawaii in a little beach craft, and so it was an amazing time to be there, but my-and the Royal Hawaiian was still submariner's club; the navy was there, the army was there. We had dates from breakfast through to midnight suppers, day in and day out. I

mean, it was a fabulous time to be wined and dined in this elegant lovely place.

And I decided it was just too much, you know. How could you work here? So I-and I needed to work. So I decided after one year that I had to come back and not stay in Hawaii. Barbara stayed. She married, she stayed. Now she lives in Sun City, Arizona.

MR. SMITH: So when you came back, where did you go?

MS. PETERSON: Well, so when I came back, I-Carlton Ball had written to me at-in Hawaii that he was inviting Clarence Merritt for a glaze-technical glaze class that summer session at Mills and I should come to take it. He'd never met Clarence Merritt, but Carlton did know that he didn't know a lot and that-

MR. SMITH: Who was Clarence Merritt?

MS. PETERSON: Clarence Merritt was the glaze technologist at Alfred University [Alfred, NY]. There was one other glaze technologist in the country; that was Max Compton at Gladding McBean, but both those men were the two glaze technologists in the U.S.A. at that time alive. So Carlton somehow knew that, invited the man, he came and I came back and went-I came back and went immediately to Mills to that summer session.

The summer session, which was body-clay body development and mathematical calculation of glaze and the study of raw material. So we had lectures in the morning. We did our lab in the afternoon. Merritt had never been out of New York State. It was wild for him to be on the West Coast. So we were in Chinatown often with Merritt; we took him all over. We had a great time with this man and he had a great time with us. Laura Andresen, who didn't-nobody threw on the potter's wheel except Carlton Ball. So even in the summer of '47 Laura sent four graduate students up to Carlton, whom I met that summer, to learn to throw and teach her.

MR. SMITH: Who else was in that special session?

MS. PETERSON: Jade Snow Wong, Connie Wong-Jade Snow Wong was a well-known enamellist in San Francisco. She was a Mills graduate. She had come back to this class. Edith and Brian Heath were in the class, [Otto and Gertrude] Natzler came, not for the whole summer but for a couple of weeks. Tony Prieto was in the class. By then he had come to Oakland. Who else? There's another -

MR. SMITH: Did Carlton Ball sit on the session?

MS. PETERSON: Oh, yes. Carlton Ball took the class. Absolutely. Now, this is the first time that Carlton understood anything about high temperature. Clarence Merritt had us working at cone 04, cone 05 and cone 10 so that we now had a range from low-fire to high-fire and we were experimenting with clay bodies and glazes in those temperatures. So that Carlton-after the advent of Clarence Merritt, Carlton then did begin again experimenting on his own at the higher-he built high-fire kilns himself. By then he was laying brick and building kilns and not buying from Denver Fire Clay Company anymore.

MR. SMITH: That session must have been very important for the Bay Area and for the West Coast-

MS. PETERSON: It was very important for everybody. Sure, it was very important for everybody, and especially now that Laura had sent those four graduate students-so Southern California was going to get a potter's wheel and somebody who knew how to use it.

MR. SMITH: After that session, I believe you went to the Wichita Art Association [now the Wichita Center for the Arts, Wichita, KS]?

MS. PETERSON: Okay, so my father had told me couldn't afford to send me to graduate school, so I would have to get a job of some sort to make enough money. So my father-my mother was active in the Wichita Art Association, and Maude Schollenberger, who was a fantastic woman-Maude Schollenberger was an interior decorator who had the foresight to develop the Wichita Art Association, which was a group of people who would support her museum and her school. So she had an art school and she had a museum, and her patrons were Olive Ann Beach [Beach Craft Airplanes] and Mrs. Lee Phillips [Phillips Oil] and the Coleman lamp person and Mary Koch, the mother of all those famous Koch boys, now very rich guys in New York City.

Anyway, there were a lot of supporters for this art association, and Maude Schollenberger had already developed the national-the annual national exhibition-'National Decorative Arts and Ceramic Exhibition" was what it was called, parallel to Syracuse ["Ceramic National"], but Syracuse was only ceramics and Wichita was all the crafts.

MR. SMITH: I remember that because actually I had, I think, entered and I think it was included in one of those early shows. That was one of the early national competitions -

MS. PETERSON: It was absolutely-yeah, right, exactly. And it was-Syracuse never was national on the scope that Wichita was, because Syracuse had prejudging in regions and then went, whereas Maude's exhibition, she hired a warehouse, she had the jury for three days, everything was laid out, and this was everything that came from all over the country.

MR. SMITH: It was also all media. It wasn't just ceramics.

MS. PETERSON: In all media, exactly. That was extremely important in the Midwest. I mean, that show-people came from all over the Midwest to that exhibition, and, of course, many things were for sale, so that people became collectors because of that show.

Okay, my father-my mother was active in the association; my father, of course, knew Maude Schollenberger as an educator for the art school anyway. So he went to her; he knew she didn't have ceramics. She had silversmithing; Rudolph Braum, the important Dutch goldsmith, was the metalsmithing teacher there. They had very good painting and drawing and sculpture, and she had weaving but no ceramics. So my father asked Mrs. Schollenberger if I could teach ceramics, if I could make a ceramic class for her. She had developed a whole block-a city block of houses, and the biggest house was her museum, then there were several carriage houses.

She gave me a five-room bungalow on the-on this city block-to develop for the ceramic classes and she gave me a postman who got off work at 2:00 in the afternoon and who was a carpenter. And he had been studying art in her classes as an exchange for working. So she gave me Jack Pharo, the carpenter, and we together-I knew what Carlton Ball's wheel looked like because my graduation present was a Carlton Ball-built wheel. So I had it there in Wichita, and my father's now director of secondary curriculum in Wichita, no longer in Grand Island, Nebraska.

So I'm going back to Wichita as home, and Jack Pharo and I went to the lumber yard for the wood; we went to the junkyard for tires and all kinds of things that we could build fly wheels out of, and we made Carlton Ball-style wheels, and we-and I bought a Denver Fire Clay Company kiln with the muffle pipe, and all I knew was cone 07, even though I had had the Clarence Merritt class. It didn't occur to me to do other than what-what I had learned, so I'm still firing 07. We prospected the clay. Kansas had clay. We went out with our washtubs and we gathered clay and we slaked it and used local clay. There weren't any ceramic suppliers in the vicinity, but there were in Denver, so I could order some glaze material through Denver and I learned on the job. [Laughs.]

MR. SMITH: That was another challenge. How long were you at Wichita?

MS. PETERSON: Well, until I had enough money to go to Alfred. And it turned out that because I was living at home, and of course the salary-my salary was a pittance, but whatever it was I could keep it, and my parents were still feeding me, so that I stayed one year, '47-came back from Hawaii '47, so fall of '47 and all of '48, and I left in January of '49 for this-for the second semester at Alfred. So I was really a year and a half at Wichita.

MR. SMITH: Alfred University, of course, was one of the schools for ceramic study,

MS. PETERSON: Exactly.

MR. SMITH: So was that your motivation? You wanted to continue learning about ceramics?

MS. PETERSON: I wanted to-and it was really at that time there wasn't any place. There was Mills. There might have been UCLA [University of California, Los Angeles], but Laura didn't know as much as Carlton knew and there really-between-there might have been Columbus, but Columbus didn't occur to me probably because I had already met Merritt, so I'd heard more about Alfred -

MR. SMITH: Ohio State [Columbus] had a program.

MS. PETERSON: -but Ohio State did have a program at that time, but I wasn't-I think it was because of Clarence Merritt that I knew about Alfred and-it took me a long time to understand what a great place Alfred really was and how important it was in the development-in the history of ceramic in the United States.

But Charles Harder, when I applied, he refused my application because-and he wrote in the letter that no one in California knew anything about ceramics and that if I wanted to enter as a freshman I could do that, but I could not come as a graduate student. So-and I'd never been to Alfred. I hadn't seen it. I didn't know what the facility was like. I only knew what the Mills facility was like, which was a bunch of chicken coops that Carlton had built that had the kilns and the wheels.

Anyway, I called up Clarence Merritt and he remembered me because I got the only A in the class that summer; maybe he remembered me for something else, but at least he remembered that and he said so on the phone. And I said I've been denied admittance by Charles Harder. He said, never mind, come. So I actually did. I packed my wardrobe trunk and I took off on a train which only went to Hornell; I didn't even know that Alfred wasn't at

Hornell. I didn't know where Alfred was, but I got off the train at Hornell with my big steamer trunk, and there is no way to get to Alfred. There are no taxis. There is absolutely no way.

However, there was a woman there in the depot as I'm talking to the superintendent of the railroad, how do I-how am I going to get to Alfred? And I'm in my high heels, and anyway this woman was Virginia Dunn and she was from Wichita. She heard that-she knew my father, so she heard the name Harnly and she was a student at the craft school. At that time Mrs. [Aileen Osborn] Webb's craft school was in Alfred. So Virginia Dunn was a student at the craft school. She had a truck and a big dog, and for some reason she was standing there in this depot. I to this day don't know why she was there except some angel sent her. So she drove me to Alfred.

Now, I also-and nobody had told me, even Clarence Merritt had never said anything but come. I assumed there were dormitories. There were dormitories for graduate students and only a few for undergrad, and people lived around the town in rooms in the town, but she's dumping me in-Virginia Dunn is dumping me. She takes me to her house to sleep that night. The next morning she takes me to the dean of women, and the dean of women is Dean Geen who was the dean at Mills College. She was my dean of women at Mills College. Now she's the dean of women at Alfred University. I couldn't believe that, but there she was. So she kept me for a couple of days in her apartment in Alfred and called all kinds of people.

No, this is-Alfred is the Seventh Day Baptist community, one of two in the United States. They're like Seventh Day Adventists but they are Baptist but they-the Sabbath is Saturday and they thought that all graduate students would drink. There-Alfred was dry. You couldn't have liquor in the town anywhere but that-nobody would harbor me. So she did call then the dean of men, who had an octagon house with a cupola on the third story that was all glass, and she said-his name was Hawthorne, "Dean Hawthorne, I know you have a cupola on the top of your octagon house and I want you to rent it to this graduate student."

MR. SMITH: It must have been very great to be at Alfred because that is such a prestigious school; it always has been and is today, with a great faculty. Can you talk about the faculty, the curriculum, and some of your fellow students?

MS. PETERSON: My-of course, Charles Harder was the chairman of the design division of the college of ceramics. Alfred University was a private institution; the New York State College of Ceramics was on the campus of Alfred University. The New York State College of Ceramics had a dean and then it had chair of glass and chair of the heavy clay products and chair-and one of the chairs was Harder, for design. It was called-our degree was industrial ceramic design. That is the M.F.A. that we got. So that the-his emphasis was industrial design. We were either going to go to work in factories as designers or we were going to have our-make our own factory. Nothing was ever said about art.

The faculty-Dan Rhodes, had been-Dan Rhodes and Vivika Heino were the first two master's degrees that Alfred gave, 1940 and '41, because Harder said that he taught everything on the undergraduate level. He didn't see any reason for a graduate degree, but finally the college of ceramics said you have to have a graduate degree because they had graduate degrees. So he had put in a master's and one year was Dan and one year was Vivika, then the war; we were the first class after the war.

MR. SMITH: Who were some of your fellow students at that time?

MS. PETERSON: So Bob Turner and Ted Randall, and Jayne Van Alstyne was the only other woman besides myself who was a degree candidate. Joan Jockwig, now married to Ron Pearson, was in school but she didn't graduate. Philip Johnson, who became the designer at Corning, Winslow Anderson, who became the designer at Blenko [Blenko Glass Company]. Justin Brady, who became the head of glaze technology at AMACO, American Art Clay Corporation. Jim Achoff, who became New York State Superintendent of Education. [Laughs.] The Secrest brothers who were well known, Jim and Phil Secrest, they both designed for Glidden Parker, who had a pottery-was an Alfred graduate but had a pottery in Alfred. They helped Glidden for quite a while, both those Secrest boys.

Am I leaving anybody out? All of them had been there for three years when they graduated. I came in January of '49 and I left in June of '50, so I either worked harder than they did or I don't know what, but I-Charles Harder-it didn't matter how many units you had, if he thought you were ready to go, then he graduated you. And if he thought you were ready to leave, he put a hand on your shoulder-I saw him do that-and you were gone the next day. So if you weren't measuring up somehow, you didn't stay.

MR. SMITH: So even though he was against your coming there, you eventually won his support.

MS. PETERSON: Well, the first semester he assigned-we had periodic lectures and we took x number of units from a given professor. We had a design professor named Ekdahl, we had Marion Fosdick, who was a Binns protégé-Charles Binns, who founded the college of ceramics. She was his protégé; she was now teaching ceramic sculpture, and what's-her-name Nelson who was teaching painting. Okay?

So this faculty with whom I had units, each one so many units, they all gave me Cs. A C was failing on the graduate level, so ostensibly I had failed the first semester. Therefore, I'm out. So Clarence Merritt again took a hand; he took me by the hand and took me up to Dean Scholes, who was now the dean of the whole college of ceramics, who was the famous glass technologist, wrote the bible for glass, and Merritt said let's put her on probation for another semester. And Dean Scholes said okay.

So they overrode Charles Harder, which didn't make him my friend anymore again, but by the second semester I was-I really-I didn't know anything coming from Carlton. I really-my knowledge was nil compared with what now my colleagues knew having been there already a year and a half, what they knew. But by the second semester Rhodes, who was new-Rhodes was a new professor when-after the war because he'd been in concentration camp, pardon me-conscientious objector camp and he came to Alfred after the war. So he was new even to high-temperature because Charles Harder had only low-fire. When they were in school, they learned only low-fire, so high-fire was now new to all of us. Charles Harder had sat out the war learning high-temperature, okay?

MR. SMITH: So you obviously benefited, not only from this specialized talented faculty, but also from your colleagues?

MS. PETERSON: Absolutely, absolutely.

MR. SMITH: So it was a very intense learning opportunity and you were at that point where you were absorbing everything at every moment.

MS. PETERSON: Absolutely, yeah, right.

MR. SMITH: But Alfred, of course, was a very-the most prestigious school in terms of ceramics education.

MS. PETERSON: And the only college of ceramics in the world, so that there were other ceramic even -- Ohio State, Georgia Tech, there were other ceramic engineering schools but not any that had, in addition to heavy clay products and glass technology and design, all-and high-temperature refractories.

MR. SMITH: So you got an M.F.A. degree?

MS. PETERSON: I got an M.F.A. in industrial ceramic design from Alfred.

MR. SMITH: But was there the opportunity to express yourself artistically, even though there wasn't a so-called art program?

MS. PETERSON: There was, because we worked at the wheel, but the word *art*-I don't think I ever heard the word *art*. I kept hearing the word *design*. We were always being talked with about design, because the art of clay had not yet entered anyone's minds perhaps.

MR. SMITH: So it was very technically oriented.

MS. PETERSON: Very technically oriented. And, I mean, technical in the sense of materials as well as in the techniques.

MR. SMITH: Was there anything other-anything else that you'd like to say about Alfred?

MS. PETERSON: Is there any room? [Laughs.] I think the main thing really was the-the men with whom I worked were-they'd all come back from the war. There was tremendous drive, great energy and spontaneity came from all of our associations together.

[Tape stops, re-starts.]

MR. SMITH: This is Paul Smith, conducting the Susan Peterson interview in Carefree, Arizona, on Monday, March 1. This is the beginning of the second disc, and we are continuing the conversation with Susan's stay at Alfred University.

Susan, tell me a little bit more about your-what happened at Alfred that was important to you and a little bit more about the other things that were going on at the school.

MS. PETERSON: Okay. Alfred, because it was a college of ceramics, it was important for us in the design area to be in the same building, which in those days we were. Today there are different buildings, but in those days we were in the same buildings with Willard Sutton and with Dean Scholes, with the glass technologists, with the glaze people, with Ferchette, the man who was so important in high-temperature refractories. So we learned more about the whole field of ceramics not just about ceramic design, and Clarence Merritt, the glaze technologist, was on both faculties. He taught the engineering school as well as he taught the art school. So I

think that was important, the fact that we got this broad-a broad feeling about ceramics as such.

Okay, the School for American Craftsmen, Mrs. Webb had put it at some other place first, I think, Dartmouth [Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH], and then it came to Alfred. It was in what was called the Crandell Barn. It was in a big red barn in downtown Alfred, but by the time I was there in 1949, they already knew that Charles Harder was very opposed to the School for American Craftsmen and he was going to run it out of town if he possibly could. Even-he talked to us in-that we should not go over to the School for American Craftsmen because they were learning a different thing from what we were learning, though he didn't advise us to go there and-

MR. SMITH: Was there a ceramic program at the School for American Craftsmen?

MS. PETERSON: Oh, absolutely.

MR. SMITH: And who was on the faculty?

MS. PETERSON: There was a clay-what I'm trying to remember is who did the teaching. Of course, that's where I met Charles and Otalie Loloma, because the School for American Craftsmen had given a scholarship to Hopi, to the pueblo of Hopi to Fred Kabotie, who was the outstanding painter-famous painter from Hopi. They gave the scholarship to him, to Fred Kabotie. Fred Kabotie didn't want to learn ceramics; it was to be in ceramics and Fred Kabotie chose Charles Loloma as being a talented kid on the Hopi res and he should go and learn about Anglo life. He was married to Otalie. They both came. They studied clay at School for American Craftsmen, but who was the teacher? I can't remember.

We really were just not supposed to go over there and-but I did-I learned about Charles and Otalie from another Wichita person, Peter Aitchison, not that we care, but he was studying ceramics there at the School for American Craftsmen and I had known him in Wichita. He introduced me to Charles and Otalie, who I knew until Charles died and Otalie also. So they were friends for all my life.

Anyway, I think that the other thing that was so important was somehow Charles Harder knew about Bernard Leach. Now how or why, and I never thought to ask him, that he would bring Bernard Leach to Alfred, New York, in 1949 to work with the graduate students, but he did. Bernard came in through Toronto, left through Toronto. Charles Harder didn't pay him enough money to travel in this country, and he did get to New York City, but that's all he saw on that particular trip.

He was important to me because I'd already been to Europe. I had bought the Leach book when I was in Europe that summer, so I came to Alfred knowing how Bernard Leach was. I had bought a big Bernard Leach pot in London out of a gallery exhibition, a pot that was actually pictured in his book, "A Potter's Book" [London: Faber and Faber, 1940]. So when I encountered Leach, I was very impressed with the person. My colleagues were not so impressed. They thought that he couldn't center, because he didn't center on the potter's wheel; he centered as he pulled up, but every-we were taught you had to center first, then you pulled up.

So I feel, really, that most of the other students were not-they didn't get from him what I got. Minnie Negoro was also a student, who didn't graduate in our class; I think she graduated in the next class, but she had been taken out of the Japanese internment camp by Laura Andresen and sent to Alfred, so that she was there working her way through her graduate program; but she had been interned with her Japanese family at Santa Anita racetrack in Los Angeles. She hated her Japanese heritage. She was nisei, born here, and Leach was a big influence on her, and he spent a lot of time with her, telling her about how important Japanese art was.

MR. SMITH: How-Leach was there for a semester or -

MS. PETERSON: No, six weeks. He was there for six weeks. Every day he gave us a project. Every day he demonstrated. Every day he talked to us, and every day he tried to hold conversation with us. He told us that we worked in too-warm rooms; we needed to open the windows and let the snow come in. He said it was no good to work in a hothouse, because he thought it was way too warm in there. He was very-to me he was very spiritual.

So I one day asked him -- because I came from this kind of religious background, I asked him if he had a religion. And he told me that if I could get a classroom away from the dirt and the mud of the ceramic department, he would talk to the group, not just to me, but he wanted to speak to the group, about his beliefs. So I got the classroom and he did talk to us about-he was a Baha'i, first time I ever heard that name, and he told us what Baha'i meant and what it meant to him and et cetera. I forgot to say that the chaplain at Alfred was now Myron Sibley, who was the chaplain at Punahou when I was at Punahou, and it was really through Myron Sibley that I got the classroom, and Myron Sibley, the chaplain at Alred whom I had known at Punahou, wanted to hear what Leach said about his religion.

Later I got very interested in Baha'i, and I went to some Baha'i meetings and so forth, but the time for me with

Leach was really very, very important and it linked me later to Hamada.

MR. SMITH: What did you get from Leach specifically in terms of ceramic education that you did not get from other faculty at Alfred?

MS. PETERSON: That's hard to say but-because really the answer's nothing other than he did show us some old English techniques with slick trail, combing. He talked a lot about the peasant pottery of middle Europe, Spain, France-showed pictures, not-we didn't have slides in those days. We didn't have cameras. The first time I saw slides, Dan Rhodes had-I don't know how, but anyway, he had taken some slides of Marguerite Wildenhain in California. He showed us some slides of Marguerite but Leach only had-he had photographs.

And anyway, I think what I got from him was more history of English-old English ceramics, not even current contemporary-and he wasn't talking much about Japan.

MR. SMITH: When you were at Alfred, did you travel in New York State or go to New York City?

MS. PETERSON: I did go to New York City. Primarily, I went to New York City with Ronnie Pearson and Joan Jockwig Watkins-no, Joan Jockwig Pearson Watkins. They had a car, most people didn't have cars-they had a car; they charged us gasoline and they went often to New York City because Ronnie had a sister living there, I guess. Anyway, they went often so I-when I was at Alfred-when I went to Europe in 1948, I sailed from New York, but I had never been around New York City.

So when I was at Alfred, I was introduced to the America House and American Craft Council, and when Mrs. Webb and Mrs. Carraway [daughter of Frank Lloyd Wright] came to Alfred to the craft school to talk, I went to hear them. So I heard Eileen (sp) talk about the importance of being an apprentice and then a journeyman. These, of course, were Mrs. Carraway's ideas, that you had to learn in the European style of apprentice and journeyman, and then you had to have an outlet, and, of course, America House was in the beginning to be the outlet of the School for American Craftsmen. Later on it was a national or international outlet, but that was when I learned to-when I learned about Mrs. Webb and Mrs. Carraway, and the America House was built by them.

MR. SMITH: Did you meet Mrs. Webb?

MS. PETERSON: Oh, yeah.

MR. SMITH: Coming back to Alfred University, were there any other experiences there that were really important?

MS. PETERSON: [Laughs.] I met Jack Peterson, who was a ceramic engineer, returned from the war-he had started before the war, came back after the war to finish his degree, and we were married, actually in Ripley, New York, and-during my time at Alfred. So we lived in the married students' housing ultimately, and Jack-at that time the big corporations, the big ceramic factories in this country came to Alfred to hire the engineers for job opportunities, but also the American Ceramics Society had competitions for certain jobs. One was the Gladding McBean, superintendent of the pottery job, and Jack Peterson won that contest at the ACS debate, and he accepted the job, which is how we got to California.

MR. SMITH: You both graduated at the same time?

MS. PETERSON: We both graduated in 1950 and we drove across the country for him to take that job.

MR. SMITH: Looking back at your overall wonderful experience and your vast education at the great schools that you attended, are there any special memorable influences that you recall?

[END TAPE 1, SIDE B.]

MS. PETERSON: Everything that happened to me was-and as I reflect later on, somehow the fact that I met Bernard Leach so early, the fact that I met Carlton Ball, the fact that I had-I even met Maria Martinez when I was 10 years old because my mother was interested in American Indians and we went to the pueblo. So I had really early influences that continued the rest of my life.

MR. SMITH: Susan, in 1950 you moved to Southern California. Would you talk about that era of your life?

MS. PETERSON: Yes, Paul. My husband, Jack L. Peterson, sort of won a job as a plant superintendent for Gladding McBean. Gladding McBean was the largest, most diverse ceramic plant factory in the world, had many plants up and down the West Coast, but the Los Angeles plant was the largest. There they made Franciscan pottery and china; they made brick; they made sewer pipe. Anyway, he was on a-he was to be the plant superintendent of the pottery department. So we came to Southern California because of that-came to Los Angeles because of that.

Then I had a baby. That was the fall of 1950. And after that child was born, we lived in an apartment in Burbank near the ceramic plant, and I was stir crazy, so I decided that I should go out and get a design job, since that's what I was trained for. So I-and there were 400 small potteries in the Los Angeles area making dinnerware as well as accessories: the Chinaman and the surrey with the fringe on top and the pink flamingo. That kind of thing was what California was making at that time. Gladding McBean, with Franciscan Pottery and China, their Apple, Desert Rose, and Ivy, their three patterns, were the largest-selling pottery patterns in the world, and the china patterns were doing very well too.

Well, I knew that-and a number of these little potteries were dinnerware plants. So I knew that that's where my forte was, and I understood everything about models and molds and how to do the process, so I would be able-I started with Gladding McBean because Jack was working there. So I went to meet the head of-the vice president of the company, the whole company, and he just laughed at me. He was an Alfred graduate and he was a ceramic engineer from Alfred, and he said, nobody designs-we don't design. He said, we take molds from other people's molds, and he said it just sort of passes around in the-so we need a new plate, we get somebody's plate and we make a mold of that plate. So it's shrinking size smaller-always shrinking size smaller; that's what we need. What we design is the pattern. If you're a patternmaker-

Well, I wasn't a patternmaker. I had learned form and how to make those forms work in a production process. We didn't dwell at all at Alfred in decoration or production decorative techniques. So, no, there was no job for me. So I stared into the small potteries. I though surely they would want me. Every time that I went to a small pottery, I would get in the door because I was an Alfred graduate, and invariably the plant superintendent was an Alfred ceramic engineer.

MR. SMITH: You speak about a lot of potteries. Were there very many potteries?

MS. PETERSON: Four hundred small potteries-that's an absolute fact-in Los Angeles in 1950.

MR. SMITH: Why were they located in Southern California?

MS. PETERSON: Probably-but I'm not even-that's an interesting question. Gladding McBean, who owned Catalina Pottery, which was a famous, early fiesta kind of pottery-Gladding McBean was such a famous company that maybe all those potteries came there because the market was there. Otherwise-I mean, it would have to be because of the market. Everybody was using-what Gladding McBean was using in pottery was a talc body. The so-called talc body was 50 percent talc, 50 percent clay, like the Egyptians 2000 B.C. used, but Gladding McBean had patented it, and then they sold the body composition. So everyone was using this talc body. Eventually their patent wore out, but for a long time they got money from their talc body. So all these potteries were making a white-low-fire, white, semi-vitreous pottery with bright, low-fire glazes, unlike ceramic manufacture in the East, which was more sedate.

MR. SMITH: So did you even then land a job with one of these -

MS. PETERSON: Yeah. So eventually I got a job with Max Weil. Max Weil Pottery was making the first square dinnerware. They made square plates, square cups and saucers, and somebody had to have designed that, but they didn't allow that they had a designer. But the Alfred engineer who hired me said he knew exactly what my training was, so he said, you'll be our vacation replacement because you can fire kilns, you can mix-[inaudible]-you can cast plaster, you can cast liquid clay, you can jigger. You'll be our vacation replacement.

So every two weeks I had a different job and I really was able to do that. I was saved, because Norma Friswold, who was the teacher at the junior college, Los Angeles Community College, a two-year school in Vermont Avenue, L.A. that-Norma Firswald was one of the four students that Laura had sent up to Carlton Ball the summer of '47. So I had met her. Now it's 1950, '51, and I have met Norma Friswald before, so she knew that I could take her job. She went to the hospital with some terrible disease and knew she'd be out for a whole semester.

So I went from Max Weil to the junior college, Los Angeles Community College to teach ceramics. My two best students there were Kenny Price and Billy Al Bengston. But they were really in high school. MR. SMITH: What year was that?

MS. PETERSON: 1951-early '51, yes, because I had already got the job at Max Weil, but now-so it was early '51.

MR. SMITH: So you were at Max Weil, and then you were also exploring other things?

MS. PETERSON: No, I quit-I quit at Max Weil-[laughs]-because now I had another job, and it was more money than I was making at Max Weil even. So I could take care of my baby-I could have somebody take care of my baby and I could go to the college. Of course, community colleges, at least in those days, you taught four days a week-four full days a week. Now maybe they teach two days a week.

But that was my first meeting with Kenny and Billy Al, and they really were still in high school; but Norma had built these Carlton Ball wheels because she had learned there from Carlton Ball. So she had wheels and the boys came to-she allowed them to come, so they were frequenting without being enrolled.

The city art supervisor, Evangeline Heisig, came to visit my-to observe me in a class one day, and she was very impressed and asked me to take the city test since I had a teaching credential for a high school job. Well, I already knew I couldn't get a job in pottery. We lived in an apartment; I couldn't have a kiln and I couldn't have a studio, so, okay, I could perhaps take a high school job. So I took their test and I got the highest grade and I was able to choose my spot, which turned out to be Whittier.

Whittier Union High School, with 5,000 students, was the largest high school in the state of California. Whittier was a nice village away from the city, and no freeways in those days, so about two hours, really, from downtown Los Angeles. So Jack Peterson had a long drive to his job at Gladding McBean, but we moved to Whittier so I wouldn't have such a long drive.

The reason I took the job was they had a whole ceramic bungalow, all outfitted with plenty of equipment. They had potter's wheels; they had kilns. It was really a great setup, but it had been set up by Joan Jockwig Pearson Watkins. Before she went to Alfred, she had been a teacher there in that place. Amazing.

MR. SMITH: Interesting that there's so many Alfred transplants in Southern California at that time.

MS. PETERSON: Absolutely. Really amazing.

Well, so while I'm at-I'm beginning really within the first month or two at Whittier Union High School-and we've already moved to Whittier-I get a call from Nelbert Chouinard. I had heard about Chouinard Art Institute [Los Angeles, CA] all my life because my mother knew about Chouinard Art Institute, so when Mrs. Chouinard called me, I was very surprised, but she said, again, that Evangeline Heisig had told her about me. And the GIs who had come back from the war didn't want such a fine, fine art training as she was giving; they needed something vocational, she explained to me, and she had hired Hudson Roysher, who we all know was an industrial designer and a silversmith and woodworker. She had hired him because she thought industrial design was what the returning GIs would like. But they didn't take to the idea and they didn't take to Hud Roysher very much, and he was costing her a lot of money with a lot of equipment that he wanted, so she was now deciding to have clay.

And she asked me to come right away, but I-my father had told me never to renege on a contract, so I didn't. So what we agreed was that I would come down weekends, I would begin to renovate the space that she allotted, and I would begin to think about the equipment that we would have.

So I wanted, of course, high-temperature firing kilns, which didn't exist-as far as I knew didn't exist unless you built it yourself. She wouldn't allow me to build it because she said that in case the collectors-the debt collectors-came after her, she would have to be able to pick these kilns up with a forklift, so I had to get kilns that were built on a chassis with legs so that they could run away in the middle of the night with this equipment if she was going to be shut down for bankruptcy or something.

So I had to find someone who could build a kiln with a metal chassis. Now, I had never seen such a kiln because at Alfred all the kilns were built out of brick, made by hand, built on the ground, as most kilns in the world were at that time. But Jack and I went to the American Ceramic Society meetings-very big on the West Coast, the American Ceramic Society was-and they had a design division, but they also had engineering and glaze technology and glass-they had many kinds of meetings. We went to the ceramic engineering meetings, and there I met a man named Mike Kalan-K-A-L-A-N-who was building low-temperature kilns. But he was a ceramic engineer graduate of Alfred, and when I spoke to him, he was building kilns similar to the Denver Fire Clay Company kilns with muffle. And when I spoke to him about a high-temperature kiln, he said, oh, sure, we could do that, and my husband, now a ceramic engineer, we all knew that we didn't want a muffle and we didn't want a baffle; we wanted an open chamber, we wanted a combustion flue large enough inside, but we didn't need-what am I trying to say? What am I talking about? [Laughs.] I'm talking about the kiln.

All right, so we built two kilns for Chouinard Art Institute that were the first high-temperature kilns, I think, west of the Mississippi-I really do believe that they were the first ones-and therefore this was done in 1952. Peter Voulkos didn't come to Otis [Otis Art Institute, Los Angeles, CA] until 1954. So by the time Voulkos got there-my husband had also built a potter's wheel for me at Alfred, because there was no good equipment when I was at Alfred, and all of the graduate students either built their own wheel or conned somebody else to build one. So Jack had built me a potter's wheel, a variable-speed, very good-very good wheel, and he was able to find a machine shop to build Chouinard, so I was going to have now my two high-temperature kilns and my variable-speed potter's wheel, which also didn't exist in California because it was only the single RPM 60 that Carlton Ball had made.

So this was all new equipment that Pete could come to town and begin to use right away. When he did come,

Otis was-belonged to the Chandler family, but the Chandler family was tired of picking up the bill and they got the county to buy the art institute, so really when Pete came, it was called the Los Angeles County Art Institute. Mrs. Chouinard said at the time, the county just doesn't know what it has done, because she knew how much it cost all the time to pick up the debt. It reverted, because the county couldn't keep it, so it did revert to Otis, which today it's now called Otis all the time, in conjunction with Voulkos, but it was never Otis when Pete was there; it was the County-we called it the County because that's what it was.

So when Pete came, he had met Jayne Van Alstyne in Montana. Jayne Van Alstyne was the other female in my graduating class from Alfred. She was teaching industrial design at Bozeman [Montana State University, Bozeman]. She had come upon Pete and Rudy [Autio] at Archie Bray's [Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts, Helena, MT], when they were first resident artists there. So Pete Voulkos had been winning prizes. We had seen his name. We had seen the fact that he was getting first prizes in many of the little exhibitions around the country. But all the glazes looked like Alfred glazes. They looked like glazes we had developed while I was in school. No one could figure that out until I finally got the letter from Voulkos saying Jayne Van Alystyne had told him to look me up. Then I realized that's how he had come upon those Alfred glazes.

So when he-really, immediately when he came to town -- we were living in Whittier. He and Paul Soldner came out. We talked about wheels, we talked about the kilns, so he was able-he took-my husband had had Master Motor Company, which made gear reduction motors, hand-make a gear reduction motor for a low potter's wheel that you could put hundreds of pounds of clay on. That's just exactly what Voulkos needed. So he got the same motors and he built his own wheels with pipe legs and plywood, and he got Mike Kalan to build him the largest kiln that Mike Kalan had yet built, and that kiln of course eventually burned the building down.

But meanwhile, in '54, when Voulkos came in the fall of '54, I was not yet on my way to SC [University of Southern California, Los Angeles], but the next year, in '55, I would go. John Mason was my first-ever assistant.

MR. SMITH: Is this at Chouinard?

MS. PETERSON: At Chouinard, so that when I was one weekend in there in 1951-'52, renovating this big open space-we had to build shelves, we had to make-anyway, I was working every weekend, and my husband as well, then Mason came from Otis-he was a student at Otis. He saw that I was building more of a ceramic department than Otis had, so he asked to come to Chouinard as my assistant. Mrs. Chouinard agreed.

MR. SMITH: Could you elaborate a little bit more about the program at Chouinard. You set the ceramic program up, which was an ambitious task. What was going on in the rest of the school-what other faculty were there at the time?

MS. PETERSON: Okay, Mrs. Chouinard had started this school as a fine art school in 1917 with the war widow's pension, she always said, and she had had the best art professors that she could find, the best artists she could find. Among them was Archipenko and Lionel Feininger, and Moholy-Nagy taught there for a little while when he wasn't in Chicago. But the other faculty were maybe not so famous but very, very good, and all of them fine artists producing their own work. She was asked by Walt Disney in the early days, because he was beginning his animation studio but he couldn't find any animators, or he couldn't even find any artists. He was hiring off the street, he used to say. So he asked Mrs. Chouinard if she would take his people and teach them art, but he couldn't pay for it, but eventually he would pay, maybe-someday he would pay her.

So she did-and that's how she began a real animation program. Chouinard had an animation program, and eventually it had a very big costume design program because of Hollywood and because of Edith Head. She was in charge of fashion at Chouinard. So the whole school was broadened because of Walt and because of Hollywood.

Mrs. Chouinard died and Walt Disney died at about the same time. Walt had promised her he would build her a big new school. She was renting the space that we were in at 8th and Grandview, but unfortunately they both died before it was finalized, and he left half of his estate to Chouinard, but the board then decided they would make the best art school in the world. They fired everybody on the Chouinard faculty and hired a whole new-made a whole new school now built on Disney's ranch at Valencia, and called it California Institute of the Arts.

MR. SMITH: During your era at Chouinard, how did your ceramic program fit in, and what was the context for the rest of the programs?

MS. PETERSON: Well, the reason that she had wanted ceramics in the first place was to provide a vocation for the GIs. If they wanted a vocation, this could be it. So I had to do what I had done at Alfred. I had a plaster wheel; I had a filter press for fine porcelain, I had everything that they had at Alfred for industrial ceramic design. So I was teaching in one room, one huge room, all of these different facets, including technical glaze calculation so that my people, my students, could go into any one of those areas in any one of these 400 small potteries, and many of them did. But I was not online with any of her other-with any of the other curriculums, so

that my people came as an elective and they weren't required to take it.

So when I was finally asked to come to SC, Mrs. Chouinard said, "Go." You know, she said, "There you can have a full program-undergraduate, graduate. You can never do that at Chouinard."

MR. SMITH: So when did you leave Chouinard?

MS. PETERSON: I left Chouinard in the summer of 1955, and I began in the fall of 1955 at USC.

MR. SMITH: What was the attraction of USC?

MS. PETERSON: Well, the fact that-Glen Lukens had been SC for 30 or 40 years and then had gone to Haiti for UNESCO [United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization], had left SC. Vivika Heino had been hired on a temporary basis for a couple of years, and she had resigned that job, so that when I was being courted by Don Goodall-the head of the ceramic department would come over to Chouinard, take me to dinner at least once a week, talking to me about coming to USC. But I had heard-I knew what it looked like with Glen Lukens; it had treadle sewing machine potter's wheels and it had a three-cubic-foot electric kiln. Vivika had not been able to get any more pieces of equipment other than she got a small gas kiln for bisque firing. So one reason that she left-or the big reason she left was that they didn't allow her to build that department, and it was mainly because her personality and the personality of the dean.

MR. SMITH: Is the USC program in ceramics part of the art department?

MS. PETERSON: Part of the art department and part of the-yeah, part of the art department. And at that time we had a-SC had a major-we had a B.F.A and an M.F.A. We had a major in painting, they had a major in sculpture, they had a major in printmaking. They didn't have a major in ceramics. So one thing he offered me was a new curriculum, undergraduate and graduate. Also, because I kept telling him, I don't want to come into this place with the treadle sewing machine wheels; we have to have new equipment; we have to have more space. So eventually he found me more space. I doubled the amount of space that had been there. And it took me all that year, but I was able to buy the equipment I wanted, and again I put in an Alfred-style industrial design ceramic department with the equipment that would teach-that would enable me to teach those kinds of things, because it's still early '50s, and this is still what I'm thinking is the potential for the students who came out.

Of course Pete Voulkos changed all that. At the end of '54-he came in the fall of '54; by '55 we were being deluged by his cut-and-paste and his sculptural pieces. He came making the functional pieces that he'd been making in Montana, but within that first year he was now-he had changed his own way of working. Paul Soldner always had said that two Chouinard girls, two of my students, went across McArthur Park over there one day and asked him to throw for them. So he did sit down and throw for them. He threw-at that time he was making these beautiful bulbous bottles with long, tall necks and flare at the top. So he threw a long, tall bottle for these two girls. Paul was the only student of Pete's for a whole year, so Paul was there-so it must be a true story.

And after Pete had made the bottle, he went over and sat down and had a cup of coffee, looked at the bottle, and then went and put down the cup of coffee, went back to the wheel and shoved the bottle around, maneuvered the neck actually, then went to another wheel and threw another neck and came back, put that neck on this first bottle and called it *Love is a Many Splendored Thing*. According to Paul, this is what caused Pete to begin to make-to begin to cut and alter the thrown shapes. I'm not so sure that's true because when Rick Petterson and Millard Sheets, who were in charge of the Los Angeles County Art Institute-Millard was the director; Rick Petterson from Scripps [Scripps College, Claremont, CA]- both of them from Scripps-Petterson was a consultant to Millard Sheets, and they had brought an exhibition in the summer of '54 of Pete Voulkos to Pomona, and I saw that exhibition. Before I ever met Voulkos I saw that exhibition, and in my view there were cut-and-pasted pieces in that exhibition. Paul says no, but Paul didn't see that exhibition.

MR. SMITH: You said that Paul [Soldner] was the only student -

MS. PETERSON: That Paul was the only student for a whole year.

MR. SMITH: So was Peter Voulkos an artist in residence?

MS. PETERSON: No. Peter Voulkos was brought as the teacher, but Paul had left his job in Boulder, Colorado, because of Nan and what's his-Jim McKinnell, who Paul had studied with at some point. And they had been in some workshop where they met Peter Voulkos. Paul, in Colorado, says to Nan McKinnell in Colorado he wanted to learn more about ceramics. They said, go to Montana, find Peter Voulkos; he's it. So Paul went from Colorado to Montana, not knowing anything about Voulkos, dropping in, saying, "I want to study with you." And Pete says, "I'm sorry; I'm going to California." So he went to California with him. And that was all-that first year they didn't want any students-he brought Paul so he had the student there, but Millard Sheets, the director, was not opening it to students, because they didn't have any equipment. They didn't have anything ready to work with.

MR. SMITH: I think Millard Sheets was not very supportive of Pete.

MS. PETERSON: Eventually-well, Pete was a lot of trouble, one who was very dirty, very messy, and threw- his big thing was to throw clay, and not just on the wheel but anywhere, so that he was-but the thing that finally was the cat's meow was the boys went off to a movie one night while the kiln was firing, and the building was burned down. By the time they came back it was gone. The next day Peter Voulkos was fired.

MR. SMITH: In the era that Pete was there-it was very important, because there was a drastic break from tradition, which he led. Eventually it had an enormous effect.

MS. PETERSON: Exactly.

MR. SMITH: Did that have an effect on what was happening in clay in Southern California at the time?

MS. PETERSON: Well, when I was in school in the '40s at Mills-and I didn't know much about Southern California at that time, but in the '30s and '40s we had the Natzlers-the Natzlers who came from Europe as escaping the Gestapo. We had Beatrice Wood. Susie Singer was kind of a homegrown person. Susie Singer was doing wonderful figurines. Harrison McIntosh was working. Rick Petterson was working. Laura Andresen was working. They were all working in low temperature; they weren't working in high temperature yet.

MR. SMITH: Were they all connected with schools?

MS. PETERSON: No, not-Natzler never was connected and Beatrice never was connected with the school. Laura was at UCLA. Rick Pettersen at that time was-first he was at Fullerton Junior College, then he was at Scripps. There were-when I came to Chouinard, there was a department at SC, at UCLA, at Scripps, and at Fullerton Junior College, and Pasadena Junior College. Those were the only-and ultimately there were 32 universities and colleges teaching ceramics in L.A., but when I first went there, hardly any.

The tradition, as it were-the contemporary tradition-was functional pottery, not so functional, because it was so low-fire that if you squeezed it it might break, but especially a Natzler that was very, very, very thin. So while it was functional, it was also decorative, but it was functional-shaped, so it was bottles and bowls primarily. We had only one art gallery in town. That was the Dalzell Hatfield Gallery in the Ambassador Hotel at that time. Glen Lukens showed there, the Natzlers showed there, Harrison McIntosh, et cetera. But that's the milieu of-that's the work that was going on at that time.

And that's really basically what I was teaching, except I'm now teaching-I had brought Bernard Leach and Shoji Hamada and Yanagi Soetsu to Chouinard when Mrs. Chouinard asked me what I wanted to do to inaugurate my new department, so we already had been infiltrated a little. Marguerite Wildenhain had come down and done a big workshop at UCLA, but-so we were teaching a little-maybe a little art but not-it was still, I think, in everybody's mind, craft, and once we sat around watching people-which is what we did-every night, or almost every night, sitting on orange crates in the basement-he started out in the basement at Otis, then he was-then a building was built-by the second year Paul was there, a building was built. But in the beginning we were sitting there in the basement watching him throw these fantastic groups of cylinders, put them onto metal shelving units, and then in an hour or so he'd begin to collect the pieces, and out of this whole group that he'd thrown he would make four or five sculptures, every night. Pete was firing high-temperature stoneware with the glazes from Alfred that Jayce Van Alstyne had taught him in Montana.

MR. SMITH: What was your attraction to go there every night? Was it because he was doing something different?

MS. PETERSON: He was doing something so much different. He was also such a personality, and, I mean, you know what kind of personality he became, but he was such a lively, young kid, pioneering in every way, caring nothing-not giving a hoot about anything technical, never measured anything, put bags of things together and didn't care whether it came out or didn't come out. However it came out would be okay-totally against anything I'd ever learned, and even against the fairly strict limitations of our ceramic vision that we were used to.

So it was such a fun session, and the of course as soon as that first year when they got the kilns built and the wheels built and all, then more students came, so that by '55 we had Michael Frimkess and Henry Takemoto and-I forgot to say that when John left-John left Chouinard in '55 when I went to USC -- John went to work at Vernon Kilns. I got him a job designing dinnerware at Vernon Kilns in order for him to make enough money to finally build his own kiln and his own studio. But Millard hired John right after we left Chouinard, because he thought Peter couldn't fire the kiln and he knew that John had had this experience at Chouinard. So he hired him basically to fire the kiln.

So John was over there. Kenny Price was in and out. Kenny Price had gone to-had finally gone to L.A. Community College, and then he came-when I went to SC he came with me to SC. But he was in and out of Voulkos's studio in '55. So you had Frimkess, a highly talented young man; you had Kenny Price; you had Soldner; you had-

Malcolm McLain was there by then, Henry Takemoto-very gifted.

MR. SMITH: This was at Otis?

MS. PETERSON: This is at Otis-County-County, but really Otis. So not only you have Pete Voulkos performing, but you've got these other fantastic people all going off in different directions. John, who had struggled at Chouinard to learn to throw; all that time he really struggled to learn to throw, and he finally became a very competent thrower. But by the time he saw Voulkos throwing, John, a very smart young man, decides to become a hand-builder. So while he was working at Vernon and at Otis firing the kilns, he was beginning to do hand-building in that studio at Otis before he got his own studio. By the time Voulkos burned the building down, John did have a studio on Glendale Boulevard and he had built his first kiln, which was six foot in each way on the hearth and six foot tall. So he had a big kiln in his own studio, and Pete could come there, after he was fired, until he got the Berkeley job. He worked a few months in John's studio.

MR. SMITH: It appears that there was a vast amount of energy in a very short time. How is that related to the greater activities in the arts in Southern California?

MS. PETERSON: Was it affecting the other arts? MR. SMITH: Was it part of it? Pete, I know, eventually was showing on La Cienega.

MS. PETERSON: On La Cienega and with some of the interesting-I mean, John Altoon is one. Who's the guy who was ostracized as if he was a communist but he really wasn't, and what was his name? He taught at Chouinard. There were some of the local artists who were on to what Pete was doing. Another couple, Jean and Arthur Ames, who were painter and-I mean, graphic artists -

MR. SMITH: There were also enamellists.

MS. PETERSON: And that other guy-yes, and Phil Dike, painter at Scripps. So some of those-and Millard Sheets never was turned on by Pete, I don't think. But there were artists who reacted with Voulkos and came to look, came to see. Voulkos was also painting. Voulkos had a big painting exhibition at the Pasadena Art Museum-all paintings, not any clay. When he first came to town, he had a painting-huge canvases for sale for a few hundred dollars, but nobody could afford even that. I mean, none of us could afford even that.

But I think-I think the town was not so affected as the other clay people were so affected, and even-it took Laura Andresen quite a long time before she was thinking that he was okay-what he was doing was okay.

MR. SMITH: As it was a small group of people, was there a lot of social interaction-I mean, did they get together -

MS. PETERSON: Yes, lots of social interaction, and a lot of it in everybody's houses. We had potluck dinners, we had-we dropped into each other's places. Fred Marer came-discovered Pete. I really don't know how he made that discovery. Fred was a mathematics teacher at Los Angeles Community College, and all of a sudden he was one of the ones sitting on the orange crates in the basement at night, watching Voulkos and eventually the other group. And he-Marer would always bring coffee, cookies, things like that. Marer had money-most of us didn't have money-and Fred really-he knew that what Voulkos needed-where he got his eye I don't know, but he had an eye, and he knew that what Voulkos needed was publicity. So he or Pete, somebody, built a darkroom in the basement in that very-in the beginning, in the basement, and Fred Marer took pictures of Voulkos throwing and of the Voulkos pieces, and he wrote publicity-news publicity things. He printed them up on paper. He got the photograph, and every day he was sending to some newspaper or some magazine in the United States about Peter Voulkos that-really.

MR. SMITH: Fred Marer was a great patron of all those artists.

MS. PETERSON: He certainly was.

MR. SMITH: He not only appreciated, but he bought their work and helped them.

MS. PETERSON: He bought their work. If they didn't have enough money to eat, he took care of them. Of course, for Jun Kaneko he was absolutely important. But he was important for everybody at that time.

MR. SMITH: And amassed a major collection.

MS. PETERSON: And amassed a major collection, now at Scripps College.

MR. SMITH: Well, that appears to be a very, very exciting time for you and historically, of course, it was a very pivotal time. When you were at USC, as I recall, you had a connection with the Idyllwild School of Music and Arts. Could you reflect on that?

MS. PETERSON: Right, I had been at SC, I think, a year, and the dean of music walked in one day to the ceramic room, introduced himself, said that he was the dean of music at SC, but he had a summer university program in the mountains of Idyllwild, and I didn't know where that was, but he told me it was between Palm Springs and Riverside and that he would like me to start a ceramic program up there; would I come and look at it and make a decision? So I went to look at it. They had nothing. It was all under the stars at that time. You learned on the rocks. But they had one building and that building was being used by the woman who built the building, gave the money for the building, and she was a sculptor, basically a portrait sculptor in clay. So she gave me her building and she worked under the stars on the rocks.

So I started the ceramic program in a building at Idyllwild in the summer of 1956-must've been because '56 or '57-I'm not really positive which year it was-smog was terrible in Los Angeles at that time-really terrible. It affected me physically. My respiratory system didn't like it, so I was delighted to be able to go to the mountains. They had a 10-week summer session. It had been-the school had been bought by Max Krone, the dean, and Meredith Willson, later of "Music Man" fame. They had bought 250 acres on this mountain and made the-and gave it to USC. So it was subsidized by these two men and the university for summer session.

So from the outset they had family programs; they had kids from age two to 110. You could be-and come there. It was very heavy in music, all kinds of music -- choir, band, orchestra, individual instrumental-and dance, contemporary dance, and contemporary writing-big program in writing-and contemporary drama, and all the visual arts. So each summer, new people came from-Max hired-he paid us only cigarette money. In those days we got about $5 a week. That was the salary. And he wanted you to work for nothing; he wanted you to work for the love of being there, and everybody did.

In the beginning we had a resident ballet troupe, which was Eugene Loring's, and then eventually Agnes DeMille was there; eventually Masami Kuni, the great Japanese dancer; Pete Seeger, a whole folk music program-the first folk music program in this country, really, was at Idyllwild, and it was basically started by Pete Seeger, and then he brought other people. Pete hitchhiked from New York City every summer to Idyllwild. [Laughs.] Sonny Terry came, and many others.

MR. SMITH: Were the students at Idyllwild from the Southern California area, or did they come from all over the country?

MS. PETERSON: They came from everywhere; they came from all over. And we had college credit if you wanted it, or you didn't have to take college credit. I taught only adults. There was a children's program going on and they had art of some sort or another, but my building and my program was for after high school. You had to be a high school graduate to come into my program. I taught people who became good clay artists. I taught housewives; I taught Toshi Seeger, Pete's wife, and a couple of his children. So it was that kind of place.

MR. SMITH: How long did you stay at USC?

MS. PETERSON: I went to Hunter College [New York, NY] in 1972-fall of 1972.

MR. SMITH: And what motivated that?

MS. PETERSON: [Laughs.] Well, I had been-I had been-you know, we're skipping a lot. I had been to Hamada. I had-Hamada had come to SC for a big, longtime workshop with his son, Shinsaku. I had done almost everything I could possibly do at SC. That was one thing. Also, I had had a terrible illness. I went to that World Craft Congress at Peru, and I had trooped around over South America prior to the conference, and I got some terrible illness. And I finally went to the hospital in January of '69 and I came out in September. So I was very ill for a long period of time. At the end of that time I separated from my husband, and I was really divorced before I went to Hunter. So I was free, and Ray Parker, who was on the painting faculty at Hunter, who-[phone rings]-do you want to cut? Ray Parker was at the-

[Tape stops, re-starts.]

MR. SMITH: In 1972 you joined Hunter College. That was quite a drastic move from Southern California to the East Coast and to live in New York. Can you reflect on that?

MS. PETERSON: I was invited to come by Eugene Goosen, who was the chairman of the art department at that time at Hunter, and the reason I was invited was that Jacqueline Wexler, who was one of the nuns who jumped over the walls-I think she was the one they wrote the book about-but Immaculate Heart-one of the Immaculate Heart nuns, and then she had been president of Webster College and had come to be president of Hunter College. Webster College had a big, broad art department. When she came to Hunter, she found only painting and sculpture. Of course the Hunter department had been started by Ad Reinhardt and Robert Motherwell, and they didn't want anything but painting and sculpture. They had tried very hard to keep every other art out of their department.

When Wexler came, she said, no ceramics, no photography, no small metals, no fiber, and she put in each one of those. However, the City University was frozen at that time. She was not supposed to appoint any full-time people, only part-time. She got me a full professorship, tenure, and I was written up in the *New York Times* in an editorial about what Jacqueline Wexler had done, getting this full professor when she wasn't supposed to have.

Anyhow, I was the one who lasted, because when Wexler retired, the others went out the window because they were part-time. They were finally reinstated, at least photography, I think. Small metals never was and fiber never was. But the Hunter-the ceramic department that she wanted, that Jacqueline Wexler wanted, and Eugene Goosen was going to have to have, I got one little room in the basement, sub-basement, of the old high school building at Lexington and 68th Street. Apparently they had asked Toshiko [Takeuzu] to do this job. She didn't want it. And they had asked Jeff Schlanger to do this job. He didn't want it. They'd asked what's his name from Baltimore-I forget what his name is-Doug-Doug -

MS. PETERSON: Baldwin?

MR. SMITH: -Baldwin. He didn't want it. Nobody wanted it because all they could have was this one little room in the basement-in the sub-basement. But I'd already built four ceramic departments and I figured that I could do that. I also saw a lot of rooms in this sub-basement. They were filled with records and papers, and it seemed to me that I could get more space by doing away with those records and papers. So, anyway, I wasn't intimidated by the site and decided that New York would be wonderful; I'd love to go to New York.

And it was a good time in my life to leave California and take on a new challenge. There were no gas kilns in Manhattan except at Greenwich House [Greenwich House Pottery]. Greenwich House had one gas kiln, but no educational institution teaching ceramics had a gas kiln. If we hadn't had at Hunter a maintenance head who was an old plumber who understood gas and pipes, I never would have been able to put gas kilns in. But he knew that a gas kiln could be safe and would be all right. So he allowed me to build two big gas kilns. I was going to build them and then he decided that I couldn't build them; they would have to be Underwriter Laboratory-approved, so they had to be built by a company. There was no company that I knew except Alpine that was Underwriter Laboratory-approved over the whole country. I knew that Jack Nesbit, the owner, had done that, but he built a kiln I didn't like.

But I called him and asked him if he would build the kiln I designed, which was the one I had built back at Chouinard with Mike Kalan, then I would order two from him, but I needed his plaque with the UL approval. The maintenance guy agreed and we ordered two kilns of a certain size. And I went back to California for Christmas vacation. I got a call from the maintenance guy, who said, these kilns are here but they don't fit in the freight elevator. I had carefully said what the dimensions had to be, but Nesbit thought he was doing me a favor building a larger kiln, and he sent two bigger kilns. They had to take the wall down, the brick wall down, in order to put the kilns down into the sub-basement.

But I did put the first gas kilns in in Manhattan. Then everybody else, all the other schools, could have gas kilns, too.

MR. SMITH: How many programs existed in New York City at the time?

MS. PETERSON: Well, Columbia and Queens, Greenwich House, of course, which wasn't a university. Brooklyn had clay. City College had clay. Baruch [Baruch College, City University of New York] had clay. They eventually got rid of it, but they did have it at that time. But everyone had electric kilns. They were not firing gas.

MR. SMITH: How did your program differ from some of the others?

MS. PETERSON: Well, we had-I was able-under Wexler I was able to put in a B.F.A. in ceramics and an M.F.A. in ceramics, so that we had a graduate program and an undergraduate program with something like 40 credits possible out of 120 credit degree-40 credits possible in clay. So I had a more broad program. I had two or three adjunct teachers. We ran nine sessions of beginning ceramics and several sections of various advanced ceramics. At Hunter you had 101 and 102. I mean, the kids took the same number over and over, but we taught different things as we went up in the years.

MR. SMITH: Obviously-[inaudible]-but moving to New York was certainly moving into a very different environment. Could you reflect a little bit about being in New York in the '70s?

MS. PETERSON: Well, of course it was so new to me, even [though] I'd been at Alfred and I'd been in New York City, but I had certainly not ever been in it much. So to come to live in New York City and to be teaching was absolutely-Hunter was a city college. It was at that time open admissions under Jacqueline Wexler, meaning that you didn't have to have a degree of any sort; you could come, enroll in the college. There were tutors up and down the halls in all those floors who would help the students to come into whatever level of whatever class he or she wanted. That eventually, of course, was a very expensive program that went out the window. But when I

first came to my classes, I had literally standing room only. There was not-there were not enough stools. The course was so popular that it was way over-enrolled, 30, 40 students in the class at a time, when we had 12 wheels maximum, and we had these two kilns. So that was -

The other part of New York City, which was the art part, the music part-I loved going to the opera, I loved being able to go to all those exhibitions, all the galleries, and I was very much helped by Rose Slivka and Paul Smith and Aileen Webb, and who else? Somebody else at ACC [American Craft Council]. Well, David Campbell, of course, when I first-oh, Don Wykoff-Wykoff was very instrumental in my early time at New York City. And Rose, because she knew every artist anywhere, and she took me to many openings. I met [Willem] de Kooning. I was able to sit with Rose in de Kooning's house many times. I met Elaine, became a very good friend of Elaine de Kooning. I was opened up-if I hadn't had you guys, I wouldn't have been able to get into the middle of the artist groups that were developing at that time. Jack Lenor Larsen, even in the craft-yeah, in the craft field.

MR. SMITH: So your move to New York really opened a whole new arena for you.

MS. PETERSON: Opened a whole new thing for me, absolutely, and changed me immensely.

MR. SMITH: In 1976, I understand you founded the Clayworks Studio Workshop.

MS. PETERSON: Yes.

MR. SMITH: What was that all about?

MS. PETERSON: Well, the dean of Hunter's liberal arts program, Gerald Freund, was very much into getting grants. He wanted all of us to get grants. So I had gotten a grant already at Idyllwild in the '60s for my American Indian program from the National Endowment. So I had already written grant proposals. So I decided that what New York City needed was a program where non-clay artists could work with clay art. I don't really know where that idea of collaboration-I don't know why that came to me, but I'd been searching in my head trying to think, where did I get that idea? Was it-could it have been from Scandinavia, artists working together? I don't know.

I voiced it to Rose Slivka, and she had already a nonprofit corporation which she had formed, so she had an umbrella under which we could write grants for grant money. She liked the idea, particularly because it involved artists that she knew who were not clay artists and would introduce them to a clay program. So it was a good idea in her view. I needed a place to live, so I went looking for-into SoHo looking for a building that I could have a studio and I could run this kind of program and I could have a living space.

So I went down at 4 Great Jones Street when there were no restaurants, no grocery stores, no anything, except big rats, down there, and I rented two floors at 4 Great Jones Street. It was a warehouse. It didn't have windows. I put in some windows, I put in all the copper plumbing, and I made a living space for me, an apartment for what we thought would be the foreman of the shop, a gallery space, and the big studio in the-the big clay studio. And we began our program with Richard Shaw as the clay artist. And who was the painter? Jack Beal was the painter.

We began working developing a three-week program, which was theoretically live-in. You could stay in the studio, be there working day and night, or if you were a Manhattan artist, of course, you could go home and come back. But it was geared for continuous work over a three-week period. We had Alice Neel and Nancy Selvin. Alice Neel was-she practically became a ceramic artist, she was so crazy about the clay. Ann somebody who taught at Brooklyn College-what was her name? My mind is escaping me. We had-Joyce Kosloff worked with Betty Woodman. That was influential to both of them. That was maybe the most successful of the cooperative programs, perhaps, because Betty influenced Joyce and Kosloff influenced Woodman. Kosloff put Woodman on the wall and Woodman gave Kosloff the pattern and the color idea that she eventually developed.

Several of our twosomes wouldn't even speak to each other. There was no collaboration, no anything. They worked at one end and the other end of the studio. So we had a collaboration between Tony Hepburn and Robert Morris which didn't work out. Both of them went home before the end of the time. So it-but it was very, very exciting, very interesting. It was working me to the nth degree because I was in charge of this program, I was in charge of the money, I was in charge of everything, and I was doing all the work, and I really was bogged down with it.

But the end didn't come until Richard Yelle-is that his name?-walked into my life down there one day and said he would-he was a graduate of RISD [Rhode Island School of Design, Providence] and he knew about glassblowing, and he wanted to have a glass kiln there since I already had the clay-ceramic kilns; he knew that it would be okay; we could put a glass furnace there. And he said it would be a little glass furnace; they would only work at certain times of the day. Well, it turned out he was working 24 hours a day. They were making a lot of noise. The clay people couldn't-my program couldn't continue the way-with the integration of the two artists the way we had hoped it would, and glass was a huge interference.

On the other hand, Richard Yelle was a very forceful and enterprising man, as you know what he's finally built in New York City in glass-or in Brooklyn, is it, now. So literally he ran me out of there. I couldn't-my program couldn't exist with his program, and he was stronger than I was. So ultimately I had put all the money into that place. I had done all the renovation, and I had to walk away from it.

MR. SMITH: How long did it live?

MS. PETERSON: Three years.

MR. SMITH: But you were also simultaneously teaching at Hunter.

MS. PETERSON: Oh, sure. I was at Hunter as well. Now, Mongrain-Jeffrey Mongrain has reactivated that idea a little bit, and he is bringing non-clay artists and clay artists in little residency programs at Hunter where he's teaching now. So I think we had a big impact for a little while-[laughs]-and then glass took over.

[Tape stops, re-starts.]

MR. SMITH: This is Paul Smith speaking. This is the Susan Peterson interview, Carefree, Arizona, on March 1, 2004. This is disc three.

Susan, you were very involved with the establishment of the Joe L. Evins Appalachian Center for Crafts in Smithville, Tennessee, that I understand opened in 1980. Could you talk about your involvement with that institution?

MS. PETERSON: Yes. I was invited to take over this project. Joe L. Evins was the House Ways and Means Committee leader in the Congress for about 30 or 40 years, and when he retired, he wanted to do something for his state of Tennessee, so he got a $10 million grant from the U.S. Congress to open a craft school in the state of Tennessee. He saw it as a folk craft school, but he gave the $10 million to the Tennessee Arts Council and they wanted to broaden it into a contemporary craft school as well as a folk craft school, and they had hired a director, and for several years had been working on it and spending a great deal of money and nothing was happening.

So between Joan Mondale, who I already knew, and Jay Solomon, who was the GSA [General Services Administration] director during the Carter administration, both of them were instrumental in putting me in touch with the Tennessee Arts Council, and ultimately as the consultant and a developer at the school. The buildings were prefab and had belonged to the U.S. government somewhere. The 250 beautiful acres on the Cumberland Lake was given by the army on a 99-year lease. What I had to do was equip the five crafts that they had decided would be there-ceramics, glass, fiber, metal, and wood. I had to buy all the equipment, and ultimately, of course, I was going to hire the faculty and get the program together.

For me this was a great opportunity because I had a real idea about how crafts-five crafts, the synergy among all those crafts could be developed, and I thought it was really a great educational venture, and I set about going down to Tennessee. I was only teaching a day and a hal,f so I went down at least three or four days every week, all spring and all during the summer, of course, and we opened in the fall. I had to get consultants because I didn't know enough about how to set up each studio, so Joel Myers helped me with the glass. Eugenia Bringle, Cynthia's twin sister, helped me with the fiber. Who helped me with the wood?-Sam Maloof and Jerry Osgood, and with the clay of course I knew about. Glass-did I say that?-Joel Myers helped me with the glass. So what am I leaving out? Metal-metal. Who helped me with the metal was Phil Dike, whom I had known a long time.

And once I got the equipment bought for each one of these studios, we spent a few more million bucks, but I was now going to hire the faculty. My idea-my vision was to have a master craftsperson and an associate master crafts person of a little lesser stature in each of the five areas. We also built a big art gallery. We had dormitories for 80 students to live on campus. We had a big dining hall, cafeteria, sit-down style. We had a bookstore, supply store. We had maintenance staff, et cetera. I was doing all of that. I hired the kitchen help. I took them over to Penland [Penland School of Crafts, Penland, NC] because they were cooking such Southern food that we couldn't stand it, so I went over to Penland to see, because I'd always heard they had such good food. So my cook spent a weekend learning how to make fresh peas look fresh.

So I had to do everything there, but my vision was that these five crafts, each with a master and an associate, would be teaching everyone simultaneously, that each student would elect two major craft and then in order the next three, so that they were going to devote time in each of these five areas. The master craftsperson would be responsible for one lecture a week in the morning for an hour or whatever he needed to demonstrate or talk to the whole student body, so that every student was getting once a week a lecture or a demo or a slide or a video, whatever the master craftsperson wanted to do. Then the master craftsperson was relating to students he didn't have. The master craftsperson only had his majors and the associate craftsman took care of the ones who were

coming in as second, third, fourth, fifth. And we hoped-I hoped that this would bring about some kind of great collaboration among these crafts, that you would have clay going with glass and glass going with metal, and something added to wood.

Anyway, when I was hiring the faculty, I explained what they had to be willing to do, what I was talking about for the curriculum. I was allowed to bring five people from each of these craft areas down for the master craftsperson job and for the five people for the associate. So ultimately my picks, the ones that I really picked or had hoped to pick, were decided by a committee, and I didn't always get my first choice. But I got Robert Brady for the ceramic master; Sandy Simon for the associate craftsman. I talked her into it because I said, you'll love Robert Brady, and the minute they met on campus -- I was there of course to start the school in the fall-the minute they met on campus, they disappeared for three days and they have been a couple ever since.

I hired Phil Dike. I had very big salaries, because I knew in order to get people to leave their jobs or their studios we'd have to pay a lot of money. So we did have big, big salaries. I got Phil Dike for the master craftsperson, and he would not allow me to choose his associate; he brought a graduate student of his own named something or other, who was the only member of the faculty still there-that I selected who is still there. Joel Myers suggested Dave Hutchausen to me, and I went to interview him, and he was the only glass person that would even consider coming for the job. He -- I didn't know-couldn't blow glass, because we had set up a cold glass and a hot glass shop. So I finally got what's his name-he became very famous-Hank-Hank -

MR. SMITH: Adams.

MS. PETERSON: Adams, that's right-to be his glass blower. Joel Myers found Hank for me. So he came down really as a student but also as the helper for Hutchausen in glass.

Jim Bassler came from UCLA to be the head of fiber, and Rebecca Medel, who was a Bernie Kester student, came as his second person. And in ceramics-oh, and that was Bob Brady. So what am I leaving out? Fiber. Wood-wood, okay. So Sam Maloof suggested his son, Slimen, but Slimen wouldn't hear of it, and Jerry Osgood told me about-I'm so bad with names-Tom Hooker [sic]-Hucker-Tom Hucker. So Tom Hucker was a student from Boston who had opened up his own shop in Pennsylvania somewhere, and Tom came to do the wood and Wendy Maruyama was my associate in wood.

So that was a wonderful faculty and we all came together a week ahead in order for me to explain my program, and we had garnered together really about 80 students, not all of them inhabiting the dorms; some of them from really close by. But we indoctrinated the students as well, and for that year the program really worked, but at the end of that year the-and I forgot to say the school was given by the Tennessee Arts Council. They couldn't cope with all the administrative aspects of it, so they gave it to Tennessee Tech-Tennessee Technological Institute in Smithville, Tennessee, which gives only a B.S. and an M.S. degree, had no art program whatsoever. But I had to learn the hard way. One, I had to learn about the South and about southern problems with the North, an I also had to learn about the jealousies among the institutions in Tennessee.

So I was able to get the B.F.A. program through the State Department of Education, but I never could get the M.F.A. program because Murfreesboro and Knoxville and Nashville, all the other schools, were too jealous; we had better equipment than any school in the country in these five areas, we had a wonderful program, we had a beautiful spot. They didn't want us to have a graduate degree, and it still doesn't have.

MR. SMITH: It has an active program today. Are you involved with it?

MS. PETERSON: They have an active program. I don't think they know that I exist. I don't think that they know I ever did exist, because-well, it's how many years later? We opened in 1980. I went for the first graduation in '82-I mean, the first class that we had started. You had to come already with two years of academic in order to get the B.F.A., because all you were going to do at our school was art-was the art program. So they had to come in with 60 undergraduate units before they could apply for this degree. But I also set up an apprentice program with a big grant from NEA [National Endowment for the Arts] so that-and I had certificate programs, two, three weeks, how to do some specific thing in clay or glass or wood, and then you'd be certificated. And because there are so many crafts in the South and so many factories-wood factories, glass factories-the certificate was a possible way toward getting a job in one of these areas without having to go to college or junior college, or anything other than-

Our certificate program and the apprentice program were going very well in the beginning, but once they got involved with Tennessee Tech, the administration moved over to that institution and there were, of course, jealousies over there too, because there was a lot of money coming to this school that should maybe have gone to Tennessee Tech, those people thought, and they've had a lot of political problems ever since. But they-and they had a number of different directors who came and went: my faculty. Hutchausen stayed five or six years in glass. As I said, Phil Dike left his-Coogan-Coogan is-[Robert] Barry Coogan is his name. He is the only one still there. Sandy and Bob Brady went back to California after a year, and Jim Bassler, I think, stayed two years and

then went back to UCLA. So it was-my program, my wonderful vision went out the door, really. [Laughs.]

MR. SMITH: But for a short time it had some success, and it is alive and well today.

MS. PETERSON: That's true.

MR. SMITH: It is a tribute to you.

MS. PETERSON: I feel good about that.

MR. SMITH: It's amazing all the different specialized ventures you've had in your life. As I was preparing for this interview, I was just really overwhelmed at the amount of things that you've accomplished.

Another very fascinating project was the television series [entitled *Wheels, Kilns & Clay*] that you did during 1967 and 1968. Let's hear about that.

MS. PETERSON: Well, the local CBS station, KNXT Television, which served the whole-all the Western-11 Western states, CBS was-there wasn't really a public television at that time, not-as there is today, and CBS was feeling that they needed an educational-some educational kind of program, so they started with a Shakespeare lecture by one of the SC faculty, and that was very successful, and then CBS decided they wanted a more visual program, so the head of the theater and film department recommended me to CBS, KNXT. They came, we talked, and I always wanted to be Shirley Temple-anyway, and I thought this was going to be a terrific opportunity; surely I would be able to get leave from USC to do this. It was going to be live. They didn't edit television at that time. It was a live program going out live. It would be put on film, the tape-the two-inch tape-so that CBS could rerun it, and they did. But it went out live and never with any editing at all.

So I was doing a 28-minute program three times a week-we were broadcasting three times a week-and my department would not give me a leave. So I was teaching at the same time as I was doing this. In the beginning, I was told I could have no rehearsal time. We built a set that looked like a ceramic studio, but they were only used to lighting the one person at one place. And after the first program they saw that I was moving all over the set. They were scrambling to change these lights. I did have three cameras. They had not told me anything about whether I could or couldn't move. Anyway, it was all a great learning experience. On every program I had a potter's wheel; I had a kiln on set. I always used regular object visuals. I used some film, some slides, some drawings or graphs in every program to vary it as the 28 minutes went by.

MR. SMITH: Did you have a special theme for each session?

MS. PETERSON: This was "All You Ever Wanted to Know About Ceramics," so that I was going to teach how to do everything: how to throw all kinds of shapes, how to hand-build, how to cast, how to make models and molds. I went to Europe; I filmed some of the artists in Europe, especially the Fins and the Swedes who were working Gustavsburg and Arabia, those artists there, and then the production adjacent. I had a ceramic engineer come one time and tell us all about what going to the moon in the clay pod-in the ceramic vessel. I had two programs on the ceramic art history. They didn't want me to do it because I was going to use slides, a lot of slides, for that program and very little of me, and voice over the slides, but it worked out all right. I had three ceramic raw material and mathematical calculations of glaze programs, so that if you really look at these, if you look 28 minutes, you can honestly learn what each one of these segments does teach.

I would practice in my own studio about 18 hours of time with a tape recorder listening back to whatever I was saying, trying to explain in the best possible way whatever it was. Of course I'd seen Julia Child. She was already on television. I had seen her. The klieg lights-because they had to light my whole set-because I was moving everywhere, they had to light the whole set. So it was so hot that I had to have three or four pieces of everything that I was putting together or trimming, or whatever, under so while I was doing a slide or something else I could pull up the next piece, because they would dry so fast under these lights. So I had a lot to learn about that kind of thing.

MS. PETERSON: What was the public response to this?

MR. SMITH: Within a few weeks CBS was getting 600 letters a week, and they accused me of writing them. [Laughs.] And I would say, I don't know how I would be able to write 600 letters. But anyway, it was tremendous. It was absolutely-to this day I meet people who-medical students who were up at-we aired at 6:30 a.m. three days a week, so we-I got a lot of firemen who were on the job at that-nurses, young medical students. In fact, just here this weekend Dr. Black, who is a psychoanalyst, who was at the dinner the other night, who was also on the bus tour when I talked at the Andora Gallery [Carefree, AZ] the other day, he told me that when he was a medical student, he lay on his back watching the television show.

Anyway, it was very, very popular, and for me it was a total eye-opener. I loved doing it. I never worked so hard

in my life. But it was wonderful to try to put out what I was wanting to get out there in a visual way, whether it was my own demonstration or the object I was showing, or a film or a slide, and of course I thought that I'd be hired by somebody quickly to have my own program in some way. As a matter of fact, this was before women were announcers or on television at all news casting, and my time at the station often coincided with the male newscaster, whose name I can't remember but he was very famous on the West Coast, and he used to tell me-because he would watch my show and then he would go on doing his show-and he said, oh, you're just great; I'm going to talk to CBS; we'll have you on. Well, it didn't ever happen. I had to go back to the classroom, back to my studio, but I loved doing it.

MR. SMITH: How many sessions?

MS. PETERSON: Fifty-four-54 half-hours.

MR. SMITH: And what has happened to all those tapes?

MS. PETERSON: Well, the-because this was CBS's so-called educational time, they were going to destroy the-I mean, reuse-the tape. So I asked-at that time Robert Wood was the president of CBS in-and of course Stanton-in New York City, and because of ACC and Mrs. Webb and all that, I was allowed to get in to see them. I went to New York and I asked if I could buy the tapes for the cost of the tape. So the cost of the tape, they claimed, was $100 each, so I bought 54 two-inch tapes on Philips (sp) cameras for $5,400. And eventually I had those-those tapes are at Alfred-the two-inch tapes are at Alfred, and then I made down to three-quarter, and then of course there was a time we used three-quarter-inch tapes, then I made them into half-inch tapes. Now they are for sale [and archived at Ceramic Research Center at Arizona State University Art Museum in regular VHS format].

MR. SMITH: Yet another great successful project.

MS. PETERSON: [Laughs.] Yes.

MR. SMITH: You have obviously done many different things, but as I recall you made your first trip to Europe in 1948. That must have been a memorable experience.

MS. PETERSON: Nineteen-forty-eight was two years after the war, I guess. I traveled over on the *Queen Mary*, which had just been renovated from being a troop ship. I went steerage class in the bottom of that ship. There was still rationing in all-all over Europe: food rationing, gasoline rationing. I saw London, Paris, Florence, Rome, all the big cities, with no cars-absolutely no cars. We traveled in horse and buggy or a hired bus, of course. But it was-very often wherever I thought-I was told I should go to this gallery or that gallery, it turned out to be a hole in the ground when I got there.

It was an extraordinary time to be in Europe. I saw Rotterdam absolutely flat-nothing rebuilt there at all. The Uffizi [Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy], the ceiling had been taken down, was still down. I saw Sainte Chapelle [Paris, France] with nary a piece of stained glass, only the lead structure. It was amazing. But I went with-my mother knew a man who took young people on trips before the war. He was from Kansas City, Kansas, and so she-because I had this money from the Mills College scholarship, she put me in touch with this guy. He went around the country choosing young people who were recent graduates of college or maybe senior, but all of us about the same age, and equal number of boys and girls.

So we went as a group; we were 20 young guys and girls. And I was the one of the whole group who cared about the museums more than anybody else, so I-because of my own great art history background that I got at Mills, I could see everything I had just recently learned about, which was fascinating for me. And we also met extraordinary people. We were in Stratford-on-Avon when Princess Elizabeth and Margaret Rose came that evening to the performance. They liked these young Americans. We were seated right behind them. They took us to a pub after the thing. We met Mary Pickford in Switzerland and Buddy Rogers. And we did the conga line through the Beau Rivage Hotel in Lausanne!

[END TAPE 2, SIDE A.]

MR. SMITH: After that memorable trip, of course, you continued to travel to many different parts of the world. What other important trips did you take that had a big influence.

MS. PETERSON: My first trip around the world was in 1962, and that was pivotal for me because we went first to Japan. And so that was my first meeting with Hamada on his own home turf, although I had brought him to Chouinard in '52. Nevertheless, this was the first time I could travel to Mashiko, and he-we went to see him first, so that he set up travel for me around Japan in the places that he thought I should meet people and see certain museums, so he wrote in a notebook little introductions to whatever. So I had six weeks in Japan at that time, really very, very good for me.

A lot of time spent in India and Nepal on that trip with, again, friends -we had had ceramic engineers from India at Alfred, so we knew people in India. By then I knew Madame what's-her-name Chattopadhyay -

MR. SMITH: Chattopadhyay.

MS. PETERSON: -and I had met Primula Pandit, so I saw her in Bombay. I was blown away by India and I've been back three or four more times, but I also had already the folk craft, whether Hamada gave it to me, whether my Pennsylvania Dutch background gave-I don't know why, but I was always interested in primitive art and folk craft, so it was really exciting for me to see what was going on all through Southeast Asia.

And then to get to England in '62 and make my first trip down to St. Ives and to open-to knock on the door and have it open by Janet Darnell, who I didn't know had married Bernard Leach. I had met Janet at Alfred. She had been a special student when I was a graduate student. So that was my first time at St. Ives.

Then as I went across Europe, the next great thing, I met a lot of people all the way along-various friends from ACC, from other connections-but what seemed so exciting at that time for me was to go to Sweden to Gustavsberg and to meet all the artists who were working there: Karin Bjorquist and Stig Lindberg and Lisa Larsen and Arthur Hald, who was the director of design at that time, and then to go to Finland and meet the artists who were at Arabia, Rut Bryk and Tapio Wirrkala and who else? Francesca Lindth at-Toni Moana, Friberg-Berndt Friberg at Gustavsberg.

Anyway, I was really very impressed with those Scandinavian artists and with the fact that they were involved in the factory, because, after all, I came out of this industrial design background, so it was interesting that a big factory was also harboring the individual artists making-they were designing sometimes for the factory but very often, more often, for themselves, and sold in galleries maintained by Gustavsberg and Arabia around the world.

And that's where I met Armi Ratia. I met-on that trip, '62, I met Armi, who was a friend for all her life [Armi Ratia founded Marimekko Company in Finland].

MS. PETERSON: Travel's very broadening. [Laughs.]

MR. SMITH: You have continued to travel-you've already said that India was one your more memorable places, but are there any other travels that stand out as being significant for one reason or another?

MS. PETERSON: Well, in 1970 when I was on my way to do the notes for the Hamada book, I went to Europe for the Dublin Conference and made my first trip to Spain and then went to Africa and again I went to west Africa first and then flew across to East Africa. In West Africa, I had had a student at USC who was now the assistant to the bishop in Ghana, and he gave us his Mercedes and we bussed around in this car all over west Africa with a woman who knew something. She was living there, she knew the tribes, and I met-these, of course, were folk artists, primitive artists that we met-doing baskets, doing fiber, doing pottery, not so much metal.

Then when I went to East Africa, I landed in Nairobi and I decided that I wanted to get a car and a driver and go around east Africa. Little did I know, but I went to a travel agent who-he was an Indian; I guess lots of the merchants in Africa were Indians, and I said I wanted to go to Kilimanjaro and I wanted to go to Serengeti and I wanted to go Kenya, I wanted to do-and I wanted to not carry any money. I wanted to pay for it all at the beginning. So he laid out the trip, although there were hardly telephones. There was not communications ways even in 1970, but I took a young guy who spoke no English, came out of the bush, scarred all over his face, and he was my driver and he slept under the car at night and I was sleeping in the tent camp or wherever we were.

And I had many memorable experiences on that trip, I can tell you, but most of them not craft exactly. But I met in the Serengeti-I wanted to see a tiger. I thought there aren't tigers in Africa; there are leopards but not tigers. Anyway, so I-my driver with whom I couldn't speak at all-I kept telling him-drawing him pictures of what I wanted to see. So we were looking-and there are no roads in Serengeti either, but we are in a big Land Rover, no problem.

So what-one day we're traveling around in the Serengeti, and on the ground, about a foot off the ground, is the sign "Olduvai Gorge," so I made him go there. So I met the Leakeys. Then the next day I'm still looking for my tiger, my lion, whatever, and we find Eliot Porter who was doing fornicating lions; he was photographing. He was so angry because we came bounding out of the ground with our big noise, interrupted his session with the lions but had a very lovely evening with Eliot Porter, the famous photographer of Africa.

MR. SMITH: You had made a reference in your travels to Dublin, and in your notes you said that you attended the first American Craft Council conference in Asilomar, California. That was a very important event because it was the first time that a national conference was held-could you reflect on that?

MS. PETERSON: I think that really was very important, but I think we were all so young in the development of the

craft that we didn't even realize how important this was to everyone who was there. And Mrs. Webb, I think, genius that she was and it must have been she who planned that program, maybe David Campbell helped, but they got the very best architects, the best designers in this country to come to speak. At that time I met Paolo Soleri and I met Charles and Ray Eames. I can't remember exactly, but everybody was important who was speaking, every panel member was important. And I think it was probably the first time that Pete Voulkos was on a national podium, and he did-he gave a talk.

We all-all Californians had participated in an exhibition. We had an exhibition at Asilomar in a gallery space that they gave us, and Dan Rhodes, who had been at my professor at Alfred, was at this conference, and I remember sitting on the bed in the dingy little motel and Dan saying to me-because the work, Voulkos's work and Carlton Ball's work was five and six feet tall, monolithic Grecian urns that he was throwing at that time, and Dan asked me if this was really all made in one piece and all fired in one piece, not glued together. So it was really the first time that easterners saw firsthand the clay work that was going on. I'm sure that was somehow important in their experience, really.

It was-I think it was a pivotal time for everybody. Conrad Brown was the editor of *Craft Horizons* at that time, and Rose and was assistant of whatever she was, and nobody had brought a tape recorder, you remember, but my husband Jack Peterson had brought a tape recorder, and we put-it was one of those wire things, it wasn't a real tape recorder as we know it now. And we sat it on the stage, so we recorded everything and eventually either Conrad or Mrs. Webb or someone decided they should reproduce the tapes and so they did. So there is a document of that conference.

MR. SMITH: As there were continuing national conferences, did you attend others?

MS. PETERSON: I didn't ever go to another one. I don't know why but I don't remember ever going. Do you know where they were?

MR. SMITH: Yes, they were held in different parts of the country and every year, for a while, and then they just spread out. In 1964 after a series of national conferences, Mrs. Webb held the first international gathering and conference at Columbia University in New York, out of which the World Craft Council was born [First World Congress of Craftsmen, 1964]. I know you attended that.

MS. PETERSON: I did attend that and we were billeted on the Columbia campus, and as I remember, we were there for two weeks. In between we went out to the world's fair, which also was on Long Island at that time. We had several bus trips out there to the various countries' pavilions whose emissaries were sitting in the conference that we were having every day to try to establish the World Craft Congress. She, of course, had got people from United Nations to come. She was running the conference-were you there?-as if it were a United Nations session, and I remember the Russians getting up and walking out, and something about the Chinese. I mean, I do remember that there were flare-ups here and there, but again for me, the important thing was the people I met and the people I was with.

I somehow was in a room near people-we were often up until 4:00 at night playing the flamenco guitar and singing and dancing, and I remember Tapio Wirrkala who went out on the town at night and then would come back too late, and somehow the Columbia gate was locked and he couldn't get in, and he'd have to sleep on the grass outside.

Also, at that point, I really got to know Arthur Hald, the son of Edward Hald, who began Orrefors Glassworks, and Dag Wigman, who was the director of the National Museum in Stockholm at that time, and who else did I meet? Karin Bjorquist was there. It was-again, I think-it had to have been Mrs. Webb's international vision. How she got it, where she got it, being this little lady from Tarrytown who-was it Tarrytown?

MR. SMITH: Near there.

MS. PETERSON: Near there, yeah, who made the little pots for jams and decided to have the American Craft Council and then later the World Craft Council. That was fantastic.

MR. SMITH: You said that you had first met Mrs. Webb at Alfred and obviously saw her at events. Did you know her very well, and did you ever work directly with the American Craft Council on any activities?

MS. PETERSON: Not really. I felt that I knew Mrs. Webb. I always saw her when I was in New York. I was always-I went to lunch at her house; I didn't every stay; I was never invited to stay overnight as Mary Neiberg was many times. Well, I wasn't, but I felt that I knew and I was one of the first five U.S.A. delegates that she named to the World Craft Council, so I felt that she liked me as well as I liked her.

And I really admired her a great deal, because I had known Nelbert Chouinard, crazy lady, you know, stockings down to her ankles, sweater torn, never looking like a-and then I knew Maude Schollenberger at the Wichita Art

Association, so to me these were three fascinating women, very much alike in their own pioneering spirit, in the vision that they had and the unit that they built. Each one of them built something that is everlasting.

MR. SMITH: On to another subject, you have published many books, and in 1974 you-the first book was on Hamada [*Shoji Hamada: A Potter's Way and Work*. New York: Kodansha International, 1974]. How did you get involved with publishing, and what motivated you to pursue that aspect of your career?

MS. PETERSON: Well, because I knew Rose Slivka and had been-I had been the West Coast-along with Bernard Kester, both of us worked for *Craft Horizons* as West Coast emissaries. So we traveled to San Francisco and sometimes to Oregon or Washington if there was an exhibition that needed to be reviewed, and for some years we had been doing the West Coast reviews; one or the other of us had been doing. So that's all the writing I'd done, or I had done a few articles-we had a local *American Ceramics Society* magazine I had written for. I wrote a few articles for *Craft Horizons*, but I'd not ever really written anything.

And in 1967 when *Hamada* was visiting U.S.A. and I was driving him on a California freeway, he always sat in the backseat. He didn't like sitting in the front seat, too close to the next car so he wanted to sit in the backseat. So he's sitting in the backseat and he asked me if I would like to write a book about him, and I'm shocked because it would never have occurred to me to write a book about anybody, let alone Shoji Hamada.

So I told him that I didn't know how to write a book, et cetera. He asked me several times to reconsider, so I did decide to think about it, and the more I thought about it, the more I thought that would be an interesting thing to do, and so I agreed to come and do it. But because I got so ill from the Peru conference and the summer I spent traveling in South America, I wasn't able to come the year that I expected to come. I was going to come on my next sabbatical, and I got ill. I couldn't go until 1970.

So I did finally go in 1970 to do the notes for the book, lived in Mashiko for five months with my former ceramics student Deborah Smith, who was also a graduate in Japanese language and who had been at Bizen doing a year there. So she spoke fluent Japanese and read and wrote Japanese. We were able therefore to-she was able to translate some of Hamada's writings. He always said he didn't write, but he did. He wrote a stack of books this high. He showed me when I was first there, and we talked about what the book would be. He wanted the book to contain some of this writing, so Deborah started out, and then she realized that she could never translate everything he had written, and I farmed part of it to the American Embassy, and then I realized that I couldn't use that material because I hadn't known him.

I had to take him where I did know him and into the-what really wasn't documented was his way of life and the way he worked, the cycle of his work. So I decided that I couldn't use that material; however, I had it, and ultimately I flew to London and went to Cornwall and told Bernard that he had to write that book, and gave him the translations that we'd made of Hamada's work, and that's where the Hamada book called Hamada by Bernard Leach [Tokyo and New York; Kodansha International, 1976] comes from. A great deal of that is the translations that we made. So Bernard made a great book out of that.

But when I-I had a contract with Leach's publisher in

England. He wanted to do the Hamada book, and I had written to Hamada asking him if that was okay. His daughter Hisako had written back it was okay, but by the time I had spent my five months in Mashiko doing the notes and the photographs, Hamada said on the last day we're leaving for Tokyo for his exhibition, I wish you would see Japanese publishers. So I finally had to give up the London publisher and go with Japanese, which is another long story.

Once I had signed an agreement with Saburo Nobuki at Kodansha International in 1970, then for several years nothing happened. Nothing was being-I was sending new drafts of my manuscript over and over, hearing nothing. Bernard Leach was going to Japan; he would talk to Kodansha; he didn't get any real answers either, and finally it was Don Wykoff of the American Craft Council who one day, when I told him I couldn't get the Hamada book-they were not publishing it, he said, "Of course it's because you're a woman and your name is Peterson," and he said, "I'll take care of it. I will buy 2,000 books sight unseen if they can be delivered in New York by September, and we will sell them to our American Craft Council people."

So I don't know whether he really ordered 2,000, but I know that he actually-and he said, "I'll take care of contract," and he did. He did everything and within a few months we had a book. So that was really because of ACC.

MR. SMITH: And a very successful book.

MS. PETERSON: Yes, it was very successful book. Having to edit with the Japanese was another problem. [Laughs.]

MR. SMITH: But that led to many other books. You did one on Maria [*The Living Tradition of Maria Martinez*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1977] -

MS. PETERSON: Yeah, when I developed this American Indian program at Idyllwild with Maria Martinez and subsequently with Lucy M. Lewis, then I realized that there hadn't been documentation of Maria photographically. There was a book with drawings, 1943 [*Maria, the Potter of San Ildefonso*. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1948], but that was all there was about her work. So I decided that should be done, and that was really the reason that I embarked on these things. I thought they ought to be done.

And by now I'm enamored with photography, too. I had met Ansel Adams and Minor White at Idyllwild. They were two of the people who came every summer and they had helped me with my excitement about photography. So I liked that aspect of it also. And then with Lucy I realized that she was a different Indian that came from a different place. The clay was different everything-and therefore she needed to be documented.

Well, with the Maria book I thought I'd have no problem with the publisher, so I finished the whole thing, all the photographs, all the manuscript, and took off for Northland Press in Arizona. They were absolutely not-in New Mexico maybe, and then the University of New Mexico Press-nobody wanted to do this book. One day I'm in Japan talking to the president of Kodansha International and I tell him I can't [get] my Maria book published, and [he] said, "Well, I'll do it," and I said, "But you don't do American-you only do Oriental." He said, "All right. I'll-it'll be my first American book." So I called him about the Lucy book and he did that one too [*Lucy M. Lewis: American Indian Potter*. New York: Kodansha International, 1984].

MR. SMITH: Is there any one of your books that you consider most important or most rewarding --

MS. PETERSON: Well, that's a tough question because each one is so different. Probably-I mean, I really enjoyed doing the Hamada book and the Maria and the Lucy, because it was a learning experience all the way and because those people are so wonderful to be with, to be involved with and to listen to, watch. But probably the most important book is *The Craft and Art of Clay* [London: Laurence King, 1999], and that book was originally commissioned by Knopf [Publishing Group], and I did it and finished it in 1980, and they never published it.

So I was sitting there with a dummy-I had dummied the whole thing with color photographs, laid it out, and I had to get out of that contract. I had to sue to get out of that contract and then went to [Harry N.] Abrams; he didn't want it, and then went to Prentice Hall. That worked out with the London-they were working with the London publisher. So Laurence King published that, and now we have four editions of that.

Laurence King also produced the *Working With Clay* [London: Laurence King, 1998]. Now I'm working on the third edition of that book, and *Jun Kaneko* [Weatherhill, 2001] Laurence King also did.

MR. SMITH: That's very impressive. I'm now going to make a big jump. One of the most important activities in your life has been the fact that you are a practicing artist and a potter, and you have managed to pursue this throughout all your years of incredible projects, teaching, and activities. How have you found time, and what has been the significance of your own studio activity?

MS. PETERSON: Well, I had three children in the '50s. When I began working, I had to have live-in help-I mean, not live-in help. Help that came every day, but full-time help is what I mean to say. So my children were basically taken care of. I never was able to work in school. Carlton Ball always worked in school, never had a studio of his own, but I couldn't work-students were always talking to me, asking questions.

So I always had a studio. Even in Whittier we built our-my first kiln in the backyard at Whittier, and then, of course, once I established Chouinard and SC, I had that kind of kiln, which is still sitting out here in my studio. The kiln I got in the early '50s is-I'm still working with. Once you have a good kiln, you never get rid of it because you know it so well and it knows you, but I-my teaching schedule in the beginning was four mornings a week and two afternoons. Then when Jules Heller became chairman of the department, he chopped us all down to two days a week, so that gave me more free time. But as the children were growing up, I had to work in the middle of the night mostly. So about 2:00 in the morning I would go to work in my studio, which was in my backyard, and then I'd be able to get breakfast and get everybody off, but I would have been up since about 2:00 in the morning.

And I did, with several of my-Doro deLariosm who was a USC student, Ellice Johnston, and Cliff Stewart were also-Ellice came from Chouinard with me, but Cliff was an SC student. We had a retail outlet in Culver City from 1957 until I left and went to New York, and even then I was still associated with it. So that we sold retail from that shop in Culver City every day, and we had two big sales twice a year. I bought my first unused automobile-my first new car, 1965 bronze Mustang, with the money that I made from pottery.

So I was making functional-I was making casseroles, pitchers, bowls. I was a functional potter. Now and then I was doing branch vases or more sculptural forms, but I was always involved-I loved the glaze, I loved reduction,

I loved copper, red and blues, and I was-and I-because of Clarence Merritt I learned glaze calculation very well, and I was-and I liked it, so I enjoyed the manipulation of the glazes and I always loved the raw clay, the engobes without glaze. So I've been doing work with both those aspects, the high gloss, the glaze, as well as the very dull matte clay surface, and I love to throw. So it's a fetish. I love to throw.

MR. SMITH: I would expect being a practicing potter has been a very important part of your teaching.

MS. PETERSON: Oh sure. I don't think-I think you have to be a practicing person if you're going to teach this particular-it is a skill. Of course, it's an art but first it's a skill, and if you can't have the skill, it's difficult to have the art. Even if-I used to think because I've always wondered, how do you teach this art, or the craft part of it; technique part of it is easy to teach, but the art is not easy to teach. How to teach this? Is the best way to go up to the top of 20-story Hunter College and drop clay down to the ground and see what happens to it? Is that the way to teach?

Or is the way to teach didactically-as Marguerite Wildenhain would say, first you learn to pull the cylinder. Then you learn to pull a half-sphere. Then you learn to pull the whole sphere. Then you put the neck on it, and now you have the sphere and the cylinder combined, and then you have the low open form. You have five-these five shapes you must learn in order to be able to throw on the potter's wheel.

Now Voulkos would never tell you that, and that was what [was] so exciting about Pete, was that he threw away every technical piece of information about ceramic, and taught only art. On the other hand, I know that he read vociferously. I know that he probably taught himself in the middle of the night somewhere how to do glaze calculation just because he would be interested. He was a very-he always interested in so many things, so I'm sure he understood all that, but he didn't want any part of it.

And the same was true of Shoji Hamada, understood everything. Once I found at the top of the compound a little electric kiln with pyrometric cones, but in his Naborigama, in his wood-burning kiln, of course, that was all done by hunt-and-peck, by looking at the color of the fire. Never any kind of pyrometer, never any mechanical device.

So in the long run it really was Voulkos who took us away from-took us totally away from the limitations. We were limited by our blinders from tradition or from background or from Bernard Leach.

MR. SMITH: So you still feel Peter was the most important influence in terms of -

MS. PETERSON: I think Voulkos was so important that I don't understand why he didn't receive more recognition in the art world from the art museums, even from the MacArthur Foundation. Why didn't Pete get a $75,000, five-year grant, at least the same as Sam Maloof? But he wasn't-why wasn't he recognized? [Laughs.] Right? It's because clay still doesn't have the stature. The material doesn't have the stature.

MR. SMITH: Do you feel there's a hierarchy of the arts? That clay is at the bottom?

MS. PETERSON: Yes, I do. I do feel that-well, even more at the bottom is fiber, perhaps, and metal is maybe in the middle, but yeah, clay is-I think it's funny. Le Corbusier and Mies [van der Rohe], those guys-[Walter] Gropius, Maholy-Nagy, they didn't like clay. On the other hand, what's-his-name at the Bauhaus did like clay. So why didn't that-why didn't those -

MR. SMITH: You mean Josef Albers?

MS. PETERSON: No, not Albers. The man who taught the ceramics whose-it's a big German name [Gerhard Marcks]. I can't remember. But I think too much clay is utilitarian, always has been. It's bricks and water pipers and rice bowls and-so that it-how can it be art if it's utilitarian in today's world?

MR. SMITH: I would like to now summarize a bit on a few subjects and reflect on your past. Throughout your illustrious career, who have been your mentors?

MS. PETERSON: Well, there have been so many mentors in my life. My parents, of course; my parents were fantastic people, both of them, and they made me what I am today. As I said, they made me be independent. I had wonderful grandparents, whom I knew. I had great high school teachers and college professors. All the administrators, Jacqueline Wexler, Don Goodall at USC, Nelbert Chouinard-I mean, people that I've mentioned in the interview already are-have been mentors.

Certainly, Hamada was one who I really revered and admired. Bernard, too, but Leach not as much for me, because Hamada was warmer, and, I feel, more of an artist than-in himself than Bernard was.

MR. SMITH: You received many honors and awards. What honors have been the most important to you? What have you cherished the most?

MS. PETERSON: Well, again it's really hard to say, because each one was so different, but the one that I'm supposed to cherish the most is the Binns Award, because I got the first Binns Award after-I think 1940 was the last Binns Award. So when they reactivated-the American Ceramics Society and Alfred University together, when they reactivated that award, I was the first recipient. So I know that the-that I was told that that was a very, really prestigious honor. So I have to say that the Binns Award was really important. And my Maria book got the 1978 Wrangler Award from The National Cowboy Hall of Fame, Oklahoma City.

And I think the lifetime achievement from NCECA [National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts] was important. My NEA grant was important. None of them are so important, you know. [Laughs.]

MR. SMITH: Looking back-as you entered the field in the '40s, you've seen many changes, especially the studio craft movement. It would be very interesting to hear your observations of changes that have taken place from that time to the present.

MS. PETERSON: Well, of course the biggest change, the most important change is from craft to art, so that in the beginning we were tacking and knitting, and now we're in the big museums and we're in the art gallery. When I came to Los Angeles, as I think I said, there was one gallery and that was the Dalzell Hatfield Gallery in 1950. That was all there was. So there's been a huge growth in the visibility of so-called craft objects. We just had that enormous show at Los Angeles County Art Institute, explosion of the '50s, whatever it was called-"Color and Fire," it was called. Totally ceramic-oriented. That could not have happened 50 years ago. So it's-it has been tremendous growth.

I remember writing articles in these local ceramic magazines about why isn't craft art when I first was writing in the '50s. Today, I don't think there's a question. I do think we have art and we have craft, and what makes the difference-you know what Picasso said, you know what [Marcel] Duchamp said, so the-it's all in the way you look at it, but there's definitely a reason to be spending $250,000 for a Ken Price or $500,000 for an [Robert] Arneson whatever they're worth today.

It has to have risen in stature, so probably the most important change between the '50s and now is the fact that we have come of age and we are accepted and respected. And equipment, you see tremendous difference in equipment.

MR. SMITH: What changes have you seen in education since the '50s?

MS. PETERSON: Well, I think-why am I saying "well" all the

time? The education was very didactic and heavily structured in my day, I think. Through elementary, high school, college, and especially in terms of art courses, and the learning was structured and projects were given and assignments were given and work was graded, and there was some kind of criteria and standard given to which you were supposed to live up. And I think the change there has been that, along with Pete, cutting and splashing and smashing and moving, along with that attitude in clay and ultimately in other craft materials, also came a certain freedom in teaching.

I'm not sure it's for the best, because I think with that you don't get much learning but that the educational process today in art areas is pretty much, develop it yourself. Here's the material. Here's the piece of equipment if it's necessary. Go into your little room and work. So it-the teaching is not as much teaching as when I was teaching.

MR. SMITH: Are you saying that for the student there's less structure and it's much freer?

MS. PETERSON: Yeah, it's much freer because the teacher is not working as hard. The teacher is not teaching as much in a structured, organized fashion. It's just not happening. Partly, I suppose, because most of the teachers in the art programs, whether it's two-dimensional or three-dimensional, are involved in their own work so that they don't have the time to spend perhaps or don't want to spend-but I'd say it's more an attitude. I think it's more an attitude.

MR. SMITH: Is it the attitude coming from the student or from the teacher?

MS. PETERSON: I think it comes from both. I hear criticism from students who feel they aren't getting enough instruction. They're not getting enough demonstration. They're not getting enough know-how. They're not being explained to. So I think the student may be suffering, and the attitude probably comes from the professor first.

MR. SMITH: There appears to be a homogenizing of discipline in these programs, in many of the schools. Do you see that happening, and what is your feeling about it?

MS. PETERSON: I certainly see that happening, and particularly at Hunter we-on the graduate program, we got

at Hunter the enormous building that was at one time a public school, trade school. So it's a six-story building with something like 50,000 square feet on each floor and huge studios for each of the graduate students, galleries, exhibition spaces on the floors.

So that what happened once we got that program was that we could-all these kids were working in the same building, looking at each other and reverberating back and forth as if they were voices in the night. They are-a ceramic person could come out being a photographer or the photographer could come out with a clay show for his thesis. So the amalgamation of all these craft or all these arts is important. I think that's a good thing.

MR. SMITH: What changes have you seen in ceramics since the '50s?

[END TAPE 2, SIDE B.]

MS. PETERSON: Do you mean in the objects or the-

MR. SMITH: Just in the field in general.

MS. PETERSON: There are thousands more of us then there used to be. The competition is fantastic. The competition for-we're turning them out like rabbits, you know-there are more ceramics students than any other form of art. When I was at Hunter, at one point I had to substantiate this program and I had to do a whole lot of research and report on statistics. I was one person. By now John Mason-we were a twosome for a while and then he retired-went to California. I was alone when I had to do this survey.

I had one-quarter of all the art students. I was the only member of the art department who-was the only professor in the department. There were 11 painters, there were six sculptors, there were five printmakers. I was the only one and I had one-quarter of the students in the art department.

There's no question ceramics is for some reason very popular in the university or the community college or the art school or what have you. So that the-there are too many ceramic artists out there looking for the jobs-it's interesting, I remember when I first came to-when I came out of Alfred and I came to begin to teach. There weren't any teaching jobs because there weren't any ceramics departments in the universities, so you had to either be a production potter or you had to do your own-you had to have your own business.

And to me that's what's happening again now. Now there are too many of us. There aren't enough teaching jobs to go around; we can't be subsidized by the university. We're going to have to make our own way, so we'll have to figure out whether it's back to the dinnerware, cups and saucers, or what it is that we can begin again to make our own livings from without the institutions abound, and I think it's probably possible today.

MR. SMITH: I'm going to jump now to the very basic word "craft." It's had a long and varied history throughout civilization and it's very controversial now. I was wondering how you interpret the meaning of craft today?

MS. PETERSON: Well, I think, perhaps the best thing to say is, is it functional or is it not functional, and it seems to be if it's functional, it's craft, and if it's not functional, it's art. Now that's not exactly true, because certainly functional things can be art also, so whether it's art is an elusive thing and we have to-you have to make up your own mind about what really is art, but the fact that there is a dialogue and that there can be a dialogue and that maybe there's an answer is important for as it didn't-craft before was technique and skill and material and the actual-that elusive quality art what wasn't-what was being taught or what was being thought about. So I do think that that's a major change, and that craft can still be technique and material and skill and perhaps function, and that art is an elusive quality that we can't explain and some things have it and other things don't.

MR. SMITH: Could you reflect on some of your memorable experiences in your career and any special things that really were so pivotal or so important to you that you really feel it changed your life?

MS. PETERSON: Well, of course, doing that TV series was absolutely pivotal. Spending five months in Mashiko in Hamada's compound, that was pivotal. I mean, really pivotal. [Laughs.] What-even the Appalachian Center; so all those individual projects-the writing of the books-it's very interesting how fun it is to work with words. My first books, Hamada, Maria, Lucy, were written by hand in the-on the yellow pages, and I-either I would type or send it out to be typed, then I revised. Once I got a computer and could see on a page and make changes quickly, then writing became very much fun, but it's always been an enjoyable thing. So that was another big change for me, to begin to really try to write.

MR. SMITH: I sense you like new challenges all the time.

MS. PETERSON: Yeah, right. That's my problem. [Laughs.] Focus is not in my vocabulary.

MR. SMITH: So you're a perennial student?

MS. PETERSON: I am a perennial student. I'd like to be a perennial student and I do want to live forever.

[Tape stops, re-starts.]

MR. SMITH: This is Paul Smith speaking with the Susan Peterson interview on March 1, 2004. This is disc four.

Susan, you have met so many interesting people throughout your career and been involved with so many artists. I think it would be interesting to have you reflect on individuals, how they affected your life or memorable associations that you had. So I'm going to begin with your Native American connection, and as you wrote a book on Maria Martinez, could you comment on Maria?

MS. PETERSON: Well, Maria was probably the most famous American Indian potter of her generation or even any generation, the most well-known, and when I brought her to Idyllwild along with other members of her family, it was interesting to me-I thought-I really had no idea what I would learn from watching her work, her and her family. Listening to-Maria was very gregarious. She told a lot of stories. She talked about the life, the Indian life-her life as a Pueblo. Her life growing up, coming to the San Diego fair and all the other World's Fairs and powwows, so I was fascinated with those stories. And I think Maria-I learned over a period of time that really she was so influenced by Dr. Hewitt at the Santa Fe Museum, who helped her and her husband, Julian, in their earliest days with the black pottery-with how to do the black pottery, with traditional designs, et cetera.

Contrasting to Lucy Lewis, who I invited to Idyllwild after Maria was too ill to come again. Lucy came from Sky City Acoma pueblo, high on a rock, had never been to school, didn't live anywhere near an art museum, had never seen pottery in a museum until I took her to the museum in Santa Fe. Actually, never was she informed, as Maria was, about any kind of Indian tradition. She picked up little shards on the ground at Chaco Canyon, which [is] considered their ancestor place, and at Acoma, and she divined these wonderful black-and-white images on the white clay, really from tiny, one-or-two-inch shards.

I feel Lucy was a tremendously innovative potter. Maria was a highly skilled potter, and together they were opposites but very important to me and both good books.

MR. SMITH: What about the younger generation -

MS. PETERSON: Oh yes, when I was doing the exhibition in New York and Washington, DC, for the National Museum of Women in the Arts, I curated that and I wrote a book for Abbeville about that [*Pottery by American Indian Women: The Legacy of Generations*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1997]. I was interested because I decided to find two progeny of each of my six matriarchs. I already knew they were important people, but I was looking for 10 new, avant-garde Indian women who still lived in their traditional life, had not been to art school. There are American Indian young people who have gone to art school and are now well-known potters, but I wanted indigenous women who came out of the regular Indian life.

And I was so surprised to find the 10 individuals doing entirely different work, not traditional, out of their own bodies and souls. Nora Naranjo-Morse firing in a pit rather than a bonfire because she was making things 11 feet tall, and Dorothy Torivio decorating with a computerlike brain on her Acoma pots. Anyway, these young women I've now followed-Roxanne Swentzell, another important one, who makes marvelous figures, of which at the Heard Museum [Phoenix, AZ] there's a huge one in the middle, in the foyer, maybe you have seen. She's a very young woman. She's in her 30s.

The book and the exhibition helped all these people quite a lot. I was trying to find non-Pueblo Indians and I did. I found Anita Fields who's an Osage from Oklahoma, and Jean Bad Moccasin, a Sioux from North Dakota. It's the Pueblos that have the pottery, but it's interesting that there are other Indian tribes still using pottery. The reason we have pottery in the American Indian life is they use it in the ceremonials. It's important in their tradition.

MR. SMITH: You've also had -

MS. PETERSON: Fred Kabotie was another-Fred Kabotie was a painter, but he was a big influence because he told me so much and he took me to Hopi-he took me to the old, old Walpi. Fred gave me a lot of Indian lore. Yeah.

MR. SMITH: You've had many international connections through your travels and through the projects you've been involved with. Although you've spoken about Shoji Hamada, could you reflect a little further on him?

MS. PETERSON: Well, I would say that he was so influential in my life because I loved his own scholarship. He spoke 13 languages. He was very well read. He knew everything about all the arts of all the cultures in the world. Of course, he'd been helped by Yanagi Soetsu, who was a distinguished scholar in folk art traditions. Hamada was a doer and really not a talker. Didn't give lectures as Bernard Leach, his colleague across the ocean-Leach

and Hamada had met in the '20s. Hamada went with Leach to England to help him live there for three years, came back, and began his own pottery.

The East-West connection-Hamada always said it depends where you stand whether it's East or West, but there was an East-West connection. Then when the two of them came to this country and did their lecturing one-night stands across the country several times and then made individual trips also, not just together, they were a decided influence on pottery. Maybe not a good influence-maybe not a good influence in terms of the potters who emulate either Hamada or Leach, I don't know.

There has been some criticism about what they said as they lectured, talking about taproots. Wanting our taproot to be American Indian-Hamada told me later that he did learn that, no, it wasn't American Indian taproot. We had taproots in all the countries of the world, very astute observation. I don't think Leach ever believed that. He believed the taproot was the American Indian.

MR. SMITH: Michael Cardew.

MS. PETERSON: And Michael I met only because I knew about Michael from Leach and Hamada, and when I was conversing with Hamada, I asked him one day about Michael Cardew. What did he think about Michael? And he told me that he didn't pay attention to Michael Cardew anymore though he had known him in England, but he didn't like what Cardew was doing in Africa. He didn't think it was right to take the folk people and make them do stoneware and porcelain at high-temperature reduction fire, when their native way was to bonfire the pot and not to use glaze, et cetera. So he didn't approve of Cardew.

I met Cardew when he had to leave Iboland, he had to leave Nigeria because of the big revolution, and he came to Southern California. For some reason he looked me up first, and he came, stayed with me several weeks, and we made-the USC film department made a film about Michael at that time. He gave several workshops. He-then later he came many times back to this country from England, and he was a vital force, I think, for a lot of young people. He didn't talk about any specific way, as Leach was very didactic in what was a good pot. Michael was much more free with his association.

MR. SMITH: Armi Ratia.

MS. PETERSON: Armi Ratia. I discovered Armi Ratia of Finland, who founded Marimekko, but when I met her, I didn't know about Marimekko. I was walking on the street in Helsinki in 1962 and I saw a lot of fabrics hanging inside a big glass window, that I could see into the shop a lot of fabric hanging and a door was open, and I went in and it was Armi Ratia, and she was silk-screening fabric by herself on a big table with big screens, making these colorful things that she was then hanging up.

And she told me that-at that time she hadn't made the dresses; she was just doing-but she told me she was going to begin a factory and that she had a contract with-what's his name?-Jim Thompson, who at Design Research-who would be bringing the fabric to America; but my association with Armi continued over the years. She was a remarkable woman administrator. She allowed me to sit in her office while she interviewed clients, while she talked with workers. I stayed many times in her summer house, attended many of the parties. She introduced me to many artists in Finland, and when she finally had her face lifted, she came and lived with me in Southern California for a few weeks. But she was a remarkable woman, who, of course, died too young from cancer.

MR. SMITH: Bertil Vallien.

MS. PETERSON: And Bertil Vallien turned up in my class at USC in the early-in '55 or '56 when I was first there at the university. He came on a student visa to study ceramics because he already knew about clay. He stayed a year in Southern California, but he also worked in-one of my graduate students had started a small production pottery and Bertil worked part of the time in that production-in that production pottery. Now you're the one who told me he went to Alfred. I didn't remember that.

He went back to Sweden, became a glass artist at Kosta Boda, and I visited him and his wife and children several times in their Skane, in their southern Sweden home, and I have seen Bertil almost every time he's been in the United States for a workshop or what have you.

I went to Santa Fe because Bertil did a workshop when David McFadden was the-not Santa Fe, Taos-when McFadden was the director of Millicent Rogers [Millicent Rogers Museum, Taos, NM]. He coupled Bertil with the one Indian-American Indian glassblower that existed. So the two of them did a together workshop. I went to that.

Bertil was-I just visited him a couple years ago in Sweden, so I've-I have followed his-the big sculptures that he's doing now in glass are fantastic. He didn't ever do clay again.

MR. SMITH: There are so many ceramic artists that we can touch on a few names here. We've already spoken about Peter Voulkos, but would you like to say anything further about him?

MS. PETERSON: That Voulkos was it, that's all there is to it. Without Voulkos we would be nowhere today. Somebody might have broken through, but I doubt it. I think it took that crazy man.

MR. SMITH: John Mason.

MS. PETERSON: And John Mason was my student at Chouinard and my assistant at Chouinard, so that he came on a scholarship to Chouinard. John was a very diligent worker. He was born in Nebraska a few miles from Grand Island. He was born in Saint Libory, Nebraska. So we were kindred souls from the beginning. We've been good friends all our lives.

He is an astonishing artist, I think, and has tried so hard not to be Peter Voulkos and has succeeded successfully, I think. John also has every 10 years-approximately every 10 years embarked on a new phase of work, unlike Peter Voulkos, who continued over a long period of time making work that was similar and of a piece. John was often on a new tack, to his credit, I think. Didn't always sell, didn't always work in the galleries, but it was an exploration for him.

MR. SMITH: Daniel Rhodes.

MS. PETERSON: Daniel Rhodes was my professor at Alfred. At that time he was new-a new professor at Alfred. New to high-temperature, we were all new to high-temperature. So Dan was sort of working along with the graduate students as well as being-as well as being professor, but I had come, as I've said, from California to Alfred, and I didn't have the background that, had I been there as long as my colleagues had been, another year and a half, I would have known more.

One day Dan-the main thing he did for me, was that one day he took me out of the ceramic lab into this-the big Scholes Library-we had an enormous ceramic library there-and he began to pull books down off the shelves and sat me down at a table and he started to draw pictures on paper-not pictures but forms, profile forms on paper and feet and lips. I still have today the papers that he drew. Then he showed me pictures in books because, obviously, I wasn't getting it in his sense of the word and I-my forms were not what he thought they should be and my decoration wasn't either.

So after that-that's really-that's all he taught me was in those few minutes in that library. Then I brought him to USC for two summers when I went to Idyllwild and I wasn't teaching. So I brought him for two summers, and during those two summers he sat in my office-my students said they hardly ever saw him-and he wrote his first two books in the office. And I knew Dan as long as he lived.

MR. SMITH: Ken Price.

MS. PETERSON: Ken Price was the most talented student I ever had. Gifted from birth probably. He-I think I learned a lot from Ken, just about how he was able to take only pieces of information that were important to him. So that he was usually in the back of the room, if I was lecturing or talking, working on his own thing, but later on he would say something to me that made me understand that he did listen to some part of what I was saying, but I had to learn that from Ken. I didn't understand you have to pick and choose what you're listening to and what will affect you.

Of course, I've known Ken now all his life and saw him just recently when he came here last year at the opening of Sara and David Lieberman's exhibition, he and Happy.

MR. SMITH: I'm now going to move on to some others. June Wayne.

MS. PETERSON: June Wayne was the-she was the director of Tamarind Lithography Workshop for 10 years in Santa Monica, then she gave the Tamarind Lithography Workshop to the University of New Mexico, but in the time that she had Tamarind, she was the first Ford Foundation grant to get $10 million. She was the first Ford $10 million grant and that's what started her in her Tamarind Lithography Workshop.

She brought artists who were not printmakers to work with master printmakers. She brought originally from Europe, because that's where they were. So she taught master printmakers here, and she used the lithographic process with artists who had never worked with lithography. She brought-that's where I first met Françoise Gilot-but she brought artists for a week or two weeks at a time, many of them over this period of 10 years.

That was the original inspiration, now that I recall, for Clayworks Studio Workshop, Inc., and June did come to New York when I was just beginning that and she outlined for me how I should develop that-the confrontation and the conjunction between two artists of different media.

MR. SMITH: Minor White.

MS. PETERSON: Minor White was an important photographer. He was, as far as I know-wasn't he a student of [Edward] Weston? I can't remember, but anyway, Max Krone, the director at Idyllwild, brought Ansel Adams every summer to Idyllwild, and I think it was Ansel who suggested that he also bring Minor White. So the first summer that Minor came he was an imposing personality, and I had looked-he was the editor of Aperture Magazine, photography magazine. I had seen that and there were a few books on Minor White, so I knew something about him.

I took his course. He was, and he freely admitted he was, a Zen Buddhist exponent, and he taught us the art of letting the picture take itself, which he said was very Zen, and then after that he taught us also how to make it look as if the picture took itself even if it didn't. So he gave us a lot of talk about composition and about-I mean, things that maybe I had heard of before in some of my art classes, but it was colored a lot with the Zen philosophy.

MR. SMITH: Ansel Adams.

MS. PETERSON: Ansel was very strict and cared very much about the big camera that he was carrying around, whereas Minor could work with any camera of any sort, and at that time was doing quite a bit with Polaroid; and Ansel began to do some work with Polaroid, but basically Ansel worked with a huge camera. And when he taught, he taught very specifically his zone system and the light and dark values, and we looked at scenes in the morning, the same scene at 10:00, and then at noon, and then in afternoon. He taught about light and shadow. Very didactic personality, totally different from Minor; both of them were an influence for me and my own photography. They told me to buy Nikon instead of Leica. [Laughs.]

MR. SMITH: Pete Seeger.

MS. PETERSON: Pete Seeger was a well-known folk singer but only to a limited group. Max Khron, the director at Idyllwild, was a musician and dean of music at SC, for some reason, very interested in folk music, so he sought out the early folk musicians, primarily Pete Seeger, and Seeger brought others. And over a period of time we probably had every folk musician alive come to Idyllwild at some point in the summer.

Pete was such a gregarious person. In the morning before classes, which began at 9:00, he was climbing Tahquitz; our mountain was 12,000-foot elevation. We were at 7,500. He was running up the hill and then back down in time for class. I got my-I bought a guitar. I learned my first D chord. But he was such an exciting person. That was his great energy. But I was turned on to the folk music. I loved the folk music, went along with my love of the folk art.

MR. SMITH: Charles and Ray Eames.

MS. PETERSON: Charles and Ray were famous in Southern California certainly, but I had no way to know them until I knew Hamada. So that when-the first time that Hamada came in '52 was when I first met Charles and Ray, and then every time Hamada came to stay with me in Los Angeles, we spent a day with Charles and Ray at their-at the studio looking at whatever their exciting projects were, watching-Charles was working with a "Rube Goldberg" experimental camera that he built, two and three cameras put together in various ways. He would explain what his newest camera was like, and then he would show it a three-minute film that he'd made with that.

We had-Ray was always talking about the latest acquisitions of objects, because they kept thousands of objects in little cubbyholes all over the studio because they loved looking at toys, at folk art, at fabric, whatever. So I again gleaned a lot of just enthusiasm, great vibes from those two people.

MR. SMITH: Françoise Gilot and Jonas Salk. MS. PETERSON: Françoise Gilot I had met earlier at Tamarind [Tamarind Institute, Albuquerque, NM], but after she left Luc Simon [her husband] and had-she had met Jonas Salk also when she was at Tamarind at some party that June Wayne threw. They had carried on some kind of relationship, which each of them had to give up whoever was their partner at the tim,e and when I met them again after they were married-June Wayne gave a party after they had been married, and I said to-by then I had read Francoise's book about my life with Picasso [with Carlton Lake. *Life with Picasso*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964], and I was so impressed with her knowledge about ceramics and her information about ceramic colorants, and the first thing I asked her was, how were you able to write so specifically about Picasso's colors and about the art of ceramics? And she said that it was her parents who had had a small pottery in the basement of her house in Neuilly, and so she'd grown [up] with a certain amount of ceramics in her own life. Therefore, she could be of assistance, and her time with Pablo was his ceramic period, his 10-year period working with clay.

Well, I asked Françoise, now she's a painter of course, I asked her-I was head of the art department at Idyllwild-would she like to come and teach at Idyllwild? And she said she'd love to teach; she'd never taught and she had

a lot of things to say. She'd like to do that. So this is the evening at the party. Next day she calls me up and says that she can't really come because she couldn't leave Jonas and then-because she told me she had only agreed to spend a few months with Jonas in San Diego. This was her time, the summertime in San Diego. Otherwise she'd be in New York or she'd be in Paris.

So she didn't want to leave him. Could Jonas teach also? So I said, "What would he teach?" like a fool, and she said, "Creativity." So I said, wonderful. They came, the two of them, for four weeks. That first summer she taught painting. Everybody loved her. He taught creativity. He had an agenda. Every 15 minutes he had a new topic. Every day he gave his students a new agenda. I was next door to his studio so I would run to sit-to listen at his feet. He was the most brilliant man probably that I've ever met or ever really was able to spend time with, and he's the one who taught me that I always walk up the mountain so that I hit a tree. It's time to learn how to go around the tree, very, very important in my early development.

Then later on, I knew them 25 or 30 years, eventually I went with Françoise on an excursion in the car from her Paris studio down to Antibes when she had an exhibition of her own work in the villa where she and Picasso had painted in the time that she was with him. So I've learned a lot about Pablo from her but also just a lot about her. She and Jonas were special people to me.

MR. SMITH: Joan Mondale.

MS. PETERSON: And Joan Mondale, when she was first in the vice president's house, I was on the board of National Endowment and I had come to some meeting at NEA. Joan Mondale knew that I was there and came, asked me if I would take her to Maria-to see Maria at the pueblo. She knew my Hamada book, which was published in '74, and she knew the Maria book, which was published in '77. So I first met Joan when we took this trip across the country.

I didn't realize she couldn't just go to the pueblo, so we had to go-we came to Los Angeles when Edith Wylie inaugurated the Craft and Folk Art Museum. We went to Chicago; we installed the Claes Oldenburg *Bat*; we went to Kansas City for the opening of the "Sacred Circle" show. Finally, in the very end, we came to San Idefonzo Pueblo with our-we traveled with Bess Abell, her assistant and 32 secret service men who were on duty in two different shifts. They cleared out the La Fonda Hotel for one floor. We had, each of us, a secret service man outside our door at night, all night. It was command post one. Nobody could get a telephone call to any of us.

That was a great experience, but then Joan asked me-it was really on that trip she asked me if I would come to Washington to teach her pottery, ceramics. She had studied with a Polish woman in Washington while Fritz was a senator, and this woman wasn't teaching her anything, she didn't think. So she couldn't let go of this woman for political reasons, but she wanted surreptitiously for me to come.

So I did go all the time they were in the White House. I went every week to Washington. She was always standing at the gate when I got off the plane, never sitting in the limo outside, standing at the gate to meet me and take me down to the limo, and then we went to either her vice president's house or to Lynn whatever-her-last-name is-to the house where there was another studio that she and this woman sometimes worked in, and we together built a kiln in those three or four years.

And I've been to-her sister lives here in Phoenix, so Joan has been here. She has stayed here because sometimes her sister's house is full of houseguests. So I have continued that relationship a long time. I wish they were president.

MR. SMITH: Now, as I said,it's impossible to touch upon all of the thousands of people you've met,but it certainly gives a very impressive panorama of the rich contacts and friends that you've developed over the years. In 2002 you gave your archives up to the Arizona State University new Ceramics Research Center [Tempe, AZ]. That's obviously a very wonderful gesture. Could you speak a little bit about the center and its purpose and also about your decision to give very generously not only your papers but your collection?

MS. PETERSON: There wasn't a ceramic research center when I had the idea to give-I could see that it wasn't working out with Alfred, and I was concerned about where all these objects I had and all the books I had and all the records from various artists, so I met Marilyn Zeitlin, the director of the art museum at ASU, and I talked to her about an archive, because I knew Rudy Turk, had known him for years. I knew they had the big ceramic collection there already and other craft.

So I asked her, now that she was director, if there was any way that they could make an archive and take my collection to add to the study collection that Rudy had already made. She was very interested in the idea, but at that time she didn't have a way. She didn't have a person on staff who could assume the responsibility. She would discuss it with the library special collections people, but they weren't staffed either to handle it, so we were put on hold for a while.

Then one night I had dinner with Sara and David Lieberman. I was telling them about the idea. Also, I was so impressed; they have 30 full-time faculty on the art history department at ASU, most of them in every country and every era of art history, so that we could have a ceramic art history program, Ph.D., doctoral program, and a curatorial program on the master's level easily with the faculty that exists, without bringing new faculty. We-I thought we could do that.

So when I was talking to Sara and David, David said, "Susan, if you can bring this off, I will give our collection," and he said ours, Sara and David collection. "I will give our collection along with your gift." Well, by the time I told Marilyn that, the university had already bought the 10-acre plot at 10th-just across from the art museum [Arizona State University Art Museum]-and Mill Avenue, and they were tearing down the shopping center, the mall that had been there. Marilyn saw that there was one building standing that they hadn't yet torn down.

Somehow she went somewhere and procured that building for herself, and she made it into the Ceramic Research Center. So she's the one who named it the Ceramic Research Center, with the Susan Harnly Peterson Archives and Study Collection, and got the building remodeled by the university, and here we are two years later celebrating that building and having had now many exhibitions in the building, had the study collection open five-four or five days a week without a curator.

Then Sara-again I said to Sara and David, we can't do without a curator. The money is frozen. The state of Arizona's giving no money theoretically to the universities, and so the university can't fund a curator. So Sara and David said, actually this is Sara's money, Sara said she would give for three years the curator's salary. So that enabled us to have a search and to bring Peter Held to that position, but the money has to be raised to fund that position.

Then Sara's the one who started the CLA-which means Ceramic Literary Associates or something like that-organization as a support group for the Ceramic Research Center. I was also-I also gave the Glen Lukens archive. When Glenn Lukins died, I was one day sitting in my Southern California house and a knock comes on the door, and it's Glen Lukens's sister from Missouri, and she has boxes of material that Lukins had left in his will somehow to me. So I finally finished going through all of the papers and smoothing them out and organizing them, and I gave-so now they have the Glen Lukens's archive also at ASU.

Hopefully, we'll have other archives from other people, and once we get-if we can get that doctoral program and that curatorial program going, then we should begin to develop some scholarship. and some real research that can go on. Of course, we want to put the whole collection online and that-again, money has to be raised for that. So these are all big projects, but perhaps it's doable.

MR. SMITH: In addition to some of your papers, you gave a lot of objects. How many have you given, and how many will you be giving?

MS. PETERSON: I gave 400 objects already and 300 books-that's according to Peter Held's count-and you can see there's still a good deal here, and much of it I just can't bear to do without. So for a while I won't give, but ultimately probably most of it will go and more of the books will go, which are necessary in-to be held, I hope, in the Ceramic Research Center, not buried in the library somewhere. And I am glad that Peter Held shares that-we need it to be a real research center with the study collection and the books and the videos. We have-I have a lot of artists' videos I've given, as well as my 54 half-hours.

[END TAPE 3, SIDE A.]

MR. SMITH: Because the present facility is a temporary one, I understand that they do have a plan for a permanent, more expanded facility that it would accommodate all of this material, as well as a lot of additional material that will be coming.

MS. PETERSON: Yeah, they were going to in-theoretically, again, because no announcement has been made officially-but supposedly the art museum will be expanded [to] double the size that it is now. The research center is supposed to be expanded three times the size it is now, and it's 7,500 or 8,000 square feet now, so that should be tripled. I understand that all of the art department offices will also be moved and the department dean will come into that building. And part of it will be the school of business, also there's a been a large print-some kind of print equipment has been given to-which is now in storage. So a portion of the 10-acre building will become some kind of printmaking pilot plant facility belonging to the art museum and to the college of art.

Then I learned at the dinner, when Dean Wills spoke, he said there was to be a boutique hotel and some restaurants, and he talked about the entrepreneurial community in Phoenix being-assisting in this endeavor, he hoped. We have a new president and we didn't get this center under this president, so we just are hoping that we can keep it.

MR. SMITH: Now, it is hard to express, Susan, all that you have accomplished. In talking with you, you're still

filled with ideas and planning all kinds of exciting new things. What's on your agenda at the present and what dreams have you not fulfilled?

MS. PETERSON: Oh, wow. Right now I have just finished [the] fourth edition of *The Craft and Art of Clay*. I'm beginning to work on [the] third edition of *Working with Clay*, which is a more beginning book, a smaller book than *Craft and Art*, which is now a very big book. Every three to four years we come out with a new edition of *Craft and Art*, so as soon as I've done the third edition of *Working with Clay* this year, I will have to begin next year on the fifth edition of *Craft and Art*.

I really want to-I have been doing my own work with an assistant. I have an assistant twice a week because I can't lift the bags of clay; I can't stack the kiln anymore, so I employ a young student; he was a student at the community college but he wants to become a studio potter. He's a little slow and that makes him not move too fast in other directions; so he's still helping for me about three years now.

I, of course, have to sell the house and move away. I have moved part of my studio already to my daughter's studio, and I will move the rest of it probably up there. So again I have to make a new-I have to make a new place to work, and I haven't been able to work since I thought the house was sold last summer. I moved part of the studio at that time. Anyway, I'd like to get back to the clay work.

I do have-I'm going to Alaska, to Anchorage, for a lecture. I'm going to Rochester, Minnesota, for the opening of that new art museum-museum or art center-which the exhibition is Kaneko, so I'm giving a lecture on Jun. I'm going to Pennsylvania, to Lancaster, because I just juried 1,800 slides for the "Strictly Functional Exhibition." I could only choose 100 slides for the exhibition. I get to go to give the 25 prizes. So I have those kinds of things.

I would like to go-I've been to China four times. I have seen a lot of that country, but I haven't seen the folk part of that country. I haven't been to Yunan Province; I would like to go to western China, Mongolia, Tibet. That I had hoped Xiaoping from Yixing-Xiaoping says he'll take me but he can only take me when he's in China, and his time in China right now is very filled up with taking other people around. So at some point I would really like to do that.

I want to go back to Japan again because I have really not yet seen-I haven't seen Hokkaido. There are places in Japan I haven't been. There are villages I haven't seen. Though I have seen most of the country, I haven't seen it all.

What else is there?

MR. SMITH: Susan, just let me say you're a remarkable person. You have accomplished so many things and pioneered so many programs that you're really a national treasure. I want to thank you so much for all your help in gathering research for this interview and for so generously sharing all your wonderful memories and reflections, and so thank you.

MS. PETERSON: But Paul Smith, I want to thank you for doing this wonderful interview, for structuring it, for getting it together, and one of these days this national archive do your interview. It's absolutely imperative. Are you listening to me? [Laughs.]

MR. SMITH: Again, thank you -

MS. PETERSON: And you helped me a great deal. You know that.

MR. SMITH: Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]

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