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Oral history interview with Miriam Colwell,
2005 June 10-11

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Miriam Colwell on June 10-11, 2005. The interview took place in Prospect Harbor, Maine, and was conducted by Susan Larsen for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Miriam Colwell and Susan Larsen 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 LARSEN: This is the morning of June 10, 2005. I'm with Ms. Miriam Colwell in the town of Prospect Harbor, Maine. And we are here to speak with Ms. Colwell about her life and work, and her associations with many people in the literary world and in the fine arts. Good morning, Miriam.

MIRIAM COLWELL: Good morning.

MS. LARSEN: I am advised by biographers that you were born in 1917.

MS. COLWELL: I was born here in this house where I live in 1917 in my mother's bedroom upstairs. And this was her home and her father's home and so on back to the early years of 1800 when it was built. This house, my home, has always been in my mother's family, the Cole family.

MS. LARSEN: And how did they come to Maine? What did they do?

MS. COLWELL: They were in - they came from England to Massachusetts, I believe, to Harvard, Massachusetts. In the late - in about the 1770s a young Cole and his stepfather came up the coast building sawmills and they apparently had been asked to come into Prospect Harbor to build a sawmill and apparently liked the area and came back the next year. I think this was Abijah Cole who was with his stepfather at that point and he was a very young man.

MS. LARSEN: And how do you spell Abijah?

MS. COLWELL: A-B-I-J-A-H. He is up in the Prospect Harbor cemetery and he and his brother came back and bought property here and then came here and settled. And the person I know as Abijah's son Asa, because I have a little notebook that Asa - a little diary that he kept. Asa was born in Prospect Harbor. He was 27 in 1817, so he was born here.

MS. LARSEN: Eighteenth century.

MS. COLWELL: Right, in the 18th century in Prospect Harbor. Well, in his little diary that he began the day he was married to a girl from Lubec when he was, I think, 27, when he gets married, he starts the diary on New Year's Day in 1817 and he is married that day. Then, he and his bride are going back to Lubec where he is employed as a schoolteacher for the first time in his life. And he teaches that semester. Then, they come back to Prospect Harbor and in July of that year, in this diary, he says something to the effect that father raised the rafters on a new house today, and I think that may be this house. I mean, the family had been living here in Prospect Harbor for 30 years before then but, and from then on, Coles lived in this house. So it was my grandfather's great-grandfather, I think.

So we go back to - they were English, then my father's family was Scottish, and Irish, the Colwells. And they seem to have come to Prospect Harbor from Canada and they came first to a little place Petit Manan Point, which is about fifteen miles east in Washington County. And he grew up there, my grandfather Colwell. So I have a background of the British Isles.

MS. LARSEN: You do, and long term Maine residence.

MS. COLWELL: Oh yes. My grandfather Colwell's parents came from Nova Scotia to Maine. Now, I think they may have been born in Scotland. I'm not sure. But they are buried in the little cemetery there.

MS. LARSEN: But although your roots go deep into this house, from what I've read, in your early childhood, you lost your mother first?

MS. COLWELL: Yes. My mother died when I was two years old. She died in 1919 in the influenza epidemic and her mother apparently took me in. My father, from that time, apparently, contracted tuberculosis, and my

earliest memories of him are as a semi-invalid who lived with his parents at the other end of the village. And I was always back and forth a great deal between the two houses, but lived and grew up here in this house with my maternal grandparents.

And my father at times was active and up and moving around and so on, but all the time I was growing up, there was great care taken, he had all his meals separately from the family and his dishes were kept separately and he had a practical nurse who lived with his family and took care of his needs and so I was always visiting him and then, at times, when he would have these dreadful hemorrhages and be very sick, I wasn't allowed to go to the house until he had recovered.

But he eventually, when I was fourteen or thirteen or fourteen, he became well enough so that he was able to go out in the car and I learned to drive sitting beside him and doing all of the gear shifting and doing most of the steering. That's really how I learned to drive.

MS. LARSEN: Was it his car?

MS. COLWELL: In my grandfather's car. Yes, my grandfather Colwell, my father's father, was a lobster dealer, quite a prosperous lobster dealer. He had one of the first, one of the nicest cars in the village. The house that he built at the other end of the village had a bathroom, of course, and a furnace, central heating, which this house did not at that time have. When I was growing up, it did not have central heating or plumbing. We had water faucets in the kitchen of cold water and we'd heat it with woodstoves. It was very comfortable, but it's a different way of life.

MS. LARSEN: It is; it certainly is. [Laughs] So that's - you had no siblings, I gather?

MS. COLWELL: No, I had a sister who was born in 1916, I think, and she died when she was a year old.

MS. LARSEN: Of the same influenza, probably?

MS. COLWELL: I think, yes, right. Yes, I was an only child and spoiled by my grandparents.

MS. LARSEN: And how old were they? Were they elderly or were they young?

MS. COLWELL: I think my grandmother was probably - I researched this and now I can't remember, but I think she was in her late 50s at the time she adopted me. And in her late 50s, it had been quite a while since she had had to care for a two-year old. I've always thought that it certainly was an undertaking to bring me into the family.

MS. LARSEN: But a wonderful thing to do.

MS. COLWELL: Right. And the household here was my grandparents', Susie and Louis Cole, and my grandfather's sister, Alice Cole. So there were three adults taking care of me as I grew up.

MS. LARSEN: Two women, and you had two women.

MS. COLWELL: Yes, right.

MS. LARSEN: Wow. Now what was this, what school did you go to as a child?

MS. COLWELL: We had a grammar school here in Prospect Harbor with eight grades or nine grades in one room in a one-room schoolhouse. And I think I got a very grounding education in the grammar school. I liked going to school and my grandmother was a great reader and she had a library, many of them still here, extraordinary. She really was an extraordinary woman. Her father came from the Shetland Islands and she and my uncle George, her brother, were both - I'm not sure that we would call them intellectuals, but they were certainly inclined to be intellectual and great readers.

MS. LARSEN: Did they read to you and then they encouraged your -

MS. COLWELL: Oh yes, oh yes. I was always read to and loved being read to. That's why I love book tapes now. I still like being read to. Yes, I grew up reading very early and loving to read and certainly had every reason to like reading.

MS. LARSEN: And what were your aspirations and maybe their aspirations for your life? What do you think they felt you would do?

MS. COLWELL: I have no idea. I really haven't a clue. In Maine, we just grew up and they certainly wanted me to be happy and well. Of course, there was a certain amount of worry because I was very thin. I was very tall and

very thin and so I wasn't allowed to play basketball, for instance, in high school, which was the activity.

MS. LARSEN: You would think being very tall and very thin, you'd be perfect for it.

MS. COLWELL: I know. I know. But because of my father's history, they thought this was too energetic, although I was perfectly well. But I was pretty skinny. When I went to high school.

MS. LARSEN: And you went to Winter Harbor High School?

MS. COLWELL: Winter Harbor High School. And we had a really remarkable principal when I was going to school there, Clair Wood.

MS. LARSEN: Wood? W-O-O-D?

MS. COLWELL: Mm-hmm. [In agreement.] Who went on from here to a very large high school. I've forgotten where now, but it was remarkable that he was here in this small school because he obviously was capable of a much bigger educational opportunity.

But I enjoyed high school. I was pretty shy, and I'm not sure, you know people who are shy, it doesn't mean that there isn't quite a lot of ego in the whole. It doesn't mean that you're not – but socially you have not developed the skills yet and I was very shy except with my peers. But I didn't play basketball, I went in for public speaking and won prizes for public speaking. [Laughs.]

MS. LARSEN: Which strangely enough does sometimes go with being shy.

MS. COLWELL: Right, right. I mean, standing up and reading someone else's words or interpreting someone else's words was fine. But to get up and speak extemporaneously was impossible.

MS. LARSEN: Did you do any writing or have any?

MS. COLWELL: In high school, I began to write poetry and I was very interested in English literature. Now I'm not sure that – I read a lot, but not very – I'm not sure how much I retained. But, you know, I was terribly fond of the poetry that you read in high school English courses.

MS. LARSEN: Did you have any sense of American literature versus English literature at that time?

MS. COLWELL: I don't think I did, no. And I have no memory of what I really read. I could have really been educated by reading the books in my grandmother's library, a great many biographies, but not – and whatever fiction there was, was good fiction. It wasn't the pulp stuff at all.

And I did write poetry and – [laughs] – one of my – I apparently must have read some of my poetry to one of my oldest friends who lived in Corea and with whom I drove. Of course, there were no school buses in those days and we had an old jalopy and I drove to school with her the last couple of years. She was a couple of years behind me. And Louise was much more – I was innocent, you know. I was not –

MS. LARSEN: Like worldly, is that – worldly?

MS. COLWELL: I was not at all worldly. I was quite an innocent and Louise, whose father had been jailed for bootlegging and so on, was much worldlier than I was and she was quite sophisticated. And she introduced me to beer and Southern Comfort and – [laughs] – and to a lot of things that I found quite exotic and I must have read some of my poetry to her because I use a lot of those high school memories in *Young* actually.

MS. LARSEN: That's your novel, written in 1955.

MS. COLWELL: Because I can remember that Louise would be amused because in a group of high school kids, sometimes the talk would be pretty coarse and they would be telling stories and Louise afterwards would say, you didn't know what that meant, did you? [Laughs.] And then she would delight in explaining to me what I hadn't understood about these dirty stories.

Well, of course, my grandfather Cole had a general store and he was the postmaster. And I, unfortunately, was able to go behind the candy counter all the time I was growing up and help myself, and also I loved to work in the store and help the clerk put up the orders and get in his way and cause him a lot of frustration. We certainly didn't have a lot of money, but there was never any feeling of want either. My grandmother Cole was just a wonderful, wonderful cook and she, early on, began to serve meals in the summers for the few people who came here summers and had summer homes. This was the dining room where she served lunches and dinners. It wasn't that you could come here. It was that people came regularly for their dinners or their lunches and so on.

MS. LARSEN: So they weren't really – it was like they were like boarders or –

MS. COLWELL: They, yeah.

MS. LARSEN: So in this home, right where we're sitting in the house you were living in, other people would come in and have their meals.

MS. COLWELL: Right, in this room, and Aunt Alice would help in the kitchen with the dishes, but my grandmother did all the cooking. And I never helped in any way. I was just – I was so spoiled, I was never asked to do anything or taught to do any cooking or cleaning or bed making or dishwashing or anything. I never was expected to do anything except play.

Anyhow, my grandmother felt the need for additional income. I'm sure that's why she began to serve meals because my grandfather had a wonderful disposition. I never heard him say an unkind word to or about anyone. But he was no kind of businessman and he allowed people to build up great bills, which –

MS. LARSEN: They didn't pay.

MS. COLWELL: Were never paid, and so my grandmother had additional income with these people who paid for meals. But I think also she enjoyed it very much because they all were friends – she never felt at all that this was a menial thing. These were people who came in and because she needed a little extra money, she cooked for them and they all became very good friends and I think she enjoyed – because they came from other parts of the country and they brought her something that she needed from the outside world.

MS. LARSEN: Social interaction?

MS. COLWELL: Right, absolutely.

MS. LARSEN: It must have exposed you to different people too.

MS. COLWELL: Yes, it did. I'm sure it did. I remember my grandmother during the summer at least, took the *Sunday Times* or the *Sunday Herald Tribune*, I presume she'd take a three month subscription or something like that, because sometimes it would be the *Times* and sometimes it would be the *Tribune*, and I was always glad when it was the *Tribune* because the funny papers, which the *New York Times* did not have. And I don't think anyone ever looked at that paper except my grandmother.

MS. LARSEN: But it was there. So it seems that though it was unfortunate what happened with your parents that you still had a very good childhood?

MS. COLWELL: Oh, I had a very warm, supportive childhood. There is no question. My Colwell grandparents, I spent quite a lot of time with them and I went with them to visit my Colwell relatives in Hancock and spent two or three days with them visiting, and I had a very warm, supportive family, And certainly a very happy childhood.

MS. LARSEN: It sounds it.

MS. COLWELL: And I also grew up with the summer young people too. I mean we were friends, because their parents had grown up here having meals, and I remember before I got a bicycle, I probably was 11 maybe, when I just had a great urge to ride bicycle, and I would go into the store and extract – liberate – packages of gum with which I would bribe one of the summer boys, Les Phalen, to let me have his little old bike for a morning or an afternoon. And I suppose my grandmother became aware of this because on my birthday, I remember walking out in the shed and here leaning against the wall in the shed was this beautiful new bike. And that's one of the memories, you know, that's indelible, that beautiful bike.

MS. LARSEN: So you're still walking back and forth in the same home, all these years later. You're still walking back and forth in the same home. Isn't that remarkable?

MS. COLWELL: Right, yeah. But after I – in fact I was valedictorian in the high school class. Now, this high school class probably had eighteen people in it. And my best friend Margaret Ash, who lived in West Gouldsboro was salutatorian. And I had a good high school, you know, I enjoyed high school and had close friends and just had a dandy time At school plays, et cetera, although I missed, dreadfully missed, because Margaret and everyone else I knew practically were on the basketball teams, and went on these trips and everything and I missed all that. And I felt the lack of that, but still I can't say that it was a blight. But when I finished high school, I wanted to go to college, but I really hadn't the slightest of why I wanted to go to college, what I wanted to study.

MS. LARSEN: How did that desire to go to college – where did that come from? Had your grandparents gone or anybody you knew?

MS. COLWELL: Certainly not, but it was just that was what – I mean I certainly didn't think of anything else but to go on to college.

MS. LARSEN: And what year would that be now?

MS. COLWELL: I graduated in '35 from high school, so I would have been the class of '39. Well, now my grandfather really couldn't afford to send me to college, but I had a small bank account, which my mother had left me. She had started when I was born apparently and I took this and went to the University of Maine.

MS. LARSEN: In Orono, right?

MS. COLWELL: In Orono, right. You know, I don't remember – I really don't remember discussing this with my grandmother, but I'm sure she wanted me to go. I'm sure it was fine. But I just don't remember discussing it. I just went.

MS. LARSEN: Now, this would have involved you living away from home, right?

MS. COLWELL: Right, yeah. I lived in Orono. And I went that year to Orono and but I was completely lost on the campus. I just simply didn't – I was in the arts and sciences and I know I took some philosophy course that I did very well in. I can't even remember what courses I took. I did perfectly well in all of them, but it really didn't – I was completely at sea. You know, I had no idea what I wanted to go toward. I just didn't know. So I think after that – and I made some very good friends at school.

But when I came home that summer and I'm afraid that I spent part of that legacy in buying a car, which you see, my grandmother didn't say you can't do that. I don't know that they could have, if I was, what, eighteen, presumably I could have done it. But I mean, I think it was stupid to do, but I bought this secondhand old Hupmobile. In fact, it seems to me I bought that before I finished that first year of school, because it seems to me I can remember driving it up to Orono, this big old Hupmobile.

MS. LARSEN: Well, there isn't any public transportation up here, is there?

MS. COLWELL: Do you know that there was a streetcar?

MS. LARSEN: There was?

MS. COLWELL : Then, that went from Orono to Bangor. Isn't that incredible?

MS. LARSEN: That's incredible.

MS. COLWELL: That was 1936.

MS. LARSEN: Nothing like that now.

MS. COLWELL: No, and for years after, I don't think. It didn't last too much after that.

Well, I came home, and I think I began working in my grandfather's store to have something to do. Still, now I was going – I always have to look when she comes in because she may be bringing something.

MS. LARSEN: Get a little gift, huh?

MS. COLWELL: Yes [From Scampi, my hunting cat].

MS. LARSEN: Pretty cat.

MS. COLWELL: What train of thought was I on?

MS. LARSEN: So you came back here to Prospect Harbor. You didn't return to college because it was –

MS. COLWELL: That summer, it would have been '37 –

MS. LARSEN: Sounds like maybe '36?

MS. COLWELL: Thirty-five, thirty-six, yeah, that would have been '36. No, because I went a year. That would have been '37.

MS. LARSEN: Okay, and this was the Depression also.

MS. COLWELL: Right, we're coming up to the Depression certainly. I really wasn't aware of the Depression here. I

mean we never had a lot of money, but we always had whatever was needed, and as far as clothes and things, my grandmother always seemed to, you know, let me buy what I wanted.

MS. LARSEN: So you weren't going to be a storekeeper, but maybe you were going –

MS. COLWELL: I was working in the store and then I had friends and I was going to the dances, you know, the weekly dances. And I loved to dance. I'm just trying to think of that life, but here I was. It was time for me to decide what – and I was writing poetry – verse. I'm not sure it would qualify as poetry. It certainly wasn't intellectually guided.

But then I think Louise, of course, had been one of my good friends all the way along and I think Louise had started working for a photographer in Ellsworth or Bangor. And her mother had started a little restaurant in Corea, Katie's Restaurant. And I think it was this summer after the year in school that Louise asked me to come over to meet these exotic New York friends of hers who had been coming to Corea for several years and eating at Katie's Restaurant and Louise had been a waitress in her mother's restaurant, so she had met these three women and they had taken to her greatly because Louise was very entertaining and a real character, Maine Down east character, who loved to be a Down east character. I mean she performed.

MS. LARSEN: She enjoyed the role, huh?

MS. COLWELL: She enjoyed the role. She continued to enjoy the role all her life. Anyhow, I went over this one night and met Chenoweth Hall and Ruth Storm and Mabel Griffin. And Chennie was then working in New York City in an advertising agency, and she had come east from – she went to the University of Wisconsin and came east to New York after she graduated, because her mother was then living in New York and working there. And Chennie grew up in Louisville – but went to the University of Wisconsin because at the time, she thought she wanted to be an architect and Frank Lloyd Wright was teaching a course there. She later decided to change to music and she graduated from Wisconsin with a degree in musicology, and she was a violinist.

But Chenoweth had come east. These were the days leading up to the Depression and she – when she came east, the only job she could get was teaching music in the New Jersey secondary schools. And she did that for two years but she hated it. And then, through friends of her mother's, she heard of a job in an advertising agency that needed someone with a musical background. And she got the job and from then on, she had – by the time I met her, she had graduated to a better job in the advertising world. And she was writing. She was an advertising account executive. And that meant that they met clients and discussed what the client wanted and wrote the ads. She was –

MS. LARSEN: Were they for radio?

MS. COLWELL: Mostly publications, magazines, ads for publications and all the big magazines and I don't remember radio. I think hers were mostly – they were mostly fashion accounts too. Carole – [Carole Stupell] – and not Elizabeth Arden, but one of Elizabeth Arden's –

MS. LARSEN: Competitors?

MS. COLWELL: Competitors. I just can't remember the name now, but you would recognize it as one of the big cosmetic companies. And she had all these illustrious clients at that time. And she enjoyed that. She was having quite a good time doing that, although, of course, she wasn't finding time for her real work. Anyhow, so I met –

MS. LARSEN: You met them in this restaurant then?

MS. COLWELL: I met them in this little restaurant, Katie's Restaurant, and Ruth and Mable were both teachers in the New York City school system. Ruth taught in Evander Childs, which at that time was one of the biggest high schools in the New York City system, and very reputable, very well known. And Chennie was sharing – Ruth lived in Yonkers with her mother, and Chennie had moved there and was living, was sharing the apartment with Ruth and with her mother in Yonkers. She had been living with her own mother in Jersey City, and while she was living with her mother in Jersey City, she had been playing with the Brooklyn Symphony and she was also playing with a quartet. I know she talked about having to go to Brooklyn for rehearsals and at that time was traveling on the subways from Brooklyn to Jersey City at midnight and thinking nothing of it, this small redhead at 22 or so.

MS. LARSEN: With her violin.

MS. COLWELL: With her violin. Anyway, at this meeting, they were completely exotic to me, I mean, from the City, and I was exotic to them. And they – [laughs] – they treated me as though I was this exotic object, this tall, blonde, attractive Maine Down east girl who was writing poetry, a budding Millay.

MS. LARSEN: Surely.

MS. COLWELL: Possibly. I mean that was their reaction to me so, of course, I blossomed under this admiration because I don't think anyone - you know, Louise read the poetry, but her reaction didn't really mean much to me. But to have someone else think that perhaps I really was capable of writing poetry was very heavy.

And Chenoweth and I liked each other immediately. We felt drawn to each other. I think Louise the year before I left, Louise had - and it was the year she was a senior in high school, they had asked her to come down and visit in New York, and she had gone on her Christmas vacation to Yonkers and stayed with Ruth and Chenoweth. And Chenoweth had a brand new little Plymouth coupe, which she had bought. And I always thought this was quite remarkable on everybody's part, because she was working and Ruth was occupied, so during the day, Louise was allowed to take this new little Plymouth coupe and drive it all over New York City.

MS. LARSEN: My goodness. Yes, that was quite a privilege.

MS. COLWELL: She had a marvelous vacation. This was before I had been invited to meet them, but I heard about this, of course. So I saw them then. We picnicked and so on. That winter when they left during the next winter, Chennie and I corresponded. And when they came back the next summer, our friendship grew, and I think it was the next fall that I drove - I, by this time, had a little brown Willys, which was really the forerunner of the Mini, of the Volkswagen Bug. I called it the Bug. It really was no bigger than a little Volkswagen, but it was a sedan. Anyhow, it was a tiny little forerunner of the small cars, four cylinder, and I drove this little bug to New York to visit Chennie.

MS. LARSEN: That's a long way from here, yes.

MS. COLWELL: Yes, it seems to me that I drove down there in fourteen hours, in one day. And this was really my first excursion into the outside world, although I had been to visit cousins in New Jersey, gone on the bus. But that was family and it was quite different. This time I was going into the world independently.

[END TAPE 1, SIDE A]

MS. COLWELL: And Chennie met me somewhere outside the city because what I remember is driving down the West Side Drive with Chennie driving by this time so that I could look - this was my introduction to the city and it was just - I still remember driving down that West Side Drive with those marvelous big apartment houses and the river, just a wonderful way to see New York for the first time, its very best face. And we stayed in a hotel and she just showed me all around.

Of course, we visited Ruth and Mabel. And she took me to the office and I met Mr. Kahn, this was Kahn's - Gussow Kahn's advertising agency, a fashion agency. And I met Mr. Kahn and I met her friends. She had a very good friend who was another copywriter and the advertising manager. He - I can't remember his name, but he was a very good friend too, and I met all of these people. And we went to see - apparently the thing I had read about and wanted to see was *Tobacco Road*, Erskine Caldwell's play on Broadway. And we saw that and I remember I really was shocked. I felt it was pretty shocking.

And that is really about all I remember about - I really don't remember much about that week except it was a very exotic week for me. And then I was driving back in the morning and I was leaving to drive home intending to drive in one day again. A friend of Chennie's called that morning before I left and said I don't think Mimi should leave because all these weather reports of a hurricane coming into New England and I don't think she should leave. I remember, it was raining very hard that morning. But, you know, New England, at that point, had never had a hurricane.

MS. LARSEN: Really?

MS. COLWELL: No. I had never heard of a hurricane in New England. So you know, they expected me at home. This was the plan. This was the day I was going to leave so I left with the stupidity of youth and also tunnel vision. And I remember even driving out of New York City, it was raining so hard, cars were stalling and pulling off. But it never occurred to me. This little bug and I just kept right on going, and we kept being detoured because of the heavy rain until, apparently, I just sat there and drove through the rain without thinking too much about it, because finally I wound up way here in western Massachusetts. What was the name of that town where I shouldn't have been [Springfield]. I mean, I kept getting detoured and detoured and detoured.

MS. LARSEN: So you ended up inland.

MS. COLWELL: And far from my regular route and I drove over this bridge into town and this policeman - this now was late afternoon - he stopped me and said, you'd better find a hotel because you can't get out of town. The bridge is out and it's just - and he must have directed me somewhere because I found a hotel. And as I remember, I left New York City with nine dollars, but apparently that nine dollars was enough for a hotel room. Isn't that incredible? I found a hotel room and I wired Chennie because I knew by this time she would be

worried, just to say I'm okay, only I'm here in this extraordinary place. And there was a movie in all this tempest that was going on. There was a movie close by the hotel, which I went to, playing *Marie Antoinette* with Norma Shearer and I went to the movie, but I couldn't bear to stay to see her beheaded, so I left before the end.

The next day, I drove on home through absolute devastation. You know, that was that really devastating hurricane that just leveled whole patches of forest and everything else.

MS. LARSEN: And what did you think when you got back to Prospect Harbor?

MS. COLWELL: Well, apparently during that week, apparently, I don't remember how these things came about now. But apparently, during that week in New York, we had agreed that I would come to New York and join Chennie. She would find an apartment and I just marvel now at her courage, because here I was coming to join her without any job, without any money, without any abilities. But that's what happened.

MS. LARSEN: But you needed to be together.

MS. COLWELL: That's what happened and she found an apartment on East 22nd Street and I went down later that fall. The only thing I contributed was the Bug, my little car.

MS. LARSEN: And what did your grandparents think?

MS. COLWELL: You know, I think my grandmother hated to have me so far away. Of course, they had met Chennie and they were very, everyone in the family just thought she was wonderful. They all embraced her as my friend. It just seemed to be acceptable. Why not?

There was never any problem about going - I think, my grandmother would have preferred that I wasn't going so far away.

MS. LARSEN: That's typical of Maine families. They like to keep their children close by.

MS. COLWELL: Right, right. And after all, I was their - they had brought me up. I was very close and they were both then, by then, they were in their late 70s and Alice was getting on to 90. But they certainly didn't - I don't remember any great things like, oh, you can't go. You mustn't go. This is a dreadful thing to do and so on. I don't remember that at all. Now maybe I've wiped it out, but I don't think so. I think they were reluctant to have me go and sorry to have me go, but if she's going, that's -

So I went down to New York and we moved into East 22nd Street, which was way over between Third and Second Avenues, in a nice second-floor where we had, I think, we had a bedroom and a living room and a very tiny little kitchenette thing and practically no furniture. I think Chennie must have bought a bed and I know she bought this big wing chair because we brought it back and had it for years here in Maine. And she made a dressing table of glass brick. And during that first - of course, she was working. Here I was just there in the city taking in the sights, doing a lot of walking and meeting her friends.

Some of the first friends that I met were Tibby and Ken McCormick. Ken was a young, then a young, editor at Doubleday. He later became the chief editor, editor-in-chief, with clients like Winston Churchill and so on. But he and Tibby were then young marrieds and Tibby had been a pupil of Ruth Storm's at Evander Childs.

MS. LARSEN: So that was the connection.

MS. COLWELL: That was the connection. And she had modeled before she married Ken. Their daughter is Dale McCormick, who was the treasurer of the state of Maine. She's just finished her period as treasurer. She's now head of one of the departments, but I can't think what. Anyhow, this was long before Dale was born. I can remember they were some of the first friends that came to our apartment and had dinner with us. And you know, meeting these people, I hardly had anything to say. I can just remember sitting through these evenings just listening to everything. But this was a completely new world to me, you know, talking about books, and art, and music.

MS. LARSEN: Did you go to museums or libraries during the day?

MS. COLWELL: Oh yes, oh yes. And there was a little - there used to be lending libraries then. And there was a little lending library just down the street where you could pay a few cents and get books. Oh yes, we went to the galleries and the museums, which was, of course, completely eye-opening too to me. And then, of course Chenoweth had met Berenice Abbott when she first came to New York. So we went to Berenice Abbott's apartment in the village and she came to 22nd Street..

MS. LARSEN: Did you see her photographs?

MS. COLWELL: I don't remember Berenice's. I presume I must have but I don't remember. I just don't remember. I must have, but I can remember at some point I began to take a WPA, Works Progress Administration, course of photography. All these courses were being offered then free, I think.

MS. LARSEN: To employ people who were teaching them, yes, right.

MS. COLWELL : Right, and I have no idea where I went, but I did have to buy a camera. And I know Chennie and I went into Lower New York and bought this box camera. What did I do with that camera? Anyhow, our instructor was very interested in socialism and he talked a lot about his social ideas, which I wasn't antagonistic toward at all, and also, I think that I found it very hard to follow when he talked about photography, technical. And I think it became apparent quite soon that I really had no affinity for photography. But I did take a number of pictures and I did set up a little dark room in the bathroom with an ironing board in the tub and pans on top of it. And I developed some pictures and I can just remember when Berenice and her mentor, Elizabeth McCausland, who was a mentor of Berenice, who was a critic on the *Springfield Republican*.

MS. LARSEN: She wrote for a lot of places.

MS. COLWELL: Okay, well, they came one night, I remember, maybe for dinner to 22nd Street, and, of course, Berenice, at some point, went in the bathroom and saw this. And so I was made to produce some photographs and I still can feel the embarrassment of showing these - [laughter] - to Berenice Abbot, which I'm sure was only exceeded by her embarrassment of having to look at them. [Laughter.] But that didn't - I didn't do that too long. That sort of petered out, but I did take some photographs. And we were - I remember Chennie had friends who were dancers, because she was always interested in dancing. And she had a very good friend who was a dancer who had married and was living in New Jersey and by this time had a child that was named for Chenoweth. And we went to New Jersey to see them. I mean, we just had a full life and I just loved being in New York, as foreign as everything was. I just loved being there. And also, I had a cousin who lived in Brooklyn and whose husband was an assistant medical examiner of New York City. And so I would go to Brooklyn to have lunch with Kay and Duke and their children in Brooklyn. And when I became able to follow that maze of the subway system, you know, I felt so much a New Yorker. Here I was traveling through the boroughs.

And then that was the first year and then we came back here for the summer. And Chennie got the whole summer off, as I recall. She just went to Mr. Kahn and said I would like to have the summer off and he gave it to her. So we came back and spent a summer here in this house here with my grandparents, which couldn't have been all that easy for Chennie, because this was before there was any plumbing and with three elderly people. But anyhow, she seemed to be able to cope with it because we had a happy summer.

And at the end of the summer, I do remember my grandmother's just really hating to have us leave and go back. And the next fall, somehow or other, Chennie had found another apartment on East 54th Street. And I do remember and it was hard to leave that fall. She may have gone back earlier and I may have stayed a little longer because I wrote a little poem about how hard it was to leave my grandmother that fall.

But that year, of course, I really felt quite seasoned as a city person and everything sort of had opened up, although I wasn't doing - I think I may - I'm not sure when - I did at some point write some freelance copy through Chennie, which she placed. I did do that. And I must have started writing. I may even have started writing a novel because I had one eventually all written so - [laughs] - I'm not sure when I started it, but I'm sure I started writing short stories as well as the poems.

But sometime during that winter also, this old friend of Chennie's from Louisville was living in New York. I think he was a newspaperman. And his wife had had some kind of abdominal operation and he had designed this sandbag really to put on her tummy and exercise to get her abdominal muscles back in shape. Well, he and Chennie decided that there was a prospect and possibility in this for commercial sales so they had this Trimtummy, which really was a glorified sandbag. Anyhow, Trimtummy and they had it made, manufactured, and they had advertising copy and all these brochures. And I was the one of the group who didn't have anything else to do, so I was elected to be the salesman of the Trimtummy.

MS. LARSEN: You probably had a trim tummy too, so that was probably good.

MS. COLWELL: Well, I did have a trim tummy. So I went around to all these sample rooms, you know, all the big department stores - Lord & Taylor's, B. Altman's, Wanamaker's, Saks. They all had sample rooms where you appeared and each department would have a certain day when they would meet there for you to appear before them and give your spiel, show your product and do your spiel, so somehow I found out this system and went around to these places. And by this time, I had gotten over some of that shyness and I kind of enjoyed this because it always amused everyone, usually amused by it so that you didn't have any antipathy to overcome in presenting this product.

MS. LARSEN: But a good title, it had a good name.

MS. COLWELL: Right. And I sold some of these. Several of the big department stores bought half a dozen, you know. And it was quite collegial because you would meet the salesmen who were going to see the same department head. You would meet them at Wanamaker's and at Saks and at B. Altman's and so on. So that took up some of my time.

The other thing I did too, I forgot this. This may have been the first year. Chennie had another friend who had been at the University of Wisconsin with her. Her name is on the tip of my tongue, but anyhow, she had a very good job in consumer research. And her job was to hire teams of young people who would go into towns like Upper Montclair, New Jersey and go house to house finding out reactions to a certain ad in a publication or a label on a jar of pickles or all these things to determine whether something was marketable or whether an ad was being noticed, consumer research, in other words. So Winona Hauser was her name so Winona hired me to join one of these teams.

Well, the first one was in one of the suburban towns in New Jersey. And it was a long questionnaire, lots of questions, which ended with saying, what is the family income. Well, I went this first day and I didn't really find it all that, I mean, you know, to get entrance and to get somebody to answer these questions. Well, I didn't have too much trouble and I got all - I got ten I think, say, during the day. But the thing was, I couldn't make myself ask them what their income -

MS. LARSEN: It wasn't polite, was it? No.

MS. COLWELL: I mean, they had been so pleasant to go through this whole thing. How could I be so inquisitive? So when I came back to New York that night, Winona was very unhappy with my day's work, and said you have got to go do these and get the income. Well, you know, now, why in the world didn't I just -

MS. LARSEN: Write something in?

MS. COLWELL: Write something in. It never occurred to me, never occurred to Chennie. At least she never told me that it occurred to her. But I was so undone by this that Chennie said, I'll take the day off. She took the day off next day, drove me back to that town, and presumably, I went back to every one of those damn houses and -

MS. LARSEN: Asked them?

MS. COLWELL: Asked them.

MS. LARSEN: And did they tell you?

MS. COLWELL: I guess so. I, at least, I seem to have brought them back to Winona. But that was my first. Apparently, after that I must have worked more for her, because the only other - I can remember later, and it may even have been the next year, going on another survey for her, and by this time, being -

[Audio Break.]

MS. LARSEN: This disk number two, interview with Miriam Colwell, June 10, 2005 in Prospect Harbor, Maine, interviewer Susan Larson.

We were talking about your time in New York with Chenoweth Hall and you were embarking on a career as a researcher.

MS. COLWELL: A consumer researcher, and I think I was saying I had done a number of these surveys by this time and had gotten acquainted with other young people who were doing them and this one girl who used to work with me, her mother was a movie columnist somewhere in the Midwest wherever Dick Powell came from. And she and her mother had gone to Hollywood and had been entertained royally at the studio and by Dick Powell, and I was fascinated by this. Well, we had discovered about how much work we needed to do in a day and we had discovered that we could do it usually in a morning and then we would find the movie to go to in the afternoon.

MS. LARSEN: Sounds like a good job.

MS. COLWELL: That was how I finally got to be a seasoned researcher. Let's see now.

MS. LARSEN: Your second year in New York City then.

MS. COLWELL: Second year in New York and I loved New York. And I was writing but I certainly wasn't earning any money except for brief spells. I think I did do a Christmas tour at Wanamaker's, wonderful Wanamaker's store in downtown New York, down by Ninth and Tenth Street and Broadway. Did you ever know that Wanamaker's store? Big wonderful Wanamaker's that was always so big and so quiet. And Chenoweth's friend in

the advertising agency had a good friend who was the coat and suit buyer at Wanamaker's both in New York and in Philadelphia, a big buyer. So and we knew Scotty very well so it was a wonderful place to go because we were royally greeted by the big coat and suit buyer in New York and got a little discount when we were ever able to buy anything. So we loved that Wanamaker's store. In one of those years, I think the second year, I signed on as a temporary Christmas clerk. That was one of the few things.

But then, we came home for the summer. No, wait a minute, wait a minute. The second year, my grandfather had the news that they were forcing retirement at age 70 in the post office. My grandfather was postmaster of Prospect Harbor. And my grandmother Cole wondered if it wouldn't be a lovely cynosure for me to come back and become postmaster because Asa Cole, my great-great-great-great grandfather - I may have gotten one too many in there - was the first postmaster in Prospect Harbor.

MS. LARSEN: So it was sort of a family trade, huh?

MS. COLWELL: Well, she just thought it would be something I could do. And of course, she was hoping that I might come back and be here rather than in New York. I loved being in New York and I really did not think I wanted to leave New York. And Chenoweth never tried to say one way or another. She never tried to sway me but she did let me know that if I decided to come back and become postmaster, she would come with me. She would be delighted to come. She had had New York and she would like to be able to spend her time painting and carving and writing.

So eventually, I decided that I should come back and we gave up our apartment on 54th Street, which was a garden apartment, and we never got any good out of the garden because when we were back in the fall, it was a little late for sitting in the garden. And then we discovered there was so much soot that you spend half-an-hour cleaning things off before you can sit on anything. And in the winter, of course, it was too cold and it was in February of that second year that we gave up the apartment and put everything we owned into the little Bug and drove up to Prospect Harbor with the prospect of my becoming postmaster.

But, I still had to take the civil service examination. And at that time, I think, I was 22 or something like that?

MS. LARSEN: Your biography says you were 23.

MS. COLWELL: Twenty-three. I had never voted, but I had registered as a Democrat, which was the right side to be on at that time. So everyone took it for granted that I would be a shoe-in because of my grandfather, although that wasn't supposed to have anything to do with it. Anyhow, I came back to take this exam and I discovered no one turned up to take it except me. But I discovered that a boy I had gone out with all through high school had intended to take it, but he heard that I was coming back to take it and was sure that I would be a shoo-in, so he hadn't even bothered to take the exam.

So I was appointed acting postmaster and we moved in here with my grandparents and Aunt Alice. And I just think of that winter for Chennie. You know, we really lived in two rooms in the winter with woodstoves, no indoor plumbing -

MS. LARSEN: Three elderly people.

MS. COLWELL: Three elderly people. My grandmother - but Chennie and my grandmother were always completely compatible. They really moved on the same wavelength and my grandmother was always busy with her letters and her correspondence with the Ellsworth American - and with her cooking, she was doing all the cooking for these five people. But Aunt Alice was really quite irascible and loathe to accept anything beyond her immediate comprehension. My grandfather, of course, was over at his general store most of the time. And anyhow, he just got along with everyone and everything. But I have thought that it certainly wasn't the easiest thing for Chennie to - but she never indicated in anyway that she was uncomfortable. And every morning, she would go in the sitting room, which was, in the winter, closed off, and she would go in and light a fire in the little Franklin stove and sit in there and write.

Until spring, this is what we did and, of course, I was running the post office. Although, at that time, my grandfather was still there running his general store, and I would plan to be there when the mail came in and sort the mail, but otherwise, there really was no sense of our both being there. If someone came in to mail a package or have a money order written, my grandfather was right there anyway, so it was a very non -

MS. LARSEN: This wasn't burdensome.

MS. COLWELL: Burdensome position, exactly. I sort of came and went very freely. And we, Chennie just loved being - she learned how to snowshoe and we would snowshoe through the fields and up in the woods, and I have photographs of her out here in the snowy road.

MS. LARSEN: This was around 1940, wasn't it?

MS. COLWELL: Yeah, right. And she just seemed very happy to be there.

MS. LARSEN: So what sort of writing was she working on?

MS. COLWELL: She was writing a novel. I think that was *The Fictitious I* that she was working on that winter. But she was writing short stories all the time too, and I think she had another novel. She had all kinds of writing projects, which she was working on. And she did no painting that winter. It was all writing.

But towards spring, she discovered the little house at the Sands. It's one of the oldest houses in the village and it was a little house that had not been lived in winters for many years. It had long ago belonged to a relative of the Cole family. Cole family have relatives everywhere. It was the Doreas Allan house, and Bessie Ray, who had a general store just down the street from my grandfather's general store had bought the house and renovated it for summer rental and had rented it to a couple of men from Colorado for the last few summers. Well, Chenoweth saw this house. It's on a lovely little sand beach looking right out the bay and that was where she decided she would like to live and went to see Bessie and Bessie agreed to rent to us year-round for the same amount of money that she had gotten for the summer rental, which turned out to be something like \$18.75 a month. [Laughs.]

MS. LARSEN: Sounds like a deal.

MS. COLWELL: But there were many months when we had difficulty finding that. Anyhow, we moved in June, I think, over to the Sands, to the Aunt Doreas house, and immediately got three kittens to join the household. And it was lovely during the summer, but it began to get cold. The only heat were the fireplaces, so we eventually found a man to put in an oil-burning heater in the kitchen, connected to the little - there were three fireplaces around a big central chimney in that house and there was even a little fireplace in the kitchen.

MS. LARSEN: Was there plumbing?

MS. COLWELL: Oh, there was plumbing, yes. There was a little bathroom upstairs. And we had this big old heater connected in the kitchen, an oil heater, which did keep us reasonably warm that winter, although from the knees up it would be quite warm, but from the knees down it was freezing. But we were perfectly comfortable and of course we would have big fires in the fireplaces, but there were no - what do you call them in the fireplaces where you can close the -

MS. LARSEN: Dampers?

MS. COLWELL: Dampers. There were no dampers in the fireplaces so 90 percent of the heat flew up. But we had lovely fires and then they looked wonderful and if you stood right in front of them. So we had a perfectly - and the amazing thing is, as we settled in at the Sands, it seemed to me, you know, it was as though somehow a sort of magnetic impulse went out over the whole area and we began to know these people who had lived - Christine and Robert Weston, in Bangor, who had lived there for some number of years, all these people around that I had not known, although I had been born here. But as we settled over there and Chennie began to know people, we began to know all these writers and painters and musicians who were all around us.

MS. LARSEN: Now this was about the same time that Hartley came to live in Corea.

MS. COLWELL: It may have been a couple of years after this. No, it may have been even the next year. The next year, yes.

MS. LARSEN: I think it was. It was either then or from 1940-43.

MS. COLWELL: Waldo Pierce brought Marsden down to Corea to Katie at Katie's restaurant. Waldo had been to Katie's restaurant. It was quite a well known place for these wonderful, simple meals, Katie's cooking and lobster dinners and so on. And there were a number of Bangor families who had summer places in Corea. The Charles Lords who became very good friends of ours. And they knew the Pierces and the Westons and so on.

MS. LARSEN: But there's a lot of curiosity about Hartley's life in Corea.

MS. COLWELL: Well, Hartley came to Bangor and Waldo brought him down because, as you know, Hartley lived on a very limited income, and I think Waldo thought this would be a place where he could paint and Katie would feed him and he could live in her house. And this would be a good spot for him. And he had a room in Katie's house and of course, he got his meals with her. Katie's husband was a lobster fisherman and after the Nova Scotia - business with the Nova Scotia lobster family that he lived with?

MS. LARSEN: And painted those wonderful paintings.

MS. COLWELL: Right, and he painted – he had a chicken house of Katie’s that he fixed up for a studio at one time. But then they talk about his painting in the church too. And I’m really not sure about that.

MS. LARSEN: What did he seem like to you?

MS. COLWELL: The first time I saw Marsden, he came walking. I think he must have walked from Corea, which is two miles, I think, from where we lived at the Sands. This large bulky elderly, it seemed to me, he probably was in his seventies, was walking by the house at the Sands. And I just think I remember thinking what a piercing look his eyes had. And now whether I’ve gathered that since or whether I recognized it instantly; anyhow, he was a rather forbidding looking figure as he walked by.

And I really don’t remember how Chennie, how they became acquainted. But, of course, Chenoweth was one of the few people that he came in contact with who recognized who he was and who appreciated who he was and who was just so delighted to be with him and talk to him and appreciate, give him something back. And he became very fond of Chenoweth. Of course, he, I mean he always addressed his letters to both of us and so on and he always included me, but he was very deaf, and I always found it almost impossible to carry on a conversation.

[END TAPE 1, SIDE B]

For one thing, I was still – I really didn’t think that I had – what I had to say was necessarily going to interest him very much. So that cut down on my attempts to speak. But we did not have too much of a rapport. I mean, I think he just was interested in Chennie and I was there too. That was the situation.

MS. LARSEN: The currently literature on Hartley talks about his wanting to be the painter of Maine at the time and really find an audience in his home state.

MS. COLWELL: I’m sure he probably did want people to appreciate him in his home state but I don’t think there was ever any question that he did not know who he was and did not know his stature internationally. And I’m sure he did not want to be known as a Maine painter. I don’t think that for a minute. I think that because Hartley was not provincial in anyway. He had lived and painted all over the world and he kept up his contacts in New York. He went back and forth all of the time. He was in Corea but, he would go back to New York for two or three weeks.

MS. LARSEN: Did people come to visit him that you noticed?

MS. COLWELL: I’m sure they did. I know that at one time Erle and Clyta Loran, who lived in California and wrote the book –

MS. LARSEN: On Cezanne.

MS. COLWELL: Cezanne. One summer, Erle and Clyta came to our door at the Sands and they had come to see Hartley and I’m sure Katie had sent them over to Chennie because he happened not to be here; he happened to be in New York. And from that, we just became very good friends and visited them in California later. And they visited for a week or so I think in this area. And then we – oh, we saw them in New York too and Erle had an exhibit there one time.

MS. LARSEN: Well, it’s just that Hartley seems this haunted, sad, appealing figure, and this last episode of his life somewhat mysterious still to people.

MS. COLWELL: Well, I know that he became bedridden and Katie – I think he asked Katie to call Chennie to come over to see him and this was very shortly before he died. And Chennie went up. He was in bed in his room and he pulled the covers back. He wanted her to see how swollen his legs were, she was horrified. And she said, at least, let me take you to New York to your own doctor. And we at that time had a nice car with a front seat that would go back and make a chaise so you could even lie down.

And she just begged him to let her drive him to New York because she did not feel he was getting the attention that he should be getting. But whether he just didn’t feel as though he was up to the trip or whether he felt that would be seeming to not appeal to Katie, you know. At any rate, it was very shortly after that that he went into Ellsworth to their little private hospital there, Hurley Hospital, and walked – was allowed to walk up the long flight of stairs into that hospital when he could hardly get out of bed here. And he died there a day later.

And Chennie never got over wishing she could have driven him to New York. Now, it may not have –

MS. LARSEN: Sure.

MS. COLWELL: Made any difference. It may have been too late.

MS. LARSEN: Did you see whatever he was painting or working on ever?

MS. COLWELL: I didn't. I don't think I ever visited his studio. Chennie did and he gave her – I know he gave her an easel and various other things which she gave to Bates [Bates College, Lewiston, Maine]. And he also gave her this strange painting at some point, which I think may have been more or less a little experiment of some kind. It's an oil painting on a small board.

And on the – I don't remember anything about this at all except that it was in Chennie's studio with her paintings. And somewhere in the back of my mind, I can think of hearing that, you know, she was in his studio and she may have picked this up and said what is this – Marsden and he said, well, you know, would you like to have it.

And then he had written on the back – and whether I am – I really don't know but it seems to me that I can remember her saying that he said, I'm going to write this on the back and some time this may be worth a lot of money. And on the back he had written, "Waltz of the Vine Leaves," Marsden Hartley, and the date. And here it was – you know, I found it 60 years later lying out there in the drawer with Chennie's things, which I gave to the university. And they have sold it I believe. It seems to me it was \$20,000 or something like that that they eventually sold it for because – [laughs] – it is a very strange thing, which dealers were non-plussed by but there is no question whether it's Hartley. But it said –

MS. LARSEN: It's not typical.

MS. COLWELL: It is untypical. Anyhow.

MS. LARSEN: But it was – it was very moving that he would have been born in Maine and he came to Maine in the end.

MS. COLWELL: He was devoted to Maine I'm sure. But I am not aware of his – I'm sure he would love thinking he had an audience in Maine of course. But I don't think that would have been of major importance to him. I think he knew, he knew that he was a painter of great stature and that he had a worldwide reputation, at least in the Western world.

MS. LARSEN: Which has only grown with time.

MS. COLWELL: Oh, yes. But he was very well known to the art world then although – and of course before he died, his last exhibit – and I can't think where it was – was very successful and for the first time in his life, he did have money. I can't remember whether he finally got hearing aids. I really just can't remember that but he may have shortly before he died because the last show finally give him some feeling of affluence.

MS. LARSEN: And Corea is very close here, isn't it? It is very –

MS. COLWELL: Corea is three miles. And of course we were living a mile from Prospect Harbor. The other thing I do remember in *Time Magazine*, I think it – what is the name? Lorraine, Ivan Lorraine Albright, and his brother, Malvin Albright – Melvin – Malvin –

MS. LARSEN: I don't know –

MS. COLWELL: Well, they came to Corea of course and they came – one of the first years we were at the Sands, and one day we looked out and there were three small men, and they wore all these long billed caps – fishermen's caps and they have a long bill. At one time they sold them everywhere in the groceries. But they all had these long little caps on and they got out – [laughs] – of this big car and went out on the beach in front of the house and began running and scurrying all over the beach and quite often they would be making views. And of course we had no idea who they were, but very shortly through the grapevine we learned this was Ivan Lorraine Albright and his brother Malvin, both painters, and their father, who was also a painter.

MS. LARSEN: From Chicago.

MS. COLWELL: From Chicago.

MS. LARSEN: Right.

MS. COLWELL: But they rented a house in Corea and they came summers for several years and a third brother – whose name I can't recall who was not a painter – I believe he was in real estate – bought property on Cranberry Point and eventually build a cottage down there and eventually his daughter, Tishie, who still owns it became a very good friend of ours. Tishie is Ivan Lorraine's niece. Well, Malvin, the twin brother of Ivan Lorraine also painted. They both married very rich Chicago women. One of them was a McCormick heir, and so on.

MS. LARSEN: That is rich.

MS. COLWELL: And Ivan Lorraine painted a very weathered wreath on a weathered door.

MS. LARSEN: Oh, yes. With a very long title.

MS. COLWELL: *That Which I Should Have Done I Did Not Do*, which won a \$10,000 prize from the Metropolitan Museum as I remember. And this was – this is what I started to say. This was in *Time Magazine* with a reproduction of the painting and the fact that he had won this big prize, plus the fact that he had refused the prize because he said it wasn't enough money at that time, 10,000 [dollars].

MS. LARSEN: Was that suppose to buy the painting?

MS. COLWELL: Well, yes, I believe so, right.

MS. LARSEN: The purchased price.

MS. COLWELL: Metropolitan. And how many wreaths he had worn out painting it and so on. Chennie took *Time* over to show Marsden and she handed it to him and he – I wasn't present, I just heard this from her – he took one look at it and flung the magazine across the room. But Malvin bought a house in Corea and with his McCormick wife – they came for years and spent long seasons in Corea, and they both were very heavy drinkers and caused a great deal of interest in the area.

MS. LARSEN: One doesn't associate the Albrights with Maine at all. Interesting.

MS. COLWELL: Right.

MS. LARSEN: Yeah, that is very interesting.

MS. COLWELL: And Tishie, who still lives in California, but she still owns the cottage on the point and rents it during the summer, and also has bought another house in Winter Harbor, which she rents. And she inherited Malvin's house in Corea, which has become the Black Duck, a B&B. Very nice.

MS. LARSEN: So.

MS. COLWELL: Now, let's see.

MS. LARSEN: Now, we're in this period in the early '40s and you're living out in – you told me the name of it. It starts with an S.

MS. COLWELL: At the sands.

MS. LARSEN: Okay. And you're starting to have a circle of your own mature friends. And did you also – where did Berenice Abbott come into all of this? Is she here at this point or later?

MS. LARSEN: Chennie met Berenice before I met her. She met Berenice one of the – I think the first year that she had come to New York. Her mother was working in Jersey City and she lived with her mother for a while. But she – but this may have been after she got the job in the advertising agency in New York. Anyhow, she was – and she – Chennie was I think monitoring courses at the New School [New School of Social Research, New York, NY] and she was involved in a music group and so on.

Anyhow she was in New York and going to dance recitals and meeting dancers and anyhow, she was in Greenwich village on the street – this is the story I hear from her of course – when some kind of protest group comes walking down the street with Berenice prominently figuring at the head of this procession as I remember. And apparently Berenice sees Chennie on the sidewalk and reaches out and grabs her and says you should be part of this, and that is how they met.

Well, after we came to Maine, I think – I don't remember when Berenice bought the house up in Abbot, Maine, but I think it was after we came to Maine. They kept in more or less contact, not close contact, but they were in touch and Berenice came down here to see us and we went up. She bought this wonderful old house that had originally been an inn and it was in this tiny, tiny little community in a valley, the name of it – Abbot was the mailing address. But this was –

MS. LARSEN: Was that a family thing, Abbot, or was it just coincidence?

MS. COLWELL: Abbot, I don't know. That is the name of a – like Gouldsboro. It includes a number of communities I think.

MS. LARSEN: I just wondered if she had ancestors going back to that.

MS. COLWELL: I don't think so, but I think the name may have appealed to her as her mailing address because she found this wonderful big classic New England house that had been an inn, and it was right on a little stream in this little valley, which didn't have more than six or eight houses I think.

And she renovated this big house and made a wonderful dark room and really moved up here more or less, and would have young photographers come and stay with her for periods just working with her and working for her just for the education they were getting. And we visited back and forth maybe a couple of times a year or something like that.

MS. LARSEN: She is a lively person. Very astute and she also had involvement with Atget's photographs.

MS. COLWELL: Oh, yeah, well, she brought - she met Atget before she left Paris, and he was a very old man as I remember the story. And his things were being neglected, ignored, forgotten, and she bought his plates and brought them here and had them printed.

MS. LARSEN: Wonderful thing to rescue.

MS. COLWELL: Right.

MS. LARSEN: Just to -

MS. COLWELL: Yes, Berenice was a very astute and very canny with her financial affairs. She loved to - when we would visit, she loved to get me to - she loved to play ping-pong. She had a ping-pong table and she could always beat me because those were the only times I ever played, was at Berenice's.

MS. LARSEN: [Laughs.] But with your long arms and legs you had a good reach. You had a chance, right.

MS. COLWELL: Well, I could give her a contest but a rather unequal one.

MS. LARSEN: And, let's see, and did you also know John Marin when you were up here?

MS. COLWELL: John Marin, oh, yes. We had very close friends in the Merriam, who - Anne Merriam's parents came here when she was a child and bought a big house in Prospect Harbor as a summer home and came here summers. And Anne grew up being in Prospect Harbor. In the summers she would be my mother's age and they knew each other. And then Anne married Carrol Merriam, who was from Boston, a Boston family, and they continued to spend summers in Prospect Harbor with their children, two daughters and a son.

And we saw a great deal of Anne because she - we used to have with Anne what we call literary evenings. So after we came back here from New York, Anne really was one of our closest friends even though she was my mother's generation. But we all got along splendidly. Well, and Anne was of Boston orientation and she always - you would know instantly that she was Boston -

MS. LARSEN: Rather than New York?

MS. COLWELL: - oriented. Oh, yes, heavens. And she always had really quite an air of an aristocratic and intellectual air, distinguished.

MS. LARSEN: Were you -

MS. COLWELL: She had - going on about Marin - she had friends at Cape Split, summer people at Cape Split. So Marin had bought a house in Cape Split after having gone to Stonington for some years - he bought this house at Cape Split and presumably Anne's friends introduced her to John Marin when she visited at Cape Split.

So one day she called us and said John Marin is coming to tea today. I hope you will be able to come. Well, of course Chennie was very excited.

MS. LARSEN: Front and center.

MS. COLWELL: And this had happened - Paul Strand happened to be visiting there and I think it may have been the only time he - [laughs] - he ever visited there. But he was there so he came too. And we met John Marin and Paul Strand up here on the hill at the Merriam's house. And after that, we visited back and forth and saw a good deal of him. He and Chennie were just about the same size and cut their hair in much the same way.

MS. LARSEN: Well, he seems to be the biggest influence that I can see in her work.

MS. COLWELL: Oh, yes.

MS. LARSEN: I mean, there –

MS. COLWELL: She saw his – an exhibit of his watercolors when she was going to school at Wisconsin, and she says in her day book in so many words – I just read it recently – she says something to the effect, I became a painter when I saw John Marin's watercolors. And he made the biggest – he had the biggest influence on me of any artist.

MS. LARSEN: Which is very clear.

MS. COLWELL: And so she was so delighted to meet him.

MS. LARSEN: Was he receptive and friendly?

MS. COLWELL: He spent summers at Cape Split, long seasons at Cape Split.

MS. LARSEN: Isn't that Addison?

MS. COLWELL: Addison, South Addison. You go through South Addison and keep on and –

MS. LARSEN: So he was in his very late period doing a lot of canvasses as well as watercolors as far as I can tell?

MS. COLWELL: I don't know when he did the canvasses.

MS. LARSEN: And he was painting on the frames and doing –

MS. COLWELL: Well, I – he was – I know he went – Marin went to Schoodic one day when he came down to visit us and we picnicked and we all went to Schoodic Point and he did a watercolor there and I know, I simply know that he intended to give us that watercolor but, you know, we were both so intent on not hanging over his shoulder, having him think we were in – that I think we just didn't pay enough attention. You know, everyone, no matter how famous they are, they want to be – what is the word –

MS. LARSEN: Deferred to or they want their deference.

MS. COLWELL: Yeah, but there is a slang word. You need to – never mind. Anyhow, I have always felt that we should have been a little more fans because I just know that he intended to give that to Chennie.

MS. LARSEN: If you had expressed your admiration and appreciation of it in that moment, yeah, which you –

MS. COLWELL: Or even, you know, said something about how much we were enjoying being there while he painted something. But we were so intent in not seeming to be hanging on his every word and brush stroke.

MS. LARSEN: To give him a little space, in other words, which is very nice, really.

MS. COLWELL: Yes, we saw quite a good deal of – in fact, we visited him in New Jersey in his studio there.

MS. LARSEN: Weehawken, you said, no. I don't know where –

MS. COLWELL: Weehawken – it is near, certainly in that area. I can't remember the name.

MS. LARSEN: And who are your writer friends here?

MS. COLWELL: Well, Christine Weston of course. Her name seems to be forgotten but she knew the Whites and the New Yorker. And Christine's first book was *Indigo*. She was born in India and *Indigo* is a story of India. And it was a bestseller I think. And her second book, *The Dark Wood*, I think was a literary guild selection. She was a very popular writer at that time. And through the Westons, we met Phil Horton and Tessa, his wife. Tessa was a painter. And Phil wrote a book, a biography, very well received biography of Hart Crane. He was a journalist. He also managed a newspaper. Was there a newspaper called *Tomorrow*, or is that the *Canadian* – no, *The Reporter*. Do you remember it? Well, it seems to me it was called *The Reporter* and Phil was the managing editor of that at one time.

They had a summer place in Harrington next to Richard Blackmur. And Helen and Richard Blackmur is a very prestigious critic, literary critic. He was at that time at Princeton in the – what is the college at Princeton where the –

MS. LARSEN: Institute for Advanced Study. Where Einstein –

MS. COLWELL: Right. Well, Richard was there even though he had no college degree. But his intellectual capacities had taken him into these realms without it. And Helen is a painter and they became our very good friends. We didn't see Richard very much but we became very close to Helen.

MS. LARSEN: Was this more likely in the summer than in the in winter usually?

MS. COLWELL: Well, of course there were more people around, but I don't - [laughs] - remember the winters as being necessarily not as - you know, people came and went. I mean, the Westons would leave in the winter for a while but then they would be back. And then we met the - [sighs] - people then move here. Well, names are leaving me. Do you remember the name, Katharine Hathaway, who wrote a book called *The Little Locksmith*? That was reprinted in the prestigious - *Atlantic Monthly* I think it was and came out as a book. But Katharine came from a very wealthy and well-established family, Boston family.

And she was a hunchback, very small and a hunchback. But she had written this very moving and sensitive story of her life. And she - I think this was a beautiful family home in Blue Hill, which is still - it is a beautiful brick house that is right in the middle of Blue Hill but it is hidden by a lot of trees from the road. But she lived there with her husband, Dan Hathaway, who just took care of her and did all of the housework. And his letters - after Katharine died, he continued to write to Chennie very often. They had a tremendous correspondence all of the time until Dan died only several years after Katharine.

MS. LARSEN: Well, here we are in the '40s and I don't know how this came about, but by 1945 you had your book, *Wind Off the Water*.

MS. COLWELL: Yes. [Laughs.]

MS. LARSEN: Now, what - how did you make this metamorphosis from the postmistress.

MS. COLWELL: Well, I was still postmistress but of course - I must have started to write a novel as well as short stories after we came back to Maine. I have no memory of this and find - I look at these short stories out there in my file and I have absolutely no memory of them whatsoever. But apparently I was writing them and apparently I wrote this novel. And I have this big sheaf of correspondence about the novels, with my agent and publishers. I really don't remember this.

MS. LARSEN: Do you remember talking with - Chenoweth was writing.

MS. COLWELL: Chenoweth was writing and painting, and -

MS. LARSEN: Did you have this back-and-forth conversation about your writing?

MS. COLWELL: No, no.

MS. LARSEN: No?

MS. COLWELL: We really didn't. Chenoweth was an intellectual and she approached things intellectually. I am not an intellectual. I appreciate it but I am not intellectually capable of looking at life from that standpoint. So I think our way of creating was entirely different and I don't - I mean, I showed them to her and she showed me what she had written and we - I'm sure we criticized each other, but we certainly - that was it. I mean, we didn't consult really; we just said, do you want to read this and tell me what you think.

MS. LARSEN: And you kind of respected the difference between you?

MS. COLWELL: Oh, yeah, absolutely. But Chenoweth - very soon after we came up here. She apparently got an agent in New York and it was Ann Watkins who had one of the most respected small - she was a small literary agency but she was one of the most respected in the publishing business. And she became Chennie's agent. I don't remember how this came about but early on, just after we had started living at the Sands, I think Chennie was summoned to New York and had sold a book of hers to a publisher, Joel, Joel - I can't remember - this is in my memoirs but I don't remember the names.

Anyway, I took Chennie to Bangor - put her on the train, she went to New York. She met, she met Ann first and they just were completely compatible and they had this long, long interview - of course this is only what I get secondhand - and then they met the publisher, and this went on until 2:00 a.m. in the morning at that hotel wherever. And she signed a contract.

Now, for some reason, that first - perhaps it wasn't - I have no idea. This first book that she signed the contract for never was published. Whether the publisher went out of business, I just don't remember. But apparently I sent my manuscript to Ann Watkins too.

MS. LARSEN: *Wind Off the Water*.

MS. COLWELL: *Wind Off the Water* on Chennie's coattails. And because I was on Chennie's coattails, Ann took me on, too. And she sent my manuscript out here and there and got back these letters which every writer gets: rejections. And somewhere along the line, apparently I decided this was not a good idea for us to have the same agent. And I have my letter, which I quote in my memoir. I have the letter I wrote to Ann saying I felt that this was not a good idea and that it really was not fair to Chenoweth or to me.

And I think from Ken McCormick, who was at Doubleday – I think we had a list. He recommended a list of literary agents. And apparently I contacted Bernice Baumgarten at Brandt and Brandt, which was another very prestigious literary firm. And at the time – it may still be true – but I know at that time the general adage was that it was much harder to find an agent than it was to be published. If you found an agent, that was a big step.

Well, apparently I wrote to Bernice and apparently I must have set up an appointment with her because the next time we went to New York – ever since we came up here, we went back to New York as often as we could raise the money and stayed with friends. So I went back to New York and I went to see Bernice at Brandt and Brandt. Well, these offices were, you know, on the 50th floor somewhere and looked like a movie set.

And Bernice, with her English shoes, and her – I mean, she was – she would have been formidable except that she was extremely nice and friendly, and she had read my book – oh, I sent her the manuscript, and she had read it and liked it, and would like to send it out. So then I had to write a letter to Ann Watkins and say, you know, I think we should part our ways.

MS. LARSEN: Part company.

MS. COLWELL: So then Bernice quite soon sold this to Random House and it was published in '45. And then Chennie's *The Crow on the Spruce*, was published by Houghton Mifflin in 1946.

MS. LARSEN: You two were on a roll, weren't you?

MS. COLWELL: And then in '47 my second book was published, *Day of the Trumpet*. And of course by the time *Day of the Trumpet* was published, I had written another one, which I think is still out here and I think this is one I tried to read and couldn't read it a few years ago. I might try it again. But then it seems to me I wrote another one before I wrote *Young*. And *Young* was never my title and I never liked it but –

MS. LARSEN: What was your title?

MS. COLWELL: *Until Midnight*, was my title when I wrote the book. Now, that may not be a very good title, but I'm sure I could have found a better title than *Young*. For one thing, it's – here is my dear friend Louise Young who people might think who knew her and read the book –

MS. LARSEN: That it was about her.

MS. COLWELL: – that there might be some of Louise in that book. [Laughs.] And here – in fact I was visiting Louise and Jean in Boston. We were both visiting there. And Louise and Jean had a photographic studio which they had made out of an old stable on the – I can't think of the street, but they always called it the backside of Beacon Hill – this wonderful studio which was in this old stable. And we were there when, for some reason I got this call from New York, from the publisher of "*Young*," from Balentine Books, Stanley Kaufman, who was my editor – and Stanley – I can remember standing there at that telephone with Louise and Jean and Chennie and hearing him say, I have titled your book and it's *Young*. And here I am with Louise Young, who figures –

Well, I mean, it was not –

MS. LARSEN: What did you say to him?

MS. COLWELL: It was just that there were things – it was not Louise but it had elements that might have been –

MS. LARSEN: Did Louise ever say anything about it?

MS. COLWELL: No, no, never.

MS. LARSEN: So there you are, a writer.

MS. COLWELL: Yes, more or less. Yeah, I wrote. And here Chennie all the time is not only writing and publishing but painting a good deal, carving –

MS. LARSEN: Playing the violin.

MS. COLWELL: And playing the violin. And she is on the board of the Monteux Summer Orchestral School [Hancock, Maine] and she is also on the board of Polly Thomas School of the Dance in Bangor, and just very busy.

MS. LARSEN: Well, when I looked you up on the Internet, I found quite a bit -

MS. COLWELL: Hmm. Me?

MS. LARSEN: About you. And people look at your books as a real early foundation for writing about life in Maine in a sort of realist way. And many of the well-known writers of the '60s and '70s looked at your work and you're really solidly in the history of writing about Maine.

MS. COLWELL: Good, good. Well, -

MS. LARSEN: In a very respectful way. I mean, people take it quite -

MS. COLWELL: Well, I know with my first book I was - you know, young writers often - I mean - [laughs] - but you feel that you are looking at things from a viewpoint that has not been expressed before, and that perhaps this is worth putting out there to present another way of looking at a certain slice of life. And that is what I was writing in *Young*, and *Wind Off of the Water*. I was trying to present a true look at the world around me.

MS. LARSEN: And that is what people appreciate.

MS. COLWELL: Right.

MS. LARSEN: But it isn't the kind of genteel, glossy, picture-post-card thing.

MS. COLWELL: No, it was rural life of course. But then my second book is more - I was trying more or less to write a fictionalized version of my grandfather Colwell's life, which I really knew very little about. But the fact that he had a very good friend who was black, who lived in the village at that time, very respected, lobster dealer like my grandfather. They built houses next to each other and were great friends and competitors -

MS. LARSEN: Isn't that great?

MS. COLWELL: Which I thought was quite interesting.

MS. LARSEN: Yes. I don't - you know, I don't think people know that.

MS. COLWELL: Yes. And that was my second book. Then, I think - I am quite delighted and pleased that this *Plus and Minus* is going to be published because I have had a lot of fun, as I had in writing *Young*, in writing. And of course it is a satirical treatment of summer people and natives.

MS. LARSEN: Oh, good. That is still an important topic.

MS. COLWELL: Well, things change the more they remain the same. Yes, this, as Connie or someone who recently read this said, the same - exactly the same problems. We are dealing with the same things now as in the '50s and '60s.

MS. LARSEN: But I'll have to print out and send you some things that are out there on the Internet. If you haven't seen them -

MS. COLWELL: No.

MS. LARSEN: You should because you are really well known as a writer and very read and you're taught in schools, and you are looked at as a precursor of a whole flood of literature. But also the actual works that you did are looked at as very complete and still very good in and of themselves.

MS. COLWELL: Well, that is very nice to hear.

MS. LARSEN: Yes, it is. It is what today's generation of writers and teachers and critics think about what it is you did when you did it. So brava.

MS. COLWELL: Well, I'm happy to say that I am still, you know, happy with those books that I have written. And I am happy with this new one that is going to -

MS. LARSEN: Which you just discovered again.

MS. COLWELL: Right, which I just -

MS. LARSEN: It is called, "Plus and Minus," is that – well, our tape is about to run out so maybe we will –

MS. COLWELL: Good, I think we are –

[END TAPE 2, SIDE A]

MS. LARSEN: Good morning. I am here with Ms. Miriam Colwell in Prospect Harbor, Maine. It is June 11th, 2005, and we are here during our third session for the Archives of American Art on Ms. Colwell's life and her relationships with the artistic community in Maine and elsewhere.

Good morning, Miriam.

MS. COLWELL: Good morning.

MS. LARSEN: I'm glad to be with you again. We stopped yesterday afternoon sometime in the mid- to late-'40s and by that time you had – by my looking into things, you had published at least two novels, *Wind Off the Water*, and *Day of the Trumpet*.

MS. COLWELL: Yes, *Day of the Trumpet* was published in 1947. And by that time – I haven't mentioned, even though we were living on this very – [laughs] – limited income, we always seemed to manage to take long trips every year. And I think one of the first ones – introduced me to the South. Of course Chenoweth was born in the South. And we traveled down the – drove down the coast, visited – would be in the spring and visited all the wonderful plantations for the spring azalea season.

And went down the Atlantic coast, down along the Gulf, and up the Mississippi to Vicksburg and then back I think probably to Kentucky and visited her family.

MS. LARSEN: Is that where she was born?

MS. COLWELL: In Louisville.

MS. LARSEN: Oh.

MS. COLWELL: So these trips were eye-opening for me certainly and we seemed to do one of these long – and then we frequently – every year we seemed to go down to Washington where I had an uncle, my Uncle Clark Blance, who was my Grandmother Cole's brother, was retired from the Army in Washington. And we visited. And my cousins – Uncle Clark's daughters, Dorothy and Fran, were very close to my age. Dorothy was a little older and Fran was a little younger. And when we were all early teens, they came up here several summers and spent the summer with their aunt, my grandmother, and with me. So we were very close. And we loved Washington and we seemed to go there every year practically.

MS. LARSEN: Did you go to the museums and –

MS. COLWELL: Oh, yes. All the sites. So interspersed with Chenoweth painting all the time, writing all of the time, carving – and we never drove anywhere that she didn't find a special stone or a special piece of wood or something that she would bring home.

MS. LARSEN: Who did she like among sculptors?

MS. COLWELL: She liked, oh, dear –

MS. LARSEN: Was it Zorach? Did she like –

MS. COLWELL: Zorach, exactly, yes. And I think she knew his work in New York before she came to Maine.

MS. LARSEN: Did you know him?

MS. COLWELL: And before he came to Maine. I believe she did. I think she knew Zorach in maybe New City, New York, which is in Rockland County across the river – inside of an – artist colony, in that area. And she liked Barbara Hepworth, English sculptor.

MS. LARSEN: All modernists.

MS. COLWELL: Yes, right.

MS. LARSEN: And among painters, who did she like particularly?

MS. COLWELL: [Laughs.] John Marin of course was her special main interest was Marin's watercolors. But when we went to Greece, she was just, you know, fascinated by all of the Greek sculpture and in Italy and Rome. So even though she did like the modern things, she also liked the ancient things.

MS. LARSEN: Which is very typical of many modern sculptures who admire, especially the pre-classical things.

MS. COLWELL: And Chenoweth had a wonderful relationship with Vincent Hartgen who was developing the art department at the University of Maine at Orono, and he gave her a number of wonderful exhibits there, of her painting and sculpture.

MS. LARSEN: And you have given some of - a good bit of her work to the university, haven't you?

MS. COLWELL: Yes, they have a great - most of her paintings, the water colors, and they are keeping a large collection in their - a large number in their special collection and they are selling some of them, which I am happy to have them do because I would much rather they were being enjoyed in someone's house rather than stored in a warehouse somewhere. And these sales will go toward fellowships in her name at the university.

MS. LARSEN: Very nice, very nice idea. So as a writer yourself, now, you had two - both books were successful, weren't they?

MS. COLWELL: Yes, although I know from looking through the correspondence - [laughs] - I was very disappointment that Random House did not seem to do much publicity about the second one. And I felt they sort of let me down on that, though it got very good reviews and it was widely reviewed.

MS. LARSEN: And then there - there seems to be a gap between '47 and '55 when you -

MS. COLWELL: I certainly - I wrote the novel, at least one novel after *Day of the Trumpet*. In fact, I think I was - I had it well written probably before *Day of the Trumpet* was published. And it was a fascinating story about a real historical event down at Indian River, which is on the way to Cape Split in down-east Maine in the mid-1800s.

A charismatic preacher arrived in that rural area and managed to convince a number of the farmers and fishermen families there that they should band together with him and go to the - sell their possessions, turn the money over to him, and they would all go to the Holy Land to prepare for the Second Coming by tilling the soil and making the desert bloom and so on in preparation for the Second Coming.

And he was - I think 70 people or so. He finally chartered a vessel and they set forth and arrived at the Holy Land, where it developed that he had not prepared the proper papers to allow them to land, so the ship is offshore and they are not being allowed to land. Finally, he did get permission for them to be landed because the skipper of the ship was very anxious to get rid of them and on his way.

So they landed all of these poor people on this sandy shore with no cover and no shelter of any kind or any kind of places to -

MS. LARSEN: Not knowing the language -

MS. COLWELL: And very hot. Well, a number of them died. But eventually the survivors did - he did get - the tracted land, but it was a disaster from the beginning. They didn't know the conditions of planting in that part of the world and crops were failures, and I think they all began to be very undone by - he developed - the leader it seemed had a weakness for alcohol and the woman with him supposedly his wife was not.

MS. LARSEN: How horrible.

MS. COLWELL: I mean, it's such a story - and the survivors of this expedition - finally, when Mark Twain was traveling through Europe and went to the Holy Land and was told about this remnant from Maine, he visited them and he was so appalled by their condition that he persuaded government to - he wrote about them in *Innocents Abroad*. And through his publicity, the government eventually sent a ship to pick them up and bring them home, the survivors.

A few people stayed. I think one man established some kind of camel route and was successful in adjusting -

MS. LARSEN: And maybe someone got married to a local person.

MS. COLWELL: Right. But it's a fascinating story, would make a fascinating novel or as a true story. And a few books have been written about it since then by people who were connected with families, but I don't think they have gotten much -

MS. LARSEN: I have never heard - of course I'm not expert on Maine history. So did you finish that novel?

MS. COLWELL: Yeah, it's in the file too. In fact, it's the one that I got out on the desk five or six years ago and found I just couldn't read it. [Laughter.] Then eventually I gave that up. No, it went to my agent and she sent it out and it just didn't – it went to a number of publishers and finally I just gave up on it and wrote *Young*.

MS. LARSEN: And what is the basic story of *Young*?

MS. COLWELL: Well, it's just a story of two girls who have just graduated from high school. And it takes place in a very – just a couple of days after their graduation, just their perambulations and I enjoyed writing. And it just sort of flowed out and was – it amused me – [laughs] – as I wrote it. And I enjoyed writing it. And that then did find a publisher right off.

As a matter of fact, though, I remember now that I had – I had felt that perhaps I needed – [laughs] – to change agents because Bernice couldn't place this pilgrimage novel. And I just made the stupid mistake of trying another agent who did sent it out to all of these places. And I finally realized that it just was not going to go so I went back to Bernice on bended knee and asked her if she would please take me back.

MS. LARSEN: And she worked with you on *Young*.

MS. COLWELL: And she did. And she sold *Young*, right.

MS. LARSEN: Have you ever had a work of yours slated to be a movie?

MS. COLWELL: Yes, *Young* was sold to the movies, probably one of the – it was a modest sale but it was sold to the movies. And I had a call from a producer whose name I can't remember from 20th Century I believe, 20th Century Fox. He was very anxious to come up here and talk to me and see Prospect Harbor, and so on. And he had the girl that he wanted – special actress whose name was familiar to me at the time. But strangely enough I would have been happy to see *Young* filmed, but I did not want it filmed in Prospect Harbor, and I did not want a movie crew coming here. And I just discouraged him. He kept saying that he wanted to come and I kept saying, well, there isn't any place to stay near here and so on –

MS. LARSEN: Why didn't you want it here?

MS. COLWELL: I just did not want – I don't – I just didn't want this to become – I can't really explain. It was an idea that I –

MS. LARSEN: You didn't want it – did you not want it change or to be exploited or –

MS. COLWELL: I simply did not want it to be made into a – to be part of a movie. And as it happened, the lead that he had in mind, this movie star, had a bad automobile accident and I heard from my agent saying they are still – they are casting this film and they are having a screenplay written, but this young woman has had this accident and can't work for six months or something like that. And apparently things just did not work out. And I have to say I really wasn't sorry. It's strange.

MS. LARSEN: No, no. There are some writers who forbid – there is a mystery writer named Sue Grafton who has forbidden the filming of her books, period, and forbidden her children ever to sell her books to be filmed. And there are people who feel that way. The reason I'm pressing you is I just find it interesting.

MS. COLWELL: Well, I would have been happy to have them build a set in Hollywood and film – I mean, the setting really wasn't that important as far as *Young* went, but I did not want them swamping around Prospect Harbor, although we had very good movie friends who came to Corea. This was earlier. This was just – it seems to me it was very soon after we came back from New York that – I think this is – 20th Century Fox had decided to do a series on industries, various industries and the lobster industry was the one they started with and they picked out Corea as a typical lobster-fishing village and they sent a crew to Corea with this Frenchman, Jean Oser, who was a wonderful editor of film, but he had not directed a film. But he came with this crew and directed this film, which was called *Lobster Town*. And we became very good friends with Jean and Ellen, his wife, and enjoyed that whole –

MS. LARSEN: So you might have enjoyed it. You never know.

MS. COLWELL: And the *Lobster Town* is still shown every two or three years in Corea in the Grange Hall there. That was many years – that was in the – because it seems to me it was before the war started because the war seemed to put an end to that whole idea. That was the only one they ever made.

MS. LARSEN: Now, how did the two of you weather out World War II?

MS. COLWELL: We just sat here in Prospect Harbor and worked and followed the progress of the war with horror and of course the boys, all the boys I had grown up with, knew in school, were in various services. And a few

that I knew were killed.

MS. LARSEN: So did you pretty much stay here and not travel about?

MS. COLWELL: We went to New York, back and forth to New York several times a year. But we certainly didn't do any long automobile trips because gasoline was rationed.

MS. LARSEN: And were you – were you basically living from your work at the post office?

MS. COLWELL: Yes, except that every once in a while, soon after we moved here, apparently through friends of ours who lived in Bangor – the *Bangor Daily News* called Chenoweth and asked her if she would do a series of interviews with the editors of weekly newspapers in Maine like the *Ellsworth American*, *The Bar Harbor Times*, I know – and she was pleased to do this, and we went. One of the first expeditions – I went with her and this was in the late fall I know because it was very cold. We drove up to Caribou and Fort Fairfield, Presque Isle, and she interviewed and did wonderful articles on all of these. And then she went – she went all over this part of Maine. I think she must have done 30 or 40 of these interviews. So then –

MS. LARSEN: Provided some income.

MS. COLWELL: Provided.

MS. LARSEN: She really was a multitalented person.

MS. COLWELL: She was a renaissance woman.

MS. LARSEN: A musician, an artist in at least two media.

MS. COLWELL: Painted, carved, and –

MS. LARSEN: A writer.

MS. COLWELL: Yeah. She had so many talents.

MS. LARSEN: It seems she has made her biggest mark as a painter from what I could see.

MS. COLWELL: I think yes. I think probably so. She had an – also in those early years, she had a number of short stories published and it seems to me *The Atlantic Monthly* and the Canadian magazine, *Tomorrow*, which is still a very popular Canadian magazine, and she had a number of stories published in it, short stories, and a number of short stories in literary magazines like the *Prairie Schooner* – I don't remember which.

MS. LARSEN: So as a – so you had gained a certain stature as a writer and did you see yourself as a writer?

MS. COLWELL: Oh, yes, oh, yes.

MS. LARSEN: And you still do.

MS. COLWELL: Yes. I definitely did.

MS. LARSEN: And did you have other projects in mind and other ambitions after *Young*?

MS. COLWELL: Yes, I believe I wrote two novels. One of them is this *Plus and Minus*, after *Young* or after *Young* was accepted for publication I mean in – I did write two more novels. And then I just seemed to – for some reason I stopped writing.

MS. LARSEN: Was there some event that triggered that?

MS. COLWELL: I have never been able to – [laughs] – decide why; it just happened.

MS. LARSEN: At about what age did you stop?

MS. COLWELL: I think I stopped when I was about 50 and I seemed to feel that there were an awful lot of books being written and I didn't necessarily feel that I needed to add to them. And nothing – it was laziness partly. I had started playing tennis and life seemed to be very full without needing to spend any of it working at writing.

MS. LARSEN: Well, it is a very big thing to get your heart and mind around a project like a novel. And it displaces some of the many pleasures of life, doesn't it?

MS. COLWELL: It means many hours of hard work, of sitting down, and working at it. But I have I think written

what I had to say and that was it.

MS. LARSEN: And much of your work focuses on your early life or at least the world of your early life, not necessarily your own but –

MS. COLWELL: Right.

MS. LARSEN: And as one gets older then that is not your subject, that you have to find another subject perhaps?

MS. COLWELL: Well, I think I began to feel that I had spent a good deal of my time writing and I was ready to spend most of it living. And I seemed to have a great many interests and life was very full without working at that point.

MS. LARSEN: At that – were you were still the postmistress?

MS. COLWELL: Yes.

MS. LARSEN: And your father probably – your grandfather was probably gone by that time.

MS. COLWELL: Oh, yes.

MS. LARSEN: And then you were in full charge of the –

MS. COLWELL: Yes. My grandfather died probably in '40 – in the late '40s, so that from that time on I did have to pay attention to being postmaster. [Laughs.] And the office grew a little bit too because of Stinson Canning companies having their office in Prospect Harbor, and they had a good deal of mail and it sent the little post office up into the third class. So it became a small third-class office, which meant a much better salary for me, but it did mean that I had to work.

But it still was one of the most, one of the least constrictive jobs I think that you could have. I mean, I could walk to work and I could more or less – I did have a clerk then for certain hours, for Saturdays for instance, and then by that time, we were much more firmly settled financially so that if I wanted to take time off I simply paid the clerk to come. But I did have to – I was managing a small business office; that is what it amounted to.

I have always felt that it was one of the luckiest kinds of cynosure you could have if you wanted to write or do something of that kind.

MS. LARSEN: So who did you see on a regular basis here in Maine, say, from about 1950 until the early '70s? What was your circle of acquaintance in the cultural community?

MS. COLWELL: Well, my goodness, well, Chenoweth was having exhibits in various places and we had a large circle of friends who were painters and writers and –

MS. LARSEN: Can you tell me a few?

MS. COLWELL: And also we had a number of very good friends who came to Corea summers year after year after year, the Condons and the Rodgers, and the Gages, and of course the Hortons, who came to Harrington and we had a very busy social life. [Laughs.] When I read these daybooks, it was just a constant and the Workmans, who came from Chicago. I just can't seem to bring up names that would mean too much to you.

MS. LARSEN: And I notice when I went through the Chenoweth Hall papers for the Archives [Archives of American Art] that she had some – was a teaching position at the university for a while?

MS. COLWELL: She was asked to go down and this was quite a lot later – this would have been in '60. Finally in – now, let's see. In the '50s, in the mid-'50s, we took two-and-a-half months off and drove across the country to California, taking two-and-a-half months, and drove up the California coast and spent the week in San Francisco and a week in Los Angeles. And we had friends in San Francisco, very good friends, the Dundes, whom we had met through the Gages in Corea.

Jules was a vice president of CBS in New York. And Francis had written – she had written for radio. I can't think of a very well known radio comedian she wrote for. She wrote scripts for him [Arthur Godfrey]. Anyhow, they became very close friends and we visited them in New York. And then Jules decided that they had to get out of New York. And he transferred to CBS in San Francisco. So we had the Dundes in San Francisco when were there. Oh, and we also visited the – Lorans, you know – you mentioned the painter who wrote about –

MS. LARSEN: Erle Loran?

MS. COLWELL: Erle and Clyta Loran were living in what is -

MS. LARSEN: Berkeley?

MS. COLWELL: No, they didn't live in Berkeley, Oakland. It's just across the river from San Francisco. It is part of San Francisco. And they were there and that was quite interesting because Erle came to our hotel in San Francisco and picked us up and took us home to their home for dinner that night. And we both noticed as delighted as they were to see us, there was some kind of constraint in both of them and we just couldn't figure out what it was. They were delighted to see us and we made a date to when we left San Francisco to meet them in - what is the national park where the waterfall?

MS. LARSEN: Yosemite.

MS. COLWELL: Yosemite to spend a weekend with them in Yosemite. Well, it was only afterward that we found out the trouble was they had previously - now, this is during the McCarthy witch hunt period. They had previously rented their house to Robert Oppenheimer, who at this time was under a severe interrogation and Erle was just terribly afraid that they - the guilt-by-association thing might damage his status there at the university. But we only found this out later -

MS. LARSEN: And he couldn't really probably you tell you about it either.

MS. COLWELL: No.

MS. LARSEN: No? They were preoccupied with that.

MS. COLWELL: They were very preoccupied. Obvious - we knew it had nothing to do with us but there was something that was obviously bothering them a great deal.

MS. LARSEN: Did they come to Yosemite?

MS. COLWELL: Oh, yeah. We had a nice weekend together at Yosemite and then we were starting back east coming through the Painted Desert and visiting the Grand Canyon and so on. It was a wonderful trip. And then the next long trip - this was in the mid-'50s that we went to California and on the next one, we wanted to go to Europe, and that was another 10 years later in '65 I think - '64. We took a ship, one of the four aces of the something American Isbrandtsen Line - I can't remember the steamship and they were cargo passenger ships.

They took about 100 passengers, all with first-class accommodations, but they also took cargo. What was the name of that ship? Anyhow, we left Hoboken; we sailed from Hoboken, and 24 hours out, we were sitting having our first dinner, I believe - it was 12 hours out, we were having our first dinner when I began to notice - smelling smoke because I'm very conscious of fire, the danger of fire.

I think then smoke - we began to notice coming from the ventilators from the kitchen and I mentioned it to the wine steward and he said, oh, that is nothing, no problem at all. But very shortly it began to get worse and worse until they closed the doors to the kitchen, to the galley, and all of the waiters were kept in the dining room. And our waiter was black - Sylvester - a nice young man, and I noticed Sylvester standing by our table and he was perspiring, and he was looking extremely nervous. And I thought something is not right.

Well, it was very shortly after that that the smoke just came gushing into the dining room, and they said quickly go to your stateroom and get coats and go on deck. And we were on deck. We had a fire alarm drill of course in the afternoon. But we were on deck from about 7:30 or 8:00 until midnight while they were fighting a fire in the galley, several times sending a crew to lower the lifeboats. So it was quite an exciting - but they got it under control.

Of course they had sent out signals and those ships heading for us to help, but they did get it under control at midnight and we were allowed to go back in the lounge. And some people could go back to their cabin, but as it happened, our cabin was amongst the few that had been damaged, so we could not go back to the cabin.

MS. LARSEN: Did you lose your luggage and everything?

MS. COLWELL: We didn't. We went down, were allowed to go down and get all of our things and the stewards helped us gather everything and bring it up and dump it in the corner of the lounge. But the only thing we lost were our guidebooks. We lost all of our guidebooks. But we came back to New York and the ship was damaged so severely we came back to New York and were put up by the steamship company at a new hotel which was right on the waterfront at the end of 42nd Street - very nice, and an elite bar lounge on the top floor.

And we were put up there while everyone made new arrangements. And some people decided that they would go home and had enough. And other people chose to fly, but we chose to go on another ship which was leaving

in a few days, but that was a cruise ship, the Atlantic, a beautiful white cruise ship where of course – completely different environment, people with extra cabins just to hold their wardrobes and things like that.

But a number of people from the –

MS. LARSEN: Ill-fated –

MS. COLWELL: Ill-fated ship, whose name is on my tongue [The Excalibur] – anyhow, they did go with us to the Atlantic. So we had a group that we had all really become quite close to each other in a way we – in that 24 hours in a way we never would have probably on the whole cruise otherwise, and we would meet them all over Greece and Italy. We would run into people from the ship like old friends.

MS. LARSEN: Well, you have been through things together. So as time went by in the '60s, did life change here very much in Maine?

MS. COLWELL: Of course we had come over to this house from our little house at the Sands after my grandparents died one by one, slowly over those years. And my grandfather was the last to die. He died and it was in – at about 54 because we – I think we came to this house in 55.

MS. LARSEN: That is the same year that *Young* is published.

MS. COLWELL: Yeah. After he died, I was anxious to come back here to live because the house was so much more comfortable and we had a furnace put in for my grandfather and we had plumbing put in too. And it is a very comfortable house.

MS. LARSEN: And it is also close to things – I mean, it was close to your work, that is another thing that might have been a factor.

MS. COLWELL: Well, because I'm attached to the house too very deeply. [Laughs.] And Chennie loved this house but she also loved the little house at the Sands and she hated to leave it but finally decided that we should. So we moved over here. She, for probably a year or two, after we moved over here, she couldn't give up the house at the Sands. She kept paying the rent – [laughs] – and keeping it, and we had –

MS. LARSEN: Did she have more studio space over there?

MS. COLWELL: No, she had much less. That was the other thing. Here she had work areas.

MS. LARSEN: Nice big barn.

MS. COLWELL: Right. So she kept the house and various relatives who came to visit and friends, we would put over there. But she finally brought herself to the point of giving it up and she was very happy here. She loved this house, but she was deeply attached to that one.

She was really becoming very well known as a painter and sculptor, having many exhibits. And in the mid – let's see – in the middle-'60s probably, maybe after we had been to Europe, she was asked to come down to the campus of the University of Maine at Machias to lecture. And she went down and gave them a lecture about – I have forgotten whether – if she might have told about the European trip. She took many, many slides. Another of her talents – she took up photography and she took wonderful photographs all over Europe – not all over Europe, all over Greece and Italy.

She may have, in corroborating those – I don't remember. I know she talked about painting and art. And very soon after that talk, she was approached by the University of Maine at Machias to ask if she wouldn't come down and teach. And they said you can make your own curriculum, name your own times, adjust it completely free hand if she would come down. And it just seemed to be a wonderful offer and she agreed to do it part-time.

But after she had been there a short time, it seemed she was spending full time, so did just have a fulltime curriculum. She taught art history and she taught sculpture I think and – but she put it all in – [END TAPE 2, SIDE B] – spend Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday there and come home Wednesday night. And she really enjoyed the teaching.

MS. LARSEN: How many years did she do that?

MS. COLWELL: She taught for 10 years.

MS. LARSEN: Wow.

MS. COLWELL: She had no intention or idea of teaching, but she was just offered this remarkable job and – I

mean, she could do what she wanted to do, and there were always some students that were so receptive that it made it worthwhile, that she was really giving them something. But she did become quite impatient with meetings and –

MS. LARSEN: Faculty meetings.

MS. COLWELL: Faculty meetings.

MS. LARSEN: Forms to fill out.

MS. COLWELL: I heard quite a lot about those. But she really – I think she thoroughly enjoyed teaching – most of the teaching. Of course she, interested in Marin – which resulted in the Marins giving a great many paintings to the university, and she also became the person for special events so that she recruited the Thomas Dance School for concerts and various –

MS. LARSEN: Musicians?

MS. COLWELL: Musicians to play, and she had a wonderful dancer come up from New York to give a concert on modern dance. She – this took a lot of time, but she enjoyed that too. And she continued working on her own, although working at the fulltime curriculum and dealing with that is pretty time-consuming.

MS. LARSEN: Yes, and it does take away from your creative – your own creative time.

MS. COLWELL: Right. And by this time Chennie –

MS. LARSEN: How old was she about this time?

MS. COLWELL: It seems to me she was 70 when she started teaching at Machias.

MS. LARSEN: Good. That's great. So she taught from 70 to 80?

MS. COLWELL: She taught from 70 – '68 to – I believe she retired in '78. I retired from the post office I think in '76 and –

MS. LARSEN: When was Chenoweth born? What was her birthday?

MS. COLWELL: 1908.

MS. LARSEN: Okay.

MS. COLWELL: So eight and '64 – no, '68, she was 60, so she taught until she was 70.

MS. LARSEN: That's longer than most people.

MS. COLWELL: Beginning – I mean, beginning to teach college level at 60.

MS. LARSEN: Very surprising. Yes, very surprising. When did she start to show signs of the Alzheimer's that eventually took her?

MS. COLWELL: I think she began the last two years – the next to the last year that we were spending when we were at Jekyll.

MS. LARSEN: That's in Georgia, right?

MS. COLWELL: In Georgia, Jekyll Island. After I retired, and then Chennie retired a couple of years later and it was in '78 that we started going to Jekyll Island and spent six months of the year there. We loved it – we both loved it.

MS. LARSEN: Did you know someone there? Did you know someone there? Was that the reason you –

MS. COLWELL: When we went there we knew no one there.

MS. LARSEN: Just picked it, huh?

MS. COLWELL: And the first winter that we spent there we just – we soon had as many good friends there as – because Chennie joined the art association and I began to play tennis and joined the tennis club. And so we had a wide range of friends, who mostly knew each other because Jekyll is not a large place. We soon had as full a life with friends and social activities in Jekyll, from that first winter, as we had at home.

Now, let's see; what were we -

MS. LARSEN: I was asking when she first showed signs of -

MS. COLWELL: Oh, yes. Well, we went to Jekyll for the next 10 years, and I think it was - it was the next to the last - it was - it was about 1988, I think, that I began to notice things that were not really like Chennie. I began to notice that her reactions to things were beginning to change, or that she didn't quite - imperceptible changes, but I did begin to notice them in about '88 or '89, our next-to-last winter down there there definitely began to be changes and I began to worry a great deal about her driving, because she was getting very forgetful as far as being in the village, say, and exactly how to get home again.

MS. LARSEN: That's scary.

MS. COLWELL: And it became very scary and it became a very ticklish issue, which it often is.

MS. LARSEN: You wanted to say something because it's not safe and then the reaction that you would get from her might be indignant or -

MS. COLWELL: Well, giving up your car and your ability to drive when and where you want to go, it's just giving up your independence, and I think it's one of the most difficult things with people who do begin to set into forgetfulness. And of course - and I remember that next-to-last year there were a couple of times when people spoke to me about having seen Chennie driving, and it was beginning to be a problem to herself and to other people on the road. And perhaps after we got home that summer, it may have been that I persuaded her that she should not drive.

MS. LARSEN: Did you have a diagnosis at that point?

MS. COLWELL: No.

MS. LARSEN: You didn't.

MS. COLWELL: No, and we went back for another winter when she obviously was not herself. And in fact, a good friend of ours, Maggie Beals, came down and spent a month with us. I asked her to come down because I was beginning to have - I hated to leave her to go off and do my own things. And I was beginning to worry about leaving her because if she decided to go somewhere she might just not be able to remember - the memory thing was beginning.

MS. LARSEN: Or leave something on the stove or who knows what.

MS. COLWELL: Right. And it was when we were driving home from Jekyll that year - that would have been 1989 - '90 - that it became very difficult. She would be fine for a morning of driving, say, but if it went on for too many hours I think she would just get very tired and she'd get very confused about, where are we going and why are we continuing to do this, and where are you taking me? And we had a very bad episode of her wanting to get out of the car in the middle of Lynchburg, I think it was, and it was a bad trip. And I had to - I wired Maggie to come and meet us, and she met us in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, I think, the next day. She flew up because I was afraid to drive any further without someone else. And of course when we got home we did go for an assessment.

MS. LARSEN: And they knew. Did they know?

MS. COLWELL: They did. I did put her in the Alzheimer care center because I thought that that was the best place and they would be able to know how to deal with this. You know, I would do it completely differently if I could do it again, but you don't know how to deal with it when you're confronted with it.

MS. LARSEN: No, you don't.

MS. COLWELL: However, she would have been as unhappy at home - I can only comfort myself with that thought - because it was a time where she was aware that something was going wrong and she was very unhappy about that. She was only - she was fine if I was there and we were going for a ride, but -

MS. LARSEN: You told me that the times you had her at home she was unhappy here as well.

MS. COLWELL: Yes.

MS. LARSEN: So you had - you knew that.

MS. COLWELL: That's right.

MS. LARSEN: Also you had no peace and no ability to take care of her 24 hours.

MS. COLWELL: Well, I had to have people here so that – I couldn't be on duty 24 hours, no. When I brought her home I had someone here all the time, 24 hours, three shifts.

MS. LARSEN: That is tiring and expensive.

MS. COLWELL: Well, yes, it was expensive – no more expensive than that nursing home, though. Also, the problem was getting people that you thought were adequate.

MS. LARSEN: Sure, because it has many dimensions to it, I'm sure.

So she passed away when?

MS. COLWELL: In '99. She suffered from this failing health for about 10 years.

MS. LARSEN: That's a long time. And how has your life changed now in the last six years or so? What have you been doing with your time?

MS. COLWELL: Well, a lot of that time was taken up with thinking about her legacy of her art and thinking that I had to do something. It suddenly was borne in on me: she had left a great deal of artwork and some provision should be made for it, but I felt absolutely ignorant of how – what to do or how to go about doing it. I finally decided the first thing was to inventory the paintings and sculpture, so I had that done, and then it seemed to me that the best thing would be to place a few of her things, paintings and sculpture, in all of the institutions.

MS. LARSEN: In the state or beyond that?

MS. COLWELL: I was thinking about state, yes. And so I began communicating with the colleges and museums like the Farnsworth [Farnsworth Museum, Rockland, Maine], and gradually, after meeting some of these people, who were very helpful, like Genetta McLean gave me a real help and a real surge of confidence that I could deal with this. And from that time on I found – on the advice of someone at the Farnsworth I found a gallery to show her things again. She had had so many exhibits, but this had been some years before, and of course for the 10 years that she had been incapacitated, there hadn't been any activity – any – and so it's probably 10 years before that, when we were spending six months of the winter in Georgia, she had done a few – in those early years down there she had done a few mica paintings in Georgia. And at home she had mostly been carving. She really stopped painting and concentrated on carving and had gone from wood to stone. Her last carving was all on stone.

And all this was – I really had nothing to do with her work. That was her work and it was –

MS. LARSEN: You had never been an agent –

MS. COLWELL: Oh, no.

MS. LARSEN: – or you had never done anything with the galleries.

MS. COLWELL: I never had anything to do with it at all – simply went along to the exhibits, but I had nothing to do with arrangements with anyone. But gradually I began to get responses and had the work in a commercial gallery with the idea that sales would be set up in my estate so that there would be fellowships in Chennie's name at the University of Maine – which I knew she would like.

MS. LARSEN: Yes, that sounds like a wonderful thing.

MS. COLWELL: And that's what – I've now given most of her – I think there were over 100 watercolors, which were unmatted, just in drawers in her workshop there, that I gave to the University of Maine and also gave them a couple of thousand a year to go toward having these things matted and framed.

MS. LARSEN: That's very thoughtful. So many donors don't think of that. Really, they just hand it –

MS. COLWELL: Well, this was on Amos' advice.

MS. LARSEN: Very smart.

MS. COLWELL: He said, you should accompany this with –

MS. LARSEN: Very smart.

MS. COLWELL: Now, except for the sculpture and the painting that is here in the house, which will stay here with

me. It's taken care of, and this will go in my will to the university.

MS. LARSEN: Okay, great. Well, I've enjoyed hearing your fascinating life story, and it's shown me that you can live a rich and varied and exciting life in a little, beautiful town in Maine.

MS. COLWELL: Right, with lots of excursions outside but firmly grounded right here. Thank you so much, Susan.

MS. LARSEN: Thank you, too, Miriam.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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