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Oral history interview with Barbara G.
Fleischman, 2011 Dec. 27-2012 Jan. 23

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Barbara Fleischman on 2011 December 27-2012 January 23. The interview took place in New York, NY, and was conducted by Avis Berman for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Barbara Fleischman and Avis Berman have reviewed the transcript and have made corrections and emendations. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

AVIS BERMAN: This is Avis Berman interviewing Barbara G. Fleischman for the Archives of American Art Oral History Program on December 27, 2011, in her home in New York City.

I start this way with everyone. Would you please state your full name and date of birth?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Barbara G. Fleischman, March 20, 1924.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay, and the G is for—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Greenberg. That was my maiden name.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, did you have a middle name?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Ann.

AVIS BERMAN: Without an E?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I was Barbara Ann Greenberg, without an E.

AVIS BERMAN: Now, what were your parents' names and dates of birth?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: My parents—Theresa Keil, T-H-E-R-E-S-A, Keil, K-E-I-L, whose family came from Austria. And funnily enough, as a little Jewish baby, she was named after Maria Theresa. My father was Samuel J. Greenberg. J didn't stand for anything. Samuel J. Greenberg, and he was born in Petoskey, Michigan. My mother was born in New York City. His family came over from Russia.

AVIS BERMAN: So both of your parents were born in this country?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Were born in the United States, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Which is unusual.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Which is very unusual for that generation.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, they were sort of—for Jews, they were Yankees. [Laughs.]

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: They were Yankees.

AVIS BERMAN: So your grandparents had come from Austria and Russia?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right.

AVIS BERMAN: And how did your parents end up in Detroit [MI]?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, that's a very interesting thing. My grandfather, when he emigrated, in some crazy way he found himself with his seven children in Traverse City, Michigan. How he found himself there I will never know.

He had a little store, a general store, and then, unaccountably—and I never knew why—he moved to Petoskey, Michigan, which is a lovely, lovely town—at my last notice, the house is still there, but the white picket fence is gone—and with his seven children, and that's where—with his children—and that's where my father was born. He had this little store. And in the panic of—I don't know if it was 1909 or '11—there was a panic.

AVIS BERMAN: I think that was 1907.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, then, that's 1907.

AVIS BERMAN: When [J. P.] Morgan saved the banks.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right. There was a panic, and the man who had the store next to him set his store afire to get insurance, and it burned my grandfather's store down with all the contents. So he was at the age of 52 with seven children, ranging in ages from being very young to teenagers.

He was in a dilemma. He took his family, and he moved down to Detroit, Michigan, and went into the insurance business. Because he hadn't had insurance on his—so he realized that insurance was very important. So it was the Greenberg Insurance Agency, which lasted for many, many decades.

AVIS BERMAN: And he could just start one with no experience?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Apparently in those days, in the early part of the century, all you had to do was say, "I want to be an insurance agent," and the insurance companies would come and bring you the policies, I suppose, and that was it. And then my father succeeded him, and my father ran the agency until my father died.

AVIS BERMAN: And did your father have education?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, but not college. Neither of my parents went to college. In my mother's family they didn't think that the girls had to go to college, and in my father's family there wasn't enough money.

AVIS BERMAN: And how did your mother meet your father, if she was in New York City?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I think they met through mutual friends in Detroit.

AVIS BERMAN: Did she grow up in Michigan, too, then?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. They moved when she was two years old, from New York to Detroit, and the family settled there. Her father was in, I think, the coffee business. I think he was in the wholesale coffee business. He and her mother, my other grandparents, died when I was just a very little baby, a little girl.

AVIS BERMAN: And did you have siblings?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, I have a brother who's six years younger than I am and who lives in Michigan and in Florida.

AVIS BERMAN: And what is his name?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Hugh.

AVIS BERMAN: Hugh. So there were just—there were two of you?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: There are just the two of us.

AVIS BERMAN: On your mother's side, moving from New York City to Detroit, was Detroit a real magnet then?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Apparently so. It was the beginning of a very lively, adventurous, viable city, which I hope and pray it will return to, and I think everybody thought it had a future.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, of course, in those days cars were coming out of—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's—exactly.

AVIS BERMAN: I mean, all—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And everything—and, of course, with my grandfather, he began selling car insurance as well as life insurance and other things as he branched out.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, of course. That would have been a whole new kind of insurance.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Exactly, exactly.

AVIS BERMAN: And I don't know when cars began needing insurance, because—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Really, I don't know that. I don't know when it was decided that there were liabilities, and there were problems.

AVIS BERMAN: Maybe about the time that people started to have to get licenses, because at first cars didn't—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, you just got into the car and drove away. [Laughs.]

AVIS BERMAN: It was an appliance, in terms of—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Exactly, exactly.

AVIS BERMAN: As a matter of fact, my own grandfather never got a license, because he had owned cars for so long. He was stopped once, and he was 80, and they asked to see his license—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: [Laughs.] He didn't know what to—

AVIS BERMAN: He said, "I've been driving since 1915, and I've never had a license. I never got one."

Was there a large Jewish community in Detroit?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, yes, a very growing and large community.

AVIS BERMAN: And were your parents religious?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, they were not. My parents belonged to a Reform temple and observed the High Holy Days, but my grandfather was an old socialist. He was wonderful. He operated with the "Do unto others as you would wish them to do unto you," and he always said that he wishes that people would stop going on Yom Kippur and praying and praying and praying, and then the next day going out and doing bad things in business and so forth. He was really a wonderful little man.

He wrote letters to Father [Charles] Coughlin, bawling him out, and Gerald L. K. Smith, because we were right in the center of that. You know, Father Coughlin was right in the outskirts of Detroit. And of course, Henry Ford was a vicious anti-Semite.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: So that there was that. But we weren't really affected by it except politically. And of course, we were living through the time of the birth of the unions, so Detroit was a very exciting city.

AVIS BERMAN: Exactly.

Now, in your house, what kind of cultural influences were there?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, my parents were very liberal, were very, very concerned and interested about what was going on in the world, were very active in different political things. For example, I remember, as a young girl, being in the kitchen and watching my mother and others making big, big vats of spaghetti because they were having some sort of a fundraising for the Spanish war, you know.

AVIS BERMAN: Civil war?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: The Spanish war before World War II, against [Generalissimo Francisco] Franco. My parents' friends all were very liberal and very involved, and joined different organizations, and so I grew up in that atmosphere.

AVIS BERMAN: I'm just going to skip ahead briefly, but then I want to go back to your early background. I thought it was fascinating that you and [Lawrence A.] Larry Fleischman met at a fundraising event. And I was going to say, were you brought up, before you met him, with any kind of sense of philanthropy and of giving?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, yes. It was mostly unconscious, really. I was aware that my parents gave donations to different things and supported different things. But it was all just part of the atmosphere, and I didn't really pay much attention. They didn't sit down with me and say, "Barbara, you should always give back to the community"—that kind of thing. But it was an atmosphere that I was aware of, that one does help those less fortunate.

AVIS BERMAN: There wasn't, in other words—or besides giving back, was there a sense of a percentage of your income either goes to a synagogue or goes to—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, that I never—

AVIS BERMAN: Well, that is more like tithing.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, that was not a factor. I never heard that.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, right. And what kind of a student were you?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I was a good student—you know, As and Bs—and I was conscientious and hardworking. It was expected of me, and I enjoyed school.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. And you knew, or it was expected, that you would go to college?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: It was hoped, yes. It was hoped. It was always, sort of, not taken for granted, but I felt that that was a probability.

AVIS BERMAN: Had either of your parents missed not being able to go to college?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, they felt very conscious, because their friends were all college graduates. They held their own with them intellectually, because my parents were very bright people, but they always felt the lack of going to a college or university. But it wasn't in the cards for either of them.

AVIS BERMAN: And what subjects interested you most then?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: English. I didn't like math particularly, but I liked English and the social sciences. And I was not a science person, but I was more in the realm of English and music and art and so forth and so on.

AVIS BERMAN: Was art a factor or something that you knew about or were introduced to at all?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, no. What I was exposed to by my parents was music. We had a great Detroit Symphony, and we do now still. It was really outstanding. From the time I was a little girl, I was taken to concerts, and the concerts were a part of my life.

And my aunt was nine years older than I. Her parents, my grandparents, both died, leaving her a little girl, and when I was about three years old—about two or three years old—each of them had died, and she was left, about nine years old. And my parents took her in and raised her for the rest of her life, until she was married, in her forties. We were not quite sisters, because there was a gap, but we shared a room until the time I went to college.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. So this was your mother's youngest sister?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: My mother's youngest, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, exactly. And her name was?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Her name was Helen.

AVIS BERMAN: Helen.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And she played the piano. We had a piano, and the house was filled with music. We always had a Victrola, and we were buying records from the time I was a little girl. So I was imbued with the whole thing that music was part of life. And it was classical. My aunt played—she had friends, and they would sit down, and they would play duets. They would play [Johann Sebastian] Bach and [Wolfgang Amadeus] Mozart and so forth.

AVIS BERMAN: Serious music.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. So this was a part of my life. As a matter of fact, I was just telling a friend the other night—my paternal grandparents had a cottage on one of the lakes, and it seemed far away at the time. It really wasn't very far. But we were coming back one day in, I think, 1939 or '38, something like that.

At that time there were extras—you know, newsboys would stand on the corner—and there was an extra, and the banner headline was "George Gershwin Died." That was so indelible in my mind. I was thinking about it the other night because I went to see *Porgy and Bess* again. I hadn't seen it in some years, and it just resonated for me that we were so sad because Gershwin—we played Gershwin in the house, among other things.

AVIS BERMAN: I think that would have been about 1938 [1937].

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Mm-hm. [Affirmative.] Yeah, maybe '38. He was 37, I think, and I think it was '38. Anyway, so that was—music was more a part—

And there was also something called the Bonstelle Playhouse in Detroit, B-O-N-S-T-E-L-L-E. It was named after, I think, a person—maybe her name was Jessica Bonstelle—I don't know what her first name was—but a woman who apparently funded a small theater. They did children's programs, and I was taken there to—you know, they would have *Rumpelstiltskin* or some of these things.

So those things were—and books were part of the life. My parents were big readers. There were always lots of books in the house and lots of encouragement, and I loved to read. I loved to read from the time I was a little girl.

As a matter of fact, what I'm doing now is I'm rereading. For example, I was reading *David Copperfield* when I was 10 years old, and I didn't really get the grasp of what Dickens was really about, except the interesting story. And now, in later years, I go back to some of the things that I read too early in life.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, you enjoyed them then, so it wasn't too early.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, yes. No, on that level, and now I'm able to enjoy them on a much more profound level.

AVIS BERMAN: Exactly. I think Dickens is a great psychological novelist, which you don't see—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, there's no question about it. And there are so many layers to what he wrote.

AVIS BERMAN: And then, you know, when you're younger you can't believe any of these coincidences, but once you've gotten older, you realize that they exist.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Exactly. [Laughs.]

AVIS BERMAN: This happens and—everyone is always running together, and you think, because you haven't had any experience, this can't happen. But of course, it does, all the time.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: It does, right.

AVIS BERMAN: Let's see, so you went to the University of Michigan [Ann Arbor]?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Michigan, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: And what did you major in?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I majored in theater arts, and I minored in elementary school teaching, because my parents said you have to have something to fall back on.

AVIS BERMAN: Does this mean you wanted to be an actress?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I wanted to be an actor or a director, yes. I loved the theater from the very beginning.

AVIS BERMAN: And so were you in drama in school?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. There was something called "Play Production," and I acted in various plays and was very active and enjoyed it thoroughly. And I think that I had some talent.

I went to the theater a lot. At that time, the theaters in Detroit were owned by the Nederlanders [David T. Nederlander], and we knew them because my—later, as I was married and everything, my husband's family was in the floor-covering business, and they sold them carpets for all the theaters. But that was just an aside. They had several theaters, and always we went. I went to the theater as a young girl, and then when Larry and I were married, we went to the theater a lot there.

AVIS BERMAN: In college, were you trying to act or direct?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, I was in college productions of various things. I still have photographs of me in varying roles.

AVIS BERMAN: But you were able—you got the roles?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, we would try out. I was in a John Van Druten play, and I was in a Maxwell Anderson play, and I was in various—I remember in the Maxwell Anderson play, which wasn't one of his very good plays, in the first act I was a Roman centurion, and in the second act I was a soothsayer. But I played women too. Because what happened was when I went to college, I was in the class of '45. I arrived in '41. And then there was Pearl Harbor, and then all of a sudden—

AVIS BERMAN: The men were gone.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Men were gone, except for the 4-Fs [unable to serve]. And so we doubled in male parts as the time went on. Then I accelerated my education by going through the summers and everything, so that I graduated in '44 instead of '45.

AVIS BERMAN: And could you sing too?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, no.

AVIS BERMAN: And for the rest of your life, did your theater background—do you feel that that helped you in any way?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, it's been indelible. It's been indelible. A lot of my activities now are based—I'm on the board of Julliard [School, New York City], and in the last year and a half I've organized something called the Drama Council, to support the drama division, and I've been active in varying drama things here in the city. I was one of the co-founders of the Hilberry Shakespeare Theater at Wayne State University [Detroit, MI], which is still going strong.

AVIS BERMAN: And also, I imagine, just in terms of things like public speaking, it's probably—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. Yes.

AVIS BERMAN: You probably have more—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: It gave me great confidence to speak. The fact that I didn't end up in the theater—and that was partly due to Larry—but the fact is that it gave me a heightened sense of understanding of theater and a heightened sense of how to critique, you know, how to evaluate performances and so forth. So it's really enriched my life in every way.

AVIS BERMAN: And also, on a simple level, probably how to memorize, if necessary.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, yeah. But I don't think about that, but nonetheless, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: And you graduated in—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Nineteen forty-four.

AVIS BERMAN: Did you want to head to New York?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. Yes. What happened was my parents wanted me to be a teacher. So I applied, and I got a teaching position, as a neophyte, at a school on the west side—an elementary school on the west side of Detroit in an under-advantaged neighborhood. I liked it very much, but I was saddled with a very terrible principal. She was angry with me from the beginning, because she did not favor University of Michigan graduates. She didn't think they got the education for elementary school training that Wayne State did.

So she was prejudiced against me from the very beginning. And she did something that was really unconscionable. Usually, when you're a neophyte teacher like that, they wait about six months or so before they send anybody in to evaluate you and to observe you. After I was there about a month, she started sending people in, which was very—and I was 20 years old. I was not even 21. She was a woman, an elderly woman, and she had white hair, I remember. And she was a devout Catholic. She went to mass every morning, and then she came to school and was really dreadful. [They laugh.] So I don't think morning mass did any good for her. But it gave me such a sour experience. I loved the children, and I loved working with them. But I just made up my mind that this was not for me—not in that place, at any rate.

So I decided that I would try to expand my horizons. And I found that Columbia University [New York City] was offering some interesting courses for the summer. One was in acting, and it was being taught by somebody who you're probably too young to remember, Mady Christians [Marguerita Maria Christians]. Now, Mady Christians was a Viennese actress who came over here, and she appeared in things like *Watch on the Rhine* [1944]. She created the role of Mama in *I Remember Mama* [1944]. And her son, Nels—we went backstage—and she invited me and the young man that was my pal in the acting class—and she invited us backstage and introduced us to her son—in the play—and his name was Marlon Brando. And that's how we met Marlon Brando.

AVIS BERMAN: So was he in *I Remember Mama* or *Watch on the Rhine*?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. *I Remember Mama*.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, wow.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: He played Nels, her son.

AVIS BERMAN: I never knew that.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That was his first—one of his first roles.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, because we're talking about '45.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's—exactly, 1945. Exactly.

AVIS BERMAN: Pre-Tennessee Williams.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: So I took that course, and I took a course in—which is laughable now—in radio writing, because I thought that I had the ability to write some radio scripts, and I was trying. And in the meantime—oh, what happened was this. I was blithely ignorant and naïve, so I signed up for the acting class. And I get to Columbia. I come here. I know nobody. And ironically, I stayed across the street at the Beekman Hotel, which is really ironic because—

AVIS BERMAN: "And my beginning is my end." [Laughs.]

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: —talk about—what happened was—I had a place up at Columbia University, up on 116th Street. I knew no one in New York. I was 20 years old. And I was determined I was going to try for this. And my parents, even though they were not well-to-do people—they were middle-class people—I will never forget that despite anything else in my life, they gave me the chance, because I never wanted to feel, well, if I hadn't tried, maybe I could have been the Helen Hayes, you know, blah-blah-blah.

AVIS BERMAN: "Could've been a contender."

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I could have been a contender. So I come and I'm in this little rooming house up on 116th Street. And I awaken during the night—[laughs]—there are bed bugs—

AVIS BERMAN: [Exclaims and laughs.]

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: —marching up and down my arms. I tell you, I have never experienced anything like that before. So I immediately got out of bed, and I washed myself, and I packed. I said I couldn't stay there any longer. And then I ended up across the street here in a very modest hotel.

So anyway, so I go to register, and they say, there's a place for 20 people in the class, and 240 people have signed up. So we were going to have to have auditions. And I was just sunk. But I got in. And they did auditions for all of us. In the class was a girl who was dancing in *Carousel* [1945], who was a professional. There was a person who was playing with Edmund Gwenn and Montgomery Clift in something called *You Touched Me* [1945], who was already acting. There were people who were really professionals. And there I was. And it was a fascinating, fascinating time.

Mady Christians worried. She said she thought I was too short. [Laughs.] She was a very tall lady. Sadly, she died young, of a heart attack. She was listed in *Red Channels* as a possible communist, which I'm sure she was not. She was a liberal lady. But it was a fascinating course.

And in the meantime, I got a job as a stock girl at Bonwit Teller's in the belt and—[laughs]—handbag department. And then they let me be a salesperson. I remember the three Andrews Sisters came in and all bought the same belt. I had a lot of interesting experiences at Bonwit's. But I felt that I had to earn some money in order to augment this—[inaudible].

Then I ended up at something—to stay, to live in—something called Ferguson Residence, 35 East 68th Street. It's still there. It was a Vanderbilt mansion, and then through the years, it turned into a residence for women. I think it was something like \$50 a week, and you got board and breakfast and dinner. And there I was. I remember being there on VE Day, VJ Day. There were a lot of interesting girls doing all kinds of interesting things there. And that's where I stayed during that whole period.

Then my father had a bookkeeper and person who was his right arm, and she left. And they talked to me about the fact that they really needed me back home. Another factor was, there was a young man with whom I had been corresponding during the war. He was a bombardier; he was a lieutenant and so forth, and I'd been corresponding. He was the younger brother of a good friend of my aunt's. And he came back, and he was very—he came to New York, and he was very serious. He said, please won't you come to Detroit, and let's see if something comes of this relationship? And so I did.

So I realized at that point that I was not making headway getting into the acting profession. It was a difficult time for the theater at that time, in any case.

AVIS BERMAN: So after the classes, were you auditioning to try to get—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, I went around. I did some rounds. And I made some contacts with somebody through Celeste Holm's husband at that time—was going to introduce me to Rodgers and Hammerstein—this and that. I mean, so there were attempts to do this—these kinds of things. But I was a good daughter, so—

AVIS BERMAN: Well, I think if you probably had that drive, you would have said no.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. What I realized, which was very important to me, was—and being with all these other people who were passionate about the theater—I was too interested in too many other things. And those people were absolutely like tunnel vision. It was all about their face, their body, their beauty, their handsomeness, their abilities—and everything else was blotted out.

That's why, with the exception of these actors that we met and became friendly with, like Vincent Price and Jack Lemmon, most of them were, at that time, were very boring people, because they were only about themselves. And I realized that I didn't have that singular drive, that that's all that I wanted to do in the world.

AVIS BERMAN: Also, for actors, what's so scary is, their body is their product.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Exactly. So that was—

AVIS BERMAN: They have to be obsessed with that.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: So there were three different factors that made me go back to Detroit.

AVIS BERMAN: Did you consider, or were you asked to change your name?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, no, no. It didn't even come to that. It didn't even come to that.

AVIS BERMAN: So you had no agent or anything.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. I was just a fledgling, just out of college. I was just a fledgling. But it was a wonderful experience, and I wouldn't have traded it for the world.

AVIS BERMAN: So when did you go back to Detroit?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I went back after '45.

AVIS BERMAN: So it would have been in '46?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Forty-six. I began to work at the Greenberg Insurance Agency, and I found after two dates that this man was—the young man was not for me at all. Then I wanted to help in the community. The Jewish Welfare Federation was working very hard at that time to get the balance of Jews out of Europe. They had something called the Junior Service Group for young people—sort of a leadership training thing. We were raising money and so forth. And I wanted to be of help, so I went to the meeting, and there was Larry Fleischman.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, I guess I should ask you, did you have relatives in Europe that you—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No.

AVIS BERMAN: —tried to get out?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. No. We had nobody, nobody. On either side of the family.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, and how aware were your family of what was happening?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, very. Very much. It was a very serious and a very troubling and very frightening time.

I remember as a youngster, every Sunday my father and mother would drive us, and we would go and visit his parents and spend time with them. My father was a very devoted son. And I remember one Sunday his pulling up in the neighborhood just on a side street, and turning on the car radio to listen to Hitler. Hitler was ranting, and they picked up the shortwave or whatever it was. So there was enormous awareness in our family, though we had no personal connections. There was enormous awareness of what a dangerous time we were in and what was happening to Jews.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, also, they were politically aware. If they were raising money for the Spanish Civil War—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. Absolutely.

AVIS BERMAN: —they were following—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah, absolutely. It was in our lives.

AVIS BERMAN: And did your family feel severely the effects of the Depression, or what happened?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. Oh, yes. That was very funny, because—there were several things that were funny. My father was a very generous man; he was a very nice man. But he couldn't stand it if my mother went to Saks Fifth Avenue, unless there was a sale and she bought two pairs of shoes at the same time. That was a hangover from the Depression. And during the Depression, my father supported his mother and father—because my grandfather at that point was too old to be involved in selling insurance and being active. My father supported that family all through the Depression.

AVIS BERMAN: As you may recall, there was no Social Security till about 1935.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Nothing. Nothing. Nothing. I remember several things. I remember that they piled me and my brother into the car, and we drove here—east to the New England states, because it was so cheap. But I remember we were—in those days, you didn't make reservations anyplace. And we stopped in Vermont at an inn. My father went in to register us, and he came out and his face was ashen. He said there was a sign there that said, "No Jews or dogs allowed." So we were very politically aware, very politically aware.

And I should tell you that, during the time—it was my junior year, I think it was—my brother became very ill. My parents, unaccountably, never told me. He had hypothyroidism, and ultimately he was operated [on], and he was cured. But they sent my uncle to pick me up at the end of the term. And they didn't tell me, which was really very shocking.

And what happened was that he ultimately was—they took him to University of Michigan hospital, where he was operated upon, and successfully. And my mother was up there with him. And so it fell to me to take care of my father and do the cooking and run the house for those weeks that—so that—I forgot about that, but that was part of my growing up.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes. There was one other thing here, before we get to meeting Larry. You also were a psychoanalyst's secretary?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. Yes, I worked—

AVIS BERMAN: And was that before or after working for your parents?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: After.

AVIS BERMAN: After.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: My father then put together a team, and I got a job being the secretary to these two Freudian psychoanalysts. They were concerned because I was young. Because in those days, I would transcribe the notes. And they were volatile. You can imagine what people say. And they were concerned whether I was mature enough to be able to absorb these things in a stable way. But I was, apparently. And it was a fascinating thing, because I learned a lot about psychology, psychiatry, psychoanalysis, and the human mind, and id, and so forth and so on. I worked for them for about a year. Mm-hm. [Affirmative.] And it was a very, very interesting experience.

AVIS BERMAN: I would think they would have been concerned that you would laugh, because obviously—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That never was an issue that they brought up with me.

AVIS BERMAN: I don't know, that—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: See, I never saw the patients.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, okay.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I never saw—I was in this little cubicle, and they would come in, and the doctor would usher them in. So I never—maybe fleetingly saw somebody. But I knew their names. But that was never an issue they raised with me. The issue was whether I could handle the material.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, maybe that's also like reading the novels, is that probably you didn't know enough—in other words, now it might affect you—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, now, yes. Yes. But there was a lot of very, very hostile and very, very volatile material there that I was transcribing.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: During that period was when I met Larry.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, exactly. So, no, as a matter of fact I was amazed—I think you actually have the date in here as June 7—I mean, I was amazed that you had the exact date down there. Now, just before meeting him, had you ever been to the Detroit Institute of Arts, or were you interested in the museum at all?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, but peripherally.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: You know, my parents would take me there, and I would go there, but not in any pointed way, let me put it that way.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I was there; I went there to puppet shows; I went there to performances, but never much roaming the galleries, I have to say.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay. No, I just—that's fine.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, I look back on that—it had a wonderful theater group. Anyway.

AVIS BERMAN: Actually, with your interest in music and theater—you can't do everything at once, so—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. No, but that was it.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay. All right.

Now I'm going to ask—kind of filling in some of the information while we're on the tape—on your terrific book that you wrote, called *No Substitute for Quality: The Many Worlds of Lawrence A. Fleischman*. It was published in 1995. So much of the information is in there, but there are some things that I thought were interesting. That he was sent to military school—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes.

AVIS BERMAN: —you said it was to get a better education.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: They lived on the east side of Detroit, which was not a very wholesome—because there were a lot of Germans there, and this was wartime. The aftermath of the war—not the aftermath, but the *Bund* was active, et cetera, et cetera. He was a very smart young boy, and the quality of education was not very good in the schools on the east side of Detroit.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. And did he have relatives in Europe that you know of?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. What had happened was—it was very interesting. What had happened was, some of his family early on emigrated to Israel. So they were in Israel. His grandfather and then his father's brother and all the aunts and uncles, they were all in Israel. They became the Sabras.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Okay. And the other question was, he went to Purdue [University], and he was taking physics and engineering and—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]

AVIS BERMAN: —although it was clear that his parents wanted him to go into the family business as well, the carpet business—why was he taking all of these scientific courses?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Because he really wanted to be a physicist. But those were the days when you did what your parents wanted you to do.

AVIS BERMAN: Absolutely. It is, but they let him take these—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. They wouldn't let him go to MIT, which was his first choice. They wouldn't let him go to MIT. But they let him go to Purdue, and he even had a class—a big lecture—with [Enrico] Fermi, which was very exciting for him. That's what he wanted to do; he wanted to be a physicist. But it was not in the cards, for a variety of reasons.

AVIS BERMAN: Do you think he regretted that later on?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I think that he had so many different interests that I don't think that it was a big factor for him. I think he found life so fascinating on so many different levels and in so many different ways that he made his own life.

AVIS BERMAN: That's for sure, because he obviously—[inaudible]—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: But he never said to me, "Gee, I wish I had been a physicist." No. He never said that.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. But it was interesting that they didn't make him take business courses or anything in economics.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: There was no such thing as, like, business administration in that sense, the way it is now. I also don't think that they were sophisticated enough to know what to demand that he should do.

AVIS BERMAN: But they—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: They wanted him to get a college education.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, that's the interesting thing. They let him go to college, though. They understood—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, the value of that.

AVIS BERMAN: And at this point, before he went to France, did he have any interest in art that he knew of?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: He was a collector all his life. He collected stamps; he collected badges; he—everywhere he collected things. He loved collecting.

AVIS BERMAN: That was what I was actually going to ask you—because a lot of true collectors, they really start in childhood, even if there's almost nothing—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Absolutely. He did. It was obvious that he had that urge.

AVIS BERMAN: I guess I remember talking to André Emmerich [about] when he was a child, and they were very poor. He collected matchboxes.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, yes. Exactly.

AVIS BERMAN: And did you have any urge like that when you were younger?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, not at all. Not at all. Mm-mm. [Negative.]

AVIS BERMAN: You mention a couple of times, when he was in France, he saw art and ancient sites.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Can you be more specific about what he saw in France?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, for example, he was in Besançon. He was very young. He had memorized the eye chart, as I said, to get into the service. He was a passionate American. He believed so strongly in this country. And he felt he wanted to do his bit. And he found himself—after he had been slightly wounded, and then he was in Besançon, he was wandering around in the Roman sites, which fascinated him.

And—as I think I wrote in the book—a French doctor saw this 17-, 18-year-old kid, infantryman, walking around all by himself, examining the Roman remains and so forth and so on. And he fell into conversation with him; he knew English. He fell into conversation with him. And really, unaccountably and uncharacteristically, he took him home for dinner—because the French are not known—

AVIS BERMAN: No.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: —for that kind of hospitality. He was fascinated by Larry, I guess, this young kid who was really looking to learn about these things. He talked to him about it and explained some of the things in the

town and what had happened and when the Romans had been there and so forth. And this left an indelible mark on Larry.

AVIS BERMAN: And also I think the doctor had works of art, you said, in the house?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Do you happen to know what those were?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I have no idea. But it was an atmosphere that Larry enjoyed.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, because he did see someone living with art.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Living with art, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: And I don't know if that was what his household was like at all.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. No. My house was. My house was—modest. My parents would come to New York frequently. And they'd go down in the Village [Greenwich Village], and go down to some of the art shows and so forth, and buy something, and bring it back and so forth. So there were always paintings—not great paintings, but works—individual and original works of art. His family, not. No.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, that was interesting. So you had works of art around you when you were—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]

AVIS BERMAN: —when you were growing up.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, but I took them for granted. You know, oh, this was what mother and dad bought from Mary So-and-so down in the Village last time. And so I didn't take it very seriously at all.

AVIS BERMAN: No. Well, they did it for fun.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, and they did it to enrich their lives.

In later years, my father-in-law kept telling people that he took Larry frequently to the Detroit Institute of Arts to—and that's what started it. That was not true at all. Never, never.

AVIS BERMAN: So at some point, your father[-in-law] wanted to take credit—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: He wanted to be part of the deal.

AVIS BERMAN: He wanted to bask. [Laughs.]

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah, exactly.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, did Larry go to the museum as a child?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. No. That was not part—it was a very hardworking family that was concentrating on working, working, working.

AVIS BERMAN: Business.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: From the time he was a little boy, he was put to work, to do things in the warehouse and so forth and so on. It was not a cultural atmosphere in his home.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. And besides science, what was he reading? What was he interested in as a young boy?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I think everything. Of course, I didn't know him as a little boy.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Well, but sometimes you—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. But I do know that he read, and he was aware—and he did get a very good education at Western Military Academy [Alton, IL]. They opened many, many avenues to him.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, because one of thinks of military academy, of course, as being this place where you put semi-delinquents—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, but apparently—no. And he had other friends from Detroit there. Apparently he was

very taken with the colonel—Colonel Persing, I think his name was. Apparently he was a very cultivated man, besides being a military man. And I think he opened a lot of doors for Larry in terms of—that this isn't all about being in the army or being a soldier, because Larry was not interested in any of that.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Well, exactly. Were most people in that school going to be soldiers?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I don't think so. I think they were disciplinary problems, and people sent them there, and they'd heard—and it was bruited about that it was a very good education. And I think probably it was, because there were a lot of humanities, I think, in the teaching. Larry never regretted going there.

AVIS BERMAN: I guess I should say, he would have liked to have gone to MIT, but—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, that came later.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Right. Okay, well, so you met.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]

AVIS BERMAN: And then you got married, and you began having children. When you were—and I know that this was so adorable—that March 20, 1949, with the first work of art for your birthday. Now, had you two been going to galleries or doing anything like that before?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, nothing. Nothing. No. No.

AVIS BERMAN: Did that kind of come out of—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: We went out on dates. Larry was interested in art, and there was a—the J. L. Hudson Company downtown was one of the great—they and Macy's and what's-his-name in Chicago—what's the—

AVIS BERMAN: Marshall Field?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Marshall Field—were the three great, great department stores.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. And there was Dayton-Hudson in Minnesota.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: It later became Dayton-Hudson, but it was J. L. Hudson—the Hudson family—first, before the Dayton people came up.

AVIS BERMAN: Because Dayton-Hudson had a really good art gallery into the '60s and '70s.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, absolutely. Absolutely. And I met the Daytons, because—I think Bruce Dayton and I were honored at the same event at the Detroit Institute of Arts long after we moved here.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Well, when you say Larry was interested in art, were there any galleries? What was the art scene in Detroit at the time?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: It was burgeoning. It was beginning to burgeon. There was the Detroit Society of Arts and Crafts, which was a fine art school. There was something called the Detroit Artists Market, where Detroit artists—Michigan artists—could bring their things on consignment, and volunteer ladies, mostly from Grosse Pointe, ran it and sold these things. And then later on, I was on that board.

But Larry was much more aware of these things. I wasn't. I was interested in the theater. It was an interesting cultural marriage, because I was not schooled in the fine arts, and Larry was not schooled in the theater. But we merged. And he became so passionate about the theater, and I became passionate about art.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. And I realize when I ask you some of these questions, you've had three children in a fairly short period of time, so your hands were full—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right. That's right.

AVIS BERMAN: —for many years. But—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And I was a mother. I was a cook. I was a housekeeper. And I was a driver [Berman laughs] for carpools.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That was my role.

But before the children came, that's when he bought me—which is upstairs still—that Max Pollak.

AVIS BERMAN: I just wondered if there were any other commercial galleries.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: There was, at the beginning. There was something—Peggy deSalle, she had been the wife of an artist, Zoltan Sepeshy, who was at Cranbrook [Academy of Art]. Cranbrook had a fine reputation. And Cranbrook had been collecting works of art for its museum [Cranbrook Art Museum]. So that was there.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Did you begin having interactions with Cranbrook people?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. And then our children went to school out there.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Our children went to Brookside [Lower School] and then [Cranbrook] Kingswood [Middle School for Girls], which were the three—Kingswood was a girls school, Cranbrook [Kingswood Boys' Middle School] was a boys school, and Brookside was the elementary school. So I would drive probably sometimes 54 miles a day carpooling, taking the children back and forth out there. Because it was about 17 miles away. It was a long day.

AVIS BERMAN: And did you meet any of the important people who were out at Cranbrook?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, not then. But as we began to collect art, then we became very much involved in the art world in Detroit, which was very, very lively, and became livelier and livelier as we kept going.

AVIS BERMAN: When you said Larry was interested in art, obviously, he was reading; he was lively; he had these experiences in France; and then we have this print. So something must have been happening in between as well.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. Yes. The interesting thing was why he decided that that was something to give me for my birthday. He went down there—actually, [the] J. L. Hudson Company had opened this new gallery. There was a man who was running it. I think Larry had met him or something and then went down to see what was all about, decided he'd buy me something there.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes. Then the other thing—it seems to me that there was a huge visual experience of this carpet design contest.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, that was very interesting. When Larry came back—see, one of the things that was a such a joke—and I think I must have mentioned it in the book—was when we met, I said, "Well, what do you do?" And he said, "I'm with Arthur Flesichman Company." I said, "You're the ones who—we're waiting for carpeting for my bedroom," because my parents, in anticipation of my returning, had decided to redecorate some of the house. And they'd ordered from his father. And they'd gotten to know his father. But this was at the tail end of the war, and the mills hadn't revved up yet and so forth. And Larry had been deputized to go out to the mill and to check on our orders, as well as other orders. So that was the coincidence.

But he became aware that floor covering was very boring. There were four colors. It was beige, grey, rose, and green. And he said, "There's something wrong." And he had the idea for starting a competition. He went to the museum [Detroit Institute of Arts]. And that's how we got involved with the museum. He met Edgar Richardson. Ted Richardson liked Larry and decided that if Larry was going to do this competition, they would do an exhibit of the winners. That's how it happened. And he did it twice. First, he did it all through the United States, and then he did it worldwide. The second time, a nun won the first prize.

And that had a profound effect on the whole carpet industry. And I can say, really, very modestly for Larry, that he effectuated a change in design in carpets.

AVIS BERMAN: First of all, was the Fleischman Company—were they national at all or just local?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. No. There were three stores. There was the big store on the east side of Detroit, the original store. They lived above this store. And then they opened one on the west side. Then there was one in Pontiac, Michigan—a small store. So it was a successful business. And it was not only things, like, for people, like us, but a contract like the Nederlanders, for the theaters, and like General Motors or Ford—

AVIS BERMAN: Industrial work.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Industrial or commercial.

And they were very prosperous. Then that's when my father-in-law branched out into real estate and bought

different things. So he became very prosperous.

AVIS BERMAN: Because it's interesting that you say that, because, of course—maybe this was too Victorian, but you know, the Arts and Crafts, William Morris—they had all of this carpet design in the 19th century.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. But somehow or other—maybe it was during the war; I don't know—maybe it's because I didn't know, but I never saw that there was a lot of imagination shown—never saw. People went to him: "I want some grey carpet," or, "I need beige for my bedroom" or something like that. There were not a lot of choices. And it changed.

AVIS BERMAN: And did the Fleischman Company adopt a lot of these designs or just the winners?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, I think that they promoted it, and they invited some of the heads of Masland [Carpets & Rugs] and all the different carpet companies. And I think it had a profound effect on their design departments, because they saw what people might be interested in. So it was very—it was fascinating.

AVIS BERMAN: Yeah. It was. And did your father-in-law accept this contest?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, because it was to do with business. Anything to do with business that Larry was doing was okay with him—that would promote business. Larry sold him on the idea that this would be a wonderful public relations thing, just like they sponsored a local program on television at the very beginning, and they insisted that Larry go on television and say something about the Arthur Fleischman Company.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: So that he would—went on television.

AVIS BERMAN: I'm surprised you didn't do it.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. No. I was never in the picture. And then, of course, Larry went to Chicago, and he was on *The Dave Garroway Show* in Chicago. I think that was about the carpet design competition, because it was a piece of news.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Right—something visual that you could show as well.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. That's right.

AVIS BERMAN: At this point also your collection—let's say '49, I think, because '52 is your first trip to New York as collectors.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]

AVIS BERMAN: Are you mostly buying prints?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Prints. We were buying local artists. We were buying Michigan artists.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Well, let's—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And Michigan crafts, pottery, and different things like that, because the Detroit Institute of Arts had each year—in alternating years, they had the Michigan Artist Show, and then they'd have the Michigan Craftsman Show. And so we offered a prize in the crafts show.

And we entertained. At that time, we became involved with museums, so they asked us if we would entertain the judges. So we had [Charles] Eames out and we met Saarinen—Eero Saarinen. And we met Hollis Baker, who was the head of the Baker Furniture Company. And we met a lot—oh, and Jack Lenor Larson. In those early days, Jack Larson came out, was at our house for dinner. So we started to get involved with Edgar Richardson and the museum through all of this.

AVIS BERMAN: Really through the carpets.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: It was through the carpets. He sensed in Larry—they had a bond from the very beginning—a fledgling collector.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes. Are you considering yourselves collectors in the early '50s?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. No. We were just buying art. I think it began to seem presumptuous. You know, people saying, well, I'm a collector—that came later. That came later. We were just having a good time. We met the people at Cranbrook. We met the people of arts and crafts, the sculptors, and the printmakers, and

everything. We were enjoying their work. And we were going to New York. That's when Ted Richardson gave us the list of places to go, which I still have.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh. Well, that's interesting, because I know the only one you mentioned in the book is Edith Halpert. Who were the other galleries that you—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Kraushaar Gallery and Babcock [Gallery] and who else? There were about four or five.

AVIS BERMAN: Yeah.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: But we got into the clutches of Edith Halpert. She was a fascinating character. And we became fascinated with some of the people she represented.

AVIS BERMAN: Of course.

Now I just wanted to go back and ask you about your memories of some of these fascinating personalities, about Charles Eames, for example. Do you remember anything about him?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Mm-hm. [Affirmative.] Yes, I remember they were very interesting, lively people. And to have a houseful of them for dinner was a very stimulating thing.

It was very funny because we had a Baker dining room table, and something about it didn't work. And Hollis Baker got on his hands and knees under the table to sort of fix what was going on—[Berman laughs]. It was very—and Jack Larson was an interesting man. We became friendly with some of these people.

AVIS BERMAN: Now, tell me about Constance Richardson.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Constance was—

AVIS BERMAN: An underrated artist to this day.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: —an underrated artist. Constance was a very serious artist. She was a very witty woman. She and Ted were a close bond. They never had children. They were sufficient unto themselves. They traveled. They drove out to Wyoming in the summertime. And she painted, and he read and studied and so forth and so on. We have some Richardsons upstairs. Nothing here.

But at any rate, she was a very able painter. She had a very good feeling for landscape. We bought her things, and we encouraged other people to buy them.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Was she someone who was able to promote her work?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: She had no—nothing about promotion in her work. No.

AVIS BERMAN: Was it hard for her because her husband was a museum director?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I don't know if it was hard. For a while, I think Wildenstein [& Company, New York, NY] had some of her things, and sold some. And I think that was part of the deal, because of her husband.

AVIS BERMAN: Because I always thought that the work was really good.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: It's very good. After her death, Martha [Fleischman] was the executor of her estate, and Martha did a good job in getting the remaining paintings placed so forth and so on, because they were worthy—

AVIS BERMAN: Yes.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: —of being in good museums and so forth and so on. And they became very close friends of Larry's and mine. It was very interesting, because we were so different.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, how were they different?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, the first place, they were WASP intellectuals and older than we were, and very much more knowledgeable, of course, and educated in the world of art. She had gone to the Pennsylvania Academy [of the Fine Arts] for a while. And he, of course, was a brilliant intellectual. They were very liberal people. I think they kind of doted on—they didn't have children—they kind of doted on the fact that we were so interested in this new world. And they did everything to help educate us and mentor us.

But they were very, in a funny way, reclusive. He was not what is now required of a museum director. He was recessive. He was reticent. He was a passionate man and passionate about art. But they didn't entertain very

often. They had a nice house on Glenn Court, filled with fascinating things. As a matter of fact, they had a little birdcage which, when it went on auction, Martha—I had her buy it for me—that I have up in my bedroom.

They had all kinds of fascinating things, because they were fascinated by so much. They were fascinated by the Detroit River and would sit along the Detroit River, identifying the boats that were going by and so forth. They were fascinating people. And I think the fact that they didn't have children—I think that somehow we filled a role for them. And as we began to develop, I think they enjoyed that thoroughly. We became very good friends up until both of their deaths.

AVIS BERMAN: Would you think that they were responsible for maybe getting you to focus on American art or think about American art?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. No. Not at all. Larry had shown Ted that he was interested, first, in Michigan artists and then American art. He thought it was fascinating. And that's why he directed him to the galleries that he directed him to, because they were handling American art.

I remember going in and meeting Edith Halpert for the first time and coming out on the sidewalk on 51st Street there, near Random House where she had her gallery, and we had bought four paintings. I said, "How are we going to pay for all of this?" [They laugh.]

I remember we bought a [Ben] Shahn and a [Yasuo] Kuniyoshi and a [Raymond] Breinen], and I can't remember what the fourth one was.

AVIS BERMAN: I think it's Stuart Davis.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. Stuart Davis, who I love. I've always loved Stuart Davis. And then, of course, she began inviting us to her dinner parties where she had these artists. And we met them, and we became friendly with Ben Shahn and with Stuart Davis, et cetera, et cetera. And then we went over to—what's his name who handled [Edward] Hopper and [Charles] Burchfield—

AVIS BERMAN: Rehn. Rehn Gallery.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: —Frank Rehn Gallery. And that's when we started buying Burchfields and Hoppers. And then even at Wildenstein we bought a wonderful [John Singleton] Copley portrait that they just had no use for.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, they had no clients for it.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: They didn't. So we really became very passionate about—both of us.

AVIS BERMAN: But you were not attracted to [Pablo] Picasso or [Henri] Matisse?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. One of our first things was a Matisse print. Yes, yes. But I think we realized early on that we couldn't be all over the lot. That was all part of what was Larry's feeling about American art, that it was so underrated and so ignored, which was the reason why he had the feeling about the Archives [of American Art]—to start the Archives—what became the Archives.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Because he said, "Look at all these books that are written about Picasso. Picasso's an extraordinary artist; he loves Picasso. But eight or nine books about all of American art in that same period? Something's askew. There's wonderful stuff being done.

AVIS BERMAN: I'm sure you know that in the universities, art historians were never channeled toward American art.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, no. It was—

AVIS BERMAN: Milton Brown and Sherman Lee were the first ones to get any advanced degrees, and that was in the '40s.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right. And Ted Richardson was one of the pioneers, because the Detroit Institute of Arts, from early on, was collecting with the help of the Ferry family, the seed people [Ferry-Morse Seed Company]. [It began with] Dexter Ferry, and then later [W.] Hawkins Ferry went into contemporary art, which was fine.

But that's one of the reasons why the Detroit Institute of Arts has such a rich American collection. Ted really, really promoted that. He was the first one, and then he wrote his book. He believed strongly in it, and I think

Larry picked up from that. And being, as I say, a passionate American, he felt that that would be a nice thing for us to do, to find the good people and to enjoy them.

AVIS BERMAN: And when did you really get on the bandwagon?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I always kidded, because Larry was the engine, and I was the caboose.

But I became caught up in it because I became responsive to the works of art. Going around to the galleries was a fascinating experience, and I reacted, and I cared about certain things and didn't care about certain other things. I began to develop a taste and an eye.

Larry had a natural eye. There's nothing that can take the place of that. No matter how schooled you are—and I see a lot of these collectors, all of them. They have the money; they don't have the eye.

There are some people who have a great eye. I think, for example—what's his name, not Shaw—who was a great collector of Indian things and of drawings; he's a patron of both the Frick and the—

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, Eugene Thaw.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Eugene Thaw—I said Shaw. Thaw—Eugene Thaw.

I think Eugene Thaw, for example, obviously has a great eye. There are others who don't—I don't think that Roy Neuberger had a great eye. I think he had the passion to collect things; that's just my opinion.

But Larry had a great eye. He could fix on something that was really special. I learned a lot from watching him, and listening to Ted, and then developing my own taste. So I developed.

AVIS BERMAN: I'm going back to that early '50s time—what was Frank Rehn's gallery like compared to the Downtown Gallery?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, it was very stodgy. Edith had flair. She was a real character, and you couldn't believe half of what she would say, but that's neither here nor there. She was passionate about her artists. She was so supportive—and she was a pioneer.

Rehn Gallery—what was his name—

AVIS BERMAN: Frank.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Frank Rehn, yeah. Frank Rehn was an old-school guy, and he believed in these artists in a very quiet way. He had a very conservative, plain gallery. She was interested in textiles and contemporary furniture and all that kind of thing, and she would have these dinner parties that had great flair. She was stylish in that sense. Frank was not—he was not.

But he had some very good things. He had things, and nobody was paying attention to them. When we went in there, and we saw *Black Iron* [Burchfield, 1935], for example, it had been knocking around his gallery for decades. Nobody was interested. And we bought it, and from then on, boy, oh, boy.

At one time both Burchfield and Hopper were in the forefront when MoMA decided who were some of the most important—and then they just faded. We were able to buy Hoppers that were just beautiful, that nobody was paying attention to. And we felt an instantaneous response.

AVIS BERMAN: It's hard to believe no one was paying attention to Hopper, and also by then he was only painting one to two pictures a year, anyway.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right.

AVIS BERMAN: The early to mid-'50s, that art was out of—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: There was a lull. There was a lull because there was kind of a revolution; people were looking at other things and so forth.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Did you ever meet the Hoppers?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, I didn't. Larry went to see them. It was very funny—he had a wonderful experience. He went there, and Jo Hopper, the wife, met him at the door. She's a little something—she said, "Everybody wants to see Eddie's work. Wouldn't you like to see mine?" It was very funny.

And of course, later we handled a lot of the Hoppers. That reverend up in Nyack [NY]—

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, Reverend [Arthayer R.] Sanborn.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, yes. I was just thinking about him last night.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, I know his son because I did his show. I wrote the catalogue—there was a Hopper show in Nyack—it was last spring at the Hopper House.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I remember, after Larry brought the U-Haul back filled with a lot of the Hoppers, when he cut the deal with him [Sanborn]. And then—it was so funny. He, like others, some other people, said, "Well, maybe I can take some of this money and start investing in other—" And Larry said, "Take it and keep it. You have been very fortunate, but don't push your luck. This is a very crazy field."

And then he called Larry at one time and said he had [had] a meeting. He had called a meeting of his board of his church, and he walked in, and he said, "I said two words: 'I quit.'" And then he moved to Florida—

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And I don't know—did he die? I suppose he—

AVIS BERMAN: He only died a couple of years ago, in his mid-90s.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Really? Well, of course, we lost track of him because the deal was done, and Larry had wonderful things. And so that was a fascinating experience.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes. Well, that was the church, because Marion Hopper, the sister, still never married, and lived in that house.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, really?

AVIS BERMAN: And they helped her. They were doing so much for Marion that I think the Hoppers gave them some things.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Larry found him very interesting. He enjoyed him. I couldn't go there—for some reason I was not available. Larry spent a lot of time with him.

Then we met Burchfield, and he was a very nice man. Very nice man, just with his own vision. And then, of course, we handled the Burchfield estate at the gallery, and Martha became very involved with the Burchfield family. So that was nice.

AVIS BERMAN: Now, and I also want to go back to artists or—you know, Detroit artists. Did you know Zubei Kachadoorian?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, sure, we knew Zubei. We knew Sarkis Sarkisian; we knew Walter Midener. We knew all these—all of them that were involved with the—

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Did you buy anything from them?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes—oh, yes. We bought examples from all of them.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. And then there was someone from Detroit, though. He ended up in Ohio, first. Did you buy anything from Stanley Twardowicz?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, no I did not.

AVIS BERMAN: He was from Detroit.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. No. And what was the other man—David—he then was handled by Edith; he was a prodigy. David—

AVIS BERMAN: Fredenthal?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Fredenthal. Yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, we should talk about the early to mid-, late, the 1950s, in which you probably were aware of Abstract Expressionism by then.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes, yes. And a lot of these artists were having a tough time, because people wanted to have the latest, the newest.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And they were doing some very good work. And of course, by that time Larry had become—we'd become involved in the museum, and Larry had become involved with the Society of Arts and Crafts. He became, again, on that board. I went on the board of the Detroit Artists Market. And then Larry was asked to join the library committee of the Detroit Institute of Arts, and then became a trustee, and then was appointed to the [City of Detroit] Arts Commission.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, right. Was the Detroit Institute of Arts presenting Abstract Expressionism, at the museum?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: A little—not much.

AVIS BERMAN: Would that be an interest of yours? I mean, you didn't collect it, but was that something—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, but I was interested. We were both interested in the people that elicited a response and not just the hangers-on and the people who just got on the gravy train, of which there are always some.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, there are always second- and third-generation.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: What we had carved out for ourselves—we had plowed our little—[laughs]—acre.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. When did you realize what your vision would be, what you would be focusing on?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I think the first trip to New York. I think the trip to New York, we realized that there were some Americans that were doing fascinating things. And we decided to collect them.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, right. And I guess you went to Kraushaar at the time?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Pardon?

AVIS BERMAN: You went to Kraushaar Gallery.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.

AVIS BERMAN: And you met Miss [Antoinette] Kraushaar.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Absolutely. Yeah, yeah. Little Miss Kraushaar.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, right. [Laughs.]

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: We bought from her, and we bought from different people. Larry became friendly with people like Curt Valentin, and some of these other people. And he had met André Emmerich.

I remember an experience roaming around. We went into Rosenberg Gallery—and recently I met [the] Rosenberg woman at—[inaudible]. And it reminded me that we went in there. She had somebody, an American artist; I can't remember who it was—I don't think it was [Abraham] Rattner. But it was somebody that we—and we went in there, and we went up and looked at the paintings. She said, "Well, you know, that's very expensive." She was very dismissive. And so we walked out, and we never went back into the gallery.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes. There have been several well-known collectors over the years who—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, there was a very lofty, snobbish thing. And you didn't get that when you talked to the American people. As a matter of fact, you see, there were some of the artists that we'd collect, like Rattner, who were doing very abstract work. And of course, one of my favorites of all time, Stuart Davis.

But we didn't go beyond that.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: We didn't go beyond that.

AVIS BERMAN: And these people were still producing in the '50s, and that was the contemporary or progressive.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right. And they were under—as I say, people weren't paying that much attention. The new flair was on, and people like Burchfield were just going on, doing their thing and so forth.

AVIS BERMAN: And so they also would have been more affordable at the time?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. And of course, there was also another thing. We couldn't afford to buy any of this. We shouldn't have been buying any of it. Our parents were very concerned about us. We bought on time.

AVIS BERMAN: Of course.

MS. FLESICHMAN: In those days they were delighted if you would pay every month, and do something, because that meant that they could pay their artists.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, that was certainly going on. When I came here, and I wanted to buy something, you know, a print—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, oh, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: —everyone was happy just to let you pay on installment.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Absolutely, absolutely.

And then we were getting people interested in Detroit, and what we were doing. That was fun, too.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, right. As long as we mentioned Stuart Davis, I would love for you to remember how the *Flying Carpet* [Stuart Davis, 1942] commission came, his involvement in that. I think we should get that on the record.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I think my recollection is—and it's a little bit hazy, so I want to be very careful. I think that Larry spoke to the people at the manufacturers.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. V'Soske?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: V'Soske. I think—because they had done work with V'Soske, because V'Soske did only special things. And Larry said, "You ought to do a series of artists—that would be great." And that's how it took place

AVIS BERMAN: Right. But was he still in Detroit then, or—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. He's still in the carpet business.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, in terms of the carpet business, he's getting involved in all these activities, all of these things. Was this taking time away from the business, and was there tension?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, he was working very hard. But his father was a very domineering man, and his father was getting more and more anxious that we were probably piling up debt. Larry was investing in a small way, whenever he could get a little money together, in the stock market—and doing quite well. He was very good at it. And his father was so impossible that he came to him one day, and he said, "I'm going to send somebody to pack up all these things and send them back to New York. I don't want you collecting art."

AVIS BERMAN: Well, how could he stop that?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, Larry was a grown man, but he said—and so Larry refused. And my father got involved, because my father was very upset with his father, and said, "You're doing something very wrong." He said, "I'm sure Larry and Barbara are responsible, and they're not going to—"

And my father-in-law—he was not a nice man in that sense—he wanted everything his way. He wanted to bask in whatever accrued to Larry, but on the other hand, he wanted to control him. That's one of the reasons that we came to New York. He would never allow Larry to show his initiative in the business, and his ideas.

And this was very apparent when Larry started this investment in the WITI TV [Milwaukee, WI, television market area].

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And when we sold it, my father-in-law took all the money. He took Larry's share and his share, and then proceeded—he said he was going to build this building, which he lost. And we begged him to listen to us about doing the décor, and so forth. And he wouldn't listen. He wouldn't listen.

What he did was, and I don't know if I mentioned it in the book, was that finally there was a rapprochement. Larry stayed away from the carpet business over the weekend and said, "I'm not going to go in there." It was the first warning bell to us that he didn't really have a future there, because his father would never allow him to

show his initiative, and Larry had so many good ideas.

AVIS BERMAN: Because he, so far, unless there were other ones—the only thing that he was allowed to do was the carpet design [competition].

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, because that was about carpets.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: But when we went to him and said, "You're making—you shouldn't just buy"—what he did was, he went to GE [General Electric], when he was building this building, and bought for every apartment a brown refrigerator and a brown stove.

And I said, "Dad," I said, "some ladies will want a yellow kitchen. Some lady might want a pink kitchen." He wouldn't pay attention.

Then Larry said to him—by that time Larry had somebody from J. Walter Thompson whom he had met during a cultural thing, and Wally said that he, at a very low price, will map out a campaign to sell the Jeffersonian, this apartment building, at a very modest price, so that we can really advertise it and—well, we didn't say "brand" in those days. My father-in-law wouldn't let him do it. Wouldn't let him do it.

AVIS BERMAN: There was no advertising?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: So these were the warning bells. What happened was, Larry at that point was earning—getting a salary of [\$]12,9[00] a year. My father-in-law cut it in half and said, "From now on your salary is going to be \$6,000."

AVIS BERMAN: Is that because—so he couldn't collect?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: So he couldn't collect.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, it's hard to believe after all of this time that Larry wasn't a partner or that he didn't get his own share back from the TV station.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, his father took it. It was a very difficult—his father was a very difficult man. Very, very difficult.

The luck for Larry is that he inherited so much of his mother's sensitivity and appreciation of beauty. She was a woman who had a tough time in her marriage. It was a tough marriage.

AVIS BERMAN: But I guess they stayed together because that's what you did.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's what you did. And she died young.

She had a stroke when they were topping off the new building. The mayor was there and everything. My father took her to the hospital; her husband remained. And she died. I was a very dutiful daughter-in-law, but he could have destroyed Larry. He destroyed his wife, but he could have destroyed Larry. And it was only Larry's innate strength and his abilities—he gave him a tough time. Larry had tough things in terms of his relationships. He was a wonderful husband and everything, but he didn't have a very good example.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, maybe his example was, I'm not going to live like these people.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I'm not going to be like that. Yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: At least he had all of the other interests. If he had only been concentrating on the business—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. But this already gave us the warning bell that Larry felt he had no future with his father in the business. His father would never allow him to do anything on his own or listen to his ideas.

AVIS BERMAN: I guess his father never thought he would leave either.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, he was shocked.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. But why don't we finish this part, even though we haven't done the Archives—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah, yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: —and other things that happened in Detroit, that you had said that some of the other people had

said Larry wanted to become a dealer?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, yes. Curt Valentin was one of the people, and—oh, God, I can't think of who the other one—I think I have it in the book, but—I'm having a senior moment. [Laughs.]

AVIS BERMAN: No, that's—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: But they said, "Larry, you've got a great eye. You're a wonderful salesman. Why aren't you a dealer?" And the interesting thing was, we had bought a few things from Kennedy Gallery [Kennedy Galleries, New York City], but it was a stodgy gallery. It was really—and then Larry had the idea. And I encouraged it, even though it was a big change, with three children and a dachshund, and really uprooting yourself from a life where we were very, very—not only—but when I say "comfortable," I'm not saying financially, because the strain that my father-in-law put on Larry was unforgivable, the financial strain he put him in.

But it allowed Larry to show his initiative in making investments and doing other things that did garner him money. After all, we were sending three children to Cranbrook schools.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Well, [\$]12,000 was a good salary; [\$]6,000 was miserable in those days.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Was nothing. We had a house, and we're running a house and so forth, sending children to camps and so forth. It was a punitive, cruel thing that he did. And he could have made hash out of Larry. He did wreak damage, shall we say, but Larry survived and overcame.

And we left—after all, Larry was president of the museum. He was head of the Archives. We were involved in all of these things, and we were touted. We had a great role in Detroit cultural life. I was busy with the Hilberry Theatre and some other things. And the little symphony that we were involved in when we—I think maybe I wrote it in the book, I don't know—when the symphony was endangered, and they were going to close down, Larry and I became part of what was called the "Drive for the Little Symphony," in order to keep the musicians in Detroit. We were involved in that.

We were involved in a lot of things and were popular. We had a good life with the children and everything. And it was a challenge and an adventure and a risk to come to this city [New York City]. And somebody said to Larry—somebody from the Archives in Detroit said to Larry, "Well, you know, here you're a big fish in a small pond. You'll go to New York, and you'll never be heard from again. Nobody will ever hear from you again. You'll be nothing." So with those jolly words, we came to New York.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. I think you also said that Edith Halpert had encouraged him.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. Edith—

AVIS BERMAN: But now, that interests me. And there were a couple—but they were American dealers, and they were encouraging, say, a competitor?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah, well, they just thought that he had the stuff—and they thought that the field needed some fresh blood. That's what I think.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, exactly.

When you were in Detroit, you were going to New York. What other places were you going to because it interested you as collectors, while you were still in Detroit?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, let me just think. We didn't stray far, but we did go to—for example, several times we had planned a trip to Israel. And each time there had been a bombing or some very bad experience, and with having three young children, I—so I've never been to Israel. But Larry did get there—because in the meantime, there was this whole thing of the USIA [United States Information Agency], which is a whole other topic.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And of course, we did go to Europe, funnily enough, with the Wunderlichs, Rudy and Eleanor Wunderlich.

AVIS BERMAN: Before you were—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, before we were involved. Because we had struck up some sort of a friendship with them. And we went to Europe with them. We went to Europe several times—several times, and of course involved ourselves in museum-going and the whole cultural thing.

AVIS BERMAN: Were you at the Art Institute of Chicago or some of those places?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. Cleveland Museum [of Art]—we went to the Cleveland Museum; Toledo [Museum of Art]—because we knew Toledo very well, and we knew Otto Wittmann. He became a friend—he and Margaret became friends. But I had three little children.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

What other museums were wooing you during that time, while you—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Pardon?

AVIS BERMAN: What other museums were wooing you while you were in Detroit at that time?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Nobody.

AVIS BERMAN: Really?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. No. Don't forget, American art collectors were not fancy enough. We used to go—it was so funny. When we'd be at the museum, there were these dowagers. And they'd both say to me, "When are you going to have a [Marc] Chagall? When are you going to buy a Picasso?" Because they would hear, by the grapevine, that we were buying American art. This was almost pre-Joe [Joseph] Hirshhorn, don't forget. Joe finally got on the bandwagon and began "Hoovering" everything up, you know.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: But we were buying things quietly as this—as Edith Halpert called us, "the kids from Detroit."

AVIS BERMAN: [Laughs.]

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And I'll tell you what would happen. We would come to New York, and we would have a very funny experience. We would go to Babcock, and he said, "I have a wonderful little [Thomas] Eakins of a little boy tap dancing." I remember this. And we looked, and it just wasn't for us. Then we went to Kraushaar: "I've got something really wonderful to show you. There's this little boy tap"—they kept moving it around—

AVIS BERMAN: [Laughs.]

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: —each one of them, in anticipation of our coming. We were the kids from Detroit. That's what Edith called us. She thought we were funny and delightful. She was delighted, because she had a coterie of a few people who were collecting American art, but not a lot. It was a struggle for all these people. And so nobody was wooing us. Nobody cared about us.

The University of Michigan, my alma mater, heard what we were doing. And Sawyer, who was the director there —

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, Charles Sawyer, of course.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah—who died only recently, I think—Charles Sawyer heard what we were doing. And, my being an alum, he asked if he could borrow and have a little showing. And I still have the catalogue upstairs with a [Charles] Demuth on the cover. And we sent out—I don't know whether it was about 30 things. This was our first taste of this kind of thing. We went out to the opening, where there was a tea, on a Sunday.

And I remember—[laughs]—it was so cute, because it was very nicely hid. They installed it very nicely at the museum. That's when the old museum was just a smallish building. And I remember some woman with a little nine-year-old child with braces came up. And this woman started burbling to me about how wonderful it was, how—and you know, and I was so—I had never had this kind of an experience before. And I turned to the little girl, and I said, "And what did you like best?" And she looked up, and she said, "The cookies."

AVIS BERMAN: [Laughs.]

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And I thought her mother would strangle her. I thought it was adorable.

AVIS BERMAN: It was pure.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I said, "Good for you." I said, "Good for you. The cookies are good." [Laughs.] But I think the mother was sort of embarrassed. But that was our first example of anybody paying any attention—outside of

a museum—nobody paid any attention to us.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, in the '50s, were you going to the Whitney when it was up?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. Yes, yes. And we became friendly with—

AVIS BERMAN: Lloyd.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: —Lloyd and Edith [Goodrich]—very friendly with them. They became friends. And Lloyd told us he tried to buy some of our collection. He said his biggest mistake in his career was selling the 19th-century things.

AVIS BERMAN: He was against—well, there was nothing he could do.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Really?

AVIS BERMAN: He was the one who regretted it. He was overruled.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, that's what I'm saying. But he was forced, and he was persuaded that that was the only salvation.

AVIS BERMAN: It was the Whitney family—at the time, there were no other trustees.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. Was Flora not involved at that time? Was she—

AVIS BERMAN: No, no. She was too young; it was her mother—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's—her mother, that's what I thought.

AVIS BERMAN: —and then—but see, Sonny was involved too.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And then he came to us subsequently to that, and said, "Is there any possibility that we could buy some of your collection?" Because we had such wonderful—we had Homers and [Albert Pinkham] Ryders and Eakins at that point.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: You know.

AVIS BERMAN: It was a disaster, because they sold in '49 and '50. And they also sold all the folk art off.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: And actually, the scandal was that Flora and Sonny bought a lot of that stuff first. It was not—today—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, no, no.

AVIS BERMAN: —I mean, you talk about controversy—if that happened today—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, no.

AVIS BERMAN: —I mean, even if—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: It couldn't.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, it couldn't, but if they had—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: It would be—

AVIS BERMAN: All of those nice Winslow Homers in the National Gallery of Art were ones that were in the Whitney, which Sonny Whitney later gave.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: The Whitney—there's something in the water there, I think. Larry was on the national board of the Whitney at that time. And we would come to the Whitney. We would meet with Ted [Edgar Richardson] sometimes, and he took us for the first time to the Frick [Collection, New York City]. And he took us—I was telling Anne Poulet, and I was telling Colin Bailey, not too long ago—our first experience at the Frick was Ted coming, taking us, and standing us in front of the [Giovanni] Bellini [*St. Francis in the Desert*, 1480] and

saying, "This is one of the great pictures of the world." I was telling this to Colin because, of course, you know they've just—

AVIS BERMAN: Right, redone.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: —redone it and rehung it. And he said, "This is abstract painting." And we stood there, and he explained and taught us what it was about that painting that made it so magical. And of course, now you can see things in it that even Ted couldn't see. They're little bits—there's a little squirrel; there's a little of this; there's a little of—it is still—and of course, the irony is, now I'm on the board of the Frick—

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: —and it's very meaningful to me. But Ted was a great teacher in a very subtle way. He was a mentor. And he loved being a mentor. And of course, then the whole thing of the Archives—which is our next thing—sprung out of what Larry absorbed from him.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, Larry wanting to find out about John Quidor?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Yeah. And who Jack Baur eventually wrote about so well.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Jack—yes. And I think maybe at the time, Jack maybe was still gathering things—but there was much to gather.

AVIS BERMAN: No, and it certainly—I know, from knowing Lloyd so well, about how he had done his work. He was lucky, because he had Mrs. Eakins, but not with Ryder.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right.

AVIS BERMAN: Ryder was—that was impossible.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And of course, people were dumping stuff.

AVIS BERMAN: Yeah.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: When they went to try to find—was it George Luks's things, or something at least—the landlady said, "Well, I just threw those things out last week because they'd been hanging around." I mean, the things that were lost—

AVIS BERMAN: Believe me, that still goes on.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, sure it does. Sure it does. To retrieve—now this whole Knoedler thing [2009 discovery of alleged sales of forged paintings] is so unpleasant.

AVIS BERMAN: Yeah.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I don't know what'll happen with it.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, but they have always looked at those archives as a—you know, as a cash asset. I remember when I was an Archives collector, I talked to—was it DeCoursey MacIntosh [former executive director of Frick Art & Historical Center, New York City] about that?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. Yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: And I said, "I know you're not ready, but"—of course, I planned to talk to them about it, but—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, we at the Archives would have loved them. We had no way. We're not in the ballpark.

AVIS BERMAN: No, no. But he always made it clear from the beginning—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: But I'm—

AVIS BERMAN: —that was a—that was a—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That was a cash cow.

AVIS BERMAN: That was going to be sold for lots and lots of money, he said.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I don't think it will be sold for lots and lots of money—

AVIS BERMAN: Well—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: —because everybody is digging in their heels.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, at the time—this was the—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. Yeah. No, but I'm saying now it's different.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. And these were also the high-flying days of what the Getty [Los Angeles, CA] was or wasn't doing. [The Getty Research Institute bought the Knoedler Archives in 2012.]

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, sure. Listen, I was on the Getty board when Castelli—they tried to sell those [the Leo Castelli Gallery records] for two million [dollars], and we turned them down. [The Castelli records were donated to the Archives of American Art in 2007.]

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Luckily, she [Barbara Bertozzi Castelli] realized what it was like to service those archives, so—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right. That's right.

AVIS BERMAN: She got a nice tax deduction, and—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Sure.

AVIS BERMAN: —it'll be fine. They're good. So certain things—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Right.

AVIS BERMAN: And the other was the Janis—the [Sidney] Janis Gallery. That was the other one. But, you know, I remember because of the—well, there were the three important galleries at the time were Castelli, Janis, and Emmerich. And André was great.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: André was wonderful.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. So we got André, and then—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: —yeah, and then it was so good to—obviously, John Smith [former director of the Archives of American Art] got the Castelli papers. But it was very nice to see that two—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Two out of three we got. [Janis records held by family.]

AVIS BERMAN: Right. And the others—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And as long as somebody gets them.

AVIS BERMAN: Well—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: See, one of the things that, from the very beginning, Larry and Ted felt was, it's not that we have to have everything, but that somebody has to have everything.

AVIS BERMAN: I agree. As long as it goes to somewhere public—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Somewhere where there's a collegial thing where you can do, you know—

AVIS BERMAN: Anything public.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right. That's why, as angry as I was about what was not going on in Los Angeles, when that rat out there was working on his own research and didn't do anything about the Los Angeles holdings there—I can't remember his name—

AVIS BERMAN: Are you thinking of Paul Karlstrom?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And so then the Getty took it up. When I was on the board, I said, "I hope that you will serve to be cooperative with the art. And we will be cooperative."

AVIS BERMAN: Okay, well, I think this is a good place to stop for today.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Okay.

[END OF TRACK 1.]

AVIS BERMAN: This is Avis Berman interviewing Barbara Fleischman for the Archives of American Art Oral History Program, on January 5, 2012, in her apartment in New York City.

I am just going to pick up a couple of things for housekeeping—you were trying to remember the dealers who had recommended that Larry become a dealer, and you remembered them later on.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, well, when I was with you, I remembered Curt Valentin, but I forgot the name of the Otto Gerson.

AVIS BERMAN: And was he with Marlborough Gallery then?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, Otto Gerson was on his own already. Otto Gerson was on his own, and a very successful dealer. I really didn't know him, but Larry, of course, knew them [Otto and Ilse Gerson]. They were extremely generous and persuasive. And of course, the point was, he was going to be in a totally different field.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. And was he in contemporary art or old?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Otto Gerson? Yes. He had a lot of contemporary, yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: And with Curt Valentin, what was he dealing with?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: He was dealing in great classics of the contemporary world—at that time what was contemporary. [Laughs.]

AVIS BERMAN: Right. And was that Buchholz Gallery he was in then?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, I think he had his own gallery. I think it was Curt Valentin.

AVIS BERMAN: Now, I'm going to stay in chronological order, and so I'm going to leave the discussion of antiquities largely for the next interview, but a couple of things happened beforehand which I'm going to ask you about. In 1952, you made your first purchase in antiquities. Do you remember what it was?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I'm trying to think. Oh, I know, I believe that that was around the time of the [William Randolph] Hearst sale. And we bought three Greek vases. Ironically, many years later, when we were here in New York, and we became acquainted with people at the Met [Metropolitan Museum of Art], and particularly Dietrich von Bothmer, who was the head of the Greek and Roman department—he came into the house, and he saw these three vases. And he says, "Get rid of them. They're not good enough for you." And we did.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, they probably were good for a beginner.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: They were good for a beginner, yes. And they epitomized our interest in it. And that was a very famous sale. But Mr. Hearst's eye was not of the highest—

AVIS BERMAN: Well, that was what I was going to say. We know he had great quantities, and they were—but I don't remember that anyone has ever talked about—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No.

AVIS BERMAN: —the connoisseurship or the great work of art—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. No, he was an acquirer. He was an acquirer. But he acquired a lot of things. And the sale was highly touted and—at that time. And our burgeoning interest decided Larry to say, well, let's see what we can get.

AVIS BERMAN: But was it also fun for you to have the provenance of it—that it came from Hearst? Did that matter?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, that didn't matter. We didn't like him.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, right. Too right-wing, I imagine.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: [Laughs.] No, we didn't like him and what he stood for at all.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Well, what was it about the ancient world in particular that you were drawn to?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, I think Larry was drawn to it first. When he was about 18 years old and was in the army—he had volunteered to be in the army and was an infantryman—he had been slightly wounded and then was on sort of a leave. He was in Besançon, France. And he was wandering around, all by himself, this very young, skinny—[laughs]—at that time, soldier. And he was wandering around the Roman ruins in Besançon.

And there was a doctor there—a man—who saw this young, young man showing such avid interest. And he came up to him, and they fell into conversation. And this French doctor did something very uncharacteristic. He invited him home for lunch, because, as you know, the French are very private and very circumspect and so forth. And he showed him some of the things that he had from the ancient world. And that's what stimulated Larry.

It was something that was totally out of my ken. I didn't know anything.

AVIS BERMAN: And was there a good collection of antiquities at the Detroit Institute of Arts?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Some, but it's not a major collection.

AVIS BERMAN: And before you bought this, were you looking at antiquities elsewhere or—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, you see, this was before I met Larry. His interest was—

AVIS BERMAN: Well, 1952.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, I was going back to how he started. No. And then it was sort of tabled, because we became so swept up in American art. Nobody was collecting American art at that time. Actually, Joe Hirshhorn came later. And it was so amusing because we would go to events at the Detroit Institute of Arts, and some of these dowagers would say to us, "When are you going to buy a Chagall? When are you going to buy a Matisse?" and so forth.

Actually, one of the first things we bought, we did buy a little Picasso drawing and a Matisse sketch, but in the very early times when we were buying it from Associated American Artists, which was a great print—contemporary print dealer. Ted Richardson had sent us there. And we bought some things.

AVIS BERMAN: When you were talking about it in the book, you mentioned Greek and Roman, and you also mentioned Renaissance bronzes. So what did "antiquities" mean to you?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, what happened was, we were just sort of omnivorous. We were looking everywhere, in every civilization. We were very young and very excited. And we started going to museums and spending time. Larry was doing a lot of reading and learning. It was just kind of fascinating. So we did not collect Renaissance bronzes at that time. Later on, we bought a couple of Flemish bronzes and a couple things.

And of course, we have here—

AVIS BERMAN: Metals—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: —late Renaissance metals. But—

AVIS BERMAN: Right. And I think you also mentioned medieval art. So what I was trying to get to was, how elastic is your definition of antiquities?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, antiquities is really—for us, is Greek, Roman, and Etruscan. That was our focus.

AVIS BERMAN: Eventually, that was the focus.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, yes. That was our focus.

AVIS BERMAN: And did you linger long with the Renaissance bronzes or medieval?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, no. When we moved here—or before we moved here, in anticipation, we stopped collecting American art, because Larry realized that we could no longer compete with what will be his clientele.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. "Here" being New York?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Here being in New York. And he said to me, and this was, of course, in 1966, we're going to have to divest ourselves of our American collection because, he said, remember how unpleasant we find it when we go into a dealer, and we say, oh, we like that, and they say, well, that's mine. He said, I will never do that to a client. So we have to really shift gears.

Earlier than that, we had bought some Dutch landscapes, 17th-century and Dutch genre paintings, et cetera, et cetera, in anticipation of the shifting of gears, a [Peter Paul] Rubens sketch and so forth and so on. And so that was what was happening. We were in flux.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, what was it like to sell all of these things that you—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: It was very painful. [Laughs.] It was very painful. One had grown very accustomed and very fond of the things. They filled our home in Detroit, and they meant a lot to us. But it was a reality. And I succumbed—I was really very upset when Larry talked to me about it, but I succumbed quickly because I saw the rationale of what he was saying. And I wanted to be as supportive as I could of what his integrity persisted in showing.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. So what would be the ones he would say, oh, I wish I could have kept today, or—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, there was the beautiful Copley of Mary Philipse [*Mrs. Roger Morris*, 1771], which is now, I think, in the Winterthur [Museum, Garden, and Library], beautiful portrait of Mary Philipse. There were a couple of Winslow Homers, there were Eakinses, there were a variety of things that were contemporary things, [John] Marins, Burchfield, Hopper.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, that reminds me, one other thing I wanted to check from last week. You had mentioned the title *Black Iron*. I'm assuming that was the Burchfield *Black Iron*?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]

AVIS BERMAN: Could you keep your family portrait?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. That was personal. It's still here upstairs.

AVIS BERMAN: You wrote about that wonderfully. That was a wonderful episode.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: It was a great experience. Franklin Watkins was a marvelous man, and an entertaining, very sophisticated, and urbane man. He—his cousin was—who was his cousin again, a writer—I'll think of it. I'll think of who his cousin was. But he was a very sophisticated man, and his wife was a beauty and lovely. We spent a lot of time—we had a good time with them. And he—it was a hot, hot summer. Ogden Nash was his cousin.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, really?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. Watty came from a very patrician family. He was a very good painter.

AVIS BERMAN: Really, he won this big prize at the Carnegie [Carnegie Art Award], called, you know, *Suicide in Costume* [1931].

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, yes. And one of the most entertaining—in later years they did a one-man show of him, a retrospective, at the Philadelphia Museum [of Art]. And we went over to it. It was primarily portraits. And the amusing thing was to watch all of these people standing in front of their portraits. There was Van Cliburn, and there was Julia Child. It was a variety of people. It was a very amusing and interesting evening.

AVIS BERMAN: Yeah. That is what you would call a real scene. [Laughs.]

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. Yes, it was very, very amusing.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, when you look at that portrait today, what do you see? What do you think that he caught?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, he caught the family as it was then—a young, young family in our living room, and three Albert Pinkham Ryders above the couch and the Gaston Lachaise *Head of Marin* [1928] sitting on the table.

And Martha, who is my dear, dear daughter, was about—I think about 18 months—no, about two years old.

And what happened was that it was such a hot summer; he was painting her—I'll show it to you—he was—well, you've seen the picture of it. He was painting her in a little sun suit. And as it got hotter and hotter, he painted most of it out so she was only wearing just little panties, because he loved the lusciousness of her apricot skin. So it was really—it was very meaningful.

AVIS BERMAN: And did you have three Ryders above the couch?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]

AVIS BERMAN: So he didn't switch, picking works of art he wanted to paint?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, no, no, no. He painted just as they were. He set up the easel in the living room, and with his drop cloths and everything. And for—what was it—nine weeks, I think it was that summer, and then we took them for a weekend to Stratford, Ontario, to see the Shakespeare [Festival] and the—and the classics. So we had a wonderful time, and it was a great experience.

AVIS BERMAN: And do you have—it's sort of secondhand, a few of your works of art. [Laughs.]

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Pardon?

AVIS BERMAN: You have a few of your works of art—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, yes. What we did keep was a few things that artists had given us; like Rattner gave us something and Jimmy Ernst gave—you know, little things, as artists would do when you bought big things of theirs.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And Marins and several other things—but small and not major. But those Larry decreed that we were allowed to keep, because those were personal gifts.

AVIS BERMAN: And did you recommend Franklin Watkins to any of your friends? Or did he do anything else in Detroit, because—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, he did not. Everybody was very interested in what he was doing, but at that time nobody else wanted a portrait painted.

AVIS BERMAN: It was unusual for the time because people were going now to portrait photographers.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right. That's right.

AVIS BERMAN: I remember all these children's photographers started—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. And then Portraits Incorporated here, which were very mundane and very slick. But he caught us.

AVIS BERMAN: Now, who were some of the other important Detroit collectors, or who would become important in the future?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, it's very interesting. In the book you'll know that we started something called Art Adventurers. It stemmed out of the people—all of our young friends would come to us and say, "You seem to be having such a good time. We'd like to learn more about this art world."

So we started out by inviting, I think it was 10, couples to meet once a month. And we would bring somebody—an artist or a collector or a museum person—in from New York or from wherever, to give a talk in somebody's home. And it grew and grew until we had five groups. I was busy planning all the logistics, and Larry was getting—he got people. He got Lloyd Goodrich to come; he got Roy Neuberger to come; and some local artists and some local scholars and scholars from different parts of the country.

And out of that grew some collectors. Now, for example, Marianne and Alan Schwartz have a very fine collection of prints all through the ages—[Albrecht] Dürer—everything, Rembrandts [Rembrandt van Rijn], Dürer, all these. And that's a known collection. And then Gilbert Silverman branched out into Fluxus. But that was long after we left.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, so what was he collecting in Detroit?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Nothing, nothing—well, he's still in Detroit. But I didn't know that he was collecting anything much. And then there was Irving Levitt—Dr. Levitt and Dr. Burton—Irving Burton.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And, let's see, who else? William Poplack—most all those people are gone. But a lot of people started buying works of art. And then we had those art shows that you read about, I'm sure, where Larry prevailed upon a variety of dealers to send works of art, up to \$500, and we arranged them in a [Minoru] Yamasaki house that was owned by some friends of ours who were collectors. And we had five couples each put in \$25 for expenses.

And these businessmen, these men who were really businessmen or doctors or whatever, were working their tails off while we had an open house where we invited a lot of people. We had Demuths, we had tiny Marins, we had little—all kinds of—little Jack Levines. We had all kinds of things—up to \$500. And how it would happen is somebody would come in, and they'd say, "I like that." They'd make a check out directly to the dealer—so we had nothing to do with anything except expenses.

And then afterwards, we took the money that was left over from our expenses, and we all went out to dinner. And then the next year we did the same thing, but up to a thousand dollars. And that started a lot of people buying, I think.

AVIS BERMAN: For a thousand, in those days you could get something good.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. Yes. Yes. And as a matter of fact, our friends Marianne and Alan Schwartz were persuaded by Larry to buy a beautiful Demuth—*Gladiolus*. He's been offered seven figures for it. I think he paid \$750 for it. I know he paid \$750. He's been offered a million-something for it. And they won't sell it, because it means a lot to them sentimentally. And it's a beauty.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Especially if it's the first thing they ever bought.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Now, what about Alfred Taubman? Was he collecting?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, he wasn't collecting at that time. He was part of our group, and his first wife, Reba—a lovely person. He was part of the group. But he was busy selling things. They had things in their bedroom, and one of these fellows would go by and say, here, you should buy this, and so forth. Al started then. He started as a result of all that. He was part of the Art Adventurers. He and Reba—and then part of the sales, and then he went on from then and became what he became.

AVIS BERMAN: I was going to ask you this, and I realize he's a little bit younger, but how, or at all, did you intersect with Eli Broad in Detroit?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Never did. Never did. I think Larry may have met him in a business way, but I never—I knew the name. It was Kaufman and Broad. They were building modest houses—tract houses. And then, of course, they moved away.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, I don't think they moved to California till the '70s.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Really?

AVIS BERMAN: Maybe?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I thought that he told me that—or Edye told me that they moved in '62.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, you could be right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I may be wrong, but I think they moved before we did. I think—but you could check up on that.

AVIS BERMAN: You're probably right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Because I think ultimately we would have crossed paths with them. But they were not—and I don't think he was collecting. You'll find that out.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: You'll find that out. But he was not on our radar screen in any of these. They were in a different group of people and didn't intersect with us at all.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. I just wondered, because Arthur Fleischman was beginning to build, as well, or develop hotels or buildings.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, you mean my father-in-law?

AVIS BERMAN: Yes.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, he built one building—

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, okay.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: —for his sins. He built a—I don't know how many story—apartment house on the Detroit River.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay, because I thought maybe there would have been a connection through there.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. No. That was a one-off. The Broads never were on our radar screen at all.

AVIS BERMAN: I mean, a lot of people came out of Detroit.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right. It was a great museum that attracted a lot of people.

AVIS BERMAN: Now through this collecting activity, or this excitement in bringing people in, did anyone in Detroit decide to become an art dealer, because there was certainly nascent interest by more people?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: In our group—not in our group. But tangentially, there was a couple of men who had been in the—Donald Morris—

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, yes.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: —and Bernie—oh, God, what was his last name—Bernie—they formed a gallery. And there were a couple others, but Donald Morris, I think, became the most successful.

AVIS BERMAN: Very much.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And continues, with his wife and son.

AVIS BERMAN: To your knowledge or observation, what was art collecting like among the very wealthy Grosse Pointe people?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, there was Hawkins Ferry, who was collecting contemporary art. There was Lydia Winston—later Lydia Winston Malbin—who was collecting Futurist art and doing very well. Each one of them was collecting with great taste and great force in the field that they had chosen.

Dexter Ferry, the older brother of Hawkins Ferry, his collecting took an interesting turn. He liked American art, 19th century and 18th century. And he would give money for Edgar Richardson to buy those things for the museum. I don't know whether Dexter and his wife actually collected personally, but they were very generous donors to the Detroit Institute of Arts.

I'm trying to think of who else there may have been. Those were the major—

AVIS BERMAN: So not as many, for all of the auto magnates, that there could have been.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. No. No. Not at all.

AVIS BERMAN: Also, I wanted to know, just culturally, what was the cultural impact of having the [Diego] Rivera murals in Detroit?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, they were the pride of the museum—one of the prides of the museum. I mean, it was the pride of possession and a pride of having something very, very unique. And it was a kind of thing where people came into Detroit, and you took them to the museum, of course, you took them to the Rivera Court.

However, I don't know what its impact was culturally. I don't know—you know, Detroit was a union town.

AVIS BERMAN: If you don't know, it means that it probably wasn't—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, it's not.

AVIS BERMAN: —and did it spur—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And it had controversy—

AVIS BERMAN: Of course.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: —don't forget. I think the important thing to remember is that at a similar time—and I just was over at the Museum of Modern Art, and that's a dandy little show, or was a dandy little show, of Rivera at the Museum of Modern Art—

AVIS BERMAN: I think it's still on.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I don't know whether it—I think it's gone—

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, okay.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: —but it was a wonderful show. At about the same time that he did this thing for Rockefeller Center, for Nelson Rockefeller, he was doing—it was about the same era.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, I think it was Detroit was first, and I think Rockefeller—they saw it and—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And don't forget that in the Detroit one, there's [Henry] Ford. There's a portrait of Ford. There was pressure on Edsel Ford to remove them, and he wouldn't do it.

Larry and I had never met him. He'd died long before we became involved with the museum, and [we] became good friends with his widow. But that was a matter of, I think, great pride, that he would not succumb to the few people who said, "Oh, well, look what they're doing here. We shouldn't have it. There's your father's picture, and you know, the implications politically," et cetera. He stood firm.

AVIS BERMAN: Was there any interest by the museum in collecting Mexican art from that?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Not that I—no. No. Don't forget the museum had strength in American art, had strength through [William R.] Valentiner in German Expressionists, and had some very fine Old Master paintings. Those were the directions that they were in.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And don't forget it was the aftermath of the Depression. There wasn't money to buy things. So—

AVIS BERMAN: And also at that time it wouldn't have necessarily have meant something. But I guess Rivera's reputation by then, in the '50s, may have been in decline—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right. Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]

AVIS BERMAN: —not that that meant anything, because Richardson could look beyond fashion, without a doubt.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. He certainly did. He certainly did. But he was concentrating on American art and Flemish.

AVIS BERMAN: Were there ever—that you know of—any overtures from other museums for him to go elsewhere?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, not until the time that he went to the Pennsylvania Academy, and then he went to Winterthur. Ted Richardson was an extraordinary scholar, a very private man, married to a very private woman, humorous and fascinating and stimulating. But they formed their own little coterie.

Many museum directors at that time didn't have the responsibility they have now of fundraising and entertaining and reaching out to the community and so forth and so on. Occasionally, they would have a cocktail party. They would invite very carefully, because they had people they didn't like, and there were people who didn't like them because they were too private and so forth and so on.

But the role of a director was very different then. He had people in the community, many in the Grosse Pointe community, who were very supportive. And Mrs. Ford—Mrs. Edsel Ford [Eleanor Clay Ford]—was a staunch, staunch supporter of Ted.

AVIS BERMAN: I want to get into her in a few minutes anyway because I think she just deserves some talking about—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: —because there aren't many people who knew her anymore.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes.

AVIS BERMAN: And obviously she was extremely important.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]

AVIS BERMAN: But you know, it's true. In that time, museum directors used to write catalogue essays and do things—I mean, not just the occasional—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And he wrote books. He wrote *Painting in America: The Story of 450 Years*. He wrote about Flemish painting, et cetera, et cetera. And his big role was as the guru, the intellectual guru of the museum. Well, that doesn't exist in the same way anymore.

AVIS BERMAN: No, no. And they usually don't have time to do any scholarly or—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. They're very busy raising money.

AVIS BERMAN: —you know, curatorial—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And he was not a money—a fundraiser.

AVIS BERMAN: So it was important. So

Let's talk about Mrs. Edsel Ford and her art interest and her unusualness, I would say.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. Yes. She was a remarkable woman. We just adored her. And she loved Larry. She loved working with Larry. She had been on the Art Commission when Larry was appointed to be the president of the Art Commission by Mayor [Jerome] Cavanaugh. She said to me afterwards, "I used to come occasionally to the Art Commission meetings. With Larry there, I wouldn't miss a meeting. I wouldn't miss it."

She was a—how can I describe her? She wasn't beautiful. She was a round-faced, small woman—comely, I would say was the word for her. Totally modest, totally shy, very smart with great insights, and she understood people very well. She caught on to people. She knew who was cossetting her because of what she was, and she knew who was just being friendly because they liked her. She knew the difference. She once told us that when she was in Ford Hospital with some ailment, she said, "I realize who the doctors were who came in who had nothing to do with my case."

So she was very, very smart and very warm and very supportive of us, because an incident came up where there was somebody who was very jealous of Larry—I don't know if I had this in the book—very jealous of Larry. They collect—him and his wife, who shall be nameless—they're both gone—were collecting in the contemporary field in a modest way. He was a rich man. And they were a very troubled couple. They were very—they didn't like it that we didn't sweep into their friendship. We were very pleasant and very nice. But we were a little bit shy of getting close to them because they were very bitter people, and they were very nasty people.

So when Larry was president, this man went to the *Detroit Free Press*. The museum had just purchased a [Gerard] ter Borch—a beautiful ter Borch [*A Lady at her Toilette*, 1660]. And he went and said that the ter Borch had been knocking out around the market for many years at a very much lower price. And his implication was that Larry had steered the museum to it and that very likely Larry had gotten a payoff. And this—so it hit the press without the—Lee Hills, who was then the head of the *Free Press*—without anybody coming to us and saying: Is this a true story? Or what is the story?

AVIS BERMAN: They didn't ask you for a comment or—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. Nothing. It appeared. And it was devastating to us. It was devastating to us. Around that time, Eleanor Ford invited me to lunch for something, and she saw that I was very upset. I told her what was happening, and she was outraged. She was outraged. She told me the story that many years before, people from *Fortune* magazine had come out to interview her husband. And they came, and they had them at their house, and they talked to them. And she said then they absolutely—this man printed a bunch of lies about Edsel. Does it strike you as contemporary? [They laugh.]

Well, so—and I'll never forget, she characteristically said to me—she said, "Barbara, if you run into them, just lean back and spit in their eye." And that was so uncharacteristic of her to speak like that. But I don't know—my impression was that she quietly made some inquiries at the newspaper. And we had some people who went to the newspaper and said, "This is a disgrace, what you're doing." And of course, when they explored it, it had just come out of a Rothschild collection—had never been on the market, had never been up for sale at anything but at the price that it was—so there was a sort of an apology printed.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. But you know that these two people were the ones who were in back of it?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. There was no question about it. It was very open.

AVIS BERMAN: That they had said it?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: It was very open that this man had gone to them.

AVIS BERMAN: But what an astonishing thing to have done that when it would be something you could check.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. No, well, he just wanted to blacken Larry because he was jealous.

And it served for a few weeks of doing a lot of damage and hurting us badly. But of course, then it just dissipated as soon as the—

AVIS BERMAN: Right. But of course, it's always hard to root out error—as you know, once something is in print, it's impossible—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Please, tell me—absolutely.

AVIS BERMAN: Now, was that painting something that Larry had something to do with?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Nothing. Nothing. It had—I can't remember—it may have been Frederick Mont who showed it to him. And then he sent the director to look at it and then bowed out. It had nothing to do with us, nothing to do with us. But our friendship with—oh, you know who was the great collector there—I had forgotten to even mention—Robert Tannahill.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, of course.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Robert Tannahill was Mrs. Edsel Ford's cousin. And he was right out of Henry James. He was a recessive—I'm sure—homosexual. At that time, he must have been in his 60s, because we were—our 40s. And he had beautiful taste. He collected some American things. He had German. He had French. He had contemporary—he had a wonderful eye, and of course, at that time, unlimited—to us—resources. Because he was part of that milieu. And he was very nice to us, very nice to us, and a real patrician and somebody totally out of the range of a young Jewish couple who had no—nothing but very nice parents, and just—and his collection was breathtaking, breathtaking.

I'll never forget, he told us a story. We were collecting, and he was encouraging us and, you know, so forth. And I'll never forget, he said, in the height of the Depression, a [Paul] Gauguin, a great Gauguin came on the market, and he wanted it. He didn't have any money at that point. And he cashed in his life insurance and bought it. And he said, "You know what makes a bargain, Larry? Time."

AVIS BERMAN: [Laughs.]

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I'll never forget that. We never forgot that, "Time." And he was right. It was a magnificent picture. And of course, all of his pictures went to the Detroit Institute of Arts.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. That's—I just realized—exactly. It sounds like he had great taste, but was he being advised by Ted Richardson?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. I don't think so.

AVIS BERMAN: Or was Ted Richardson saying, "We could use"—"We would like this"—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. Yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: —was he buying—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Unlike Dexter Ferry, I don't think Bob Tannahill bought things per se for the museum. I think he was buying for himself.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, but it was understood—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: It was understood that all these things would go to the museum. And they did.

AVIS BERMAN: So there was no funny business.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: So Ted understood. Bob was a—sort of a distant man. He wasn't like Dexter Ferry. Dexter was very much more congenial, and he was not as sophisticated. Bob was very a sophisticated man.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, he sounds like—in the full sense of the word—an aesthete.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. Absolutely.

AVIS BERMAN: And did he work? Or did he have to work?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Never. I don't think he ever worked. In the aftermath, when we moved, he and Eleanor Ford used to come to New York on the train. And we always saw them. We'd go to dinner, and we'd go to the theater together. And the friendship continued until they died.

But I'll never forget—there was a very cute incident. We went to the theater one night. And at the interval, there was a lot of buzz, a lot of buzz. And Eleanor turned to me, and she said, "There must be somebody important in the lobby." And she was, at that time, listed as the sixth richest woman in the world. She said, "It must be somebody important." And it turned out to be Princess Grace [of Monaco]. We saw her at the other end of the lobby. But this was how modest she was. It was the dearest thing. But that's how she was.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, she married a Ford. I mean, was she—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. No. No. She married Edsel.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Edsel—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Her name was Clay, Eleanor Clay Ford.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, okay.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And her children were Henry and Benson and Dody [Josephine]. Those were the three children of Edsel and her. [They also had a third son, William.]

AVIS BERMAN: Well, right. But you know—but she married Edsel.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: But—no, no. But Dody Ford married a Ford. She married Wally from a different family.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Her daughter married, so she was Ford-Ford—a really nice guy that Larry worked with at the art school.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. What did Eleanor Ford's house look like in terms of—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, it was designed by Albert Kahn, on the Detroit River. And it was a rambling, very beautiful mansion, filled with all these beautiful—she and Edsel bought, just to—they bought art to furnish their home. But they bought great things.

And I remember in a little private receiving room, small, maybe about the size of this library that we're in, there was a great, great [Vincent] van Gogh over the fireplace. And Larry said, "Eleanor, if you light a fire in that fireplace, that painting should not be there, because the heat would"—and I think she moved it.

But she had beautiful, beautiful pictures; beautiful, beautiful paintings; and lovely porcelains and everything. When we would go there for dinner, it was so funny because she had all of these butlers or—or people maybe she hired. They all looked like bank presidents. And they were standing behind all of our chairs, these white-haired, white gentlemen, who helped serve.

One of the funniest experiences we had was in the early days of the Archives, when they had formed the board, with Al Capp and Vincent Price and—what's her name—Firestone and Henry du Pont and all these people—they were having the first meeting, and Eleanor said she'd have a dinner.

And I'll never forget—[laughs]—we went out there for dinner. It was a lovely, lovely evening. And she came out after a while—we were having cocktails, and it was taking so long—and she said, "The electricity has fallen apart

in the kitchen"—I think—"and we'll have to wait." And she called Sidney Weinberg in New York—[laughs]—who was then, I think, at the head of GE or something—[they laugh]—to get it straight.

But that was the level on which they operated. I mean, Eleanor Ford would not know to call the local GE or something. [Laughs.] She called and he—and ultimately the dinner was served, very nice, and all these—I remember, that was another occasion where all these men stood behind our chairs. And it was so funny. It was such an amusing board at that time.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, besides the van Gogh, was it Impressionists, Post-Impressionists, or—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, there were French pictures—French pictures and lovely, lovely, attractive pictures—but good, very good. And I think most of them are in the museum, and the house belongs to the Detroit Institute as a study center now.

AVIS BERMAN: Whatever's not in the museum, basically.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Mm-hm. [Affirmative.] The interesting thing about Eleanor was that she mourned Edsel for the whole rest of her life. It was a really a love match. She told Larry and me one time, "You know, sometime after he died, I walked out on the grounds. And I walked toward the river. And I was going to walk into the river. But then I thought of my children, and I didn't. I turned back."

She mourned him the rest of her life—not in a bad—not in a lugubrious way. Because she was such a sweetie, I knew there were men who—of her ilk—who wanted to marry her. Nothing; she remained what she was.

Another nice anecdote about Eleanor is this. They were having an Art Commission meeting. And Larry was called out. He was chairing the meeting; he was called out. They said, "We've just had a piece of news, and we think you should know about it right away."

A man by the name of [Feodosy] Kogut—a Russian-born man who had a little grocery store on Michigan Avenue, which is not a fancy street in Detroit—he had a little grocery store. And he died. And he left his whole estate—which was like \$250,000—to the Detroit Institute of Arts, stating in his will that he came into the Detroit Institute of Arts one day and fell into conversation with a guard. And you know how some of these guards are. They—at that time particularly; I don't think you see it very much [anymore]—he was a very talkative, and was expounding about all the art, and he was telling him. And he was a lonely man, had no family. And he was so struck by that, that that's what he did.

So Larry came back and told them. At that very point, they had been talking about a Titian that had been offered to them, I think for a half a million dollars. So you see, this was in the early '60s. Eleanor Ford said, "I'll give the rest to buy the Titian." And she was so modest that she never—it was always "private collector" or "private donor" or something. In this one it said, "Mr."—[inaudible]—his name—"Vladimir," or whatever his name is, "Kogut and Mrs. Edsel Ford." And that was so sweet.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes. She had the touch.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: So that was characteristic of her.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: She was very touched by this man whom nobody had ever met, who did what he did.

AVIS BERMAN: But she also, obviously, could be interested in American art and things that she didn't collect.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Mm-hm. [Affirmative.] She was totally supportive of Larry—totally.

AVIS BERMAN: And I guess the museum, too, was—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: —was that her main cause, or did she have others?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: She had several other—well, she was active—symphony, and the Merrill Palmer school [Merrill Palmer Institute for Child and Family Development]; she was a very big supporter of the Merrill Palmer school, and other cultural things. But the Detroit Institute of Arts was her main interest.

AVIS BERMAN: And had she studied art or art history or anything?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Not to my knowledge. I think she'd been brought up as a lovely, well-to-do little girl,

and maybe taken to Europe, and taken around and given the grand tour. But I never sensed, from anything she said or anything she did, that she had a basic grounding in the world of art.

AVIS BERMAN: Grounding. And to your knowledge, were museum directors from other cities courting her?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I think they respected her. But in those days, Sherman Lee was in Cleveland; Otto Wittmann was in Toledo. And there was a sort of a collegiality with Ted Richardson. I don't think there was anything about poaching. I do know that she gave money to the MoMA, because I've seen her name on the wall, but I think that was because of her relationship with Lizzie [Plummer Bliss]. With some of these women, these rich women—they asked her to be supportive, and she was.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, exactly. Well, only because when you've mentioned before, for example, Lydia Winston Malbin, is that her collection became a grail for museums from all over.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, well, that was a whole different thing. And she encouraged it. Lydia was a totally different piece of work, totally different woman. And Lydia, it was disappointing, because she had gained so much. Larry put her on the Art Commission. She had gained so much out of her relationship with the Art Commission and so forth and so on. She was an important collector. And when she left, she left them a little [Claude] Monet—some second-rate Monet or something—and it was wrong. It was wrong. She'd been treated very well; she was not a very good person.

AVIS BERMAN: She was not gracious about that.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Not at all, no.

She had a wonderful sister and brother-in-law with whom we were very friendly—Eddie Rothman and Ruth Rothman.

And her brother-in-law said famously, well—oh, once we were having a talk. We were together, and Eleanor Ford said—sort of placating, because they were criticizing her; she was not behaving well—and Eleanor said in this sweet way, "Well, she's her own worst enemy." And her brother-in-law said, "Not while I'm alive." [They laugh.] So that was Lydia.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Now do you want to stop to take a stretch for a minute? Would that be good? Why don't we just pause this.

[Audio break.]

Among the people—it seemed to me that Mrs. Ford really was unique in this—was there anyone else from her culture in Detroit who had that breadth of interest? We did mention some collectors, but—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, her cousin was the main—Bob was extraordinary. He was unique to the Detroit—

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Because you had all the carmakers there.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. What happened in Detroit was an interesting cultural thing. A lot of the tycoons then of the automotive industry came and went. You see, they would come, and most of them lived out in Bloomfield Hills. They didn't live up in Grosse Pointe. And then they were appointed someplace else and moved someplace else. So they didn't, by and large, seem to have the loyalty or the roots in the Detroit community.

AVIS BERMAN: I guess I never thought of Bloomfield Hills as being so far away as to outlaw Detroit from consciousness.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I think it was 17 miles away from the city limits, because I used to make that drive. My kids went to school at the Cranbrook schools.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And I used to carpool.

AVIS BERMAN: Before we get to the Archives, there were two other episodes I want to ask you about, and then I want to concentrate on the Archives of American Art—because I think, if the two of you had done nothing else, that would be an extraordinary legacy. Of course, I'm prejudiced.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: There was also something else that Detroit called the Detroit Artists Market, which was run by volunteers, by and large, except for one paid person. I was on that board. Local Michigan artists would consign some of their works to the Artists Market, and we would sell them. And then we had a garden party once

a year. I mean, this was very Grosse Pointe—that's the way they did things. They'd have a garden party, and everybody would come. And they'd buy things that were modestly priced. But there were some very nice artists. There were some very good artists there.

AVIS BERMAN: I know, and it helped them.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. I understand that it's still extant, but sort of in a different way. I don't know; I haven't kept track.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Well, it's also—if you're saying that there were so few dealers, artists—it was a way for artists—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. No, it was very helpful. Very, very helpful.

AVIS BERMAN: —for artists to get an audience, shall we say.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Exactly.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. This was just the other, sort of, little foray into antiquities that I want to get to today. You said in 1958 the two of you went to Greece, and if that was maybe your first trip—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes.

AVIS BERMAN: —and was an exposure, and if you could recount that or—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, it was just an exciting trip. For the first time we saw some of the great—the Parthenon and all the different things—so it was very exciting.

AVIS BERMAN: The other thing I want is that, I guess you were not along, but it was a really important show at the time, which was this 1959—this Moscow exhibition ["American Nation Exhibition." Moscow, summer 1959; setting for the "Kitchen Debate" of then-Vice President Richard M. Nixon and Soviet Premier Nikita Krushchev].

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. Larry was very much involved in that.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, exactly.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Very—because Larry was on the advisory committee of the USIA by that time. He used to go to meetings in Washington. And that's when they planned this show.

AVIS BERMAN: But what was the USIA doing in terms of art or—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, they were trying to export art—American art—to show the culture. And they had sponsored Larry's trips to Central and South America—where he made 14 trips with 60-some-odd pieces from our American collection. And it was really a wonderful time, because they were trying to show that American people were interested in their own culture, and that a businessman, a young businessman, wasn't just interested in piling up the dollars. He was fascinated with his own culture. And it was very successful.

AVIS BERMAN: It was sort of a replay of what Nelson Rockefeller had done a few decades before.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Mm-hm. [Affirmative.] An expansion of that, yes. And Larry would go down—I couldn't go down because we had three little children. So I went just on several of the trips, which were wonderful. I went to Mexico, and I went to Ecuador, and I went to Argentina and Brazil, et cetera.

Larry would go, and he would give a series of talks on American art. Then he would present the head of the museum or whoever with a whole case of slides of American art. And that was all part of the—and then he would meet with all of the intellectual leaders in each place. It was a fascinating experience. Even the ones that I went on were—and I went to Peru too. But most of the time I stayed home with the children.

AVIS BERMAN: In what I have read about that show, I didn't realize that Larry was there, because there was a lot of publicity. I mean, the only one I thought was there was Edith Halpert.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, that's a real story.

AVIS BERMAN: So that's what I want to know.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Edith was a character, that's all I can say. She came along. She asked Larry if she could come along, because Larry went, and a couple of his friends went with him, and his father returned to Russia for the first time since he'd escaped. And so it was quite an experience. And his father, at Larry's insistence and

suggestion, supplied the carpeting for the American pavilion.

And that was at the same time that there was a whole uproar about not including Jack Levine's painting of *Welcome Home* [1946], which showed the dissipated generals, et cetera. And finally Larry met with President [Dwight D.] Eisenhower. And the tradeoff was this: President Eisenhower decided not to pursue this, but sent several of his paintings to be in the show.

Edith came, and she told the most ridiculous stories about—somebody kidnapped her, and that they held her, and that she did this and that, until—she made up, out of her imagination, all these things that had happened to her in Moscow—which were made out of whole cloth.

AVIS BERMAN: In 1959, is that right?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. Yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Because I thought she was maybe joking about her childhood, because she was brought from Russia.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. Yes. And she said they were after her, and they took her, and they questioned her. Larry said it was made up out of whole cloth.

AVIS BERMAN: And she was telling all sorts of people?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Was this a bid for attention or for publicity?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. I think there was a lot—yes. I think there was a lot of that.

AVIS BERMAN: Because the publicity turned out as if she were the spokesperson.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. No. As a matter of fact, she was a minor character. She was a minor character in that thing. But she pushed herself forward in her imagination and made out of whole cloth all these stories about how she was taken, and she was done to this, and then so forth—I mean, it was absolutely untrue.

AVIS BERMAN: How bizarre.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, it was bizarre. And the thing is, it was a very interesting time, because I have pictures in my book of Larry and all of them, when Khrushchev and Nixon came through, and Nixon wouldn't come anywhere near the Jack Levine picture. He had been coached.

AVIS BERMAN: Yeah. I'm sure that Nixon's interest or understanding of art was nil.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Was nil. Was nil. But he was political enough so that somebody—they had coached him that this is the painting that was causing the ruckus. So he bypassed that part of the gallery.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, supposedly there was a lot of controversy because they were very prudish—because wasn't there a Gaston Lachaise? There was a cast of *Standing Woman* [1932].

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That was a—no. No. The real issue was the Jack Levine.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Because it was a nude woman, and the Russians were kind of prudish about that.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. Yeah. No.

AVIS BERMAN: In Edith's telling, she—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Everything that Edith said was a fantasy—because when we came back, Larry said, "She wasn't on the same trip we were on."

AVIS BERMAN: [Laughs.]

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Because Larry saw a lot—you know, she was around. And he said, "What she concocted"—it was attention-getting, and as if she were the main character.

AVIS BERMAN: Because I remember Lloyd Goodrich telling me that she had told him she was various things.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh. And Lloyd later—even though Lloyd was —and Edith were good friends of ours—he

said, "She's nuts. She's really nuts." But she had the need to be the center of attention. And I have to say for Edith, there were very many good things about her. She was very supportive of her artists and passionate about them. And so for that I give her full credit. And she was very nice to Larry and me. She called us "the kids from Detroit."

AVIS BERMAN: That's why I wanted to ask you, because it was so—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: It was flagrant.

AVIS BERMAN: You would have thought that she was leading the delegation, from what came out.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. She was an afterthought. She said to Larry, "Oh, you're going? Can I come?" Larry said, "Sure, we'll make the arrangements."

But by that time, Larry had two of his friends and his father; there were four men who went together. And he had to shut his father up, because his father kept shooting off his mouth. As they came in from the airport, the man was driving, and my father-in-law was sitting in the front. And they were passing these housing units—[laughs]. And he said, "In our country, we would call them slums," or something.

AVIS BERMAN: [Laughs.]

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And Larry said, "For God's sake, keep quiet. Keep quiet." He had to rescue him several times, because he was not very circumspect at all. But at any rate, Edith was—it was a total fabrication.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, the two of them should have gone off together.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: They should have gone off together, yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: [Laughs.]

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: But at any rate, it was a fascinating experience apparently.

AVIS BERMAN: Thank you for straightening that out. Because there was another Edith story that she told that—about the Lachaise, that they were complaining about the woman. And she said, "Oh, she's like Mother Russia."

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. Well, she just concocted all this stuff. I don't know why.

AVIS BERMAN: Very interesting.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I think it [was] attention-getting. She wanted to be perceived as the centerpiece of this whole thing.

AVIS BERMAN: And did that change your relationship with her—[inaudible]?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, by that time, you see, we were buying from a lot of other people. And she didn't like that either. [Laughs.] We were buying from Frank Rehn; we were buying from Babcock; we were buying from—even bought from Manny Rousuck at Wildenstein. So we were no longer her property. But it didn't spoil it when we were together. She always had us to her dinner parties, and we always had a jolly time. And she introduced us to a lot of people.

AVIS BERMAN: In those days, were collectors really the exclusive property of a dealer?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, she would have liked it to be that way. But it was never, you know—

AVIS BERMAN: I mean, obviously, she had some very important clients like—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, she had the Salingers—the Salingers. She had—oh, what's the name of that wonderful couple that had the whole dining room filled with—

AVIS BERMAN: She had the Lowenthals [Edith and Milton Lowenthal].

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: The Lowenthals, yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: She had Roy Neuberger.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: She had Roy—yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: But she dealt—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: But not exclusively.

AVIS BERMAN: I mean, I don't think people did that after a while—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, no, no.

AVIS BERMAN: —because nobody had everything.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. She had—what was—oh, that couple—I can't remember their name—who had Arthur Doves in—just all around—

AVIS BERMAN: The Lanes [William and Sandra Lane]?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, it wasn't the Lanes. Kramers or something. I really can't remember their name. But I remember being in their dining room, and it was just—because I loved Dove.

As long as you just continued buying from her from time to time, she was okay.

AVIS BERMAN: Today there are certain—there may be a megadealer, someone like [Larry] Gagosian, and maybe he functions as an adviser and gets everything else for you. But I don't know if any dealer in America had that position—or maybe [Joseph] Duveen did for certain people.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, there was a gap, because there were the Duveens and those—but these were the Americans.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And that wasn't important. That wasn't important. So they were left alone. There were a few pioneers who were just buying American—but nobody was paying any attention to us, which was fine.

AVIS BERMAN: Yeah.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And Joe Hirshhorn came along like a—like a Hoover and was vacuuming everything up in his day. But he was all over the place.

And he didn't know half of what he had. It was so funny about Joe. Larry one time was—Joe wanted to take him down to his warehouse, because he had bought some Persian glass, and he wanted to show it to Larry. So Al Lerner and Larry and Joe were in the car. And Joe started telling, like, "Larry, I just love your Thomas Eakins. I just think it's—and you have that other Thomas—and I just love it, and I'm so jealous." And Al Lerner quietly from the front seat says, "Joe, you have six." That was Joe. And Joe was on the Archives board at the beginning too. He was at that dinner. He was so funny with Mrs. Ford.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, tell me about that.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, because he was so brash, and he was so out of control. This plain—this guy—and he didn't know how to behave. But he was okay. He was okay.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, but was he interested in the Archives?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: He wasn't a generous man outside of what he was doing. Let's put it that way. But he wanted the luster of being on this important board with Mrs. Ford and all these people.

AVIS BERMAN: Why don't we get to the Archives of American Art, because—first of all, I know that in your book it had the suggestion that you name it the Fleischman Archives of American Art?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, that's what Ted said.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. But who came up with the title "Archives of American Art"?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I think Ted Richardson.

AVIS BERMAN: I mean, it's kind of a perfect title, and I don't—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: It is.

AVIS BERMAN: I mean, I'm not someone who's good with titles.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, because Larry and I were not in a scholarly field, and Ted was. Larry turned him

down about Fleischman Archives of American Art—and I think I told you why—because he said, "Look at the Whitney Museum. Everybody thinks that the Whitneys support it completely." He said—[laughs]—"Barbara and I will give you \$100 to open up a bank account, but that's as far as we can go right now." At any rate.

AVIS BERMAN: But it was a great idea. And I know he had said there were so few books written—did he have a model or a manuscript collection or anything in mind when he was thinking about this?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Who? Larry?

AVIS BERMAN: Larry.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. No. No. He was just—I think I told you—it was a rainy April day, a Saturday. And he was at home, had come home early from work—at about 3:00 in the afternoon, I think. And he came to me, and he says, "I have this idea." He says, "I've been trying to find out more about John Quidor. I've heard that he painted fire engines to earn a living." And he was up there in northern New York.

We had Quidors; we had several Quidors. And he says, "It's so frustrating." Because Larry was a—what do you call it, a manqué—he was a scholar. He really just didn't want to possess paintings; he wanted to know about them. He wanted to learn about the people who created them. And he said, "I've got this idea, Barbara. What do you think of this?" And I said, "I think it's a brilliant idea."

AVIS BERMAN: But what did he say to you?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: He said, "This country's too big." And he said, "Scholars are not well-to-do. They can't afford to go into every nook and cranny of this country, because it cost a lot of money." He said, "Wouldn't it be nice if in some way you could have all the papers all together in one place, so that if a person wanted to write a book about something, he could go to one place and have it?" He had no idea of the techniques of it, but just the idea of it.

And he said, "What do you think?" I said, "I think it's a great idea." He said, "I was thinking of bouncing it off of Ted." I said, "Go to the phone," and he went to the phone. And he called Ted; Ted was around. And he went down there, and he said Ted immediately saw the brilliance of the idea. And he said, "We can do microfilm." Larry had never—and I—we didn't know what microfilm was.

AVIS BERMAN: But Ted knew about microfilm?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. Yes. He said, "We can microfilm these things, so that even if we don't get the original papers, we can gather copies of what are in other collections," blah blah, blah blah.

AVIS BERMAN: Because that in itself was a great idea, rather than thinking we just have to get everything.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: See, but as a scholar, he knew. And of course, the first thing we did, when he hired [Mary] Bartlett Cowdrey, was, they microfilmed the American Philosophical Society holdings. That was the first thing they did. It was a revelation to Larry.

AVIS BERMAN: It's kind of astonishing that Ted would have an inkling of what might be out there in terms of collections that were already there. But did anyone have a sense of how massive the documentation could be?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I think we just kind of—[laughs]—we went forward. I think Ted may have. I never discussed this with him. He may have discussed it with Larry, but I was never privy to any of that conversation. But neither one of them thought that the idea was monumental in—so big that it couldn't be done.

AVIS BERMAN: Thank goodness. If you ever knew what anything was like, you'd never do anything.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right. And the thing was, from the very beginning, Larry wanted Latinos; he wanted African-Americans covered; he wanted craftspeople covered. And the other thing that he said was, "And really, in the last analysis, we don't care if we can't get everything, as long as somebody has everything and we can be collegial." He said, "We can't be selfish, as if we're the only ones in the world. But we've got to make sure that these things aren't thrown away."

AVIS BERMAN: And also, had you had any experiences with artists' papers being thrown away? Had you run into that yet, or were you aware of it?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. No. This was Larry. It was absolutely Larry's thought.

AVIS BERMAN: So the two of them get together. Did their thoughts run to having a board first or trying to collect something?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. They went to Mrs. Ford. And she was wonderful. She grasped it immediately. That's how intelligent she was. And she swung her personal support, and then went to the Ford Foundation. And they—for the first couple years, for a few years—were supporters of the Archives and put it on its feet. And then she suggested—and it was appropriate, since nobody knew Larry, that Charlie Moore should be the president of the Archives of American Art.

AVIS BERMAN: And I'm not sure who he is.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Charlie Moore was, I think, the head of public relations at the Ford, the Ford Motor Company. A very affable, nice man; I don't think he cared one hoot about American paintings—[laughs]—but he was a good centerpiece. And it was very helpful, because the Ford Foundation connection, Mrs. Ford—so that it worked for the first few years.

AVIS BERMAN: And when was this board organized?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I think in '55. The idea was '54. I think they began getting to the people in '55 and '56.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, was there a sense—because this is always one of the problems for the Archives, and thankfully, one of the virtues, is, it's not glamorous. Did it seem to be glamorous?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, it was amusing. The board was really an amusing board, because it had these diverse people on it. Vincent Price was very helpful.

AVIS BERMAN: How did you get to know Vincent Price?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Larry didn't know him. Larry called Edward G. Robinson first.

AVIS BERMAN: And how did he know him?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: He didn't.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, okay.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: He didn't. But somebody made it possible for him to talk to Mr. Robinson. He was very interested. But, he said, "I am in the midst of a very, very painful divorce. And it's jeopardizing my collection," and one thing and another. And he said, "This is just not the moment."

AVIS BERMAN: He was the one with supposedly the best collection.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. He had the *Three Skulls* [1900] of [Paul] Cézanne and all these wonderful pictures. And then the divorce, I think—they had to divide it up between his wife and him, and so it was very unpleasant. So then Larry had heard, as we had heard, of Vincent Price. So Larry called him. And Vincent said yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Just out of the blue?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Out of the blue. Larry told him the idea. He thought it was a wonderful idea. He was a passionate collector. He was a very fine art scholar himself; he had studied in London.

AVIS BERMAN: I think he had actually started as an art historian.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]

AVIS BERMAN: And acting was supporting the collecting habit.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right. That's right. And then he collected for Sears [1962-71, for sales to customers]—you know that collection [the Vincent Price Collection of Fine Art]. And he was a darling and became a good friend. I'll never forget when he came over to the house one time, and afterwards he wanted to get presents for the children. He said that for Martha—she was yea-high—a diamond necklace, he said. [They laugh.] He loved Martha. But he was wonderful, and he was very helpful with his contacts.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, also, people probably wanted to meet him.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. And he made himself available. He made himself available at different events, so that we could—and he spoke at different events. And we got different people to speak.

AVIS BERMAN: And did he know other art people?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: He knew the whole art world, particularly California. He knew the whole art world.

AVIS BERMAN: What I do not understand on the board is, why or how Al Capp—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I just don't know whose idea—I don't think it was Larry's idea. I think he had been in Detroit and expressed an interest in the museum, and had met Ted, and had come through and so forth. And they thought it would—that maybe with his contacts—I don't know what he ultimately contributed. He was an amusing guy. But I don't know what he ultimately—

AVIS BERMAN: I mean, certainly at that time *Li'l Abner* was a very popular cartoon.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. Yes. So it was an amusing addition. Henry du Pont was very nice. It was nice for du Pont, because he stood for something very special in the museum world and in the whole world of art and American décor. He had wonderful American furniture, et cetera. So that was one. And the Firestone woman—it was—that was a Ford connection. And, let's see—and Joe Hirshhorn.

AVIS BERMAN: These people, of course, were there to, of course, contribute money and—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And spread the word.

AVIS BERMAN: —and spread the word. Did any of them have collections or papers or access to papers?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, I don't think so. And I don't think any of them—I don't know where—Vinnie Price's probably went to Yale [University], because he was a Yale graduate, and he was very, very loyal to Yale. I don't know what happened to Al Capp's papers. At any rate, we went out to make a committee in Detroit, and then, of course, expanded it to a New York committee.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Well, how and when did that come about?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: A couple years later, what happened was, Ted had inaugurated an extraordinary exhibition of Flemish art ["Flanders in the Fifteenth Century: Art and Civilization." October—December 1960]. And it was started in—let's see, where did we go? Belgium—where was it? What town was it? Oh, gosh, I'm having a senior moment.

AVIS BERMAN: Bruges? Ghent?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah, Ghent.

AVIS BERMAN: Ghent.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. And it was—and the king and queen of Belgium were there, and we were there, and it was supposed to be also at the Met. But I think it was [James] Rorimer who decided to call Ted and say, "I demand that it start at the Met." And Ted said no. And they pulled out. So it was Ghent and Detroit. And it was a major show—a major show. As a matter of fact, we were told that in JFK's hotel room was a copy of the catalogue. But at any rate, what happened was—let me see.

Oh, so the exhibition was in Detroit. At that time, they had hired Peter Pollack, who was from the Chicago Art Institute, and really a pioneer in photography. Peter was really a bright guy. He was—[laughs]—I liked him very much. He was brash and irreverent but smart. And he was a good public relations man.

He and Larry sat down and concocted the idea of inviting a group of New Yorkers to come under the aegis of the Archives. They would come, ostensibly, to see the show, which was attracting people from all over the world, but really plug the Archives and get them—so they got Eloise Spaeth and the Weinsteins and Henry and—oh, Henry—who had all the Cézannes.

AVIS BERMAN: Pearlman.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Henry Pearlman and a whole group. And they chartered a plane. I think there were maybe 40 of them or something. And they came to Detroit. And they saw the exhibition. And then Eleanor Ford had them all out there to her place for cocktails. And we wined them and dined them. And that was the birth of the New York committee.

AVIS BERMAN: What did you have to show them from the Archives?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, we showed them the Archives office, because there was an office there already. It was a fledgling office, and Ted was still the head of the Archives from a standpoint of the—shall we say, scholarly head. And we'd show them, and he and Larry gave a talk to them and told them about the Archives and what it was. Eloise Spaeth glommed onto the idea right away. She helped organize it with Peter Pollack. And that was the beginning of the New York committee, which was very key and very important.

AVIS BERMAN: Absolutely. And did they start a New York office too?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: They had a New York office, yes, a small office. I really don't recall where or what.

AVIS BERMAN: In the early days when you're starting, when there's only Detroit, who is out collecting things?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, [Mary] Bartlett Cowdrey.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, I thought—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: She had been at Vassar, I think—a woman's college [New Jersey College for Women, later Douglass College, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ]. She was a scholar. They had hired her right away, even before the New York committee. And she was going through Philadelphia. She had started with the American Philosophical Society and then was going through Philadelphia and then started with New York. And she started collecting. Then they started—not broadcasting, but revealing to people that this is what we were doing, and this was our charge and our mission. And it began to take shape.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Was there a microfilm facility at the museum, at the Detroit Institute of Arts?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I don't know whether it was there. There was microfilm. I don't know—Bartlett was using microfilm. I don't know the details of that.

AVIS BERMAN: Because those would be for collections you couldn't have.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right.

AVIS BERMAN: I mean, the early ones, like the New-York Historical Society, they did the microfilm.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah, well, they did the American Philosophical. That was the first charge that Ted gave to her. Ted was in charge until later on, when [William] Bill Woolfenden took over.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. We should talk about Bill, of course, and how and why and what he—you know, and if you knew him before, and—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Bill was the director of education at the Detroit Institute of Arts. We became friendly with him then, and he became a friend. He was a delight. He was very amusing and very dedicated to the Detroit Institute of Arts. Larry and Ted persuaded him, though, to become the director of the Archives. And he saw that as a big step up and was delighted to do it. And that's when the whole center of the archives was in the Detroit Institute of Arts, for those years—until 1970, when Dillon Ripley [then secretary of the Smithsonian Institution] persuaded them to become part of the Smithsonian.

AVIS BERMAN: So the Smithsonian made the overture here?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, absolutely. We had met Dillon in other connections, in the Vatican and so forth and so on, and traveled with him and his wife and daughters. And, oh, no, he wanted the luster. He recognized that this was a very important institution. And he wanted it part of the Smithsonian.

AVIS BERMAN: So before that, there was the Detroit office, and there was a—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: A New York presence someplace.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. But was it—whether or not it was a building or—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I think the Archives would tell you that. I'm vague, but I know that there was some place in New York.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. When you moved to New York, was there a New York office somewhere?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, yes, yes, because I remember I was deputized by then, Howard—

AVIS BERMAN: Lipman.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah, because they wanted to put me on the board. I was deputized, and it was so funny that I was doing some work with—Milly Glimcher helped me and, what's her name, Rausch [ph] and—oh, what's the name of the other woman? Three women—wait a minute, Betty Rausch and—I'll think of the third woman. And I saw Betty Rausch for the first time in about 35 years at a party last week. [Laughs.] It was so funny. It was very nice to see her again. And these women helped—I was doing some kind of development work and they came and helped me.

AVIS BERMAN: So there was no presence in Washington before the Smithsonian?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No.

AVIS BERMAN: No. Was it because Ted Richardson was too busy?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, I mean, it just didn't occur. They were so busy with the Detroit group and doing fundraising in Detroit.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, I meant to say, was he too—in other words, why Bill took over—Bill Woolfenden.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, because Ted had too much, and he was getting ready to retire anyway. He wanted to turn over the reins.

AVIS BERMAN: And so Garnett McCoy did not come until [1962]—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Garnett came—yes, Garnett was there, but he was an archivist.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, but was he part of the Smithsonian, or was he—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, no. He was before that.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, so who found Garnett?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I don't know whether—it must have been Ted and Bill.

AVIS BERMAN: And so was Garnett McCoy originally from the Detroit area?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I don't think so. I don't recall.

AVIS BERMAN: Because Garnett certainly was a very strong collector at that age.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Yes, and he was passionate about the Archives and was very conscientious—very good.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, he was terrific. It wasn't just a great idea; you really had to find the right people to bring that off in the beginning.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: To bring it off, it's just—an idea on its own is nothing until something happens.

AVIS BERMAN: Because you really had to have intellectual people as well.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right. No, he was a real find.

And then we went about—Ted—not Ted, but Peter and Larry, based on the success of the New York trip to Detroit, started something which was called the Archives Trips—the airlifts.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, I thought—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Nobody had ever done that.

AVIS BERMAN: Had never taken their constituencies on trips?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right, it was a fundraising—you had to pay \$500, above. And the first one we went on KLM [Airlines], and went to four cities, visited collections, went to the embassies and so forth, wined and dined. And then everybody started to copy that. Everybody. But we were the first.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, well, that's interesting. And because it was so rare, you probably did get real opportunities there.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: It was funny though. No, I didn't realize that it started with Detroit. I somehow thought that Eloise had started it, because she—no?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. It was Peter and Larry. They were—we were sitting at dinner. I remember clearly Larry's father—Larry owned an apartment hotel called the Lee Plaza Hotel.

AVIS BERMAN: The what plaza?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Lee Plaza Hotel in Detroit on West Grand Boulevard. It was an elegant hotel. Peter was in town, and we had him to dinner there. And they talked about the success of the airlift from New York to Detroit. And Peter said, "What would you think?" And Larry said, "Why not do this, charter a whole plane?" And the two of them started—and I'm sitting there listening to this whole thing. And the two of them put it together.

AVIS BERMAN: Though, in retrospect, I'm sure that Larry had a very frustrating time at the carpet company, but the outlet for all of that were these incredible—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, it saved him.

AVIS BERMAN: All of these ideas that he couldn't do in his business, I think—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: It led him to—you're absolutely right.

AVIS BERMAN: To all these other things.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: You're absolutely right. That enriched his life. And don't forget, about that time he was on the board of the museum.

AVIS BERMAN: Because in terms of ideas, he was just percolating constantly.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Exactly. Exactly. And up until the very end he had ideas.

AVIS BERMAN: Do you think, in retrospective, when the Smithsonian took over the Archives, was there anything that you would change, looking back?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah, well, Larry was very concerned. What happened was we were, by that time, here in New York—Larry and I. And our bonds with the Archives, outside of giving money every year, had been loosened completely. Bill Woolfenden had become very, very friendly with Irv Burton. And he made him the chairman of the board. And he lasted only a year because he was no good.

The Burtons were jealous of Larry and me. Irv wanted to have his wife put on the board. And they balked at that. They said one Burton on the board is enough. But they—for example, when I moved to New York, they didn't want me to be put on the board. And Howard Lipman insisted. Bill Woolfenden and they sat down with us one time when it was announced that we were moving to New York. And they said to us, "You know, here you're a big fish in a small pond. You'll go to New York, and nobody will ever hear of you again." I'll never forget that.

AVIS BERMAN: So Bill and the Burtons said that, or—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah, to us. You'll never be heard from again. And so that was their attitude. They wanted to have possession of the Archives. But Howard Lipman brought me in. Larry was not consulted, nor was Ted.

AVIS BERMAN: Ted wasn't? That's really shocking because—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. They decided that they were going to go—Dillon was very persuasive. And when Larry heard about it, he said, "On the surface, it sounds wonderful," he said, "but wait until the government has cutbacks." He was very prescient, and he understood. But nobody had called him or Ted and said, "What do you think of this idea?" They just kept it to themselves, and they went ahead and did it.

Of course, it does have the luster of being part of the Smithsonian now. But it has its problems, its fiscal problems, as a result.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, and there were a lot of problems just to get anything done—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Mm-hm. [Affirmative.] And the bureaucracy and the red tape are so exhausting and so frustrating that it's really—it really slows everything down.

AVIS BERMAN: In terms of what you were doing, were you experiencing, pre-1970, problems with storage? Where was everything going?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, in the Detroit office—and I don't know—at that point, to be very honest with you, I don't know if they had offsite storage someplace. But the Detroit office was in full swing there.

AVIS BERMAN: I mean in terms of volume of collecting, and I don't know where they were collecting in New York either.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah—no, I don't know. That I don't know. But you could find that, you know, I'm sure.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. I'm just asking from your point of view.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: From my viewpoint, I didn't know.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Because we were sort of out of it by that time.

AVIS BERMAN: So when it was absorbed by the Smithsonian, it became a bureau of the Smithsonian, did your involvement cease for a while?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, it had ceased before then.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: As soon as we moved, Larry was—as a matter of fact, some of them didn't want his name on the stationery. They said, "No, he's a dealer." Not really, he was a founding member. And ultimately, they put the three founding members—him and Ted and Eleanor—which exist today, the founding members of the Archives, which is appropriate. But there was some jealousy and some things there.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. And where was Mrs. Ford? Was she still involved in the—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: She was involved, and then she died.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: She died.

AVIS BERMAN: Which probably made a big difference.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. Well, she gave money every year. And then, I don't know if you were—I think you were around when I insisted that we have one of our dinners in her memory. Do you remember that? A few years ago.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, yeah. Exactly.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah, because I felt that it was her due.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, and she—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Felt it was her due. And I was glad I did it. And I got her granddaughters to come and so forth and so on. And the Ford Motor company gave \$25,000 towards it. So that's nice.

[Audio break.]

AVIS BERMAN: One more question about the early days. In terms of getting the word out to the people with the papers, the artists, the collectors, the living artists, how was that done?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, that was done with the professionals. We simply did things to raise money. We had dinners. Larry got a Grosse Pointe friend, Harold Love, to be on the board. And he had an idea for having a machinery auction. And that raised money. We had several machinery auctions.

AVIS BERMAN: What is a machinery—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, being in Detroit, there was a lot of used machinery. And small companies wanted to buy it. So a portion of the sales went to the Archives. It was arranged. So Everybody thought that the Archives' ideas for fundraising were very amusing.

AVIS BERMAN: They were a lot more eclectic than they are today because they're much more related to the so-called mission—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Exactly. Exactly.

So Larry and I, and Harold Love and his wife, who just died at the age of 97 last month, worked on development and getting ideas for raising money and reaching out to the community. We developed some very staunch supporters. And so that kept us going. And then Eloise Spaeth started organizing New York and got very busy

with it and came on the board. They were raising money in a variety of ways. And so that's what happened.

AVIS BERMAN: Whose idea was it to start an oral history program?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I think that was—that was professional, whether it was Garnett and Bill—

AVIS BERMAN: The first ones are from about 1959.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, then Ted must have been involved.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. I mean, I'm not sure if they called it an oral history—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: See, what you have to understand is, there's a demarcation between the professionals and the volunteers, which is appropriate. And so I would hear of—Larry knew about these—Larry was privy to everything. He knew what was happening. And if he were here, he'd be able to tell you. But I can only conjecture that this did not come from—this idea did not come from Larry. This idea came from the professional scholars.

AVIS BERMAN: Because taping someone wasn't something that was done that much in art history then, for several reasons. Because most of the time the work wasn't being done for it—people took notes if you were talking to an artist.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And it was all amusing because when they persuaded Edith Halpert to do it, she said, but it has to be sealed for 25 years. And of course, 25 years went by, and it was unsealed. So Lindsay was able to write her book [Lindsay Pollock. *The Girl with the Gallery: Edith Gregor Halpert and the Making of the Modern Art Market*].

AVIS BERMAN: Exactly. Edith kept it sealed as long as possible because I think Edith—you know, they—she felt she was too old and wasn't at her best either, so there was that.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. Well, at the end it was very sad because Larry even went and took some Kennedy Gallery employees to hang her shows at the last because she was really not doing well. And we were loyal to her—crazy as she was, we were loyal to her, because she had figured in our collecting life.

AVIS BERMAN: When something like that happens, you remember the person as he or she was; you don't think about what's happening at the end.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Absolutely. Absolutely. And I remember we took her to dinner at the old Russian Tearoom, and she liked it very much, but she was already not functioning terribly well.

AVIS BERMAN: Because I think the only oral history program—I could be wrong, but I'm pretty sure, I mean, it was famous—Columbia University had started an oral history program about 1948 or '49.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. Yes.

AVIS BERMAN: But I don't think there were too many other ones at all.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, no.

AVIS BERMAN: So this could have been the second major oral history program.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, yes. Mm-hm. [Affirmative.] But I'm convinced—I know that it didn't come from Larry. I mean, I'm delighted to say that the idea of the Archives came from him, but these other things were things that the professionals sat down and decided where they were going to go next, what papers they were going to try for, what artists they were going to try for. And so that was completely the professional side, which was appropriate.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Well, at that time there was no competition for things [papers]. The point was to save them from the dumpster.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, people were throwing things out.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, or people didn't know where to put them.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Where to put them.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. So finding out that it existed is—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right.

AVIS BERMAN: —is the important thing. And then the other big thing, by about '64 was someone's idea was to go back and cover the WPA [Works Progress Administration, 1935-43]. [Referring to the Archives of American Art's New Deal and the Arts project, which include more than 400 interviews of artists, administrators, historians, and others involved with the federal government's art programs and the activities of the Farm Security Administration in the 1930s and early 1940s.]

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: And I don't know—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I think that was Ted. Because that was such a seminal moment in the world of American art. We had discussed it, I know, with Ben Shahn, who was a friend—became a friend of ours. And, of course, Ben was very involved in whole WPA thing—

AVIS BERMAN: Of course.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: —with his photographs and his art and so forth and so on.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, and Barbara Shahn was too.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right. That's right. So I think that that was something that we all agreed upon.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Yeah, I wonder also if possibly—and I again I don't know if Garnett had come up—if he had been there by then, because Garnett was always interested in unions—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, Garnett was there in the '60s. Oh, yes. Because Garnett was there before we moved to New York.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, okay. Because Garnett was always interested in unions and left-wing activities—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. Yes, he was a very liberal young man.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, and very—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: [Laughs.] Young man.

AVIS BERMAN: He always loved all of that stuff too.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. Yes. And that was so significant—so significant.

AVIS BERMAN: Not just collecting the papers, but they did a hundred interviews. They were short. They were less full than we might like them today.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: But they were there.

AVIS BERMAN: They were there.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right.

AVIS BERMAN: They just concentrated on the federal art projects and not anything else.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right.

AVIS BERMAN: All right. Okay, well, thank you. That's all for today.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: All right.

[END OF TRACK 2.]

AVIS BERMAN: This is Avis Berman, recording Barbara Flesichman for the Archives of American Art Oral History Program on January 20, 2012, in her apartment in Manhattan.

We're going to start with the Kennedy Galleries. I want to establish some of the reasons why the Fleischmans decided to leave Detroit. How did you or your husband focus on Kennedy? And why did he pick that gallery? How did that come about?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, I think that in a sense, it was a very stodgy gallery, dealing mostly in prints and in western art. But they had occasionally gotten some interesting things—I think the Hudson River School—but

rarely. But we bought them. And we became rather acquainted with the Wunderlichs, with Rudy and Eleanor. And it just seemed, I think, to Larry, that that was a good stepping-off place for him. And of course, what transpired is that he changed it drastically.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: But Rudy was very malleable in that sense. He went his own way. And so it was very easy for Larry to put a strong, different stamp on the gallery and make it come alive.

AVIS BERMAN: Now, did he feel [he] had to learn the business from someone?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. Larry was a consummate businessman and a salesman. He was very good in the family business. The only drawback to that business was his father was so controlling, he didn't allow him to have any—Larry, as the younger man coming up—to have any control or any creativity in the business. So this was extremely frustrating for him, because Larry had a lot of imagination; he had a lot of ideas to make things better. And his father just held the reins.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. I just meant, in other words, you did not come to New York and open Fleischman Gallery; you went into something established. That's what I'm trying to—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. I think Larry found that that was a very good beginning and that the Wunderlichs welcomed it. They welcomed some new blood, in a certain way.

AVIS BERMAN: A lot of your collection went into—you brought—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. That was part of our payment, because Larry had made it very clear to me. He sat me down and said, "Barbara, now, I'm going to be a dealer, and we cannot continue collecting American art." He said, "You know how we felt when we, as collectors, have gone into galleries and have said, oh, we like that, and the dealer says, 'Oh, that's mine.'" He said, "I will never do that to a client. It's not right." So we divested ourselves, as part of the deal, of the vast proportion of our—

AVIS BERMAN: Right. But did it go into the inventory of Kennedy—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes.

AVIS BERMAN: —or was it sold privately away?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, no. It went into the inventory. It was part of the deal. It was part of our payment for the interest in the gallery.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And the only things that we kept were things that artists had given us and gifts and a few things like that.

AVIS BERMAN: Was it hard to get used to being a dealer after being a collector for a handful of those years?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I think Larry was energized, because it gave him the inspiration that he needed to do something creative on his own in the business world. So it was very exciting for him. And I supported him a thousand percent. I was sad to—because I had become very fond of the things we had collected. But I saw the reality of what Larry said. So I entered into the excitement full-steam.

AVIS BERMAN: And as a dealer's wife, did you have any sort of special duties or things that you were involved in?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. I was really always in charge of the social side, because I loved to cook and bake, and I loved to entertain. So it was very easy for me to make the contribution when we would have openings or dinners for artists or dinners for collectors or scholarly things. It was easy for me to plan the menus and the seating and the wines and everything. And that gave me a sense of belonging, but without impinging on what was the gallery itself. And of course, when Martha graduated from Sarah Lawrence [College], and then Larry persuaded her to come into the gallery, we always teased that two Fleischmans in the gallery was quite enough.

AVIS BERMAN: Did Martha have any other ideas about what she might like to do with her future other than—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I think you'd have to ask her that. Martha specialized in medieval art, as you may or may not know. But I think she was challenged—she had grown up, from the time she was a little girl, surrounded by American art all over the house and in her bedroom. And what we did was—with our children—we never were

didactic with them. We never said: Now, listen, this is a John Marin, and you should know this is the—we just let them live among the things and enjoy them. And one of the funnier things was, we once hosted, for a little cocktail, members of the College Art Association. And there was a great scholar, Anna—oh gosh, she was a Peale scholar [Lillian Miller]. And Martha was maybe six, seven—I don't know how old she was. And when she went up into the bedroom, Martha was there with a ruler and she was explaining the Anna Claypool Peale paintings to this woman. And she had no idea that this woman was the world's authority on the Peale family.

AVIS BERMAN: [Laughs.]

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: So it was very amusing. So they were steeped in it. Martha was steeped—and in a way, it was a natural progression for her to choose that.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Right. When you say Larry put his distinctive stamp on the gallery, what were the big changes that came about?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, the big changes, of course, were representing contemporary artists. Over the years, we had established relationships with people like Ben Shahn and Jack Levine and Hopper and Burchfield and quite a few of those artists. And some of them came to Larry as soon as it was known and announced that he was going to be—because several of them had maybe dissatisfaction with where they were, or they were in limbo. And so it was very easy to start to represent them.

And of course, Larry had a great eye, which Rudy did not have. Larry was able, even in the 19th century, to start finding things that were really of great quality rather than just mundane. He was not interested in the western art, nor was he particularly interested in the print department, although it was a very successful department—old American prints.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, right, because that was from when it was Kennedy and Wunderlich, and Edgar Kennedy—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: From the—E. J. Kennedy from the very, very beginning.

AVIS BERMAN: Yeah. Right. Well, he was a friend of [James Abbott McNeill] Whistler's, and that's—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right. Yes. So the Whistlers were fine. But there were others that were—you know, views—very nice, very nice, and not—I don't sneeze at them. But Larry had other ideas. He was a very creative businessman.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. And how were the Wunderlichs about phasing those areas out?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, they were just sort of a side—they weren't phased out. The print department remained the print department for many years. I think they were comfortable and began to do very well. [Laughs.] The gallery began to really do very much better financially. It was getting a different reputation all through the art world.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Right. And also, then the gallery, as it was, never would have established the *American Art Journal*.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. No. That was Larry's idea. Mm-hm. [Affirmative.] No, and he—because of his strong feeling for scholarship.

AVIS BERMAN: Nobody did that. That was unique for an art dealer at the time—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. That's right. That's right.

AVIS BERMAN: Something that was different than putting out announcements of your acquisitions.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Exactly. And he had a strong feeling about it. That's how he started the Archives too.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: He had a very strong feeling that scholars should be able to make a contribution and should be recognized.

AVIS BERMAN: Where and how did the conflicts or differences develop between Larry and the Wunderlichs?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: There was not like a war or anything—nothing. I think that Larry went his way, and Rudy went his way. Rudy was not a direct man. And he was not a particularly ethical man. He was doing things on his own that—many of which were discovered after we became the sole owners—very distressing, very

disturbing.

But Larry was creating all this excitement and buzz with all the exhibitions that he was starting and all of the artists and so forth and so on. It was really very exciting times. Rudy drifted in and out with his big western hat. And he went his way. He went his way. Larry didn't realize, and we didn't realize, that there were some things that were not very straightforward, let me just put it that way.

But there was never any open war or anything. No. It was like two streams going through. He was continuing with the western art and the [Charles M.] Russells and the [Frederic] Remingtons and everything. His mother was the so-called *éminence grise*, and she was a tough lady.

AVIS BERMAN: That's Eleanor or—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. No. That was his mother. His wife was Eleanor. And Eleanor was never—she rarely came into the city. She was up in Ossining [NY], leading her own life.

AVIS BERMAN: So this would be—was it Margaret? Was that the mother?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: She was tough, Germanic. And she was very, very respectful of Larry. So there was never anything like that that was going on—a war or disagreements or anything. And they were glad, because the reputation of the Kennedy Galleries was being heightened all the time and was taking its place for its genre right where it had never been before. So she was very respectful. But she was a kind of woman who didn't want the staff to wear pants—women, pants.

AVIS BERMAN: Not modern.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. She was very, very controlling. But she was very careful of Larry—very, very careful. And we got along fine.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. I guess on the management, did you come in as partners and then eventually become sole owners?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. We came in as half partners. And then some years later, Larry bought him out —

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, and then—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: —because Rudy—his marriage was then falling apart. He had —loved somebody else in his life in Chicago. And he was losing interest. It was much to the chagrin of one of his sons; he was very amenable to Larry's buyout.

AVIS BERMAN: And then after that he left the gallery?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. That was part of the deal. And then he moved to Chicago and divorced and remarried and began leading a totally different life.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Okay, now I want to get into some of the things that Martha mentioned, both about the gallery and things that I should ask you about. Just a couple of earlier stories that she said that you should tell me about. You were there when an airplane crashed into—was it the Empire State Building?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, but that was long before. That was in my youth.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, okay.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. No. That had nothing—when I was a very young girl in my—it's when—[inaudible]—was six. I was probably 12 or 13. And my parents—it was during the aftermath of the Depression—wanted to give us a treat. In those days, you got into the car, made no reservations. And with my young cousin and my brother, we came to New York. And we were walking on Fifth Avenue when we heard—and of course, the exaggeration: "The Empire State Building has fallen down."

And that's when that happened.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. No, it was a famous time; that's what I thought, but I'm just going through these.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, but that's way—

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Yeah. Also, you had mentioned earlier when we were talking about, actually, your theater background—but you weren't interested in most actors, except for Vincent Price, and the other one was Jack Lemmon. What was your friendship?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, we met—that was in the later years. We had Jack and Felicia for dinner. We met them—oh, I was at that time—I was on the board of what was then the Museum of Television and Radio. I was on that board. And we did a lot of entertaining. A lot of these stars would come in and do programs and be honored and one thing or another. And we kind of hit it off with Jack. And so we, from time to time, saw them when they came into New York. He was a very delightful, lively man. And Felicia, his wife, was very attractive. I think she may even still be alive. But we lost touch many years ago.

AVIS BERMAN: I know that he was more interested in drama, of course. But he went to Andover [Phillips Academy], so he was exposed to the Addison collection [Addison Gallery of American Art].

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. And he was a wonderful pianist. He loved to play the piano. And so it was just a nice interlude. You know, when you meet people like that along the way who are so gifted and creative, it's great fun.

AVIS BERMAN: I didn't know if he collected, or if he—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, I don't think so. I think maybe they had some things, but they were not in that world, not like Vincent.

AVIS BERMAN: And Martha said I should ask you about two collectors, Winton Blount—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. Winton Blount. Yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: —yes—and the gallery's relationship with him.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, well, it was very funny. Winton Blount was the last postmaster general of the United States when it was designated as a—under Nixon. They were from Montgomery, Alabama. And one day, his wife—his first wife—and a decorator drifted into the gallery. They—Red Blount, Winton "Red" Blount had—they said they had a new home, and that he had designated that for \$5,000 they could buy something for over the fireplace.

So they came in. And Larry was showing them things and showing them things. And then Red came in. He was a toughie, but a darling, lovely man, a very charming Southern man, and a very tough businessman, very able. And he came in and started talking—he says—he was kind of shifting around and so on—and Larry starts showing them some other things that he had. And he became riveted by Larry and by the works of art. And so he sent his wife with the decorator away, and he began to talk to Larry.

So he became a wonderful collector. He became fascinated. And he was crazy about Larry. They formed a lovely friendship. Here he was, this Baptist Southern Republican, and Larry, this Jewish Midwestern transfer to New York—Democrat, progressive. And they developed this great, great friendship. And Larry built his collection, which was wonderful, which he ultimately gave in his lifetime to the—what do you call it—is it the Montgomery Museum?

AVIS BERMAN: Montgomery Museum of Art.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Montgomery Museum of Art. And they did another thing. He divorced his wife and then married another charming, charming lady. And they started the Alabama Shakespeare Festival on their land, because he had acres behind the house. They went all over the world looking at Shakespeare theaters, and they had people in London giving them advice and everything, because his second wife was passionate about the theater.

And I remember then they built this place with great gardens and swans. And it's a very important part of the state, as an educational thing as well as a very, very special theater. It's part of the community. It's the Alabama [Shakespeare] Festival theater. And we went for the opening, and that was great fun, because we were great friends.

AVIS BERMAN: And also Martha mentioned that I should ask about Baron Thyssen [Baron Hans Heinrich Thyssen-Bornemisza]—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Ah, well—[laughs]—Heini Thyssen was, of course, an elegant, elegant, amusing, and attractive man who had a great history. His father was a great collector. And he had great flair and taste and a

passion for collecting. Somehow he came into the Kennedy Galleries, and he and Larry became fast friends. Larry sold him a lot of things. He bought from other people, but his friendship with Larry was very, very special—and us.

And it's interesting that when Larry worked with Cardinal [Terence] Cooke to establish the Friends of the Vatican Museum, he got both Thyssen and Red Blount to be [on] the committee. So there was a Baptist and a Catholic. And we had great times. We had fun with them. We traveled, and, of course, Thyssen was from another world. He was a very, very patrician man, but very wicked—great sense of humor and very much fun.

And so we had lots of fun, especially as he began to have different wives and different lady friends. One of the things he did—he wanted to regain his Catholicism, even though he'd been married three or four times. And Larry arranged for our mutual friend, Archbishop [Paul] Marcinkus, at the Vatican to visit with him. And so he insisted that Larry come with him. Larry said, "Look I'm Jewish—what—I have nothing to"—"No, Larry, you've got to come with me." And it was so funny because Larry was down in the lobby, and there he was with his lady friend, whom he later married.

AVIS BERMAN: Was this Gloria or a wife before?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. No. No. This was the last one.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, okay. The Spanish one?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Because it's not—yeah. Gloria was another—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, no. That was—that was two or three—I don't know. She was the last one. And Larry said, "How can you bring her?" He said, "I'll have her stay in the hall." You know, it was very amusing. The thing that was interesting about it was, which is not so important to this story, but that Marcinkus said to him, "Look, if you can tell me that your father insisted that you marry your first young wife, I can have that—these annulled." And he wouldn't do it. He said, "It's not the truth, and I won't do that." So he was very honorable. But he was a delightful man. We had lots of good times.

AVIS BERMAN: So did he ever become Catholic again?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No.

AVIS BERMAN: No?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. I mean, he never was approved by the church then. But he enjoyed his life. It didn't bother him. [Laughs.]

AVIS BERMAN: Well, what I find very interesting is here is—I mean, how many Europeans of his backgrounds collected American art?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And then there was another couple from Sweden. I don't know whether Martha mentioned them, Johan and Betty Throneholst. They had run the great chocolate factory in Sweden, their family. And Johan had gone to Harvard [University], and Betty was a Chicagoan, and they drifted into the gallery, and they began to buy American art from Larry.

AVIS BERMAN: No, she didn't mention them. But the Baron, I just wondered if you had any sense of why he would even look at American art, because most of them never would have.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: He was omnivorous. He really reached out. He was just a very curious man, and he was delighted, and I think he responded to American art. I really think he did.

AVIS BERMAN: Yeah. No, I would understand that the Swedish couple might have, because she was from Chicago, but—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: But Johan, it was Johan who was the driving force. He had been exposed to—you know, at Harvard, he'd probably gone to the Fogg [Museum] and been there.

AVIS BERMAN: Boston and all of those other things, right. So I'm not sure if this has to do with Kennedy Galleries per se, but Martha said there was a funny story about Lee Bontecou. Were you at the Venice Biennale with her? Is that correct?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, no, it wasn't Lee Bontecou. It was—oh, God, the Venezuelan sculptress.

AVIS BERMAN: Marisol [Escobar]?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Marisol. It was not Lee Bontecou, it was Marisol. It was a very funny story. We used to go every year to Europe; only we could only go in those days in August, because the gallery was closed in August. And we always ended up in Venice at the [Hotel] Cipriani, because we adored Venice, and I still do. And we'd stay at the Cipriani.

And they had—one year, it was so funny—they had formed a little tiny room that had two chairs in it as a little hairdressing unit, and I was in there getting my hair done. We were going to some place, I don't know. And Marisol was in there, and she had long, stranding black hair below her waist in the back. And they were busy fussing with her, and fussing and washing and cleaning and drying and combing, and so forth and so on. And she thanked them and then she went out and dove into the pool. [Berman laughs.] I thought that was a very funny story.

AVIS BERMAN: [Laughs.] Yes, it is. It is. Were you able to talk—she was pretty quiet, but did—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. No, she was very reserved. I mean, it was pleasant, but it was just a passing, passing event.

And actually, I like Lee Bontecou's work better than Marisol's, come to think of it.

AVIS BERMAN: Something else that Martha had said was that I should—that it would be good to talk about—Larry commissioned musicians to do—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. Yes, he loved music. He had this idea. I don't know where all these ideas came from, from him. It was just amazing.

We had become friendly with Bill Schuman, who was then the head of Lincoln Center. And Frankie, his wife, and I were on the board of Channel 13 together, and we became friendly. And we appreciated his talent. So Larry went to him and said he'd like him to write something in the spirit of Ben Shahn. And he did. He wrote a canticle ["In Praise of Shahn," 1970].

AVIS BERMAN: Was Ben Shahn still alive then?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, no. It was shortly after he died. And he wrote a lovely piece of music, and Leonard Bernstein conducted it at the New York Philharmonic. And I think it's been conducted since then. So Larry thought that was a good idea.

And we became friendly with Morton and Shirley Gould through the Schumans and our friends the Bernbachs, and he got Morton to write something, an homage to Charles Burchfield ["Burchfield Gallery," 1981].

That was performed—I think it was Lorin Maazel at the Cleveland Symphony performed that. I don't know. You know, I haven't kept track of it. And his last thing was, he was going to get Leonard Bernstein to do something about Jack Levine, but Leonard Bernstein got sick, and then the whole—it never happened.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Well, we should talk about your relationship with Jack Levine, and the gallery's relationship.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, we knew Jack from the time that we met him when he was represented by Edith Halpert. He was a very bright man, a very acerbic man, with a loyal wife who was also a painter. We became friendly. He was very talented. He was talented as a very young artist, and he and Hyman Bloom kind of, in the Boston area, moved on to become very significant artists.

Ultimately, he came to Larry, and he wanted to be represented, because by that time Edith was going downhill and evaporating, and Charles Alan was not doing right by him. So Larry took him on, and we had a series of exhibitions of his work. There was one difficult thing, because his wife, as I say, was a painter.

AVIS BERMAN: Ruth Gikow.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: But she's not terribly good by our standards. She was run of the mile—

AVIS BERMAN: Run of the mill.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Run of the mill, yeah. [Laughs.] And I think Larry had one show of hers—Martha would be able to confirm that—but it was a sticky thing. Larry avoided it, and—but they were constantly putting pressure on him to give her her due in the same way that he was giving Jack. And I think that made for difficulties.

And Jack was basically a very, very acerbic—

AVIS BERMAN: Very bitter.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: A bitter man, a very bitter man. And he was always angry. He was always angry, and ultimately he left the gallery.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, Martha said he also, I guess, evidently once lit into you because—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: What?

AVIS BERMAN: Martha said that he once really lit into you, or called up and yelled at you about—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: About Larry?

AVIS BERMAN: Well, or not showing Ruth, or not doing enough for Ruth.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, yes. And I recall it vaguely, but I remember that I said, "Look, I have nothing to do with the philosophical side and the business side of the gallery. And I think Ruth is a lovely woman, and I like"—you know, blah, blah, blah. He was angry about everything. He was angry about everything in his life.

And he was particularly angry, of course, because the world began to pass him by. Abstract Expressionism came on, and he was mad that he didn't get a show at the Whitney, and he was mad that he didn't get attention from MoMA. So it was not only directed at Larry. He was, in general, a very angry, bitter man.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. But he was also very intolerant of the least even tinge of abstraction.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. No, he had no interest, and he had contempt, and that was based on, really, the fact that these people were getting a reputation and were doing something very different. It was very sad to watch, and it disrupted things for us, although we were never intimate friends. We had a friendly relationship. And you know, we would go to their house for dinner; they'd come here occasionally.

And of course, in the context of giving him a show, we would have a lovely dinner with lots of people, and people who supported him and collected him. And so we did right by him, but nothing could change his—what he did was he chose Ruth Gikow's—our inattention to her as the focal thing that made him the angriest. It's sad. It was very loyal on his part, but it was very sad, because Larry did have a certain integrity, and he would go just so far with that kind of thing.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, right, exactly, because there were plenty of artists who had spouses—I mean, you couldn't just—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Absolutely.

AVIS BERMAN: —[inaudible]—to start that.

Did this come from Rudy Wunderlich, or was this your or Larry's choice to put Millard Sheets in the gallery?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, it was Larry. Rudy knew nothing and paid no attention to anything that was contemporary.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, okay.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: We met Millard, I think, when we went out to California to work on the Archives there, to get a branch going. We met Millard, and he was a charming man. He was a certain oeuvre, you know, and he did very nice, very nice things. Larry did very nicely by him, and he was very popular when Larry had a show of his.

We became friends. He was not a great artist. He was not a Burchfield; he was not a Hopper. He was not a Marin. But he was a professional, serious artist, who was in his own groove, painting certain things that he was—in his travels—that were very charming. He was charming.

AVIS BERMAN: He was very influential in the history of California art.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, and he was a great teacher. Apparently, he was a great teacher. We visited them up there in Northern California, and we formed a friendship, as one does when you're a gallery owner, and you like somebody's work and so forth.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, that's—artists like you if you like their work.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Of course, of course.

AVIS BERMAN: Because that's them.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: But that wasn't enough for Jack, you see, because I liked a lot of his work, but that wasn't enough. He lived and died a bitter man. I could understand, to some extent; Abe Rattner was bitter. Because these are people who soared and soared in the '40s, and were so important, and attention was lavished on them, and they were given articles and so forth, and all of a sudden the world changes. All of a sudden, they see the world go by. That happens with actors. It happens with musicians; it happens with writers.

AVIS BERMAN: It happens with everyone, really.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And so I must say, not being in that field myself as a professional, I would imagine that it would be pretty difficult to keep your equilibrium when all of a sudden you see the world passing you by, and nobody's writing articles about you anymore, and nobody's begging you to have a showing at a museum. So it's understandable, but Abe Rattner was not—he may have been bitter and everything, but he was not as angry, in that sense, as Jack was.

AVIS BERMAN: And I also think it's worse for actors because, I mean, an artist can keep painting or sculpting. It's hard, because you need to make—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: But if as an actress doesn't have a part—

AVIS BERMAN: Right, you can't—you can't do it.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: —you're absolutely right.

AVIS BERMAN: Because it's collaborative.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And that's very sad.

AVIS BERMAN: So that's, I think, that's—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's a difference.

AVIS BERMAN: At least artists or writers can keep creating on their own.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right.

AVIS BERMAN: You might not get published or seen, but—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right, but you keep working.

AVIS BERMAN: Or there's something you can do.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right.

AVIS BERMAN: No matter how other people judge it, so I think performing arts is a lot harder in that—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I agree with you, and I see that all the time.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, this was someone that Martha mentioned—Godfrey [O.] Gaston from the Kennedy Gallery. He was a secretary there?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I think Gaston, yeah. I don't remember.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I don't know. You'll have to follow up—

AVIS BERMAN: —on that, with Martha on that. And then how did Lillian Brenwasser come to the gallery?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: She applied for a job as a secretary.

AVIS BERMAN: Because she was always there.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. And she is a bright, energetic lady, and very attractive and very darling, a wonderful person. And she worked herself up to be vice president. She's very organized. She's very able, and

she's very grounded. She became like one of our family. She was so dear.

AVIS BERMAN: That lady was not a slacker, to say the least.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, no. No, absolutely. Absolutely, she was totally professional, and she did her job well. So she segued from being a secretary, moved on, and of course, Larry recognized her qualities and immediately gave her more and more responsibility, and more and more salary and title, until she was the vice president.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Now, who were some of the other employees in the gallery who went off on their own, or had established good careers as dealers—who were there?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, Susan Sheehan did.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, I didn't know she was there. I didn't know she worked there.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Deedee Wigmore did.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, this is like a second graduate school.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Mm-hm. [Affirmative.] I'm trying to think. Jacques Wiegert did. I'm trying to think of people. Martha could give you names even better than I. Because she was intimately involved.

AVIS BERMAN: Was there anyone there besides Martha that Larry might have been grooming for the next generation?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. They were all steeped in the Wunderlich mode. I wouldn't say Deedee and Susan were, but—oh, and what's her name, too, Mindy Moak.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. These people moved on. But for a variety of reasons in each case, Martha was the one. Martha had the most flair; she had the best eye. And she had the personality that attracted dealers—not dealers—well, dealers, but that attracted collectors and museum people.

AVIS BERMAN: I have not been all around the apartment, but did you collect Early American furniture? The reason I ask this is because I know that both of you were very friendly with Harold Sack.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. Everything that you see in the house, virtually everything, when we were living in Detroit, and we were furnishing our home, was from Harold. He and Larry were very good friends, and he had a wonderful eye. They had great things. When we needed a sofa, when we needed an armchair, when we needed a table—

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, so even if it wasn't, say, Federal furniture, you would—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, we've—it ranges, late 18th century, but mostly 19th century. We have Philadelphia, and we have Boston. It was not like some real collectors of furniture. We were not furniture collectors. We just wanted to buy lovely things that fit in our house, and they worked with all the things that we had on the walls.

AVIS BERMAN: So you weren't a purist furniture period or maker?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, no, not at all. Not at all. We have something from Rhode Island. We have some Philadelphia. As I say, different. We have a Duncan Phyfe thing tucked away. So it was just a matter of having—and for us they were like sculpture. They were sculptural, and that was the pleasure we got out of them, as pieces of sculpture that actually furnished our home.

AVIS BERMAN: And was he recommended to you by Edgar Richardson, or did you find him another way?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I think he was. I think he was.

AVIS BERMAN: Because they were really, really famous.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: When we moved here in '66, we had virtually almost everything. Now, for example, that captain's table right there we bought after we got here, but through the house virtually everything—we had one corner chair and something else—but we had the beds, and we had all the things that we enjoyed. And we enjoyed them on that level, but we were mostly focused on painting and sculpture, really, in a definite way. But not the furniture.

AVIS BERMAN: But nonetheless, you went to the best.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, absolutely. And people kept on saying in Detroit, oh, you're buying from Harold Sack? He's more expensive than anybody. But time takes care of that, and all the things he sold us were of very, very good quality, and a couple things great. So we had no problem with that. We knew we were in the right hands.

AVIS BERMAN: And did you ever sell any of the furniture?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, no. We traded. When we came here, there was a certain kind of chair that I needed, a certain kind of thing, but I never—no, all of this is from the '50s.

AVIS BERMAN: Amazing.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. The only thing that we bought when we came here was, we went to Doris Blau and bought—

AVIS BERMAN: Rugs.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: —Oriental rugs.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, now we're going to get into the collecting of antiquities, because once you became dealers, you were not going to be collecting American art.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Right.

AVIS BERMAN: Where we left off the last time is that Dietrich von Bothmer looked at the vases you had and said to get rid of them.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: The Hearst vases, yeah. Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

AVIS BERMAN: And when would that have been, about?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I think—give me a minute—I'm going to have to really reach back here—in the '70s. In the '70s.

AVIS BERMAN: And then did he start advising you as to what to look for?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: We met Dietrich, and Larry expressed an interest of seeing—and Larry was a passionate collector. He couldn't resist collecting. And of course, he had been interested, and we had bought a few things early, early on—just a couple, like the vases and a couple little things. And he felt that this was something—reaching back to the ancient world was no conflict with what he was selling, American art, during the day, and that it was fascinating, and it was fun. And that's how we embarked on it.

And so we met Dietrich. And then he came to the house, and that's—I told you, he immediately told us we should get rid of those Hearst—they weren't good enough, the Hearst vases. And we started to go to dealers both here and in London. And we began having a great time.

Mostly in the '80s, I think.

AVIS BERMAN: The '80s, right. You bought a house, or a flat, in London—was that because of your interest in antiquities?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, no, I think we just loved London. We liked to go there often. When we had the flat, we would go five or six times a year. We kept luggage there, and we kept some clothes, so we could just walk on the plane and go there. And then sometimes we would go to France or Italy or Greece or someplace, but many times stay in England and go throughout different parts of the United Kingdom. And it was great fun.

AVIS BERMAN: Who were the American dealers that you started buying from?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, let's see. Michael Ward and Ed Marin, and who else? I'm having a block. Ward and Ed Marin were the main ones. And then in England it was Robin Symes, and then later those brothers—

AVIS BERMAN: That begins with an A—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: The Aboutaam brothers [Hischan and Ali Aboutaam]. Yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: Now who were they?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: They were Middle Eastern, and they established a gallery here, and they had a gallery, I think in Switzerland, and so forth and so on. And they got wonderful things. Then there were others that we didn't buy from as much, but occasionally. I could give you the names; right at this moment I can't.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: But those were the major ones.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay, well, what about Robert Hecht? Were you buying from him?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: We—yes. We bought some from Robert Hecht, yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: He got good things too. He was a scholar. He was a pirate and a scoundrel, but he was a scholar. He knew what he was—

AVIS BERMAN: "He," Robert Hecht?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Robert Hecht.

AVIS BERMAN: When you say "a pirate and a scoundrel"—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, because he was the one where we first learned—from a story that he told us one night—about how he was taking things out of countries. And that disquieted us. That was the first thing that—because we were just having a good time. And Shelby and Leon were collecting, and this one was collecting, and we were forming just new friendships and scholarly relationships. It was fun. Nobody was making any—showed any interest in any of this.

But one time we were at dinner, a group of us, and Bob Hecht was regaling us with a story about how he and his wife smuggled out some things in a farmer's cart under some cabbages. And this was very disquieting. It put us off from dealing with him.

AVIS BERMAN: So after you heard that, did you—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: We were very chary of having dealings with him.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, but—and I just want to go back. Before the dealers, how else were you educating yourself besides the dealers?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Reading. Reading, reading, looking at exhibitions, looking at collections in museums.

AVIS BERMAN: And the museum collections would have been—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: The Met. Boston—we were on the Visiting Committee at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts in the Greek and Roman department. And then later on the Getty.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. We'll get to that later—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah, that was later.

AVIS BERMAN: How about the British Museum [London]?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: The British Museum—we became involved with the British Museum.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. At this point—there's a certain point where you established support groups, right?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. Larry started the Caryatids, working with the then-keeper to set up a support group. And then—

AVIS BERMAN: That's at the British Museum.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's the British Museum. And then he went to Dietrich, and he worked with Dietrich to set up the Philodores at the [Metropolitan Museum of Art]—which still exists. That was Larry's idea. And then Larry went to Jock Howat in the American department, and Larry organized with Jock the William Cullen Bryant [Fellows]. And Larry got Leonard Baskin to do a medal to give to each person who—I don't know where the rest of the medals are these days—each person got a medal who joined. It's a big success, that William Cullen

Bryant. And I mentioned that the Philodores—I had nothing to do with it.

AVIS BERMAN: Was Dietrich von Bothmer advising you on other things to buy?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: He would—no. He would occasionally say, "You know, so-and-so I think has a nice vase," or something—but not in a very aggressive way, no.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Well, okay, so you are now beginning—what do you decide—you told me that antiquities, to you as collectors, eventually meant Greece, Rome—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And Etruria.

AVIS BERMAN: —Etruria. What kind of objects caught you the most?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Any kind. Bronzes, terracottas, marbles, gold—anything that was handsome and that made a statement that was exciting to us. We had no restrictions. We did not go into Egypt, because Egypt is a very, very separate civilization with its own parameters. And I don't think you can go across waters. So we were really the Mediterranean, that part of the—and I loved the Etruscan people—still do—and I loved what they created.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, those tombs are so wonderful.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, oh, yes. And their relationship with women was so wonderful. They were so much more egalitarian with women than the Greeks or Romans were. You can tell by the sarcophagi, where the men and women are lying on the top together. And they had a great sense of humor. I love the Etruscans.

AVIS BERMAN: So this is just going back to being chary. Were there any dealers in Italy that you could deal with?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Never. We never, never bought in a country of origin. Never.

AVIS BERMAN: And that was because—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, we just steered clear. We had the sense that this was not appropriate. And we didn't go there to buy. We found that people were getting beautiful things in London and getting beautiful things here. And it was more accessible to us, and open.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. And did you have a sense of provenance or provenience at the time?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, you know, really—[laughs]—we were very—all of us were naïve. Museums were naïve, collectors were naïve, and we just went—if they said it came from a wonderful Swiss collection, or it had been in Germany all this time or something, we believed what the dealers told us. That's the essence, really, of what it was.

And whether you call it naïveté—I don't call it stupidity. I think we were living in a different world. No country was making any noise until it became politically very advantageous to do it.

AVIS BERMAN: Now—and again, I am not a specialist—I can't remember any, as you say, political advantageousness. Did that begin with Melina Mercouri and the Elgin Marbles?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, that was part of it. Yes. Yes. And it was very funny, because our friends told us—at the British Museum—that she and her husband and an entourage came into the British Museum, and they were being escorted around. And they came into where the caryatids are—just before you go into the Duveen Gallery. And she stood there weeping and weeping—

AVIS BERMAN: [Laughs.]

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: —and how this—and then the keeper said very modestly to her, "Madam Mecouri, that's from Turkey."

AVIS BERMAN: [Laughs.]

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: So then she went into the Duveen Gallery and began weeping again. It was a big—I think she cared passionately about this—

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: —problem, as a Greek woman. But she made it into a big dramatic thing.

AVIS BERMAN: She made it into a cause.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. Yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, or a cause celebre. Right, exactly. Well, because she was also famous, she was the first one to put it over.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, absolutely.

AVIS BERMAN: Because the Greeks had been complaining for years and years.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. Yes, right.

AVIS BERMAN: And these dealers were all considered reputable, that you—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, they were distinguished dealers. And they knew, and they got wonderful things. And we just—nobody ever asked—you were told—"Well, where did this come?" "Well, this was in a great Swiss collection," or "This was—came from here." It never came out of the soil. Never, never. There was always—it had been owned by so-and-so. And I guess you could say that it was prevarication.

AVIS BERMAN: In American art a lot of times, as you know, you have to present these sheets with all the provenance. Did they have all of that?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. I have records upstairs that tell where everything, seemingly, came from. Now, of course, in hindsight Larry and I realize that we were probably lied to. Everybody.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. But he—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Museums. But that came much later.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And Larry never lived to see this dreadful, dreadful time.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Well, the smear campaign, shall we say—among other things, so. But Robert Hecht was the only one that you were—I mean, but you thought he was the lone person—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: As I say, we were disquieted by that. And Larry said, "I want to be very careful. I want to be very careful if I buy anything from Bob."

AVIS BERMAN: Right. But you didn't think about the other ones.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: We didn't think about the vast world. We didn't think about the vast world.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And I'll tell you—there was nobody who was warning you. There was Dietrich and the people from the Museum of Fine Arts and Princeton and so—nobody was saying, "You know, you're buying—"—because they weren't careful either. They were buying innocently and delightedly, just the way we were, until the eruption came.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Because I think there had been—although this is a different area—certainly, shall we say, an eruption about Pre-Columbian art and tomb robberies.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. Yes.

AVIS BERMAN: And that became stricter maybe sooner?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. Yes. And we learned about that because Lillian Brenwasser's husband dealt in Pre-Columbian, and the Merrins did.

AVIS BERMAN: Yeah. Well, and also it's why André Emmerich had to change his business too.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Exactly. Exactly.

AVIS BERMAN: So that was sort of, you know—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: So that was—would you say it was a precursor of this?

AVIS BERMAN: But it wasn't enough—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: But that was very obvious. It was a very obvious thing.

AVIS BERMAN: So at this moment, besides Dietrich von Bothmer, who were the other people at the Met you were—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, Max Anderson. And Max at that point was a Romanist and was enthusiastic and so forth. He later turned tail and began to be holier than thou. But at that time, Larry and I met Max and his then-girlfriend, the Ferragamo girl—we met them in Naples and spent a few days together in Naples, and Larry squired us all around and going to the museum there and so forth and so on. And Max was part of our life—advisory life—at that time.

AVIS BERMAN: What were some objects that he advised you to have?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: You know, I can't remember.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. And he was working for the Met then, or was that—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: That was before he was at Emory [University].

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.

AVIS BERMAN: Yeah. Did the Met expect to get your antiquities collection?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I think maybe so.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Well, here is the question: When you were making this, were you thinking about giving it to any—what were the—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, ultimately everything that we were going to have was going to be given to some—we ended up giving small objects to our children that were not really terribly important, but very enjoyable and so forth and so on, so that they could feel part of this thing, little terracottas and so forth.

But the major things—I think Larry always had a very great sense—his mantra to me always was, "If you've been lucky enough in life and been treated well, you give back to the community." And that, of course, has continued for me. I think that if you've been blessed with the ability to gather things together or to be interested in a field, then it's an obligation to do something back into the field or into the city or whatever.

AVIS BERMAN: You're right, by the way, about the museums, because they've had to give things back too.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Ultimately, but not then.

AVIS BERMAN: No, no, no, they were things—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Everybody was gliding along happily.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Does Thomas Hoving enter into your life at all?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, Tom we knew. Tom was a showman. And he was not truthful at all. I remember a very interesting thing, when he wrote one of his books, that somebody asked Ashton Hawkins whether they were going to have it in the shops in the Met. He said, "We don't stock fiction."

AVIS BERMAN: That was probably *Making the Mummies Dance*.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: I mean, I have that—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And it's filled with all kinds of exaggerations and untruths and everything. I remember Danny Davison, who was on the board then at the time, saying to me, "You know, he wrote a whole thing about, 'I had this rich uncle who had acres and acres of land and tracts of land that he was giving me out in Wyoming' or something." He said, "It's an absolute lie."

But Tom did some good things. He started the whole idea of blockbuster shows. But he really made a lot of mistakes. He overstepped himself and paved the way for Philippe [de Montebello] to be much different.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, right, exactly.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And now Tom Campbell.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, this is not the antiques, but I think this is so important: you might now talk about the [John] Vanderlyn panorama room.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. Yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: That is a great room. Now, did that survive the new wing? Is that still—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, of course.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, okay.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: It's a very important—they have meetings there. They sometimes have board meetings in the Vanderlyn panorama. Oh, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: I love that space.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, it's wonderful. You see, what happened—we became a little bit more acquainted with the museum. And then we were approached to help. This was in the '70s.

So what we did was—at that time Margaret Frazer was this wonderful person in the medieval department. Although that was not our main interest, she came to Larry one day and said, "We have so many things that are in storage out at the Cloisters, and we would love to—Philippe said we can have a little gallery for secular art—medieval art. Would you do anything about it?" And he said, "Yes." So there it's the Fleischman Gallery.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I don't know if you've ever seen it.

AVIS BERMAN: I've been all through all of them. I probably haven't noticed that that—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. You'll see it. It's the last gallery going into the [Charles] Engelhard Court.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: It's a charming little gallery. And we loved Margaret, who, unhappily, died. There were other things and so Larry began to do things, like, with galleries—this was in the '70s—endowed the chair for the chairman of the department. And then they came to him and said, "Well, we have this fascinating thing. It's been rolled up all these years." And Vanderlyn, in the early 19th century, the panoramas were very popular, and they had this whole little building downtown—way down—

AVIS BERMAN: It was near city hall.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: —where they had it, and for 10 cents or something you'd come and see this wonderful panorama. And then it had been rolled up and forgotten. And now they rediscovered it and asked would—and so paid for the conservation and installation of it.

AVIS BERMAN: And as a matter of fact, that was going to be in my murals book as one of the earliest ways of—you know, because it was an environment.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah, yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: I always thought that would be a wonderful thing to have in there.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, and I find it charming. I love going in there. And there are all kinds of meetings—the William Cullen Bryant has its annual dinner, and Martha has taken on that membership and invites me. So our cocktails and our voting on works of art that we're going to pay for there, it takes place in the Vanderlyn panorama. It's a delight.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, great. How did you get involved with antiques at the British Museum, and who were—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Larry always adored the British Museum. And what happened was that when he was a young 18-year-old—not sure, a 19-year-old—doughboy, when he was in the infantry during World War II and he was in London for a while, at that time they had moved so much of the collection away and buried it—the British Museum.

But they had an Edward VII gallery—this long, long gallery, which is now devoted to Asian art I think. And what they did was they had a sampling from every department, so that people could come in and get an idea of what the British Museum represented. And he spent a lot of time there. He never forgot how wonderful it was for his eye and education to go into that gallery and see these supreme things.

I think he introduced himself to Brian Cook, who was then the keeper of ancient art. He and Brian struck up a friendship, and we became active there and helpful. Because we've always felt, and I continue to feel, I don't care where in the world it is: if you're doing wonderful things that should be supported, and I can support in a little way—or Larry can support—you support it, because art of all kinds is universal, and it has no boundaries.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. And so that group that you started, even though you were Americans starting it, did you have any trouble attracting British collectors?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, there were some Britishers.

AVIS BERMAN: Of course, there would be, but I wondered if they—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, we met some wonderful—like the [A. G.] Leventis family, who were Cypriot collectors. There's a Leventis gallery in the Met here. They were darling, a lovely couple, and we became friendly with them. We formed some really nice friendships.

AVIS BERMAN: I think there has been, at least since the 19th century, a long Anglo-Greek community also in London.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. Yes. And, of course, that continues now with the barrage constantly of getting back the Elgin Marbles, which will not go back.

AVIS BERMAN: I would hope not.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: So we had lovely—and so we began going. Then we got the flat, and our activity at the British Museum made justified the whole thing. That was our country house—[laughs]—for example. People would say, well, do you have a place out in the Hamptons or up in western—we'd say, no we have a flat in London. So it was great fun.

AVIS BERMAN: So you've got relationships with the Met, the British Museum, and maybe Boston or Cleveland or —

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Boston, yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay. Were you involved with the Getty before you met Marion True?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, it all came at the same time. We learned that there was going to be a very, very excellent seminar on ancient marbles at the Getty. We had never been out there. And we signed up to go out there. Larry had met John Walsh, fleetingly, because the two of them had been working on the [Robert] Mapplethorpe—you remember the excitement about barring his works of art? Don't you—you remember that?

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, Mapplethorpe. Oh, yeah. Yeah, right, right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And Larry was helpful in that, and John Walsh was helpful on that. So they had met fleetingly but hadn't formed a friendship or anything. So we went out there.

AVIS BERMAN: I think the Mapplethorpe controversy was '88 or '89—maybe '89.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right. And this was, I think, '90, '91 that we went out to that seminar. And we were introduced to Marion. She had heard about the fact that we were collecting, and she said, would it be possible, the next time she comes into New York, she would love to come and see our collection. And that's how it all started.

She came, and she was dazzled. And we formed a friendship because she was almost like another daughter, because she's of an age. And we were so respectful of her scholarly approach and her wisdom and her integrity. It was very impressive.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, I think also, before her, there had been this very shady character at the Getty—this guy—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. It was terrible.

AVIS BERMAN: Frel? Was that his name?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, Jiri Frel.

AVIS BERMAN: So—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And she was cleaning up the act.

AVIS BERMAN: Yeah. That's it. She was—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. She had become like an ambassador. She was concerned about provenance, and she was going all over talking about exchanges and how people could long-term loan things that—she realized that there were some very, very bad things going on. She was the only one who went from Italy to Greece to Turkey, everything, talking about having a better way of dealing with this. And her reward was—

AVIS BERMAN: Well, I think it's true—I mean, some people do say that she took the fall for the rest of the profession.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, she was hung out to dry. She was hung out—she was destroyed. And John Walsh ducked under the bed and became a Buddhist. The people at the Getty—and I was on the board then—I begged them; I said, you're handling this—I said to the board in private session—my adviser during all this was Vartan Gregorian, because Vartan has been on the board of the Getty. He left the board as I came on.

Vartan and I have been very good friends for a very long time. I was on the search committee that brought him to the library. And Vartan worked with me because I said, "I want to make a statement to the board. They're doing this wrong."

AVIS BERMAN: What part were you objecting to the most?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I was objecting to the fact that they were not dealing with the Italians seriously; they were acting arrogant and contemptuous.

AVIS BERMAN: Yeah, because I guess she was indicted in 2005, when—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Who?

AVIS BERMAN: Marion True was indicted in 2005.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Was this before that?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: I mean, but before, what were they—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: About 2003.

AVIS BERMAN: In other words that—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That was before she was indicted, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, but they were being—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: But the handwriting was on the wall that they were not dealing with this in an appropriate way. They were not dealing with the Italians right, and they certainly weren't dealing with her correctly. Because what was never made clear by the press, whether it was deliberate or not, was—as you know better than most people—no curator has the power to buy. They have the power to offer; they have the power to suggest; they have the power to beg; but if the director and the board don't want it—ah.

And as Marion said, "They behaved as though I was running around the world with millions of dollars in my pocket, just throwing it around and buying everything in sight." Of course, that's—but everybody forsook her—everybody did. But Vartan was a wonderful friend to me throughout and helped me through that whole episode. And I asked for a private session with the board at one of the board meetings. And I read this paper.

Because there were Italians who had been in touch with them, said, "We don't like what's happening, because we'd like to have a nice relationship, and we think Marion True is wonderful." There was one man who was the head of the Cultural Commission [Cultural Property Advisory Committee, U.S. State Department]—I can't remember his name; Marion would remember his name—and he was going to be in San Francisco [CA].

He called Debbie Gribbon, who was then the director and the dealer—and the lawyer, Peter Erichsen, and said, "I'd like to come to speak with you and see how we can settle this thing so that it doesn't come to be bad." They wouldn't see him.

That was typical of them. They behaved arrogantly. They would go, and they would not cooperate. They were awful. Debbie Gribbon was terrible, and the lawyer was terrible.

AVIS BERMAN: Is it they didn't understand or—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. Debbie was very jealous of Marion. And for what reason I don't know. Marion never wanted her job. Marion only wanted to be at the Villa. She only wanted to be in that department and bring it into its exciting way, and then that would be it. But Debbie didn't like her. And Debbie was vicious. She did everything to really destroy her.

AVIS BERMAN: Where is Marion True today?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Marion True is in Quetteville in France. She married a lovely Frenchman. And they've just recently bought a little apartment in Newburyport in Massachusetts, right near her mother. She's coming on the 16th—she's coming to America, because her French husband said, "I don't want you to be an exile. You're not an exile. I want you to have some place in your own country." He's a darling man.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, because I was thinking, how is she surviving, and can she work anywhere?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. She was destroyed professionally; she was destroyed financially, and nearly destroyed emotionally, but she has a wonderful husband, and there were people who supported her and—

AVIS BERMAN: You were the only one who, I guess, stood up for her, right?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: On the board? Yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, there were people who muttered and mumbled, oh yes, Marion's so wonderful, but when push come to shove, one of the things I learned in this whole episode—and I learned many things—was how courage is in such short supply.

I didn't care—and I was even ready to stand up and to take whatever blows—and I took some very, very—Larry and I took some very false blows, very bad blows. They couldn't destroy me because I was not in the field. But I would not have done otherwise. You have to respond to the truth. And you have to be honorable. You have to be supportive of people who are being unfairly tried.

[Audio break.]

AVIS BERMAN: Okay, we're going to continue. I'm going to backtrack. This is something I read—and you can tell me if I'm correct—that on Larry's 70th birthday, which was February 14, I guess, 1995, he decided it was time to give the collection—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, it wasn't on his birthday, but it was shortly thereafter that he began to think that it would be nice to really make a plan. He came to me about it. He said, "Look, the Met, we love. Its holdings are so vast and so profound. We know all the stuff underneath, where they can't even show some really brilliant stuff. He said, "The Getty's been wonderful to us. We value their staff. Marion is brilliant." As a matter of fact, I don't know if you know that Larry tried to bring Marion to the Met to take Dietrich's place.

AVIS BERMAN: No, why don't you tell—because that's totally unknown.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yeah. What happened was during this time—it was getting time for Dietrich to retire. So Larry went to Philippe and said, "There is a star out at the Getty. She's brilliant. She's inventive. She's creative. She's scholarly. And I think that you ought to look at her—Marion True." And Philippe just kind of said, "Absolutely."

So he called Marion and said, "The next time when you're in New York, would you come in? I'd love to see you and talk to you." And he did. And she did. And it was very attractive. She was very interested—although she loved California at that time—she was very interested. And she, in her ethical way, went back and told Harold Williams and John Walsh that she was being offered this job.

Well, they offered her the world. They—oh, no, you'll do this; you'll stay—and Vartan told me, because I was not on the board at the time, he said, "And they gave her nothing, after promising her all these things. They didn't

end up going through." Although Harold loved her. Harold Williams loves Marion. But the person who was in charge of all of this was John Walsh. And he reneged on everything. But she stayed at the Getty. And that's when they brought Carlos Picón.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay. Now, again, this is things I have read: before actually making a plan about the Getty, the Getty organized the exhibition ["A Passion for Antiquities: Ancient Art from the Collection of Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman." Getty Museum, October 13, 1994—January 15, 1995; Cleveland Museum of Art, February 15—April 23, 1995].

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. It was going to be in the Getty, New York at the Met, Cleveland, and Boston.

AVIS BERMAN: So four places?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Four places. What happened was that Philippe got on his high horse. And he had a very, very strong conversation with Marion, insisting that it begin at the Met. He was very demanding that it should begin. So that did away with that, because they weren't going to do that. Then what happened was Boston had an upheaval, and their director changed.

And so Malcolm Rogers said, "We have to have a period of transition here. How about after it's in Cleveland—it's going to be in the Getty and then Cleveland—how about then taking it back home, and then six months later we'll repack it and bring it to me." Well, we didn't want to do that to these objects. So we eliminated Boston. And that was enough. The two venues were enough.

So it started in '94; it was October of '94 at the Getty. And it was beautifully mounted—beautifully done. And then on Larry's birthday in '95, it opened at the Cleveland Museum. And it was done beautifully there—just beautifully. Differently, but beautifully.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Now, I had also read—again I can't be sure if anything is correct, so I don't—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, well, tell me, and I'll—

AVIS BERMAN: Is that you had hoped to have a show of the antiquities at the Met, but they wanted you to pay for it?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, yes, that was part of it.

AVIS BERMAN: This same show?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: The same show. Philippe saying, you know, we had said originally that we would pay for the photography—for Bruce White to do the photography—and we would pay for the dinner. And then Philippe came back and said—in addition to other things—he said, well, it's very hard to get a sponsor for a private collection. And we're going to have to talk about this. And Larry was furious and said, no way. Mm-mm. [Negative.]

AVIS BERMAN: Right. After all that you had done for the Met?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah, that's it. That was really more the main reason than what I told you before. I'm glad you reminded me.

AVIS BERMAN: Yeah. And also, did they want you to give objects to the Met?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. They wanted their curator to select the 12 most important objects, and those would be the gift.

AVIS BERMAN: Is that usual?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I don't know. But Larry wouldn't sit still for that. He said, no way. We're withdrawing.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Because in the press, it looked as if it were a different show, not part of this one show.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, no, no.

AVIS BERMAN: I wanted to make that clear.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, that was the same show.

AVIS BERMAN: Yeah, because it's often etiquette, if you have a show, to give one object.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. That was the story. And when Larry heard that, he hit the roof; he was so angry.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, that does sound rather like highway robbery or extortion.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. No, it's not—

AVIS BERMAN: Was that because maybe Philippe didn't want to have the show, and that was the way—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, no. I think he wanted to buttress the—a gift that made it worthwhile.

AVIS BERMAN: And did any other museums have conditions like that?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Nothing! Nothing. No, no way.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay. Well, I think we will stop now for today.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: All right.

[END OF TRACK 3.]

AVIS BERMAN: This is Avis Berman interviewing Barbara Fleischman for the Archives of American Art Oral History Program on January 23, 2012, in her apartment in Manhattan.

I'm picking up with collecting antiquities. I realized I had a general question before we went back to the Getty.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]

AVIS BERMAN: After the initial dismissal of those Hearst vases by von Bothmer, when did you feel you knew what you were doing?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, I think Larry's time building up an enormous library, which I have given to Jasper Gaunt at the Michael C. Carlos Museum down in Atlanta, because they didn't have a really great library. I wasn't going to be doing research anymore here since my collecting days were over after Larry's death. Larry was really a scholar. What do you call a scholar *manqué*, you know?

He really wanted to learn. So everywhere we went, we gathered books and read them and studied them—he more than I, I must say. But I was glad to. And we went to different exhibitions and trained our eyes and learned a lot and went to seminars and lectures and so forth and so on. And after a while, you get immersed in the field. And you're thrown with very, very gifted scholars. And so we learned.

AVIS BERMAN: Are your collecting days really over?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. I always say that Larry was the engine, and I was the caboose. But he was an extraordinary collector and had the passion and the urge. And I, of course, as his wife, was enthusiastic and supported him. But after his unexpected death, I just—the heart went out of me. The heart went out of me. And of course, then compounded by the bad behavior of the Getty and that whole dreadful, dreadful episode, it soured me. It soured me.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Your walls are not bare.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. No. I still have quite a nice group of things that we bought after we made the gift to the Getty. We continued, of course, to buy until Larry's death. And so I have some lovely things here. I enjoy them. I like being surrounded by them, as well as pictures and pottery and drawings and so forth and so on. So my surroundings are rich in that sense.

AVIS BERMAN: What you have on the walls would be maybe what you bought the last two or three years together?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: What we bought, yes, after we made the gift.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, let us go back to the dreadful episode, because there were a couple of things—we mentioned a few of the administrators who were not so great. And I want to ask you if these other ones clash or come into, you your problems with them, which was Barry Munitz.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Barry Munitz is a very bad man. He came out of the California educational system. He was a provost, et cetera, et cetera—a very, very ambitious man socially, very ambitious to really assert himself. He was a guy from Brooklyn who was very smart. And this—being selected, it was crazy. It was before I came on the board. Being selected as the CEO of the Getty was absolutely crazy. He had no interest in art particularly. It

was a cushy and a very prestigious position. And he made the best of it. He warmed to it and became—he became, really, a very—not a good leader in the best sense of the word. He followed Harold Williams, who was a very good leader in many ways. Harold was a fine gentleman.

He was the masterpiece of self-aggrandizement. Everything was for him to—for example, we went to a Getty meeting in London, and he was busy cultivating Jacob Rothschild at such a nauseating degree.

AVIS BERMAN: [Laughs.]

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And so that was very unattractive.

AVIS BERMAN: Did he have anything to do with the antiquities or handling the—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. What he had to do with was he was the man in charge. He was determined that he wasn't going to get any of the blame, because it could be just dumped on the curator, Marion True, which was so cruel and so unjust and so—it had no bearing—no—as I've said to you, and I've said countless times, anybody who knows anything about the museum world knows that a curator has no power. He or she can beg to have something acquired. They can insist upon it. They can want to have something acquired, have all the right reasons. But if the head of the museum, à la John Walsh, or the board itself decides it's either too expensive, or the museum director doesn't think that it fits or something, that's the end of it. That's the end of it. But they managed to tar her. And it's unforgivable.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. And then there was Michael Brand.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, Michael Brand came later.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: He came after John Walsh—after Debbie Gribbon had resigned. John Walsh and then Debbie Gribbon had resigned. And it was apparent from when we were—well, I was on the search committee—there was nobody very important that was bidding for that job, because already the Getty was perceived as a hellhole. People were saying to me privately, who might have otherwise have applied for the job: listen, if they would do that to Marion True, they'll do it to me.

And so he was the best of a—not a great lot. Michael was a nice man, nice man. He came with great enthusiasm. But Barry Munitz made it very clear he was his man. Even his body language at the board—he was hovering over him. And he made it very clear he didn't want him to have anything to do with Marion True. He gave him his marching orders. It was a very bad business. And I think he felt trapped. And then, of course, when Barry was thrown out, and [James N.] Jim Woods came, Jim couldn't resist, as a former great museum director, meddling into his bailiwick. And it was very, very difficult for Michael. He wasn't a top-notch director, but he was an earnest, hardworking man and nice. And he finally—he couldn't stand it any longer.

AVIS BERMAN: But he was an honest person.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Uh-huh. No question about that.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Now what about Jim Woods? How did he improve, or do, anything?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, Jim came after I resigned from the board.

AVIS BERMAN: Let me just pause this for a second. Okay.

[Audio break.]

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I retained many of my friendships on the staff, et cetera. What Jim did was, he came in, found that—the really difficult situation, which was when those people built that grandiose thing, you know, new Getty up at Brentwood—

[Side conversation.]

What he did was—finding out that they had no apparent sense of responsibility about how much it was going to cost to maintain that place. So, of course, the costs of maintaining it were rising and rising. So among the things he did immediately, he cut the washing the windows down to not what they were before, the number of times. The picking up of the trash, he cut. He made the staff go down and pick up their mail. He instituted a lot of things. And he stirred up a lot of bad feeling.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, probably because—this sounds like a country club beforehand.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. Oh, yes. But there was no awareness on the part of the people who—John Walsh and Barry Munitz and all these people, and, really, the former CEO, Harold Williams—they didn't factor in what it was going to cost to heat that place, what it was going to cost to maintain the garden, what it was going to cost, you know. And I see this over and over again with institutions. They just go full steam ahead, and they think it's all going to take care of itself. Well, you have to raise a lot more money, or you have to dip into your endowment a lot more. So there was that. That was after I was gone. I had no experience being on the board with Jim Woods. I had resigned before that.

AVIS BERMAN: Do you think his reforms were justified?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I think that they were—from what I gather from the outside, and it's very hard to know—I think that they were sort of nitpicking. It wasn't really attacking the problem.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. It sounds like, okay, don't have a latte every day, and it'll take care of everything—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. Exactly. Exactly. But that's just what I was getting from the staff and what I was observing. You know, you're having a huge wound, and you put a little tiny Band-Aid on it. So I think that was not—

AVIS BERMAN: The Getty has had such a checkered history of people at the top. Why do you think that—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I don't know. I do know that I think that the present board is feckless and irresponsible, and that there were people on the board when I was on the board who had no knowledge of how a museum should be run. They knew about education because Barry was carefully putting on his cronies. And that was in the education world. And [Agnes] Aggie Gund and I begged him to start putting people on who understood museums and art. And he never did.

So you had people either who were legally adept—they were lawyers—or they were in the financial world or in the education world. And Aggie and I really were the only ones who had any perception of how a museum should be run and how acquisitions should be made and how staff should be incorporated and all that, the things that are important, because the museum was the centerpiece.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Is she still on the board?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Who?

AVIS BERMAN: Agnes Gund.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, no. She resigned, too. Mm-mm. [Negative.]

AVIS BERMAN: And how did she feel about Marion True?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, she was disgusted.

AVIS BERMAN: So she shared your opinion?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. She knew that it was a bad, bad situation.

I think I told you last time that Vartan Gregorian was very helpful. I asked for a closed session of the board, and I put together a statement that I wanted read to the board and those who were online who couldn't come to the meeting—this was a small board. And in it—I have a copy of it; of course, I kept it—I stated my concerns about how they were dealing with the Italians, which was bad and which was stupid and which was arrogant and did everything to fuel the prosecutor, [Paolo] Ferri, for wanting to go further and further. Because he was really—he would've buckled if they had talked to him and said, "Well, okay, we're going to give you back this, this, and this and so forth, and be done with it." And I don't think he would have tussled with Marion.

He was surprised—and I know he was surprised—that when he indicted Marion True, he was shocked that they didn't come to her defense and immediately say, "Well, okay, put her off this thing. She has nothing to do with it. We're going to deal with you." But because of their jealousies and because of their nastiness, they threw her to the wolves. And so he continued. And I think I told you that the judge—the Italian judge—told Marion's lawyers, "This isn't about Dr. True. This is just about politics."

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, no. No, you didn't say that. But even the Italians—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: The Italian judge told her lawyers: This is not about Dr. True.

AVIS BERMAN: So do you think that it was dragged on purposely for so long so the statute would expire—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, I don't think so. I think what happened was that Ferri—and I met him, because I was deputized and I—

AVIS BERMAN: Deposed?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Pardon?

AVIS BERMAN: Were you deposed?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I was deposed downtown at the attorney general's office with all these people from Rome, including Ferri, who could not talk to me directly—but all these people and my lawyers and so forth and so on. I was deposed for six hours down there. And it was apparent to me that he just thought he was going to get a big, big job out of this, that something great was going to happen to him as a result. I think that his ambition fueled this thing. It had no sense of reality. And he knew it, but he continued.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. In retrospect, do you wish that the trial had come to the point where the defense would call witnesses?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, it came to that point, but they abandoned it. They wouldn't call them, because—she had about 80 people who were going to speak for her from all over the world. And it didn't come to that. Then you saw in the paper the other day that the statute of limitations has expired for Robert Hecht.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And Robert Hecht—oh [laughs]—

AVIS BERMAN: And he was guilty—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: What?

AVIS BERMAN: Well—and he would have been—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, he was. But he said he thought that the trial would outlive him because he's in his 90s.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: But it didn't.

AVIS BERMAN: It's a Jarndyce and Jarndyce [from Charles Dickens's *Bleak House* (1853)] situation.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I kept saying that over and over again. I kept on invoking Jarndyce versus Jarndyce. But the board was cowardly. They were influenced by their friend, Barry. They really didn't know the workings of the curatorial field, so that it was never made clear to them that this woman had no power outside of the power to offer things, and that they blithely, the administration, were accepting a lot of things, and so forth and so on—and so they were to blame too.

AVIS BERMAN: In retrospect, do you wish you had given your antiquities collection elsewhere?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. That's a very interesting question. I've been asked that a lot. Of course, the Met was extremely disappointed, and to some degree angry, at the initial announcement. It was very clear, and Larry made it clear to me, and then I agreed, the Met's collection of antiquities is sublime. It is so huge and everything. The things in storage that are great, which don't come out, are enormous in number.

And we had had such a wonderful experience with Marion and her staff, and a small collection—a nice, good collection—that we felt, look, it's in the United States. We're Americans. Why don't we enrich something that needs enriching, rather than Boston or New York? Now, even after all the unpleasantness, even after all the anguish and all the hurt, 35 years from now, nobody will remember. And it's already enriching the community. And really, after all, isn't that what this is about?

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: So I can't be bitter about that. I think Larry's idea was right. And as time goes on, and all this unpleasantness and nastiness has subsided and gone into history and forgotten, there'll still be the great, great villa there.

AVIS BERMAN: And indeed, as we know, some of these great collectors were terrible in their time, like [Henry

Clay] Frick, and what do we care about it? Not really.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: He was perfumed by his philanthropy.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Frick and [Andrew] Carnegie and all of these people.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, who really did ruthless things.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right. They were robber barons. We weren't exactly robber barons, but we were a very naïve bunch of people, because it just didn't occur to us that it would become a political football.

AVIS BERMAN: Your collection, I guess, what the Getty ended up with, numbered about 300 pieces. And as far as I could tell, what was in the press is that 12 were returned.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Eight.

AVIS BERMAN: Eight, so that's really not so bad.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: It's a mere bagatelle. You know, it's nothing.

And I might add to you that Marion was extremely upset, because at the Getty, they just accepted what they said belonged to them. They didn't do research on them. They were, by that time, in such a tizzy and wanted to get rid of the whole thing—not get rid of her as a guilty party, supposedly, but they wanted to get off the hook themselves—that they returned everything that they asked for.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. But still, eight doesn't seem too bad.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: It was not.

AVIS BERMAN: Were those the most important objects in the collection?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, they weren't. Some of the greatest objects are sitting right out there, as Marion planned the placement of every single thing in our collection. And they look divine out there.

AVIS BERMAN: Before you had to resign, were there other things you were able to accomplish at the Getty?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. There was a lot of intransigence. You see, there were certain people on the board who were so thrilled to be on the board, they would do whatever Barry told them. One of them said, "This is the highlight of my life, to be asked to be on this board." Because he was a friend of Barry's, and Barry was on his board, of his foundation.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, so you and Agnes Gund were not able to, maybe, professionalize the situation.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, no. What I did do with Marion, we created a support group for the Villa, which was called the Villa Council, where we paid dues every year; we went on trips that Marion took us on all over the world, meeting scholars, seeing collections, seeing things in situ. And these people were very good supporters of the Getty. We had all kinds of programs and meetings that she and I—and she and I created this thing.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, let's get to the real bomb. What were the circumstances of the loan that she first asked for and got?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: She didn't—from us?

AVIS BERMAN: No. First, okay, this was what was in the press: she wanted to buy a house in Greece. First, she got a loan through an attorney that was—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah, the attorney there. And incidentally, the Getty never went to check that story with the attorney. They never went and said, "Now, this is what Dr. True says," because he would have told them, this is exactly what happened. But they never pursued it and corroborated it.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay, what happened? Because I only know—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, what happened was—this is the chain of events. We knew that she was buying the little place there, and we were very excited for her. And she called one day about a certain bronze that we had acquired that Larry had asked her some questions about.

And when they were finished the conversation Larry said, "How's the house coming along?" "Well," she said, "it's getting a little difficult. This man in Greece—they're charging me such exorbitant interest, and it's going to be short term, and so I'm going to have to cast around, because I can't afford—this would be draining me." And so he said, "Wait a minute; we'll loan you the money for the mortgage." And she said, "Oh, no, no. You can't do that."

He said, "Look, we will charge you the going rate of interest," which he did. "We'll charge you that, and we'll treat it like an absolute business transaction, and then you'll just pay us back." That's all. And then Larry came to me and, said what do you—I said, "I think it's a great idea." Why not? And that came long after our gift. That came months later. It had no relation to anything else we were doing at the Getty. In other words, she didn't plug for us to give the gift as a result of being rewarded by Larry's loaning her the money.

AVIS BERMAN: But she couldn't get a loan through a bank there? I mean, she—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, it's that whole Greek—it was a whole Greek thing. And no, the bank would have charged, because you had to be there, or she had to supply it elsewhere. But anyway, but they were very careful not to find out that what she was telling was the truth, and that was part of how they behaved.

AVIS BERMAN: Because this is why, this is presumably why you had to resign, because of this—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I didn't have to resign, no. No, I chose to resign. The chairman of the board made it clear that it would be very comfortable for them if I did resign. But I held on. I wanted to resign months before, but Marion's attorney begged me to stay. He said, "You can still be valuable. You've got a voice there, and you can still"—blah, blah, blah.

And so I did, out of deference to trying to help Marion, because—and that was during the time that I made my statement to the board saying that she was being treated wrongly, and that they were not handling the Italian thing correctly, and that this was going to be a very bad stain on the luster of the Getty. And my punishment was—oh, Barry was furious—he fed some false stories to the *L.A. Times* about Larry and me.

AVIS BERMAN: Which were?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Which were that we had known all along, that we were buying for the Getty, that we weren't buying for our collection. I mean, it was just a tissue of—and of course, those two irresponsible, unethical so-called journalists lapped it up. Because I didn't want to talk to them, I didn't want to—and one of them stalked me.

He came and called here and told my housekeeper—whom you've met—he told my housekeeper, "I'm coming over to see Mrs. Fleischman at 3:00, and I'm going to take her to tea." And I came in from a meeting, and she said, "There's a Mr. Felch who called from the *L.A. Times*, and he's coming over." Well, luckily he had left a telephone number. I called him up, and I said, "If you so much as come near me, I'm going to call the police."

And as a result, later on, when they did this book, *Chasing Aphrodite*, they told Marion's lawyer very clearly and succinctly that because Marion wouldn't talk to them, and I wouldn't talk to them, they would print anything about us that they wanted to. They said it to him. I've never read the book, and I will not buy the book, and I don't have anything to do with the book. I wouldn't give them a penny's worth of royalty.

And I know that it's—I love the title, but I know that it's a tissue of lies, because they lied all the time. But Barry gave them a false timetable—that we had loaned her the money, or promised to loan her the money, before she said that she would—

AVIS BERMAN: Right, that's what it says—that within a month or so—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. And it was months later, because Larry hadn't made the decision. He made the decision, with which I concurred, in February of that year. It was either July or August that Marion was up the tree without—[laughs]—or up the river without an oar, I should say. It was months later, months later, had nothing to do with that. And they were dying for our collection. Everybody was dying for our collection.

It was just a falsehood made up out of whole cloth to get Barry off the hook. What was happening, you see, at the time was, all of a sudden, the state's attorney general was after Barry because he was spending money like water. And he was doing things that were inappropriate as the head of the trust. As you know, later they threw him out, and he had to pay a quarter of a million dollars back to the trust. But his tactic was, if he could smear other people, that would take the onus off of him and the attention away from him.

The interesting thing is this—that when the attorney general made his report to the Getty after this, he said, "Barbara Fleischman behaved appropriately as a trustee, and it was appropriate for her to be"—how do you call

it? I'm thinking of the word, you know, when you're—let me put it this way, when your testimony is paid for by the board, when your defense is paid for by the board. You know what I'm—

AVIS BERMAN: Right, right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: You know what I mean. The fact of the matter is that I was talking to the chairman of the board and I said, you know—

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, you were indemnified, or you were—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Indemnified, indemnified. He said, "It was appropriate that she be indemnified."

What happened was that I was talking to the chairman of the board, who at that time was a lovely man who later retired and resigned, and I said, "I don't know how long this is going on. I had to pay out of pocket \$46,000 in legal fees." He says, "Well, that's not right." So he went to the board without my knowing it and said, "She's a board member. She should be indemnified."

Well, P.S., they paid the bill and so forth—not the initial, I paid that. When the last bills were submitted to them, they refused. And about a year ago my lawyer went to them and thought, well, with a new administration he would go—they refused to pay on my last bill. So my lawyers were nice, and they knocked off a little money, but I had to pay thousands of dollars. And that was another terrible thing that they did. And I was indemnified.

Jim Wood wrote me a letter—this was just a couple months before he died—and he said, "Well, I'm sorry that our decision has angered you about the Getty, and because of your gifts, and you've been, in your way, generous as Mr. Getty." You know, blah, blah, blah. I wrote back to him, and I said, "My anger has nothing to do with it. This was just another example of the punitive, wrongheaded, and mean and illegal things that you people are doing. I've been angry since you destroyed Marion True."

And I never had an answer, and then he died. [They laugh.]

AVIS BERMAN: I shouldn't laugh at that.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: But they behaved so badly throughout.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Because, from what I read, it sounded as if they wanted to get rid of you because you loaned Marion money.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. That was the excuse. Barry—oh, Barry had called me, and he said, "Listen, I'm just hearing this story that Marion got money from Robin Symes"—the dealer—"for her thing, and she got money, and that's how she paid. And that's how she's paying for her mortgage." And I'm thinking—so I said, "Wait a minute, I'm going to call you back." So I called my lawyer, and I said, "Look," I said, "I don't want this to go that direction, because it's false. And this is the—"

AVIS BERMAN: So she never got money from Robin Symes.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. No.

AVIS BERMAN: It was someone in Greece that was—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, it was a Greek lawyer. It was totally legally cut and dried. So I said to my lawyer—I said, "Look. I'm not going to let this go." I said, "Larry loaned her the money." And he said, "You're absolutely right." I said, "I want to call him"—so I called him back. He was triumphant. He now had a hook to destroy me and continue to destroy Marion. And in retrospect, maybe she was naïve, and Larry was naïve, not thinking—because it was so many months later. It had nothing to do with our gift. It had nothing to do with—but Larry did that all the time.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Well, it's an interesting thing because it was called a conflict of interest, yet here in New York—I mean, museum directors are given sweetheart deals, including interest-free loans by the boards—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And apartments, and different things—oh, absolutely.

AVIS BERMAN: So there's nothing—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, so—it—

AVIS BERMAN: —it is like everything else, it's—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Interpretation.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. And it's happening on a widespread basis.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Exactly.

AVIS BERMAN: It depends who gets spotlighted.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's exactly it, who wants to get whom. And it was just, you were caught up in all of these nice things. Larry loaned people money all the time. Do you remember Wayne Andrews?

AVIS BERMAN: Yes.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Wayne came to Larry—this was when we were in Detroit—and he was almost in tears. His wife had to have a gall bladder operation. And he says, "They told me it's going to cost \$21,000"—or something like that. Larry says, "Don't be ridiculous; I'll loan you the money." And he never even charged any of these people interest. Marion he charged interest, because he said, "Barbara, she's like a daughter to us. And she's got to learn that this is the way you do things in a businesslike way." And he said that, "I would have done that for Martha or the other children." He said, "This is how we do it."

But to Wayne and to countless people—scholars and other people who would come saying, "I just need so-and-so thousand for my book, and I can't get it, and I don't"—Larry was like that all his life. And I would never have changed him. He just was—he was responsive, and the soul of sympathy and generosity.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, I could only say, whenever I went in the gallery—from when I first got to New York and knew nothing or anyone—he—I know that the right principle of any gallery is, you treat everybody as if she's Mrs. Rockefeller.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That doesn't hold, believe me.

AVIS BERMAN: No, it doesn't, but that's what should be done.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: What should be, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. But he always treated me as if I were some knowledgeable authority.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, because you are.

AVIS BERMAN: But not then.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, but at any rate, he respected what you were doing.

AVIS BERMAN: But he was very courteous to art—I mean, he treated them all as if they were Lloyd Goodrich—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right, because he was.

AVIS BERMAN: —let's just put it that way.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. And that's why he set up the whole *Art Journal* thing and so forth. He had a passion for people who knew and studied and had this kind of knowledge they could disseminate. So he was terrific. Needless to say—[laughs]—I'm saying—but at any rate, they—they're bad people.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Okay, well, I think all those things are—[inaudible]—straightened out—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes.

AVIS BERMAN: —which I'm glad to hear from the other side.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes.

AVIS BERMAN: So let us go on to the New York Public Library, which you got involved with about 1970 or '80, and—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Seventy. It was in the early '70s. I'll tell you how it happened. I was asked to chair the first on-air auction for Channel 13.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And I got my neighbor and friend, who was then the chairman of the board of the [New York Public Library]—[Richard B.] Dick Salomon, who lived down—a couple floors down here. And I got him to be my vice chairman. No good deed goes unpunished. He called me after the auction was over, took me and another lady to—a Mrs. Florsheim—to lunch. And they asked me if I would come and help out the library.

What happened was, at that juncture, the library volunteer committee had devolved into being sort of a sorority. "No, we're going to take her on the committee." "No, we're not going to take her." And it could have been a very explosive thing if it had been exposed, because it's a city institution. And he wanted somebody to come and straighten that out.

And I did. I came, and I totally reorganized the whole thing and brought in new people. It's flourishing now, with hundreds of volunteers. I was the chairman and got very active and did a lot of things and was put on the board. That's 32 years ago I was put on the board.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. And once you were put on the board, what was the library like then? Were you involved in bringing Vartan Gregorian to the library?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Happily, I was on the search committee that brought him. I keep telling him that was one of my victories in life, because his reputation was great, but he had been treated so badly that he just didn't know what was happening. And of course, he skyrocketed, because he—

AVIS BERMAN: He was the greatest.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: —because he's what he is, that's all. And he remains—he and Clare remain dear friends of mine from the very beginning.

The library, when I first came on, was very sleepy place. And the then-director didn't like volunteers terribly much. He was a scholarly—Richard Couper. He was a scholarly man; he was a good scholar. But he didn't want a lot of activity. He just wanted—[laughs]—them to deal with the books and so forth. And of course, Vartan was responsive to any ideas I had. And Andrew Heiskell was, too—who was the chairman of the board. It's a wonderful experience, and I've had good times.

AVIS BERMAN: What were some of your more important ideas once you were on the board?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, I created something called the Night of 100 Dinners. Larry was giving a talk out in Oklahoma City on John Marin, and I went with him. The director then knew that I loved to cook and bake, and that I collected cookbooks, so he gave me their cookbook. And I started leafing through, and I said, "Well, what's the genesis of all this?" He says, "Well, for the last couple of years, we have about 16 people, and each of them gives on the same night a dinner for the benefit of the Oklahoma Arts Center." And he began to talk to me about it. I just grabbed that idea.

I came home, and I said—Andrew also lived in the building here. [Laughs.] Marian [Heiskell] still does. And I went to Andrew, and I said, "Look"—they were doing, like, a French dinner, an Italian dinner—I said, "I'd like to do it really more imaginatively. I'd like to do, you know, a [Leo] Tolstoy dinner. I'd like to do things with a really literary and other themes, and I'd like to do a hundred of them." And he said, "Barbara, go ahead and plan it and do it." He and Marian gave a dinner in my honor afterwards; it was very sweet. Afterwards he said, "That lady's off the wall." [They laugh.] "But let her try." And of course, we did it several times, and it was a huge success.

The reason I liked it so much was, the tickets were not expensive. The first year they were \$150 a ticket. And then later it was 300 [dollars]; we raised it to 300. But by the standards of what gala tickets are, that was a mere—nothing. But it gave people who didn't have great funds and weren't big, rich people the opportunity to feel part of the library, which I think is extremely important. And some of the people who started out there giving us a \$300 ticket ended up giving us thousands of dollars as time wore on.

AVIS BERMAN: And were you involved in the Literary Lions?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, but to a lesser extent. A lesser—no, I was involved in that. And there were other other things that I did.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. And did you work with Mrs. [Vincent] Astor? [Russell Brooke Astor.]

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. She became a very dear friend.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. It would be great if you could elaborate on that.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, Brooke Astor made herself. She's one of these people who created herself, like Katharine Graham created herself, and other people have created themselves. She was a lively lady. She was

lots of fun. And she cared about the community. So we got together very often. We lunched, up until two years before she died, when she really went gaga. She was a woman with great curiosity.

I remember one time they were honoring her down at the Lafayette—there's a Lafayette House down at the base of New York, where Lafayette apparently, when he landed, he stayed. And so they have a Lafayette medal or something, and they give it to a citizen. So they were giving it to Brooke some years ago. I was one of three or four people who was asked to make some remarks about her at the luncheon. And what I said was true, and what means a lot to me is, I said, "Brooke will never grow old, because she's curious."

She'd come into the house here for dinner, and she'd look and say, "Now Larry, what's that sculpture?" And Larry would say, "Well, this is Etruscan, 500 B.C." and blah blah. "Oh, yes"—there are people who are very intelligent and very nice people, who come into your home and they come in to see you. They're not interested or curious about things. And I don't fault them, but on the other hand, she had this curiosity. And she was full of fun and gossip. She was full of fun and gossip.

AVIS BERMAN: She was cute. She was really cute, you know? [Laughs.]

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes.

AVIS BERMAN: I mean, kind of perky and flirty.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, perky, and she'd say, "Oh, Barbara, I like that purse," or, "Oh, that jacket, tell me about your jacket" or some—she was very—and when she was in her 90s, in her late 90s, she went to Europe, and she bought 10 Balenciaga outfits. And I thought, "Boy, is that being optimistic." She loved to dress well. She was an interesting contrast to Eleanor Ford, Mrs. Edsel Ford, because when she had dinner parties, she had all these different people and so forth and—

AVIS BERMAN: "She," Mrs. Astor.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Mrs. Astor. Eleanor Ford was much more reserved and much shyer and much more modest. But Brooke loved the attention. She loved what she was doing and getting credit for it. And I don't blame—that's human. But she could have just continued to be the evolution of a debutante and just have been a dowager, like so many people. But she cared.

It was so funny, because she would say to me—well, she went to Harlem, because she visited everything she gave money to. And she was wearing a diamond brooch and diamond earrings and she said, "Well, I'm Mrs. Astor. They expect that of me." She never worried about—and she would take the dogs into the park wearing fancy jewelry and everything. And nobody ever touched her.

She loved gathering interesting people around her. Loved that. I learned a lot from her. I was an usher at her funeral, one of the six ushers at her funeral. She was—because that's what's so wonderful, when you can learn a lot from people.

AVIS BERMAN: Also just her presence—she helped make the library.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: She made the library.

AVIS BERMAN: She made it chic.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: She recreated it. Yeah. Between her, and then Dick Salomon, and then Andrew, and, of course, Vartan, they really put it on the map—because when I came on the board, it was a very nice board. But then it became the board to be on. And, how much money do I have to give to be on the board?

AVIS BERMAN: Right. But it was also—the library needed so much in terms of climate control and—all of this.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. It was not in a good state. And it was managerial; it was just kind of floating along. But she was a very special woman—very, very special woman.

AVIS BERMAN: Were there major things that the library did that you disagreed with?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, I think there's one basic thing—I don't like it being viewed as a place for fat cats. I think there was some sort of seduction where people thought that all you'd get on your board is very rich people, and you do rich things. Now, for example, I did that Night of 100 Dinners at a low price. Then one of the trustees, who I won't mention, came along, and she said to them, "I can raise that much money in one night, just charging \$25,000 a table and"—and she did, and they abandoned the Night of 100 Dinners, and they raised all that money.

There was something about being seduced by all those rich and powerful people. That's not going to happen now, because [CEO Anthony W.] Tony Marx is not beguiled. He's a very good person, and I'm very fond of him already. He's got his head screwed on right. But this began to evolve, and I didn't like it. There was a man who was a head of a big hedge fund and came to a meeting. He had this big plan that we should close all the branches that aren't making money.

AVIS BERMAN: They're not supposed to make money.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, really.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, okay.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I didn't counter him. It was some big meeting. But I went and asked for a meeting with [New York Public Library President] Paul LeClerc and the heads of the administration. I said, "What's the matter with him?" I said, "Libraries aren't meant to make money; they're meant to serve the community." "Oh, Barbara, don't worry. We're not going to go"—he said, you know, "We can close this. We can have hub libraries."

"He said, "This hub would only be about a mile away from the original one that's not doing so well." And I said to Paul, "He gets into his chauffeured limousine at the end of the day when we have a meeting. They could drive him 50 miles away, and it means nothing to him. For a nine year old little girl or an elderly man with a cane, a mile is 50 miles."

And I said, "What mother wants a little child walking a mile in a dubious neighborhood?" I said, "Those libraries are refuges for some of these people—of these children and some of these older people particularly." It was dropped. But this was the mentality.

And there was one time when a new trustee came on board from a big, big financial firm. It was during the [Mayor Ed] Koch administration when he came on board. And he sat there in the boardroom, and he said, "I think we have to start charging people to come to the library." And Gordon Ray, who was at that time the head of the Guggenheim Foundation and a scholar and a collector in his own right, I thought he was going to have a stroke. He stood up, and he pointed to the statement by [Thomas] Jefferson—near the ceiling. It says, "This is for the free use of the people." That stopped this gentleman in his tracks.

AVIS BERMAN: You'd think that some of these people had never been to a library.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, they didn't understand its role in the community, particularly among people who are not as fortunate as they, and can't just go to a bookstore and buy five books.

AVIS BERMAN: Some of these people went to university. Presumably they used a library. You would think there would be a vested—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, something happens to some of these people when they get so well-to-do. There's a sense of entitlement; there's a sense of their superiority and a contempt for others. We're seeing it in this election process.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, that's true.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: This is very troubling. You see it spread through the community in a variety of ways. We have to counteract that, that's all. I will never hesitate to speak up—nicely, but I'll speak up.

AVIS BERMAN: Now, is there anything else that you would like to say about your work for the library that—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, no. I've enjoyed it, just like I enjoy working for the Archives or the Frick or the Julliard. I'm having a good time, and I like giving back to the community and being helpful. And sometimes I'm listened to. So it's a good experience.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. But you are still really involved with the library?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I'm involved with the library, yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, and now let us turn to the Archives of American Art. I'm assuming that there was a hiatus, because at the time it was felt, because Larry was now a dealer, dealers were—or their families were not supposed to be involved with the Archives.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. Eloise Spaeth made it very clear that Larry's name shouldn't even be on the stationery. For a while his name wasn't on it. And he, look, was the founder, with Edgar Richardson and Eleanor Ford. It was petty. And it was understandable, although I have to say, a dealer—you're not buying pictures.

The point was, Larry was not upset about this. I was more so. He was not, because he was so involved with trying to now start his new career that he didn't have time. And ultimately, a couple years later, Howard Lipman asked me if I would take part and help out. And, as a consequence, I did.

And then there was a whole thing where there were some people that were jealous of Larry and didn't want me to be around and so forth and so on. And Bill Woolfenden then listened to them. So—and I liked Bill, and we later talked the whole thing out, and he was sorry. But he was listening to this other couple who were very jealous of us.

These were the people who said to Larry, when he told him that we were moving, they said, "What's the matter with you and Barbara? You're big fish in a small pond here. You will move to New York, and nobody will ever hear of you again." So that was the story. That was their mentality.

Anyway, so what happened after Larry's death, I was invited on the board. And I'm glad to be, because I think that this is a legacy. I feel very personal about it because I lived with it from the very day of the idea. And I think it's very, very important. I'm glad that Martha's now on the board, so that that legacy will continue.

AVIS BERMAN: How did you feel about having the director and everything centralized in Washington versus here, the way it used to be?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, it was very interesting, when Larry learned of the offer and the acceptance to be part of the Smithsonian—he was never consulted, incidentally, nor was Ted Richardson, which I think was a very rude thing—he said, "Oh, it sounds wonderful now." He said, but he was so smart and prescient. "But," he said, "wait until they have to cut their budgets. Wait till the federal government has problems." Which, of course, was true.

But John Smith, particularly, has been very—was very good—about maintaining that connection, so that you never felt, oh, he's way off in Washington. He was a presence here. He was always available. And he worked very hard, and he did a very fine job. And I'm hopeful that the next person will do the same. I think that has to be a criterion.

AVIS BERMAN: When there was a New York director even,,when there was [William] Bill McNaught, there was also—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. There was a New York committee.

AVIS BERMAN: Exactly. I'm totally prejudiced, but I just think so much—because so much of the quality and quantity come in through New York.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right. That's right.

AVIS BERMAN: I always thought it was too bad, but—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. Well, that was one of the—

AVIS BERMAN: The Smithsonian's—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That was their stricture, yeah.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. On the other hand, the Smithsonian did pump in a lot of time and space and facility.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, naturally.

AVIS BERMAN: Do you think that any private group could have carried that on, the extent—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. And I think that some of these artists who set up their own archives are feckless. I think that it's dumb. They don't realize how much effort and how much money it's going to take to maintain their archive. And I do want to say this, that I think what has saved us at the Archives, and the fact that it's based in Washington, is technology. You can type in anything, you can push in anything, and you get your information.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Well, the digitization is great because now, I mean, the democracy of it—if you're in Dubuque or if you're in Poland, you know, you can—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah, whatever. You can pull it up.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, you can see. And a lot of times you can get the whole collection.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Exactly. Exactly.

AVIS BERMAN: So I think that that's important.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, I think that that's worked very, very well. And of course, we were, again, so naïve, when Ted Richardson—when Larry went to him with the idea, and Ted said, well, you can use microfilm, neither one of us had ever heard of microfilm.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, I have always thought that was the great advantage of the Archives, because no one else used to get things microfilmed. Nobody else did it, and it really was terrific for dissemination.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And the first thing that we did, of course, was to microfilm American Philosophical Society, as I think I told you.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: So I'm very proud of it. And I think it'll continue. I don't worry about the fact that there are other people doing it, because Larry's thought always was, "We don't have to have everything, as long as somebody preserves everything, and we have a collegial relationship so that we can have access to each other's collections."

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Now, were you involved with something else with the Getty? Any kind of bridge-building with the archives at the Getty?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. Yes. I'll tell you why. At that time, the Archives had this scholar out there who was supposed to be collecting in the Los Angeles and the California area.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, Paul Karlstrom.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: He did nothing. He was only feathering his nest. He was working on his own scholarly projects. And [Richard] Wattenmaker [former director of Archives of American Art] made no attempt to rein him in and to make him do his job.

AVIS BERMAN: I thought Wattenmaker fired him.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: He may have—he may have at the end, I don't know. But Wattenmaker—I'm not a Wattenmaker fan. He did a dreadful job of the Archives. He was very, very—he's not a people person, let's put it that way. At the Getty board meetings, they were talking about getting the things in the LA area and Los Angeles. I said—as a board member there, I said, "Look, I'm wearing two hats. I think it's wonderful if you do it, but I hope that you can promise me that it will be a bridge-building thing between you and the Archives, so that whatever they have that relates to California artists will be available to you, and whatever you have will be available"—and they promised me they would. And I have the feeling that they are sticking to that promise. A couple months ago they had a seminar out at the Getty, and our Archives people went—our staff. So I think that there is that relationship.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Because, well, what everyone was afraid of—if you recall, it was infamous; they were buying papers.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, but I was there on the board when they turned down the Castelli papers, because people began getting so greedy and so demanding; they wanted the Getty to pay them two million dollars for those things. And the Getty—they drew the line in the sand.

And now they're not in a position to so readily spend big bucks for things.

AVIS BERMAN: Right. Well, I thought that the Getty was going to buy them originally at a lowered price, and then, I guess, Barbara Castelli didn't like that—I'm not sure—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, he [Leo Castelli] wanted to give them to the Archives from the very beginning.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, yes. That's it.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: But she and the children, I think, set the two million dollars because that was what was presented to us—two million.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Of course.

AVIS BERMAN: Now, he had promised them to the Archives for a long time.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes. That's what he wanted. So ultimately that was done.

AVIS BERMAN: Yes, that was done. Because I had thought that the Getty had agreed to buy them for something like—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No. No.

AVIS BERMAN: —1.2 million, and then they wanted more, or something—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, no, no. No, no.

AVIS BERMAN: Never? Okay.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Two million was the price, and they turned it down. We weren't, at that point, going to spend that kind of money for archives.

AVIS BERMAN: Looking at the Archives, how do you think it could be improved?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, I think we need to spend much more time creating more visibility. I think we have to reach out much more. What troubles me, and I've told the development people this, and I keep saying it, and I will continue to say it: when Larry left as president of the Archives, there were about—I can't remember whether there were eight hundred, nine hundred members of the Archives. There are now just several hundreds. It makes no sense to me. There are more scholar[s]. There are more collectors. There are more museum shows—look at the American Wing and what that's going to engender in terms of interest. And it makes no sense.

So my hope is that, with an energized board—and we're putting more people on the board—that we will devote ourselves to reaching out to collectors now. And the fact that we're collecting contemporary things, you know, that we're not hedged—and we're not talking only about [John Frederick] Kensett and Frederic E. Church and Copley. We're talking about contemporary people. I think this is the biggest challenge for us, is to get more support and to have more of a constituency.

AVIS BERMAN: And besides the technology, what do you think the success stories have been?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Oh, I think, in recent years, I think the redoing of the *Journal*—I think it's very attractive. I think the website is good. And I think that, in general, the whole look of the Archives is much improved—that's John Smith's doing, primarily. And I'm very pleased about it. I think we're getting some new and interesting people on the board. And I think we should get more and younger. So that's my goal.

AVIS BERMAN: Good. Well, do you think there's anything in Larry's vision of the Archives that is still unmet at the moment?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No, I think from the very beginning he wanted there to be attention to the craft world. He wanted there to be attention to the African-American world and the Latino world. And that is going on. That's been accomplished—is being accomplished, I should say.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: I don't think that there's been anything that's been missed. I think more emphasis on this at one time, more emphasis on that. But still, that's part of the mission.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, it's also what comes along, and who's going to make what available at the moment, and what the opportunities are.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: That's right. That's right.

[Audio break.]

AVIS BERMAN: You were just saying you were very proud of the Archives, so—

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yeah, I am. I think that we have to do a lot more. We have nice leadership now and are looking forward to getting a really lively and committed director—hope that can come soon.

AVIS BERMAN: Right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: But—anyway.

AVIS BERMAN: Okay

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: And I'm very optimistic.

AVIS BERMAN: It's hard to ask about the Archives because I've been so involved myself. What do you feel have been the constraints from the Smithsonian, from the Castle?

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, I think that they look upon us as an advisory board, you see. They're very controlling. I think the red tape is terrible there. I think the bureaucracy is terrible there. You have to have three people to sign off on this and so forth. And the very way that they're going about this search committee—they should be moving fast. This is going to take us a year. And under ordinary circumstances that shouldn't happen, but that's the bureaucracy of it.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, I've always suspected they also move slowly so they don't have to pay a salary for a year or two.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Yes, because we're not going to be credited with that lack of salary, you know.

AVIS BERMAN: Right, right.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: No.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, I think I'm done, if there's nothing else.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Okay, my friend.

AVIS BERMAN: Well, thank you so much.

BARBARA FLEISCHMAN: Well, you're very welcome. This is so nice, visiting with you.

AVIS BERMAN: Oh, it was fun.

[END OF TRACK 4.]

[END OF INTERVIEW.]