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SKOWHEGAN SCHOOL
OF PAINTING & SCULPTURE
Skowhegan, Maine

Lecture by Henry Varnum Poor
Summer, 1966

Transcriber: Judith Stoodley
(RECORDING BEGINS WITH INTRODUCTION IN PROGRESS)

Introduction: (Abbot Pattison) …It's too simplified, but he's a person that I think all of you young people are very, very fortunate to have any connection with him, and with a school that I think he has been responsible for… and myself as… on the faculty, I feel the same obligation and the same admiration for the fact that he's a painter; he's a potter; he's made some wonderful sculpture; he's made ceramics… These frescoes that we've seen around here are not kind of an automatic thing… I think it has a great deal to do with the fact that he was a fresco painter, and has been a fresco painter, and *is* a fresco painter. I've seen his frescoes down on Cape Cod, and I've seen them in Chicago; and… he's a man of great many versatile talents… and I just think that it's a great privilege for all of us to have any connection with him and with a school that he has been responsible for. And I'd like to introduce Henry Varnum Poor to you. (Applause)

Speaker: I wish I could make a wonderful speech to live up to Abbot's wonderful introduction… but… I'm a very uncertain quantity as a speaker… And so I hope you'll put up with me from that point of view. And if I don't speak loud enough, which I have difficulty in doing… --I haven't a carrying voice like Abbot's—if you'll… in the back, whoever doesn't hear, if they'll remind me that I'm *not* speaking loud enough, I'll be happy to try to speak louder. And… as I say, when I face an audience like this group of students, I never quite know where I'm going to come out in the end, because I'm a very uncertain quantity. I remember Frank Wren (024) told a

story about his old friend George Bellows, who went to one of the big girls' universities to give a speech at some—I think this was Radcliffe or something… And George got up there in front of the… whole auditorium… and found that he couldn't say a word, he was so abashed by the audience of girls in front of him. And after trying he finally gave up and sat down, and gave them back their fee, whatever it was. (laughter) And that was the end of his speaking engagements. And we've had artists up here who… some of them are completely tongue-tied and some of them are quite remarkably eloquent, beyond what you would expect. For instance… I think the first speech that Stankiewicz, the sculptor who put machine parts together, you know… I think the first speech he ever made he made up here; and it was quite remarkable the way he stood rigid as a post, with no pulpit in front of him to protect him, and gave a remarkable speech. That is, he found words for all of his thoughts and his concepts and his work; it was really quite remarkable. And I remember "Loren MacIver" was here; and she came in front of this—an audience like you people… and *she* couldn't find the words to say. And so we finally took pity on her and began to ask her some questions; and then she finally succeeded in at least saying something audible, and saying some very wonderful and very wise things. But she was completely unable to talk in the beginning. David Smith, for instance, came here; and he was a wonderful talker. He… You know, he was as forthright and direct as his work. And a fellow like Al Katz… who is never at a loss for words in conversation—he's a terrific sculptor [sic] (047), one time he leaned over his pulpit like this… and couldn't gather his wits together at all, and couldn't say a word. And… it got quite (laughs) embarrassing; but he finally, through being urged and prodded by other people, began to… talk, and talked beautifully. So… my best is a very unpleasant best as a talker… and that's the reason that… after a while I'll fall back on slides, because it isn't through vanity of showing my work, but it gets more easy if you begin to have things on the screen and be able to talk about them, instead of just talking into the air…. Well… what I wanted to talk about is the sort of present-day art world and this school in relation to that. And that's a very complicated theme; and I don't know whether I'll succeed in saying much that's very enlightening about because we all know what a confused and complicated art world it is… and… before the summer's over you will have a clear idea of what this school is, and what it tries to do, and what it's place *in* this complicated art world is… And not only what it *has been*, since its founding in—What was it? Forty-four, Willard…? (answer inaudible) up to the present. It's survived and grown to a very, very disruptive and complicated… period in the

whole world of art. And… that's just a sort of example of how complicated this present day world is…--the art world, I'm talking about—The other world is, goodness knows, even more complicated, perhaps; and I think you at your age are probably much more aware of that than I am even, because a lot of you are probably still subject to the draft… and you're wondering whether there's really going to be a general World War coming up… And so it makes all of the present living a very complicated and uncertain and disruptive sort of life. I think it's quite wonderful that you can come here, and for a while… forget that, and… concentrate… just on your profession, and what you will hope will be your profession of an artist. In the *Times* a few weeks ago there was a notice of the sale of a Van Gogh painting, a very simple little portrait, in profile, of a red-headed girl, for I think something like five hundred thousand dollars… (unintelligible) some astronomical sum… And in the same Sunday magazine there was a review of the current show in Venice, the Biennale, which apparently was completely abstract, and, according to the reviewer of the *Times*, who was not Canaday, but somebody else, was extremely bad. "But the important thing was that even the European countries, which seem to (unintelligible Left? Swept?) completely the whole contemporary world of art… working in the abstract vein… And I thought that that contradiction in extremes was really typical of the times that we have to deal with, and that all of" you as students have to deal with; that is, what is essentially valuable, not in terms of money… although money reflects *something*. That is, money… The fact that a Van Gogh which he very possibly *gave away*—I think he gave it to his doctor… after this period would be able to sell for five hundred thousand dollars, *does reflect* some very meaningful permanent things in human value. And… the fact that the contemporary scene was so completely fragmented that a very sympathetic critic couldn't find anything to… find of very much of value in the whole Venice Biennale, which supposedly reflects the contemporary art world, not only of America but all of Europe…. Then… (unintelligible) in my very casual acquaintance so far with this particular group of students and this faculty, I think that we—the strength which is shown here—that is, the strength of character which you read in people… and in the age group—that is, this is an older age group than usual, which indicates that you are people who have arrived at more your self-determination, and are not indulging in going to art school just because you have nothing else to do… and that in general this means a serious and dedicated group of people. And the faculty that you have this year I think is a remarkably strong faculty; and I should think that on the whole you are facing, really, a wonderful summer

of work here. Then from the point of view of, you might say, introducing you to the school, if you need any introduction, I thought I would read an early statement of just the intention of the school:

that if we at Skowhegan can have that very rare part of wisdom, good judgment, in helping students to greater awareness and greater understanding of the visual miracle of the world into which they were born, we can call ourselves fortunate. This is what we have tried to do, keeping theory and verbalization always subordinate to direct observation and honest experience through acquiring skills and manual ability; to the self-discipline of sustained and concentrated work in the actual practice of drawing and painting, carving and modeling. To see with their own eyes, and through knowledge and skill have the assurance and courage to go their own way, speak with their own voices, is what we hope for every sensitive and talented student. To this achievement of maturity and self-confidence the school is dedicated.

Well that was true in the early years of the school, and I think it's equally true now, although the… picture that you face as young students in the whole art world is immensely more complicated than it used to be. And when this school started, there was no such thing as Pop art, or any of the—I haven't… got all the glib different things on my tongue, so I can't think of them at the moment, but I know that you know them—Those were completely unborn yet. And… if you… as anything—as much as any single thing was in the background of the painting world… Cezanne, I suppose, was the great mountain on which young painters were basing their work. And… now, in this short period of time, you've passed through that, and… the most… I don't know what to call them, whether they're popular… or… most written about, or most shown… painters… have absolutely nothing to do with Cezanne. I mean to say they aren't in any sense influenced *by* Cezanne; so the whole world of painting has been completely turned upside down, as far as the influences lying back of… a young painter are concerned. Well, I'd like to say a little bit about the first—the very first year of the school. It happened that at end, as we organized it, Bill Cummings had been in the Army… and I had been in the Army Art Group… and… then after the war was over Bill put the whole place together, and I came up and we started, and by grace of luck the young painters of that generation were just getting out of the war, after being held through the draft and through the war… in… well, through the World War then… were out of the Army and they had bonuses; and so we had a great many students who

were able to pay their way through art school on the government bonus that was given them as young artists. And so in that first year we had a wonderful group of students. The school wasn't quite as large; I think it was about forty students was all that we had room for then… and Al Blaustein, and a whole group whose names I can't think of at the moment, were in that first… year's group; and it was a remarkably fruitful year. That is… those of us who were involved in it were terrifically eager, and we were rewarded by having these wonderful students… And the percentage of students from this group who have become successful artists is quite astonishingly large. Then I think the problem that faces this school now, very much, is, in this present terrific confusion of ideas, which you must be very conscious of; that is, wondering what is really *the* right way to paint, the right way to progress, the right way to study… That poses a terrific problem for the school to face… and to meet conscientiously… and still keeping the ideals that it started with, not necessarily in detail, but the general ideal of students being to some extent, at least as much as possible, uninfluenced by anything that gets in the way of their personal observation of the world; so that they can be fresh enough, as they come here as students, to postpone the necessity of having arrived manners of any kind; and put that into the background, and really be modest enough to open your eyes and see… and to be aware of the world, the visual world around you, the landscape world, the world of people, the world of objects and still life, so that… instead of coming here with too many preconceived ideas of how you want to paint, that you'll be able to discover how you want to paint through the very wise help that you'll get here from the faculty and through your own personal observation. And of course one of the big things is your association with other students, because the fact that you come from all over the country… and a great many of you are chosen from art schools in different parts of the country, the associations between yourselves are more important than any others… any other factor than I've been talking about. But at the same time the faculty *does* play a very important part, although more or less minor (laughs) part; and the environment, actual physical environment, plays a tremendous part… as I think we've had in the past young scholarship students who came from Cooper Union in New York, and to whom the Maine landscape, and, in fact, landscape in general—to live intimately with landscape was an extremely new and novel experience. And some of them have gotten very, very excited, for the first time, over landscape painting, something that they never dreamed would happen to them, because they were completely uninterested in it before. That is, Turner and Constable, and the great landscape

painter—somebody that they passed by because it was, in a sense, outside of their experience. And their experience with this landscape was tremendously exciting and important to them. But then in sticking to those extremely fundamental things-- I think to reduce it to the very simplest statement would be simply that we want students to have open eyes and see the world with their own eyes… and not see it through the eyes of prejudice of any kind, or… other painters. I don't mean to say that any student can be unaware of and uninfluenced by other painters. His admiration's tremendously important, and may influence his whole way of seeing. But if whatever your admirations may be, they shouldn't get in the way of your fresh vision of what's around you, of people and landscape. And I think that's terribly important. But I don't think that you'll find that… any of the faculty will be dogmatic in insisting upon any particular way of seeing; because in this particular day and age it's… impossible to be dogmatic; that is, the changes are too revolutionary, and the whole air of uncertainty that fills the whole world and is reflected in the art world is something which is not to be denied. When I was a student briefly in London, I studied with Walter Sickert and he was a supreme example of a dictatorial teacher who made you do exactly as he said, or out you went. That is, you couldn't stay in his classes or his school. He taught in (unintelligible) County Council schools in London… and I was going to trade school, and I went there in the evening to study with Walter Sickert, because I very greatly admired his painting. And I remember he came to my drawing… You felt very flattered if he even stopped at your work at all, because generally he marched around—He'd come in about nine o'clock with a top hat and a cape which the (unintelligible) would take from him and hold-- he'd been out to a dinner party or something—and then walk around with a very superior air. So when he first stopped and sat down and looked at my work I was extremely excited and flattered. And I had a drawing which was filling the… paper from top to bottom, the way the little thing I'd had was supposed to be the way to do… He sat down and he said, "Well, you are started on a course of drawing which presupposes that you'll be an art student for at least ten years." (laughter) (laughs) And… "it's absolutely the wrong way to draw; it's absolutely a false point of view; and I want you to throw all this away and start all over again." Then he carefully explained to me *his* theory of drawing, which he maintained was the way all the old Masters drew, which was to draw things in the size that they appear to you, taking into account the visual starting point of your eye, the spreading of the lines of sight, to include the object; and at what point you would intercept those lines of sight with your paper. If I was drawing him, and if I

wanted to make him anywhere near life-size, the paper would have to be almost as far off as he is; but at *this* point of view, this distance, the lines of sight make his foot here, his head *here*; so that would be the size in which I should draw his figure. And if you followed that… --He maintained that's the way Rembrandt drew (unintelligible), all the old Masters drew, on that principle. And if you didn't want to draw that way you went out of the class, that's all; there was nothing else to be done. And… so naturally I drew that way. (laughs) And… But I got a little bit fed up with it by Christmas, and went over to Julian's in Paris, where they were drawing on big sheets of charcoal paper, and making black and white pictures of the whole thing; that is—And immediately I pitched in and did that for (unintelligible) too. That is, I wasn't… (unintelligible) a convert to that extent. And each one had its merits. What I started to talk about that for is to say that you won't find that kind of dogmatic point of view here, by any means; and I'm not at all sure (laughs) that's it's altogether good to eliminate it either… because you do get a great deal through accepting one person's point of view, if you have faith in that person or admiration for that person, and following it to an extreme… and… seeing what there is in it. And… I was extremely conscious of the fact that Sickert's mode of drawing and his (unintelligible) was extremely important; and I've followed it all my life in quick sketching. And the other point of view, which we… with Julian, was also important, especially the space-filling of your whole paper too. That is, both of those elements come into drawing… not only the element of accurate and quick reproduction, but also the element of design and the space-filling which is implied from your dealing with a whole piece of paper and filling it as beautifully as you can. (pause) Well, as I look through the notes that I made here, to talk about, I think I've sort of (laughs) slurred them all together, and have said pretty much all the things that I wanted to say to you; and… the—I might say a few words more about the business of a summer art school. That is, most summer art schools are by implication, almost, just places where casual people drop in and amuse themselves for a while while they're on a vacation. And that concept of a summer art school has been the bane of our existence, and luckily we have very few people who get here in that false expectation of this being just a place to pleasantly spend the time. And the thing that's been largely responsible for that has been our scholarship program of getting money enough together to be able to offer scholarships to the finest students from the (unintelligible) art schools. So from the very beginning we have avoided that… thing which… if you go down to Ogunquit, for instance, and drive through the town, you'll see what I mean; they place is

swarming with… (laughs) I won't say old ladies or old men, (laughter) but people walking around with canvases and easels under their arms until you can scarcely move through the streets. It's a pleasant summer occupation. And Provincetown is just beyond belief now. (laughter) You know, if you ever go to Provincetown in the height of the art season, it's really something to see…. And our remoteness here… is very much to our advantage. That is, we've always been happy to be way up here in the middle of Maine, where we don't have any ocean beaches to distract you—although later on I'm sure that a lot of you will be running *to* the ocean beaches; but still… the remoteness of this place, and the quietness of it, has been extremely important. Oh, I have a note here that said "Don't—" that is, as you as young artists… study here, "don't be in a hurry to acquire a recognizable manner," so that anybody right away will know that it's your work or whose work, or this or that. That is, concentrate on simply learning, on learning to see space, and learning to express yourself fluently and accurately; and avoid working in any overly mannered way, because I think you're apt to find that working in a specific manner, and getting too invested *in* any manner, will in the end hold you back. That is, let manner be something which you arrive at through years of work… and let it be your *own* manner, instead of… that being somebody else's manner. Every student is a combination of two different influences; that is, there may be more than two, but I mean to say two main influences. That is their own reaction to the world, to reality; and one is their reaction, and their knowledge, and their interest in the world of art… what other people have done, the way other people have expressed themselves, the way other people have reacted to people, to cheese … to nature, to reality, as they have lived it. And the combination of those two things is what makes the whole life of an artist. You can't describe one or you can't describe the other; they're both a necessary part of your development. But be very careful that no manner… gets hold of you to the extent that it… warps you into one way or another of seeing. That is, keep yourselves open and flexible and plastic as long as you can; because the whole thing that distinguishes the human race from the ape, the fact… that infants stay unmatured, and… subject to influences for long, long periods of years instead of growing up and being set and definite in a few months… And so the longer you can really keep yourself in a plastic and searching frame of mind, the happier it is for you. In my notes I have… a note to read—I'm a sort of Jack of all trades myself, and I do a great deal of ceramics… And in a book of ceramics that was published by Prentice-Hall some years ago, I wrote down some of my theories of painting… or of development for an artist, which I hope

you'll forgive me for reading, because if I tried to say them again it would be just repeating this—what I've already said.

I believe that the only essential new thing in the work of art is the freshness of a new person, and his fresh discovery of the world, of a spirit that expresses itself with confidence and freedom. There are periods in art which are to some extent revolutionary, when new forms seem to be evolved; but most of even this apparently startling newness seem in retrospect to be a sometimes conscious rebirth or reaffirmation of old forms. Extreme individualism, therefore, and the self-conscious search for originality are our curse. But each new birth is a recreation, in outward form and even inward spirit, it is close to a repetition; but to command attention the new work of art should not have to express itself in new forms, any more than a new baby has to have four arms in order be an individual. To maintain this subtle difference that is yourself is difficult, and cannot be done through self-consciousness. To know yourself is the hardest knowledge to acquire, and it must be arrived at quietly and obliquely. You can never really see yourself or smell yourself or be fully aware of that emanation which is yourself. The more self-knowledge can be left to instinctual behavior, the better. If you turn a spotlight on the self it vanishes, or becomes a self-conscious act. The purest approach to self-knowledge is to forget yourself and the problems of knowing and doing. To tell a student to express himself, to look inward, is the most futile of all help. Things evolved from self and from self-absorption fall surprisingly into repetitive patterns, either behavior patterns or speech patterns or patterns in painting. That's one of the most significant of Freudian discoveries, how alike people are. And these patterns, in whatever art, are the sure road to academics, unless they are enlarged and made vital by a passionate apprehension of the universe outside yourself. Harmony and order are, in themselves, easily achieved in a vacuum which… when form is divorced from content. The ability to make harmonious color and ordered form arrangements is an almost universal ability; but to give meaningful order to the universe by creating and arranging vital and living images, that is another thing. And it is only as the abstract qualities in art are welded into this total that they acquire any rich and emotional value. To accept these qualities as ends in themselves denotes such a paucity of faith, understanding and sheer energy as to be a saddening thing. The feelings, the concepts, that begin and end in yourself are only the starting point, and your creative richness is measured by the love and understanding with which you see and meet the world in its infinite variety and unexpectedness.

I guess that's enough for me to read. Well, I think that by good luck I've said almost all the things I wanted to say; so I have some slides of… things, which, as I said before, I don't show through vanity, but just to sort of… introduction of myself that much more. This is what… what I try to do. And… So if you can show the slides now. Then, afterwards, I'd be very happy to discuss any of these points with you if anybody wants. Can we have the slides?

SLIDE

Upside down. If they're all going to be upside-down maybe you'd better change them. The… mark that I had is on the lower left-hand corner. (long pause) This is a landscape done around here. The… different trees I'm very fond of—The tree on the left is a larch tree, which is very characteristic of Maine… and very handsome… wonderful tree…. Next.

SLIDE

Poor girl is standing on her head. (off-microphone discussion of slide orientations) Should I keep speaking into here, Bill? Maybe you'd better shift the whole—I had them… with that X mark on the lower left-hand corner. (continued off-microphone reparations to slide orientations) Most of these are self-explanatory; there's no use of my saying anything… A puppy I had. Next.

SLIDE

Girl drawing in the dunes…. Next.

SLIDE

That's an old rail fence and elm trees… back of my barn. Next.

SLIDE

Shall I tap for next? That's down in the forbidden country of Cuba, where I used to go and enjoy…. Next.

SLIDE

(laughter) He's standing on his ear! (laughs) (long pause) I'm sorry they're confused; I thought I had them clearly marked. (long pause) (laughs) (laughter, prolonged) Next.

SLIDE

Boats down at… (unintelligible place name, Marco? Marshall?), Florida.

SLIDE

These are chalk drawings, mostly—Pen and ink and chalk.

SLIDE

If you don't know what those are you'd better go to the farm…. (laughter)
SLIDE
SLIDE
SLIDE
SLIDE
It's on its side. That's a small painting, and in this enlarged size it makes me out an action painter, more or less… (laughter) with… brush strokes about three feet long. (laughter)
SLIDE
These landscapes are practically all here in Maine. Toward the… At this moment the country is almost unbearably green; but still I find the greens very handsome…. But later on, towards autumn, the varieties of colors get much more pronounced, and it's very, very handsome country to paint.
SLIDE
SLIDE
I paint a great deal of still life; I enjoy it very, very much…
SLIDE
A head of Karl Knaths when he was up here to… lecture one time.
SLIDE
SLIDE
That'll be… Kenneth Callahan country, out on the Pacific coast….
SLIDE
SLIDE
My granddaughter.
SLIDE
SLIDE
This is a… I told you I do pottery. This is a—I started doing pottery really for the sake of having surfaces to decorate, because I had a yen at the time to do mural decorations; and you can't get people to give you walls and things to decorate. So I… started doing pottery really for the pleasure of decorating it. And… it's gone through several stages. I got more and more involved in interest in glazes and things of that sort, but I still enjoy the decoration of pottery more than anything else.

SLIDE

The wonderful thing about pottery is that you… when you submit it to high heat, and particularly this, for instance… a reducing flame, which turns copper, which normally is green into red, you find what you have done is enhanced remarkably by the process of the glaze and the firing. So it's an extremely… exciting thing, just because of the uncertainty and because of that enhancement of what… you have done. That is, you do the best you can with it, the most beautiful drawing you can, and decoration… and you find that some real miracles have been worked in the heat.

SLIDE

So I can admire my pottery more whole-heartedly than I can my painting, without any vanity involved.

SLIDE

SLIDE

SLIDE

What seems to be almost black here in the slide is really a very rich maroon-y red in the original (unintelligible)

SLIDE

SLIDE

SLIDE

For some reason all these seem elongated. Maybe it's because I'm looking at it side angle….

SLIDE

These terra cotta heads are built of slabs that are hollow inside, which I think is a very sensible way to go at them—that's the way of a potter rather than a sculptor, really. So in a sense these are expressions of a potter more than a sculptor.

SLIDE

Big bowl all covered inside and out with… tree animals.

SLIDE

These are a few tiles from a big tile mural that I did in the Mount Sinai hospital in New York in the (unintelligible) Klingenstein Pavilion. It was about thirty feet long by nine feet high… made up of twelve by twelve tiles.

Question: (unintelligible)

Speaker: Oh, yeah? (unintelligible) (laughs)

SLIDE

Well, these coming up now are three or four houses that I've designed and supervised the building of, for neighbors mostly…. This is a house that I built for Milton Caniff, the cartoonist and (unintelligible) a whitewashed exterior.

SLIDE

This is Jack Hauseman's house… the theatrical man….

SLIDE

This is the other side of the Caniff house, the side facing the south.

SLIDE

Another view of it….

SLIDE

This is my own house, built of the same red sandstone that makes up all the brownstone fronts in New York. It happens that the section of Rockland County where I live, up the Hudson, is… full of abandoned quarries, where they used to quarry the red sandstone for the brownstone fronts of New York. In New York it soon gets eaten with sulfur fumes and turns an ugly dirty brown. But out in the country, where it just comes out of the quarry, it's wonderful rosy colored stone….

SLIDE

A long, low house up there in my countryside….

SLIDE

This house I built for Maxwell Anderson, the playwright. It has about… It has more than seven gables, so we'd call it "The House of More Than Seven Gables…" (laughter)

SLIDE

The same house from another view.

SLIDE

This is my own studio, across a little stream from my house.

SLIDE

That's all. (Applause) Well… have we any questions coming up? (pause) Nothing, huh? Nothing *debatable* about my points of view…?

Question: I'd like to ask about your house. I heard you put that together with your own hands….

Speaker: Who else's *would* I put it together with? (laughs) (laughter) Yes, it's—I built that entirely by self. The others that I did for other people were designed by me and supervised; but this is the first—my own house is the first that I built; and… it was the result of living in France during the war, and falling in love with these old beautiful masonry houses… and realizing that they were built by the people who lived in them mostly. So I thought that when I got home, out of the war, I would do it too. So luckily I got this piece of land that had an old abandoned quarry on it; and so I got it onto carts and brought it down the stream, and… And the land was covered with dead chestnuts, too, which I cut down and hewed out (unintelligible) timbers. And… I started learning to lay up stone by starting on the ground where it's hidden in the foundations; and by the time I got above-ground I could do a respectable job. (laughter) So it looks like very decent masonry.

Question: How long did it take you to build?

Speaker: I started hewing out the timbers and cutting down the trees in the middle of winter; and… then as soon as the frost was out of the ground I started digging the foundation. I had one or two helpers most of the time. I was the only professional, so-called, whereas the others were just boys… or… maybe a farmer… And I had it under roof by snowfall, working every single day from dawn to dusk. Luckily I didn't break a rib or an arm or anything, or that would have set me back… It was a complete dawn to dark job from snow melt into snow falling in the autumn…. And since then the… Since it was a very convenient distance from New York, and is very unspoiled, uncut country—because it's on the west shore of the Hudson, and there was no bridge across the Hudson yet—The George Washington Bridge hadn't been built So commuting was so difficult that at that time, which was just after the First World War, 1930's, land was extremely cheap, and so I got an old farm for very, very little money… But as soon as the George Washington Bridge was built, it became very much built up. And luckily the group—happened to be a group from California; it was (unintelligible, possible Matt Standish 810) had gone to Stamford University (unintelligible), and several other Californians who bought adjoining farms there; and… so we were very protected, because we owned rather large tracts of land. It's now become quite valuable… because civilization has creeped in on us, (laughter) and housing developments are all around, but they haven't pushed… haven't gotten along very close.

Question: (unintelligible)

Speaker: I went to Alaska in the… Second World War, as we call it, because in this War Art Unit, which was formed from two directions—That is, a group of older artists, beyond the age of Army, were very interested in keeping a pictorial record of the war, while a group of younger artists who were *in* the war were also forming an artists' (unintelligible) And that's where Bill Cummings and I got together. Bill was in the Army, and he was sent to Alaska on the same mission that I was… I don't know what—I've forgotten what you call those… War Artists… and… we got paid by the Army… And I had a wonderful… shipment along the whole coast of Alaska. I've chose Alaska because I was just very excited about it; and I vaguely thought that as the war progressed, we would cross over into Russia and into Japan by that northern route. And I was very serious to get (unintelligible) the… (unintelligible) war ended without that happening. No more questions?

(Transcriber's note: Sound quality is badly degraded and/or Speaker moves away from microphone from this point on, with only fragments audible)

Question: In your (unintelligible)

Speaker: You're asking what artists have influenced me?

Question: … had greatest impact on you, or, if not artists (unintelligible)

Speaker: (unintelligible) … the first school that England had had after the so-called Post-Impressionists: that is, Cezanne… and Van Gogh… and Gauguin, and (unintelligible) And that was a complete eye opener for me, a complete—It bowled me over; and I became tremendously enthusiastic in the (unintelligible) And then when I left the (unintelligible), I saw all the Cezanne that I could find… (unintelligible)

Question: Do you think that you still might (unintelligible)

Speaker: Any other questions?

Question followed by Speaker's response (unintelligible)

(Recording continues to be of insufficient clarity to warrant transcription until Applause)

END OF RECORDING