

ART HISTORIAN

Craig Hugh Smyth

Interviewed by Taina Rikala de Noriega, Thomas F. Reese,
and Richard Cándida Smith

Art History Oral Documentation Project

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BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

PERSONAL HISTORY:

Born: July 28, 1915, New York City.

Education: A.B., 1938; M.F.A., 1941; Ph.D., 1956, Princeton University.

Spouse: Barbara Linforth Smyth, two children.

Military Career: Ensign, United States Naval Reserve, 1942-46; officer in charge, director, central art collecting point, Munich, Germany, Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Section, 1945-46.

CAREER HISTORY:

Research assistant, senior museum aide, National Gallery of Art, 1941-42.

Lecturer, Frick Collection, 1946-50.

Assistant professor, professor, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1950-73; acting director, 1951-53; director, 1953-73; trustee, 1973-present.

Professor, fine arts, Harvard University, 1973-85; professor emeritus, 1985-present.

Director, Villa i Tatti, Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, Florence, Italy, 1973-85.

Samuel Kress Professor, National Gallery of Art, 1987-88.

AFFILIATIONS:

American Academy in Rome, art historian in residence, 1959.

Bibliotheca Hertziana, Max Planck Gesellschaft, Rome, visiting member, 1972, 1973.

Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art, committee member, 1983-84.

College Art Association of America, board of directors, 1953-57; secretary, 1956.

Department of Fine Arts, Harvard University, visiting committee, 1953-57.

Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University, visiting committee, 1956-73, 1985-89.

Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, advisory committee, 1982-present.

Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton University, member, 1978; visiting member, 1971, 1983, 1985-86.

International Committee for the History of Art, alternate United States member, 1970-82; member, 1982-85.

United States National Committee of the History of Art, 1955-85

HONORS AND AWARDS:

Chevalier, Legion of Honor, France, 1946.

United States Army Medal of Commendation, 1946.

Voor Verdtenster Jegens Openbare Verzamlingen (medal), Netherlands, 1946.

Honorary trustee, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1968-present.

Fellow, Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1978.

Member, American Philosophical Society, 1979-present.

Associate academician, Accademia delle arti del disegno, 1980-present.

Festschrift, Renaissance Studies in Honor of Craig Hugh Smyth, 1985.

I Tatti Mongan Prize, Harvard University, 1992.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS:

Mannerism and Maniera. Locust Valley, New York: J. J. Augustin, 1963. Revised edition, Vienna: IRSA Verlag, 1992.

Bronzino as Draughtsman: An Introduction with Notes on
His Portraiture and Tapestries. Locust Valley, New York:
J. J. Augustin, 1971.

Repatriation of Art from the Collecting Point in Munich
after World War II: Background and Beginnings, with
Reference Especially to the Netherlands. Montclair, New
Jersey: Abner Schram, 1988.

Michelangelo Architect: The Facade of San Lorenzo and the
Drum and Dome of Saint Peter's. With Henry Millon.
Milan, Italy: Olivetti, 1988.

Michelangelo Drawings. Washington, D.C.: National
Gallery of Art, 1992.

The Early Years of Art History in the United States.
Edited with Peter Lukehart. Princeton: Princeton
University Press, 1993.

INTERVIEW HISTORY

INTERVIEWER:

Taina Rikala de Noriega. B.A., Art History and Environmental Studies, University of California, Santa Cruz; M.Sc. Architecture, University College, London; Ph.D., Urban Planning, UCLA.

Thomas F. Reese, Deputy Director, Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities. B.A., Art History, Tulane University; M.A., Ph.D., Art History, Yale University.

Richard Cándida Smith, Associate Director/Principal Editor, UCLA Oral History Program. B.A., Theater Arts, University of California, Los Angeles; M.A., Ph.D., United States History, University of California, Los Angeles.

TIME AND SETTING OF INTERVIEW:

Place: Tapes I-III and V, Hotel Dorset, New York City; Tapes IV and VI, Smyth's home, Cresskill, New Jersey; Tapes VII-X, Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, Santa Monica, California.

Dates, length of sessions: October 21, 1991 (75 minutes); October 22, 1991 (149); October 23, 1991 (108); October 24, 1991 (42); October 25, 1991 (55); May 14, 1992 (106); May 15, 1992 (110).

Total number of recorded hours: 10.75

Persons present during interview: Tapes I-III, Smyth, Rikala, and Reese; Tapes IV-VI, Smyth and Rikala; Tapes VII-X, Smyth and Smith.

CONDUCT OF INTERVIEW:

This is one in a series of interviews intended to examine the development of art history as a professional discipline and conducted under the joint auspices of the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities and the UCLA Oral History Program.

In preparing for the interview, Rikala consulted with Reese and Smith, the project director, about the goals

and purpose of the project and possible lines of questioning. Rikala and Smith did background research by reviewing Smyth's articles and books.

The interview is organized chronologically, beginning with Smyth's childhood and family background and continuing through his education and career as an art historian and academic. Major topics include art history at Princeton and New York University's Institute of Fine Arts, Harvard University's Villa I Tatti, fund-raising as director of the Institute of Fine Arts and I Tatti, and the contributions of major art historians during the mid-twentieth century.

EDITING:

Alex Cline, editor, edited the interview. He checked the verbatim transcript of the interview against the original recordings, edited for punctuation, paragraphing, and spelling, and verified proper names. Words and phrases inserted by the editor have been bracketed.

Smyth reviewed the transcript. He verified proper names and made extensive corrections and additions.

Teresa Barnett, principal editor, prepared the table of contents. Alex Cline, editor, assembled the biographical summary. Kristian London, editorial assistant, prepared the interview history. Rebecca Stone, editorial assistant, compiled the index.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

The original tape recordings of the interview are in the university archives and are available under the regulations governing the use of permanent noncurrent records of the university. Records relating to the interview are located in the office of the UCLA Oral History Program.

TAPE NUMBER: I, SIDE ONE

OCTOBER 21, 1991

RIKALA: We usually begin with the simplest question, which is where were you born and when.

SMYTH: I was born in New York City, July 28, 1915.

RIKALA: So you're a true New Yorker.

SMYTH: Uh-huh.

RIKALA: Could you tell me a bit about your family background. What did your father [George Hugh Smyth] do?

SMYTH: My father was a Presbyterian minister.

RIKALA: A minister. So I'll just jump ahead to one of my other questions. You obviously had a strong religious and community association in your family. Has that shaped the way you've sort of looked at your life and career?

SMYTH: I suppose it did. That's hard to-- My father was a marvelous person. His life was devoted to doing the best he could for other people very much, including me. All that was, I think, remarkable. He was an Irishman. That is to say, born in New York, but his father and mother both came from North Ireland, so they were Scotch-Irish.

RIKALA: Really? Did they--?

SMYTH: They met here. He was brought up in Harlem, New York City. Fascinating, because it was Harlem before Harlem was changed to another kind of community.

RIKALA: Yes, there were lots of northern Europeans and

Scandinavians in Harlem as well.

SMYTH: I think Harlem was a place that was strong, middle-class New York. There's just been an article in the New York Times about some of the impressive houses that are there that the present inhabitants are very proud of and keeping in good shape.

RIKALA: Do you come from a large family, many sisters and--?

SMYTH: No, I'm an only child.

RIKALA: And what about your mother?

SMYTH: She was a New Englander from Holyoke, Massachusetts, going way back--you know, the Mayflower. Her name was Humeston. Lucy Salome Humeston [Smyth]. She was also another marvelous person, and very solicitous and great.

RIKALA: Did she go to college?

SMYTH: She went to Mount Holyoke [College]. Took art history, even.

RIKALA: Really?

SMYTH: She thought that the subject, art history, was all perfectly well known by now, so why do you have to do any research about it? You know, this was a subject one knew, didn't one? So that was all very interesting.

RIKALA: Did your family have an interest in collecting art? Did you have art in the house?

SMYTH: No. They had nice photographs and things, but they weren't--

RIKALA: Being a New Yorker, was there a particular understanding of the city?

SMYTH: Well, I didn't live in New York.

RIKALA: You didn't? Where did you live?

SMYTH: No. My family lived in Scarsdale. I came to New York, you know, a lot as a child, but we didn't live here.

RIKALA: What about issues like political orientation? How strong was that in your household?

SMYTH: Scarsdale is a Republican community, and the word Democrat was looked on with a certain amount of horror, I think. My family really wasn't very political. I think that they sort of went along with the surrounding views but weren't thinking very much about it. They followed the news closely and had many thoughts about that. I suppose they always voted Republican.

RIKALA: How interesting. Tell me about the kind of education you had growing up.

SMYTH: I went to a sort of preschool kindergarten in a private school called Roger Ascam, which was first in Scarsdale and later in White Plains or Harrison. Then I went into the public school, into the second grade. I don't think I ever was in the first grade. The person who was teaching second grade was a classmate of my mother's at Mount Holyoke, so that was rather warming. I stayed in that

school through the sixth grade *[the best year was the fourth, with a Mrs. Cathcart, a remarkably good teacher] and then went to the junior high school, which didn't seem-- It had a contract system of education, and I thought it was appalling. My family, who were wonderful, always listening to what I thought, thought to take me out and put me back in Roger Ascam School, which I did for classes seven, eight, nine. That was a rewarding place to be. I had good friends. One was Nat [Nathaniel] Benchley, the son of Robert Benchley. But my family had, in the parish, good friends, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Robbins, who were insistent that I go away to school to Hotchkiss [School, Labeville, Connecticut], where the son of Mrs. [Emma S. Edwards] Robbins had gone. He had died, and the Robbinses had a strong feeling about the school and how great it had been. So with their help, my family sent me to Hotchkiss.

There is a story about that which needn't be on the record, but I'm very-- I like to think of it. Because I took the examinations for Hotchkiss to get in and failed them all, I was told that I couldn't go there. *[Whether Roger Ascam's fault or mine, I can't say.] So then, where would I go? I was taken up to be interviewed at Taft

* Smyth added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.

[School]. Taft accepted me if I would go to the summer school. So my father and a driver drove me up to summer school, which I think was in New Hampshire somewhere. We arrived, and I took a look at this place, and I asked my father if he would stay overnight and come back in the morning. And he did. He came back in the morning. I said, "I don't want to stay here." I can't imagine doing this at the age I was. "I don't think that it has the kind of quality-- I'd like to be taken, if you could, to Hotchkiss summer school, even if they don't let me in the school after that." And my father, who was an amazing guy, said yes. [laughter] He didn't say, "No. I brought you here, you're going to have to stay." So we drove to Hotchkiss summer school, and they said, "Yes, you can come to summer school here." After I'd been there a month, they accepted me for the year. So that was a great thing. That was my father. That was the kind of thing he would do. So that's where I went to school.

RIKALA: From there you went to Princeton [University].

SMYTH: And from there I went to Princeton.

RIKALA: During the time at Hotchkiss, did you study languages? Was there a university preparatory--?

SMYTH: It was very much geared to preparing you for a university, especially for the college board examinations, to get in. And the university was Yale [University]. That

was where you were thought to be going almost entirely. But there were some of us who didn't.

REESE: Could you describe a little bit the ambient of such a school during these years and the type of student and the types of activities that were most important in the curriculum? Student life.

SMYTH: Well, it was very rigorous and very tied in by strict rules. Many of the rules seemed to be, you know, superfluous. One always thought, "Why do they have a rule that says you can't throw a snowball within one hundred feet of a building?" or whatever. But those were small things. The main thing was a strong framework in which to discipline one's self and get down to how to study. That was what you learned. And you also had friends forever, as you would, you know. My best man I met there, Henry Gardiner. We still see each other all the time. So it was a marvelous experience, I think. I wouldn't have missed it for anything. But there wasn't, in those days, anything much that was arranged to catch your intellectual curiosity. You were there to learn so that you could pass the college boards so that you could go to the university. That was the fundamental thing. There were teachers who did more than that, but that wasn't the main program.

REESE: Are there particular teachers you remember as having had more influence on your learning?

SMYTH: Oh, yes. John Coolidge's brother Archie [Archibald Cary Coolidge], for example, taught English to lower-mids--that's sophomores. He was intellectually alive, a light in the classroom, taking us through books in a way that fascinated and made us deeply interested. On Conrad's Heart of Darkness, for instance-- I'll always remember that experience. He invited us, a number of us, over to the house regularly to read things out loud that weren't in the course at all, Faulkner and whatever. He was married to a distant cousin of mine, so I knew him on another level.

There was another English teacher named Carl Parsons, who got us all when we were first there, that summer school, and then throughout the first year. He taught about how to punctuate and spell and write sentences and paragraphs that were coherent. That kind of thing was driven into you, you know. He made it not only rigorous but even fun, because he made all this a challenge and was, at the same time, amusing and very much aware of each of us as individuals.

Then there was a man who influenced lots and lots of people, the senior English teacher, [John] McChesney, who, you know, many people would talk about ever after. John Hersey, for one. When you entered his class--and this was totally different from everything else at Hotchkiss senior year--he said something like this: "The first weeks, we're

just going to ask ourselves what it is to be a human being." There were no assignments at first, except a novel a week or a book of some kind a week you were assigned to read and had to write a paper about. But otherwise, nothing. After about six weeks, then we turned to Hamlet. *[From then on, preparation for the college boards was in the air again.] The first weeks introduced a marvelous experience. Because philosophy didn't figure in the school really much at all. A little with the headmaster, but not much. So this is where it came out, with this man sitting on a stool in front of the class and getting you to talk and teaching you little by little about thinkers of the past. It was quite something.

REESE: Were the student body largely from--

SMYTH: It was WASP-ish.

REESE: --the same part of the country and the same--?

SMYTH: No, across the country, but pretty much the same sort of WASP-ish makeup. Very different now. It's an open school now. It's totally plural in its student body. But it wasn't then.

REESE: Do you think your parents had Yale in mind for you when they sent you?

* Smyth added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.

RIKALA: They didn't, no. No, they didn't. I'm sure that this family that directed in that direction did, Mr. Walter Robbins and his wife, who was really the main force in this. She was determined to help the family and see that I went to Hotchkiss. Ministers, you know, are often impecunious, and they're often helped by their parishioners, so I suppose that's how it happened.

REESE: Could I ask you about, kind of, art and culture in the house with your parents and--?

SMYTH: Lots of good reading, reading out loud, my mother especially. My father much less, practically not. Going to museums, yes. But art wasn't something you thought of as having in your own ambient. Music, piano--mother played well, could read music right off--as something to be taken for granted, all that, very much. So--

RIKALA: What about travel? Did your family travel?

SMYTH: Well, we went abroad in 1929, the summer I was thirteen to fourteen. And that was a great thing.

Absolutely. From then on, that had a big influence on me. I can remember thinking, "I have to get back here" and having a sort of fantasy that Europe wouldn't exist except when I was there, which was very funny. [laughter]

REESE: Where in Europe did you travel?

SMYTH: We landed at Cherbourg, stayed nights in Trouville, Deauville, Caen, and then to Paris. Afterwards,

Switzerland, Geneva. Went up the Jungfrau. Lucerne. Back to Paris. To London. To Edinburgh. Across the Trossachs to Glasgow. Took a ship to Northern Ireland to see where my father's family came from and saw whatever sort of relatives there still were--there were only rather distant relatives by then--and home. Two months. It was really great.

RIKALA: Did you study foreign languages? Or was that part of the school curriculum before?

SMYTH: By then, I had had a little Latin in Roger Ascam School, but that's all. Maybe some French. But at Hotchkiss you took French four years willy-nilly. You took Latin four years willy-nilly. I wanted to take Greek, but my adviser my first year was a chemist, and he said, "You do not need Greek in life," so I wasn't allowed to take it. I had to make that up when I got to college.

RIKALA: So what factors helped you choose Princeton?

SMYTH: Well, we went one summer to a place in Maine, and there was a lad there who was going to Princeton. He had a great sweater, and it had orange numerals on it. That caught my attention. But I can't-- And then my father had-- He and his family had lived in New Jersey some. He'd gone to a school in Princeton once. So he was sort of oriented in that direction, not pushing at all, but knew it. And I didn't seem to want to do the thing that everybody else did, so-- My best friend at Hotchkiss, John Needham, went to

Harvard [University]. We talked about this a lot. He chose that. I think only nine people out of our class went to Harvard.

RIKALA: And what did he study there?

SMYTH: It would have been the humanities. And he wanted-- He was way ahead of me. He wanted to make his life revolve around the city of Florence and Leonardo [da Vinci]. He was a very good athlete. He did all sorts of other things, but this was his aim, though his family wanted him in the family advertising business, a well-known Chicago firm-- He was killed in the war--naval officer in the Philippines--so he never got to do that. *[The sad irony is that I, who hadn't ever planned it, ended up in Florence--just what he wanted.]

REESE: So of that class, then, nine or ten went to Harvard.

SMYTH: I think something like that. About eighteen of us went to Princeton. Very good friends I had in this eighteen.

REESE: Did others go, then, to Yale and--?

SMYTH: Mostly to Yale. Then, if one's record wasn't very good, I suppose then one went to someplace else. Yale, Princeton, Harvard were the places people sort of assumed.

REESE: Can you remember what, at that age, your kind of

* Smyth added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.

mental idea of each of these institutions was, if you had any at all? For instance, what a Harvard would be as opposed to a Yale or a Princeton?

SMYTH: I don't know. It's very hard for me to say now. I knew what it was to go to Yale football games, because they were not too far away from home, and I'd been there to those. And, of course, we knew people who went to these places. But I should have thought that Princeton was somehow, I don't know, a fresh, open experience that wasn't closed in so much by tradition, the tradition that I knew. An exception. I seemed to have liked to do the exception.

REESE: So that Yale would have felt too close.

SMYTH: Somehow.

REESE: Too already known to you.

SMYTH: Something like that. Then a very good friend of mine, Bill [William] Borden, who was in the class ahead of me, had gone to Princeton. And I went down to visit him his first year. So that was-- He was a musician, and I was playing in those days too. So I thought that it would be nice to be there and continue playing.

RIKALA: What did you play?

SMYTH: I played the saxophone and trombone, and we played our way to Europe on ships. That's the way we got-- You see, I wanted to get back to Europe. And in 1933, upper-mid year, when I was seventeen, again my father-- I said I would

like to take a band of kids from school to Europe on a ship, and he said okay. He knew the president of the United States line, and he took me to see him. The man said yes. So I put together an orchestra. But my father saw to it that there was an older member along who was a minister in Scarsdale who played the saxophone. He thought that that would be the right thing, so he [the older man] went.

RIKALA: A chaperone in saxophone disguise.

REESE: What kind of music did you play on board?

SMYTH: We played jazz. And it was jazz when jazz was very young. So jazz was moving very rapidly, and it was fun to be in on it. I didn't ever have time to, you know, put great effort into it, but we played it and enjoyed it very much. This lad that went to Princeton from Hotchkiss ahead of me, Bill Borden--he went on the 1933 trip--he was very moneyed, so he didn't really have to do anything he didn't want to, and in the end he became the arranger and substitute pianist for Claude Thornhill. Did you ever hear of Claude Thornhill? Well, in the history of jazz, his was an important band, because Miles Davis was influenced very much by Claude Thornhill's arrangements. And my friend, Bill Borden, was one of the arrangers for Claude Thornhill. *[He

* Smyth added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.

found Gil Evans and brought him in to arrange for Thornhill, too. Evans: an outstanding name in jazz history.]

RIKALA: Was there ever any possibility that you might go into music?

SMYTH: No. I wasn't that good. I could do it, but--

REESE: But did this association with jazz put you in a class of being somehow different as a student? Or was it a normal--?

SMYTH: I don't think so. No, I think it was normal. The headmaster of Hotchkiss thought it was the devil's music. [laughter] But otherwise, I don't think it did. John Hammond, who was very important to the history of jazz as a patron--he found Billie Holiday, for instance--went to Hotchkiss. He had graduated just before I got there. So there was a tradition in the school of interest in it. There was an orchestra that recorded my first year in Hotchkiss, 1930. We made a recording. I still have it. It was done at the Columbia Studios here in New York, and it's not bad. For the time, it's not bad. So there was a tradition. And there was a teacher of piano in school who was thought only to be able to play classical music. I discovered that he had played for Jack Hilton in London. So I got him out and got him playing, much to the headmaster's surprise and probably distress. [laughter]

RIKALA: When you started at university, did you belong to a

specific college? What was the first year like, and how did you organize your life?

SMYTH: Well, the first year, 1934-35, I don't know how this happened, but three of us, four of us from school got into the same small building, 11 Dickinson Street, in Princeton. I think that's what it was. Something Dickinson Street. On the corner of Dickinson Street and University Place, just across from the campus proper. And that was wonderful, because we knew each other very well. And then the next year we moved onto the campus into dormitories, again the same group pretty much together. And then at Princeton you join a club for your junior and senior year, but we just stayed in the same room always. You don't live in the clubs.

REESE: What was the basis of the organization of undergraduate life at Princeton? It did not have a college system per se.

SMYTH: No, it didn't.

REESE: But you lived in dormitories?

SMYTH: You lived in dormitories, and there wasn't, so to say, a housemaster for the dormitory. There were people from the faculty living in various dormitories. We had a man who was a sort of chaplain, not connected with the chapel itself but somehow officially part of the university, a very nice man by the name of Bryant. He was there, but I

don't think he was there to supervise us.

REESE: What do you remember about the earliest classes you took at Princeton and kind of looking out from those classes at the student body and the environment and the opportunities?

SMYTH: I loved it. I thought it was just wonderful. I had my first history course with an instructor named White during freshman year. That was quite something. I wrote papers for him. I liked that a lot. I took Latin and Greek, which I enjoyed very much, English with a wonderful man, whose name I'm not going to now say, but who had presided very much over part of the English world at Princeton. I was put into a precept--the preceptorial is very important at Princeton; it goes with every lecture course--of a man named [Herbert S.] Murch, who had been the unofficial creative writing teacher at Princeton. I think Edmund Wilson studied with him. I think you can find a whole series of people who went to his preceptorial. It was sheer chance that I was put into a preceptorial with him. And I stayed in his preceptorial for two years, so I got a lot from him. He was great. Not as a teacher of creative writing to us at all, but just as the leader of discussion on the subject of the course lectures, whatever they were. I never will forget that. He never left his room, so far as

I know. The preceptorials met in his room, and he presided over our reading and our thoughts, drew us out. It was great.

REESE: This was what year, now?

SMYTH: Freshman and sophomore with him, 1934-35, 1935-36.

REESE: Was Princeton's curriculum fixed for the first year or two?

SMYTH: No.

REESE: You could elect?

SMYTH: You could elect. But there must have been a structure that you had to follow. I'm not sure what that was. I had chemistry in the middle of this, because I was to be a doctor. My mother thought I should be a doctor. So I'd had chemistry at Hotchkiss and went on with it at Princeton. My second year, I was taking biology, and suddenly I knew I wasn't going to be a doctor. In fact, I knew before that I wasn't, because in-- This is all very strange I think, but in freshman year, I had a man by the name of [Walter Livingston] Wright [Jr.] in history, freshman history. One of the two papers I wrote for him was on the Turks, the Seljuk Turks and the Ottoman Turks. He seemed to like the paper. When the year was closing, he said to me that he had just been named president of Roberts College in Istanbul, and would I like, when I finished Princeton, to come out and teach at Roberts College. Well,

of course, I was knocked out by that. I said, "Yes. That would be fine." [laughter] Like that. So he said, "Well, in that case, you should prepare yourself in the following way: you should take the introductory course on Islam with Mr. [Philip] Hitti"--who was a great figure at Princeton-- "and you should go on taking languages." And he knew I was doing Greek and Latin. I guess he asked me, "But you should also take an art course, history of art." Well, one of my best friends [Henry Gardiner] was painting and taking art courses the first year he was at Princeton, and I kept hearing about them from him all the time, so that suited me. So that's what I did the second year, really. Pushed in that direction. And I didn't think that the doctor thing was what I wanted to do. I didn't like-- I liked the biology as a general idea, but not doing it.

RIKALA: How did your mother take the news, that you decided--?

SMYTH: She was fine about it.

RIKALA: She wasn't let down?

SMYTH: She was puzzled but perfectly all right about it.

RIKALA: You've talked about this group of friends, this group of four. Could you tell me a little bit more about how you evolved together and some of the experiences--?

SMYTH: Well, my roommate was a man by the name of John Clark. He had been in Hotchkiss the first year and then had

become very ill and had to stay out of school for a year. For whatever reason, his family decided not to send him back. But I'd liked him very much. We'd spent lots of time together. So when I discovered we were both going to Princeton, we talked with each other about rooming together. So he was the person I roomed with for four years, actually. He just died. He was a marvelous guy. He had a hobby. His hobby was the Civil War. In freshman year at Hotchkiss we often went off on holidays together. You know, a one-day holiday would suddenly be announced by the headmaster. John Clark's idea of the perfect holiday was to go to cemeteries to look up Civil War veterans. [laughter] So we saw a lot of cemeteries and had a lot of fun. So that was fun.

RIKALA: What did he study?

SMYTH: At Princeton? History. He was fascinated with the Civil War, but he also was fascinated with horses. He knew the bloodlines of racehorses so well that Mr. [Joseph] Widener didn't buy a horse without talking to John Clark to find out about the horse's bloodline and whether this was going to be all right. So John wrote his senior thesis on the cavalry in the Civil War, which is a nice combination. And he was a wise and thoughtful person. He hardly ever left our room except to go eat at the club. He didn't do anything very much except go to horse races. But everybody came to see him. He was a sort of sage. So there was

always somebody coming in to see John and ask his opinion, which was enriching. He was one of the big athletes, even.

RIKALA: How interesting.

REESE: What was the relationship among the underclassmen and the slightly older students at Princeton? Did you stay pretty much with your own class, or--?

SMYTH: I think you stayed pretty much with your own class. I was in the Triangle Club as a musician in the pit one year, sophomore year. So in that situation you're thrown in to some extent with older students. *[Frank Taplin, later the president of the Metropolitan Opera Association, I think it's called, was the leader, a class ahead of me. He's been a friend ever since.] I had the very good luck in summer school at Hotchkiss, before I started school there, to have in summer school that same summer the captain of the football team at Hotchkiss, who became a good friend. He took hold as soon as I got to Princeton, you know, told me what I had to do and all that, so that was very helpful. He went to Princeton three years ahead of me. That's another reason I probably went, because he was a very good guy, and I liked him.

REESE: One of the things that George [A.] Kubler talked

* Smyth added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.

about at Yale, although he arrives at Yale in '29, right at the point of the Depression, was the kind of changes within the university community as they attempted to transform Yale from what was a gentleman's institution into something that was much more of a professional, you know, newly formed institution of learning, and the tensions that were present as they urged curriculum reform and so on. Had that already happened at Princeton? Or was that never really an issue at Princeton?

SMYTH: I don't think it was an issue. I think that Princeton had faced that when I got there, at least, and it must have been going on for quite a while: a very strong commitment to undergraduate education, and the main figures on the faculty taught undergraduates. You weren't being taught by student assistants, you know. If you took Virgil as an undergraduate, you studied with the Virgil person at Princeton. That the faculty was doing its own research you knew. And you knew that there were graduate students who were, but they were much less numerous. The graduate school was small. You knew they were there. Once in a while you knew a graduate student. But, in any case, you had the feeling that Princeton was not a country club, as the place looked. It was a very serious undergraduate education. Which you could skirt to some extent by taking "guts," as you could, I suppose, anywhere, but not forever, because you

had to write a senior dissertation, a senior thesis. So for everyone it became serious.

RIKALA: How was that organized? Through a particular department or--? How did you then become affiliated with a particular program of study?

SMYTH: Well, you had to choose a major department for your last two years, so in your sophomore year you made that choice. I chose the department of classics. One of my good friends of this four was Henry Gardiner, the one who was my best man when I got married. He still very much survives, though he was a bomber pilot in the war and his plane was hit. He brought it in safely. He was the person who was painting a lot and was taking department courses in art and archaeology in the first two years, so I got a lot of it from hearing what was going on there from him.

RIKALA: Was that where the art history program was located, then, within classics? Or was there a fine arts program?

SMYTH: No, there was the department of the history of art. History of art and archaeology. They called it the Department of Art and Archaeology. That goes right back to the beginning of that department, which was founded in 1883 by Allan Marquand, one of the early departments in the land. He had been a Latinist and philosopher, undergraduate at Princeton, but Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins [University]. When he founded the department, it was, right from the beginning,

archaeology and history of art. His first move after being appointed to start the department was to go to the Mediterranean to learn what he could about archaeology as fast as he could. I think from the beginning he had the notion that the department should have a dig somewhere. And they did some. And he also set out to study the Renaissance, where he chose to concentrate on della Robbia and eventually wrote the main works on della Robbia. So it began as a very scholarly department. He was head of the department until 1924, from 1883 to 1924.

They had built McCormick Hall, which was for architecture as well as art and archaeology, and it was very much of a going concern. Princeton was strong in the humanities, I think, when I was there. There was, you know, lots of play, I'm sure you'd have to say, but--

REESE: Did you have a sense as a second- or third-year student, though, that the Princeton student body consisted of those very interested in humanities and arts versus others who were very clearly there for professional education versus others who were just there to get a degree and go on?

SMYTH: I suppose you were aware of that in a sort of subconscious way. You knew that there were people who were just focusing their major on engineering. Well, that's obviously career oriented. But most people I don't think

were taking courses for a professional reason. People going into medicine, yes. Physics maybe. Mathematics was very strong at Princeton then, and Mr. Einstein was to be seen walking across our campus regularly. But I think it was sort of subconscious. The clubs were quite varied at Princeton, and you knew that a lot of it was just, you know, being there for the social and whatever amusing sides, those being the most important for some people, surely. That was there.

REESE: But being a classics major, you felt that you were really at the core of what the institution represented? I mean, that was not considered an esoteric field at all?

SMYTH: No, no. It wasn't considered so at all. And there was a great movement. This is, I think, really important about Princeton at that point. Under the influence of Paul Elmer More--do you know anything about him?--there began, I suppose around 1930, maybe a little earlier, a movement within the world of the humanities at Princeton to consider the value of the humanities in education. Education properly for values. The lynchpin of that group of people in Paul Elmer More's circle-- More was not a member of the faculty, but he lived in Princeton. He was a Platonist and a Christian apologist who was apparently a personality, very charismatic, quietly charismatic. The lynchpin of this group was T. M. [Theodore Meyer] Greene. The people who

were in the group included Asher Hines from the English department, Whitney Oates classics, and also a man by the name of [Francis R. B.] Godolphin from the classics department, to some extent. In addition, though he wasn't with these all the time but was very influential with them, Bert Friend, Albert Friend, from the art department. Also E. Baldwin Smith, again not in the closest center of the humanities movement, but a great propagandist for it. He was in the art department, wrote on the history of architecture. I should be able to go on and mention more, but this was the core.

A ritual developed in that group. The very smallest core of it met every day at "the Balt" [the Baltimore Restaurant] on Nassau Street, which was a cafeteria, for coffee at around ten thirty in the morning. There over the years, there developed a whole philosophy of how the humanities should be taught. And T. M. Greene gave a lecture course, which eventually became a book, which was the expression of this group, a lecture course called the Philosophy of Art. The book that came out of that course was entitled The Arts and the Art of Criticism. That was published in 1940. It was an awful time to publish because the war was just beginning. People were going off to war. Whitney Oates went into the marines. Students were preoccupied by other things. The book was obviously never

known in Europe. So the influence it could have had beyond Princeton was curtailed, also because George Boas at Johns Hopkins gave it a terrible review, called it "high church." But it's an extraordinary book. You would enjoy it.

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SMYTH: That man Wright, I've forgotten his first name. And the people in the classics department, chaired by Duane Stewart. There was a man by the name of Shirley Weber in the classics department who didn't publish much and, because of this I think, eventually got dropped over the side, which was very sad, because he was a wonderful teacher of Greek and Latin. He made those languages languages that you really wanted to read as you read French, you know. You'd never been taught that way in school. Latin in Hotchkiss was a puzzle, you know, the way it was taught everywhere by then. You had to find the subject and then you had to find the object and then find out what sort of ablative you were using. [laughter] It wasn't what you read off. If I could have stayed with Weber, that would have been wonderful. But he didn't stay at Princeton. He went off and became the librarian of the American School [of Classical Studies] in Athens and was superb there, so everything was all right. But these--Wright and Weber and others--were marvelous people to be thrown with that first year.

REESE: What was your first encounter, really, with the Department of Art and Archaeology? You said you took this one class to--

SMYTH: Well, my second year I took E. Baldwin Smith's

History of Architecture, which, the first semester, started with Egypt and ended-- Where? I'm not so sure. It went to the Middle Ages and then the second semester from the Middle Ages on, and I've forgotten how far it went. But he was a riveting lecturer, as you probably know, a stentorian voice that no one has ever heard the like of, and a very good encapsulator of the history of architecture, I think.

REESE: I see he was there in 1915 and got the second Ph.D. from Princeton and was an instructor in 1916. So he was a fixture.

SMYTH: He was a fixture. And that was excellent. Then I had George Forsyth as a preceptor in the course. It was George Forsyth's preceptorial that suddenly made me think seriously for the first time about that being a subject one might want to go on and study. I didn't make any decision, but I knew from that experience with him that that was something to be thought about.

REESE: The preceptor system. Could you explain just a little more about how it works? It's an English system, or a--?

SMYTH: Well, it was invented I guess before Woodrow Wilson, but he was very keen on it. He brought in a lot of young people whom he thought would be great in the end to be preceptorial leaders. One of those was Charles Rufus Morey. When we were there, a course like Mr. Smith's met as a

lecture course twice a week.

RIKALA: And were there slides?

SMYTH: Slides, yes. It was in a big lecture hall, and it was a course that lots of people took. It had a good reputation, and it was also a way, I think, for people to get into their heads the periodization of history, because in one year it covered a long period. So I think it had values beyond just the history of architecture. Then you had a preceptorial once a week, and the audience of the lecture was broken down into groups of maybe nine or ten people at most. You had it with a good member of the department. Mr. Friend always taught preceptorials, though he was one of Princeton's great figures. Questions were raised in the preceptorial with photographs present, no slides, but photographs brought in. I think Tom [Thomas] Hoving tells that that's how he got started, you know, studying with a man by the name of [W. Frederick] Stohlman, who was also there in my time. He got interested in possibly going into this field through the preceptorials, and that's what first caught me. So I think it must have happened in a number of cases.

REESE: They were held in academic buildings or in--?

SMYTH: Right in McCormick Hall, in rooms that were built for it, small rooms, you know, half the size of this room, with a table and a screen if you wanted to show a slide and

chairs around the table. You sat with the leader of the precept. He had a program. It had been decided beforehand by the faculty what points they wanted to have come out. But each faculty member did it in his own way.

RIKALA: Was there specific work that you did for the course? Present papers at all? Or was that--?

SMYTH: No, I don't remember that in those lecture courses. In a history course, yes, we had papers to write. In English, of course, papers to write. But I don't remember that one did them in history of art courses.

REESE: One of the things we're particularly interested in is the role of this introductory art history class and the student body at large. The kind of reasons that universities had this special kind of interest in art history. You've already talked about teaching periodization, but museums were growing, excavations were being planned. It was a way, I think, of establishing a lot of other kinds of relationships. What do you remember about E. Baldwin Smith's lecture course and the way it was taught? The slides, the kind of method he used, the testing?

SMYTH: Well, first of all, it wasn't a survey in our sense of the word. It wasn't the survey of the history of art. It was the department's introductory course, yes, but a serious exposition of the history of architecture. In graduate school, in graduate study of the history of art at

Princeton, you never got a lecture course about anything except, very occasionally, a series of lectures--not a full course for credit--given by, say, [Erwin] Panofsky, who was not in the department. It was all seminars. If a graduate student came from outside of Princeton or from within Princeton who hadn't majored in the history of art, he was advised to go to the undergraduate courses if he needed to catch up, with the help of reading and so forth. So those were serious undergraduate courses. That was not a watered-down affair. Smith's architecture was as concentrated as E. Baldwin Smith could make it, given that he was covering the long space in time that he had.

REESE: But it was a graduate course? Or an undergraduate course?

SMYTH: Undergraduate. It was a 200 course. Two hundred courses are thought of, or were thought of then, as more sophomore than anything else, but anybody could take it. You could take it as a freshman, you could take it as a senior. And it was, as I say, a serious thing, with somebody for the preceptorials like George Forsyth, who was excavating then at Angers, so when you got to medieval architecture, you had a man you were dealing with who was in it up to his ears, you know. It was not watered down.

REESE: How do you remember the lectures? You've spoken a little bit about Smith's style being very dynamic.

SMYTH: It was an incredible style. He also taught the course on modern painting, which began with Rembrandt and ended with things that he did not approve of. But that was very strange, to hear modern art taught in this stentorian voice, which had long noises between phrases. [demonstrates this style] It was a wonderful thing. But you respected it very much. It was absolutely clear, and he said exactly what he meant to say. I once missed some lectures in his modern painting course. He said, "Well, you can just look at my lecture notes." So I was given his book of lecture notes. The lectures were written with fairly wide margins, and the margins had been filled, over however long this course had been going on, with all sorts of inserts. He was thinking about it all the time. Unlike NYU [New York University]'s Institute of Fine Arts, they didn't have a change of course every semester at all. The courses were settled, and that's what they were. But he was thinking and adding.

REESE: What do you think he expected the student to get out of this? What were his expectations?

SMYTH: I don't know. I think he was very much involved, not as a central part of the core of this humanities thing that I was talking about, but as a great propagandist for it: the humanities as a view of what it is to be a human being, as my teacher in Hotchkiss would have said, and the

Western tradition of thought and of making works of art and buildings. And for him, it was buildings and what buildings expressed. His book on the dome [The Dome: A Study in the History of Ideas] is a perfect example of what he stood for. That's what his courses stood for and what his seminar-- I took a course with him my first year as a graduate student on problems in the history of architecture, which was focused on the ancient Near East and the development of the dome, the Parthians, you know. And when you were doing that, you knew you were digging where people should dig, and he was seriously with you.

REESE: Did he give exams?

SMYTH: Yes. There was always an exam in the undergraduate courses, except Friend's Northern Renaissance course.

RIKALA: And what kinds of questions were posed in the exam? I don't expect you to know, but, I mean, recall sort of impressionistically what kinds of questions.

SMYTH: I can't remember about that, really. The department's philosophy about that may be exemplified by its exams for graduate students at the end of graduate study. That was a three-part exam, and it was the whole history of art. It took place on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, nine hours each day. You had a day in between each one of these. The first day was art historical problems. These were problems that went from the pyramids to Picasso. [laughter]

You had choices. You couldn't do them all in one area. You wrote for nine hours on two art historical problems. So that was one thing, going as deeply as possible into major historical matters. The second day was fact, just plain fact about the history of art. The third day was critical. You had choices, to be sure, but they weren't choices that gave you a lot of leeway.

The critical day was very much, I'm sure-- In their heads they were thinking in terms of this whole humanities movement, which was so strong, and out of which then there came a humanities program, which I meant to say. Neil Rudenstine, when he got to Princeton, he majored in that humanities program. When I was there, it hadn't yet become a program, but it was becoming one, and it was going to be interdisciplinary. The department of the history of art was already moving in the interdisciplinary way, which is why what happened to me-- Which I can tell you about. Because my senior thesis was written between the art department and the classics department.

RIKALA: So was it a move on the part of the students or the faculty that brought--?

SMYTH: Faculty.

RIKALA: Faculty brought about this integration.

SMYTH: Out of this group of people who were in the Paul Elmer More circle.

RIKALA: That was their specific intellectual trend, you could say. That was their contribution to the humanities.

SMYTH: Yes. They wanted to see-- And this book, T. M. Greene's The Arts and the Art of Criticism, is an example of that. They wanted to see the arts together, and they wanted to find the common grounds among the arts and common grounds for critics of the arts.

RIKALA: So the role of the critic was an integrated role, not a--

SMYTH: Integrated role.

RIKALA: Rather than an outsider observing back or--

SMYTH: At least they wanted the critic not to be insular.

REESE: It's interesting, because it's those very years between '34 and '40 that arts and letters at Yale is established, which then becomes the basis for the art history program. But it didn't have any departmental base until it was, in some way, adopted by this larger interdisciplinary program. And then it grew.

SMYTH: And then they got T. M. Greene, who was the lynchpin of this program, to go to Yale.

REESE: We've left you, I think, with Baldwin [Smith]'s myth, then, and this next art history class. I'm just wondering about your last two years as an undergraduate at Princeton, what you remember.

RIKALA: You'd mentioned that you joined a club your third

year.

SMYTH: There was what was called "bicker." If you were lucky during that, you joined a club. Some people didn't get in, so it was not-- It was an elitist system.

RIKALA: How did that work?

SMYTH: Well, I had been in the Triangle [Club] by then, and there was a club that was devoted especially to theatricals, and the Triangle-- Jimmy [James] Stewart had been in it. That's the club I joined. The Charter Club it was called. It was, you know, not a great, important part of my life, but you had to eat all your meals there, so you saw all those people all the time. That was good.

Well, I took more history of art. The summer of sophomore year, 1936, I went to-- I played on a Cunard-line ship and got to France with several orchestra friends. And we made a trip down through the Loire valley. We bicycled along the Loire. That was great. So I became more interested. By then I'd had E. Baldwin Smith and architecture--looked at it with some expertise, I suppose.

RIKALA: That medieval cathedrals and--

SMYTH: The next year, I tried to sell our band to the Odyssey Cruise. I don't know if you've ever heard of that. There was a wonderful cruise that went once a year under the direction and ownership of a man by the name of Anderson, I think. He hired an Italian-owned vessel. It was a month-

long cruise that started in Venice and went into the Aegean and up as far as Istanbul. I thought it would be great to sell him a band. So I went to see him with a piano-playing Princeton friend of mine, and he said, "You can't be serious. I wouldn't have such a thing on my ship."

[laughter] But he said, "I do need some helpers on this cruise, still. Would you like to do that?" So we jettisoned the whole idea of a band and went on the cruise. And that was fun. There were some very interesting people in our group. On that trip, I got talking to two art historians, one who was the head of the art department at Williams [College], Mr. [Karl E.] Weston, I think, and one who ended up at Swarthmore [College]. I'm not going to be able to say his name. But we talked art history quite a lot and whether it was a field that one might want to go into. So that was important. And we saw a lot on that trip.

RIKALA: And how did you come to define your senior thesis project?

SMYTH: Well, that was very strange. Mr. Charles Rufus Morey, who was the head of the department, followed Marquand, who was a medievalist. He was a great figure. I hadn't taken his course. But one day he buttonholed me--I didn't know that he knew who I was--and asked me into his office and asked me if I would like to write my senior thesis between the department of classics and the department

of the history of art, which amazed me. And that sounded good. He said he had a subject that he wanted me to do, since my author for classics was Virgil: "Virgil illustration in the Renaissance." Well, afterwards, I could see why he did this: (a) because of this movement towards interdisciplinary things that they were talking about then, and (b) because Erwin Panofsky, who was a great friend of Morey's and had come to the institute at Princeton because of Morey-- Because Morey really populated the whole side of the humanities in the institute for Advanced Study at the beginning. The head of the institute had come to Morey and asked whom the institute should appoint. Panofsky was his recommendation. Anyway, Panofsky had just done with [Fritz] Saxl his article on the rebirth of classical antiquity, the theme of which was that classical form and classical subject matter had separated after antiquity and did not join together again until the Renaissance. So a good place to see how classical form and classical subject matter joined together again might be Virgil illustrations, but I didn't realize that. I was not told that. So I agreed. I thought, "That's wonderful." The classics department didn't like it very much, but Mr. Morey, being Mr. Morey--and a former classicist--he won. So that's the way it was.

RIKALA: Did you have a sense of someone helping you and shaping your career, bringing you along?

SMYTH: Well, it was wonderful, because he said, "You have to come and see me every Thursday morning starting in September." So I did. The first was just, "What are you doing?" and "Are you looking at this, looking at that." Pretty soon it was staying for a little while, and before the semester was over it was staying all morning. He showed me how he kept notes and how he worked and the kinds of questions he asked. It was just an extraordinary thing. The second term, because my marks were good, I didn't have to take any courses. So the whole second term was that senior thesis. He was there with it all the way. That was awfully good. Extraordinary.

REESE: How old a scholar was Morey at that point?

SMYTH: I don't know. I can't remember. He was born in the eighties, probably? I can't remember. Maybe he was sixty-five in 1945 when he retired. So then he was in his late fifties. Would that be right? Something like that.

Anyway, then I decided to go to graduate school, but earlier there had been a question of whether it would be classics or the history of art. The classics department was very open about offering a fellowship, if I were to apply, and teaching, which I thought was amazing. I didn't know enough classics to teach it. So I applied to the classics department, and I got a fellowship. Then I had twenty-four awful hours. I don't know whether this has ever happened to

you, but you make a decision and realize you shouldn't?

Having had this sleepless twenty-four hours, I went over to Mr. Morey's office and said what I'd done and that I was unhappy with it. Mr. Morey walked down to the end of his study, turned around, and shot a four-letter word which I didn't know he would use--a milder one than most, though--straight back at me. He said, "You get over to McCormick, to Nassau Hall. I will telephone, and you change it."

[laughter] So I went over and did that. So that was how it happened. So he was very important to me.

REESE: Did Morey do a lot of teaching at that point? Or was it mainly seminars that--?

SMYTH: He did graduate seminars, and he did his undergraduate lecture course. He no longer did preceptorials. I think he had for many years, but he had stopped doing that. Of course, he was running that department; he was raising money. He had started the Christian index [Princeton University Index of Christian Art] and had to raise money for that. He was teaching also at New York University at the Institute of Fine Arts. He taught all that period of the thirties there. That's where he got to know Pan [Erwin Panofsky] and why he therefore knew him well enough to put him into the Institute for Advanced Study.

[Abraham] Flexner was the director of the Institute for Advanced Study, and after he got his scientists together, he

knew that he wanted to have a humanities department. The man he went to was Morey. Morey thought that art and archaeology was the core of the humanities, and he thought that therefore the institute should start only with art and archaeology. He also saw this as strengthening--though it wasn't part of Princeton University--Princeton's strength in the field and hoped that they would teach in the department. He recommended all those people who came and hoped that they would teach in the department. He recommended all those people who came in the first group, the archaeologist Hetty Goldman, all those people.

REESE: Did you have a sense of how Princeton, being a clear alternative in terms of the kind of art history that was done there to, let us say, Harvard or Yale or Columbia [University]--? At what point does some sense of an ability to differentiate between what it meant to be a Princeton art historian--?

SMYTH: I didn't have any sense as an undergraduate. It was mostly factual art history in the American tradition. I think that's where it grew, right there, under Marquand. But with this critical part that was represented most strongly by Bert Friend, who was a product of the department-- The critical concerns had grown up in the department. But it wasn't until we were graduate students that I became aware of New York University. Things were

happening there that certainly weren't happening in Princeton. New York University had syllabi, which Walter Cook had every lecturer make, as you remember. Those filtered their way to Princeton, and we knew that something was happening in New York. We learned a lot from those syllabi. I couldn't wait to get out of Princeton so I could begin to study the things they were doing in New York.

RIKALA: Yet you decided to continue your graduate education at Princeton. But had there been an opportunity to apply--?

SMYTH: I'd thought of going on in classics at Princeton, and I didn't really think of going anywhere else. I looked at the department of the history of art. Mr. Morey, you know, was by then a mentor.

RIKALA: Could you describe him a little bit? His personality through-- A bio? A bit about him?

SMYTH: Well, he was on the surface a very quiet, gentle, strong person. Very factually oriented in his course, but with perceptive, probing-- When I finally got into his lectures and listened, he had critical capacities which were exemplary in the way that he could, in a few words, capture what he wanted to say critically about something. He was more than that by far, I think. He was humorous, which, as undergraduates, we didn't know at all. He went to the movies almost every night, which seemed to us very strange and wonderful. [laughter] And eventually I knew him well

enough to see a rugged quality.

Years later, in 1947, when he had retired from Princeton and was the first cultural attaché to the [American] embassy in Rome after the war and did so much to rehabilitate Rome as a cultural center again for scholars, I was in Europe for a few weeks. What I was studying was Tuscan. But I wanted to see him. So I got in touch with him and said I would come down, if it was all right, for a night just to see him. So I went down, and he had me picked up at the hotel I'd chosen to stay at near the station. He had a man drive me up to the [American] Academy [in Rome]. I arrived at the-- You know where the Villa Aurelia is at the academy, across the street from the main building. You go in through a little gate, and there's a small house just above the gate called the villino, I think. That's where he was staying. I came up the stairs-- We stayed in this same house two years ago, so it all came back very strongly. I came into this bare little room, living room, which is still looking exactly as it did then, with the table exactly where it was. He greeted me. And on the table there was a bottle of whiskey. That was all. He said, "We are going to drink that." [laughter] We sat down, and for a whole evening we talked, he telling me about his life, about the history of art, about what he thought about art historians, about what he thought this field was. It should have been taped,

because it was an absolutely unique evening, full of humor, too. But, you know, you never saw that as an undergraduate. As a graduate student, I never really knew that was there except that one time when he turned around and shot the four-letter word at me. Then I knew there was something else I hadn't seen. [laughter]

REESE: What about his family's position, wealth? I mean, what was that generation you studied with's--?

SMYTH: He came from a modest background, I think. He came from Michigan. I know a little bit about Rufus Morey because I wrote a piece about him. That's why I'm able to fill in some of this. He majored in classics at the University of Michigan. About his background I really don't know. I think it was modest. He married an awfully nice person, and they had one child, who was in my class at Princeton, Johnny [Jonathan T.] Morey, who was sort of odd and separate, but whom I got to know when I was at the collecting point in Munich because he was a Monuments, [Fine Arts, and Archives Section] officer in the Munich section. So I got to know him there some and liked him very much.

REESE: Your image of the teachers you had as an undergraduate at Princeton, both in art history and in other humanities groups, were not those very wealthy class--?

SMYTH: Oh, no. Oh, no. No. The successful Princeton

professor lived in a pretty nice house. Those houses that are along-- What's the road up there? Well, I can't say the name, but where Duane Stewart, who was head of the classics department, lived. Those are very nice houses. I don't think any professors-- Practically nobody but Jim [James] McCredie lives on that street, yes. But he has separate funds. And Jonathan Brown now lives on that street. But I think mostly--

REESE: Battle Road.

SMYTH: Battle Road. But that was all faculty then. Marquand lived on it. Mr. Morey lived on the other side of town in a university-owned house like one that Neil Rudenstine had for quite a while. Big, comfortable, but no wealth.

REESE: What about religion in Princeton?

SMYTH: Chapel. Had to go half the time. Wasn't an intense experience. A wonderful man, [Robert] Wicks, was the head of it then in my day, and my family had known him, so I knew him. By the time of graduate school, I used to see him quite a lot. We once thought we would take a canoe trip together. We didn't manage to do that. He was a fine man. I liked very much talking with him, visiting him and his family in Princeton. But I don't think that religion permeated our lives much at the university. It was there, and the art department had been very much involved in the

planning, Mr. Friend particularly, of the iconography of the windows of the chapel and what the chapel would be like and all that. But I don't think-- [tape recorder off]

REESE: There's very little information about the kind of financial base that an institution like the Institute of Fine Arts must have had in its early years, because Colin Eisler's article mentions families and mentions this, but in fact I have never seen anyone talk about how, in fact, these networks were created.

SMYTH: Well, I can do some of that. Walter Cook gave me it all, but it was all verbal, and I don't remember much of the detail. But also, I think the philosophy behind teaching there, I did have to think about it a lot, and I can talk to you about that.

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OCTOBER 22, 1991

SMYTH: Well, this is just apropos the fact that I brought the copy of [Theodore Meyer] Greene's The Arts and the Art of Criticism. In my first year as a graduate student taking a proseminar with [E.] Baldwin Smith, I was assigned a seminar report on scale in architecture and became, in the course of this, interested in going back to the thinking of Greene that I knew a good deal about because I'd attended his courses. He got fascinated with my problems of scale in architecture. We spent a long time, extending over several weeks, talking about the problems that scale in architecture involves, issues that it brings up. So I got to know him very well by virtue of that, and it also improved my paper a good deal.

RIKALA: Today I'm going to save some questions that I have about your family for another day, and I'd like to begin with following up on some of the points that we could have worked out a little bit more on your undergraduate education, one or two things, move on to the graduate years at Princeton [University], and then we can move forward. I don't know the best way to ask this question except in a kind of dumb, blunt way. We were talking about your undergraduate thesis between the classics and art history, and you mentioned that there was this obvious [Erwin] Panofsky

kind of undercurrent that you didn't realize at the time.

SMYTH: Well, I knew what Panofsky was thinking. In fact, Mr. [Charles Rufus] Morey sent me immediately to him. So I got to know Panofsky in my senior year quite well.

RIKALA: Oh, that's good.

SMYTH: But I didn't realize until much later--suddenly it came to me--that of course probably the reason Mr. Morey got started pushing me in this direction was because he wanted himself to get into this subject and see whether it really was true.

RIKALA: So the question is, what do you recall being your theoretical basis for your undergraduate piece?

SMYTH: My theoretical basis?

RIKALA: Your world view, the theoretical point of departure that you started with on the undergraduate work.

SMYTH: I don't think I can say more about it than I did yesterday. It shifted so markedly from what it was when I arrived. I very soon thought about graduate work, I think. Not when I was being asked whether I would like to go to teach at Roberts College that first freshman year, but soon after. On that occasion, in 1937, the summer of my junior year, when I was lucky enough to go on the Odyssey cruise, which started in Venice and ended in Venice, then I made a trip down through Italy with a friend who was on that cruise, just looking at works of art and thinking about

that, not having decided surely, but almost.

REESE: Let me see if I can pose the question in a slightly different way. If you look at the careers of, say, the Yale [University] people, [Charles] Seymour [Jr.], [George Heard] Hamilton, and [George A.] Kubler, for them the history of art was a very sudden discovery. [Henri] Focillon in '33 and '34 taught the first serious art history, and they were converted. Those people who went to the Institute [of Fine Arts, New York University] seemed to discover the German method and be converted by it. I mean, John Coolidge talks a little bit about how from Harvard [University] the Institute begins the fire. But what you're describing at Princeton seemed to have much more of a sense of continuity rather than a conversion, as though art history was older and deeper there somehow.

SMYTH: It was, it was. I don't think you felt you were in a place that was revolutionary, but you respected very much what you were learning. You trusted what you were learning. You didn't see as an undergraduate what was true then, and perhaps even now of undergraduate teaching there: that the history of art was presented in undergraduate courses seriously, but not as a subject with problems. You were not in undergraduate courses dealing with the kind of thing that you immediately do when you begin as a graduate student. So that an undergraduate could leave Princeton thinking, "There

it is. I know it. Nothing more, really, has to be done." Because art history was given as a sort of smooth, complete subject.

REESE: Morey, you felt, though, began to involve you in the problems the first--

SMYTH: Oh, immediately. That's what happens when you're-- And I think it must happen in all disciplines at Princeton. The undergraduate senior thesis is a real submersion in scholarship and problems, and you can't come through it, I should think, without having a new view of what people in universities do.

REESE: When you first went over to see Panofsky, or when you first kind of sensed Panofsky's presence, was there a sense that there was something new in the air? Did it seem to you that Morey and Panofsky in some way were engaged in the same enterprise?

SMYTH: I thought they were engaged in the same enterprise. And I read immediately that article of [Fritz] Saxl and Panofsky which was published in 1933, I think in the Metropolitan Museum Bulletin, of all places. So I knew what he was thinking about there. Very shortly after I saw him he gave me a list of books to read, all of them in German, you know, so that I was pushing into his world and gradually realized what it was, but I didn't know it when I began. He was very welcoming, as he always was with students.

RIKALA: Will you describe a bit more the friendship between Morey and Panofsky from this point now? Not from your undergraduate point of view.

SMYTH: I don't know that they were social friends very much, but they had certainly encountered each other through the New York University graduate program, which wasn't an institute until 1937. They both were teaching there. I guess Mr. Morey began to teach here in New York in the late twenties. Pan arrived in 1931 and liked it so much--you remember, he wrote about this--that he decided to come every year for a term, keeping his professorship in [University of] Hamburg, and then he was here after Hitler came into power. He lost his Hamburg professorship that spring when he was teaching here. He got a notice on a beautiful Easter telegram, all decorated nicely, that he'd been fired from Hamburg. Walter Cook by then had just become head of the department, and he asked him to join the department, which he then did. So in those years, Mr. Morey would have known Panofsky. Then, in 1934, I expect, when he was asked by [Abraham] Flexner to make suggestions for people to come to the Institute [for Advanced Study, Princeton University], then he suggested Pan. And Pan went, but with his loyalties very much in New York, and so he said he would always come back and teach at New York University, which he did.

RIKALA: Loyalties to Walter Cook particularly? Or to the

group of--?

SMYTH: No, to the place, because Walter Cook was not there when he arrived. It was Richard Offner who invited him. The connoisseur inviting the iconologist. Wonderful, I think.

REESE: At this point it seems like a very complicated scenario to try to trace, because you have so many simultaneous things happening. We have your graduate career at Princeton; we have the emerging birth of the Institute for Advanced Study; we have the Institute of Fine Arts in formation. I don't know whether there's a correct path to take. In other words, whether one should first talk about the Princeton experience in isolation or talk about the thirties in New York and what's happening.

SMYTH: It's hard to know. We were aware, as graduate students, of the Institute in New York not only through the syllabi, but through John Coolidge. Because John, while a graduate student here, decided to live in Princeton. I think the reason was--he will have told you--because Pan was there. He had taken Pan's Flemish painting, and he thought it would be nice to live nearby and to be able to see him. Mr. Morey, in his absolutely typical way, gave John a desk in our graduate study room. There were very few of us graduate students in Princeton at one time--I don't know, maybe twelve to fifteen. We each had a desk, one beside the

other, in the graduate study room, and there was John. So he brought a whole new breath into the place. I can remember-- I've written about this in this little book that's going to come out sometime about the history of the history of art in the United States [The Early Years of Art History in the United States (1993)]. I can remember standing under the trees outside of McCormick Hall and John talking a mile a minute, the way he does, about the deficiencies of the department at Princeton. [laughter] It was great.

REESE: Perhaps it might be best to focus a little bit on Princeton first and ask about the graduate program, your colleagues, your developing professional commitment to the history of art; and what you remember about being a graduate student.

SMYTH: Before I do that, I would like to add to something I said yesterday about Mr. [Albert] Friend, who was a very powerful part of the influence at Princeton. He was a man, as I say, who published very little, but he knew an enormous amount, and he was interested in what everybody was doing. As a graduate student, you would walk along the passageway and suddenly meet him, and he would ask you a question about what you were doing that opened up a whole new thing you hadn't even thought about. You'd go down the hall mesmerized with what he'd just said. But as an undergraduate, one also felt his influence very much because

he gave a course called the Northern Renaissance. The mystery of this course was that the lectures were all on the history of religion and philosophy from the Greeks to modern times, or at least down through the Renaissance period. The preceptorials he gave all himself. Since the class was maybe thirty people, he had to break this down for the preceptorials. He gave at least three preceptorials a week in addition to his two lectures. The preceptorials were about art in Europe outside Italy, but not as a factual matter, not anything about that. Always looking at the objects. He had a way of just absorbing students into this, holding a pile of photographs in front of him and lifting one at a time as he made his point. You know, he was really just riveting, even mesmerizing, for an undergraduate. Most of the people I know who took it kept those lectures, which were quite wonderful, and notes that they had about the preceptorials. It was finally a course in how you look, how you relate to works of art, how works of art relate to their periods, how they relate to society, culture, religion, thought at every level, not just one level. How they relate, as he said, to what people thought was real. I mean, very modern thinking that we were exposed to, not knowing that we were getting something that was really quite rare.

Now, this friend of mine, who I mentioned yesterday, who

was my best man, Henry Gardiner, has gone back to that and has instigated an article about Mr. Friend that will be published in the Alumni Weekly soon, because he was so moved by this. He felt it was the most important experience of his life. He was a bomber pilot in World War II, and later a designer, studying with [László] Moholy-Nagy, who because his friend, and then working with Herbert Bayer as his assistant for three years. He'd done all sorts of amazing things--taught Latin and Greek at Hotchkiss [School] for a while before the war--and this has always been the beacon, this course, for him. So that's an amazing thing.

RIKALA: It was an intellectual exercise in looking at-- An intellectual history.

SMYTH: Yes. An intellectual history, but very close to works of art. If you look at the illustrations that Friend chose for that book of T. M. Greene's, you just need to flip them and you know that this man is thinking and seeing.

*[Greene acknowledged Friend's enormous contribution to the art historical and critical aspects of the book.]

RIKALA: Yes, that is fascinating.

REESE: How would you describe the approach? I mean, not Ruskin per se--

* Smyth added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.

SMYTH: No.

REESE: But not with a moral component? Or with a--

SMYTH: There was a moral component. You took no examination in this course at all, but in the middle of the term you had ten days to write a paper. The subject may always have been the same subject. I don't know. But in our year the subject was "the dignity of man." That was all. This comes out of the same background, Paul Elmer More. I mean, all these people in that circle were thinking about these matters, and that was at the core of their whole notion about making the humanities more important at Princeton.

REESE: So you were really trying to read into this painting a whole view of society and mankind.

SMYTH: Uh-huh. Man's change from period to period, but also the continuing aspects of what it is to be a human being, at least in the Western world. It was an amazing thing. But when you got Friend as a graduate student, then it was method, dealing with manuscripts. You sat day after day, I mean week after week, learning what he and [Kurt] Weitzmann--but it was mostly he, I think--thought should be said about how you trace the genealogy of pictures, a method constructed on the basis of biblical scholarship. I mean, say, the critical study of biblical text transferred as much as you could over to the study of manuscript

illustrations. It was very dry. You couldn't believe that it was the same man that you'd just been dealing with as an undergraduate.

REESE: Now, was he trained at [John] Hopkins [University] or--?

SMYTH: No, Princeton. He never left except for service in World War I. Class of 1915, I think. A student of Morey's, but, of course, [Allan] Marquand, too, and Howard Crosby Butler.

REESE: What was the sense of relationship with professors? Was it only in McCormick Hall that you saw them both as a senior and as an early graduate student? Or was the communal life of Princeton such that you had social interactions with faculty?

SMYTH: You didn't as an undergraduate, I think, or at least I didn't. One had very good-- You know, one was welcome to go and talk to them. I can remember Johnny [John] Clark and me going to talk to our history teacher, White, that first freshman term. Those history classes were small. We were puzzled about something. We went to his rooms in one of the dormitories and talked to him, and it was a very pleasant thing to do. I didn't do that much, but one always could. I can't-- Yes, I think as classics students we were invited to the head of the classics department [Duane Stewart]'s house as undergraduates. And I did know Whitney Oates as an

undergraduate. He was fascinated because--not fascinated, but he-- Freshman year, I emerged as a personality for him, because I was taking a course, I think, with him, and he went to the freshman reception in the president's house and there I was playing a trombone in the dance orchestra, playing dance music to accompany the reception. So he was very amazed at that. So from then on he would stop and talk. He helped encourage me to major in classics. And he was a prime mover in the humanities movement, if that is the name for it.

REESE: Were Princeton students regularly going into New York to museums and exhibitions?

SMYTH: No, not very much. Princeton is isolated, strangely. It still is, I think, for undergraduates. One went, but it was a big move, which is too bad. But we were also isolated, rather, from the museum, the Princeton [Art] Museum, which had been founded with the notion that it would be part of one's education as a Princeton undergraduate and graduate student. Yet, in fact, there was very little relationship between the museum and study. They've changed all that now, but in my time you had to make-- It was almost like getting yourself through the wall and getting into the museum. It was a separate affair.

RIKALA: And there wasn't any sort of museum course at Princeton at the time that would be comparable to what was

going on at Harvard?

SMYTH: No. No, not at all.

RIKALA: They were completely different.

SMYTH: Very strange. Though people went into museum jobs from Princeton, as I did.

REESE: As you've described it now, the kind of core faculty for you were Morey and Friend and Smith.

SMYTH: Plus George Rowley, who was in the Far Eastern field. Trained as an art historian in Italian painting, I think, so he also wrote a book on Ambrogio Lorenzetti eventually. But his field at Princeton, his teaching, was all in the Far Eastern field. He was absolutely wonderful. He taught Alexander Soper and Wen Fong. They're his legacy. Didn't publish very much himself, but some. He, too, had an effect on undergraduates which was very great. Another friend of mine who went into English literature and taught all his life at Barnard [College] [David Allan Robertson Jr.] won from that course a relationship to the Far East that he's always kept, and he knows a great deal about it and has taken groups to the Far East and so forth, all out of that.

REESE: Did he teach Islamic art as well?

SMYTH: No. Islamic had no place at all, though there was a very strong Islamic history component at Princeton. But it wasn't featured at all in the department.

REESE: Now, [Donald] Egbert, [Ernest T.] DeWald, [W. Frederick] Stohlman, [George] Elderkin, [Richard] Stillwell, [George] Forsyth, I mean, these are names that I just read in a brief review.

SMYTH: Yes.

REESE: This is the next generation?

SMYTH: No, they were all there too. Various ages. I think that one would have said that DeWald and Friend were fairly close in age. Mr. DeWald was a medievalist, but when Frank Jewett Mather retired, he took over his undergraduate course in Italian painting. And he gave graduate seminars. I never took a seminar on Italian painting with him, I don't think--I don't remember one-- but one in Spanish painting, about which he knew something, not a great deal. He was a knowledgeable, good scholar, but not the center of my interest at all.

Elderkin, a good, factual historian of the art of classical antiquity, particularly Greece, I think. Descriptive undergraduate course on ancient art. Very factual graduate seminar. I think he was respected, but not somebody that I would have been drawn to work with. I liked him. Who else did you--?

REESE: Stohlman.

SMYTH: Stohlman. A very fine person but never went beyond associate professor. Mr. Morey directed him toward Limoges

enamels, and he did the catalog of enamels at the Vatican. Mr. Morey was in charge of the catalogs of medieval objects owned by the Vatican, and he did two of those catalogs himself, but he got other people to do other parts, and he got Mr. Stohlman to do the enamels, which he did well. But he wasn't a man who was out pushing the horizons at all. On the other hand, he was a good teacher, and he's the person who caught the attention of Tom [Thomas] Hoving, so Tom said.

REESE: And Stillwell?

SMYTH: And Stillwell was a remarkable man who wasn't teaching a course regularly when I was there. He had been the director of the American School [of Classical Studies] in Athens and had done it very well, as I know, because my wife [Barbara Linforth Smyth] was there for a year at the American School when her father was visiting professor at the American School. So she saw Stillwell in operation there and thought he was excellent. I think he wasn't tapped enough in the Princeton department. He was a modest man, but he was really knowledgeable, I think. He sat in on seminars that E. Baldwin Smith gave to graduate students, and there you would see him suddenly come out with something that showed just how good he was. But we weren't-- We didn't study with him. Why, I don't know. He wasn't giving courses.

REESE: And Egbert?

SMYTH: Egbert was architect and architectural historian but wrote his dissertation on the Tickhill Psalter in the public library here in New York, so he had a pretty wide range and became eventually interested in social art history, socially looked at. I had one undergraduate course with him on Renaissance architecture, which was okay. For some reason, I had to deal with him about something I was doing in graduate school--what, I can't remember anymore. He was better then, good at advising about what it was I was doing.

REESE: Was there an emerging separation between architectural history and art history in people like E. Baldwin Smith or, let's say, Egbert and the others? Or did it still have à--?

SMYTH: It was integrated, because originally, I think, architecture itself, the practice of architecture, it was thought--because of Howard Crosby Butler, who was both architect and architectural historian--that it should all be in one place, you know. When eventually they added a wing to McCormick Hall and put architecture in it, there was still a liaison across so that we knew the architectural people. There was a man by the name of [Francis] Comstock who taught architecture, whom I saw a lot of as a graduate student, and when I was having a very bad time and wondering whether I was going to go on being a graduate student at all, he said, "What you need to do is learn to fly."

[laughter] So he took me off to New Brunswick and tried to teach me to fly. But you know, we knew both sides, and Egbert somehow had his feet in both. And Baldy [E. Baldwin Smith] may have once, though less, I think, by the time I was there.

REESE: Another distinction, of course, is that-- That was bonding the department together, which is art history and archaeology. Did one, or did students ever, identify someone as an archaeologist as opposed to an art historian?

SMYTH: No. No. And I think when I was there, there was no dig going on. There had been the dig at Sardis under Butler, a major dig, and there had been others earlier. I think there was one in Syria which Mr. Morey had to do with. Then Mr. Morey himself had got-- Yes. He had got the excavations and study of Antioch going in the 1930s, presided over that. He got the French into it and various museums in this country, a consortium, but he presided over the consortium, and he sent people, his own students, out to be part of that dig. Some of them therefore were, in a way, archaeologists while they were art historians. But when I was there--it was very close to the war--I don't know whether they were having a purely departmental dig or not. I don't know.

REESE: If someone had suggested to you that you spend the summer on a dig, would you have said that you--?

SMYTH: Oh, I would have thought that was great. Sure.

RIKALA: Tell us what the graduate program was like then.

You had an adviser, you chose a path of study. How did you set your life up as a graduate student?

SMYTH: I think it was pretty much told you by the department what you were going to do each year as a graduate student--that is, what seminars you were going to take.

There was no choice, as I remember. You were a graduate student normally for three years, and at the end of that period you took your big general exams.

RIKALA: These exams that you told us about.

SMYTH: So all that time you were thinking about those exams, and preparation was left to you to do. The seminars were the other part of it. Once in a while you had a lecture series. Pan was there. He gave us his lectures on Dürer and on iconology. He also gave us regular seminars. He gave us a seminar on fourteenth-century illumination in the Netherlands. These were, you know, staggering experiences. Coming to grips with him in a seminar in contrast to the kind of thing I had as an undergraduate was just boggling, because you hadn't seen a blinding light like that before, and it blinded you. It was really something.

REESE: When you say blinded you, could you explain a little more--?

SMYTH: Well, you wondered what you brought, you know, when

you saw a mind that moved as fast as that with all the equipment and cultural background that he brought to it. You knew your education had been minimal, and you could see that art history looked at this way was an enormously demanding and wide-ranging affair. But then, in seminars, he would give you a problem you could deal with, you know, one he usually knew the answer to. The problem he gave me I thought was dreadful, so I didn't ever get very far with it until--

REESE: What was it?

SMYTH: It was tracing the iconography of the death of the Virgin with an eye to its peculiarities in one school. It was a sort of, as I remember, statistical thing: where and how many times does this occur and that occur. It was the kind of thing that Mr. Morey did, too. Mr. Morey put John [R.] Martin and Charles [P.] Parkhurst [Jr.] and me on the study of the ciborium columns of Saint Mark's in Venice. Chuck and I had one pair of columns, and Jack Martin had the other pair, because they, the two pairs, were obviously of different dates, or at least people thought they were. Chuck had the style, and I had the subject matter of our pair, which was thought to be early Christian and hence most important. There are a lot of scenes on those things. And what Mr. Morey wanted to know was-- The way he did work and Baldwin Smith's first book on early Christian ivories [Early

Christian Iconography and a School of Ivory Carvers in Provence] was an example--statistical studies. For example, where and how many times does the Virgin come in from the right in the annunciation; where and how many times from the left, you know, in the whole of the period. So you took the scenes and tried to compare them on statistical grounds with all the scenes of early Christian art to see if you could find out where these columns were made. But when you have a lot of scenes, you spend a lot of time in Princeton's Christian index [Index of Christian Art]. All the pictures in the index were on cards the same size, no matter how big the work of art. Day after day, month after month, looking at works of art all on little pictures like this was a bad-- That was a numbing experience, and that's when I didn't know whether I'd go on with the history of art and when Comstock said, "You've got to get out of here some and learn to fly." I stopped taking all courses at that point on the advice of the university psychiatrist, except a Far Eastern seminar with George Rowley, which was always greatly satisfying.

REESE: This is still before the war.

SMYTH: This was before the war, but I was thinking of just pulling out, and Mr. Morey, I guess, must have said, "Okay. Don't take any courses for now. Just take the thing you like most at the moment." And I liked the Far Eastern, so I

did.

RIKALA: Was that a crisis in confidence on your own part?
Or were you just tired of this method?

SMYTH: I didn't think that this was for me, you know. If
this is what it was going to be, that really wasn't--

REESE: You described first, I think, an undergraduate
education in Princeton, which really was kind of this very
broad humanistic view of the kind of role of art in society.
Now, in the course work with Morey and Panofsky, you've
described something that sounds very factual, at least very
empirical in the sense of taking a concrete problem, a
concrete work of art, and analyzing every possible component
within it, a method which Panofsky and Morey shared.

SMYTH: Yes. They did it different ways. They did it in
very different ways. And, of course, Mr. Morey had the
broad view, too. If you read him, you know that. But his
way of dealing with graduate students was usually to point
them right at one specific object which had to be located in
time and space. In this case, it was one object, but it was
manifold in its scenes, so it was a bigger job than he
normally gave. Yet it became, albeit factual pretty much,
stylistic, too. The stylistic part-- While I was looking at
these things from the point of view of subject matter, I
suddenly realized there were two hands in our pair of
columns. So I popped up with that, and that seemed to be

true. But the iconographical statistics-- I just wanted to walk away from it. I didn't do it for a while and then I did return to it and completed a lot. It certainly familiarized me, in any case, with Christian iconography.

REESE: What I was curious about was how Morey's approach might have differed to you as a student from Panofsky's. In other words, the kind of erudition that Panofsky was bringing to the problem, when you approached it as a student, did it feel like just another problem? Or did it seem like it had a very different frame from that which Morey gave?

SMYTH: No, in the case of the problems I happened to be given, it didn't seem as if it had a different frame. No, it didn't. Pan brought very different equipment to it. But in the case of the seminar on fourteenth-, early fifteenth-century Netherlandish illumination, it was a question very much of what was influencing what. He was thinking then about his lectures on Netherlandish painting and the sources for fifteenth-century style, who the main figures were in this development, separating out the illuminators, dating them, finding the anticipations of what would happen later, where the most important developments were taking place, that kind of thing. We got all that. That's not much different from what Mr. Morey would have been concerned with when preparing for his famous "Sources of Medieval Style."

REESE: Of course, you know, what everyone who deals with Panofsky faces is the kind of transition from Perspective as Symbolic Form to the much more concretely textured work in America. Not to say it's better philosophical background, but how that might have been reflected in the teaching itself. I mean, did he make constant references to more theoretical works that were written, or methodological tracts that students should read? Or was it pretty much, "Here's a problem, let's--"?

SMYTH: "Here's a problem," pretty much, I think. When I had to deal with him as an undergraduate, the things that I had to read were all the things that he and Saxl had concerned themselves with when they were coming to their theory about classical form and classical subject matter separating in the Middle Ages and rejoining in the Renaissance. That was a good exercise in their sources, sources of some of their information and thinking. Panofsky was also interested in proportion studies, for example. I don't know whether he ever wrote much about that. I think he maybe did in his dissertation. After coming to Princeton, he pushed Mr. Friend in the direction of writing about Dürer and proportion, and that wasn't Mr. Friend's thing, and Mr. Friend should never have written about it. He did, and it wasn't very good, unfortunately. They were sort of rivals because their minds both went so fast and so

far, and Mr. Friend knew he had a mind comparably stuffed in every direction. Now, I shouldn't have said that-- You got-- You know, when Pan arrived in Princeton, he wrote a piece--I think it was published in the Princeton Museum Bulletin--on the movies. Did you ever read that? So you were getting that, too, you know--somebody who was alive and thinking about present-day things. You got that as overtones all the time.

REESE: Space-charged time and time-charged space. I was trying to remember.

RIKALA: I'm interested in knowing what questions in art history you were interested in as a graduate student.

What were the issues and the problems?

SMYTH: Well, I knew fairly early on that I was not going to be a medievalist. And that in spite of Mr. Morey. Mr. Morey-- I'd worked on the Renaissance with him, you see, and I knew-- I came out of that knowing something, and I was comfortable with it and loved it and loved the things. So in a way I couldn't wait to get out the door to where I could go and begin to work on the Renaissance, because no one at Princeton was doing anything with graduate students about the Renaissance.

RIKALA: Really?

SMYTH: No. It was medieval.

RIKALA: Medieval and ancient art.

SMYTH: Yes, and I don't think any of my generation there did much in the ancient field. I don't think Mr. Elderkin sparked anybody to do anything very much. We belonged to the Morey period, when medieval art was paramount and a dissertation was not what you did at Princeton. You finished with an M.F.A., and that, under Mr. Morey, was considered to have the job-getting power of a Ph.D., and out you walked without a Ph.D. If you wrote a book sometime, you could take it back, and they would consider it for the doctor's degree.

RIKALA: I see.

SMYTH: As soon as he retired in 1945, they changed it like that.

RIKALA: Oh. So he perhaps held onto that.

SMYTH: He held onto that. He didn't have a Ph.D. himself, though I don't know whether this influenced his views. Neither did Mr. Friend. So there was a tradition in the department for being, you know, a great figure, as Mr. Morey certainly was in Europe and America, a very amazingly giant medievalist. But, in any case, one didn't have to have a Ph.D. in his time. So-- How did I get started on that?

RIKALA: I was asking about the questions and problems that you yourself--

SMYTH: So I just wanted to get out and get into something that I really cared about.

RIKALA: So in your mind did you know that you would be continuing your studies? Or seeking another institution?

SMYTH: I knew that I would be learning for myself.

Teaching myself, which I'd really learned from Mr. Morey was the way you should do it anyway, because that's what he had done. Nobody had ever taught him one bit of art history. He'd gone to Rome as a classicist and began to look at archaeology, and from archaeology to art history.

RIKALA: What did you expect your career to be?

SMYTH: I didn't have an expectation, I don't think. Mr. [Karl E.] Weston, on that trip I spoke about, had said, "If you become an art historian, let me know when you finish." So I did, and he didn't have anything at all. [laughter]

REESE: What were the kind of choices that most Princeton students of your generation felt you had vis-à-vis subject matter? In other words, classical, medieval, Renaissance. Modern: Was that a viable option?

SMYTH: No, I don't think anybody thought of it. *[That's not quite true: someone, I think Harry Grier, gave a departmental Journal Club talk on surrealism. As I remember the occasion, Mr. Morey's questions to the speaker following the talk did not seem compliments for the subject.] And

* Smyth added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.

seventeenth and eighteenth century, I can't think of anybody in my generation who then was thinking of going on in that, as John Martin, a fellow graduate student, eventually did.

RIKALA: But were you interested in the modern? You mentioned-- Was it Baldwin Smith's class that began with Rembrandt and worked through the modern?

SMYTH: Yes, we were interested. Yeah. We were going to look at things.

RIKALA: That was what you'd traveled--

SMYTH: Yes, I did come to New York to see things to some extent as the Museum of Modern Art got started, for example. The first shows there.

RIKALA: And what about other current interests? Did you know--? Well, your friend [Henry Gardiner] was an artist, one of your best friends.

SMYTH: Yeah.

RIKALA: So did he perhaps open you up to other current, contemporary--?

SMYTH: We talked Cézanne endlessly, and the year that I'd played on the Cunard line's Beringeria, 1936, there was the Cézanne show in [Musée de] l'Orangerie. I spend long hours there, looking, learning, enjoying greatly, the summer after sophomore year.

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SMYTH: Partly because of this friend of mine who I just talked about as having been moved by Mr. Friend, this person who painted in this period-- He was thinking a lot about what Cézanne was doing, and we talked about that a lot. And Mr. Friend was himself excellent about Cézanne, and I had him as a preceptorial teacher in the modern course after seeing Cézanne in Paris. To have Mr. Friend as your preceptor? That couldn't have been better. We were aware of the Museum of Modern Art beginning and the surrealist show it had and that kind of thing. I came to see those, but not as something that I intended to work on. I should have, perhaps, but I didn't. No, my root I think was Renaissance by virtue of that senior thesis.

REESE: Now, in your travels, it was your third trip that took you to Italy actually?

SMYTH: No, the fourth.

REESE: The fourth trip to Italy for the first time. Did you have a sense of identification with the place on that trip that was very special? Or was it more the intellectual undergraduate experience?

SMYTH: I don't know. I used to say--I don't know whether this is so or not--that finally, when I got to Italy, I realized I'd gotten to Europe. That's really where it was

at somehow.

REESE: What can you recall about that Italian trip?

SMYTH: Well, it was marvelous. We arrived in Venice and, of course, immediately had to begin helping with the cruise, doing things to help them, which meant going off to various hotels and rounding up people who were going to be on the cruise, doing things to help them. So one got to know the town quite quickly, and we were dealing with people who ran the hotels, so that was good. And Sargent Shriver was one of the cruise helpers, too. [Robert] Scranton, who was to be the governor of Pennsylvania, he was a passenger on it. Marshall Green, later a diplomat. It was a very interesting lot of people. We were there in Venice for maybe four, five days before we left, and we, the cruise staff, were first put in a hotel that seemed to me far too expensive, and to all of us it did, so we rushed around and found ourselves the Pensione Seguso, which my wife and I have been going back to ever since. A lot of the young people then, when we got back from the cruise, moved over with us in the Seguso when we got back from the cruise. [laughter] You know, it was a very nice, cheerful time. We saw a lot of Venice and then started on our way--this other piano-playing man and myself--down through Italy. We stayed at the Pensione Annalena in Florence, which is a wonderful place to stay. The lady who became Mrs. Richard Offner [Philippa Whiting]

was staying there. She took me in hand for the Giotto exhibition which was going on in 1937, which was that huge exhibition of Giotto and all related painters, and took me around it. The theme, her theme, was what Richard Offner thought of each picture. Afterwards I wrote down in the catalog all I could remember that she had told me. So I got a real, complete bathing in Richard Offner's views and why, which was wonderful.

REESE: One of the things I did yesterday was to ask for a kind of printout of some of the dissertations which were done between 1930 and 1956 at Princeton, and, you know, I thought it-- I was surprised, in fact, to learn that many people were in fact Princeton graduates whom I'd never associated with Princeton. But I thought I might just read some of them to see if you'd like to comment on any of them. From about 1934, [Lester D.] Longman; '40, James Webster--

SMYTH: I knew James Webster a little bit. He came back to work on his labors of the month when I was there, and he was a very solid, nice, good man and much respected by Mr. Morey. I think he was a man who sort of hid his light under a bushel, rather. He was very quiet and recessive but very solid, nice.

REESE: David Robb.

SMYTH: David Robb. He was there with us at some point while we were graduate students. I'm not just sure how that

happened, whether he was already teaching at [University of] Pennsylvania or not. He spent quite a lot of time talking to me and-- I'm not drawn to textbooks much, so I really couldn't get very far with his book, but I enjoyed talking to him a lot. And then he surprised me by telling me, before he left, that he'd told Francis Taylor about me. He had recommended me for the paintings department at the Metropolitan Museum [of Art], and he felt maybe I would have a museum career and be a curator or head the department there. Very strange. I didn't have any words about that at all. But I liked him. Then he grabbed John Coolidge and took him off to Penn.

REESE: So I won't have to read everyone and have comments on each, I'll read them in groups of, say, three or four. In '43, Frederick Vaga; '44, Alexander Soper; '47, John Rupert Martin.

SMYTH: Alexander Soper, who, of course, I knew very well later. Soper had done his undergraduate at Hamilton College but then had trained to be an architect, I think, at Princeton. When he emerged from architecture school, which I think was 1929 maybe, or '30, there was the Depression. He could find no job. There was no encouragement to be an architect, and he had become interested, I think, by then in Far Eastern things, so he began to study with George Rowley. It was out of that that he came. But he also did, you know,

medieval, as any of us who took graduate work in the history of art at Princeton did. His earliest articles came out of Mr. Morey's seminar. Mr. Morey was very funny about him. He said, "That's a remarkable man. He never came to ask me one bit of advice. I saw him often in the library, and then suddenly I had a paper I could publish." [laughter] So he was an amazing guy. Of course, I'm very pleased that I got him to come to the Institute of Fine Arts, which was not easy.

REESE: In '47, John Rupert Martin.

SMYTH: Yes. We were together as graduate students. He is an old friend. Well, he went back to Princeton after the war, having been in the Canadian army, and worked to get a doctor's degree, because we all had emerged without doctor's degrees. By then the new regime had taken over-- Baldy Smith--and the doctor's degree became the goal of graduate study again. Jack went back to do that. I think he taught somewhere else for a year or two but then was brought back to Princeton as a faculty member. We're very close. We see each other whenever we can, and I like him very much.

REESE: Was there a sense of this return to the alma mater to teach? I mean, about how that worked, that certain students would seem to be the ones invited back to teach--

SMYTH: I don't know what was going on in their minds then.

I certainly wasn't invited back then. I was asked later to come back and head the department, but I didn't. But not at that point. Chuck Parkhurst went back. He was going, I think, to write a dissertation, but he got involved in teaching and then went off to the Buffalo museum [Albright-Knox Art Gallery]. I don't think he ever wrote a dissertation, which he could have done with-- You know, it would have been very good.

REESE: In '47 and '48 there are three people whose work I do not know: Patrick [J.] Kelleher, Harry Hazard, and Donald Wilbur.

SMYTH: Well, they're all-- The middle one I don't know, but Patrick Kelleher was a graduate student when I was there--a couple of years behind me. I think his story has been told. I think Mr. Morey discovered him out west somewhere, realized that he had real potential. He was very wonderful with works of art. I got to know him at Princeton. We both took a course with Pan, I think, on fifteenth-century German painting, a lecture course. Kelleher and I sort of looked at photographs of those things and went over the lectures together, and I enjoyed that a lot. He then went into the service and turned up in Germany after the war in the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives [Section] and then went back to do his dissertation, I think, on the crown of Saint Stephen, which he had had to deal with as a monuments

officer. He was eventually, after having done other things, the head of the Princeton museum and bought for it wonderfully well. His wife is still alive. He died some years ago. Sad, because he had a drinking problem which got in the way of his being completely effective there. But a very gifted and remarkably fine guy.

REESE: Now, in 1949 and '50, there are two much more--

SMYTH: I wanted to tell you about Donald Wilbur. Donald Wilbur still exists, and he's a man to talk to if you can grab him. He, I think, was an architect but went very early as a young man--and he's written about it; he's written a little book about this--to the ancient Near East with-- Who was the man who was the great figure out there? Well, I can't say his name at the moment [Arthur Upham Pope]. But, in any case, Wilbur knew Afghanistan and Persia from very early on and was interested in the languages and the architecture and pretty soon was a sort of member, somehow, of the Princeton department. I don't know how the official connection was set up. I don't know under what aegis he was there or what sort of title he had, but he was there, and we all saw him, and we talked to him, and he was part of our lives. I suppose eventually he thought he ought to have a Ph.D. and so got it. But he's in Princeton, and he would be a remarkable man to talk to.

I'll tell you somebody else who's in Princeton to talk

to, and that's Bill [William] Heckscher. He's about ninety, I would think, and, as far as I know, very clear. He was a colleague, though much older, of Peter Janson. They were roommates when they were students of Panofsky's at Hamburg, and they both plotted how to get out of Germany after Hitler came to power--though neither had to; neither was Jewish. They remained fast friends. Heckscher has had a wide experience, first as Panofsky's most loyal follower in Canada and in this country and in Holland. He was at [University of] Utrecht for quite a long time as a professor, then at Duke University for many years, and his head is filled with all sorts of lore about odd places in the history of art and the history of art in Germany. And he shouldn't be alive, but there he is.

REESE: I was going to say, in '49 and '50, Joseph Sloan and Allan Gowans.

SMYTH: Yes. Allan Gowans I really didn't know, but Joe Sloan had been a preceptor when we were graduate students, I guess. Maybe as an undergraduate I might have had him in a precept. A very fine guy. Knowledgeable, deeply dedicated to what he was doing, and he was modern. Now, there's a Princeton graduate student who moved into the modern area, and with all the backing in the world from Mr. Morey. He thought it was good, I think, for him to do that. Sloan, he went off to Bryn Mawr [College]. We were always aware of

him. He was really a remarkably fine person. Then he wrote a book, and that book was smashed in a review by Meyer Schapiro. It shouldn't have been, but it was. I think that stopped Joe Sloan in his tracks. Would anybody, I think. So I think there was a vacuum for him. I was earmarked to be president of the College Art Association [of America, CAA] in the middle fifties. You went to that from secretary. You were made secretary of the association, and from secretary you went to president. I was secretary of the CAA, but I was then involved in our effort to try to get the [Doris] Duke house and to move the Institute, and I didn't see how these two-- And I was writing my dissertation for Princeton at the same time. So I couldn't do it. And the CAA got Joe Sloan for the presidency, and he reformed the College Art Association in an excellent way. Really did an amazing job and made himself a real name as a caring public figure. He should have gone on with his modern field.

REESE: Now, I think as we go on, probably some of the people might have actually started after the war, but I have-- Sorry, let's see where I am. George Bishop Tatum, James MacDonnaugh--

SMYTH: I knew Tatum, but I don't think I knew him while I was a graduate student. I don't know how I happened to know him. I seem to remember him, however, as a very serious, intelligent, hard-working graduate student in the Princeton

department's graduate study room and talking with him a lot there. So he must have started as a graduate student before I left.

REESE: 'Fifty-one, Amis Chang; '52, Lawrence Eitner.

SMYTH: Yes. Either was there, also. When I was a graduate student, he arrived, and he was a very impressive person. One knew he would do well. Paul Norton was there when we were graduate students, too, a little bit behind me, and he has gone on to make a good name for himself. A person you're not mentioning because he didn't take a Ph.D.--it being Mr. Morey's time--is Bob [Robert] Griffing, who was a really-- He taught, he did precepts while he was a graduate student, which was unusual, I think, and he was absolutely filled with spirit and life and helped to make the department a happy place to be. He was the department's Jacobus fellow, as I remember, its most prestigious fellowship. He ended by being the director of the museum in Hawaii, Honolulu. Died some years ago. *[I owe him a very great deal. He was with me when I met Barbara Linforth, who became my wife. She was at a party we crashed together at the graduate college given by a friend we thought should have invited us. And Bob saw to it that I saw Barbara

* Smyth added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.

again. Then that was that.]

REESE: Now, the next group are all very well known. From '54 to '56, David Coffin, Robert Koch, Marvin Isenberg, Bill Sites, Oleg Grabar, and Craig Smyth.

SMYTH: Well, but Craig Smyth, you see, by then I wasn't a graduate student. I was in New York City at the Institute. I was director of the Institute, and I was presiding at doctor's examinations, and it seemed crazy not to have a doctor's degree. So I set about trying to write a dissertation. I didn't try to get leave for it, so I had to do it at the same time that I was doing the Institute. It was quite a busy time.

REESE: But this group of people were not there during the early years.

SMYTH: No. I knew David Coffin a little bit, but he was an undergraduate when I was a graduate student and quite obviously going to be an art historian. I knew him a little bit. And Koch had been in Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives, so I knew him slightly from that. I shouldn't have said I knew the others.

RIKALA: I think we should probably skip ahead, skip over the war years and pick up-- You spent a year at the National Gallery [of Art].

SMYTH: Yes, before the war. Before Pearl Harbor. That was Mr. Morey again. He decided that he was going to have

somebody in the new National Gallery, and he sent Chuck Parkhurst and me down to be interviewed for the post of Ted [Theodore] Rousseau. And we both got the job. So that was-- But it was always Mr. Morey who decided. [laughter] That was his thing.

REESE: What year was this?

SMYTH: That was--

RIKALA: Nineteen forty-one?

SMYTH: That was late winter or early spring 1941. We went, I suppose, down-- We went down to be interviewed before the gallery opened, but we still had to stay on at Princeton and finish. And then we began in Washington July 1, after Barbara and I were married on June 24, so it had been open a couple of months by the time we got there. But we were interviewed by John Walker and hired before the opening.

RIKALA: And what were your duties at the museum?

SMYTH: Well, sort of everything. There were only four of us altogether in the curatorial department. If you think of the gallery now and all the people, it's a totally different thing. John Walker was chief curator in mainly painting. Charlie Seymour was the next down, and he was the curator of sculpture. Then there were Chuck Parkhurst and me. And we had an office together. We did what we were told. We wrote catalog entries and we shepherded pictures around and-- You

know, anything that was going we did. It was a marvelous experience.

Then when Pearl Harbor came, the gallery decided, as the Met [Metropolitan Museum of Art] did, too, to evacuate its main things to the countryside with the idea that maybe Washington might be bombed. They were sent off to Ashville, North Carolina, to the house of the Vanderbilts there, called Biltmore--famous. We curators were to take our turns going down and taking care of that collection. It was fairly obvious I would be in the service pretty quickly, and I was sent first. So Barbara and I went down, and we had that collection to ourselves for six weeks. There wasn't anything else to do but look at it. It was the greatest experience that I ever possibly had. We had eighteen guards from the gallery, who were fine. One of them thought that Germans were going to attack from the little river behind us, [laughter] so I had some small administrative problems with him, but otherwise it was just a wonderful, wonderful experience. So the pictures that we had and the sculptures that were unpacked--most of the sculptures remained packed--you know, one knows like the palm of one's hand. It was a great thing. *[Barbara and I did most of the looking

* Smyth added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.

together. She had studied painting at the University of California in Berkeley under the influence of Earle Loran. Her eye for composition and for quality taught me a great deal and always has.] Then Chuck followed me. And Johnny Walker went down later. I don't remember when Charlie Seymour went, but I'd left the gallery for the navy by then, so--

RIKALA: So this was your first taste of working in a museum?

SMYTH: I hadn't had any museum training. Niente. But you learn. Fast. And since the National Gallery was just forming itself, it was a perfect time to, you know, get your--

RIKALA: What was the charge of the National Gallery? How did they conceive of themselves at the time?

SMYTH: They conceived of themselves as on the way to being the great national collection. And they were busy wooing the Wideners, and they got the Widener collection after I left. And the Kress collection had already been committed and was there. So it was the Mellon collection and the Kress collection. And it was a chance to see how they ran it. The Kress collection had brought with it Mr. Pichetto as the conservator. He was here in New York but came down with his team every little while to restore, not conserve, and that was a lesson in what you don't do with pictures. We all knew it--that is, Charlie Seymour, Chuck and I, at

least. We knew the list of pictures that were going to go to his studio. When he was on his way down, we'd go and kiss them good-bye, wondering what they were going to look like when they came back. [laughter]

REESE: It's like walking out of Street Hall in New Haven and picking up the swatches from Andy Petrins's studio with Pollaiuolo all over it. [laughter]

SMYTH: That's a terrible thought. Well, it was something.

REESE: Did you at that point get to personally meet [Andrew W.] Mellon, [Joseph] Widener, the major patrons?

SMYTH: No. Well, Mr. Mellon had died, and I never saw Paul Mellon then. I suppose he came, but I didn't see him. Mr. Chester Dale, yes. He was in the process of putting part of his collection on indefinite loan at the gallery, and Chuck and I did the catalog of that. It's modern painting. We saw him, talked to him some, heard him talk about how he made his collection, and that was fun. Then Mr. [Duncan] Phillips, who had given a Daumier maybe just while we were there, came in and talked quite a lot about what it was that made a beautiful picture. Chuck and I would see him and have incidental conversations. But no, we were lowly, you know; we weren't brought into great meetings. It was a very good experience. It was a wonderful experience. It was a wonderful experience, and it was object oriented, which Princeton really hadn't been except in the way that

Mr. Morey made you object oriented when you were given a piece to know backwards and forwards and try to place.

REESE: After the museum experience, did you think about returning to the museum?

SMYTH: Yes, I did. Both Chuck and I could have gone back to the National Gallery after the war, but neither of us wanted to for various reasons. But I think we both thought kindly of being in a museum, and Chuck left Princeton for the Buffalo museum, actually. We were oriented in that direction.

On the troop transport coming back from Germany, I had maybe ten days to sort of think what was happening next. I tried to think what would be good, and I thought it would be wonderful to have some time to try to get back, really, into the history of art again. And where to do that? Boston? Or Washington? Or where? And I thought New York. And then I thought how nice it would be to be at the Frick Collection. And when I got off the ship, there was an offer waiting from the Frick Collection at home and one from Wellesley College. [laughter] I didn't think of Wellesley; I just thought of the Frick Collection. It was a marvelous thing.

So back in a museum, but a different kind of museum relationship. A place that was quiet, not doing very much,

not having exhibitions, not buying much--a little bit--and there one was a lecturer as well as a research assistant. At the National Gallery, the first month or two that I was there I was put into the education department so that I could learn the collection. I don't think Chuck was, but I was. That involved going around and talking in front of pictures. I found that I could do it, so I thought maybe I could do the lecturing at the Frick Collection. You always lectured there on what you wanted to lecture on. I mean, you picked your own subjects, so that was good. Working with Mr. [Frederick M.] Clapp was marvelous. He was the director, and I was deeply fond of him. He'd written on Pontormo, and by then I was in mannerism, so that was very nice. But I thought of myself as always being in museums. I didn't think I was going to be in the academic world.

RIKALA: That was just a thought that evolved, or--?

SMYTH: No, it was Walter Cook.

REESE: The kind of experience that you had at the National Gallery and the Frick, then, were similar in kind.

SMYTH: Well, one was a busy, busy place, and you were doing something all the time. It was curatorial housekeeping, which is a marvelous way to learn about a museum. The Frick Collection was steady, banked down, not much happening, looking at paintings that were offered for sale, and helping Mr. Clapp think about those. I think I saved them one awful

purchase which wouldn't have been good, a picture that ended up, and should never have ended up, in the Metropolitan Museum, which is now in the storeroom. Nobody looks at it.

REESE: One of the things I was thinking about at that moment in time is museums and styles of museums and whether different museums had a very clear reputation for a certain kind of educational practice and teaching collections. The Met, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Philadelphia [Museum of Art].

SMYTH: I don't think I could say. Certainly the National Gallery wasn't yet in the business of teaching graduate students or having fellows come there, I think, at all.

*[It did have an education department which concentrated on the public--lectures, gallery tours--under Lamont Moore.]

There were certainly people who were there one could learn from. John Walker one could learn from, you know. You didn't see him a lot, but if you were-- He had had a lot of experience and he was good, in some ways very good. He was a framer by trade, and he was brought in as the man who was in charge of moving objects everywhere in the gallery and framing them. A man by the name of [Fred] Reith. I think Chuck and I learned, both of us, a great deal from him. He

* Smyth added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.

was a marvelous person and knew condition, not only of frames but pictures somehow. You know, you were down in the nitty-gritty with him a lot.

The Met by then must have had some educational program because I know that they had had some museum-- Well, NYU [New York University]'s Institute, before it was an institute, held its classes in the Metropolitan, and there was, I think, a course that the Institute early on gave about museum work. So there must have been some education programs at the Met, but I don't know what.

REESE: So you were at the Frick for one year?

SMYTH: Three years. I think Mr. Clapp viewed that as an indoctrination. He didn't want people to stay more than three years, and he thought of it as an indoctrination that he sort of presided over. I suppose he thought of that as partly a teaching experience. And we had Billy [William] Suhr as the restorer--again, not really conservator--working there, and we spent hours watching him work. *[And I should add that the three years there were spent very much on my own research. I had twenty-four-hour privileges in the Frick Art Reference Library, and again, always looking, looking at the Frick Collection. The other lecturer/

* Smyth added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.

research assistant was James Fosburgh, a painter. We spent much time in those years talking about pictures together, everything about them, and I looked with him, too, and also with Barbara.]

RIKALA: At this point you'd already developed an interest in mannerism, and you were looking at--

SMYTH: Well, I had because it was an unknown. The word wasn't mentioned at Princeton.

RIKALA: Oh.

SMYTH: And because there we were getting NYU syllabi, and we had John Coolidge. We knew about Walter Friedlaender, we knew what he was saying, and we'd gone and read his things. When I got to the National Gallery, one of the things that Chuck and I were both told was that one of the things we had to do was to give one big, formal Sunday lecture, and we had to choose a subject. I chose the thing I knew nothing about: mannerism. So I really had to work. That was wonderful. That's how I got into it.

RIKALA: At this point, when you'd come back and you were at the Frick, it isn't until a little bit later that you decide to do a dissertation. But were you--?

SMYTH: No. I began just working on mannerism and Bronzino.

RIKALA: On Bronzino. And how did you choose Bronzino? Where did that interest come from?

SMYTH: Well, it came by virtue of being at the National

Gallery and lecturing on mannerism, because they had a picture there which was said to be a Pontormo, and it is partly Pontormo, but it also seemed to turn out to be a Bronzino. I found the drawings for it and so forth, got into it that way. Then after an article I did on early Bronzino existed, I decided, after becoming director of the Institute, that I should try to do the dissertation.

Princeton said that they would accept that article, although already published, as a chapter of the dissertation.

RIKALA: At this point when you were working at the Frick Collection, were you attending the seminars and lectures that were going on at NYU while you were establishing a relationship there?

SMYTH: I started to a little bit. Well, for slides for lectures at the Frick Collection, I used the ones at the Met and at the Institute, and the Institute slide room was very nice about that, and I therefore got to know people there. I got to know Jim [James S.] Ackerman, for example, in the slide room, I think, first. He was there as a graduate student. John Coolidge had introduced us to people from the Institute, so we knew a little bit about-- I did go and sit in a seminar that Walter Friedlaender was giving about Bellori with Kenny [Kenneth] Donahue, who was going to write a book on Bellori and would have done a wonderful book but went on in a busy museum career and didn't. I sat for a

couple of times in a seminar of Richard Offner's, and I thought it was very good, but I didn't see myself doing it for a whole semester, so I didn't. I just stayed long enough to sort of see the method and left.

RIKALA: How did NYU seem at the time? What were the, say, jarring distinctions?

SMYTH: It seemed to me that that's where the center of gravity for the history of art in this country was. I was suddenly asked to give a course at Yale in the fall of 1948-49, commuting from the Frick, when somebody was missing, and it was an undergraduate, sort of seminar-like course.

Robert Rosenblum was a first-year graduate student, and he came and sat in on the course. He wasn't getting credit for it, but he came. He sat there all year and took part. So I got to know him some and realized how good he was. My feeling was that the Yale department didn't offer all the things that he needed and that the Institute did, though I didn't have anything to do with the Institute, so I suggested that he do what Kubler had done: go to New York for a couple of years, which he did. He turned up there the same term I turned up there on the faculty in 1950, so there he was again. So I knew enough about the Institute to know that that's where I would want somebody who was really good to be at that time.

RIKALA: And it's 1950 that you get hired there?

SMYTH: That's right.

RIKALA: What were those circumstances? What was the position, and what was your role there?

SMYTH: Well, it was very puzzling. I got a Fulbright fellowship, a senior Fulbright fellowship-- There's the power of the M.F.A. You couldn't have done that after that. The M.F.A with Mr. Morey presiding partly over the Fulbright. In fact, he may have invented the whole Fulbright program. [laughter] I got a senior Fulbright fellowship to Italy '49 to '50. Before I left, I don't know how much before, maybe quite a long time before, Walter Cook, whom I didn't really know at all as far as I remember-- I'd seen him, but I didn't know him--asked me to come and see him, which I did. He talked in a sort of roundabout way about the Institute and rather incidentally about the fact that he thought he was going to retire before too long. I realize now that he was having-- I mean, I learned afterwards that he was having a standoff then with Bobby [Robert] Lehman and perhaps the university, too, and was thinking about what he might do about that, I guess. In any case, he talked about thinking of retiring, and he didn't seem to have any purpose in talking to me, and I didn't really know why I was asked to come and see him.

RIKALA: No premonitions at the time?

SMYTH: No. That's really what he talked about, including

the fact that he might be leaving and so forth. So I didn't think much, or any, more about that. I went off to Italy, and then suddenly I had an offer from the University of Minnesota--I don't know why, I can't tell you that--and then suddenly an invitation from Walter Cook to come to the Institute. Well, that scared me, but Barbara had already said the first time she'd heard the word Minnesota that she was not going to live in Minnesota. [laughter] So that sort of put that out.

So, as I always did about anything, I got in touch with Mr. Morey, who was still the cultural attaché in Rome, to see what he thought. And, as usual, he was very sure of what he thought. He said, "You've got to take it. Scared? That doesn't matter. You've got to take it." Because I thought, "Teaching just graduate courses?" I knew that they changed courses every year, you know, so how I was going to do that, I didn't know. But he said, "Yes."

So then I wrote Walter Cook and said I would come and be a-- You know, I was to be an assistant professor. They had lost [Dimitri] Tselos, who had gone somewhere else, and they needed to fill a post. So that seemed quite obvious, and that was-- I didn't know really how I figured in it, but then I was asked, so I did it. Then I had again one of those terrible twenty-four hours of thinking, "My God, what have I done?" [laughter] So I went down to the telephone.

The telephones in Italy in 1949, you had to go to the post office to call the United States, and you had to put your call in and wait, sometimes hours, and then you finally got through. I got Walter Cook on the other end, and I said, "I've made a mistake. I really can't take this post. I don't know enough, and I'm not ready for it." And Walter Cook-- Did you ever know him?

REESE: No.

SMYTH: He shouted into the other end of the phone. He said, "I've already told the dean. You can't do anything about it." Bang! Down the phone went. [laughter] To go through all that again, I didn't see how-- You know, for the hours it took to do all that. So there I was.

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REESE: Craig, when you first went to the Institute [of Fine Arts, New York University], there was clearly a kind of legacy there that you inherited. How can you describe that and what your job would be from then on out?

SMYTH: Well, I wanted to continue their legacy because it seemed to me to be a wonderful legacy. I suppose that you might describe it--as I've often thought of it, and maybe other people, too--as bringing together the experience of a lot of German universities into one place, because as a student in Germany you went from university to university to study with the various people in your field you thought you'd like to study with and ended, finally, in one of those universities to do your dissertation. Well, here there were collected under one roof a lot of people who had the standing of the great professors, who would have been almost alone, each in his university, in Germany. You could go from one to the other.

They were still doing what they did in German universities: not repeating their courses, but each year doing something new that was related to what they were working on--a profound course, or a course in a field where the professor felt there must be a kind of overall view given, as Karl Lehmann did very much. He had his own view

of the development of art since antiquity: architecture and sculpture and painting. Over a period--I think he would have said over three years--he kept going over the whole ancient field to give that picture to somebody who stayed with him for three years and heard his lecture courses. At the same time, his seminars were very close to what he himself was thinking about and working on. Since his view of antiquity was original, in those syllabi is the only place where that is all collected. That was what you then did as a student at the Institute; you went from one of these people to another. You might go just to hear him because of his method or because it was a great personality or because it was the field you really wanted to work on.

REESE: I mean, one of the things that [Erwin] Panofsky comments on, which is in that "Three Decades [of Art History in the United States," from Meaning in the Visual Arts] article, which is much discussed, is what the movement in the American university system had in terms of the new kinds of demands that were made on the great German professors, who held Lehrstühle of enormous importance and could run their institutes as truly powerful figures with a whole institute behind them, and how coming to America meant, really, learning about a whole new set of things. I know that Irving Lavin and others--including you, I think--one time in Kurt [Forster]'s office were talking about whether or not this is a true

vision, or whether certain elitist elements of the German tradition lived on. Let me preface this by saying that, as I look through all of the early course schedules, what impressed me was that [Walter] Cook, [Richard] Offner, and [Philip] McMahon were listed on the first page in the thirties, and then [Walter] Friedlaender and Lehmann on the next, and then everyone else followed, as though the founding generation--

SMYTH: That's interesting. I don't think I remember that.

REESE: I never noticed it before, but--

SMYTH: I think by the time I got there, or maybe it was because of me, we did it alphabetically, didn't we?

REESE: It changed later. But the thirties ones were clearly--

SMYTH: Well, Walter Cook had, you know, something of the same feeling. His word seemed law in the Institute. Yes, there you are. I don't know how it got this way, but, sure, Walter was the boss in his time. Richard Offner was the oldest member; he had been there on the faculty longer than anybody else. McMahon had come just after him to New York University, so I suppose they were senior. Walter Friedlaender must have arrived ahead of Karl Lehmann. Maybe that's the way it worked. Though here is Panofsky after [Henri] Focillon, whereas he got there before Focillon, I think.

REESE: But those are lecturers, I believe, so that they are

temporarily brought up, probably.

SMYTH: They're not in alphabetical order, so I don't know what order is doing now. Very strange.

REESE: But my broader question, really, is the German university in America and that transition from Germany to America as it lives on in the Institute, just what your reflections about that are.

SMYTH: Well, I should have thought that they would not have found it puzzling that Walter Cook was the guy, really, who seemed to make the decisions. He didn't have faculty meetings very often, and my first year I don't remember that we discussed policy in faculty meetings at all. I think when he decided that he wanted me on the faculty he must have talked to somebody, but I don't know that there was a vote or anything like that. They knew that they could always go to Walter Cook and express themselves and that he would hear absolutely what they were saying. But even in my time, you know, search committees? No. Committees to study this or that? No. I tried always to have everybody able to express his opinion privately to me long before we took it to a table, and I always went to everybody with every new proposal I had to make. But in the end, I think it was sort of the director's decision when it was all over with. So that lasted there in the tradition of Walter in some ways for quite a while. I don't think that the faculty would

have thought this odd. I think that's what they probably would have wanted.

What was new to them was to be all under the same roof. Some were rivals and some were not, but there they all were. It was an astonishing thing. I can remember a scholar that I knew from Germany who arrived. When he had been there a day or two and seen all the people who were under that roof, he said, "I would like to come in here, close the door, and just stay." [laughter]

REESE: Well, I find in this same small course announcement the tendency to put the German university from which each came--say, Berlin, Munich--and then to list all of the publications, too. It's something very, very new, that what you're looking at there is a scholarly record of achievement that is the primary advertisement that--

SMYTH: Yes, that's true. That's true. Of these people, the permanent, full-time faculty was always much smaller than the people in this long list. It was Cook and Offner and McMahon, Walter Friedlaender, Lehmann, not Focillon, not Panofsky, not [Charles Rufus] Morey, not [Ernst] Herzfeld. All the rest from then on are visitors, I would have said, except [Alfred] Salmony, and how he got so far down the list here I don't know. Richard Krautheimer wasn't a member of the faculty; he came once a week to teach one semester each year. So the permanent faculty was small, and the permanent

faculty was still small when I got there. I think there were five or six people altogether.

REESE: Can you reconstruct at all the way you would periodize the history of the Institute and how it changed? In other words, you have this founding group. I mean, you have the foundation of the department in the twenties, and then you have the Germans arriving in the thirties, and slowly, during your tenure, more and more American Ph.D.'s are joining that faculty.

SMYTH: Well, there were no American Ph.D.'s-- Well, Cook was, and McMahon was. McMahon was never a full member of the department uptown. He was a member of the department downtown who taught some uptown in the graduate department. He had disappeared by the time I arrived, so I never knew him. There was very early on a European in the department who did ancient Near East things, a man who was very much admired, loved, and died young, and his name I should have on the tip of my tongue but I don't at the moment [Rudolf M. Riefstahl].

REESE: I mean, I've traced the new additions a little bit, in other words, to the permanent faculty of, say, Cook, Offner, Friedlaender, Lehmann, Panofsky as a regular visitor, Salmony, and [Martin] Weinberger--

SMYTH: That's right. Weinberger was, too.

REESE: In '52-'53, Krautheimer and [Hanns] Swarzenski were

visiting.

SMYTH: In what year?

REESE: In '52 and '53.

SMYTH: Krautheimer came as a permanent member of the faculty in the fall of '52.

REESE: Then in '53-'54, Paul Frankl is listed as new, probably as a visitor.

SMYTH: Yes, as a visitor.

REESE: Then, in '54 and '55, as teaching there, Rensselaer Lee, Harry Bober, and Robert Goldwater.

SMYTH: Well, Robert had taught off and on long before that. But about that time he became a regular member of the faculty on a sort of half-time basis. It was one of the things that the Institute was-- We were very good at cooking up things that weren't right but worked. He was helping Nelson [A.] Rockefeller start his Museum of Primitive Art, and he was also-- He came onto our faculty as a regular member of the faculty at the same time and was treated like a full-time member even though he wasn't. Rens Lee had been teaching at Columbia [University] and Smith [College], I think part-time in each place. We invited him to come and be a regular member of the faculty, which he did, and he would have stayed had he not been called to Princeton [University] to be the chairman of that department only a year after he arrived at the Institute. Who was your third

person?

REESE: It was Harry Bober.

SMYTH: Harry Bober had taken his degree at the Institute. When I arrived in 1950 he was teaching at [the main New York University campus at] Washington Square but was in the Institute a great deal. I always thought of him as teaching at the Institute, but I don't think he actually did do a course. Then he was asked to go to Harvard [University], which he did, and we were looking for a medievalist. We didn't have one. And the faculty, led by-- We always included Pan [Erwin Panofsky] in our deliberations because he cared about the place a lot. He led the cry to bring Harry Bober back from Harvard, which is what we then did, and he came back as a regular member of the faculty.

REESE: I mean, what I was noting in those three names is that, of course, you know, that is three Americans--

SMYTH: That's three Americans.

REESE: --joining the faculty.

SMYTH: And [Dimitri] Tselos was an American, too, who had been there for quite a while before me. The German contingent was not the whole of the Institute ever, and the German contingent didn't just begin with 1933. Riefstahl, German and German trained, had been in NYU [New York University] department from the time Fiske Kimball founded it, in 1923. Then, when Richard Offner was chairman for

those few years at the end of the 1920s, he invited [Arthur E. G.] Haseloff, and he invited Panofsky, and Panofsky decided to be a part of it and come, as I said, every year. So there was already a precedent started by Offner that Cook, when he came back to New York University-- He'd been on leave for several years. He had been an associate professor. He was called back, soon to become chairman. In 1932 he came, and it was in his first year, I suppose, '32-'33, that Hitler came to power. Pan was in residence at that moment when he was fired from Hamburg, and I suppose that Walter, being absolutely a driving force, saw a chance really to give the department extraordinary new strength. He always said; you know, "Hitler shook the tree, and I picked up the apples."

REESE: How did he at that point have the kind of combination of vision and resources to allow for such a massive influx of--? To build a new institution in a very short period of time?

SMYTH: Well, the details I don't know, though he did tell me. That was long ago. There were already people who had become interested in this department. Percy Strauss was one of them. The Strauss family had been backing the Corpus of Florentine Painting, the publication of Richard Offner's corpus, so that must have been through Richard Offner. There were various people who helped from some-- There were

a few deans who were also not any enemies of this small department that was growing. So there were people. But what Walter Cook was able to do was to build on this very small foundation, and he was marvelous at that. He could bring people in and make them interested and get them to support him, and they were people important in New York, I think people like the Altmans. I don't know whether the Altmans did do that, but that's the kind of person. The Strausses were Macy's [department store]. And Bobby [Robert] Lehman, he [Percy Strauss] probably brought in. I don't think Bobby Lehman was there before, though being, with his father, a major collector of Italian painting, he would have been in touch with Offner and perhaps came in with Offner. There was a Mrs. Murray Crane, who had a kind of salon in New York, who threw her support with it, and there were-- They did things for people that were interesting like having lectures open to the public. Helen [C.] Frick came to the Offner lectures, you know. The lectures' place was in the Metropolitan Museum [of Art] in the very first years.

And the department wasn't called an institute yet. It had a couple of rooms on Eighty-third [Street] and Madison [Avenue] finally, beginning, Bober says, in 1934, but Pan tells about slides or syllabi kept in the bathtub, all that. [laughter] Walter, between his first year, 1932, and 1937, completely changed it and put the department into Mr.

Warburg's, Paul Warburg's house on Eightieth Street--17 East Eightieth Street--and called it an institute. It had been growing in the direction of just graduate study, not undergraduate. Already that had been something that a small group led by Richard Offner, I think, had wanted, but probably Walter was in on that talk when he was around, before he went off on his leave. He galvanized the department's development and did it and found the funds when he needed them. He didn't have any endowment. He did it on an absolutely ad hoc basis.

REESE: And at that moment, what was the relationship of this fledgling institute to NYU [New York University]? It was totally integrated into NYU, or--?

SMYTH: Never was totally integrated, no. It's hard for me to say exactly what it was then. There were people at New York University who didn't want this development, this department to be just a graduate department uptown. But there were other people there who did, who saw it-- I've got some of those names, and they're in my little piece about the early years of the department before the Germans came, but they're also in Harry Bober's piece.

By virtue of being so far away from NYU's Washington Square, one could do things that nobody knew one was doing, you know. I don't know what Walter Cook's direct relationship with the square was when I got there.

Something had gone wrong in his relationship with Bobby Lehman, not with the faculty. The faculty reached out and got to the art historical world at large about 1948 and '49 and got letters of endorsement for Walter Cook and all he was doing, so there must have been something going wrong. Then, at that point, Lauder Greenway, who had been secretary of the Metropolitan Museum, was brought in to be sort of acting director insofar as the relationship to New York University went. Walter kept the title head of the department but not the title of director, though everybody thought of him as director. But officially, I think, he wasn't director anymore when I arrived in 1950. So exactly whom he reported to-- Maybe just to the dean. And Lauder Greenway reporting over the dean to the chancellor, as the head of the university was called. That I really don't know.

But when I, then, in 1951 became acting director-- because it occurred right away--the two titles were then brought together again. That was the faculty's condition, really, that they be brought back together again, and I was acting as both head of the department and director. I reported then--from then on and after becoming director, instead of acting director, in 1953--to the provost, just under the chancellor, and not much to the dean. A little bit. Academic things to the dean, but over him was the

provost, who really approved my appointment originally and with whom I worked about Institute matters. I think that this must have been the way it had been before the short period when things didn't go quite right for Walter in the late 1940s.

REESE: I mean, do you ascribe that to the influence of the supporters of the Institute?

SMYTH: Yes, and I think Walter's vision of how it had to be, you know. They knew they were going to be exceptional. They knew they were going to do things that nobody else would be doing or wanting to do or wanting them to do. I think Walter must have known that to do that he had to be talking to the top rung. With all those very good supporters, a Bobby Lehman in the background or a Percy Strauss in the background, you had leverage to do that. So that's the way I picture it, as having been his invention with their backing.

REESE: Greenway did have a Ph.D. and was an art historian?

SMYTH: He did have a Ph.D. No, he had taught English at Yale [University], got his Ph.D. there. He was a man of means, a remarkably nice man who lent himself to many good causes. When this problem at the Institute needed him-- You know, I think it must have been Bobby Lehman who suggested him. He did it, though the faculty resented it. They didn't know him. They didn't like an outsider coming in

and having part of Walter Cook's title and authority. But he was a gentle and fine person as far as I knew him at all. I think that was really truly what he was. So that when I took Walter's post in an acting capacity, and that meant that Greenway was leaving, I asked him to stay as a member of the advisory committee. Bobby Lehman, who was chairman of the advisory committee, became honorary chairman, and Lauder became chairman, so that he wasn't suddenly outside looking in. And he was enormously helpful thereafter.

REESE: I've read several things about Panofsky refusing ever to sign receipts that said he was an employee of the university. Rather, he was the university. I mean, I say that to ask really what the German members of the faculty here in America felt about what their relationship to the Institute was. Were they the Institute? Or were they thankful to Walter Cook or to you as director--?

SMYTH: They were thankful to Walter Cook, absolutely thankful. But they were the Institute, no question about that. You know, Karl Lehmann, when he arrived, it was his place, and he was very influential in it. I think they all felt that this was theirs with an immense loyalty. Absolutely immense loyalty. Though they differed with each other, and sometimes there was a little competition for this or that student, mostly it was harmonious in my time. There

were one or two who didn't like one or two, but mostly it was very harmonious. And that harmony could be kept to all intents and purposes.

REESE: I mean, I'm returning to the question you raised about governance and how things were done. How a decision would be made about a new faculty member. I guess I should preface this by saying in the early fifties.

SMYTH: Well, I didn't know anything about it before then, but when I started, I decided that we should have a regular faculty meeting once a month, Thursday morning, and that we should be able to discuss everything that was of importance. Nothing should be hidden there. On the other hand, I thought, and still do think, that before discussion hits the table in front of a lot of people, everybody in the group should know about the issues long before. So I always--and I think I did that my whole time there--took the time to talk to everybody on the faculty independently about every major issue. If I had a proposal I really wanted to make, I would offer this to each individually as something to discuss to see what they thought of it. And my effort, of course, was to bring people around if I really had a great conviction about something. But often it was just "These are issues that we have to face, and what's your position on it?" If I could--and very often it was possible--without anybody realizing it, you could have an agreement already

behind the scenes with nobody knowing he was agreeing with anybody else. If they looked at the thing independently and saw the issue, they might all come up with pretty much the same view. So when it hit the table, we could discuss it, but it wasn't suddenly a surprise and wasn't immediate cause for argument.

REESE: So most of the initiative, then, would have been in your hands in terms of suggesting new fields that should be covered, new faculty.

SMYTH: Yes. Well, but very often someone would come and say, "Look, we've got to do something about the following. We don't have this. What can we do?" You know, "I propose we do the following." Then, in the same way, I would try to see that this got discussed as long as it needed to be individually, and they could always discuss it with each other once everybody knew the issue, so that when we finally met, we were already partly prepared to deal with it. If there was a real "no" on the part of a faculty member, then my feeling would be mostly not to do it. If it were really a strong "no" and everybody knew it and sort of agreed that ought to be a veto, then we would not do it. We never voted. We never went around the table and said "yes" or "no."

REESE: And senior faculty met with junior faculty?

SMYTH: Yes. All the faculty together. Eventually the

faculty became so large that you couldn't really discuss matters of fundamental importance in such a big group. So then we had a smaller executive group, which added to the time we spent on all this, and from the executive group would come to the whole faculty the views that we had discussed together. But, as I say, it never was a vote, so nobody ever had to feel, "Well, he voted against my proposal." We tried to do it by consensus. That was me. I mean, I didn't think votes were good, so I didn't do it.

REESE: I mean, I'm trying to think about the relationship between new positions at the Institute and the funding of them. Was that generally something in your tenure that took place with New York University? Or was this advisory council the key agent in getting positions funded?

SMYTH: Well, we didn't have very much money, and you had to raise money each year. So right from the beginning I was raising money, but I was following, to start with, in the footsteps of Walter, doing the same thing that he did. Then there was Bobby Lehman, whom I kept in touch with on really every major issue that was going on, so that he never was surprised about what we were doing. I don't know whether he'd done this with Walter, but he may have. He would hear what I thought were needs, and we would talk about whom I might approach if I didn't know whom to approach, and then at a certain point he would telephone and say, "Well? How

are you doing? Need some money?" In those first few years it wasn't large sums. But, you know, \$15,000 for this, yeah.

REESE: But the faculty positions were generally university funded, and then extras were--?

SMYTH: Well, the regular faculty positions were university funded, but Friedlaender wasn't, because he was outside all university rules. He wasn't supposed to be teaching. He wasn't supposed to be a faculty member. But if you funded him-- We kept him going teaching until he was ninety-four. This was, you know, never heard of, but nobody could really say anything about that because he was funded by the Institute, and people were coming from all over the world to see him, to be with him. And the distance from the square-- And surely it was the same way that Walter played it from the very beginning. It was sort of understood there that this place was not going to be run like anything else, and you couldn't do anything with it, so to hell with it. There were people at the square who got very angry about it at times--and later I can tell you one--but they didn't win. They didn't.

The first appointment that I had anything to do with was Richard Krautheimer. Walter had been wanting to bring him to the Institute for a long time. Richard stopped teaching I think in '48 or '49, commuting down from Vassar

[College]. I don't know what finally decided him that he didn't just want to keep commuting. He wasn't made a member of the faculty, but that wasn't Walter's fault. He tried, and he got knocked down by the university. They said the Institute faculty was big enough. It was quite plain that this was an appointment that ought to be made; everybody on the faculty knew that. I thought, "Well, I've got nothing to lose, and it's my honeymoon period, so I'll try." And it worked. So there was no argument about that appointment. Everybody was completely of one mind.

REESE: Could you say something about Mr. Lehman and his interest and engagement in the art world and in the Institute's life?

SMYTH: Well, he cared about the Institute a lot. One of the things I decided very shortly after having started this thing was that the donors that you have or try to get should be people who need you as much as you need them. Robert Lehman with his collection and being on the board of the Metropolitan should have been the chairman of the Metropolitan board, but he wasn't. I realized that the Institute was his platform. He was the chief trustee-like figure there. You know, from then on, that's the way I thought about money-raising. What can we do for the person who can help us? What have we got that they need? There are lots of things, actually, when you begin to think about

it. So he cared about this place for partly a personal reason, but partly because he admired it. He admired Offner. He liked Walter Cook a lot, and they did things together. When they split, it was over Walter's drinking, I think. I think that was it, though it may have been something else, I don't know.

But, in any case, he was very much interested in the fact that I was being proposed by Walter to be his stand-in, because after I'd been there about four months Walter asked me if I would take over for him for two years. At that point, the museum [Metropolitan Museum of Art] had approached me about going there to be the curator of drawings, to start a drawing department. They had drawings, but they didn't have a department. I was fascinated by it, because teaching these three graduate courses a term--that was what it was, three courses a term, all new each year--I just thought, "I'm going to run out very fast." So I was interested in that. And apparently Bobby Lehman telephoned Francis Taylor, as I heard afterwards, and said, "Lay off." [laughter] And he could say that, you know. He cared about the place, and he cared about what was happening, and he wanted to have a word in it, which is not where you want things, outsiders and trustees having a word, but he did. But his word was sensible usually. I don't know about me,

but in general it was. I once argued with him about something, and he looked suddenly very angry, and he said, "What are you trying to do, tell me?" "Well," I said, "I'm trying to get it through if I can." [laughter]

REESE: Was he the instrumental force in building this board of advisers too, though? In other words, was it a shared responsibility to increase the membership? Or was it primarily the director's?

SMYTH: I think it was the director's. I think that Walter had done it with Lehman's approval and help, and no doubt Percy Strauss's, too, and suggesting people. When I got there, I wouldn't have added anybody that I wouldn't have talked to Lehman about, but I think the additions were mostly mine, not his.

REESE: What was the relationship between, let's say, the senior faculty, Friedlaender, Lehmann, and the board of advisers? Were they directly and closely related?

SMYTH: No, they weren't.

REESE: Not at all?

SMYTH: Not much. I think that the faculty was suspicious of them a little bit, and I think particularly after the stand-off between Walter and Lehman and I don't know who else was with Lehman, you know, on that. I think they were a little bit suspicious. But I think they got over that, and they saw each other from time to time when I was there. We had

to get them together so that they saw each other and talked.

REESE: So in a real way the director of the Institute was the key person in protecting the professorate from both the bureaucracy of the university and the normal interference of other things.

SMYTH: That's right.

RIKALA: You were quite young at this point. You were in your mid-thirties.

SMYTH: Thirty-five.

RIKALA: That's quite an awesome role.

SMYTH: All these guys were older than I was, that's for sure. Well, I think it was all because of the Munich collecting point, you know. I think, you know, Walter Cook didn't know me from Adam, or at least I don't think he did. But the collecting point [where Smyth served with the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Section] had definitely suggested that I could run something. I came upon a letter once from Chuck [Charles P.] Parkhurst [Jr.]--I don't know if I ever told him that--in the files to Walter Cook about how I ran the collecting point. So I think he must have wanted to know and asked various people.

REESE: Another point of much discussion in the early history of the Institute is the relationship to the Metropolitan Museum and what the nature of that relationship was. I'm not talking about administratively; I'm talking

about in terms of teaching and research.

SMYTH: Well, I think from early on they were involved with each other. I mean, when the department didn't have a home, the courses took place there at the museum, as Pan describes it. There were people from the museum who came to take those courses. Richard Offner did a lot of his teaching in front of pictures in the museum. That's why Richard and those other people, before Walter took the place over, wanted the department to be uptown. That was the whole idea. As Walter Cook used to say, "We've got our university museum across the street," you know. But when I arrived, the relationship wasn't very good, and what the reason for that is I don't know. Walter thought that the museum was trying to take the Institute over. He said, I think, as I remember, that they would like to just get it away from New York University and have it as their own. Whether that was true or not, I don't know, or whether I remember it right or not. There was some sort of standoff between the two institutions.

But I was in a very good position to try to do something about that, because I had just gotten to know Francis Taylor a little bit because of this negotiation for me. So I think almost from the beginning I could talk to him about things that we might do together. Being a museum person, I was interested pretty soon in trying to make the museum education, the museum training, program, bring it

into existence. There had been courses. Weinberger taught a course--I don't know what he called it--but how to run a museum, how to be a museum man. There had been things like that. Also relationships to the American Museum of Natural History. But I think from early on I thought that the split which still continues at the Getty [Center for the History of Art and the Humanities] between the museum world and the scholarly world was a split which shouldn't exist, or at least it shouldn't exist in this form at all, in the form that it does sort of worldwide--did then very much. I thought we could do something about that in this relationship. So did Harry Bober.

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SMYTH: So we talked, I suppose, toward the middle fifties, about what we would do together, and I can't remember the details of it now, how we got started, but we did make a plan then with the museum finally. I don't remember all those steps--negotiations partly with Francis Taylor and then with his successor, James Rorimer, whom I'd known a long time. We--our faculty and the museum--created a three-stage training program that began with an introductory course which eventually had [A.] Hyatt Mayor to teach it, and then a series of seminars within departments of the museum as the second stage, the next year, for the students who had taken the first course. I went to all those seminars the first year we had them to be sure they ran the way we and the museum people who planned this thing with us thought they ought to run. And then an internship was the third stage after that. Well, it brought a close relationship with many museum people, very close. I mean, Olga Roger, for example, was a part of that. Ever since, she teaches over at the Institute; she's part of the Institute faculty as an adjunct professor. When we saw somebody we really thought would be great teaching a regular course at the Institute, we asked them to do it. Walter had done that before. That wasn't really new. We just did more

of it and used the title adjunct professor and tried to build the bridges across the street.

Then, when we moved into the new house, the [Doris] Duke house, one of the reasons for doing that was to get space to build a library, because the Institute really didn't have much of a library. It, you know, depended on the Frick Art Reference Library and the Met [Metropolitan Museum of Art]'s library and the [Pierpont] Morgan [Library] and the [New York] Public Library. So at that point I thought it would be good if the two institutions--the Met and the Institute--collaborated on their libraries. We ended up with a program in which we bought books for them that we thought were more specialized than we would be using every day, and mainly bought as books for ourselves only the ones that you go to first and use the most. So that was the sort of distinction. This was a very good collaboration. We contributed quite a lot to that library across the street, which I thought was right, since we depended upon it.

So in the end we did quite a lot together. I'm sure there was this or that curator who didn't think we should, or-- But I think all of our faculty in the end thought this was good.

Then when we had a joint appointment-- I've forgotten when this was. I wanted to see the Institute go in the direction of Islamic art. I don't think there was much

thought about that on our faculty. Richard Krautheimer, for instance, really wasn't for expanding the Institute beyond western Europe much. But, as a starter, we did ask [Richard] Ettinghausen to commute up from Washington, and in the end, to bring him for sure-- I mean, first he commuted, and then to bring him for good. It seemed plain that he ought to continue to be a museum man. So I proposed to the Met--to Tom [Thomas] Hoving--which needed an Islamicist after their Islamic curator, [Maurice S.] Dimand retired, that Ettinghausen be over there as a chairman of the Islamic department and on our faculty as a full member at the same time. That's the way it worked.

REESE: I'm noticing in terms of dates that in '58-'59 Soper, Hyatt Mayor, and [Peter] von Blanckenhagen, and then in '60-'61 [Bernard] Bothmer, Ettinghausen, [Charles] Sterling join. So those are part of that general--

SMYTH: They're part of that growth as we moved into the Duke house. Sterling was a little bit different from that, but that paper I spoke about, which I wrote in England in 1960, partly had to do with moving in the direction of Asia, and the bringing of Ettinghausen was part of that. *[That was a paper required of all department heads by the NYU

* Smyth added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.

president outlining the developments each head wanted to see in their department over the next ten years. Somewhere in my archives I have a copy, as does the university. It was wide-ranging.]

REESE: I think one of the things that we're all so often curious about is that we have a very clear impression of the impact of the Germans on American art history. But one seldom hears about the attitudes of the Germans towards American art history, with the single exception of Panofsky, who says a great deal about it. Everywhere in interviews about Harvard or Yale or Princeton one notes immediately the impact that Germans had. In fact, John Coolidge talks about the fact that when he went back to Harvard he was called a German. I mean, he was trained at the Institute. He was a German even though he was a Harvard undergraduate. But I'm just wondering, as the director in the fifties, how you felt-- I mean, how did Karl Lehmann feel about American art history? How did Walter Friedlaender, Richard Krautheimer feel about American art history? Were they a part of it? Was it something different?

SMYTH: Oh, I think they were a part of it by then. They'd already influenced it, as John says--as I remember what he says. He learned about art history that had to do with problems and people investigating things. If you went to Princeton as an undergraduate, as I did, you didn't know

there were any problems in the history of art from the undergraduate courses. I suspect that if you went to some of the courses at Harvard you would not have heard anything about problems in the history of art. But by the time that I reached the Institute, the Germans had been functioning for nearly fifteen years, and their impact had taken place and people knew about that. They, meanwhile, certainly respected at least some American art historians. They very much respected Rens Lee, for example--no question about that. Absolutely not a question. And Richard Offner? Oh, absolutely. Of course, he got his doctorate degree under [Max] Dvořák in Vienna, but he was Harvard educated.

*[Also, Millard Meiss, the Institute's own product--much respected.] No, I think there was great mutual respect at a certain level. But, as in any field, medicine or whatever, there are not many doctors you really want to trust your life to, so in the history of art there are probably not so very many that everybody would agree are absolutely first-class.

REESE: But you didn't feel any sense of "Oh, he's American"?

SMYTH: No, no. Not at all. Not at all.

* Smyth added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.

REESE: Another theme that I remember more from my years as a graduate student than I do from any history books were some of the clans at NYU. I mean, clearly, when one reads of Walter Friedlaender, and his students taking care of him, and the Karl Lehmann-- Then there was [José] López-Rey, and others, who seemed to be different, in a different group.

SMYTH: I think the faculty regarded López-Rey as an interloper a little bit. He had been brought in by Walter Cook and perhaps not with faculty advice. I don't know that, but when I got there he had been promised a regular position on the faculty by Walter, though he was still teaching, I think, part-time at Smith. So that followed, and he came. But I don't think that the faculty ever, any of them, thought that he was one of them, and I'm sure that he therefore felt out of it. Bobby Lehman didn't care for his being there either, because he said he was a dealer or was working with a dealer. Lehman didn't think there ought to be a dealer on the faculty, nor did we. Well, he wasn't personally a dealer, I think, and he denied, really, having any interest in that world, but Bobby Lehman thought he did, and he was in a position to know a good deal. I think all of that kept him at arm's length.

REESE: But it was not a difficult job of managing factions at the Institute during your time?

SMYTH: What I tried, as anybody would try to do, is to

create a situation in which there was harmony and goodwill and spirit, you know, spirit for the place and loyalty to each other. Part of the way the faculty meetings were managed, as I tried to explain, was that we avoided confrontations. We didn't always. At first, Karl Lehmann came to the faculty meetings with a machine gun right in front of him ready to shoot at just one person, [laughter] and he would pick it up and let it go, and it wasn't a happy moment. But he was shooting it at the Germans, not the Americans.

REESE: Is it fair to ask--? [laughter]

SMYTH: Martin Weinberger.

REESE: Who was a museum person from Yale?

SMYTH: He was a museum person from Munich. Immensely knowledgeable. I think a lot of the relationships that the Europeans had with each other, even as to the way they thought about each other from a scholarly point of view, had something to do with position in society, too--that is, the social level they cause from in pre-Hitler Germany.

Panofsky pointed that out to me once. There may have been something of that in this. Walter Friedlaender, who was naughty about everybody--no one escaped--said, "Yes,

Weinberger: he knows everything, but no more." [laughter]

He was a quite wonderful man, Weinberger, actually, and a very sweet and nice man.

REESE: What about attitudes towards the teaching of modern art at the Institute among the faculty?

SMYTH: They trusted Robert Goldwater absolutely, and should, and so we had modern art. It wasn't contemporary art, but it was up to that and touched on that. His wife, Louise Bourgeois, his close friend Mark Rothko, his writing on Franz Kline--all this meant that his teaching must have reflected concern with contemporary art. Robert was an extraordinary man, a very gentle, quiet, but very strong man, and wonderfully articulate. Have you read much of him? He wrote a book on symbolism just before he died which Penguin [Publishers] brought out. It's a wonderful book [Symbolism]. So he was absolutely trusted.

REESE: I heard him lecture--and Walter Friedlaender--at the Institute in '65, I think. My first year in graduate school, I would come down and attend lectures.

SMYTH: You did?

REESE: Sneak in, I'm sure. [laughter]

SMYTH: Well, you know, then, what he was like. He was great. I asked him to be deputy director, and he did it really extremely well. I was on leave the year of the Kent [State University] crisis, and Robert Goldwater took the Institute through that in just the best possible way. I couldn't have done nearly as well. He was great.

REESE: What about the French? I mean, clearly Focillon and

[Marcel] Aubert visited and gave lectures, and then Sterling--

SMYTH: And we had [Charles] Picard, also. One of the first things I discovered was that no member of the faculty had ever had a research leave from the Institute or a sabbatical. *[Offner was different. He taught only one semester and always had the other semester and summer to live in Italy.] I did two things, three things: One, I thought everybody was teaching too much. Three courses a term? Terrible. So, again--honeymoon--I was able to get the university to agree that we wouldn't do that, that we would teach two courses a semester, and that we would have leaves that would be sabbaticals. Then, in the end, an arrangement that got everybody off a term every six terms in addition to sabbaticals so that people would have a chance-- Because these people came from Europe with a scholarly capital that was being spent and no way to do something to recapitalize. So the first person to have a leave was Karl Lehmann, and he wanted Picard as his substitute. Picard came, and that was splendid. So the French element got back in through that.

REESE: I mean, both Jim [James S.] Ackerman and John

* Smyth added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.

Coolidge report the enormous disdain of the Institute faculty for Focillon and the French method. I shouldn't say the French method, but Focillon's method.

SMYTH: I never got any of that. I never got any at all.

REESE: That it was poetic in some way but lacked substance.

SMYTH: No, I never heard that. At least I don't remember, I may have heard it. Since I admired him rather, probably I pushed that aside. [laughter]

REESE: One of the things I'd like to hear you say something about is the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton and whether or not there were connections really between the two institutes.

SMYTH: Not really. It was by virtue of Panofsky being in both. I don't think anybody else from there-- Well, maybe Herzfeld when he first came. Herzfeld didn't teach at the Institute of Fine Arts when I was there, but he had been at our institute. I can't think of anybody else from there who was. *[Yes, in my time, we had from the Institute for Advanced Study to teach one term, as I remember, Paul Frankl. I would have liked to ask Charles de Tolnay, but some of the faculty would have been troubled.]

REESE: What was the relationship between the Institute for

* Smyth added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.

Advanced Study and Princeton itself?

SMYTH: That's hard for me to say, too. As long as Mr. Morey and Mr. [Abraham] Flexner were the chief people, it must have been very close. Mr. Morey, as I said, seems to have suggested to Flexner all the people added to the institute in our field, art and archaeology, as a kind of extension of, or at least a supplement to, the strength of his own department. I think he thought of that. He brought [Kurt] Weitzmann, who was a member primarily of the Institute for Advanced Study, right into McCormick Hall, and that was where his office was. Morey gave Pan an office, too. After Morey left, I'm told there was an effort to squeeze Pan out, but not while Mr. Morey was there. At least I've never heard there was.

Hanns Swarzenski came to the Institute, and his home was McCormick Hall. That was one of the best things about the whole of graduate studies, the fact that Hanns was there. And when I was having trouble deciding whether I was going to go on with art history, it was Hanns who tipped the scale. Absolutely. Taking me to look at things. Getting me to look very closely. It was wonderful. And de Tolnay, too, you see. He came and worked in McCormick Hall. All these people were in and out of our lives. That was good.

REESE: Do you know the history of how art history got a foothold in the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton?

SMYTH: Only because of Mr. Morey. It was solely he. Flexner came to Morey, who was a respected humanist and a classicist, as well, as an art historian, and asked him what he should do. He wanted to have a school of humanities. "Well," said Mr. Morey, "the center of humanities is the history of art. So what you should do is to bring in this subject, to which they all relate, and make that your strength." He proposed Benjamin Merritt for a classical archaeologist. He was an epigrapher. Hetty Goldman, who dug in-- Where? The Hittites? Something like that. Herzfeld, who was an archaeologist/art historian of the Near East. Pan for European art history. And that man [Elias A.] Lowe for paleography. That was it. Five people. Now they have changed themselves and called it the School of Historical Studies later, but that's how it began--Near Eastern, Mediterranean, and Western archaeology and art history--and I think it was solely due to Charles Rufus Morey. Pan wrote about Charles Rufus Morey. Have you ever read that?

REESE: No, I haven't. Well, in "Three Decades" there is a piece--

SMYTH: Yes, there is. But look at his [Morey's] obituary that he [Panofsky] wrote for the American Philosophical Society. It's in their papers. It's one of the most beautiful things. It's about Mr. Morey both as art

historian and as art historical statesman, and it really is just great.

REESE: There's one other institution that I haven't mentioned at all, and that is Columbia University in New York. What kind of relationships were there?

SMYTH: Well, I don't know what it was before I came. It might have just continued what there was. But, in any case, obviously there were courses going on at Columbia with Millard Meiss and Rens Lee and [Meyer] Schapiro that you wanted people to hear, and [William Bell] Dinsmoor. So we had the policy of just taking any course credit that students got there and putting it into their record at New York University. The university had a cutoff point. You could only use X number of points from another place for the M.A. degree and then more for the Ph.D., so that we had to abide by that cutoff point, but that's all. And Columbia people came down to us.

REESE: On the same basis?

SMYTH: On the same basis, I think. So it was good from that point of view. There was no sense, I think, of rivalry at all. But it wasn't a department that was cooking much in those years. Wonderful people, but not being starred. And, you know, Millard Meiss was an assistant/associate professor for years and years. Then we asked him to come to the Institute, and he said yes. And then John [Coolidge] asked

him to go to Harvard, and he went to Harvard. That was too bad.

REESE: To me the amazing thing is the autonomy with which the Institute seemed to be able to operate in these years.

SMYTH: Well, you could. You could. There's a case in point when-- In 1955 or '56--'56, I think--Rens Lee had become chairman of the department at Princeton. The first thing he did was to invite Richard Krautheimer to come to Princeton as the Howard Crosby Butler professor. So that wouldn't do. So I went to the president of the university, Mr. [Henry T.] Heald, who came in my time and then shortly became head of the Ford Foundation, and told him what the situation was and that I thought we could keep Richard Krautheimer if we could extend his retirement age beyond sixty-five, say to sixty-eight. I must have talked to Richard about that; I must have gotten it from him, I don't know. In any case, Mr. Heald said, "Sure. That's what we'll do." Then Richard needed also to get his corpus of early Christian basilicas going, and Phyllis Lambert agreed to finance that, so then we had that.

Well, some years later I got a call from the acting dean, and he said, "The chancellor wants to see you. Will you please come right down?" Well, the chancellor--a post now under the president--was a new man named George Stoddard, who had been the president of the University of

Illinois and had come to New York University as head of the school of education. "Peter" [Horst Woldemar] Janson had worked for him once and knew him as awful and told me he was awful. So I knew it wasn't going to be a great meeting, whatever this was. As we walked over from the office of the dean--a new acting dean of the graduate school--to the chancellor's office, he said, "You're going to have trouble. This man has found out that Richard Krautheimer has been told he can retire at sixty-eight, and he's going to go after you." So I came into this room, and he did go after me. I thought the only way to deal with him is to be just as tough with him as he is with me. So I slammed him back just as hard as I could punch. [laughter] I told him President Heald had done it and he would have to turn to him. He never said a word. That was the end of it. Well, you could do that, because from the Institute you could go to the top, you see, and get a decision that was not the regular thing in the university, if the president thought he wanted to do it. Walter had done that all along. I think that was a good old tradition.

REESE: It's amazing at Yale, as well, where you have Charles Seymour [Jr.]'s father as president and Focillon. That access to power for early art history must have been very important.

TAPE NUMBER: IV, SIDE ONE

OCTOBER 23, 1991

RIKALA: I think we'll continue on from yesterday's discussion about the Institute [of Fine Arts] and NYU [New York University]. I'll recount a few of the things that you mentioned yesterday that were very interesting points to me, and perhaps we can expand on them. One of the things that you described was the autonomy of the Institute and the way Walter Cook really founded it and shaped it and made it that way in relationship to the university. Could you perhaps elaborate just a little bit more on how he might have gone about doing that? Was it because he was able to get funds outside? Or was it a particular relationship or a deal that he could strike with the university? How would one really effectively do that? Because that's--

SMYTH: Well, I never saw him doing it.

RIKALA: Right. Yes, you inherited it.

SMYTH: I saw him in action that first year that I was there. Let me see. He had enemies, not personal enemies, but enemies who didn't really want to see the Institute develop, I'm sure, from all I heard him say about it. But he also had on his side influential people. That's one reason you have an advisory committee or whatever you call it, a visiting committee or a board of trustees or whatever. If they are influential, powerful people, when you talk,

without mentioning it, you have them behind you. I'm sure he used that.

The leadership of New York University then I don't really know much about. The head person was not called president in his time, he was called chancellor, and Chancellor [Harry W.] Chase was the chancellor. He left as I came in, and his place was taken by Mr. [Henry T.] Heald, who called himself president, and the name chancellor was then used for what we would now be apt to call provost under the president and had been provost under the chancellor. Mr. Heald gave me, I think, a much easier road than Walter Cook had. He went right through the university on arrival and decided that the Institute of Fine Arts was one of the stars in the crown of the university, and any nonsense about it should be avoided. So that changed the ball game. There were people under him--as I mentioned yesterday, that later chancellor whom I dealt with--who were still not of his mind, but he himself had decided. This made a great deal of difference. I think that Walter Cook had a rougher time with the university probably than I did. In any case, he did have strong backers: Percy Strauss and Robert Lehman. That's pretty good.

RIKALA: Could you sketch Robert Lehman's personality a bit for us?

SMYTH: He was normally very quiet and gentle. I've used

that word several times about people, but he was not aggressive in normal dealings until he wanted to be, and then he was a fireball. I got to know him pretty well, and once we spent a period of time in Rome at the same time. I went with him about Rome and did things with him. We saw him socially some. We went and spent the weekend once with him and his new wife [Lee Lynn Lehman] out on Long Island. His new wife was a shock to all his friends and followers. She seemed not to be the right sort of person for an important businessman to have as a wife. [laughter] But we found some rather nice things about her in spite of the fact that the main line about her was probably true.

I saw him normally at meetings of the advisory committee, at talks at his house before we had a meeting, to talk over the agenda and see what we would really be doing at the meeting, and those were good discussions about the Institute. His office was in Lehman Brothers downtown on Williams Street, and I went there as much as to his apartment to talk, Lauder Greenway often going with me. He very much admired Lauder Greenway, and that made the relationship also easy. He was never difficult with me and was very discerning about what we were doing and why we were doing it.

He was a great friend of James Rorimer's, and when James Rorimer came to be director of the Metropolitan Museum

[of Art] in 1955 or '56, they talked on the phone every morning. So he had a great deal of input into the Metropolitan via those talks with James, and he was, of course, a trustee. But as the preeminent collector amongst all those people, he should properly have been recognized with the presidency or the chairmanship of the board of trustees. He was so discerning that it would have been good. He was capable of raising money because he gave so much in the world, so the reciprocal relationship that he had with people I'm sure would have made it good. Instead, the board of trustees at the Met was presided over by a man by the name of Roland Redman, who was, as far as I know, not a collector and whom we thought at the time didn't really understand very much about what he was doing, and we still mostly think that's so.

You would not have thought of Robert Lehman as a great financial figure in the normal course of events. You would if you suddenly saw him--and I did, in his office on occasion--say what he was going to do. He made his decision, and--bang!--that was finally it, you know. But he had a very tiny office. His office can't have been larger than this room, maybe slightly smaller, with a very small desk. Nothing on it. A few pictures, a few photographs, a few paintings. People came and went from this office to talk with him. And he quite obviously ran Lehman Brothers;

there wasn't anybody else running it. He ran it from this very tiny spot.

He didn't live in the house on Fifty-fourth Street. He tried to keep it as it had looked when his father and mother lived there. Instead, he lived in an apartment on Park Avenue which was not showy at all, a fairly large living room and dining room and a few bedrooms. *[He had been divorced and was single when I first knew him.] The house on Fifty-fourth Street always seemed cramped. If you look at it, it's a narrow house. We always thought he ought to buy the house next door, because he had one of the most wonderful drawing collections anybody ever made. These things were all stacked up in the closets, you know. [laughter] It looked like anybody's closet with clothes and yet drawings all over. You kept thinking he ought to get the house next door. Well, he began to think about that, and I think that Nelson [A.] Rockefeller owned the house next door. He didn't like the whole idea of that primitive museum [Museum of Primitive Art] being there. I don't know whether it helps to picture it.

At a certain point, he decided that he wanted to give his whole collection to the Institute of Fine Arts and leave it in the house, and then, by all means, try to get the

* Smyth added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.

house next door so that there would be space for it all. He pictured the Institute using it as a study collection, but it was a good deal of distance from the Institute. After all, that was Seventy-eighth Street to Fifty-fourth Street. He envisaged the New York University as the custodians, and specifically the Institute. It would have stayed that way. I wasn't really terribly for it, because I thought it would be a big responsibility for the Institute and that the distance would mean you couldn't use it as your next-door college museum. I thought it would be wonderful if he could have bought the Whitney house, which is right next to the Institute on Fifth Avenue, but the French had it, and they weren't about to sell it. So it was left as I speak of it. Then Tom [Thomas] Hoving became the director on the death of James Rorimer, and the first thing he did was what anybody should have done: he made Robert Lehman the chairman of the board of trustees, and that changed it. Then he decided to give his collection to the museum.

RIKALA: You mentioned yesterday that you had made Mr. Lehman part of the Institute.

SMYTH: No, that was Walter Cook. He was already there before I came, and, as I said, he had had some contretemps with Walter Cook in the late forties. Whom else that involved, I don't know. But, in any case, he had. They

were on speaking terms, but it wasn't all that good. So he, surely, was welcoming the idea of a change in the directorship. But how much he had to do with Walter's having decided to stop then, I don't know. Certainly I got nothing of that from Walter Cook, and I only saw that later. But he was certainly in on at least the approval of the choice.

He interviewed me at a certain point after I joined the faculty but before this all happened. I forgot to say yesterday that when Walter Cook asked me to be acting head for him, I said I couldn't do it unless I knew that the faculty approved, you know. "Oh," he said, "they think that's fine." Well, I couldn't know how he found out, [laughter] so I went to everybody to find out whether they had been in on this and whether they were for it.

RIKALA: You mentioned that you came with a lot of skills, administrative skills, from your experiences with the MFA and A [Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Section], and we can talk about that distinctly. But you certainly must have been surprised, although maybe not unaware, but surprised that here you'd been at the Institute for a couple of years, and you were being asked to--

SMYTH: I hadn't been there more than four months.

RIKALA: Four months, okay.

SMYTH: I was totally surprised.

RIKALA: And receiving the directorship.

SMYTH: But the only thing I did have-- I suppose it was somewhere in the back of my mind, but it hadn't loomed in any way when I was thinking about whether to go to the Institute or not. But when he brought the subject up, I would have remembered his discussion with me about the fact that he was going to retire, the discussion which had happened, you know, before we went off to the Fulbright [fellowship] year in Italy. So I suppose that I would have hitched it in some way to that. I don't remember that, but-- No. It was amazing, amazing, because I was really very seriously wanting to go across the street to the museum. I didn't think I could go on and be-- With no research leaves, and having been four years out of the history of art, really, during the war, and only four years since then to get back in it again, I didn't see how I could possibly teach well year after year and have enough to bring to it, you know. Whereas the notion of going to the Metropolitan-- They had a drawing collection. It was Hyatt Mayer who got this idea, I think. He was the first person to speak to me about it. He introduced me to Francis Taylor, whom I'd never met, at dinner, and then it evolved from there. And it sounded like something I would really like to do. In fact, they got Jacob Beene after that, and that was wonderful. He couldn't be better.

RIKALA: You mentioned drawings on several occasions. You had a specific interest in--

SMYTH: I got interested in them when I was at the National Gallery [of Art].

RIKALA: Works on paper and old master drawings?

SMYTH: Well, I got started in it by looking at mannerism, you see. I suppose I looked a good deal but never thought of myself as being in the drawing business, and I hadn't thought of it when Hyatt Mayer brought it up.

RIKALA: It's interesting how these little pockets of interest come and bring you things. I wanted to ask about a couple of other people you've mentioned who were supportive at NYU. In addition to Mr. Lehman, you've mentioned Percy Strauss several times.

SMYTH: He had died before I came, so I never knew him.

RIKALA: So you never knew him.

SMYTH: The Strausses had not continued to support the Institute, nor had they continued to support the publication of Richard Offner's Corpus [of Florentine Painting], which Mr. and Mrs. Strauss had started to do. So I did get to know one son of Percy Strauss [Ralph Strauss], whom I went to about this, and a sister of Percy Strauss [Mrs. Hess]. They came back, as a result. It took some time, but they did come back and help. Percy Strauss had been going to leave, everyone thought, a substantial amount of money to

the Institute in his will. When he died, he didn't somehow. Something went wrong. I knew a good deal about it then. I think there was an understanding that he'd had with the family that they would do it, but they hadn't. So this was difficult. Bobby Lehman always helped in anything like that, you know. He was supportive. He would telephone somebody if we thought that that would help, you know. I think he must have-- I don't remember specifically, but I think he must have been in the background to some extent when I made my first contact with the Strausses to try to repair all this.

RIKALA: You've also mentioned a Mrs. Murray Crane.

SMYTH: I never knew her either. She was a society lady, I gather, who had salons in a nice French way in New York and lectures in her apartment, and I think that Walter Cook had a very good relationship with her. He was an awfully jovial, nice man to have about, you know, and functioned in that level of society, I think, with ease. So she was one of the rallying points, I think, that he had for bringing people into the Institute.

RIKALA: You also mentioned Helen [C.] Frick yesterday.

SMYTH: She, I think, was certainly a friend of the Institute. Whether she gave money to it I don't remember. She didn't in my time. But she might have earlier. She certainly opened the doors of her library early on, willingly, to the professors at the Institute. They taught

sometimes in her library, a course in the back room there. She very much admired Richard Offner and went to his lectures for quite a number of years. On the backs of her photographs there were sometimes quotes from Richard Offner's lectures. By the time I got to the Frick Collection, I think she wasn't very much in touch with the Institute, and I certainly never tried to bring her back into the picture. I knew her because, as a member of the staff of the Frick Collection, I was introduced to her. Everybody who has ever worked at the Frick Collection had access to her library, though she was no longer speaking to the trustees at the Frick Collection very much. They weren't on the best of terms by then.

Somehow she became a sort of distant friend of mine and told me I had twenty-four-hour privileges for the Frick Art Reference Library. That was one of the best things that ever happened, because after the day was over I could go there and work, and I continued to have this twenty-four-hour privilege all the time I was at the Institute.

RIKALA: That's very nice.

SMYTH: That was wonderful.

RIKALA: Yes, special library privileges always help scholars.

SMYTH: I haven't done very well about Robert Lehman. You ask Barbara [Linfirth Smyth] about him. They were on very

good terms, I think, and she could help.

Then, when Charlie [Charles] Wrightsman came into the picture, if you want to know about that, I can tell you something. He [Robert Lehman] didn't like that very much. They had had some sort of business relationship which I don't think he enjoyed. Charlie was dictatorial, and Robert Lehman didn't really like that very much. He wasn't happy with it. He was torn because he knew that Charlie Wrightsman could be helpful, but it wasn't a happy moment.

I told you Bobby Lehman gave money each year for-- He would say, "Well, we're getting close to the end of the year. How far in the hole are you?" We'd usually make it up. Then one day we were having some sort of reception, and he was there and Harry Bober was talking to him. Harry was a total enthusiast for what he was thinking and thought was needed at the Institute, and he put it to Mr. Lehman that there should be a fellowship, a Lehman fellowship. And boy, he did it. I think he gave a million dollars for that. It was just a short discussion with Harry at Harry's top form, I'm sure. I didn't hear it. So that was good.

RIKALA: What I'm curious about is New York has a tradition of patronage in the arts, so I'm curious about the patronage, then, if you could use the word--that may not be the right word--of the Institute, and that's why I'm asking about all these people. Because then, as you become

director, you too then become part of this liaison or part of helping that tradition and that patronage continue for the sake of the Institute. That's what I'm a bit curious about, because, again, it's obviously such a rarified situation, because you're supporting scholars on the one hand who had no other place to go, and then developing a relationship with the community. I'm interested, almost in the simplest way, in how was the Institute seen and who wanted to participate. Because there's this magnetism that seems to have worked in two ways there at the Institute, and that's what I'm trying to get at.

SMYTH: Well, the advisory committee-- If we had a list, it would be good if you had one of those.

RIKALA: I don't. Oh, no. I don't think so. Tom [Thomas Reese] has those. I'm sorry.

SMYTH: The advisory committee wasn't very large when I got there, and it had people who were there, really, partly because of their names. There was a Mrs. [Benjamin] Moore-- I ought to be able to remember her whole name--who was a person well-known in New York and Long Island society. Quiet, not a flashy person, but-- A lovely place on Long Island. She was on the committee, and she came from time to time, but she wasn't a donor of more than very little. But she was there because it graced the institution that she'd be there. And it does more than that. As I said, I think, when we were

first talking about it, I learned very quickly that if you were trying to make money for your institution, you needed to have such people. Maybe I haven't said this yet.

There ought to be people that other people would like to sit around a table with. That's part of the whole view that I think you have to have. Why are these people helping? What is it that we're doing for them and can do for them that brought them in the first place and will keep them? It's not an entirely selfish thing. If you're considerate, you would like to do that anyway, you know. So people surely wanted to sit at the same table as Mrs. Moore. In adding to the committee, I always, always thought of that, and in setting up a new one, as I did at [Villa] i Tatti, I always thought about who would like to be at the same table, what relationships will they have, what will be interesting for them about it, you know. So there was that kind of person.

Ronnie [Ronald] Tree was a member of the committee when I got there. Now, who brought him on, I don't know-- maybe Lauder Greenway, who knew him well. That's because I don't think Walter Cook would have met him in the normal course of events. He was in a British circle in New York and had a big house on East Seventy-ninth Street, where he and his wife Marietta Peabody Tree entertained many of the famous. He became a good friend, and we often went off to

have lunch together and never talked Institute at all but just had a nice time. But the fact that he was there also made it more attractive to others.

So when adding people to the committee-- And I can't now remember, you know, who came next. Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss [Mildred Barnes Bliss], the Washington Bliss, who owned Dumbarton Oaks, was a member of the committee when I arrived. She came to a meeting only once in my time. But she showed an interest, you know, a word with her on the phone or whatever about something we were thinking about. I'd like her to have been there more. She never wanted to get off the committee, but she only came once.

Mrs. [Andrea] Cowden was another person who certainly did nothing financially, I think, at all for the Institute, but she knew very many people, and it was a joy to have her present. She was a great friend, again, of Lauder Greenway's.

So that's the way it functioned. I always thought that professional money-raisers should never have any part of any such thing at all. I came eventually to have a definition of a money-raiser as a person who doesn't raise money, but who instead does have a lot of data about people, about the money that they have and might be willing to part with. It's very sort of quantitative and not qualitative judgments. But I think that in the normal course of events

it has to be a person who is in the institution--preferably the head, but not always at all--who is deeply convinced of it, like Harry Bober: a person who speaks from the heart when he speaks because he really cares about it.

So that kind of relationship is what you hope for so that you can talk to people when it's partly social and partly business--and not entirely comfortable, because if you finally become a very good friend of somebody, then you don't want to push them. It becomes one of the nice things about not being at I Tatti that some of the people who are on the committee there I can now see without having any ulterior purposes, [laughter] people my wife and I have come to know well and are very fond of.

RIKALA: You can have a free conscience. [laughter]

Also to follow up from yesterday, that we didn't get a chance to talk much about with Tom, is about some of the faculty, the permanent faculty at NYU. We didn't really get a chance to just do some personality sketches, and I hope we could do that a little bit today. There's the original group. You said there was Richard Offner and Walter Cook. There was that twenties group, and then the expansion in the thirties, and then, when you come on in the fifties, it changes.

SMYTH: Fiske Kimball founded the department and then left, I think, after two or three years to be the director of the

Philadelphia Museum of Art. He brought Richard Offner and [Rudolf M.] Riefstahl. Kimball and Offner were both Harvard [University], and they probably knew each other there. By the early twenties, Richard had become a figure to conjure with--particularly fourteenth-century studies in Italy--and he stayed, obviously. He'd never wanted to be an administrator, but in the late twenties he did take the post when there wasn't anybody else to do it. Fiske Kimball added people: [Philip] McMahon, whom you saw, whom I never knew, whose name you saw yesterday.

RIKALA: I don't know anything about him, though.

SMYTH: He is known chiefly now for his book about Leonardo [da Vinci] [translation and annotation of da Vinci's Treatise on Painting]. At the time, I think he taught widely in Renaissance and late medieval things, but one can see that from the schedules of courses. And some about theory--not perhaps philosophy of art, but getting there. He was not, I think, an enthusiastic party to the move uptown, and he always kept his roots at [the main New York University campus at] Washington Square in the undergraduate teaching. Always taught uptown but wasn't part of that nucleus up there, which no longer had anything to do with undergraduate teaching. So there must have been some tension. But he had died, I think, before I came, so I really don't know about that.

Then there was the man who for many, many years was at

the University of Chicago and the editor for longer than anyone else of Art Bulletin, whose name I'm not now saying [John Shapley], whom I didn't know at all but met many years later. He headed the department for about three years during the period when it was growing a little bit as an undergraduate department and thinking about having a graduate section uptown, close to the Metropolitan Museum. Then he left for Chicago. I think it was after he left that Richard Offner was in charge of the uptown graduate section as it began. Walter Cook had been there, too. Again, Harvard. Spanish interest was brought in in Shapley's time. I think from the beginning they tried to get people who were specialists in fields that complemented each other. Cook had left, I think, for study abroad in the late twenties on a long sort of-- Whether it was really considered a leave I don't know, but he was in Spain most of that time. It was the decision to call him back to head the department--whose decision it was I don't know--that started the whole new development toward making the uptown department an institute. But the spirit of the place I should have thought was in existence by the late twenties. Millard Meiss went there to study, I suspect, in 1929, '28, '29. Somebody who's still alive was studying there at the same time-- I'm not very good about names this morning.

RIKALA: They come and go.

SMYTH: Oh, dear. I'll get it later. [Helen M. Franc]
She's still alive and very able to describe what it was like
in Richard Offner's time. I've used a lot of her things in
my piece that I've done about the Institute [The Early Years
of Art History in the United States (1993)], and I might get
that from upstairs. You might like to look at that.

RIKALA: Yes, I would like to look at that.

SMYTH: Robert Goldwater arrived about that time. I think
there had only been one Ph.D. before that. *[I now learn
that the first Ph.D. was given in 1933, to Bernard Myers,
who has just died (in 1993). It seems that Meiss was the
next to take a Ph.D., in the same year, and that Goldwater's
was a year or so later.] By the time I got there many years
later, 1950, I think there had only been fourteen Ph.D.'s,
and that was another thing that I thought we ought to try to
change and did. We changed the requirements. It was the
exams that were-- The way they were spaced and what was
expected. They had become separate hurdles that people took
too long to jump, or simply stopped. They took too long to
jump, so we worked on that.

But, in any case, back then, with Offner bringing in
[Arthur E. G.] Haseloff and [Erwin] Panofsky, and Panofsky

* Smyth added the following bracketed section during his
review of the transcript.

describing the spirit of the place-- That is really the spirit that still was in existence when I arrived and one tried to keep from then on. I think Pan [Erwin Panofsky] gets it very well, the adjournments to a speakeasy to go on with a seminar, all that. That was in the spirit of it very much.

Richard Offner's seminars in those days were held in his own apartment, and they would go on all day. Sometimes they would adjourn to Philadelphia or New Haven to look at pictures, you know. I went to that apartment in 1937 as an undergraduate, because when I was working with Mr. [Charles Rufus] Morey, he thought that Offner would have photographs that I would need for the "Virgil [illustration] in the Renaissance," and so I did, and I saw the place. I know what it looked like and what he was like then.

RIKALA: Then the group from the thirties began with [Walter] Friedlaender? Or Panofsky?

SMYTH: Well, Panofsky was the first then to stay, and what the order of events after that was, I don't know. I suspect that Friedlaender was the next, because he had been associated with Panofsky. Panofsky had studied with Friedlaender--they were always slightly rivals, but he had studied with Friedlaender in Freiburg--so I suspect that he had a lot to do with the choice of finding Friedlaender and getting him. Karl Lehmann would have been very soon.

Martin Weinberger very soon, I think. I'm not sure when Alfred Salmony joined, and what he was attached to at the time he left Europe I'm not sure either. I think Karl Lehmann had gone to Rome to be out of Germany. I think he was available there.

Then there were Richard Ettinghausen, who came briefly to the Institute in the thirties, and Julius Held. Held arrived by 1935, I think, and taught in the new graduate section several years before he went to Columbia [University], to Barnard [College]. [Ernst] Herzfeld: whether Cook had anything to do with bringing him into this country I don't know. And Schoenberger, Guido Schoenberger, arrived a little later, and there was no longer a place to put him as a full-time faculty member, but instead part-time. And there was no longer a place to put Richard Krautheimer full-time. When he arrived at Vassar [College] in 1937, Walter didn't have a full-time post for him. He commuted and taught one term, I think, each year and came down for one day a week during that term.

RIKALA: I know you don't know firsthand, but was there any sort of discomfort that these people were Jewish, most of them fleeing? I know that Cook obviously was doing all he could to bring them in; we've heard those stories. But on the part of the university at large or this idea that, again, being a place in society, any sort of--?

SMYTH: I never got a clue to anything like that. Not anything at all. But I'm not myself very much-- You know, I don't think that way, so I probably wasn't looking for it. I suppose you could say that the faculty was mostly Jewish. And Richard Offner was, no? You'd have to say that New York University as a city university certainly had its Jewish contingent. But, you know, I don't think we thought about that at all. Percy Strauss and Robert Lehman knew, but-- I never saw amongst them, in the relationships that we had in the advisory committee, any feeling like that show. It may have been there, but I didn't see it.

RIKALA: Because I'm curious, and, you know, it may not be anything. There may be nothing, no insight in this, but I'm curious as to how these people who were coming from Europe were also very much a part of art history. Why this group of--? There's no even correct way of asking the question. But how is it that these intellectuals were interested in art history, too, per se? Because if you look at other disciplines growing at this time, there isn't that sort of cultural magnet the way you see it in art history. Maybe I am just being naive.

SMYTH: Magnet for whom in this case?

RIKALA: Well, coming from Germany, there were so many of these people who were Jewish who were interested in a cultural history and an intellectual history through the

arts.

SMYTH: Well, you saw the ones that had to leave. There was a contingent that stayed behind that didn't have to leave.

RIKALA: That's true. Politically, they were--

SMYTH: The history of art in the modern sense began in Germany with [Karl Friedrich von] Ruhmor, you know. There are earlier figures, but he's the first, so to say, art historian that you would recognize as beginning to think like a modern art historian. Then followed by [Franz] Kugler and [Jakob] Burckhardt, and they proliferated so that in Germany by then there were people like [Heinrich] Wölfflin or [Wilhelm] Pinder. Pinder was a great figure, obviously not Jewish, and had a Nazi leaning, or at least he allowed himself to go along with it. And [Hans] Sedlmayr and-- You know, you could go on and on. There were lots of very major, major figures there.

RIKALA: So it's just that the discipline was already very, very strong--

SMYTH: It was very strong in Germany.

RIKALA: And just that we get part and parcel of it here in the United States.

SMYTH: The United States was looking at German scholarship, had to, you know, all the time, and was learning from it.

RIKALA: Exactly. There was a certain appeal to the Americans of this German tradition. I mean, they were

interested in the French, but there's certainly the appeal of the German academic tradition.

SMYTH: That's right. But I think that Walter Cook would have said he was as interested in [Henri] Focillon, you know, and [Marcel] Aubert. Aubert came and taught at the Institute, too, I remember, and gave a course there.

RIKALA: Now, Aubert went back to France after the war, didn't he?

SMYTH: He went back to France. Well, he was there during the war. The Germans were not oblivious to American scholarship. By then they certainly were aware of Richard Offner, and they were certainly aware of Charles Rufus Morey. Morey published in 1924-- Is that right? I think so, 1924. An article called "The Sources of Medieval Style." And Hanns Swarzenski described to me the impact that that had on him and his generation of young German scholars when that hit them. He said it stopped them short in their tracks, and they had to rethink what they were studying, what they were doing, and how they would do it in the future.

RIKALA: Oh, that's very interesting.

SMYTH: And that's long before these people arrived. It was open. Figures like Offner and Morey and a few others I think you could find at Harvard had more than begun to be important to Europeans.

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SMYTH: In that same year, 1924, Charles Rufus Morey published another work, totally different, an archaeological work about a sarcophagus that had been found at Sardis [The Sarcophagus of Claudia Antonia Sabina and the Asiatic Sarcophagi]. That led him to study that whole class of sarcophagi, and in relation to other sarcophagi, within the big problem that had emerged in the late nineteenth century, early twentieth century about where sarcophagi were made, and having to do with the whole notion of how much the East and whatever elements there were from the East that were special to the East had affected the development of ancient art in the Mediterranean as a whole in preparation for the coming of medieval art. Mr. Morey was caught up in that, and his article-- And a great figure in that discussion was [Josef] Strzygowski, who was Vienna. When this book, I guess it was, came out in 1924, Strzygowski reviewed it in total admiration. The two sides of Mr. Morey, which I've tried to say in the piece I wrote about him-- "The Sources of Medieval Style" is a critical thing. It's making a critical synthesis of a development, which is what [Heinrich] Wölfflin was doing in his way. Mr. Morey wasn't uninfluenced by that either. But that was a critical effort, whereas the other was an art historical,

archaeological, factual effort, but always then with a critical overtone in his final estimates. And these were of international standing, important.

RIKALA: Perhaps we can go on to talk a bit about the people at the Institute who were there, then, in the years that you were most active.

SMYTH: Well, Richard Offner I came to know quite well. He had been sort of a-- What do I want to say? When I was at the Frick Collection, I went to see him about a problem I was studying. He looked at it very carefully. And I then knew Millard Meiss, his student, very well, so maybe I was introduced through Millard Meiss. I can remember his looking at the problem carefully. He looked up and he said, "You work on it long enough and you're going to get it." But it was an optimistic view, you know. It wasn't "You can't do this." Which was very nice, I thought. When we were abroad in '49-'50 on the Fulbright, we were in Florence most of that year living--that was our base--and he was there, and so I got to know him some there, talked to him a lot. Then later, after I came to the Institute--because I took over his publication the Corpus of Florentine Painting, projected in many volumes-- He wasn't financing it, and he wasn't getting it out, so I finally decided to become the producer of this thing--as publisher, so to say, and responsible for the finances--and then we got to know each other really quite well and talked a lot on many themes.

That was really wonderful. He was very tough on students, I always heard, but I never saw this, maybe because I wasn't a student. What I saw was a very discerning and very sensitive, thoughtful, and considerate person, also about students, when talking about a student. He may have been very tough to the student himself, but he was there to defend him, which was really nice, I think. I've written a paper about him, and it hasn't been published. It was to have been in a little group of papers that were to be published in Florence, but they never got published. So if you're interested in that I'll-- *[It is now being published in a book of Offner's essays edited by Andrew Ladis].

RIKALA: Yes, yes, I'll make a note here about that.

SMYTH: And it does say something about his personality.

RIKALA: The other people--

SMYTH: Karl Lehmann would be the sort of other great power in the Institute. Full-time member of the faculty. By the time I got there, he'd already begun his excavations at Samothrace. He was keenly interested in doing that. An absolutely driving force as a teacher and intolerant, to be sure, of things he thought were not up to snuff--students that he didn't think were good enough. I did save a few

* Smyth added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.

students that were coming under the hatchet who are now doing very well in the profession. [laughter] But mostly it was a very positive and wonderful experience to know him. He had marvelously good judgment except, I think, when his own interests were too much involved. But about things that were not very close to his own concerns, he could see with great clarity and with a sense of all the context, so that, in talking with faculty members before we ever took up a problem, he was one of the people I talked to the most, because it was always worthwhile to know what he thought-- just politically so that we wouldn't have confrontations, but also to-- Because his thinking was so clear and so good. I was pushing very hard to go to the [Doris] Duke house, for example, and Walter Cook had always wanted to do that if it could be done. There were faculty members who didn't think so, although Karl thought so. But right from the start he was very good at saying why and all that. He was a real strength.

I don't think we saw him very much at all socially. Well, I told you. We lived out here in Alpine, in this summer camp, as it were, so they all came out here. But, as a general rule, we weren't all living in a nice college town and seeing each other.

RIKALA: Right. A little different.

SMYTH: Which has its advantages I think, too, because then

you do have more than one life.

So he was a very positive influence there in the Institute and wonderful for keeping the standards high. Walter Cook was so kind to everybody that a poor student got along with him as well as a good student. Karl Lehmann's standards were very high, and he would see that they were held to as much as possible. So whom else?

RIKALA: Well, we could talk a bit about-- You've talked about Friedlaender a bit. We've talked about Panofsky and McMahon. Perhaps [Richard] Krautheimer would be--

SMYTH: Are you going to interview him? [tape recorder off] You'll see questions you'll have right away that would supplement that. That's a very beautiful piece he's written about himself. Very self-referent, of course. When you write about yourself, you have to be self-referent.

RIKALA: Sure. What else is there? [laughter] So he substituted for you while you were away from the Institute?

SMYTH: When I went on my first leave in 1955. I had to go abroad to get ready for the defense of my dissertation.

RIKALA: Which you've been writing all along, working as a full-time director.

SMYTH: Yes.

RIKALA: Were you teaching at that time as well?

SMYTH: Uh-huh.

RIKALA: So how did you fit in Bronzino? [laughter]

SMYTH: I don't know. I did. I think my wife thought it was wild, you know, when we weren't-- I was in New York a lot those twenty-four hours in the Frick Art Reference Library. [laughter] I wrote it, really, sitting there in that library at night.

RIKALA: Oh, my goodness.

SMYTH: And that was really great. I handed in a draft of it, I think, in 1953.

RIKALA: Who were the people who read the dissertation?

SMYTH: E. Baldwin Smith, who knew nothing about Bronzino at all, Jack [John R.] Martin, who had been a fellow graduate student who by then was on the faculty, and I can't remember who else. When I defended it, they were both there. I can't remember about the rest of it. In any case, I then revised it and went abroad to look for a last time at drawings that I-- Because there's a section in it on Bronzino drawings out of which that later book came [Bronzino as Draughtsman: An Introduction with Notes on His Portraiture and Tapestries (1971)]. I had to see those all again. I had never spent time in Rome because of the war, and so I thought I ought to get to know Rome much better than I knew it. So I went and spent six weeks in Rome that summer, and spring, I guess, too, and Richard took over through all that.

RIKALA: Richard Krautheimer.

SMYTH: Uh-huh. So that was the first time. And then he did it again on another occasion in 1959-60. By then, after

that, there was a deputy director, so after '59-'60 he didn't do it again.

RIKALA: Let's talk a bit about the dissertation, since we've come across it. What did you define as the problem that you set yourself to answer, or the project that you set yourself--?

SMYTH: Well, I'd begun with what hadn't been studied, Bronzino's early years. I also had spent a great deal of time while doing that on his drawings and on drawings of Florence altogether in that same period. That was the Fulbright year, and nobody was studying drawings much. There was Philip Pouncey and me at the Uffizi [Gallery] drawing cabinet and a couple of other people and nobody else, you know. The drawings were many times not in passe-partouts; they were just lying in great stacks. It was a very strange time. [Walter] Gernsheim in those years was making his photographic corpus of old master drawings which were-- He was photographing them. And he was there. He wasn't looking at them from a close connoisseur's point of view, but he knew where everything was. So we had a year of looking at drawings, which was wonderful. So that was part of the dissertation. Then taking the development of Bronzino up to the time that he worked with Cosimo [de Medici]. The dissertation didn't go after that. So that's what it was. [tape recorder off]

RIKALA: Okay. Just getting back to the dissertation once more before we leave it: You said that you felt very much both compelled and confident to do the dissertation because you had graduate students, and you, too, felt that it was--

SMYTH: Well, it seemed very strange. I presided, for example, over the defense of James [S.] Ackerman. I thought, you know, this is one after another of these people not having a doctor's degree, and Princeton [University] having changed its view of the M.F.A. from that time, it seemed, you know, something I ought to do. That's when I began to work on it quietly. But I couldn't take any time off for it. Then I got made the secretary of the College Art Association [of America], which was another sudden, heavy thing. I should never have done that. That was silly.

RIKALA: What was the College Art Association about at that point?

SMYTH: Well, it had started earlier. It was just what it is now: the society of art historians and artists. It meets once a year, and it has two publications, and it raises money. Suddenly, when you were in that, you were taking the minutes as the secretary at the directors' meetings, and you were contacting everybody. It's a big operation.

RIKALA: So you'd been tagged as this skilled administrator and fund-raiser, and obviously because institutes and organizations were seeking you to run these positions.

SMYTH: Well, I think it was-- I said yesterday, pure and simple, the collecting point [in Munich]. I'd never had any administrative experience before. Well, I did a little bit at the National Gallery [of Art]; at least I saw it in operation in that six weeks that we were in the country with the collection for a little bit. But I learned about it in the navy, I think. I think the navy taught me possibilities that I hadn't ever thought about in myself.

RIKALA: Well, perhaps we can start with-- Let's go back in time, then. You knew that you would be going off to war soon when you were at the National Gallery.

SMYTH: Yes.

RIKALA: Had you been drafted or enlisted?

SMYTH: No, I hadn't been drafted, because I had been in graduate school, and so they passed me by while I was doing that. Then I got married just as soon as I got out of graduate school, the next thing, and that also put it off. But then, as the war began, I made an application to the navy.

RIKALA: From my readings I've learned--obviously I didn't know very much about this--that the military took art historians very seriously then in their--

SMYTH: They weren't at that moment. They weren't thinking about that, no.

RIKALA: Not in the beginning, but towards the--

SMYTH: No. Not at all. If you were accepted and you had an education like mine, then you were put into an indoctrination school rather than a midshipman's school, because you were further along. Then, when you came out of indoctrination school, you were posted wherever they wanted you. You might be sent to more training for sea duty or just put on a ship right away or sent to some land-based thing, and you hadn't any notion of what you were going to do. I was sent to Newport [Rhode Island], to the naval training station, to help start a new indoctrination school for officers, and that was because I'd obviously been in the academic world. But on arrival there, most of my colleagues were not academics at all; they were naval officers. Tough. And that was good. That was wonderful. And, you know, company.

Then, for some reason, somebody thought that I did that well, I guess, because I was suddenly ordered to New York to the midshipman's school to be a drill officer, which was what I was.

RIKALA: What does a drill officer do? [laughter]

SMYTH: Well, he's in charge of the training of everyone, except in the classroom. Everything about their lives otherwise is under the drill officer. Yes, he goes out and drills, but it's really trying to ease somebody into the navy in a tough way. Yet I always thought I had to be

gentle somewhere underneath. But the idea is to find out who's going to make a decent officer and what sort of duty he probably could do best. So you're constantly being made a judge to decide what you think of your people. That's a responsibility, because you had lives in-- That was a very, you know, weighing thing.

The head drill officer in my unit [Ralph Eberly]-- We've just made contact again after forty-five years. He's a wonderful guy. We've written back and forth but haven't seen each other except once. Now, this summer, we have just seen each other. He's a really marvelous person--not an academic at all--and has kept in touch with all the people he knew in the navy. That's the kind of guy he was. His roommate when we were together at the midshipman's school was Cy [Cyrus] Vance, and he and Cy have kept up very closely, so I get all the latest scoop from him now, whatever he's thinking.

RIKALA: How did his career go?

SMYTH: From there?

RIKALA: Yes.

SMYTH: He went with Elizabeth Arden and was one of her chief figures in Elizabeth Arden [Inc.].

RIKALA: Oh, I see.

SMYTH: He was very fond of her and thought she was wonderful. Then, when the company was taken over by a new

outfit he was very sore and troubled by it and eventually got out. In any case, when we went down to see him this summer, I had a very fine time, because he collected one of the people who'd been in one of my companies to come and give me a bad time. A very funny, marvelous evening. I learned that I was called, in his company at least, "the cobra."

RIKALA: "The cobra." Well, that's quite an image.

[laughter]

SMYTH: But the same company gave me a memento that said they didn't really believe that.

RIKALA: A plaque?

SMYTH: That thing over there on the far side.

RIKALA: This?

SMYTH: Uh-huh. That was this man's company that gave me that.

RIKALA: A plate. How beautiful. A silver plate, yes.

SMYTH: It's nice, isn't it? One learned an awful lot, you know. And I didn't lose that.

RIKALA: I'd better set this down properly. [tape recorder off]

SMYTH: As part of your assignment, you also had to go to sea for a while, and that was another lesson, you know, what you could do. So by the time I got to the collecting point, I'd had a fair amount of experience, which I never would

have as an art historian.

RIKALA: You were with the navy for a fair amount of years.

SMYTH: Four.

RIKALA: Four years. So that is a lot. What do you remember about how that period--? How it felt? What it was like? Perhaps just some experiential memories.

SMYTH: Well, I think you-- I learned about myself. I never would have pictured myself doing any of that, you know. I hadn't a notion of it.

RIKALA: Different challenges?

SMYTH: Totally different. I got interested in this silly business of marching, and I thought if we're going to march, we're going to win, you know. So we did, worked out. I could see what sense it made in training. Also, then you got to know these remarkable people whom you had in your company coming from every level of society, and once in uniform, all looking the same, you know. You could have told them apart, their level of society, before, but you couldn't once they were all set. And that was also an experience for them, you know, to suddenly be on an equal basis with all kinds of people.

RIKALA: With a common purpose.

SMYTH: With a common purpose, and with the awful problems people brought with them, too. One of the things the drill officer ought to properly do would be be ready to help with

those problems. You'd have people coming to you with the most silly problems in the world just because you were there and they could talk about it, you know. So all of that was educational.

RIKALA: This book on the collecting point [Repatriation of Art from the Collecting Point in Munich after World War II (1988)] is very fascinating, because you describe how this notion of saving the monuments and art pieces came about and how many people were involved and how it was orchestrated. And what I'm curious about is, then, how quickly it seems to have happened, at least in terms of time and space, and the urgency that was obviously there, and the urgency that you were all faced with. Can you describe a bit just how these moments, in a sense, were enacted? You knew you had pieces of art that you had to go to or save or hide and then return later. The thinking came from a group of scholars, different scholars, interested, but your group actually implemented all the notions. Could you talk just a little bit about that, just how it worked, really?

SMYTH: Well, I think you were optimistic, you know; at least I felt optimistic that it could be done. But the issue, if the army could be made to understand it, would be, you know, you'd be able to do it. And, as I said in this thing when I started, I was a naval officer in the middle of army people, and I decided to take advantage of that and pretend I didn't understand how they worked and always go to

the top. That did it, you know. The same thing Walter Cook learned at the Institute. [laughter] So that I could get--

RIKALA: You could be effective that way.

SMYTH: I could be effective that way. There were people there in the army who were very helpful, and after what?--a week I wasn't alone, because that man, Hamilton Coulter, joined me, who became a great friend--a wonderful, wonderful, guy. We divided responsibilities in the day-to-day running of things. He did the architecture. I did the rest of it. It was a most happy thing.

Then Dieter Sattler, that man who got to be the-- He was the second German person I hired. I had been talking to architects, because we needed to have a German architect who knew his way around and could design whatever had to be designed to make these buildings, the Führerbau and Verwaltungsbau, watertight and so forth. I talked to quite a few, and none of them seemed to be right for this at all. Somebody told me about the elder Sattler, this man's father, who lived on Josephstrasse in Munich, and I went to see him. He was a good man, and he had been a big figure in German architecture for a long time. I talked to him about his son and what he thought of him, and I thought what he said about him was just fine. So I sent out a G.I. with a car to get him out in the country near the Austrian border. He thought he was being arrested. He was very scared. You know, the

G.I. and he couldn't speak very much together. Then, by the time he got to Munich--I think he arrived the same day as Hamilton Coulter--and we began to talk, I knew that we three people could work together. And it was that from then on.

He was immensely knowledgeable about Munich, German society in a very broad sense, and he had not been working. He couldn't function as an architect under Hitler, but he did have some money, so he had been able to live in the country away from it all. With those people one had to be optimistic. You knew you had a deadline for getting ready to receive the first loads of art, and George Stout was the sort of person who always just said, "We're going to do it by then." So he came in from the salt-mine repositories at Alt Aussee, looked over what we'd done at our new Munich repository, and approved.

RIKALA: Did you have a sense at the time--? One of the letters--perhaps it was from Stout or Francis Taylor, I can't recall now--said that you knew that you were protecting the whole of Western culture in saving these artifacts. Did you have a sense at the time of the enormity of the work that you were--?

SMYTH: Yes. Yes, you did. Yes, you knew that. I think there's no doubt about that. Because we didn't have the right inoculations when we arrived in Europe to go into Germany-- The man I happened to be sent with--we were on the

same plane--was that man Tom [Thomas Carr] Howe. He didn't have the right inoculations, either. So we were kept in Versailles at SHAEF [Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force] headquarters for long enough to have the inoculations and have them working. That meant that we were attached to SHAEF headquarters. So we there learned the range of what the monuments service was up against.

One of the people attached to that headquarters had just been in Germany and seen a little bit of what one was dealing with. He'd been down to Alt Aussee, and that was [Charles] Kuhn, whom I talked to you about yesterday, who was really responsible for Harvard's Busch-Reisinger collection. Well, he was a monuments officer--navy again--and I got to know him because of that. He made an estimate of what was coming. So it was no mystery about the fact that it was a very big operation.

RIKALA: Right. The operation and important historical project.

SMYTH: Well, it was a unique kind of thing. And who thought about doing it for the war with Iraq? Nobody.

RIKALA: Well, there was some talk about it, but it never really got enacted, no. Certain scholars--

SMYTH: I talked a little bit to John Russell about it, that it ought to get off the ground. Now, there's a group of young people, I'm told, who want to try to make this a part of regular government thinking when there are military

hostilities.

RIKALA: Yes. There's no reason for it not to be, but somehow it's just not there.

You spent about a year, less than a year--

SMYTH: Yes, I arrived in early June and left at the end of April, I think. I left in April, but went to Italy to try to find [Ludwig] Heydenreich.

RIKALA: Really?

SMYTH: For, by then, we had envisioned the founding of an institute for the history of art on the foundations, so to say, of the collecting point, and the question was who could be a director who would satisfy both the Germans and the Allies. The name that came up most often was Heydenreich, and one couldn't reach him at all. There was no communication that was any good at all, even for the military, between Germany and Italy, so, in my last days, I went to Italy to find him and did find him. Out of that then came, eventually, though it wasn't in my time, his appointment. The question was just would he be interested, so that he might save himself for the post if he were interested. And so, in due time, it was he who founded the Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte, which is the basic place for--

RIKALA: Yes, yes. That too is an interesting point of fact coming out of this project.

SMYTH: Uh-huh. Well, it did, it really did come out of that. I'm sure that somebody would have done something like that sooner or later. The Germans could picture how it would be to work together in one place in a central institute, because the scholars who joined the staff, who had to be on the staff, began to work together in a way they wouldn't have done if they'd all been in their separate posts in other places. So it formed out of the quality of what they were doing, in the spirit of the place.

RIKALA: You've mentioned a few people whom you knew before you went over there and then coming back. One person is Johnny [Jonathan T.] Morey, whom you said was also part of this project.

SMYTH: He wasn't part of this. He was on the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives [Section] staff of Munich.

RIKALA: Oh.

SMYTH: Since we were classmates, and since his father had meant so much to me and I'd known him a little bit as an undergraduate--not much, but a little--it was natural that we should get together. He's rather recessive, so he would never have made the move. So I made the move. And we lunched together once a week.

RIKALA: Oh, that's good.

SMYTH: We had a nice time.

RIKALA: That's interesting. And Patrick [J.] Kelleher you

mentioned.

SMYTH: Yes. He wasn't part of the Munich area. He must have been closer to Wiesbaden. But I'd known him as a graduate student, and I hope I tried to say what a very special person he was yesterday, because he really was. A great talent, warm, really a completely satisfactory human being, I think, and married to a most extraordinary lady [Marion Mackie Kelleher]. They made a house in Princeton, which still exists, which is one of the sights to be seen there. It's filled with works of art which are-- It's a great big barn, and they made the barn into a house that's really an extraordinary spot. She still lives there.

RIKALA: And James Rorimer was--

SMYTH: James Rorimer was attached to the army that took Munich. His army was pulling out as I arrived and as the Third Army was arriving, so we just overlapped by--what?-- twenty-four hours, maybe. But it was in that period that what I wrote about happened there. He had already chosen one of those two Nazi buildings on the square, the Königsplatz, and thought that that was the right place. But he also thought that I should see the Haus der deutschen Kunst that Hitler had also built, which is on the Prinzregentenstrasse in the englische Garten. I went to both those buildings with him the night I arrived, looking at both to see which would be better, and it was quite plain

that he was right, that the Verwaltungsbau was better by all odds. But he hadn't yet realized what Captain [Robert K.] Posey with the Third Army realized, that the volume of things was going to be much greater than the Verwaltungsbau could hold, and that we needed both buildings. So from that moment on we were shooting for both buildings rather than one and got them eventually. But Rorimer was very good, you know. He saw the situation. Couldn't have been a better man for it, I think.

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RIKALA: What I'd like to do is to go back to our starting point about family history and talk a little bit about that. Since we seemed to move quite quickly through it the first time, this time I'll be a little more deliberate in my questions. You talked about your father [George Hugh Smyth] being a Presbyterian minister. You mentioned that he had also attended a school in Princeton at some point? Where did he get his education?

SMYTH: He went from school to school. I think he wasn't always-- What do I want to say? I think that he wasn't always very successful in these schools in behavior. I think he was up to pranks. I'm not sure about that. Something like that. Anyway, he did move from school to school. Then he became very serious when he went to New York University, and he took his B.A. degree there, I think. Then he went to Union Theological Seminary and had a lot of friends all his life from that period. He was a New Yorker, really, because he was born there. His father had a church. He too built a building, a church. A minister builds it, I mean, if he rallies the people who are interested. That church still exists. It's on Lennox Avenue at 123d Street in Harlem. It's now a black church, obviously.

RIKALA: That was your grandfather?

SMYTH: That was my grandfather, whom I never knew, whom you saw a picture of when Barbara [Linforth Smyth] was taking it out. I never knew him. He died before I was born.

RIKALA: And his name?

SMYTH: His name was George Hutchinson Smyth.

RIKALA: They came from Northern Ireland, you mentioned.

SMYTH: They came from Northern Ireland. My father was George Hugh Smyth.

RIKALA: And your father's mother [Letitia Kennedy]'s family? Was she also--?

SMYTH: She was a Kennedy from Northern Ireland, and she and her sister must have come to this country together. Her sister married a man by the name of Hugh O'Neill, who, along with Mr. Altman, was one of the two chief dry goods people in New York City. The building that O'Neill built is still existing on Sixth Avenue at about Twenty-first Street with the name Hugh O'Neill over the top of it. When Mr. Altman decided to-- This was the way it was told to me-- When he decided to move uptown to Thirty-fourth Street and Fifth Avenue, Hugh O'Neill decided he had had enough of business, a successful business, and wasn't going to do it anymore. So the business came to an end, and he died very early. But his son was my father's chief friend, his first cousin. He died early, and his name was Hugh [O'Neill], too, so that's why I became a Hugh.

RIKALA: I see. And your mother [Lucy Salome Humeston

Smyth]'s family-- You mentioned that her family came over on the Mayflower.

SMYTH: Well, some of them did. She was slightly interested in being a whatever she was, a Colonial Dame [of America] or whatever. She never went to meetings, but she was not dissatisfied to be recognized for that.

RIKALA: And the family is from Massachusetts?

SMYTH: And it's from Massachusetts. It had, I think, quite wide-ranging Massachusetts families in its lineage. I used to know a lot about that, but I don't now seem to know about it very much. These were part of her family.

RIKALA: These portraits?

SMYTH: These portraits painted in 1847 or 1841, something like that. I knew the artist, and I have it written somewhere--Chandler--but it was on the back of the portraits along with the year and the names of the people. When I had the portraits relined, they covered this information. Not very good.

RIKALA: You also mentioned that your mother was college educated.

SMYTH: Uh-huh.

RIKALA: In her society, in her generation, how common was that?

SMYTH: I don't think so very common, but I knew a couple of her classmates, one of whom she kept up with always, and I

was taught by another in second grade. So I got the feeling that they didn't think they were greatly exceptional, but I think they probably were.

RIKALA: They were. And you mentioned that she studied art history.

SMYTH: Well, her major was English history, I think, which she was, I think, sorry she studied, because it was very much concerned with constitutional matters. Whether she really liked that I don't know. But she did take the history of art with a person who was still alive when I gave a lecture at Mount Holyoke [College] in the 1950s, so there was a sort of connection with the past.

RIKALA: Tell me a little bit about the--

SMYTH: She loved college. She thought it was just wonderful. She just had a marvelous time and was very close to all her close friends.

RIKALA: Where did your parents meet? Do you know the story?

SMYTH: They met in Holyoke [Massachusetts], because my father had become the assistant minister at the First Presbyterian Church in Holyoke. And they met therefore, for that was her church. She had studied piano with the organist there, who was quite a famous figure named Mr. [William Churchill] Hammond. So they met in the natural course of events, I think. I don't think they stayed on

long after they were married. I think they soon came to New York, and he became assistant at the Central Presbyterian Church in New York, which is now on Park Avenue. He took me all through it once. I don't know where it was when he was in it. Then he went from there to have a church of his own in Pleasantville [New York] and then went to Scarsdale [New York]. I think he was often asked to go other places from Scarsdale, but he liked it and just stayed.

RIKALA: That's where your family home was, then.

SMYTH: That's where I grew up.

RIKALA: Tell me a bit about just your life at home. What were the dinner table conversations like? You'd mentioned that he followed the news very carefully. I think that was in response to a question of mine about politics or interests in the house.

SMYTH: Well, I think that it's hard to remember what the conversations were about. A lot was about the problems or the events that had to do with the church, because my mother then was involved in guilds, and she had a children's choir. She also sang in the church choir. She had a wonderful voice. So there was a lot about that. When my father had, after the earliest years, an assistant minister, the assistant often came to lunch on Sunday. Or one of the people who sang in the choir. Among them eventually was Ben Cutler. That won't mean anything to you, but he was a sort

of Rudy Vallee-like man who made his money singing, both seriously and singing in front of his own society dance orchestra in New York City. He did that for years and became very well known there. Well, these people would turn up, and that was always fascinating to me. That's why I got into wanting to play instruments, the same instruments Ben Cutler played.

In the Lenten season, there were always visiting preachers, and the great names of the profession seemed to turn up. Harry Emerson Fosdick, who was the minister of the big Rockefeller church on Riverside Drive. He was an old friend of my father, and he always turned up. *[William Pearson Merrill, too, of New York's Brick Church, when it was on Fifth Avenue opposite Altman's at Thirty-fourth Street. My father had the Wednesday noontime service there for many years.] Well, these people were interesting to me, you know. I'd hear them talking. They were high-minded and all that. It was a good atmosphere.

On the other hand, Scarsdale was mostly business people. Scholarship: I don't think that word was ever mentioned. [laughter] They were very pleasant people, some of them, and I kept up with them. The kids that I knew were

* Smyth added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.

great. One was a boy by the name of Paul Austin, who became the head of the whole Coca-Cola company in the end. Very good guy. We did a lot of things together.

Then I went away to school when I was fifteen. I was glad to go, because living in a minister's family is living in a fishbowl because everybody's talking about you.

RIKALA: Yes, it's a public life.

SMYTH: It's a very public position to be in. You know, I was very glad to not be in it. My mother didn't really like that side of it much. It didn't bother my father one way or the other.

RIKALA: Because he had grown up with it.

SMYTH: He'd grown up with it, and he was very interested in people's problems. He was a person that everyone knew they could come to with a problem. And the black community in White Plains [New York] knew it, and if somebody were really in trouble, that's when they would come to him. He was always finding a way to deal with this, and he preached regularly for the blacks in White Plains and was very ecumenical with all the different religions that there were in that part of the world, including the Jewish contingent. It was admirable. And he also had an eye. I was thinking, when you asked if we had works of art-- No. But he did guide the making of the buildings of his church. And he had

an eye for what it ought to be. He wouldn't have thought about that. It just was there.

RIKALA: You mentioned that the community built a church.

SMYTH: Uh-huh. *[He was brought as minister when the members of the church congregation numbered around ten, I think, and they had only a portable chapel. My father was a driving force, I'm sure, in the decision to build a permanent church.]

RIKALA: Was that in Scarsdale?

SMYTH: Yes. In northern Scarsdale, close to Hartsdale.

RIKALA: He would effectively oversee the building of that?

SMYTH: Yes, got the architect, I suppose, or at least he approved it and worked with him.

RIKALA: What kind of building was it? What was the style?

SMYTH: Well, it was a marvelous-- Just burned down, unfortunately. It was a stone building with marvelous wooden-- A gabled roof with great wooden beams open to view under it, which were the real mark of the place. A great pleasure to go into. So he must have had a real sense of that sort of thing--architecture, not just building. You know, I would never have thought of it before. *[I'm sure he must have had a guiding hand in this, because, later,

* Smyth added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.

after I was around seven or eight, I saw him meeting often with the architect--the same one--over the plans of a parish house, built in my time.]

RIKALA: So you happily went off to school. When you were in college at Princeton [University], you went away parts of the summers on these cruises and working and things. How, then, did the relationship with your family change?

SMYTH: Well, it didn't change, really. I spent part of each summer certainly with them. We went to Edgertown [on Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts] for a period from about 1930 to the time I graduated from college, I guess solely because of that family that I talked to you about yesterday whom I'm grateful to for seeing that I went off to Hotchkiss [School].

RIKALA: Robbins.

SMYTH: The Robbins family. And they had a house in Edgertown. They loved it and got my family interested in going up, and that was-- My father by then had a two-month vacation. He went out and preached occasionally from time to time on invitation, but was really on vacation--reading, I'm sure, but also enjoying the town, the island, and friends. And my mother liked it there, too--liked the Robbinses very much and others in that summer place. So I was there a lot. You know, I went off and did something but came back. And that was very important. A good thing to

have.

RIKALA: Yes. Yes. You also told me about some of your friends--

SMYTH: I never felt revolution with respect to my family.

RIKALA: No, no. I guess I wasn't asking that. I was just wondering-- Being an only child myself, I was just wondering a bit about that. In a sense I did a similar thing: went off to college and started going back and forth with the family and such.

SMYTH: Did you find it a bad thing to be an only child? I thought it was great.

RIKALA: No. Perhaps because I was an only child I was quite willing to be independent in my own life but very connected in my family's life.

SMYTH: Well, I think that's the way it was. Barbara had three--two sisters and a brother--and she thinks it's amazing that somebody grows up single, an only child. I thought it was good.

RIKALA: I haven't suffered yet.

Why don't you tell me a little bit about Barbara? When did you meet your wife, and where?

SMYTH: You should ask her, but her father [Ivan Mortimer Linforth] was a Greek professor at [University of California] Berkeley, and a very renowned one. And I remember reading in the Daily Princetonian when I was a

graduate student that this man was being invited to Princeton to be the Andrew West professor of Greek for the year, and that he was coming with his wife [Storey Linforth] and one of his daughters, which somehow stuck in my head. Then I wasn't doing classics anymore, but I was always interested, and I was hearing what he was like as a teacher.

I crashed a party with Bob [Robert] Griffing, another graduate student in art history. A graduate student friend of ours, David [Allan] Robertson [Jr.], whom we still know very well--he is one of my, and our, very best friends, who wrote that poem on top of the thing there--in order to introduce me and Bob Griffing, whom I mentioned yesterday, to his fiancée; he had the two of us to a very proper sherry in his rooms at the graduate college after a football game. *[The fiancée was Berry [Berridge] Mallory, daughter of George Lee Mallory of Everest. They soon were married. When we decided to live in New Jersey after the war, it was partly at their suggestion and to be near them. She died of cancer in 1953. David was professor of English at Barnard College, had his whole career there. Remarried twice, he lives in Princeton and is secretary of the Century Association.] When we left, Griffing and I knew that

* Smyth added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.

another man whom we knew in graduate school was having a big party and hadn't invited us, and we ought to go.

[laughter] So we went to this party, and, as I entered the room, there was Barbara sitting in a chair facing toward the door with a lot of people talking with her, and I thought she was great, so I sat down on the floor near the door in front of her and watched her. And she remembers that. She was having a riveting conversation about the New Jersey Sterilization League. Amazing. Anyway, then I thought, "I have to find her," but I had a lot of work to do I was supposed to be doing, so I put it off. But I knew that if I went to a dance, a little club dance in Princeton, I would see her there. The night came that I was going to go with Griffing, and I felt tired, and I went to bed. Griffing came and said, "You've got to get up. You've got to go to the dance." [laughter] So I met her there, and that was it.

RIKALA: When in your college career was this?

SMYTH: This was as a graduate student. That was my next to last year of graduate work. That was the fall of 1939.

RIKALA: What was she studying?

SMYTH: She was not studying there. She had finished-- She didn't finish the university, but she'd gone to the University of California at Berkeley. Previously, at eighteen, she'd gone with her family to Greece for a year

when her father was visiting professor at the American School [in Athens] and got a lot out of that, really. That was a wonderful year. She was with her family now in Princeton, a few years later, on leaving California, and having a free year. John Coolidge lived across the street from their house, so he watched me coming to visit.

[laughter]

RIKALA: So he suspected all along.

SMYTH: He knew. He saw all of this. I came on my bicycle. I was called "the bicycle boy" by Barbara's mother. Then, by the time that they left for California in May 1940, we were pretty sure what was going to happen next. We got married as soon as I could, as soon as I got out of graduate school the following year.

RIKALA: So you had a time apart. She was in California? Or did she stay?

SMYTH: Yes, but she came back during that year, because her sister [Katherine Linforth Henderson] was still living in Princeton. Both sisters were married to Princeton faculty, both living in Princeton. One of them was having her first child, and Barbara came back to be midwife for this, pretend to be midwife. Her main reason perhaps was also that we could see each other again. So she was there all of the fall.

RIKALA: Then the two of you moved with the National Gallery

[of Art] job down to--

SMYTH: Yes. We were married in California from her house.

RIKALA: In Berkeley?

SMYTH: In Berkeley. I mean, say, out of her house, in a Berkeley church, and went to Carmel [California] for five days, and then went to Washington [D.C.].

RIKALA: How exciting. How exciting. And then you were in Washington about a year.

SMYTH: About a year. Well, a little bit less. I think that I went off to the service in June. Well, almost a year.

RIKALA: Then, during those five years, how much time were you able to see your wife at that point?

SMYTH: Well, I was a lot of that time in the midshipman's school in New York. I lived in New York.

RIKALA: So was it--?

SMYTH: From that point of view--

RIKALA: It wasn't a tremendous interruption.

SMYTH: No.

RIKALA: And the other people that I also wanted to ask you about-- You mentioned that when you went off to Princeton, you started living with four friends together in a house. You've told me about two of the friends, but the other two have gone unmentioned, and I thought it would be fair that you could tell us a little bit about them and see what

happened.

SMYTH: Well, there was Henry Gardiner, who is the one who is painting and the one who has been doing so much to memorialize Bert [Albert] Friend, who's just seen to it that there is an inscription on the wall of Princeton chapel about Mr. Friend.

RIKALA: Oh, that's very nice.

SMYTH: I talked to him yesterday after-- He telephoned just after we--

RIKALA: Oh, terrific, after we parted.

SMYTH: So I told him all about this. He taught Latin first after college at Hotchkiss, Latin and Greek, then went into the service and flew bombers in many, many missions. Shot down-- Not really shot down. Hit, rather, lost power, but they finally glided to a forced landing just on the southern coast of England-- [tape recorder off] Then, when he came back from the service, he'd always wanted really to be a designer, and he went to Chicago and studied with [László] Moholy-Nagy and became a great friend. And then Moholy died. He continued, and, on finishing that school, he and Winnie [Winifred Gardiner]--he having married the girl he had gone with when we were in Hotchkiss--they went out to Aspen [Colorado], where he was the assistant for three years for the great Bauhaus man at Aspen [Herbert Bayer]. Then he came back to New York and was the designer of exhibits at

the American Museum of Natural History. Since, we've kept very close. He was my best man when I was married. When he was married, his brother was his best man, obviously. But that was an interesting group. John O'Hara was married to the sister of Hank's wife, so he was in all that circle.

Then there was Johnny [John] Clark, whom I told you about, who was a marvelous person. And then there was a man by the name of James Ewing, who ended up living in Keene, New Hampshire, and owning one of the chief newspapers, maybe a chain of newspapers in New Hampshire, and has been very much an influence there. We didn't see each other for years, and then he turned up at [Villa] i Tatti, and we had a great reunion. He was less part of our little group as time went on. He went off and did other things. We all, you know, were connected very soon with a lot of other people, but the ties were there. So there were four of us that first year. There wasn't another.

But one of the people who joined that group was a man by the name of Frank Rounds, who was also in that house that year and was famous as an undergraduate. He became the head of the Princetonian and won the Pyre Prize in our class, the foremost prize at graduation. He was in the navy as a publicity officer in the Pacific, saw everybody, talked to everybody, including interviews with Gandhi and Mao [Tse-tung] as the result of sheer persistence, wrote about

everybody, and eventually turned up in Munich at the collecting point to write about it. We always saw him a lot. Hank is now prepared to get him recognition--he's died--and get him on the honor roll at Princeton somewhere, too, so that's Hank's next project, as he told me yesterday.

RIKALA: Those were very admirable projects.

TAPE NUMBER: V, SIDE TWO

OCTOBER 24, 1991

RIKALA: I want to ask one more perhaps broader question about NYU [New York University] before we move on, and that's if you can tell me a bit about the [Walter] Cook legacy at NYU and Smyth's vision for the department [Institute of Fine Arts] at NYU and how you see what the transition and the transformation of the department was.

SMYTH: Well, on succeeding him, I thought that the department could be improved by several things right away. One was changing the teaching load of the faculty which I told you about, and providing finally, as soon as possible, a leave schedule that people could count on. I think I said the principle of that schedule. It was, by all comparisons within New York University, unheard of, but I got it through. Then I wanted the faculty to concentrate on the examinations, because it seemed to me that that was the chief problem that was keeping people from getting their Ph.D.'s. Not only that, but also the weight that the M.A. thesis had had. People tended to put so much into the M.A. thesis that their energy for going on to the Ph.D. seemed to be sapped.

As a result of this, we were able to put together in one examination the major and the related minor, which had been separate and people had worked for separately. They

had been able to take the exams whenever they wanted, so months, years would go between these, and we eliminated the examination for the unrelated minor and simply required that a certain number of courses be taken in subjects of the unrelated minor. And then we made part of the one major examination, which was the major field plus the related minor, partly an oral examination and partly a written examination, but a written examination different from anything that had been done before. Instead, after the oral, the faculty of that oral would provide the student with a choice of questions from which he could choose one and have two weeks to do it and work in a library while doing it. *[Usually the subjects came out of the oral, subjects chosen because the candidate seemed perhaps to know less about them than it might be in the candidate's interest to know.] It didn't make the exams less demanding, but it concentrated and made it less awe-inspiring.

So people began to get Ph.D.'s. As I say, I think there were only twelve or fourteen in the whole time in the Institute before that. Now I wonder whether we produced too many, but--

RIKALA: But this-- [tape recorder off]

* Smyth added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.

SMYTH: People in our-- Creighton Gilbert, for instance, had presented no dissertation. He'd left the department before I came. I knew he'd been working on it, but he wasn't in touch with anybody, and so I finally got in touch with him and said, "What's up?" And I found that there was some sort of block. He'd finished the dissertation. I said, "Well, you give it to me to read." We got started, and, of course, he got his degree, and the dissertation is a classic and all that. So there were problems of that sort.

RIKALA: It sounds as though the expectations snowballed over the years, that perhaps each scholar or-- I don't know who, but--

SMYTH: Something like that happened. I think the hurdle of the M.A., which produced wonderful theses but drew off the energies that could have been put on a Ph.D., also seemed to be a factor. So what we did then in the end, I think, was to have two papers that were of publishable quality instead of a thesis that could become, really, a doctor's thesis, but earned only an M.A. In one case, after I got there, somebody produced an M.A. under the old regime, and it seemed to me a Ph.D. thesis, so I said so to the people who were supervising. They said, "Oh, yes, it is." So he went on and got a Ph.D. with his M.A. thesis.

RIKALA: Well, that's terrific, too. So it became more palatable for the students to get through the requirements.

SMYTH: Well, it became conceivable within a reasonable time. It still was four, five years. Five years more often than not. Very few people did it in four. Phyllis [Pray] Bober did it in four before any of these modifications were made. She was astonishing.

RIKALA: Compare, will you--

SMYTH: Well, then I was concerned with the museum-training program and wanted very much to do that. I don't know how soon after I got there I wanted to do it, but it seemed to me logical, having a relationship to Francis Taylor that didn't provide obstacles, and knowing James Rorimer well, who was still a curator, and some of the others. That seemed to be worthwhile doing. What did emerge was a program that had as its hope that good graduate students would be drawn to the museum field and not feel that that was not a place--if you were really good--to be. It did change things. If you think of it right now, the directors of the Metropolitan Museum [of Art], the National Gallery in Washington, and the Chicago Art Institute and the [Fine Arts] Museums in San Francisco are all out of that program about that time in the late 1950s after we got it going.

RIKALA: Did you look at the museum program at Harvard [University] at the time?

SMYTH: No. I thought it had wound down, and it had been very much a one-man-- An extraordinary sort of genius that

man [Paul J.] Sachs, and we didn't have the person for that, although [A. Hyatt] Mayor in a certain way was that, and we got him to do the introductory course. I think he helped in our thinking about how the whole thing should go. But, in any case, we did get him to do the introductory course, and he was a figure. He had a nice bashing way of going at it, also, being skeptical of museum practice and theory and all sorts of things. So this was very good, I think, as an introduction.

RIKALA: Yes. Did you model the program, then, on experiences that you had had at the National Gallery?

SMYTH: We modeled it sort of from scratch. I certainly didn't do it alone. Harry Bober had enormous input. But what we did want-- Yes, I suppose my having been in museums and knowing that I'd had no museum training and yet the good chance of being in a museum when it was forming itself and doing the scut work there of all kinds must have had some influence on our wanting to have an internship as the third stage of this thing, when you join, then, a department of the Metropolitan as a course. Right while you were taking your regular graduate courses, you also did this.

RIKALA: So there was a practical component.

SMYTH: There was a practical component. There was the first one with Hyatt Mayor, which was a general introduction to the world and practice of museums, and the second one,

which was a seminar that moved from department to department for a semester, in which the departments tried to show what it was they were really doing. Some people were stellar at that. Tom [Thomas] Hoving, when he got there, did that perfectly. He was good then, very good, at ivories. We thought so well of him that we finally asked him if he'd like to teach a course on ivories. He said, "Yes, I would very much. I'll tell you next week." And the next week he became park commissioner.

RIKALA: How funny.

SMYTH: So he didn't do it and went off and wasn't a scholar, really, after that at all. But he was good. And then the Ford Foundation took an interest in this program and began to put real money into it for fellowships, so that helped it.

RIKALA: Had that come through your efforts, the Ford Foundation?

SMYTH: Yes. There was a remarkable staff in the humanities section of the Ford Foundation. Just wonderful. They were good listeners, good questioners, and they looked for quality, and I think they thought they found it.

RIKALA: In addition to changing some of the requirements for the students, what's your most proud contribution to NYU?

SMYTH: I don't know. I think just to keep the spirit of

the place, which I thought was extraordinary, unlike anything I'd ever seen. The people who were there from the start must have had a great deal to do with that: Fiske Kimball, Richard Offner, but especially Walter Cook.

Then, I respond to challenges. When we asked Millard Meiss to join the faculty to be the successor of Offner but to teach alongside him for some years, and he accepted, and then Harvard came along, namely John Coolidge, and asked him to go there, and he decided instead to go to Harvard, the word filtered through to me rightly or wrongly that Harvard thought the center of gravity in the history of art should move now from New York to Cambridge.

RIKALA: They just decided this? [laughter]

SMYTH: Well, I didn't talk to anybody about it there, but that's the impression I got. The impression I got also was that they would gear up to asking more people from the Institute to go to Cambridge. So, as I say, I respond to challenges, and so I was determined that the center of gravity would remain where it had been.

Everything then was put to that end. We brought in Rens [Rensselaer] Lee for a while--he would have stayed if he hadn't been asked to go to Princeton as chairman--and strengthen the faculty rather than letting it weaken. And of course, then, in the course of our moving to the [Doris] Duke house, we began to add faculty. That was the next

stage. And it became a much larger permanent faculty-- whether too large, I don't know. We also did what Walter Cook and the department before him had always done: brought in outsiders, but more and more regularly, thinking of the relationship of people in the museum across the street who could be adjunct faculty.

RIKALA: Was the art history distinct from the architectural history program? Were there separate--?

SMYTH: No, it was all one. It was, of course, Richard Krautheimer who stood out as architectural historian, but Bates Lowry joined us for a while as an architectural historian, and then Wolfgang Lotz, later to be director of the Bibliotheca Hertziana.

RIKALA: Was [Henry-Russell] Hitchcock there?

SMYTH: And Hitchcock. Yes, when Hitchcock retired from Smith [College], I got the faculty to ask him-- I mean, to agree that we could ask him. There were one or two who dragged their feet. But, in fact, he went into, I think, a wonderful period coming here and loved the Institute, left his books to the Institute, and functioned for years right there. And at Smith he hadn't been in a place where graduate students could flow to him. Here, he did have that chance.

RIKALA: Yes, that was probably the greatest appeal, was this group of very exciting graduate students always. NYU

graduate students have always had this reputation. Also yesterday you asked me to mention-- Was it the executive secretary that you were--?

SMYTH: Oh, yes. Gertrude Wolf. Gertrude Wolf had been with the department from its inception, I think. Whether that means she came in the same day that Fiske Kimball did or a little bit later, I don't know, but, in any case, she had been, she told me once, the secretary of Rabbi [Stephen S.] Wise here in New York. How Fiske Kimball found her, I don't know. But, in any case, she came to Washington Square, where it was all headquartered, and if you read Harry Bober's account of the early history of the department, you'll see that it moved from place to place, and she always moved with it, I think, each step, and was with it when it finally arrived uptown permanently in the little rooms that they had at Madison [Avenue] and Eighty-third [Street]. Then they had the mezzanine of the Carlyle Hotel, and then they had the Paul Warburg house. She knew every step of this way. Her entire thought in life was devoted to the place. She knew every student well. She knew the faculty and all their concerns enormously well. She didn't approve of all their concerns, and she was very good at telling me very slowly and quietly what she didn't approve of. [laughter] She had been very supportive, totally supportive of Walter Cook, thought he was wonderful,

and yet could make me feel as if I were okay and taught me all that she thought I ought to know about the workings of the place. And she did it all. She did all the typing, all the filing. Everything there was, it was she.

RIKALA: Really?

SMYTH: I finally decided that was too much, so we brought in somebody to help. And I don't think she really liked that. [laughter] Then she retired when she began to have palsy and couldn't really type very well.

RIKALA: Oh, dear.

SMYTH: So that was very sad. Except for the first person who followed her, everybody else who followed her was excellent. The person who followed her was one of the few people I've ever fired. [laughter] That wasn't good, but everything else was.

RIKALA: And by the time the early seventies rolled around--

SMYTH: But I decided early in the seventies that I didn't think I should go on being director of the Institute: (a) it had been a long time and (b) it seemed to me that it was taking more and more time and that I should try to be able to do the thing I really wanted to do, work and write. So I began to think about that, and I was just going to stay, I hoped, to just be a proper professor when the Villa i Tatti offer came along. They said that I wouldn't have to raise money, and I was assured that it would take only two hours a

day administration--

RIKALA: Is that really true?

SMYTH: No. [laughter] I thought about that very carefully and decided I could do that because it wasn't a rival institution. I Tatti was not an institution that taught the history of art in this country. Students from the Institute had had fellowships at I Tatti. So it wasn't a rival institution. I'd been asked to go to Princeton, I'd been asked to go to Harvard, and in both cases I turned it down because they were rival institutions, and I couldn't see going off from the place I was devoted to, and I didn't want to be on the other side. But this didn't seem to be at all like that. So it fitted my notion of stopping being director. It was twenty-two years, and that was quite a long time. I think they were probably glad to see some new face. So that was that.

RIKALA: Before we move on to that, will you just briefly compare-- You mentioned that Princeton and Harvard were rival institutions. Could you briefly compare the art history departments in the period of, say, the mid to late fifties to the beginning of the seventies at Harvard?

SMYTH: Well, Harvard had great strengths, you know, people like Sydney [J.] Freedberg, extraordinary, and a wonderful classical section. You know, one after another of the people there were good, and Princeton, too, but Princeton

was losing its old guard in that same period. I think Mr. Friend died in 1956 probably, and Mr. [Charles Rufus] Morey had retired in 1945, and E. Baldwin Smith probably didn't go beyond 1960. And they were bringing in younger people. In one field at least, their Far Eastern field with Wen Fong, they were absolutely at the top. But it didn't have the same strength as this place. Our great trick here at NYU's Institute was to bring in the people that weren't just younger. Our policy was to always go for the person we all could decide was the best in the field. If we could decide together it was the best person, then we would go after that person with the notion that it could be all chiefs and no Indians, whereas most departments had lots of instructors and all that. We didn't do that.

RIKALA: What about Columbia [University] at this time?

SMYTH: Columbia had wonderful people, but not much drive until Rudolf Wittkower came, and I think that was in the middle fifties. He turned it around absolutely, looking down across Central Park to this place down here, decided-- I'm sure he was going to give it a run for its money.

RIKALA: Was there ever a question of Wittkower coming to NYU?

SMYTH: Well, we had thought about asking him, and, in due time, if he hadn't gone to Columbia, I think we probably would have come around to doing that, because he was in

London. But, in fact, we hadn't geared up to that. So once he was at Columbia and had his own place and his own vision of what that place should be, which was good, and he began to turn out students who were first-class, the whole thing had a new energy and a new vision of what it was going to be. Whereas Mr. [William Bell] Dinsmoor, excellent archaeologist as he was, as leader of the department didn't seem to generate much. And, as I say, Millard Meiss was an assistant and an associate professor for years there and was never made a professor, as I remember.

RIKALA: What about Yale [University]? We haven't mentioned Yale.

SMYTH: I wasn't very clear about Yale. I taught there that semester--I mean that whole year, 1948-49--but only going up on the train to teach the course and come away. I thought it was sort of sleepy except for Vince [Vincent] Scully, who was obviously already quite something. And I was absolutely certain that George [Heard] Hamilton and George [A.] Kubler were, but I didn't get much sense of what was happening there in the course of it. The students that I had I don't think gave me to understand much about the department.

RIKALA: So clearly the very best departments were NYU and Harvard.

SMYTH: I would have thought, I would have thought.

RIKALA: What about the West Coast? Any?

SMYTH: Well, things had changed at Berkeley with the arrival of a German scholar, Walter Horn, whom I knew well in the monuments service and who is still alive and you should interview. He was in the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives [Section of the] service.

RIKALA: Walter Horn, yes.

SMYTH: So Walter Horn, who had been a student of [Erwin] Panofsky's, came over from Germany in the-- I should have said late thirties, maybe '38, something like that. We were aware of him because he came to Princeton and gave a lecture. He worked on the Baptistery at Florence and made major progress with the study of that building and lectured about it. Then he was hired at the University of California. Up until then it had been local people. There was a man by the name of Neuberger, maybe, who was in the department and very good at teaching undergraduates, but it wasn't a graduate department. Horn changed that, bringing in new aims. But it hadn't got going very far by the 1950s, I think, because Horn was away during the war and only slowly-- They were beginning to build up the department just-- Because I taught their summer school in 1949, so I got a little sense of what they hoped to do, but not very much had started yet. That was a way to get to California and see my family. I decided never to teach in summer school again.

RIKALA: After that experience?

SMYTH: Yes, because it was-- I'd just taught a course in fifteenth-century Italian painting at Yale, and then I did it-- It was all sitting there, so that summer I did it at California, but I had to do it in six weeks, and it changed the whole quality. To compress it seemed to me not what one should do.

RIKALA: What was the condition and state of the Villa i Tatti when you became director in 1973?

SMYTH: Well, it was in a great state as an institute for scholarly research, for advanced study. I think Myron Gilmore had done a great deal to make it function as a place like that should function and presided yearly over a group of scholars coming from many countries, who were very good, and he had given it visibility in Florence that was acceptable to the Florentines. The high moment in his time was the flood, when he could step in and give all the help that could come from I Tatti to people trying to preserve art, books, photo collections there, and made I Tatti headquarters for lots of what they did, and so forth. But if you mean state of the house, Brooke Astor when she heard I was going there said, "Oh, yes, Villa i Tacky," [laughter] because she thought it wasn't kept up very well inside.

RIKALA: Well, I suppose that was one of the balancing tricks, to somehow preserve the monument to [Bernard]

Berenson--

SMYTH: That's right.

RIKALA: --but also move it into the twenty-first century.

SMYTH: Well, we didn't want to move it into the twenty-first century. [laughter] We wanted to do all we could to make it look better and keep it as it was. And Walter Kaiser has very much that view, and he's been concentrating with the help of a decorator now.

RIKALA: Is he the new director?

SMYTH: He's the present director. I was doing the same thing, and he's doing it, I think, very well. But it can't be your first concern. First is the scholarly missions. But when I arrived at I Tatti in the fall of '73, inflation was just starting to take off in Italy, and in a very few weeks it was quite plain that it was a disaster coming. The dollar's value was suddenly not there, so what had been a perfectly balanced budget under Myron Gilmore suddenly was crazy. I said I had not come to do any money-raising, so I asked the university to do it as they said they would, and nothing happened. I didn't think very much of the money-raising organization that I found at Harvard when I got there, but I thought it must do quite well, because Harvard is so wealthy. In any case, it didn't work, so finally, having become devoted to the place, I thought I had better get into it and did. Otherwise, I found, Harvard would

simply close it. So decorating, redecorating the house wasn't the priority at all. To try to keep the place open, the budget balanced, fellowship program, and the books coming in, and all that was first priority.

RIKALA: I read somewhere that in taking over the directorship of I Tatti, your career as professor then came to a close.

SMYTH: Yes, I didn't teach anymore. But I did preside over nearly weekly discussions in connection with papers given by fellows and lectures, also read manuscripts of the fellows, advised on them, even on the careers.

RIKALA: Yet, when you were thinking about retiring from NYU, you said you'd wanted to just become a regular professor.

SMYTH: But I didn't want to retire from the Institute, only to not be head of it at all, not have any responsibilities for it, and then I would have been teaching. That was my thought.

RIKALA: Did you feel a sense of regret at that point, or not?

SMYTH: Yes. I had come to a kind of teaching which I liked very much. I began to think that I didn't want to stand up and tell people in lectures anymore. Not only because the subject keeps changing and what you said some years ago you wouldn't say now, [laughter] but because telling didn't seem

to me what it was about. So instead I concentrated, when I taught, on seminars that were joint investigations of something that seemed to me to be what I would like to know about and the field should know, and tried to get a team of us working together, students and teacher. This worked out well from my point of view and, I gather, from theirs. I would have loved to have gone on doing that.

RIKALA: Will you describe one of your average days at I Tatti? What was the day like?

SMYTH: Well, I made a schedule for the week which left me certain mornings free of any telephone calls or whatever. This schedule, of course, was broken into, because if you're the head of something, you're subject to emergencies as they arise.

RIKALA: Sure.

SMYTH: And if there's trouble, then there's trouble, and you can't stick to it.

RIKALA: Can't hide. [laughter] So you had a weekly schedule.

SMYTH: I had a weekly schedule, a day-by-day schedule. But a normal day would be that I would be up early, which I always do before the day begins, to read or write or whatever. And some exercises. Then breakfast with Barbara in our room, still in bed, so to say, very grand. Trays. Then dressing and appearing by nine o'clock, when the place

began. If it were a morning when I was going to be doing, you know, the routine things, then I did those. There were hours when visitors who wanted to come and see me were supposed to be-- You know, appointments made for and the time to go over things with the assistant director. Nelda Ferace had been there since 1962 as a part of the place under the first director, Mr. [Kenneth] Murdoch, and then under Myron Gilmore, whom she was very fond of and close to. She seemed to know the place best compared with anybody as far as how it ran. And I've always, having been in the navy, wanted an executive officer. The executive officer, according to my view, should know everything you know--no secrets--so that if you drop dead, there's somebody who knows what you were up to. So I would see her daily, pretty much daily, about what was on my mind, what she was doing about all the things, and she did a lot of what we decided on. That didn't go on under my successor at all, because most people don't, I think, want to do that.

RIKALA: Don't want to share responsibility, perhaps, or--?

SMYTH: I think that it's a general feeling that not anybody should know all the secrets, so maybe that's it. I don't know. But, in any case, that's the way it has been with me, and she did it very well.

And there were other wonderful people. Fiorella Superbi, who presides over part of the library, the

photographic library, whom I then made responsible for much more, the collection, the person who organized scholarly events, all that. She'd lived there all her life, having grown up there as the daughter of the estate manager, Geremia Gioffredi. She's still there. She's an absolutely wonderful person, has a doctor's degree in her own right.

It was a marvelous group of people. So I tried to delegate as much as I could. That's partly selfish. You want to see if you could get some time for your own work or to talk with--consultation, advising--the fellows. But it couldn't always be done. And you can't delegate money-raising. There's no way to do that. And money-raising takes more time thinking about what you're doing, and you become a schemer, which is not a pleasant thing. You scheme as to how you're going to interest somebody and how you're going to get them. I'm very glad to be out of all that.

RIKALA: You become a seductor of sorts.

SMYTH: Yes, but I don't like that word. [laughter]

RIKALA: No, I know they're difficult words, aren't they?

SMYTH: So that took time. But there were periods when I could really work and got some things out that I wanted to do. But mostly it was a very full day. And Barbara had a lot of things to do with the running of the place: all the planning of events--and there were many, both scholarly and social. She was in on very much, not to mention the

planning of every day's meals, all that, and supervising the care of the garden.

RIKALA: Yes. Was it in the Berenson tradition that you would meet for a luncheon or a gathering with the scholars and fellows?

SMYTH: There was lunch every day with the fellows, and certain days of the week only the fellows, and other times guests they could bring or we would bring. And every morning at eleven, coffee, which took place in Mr. Berenson's study in the house in Myron Gilmore's time, and I followed that. I thought that was wonderful in Mr. Berenson's study. So the house was part of the daily life of people, not only their studies where they worked but the house itself. And then tea in the afternoon at five. This was again Myron Gilmore's procedure: tea down in the salone. And then readiness-- I would hope that anybody who was there thought he could make himself known, come in with a problem. There's some difficulty about that always. People don't want to disturb you.

Anyhow, it was a full day, and so long as money-raising was in it-- For the scholarly side of the director, money-raising was bad. When that was not so important, then it gave you more time.

RIKALA: What intellectual projects did you bring with you? What scholarly projects did you bring?

SMYTH: Well, one thing I had wanted very much to do was to write a sort of a complement to the book Mannerism and Maniera [1963], that is to say about the High Renaissance and how the High Renaissance, I thought, began and its relationship then to the maniera. As luck had it, the scholars that were very close to I Tatti then wanted us to do a convegno of several days on the relations of Venice and Florence in all fields of study. That was right where I wanted to be, because my theoretical view was that there wouldn't have been a High Renaissance in Florence without Venice. So that was then wonderful, because it was pressure; it had to be done by then, and so I didn't have to postpone it. So that was, I think, the first thing I really wanted to do.

And then Henry Millon and I were feeling very much that we were too slow with our studies on Saint Peter's, so we did a big job on Saint Peter's. And he was in--

RIKALA: When did that interest in Michelangelo begin?

SMYTH: Well, we've told that story in our latest piece, the most recently big piece that we published. I don't know whether you have it there. It's the Pirro Ligorio one of 1987.

RIKALA: Oh, I don't have that.

SMYTH: It's "Pirro Ligorio, Michelangelo, and Saint Peter's," I think that's what it's called. So it's all

there. In 1959 I was at the American Academy in Rome. I was visiting as art historian in residence in the fall of 1959, and Henry Millon was a fellow. We happened to walk behind Saint Peter's together one morning looking at the building, and that's what I love to think of, having something start with looking at the work of art, rather than something you're researching. We made a decision about it, just standing there, in about fifteen minutes, which neither of us would ever have made without the other pushing. We had been going there on some quite different purpose. We weren't going there to look at Saint Peter's at all, we were going to see the Casino of Pius IV. When we got back to the academy, Henry disappeared, came back in about a couple of hours, and he said, "I think we've got something." [laughter] So we've been working on it ever since and publishing as best we can. It was fun, because in 1973 he was made director of the American Academy [in Rome] at the same moment that I was made head of I Tatti, so we thought Saint Peter had moved us both to Italy so we could get to work.

RIKALA: And the Casa Buonaroti is also near the Villa i Tatti, isn't it?

SMYTH: That's downtown.

RIKALA: I just thought of all kinds of conveniences, then. The next time we meet I would like to talk more about the collaborative nature of work and your work with Hank Millon,

but I think we should stay a little bit more with I Tatti.

SMYTH: The only thing I can say right now is that that's been a blessing in every way.

RIKALA: I think collaborations are fascinating, so I'm interested in talking about that further. A few of the things-- I read the introduction to Renaissance Studies in Honor of Craig Hugh Smyth [Andrew Morrogh et al., editors], and I've picked out some bits from that. One statement is the Villa i Tatti became, under your directorship, what Bernard Berenson thought it should one day become.

SMYTH: Well, that shortchanges Myron Gilmore.

RIKALA: Well, I'm wondering, because it does sound like there was no life in the parts in between.

SMYTH: No, no.

RIKALA: Berenson died in '59.

SMYTH: No. That shortchanges Myron Gilmore. Under Mr. [Kenneth] Murdoch, Harvard I think had a very much more closed view of what it should be. Myron Gilmore opened it up to Florence. And I did that more. I found that there were some feelings still that the people on the hill didn't welcome Florence. I don't think that was right. I think Myron had already done quite a lot, but evidently what happened after we got there was more. And then my first successor wasn't so interested in that, apparently, so now what we did looks better.

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RIKALA: To continue on with yesterday's discussion, I'd like to know more about how you managed the visitors that you had, the types of issues that you were looking for. I know again that it was in keeping with the [Bernard] Berenson tradition, but what were the points and the purposes of [Villa] i Tatti, in your opinion, that you wanted to promote?

SMYTH: I came to think of it as having unique possibilities. All that he realized made an ideal place for bringing scholars of different disciplines together in a close relationship that was a harmonious relationship in which they saw each other regularly, sometimes in formal discussions, sometimes informal discussions. Always the possibility of talking with each other. On occasion there would be a scholar who had thoughts about leading discussions. When that was somebody who really could do it, we would do that too in addition to what I might be doing. There were, I think, a number of occasions when someone who had experienced this--more often than not an Italian who had never been in this kind of atmosphere before, because that's not the kind of atmosphere that's generally created in Italy-- A person who had been there would say, "This is the greatest year of my life," you know, and that's what the

place can do. I think other institutes for advanced study do it in some way, also, but I Tatti is favored by the villa, the collection, the gardens, and the place, and the fact that you're in Italy where--important if you're a foreigner--your subject is. All this tends to make it very special. I think for most people it is special, and that's what one wanted to try to promote and, you know, make it better if you could.

RIKALA: Most of the visitors and scholars live in apartments on the grounds or away from the grounds?

SMYTH: No, it's-- From the beginning, Harvard [University] thought that it was better, probably, for scholars to live in Italy rather than on an American preserve, but that was partly conditioned by the fact that there wasn't much place to live at I Tatti. In our time, one of the first things we did was to make apartments in the building next to the church, San Martino, which is on the property in the cloister of the church, so to say. It happened that Mr. Berenson's Nicky Mariano and her sister lived in that building. Nicky moved there when Harvard took over the villa, and her sister had been there for a long time. After she and her sister died--her sister in 1974 or 1975--the building reverted to our use, and what we then did was to make it into four separate apartments for scholars. And the villino had been there for years, and we promoted that for

the use as two apartments. You could have the whole villino, but you could also divide it the way we arranged it so that you-- So there on the property then there were some scholars again. So it was both ways for scholars: living on the estate or living somewhere else. Living, however, as far from Villa i Tatti itself as the church, you were already in Italy, so you were really under the-- This is quite different from the American Academy in Rome, which has as its policy everybody aboard living together. And you can be quite separate from Rome doing that.

RIKALA: You can be your own little enclave.

SMYTH: There are lots of people who surmount that easily, but there are people, I suspect, who don't. Whereas at I Tatti, it's always been felt that it was good to be in constant touch with the world around you, a world which, of course, has its roots in the Renaissance.

RIKALA: Under your directorship, what kind of scholars did you look for? Did you always have a set variety that you were looking for? Or at some times did the balance tip--?

SMYTH: We didn't have quotas.

RIKALA: Didn't have quotas, that's the right word.

SMYTH: The scholars were chosen by a committee called the advisory committee, of which the director--and this was true in Myron Gilmore's time--is the chairman. The vice chairman has been at Harvard, and the present director, Walter

Kaiser, was for years the vice chairman as a member of the department of comparative literature, so he knew the issues and the purposes of I Tatti very well. It's been understood always that the-- This was advice to the director that the advisory committee gives, and that if he doesn't agree he could change the list in some form or other. Well, I really didn't do that. What I did do, however, was, on occasion, when the committee missed somebody that I thought was very important, then I would make a separate appointment of that person as an associate of I Tatti, which meant that it was the same from the person's point of view as being a fellow pretty much. That I did on several occasions. But mostly it's a joint decision when the committee meets once a year, and there are certainly not quotas. There is a feeling that each major field of Renaissance studies should be represented.

Some fields have more applicants than others. The music field, for example, has, in my time, had rather fewer applicants usually than history or the history of art or literature or science or economics. I Tatti has a superb library for Renaissance music, so we never wanted to have that not used, so we were always glad that there was at least one and sometimes two or three music historians aboard.

RIKALA: Was that a library that Berenson collected?

SMYTH: No, that was made by Mr. and Mrs. [F. Gordon] Morrill, whose names you would find very much in the front of things if you were to list the donors to I Tatti. They knew Mr. Berenson. They have a house in Florence across the river from the Uffizi [Gallery]. This [pointing to photograph in his home's dining room] is the view from their house, which is about the most beautiful view of Florence you can possibly have. That's their front lawn.

RIKALA: It's not very far from the duomo.

SMYTH: It's across the river here. In any case, they knew Mr. Berenson. They were very much interested in the history of music, and they started the history of music library at I Tatti and built it so that it is now considered the best history of music library in Italy for the Renaissance.

RIKALA: I see.

SMYTH: They continue very much to be part of it. They've given this house now that we're standing in [in the photograph] also to I Tatti. Just exactly how I Tatti will use it is up to the future to decide, but, in any case, it will be also owned by I Tatti. And I Tatti's up there on the hill. It's way in the distance.

RIKALA: Yes, that's what I thought, the opposite side across the valley.

What's the relationship of I Tatti to Harvard academically? Is there a--?

SMYTH: It is not under any dean. It reports only to the president. It's not part of any other school. This, of course, makes it much easier for the man who's running it because he only reports to one person, namely the president of the university.

RIKALA: How was that organized when Harvard picked up I Tatti?

SMYTH: I think they decided right from the beginning that that's the way it would be.

RIKALA: They would just be its own--

SMYTH: Uh-huh. In my time, there was a little flurry in the faculty of arts and sciences that indicated that there was someone there who would like to see it put within the faculty of arts and sciences, but I didn't agree at all, so that it didn't result.

RIKALA: What about the relationship of the Villa i Tatti to Harvard's broader goals? Is there any sort of path of thinking?

SMYTH: Well, one wanted to integrate it more into Harvard's needs, and we began to ask people from Harvard to come and be visiting professors. We also had the policy in the choice of fellows-- If you had two candidates who seemed to be absolutely equal, and there was only one more spot to fill, and one of them was from Harvard, the Harvard person was likely to get it. But otherwise no favoritism in that

respect. But Walter Kaiser has gone much further now in having as a regular component of I Tatti--almost a regular component--a member of the Harvard faculty visiting as a visiting scholar, which is what we did do, but not on this frequent--

RIKALA: No, not policy, sort of.

SMYTH: Well, it was a policy, but we didn't do it as frequently, and I think it's excellent. There's a real growing feeling, I think, on the part of Harvard that I Tatti's essential to it. This is certainly true of the new president, Neil Rudenstine, who's keen about it and whose wife [Angelica Zander Rudenstine] is writing a history of I Tatti under Harvard. She was long before they ever had a thought that he would be president of Harvard. He was at the Mellon Foundation. She's writing a history of Harvard's program at I Tatti.

President [Derek C.] Bok was the person, as I say; he was the only one I reported to. I came to know what he thought very well, and he what I thought, and all of this seemed to be good from the point of view of the relationship to the university. Then his right hand was Daniel Steiner, who is a lawyer, general counsel for Harvard, and is now much more than that, vice president for various things. He became deeply interested in I Tatti. He's an old friend of Walter Kaiser, too, which is really nice now. When there seemed to be some crises under my first successor after I

left, Dan Steiner was made the chairman of a committee to consider these from the point of view of Harvard. So that's all-- You know, it's tightly integrated now, but he still reports only to the president.

RIKALA: How many scholars are there at any one time there?

SMYTH: Well, I think the most we ever had was seventeen, which was perhaps too many. We thought fourteen or fifteen was about right, and one year we thought we should try to see what would happen if we had even less, so we did, but we didn't think that was good enough.

RIKALA: Will you describe a bit your shared responsibilities with Barbara [Linforth Smyth]? You mentioned yesterday that she had a lot to do with the daily goings-on.

SMYTH: Well, if any ceremony was to take place there at all, or a conference, whatever, she was very much involved in how we would run it. What the order of events would be and when we would time it, put it-- The visitors that were coming. Obviously there were also lots of people coming to the villa who simply asked to come and visit, and if amongst those we thought there were people we might want to do something about, then she was involved in that. And to a certain extent, to keep in touch with people in the vicinity as well as donors, there were dinner parties, and, of

course, she was the one who did that. *[In many ways, this was a post we had together. She had not been involved much with the Institute of Fine Arts in New York. She was busy with children, house, our activities in New Jersey. So this was a post in which she was colleague, too. We much appreciated this.] There was also the garden. She took the real responsibility for seeing that the garden was kept properly. This wasn't always easy, because the two gardeners, whom we were devoted to, had their own routine of many, many years and their own ideas as to priorities, and these were not exactly our ideas as to priorities. So it was hard. She had to work. [laughter] *[She put in a new vegetable garden, too, not far from the main house. It looks as if it has always been there.]

RIKALA: How are the gardens today? Have they--?

SMYTH: Well, there's a lithograph of them by the husband, Donald Campbell, of one of the staff members, Alexa Mason. They are, I think, in fine shape.

RIKALA: Really splendid. Yes, actually that was the first thing I noticed when I came to the house the other day.

Let's talk a bit about Bernard Berenson. Were there any ghosts lingering, or legends that you--?

* Smyth added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.

SMYTH: No, I shouldn't have thought. I shouldn't have thought. Did we talk about him at all?

RIKALA: No, we haven't yet. Perhaps now's a good time. Did you ever meet him?

SMYTH: Oh, yes. I knew him.

RIKALA: You knew him.

SMYTH: When I went to Italy from Munich in April of 1946 to find [Ludwig] Heydenreich-- I found Heydenreich, and Heydenreich wanted, I think, perhaps to mend the war problems--he was a German after all--to see Mr. Berenson. He made an appointment to bring me up to see him. I think I was the excuse for coming. Mr. Berenson was waiting for us in the salon, and I was in uniform, so I looked very official. We had a nice time, a nice talk. Then three years later, when we came back on a Fulbright [fellowship] for a year, I wanted very much to study his photograph collection, particularly the sixteenth-century part. So I telephoned and asked if I could. And it was with Nicky Mariano, whom I had most dealings with then. They were very nice. They said, "Yes. Come every day for as long as you want." So what I did was to come up at nine in the morning and stay all day in the library, and they would invite me to lunch if they wanted to or send up lunch. So I saw him quite a lot at those luncheons. Then they invited us to a dinner party or two, and so Barbara got to meet him. It

couldn't have been more welcoming.

I'd always heard that he didn't want to talk history of art to art historians, that he didn't really like art historians. I was surprised therefore that right from the beginning he talked, and I had a chance to ask him a lot about what he would do now if he were setting out and all that. That was fun and good. I thought afterwards that it might have been for the following reason: I had just published my first article ["The Earliest Works of Bronzino" (1949)], and one of the points of that article had to be that Mr. Berenson had mistranslated some Italian and got a subject off on a wrong foot, and in order to get it back on the right foot, I had to point out that this was wrong. I did it as politely as I could. But, in any case, it might have been that, you know, that he realized that I was right. He never mentioned this article, but Nicky Mariano would have found it probably and brought it to him.

RIKALA: His course of events over the day, as I recall reading about them, he would see people in the morning, have these luncheons or teas, and then at the end of the day he kept time for himself, private time, to write letters and work on whatever his interest was.

SMYTH: Well, I really don't know much about the way he-- I've heard from people there, Liliana Ciullini, who was a member of the staff in his time, for example, and she knows

the routine of that time very well. I think that he woke up very early and read in the morning and was read to. He had a small bedroom and a dressing room next to it, and the small bedroom became the director's study, so one was in this holy place. I can remember Fred [Frederick] Hartt coming into the library one day when I was working in the library in 1949, '50--Mr. Berenson was away, I think, that day--and he said, "Would you like to see his bedroom?" And he took me down the hall and into his bedroom as if it were a very holy spot. I think Mr. Berenson probably went back there quite often in the daytime. He was welcoming and nice with me, and I think he was with lots of people.

RIKALA: Oh, yes, he must have been. I also recall reading that during World War II all the artifacts were stored away and that he lived somewhere else and that his wife Mary [Costelloe Berenson] stayed with the villa? Is that how--?

SMYTH: She was ill. She stayed there, and the Germans occupied it. But apparently they were considerate, the people who occupied it. They were very high in the high German command. And the man who saw to the saving of all those objects, putting them in safe places, is still there, Signor Geremia Gioffredi. He was still the estate manager when we arrived and continued to be until about the early eighties. He lives there still in the house that Mr. Berenson gave him to have for his life. His daughter, as I

have mentioned, Fiorella Superbi, whom I talked to this morning on the phone, is very much part of the staff.

RIKALA: There are several generations that comprised both Berenson's tenure and then other people coming on and their families.

SMYTH: Those two gardeners that I mentioned were there in Mr. Berenson's time.

RIKALA: So that's quite extraordinary, too, because it's a living history.

SMYTH: It's a living history, and they appreciate what the place is and does. The farmers, for example: They were sharecroppers until just before I arrived, and Myron Gilmore changed them into proper salaried people because sharecropping became very hard. And they're devoted to the place. Some of them are retired, but others are still there, and they all still live on the property, retired or not.

RIKALA: So it's really truly run like an old Italian villa.

SMYTH: Uh-huh. That's good.

RIKALA: Yes. If you'll recall for me some of the memorable visitors and memorable moments in the times that you were there.

SMYTH: It's very hard to do that, I think. One of the problems in remembering all these visitors very clearly is that you saw them always in the same room. And if you

didn't know the people to begin with, their faces tended to blend. [laughter] One of the great visits was Clark's visit, "K" Clark.

RIKALA: Kenneth Clark.

SMYTH: He had been Mr. Berenson's assistant, you may remember, when he was young, from about 1926 to 1929. People thought that he wasn't very polite about Mr. Berenson in his autobiography. In any case, Harvard had a meeting of its donors in Florence--for the donors to the Fogg [Art Museum], that is to say--and obviously the place to have that was at I Tatti. And the speaker was Clark. We invited him and his new wife--we'd known his previous wife pretty well, too--to stay after this meeting, and they did. We knew him fairly well. And that was a good time. He loved it. He roamed the place and told his new wife about what happened here and what happened there, and he seemed really appreciative of those years that he'd been there. So the overtone of his autobiography seemed to not be present when he was there. That was very reassuring. And on one of those days that he was there, Murray Perahia visited, the pianist, and played the piano with the windows open and all of us standing underneath the windows, Clark thinking that was wonderful, because he was very much of a music person as well.

RIKALA: I think it's important to speak just a little bit

about what you feel that you learned from Berenson, an appreciation for drawings that you have or the issues of connoisseurship.

SMYTH: Well, I read him. I read everything before ever I-- You know, I never thought I would have anything to do with the villa. And I found what he wrote important always to me. Old-fashioned now, but-- And I don't feel drawn, really, to going back to read him now unless I'm working on something that he worked on. When thinking about Michelangelo drawings, yes, I go back and look. He wasn't good with Bronzino at all, so that's not much use. But he was excellent with Michelangelo and many, many things.

RIKALA: There certainly has been a lot written about Berenson in the past maybe five or ten years, some good, some bad.

SMYTH: Yes. Well, a man by the name of [Ernest] Samuels has written a two-volume work which is a very careful documentation [Bernard Berenson: The Making of a Connoisseur]. He's not an art historian--he doesn't have axes to grind of that sort--and I think, by and large, it's the place to look. There was a woman [Meryle Secrest] who wrote about him--we have the book [Being Bernard Berenson: A Biography] upstairs--and I knew her. She was recommended to us by Harold Acton and by "K" Clark as a person we should give every help to in writing about Mr. Berenson. In fact, she was more after backstairs gossip than anything else.

But before "K" knew this, he also authorized her to write his biography, and he never should have done it. It wasn't a very good plan.

RIKALA: Who is this?

SMYTH: That's come out, too. He was sorry, I think, about that.

RIKALA: You also mentioned that Henry Millon was at Rome at the American Academy at the same time. Will you start telling me a little bit about that friendship and that working relationship? You got started, I remember you mentioned yesterday, several years before you actually started working together.

SMYTH: Yes. That was the fall of 1959 that we made this observation--discovery really--about Saint Peter's. It was quite by chance. Hank had got permission, or was getting permission, to go and see the villa of Pius IV in the gardens of the Vatican and asked if I wanted to go along. I did because I'd never been there. So one early morning we set out. To get there, you have to walk behind Saint Peter's, and so that's when our discussion started that started all of this.

RIKALA: About the drum specifically?

SMYTH: No, we were looking at the elevation of the building, and we had doubts about the upper order and came to the conclusion standing in front of it--you know, crazy,

we didn't think anybody would ever hear us about it--that the upper order couldn't be as he wanted it. It had always been--

RIKALA: There's a photograph of it in the middle of the book [Michelangelo Architect: The Facade of San Lorenzo and the Drum and Dome of Saint Peter's (1988)].

SMYTH: Well, that's the upper order. We decided that that could not have been the order as Michelangelo would have wanted it there on that elevation.

RIKALA: That Michelangelo wouldn't have thought that way.

SMYTH: Wouldn't have thought that. This was rather amazing, because it's always been assumed that everything you see when you're standing on the side of the building--not on the front, when you're standing on the side--is Michelangelo from top to bottom. So if you say that isn't, or at least not what he wanted, then you've changed the view.

RIKALA: You've changed several hundred years of--

SMYTH: We've done a piece about that, and that's over there. So then we couldn't-- I was trying to get Mannerism and Maniera [1963] done. He was doing his dissertation, which was architecture in Piedmont, so we didn't get together again until I think 1964, when the decks were cleared, and then we began to work and worked a lot on this and brought our first article out in 1969. I would go up to

Boston usually, because that way I wouldn't be near the phone here. [laughter] We would work for two or three days. And this became easy to do and fun. Then we just kept going, you know, whenever we had time.

So we've published, I don't know, five installments now? I think we have three more we think we're going to try to finish.

RIKALA: Really?

SMYTH: And one we've got to do this fall, so--

RIKALA: Do you have a trip planned to--?

SMYTH: Well, we don't do any trips. But Hank has taken on a big exhibition of architectural models which is being backed by Olivetti, and one part of that is Michelangelo, and I'm scheduled to have some part in that. But there's another big article that we've had in existence for a long time and haven't finished. We think we need ten days, but we can't seem to find those ten days. Then we have a couple more that have to be started from scratch. So there's plenty to do.

Because what this did was to take us into the whole building and the whole Michelangelo design. So in the end we've done things about the interior as well as the exterior, and we have a piece coming that we haven't started yet about the facade, what Michelangelo wanted for the facade. Heretical.

RIKALA: Heretical on his part or yours? [laughter]

SMYTH: Ours. Ours. Also his. It couldn't have been better. And as we got to know each other better, it's a very close friendship. You know, we see each other to play as well as to work. When at I Tatti, we went down for I think all our Christmases to Rome, and then they came up, Hank and his wife Judy [Millon] and their children, Phoebe and Aaron [Millon], for a summer in the villino.

RIKALA: How long was he at the American Academy?

SMYTH: He got there in the fall of '73, maybe January '74, something like that, and was, I should have thought, there three years. He was on leave from MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology]. He couldn't stay very long without losing his post.

RIKALA: Off tape we talked a little bit about the nature of collaboration, and I'm hoping that we could go over that a little bit more. How it is that two people sit down to work on something that is an academic project in a part of the academic world that doesn't see collaboration as the first and foremost way of working?

SMYTH: Well, we spoke a little about that.

RIKALA: Yes, but it was--

SMYTH: I don't think I have anything more to say about how and why we could do it. It's never the same. Each time it's a little bit different. On some occasion, one of us

may have already progressed perhaps in part of the problem and thinks it should go this way and sets forth what he has found and thinks about it, and the other has to get into it and begin to see whether he agrees. We can't write everything we don't finally agree about. Or we can start by saying, "We don't know anything about this. Let's go to the library." Or each of us take this or that part. It's different every time. A lot of the time, when we have sat down with a blank page, at the time we were going to begin to put things on paper one will say, "Well, maybe we ought to start this way." And the other grabs a pencil and tries to get down what he's saying. Then we look at that and go from there. Or one of us will sit down and write a piece, a little part of something, and show it to the other and see if that is okay. So it's different all the time, and, as I say, what we learned very shortly was you can't and don't want to think about who did what at all, who discovered what, whose idea this or that was, who wrote that.

RIKALA: That comes from a very strong position of trust and commitment.

SMYTH: Completely. You have to have that. You have to have that. Whatever the credit, it belongs to both.

I know of one thing that Hank did that I never did. When we were working on the inside of the building at the level of that same order, Hank went out on the entablature

and walked along it.

RIKALA: How narrow is it? [laughter] It must be--

SMYTH: And carried a camera, as I remember, along it. You know, not anything I could have done.

RIKALA: Well, it must be less than a--

SMYTH: Well, no, it's fairly wide, but it doesn't feel wide when you're up there.

RIKALA: No, and it's about two and a half stories, three stories up already, that row. Oh, my goodness. So that wasn't a shared project. [laughter]

SMYTH: No, that wasn't a shared project.

RIKALA: Perhaps you can give us a bit of your opinion as to whether you think more art history and architectural history should be done this way.

SMYTH: It depends upon whether two people have done something from the start together or know that each of them has ideas that can be shared. Or very often it occurs that somebody who's about to write about something or is already writing discovers that so-and-so in another place is already doing it, too. And if they are personalities that can work together, then that's fine, I think. I should think that would be great. But the nature of the kind of record of publication scholars have to produce to be promoted these days probably militates against it.

RIKALA: Yes. I mean, the nature of competition--

SMYTH: If it's a joint project, how is a committee to know what your contribution to the project is?

RIKALA: Exactly. It's very hard to determine the fifty-fifty value. Do you think art history has changed a lot? Has it always been as competitive as it seems to be now? Or has it become--?

SMYTH: I don't think of it as so competitive.

RIKALA: Something that you said yesterday which caught my ear was that you felt you didn't have to publish anything until you were ready to publish.

SMYTH: Well, that's because I was suddenly in a very--

RIKALA: Yes, you were in a directorship position.

SMYTH: The director.

RIKALA: But that's still quite a wonderful position of having the confidence to speak from the point of view of knowing that you're ready to speak on something.

SMYTH: I think it's probably not bad to have deadlines.

RIKALA: No.

SMYTH: And I didn't therefore have deadlines. No, I was very fortunate. But, you see, in my time, a lot of major things hadn't been touched. Old [Walter] Friedlaender used to ask of an art historian, if we were considering one, "What province has he conquered?" [laughter] Well, there were provinces still to conquer that were all lying there waiting. That's not true now really so much, though

wonderful things do happen. If you go and study something that's been studied and restudied and restudied like Michelangelo--nobody's ever been worked on as much as Michelangelo--then suddenly you find something that is totally there to be studied. And what Hank and I feel is that, in our pieces, we haven't written anything that anybody else has written, because we're off on another tack, you know, about Michelangelo. Anyhow, it's less possible now. I suppose that makes a difference when one is coming into the field.

TAPE NUMBER: VI, SIDE TWO

OCTOBER 25, 1991

RIKALA: You stayed at the Villa i Tatti until 1985, at which time you decided to leave Italy altogether and come home?

SMYTH: Uh-huh. Well, we decided before that, several years before that.

RIKALA: I remember you told me that you were glad that you'd kept your house here and were looking forward to coming back to be with your family here, back in the New York area.

SMYTH: Well, when we actually got back we didn't know whether we were going to come back to this house or not. A friend lent us a house in Chappaqua, New York, and we were really getting ready to stay there for a period and see where we really wanted to live--probably here, but we weren't absolutely certain--when I was asked by Irving Lavin to come back to the Institute [for Advanced Study, Princeton University] in Princeton. And the leaves that I'd had at I Tatti had always been at the institute. That had been very lucky, because I was supposed to go back--that was the original idea--and do some teaching at Harvard when I was at I Tatti, but instead I took leaves and tried to work for myself. The Princeton experience was always wonderful. And, I never having thought of it, Marilyn Lavin I think

maybe suggested it--I think she did--and it turned out to be possible to ask us there. So I was a visiting scholar for the year '85-'86 there and living in one of the institute's little houses. We thought at the beginning of that time that we might live in Princeton. We couldn't find a house we really liked that we could buy for the same amount that we could sell this for, and we didn't want to pay more. So we began to think, anyway, this is where we'd like to come back to. We worked on rehabilitating this house, because it had been rented and it was in bad shape. Then we moved back here in the summer of '86.

RIKALA: At that point were you considering giving your career back to your scholarship, back to your writing?

SMYTH: Yes. I hadn't really any plans except to retire. I was asked by the institute and Williams College if I would do some teaching. But I didn't think I was ready to do that. I would really want to work for myself or for-- In Princeton I worked the first part of the year on the piece I did about Mr. [Charles Rufus] Morey, the middle of the year on the lecture for Holland [University of Groningen] about the collecting point [later published as Repatriation of Art from the Collecting Point in Munich after World War II: Background and Beginnings, with Reference Especially to the Netherlands (1988)], and the rest of the year with Hank on Saint Peter's. Then we moved here.

Irving Lavin, having heard the piece about Mr. Morey-- because when you're there as a scholar at the institute you have to give a luncheon seminar--asked me to do the Morey there. So I did, and he was sparked by that to see if there could be a session in the College Art Association [of America] meeting the next year devoted to the early years of the history of art in the United States and asked me if I-- He didn't ask me, but he told somebody at the College Art about it who did ask me if I would do this. Well, in those days I thought, you know, I would have lots of time. I was asked to do this, and so I did. I organized a session for the plenary session of the CAA [College Art Association] in '87.

RIKALA: That hasn't come out yet, has it?

SMYTH: No, because it seemed to me too thin. I never thought of publishing it, but people seem to want it published. And Princeton, the department in Princeton, had people in it who thought that it would be good if it were published there, and they decided to do it, but I didn't think it was full enough for publication. [tape recorder off] There was a session again on the history of art in the United States that Tom [Thomas F.] Reese was going to do at the CAA meeting in Houston, but he had to give it up and turned it over to Henry Millon, who collected people to do it and got me to redo the Morey paper as one of those people. Then the following year, [Donald] Preziosi did a

session in San Francisco again on the early years of the history of art. And various people realized that it would be good if these were all together.

So that's what happened. They were all put together, and Princeton was given the manuscript a year and a half ago and then delayed for various financial reasons, I think. But they are now going to do it, and I found a donor, which I never-- I said I would never raise money again, but this thing was sitting there, and I found a donor to do the illustrations so that the thing can be properly illustrated with all the pictures of all the faculty of the early art history departments that we can get. So I think it's going to come out in '92, a little bit late, going back to '87. [The Early Years of Art History in the United States (1993)]

Then, when I was at the [Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts] National Gallery [of Art] as the Samuel Kress professor in '87-'88, Hank and I did this exhibition, which he really organized, you know. That's his--

RIKALA: The Michelangelo.

SMYTH: The Michelangelo. He organized it. Then, when I got there, I worked with him on the second half of it, not the San Lorenzo part of it. And then there was a convegno of papers about Michelangelo drawings, and Hank asked me if I would be the editor. Well, I thought, "That's easy," but it isn't. It took a lot of time. And that's in press.

[Michelangelo Drawings (1992)].

RIKALA: Oh, that's terrific.

SMYTH: That will come out in '92.

RIKALA: So together you two have very much advanced the scholarship of Michelangelo and promoted the studies.

SMYTH: Lots of people are working on Michelangelo. But there are good papers in that group that I've had to edit. I also had to write an introduction, which gave me a chance-- I was really asked, I thought, to make the introduction about method, because the methods of the papers were so different, and so apt they each were, I thought, to what the person was doing that it was a good chance to look at method in a time when people like Preziosi are writing books about rethinking art history. Of course, these are traditionalists, because they work on Michelangelo. Michelangelo is not where you work now if you want to be in what is thought by some to be the vanguard of art history. But the chances are that Michelangelo will not be abandoned. And these papers are all doing things that haven't been done before.

RIKALA: Do you feel that even the traditional methods have been touched by the rethinking?

SMYTH: I read everything about everything, and a bit affects me. But I suppose, you know, being of my generation and believing in it and believing in that book--

RIKALA: [Theodore Meyer] Greene's book [The Arts and the Art of Criticism].

SMYTH: --it's not going to change, basically. In fact, I state again in this introduction my own beliefs about it.

RIKALA: And without a sense of crisis, do you feel that there's room for all these methods in art history?

SMYTH: I think the more the merrier, you know. I think it's great that there are other approaches. They're apt to turn up. They should turn up: ways of looking at things that we haven't looked at. But that doesn't need to cancel out other ways. It doesn't hurt, I think, at all, except when there comes about an inimical confrontation. I was talking to a man this morning who was facing it, where the people of the new thought tell their students, "If you're going to study with me, you may not study with him." Now, that's not the way it should be.

RIKALA: But does that have more to do with factionalism within a university department rather than--?

SMYTH: No, it has to do with beliefs about the history of art, what is politically correct and what isn't. This is a very urgent matter in some few places--I don't think many places.

RIKALA: Well, I think it probably requires the student to draw lines politically in a discipline that doesn't necessarily have to have such strict political definitions. You know, it's just alliances.

SMYTH: Well, the whole notion that ideology is very

important in what one does I don't think was a bad notion to bring to the fore. I don't think it's as important as concentrating on that alone would make you think, but I think it has something to do with what one studies and looks at and writes about, how one writes about it. So that's all good. The only part of it that I can't buy is the exclusiveness of it. I find that Preziosi's book [Rethinking Art History: Meditations on a Coy Science], after you've gone through it, comes out pretty much where one stood to start with. Very strange.

RIKALA: It's not as revolutionary as it might be made out to be.

What was your role as the Samuel Kress professor at the Center for Advanced Study?

SMYTH: Well, I think normally the role is to do your own work but be available to other people, to give one session of the year, and to be an adviser. But in my year, since this Michelangelo show was on, I had a job to do as well. So I worked on this with Henry.

RIKALA: Looking ahead, what are your projects? You've mentioned these writing projects with Hank Millon.

SMYTH: Well, Hank-- That's primary. I'd like to be working less and enjoying more and traveling more and reading a lot, and also things that we [Smyth and his wife Barbara] read together. We've always read out loud for, you know, fifty

years. We've just had our wedding anniversary.

RIKALA: Well, congratulations.

SMYTH: And that we do, and I'd like to have more time for that. I also want to go back to an art historian who means a great deal to me, who's never been translated into English except one small piece, and I'd like to translate some of him into English and--

RIKALA: From Italian or--?

SMYTH: From German.

RIKALA: From German. And who is that?

SMYTH: Theodor Hetzer, whom you will probably never have heard of.

RIKALA: No.

SMYTH: You should read him on architecture.

RIKALA: Really? [laughter]

SMYTH: Yes. He died in 1946 I think, December '46 probably, and was professor at [University of] Leipzig, and was never known I think outside Germany much at all. He was greatly admired by one scholar that all of us admire, Johannes Wilde, who wrote a very good review of a book that he wrote about Titian, but not translated out of Germany. I got to know about him when I was in Munich by virtue of a Russian scholar, Victor Lazareff, who came to the collecting point to see what there was from Russia in the collecting point. He had not been in Western Europe during all the war

and had had no books from the West. In the West he was a well-known, much admired scholar. I had read some of Lazareff's publications. We talked for five days whenever we could with the KGB standing around. It was not very easy to do because he had a lot of people with him who were listening to what was said. In any case, he wanted to buy whatever books he could to take back to Russia. Well, bookstores weren't really functioning very well, but he thought maybe I could find books to buy. And he said, "If you can, the author I would most like to have anything by that has been published since 1939 is Theodor Hetzer." I thought, "Well, if he wants to read whatever he's brought out, I think I'd better look at it, too." So I bought for myself a duplicate of what I bought for him, and that began it. And he became the art historian I have tended to admire most.

RIKALA: What was Hetzer's contribution?

SMYTH: Well, it's a way of looking at the history of painting, first of all, painting and drawing from the time of Giotto to Tiepolo and to Goya, with a little bit in the nineteenth century: Cézanne. He had a view of how painting developed. It's a view that is not entirely true, but such a vision that it makes you see. He wrote about it beautifully in a wonderful German, and it was eye-opening. He also wrote about architecture, but most of those writings

of his have only just come out. In the past I'd read only one architectural piece. His work is now being collected finally. The book of his things on architecture has just come out.

RIKALA: It seems that you've been very, very interested in bringing out both the history of art history and contributing pieces on both your friends and your teachers and your influences.

SMYTH: Well, I really wouldn't have done it if I hadn't been asked to do it. I was asked to do a paper on Morey in Rome because I was in Italy, and there was going to be a convegno in Rome, a week-long convegno in honor of Mr. Morey. They needed somebody to write about Mr. Morey, and I was there, and they asked me if I would, so I did.

RIKALA: So it's just a happenstance. The question I was leading to is, I guess, we're at the landmark point in art history where we can begin looking-- As we're looking forward, we can look back and take--

SMYTH: That I think is happening.

RIKALA: With or without this rethinking going on? Or do you think it's been--?

SMYTH: No, I think it's part of the rethinking, but, you know, the grandfather law is at work always, which takes you back over the previous generation to the generation before and makes you look again at that and find things that you

admire in all fields, probably. And it's functioning here.

RIKALA: Yes, yes. I think it's a particularly interesting self-consciousness, because one doesn't just write for the future audience or one's immediate audience, but one seems to also be very concerned with one's past audience. It's nice to know that so many years are listening along the way. I think that's an important exercise for art history.

SMYTH: Well, a lot of people have contributed to this little book about the history of the history of art The Early Years [of Art History in the United States (1993)], the one Princeton is publishing.

RIKALA: The College Art Association, yes.

SMYTH: I think it's good. [George A.] Kubler did a piece about Yale [University], very short, very succinct but good. Some of the people that Preziosi had did really nice pieces.

RIKALA: So that's very good. I think at this point we could wrap up since I know you're pressed for time.

SMYTH: Yeah. I think I have to do that.

I was going to say I've thought of some things since we last talked. You asked me about Bobby [Robert] Lehman. Well, I have a couple of stories about Bobby Lehman that would tell you quite a lot about him if you wanted to hear, and they just came to my head, but they should have been there before. You didn't ask, and maybe it's not necessary to ask about Charlie [Charles] Wrightsman, but the September

issue of Connoisseur has a long article on Jayne [B.] Wrightsman. And, of course, these were people who were normally helpful to the Institute of Fine Arts [New York University]. The history of the Institute is not a full history without these two people. So there they are. As I say, I'd like to correct some things that are said in that article, and that I could do.

RIKALA: Do you have time to do that now, or not?

SMYTH: No, I don't.

RIKALA: Okay. So we'll have to save that.

SMYTH: That would be quite a long thing.

RIKALA: We'll have to save that for our next meeting.

SMYTH: And also the things about Bobby which I think would be relevant.

TAPE NUMBER: VII, SIDE ONE

MAY 14, 1992

SMITH: I thought we would begin this follow-up session by talking about Charles and Jayne [B.] Wrightsman. You mentioned yesterday you were concerned about some of the recent publicity that's been written about them. I thought maybe if you could begin by describing the situations in which you first met them.

SMYTH: Well, I met them first through James Rorimer just shortly after he'd become director of the Metropolitan Museum [of Art]. I had known him for a long time and we were comfortable. He knew what I was up to at the Institute [of Fine Arts, New York University], and he thought it would be nice if Barbara [Linforth Smyth] and I met the Wrightsmans. So he had us all to dinner. And as a result of that, I asked Jayne if she would be on the advisory committee of the Institute, the visiting committee. She came maybe once or twice, but not much, and I didn't pursue it at all. I think they asked us to dinner at their place maybe just after that, but that was that.

SMITH: What time frame would we be talking about? The mid-fifties? Late fifties?

SMYTH: That's 1955, '56, '57, somewhere in there.

SMITH: Was there a collection already in place?

SMYTH: It was being made, but I don't think anybody knew

very much about it yet. And I'm not sure that Charlie was on the board [of directors] of the Metropolitan Museum yet. But Jim obviously saw great things for the future, I think, with them, but very generously wanted to share it, which was very nice. But it was only after we got-- In 1956, '57, '58, we were occupied with taking the [Doris] Duke house, which I think I must have spoken about.

SMITH: Yes.

SMYTH: And when we finally got in it, then [Benjamin] Sonnenberg, whom I mentioned to you, I think in the fall of 1961, said, "I'm going to give you \$5,000"--he was on the advisory committee at the Institute--"which you may not spend on anything you're interested in." [laughter] "It can only be spent on taking the Institute's light out from under a bushel," which I didn't think it was under, but still-- So I thought about this \$5,000 and thought it would be good to ask the Wrightsmans if they'd like to show some of their collection at the Institute, because I didn't think people were aware of what they had. *[To my knowledge, nothing of theirs had yet been shown at the Metropolitan Museum.] And they said that they would be very interested to do that and would let me know shortly about what they'd

* Smyth added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.

like to show. And then they told me that what they really wanted to show were their snuff boxes. You can imagine the faculty of the Institute when it heard that there would be an exhibition of snuff boxes at the Institute-- But, still, it was a wonderful collection, as you may know, and brought a lot of people to see it who might not have come or have known the Institute otherwise.

And we brought over Francis Watson. They brought him-- or I guess we brought him with our \$5,000--to give a lecture about the snuff boxes on the opening of the exhibition. And there was a dinner party for the opening of the exhibition which Lauder Greenway, who was very much in our corner, arranged. We had a new president, James [M.] Hester, just in, and I telephoned him and invited him and his wife to come to this dinner, and he said, "Must I?" And I said, "Yes, you must." So he came, and I put him next to Jayne Wrightsman. And the exhibition drew everybody's attention.

Very shortly after, James Hester met them on an airplane--remet them--and they became, from that moment on, good friends. And, at the same time, Charlie became very much interested in the Institute. He was always interested in what he called "the best in the world." If he told you about something that he really liked, he was apt to say it was "the best in the world." And he had decided, listening to "K" [Kenneth] Clark and to Charles Sterling, that the

Institute was the best in the world. So he was interested in coming into it. And we had a visiting committee, the advisory committee, and I asked him to join it.

SMITH: I'm wondering-- I can understand what a collector such as he would find of interest in the Metropolitan or in another museum of that nature, but what would a person like him find of interest in a scholarly institution?

SMYTH: Well, Jayne had become, in an admirable way, something a bit like a scholar. She wasn't producing anything, but she was reading art history books and articles very widely. And if you talked to her about anything in the history of western European art, she would know some bibliography, she would know some of the people who were working in the field, she would know something about the state of scholarship in the field. It was an amazing thing. And he [Charles] was hearing this. And Charlie also had a very good mind and a rare sense of quality, which must have been born in him. I don't know how you-- He collected silver early on. I didn't know him then at all. But a silver expert I once met said that his eye for silver, never having been taught anything much, was absolutely superb. And he was good at human beings: who would be successful and who wouldn't was really what he was concerned with most, and whom one could trust or not trust. And when it came to buying works of art, the people who were involved in that

were always conveying the fact that it was his final choice as to whether it was good enough. He had advice, but he knew what he was doing.

So he was interested in this world of people who knew about works of art. And, as I say, he liked to be connected with that world and he had no platform in New York City before any of his collection was in the Metropolitan Museum. One of my rules about fund-raising is to find somebody who needs you as much as you need them. He needed a platform, and he got it by virtue of the Institute and NYU [New York University]. Very soon he wanted us to form a board of trustees for the Institute. Well, the Institute is under New York University's board of trustees, and what the Institute had was the conventional visiting committee. And he suggested that, since a board of trustees was quite difficult to imagine, in any case, we make a little group, a smaller group than the advisory or visiting committee, and make it a real business committee, which is what one needs.

Robert Lehman had always been the chief figure in my day and earlier, before I came, in the Institute's affairs of this kind, and he didn't like Charlie Wrightsman very much. They had been in on a business deal together, and he didn't much like his style. So this was hard. But he could see that there was good in it, so we did it. And this little group finally-- Charlie persuaded the university that

it could be a board of trustees.

Well, this worried me very much, because boards of trustees are apt to tell you what to do, and while we needed these people for what they could do for us, we didn't need to be dictated to at all on an academic level. So with the help of Charlie's lawyer, a man by the name of Tag [Taggart] Whipple, who's still alive, I made a kind of constitution for this board of trustees which Charlie approved because his lawyer approved it, and it made a sharp demarcation between--

SMITH: Now, why did he want a board of trustees as opposed to a--?

SMYTH: Sounded better. Sounded better.

SMITH: Okay. Was he interested in shaping the Institute?

SMYTH: Not really. Not really. He would have thoughts about who ought to be on the faculty, and he would pass them to me. The one person that he suggested--the only one I remember, I guess, and maybe it was only one person--was John Pope-Hennessy, whom I had already tried to interest in the Institute, and we would have loved to have had him, so there was no argument with him about that. And he also wanted to have the Wrightsman Lectures under Institute auspices, and these he decided, with our agreement, to have. They were like the Mellon Lectures at the National Gallery [of Art], from his point of view. That's what he wanted.

Again, his thought was to get the very best people. And this was not hard to do up to a point. I think he discontinued those lectures just about the time I was leaving or thought they had gone far enough to include people he thought were best and we, as a faculty, could all easily agree were the best for such a public series. They were given in the Metropolitan Museum and open to the public.

SMITH: Was there ever any concern that since, I think, other lecture series were developing, that there might begin to be a competition for scarce resources? I mean, you had the Elliot Lectures, the Norton Lectures at Harvard [University], and the Mellon Lectures at the National Gallery.

SMYTH: Yes. Well, we duplicated. Kenneth Clark spoke at both, [Ernst] Gombrich spoke at both, I think, and [Erwin] Panofsky spoke at Harvard, the Elliot Lectures. So there was duplication. But I think it was a perfectly good thing to do, and a few major books came out of it.

In any case, this was how Charlie got into it. But then, because of his friendship with the president, James Hester, he began to influence very much what was happening in Washington Square, that part of the university. He wanted to see the university have some architectural identity, and he was absolutely right about this. This was the kind of thing he could envision for the good of things

he was interested in. And the university had needed a library forever. I knew the president pretty well, and I kept pushing this, that NYU should build a library, and I imagine other people did. So when Hester began to think of what a library should look like, Charlie Wrightsman told him that he should get Philip Johnson to be the architect. So Philip Johnson came in and redesigned what New York University would look like at Washington Square. I think only three or four of his buildings were ever built, and they're not in the same place, so you don't see the unity that Wrightsman and Johnson wanted. It's not a design, I think, that would have been a great credit to Johnson, however. The buildings that are up are not a great credit to him. But it seemed very good at the moment, and it certainly gave what New York University needed, which was an architectural identity. It didn't have it, and it got some, thanks to Charles Wrightsman's inventive view.

SMITH: Well, part of its charm is just sort of being plopped there in the middle of Greenwich Village.

SMYTH: That's right. Well, there was a lot of objection to these buildings in Greenwich Village. They weren't Greenwich Village-like at all. But the big library looms over Washington Square, and if it had turned the corner, and if all those buildings on the east side had also been the same design as was planned--they were all to get new facades

like the library's--well, you would have known it was New York University, all right.

SMITH: The article which we're talking about, the one in the September '91 issue of Connoisseur magazine, describes Wrightsman in really negative terms as compulsive and a person who thought that he knew everything about how to do everything.

SMYTH: Well, I wouldn't have said that. He made up his mind, and he was not easily budgeable once he did. Yet he would have struck people that way, I think, very much. But by virtue of the fact that he was one of our backers and had produced this board of trustees for the Institute, of which he was eventually chairman, he wanted to talk a lot, and the place he liked to talk was to take us on a cruise in the Mediterranean. He took a yacht every year, the same yacht, the Radiant II, which had a crew of twenty-eight, I think--something in the twenties. And it was a splendid thing. And we went on this--

SMITH: Who would come on these cruises?

SMYTH: Well, art historians, mostly. Art historians and museum people, but also friends like the William Blairs of Washington, D.C. Blair's career was in diplomacy.

SMITH: Your faculty or--?

SMYTH: Well, my faculty didn't get invited, but I did, and James Hester got invited several times. Jim Rorimer got

invited several times. Arthur Houghton, who was chairman of the board of the Metropolitan Museum, and Ros [Roswell] Gilpatric, who was on the Met's board and eventually on our Institute board, that kind of thing. And, when he was director, [Thomas] Hoving. This was a place to discuss and think really about what Charlie Wrightsman might like to do in the future, I think. Francis Watson, director of the Wallace Collection in London, who helped him form his collection of French eighteenth-century things, very much, I think, very often on it. John Pope-Hennessy, Cecil Beaton. That kind of-- These people were-- It was a very remarkable thing.

The first time we went, we were aboard for two and a half weeks, I think, and it was only Barbara and me and a doctor, who was an anesthesiologist and was leading the world in new developments in that field. When somebody was leading the world, Charlie was interested. And this guy had been very beneficial to him when he was ill himself. So there were the three of us and the two of them for two and a half weeks, from Venice to Lisbon.

SMITH: Oh. So these were actually very intimate groups.

SMYTH: Yeah. And you were swimming every day and talking every day and having a lot of fun, going ashore at many points. Also being told what we shouldn't do. He was very distrustful of food ashore. We were never supposed to eat

food ashore unless we went to the best restaurant, "the best in the world." And you'd do it sometimes, and you'd come home ill, because he had a kind of spell. [laughter]

SMITH: Did he have a sense of the limits of his knowledge? Where he should not--?

SMYTH: Oh, yes. Well, he thought he could do with the help of people who knew what he would like to do. And we talked a lot just easily and generally about what he was doing and what he was collecting, whom he was in touch with, but also about other things, any subject that might come up. I can remember his saying once--this doesn't sound like the man in that article--that without his father and the money his father gave him, he would have been nothing. Well, that article doesn't tell you that.

SMITH: No, not at all.

SMYTH: And we got no sense that he was incarcerating his father someplace, which I think you sort of get from that article. Now, whether he was or wasn't, I can't tell you, but you got no sense of that.

SMITH: And having defrauded his father.

SMYTH: You got no sense of that, certainly. *[We had heard rumors of his dealing badly with his daughters, but when a

* Smyth added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.

grandson came aboard the Radiant for a time once, Wrightsman was not bad with him.] He was tough with Jayne, for example. If he wanted to do something, he laid the law right down and said, "Do that." On the other hand, he respected her enormously for what she knew, and she was certainly attractive, and the way she organized his life and everything around it was perfection, absolute perfection. When we went to [Villa] i Tatti, we used to say to ourselves that we'd learned something about how you would keep a place, with all those people coming and going, running in a good way; we'd learned something from Jayne Wrightsman, from the way she managed their house at Palm Beach with all its guests. It was remarkable. Very early when I knew him, he said something that was inexcusable, I first thought, to somebody he barely knew. We were talking about something that had to do with Jayne, and he said, "You know, she was nothing when I found her," as if he had made her. That didn't sound really terribly nice. But I realized soon that it should certainly be interpreted as expressing pride in what she had become through her own efforts and strength.

SMITH: Did you know about her background? Did she talk about--?

SMYTH: We only knew that she came from a fairly modest background, certainly not the world that he had come from. She has grace, and she must always have had it. She was a

pleasure to know.

SMITH: Did you know that they had met at a department store?

SMYTH: No, I didn't know that. I knew it was by chance, but I didn't know that.

SMITH: That's one thing that they did not discuss, that sort of thing?

SMYTH: Not with us, no. No, not at all. They wouldn't have hidden it, I think. If you'd said, "Where did you meet?" they would have said. And Jayne would have said. I don't think it was any hiding of anything.

SMITH: Now, she was on your visiting board for a while. But was she on the board of trustees at all?

SMYTH: Was she on the board of trustees? No, I don't believe so.

SMITH: Okay. I also wanted to know if he understood and if--?

SMYTH: No, she wasn't on the board of trustees. No.

SMITH: If he understood, and perhaps if other members of the board of trustees understood in a practical sense what, quote, unquote, "academic freedom" means, since it's not something that exists in the business world. It doesn't have an analog.

SMYTH: I don't think the issue ever arose. If it had, I don't know what would have happened. If somebody was

reported to Charlie to be giving aspects of the history of art or a slant to the history of art that other people didn't like, I don't know what he would have said about that. But it's not an issue that ever arose.

SMITH: What about the ranking? I mean, it can reflect itself also in the ranking you give to different kinds of topics in the sense that you may decide that something is important or something else is not important and want to see the institutional focus--

SMYTH: He didn't do that. No, he was hands off as far as the Institute's running and faculty and policies were concerned. But this had been the thing that I'd been most concerned about, and being able to put it in the constitution of the board, in writing, with his lawyer, whom he trusted completely, I think this-- It was in writing where he and the board-- Where the line was. And I don't think it was ever a problem to him.

SMITH: Was his concern, then, primarily the public profile of the Institute?

SMYTH: His concern was to see that it flourished and remained "the best in the world." *[It helped that he brought onto the new board of trustees Brooke Astor and

* Smyth added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.

Roswell Gilpatric, for instance.] If it was a question of a new faculty member that we wanted to appoint and we needed money for it, he would like to rally help with that. What he didn't do himself was give very much. He promised the Institute a million or so dollars early on but didn't produce it. And this made money-raising suddenly very hard, because when you went to the Ford Foundation or the Mellon Foundation or whatever and they examined who was giving what and there was Charlie Wrightsman as chairman of this board, who hadn't produced, that made getting a grant from them very difficult.

SMITH: Do you know why he didn't produce?

SMYTH: I can't tell you.

SMITH: Did you--?

SMYTH: I'd made this plain to him. I made it plain to him. But in the end--

Well, this led to odd things. I don't know if this is the place to say it. There was a man by the name of Jack [John David] Barrett [Jr.], who belonged to the Mellon Foundation. He headed the Bollingen Foundation, which was part of the Mellon, and was a wonderful person who had been supporting projects of the Institute for years. He was a marvelous one to deal with, because when you went to him, it was, right away, "Yes, that's the sort of thing we're interested in" or "That's not the sort of thing," and you

didn't have to jump through many hoops. So I went to him when things were difficult in the Mellon Foundation on this score and asked him what he thought ought to happen. Well, he said, "I think you should see Paul Mellon." So he talked to Mr. Mellon, and Mr. Mellon invited me to lunch in New York with Jack Barrett and listened to the achievements and plight at that moment and said, "Well, you know, I'm just one voice, but I think you have something." We had a very nice luncheon--we did it all, the pouring of the drinks and whatever else--and very shortly we had a real grant from the Mellon Foundation. He poked into the whole question of Charlie Wrightsman and was satisfied about this, and the Mellon grant came through.

The same thing happened, but not so nicely, with the Ford Foundation. The Ford people wanted to give us a grant of \$3 million. McGeorge Bundy was the head of it at that point, and he was absolutely turned against anything because of this same problem. So Roswell Gilpatric, who had been deputy defense secretary in the same government that McGeorge Bundy was in, [the John F.] Kennedy [administration], said he would go with me to see him. So we went. We were kept waiting in his office for quite a long time. And when we went in, he said, yes, he understood. He would approve a million dollars, but not more.

SMITH: What was this money for? Do you recall?

SMYTH: Well, we were trying to build up the endowment. There wasn't much. There was none when I came. So this was a big effort in the late years.

SMITH: But it sounds like a situation where having a board of trustees was actually working against you rather than for you.

SMYTH: Well, Wrightsman wasn't working against, but he wouldn't come forward with his promised contribution. He eventually did when I left, and that's another story. He got very angry at my leaving.

SMITH: Really?

SMYTH: Because I didn't consult him about that. I'd been there for twenty-two years, heading it, and I knew I didn't want to go on forever and there ought to be somebody else. I was going to just return to the faculty. And then I had an offer from Harvard to be director of [Villa] i Tatti, and I Tatti was the only place I could go without being in a rival institution. I'd been asked to go to Harvard and Princeton [University]--

SMITH: You'd go to the Villa i Tatti--

SMYTH: But to go to Villa i Tatti was not a rival because graduate students from the Institute went there as fellows, so I could do that. And Harvard promised that there wouldn't be any more fund-raising and all that, so I thought-- [laughter]

SMITH: Well, we know about promises. [laughter]

SMYTH: Anyway, when Charlie learned that that's what I was going to do, he was incensed that I would go, first. But, second, that I hadn't talked to him about it. And I didn't talk to him about it for various reasons, which maybe I shouldn't put on record. [laughter]

SMITH: Well, I mean, you can seal anything that you wish to keep off the public record for a period of time. So it's up to you.

SMYTH: Well, I knew Charlie well enough to feel he might say, "If you do that, I won't do this or that." So I didn't want to open up a possibility of that sort of thing. But he was incensed about my not consulting him before I made up my mind, and I can see why. And so he slammed his million dollars or whatever it was down on the table and left.

[laughter]

SMITH: Pretty nice going-away present.

SMYTH: *[He did telephone, though, and made a gentle and friendly farewell and wrote a very warm letter saying we would always be friends.]

SMITH: Who else was on the board of trustees during your tenure?

SMYTH: Well, Robert Lehman, who had been the chief figure

* Smyth added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.

for the Institute always; Ronnie [Ronald] Tree, who-- I don't know if you know about him. He had by then become a private figure, but in England he had been important. Just before he died, he wrote a book about, I think, mostly his observations of Winston Churchill and people he knew very well. He was a wonderful person and gave the Institute's board-- You want on your boards, I think, not only people who need you, but people who, by virtue of their presence, other people want to be there. And Ronnie Tree was such a person. *[I am wrong, as I now think: Tree was on the advisory committee, not the board.] Where he was, people wanted to be. Lauder Greenway, very much, who was very close to Paul Mellon and his sister [Alisa Mellon]. He was very active. After she split with Mr. [David K. E.] Bruce, he was the person she was seeing mostly. So he was also a person people liked to be with, but he was also a real worker, and when it came time to do something, he was really ready to pitch in. Ben Sonnenberg, a great help many times. He was on the advisory committee. So was a very nice lady on Long Island, whose name is-- Mrs. Benjamin Moore, I think her name was, another one whom people wanted to be with very much. Also Andrea Cowden, a well-known figure in New York

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society. We brought Alice Tully onto the board, who was wonderful, a great help. People liked to be with her.

*[Wrightsmen brought on Brooke Astor, Roswell Gilpatric, and Taggart Whipple. I brought in Phyllis Lambert, who had taken courses with Richard Krautheimer, and also Jane Timpkin, who had an Institute Ph.D.] Also James Cherry, who is still on the board there. And how he came in is another whole topic, which I wrote down today.

SMITH: Well, if you want to just go into that now--

SMYTH: Well, when we moved into the new building, it gave us a chance to expand the faculty and-- Not just the faculty so much as the fields that we were dealing with, and that did expand the faculty. And one of the first moves that I wanted to make was to open into Asia. We had one person in Asian, but only one. And we didn't have the Islamic field. And Richard Ettinghausen was not here in New York, but there in Washington at the Freer [Gallery of Art]. He had been professor at [the University of] Michigan. When he had first come to the United States in Hitler's time, he'd been at the Institute of Fine Arts for a very short time, before it was an institute. So I wanted to bring him back to New York. And I got him to come, first commuting, to give a

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course and then, finally, to move from Washington to New York and become, at the same moment, part of the Metropolitan, which is also something I very much wanted to do, to get the two institutions closer together and lend to them the people who would really be good for them. So he became the consultative curator and then consultative chairman of the Islamic department--my name: consultative. Hoving wanted to know why that should be the name, and I said, "Because you don't want these people to be answering letters all the time. They shouldn't be in the daily affairs from the outside world's point of view so they can still go on being professors." *[Tom Hoving accepted this invented name and used it for other chairmen, too, to save them from the obligations of answering all the routine mail and requests. The name is still used at the Met.]

Well, anyway, in the process of this, as Ettinghausen came, he introduced me to a foundation, the Kevorkian Foundation. James Cherry was a legal adviser to the Kevorkian Foundation, and at the first luncheon I had with these people, he was there, and I liked him right away. He was a Harvard graduate, and he seemed really great. So he came on the board eventually--quite soon. And the Kevorkian Foundation became

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very much part of the backup for the Institute and then the university. So that all happened sort of out of that move. And James Cherry is still on the board. At a certain point, the board got part of our endowment funds away from the university's investment people, whom we didn't think were very good, and put them under our own board, and James Cherry ran that. I can't think now of more people.

SMITH: You had down here [Tag] Whipple?

SMYTH: Well, he was the lawyer for Charlie Wrightsman, and he was on the board. Still is.

SMITH: Oh, okay. One of the things that's curious to me-- Well, there are several things. But Bobby Lehman stays on the board, and yet Wrightsman has become chair--

SMYTH: Charlie didn't become chair until Bobby was in ill health. Lehman didn't like Wrightsman's being important for the Institute, and it was not good. It really wasn't good.

SMITH: And he's such a central figure to--

SMYTH: That's right. It really wasn't fair. And I really didn't know how to deal with that very much. I tried to keep not one running it rather than the other, and maybe I did for a while. Maybe Robert Lehman was the chairman until he died. That's possible. That's possible, because I can remember very late in Bobby's life going to him about an agenda for a meeting, so it would have been this board. And it had just come out in the newspapers that morning that he was going to give his collection to the Metropolitan Museum

and that Tom Hoving was going to build a new wing on the museum and take down the staircase so that, when you came in the front door of the museum, you would look all the way through to the Lehman Pavilion at the end. Probably because he had never been made chairman of the Metropolitan Museum board, Bobby had wanted to give this collection to New York University and have us run it. I'd always been a little bit leery of that, because it was to be down on Fifty-fourth Street in his house, and I wanted it, if it were going to be ours, there next to us, in a house nearby, which could have been done. Anyway, he'd never come to that, and so it was not an arrangement that was absolutely essential for us at all. So I congratulated him on this final decision. And he said, "I don't know if I'm going to do this at all. And that stair," he said, "taking down that stair, that's nonsense." [laughter] But I can remember that, and that was surely after Charlie was in there, and it was an agenda that I was doing with him. So he must still have been the chairman of the board.

SMITH: At the end of the session that Taina Rikala did, you had mentioned that you had several personal stories to tell about Lehman. You had actually discussed somewhat in detail certain of the organizational contributions he had made.

But if you could give a sense of Lehman as a person--?

SMYTH: Well, the Lehman that I knew was very gentle and

very nice, whether seeing him in his house--or in his apartment, rather, once in a while in the house where the collection was--or at his office. But you knew that there was tremendous strength and readiness to crack down if he didn't like something. He never did that with me except once, when we were standing by the window in my office and I said something about his advisory committee, which it was called there, and he said something like, "Who's running this? You or me?" Bang. [laughter] But that's the only time he ever did that.

And Barbara liked him very much, and they had nice times talking together when we went to the theater with them or whatever. And we went once and visited them in Sands Point on Long Island after he'd married his last wife [Lee Lynn Lehman], whom the world thought he should never have married, because she was totally unlike the dignified lady that one would have hoped he would have. But it was a nice atmosphere, nevertheless, when we got there.

On the powerful side, Ben Sonnenberg told me a story about when they were traveling in France together. Ben was his adviser on public relations, and they did a lot of traveling together, talking about things. They arrived at the airport in Nice, and the plane that they thought that they were taking was full, and Bobby got angry. He said, "I'll hire the whole plane." And they gave it to him, and

he flew off to Paris with Ben Sonnenberg. [laughter] So he could be tough.

But the man you saw usually when we were talking about agendas, anything like that, was gentle and thoughtful. He was interested in faculty, he was interested in their salaries. He didn't want to see people hurting. He would call me pretty much routinely as the year was ending, the fiscal year was ending, and say, "Okay, how many dollars are you down?" And I would say--it was usually not a great figure--and it would be in the mail. That was all absolutely great.

And he was enormously helpful when it came to getting the Duke house. I don't know if I told about that.

SMITH: Not really, no.

SMYTH: That was a long effort, the getting of the Duke house, and he stepped in at a crucial point and helped that. And he had a lot to do with my staying at the Institute, because, when I got there, the first year, I was a regular member of the faculty, and it was all too much: six courses a year, graduate courses, changing every year. I thought, "How am I going to do this year after year?" And I was asked by the museum [Metropolitan Museum of Art] whether I would be interested in being the curator of drawings, being sort of the first curator of drawings, and that sounded very interesting to me. So it got as far as my seeing Francis

Taylor at dinner. I'd been brought to the Institute by Walter Cook, my predecessor, and he had evidently had the idea from the beginning that I might be his successor, but this was not figuring in my head at all at that moment. And suddenly, as I learned much later, the word went from Bobby Lehman to Francis Taylor, "Lay off." [laughter] So the job disappeared. I didn't know why, but it just suddenly disappeared.

SMITH: You also have down here Lehman's involvement with the choice of President Hester.

SMYTH: Yes, well, did I say anything about that?

SMITH: No, you did not.

SMYTH: Well, Ben Sonnenberg called me-- The president of the university was Mr. Newsome, Carroll Newsome. He had been there for four or five years, a mathematician and a very nice man. Suddenly he announced, I think in the early autumn of '61, that he was going to leave the university by the end of December. And Ben Sonnenberg telephoned me. He said, "Bobby's abroad, but he's just been on the phone to me, and he said he doesn't like that." Because Bobby was a member of the board of trustees of the university as well as being advisory to the Institute. And he said, "Bobby doesn't like this at all. He would like to see the next president be somebody he can trust to keep in touch about any move like that. Will you suggest somebody who could be

president of the university?" So I went home to Barbara and I said, "I'm not going to do this--king maker." But I knew exactly who ought to be it in my estimation. It was a very new member who had been brought in by Newsome to be the dean of the graduate school of arts and sciences. He had been there just one year, but he had absolutely convinced me and a number of other people that he was very good. And people had been suggesting his name, I'm sure, from Washington Square for this post.

But there was another person who was said to be the sure winner, a man by the name of Stoddard, George Stoddard, who had been the president of the University of Illinois and had come to New York University as head of the school of education, and whom I had encountered in a most unpleasant situation, and I had heard awful things about him. So all of this said to me he's the last person who ought to be the president.

And given this, I walked up and down the kitchen--I can remember it perfectly well--"Shall I do this or shall I not?" And I decided yes. So I called Ben Sonnenberg and told him that I thought it should be James McNaughton Hester. Robert Lehman came home and passed the word that he wanted to meet James McNaughton Hester, please. He had decided at that point to leave his collection to New York University, to the Institute, but in his house on Fifty-

fourth Street.

So we--that is, Lehman with me--made up a reason for them to meet, namely, as dean of the graduate school, under which the Institute is officially, he ought to see the collection and to show his interest in it and tell Mr. Lehman that he would, as dean, be careful with this collection, so forth, whatever. So we made an appointment to see Mr. Lehman and went to Lehman's apartment on Park Avenue, and then over--

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SMITH: Okay, so you went over to his apartment--

SMYTH: Yes. So we went to the apartment and then to the house, went over the collection. They talked a lot about the role that the collection might have in the university and so forth, something about the finances, how much money would be given with it, so forth, to keep it and all that-- that kind of straight discussion. And, as a result, Bobby liked him. So the next thing I had-- Well, there was then to be a meeting of the board of trustees to decide finally on the new president. And after the meeting I got a telephone call-- Ben Sonnenberg, who was a very funny man, and he said, "It's in. He's won. Hester's president. And you're going to be the next mayor of New York." [laughter] Which was very funny.

But I thought that it would be very good for New York University because he came from a different world, very much Ivy League, had a degree from Oxford [University] as well, Princeton and Oxford, and could bring a conception of what a university could be that was different from the way New York University looked at itself, and I thought could make a city university proud to be in a city, which New York University always seemed not quite proud to be. And this is what he did.

SMITH: And I gather that there's been a tradition of sort of a crosstown rivalry between Columbia [University] and NYU, and NYU feeling not necessarily quite up to--

SMYTH: Well, I think it does feel up to Columbia at this point. I think it absolutely does. And you see the people who come out to this place [Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities] from New York University are some winners--from other departments. We saw somebody from NYU yesterday who's really something.

SMITH: I think we should also talk about Doris Duke and the Duke house, because that was only alluded to. You did not really go into detail.

SMYTH: Yes.

SMITH: What's your relationship with her and the move to the--?

SMYTH: Well, she had been in contact with the Institute before I ever got there, because Walter Cook knew her. And she had helped the students start a periodical called Marsyas, so she knew what it was. And Walter had always hoped the Institute could move to her house on Fifth Avenue. But her mother was still living in the house, and nothing had happened. And she had meanwhile offered it, when her mother should no longer be there, to the Metropolitan Museum. She had had a break of some sort with Walter Cook. I don't know what it was, but they were not in touch with

each other anymore.

Well, at a certain point, it seemed to me that the Institute, the building on Eighty-sixth Street, was too small for what it was trying to be, and that Walter Cook's idea that the Duke house should be it seemed a good one, although very grand. I was wondering whether we could really work in such a grand place. So I got in touch with James Rorimer, whom, as I say, I knew very well, and said that I knew that she had offered it to the Met. Was the Met going to take it? And if it wasn't going to take it, I would try to see if she would be interested in giving it to the Institute, and would he help? So he said, "Give me two weeks." And he came back in two weeks and said, "No, we thought it over carefully. This is not for us. And, yes, I will help you with it."

So I then went to Lauder Greenway, who knew Doris Duke, and he knew her very good friend Leta MacDonald, and I met with her and told her what we had in mind, and she thought that it was a good thing for the house and that it was worth interesting Doris Duke in doing this. So they brought about my seeing her and talking about it. And she was terribly nice about it. She thought about it a lot, wanted to know what we would do with the inside of it, whether the memory of her father would be properly kept. And while she was still thinking and it wasn't clear that

she was going to do it, I asked Robert Lehman if he would go with me to see her, and he said absolutely. He was for this. So we went to see her in her very modest apartment in New York--not Somerville, New Jersey--and talked about it. And very shortly after, she said yes. And she--

SMITH: It doesn't sound like she needed much convincing.

SMYTH: Well, she was slow about it, but she thought about it. And when she decided to do it, that was it. And she also decided to help with the rearranging of the-- We couldn't have accepted the gift if she hadn't agreed to fund the alterations. You know, you have to make changes in a house to make it work for an institute. So she met with the architect, as soon he was chosen, about his ideas, about how we would do this. She was not always pleased with what he proposed but went along with it. And that was Bob [Robert] Venturi, and it was Bob's first job. So I have a copy of his book that changed the world, that began postmodernism, inscribed, "To Craig, first client, Bob," which I like very much.

SMITH: At that time, was he already moving in that direction?

SMYTH: No. No. No. I was looking for a young architect (a) because I thought that it needed imagination to do this and do it without hurting the building, and yet making it

right for an institute, and (b) because I felt that it would cost us less if we had a young person. I thought somebody who had been through the American Academy in Rome might be good. That would mean they respected old buildings as well as new.

And there was one architect whom I had met there in 1955, when I fell ill in the academy, and he and his wife were terribly nice and nursed me through this, and I liked what he did. I asked him if he would be interested, and he wasn't interested at all.

So then I asked Richard Krautheimer, who was on the committee for the American Academy at that point and knew people going through, because he was sitting on committees, and he suggested a man by the name of Venturi, who lived in Philadelphia. So I telephoned this man, and his voice on the phone sounded great. I liked what I heard. So I asked him to come to New York, and he came. He was then sort of helping Louis Kahn, I think, but he didn't have a practice of his own. And he got a young architect whom he knew, Mather Lippincott, who was very much an engineering type, which Bob isn't, as his partner, and they did it together. And it turned out very well. I can remember lying on the floor in our living room in Cresskill going over Bob's drawings with him. Wonderful drawings. I wish I'd kept some. They were really great. And she liked them, I think,

too. She liked the drawings. I think she caught the quality of those. But the kind of thing he wanted to do seemed so odd to her, and she'd never quite heard of anything like that. But I think in the end, she liked it.

And then she stuck with us when, very shortly after we were in the house, it became clear that this wasn't going to be enough space, because we had started to build a library, which we couldn't have in the old house, and really put our backs into that. And in 1960 we had started the conservation center, by virtue of this space, and that had ruled out a lot of things, a lot of areas that we would have used for other things. I'd wanted to buy the house next door and gut it and make it the library and just have a bridge across. So that could be a full-stacked thing from bottom to top. And Bobby said, "No, you've got enough space. Don't." I couldn't do it without him.

But then, several years later, he agreed that this was something we had to do something about, but then we could no longer get the house next door. So I went up and down Seventy-Eighth Street looking for a place that could be bought, and there was a house just a few doors down on the other side of the street that was for sale by a famous skin beautifier, I guess. And I discovered that he owned half the house, but Doris Duke owned the other half. So I went to her and told her what we were up to, that we thought we'd

like to have it, and would she give us her half. And she said she would, which was great.

By then, she'd gotten interested in the conservation center. She's very good with her hands, and she'd become fascinated with what was going on in the conservation center. The person who was mostly running it, a man by the name of [Lawrence] Majewski, whom we'd brought in when we began it, she liked and trusted. And he would go out to Somerville and show her how to do this and that, even to Honolulu. So her link to the Institute became more than just sort of a formal way of seeing that her family's house was in the right state. Then Bobby Lehman and Wrightsman and André Meyer bought the other half of the house for us, and we had it. Now it houses the Institute's conservation center.

Then, in the mid-sixties, Hester announced that there would be a period of deficits in the university and that he would like help with these deficits, if possible. Well, the Institute always ran a deficit. By that time, it had become a sort of star in the crown of the university, and they were willing to help this deficit, which they still now do. But I thought that in this period of five years that Hester was talking about, maybe we ought to help. So I went out to see her in Somerville and told her what the situation was and asked her if she'd be willing to look at those deficits each

year and cover them for five years. And she said yes. So she did. They were a different figure each year. So that was a remarkable thing to do for us.

SMITH: How much pressure did you feel not to run a deficit or to keep the deficit at a minimum? Or were you supposed to just run your program as if--?

SMYTH: Well, I tried to keep it down, obviously. But the place had become-- That was why we were, in those same five years, trying to get an endowment to help deal with this in the future.

SMITH: You were trying to avoid having to make cuts?

SMYTH: Trying to avoid having to make cuts, and we didn't make cuts. Thanks to her, we didn't make cuts. Bobby Lehman said, "Oh, you're crazy to cover those deficits. You've gotten the university used to that, and they'll never let you have deficits again." [laughter]

SMITH: Another name you've mentioned on your list is C. Douglas Dillon. What was his relationship to--?

SMYTH: Well, it was distant. By virtue of his being important in the museum and becoming, finally, the successor to Arthur Houghton as chairman of the board, he was ex officio, so to say, a member of Charlie's board of trustees, and so was the director, namely Hoving. So they came to our meetings. And also on the board was Brooke Astor, and she was a real spark. If she decided to give \$50,000 to

something, she would turn to Mr. Dillon and say, "And you, would you match me?" And he would say yes. So that was very useful. He would have done nothing on his own for the Institute, I think, but the fact that she was there and that the Institute and the Met had become quite close and we were lending people to the Met made it helpful and good. But whether he really understood deeply what the Institute was doing I never was quite sure.

SMITH: Were there other people at the Institute? Were there faculty that were acting at this level of New York society? Or were you basically the person at the Institute who was supposed to do that?

SMYTH: I was the person who was supposed to do it. There were people who certainly became well known and-- When I first got there, there was a faculty of five. Visitors came from other places for a term or a year, but that was what it was. And I think none of those people, except possibly Richard Offner--I would say, yes, Richard Offner--were in touch with New York society. He was. He knew Miss [Helen C.] Frick very well, for example, and she admired him greatly. He knew the Strausses. Strauss had run Macy's. He was--

SMITH: Percy Strauss?

SMYTH: Percy Strauss, and Percy Strauss's sister, whose name I'm not bringing up [Mrs. Hess], who eventually helped

me a lot, and it was by virtue of Richard Offner that she did. And Walter Cook certainly had been in touch with everybody. But the contingent from Germany less, I would say.

SMITH: Well, I know that Karl Lehmann was, to some extent. His Samothrace expedition was financed by a couple from New York. And I guess that's really the thrust of the--

SMYTH: Yes. Well, now, I'm not clear on what couple it was. He got this, the Samothrace dig, going before I arrived, and they may have been in this then.

SMITH: See, I'm not clear either. We have an interview with Phyllis [Williams] Lehmann. Everyone who has talked about this has said that they remember meeting with the couple and so forth, but they can't remember the name.

SMYTH: No, I can't remember. There was a man who lived in Connecticut who was also very keen on the exhibition and saw to funding it. His name is not coming up to me. The name Strauss comes up, but I'm not sure at all that that was his name. And then there was Lady [Mabel McAfee] Gabriel. Have you heard about Lady Gabriel?

SMITH: No.

SMYTH: Well, she was a wonder. She was a widow. Her husband, Gabriel, had died. And she traveled abroad a good deal. She had never gone to college. She was a great reader, very much interested in works of art. And passing a

London bookshop one day, she saw the Offner [A Critical and Historical] Corpus of Florentine Painting in the window, went in, bought it, looked at it, and decided she'd like to take courses with this man. Where was he? She discovered from the book itself that it was New York University, I guess, so she came to the Institute and asked if she could take a course with him. Well, one of the great things about the Institute under Walter Cook, even before him, and forever after is that outsiders can enroll in lecture courses. And she did. She loved it and got permission from Richard Offner to attend his seminar.

But she also, at the same time, began to listen to Karl Lehmann and was totally entranced by Karl Lehmann. And Karl saw her intellectual capacities and got her started. She wrote two books on a combination of her interest in Offner and his method and in Roman painting. So she brought his sort of connoisseurship to Roman painting. The Paintings in the House of Livia was one of the two books. It was really a good book. Also, she was interested in birds, and so she identified all the birds in the House of Livia's murals, which was also very good. So she made a name for herself.

But she also had lots of money, and she became very much interested in the Samothrace expedition and began to finance it, and before long financed the building of the

museum there. And in 1955 we all went out and dedicated the museum which she had built on the island of Samothrace. And then, when Karl moved himself out of New York to go and live in Northampton [Massachusetts], where Phyllis was, and took his library--because that was the only classical library the Institute had, Karl's library--then she [Lady Gabriel] agreed to build up a new classical library. And we called it the McAfee Library of Classical Art, after her maiden name, as I remember. And we simply took the shelf list of the classical library at the Institute for Advanced Study [Princeton University] and bought it, which is great.

[laughter]

SMITH: Yeah. First of all, my question originally had been the degree these interactions between the school and New York society were related to funding of projects for scholars related to research.

SMYTH: Well, it certainly was in the case of Lady Gabriel. And that was a connection, finally, not of Richard Offner, but of Karl Lehmann with her. They were devoted to each other and Phyllis. And all that-- This is just what you're talking about.

SMITH: Were there other cases? I mean, did the Wrightsmans ever fund any scholarship? Well, of course they did. They did the Francis Watson--

SMYTH: Yes, they funded things. They didn't fund big

things, not until the very end, as I say, when I left. But they helped with small things. I wish I could remember details, but I can't. Who else?

SMITH: What about things like student travel fellowships and student fellowships?

SMYTH: Well, Bobby did that. He made a fellowship in honor of Bernard Berenson for people to go to Italy to work. And Berenson was still alive. Bobby was keen about him.

I should say something about Bobby that I haven't said. He never took credit for that collection, the Lehman collection, all by himself at all, and he would have been, I think, distressed to see it known as the Robert Lehman Collection, as I've told the Met. He would have had it the Philip and Robert Lehman Collection, because his father started the collection, and, as he told me, he was introduced to connoisseurship and the dealer world and all that by his father and was involved in a lot of what went on in his father's time. He gave his father great credit for all of that.

So he was interested in students being close to works of art and getting abroad, absolutely. And one day Harry Bober, who was on the faculty--he joined it after I came--met him at a reception we were having and told him how much we needed fellowships, and he endowed a fellowship just that afternoon, which was great.

I can't now think of other people. Leon Levy, who is a successor--he's on the board of trustees now and came through Harry Bober to the Institute, not through me at all, after my time--has done a superb thing for it. He has given-- He gives to every M.A. student who has pursued a full year of study for the M.A. degree successfully one year a trip to Europe that summer, where he has no project. He must have no project. He goes to look. Wonderful. Every student, bar none. So that's a tradition, I suppose you could say, that started a little bit through Robert Lehman, but a totally new idea.

I had one other thing to say about Bobby. Oh. With his own collection, it was plain that he loved it and loved buying for it and loved the objects. You got that a little bit going through the collection with him. You got it a little bit when he opened a closet and you saw all his drawings, because the drawings weren't up. They were stuffed here, stuffed there in the house. And I always said, "You ought to buy the house next door, if you're going to stay on Fifty-fourth Street, and put the drawings in it." In any case, he always had a member of the faculty of the Institute as his aide for this. Martin Weinberger was that for a long time. And then, when Martin died--I think it was when Martin died, not when he retired--he wanted somebody else, and we got him one other person, and that person

didn't stay very long. So he called me and said, "I need another person." And we had a student who had just come from Hungary after the 1956 explosion in Hungary, a young Hungarian who already had his doctor's degree, whose name I'm now-- George Szabo. I asked Harry whom he would suggest for Lehman to have as an assistant, somebody to sort of help him with the collection, and he said George Szabo and told about the range of his interests. And I knew George Szabo a little bit; I thought it might be a good idea. And I told Bobby about this by phone. I said, "We have a Hungarian who seems to have the range and the interest that you've got." But I said, "You must remember that all Hungarians are crazy." [laughter] He said, "Yes, but I want to see him." So he saw George Szabo and called me up perfectly seriously, and he said, "All Hungarians are not crazy. I like George Szabo, and I'm going to take him." And this was a wonderful combination. They bought drawings together, they pored over things. And when Bobby died, he was made the curator of the Lehman wing. But he infuriated everybody at the Met, because he was there to protect, not to do anything cooperative with the museum, so they finally got rid of him. He was slightly crazy. [laughter]

SMITH: There was an area that I thought we should discuss, and I don't know how much there is to discuss about it, but, obviously, one of the things about the New York art world in

the period after '45 is that it was the capital of contemporary art. And I'm wondering to what degree the people that you were involved with on the board of trustees were interested in collecting contemporary art. To what degree was the Institute beginning to move in that direction, say in the way that Meyer Schapiro was already?

SMYTH: Well, I would have said that we had no one on the board of trustees who was really interested in modern art at all, but one of the products of the Institute was Robert Goldwater. He'd been a graduate student. And his dissertation, as you may remember, was on primitivism in modern art, which was suggested by Richard Offner.

SMITH: That's dealing with the Picasso period, correct?

SMYTH: That's right. So Robert had from time to time taught a course at the Institute, but it seemed to me important that he be a full-time member. At that time he was also helping Nelson [A.] Rockefeller form his collection of primitive art. So Robert liked the idea of being at the Institute very much. I didn't want him as a part-time member. So we made an absolutely crazy pact with Nelson Rockefeller. He and I met over this question, and we agreed that Robert could be a full-time member of the Institute officially but could continue to be the director of his nascent Museum of Primitive Art, and this would somehow all work together. So we did this. This is the kind of thing

the Institute was able to do because it was so far away from [the main campus at] Washington Square that nobody really ever knew quite what we were doing. [laughter]

SMITH: So was he teaching both modern and--?

SMYTH: And that's why I really wanted him, because he was the one person whom the faculty would trust to move into really contemporary things. And his wife being-- Oh, dear. Famous, now very famous American woman sculptor. Bourgeois. Louise Bourgeois. He was very much in that world, and he was a great friend of the abstractionist-- One of the great figures in all of this after [Jackson] Pollock.

SMITH: [Willem] de Kooning?

SMYTH: No, the next one. [laughter]

SMITH: [Mark] Rothko?

SMYTH: Rothko. Great friend of Rothko, who was a very good person, I thought on meeting him through Robert. So this way, through Robert, who was respectable as far as the Institute's faculty goes, we were able to have some of this going on.

SMITH: Because I know that at Harvard and Yale [University] there was considerable resistance to even allowing anybody to write on--

SMYTH: Well, there was resistance among us, among our group. But not ever to Robert Goldwater. So he could do it. And I also wanted to have American art. I wanted to

have Jimmy [James T.] Flexner, who had no credentials whatsoever, but who knew the field and knew it in a remarkable way, I thought. He said, "They will never have me at the Institute. I write too well." [laughter] But, in any case, I couldn't really put him through the faculty. But Robert Goldwater, yes.

SMITH: I'm wondering in terms of how--

SMYTH: And we had Bobby [Robert] Rosenblum, of course, as soon as we could. He had been a student at Yale, whom I met when I substituted one year at Yale, and he was in my class as an auditor, not as a-- He was a graduate student. This class was for undergraduates. He sat there all year, and I came to know him quite well and suggested that he go to the Institute long before I had anything to do with it, because I thought it would be a wider experience for him than Yale. Come down for a couple of years the way George [A.] Kubler did. So he came to the Institute at the same time I did and then eventually stayed for his degree, and as soon as we could we got him teaching in the field.

SMITH: I'm wondering the way the lag time shortened. I mean, it seems as we progress into the sixties and seventies, that ultimately art that was made literally yesterday becomes something else taught in art history courses. And how--?

SMYTH: I missed that, the last thing. Who taught?

SMITH: That the-- I mean, for instance, when one started out, abstract expressionism would be taught but not necessarily pop art. But then the lag in which-- The historical distance between what's being created and when it's being taught is constantly shortening--

SMYTH: It was shortening.

SMITH: And I'm wondering why that process took place at the Institute and if there was resistance to dealing with the contemporary developments.

SMYTH: I think if we'd made it a faculty issue, there would have been resistance. But what instead happened was that people who were respectable, who respected the faculty-- Robert Goldwater first, and Robert Rosenblum next, who had done his dissertation on the eighteenth century--it could happen without being a great issue. And then, just one block away, was Leo Castelli. There he was; he was showing this stuff. And as soon as pop art began, I began to buy it. [laughter] So I was for it. There wasn't a problem with respect to me. But we never made it an issue.

SMITH: Okay. Were you also interested in postpainterly abstraction or conceptual art?

SMYTH: I never really came into the conceptual, and, I must say, I think I left New York just about the time I might have. I would have been a lag on that, I think, quite a

lag. *[But Ad Reinhardt was an Institute alumnus, a loyal one, and still came back to sit in lecture courses.]

SMITH: I'm also wondering--this is a sort of general philosophical question--the degree to which you felt that the Institute either directly or through its influence on the museums--had a responsibility of shaping public tastes on art.

SMYTH: Well, I can think of a specific: the Ettinghausen thing, which we've talked about, might come under that heading. I don't know whether it does. I thought there was no place in the land where people were going to study Islamic, as far as I could see, except [University of] Michigan, which was way out of the way. There was no way for people to begin in this field, so we ought to create some people who knew this field and go out to begin to teach it. Because I felt one way, the shortest, quickest way, to know something about the Islamic world, which often must mean a great deal to us in the West, is through works of art. You can begin that way without the language. You couldn't study with Richard Ettinghausen at the graduate level without learning the languages, but people who studied with him could teach it at an undergraduate level without a

* Smyth added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.

language requirement, and this would be a way of making that world a little bit part of ours, which it didn't seem to be. And that was the argument I very much used with Richard Ettinghausen in getting him to leave Washington and join us: "You come down here on a New York street corner and begin to preach, and maybe this can have an effect far beyond us." But I don't know that I thought specially of it in other respects. Maybe.

SMITH: I'll give you two examples. They may not lead anywhere, but I'm curious to see what kind of resonance they might have. Discussing this with John Coolidge, he talked about how he and Alfred [H.] Barr [Jr.] had long discussions in the late 1940s and early 1950s about how they thought the wrong image of modern art was being presented in the American media, that too much emphasis was put on the surrealists and dada movement, and much more emphasis needed to be put on what he called the tragic tradition of modern art, which would be Picasso, Braque, Miró, and Klee. So, therefore, one of their responsibilities, both he at the Fogg [Art Museum] and Barr at MOMA [Museum of Modern Art], was to try to wean the public away from the showy aspects of surrealism to the more difficult art that they preferred. I'm wondering if there were those kinds of discussions going on.

SMYTH: No, I don't think so. I don't think so. We knew

Alfred, you know, talked to him, had fun with him, Barbara especially. I don't think we ever talked seriously about that. Now, I can see John talking that way with him, absolutely. Yes.

SMITH: Yeah. It struck me, because, looking from the outside, one thinks of museums sort of building up all schools of art and not making those kinds of value judgments necessarily. Obviously they must on some level, but--

SMYTH: No, I don't think that I can remember anything like that.

SMITH: The other example relates more specifically to the Italian classics. It comes from the interview we did at UCLA with Kenneth Donahue, where he talks about the necessity of trying to educate the public about the importance of painters like Guido Reni and his generation. Partly it's practical, because there's no way that a museum like LACMA [Los Angeles County Museum of Art] could get Raphaels or-- But also because he thought, in reality, that it was very important, that Reni and his generation of painters were extremely important and were undervalued and there needed to be more attention paid to them to understand the tradition of how painting had developed.

SMYTH: Well, I see the roots of what he said. When he

followed Richard Krautheimer from wherever it was, [University of] Louisville, to New York, he studied with [Walter] Friedlaender. And Friedlaender had not only written on mannerism but anti-mannerism, namely the Carracci generation and Caravaggio. And he got Kenny [Kenneth Donahue] to concentrate on Bellori, who had written about all these people. And Kenny's dissertation was to have been his life work really, Bellori, and he's a spokesman for that generation. There followed, in the mid-fifties, the exhibitions that Bologna had on these seventeenth-century people, and that was what awakened the world to them, I think. Kenny was there first, but these exhibitions opened people's eyes. Instead of just being "the eclectics," which was a dirty word in those days somehow, they became absolutely the center of all sorts of scholarly attention. And people who weren't in that field would go and spend a long time with it. There were also roots in Italy for this in the twenties, a sort of awakening to these artists. [Matteo] Marangoni, for example, in 1923, had done an exhibition at the Pitti [Palace], I think, on these people. And so there were-- And [Roberto] Longhi knew something about them, too. But it was the fifties that opened up to them, and then you saw--and Kenny could argue--that these were great artists, too. So that may have been something of the roots of what he was saying.

SMITH: Yeah. Part of it was he had to-- I mean, he talks about public education, but there's a specific subset of that, which is he had to convince donors to the County Museum of Art that you were not throwing your money away and making a fool of yourself by buying one of these works of art.

SMYTH: That's great.

SMITH: I'm wondering to what degree in dealing with people in New York there was also a process of trying to widen their horizons as to what was significant or who were significant artists.

SMYTH: Well, I don't know that I thought of it in terms of the public. I myself was in the world of mannerism, and I got interested in the maniera artists, who were scorned, that's for sure. And I've tried to write about them in a way that would show they weren't to be scorned. But I don't think I was thinking of a larger New York public. I think I was thinking of art historians.

SMITH: Well, of course, you were not working at a museum like Donahue was, so you had a different set of practical problems.

SMYTH: I also was keen on seeing people enter the museum world with an expertise that really was strong. And one of the things that I'm satisfied with is that we started at the Institute not only Islamic studies but Egyptian studies,

which was not offered in graduate studies in this country, except at [University of] Chicago, as I remember. And you had to learn hieroglyphics to work in this. And we brought [Bernard] Bothmer in and a really very good man from the Met, a wonderful scholar, whose name is not coming to my mind at the moment [Henry Fischer]. He soon began a dig in Egypt and produced Christine Liliquist, a student of ours, who became the chief curator of Egyptian art at the Met. So we were interested in seeing that we had some influence, scholarly influence, in the museum world, which would eventually touch the public, but I don't think I was looking out over that.

SMITH: I'm not saying that you should have been. What I'm actually inquiring about is how these various social elements combine and--

SMYTH: It seemed to us--and this was Walter Cook's doing--that the fact that the lectures were open to anyone who wanted to come, the lecture courses, and we didn't say, "Some lecture courses you can attend, some you can't"-- They were all open if anybody wanted to come and sit there, and this, I think, we thought of as really doing a public service.

SMITH: I implied in my inquiries that you personally are moving in, in a sense, two worlds simultaneously, or you are the nexus of two worlds simultaneously. Because art

historians have a very particular way of evaluating their work and their sense of dialogue through time and internationally, and then you have these other obviously very intelligent, aggressive people in the business world who have another set of values for judging whether what they're doing and what other people are doing is effective. How one combines those two sets of things so they're not in conflict but helping each other, building each other--

SMYTH: Well, I think that what you've said is so. This happened this way. I think it's successful, your relationship with the outside world--when it's also the supporting world--when you're doing something for them, as I say, giving them a platform or a relationship that they wouldn't have had otherwise. But more than that, a person like Ben Sonnenberg was a collector. He collected brass until you couldn't believe it, the amount of brass you saw in his house, but also other things. And he respected very much what was going on in our Duke house. So his coming to me and saying, "Get your light out from under a bushel" was because he thought this was an institution that had great value and was doing things that people ought to know about, and he cared about it. He would sometimes call up in the morning and say, "I want to take a walk. Will you take a walk?" So we'd go off and walk someplace and talk about things that he cared about. And he wasn't trying to use me

or any such thing as that. It was good. He was an amazing guy. He invented, as far as I can see, PR [public relations]. He had a huge firm in New York, and he, as I say, told Bobby Lehman what he thought he ought to do. He was his PR man, as it were. He once told me, "I'm retained by the Pennsylvania Railroad at \$50,000 a year for nothing. But if they have a wreck, I'm the guy who has to see that the best light is put upon it."

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SMITH: In the article on the Wrightsmans [Charles and Jayne B.], they made quite a big to-do about René de Becker and Eric von Goldschmidt-Rothschild coming to New York.

SMYTH: I didn't know them at all.

SMITH: You didn't know them at all?

SMYTH: No.

SMITH: So you were not aware of their having a tremendous influence on the culture of high society?

SMYTH: No. We knew that Jayne was advised about the decoration of their place. Absolutely. It was not done alone. And we knew she had standards for all of that that were helped by the people whom she knew. But, other than that, we didn't.

SMITH: Do you still see Jayne Wrightsman?

SMYTH: I see her at board meetings.

SMITH: Oh, okay.

SMYTH: I'm an honorary trustee at the Met [Metropolitan Museum of Art], not a trustee, so I get invited once a year.

The following thing about that: When Charlie [Charles Wrightsman] got sore at our leaving, he telephoned very sweetly and he said, "I'm sorry. We've been great friends, but we're not going to see each other again." Whammo. And

then I got messages from Jayne sending her love and sort of apologizing, because when she first heard that we were going to [Villa] i Tatti, she was very-- She knew Mr. [Bernard] Berenson. She liked him very much. She had gotten a lot of impetus for studying things from him, and she said, "Gee, it will be great! We'll be coming back to I Tatti to see you." But he said no. So then we really didn't-- Once in a while we got a roundabout message from her, a very nice message, but we didn't see them. Then, after Charlie became ill and was out of the running, Barbara [Linthorpe Smyth] came to New York for an operation, and Jayne heard of it and immediately got in touch and sent flowers and called her and all that. We saw her a little bit as we came and went from New York.

But we made a resolve when we came back from I Tatti that we were not going to go back into the New York social world. We'd done it, and we'd been seeing people at I Tatti socially for a long, long time, and that we were going to try to live a bit of our own lives and not be back in that. It would have been fun to see them a little bit. Brooke Astor we miss, and whenever I see her she says, "Oh, you've got to come. We've got to see you." But we haven't done that. So I see her only in passing. But she's very welcoming and really very sweet. I felt very badly after this article ["Gilt Complex" *Connoisseur* 221:72-9], and troubled, too, that in John Pope-Hennessy's book of

reminiscences [Learning to Look]- He's excellent on Charlie Wrightsman. He really does get the picture of him very well, I think. But he didn't say much about Jayne, which I thought was too bad, though she didn't show a sign of thinking so when we talked about John's book. So after this article, when I saw her, I, not referring to it at all, but saying that I had been ill and really thinking about my past, said that my view of her, looking from now, was gratefulness, not only for the really wonderful times we'd had, but also what we'd learned from her, the standards that she had set that were a help for us at I Tatti, because I thought that this needed to be said to her somehow.

SMITH: What was your degree of involvement with the Kennedys?

SMYTH: Only that Charlie knew them very well, and he thought, for the Institute [of Fine Arts, New York University]'s good, that Mrs. [Jacqueline Bouvier] Kennedy ought to visit the Institute. Well, I wondered about that. But, anyway, we had a--

SMITH: When she was first lady?

SMYTH: When she was first lady. The Wrightsmans said, "We want her to see our snuff box show. So will you invite her?" They told her what this was all about, and she said yes. So she came to the snuff box show. But we also used it as an occasion to show her the Institute and what it did.

And we'd opened the conservation center by then, and Tintori, Leonetto Tintori, who was at that moment the great fresco conservator in Italy, was visiting in his role as a part-time teacher and visitor at the conservation center. We introduced them, and she liked that. On arrival she said, "I want to see Richard Krautheimer," who had taught her at Vassar [College]. So Richard was brought. [laughter] And that was all-- It was all good. That was all photographed within an inch of its life. I was looking for photographs of Richard Offner the other day for a piece that I've written about him and came upon a whole ream of photographs of the day that she visited the Institute.

After [John F.] Kennedy died, I guess, we met his mother Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy], had lunch with her at the Wrightsmans' at Palm Beach [Florida] and several times with Mrs. [Jacqueline] Kennedy. Then, when the flood hit Florence in 1966, at the suggestion of Bates Lowry, who wanted to get something going in the United States to help with this, I organized a New York committee for his efforts on behalf of art in the flood, and I asked her to be on it, and she said she would. So she came to the Institute for a meeting with Rudolf Wittkower and various others of the academic community who had joined, in which she was perfectly comfortable. Then, on the last cruise that we took with the Wrightsmans, he wanted to stop off and see her on her [Aristotle Onassis's] island. So we spent the day on

the Cristina, if that's what it's called, the yacht, swimming, and then went off with her and the children to a far part of the island and spent the day, with a picnic and all that. So we saw sort of the family life. But she wasn't a person we knew. She was an acquaintance. Fun. She was nice.

SMITH: This is moving to another subject, but I'm wondering to what degree you were involved either formally or informally in discussions leading up to the foundation of the national endowments [National Endowment for the Arts and National Endowment for the Humanities].

SMYTH: Nothing.

SMITH: Nothing? Okay. They just appeared as another source of funding?

SMYTH: The National Endowment for the Humanities [NEH] I was in touch with very early. I've forgotten the name of the man who was then in charge of it. But we had started this campaign for endowment, and it had come to the end of the period--I think this is it--when Doris Duke was covering deficits. I had met this man at a celebratory meal at the New York Public Library, I guess. They, the NEH, had been giving money to the public library early on, just shortly after they were founded, I think. So I thought I would go see him in Washington and see if they would consider picking up the deficit of the Institute for a couple of years while

we finished this campaign. And, lo and behold, they did. And then, when I got to I Tatti, the same man was still in charge, and I went to him for a similar grant, and he did there, too. And they then funded, also, fellowships at I Tatti. So I got to know the people in that place under his regime. Not much under the people that followed him.

SMITH: Did you know Nancy Hanks at all?

SMYTH: No. I met her but didn't know her.

SMITH: Were you invited to sit on panels or on review boards?

SMYTH: Not when I was in Italy, but when I got home I was, at the National Endowment for the Arts. I sat on one panel, and I think I disturbed them badly.

SMITH: Why?

SMYTH: Well, one of the applicants was a library in Harlem that was doing educational work. If you measured the steps that they had taken to fund themselves against what other people had done successfully, they didn't match up. So the rest of the people on this committee wanted to turn their application down, and I thought this was terrible and said so, and I was never asked again. I think that was the reason.

SMITH: You may be covering this in your article, but at the very end of the last sessions at your home, you had said you had vivid recollections of your visit in the 1930s to

Richard Offner, and you could describe what his apartment looked like and what he looked like. So I was going to ask you if we could follow through on that.

SMYTH: Well, I was an undergraduate at Princeton [University] in the classics department, but Mr. [Charles Rufus] Morey, who was the head of the Department of Art and Archaeology, had convinced me to write a senior thesis combining the two departments. The subject was "Virgil illustration in the Renaissance," and Richard Offner, in connection with his work at the museum in New Haven [Connecticut, Yale Art Gallery] and his book, his wonderful book on that collection [Italian Primitives at Yale University], had had to deal with the painter of a lot of these scenes of Virgil illustration. So Mr. Morey said, "You've got to go to Richard Offner and see if he will give you some photographs and give you some advice." So I went. I already knew about him for another reason, which I'll tell you in a minute, and was in awe of him.

So I came, very much in awe, and I came into what I remember as a large room which looked less a living room than a workroom. Wherever he worked, there were photographs in--what do I want to call them?--stands of his own invention, at least I think they were, to put photographs in, and glass over, so that he could put before him the photographs that he was thinking about in connection with

the decision as to whether a work of art was or was not by so-and-so. One of his credos was that you should live with photographs. You should see them any time of the day. They should be there as a part of your life so that you got to know them like people. Then you would know, as you would know anybody's face, who it was. So this was part of it. That's what was in this place: photographs and books and papers and a wide range of room in which there were flat surfaces. That's the way I remember it. I think I was told afterwards that he taught there in that room, because the Department of Fine Arts didn't have any place at all at first. The first things they had, about 1934, '35, were a couple of rooms and a bathroom, and the slides that they had were in the bathroom tub. So Richard taught in his own apartment a lot of the time--seminars at least. Not lectures. Lectures were at the Metropolitan. So that's the way I remember it. He was very helpful--rather distant but very helpful. Trim, alive, young, slow, always very slow, very deliberate. But I got to know him so well as a friend later, I suppose that part of this is what I project back on that.

But that summer before, I'd been in Florence--my first time in Italy--staying at a pensione where everybody who stayed there sort of sat at a central table. One of the people there was Philippa Whiting, who was his assistant and

later to be his wife. She knew that I was at the Uffizi [Gallery] a good deal, and there was the big Giotto exhibition that year, 1937, which he had been an adviser to. He didn't make the exhibition, but he had been an adviser to it. Two ladies, marvelous Italian ladies [Giulia Brunetti and Giulia Sinibaldi]--I knew them both later--had made the exhibition, and they had not always followed his ideas about the exhibition. Philippa Whiting said, "You must come to this exhibition with me." So she took me down and took me around the exhibition. On the way back, two of my club members from Princeton [University] suddenly appeared as we rounded the turn on the Ponte Vecchio--I hadn't known they were in Florence--and they said, "Craig! Where did you get her?" [laughter] She was wonderful looking. [laughter] She took me around the exhibition and showed me one thing after another with Richard's opinion. So then I bought the small catalog--the large one I wasn't aware of till much later--and wrote in his opinion wherever I could remember it from that afternoon against the opinions that other people had had. So I knew about him before I went to see him, and I was very much in awe.

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MAY 15, 1992

SMITH: You have a few things you'd like to add to what we discussed yesterday?

SMYTH: Yes, I wanted to say about the whole [James M.] Hester-[Robert] Lehman affair that I never told anybody in the university about this, because I didn't want anybody to think I had to be paid off for any of this, particularly James Hester, whom I liked very much. So I never passed the word at all about that. People tried to find out. Mr. [Carroll] Newsome tried to find out from me what happened. Mr. [George] Stoddard tried to find out if I hadn't been involved in it, because I suppose he thought how else would Lehman know about Hester, but I would never give any sign on that score. I told James Hester about it a month ago for the first time. We were sitting next to each other at a dinner, and he said, "I want to interview you. I'm writing my memoirs." [laughter] I said, "Well, I have something to tell you sometime." He said, "Why don't you tell it now?" [laughter] So I told him.

About the Institute [of Fine Arts, New York University] and modern [art]: Milton Brown was a graduate student at the Institute in the thirties and left before I came. He wrote his dissertation on the Armory Show. Then already in

the 1930s he began writing about American painting of that era, the 1930s, with a social context, Marxist overtone, and went on to be a great figure.

SMITH: I was thinking of doing a follow-up question on the development of American studies in the Institute, because it seems to be a field that develops late, anyway, period.

SMYTH: Yes.

SMITH: So it must have been-- At Harvard [University], I think it was Chandler Post, who was an Asia art scholar, who developed the concept of luminism.

SMYTH: But you were thinking of Ben [Benjamin] Rowland, I think, not Chandler Post.

SMITH: Oh, excuse me. Excuse me. I'm sorry. Yes, you're right. Ben Rowland.

SMYTH: So the question?

SMITH: The question is, if you wanted to teach American art history--I know that the other aspect of it was that people like John Coolidge were doing work in the American field with the Europeans in a sort of crossover--how would you go about developing a discipline of American art?

SMYTH: Well, it was developing in a funny way, disapproved, I think, by the establishment. But certainly Jimmy [James T.] Flexner did a big job. He rejoiced in not being establishment. He liked to tell you all the reasons why he wasn't. But, in fact, he contributed a great deal, and if

we'd been able to overcome some of the prejudices of the faculty about this, he would have been able to teach there, and people would have gone to him. Then there was another man that he was very conscious of, thought of as a rival. I can't say his name anymore, but he was also making steps in this field. I think they were the two people who stood out when I looked. It was hard. It wasn't going very well. But there was a man, for example, at the Whitney [Museum of American Art] named [John I. H.] Baur, who was the first person to open up the subject of luminism in American painting, as far as I know. The other man, the principal figure at the Whitney, Lloyd Goodrich-- They were doing real work, only they weren't brought inside the establishment. But a lot was going on. I think we sent students to work with Lloyd Goodrich, do a paper with him or something like that.

SMITH: Oh, I see.

SMYTH: I think we did. It was the kind of thing we would be apt to do.

SMITH: Would you invite someone like him to give a special seminar or a lecture course?

SMYTH: Well, we did invite Baur to lecture. I can't remember about Lloyd Goodrich.

SMITH: What was the basis of the resistance that you've mentioned about incorporating American art history?

SMYTH: I think that the Eurocentric, as we would say now, view was that not much had happened here in the way of art and that the method that people brought to it wasn't profound enough or didn't have high enough standards to make it a part of graduate school. Something like that.

SMITH: But I think it was-- [E.] Maurice Bloch did his dissertation at the Institute on George Caleb Bingham, if I'm not mistaken.

SMYTH: Now, when was that?

SMITH: In the 1950s is when he completed. I think he started his studies in the forties, and I thought he studied under [Walter] Friedlaender.

SMYTH: Could have been, and Friedlaender would have been interested. Once drawn in, he would have been interested. That was just when I arrived, so I don't remember that.

SMITH: So you could make those sort of individual connections with the faculty?

SMYTH: Yes, yes. Sure. And a fairly early graduate student wrote his dissertation in my era on a Hudson River School artist, whom we all know, which I'm not able to say at the moment. [Jasper F.] Cropsey. A good catalog. So it happened. I mean, it was allowed, if somebody wanted to go off and do that.

I had a graduate student who wanted very much to write on Giovanni Bellini, but he didn't bring to Giovanni Bellini

the kind of equipment to do it. He had come from the Barnes Foundation to the Institute and had had the background of Mr. [Albert C.] Barnes's way of looking at pictures. It was [William] Glackens who really taught Mr. Barnes to look at pictures, in my view. So I put this man onto Glackens, and he wrote a very good dissertation on Glackens. *[His name is Richard J. Wattenmaker, now head of the Archives of American Art in Washington.] So this kind of thing happened at the Institute, but it wasn't central, except that there was Robert Goldwater doing it a good deal of the time.

Also, Ad Reinhardt, for example, had been a student at the Institute, a graduate student. I think he took an M.A., something like that. He was one of the theoreticians of modern art, as well as one of the examples of minimalist painting before it was called that. He came back to the Institute all the time to sit in lecture courses, even when he'd become quite famous. That was one of the advantages of the Institute. I can remember one time when [Marcel] Duchamp came to a lecture. So it wasn't out of bounds for that.

Then, I wanted to say a word more about Charles Wrightsman putting Mrs. [Jacqueline Bouvier] Kennedy into

* Smyth added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.

the picture on that one occasion at the Institute. He did it to make the Institute visible, as Ben [Benjamin] Sonnenberg had hoped.

You could say a lot about Charlie and Tom [Thomas] Hoving--I don't know whether one should or not--but he didn't altogether approve of him. But as soon as Tom was director, he was then good with him. I don't know whether he changed his mind, but he dealt with him. Trustees: I think Dorothy Bernard was a trustee, and she was a Lehman and the sister of John Loeb's wife, Peter Loeb. So she was in that picture. You asked me that.

Robert Lehman, one or two things about him: He didn't like the idea of people on the Institute's faculty being involved with the market, which I found interesting.

SMITH: The art--

SMYTH: With the art market.

SMITH: Right.

SMYTH: But I never heard him object in the case of Richard Offner, because Richard Offner had a very strict rule: "I don't care what you bring me to give my opinion about; the price will be the same. If it turns out to be a Raphael, the price is still the same." He never varied. He had a fee if a dealer wanted him to tell what he thought, period. So no one objected to that. But when Lehman thought one member of the faculty was involved in the market in more

fluid ways, he didn't like that at all.

SMITH: What did he do about it?

SMYTH: Well, there wasn't anything you could do about it, but this man had been on the faculty a long time, and-- I'm not sure it was true, but it looked to various people as if it were true. Robert Lehman, who had his connections with the market, thought so. He also agreed with all of us--I don't know who held this position more--that it was great to have contributions from the world of the dealers to the Institute, but he didn't feel that one should collaborate in dealer exhibitions for the benefit of the Institute, which the dealer also might be using for purposes of his own. That was all, I think, perfectly above-board thinking.

SMITH: Well, how did you feel about these questions? Did you--?

SMYTH: The same.

SMITH: Same.

SMYTH: Uh-huh. Exactly. No, we had no disagreement.

SMITH: Do you think that the general, shall we say, code of conduct in the relationship of expert advice and the art market has changed over the last forty years?

SMYTH: Well, I can't tell you. When I was coming up, we were all so put off by the previous generation's involvement in the art market. If you looked into the files of the

National Gallery [of Art] in Washington [D.C.], as I did when I started out there, you had statement after statement from art historians--there were a whole slew of them--who would say, "Yes, this is by so-and-so," when you knew it was a dog, you know. [laughter] They must have known it was. So we didn't like that at all. Most of us wanted to absolutely clear away, completely stay out of it all. I think there was a way of doing it: "Yes, you can show me something. I don't want a fee for it, and I don't want to put what I'm saying in writing." So if somebody came to you with something like that, if you said that, you said what you thought, which is a perfectly decent thing to do, but it never was in writing, and you didn't get paid. Now there are people who are still, I'm sure, doing what the previous generation did, but I shouldn't have thought that there were a great many doing that. You probably know more about that than I do.

One thing I wanted to say also about Robert Lehman's decision to leave his collection to New York University: I can't be sure, but I think that it was because he was not in the ruling circle of the Metropolitan Museum [of Art]. Tom Hoving saw this and saw to it that he was made president of the museum. He had always been in very close touch with James Rorimer. They had talked almost every morning on the phone. So he knew what James Rorimer was thinking and had

his input through him. But under Roland Redmonds's regime as chairman of the board, he simply wasn't recognized as a major figure, and he should have been. When Tom Hoving came in and Arthur Houghton was chairman, they saw to it that he was made president, or vice versa. I've forgotten which it was. It was that time, then, that Hoving asked him for his collection, as he properly should have. So that was a footnote to that.

Oh, and I wanted to say one more thing about Robert Goldwater's odd appointment. It was irregular but made absolute sense. He could be full professor at the Institute while doing the job for Nelson [A.] Rockefeller, which didn't take very long. He had that access to that growing collection for his students. So it all made good sense. And he had time to be deputy director to me for nearly six years. So it worked perfectly well. It looked unorthodox, but it was perfectly okay.

SMITH: When he was hired, was he hired primarily as a professor in primitive art or in modern art?

SMYTH: For the whole thing, I think.

SMITH: The whole thing.

SMYTH: He'd been teaching at the Institute from time to time. He wasn't a new addition, but he hadn't been full-time. He hadn't been a professor there; he'd been a visitor.

The one other thing that I-- I gave you the list yesterday of people who joined the faculty after my time.

SMITH: Yes.

SMYTH: One I left out was Colin Eisler, who joined-- He was practically the first of these people. He came in at the suggestion of Richard Krautheimer and has been an ornament to the Institute ever since. I should have thought he was very much in touch with the social world in New York. He's a member of the Century [Club]; he's moving easily in that world and I think has lots of friends in that world.

SMITH: Well, in the 1930s, art history was a very small, actually rather unimportant aspect of American academic life, and maybe art was not a very important part of American life in general. Yet, by the 1980s, art is certainly a multi-million-dollar business, and art history is far-flung. And I think there's some-- Diana Crane, in her book [The Transformation of the Avant-Garde], had a statistic that 80 percent of the American museums were founded after 1940, currently existing museums when she wrote that book, which was '87. Do you have any thoughts on why art history and art became so important in American society in that fifty-year period?

SMYTH: Well, I think that art historians had a lot to do with it, because the subject began to be taught in colleges and universities. It didn't really begin in this country

until the 1860s, I think. Vassar [College] was the first place, not Harvard. This has recently been shown. Very slowly, but out of these rather elitist institutions the subject spread as something you knew about. My mother [Lucy Salome Humeston Smyth] took the history of art in Mount Holyoke [College], and she was the class of 1906. Slowly it was moving out. Then, by the 1930s, had become, in Princeton [University], certainly, a major matter. That department had started in 1883, I think. Mr. [Allan] Marquand had presided over it until 1924 and seen it all the way from nothing to a major influence. It certainly was something that, when we came to college in the 1930s, was a subject that everybody was interested in. We wanted to take at least a little of it, you know. And with the Institute on a New York street, that helped very much, I'm sure.

In the University of California, pretty gentlemanly art history until the arrival of Walter Horn. That was the first scholarship that arrived in the field. Appreciation preceded scholarship. Once scholarship was in, I suppose it became a very respectable subject and helped to make it spread. But I'm sure that's not the whole story. The arrival of the Europeans in New York for the war, that had an awful lot to do with what went on. It moved things fast. SMITH: Well, part of the reason I ask is it has to do with-- I mean, you chose the career at a time when it did not

necessarily have a lot of prestige to it, even though at Princeton it was an important part of the work there. As you've built your career, art history has also expanded. So I'm wondering how you see those kinds of connections between the ambitions of the men and women of your generation and the results they accomplished.

SMYTH: I don't know how to describe that. Ambition wasn't a word in the picture, I think, for me and my generation. I was in the classics department of Princeton, to take my case, and I liked the kind of thing I was doing. I was pushed in that direction, in the directions of universities, also-- My mother wanted me to be a doctor. So I started in Princeton doing premedical. But I had a teacher in history in the first year who, at the end of the year, said, "I'm going to go to Istanbul to be the president of Roberts College. Would you like to come and teach there when you finish?" [laughter] I said, "Sure. That sounds great." But he said, "You ought to take this, you ought to take that in preparation." That moved me away a little bit from my notion that I was going to just stick to the classics. So I took a number of things outside of that.

My best friend from long, long before [Henry Gardiner] came to Princeton with me, and he was taking-- He was a painter, he was taking history of art. So I sort of thought

what he was doing, I'd like to do. But when moved, I found myself doing it, because I loved it very shortly. But I got into it sort of without thinking. Then I was going to go on in graduate work in classics, and Mr. [Charles Rufus] Morey had been my adviser for my thesis. He'd gotten me doing Renaissance art in connection with Virgil. When I made up my mind to do classics and got accepted as a fellow for the first year of graduate study, and I was going to be teaching, too, I had a terrible twenty-four hours.

[laughter] I thought, "This is not what I want to do." So I went over to Mr. Morey's office and told him I'd made a mistake. I thought that it was probably too late to change it. He went down to the end of his office, swung around, and shot a four-letter word, a mild one, and said, "You get over to Nassau Hall. I'll telephone." It wasn't very well planned.

We had no notion that we would make money doing anything like this. Nobody ever thought of that. You didn't know where you would end up. You just liked the subject.

SMITH: Did you assume that you would become a professor?

SMYTH: I don't think I was assuming. Mr. Morey decided that Charles [P.] Parkhurst [Jr.] and I ought to be museum people, not because he thought we might be very good museum people, but the National Gallery was opening, and he wanted

some people in the National Gallery. So he said to both of us, "I'm sending you down to be interviewed at the National Gallery." [laughter] And we went and we were both taken.

SMITH: So in terms of the thirties, and as you enter the field, it's because of love and interest, not because of any ambition.

SMYTH: Interest, yes.

SMITH: But in the 1950s, when you're the director of the preeminent art history program in the country-- Maybe not everybody would have agreed with that, but certainly you thought so.

SMYTH: Yeah, I thought so. [laughter]

SMITH: At that time, did you have ambitions for what the Institute would become? Did you want to shape it?

SMYTH: No, I don't think so at the start. My chief thought was to continue it as Walter Cook had gotten it going, with earlier influence on this by Fiske Kimball and Richard Offner and John Shapley. But it was Cook who really put it together and made it, and it seemed important that that not be threatened. There were two or three things that I thought ought to be revised, but that was not to make it bigger or any such thing as that. It was just to make it what I thought worked better. The requirements for the M.A. and Ph.D. made people jump through so many hoops that there weren't many Ph.D.'s coming out. The thing had existed for

years, and only fourteen Ph.D.'s had ever come through it. So I thought that ought to be changed. And we changed it. Whether that was good or not, I don't know, because there were lots of Ph.D.'s thereafter. Maybe there shouldn't have been so many. But the standards held, absolutely. The standard held. But the number of hoops changed.

SMITH: Well, that seemed be a trend in general, throughout American academia, simplifying the requirements. Going from three-day comprehensive exams to a one-day exam.

SMYTH: Yes. Yes. Well, it still meant-- What had happened at the Institute, if you're interested at all, was that you had three fields, and you continued to have three fields. Previously, you took a big exam in all three of those fields, in your major even bigger and longer than in the others. People would work for years on preparing for each one of these. Our solution in the end was to make the unrelated minor without an exam. You simply had to take X number of courses in that area so you knew something about it, and then we put the related minor and major together so that it was one hurdle rather than two separate hurdles. That made a great deal of difference. It was a tough exam still, but it didn't go over so many years.

Then the faculty had never had any leaves for anything. So I thought that had to be changed. [laughter]

SMITH: I'm surprised they didn't think of it themselves.

[laughter]

SMYTH: Well, they were mostly European. Richard Offner only taught half-time. He was in Europe one half the year and in the United States the other, so he wasn't involved in that. But the rest of them were doing full-time teaching steadily. The tradition of the Institute was to change courses every year and to teach three courses a semester. So I thought there were too many courses a semester. Reduce it two and have a leave schedule. So those are the only things I really thought about at the beginning.

Then John Coolidge, who we've been talking about, thought really that the center of gravity for the history of art ought to move to Cambridge [Massachusetts, to Harvard University]. So he made some invitations to this faculty. And I react to challenge, so I decided that shouldn't happen. On the basis of that, I suppose I began to think more of changing the Institute to make it a richer and broader offering.

SMITH: And that's when you started thinking of adding more fields.

SMYTH: Yeah.

SMITH: Okay. I had some questions about Villa i Tatti. Particularly, I was interested in the relationship of international cooperation and how art history as a field involving people from different countries with different

traditions affects the way people do work. There you are, an American institution in Italy, which has a rather different academic environment and different way of setting up its archives and where the academic environment is much more explicitly political. People's allegiances are important. What kind of interaction did you have, say, with the Italian government?

SMYTH: Not much with the Italian government. First of all, as far as I Tatti goes, it's not just a history of art, it's the whole range of Renaissance studies, including history of science. Not very many history of science people have been there, but there have been, and one wants them. So it's political, economic, art, architecture, music, the whole thing. The principle there is that people from any culture can come providing they have standards and promise and achievements that put them in the running. So every year at I Tatti, there are people from all over the world, including Japan. And there's no quota at all. One likes to see a sufficient number of Italians to keep the sense this is Italy, after all, that you're in. But that's easy, because they turn out a marvelous lot of scholars. Once there, I think it's eye-opening, especially to Italians, I suppose, to have a day-to-day contact without formalities. Again and again a fellow appointed from Italy but also from many other

countries would end the year by saying, "This is the most important, enjoyable, richest year of life in scholarship I've ever had." It didn't happen that way for everybody, but it happened that way for a lot.

As for connections with the surrounding world, Italy, Florence, was very welcoming. I, as director of I Tatti, was asked to be very shortly on the committee for the square outside the Palazzo Vecchio, Piazza della Signoria. Well, for a foreigner to sit on their committee about what to do with that square-- Thank God they never could decide in my time, because what happened in the end was a disaster. But still, I was on it for a while. One was welcomed and brought into it.

Eugenio Garin, for example, had never shown, I was told, much interest in what happened to I Tatti. He was the great scholarly figure in Florence and a person you admire on every score. So I thought this could be closer if there were interchange sort of constantly between his institution and ours. I asked his right-hand to come to lunch as part of the group whenever he wanted to, and I gave him a key to the building so he could get in and out and use the library just like any of us however many hours a day. This became wonderful, because he brought a lot. He's a fine scholar. The mysteries of this place vanished for those people in town once he could say what went on there. So Eugenio Garin

became really relaxed and comfortable about it. We asked him to come and give a lecture on any subject he wanted. He came and gave an autobiographical lecture about his career as a scholar. Well, to do that in our house? You know, that was a wonderful thing. And people came. The lectures were open, much more perhaps than they had been in the past, to the whole scholarly community in Florence. But it all worked without much effort or even thought about it.

Well, I was drawn into all sorts of things, the four hundredth anniversary of the Uffizi [Gallery], for example. I got to know Paola Barocchi a little bit, and she's a great power and a wonderful person. Suddenly I was on a committee that she was running for the four hundredth anniversary and ended up the keynote speaker. I don't know how. It's quite amazing. [laughter] So there didn't seem to be walls. We probably could have done much more than we did. We were too far away from the central government to have any--

SMITH: The Tuscany government?

SMYTH: No. [Giovanni] Spadolini, who ultimately became prime minister, was, when I arrived, the cultural minister of Italy. He was a Florentine very much and had been professor in the university, respected as a professor, and he certainly was friendly towards the existence of the institution. We didn't have much contact with him, but he certainly was open. I think it was mostly without strain.

SMITH: One of the things that has struck me about the difference between academic work in Europe and the United States, even in the humanities, is the greater emphasis they put on research teams and people working together on common projects.

SMYTH: We didn't see that much, I think, at I Tatti or in Florence, I think. Eugenio Battisti presided for part of my time there over work at the [University of Florence] school of architecture. And, yes, with him, teams. Absolutely. But he was very much a catalyst for that kind of thing. There was a collaboration on Lorenzo de' Medici studies under the aegis particularly of Nicolai Rubenstein, who, though far into his seventies, maybe his eighties, is still very much a major figure. He taught in London in the Warburg [Institute] circle. Many good scholars came out of that. He had a seminar that ran for years in London to which anybody could come and sit and talk Renaissance studies. The people who worked with him in London came very close to people whom he'd worked with and knew in Italy. So there was a lot of collaboration in a general sense, but not sitting down at a table and working together the way Hank [Henry Millon] and I have done. You know, we write together.

SMITH: Which still is an unusual thing, for people to collaborate on that level.

SMYTH: Yes.

SMITH: I mean, it has struck me, from the people I know, that the Europeans-- Perhaps it's because of government funding, but I was wondering what you thought might be the reasons for that greater ability to--

SMYTH: I haven't thought about it, really. I've just always been puzzled that there wasn't more collaborative work. But if it's to be real collaborative work, then you have to be absolutely willing and happy not to look for credit. Our rule--Hank's and my rule--became, slowly, without even thinking about it, that we couldn't try to remember who thought of what. If one of us thinks of anything new, it's ours. Or who wrote what. Some of the time we write together, sometimes not. That's not the way scholars mostly think. They're mostly thinking about the next publication which will help them to get a higher post or whatever. That's built into our system, in a way. We were lucky, because we weren't trying to get up a ladder or any such thing as that. We weren't going to profit monetarily or academically.

SMITH: You had on the notes you gave me yesterday that you wanted to discuss [McGeorge] Bundy and Harvard and the visiting committee.

SMYTH: Well, I thought afterwards that maybe that's not necessary. [laughter]

SMITH: Oh, okay.

SMYTH: It was really a picture of McGeorge Bundy functioning and the ad hoc committees at Harvard, which I was on a couple of times, thanks to John Coolidge, I'm sure, in the 1950s. I was on the committee for the appointment of Seymour Slive, for example, and saw how it worked, and it was wonderful, I thought. But I didn't get a very good picture of Mr. Bundy in all that. A very good picture of Nathan Pusey, however.

SMITH: But Harvard has a very particular and somewhat unique system for how it selects faculty.

SMYTH: Uh-huh. I thought that was wonderful, what I saw, but that was back in the 1950s, you know, 1953 or '54.

SMITH: I had wanted to ask you what you felt were the most significant involvements that you had in terms of committees and boards. Someone like you sits on a lot of boards, I'm sure, and a lot of committees.

SMYTH: No, I don't. I don't really. I shouldn't have thought. I'm a trustee of the Burlington [Magazine], but we don't meet, really. Once in a while we do. Niel MacGregor, now director of the National Gallery in London, still takes an active part, and once in a while we meet with him and Caroline [Elam], the editor, and that's nice. In the Institute of Fine Arts I'm on the board of trustees. That's interesting because I get caught up on what's happening. My

thought is that old directors should stay away, mostly, from the institutions they were at so that the successors don't feel hounded. So I don't get much of a picture of what's happening at the Institute except by going to those trustees' meetings, which is nice. And they're good people, and I'm glad to see them. It's not something that deeply involves me.

I am concerned with the choosing of fellows still for I Tatti, and I love that. The discussions one has at such meetings are about the subject--not just about people, but about projects and so forth. I have had a certain amount of that always, but not a lot.

SMITH: And, of course, you're on the Getty Center [for the History of Art and the Humanities]'s visiting committee.

SMYTH: Yeah, and that's been fascinating from the start. Harold [M. Williams] has been very good at picking people out and getting them to think. I was there early, because I was raising money from the Getty before Harold arrived, or trying to. So when he arrived, I saw him right away. It turned out that I and a number of other people were involved in helping him plan what he would do at the Getty. That was great. That was wonderful. He's great at drawing on people.

SMITH: I have two lines of questioning, but I'll take the easier one first, which is you've been on both sides of the

visiting committee or board of trustees question, and I wonder how you view what the limits are that a member of a visiting committee or a board of trustees should observe in terms of advocating a point of view or intruding--intruding is maybe not quite the right word--but getting involved in the operations.

SMYTH: Well, it's how seriously the institution wants to know, I think, that matters. John Coolidge once said, "Visiting committees are made up partly of people in the know and partly of people in the chips," and they are mostly formalities to try to interest people who have money who can back things. That's what they mostly are. In this case, the visiting committee here started not as a visiting committee, but as a real advisory committee to Harold and Nancy [Englander]. He wanted to really know what we thought, and we were there to tell him what we thought. Then, when Kurt [Forster] got in place, the decision here in the center was to make us a visiting committee. And, by definition, the visiting committee just comes and hears what the group says it's doing and is supposed to bow and say thank you and leave. [laughter] But Harold wanted more than that. So after the visiting part of the visiting committee went, he would get ahold of us and say, "Okay, tell me." So he got a lot of different points of view, which was good. Then some problems developed that seemed to

be very difficult, and then he really wanted the committee's aid in helping to solve those problems, to see them clean and clear. I think the committee did help. This committee has ranged all the way from-- Well, we were never a money-raising committee. [laughter] Nobody was there for that.

SMITH: But it sounds like, then, you were on the ground floor of the discussions that led to the creation of the center.

SMYTH: Yeah, right from the beginning.

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SMYTH: They [Harold M. Williams and Nancy Englander] were, neither one, deep in the art historical world or in the museum world. Nancy, some, in the past, and she'd had the job of directing--what was it?--the MacDowell Foundation? I think that's the name. But they didn't know people in this world of art historical scholarship much. Nancy came first to I Tatti alone, and then Harold, and she came to talk about things that they were thinking through. They needed to know more people in this world that they were moving into, and I'm sure, as they picked up one or another, they learned about more. I introduced them to some. Then they spent a lot of time with this advisory group, when they finally formed it, talking about not just the center, which we were officially there for, our group, but really wide-ranging about the whole thing. Not that we had great input on all of it at all, but we did on some of it and saw its shape. They kept us meeting one place after another for a couple of years.

SMITH: For you, what were the important issues at the beginning in terms of shaping the center? Perhaps even before Kurt was appointed the first director. What were the things that intrigued you most as possibilities?

SMYTH: It's hard to think back now to that point. I think

we didn't want it to be a duplicate of the places that exist. I think several of us thought that there was a chance--which really hasn't been taken advantage of--of bringing the scholar world and the museum world close. There's a long division about which Max Friedländer wrote in the early twentieth century. Split is a heavy word, but the distance between the museum scholar and the university scholar. It's partly because one is more object oriented, but it's not necessarily so. You take a Richard Offner, who never worked in a museum in his life, and he was the most object-oriented person you'd want to see. So one of the things we were interested in in New York was to try to bridge this gap. We thought here at the Getty was the perfect place to make an advance. So that we cared about very much, and that really hasn't happened.

SMITH: That was going to be the next thing I followed up on, because one of the last things you said in your session in New Jersey was--and you did use the word split--"The Getty had gotten caught up between the museum and the scholarly world." I wanted to discuss with you in terms of the depth of your career the efforts that you had taken at the Institute and I Tatti and your involvements in things such as the Getty to bridge that gap.

SMYTH: Well, for me, I would never have thought of it as a gap, because I went into the National Gallery right out of

graduate school, and then, after the war, to the Frick Collection, and I didn't think that I was any the less whatever because I was in one of those places. When I got asked to the Institute, I didn't think that was much of a jump, not much of a change. When I got there, I became aware of the split. There was a split having to do, I think, with personalities, partly, between the Institute and the museum [Metropolitan Museum of Art], which hadn't been there earlier at all. The classes of the Institute had been held in the museum. With Richard Offner, a major figure, the works of art across the street were a major matter. Walter Cook used to say, "I don't need a college museum. We have our college museum right there." That's why the Institute had decided from the very beginning, long before it was an institute, that its graduate courses must be at the Metropolitan, or next door. So there didn't seem to be a split, except when I got there, there was somehow. Something had happened.

So I tried to put that together again and think of all the ways in which we could meld our communities. Harry Bober was very much for this. There were other members of the faculty who wanted very much to see that we somehow addressed the problem that Max Friedländer had long before isolated as a widespread phenomenon.

SMITH: So you did develop a museum training program.

SMYTH: So we developed the museum training program. That

was all part of it, and to try to see that people with strong scholarly background wanted to go to museum careers. We felt, rightly or wrongly, that up at Harvard the people who went to museums were the people who were not the scholars but were thought to be suitable for the social and connoisseur world of the museum.

SMITH: Well, there certainly was a strong focus on the scholarship of connoisseurship, shall we say--

SMYTH: Yes.

SMITH: On being able to take an object and identify it from its physical characteristics rather than contextual study.

SMYTH: That's true. That's true. Well, somebody like Jimmy Rorimer, who came out of that, was an object man and wonderful, but he always felt sensitive about the fact that he didn't have full training, I think. Anyway, that was one of the aims, to try to see that people who were very good wanted to go into museum work and be object-oriented scholars.

SMITH: And for your museum scholars, did you assume they should have the same scholarly accomplishments as someone who was aiming to go into a university?

SMYTH: Exactly. Exactly, only with the additional component that some of their courses were in what was called museum training. It's a terrible name, I think, but that's what we called it. And that involved general introduction,

and most of the time, in the early years of this thing, with [A.] Hyatt Mayor, who was the most unorthodox museum man and a wonderful sort of instigator of thought and emotion about these matters. Then into the departments, from department to department, in a seminar, which, when we first started it, I followed, went with all year long, to be sure that we were getting the kind of thing in those seminars that we and the museum both agreed we ought to have. And then a proper internship in the museum--all for graduate credit. And the Ford Foundation liked this and came in and backed it strongly.

SMITH: Now, were these internships primarily at the Metropolitan?

SMYTH: Yes.

SMITH: Or exclusively at the Metropolitan?

SMYTH: Yes, they were. But then, when we got the conservation center going and internships for conservators, then they went to various places in Europe and in this country.

SMITH: Of course, you had this special relationship with the Met [Metropolitan Museum of Art], but, as your programs developed, did you begin to reach out to the Whitney or to MOMA [Museum of Modern Art] or to the [American] Museum of Natural History, which has such a good, quote, "primitive," unquote, art collection?

SMYTH: Well, people could be interns with Robert Goldwater in the Rockefeller Museum of Primitive Art. I don't remember that we did. We may have. I think of a person named Patricia Hill, who went into the American field, and I wonder whether she had an internship in the Whitney [Museum of American Art]. I'm not sure. I don't recall. I don't think we were closed to it, but the museum across the street is an encyclopedic museum. It had excellent people in the full range of it. To work with somebody like Tom Hoving was-- He really did know about medieval art and ivories, especially. We even asked him to give a course at the Institute. He said, "Yes, I'll tell you in a week." In a week, he was park commissioner. [laughter] So--

SMITH: You have a note here that you wanted to mention something about [J.] Carter Brown's coming to the Institute.

SMYTH: Oh, well, I think that's just anecdotal. I think that's probably just anecdotal. I knew his father [John Nicholas Brown] from the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives [Section], so I was fascinated when Carter came to apply. I somehow knew that he was headed for the National Gallery and sort of heir apparent to the National Gallery.

SMITH: Already at this point?

SMYTH: I think we all knew that, but how we knew that or whether we really knew it or not, I don't know. In any case, when he came, I thought, "Well, I'm not going to make

it easy for Carter. I'm going to tell him how hard this institution is, and in coming here, while it's easy to get in, the standards are such that you get onto a beachhead, but you have to fight your way out of this beachhead in order to really do anything in this field." Well, he seems to have remembered that always and told it in various ways. But it apparently caught his imagination, because when he went to the other places, they had all welcomed him and said that they wanted him to come. So he decided to come to the Institute. According to him, that was what did it.

We were then moving into the [Doris] Duke house and the-- We weren't moving in yet, but we had it, and we were doing the alterations that were necessary. And I went over one day, and there were Carter and his father going over the house. He hadn't said yet he was coming. So they looked it over, and then he came. I liked his father very much. He was a fine man.

There was a great lecture here this week by Carter on his father and [Richard J.] Neutra and the house that Neutra built for them on Fisher's Island and his father's relationship to Neutra and the way he laid it down. It was wonderful, just absolutely great.

SMITH: You had a note here, also, about the development of the excavations programs.

SMYTH: Well, I think that was a good development. Karl

Lehmann had started the Samothrace excavations just after the war, I think. Princeton had had a tradition for digs under Howard Crosby Butler and, after the war, started again at Morgantina. People who do that in connection with their art history and the ancient world seem to be the better for it. So I didn't suggest these programs--other people suggested them--but I was all for them when they were suggested. We wanted to have the Egyptian field at the Institute and got [Bernard] Bothmer, and he, after he'd been teaching a couple of years, said, "We need to have an excavation." He had a place in Egypt that was available and could be had, so we did that at Mendes. To do that excavation, he suggested that we get Donald Hansen from the archaeological institute in Chicago [Oriental Institute, University of Chicago]. And he came. His real interest was not Egyptian but ancient Near Eastern, and he wanted to have a dig eventually in Iraq. So that developed. Then John Ward-Perkins had taught for us. When we began our leave program and Karl Lehmann went on leave, we got John Ward-Perkins to take his place one semester, and I got to know him well. He was keen on doing digs of Roman villas. So, when Peter von Blanckenhagen came, he and Peter von Blanckenhagen got together and said, "Let's have a joint excavation program on Roman villas." Well, there was a time then when we had four excavations going. And all of that seemed to me to be good. People would come back from them

with a sense of belonging to another land, having worked in it, and it deepened their subject.

SMITH: Was it easy at that time to get funding for excavations?

SMYTH: Well, the dig in Egypt was funded by the government.

SMITH: The Egyptian government or--?

SMYTH: Ours. I've forgotten how it was, but it was Fulbright-- It was funds left over from the war, American funds left over from the war in Egypt, and through the government we were given access to that money, so much a year. In Italy, I've forgotten about how that was funded. Maybe the same way. I don't remember that. And Karl had his own backing for Samothrace.

SMITH: Right. Actually, I think those government funds were everywhere, and there were quite a lot of them in the forties and fifties.

SMYTH: They seemed to be. It wasn't a big deal to get it for the Egyptian. They liked that. They wanted that. They thought it was good.

SMITH: One of the things you had here and I had wanted to talk to you more about was [Erwin] Panofsky as a teacher and as a person, a sense of him. I mean, you saw him from both the Princeton side and the Institute side.

SMYTH: Did I talk about that at all before?

SMITH: Not much, really.

SMYTH: Well, when Mr. Morey got me working on Virgil illustration in the Renaissance, he sent me to Erwin Panofsky. And it was a rich experience. You know, here I was knowing nothing, really, zero about it. He gave me a bibliography, which became a sort of bible. It was just the things you wanted to read. He had written an article with [Fritz] Saxl in 1933 about the separation of classical form and subject matter in the Middle Ages and their recombining in the Renaissance, which, though published by the Metropolitan Museum, became a beacon for the history of the Renaissance everywhere. All that in his wonderful, very amusing and happy way he conveyed to me very fast. It couldn't have been nicer. It really just couldn't have been better.

His first move to this country was to come to New York University, and it was Offner who invited him. He came in 1931 for a semester, just one semester, while he was professor at [University of] Hamburg. Offner had made a compact with him to come back each year for a semester. So he was in this country when Hitler came to power and when he was fired from the University of Hamburg. By then, Walter Cook was aboard, and he immediately said, "You stay. This is where you should be." He found the money for him to do that. Then Panofsky went back to Hamburg to see Hugo Buchthal through his Ph.D. and get his goods and chattels

together and come to this country, which he did.

But very shortly after he was here and was full-time at the Institute, the Institute for Advanced Study [Princeton University] wanted to branch out and have a school of historical studies--humanistic studies I think they called it. They asked Charles Rufus Morey whom they should have, and he told them whom they should have, and one of the people he told them was Erwin Panofsky. So he went to the Institute for Advanced Study. But he always continued to teach at the Institute [of Fine Arts] year in and year out.

When he retired from the Institute [for Advanced Study], we resurrected the title of Samuel F. B. Morse Professor of the History of the Literature of the Arts of Design, and he was it. He came back and taught regularly till he died.

SMITH: What was his style as a lecturer?

SMYTH: It was quick, one unbelievable shot after another. If you were an American brought up in the American world, to hear somebody say so many interesting things so fast that you'd never thought of was an amazing thing. [laughter] It was a little bit stunning in the almost literal sense of the word, you know. It paralyzed you, and you went out shaking your head. But it was absolutely eye-opening and wonderful.

As a graduate student, I took a seminar with him--several, I guess--but one on Netherlandish manuscripts, fundamentally, of the fourteenth century. We didn't any of

us know anything about it at all when we arrived in the room. His opening talks about it assumed we knew. So that was amazing, and pretty soon you did know. Then he gave us topics that got us deeply into it.

SMITH: For instance, do you recall the topic that you worked on?

SMYTH: Mine was a sort of statistical topic having to do with the assumption of the Virgin. And I must say, statistical topics never interested me very much. So I didn't get that anywhere that was useful at all. But Chuck Parkhurst had something about the Virgin with the ink pot that nobody had ever thought about, and he wrote a piece about that out of the seminar. Almost always, Pan knew what the result of a project would be and knew that it was publishable. So to work with him, if you got a subject you really liked, was a plus. It was opening a whole career sometimes.

SMITH: John Coolidge had said he had come to Princeton to study with Panofsky or to read with Panofsky particularly to focus on connoisseurship, which was surprising to me, because I had never thought of Panofsky as a connoisseur, but it sort of opened up another way of looking at it.

SMYTH: Well, he did everything to make it sound as if he weren't. He used to say, "Those damned originals."

[laughter] And his words about photographs as being the

major thing, as if he didn't-- In fact, he was wonderful with a work of art. You know his statement about whoever has the most photographs wins? [laughter] But he did a lot of that himself.

So John came to Princeton to be near him, and Mr. Morey, in his wonderful way, gave John a chair in our graduate study room. So we all got to know each other. Then John began to consider the Princeton department from the [point of view of the] Institute in New York, which we knew only as a distant wonder. And the critiques that he gave of the Princeton department were memorable.

SMITH: I had wanted to ask you also about the Titian lectures.

SMYTH: Well, the Titian lectures are self-referent again, I'm sorry to say.

SMITH: Really?

SMYTH: I called Pan to ask what he was going to teach next term, and he said, "I have nothing to teach. I've published everything that I ever planned to publish. I can't keep going to a library and digging out this material that I would have to do for anything new, so the only thing I can possibly teach is my seminar on method," which he had given from time to time. And I said, "Well, Pan, you always conveyed to me that your favorite artist was Titian, and I can't remember that you ever wrote very much about Titian. I think maybe one or two things, but not much. What about a

course on Titian?" "Oh," he said, "absolute nonsense. I couldn't conceivably do it. I will do the course on method if you want it." So that was settled, and the phone went down. In about a week he telephoned again, and he said, "I want to do a fifteen-week lecture course on Titian."

[laughter] "I've gone into the library. I think I can do it, and it would be great fun."

So then he came, and I came to hear a few of them, because the Wrightsman Lectures had started, and I wanted to see what was up, because it seemed to be a great possibility for the Wrightsman Lectures. So I came in to hear the first couple. And out of that came the Wrightsman Lectures.

[laughter] But it was a whole new birth for him, I think, to start doing something he hadn't done and had never planned to do. I was happy to be involved in that. And he went at it.

There was a scholar whom I liked very much, German, never translated into English--I'd like to do that sometime--translated once recently, but just one small piece, named Theodor Hetzer. I had a feeling that Pan didn't approve of him. I thought I heard him saying one day in the slide room something really derogatory about anything Hetzer did. Well, Hetzer is the person who'd written about Titian the most, or maybe not the most, but the most penetratingly, in my view, in a way that nobody had written about Titian. He

had divided his career up into six periods, as people are apt to do, but they were sound divisions and got you deeper into-- It was an arbitrary thing, and it wasn't all true, but it made you see. Well, the thing I really liked--and that's what came out and why I originally suggested this, I think--was that Pan turned to Hetzer with joy and found there what was fundamental for him, and I enjoyed that very much.

SMITH: You mentioned Panofsky's course on method. It started me thinking that, of course, in the late fifties there seemed to be a concern among some people in the art history field about the weakness of the theoretical base of the field, and you had [Meyer] Schapiro and [George A.] Kubler and [James S.] Ackerman tackling this. How did you feel at that time? Did you think that the theory was adequately being covered? That the method was there?

SMYTH: I have to say I don't think I thought about it very much. Within the Institute itself there were so many-- I mean, everybody there had a different point of view and a different way of working. [Walter] Friedlaender was deeply interested in art theory of the periods that he studied, and his office was lined with the original sources. Karl Lehmann had an encyclopedic grasp of ancient art and architecture, just absolutely encyclopedic, but with a mind that was thinking of new syntheses of all this material, new

ways of looking at it, deeper penetration of the meaning of objects in relation to style as well as just straight iconography. All this was going on, and it seemed to me all vital, I suppose, so I don't think I thought about need.

On the other hand, when I read Jim Ackerman's book about the development of the history of art [Art and Archaeology], I was fascinated. I think he was wrong in the arbitrary statement that American art history had been factual and not theoretical, that the critical was all somehow located in Europe, which is something that Mr. [Michael] Podro and his book on critical historians [The Critical Historians of Art] has continued. But I don't think that was so. I mean, Mr. Morey made a synthesis of the history of medieval art which was new--based on things that had been coming along, but new ["The Sources of Medieval Style"]. And Hanns Swarzenski used to say that it stopped all the medievalists in their tracks in Germany when this thing came out. They all just stopped and said, "What are we doing?" And Meyer Schapiro, years later, though he criticized the synthesis, said it became, and rightly so, the basis for research in the future for a long time. It gave a context for-- Well, that was theoretical and extraordinary, really. But, in any case, wrong on that or not, Jim's book--and Rhys Carpenter, co-author--was eye-opening to me. I hadn't really thought about it like that.

SMITH: As a teacher, how much did you teach, actually, at the Institute?

SMYTH: Well, when I got there I taught six courses the first year. [laughter]

SMITH: Right, but as director--

SMYTH: I think I cut down to two one term and one the other. And then, when the money-raising thing got very bad, from time to time I quit for a term. And then, in 1969, I think I gave my last course, because the need for endowment had become so great that I just couldn't do it and do the endowment.

SMITH: Were your courses largely on Italian Renaissance and mannerism?

SMYTH: Uh-huh. Well, it was Italian Renaissance, but it wasn't all mannerism at all. It was fifteenth and sixteenth century and some architecture.

SMITH: Both seminars and lectures?

SMYTH: Yes. I came myself to dislike hearing myself preach from a pulpit. I'd been a lecturer at the Frick Collection, so I'd done a lot of lecturing, and when I got to the Institute I went on, but more and more I didn't want to do it all. I wanted to have colloquia, sort of seminar like, but not the German type of seminar. A seminar in which everybody starts with the same sort of basic readings, so there's a sort of common foundation for a problem, and goes

toward a problem, which then everyone has a different aspect of to take up and become expert in, in the course of the term, but all talking often, short reports often. Then, if it works, it becomes a community that really knows something about--

SMITH: Would they, then, report on aspects of the research that would be going into their theses and dissertations?

SMYTH: Well, a dissertation could come out of it, absolutely. Sure.

SMITH: Did you find that readings such as Schapiro's essay on style or Ackerman's book or Kubler's The Shape of Time were the sort--? Were those the sorts of things that you would assign?

SMYTH: No.

SMITH: So you didn't feel they would be useful for the kinds of discussions you wanted to see develop?

SMYTH: No, I think I was looking at what happened and how we can understand what happened, and has the history of art got this right? That was more my sort of thing. I wanted to do it in terms of the background of theory of the art's own time, a lot of reading of sources, but not in relation to any critical form that I would want to put it in, I think.

SMITH: Can I get a sense of the sources that you would assign? Would it be like Alberti or--?

SMYTH: Yeah, sure. But, I mean to say, if you are dealing with mannerism in the sixteenth century, there are things you really have to have read, and you have to have read widely enough so that you not only know what they say specifically that pertains to our concepts of mannerism, or ought to, but widely enough so that you put this all into some context. So to be conversant with what was written in an inclusive, comfortable way.

SMITH: And would you get into social, political, or economic context?

SMYTH: No. I don't think so. Not any more than my teachers had. It was always there, but it was not an explicit concern in itself. And I'm glad to have it become that.

SMITH: How was the Institute and/or your classes affected by the student unrest of '68, shall we say, and the Vietnam War?

SMYTH: Well, it wasn't much in '68, but it was in the spring of '71.

SMITH: Kent State?

SMYTH: Kent State.

SMITH: Nineteen seventy.

SMYTH: As it happened, I was on leave at the Institute [for Advanced Study] in Princeton that semester. It was Robert Goldwater who was in my place for that semester, and he dealt

with it. As Richard Krautheimer said, "I never knew the depth and wisdom of that man until that moment." He was absolutely superb. Whether I could have done it, I have no clue.

SMITH: Did he call you?

SMYTH: Well, we talked on the phone, sure. Oh, yeah. But he did it just superbly.

SMITH: One of the things that comes out of '68, if we use that year as a metaphor, was kind of new directions in what students wanted and then what scholars wanted: the whole rise of a neo-Marxist approach, feminism, ethnic studies, gay liberation, all demanding inclusion and revision of academia. How did that affect the Institute and your personal work as an instructor?

SMYTH: Well, as I say, in 1969, I think that was the last year I taught. What I was aware of with students was the kind of lecture programs that they wanted. The students at the Institute were the ones who invited outside lecturers. We, the faculty, did to some extent, but we turned over a lot of it to the students, which meant that they could hear voices that they were not hearing. They really did very well at this, bringing in issues of this kind. In the classroom, I doubt if many who were there reacted to it soon. Colin Eisler, maybe, because he's very sensitive, and his ear is easily to the ground, and his range of interests is very wide. But it wasn't something that, as long as I

was there, affected much of what happened at the Institute. I knew by January or February of '73 that I was going to leave.

SMITH: At I Tatti, was there a development of a more feminist kind of work coming?

SMYTH: No, not really. We had lots of female scholars welcomed there, but it didn't rise as an issue in the place. There were people there very much interested in contextual studies in all fields more and more as time went on, but it wasn't an issue or a matter of rhetoric at all. We tried to get people talking together on Renaissance issues the year that Charles Trinkaus, a philosopher in Renaissance studies, who is excellent, was there. He became the center of a discussion group that met nearly every week all year long and ranged over all sorts of Renaissance issues and issues of study of the Renaissance. But it never was combative, and it never was focusing especially on one of these now very central issues.

SMITH: What about the involvement, the recruitment, of non-whites and women into art history?

SMYTH: Well, we weren't very good at it at the Institute. But, first of all, there were lots of women among the students, and lots of them went to very good posts, but we ourselves were not-- We weren't saying to ourselves, "We must have a woman." We were always saying to ourselves,

"Who's the best person?" So we had Stella Kramrisch as soon as we got deep into Asian studies, who was the person, extraordinary person, in that field. Phyllis [Pray] Bober was not teaching for us, but she was a part of the Institute with her study of antique works of art known to Renaissance artists. In fact, the Institute supported that whole thing financially for years. Even though it was a Warburg subject, they weren't supporting it; we were. Then Eve Harrison was invited to join the faculty before I left. Kathy [Kathleen] Weil-Garris Brandt-- I wrote some names down there. Do I have any others?

SMITH: Well, Phyllis [Williams] Lehmann.

SMYTH: Phyllis Lehmann never taught because she was up at Northampton. But she's a person I would have very much liked to teach if she had been nearby once her husband was not doing it all, and he was doing it all for years. But we weren't as good as we should have been, and I'm sorry we didn't find more people.

SMITH: What about nonwhites? Were there any nonwhites?

SMYTH: That was a big issue for me. Before I'd come, one man had come through--I think his name was Porter--who became the art historian for the essentially black university in Washington, D.C.

SMITH: Oh, Howard [University].

SMYTH: Howard. And then, when I got there, there was a

student finishing his work with Richard Offner who had not finished and was having trouble financing himself to finish. This I thought a high priority, so I found financing for him, as I remember, and got him to finish his dissertation, and Offner saw him through, and all that was excellent. But getting him a job? That was hard.

SMITH: How come?

SMYTH: Well, people-- He wasn't the best, anyway. He really was rather good--sensitive, knowledgeable, with presence--but he wasn't the best of our students.

SMITH: But you did have an expansion of colleges in the mid-fifties--

SMYTH: Yes, well, we found him a job. We did get him a job, and the last I heard he's still there. It was in the University of Southern Illinois, I think. But it wasn't easy. There weren't many people coming.

At the beginning of the conservation program--and we were very careful in the selection of people for that--we had a young black student in that who went on in the field, and that was great. But they didn't come in droves, and we didn't go out ever trying to find them, which perhaps we should have.

SMITH: With the development of the civil rights and the black power movement in the sixties and the interest in affirmative action, did you begin to start thinking about

developing an affirmative action program?

SMYTH: I don't think so, because I think what we thought was that we'd always been open to it and ready if there came anybody we could do anything for. But I don't think we thought of searching for a faculty member, because the standard remained all the time I was there, "Let us get the best person in the field."

SMITH: Well, how about students? Affirmative action vis-à-vis student recruitment.

SMYTH: We didn't recruit students; people came to us. And we were very open door, so that any black student who had a chance to come was admitted almost surely. Our thought was that the obstacles should never be at the entrance, that the hurdles should come after you have arrived and started to work, and then see.

SMITH: So you did not have a difficult admissions process?

SMYTH: Not a difficult one. We looked at each person very carefully. I did it all for a while, then Robert Goldwater did it all for a while. We would say, "We mustn't have more than, whatever, fifty or thirty students next year, must we?" "No, we mustn't." But then, when we were finished, we had found so many people that ought to come that, if we could get them in-- Almost always Robert Goldwater took far too many so that the place got crowded.

SMITH: If you have sort of an open-door admissions policy

but very high standards once you're in, doesn't that create a psychological problem for students?

SMYTH: I think it probably does. I think it probably does. But it was not done in a brutal way.

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SMITH: You were saying that you had a mechanism--

SMYTH: Well, we tried to have, at various stages, a chance to look-- In a big place like that [Institute of Fine Arts, New York University], you can lose somebody, and we wanted not to lose people, and we wanted to find out who was doing poorly and what could be done to get someone to do better, eventually, with the purpose of not letting somebody go on to the Ph.D. who couldn't do it in the end. That's really what the effort was. Not just to find the best and brightest, but to be sure that the people who could do it did, and the people who couldn't, from all we knew, were discouraged from doing it.

I can remember a case of a person who was absolutely outclassed by the Institute but deeply devoted to the study, for whom it would have been a tragedy not to go on, and finding a graduate school which seemed right for him and helping him to get in it. I heard from him for years afterwards, his gratitude for this, what the other school had done, and his joy in teaching when he finally got to it. So there were cases when we didn't discourage a person totally but tried to find another route.

SMITH: How involved were you in placing graduates, job placement?

SMYTH: Very much.

SMITH: That was a high priority?

SMYTH: High priority, and in those days the field wasn't so large that you didn't think-- At least I thought I knew what was happening pretty much everywhere, what job openings there were and all the people to be in touch with. Well, I couldn't conceive of doing that now. [laughter]

SMITH: Did you consider both museum and academic work?

SMYTH: Yes.

SMITH: You had made a list of your wins in faculty appointments, but I thought, actually, it might be more interesting to talk about your losses and why someone didn't work out and what you did to fill that gap. And the first name you have here is-- Is it Zeri?

SMYTH: Federico Zeri, who was very much a part of this institution [the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities] for a while, at one point, at least. He was the Italianist whom Richard Offner really looked at with, I wouldn't say apprehension, but with the thought that Zeri would eventually learn and know all that he himself knew-- that he had wonderful eyes, that his lists of works of art under the names of artists would be very close to what Richard himself had come up with. I can remember, as I wrote somewhere once, walking with Richard in Florence in 1959 and his saying, "I must make [Bernard] Berenson-like

lists of my attributions, because I'd like to have them under my name before they all come out under Federico Zeri's name, because he's so good." He admired him immensely. So both of us thought that it would be wonderful if we had him at the Institute overlapping with Richard, that it would be absolutely marvelous. But it wasn't something we could convince the rest of the faculty of, because the word was that he was very much in the market, and we had a feeling about that. Richard thought he was in the market perfectly legitimately, in the same way he himself was, and that there should be no obstacle there. Zeri came once when we were thinking about all this--whether I'd asked him to come in or not, I've forgotten--to talk, and we talked about his being in the market. He conveyed the fact that, yes, he gave them information, but that he couldn't be called "in the market." But we couldn't bring that off for the rest of the faculty.

SMITH: Do you think this was a concern that the faculties at other schools were as adamant about?

SMYTH: I don't know. I can't speak of that. I don't know. Whether they had people on their faculties who would be helpful, whose knowledge was the kind that would be helpful to the dealer world, I don't know. You know, that has a lot to do with it.

SMITH: I mean, in the sciences it's typical for a person in the department of chemistry to be a consultant for half a

dozen firms and triple his or her income.

SMYTH: Sure. And it ought to have been that way for us, I think. I think Richard Offner, if you're going to do it, did it right, as far as we knew about the way he worked, and I trusted him very much. That looked very much like the scientists' way. But the history of involvement in the market, Mr. Berenson's involvement in the market, other people of his generation, it wasn't clean and clear like that, as far as anybody knew. As I say, looking in the files of the National Gallery [of Art], the people who obviously wrote an endorsement of an object that shouldn't have been endorsed, for a price, that gave you real pause. So we all had drawn back, not wanting much to do with that.

SMITH: In terms of scholarship as scholarship, aren't there, in a sense, academic checks and balances, so that a scholar could not abuse in his critical writing his or her knowledge?

SMYTH: That's right. There are. In any case, I don't think I can shed any more light on it than that.

SMITH: Okay. How about Horst Gerson?

SMYTH: Well, he came for a semester to teach, and [J.] Carter Brown did his master's thesis with him, an excellent master's thesis on van Goyen, on the basis of which I tried to convince Carter to stay on and finish his Ph.D., because he obviously was good, and Gerson drew him out. He was a

splendid teacher, and people liked him. So I pushed hard for him, but I couldn't get a faculty agreement. I'm not sure of this, but I had the feeling that it was Richard Krautheimer who was-- I could never tell why, because I should have thought they would have been mutually admiring. So that was too bad. But for Gerson it was very good, because he went to [the University of] Groningen in Holland, right where his subject was, and was deeply revered, and there's a Horst Gerson Foundation which funds lectures at Groningen in his honor.

SMITH: And then you mentioned Otto Pächt.

SMYTH: Otto Pächt was, again, a major, remarkably fine scholar, I think, an entrancing man. We needed, I thought-- most of us thought--his kind of scholarship and his interest in the Institute. But Harry Bober was our medievalist, and he was not keen on Pächt's work. And since he was the medievalist, it was very hard to-- We didn't want to run around him. We never did run around a member of the faculty who had a real conviction about something.

SMITH: To what degree was it discussed or did you consider it important to have a multiplicity of viewpoints within the faculty which might be on some levels contentious? You know, to go to one person to get one view of a certain aspect of medieval art and go to another faculty member to get a very different view.

SMYTH: Well, most of us thought the more the merrier. As wide a range as possible. And as far as contention within the faculty about whether somebody should be appointed or not, that kind of thing I tried never to have out at a faculty meeting for final decision at all, but to talk individually to the people most concerned on the faculty who would have the most reason to be pro or con and try to see if some sort of agreement could be brought about amongst them, if they weren't too much opposed. We never voted. I was against voting. We tried to have an agreement around a table if we could. If it seemed an agreement, I would say, "Is this an agreement?" It was or wasn't. I don't think we ever fought out across a table whether we should have Pächt or not. It was discussions, and it might have been at the table that we formally decided not to do this. "Is anybody against that or for it or what?"

SMITH: Well, in terms of medieval, what directions did you go?

SMYTH: Well, then we went towards Willibald Sauerländer, who had been at the Institute for Advanced Study [Princeton University] in Princeton, and we asked him to come, and he did. He must have come in the fall of '63 and taught for maybe three years. He was happy, I think, and we and the students found him a real addition. There were no problems between him and Bober or with anyone else. But he did have

a very strong view that he ought to be back in Germany, that he ought to be supporting his own nation, not out somewhere else. When he was asked back, he went. He's going to teach at the Institute this coming year, which is nice, I think. He loved it, and he was a great force in it and for the good. Wonderful teacher. Knowing him there, he was one of the reasons I thought he should be on this committee that Nancy [Englander] and Harold [M. Williams] were forming.

SMITH: I wanted to ask you your thoughts about the relationship of criticism and historical method in art history and balancing the question of analysis versus evaluation and the role of quality as a question.

SMYTH: Well, these are a lot of somewhat different things. I think that you can't be an art historian of any significance without being a critic at the same time. I think you probably can be a critic without being much of a historian. [laughter] But I don't think the other works. I think you are making critical judgments all the time, even in trying to get the factual record straight. You may not be going off on specifically critical issues, but you are, if you are significant, I think, a historian and critic.

About quality, well, to tell the whole story of the "landscape" of art history, as Richard Offner would like to do, he invoked objects of every level of quality, as long as they were authentic. They were all part of the picture of

the history of art, and he wanted to find the relationships of all to each other in the "landscape" of art history--that was his word--that he was trying to construct. Out of the objects themselves, he wanted to slough off as much as he could as superfluous of what had been said before about objects. He wanted to go back to the objects themselves. Then he said quite a lot, to be sure, when he finally did. [laughter] He set out to make the history of art from the individual objects. So objects of every level of quality were involved. But he was aware of the levels and of the relationship between quality and the effect and influence of an object within the development of the history of art. So quality was always on his mind, and I would say that it should be if you deal with the history of art like that. If you're looking for other kinds of things, I suppose, as does happen now very much, it's considered a sub-issue or a non-issue. But I subscribe to Richard Offner on that.

SMITH: So in your own work, you were always concerned--

SMYTH: I was aware.

SMITH: Aware, yeah.

SMYTH: Of an artist that I thought was significant, I would like to be able to see his work as having the kind of quality that I would want to see. But I came into the subject because I loved the things themselves, you see. I wanted to know about them as much as possible, about what

the object itself was. And you cared most about the things that seemed to have the greatest quality.

SMITH: I've noticed that sometimes, as I study something more deeply, I become more convinced of its quality, so that makes me wonder whether the quality is inherent in the thing or--

SMYTH: I think you're right. I think you're right.

SMITH: --or in the phenomenology of it.

SMYTH: You take Vasari, for example. We all put Vasari aside as not having much quality as a painter. Well, now, instead, you know, he gets a good deal of praise as a painter and draftsman. But, you see, what you've done is to learn a lot more about the conditions that he was working within, the condition of the history of art as it was going then and theory and what he wanted to do and what people wanted him to do, and then you begin to rate the quality in relation to all that. So it is in context. I think you're right.

SMITH: What about in terms of the museum's responsibility--? And you've been primarily involved with the Metropolitan [Museum of Art], is that correct?

SMYTH: Uh-huh.

SMITH: Does the museum have a responsibility to present a range of quality of work, do you think, in terms of contextualizing?

SMYTH: I think it needs study collections where the objects that are authentic, or even those that are not authentic, are on display, whatever their quality, so that you can get as much of the whole picture as possible. I mean, the whole landscape, as Richard would call it.

SMITH: Not necessarily for display but on--

SMYTH: No, I shouldn't have thought. But I'm an old-timer on that score.

SMITH: What did you feel about the development of the blockbuster exhibition, to get into a controversial subject?

SMYTH: Well, I've enjoyed them, I must say, and I've learned a lot. I think not all of them should have been-- As soon as "blockbuster" became a term of denigration, I should think we should have put them aside in some cases, because a great deal came from some of those exhibitions. So I would have wanted to--

SMITH: You were supportive at the time?

SMYTH: I was supportive of the idea, as long as it wasn't just for the sake of blockbusting. One learned an awful lot when you brought together in Bologna, in various exhibitions, the Bolognese painters. I suppose you could, although nobody did then, call them blockbusters. But what they did was to teach the world what this painting had been.

SMITH: How do you feel about the more recent development of explicitly thematic shows. I'm thinking like the American

West show ["The West as America: Reinterpreting Images of the Frontier"] that was in Washington [at the Smithsonian Institution] or the "Degenerate Art: [The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany]" show here at LACMA [Los Angeles County Museum of Art].

SMYTH: Well, I could have gone to the "Degenerate Art" show, and I didn't. I suppose that says something. I would like to have seen the objects, but to put them all together to show what Hitler had eschewed-- I think it was instructive. But, you know, I was in the middle of that, at the end of the war. I knew what he didn't like. So just to come here to find out what he didn't like I didn't find necessary. But the objects in the show, yes, individually.

SMITH: Do you find it offensive for a curator to have such an explicit thematic point of view or a--?

SMYTH: No, I don't. No, I don't. I think that for a lot of people that was immensely instructive. So I think that was all right. The interest now in meaning of works of art is in accord with that, and I don't see anything wrong with that at all. It may be eye-opening or enspiriting to an artist who may come to it and think, "My God, I might be doing something that I've never done."

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