

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE  
TAPE 4 OF 11; 88-102

INTERVIEW WITH: Harlan Hubbard  
CONDUCTED BY: Joanne Weeter  
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LOCATION: Payne Hollow, Kentucky

JOANNE WEETER: Harlan, I'd like to ask you a question about the Hubbard collection that you recently donated to the University of Louisville. How did it come about that you donated your papers to the University?

HARLAN HUBBARD: Well, it was on my own initiative; I felt that I'd like to get these, something that was valuable -- now that I'm alone here -- into a place where they'd be safe. Not that I think my papers and sketches and things are worth a great deal but to some person, some time, I think they might. And since the museum is there, they might as well be storing some of that stuff. So I wrote to Bill Morison, who's the archivist at the University of Louisville library, and he's very enthusiastic about that, the whole idea and said they'd welcome anything that I had. I tried to get some idea from him what they wanted and he said, "Anything at all. Don't throw anything away; we'll do that if it's necessary." Well, he came up in a boat with his wife and we had a good visit, too. When we got the stuff all together and packed it in trash bags, I found there were seventeen of them, some of them quite heavy, must have been about a boatload. I had no idea there'd be so much. That's where they went.

JW: Did you include some of your paintings?

HH: I didn't include any large paintings but I gave them maybe twenty small water colors which I thought they could handle better and would be just as valuable and he was especially pleased to have them because he said they could use those for exhibition purposes. I gave him all the original manuscripts I had and all the first drafts and manuscripts of some things that had never been published, never even been read, some of them. And then I gave him all the letters I had, the ones I'd written and copied, I gave him the copies and a lot of the originals that came back to my hands, too. Then I had a wonderful collection of letters from my brother, Frank, which cover a long period of years – and we were very close. It's hard to remember now just what would make up those seventeen trash bags but [laughs] I guess there won't be that many when they get through.

JW: You consented to an oral history when I asked about it last fall and we're about halfway through now and I wanted to ask you just what value you feel there is in agreeing to these oral history interviews.

HH: Well, in a way, I guess there's not much more in them than would be in the manuscripts and letters and things I gave to the library. But it's a different medium and I think the voice is important just to know that you're listening to the man who wrote those letters; it means more than if you just read the letters, I think. Then I can say things that come on the spur of the moment that might not be transmitted any other way. I think it gives a good picture of a man and his mind and the way he thinks and what he's interested in.

JW: Are you comfortable with the medium and with hearing your own voice?

HH: I'm getting worse, though, but it still seems strange to me. I'm not a talking man, to tell the truth; I can talk if I'm really inspired to it. An example is last December 11 when those Governor's Awards were distributed and by some lucky chance I was to receive an award and when I was called up to go on the stage and I received an award from Governor Collins -- I thanked her, of course, but it seemed rather a scurvy trick just to walk off in silence and sit down so I went over to the microphone and began a little talk. I'd been dreading this moment of the award ceremonies from the time I first heard of them but at this moment it seemed like all that uneasiness went away and I was perfectly at ease and I think I said some things . . . I said some things I hadn't thought I would say, I'm sure, but I said things that were important, I think, and I said them well and I didn't stammer around waiting for inspiration to come as I do now. And when my little talk was over, the applause was certainly a surprise to me. [laughs] But I think that's the top of my speaking career; I'll never do that again, probably.

JW: Tell me a little bit . . . (tape turned off momentarily, then resumed)

HH: You asked what I said in the speech: it was very brief and I don't remember all of it but one part was that I was, after I thanked everybody, was that it came to me at a very fortunate time because I was at a point where one period of my life was over and I was beginning a new one and I hoped to go on painting but I still, my greatest hope was that I could do something -- I won't say better than I have ever done before, but just something more significant and more meaningful and raising to a higher level, something that would make this -- make me -- make this award something I deserved. And I closed by saying that

no matter what I painted it'll always be the Kentucky landscape, the Ohio River and the steamboats I loved. I said that all quite plainly and at the end I walked off.

JW: You were one of a number of recipients for the Governor's Awards in the Arts for different categories and on the brochure that was chosen for the cover one of your paintings, a 1949 river scene that made the cover was later given to Barry Bingham, Sr., who was the Milner Award winner. How did you come about selecting that particular river scene?

HH: I had nothing to do with it. It was a water color sketch about the same size as you see it on the program, but it was selected by Ann Ogden who was a representative of the Kentucky Department of the Arts and she spent a long time looking over those water colors, I think. Then we had it reproduced and mounted on the cover and it looked very well, I think; it looked very much like the original. I couldn't tell the difference.

JW: You strike me as a private person, one who likes your solitude and to be away from the hustle and bustle of the city, yet you seem more than willing when asked the question to answer this as well as you're able. Do you mind people asking you questions about your life and your lifestyle?

HH: Well, I've gotten used to it. Maybe there's a strain of vanity in it but I don't think that amounts to much. My nature, as you say . . . I've been a loner in ways, too, and choose to be alone than to live among people, but I've learned a lot to be here. At first I rather resented even people coming, strangers wanting to spend an afternoon taking up all that time and asking questions but as I got to know these people better I found that they were really sincere, especially the country people. And sometimes the most unpromising

person will turn out to have something very interesting to say if you just give him a chance and let his defense mechanism wear off a little bit and let him talk naturally. And I've learned a lot from people and gotten to admire them very much.

JW: You've kept journals for years and years and eventually you, your book *Shantyboat* and your other book, *Payne Hollow*, were published and your most recent has been *Harlan Hubbard Journals from 1929 to 1944* [title is actually *Harlan Hubbard Journals 1929 to 1944*]; what led to the publishing of those books?

HH: Well, *Shantyboat* is the first one. I sent the manuscript to my brother, Frank, in New York because he said he had a friend who was a reader for McMillan or somebody, and just about that time he was out to lunch and he was introduced to Edwin Way Teale and Frank happened to think of my manuscript and Teale was interested and said, "Why don't you send it to Dodd, Mead there, who published my book" -- that was *North With The Spring* -- "they might be interested in your river book." So Frank took it over there and they accepted it right away, which I think was very fortunate and unexpected.

JW: Were you nervous about how it would be received?

HH: No, I thought everybody ought to like *Shantyboat*. *Payne Hollow* I wasn't so sure about. That had a different career, too; I spent a lot of time writing it, much longer than I did writing *Shantyboat* and when it was finally, I thought it was ready for publication, I sent it to, I don't know, somebody out in California that the *Whole Earth Catalog* had recommended. Then it happened one summer morning, we were visited by a young man named Harvey Simmonds. He said he was a, he worked on the Delta Queen and he'd heard about us since he'd been talking to the rivermen and trying to find out as much about the

Ohio River as he could and he heard about us and he came over to get acquainted. It seemed like he'd been in the New York Public Library in the rare book department and just took a notion that he would like to get some experience on the western rivers. So he gave up his job and came out here and got a . . . they took him around on the Delta Queen and give him a job washing dishes. But Harvey's a very intelligent man and a strong personality and he soon impressed them with his work. As a proof of it, they let him have the – he told us in a letter he wrote to us first that he would hitchhike from Madison where the boat was to be tied up over to Milton to see us. That made us laugh because hitchhiking from Madison to where we lived might take a week. Anyway, somebody else must have told him that because he talked Captain Wagner of the Delta Queen into letting him have the company car that they carry on board and he drove over in that.

He was very much interested and we were much interested in him. We liked him from the first: a very cultured, quiet person, very great enthusiasms. And I showed him the manuscript and told him about it and he said – [pause] no, at that time it was with St. Martin's Press, I didn't have it -- but he said he would get it back if he could and he'd like to take it to the Eakins Press where he had been working before he went on the, he'd been connected with them before he went on the Delta Queen.

The Eakins Press consisted of Leslie Katz and Harvey Simmonds, I think, but Leslie Katz liked it very much and it was the kind of book that he wanted to – to publish one in that field so he published that. And I think we were very fortunate because the book was printed by Stinehour on a very special paper and a very nice job. And Harvey remained our friend, still is, and through us became acquainted with Wendell Berry.

JW: Did you know Mr. Berry?

HH: Oh, yes. I can't remember how we got acquainted but he's been here a good many times and we've been over there. We have much in common.

JW: Did you enjoy the publicity that these books brought?

HH: Yes, I was just innocent enough to think that was great and *Shantyboat* threatened to do pretty well and it did, too; I had some good reviews. But neither book made a great success financially.

JW: Some years ago a video was made of your life; what, what kind of an experience was that and were you pleased with the end result?

HH: Well, it was very frustrating in a way. I think that if you give a man a video camera, he thinks he's a motion picture director and he wants . . . he didn't try to portray things simply as you would with a camera, he wants to make something more dramatic of it. The first one was, Walt Lowe was the director, and then the next one, John Morgan. I think they both did really well and we enjoyed it, too. Although I kept thinking, well, they don't see things the way they are, they want to change them so they look better in the picture.

JW: In 1986 a book of photographs entitled *A Day in the Life* was published and you were one of the – one of the chosen subjects. How did they select you and can you describe just what that day was like?

HH: Well, we were interviewed by Sarah Grosvenor, a young girl, and we had been suggested to her by D. Gorton, a photographer who became our friend. At the time he was working for the *New York Times'* Washington bureau and he was stationed in the

White House, covered the White House. But he read *Shantyboat* somewhere and one of his secret longings was to make a river trip down the Ohio River so he came all the way out from Washington to see us. This is all a preamble to say that he was one of the photographers chosen to photograph on that memorable day of May 2, 1946 [1986], and he had told Sarah Grosvenor about us, she came to investigate and she, like – she had a hard time finding us because at that time Anna was in the hospital and I wasn't home very much. She finally got in touch with us and I tried to tell her that this was no time for me to go into anything like that but I guess if anybody asks me to do anything I'm so happy to say yes that I finally consented. [pause]

Sarah made great efforts to find us; she went to the post office in Milton and dictated a long letter to the postmistress, which I finally received. She also went to the hospital where she was told Anna was. That time Anna was in intensive care and she even went in there, looking for me. [laughs] I found a note there from her. We finally got acquainted somehow, met up and I told her I didn't think I was in condition, this wasn't the time for anything like that. But it's one of those things that if a person keeps on long enough, I guess I'll say yes.

So she came over to the house on that -- it was supposed to be early in the morning on May 2nd, that was when they were going to do all the photography but she didn't get here till about noon. She came over on the other side of the river and we got started. Paul was here that day, my helper, and all three of us worked very hard all day till midnight. And Sarah took a great many, exposed a great many films and when she left she said she'd send

us a copy of the book when it came out, which she did, which was very nice of her, I thought, and there sure enough, was my photograph.

JW: Were you pleased with the end result?

HH: Well, I was in a way; it was a very quiet, peaceful scene illuminated by firelight. I was sitting there reading. I guess it was very good, yeah.

JW: Much goes on in the world outside Payne Hollow; do you keep up with current events? Or what's your link to the outside world?

HH: Well, one time a well-meaning friend of ours gave us a subscription to the *Christian Science Monitor* and I'd go up the hill maybe once a week to get the mail and there would be four or five or six copies of the *Christian Science Monitor* we had to read all at once. It became rather laborious and it seemed like the same things were going on all the time so when the subscription expired we made no move to renew it. I am interested in what's going on in the world in a way, just out of curiosity, I guess, and once in awhile if I'm waiting in the dentist's office or somewhere I look through an issue of *Time* or *Newsweek* or news of what's going on. I don't think I would like to read that every week, though, because it's too nerve-wracking. I find that it's best to stay home and the news will come to you some way.

JW: Didn't you recently purchase a Sony Walkman?

HH: Well, I didn't really purchase it. It was the same D. Gorton that came down to see us said, "I'm going to give you a radio." And I said, "We don't want a radio." And Anna agreed with me and he said, "This is different, you'll like this." And we did, too, because it records music very carefully and you can't hear it except the person who has the

earphones on. So we got two sets of earphones and we heard some good music that way but we didn't use it to keep up with the world. I still use it and [pause] my greatest use now is to have it at my bedside at night and if I wake up at 1:29 -- I also have a clock so I won't get up too early -- there's wonderful music comes on at night on the Beethoven Satellite and I listen to some of that. At first I was very enthusiastic and listened to everything but I find that I'm getting more selective in the music I hear and things I used to like, I don't. I feel that the so-called classical music, the whole idea of it should be overhauled. There's too much in it that's just bombast and pretension.

JW: The Marble Hill Nuclear Power Plant is just across the river from us here at Payne Hollow and I was wondering, it can either be viewed as a very positive thing or a very negative thing in terms of technology and I know that the project was abandoned and it was never completed but how did you feel about it when it was being built?

HH: Well, it seemed to alarm our visitors more than anything. They would come down and begin feeling sorry for us that we'd come out here to be away from it all and here they built an atomic plant close to us. It really isn't as close as some people believe. In fact, one photographer -- I can't forgive him this, either -- he superimposed one photograph on another some way and made it look like the power plant is right across the river. It isn't; it's three miles down the river and from the house, even in wintertime, it's concealed by a fringe of trees so that the only place you can see it is down on the riverbank. People ask me what our reaction was to it and I told them it didn't bother us any and I was sure that in a few years that it would be regarded as a ruined castle on the Rhine and that's just about what happened to it. [laughs]

JW: Harlan, you've had a close relationship with the students and the faculty at Hanover College in Indiana through the years; didn't the professors bring a number of students to come and visit?

HH: Yes. When we first came here there was considerable interest in us and our place down here. Besides the classes some of the students would come down on their own to help work in the garden and so forth. Of all the students at Hanover that we met, the ones whose friendship has endured were those first ones. I sometimes wonder about that but I think it's because of a change in the students' attitude, not toward us but toward their going to school and toward their studies. It seemed like the older students -- I'm speaking of twenty, twenty-five years ago -- had more outside interests. They were rather radical in their ideas sometimes and they would promote different things and many of them liked to come down here to talk. But nowadays the teachers seldom bring a class down and we don't know the new faculty very well, very few of them do we know. And the students that we meet it seems that there's a different attitude. They're more materialistic and their whole idea is to do what they have to to earn a degree and get it over with as quick as possible. And they're not prone to trying experiments or go visit people who are making experiments in living or anything like that.

JW: You donated a number of paintings to Hanover College in February of 1986. I believe there were fourteen total. How did -- how did that come about?

HH: That was by my own initiative. I offered them to them. I had those paintings, that's only part of what I had. I've really produced a lot of paintings and what I had was a very small percentage of what I'd done but they were some of the best and I just

felt like instead of letting them go into private hands I'd like to keep them in a unit and have them somewhere where they would be available, accessible to all people and could be seen at all times. So I gave them in a group and then I also gave fifteen or sixteen of them to the Behringer-Crawford Museum in Covington where they have established a special collection. I feel very good about it.

JW: And the paintings are permanently displayed?

HH: Yeah. Nicely lighted and I hear very good reports from them. It was quite an experience giving those paintings away and I learned some things. I found that you can't give paintings to every museum. The bigger the museum, the harder it is to have them accepted. By that I don't mean that I didn't think my paintings were worth going into a larger museum, but these people were very glad to get them and if they were accepted by a larger museum like the Cincinnati museum or the Louisville museum they probably would have spent most of their lives down the basement and brought out once in awhile. And then they really don't want them. You couldn't give a painting to a real first-class national museum; they have [laughs] money to buy what they want and there are so many people that would like to be represented there that they would be flooded if they took everything that was offered them.

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A

START OF TAPE 2, SIDE B

JW: Today is September 24, 1987. This is the second side of the tape that we're doing today at Payne Hollow. Harlan, the environment here at Payne Hollow is very distinct and is much different from what you might find if you go to Madison or perhaps a

larger town like Louisville or Cincinnati. When you travel from Payne Hollow to one of these other places, do you suffer from culture shock because of the difference in the environment?

HH: No, I don't think either Anna or I did that because after all, urban environment is what we had in the beginning and it lasted much longer than our time we lived in Payne Hollow. All the time that I lived in the, not in the city exactly, but in the suburbs and so forth, I was going into the country and the country always seemed something special, something new. But nowadays the country seems natural and home, and the city seems strange and uninviting. But still, it's so familiar from those early days and that early exposure to it that both of us were quite at home in the city. But the longer I live here, the more difficult it is to go to town and I don't enjoy it except at certain points.

Then the towns and cities have changed a lot; the whole world has been changed by the automobile. There's so much more traffic now, so much faster traffic and so much noise, trucks. The city is quite different than it used to be. Now it is getting to be quite different -- difficult for me to be at home there.

JW: Your lifestyle now harks back to the turn of the century. Do you ever feel like you were born in the wrong century?

HH: No, I was born in the nick of time. As I said once, when I was very young I used to think that if I'd been born five days earlier I might have lived in the nineteenth century and the twentieth and if I lived long enough -- which I don't think I will -- I could live in the twenty-first. It won't be much longer, though. [laughs]

JW: Fifty years from now it'll be the year 2037. What do you imagine Payne Hollow will look like?

HH: Anybody's guess is good there, I think. Some people think it should be preserved and there have been suggestions made as to what could be done. One friend even made the suggestion that he'd like to see it turned into a writer's colony. But of course, he said, you'd have to have electricity and make some changes. [laughs] So I don't think there'd be much left of the original if it was made into a writer's colony and I don't think that anybody who didn't live here could keep it up. There's too many things could happen: the roof starts to leak or the windows get broken, vandalism. And I can't imagine somehow anybody taking it over as Anna and I did and live here for that length of time.

JW: You think there's no one who has the patience or the willingness?

HH: It's partly patience and it's partly experience. No one realizes what a place like this demands. For instance, the water supply; in the city you turn the tap and you get water but here you have to, we have a cistern and you have to get the water out of the cistern to use it and you have to keep the cistern clean and clean it out every once in awhile -- not very often -- when I first came here I cleaned it out every other year but it's gotten to be longer periods now and it seems to work just as well. But anyway, you do have to keep the gutters clean and not let water run in when they're full of leaves and trash. And when the cistern gets full, you can't let any more in or you'll have it running over and there's always the chance that some snake or frog will get in there and contaminate the water. There are many problems that you don't have with city water. On the other hand, it's very sweet, tasty

water and when I go to drink in town it tastes like medicine. It's that way with everything here; nothing takes care of itself.

JW: Is it harder now that you're on your own?

HH: No, it's easier. I've lowered my standards a great deal. Not in keeping the house clean but there are some things that I did just for Anna that I don't have to do any more. One thing, she was so particular, for good reasons, about any smoke in the room. And now, if the fireplace smokes, I don't mind [laughs] at all. It soon goes out. The smoke doesn't bother me. And then I don't, I've given up trying to heat the whole house and the hardest part to heat is that lower room with the high ceiling and it really took quite a supply of firewood to keep that warm during the cold winter. Now I just -- my winter quarters are on the upper level which is a smaller room with a low ceiling, pretty well insulated, only two windows in it, it doesn't have that tremendous window in the front so it's much easier to heat. It doesn't mean I'm glad Anna's gone, of course. [laughs] There are drawbacks, things that she did for me I have to do for myself.

JW: She did most of the cooking, didn't she?

HH: She did all of the cooking, yes.

JW: How are you doing fending for yourself in terms of cooking?

HH: Well, I don't think the meals would be judged to be as good as they used to be. I only make a fire once a day and I've simplified the food supply a great deal but I seem to be getting along all right.

JW: Do you still fish as much as you used to?

HH: Well, I was fishing this spring and that was some of the best fishing I've had on the river. I was catching a great many nice, big catfish using worms dug out of the compost heap. But I soon found that I couldn't eat them all, I was catching too many and there wasn't enough to can. The canning is one thing that I've fallen by the wayside in, Anna used to can so much. In fact, I'm still using from her bounty of canned goods. But then I realized that canning is, if you're by yourself, it's quite a chore. When Anna canned anything, I would gather the fruit and vegetables -- tomatoes, for instance -- bring them in and wash them and sort them and then the tomatoes I would peel and cut up and all Anna had to do was put them in jars. When you do all that yourself, it takes at least twice as long.

JW: The last time I was here, Ranger, your dog, caught a groundhog. Can you talk a little bit about how you dress a groundhog?

HH: Well, that's the problem I was faced with when Ranger caught the first one but I seemed to know what to do. I don't know, I guess we'd had enough experience on the shantyboat with wild game. Groundhog is not hard to dress. I tie them up by hind legs and start peeling off the skin. When you get that done, the worst is over. But if you get a big, old groundhog that's tough, everything is tough and hard, it takes longer. Ranger's gone and dropped out of the groundhog business pretty much but I think this year, this summer he's caught about twelve. But two days he caught two groundhogs in a day and some of them were big ones, too. But one of the early years, I remember when we first got Ranger and the groundhogs were plentiful in the garden, he caught forty in one summer. And we ate every one of them except what Ranger ( ).

JW: Do you roast the meat?

HH: We had other dogs before Ranger. He's the one that caught forty groundhogs. You don't roast groundhogs; we'd put them in an iron kettle, a cast iron kettle and put another pan inside and really -- makes a double boiler of it and you steam them very slowly. Then the meat gets right tender, anything else you try to do to a groundhog or rabbit or anything, I guess, especially you just happen to make the meat tough.

JW: You used to have quite a few goats. In fact, you talk about them in *Payne Hollow*. How did the decision to stop raising the goats come about?

HH: Well, we got the first goat in 1957, the first two or three goats. I had always thought it would be a good idea to have goats and Anna approved of it as a source of milk and meat and I was always intrigued by goats anyway. So in 1957 I built a little goat house, some people call it a goat shed, a goat stable -- and looked around for some goats. They were hard to find but I did get two, two does that gave some milk. I think they were classed as brush goats, though; the owner kept them just to keep the brush down in his field. But they turned out pretty well; the kids -- then we got a buck that was of the higher grade from a real herd of goats, the first thing you know we were in business. It was a lot of work, though; I thought that you could raise goats in a small area and you can, you can shut them in and keep them there, you have to feed them hay all the time, though. And a goat is an animal that likes to roam the range over in the woods and eat leaves, bark, so I kept making a longer range, bigger enclosure. Finally I turned them loose and let them go out.

The hillside above us has about forty acres on it and it was absolutely uncultivated and a wonderful place for goats. Up at the top are some cliffs which appealed to them. I kept them coming in by feeding them grain at night, which also increased the milk supply.

And the whole experience was profitable and I enjoyed it and I learned a good deal. One thing you learn is you're not keeping goats, they're keeping you. You have to do a lot for them. But they do – they are an interesting animal and they have strange characters some times.

JW: Do they have pleasant dispositions?

HH: Yes, I never had any trouble with any goats. The females, the does, were always rather aloof but the males were very friendly, good pals, except when there was a -- certain times when the females were around. But we turned them loose all the time together. We had to restrict that, though; first thing you know we had about sixteen goats and I didn't want more than three or four. Anyway, we kept goats from 1957 until 1978, which I figure is twenty-one years.

JW: Did you ever eat goat's milk, I mean eat goat's meat?

HH: Before that?

JW: Hm-hm. Or during that time.

HH: Well, during that time that was our main source of meat. We didn't buy much else and during the winter Anna would can a great quantity of it for summer use. And I would smoke goat meat and make jerky and yeah, we ate the meat, all right.

JW: So it was a whole – a whole other industry almost that surrounded the goats.

HH: Yes, it was.

JW: Canning the meat and . . .

HH: It was an experience, too. One learns a lot from keeping animals. As I say, they don't keep you but you keep them; you have to make them happy and healthy and keep them contented. You have to be there every day to milk if they're fresh and if you have more than two or three goats, why, there's usually one of them fresh all the time. So it's really rather confining, too. Once in awhile, in the fall of the year, they would take a notion to roam, too; they wouldn't come in. And I spent a good many hours tramping over these rough hillsides looking for the goats. But usually they did come in.

But then in the late – in the '70s I began to think that I would be happier if I didn't have so much work to do and that feeling kept growing until finally in 1978 I butchered the last goat. And I missed them and I still miss the milk and the meat, and the goats, too. But it does allow me a lot more time and that's what I'm working out these days is not to have so much work to do or so much hard work.

JW: Harlan, I'd like to change the subject a little bit and talk more about your art work. In 1980 a woman named Florence A. Fowler compiled a number of slides of your paintings.

HH: 456.

JW: 456, I understand, is the total. She was doing this under the direction of project advisor Dr. Robert J. Rosenthal who was with Hanover College just across the river in Indiana. Can you tell me a little bit about how the project came about?

HH: Well, it's -- the students in their senior year were given or they could select something for independent study. It had no connection with their class work -- they had to do it all outside the classes -- but their professor was the supervisor; they had to report to

him to get advice and show their progress. But the work was all done by Flo Fowler and she, after the slides were made, of every painting she found she made a slide and gave the present owner and measurement and medium and title and then she made a, she photographed the slides and put the photographs in these two albums. There's a photograph for every picture she took of all 456. And they go pretty far back. Is that turned on yet?

JW: Yeah.

HH: This is one of the earliest ones and it just happens that I have the original. And there it is and in this catalog it's number six. [In a whisper] (Better write that down. [pause] I'll put some dimensions and the percentages.) The size is ten and a half wide by nine inches high. It's painted in oil and it was done in 1920 and the catalog says it's the property of the artist, and it still is and it's going to be for awhile.

JW: This one is entitled: "Still life with carrot, onion and can."

HH: That's right. That's a very good description. [chuckle] But the arrangement is good and the painting is excellent, I think. The contrast of color between the reddish carrot and the yellowish onion and the textures of the two and the texture of the can which is a dark, gun-metal sort of color. I remember just when I made this; it was a holiday of some kind and Frank was home and I was home. At that time I was going through the National Academy of Design Art School. And Frank was -- I had never painted in oil -- and Frank was going to help me get started and he set up this still life. I was living with my mother at the time in New York in the Bronx in an apartment on the Grand Concourse. It sounds like an expensive apartment but it wasn't. [chuckle] We set this up out in the little kitchen -- we took over the kitchen for the painting of it -- Frank was an excellent teacher.

He wasn't a good painter himself because his interest was in black and white because, and that was due to his eyes which had some trouble distinguishing color, certain colors. But anyway, I made this painting there and I can still remember the thrill I had when squeezing the color out of the tubes of paint and mixing them up on a palette.

JW: How much direction did you get from your art teachers?

HH: Well, I hadn't had any direction or any instruction in painting up to this point; I never did have as far as that goes. I don't know how I got through three years of art school without having more pertinent instruction. All I know about teachers is that they, even in the National Academy of Design, they had one of the older students, called a monitor, would take care of the model and the pose.

In the antique class you made drawings of plaster casts, whichever cast appealed to you, but the teacher would come around, I think twice a week, and criticize your work. He didn't stay very long or say very much. Some of them took an interest, though, but I got most of my help from older students. Some of their advice wasn't very good, of course, [laughs] but they had had experience, anyway.

There was a nice spirit in those classes, though. The students were all enthusiastic and interested and all working toward a common goal and helping each other and there was a very democratic body, there was no -- almost self-governing -- but we never had any trouble that I knew of. And the students were all poor, too, because the National Academy of Design, I think you had to pay ten dollars when you entered. That's about all. Furnish your own materials, of course, but they furnished the model and kept the place warm and it was a very good bargain, I think.

That's one I made there and here's another one, which is quite different. I think this was made two years later at a, when I went there again. The second – the year in-between I went to Cincinnati Art Academy and then in the third year I went back to the National Academy of Design. This is a figure . . .

JW: This is number two?

HH: Number two, yeah. No, it's number one.

JW: Oh, I'm sorry.

HH: I took that one. Can you get that?

JW: Yes, it's "Sketch of a nude figure reclining."

HH: Yeah. That's what it is, too. And it's very good; it's a difficult position. It's foreshortened, the drawing is good and the figure lies on the floor so flat, I mean it just fits there and the perspective is good. The color is good, too, and the modeling. In fact, I'm quite proud of it. This is a picture that my niece selected when I offered her one. She said - she was a dancer herself -- and she said this looks like she did, she does after she's had a hard session of dancing. So I'm quite pleased -- I don't have the original . . . that's the original and this is a photograph and they're both very good.

JW: Did your anatomy class help you with the musculature?

HH: We didn't have a real class in anatomy. There was a lecturer came around once in awhile and lectured on anatomy and also once in awhile one came around and lectured on perspective. And the teachers, of course, the teacher we had in the antique class was a very good draftsman -- he'd studied under Gerome in Paris -- and he was a stickler for

good drawing. The trouble with him is he wanted too much detail. We spent time on detail that wasn't effective.

JW: The floors in the studio must have been a little dirty.

HH: Dirty. [laughter]

JW: She's got dirty feet.

HH: Nobody ever cleaned those floors that I know of. [laughter]

JW: And that's number one.

HH: Number two is a portrait of an old man who was a model in one of our classes, too. It's a painting and it's real nice, I think.

JW: It's in oil as well?

HH: Hm-hm. That's all they had in those days. Acrylics weren't invented. Of course, they had tempera and water colors but no acrylic.

JW: This one, the brushstrokes seem much quicker.

HH: Yeah, well, it's more loose and open and done quicker than that one. I worked on that one. [chuckle] But that's good, the balance of light and dark, see, this light figure here and all this dark here and see how this goes down into the dark and this tremendous ear out here that looks like it's out of the drawing, doesn't it?

JW: [chuckle]

HH: Maybe he had an ear that big. But the face is modeled well. A little highlight here brings out the round of the forehead and it has some character, too. It looks like a human being, not just a model.

JW: Yeah, it sure does.

HH: Well, that's number two. That, I don't know where it is now. It's been destroyed, I'm sure. It says it's the property of the artist, I guess, but I don't have it. I think that is all the paintings that I have left from art school. But in 1921 we returned to Kentucky and I started painting here and these two . . .

JW: Number three and four.

HH: Hm-hm. Especially number four is a wonderful view of Brent looking down on it from the hill. You can see the curve of the river and how the railroad track follows the river and there's a big, long train. The caboose is up here, it's painted red. And the locomotive's down there where that cloud of smoke is coming out. There's another train coming up from down the river and its smoke is reflected in the smooth water. You can tell this is winter because the smoke is white, you know, there's so much steam in the smoke that it vaporizes in the winter air, I guess.

JW: Where would you have been standing or sketching?

HH: On this hill on this side, overlooking the river and there's a hill there. And then this little valley here is . . . Winter's Lane goes up there; that's what I write so much about in the journal. And the studio that I had was an old planing mill up here, a small place, and it used to belong to Neely Willison. I worked for him for awhile, I worked for him all summer in that planing mill one year just to get acquaintance with tools and learn about wood from an old-timer like that. And after he died, I had permission from his daughter to make a studio in part of the planing mill. I tell all about that in the journal. This is -- they call it Onion Creek -- comes down to the river.

JW: You can see the roads because they're whiter. Is that from snow?

HH: No, this is a concrete road here and that's just a stony road. It isn't blacktop; they didn't have any black top. But that's ( ) painting and it has a . . . I soon got out of this style; see how it's so flat? The masses are so flat and simplified and the outlines are kind of hard. It's pre-Impressionist, really, or it might be Art Nouveau, that's what came in about the time just before I painted this.

JW: At that time, what were the artistic influences? I mean, were you exposed to the museums in New York?

HH: Oh, yes. And having Mr. Hinton as an -- in antiques -- he was, as I say, a student of Gerome and we felt like we were in Paris sometimes. There was a very strong French influence. And then when I got to studying, got to painting, of course, I was influenced by Impressionism. But this particular painting goes back before Impressionist days. I look at it with a little bit of longing, too, as if I left something behind that was good.

JW: Afraid it doesn't look like that any more, does it?

HH: No. That's where we built the shantyboat, right there, about there, and then there's a big, four-lane bridge that crosses the river here right over the top where I built the boat and it goes up to Three Mile Creek.

JW: So that would have been right across from where they built Fontaine Ferry eventually.

HH: What? Coney Island Ferry?

JW: Fontaine Ferry. Or, yeah, Coney Island, yeah.

HH: Coney Island Ferry.

JW: Fontaine Ferry's in Louisville.

HH: Yeah. It used to start up here where there's an underpass and the cars could drive down to it there. And Johnny Laughead who operated the ferry got in trouble with Mrs. Wilson on that land and she wouldn't let him come in there anymore so when we were building the shantyboat . . .

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE B