

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE
TAPE 5 OF 11; 1988-102

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

JOANNE WEETER: This is Joanne Weeter and I am continuing to interview Harlan Hubbard. Right now we are on painting number four out of the catalog compiled by Flo Fowler in 1980.

HH: This painting . . .

JW: Number three?

HH: Yeah. You can see the difference between that one and this one; it's done with very broad brushstrokes and very loose. It doesn't have the tight edges and the flat masses of this one. That little steamboat down in the corner, that's the first one I ever painted, I guess. But that's nice, too, you know. It's a real good landscape, looking across the river.

JW: It's very painterly. You can tell where your brushstrokes are.

HH: Yeah. This is in that period, too . . .

JW: Number five.

HH: It's a hay field overlooking the river. I think there's a wagon there, horse and wagon; they're loading hay. It looks down along the river.

JW: And this was oil on tin or on steel?

HH: Steel.

JW: Oil on steel, it says.

HH: Yeah, about that time I started painting on galvanized steel but it was not the ordinary galvanizing the paint won't stick to, it was the kind of galvanizing called paint grip. It was made to be painted on right away. And I still have those old metal canvases -- metal paintings, I mean. They're in good shape. It's very permanent.

JW: Harlan, number five is the first one that we've come across that has a frame. Do the other ones not have frames or did she not include the frames when she. . . ?

HH: No, she photographed the frames when -- this is the only one that had been framed. I made a frame for this later and it's been sold. I don't have it any more.

JW: For number four, you mean.

HH: Yeah. And the same for this one; it's gone.

JW: For number three.

HH: This one -- they're all gone except those two from the art school. I still have those.

JW: We're flipping to the next page now.

HH: Number seven . . .

JW: This one was done in 1920. "River Town," it's entitled.

HH: You only see a couple of houses over there. There's one very plain one with a white fence around it. The photograph was not very good but you get the idea.

JW: It has a nice reflective quality.

HH: Yeah. And the edge of the water where the reflection goes into the sunlight is very nice. That's -- it shows at that early date where my longing was, or what kind of

things I wanted to paint. "River Town." And that subject has been repeated over and over in different sizes and styles and different places.

This is another one, number eight, that was done about the same time and that is a distant steamboat coming down the river with clouds of smoke over it and it's reflected in the water. That's another typical scene. It seems like I repeated the same motifs over and over and I still don't tire of them.

JW: It has a nice composition here with the curve of the shore.

HH: All of these are nicely composed. They don't run off of the page, off of the - out of the frame. [pause] We don't have to talk about each one of these, do we? This one I can't say much about.

JW: Uh-uh. Number nine.

HH: Some bare trees against the sunny hillside.

JW: Number ten seems . . .

HH: That looks like a sketch for a mural. See, there's an old fishing boat and old houses up here. That's one of the times when I was ambitious, I guess, and thought that I would paint . . . like a mural. Those were commissioned by the government, I guess. The post office is right here.

JW: Hm-hm. Didn't you have one – didn't you end up painting one in . . .

HH: In Covington, yeah.

JW: A post office.

HH: We'll come to that one later on.

JW: Okay.

HH: We'll talk about it then. Now this one is out of place, I think, number eleven, because it's one of the best paintings I've ever done. This is Three Mile Valley. That's Andy Feglein's farm. I don't know who has that. It's one of my great mistakes is letting my paintings go without writing down who has them.

JW: Mr. Fred Fettig?

HH: Fettig.

JW: In Edgewood, Kentucky.

HH: Does he have number eleven?

JW: Mm-hm.

HH: I didn't know that. Well, well, I'm glad he has it. But it's, you can see from here, it's been a snowy night and the sun is just breaking through in the morning and how much lighter it is there. And this side of the roof is lighter than that one. It's just very delicate that way. It's almost photographic but it has so much more to it than that. It's a very good painting, I think. See, this goes down, up this way, all around.

JW: Were you painting outside when you did this?

HH: No, I never paint outside; never did even then. I'd make a pencil sketch and come inside and paint. That's a significant difference, I think.

JW: It'd be a little cold.

HH: Well, not only that, in the summertime I didn't do it, either. I think the reason is when you're outside looking at something, you have to do a lot of real hard looking to get the design of it and the proportions and the structure of your painting and if you try to do all that and paint it at the same time, it's just too much. But if you make just a

pencil sketch to get the main outlines and remember the color, then when you go in you can concentrate on that and you're not distracted by so much landscape around you. So I think it's the only way to paint is to paint inside. I shouldn't say that, though, because you have good artists who. . . . This is a picture of the old Brent Schoolhouse, which is gone. It's rather an historical monument.

JW: Number twelve.

HH: That's the property of George Bartnick. Does it say that?

JW: Property of the artist, it says now, but this was done in 1980.

HH: No. And George is Susan's brother. Susan selected that one of the dancer, of the nude figure lying on the floor and George picked this one out. See, it's recess and the children are out playing in the yard going round and round. There's a boat going down the river and one coming up on the other side. A lot going on. That's *Fred Hall* going down with a couple of sand barges loaded, sand barges from the sand digger that was up here. And this is Hubbard Claraville Wilmer's (?) house; the house is still there but the school is all gone.

JW: Do you remember the name of the barge because of its form or do you remember painting it?

HH: I remember painting it and it looks like it, too. And it towed sand. [pause] I have this picture of the bare trees, one going up on each side of the canvas and then in the pale distance is this wide stretch of the river.

JW: Number fourteen.

HH: Nobody seemed to want that and I guess there's good reasons for it.

JW: Craggly trees.

HH: Hm-hm. The photograph is better than the original, I think. This is a picture of the steamer *Chris Greene*.

JW: Number thirteen.

HH: That's the modern steel hull, steel steamer but it was about the last, this and the *Tom Greene* were about the last sternwheel packets which were constructed on the Ohio River. And there are all the beautiful lines of the old boats but there's something lacking. The painting is very good. It's the property of a lady in Bedford. I can't think of her name now. Does it say?

JW: George Yenowine in Pendleton.

HH: Yeah. Well, it says Pendleton, near Bedford.

JW: Hm-hm. Mr. and Mrs. George Yenowine.

HH: Hm-hm. She's really proud of that painting.

JW: Number fifteen has a quality about it where you've taken a very broad view.

HH: Yeah. This is more like the paintings of, this is more advanced than the rest of them. The composition is better. This is rather awkward, you see, don't you think?

These trees going up the side.

JW: Number fourteen? Hm-hm.

HH: Yeah. This one seems to be better balanced although this is kind of wasted space down here.

JW: You mean the trees around the bottom of number fifteen?

HH: Yeah. There's so much of that that I just had to fill up that corner some way. But this is the best part, the distant hills. I worked very hard on the drawing of the surface of the river to make that flat and go back in the distance and to have these cloud shadows on it too. It's a very good picture.

JW: Number fifteen is entitled "Towboat in Red Water" and it's the property of the artist, it says, at least as of 1980.

HH: I don't know who has it now. I didn't keep up Flo Fowler's catalog, I'm sorry to say. This is going to take us the rest of the summer . . . [both laugh]

JW: It could. Well, we can be selective. Number nineteen is unusual.

HH: [pause] Yeah. The distant blue hills. I think I still have that, don't I?

JW: It says "Pear Trees on a Ridge," property of the artist.

HH: I wouldn't be surprised if I still have it. Nobody seemed to like this painting. This is one of my best paintings, done in Winter's Lane. It's a picture of Winter's Lane in the winter. It's quite large. You can get the dimensions on there.

JW: Number twenty-three, it's thirty by twenty-four inches.

HH: Yeah, that's a pretty good size for me. And you can see the snowy road going up. And this is the brick building down under the road like, where Neely Willison lived, and this dark mass over here is his workshop, the planing mill, in which I made a studio, in which this was painted. It's now and still the property of Dan McTamney, isn't it?

JW: Hm-hm. That's correct.

HH: He's dead and Carleen McTamney still has it and she has several others, too. Dan was one of my first patrons. I think he got this for fifty dollars. That was the last one of this. That's a nice picture of the Queen City there.

JW: Number twenty-two. That's also owned by the McTamneys.

HH: Well, he got some good ones and they still have them. I think this is about the first picture of a shantyboat.

JW: Number twenty-eight.

HH: Sitting there on the corner, yeah. And some more beached out up here. That's at Brent, right where we built our boat. And this one belongs to Vince Kohler, doesn't it?

JW: Judi Clubb of Fort Thomas, number twenty-four belongs to, it says.

HH: Hm.

JW: A farm scene.

HH: That's a different one but he has one with the barn like this in the corner. I put that in. What's the name again?

JW: Judi Clubb.

HH: Oh, Judi Clubb, yeah. She got her collection by helping me; in 1968 I went down there to clean out the studio because we were selling the house and in it had been stored all my paintings that I did at Brent and one was "Shantyboat." Up till the time we built the Shantyboat. Not all of them; some of them had been sold but not many. And she helped me. She lives in a house out on the street in front and in return I gave her this painting and another one of the, it was an oval shape with a boat in the middle of it.

JW: How did it come to be that you left your paintings there for such a long period of time?

HH: Nobody wanted them. I put them there in 1944 when we started to build the shantyboat and didn't pull them out till 1968. And when I put them in there nobody wanted them but when I took them out later they were more popular. I was surprised. I think there had been a change in the public taste. Those early paintings, when these early paintings were done the whole thing in the art world was abstract Impressionism and if you didn't make something that was abstract and a little screwy, out of proportion in the drawing, why then nobody would look at it. And these things are so realistic. That's one of my principles, realism. Of course, not distort any proportions or construction or anything. I still have that one. Water running over a creek.

JW: Yeah, it's a much tighter shot, a tighter painting.

HH: That's one of the few paintings I made that didn't have some view of the sky that's reflected in the water. [pause, then tape shuts off, then is resumed]

JW: You say number thirty-one belongs to Mr. Schimfossil? Property of the artist, it says.

HH: He's bought it since then and I think what sold it to him was that mule standing up on the ridge there, silhouetted against the sky. By the bare tree. At least that's what he was most interested in. He's very proud of it, though. He lives in Madison.

JW: You can really see how they plow the side of the hill.

HH: Yeah, you can see the erosion of these hills too. Gulleys washed it down. This is a nice one; it's melting snow on the bare hillside.

JW: Number thirty.

HH: I think the Bartnicks have that one.

JW: William Wiley.

HH: [chuckle] I missed that one, didn't I? William Wiley.

JW: Now where it says here, "Reverse of 134" . . .

HH: 134 is on the other side.

JW: Oh. You mean you painted on two sides of one . . .

HH: Yeah. A lot of them are that way.

JW: Of one piece of tin. So, if they wanted to, they would have some variety,
huh?

HH: They got two paintings in one. Nobody ever thought of paying for the second one, though; they thought it was like the bargains in the store. [chuckle] The second one costs a penny.

JW: Two for one. [chuckle]

HH: This is a nice one of the distant view of the hill, of the river. That's one motif I worked over and over. The river coming down between the blue hills in the foreground. Warm colors.

JW: How long would it take you to make your initial sketch?

HH: Just a few minutes.

JW: And then you would formulate in the studio what you wanted to paint?

HH: Yeah, it took a long time in the studio sometimes.

JW: Hm-hm. Were you always alone when you painted?

HH: Yeah. I still am. I can't paint if there's anybody in the same building.

[chuckle] This is a page of some of the best things I've done.

JW: Numbers thirty-three through thirty-six.

HH: This one and this one are in the Hanover College collection.

JW: Thirty-three and thirty-six.

HH: Probably doesn't, it was given to them because that was made before the collection was set up.

JW: Thirty-six is the *Julius Fleischmann*.

HH: Yeah. And who owns that one?

JW: It says "Property of the artist."

HH: That's one we gave to Hanover.

JW: And then thirty-three is "Shantyboats at Sunrise."

HH: They're in the snow, see, and it's winter and the sun was just rising and the color of the sky is reflected in the water down here but this is snow back here; it looks like it might be water when you first look at it but the water's outside that bank there. And all these, the johnboat and little lines and gang plank, everything about the boat are just like they were when they were floating, but they're just ready for the river to come up again. So it's really, that's one of the most popular paintings I ever made. I could have sold it many times but I kept it. What date was that made?

JW: Between 1930 and 1940.

HH: Oh yeah. Well, I kept it until 1986 when I gave it to Hanover College.

These two. This one is a picture of Springdale, a little town up above Maysville, in the rain. It's really nice, soft, and little white houses so inviting.

JW: That's number thirty-five.

HH: Springdale is where Anna and I took a walk on our marriage day. I told you we were married in Maysville and after the ceremony we walked up the railroad track to Springdale, the next little town, which was this one and walked out this road into the country a little ways.

JW: You didn't have your sketch book with you at that point, though, I guess you . . .

HH: Yes, I did because I made this before we were married. This was long before we married, wasn't it?

JW: Yeah, between 1930 and 1940 and you were married in '43 so. . . .

HH: But maybe that's one reason I went there because I liked the place. But this is now the property of Judy Moffett who lives in Pennsylvania. She was a former Hanover student and one of those students that came down here and became a part of our life here almost and we've kept in touch ever since. She's teaching or she has been teaching in the English department at the University of Pennsylvania but I think she's gone into free-lance writing now. She's written a good deal of poetry and I think the last I heard from her, which was this spring, she had had her novel accepted by a publisher which was coming out in October so it ought to be out about now. That's a great painting. Now this one is another one, that's the little town of Wellsburg.

JW: Number thirty-four.

HH: This woman that was here today from Augusta, you know, that's just above this, this is Wellsburg and Augusta's up here a few miles.

JW: Much more photographic.

HH: Yeah. That's another one of the best, the most popular paintings I ever made. See, there's all these towns with all the detail: the washing hanging out on the line and you can see it clear -- this is a large painting -- the railroad station and the coal cars on the siding and then the road trickles out and goes down to the river and the shantyboats down there and a steamboat going by.

JW: And a little church.

HH: Yeah. Who owns that one? Property of the artist, I guess.

JW: Number thirty-four, yeah.

HH: Well, in 1985 it was purchased by, let me get this straight now, [pause] the University of Kentucky at, the school in Louisville, that city down there, a small place. A man named Andy Riley, of all names, saw this painting in a show in Frankfort, Kentucky, which was sponsored by our governor -- I want to say () but . . .

JW: Not Martha Layne but John Y. Brown.

HH: No, it was Martha Layne.

JW: Oh, it was Martha?

HH: And we met her down there and while it was in there it was seen by Mr. Andy Riley and they bought it. And they paid \$1,500 for it, the highest price I ever got for a painting or ever will get, I guess. They thought that was well worth it, though.

JW: You should be proud of yourself.

HH: Well, every little bit helps.

JW: That's pretty.

HH: These are all landscapes painted in that productive period between 1930 and '40 before I got married. I was living at home then with my mother and I described all of this in one of those tapes that I made.

JW: We're looking at thirty-seven through forty.

HH: I had more time for painting then than I ever had later until now, because when we went on the shantyboat and then came back and built Payne Hollow and all the time I lived there, I was working hard labor. I did some painting but not as much as I would have liked to have done. I don't think I have any of those any more. Carol Swearingen, I sold that in her gallery.

JW: Number forty-one.

HH: And this was bought by somebody from a show in Hanover.

JW: Number forty-two.

HH: What does it say there? Property of the artist, I guess.

JW: Yes.

HH: Most of those have gone out of my hands since that catalog was made. This is a nice one, I always liked that. The Swearingen gallery has that.

JW: Number forty-four. Does Carol Swearingen handle a lot of your paintings?

HH: Not a lot but she wants more all the time. She wouldn't like it because I let this woman today have some. She says last time she came up here to get some paintings,

she said, "I'm going to take these while I can before somebody else comes along and twists your arm and gets them." She was twisting my arm all the time, of course, and this woman did the same thing today. [chuckle]

JW: Well, we just won't tell her.

HH: Well, Carol's all right, I like her very much and she's gotten high prices; she's sold several of them for \$1,000. This is a nice picture of Brent.

JW: Number forty-six.

HH: I don't still have that one, do I?

JW: Property of the artist. "Three Mile Valley," it says.

HH: Well, that's where we built the shantyboat, right down over the hill from the railroad track where the train is. This is the road that goes up to Fort Thomas and Andy Feglein's farm that we had back there is right on the hillside here. And Brent was right around the corner, the old planing mill and all that.

JW: Does this one, is number forty-eight as impressionistic as it appears or is it the photography?

HH: No, that's the way it is. It's fuzzy but it's more atmospheric than it is Impressionism, I think. I don't know where all those paintings are. Here's a big enormous oak tree with a horse standing down there in the pasture.

JW: Forty-nine. Do you prefer dealing with a gallery or do you enjoy selling them yourself?

HH: If there's anything I hate to do it's sell a painting and that's one thing the gallery relieves me of, but at the same time I don't like to deal with galleries, either.

[chuckle] That woman today was too, too commercial and too graspy, I thought but. . . .

That's a nice one there.

JW: Number fifty looks as though there's a lot of movement.

HH: Yeah. And the sky's . . .

JW: In the sky. And number fifty-one there's movement, too, but it's, it's softer.

HH: Well, I was always trying experiments. Now these are different, how different all these are. Hardly any two of my paintings look alike; they're all experimental in some way or another. I think I still have that one, I had it till recently and somebody took this one just recently.

JW: Number fifty-five.

HH: That's the dreariest painting I ever saw. It's a flood, the rain's coming down, dripping off the roof and the water's coming up over the road and the railroad's just about ready to go under. I didn't put down who bought it but somebody bought it just the other day.

JW: Now this was done between 1930 and 1940.

HH: Same period.

JW: Is that the '37 flood?

HH: Yeah, it could be. I think it is.

JW: What do you remember about the '37 flood?

HH: Well, I was up in (); I didn't have anything to do with it, of course, but I spent a lot of time watching it. I'd go to all the different outposts and look at it or go down to the city to look at it and go out in the country and go up on top of the hills. I was very

much interested in the river at that high stage. It's not the familiar river that you know, it's something going into . . . it's like the person, ecstasy, they're just above it. Liminal, you know, that's just what it is. But it makes a different thing of it, it's a different relation with the world entirely.

JW: So it was a study for you more than a threat.

HH: Yeah. I didn't think of it as a threat and I didn't have much interest in helping flood relief, either, but I did study the river a lot. This belongs to Linley Pearson of Frankfort, Indiana.

JW: Number fifty-one.

HH: He bought that -- he's a state official who came down here with Bill Caddell.

JW: Why is it that you preferred to paint landscapes and river scenes over people?

HH: That's just my nature. It shows my inner nature. I don't like people.

[chuckle]

JW: Okay.

HH: No, that's not it. But nature means so much to me; it's a religion, really. It isn't just painting to earn a living or painting to do something. It's the source of all my inspiration and people don't fit into it, you know? Sometimes a man working in a field in the distance is good but . . .

JW: Where you don't have too much interaction with them.

HH: Yeah, they're just part of the landscape. Yes, I would go, when I'm out, used to be out for a walk I'd go around the side of the hillside to avoid passing close to a house. I've always been that way, I guess. But that's a significant question.

END OF TAPE 5, SIDE A

START OF TAPE 5, SIDE B

HH: That painting, it goes back to that flat way of painting that I mentioned at the very beginning, of Brent, that other picture looking down on Brent. I always liked it but I painted it on burlap and burlap, you know, is porous. If you hold it up to the light it's like looking through a screen, and so I think, I said, well, this painting is worth saving so I'll mount it on a piece of canvas, I mean a piece of board.

JW: Where did you go for your art supplies? Into Cincinnati?

HH: To some extent, yeah, but the colors I use are dry colors, they're not in tubes any more, and I buy those wholesale, I used to buy them from a firm in New York -- I got started when I was in art school -- called Fezandie and Speredle. Down on the waterfront where all the fish docks are. It was a little ramshackle place, but they would sell, you'd go in there and you'd buy a pound or a half pound or five pounds, whatever you wanted. It was very economical and I'd buy some oil and turpentine, linseed oil and turpentine and I was all set up for a long period of painting. I did that after I came back here to Kentucky for awhile and then I lost track of Fezandie and Speredle; I thought they'd gone out of business. But just recently I learned that they're, those dry colors are still being sold by a firm in New York called David Davis, Fine Art Material, Fine Arts Material. And they're still called Fezandie and Speredle, they've still retained that name. So I get them from them. They're a little more

expensive than they used to be but they're still. . . . So I have enough paint, I can get enough colors that way to last for so long and then linseed oil is easy to get and turpentine and now they're mixing acrylic resin with it and I can get that here so I don't have to go anywhere for art material.

This is a painting, a very nice painting of the riverbank with the sycamores and all quiet and peaceful. Bare trees, bare sycamores. It belongs to Marge Webster.

JW: Number seventy-one.

HH: Or is that still property of the artist?

JW: Property of the artist.

HH: But she selected it, she's a young woman whom I admire very much. She's Dan and Nita Webster's daughter from Hanover College and she took it over to England with her. One of the few paintings I have in foreign countries.

JW: Number seventy-three looks very quiet, too.

HH: Hm-hm. Yeah, that's nice, the night fog lying in the valley over here. Well, I certainly did devote a large part of my life to depicting nature and I'm not just trying to patronize it but to paint it with reverence. That's a painting of figures and a mule. Is that property of the artist, too?

JW: Yes. It's entitled, "Jake and Eddie Planting Peas with Mules." And that's number seventy-six.

HH: Yes. That's going along, Jake Sandfoss owned the cottage I rented up there for a studio after I left Brent. Eddie was a young man, younger than I was at the time. We

got pretty well acquainted. But a lot of these paintings looking over the river were done there.

JW: It looks like a lot of work.

HH: Planting peas?

JW: Hm-hm.

HH: Lot of work for everybody, me included. I saw this the other day; it's one that Nita Webster has.

JW: Number seventy-seven.

HH: She has it now.

JW: "Winding road," it's called. Property of the artist.

HH: Yeah. I wish I still had all those. [chuckle] This one, just the other day, I sold it to somebody. It's rather a difficult painting; people look at that and say, "Gee, it must be a hard climb way up. . . ." The way it winds around, it makes them tired looking.

[chuckle]

JW: Number seventy-nine. What's this in . . . ?

HH: A mudhole.

JW: In the foreground. Hm.

HH: Yeah, picture wouldn't do without that; it needs some contrast. Yeah, that's gone.

JW: Number eighty, was that taken . . . ?

HH: That's on the Sandfoss farm, that's the sheep fold and this is down in the cellar and they have these big timbers supporting the barn and in this little window, see the thick walls? It looks like a foreign country, doesn't it?

JW: Hm-hm.

HH: Here's a little sheep with her little ones.

JW: And this is in Newport, number eighty-one.

HH: Yeah, that was an old house on the waterfront there that has been torn down since then. I know all these have been sold. This was sold just the other day to a fellow -- I don't know; I'm surprised he wanted it. [pause] This is one of my most successful landscapes, too.

JW: Number eighty-three.

HH: That's part of, that's either in Hanover or Behringer-Crawford Museum, I don't know which it is.

JW: You use a lot of blues for the shading.

HH: Well, you can't trust these photographs very much but that's true in a way. There's a lot of warm color in here, too. But these colors, some of them are so bad that . . . this is the one that Richard Strimple bought. Do you know Richard Strimple?

JW: Number eighty-seven? I don't believe so. [pause] Going back and locating these in your old studio, it must have been like Christmas.

HH: Yeah. To get them out and see how good they were. And some sad parts about it, though, the raccoons got in there and damaged a lot of them; not a lot of them but some of them. Bob Canida owns that one.

JW: Number eighty-six.

HH: And the Weitzels live in Cincinnati. Mrs. Weitzel, too. I'm sure they're in there.

JW: Eighty [should be eighty-eight] and eighty-nine.

HH: Are they?

JW: Hm-hm. Now when you chose the frames for your paintings, did you mostly used salvaged wood?

HH: It's all driftwood or old barn siding, scraps of wood.

JW: Is that just a matter of convenience or did you think that was most compatible?

HH: I thought it was most compatible and I like to work it and I like to use it. Everybody seems to like -- not everybody -- but most people like my frames. Some people think they don't harmonize with their furniture and they'll take them off, which makes me feel bad. This is, no, this is John Plamp, Plamp, P-L-A-M-P, he's an insurance agent in Louisville. There, I have some figures in, a lot of them, horses. . . .

JW: It's reminiscent of, what is it, the *Journal of the Sally Ann*?

HH: *Log of the Betsy Ann*?

JW: Yes.

HH: Yeah, that's a smaller boat, it's a much older boat, too.

JW: Hm. This one Uncle Fred, Fred Williams has.

HH: Yeah, that's right. The "H" doesn't stand for "Harlan," it stands for Hatfield Coal Company. [pause] I made on the George Layfields' farm . . .

JW: Number 144, oh, no, I'm sorry, 114.

HH: 114. Is that his name on there?

JW: "George Layfield Plowing."

HH: Yeah.

JW: That's an interesting perspective.

HH: Yes, it is. His house was just up on the hill above my studio in Ross on the river. I got well acquainted with him; I used to go out there and his daughter came down here not so long ago and wanted to know if I had any paintings that were made up at that time. She knew I used to come up there and paint, sketch. I was able to get out three or four of her father and an old house up there -- I think that's it -- where an old man lived by himself. And she was so pleased to get them. That makes me feel good when a painting means something to people outside their interest just as a painting.

JW: The horse really looks like it's straining.

HH: Hm-hm. The chickens are running along behind to pick up the worms that the plow uncovers. [pause] Here's a couple of good steamboats, number 119. It looks like the . . .

JW: The *Chilo*?

HH: *Chilo*, yeah. Does that belong to a Mrs. . . ?

JW: [reads] "Private collection."

HH: Frank Klaine's daughter bought that. Trapp was her name.

JW: Number 120 belongs to Bellevue High School; did they purchase it from you?

HH: Yes. There it is with all the pear trees in bloom; it's very much like that other one of the river with the train going over the track, but this is high water, see the backwater's all backed up in there. And I've been trying to find out about that painting; I was approached by a Mrs. Annie West, who was my teacher in elementary school and she said she was trying to get some paintings by Bellevue artists to put in the library of the new building so I gave them this one and I've. . . . Since then they've built another new building -- I don't know what the old building is used for or if this painting is still there or not. I've asked different people but nobody ever seems to know anything about it. I'll have to go down some time. It's a nice painting.

I was always afraid of Annie West, she was so, so big and dominating. She was the only person in my life that made me sing. I was too bashful to open my mouth to sing but she caught me one recess and said -- I think she needed more boys in her choir and she wanted to try my voice so she said -- "Sing! Do re mi." So I sang , "Do, re, mi." [chuckle] You'd do what she said. We always called her Big Ann.

JW: Was she less imposing the older you got?

HH: Oh, yes. Well, she was still imposing. My brother, Lucien, and I drove down to see her one day; I had some business with this picture, I think, and he got there and when he got there I rang the bell and nobody answered and he said, "Let's go, I don't want to see her." [laughter] He was afraid of her, too, and he's a bold man.

This painting is the house, farm house next to the one in that studio at Ross that I had that belonged to an old man named Henry Reinert. I got acquainted with those people and his son, Joe, much younger than I, and I got acquainted with Joe. Joe used to come over

and see what I was doing sometimes. And when I left there I got, I lost all track of those people. I know Mr. Reinert died. One day somebody rang the bell across the river and if it wasn't Joe Reinert and his wife, and they wanted to know if I still had any of those paintings that I made up there. And I had this one which was an excellent portrait of their house, it couldn't be any better if you had made it on commission.

JW: Number 121.

HH: There's something funny about their coming down, too. Joe started walking down the ramp over there and his wife was just behind him and Joe can't hear very well and he said, "Do you know who I am?" I said, "No!" And he turned to his wife and said, "See, he knows I'm Joe." So I got credit for remembering him all those years. [chuckle] I said no and . . . [chuckle]

Joe and Victoria are one of my best friends now. Joe has to go to Florida in winters for his health but they come here and see me every summer. He can't come up the hill any more. Last year we met him in Madison and the year before that we met him across the river but he still insists on seeing me every year.

This is an unusual picture of the chickens on the sled. It's on the Sandfoss Farm and that's rather an unusual painting. I like big paintings of chickens but that's a nice picture of the sled, too; that's an old wooden sled, nice curves to it and the chickens all roosting up there. That was bought by Charles Fleischman.

JW: Charles Fleischman, number 124. Now that was a sled, a snow sled or a sled for hauling?

HH: No, just for hauling things out and see, they farmed that big bottom out there, which was just sand and mud and they'd use this instead of a wagon. It would run easy on the sand and the mules would pull it along.

Now this painting, that's the Augusta Ferry. Now if Lois Green was here and see that, she'd say, "Gee, that's a shame, isn't it?" Wouldn't she? She'd go jumping up and down if she saw that one.

JW: Number 125.

HH: That's the Fettigs', isn't it?

JW: Yes.

HH: [pause] You can see we're getting into good paintings now. The general quality is improving, don't you think? I did some good work in that period. That's real nice; I must . . . I don't know what I must do.

JW: The water is particularly nice towards the bottom with the ripples.

HH: Yeah. Hm-hm. And then there's the johnboat and a bench; we'd probably row, we'd be sitting on it watching the ferry go by. Hm.

JW: Number 126 and 127, the frames look a little different.

HH: I think the Weitzels own this one, I'm not sure, Ray Weitzel?

JW: Harry Mack.

HH: Oh. 126?

JW: Both 126 and 127.

HH: Oh, he has both of them. This is one the Weitzels have, I think. 130?

JW: 130 is "The Landing on the Oneonta" and Dan McTamney.

HH: Oh, he has that one, too, huh? She has a good collection. Frank Klaine has this one of the sunshine, I think.

JW: Number 131.

HH: This is a picture of the Ravenswood Ferry. I gave that to Jim Milliken. Coming across in the twilight with the lights reflecting in the water.

JW: Number 136. [pause] 142, Mr. Frank Hubbard owns, of the Cincinnati waterfront.

HH: I didn't know he owned 142.

JW: They seem to be out of order.

HH: 140. Bill Caddell bought this one, the "Steamer *Messenger*," for the Frankfort, Indiana, library. He's a librarian up there. That belongs to Bob Canida, those little cottages; that's one of my favorite paintings.

JW: Number 151. The sizes are getting bigger, aren't they?

HH: No, this is much smaller. [pause] This one was given to the, I gave to a prominent Madison citizen, who was soliciting money to build the, rebuild the fountain on Broadway -- I guess you don't know anything about that -- but they wanted to rebuild that fountain. It's a copy of a famous fountain and he -- they wanted to raffle off some paintings so I gave him that one and I was surprised they sold it for \$450. I'd been getting about, if I got \$150 I thought I was doing really well.

JW: That's Three Mile Creek, 154, that the Whiteheads own, Neil Whitehead.

HH: Oh, yeah. Do you know them?

JW: Hm-hm.

HH: Frank Klaine owns that one, I think. This is not very interesting to the listener to this tape right now, do you think it is?

JW: Well, we probably should concentrate on talking about the technique rather than . . . I guess it's easy to get caught up in who owns what. [tape shuts off momentarily, then resumes] Number 160.

HH: . . . made for the WPA, when they were hiring artists, it's the old market in Covington . . .

JW: That's number 160.

HH: We ought to be coming to that one in the mural pretty soon. [pause] That's another one I made for the WPA, the old courthouse.

JW: Number 166.

HH: Do they list it that way?

JW: "Campbell County Old Courthouse in Alexandria." And that's in the Newport library.

HH: This is one Ann Ogden has that she's so proud of. She just got it recently, though. This is the barn at the Sandfosses', which the Weitzels have.

JW: You don't do many interior shots, either.

HH: No, I'm more of an outdoor person. [pause, ruffling sound in background] One of the Sandfoss farm.

JW: 180.

HH: This is another of Joe Reinert's house. He got the roof in anyway. [chuckle]

JW: 178. Oh yeah, I recognize it.

HH: This is in the Hanover collection.

JW: 186.

HH: [pause, ruffling sounds] Turning these pages is probably making a lot of noise. This is the mouth of the Licking River.

JW: 204.

HH: And just recently I came upon the log of a canoe trip that Anna and I made down the Licking. Quite a detailed log with photographs and forty oil sketches made on that trip. Some of the best things I've done.

JW: I've noticed that number 188 and 189, one is the *J.M. White* and the other is the *Vicksburg*, are both owned by the Filson Club.

HH: Oh yeah, but they didn't buy them.

JW: Those two.

HH: I painted those pictures for a Louisville lawyer named Hopkins. He paid me fifty dollars apiece for them and when he died he gave them to the Filson Club. That's where they are now. They also have other paintings that people gave them of mine. This is one of the best-liked steamboats that I ever painted. *J.M. White*.

JW: 208.

HH: No, *City of Providence*. Isn't that right?

JW: Hm-hm.

HH: Belongs to a man in Louisville.

JW: Mr. Howard Wood.

HH: [pause] That's really a very popular painting. It looks like a picture postcard, all blue sky and that big, white boat.

JW: Does that one appeal to you?

HH: Hm?

JW: That one appeals to you -- more so than . . . or do other people like that one?

HH: Framed? I didn't make that frame.

JW: This is very industrial looking. 209.

HH: That's Cincinnati, a towboat going by the waterfront there.

JW: Number . . . oh, sorry, I'm getting ahead of myself.

HH: Bob Canida has this one, I think, too. A portrait. Isn't that terrible?

[chuckle]

JW: Which, 215?

HH: Bill Franklin.

JW: C.W. Franklin. His wife owns it.

HH: Yeah, he's dead but she's still living, I think. How's that come out in here again? That's Springdale. We saw that at the beginning, didn't we?

JW: Hm-hm.

HH: This is in Hanover.

JW: 221.

HH: That's my mother.

JW: Number 222. Is that the only one you have of your mother?

HH: Hm-hm. I painted two others and gave them to my brothers and I don't know what happened to them. I guess their children might have them, I don't know.

JW: Did she mind sitting for you?

HH: No, she was quite pleased. She's a very strong character, as you can see. She didn't think much of me being an artist. I think I told about that in -- when I was talking about my early life. [pause] I think we're about at the end of it now. These are watercolors.

JW: Did you like painting with watercolors?

HH: Yes, I did. [ruffling sound, pause] Louisiana.

JW: Did you have a special place on your boat for your easel and. . . ?

HH: It was just a long board and I'd prop it up between the ceiling and the floor; there's not much headroom there, you know. This is a shrimp trawler down Louisiana and this is the -- I still have this one; I looked at it today. [pause] And this one that woman took today.

JW: 269.

HH: Lois Green. That's an old plantation house, these are slave quarters on the plantation.

JW: 275, oh, 274.

HH: [pause] These paintings represent a lot of living and a lot of work and a lot of time, you know, lapse of time from the very beginning. Didn't -- didn't come across your father's; maybe they're in another book. Or maybe I turned the pages and we didn't see it.

JW: I see here that Barry Bingham has one.

HH: Yeah, he came by here one day with Charlie Stock in a boat. Very friendly and they saw a painting and liked it and said, "How much?" I said, "\$45." And he pulled it out of his pocket and handed me the money and took the painting. [both laugh]

JW: 286.

HH: \$45.

JW: So the one that he received as part of the Milner Award at the Governor's Conference --

HH: It was just a little watercolor, about this big.

JW: Oh, I see.

HH: But they paid me \$250 for that. [long pause, ruffling sounds]

JW: 298. That's the one my dad has.

HH: Is it? 298.

JW: "Hull Towing A Shantyboat."

HH: Well, what do you want me to tell about it?

JW: Oh, what do you remember about painting it? Although that may be a little too much to ask.

HH: I remember this one belongs to Priscilla Robertson. She bought that -- that's a good one, too, she still has it down -- she lives in Lexington now.

JW: 297.

HH: I can't remember a thing about that. I guess I could make up something.

END OF TAPE 5, SIDE B