

JULIETTE MAY FRASER

THE WATUMULL FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Juliette May Fraser

(1887 -)

Miss Fraser, who was born in Honolulu during the reign of King Kalakaua, is a prominent artist and a former teacher at McKinley High School and Punahou School.

She discusses her development as an artist, her approach to each new art project, the techniques she used in the creation of frescoes and other functioning murals, and the symbolism in her works of art.

She gives eyewitness accounts of Hawaiian history during her lifetime and tells anecdotes about family, friends, and professional associates. Noteworthy are her remembrances of the late Jean Charlot and the work she did with him and with fellow artist, David G. Asherman.

This interview was conducted on September 13, 1971 in Miss Fraser's Manoa home. Another narrative segment was obtained by telephone in December 1971.

Katherine B. Allen, Interviewer

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2051 Young Street, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96826

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INTERVIEW WITH JULIETTE MAY FRASER

At her Manoa home, 2740 Hillside Avenue, Honolulu, 96822

September 13, 1971

F: Juliette May Fraser

A: Kathy Allen, Interviewer

F: My name is Juliette May Fraser and the Juliette is spelled J-U-L-IE-TT-E, with all the trimmings. M-A-Y is the middle name and the last name, F-R-A-S-E-R, just one of the correct ways of spelling it. I was born in Honolulu in January 27, 1887 and that was at the time that Kalakaua was king, but I do not remember him. I was too young at the time. But I do recall that my mother said that when Kalakaua passed by our house in his carriage that she would put me standing on the railing of the porch so I could see him, although I have no recollection of anything like that happening but it just amuses me to think that I saw Kalakaua but don't remember it.

I do remember, though, Liliuokalani, his sister, because when I was going to Punahou Prep, Punahou Preparatory School was where the Parke-Memorial Chapel of St. Andrew's is now and it was in the old Armstrong house which was one of the mission houses. It was a two-story house with a long stairway. Well, it was probably a basement and upper floor and you went up this long stairway which was a story high, of course, and it was a coral house, one of the old coral houses. It's been torn down for a long time now because the chapel was built there by St. Andrew's, 'cause St. Andrew's bought that property, probably from Punahou, I don't know. But that was where I went to preparatory school.

There was a high board fence between Punahou Preparatory School and what is now the Governor's mansion [Washington Place] and that was where Liliuokalani lived. And we were allowed, if we were very polite and we were very quiet and didn't make any comments or remarks of any kind, we were allowed to climb on the fence and watch the Queen play croquet with her ladies-in-waiting. And they were all dressed in black holokus and I'm sure they knew we were there but they paid no attention whatever to us. But I think they got quite a kick out of seeing us enjoying their game; having an audience, even if it was so very juvenile.

They didn't even mind. Of course it was your duty, at least it was the duty of the boys, to fall in the pond at least once. There was a pond out in the front yard of the house then and the boys dutifully fell in the pond one at a time. They were fished out and it always caused a little commotion, you know, and a very pleasant commotion, for everyone concerned, even the person who fell in.

Then Punahou moved [in 1902] out to Punahou here on the grounds that it occupies now and they built a new building and that housed the preparatory school, so they didn't need this place and, of course, then it was sold probably about the same time to the St. Andrew's people. And that was the history of that. That ended Punahou Preparatory downtown. But Punahou Preparatory at that time was very near Central Union Church--the old Central Union Church, which [was sold to] Schuman Carriage Company. And it still kept the dome, had the domed roof that the old Central Union Church had. That was one of the landmarks there. Central Union, of course, moved up to Punahou Street where it is now and Schuman Carriage Company took over the old building and used it as a showroom, which they [did until they moved to 1234 South Beretania Street], and they still have the old horse and carriage in the window that they had long years ago, which is another sort of landmark. See if I can think of any other landmarks around there. Do you have any suggestions about landmarks? Of course it's changed so much from what it used to be.

We used to live near, just beyond, ORL station on King Street [Oahu Rail & Land Co.] and that was considered--well, it would be like Makiki is now; it was a medium priced residential section and it wasn't a business section at all but it gradually became. Business grew up around there and it changed character somewhat but it still is there. And Liliha Street was still in the country. In fact, upper Liliha Street became residential and then that gradually became business and now it's cluttered with all kinds of things. You can't recognize it anymore.

Some of my early friends, like Jessie Shaw Fisher--the [Reverend Sereno E.] Bishop family lived on School Street, also the [Dr. Nathaniel B.] Emersons lived on School Street, and that was one of the older neighborhoods. They used to come and play in our yard and we used to go up and play in their yard. Everybody had, almost everybody had, at that time, big yards and there was no such thing as apartments. Everybody had a house; a cottage, at least. Dorothy True-Bell lived there also. She lived across from Jessie, so we were sort of a little colony. It was within walking distance. We used to trot back and forth to each others' homes, you know. Mrs. [Jonathan] Shaw had a little cooking class and she taught us how to make cookies and that sort of thing. Once an amusing thing happened: she

reached for the vanilla and put it into the cookie dough and it turned out [to be] onion extract, which caused a great deal of merriment. And she even enjoyed the joke too because she had to show off the dough and in a class it was rather funny. We just got a big kick out of it, the kids did.

The Nuuanu Stream runs on the edge of the Bishop property [near Nuuanu Street] and I think it still winds in there somewhere--there's a little stream--and we used to catch oopus with bent pins.

A: Oopus?

F: Yeh, they're little gray fresh water fish. It really is a mud fish. It burrows in the mud, but if you have a worm on a hook, it will come up and catch it, you know. I believe the Hawaiians did use to use it as a bait fish. I don't know what they do with it now. I don't suppose it even exists anymore. I've lost track of it.

A: Would you like to tell about your family?

F: Oh yes. My mother's family, the Dexters: she was born in Illinois. The Dexter family goes back to England they took the part of Cromwell at the time of Charles the Second and, when Charles II came back again, they were out of favor, of course, and it was rather uncomfortable being in England, so one of my great grandfathers decided that he'd try Canada. So he went to Canada and . . .

A: Do you know what his first name was--that Dexter?

F: No. Probably I knew at one time but I don't now. Then he got as far as the lakes and it looked kind of good to him across the stream or lake or whatever it was, and so he decided to cross over. 'Course then they didn't have to have passports to get in from one place to another and he just walked across the border, which is indefinite, into Illinois and settled in Illinois--likè it and settled in Illinois--and did some farming around Dixon, Illinois. And my mother was born there but she doesn't remember Illinois at all because my grandfather was a '49er and he had gone in 1849 to California--he and a friend. I don't know who he was. They did find gold in Colorado but they were really more interested in the traveling and adventure than they were actually in the gold-seeking, [which] just was sort of a sideline as a reason for going. So he went on and found a place in California that he liked which is around Sacramento. He was married then but his wife was waiting for him to find out where he wanted to settle, because it was a small family--two daughters. My mother

was the second daughter. I may have this a little bit off but it's about like this. And so he came back, got her and the two children, and went by covered wagon back to California, and there the other two sisters were born. I have three aunts.

A: Do you know what their names are?

F: Yes. The oldest sister was Dell. They all called her Dell. Della, I think it probably was, but everybody called her Dell. Then my mother's name was Nina and it was pronounced Neena, not Nighna. I guess the Spanish pronunciation; near it. Then Grace was the next one and May was the one I was named for. Of course, as quite often happens in families, one sister will take charge of another sister. My mother and May, the younger sister, were sort of pals and Dell and Grace were pals. So it worked out so that way they were very close to each other, partly because I think they had a stepmother and she didn't too much care for children. But they adored their father and he did them too and so it worked out very well as a family.

A: Do you remember your grandfather's first name?

F: Thomas Jefferson but everybody called him T. J.--T. J. Dexter. And that's my brother's name and that caused a good deal of commotion in the school, in fact, because the teacher would say, "What is your name?" and he'd say, "T. J. Dexter Fraser." "Well, what does T. J. stand for?" "Well, it doesn't stand for anything." And that was true. My mother only called him T. J. because that was my grandfather's nickname. But T. J. did not mean Thomas Jefferson in his name. But my brother had great difficulty in explaining that to teachers and it nearly drove my mother crazy because she couldn't explain it to him, to get it back to them, and so she said, "Well, we'll just settle it. T. J. is your name." So that when they asked him what his name was, it was T. J. But he uses Dexter as his official name but he was originally T. J. Dexter [Fraser]. But now he's just Dexter Fraser. He himself dropped the T. J. Sounds a little bit complicated but there it is.

Now my mother, of course was Nina Dexter Fraser, I don't think she had a middle name. Oh yes, she did. It was Nina Lee. I think it was from some General [Robert E. Lee]. Yeah, yeh. She didn't use the Lee very much, but her official name was Nina Lee. She was a teacher and became principal of the Kaiulani School, which is still out on King Street, but the yard is full of buildings, which it didn't used to be. As I remember Kaiulani School, it was two buildings. It started out with one and then another one was added. Now it's a complex. And she remained

principal until her retirement. [1900-1930]

A: Were there just four daughters or were there any sons?

F: One son who died. He died as a baby. In fact, I think he died very shortly after he was born. It was very early. So I don't know about him. I don't believe my mother really remembered him.

My father's profession, I think now would probably be a combined accountant and bookkeeper but at that time they simplified, they just kept books, you know. But now it's sort of subdivided into two departments, but anyway, my father's covered both of them. And the reason we came down here; my father knew the Parmelee family. I forget what the first name was. [Howard A. Parmelee] But he had a small sort of factory, soda works factory. They had ice cream--they didn't have ice cream--but regular soda water. That kind of stuff. And my father was the bookkeeper for it and when he got settled, he sent for my mother and I was born here. [Howard A. Parmelee was associated with both Hollister Drug Company and Consolidated Soda Water Works.]

A: You were born here. Where was your mother born?

F: My mother was born in--she was actually born in Illinois but she remembers nothing about it. She remembers only California, so she calls herself a Californian by choice because she just has no recollection of Illinois and so it has no meaning for her and I don't think she ever visited it. I'm not sure about that; I don't think so. But she, of course, knew California very well.

A: You had a sister, you said?

F: No, I have no sister. No, a brother. My brother is four years younger than I am and he was born in California in Shasta County. My father had heard about this farming country up in Shasta County and it was one of those early booms, you know, that they have and it was advertised as farming country. And my father--you know, so many people that have indoor jobs have a yen for outdoor jobs and, without knowing too much about it. He knew something because I believe his parents did some farming. I'm not quite sure about that yet, but he had a yen to try out farming in northern California, so we went up there and it was the wrong thing to do because it was grazing country, it was not farming country, and we found that out after we got there, which often happens. So my brother was born in Shasta County, California.

A: Now, so far, this is your mother's side. We haven't gone

to your father's side yet.

F: Well, I really don't know anything about them. I never met any of them but this one cousin, woman, who's a very charming person, but she was only down here as a tourist. So I've never met them. That sometimes happens.

A: Yes. Do you not know anything about your . . . ?

F: Well, I think they were farmers, not on a large scale, but I think they did some farming but I'm not quite sure about it.

A: And where would that have been?

F: Around southern California, but which town, I don't remember now. If you've never visited a town, it doesn't mean too much and especially when there're several towns in one vicinity and exactly which one they lived in, you just don't know.

A: Now I want to get your father's name correct.

F: Charles Edward Fraser.

A: And he married your mother on the Mainland somewhere.

F: Yes, that was California. I think, probably, it was around Woodland, and Woodland is near Sacramento. A small town. When I was about 14, there was a divorce, so I've kind of lost track of my father. I know only he did marry again but I didn't meet his wife. I knew she was--she was part-Hawaiian, I think, but you can just leave that out because I know so little about it.

A: But your mother remarried also?

F: No. As I said, she taught at the Kaiulani School, then she became the principal of the Kaiulani School. I used to meet--not so much now, of course, because they're getting along in years--the teachers, don't you know, that taught under her. Some of them I knew and some of them would remind me of certain things, you know, and I had heard their names but maybe I hadn't met them; but many of them I had met that had taught at Kaiulani.

A: Are there any now remaining who did teach at Kaiulani?

F: I don't know. I haven't heard of any lately, 'cause they would be around my mother's age.

A: Do you recall what years your mother was the principal at Kaiulani? Or at least when she left there. Did she retire then?

F: She retired at the retirement age. She took the longest time she could. That would be on the records but I'm very bad on dates so I don't remember that.

A: Is your brother married?

F: Yes, he's married and has two daughters.

A: All right. Do you know who he married--her name?

F: Isn't that silly, I know it as well as my own but I can't tell you.

A: All right. Do you know his children's names?

F: Mary Margaret. Now she has remarried lately and I do not know her husband's name. I have it in a letter somewhere. And then where she lives, I'm not quite sure either. She was living in Canada for awhile but she's moved back to California but I don't know what town. She was an adopted daughter.

A: And the other one?

F: Linnell. It's from the family name, Linn. That was her mother's name. In fact, her name is Billie Linn and she was named for her father but you can't name a girl William, but Billie is a perfectly good name for a girl, and so my brother's wife's name is Billie Linn. She was, I believe, born in West Virginia but lived most of her life before she came here as a teacher in Missouri, so in a way, she calls that her home until she moved here. And she came as a teacher and she taught on Maui, very close to where my brother was at Dole's Pineapple [Company]. He was working there and I think at the time he was manager when he met her and they were married. Her sister--I can't think who she married. But the reason that he met Billie was that Billie used to visit her sister whose husband was my brother's top man, his first assistant. And, sorry enough, I can't remember that name. So that's the way they met and I think they were married in her sister's home.

A: That would be a natural culmination.

F: Yeh, yeh, um hum. She's a lovely person.

END OF SIDE 1/1ST TAPE

I was startled when I came back from Greece, which was around 1967-68. I went down to Waikiki and I couldn't see Diamond Head for high rises. I had to come up here to Manoa to see Diamond Head, which doesn't make sense. And that shows that suddenly there was a great change.

Now one of the old landmarks, the old Queen Theater, was on the Damon property--I think the Frank Damon property; the Sam Damon property was Moanalua. And Frank Damon had property, not as much, but property more in town and the Queen Theater was near his property, if not on it. The old Queen Theater, the downtown one. [Princess Theater on upper Fort Street?] And Kukui Street, far from being the red light district which I think it is now more or less, was very respectable and the largest property in that section was Robert Bicknell's, the Bicknell family, and they were connected somehow with the missionary family but I don't remember how it was. [Ellen Mariner Bond, daughter of Elias and Ellen Mariner Howell Bond, married James Bicknell and died in 1922.] And their yard contained several cottages quite similar to that place on King Street where David [Asherman] had his studio, you know. [1083 A. Young Street] It's between King Street and Young Street. There's a big yard with a picket fence around it and several cottages in it and that is a remnant of an old estate. And this Bicknell property, which was pretty long ago, was also one of the old estates. Back to back with the Bicknell's back yard was the back yard of the Kings, the King family. Now, the Kings were part-Hawaiian so I don't know which King it was, but they've been famous in politics and their family, a very lively family of young people, used to annually put on a circus and they did really almost a professional job. And they didn't particularly like the fact that we had reserved seats but didn't pay for them 'cause we were on the other side of the fence. We climbed a coconut tree and watched them from it. So, just little sidelights.

Another rather amusing incident: On Sunday, it seemed to me always the Payne's tramcars [William H. Payne, manager, Hawaiian Tram Company. 1896-97 City Directory]--they were small, mule-drawn cars that ambled along the main street--and always, in front of Central Union Church, they'd always come off the track. And it was the deacon's job almost always to stay out there and help put the tramcars back on this track so it could move. Of course, you see, so many of the congregation lived on the tram line and it was up to the deacons to help put the [tramcars back on the line]. I remember Mr. Shaw always being there, helping to put on the tramcar.

A: That's Jessie Shaw Fisher's father?

F: Yes, Jessie Shaw Fisher.

- A: Would you tell a little bit about your memories of Jessie Shaw Fisher as you remember her as a youngster?
- F: Yes. Ruth [Shaw, Jessie Shaw Fisher's sister] died fairly early and Jessie married Mr. Thomas Fisher, who came from California, and he was the only boy in his family and I think he had three sisters--I'm not sure, I think he had three--and they came down and visited often. Mrs. Shaw owned that whole hillside where the Fisher home is still there but other people own it now and I don't know who they are.
- A: Haena Drive, is that?
- F: Yes. [2115] Haena Drive. That was the back of what became the Fisher property and was originally Mrs. Shaw's property and she willed that to her children and it finally became just Tom Fisher's and, of course, Jessie's--Jessie's and Tom's property. And that was a big lot that Mrs. Shaw always kept clear because she liked the view, so any house that was on it was built at the bottom of the property. But of course, I don't know now. I think it's pretty well filled up, I'm not sure. But I haven't been there so I don't know anything about who's living there now.
- A: Isn't Mrs. Fisher still . . . ?
- F: No, Mrs. Fisher moved. Her son used to come on a visit and I think Jessie just decided that she was very fond of her daughter-in-law and so she just moved up and lives near her son somewhere on the Mainland.
- A: That was recently, wasn't it?
- F: Yes, very recently, within a few years, that is. And nobody's heard from her. No, she's just not a letter writer. And evidently she--that part of her life was through with and so she was just pau.
- A: Pau with the Islands and she's on the Mainland now. California, do you suppose?
- F: I think they live either in Oregon or Washington, it isn't California. I don't remember the name of the town. I couldn't remember it because I don't know it.
- A: Well, I'm glad to know about that because I've been trying to locate her too (for an interview).
- F: Well, you could locate her by someone living in her old home. I'm sorry I don't recall the name just now but they would know as much about her as anybody.

A: You mentioned somebody named Ruth.

F: Ruth Shaw. Ruth Shaw was the oldest. See, I'm just a little bit younger than Ruth and Jessie's younger than I am but we were very close to being the same age. Now Margaret was the youngest of the Shaw family and she's Mrs. [Sherman Sylvester] Humphrey who lives in Ohio. I have her name in my address book somewhere but her husband's last name is Humphrey. I think they met through--they're both interested in botany. Margaret is a very good botanist and Humphrey is also. I think he taught it and I think she did for a while too at some university, but I don't know which one.

A: Also, you mentioned somebody by the name of Dorothy . . .

F: Oh, Dorothy True-Bell. She's a decorator. Yes, she's done quite a bit of decorating here and she's one of the well-known decorators here. I don't know whether she's still practising or not. Her name is Dorothy True but I think that as a widow she hyphenates it because so many people knew her as True, Dorothy True, and a lot of people knew her as Bell, Mrs. Bell. I think she hyphenates it.

A: She was one of your young friends also.

F: Yes, the Trues lived across the street from Jessie, Jessie Shaw.

A: Is there anything else that you can recall about your Punahou days or the early times?

F: I taught one year at Punahou. I only taught one year at McKinley after I came back from art school.

A: Tell about your education and all that, would you?

F: Well, I graduated from Punahou. That was when I was probably about 19, when I graduated from Punahou. Then I went to Wellesley, was four years at Wellesley, got my B.A. from Wellesley. So that took four years. You could figure out from my age what year it was I got that. Then there were two years that I taught, one at McKinley. I was thinking, of all things, I'm taking the place of a--I had the entire Latin department and I had dropped Latin like a hotcake at Wellesley because I'd lost interest in it; and one mathematics class and I had dropped mathematics. So there you are. That's what happens to you. Very funny--it got to be standard--so many of the pupil group. I'd be their older sister. You know, I was at just the age where many of them had older brothers or sisters about my age, so we were kind of a family, don't you know, and pretty informal.

And so, if they'd ask me a question, I'd say, "Well, I don't know, I'll tell you tomorrow."

A: That's what teachers are advised to do if they don't know the answer.

F: Well, I mean, it was just on the verge of the era when teachers were supposed to know everything, actually. But nobody knows everything, you might as well admit it. And sometimes I'd tell them to look it up. I said, "You'll find it in so-and-so. Please look that up. That's your assignment for tomorrow. And I'll look up such-and-such if it's not too complicated." I'd look up something that I knew they couldn't find and I'd tell them where to find the things I knew they could and it would be up to them to look it up. So we worked things out that way and they all got a kick out of it actually. It was kind of fun. In fact, there was a Japanese boy who was educated in Japan but his English needed polishing up. And he was older than I and we had a good deal of amusement out of that and so did he.

A: Yes, quite an unusual experience. Was Professor Marion M. Scott there at the time that you taught?

F: I think he had just retired. I knew him, I knew who he was, but I forget who was the principal of the high school then. And Mr. Griffiths was principal of Punahou when I was teaching. I think his name was Arthur Floyd Griffiths. He was a very understanding person, very nice person.

A: I'd like to get your impression, since you did know Professor Scott, what your impression of him was.

F: The age now is ages make no difference. At the time that I was teaching there [at McKinley High School], chronological years did make an awful lot of difference and you thought about age a lot more than you do now. Nobody pays any attention and small children will call me by my first name and I like it and so you don't make so much of it. And he seemed to me like a very very old man and he had white hair and he acted it. He was inclined to act old and act rather professor-ish and he put a little distance between us. Mr. Griffiths did not. He was a younger man and I don't think age made too much difference with him and, in fact, it was more comrades. We were working together. Professor Scott, I think, rather liked to be looked up to. That was just my impression but, as I say, I don't know. People of his generation may be surprised at my impression of him, you know.

A: Well, . . . do you know Signa Wikander?

F: Oh yes.

A: Well, she of course remembers him too and I think your impression pretty much . . .

F: Parallels hers?

A: Um hum. Which is interesting.

F: Well, it must be we were fairly near on the right track for our generation. We didn't belong to his generation. I would say he belonged to our parents' generation.

A: Now you mentioned that you took some art . . .

F: Well, I took any art that they had . . . wherever I could find it.

A: But I mean, was this at Wellesley or did you go to art school?

F: Wellesley had excellent art history. They did not have very good--they were not so much interested in art practice. They had some, but even the teachers knew that it wasn't an art school standard. It didn't pretend to be. There was one professor of art--of architectural history--who was a practicing architect and she gave a wonderful course in architecture because she took it from an architect's standpoint. And we had to know the correct name for beams of different kinds. I've kind of forgotten them. I recognize them if I see them but you don't use architectural terms except to architects and so I don't remember them all but she taught us them that way and she would refuse to understand us if we didn't use the right terms.

A: Well, that's discipline, isn't it?

F: Yeh, yeh, yeh.

A: So you took architecture.

F: That was the course that I enjoyed the most. We called her "Art Brown". I've forgotten what her first name was [she was Miss Brown] but she--I'm sure she thought that art ended with Titian, and so I didn't know anything about the Flemish painters. I don't think she recognized them but she was all set on Italian paintings. That was her own suit and she taught it very well, but there are other nationalities she didn't offer. Of course, she knew the

Greeks; the Greeks and the Italians. But past Titian, they were under suspicion, not being too good. And so consequently, I missed a lot of very excellent art because I didn't know anything about it, until I got out of college and did some reading and did some traveling.

A: Now, was your art developed while you were in school or before?

F: Well, when I got through; Wellesley was a disappointment to me because I got no--I got some drawing from casts. We did have one teacher and I think that it almost drove him crazy because he couldn't--he was a good painter but he didn't have time enough to give us the practical. He was too good a technician to be satisfied with what he was able to give us and I realize that now, looking back at the things he would say; that he just couldn't tell us because he didn't have time. And we had one or two hours a week. To anybody through with art school, I discovered that later, that was just piddling. You didn't get started in an hour. And we were expected to turn out something in an hour a week. Couldn't be done. So when I got out of Wellesley, I realized that I'd had some very good history background but I did not have any practical background. And I did try some lessons with D. Howard Hitchcock, but he was more of a dreamer than he was a teacher and so I just didn't get too much. And he wanted to be a technician. So I didn't get much out of that.

Of course, when you go to an art school--I was very fortunate in having Eugene Speicher. I don't know whether he's living still or not but he was, at that time, one of the rising young portrait painters. He was a wonderful technician. And I also had Frank Vincent Dumond. He was the head of the department, and he had what we students, especially those that were under professors, would speak of certain people with Dumonditis. And that meant: Dumond had a sort of recipe that he taught, and I'm always suspicious of people with recipes, but he did have certain things. He did insist that you do three dimensional drawings or paintings. I didn't want to take painting with him because I did not want his recipe because you get tied with it and then it's hard to break. And too many of his students worshipped him but I never got to the point where I could worship him. I admired him for certain things. I did not admire him for other things. He was a little bit of a dictator but he did teach you how to model. But I didn't want to model that way the rest of my life so I dropped him and took from Speicher, who had a slight tendency toward Dumonditis but not much. He'd broken away. But I saw the warning. If Speicher, who's a strong individualist, couldn't break, he took Dumond too long. And he had traces of

Dumond that weren't bad because he went off on his own. And he was the one who introduced me to Cezanne in painting.

Well, I took work from Charles Carson [John Carlson is who she meant and says so later]. No, wait a minute. Carlson. You better put Charles with a question mark but he was a Carlson--S-O-N. CARLSEN is another painter of the same time, but he's a still life painter. Oh, John Carlson. Emile was the S-E-N man [Emile Carlsen] but I haven't been with him, so I just knew his work.

John Carlson was a landscape painter. Now this is the connection with Speicher that I was talking about. I met Eugene and liked his work and I was ready and I knew his wife and they were a delightful couple. And so he saw me very disconsolately painting on a small sketch board and he said, "What's the matter with you? You look as if you'd lost your last friend." Then I told him about what had happened.

I was sort of muddling away, you know, over the paint and he sized up my trouble immediately. I told him that John Carlson had--that I had come to be, I wanted to be, a landscape painter and here I was trying, doing my best, and I didn't seem to be able to make the grade. And he said, "What's the matter?" And I said, "Well, Mr. Carlson said that--I remembered very well that he said one day: 'I'm sorry. I'm awfully sorry to say this, I don't like saying it, but some people don't have a color sense and some people do and you apparently have no color sense.'" Left me high and dry. And I told this to Eugene and Eugene said, "Huh! You see too much color but you're trying to mix it all in one pat." And he said, "Your trouble is technical but you see too much color." He said, "I've just been to Paris"--he had an independent income, so he could paint part of the year, then he'd go to Paris and study and come back and paint. And he said, "This time I was studying Cezanne. Now what Cezanne did"--Cezanne was the great colorist--"What Cezanne does, he mixes, say it's green, well, he mixes several shades of green, each shade he'll put one next to the other, and he put the warm color next to a cool green and that makes it sparkle."

Well, that was a hint. So I skipped two sessions and worked by myself entirely. And there's only one friend, Dorothy Greenwood, a Canadian, who knew about this and she knew what Carlson had said and she sort of watched what I was doing. And I picked out a subject, which was an old weatherbeaten unpainted barn sitting in the middle of a sort of a drying-up grassy field with white daisies in it and just a little line of blue mountains in the background. And I had very meticulously painted this gray, which is a test. If you can paint a colorful neutral, then you have a sense of color. And so I painted this

whole--the barn takes up most--it's almost like a still life, outdoor still life--takes up most of the picture. It's a dark gray but there're no two spots the same color of gray; they're all different shades of gray. And I tried putting--I knew what a warm color was; I knew what a cool color was; and I put warm next to a cool, I alternated it. And then I went early to the next week's [session]. We had a criticism when we put up our things that we had done by ourselves or finished up something that he criticized in the field and then he [John Carlson] would--sometimes he gave a talk in general; sometimes he gave a criticism one thing at a time. The whole thing would be a series of criticisms. This time he sort of looked over things and he kept coming back to this barn and I couldn't understand. I thought, I wonder what he's going to do. He made the barn the text of a sermon on color. Isn't that something?

A: Was that your very first . . . ?

F: That was the first time that I had understood what painting is all about. I mean I got a glimpse of what painting was because what I had been doing was, I'd change my mind and mix some more color with it and it'd turn out gray and it would turn out mud. 'Cause you mix two colors and you've got a strong color; you mix three colors, you get a grayish color; but you mix three or four and you get mud.

A: What year would this have been, approximately?

F: Well, I was out of college and this was about the second or third year out of college. And so John Carlson made this kind of a text of his sermon and afterward he stayed awhile--he usually did 'cause sometimes people wanted to ask him questions--and finally there was just Dorothy and me left and everybody had taken their sketch out after the criticism and there was just this one [hers] left.

END OF SIDE 2/ 1ST TAPE

BEGINNING OF SIDE 1/ 2ND TAPE

Dorothy said to Mr. Carlson, "Wouldn't you like to know who painted that?" He said, "Yes, I would because I don't think I ever saw this person's work before." And then, "She did it." And Mr. Carlson turned to me with surprise and he was the sweetest man that ever was and he said, "You know, I'm so glad I was wrong." He remembered what he'd said. But I thought this was the loveliest thing and so simply done, you know. And after that, I began to see my way in paint. I didn't have the same trouble with drawing, because it's one color, and form seemed not to bother me,

but it was technical and Speicher happened to have hit the nail on the head; saw the problem. But of course, John Carlson had about twenty-five or thirty people and at one glance you can't analyze things and so it just took this one person to point out what the difficulty was and show me what could be done about it.

A: And you did it.

F: Yeh.

A: That was a turning point then really.

F: Yes, it really was because then after that I saw what the principles of color were and then Frederic Taubes came down here and he gave lessons in technique, different kinds of technique, showing how different artists from medieval times to the present day worked and why they did certain things. In fact the first thing he did was to take four or five or six of us at a time to the sink and showed us how to wash our brushes and showed us what the danger point was and that part must be kept clear, otherwise we would lose the resilient quality of the brush. And that, of course, opened up a new territory. And then he showed us what to do with the palette knives, how to use a palette knife; how to size a canvas, in case we wanted to put our own size on the canvas; what impasto meant [The laying on of colors thickly--Dictionary], how to use impasto; what kind of paint to use--now, for instance, zinc white you never use for a body color; it's a glaze color because it has too much oil in it. And then he made us grind, at least just a sample, to show us why certain colors, like the earth colors, did not require as much oil to grind them and so became body colors. And colors like alizarin crimson and pink white were practically glaze colors; don't mix them with them because the heavy colors will eat them up. And he showed us all those things, so then you're not puzzled by coming across things you don't understand. So it was wonderful to have him explain all of this, all those things.

A: Yes, the more you know about what you're doing . . .

F: Yeh. Well, your mechanics. And he scoffed at people who scoffed at mechanics, because he said, "You're dependent on your tools largely for the effect that you want to get. How can you get an effect if you don't know what tool to use? Whether you use a brush or a palette knife."

A: I recall that you said something about how you wanted to be a landscape artist.

F: Oh yes. Well, the landscape came in before animals and people and finally there were no more landscapes, or very little landscape. But then I think probably I always had a tendency toward--without knowing it, I had a tendency toward mural painting, because in a way I sort of felt mural; I thought construction. Some people think color. Madge [Tennent] thinks motion. I believe she thinks in motion, 'cause she has her construction down pat. She couldn't acquire motion without the joints, and joints have to be flexible so they can move in all directions. But she knows her anatomy perfectly, so she's free to express any amount of motion she wants to and it's interesting to see how she distorts in motion. And I distort--when I distort, it's in the language: building one thing to another; it's architectural. And I think that was why I took to fresco immediately and that was when Jean Charlot came down here.

He came down here to do the [fresco mural for the First Hawaiian Bank in Waikiki] in the first place and he also taught at the University [of Hawaii]. And David Asherman and I were his regular assistants. We saw to it that we got there early at the bank before he was ready to paint and we had the paints all lined up with the right amount of water in them and everything, and any tool that would be likely to be needed, because the plasterer--we came very close to the time the plasterer did--the plasterer came early and glazed it. Of course Jean has told him what section he wants plastered with the coating for the painting, because he's planned that the day before--you paint in sections.

And then we helped him trace. 'Course he uses the 'incise method' of tracing: you trace through. You make a tracing of your 'cartoon' not using all the lines but using the main lines on architect's tracing paper, fairly finished, and then you take a blunt nail and put your tracing paper against where you want it--where you want your tracing and then you follow the lines, tracing it into the mortar. You don't trace them heavily because you're not supposed to tear your paper. If you tear your paper, you're probably scratching the surface and that would make roughness; but if it makes a dent in your paper, then you know you're tracing so that you can be understood.

Your next step is to take the very lightest color that you're going to use and go over the lines; and where it goes into the little grooves, it makes your outline in color, giving your color outline. And then, from then on, you use your own judgment, is what you want to do. In the Italian style which Jean does, you start light and build up to the dark. The Byzantine started dark and added light with lime, mixing lime with it 'cause lime is white like Chinese white. And both are perfectly good. And you can

mix the two because you have to retouch and you very seldom are able to retouch when the lime is moist enough. You have to retouch on the drying mortar and that means you have to mix a little bit of lime, which is a binder, otherwise away it would go because your color is only water and paint--paint flour is what it is really. It's called paint powder mixed with water and when you paint on wet mortar it, the paint, goes into the mortar and nothing's left on the surface unless you put too much. Whatever is left on the surface will blow off anyhow, so it's all right, but you just don't load your brush. You paint more as you would watercolor--the English style watercolor--because they start light, showing the paper, and you reserve your lights. The Byzantines add them the last thing, add the lime in the water and that makes it chalk white and they build up to chalk white, from dark to chalk white. So that we had to learn, teach ourselves, when we got to Greece--both David and I did. We had to teach ourselves that other technique because we had to paint so much of the little chapel. Italian fresco is designed to see at a distance because the churches are big. The Greek churches are smallish and also the big ones are narrow and so you see everything close up. Well, you have to paint mural miniatures; they have to be done 'miniature technique' done in mural style. So that's what we had to remember when we were doing it. We could start Italian style but we had to end up with building on our darkest; we built up light. So we mixed the two styles in that little chapel [in Greece]. [Ipapandi Chapel, Vavyli Village, Chios Island]

A: What was the name of that chapel? I can't think of it now.

F: It was Vavilia. In English, it's spelled V-A-V-I-LIA. And on the bus, written in Greek caps [capital letters], it looks like Babylon. It is: it's the Greek for Babylon. It's the Greek spelling of Babylon. It's a tiny village of about 200 inhabitants. And that was quite an accidental thing that happened to us there.

A: Please tell.

F: We were in Greece. David was taking Greek lessons from Professor Pararos, who was a Greek who spoke English and had taught at Columbia. Of course he had to teach in English. His wife's family were connected with--let's see, how was it? Oh yes, Mrs. Pararos's brother married Aphrodite Makri's daughter and Aphrodite Makri was an Athenian dress designer originally who had lived in Constantinople. She was born on the Island of Chios and had her ancestral home there, which was on the main street.

The Easter celebration, in the Greek Orthodox church,

is the big celebration; Christmas is not. They know Christmas but they pass it by. But the gift giving and all that sort of thing is done at Easter and so the Easter season lasts usually at least one week and lasts usually, in the outlying districts, for three weeks because they make a big time of it. And on the Island of Chios too. So she [Aphrodite Makri] asked the Pararoses--invited the Pararoses--over to celebrate on account of this connection between Mrs. Pararos, whose brother was a lawyer and married her daughter. And she was inviting the daughter and the husband and the Pararoses and she said to the Pararoses, "Why don't you invite any friends that you want to, that you think would enjoy seeing the island, and we'll take them around?" So they immediately invited us and of course we were delighted to go. There's a very fine Nea Moni monastery there that is famous all over the world for its glass mosaics and of course I wanted to go there to see the glass mosaics. I didn't know about the rest of the island, that was my main objective, so I was delighted to be able to go there.

A: Nea Moni?

F: Nea Moni, yeh. N-E-A that means new. Moni, I forget what Moni means. M-O-N-I. And I think it's spelled two words, but I'm not quite sure. But it wouldn't make any difference, it could be spelled two words. And that was where there were glass mosaics, world famous glass mosaics done by Greeks.

And Aphrodite lived in this little village of Vavilia and when we went to her home she showed us, across the way from her home, back of a little iron fence enclosure, a tiny chapel and very simple. Well, it would be about half the size of this room. It was thirty-six feet long and inside it was about eight feet wide. Very tiny. And she showed us this little chapel. And we looked it over and David said to her--she spoke French but no English; David could speak French so he asked her in French, "Who's going to paint your murals?" And she looked at him in astonishment and she said, "Murals? Why, there isn't enough money left in the treasury to whitewash. It's going to be whitewashed." That was a horrible thing to say to a pair of fresco painters so David grabbed me and said, "If they furnish the brushes, which they'd have to furnish anyhow, and the plaster, which they'd have to have at any rate, would you be willing to do the frescoes in this chapel?" I said, "What a wonderful idea! I think it's swell," thinking it would take about three or four months. It took us a year.

A: Both of you? I remember reading about your going to do this work. When did you return from Greece?

F: Well, I got back from Greece about 1967-68, somewhere in there between '67 and '68, and David came a little bit later. Tony came before that--Tony Laouras. He's a native of Chios. We met him there as a schoolboy. He was going to school there and we were very much interested in him because he had a very fine mind and he picked up English very readily. And we sponsored his first year in university here and he came over first. We felt that he should be on his own, so he came earlier than we did, he settled here and did his own housekeeping and made his own acquaintances and all that sort of thing, you know, and got really settled and started at the university.

After we got back from Vavilia, we settled in Athens and we were a family. We did all our traveling as a family. And Tony had relatives--he had an aunt on the island of Chios--but he had no real family. We were the first family that actually he felt was a real family and of course we were a curiosity to the Greeks because they couldn't figure us out, you know. We were three generations. I'm just between David's father and mother and he's old enough to be Tony's father, so we're three generations. So what? We were a family. And sometimes we'd share an apartment; sometimes we'd have one apartment above another, don't you know--just depends on which was most convenient--and it caused some puzzlement among them but who cares? We were still a family. And Tony is now married to a lovely girl who was his English professor. She's about two or three years older than he is but he looks older than she so it doesn't matter. And they have moved to the Mainland now and they're living in, I think, Wisconsin now. They're somewhere in the Middle West, not too far from her family.

A: So you would have been there a year, working on the chapel.

F: And we lived in the town because the village had no electricity at that time. I think it does now but all they had were those little charcoal braziers, you know, and with the cold weather you'd just freeze. Even the hotel was cool, it wasn't too well heated but it was passable. There were two or three hotels that were really quite presentable and we stayed at different ones there and we'd take the early bus--there'd be about three buses a day--we'd take the early one that left about 7 o'clock and then we'd work until the 6 o'clock bus left, came back to Chios. The name of the capital and the name of the island were the same, so we lived in the capital.

What we did in the chapel was, we really found, very much the old convention--Medieval convention--because they put their own buildings that they were familiar with in their frescoes. You can recognize some of them if the buildings haven't been torn down. If the famous building is still in existence there, you find it. In some of Fra

Angelico's frescoes, you can recognize just about where it was, where he got the building in the picture. Also, they were inclined many times to paint--to use--the costume of their own day. They'd make little imaginary variations on it but they didn't always use the churchly style. They did for some. They use Roman robes for some of the apostles because they belonged to that period, and so it got to be the fashion for some of the earlier saints to be in Roman robes, but many of the modern painters have forgotten why it was--how it originated--and so the later saints they put in the costume that the later saints used. So you'd find different kinds of costumes; you'd find medieval costumes and a saint in armor. St. George would be in armor. Quite all right. So you had certain liberties and we used as a text-book and a sort of a bible, a work that was very profusely illustrated by a Greek who considered himself an authority--and I think he really was very much an authority--on Byzantine, the old-style Byzantine style.

We didn't want to embarrass the villagers by being too far out, you know, so we kept within the range of things that they might have seen or heard of so when they'd say, "Well, that's an outlandish-looking saint. Who is he?" they weren't too much bothered with finding St. Paul, don't you know, and St. John. St. John, I put him in a robe with a sort of a frontispiece like the bishops often use and at the bottom of it I put his signal, which was the eagle, sort of embroidered. Each of the saints had his own symbol: St. Mark was carrying a book with the winged lion on the [spine] of the binding, so they had his symbol in that way. So in that way we kept up with--we introduced--one of the old time conventions. One of the angels is in Vavilian costume and that's all right.

A: Wonderful. What building did you include?

F: What we did, we used trees more than anything else because David had been to Mt. Athos and I'd also seen the same thing in Yugoslavia where the Greeks worked. They might have a border of trees in flower, don't you know, as part of a border. Well, there's a barrel roof, barrel-vault roof, and where the vault started we put a frieze of angels: angel, tree; angel, tree. And on one side of the entrance--the doorway, which is the Annunciation; we had the Annunciation over that door inside--there was a night blooming cereus border; on the other side there was grape because this is grape-growing country.

Chios has the biggest average of seaman of any of the Greek islands, so I saw an aloha shirt there on the island somebody brought back from Hawaii. And you'd say, "Where did you come from, Hawaii?" "Oh yes, I've been there." So Hawaii really meant something to them, so that's why we

mixed. We put up a royal palm and right next to it we would have an olive tree, so we have the Greek and the Hawaiian, Greek and Hawaiian, and we had mynah birds everywhere. They knew what they were; they weren't familiar with them, but they understood them and some of them, of course, had seen them. And the angel with the trumpet is dressed in a Hawaiian feather cloak. And the first thing they recognized: "Oh, Greek helmet!" because the Hawaiian helmet is the same shape as the Greek helmet and so they felt perfectly at home with him. And the shell trumpet, they knew. Well, he's blowing a conch shell trumpet, which would be the Hawaiian style, but the Greeks also had collected shells. In fact, I had to borrow a shell trumpet from one of our Greek friends. And on the other side is-- Greeks love dancing, so I have a slim Hawaiian angel in a holoku and she's doing a very slight hula. And they know the hula. And they also know the shell gourd. They have a different shape; they don't decorate it the same, but they knew what it was, they understood it, so it doesn't bother them. In fact they like it. And then all the rest of the angels are Greek. There's a drummer angel that has a costume from north Greece and it's all different Greek islands [represented]. The angels are dressed in Greek costumes.

A: That sounds delightful.

F: They love it. And they'd come in. In fact, we encouraged them to come in because they had never seen anybody painting a fresco before and I thought, "Well, it's good; it doesn't grow like fungus, you know. It doesn't grow on the wall, it's painted on the wall." Well, it's the first time many of them had ever seen it done and they were very much interested. And the women would bring us in something to eat around noontime, you know, that they'd just been cooking and we never knew what we were going to get. Sometimes it was a stew and sometimes it was biscuits and we never knew 'cause they were just sweet, you know.

A: Hawaiian hospitality.

F: Hawaiian hospitality, yeh. This was the thing that brought the attention of Hawaii to it especially. When the chapel was all finished, the Greek men called David apart and they said, "Well now, we want to give her something. We want to give May something but frankly we don't have the money to give her the thing that we'd like to." David said, "Look, I think it would embarrass her 'cause she knows your circumstances, she knows you don't have the money and don't think about it 'cause I think she'd just be embarrassed. She appreciates your appreciation, but forget it."

And somehow the little street--the little main street where Aphrodite's house is--was all cobblestones, and when we had the opening, we sent invitations. Now I didn't know that David was enclosing another enclosure, that I didn't know about, which was telling people here--inviting them to the opening of the chapel and telling them something about it, but this other little slip said, "These people have the most awful unpaved streets, cobblestones. In the wintertime, it's dangerous and slippery. Why don't you . . ."

END OF SIDE 1/ 2ND TAPE

. . . if we could give our gift--that is, from Hawaii--Hawaii gives the paving of this street to the people of Vavilia. We're both of us islands; islanders understand each other, so why don't you do it that way?" And do you know, we got that. Then Aphrodite started opening letters with David and a letter would come with an enclosure. One day two letters came. One had an enclosure of ten dollars; the other enclosure had--ten dollars is fabulous. She had been collecting by twenty-five cent pieces, ten cents, and five cents for three years, to build this tiny chapel. Here the money came flooding from Hawaii--another island and another town to a sister town--and money that was fabulous to her. And at one time, of course, there was a split between the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Church way way back; way back. The Roman Catholics have forgotten it but the Greek Catholics still are a little bit wary. In this same mail came a donation of five dollars, a donation of ten dollars, from two Roman Catholics, and David pointed it out to her. He said, "I know these people. They're Roman Catholics." She was speechless. She did some soul-searching that night, I'm sure, because the next day she said to David, "You know, I'm afraid if it had been the other way, I wouldn't have given. But," she said, "I think it's the most wonderful thing I ever, ever heard of." And she was close to tears.

A: Democratic, I suppose.

F: Democratic, yeh. So then, that goes all over Greece because they're great broadcasters, the Greeks are. They have relations all over the place, you know, and if a good story comes up, it goes around. Anything like that would go the rounds. And I'm sure it did an awful lot of good, so it was a wonderful thing.

A: Ecumenical good.

F: Yeh, yeh, absolutely. And the fact that several people said, "Now those people, they're not wealthy and they've enclosed one dollar, five dollars, ten dollars." David

said, "Those are not wealthy people. They're not poor, but they're not wealthy." And she was astonished with all this generosity, you know. That means a sacrifice to those people and she understood that. Now that goes around. But it was a genuine friendship, so this idea of friendship, I think, has permeated the whole community, you know. It was really wonderful. (Later we agreed that their art work in the chapel is a contribution to Greek-Hawaiian relations, far more significant than financial aid)

There happened to be a battleship--I believe it was in Peiraievs Harbor--at the time we were about to have our show. David had connections--of course he's a retired major and that means he has connections with army and navy both--so he passed the word around to somebody he knew in the military who knew somebody in the navy and this navy ship came in--American ship came in--and all these sailors came flooding up to there and really it was just a gala performance, you know. It was marvelous and the villagers had so much fun 'cause they'd each of them annex a boy, you know, and take him home to dinner and all that sort of thing, and I think these sailors had the time of their life. They had a marvelous time. And the villagers, they'll never forget it. So that added to the festivities, you know. [Peiraievs (phonetic) is probably Pirevs Harbor.]

A: That's wonderful. Have you returned there since that time?

F: No, I haven't been. There's one thing I would like very much to do. There's a little money left in the treasury. We set up a treasury and Aphrodite, of course, is the treasurer and she's saving that money to pave the little enclosure around the chapel which is now just pebbles. And it isn't exclusively Chios but the islands have several places where they're outstanding black and white pebble mosaics. The design's done in black pebbles on white or white pebbles on black, depending on which--because they're two beaches; one beach has black pebbles, about the size of almonds and walnuts, and they've been weathered and smoothed so that they become really--they are--more like a tesserae than a mosaic, irregular shape of course. And so those would be--we have designs for a pavement which would make it complete. Now the outside of it was done--we found a Perghi artist. Now Perghi is one of the cities in which the outside of the building was painted in fresco in abstract designs and this man was the last of the Perghi artists who did that kind of work.

A: How is that spelled?

F: P-E-R-G-H-I. Perghi. It's a town nearby, fairly large town. It's a town in which there are houses painted on the outside. And this little chapel--our little chapel--

David thought that instead of just being brick, which didn't look too well, why didn't we ask this Perghi artist to--we had enough money in the treasury to pay him to fresco the outside. And this man had not had a job for ten years in that kind of work and he was thrilled to the core. And David said, "I want you to do the design. Just remember that we would like to give the visual effect of lowering the roof because it looks too up. Cut it down some way." Well, he put a strip of yellow around it which cut down the height and made it better proportioned. And he kept that in mind, everything he did. And this man said, "I could finish this quicker if I use the same design." David said, "Look, if you don't do the best work you ever did in your life, I'm going to fire you." Well, you know, he said, "Nobody's ever said that to me before. They've always said, 'It's getting to be expensive. Can you cut it down a little bit?'" And he said, "This is the first time anybody's ever told me to do my best." He really couldn't get over it, that quality meant more to us than anything else. And so he did a beautiful job on that little chapel, as good as any of the medieval things. He just did a beautiful job on it.

A: Well, I should think that that would be something that many people from the Islands would wish to go and see especially.

F: Well, yes, a number of them have and Aphrodite is always thrilled when somebody comes and sees the little chapel. If we ever get around to going back again and doing the pebble mosaic, why, it'll be complete. I really would love to do that because then it would be a perfect example.

A: This gentleman, the Perghi artist who did the exterior of the chapel, do you recall what his name was?

F: Not at the present moment. I'll think of it. I haven't thought of it for some time. A very fine person, a very delightful artist. (She looks for his name somewhere but can not locate it. Instead she brings out colored slides of the chapel interior.)

The two angels at the entrance vestibule--it's very narrow--one angel has a candle which she's shielding with her hand; the other angel has a censer, and the symbolism is: There are a couple of reasons you go to church. You go to church for enlightenment and you also go to church for worship. So that would account for the candle and the censer. (I look at the colored slides while she explains them)

I think it's the grape side. The only restriction, as far as subject matter was concerned, we consulted the

villagers first and we found that the chapel was called "Epapondi" (phonetic) and that means "the presentation of the Christ Child in the temple."

A: Epapondi? [Ipapandi Chapel]

F: Epapondi. I don't know how they spell it but that's the way it sounds. And the meaning is "the presentation of the Christ Child in the temple." And that means that the first fresco picture in the aisle has to be that subject and it has to be on the left hand side. So that was all right; we just put that in. And in that one, we used some Chios architecture [in keeping with the Medieval style] and we made it something like what would be a patio any place. It was a little enclosed courtyard where the priest was supposed to have received the Christ Child. And then we said, "Well, what about for the opposite picture on the right hand wall, opposite the presentation of the Christ Child, why not have the presentation of the Child Virgin in the temple?" And they thought it was very appropriate. We could put anything we wanted but we always asked them, "Would you like it?" And sometimes they'd suggest something else, but mostly they thought it was a good idea and so they accepted it, you know. But those were the two main pictures in the chapel because there isn't very much room. Then over the door, I said, "Well, what about the Annunciation over the door because that would connect the two events and it's logical." Well, they thought it was fine. So the Virgin goes over the door; and Gabriel in the Annunciation.

A: You are another Michelangelo. (The Annunciation fresco looks very much like the work of Michelangelo on the Sistine Chapel's ceiling)

F: Oh, this is St. George! When we asked them what saints they would like to have represented, they said "We would like to have St. George." Well, St. George I like too, so we had St. George. And on the other side, St. Demetrius. 'Course I had to ask who St. Demetrius was because I never heard of him, but he was a cavalry man who killed a dragon --not a dragon, but St. George was the dragon killer and St. Demetrius killed a very wicked emperor who murdered Christians. Demetrius is spearing the emperor in this one and he's stabbing down and, as you face the door, he's on the right hand side of the door. As you face the door, St. George is on the left. This caused a great commotion. The Greeks would come in. They'd say, "St. George. Where's the dragon?" and they'd look under the horse. No dragon under the horse. Well, that's a proper place for the dragon, under the horse. Well, I'd seen the dragon. It looks

like an armadillo with wings and I didn't too much like it. I had used the Chinese design for clouds in the sky, you know. You've seen them in Chinese paintings, sort of a scroll design for clouds. Well, the logical place for the dragon then was coming out of the clouds and it's a Chinese dragon and St. George is standing up. "Well, it's no place for your dragon, up in the clouds. It belongs under the horse." "Well now, look," I said, "right down in your own village, there is a water spout with a Chinese dragon head. So that's your water spout and I copied the water spout for the Chinese dragon's head." Well, it pleased them and after that there was no trouble with the dragon. He was quite proper. But you see, they were so kind of highboud [or hideboud, more probably, in this sense] by certain things that were proper and certain things not, you know, and so it took a little while to get used to St. George's dragon. But it made a better line because one was standing up; the other was standing down, and it made a much better line and balance in the composition in a small place.

A: It's just beautiful and the colors are beautiful too.

F: Well, we explained to them that we were using bright colors, we told them, "because this chapel represents joy and it's small. You people have given it with pleasure. All right. We want you to enjoy it; we want it to express joy." And they understood and I think they rather liked the idea.

A: Now, you still haven't found the name of the man who did the exterior.

F: I'll have to phone that to you.

A: All right. Okay. Now . . . would you like to take a rest? Is your throat all right?

F: No, it's all right.

A: I would like to ask you what you consider your greatest achievement in the field of art, in the artistic field. Your greatest artistic achievement.

F: Well, you mean the thing I enjoyed doing best?

A: Maybe that would be your way of defining it.

F: Yeh, I think it probably would be more, because I don't know. You know, you're the last one to be able to judge your own things. Well, I think that one thing that I feel that I wouldn't make too many changes in if I had to do it over again would be the Board of Water Supply mural. I

did a lot of research on that one and working with the engineers on it because I had to know. In fact, that was another sort of amusing thing. They had made up their minds that they would not dictate in any way to me. Well, there's a difference between dictating and giving you information and finally I said, "Well, look, I'm not an engineer. I've got to know these things. You must explain it because I'll make silly mistakes that I wouldn't have made if I'd known." And they kind of apologized for the little door that leads from the back of the desk. It's where you pay your bills. It's a rather unusual shape because it's on two walls that are perpendicular to each other; at right angles to each other. And as I got to know them, I would make suggestions or ask questions.

For one thing, it's very difficult to know how to handle a situation where you have one wall this way, the other wall meeting it, because one wall is always dark, the other's always light, and it changes. The wall that's light in the morning will be dark in the afternoon and there'll be a line between the two. Well, what are you going to do about it? So I said, "Would you mind--would it be possible to--in some way to curve that corner, so it makes a flat curve instead of a corner?" Well, they said, "It's no trouble because we haven't gone far enough." And so he says, "Put a wire mesh in there. Get a curve with wire mesh and plaster it." Went on with it. So that makes a perfect setting for the finding of how water accumulates from the heights. I had to understand this before I could do it.

The water falls on the highlands, that's why they're restricted. You can't build on certain heights because that is where the watershed is. The water goes down through the lava rock, it flows underground, it meets hardpan so the ocean can't reach it and salt the water--it can't get into the ocean and we lose the water--so it's a perfect set-up. But I had to know, I had to understand that before I could work it. So the center of it is the lava cliff with just water coming down through a little bit and two water-finders. This is part symbol and part literal. The symbolic end is in the center and on the mauka side, because the water-finders are Kane and Kanaloa. Kanaloa was an awa-drinker and he had to have water to mix with his awa, so Kanaloa went along with him [Kane] and when Kanaloa asked for some water, he simply, like Moses did, struck the rock--another connection between Hawaii and the old times--with his spear and water came out. Fresh water.

One of the engineers said, "'Course you can't do it, I know, but that water pump--that green water pump that's out front--it's near the fountain, but it's distinctly a mechanical device. That's very important." I said, "Well, fine. That goes right between the water--symbolically, you're the water-finders of the present, so it's perfect

between the two gods. So there's their pump sitting between the two gods. Worked out perfectly. Then they were sorry about the door but they had to have a door and they're tall men there and they couldn't lower the door to five feet and have them crawling in, don't you know. So I said, "What's the matter with that? It gives me exactly the height. I need a little rise--height--because you've just asked to have a water pump--'course I haven't been able to decide where to put it--that lets water into an irrigating ditch. And the valve that's turned on--somebody has to turn that valve on--it's an ideal spot for a man to turn the valve on, the water flows over, and nobody gets wet. So that's perfect." Well, you know, they were so astonished that all these way out things that they thought were way out. were perfect in fitting in, don't you know. So that's the way things worked on the Board of Water Supply mural.

Oh, then I have also the people who use water: army and navy. The army, I had a group of Hawaiian gods with the War God in the center and used that way. The whole building is full of columns so I used these figures as clustered columns to echo the fact that I recognized that the building was held up with pillars and just one of those architectural things you have to remember. And then at the end, to close off the composition, I have a canoe--that represents the navy--and back of the canoe, along the same line, is a row of cans coming down from the cannery--the Dole's pineapple. The cannery uses water but the pineapples do not, so I put the pineapple fields way in the distance where they only use rain water. They don't irrigate, but other fields need irrigating. Sugar cane needs irrigating so I use the irrigating part for the sugar cane. And there's a sugar mill so that you recognize that the sugar industry uses water in quantity. And then, they're little houses 'cause people use water also in their homes. And so that finishes off the uses of water.

And then, in the ancient times, the Hawaiians knew about this watershed business, not technically but they knew about it, because they would take the sailors from the ships up into the hills to get the freshest water there to take back to their ships. So I have some sailors coming up with Hawaiian guides and a chief with a priest and several attendants looking out over the landscape because the banner of Lono is coming up--that's the harvest festival. The banner of Lono [god of agriculture] is coming across the fields, 'cause that's harvest in Hawaii. So that is a symbol and also the place where the women would scoop up the freshest water from the top of the water so they wouldn't catch any mud. In dryish weather, there were still little pools of water.

A: I don't think I've ever seen that mural.

F: . . . It's right at the desk there. And ask for the brochure that goes with it, 'cause they have an explanation of who the figures are and all that sort of thing. It's all in--tonally, rather on the green order because their decoration is largely cool colors.

The first mural I ever did was for the San Francisco Fair Building. [1938-39]

A: Good. I was going to ask you that.

F: That was a drawing on masonite [fifty by nine feet] showing the Makahiki Festival and that was inside the wall on a frieze above people. There were offices at the back and a reception room in the front and to mask the reception area, which didn't look like much of anything, we had this frieze done on masonite. I painted masonite the color of light parchment, then drew on it in charcoal and red chalk, with touches of white for accent, because the decorator was Grossman-Moody and they had very colorful decorations. I thought too much color would just overwhelm the place 'cause it's small, so I did mine in neutrals so it's only drawing, but it does represent the harvest festival which is the closest to a fair the Hawaiians had, 'cause they had feasting. They paid taxes but they had some fun after paying taxes, 'cause they had feasts and dancing and games and all that kind of thing and athletic events. The chief had to live so they brought all their produce and presented it to the chief and then they had fun afterwards.

A: That is a very good psychology for paying taxes.

F: If they'd make it a little funnier, we wouldn't have so much trouble with it. It wouldn't be such a bore, to say the least.

And then I did--my first fresco was the one in the patio of the chemistry building. It's called "Air." Mrs. [Leonora N.] Bilger was at that time the head of the chemistry department. I don't know whether she is now or not.

A: Is that the University of Hawaii?

F: At the university. You see, Jean [Charlot] taught fresco and then he wangled this building area for his students that were interested in doing it. And David chose "Water" and he had the two water-finders and that is over the door of one of the lecture halls. Sueko Kimura's is around the corner from his and she chose "Earth" and she features the breadfruit tree because one of the gods leaped head first into the earth and his body became a breadfruit tree. It's an unfamiliar legend to me but she found it. I thought it was a beautiful one, too. And then a young fellow, [Richard Lucier] who went back to San Francisco, did "Fire" and

of course that's Pele and the volcano. And mine--all that was left was "Air" and that happened to be the largest area to do--so mine is "Air" and I got help from various people. David helped when he got through with his and several other artists. Jessie Shaw Fisher did some of it. Mr. Bilger was rather artistically inclined in watercolor so I gave him a piece to do. He did some ferns around the fountain. The subject is the "Breath of Life" and Kane is the breath of life and of course Kane was never represented in human form. If you wanted to represent Kane, you . . .

END OF SIDE 2/ 2ND TAPE

BEGINNING OF SIDE 1/ 3RD TAPE

Kane was also called the "Great Creator" and he created man from clay that was brought to him by Ku and Lono, I think. Yes. And so I have a mountain shape and then two hands that are the color of gray rock and then a man's figure in between kneeling, facing Kane, because the first thing that man did was to give praise for--thanksgiving for--his creation. So that was the idea: he's just been created and he's thanking Kane for the breath of life because Kane's just breathed the breath of life into him.

A: Great idea for an "Air" theme.

F: Well, it seemed to me that it was more universal. Then, of course, wind is air in motion so the little Wind God had the wind in his calabashes. He's furnishing wind to the sailors who are asking politely for it--for a certain breeze--and he'll give it to them. And then Hi'iaka, the sister of Pele--she's the patron of green woods and forested regions which lift themselves in the air, so she's appropriate to it. And I have Maui on the other side because Maui--the birds live in the air, practically, so there are Hawaiian birds and also Maui. Maui's mother had difficulty drying and beating her tapa because, for some reason, the weather didn't suite her quite. And I think it was the sun went too fast.

A: Yes, too fast for her clothes to dry.

F: Yeh. So Maui is requesting the sun to please go a little slower. And they're women beating tapa on that side. See if there are any others. Oh, the library murals I did. [1934-35] They were the first murals I ever did for Mrs. Charles Adams's house on the peninsula which doesn't exist now because the navy bought all of the peninsula, you know, and bought out everybody that owned places on the peninsula.

A: Which peninsula are you referring to?

F: Well, Pearl City. Near Pearl City. You used to take the train.

A: And Mrs. Charles Adams?

F: Mrs. Charles Adams. She was Mrs. Walter Dillingham's mother. And she built this sort of play place for Ben Dillingham and his pals. And Sue McIntosh at that time-- I've lost track of Sue so I don't know what's become of her --she was a decorator about the time of Dorothy True-Bell and a little bit earlier and she was a person that lived there. And she came to me one day and she said, "You're going to do a mural for Mrs. Adams." And I said, "I never did a mural in my life." She said, "You're going to do one now." And so I found out that I was to do a mural on the outside of the house. It was rough board and it just had a stain on it, that was all--a light gray stain--so that it had some body to it, it wasn't entirely splinters. And Mrs. Adams said she wanted trees on the outside. Well, all right, that was fine. So I put a banyan tree with roots and all over the front windows and the front door and that made a very nice entrance. And then some coconut trees and I got a little tired of doing one after the other --it's a little bit monotonous--so I said to Mrs. Adams, "The back of the house is on the seafront. How about a canoe race on the seafront?" "Ch, fine." She was one of these people that accepted a new idea, don't you know, and all she'd say is, "Nope," and I didn't talk. But she was very decided and she was prepared to like things, which is a wonderful help, you know. So on the ocean side, I did the canoe race. And then she said, "You know, we've got to have the Dillingham ship in somehow." And there was a boathouse and I said, "Well, fine, it would fit on the boathouse just right." So I went down and drew from the model of the original Dillingham ship that became a sailing vessel that came over.

A: What was that sailing vessel called, do you recall?

F: No, no I don't remember the name of it. They would know it down at the Dillingham place. Any of the Dillinghams could tell you that. They probably still have in the office the ship model; it's a tiny one. So that went on the boathouse. She liked that and so, "What about doing the garage?" So I did something for transportation. Then she said, "You know, I think really you should do something on the station wagon." (We are interrupted by a telephone call)

- A: Maybe I can look at these (photos of her work) a little later on. Oh, these are. (She shows me and explains photos of the "Air" work) (The tape is very noisy here) Now, let's see, I have another question for you too. Your latest work is, as you pointed out, this one ("The Family" which she had displayed--one an old oil painting; another, a charcoal sketch expressing a different concept)
- F: (She has moved across the room to the painting and sketch to explain them, so what she said is difficult to hear) Well, that . . . one I did originally is of a boy and his parents . . . and so I'm doing it over again. I'm painting it over again because it's much easier than fooling around with re-doing something that's already done because you never quite get away from it. So you use that and then just turn the canvas over and size it on the other side.
- A: Is this a future work to be done?
- F: It is a subject that interests me. I just call it "The Family." I've done different versions of it. I've done it in prints; I've done it in watercolor; I've done it in oil and different ways, but in this one I have the baby reaching for a little crab. Of course, kids always do that, you know. This is standard. And the young father and mother watching.
- A: They're all intent on that object.
- F: Yeah, on what the baby's doing.
- A: And is this a lauhala tree behind them?
- F: Lauhala, yes. I've rearranged the hala, putting the ocean between and hala leaves on either side of it. I think it's a little too conflicting to get those different very smooth, roundness and serenity of the forms and then too much action in the leaves, so I'm just rearranging it. One of the things that you do sometimes. Sometimes a subject will interest you and you put it away for six weeks or a year or two years or ten and come back to it and you have a different idea about it.
- A: So this is something that you have done.
- F: Yes. If it doesn't interest me anymore, I leave it alone. And if I'm still interested in a subject and get a new light on it, why then, I do it over in some way or another. Or maybe I'll do it in another technique. Oh, there's one other technique that I've done a mural in and that's mosaic and that's not very far from here. It's at Mid-Pacific

Institute. It's on the wall above the auditorium and it's just as you drive in. You drive into the grounds and there it is, facing you. And that resulted, of course, in my going to Cremona [a city in Northern Italy on the Po River] and watching the process of making mosaic.

A: This was in . . . (I was going to ask in what year this occurred)

F: Yes, their subject. I had an awfully hard time gathering what they would like to have and finally Mr. Bakken [Joseph Ingman Bakken, retired educator, who was president of Mid-Pacific Institute from 1941 to 1965] said, "Well, why not --they seem to like the idea of the spirit of Mid-Pacific." Well, how on earth are you going to do that with little squares that you have to design like cross-stitch embroidery --because that's what you have to do? So I said, "Spirit of Mid-Pacific." I was trying to figure what the "spirit of Mid-Pacific" could be. So I made quite a number of sketches, most of them I knew they wouldn't like 'cause there was too much athletics in it, don't you know. I knew they wouldn't like it but, you know, if you can get a definite "I don't like this" then you have some idea what they do like, if it's the opposite, so I went at it that way. But Mr. Bakken sort of thumbed through a book and he said, "This is our hymn book or song book and this is our school song: 'We've a Story to Tell to the Nations.' There it is: there's your spirit of Mid-Pacific right there."

Well, lettering is one of the things you can do in mosaic and do it quite well. So it's a long--it's about 90 feet long--huge long wall and so the lettering is about 18 inches high. And so, the lettering is slightly staggered--it isn't all in one straight line across but it goes across that way. I put "We've a Story to Tell to the Nations" right across the center and in the center it combines history and their present day. They have a very good music department so that's the whole plan of it in the first place. I looked at the situation and the building is against a hill. You see it against the mountainside. Now the mountainside is built of cliffs--a flat place where there are trees, another cliff--but it's all staggered, it interweaves, but mostly in rectangles. Okay, it's perfect for a design for a mosaic because mosaic is in little squares. Okay, this is ideal. So I made interlacing rectangles--some of them were a little bit free form but they're still rectangular--and they fit in the wall, the same formation more or less that the cliffs have in the background. So that's where you see it: that way that's a mural. Then in these different rectangles, where it would fit, I put, for instance, music--they have a good music department--all right, I had violins, trumpet, cello, different things

that would fit--and a few notes of music--that would fit in that rectangle. Then they had a very good football team; they had a good basketball team. All right. That would fit exactly the plan: the layout of a football field, the layout of a basketball field fitted perfectly in other rectangles so those are all in there. They had a Kite Festival so I made one end--I made a border going up and down at one end of kites, a design of kites that the boys had made because that is their characteristic festival--Kite Day. They actually fly them.

And then the other side, I have some history. Well, they have had three or four disastrous fires that have burned down their building but they always built a better building to take its place. Even the craft shop had been burnt down. So I had: the Phoenix represents rebuilding after a fire, because the Phoenix always built better'n ever after it burned down. So the Phoenix is on one side, with the wings outspread--she's in red--and then there are the beginnings of new buildings, just the framework, because that made a nice design--that nice para . . . [probably parable]--in black.

Kawaihāo Seminary joined Mid-Pacific some years ago. [1908] It used to be Mill's School for boys. It is now Mid-Pacific Institute and it's coed. It used to be only one. And of course the girls' school moved up there and so I put their seal in the center. I put Mid-Pacific seal. Oh, Kawaihāo I put to represent--I don't think they had a seal at that time. I represented Kawaihāo [Church] steeple, which should be recognizable. Then there's Mid-Pacific in the center.

A: That's that medieval type of technique again, isn't it?
[To include a building]

F: Yeh, yeh. Perfect. And then across it comes this "We've a Story to Tell to the Nations," representing the spirit of Mid-Pacific. So that it came out very well. I did this all on squared paper, each tessera is accounted for, and more or less, I had samples of tesserae from the Gozi factory in Cremona, Italy, 'cause it was all imported from Italy.

A: Is it Pomona?

F: Cremona. The violin place where the Cremona violins come from. And they still have a factory where they make violins. Cremona is one of the famous violin makes in, oh I'd say, Renaissance times. It's very old. But now it's a manufacturing town more than it is a musical town. And I--just an amusing thing--I thought, well, now the money I get from this, why shouldn't I take that and go to Cremona and see

how they make the tiles, because if I ever have another one I'll know better how to work it. So I went to Cremona and found the Gozi factory. Cremona is a lovely town; it's an old town. And I met the proprietor, Mr. Gozi, and some of the head men and I said that I'd like very much, if it would not inconvenience them too much, if I could come and sit down and watch them, watch the girls--it's all women, women and girls in the factory--and they have little square trays that are marked off the size of the tesserae and just as fast as their hands will move they put the tesserae in and then somebody slaps a piece of gummed paper on it and then when it's dry they pull it off and they put it on the face of the mural, label it by number so they know what order to put it up in. And of course I had the sketch checked off so that they knew which went where. I noticed that they were polite but extremely distant and I thought, well that's funny, this isn't like the cordial way that I'm used to Italians treating me. And then I realized that they think Americans are likely too--they thought I was going to tell them how to do their job. Well, as soon as I saw that, I said very casually, "You know, this is the first mosaic mural I've ever designed and I like doing it very much but there're a lot of things that I know I could learn if you would let me just sit in and watch you do it, because then that would tell me what to look out for if I have to do it again." And, oh! So I had a lovely time there and watched them putting it together, you know.

A: That would be very intricate to do.

F: Well, they were so cute, you know. I didn't realize that they were worried for fear I was going to--'cause one of them said, "Don't you get bored?" "Don't you know you have a lovely town? Didn't you ever hear of it?" I said, "It's a beautiful town, I love it. I'm not bored. How could I be bored here?" Well, you know, that tickled them because Italians can understand your being mad about something, being furious; they can imagine you crying over something because you're disappointed; but they can't imagine your being bored, and they think that Americans are capable of being bored. So we just got along fine and I did learn quite a lot about making those. I'll show you (She shows me the sketch from which she worked and which the tesserae workers used as a guide) I did this sketch to show them what I had in mind.

A: And of course that's so well-organized, to have them numbered as you go along like that.

F: Yes, I think that way, and in fact I caught one mistake which might have tangled up for awhile, and when I got back

here, I found that it was an Hawaiian man who was going to do the setting for me and he was really an expert in his line. And I said, "Well, I'm not sure how much is coming. I think we might have too much and, so we don't come out lopsided, supposing we start in the center and work from the center out to the ends and whatever we've got left over, that's left over." Well, it happened that it cut the Phoenix off, which is all right--that's Spanish: you don't have to show the whole bird but the composition is still good. And so that end must come off. When I'd taken it to the border, I couldn't cut the kites in two but I had a little bit too much and this man told me, "You've got to lose about 18 inches." I needed about one inch, but I couldn't lose them in chunks, I had to lose it in fragments, but I pulled out enough so that I got the kites in before he got to that point. But I had to cut off some of the rocks, but he understood; he got the idea. And so I just marked out the parts where you get rid of. I couldn't cut through a design; I had to cut through neutral parts that were just color, not design. You change the shape of your rectangle, that's not too bad, but to cut a design in chunks, you lose the . . .

A: You lose the balance of it.

F: Yeh. People don't know what you're talking about. But that's right down here. It's just off University Avenue.

A: I know where that is.

F: Where the little church is, you just turn in there (when you come near the park), if you want to take a look at it.

A: I would like to. I have been to Mid-Pacific [Institute] but I have not been to their auditorium, so I haven't seen that.

F: Well, it's just above the auditorium. The architectural problem of the wall that had to be built over the auditorium was on account of a sort of projection room or something like that that showed moving pictures and it meant that that room stuck up like a little sore thumb in the center of the building and the architect didn't like the look of it so he just built the wall to mask it. And then, what to do with the wall? Just a cement wall looked stupid. So then the donor who gave the money for it--who wanted to remain anonymous--then I did the work and paid for the installation of it. And when I came back again, I'm glad I came back early enough because I think I was some help to him 'cause he might not have known where to start. But starting in the middle is a sensible place to start, since it

is that kind of design, then work to the sides.

Did you want the library mural? Well, I think that's about the last of it. Well, the library mural was a Public Works of Arts Project. They call it PWA but it's PWAP 'cause it was a part of the Public Works Project but it was the Arts end of it. They didn't mix the two. It was just a little bit after Padraic Colum had been down here--the Irishman who writes legends--and the decorations would come in between the windows of the children's room. And so I said, "Why not have them episodes from the Padraic Colum books because they comprise the stories that the children will have read and they'll be right up there for them."

Well, PWA was practically the "Gay Nineties" period, wasn't it, something like that? Just a little bit after the Gay Nineties was over but I mean it was early so that the nude was not ordinarily seen in art. But what are you going to do? With Hawaiian figures, you've got to have it. Well, some woman criticized it and I said, "Well, do you think Hina would look better in a bathing suit?" She looked at it and she said, "Well." And you couldn't eliminate Hina. But, you know, the children never noticed it. They don't bother. It doesn't bother them. It's only somebody who had that funny idea about the nude being sort of pornographic, you know, and there's an awful lot of difference. There's nakedness and nude. And they're so different. And after that, I noticed that the children just casually looked at it as they would any other picture. But almost all the figures have no more clothing than the ancient Hawaiians would have anyhow and the Hawaiians are very practical people. If they were cold, they'd put a shawl on and they threw it off when they got too warm. And Hina certainly wouldn't dive in a bathing suit.

And that [mural] is oil paint on an already plastered wall which was painted. It was painted a neutral, rather lightish medium-light gray, and I knew that in painting oil over oil that you have to be sure that you know what paint was used originally, because otherwise it may peel off. So they told me who the painter was and I asked him what paint he'd used and he told me the brand and everything, so I got that brand of paint and I mixed my colors with it so that I would have something that was homogeneous, you know, instead of being something that was put on afterwards. And I think I was right in doing that because it was a mat finish that he'd painted and if you have little shiny spots where the slightly rough plaster is, you get little sun spots but if it is mat finish, you don't. So it's really house paint with durable oil colors in it. Of course it's gotten filthy dirty from all the dirt that sifted into the windows all the time the capital was being built, so I think I'm going to--David and I are working on it--we think we're going to do them over again, retouch them--probably

a little more than retouch, refinish them, because, you know, you're not the same person that painted the original. That must have been around '35 or something like that, so, you know, you're not the same person now that you were in 1935.

- A: No, that's right. That's something that relates to what I was thinking of asking you also. I don't know if it's a very good question but I wondered if you would compare your latest work with your earliest work. Your own comparison on whatever basis you wish to compare them.
- F: Well, I'd say that probably going through the fresco stage and being natural--I think I'm a natural for architectural, because I like architecture--and when I'm . . .

END OF SIDE 1/ 3RD TAPE

I always walk around the outside of the building to see what it's like, I look at the people who are working in the building because they've got to look at it, and then I look at the inside. How is this supported? How are the walls supported? Is it a tall ceiling? Is it a short ceiling? What is it?--because it's much easier if you can work--you can work from plans, but it's hard, because plans do not give you the visual impact that you get from a building that's already put up. A plan is pretty cold; it's very cold. And you can do it but it's not the easiest thing, so if I'm able to, I walk around the building, inside it, look at people, look at who goes by, who goes into the building, all that kind of thing. What are they furnishing it with? What are they going to use it for? Is it offices? Is this a place where people sit and talk or is it a place where you just rush through? And then you plan your mural with some consideration for those things. You can't be too--because people change and the building changes--so what you really do is to put in the building the mural that you think fits the walls best and is the most meaningful in the way of subject and in the way of handling and all that sort of thing and how you divide it up and all that sort of thing. But you do consider, at the time you're doing it you do consider other things because things change. At any rate, you're working with human beings too.

- A: Well then, let me ask you. Maybe I'll put this question another way. Where do you see the greatest change in your work, from the earliest work to the latest thing you are doing?
- F: I think probably the change is more toward simplification and possibly I have more feeling for construction and

angularity. Now Madge [Tennent] goes to curves and I go to angles and straights, rectangles, and I'm rather inclined to reduce things to geometric. I love geometric forms in spite of the fact that I flunked geometry.

A: Well, that's what's so interesting and of course you mentioned that you had taken architectural art also and all of this has been just grist for the mill for you in a way.

F: Yes, yes, it was.

A: Even though that was not what you thought you wanted at the time.

F: Yeh, yeh. I think probably I'm also inclined, more or less, to speak in symbols, to paint in symbols, because if I can get a subject over with a symbol I'll do it; or introduce a symbol for the meaning of the picture, rather more than making a composition out of certain elements. I'll have a symbolic meaning at the back of my mind, like the Mid-Pacific. You see, even as far back as that I was working symbolically. I mean, getting my idea organized from a symbol, rather than from a subject. Subject matter, in a way, doesn't interest me as much as it used to and I don't care as much about it. To me, the meaning of the picture is more important than the subject matter and I get the subject matter I think is best. But I still work with subject matter.

A: Because it's your means, really, of communicating.

F: Well, I can only communicate with it mostly in murals. I have seen very effective murals done geometrically but I don't think they--I think they're pretty cold. I mean, humanly speaking, I think they're cold. They speak more to architects. Now an architect would enjoy that kind of mural much more than, I think, a person who would enjoy something you could recognize as human. Humanistic. I don't think you have to go all out for being realistic. I don't think that's necessary. But I think some suggestion of humanity, 'cause houses and buildings, after all, are for people. They're gone long ago but they're still for people.

A: Your mentioning the pyramids calls to mind again--I've thought of it off and on this morning--the recent work by Jean Charlot, "Alii Nui." I wondered what your reaction has been to that or what your reaction was to it.

F: Yes. I'm tremendously interested in it. It's a terrific problem and I think he did amazingly well in solving it. He had the background of, I don't know how many, forty

of so steric, more than that. You have to see it from below, which shortens it, or at least there was one place where you have to see it from below. I think it's an extremely powerful thing and doing it in ceramics--I'm terribly keen because I've always had a sneaking notion I wanted to do some ceramic sculpture but I never aimed at anything as large as that. I aimed it more at smaller things, twenty-five or thirty inches high or something like that.

A: This one is about nine feet, isn't it?

F: Nine feet high. So that practically means that you plan it, over it, but unless you have a kiln of your own, how are you going to fire it?

A: It was done in layers. I think, wasn't it?

F: Well, it's done in sort of tiers.

A: Tiers, yes, that's what I meant.

F: And each tier--I looked at it and each tier is done in sections of shaped tile and so around the bottom of it there're probably about ten pieces, at least, and each of those has a shape and a texture and it's very beautifully done. But it's some tremendous problem because you have to know what heat, just how thick you should make your tile. At that heat, is it going to shrink more or less? And I think that's why he has to do it in tiles, instead of--you can't do it in one round, one continuous piece. It'd probably crack.

A: Do you see any resemblance between that statue ["Alii Nui"] and Marisol's "Damien"? Do you see any resemblance between the two? [In concept and style]

F: Well, they're both monumental. No, I don't. Well, they both are built on--I think probably Jean's is more architectural. He had architecture in mind. Hers I don't think is. I would say that hers is monumental sculpture, pure and simple, but without necessarily having any--it fits into architecture but I don't know whether. . . . I hadn't thought about it too much but it's very satisfying. I like it very much. I would say that one is built as figure sculpture and the other is built as architecture.

A: I see. Very good. I like that. I like especially your distinction.

F: Well, it had to be that way because I don't think Marisol

knew where hers was going to be. I don't think so.

A: Oh, I see. That does make a difference, doesn't it?

F: It seems to me that that was--yeh. But I think she knew what size the building was going to be, more or less, but I don't know whether she knew what the position was and it's in the court [of the State Capitol Building], so it's neither interior nor exterior, which is all right.

A: Yes, uh huh. It's well-located.

F: Oh yes, I think so too. Yeh. I think the person that located it or the people that located it gave it a great deal of thought so they wouldn't squeeze it or make it look small.

A: It's nice to be able to walk around it.

F: Yes, yes. Well, you should because hers is distinctly a piece of sculpture.

A: Now I want to bring up "Prometheus Bound."

F: All right. I'll show it to you. Do you want to see it?

A: I'd like to see it, if I may. Is that a recent work or is it one that . . . ?

F: Well, I would say that it is recent-ish. (She goes across the room to get the painting so what she says is indistinct and what follows, about the painting, is also. What she said, in essence, was that "Prometheus Bound" is a nature scene and the snow that had fallen on the mountains beside the road to Delphi formed a pattern that she saw as The Crucifixion or Prometheus crucified on the rock for stealing fire to give to man and "this was civilization.")

A: I just wanted you to please speak into that (the microphone) about how the pattern was formed.

F: The oil painting, "Prometheus Bound," started out in idea from a natural piece of scenery. I happened to be going to Delphi in Greece by bus and I happened to look up and there, on the side of the cliff, the snow, which does happen in Greece occasionally, had fallen on ledges in a pattern that suggested a crucified figure, and since Prometheus was a Greek hero who was pinned to a rock and paid the penalty for bringing civilization to man, I thought that it seemed to me like something worth trying for anyhow. So when I got to a studio where I could work, I did two--they're

fairly similar--two paintings of this same subject of "Prometheus Bound." But it isn't often that you come upon a natural. The trick is to recognize it because I'm sure the other people in the bus didn't see it at all.

- A: Well, that's very interesting. Now, when was that Prometheus--do you recall approximately when that was painted?
- F: Well, it would be probably about five years ago. You see, for the last year almost, I haven't had a chance to paint because I've been away. I've been waiting for this house to get finished.
- A: I see. And you were in Greece during this time.
- F: Yes. As I recall, that was something I did the last part of the Greek stay and I came back from Greece about 1968.
- A: Now, let's see if I have any other questions here. Are you and your work in any art history books?
- F: Frederic Taubes wrote an article in American Artists about me and I'll give you the number afterwards. It's over there. And it seems to me--well, all you have to do is pay your money and you can get into any book you want to, so what's the point? I was in American Artists once--I mean Artists in America or something like that. It's a big book. It's just like a dictionary, big like a dictionary, and you have about a column inch, something like that, and you pay your money. And that's enough. I mean, anybody can get into it. Into the act.
- A: Well, I guess what I meant really is: If you were to be included in an art history book, for instance, what would you want to have said about you? I mean, what would you want to be remembered for especially?
- F: Well, I think for mural painting. Mural painting.
- A: For mural painting. And which particular mural?
- F: The ones I've mentioned. You see, orders for murals don't grow on trees. You have to have your building first. You have to have people that want a mural and who have money enough to pay for it, because it is a long job and a lot of it, especially fresco, as Jean Charlot very well puts it: "You work with your plasterer and you hope you're as good in your line as he is in his." And I think that puts it very well because there's a camaraderie that you couldn't possibly have in oil, because oil is very individual. It's one person that has to do it because the

difference in technique shows up too fast. It's very difficult for two oil painters to work exactly the same because you have too many tools, too many different tools. You have only one kind of brush, one kind of paint, and one plasterer. All right, how much difference can you do with that? Even then, you get a slight difference because there're not so many things you can do. In cross hatching, you can do only a few things. You can only do a few things in washes. You can't go too different. There's no such thing. You have no impasto to contend with because you don't work for textures, so that's eliminated. So a number of people can work on a fresco, as Jean Charlot. He had as many as six or eight people working at one time.

A: Yes, and also the work that was done on the feather cloak by Anderson. Ruth Anderson.

F: Ruth Anderson? Oh yes, that weaving. I imagine that there aren't too many different things you can do in weaving. Of course, it could be overdone. Now we all--even the person who designs it, who draws the cartoons of a fresco mural, has to follow them after they're once decided upon, otherwise, the only way you erase a fresco is to chop it out and you don't do that--it's a last resort. So you make up your mind and Jean does--and so have I. When I finish my cartoon, I try it against the wall to see if I'm over or if there're changes I want to make before I trace--do the tracing. You make some changes when you do your tracing because you simplify slightly, but you have your model, then you hang the model section up where you can see it so you know which side is lighted and which side has a shadow on it so you don't do foolish things--contradictory things --and you don't get one part of it very dark and then taper off to nothing some other place where it needs slight shadow. So you keep tab on yourself because it simply reminds you that that's what you made up your mind to do and you're working on a white surface instead of brown wrapping paper. That's the only difference.

A: All right. You had most fun working on the Board of Water Supply mural. What do you think was one of your happiest times?

F: You know it's hard work. You're happy when it's finished the way you want it and otherwise you're likely to be worried. In a way--I don't know exactly how to say this but--you take your work seriously; you don't take yourself seriously. And there's a lot of difference in that. So you're very jealous, if somebody's helping you. It's your job to see that they're doing it so that the over-all will be what is desirable, what we've all decided on. Some

people get a little carried away and they finish up a thing or they're inclined to finish it a little more than would really be suitable for the rest of the thing so you have to look out for everybody. So you really are on the job every minute and you have no time to know whether you're enjoying it or not, so I don't know.

A: I see. I see how you've answered that. Then may I ask you this . . . ?

F: No, art isn't fun. If anybody asks you if it's fun, no. People who say, "Oh, aren't you having fun!" Well, we're having hard work and tearing our hair, but we wouldn't do anything else.

A: I know. I understand because writing is that way too. I mean, you just do it.

F: Yes, exactly. You've got to. It's your job, you have to do it and nobody else can do it for you.

A: Oh, it is fun but yet it's hard work.

F: It's hard work and you enjoy it with sort of a fierce enjoyment.

A: Oh, I know. Now this is, I think, one of the hardest questions to answer but what word do you think best characterizes your work?

F: Well, I know what my aim is but I don't know whether I've expressed it or not. I think somebody else has to describe it. I wouldn't . . .

A: Can you think of any one word that would characterize your work?

F: No, because in mural work you're sometimes required to work in a monumental style; other times it's perfectly proper and right to work in an amusing style but of course that borders on decoration. For instance, a good example of that is the two stairways where the Indonesian does a highly amusing one with the hands--same subject--and Jean [Charlot] has done a monumental one with the hands.

A: Oh yes, that's at the East-West Center [Jefferson Hall].

F: He's done an architectural mural. The fingers follow the steps and they tell you whether to go up or down. The Indonesian isn't concerned either way. Now his decoration could be moved to some other place and if the wall were the right size and the building would require it, it would

be a charming decoration just exactly the same. Now Jean's couldn't be moved, you'd wonder, where does that come from? It doesn't belong here. Where does it come from? And that is correct, it should fit the architecture; that is, if it's a mural--if it's a functioning mural. The difference is there then: the Indonesian's is not a functioning mural, it's a mural decoration. Very good, excellent, but it's just a different kind. Jean's is a functioning mural because those fingers are the steps and they tell you which way to go, up-down. If you're up, you go down, and you follow the fingers. And so, David and I were both brought up with that by Jean. I think probably we were more or less used to it but we prefer functioning mural work to decorative mural work. I admire decorative murals, but if I had the choice between which I'd do, I'd say the functioning. It'd probably turn out functioning anyhow. I couldn't help it. [So her work might be described as "functional" or "functioning mural."]

A: Has there ever been any artistic disaster in your life? That you can remember. Any artistic disaster where . . .

F: You mean where I might lose it?

A: Well, whatever you would consider an artistic disaster.

F: Well, if it's a canvas, I just tear it up and throw it in the garbage.

A: I just wondered if in your experience you have.

F: Well, you see, with mural you have to What do you mean by disaster? You mean something that an earthquake came and knocked it down or something?

A: No; well, it would be that symbolically though.

F: Oh, you mean symbolically.

A: I mean it symbolically.

F: Oh yes. Well, no. That doesn't happen I don't think so often in mural because you have so much time to--you begin with your--in most cases, you begin with your cartoon because your wall is too big, you can't take it all in. If you're standing there, in that corner of the room, you can not know what's going on in this corner of the room and you change your scale. That's why you draw your cartoon, then you keep your scale right, because you could start in with an enormous figure over here, or you could start in with a natural size figure over there, and as you get freer

you'd end up with an enormous figure in this end which wouldn't be right at all. So you have time to think things over and you avoid what you might call a disaster because you forestall it.

A: I see.

F: I think it's a matter of forestalling.

A: You have never had any then, any disaster. I guess a silly example would be the man who painted himself into the corner of the room. That was his disaster. You see, this is the kind of thing I mean. Or the man who cuts the limb off the tree while he's on the wrong end of the limb. This type of thing.

F: Oh, well, I don't know--this didn't turn out a disaster because it's funny, but this is one of the funny things that happens to you. This is in connection with Mrs. Adams's house. When I finished all the outdoor things, including the snail, that insulted people who couldn't keep up, on the back of the station wagon, she said, "The boys have a dormitory--sort of a dormitory with locker rooms--for their sleeping quarters." There was one long kind of a dark room and then across from it there were a series of lockers and each boy that visited her little grandson would have his own locker room. And Mrs. Adams said, "Well, why not paint something on the lockers?" I said, "Fine." And it just happened there's also a little toilet. It has a slightly larger area with a door in it and that's the little toilet; and then the lockers go along, each one with a door and she wanted a decoration on each one of the doors. And I said, "Well, why don't we choose Davy Jones's locker for it?" Well, she had never heard of Davy Jones's locker and so when I explained it to her she thought it was swell because it's right down by the ocean, you know. And she was highly amused because on the little toilet I put Neptune enthroned on this coral throne. She got a big kick out of that one. And then each boy had a different one. One of them had starfish on his door featured; one of them had mullet featured; and somebody else had mermaids featured on his, but they were all different things undersea. The whole rest of it was all Davy Jones's locker, of course--undersea stuff. And so each boy could identify his own because he'd know which fish or which plant or piece of seaweed or mermaid--his own symbol; his own locker. She was quite amused about it.

A: Very clever and delightful. You say that the house is no longer there. Were those preserved, I wonder.

F: I haven't any idea whatever became of them.

A: It would be interesting to find out, wouldn't it?

F: Yes. I don't know whether Ben [Dillingham] would know or not, but the buildings probably . . .

END OF SIDE 2/ 3RD TAPE

BEGINNING OF SIDE 1/ 4TH TAPE

A: Now this is on Kauai at . . . (looking at photos of her work)

F: Yes. Kealia, at St. Catherine's. Jean [Charlot] painted the high altar piece which I think is Christ and the lion, as I remember, and also the Stations of the Cross; and Tseng Yu-Ho did the apostles . . . (the rest of what she says is too indistinct to make out)

A: I like your Hawaiian madonna and child.

F: Well, it was really very amusing because you never know what reaction you're going to get. Father MacDonald was out here and he--I think it's better if you turn that off --and he was talking to this group of Portuguese men and they said, "Why a Hawaiian madonna?" "Well," Father MacDonald said, "would you rather have a Portuguese madonna?" He reminded them that in Spain, the madonna is Spanish; in Italy, she's an Italian girl; in Greece, she's a Greek girl.

A: And in Japan, she's a Japanese madonna.

F: Yuh. I mean, using her as a subject makes her universal.

A: That's right, it does make her universal. (Looking at colored slides of her work now) One has to see these, actually. Oh yes, "Air."

F: There's Hina. And this is--what was his name?--a god who --the sun, moon, and stars were stolen and he reached down and he's bringing up some of the stars, I guess, and he's tossing Hina the moon and she's going to arrange it, put it back in place. The sky used to sit on top the trees and that made them flat until Maui pushed them up ("it gives you the sense of Maui holding up the sky"). He's pushing the sky up, this man's pushing down. But it makes a design

as though you're looking through a window.

A: And also it certainly expresses the idea of what comes down must go up and what goes up must come down. [Rain, for example, in natural terms]

F: Yes, uh huh.

A: Now here is that Alii Nui-looking type . . .

F: Yes. Yes. Well, it was Ku and Lono [gods of war and agriculture], brought clay that Kane made the man out of. That is that detail. That's in the patio at Bilger Hall. This is (a colored slide photo of Madonna with Child holding a sword) my Byzantine Period. There's a verse in Matthew that says: "I came not into the world to bring peace but a sword." And I thought how much more effective it would be if the Child knew it. And Jean said he'd never seen that concept of it. (or--never saw it painted like that.) Unusual.

A: I've never seen it. No, I've never seen this.

F: "Child With A Sword."

A: "Child With A Sword." Now when was this done, do you recall?

F: That was, I think, just after I got back from Greece, something like that.

A: And you call it your "Byzantine Period."

F: Yes, because I had been exposed to the Byzantine work and the folds that they use are sharp, much more so than the Italians', and much more miniature style and this seemed to be the kind of subject, the sword being so--such a sharp line in the picture--it seemed appropriate to use the Byzantine style throughout. Instead of flowing lines, put the sharp angular lines in.

A: Now is there anything else that you would like to mention? I've asked you quite a few questions. I guess you're getting a little tired now.

F: No, it isn't that but I think we've talked about everything.

A: The only thing was that we didn't quite complete, remember, about the Dillingham--when the house was torn down and you were telling about that.

- F: Oh, that. I simply do not know what became of that building and the only person I think that might possibly know would be Lowell Dillingham, possibly Ben Dillingham, but then of course he's where?
- A: He's in Australia.
- F: He's in Australia. So I don't know. I'm sure it was before he went to Australia because in World War II they needed more room or something like that. Now Mrs. McIntyre --Florence McIntyre--had a place down there and she had to sell hers.
- A: To the Navy Yard?
- F: To the navy, yeh, and everybody on the peninsula had to get out and sell their places, so I've no idea what could have happened to it. Anybody in the navy, if they're still here, they would know.
- A: I imagine it would be possible to find out through the Dillinghams, in any case.
- F: Yes, if you'd like to know what happened, they might put you through to somebody who did know.

END OF 1ST 1/4 OF 4TH TAPE

END OF INTERVIEW

Transcribed and edited by Katherine B. Allen

Note: Re p. 42: Marisol's statue of "Damien" is now located, in 1979, at the mauka entrance to the State Capitol Building.

POST-INTERVIEW DATA

Additional information was obtained from May Fraser during telephone conversations on December 7th and 8th, 1971. This material has been edited, reorganized, and classified according to subject matter for easier reference.

Art and artists:

May Fraser met David G. Asherman in the office of Jean Charlot while he was teaching art courses at the University of Hawaii. Asherman had come to Honolulu from the Mainland when he heard that Charlot was here because he wanted to work with him. At the time of their introduction, May knew how to mix colors and David didn't. Miss Fraser says that Charlot used "an unfortunate phrase" when he told Asherman that he would "work under" her as his full-time assistants in the painting of the Bishop Bank mural. "David never got over that," she says. Since she had a car, she would pick Asherman up to go to work.

The old Bishop Bank building [now First Hawaiian Bank] was on Lewers Street and had a parking lot in front of it. The new building occupies the entire corner at Lewers Street and Kalakaua Avenue. The original mural in the old building was sold in sections before it was demolished but the original cartoon was used for the mural in the new building.

"David did the 'Kahuna Worshipping a Rock' and I did the 'Missionary's Cat,' using Marvell Hart's cat, Alonzo, as model. I noticed Jean was painting two dogs at the other end of the mural, so I painted a cat because I don't much care for dogs. Mrs. [Fritz] Hart bought this section of the mural. I posed for the 'Missionary Woman at the Spinning Wheel' which Jean painted."

Miss Fraser states that it was through her work at St. Catherine's Church at Kealia, Kauai that she was awarded the commission to do the mosaic mural at Mid-Pacific Institute. The auditorium at Mid-Pacific was designed by the same architect who designed St. Catherine's and it was this architect who got her the commission. Her mosaic work is meant to express "The Spirit of Mid-Pacific" through its theme song title, "We've a Story To Tell The Nation." The history of Mid-Pacific, which evolved out of Kawaihāo Girls' Seminary and Mill's School, is central to the work and is represented by Kawaihāo Church. This is the first and only mosaic work, at least on a large scale, that she has done. The tessera used is "like bathroom tile." She has perhaps worked with tile since then

"but not with tessera like this was." [See pages 34-38 for details of this work.]

Father MacDonald, the priest at St. Catherine's Church in 1954, got the idea for the frescoes done by Miss Fraser, who did the altar piece; Jean Charlot, who did the main altar piece; and Mrs. Gustav Ecke [Yu-Ho, Tseng], who did "a fresco of the saint who wanted to be a missionary to China but died before he could get there." One of the nuns helped Miss Fraser with minor work on her fresco, "Hawaiian Nativity," a non-traditional Hawaiian madonna seated with the Child on her lap. "The wise men offering their gifts are Hawaiian, Chinese, and haole; the shepherds are Portuguese with their goats; and in the background is a jeep, the modern donkey. It is international in flavor." [See page 48.]

Gurrey's Ltd. was "a haole-style art store" operated by Alfred Gurrey where Miss Fraser worked for eight years after teaching for two years and attending art school for three years. [1914-22] While she worked there, she did everything including janitor work and painted on weekends, being able to accomplish a great deal by setting aside this time on a regular basis. She recalls that Bess Luquiens, [the wife of Huc-Mazelot Luquiens, an outstanding etcher], worked there also.

Miss Fraser says that Gurrey's "window displays were like still lifes and every table was a still life display. He was ahead of his time. He obtained Oriental art items from China, including the Muthe Collection, which Mrs. Charles Montague Cooke bought most of for the Academy of Arts, and there was pottery and porcelain, et cetera. The academy also has a collection of Caroline Haskins Gurrey's photographs--an International Collection which contains a group of Hawaiians from Kamehameha Schools, along with their genealogy. Dick Gurrey is Caroline's son. Because Mr. Gurrey was more interested in art than money, he sold out and that was when Mrs. Cooke bought most of the Oriental items and when Fong Inn Store got the idea of taking over the antique dealership in town. Gurrey's was located opposite Benson Smith's [drug store], which later was to become Woolworth's, and Detor's Jewelers was on the other corner. Fong Inn's was almost a fairyland of Oriental stuff and touristy junk. I think they got the idea from Gurrey's Ltd. that Oriental antiques and art would sell in Honolulu."

Historical data:

Miss Fraser was present at the annexation ceremony on August 12, 1898 and remembers that a number of her mother's Hawaiian friends were in the audience with them. As an American whose parents had come from the Mainland, she was excited about belonging to the United States, but when she heard the "soft wailing" of Hawaiians as the Hawaiian flag was lowered,

she too "was overcome by the lowering of the Hawaiian flag" and tears came to her eyes. (she was audibly moved while telling about this, close to tears) She describes the event as "touching and dramatic, almost theatrical."

On the first day of the Royalist Revolution of 1895 [January 7th], Miss Fraser recalls that as a youngster of nearly eight years of age she "knew there was tension" because her mother wasn't teaching that day. Then, when she was saying goodbye to her father, she saw that he was taking his gun to work and thought that was strange. She and her brother Dexter wanted to go out to play but her mother wouldn't let them, explaining that "the Hawaiians were up in the hills and might throw shells on [or shell] the town." Thinking this meant sea shells or land shells, she thought, "How wonderful that would be and how nice if I could catch one." She had always wanted one of those beautiful clam shells like Jessie Shaw Fisher had under a leaky faucet to serve as a bird bath.

The Fraser family was living "at the Bicknell place on Kukui Street [30 Kukui Street]" on January 20, 1900 when a fire was set by the Board of Health to raze some buildings in Chinatown where Bubonic plague was widespread. The fire got out of control and destroyed thirty-eight acres in the area but stopped short of their home which was located between Nuuanu and Fort streets.

"Waikiki has changed more than any part of town. When I returned from Greece, I had to go to Manoa to see Diamond Head. Going to Waikiki was a treat in my youth. My mother didn't much care for the beach but Mrs. Shaw did and she used to take us to the beach and teach us different strokes. There was a heavy woman, a Mrs. Turner whose husband had something to do with hotels, who would walk on the beach. The youngster would sing, 'Fat belly, fat belly, won't you have a swim? Yes, by golly, when the tide comes in.' My mother, hearing me, forbade me to ever sing it again. There were few swimmers then and a wide expanse of beach. The Halekulani [Hotel] didn't have so many buildings on its grounds as it does now."

"I remember when fire engines were horsedrawn and the firemen groomed the horses constantly. The horses were big, beautiful, and swift."

On the morning of December 7, 1941, Miss Fraser and Mrs. Rosalind, the niece of Charles W. Bartlett, had gone to visit Mrs. Bartlett in her Woodlawn home. She had been ill for some time and was in a coma, so the nurse said they couldn't see her. Mr. Bartlett was the artist who painted the portrait of Mrs. Charles Montague Cooke that hangs in the Academy of Arts and both she and Jessie Shaw Fisher knew the Bartletts. On

her way home from Woodlawn, she saw planes in the air and thought they were going through the usual maneuvers but thought it strange that they were bombing. When she got home and was unable to find her Sunday newspaper, she went next door to the home of Dr. William Frye, a minister, to ask if they had received their paper. Their radio was on and the announcer was saying that the attack was real. That was how she first learned of the Pearl Harbor attack which she had observed.

"During the war, I first worked on camouflaging and was head of the paint division, mixing dyes in fifty gallon drums, which developed my muscles. George Moody was the head of camouflage and Tommy Thompson headed our group of workers--the dyers, net makers, weavers, et cetera. I had worked with George Moody at Gump's and he had the Grossman-Moody store which dealt in antiques. [Now Grossman-Moody Jewelers] We called our place the 'Camouflage Factory' and we were located on the Kamehameha Schools grounds [or Fort Shafter]. This was where the lei makers put their talent to work. They had good color sense and knew sections of the island so they could help determine the colors to use for camouflaging for different areas: gray-black-white for beach areas; mixed greens for hills, matching the color of kukui trees or trees indigenous to the area; red dirt color for Wahiawa, et cetera.

"There were ten basic colors. Material was dipped into dyes in bathtubs, then stacked in wheel barrows and rolled out to the lei women. They did the weaving of strips into nets at first, but these were not fire proof so chicken wire was later used. The strips were made by Hawaiians and Filipinos, mostly, who used two types of knots. After these were woven, they were bundled loosely and stored for use when needed.

"Among the lei makers was Agnes Makaiwi, president of the Lei Makers Association, who was a wonderful person. Among the workers was Madam Zurhelle, a baroness who married a German baron and dumped him and who was a hapa-haole chiefess. She worked with me in the paint division even though she was allergic to turpentine, and the Hawaiian 'commoners' who worked with us acknowledged her chiefess right to do as she wished. Juanita Vitousek knew the baroness. Keelii (phonetic), an old-fashioned Hawaiian and Kawaihāo Church member, was among the workers also. We celebrated people's birthdays and on my birthday they collected fifty-five dollars and one poor woman came up to me and gave me a quarter. I had installed a mirror they needed in a washroom for them.

"Up to December 7, 1941 there were few Negroes in Hawaii. Then there was a regiment of them here. On their first encounter with them, the Hawaiians remarked on how black they were, not realizing that many of them had become darkened by the sun. [On the Mainland, Negroes were heard to say they were Royal Hawaiians.]

"When the Camouflage Factory was closed because our work

was completed, [mid-1943], I went to work for two or three years at the craft shop at Aiea Hospital where I did occupational therapy. I taught the boys [injured servicemen] leather work, although I had never worked with leather before. I just used common sense. I used to design monograms for the boys who wanted something fancy and made the designs Gothic."

Landmarks:

"On Nuuanu Street on the way to the Pali was an estate--possibly the Waterhouse estate--which had stone pillar gateposts similar to those around Iolani Palace and a wrought iron fence with spear tops that would make climbing over them uncomfortable. People would stop at the gate to gain entry by contact with someone in the house. In the large yard were a number of stone animals. I remember looking through the fence and seeing a stalking lion, life-size and of an Italian style sculpture, and a pair of Oriental dogs that might have been Fong dogs. The animals are no longer there." [There is a description of the old Waterhouse home on Nuuanu Street, where "iron animals stood guard," in an article in the Star-Bulletin for January 13, 1934.]

Hawaiian legend told by Mrs. Martha K. Hohu:

"Mrs. Hohu told me a story about a haole teacher at Kamehameha Schools who had an old Model T Ford which she was driving one night. The woman said, 'I never kill my engine,' yet that night, suddenly, her engine died. She saw a white dog in the road. Mrs. Hohu said that the dog was Pa'e and had saved the woman from crossing in front of the 'Night Marchers'--warrior ghosts that march on the Night of Kane, god of light--for to cross their path while they are marching may cost the person her life. This also happened to a man who was driving at night on the Night of Kane, a certain date of the Hawaiian calendar. You know, Hawaiian legends live even today."

Travel:

"I have been around the world about four times. When I went to Greece, I was on my way around the world but I was delayed by the Vavyli chapel project, then I went on and returned. Greece is like a second home to me--another homeland. I learned so much there. The Greek technique is 'murals in miniature' because of the small space they are painted in. The Italian technique is large and sprawling, in keeping with the size of buildings. On one of my tours around the world, in a small, one-horse town in Italy, I wrote my address as Territory of Hawaii on the hotel register. The inn keeper had to remind me that Hawaii was no longer a territory but a state."

Nina Lee Dexter Fraser:

"My mother taught at Kaiulani School and was principal when my brother Dexter and I were about six and ten years old. [The school opened in April 1899] We lived next door to the school [located at 783 North King Street] and Palama at that time was residential. The residents were mixed nationalities but there were more Hawaiians living there than at Makiki, which was an open plain then. My mother died just before Pearl Harbor, about October 1941. She liked the Japanese and wondered what they were up to but didn't live to find out."

Jessie Shaw Fisher:

"Jessie and I both attended Punahou [School] and took the same courses. We were the same age and were best friends through our teens and graduated from Punahou. We were always drawing as youngsters. Jessie had two sisters--Margaret who now lives in Cleveland, Ohio and Ruth who died long ago. Jessie has written several books, illustrated with pen and ink drawings, and worked in the same medium as I did. We both took the oil painting course from Frederic Taubes but Jessie used watercolor techniques in oil painting and it doesn't work. She was sort of a dreamer and probably had pictorial dreams, but when she worked, she worked intensively."

Edited and typed by Katherine B. Allen, interviewer, 1980

Information from a plaque on the old Mission grounds regarding the Armstrong pew, the last remnant of the Armstrong house mentioned by Miss Fraser on page one:

Coral forming bench from old "Stone House," home of Reverend Richard Armstrong (Fifth Company) "once located on Beretania Street just ewa of Washington Place."

House built in 1846 for the Reverend William Richards (Minister of Public Instruction), after whose death Armstrong became Minister of Public Instruction and bought the house which was named "Stone House," in honor of Admiral Thomas after the admiral's ancestral home in England.

"After it was sold in 1881, Punahou School owned and used it for preparatory grades. In 1905 it was bought by the Episcopal church [St. Andrew's]. Iolani School was established and flourished there until 1927." Despite efforts to preserve the landmark, it was demolished in August of 1931. The "pew" is all that remains of the old "Stone House."

INFORMATION FROM CITY DIRECTORIES: Fraser is spelled Frasher:

1888: Frasher, Chas. E. - mgr. Hollister & Co. Soda Works,
res. 32 King

1890: Frasher, Chas. E. - laborer - res. King

Frazier, Chas. - driver Hollister & Co.
res. 33 King, Palama

1892-93: Frasher, Chas. E. - clerk Crystal Soda Works
res. Beretania nr Piikoi

1896-97: Frasher, C. E. - bookkeeper, Consol. Soda Wks. Co.
res. Kukui nr Fort

Frasher, Mrs. NLD, teacher Kauluwela Sch.
res. Kukui nr Fort

1899: Frasher, Chas. E. - bookkeeper, Con. S. W. Works Co.
res. 30 Kukui

Frasher, Nina L. Miss - teacher Fort St. School
(cor. Fort and School)
res. 30 Kukui

Bicknell, Ellen M. Mrs., widow - 32 Kukui
George, James, Robert D. - 32 Kukui

King, Thos. J. - driver City Carriage No. 3, cor. Fort
& Hotel. res. Nuuanu nr Kukui

1900-01: Frasher, Chas. E. - bookkeeper Co. S W Works Co.
res. Kukui nr Fort

Frasher, Nina L. D. Mrs., prin. Kaiulani School
res. King nr Victoria

First listing of Kaiulani School in directory, with
Mrs. Frasher as principal, but no address is listed.
1902: King nr. Robello Lane.

1915: Frasher, Chas. E. - v-Pres. and mgr. Hon. Soda Water Co.
res. Bellair tract, Kalihi-uka

1919: Fraser, Juliette May - artist
res. 1804 College

REFERENCES IN ARCHIVES OF HAWAII:

1. The Friend, Feb. 1901, p. 17, col. 3:
T. J. Dexter died Woodland, Cal. 1/9/1901 at 70.
Father, Mrs. C. E. Frasher, Hono.
2. Advertiser, Aug. 6, 1938, p. 1, col. 6: J. May Fraser:
Kamaaina artist. Commissioned to prepare great mural,
50' x 9' Hawaii Fair Exhibits.
3. Paradise of the Pacific, Feb. 1945, p. 14:
Juliette May Fraser, Honolulu artist.
Lorna Arlen - Biog. sketch.
4. ibid, Dec. 1952, p. 30:
Ke Anuenuue; review of book by Juliette May Fraser. Illus.
". . .a portfolio of prints. . .arranged in pairs, they
show contrasting scenes from Hawaii's vivid present and
her legendary past. One pair, for instance, consists of
heroes of today and yesterday." There are 20 subjects.
5. Hist. & Misc. May 1935: J. M. Fraser
Artist of murals in Edna Room, Lib. of Hawaii.
6. Star-Bulletin, Jan. 7, 1939, p. 1, c. 6.
"Mural of Old Hawaii Ready for S. F. Fair."
Description and cut.
7. Publ. Instruction (Misc.) 4/1/1909:
To: Mrs. Nina L. D. Fraser from Supt. of Pub. Instr.
"Term of service in the employ of the Bd. of Educ.
Sept. 1893 to Mar. 1909."
8. Mrs. Charles Francis Adams (Eliz. Mitchell)
Charles Francis Adams (Sec. of Navy, U.S.A.)
Children: Louise Olga Gaylord Dillingham
Henry H. Gaylord

REFERENCES IN ARCHIVES OF HAWAII:

Private Collections File: M-47: Chas. E. Frasher (1855-1924)

Hon. disch. from Co. B., First reg., Nat'l. Guard of
Haw., Republic (1894-1898), also one discharge for 1899,
T. of H.

1855 - b. San Jose, Cal.

1888 - 1918 - Clerk, bookkeeper, sec'ty, manager, vice-
pres. of various soda water companies; Hollis-
ter & Co. Soda Works; Crystal Soda Works; Con-
solidated Soda Works; Arctic Soda Works; Hon.
Soda Water Co., Ltd.; O.K. Distilled Soda Water
Co., Ltd.; Liquid Sunshine Soda Shop.

1894 - 1898 Mem. nat'l. guard of Rep.

1898 - 1899 Mem. nat'l. guard, T of H

1921 - Clerk, Honolulu Advertiser

1922 - Collector, Honolulu Advertiser

11/27/24 - Died, Hono. 947 - 4th Ave.

Juliette May Fraser
(Events by Decades in Her Life)

1880's

- 1/27/87 - Born in Honolulu
1888 residence: 32 King Street

1890's

- 1890 residence: 33 King Street
1894 - Entered Punahou Preparatory School
1/7/95 - Experienced the Royalist revolution against the Reformers.
8/12/98 - Observed the annexation ceremony at which the Hawaiian flag was lowered and the United States flag was raised over the executive building (Iolani Palace).
4/1899 - Mother, Nina Lee Dexter Fraser (aka: Frasher), becomes principal of the new Kaiulani School, 783 North King Street, between Austin and Robello lanes, after teaching at Kauluwela and Fort Street schools since 1893. (Honolulu Advertiser, 4/24/1899, reports the opening of Kaiulani School.)

1900's

- 1/9/1900 - Maternal grandfather, T. J. Dexter, died in Woodland, California at the age of seventy.
1/20/1900 - Lived at the Bicknell place, 30 Kukui Street, between Nuuanu and Fort streets, and saw the Bubonic plague fire, set by the Board of Health to raze plagued buildings, get out of control and destroy 38 acres of Chinatown. The fire stopped at Nuuanu Street, short of the Fraser home.
1901 - Graduated from Punahou Preparatory School (elementary) to Punahou Academy.
1901 residence: King Street near Victoria Street (Nina L. D. Fraser's address)
1900-01 ? - Charles Edward Fraser and Nina Lee Fraser divorced.
1905 - Graduated from Punahou Academy where she studied art with D. Howard Hitchcock.

- 1905 - Entered Wellesley College in Massachusetts.
- 1909 - Received B.A. from Wellesley where she studied architectural art and art history and majored in Latin and Greek.
- 1909-10 - Taught and headed Latin department for one year at McKinley High School, which evolved from the Fort Street English Day School (1865) and the Honolulu High School.

1910's

- 1910 residence: 1804 College (Nina L. D. Fraser)
- 1910-11 - Taught English, medieval and modern history, and Latin for a year at Punahou School (then Oahu College). Saved enough to attend art school, with the additional financial help of her mother.
- 1911-14 - Attended Art Students League of New York and studied with Frank Vincent Dumond and Eugene Speicher. Attended Woodstock New York summer school and studied with John Carlson.
- 1914-22 (?) - Employed at Gurrey's Ltd., 1066 Fort Street, an art and antique shop operated by Alfred Gurrey. Painted on weekends.

1920's

- 1920 residence: 1804 College (Nina L. D. Fraser)
- 1923 - Painted "Golden Shower Tree," an oil commissioned by Miss Ethelwyn Castle.
- 1924 - Painted "Hawaiian Legend of the Arrow and the Swing," an oil on masonite commissioned by Miss Ethelwyn Castle.
- 1925 or 1928 (?) - Received her first mural commission through Sue McIntosh, decorator: painted exterior and interior murals for Mrs. Charles F. Adams's Peninsula home at Pearl Harbor.
- 1929-34 (?) - Employed at Gump's in Waikiki, painting floral screens which she signed I. M. Meibe. (Honolulu Advertiser, 7/18/1979)

1930's

- 1930 residence: 2733 Terrace Drive (Nina L. D. Fraser)
- 6/1931 - Nina L. D. Fraser retired as principal of Kaiulani School after thirty-two years in that position.
- 1932 - Illustrations of Hawaiian Legends published, Paris.

- 1934-35 - Painted murals, depicting Hawaiian legends written by Padraic Colum, in Edna Allyn children's room of Hawaii State Library. (WPA Arts Project)
- 1938-39 - Drew frieze mural in the lobby of Hawaii's building in the Golden Gate International Exposition, San Francisco (2/18 to 10/29, 1939).
- 8/6/38 - Advertiser article about JMF being commissioned to prepare a 50' X 9' mural, "Makahiki," for Hawaii Fair exhibit.
- 1/7/39 - Article in Star-Bulletin: JMF's mural of old Hawaii is ready for the San Francisco Fair.
- 10/1/39 - Nina Lee Dexter Fraser died.

1940's

- 1940 residence: 2733 Terrace Drive
studio: 2740 Hillside Avenue
- 12/7/41 - Observed attack on Pearl Harbor while enroute home from the Charles W. Bartlett home, Woodlawn, Honolulu.
- 1941-43 - Headed Paint Division of Camouflage Factory under the supervision of Tommy Thompson and over-all director, George Moody.
- 1943-45 - Helped with occupational therapy (leather craft) at Aiea Hospital.
- 2/1945 - Biographical sketch of JMF, by Lorna Arlen, appeared in Paradise of the Pacific.

1950's

- 3/28/52 - Star-Bulletin article: Dexter Fraser (JMF's brother), known as "Blue," will retire as manager of the Hawaiian Pine's Lanai plant on July 1, 1952 after thirty-six years in the industry.
- 1952 - Ke Anuenu (The Rainbow), a collection of ten pairs of ancient-modern prints by JMF, published by the University of Hawaii Press, was selected by the American Institute of Graphic Arts as one of the "50 Best Books of 1952."
- 12/52 - A review of Ke Anuenu appeared in Paradise of the Pacific.
- 1952-53 - Paints fresco mural, "Air; The Breath of Life," Bilger Hall, University of Hawaii.
- 1953 - Paints fresco panel, "Birds' View of St. Francis," Hawaii Loa College.

- 1953 - Assisted Jean Charlot in the painting of a fresco mural in Bishop National Bank's Waikiki office.
- 1954 - Painted mural, "Hawaiian Nativity," in Saint Catherine's Church, Kauai.
- 1955 - Visited the studio of William Franklin Draper, portrait painter, in New York.
- 5/1958 - Painted fresco mural, depicting the development and usage of water, for the new Board of Water Supply building.
- 9/1958 - Frederic Taubes's article about JMF from an artist's point of view appears in American Artists.
- 1959 - Created a ninety-foot mosaic mural for the Joseph I. Bakken Hall at Mid-Pacific Institute. Traveled to Cremona, Italy for tesserae for this mosaic and to study technique.

1960's

- 1960 residence: 2740 Hillside Avenue, Manoa (1950 also)
- 2/21/60 - Article about JMF's accomplishments appeared in the Advertiser's supplement.
- 10/1960 - Held a one-man show at The Gallery in the Hawaiian Village Hotel.
- 1962-63 - Painted fresco mural for Ipapandi Chapel, Vavyli Village, Island of Chios, Greece with David G. Asherman. Villagers named a street, May Fraser Street, in her honor.
- 8/31/64 - Left on a six-month world trip as an artist-ambassador after exhibiting her work at Loring Gallery in August.
- 11/1964 - At the invitation of the Greek Society of Architects, JMF exhibited her work in Athens.
- 1966 - Assisted Jean Charlot in the painting of a fresco mural for the new First Hawaiian Bank in Waikiki at Lewers Street and Kalakaua Avenue.
- 1966 - Painted "Prometheus Bound," an oil, inspired by a scenic experience enroute to Delphi, Greece.
- 1969 - Painted "Behold Hawaii," a fresco mural in the American Savings and Loan, Kapiolani Branch. On January 27, her birthday was celebrated here while she was at work.

1970's

- 1970 residence: 2740 Hillside Avenue, Manoa
- 1/27/70 - Honored by her friends with a surprise birthday party while finishing a print on a hand-operated press in the University of Hawaii printmaking shop at King Street and University Avenue.
- 1970-71 - Painted "Iolani Palace Ball" fresco mural for the lobby of the Ala Moana Hotel.
- 1972 - Executed a ceramic tile mural, commissioned by the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts, at the Benjamin Parker Elementary School, Kaneohe.
- 1972 - Painted a fresco mural depicting Chinese contributions to Hawaii in the penthouse residence of Charles K. C. and Winona Chang, Honolulu.
- 1974 - Created "Hawaiian Vowels" stitchery.
- 1/27/77 - Received a birthday gift of \$6,400 for a trip around the world to see murals.
An editorial tribute to JMF appeared in the Star-Bulletin.
- 1/1978 Received the Order of Distinction for Cultural Leadership award from Governor George R. Ariyoshi.
- 1978 - Traveled around the world with David G. Asherman for five and a half months as Hawaii's first Cultural Ambassador-at-Large.
- 7/19/79 - William F. Draper's oil portrait of JMF, commissioned for the East-West Center by the Hawaii State Foundation on Culture and the Arts, was unveiled at the East-West Center's John A. Burns Hall.
An exhibition of twenty-five of JMF's work, spanning more than half a century, was held from July 19 to August 3.
- 1979 - JMF's work in process:
An Illustrated Report to the Governor on her trip as Cultural Ambassador.
Fresco panels on Captain Cook for the residence of Mr. and Mrs. David Watumull.
Fresco panels on the history of Lanai, commissioned by Castle and Cooke.

Murals for Maui's Correctional Facility, commissioned by the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts.

A ceramic tile mural for the new District Court when it is built, commissioned by the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts.

12/23/79 JMF's "Vision of Saint Nicholas" appeared in the Honolulu Star-Bulletin.

Note: Because May Fraser is a prolific artist and has been incredibly active during her ninety-three years of living, it is impossible to acknowledge all of her accomplishments, to list all of her works, and to record all of the events in her life.

It should be noted that she attended the California College of Arts and Crafts and the University of Hawaii. She studied painting with Joseph Albers, etching with Huc M. Luquiens, and mural painting with Jean Charlot. By 1960, she had illustrated at least five books on Hawaii; and in 1976, she was included in the book, Artists of Hawaii.

For many years she was an art critic for the Honolulu Star-Bulletin. She has been interviewed numerous times for various publications and has been televised on many occasions.

During a stopover in Athens, enroute from Chios to Hawaii in 1963, she was entertained by the United States Ambassador to Greece and Mrs. Henry La Bouisse. When she returned to Hawaii in August 1963, she was greeted by "a throng of friends" and by Duke Kahanamoku, representing Mayor Neal S. Blaisdell.

May Fraser is certainly one of the most popular and beloved artists in Hawaii, "an artist of great heart and talent."

Subject Index

- 1 - 2 History: Punahou Preparatory School
 Honolulu landmarks and districts
 Central Union Church; Schuman Carriage Company
- 2 - 3 Childhood friends and activities
- 3 - 8 Family history; genealogy; anecdotes
 Nina Lee Dexter Fraser; employment
 Charles Edward Fraser; employment
- 8 - 9 Downtown Honolulu residents, pre-1900
 Damons, Bicknells, Kings
 Anecdote: Payne's tramcars
- 9 - 10 The Shaw family and residence
 Sherman S. and Ruth Shaw Humphrey
 Thomas and Jessie Shaw Fisher
- 10 - 12 Dorothy True-Bell, decorator
 Education and teaching experiences
 Marion M. Scott; Arthur F. Griffiths
- 12 - 14 Art and art history background
 Wellesley College art courses, 1905-09
 D. Howard Hitchcock, artist and art teacher
 Art Students League, New York, 1911-14
 Teachers: Speicher, Dumond, Carlson
- 14 - 16 Eugene Speicher's lesson in color

- 16 - 17 Frederic Taubes' lessons in technique
- 17 - 18 "I felt mural; I thought construction"
Observations: Madge Tennent's art
Work with Jean Charlot and David Asherman
Fresco painting: steps, methods, styles
Comparison of Byzantine and Italian frescoes
- 18 - 20 Story of the Ipapandi Chapel fresco, Greece
Nea Moni glass mosaics, Chios Island, Greece
Sponsorship of a Greek student
- 20 - 22 Description of Ipapandi Chapel frescoes
The medieval convention in art
- 22 - 24 Greek-Hawaiian friendship formed by artists
Hawaii's gift to Vavyli Village, Chios
- 24 - 25 Perghi fresco painting: abstract designs
- 25 - 27 Details of the Ipapandi Chapel frescoes
- 27 - 30 Board of Water Supply mural, 1958:
Its construction, story, and meaning
- 30 - 31 San Francisco Fair mural, 1938-39
First fresco: "Air," 1953
- 31 - 33 First mural: Mrs. Charles Adams' home
Sue McIntosh, decorator
- 33 - 34 Explanation of "The Family" sketch

- 34 - 38 Mosaic mural: Mid-Pacific Institute, 1959
Its construction, story, and meaning
Experiences in Cremona, Italy
Problems involved with mosaic
- 38 - 39 Murals: Hawaii State Library, 1934-35
Artistic problem-solving
- 39 - 40 Planning a 'functioning' mural:
Preliminary considerations
- 40 - 41 The artist discusses her art:
Development, construction, symbolism
- 41 - 42 Jean Charlot's ceramic sculpture: "Alii Nui"
Compared with Marisol's "Damien"
- 42 - 43 Oil painting: "Prometheus Bound," circa 1966
Story of its conception in Greece
- 43 - 44 Frederic Taubes's article in American Artists
Painting frescoes with Jean Charlot
Comparison of individual and group art
Importance of fresco cartoons
- 44 - 46 The artist's attitude toward her work
Comparison of decorative and functioning murals
- 46 - 47 Use of cartoons to scale murals
- 47 - 48 "Davy Jones's Locker" theme: Adams' murals

- 48 - 49 Mural: "Hawaiian Nativity," 1954:
St. Catherine's Church, Kauai
Jean Charlot; Tseng Yu-Ho Ecke
Story and meaning of "Air": "Breath of Life"
- 49 - 50 The artist's Byzantine Period:
Painting: "Child With a Sword," circa 1967
Sale of Adams' peninsula home to the navy
- 51 - 52 Post-Interview narrative data:
Art and artists
- 52 - 55 Historical data
Annexation ceremony, 1898
Revolution of 1895
Chinatown fire, 1900
Waikiki: past and present
World War II, 1941 - 45
- 55 - 56 Landmarks; Hawaiian legend; travel
Nina Lee Dexter Fraser
Jessie Cunningham Shaw Fisher
- 57 Punahou Preparatory School: Armstrong House
- 58 Data from City Directories
- 59 - 60 References to the artist in State Archives
- 61 - 66 Events by decades in the artist's life

THE WATUMULL FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

In May 1971, the Watumull Foundation initiated an Oral History Project.

The project was formally begun on June 24, 1971 when Katherine B. Allen was selected to interview kamaainas and longtime residents of Hawaii in order to preserve their experiences and knowledge. In July, Lynda Mair joined the staff as an interviewer.

During the next seventeen months, eighty-eight persons were interviewed. Most of these taped oral histories were transcribed by November 30, 1972.

Then the project was suspended indefinitely due to the retirement of the foundation's chairman, Ellen Jensen Watumull.

In February 1979, the project was reactivated and Miss Allen was recalled as director and editor.

Three sets of the final transcripts, typed on acid-free Permalife Bond paper, have been deposited respectively in the Archives of Hawaii, the Hamilton Library at the University of Hawaii, and the Cooke Library at Punahou School.