CONRAD BUFF:

ARTIST

Completed under the auspices
of the
Oral History Program

University of California
Los Angeles
1968

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INTRODUCTION

Conrad Buff, artist, was born in Speicher, Switzerland on January 15, 1886, the son of Conrad and Anna (Bruderer) Buff. His boyhood was spent in Speicher in his early years, and later in Turgau, where the family moved when Buff was nine years old; there his father operated a general store.

At the age of fourteen, Buff was apprenticed to his uncle, a baker and confectioner. However, his growing interest in drawing led him to St. Gallen, where he became a student in the School for Arts and Crafts from 1900 to 1903, studying embroidery design. In 1903, convinced that his future did not lie in a career in the lace industry of his country, he went to Munich to study painting in a private art school. Shortly thereafter he determined to emigrate to the United States.

Thus in 1905, at the age of nineteen, Buff arrived in America. The following narrative, which is a transcript of tape-recorded interviews made by the artist with the UCLA Oral History Program, describes in some detail the many jobs he undertook to support himself as he worked his way westward, learning English, adapting to the ways of a new country, and always devoting himself to his goal of drawing and painting.

Eventually, Buff arrived in California and established a studio in Eagle Rock. In the manuscript, he describes the gradual development of his career in the Los Angeles area, as a student, becoming involved with local artists and the art world, and eventually achieving recognition as a muralist and landscape painter of the Southwest.

In 1922, Buff married Mary Marsh, who was then assistant art curator at the Los Angeles County Museum. Mrs. Buff was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on April 10, 1890; she too was a student of art, studying painting at Bethany College, Kansas, the University of Oklahoma, and the Academy of Fine Arts in Chicago, and holding various positions as instructor, curator and critic in the art world.

Together the Buffs have become widely known for their collaboration on books for young people, Mrs. Buff writing the texts and Buff illustrating them in various media: color lithography, pen and ink, pencil, and tempera and oil paintings. Mrs. Buff participated in the interviews in describing this aspect of their careers. A list of their books is included at the end of the introduction.

Buff has become particularly known for his landscape paintings of the Southwest, an area in which he has traveled widely. His work reflects his feeling for the architectural forms in nature, his strong sense of design, and his love of color and light. He does not think of himself as a modernist, an abstractionist, or an academician but, in his own words, he "remains aloof from art styles and true to a personal vision of the world."

Buff's work has been shown in many exhibits throughout the Los Angeles area. Among his awards are the following: First prize, California State Fair, 1924; Huntington Prize, Los Angeles County Museum, 1925; Fine Arts Award, San Diego

Museum, 1925; First honorable mention, Third International Exhibition of Lithography, Chicago, 1931; Second prize, Los Angeles Print Group, 1934; Purchase prize for painting "Westward," Los Angeles County Museum, 1937; Award, Los Angeles County Fair, 1939; Second prize in oils, Ebell Club of Los Angeles, 1943; Purchase award, Sant Paula Art Exhibit, 1944; Second award in painting, Los Angeles Municipal Exhibition, 1948.

Museums which hold paintings or lithographs by Buff include the following: Boston Museum of Fine Arts; British Museum; Chicago Art Institute; Cleveland Museum of Art; Delgado Museum of Art, New Orleans; Detroit Museum of Art; Los Angeles County Museum; Los Angeles Public Library; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; National Art Gallery, Washington, D.C.; Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco; San Diego Museum of Art.

Murals by Buff are in the Edison Building, Los Angeles; Guarantee Building and Loan Offices; Huntington Park Church, L. D.S.; Medical Library, County Medical Association Building; National Bank, Phoenix; Santa Monica High School; U.S. Post Office, Manteca, California; and the William Penn Hotel, Whittier, California.

Negatives of many of Buff's paintings have been donated by the artist to the UCLA Library and are housed in the Department of Special Collections. Records relating to the interviews are in the Oral History Program.

BOOKS BY CONRAD AND MARY BUFF

The Apple and the Arrow. Houghton Mifflin, 1951.

Newberry Runner-up, 1951; Distinguished Books of 1951, Children's Library Association.

Big Tree. Viking, 1946.

Junior Literary Guild Selection. Newberry Runner-up. Commonwealth Club Award. American Institute of Graphic Arts Award.

The Colorado: River of Mystery. Ward Ritchie Press, 1968.

Dancing Cloud: A Navajo Boy. Viking, 1936. New edition, 1957.

Junior Literary Guild Selection.

Dash and Dart. Viking, 1942.

Caldecott Runner-up, 1942.

Elf Owl. Viking, 1958.

Junior Literary Guild Selection.

Forest Folk. Viking, 1962.

Junior Literary Guild Selection.

Hah-Nee of the Cliff Dwellers. Houghton Mifflin, 1956.

Hurry Scurry and Flurry. Viking, 1954.

Kemi: An Indian Boy before the White Man Came. Ward Ritchie Press, 1966.

Award for juvenile literature, Friends of the Library, University of California, Irvine, 1967.

Kobi, A Boy of Switzerland. 1939.

Magic Maize. Houghton Mifflin, 1953. New edition, 1967.

Newberry Medal Runner-up, 1953. Book of year, American Institute of Graphic Arts.

Peter's Pinto. Viking, 1949.

Junior Literary Guild Selection. Boys Club of America Award.

Trix and Vix. Houghton Mifflin, 1960.

INTERVIEW HISTORY

INTERVIEWER: Elizabeth I. Dixon, Oral History Program, UCLA. Age, 48. B.A., International Relations, USC; M.L.S., Library Service, UCLA.

TIME AND SETTING OF INTERVIEW:

Place: At the Buffs' home, 77 Patrician Way, Pasadena, California.

Dates: At intervals, beginning on June 2, 1964 and ending on September 16, 1964.

Length of sessions and total number of recording hours: With the exception of the first session, in which two hours were spent in actual recording, each session produced one hour of recorded tape. The manuscript represents a total of ten hours of recording time.

Persons present during interview: Buff and Dixon; occasionally Mrs. Buff joined the sessions mainly in those portions relating to her work.

CONDUCT OF INTERVIEW: The interviewer encouraged Mr. Buff to talk freely in narrative style, following his career chronologically and asking occasional questions.

EDITING: Editor, Adelaide Tusler, Oral History Program, UCLA. M.L.S., Library Service, UCLA.

In 1965, a verbatim transcription of the tapes was made. In 1968, the editor completed an audit-edit of this manuscript, introducing punctuation, emending syntax very slightly, and verifying name spellings. The material is presented in the order in which it was recorded, and faithfully reflects the interview itself.

Mr. and Mrs. Buff reviewed and approved the edited manuscript, from which this final version was typed. They made only minor changes in words and phrases.

The index was prepared by Jack Vaughn.

TAPE NUMBER: I, SIDE ONE

In the extreme northeast part of Switzerland there is a canton called Appenzell, and the people there are of a distinctly different racial origin than in the rest of Switzerland. My cousin, who is a historian, tells me that he thought they immigrated from the Adriatic coast, maybe in the pre-Roman days, or they might have even been descendants of the Huns and might have traveled into Switzerland into the high forest lands. In those days, everything was of course covered with pine forests, and they must have had hard times at first, raising enough crops and cattle to make a living.

But it went on until the Reformation came and the country was split in two, in part Catholic and part Protestant. Now the people that inhabited the Protestant part are rather practical people. The whole people are short in stature, something like the Japanese. The Protestants are, as I said, practical business people, and at the same time they had sort of a strange stubbornness about them and a sense of humor that's quite known all over Switzerland. All the jokes in Switzerland pertain to the people of Appenzell because they are so different than the rest of the population.

The people who are Catholics live in the higher

mountains, and they're of a slightly different temperament. They're happy-go-lucky. They're the friendliest people in the world. When you go into a store there, everybody welcomes you, not because you're going to spend money, but because they like people. They like to sing, and they're not very practical. They have in many ways a bad reputation for being slovenly and life-loving, but they manage to get along and they always have jokes about each other.

For instance, one of the jokes: one man from the Protestant town went over into the high country, the Catholic part, and he saw a laundry line before a house. The woman was hanging up the laundry and he thought it was rather dirty laundry, and he said to the woman, "Isn't it wonderful when you go traveling--you always learn something new!"

She said, "What did you learn?"

He said, "I learned that you can hang out laundry before you wash it."

That was one of the jokes.

But these Catholic people love to dance. Sometimes they'd dance way into the morning and they'd get pretty rough. A friend of ours who has come over, a woman, Trudi Schoop--you have heard of Trudi Schoop? Well, she lived up there in Appenzell sometimes (I think she was teaching in the Pestalozzi village), and she said that she attended some dances there that were the

roughest things that she had ever seen. They were wilder than the dances in the Congo. And that's going pretty strong.

But the country is really beautiful--from my village, which lies very close to the city of Saint Gall, only about three or four miles away. But the civilization is entirely different. From Saint Gall, you move uphill for about an hour and then you have the most magnificent view of the country toward Germany, Lake Konstanz and the lower part of the canton of Thurgau and Saint Gall. To the east you see the mountains of Vorarlberg, and to the west, the southwest, the mountains of Switzerland, the high snow-covered mountains. The villages are on hills, and from one hill you can see five different villages on different hills, a deep canyon in between. On a clear day you can hear the church bells from the villages, and they do have church bells. They have better church bells in that part of Switzerland than any place else I've seen in Europe.

Dixon: Why?

Buff: I don't know. They just took a pride in it. They're a musical people, not in the sense of classic music, but in the sense of folk music, and I think that they always like the sound of bells. Now in Italy, the bells are miserable. You just hear "bang, bang, bang." But here you usually have five bells--the biggest one weighs about five tons. It takes two men to ring it. It's called the "male" bell. Then comes the "female" bell which is

slightly smaller; then come the "boy and girl" bells which are slightly smaller, and then the two "baby" bells. They're all tuned to a chord, I-III-V usually. All these villages have these same number of bells, and it's really beautiful on a clear day. It no doubt helped me form my general impression of life.

I used to go up there and look over Lake Konstanz and wonder what country was down below. My father would tell me that there was a wonderful country down there where they could grow wheat and grapes. Up in our part we could only grow apples and pears and grass, nothing in the gardens to speak of. All the vegetables had to come from down in the Rhine Valley below. So I always wanted to go down to the low country to see. My father was down there once, and he brought an ear of wheat that I thought was the most wonderful thing I had ever seen, that grass could grow that big. One day I was allowed to visit some friends of my father during school vacation down in the lowlands--I could spend two weeks there on the farm, and that was one of the most wonderful experiences I had in my life. But I'm jumping ahead of the whole thing there.

In the middle of the last century, there lived in one of the valleys a roofer with his family. He had four sons and two girls. He died rather young and must have been very poor.

He died leaving his wife, four sons and two girls, and they were all rather neurotic. All the sons when they developed had great ideas, but they were most impractical. Now, for instance, one of them, the oldest one, had to be a shoemaker although he wanted to be a musician, but he had to be satisfied with being a shoemaker. He was rather neurotic and took to drink and had to be put in the insane asylum for a while because he couldn't get along with anybody. Then another one was a butcher. He was the most practical one and he became rich, but he wanted to be a musician in his younger years too. The third one became an embroiderer, running an embroidery machine. (Embroidery at that time was quite a way of making a living.) He was drinking heavily too, but he became a Methodist and stopped drinking and became quite prosperous. But he too had in his youth ideas of being something out of the ordinary.

But the fourth one, the youngest one, who by the way became my father, had quite a collection of musical instruments that I used to see showed he wanted to be a musician too. But he had to become an embroidery man too. He was rather handsome from a photograph that I've seen when he was about twenty-two. I don't know what became of the girls--I never met any of the girls and I never met the mother nor of course the father

and I don't know what became of those girls. It's a mystery there. Something went wrong and I don't know exactly what it was. But, anyway, that was the one side of the family.

Then on the other side, mother's family, there is a very practical storekeeper and industrialist. He became an agent for the weaving industry and the embroidery industry, and he ran a restaurant and he had a grocery store. My mother tells me that in the early days when he started his grocery store, people had to take all of the groceries on muleback from the city of Saint Gall; there were no streets. But anyway, he became quite wealthy. His wife died at the age of thirty-eight and then he married again. His second wife must have been quite a hard person. The family had three girls and so the second wife brought another girl in, and there was a lot of friction there. According to my mother, who was also a very practical person, she loved her father and she hated her stepmother, and she said that her stepmother would always feed her own daughter wonderfully and would be rather stingy to the other three girls.

So at the age of thirteen, not to be a burden on the family, she went to work in a factory. She said that they started at seven in the morning and worked until seven at night with a short time off for lunch--for a thirteen-year-old girl that's quite a thing, but

she was so overly conscientious that she didn't want to be a burden to her father. When her father died she was about nineteen (The stepdaughter died before; she became consumptive and died.), and these three daughters were left.

It was quite a different family, quite different in temperament. One was rather voluptuous and pleasure-loving and very nice. She took to religion too and was a very handsome woman; but my mother was the middle one and she was the most practical one. Everything tended to be "is it worthwhile?" and she was very strict in morals. And the youngest one was too young--when her father died, she was brought up by the stepmother. But that made my mother what she was, rather practical and rather hard in her moral concepts. The older sister made a faux pas and ran off with a man that she shouldn't, so my mother never forgave her all her life. She wouldn't have anything to do with her, even though this older sister was wonderful to me all her life. We were never allowed to go and see them. Just because of that. As good a woman as my mother was, that was one of the things that always irritated me. I didn't know about this thing until I was grown up and was told all about it.

Well, it happened that shortly after my mother's father died, my father began to woo mother and they were married. I never found out who my grandmother was.

I never met her. It happened that my mother never talked very much of father's family to me because they were all neurotic people and spendthrifts and she had no use for them, and so she just wouldn't let us have contact with them. I had hardly anything to do with my father's brothers. All I knew was that one was a drunkard and they had him in the insane asylum, and that the other was a butcher. The butcher was nice to us because usually around Christmas he brought us some sausages. That was as far as we were allowed to have contact with him.

I must have been about three years old when my father and my mother moved from their big house that they first had into a small house, and I remember the change of surroundings. The first house was in the middle of the village right next to the schoolhouse. But the second house was lower in the valley surrounded by green pastures. I must have been a rather rambunctious boy, because my mother was always in trouble with me. She said I was wild and I wouldn't mind, and she would promise me a spanking by the time father was through working. But my father always smiled. He was a really nice man. He was good-natured and liked loving, and he liked to go to the mountains. Usually on Saturday he would take a trip to the mountains. Climbing mountains in Switzerland is quite a sport. He would always bring home a bouquet of those national flowers of Switzerland, a tiny rhododendron--they're called the "rose of the

Alps." Alpenrosen. It awakened in me quite a love of mountains--I could always see these mountains, and I was always wondering how would it be there, and would I ever be able to gather some of those flowers?

I must have been about seven or eight years old, and one Saturday (On Saturday we didn't have school.) it was a beautiful day, and I looked at the mountains, and suddenly it came over me that I'd go up to them. I was barefoot, and without asking anybody I just started out. Well, at first the mountains are not so very high--they're a good deal like our steep hills here. But it was about an hour's trip and I was barefoot and I must have hurt my heel in some way--it started to ache. I didn't pay any attention to it. I could see these mountains in front of me, and I climbed up and climbed up and finally I came to a place where there was a bush of these rhododendrons growing and so I thought that I was there. I picked some of them and then began to think of going home. I was going to show my father that I had climbed a mountain and bring him the flowers, but on the way this heel began to get sore and a blister formed so I had to walk on the toes on one foot. The day got shorter and the sun began to set down and I was far from home. I was supposed to be home at curfew. Curfew always came just before dark, so I got scared that

I wasn't going to be able to make it, and the foot hurt me more and more, and so I sat down and began to cry. Then I said, "I can't get home this way," so I finally managed to get home by dark, and of course they were wondering what happened to the boy, where was I? When I got home my mother was ready to give me a good lashing and spanking, but when father saw the flowers and I told him where I was, he melted and didn't want to spank me at all, so he let things go with a talking-to. Well, that is one of my earlier adventures.

I also developed a rather bad streak: I began to steal. Not far from our house there was a grocery store, and they kept the windows open. The windows were about three feet above the ground, and to get the windows open was easy. Everything was very exposed inside the windows and there was hardly anybody around, and so I began to steal a pipe. Then there was a butcher shop and they had the same thing, had the windows open all the time, and there were the sausages hanging down, and I started to steal the sausage. I was never discovered, but I had a tremendous feeling that I was doing wrong. My father, had he discovered this, I would have gotten a real spanking. I got by with it and so the thing developed further and further. On the one hand I had this terrible conscience, the pangs of conscience, and on the other hand I had this urge to steal some more.

About when I was nine years old, my parents decided

to move, and they moved down in the lowlands. They took over a grocery store because my mother was used to working in my father's grocery store, so she felt that would be all right. My father never liked the embroidery work; it was tedious for him. He had better ideas. He wanted to be a merchant so he bought this grocery store, a general store in a rather smaller village. There I was a big shot because my parents were considered wealthy since they had the store. It was a farming community and nobody knew very much about anything, and we were the big shots in town. From then on I had a wonderful time.

By the way, I forgot to tell you--earlier I used to have to every Sunday (I would never be allowed to play with the boys because I always got in trouble with them) with my brother who was a year younger, follow our parents on a walk over the hills. We were never able to get very far away and so I resented that. I wanted to play rough with the boys, and my brother was a tittle-tattle and he would tell on me, and I was in trouble all the time. But here in the second home my parents kept store every day in the week and they didn't have time to watch over me, and I had the most wonderful time. I could play with the boys, I could do all kinds of things I shouldn't have done, and nobody paid much attention to me.

So I got to the point where I started to steal in the store. The cash drawer was always open--there was

no cash register, just a cash drawer, so I got the idea taking a little money out of that and then going to the butcher shop and buying a sausage with it. Then we had these candy jars where, when kids came to buy things, they always got a few pieces of candy. When the jar got low, I got permission to go up above where we had a great big box of candy to fill it with, and I pocketed candy up there. Then we had also a chamber where we kept the cigars, so I started to take cigars and divide them among the boys.

It turned out after a while that a neighbor girl complained to my parents about my smoking cigars with the boys. By that time of course my conscience could hardly stand it, it bothered me so much when I thought that my parents trusted me and I was just a common thief, and what a terrible boy I was, and when my father asked me if this was true, I said, "It's true." He took a rope and he unmercifully beat me up. I thought that he was right, he had a right to do that. But on the other hand I thought that he shouldn't have been quite so temperamental. If he had only told me that I had done the wrong thing, it would have hurt me just as much as the licking hurt me. But anyway, I never forgave me for that, and I never touched another nickel after that. It made such an impression on me that I completely turned around. So that much for the youthful bad habits.

The early teacher in our earlier home...I forgot to tell you about the school there. The first three grades, the second and third grades, were in a room by themselves, and the teacher was a nice enough fellow, but he must have been maybe forty-four or fifty, forty-five; he was also neurotic and he would delight in hitting us, and whenever possible he would say, if a child would talk to another child in the classroom, "Well, you get three." That would mean that you would get three beats on the way out. So almost every time I left school I had to hold out my hand and get these beats. I think many days I deserved it because I was rather naughty. Once, he sent me home because I did say something to a girl that wasn't very nice, and the girl complained and so he just let me go home. Well, I didn't go home; I sat out in the churchyard and worked until it was time to go home, so nobody would find out about it. But, anyway, it was a continuous being afraid of the teacher. He had this nasty temperament. He never said a nice word to anybody. He was always punishment, punishment.

But when we came to this new village where we had the store, we had an entirely different teacher, an idealist. He was about twenty-eight years old, and by the way, his name was Schoop, too, and he had a little girl by the name of Trudi Schoop. For a while, when I heard of Trudi Schoop, I thought that it was the same

Trudi Schoop, but it wasn't. She's too young for that. Anyway, this teacher was a very nice fellow and a very strict fellow. He had the European strictness and he believed in discipline first of all. But he took a great liking to me, and he thought that I had great talent to be a musician, so he offered to give me violin lessons. He did give me violin lessons for a long time, and he helped me in my drawing. I loved drawing already at that time, and he helped me along, and he thought that I was really going to be somebody. But I was always afraid of him. In a way, I loved him, and in a way, I was afraid of him. I could never warm up to him because he was so strict.

I know one day (my parents had a horse at that time and I think that I was about eleven years old) I was driving the horse and wagon to the city, which was about five miles away, to get groceries down there. They, for some reason, had to get groceries in a hurry, and they asked the teacher if he would allow me to come home in the afternoon and go to the city with the horse and get some groceries. He said yes, so I didn't show up in the afternoon because I thought that it was all settled.

When I came back, my father said, "Well, you didn't ask the teacher for permission to go, he's very mad at you."

I said, "Well, I'm sorry, I thought that it was

all settled."

And he said, "No. Go up there and apologize."

I thought that was very narrow of him, but still he had such a high opinion of me that in every way I was the star student, and there was a conflict again.

One day my brother and I had a little fight and I chased my brother around and the door slammed, and the door slamming caused the window to open and break a pane of glass. My mother was furious and said that now I would have to buy a new pane of glass, which was very expensive in those days. I had about a franc and a half, which would be a dollar and a half, saved up for the county fair, so I had to spend that all on the glass.

But the next year I had about a franc and a half for the county fair again--I must have been about twelve years old by that time, and I went to the county fair and was wondering how I should spend my money. I was going to buy something worthwhile--I wasn't going to buy a piece of junk. I came to the window of a music store, and there I saw all kinds of things. I saw a violin and I thought that I could buy a new violin. I went inside, and when I found out how much they cost, I couldn't even afford to buy a bow. I saw a baton, and it had silver endings--it was black ebony with silver endings, and that was a franc, so, for some reason, I got the idea that it was the thing for me,

and I bought this baton. I was very proud of myself for having spent the money on something worthwhile, and all I could do with the rest of the money was to buy a glass of cider and a piece of sausage.

I bought this baton home with great pride. After a while, father said, "That's all right, but what's it for? What are you going to do with it?" I couldn't do anything with it! So he said, "Let's keep it till Christmas and we'll give it to the teacher at Christmas." He directed the singing society. Well, that was another episode.

But my mother became very nervous and there were a lot of disagreements in the family, and it got so bad that she demanded that father sell the store. That was after the third year that they had the store, and they made quite a bit of money. My father didn't want to sell it, but she threatened that she would leave him if he didn't sell the store because she couldn't stand it. She was too sick.

So, he finally sold it and then he didn't know what to do. He tried to get a job as a salesman but didn't seem to have the necessary background. He got the idea of buying a farm and he talked it over with mother, but she didn't want a big farm--he wanted a big farm, and she was all for little things. She wanted a small farm, but she also thought it would be best if he had just three cows and in summertime he could work on the farm and in wintertime he could embroider.

Well, he didn't like that, but he didn't say much.

All of a sudden he came home with the idea that he bought a farm. He bought what was considered a fairly good-sized farm in Switzerland, maybe about sixteen acres, and about six cows. So, of course, the trouble started already there. He went to buy this farm and he considered, well--this was his money, because he made it at his store. Well, when he came to the farm he really didn't know anything about farming. He had idealistic ideas about improving the soil and he studied the journals about soil improvement and he had his own ideas; he didn't consult any of the other farmers in the village to find out what they were doing. He applied these ideas that he had from his old home where they used nothing but natural fertilizer. He wouldn't use artificial fertilizer like everybody else did there. Well, it turned out that this land that he had was so poor that he needed artificial fertilizer in the worst way, but he didn't use it. He was against it, so the land got worse and worse. And his cows didn't do so well. He bought these cows without knowing anything about cows and they didn't do very well.

So the poor father, his temperament changed entirely. He became a bitter man, and he flew off the handle at the least provocation. He got so bad that the whole

family hated him, and he became more and more bitter. So I was finally glad when I got old enough to leave home.

Now, there starts a new story. During these three years when we had the farm I developed a liking for painting. I had seen some paintings and I had seen some magazine reproductions, and I wanted to paint all the more. The longer I lived, the more I wanted to paint. But I realized as an artist I couldn't possibly make a living, so I had to do something else.

Now my uncle, my mother's sister's husband, was a pastry cook. I heard stories about his having been in France, and I thought, well, I would become a pastry cook and then I could go to France and study art. So when I was fourteen I was apprenticed to my uncle, and I was glad to get away from father who was always criticizing and always nagging and was a bitter man. My uncle was an entirely different man. He was a nice fellow, but he never said anything nice. He was quiet. He never scolded me.

Now, I had a terrible ambition. I wanted to be good. I wanted to become a good man. I wanted to please him in everything, and I worked hard. In the morning at six o'clock when the bell rang, I went right down and I started the fire and did everything, but the other apprentice was older than I was. He was a typical fellow--you know, the older power over the

younger one, and there was already conflict starting. He always tried to shove work on me that he was supposed to do himself. I began to hate him. But my uncle, he would never say anything nice. He would never praise me for anything, and I was so anxious to make good. He just never said anything--no matter how well I did, he never congratulated me. The other fellow who was a poor fellow was never any good. He used to steal from him. He, my uncle, almost had to fire him, but he never scolded him either. So when we got into fights he never said anything. He'd let us fight it out.

One day the older apprentice had his hands in a lot of dough that he was kneading, and we got into a fight. We threw each other full of dough, smeared each other's faces with dough.

Dixon: Oh, you must have been a menace.

Buff: But in the meantime I was spending all my free time drawing. I went over to my mother's sister's (the older sister I spoke about). They were living next door and she was very nice to me. She gave me a room upstairs. She had a beautiful house and an empty room upstairs with a sofa and a table, and on Sunday I would go up there and all Sunday I would paint and draw.

So that story, of course, got around among my relatives, especially the daughter of this aunt of mine who was married to a schoolteacher. He apparently was

a very nice fellow too, and he took an interest in me and thought that I should become an embroidery designer--I should not become a pastry cooker. That's nonsense. And another son-in-law of my aunt was working in the city as a clerk, and he was enthusiastic about my drawings, so the two of them worked on me that I should try to become an embroidery designer. Together with the fact that my uncle never praised me and I was inside torn, was I any good, did I please him or did I not, and then this fight with the other apprentice, made me forget my ideas that I wanted to be a pastry cook, and I thought, well, maybe it wouldn't be a bad idea if I became a designer, although all the time I had in the back of my mind that designing little samples for embroidery was a rather tedious thing and wasn't the thing for me because I wouldn't find any satisfaction in it. But the fight was so bad in me that I decided that maybe it would be a good idea.

The moment that I said that maybe it would be a good idea, they telegraphed to my father and he came right up and he was very enthusiastic. He thought that that was better. They never thought that this hopeful son of theirs should just be a pastry cook. He should be something more worthwhile. My mother wanted me to be a clerk in a post office or in a bank. That was her idea of a successful son. But when they found out that I might be a designer, they came up and took me

down to the city of Saint Gall where there was a school for embroidery designers, and we went up to see this teacher. He was a noncommital fellow, and my father told him that I wanted to be an artist. He said, "Well, why don't he stick to designing cakes and things like that?" Well, my father thought that he wasn't really a good man to go to, so he went to the director of the school, and he was very different and he was very nice. He said that was very nice if I wanted to be a designer, that this was the school and I apparently had talent, but as far as being an artist he wouldn't advise me to do that because it was very, very difficult to make a living as an artist. It wasn't so much entirely a matter of talent--it was also a matter of endurance. If a man of a fair amount of talent had endurance to stick to it all his life and live on a crust of bread, that was all right, but otherwise it wouldn't be; even if a man had great talent, it would still be a bad thing.

My father decided to leave it to me, what I wanted to do. Well, by this time I had the idea that maybe I had better try the school. So we gave up my apprenticeship and I moved to my aunt's, and I walked down to Saint Gall, which was about an hour's walk, to school.

Now here starts a new life altogether. This teacher was somewhat of a poet; he wrote fairly good poetry and he was a fairly good flower painter, flower drafter--he wasn't a very good painter, but he could

make beautiful drawings of flowers. His idea was to teach a designer for embroidery it was necessary that you draw flowers first, and not be too practical. Here we were all in a big group drawing flowers and he would never come around to tell us anything. But he came around almost every day. He had a beard and he twitched his beard, and he would tell us his life story and how he was mistreated and about his life in a parish and how provincial people were around here. Freedom, that was the thing. It wasn't good to teach people how to draw, they learned that, but to have freedom and to develop their own individuality. Of course, this fired us up and we thought that this was wonderful. No one checked on us what time we came there, what time we went home, how long we stayed for lunch. He just came around and walked through the room and kept on making his speeches, and then went back into his own room and we didn't see him any more.

So the thing went on for a whole summer. And oh, I enjoyed it! I had this freedom and I could draw these plants and flowers.

But in the wintertime I had to go to a different teacher. There I was supposed to learn to draw ornaments. Here was an entirely different man. He was a German, and he was a typical German professor of the worst sort. He had no ideas on anything. He was a commercial artist by the side and had his room where he

drew, and he came around twice a day to make the rounds and correct ornaments. The idea was to learn the styles of ornaments. We started with the Syrian, the Egyptian, and gradually at the end of the semester got to the French Renaissance. Well, I just detested the man. I could draw the ornaments, they were nothing to me; but then he came around and fiddled around a little bit, and he was always sure that we were there at eight o'clock and that we didn't leave before evening. So I just hated the whole thing.

Next spring was an unusually nasty spring and I developed a cold that affected my eyesight, and I couldn't get rid of the cold. When we came to the other teacher again in the summertime, when we drew the flowers, I began to doubt certain things. If I have to draw those ornaments, what will I do? I can't go on with this. I can't do it. I must do something else.

Oh, by the way, I forgot to tell you my father and my mother had a divorce. My father stayed at the farm, and my mother moved to the city and I lived with my mother. She worked at embroidery, and I felt terrible that my mother had to work for me and I wasn't even sure that I could go on with this. I was afraid. I was afraid to tell her. I was afraid to show that I had doubt about my abilities, and I just felt that I couldn't draw these little designs. And then I thought, well, I'll keep on with this teacher and with this

flower painting and I could become a designer for wallpaper, but that was outside of Switzerland. The factories for wallpaper were in Germany. I had that in mind, but I didn't dare tell anybody.

But this thing went on to the second year. I became very nervous and my eyes began to get weaker, and I had to wear glasses, and there was just a tumult inside of me. I became a nervous wreck. I still didn't dare tell Mother that I felt that I was cheating her and that I was never going to be a designer for embroidery.

But it went on until it came to a climax in the third year. I completely broke down and I had to tell my mother that I couldn't go on with it, that I wanted to become a painter. The idea came to me if I could go to the city of Basel where they had the big collection of paintings, I could copy some of those paintings and make a living that way. And the idea, a wild young man's dream, of going to Italy and that sort of thing.

When I told her about it, she just blew up. She told me to get out of the house. So my cousin, the girl who had married the teacher, had moved to thebig city of Basel where he got a job as a teacher. He was considered a good teacher. They wrote me to come down there, so I went and I left my mother. You can imagine the thing set up in me then. I felt I was no good, and yet what could I do? I didn't know what to do.

When I came to Basel, it turned out that the teacher who had married my cousin turned out to be a self-righteous little fool, and he evidently got tired of his wife's company and every night he would go out and play cards with his cronies. She was left with her three babies alone in the house, and so she was glad to see me. She was the one who instigated that I should come down so that she would have somebody, if I studied down there in school, she would have somebody to talk to in the evening. She and I got along fine and I used to entertain the children at night and tell them stories, and they thought that I was wonderful.

But he didn't like the idea that I should become a painter; of course, that was all right--he had a right to think so, that it was a crazy ideal that I should make a living copying paintings in a museum. I could do it. But I also found out by inquiry at the museum that I wasn't allowed to copy pictures unless I had the written permit by the artist whose paintings I wanted to copy. In the case of Boecklin [Arnold] (I don't know whether you know the name--he was the great celebrity at that time in Germany and Switzerland, and he had some of the best paintings in the museum of Basel, and I wanted to copy some of those), he was dead, but his wife was living in Italy and you had to get permission from her, and that was for me practically impossible. So that fell through.

Then I decided that I could become a house painter. In the paper I read an article: somebody wanted a young man to learn the trade of house painting and they paid a franc a day. I applied for it, and, of course, the fellow was glad to have me. So I took the job. I could live on a franc a day, it was possible. I would cook my own meals and live very simply. Oh, by the way, we had trouble--my uncle (I called him my uncle, the teacher) objected so strenuously to my painting that he quarreled with his wife, so she told me that it was just too bad that he wouldn't have me around any more. Then I moved away from them and moved into an attic.

Among the house painters that I worked with, the boss was very nice, and there were quite a number of fellows who took a liking to me. One of them one day told me, "You know, he said, "we have a little society and we are studying in the evening, we're studying sociology and things like that--wouldn't you like to join us?" He said, "We have some students from the university and some workmen."

And so I said, yes, I would like to. He took me to the home of a Russian Communist. Already in those days, in 1904, the Russians were exploiting Communism. He gave his lecture on sociology and Communism and he told us all about the injustices, and we really had a very nice group. We had several students from the

university who wanted to know about these things, and I became quite friendly with these fellows.

One day the fellow that induced me to come to these told me, "You don't have to work for a franc a day, you're good enough--all you have to do is go and tell some firm that you're a painter and they'll hire you and you'll make four francs a day. With your ability in drawing and painting you're foolish."

So I quit the job and I went to a big firm in the city, called myself a house painter, and they hired me. We got a new building and there were quite a lot of young fellows there painting, and I worked hard and tried to make good. I worked harder than anybody else, and on the third day at noon the foreman came to me and said, "You're the only one that I can trust around here. I want you this afternoon to enamel the bathroom."

Well, I never did any enameling, and the enamel we had in those days was very tough and difficult to handle. The whole thing fell to pieces. I wouldn't dare to tell him that I wasn't really a good painter, that I had never done any enameling, so all I could do was to come down after lunch and tell him that I had to go home. I couldn't face the disgrace. So he said, "Oh, every time you think you have a good fellow, he quits the second day." I went to the office and collected my four francs a day.

So then I was up against it again. Two of the

students at this group we went to with this Russian, they took a liking to me, and one of them had a job, but the other one, an Alsatian, spoke French fluently and spoke German fluently. He had been a student of theology, but he couldn't believe it any more and so he gave it up. He lived by giving French lessons. So I had nothing to do, I lived up in my attic and did some drawing, and we used to get together. We spent half of the night discussing philosophy; he was a great believer in nature. He had given up his religious beliefs and taken over nature.

Dixon: He did switch!

Buff: But here I was torn between nature and socialism, Communism. We discussed it day and night and didn't get anywhere. I spent practically all summer there just going around discussing it. I had about 400 francs saved up that my mother let me take along, and in that little town I could live on practically nothing. I just bought a little milk and a little bread, and up in our attic we used to eat it together.

But he got the idea that he wanted to go to London to learn English. He had taken English lessons but he wanted to perfect his English and so he was going to go to London, and then I was left alone in Basel. I thought, well, I'd better go to either Paris or Munich. I couldn't speak French, so I thought that Munich would be better. I started to go home and I didn't ever see

Mother because she chased me out, so I thought I'd go see Father. Father had written to me that if I ever needed anything he would be glad to help me. That was always his thing: he was always very willing to help me, but he never had anything.

So I went home, and I told him the whole story. He said, "Oh, yes, your cousin the schoolteacher was here a few weeks ago, and he told me that you were no good, you were lazy, you were a bum. I can appreciate that you couldn't do embroidery design--you were just not meant that way. You had to work on a thing hard and think it over and do a good job." It was all right if I wanted to go to Munich, and as soon as he could he would help me, always as soon as he could.

So I decided that I would walk to Munich, and I started to walk. I walked all day long, and in the evening my legs began to hurt. I was near a town that the railroad passed through, so I thought, well, I would just take the train, so I hopped on the train. By midnight or one o'clock in the morning I landed in Munich, without anything. I didn't dare go to a big hotel for fear that the prices would be too high, so I just walked the streets till morning, and I sat down in the railroad station and waited and slept a little bit, and at seven o'clock in the morning I got up and started to look for a room to rent. I found a room which was rather inexpensive, with a shoemaker, and

they were rather cordial Bavarian people and I liked them, and we got along fine.

But now I had to do something. I had a little over one hundred marks left of my money and I wanted to get to the Royal Academy to take classes. I looked up some Swiss art students whose address I had, and we got together. They said, "Well, now, if you want to get to the Academy you have to take an entrance examination about three weeks from now. In the meantime, you had better go to a private school."

So I went to this private school and it was an interesting school. We had people there from all over the world. They had two Americans who spoke English among themselves, and, of course, no one could understand what they said. Then they had some Serbians and Czechoslavakians, and it was an interesting crowd. When the time came to take the examinations for the Academy, I decided to visit one of the professors whose address I found out, and to ask him whether he thought I could pass the examinations. One Sunday morning I took the streetcar and found the address. I had seen reproductions of this man's work--he was a very good draftsman, that was quite emphatic. He loved his work. He received me very nicely. He was wonderful, and he listened to my talk and he said, "Well, it's tough to be an artist, but I think you will pass the examination." (I showed him some of my work.) "I think you will pass

the examination, but that isn't all. To be an artist, what are you going to live by?"

I said, well, maybe I could become a teacher of drawing.

"Well, you do that, that's all right. You try the examinations."

But by the time the examinations came around, I had so little money I couldn't afford to pay the entrance fee. So that was done for. I kept on in my private school, and when the second month came along to pay (I had to pay thirty marks a month), I didn't have hardly anything left, so I didn't pay. He was a good-natured fellow and he only came around one day a week, on Monday, and he only spoke to us for about an hour and then he went away. So I thought that I really didn't have to pay. He never would know it.

One day as I left the school, in a narrow passageway that we had to go through to the street, he met me. He said, "Well, how are you? I bet you have some money for me."

I said, "I'm so sorry, but I haven't."

He said, "Well, that's too bad. I've got my expenses to pay."

And so that was the end of it--all I could do was to buy a ticket to go home.

In the meantime, my father had written me a letter and said that if I wanted to come home, I could stay

with him on the farm and help a little bit in the morning and the evening, and the rest of the day I could paint. I thought that was pretty wonderful. He had married another woman by that time. She was nice, all right. But he got in one of those terrible moods and he treated me badly. He yelled at me and called me names, and I realized that the thing wouldn't work. So I went to Saint Gall to see Mother.

TAPE NUMBER: I, SIDE TWO

In discussing my earlier youth, I meant to dwell on the culture of the people of Appenzell and their environment, and I somehow forgot about it. As I already said, they were not a Germanic people; they came from somewhere across the Adriatic, really, and had adopted the German language or some medieval dialect of the German language. They still kept it, I think, against the neighbors, although they were only five kilometers away from the city of Saint Gall where they had an entirely different culture. They maintained their dialect--the change was so abrupt you couldn't believe it. All their habits of living were abruptly different, although in the towns, in the bigger towns, they gradually adopted some of the ways. Some of the architecture that they had originally was very rigid and very well adapted to the rough climate and the wood culture. In the towns they began to imitate the baroque town houses. So, also, the town people began to dress more fashionably, the women adapted styles, they went to buy their hats in Saint Gall, and they attempted the latest styles.

But the ordinary people kept their strict historical environment. The men, the farmers that is (they were mostly farmers outside the village), had their own culture. For instance, their implements, their buckets

and things, were all made of wood, and it was some of the most beautiful handcraft work that they did, in this very light wood--they made buckets and things to carry milk on their backs.

And the language they preserved pretty pure, the old language, and very broad; it was a very broad dialect. Their singing (we call it yodeling now, but it wasn't really yodeling, it was singing) antedated all the yodeling that you hear, Swiss yodeling. It was a much simpler thing but very impressive, at least to me it was.

From the very earliest youth I took a liking to all the common people, and I despised the city people. I thought that trying to live according to the latest style was ridiculous, and I was ashamed of them. I thought they had such a beautiful culture up here, why didn't they stick to it? And it affected me.

Then very often, as stated in this book, the farmers would have a procession to go to the Alps with their cows, and they had a big festival leading cows wearing big bells, and they would sing and yodel on their way through the villages, and that made a terrific impression on me. As a little boy, I always first wanted to be a farmer.

The country architecture is quite typical of the hill country in that part of Switzerland. The weather is very rough, and so they developed a most beautiful

austere type of architecture that you won't find anywhere else in Switzerland, completely devoid of all the fancy things you see in some of the Swiss houses, these modern mountain cabins; they don't belong there, and at that time they didn't have them--now they're building the chalets all over the place, and it's really an eyesore, these highly ornamented chalets; but these houses were very severe and they were weathered, they never painted them. They let them brown and they took a deep brown, and the roofs were shingles in those days; now, of course, they make them have tile and the color of the tile doesn't fit into the country. But anyway, that architecture still makes a big impression on me. I think it's a really original form of architecture that the baroque Italian influence is trying to destroy.

Another thing, when I was a little boy, we had a mail carrier who was kind of a funny character--he must have been in the 40's or 50's, it was hard to say when you're a little boy and everybody looks old, but he looked like an old man. He was an artist of sorts. He used to make ink drawings, and then he covered them with water colors, and gave them to his friends--it was usually either one of these farmers ringing the bells, or cows, or the church of the village; so that made a tremendous impression on me and I tried to imitate him until I began to draw in school, and started drawing other things. That may have had an influence

on me, why I wanted to try. But all these things together, of course....I was just destined to be a fool artist.

It's hard to talk about this architecture, unless you've really studied it, and make an essay of it without showing pictures.

Dixon: Did you have any other art instruction in grammar school, drawing or anything?

Buff: No. When our parents had the store, the teacher took quite an interest and he showed me once to make pen and ink drawings, although he was not an artist himself, but he thought that I could do well with pen and ink. That was a little bit beyond my ability, as pen and ink requires quite a bit of dexterity. But he helped me get interested in these things. I copied a lot.

After we sold the store, I came to a bigger town where my father had this farm, and I had to go to high school there. There again I was rather unlucky with my teachers. The teacher that I had in the first year was an old crank, too, and I must have made an impression on him, because the teacher that I had before gave me all "A's," and so he was quite impressed. But he was another one of those Swiss fellows that could never give a word of praise to anybody, although he was nice to me. He never spoke a rough word to me, but he did treat other students pretty badly. I remember one

fellow, I liked him very much, who was an intelligent fellow but he was a little bit uncouth, and the teacher hated him so much that he actually took him over his knees and spanked him once. And then this student got worse all the time. He got so he wouldn't dare to say anything. I hated the teacher so much for that, because the fellow was a nice fellow and was intelligent enough that if he had been given good treatment, he could have been a very good student.

Then they had another teacher for drawing and geometry whom I liked very much and he liked me, and we got along gloriously. He went and died. So then we got a young teacher for two or three hours a week that took his place, and he was a nice fellow. But I didn't have him. I had this old fellow for two years, and so high school was rather spoiled for me. I hated the school.

Dixon: Was it a high school or gymnasium?

Buff: This was just a high school. It was a three-year course, but I hated it so much that I quit after two years. I had an option in those days, I could take two years or three years. I didn't want to take the third year because I just didn't like it.

Mary Buff: Would you say that that is somewhat typical of the Germanic-Swiss restraint in matters of praise?

Buff: Oh, that's the worst thing about the Swiss. I don't know whether it's still so or whether they've

changed, but I think that they're still the same people. They're always ready to criticize and to say bad things, but they will never praise anybody. The idea is that if you praise somebody they will get big-headed. So for me that was a terrible thing, because I was always trying very hard to please the teachers or please my employers, and nobody ever appreciated anything--it began to wear me down. They're well-meaning people, but they're just so Calvinistic and moralistic that they feel that you never tell a woman she looks well, but you always tell her she looks bad today, are you sick? That's the general tone.

Dixon: Discouraging, to say the least!

Buff: Even when I think of those things now, it makes me mad.

Dixon: You had gone back to your father?

Buff: Oh, yes; I went to Munich and then went back again to my father, and then I couldn't stand that. My mother had in the meantime written a letter to me saying that if I came back to her, she'd buy me a new suit of clothes. She was always good that way. She tried to do the very best she could, but she just didn't think the same way that I did. So I went to see her and she was glad to see me, and she said that if I would try now to become an embroidery designer she would forgive everything I did and everything would be all right.

She read an advertisement in the paper where a

fellow was looking for an apprentice, so I applied. He was doing these great big window curtains that they embroidered. They're out of style now, but at that time everybody had them. Great big floral designs. Well, this was of course new to me and he didn't say how much he was going to pay me, but he said he would try me out. He had another apprentice there, and we became quite chummy. He had been there for two years already, and he was paying him sixty francs a month, and so I kept up with this fellow nicely and thought I would get the same.

One day the boss came around and made a few rough sketches and said, "You work that out and see what you can do."

Well, I hated those things! The designs were so bad. Those flowers were so ridiculous that I just couldn't do anything in that stuff.

So then I was at the end of the month and I said, "Well, how much are you going to pay me?"

He said, "Well, I can't pay you very much. If you hadn't been a darn fool and gone to Munich, if you had stuck around here, you could have made some money."

I said, "You leave that alone, that's my business whether I went to Munich or not."

And so he said that he could only pay me twenty francs a month. It cost sixty francs a month to live in the simplest way, so I told my mother and she said that

that was ridiculous and that I shouldn't take it and I didn't want to take it. I thought that the fellow was a crude businessman and his designs repelled me, they were so ordinary and so common. So I was glad to get rid of that.

I had a teacher there that taught in the evening school, figure drawing, and I took that course, beside the course I had taken all those three years in floral design. He had taken a liking to me and he helped me, and then he started an evening class of drawing from the nude. A few specially invited people came and I was the youngest, I was eighteen. I was doing very well there, and so he said when I came back from Munich and I went to visit him, "Well, you shouldn't work for these damn embroidery people, they're a lousy outfit. I think I can keep you here and do a certain amount of commercial work; I'm sure you can do these commercial things and I can pay you eightly francs a month. You can live on it and you can study."

I thought that was wonderful, so I started in and I worked with him for a month, but I realized that he just did it to help me out. I couldn't really make money for him. How could he make money on these few drawings that I made?

So I told him, "Well, I think you're too kind-- I know you're losing money on me, and I just can't accept this."

He said, "Don't take it that way; I'm glad to do

this for you."

I was of course completely torn up. I couldn't, and I told my mother that I just couldn't do this. She said,"Well, why don't you go to school for two more years and become a teacher for design?"

So I went down to Winterthur to talk to the people at the technical school there where they gave courses in training for teachers, and the fellow said, "Well, it's just too bad. We only accept a new class every two years, so you have to wait a year before you can enter. Of course, I couln't guarantee that you'd get a job because there are so many more applicants than we have jobs for teachers--even if you got a diploma you might have to wait three or four years before you got a job."

When I came to mother, I said, "I just can't do this, wait for a whole year and then study two years and then wait for another job. I'm sick and tired." I was so down and out that my nerves completely collapsed. I said, "I've got to take away from this civilization. It's more than I can take. I want to go someplace where I don't see any cities or any towns, and just recuperate and get my bearings again."

She said that she had some relatives in New Zealand.

I said, "It would cost a fortune to get to New Zealand. and if I got there and I wanted to come back, I would have to spend a fortune to get back."

I thought that America would be better. A school friend of mine had gone to America, and before I decided to go to America I visited his family. His sister told me that he was having a cattle ranch in Wyoming in a little town called Lost Cabin, and I said that maybe I could get enough money to go see him. Maybe there's something there. He lives on a cattle ranch up in the mountains of Wyoming, and it would be just the place for me. I decided to go to America. I had an address that the landlady with whom I had stayed gave me of her brother who had a farm in Wisconsin (I had to have an address for the immigration authorities), so I came to Wisconsin.

The trip across the Atlantic was not all one would desire. In those days, the steerage passengers were way down (even now they're down), and the quarters down there were smelly between oil and raw meat and all the other things; there was a terrible odor down there. We had a cabin for four of us, two bunks. There was one fellow, a very nice fellow, who said he was going to Sacramento. He had an aunt there who was going to give him a job, and I thought, well, that would be fine for me--but I wouldn't have enough money to get to Sacramento. He was so seasick on the whole trip that he was lying in his bed not speaking to anybody except groaning. The other fellows were rough Germans and we had nothing in common. I was sick for two days, but I was able to

manage to walk around.

Well, I came to Ellis Island. They were very nice there, the officials. They sold me a basket lunch and put me on a train to Wisconsin. In the morning I woke up somewhere up on the Great Lakes and then got into Chicago, but that made a terrible impression on me. Chicago was about the crummiest town I had ever seen. No paved streets and the telegraph poles were leaning this way, and the houses.... Of course these were the outskirts.

Dixon: What year was this?

Buff: 1905. At the center of the city they had the skyscrapers, of course, and the big buildings; but all of the outskirts were so bad, I got a bad impression of America. I was glad to get on to Wisconsin. There was a sort of Swiss settlement there.

The train from Chicago to Wisconsin was no longer an immigrant train; it was a regular train with upholstered seats, which for ordinary traveling seemed wonderful because third-class trips in Europe were all hard benches. I sat down and of course I couldn't speak a word of English. The conductor came and found out that I could only speak German, so he started to speak German and sat down next to me and took his cap off and started to say, "Where are you going and where are you coming from?" I thought that was marvelous. In Switzerland, the conductor would

have never dared lose his dignity to sit down with a little boy and talk with him and take his cap off. I thought, my, what a wonderful country this is.

When I finally landed at the station there were some Swiss boys there, and I started to talk to them and told them that I wanted to go to a special place, to a certain farm. They said, "You come over to us, it's too late tonight to go there. We'll telephone him and you stay with us overnight, and in the morning he can come and get you with his buggy."

So they took me to their home. It was a nice large family, and I slept there and thought what a wonderful place this was. In the morning, I was used to having breakfast of an egg and a cup of coffee. Here we had everything under the sun: prunes, rice, fried bacon, sausages and meat. I said, "My gosh, what a country!"

By midmorning the next day, this fellow to whose farm I was going came with his buggy, and he was very nice. He said that his sister wrote him about me. "You just come to us until you can find a job and something to do." He took me to his farm and introduced me to his wife and little girl and said, "Well, you just rest from your trip now."

I said, "Oh no, I want to work. I want to earn a living here."

He said, "Nonsense, you just stay here as long as you want to until you find a job. In a few days I've

got to go to town, and I'll take you to town and help you look for a job."

So I helped him as much as I could, but he would never wake me in the morning. He just let me sleep till I felt ashamed when I found that they had already been working for an hour. He finally let me hoe the corn and I hoed corn all day for two or three days.

Finally, he said, "Now I am going to town and you can come along, and we'll see if you can find a job."

He wanted to pay me for my work. I said, "Oh, I can't take any money. I have been living here."

He said, "Oh, you don't know America. You don't work for nothing."

So, he took me to town, and it was really sort of a German and Swiss settlement. He talked to a fellow and he said, "I know a man who wants a hand." He introduced me to this fellow while he was eating, and this fellow said, "Well, can you milk fifteen cows?"

Well, fifteen cows--I said, "I've milked six cows."

He said, "Let me see your hands." You see, the milkers in Switzerland milk like this [gesture] so they get big bumps on their hands. I had some bumps, so he said, "Well, I guess maybe you can do it. If you can milk fifteen cows, I'll pay you twenty dollars a month, and if you can't milk that many I'll pay you sixteen dollars a month."

So that was settled. He had a big farm. He had about seventy-five cows, and he had two more Swiss

fellows there. One was about two years older than I was, and there was a Swiss girl there who had just come over from Switzerland, and then there was an older hand and he himself. Together we were five men to milk these seventy-five cows, so each one had to milk fifteen cows.

Well, I got out and that was evening when I started to milk these fifteen cows, and I got through with the rest of them. I worked very hard. I didn't want to be left behind. Then by ten o'clock we had to bed down the cows and about 10:30 we could go to sleep. But at four o'clock in the morning he called us, and I had to start to bring in the cows from the pasture and milk these fifteen cows again.

By six o'clock breakfast wasn't quite ready so he said, "There is a wood pile out there, you can just split some wood until breakfast is ready."

Well, I was very anxious. So this girl came over and she said, "You know, this is a terrible place. I wish you would stay, but I couldn't blame you if you didn't stay."

So he put me into the barn. There was a great big pile of wheat and then there was a machine standing there to grind the wheat into small pieces to feed to the cows. This younger fellow that was about two years older than I was (he had been there for some time and he was to work with me shoveling this wheat)

stood there and watched the machine, and I shoveled wheat all morning. I had to keep up with the machine and by noon I was almost dead. In the afternoon we had to finish the pile. I said to myself, "Why can't this damn fool help me? He just stands there watching the machine."

That same evening I milked my fifteen cows, and the next morning at four o'clock I milked the fifteen cows again. After breakfast he said, "Now you go with the other fellow and he'll show you what to do." He took me to a place (it was by that time about eight o'clock) where there was another Swiss working digging fence-post holes, and he said, "This worker digs fence-post holes until lunch." I already had cramps in my hands. I started to dig these holes. This other fellow was employed by the day, the Swiss who was working on the fence, and he said, "You got into a bad hole here. This guy is terrible. He has a bad reputation all over the state. He abuses everybody. I only work here eight hours and I get two dollars a day." He asked me how much I was getting, and he said, "You're crazy. I work here only eight hours and get two dollars a day, and then I can go home. I bet you won't stay here very long."

So that settled me. I said, "I'm not going to do this." I told him I was going to quit. I had to walk to town, and I went to a restaurant to get lunch. There

was a Swiss girl waiting. I told her where I had been, and she laughed and said, "I'm not surprised--nobody stays there. He's the worst labor man in the country." She said, "Just a minute, I'll call somebody on the phone."

So she phoned, and she said, "I have a job for you in a cheese factory. I think these people will treat you better." She introduced me to a man in town and he said, "I'll take you there."

So he took me on a train to a place in Illinois, and there the Swiss cheese maker met me and took me to his house. He had a wife and a son. He was about forty-five and his wife was maybe about forty, and he had a twenty-year-old son and a little baby. He told me this baby was an accident, he wasn't going to have any more babies when he came. The wife, she was a bad character. She was complaining all the time, and she was too fat for anything, and all the work was too much. To think that I couldn't speak English and she had to speak German! (She was Swiss, too.) Then she always lapsed into English and I could see that she talked about me. When I came from work in my work clothes, I rolled up my sleeves. Then she complained, "In America we don't roll up our sleeves when we eat." I had nothing to eat but milk and cheese and bread, and I can't eat cheese! But I had all the milk I wanted.

Here it was a similar situation. Again we got up

at six o'clock, and then the farmers brought in the milk, and we had to process this milk and make the cheese. The milk is put into a big container that can be heated by electricity or gas --all the milk is heated to blood temperature. Then this powder is put in it (rennet) and it separates the whey from the curds. After you work for awhile with the big broom (you sweep the milk), then you have to pick out these curds in a cheesecloth, and it is formed into little squares. They were making limburger. We had these little molds and we put the curd in. After the milk was already sieved we had breakfast, and then after breakfast we had to form these little cheeses and bury them in salt. They had shelves and shelves of limburgers that were aging.

We worked all day down in the cellar where there was a cement floor, and there was water on the floor all the time. I got wet feet. It went along all right but we never got through before half-past ten at night. It was June, and it was so hot that I decided that I had to take a bath. They had a barrel standing there, so I filled it up with water and went in there. When the woman found out that I had been taking a bath in the barrel, she said, "Well, that man is crazy. Who ever heard of a man taking a bath in a barrel?" (They didn't have any bathroom--nobody took a bath.) She said, "You'll catch a cold taking a bath in cold water

at night."

About three or four days later, in the morning I had just a terrific cold and pain in my chest. The old man came to wake us up, and I said, "I can't get up."

"Oh, you have to get up. The cheeses have to be taken care of. The farmers are coming to bring the milk and I can't work. You two boys are going to have to do the work."

I said, "I can't get up."

He said, "You have to get up."

Then I got my Irish up and said, "The hell with you--I'm not going to get up!"

Then he changed his tune, and he said, "Well, I'll have to take you to a doctor. If you wait until the milk is in and we have breakfast, I'll take you to town."

So he took me to town and took me to the doctor's office. This doctor couldn't speak German, so the discussion was all between these two men. They translated certain questions, and the doctor asked, "How old are your parents?" I told him.

He said, "How old are your grandparents?"

I told him, "They are all dead. They died before I ever knew them."

"Is there consumption in your family?"

I said, "No. Not that I know of." But then I began to get suspicious. He gave me medicine and the cheesemaker said, "Let's go now." He told me that the

doctor said that I should go back to work, that I would be all right in a day or two. I distrusted him because he [the doctor] had asked me if there was consumption, and I had this pain in my lungs and coughing. I said, "He thinks I'm having tuberculosis." I got scared, and I said that I wouldn't go back to work no matter what happened, not to this factory where I had wet feet all day long.

He said, "I've got to make a telephone call. I'll come back. You go and eat lunch in the meantime."

So I ate lunch, and by the time I got through with lunch he came back and said, "You know, I telephoned to the boss in the city and he said he would send out another man. The doctor said you couldn't work at this game because you might get tuberculosis." I said, "Now see what these Swiss will do to their own people?"

I went back to the man that first met me at the train and he said, "Well, I guess you had bad luck. What are you going to do now?"

I said, "I want to go west." Secretly I said I'm through with you Swiss people.

The next day I took my suitcase and went down to the depot and looked up places in Wyoming. I saw Cheyenne and I decided I was going to Cheyenne. So I bought a ticket. There was a priest standing outside while I was waiting for the train. I'm not a Catholic, but he was a nice fellow. He was a Swiss priest, and he

said, "Well, boy, where are you going?"

"I just bought a ticket to Cheyenne."

He said, "Don't go west, they'll kill you out there. The people are bad out there! The west has a bad reputation. Stay with your own people who can take care of you."

I said to myself, "The hell with my country people." I'd had enough of them.

Finally the train came and I took the train. I think the first day we got as far as Omaha, and then there was night and I slept in the chair. In the morning at about four o'clock the train was standing still, and I noticed outside there was a water tank and a little house with those sort of wide hills. This was what I was looking for. These hills. This was my country. I had intended to go back to Switzerland to study art after I had made a little money, but I said that I'd never go back until I had enough money to go.

On the train I met a German who had been here for about three years and he spoke a little English. He was a carpenter. He was going to Cheyenne, too. When we got to Cheyenne he said, "Let's go and have a glass of beer." We went into a saloon and he was talking to the saloon keeper in English--I couldn't understand what he said, but he said that the fellow said that he could use me if I wanted to be a porter. I said, "Well, sure." He said he would pay me nine dollars a week, but he said

I could have a free lunch there all the time.

It turned out that I had to get there at four o'clock in the morning and scrub the floors and clean the spittoons and clean the rail--and that rail was a mess. Well, I said, this is all in a life's work, and I worked hard and I cleaned up in fine shape--by the time the bartender came in everything was spic and span. The fellow had told me that if I was satisfactory he would pay me twelve dollars. In the meantime, after I had worked for two or three weeks there, he gave me a room upstairs where I could cook for myself. I lived up there and had a bed and cooked for myself and ate the free lunch. At about ten o'clock I was through with my regular work, but then I had to come back every two or three hours to see if they needed a new keg of beer started, and I had to go down in the basement and start the beer. In the evening I had to do a little sweeping out.

It was a nice job, but I had the idea of writing to this fellow in Lost Cabin. I wanted to know if I could come up there, but nobody knew where Lost Cabin was. I asked everybody but they all said that they had never heard of the place; I addressed the letter to Lost Cabin anyway, but I never got an answer, whether there was no Lost Cabin, or whether the fellow didn't get the mail, or whether he didn't answer.

But I had the fever, and after about a month or two I said to the fellow, "I'd like to have the twelve dollars

now a week."

He said, "Well I gave you the room upstairs and that took care of that."

So I said I didn't want that, so I quit. I went down to the employment agency. Of course, there were always hobos around that had fun with this Dutchman who could speak a little bit of English and they made him full of stories. I said that I wanted to be a cowboy, and they laughed and said, "You would be a good sheepherder."

So I said, "All right, I'll be a sheepherder." Somebody told me that the sheepherders had an easy life. I could take three thousand sheep out to pasture in the morning (they stick together) and by ten o'clock they would lie down and I wouldn't have anything to do until four o'clock when they got up and I would have to herd them again. They said that I could paint in the meantime. I thought that that would be wonderful, if I could paint all day long and take care of the sheep.

Then there was a job open for a sheepherder, so I took it. The fellow said, "Well, the boss will be in this afternoon." About one o'clock a nice fellow, a charming fellow, came up in a team and buggy and I was introduced. He was a young fellow. Oh, he must have been about twenty-four or twenty-five. He looked like an educated fellow. He started to talk to me and he said, "Oh, you'll be fine, come along." So I went along and we became good friends. When we had to open the fence

to let the team through, he said, "Conrad, will you please open the fence?" That thing knocked me cold. To have somebody call me by the first name and say, "Please open the fence!" In Switzerland they would say, "Get out and open the fence!" Okay. My, what a beautiful country this is!

So he let me get off by a camp where they made hay, and he introduced me to the foreman of the camp. He was a nice old fellow, too, and he said, "Well, can you speak a little English?" And I said, "Yes, show me what to do." They had cut the hay and we had to turn it over to get the other side. They already had about ten men there doing the same thing. I just went over and was one of the gang, but I wanted to make good and I worked hard. The other fellow said, "Hey, you Dutchman, take it easy. You won't get any more money if you work your head off."

The foreman had a cow that he had to milk every day to supply milk for these fellows, and I noticed that he was very clumsy in milking, so I said, "Say, I can milk cows."

"Oh, you can milk cows! All right."

So I milked the cow in no time, and he said, "Gee, you're a cow man all right." Then I got along splendidly with him, but the fellows didn't like me very much because I milked the cow after working hours.

After a while the first boss came around with his team and he said that he would take me to the main ranch now.

I thought he was going to take me to herd sheep, but he said, "Well, you can work on the ranch here."

I said, "I thought that I was going to herd sheep."

He said, "You're too nice a boy to herd sheep. You work on the farm. We need fellows like you."

They had a straw boss there, and he was a nice fellow, too, with five cows to milk. When work was done and we were getting ready for supper the first evening, I watched him milk these cows. He said, "There's one cow here that I can hardly get any milk out of."

I said, "Let me try it." I was used to hard milkers.

He said, "Gee, that's wonderful."

I said, "You let me milk these cows."

Then he said, "That would be wonderful."

So in the morning I had to get these five cows milked. First I had to bring them in from the pasture. He had a horse there and he said, "Just saddle the horse in the morning and bring in the cows." So I saddled the horse and I rode after the cows. I thought that this riding the horse was wonderful. I brought the cows in, and we milked them. I worked in the hay fields all day. The second morning, oh, maybe it was a week later, I had worked in the hay fields and I hoped that I would be allowed to herd sheep, but this riding in the morning to bring in the cows was wonderful. I just enjoyed galloping over the prairie. One morning the horse got into one of these holes that the prairie dogs make, and he went down and threw me

about ten feet ahead on my shoulder. I landed on my left shoulder. I noticed that the shoulder was sore and the horse was behind me lying down and couldn't get up. Finally I induced the horse to get up and we walked home.

The straw boss knew we had the spill, and he said, "Can you milk?" I said I thought that I could milk. I milked these cows, but my arm began to hurt worse all the time. Then he told the nice big boss about it, and the boss said that if I could milk cows that was all right; I didn't have to do anything else other than milk the cows.

Then I said, "When do I begin to herd sheep?" (My arm was really getting better), but I pretended that it was sore, and I said to him, "Wouldn't it be a good idea for me, instead of loafing around here, to go and herd sheep? Then I could do a little painting in the meantime."

And he said, "Oh, no, you can't do any painting while you herd sheep." And he said, "Well, if you want to, you can try it if you feel that you're not earning your keep here; I'll let you go and herd sheep."

I thought, I can't take my paints along but at least I can see how the sheepherding goes along. One of the farm hands who was a very nice fellow was a sort of a cowboy and one of the finest people that you'll ever meet among western people. He took me to the sheep corral which was about fourteen miles away from the ranch, and there was a little house, a stone house with a roof over it, and a big sheep corral and a brook and big cottonwood trees,

and there were a thousand lambs. Now, anybody that knows anything about sheep knows that you cannot keep a thousand lambs together that have been taken away from their mamas--they would simply not hold together. But this big boss had evidently been a college graduate and had been sent to this farm and didn't know enough, and he sent me out with these thousand lambs.

Well, nobody said anything, but the fellow that brought me there with the wagon said, "Good luck to you, boy, and there's some food in there. I'll be here in a few days again and bring some more food. I'll make the trip regular."

I went to sleep and at night it was kind of lonely. The wind was rustling in the trees, and the lambs, baaaa, all night, baaa, baaaa. I felt kind of lonely. But I said, that's all right. All of a sudden the lambs quit. Then maybe an hour later they started in again. I thought that they were going to sleep when they quit, but evidently not. They were too restless. In the morning I found a dead one there. Coyote. I jumped over the fence. The coyote was in the corral, and the lambs wouldn't cry. When a sheep is scared it doesn't make a move. It just acts dead, so these lambs all acted dead. As soon as the danger was over they started to baa-baa again.

But in the morning when I let them out of the corral after I had breakfast, they scattered all over the place. I had two dogs, and they would bark and bark and try to move them this way or that way. But these dogs got tired

of it. The lambs scattered so far away that all I could do was to watch and see where they went. By the time they got tired of walking around at ten o'clock I could bring them in again.

Well, I succeeded the first day in bringing them in but the second day it was worse. They strayed off further and further. All I could do was to go on a little high part to see where they were, and by the time ten o'clock came around I'd be able to gather them in. The dogs got so tired that they wouldn't do anything any more. They went down to the creek and went into the water with their tongues hanging out, panting.

On the third day it was even worse. These lambs disappeared. I stood up on the hill and watched them, and saw them go behind another hill, and some of them went this way and some of them went that way, and finally I didn't have any more lambs. They all disappeared.

So I said, what am I going to do? I lost the whole colony of lambs. The whole shebang. I went back to the house, and I knew that there were two horses out there hobbled somewhere in the neighborhood, and so I thought that I would go and see if I could unhobble one of those horses and ride after them. There was a saddle hanging in the hut. As soon as I got near the horses, within five or six feet, the horses would gallop, and went away. I was desperate. My God, what am I to do?

After a while I saw this man at the food wagon come

up with two horses and a saddle horse tied to the back of the wagon. So I told him about it. He said, "Oh, Lord," and hitched one of the horses and said, "I'll take the saddle horse in the back and ride around and find where I can get them." I unhitched these two horses and tied one up and saddled the other one and rode after him.

We rode all day, and we lost twenty sheep that the coyotes had already disemboweled. Those coyotes are always standing outside of sight, to catch a sheep that strays away. The sheep are dumb enough when they are attacked by a coyote that they will not make any noise. They will lie down and play dead. Well, we finally got eight hundred sheep together by nightfall out of the thousand. The next morning a cowboy came up with 180 sheep that had gone fourteen miles. But the twenty sheep, of course, were never found.

The cowboy with the wagon said, "Well, you're not to blame. The boss should have had more sense than to let you have these lambs; everybody knows that lambs when they are taken away from their mothers can't be kept together. The mother would form a flock and they never would stray far apart. You keep the saddle horse here and I'll tell the boss. He'll have to send you a saddle horse here to keep these lambs in shape."

The next day he brought a saddle horse down, and from then on I had a horse and was able to keep the lambs in line. After about a month of it they took the sheep back

to the home ranch, and there I was supposed to work on the farm again. I had made a reputation for myself in stacking hay. Back home we used to carry the hay in wagons and then the hay had to be built up straight so that it wouldn't look like this but like this. [gesture] When I found that they were stacking hay I saw that they had them like this, so I said to the boss, "Why don't you build them like this?"

"Can you do it?"

I said, "Yes."

"All right. The job is yours."

Now, every morning, we had these little piles of hay on the prairie to keep them overnight; in the morning we had to turn them over and spread them out and under every pile we found a rattlesnake. Those rattlesnakes went under there to keep warm, but in the daytime when the hay was spread, they disappeared. They can't stand heat. But I didn't know that. When I stood on that pile of hay and tried to build up this thing, I got dead scared of these rattlesnakes. I thought gee, if a rattlesnake is thrown up with the hay, I'm done for. Nothing, of course, ever happened, because there just weren't any rattlesnakes in the daytime. I made a reputation building these hay stacks, so I was quite a welcome man on the farm.

But a bad thing happened there. There was one of these rich man's sons who had been sent to this ranch because he was no good, and he was really no good--he had all the

fancy costumes and all the fancy chaps, the mohair, you know, white, and all the fancy things. But he hated me. He called me "sauerkraut," and his favorite fun was to make fun of me. He was one of those damn fools: here was a greenhorn who couln't speak much English, and it was good sport to make fun of him. Finally it got so bad I told the boss that I quit. I just wouldn't stand for this.

So I went back to Cheyenne. I had to walk there three miles, but I finally got to Cheyenne and looked for a job. Of course, on the ranch, I had a six-shooter to protect myself against coyotes, but I took the thing back to town and I kept it in my apartment and never thought anything of it. I finally got a job in a bakery for a German. I told him I was a fair baker, and he said he would try me out. I said I was a baker's helper; so that first day this fellow got a carload of flour, a railroad carload--there was enough flour in hundred pound bags to fill this whole house, and the draymen shot them down into a shoot into the basement. I had to pick them up down there and go back and pile them up.

The baker was a strong man, but he didn't try to help me. After a while he got a young fellow that came in to help me. He saw that I couldn't take care of the whole carload in one day, so the two of us worked with these hundred-pound sacks of flour, stacking them up all day until nine o'clock at night when we finally got them up. This fellow that worked from eleven o'clock to nine o'clock got two dollars and I just got wages,

which were about $25 dollars a month. But I was glad to have a job, and I thought that it would be nice to work in a bakery.

I got along fine with the baker. Every morning at seven o'clock he would call me to come to breakfast, and the job was comparatively easy because we got through about four or five o'clock in the evening and there was nothing to do. After a while, he hired another helper who was also a German. This helper was supposed to be good, but he wasn't any better than I was. The two of us worked and the baker just formed the loaves of bread, but we did most of the hard work. But this other fellow was no good. He used to fill his pockets with cookies at night and go out and distribute them to the girls in the street, and I said to myself, "How long will the boss stand for this?" (I never went out at night because I never had enough money.) I thought, how can he stand this?

The next Monday morning he didn't call us at seven o'clock. I said, what's wrong? I went down for breakfast and he said, "You don't need to work. I couldn't stand to have you two bums stealing my stuff. I have to hire a baker." So we were out on the street.

This fellow said, "Let's go down to Denver. In wintertime there won't be anything to do up here, so let's go down to Denver--I'll tell you how we'll get down there." (You've heard about hobos riding the freight

train.) He said, "We'll take a passenger. Tell you what we'll do. We'll buy a ticket for the first station outside of Cheyenne. When the train stops,we get off and get behind the engine near the coal heap there, and we can ride on a fast train."

Well, I thought that would be good sport. Of course, I had to buy the tickets. I put all my belongings on the express to be sent to Denver and so I didn't have anything to carry. But I had to pay for all these things. When we got to this first station, of course we jumped off and got behind the engine.

TAPE NUMBER: II, SIDE ONE

We didn't know it was about four miles to Greeley and it was getting evening, so we decided we were going to walk to Greeley and see if we could get a place to sleep. By the time we got to Greeley it was already dark. In the railroad yards there were a lot of box cars standing around and my friend said, "Let's go in one of these box cars and sleep."

So we went in there and I took my overcoat and wrapped it around me, and I was just about asleep when I heard the doors open and I heard two voices say, "Oh, here they are." Two policemen came over and said, "Get up, boys." They searched us. Of course, I had my gun, my revolver, and some ammunition and some money. Fortunately enough I had the biggest of my bills in my shoe, between the socks and my shoes, so I only had the silver in my pockets. They took that. Of course, I couldn't speak much English, and I heard one say, "Oh, he's just making it up--he's just kidding us, he could speak English all right if he wants to."

They took us to the fire engine house and there on the side there was a cage, just like a wild animal cage. It had iron gratings around three sides and on one side a concrete wall. They told me to go in there, and they asked my partner did he want to go in with me? and he declined.

He didn't want to go in there. There were already a bunch of hobos outside sleeping overnight in the fire engine house. I was locked up in there, and it was the most dismal place that you ever saw in your life. An iron floor. The whole cage was six feet by six feet, with iron gratings, and there was a blanket on the floor and it stunk. Terrible. So I rolled it up and put it in the corner. I wasn't going to sleep on anything like that. In the corner was a bucket with slop. It hadn't been emptied for God knows how long, and it smelled to high heaven.

Gradually the hobos would come over and talk to me and they would say, "Well, carrying a gun, that means thirty days in jail."

I said, "If I had to stay thirty days in this cell I'd go crazy."

They said, "Well, they may let you get out and work on the chain gang."

I said, "Well, I hope I'll be able to work on the chain gang rather than stay here any longer."

Then my partner came up and said, "You'd better give me that money in your shoe or they'll take it away from you."

I had had enough of this partner of mine and said, "No, no. I'll keep it."

I slept on the floor and I covered myself with the overcoat. In the morning when I woke up, my partner came over again and said, "Let me have some money. I'll bring

you some breakfast."

I said, "No. I'm not hungry."

About nine o'clock a nice fellow came around and he started to talk German to me. A nice man. He asked me all sorts of questions, how I got here and why I had gone and done all these things, but he was very nice. He said, "Well, I'll have to take you before the judge."

He took me out of this jail and we walked down to the city hall and he took me before the judge. The judge was a sweet old man. A very nice fellow. They talked together in English. I couldn't understand what they said. The judge was asking questions. Finally he told me that the judge said that I had evidently been in bad company, and if I wouldpromise to go down to the railroad station and take a train to Denver, he would let me go. Of course, they couldn't let me have my gun again, but I would get the money and all I had to do was to walk down the street. Did I jump down there to that station! I never looked around. The sky looked so marvelous and everything looked so fresh and clean! I said my, what a life to be rid of all the scare of those thirty days!

I bought a ticket to Denver, and when I got to Denver I found that my express packages that I had sent from Wyoming were there, and I had an easel and my paints and I had a camp cot. I took the whole thing and I rented a room. It was a rooming house, and down below there was a bakery and on the first floor there was an unfurnished room. I set up my easel and did a little work, and then I

went down to the bakery to get something to eat.

So every day, I ate at this bakery, and finally the girl said, "Are you the artist that lives upstairs?"

I said yes.

She said, "Well, if you are out of money, you can get things here on credit. We'll be glad to help you out."

I said, "Well, thank you very much, but I've still got enough to pay for my rolls."

As I was walking through the streets I saw an art store, and in the art store was a painting by a painter with a German name--it gave his address. He was living upin a skyscraper on the fifteenth floor, and so I went to see this fellow. I looked up this building and I walked up the fifteen floors--I didn't know there was an elevator! When I got up there I panted.

I went inside and I was still panting. He was a very nice fellow, a fellow about four years my senior. When I told him that I walked up, he laughed. "Don't you know that there's an elevator?"

He was painting pictures and selling them through an art store, and he told me that if I would paint little pictures I might be able to sell them at the art store for fifty cents, or something like that. I thought, well, fifty cents--if I painted enough and sold enough I could do very well. He said I could use his studio.

So I started in, but I began to realize that I was

totally unequipped to paint pictures quick enough so that I could even make a half a day's wages. Finally I told him I was sorry but I just had to go and get a job of some sort to get a little money. He said he was sorry, but to come to see him any time.

As usual, I went to the employment office and I found that there was a job available. They were looking for somebody who could milk five cows and take care of them. So I said that's my sauce. It was way up in Palmer Lake. Now, Palmer Lake is between Colorado Springs and Denver on the highest part where it's 9,000 feet above sea level, and all the trains stop there and take water in both directions. I found that this was a railroad restaurant and they had five cows, and that's where the restaurant got their milk and butter and cream. They asked me, of course, if I could milk, and I said yes. They came with me to the barn to see if I could milk and they were satisfied that I could do it.

I stayed there practically the whole winter, from September to the first of May or something. One incident. The neighbor had a cow they couldn't milk because the cow was getting so she kicked the bucket every time and they would be afraid to go near her, and they said to my boss that if I could milk that cow they would be glad to give it to him. He asked me could I milk it, and I said, "I never saw a cow I couldn't milk." I would try it.

So I tied the cow's leg to a post on the back of the

barn and started. I petted her. Cows like to hear men sing. In my home town, they always sing to the cows when they milk them. I sang to the cow and I petted the cow--but of course she kicked. I had her tied up so that she couldn't do any harm. For two days I did the same thing, and by the third day I was able to milk her. She had evidence of being treated rough, and so that's the way it goes.

I had a horse, too, and I had a cabin, and the cabin was kind of windy; it was full of cracks, and when it snowed it would snow on my bed. But I had lots of coals—since it was a railroad restaurant, I had access to the coal pile at the station. I was able to build a fire at night, and then at one o'clock in the morning when the fire went out I built a new one. It got really cold up there.

By the way, I had been treated very nicely. They were lovely people and everybody was nice to me. But in the spring, I felt that I would like to try my luck at something that was more my actual occupation: painting or drawing or something. I read an advertisement in the paper that a map company in Denver was looking for an apprentice. I thought, well, I'll try them, so I quit my job and went to see them. I had some drawings that I could show, and they said that was nice, that they needed somebody to paint pictures on some prospect things that they sent out, and they had to have a picture to explain

the map. They thought that maybe I could do it. So I tried. I had to paint a cabin in the mountains.

Well, I started in, and I thought that it would be wonderful if I could do that sort of thing. I went and rented a room in a rooming house where they gave you board and room for six dollars a week. It looked like a marvelous life here--six dollars a week in those days was quite a bit of money. I had a front room in a nice house facing the street, and they gave us wonderful meals. For breakfast we had two kinds of meat and hotcakes and everything under the sun. I never saw such meals! Three meals a day with two kinds of meat, coffee--and of course no beer or wine, but it was wonderful.

I worked my head off. I was anxious to make good, and I worked and I worked. By the time Friday came around, the boss was sure tickled by what I did, and he brought his wife and introduced me to his wife. But by that time I was already so displeased with what I did that I just couldn't stand to see it any more, and by Saturday I was so disgusted--I was afraid that they were so nice to me and I was disappointing them, and I just didn't have the equipment to do a really fine job. They didn't evidently know it, but I felt that it was terrible. So I decided I wouldn't do it, I'd just skip. Without telling(I was afraid to tell them), I just didn't show up Monday.

As usual, I went to the employment agency again and got a job to take me out to Billings, Montana, to work on

the railroad, the Little Big Horn Railroad. They were building it at that time. When we got to the place on the train about twenty miles from the camp (we had to walk to the camp the twenty miles) there were already with us about twenty or thirty Turks from Albania with their baggy trousers, and they looked like real Turks. They couldn't speak a word of English. They didn't know where to go. There were two Germans besides myself, and the three of us could talk German and ask questions, and we could speak a little English and ask questions about how to get to this camp. So we walked over the desert with these fifty Turks behind us.

Finally we got to the camp, and we were all living in tents. The food was plentiful. We had wonderful food. The only trouble was, we were sitting at long tables, and on one side there were the Turks and on one side we were. If the food first got to the Turks, they ate it all up before it got to us. At least they picked up the best stuff. To save ourselves, we asked the cook to send it to us first, so we filled ourselves before we passed it to the Turks.

It was all pick and shovel work, and the air was clear up in northern Wyoming. It was spring and it got hot in daytime, and we got so thirsty swinging the pick all day. We had two kinds of water: out of the Yellowstone River, which was half sand, and out of swamps, which was green. We had to take pills all the time.

We drank as little as possible, but for lunch we used to drink four to six cups of coffee to fill up with moisture.

They had teams of horses, maybe about twenty teams, that went around in a circle, picking up dirt where we shoveled it in, and they went out of the circle and dumped it someplace else. There was one team that was always ahead of the gang. That shows that the team was very slow. The others pushed it along. The teamster was a terrible person, one of those lousy roughnecks, and he cursed at these things and he threw rocks--he had a mule and a horse, and he would throw rocks at the mule and the mule wouldn't go, sometimes stopped altogether, and he beat it, and finally he got so disgusted that he quit.

So the boss came to us pick-and-shovel people and asked if there was anyone here that could drive a team.

I said, "Oh, I can drive a team."

He said, "Where did you ever learn to drive a team?"

I said, "Well, I was born on a farm."

So he said, "All right, let's try it."

I went over to this mule that wouldn't go, and first thing I went to the kitchen and asked if they had some carrots. I got a few carrots and I went over to this mule and petted him and gave him the carrots and stroked him all along. Finally I took the reins, and off he went, just like greased lightning. From then on, my team was always in the back of the circle because it was the best team. The foreman came over and said, "Say, boy, if you

want a steady job we have work for your all the year round."

But of course, my idea was to get to San Francisco. I wanted to get out of the jungle and try my luck in San Francisco. Just as we were ready to quit, three of us, we heard that San Francisco had had an earthquake, so that was out. But we decid-d we'd go up to Billings anyway, Billings, Montana. So we walked back, and when we came back to the st tion where we could buy some food, I brought a loaf of bread and we drank water out of the ditch, and we thought we had the most marvelous meal! We got there about the middle of the night, and decided to walk to Billings which was over the hills.

By morning we got to a farmhouse and thought that perhaps we could get some breakfast. I went in and asked if we could buy some breakfast and the woman said, "Well, you can get breakfast but you don't have to buy it. I'll be glad to give you some."

So we all got breakfast, and then the man said, "Now I'm going into the village with my horse and buggy, and if you fellows want work in my stone quarry (I have a stone quarry there) I can give you a job."

So he took us into Billings, and we started to work in the stone quarry. It was hard work. We had to swing a big hammer all day long to split these big blocks of stone. By the way, one day I tried to separate two big blocks of stone--I wore mittens and the stone slipped and there was my hand, and so I pulled it out and found

that I didn't have a fingernail on my middle finger. Took it clean off, but it didn't hurt. I said to myself, it's going to hurt terribly after while. I went down to the spring and washed it and tied my handkerchief around it and wrapped it up. It never hurt. I worked until evening and I thought it would hurt at night, but it never hurt at all. The next morning there was already a skin formed over it and I went back to work.

But after a while I told the boss I had a job as a painter and I quit. He said that he was sorry, but he could see that I would rather work on the paint, on my trade. So I started to work at two dollars a day. I had a painting job for an architect, and I found out everybody said you can't work for two dollars a day, the union rates were four dollars a day. So I told the boss that I must have four dollars a day and he said, "I can't give you four dollars a day, you're just a foreign kid." So I quit.

Again I fell back to cooking. I got a job in a restaurant, in the railroad restaurant, to wash dishes at night from twelve to twelve, seven days a week. And so I took the job, and the cook was a Swede, kind of a funny Swede. He wasn't very bright but he was night cook, and he had to make seven pies every night. The pies were terrible. The dough was like leather.

So I said to him, "Let me make your pies for you."

He said, "Can you make pies?"

I said, "Oh yes, I learned it." So I made pies. I always knew how to make pie dough so that it was nice and tender, and so everybody started to eat pies.

I started to help him in the morning about six o'clock when business started in. He had to work till seven o'clock (we both had to work till seven), and from six to seven was a madhouse; everybody came and they would want this and that, and he just couldn't manage to get along, so I helped him.

After awhile he quit his job, and then the boss came and said, "Can you take his job?"

I said, "Oh, I'll try."

So I was working as a night cook. But, as always, there was a hook in the ointments. There was a headwaiter, a little Irishman who hated the Germans--he called me "Sauerkraut" and tried his level best to play jokes on me. About four o'clock in the morning when we were quite sleepy he would have a fellow out there that wanted some sort of breakfast, a brakeman, and I would hear them whisper together. Then they ordered something that I didn't know how to make, some fancy title that they got some place, and I would say, "I don't know how to cook that," and then they laughed. Every morning they did the same thing. I got kind of sick of it.

The day cook was a very nice fellow too, and one day he got sick. The boss asked me if I could take the day job beside the night job until the fellow got well. It

would only be a day, so I took the day job, too. I worked from seven o'clock in the evening to seven o'clock the next evening until seven o'clock in the morning without sleeping, so I was played out. That morning again this little Irishman, to have fun with me, started to order some crazy thing. I was all played out and I was so mad I said, "All right, you damn fool, you do it yourself." And I started to pack up and go home.

Well, he pleaded. "Can't you take a joke?" I said that I didn't take that kind of jokes.

He said, "All right, you go back and work with pick and shovel."

I said, "That that's just what I will," and I walked off.

Well, the boss came to visit me in the room after I had slept and he said, "Well, why don't you stay?" But I was too worn out and I said, "No, I want to go to Seattle." So he said, "Will you stay until I get another man?" I said I would do that. So when he got another man he said, "If you want to go I'll see that you get a free trip to Seattle. You meet me here tomorrow at twelve o'clock noon and the overland train will come in at that time. I'll see if I can get a seat on it for you."

So when the train came in he had some cigars. The conductor got off the train and I saw him hand the conductor these cigars. Then he said, "All right, now you go into the dining car." So I went into the dining car and he

introduced me to the chef, and the chef was a nice fellow, too. He said, "Oh sure, I can take him in here. He can peel potatoes and do things like that."

So on the whole trip from Billings to Seattle I was the guest of the dining car, and everybody was nice to me. They gave me a bed to sleep in at night. Then the chef said when he got near Seattle, "If you want to work in a kitchen in Seattle, I know a lot of the chefs, and I'll take you around and get you a job."

I said, "Well, thanks, but I'd rather not work in a kitchen any more. I'll try to get a job with my trade."

So I got to Seattle, and I was glad to be near the water again so in case I had to go home I could take a boat. But the first thing I had to do, I went to a saloon, a Swiss saloon, and tried to get acquainted with some people that might help me get a job. So he said, "I know a rooming house that's run by a Swiss and he's a floor layer, a hardwood floor layer. Maybe he can get you a job."

He took me up there and oh, this fellow was nice. Oh, yes, I could work. He would teach me how to lay hardwood floors. In those days, the hardwood floors were scraped by hand, not by machines. We all went down on our knees and started pushing the scraper all day long. My knees were about that high! After three days I said, "I can't go on. I can't even stand up straight any more."

So he said, "Well, I can see where you're not made

for this kind of work."

There was a painter in the rooming house, too, a German painter, and he said, "You can work for me." He said he'd give me two dollars a day--of course, in Seattle, the scale was three and a half a day. I thought, I'm really not a very good housepainter yet but I can pass for one, so I took the job. But I also found that this was a job that lasted for only two weeks. The fellow didn't have any more work, and so I was laid off again. Besides, the fellow was one of those fellows who would make me get there a quarter before eight and work hard until half an hour after quitting time, and he would never say quit. I would have to say, "Well, it's half an hour after quitting time." After the two weeks he didn't have any work so he said, "Wait until I get another job."

So I went around and looked for another job and I got it. Those fellows were paying me three dollars. It wasn't a union shop but they paid fifty cents less. I worked there for two weeks and that shop gave out, but the boss said, "I like you but I just don't have any more work."

So I said to myself, "If these fellows can get jobs I can get a job, too." I went around and looked at new buildings and I asked to get a chance to figure. The first one said, "Sure, you can figure." I didn't know how to figure. I could figure out about how many hours it would take to do this and to do that--the hours I could figure out, but the quantity of material I couldn't figure very

well, especially for a new shingle roof. I gave him a figure and he accepted it right away. So I started on the roof, and I had figured that it would take about five gallons to cover the roof, but it took twenty-five gallons. So there was my profit gone!

Well, I got along all right. I said, "Well, I'm in it now; maybe I'll make two dollars a day, anyway." I had to hire help to get the job done, so I called up the union and they sent out a young man. He was about four years older than I was, a Welshman. We got along fine. By the time I got through with the job, I found that I made about a dollar and a half a day. I had to pay the man three and a half a day. I had to pay the man three and a half because he was a union man. So I told him, "Well, I can't have you any more because I just can't pay that much money. I'll have to do it myself."

He said, "Oh, don't worry. I'll work with you and we'll split up. I like you and you like me, and we get along fine."

So we started to work on contracts and we got along fine all summer. Oh, by the way, I forgot to tell you one incident. While we were painting on this house, on the side I had a swinging scaffold, and the hook that fastened to the roof slipped and down went my side of the scaffold. Lucky enough, he could step into a window and protect himself, but from a two-story building

I went down on my back. The first thing I could think of was, "Well, I guess I'm gone now. I'd better try and see if I can get up." I got up and I said, "My back isn't broken," and I laid down again. The woman came out and brought me a drink of whiskey and she said, "Take that and you'll be all right." After a while I was able to get up and continue my work. So I was all right.

Well, we worked all summer; and when fall came on it started to rain in Seattle. I said, "Well, I'm going down to San Francisco." My partner said, "Well, I can't go--I've got a wife, but if you get a good job down south write to me and I'll come down."

Of course, when I came to San Francisco everything was in ruins. So I figured I'd go to Los Angeles. I took a boat to Los Angeles. (This was 1907, after the earthquake--you see, I'd spent a year in Seattle.)

We came to Los Angeles on a beautiful day in September--the clear, warm air that they have in September--and I said, "My, what a country. I'll never get out of here." I really had intended, when I got to the coast, to go down to Guatemala. I heard in school that that was the land of everlasting spring, so I thought I'd go to Guatemala, but when I got to Los Angeles of course I said this was good enough. And anyway, everybody told me in Mexico and Guatemala you couldn't make a living, which was true enough, so I

decided to stay.

So there I was and again, of course, it was the employment agency that we looked up first. I got a job with the Lankershim Hotel as a yard man. As a yard man, I had to cut ice on an ice machine, cut it in blocks and spread it for the ice boxes, and I had to be a chicken butcher and a fish butcher, and I had to clean the basement. The basement was in awful shape. It was so dirty I was ashamed to work down there--there was a room adjoining where there was a lot of coaldust and everything--and so I decided that I had to clean up. The waiters had their toilets down there, too; they were in a filthy state. So I cleaned up. It took about a week of extra time, and I cleaned up everything so it was fit to work in. Of course, the waiters were delighted to have clean rooms.

There was a bakery adjoining where I used to have to clean the ice cream cans, too. That was the most amazing thing, you know. Vanilla ice cream was used, to change it into strawberry or this and that, but if they had any other ice cream left, chocolate or strawberry, sometimes two quarts were left and had to be thrown away. I felt terrible that they should have to throw away this ice cream, but I couldn't do anything and so I forgot about it.

But up in the kitchen, the chef he liked me because the chickens and the fish were always in nice shape

when I brought them up, and the pantry girls liked me because I cleaned out their pantry, the garbage cans, and kept them in fine shape. The chef said, "Well, when the winter comes along I'll let you work up here in the kitchen." I was anxious that winter should come along and I should be able to work up in thekitchen. So I made a mistake, and offered to come up there anyway as a pot washer. He needed a pot washer, and so I went up there and worked as a pot washer. But I kept the pots so clean and shiny on the outside that it was too much work for me. I just was worn out. Finally I just couldn't wait--I was worn out, and so I quit that job.

But I got a job as a second cook in another hotel, the Westmore Hotel that was on west Seventh Street. It was sort of a boarding hotel. I had to help the cook, the chef. He was an awfully nice fellow. He said, "Oh, Conrad I'm so glad I got you to help me. I'm getting old and tired and I'm glad I got a good helper." We got along splendidly for about two weeks, and then all of a sudden he goes and dies.

Then comes one of those crazy Danes for a chef and we didn't get along at all. Well, of course, I got along; but I hated him, and I could see that he didn't like me either, because he wanted to go out in the evening and drink, and I didn't drink and I didn't want to go out with him to drink, and so we just

didn't get along very well. But I hated to give the job up because I said, "Here I'm the second cook and the time comes when I'll be chef," and I got good money.

But one day I caught a terrible cold and a sort of flu, and I just had to quit my job. I began to spit blood and cough all day long. So I said, "Here goes my job as a cook."

I had joined a German singing society. I was always a fairly good singer, and I had joined this singing society. The first tenor told me, "Well, if you're not feeling well, why don't you come out to my place?" (He was a painter.) "I can give you a job as a painter whenever I have work, and if we don't have any work you can stay with me anyway."

So I went down with him and I started to work as a painter. We worked along off and on; he was really not much of a painter--I was a better painter than he was. As we were working we got along all right, but we didn't have very much work. Besides, he was always out of money. When he took a contract he would collect money beyond what he had coming. One day, he had had a job and he hadn't collected money and the job wasn't finished. He was going to escape, and I said, "Well, I'm going to take over your business and I don't want a black eye. I'll do the job anyway, even though I won't get any money." So I finished that job and he

escaped to Oregon, and I got started as a contractor in Eagle Rock.

Dixon: I'm not even going to try and count the number of jobs you've had. [laughter]

Buff: So I was contracting. But there wasn't very much building and there weren't any really new houses that I knew of that needed a painter. So I was thinking what I could do. I heard of a job that was going to be started, a very big house by a rich man, and I thought well, if I could get that job I could at least make a reputation. I'd do a very fine job and make a reputation as a house painter, and I would be launched.

So when the job was getting fairly along--the roof was over the house--I went to see the contractor and asked him if I could give him an estimate. He looked at me and said, "You. What did you ever paint?" I said, "I learned my trade in Europe." He said, "Well, you can give me an estimate."

So here was a big job. It called for two coats of a fine grade of enamel in the bedrooms and in the living room and dining room a piano finish. I said, "Oh, that's just my job. Here I can really make a reputation." I gave him a figure. I just happened to guess at it and thought, "Well, if I make a dollar a day, that's all right."

And so he said, "That's all right. You can have the job."

So I started in, and I knew I would have to hire some help. Again, I called the union and they sent a man for three and a half a day. We worked at it and finally, of course, I could see that I was spending more money for help than I was getting for the whole job. But the hardware man that sold me the paints liked me very much, and I [asked] him if I could I get paints on credit--I said I was running a little close. He said, oh yes, that they would give me credit.

So all the time I was working there, all my money went out for wages for my help, and I had to buy this expensive enamel. But by the time I had the first coat of enamel on, the contractor came over and said, "Conrad, you don't need to put the second coat on. This is the best job I've ever seen of enameling."

I said, "Well, I'll tell you. I want to make a reputation; I want to put the second coat on and I want this job to be the best job there ever was in Eagle Rock." He said, "That's up to you, but you don't have to."

I had an allowance of five dollars for the dining room to buy wallpaper. So I went to the owner and I said, "Well, I got this allowance--would you give me the five-dollar allowance if I decorate the walls instead of putting wallpaper on?" He said, "Well, sure."

Above the wainscoating in the dining room there

was a panel about three feet all around, and I designed an all-over pattern of grapes and stenciled it on. Then I had to outline and shade it by hand. My helper and I worked for two weeks on the thing, working on Sunday. Finally I got a very nice job there. I was finally through with the building, and I was two hundred dollars in debt. But I did make a reputation. Everybody had heard about this fine job that had been done. From then on, I didn't have any trouble getting jobs when there were jobs. Of course, there weren't always jobs because building was rather slow, but I didn't make such mistakes in figuring any more, so I did make scant wages.

But in the meantime I had to have a horse because (that was before automobiles) I couldn't carry my paint buckets and ladders from one job to another. I was able to buy a little horse and a wagon and a buggy and a saddle, all for twenty-five dollars. I bought this little horse, but I found out that the horse couldn't be used on the automobile road when there were any automobiles coming against the horse--the horse would just turn around, and of course it would wreck the wagon. So I said, "Oh my, I've got to break in this horse."

I put the saddle on the horse on Sunday and rode up and down the main boulevard where the cars came, and every time the horse tried to turn around I'd

hold it. Finally the horse was all right. I had it broken in and I could use it with the wagon, and I got along fine.

But then I had to have a barn. I was able to rent a place that had a little barn, but after a while the landlord said I'd better go some place else with the horse. It was in the middle of the village of Eagle Rock, and it wasn't very good.

I decided I had to build a barn. So I bought a lot on easy payment and had a carpenter friend of mine build me a little house. The whole house cost me seventy-five dollars. I had a shop without a floor and then a little barn next to it. The second story was sort of an open place where I could sleep. One morning I got up at four o'clock--I had ordered some cement and gravel, and I made a floor. By eleven o'clock that night I was through. So we had a wonderful home. I had this lower shop--I called it a paint shop, where I could paint pictures, and next door was the horse, and everybody was sitting fine.

So we kept on working there for a long time together, the horse and I. [laughter] When I didn't have a job I would paint pictures. In fact, I didn't want any more jobs than I had to have to make money. Whenever I didn't have a job I was glad, because it gave me time to paint pictures.

Well, things went on like that all through till

1919. I heard of a job that was to be had in Glendale. An artist by the name of Edgar [Alwin] Payne came from Chicago; I was told he had a big job of painting murals for a big hotel in Chicago and he needed a helper. So I went to see him and he was glad to hire me. He asked me how much I wanted, and I said three and a half a day was all I wanted. He said that's fine. He was going to have a big job. He was going to decorate all the halls and stairways on an eleven-story hotel in Chicago. He would paint the things on muslin according to measure, and then when they were finished he'd roll them up and send them to Chicago where they would hang them on the walls.

So he rented a piano factory in Tropico with two floors. We built racks there to stretch canvas, and we stretched canvas and stretched canvas--the whole thing was about one hundred feet long. He hired Jack Wilkinson Smith, who was a well-known painter at that time, and he hired a flower painter, Peter Nielsen, who was a decorator and was good at painting flowers. Then he hired a friend of his from Chicago, Grayson Sayre. He had been a commercial illustrator, an ink artist in Chicago, and he had a nervous breakdown and had to come out here. He hired him because they were friends, and he taught him to paint.

So what we did--I started the thing. I stretched

the canvases on long stretches, and Payne would come and make out the dimensions for each picture. Then I prepared a canvas and painted the sky in and the clouds. He outlined mountains. We had one solid color for the mountains, and in the foreground, Jack Wilkinson Smith, who was the landscape painter and Payne himself painted the foreground, the flowers and everything; and Peter Nielsen, who was the decorator on flowers, painted garlands of flowers all over the place. Then Sayre who had been an illustrator was trained to help on the foreground.

The five of us worked all summer there. We painted yards and yards and yards of scenery. Every time a rack was finished, we rolled it up and sent it to Chicago. By the time fall came around he had raised my wages; he kept raising my wages all the time. We got along fine, and I got up to five dollars by the time the job was finished.

So he said, "Well, I am going to build a house in Laguna Beach," (He had a wife and child). "If you want to come down and cook for us I can give you a little house and you can live with us."

I thought that was wonderful. He had rented a house first and it had a garden house that he fixed up for me to sleep in. So I had a house to sleep in and all I had to do was cook breakfast and dinner for them, and then I could paint the rest of the day. Peter

Nielsen came down too and painted--we sketched all day long and in the evening I cooked. Then he built his new house and he asked me to paint the house on the outside.

One day while I was working on the outside I saw three girls across the road among the trees. They were painting on easels, and I was kind of watching and saw what they were doing. All of a sudden one of the girls screamed. She said, "A snake!" I went over there and said, "What's wrong?" "Well, I saw a snake there, a rattlesnake." I said that there were no snakes around here. She said, "Well, I'm glad you came and rescued me."

The three girls--one was an artist and the two of them were students. We got to go sketching together and we had a grand time sketching the ocean. They got to be quite interested in my sketches and they thought that they were quite unusual. One of them was a friend of the curator at the Los Angeles Museum. They told this curator about my sketches, and she said I could have an exhibition of my sketches.

One day when I went down to arrange my exhibition they had a new curator out there, and this new curator was a woman called Mary Marsh. Mary Marsh and I got along so fine that we started to go out sketching together. My exhibition of sketches came along very well, but I gained a companion. We used to go sketching

together.

Then I began to kind of advise the curator as to what kind of exhibitions they ought to have. When I was down at Laguna Beach I made the acquaintance of a painter who did wonderful work, according to my estimation. He was a gypsy and his name was George Stanley. He had come down from San Francisco and he was quite a character. He wore bangs, with black hair. He was quite an extraordinary guy, quite a talker, too. He showed me his work and we became quite friends. I was enthusiastic about his work. He was the first abstractionist in Los Angeles. He did fantastic work. He had a wife and child. The wife was a schoolteacher and of course, he couldn't sell these things, so the schoolteacher made a living for him.

So I told Mary that it would be nice if this man could have an exhibition at the museum. Well, the director, Dr. [William Alanson] Bryan,was a rather conservative man. He didn't like modern things. But Mary and I went to see this man's work and Mary was enthusiastic, too. She decided she would talk to Dr. Bryan about this young man and see if he could have an exhibition. Dr. Bryan finally consented that he was going to give him time about a month from then, and the date was set.

About a week later, Mary wrote George Stanley

a letter saying that they were forced to change the date to two weeks later. He wrote a letter back and said if they couldn't keep their word that he wasn't going to have an exhibition. He was so temperamental. So Mary came to me and showed me the letter and said, "What a ridiculous thing to do. I can't tell Mr. Bryan now that this fellow is so temperamental--and nobody will ever have a modern exhibition any more. Can you talk to the fellow?"

So I went to him and I talked to him for two hours. I tried to tell him that this would spoil the whole thing for every modern artist if he did a thing like this. He finally consented to have the exhibition anyway at that time, and that smoothed it over. But in the meantime he took a trip to Hawaii--he left his wife and child here and spent about six months in Hawaii, and he came back with a lot of new work. But by that time he had changed his name--he began to get the swell-head, and because he was a Serbian gypsy he changed it to George Stojana instead of Stanley.

Everything went on all right, and we had another exhibition arranged by a group of modern artists. [Peter] Krasnow was there--maybe you've heard of Krasnow--and quite a few of the modernists. They had quite an exhibition there of modern art. I can't remember all the names. [Edouard] Vysekal was there and of course George Stojana and Krasnow and some others that just

disappeared in the meantime. But it was quite an exhibition they had. So that was the first real modern art exhibition.

Dixon: What year was that?

Buff: It must have been either '23 or '24.

Dixon: Were you married then?

Buff: In 1922, we got married. Then it [the exhibition] must have been before 1922, because Mary quit the job when we got married, but the exhibition took place still under her regime, so it must have been before 1923.

Mary Buff: May I say something here to clarify?

Buff: Yes.

Mary Buff: The museum was small then. There was the museum of history, of science, and art. The director had died then and this Dr. Bryan came from Hawaii. He was a scientist. He had nothing ever much to do with art. I was acting curator there of the galleries. So that was why there was a certain amount of confusion, because he was a science man and he knew nothing about painting. He had to learn it all, so that's why the situation was as it was. The predecessor to me was Helen Rich, who later married John Rich, who became a pretty well-known portrait painter and he also taught at the Otis Art Institute. When they were married, and I went in there as the acting curator.

Buff: Another funny thing happened when we arranged

this exhibition. A fellow by the name of Murphy was quite a good draftsman--he was teaching art at the Art Students League, and I had met him down there. So we invited him, too, to send some of his pictures to the exhibition. By the time the exhibition was ready to open, Murphy hadn't sent his stuff in. Finally, we had to do without Murphy although he was already on the program.

Later on, when I saw Murphy I asked him, "What happened? Why didn't you come?"

He said, "Well, I'll tell you. I couldn't pay my room rent, so the landlord had locked my room and I couldn't get in to get my stuff." That was quite typical of modern artists. But that exhibition came off pretty well.

Mary Buff: Quite an eye-opener, actually.

Buff: Yes. It was quite something new. But in the meantime Mary had quit and we had met Krasnow. The exhibitors all decided to form a modern art society. [Stanton] Macdonald Wright was in town at that time. He was quite a celebrity because his brother had written a book on modern art in Europe and had given a chapter to his brother Stanton, so Stanton was quite famous. He came into the modern art society, too. But he had been on a jury in Los Angeles, at the museum, and had made the mistake of giving himself the first prize.

Dixon: That's quite a mistake.

Buff: So he began to be disliked among the artists. They couldn't stand that.

One day when we had a meeting for the modern art society to direct business and to elect a president, they all wanted to elect George Stojana. I had already had some sad experiences with his swelled head. So at the meeting, before George Stojana was there and they were talking about electing him president, I said, "Don't elect George--he will wreck the club. He gets a swelled head and he will do things that will throw the whole thing into a bad gear." I said, "Take Wright here, Macdonald Wright. He'll be an able president. He's good." (He was there, too.) "He's a good talker and he can run the show."

Just then George Stojana came in, and I said, "Well, here he comes now." I didn't know what to say. I said, "George, they want to make you president, and I told them that you were a very good painter but you wouldn't make a good president because you're not enough of a politician to run a society and I talked against you."

But they elected him anyway. They hated Wright because he did vote for himself. Four weeks later I met Wright and he said, "Buff, you were right. That fellow is crazy. He hates everybody but himself." He had already wrecked the whole thing.

TAPE NUMBER: II, SIDE TWO

Buff: I think I should go back to the year 1910, because although nothing of very great importance happened in the ten years from 1910 to 1920, yet for myself the small events were important and it fills in its own way an important period of my life. In 1910 I started a big job of decorating and painting a house in Eagle Rock where I lost my shirt; and so I go to that period and start on.

During the time after that when I had quite a bit of work in painting houses because I made somewhat of a reputation, I acquired a friend who was a contractor and a builder, and he used to let me have the contracts for all his buildings. He usually set his own price, but I always found it was fair and I was inclined to accept it. So I painted house after house, and we had friendly people who seemed to be appreciating my work. I usually tried to get some extra work in on my own expense, partly to practice on decorating walls and partly just to please people. I found that in decorating a small room it was very important that the walls should not come forward because it diminished the size of the room. To find a way of pushing the walls back was a problem. The colors they were using about that time were for a living romm, usually

a dark rich green, and for a dining room dark rich red, which was of course rather crude. But it was the style. I tried to talk people out of that, and tried to develop a wall decoration that would allow me to push the walls back.

Now, I found out that any color used in a small area just a little larger than a dot would recede, and any color used in a large area, no matter how delicate it was, would have a tendency to come forward. I was thinking of the French impressionists and their pointilism: if I could use that on a wall and use the most brilliant complementary colors in small dots, I could create a nice grade. I practiced on that and I began to use a sponge. I dipped a wet sponge in paint and dappled it on walls in a certain pattern or area. For instance, I started with a rich orange and then added a blue-green and purple, and the three colors by themselves had a tendency to create a grey, if seen from a distance; but in order to soften the thing I dappled it over with two or three delicate greys of varying hue.

Then later on I got the idea I could use a stencil over the whole thing--a pattern in a stencil that went all over the wall, and that I used in two or three different greys, too. So I got a very delicate and at the same time very rich effect. But it was of course a fairly costly affair because it took time.

But because, as I said, some people were nice to me and appreciated my work, I sometimes did a room like that just for the fun of it. Sometimes when the cel ceiling was too large in area I would line it with a few lines of different colors to cut it down to a smaller size. All of that gave me quite a bit of work on experiments. It took, of course, time.

In the evening when I didn't have anything to do I would go to art school. There was a school called the Art Students League down in Los Angeles and they had live models there. Inthe evenings, sometimes once or twice a week, I'd go down there and draw from the models. But after a while a young fellow came from New York,who had studied in the Art Students League in New York. He was a great talker, a very important-talking fellow, and he took the whole thing over--instead of letting everybody be his own judge, he began to criticize things and he brought ideas that were not very convenient to me. He was quite an exponent of the Henri school and the impressionists in Paris, whereas I came from Germany where different artists were more celebrated. For instance, Arnold Boecklin, the Swiss, was the great celebrity in Germany at that time. Everybody had one of his reproductions in his house. And then there was the Italian Segantini, who painted the mountains of the southern part of Switzerland with a great new technique. He was the

second one in northern Europe, in Germany and the Scandinavian countries. I brought those ideas over and the impressionists didn't make much of an impression on me. But this fellow was so adamant that he would come to you and start to redraw and repaint your canvas according to his own ideas. Finally that made me mad, and I quit the Art Students League.

But then I was able to go to the evening school of Los Angeles High School. Mr. Paxton had a class in mechanical drawing, but for his own fun besides that he used to get portrait models, and quite a few students would enjoy that better than the mechanical drawing. I went there for several years about one or two evenings a week and drew some portraits. That filled all my evenings, and besides that, if I didn't go there, I would make drawings in sketch books practicing abstract forms. That was before abstractionism was at all thought of or heard of, but I always felt that the foundation of all painting, of all pictorial painting, lay in the arrangements of areas--area against area and color against color, and anything besides that was more or less just something extra. So I practiced on those things.

But in the daytime, of course, I had sometimes a hard time getting jobs when I needed the money. I was always poor and I was always stingy, and I never bought any clothes because I never had any money. I

wasn't anxious to get new jobs and I didn't go around to get them. I just painted landscapes until the money gave out and I was desperate and had to go around and get a job. As I said, this carpenter friend of mine supplied me fairly well with jobs. But I had also another real estate firm by the name of Edwards and Wildey who had a lot of billboards around Eagle Rock. They would ask me to repaint them every so often so I had quite a bit of work that way. By the way, they had their office on Colorado and Eagle Rock Boulevard on the west side, and they had a billboard on the east side of Eagle Rock Boulevard right opposite their office. Mr. Edwards asked me if I would be able to suggest a way so that people looking at the billboard would know their office was across the street. I said that was easy. "I'll just paint a man on the billboard pointing his hand across the street to the office." He said, "Can you do that? You can't stretch out your arm that way." I said, "I have to foreshorten it so that the hand will point directly." He said, "I don't think you can do that."

I made a sketch and showed it to him. He said, "Well, if you can do that it would be fine." I didn't have money to get a model, so I just drew myself in the mirror and then I painted it from that sketch. Everybody had a laugh on me, because they said I painted my own portrait on the billboard pointing to the office.

Another thing that was rather discouraging to me. A delegation from the women's club came to me one day and said that I should keep my house in better order, on the outside, the yard, and I should cut down the weeds. Now, the house of course was not on the main street. It was in fact on a back alley some place, and I didn't think it made too much difference; but when I found out that the women's club was anxious that I should keep better order, of course I had to do it.

Then I had somewhat of an enemy, a competitor in house painting who felt that I was unpleasant competition because I was always lower in price and I really did better work than he did, so he didn't like me. But he had a brother-in-law who was on the city council in Eagle Rock--they had five councilmen. They were all just ordinary businessmen--one was a real estate man, and this fellow was a milkman, and one was a professor at Occidental College, and the fourth or fifth one was just a retired man who lived in Eagle Rock. This brother-in-law of my competitor came to me and asked me if I would be willing to paint some signs on the street curbs. They needed some signs so they would know the name of the street. I said I would be delighted.

I said, "How do you want to do it, by the day?"

They said, "Yes. We pay two dollars a day."

I said, "Well, that's as much as a pick-and-shovel man gets--the sign painters' rates are four dollars a day."

He said, "The city can't afford to pay that much."

I said, "Well, let's see now. Would you let me do it by contract?" He said, "If you want to do it by contract, how much would you want?"

I said, "I'll figure it out and let you know tomorrow."

So I began to figure in the evening just how could I arrange this. I came up with a figure of seven cents a piece and I submitted it to him. He said, "If you can do it for that, it's fine."

So the way I arranged the thing--of course, I had a horse and wagon, and first I went from one corner of the curb to the next corner with the horse and buggy. I had hired a boy, a schoolboy, because it was during vacation time. He drove the horse, and I jumped off the wagon as soon as I got to the corner and painted the thing white, the right area. I had made a stencil. I asked the councilman if they would let me have the stencil stuff. They said they didn't have the stencils and I would have to buy them, so I said that I could make them; so I made some stencils of all of the different letters, the whole alphabet.

After those places were dry the next day, I started out. I had this boy driving the wagon and giving me the stencils. I would say, "Give me E and give me B", and he would hand them to me, and I would paint them in black. As soon as the name was finished I would say,

"Go to the next corner." We drove all day, and I think in that day and the next day I finished the job. I had about two hundred signs made.

By the way, in the evening of the first day this councilman came to see it and he said, "How are you getting along?" And I said fine, and he didn't say that there was anything wrong in any way. But when I sent in the bill it was fourteen dollars. He said, "Well, that's too much." I said, "I did over two hundred and I agreed to do them for seven cents apiece, and that makes a little over fourteen dollars." And he said, "Well, I saw that some of these things were not very good. The spacing was not right. You have to go around with me and pick out the ones that have to be done over. I don't like the lettering. The lettering isn't very good."

I realized that he was just going to make me earn my money over again. So I said, "Well, I won't go with you. The job is finished, and if you can tell me where there's one that isn't right, I'll make it over." He said, "You'll have to go with me. I haven't the time to go alone."

So I decided I was going to the next meeting of the city council. I was going to go down there and put it up before the council, and ask the council if they would let me pick another member of the council to go around with me and I would do anything he would say. I was

under the impression that this man whose name was Miller, was just trying to make it hard for me. And they said, "We can't do that. We appointed him to do this part."

But the professor at Occidental College said, "What's the matter with you people? You're talking about spending several hundred dollars for this and that, and here you won't even pay a workingman's wages. I saw the signs and I think they're good. I like them and I couldn't find anything that was wrong with them."

Well, they voted him down. They said, "We can't get another man to go around. Mr. Miller is appointed to do his job and we just won't pay you."

Then I went to see a lawyer and he said, "You've got a very good case, but you must remember you've got to pay court costs. It costs five dollars to get the court to accept it, and then if you have a lawyer you have to pay the lawyer, and you'll lose money in the long run." So I decided not to go around with this Miller because he was just trying to make it hard for me, so I just forgot the whole thing and never collected.

Up to that time I used to do quite a lot of voluntary work. If a woman's club had a bazaar or a church club had some sort of thing, I would paint them a sign free just to keep in good touch with the people. But after that I said if the city acts like that, that they won't even pay a just bill, I will no longer do any free work.

Another thing--the women's club built a new club house, and I was appointed the job of painting it inside and out. But they paid me by the day, I think it was about three and a half a day. I offered to donate the painting of the ceiling and they gratefully accepted that. Then they had a nice space over the mantle for a picture. So I wrote them a letter and told them that I'd be glad to paint a picture at my own expense if they would like to have me. But I got a letter back that they just couldn't let me do that. Of course, I knew that they just didn't think that I could do it!

Another episode was that my carpenter friend had done so much for me, given me so many jobs, that I decided to do something for him, so I decorated his whole house. I used this particular color scheme on the walls and lined the ceiling and made a real nice job out of the whole thing. One day a retired French farmer came from the east and had this carpenter build a house for him. He saw the job I did on the carpenter's house so he wanted to be sure that I would do the decorating.

Well, that was fine. One day when I was working on his house, a young paint salesman from a firm downtown in Los Angeles came and tried to sell me some paints. I said, "I really don't need any paints. I've got everything on the job here." He kept on

pestering me and saying that he was new in the business and would like to make a good impression on his employer--if I could only give him an order. I said I didn't have the money and I had all the paints I needed. He said, "As far as the money is concerned I'll give you sixty days." So I said, "Well, if you give me sixty days I'll give you an order and you can just deliver it here at the job, although I won't need it here, and I'll take it home."

So I got the goods, and about a month later I got a bill for the whole amount and a notice that the payment was overdue. Then they went to the owner of the building and told him that they were going to put a lien on his building unless I paid up right away. The fellow got furious and came tome and said, "What kind of a swindler are you, to have paint delivered here on my job that you are not paying for?"

I explained it to him. I said, "This is ridiculous. The fellow told me that I could have sixty days, and I didn't use the paint here and they had no reason for coming to you expecting you to pay." He was just so mad he wouldn't listen to anything. I wrote a letter to the paint company and explained the matter, and I told them I would have the money ready at the proper date, sixty days after the purchase. But they just didn't answer the letter. I decided that I wasn't going to pay until the proper time came. But the

fellow was so mad he went to the contractor and told him I was a swindler and told everybody what a swindler I was, and he wouldn't have anything to do with me. He just couldn't see the point. So these are some of the things that happened.

One day a man called me up on the phone and told me that he was a decorator--he had seen some of my work and he would like to be a partner. He said he could get big prices for the work if I would accept him as a partner. I thought, well, it might be a good idea if he can get good prices for it. I myself never could get any decent price for anything. So I accepted him, and after the first two days I found out that he wasn't really a painter. He just made up that he was a painter. He did get good prices. He was a good talker and he got good prices, and so we got along all right. But I soon found out that his main object was in making money. If the job was half finished he said, "That's good enough. Don't put any more in it." I said, "I've got a reputation to uphold and I've got to finish this job." "No No. We're losing money." I said, "You're making plenty of money. You're making at least one hundred percent." He said, "If we can't make good money, what's the use in doing it?" So I finally had to give him up. I just couldn't do it. My whole idea was to do good work and I didn't care very much about the money.

But then I met another man who was quite in love with my work, a decorator by the name of Mr. Goodman. He was doing floral decorating in Pasadena. He was employed by the three hotels--the Maryland and the Green (the Green is still standing) and the Huntington. He did all kinds of decorative work for them. The Huntington usually had in the wintertime one or two theatrical shows. I had to paint the backgrounds and scenery for those, and that was quite a wonderful thing for me because it gave me practice in scene painting.

He also did the floats for the Pasadena [Rose] Parade. Each hotel usually put in a float. I used to help him at night to get the float ready. But I always told him, why don't they instead of trying to make a human figure out of flowers or a house of flowers' why don't they just make a decorative job and make it as beautiful as they can by contrasting colors and forms? He said that they would never allow him to do that. But I kept on talking about it and one year he said, "Well, why don't you try it? Why don't you do a float?"

So I made a design for the float for the Hotel Maryland where I just used three colors. It had the dusty miller--it's a very delicate grey; then I had the yellow acacia flowers and then we had the blue violet--I guess it must have been the cinerarius in bloom at that time. I thought it had a beautiful

color effect. The custom was that each float got some sort of award. There was a first award, a second and so forth, and every float that year got one except mine! The judges said it didn't represent anything. The idea was that it should represent something.

Time went on through the years and we come to the time when Mr. Payne (I spoke about Mr. [Edgar] Payne) got his job and we worked all summer there--not all summer, but until the latter part of July. When the job was finished he said, "I'm going up to the High Sierras to sketch. Would you like to come along?" I said that would be fine. He had a wife and ayoung daughter. He said, "You could do the cooking for us up there and then you would have your meals free, and you wouldn't have to pay any hotel bills because we could camp way up in the mountains."

Then I had another friend, a fellow by the name of Franz [A.] Bischoff who was an artist--I had met him at the Art Students League. I told him about it and asked if he would like to come along too. He was delighted. Bischoff and I would go in my car and Mr. Payne and his family would go in another car. We bought some groceries that we thought we'd need in case we shouldn't get along with Mr. Payne and anything should happen, so we wouldn't be without food. We packed our car on the proper day, and we had an agreement with Payne that we would meet him at eleven o'clock the

next day in Burbank. Now, Burbank in those days was not much of a town. They had a post office and they had a saloon and a blacksmith shop and a grocery store, and that was all there was to Burbank.

Bischoff and I started out to Burbank. I had four fairly decent tires on my car and two extras that were not very good, but they were spares. I went out there to Burbank, and we waited and waited and Payne didn't show up, so we went into the saloon and had a glass of beer, thinking that he would come soon. But he didn't come and didn't come--we waited until one o'clock and Payne didn't come.

So we said, let's go on. Payne will have a big and better car, anyway. (I had an old model T with a truck body and a kind of a roof over the seat.) We started to drive on, and we got to San Fernando--outside of San Fernando one of my tires blew out. I had another spare and so I put one spare on. We drove and drove all afternoon. We finally got to the place where the Mint Canyon Road started, but the road was closed because they were rebuilding it. You know, in those days the roads were not very good and they were going to build a good Mint Canyon Road. So we couldn't use that and we had to go over Bouquet Canyon. Bouquet Canyon was just two tracks in the sand, but we kept on driving, and toward evening we got to Mojave and rented a sort of cabin there--it could hardly be called a cabin, I

think it was a chicken coop once, but anyway we slept there. It was a beautiful evening.

In the morning early, at about four o'clock, we started out. From Mojave on there were no roads. Just two tracks in the sand. Sometimes there wasn't any sand, just rocks. But it was such a beautiful morning. From Mojave to Red Rock Canyon is thirty miles. By about eight o'clock, the hills were beautiful. The sky was as deep a blue as I've ever seen before, and the hills were so brilliant that I didn't think that I could ever paint them that way. I enjoyed the trip. We came to the place where the road goes into Red Rock Canyon--it's fantastic scenery there. It looks like something out of old Egypt, and I was just delighted. I had never seen anything like that before.

After we had gone through the canyon for a while, we came to a little grocery store. It had been hot already and we were sweating and we said, let's go in and see if we can get a drink. We got in there, and there was an old man who introduced himself as Von Harden, a German name. He was delighted to get a chance to talk German to somebody; of course, hardly any people got through there, but he had this grocery store and he had a contraption to cool beer. He had beer bottles under a canvas in a gunny sack that he kept wet, and then the water would drip down and cool

the beer. We had a wonderful cool glass of beer there. We talked and talked and talked, and he told us that he was a rittmeister in the Austrian army in Vienna (rittmeister means a riding master), and it was a job, I would think, for about a captain. He told us stories about his army life--he was so delighted to have somebody to tell these stories about his life.

He told us that he was a gold miner, and outside we saw some great big metal pipes. They must have been about five or six foot in diameter and he said he was going to sink those down. He said about one hundred feet down below the earth there was a river, and that river was salted with gold--he had already taken out of that particular territory over a million dollars worth of gold, but he had always sunk it back into trying to get down into this river, and every time he got down a few feet the sand would collapse. So he got the idea that he was going to put these big iron tunnels down--right now he wasn't able to buy enough, but he would soon be able to get enough money to go down. He was sure that there were millions and millions of dollars worth of gold down there. We all hoped that he would find it, and we said goodbye.

Then it was going uphill--from Red Rock Canyon you first go up quite a while, and then you come to a plateau where you see the hills beyond. The territory looked like a graveyard with all these yuccas and what

do they call those other plants? Anyway, it looked so ghastly that I ghought I must come back here sometime and sketch, because this was scenery that I'd never seen before.

After a while we drove over this plateau and we came down to Indian Wells. There those hills were in their most glorious state. The sky was almost black-blue it was so deep, and the hills--I had never seen anything like that before. I was in my seventh heaven. But the heat got quite bad, and by the time we got to Little Lake we made a stop and had a little lunch. Then we drove on in the most glorious sunshine.

But all of a sudden another tire blew out. Then I didn't have any more spare tires, because I used the last one up. I began to wonder what was going to happen to us in case we should lose another tire--none of the tires were in too good shape, and I didn't have enough money on me to buy a new tire. I was always wondering, would I be able to cash a check? I had a checkbook, and I hoped that maybe they would trust me with a check. But as luck would have it, I never had another blowout.

When we came to Olancha (that's the first town where you see the snow-capped mountains) I said this is just marvelous, this deep blue sky with white snow. We drove on and on and on in this terrific heat along the Owens Lake. The Owens Lake already at that time

had hardly any water in it. It was all these soda mines. The heat was almost unbearable there in an open car. But we got by. It's about twenty miles up to Lone Pine. When we got to Lone Pine, we could see the whole chain of the High Sierras there. Of course, in those days traveling on the desert wasn't what it is now. Now you can get by [quickly], but to travel on no raod, practically, with an old Model-T Ford, it took all day.

We got to Lone Pine toward evening, and just as we came round the curve we could get the breeze from the Sierra--oh, what a delightful thing. I think it's one of the keenest pleasures, to come out of desert heat toward evening and get up where the cool breeze comes off the mountains. We found a camping spot among the trees, the cottonwoods. There was a brook. You know, in those days the water hadn't all been taken out, and there were brooks coming off the High Sierra with the most delightful cool water. We had ourselves quite a camp there. Lone Pine was hardly any city. There was just a gasoline station and a restaurant. It's a fair city now. They have quite a few gasoline stations and they have some restaurants. It's quite a different place. But anyway, we slept wonderfully therein that cool air.

In the morning I woke up at about four or five o'clock and I saw the first rays of sun hit the

mountain tops. I called my partner and said, let's get up and get going. We were supposed to go up as far as Bigpine, according to Mr. Payne's schedule. But Payne had never showed up yet.

We drove on and it got to be quite hot again. Finally we got to Bigpine in the late afternoon. No Payne, and we didn't know what to do. I thought, well, the idea was to get up Bigpine Creek. It's the first real creek that comes off the Sierra, and there was a road along the creek. I thought, well, we'll drive up there. So we started out and went all right for a while until it began to get steep. Of course, it was still very hot. The engine started to boil, so we had to go down to the creek and get a bucket full of water and put it into the radiator. We drove about another half block and the engine would boil again. So we went down to the creek again and filled up the radiator with cold water. We did that about five times, but finally the car just wouldn't pull any more. So we had to go back.

We decided we'd go back and go toward Lone Pine and see if we could meet Payne. And sure enough, after we had driven four or five miles, there came Payne with his family. Then it was too late to do any more than just find a camp. He said we wouldn't be able to drive there--that was out of the question. We'd have to have a packing outfit to take us up there.

He knew the packer, a fellow by the name of Mr. Robinson who had quite a yard there. We put our cars in his yard and made a camp. Mr. Robinson was going to take us the next day up Bigpine Creek.

We packed everything as best we could, and in the morning when he brought his horses andmules we packed them on the animals and started out. But he warned us that he couldn't take us clear up to the main lakes because the mosquitoes would be so bad that he couldn't stand it. We'd have to wait a week until the first of August; then the mosquitoes would disappear. So he took us half way up. Have you ever been up to Bigpine Creek?

Dixon: No.

Buff: Well, about half way up to the lakes there is a hotel now, but at that time there wasn't anything. Two rivers came together. We camped there, in that triangle. Mr. Robinson went back with his horses and said that he would call for us in another week.

We made our camp there. The scenery up there is something marvelous. It reminded me of Switzerland, but in Switzerland the skies have never been blue like that. So we started to paint, and we spent a week there. I kept cooking and we had a grand time.

In another week Mr. Robinson came with his horses to take us up to the first lake. There are five lakes up there, and they're numbered first, second,

third, fourth and fifth lakes. We came to the first lake, and there was an old broken-down cabin there. Bischoff and I decided to sleep in this broken-down cabin--Mr. Payne had his tent and quite a camping outfit; he camped by himself and we slept in this cabin. About one o'clock in the morning it got so cold (we only had one blanket each--I thought there was no cold in the middle of the summer) that we couldn't sleep any more, so we had to go out and build a fire and warm some stones. We heated stones and afterwards we wrapped them up in paper and brought them back and made a bed.

But in the morning it was wonderful. I got up at four o'clock before anybody was up, and I started to walk around. I saw the mountains all around us and I thought well, now, if I could find a path up the mountain I could get higher up to see what was further up. I walked about a quarter of a mile over rocks, and under the rocks I heard water rushing by. There was a creek under the rocks, water was going, and it gave me a sort of eerie feeling to walk over water. When I finally started to climb, every once and a while I heard a rock tumble down from above. Loose rock is always falling in the High Sierra and that made me feel kind of scared. I was alone and it finally came to me--here I'm alone at four o'clock in the morning, about half a mile from where the others are, and if a rock

would hit me or if I would break an ankle or something, nobody would know where I was. So I went back to the camp. By the time I got to the camp, the rest of the family was getting up. I cooked breakfast and we had a grand breakfast together. Not a mosquito was then there.

But later on I decided I was going to try to find Summit Lake, which was quite a bit higher. I packed my easel and stuff and started to walk up to Summit Lake. There I could see the Palisade Glacier on a big sweep across the valley, one of the most marvelous scenes I've seen any place. I started to sketch, and every morning I went up there and sketched again. There was this little lake there, and then down below in the valley you saw some more lakes--those lakes have a marvelous blue-green color. I think it's due to the reflection of the forest that makes it such a beautiful color. I painted there.

Then we went back; Mr. Robinson came in two weeks and brought us back to the valley. By the way, every morning there was some frost on the ground, it got so cold, in August. But when we got down to the valley, of course, it was always hot. We finally made our way back to Los Angeles, to Eagle Rock, and the trip was over; but I could never forget that trip because it was something that I had never experienced, to come

out of the desert into these cool mountain streams.

Then the time came when Mr. Payne was going down to Laguna, where he had bought a lot. I think I spoke about that last time--how I painted his house and how I met some girls and how things had changed. All of a sudden I had company, people to whom I could talk my own language. The trouble was up to that time, during all those years, that I never had anybody I could talk to. People were all very nice to me but they spoke in a different language. They were different. They were business people mostly and had no interest in anything but business. So here for the first time I was able to talk to people who could really understand what I was talking about. Then I met Mary in the museum--I think I said that on the last tape. So from then on it was quite a different life.

Dixon: It must have been like being reborn.

Buff: It was. Well, those ten years were interesting enough, but they were rather bitter; it was nothing but work and wondering what I was going to do next. Of course, I lost entirely my hope that I would be able to go back to Europe to paint again or to go to school. I knew I had to make a living the best I could and learn how to take care of things and how to make a living--I had a definite way of making a living, which before then I didn't have. It was a period that I was gladto see over with.

Dixon: Did you try to sell any of your work, any of your paintings at this time?

Buff: I had never had the courage to really show my work up to that time, because I was never satisfied with anything I did. The blue skies especially always tempted me. I couldn't find a way of harmonizing a really blue sky with the landscape. The rest of the painters never tried to paint the blue sky. Their skies were always sort of a grey-blue, and that was easy enough to harmonize the color of the foreground and hills with. But I struggled and struggled, painted things over and over and over again, trying to find a way of harmonizing a really blue sky.

When I came back from the mountains I was fascinated by what I'd seen up there--the snow and the deep blue sky, and I kept on working from my sketches. I painted a little picture of the glacier and the surrounding country and I got a little further on the blue sky, not really blue but fairly blue. I exhibited that at one of the art club exhibitions in the spring, and strangely enough I got a little special mention in thepaper. That encouraged me, and I started a large painting of the same subject. It was almost as large as this wall. I worked on it and worked on it and finally I got it fairly well. I think somewhere I've got a photograph of it.

But since I had shown that particular painting on

a small scale, I didn't want to show it again the next year. I had painted another painting of the desert where I practiced with the blue sky; it was a fairly large painting, about three times as large as that one, and the next year I sent it to a California Art Club exhibition. But it was turned down. I couldn't understand how they could turn it down, because they had certainly a lot of pictures that they had accepted that were not anywhere near as good as that. The only way I could figure it was that it was painted in an unusual way. I used the pointilism technique, and that was something that had never been seen at the California Art Club. I think it was too strange, and they turned it down. That gave me quite a knock. I couldn't understand how I could lose with a picture like that, but that's the way it happened. Mary (of course, I was already engaged to her at that time) encouraged me. She said you have to take the knocks with the good things.

I further developed my technique of painting walls, and when we got married I was able to make a living by painting walls and painting decorations. Again, I had the experience that a man came up to me and said that these wall decorations were something entirely new, and if I would go in with him he would guarantee me $25,000 a year. Well, that was unbelievable. I couldn't believe it. But I thought, if he can get

good money for these things, why not try it? So I tried it on his own house, and before I got to put in the delicate greys over the brilliant colors, he said, "That's good enough, I don't want any more." I said, "You can't sell that." He said, "Yes, I can sell that." So I played around with him for a while, but it was always the same thing. "It's good enough. It's good enough." I finally said, "What's the good of making money if I can't really do something worthwhile?" So I had to give that up.

But we got along. I had built a house and we made friends. One of the friends that we got acquainted with was a man by the name of [Karl] Hauenstein. He came from Chicago, and he and his wife were quite progressive minded--he was all for modern art and at the same time he was a Freudian. He was interested in psychoanalysis, and together with modern art and talks on psychoanalysis he captivated us, and we became quite friends.

Then he made us acquainted with another friend of his that he had met in Chicago, by the name of Richard Neutra. Richard Neutra had just come out from Chicago. He had been interested in Frank Lloyd Wright; he had worked with Frank Lloyd Wright in Chicago, and he was quite an interesting fellow. We were delighted to meet him and his wife. Mrs. Neutra was Swiss, and she was a cello player and a singer--she used to sing these

Swiss songs, and we had some grand times.

Then through Neutra we became acquainted with [Rudolph Michael] Schindler. Schindler had built a house on Kings Road. Schindler, besides being a disciple of Frank Lloyd Wright, was a very handsome fellow. He was quite a ladies' man, and part of his business was to make love to all the ladies he could. He had a very interesting wife, but that didn't bother him. There was quite a group of people that used to meet down at Schindler's house.

Schindler was the first one who built a house out of concrete by pouring the slabs on the ground and then raising them up. Now that's a technique that they're using all over, only on a much larger scale. The walls of this house were about the height of our walls here, about eight feet, but he did cast them on the ground and then raise them. That was the first time that I'd ever heard of that, and Richard Neutra said the same thing, that it was quite a revolutionary way of pouring concrete. But his house was rather slipshod in workmanship--the carpentry work wasn't very good, but everything was original. Schindler was quite taken with doing original work. Besides working for himself, he was working for Frank Lloyd Wright, supervising the Barnsdall residence on that hill. Of course, we were all interested in that because it

was so revolutionary and the residence was so beautiful. We became acquainted with Frank Lloyd Wright's ideas. We didn't meet Frank Lloyd Wright at that time, but we were all enthusiastic about his work.

Then Schindler and Neutra and Hauenstein and quite a group used to meet down at Schindler's house every so often. We had quite a time there. Schindler brought a book written by a man in Chicago by the name of [Stanislaus] Szukalski. In fact, there were two volumes of reproductions of sculpture that this Szukalski had done in Chicago, very extremely modern for that time. Schindler thought it was wonderful. I'll have more to say about Szukalski about ten years later. At that time, the name didn't impress me, except that I always remembered that I had seen his books. So we had these great parties down there at Schindler's.

I was going to build a garage, an additional garage to our house. They cut the street through and we didn't have much of a street--the city cut the regular street through, and we had to build a garage on the street level. So I made a plan for the whole approach, and then I found out that I had to have an engineer to sign the plans. I asked Richard Neutra if he would be able to sign these plans so I could get them through the building department. He said yes, he could do that; but he said, "Why don't you let me do it?" I said, "Well, I haven't very much money" (it

would have meant rearranging the whole yard and the front of the house), "but if you want to do it, you are welcome."

So he took charge of the whole thing, and he practically rebuilt the front of the house, and he built the garage and a nice approach; but it cost me a lot of money and it took all the money that I had. Neutra often said that that was the first job he got in Los Angeles.

Dixon: To have a garage designed by Richard Neutra is really something.

Buff: Not only the garage, but he changed the whole appearance of the house. So it was quite a thing. I don't mean to criticize Richard Neutra, but he didn't get along with the workmen. He had this European habit of being the big man, and he would come to the job in the morning and wouldn't even say good morning to the fellows, and start to boss them around. Well, you can't do that in this country; you could do that in Vienna, but not here. Anyway, there was always a quarrel. Finally, when the job was finished, he failed to demand that the contractor give a notice of completion. Then later on the contractor came around and demanded one hundred dollars extra, and I had to pay because Neutra failed to demand this notice of completion.

TAPE NUMBER: III, SIDE ONE

Buff: I stated before that Mary and I were married--I want to be sure that I stated that, so people don't think we were living in sin. Perhaps as I stated before, in 1922 Mary Marsh, the then acting curator at the LosAngeles Museum, and I were married.

There's an interesting incident about that marriage. Mary had been living with her mother in a cottage near the museum, and Mrs. Marsh wanted to be sure that we were married by her minister, the minister of the Congregational Church. We were going to have a very simple wedding at her home. We engaged the minister to come at two o'clock, and the witnesses, too. We were all waiting, and two o'clock came and nobody came. So we waited, and ate some of the cake, and at about two-thirty or so I decided I would call up the minister. I went to the neighborhood phone and I called him up, and he said, "Oh my Lord, I forgot all about it. I'll be out there as soon as I can." It was quite a way from the main Congregational Church near LaFayette Park out to the museum, but about half an hour later he appeared and the ceremony was over in a short time.

But the trouble was that Mrs. Marsh had already a ticket to go back east to see her other children.

She was to be at the station at five o'clock that evening, and here it was already close to four o'clock. We were out at Exposition Park and I had to drive her way down to the depot. It was quite a race with the traffic, but I finally got there. [laughter] I thought that maybe that was the funniest wedding that anybody ever had.

When I look back at those years in the 1920's and look back at my early youth, I was confounded to find out that certain characteristics and faults of mine were responsible for a lot of things that happened to me. My parents were exceptionally conservative in their outlook on characteristics of people. They didn't like anybody to advertise themselves, and they impressed on me all the time that it was bad taste to put your best foot forward. You had to hold back. Although they had a grocery store, they absolutely refused to advertise anything, and they always spoke about competitors who were so bad as to advertise. In my personal appearance they were very anxious that I should look conservative. If I tilted my hat a little bit, my father would come and straighten it out. He gave me a strange feeling that I shouldn't be aggressive. So for that reason, all my life I had a reticence about being telling people that I was good or that I could do anything, coupled with the fact that I'm very poor with language.

I remember back in Eagle Rock when I was about twenty years old I was doing some work for a doctor. The same doctor treated Mary twenty or thirty years later, and he told her about me. He said, "As a boy you just couldn't get a word out of him. He was the funniest boy I ever met." So those were the characteristics that formed my life. For that reason, my progress was unnecessarily slow and made it hard for me to get on with jobs.

About 1922, I joined the California Art Club. The California Art Club in those days was practically the only club in Los Angeles that represented the artists. They had a yearly show at the Los Angeles Museum--that was a privilege they had, and it was quite the show of the year, although there was another exhibition that took place in the fall where everybody was eligible to submit their works to a jury. In those days, the museum was really a place where the artists were treated royally, not like now where everybody has to send pictures in and submit them to a jury and be perhaps in competition with ten thousand others. In those days, the museum would come to your house, pick up the pictures, and submit them to the jury. Practically everybody that had half-way decent work would be accepted. After the show was over, the museum would bring the pictures back. So it was a golden age for the artists.

In the middle '20's or the later '20's, the club had a wonderful opportunity. Miss Barnsdall of Barnsdall Hill gave her residence to the club, to be solely used by the club. I don't know why Miss Barnsdall didn't like her house, although at this time it was considered the most beautiful building in LosAngeles. It was, of course, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and the supervising architect was Rudolph Schindler; as I said, it was quite a remarkable building and everybody liked it except the other architects. The architects were down on Frank Lloyd Wright. We were very fortunate in having this privilege of using the building for fifteen years. She gave us a fifteen-year lease on the building.

Dixon: Did you use it for exhibits only?

Buff: No, it was mostly used for social purposes. We had our meetings there, and then we had open evenings for everybody to come in and discuss art. The Club was quite a successful thing and we had a good time while things lasted.

As soon as we were married, Mary and I felt it would be a good thing if she would give up her job at the museum and devote her interests entirely to her home. Miss Louise Upton was appointed her successor and she became a very dear friend of ours. In a few weeks after she attained her job she gave me a one-man show at the museum, and I had the chance to show

maybe about fifty paintings. I think I stated before that when Mary was curator, when she first started, she gave me an exhibition of smaller things at the museum. So this was the second exhibition I had out there.

The principal members of the California Art Club at that time included William Wendt, the landscape painter; he was more or less considered the best landscape painter in California. He came from Chicago where he had acquired quite a reputation, and he was a friend of William Preston Harrison, the collector. There was Hansen Puthoff, a good landscape painter, who was also working on billboards to make a living for his large family. There was Jack Wilkinson Smith who also was a landscape painter and worked on billboards, too, to make a living. There was [Edwin] Roscoe Shrader, who was the director of the Otis Art Institute. There was Clarence [K.] Hinkle, a dear friend of ours, and Edouard Vysekal, who was quite up in reputation in LosAngeles at that time, but he died rather early of a coronary. Then there was Donna Schuster, Henri De Kruif, John Rich, Mable Alvarez, and Guy Rose, who in my estimation was the finest painter that California at that time had. He was a delicate soul, and had been in Paris where he had studied with impressionists, and had a rather delicate charming way of expressing landscapes.

Then there was Edgar Payne, my personal friend who has been very helpful all my life. There was Merril Gage, who was later, or maybe at that time, a sculptor and director of the art school at USC, William Cahill, Franz Bischoff, the fellow that went with me up to the High Sierra, and many others.

The club was essentially a conservative organization. At that time, modernism hadn't come to Los Angeles with any power. They had the whole thing by themselves, and they weren't very much in favor of anything that differed from their own style that was established at that time. Since they didn't have any rebellious members, they got along very well. Although there were other artist clubs springing up, they never had the membership that the California Art Club had. But later on internal dissensions came up, and gradually the club went downhill as an important artist organization.

Dixon: What kind of dissension?

Buff: For instance, Macdonald Wright came to Los Angeles. You know, his brother had written a book on modernism in Paris that mentioned all the important people in Paris, and he gave his brother a chapter. That established the reputation all over America for Macdonald Wright, and so he came to Los Angeles a debonaire, softly spoken man with a marvelous vocabulary. Nobody

could speak against him. He could talk anybody down. He was quite an addition to Los Angeles, and around him grouped a bunch of young fellows who made the principal opposition to the California Art Club. Gradually some of the better members of the California Art Club dropped out and formed another organization, and so the thing deteriorated and we had many organizations without anybody being really the top dog. So that finished that part.

Later on, about the middle of the '20's, a man came to me and asked me if I would be willing to decorate a Mormon Church. He was a young architect who had come from Salt Lake, and he was given the job of building what they call a "stake house" for the Mormons. A stake house is a sort of a thing better than a church--it has a social center. The Mormons were always very anxious that their young people should find entertainment within the church, so they had a stake house where they had socials and dances--they were great on dancing, and they had dinners and all that. This young man, by the name of Lawrence Nowell, had the job of designing this big building. He didn't know of any decorators, so I was recommended to him. He came to me and asked me if I would be willing. Well, of course, I certainly was willing. This looked like a marvelous opportunity to have a chance to decorate, not only a church, but a social

hall and a dance hall and dining rooms and everything under the sun.

So I began to think about this thing. Well, he had a definite price that he could afford to pay, but that didn't bother me. I said, "I'll take the job for what they can afford to pay and I'll do the best I can." I began to get busy on the idea and I thought maybe there would be a chance to put some murals in. The idea of adjusting mural paintings to the general scheme and making a harmonious thing had already taken hold of me, and I was very anxious to have murals. In the main hall, the entrance hall to the auditorium of the church, there were three double doors and above the doors were lunettes. There were three successive lunettes, and I thought of showing how the Mormons left the East and came to the Salt Lake. I painted three large murals there besides, of course, decorating the walls.

Then I had the job of decorating the ceiling of the church, of the chapel proper. Mr. Nowell built me a stage so I could get up there. I worked up there for almost a month ornamenting the ceiling, although on the whole I wasn't in favor of ornamenting ceilings; I was rather thinking most of the attraction should be on the walls. But since there were no particularly interesting walls, I thought I'd concentrate on the ceiling. Then there was an auditorium for theatrical

performances with a big curtain, so I thought that I would decorate the curtain. I spent quite a long time on that curtain. Then down in the basement they had a social hall that had a low ceiling and a rather large expanse of floor space, so that the whole ceiling seemed to sag down in the middle. I thought I had to try to find a way of straightening out the ceiling by means of decoration. I worked for quite a while, and finally came up with a scheme that really allowed me to straighten out the ceiling. Mr. Nowell was surprised--he didn't think it could be done just by decorating. So the whole scheme was very successful, and the Mormons, being very nice people, gave me a lot of other smaller churches to do that they built around the city.

Another thing happened about that time. A contractor, or a promoter, decided to build a hotel in Whittier--they called it the William Penn Hotel in Whittier. Whittier was a fairly small town at that time, and William Penn was, of course, the saint. So the contractor came to me and asked me if I would take over the job of decorating this hotel, and of course that was wonderful for me. Here I thought I could do something that would really make a reputation for me. The lobby had a fireplace--it was not too large a lobby, but it had the fireplace in the center, and I thought it would be wonderful if I painted a

mural over the mantle, which I did. Then I had a chance to tone the walls and the mural together, which again was one of my big problems. I used my old technique of decorating walls with the stencil and the different colors, and created a very sensitive background for this large mural over the mantle. The dining room I decorated in the same way. Of course, I didn't have too much money, but I was able to manage things well enough so I didn't lose any money. I was able to pay the workmen and still not dig into my own pocket.

But a strange thing happened later on. About ten years later I thought I'd go back and see this--see how the mural was still looking, whether I still would be interested in really seeing it. So I came in and I saw that they had changed the color of the walls--they had a horrible color on the walls, and then the picture--oh, Lord, it was terrible! They had a design painter repaint the picture in gaudy colors, and he changed everything except my signature. The whole thing was absolutely ruined. I felt just terrible and I began to talk to the proprietor and asked them if they would at least paint out my name. I said, "You had a thousand dollar painting there, and it's not worth five cents now. Now please repaint my name so I won't be blamed for it." Well, they were very, very surly and I don't know whether they

ever did it. I never went back, I was too sore. By the way, I lost my money there because the company went bankrupt and we only got a very small part of the contract sum.

So that's the way things went on during the '20's. But toward '28 or '29, I heard that the Edison Company was putting up a big building downtown, an office building, and that Allison and Allison had the contract to design the building. So I got to thinking, wouldn't it be wonderful, since the Edison Company got most of its power from the High Sierra, if they could use murals depicting the source of the power in the Sierras, since I was always interested in painting the Sierras. Mary, as usual, pushed me, and she wrote a letter to Mr. Allison [asking] if they could use Sierra paintings somewhere. Mr. Allison right away answered and said, "Why don't you come down?"

So I went down and he showed me the plans. In the elevator lobby, above the elevator doors, he had six panels, and he thought it would be nice if those could be decorated with murals. At the main end of the lobby there was a space, but that was already given to a mural painter by the name of Hugo Ballin. That was just one panel. Of course, that would have been the most ideal place, but since it was already given to somebody else I didn't bother. I thought these six panels would be wonderful, so I

started to make sketches. Mr. Allison told me that if I would make sketches he wouldn't ask anybody else to make sketches. I thought it would be worthwhile putting a lot of time in on it, so we started to work together. Every time I had an idea I took it to Mr. Allison and got his approval, and then I went a little further, and went to show him my progress, and everything went on fine until (this started about June) fall, when he told me that another artist had come in at the time I came in and he had let him make sketches. Then he never came back, and he thought that he had dropped out; so that's why he told me that I was the only artist. He said that now the best thing he could do would be to allow both of us to compete.

Well, the other man was Barse Miller. He was a friend of mine and he belonged to the California Art Club, so we were both competing against each other. About October first we were supposed to submit our sketches to the president of the Edison Company, Mr. Miller. The day approached when we went up to Mr. Miller's office with Mr. Allison present and we displayed our sketches against the wall. Mr. Miller looked at them and said, "Well, I want those," and he pointed to mine. That was quite a blow to Barse Miller, my friend, and I felt sorry for him. Besides, the whole job had to be finished by January the first--that was when the opening of the building was scheduled.

For a while I didn't know what to say. Finally I thought well, the time was short and Barse Miller was terribly disappointed, so I said to him, "Would you be willing to take half, to take three panels, provided Mr. Miller would agree to it?"

So I submitted it to Mr. Miller and said, "Would it be agreeable to you if Barse took one side, provided he followed my instructions--that is, to have it in the same character that I had mine?" Mr. Miller said, "I don't object, just as long as you get things done nicely." So then Barse and I had a big dinner together and had a wonderful time. The price was set. Allison asked us what would we do them for. We had to make up our minds, so we decided five thousand dollars for the whole job--that would leave twenty-five hundred dollars for each, which was a wonderful sum in those days. You know, a dollar was worth a dollar then.

So we began to work, and we worked and we worked until just about Christmas we had the job finished. We had quite a success. The papers praised us for the job we did, and we really had our first success. But we found out that the other artist, Mr. Ballin, who came from New York, got six thousand for his one panel, and we got five thousand for our six panels. So we learned not to underestimate our price.

Back to our early life. In the early '20's, we

had built a house on a hill overlooking Eagle Rock Valley, a beautiful hill, and we built a large livingroom and we had quite a gay time there. We had quite a number of friends and we used to have dances and dinners.

Dixon: Did you always do the cooking?

Buff: I always did the cooking. I think of an episode when one of the editors for the Los Angeles Times, who wrote a weekly column on things that happened during the week, was invited to dinner one night. The next Sunday he wrote in the paper that he was at dinner at the Buff's, and if Mr. Buff was as good a painter as he was a cook, he would get somewhere!

As time went on, we acquired quite a number of friends who were quite interesting at our parties. One was Karl Hauenstein, who later became the manager of the Otis Art Institute; Richard Neutra, the architect; Rudy Schindler, the man that had supervised Barnsdall Park; Julius Davidson and his wife; Kem Weber; Arthur Miller, who was the art editor of the Los Angeles Times for many years, and his friend Lawrence Tibbett. He came to one party dressed up as a hobo. We used to have these dress parties, and everybody was supposed to dress in the most primitive way. He came dressed as a hobo and filled the room with his voice. Then we had quite a few of the scientists

of Cal Tech--there was our Swiss compatriot Fritz Zwicky, the astrophysicist, and Dr. [Richard] Badger and Dr. Morgan Ward. That is about all that I can think of now.

Besides decorating and painting, Mary and I used to take trips. I was always interested in the Owens Valley since I had gone up there with Franz Bischoff and Edgar Payne, and I thought I'd like to go up there again and go further up toward Bishop. From Bishop we drove up to Long Valley and to a place where Lake Havasu is now. To the north (I think it's to the north--I always get mixed up with directions) there's Mount Morrison and Laurel Mountain--these two mountains fascinated me to such an extent that for years and years after, I painted and painted and painted, thinking that I could get the real significance of that wonderful landscape. Of course we went back there time and time again.

Then a little later a friend of ours told us about Zion Park in Utah, what a wonderful place it was. In those days, Zion Park was hardly known. Hardly anyone knew of Zion Park--that was around '24. So I decided we'd take a trip out there. In those days, of course, the roads were in awful shape. Up to Victorville

the roads were good, but from Victorville to Barstow the roads were so bad--they had been working on the roads and part of the road didn't exist. The first day we got as far as Barstow, and the heat was terrible. We decided to camp at Barstow. Barstow in those days was just a few houses.

The next morning we started out and the heat was getting worse as we got down to Baker. Perhaps Baker is one of the hottest places in the United States--it usually is about 115 or 120 in the shade. We luckily passed Baker on a terribly poor road, and started to go up hill and then down hill again. Up and down hill meant something, because on the up-hill grade with a Model-T Ford, sometimes we could hardly make it. But we finally reached Las Vegas. Las Vegas in those days was nothing at all, just a few houses, a small village, mostly Mormons. So we passed through Las Vegas. That was of course before Boulder Dam was built. There wasn't anything there.

The next morning we started out going east, and as we got further and further away the air got clearer and clearer and the landscape was fantastic--it was beautiful. Always the same varied pattern of hills, the same foreground with the sagebrush, but the air so clear that the design of the hills stood out against the deep blue sky which has always fascinated me and still does--the deep blue sky and the mountains and

hills against it. Finally we came to Glendale, Nevada. Glendale today, of course, is a gambling joint--they have slot machines there; even in those days they had in the restaurant there one slot machine. But there was hardly anything but the restaurant there and the gasoline station.

After we started out from Glendale we got to the Virgin River, on a pretty bad road going up and down and up and down over dry washes; it took us almost till noon until we got to the Virgin River. We crossed the Virgin River and before long we came to the first Mormon village, Bunkersville. We went off the road to drive through the village and I was impressed by the amount of orderliness there and the peculiar architecture that the Mormons brought from the north-eastern provinces of the United States--those small, sharply designed houses. Trees were always there and shaded everything, and there was always water on the side of the road. I was marvelously impressed by the Mormon culture at that time.

We drove on and came to another village, and the same thing. People were out there with fruit for sale, and we were almost ashamed to buy the fruit, it was so cheap. Finally we got over the hill to Santa Clara, and from on top of the hill before we reached Santa Clara I could see the wonderful red cliffs around Santa Clara and St. George. But the village of

Santa Clara--I will never forget the beauty of it, the intimate aspect of it and the fruit trees all over that hid the little houses. The people were so marvelous, I could never forget how beautifully they were treating us. It was so different from anything that happened in Arizona. You know, in Arizona at that time, when you came into a new town the first thing you saw was a bunch of tin cans and discarded automobiles. But here everything was in wonderful order and I thought, whatever religion the Mormons had, if a religion can create that, you don't wonder that they had a success.

After a while we came to St. George. St. George, of course, on those days was rather a small town, too, one or two restaurants and two gasoline stations. But again we saw the orderliness and the quality of the people that always intrigued me. They were so warmhearted and so anxious to make a good impression on visitors. I think they had no doubt had trouble with the Gentiles and thought that the Gentiles hated them, and when some decent people came inand treated them nice and felt sympathetic toward their religion and their general way of life, they went all out to make it pleasant. We stayed there over night, and in the morning again we started out for Zion.

Of course, the roads had been very poor all the way. Then we came to Anderson's Ranch. The government

had built, I think under President Harding, a paved road into Zion, and it was like getting into heaven to be able to travel again on a paved road. As we approached Zion Park I saw the cliffs from thedistance and it looked like a fairy tale way off, the red cliffs and the white limestone on top. I felt like I was getting into an entirely new country that I never dreamed of before. The nearer we got to Zion the more enthusiastic I became. Springdale I think was the first town we got to. The same thing again. The wonderful people, beautifully kept houses and gardens, and always the fruitstand there with people selling fruit. Cherries--the Mormons had the most wonderful cherries, and in June they were ripe. They didn't even try to sell them. We saw cherry trees in front of houses full of cherries, and we went and asked them if we could buy some cherries. They would say well, if you want to pick them yourself, help yourself. That's something I never heard of before! They were short of labor and they didn't want to go through the trouble of picking the cherries--it was quite a bit of trouble to go up on the ladder and pick the cherries, so we picked them for ourselves.

At that time the road through the towns above Zion was not installed. They were working in the towns but it had not been finished, so we couldn't get out of Zion except by going back again or by

climbing over the Hurricane Fault and getting into territory where the Mormons still had polygamy. But it was the most marvelous country too, and there was a big expanse of territory clear down to the Colorado River, where there were still wild horses. That was before the time that the government asked people to kill the wild horses. We saw a few Mormon houses up there. They were dugouts. That was the first dugout we had seen. Again, even these polygamists, were wonderful people. To make a joke of it, the polygamist women didn't tempt us at all! They were mostly old, elderly women who had worked all their lives and were really worn out.

We stayed for about two weeks up there and I sketched and I photographed and I painted, and finally we had to come back. There was no other way to go back except the way we came. The time when I got through with the Edison murals was about 1929, and the depression had just struck. We didn't feel so much of it at that time because there was still a lot of building going on--the period from 1920 to 1930 had tremendous building activity, and it wasn't so much felt that there was a depression until 1933.

About 1930, another architect who also was a member of the California Art Club and whom I had known for some time, told me that he had a bank to do in Phoenix, Arizona, and he would like to try out

my schemes on the walls with the idea of relating the walls to the murals. Of course, that was a wonderful opportunity, so I went over to where he had an office established in Phoenix. I went over in the month of February to look this whole thing over and work in his office, trying to work out a scheme for a mural. There we had the same trouble that we had in most of these old buildings that had a low ceiling and a large expanse of floor space. The idea was to raise the ceiling. I worked on the scheme of painting a large mural at the main end wall, trying to raise the ceiling. I had an interesting scheme of the first Phoenix raising from the ashes, the big bird going up to the ceiling and the city of Phoenix down below. Then I used my scheme on the walls.

By the time June came along the building was ready for me to work. He had a fixed price and it was a very favorable price. I think I was getting about $2,000 for my work, and I had $2,000 to pay for the rest of the walls and the painting on them. So we had a wonderful time, although it was terribly hot. They had no air conditioning any place. I slept in a hotel room. It was so hot in the morning I just felt like a washrag. I couldn't eat anything except for a cup of coffee and a grapefruit. But just about then they installed air conditioning in the new building, so while I was in the building working on the mural

it wasn't bad.

Dixon: You could have put a cot in there and slept.

Buff: Well, it was a bank building and I don't suppose they would have liked to have anybody sleep there! But anyway, that job went along fine and I got through.

Then when I came home, Guarantee Loan Company, run by a man by the name of Beesemeyer in Pasadena, built a new bank and the architect, Mr. [John] Austin, asked me if I would design a mural. I was of course delighted. They had $2,000, which in those days was real money. I went at it furiously and the time was very short, so I had to work almost day and night to get the thing done. I know one night I worked till one o'clock in the morning. But I finally got through; and there I had the same problem of trying to raise the ceiling. The job was quite successful.

By the time I got through it was nearly 1933. I don't know if you've ever heard of Beesemeyer, but the whole thing went bankrupt. Fortunately, I got my money--I got the $2,000 out of it. But Mr. Beesemeyer had bought five hundred dollars -worth of my paintings besides for his private office, and those I never got paid for. They collapsed.

Dixon: You didn't get your paintings back?

Buff: Oh, I didn't want to get them back. I felt very favorably toward Mr. Beesemeyer. After all, a lot of people had done the same things and never got caught.

He was unfortunate enough that he got caught. I didn't feel badly. He had the paintings and I thought, well, what would I do with the paintings? I have lots more. So I didn't do anything.

But by that time the depression really began to be felt. Building had been stopped altogether, and Mary was fortunate enough to get a job at the Hollywood Progressive School teaching art. She got that job about 1930, and for three years she stayed at the job and it kept us from going hungry. By 1933, I had practically used up my money.

Dixon: Did you have children by this time?

Buff: Yes, I had two children. Our first son was born in 1926, and the second son was born in 1929. Unfortunately, the second son was not normal and we had quite a lot of trouble and it was quite an expense. We were always hoping that he might turn out to be all right. The doctors didn't know much about the trouble he had. He was a Mongolian, and they knew very little about Mongolism at that time. The specialist that we took him to first thought that they could help him, and they gave him injections; but after a while they said if we had another son it was better to devote our resources to him, because they didn't think there was anything they could do for him, the second son. That of course was quite a blow to us.

By 1933 things got bad. Mr. Roosevelt came in,

and the first thing, of course, he did was to come out and change the whole financial scheme of the United States. Instead of figuring on the money dropping down from the upper class to the lower, he felt that we should build up the lower classes so that they could make a living. He was influenced by certain artists to try to help the artists. He had been told that the artists were in bad shape and something had to be done. So a scheme was cooked up to employ artists at mechanics' wages, that is, to take the good, established artists to work for the government at pictures that the government passed upon. They submitted their sketches and the government would pass on them. The students or the second-class artists would have twenty-four dollars a week. The first-class artists were getting thirty-eight dollars a week, which were the wages that were paid to carpenters. We thought that was wonderful.

Dixon: That was good money.

Buff: Oh, yes. The better artists always had the idea that the artist should not be a favored human being that was making a lot of money; he should even work at regular wages like they had at that time in Mexico. The apprentices, the young fellows, were getting twelve dollars a week. We thought we were in heaven. Every week we'd take our works that were started over to the office and if the office passed them favorably,

we'd get our check and for another week we could work.

And we did work. It was the first time I really could devote my entire time to painting pictures, and I had something to look forward to. The pictures were going to be used. (After nine months, of course, the Congress said it was boondoggling and wasn't necessary, that the artists would be able to get along now that the depression was out of the way, so the thing stopped.) But during that nine months, I painted about ten large paintings. Some of them went to schools. One of them went to the museum and one of them went to a senator from Nevada.

I forgot to say that as soon as the scheme was announced and I went to work, I thought I would go up to Boulder Dam. They were building Boulder Dam at that time, and I thought I'd go up there and make sketches and painted a monument to the construction of the dam. Mary came along. We spent some time at the dam, and we were given the privilege of seeing everything that was being done. They had the catwalk across the canyon and we were allowed to go across that and make sketches. We worked there for a long time. When I came back, I worked up about ten paintings.

When that ended, of course, it was a matter again of working for yourself. But I had sketch material that I made and I worked up quite a number of pictures.

Sometime a little bit about 1933, the Congress

decided that the artists were not going to be helped in the same way but that they were going to have competitions for decorating the post offices. A competition was announced for the Beverly Hills Post Office.

Before this happened, the Los Angeles Public Library announced their competition for the decorating of the public library, and artists wereinvited to submit sketches for it. I thought it would be a wonderful opportunity because there was a great big auditorium in the main hall that could be decorated with murals. The prospectus said that any artist could take part in the competition provided that he pay ten dollars to take out plans and instructions. I thought that that would be a wonderful thing and I would like to work on it, so I spent the ten dollars and took out the plans. But as I worked along (the time was rather short--I think it was only about six months to make the sketches in), I saw that the thing was too much for me and I just couldn't go on. I could never finish it, so I gave it up; but because I had taken out the plans and had paid the ten dollars I was allowed when the time came to announce the winner. They were going to have an exhibition of all the sketches, and those that took out the sketches were privileged to see this exhibition of the sketches.

So I went in there; and I had of course fairly

well studied the whole set-up, when I was thinking of taking part in the competition. I knew about what was required. I found out that very few of the sketches really understood the architectural problem. One thing was outstanding, though. Maynard Dixon had an entry and I thought he understood the architectural problem better than anybody else. It was a beautiful sketch that he made and I thought he would have gotten the first prize. But I found out that somebody else was given the award. I won't mention the name, but he was a newcomer to Los Angeles and I didn't think he understood the problem. But his price was $50,000, and Dixon's price was $37,000. I couldn't understand why Dixon didn't get the award.

Well, I wondered, and I asked people, and finally I found out that the library had never intended to give the job out by competition. The man who got the award had been studying with Frank Brangwyn in London; they wanted Frank Brangwyn to do the job, but he was too busy. He didn't want the job, but he recommended this particular man to do the work. They intended from the very beginning to let him have the job, but in order to comply with the law that required that for public buildings they had to have a competition they started this humbug of having a competition, without ever thinking that anybody except this one particular man would get the job. So that's a black spot on the

government of Los Angeles. When I saw how that happened, I decided I would never take part in any competition. If things are rigged in the first place, why go to the trouble of working hard?

So when a Beverly Hills project came up, I had no intention of taking part in the competition because I figured it was going to be rigged, anyway. But the architect came to me and asked if I would take part in the competition. I said no, I was through with competitions. He said he would personally guarantee (he was on the commission) that we were getting a fair deal; so on the strength of that, I decided I was going to make sketches. There were supposed to be two murals, one on each side of the building, fairly high up. When the time came to send the sketches in, the decision was to be made. They picked out five entries and mine was among the five to go to Washington to let Washington decide.

Now, the chairman of the commission, besides the architect, was a fellow by the name of Merle Armitage. The decision was made, and the girl friend of Merle Armitage was supposed to get one side and a newcomer to Los Angeles, who claimed to be a fresco painter, got the other side. Well, the architect came to me and said, "Have you heard about this?" He was up in arms. "I will not stand for this ." This girl friend of Merle Armitage had never

painted before, and the agreement was that the fellow by the name of [Charles M.] Kassler who got the other side and who claimed to be a fresco painter, was to teach her and the two were to do the work.

Well, the architect went to Washington and raised Cain. He said he would never stand for this. Washington decided that the fresco painter, Kassler, was supposed to do both of them because the architect wouldn't let the girl do it. So that completely cured me of ever taking part in any competition any more.

Before the competition started it was announced that the five first entries would be given automatically other post offices to do. I figured that I would get a call from Washington to do another post office, but months went by and nothing came up. I was sore, and I finally said to Mary, "Why can't we do something?" She said, "Well, why don't you write to Washington and tell them?" So she wrote a letter to Washington and said that this was strange, that we were promised this, and how come nothing ever happened?

Shortly after, I got a reply from Washington saying that I was awarded a mural up in Manteca. That's up north. If I would make sketches for it they would decide whether they were good enough. So I started to make sketches and I worked hard. First, I went up to Manteca to see the job and look over the problem--as

usual I had a certain idea of what was required, not just to paste a picture on the wall, but to conform to the architectural scheme.

TAPE NUMBER: III, SIDE TWO

Buff: Last time, we finished by my telling you about the mural the government let me do up in Manteca. That was an interesting thing, too. I went up to Manteca to talk to the postmaster. We got along fine, everything was fine. Then I started to make my sketches and submitted them to the government commission, and everything was fine. I painted the mural according to their wishes.

When I finally went out there to install the mural, they had a new postmaster. He was a Republican, and the other postmaster had been a Democrat. Of course, this was entirely a Democratic administration. This whole thing about the post office murals was a Democratic idea. He was not in favor of having a mural.

I showed him the picture. He said, "That's a very nice picture, but that doesn't fit our locale here because we've got mostly vineyards and cattle here." (I had a landscape of the Tujunga hills). "That doesn't apply to our locale--I wanted some cows in there."

I said, "Well, I'm afraid you'll have to take that up with the government. I can't help it--the thing is done." He said, "Well, we can't help it now." So

everything was settled and I installed it. Later on, I got a very nice letter from the government saying that they were very pleased with the mural. That was settled that way.

But that just about ended my career as a decorator and mural painter, because in the early '30's building had stopped. There were no more public buildings. There was no more decoration of any kind. I thought, "Well, this is about the end of my career as a mural painter." I think that time just about cuts my life history in two. After that, it became an entirely different thing. So maybe I might try to sum up the whole thing that I've stated before--there are some things that I would like to emphasize.

There were two parallel lines of endeavor in my life. One was to be a painter and the other was to make a living. In my earlier years, up to my marriage, just making a living was a pretty tough job. It didn't leave me really very much time to paint, although I squeezed out as much time as I could. But from then on, that is, fromthe twenties to the depression, things began to look up, partly due to the fact that I was able to do murals and was able to do decorations. I had gained enough experience in house painting and wall treatment, and I really had good equipment to do the decorations. But owing to my inability to sell myself, I have always been extremely

shy and extremely stubborn. Between the two, of course, it didn't make a salesman out of me.

As I look back, I must say all my troubles, most of my troubles, started from the fact that I was too shy to sell myself. I couldn't put my best foot forward. In order to get the big decorations and public buildings where the real money is, you have to really put a lot of time on salesmanship, trying to get next to architects and convincing them that you are able to do these things, which I could never do. I could never go into an architect's office and ask for a job. I just took the jobs that the architects brought to me. Those were not the big jobs that everybody was after. There was really an awful lot of money available for decorations in the '20's. The style of architecture needed some decorations; the whole tendency was to rely on the Italian renaissance for the style of decorations, and for architecture, too. That was before modern architecture even tried to come in. So I would like to say that while I was happy enough and got enough work and made a fairly comfortable living doing the decorations that I could get hold of, none of the big things were available to me.

For instance, as I stated before, in the Los Angeles Public Library the contract was awarded to a man who wanted $50,000 for the murals and three years to do them in, against Maynard Dixon who wanted to do

the thing for $37,000. Dixon was the only really qualified man. He had done a lot of murals in San Francisco, very good things. He didn't get the job, and the other fellow was awarded it. What's more, after two years were over, he came back and asked for twenty-five thousand dollars more because he said he had made a mistake in calculations and wanted two years more. That is, he wanted seventy-five thousand dollars plus five years to do it in, and they gave it to him without any trouble.

In a lot of banks, twenty thousand dollars for decorations was a small price. It was mostly done by men who imitated Italian renaissance ceilings. Most of the decorations were done on ceilings and very little attention was paid to walls. These elaborate Italian ornaments were painted on ceilings. For instance, I know one fellow, who did the Biltmore Hotel, had a regular factory. He had art students copy little pictures that he designed on canvas, and then they were later pasted on the ceiling. The same man decorated the Civic Auditorium in Pasadena which he plastered with little pictures all over the walls and the ceilings, everywhere! I don't know exactly how much he got, but he became a very rich man in a short time.

Then there was the Los Angeles City Hall. They spent forty-five thousand dollars on decorations for

part of it and thirty thousand dollars for decorations in the council chamber. I could recall similar places where banks spent tremendous amounts of money. But, as I said, I was just not able to compete with that sort of thing. I was happy enough to be able to make a fairly comfortable living doing smaller things. People who built residences and liked my wall treatment were willing and able to pay a fair price, nothing compared with what the decorators got--but I was happy enough.

I sometimes got awards for paintings. I got the Mrs. Huntington award for the best painting in a San Diego exhibition. I was especially invited to submit a picture to the Pan American show in Los Angeles. I had the second one-man show in the Los Angeles Museum. Later on, I won the first prize for a painting at a Los Angeles exhibition. So I can't complain. I also got an award in Sacramento, and at an international exhibitionof lithography in Chicago. So things went along fairly well.

But as I said, the time came when all that stopped with the depression. At first we thought that this wouldn't last very long--maybe six months or a year, and then it would be over. Gradually we spent our earnings, but when most of it was spent we had to think of doing something else. Mary was successful in getting a job as a teacher for arts and crafts at a

Hollywood progressive school, and she was there about three years, while I had time to try to think of something else to do.

I remember in Germany when I was a young fellow they did some beautiful pictures for wall decorations in color lithography. I thought if I could learn the process of lithography I might be able to do something similar here. We were also thinking of doing block prints. Of course, the fundamental principle of lithography is similar to block prints--that is, you print on one side and stop out the other. A slab of limestone is polished or smoothed out, and then you make your drawing with a greasy pencil. The limestone has a tendency to absorb grease--it has an affinity for grease. Whenever you make a drawing on it, it sinks right into the surface of the stone. Then you apply a solution of gum arabic to the whole thing, a water solution that will desensitize the rest of the stone, then you can apply water to the whole surface, and with an ink roller roll ink over the whole thing. The ink will only adhere to the greasy spots. The gum arabic spots will repel the ink, so you have your drawing ready to print.

I had a rough idea of what it was all about, but I hadn't the slightest idea of how to go about it. Then I heard that the Western Lithograph Company, one of the biggest outfits in the United States, was

employing artists to do lithographies. I went to see them. Mr. Cortlander was the manager of the outfit, and he was awfully nice. He said he didn't hire any new artists right away but he would always be willing to help us learn lithography, and that he would give me about three or four zinc plates. (By the way, I've forgotten to mention that lithography is now being printed not from stone but from zinc or aluminum plates. Artists are still using stones because they claim they can do more on stones than they can do on zinc plates.) Well, anyway, Mr. Cortlander gave me three zinc plates and told me to make some drawings on them and he would have them printed, sample proofs.

I went to work and took these things back when I had them drawn. They made some beautiful prints, so I was quite encouraged, and started to think in terms of how I could do color work in lithography. But that was of course far off. First I had to really get a printer, a paid printer. I couldn't impose on Mr. Cortlander all the time, so I had to find out where to get the zinc plates and where to get them printed. I had to also learn how to treat zinc plates before you could draw on them.

Of course, I went to the Los Angeles Public Library and looked up all the books on lithography. I was told that a man by the name of Paul Roeher would be a good printer. I got myself some zinc

plates from the Senefelder Company in Los Angeles--they dealt in materials for lithographic printers. I learned how to prepare them and I made my first drawing of one of the missions, the Pala mission, and I took it to Mr. Roeher. He proved to be a very good mechanic. He was an old-time German lithographer who had quit his regular business, but he did printing for artists. He was a very nice fellow, and between the two of us we produced quite a number of lithographs, as you can see.

Of course, I wanted to learn the printing myself because I knew I couldn't afford to pay out money for printing all the time, and as a matter of principle I wanted to do the whole thing. So I made some samples and printed them on a laundry wringer. I experimented with color lithographs.

In the meantime, I also heard of the silk-screen process. (They call it serigraph now.) In those days it was practically unknown. A fellow told me that he knew something about it, that the process was being used by sign painters. The Chinese had invented the process of making pictures that way. So he gave me a rough idea of how it was done and I began to experiment.

First of all, you stretch a piece of silk quite a bit larger than you expect to make the print on, so as to have a margin on the outside all around. Then

you draw all the outlines of the picture that you want to print in India ink so thatit's permanent, it can't be washed out. Then you begin to fill in the area, or rather the opposite of the area that you want to print with a glue solution that will stop the pores of the silk. The silk is a very tough silk, a particular kind of silk that's made to bolt flour through in flour mills. It's very fine--of course, they have different degrees of fineness, but we had to have the finest.

Once the pores of a certain area were stopped out so nothing could penetrate them, you were ready to print the open area. You lay your cardboard or whatever you want to print on a table and put the screen with the frame over it. Then you pour the paint you want to use for that area on the margin, which was stopped out too, and then with a rubber squeeger you pull the paint across the surface. That forces the paint through the pores of the silk onto the board below. Then you have the form that you wanted to get on your canvas or whatever you want to print on. Then in order to get another area, first you wash out all the paint very thoroughly after you print a certain number, whatever number you wanted to print, and then with water you wash out all the glue. So you have a new piece of silk with the outline drawing on it. So then you can stop out another area and

leave open another area. By the time you're through with that particular area you wash it out again and stop out a new design.

Of course, I first started out experimenting in a small way. I did a few small things in just one or two colors. Then I thought this would be a good process to do large paintings, reproduce paintings, not just block prints. I thought the schools would be interested in large things if they could get them cheaply enough. So I began to experiment with adding color after color. The first print was of two deer in the forest, and I used about forty different colors. That meant I had to wash it out and reprint it forty times, and I made an edition of about forty-five numbers. The numbers don't matter much because you just print one after the other--you can print forty-five in two or three hours. But the washing out and making a new design [take time]. I made very elaborate designs--I overprinted and overprinted and left out things until I had about forty or fifty different colors.

The thing was so successful that Mary, who by that time had given up her job in Hollywood, began to pedal them around to schools. They went very well. I started to do more, and the next thing was I think a desert picture. That went so well that I had to print another edition. Altogether I think I made ten different subjects, which took quite a bit of time,

but through the years I had nothing else to do. I did one print of a little Indian girl holding a lamb out in the desert. A fellow by the name of Philip Johnston, who had been born on the reservation and was the son of a missionary (you'll hear more of him later on because we became quite good friends), had taken a photograph of a girl like that, and he let me have the photograph and I made a painting of it. That had quite a successful future because it was used for the foundation of our first Indian book. But that comes later.

In the meantime, I began to think about lithography again. This silk-screen print process was after all an elaborate process; you couldn't print thousands of them because after all the process was limited. They had to be sold for about twenty-five dollars apiece in order to break even. I was thinking all the time of a process where I could sell things more cheaply. I began to think about lithography again, but in color this time. I began to experiment. I had to print them myself because Mr. Roeher didn't know anything about color printing, and I had to learn it myself.

First I got in touch with a lithograph company in Hollywood. A man by the name of Andy Freese was the owner of it and he was very sympathetic to this color printing. He said he would like to know more

about it himself and he'd be willing to experiment with me. We made one experiment there, but later on he changed his mind and said it was too expensive for him and that he didn't think he could spare the time. But he said I could use his press. When I tried to come back and use his press, he said his partner said that it was unethical to let somebody else use his press.

Then I said that the only thing I could do was to buy my own press. I learned by and I don't know what means that the Senefelder Company in New York was selling their old hand presses because they were out of date--new presses were invented, and so they were getting rid of all of their stones and their hand presses at a very low price. They were willing to sell a hand press with a three hundred-pound stone about twenty-four by thirty inches for one hundred dollars and ship it to San Pedro. I bought one of those and had a man from San Pedro bring it up to the studio. It was so heavy it took about four or five men to lift it up to the studio, and even if they took the three hundred-pound stone off. But we got it there, and I had a happy time making all kinds of experiments. First I thought if I made a color print that could be sold for three dollars, I might be able to print one on my press and then on an offset press have maybe a thousand printed. It looked very

promising, much more promising than the silk-screen process.

In the lithographic process it is possible to completely erase one drawing and make room for a new one by using another stone (it doesn't have to be the same size) upside down, putting the polished surface down, and use some carborundum powder or sand and in slow motion grind into the stone until the picture is completely erased. Then the stone becomes as sensitive as ever. However, with the zinc plates you can do the same thing, but you have to have a machine. There's an outfit somewhere in the southern part of the city that makes it their business to regrain zinc plates. These zinc plates originally were perfectly smooth plates, shiny metal. Then by means of carborundum powder and a machine, they grind a surface into it so that you can draw on them as you can on a piece of paper. Originally, you couldn't draw on a piece of smooth tin or aluminum. Now they use aluminum instead of zinc, but they no doubt use similar processes. In lithography, every five years they find new methods. Now I find that they are using perfectly smooth aluminum plates. They photograph the pictures on. Of course, for hand-drawn lithography you couldn't use those plates. You have to have a grained surface like on a stone--you grind a surface into it by using carborundum powder.

I liked zinc plates very well, but most artists preferred to have stones, even today. It's true that there are certain things you can't do on it. On a stone you can scrape out certain portions with a knife, but on zinc plates you can't do anything like that. And several other things; to work on zinc plate makes it a little more difficult. I remember that Macdonald Wright once asked me how he could make lithographs. I told him about the general process; I told him about a zinc plate and I showed him a zinc plate. He said, "Oh, I wouldn't work on that. That grey color is terrible." The color of the stone is beautiful, but the zinc plate was no good. So a lot of artists of course objected to that entirely.

I was going to say how we started the color lithographs. In doing a color lithograph you make your drawing. Say you want to print in three or four colors, say four colors: you make one plate for the red, one plate for the yellow, one for the blue, and one for the black, if you're going to use black. It's almost impossible to do a good job without using black, because the overprinting of blue and yellow over red, or the other way around, doesn't give always a very deep black, although I did some in just the three colors and I got very good blacks. But on the whole, the more plates you use, the better work you can do. A lot of these reproduction processes that they're

using now for paintings are not done entirely by lithography, but they're done in a similar process and you use one plate for each color. Sometimes they use as many as ten or fifteen plates to get really fine work, but I was satisfied if I could get a job to work with three colors.

After I made some experiments in three colors, I thought I no doubt could get better results by using five plates. I used one yellow, two reds, two blues and no black. The two reds gave me a dark red and a light red, and the two blues gave me a light blue and a dark blue. Using the dark blues with the dark red and over the yellow gave me a very good black, in fact a more beautiful black than any black would give you. I started to experiment with these five plates and since I had my own press the cost of printing didn't amount to anything, just my own time. I made several things and I found out of course that sometimes I had to draw a plate over again if it wasn't just right. It was a matter of experimentation to see what to do with each plate.

I made a print of two deer in the forest. I used five plates, and it was quite successful and was considered a very beautiful thing. It sold very handsomely. I only made a few hand prints, and then I had them printed on the offset machine--the offset machine at that time could print about three thousand

in an hour. Of course, you had to watch the pressman very carefully, because you had to be sure that you got the same strength of each color. If, for instance, at one time the fellow used the yellow too heavily, then I couldn't get a good blue, or I couldn't get a good purple. Everything was a little bit tinged with yellow. By experimentation I found out just how much to use, how much red, how much light red, how much dark red. Very often I had to do a plate twice, because when I made my proof I found out that I could improve on it.

I was able to get three thousand printed in an hour at a fairly small expense--I think the printing bill cost me about $150 dollars, and I got three thousand for that. They were really good; they were just as good as the hand prints. In many ways they were really better than the hand prints, because in lithography, in the hand print, you've got to wet your plate in order to roll the ink on, and then you print over that under heavy pressure. That pressure on the wet plate will smooth out the texture on the paper--that nice texture on the paper will be squashed, so you lost that. But on theoffset you don't use any water. That is, of course you use water--but I don't know whether you're familiar with an offset. You print on a rubber blanket, and then from the rubber blanket you print on paper, so you don't get any water on the

paper and you don't squash the texture. You can have a beautiful textured paper with the texture intact. In that sense, the offset prints were better than the original, provided the pressmen watched the strength of the color all the time. About every ten prints he pulled one out and compared it with the original one. That work had to be done very carefully. I was always there when they made the prints because I wanted to be sure that the pressmen didn't neglect anything. So I got very good results, very even results all the way through.

Then I made another print, with three colors only, of some cactus flowers. You know these cacti that bloom around here with these brilliant orange flowers. Up in Tujunga wash I found some beautiful specimens, some beautiful lemon yellow and some deep red, so I thought I would make some prints. I made one of a red in three colors only, and one of a yellow in three colors. I got just as good a black as if I had used five colors, but of course it took more care. You have to watch your red and blue very carefully so that they come deep enough. I printed those on the offset press later on, too, but they didn't sell as well as the deer print. The deer print was really a good seller; I sold a thousand of them in a fairly short time and had to make some more. Unfortunately, they had destroyed the plates already.

I had to get somebody to make offset plates, which I was lucky enough to have Mr. Roeher, who was still alive, to do it for me. So I printed another thousand. That was the one successful print, together with the desert in the silk-screen process.

I had given up the silk-screen process for the simple reason that they were a lot of work and I found out that I could sell the others cheaper. After a while the market was exhausted, of course. Mary went to all the schools and the schools really bought quite a lot of them, but after a while you exhaust your market and then you have to depend on going around to small stores every month or so to try to sell some. Well, neither Mary nor I were very good at that, so I thought the color lithographs would sell without having to use a lot of salesmanship. So I gave the silk-screen print up and devoted myself entirely to the color lithograph.

I told you already that I had made a print of a little Indian girl. Well, it turned out that Mary had shown that print to the assistant superintendent of schools in Los Angeles. He was very enthusiastic and said I should do a book on the Indians. The schools were so much in need of information about the Navajo Indians that if we could manage to do a book he was quite sure it would be good for the schools and would help us sell the book. Miss [Gladys] English at the

Los Angeles Public Library suggested that we send one of these prints to the Viking Press. She thought the Viking Press in New York was the best press to approach for children's books, that we ought to send it there with the idea of doing a book. Well, we did send the thing in and we got a letter from Miss [May] Massee, the editor, saying that she was very much interested in the picture and as far as the book was concerned, she was coming out to Los Angeles in a month or two and would come to see us.

So she did come and we told her we had an idea for a book. We told her roughly what the idea was, and she said if I would make my own color plates, they would give me all the color that I wanted--I wanted color first of all. If I could make all my plates and send them all the plates, black and whites and color, she would accept the book. Then it got to be a matter of really trying to think what we were going to do. In order to make ourselves acquainted with the Navajos, of course we had to study them first-hand, go up there. I also had to really perfect my idea of color.

So we went up there and spent about two months, Mary and I. We had this Philip Johnston, that I started to tell you about, who became a friend of mine. He was born on the Navajo reservation as the son of a missionary, and his father was still up there

in Indian Wells. Indian Wells is about forty miles north of Holbrook. He wrote to his father and asked him if he had room to put us up there, and of course he was delighted to have some company come up.

So we drove up there. Here at Indian Wells was a trading post and a nice big building that had been used for the mission, but it was not used any longer. Mr. Johnston, the minister, lived in another house so he was willing to rent us the big building. So we had a chance to live up there for some time, and think the whole thing over and make sketches and become acquainted.

First he introduced us to a Navajo boy who was a schoolboy who spoke English. He took us around to different hogans. (By the way, the name "hogan" is pronounced ho-rǎhn. They use that French "r" and the accent is on the last syllable. I learned a few words of Navajo, but not very much.) Anyway, he took us around and we met a Navajo medicine man. He took us to his hogan and he translated. The medicine man couldn't speak any English, but he was a very nice fellow. They called him Hosteen Bichini. Hosteen is the name for "mister" and Bichini means "automobile." They called him Hosteen Bichini because he was the first man that had an automobile up there. He had about six grown-up sons and of course he had a wife, and instead of a hogan he had a one-story stone building.

So we got along swell. We had to talk through the translator but he was a very friendly man--not talkative; of course, Indians are not talkative. But he asked us to come into his house. Now, in a Navajo hogan the women sit on one side and the men sit on the other, so we sat on one side and his wife and the children sat on the other side.

We talked for some time, and on the way out I saw he had a sheepskin drying. Just to make conversation I said, "How much can you get for the sheepskins?"

He said, "Just a minute, I'll find out." So he goes inside, and after a while he comes out and he said, "You can have it."

The boy, the translator, told me to take it--when you ask how much can you get for it, that means, can I have it? So I learned among Navajos never to ask how much you can get anything for, because it means that you would like to have them give it to you.

Later on, I was in the store and I was talking to the storekeeper when a Navajo came in. He could speak English. He was about thirty-five years old. He said he had been at the Riverside school but he ran away and went back to the reservation. He was a nice fellow--we got along fine. He asked us to come and see him. He lived in a hogan with his wife and a niece. So as time went on, we went down to see him

and we became quite friends. We went to see him quite often and he told us all about the Navajos.

I think I'm rather ahead in my story, really. After we had been there about four or five weeks at Indian Wells, we decided to go back to Los Angeles and think over what kind of a book we could do. I made sketches and Mary wrote a few pages, outlined the whole thing, and I made my sketches. I had a lot of pictures in it. I was anxious to do as many pictures as I could get in. Then we sent that to New York and Miss Massee was enthusiastic about it. Now, Miss Massee is a very interesting person. She never criticized my drawings but she was always fussy with the text. We had quite a lot of trouble with her because she always made changes in the text, this and that, although in the first book she accepted the whole idea right away.

Then it became a matter of finally deciding what kind of pictures I wanted. We had to go back to the Navajo reservation again in order to make thorough studies. We stayed up there for quite a while. We rented that house for a month or two months, and we became acquainted with a lot of Indians. As I said, this friend of ours, the thirty-five-years-old, could speak fair English, so that he could tell us about everything. I took photographs.

Speaking about photography: that was an interesting

thing, too. You know the Navajos don't like to be photographed, especially the old fellows. One day I was out in a canyon and I was taking some photographs. I was alone. I saw a Navajo come up to me and I got kind of scared. I thought I had done something I shouldn't do. He was quite friendly and he was able to speak English pretty well, for a Navajo. He asked me how much did it cost to take photographs? I knew what he meant, so I said, oh, yes, I'll take photographs of you. He said, "You come next Sunday to my hogan and take photographs of my wife and children."

Sunday came, and I went out there. The wife was all dressed up with all her jewelry. The children were all combed and fancied up. I took photographs of the whole clan, and then a Navajo came around. He had been in the tent next to the hogan, and he was one of the most beautiful human beings I've ever seen. He had that wild look of the Navajo that I have never seen in the white people. It makes all the difference in the world. He had a beautiful face, the typical Navajo face.

He came over and talked with this other fellow. I was enthusiastic, and I took my camera and said, "Tell him I would like to take a picture."

You should have seen that man beat it! He went behind his tent and he never showed up again. He was from the black forest up there that had never

seen any white people, evidently. They think the spirit goes into the camera--that's the thing with most of the old Navajos. The younger ones, of course, changed their minds on that. But anyway, that was the way they were.

The man who had his pictures taken asked me, "How much does it cost to eat at your house?" I said, "It won't cost you anything. You come down with me in the evening and we'll eat together." But the wife didn't want to come; she didn't speak any English, and the children of course didn't come. He came down and he enjoyed the salami. (I always took a lot of salami with us--that's the kind of meat that keeps up there.) So he had quite a good time. I made quite a few photographs of his clan, and on our next trip up there of course I brought him the photographs. He was delighted. That was one case where the Navajo really wanted to have his picture taken.

As I said, we had to go back and make some real studies, and I took a lot of photographs and made sketches of the landscape. I didn't make any sketches of the people; I was never any good at making portraits because I always felt sorry for the sitter. I couldn't ask people to sit still for half an hour or an hour, so I relied entirely on photography for that purpose. We worked for, I think, two months and became fairly well acquainted with the whole history

of the Navajo, so that Mary was really able to write a book.

I was anxious that these should be true to the spirit of the Navajo at that time, and show the tragedy of it, too, the poverty. I was amazed that the United States could allow such poverty. It was unbelievable. The land was so poor that there was hardly any grass, just a few blades of grass and some rocks, and here the people with about sixty or seventy sheep had managed tomake a living. That's all they had to make a living on.

The women did most of the work. The men attended to the horses. That was the old-fashioned wayof doing it. They were the fighters and they had to attend to the sheep. The sheep belonged to the wife, too. The horses belonged to the men. And if there was a case of divorce, it was very simple: the woman just put the saddle outside the hogan, and when the man came home he knew that he was supposed to leave. All he had was his horses. The woman had the children and the hogan and the sheep. As far as the hogan was concerned, he could get another wife and build another hogan. They built their own hogans, and it's very interesting how they build them. There's an old tradition for doing it, and they can't go wrong. Of course in the book we described the way they made a hogan.

After the text was accepted in New York (there was

a little more to that than there was with the drawings—Miss Massee always liked the drawings, but she was very fussy about the text), I had to begin to really make the plates. I was supposed to make all the plates and give them to them inorder to have quite a bit of color. Anyway, the publishers are smart. They like to get everything out of an artist and a writer without paying much for it. So when she found out that I was willing to make my own plates, of course that was wonderful. She let me have my own way.

I really had to try to perfect my own printing, to try to do the color work as well as I could, because I could only use the same three colors for all the pictures. I had to adapt all the pictures to these three colors, just yellow, red and blue, and no black. I worked for a long time on these prints, and when I sent them in there was no question about it. Just about the time when they were thinking of printing it, I had to go to New York and I was introduced to the printers. They didn't seem to think very much of my plates. There's a tremendous jealousy among all the craftsmen. They found out that here an artist was making his own plates and they were supposed to copy them on a big press plate. They found all kinds of things wrong with these plates. But what could I do? Here they were, and I felt that enmity all the time. Whenever I went to a craftsman in lithography, I felt

that they always thought that an artist will never learn to do this, that this is so difficult that an artist will never learn to do it.

But anyway, the book came out and it was a tremendous success right away, artistically. It seems that in New York they were quite enthusiastic, the book dealers. I was told that in the book stores they had these books exhibited in all the windows, and one of the big papers drew big illustrations and did a big write-up about this Navajo book. It was quite a thing. It sold all right; it sold very well.

Dixon: This was about '37, didn't you say?

Buff: It came out in '37.

Dixon: This was when the second depression sort of started to hit, too.

Buff: Well, the depression had hit already in 1934. In fact, if it hadn't been for Roosevelt in 1933 we would have had a bad time for a while.

But anyway, that was our first book. From then on, I could think of all kinds of books that we'd like to do, but we'd have to try to get the material--and that was another story. Of course, to get the material for the books (unless you depend on what's written on a subject--it neveroccurred to us that we could look up things in the library and write a book), we had to go there ourselves.

I really ought to tell you more about the Navajo

and our visit up there, because it was very interesting. They were awfully nice to us. I found out [how to] approach a Navajo in the right way. For instance, once we were up in Kayenta, and I had found that the Navajo liked the seashells. Somebody told us that if you took enough seashells along you'd never have any trouble interesting the Navajo in whatever you wanted to do. We were outside of Kayenta, camped outside of the reservation, and early in the morning I got up. I saw a Navajo riding toward our car, and I thought maybe he didn't like the idea of people camping on the reservation. So I went and got one of my big abalone shells. I used to get them down in a store in Los Angeles for about ten cents apiece. I went to meet this Navajo. He jumped off of his horse and I held this shell out. Oh, he came over to me and he hugged me! Of course, he wouldn't talk, he couldn't talk English. He took it to his horse and he went off. I knew what to do after that.

Another thing, if you want to make friends with the Navajo in summertime, especially the women, you should take some fruit along. Oranges, peaches, any kind of fruit. When you first see the Navajo women, they are very shy and cover their faces and their mouths. Then when you show them the peaches or the oranges, they come over and start to talk and chatter away and are so delighted. We always on every trip

up there used to take some fruit, some cherries, anything we could find, and we always got a welcome--with the shells, too.

Dixon: Did they use the shells?

Buff: Yes. This Navajo medicine man that we first met with his sons (we took on our second trip a lot of shells along) picked out the best ones, and the boy that introduced us to him told us that they were used to make medicine. It seems way back in their own history, the Navajo originally came out of the sea; so they have an affinity for seashells, and they use seashells to prepare their medicine. Every time I had the least difficulty with the Navajo I always had a seashell handy.

Once we were up in Monument Valley and I saw a herd of sheep coming along with a girl rider. It was such a beautiful arrangement I thought I would take a picture. After her came a man and he [angry gesture]. (Of course, he couldn't speak English). In the evening I saw that Navajo again. I was with Harry Goulding, who had the lodge up there, and I said to Harry, "Would you apologize to this Navajo for my behavior? I didn't know that he didn't want to have a picture taken of his sheep." I told Goulding to give him a shell and apologize. So he gave the shell, and the Navajo came over and thanked me and everything was all right. This was really quite an experience.

Another thing I found out when you meet a Navajo person you don't speak. You just stand there and let some time pass. Never ask any questions. They hate to be asked questions. When he starts to say something, then you begin to speak; but if you begin to speak, he just turns away. That seems to be the style. First you have to look at each other and take each others' measure before you start to speak.

We were once at a trading post and there were some Navajo sitting outside. I wanted to make friends and I started to talk. Not a word out of them. So I thought I would try something else, and I went into the store and got a few bottles of pop. I went out with these pop bottles and delighted them. I began to get some stories right away! [laughter] So I learned a lot of things about them.

I think that I will never have any more trouble up there in the Navajo reservation. In fact, I learned a lot about the Indians. I always get along fine with them with the right approach. Down in Guatemala I had the same thing happen to me--with the right approach they would light up, although first when you meet them they are very glum and don't want to have anything to do with you.

TAPE NUMBER: IV, SIDE ONE

Buff: As I said, before we got interested in this book my career as a mural painter came to an end. We had to try to think of something else to do to make a living, so for that purpose I'd better turn you over to Mary who was really instrumental in getting us started in the books. Maybe she can tell just how we got started.

Mary Buff: Well, it was about 1931. You were involved in lithographs and silk-screen prints and the government project through '34. I was trying to think about when I went to the school, and it was about '31. A friend of ours told us that they werestarting a progressive school, the first one in the city, on Highland Avenue. She happened to know the principal, and they were looking for an art and shop teacher, things which I had done previously in college. She suggested I go over with her, so we went over to this progressive school. They were just starting, a very small school. Perhaps they eventually had ten, twelve, or fifteen in a class. We talked to the principal and she did need an art and shop teacher, so I was employed.

I stayed three years in that job, which I found fascinating. The painting, and the woodwork and the ceramics, and all those things, were tied up with the

course of study, the social study, in the classroom. It made it larger and more interesting than just a straight art class.

Dixon: Was this a public school or a private school?

Mary Buff: Private school. It was the Hollywood Progressive School. A great many children from Hollywood, from the moving picture people, were there. For instance, Budd Schulberg, who later did What Makes Sammy Run, I remember as a youngster.

I enjoyed that very much. The classes were small and there was always something new to do. If they were studying Egypt, say, in any other classes, I would cooperate in the shop and build all kinds of things. It was a great deal of fun. There were no precedents for it. I found that to get the material was rather difficult because it couldn't be just a straight art class, you see. I had to go to museums and libraries and hardware stores to pick up this, that and the other thing. It was a lot of fun.

Dixon: Did you have a pretty good budget to work with?

Mary Buff: Oh, good enough. We got by. We had to compromise, naturally. But it was a stimulating job. I would drive over to Hollywood every day. We had two children at that time. My son who is now the architect was in kindergarten, so he must have been about five or six.

That went on for about three years--three years

seems to be my limit for everything. At the end of the time, things were getting considerably better. One day, I think it was about three years later, it must have been about 1934 or 1935, Conrad had a little exhibit of the screen prints in the offices I believe of the Assistant Superintendent of Schools, one of them, Dr. Lane. He was one of the more progressive and stimulating. You've heard of him?

Dixon: Yes.

Mary Buff: He always had new ideas. Well, these screen prints were more or less geared to the same kind of thing. They were prints, some of them, for schools. They could use these prints, tying them up with their courses of study, like the westward movement or this and that. He did seven different subjects. So when Dr. Lane saw some of these things, particularly the one he did on the westward movement when the Mormons put the wagons down over the cliffs, which was a quite exciting picture..

Buff: Pardon me. Wasn't one of those the one with the Indian girl?

Mary Buff: And one with a child holding a lamb. He looked long at that Indian child with the lamb, and an expression came over his face. He looked at me and he said, "You know, Mrs. Buff, there is one thing we do need in our schools, and that is books on the American Indians which makes of the Indian something more

than a warrior and a killer and an enemy. We have very little in our school system of books that tell the lives of the Indians as people rather than as enemies."

Well, that naturally appealed to me right away. Then he looked again at the picture and he said, "You see, your husband could do the pictures, and since you've been doing this type of work, you could certainly write the story."

Immediately I said, "Oh, I couldn't do that." That was my first reaction.

He said, "Well, at least you could do a few paragraphs of explanation if nothing else."

Well, I said I might do that. So I came home rather steamed upabout it. Conrad had been up in the reservation, perhaps. At any rate, he was interested. So we bundled our two youngsters in the car, got the address of the trading post, the people we knew there at a place called Indian Wells, Arizona, and went up there. I think he has told you something previously, has he not, about the Indians?

Buff: Yes, I did, but I don't think I made it clear that we went to the house of Dr. Johnston, who was a missionary to the Indians and a fighter for Indian rights. He had for years made trips to Washington to try to convince Congress that they should allocate money to make life easier for the Indians. By the way, this

Dr. Johnston was the father of Philip Johnston, who became a friend of mine. Philip Johnston was born there on the Navajo reservation and he spoke Navajo like an Indian. Later on I'll bring in Johnston again.

Mary Buff: Well, we stayed there and of course we became acquainted with the Indians. We were fortunate in meeting a young man who knew English. Few of them did. He was agreeable, and what with the use of abalone shells which they love, we were introduced into the various hogans and observed the life and came back home.

The first idea of this book, Dancing Cloud, was to be primarily a picture book, just pictures of the daily life of these Indians who were very colorful, by the way, with very little text, just an explanatory text. We made a sort of dummy, which I could show you, which is the first germ of the idea of this book. But themore we worked on it the more I felt that just explanatory text wouldn't do the job. There should be characters, it should have movement, it should be a narrative. I was more or less forced against my will, in a way, to write the story around these pictures. So we went back again, as I remember, and mulled over the thing. Eventually we got the rough draft of Dancing Cloud done.

Then there was the problem: who would publish it? How do you get it published? I happened to be talking

one day to a well-known person here, Gladys English, who was the head of all the work for children in the city of Los Angeles, and a friend of ours. She became interested in the project. She said, "Well, you might as well shoot high if you're going to shoot at all. Why don't you shoot at Viking? They do the best job in America. It doesn't do any harm."

We sent this very print that Dr. [Robert] Lane had seen of the child holding the goat. I sent that to May Massee, who was a leading editor in this country and a very imaginative person, especially graphically. Of course, she immediately responded as they thought she would. She was interested in the print and the process, so she wrote back and said, "I will be in San Francisco at the American Library Association meeting at such and such a time, after which I will come down to Los Angeles. I will be at the Biltmore and maybe we can get together then."

So that came about. By the time she came down here and was at the Biltmore, we had our material ready. We picked her up and she came out to the studio, our old place out in Eagle Rock. The main room there is very large and quite impressive, and Conrad had some of his large things around and they're very dramatic.

Miss Massee is probably one of the most graphically oriented people of almost all the publishers.

She responds very quickly to artistic things. She looked around at these paintings and it was obvious that she was impressed.

She said, "Where is your text?" We handed her this dummy with all these rough sketches and the text not too good, I didn't think, at that time.

She glanced over it rather quickly and looked at these drawings, looked at us, and she said, "We'll take it." Just like that. No more fuss about it.

We took her back to the hotel. We came back and we looked at these things and thought they were really not quite what we wanted. So we made another trip up to the reservation and refined and verified and checked and got more true what we felt about it. We came back and polished up the text. Conrad accepted it--they sent us a contract, and he would do, he said, the drawings on lithographic plates and do the color separations with yellow and blue and red, three plates for each picture. It was a long job and it was an interesting job. He had his own press by that time.

So, to sum it all up, in about six months or so we had the material ready and sent it to New York. It eventually came out and it created something of a sensation, because here was a book which represented the Indians rather realistically--they weren't white children dressed up like Indians, they were really Indians. The country was wide and full of color and

full of form, as he saw it. All and all, the book was received extremely well. The Junior Guild took it, too. So that was really our start, you might say, which was a series of accidents.

Dixon: I believe in fortuitous accidents.

Mary Buff: Is that about the way it was?

Buff: Yes. Now we are practically finished with the book together with the text, I would like to come back to Philip Johnston, the son of the missionary up there. Phil Townsend Hanna was at that time the editor of a magazine called Touring Topics. He got in touch with Philip Johnston who had already been doing occasional articles for Touring Topics, and said he had heard of a country up in northern Arizona, a place called Tuweep that was practically unknown. Nobody had ever gone out there except Major Powell when he came down the [Colorado] River. He wanted Phil Johnston to go up there and do an article for Touring Topics and tell the readers how to get there. If he could take an illustrator along to do a cover for the magazine, that would be fine.

So that's the way I got in touch with Phil Johnston. He was very glad to have company to go up there. He drove in his car up to St. George, Utah, first, and then we had to inquire how to get there. They said you go to Hurricane, and from Hurricane you go up to Hurricane Fault, which I think is at

least three hundred feet above the town of Hurricane. It was a very steep road to go up there and not a very good road. But Phil had a good car and we got up there, to a place called Short Creek. That's the same Short Creek that became very famous later on because they had a Mormon sect there that still practiced polygamy. Well, anyway, we didn't know anything about that. There were just a few houses. By the way, that's the original home of Jonreed Lauritzen, the writer. His father has a homestead up there and Jonreed was born there. But we didn't know anything about Jonreed at that time.

We asked for the mailman--that was our instruction, to ask for the mailman. He could tell us how to get down to Tuweep. We found the mailman living with a wife and children in a dugout, quite a thing that I had never seen before, but it was a lovely dugout. It had geraniums out in front. We asked the mailman how to get there, and he said, "Well, it's hard to tell. If you can wait until tomorrow I'll go down there. I go twice a week on my route. If you wait until tomorrow you can follow me."

Well, we didn't want to stay there for a whole day and a night, so we said we'd take a chance. He said, "Just bear in mind that you have to go straight south from here. The sheep wagon roads go zig-zag--you just take those roads, but always keep going

south." It was a sixty-mile trip over rough country. This great big valley that stretches from the Hurricane Fault clear over to Pipe Spring or even to Fredonia is about sixty miles square. There were still wild horses there--I think it was called Antelope Valley, if I'm not mistaken. We saw herds of wild horses in the distance raising dust.

Finally we came to a little settlement. I don't remember what the name of it is. There were about two or three houses there. From then on we had a better road. We asked about the road and were told it was about ten miles further. After about four miles we came to a ranch, and the rancher was named Bud Kent, a wonderful character. One of the real western characters, always helpful and glad to see strangers. He said that since it was getting evening we'd better not go down the canyon down to Tuweep because it would be dark before we got there. He said he had a cabin about two miles further down and we'd be welcome to use it overnight although there was a man there already, a writer by the name of Flowers, but he thought he was a nice fellow and we could get along all right.

So we drove down there, and sure enough, there was a man down there. A very nice lanky fellow, a man of about forty. He said that we would be welcome to stay there. There were three beds and a stove,

and if it got too cold we could make a fire. It was in April, and at that altitude and latitude it could get fairly cool in the morning. So we had a good time talking and finally we went to sleep.

Now Philip Johnston is a very courageous man--no inhibitions of any kind and a goodsnorer, and he kept us awake snoring all night. At about four o'clock in the morning I heard Mr. Flowers get up. I opened my eyes and saw he was laying wood in the stove for a fire, but he didn't light it and he went back to bed again. When it got daylight we got up. Phil Johnston didn't have a word to say. He was just as sore as a buck about something. I cooked breakfast and I had to keep a conversation going because Phil just wouldn't say anything--I was wondering what was wrong with him. As we drove off I said good-bye to Mr. Flowers, but Phil didn't say good-bye. He just walked off. On the way down he said, "What do you think of an S.O.B. that will get up at four o'clock in the morning and lay a fire and never light it?"

Mary Buff: He didn't know he was snoring, evidently.

Buff: I didn't want to tell him that he kept us awake with his snoring.

Dixon: I think it's a good thing you didn't tell him.

Buff: No, I thought that was too dangerous. He was a very temperamental fellow and he would take the wrong side of the thing.

Mary Buff: You wanted a nice trip out of it, too.

Buff: No, I didn't want any disagreement. But we came down after about two miles more to this sudden drop in the canyon. The canyon at that point is about a mile and a half wide. You see, this is on the west end of the Grand Canyon and there's a drop of three thousand feet. You can see right straight down into the river--the most marvelous scenery that I have ever seen.

Phil had a big camera, I think a ten by twelve plate camera along with a big tripod. There were these ledges at the top, maybe about four feet down, and then there was a ledge and then another ledge. Looking down into this chasm made me very nervous and I stepped carefully from one ledge to another. But Phil--it didn't bother him. He just took his big camera and jumped on to the next ledge. I thought Lord Almighty, how can a man have such courage?

We stayed there for three days and finally our water gave out and we had to go back. It was evening when we started back and it got dark. We were supposed to make a map of the way to get down there. We were going right straight north by the northern star, and as we went in one direction I marked the mileage from the speedometer on a piece of paper. When we changed direction I made a note on the paper of the change, and when we started north again I noted all these things so we had a fairly accurate map.

So our trip came to an end. Phil was going to see a lot of Mormon families in that vicinity. He wanted to write an article or a book on the Mountain Meadows Massacre. So he went up to New Harmony (that's a Mormon town up there) and looked up the old-timers and tried to get information about the massacre. Well, the Mormons weren't very anxious to give [it to him].

Dixon: They weren't very proud of that portion of their history.

Buff: No; but, by the way, if anybody is interested in the Mountain Meadows Massacre and wants a clear picture of it a friend of ours, a Mormon woman, Juanita Brooks, wrote a very interesting book on the whole massacre giving both sides.

Dixon: There's been another study done within the last three months or so, using her book as the takeoff.

Buff: By the way we made a little trip up to Mount Trumbull, too, to see if we could get some information there, because the man who was supposed to be responsible for the Mountain Meadows Massacre, John D. Lee, was supposed to have been in hiding up there for quite a while when government agents were after him, before he went to Lees Ferry. We also intended to go to Lees Ferry, but at Lees Ferry there wasn't anybody there. Anyway, he never did write that article on the massacre, and it was a good thing too because it would have very likely been influenced on one side too much. Juanita

Brooks wrote a very good thing and it clears up the thing for anybody.

Dixon: It's a good thing. I havèn't read it, but I know that another study was done based on it, and I know her name in connection with it.

Buff: She was living in St. George--we became quite friends. I think her grandmother was still living in Bunkerville--this grandmother was over ninety years old, and on the way back once when Mary and I were up there (Miss Brooks had told us how to get to her house) we went down to see the old lady. She told us how she came across the plains as a little girl with a hand wagon.

Dixon: Yes, with the wheelbarrow parade that they made across the plains.

Buff: It was quite an interesting interview that we had with her. She died about three years later.

Mary Buff: Excuse me. I found this book right here: Recollections of a Handcraft Pioneer in 1860. That's her book. She wrote it for her children and her grandchildren--published in Denver, privately published.

Buff: Her son, Dr. Haven, had it published.

About the same time, in the middle '30's, I got a telephone call one evening. A man said that his wife had seen one of my paintings, and could he come down and see it. I said I'd be glad to. An hour later, a man and his young wife came down and they said they had built a house in Altadena. His name was [Max] Lewis.

Mrs. Lewis had designed this house, and she had designed a special place where she wanted the painting on the east wall. So would I care to come up to the house and see this place, and see if I had a painting the right size?

We drove up there that same night. It was really a lovely house that they had designed. It had a great big window overlooking the whole Pasadena valley down to the ocean. The south wall was perhaps about sixty feet long, and on the east wall, which was about thirty feet wide, they had a panel cut in for a picture. I could see right away that I didn't have a picture that was the right size. The one picture that they liked most of all wasn't the right size or the right shape, so Iproposed that I paint a picture especially for the place. Max Lewis was very interested in this and said that would be a fine solution. We agreed on the price. Mrs. Lewis turned out to be a painter, too, and she was in love with the desert and the mountains. She had seen one of my pictures that interested her and she thought she would like to have something like that.

Do I did paint a picture, for this particular place, and it was a rather difficult problem. Here to the south I had this sixty feet of glass looking over this marvelous view, and here I had a thirty-foot wall with a comparatively small place to paint a picture--it was about four by five feet. To paint something that would

hold up against this magnificent view was quite a task. I didn't want this to just look like a little picture stuck on the wall: I wanted something that would hold up and yet be entirely different. Since they wanted the desert mountains it was very nice for me, but I still had to make a composition that was powerful enough to hold its place.

Well, I got through with one and then I suggested that they have another one painted; in case they got tired of looking at one they could change it. He thought that that was a good idea, so I painted another one. And then when that one was done, I said that it wouldn't be a bad idea to have a third one. He thought that was fine.

Mary Buff: You're a good salesman.

Buff: So everything went all right. I painted these three pictures. Then he said, well, now, would I take him up to see this country that I painted? He had never seen the real West. He had been raised in an orphanage in New York City--he had had a hard time as a kid and had never got enough to eat, so always when he went someplace he would go to the best restaurants, or take enough food along to last for a week if he only went out for an hour. Anyway, he asked me if I would take him up to this country. I said, "Well, let's go together." Mary didn't want to come for some reason, but Mrs. Lewis [went], and what was the name of the

landscape architect?

Mary Buff: Ralph Cornell.

Buff: Ralph Cornell, the landscape architect, was a friend of Max Lewis too, and so he came along. We went first to Zion Park because one of the pictures I painted had something to do with Zion Park. So of course he went to the best hotel there and had a fine meal. He had the rear end of the car stacked with the finest canned food from Europe and any place in the world. It was just marvelous. But since we had such a fine hotel in Zion Park we didn't camp. We spent a day there. We rented horses and rode way up to the top of the canyon and took pictures up there.

The next day we started to drive up towards Bryce Canyon. After we had seen Bryce Canyon for a day, we camped and built a fire and had some of that wonderful food. Then the next day he said, "Now can you take us someplace else?" I said, "Well, let's go up to Monument Valley." So we went back south again and over the new Navajo Bridge on the new way to Monument Valley. There he said, "Let's not camp if we can help it. Let's go to Goulding's place at Monument Valley." At that time, it wasn't quite as elaborate as it is now. We got there after dark and Max just hollered out:"Come down here. There are some guests here." Goulding was just a little bit taken aback. He thought, who can call me like that? But he came down and we had dinner there and we stayed

overnight.

In the morning Goulding was taking people down to Monument Valley in a special car, and of course Max wanted to take that trip. We went down with Goulding--he had an Indian settlement down there, a few Indians that used to pose for pictures for tourists. There were two little children there and of course we photographed them and gave them some of our food. Then we met the father of these children, a pitiful looking man. He had just come out of the hospital--he had trouble with his spine, tuberculosis of the spine, or something. Oh, he looked terrible. We were so taken by the poverty of these people--we just couldn't believe that in a country like ours people could be so terribly poor.

Max felt it very deeply and he said to Goulding, "We've got to get this man well again. I'll supply him with a bottle of vitamins every two weeks," and he gave all the fancy food he had to Goulding. He said, "You give it to these Indians. I'll send you $45 a month until this man gets well." I don't know whether Goulding ever gave any of that stuff to the Indians or not, but I hope so. I don't know Goulding well enough to know. It would be quite a temptation for a man to sell that stuff and give the Indians something cheaper. But anyway, it was a good thing for Max to do. He was a big-hearted fellow. He was always trying to help the poor people. As I found out later, he was an associate

of Dr. [Henry] Borshak. Dr. Borshak had invented this vitamin which they called Stuart Formula later on, and Max was a close friend of his. So that was an episode.

Dixon: Did you ever find out if the Indian got well?

Buff: Years later I met somebody in Fruita, a man who was very much interested in the Indians, and I asked him if he had ever heard of this fellow. He said, "Oh yes, he's all right now."

Of course, it wasn't just that one Indian. The Indians were really a pitiful lot.

Dixon: They still, are, too, invarious places.

Buff: I think they're better off now because they've discovered so much oil and uranium there.

Dixon: They're making such a thing in the newspapers, too. Adverse publicity has forced the government to take a little more action.

Buff: There is naturally a lot of talk. You see, the tribal council has the money. All the money goes to the tribal council, and they are doing a lot of things. They built a motel there, two motels in fact, and they don't dish out the money to individuals. So there's a lot of criticism. But I can understnad that very well, because if you gave those Indians all of a sudden a bunch of money, they'd blow it in drinks, and so I think that the tribal council perhaps is doing a very good thing.

Dixon: I know the Zuni are a very proud people.

Buff: By the way, I think the Indians, from what I

heard, liked our book very much.

Mary Buff: The Indian Service was using it in the schools up there. We have some letters here to show. The reception of the book was very good. That came out in 1937, and then went into a number of editions. The plates ran out, by the way, and they felt that they couldn't do another edition in color, so they did an entirely different edition and format. It's still going on every year but in different form. The text is the same, and it is used all through the schools for the third and fourth grades.

Buff: By the way, I forgot to mention thatwhen Philip Johnston and I came back to Los Angeles and he turned in his report on this trip to Tuweep, they commissioned me for a painting for the cover of the magazine. I did paint it and they reproduced it, and it came out very well on the cover. I think I still have some copies of it. The original is hanging at the main automobile club. It is not a large picture.

Another thing happened at that time. A friend of Phil Johnston had built a house, and it was a very rough affair--it had a whitewashed ceiling and wooden walls and Indian rugs on the floor. On the east side there was a big stone fireplace, and above the fireplace he wanted a painting. It was right down my alley. It had the white ceiling and the red Indian rugs and the dark wood and the stone fireplace, so I used a motif

out of Zion Park, with the white cliffs above and the red below and cactus at the bottom to harmonize with the lower part. It was quite a large painting. The house burned down later on but the painting was saved, I'm told. I don't know who owned the house at the time when the house burned down; I don't know what became of the painting. But I got a good black and white photograph of it.

Mary Buff: It was stunning in that place.

Buff: It harmonized beautifully.

Now I think we might go on to the next book.

Mary Buff: This first book, Dancing Cloud, was well received, so you know how it is--publishers always like to get a second. We had been talking together about the books on Switzerland for children, and Conrad had always said that most of those at least that we saw were done by tourists who just took in the main big cities and that was it. And he having been born and raised in the Alpine country where the characteristics of the people are so unique and where they have such a long and old culture that he felt it should be told in a book and it would make a very good book since his life had been spent there. So we thought that we might go to Switzerland and our son, our oldest, was about twelve then--we would take him with us. We could go to the very village where Conrad was born and grew up as a child and we could stay a while. You see I was green about

the whole thing, so I as an American had to know and feel the surroundings and the people and he could add to the information. So that's what we did. We bundled up our boy and off we went to Switzerland, our first trip to Europe, or mine, anyway. We were very fortunate in finding a house in the outskirts of this little town of Speicher.

Dixon: Would you like to talk about the actual trip itself?

Mary Buff: We got on a German boat at New York, one of four German boats, I believe.

Buff: Pardon me. We drove to New York in our car, and then we had the car put on the boat and landed in Cherbourg.

Mary Buff: It was interesting that that boat was afterward sunk up north. But anyway, we landed at Cherbourg. It was April--I remember it was my birthday, the tenth of April, and we drove through this beautiful French countryside that was ablaze with blossoms.

Buff: We came to the town of Coutances.

Mary Buff: But before we came to Coutances we went to a little village...

Buff: Well, that was Coutances.

Mary Buff: You were always raving about what wonderful pastry they had. So we went and filled ourselves up on this wonderful pastry, and it really was! What with the blossoms and the pastry, that was a very nice birthday. We drove through all those lovely old towns

between the ocean and Paris. To me they were quite miracles.
Buff: We also went to Mont St.-Michel and had quite a time looking at the interiors, all that marvelous carving that they did in those days. It was amazing to me to think that in the eleventh century the artists were able to do such marvelous carving. They had a frieze there, a rather naturalistic frieze cut in stone. Those fellows really knew something about decoration. A Frenchman gave a lecture there to the audience and we were amazed at the interest the people took and the intelligent lecture this Frenchman gave. In America, a fellow would have done a cut-and-dried lecture and nobody would have paid much attention to it. But this audience was alive--they asked questions and they corrected him and we were amazed.

From there on we went inland on the way to Paris. We came to a town called Fourgères, an old, old town that had some ruins there from Roman times. We found a hotel, and for supper we were assembled in the dining room. A Frenchman who spoke a little English came over to us and asked us if he could help us select things. (We couldn't speak French very well). We were delighted, and he ordered the dinner for us and ordered a bottle of wine that he thought was the best. We had quite a time, and later on he asked us if he could come up to our room, and we kept on with our conversations and he told us how to get to Paris. We had another bottle

of wine there and quite an interesting talk. The next morning we continued our trip.

Mary Buff: No, we didn't. Didn't we go to the castle? [Wolframs Castle].

Buff: It's an old Roman ruin. We hired a guide to show us through the castle and he had a key about that large to open the doors.

Mary Buff: It was my first view of a castle--of course, he was brought up on castles. But anyway, we kept on going toward Paris.

Buff: First we went to this town where they have this famous cathedral, Chartres. We went to Chartres and stayed there overnight, and then in the morning we drove slowly to Paris.

Mary Buff: What about the stained-glass windows that we saw at Chartres? That was something.

Buff: The stained-glass windows at the cathedral of Chartres are, of course, the most famous of the stained-glass windows. We were delighted that they didn't use any other decorations. There were just these stone balusters and stone walls, and then these marvelous windows. So we had quite a time there.

Toward noon we started to drive toward Paris. I had a map of Paris and it showed a certain bridge, and when we got to a bridge I thought that I was at *this* bridge. But my map didn't show a first bridge. So I asked a Frenchman how to get to a certain place

in the middle of Paris (we were supposed to stay at the St. George Hotel, or something like that). He explained to us, and I remember, "Vous vous trompez!" (That means you made a mistake). I showed him the map, but I couldn't understand what he was telling me about what kind of mistake I made. So I said well, I did as shown by the map--I turned left and I got through the Boulogne Gardens. We drove and drove and drove and finally I said, "We're not getting into the city, we're getting out of the city." After a long time we were out in the fields. I said as soon as we got to a town we'd go to a bookstore and ask for a better map. I found out that I had taken the wrong way and I should have gone on to the next bridge. But in the afternoon traffic I had to come from the north through Paris!

Mary Buff: It took a strong man to do that then, and a stronger man now.

Buff: Finally we got into this four-lane traffic. I was in the second lane and I had to make a left turn to get to the hotel, but I didn't dare to make a left turn because everybody was rushing. So I went to the next stop signal where I could really make a left turn. By that time I was way out of my lane again, but I finally found my way back to the hotel.

We were in an English hotel, the King George Hotel, and I thought well, now we'd have some of this wonderful French food. Instead we had English food. It was terrible!

Well, we looked for better food the next few days, but I never found a decent restaurant in all of Paris. I didn't know where to go, of course. We had some funny experiences in Paris, but we were bound for Switzerland so we drove on through Burgundy. By the way, in the morning we had some croissants in the restaurant and some coffee--our son ate two croissants and some chocolate and on the way to Switzerland he got deathly sick.

When we finally got out of France into the Swiss towns we found the difference amazing. Of course, France had come out of a war and everything was dilapidated and terrible. But as soon as we came into the Swiss country, everything was spick-and-span. In fact, it was too spick-and-span. It was so spick-and-span it almost hurt.

Mary Buff: It was fantastically different.

Buff: Of course, a short time after the war, not after the second war but even after the first world war, France hadn't properly recovered.

Dixon: They spent a lot on their Maginot line but not too much on the rest of France.

Buff: We came to a Swiss town, and our son was so sick I had to go to a drugstore. I tried to buy some soda to clean him out, and I talked to this druggist who couldn't speak English, and I didn't know how to say "soda." I tried to show him that our son was sick, in my limited French, and he gave me some kind of a

powder. But he was sick all night. This town we had been in was called Le Locle, and it's up in the hills of western Switzerland.

In the morning we drove to La Chaux-de-Fonds. By the way, that's the home of the great architect, Le Corbusier. That's where he was born. It was Easter morning and a beautiful sunshiny morning. We drove over the mountains, and when we got to the top of the mountains we could see way out to Lake Neuchatel and the snowcapped mountains in the distance made quite an impression on us.

Mary Buff: They seemed to be up in the sky. They didn't have any connection with the earth.

Buff: We were so high up that the mountains looked as though they were painted on the sky. We finally got down to Neuchatel and by that time the view had changed. We couldn't see much of the mountains any more. By that time, our boy was all right.

Mary Buff: We got happily on to Speicher, where Conrad was born. It's almost a fairy-story little place, set into a valley. The houses give you the impression of children's houses. We were very fortunate in being able to find a lovely little typical Swiss house on the outskirts of Speicher where we rented a livingroom, had use of a kitchen, and we had a bedroom and the boy had a bedroom. One of these little four-story typical Swiss houses.

The person who owned this house was a weaver who wove this fine dotted Swiss in the basement; when he wasn't doing that he had a few cows. That was the economy of that area. This old man, Mr. Tyler, would be up at the crack of dawn down in his basement weaving this dotted Swiss on his old loom. They had to keep this basement very damp because the threads would break when they dried up, so the poor man really had to work under a difficult situation.

We lived there for quite a long time so that I could absorb the countryside. Conrad had a distant cousin who had a restaurant inthe town, Uncle Oskar. Our twelve-year-old son and Uncle Oskar were the best of pals--he spent most of his time in the kitchen imbibing whipped cream and more delightful delicacies. So from that experience and also from the things that Conrad told me of his youth when he always wanted to be a farm boy (he always wanted to go to the Alps with the cows in the spring, and he wanted always to be anything but dressed up), on the basis of that, the story finally developed.

Buff: I think you might bring in the trip we made to the cheesemaker's hut. In order to be really truthful in the book, we had to know how they made cheese in the Alps. So on a nice morning we started out in our car, but before long it started to rain, as it usually does over there. We came to a place where we couldn't go any

further--I could see the hut further up. We had to walk through the wet grass. The grass was knee-high and it was raining cats and dogs and we walked up there--we weren't prepared for all this rain. But we finally got to the hut and we went inside.

There was a man, a nice fellow who had a daughter who wasn't very bright, but they were working making cheese. I wanted to find out just how cheese was made. Of course, I could speak the language to him and he was very glad to have somebody to talk to. He told us all about making this cheese, and it was very interesting because not a bit of stuff was wasted. First, they separate the whey from the curd and take the curds out, and then the whey is subjected to another heating process and some other medicine is put in, and the whey separates again.

Mary Buff: As medicine, you mean something from the cows?

Buff: No, the calf's stomach is used in the first place, but for the second time they have another powder and it separates again. They make some other kind of cheese out of that. What's left is fed to the pigs, so that nothing is wasted. So we had seen this first-hand and we were able to describe it in the book to a certain extent.

Mary Buff: We were able to see the Alp journey which was quite fantastic. It was in June, wasn't it?

Buff: That was in the early part of June--the way the mountaineers take their cattle to the mountains. It's quite a festival. The three first cows are carrying great big bells--they're about thirty inches across and the same height, and they're so heavy that they only let them carry these bells in going through the villages. As soon as they get in between the villages, the men carry the bells again because it would be too hard on the cows. The bells are all tuned to the chord I, III, V, and they are copper bells. They are not bronze bells, and they have a very deep sound. When they go through a village, the cows carry the bells and the men yodel with the cows.

Mary Buff: The costume of the men who go along with the cattle--the hats decorated with flowers, the white shirts, the red vests, the yellow pants, the white socks, broad shoes with silver buckles, and the suspenders that hold up the yellow pants of very heavy leather on which are cut cows and herders and that sort of thing -it's really a beautiful and pictorial thing, and it only happens there. In the spring they do that: they take the cattle to the alps with all this ceremony, and then in the fall they bring them down, not with so much hullaballoo, but still it's really a beautiful ceremony. The singing is fantastic. No words to their yodeling.

Buff: There are two kinds of yodeling. One is the

Bernese which they do in the Bernese valleys in the interior of Switzerland, and it's a lot of tongue-twisting. But in Appenzell it's a more ancient yodel. It doesn't have any tongue-twisting, just the strange old-fashioned melodies. Somebody gave me a record of how yodeling started in Switzerland, and it showed how first it was very simple chords and later on developed into this tongue-twisting.

Mary Buff: Well, that's what we did in Appenzell. We stayed quite a while there. We took a little flier down to Florence. We thought we ought to go to Italy, at least Florence, before we went home. That was a lovely experience--it was our first trip there, his, too. Of course that's a treasure house if there ever was one.

A very amusing thing happened there. As we were going through the Uffizi Gallery, I think it was, it was about noon. We had gotten into a little gallery that had theDutch still-life paintings and we were absorbing them very seriously when a great tall man came up to Conrad, slapped him on the shoulder and said, "Conrad Buff, what are you doing in Florence?" He looked up and here was a painter from Los Angeles, Paul Sample, well-known at that time. He was as delighted as we were. They were staying at a pension, he and his wife, and so we went there to visit them and he took us around various

parts of Florence because he'd been there for a long time. So we got a little bit more than the average tourist, enough to whet our appetites for future trips that we would take, but we didn't stay long.

Then we drove up through Switzerland across the border into Germany. Someone had sent our son a Sunday Times from Los Angeles, the funny paper, and as we crossed that border we were helped up by these black Nazis --this was just before the war. These brown shirts were very, very militaristic and very suspecting. Here we were, Americans, and they looked at everything in the car. Here they saw this boy looking at a newspaper. They wanted to know what newspapers we had. On seeing it was a funny paper, they threw it back saying "kid stuff."

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Mary Buff: Then we went on by car--we were driving through Germany. We found the people very pleasant. We went to Hamburg where we stayed for a little while, waiting for our boat, which was one of those German boats later sunk during the war. We reached New York in due time.

Naturally, I wanted to tell Miss Massee of Viking, our editor, about what had transpired over there. I roughed out a story which later became a book called Kobi, a word which means Jacob, a familiar word in Switzerland. So we were over there for dinner, and I don't recall whether I gave her the text--yes, I must have given her the rough draft for her to look over. She went off by herself to glance over it, and it must have been the wrong time of the day or the wrong time of the night, or maybe the stuff was just terrible--I haven't any way of knowing. She didn't like it and she was frank about it.

But she did say one thing that has stayed in my mind which has been very helpful since. Perhaps it was a fault in it. Perhaps I had digressed. I really don't remember what the original text was like. She said, "You've always got to keep your eye on the character, the main character, and everything has to be seen through

his eyes." That seemed to stick in my mind. She didn't like it as it was, so I took that with a grain of salt, went back home, and eventually wrote up the story of Kobi which was very well liked. But always that thing she said remained and was very helpful ever since. I think that will cover it, except for the way that you illustrated it.

Buff: Well, naturally, I still had to illustrate it by color lithography, not the lithography they use nowadays, done directly on zinc plates with crayon. I was very anxious to make a good showing. I was going to have four double spreads in color and about six single pages in color, and I was going to use five colors for each picture. That means I had to draw a picture five times for each. But I got through with it and the proofs came out very nicely. I think some of them I had to do twice in order to satisfy myself. It took almost a year to do all these plates. They came out very nicely and the book turned out pretty well. There were a few mistakes that the printers made but that has to be taken.

That was the last book that we did in hand lithography. After that we had in mind doing another one on the Grand Canyon. We were fascinated by the landscape surrounding the Colorado River from its very start in the Wind River Mountains in Wyoming to the coast of Mexico. Mary had thought to involve an adventure story with it. She had a little boy starting with his father in St. Louis

and coming to the Colorado River and then all the way by boat down the Colorado River, that way describing the whole scenery. I had in mind doing a lot of pictures because I've always been fascinated by the whole western country, especially the country along the Colorado River. We worked on it for some time.

Finally Mary sent a draft of the text to Viking. In the meantime, Emil Ludwig, the German writer, had written a book on the Nile, a factual book on the Nile. When Miss Massee saw that book she thought it would be a good idea if we didn't have an adventure story, but just a factual story like Emil Ludwig. Well, that struck me like a thunderbolt. I didn't think for a minute that a factual book would be good for children--unless there's a child involved and the main character of the story is a child, children will not be interested especially in geography. I'd already made four double spreads, also in four colors, and I'd made a lot of sketches, but we had to discard all that. We just had to tell Miss Massee frankly that we didn't think it would go over. So we gave the whole thing up.

Mary Buff: Pardon me here. She suggested a documentary, a factual story of the river all along through its history. So I went ahead and did it. I actually did it. I spent a long time writing that. I just slaved away on that, discarding all the adventure story I'd created before. I really did it and sent it in, and

it was then that she was uncertain about it. I think in her mind she felt she wanted to go back to the first idea. By that time we both had decided that the Colorado River, the way we saw it, in this way, would simply not interest children, even of fifteen or sixteen. It was essentially an adult book, you see, as it was then. Furthermore, Conrad felt that the lithographs should be quite large in order to suggest the vastness of the country. So all in all it was rather discouraging. We gave it up after a year or a year and a half. Oddly enough, years and years later when we were in New York, she said something about how about the Colorado River book? Well, by that time everything had cooled down and we couldn't imagine going back to a thing like that. It was a dead horse.

Buff: Well, of course, the minute she wanted a factual book, I was against it because I just couldn't see how it could work. After spending over a year's work on the thing, we gave it up. However, I wasn't only busy on that sort of thing. I was painting pictures, too. In the middle of the 1930's I had the second one-man show at the Los Angeles Museum. I mentioned that before, so I won't dwell on that.

But about the same time an art dealer started a gallery at the Ambassador. In fact, he didn't start it, he took over Stendhal's gallery. A fellow by the name of Philip Ilsley took it over. He wrote me a

letter and asked me if I would be interested in having his firm handle my pictures because he was very much interested in the type of picture I was doing. Of course, I didn't have a dealer and that struck me as wonderful. I accepted it right away. He gave me a one-man show and it was very nicely arranged, few pictures but well placed. I thought it was going to go over very well. But unfortunately just about the time when the exhibition opened, there was a terrific earthquake in Los Angeles and Long Beach was almost destroyed. A lot of houses were damaged even in Los Angeles. So then the exhibition wasn't a huge success--nobody dared to come in to see it.

But one nice thing was that at the opening of the exhibition I met Maynard Dixon for the first time. I had been familiar with his work and I had admired his work all the time. I thought he was the only western painter that had the real spirit. We became quite friendly. I had a picture there of Zion Park--he had never been at Zion Park and didn't know anything about it. He said, "Where did you get that picture?" I said at Zion Park. He said that he must go out there, and he hotfooted it right up there. About a year later he came back with a bunch of pictures and had an exhibition of his pictures at the Ilsley Gallery. I don't know whether he sold anything out of it--that type of picture just was not popular.

But Mr. Ilsley got the bright idea of sending the two of us up to Zion Park for a year, financing us for a year. The idea was he was to give us [the money]--I asked for $3,000 for the whole deal and Maynard Dixon wanted $6,000. But of course it was dirt cheap in either case, because Mr. Ilsley made the stipulation that we were to give him ten large-size paintings and all the sketches that we were making free. Well, we were willing to do that because it was during a bad time of the depression. But Mr. Ilsley thought that $6,000 was too much. Later on, I was always glad, because I would have had an awful time painting ten large paintings in one year. I don't work fast and to paint ten pictures would have taxed me to the limit, besides giving him all the sketches that I made. Mr. Ilsley wanted to interest the Union Pacific in these pictures. He thought he could sell the whole bunch to the Union Pacific for a big profit. But the whole thing fell through.

Mary Buff: May I interrupt here? Do you recall the exhibition that you planned, based on the Colorado River from the time it started up in the Wind River Mountains all the way through Bryce Canyon--they were oil paintings--andon the building of Boulder Dam? (You did those anyway for the government building board). Telling the story of the river all the way through by means of an exhibition. What happened to that exhibition?

Did we ever carry it through?

Buff: No, nothing happened. That thing I proposed to the man Cowie [Cowie Gallery] and of course he had no idea for things like that. What he wanted were potboilers and what I wanted were serious things, and the thing fell through from the very beginning.

I haven't mentioned yet the different prizes [I won]. I'm not very proud of getting prizes and awards from museums, but I think it would belong in here [to mention] that I did get a few. I got a prize down in San Diego, the Mrs. Huntington Prize, which was a cash award. Mrs. Henry Huntington gave a hundred dollars and I got that prize. I got an award at the International Exhibition of Lithography in Chicago for one of my lithographs. Then I got a first museum prize at an exhibition in Los Angeles--I forget what kind of prize you call that--the museum owns the picture and gave me the money. Then I won a prize in Sacramento for a show at the State Fair. And I got two or three small awards. I just wanted to mention this so nobody would think that I never won an award.

Another thing happened about at that time. A Dr. Comeau, a dentist, got interested in my lithographs and he acquired a lot of lithographs. He got the idea he would propose to various museums that he would donate one of the lithographs, to several eastern museums and to the British Museum. They all accepted, and so

I was represented in a lot of these museums by lithographs, in the print collections.

About that time, too, we took a trip to Alaska. We drove up to Seattle and then took the boat from Seattle to Skagway, inland on the canal, not on the open sea. It's a very lovely trip and in good weather it must be marvelous. Unfortunately, we didn't have very much good weather. It was always foggy, as it is very often. We had about two or three days when I could see the magnificent scenery. The result of that trip were several paintings and several lithographs when I came back. It happened that one of those paintings was exhibited down at the Biltmore in the general exhibition. Dr. Lawrence White wrote me a letter and said that he was very much interested in that painting--would I consider trading it for professional services? Actually our friendship has lasted practically forever, and he has now probably the biggest collection of Buff paintings of anybody in the United States.

Dixon: How did that trade come about? How did you evaluate [the trade]?

Buff: I never evaluated my paintings. Once a year he came and selected whatever he wanted, and he took care of our health and our children's, too. It was a wonderful thing because I could feel sure that I wouldn't have any medical expenses. Dr. Corneau, the dentist, did the same thing. He took paintings and lithographs

in return for dental work. When Dr. Comeau decided he had enough paintings he turned me over to Dr. Roland Fisher, another dentist, and he did the same thing. He acquired quite a lot of my paintings. I am still in touch with him and he takes care of all my dental work.

Mary Buff: It was very nice because it gave us a relationship between the doctors and ourselves. It was always on a level of mutual respect and understanding. It was quite delightful, really. They were just as conscientious in their way as we were in ours.

Buff: Now to come back to Maynard Dixon. As I said already, he spent some time up at Zion Park and he fell in love with the Mormons, as I did. He decided he was going to have a home up there, so he bought an acre of land in a place called Mount Carmel--it's right on the other side of Zion Park over the mountain. He had a beautiful lot there and built a home, a studio and some log cabins for rent. As I said, he fell in love with the Mormons. We went up there quite often to visit him.

One summer we rented his cabins and had quite a lovely time up there for a whole summer. While we were there Jonreed Lauritzen, the writer, came over from Short Creek, Utah. That's the place where the old-fashioned Mormons still had polygamy. His father had a ranch up there and he is quite a good writer. He

came over and we were talking about the country north of Mount Carmel--it was practically an unknown country; he said he would like to go over there and if I would like to come along he was able to get free gasoline from Ickes, the Secretary of the Interior, who wanted him to write up that country. So we decided we'd go there.

Mary Buff: We didn't have any gasoline to speak of.

Buff: That was already during the war when gasoline was hard to get. So we started to take this trip, Mary and I and Jonreed and his wife.

Our first stop was Escalante and, as usual, the Mormons were wonderful there. They were very helpful. They told us how to get over the Aquarius plateau. It's a plateau that stretches north of Zion Park, 9,000 feet high, and goes over into the Wayne Wonderland. That was all unknwon to us, but the people in Escalante told us how to get there. We first had to go down into the valley along the Escalante River, and it was the most wild country that I've ever seen, cliffs and canyons and cliffs and canyons. We got down across the Escalante River and we had a fairly good road up to a place called Boulder. Boulder was about three or four miles above the Escalante River. This was a beautiful green valley, just a fewhouses, but surrounded by cliffs on all sides and canyons. We got there at dusk, and we found out that the road had been built just a short time before by the CCC boys; before then they didn't

have a road. They had to pack everything in on horseback, and they didn't have in any automobiles up there. There were these Mormon settlements. It was the most beautiful valley I've ever seen.

We got there at dusk as I said, and we saw a gasoline pump in front of a house. There were two men standing there and we asked them if we could find a place to stay overnight. They were very nice and said there was a hotel up the line, but they didn't know whether anybody was home. We'd better go up there, he said, and see--if nobody was home we should wait until he came with his car and then follow him. He'd take us to his house.

So we went up there and of course there was nobody home. The hotel was closed. We waited until the fellow showed up in a model-T Ford and we followed him-- he took us to his house and introduced us to his wife. His wife cooked supper for us and then they showed us to two rooms upstairs. We slept there all night and had a wonderful rest. In the morning breakfast was waiting for us. Then we found out that this man gave us his own room and had to go to a neighbor to find a room for himself. That's a Mormon for you. We wanted to pay but he wouldn't take anything.

Mary Buff: May I tell the story of the geraniums?

Buff: Yes.

Mary Buff: Mrs. Lauritzen noticed a beautiful blossoming

geranium in a tin can on the window sill, a very great prize because to raise a geranium was quite a problem there. Mr. Lauritzen admired it, and finally when we were ready to leave, our hostess insisted that Mrs. Lauritzen take the plant. That was quite typical of their courtesy and frontier kindliness.

Buff: So he told us how to get on--of course, the roads were very scarce; usually they were just two tracks in the sand, and so he told how to get over the Aquarius Plateau. When we got to the top we had a most marvelous view of the country all around, canyon after canyon. To the east we could see faintly the monuments of Monument Valley ninety miles away, it was so clear. We decided we'd go on. Just then a car came up with four or five men in it. They drove on and we followed them up to the top a little later. When we came up we found that these five men had shoveled snow out of the way. The road had been blocked with snow--somebody had told them and they went up to clear the road for us.

After a while we went on, and we headed downhill and downhill until we finally came to a little town called Teasdale. We asked a woman there at the farm how to proceed, how to go further to the Wayne Wonderland. We finally got down to a place called Fruita, which is a small Mormon settlement against the cliffs. There was a beautiful house within a stone fence, and a woman living next door told us that it belonged to a fellow

by the name of Dr. [A.L.] Inglesby. She said that he was a queer fellow. If he liked us he would let us come in, but he wasn't here now. If he liked us we were welcome to stay there, because he had cabins for rent too.

But since he wasn't there we stayed at this Mrs. Chestnut's place. Mrs. Chestnut was right across the street along some marvelous cottonwood trees and she had some cabins, too, but her cabins were terribly primitive. They still had coal-oil lamps--they were down at the heel and the windows were knocked out. But she was a nice woman. She had two sons and they were good-for-nothing sons. They liked to ride horseback, but Mrs. Chestnut did all the work. Her husband was a cripple who would sit on the porch all day long. We rented two cabins. What was thename of the man who had charge of the [monument]?

Mary Buff: Charles Kelly.

Buff: Charley Kelly was the curator of the monument. He wrote several books about the Mormons. He was against the Mormons, and in spite of the fact that he wrote books against the Mormons, the Mormons tolerated him and treated him very nicely. But he was very glad to see us, because in those days Capital Reef Monument wasn't visited by anybody. It was the most marvelous country that you ever saw. These thousands of cliffs, red limestone, and the farms at the bottom and the river

going through the valley--it was just an ideal place.

Mary Buff: May I say something here? The canyon going through Fruita, with those big cliffs, was so narrow that in some places there was only room for one car, and yet the cliffs on both sides rose about 1,000 feet. It was like a huge crack. That was the Capital Reef Monumert, which has now become very well known and is visited because of the better roads. We were one of the first in there, and to us that whole country was the most impressive and the least known of any part of the United States.

Buff: Charley Kelly was very nice to us--he was the curator, brought by the government to take care of the place. He took us ona ride. We rented a horse from Mrs. Chestnut's son and rode down the river and then up into the hills into the place where there's a natural bridge. We stayed, until we came back, at Mrs. Chestnut's place.

On the way home, back to Mount Carmel, when we told Maynard Dixon about the trip and showed him some of the sketches that I'd made, he was all for going there himself. The trouble was that he had heart trouble and we weren't sure whether he could take trips over the nine thousand foot elevation. But he wanted to go anyway, so we packed him into the car with his wife, and we went over the same route again.

This time Doctor Inglesby was in. We found

Doctor Inglesby the most charming queer character of anybody that we have ever met. He had a loud voice and was hard of hearing (that of course made his loud voice). He welcomed us, and we rented a cabin from him and stayed there. We had our meals there, but I had to do my own cooking because his cooking was so bad that we didn't think we could stand it. He always had the stump of a cigar in his mouth--it usually was cold, but the ashes would fall off just the same while he was cooking and stirred things. He always had a hat on his head.

Dixon: Was he a medical doctor?

Buff: No, he was a retireddentist. Fried eggs and bacon--that's all he could cook. He had a kettle with deep fat in it, and then dropped two eggs and some bacon in and fried them together. So I decided that I'd better take over the cooking. He was very glad to let me do that. At the table he would brag about his health. He said that he had never been sick a day in his life, and he was high in his eighties. But he ate only milk and crackers because it turned out that he had ulcers. [laughter]

Mary Buff: Speak about how much this strange man knew actually about the country and the rocks, particularly.

Buff: Well, he was a rock collector. He had a machine to polish rocks and he did a beautiful job. He knew where all the rocks were available and petrified wood

and all kinds of other gems, and he had the greatest collection of rocks around his cabins. Everything was full of rocks, all around. He had one cabin devoted to the machines and the machines were going all the time, polishing these little rocks. In this most charming house, he had a whole room devoted to drawers full of little polished things thathe was willing to sell. He knew all about rocks up there.

He had spent practically twenty or thirty years up there. He stayed at Fruita in the summertime, but in the wintertime he had a home in Salt Lake, and a wife up there. I said, "Why don't you bring your wife down here?" He said, "She can't stand the dirt down here, and she can't stand me up at the house because she won't let me spit on the floor."

Mary Buff: He was infinitely dirty. But it doesn't matter. We might tell the story of the leg of lamb. It's very hard to get meat up in that country, so when we came through Richfield we bought a leg of lamb and put it in the cool house outside so that it would stay. Doc, they called him Doc, one of his occupations was to escort the dudes, as he called them, all over the country because he knew every inch ofit, more than anyone else. People came from all over the United States to visit Doc because he really knew his stuff, and he was a good guide and he'd go camping anywhere.

That particular day he was camping out with some

dudes down by the river and would be gone all day, so Conrad thought that he would get the leg of lamb started. He went out to the cooler and there was no leg of lamb. He looked all over the kitchen and there was no leg of lamb. We just couldn't imagine what could have happened to it. Finally we ventured very gingerly into Doc's bedroom. In his bedroom he had a very favorite little dog and puppies who held forth under a table in the corner of the room. We thought that maybe the dog had tekan the leg of lamb. And then he looked very carefully at the unmade bed--in the center of the unmade bed was a large round mound of blanket. He unrolled the moundof blanket and there was the leg of lamb. And he took the leg of lamb and cooked it. Well, that's an old sheepherder's knowledge. It gets cold at night up there and it's warm in the day; they let the leg of lamb be rolled up during the warm day and let it out during the night when it was cold. So that was perfectly rational!

Buff: We stayed there for several days, and at night we always had a bunch of people come around--Charley Kelly and his wife would always come to Doc's house to chew the fat in the evening, and one or two other neighbors; Mrs. Chestnut from across the road; so we always had a good time in the evening. Doc would show some of the photographs that he had taken.

One night there was a knock at the door and the Doc

went out and talked to some fellows. It was a long conversation. Finally the doc came back and he said, "What do you know about those damn fools." They had come to the canyon, the canyon that Mary spoke about that was so narrow, and they went through there at night. They got so scared that they said what a terrible country this was--they loathed the country. And if anybody ever said anything bad about the country, Doc Inglesby would get furious! So because these two fellows knocked the country, when they asked him how to get out of there, he said, "Well, you can't get out of here. You have to go back where you came from." It would have only been about twenty miles to a paved road going the other direction, but he made them go back! [laughter]

Mary Buff: He was so furious that they felt that way about the country that he loved that he just was going to make them go through it again. That's the kind of man that he was.

Buff: But you know, from there to the Green River was about one hundred miles through bad country and bad roads. I thought that that was a dirty trick to play on tourists.

Mary Buff: You see, they came there for two reasons. First, he had this beautiful collection of stones. Second, he knew all about them. And thirdly, he knew all about the country, and he's a wonderful storyteller. He liked to exaggerate and made a good storyteller

and he knew all the history of the country. He had been a dentist in Globe for a good many years and also owned some buses that went through the parks. I don't know what kind of a dentist he was, but I rather wonder because there is one story that they tell about him which may or may not be true, I can't verify it, but it sounds reasonable. Doc was filling some woman's teeth, andin those days they used to have sort of a rubber thing in your mouth so that the water could be drained off while they worked on the teeth, so that the teeth could be dry. This woman was inthe chair and Doc was taking care of her teeth, and the telephone rang. Someone at the other end of the line said, "Doc, your bus has broken down on the way to Bryce Canyon. What are we going to do?" He said, "Oh, I'll be right along." He claps on his hat, chases out of the door, and leaves the woman in the chair with the rubber mat in her mouth--and we don't knowwhat ever happened to her! That's the story. It's rather typical. [laughter]

Buff: Well, they tell another story about him. A woman told him that she had a tooth that hurt, so he extracted every tooth in her mouth except the one that hurt. These are the stories that they tell about the old fellow.

Mary Buff: There was another story. Doc was rather careless, being an old bachelor in spirit, living alone with his dogs and all. He never dusted anything or took care of anything. They were out hunting and

they got a deer, and he hung it up in the basement wherehe had all his food. Someone remonstrated with him and said, "Doc, you shouldn't hang that venison in the basement. You know that the rats are going to eat it and are probably already at it." He said, "Oh, well, what's the difference. They can't eat it all." [laughter]

Buff: We went up there many times just to see the old Doc again. We liked him very much because he was a genuine fellow, good-hearted but easily hurt. He easily got mad, but if you treated him right he was a wonderful fellow. By the way, he died a few years ago and he left that beautiful house and the garden and everything to a woman who used to come up there every year to stay with him and help him out.

It was a beautiful house. Really, it was a gem of a house, inside of a stone fence and among all kinds of fruit trees--he had pear trees, he had plum trees, he had apple trees and the funny part of it was he never could do anything with the fruit. He had no way to get the fruit to the market, the roads were so bad, and it was a hundred miles to Richfield. It just didn't pay to sell them, so he just let the fruit fall down. Those marvelous pears, great big pears, would be always covering the ground. Mrs. Chestnut would rake them up and feed them to the pigs. And marvelous apples. They didn't spray the apple trees and some of them had worm holes in them, but they were marvelous fruit. Peaches

and all kinds of fruit. He kept a beautiful flower garden and always watered it. But he was just as neglectful about the cabins as he was careful about the fruit trees. It was quite a privilege to have a man like that for a friend.

Mary Buff: After he died, the whole spirit went out of the place, and no one would want to go there again. I'm sure I wouldn't. The whole spirit is gone with this man. He made it what it was. I think many people felt that way.

Buff: Another thing [happened] later on, quite a few years later; you know I've spoken about Max Lewis. Max Lewis wanted to go up there with us. He had heard us tell about the place, and so we took a trip up there and he fell in love with Doc Inglesby. He fell so much in love with it that he decided he was going to buy the whole valley. He was going to make a resort out of it. As time went on, not right away, he bought all the land that he could get hold of. But one fellow held out and so he couldn't go ahead with it. He was going to build a house for himself on one of the hills. He had our son, the architect, design the plans for this house, and he was going to have him design the plans for this house, and he was going to have him design plans for a hotel and cabins. He was going to do everything in a grand way. But just about the time when things were starting to go better, he died. So the whole thing

fell flat.

Dixon: I take it that Maynard Dixon did make the trip all right.

Buff: Oh, yes. He and Charley Kelly had quite a time. Charley Kelly had known of his work and he was doing some painting, too. He hovered over Maynard Dixon and watched him paint in order to pick up a few things. Well, that's the story about Fruita.

Mary Buff: Maynard stood the trip because he just sat in the station wagon and didn't move. He probably had TB and he couldn't stand the heights. But by just sitting still in the station wagon and not moving he was able tomake that high trip.

Buff: Fruita is four or five thousand feet above sea level, but the Aquarius Plateau is over nine thousand feet. But he stood it all right since he just sat quietly in the car.

Mary Buff: Now that area has been taken over by Uncle Sam. It's going to be a large public monument. There will be a hotel and motels and that sort of thing. The Mormons have been bought out, and it will all be changed now. They found uranium down in that area and so it's all changed. But we had known it from the very beginning.

Buff: We heard of the big trees up in Sequoia Park, so we thought we'd take a trip up to Sequoia to see the sights. We had a lovely trip up there. One June we

were up there, and we had a cabin. This was during the war when meat ration stamps had to be gotten. We had enough to take care of our needs. We rented a cabin up there and the cabin next to us was occupied by a family from Los Angeles, too, and they had hung a ham that they had bought with saved-up ration stamps in the window. One evening as we came home from a walk we just saw a bear reach in with his hand, pulling it down and making off with it to the woods. [laughter]

We enjoyed our stay there, and we were so impressed by these marvelous trees that we said we ought to do something with this. I took all the photographs that I could, and Mary and I took trips around, and we began to wonder what we could do with this, how we could do a book on this. I would like to let Mary talk about this.

Mary Buff: After we had done the two books, Dancing Cloud and Kobi, Kobi from Switzerland and Dancing Cloud from the Navajo, the war was on. We couldn't go anywhere very far. In the meantime, Conrad had done some rather interesting things on deer--black-and-white lithographs on the deer, and a colored lithograph. One day he suggested that it might be interesting to do a picture book on deer, so naturally that suggested Yosemite. We had very little gasoline, but we decided to go up there and see if we could find materials. By being very careful about gasoline and going down the hills

coasting more or less, we made it. The idea gradually developed that we would tell the story of the life of a fawn born in that area, and what happened to him in the first year of his life until he had his antlers, which marked the end of that. We decided that this book should be for much younger children than we'd written for before, and perhaps it would be in blank verse, a rhythmic prose.

We studied all the life up there and came back, and that's exactly the way it developed. It developed into a prose poem about the life of a fawn, with pictures on almost every page. It just so happens that he had been in love with deer for I can't say how long--he had drawn them and loved them and watched them, so that it was a natural subject for him. I liked to write in rhythmic verses, and altogether we worked out the life of this little fawn. We called it Dash and Dart because those two words suggested movement. Dash was the main character and Dart was his twin sister, and we tell the story of the forest through this book.

This book was published in 1942, I believe, and it was tremendously successful. It was a Guild book, of course, and the edition was large. The thing went on and on and on--I think it's now in the eleventh or twelfth edition and going strong. I think part of it's due to the beauty of the pictures, the fact that it has to do with a young animal, and that it isn't sentimentalized

or personalized, particularly. It's nature study, but it's alive, and it has evidently touched the heart of countless people. So that was Dash and Dart. Viking was very happy about that one. Then the next book came several years later.

Buff: I think I should say something about the pictures, for the simple reason that it was the first book we didn't do in lithography. I decided that the time had come to show that I wasn't going tomake my own plates any more, thatthe publishers should pay for plates; and so lithography was out. I decided I was going to do pencil drawings a third larger than the actual picture, and I was going to do four color pictures in oil paints. Those I did quite large and they had to reduce them. As I said, the black-and-whites were done in a new technique, pencil drawing in black and white, a third larger than the actual picture.

Mary Buff: We were still in love with the forest, and we made a trip to Sequoia, I believe it was. We were very much impressed with the great trees, especially the giant trees, but we had no particular idea about doing anything about them. Then on one of our trips I left the rest of the group and wandered into the forest alone. I saw a huge tree that had partly burned and was still growing strong. I knew from what I'd learned of it that these trees were thousands of years old. I had a great feeling of awe at that time, and was

emotionally, you might say, almost elated by the beauty and the mystery of these things living so long. You had the feeling that you were in another age and at any time an animal might come out, some strange little animal of another age, to look at you. It was a kind of inspiring experience. But I didn't really think very much about doing anything about it.

Then when we came back to Los Angeles I was talking to a friend and describing this, and this friend said (and this was a crucial word), "You know, if a tree could only speak of what had happened around him as he grew in the life of the forest, what a yarn he would tell, really." That sparked whatever was already there. I felt: well, that's exactly what could be done. Then it occurred to me that children have no sense of time, they have no sense of size, and that it would be a difficult thing to do. But with that idea in mind we started out.

It took a long time to get this conception into a logical form. But finally we arrived at the form as it now is. At one time when we presented it to Viking, they not knowing these trees, not knowing this mystery, didn't understand why we would approach it that way; but finally we persuaded them that man had practically nothing to do with the forest, that this was long before man, except Indians. It finally developed in the way it was. It was one of the fifty books of the year

from the standpoint of printing, by the Graphic Arts Society. It has become a sort of standard book for schools on the forest and on conservation, because we had brought that in; and now I understand Scott, Foresman and Company, which is a textbook publisher, is to use it in full in a text--not really a text, but a reading book for the schools, with two or three other books. It will be published in the fall. That book has been going on since 1945, in many editions.

Buff: In regard to the pictures, I would say that Viking absolutely refused to do any more color work, because color work is expensive. But they said they would make it a duo print--print it in two tones of black and white, so that was the first time that we did a book in pencil drawings to be done in duotone. It turned out very well.

Unfortunately, though, about two years ago, after the book had gone through many editions and they wanted to do a new edition, they found out that the photographs had been lost, the film that is the basis for this. Without them they couldn't do another. So we had to try to find our original drawings, and some we could find and some I had to redraw. The same thing happened in Dash and Dart. They lost the plates, but there they were able to photograph the drawings in the old book and they were able to make new plates. Because the Big Tree had been done in duotone they couldn't photograph

and reproduce it, and I had to furnish the drawings. Fortunately we were able to get most of the drawings, and I had tomake about six or eight over again. They're both back in print now.

But we haven't talked about the other book, Peter's Pinto.

Mary Buff: That came a little later.

Buff: Oh, did it? Of course, we were in love with the Mormons, as I've stated so many times. We thought something ought to be done to show the people of the United States that the Mormons were not black sheep, that they were decent people. We described the life of a boy in Utah. The idea was to describe a boy coming from Salt Lake for a vacation to a ranch in southern Utah, and describe what happened to him there. I was to do it in pen and ink drawings. That was a new thing for me, but I don't remember why--maybe I just wanted to try my luck in pen and ink drawings. But I've always been sorry, because though the book was successful--it's been through several editions--it was never as successful as the others. I think it was mostly because the drawings were done in pen and ink and didn't have the appeal that the pencil drawings had.

Mary Buff: It was based on the experiences at Fruita in that canyon country, around the Mormons, with some old Mormon stories. The idea was to show the Mormons as people. It's a regional book, really. It wasn't

any howling success--it went through three editions, I believe, and it was used widely. But it wasn't a book that would last for years and years like Big Tree and Dash and Dart, which are more universal. So that's the story of those books.

Buff: I wanted very much to have this book done in color because I felt that the Utah country was especially wonderful because of its color; but that was part of the wrangling we had with the publisher. They absolutely refused to pay for any color. But one reason that I didn't object to it too much was because to do color illustrations is for the artist just as expensive as it is for theprinter. You have to do large paintings, and you can do a black-and-white drawing in about one-tenth of the time that you can do a color work. So the thing was done in black and white, and I often thought that if I had done it in color andhad done it in pencil drawings like the others, the thing would be going strong still. But such is the life of the books.

Mary Buff: As long as they keep them in print you're happy enough.

TAPE NUMBER: FIVE, SIDE ONE

Buff: Now that we've talked so much about our fancy trips up to Utah and all those pleasure trips to Maynard Dixon's place, I really ought to say what I was doing myself, besides just having a good time. Of course, landscape painting has been my favorite thing practically all my life. But I found out that the way that I saw landscape, especially the western landscape that I was so much in love with, wasn't the way the public saw it. I just couldn't get interested in the verbenas and the sunsets. I kept onpainting these magnificent forms that I saw and that I was interested in, and I tried to get the magnificent blues that we saw on the desert, which wasn't so easy to harmonize with the rest of the landscape. And especially the wild country in Utah.

But I found that the public just wasn't interested in that sort of thing. Most of the one-man shows that I had were a fizzle--they thought that sort of stuff never existed any place because they hadn't seen it themselves. So I would turn back to my studio again and again, always try to do the things that I liked but without having any success.

On the other hand, I was also interested in mural painting. That was my second love, and interior decoration.

Since 1930, there was practically no mural painting on a large scale, so I was thrown back to just arrangements of color in architecture. I had several architects of the more conventional type who were interested in my colors and employed me as a color consultant and decorator, especially one of them who did a lot of schools, grammar schools.

I felt that there was a real need of developing a color scheme that created an atmosphere of quiet and restraint so that the children wouldn't be excited. Up to that time, most of the public buildings were painted in a sort of greyish-buff or tan, which I felt wasn't as good as it could be. While I agreed that the ceiling should reflect a maximum amount of light, the walls should be rather quiet and retiring. The tan was just a little bit too reflective. It reflected too much light of the wrong kind. I gradually developed a grey-green that seemed to me was the most satisfactory background. It was restful, and if it wasn't too dark or too light, it reflected the right amount of light into the children's eyes so that they could work and feel quiet. If the light came in not from the front but from the side, it created anideal place to work.

Of course, you could do all the rooms the same color in a big school. People wanted variation, but there was plenty of room for variation, inasmuch as one could keep one room a little more on the blue-green side and the

other a little more on the yellow-green side or on the tan or on the more neutral grey side. Then there was always a chance of creating a little bit of excitement by using the doors and the baseboards and window jambs in a slightly different color. That differentiation in color was especially necessary because a sunny room on the south side of the building would stand a little more blue and the northern side would require a little more yellow to counteract the blue light from the blue sky. So there was plenty of chance to vary the color scheme.

I had pretty good success with most of the architects I worked with, especially one case where the architect did a two-story building for a grammar school. The principal was a lady and she had in mind this tan, because it was the regular thing. In fact, she called it "parchment" which would be a rather greyish-tan. She wanted that, but by means of samples and talk with the architect and with her, I got her to agree to have the classrooms in the greens--but her own private office she wanted tan. Well, we got along. We got a very nice satisfactory job for the classrooms but she had her tan in the private office. That was a disappointment to her after she had seen the classrooms; she felt she would like to have that green too, but the money was gone and she couldn't have it, so she had to live with what she got.

Those are things that, of course, an interior decorator

in developing color schemes is always up against. The people have preconceived ideas of what they would like to have, and it's very difficult to correct it with something different. In that sense the whole idea of interior decoration was very often disappointing, but it was practically the only way for me to make a living.

Then for a while I got the idea of doing portraits. I always had a talent to get a pretty good likeness--that was the least of my troubles. My idea was to get as good a likeness of the person, as realistic a likeness of the person, as I could. I was always in love with the particular face and the expression of the sitter, but I soon found out that that wasn't what the people wanted. They wanted glamor. A woman wants to be beautiful and young and glamorous. The man wants to be important and stately, and all that. I always found out after the second sitting already that I was on the wrong track. I always admired those early drawings of Holbein that he did in England at the time of King Henry--in his drawings he got the very thing that I was striving for. But when he did the paintings he lost that, because very likely these drawings he did for reference and then he painted the paintings without the sitter. He put in all the medals and all the fancy clothes he could get in those finished things, and he got away with it that way. I often wondered how he got away with his drawings of the sitters, but chances are he never showed

those to the people.

Then there was another painter that I always admired for his great realism, the great Spaniard Goya. He could paint a king and a queen that looked like cows, dumb. Perhaps they were as dumb as cows but he got away with it--and how he got away with, for instance, painting the Duchess of Alba entirely nude. But he had his way, for in Madrid evidently they couldn't get along without him. He was the delight of society. They once banished him from court, and then after a short time they had to get him back because life was so dry without him that everything was forgiven. But those are about the only two painters that I could think of who got away with not glamorizing the sitter. There no doubt were others--there were some very good portrait painters, but their main talent was in combining glamor with realism. I was absolutely incapable of doing that, I got so lost in my search for realism, and I have no sense for glamor anyway. I had to give that up.

So that was evidently something I couldn't do. I soon realized that I had to do something else for a living, and of course then came the books and the lithographs. Speaking about lithographs, about in the middle '30's the Mexican painter, Alfaro Siqueiros came to Los Angeles. He did a mural at the Chouinard School of Art in the patio, and then he did a great big thing on the outside of a barn-like building on the east side of the city in

the Mexican quarter, and it was a magnificent thing. As usual he was hounded by bad luck. Both of these paintings were painted over in a short time by the owners who didn't like them, so he went back to Mexico. While he was doing those things, hemust have heard that I was doing lithography on zinc, which evidently was unknown to him. One day he called me up and asked me if I could tell him how to do it. I said I'd be glad to. Of course, at that time I thought that he was rich--he was very famous and I thought he had lots of money. I said I would be very glad to sell him a piece of zinc and show him how to do it. He asked me how much a sheet of zinc would cost. Well, it cost me about five dollars for a large sheet, and I said I would be glad to let him have it for the same price, and if he came out to the studio I would show him how to prepare a zinc sheet for drawing and help him in general. He said he was coming and I gave him instructions on how to get there, but he never showed up. That's the Mexican way, you know.

That reminds me of another episode with a Mexican. A friend of mine went down to Mexico City. He was a commercial businessman, and he talked with these Mexican artists that he met about the silk-screen process. They supposedly had never heard ofit. He told them that I had been doing some of these silk-screen things and they were very much interested. They proposed that I should come down and teach them, and they would pay me two hundred

dollars for the month. I felt that that was wonderful. When my friend came back he said, "Well, you write them a letter and send them one of your silk-screen pictures and tell them that I recommended you."

So I did that. I was very excited about being able to go to Mexico City and getting paid for it. I took one of my larger things to the post office, maybe 20 by 30. The post office said they couldn't ship anything as large as that to Mexico, that the largest was a certain size. I cut the thing in half and folded it up, and then independently of this package I wrote a letter to the address he gave me. The letter came back and the package came back--they were never called for. That is just like the Mexicans. They are very pleasant and they make great promises, and then they forget all about them the next day.

Again speaking about lithography, a fellow by the name of [Stanislaus] Szukalski called me up and asked me if I could help him to do lithographs. Szukalski was a very important man in the early '20's. He had two large volumes published on his sculpture. He was a sculptor and did extremely modern things in Chicago in the early '20's. I had seen those two volumes at the home of Schindler, the architect. I was interested in this man Szukalski because that sculpture was quite unusual for that time. During the beginning of the Second World War he called me up and asked me if I could help him. I

was very excited to meet this fellow and I said sure, come out. I showed him how to do lithographs and we did several under my direction--he did some beautiful portraits. He was a marvelous draftsman. He told me that he had gone to Warsaw in the early '30's when Pilsudski was the whole cheese in Warsaw and had done magnificent sculptures there. He said that among other things he had a statue forty feet high, and was well paid by Pilsudski--he liked his work. He did a statue of Mussolini. When the war started and Hitler started to bombard Warsaw, the building he was working in was destroyed completely and he crawled around in the basement for three days before he finally got out.

I must also mention that in the '20's when he did those sculptures and those books were published on him, he was married to a millionairess, and for some reason this marriage went to pieces. In the '30's he married an American schoolteacher and he had to make a living. He went over to Warsaw which was his original home and came in withPilsudski and did very well. After he crawled out of this building, out of this rubble, he tried to come to America with his wife. He had $40,000 in the bank, but Hitler wouldn't let him take any money out of Poland. He couldn't even buy a ticket; he had to write to his father-in-law here in Los Angeles and ask him to send him two tickets. So he did. He came to Los Angeles absolutely penniless.

He got theidea of doing lithographs because he was such a magnificent draftsman and he had no trouble doing portraits. He did a portrait of Lincoln--it was about twenty inches tall and about fifteen inches wide, a magnificent portrait of Lincoln, the best one I've ever seen. Then he did one of Churchill and that was more fantastic. He started to get into these fantastic ideas in the background, but it was an excellent portrait of Churchill. Then he did one of a Polish astronomer in the old days, Copernicus. That was still more fantastic. I printed these three for him, I printed several copies for him. Later on he came and asked me (he had a little money now) if I would print all these things for him in numbers--he would be glad to pay me. I said if he had money to pay for these things, to take them to a man that I knew who was a very goodprinter. I wasn't interested in just doing a lot of printing. So he went over to this Paul Roeher, the German lithographer who did very good printing, and had his work printed. But evidently the things didn't sell. They were too good. The portrait of Lincoln wasn't sweet enough. I suppose he sold some to schools but evidently not enough to make it pay.

But here comes the final thing. He was also a writer and he was an excellent draftsman inblack and white, pen and ink. He got the idea of doing a history of the world. Like so many Poles, he had an exaggerated idea of Poland, and in this history everything started in Poland. The

whole world's history started in Poland. First, of course, he gave the history of the world from the very beginning of the earth, and then right away he came into Poland. When I saw him again he had a pile of manuscripts typewritten and beautiful drawings, just hundreds of beautiful drawings in black and white. He came to see me and wanted to know if I could recommend a publisher. He said he was going to write this book and he would have enough material for three big volumes. I said I would be glad to give him names of publishers that I knew, but that I myself had very little confidence that anybody would be interested in thatsort of a history of the world.

Well, I hadn't seen him for several years, and then he came back to me and said he was going to Italy. He had a pile of manuscripts and was still working on this book. He said he and his wife had saved $3,000--he was working for the airplanes doing tiny little drawings for the airplanes, an incredibly minute job; but he had saved up $3,000, so he got the idea of doing sculpture again and wanted to go to Rome. He'd heard that inItaly living was still cheap, and he hoped that with his $3,000 he would be able to live for three years. I said I wasn't so sure about Italy because I had been down in Italy and had seen that things in Italy were not so cheap.

For six months I didn't hear anything of him, and then all of a sudden he's back. He said that living was so high that he spent all his $3,000, so he had to go back

to his job. He said thathe lived in a chicken house in the San Fernando Valley, and he would have to go back to his airplanes. I haven't heard from him ever since. But Mrs. Ejnar Hanson, who is quite a friend of his, said to Mary the other day thathe was still working on this book and that he had a stack of manuscripts seven feet high. Here is a man who has an idea and can't get rid of it. I don't know what the later parts of his book are like, but if it's still dealing with Poland and all that stuff, I feel sorry for him--he has this idea and he still sticks to it and won't let loose. He's an excellent sculptor and an excellent draftsman, but he got sidetracked.

During the war, a bunch of us artists had the idea that we would like to do something for the war effort. We naturally thought of doing camouflage. Of course, we were all past fifty and they wouldn't take us into the actual Army; but we thought that camouflage was a thing that required knowledge and we had the knowledge, and so we approached the government with the idea of their employing us. But the government laughed at us. They said that camouflage was something for the First World War, that today they didn't count on camouflage, that the cameras on the airplanes can discover anything. Any camouflage would be just laughable. So that was out.

The only thing I could think of was to be an air raid warden. I became a block warden, and it was quite

interesting. First, of course, we had to go to a sort of school and they told us what the dangers were. It looked quite dangerous. I thought if I wereout there and the bombs were dropping it wouldn't be very funny. But the funny thing is that when the actual thing came, when there was a total blackout and I had to walk around the block, I lost all sense of fear. The reality seems to destroy everything that you have built up in your mind. I said well, if they come, let them come. I'm ready for them. But of course that didn't last very long.

The next thing that the artists thought of was to entertain the wounded soldiers that came back. Kem Weber, the architect, was living in Glendale and had made arrangements with the authorities to have artists go down to the hospital in Long Beach and entertain the soldiers by teaching them art, lecturing to them, and painting portraits of the wounded to send to their parents. I was ready to go. He called me up especially to ask me if I would take part in this. I said I would be delighted, because I wanted to do something. This war was getting on my nerves, sitting home and doing nothing for it.

When we were about ready to go, I got a letter from Pasadena saying that since I was a resident of Pasadena or of East Eagle Rock I couldn't go with the Glendale outfit. I should be incorporated in the Pasadena outfit. If I was interested I should come to a meeting and bring

two of my works to show that I was eligible for doing such work. After I had lived around here for twenty years and won prizes and had exhibitions I would have to pass a jury of society women!

But anyway, I swallowed my pride. I was supposed to be at a certain hotel at a certain time, at four o'clock on a certain day, and bring two of my works. I took two of my things under my arm and went over there. I got into this room and I found that the whole room was full of amateurs, mostly amateurs, who wanted to be in on this. This was the anteroom. I said, "Well, when can I go in there?" They said I would have to take a number off the shelf and that my number would be twenty-three now. I said, "I was asked to come here at four o'clock, and if they want me again they can all me up." And so I left. They were society women that were supposed to pass on this thing.

Well, I can tell you another story that seems to be just about as ridiculous. At the time of Stalingrad, when the Russians were hard pressed, somebody in Los Angeles arranged for artists to enter on a poster competition. They wanted posters to show that the Russians were hard pressed, to help the wounded and to help the orphans in Stalingrad. So while I was against any competitions, I had such bad luck with competitions, I was anxious to do something--here was something that I could really do that was valuable, and I felt deeply about

Stalingrad. I figured if Stalingrad was lost we would very likely lose the war, if Hitler could combine with the Japanese.

So I did a poster. It was a sad poster in a sense. It had a wounded Russian soldier entangled in barbed wire in the snow, and inthe background there was a big battle going on, cannon firing and men attacking. I thought I had a very good thing. In this prospectus that they sent out, it said that all entries would be shown at an exhibition at the Los Angeles Museum as soon as the jury had awarded the prize; they would have the exhibition at the museum and have a big dinner and so on, and we should send in our application form for this dinner. The day after the jury had met I went down to the museum to see what was going on. I expected all these things on the wall, just as the prospectus had said, but most of them were lying on the floor. Mine was lying on the floor--only about ten were hanging on the walls and they were rather insipid stuff.

So I went to the director of the museum and asked, "What's this all about? Here we have a prospectus promising that everything will be hanging on the walls, and all the stuff is on the floor."

He said, "Well, I'll tell you. I have nothing to do with this. All the pictures are going to be shipped to a gallery in Beverly Hills and they will be shown down there."

I said, "That's funny." So I went down to Beverly Hills to this gallery, and here again they had only a handful on the wall. I asked the man, "Where's my picture?" He said, "Well, I'll tell you--you've got a very good painting but it's not a poster. It's down in the basement."

And I began to say, "Well, look here, the prospectus said this--and here my stuff is in the basement. You say that it's a good painting but it's not a poster. Usually, when I have paintings, they say these are good posters not paintings. When I make a poster they say it's a good painting, it's not a poster."

So I remonstrated with him, and finally he got mad and opened the door and said, "You get out of here." Of course I couldn't fight him on his own premises. I went out and he threw the pictureout.

I was good and mad by that time, and I said I was going to fight this. I found out who the lawyer was who had charge of this whole thing, and went to his office. The girl was in--it wasin the evening. I told the girl that here is the prospectus, and he promised such-and-such things, and he didn't do it. She said she was very sorry that Mr. So-and-So was not in, but she'd call me in the morning.

The next morning I didn't get a call. I called again, and it was just like a cold wind had blown overthe whole thing. The girl said, "You have no right to ask such

things--even if the prospectus said that, we were not bound to live up to that. You must be a Communist." I thought that the next thing to do would be to try to get all the artists together and make a protest. I started to call artists; especially I called the fellow that won the first prize. I thought that if he had any sense of honor he would see thenthing. "Oh," he said, "Let's not start a rumpus. Let's let it go." I called everyone and, with the exception of one, they allsaid they didn't want to make any trouble. One of them said, "I'm with you" right away. But we were only two alone, and what could we do? So that's the way it went.

About that time, the Los Angeles Museum was rather in a sad state. There were more and more artists and less and less room for artists to exhibit their pictures. The museum used to have two exhibitions a year; one was open to the California Art Club members and the other was open to everybody. But after a while theCalifornia Art Club exhibition was cut out, so there was only one exhibition a year where everybody could send a picture. There were more and more artists and less and less space.

We got a new director--Mr. McKinney became director of the museum, and he evidently saw that there was something wrong there. He got intouch with about ten artists that he considered representative to discuss the museum question and exhibition question. So we had a meeting and it lasted about two hours. We discussed

it back and forth, and came to the conslusion, and the director was very much in favor of it, to have two exhibitions a year open to everybody, one in the spring and one in the fall, and then to have twelve one-man shows, each one to last a month. The museum was to select the artists for that. We thought that now at last the museum was waking up again and living up to its purpose.

But unfortunately, about three months later, Mr. McKinney gave up his job and went to New York. Then a Mr. Breasted, the son of a historian at UCLA, came in as director of the museum; he evidently had no interest whatever in art and he cut everything out. The whole program was discarded. From then on, they had a scheme that each entrant had to pay three dollars for each entry, andif they were refused by the jury they were not given the money back. At that time there used to be about 3,000 entries, so that means that they took in about $9,000. Only about 150 items could be hung, so almost $3,000 dollars were wasted by the artists because they didn't get it back. I thought that that was a lousy scheme for making money for the museum, so I stopped sending pictures. Quite a lot of artists quit sending pictures. They were not going to pay to show their pictures or perhaps have them refused and then not get the money back.

Later on they had one exhibition there and I was especially invited--I sent the picture without having to pay the three dollars, and I got an award on that. But

that's the last time I sent anything to the museum. After that it was just simply a horse race. You sent a picture andpaid three dollars, there were 3,000 entries and only 150 accepted, so there was absolutely no use. After awhile they changed the three-dollar business so that pictures again could be sent in free. But by that time the juries were usually selected from out-of-town artists, usually the most extreme modernists from New York or San Francisco, so the chances of having a picture accepted was so small, in fact, that there was no use sending it. I never sent any more since then.

Mary and I decided that we would go back to Switzerland. My parents were getting to be almost ninety years old and I hadn't seen them in a long time, so I thought we would go there and combine the trip to see that my parents were all right. After all the greetings and so on, I found that they were getting along reasonably well with good health and they were comfortable.

We spent quite a lot of time in Lucerne, and while we were there we heard of a show being given at the source of the lake, at the intake of the lake, at a place called Altdorf. The show was really by amateurs and was given every summer. We thought we'd like to see that, and we took a boat ride from Lucerne up to Altdorf and saw the show. We were so impressed by it--it was really magnificent on a show like that. It was better than anything I've seen in Los Angeles, professional shows.

On the way back on the boat, we got the idea that it would be a good idea to do a book for our American children on William Tell. The more we thought about it the more enthusiastic we became. We began to look up historical things. They had a museum and a historic library in Lucerne, so we tried to find out all about William Tell. But we soon found out that this was not history. The whole William Tell story was a saga, and historically the man didn't exist. In fact, we were told that in the northern land, in Denmark, they had a similar story of shooting an apple off a boy's head. But anyway, we thought that we wouldn't let that stop us because it's a good story, and we thought American children would be interested in it since there was nothing available at all in American libraries for children. So we got to work on the idea.

We camehome and we proposed the thing to Miss Massee, but she wouldn't give us any color. They got to be very tight. Color cost a lot of money and it was too uncertain, whether they could get their money back. We corresponded with her for quite a while, and finally she said, "Well, if you can find another publisher that's willing to give you color, you're welcome." That's about the same as saying go to the devil.

So right away we wrote--we made an unforgivable mistake--we wrote to two publishers at the same time. We didn't know that was against the rules, and both of

them accepted. So we had to give up one. The less known one we explained that we made a mistake, and unfortunately Houghton Mifflin had accepted it a little earlier and so we had to give it to them. So nothing was heard from it any more.

But I started to work on it and I did a lot of large paintings, full page and double spreads. They didn't want it in oils, they wanted it in tempera. I had never before worked in opaque tempera and I began to study up on tempera. I painted these things in tempera and they accepted them. It turned out to be a very, very good book. In fact, it turned out to be the best book we had outside of Big Tree.

After that book was published, we got the idea that we might do a book on Guatemala. Mary wanted to go to Guatemala. I wasn't very enthusiastic because I wanted to do my ownpaintings and not do another book, but she wanted to go down to Guatemala, anyway. So she took a trip to Guatemala and came back all enthusiastic about it,the wonderful highlands of Guatemala. She induced me to go with her a few months later.

We went to Mexico City on the plane and took a hotel there. We were eating dinner, and when I tried to get up I couldn't. My left leg wouldn't work. It was in such pain that I said let's go up to our room--they helped me get up to my room. In the morning it was still as bad as ever and I said to Mary, "I've got to go home. I want to

get to a doctor." The doctor, when I came home, said it was an injured cartilage. He said I must have climbed something and injured a cartilage. I never felt that I had had any accident. He gave me some exercises to do, lifting ten-pound weights with my foot. I did it for a week, and it got worse and worse and worse. I finally went to the doctor again and said that I had done all that he told me, but it got so bad that I could hardly move. He said we must be on the wrong track. We tried to immobilize it. He put a cast on it and immobilized the leg, and in about two weeks he took off the cast and my leg was almost all right.

So later on, we were able to go back to Guatemala together; although I had to walk with a cane we got to Guatemala, and I was very enthusiastic about the scenery that I saw there and about plight of the Indians and we thought that it would make a wonderful book. Now I'll let Mary talk.

Mary Buff: The Guatemala book came out--it was called Magic Maize; it came out in 1953. The way we happened to get interested in it, at least the way I did, was that I had a schoolteacher friend who'd been down there a number of times. She was very much interested in the Indian weaving. One night she invited us to a picture show at her house and we went. Immediately I got all fired up about going to Guatemala. I'd been to Mexico several times, but Guatemala was just something quite different.

So I don't know how I engineered the idea of the going. Conrad just spoke about how he had conked out there in Mexico City, and then when he came back he was on crutches for a couple of weeks. After while he said, "Well, Mary, I know how badly you want to go--so why don't you just go?"

So I went to Mexico City. I was very much interested in the origin of corn. The whole culture of the Americas is based on corn, maize. I went to Mexico City first and found that the Rockerfeller group had some sort of a project there and had had for some time, trying to raise the standard of quality of the Mexican hybrid corn. As an end result the Mexicans were exporting corn rather than importing corn, and raising it for the wellbeing of the people. I went out to their area. They had some kind of an organization outside of Mexico City and I went there. They told me when I went to Guatemala City to be sure to go to Antigua and talk to the scientists from Ames, Iowa.

So when I went on my own I went first to Mexico City and then flew to Guatemala City. That was really quite a nice time. It was in August. The rains had begun to come. First I located in Guatemala City for a short time, and I went to the consulate, talked to all the people there, and was able to get in touch with the Minister ofAgriculture and Education; I was also able to talk to our own embassy and get a sort of background material.

They said to be sure to go to Antigua.

So I went to Antigua and got in touchwith several scientists who had been trying to introduce hybrid corn in Guatemala. I thought that would be the basis for the theme of the book, especially since I found out that maize had probably originated in Guatemala, many thousands of years ago, and perhaps also in Peru, we don't know. At any rate, the crossing of two wild weeds at first started the original corn. That was the fundamental idea for all the Indian culture. So I got that information, and then they told me that to really see the Indian life as it should be seen I should go from Antigua up to Lake Atitlan. It's a beautiful lake high up. When I got up there (it was a rather rough drive that led up to the fancy hotel) the rooms weren't made up yet, and someone there told me that it was possible to get to a little pension away from themain part of the panajachel that was called La Cucurumba. I met someone on the bus, and we were waiting for the rooms to be done; and so we traveled along this little dirty road and it was quite charming.

After a while we just happened upon the Rancho Grande. Out walked an enormous woman, an American who evidently ran the shebang. She had a heart of gold and a will of iron and she treated these Indians with a very strict discipline, yet at the same time they knew that she would be fair with them. It was a charming place--it consisted

of a series of small cottages surrounded by a coffee plantation, and each cottage had bright red doors and inside was furnished inthe typical Guatemalan furniture. Everything was in very good taste. You could rent one of those cottages and take your meals at theinexpensive dining room. It was quite simple. People who came there were mostly artists and scientists, people who were interested in Guatemala as such rather than just tourists. From that point I could operate. I went across the lake to the seven villages that are across the lake, and in one of those villages found this village where all the women wore white blouses and red skirts, Santiago. I was able to very leisurely take in all this and get the feeling of what it would be like.

Then there was a charming little native boy who cleaned up around the Rancho Grande. He was the boy whose portrait is on this book--he was so charming and so big-eyed and so sweet. His father was digging a ditch on the place. When we got there Millie, the proprietor, brought food to the veranda (everybody had a veranda), brought tea, including bread and jam and so on. This little boy was raking up leaves in front of us and we noticed how beautiful he was. We handed him bread and jam. He didn't touch it. He just broke it in two. Then he ran to find papa. Papa was digging somewhere in the distance. He gave papa half and came back and went on with his work.

So he's the hero of this book. The whole story isbased more or less on the idea that this boy, whose father is very conservative and raised corn in the old way, had accidentally gotten from his brother, who was an itinerant peddlar, some kernels of this new magic corn from the north. Knowing that his father would dislike the idea of his having taken something from the white people, the Gringos, he andhis friend planted this corn way up high on the mountains near a volcano, to see what would happen. Of course it grew, quite a bit better than native corn. On that idea the whole book is based, with the final reconciliation between the old and the new, which is quite an involved story.

After I got the idea of the story I went back to work on it a while, and then later in the year, in March, we decided that we'd better go down again. So the two of us went down again, to the same place. We went over the same places, saw the same people, and eventually this book was finished.

Buff: We took a ride across the lake to the village. There we visited these Indians, and they had a festival there, some Catholic festival. I took photographs of these Indians and of course I was very glad to paint them. I came to oneIndian--he was really an oldtimer and he was slightly drunk. I asked him if I could take his picture and he spat at my feet. I handed him a cigarette and he took it, but I didn't get his picture.

I took several photographs of the very interesting houses that they had--it was really quite an idea to see that village; it took you back thousands of years.

Mary Buff: Pre-Columbian. That was really in interesting adventure.

Buff: Later on, we took a ride up to Chichicastenango, which is quite high up in the mountains--I think it's about 8,000 feet, if I'm not mistaken. There they had two churches, one for the Indians on one side, and then on the other side of the plaza, there was a church for everybody. In this church where the Catholics are, of course everybody was allowed to go in. On the steps of the church the Indians would burn copal gum--they made smoke. They prayed on the steps of the church to their own god, and then later on they went into the interior of the Catholic church and prayed to the Christian God. It must have been Easter Sunday--one of the priests from another church came to bless the children.

Mary Buff: Baptize them, actually.

Buff: There were about twenty Indian women with their newborn babies around the circle, and this priest would go from one to the other sprinkling a little water. It was quite a mechanical affair. Evidently that was the way that they did it. Every so often a priest came from a neighboring church to bless the children.

Mary Buff: It was interesting how the old native religion fundamental for their life was there just the same,

but on it was superimposed these new gods. It didn't seem to be at all difficult to take over the new gods and give them the names perhaps of the old gods in their minds. There seemed to be no friction between these things.

Dixon: No, they made the changeover, and still are making this changeover.

Buff: So we came home and submitted the story to Houghton Mifflin and they were glad to accept it. They gave us all the color that we wanted. This time I painted in oils. In fact I had a new editor--she was out in Los Angeles and I told her that the old editor demanded that I do it in tempera. She said, "Oh, that woman didn't know anything about it. You do it any way you want to." So I did them in oils and the drawings were done a third larger in pencil. About a year later the book was published and it was quite satisfactory.

Mary Buff: Conrad, may I question something here? This came out in 1953. It seems to me that we did the Apple and Arrow before that.

Buff: I explained that already.

Mary Buff: Oh, did you?

Buff: After 1953, I went back to my pictures again. I painted pictures for myself.

Mary Buff: There's another thing, though. Did we about that time build a cabin at Lake Arrowhead?

Buff: Yes. We had a chance to buy ten acres up at Lake

Arrowhead at a very, very reasonable price; it was some sort of a sleeper in a mysterious way--nobody wanted it because you had to have cash. We just happened to have enough cash to buy the thing, and so we bought this ten acres. Then our son, being an architect, he built us a house up there.

Mary Buff: The first A-frame house built in this area.

Buff: In fact, the building regulations up there were such that they wouldn't stand for an A-frame house. We had to modify it--it was still an A-frame house, but it _wasn't_ really an A-frame house. But it was the first A-frame house that had been built around there. They put in on the cover of the Sunday _Times_.

TAPE NUMBER: FIVE, SIDE TWO

Bufi: Now comes the time when I ought to revert to [talking about] my own work in painting. After the depression, I think I stated before that it was rather hard to find a way of making a living. I tried many things. Among other things, I thought I could do posters, and I think I spoke about a poster I did on Stalingrad. But I did another one. It happened something like this. In Los Angeles they had some sort of a [project] to help the widows and orphans of the war. I don't remember just what society started it, but a prominent businessman in Eagle Rock came to me and asked me if I would contribute to the affair by painting a poster. He explained to me what it was all about and I thought that it was a wonderful opportunity to do an effective poster. So I did paint not only one, but I painted two of them, rather large, about six feet tall. They were supposed to be displayed in stores. My theme was a young widow with two children at the grave of a killed soldier; it had a cross and a helmet on top with a hole through it, with the sad widow and the two little children against a flaming sky. It was of course a sad thing, but I meant to awaken the pity of the people, which I thought the whole thing was for, to get people to contribute to the welfare of the orphans and widows.

But it didn't turn out to be successful because the stores thought it was too sad. They couldn't afford to have a sad atmosphere in the store. At one big gathering a woman came over and asked me, "What do you mean to say? What does it allmean?" So I gave it up. I said if we can't have it in the stores, we can't have it anyplace else. The man who asked me to do it felt very sorry. He couldn't understand it. He thought it was a good poster. But he gave me theidea that I just didn't have the right spirit to get people enthusiastic. A poster evidently takes a special talent. It's a thing to induce people todo something, and I didn't have the right thing--like in the Stalingrad poster, too; it just didn't go over. So I gave up the poster idea.

I came back to my mural painting. I think I should explain the difference of attitude among the mural painters. Most mural painters consider the wall a background to express an idea as forcefully as possible. A smaller group, or a more old-fashioned group, maintained that the mural was a part of a room andhad to be in harmony with the room, not be too obvious. But very few mural painters nowadays seem to subscribe to that idea. For instance, the Mexicans are the most emphatic people on the other side. They consider a wall entirely something to paint forcefully a social idea. Diego Rivera, Orozco and all those fellows are really not in the other sense mural painters. They're just expressionist painters

who have used the wall to have a large scale to paint on. I always had an entirely different idea. By the way, even Michelangelo was one of those fellows. The Sistine Chapel ceiling is so out of touch with the architecture and so purely a story-telling expressionist idea. Even his sculptures never really fit into a piece of architecture. But they're always magnificent, as his work is all the way around--that's just the sort of a man he is. It had its place.

I personally was of the other idea, that the mural was just part of the architecture and had toconform to the architectural scheme and not be too obvious. But I find that very few people agree with that. It may be partly because that idea was held by the rather superficial decorators; much work in that way was rather superficial and sugary, and so anybody who held that idea was right away classed an an ordinary decorator, which of course shouldn't be. For instance, the Greeks in their temples really subordinated the decorations to the architectural scheme. Those figures in the Parthenon would rather show that--it's just a frieze and it doesn't conflict with the architectural idea. But I got a severe shock when I went to Pomona where Orozco painted his Prometheus. I think it's a marvelous piece of work, but it completely destroys the architecture. Even the architect of the building told me that he felt it was so powerful that it made his architecture shake; it's true. I don't mean to say

that that's wrong. It's just one way of thinking, one wayof doing things.

I myself started as a decorator, but even as a decorator I never had the idea ofmaking an interior look magnificent. I always had the idea that the interior shoould express something. For instance, I never believed in having an elaborate ceiling decoration, because you're not supposed to look up at the ceiling and strain your neck. The ceiling ought to either appear higher than it actually was or, in the case of a very high place, it could be brought down more by strong colors. All the way through, while I was doing mural painting for architects, I still carried that in my mind: I never let my pictures run away with the show.

As I grew older I got away from the idea of painting mural pictures at all. I figured thatthe room itself should be the picture. It should be a piece of art without any additional decorations.

Color should express something. Color has two characteristics: one is the emotional and the other is the functional. Everybody understands the emotional part of color, but very few people realize that color can be a functional thing, too. It's very hard to explain, without having actual samples of color to show, how certain colors sink to the bottom and other colors will rise, how colors can advance and retard. In a small room my idea was always that the walls should retard.

The things that happen inside the room are the important things, and the colors of the walls should support the function of whatever is to go on in the middle. For instance, a table of flowers can look magnificent if the right kind of a wall color is brought in. But if the color of the wall is too prominent, it can kill the flowers. In so many different ways that can be applied.

In the '20's, there was an architectural magazine and I contributed to it--rather, Mary wrote for me my ideas, and I expressed those ideas in relationship to color. How, for instance, if you wanted a building to look larger you would use heavy dark colors at the bottom, and gradually lighten the colors as you reached the top so it would give additional height to the building. Of course, in exterior architecture it's somewhat difficult because we didn't have very good colors that could stand the sunlight, but still to a certain extent you could work with sun-proof colors. And now especially with the mosaics, since the mosaics are rather cheap comparatively, you could use magnificent colors on the outside.

For some reason, I have never been able to convince modern architects that they should use color. As intimately as I was acquainted with Neutra, Davidson, and Schindler, I could never convince them that they should use color. Rudolph Schindler hated all applied colors. He wanted only to use the colors of the actual material, for instance, bare concrete and dark stained woodwork. He never gave

any attention to color itself. Neutra wasn't that severe, but he never could be convinced that color could be used to help to express the architectural design. I've never found a modern architect who was congenial to my ideas. All the ideas I had about color I had to just carry in my head. Of course, I got contracts to do small decorative jobs but never on the large scale where you could actually use colors to the full extent.

Dixon: What about your son? Does he?

Buff: He belongs to the same class of architects. He doesn't want color. I've never been able to convince him that he should use color. The older architects were more likely to like color, but the modern ones I think are afraid; they're afraid that whoever might use color might not understand their design, and they've also been spoiled and made sour because of decorators, decorators who have mainly the idea of sugar-coating everything in the architecture. Usually they feel the decorators spoil the architectural interiors. So they're wary of any ideas about using color. They themselves think in terms of dark and light entirely. I don't mean to say that all modern architects are that way, but those that I happen to know think in terms of black and white only, and light and dark. I would like to express myself more thoroughly in regard to the use of color, but without being very well prepared for it and without having samples to show, it's very difficult to put it over. All through these years I've

tried and tried, and finally I had to give it up and just concentrate on my landscapes.

Now, in that regard of course, I have always been in love with the western topography, with the western climate. For instance, southern Utah and northern Arizona are to me the most magnificent countries as far as landscape is concerned. I've spent most of my time expressing my love for those particular places. Up to ten years ago, it was possible to get these ideas over in exhibitions, but about ten years ago all representative painting started to be taboo. You couldn't get into exhibitions any more. Everything turned to the abstract or nonrepresentational or nonobjective. Themuseums played their part too, inasmuch as they appointed juries composed entirely of abstractionist or nonrepresentational painters. They threw everything out that smacked of representation. I haven't been able to use many of my later things in exhibitions because the competition was too great; usually for an exhibition they would have about 3,000 entries and the museum would allow only about 150, so the chances were slim, especially with the modern juries. I just gave up even trying to sell the idea.

I don't know what's going to become of any landscape painting. As for my part, I do it in the studio and hope that I can satisfy myself and maybe somebody else, some friend, who might be interested in seeing one. But to have exhibitions seems to be quite useless. I think it's

partly the museums' fault, in not considering that the local artists should have a chance to show their works, not only bringing work of French or New York artists. For instance, the LosAngeles Museum now for three years hasn't had an exhibition, and artists in Los Angeles have no way of showing their works in a large exhibition hall. We have the others on La Cienega, but they all have small rooms and large pictures can not be shown. So it's rather hopeless for artists today who want to paint large things. If they can send them to New York, if they have enough money to buy big frames and send them to New York or to outside exhibitions, it's all right. But I never did send pictures to New York or to outside exhibitions because I didn't want to go to the expense of buying a big frame and incurring a lot of expense, so I depended on local exhibitions entirely. Now I'm confined to doing what I can for myself in the studio, and amuse myself.

Dixon: I'd like to ask you about your techniques. Have you changed your techniques?

Buff: Yes, Ihave changed my technique quite considerably. In the earlier pictures I used the pointalist technique in order to be truthful to the light of the deserts and the mountains. But later on I found a way of expressing that clarity of air by broader application of colors, by more bright application of brighter colors. In that sense I changed entirely, and lost a lot of friends by doing so.

Dixon: I know this happens to authors who change a style of writing.

Buff: Once you get a public that likes your work and you change your style, then all of a sudden you lose everybody. If you're young enough to build up a new audience that's all right, but if you're too old you're just out. I don't mean to say that I haven't any friends left who like what I'm doing, but it's certainly not a popular idea, together with the fact that of course landscape painting is out of style today entirely; the same with ordinary figure painting. We have come into more wildly expressive ideas, and abstract and nonrepresentational paintings are entirely in style now. I'm just too old to start. At all times, my pictures were built up on a design basis. I stress strongly the design. In fact, the landscape of Arizona and Utah appealed to me mostly because it strongly emphasized design. But to entirely drop the representational character is somehow outside of me--I can't feel happy in just working inpure design. I don't mean to say that that's necessarily a virtue, but it just happens to be that that's the way I am. I have to do as Luther said, "Here I stand. God help me, I can't do otherwise."

I'll go back to the books now. I think the last book was the Apple and the Arrow. We took a trip up to Mesa Verde, Mary and I; I don't rememberthe exact year but it was somewhat later. We were so impressed by not only

the landscape but the way the people had to live in those early days, the whole idea of these canyon dwellers, that we thought that we might do a book. Mary got the idea, as usual, and she worked up the story. I think it was Houghton Mifflin who accepted the book. Viking had already declined to do any color work. Houghton Mifflin was willing to do color--they gave us quite a lot of color.

Later on, I think it was '47 or so, the P.E.N. Club had its meeting in Japan. We decided to go with the club to Japan. We took a boat a week ahead, a week before the opening, and we got to Yokahama by boat. As the boat stopped I noticed some Japanese coming aboard. Then I heard my name called after while, and I was wondering what was going to happen, who knew me. It turned out that they were newspapermen of the different newspapers, and they came to welcome us. They were just the most charming people on earth. You know, you have the idea that Japanese men are rather rude, but it was exactly the opposite--they're really charming people. They welcomed us and introduced us to the officer and let us get by in no time--we were out in no time, down on the plaza where the taxis were. The taxi drivers were just as charming as they could be. We had the idea from the war, of course, of what the Japanese men [were like], but we didn't meet any of that type.

We came to a point where we had to take the railroad

train to Tokyo, and we had to climb some steps to get to the depot. We had about four suitcases. There was a man, one of those red caps or whatever they call them in Japan, and he was an old man. He must have been about fifty or fifty-five. Being a little man I couldn't understand how he could carry all those suitcases, but he piled them all up. I tried to help him with one but he wanted to carry them all himself. He carried them up the steps where we took the train. On the train it was the same thing--everybody was polite. The man that took the tickets was just as nice, and he got us to a seat even though the car was crowded.

Finally we landed inour hotel. We didn't have reservations for the Imperial Hotel that Frank Lloyd Wright did--I forget the name of the other hotel. It was a modern hotel built especially by Japanese, and it was just as nice as it could be. What impressed me were the little girls standing around taking people to the elevators. They couldn't have been more than about fourteen or fifteen, but they were so little they looked like kindergarten.

We finally got to our room and had hardly settled there when we got a call. Some peo le down below wanted to see us. I thought, who in the world would want to see me, who knows that I'm here? There were four men down there--one interpreter, two newspapermen and one theatrical producer. For some reason it got around that

we were there, so they came to see us at the hotel. They wanted to see our books, so we had to go upstairs and bring Mary down to show the books. The man who was the theatrical producer asked us if we could come tomorrow to a theatrical performance that he was giving for a children's audience. Of course, we had to say we were delighted. The next day he sent a car for us and he took us to his theatre. It turned out that he knew all about the Pasadena Playhouse and Gilmor Brown here in Pasadena. He was producing a show here for the children. I think it was the most beautiful setting. I don't think that anything in Los Angeles or New York could compare with what they did there. I think it was done by children. It was absolutely beautiful. It had about four acts and after the second act, in the pause, all of a sudden everybody looked at us. The children all looked back at us, and it seemed that the manager told them that we were there and we were doing children's books. They all looked back and then they applauded.

After the show was over of course they gave us refreshments, and then asked us if we would allow them to take us back to the hotel in the car. He had the most charming girl, a married woman of about twenty or so, drive us back to the hotel. When we got back there, I asked her if she wouldn't care to have supper with us at the hotel, and I asked her if she would please call her husband and ask him if he would care to join us.

She had told us that her husband was a poet. So she went to the phone and called him up. Then she came back and she said, "He's too shy." We had supper together and then she went home.

We waited for the P.E.N. Club to open up. And there again, what the Japanese did for the club is unbelievable. They gave garden parties one after theother. We met practically all the members. Of course most of them couldn't speak English. Among others, we met the poet to the Emperor and his wife and daughter. They were darling people. He was such a shy man he could hardly talk. He was thepoet to the Emperor. We became well acquainted and we exchanged books, and they accompanied us on different trips to the gardens and so on. We took pictures of each other. I couldn't believe that the court of the Emperor could be so interested in a few American writers.

One of the most magnificent trips was the one that we took to the Katsura Gardens. It's perhaps one of the finest specimens of architecture in relationship to a park. I think the Japanese in that regard are the biggest artists the world has ever dreamed of. I don't think that any place in Italy orGreece has such a combination of architecture and gardens. It's just marvelous. To every park we went it was the same thing.

Once we decided we'd go up to Nikko, and take a trip up there. That's about one hundred miles north of

Tokyo and we had to take a train. (Another thing that impressed me there were the Japanese trains. They're the speediest trains and most magnificent trains in the world, I think, but they're run by "children." These great massive looking motors and then these little people--they look like children, they look young. The people that collected the tickets and the girls that brought the drinks around, they all looked like little children. I always say that the Japanese trains are the best in the world and that they are all run by children.)
Finally we came up to Nikko, and that in a sense is a different type of architecture from the Shinto. The Shinto Architecture in Japan is all simplicity and very carefully considered volumes and planes against each other. But a later architecture is an importation from China, andit's very elaborate and rather overdone. I think it was done in the seventeenth century when the Chinese influence was quite strong, and it wasn't the best ofthe Chinese, either. It was an overdone idea. But the setting among the great big trees is something that I have never seen any place else. It's absolutely marvelous. Another thing--the Torii gate. I think, in connection with the landscape, they are some of the world's finest sculpture. It is sculpture and architecture combined. But it's so absolutely right and so beautiful in relationship to the landscape--I always think of the Greek and their Acropolis, but it can't be any more

beautiful than the Torii gate in that beautiful garden.

Mary Buff: Don't forget the lovely bridge across the river that you painted so much.

Buff: Oh, yes. In Nikko there's a big river that comes down from the mountains, and a red and gold bridge goes across the river. It's not a bridge for everybody to go on--it's only open once a year for a parade. Butit's one of the most beautiful things I've ever seen: this big stream coming through from the mountains and then this red bridge with gold ornaments. I happened to paint that several times.

Dixon: How long were you in Japan?

Buff: Unfortunately, we couldn't stay very long because Mary got sick and we had to come home. We would have liked to see a lot more. We found out one Friday morning that we'd better go home, because the day before we'd had to go to a doctor and we weren't very satisfied with the doctor, so we decided we'd better go home. I asked the man at the hotel if he could get us a reservation to go home as soon as possible. We were near Kyoto, and of course we'd have to take a plane from Tokyo. He came back and said the only thing he could get was for today, because they were all filled up for the whole week until next Friday. This was a Friday, the 13th, but we didn't know it. It was about ten o'clock in the morning. I said, "How will I get to Tokyo from here? It takes six hours on the train even with good connections." He said,

"I've figured out a way. I'll take you to the station in Kyoto and then there's a train that leaves for Osaka at twelve o'clock. If you take that train, in Osaka you can take a plane to Tokyo." So he took us up to the station just in time to buy tickets to Osaka. We came to Osaka, and there we had an hour and had a cup of coffee. We met a very charming Japanese who had something to do with the Imperial Hotel.

Mary Buff: He was a sort of in-between man for these American people.

Buff: He was at the Imperial Hotel and so we became acquainted. We took the plane together. He wasthe most charming man. We came to Tokyo just in time, I think. The plane left at nine o'clock and we got there at about seven o'clock. I had to go and take a taxi to the Imperial Hotel and then take another taxi back to the station.

Mary Buff: Conrad, would you mind my telling here what this friend of ours at Osaka told us--this beautiful fairy story that he toldus, a sort of traditional story, which sums up the attitude of the Japanese toward life, toward art and toward simplicity. It made a great impression on me.

The story is that the morning-glory was rare--it came from China years and years ago. There was only one place where this blue morning-glory grew, and that was over the hut of a priest far offin the country some place.

So this got around over Japan. A shogun, strongly powerful at that time, wanted to see this morning-glory, so he got his retinue together and started off. It was quite a long journey to the hut of this priest who lived in the valley. When they came to the top of the hill overlooking the valley, he sent his retainers on to notify the priest that they were coming. Even from the distance they could see that this hut was covered with greenery. In due time the shogun arrives at the hut, and there was not a bit of greenery on the hut. It's entirely empty, entirely clear. The priest comes out, and the shogun is very, very angry to think that he has probably torn all this off, and here he has come so far to see this beautiful blue morning-glory. The priest says, "Come into the hut. I will show you." There on one side of the hut was the tokonom (a bench like that) on which there was a beautiful vase, andin the vase, alone, was a beautiful spray of the vine and the leaves and a morning-glory. He said, "This is the morning-glory. This is the soul of the morning-glory--not many morning-glories, but this is the morning-glory." Our friend says that in a sense that typifies the reserve and the simplicity and the essense thatis in Japanese art. I've never forgotten that story.

Buff: I arrived at the Imperial Hotel and I was able to get back to the airport in time to have supper. Outside there was a big congregation of Japanese people and they

were singing "Auld Lang Syne." We asked one of the young fellows there what was the occasion. He said, "Two of our friends are going to London, to Oxford, and we all came to say good-bye to them." I said, "How come you sing "Auld Lang Syne?" Well, that was a Japanese song. They had made a song with the melody of "Auld Lang Syne."

Mary Buff: They all crowded around us because we spoke English, and avidity to learn English is, of course, phenomenal all over Japan.

Buff: But I forgot to say something about the Imperial Hotel. Of course, Frank Lloyd Wright made a great reputation by doing that building, and we all thought that the Japanese were wild about it. But it turned out that that wasn't so at all. The Japanese really didn't like it. It was magnificent from the outside with the pool and water lilies--practically all of Frank Lloyd Wright's buildings are beautiful from the outside. But on the inside it was crowded and it was overdecorated, and the walls were so low you felt closed in.

Mary Buff: The Mayan motives. Were they not heavy Mayan motives?

Buff: Well, it was typical Frank Lloyd Wright decoration, but it was really overdone. The Japanese didn't like it because they like simple things. A psychologist who was with us there told us he had to move out because he got claustrophobia in there because the ceilings were so low.

Mary Buff: Did you speak about the attitude of the Japanese as a whole toward this international meeting of writers?

Buff: I did speak some about the parties. There was one party especially that was given to us at night, a moonlight party in one of the big parks that belonged to a very rich Japanese. As we entered through the gate, we were confronted by booths where they had empty dishes, unpainted dishes and colors. They asked if we'd like to paint the dishes, so Mary painted one, and the next morning they brought it to us, and it was all fired. It was the most marvelous party that I ever attended. A river came out of a lake, and you crossed the bridge across the river and then you saw a lake inthe moonshine, and a few boats on the lake. All along the lakeshore there were booths with all kinds of drinks, champagne and beer and cocktails, and beautiful girls serving in native costumes. And a show, a theater production. All around the lake. As we went out, by the time we had our fill of eats and drinks, we were confronted by a man who gave each one of us a kimono and an umbrella to remember the party.

Mary Buff: They're great on gifts, you know.

Buff: It was unbelievable what they did for us. We had attended P.E.N. Club meetings in Europe, but nobody had done anything like that.

Mary Buff: They had a Kabuki play and they had the Noh

play for us. It was really something beyond anything we ever saw.

Buff: We had free entry to the National Museum.

Mary Buff: Free transportation on all railroads. They say that even the schoolchildren and laborers contributed their little pittances.

Buff: That's an amazing thing. The labor unions contributed to the expenses, and the schoolchildren, to entertain these international writers. It's unbelievable.

Mary Buff: The Prime Minister gave us a reception; the respect they seem to have for the arts and the people who create, no matter what they create in, at least it seemed to us, was beyond anything that we had ever experienced. John Steinbeck was one of the guests, remember?

Buff: Yes, John Steinbeck was a speaker at the gathering there. Of course, as it usually happens, there were many speakers. The Japanese are no exception--when they get to talk, they like to talk. We were so tired of all the speakers. Finally John Steinbeck came up and he said, "I'll make this short."

Mary Buff: He stood at the rostrum and he looked over the crowd, and it was very quiet. He said, "When I was in New York and they told me, 'John, you're supposed to go to Tokyo and give a talk," I was frankly rather frightened about it." He's a shy person. "They said, 'Oh, well, John, you don't have to worry about it. Just look around. Keep your ears open.' " He said, "So I've come

here. I've come here with my ears open and my eyes open, and I'm going to try very hard to understand." And with that he sat down, and that was his speech. Everyone clapped and clapped. Probably it was a relief from these long-winded things, but partly it was the sincerity and the directness and the real truth in what he said.

Buff: Another thing I'd like to relate. I was at the National Museum, and I was not asked to give up my camera. I wasallowed to keep my camera, which in no other European or American museum is allowed. But here nobody says anything. I took some pictures and walked around, and finally when I went out I heard that there was an art exhibition on the same grounds in another building. I had a friend with me, another painter from Los Angeles, so we decided to go there to see the art exhibition. We walked around and it was all very modern but very good, mostly abstract but very sensual stuff. A young Japanese followed us there and finally he said, "Are you artists?" in broken English. We said yes. He said, "Would you like to meet some Japanese artists?" We said that we would be delighted. He took us into a little room that was full of people, and right away the girls brought some tea--they welcomed us as fellow artists and we had some talk. Finally when we were ready to go one fellow said, "Would you let me take you to your hotel?" I said,"Oh, no, please. We can take a streetcar." He said, "No, please

let me take you." He had a car outside and a chauffeur, and he took us to the hotel.

Well, finally we got on the plane, and we found out that the reason we got passage was because it was Friday the thirteenth--when you come across the ocean, of course you cross the date line and you have two Fridays the thirteenth. Nobody was traveling that day! We finally got to Hawaii and stayed in Hawaii over night. The next day we took a taxi to show us around, and the number was 1313. I said, "Well, we are bound to have an accident!" [laughter]

Mary Buff: We got home safe and sound, with a fox awaiting us in the yard.

Buff: We had foxes come here every night, and we fed them. When we came home in the afternoon, there was a fox sitting outside. He was wondering why we didn't come home.

Mary Buff: Well, we had a friend here to take care of the place. We told her to be sure and feed the foxes, which she did. She never saw them during all the time we were away; and then in the late afternoon, which is certainly not the time that foxes come out, as we looked out there on the terrace, there was one of those foxes sitting there like a dog, peering in and patently aware that we had returned. Very strange.

Buff: Now we ought to go back to our books. What book did we do after that?

Mary Buff: Did we do Hah-Nee?

Buff: No, I already covered that.

Mary Buff: Well, after Hah-Nee. We lived up in Arrowhead on weekends for some years. The main animal in that area of course are the squirrels. We decided to do a small book, the four seasons in the life of a squirrel, starting with the winter and the spring. We decided to do it in the same form as Dash and Dart, which was done many years before but which was very well liked. Viking liked the idea. Conrad was able to use the models up there for this. This came out in 1954. There's not really much to be said about it. You've already spoken about how we happened to do Hah-Nee.

I was getting itchy feet again about a book, in about 1956, and we wondered if a desert book might not be interesting to do, in which the idea of water in the desert, which is of course the foundation of all life, might be the motif. At that time Walt Disney had brought out Living Desert--we had seen that and were very impressed by it. So I took a little trip over to Tucson and went up and visited the desert museum where they have a great many animals of the desert in their habitats--I saw the pools and different types of animals and especially the saguaro country. I learned about the little elf fowl that lives in the giant saguaro. I thought that the saguaro living at the foot of a poolthat would dry up eventually, as seen by this tiny bird, might be the basis

of the story. After while we came up with a book called Elf Owl which was in the same blank verse, with black and white drawings in pencil, as Dash and Dart and Hurry Skurry and Flurry. These three form a sort of a combination--the deer in the forest in Dash and Dart, the small life in the foothills in Hurry Skurry and Flurry, and Elf Owl, which is the story of the southwestern desert. That was published rather successfully in 1958.

As we said before, we had animals coming up here at night. We had foxes, racoons, skunks, occasionally coyotes which we rarely saw, and that big ratlike creature that's so terrifying, the opossum. We thought it would be rather interesting to tell a very simple story of how these foxes happened to come down into the city, why they stayed here, and what their experiences might be. The enemies they had here were of course mostly dogs and boys with bows and arrows. We finally worked up a little story and called it Trix and Vix. It starts up in the mountains here, and tells how this little fox comes down and why it lives here. It brings in our granchildren and brings in the relation of the city, or the suburbs of the city, to the wild life. That was published by Houghton Mifflin in the year 1960. I think that's all from my part for the moment.

Buff: Well, we had taken a trip to Italy--I don't remember, in '58, or something like that. We took it in our own little car. We bought a little car for that purpose

and we took a ship to Cannes (we had the car delivered there), and from there we traveled along theRiviera and down to Pisa. In Pisa I had a wonderful experience, not at the Leaning Tower and not at the cathedral, but at the baptistry. The baptistry to me was the most beautiful building in all Italy. It was simple. It was not overdone like most of the churches in Italy. It was so beautiful. It had pieces of sculpture at the bottom which were so well adapted--they were not like Michelangelo's things that you have to see close up; they held themselves against the big walls and made a beautiful ornament. It was so much in harmony with my own idea of architectural decoration that I will never forget that baptistry. Now, others may disagree with me. They may think that the cathedrals are more beautiful. But in all Italy I never had seen a cathedral that I really liked. St. Peters to me was just awful, and the Sistine Chapel to me was bad decoration and bad architecture. I came out of Italy more than ever convinced that my own ideas about architectural decoration were to me far more desirable than what the Italians did. At no time did I see in Italy a picture that I thought was suitable for the architecture or was well organized with the architecture.

Dixon: You're more Japanese in your outlook, then?

Buff: Well, in regard to architecture, yes. Of course, later on I saw the Acropolis in Athens, and that to me as architecture was of course the most marvelous thing

that western civilization has produced. But that was only a temple on top of a hill (and it was magnificent on top of that hill), but what the Greek cities were like nobody knows. I don't think they were anything to brag about. I think they concentrated entirely on their temples. There they certainly achieved some marvelous things. But I can't think that they ever did anything more beautiful than the combination of landscape and architecture that the Japanese were able to produce.

I was glad to have seen both Italy and Athens. Of course, in Greece there isn't really much besides the Acropolis. All the monuments and all the other things were so much in ruins thatit takes too much of an imagination. Another thing I was wondering was whether the Greeks ever used color in their temples. We see these marble structures, but a lot of archeologists think that there must have been magnificent color. There's nothing there that really gives you the idea that there was real color there. The color that you see there ight have been oxidation in the marble which turned it a little bit red-brown.

Mary Buff: I think that they're all agreed that there was some color.

Buff: Some say that there must have been, and others say that none of the statues show any color. But others again will say that sensuous people like the Greeks wouldn't be able to stand for pure white buildings. They

had to use color.

Mary Buff: You could say that between Japan and Greece and Italy, you're more in sympathy perhaps with Greece and Japan.

Buff: Yes. Of course, in Italy you have a continuous culture from the time of the Romans and the time of the Greeks up to modern times. It was a continuous flow of art and culture, which in Greece you don't get. You stop at the temples and nothing happened in all of Greece to speak of. In that sense, Italy was certainly more interesting. But I take my hat off to the Japanese.

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