BOOKS AND THE IMAGINATION: FIFTY YEARS OF RARE BOOKS

Jake Zeitlin

Interviewed by Joel Gardner

VOLUME II

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TAPE NUMBER: X, SIDE ONE

JANUARY 17, 1978

GARDNER: You have before you some items pertaining to Thomas Wise that are going to be our topic, at least at the beginning, for today.

ZEITLIN: I think it's appropriate to discuss these publications in the context of my own history as a bookseller. The basic volume relating to the Wise forgeries, which is entitled An Enquiry into the Nature of Certain Nineteenth-Century Pamphlets, was written by John Carter and Graham Pollard, and published in 1934. It was a joint publication of Constable & Company in London and Charles Scribner's Sons in New York. Among my customers who were interested was a Mrs. LeRoy Crummer, usually known to her friends as Myrtle. Myrtle Crummer was married to Dr. LeRoy Crummer, who was one of the outstanding collectors of rare books in the history of medicine during the golden period of the twenties and thirties. Crummer, along with Dr. [George] Streeter, and [Harvey] Cushing, and Camac, Sir William Osler, and Dr. George Dock had all contributed towards the publication of a very fine journal--beautifully printed design by Frederick Goudy and published by Paul Hoeber--called [Annals of] Medical History. It was a small folio printed on fine handmade paper (or good mold-made paper, I should

say), printed in Goudy types and with plentiful illustrations, both block cuts and halftones. It ran for a period of approximately, I would say, twenty-five years. Every prominent American collector and historian of medicine of that time contributed to it, and it is still one of the fine sources, one of the most useful sources, on a great many subjects in the history of medicine. It was published during the great period of the amateur in medical history. A medical man who loved to collect books and who was interested in the history of medicine would have the courage to write an article on his favorite topic and publish it there without having to prove that he had a PhD in history. In our own day, the academicians have taken over the history of medicine, and it has largely become a field in which they write for each other rather than for the devoted amateur and the public and the rest of the medical profession, which might be inspired by what they have written. The enthusiasm for the history of medicine has been overwhelmed by the discipline of the scholars, in my opinion. It used to be you would go to meetings of the Society for the History of Medicine and you would find a great many devoted amateurs, who might not really have a profound knowledge of the history of medicine, might not be adept in Greek and Latin, but still had a great devotion to what they could learn

from reading the books in the languages with which they were familiar, and very often made some very exciting and original contributions. Cushing himself was an amateur, and John Fulton, who was a highly competent bibliographer and historian of medicine, could certainly not be credited with being a certified historian.

LeRoy Crummer had traveled to a great many of the cities of Europe, [and] with Dr. Dock, Dr. Streeter and [Dr. William] Osler, had ransacked the shelves of the bookshops of Vienna and Munich and Paris and London, and had brought together a most unusual collection of rare books on the history of medicine. His wife, Myrtle, had on these journeys devoted herself to collecting the literature of the nineteenth-century poets. She had a remarkably comprehensive collection of Keats and Shelley, Wordsworth and the later poets such as Matthew Arnold and Swinburne, and was regarded as quite an authority. Well, I called her up and said, "I have a book here I think you'll be interested in reading," and I sent her a copy of the Carter and Pollard Enquiry. I didn't hear from her for several weeks, and finally I called her and said, "What did you think of the book?" She said, "I've been too upset to talk to anyone. In fact, the book upset me so much that I had to go and see a psychiatrist and pay him to listen to me." She said, "I can't believe it. Why, Thomas Wise had asked us to tea a number of times when we

were in London. He couldn't possibly have done such a thing." And she said, "I shall never buy another book in the nineteenth century, and I'm going to get rid of my collection as soon as I can."

The *Enquiry* made tremendous waves throughout the world of book collecting and literary criticism; it represented the application of critical bibliography to literature in a way that it had never been applied before. It introduced scientific methods. The paper was analyzed under the microscope, and its evidence was assessed in the light of research into the history of paper manufacturing. The peculiarities of the type had been traced to the printer, and a careful study was made of the typefaces and their introduction into English printing. The book amounted to a highly specialized piece of detective work, which totally destroyed the reputation of a man who was regarded up to that time as the greatest living bibliographer and authority on literature of the nineteenth century. His bibliographies of Landor, of Byron, and a great many others of the outstanding men of letters of the nineteenth century were looked upon as the last word. His catalog of the Ashley Library, which is the library that he assembled, was regarded as a sort of a scriptural edifice. Here he was at the age of eighty, a man who had been given a doctorate

at Oxford University and honored with every possible honor within the power of the English bibliographical scholarly world, suddenly exposed by implication, although never by direct statement, as having through the years produced--and then produced the literature which justified them and gave them validity--a number of so-called first editions. Among other things, he had published an edition of the Sonnets from the Portuguese of Elizabeth Barrett Browning with the date of 1848. Until he had produced this, there had never been any mention in any of the bibliographical or biographical literature of Robert Browning or Elizabeth Barrett Browning of the existence of such an edition. Mind you, all of the forgeries which he published were genuinely the work of the authors to whom they were attributed. What he did was produce editions dated anywhere from two to twenty years earlier than any previously known date of publication, thus creating and validating, through his own bibliographical writings, a number of works of which he had created the entire stock and which he was marketing, some of them directly and some of them through a poor dupe of a bookseller by the name of [Herbert Edwin] Gorfin. Mr. Wise made a very poor attempt to defend himself, refused to justify himself before his friends or any of his own

partisans. He remained silent on the whole matter until his death.

GARDNER: Now for the interesting part, the extraordinarily interesting part.

ZEITLIN: Yes. Now, at the time that the Enquiry was published, A.W. Pollard, who was keeper of printed books at the British Museum (as it was called then), had declared that these could not have been produced by Thomas Wise alone. He said quite bluntly he didn't have the brains for it (or to use his own terms, "He hadn't got the brains for it"--that's what he was reported to have said).

The only person who came forward with the suggestion that others might be involved in the fabrication of these publications, their systematic validation, and then their release upon the public, was a spinster lady by the name of Miss Fannie Ratchford, who was in charge of the Wrenn Library and the Letcher Stark Library at the University of Texas in Austin. I had the good fortune to call upon Miss Ratchford somewhere about 1945, and at that time she had published a little pamphlet called Between the Lines, in which she implied, or which she stated with considerable certitude, that H. Buxton Forman and Sir Edmund Gosse were also involved in the publication of these forgeries. Even Graham Pollard and John Carter

at that time pooh-poohed her and put her down. They felt that it was impossible that a man as eminent as H. Buxton Forman, one of the high priests of English literary criticism of the time, could have been involved in such nefarious activities. H. Buxton Forman had edited the definitive editions of Keats and Shelley. He was a highly respected man. He had a great library of his own which later was sold at auction and created quite a stir.

But evidence to support the allegations of Miss Fannie Ratchford was not available. The chief reason it was not available is that the Buxton Forman family had kept under cover all of the correspondence of Buxton Forman with Wise and all of the papers which had to do with the various publishing activities of Buxton Forman, and would not permit access to them. I must say that when I called on Miss Ratchford in 1945, she said that she had been allowed to look through the letters, and she knew that the evidence was there, but she was not allowed to copy anything. The only other basis she had (one of the other bases, I must say, not the only other basis she had) for her charges with regard to Harry Buxton Forman was the letters of Thomas Wise to Colonel [John Henry] Wrenn.

Colonel Wrenn was a Chicago book collector who had

formed a substantial collection of seventeenth-century English drama and other English literary works, and who also had been a very substantial purchaser of Mr. Thomas Wise's forgeries. Thomas Wise had systematically sold Colonel Wrenn a great many works in English literature; sometimes he would sell him two copies of the same work by changing the title, and Wrenn was so gullible and had so much faith in Wise that whatever Wise offered him, he took. Wise systematically gulled him, and the evidence of it was to be found in these letters. It was my privilege to supply Fannie Ratchford with the first letter having to do with the relationship of Thomas Wise to Colonel Wrenn. It was a letter written by Thomas Wise to Irving Way. I haven't got the letter here in front of me. It appears in the volume which was published by Alfred Knopf called the Wise-Wrenn correspondence, or Wise-Wrenn letters, edited by Fannie Ratchford. [*Letters of Thomas J. Wise to John Henry Wrenn; A Further Enquiry into the Guilt of Certain Nineteenth-Century Forgers*]

Well, finally, in 1972 there appeared a catalog of Sotheby and Company containing the printed books comprising the property of Mrs. Madeleine Buxton Holmes, daughter of the late Maurice Buxton Forman. This collection contained a remarkable group of letters between Buxton Forman and Thomas Wise, and a number of other works, including some

of the fabrications, proof copies, layouts, prospectuses and so on, and these were bought in block by Bernard Quaritch. The firm of Quaritch bought them because they were aware of the significance of this material, and they successfully bid on every piece of consequence, so far as I know, relating to the Buxton Forman-Thomas Wise conspiracy. They published a catalog devoted exclusively to the things which they had purchased from the library of M. Buxton Forman, and the introduction to it was written by Graham Pollard. This introduction proceeded to review the history of the exposure of Thomas Wise and the history of the participation of Buxton Forman in the production, validation, and circulation of the various forgeries. Among other things, Pollard showed that there was firm documentary evidence that Wise and Forman were working together as early as February or March of 1890, when they forged William Morris's The Two Sides of the River, giving it a date of 1876. And then in 1896, they printed Tennyson's The Last Tournament, giving it a date of 1871. In fact, Pollard was able to conclude that there can be little doubt that most of the more important forgeries were joint work and that they were done during the period 1887, 1888, and 1899. Now, of course, Wise went off on his own and continued to produce some of these without consulting with Buxton Forman, but Forman provided the

bibliographical information and the scholarship which could enable Wise to bibliographically validate these publications.

GARDNER: Before we were talking, you mentioned Edmund Gosse, too.

ZEITLIN: Well, Edmund Gosse had been mentioned, but the extent of his participation has never been proved, so far as I know. Now, there seems to have also been another conspirator, and that was Buxton Forman's younger brother Alfred, who was a paper manufacturer's agent. He was secretary of the Villon Society, and he supplied the paper for H. Buxton Forman's editions of Shelley and Keats. It seems that he also did the layout for some of these forgeries, and it hardly seems possible that he could have been ignorant of what was going on. About the role of Edmund Gosse I can't produce any further information right now.

GARDNER: Was the motivation for this entirely financial?

ZEITLIN: No, and that is an interesting thing. When Graham Pollard was here in 1973 at the Huntington for a short period, he said he wanted to come over to Los Angeles, and they asked him who he wanted to see, and he said, "I want to see Jake Zeitlin." So they delivered him to Dawson's Book Shop, and I went over and got him and took him to my shop, where we sat and talked for

several hours. And then I delivered him back to Dawson's Book Shop, so that he could be taken to Pasadena by one of the Dawsons.

But Graham Pollard did not tell me this story which I'm about to relate. The story was related to me first by David Randall. The work of producing the _Enquiry into the Nature of Certain Nineteenth-Century Pamphlets_ took a great many years and a great deal of tedious work, some of which must have been extremely boring. The question that occurs to one is, What, besides the motivation for doing something sensational in the way of exposing a noted figure in the world of letters, could have driven Pollard and Carter on? And the story I heard seems to be the sort of thing that would account for it, because there are human motivations in a great many cases which are not apparent on the surface.

Graham Pollard had been a student at Oxford. He had a small collection of books; his interest in book collecting had surfaced very early. He was in one of the colleges at Oxford, and he had been given quarters there. He had a small shelf of the books he'd been able to collect with the little money he'd been able to scrape together. Thomas Wise had been brought to Oxford by a certain Colonel Hutchinson to receive an honorary degree, and the colonel and some of the masters brought Wise up

to Pollard's rooms because they wanted to show that they had a young book collector in residence. Wise looked at the books very, well, very disdainfully. Among these was a copy of [George] Crabbe's book called Inebriety, of which only two copies were known to exist. One was a complete copy, and the other lacked the title page, and the copy without the title page was the copy that Pollard had been able to acquire. Crabbe had taken great pains to destroy every copy that could be found. Wise looked at this copy with a great show of disgust and said, "Young man, never collect imperfect books." Also, I am told (but I was not told this by Graham Pollard), he turned to the faculty members that were present, Graham Pollard's own tutors, and said, "It's all rubbish and should be thrown in the dustbin."

Now, you can imagine what this young man thought at that moment. It was probably something like, "Someday I will get that so-and-so." And while Graham Pollard never directly admitted this, he did admit to me the facts of Wise having come there, and that he was brought by Hutchinson, and that he did look at this book which had no title page, and said, "Young man, never collect imperfect books." Beyond that he wouldn't go.

GARDNER: What about Buxton Forman? Why would someone like that get involved in a scheme like this?

ZEITLIN: Well, it appears that they made a great deal of money out of it.

GARDNER: So it was that.

ZEITLIN: There was money involved in the production of these things--I mean a considerable monetary return. According to the records of Gorfin, who had a careful record of the number of copies he was given of Wise's pamphlets to sell, and according to other records which have been consulted, Wise, over the years, made a great deal out of these. There was a time when a copy of the Sonnets from the Portuguese would sell anywhere from about $750 or $1,000 or $1,500, and Wise very shrewdly fed these into the market slowly, always taking great care to give them bibliographical justification and authentication. He introduced these bibliographical supports into his own bibliographies and into the literature of the times.

It was curious, though, that when it came to [John] Ruskin, somebody smelled a rat a long time ago. The first reference to the possibility that some of the Ruskin pamphlets might be fakes was by [Edward Tyas] Cook and [Alexander] Wedderburn, the editors of the standard edition of Ruskin, and they found four pamphlets which they denounced roughly as fakes at the time. [pauses to research date] I'm trying to look up the date

of the Cook and Wedderburn bibliography--that was the definitive edition of Ruskin which they edited, and a real great landmark. They denounced these things a long time ago, and then nobody did anything about them. [tape recorder turned off] Cook and Wedderburn published their bibliography of Ruskin in about 1912. They collated the text of all the important editions of Ruskin books and first detected two of these forgeries, as well as providing negative evidence against two more. But this announcement was made in small type in a work of thirty-nine volumes.

GARDNER: Why is that?

ZEITLIN: Well, they were too busy. They were concerned with the works of Ruskin in general. They incidentally mentioned that these were spurious. Thomas Wise had himself published a bibliography in prose and verse of John Ruskin in nineteen parts in 1889 to 1893, and then there was an edition first in 1878, a bibliography on Ruskin--although Cook and Wedderburn, as early as 1903, had detected these things as forgeries, and no notice was taken of this exposure. And thus it was [that] there were other whispers. A few other people had their suspicions, but no one had gathered together all of the evidence until John Carter and Graham Pollard set to work and exposed Mr. Wise.

GARDNER: How common are copies of the Wise books these days?

ZEITLIN: Well, they're all rather scarce, and they're commencing to bring substantial prices on their own.

GARDNER: As curiosities?

ZEITLIN: No. Some people collect forgeries, and everybody would like to have something of the Wise forgeries just to show. This man Wise was very prolific; he published a tremendous amount of stuff, and, of course, there's been a substantial amount of literature published about the forgeries since then.

There was another thing that Wise was guilty of which I think is even more dastardly than his production of these forgeries and validation of them in these bibliographies. He went to the British Museum from time to time, and being the great Thomas Wise, no one ever bothered to look in his briefcase. He would call out books, seventeenth-century quartos, and take out of them pages of books of which he had copies that lacked these pages. He mutilated the British Museum copies in order to perfect his own. After the exposure of Wise in 1934, and after Wise died and the British Museum acquired the Ashley Library, which was indeed a great collection of books, they started to look through their own copies of certain books which were in their library. Then they looked at

the books in the Ashley Library, and they found that in a number of cases, the pages were missing, and leaves from their own copies could be found in the copies that were in the Ashley Library. They fitted in such a way that there could be no doubt. It was also discovered that the University of Texas, through the Wrenn purchases, had a number of books which had been perfected by Mr. Thomas Wise by mutilating British Museum copies, and no one will ever know the amount of damage that he did to books in the British Museum by stealing pages from them. But certainly it's known that he did a lot of it. So it's obvious that he was a fabulous rascal.

I was fortunate in knowing John Carter over many years. He and I were known as "the other Jakes": whenever one meant to speak of John, they would say "Jake," and then they would say "the other Jake." And we always addressed each other as Jake and signed the letters Jake, so we had fun. He was a very elegant man and a man of great taste and a great ornament to the book world. He had grown up working in bookshops; he'd gone to Eton College and then gone to Cambridge. Among other things, he had formed a great friendship with A.E. Housman and collected Housman's books and did the bibliography of Housman. He came over to the United States when he was quite young, and first he worked for Elkin Mathews, which

was a remarkable shop, a school for great bookmen. Among others, there was Percy Muir. But John Carter was the other man besides Percy Muir who was really in the first rank of bookmen of his times. He went to work for Scribner's rare-book department; he remained there for a while, then went back to England and became Scribner's English representative. He and Percy Muir would buy on the English market and on the Continent a great many of the important books which were sent over to Scribner's and sold by David Randall. And that included the Schukberg Gutenberg Bible.

John Carter came here to Southern California; he visited me here in this house, and we became friends and over the years exchanged a considerable amount of correspondence. I would see him when I went to London, and I'm glad to say that I called on him at his home when he was in his last illness, and had a very good, heartwarming conversation with him. The people who came with me were Warren Howell and Kenneth Nebenzahl, both really fine bookmen. It was interesting to notice that these young men were so busy telling John Carter about their exploits that they didn't have time to ask him about himself, or how he felt, or to give him an opportunity to express his own thoughts. I sat there very silent most of the time, thinking how much more worthwhile it would have

been if we had all listened to him.

GARDNER: Well, we're just about at the end of this--shall we stop?

TAPE NUMBER: X, SIDE TWO

JANUARY 17, 1978 and
FEBRUARY 14, 1978

GARDNER: Continue with your thoughts.

ZEITLIN: I will begin all over again by saying that I was fortunate to live in the period of a whole school of bookmen who added great luster to bookselling; they included men like David Randall, who came up in the New York bookselling school, having worked for G.A. Baker & Company under a man by the name of Harzof, who seems to have been a great legend among bookmen and who educated many of the young men of the twenties. There was Jake Blanck, who went to work for Merle Johnson and helped produce the Merle Johnson First Editions of American literature, and later became the editor and chief producer of the bibliography of American literature, which is continuing now; and Edward Lazare, later editor of American Book-Prices Current; and there were John Van Kohn and Mike Papantonio, who founded the Seven Gables Bookshop. Some of these men were products of Byrne Hackett of the Brick Row Book Shop. There was in England the greatest of them all--Percy Muir, who, I'm very grateful to say, is still living and flourishing. And there was John Carter. All these were men who had the ability to write and speak. They were concerned about

bibliographical matters. They were, I think, the first generation of American and English bookmen who added the touch of professionalism which bookselling needed in order to take us all out of the class of back-door tradesmen. [laughter]

GARDNER: Well, it already had that in Europe.

ZEITLIN: It already had that in Europe; but these were the men, primarily, who, I think, provided the talent, the brilliance, the literacy, and the innate dignity which elevated bookselling in America and left a great tradition. There were, of course, men like David Magee in San Francisco, who did the same thing for the West Coast. Now we have a new generation of young bookmen who, I think, will also make important contributions, but none, I think, for me at least, that have the flavor of dash and enthusiasm and adventurousness (and inventiveness in creating new fields of collecting) that some of these men had.

GARDNER: When did you make your first contacts with some of them? I don't mean simply in the sense of letters back and forth . . .

ZEITLIN: You mean actually meeting? Well, I think it must have been in 1936 or 1937 that Dave Randall and Eddie Lazare, the man who for many years edited and published American Book-Prices Current, came out here

and came to see me. I think it must have been somewhere in the forties that I first met John Carter, and it must have been somewhere in the early forties that I met John Van Kohn. It was not until the late forties that I went to New York and met Jake Blanck and Mike Papantonio and some of the other bookmen who were prominent in the East. I also had the opportunity to meet some of the librarians who really adorned the world of book collecting and bibliography, and foremost among those were certainly Freddy Adams of the Morgan Library and Ed Wolf of the Library Company of Philadelphia. All of these people have been my teachers and my friends, and I owe very much to them.

GARDNER: Shall we stop here?

FEBRUARY 14, 1978

GARDNER: You have in your hand a file from your archive of the Southern California Antiquarian Booksellers. Were you ever a member of the Southern California Booksellers, not the Antiquarians?

ZEITLIN: Well, as well as I can remember, the Southern California Booksellers Association was formed somewhere around 1927, early in the year. And the first activity that the Southern California Booksellers Association entered into was a bookfair at the Los Angeles Public

Library. Somewhere in my files, I have a letterhead of that bookfair, and the board of that bookfair really constituted the founding board of the Southern California chapter, or affiliate association, of the American Booksellers Association. The president was Leslie Hood, and the vice-president was, I believe, Odo Staade. Let me go back and say that Leslie Hood was the manager of Vroman's in Pasadena. He was a very energetic man, and he was tremendously interested in the affairs of the booksellers as a whole, and was a natural leader. Odo Stade was the manager and later owner of the Hollywood Bookshop on Hollywood Boulevard near Highland, right across from the old Hollywood Hotel. I first met him when I came here in 1925. And the secretary-treasurer was June Cleveland, who was manager of Bullock's book department. She may have been treasurer, and I was secretary, as well as I remember. My name appears on the letterhead, so I think that the offices were divided up something like that. Although I never was active in the Southern California Booksellers Association as such, I was involved in the founding of the original affiliate group.

GARDNER: It sort of kept reconstituting itself, didn't it? Disappearing and coming back in?

ZEITLIN: Yes, it did. It went through various formats,

but I never identified too much with the new-book sellers, and they, in turn, I don't think were very much interested in encouraging me as a member. I was critical of the American Booksellers Association because I felt they did not exert enough pressure on the publishers in several areas. The American Booksellers Association was actually a child of the publishers association and therefore was of course dictated to in its policy by the publishers association. My criticisms were very vocal. They were, number one, that the publishers hadn't done enough to protect the local booksellers or cooperate with them. They used to send their sales representatives out to sell direct to the local libraries, and I felt that this was cutting off one of the chief means of support of the local booksellers. And in the second place, they, the publishers, had a murderous remainder policy and still continue to have. A bookseller who stocks up on any good publisher's book may find himself, in a very short time, even as little as six months from the time of publication, holding a book which has been remaindered by the publishers. Smaller booksellers, especially, suffered greatly from this policy. The larger booksellers were always warned in advance and given an opportunity to return books which were being remaindered. But the small booksellers, so far as I know, were never given any opportunity to return the books,

so they found themselves holding books in the twenty-five dollar to fifty dollar class which had been remaindered at five dollars to ten dollars. So far as I could tell, the American Booksellers Association never took a strong stand with regard to these two things, as well as the cooperation of the publishers with the book clubs. Several of the publishers, such as Doubleday, and Dodd Mead, and Macmillan, appeared to me to have a strong financial interest in the Book-of-the-Month Club and the Literary Guild, so that a great many of our regular local customers were drained off from us by the book clubs. The book club editions, which were contracted with the publishers, came out simultaneously with the regular publication and very often cut off our sales. Well, I realize that you cannot stand in the way of some of these economic injustices, but these were some of my reasons for never taking an active part as a member of the American Booksellers Association.

GARDNER: In fact, one of the times that the Booksellers Association really did get organized and going here was the fight for a returns policy for the new booksellers. The booksellers finally did band together, because they acknowledged that there was an injustice being done.

ZEITLIN: Well, it was a quick way to bankruptcy--handling new books--and the publishers themselves, I think, had to

realize sooner or later that if they wanted retail outlets, they had to help them stay in business. They couldn't sabotage them by supporting book clubs, by selling direct to libraries, and by their destructive remaindering methods.

GARDNER: Now, it's interesting that, though obviously the local antiquarian booksellers were great friends for a long time and all knew one another, nonetheless, it wasn't until 1949, according to the records that we have, that there was any formal organization.

ZEITLIN: Well, remember there was no formal national antiquarian bookseller's association until very nearly that time. If I can look at this file there, I think we can tell just about when the national association was formed, and it was after that was formed. There are the by-laws. It has the date of incorporation there.

GARDNER: February 1950 is what it says.

ZEITLIN: In that case, it seems that the Southern California Antiquarian Booksellers Association was actually formed in 1949, which preceded the formation of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America.

GARDNER: Yes, they say the planning stages must have been virtually simultaneous.

ZEITLIN: As in all things, Ernest Dawson was a great leader, and I think we owe it to him more than to anyone

else that we formed an antiquarian booksellers association here early in 1949.

GARDNER: What was his inspiration for it?

ZEITLIN: Well, it was just the idea that we got together, and we thought that it would be valuable for all of us to have an organization where we could exchange ideas, where we could sponsor various activities such as lectures and courses in antiquarian books and book collecting, and we could exchange credit information and deal with complaints against the members of the trade and so on. So that we actually, as far as I can remember, met first on May 11, 1949. The members present consisted of both members of the firm of Bennett and Marshall, the Pickwick Book Shop, Charles Yale, Kurt Schwarz, myself, and Josephine. There were eight representatives of Dawson's Book Shop. Kurt Merlander was present, Harry Levinson, John Valentine, M.J. Royer, Ben Epstein of the Argonaut Book Shop, two people representing Arthur H. Clark Company, Mr. [Mac] Gordon of the Satyr Book Shop, Claremont Book and Art Shop. Tecolote Bookshop of Santa Barbara apparently was not present; the Cambridge Bookshop, Charles Salzman was present. Our guests included Lawrence Powell, Robert Vosper, Winifred Myers of London, Willis Kerr of Claremont, Bob Schad of Huntington Library, Dr. Lewis [Francis] Stieg of USC.

GARDNER: The name I have down for the Claremont Book and Art Shop, by the way, is Samuel Brier.

ZEITLIN: Samuel Brier is correct, and a very nice man. And then, also present was Bob Campbell of Campbell's Book Store . . .

GARDNER: . . . who at the time would have just been through being president of ABA, I would guess. Wasn't that right after the war?

ZEITLIN: Well, I don't know. This was 1949. There was also Bob Ritter (I don't remember what bookshop he represented), Philip Brown of Yale and Brown, Justin Turner, I. [Isaac] E. Chadwick (who was a very effective organizing force), Mr. Nicholas Kovach, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Gottlieb, and a Mr. Kenke (whom I do not recognize). In all, there were forty-three members or prospective members of the association, and nine guests. Assumedly the purpose was to welcome Miss Winifred Myers of London, who was the vice-president of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of England. I drew up the agenda for the meeting, but it was actually called to order by Glen Dawson. A report was delivered on a temporary organizing committee, and a motion was made to form a permanent organization. The officers to form the permanent organization were nominated immediately, and, following that, the guests were introduced by myself--no, no, excuse me, the first introduction

of Winifred Myers was made by Kurt Schwarz, followed by her speech. Then I introduced Larry Powell, and that was followed by his speech. At that meeting, a cable of greetings from the International Antiquarian Booksellers Association of London, signed by Dudley Massey, was read.

GARDNER: Now, this is a strange and off-the-wall question, Do you recall any of this without looking at the papers and the archive?

ZEITLIN: I recall these details very vaguely. We drew up a list of prospective members, we invited a number of guests, and we just went to work. I think the moving committee was Glen Dawson and I.E. Chadwick, John Valentine, and myself. We then met on July 18th at the home of Robert Bennett and Richard Marshall. The minutes have these things reversed. [laughter]

GARDNER: Who wrote the minutes?

ZEITLIN: I was the secretary, and I wrote the minutes. [laughter] And it appears that by that time Charles Yale had become regional vice-president of the national Antiquarian Booksellers Association, and in his absence the meeting was opened and presided over by Glen Dawson. Muir Dawson reported that he'd been to New York and that our chapter was regarded as a sort of a pilot group. It was the first regional group to be formed, and its example

was used to set the pattern for other chapters.

GARDNER: It was really a pioneering group.

ZEITLIN: Yes it was.

GARDNER: Were there any issues--this of course is a test of your memory as much as of the archive--were there any issues that were really being dealt with at that time, or was it. . . ?

ZEITLIN: Well, we felt that we had the need for an auction house, so we attempted to set up an auction . . .

GARDNER: I have that, by the way.

ZEITLIN: . . . and set up rules for them. It was decided that we hold a series of three auctions at the Ames Gallery.

GARDNER: I have one of them that I forgot to put in. This is the September 1949 auction.

ZEITLIN: And an auction was actually held in September, 1949; a catalog was issued. It was held in the Ames Gallery and in conjunction with it. It seemed to have done pretty well, considering the times, although we'd all love to buy the books at the prices which they brought then. [laughter] It seemed like the highest price realized was something like $175 and $180.

GARDNER: For what sort of things?

ZEITLIN: Well, $175 for the Boswell papers published at Yale and $180 for the first edition of [Alain Rene]

Lesage's [L'Histoire de] Gil Blas [de Santillane]. The Boswell papers--I don't know who the buyer of those was, but the Gil Blas was purchased by me, it seems here, for $180. There were, in all, 295 items in the sale. I have no total of what was realized; however, this sale was one of the outcomes of the meeting. I think, in addition, this was the main action taken at the July 18, 1949 meeting, which was one of the earliest to be held. The association also early in 1950 participated in a centennial exhibition. They formed an exhibition of material illustrating 100 years of California statehood, and this was exhibited in connection with the meeting of the California Library Association in Los Angeles. All of the members of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association contributed various things to be exhibited, which were either the property of some of the members or were published by some of the members. I notice that, among other things, there was a copy of A Flower from the Golden Land by Ludwig Louis Salvator.

GARDNER: Why don't you take out the catalog, because the rest of it's in order, or should be.

ZEITLIN: Well, it seems to me that there is a duplication of one page.

GARDNER: Oh, there are going to be lots of duplications. There are many copies.

ZEITLIN: Beginning, then, in 1949, we very soon affiliated with the national association. The Southern California group at that time consisted of Regional Vice-President Charles Yale; a secretary (which was myself); and a treasurer, Harry Levinson. A list of the membership of the association at that time is among the archives. The next meeting was August 5, 1948. We met a lot more frequently then than we do now. We were less busy then--anyway, less busy than we are now. And in August 5, 1949, we seemed to have formulated a policy with regard to auctions; what amount we were going to allow for the gallery. That included 15 percent for the auction gallery and two dollars per item for cataloging.

GARDNER: Do you find anywhere on there, or do you recall what the money was being raised for?

ZEITLIN: Well, we had a balance of forty-three dollars on hand, which didn't make it possible to raise the money for very much. However, we did raise the money for participating as much as possible in the various fairs and public activities. We, of course, had to underwrite some of the auctions and pay for the advertising, and we also attempted to deal with the problems of brokerage and customs. There was a certain amount of money allocated for stationery. The dues were three dollars a

year and didn't produce very much.

GARDNER: One thing I'd like to do is take that early roster and go through some of the people.

ZEITLIN: Well, here are the people present August 5th. There was Maxwell Hunley, who still is in business in Pasadena, an outstanding dealer in American first editions and children's books. He had worked for a stockbroker. On Saturday afternoons in 1926 and 1927, Max Hunley and I used to go around and scout various bookshops to see what sleepers we could pick up.

Kurt Schwarz--whose father and mother had run an outstanding bookshop in Vienna and who had to leave after the Anschluss; moved to Shanghai. He was interned there. and following his internment, came to California and began his business jointly with Ernest Gottlieb. But they later separated.

GARDNER: What sort of specialization?

ZEITLIN: Well, in books having to do with the Orient and Oriental art--of which Kurt Schwarz knew a great deal--and of course, in German-language books.

Now, there was N.A. Kovach, who has remained in Southern California and is still operating, who very soon started specializing in periodicals. Mr. Kovach was one of our earliest members to resign. He was a member of our first grievance committee, and when the grievance

committee met for the first time to consider grievances of collectors and librarians, all of the complaints were against Mr. Kovach. Kovach didn't wait to hear the complaints, and he offered his resignation.

There was Charles Philip Yale, the son of Charles Yale. Charles Philip Yale continued the business founded by his father, and later joined with Philip Brown. They ran a very good rare-book business in Pasadena for a number of years.

Roman Novins--I cannot remember who he was. It just doesn't come back to me.

M.J. Royer, of course, all of us know--Mel Royer, who was a man of very fine taste, one of the most dedicated members the association had, and who specialized in art books. He also handled prints and small paintings and a few antiquities and artifacts. He's still alive, I'm glad to say.

Walter Neuman, who was a German refugee, specialized in maps and prints and later went back to Europe.

Richard Marshall of the firm of Bennett and Marshall, who had started up in the Bay Area and came down here, worked for Holmes Book Company, as well as I remember, and for Ernest Dawson, and later joined forces with Bob Bennett to form Bennett and Marshall. They opened on Pearl Harbor Day, [laughter] which was not the best time

to start, but they developed into a very important business.

Eugene Bechtold, who specialized in books having to do with the history of the labor movement and radical literature--he never had a bookshop [but] did business from his home, [and] he really built an outstanding reputation in this field, both locally and nationally. He is still living but has retired from the book business for some time.

Philip S. Brown, who came out to California from Minnesota in the thirties together with Karl Zamboni; he worked for a while for Bunster Creeley of the Abbey Book Shop on West Sixth Street and then went over to Pasadena and joined up with Philip Yale in operating Yale and Brown. His wife, Helen Brown, was a very fine cook and caterer, and through her Philip Brown became very much interested in cookery, and is now editor of Jurgensen's bulletin and teaches a number of courses in gourmet cooking and gastronomy.

And Robert Bennett, who was the partner of Richard Marshall, had worked in Berkeley in a department store there (I've forgotten the name; it had an outstanding book department in its day), later came down here, worked for Dawson and joined forces with Richard Marshall and died about two years ago.

Ernest Gottlieb, who was a German refugee and formed a book business in Beverly Hills together with Kurt Schwarz; he specialized in music, published several reprints of music [and] was also, at one time, a very fine portrait photographer. He died some fifteen years ago.

And Harry Levinson, who had his beginning in the book business in New York about fifty years ago, had, I think it was, the Caxton Bookshop there for a number of years, came out to California in something like 1942 and has had a distinguished career in bookselling since then. He closed his bookshop in Beverly Hills some three or four years ago and now conducts business from his home.

Muir Dawson, the younger son of Ernest Dawson, who specializes in fine printing and calligraphy and is a very fine inheritor of the tradition of his father. And his partner, Glen Dawson, who is the manager of Dawson's Book Shop and specialized in Californiana, as well as publishing books--many reprints and many original publications having to do with California history. And myself.

In any event, we succeeded in forming an organization, we succeeded in holding at least one successful auction, and we continued to meet, from that time on, quite regularly. On October 5, 1949, we met at the home of Charles Yale in Altadena, and there was a very substantial attendance--

about twenty-one members present. At that time we received the first application for membership outside the area, and that was from H.H. Evans of San Francisco. And we at that time expressed the hope that a Northern California chapter would be formed. The treasurer's report on that occasion was to the effect that the gross sales at the auction were $7,038.50. The returns to consignor members after deducting commissions and expenses was $5,886.66. In all, after deduction of all expenses, the balance in our treasury consisted of $21.91 and refunds of $6 from New York, so that our total funds were $27.

GARDNER: This was a real shoestring organization.

ZEITLIN: Yes, it was indeed a shoestring organization, but that seemed to be adequate for the purpose. In fact, successful organizations should not have any money left over; they should always be in the red a little bit. It was then decided that management of future sales of the book auctions be turned over to Harry Levinson, and sometime thereafter Harry Levinson did start a series of book auctions.

We also set up an exhibition committee for the purpose of sending out traveling exhibitions of rare books and a lecture series. Glen Dawson and I were instructed to constitute a committee to prepare a plan for the Southern California series of lectures on book collecting, and were

instructed to make arrangements with Miss Ellen Shaffer for these to be carried out under the auspices of University of California Extension Division. Ellen Shaffer took over this project and carried it through very successfully, and that was the beginning of a series of book lectures which have continued until this day.

The series of lectures was announced on November 11th, and they were planned as a series of eight lectures to continue through until May 2nd. Among the speakers who participated were Robert Schad of the Huntington Library, Lawrence Clark Powell of UCLA, J. Gregg Layne, a notable California collector of his day, and Ward Ritchie. We applied to Charles Boyer, who at that time operated what he called the French Institute on La Cienega Boulevard, for permission to hold the lectures at his institute. It was a very attractive place that he occupied, and he had a very fine library of French books. And we were allowed to meet there. We paid for the services of an assistant who opened it up, and that was the beginning of this series.

GARDNER: Ernest Dawson was very active at this beginning.

ZEITLIN: Oh, Ernest Dawson was always very active.

GARDNER: Wasn't he very old by this time?

ZEITLIN: Well, I think we're really talking about Glen Dawson.

GARDNER: Oh, really?

ZEITLIN: Yes, Ernest Dawson I don't think . . .

GARDNER: Because he was down as one of the founders when you read about it.

ZEITLIN: Well, he was one of the founders, but I don't think he survived very long after that. In any event, we met again in November at the Savoy Hotel and conducted business. It was at that time that we undertook the "One Hundred Years of California Statehood" exhibition, and at that time, we were invited to participate by the California Library Association in the centennial meeting of the California Library Association in Sacramento.

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ZEITLIN: I was discussing the meeting of November 17, 1949, held at the Savoy Hotel, which was on West Sixth Street in Los Angeles. At that time the most important matters of business were the report of the exhibition committee, at which time it was decided to prepare this exhibition called "One Hundred Years of California Statehood," and this was to be circulated among smaller California libraries. The centennial meeting was announced of the California Library Association under the presidency of Lawrence Clark Powell. That was to be held in June of 1950, and the theme of the meeting would be "One Hundred Years of Librarianship, Publishing, and Bookselling in California." We were invited to participate; take exhibition space; furnish keepsakes, catalogs, and literature; and provide a speaker for the program. I was designated to be the speaker for that program and did participate in it. Ellen Shaffer also reported that the University of California had agreed to the course of lectures and that eight lectures were scheduled. The speakers were to be Lawrence Clark Powell, Robert Schad, Harry Levinson, J. Gregg Layne, Ward Ritchie, and Jake Zeitlin. Then Harry Levinson reported that he was negotiating for a place of business in Beverly Hills.

Shortly thereafter, he did open up a bookshop there. It was his intention to combine a bookshop and auction gallery, and he hoped to hold the next auction the third week in January.

GARDNER: Where had he been before Beverly Hills?

ZEITLIN: He had done business from his home since coming out from New York. It was also decided that a cooperative advertisement was to be placed in the [Los Angeles] Daily News Christmas issue, and Harry Levinson announced that we had taken space for an advertisement in the United States Cumulative Book Auction Records and in the Antiquarian Bookman permanent want list.

And what is, I think, of special note is that on this occasion we received word that an organizing meeting for the Northern California chapter would be held at Dave Magee's bookshop on December 8th, thus marking the beginning of the Northern California chapter. On December 24, 1949, it was decided to put out a directory of the antiquarian booksellers in this region, and that was the beginning of the Antiquarian Booksellers Directory, which has continued to be produced at regular intervals until this time. The questionnaires were sent out by Ellen Shaffer, and a directory was prepared by her and Glen Dawson. Our next meeting was as guests of Mr. and Mrs. Larson and Nick Kovach at the Gung Ho Chinese Restaurant,

[laughter] 5530 Hollywood Boulevard. There is a photograph in existence of the people present at that meeting.

GARDNER: Do you have one?

ZEITLIN: Yes, I have a photograph, and I think it's reproduced in the slide show which Muir Dawson showed. There were, I'd say, something like about thirty-five members and guests present at that meeting, and Glen Dawson presided. At that meeting Harry Levinson reported that he was going to hold a book auction on February 26 of 1950, and a later one in March of the same year. Ellen Shaffer reported that the lecture series was now an established reality and that the French Foundation at 411 North La Cienega Boulevard had agreed to make their hall available for us at a very reasonable charge. The funds for paying for the rental, which was thirty-five dollars a meeting, were in part contributed by the organization, and in part contributed by the University of California Extension, and part contributed by myself in the form of a return of the fee that I was to receive. [laughter] The minutes of that meeting concluded with a very elaborate menu of Chinese food served on this occasion--in all, about eleven items.

GARDNER: A memorable evening was had by all. [laughter]

ZEITLIN: Yes, a memorable evening indeed. It seemed that the next meeting of the antiquarian booksellers

involved a banquet, and the cost of the banquet was $193, of which cash received was $178.50, leaving us in the red for $16.50. I'm sure that deficit was made up in one way or another. [tape recorder turned off] On January 2, 1950, the booksellers met again at Harry Levinson's bookshop with a considerable number of members present, and the guest member of the national association, Mr. Philip Rosenbach, brother of Dr. Rosenbach of Philadelphia. Charles Yale presided. Harry Levinson, as treasurer, reported that there was a current balance of $232.71 in the treasury.

GARDNER: Wonderful. He was a good treasurer.

ZEITLIN: A lot of progress was made. The cost of the rental of the hall for the French Institute for the fine-printing and rare-books lectures was discussed. There was a deficiency of fifty dollars; and various members, including Dawson's Book Shop, Pickwick Book Shop, Max Hunley, Harry Levinson, Charles Yale, Philip Rosenbach, and myself made up a total of eighty dollars in all, being the sum necessary to take care of all the additional expenses. On that occasion, Louis Epstein made the first report of the grievance committee. The exhibition, under our auspices, had now advanced to the point that an eight-page catalog had been prepared and printed, and that the first of the exhibitions was to

be held at Pasadena Junior College.

Glen Dawson, who by then was a member of the National Board of Governors of the association, reported that finally a constitution for the national association was confirmed and that the association voted to become a part of the International League of Booksellers. This, of course, made us participants in the activities not only of the local association but in the national association and of the international association. The meeting then was introduced to Philip Rosenbach, and he was made an honorary member of the local group. This sort of shows the step-by-step development of the association. The first general bulletin of the Southern California chapter was published, including a directory of the members and their real names and addresses. Our farthest northern directory at that time appears to have been John and Jane Wilgress of Monterey, California. We did have one San Diego member--the Book Center--and the farthest east member was the Claremont Book and Art Shop in Claremont and Musicana Unlimited of Pomona.

GARDNER: Who was that? That doesn't sound familiar.

ZEITLIN: I don't know who they were.

GARDNER: Could I see that roster?

ZEITLIN: Yes.

GARDNER: Can I go back and ask you about some of these

people while you're thumbing through?

ZEITLIN: Yes, certainly.

GARDNER: Some of them I know the answers, some of them I don't. Abbey Book Shop at that time--that was no longer Bunster Creeley, was it?

ZEITLIN: I don't know who succeeded Bunster Creeley, but, as I remember, I thought he was still a member.

GARDNER: Was he, at that point?

ZEITLIN: Yes.

GARDNER: The Argonaut was Ben Epstein.

ZEITLIN: The Argonaut was Ben Epstein, and he was on Sixth Street. That was really a subsidiary of the . . .

GARDNER: . . . Pickwick.

ZEITLIN: Yes.

GARDNER: Clare R. Bill--that's a name I don't remember at all.

ZEITLIN: Well, Clare Bill began her bookselling career at Bullock's in 1926 or '27--no, in 1925 or 1926, about the same time that I was working there in the book department. She later became a specialist in bookplates, wrote several books about bookplates, ran a succession of small book and antique shops down here, cataloged the Morgan Collection in Santa Barbara (which I think was given to Harvard), and later moved up to Northern California, where she still remains and is publishing books about

bookplates and dealing in books and bookplates.

GARDNER: Did we talk about John Q. Burch? I don't think so.

ZEITLIN: John Q. Burch and his wife were a very fine old couple who turned their hobby, which was shells, into a very successful business in their later years; and along with shells, they dealt in books about shells. They retired from the book business, oh, some fifteen years ago, I think; and I don't know whether they're still living or not. But they were a very amiable pair of people who had this business dealing mainly in books about shells (although they did include other natural history) and in rare shells. They were a wonderful example of people who made their hobby and their business one and the same.

GARDNER: I don't think we've talked about Arthur H. Clark.

ZEITLIN: Well, Arthur H. Clark Company, in terms of the beginnings--the people of Southern California with the earliest history in the book business--certainly comes first because he began as an apprentice in England before the turn of the century. He came to New York (I think he worked for American Art Galleries for some time), then he moved to Cleveland, and he started a business specializing in American historical literature, Western

Americana and other Americana, and publishing. He built up a very substantial business; in fact, it was the outstanding specialty-book publishing business in the field. He got out regular catalogs, a great many of them over the years, of books on American historical subjects. And sometime around 1940, I think, he moved his entire stock to Glendale, California, and started a new business there. The business continued under the management of Mr. Gallagher and his son Arthur H. Clark, Jr. Now the son of Arthur H. Clark is involved. They've done a lot of excellent western-book publishing.

GARDNER: Dale's Bookazine?

ZEITLIN: Well, Harry Dale came from Indianapolis, Indiana. He was sort of a diamond in the rough. He had a great talent for merchandising, and his shop was filled with signs. There was always a spirit of activity in his bookshop. However, the book business was too slow for him after a while, and he went into the record business. What finally happened to him I don't know, because I think his spirit of enterprise outran his accounting, [laughter] and I'm afraid he got into some financial trouble and closed his business and moved away from here. But I don't know. . . . I'm sure he's not alive still.

GARDNER: Lee Freeson?

ZEITLIN: Lee Freeson was interested in the ballet and was associated with the New York theater for many years. He was married to a very fine dancer [Carmelita Maracci]. She was outstanding in her day. And Lee became interested in books having to do primarily with the dance. From that he developed a substantial business in books on the ballet and the theater, and has remained in business, without a bookshop--selling entirely from his home.

GARDNER: International Bookfinders is Dick Mohr, isn't it?

ZEITLIN: International Bookfinders is Dick Mohr, which is an out-of-print search business, doing business from his home in Pacific Palisades--entirely a mail-order business.

GARDNER: You mentioned Kurt Merlander before as one of the founders, but I don't think you've talked about him.

ZEITLIN: Well, Kurt Merlander worked for Stanley Rose Bookshop at one time. He also worked for me. He was a refugee from Germany. He was a specialist in Spanish, knew a great deal about Spanish literature and ultimately went into business for himself, dealing in books mainly about Hispanica, and has continued to conduct a mail-order business. I don't know how much he's doing now--he's probably retired--but he was quite successful dealing only in Hispanica.

GARDNER: I think that about covers my list. I think you've talked about the rest. Let me put this back in the file and go on.

ZEITLIN: Now, I find here the announcement of the University Extension of a series of eight lectures which was conducted. Curiously enough, it doesn't give a year; it says Tuesday evening from eight o'clock to ten o'clock, beginning March 7th--I think that must have been 1950--at the French Research Foundation on 499 North La Cienega Boulevard. The fee was ten dollars for the entire course, and the speakers included Lawrence Clark Powell on some great California book collectors, J. Gregg Layne on Californiana, Ward Ritchie on fine printing, Margaret Lecky on bindings, Kenneth Foster of Pomona College on Oriental books, myself on early scientific books, Paul Jordan-Smith on collecting odd books, and Robert Schad on Henry E. Huntington--the collector and his library. In addition to that, in the same location in the folder is a very amusing little folded brochure (quite obviously the work of William Cheney, the founder and genius of the Auk Press), which was issued by the downtown members of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America--Abbey Book Shop, Argonaut Book Shop, Bennett and Marshall, and Dawson's Book Shop--inviting their guests to a dinner meeting of the ABAA on June 16, 1950. I think I have

referred to the minutes of that meeting--no, we haven't gotten to that point yet. But here is the May 17, 1950 [meeting], and that was held at Max Hunley's bookshop with a very substantial membership present, including Mrs. Sara Kamen of the Kamen Bookshop, New York, and Mr. and Mrs. John Q. Burch. At that meeting Lee Freeson (who styled himself "Trader at Large in Fine Books--by Appointment Only") was elected to membership, and a slate of officers was nominated and so on, the usual thing. Both the nominations and the elections were held on the same evening, and Mr. Glen Dawson reported that the lecture series had been a great success. And on the sixteenth of June, the meeting to which the members had been invited on the previous pamphlet was held at the Savoy Hotel with large attendance. Practically every member of the association was present with a lot of members of their staff and also Mr. and Mrs. Powell; H. Richard and Margot Archer; Dr. Lewis Stieg; Robert Schad; Miss Lucille Miller, who was the librarian for Mrs. E.L. Doheny. The election of members was finally completed at that meeting, and arrangements were made for a booth of the California Library Association at the Sacramento convention. August of 1950: the bylaws were finally discussed and approved. Group insurance, which was a matter of continuous discussion for the members

over a period of a number of years, was discussed; and nobody has, even to this date, been able to work out a satisfactory plan.

GARDNER: Is that so? I notice later on you were very active in trying to set something up.

ZEITLIN: Well, we attempted a number of times, but nothing was actually effected. The bylaws were at that time presented for discussion, and a draft of them accompanied the minutes. Later in that month, on August 29, 1950, a dinner was held honoring Carl Kup--curator of the Spencer Collection of the New York Public Library--a very distinguished, elegant gentleman, who is indeed one of the great men in the world of rare books. He was then just on the way up in what was to be one of the outstanding careers among bookmen. The notice of the meeting was signed by M.J. Royer as secretary and Louis Epstein as president.

GARDNER: Maybe this would be a good moment to recapitulate something about Louis, because it's been a long time since the early days in the 1920s when the two of you were down on Sixth Street.

ZEITLIN: Well, Louis and I were friends from the very beginning, when I walked into his shop--I think it was in 1926--and he had opened the . . .

GARDNER: The Acadia, wasn't it?

ZEITLIN: . . . Acadia Book Shop on West Sixth Street. Later on Louis himself said that he had taken the name from Longfellow's Hiawatha, [laughter] which, of course, was not the poem.

GARDNER: Right author, wrong poem.

ZEITLIN: Yes, right author, wrong poem. It's strange that the man who chose the name of his bookshop didn't remember the source of the name. I was much amused, but I didn't correct him in print; I merely took a jab at him in private. It seemed that he had bought a bookshop in Long Beach first, and as is the case with lots of people who've later been successful in the book business, he didn't know anything about bookselling. He discovered that the shelves were full of junk, and that there was no hope for what he had. He succeeded in selling it out for enough to get out from under.

He came down to Los Angeles and rented a space on West Sixth Street and started over again. Louis has a very high degree of intelligence, and so it didn't take him long to learn what was desirable in the way of books and what was not desirable and salable, so that he filled his shop with a rather choice selection of books. He didn't know much about the value of these books; Max Hunley and I took a lot of good sleepers off his shelves before we finally tried to educate him a little bit.

[laughter] Louis has a great talent for winning friends, and before long, a lot of people were coming in and out of his shop. He's also a very good businessman, so that even if his books were cheap, he was making a good profit out of them, because he knew how and where to buy them. And one day two brothers . . .

GARDNER: Howey . . .

ZEITLIN: . . . Howey brothers . . . came in and looked it over and asked him how much he wanted for his business. He took a look around and, quite off the top of his head, said, "$1,600." They came back and looked around and said, "We'll take it." Ralph Howey was the one who chose to stay in the shop and run the business. The [other] brother Richard Howey, was interested in economics and teaching economics, and later went to the University of Kansas; became head of the department and pursued his interest in books to the point where he formed one of the outstanding collections in the history of economics at the University of Kansas. But Ralph Howey was a very quiet man--no salesmanship at all about him, but a great deal of quiet persistence and intelligence. He very soon got rid of the general run-of-the-mill secondhand books and was filling the shelves with better books, mainly in the field of English literature. He was buying out of English catalogs and buying libraries, and before long, he had

really fine books there. I bought a good many important first editions of English literature from him, including a copy of the first edition of Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice in the original boards. It was very much to my sorrow and his regret that we later discovered that this copy had been doctored and that it was not all that it was represented to be. It was the copy which I sold Frank Hogan that turned out to be a made-up copy.

Well, I think it was agreed at the time of the sale that Louis would not enter into the book business again for something like one year. So he found himself without anything to do but still obsessed by books, and he started traveling around to places like the Goodwill and the various thriftshop organizations. He became very well acquainted with the people who managed these shops and with the days when it was best to be there, and he was soon accumulating a stock of books in his house. In 1928, when I opened my shop, he still didn't have a shop of his own, and he lent me some books to put on my shelves and fill out my empty spaces. He says that I refused to return to him when he wanted them any of the books that were unsold, [laughter] but his memory and mine do not exactly jibe. In any event, it was very helpful to me, and it was very kind of him to lend me part of the beginnings of my stock. He and I made a trip in 1927 to Santa

Barbara, and we had told ourselves that we were going to go back at least every ten years. We have not yet made another trip together to Santa Barbara, and I've warned him that this year may be our last chance. I hope that he will be inclined to go.

Well, Louis is a very enterprising man, and he's a man of excellent judgment in business, very energetic, and as soon as possible, he opened up another bookshop on West Eighth Street. He knew the one great secret about bookselling, and that is that if you buy right, you cannot go wrong. If you buy right, you can price your books low enough so that people will come in and buy them, and you will still make a very substantial profit. In addition to that, he had the assistance of a man who'd been a collector around town for a number of years. Mr. Shelton was a curious, eccentric, solitary kind of a man, and the bookshop became his whole life. I think that he had the hope that in the days to come he and Louis would be equal partners in the ownership of the business. But it didn't work out that way, and he became very disillusioned and angry and broke off with Louis and left his employment.

Louis, in the meantime, had met [Ed] Stackhouse, who was a very brilliant merchandiser and equally [as] energetic as Louis. Stackhouse worked shoulder to shoulder with

Louis, and, in time, Louis had an opportunity to open a store in Hollywood. The remains of the Depression were still with us, and there was a great deal of property to be had at relatively low prices. This corner building--or building next to the corner--on Hollywood Boulevard was one of the properties in the hands of a bank which they did not wish to carry, and so they offered Louis very attractive terms--but terms which were still difficult for him. Nonetheless, he bought that building, and it became the center of his book business. He hadn't really intended to go into the new-book business; but as time went on, and the demand for new books increased, and as there was no other bookseller in Hollywood that carried as big a stock as Louis Epstein did, his shop quickly expanded. He bought the corner, and it became the leading bookshop in Hollywood, as well as in Southern California. Later he was induced to occupy a space in one of the shopping centers . . .

GARDNER: . . . Topanga . . .

ZEITLIN: . . . that was being promoted by May Company. He found, very much to his surprise, that this branch store was doing almost as well as his Hollywood bookshop. Ultimately, of course, he built up a very large business, which was purchased from him by B. Dalton.

Louis is a very earnest, responsible individual.

He's a good citizen with a great sense of what's right. We have not always agreed on all matters, but I admire him very much, and I have a very great affection for him. We have remained very close friends through all the years, which is a matter of great satisfaction and pride to me.

GARDNER: After all these years, that's true.

ZEITLIN: At times when I've faced critical conditions, when I was short of funds, Louis was very generous in helping me with loans. I always repaid him and tried to compensate for them in other ways, and I've certainly tried to give evidence of my gratitude in every other way. I must say that because of the help he extended to me over the years I've felt obliged to extend help to others, and he too has done a great deal of the same sort of thing for others.

GARDNER: That's very interesting. That brings up an interesting point to discuss, I think, and especially from talking about the organization, and that's the sort of brotherhood that seems to exist among bookdealers.

ZEITLIN: Well, book dealers have, up to now, in Southern California been on very friendly terms. There are a few individuals who some of us don't feel as close to and don't have the same confidence in, and there have been a few rivalries which, I think, have created a little

acrimony. But on the whole, there's been a very high level of cooperation, and we've remained friends and in many ways supported each other through difficult times. My closest relationship, of course, has been with the Dawsons, for whom I have a very high respect. We've always cooperated in everything where it was possible. There has to be a certain amount of competition in a business like this, but it should never go to the point where you have to cut each other's throat in order to survive.

GARDNER: Well, Louis made an interesting point when, in [our] conversations, he talked about one way in which the book business differs from others, and that is that competition in the book business actually increases business for everybody, and that the more stores you have on a street, the more business you'll do.

ZEITLIN: Yes. When I moved out on La Cienega, there was not another shop near me. I encouraged Peggy Christian to move in so that I could have someone there to send my customers to and who would in turn send customers to me. Since then, of course, a whole group of bookshops have grown up along Melrose. For instance, there are now about six bookshops--there's George Houle, there's Bennett and Marshall, there is Lenny's Bookshop, there is Salzman's Canterbury Book Shop, and there is Michael Thompson, and

there is one other of which I don't remember the name right now. But generally if one man doesn't have it, he'll send people to the other bookseller. If we want something from the other bookseller, he will give us a discount so we can make a profit off it; and we feel obliged to do the same thing. There's no dog in the manger in this business so far as I know.

GARDNER: You mentioned great rivalries, though.

ZEITLIN: Well, there are rivalries . . .

GARDNER: Can you tell me a couple of them?

ZEITLIN: . . . mostly in terms of prestige. No, they're things I don't think it would be easy to discuss, and I think that these things are best left for other people to talk about.

GARDNER: Okay, instead I'll ask you this, Another one of the good book areas now is Westwood Boulevard--now, Bob Campbell told me, and I don't think we've talked about this, that you were out in Westwood very early on in '29 or '30.

ZEITLIN: I had a bookshop in Westwood in 1929. I had a young woman working for me, Tone Price. She had come out from my hometown in Texas, Fort Worth. Tone had a great deal of personal charm. She was a peculiar kind of a woman, I think, given to attract members of her own sex, and she dressed rather peculiarly with mannish

dresses. She didn't wear slacks, of course, because that wasn't heard of at that time. But she wore tailored coats and skirts and mannish shirts with neckties and so on. She had a great deal of personal magnetism and charm, and while she wasn't a highly literate person, she learned quick. She learned by ear, and she had good taste. She worked in my bookshop for, oh, four or five years; and, of course, at that time she had the idea that it would be a good thing if we tried to start a bookshop in Westwood. We started at a little place facing the university, on the street where Campbell's is now [Le Conte], but nearer to Westwood Boulevard. The shop was designed by Leroy Davidson, and it was a very attractive little shop. But unfortunately we didn't have the capital, and we didn't have the stock with which to carry on. I think it lasted about six months in all. Bob Campbell was very encouraging. I know he would have liked to have us stay, but it didn't work out.

GARDNER: It's interesting that no used-book stores--really, no rare, out-of-print anything has really made it in Westwood Village.

ZEITLIN: Not in the Village. There was a remainder bookshop that did extremely well for a while, and then they had a fire and that all went kaput. But Jimmy

Hakes has run the best general bookshop in Westwood other than Campbell's.

TAPE NUMBER: XI, SIDE TWO

FEBRUARY 21, 1978

GARDNER: We're back dealing with the files again of the early days of the local chapter of ABAA. You just noticed that you were president in 1951.

ZEITLIN: Yes, I see by the minutes here before me that in 1951 I was president and that we met on August 29th of that year for the purpose of honoring the return of UCLA Librarian Lawrence Clark Powell and his wife from their European tour. Powell invited any of the dealers who wanted more information about the English book trade to visit him by appointment. At the same time, Justin Turner, president of the National Society of Autograph Collectors, spoke of plans for the society. This was in the very earliest days of what later became the Manuscript Society, a name which I suggested when the impression was that autograph collecting was not necessarily manuscript collecting.

GARDNER: Do you recall anything about what your duties were as president? What did the president do other than call meetings to order and so on?

ZEITLIN: Well, the president presided. He was also ex officio member of all committees. He appointed committees to various functions, and he, depending upon

the initiative which he took, could arrange the program and plan other activities of the organization during the term of his office. The organization had a series of meetings at one time. They were visited by Samuel Hume of Berkeley, a very colorful character who had been a part of the early theater movement. Most of the activities of the association, other than that of meeting, consisted of arranging book exhibitions.

GARDNER: Well, we talked somewhat about the first auction last time, and you mentioned before we turned this on that you wanted to say something about the first bookfair, and that's not anywhere in here.

ZEITLIN: Oh, well, I'm afraid that I can't talk about that without referring to the record, which I don't have with me. I do have in front of me what appears to be the floor plan . . . [leafs through files] oh, no, this is the California Library Association exhibition room floor plan, in which we participated. We also met in the course of the year 1951 at Claremont and held a meeting honoring Charles Yale, who had died at that time and who had worked first for the state library in Sacramento and later was manager for Ernest Dawson.

GARDNER: Why don't we move ahead and talk about the national organizations, because I think we really have covered the origins here and gotten an idea of the sort

of meetings that were held. And since the archive does contain all this material. . . . I can see you're spellbound.

ZEITLIN: Yes, by my own prose. [laughter] This is the introduction to the meeting honoring Charles Yale and the dedication of the Charles Yale Collection at Scripps College, Claremont, on Sunday, June 3, 1951.

GARDNER: I just ran across in my notes . . . I'm going to try to stop you from reading your notes there. [laughter]

ZEITLIN: Yes, go ahead.

GARDNER: I just ran across some quote that I pulled out of Louis Epstein's oral history, and there are two or three quotes having to do with the local chapter that I'd be interested to hear you comment about. First one: he said, "At most of our meetings we discussed a minimum of business and a maximum of gossip."

ZEITLIN: Well, I didn't recall that the gossip took place in the course of the meeting. It may have taken place before the meeting or afterward, but it seemed to me that we spent an awful lot of time discussing trifling things, which is the fate of a great many organizations, especially when they get started and have to adopt bylaws and constitutions.

GARDNER: Another thing he mentioned is about as great a

controversy as there was--the nature of the membership, whether or not all booksellers should be allowed or the membership should be limited.

ZEITLIN: Well, there was never any doubt that in order to qualify for membership you had to be in business for a fixed period of time (it was two years at one time, and I think it's been extended to three years now), and that you had to have a place of business, other than your home, where you sold books. You also had to be proposed and seconded by two other members of the association, and you had to be voted upon, both by the local association and if you were accepted by them, by the national association. There was a controversy at one time where some members of the national association did not want to have to pay dues to the local association; they wanted the benefits of membership in the national association without contributing anything towards the support of it. That was thrashed out with the national association. Now members have to belong to a local chapter, where there is one in their part of the country, in order to be eligible for membership in the national association.

GARDNER: Why don't we go on and talk about the national now. Would that be okay? I don't think there's anything really compelling in this file.

ZEITLIN: Yes, well, I think we. . . . Let me see here a minute.

GARDNER: No, you won't find a book there.

ZEITLIN: You've gone through here?

GARDNER: Yes.

ZEITLIN: There is one thing that I think is worth mentioning, and that is that on January 23, 1951, the association set up an intellectual freedom committee consisting of John Valentine and myself, and we prepared a resolution on intellectual freedom for submission to the local board; and, following that, submission to the national board for adoption. I'm sorry to say that the national board did not accept any resolution pertaining to intellectual freedom. They were a bunch of small-business men who didn't want to become involved in such things as questions of intellectual freedom, freedom of speech, and didn't want to even become involved in the question of freedom against censorship until they got caught in the squeeze.

GARDNER: What sparked your forming that committee? Was there any particular situation?

ZEITLIN: No, John Valentine and I were both Democrats, active in the Democratic party, interested in questions of intellectual freedom, and we felt that the booksellers association should follow the lead of the American Library Association and set up a working committee for the protec-

tion of their members in the matter of censorship of literary material and booksellers. The idea was that we would support any member who was being prosecuted, we'd provide him with as much financial and legal aid as we could, as well as any other support. The other thing that the association became involved in about that time was the running of the association advertisements in the yellow pages of the telephone directory. And we occasionally did buy space in the book section of the _Los Angeles Times_. I'm amused to find here a letter from Richard Wormser, the secretary, concerning the resolution which John Valentine and I prepared, in which he says that "it was presented to the quarterly meeting of the board of governors, and though everyone at the meeting agreed with the sentiments in the proposal, the consensus was that the subject is not within the province of our association. Should there be any attempt to impose restrictions on the material in which we deal, we shall take steps to combat them." That's signed by Richard Wormser, the secretary--and I must say that it was not very long after that that I met Richard Wormser--and he'd discovered that there was really a need for taking a position on the matter of intellectual freedom. Well, it looks to me like I'm going backwards here. The association seemed to have just about the same number of people

in attendance in its early years as it does now.

GARDNER: Is that so? Membership is still limited, isn't it?

ZEITLIN: Membership is still limited, but Id say the present membership--where it started with about twenty, present membership has a total of forty-eight firms.

GARDNER: Can I look through that and ask you about some of the people, maybe bring it up to date? Well, I hate to go through everyone here because there are so many.

ZEITLIN: Yes, of course. This is the most up-to-date list, and there are of course a great many new names, a great many dealers in specialties such as we did not have when we began.

GARDNER: Right. Well, I think that it'd be lengthy to go through the entire list.

ZEITLIN: The association enjoyed the membership of most of the prominent antiquarian booksellers in the area, but not all of them. The Arthur H. Clark Company was a member for a short while and then decided that they did not wish to participate for various reasons. They were located in Glendale and, I think, to some degree, partook of the general political complexion of that part of the world.

GARDNER: Do you want to take this file, then? It starts in back, in the earliest days. This is the national

antiquarian group--start on the other side, I think. Is that the earliest? Yes. Now, as we talked about it last time, the organizations were pretty well simultaneous.

ZEITLIN: Well, yes. The national association was incorporated in 1949, early in 1949, and as well as I can remember, the local association was formed . . .

GARDNER: . . . it was about the same time--fall of 1949, spring of 1950 . . .

ZEITLIN: . . . Yes, fall of 1949, so that we were the first regional chapter to be formed. The association was formed by a group of incorporators, including Robert Barry of New Haven; the firm of Charles Stonehill; Mary Benjamin, the autograph dealer; Herman Cohen, a dealer in books on fine printing; Glen Dawson of Los Angeles; Marston Drake of the very great firm of James E. Drake in New York; Emily Driscoll, a lady autograph dealer; Lawrence Gomme, who became later the first president of the association; George Goodspeed of Boston; Nathan Ladden of the firm of Inman of New York; Aaron Mendoza (the Mendoza book firm was an outstanding firm in its day but seems not to exist anymore); Ralph G. Newman--18 East Chestnut Street, Chicago, Illinois--who, while he was an incorporator, did not remain a member for very long afterward; Bernard Otto, who I think was associated

with G.A. Baker and Company; David Randall, in charge of the rare-book department at Scribner's; Walter Schatzki, who later was one of the presidents in the association, one of the very good ones; Richard Wormser, who was certainly one of the most diplomatic and witty of the members and also had international contacts in the world of books; and Mabel Zahn of Sessler's in Philadelphia. It's worth noting that nobody representing the Rosenbach firm was involved in the forming of the association, and I don't think it was until quite a long time after the association was formed that the Rosenbachs decided to involve themselves.

GARDNER: Why is that?

ZEITLIN: Well, I don't think they thought the organization would last. And they didn't really want to do anything to strengthen what might become competition.

GARDNER: Do you want to take a few minutes and go through that?

ZEITLIN: Yes. I think you'd better turn it off. [tape recorder turned off]

GARDNER: You've now perused the files of the national organization.

ZEITLIN: Well, the national organization seems to have come into being in 1949, and by 1950 it was well launched and was conducting a great many activities. They started the same way that we did, by preparing a traveling exhibition,

and their first exhibition was to be of "rare and interesting books which can be bought for twenty-five dollars or less." (Interesting comment--I don't think that any rare-book dealer could afford to put on an exhibition of books for twenty-five dollars or less.)

The most important event in the year following the incorporation of the association was an invitation from the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers to attend their annual conference in Paris. The French national organization was the host, and they requested the American organization to send them the names of any members who would be present in Paris at the time. This was the first year of participation of the American association, and they were then affiliated with the international league. Those who attended as delegates were Captain Louis Henry Cohn of the House of Books; Muir Dawson of Dawson's Book Shop; Mr. Jeffrey Steele of Chappaqua, New York; and Lawrence Verry of Verry Fischer and Company, New York. One of the most notable events at that international meeting was an address on the part of Percy Muir, one of the most learned and most respected of booksellers, who fortunately is still active as a country bookseller in England. I note that there was a slightly acrimonious exchange of correspondence between myself and Mr. Wormser concerning the action of the

association on the resolution concerning setting up of an intellectual freedom committee. Nothing came of it; no intellectual freedom committee was ever established.

The Antiquarian Booksellers Association quickly developed problems such as I've mentioned before of the desire of some booksellers to join the national association without joining their regional organization, and as a result of that, an amendment to the bylaws was passed in 1951 which required all members of the national association to be members of some regional association.

GARDNER: How many regional associations do you think there were about that time?

ZEITLIN: Well, there were very few. They set up very shortly a North Atlantic chapter and the Middle Western chapter and the Western chapter.

GARDNER: And there would be no southern members?

ZEITLIN: Southern members could belong to the association which was nearest to them. Another thing that the association developed was the exchange of credit information and the effort to assist various members in dealing with reluctant debtors. The other thing that developed in the early years was the establishment of a fund to help booksellers or their dependents who might be in need, and that fund has grown and now has quite a substanial amount of money which it has on occasions lent

to bookseller members or their families. In nearly every case the help extended and the funds have been returned. At one time the organization set up a collection agent for all the members of the association; it didn't work very well and finally was dropped. There are some things which can only be done in an informal manner if you are to avoid legal difficulties. The other activity which the national and the local association undertook was to set up hospitality rooms and offer other entertainment to librarians when they had their meetings in one of the cities where a particular chapter was based, so that in 1953 the California chapter acted as host to the members of the American Library Association, who met for their annual conference in Los Angeles.

GARDNER: Is this still true?

ZEITLIN: Yes. The association, either formally or informally, usually sets up a hospitality room where they offer drinks and refreshments of other kinds to librarians. It provides an easy way for the membership to meet and mingle with the librarians and for the librarians to get acquainted with the booksellers. And the librarians seem to like it very much. The international meetings which take place every other year have become very important affairs and very popular and attract a great many members. The West Coast has served as host on one occasion;

meetings generally have taken place in London, Paris, Geneva, Vienna, and in Italy at Milano-Maritima, a seacoast resort. There has always been the most splendid hospitality.

In 1955 the international organization met in New York, and the meetings took place in the meeting hall of the Carnegie Foundation for Peace on the United Nations Plaza. I remember that on that occasion Mr. Luther Evans, the retired director of the Library of Congress, was invited to address the membership, and he made some remarks about the high prices and what he called the hold-up manners of Mr. Kraus. In spite of the fact that Kraus was not universally beloved, it was very much resented. That meeting was really a high-water mark for the association. They gave us a very fine reception at Yale, one of the most lavish and, I must also say, riotous evenings that I ever took part in; in fact, it was so riotous and exhausting that I spent the night at one of the houses there as the guest of Bob Metzdorf. Mike Papantonio and I stayed overnight there and the next morning started to drive back to New York. It took a very long time to get back because Mr. Papantonio had a hard time getting over the effects of the celebration the night before.

This congress of 1955 included delegates from Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany (I think it was

the first meeting to which the German delegates were admitted), the United States, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland. I met some of my most important friends in the book world on the occasion of that meeting, and I'm sure that a great many of the other booksellers also formed friendships there which have lasted through the years. (I forgot to mention Amsterdam also as one of the places where the Antiquarian Booksellers international meetings have taken place.) One meeting, as I said before, took place in San Francisco and later adjourned to continue informally down here, because that was our first international bookfair in California. The association also issued a form to be given to people who desired to sell or have books appraised, so as to set up a uniform procedure for those things. The last minutes which I have in the files (which now are part of the archives at UCLA) cover the ninth annual meeting of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America on February 4, 1958. By then the organization had become well formalized and had proceeded to make motions and conduct business according to the best Robert's Rules of Order standards.

GARDNER: How many of your fellow local booksellers would have traveled to the national conventions? Was it a sort of common thing to do, or was it rare?

ZEITLIN: Well, the national meetings are held once a year still, when the presidency either changes hands or the old officers are reelected, and not a great many members from around the country attend. I was the speaker before last at the annual meeting in New York, and I would say there were probably 100 people there, but most of them were New Yorkers, and a great many of them were friends of booksellers rather than booksellers. The national meetings usually don't attract a great many members. There is a lot of competition, and the Bibliographical Society of America meets about the same time in January, the Grolier Club holds its annual meeting at that time, and the auction houses usually put on auctions especially aimed at the booksellers and collectors who will be attending the Bibliographical Society meeting, so that there's really very little time to attend. Now, the international meetings are remarkably well attended, when you consider that most booksellers are not affluent in the sense that they can travel to Europe and back just for the sake of participating in a meeting. But they have become such wonderfully well-conducted affairs that every bookseller that can do so, goes. You have to be designated a delegate; but if an organization like the United States has five delegates, and ten additional people indicate that they'd like to attend, [then] they are made alternate delegates so they can attend

anyway. The meetings are very interesting and exciting; we are usually taken on tours of the most interesting libraries and galleries. Special arrangements are made: bus tours to outlying areas, monasteries, and private libraries, and palaces, and villas. The dinners are very grand. I remember one that we had at the Savoy Hotel in London in 1956 (the first I attended) which was followed by a ballet at Covent Garden, and that was followed by a champagne supper afterwards. We also were taken out to Greenwich; they erected a pavilion, and lunch was served in the pavilion on the lawn. We were really made to feel very much like honored guests at all the affairs that I have attended.

GARDNER: You've mentioned the word delegate; that implies to me some sort of transaction of business.

ZEITLIN: Oh, there are business meetings. They are taken very seriously, and they often become quite heated. On one occasion--well, the one in San Francisco--the president of the international association was an English bookseller, a very quiet, reticent man who really didn't know how to preside; and there was a rebellion led by the Germans, who were very punctilious and precise and who wanted to vote the president out of office immediately, right from the floor. It took a great deal of lobbying and closet persuasion to keep this from happening, because we Americans and the British were not going to see the

president, who was an Englishman, dislodged by a bunch of those "Prussians," [laughter] as we felt about them at that time.

The majority of the points of contention have to do with questions of the allowing of discounts to fellow members with the terms of credit--that is, the length of time for which credit is extended--and with customs problems. And also there is a biennial bibliographical prize given by the association, a prize for what is considered the most noteworthy contribution to the field of bibliography. An international committee is appointed to select the candidates for this award, and I think it's something like $500 that's awarded to the winner of the prize.

GARDNER: There's nothing like that on the national level, though, is there? Or is there?

ZEITLIN: The national organization has not been able to effect any sponsorship of any activities outside of those having directly to do with the business of the organziation and being the host nation for international meetings and such things. The national organization has also had a problem in recent years with the question of whether or not they could legally refuse membership because of the bookfairs which were sponsored by the national organization. The national organization had almost concluded that they would no longer sponsor bookfairs. In the past, only

members of the association could participate in the bookfairs, and we were threatened with lawsuits by various bookdealers who felt that this was discrimination and restraint of trade. But we've now been advised by our new legal advisors that there are ways of continuing to sponsor bookfairs without being forced to admit members whom we do not feel are up to the requirements for membership in the association. This has been a serious matter, because from time to time it looked as if we weren't going to be able to maintain an organization limited to people that we felt were admissible, and there were threats of suits from several booksellers, mainly California ones. This year there will be an international bookfair conducted in New York, not directly under the sponsorship of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association but conducted by a private organization which will do it for profit. There will also be one conducted by the Antiquarian Booksellers. But the international association is committed to bookfairs because it's an old institution in Europe. One of the first international bookfairs that was held in recent years was held during the fifties in Amsterdam. They have been held annually in London; there is one in Düsseldorf now. And these, in addition to the ones in New York, Boston, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, have become a sort of circuit for some booksellers who seem

never to stay home but spend all their time going from one fair to another.

GARDNER: Do you go to more than just the California ones?

ZEITLIN: Oh, yes. We participated in the Boston bookfair last year with some success, and we are participating in the New York bookfair this year. We have not decided yet whether we'll participate in the Toronto bookfair, but we have in the past two occasions, including the first time they held a bookfair in Canada. We were encouraged by the Canadian association and the librarians of Canada to come up and participate; they felt that it would add to the distinction of the occasion if we went there.

GARDNER: Did it?

ZEITLIN: I'm not sure that I contributed anything but confusion. But, anyhow, it was a lot of fun.

GARDNER: Have any of the local booksellers become officers in either the national or international organizations?

ZEITLIN: Well, yes. There are a great many members of the local associations who have been officers: Glen Dawson was the treasurer for a number of years; Warren Howell is the current president of the association for the second term; a great many of us have been members of

the board. I was a board member for one year, but I did not attend but for one meeting. I never could get involved in the business of the association enough to contribute very much. I did propose that the association undertake to sponsor, with financial help and otherwise, a history of bookselling in America. I felt that if we were to give it the primary sponsorship, we could get funding from some of the foundations--from the Guggenheim Foundation, for instance, because of the strong sympathy that Gordon Ray has for booksellers.

TAPE NUMBER: XII, SIDE ONE

FEBRUARY 21, 1978 and
MARCH 14, 1978

GARDNER: You were talking about the history of the booksellers.

ZEITLIN: . . . the history of antiquarian bookselling in America. I wrote a letter to the president, who brought it up before the board of the national association, but it got nowhere. I regret this very much, because I think that the history of the antiquarian book trade in America is very interesting. A great many colorful individuals have participated in bookselling. They have been cultural outposts in many of the growing cities of America, and their story is worth telling and worth preserving. I'm sorry that it wasn't undertaken, and I'm afraid that there isn't anybody among the younger generation willing to push it forward at this time.

GARDNER: Have you tried contacting the foundations themselves?

ZEITLIN: I haven't tried contacting the foundations because, without the support of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association themselves, I don't think any foundation would take much interest in such a project. I think, on the other hand, that if we could set up a board of, say, two booksellers and three historians to

explore the possibilities, the history could become a reality.

GARDNER: That's an interesting idea--somebody's doing it on a very small level. To come back to, say, Warren Howell being president of the national organization and so on (and you served on the board but apparently not in a dedicated manner), how much time does it take up for someone like Warren Howell?

ZEITLIN: It takes a great deal of time.

GARDNER: Does it interfere with his running his business?

ZEITLIN: Well, it would if he didn't have a good functioning organization. Nobody can afford to take the job without a backup staff in his own place of business which can relieve him of a lot of his responsibilities. He has to be able and willing to travel back and forth. There are about four meetings a year, most of them held in New York, although the national meeting was held here in Los Angeles at the same time as the Antiquarian bookfair early this month. And very often the national meetings will be held in the city where a bookfair is going on because a great many of the booksellers will be going there anyway to participate in the bookfair, and it makes it easier for them to attend. The Antiquarian Booksellers Association has now reached the point where it has to increase its membership dues substantially. It has not

had a full-time functioning secretary or administrator. It is a trade organization. (Trade organizations provide services for their members, depending on how much money they have and how interested their officers are.) And this is one of the things that Warren Howell has contributed to the association: he has tightened up a lot of the activities, and he has brought about the establishment of a higher dues schedule and the creation of a post of what can be called director, or administrator, of the office of the association.

GARDNER: I see. Who serves as that?

ZEITLIN: Well, I don't think they've selected anybody yet, but that's just been enacted. The necessary steps have taken place to make that possible.

GARDNER: Now, since we've talked about international bookselling, this may perhaps be an interesting place for me to bring up something I've been wanting to ask you about for a while, and that's the brief but somewhat touching dispute that you had with Menno Hertzberger. Apparently you and he had become close friends; I'm interested in knowing the whole background of that as well.

ZEITLIN: Well, he had come out here a number of times, and we'd become very close friends. Menno Hertzberger is a very charming man. He's the man who's responsible

for the formation of the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers. He is a very knowledgeable bookman. [phone rings; tape recorder turned off] Menno Hertzberger is a man of great charm. He is a cosmopolite. He is fluent in English, French, German, and I don't know what other languages. He's a man who quickly ingratiates himself with people. He has had a long life in the rare-book business, and I think we met sometime in the fifties. We also have exchanged letters over many years. I really don't think one should make much of our difference, because it looked bigger at the time than it really was.

GARDNER: Well, that's one reason I wanted to hear about it, because it does loom large in the archives.

ZEITLIN: I suppose there was a lot of exchange of correspondence, but it all had to do with a Ratdolt book which I had bought from Menno. I sold it to a man by the name of Speck, Dr. Richard Speck, in San Francisco. Dr. Speck, after some time, returned it to me and pointed out that it was a made-up copy, and that part of the book was from an edition of one date and part of it was from an edition of another date. So I wrote to Menno asking him if he would accept the return of the book, and Menno was convinced that there was nothing wrong with the book, and he wouldn't accept its return. This became quite a

concern, and I was very much angered and simply refused to do any more business or continue to associate with him.

Well, it seems that Menno had a reputation for being a little bit careless, and there were other booksellers who from time to time had reported to me that they had complaints about similar things. I think that what happened in my case (which wasn't known to me at the time) was that Menno had gone into business with someone else; that he'd actually sold his own business and therefore couldn't expect the firm which now owned him to take the responsibility for books which he had sold during the time when he was operating independently. He had no other way of dealing with this thing, so he was caught between his associates and me. That's something I did not know at the time.

Now, later Menno and I met in Italy at a congress there, and Menno agreed to take back the book and give me the equivalent amount in exchange of other books that I might select. However, that became difficult, because every good book I picked didn't seem to be available. [laughter] You can't stay angry with Menno, and there's really no sense in it. I think that in some ways he is as naive as a child, and so we have met since in London and dined together. I've visited him twice in the Dutch

town of Baarn, where he lives. On one occasion, on Liberation Day in Baarn, we marched together down the streets. It was a solemn occasion when the whole town walked through the main streets of the town and converged on a park there to conduct a memorial service for all those that had been murdered by the Nazis; nothing, not a word said, just the sound of people's feet walking through the streets. We have exchanged letters of congratulation on each other's birthday. He let me know not long ago that he was eighty years old, and I sent off a letter of congratulation. I think that his eyesight is very poor now, although he still continues to operate a book business from a fine old house in Baarn. He manages to get ahold of very good books--I mean from old customers who want to sell off their books, or librarians that he's known who have duplicates to dispose of, and other booksellers, so that he gets off some very respectable catalogs, as always, with a great deal of scholarship. He's probably one of the most knowledgeable men, especially in bibliographical sources, of any man in the book business, and has a great deal of knowledge in the history of printing and of incunabula. Now he is living out his declining years in Baarn in peace, and, I think, considerable comfort, and with the respect of his fellows in the book trade.

GARDNER: Is that sort of dispute relatively common?

ZEITLIN: Well, various kinds of disputes develop, and very often they cannot be brought up. The association discourages making big affairs out of little ones, so that they prefer to have these things settled by the dealers themselves. But they do, under extreme circumstances--where both dealers insist on it and they can't get together--set up an arbitration committee and try to arbitrate these differences. I had a dispute with a group of English booksellers several years ago, and they threatened to bring it up before the English association. I urged them to do so, whereupon they immediately withdrew their suggestion. They decided they didn't really want this business exposed to the knowledge of not only the rest of the book trade but the book world in general. There are all varieties of people engaged in bookselling. The majority of them are, I think, people of reasonable honesty and good principle, but there are others--especially the groups which make up the "ring" in England, and the groups which form and disperse occasionally at the continental auctions--which I think are less than beneficial to the good name of bookselling.

GARDNER: What is the "ring"?

ZEITLIN: Well, it seems that there have been rings of booksellers, just as there are in the antique trade and

in other businesses, for many years, and it consists of a small group of booksellers who dominate the auctions and agree between themselves the limits that they will pay. They agree not to bid against each other and they also pay off the small dealers who come; they give them five or ten pounds just to not bid. Then when the auction is closed and the books have been brought in at the lowest possible figures by the booksellers who are in the ring, they then hold a separate auction between themselves. It's a very complicated business. It takes the brain of a mathematical genius to follow the complications, [laughter] and if they're also conducted with French currency or with German, why, then you're even more mystified. There is a strong ring in England. It has existed for many years. There were efforts made to break it, and a law was passed in Parliament outlawing rings. Percy Muir, one of the most upright and scholarly of antiquarian booksellers, got into a great deal of trouble trying to fight the ring in the auction rooms. But it still exists, and it seems to be one of these evils that there is no way of breaking. Everyone is loath to bring these things to the attention of the Queen's Counsel in England, but once in a while, when it just gets too blatant, the word gets out, and the ring quiets down a bit.

At present there is a group known as DETH in England--Dawsons, Edwards, Traylen, Hammond--which are known to constitute the ring, and they usually dominate the country auctions because there isn't very much competition from the outside world. If an important auction takes place in London, they may have to come up against people like Kraus. Sometimes Warren Howell and myself will go in together with another dealer, like Kenneth Nebenzahl, and buck the English ring, but sometimes the English ring will simply agree to not get in our way if we don't get in theirs.

GARDNER: So, in other words, you're setting up a ring of your own.

ZEITLIN: Well, I don't go along with it, but there are dealers who do. Ours is not a ring because we do not agree to refrain from bidding against each other, and we do not hold a "knockout" afterward.

GARDNER: I see.

ZEITLIN: I will go into partnership, where it's an openly announced partnership. In other words, two or three of us will agree to buy a book together, and we'll share equally in the purchase price. But then when it's knocked down, the law requires that all participants in the bid should be named.

GARDNER: I see. In other words, what you would do is

name the participants, where what they would do is not.

ZEITLIN: Yes, they wouldn't. And you see, we don't hold any auction afterwards, and we're standing up against a great many other dealers who have just as much interest in buying the books as we do. Sometimes it just takes more capital than any one of us has got freely available.

GARDNER: That's an interesting kind of scam. Are there any similar things that go on in America?

ZEITLIN: No, there never has been quite the same thing as an organized ring. In the days of Mitchell Kennerly and the early days of the American Art Association, there were people, dealers, who worked with the house. In other words, they were shills who boosted the prices against other dealers. On one occasion Dr. Rosenbach found that he was being pushed up by a dealer who obviously couldn't absorb these purchases himself and must have been there buying for the house. He [Rosenbach] got up and announced that he was not bidding any further and would never attend another auction. The gentleman who was the house shill is still doing business in New York and enjoys the patronage of some of the best collectors in that part of the world, and it's always been a mystery to me.

GARDNER: And his name was?

ZEITLIN: I'm not going to mention his name. I don't think

there's a point to it.

GARDNER: Okay, I just thought I'd ask you.

ZEITLIN: Well, it's well known in the trade and among collectors, too, but I don't see any point in making it a matter of record right now.

GARDNER: The other interesting dispute that I ran across in your archives was with Gelber and Lilienthal of San Francisco, way, way back in your early days.

ZEITLIN: Oh, yes, that was a very interesting one. It had to do with a copy of David Copperfield in parts, and I had bought this without knowing anything about the special points of David Copperfield or any other Dickens in parts. It was in a case, it looked good, and apparently it was all right. I had it in my shop, and I had a visit from Mr. Thomas Hatton, the coauthor of the Hatton and [Arthur H.] Cleaver bibliography of Dickens in parts. Mr. Hatton had come over here to sell books to Mrs. Doheny and other collectors, and he had made his headquarters in my shop and sold a great many things through me. So, naturally, I brought out my set of David Copperfield and asked him what he thought of it. He looked it over, and he said, "See here, your 'Part I' is not a 'Part I.' The X has been scratched out of an XI." It was really "Part XI." The rest of the cover looked identical with the covers of all the other issues, so it was only in the numbering at the

top of the cover that you could determine which issue [it was] of the twenty parts in eighteen, which usually constituted a full round of one of Dickens's novels published in serial parts.

This was a most serious defect, because a fine first edition of David Copperfield in parts requires that all of the covers be the original covers and that it not be made up of bits and pieces or tampered with. There was a man in England, Walter Spencer, who specialized in making up Dickens in parts. There was a great vogue for Dickens at one time, much greater than there is now, so that every collector had to have his favorite Dickens novel in the original parts; and Mr. Spencer obliged by doctoring copies, putting them together skillfully, putting covers on the spine and inserting advertisements and other things called for. He made up numerous sets. There were other things that were missing from this set of Dickens, so I wrote to Mr. Lilienthal (who is a very honorable man) and said, "Look here, I find that this Dickens parts which I bought from you is not really a first edition. It's imperfect. It's lacking in these respects--it has been made up, doctored--and I'd like to return it." And Mr. Lilienthal said, "No, caveat emptor. You bought it and you keep it. We're not going to take it back. When one dealer buys from another, he's supposed

to know what he's doing."

Well, Mr. Will Clary of the firm of O'Melveny and Meyers came into my place just after I'd received Mr. Lilienthal's letter, so I said to him, "What do you think about this"? And he said, "I'm very much interested, because I'd really like to know what the rights of a buyer are in a case like this, and whether he has recourse. If you don't mind, I'll put somebody in my office to work, and we'll look up the law." Well, without any expense to me, a great deal of valuable, high-priced legal time and talent was expended upon preparing a brief citing the law, which was to the effect that items of rarity--things like rare books or antiques or works of art or valuable jewelry--carry an implied warranty with them; that the seller was responsible for anything that was wrong which he had not pointed out to the buyer at the time of the sale; that, in this case, these defects had not been pointed out to me. I had discovered them afterwards and therefore was entitled to return the books.

Well, I informed Mr. Lilienthal of this, told him that this brief had been prepared, whereupon he engaged a firm of prominent San Francisco lawyers. [laughter] They prepared a brief which was based upon law just as sound as the one that Mr. Clary's firm prepared, which reached the conclusion that there was no implied warranty,

and that the buyer, especially if he was a dealer, had equal standing as an expert with the seller and had no rights of recourse. The matter was there in kind of a deadlock, and I decided not to do anything else, because I do not believe in suing: there's nothing to be gained except for the lawyers. I simply told Mr. Lilienthal that I was disappointed, that I'd had a very great respect for him and his partner, Leon Gelber, and I had expected a different attitude. First of all, they could afford to lose the money very easily because Lilienthal was a very wealthy man. But I think they felt that they had a principle to defend, and they weren't going to take this back.

Finally, Mr. Hatton came back on a second trip with more Dickens in parts, and he said to me, "I'd like to look at your Copperfield." And he looked at it, and he said, "You know, your Copperfield has a number of important advertisements--some printed on cork--and other inserts which would perfect a copy that I have. So if you would accept what you paid for your set, I'll take it off your hands." I was thus relieved of the book and recovered my money.

Thomas Hatton was an interesting man. He had been a motorcycle-race promoter and a greyhound-race promoter in Leicester. Quite by accident, he wandered into

Sotheby's one day when a copy of The Seven Pillars of Wisdom was knocked down for a very substantial price. And he said, "My God, do books bring that much money?" He commenced to take an interest. Well, he talked like a Cockney, he looked like a racetrack tout, [laughter] but he had a very keen intelligence, and he had the patience and the ability to go through thousands of copies of Dickens and to prepare this very detailed bibliography which superseded [John C.] Eckel's and has, I think, remained the chief bibliographical authority on Dickens in parts. Lord knows, nobody else is ever going to undertake such a job.

Mr. Hatton used to come over here and make his headquarters in my shop, as I said. I would take him out to see Mrs. Doheny, and she was quite charmed by what she thought were English manners. I remember on one occasion he sold her one of Dickens in parts for something like $10,000; I don't remember just which one. It may have been an extraordinarily fine and complete set, untouched, with the signature of the subscriber on the cover of each of the parts. On another occasion, I took him out to see Hugh Walpole, and we spent a couple of days showing Sir Hugh a collection of English novels, three-deckers--in boards and in parts and in original cloth. Mr. Walpole ended up by buying about $6,000 worth

of these novels. He had a particular fondness for English nineteenth-century novelists, so this was a great coup for him. It's a curious thing about Hugh Walpole, who was a very gentle man and a kind man, that neither his books nor the books he collected have ever received the respect I think they were entitled to.

But Mr. Hatton, after about his third trip over--and I must say they enlivened my shop very much; there were great parties every evening after work (the girls and the young men and the collectors would swarm in and get nice and liquored up, and everybody would have fun and tell stories)--went back to England and didn't come back anymore, and I didn't hear from him again. Mr. Hatton, like some other tradesmen, had his small faults, and on one occasion he made a very large sale through my shop and concealed it from me and didn't allow me my commission. Since I was spending a great deal of time in letting him use my premises rent-free, I really resented that. But then he was a cheerful rogue, so you couldn't really resent him for very long. I'm not sure exactly what became of Hatton. He seemed to have dropped out of sight. I did hear rumors that he had overplayed the ponies and had dropped out of business altogether, but I don't know what happened to him.

GARDNER: And you and Lilienthal established relations

with Gelber and Lilienthal again?

ZEITLIN: Not immediately; our relationships were very cool for a long time, and I don't think either one of us really sought each other out until after Leon Gelber died (that was Lilienthal's partner). I remember going up and visiting Gelber's wife, and I bought some things from her that were part of Gelber's private collection. I think the firm had been dissolved by then. Ted Lilienthal retired to the country and bought himself a printing press--one of the Caslon presses of the sort that William Morris used--and printed a number of small broadsides and pamphlets on it, and lived out his years a very respectable amateur of books. We got on very well in later years and met on a number of occasions, but we never discussed Dickens in parts.

GARDNER: What about the principle of it? Do you still agree with the. . . ?

ZEITLIN: Let me say this: I recently had a man approach me with a print which was bought from our gallery eleven years ago. There isn't anything wrong with the print, and he doesn't claim that there's anything wrong with it. He claims that he paid too much for it, and he feels that we should take it back. So I had a talk with him the other day. Before that, someone upstairs had dealt with him, one of the young women, and she brought the matter

to me. So when he came in, I sat him down, and I said, "Look, I've been in business for fifty years. It doesn't matter to me; I won't go broke if I give you back the money you paid for this. I've still got customers that I had when I started in the business, and I pride myself on trying to be fair. I'd rather give ground on a matter like this than leave the doubt in anyone's mind. So what do you want me to do?" And he said, "I don't know." (I think the best thing you can do in a case like that is put the other fellow on the spot, let him declare what he wants.) He said, "I have to go into the hospital for a cataract operation, and I don't want to get into this any further now. So if you'll let me have my print, we'll talk about it after I come back from the hospital."

Now, I think what I will do is explain to him why the print was priced as it was. We bought it--it was part of a great collection. It belonged to [Loys] Delteil, the man who prepared the catalog of Daumier's prints. It was an exceptionally fine one on white paper, and we paid a great deal of money for it. And we did not make an exorbitant profit. Now, I'm going to tell him that it's not customary for a firm to take back a piece of merchandise which they sold eleven years ago unless that's proven to be a fake--and he isn't claiming that. So I'm simply going to say to him, "I'll take it

back and give you credit for anything else you want purchased at the same amount." And I don't see how he can object to that.

GARDNER: Right. Now, on the other hand, if he came back to you and said that it was a fake . . .

ZEITLIN: Well, I'd have to defend it to prove that it wasn't, and he'd have to prove that it is. But then, what we might do if we couldn't agree is, each one of us select an expert and then let the experts select a third one, and let them act as jury and agree to abide by their decision.

GARDNER: Does that happen much?

ZEITLIN: Not very often. I've made mistakes and I've freely admitted them. I took back a drawing not long ago that had been sold by one of the people in the shop, and by God, if it had ever been taken out of the frame when we took it in, before we sold it, it would have been easily recognized; it was a photographic copy of a drawing. It was so well done, and it had been so cleverly treated that it couldn't be detected except if you removed the glass and looked at it carefully outside of the mat. Well, it had been sold for three or four years; a woman had paid $750 for it. She sent it back, and we sent her her money. There's nothing else to do. Right now I think that one of my former employees is probably respon-

sible for a few of these efforts to return things that have taken place lately. This employee has been going around looking at collections and denigrating some of the things which were purchased from me. But in every case where they've been brought to me, I've been able to convince the buyer that they were genuine, and I've offered to satisfy them. And I haven't had any trouble.

GARDNER: Well, shall we stop now?

ZEITLIN: Yes, I think that's enough.

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GARDNER: As you've been gathering information and you've been talking about--today we'll go through some of the publications and presses which you have been involved with, beginning (since we both sort of have it at hand) with the Mel [Jerome Melvyn] Edelstein bibliography of Primavera. The first several books don't appear to be Primavera imprints, and I think that goes for several of the works involved here. Los Angeles in the Sunny Seventies, for example, is imprinted "Bruce McCallister, Jake Zeitlin," right?

ZEITLIN: Yes.

GARDNER: So the first Primavera, then, would be this Cavalcade, is that accurate?

ZEITLIN: Yes, I believe so. That was the first time I

used the name "Primavera Press" on any publication.

GARDNER: The other two before that were just under "Jake Zeitlin."

ZEITLIN: Jake Zeitlin. The first was Bruce McCallister and Jake Zeitlin, and that was the *Los Angeles in the Sunny Seventies*. Then came the *Aristocracy of Art*, by Merle Armitage, which I can't remember how I was hornswoggled into publishing, [laughter] but as time has gone on, I've wondered more and more, because I don't find myself at all in sympathy with the philosophy expressed there. Merle Armitage and I were great pals in those days. He had delivered this as a lecture at the California Art Club up on Barnsdall Hill, and he got the idea of publishing it, and I went ahead and got it out. It amuses me to find it now being offered for sale for as much as twenty-five to seventy-five dollars. Somewhere in the back room or in my garage is a large bundle of them which I couldn't sell at a dollar and a half apiece in 1929, [laughter] but of course, the Depression was going on then. And besides, it was a most funereal-looking book, all in black wrappers over black boards with a white paper label printed in black. [laughter]

GARDNER: Sounds lovely.

ZEITLIN: Yes, it would have made a good advertisement for an undertaker.

GARDNER: What was the reason for that?

ZEITLIN: Well, it was just the idea of Armitage. Armitage has some rather strong ideas about book design which he expressed in this, the first of his books. This gave him the notion of going in for designing books and publishing, of which he did a great deal over the years; later, mostly in association with Lynton Kistler.

GARDNER: My next observation is that your next publication, or actually the publication which sandwiched these two, were the Carl Sandburg poems. They also precede the Primavera.

ZEITLIN: Oh, well, those were done, as well as I remember, sometime in 1929.

GARDNER: Right, which is the same date as the Los Angeles in the Sunny Seventies and the Aristocracy of Art.

ZEITLIN: Yes, they were hardly what you call publications; they were certainly what you call private publications. They were not intended to be sold. I got Carl Sandburg's permission to publish his poem, M'liss and Louie, and we got out, I think, about 100 copies. It was the result of Ward Ritchie coming to me and saying that he wanted to get out some poetry and could I get hold of something that hadn't been published. So I got Carl's permission to publish M'liss and Louie, and this, too, was not what you'd call a best seller at a dollar a copy. [laughter] Over

the years I gave away a few, and I think there must be a little bundle of those somewhere in our back room. The last time one was sold in a catalog it was priced at $100.

GARDNER: Huh!

ZEITLIN: Now, I became a little more bold after bringing this out. Carl Sandburg had left a partly-typed, partly-manuscript poem with me called _Soo Line Sonata_, and I said to Ward, "You know, we can't get this out except for very limited distribution. If you want to make an exercise in printing of it, well, go ahead, but I think it would be a very good idea for us to print only five copies." As far as I know, that's all he printed.

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GARDNER: Carl Sandburg was saying. . . .

ZEITLIN: Later, Carl Sandburg got wind (someone might have hinted to him) that I had published something of his, and the next time he came out he said, "Jake, if I ever hear of you publishing anything of mine without my permission, I'm going to sue the hell out of you, no matter how good a friend you are." The curious thing is that, to go back to M'liss and Louie, he gave me permission to print it, and Ward Ritchie printed it, and then I sent him five copies. He must have sent one to Alfred Harcourt, because shortly afterward I got a letter from the firm of Harcourt Brace saying that this had been published without their permission, that no copyright notice had been published with it, and that, therefore, I would have to pay them a fee as a precedent, in order to protect Sandburg's copyright. I wrote back and said that Mr. Sandburg had given me permission to publish it, and they said, "That makes no difference. We have to establish the property rights in this, and you're going to have to send us ten dollars." So I sent them ten dollars in order to satisfy their requirements and to protect their copyright. My friend Mel

Edelstein had his own ideas of what constituted Primavera Press publications and what didn't; and, after all, I saw no reason to argue with a well-intentioned friend, so I never insisted. But actually, the Primavera Press books that are listed in the bibliography at the back of the *Garland for Jake Zeitlin*, which was published in 1967, lists a number of things that were not Primavera Press, and it fails to list a lot of things that *were* Primavera Press, as well. The first Primavera Press book was this *Cavalcade* of David Weisman, and my reason for doing that was that I didn't want my name to be attached to what was obviously vanity publishing; yet I didn't want to refuse my friends who wanted to have some publisher's name on their books of poetry and were willing to pay. The same thing was true of *Enoch and Other Poems* by Medora Nickell.

However, the first book published under the Primavera Press as an organized press was the *Anthology of Southern California Verse*. The Primavera Press became a publishing company in 1930 when Leslie Nelson Jennings, who was a friend of Sidney King Russell, had come to me. He needed a job. Sidney King Russell urged me to sort of find a way to occupy him, so we decided that we would start a separate publishing concern called the Primavera Press. For that, it was merely a press name.

GARDNER: I see.

ZEITLIN: Sidney King Russell had been associated before that with Harold Vinal, so he'd had long experience with publishing what were called "vanity books." He published a great many privately printed books, books subsidized by their authors, and he was probably the best example of the so-called vanity publisher. Now, there's really nothing against vanity publishing, so called: Amy Lowell's first book was published privately at her own expense; Robert Frost's first book was published privately at his own expense; Vachel Lindsay's first book, Poems to be Traded for Bread, was published privately at his own expense; Carl Sandburg's first book was published privately at the expense of a friend; H.L. Mencken's Ventures into Verse was published privately by probably the most successful of all vanity publishers, Badger and Company in Boston (rather aptly named). [tape recorder turned off] Edwin Arlington Robinson's first book of poems was published privately at his own expense; and Robinson Jeffer's Flagons and Apples was published privately at his own expense here in Los Angeles and was for many years given away by Holmes, who bought the remainder for something like ten cents a copy and used to sell me copies first for seventy-five cents apiece, then a dollar and a half apiece. Later on I bought ten copies at a time for

three dollars apiece. Ultimately he went up as high as fifteen dollars before he closed and went out of business. It is now something like a $750 book.

But we thought we would satisfy the desire of a number of people who wanted books of their poetry published. We undertook nothing except to put them into print. We sent out a circular to sell them if anybody wanted to buy them. The first book we published was the _Anthology of Southern California Verse_, which really was a nicely printed book; it was designed and printed by Young and McCallister, and it contained a considerable number of rather good poems. _Wind Upon My Face_, by Sarah Bixby Smith, was not a Primavera Press book.

GARDNER: I was about to ask that.

ZEITLIN: It was privately printed by Grant Dahlstrom on Arthur Ellis's Albion handpress. And while it says "250 copies printed," I doubt if there were that many. It was purely a private matter between Sarah Bixby Smith and myself. A great many copies were given away, some sold; but it's a scarce book today, and I think it had considerable merit as poetry.

GARDNER: Next comes your first blockbuster.

ZEITLIN: Well, _Libros Californianos_. By 1931 Primavera Press no longer had Leslie Nelson Jennings involved in

it, and Ward Ritchie was working for me. Phil Townsend Hanna had come along with this idea of publishing a selection of the five feet of California books that would be basic to any library of Californiana, and we added to that the idea of having Henry R. Wagner, Robert Cowan, and Leslie Bliss make selections of what they considered the twenty-five most desirable books in any library of California or southwestern literature (by "desirable" they leaned rather towards the rare and hard to find).

GARDNER: Did they each pick things from their own library?

ZEITLIN: No, they picked things which they considered to be of considerable consequence and also rarities. So it came to be a sort of a guide.

GARDNER: There's a fairly quick second edition.

ZEITLIN: Yes. Now, Ward Ritchie was working for me at the time that I started to publish this, and I said to Ward, "Ward, you don't want to be a bookseller." (He used to stand in the back of the shop and do layouts on the wrapping paper when he was supposed to be wrapping books.) So I said, "Here's a book--why don't you go and print it. It'll be the beginning of printing for you." He had some friends by the name of [Edward A.K.] Hackett and Newell who had a printing plant out in Westwood, so he joined them, and Hackett, Newell and Ritchie Company came into being. It did rather well, so

we reprinted it the next year.

GARDNER: It says "number of copies unknown" for that second edition. Do you know how many?

ZEITLIN: I have no idea how many copies were printed, but I think there must have been about 500. It went extremely well, the first printing of 1,050 copies. Finally, in 1958, Larry Powell agreed to revise this, and he added the books that had been published since 1931 that he felt should be put on a list, with brief notes. There were 1,000 copies printed, and we thought we'd sold them all out. But a couple of years ago I found several packages in the back of my shop, so it's again in print. Adobe Days of Sarah Bixby Smith was not truly a Primavera Press book; it did not have the Primavera Press imprint.

GARDNER: Again, it's Jake Zeitlin, Los Angeles.

ZEITLIN: Yes, it's Jake Zeitlin. It was produced by Young and McCallister, but the unbound sheets were taken over by Ward Ritchie and [Gregg] Anderson.

GARDNER: It mentions that it's the third edition, so it was something that was originally published somewhere else.

ZEITLIN: Well, the first edition was published in Cedar Rapids, Iowa [Torch Press] in 1925, and then a second edition in 1926, also at Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Then in 1931 Sarah Bixby decided that it was out of print, that there

was a demand for it, and that she would like to have it printed again. So she helped finance it, and I published it. Fifteen hundred copies were printed. The major part of these were destroyed at Ward Ritchie's.

GARDNER: Oh, right. I think you told that story.

ZEITLIN: Right, I've told it elsewhere.

GARDNER: Now, the rest of these are all Primavera.

ZEITLIN: Yes. However, I want to make a little note about the Reminiscences of a Ranger. The actual sheets of the Reminiscences of a Ranger were printed in Chicago at the Lakeside Press. They had been intended to be published by Wallace Hebbard in 1927, but something went awry, and we took over the sheets and got out this edition with the new title page, binding, and dust jacket designed by Ward Ritchie. I think it was Phil Hanna who wrote the blurb for this edition, and the blurb evidently contained something which was very offensive to the daughters of Horace Bell. They discovered a copy in Parker's Bookstore and immediately got in touch with us and threatened to sue us, so that we destroyed all the dust jackets on all the copies except those which had already gone out. A copy with the dust jacket of that book is extremely rare. In fact, I haven't got one myself, and I haven't seen one for sale.

The most beautiful book that was produced under the

Primavera Press imprint--and I think still, from a typographic standpoint and all-around bookmaker's standpoint, the best book produced in Southern California--was Alexandre Dumas's [A] Gil Blas in California, which was translated by Marguerite Eyer Wilbur.

GARDNER: This was Saul Marks's first book, right?

ZEITLIN: This was Saul Marks's first book. The wood engravings were produced by Paul Landacre. Ward Ritchie had a considerable hand in the design of it. Actually, the Plantin Press at that time was in part financed by Grant Dahlstrom, and he also advised in the production of this book and did a great deal of teaching of Saul and Ward. But all in all, that is a very pleasing book, and I think by far the best book ever produced in Southern California.

GARDNER: Before you skip on, I notice in 1934 there's another one--oh, no, I take that back, it says printed by the Primavera Press even though it wasn't. Okay, pardon me. Now, to move on to the next section . . .

ZEITLIN: Well, I think we should include, in any discussion of the books which I've had anything to do with, the books that I've published which, for one reason or another, Mel Edelstein did not see fit to include. Why he included some as publications of the Primavera Press which were not and excluded others [which were] I can't explain. However,

I think one of the outstanding books that was produced by Zeitlin and Ver Brugge under the Zeitlin and Ver Brugge imprint was Aldous Huxley's Prisons. That was produced in Paris, and it has a rather interesting history. Arnold Fawcus of Philadelphia had started producing books in London and Paris under the imprint of the Trianon Press. I had persuaded Aldous Huxley to do an essay on what was one of his and my favorite collections of prints, and that is the Carceri, [or] The Prisons, of [Giambattista] Piranesi. Piranesi's Prisons had been the subject of essays by [Thomas] DeQuincey and by [William] Wordsworth and a number of other writers. They have a haunting quality about them. In them Piranesi did something different from any other thing he did during his whole career as an etcher. They are sort of a dreamlike creation. They deserve to be classed with Blake's Book of Job, or with some of the etchings of Goya. They have a certain terrifying quality about them as well. So because of the interest in them that Huxley had, and which I shared because I had handled several sets of The Prisons and had looked over one set that had belonged to the museum here together, he wrote this essay.

About that time, Arnold Fawcus came to town, and I told him about it, and he said, "Let's do this together.

I can get John Adhémar, who is the curator of prints at the Bibliothèque Nationale and who is a foremost authority on Piranesi, to write an essay describing the different states. We'll do something really fine and have it printed by one of the good printers in Paris." We agreed that we would each pay half, and there would be a total of 212 copies--100 for the Trianon Press and the so-called Grey Falcon Press in Philadelphia, and 100 for Zeitlin and Ver Brugge, and 12 for Aldous Huxley and ourselves. Arnold Fawcus produced this, sent me my 100 copies. We got Aldous to sign all the 212 copies and delivered his copies to him. Much to my surprise and Aldous's, we discovered later that Fawcus had also printed 1,000 unsigned copies which he had turned over to Faber and Faber for distribution without giving Aldous Huxley any royalty [or] paying him any fee for the production of these books [and] without informing me or giving me any share for having participated in the cost of production. Because actually the composition, the printing, the plates and everything, were produced out of half the cost, which I provided.

It was more than twenty years afterward, when I was in Paris, Paul Mellon's librarian, Willis Van Devanter, insisted that I go with him and his wife to meet Arnold Fawcus at his printing establishment in Paris, and I

went out. Arnold Fawcus by then had become the official printer and publisher of the [William] Blake trust--very beautiful books, very sumptuously produced under the editorship of Geoffrey Keynes and with the aid of Paul Mellon and Lessing Rosenwald. I doubt if books as sumptuous as these facsimile books in marvelous color have ever been produced. So when I went to see Arnold and he showed me around, I said, "Arnold, you know we have some unsettled business." [laughter] "I think we ought to sit down and talk it over." I told him about this and told him that he had never settled with Huxley, he had never settled with me, and had never even informed us of what he was doing. It was not part of his contract with Huxley and with me. He looked like a man who knew he'd done something wrong, and he said he was very contrite. He said, "You know, I was very poor in those days, and struggling, and I'm afraid that I didn't take the trouble I should have taken to get Huxley's permission and yours and to settle with you." And he said, "Now, what do you want?" He at that time had published a very handsome haggadah with illustrations by Ben Shahn, and I said, "Well, you can give me one of the haggadahs and you can consider it settled." So that's what happened.

GARDNER: What was the year of the publication of The Prisons?

ZEITLIN: In 1949. It was very nicely gotten up with a full set of the plates in every one of the states described by Adhémar. It had both Huxley's essay and Adhémar's essay. Also it had a portfolio in addition to the Dutch paper binding. It now sells for around $250 to $300. I think at that time we sold it for $18, and Lessing Rosenwald very kindly bailed me out by buying about ten of them at the time they were published. I'm sure I wouldn't have been able to pay my share of the printing cost if it hadn't been for that.

In 1940 I also published a little book of Aldous Huxley's called Words and Their Meanings, and that also has a curious history. Aldous Huxley had given me the manuscript, and I went to Ward Ritchie and said, "I'd like to have it printed, and I want to publish it." Whereupon he produced 100 copies to be signed by Aldous Huxley, but he proceeded to produce, according to what I find in the bibliography, about 1,000 copies for general distribution. And that bears no reference to me and was published entirely by the Ward Ritchie Press. What it says in the bibliography is "Los Angeles, the Ward Ritchie Press, 1940, 1,000 copies." I'm puzzled that there is no mention of the 100 copies that were printed off for me and signed by Huxley.

GARDNER: What was the imprint that you would have had?

ZEITLIN: I have the original edition that was printed for me, which says "Jake Zeitlin"; it bears a colophon signed by Huxley, and it is dated the same year. The fact is that Ritchie went ahead and printed 1,000 copies in all for his own distribution.

One of the notable things about this book is that jacket and the title page were designed by Alvin Lustig, a very young man at the time, who had studied architecture with Frank Lloyd Wright and then had abandoned architecture and gone in for printing design. I sent him to Ritchie, and he did several notable books there at Ritchie's press and established a very highly-personal style of design, using ornament in a way that was very much derived from the style of Frank Lloyd Wright. Gradually he developed a style very much his own. Later, I introduced him to the man who owned New Directions Press, James Laughlin, and Laughlin immediately engaged him to design jackets and become the designer for New Directions Press. He did that for a while. He went East and ended up teaching typographic design at Yale. He acquired quite a reputation as a designer. Unfortunately, he developed some condition with his eyes, and he went blind and died very young--I think quite a loss in the field of typographic design. He was a really extraordinary

talented, highly individual designer. Now, among the other books which I have published since, I think one of the notable ones is an edition of Thomas Salusbury's Mathematical Collections.

GARDNER: Now, this is Zeitlin again, "Jake Zeitlin," or is this Zeitlin and Ver Brugge?

ZEITLIN: No, this is Zeitlin and Ver Brugge, and Dawsons of Pall Mall, and this is a very sumptuous publication, two volumes bound in full leather by Zaehnsdorf in an edition of 200 copies. It's a reprint of a work published originally in 1664 and '65, and the reprint contains an introductory essay by Stillman Drake. I think I've told somewhere else the story of how this publication came about.

GARDNER: Yes. What was the date on it?

ZEITLIN: It was 1967.

GARDNER: Oh, that's recent.

ZEITLIN: As I've told before, Volume I is relatively common--there are something like fifty copies known--but Volume II was known only in seven copies. The seventh known copy, which had belonged to de Andrade, came up at an auction of his scientific books in the summer of 1964. I was present, Stillman Drake was present, and our chief competitor in the bidding was the manager of Dawsons of Pall Mall, a man by the name of [Bert] Marley. The book

kept rising, Mr. Marley hung on, and I kept bidding up. Finally, when it got to 2,800 pounds, I raised to 3,000 pounds, and Mr. Marley dropped out, but not without sticking his tongue out at me across the table in the august auction rooms of Sotheby's. [laughter]

Well, that afternoon we had a drink together, and we decided that we would publish the two volumes in facsimile--with the permission of Joe Schaffner, for whom I'd bought it--with an introduction by Stillman Drake. So Stillman Drake provided us with an introduction. The production of it was under the supervision of Dawsons of Pall Mall. I'm sorry that I didn't keep more of a hand in on the production side; I thought they were going to give it to somebody like Curwen Press to do, but instead they farmed it out to some house who didn't use much taste in the design of the title page. The interior of the book was very well done--that is, that portion which was originally set, the introductory matter written by Drake. Because the volumes were bound in full calf by Zaehnsdorf, we had to sell the book for something like $365 a copy. I'd forgotten how much it amounted to in pounds in those days--probably about 175 pounds. We did succeed, however, in selling enough copies to pay back our cost. The remaining copies I ultimately bought from Dawsons of Pall Mall, and from time to time I sell a copy. I think I must have about 50 out of the original 200 left. All in

all, it is a very handsome book and one that I'm proud to have been involved in publishing.

GARDNER: Can we go back? I don't know what order you have those in, but what originally inspired this session was Jim Davis's finding of the Harold Ickes book that was put out by the Breakfast Press and the discovery that there was a Jake Zeitlin press that no one knew anything about.

ZEITLIN: Well, it wasn't really a Jake Zeitlin press; Jake Zeitlin was merely one of the participants. Sometime in the thirties, Preston Tuttle and his wife Mildred, and Josephine and I, and Paul and Margaret Landacre started meeting Sundays and having breakfast, and then after breakfast we would read a play of Shakespeare's. We decided we needed to know Shakespeare's plays. Some of us had read some of them, but none of us had read all of them, and we thought we would read through them, each of us taking parts, and we found this to be very enjoyable. Part of the time we would meet at the house of Grant Dahlstrom, where he had an Albion handpress out in the barn, and it was suggested that we print something on the press on one of the Sundays. So, after having breakfast and after reading one of the plays, we would go out in the backyard. Grant usually had set the type in advance and had the forms locked in, and we would ink and pull the presses. The first book we did was The Amphisbaena, the Crocodile, and Other Poems, by A.E.

Housman. It had appeared in a school paper when Housman was a boy and had never been reprinted, but it had been discovered by William White, who teaches now at Wayne University but then was a graduate student at USC here. William White has a great nose for ephemera. He publishes very few books, but he publishes lots of half-page and quarter-page bibliographical notes and brief notes. His bibliography is immense, consisting largely of bibliographical notes and short reviews, short essays of one sort or another. But he does have a nose for the things that are overlooked and forgotten, and he came to me and he said, "Look here, how would you like to publish a couple of poems of A.E. Housman that have never appeared separately?" So, without troubling to get the permission of Mr. Housman (because copyright had run out already), we proceeded to publish these with the introduction of William White. I think we must have printed 100 copies. They were printed on handmade paper, and I think we made the paper ourselves, but I can't remember. In any event, we folded them--they were printed wet and they had to be hung up to dry afterwards and pressed on an ironing board with a regular kitchen iron--and the wives sewed them. Some copies did not have the cover, so that most of the copies that exist today have only the title page. But it's a very rare Housman item, and none have turned up for

sale in quite a few years; the last that turned up were bringing around twenty-five dollars apiece.

Later on I ran across an article in The New Republic by Harold Ickes, and it was called "When Are You Going to Laugh, America?" It appealed to all of us, and so we decided to print it. We printed, I suppose, a couple of hundred copies. In both cases Paul Landacre did a wood engraving--an ornament for The Amphisbaena, and I think the same thing for Harold Ickes's "When Are You Going to Laugh?" So these are really very scarce ephemera; most of them were dispersed. I'm not sure that I haven't got a little bundle of The Amphisbaena somewhere around the bookshop still, and I wish I could find them, just like the Carl Sandburg things, because I think that it would be better than finding a cache of gold coins. [laughter]

GARDNER: How come you stopped after two?

ZEITLIN: Well, it got to be work. As long as it was fun and we did it more or less as a recreation, it was all right. But when it got to be something that we felt under compulsion about and didn't have the urge to get out there and pull at the handpress for several hours on a Sunday afternoon--Grant Dahlstrom didn't feel like setting up the type in advance--so, we just dropped it. It was purely for fun, and when it stopped being fun, we quit. [laughter] Which is the way it should be.

GARDNER: Were there any other presses which were not Zeitlin or Zeitlin and Ver Brugge? Were there any other publishing ventures that you were involved in?

ZEITLIN: Well, I think that I helped George Yamada, a little Japanese fellow, get started. He had very good taste; he did some good printing. He would rent the press at Anderson and Ritchie, or he would rent the press at Dahlstrom, and got out several very nice things. They've disappeared, most of what George Yamada produced, but they were in very good taste, very charming. He became an anthropologist and went down into Mexico. He also wrote a little pamphlet about the Navajos which he's published and which is now extremely scarce. It is an important item on the Navajo land problems.

GARDNER: What was his imprint?

ZEITLIN: "George Yamada," as I remember it. I can't remember what his imprint was; he's very much forgotten. Of course, there was Thomas Perry Stricker, who printed several things for me. I had him write about four essays on four rare books that I'd sold to Frank Hogan, and in each case he wrote the essays, and then he printed them up into little books. They were very charming. He had a tendency toward the French cursive letters. He had rather a striking, flamboyant style. He went to New York and became the New York representative for some of the

German typefounders (Bauer and Company), was involved in the activities of the Typophiles [Club], and so on. He died there, and the majority of his books are now at the [William Andrews] Clark [Memorial] Library. Thomas Perry Stricker was a colorful chap. He worked for me for a while, not only doing these essays and the little booklets but also as a cataloger during the time when he was not employed full time.

Then, of course, there is Bill Cheney, who is a story all to himself. The most remarkable production of Bill Cheney's is his volume called The Type Stickers of the Southern California Region, which is a collection of letters between Bill Cheney and H. Richard Archer. Richard Archer had a little press called the Hippogryff Press, and it was the various members of the Rounce and Coffin Club that bought the press and a font of type and enough equipment for him to get started.

TAPE NUMBER: XIII, SIDE ONE

APRIL 25, 1978

ZEITLIN: Today I had lunch with Ann Bobrow, who has been our cataloger for approximately forty years, and Grant Dahlstrom, who is my friend of over fifty years. Our purpose was to discuss the projected catalog which we are planning to bring out in the early fall of this year. It is to be entitled Our First Half-Century, and it will contain a selection of books and manuscripts and letters such as we would have handled over this period (but really books). Everything contained will be something for sale at present or recently sold. My purpose in dictating this is to produce, if possible, what may be used as a foreword to the catalog--sort of a historical summary of my fifty years of bookselling and their significance to me.

It is as much a surprise to me as it could possibly be to anyone else that I stand here at the end of fifty years of bookselling. I really had no hopes of surviving as a businessman for this long, and in the face of several periods where the certainty of survival was much less than the certainty of failure. It occurs to me that sort of a quick sketch of these years and of those people who have been most helpful to me in furthering my career as a

bookseller would be the best possible way of expressing both my satisfaction at having reached this point and of my gratitude.

I can honestly say that, my temperament being what it is, bookselling is probably the only field in which I could have succeeded to the degree that I have--for it is a field in which you can jump from one interesting topic of interest to another without having to concentrate too long. Each day brings some new surprise; each purchase contains something different from anything else that I have bought before. And in that way, I'm able to divert my attention and divert myself before any one thing becomes too tedious to pursue too long. This limited span of attention, which seems to be a characteristic of mine, has particular value in the business of selling books and of dealing with the wide variety of people that one should be able to cope with. In the course of a day, you not only have your attention shifted from one subject to another, but you also have your attention shifted from one kind of a personality to another. And while some people may stay a long time and bring you to the point of absolute desperation or boredom (the latter of which I have rarely felt in my life), in the majority of cases each person that comes is a challenge, each is a stimulant, and each one brings out something in me which might have lain latent

without the demands of adapting to that new kind of a person. So what in some fields of endeavor might be a defeating handicap has in bookselling been a great asset. In addition, I think that bookselling has been a great outlet for my desire to explore the personalities of people. I find that the more interest you take in people, the more they respond to you and the more likely they are to buy something--whether it's a book or whatever you have to offer for sale. No one fails to react favorably to the question: "Tell me about yourself. Tell me what you like. Tell me what you're interested in." And I must say that I have consciously exploited this device to very good advantage. But it has given me a great deal of pleasure, and I think it's also given the person opposite me a great deal of satisfaction to have someone who asks them those questions and then listens to them while they talk about themselves. For the privilege of talking about yourself and what you like and what you're interested in, you're willing to pay a considerable price, and if there is any one secret about salesmanship, I think it is that.

To go back to my beginnings and the origins of the development of my own peculiar interests and tastes, I must say that the roots lie very deep and very early in my childhood. I was fortunate in being thrown into the

company of, first, the teachers that I had in school, and then the individuals that I found in the community that I grew up in--I'm sure a very average, middle-sized American town with, if anything, less of the usual cultural advantages or cultural assets. I was never able to fit myself into the ordinary social group. I did not play games like baseball or any of the other team games, first because I was not very dextrous, not very well coordinated; and in the second place, because I disliked losing, and I did not choose to participate in any game in which I would be the loser. So I chose such things as were not competitive, where I would not have to compare with other people. I chose swimming because that was something that you could do in or out of competition. I chose bird watching, and I chose reading because reading and the effort to write--which I commenced at very early--were activities that you did not have to immediately stand [in] comparison with anyone else.

I was not a good games player, as I said before, and neither was I good at the usual social activities of the younger people of my family group. I didn't participate in the usual dances or parties. I didn't have enough confidence in my personal appearance to try to dress presentably, so I dressed as unpresentably as I could; I indulged my eccentricities because they provided a shield

against the necessity for comparison, rather than because they made me conspicuous. And most of my friendships were one-to-one associations; most of my social activities consisted of cultivating single friendships. I never seemed to have any sense of age differences as a barrier, so that I very early started associating with people much older than myself. I would go to them and say, "I understand that you are a botanist," or "You are a geologist," or "You know a great deal about music and architecture, and I'd like to know whatever you can take the time and trouble to tell me." So that old Albert Ruth, who was one of Texas's outstanding botanists of his time, a man who was close to eighty at the time I met him, said, "Come along with me when I go botanizing, and I'll show you the plants around here and tell you about them." And so it was with a number of other people. I used to stay after school and ask questions of my teachers, and if they proposed a project, I very eagerly went about doing it. I developed a course in ornithology at the high school. Of course, we had several trunks of bird skins. The teacher found that this was a very good way to fill in the time and keep the classes occupied between the regular lectures they had prepared, or the laboratory work; so I was allowed to take the bird skins, and I prepared an outline, which was passed on by the teacher. Here I was, a young man of

sixteen, lecturing to the high school zoology classes about ornithology--about which, as I remember now, I really knew very little.

But I had, as I say, no sense of any handicap about age difference between myself and older people, and I also had no sense of inferiority in respect to other people, whatever their financial or social status might be. To me, nobody was any taller than I. I think this has been a great advantage also in my bookselling, because I've never felt any particular hesitancy or self-consciousness about approaching people of great eminence or great wealth, and they have usually responded to me with great interest and kindness. Great collectors, like Lessing Rosenwald, whom I called on the telephone and asked if I could come and see at his hotel--he said "Yes, come along." I came. I brought what I had to offer. I showed them to him. I was neither too agressive nor too subservient. I didn't attempt to flatter, and I did not put myself down. And this, I think, served very well, both for them and for me. (By the way, this is not what I had intended to say, but I think I'll continue in this vein.) [laughter]

When I first decided to become a bookseller as a result of my association with Ben Abramson--who later founded the Argus Book Shop--I was driving a truck in Texas, and Ben Abramson was my helper. I was by far his junior, but I

could drive a truck, and he couldn't; and he needed a job, and I had the advantage of being the boss's son. After a few days, he started talking. He was a nonstop talker, a man whose capacity for having no terminal facilities became famous in later years when he developed his bookshop in Chicago. And so he enchanted me with his talk about McClurg's bookshop in Chicago, the Saints and Sinners Corner--which was frequented by people like Eugene Field in its early days, and later by Sherwood Anderson and Carl Sandburg--the Dill Pickle Club, the Whitechapel Club, all of which were more or less formal groups of people interested in books and general hilarity.

When Ben Abramson departed, approximately in 1919, I had pretty well made up my mind that what I wanted to do was to be a bookseller. I had developed a number of friendships among the people who owned books, with the manager of the leading book department in The Fair department store and with his opposite, a man by the name of Teale, at Stripling's department store. Both of them were men who had a real dedication to books and people, surprisingly literate in spite of their appearance of being purely merchandisers. And so I moved, rather ruthlessly, as I see it now, away from my own family's business--away from the obligation I had to my family, which was dependent on it--and took a job as a clerk in the book

department of The Fair, a department store there in Fort Worth. I don't think I was very good at it. People came in and talked, and I talked to them. My tendency to encourage people to stay--I encouraged them to talk about themselves and their interests--became so noticeable that the manager of the book department spoke to me about it; the merchandise manager in the department store spoke to me about it. But this was, for me, not something that I could consciously control. I think that all my life I have moved by tropisms, sort of an unconscious response to pressures about which I had very little conscious knowledge. What their roots are I don't know, and I don't suppose I ever will, and maybe it would be just as well if I didn't.

When I finally decided to leave my hometown, my choice was purely in terms of what I hoped would be a bookselling future. In fact, I tossed a coin: if it was heads, I was going to go to Chicago, where I hoped to go to work for my friend Ben Abramson and his associate Gerry Nedwick, both of whom had worked for me; if it was tails, I was going to go to Los Angeles, where my friend Franklin Wolfe had some friends who he thought could help me find a job in a bookstore. Well, it came up tails, so I sent my wife by train to Los Angeles to these unknown friends of a friend. I borrowed fifteen dollars, and I started

walking across the country to Los Angeles. Of course, I had no idea how far away it was, or the fact that there were dry, empty prairies and deserts and mountains in between. If I had known it, I'd never have started; and if I hadn't started, I wouldn't have got here, so I guess it was just as well.

There are great blanks in my own recollections of how I got from place to place in some parts of New Mexico, and I especially have trouble remembering how I ever got as far as Needles from Gallup, New Mexico, and then from Needles to Daggett. It was as if I was moving in a dream: I can't remember where I slept or what I ate or how I traveled. Of course, I did hitch a number of rides, and where I couldn't get a ride, I would walk at night. But in the course of about three weeks, I got as far as Daggett; and from Daggett to Los Angeles was one quick ride on a truck. The man who was driving it was selling dairy products--butter and cheese and milk--to restaurants and grocery stores, traveling out of Los Angeles. And the trip from the desert down into Los Angeles was, I suppose, one of the most magical unrolling of landscape and of a new world that I have ever experienced.

Without dwelling in detail on what I think I have told in some of the previous parts of this series of interviews, I think the most crucial point in my whole life was the

night of the Sunday in 1925. I had been fired by Holmes the night before; I had no idea where I would turn next. And that day the house caught fire. That evening, we found ourselves sitting around the table--my wife Edith and my friend Bates Booth, a young law student then attending the University of Southern California law school, who had come out from Fort Worth. He had previously attended Sewanee [Institute], and he had attended Stanford law school. He had taught English in the high school in Fort Worth, and he came out to California after I ventured out here. And he was living in the house with us while he had a part-time job and was struggling to complete his degree in law. The roof and ceiling had been burned off the house. We lit candles, gathered up all the food that was left, made one big meal of it, and sat there. And my friend Booth said to Edith, my then-wife, and me, "I think we're licked. I think we've tried, and we've done our best, and I think the best thing to do is get in touch with our folks, tell 'em we don't have any money, we have no shelter, and we'd like to come home. And they'll send money to us. We'll go back home." And I said, "No, we can't do that. If we go back, we'll be defeated for the rest of our lives. We give up, and we're done for. We'll be captives. I'm going to stay here, and someday I'm going to have a bookshop, and it's going to be

a bookshop where you'll find first editions of the classics and the great names in literature, and beautiful art books, and etchings of Rembrandt and Dürer on the walls, and hangings and carpets on the balconies. And I'm going to stay here till I get it."

We went to a neighbor's house that night and slept in the attic. The Monday morning afterward, I went down to the May Company--one of the department stores in town--to the manager of the book department. I presented myself and said, "I can sell books, and I'd like a job. I want you to give me a chance." The manager of that book department was a woman by the name of May Perks. I'm sure that she was no candidate for any beauty prize; she was a very plain-looking woman, and, at that time, seemed to be a rather dull, unimaginative person. But she had enough imagination to say, "Go down to the personnel office and tell them that I sent you and that I'd like to have you in my department. And if there is an opening, they'll give you the job, unless there's someone that is ahead of you." So I went down, and the next day I was given the job.

This very plain May Perks was the first person to have the idea of exploiting film personalities for product sales. She acquired the rights to represent Shirley Temple; and she licensed the use of Shirley Temple's name, helped

develop products in clothes, in dolls, in books, and in all kinds of other products, and ended up a very wealthy woman.

I didn't stay in the May Company book department for more than about three weeks. By that time, I'd discovered that up the street about two blocks was Bullock's, which had a much higher quality of merchandise, which had a book department that carried a great many more books of a higher level, had some pretensions to wanting to merchandise bindings, well-printed books, literary works, and sets, as well as the usual run-of-the-mill best sellers, the staples of department-store book departments. Nobody really trained me. I did, very early, subscribe to the Publishers Weekly. I started reading the departments of the Publishers Weekly, the sections which were conducted by Jake Blanck, at that time, and later by Sol Malkin, for the benefit of the antiquarian-book trade. I haunted secondhand-book stores in the evenings and on my days off. A great deal of the time, I would go together with a young man who worked in a stockbroker's office on Spring Street. His name was Max Hunley, and Max and I would spend our time going from one bookstore to another trying to find books which we could buy for a dollar and take down the street to another bookstore and sell for two dollars, or take to some of the individual collectors that we'd learned about.

These were the early beginnings. And it was a combination of the friendships which I formed in the bookshops where I worked, and the curiosity in my head about books and the desire to learn more and more about them, the appetite I had for reading, the lack of humility--which must have been a considerable asset. I was neither bumptious nor shy. I wrote to Paul Jordan-Smith, whose book on strange authors I had read--a book of essays about Ambrose Bierce, James Branch Cabell, Arthur Machen, and a few other literary names--and told him that I was working in a bookshop in Los Angeles, that I would like to call on him. I got a letter back saying, "Please do." So on a Sunday, I took the Red Car out to Claremont and was met at the station by this tall, very kindly, very handsome man, with a big German shepherd dog. We walked down the long rows of eucalyptus trees to a charming old house, and for the first time in my life, I really saw a collector's library. He was one of the first men to discover and write about James Joyce's Ulysses, and it was there that I saw a copy of the first edition in the original blue wrappers. Some of the people he was interested in never really amounted to very much, people like Eden Phillpotts, who wrote a tremendous lot. Phillpots wrote one or two books of some merit, including Children of the Mist, which Paul Jordan thought was one of the great

English novels about Devon, and which I feel is a book which has merit far beyond which has been recognized. He collected the works of people like J. Mills Whitham, who nobody had heard about then and nobody has heard about since. On the other hand, he was a great follower of John Cowper Powys and Llewellyn Powys and T.F. Powys, all three of whom had great merit. John Cowper Powys was a lecturer then and a writer of essays, but he really found his outlet and found his highest level of achievement in the writing of novels--rather dour, grim novels which I think have also not been appreciated enough. Here were first editions of Arthur Machen--*The Hill of Dreams*, *The Great God Pan*--as well as the first edition of *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, the book to which, of all books, Paul Jordan-Smith was most dedicated. He was engaged in doing a new edition of it in which he was annotating every reference that Robert Burton made to the various sources that he'd drawn upon. He was interested in reading (so that he might understand Robert Burton's sources) all of the works that Burton referred to. He was collecting them in first or early editions or the editions which had been read by Burton. So he had a houseful of books that were being collected not only because of their rarity but because they were useful in his scholarly endeavors. And I think this really lit

the torch more than anything else; gave me an idea, of what the uses of a collection of rare books could be, other than that of just being able to possess something rare and expensive. It was very exciting. It was exciting to listen to Paul Jordan-Smith because he was a great conversationalist, he was a man of tremendous enthusiasm, and he was a man of widely varied interests in special kinds of literature. He became my very strong friend and sponsor. How I impressed him I don't know. As some of my friends have said, because I have accumulated in my boyhood in Texas quite a variety of folk songs, which I used to sing with great enthusiasm, I gave the impression to some of the people who are still alive and who remember my performances that I was playing the guitar. As a matter of fact, I was only singing and clapping my hands in rhythm for background.

While at Bullock's, I met Phil Townsend Hanna.

TAPE NUMBER: XIII, SIDE TWO

APRIL 25, 1978 and
MAY 9, 1978

ZEITLIN: Phil Townsend Hanna became the editor of what then was called Touring Topics, the house organ of the Automobile Club of Southern California; it later became Westways and now has developed into a very respectable magazine.

Somehow I stimulated the curiosity and the interest of Phil Hanna, and he in turn brought in Will Connell, a photographer. Will Connell then introduced me to Lloyd Wright, the son of Frank Lloyd Wright. I met Grace Marion Brown, a designer. And before very long I had formed a circle of friends, a quite astonishedly varied circle, which included Merle Armitage, then manager of the Los Angeles opera; Carl Haverlin, who was manager of KFI, the leading radio station in Los Angeles; Gordon Raye Young, who was the book review editor of the Los Angeles Times. In a very short while, I developed a broad spectrum of friendship; as I look back on it now, it's hard to explain. There was Bill Conselman and his wife Mina Conselman. He was a writer at Twentieth Century-Fox, and between them, they developed a strip called "Ella Cinders" that made them wealthy. There were many other people in this circle, and as time went on, I think I became a sort

of a binding element. The person most responsible, I think, was Will Connell, who had a great talent for bringing people together and who also was generous beyond the call of duty to a great many people.

By the time I was ready to open my own bookshop, I had formed a wide circle of acquaintances, friendships which were more than casual. People commenced to take trouble: to further me, to introduce me to people who might buy books, to lend me support in all kinds of ways--help me design my bookshop, lend me stocks of books so that I'd have enough books to fill the shelves, send me drawings, prints, photographs to hang on the wall to sell. As I look back on it now with some perspective, I think it was the most marvelous spontaneous phenomenon. I was young; I was eager; I was articulate. And I think all these things affected other people, and very soon we had, really, the beginnings of an intellectual circle. Some of the participants weren't so profoundly intellectual, but the chief thing that brought them together was an interest in one or the other of the arts, and particularly in books, writing, printing, music. Carey McWilliams became a part of the group. An architect and designer of furniture by the name of Kem Weber was a part of the group. Arthur Millier, the art editor of the Times, was a part of the group. Why it was a group at all is hard to understand;

we took to meeting without ever really having an organization, at quite regular intervals, at the French restaurant near us on West Sixth Street, a place called René and Jean. Then we'd repair to the bookshop, sit around and talk. Of course, this all provided me with customers as well, but as I look back on it now, I didn't really take the advantage I might have if I'd known the ways of business better. A great many of the people who came, participated, and took a lot of my time, and so on, weren't really customers. They certainly were friends, and they helped build the ambiance the whole spirit out of which my bookshop grew and which sustained it even when it didn't do so well financially. I think what I'm trying to get at is the idea that after a while my bookshop became a community expression rather than just the expression of myself, and that is how it has grown. The thing which has kept me going in spite of my deficiencies as a businessman (and I certainly had many of them to start with; I've learned something about business management since, but I certainly didn't know anything about it then) was that after a while the bookshop became more than the expression of myself; it became the expression of the wishes and the dreams of a great many other people. I remember that when I moved and my friends decided to hold an opening party, it was presided

over by a man by the name of A.G. Beaman, and the people that came represented all facets of the community. There were my fellow booksellers, like Ernest Dawson and Mrs. Millard; there were printers; there were writers; there were musicians. They were people like Hamlin Garland, who wrote me a beautiful letter. I have a very thick portfolio of letters which were written to me by people from all over the community, and from all over the country, expressing their enthusiasm, assuring me that their heart was with me in this bookshop. It was something different, I think, from any other bookshop, certainly in this community, and I don't think there's been any other quite like it. Dawson's, of course, is a community institution. I think as time has gone on and my business has increased in size, and I've had to isolate myself more from the public, my shop doesn't represent now what it did then. But it certainly is a product of the dreams and the good wishes, the hopes, of a lot of people for whom the bookshop was a personal expression. They were fulfilling their ambitions as well as mine.

I wish I could name all the people who, in one way or another, went out of their way to help me, people like Mrs. Estelle Getz, Julius Jacoby, members of the Jewish community. There was quite a large number of the Jewish

community then--the well-to-do leaders of the organized Jewish community--who helped me, men like Sol Lesser, like George Moschbacher. I can't remember all their names. Then there were medical men, like Dr. Hyman Miller and Dr. Arthur Cecil and Dr. Elmer Belt, and a great many more. There were people like Hugh Walpole who came and bought books from me and extended me their friendship and their support, people like Wilbur and Ida Needham, who really are among the dearest people that we ever had in this community.

One of the most important people who saw me through many difficulties and provided the financial support that really has made it possible for me to go on was John Valentine, a man from Decatur, Illinois, who had helped found the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop in Chicago and then came out here. He was a man who collected books. He loved books; he loved good company. He went traveling with me to buy books, and he supplied me with the funds to buy libraries when I couldn't have gotten the money any other way. There were people in the book trade, especially Ernest Maggs, of Maggs Brothers, and there were librarians like Nathan Van Patten of Stanford University, and Harold Leupp of the University of California, and Willis Kerr of Pomona College, Claremont universities, that gave me their patronage and their

advice and their encouragement. And there were other booksellers in addition to Ernest Dawson, like John Howell, who were very helpful, and the firm of E. Weyhe in New York, especially the man in charge of the print department there, Carl Zigrosser. Dr. Rosenbach came out, called on me, sent me books to sell. Just the prestige of being associated with him was a tremendous asset. [There were] people like Frank Hogan, one of the greatest trial lawyers America ever had, a tremendous book lover and a tremendous friend of book people, who had a particular weakness for booksellers, and Mrs. Doheny, who was a very faithful patron, and all of the many small collectors, not just the great and famous ones, but the many people whose two- and five- and ten- and twenty-five- and hundred-dollar purchases made it possible for me to keep my doors open. Whatever my personal differences might have been with Homer Crotty--and mostly they were differences of politics and ideology--he was certainly very supportive. Very often he would come over, and I'd say, "Look, I need to sell some books today," and he would pick out a large pile of books and take them away. And [there were] men like Will Clary, of the firm of O'Melveny and Meyers. The bookshop became, as I said before, the product of so many different people's interests and

affection and loyalty and support that it was not just my shop. And I like to think that it still isn't. I like to think that what it has grown to be, as a rather large business, is very much the expression of all the people who have felt a sense of participation and to whom it has been an expression of themselves as well as of me.

MAY 9, 1978

GARDNER: Okay, as I mentioned, I thought we'd start out this evening and finish up with your publications, talk about what you did with Salusbury's materials.

ZEITLIN: Well, the roots of the publication of Salusbury's Mathematical Collections go back to about 1942, when I met Stillman Drake. In the course of our acquaintanceship, which was related to a mutual interest in the history of science and history of logic and philosophy, he talked to me a great deal about Galileo, which was his favorite subject and still is. Stillman Drake was a product of the Depression. He'd gone to the University of California at Berkeley, and he had majored in philosophy. He had to stop school and start earning a living for his wife and two sons because of the Depression, and so he never got his PhD. He had a substantial knowledge of mathematics and particularly of statistics, so that he very early got a job

with some one of the federal agencies, came down to Los Angeles, and wandered into my shop one day. We got into conversation, and he showed me a book which he had printed in an edition of about eighteen copies. It was a reprint of a very rare philosophical work by a remote American philosopher named A.B. Johnson, of Ithaca, New York, who in 1828 wrote a book called [*A Treatise on Language, or*] *Words and the Relation That They Bear to Things*, by far the earliest American semanticist. I said, "How can I get one?" And he said, "There aren't any for sale, and I have only a couple of copies left. And the only thing that would induce me to part with a copy would be if you could offer me a copy of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*." And I said, "Well, just hang on here. I think I can get one for you." I reached for the telephone, and I called Larry Edmunds Book Shop in Hollywood. And I said to Larry, "If you'll turn around in the seat you're sitting in and look up at the third shelf from the top at about the fourth book to the right, I think you'll see a copy of a book by Wittgenstein called *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*." He turned around, he said, "Yes, it's there." And I said, "Well, you put it aside. A friend of mine's going to stop by and pick it up, and you bill me for it." And I turned around to Drake, and I said, "If you go out to

Larry Edmunds Book Shop in Hollywood on Cahuenga"--which is where the shop was at that time--"go in there and tell them you've come to pick up Tractatus Logico Philosophicus." He was very much impressed. Of all things, I had remembered the location of that particular book on the shelf of this bookshop when I had been in there scanning the shelves one day.

GARDNER: What was Larry Edmunds doing with that, just something he'd picked up?

ZEITLIN: Well, that was before . . .

GARDNER: . . . before his specialization.

ZEITLIN: Yes, before his specialization. It was a general secondhand-book shop, and Larry Edmunds was specializing in secondhand-book selling and bootlegging at that time, [laughter] although I think that Prohibition had already been repealed.

GARDNER: Which was he better at?

ZEITLIN: Well, I think that he did very well at bootlegging as long as whiskey-selling wasn't legalized. He was one of these people that you very often find in the book business. Like Stanley Rose, he appeared to be almost an illiterate, and yet he picked up enough by ear in the course of the years to be able to speak with authority on almost any subject. And that is what a lot of booksellers learn to do.

GARDNER: Anyway, back to our story.

ZEITLIN: Well, Drake, in due course, sent me down a copy of A.B. Johnson's *Treatise on Language*. And the next time he came to see me, he told me that his great ambition was to translate Galileo's *Dialogue [Concerning] the Two [Chief] World Systems* and that his model for the English translation, to some degree, was going to be a translation by Thomas Salusbury in a volume called *Mathematical [Collections and] Translations*, published in London in 1657, consisting of translations from Italian, French, German, Dutch, Latin of important works primarily on mechanics and hydraulics. He introduced me to the obvious information about Thomas Salusbury. The first volume of Salusbury's *Mathematical Collections* was published in England in 1664, and the second volume in 1665. The first volume was fairly easy to get; there were about fifty known copies of it, according to the censuses. But the second volume of *Mathematical Collections* consisted of about seven known copies. Just how it happened there were no more no one knew then, or still do not know, except that the great fire of London might have destroyed most of them. In any event, of the seven known copies of the second volume of *Mathematical Collections*, there had been one copy described in the middle of the nineteenth century which contained a life of Galileo, and that was the only copy of *Mathematical Collections* which contained this life,

although all the other six copies had it listed on the table of contents. There was a great mystery of how this one copy, which was complete, had disappeared, but it was known with certainty that it had existed, and quotations from it had been published. Rumors turned up from time to time, and have turned up until recently, that the copy was stolen and taken to Australia. But my queries to Australian libraries and Australian booksellers, other bookish people in Australia, have not produced any record of this copy. Drake published a translation of Galileo's _Dialogue_, the 1632 work, the one which caused Galileo to be brought to Rome and tried by the inquisition. However, he did not depend upon the Salusbury translation. He produced an original translation. He had taught himself to read Italian; he had taught himself all that he needed to know in order to translate it into readable English. And, of course, being well trained in mechanics and astronomy and the logic of science, he felt that he was better equipped to interpret Galileo into English than if he depended upon a predecessor. Simultaneously with the publication of Stillman Drake's _Dialogue_, and unknown to him, there appeared another translation of Galileo's _Dialogue of the Two World Systems_. Drake's was published by the University of California Press, the other one translated by Giogio di Santillana [and published] by the University

of Chicago Press. Giorgio di Santillana had leaned heavily on the Salusbury translation, but in his introduction and all the way through, he criticized Salusbury for his misunderstanding of the essentials of mechanics and of astronomy, and accused him of being a poor translator. Drake felt that this was unjust, but he couldn't really prove why. He just couldn't see how a man who knew Italian, who had associated with the people who knew Galileo, could be so wrong. What Santillana did was point out a number of obvious errors in Salusbury's translation.

The first publication in Isis of Stillman Drake's was an essay, "Galileo Gleanings," and this was a discussion of Salusbury's translation of Galileo. In it he pointed out that Salusbury was an unknown figure. There was no proof even that there was a man by the name of Salusbury. He leaned towards the conclusion that Salusbury was a pseudonym, and that whoever he was, he was most likely to have been a Jesuit in hiding in England. He put down all the known facts, which were very few, about Salusbury. It was not known where he was born, where he had died, whether he was married, whether he had any children, and when he had died was not even known.

And thus it rested until one day, in a bookshop in New York called the Scientific Book Services, a shop

which specialized in cripples. . . . The man who ran it, Sam Orlinick, was really a musicologist, and he knew a great deal about the literature of music and had a very good stock. But he also had accumulated over the years a large stock of early science books. He didn't care whether they were perfect, whether they were complete or not. He very righfully gave them a home on his shelves, priced them so that anyone who wanted a copy that wasn't perfect could find it for very little. In wandering around, I picked up off his shelf a copy of Salusbury's Mathematical Translations, volume one. It was a very thin paper copy, and it had been rebound, and it had belonged once to Augustus De Morgan, a man who wrote A Budget of Paradoxes. And so, in spite of the fact that it was rather worn, and the title page was ragged on the fore-edges, I bought it. Much to my surprise, when I brought it back to Los Angeles and started to look through it, I found a complete errata sheet.

I called up Stillman Drake in San Francisco, and he hurried down. He immediately recognized that all of the errors for which Salusbury had been blamed by Santillana were actually corrected in this errata sheet. There was no other known copy that had that errata sheet except this one, but it was the vindication for Drake of his faith in the correctness of Salusbury. It provided proof that it

was not Salusbury but the printer who had introduced these errors, and that Salusbury had corrected them, but the printer apparently had only put this errata sheet into a very few copies. So, of course, Drake was exalted. He offered me not only his own copy of the regular edition of the 1665 Salusbury volume one but a number of other books to make the trade even, because he knew I knew that this was a unique copy. And on the basis of that, he promised another "Galileo Gleanings" in Isis in which he expounded on this contention of his that Giorgio di Santillana had been wrong in blaming Salusbury for the errors. It was a great coup for him. As nearly always happens when a rarity turns up, within a year or two, other copies of Salusbury's Mathematical Collections turned up with the same errata sheet. But none have turned up since.

This, of course, made me feel that I could be a participant in the discovery of anything else new that might be found about Salusbury. In the year 1955, late one night, I found myself unable to go to sleep, and I started to read an article in the Book Collector about Lord [Edward Hyde] Clarendon as a book collector. Now, Clarendon is considered the dullest writer in the English language; his History of the Rebellion has been offered to condemned criminals as a choice between reading it and

being hung, and I understand they preferred hanging. [laughter] So I was reading this with very little attention, hoping that I would drop off to sleep, when suddenly there popped up before me a statement that went something like this: "I found Thomas Salusbury cataloging the library of my Lord Dorchester." And then it referred in a footnote to HA 10066, or something like that, and I knew that HA meant Hastings Abbey papers, and that this was the entry number of the paper from which the author, P.H. Hardacre, was quoting. I remembered this because a bookseller's mind accumulates a lot of rubbish. I also remembered that the Hastings Abbey papers were at the Huntington Library, so I didn't sleep the rest of the night, and the next morning I called up a friend in the manuscript department and said, "Would you mind taking a look and telling me how many letters of Thomas Salusbury you have listed in the Hastings Abbey papers?" And in a while he called back. He said, "I think we've got thirteen letters of Salusbury." You can imagine how quickly I rushed out there. Sure enough, there were thirteen letters in his handwriting written to the Earl of Huntington, who was a very young man at that time, and all signed "Thomas Salusbury, your humble servant." These letters revealed a great deal more than had ever been known before about Salusbury: who his wife was, what his coat of arms were,

when they were married, the fact that he had two daughters, and the fact that he was a translator particularly proficient in Italian; that he wrote a regular newsletter to the Earl of Huntington, who was a very young man at the time, in order that the earl might know what was going on in the world. From the related records in the collection I was able to determine when he had died and that he had died of the plague. This was a considerable coup, and I quickly reported to Stillman Drake, and suggested he publish it. He said, "No, you have the right to publish that as your own discovery." He encouraged me to do so, read the manuscript, corrected it. I submitted it to Isis, where it was published in December 1959, under the title of "Thomas Salusbury Discovered." I got a great credit out of having tried to find a way to fall asleep.

Drake and I went to Italy in June of 1964. It was the first time he had gone to Italy, and it was a great experience for him. And on the way over, we went to the auction of the books of E. de C. Andrade. Andrade had been a sort of a secretary of the Royal Society. He had collected a notable library of classics in the history of science, and in his library was one of the seven known copies of volume two of Salusbury's Mathematical Collections. It was the only copy left out of captivity; all the other copies are in university libraries, or in places

like the British Museum and will never again be offered for sale. I had a customer in Santa Barbara, Joseph Halle Schaffner, who had commissioned me to bid. There were two days of sales. On the first day I discovered that the bids he had given me were not good enough; they couldn't hold up against the new rise in prices that had taken place in the world of scientific-book collecting. And the leading buyer, the bull of the market there, was a man by the name of Bert Marley, manager of Dawsons of Pall Mall. So I cabled back to Joe Schaffner in Santa Barbara and said, "I must tell you that you're not going to get any books unless you raise your bids." And Warren Howell, who was sort of my anchorman back in San Francisco, called Schaffner. Between the two of them, they concocted the idea of calling me back and saying, "Triple all bids." So on the next day I had one of those great moments which every bookman dreams of: I sat in Sotheby's rooms and bought every book I wanted or made the competition pay dearly for it. After a while, they discovered that it wasn't really smart to try and go against me because I might drop it on them at a pretty heavy price. I could afford to pay high if I wanted the book very much; or if they felt that they could pay too much more than I could, then I would let them have it. After a while, the leading competitors decided they weren't going to draw my blood. [laughter] Just before volume two of Salusbury's

Mathematical Collections came up, Drake said to me, "I have commissioned Marley of Dawsons to bid up to 1,500 pounds for this book." I said, "In that case I will stay out of the bidding until it passes that figure. But if Marley does not get it at any price up to 1,500 pounds I will step in." The bidding went on, and I stepped in and bought it for 3,000 pounds. Then I told him Mr. Schaffner had authorized me to turn the book over to Drake for his use as long as he wanted it.

TAPE NUMBER: XIV, SIDE ONE

JUNE 27, 1978

GARDNER: Tonight we're going to discuss a monumental collection that you have just dealt with.

ZEITLIN: To begin with, I think I should tell something about Mr. Robert Honeyman and the formation of the Honeyman collection and my previous associations with him. While I had known of Robert Honeyman in a very slight way for many years and he had known of me, it was not until about June of 1955 that I actually got to meet him, and it is to Warren Howell that I owe a great debt for having introduced me. Early in 1955, I had bought one of the Herbert Evans collections of books on the history of science. It was a very outstanding collection containing many of the classics. Herbert Evans was certainly the most prodigious of all collectors in the history of science in this country. His first collecting commenced somewhere in the 1930s. Early in 1942, as well as I can remember, he had formed a collection of outstanding classics in the history of science. He was a famous endocrinologist and physiologist and was professor of anatomy and physiology at the University of California at Berkeley. He had a large laboratory assigned to him in the Life Sciences Building there. Evans was known for

having made a number of important contributions to endocrinology. To begin with, he had done the first dissection of the thyroid and the parathyroid for [William Stewart] Halsted at Johns Hopkins. As a result of this dissection, Halsted radically changed his operation for removal of the thyroid, and he decided that it was necessary to leave part of the thyroid in the patient rather than to extirpate all of it. It was found that removal of the entire thyroid and parathyroid had a bad consequence, and that many of the patients either died or suffered very bad results. But with the dissection by Evans and the revision of the operation, Halsted was able to perform a successful removal of the thyroid and opened a whole new area of endocrine surgery. Dr. Evans had also isolated vitamin E. He had developed a test which was known as Evans blue, which gave a quick means of determining if the fetus in the process of formation was not developing normally, and that resulted in the introduction of certain techniques which prevented abnormal births in many cases. He was a giant of a man physically, and he was a prodigiously active man in many departments. He was also a naive and childlike man in some ways, and in other ways he was a man full of guile and temperament, and could sometimes behave in a rather disturbing manner. One of his great passions was the history of science, and he had succeeded in developing a collection

which represented the first editions of the classics in all departments of the history of science. He had canvassed the leading authorities in the different fields--such as physiology, anatomy, geology, physics, optics, astronomy, mathematics--and through their consensus had developed a list of what they considered the greatest books. He then set about collecting them. He collected with tremendous zeal and abandon, so that he often exceeded his income and bought many rare books for which he couldn't pay, and then found himself being threatened by his creditors; as a result of that, he had to sell a number of collections. In all, he formed about eight collections; I have written a complete history of these, or at least tabulated them, in an article that I did for Isis shortly after Herbert Evans's death.

In 1942, he had been divorced from his first wife for some time, and his collection had become part of his settlement with his wife. It was stored in the Life Sciences Building in Herbert Evans's office at the University of California at Berkeley. The first Mrs. Evans became ill; she had to come under the protection of a conservator. She needed money, and it was decided to sell that collection through the courts. Warren Howell and I decided to attempt to purchase this, and I in turn brought this collection to the attention of

Lessing Rosenwald. Lessing Rosenwald first got in touch with the Librarian of Congress and asked him if he would like to have this as a gift, and the librarian made a mistake very often made by librarians: they made a check of their own collection and determined that they had about two-thirds of the books in the collection and therefore decided not to accept it. What they failed to take into consideration was that the one-third that they lacked were the greatest and rarest of the books, and they would have been very wise to accept the collection and then discard the poorer copies of what they had in duplicate.

When the Library of Congress declined the collection, Lessing Rosenwald decided to give it to the Institute for Advanced Study, and, as well as I can remember, he gave us a bid of $36,000 to execute at the auction--at the court sale, I should say, because it wasn't exactly an auction. We were disturbed for a while, because Herbert Evans in San Francisco had heard about the collection being put up, and we feared that he might come into the court and make an offer which was greater than ours. Warren Howell tried to prevent Evans from having access to the inventory, but I said there's no way legally that we can prevent him from having access to the inventory, and it would actually be to our advantage to have him

appear as a competitive bidder, so that there would be no question of collusion or any other improper procedures. What finally happened is that he appeared in court at the time of the court sale but made no bid, and it fell into our hands and was purchased by us for Mr. Rosenwald. And it was in '55 that I went to Princeton, unpacked the collection, met J. Robert Oppenheimer, and had a very good opportunity to become well acquainted with him. This was one of the finest of the Evans collections. In the meantime, Evans had started to form another collection, so that early in 1955 he was personally heavily in debt and needed to sell. I flew up to Berkeley, visited him, and made him an offer. I presented him with a check of $5,000 to prove my serious intent. He in turn discussed it with his wife and the bank to whom he owed a great deal of money that he'd borrowed in order to form the collection, and in a few days, I was informed that he would accept our proposal. Now, I must say that I didn't have the $27,000 which I offered him for the collection. I had, in fact, no money at all. [laughter] But a good friend, John Valentine, of whom I have spoken before, came forward with $9,000 of the money. And on the basis of that loan of $9,000, I borrowed an additional $18,000 from Justin Turner and was able to close the deal.

GARDNER: Now, what year was this?

ZEITLIN: That was in 1955. Later on, Dave Randall of Scribner's said to me, "Jake, how did you happen to buy this collection when so many other booksellers were all after it? And I had said to Dr. Evans, 'Dr. Evans, if you're ever ready to sell the collection, please let me know!'" (I'm quoting Dave.) And I answered Dave, "Well, it's very simple. I offered him money." [laughter] In other words, I came to him with a specific proposition and a check in hand.

Evans accepted my offer. I bought the collection. I tried to sell it to a number of people as a collection, including UCLA, and none of them would consider buying it. My price was $55,000, and after they all refused it--including a very serious group, the Friends of UCLA Medical School--I decided there was no course left to me but to break it up. The majority of the geology books went to Everette [L.] De Golyer in Dallas, and became part of the collection which he later gave to the University of Oklahoma. I printed two catalogs, and I wish I had those books now. When I look at the prices I asked, they are so pathetically small compared to the prices these books have brought now. For instance, I sold a first edition of Copernicus to Sam Barchas for $2,000 and a first edition of Newton's [Philosophiae Naturalis] Principia [Mathematica] for $750. The latest prices for Copernicus that I got was $35,000,

and for Newton's Principia, I recently offered a copy for sale for $15,000, and it's under reserve now.

Well, I had all these beautiful early books in the history of science, and I had heard that Mr. Honeyman was collecting. So I asked Warren Howell one day, when he came in my place, if he would tell Mr. Honeyman about these and if Mr. Honeyman would give me an appointment to come out and see him. I think it was May or June of 1955 that I went to see Mr. Honeyman on his beautiful ranch at San Juan Capistrano. We traveled up the hill on a winding road. The road was covered with lavender petals falling from the blooming jacaranda trees, which stretched for about a quarter of a mile along the road, and came to his house at the top of the hill. He took me into his basement where he had his collection on the history of science. Mr. Honeyman was very affable, very warm, as he showed me his books. We talked about them, and I was so enthusiastic, and I started darting from shelf to shelf, taking books out and talking about them and expressing my great pleasure in having found such a marvelous collection. He in turn became more excited as we talked, and he bought a few books. Finally he said, "Now, look here, I've only got a fair collection now, but I have a list of desiderata, and I would like to make this a really good collection. So why don't you go ahead

and bring to my attention any of the great books in the history of science that come your way, and I will give you my list of wants, and we'll see what we can do." And thus began a wonderful working relationship, which, for me, was immensely valuable, because I could go to the auctions and the booksellers all over the world with Mr. Honeyman's list and ask them what they had in the way of important items in the history of science. And if he [Honeyman] didn't have it, I was in a position to say, "We'll take it." So it was really a wonderful thing for me; it gave me great prestige.

In 1958, he let me go to the sale of the Herschel books in London, and I bought not only a great many of the important books of the library of Wilhelm Herschel (Friedrich Wilhelm Herschel), but also a number of the instruments of the Herschel Observatory at Slough. I gave most of the instruments to Greenwich, and it was at very little expense that I got a great deal of credit and kudos. Because, during the sale, the instruments were coming up, and they were being sold for four, five, seven, and ten pounds, and I thought this was terrible and I just kept going on bidding. When I saw what I bought, this big mass of stuff, I couldn't conceive of how I could possibly send them back. So I said to Frank Maggs, who was representing me at the sale and beside whom I sat,

"Tell the people at the Greenwich Maritime Museum that they can have any of these if they'd like. I'd be glad to give them." So they picked out a considerable number of the instruments and added them to their collection. As a result, I was invited to spend a day at Greenwich and was received by the director. I was asked to sign the great book. I was given the VIP tour of the exhibitions, and lunch in the great painted hall. I was also interviewed for television. [laughter] So the few pounds that I spent on the instruments I gave them was very little in return for the great pleasure I had and the great consideration I was shown. Incidentally, I took some snapshots with a cheap camera that I had--of Frank Maggs and Frank Carr, the director of Greenwich, standing in front of the *Cutty Sark*, which had been set up on blocks and restored at Greenwich. Later, when Frank Maggs died, the only good photograph that the family had of Frank Maggs to use in some memorial that was published was the one I had taken there of him standing in front of the *Cutty Sark*.

It gave me a great deal of pleasure and a great deal of prestige to be able to go to these auctions, and later I, in addition, was able to represent Joseph Halle Schaffner in the same way and go to the Andrade sale, where I bought a number of important books for Mr. Schaffner,

and also some books for Mr. Honeyman.

GARDNER: Let me interrupt you here and just ask a question or two about Mr. Honeyman. First of all, where did his wealth originate?

ZEITLIN: Well, Mr. Honeyman's father was an attorney in New York City. They, the Honeymans, go back a long way in American history; in fact, one member of the family--John Honeyman, who was a butcher--was a secret agent for Washington, and he was the man who was responsible for the defeat of the British at the Battle of Trenton. Bob Honeyman also had married Marian Stewart, who had inherited a substantial fortune. She was the daughter of the Stewart who founded one of the largest automobile accessory manufacturing firms, Stewart Magneto, and a lot of other things. Bob Honeyman and Marian Stewart were married, I think, in 1927, and they rented an apartment in New York in which they spent their first several years. It happened to be the apartment of a man who was a great collector of books and autographs, Adrian [Hoffman] Joline. So they found themselves in this apartment, surrounded by rare books and autographs, and this inspired Mr. Honeyman to start collecting. He didn't start collecting science books, although he had graduated from Lehigh as a metallurgical engineer. His grandfather had been a graduate of Lehigh, his father was a graduate of Lehigh, Bob was a

graduate of Lehigh, and his son was a graduate of Lehigh. Over the years, Bob collected many rare books and manuscripts, including James Fenimore Cooper, Washington Irving, Stephen Crane, Walt Whitman. And all of these literary firsts which he collected, with few exceptions, he gave to Lehigh. Over the years it was his intention to give his entire collection to Lehigh. Early in the thirties, Bob Honeyman came across some catalogs of Henry Sothern in London, and these were catalogs of early science books which were prepared by a man named Henry Zeitlinger. Henry Zeitlinger sat down there in that cold basement and wrote descriptions and notes of these wonderful early science books at a time when nobody else was paying much attention to them in England, and he got out catalogs which have now become important reference works on the history of science. There were many great books there--presentations, copies of books by [Johannes] Kepler and [Johannes] Hevelius, first editions of Galileo, first editions of Copernicus's De Revolutionibus for thirty pounds, first edition of Newton's Principia for thirty pounds. Over the years he accumulated a great many of the best books that were offered in Henry Sothern's catalogs. He was a very systematic man, and one of the great advantages that I had when it came to determining its cost, was that he had a complete record of every book--where he had

bought it, when he had bought it, and how much he'd paid for it. Mr. Honeyman is a very imaginative man, also a very astute man, and a very good businessman. He had a seat on the New York Stock Exchange at the time of the Depression, and he survived the Depression--which is something very few men who held seats on the New York Stock Exchange did. He managed the properties, the funds, of both himself and Marian with great judgment; and, over the years, they accumulated a very large fortune.

As I say, he gave a great many fine books to Lehigh, and he continued, up until a very short time ago, to plan that his books were all going to be given to Lehigh. And they would have been given to Lehigh if the administration of Lehigh hadn't been very stupid. [laugher] A couple of years ago, I guess it was, somebody at Lehigh got in touch with him and said, "Mr. Honeyman, you gave us a set of the photographs of [Eadweard] Muybridge. We need to pay for a parking lot here. It will take about $30,000, which is what we've been offered for this set of Muybridge. May we sell it?" And you can imagine what effect that had on him.

GARDNER: Oh, no. . . .

ZEITLIN: He said, "I am not interested in giving them money. If I'd wanted to give them money, I would have given them money. I have given them some." They had

given him an honorary degree. He had already won a Phi Beta Kappa. They had honored him in many ways, but the idea that the books he had spent years collecting, that really had meant more to him than anything else, might be broken up and sold by the university in order to pay [for] parking lots and things like that destroyed all that dream. So he cooled off substantially.

In the meantime, I had arranged one exhibition of books from his collection having to do with the size and shape of the earth. That exhibition was held at UCLA, and Dr. Seymour Chapin at L.A. State had prepared the catalog notes. Then, during the Copernicus year, Mr. Honeyman lent Lehigh the best things he had concerning the predecessors of Copernicus, the important works of Copernicus and his contemporaries, and all of the works right up to the early nineteenth century which had in one way or another contributed toward the establishment of Copernicanism, and the proof of it as a valid cosmological theory. Mr. Honeyman not only bought books, but he bought manuscripts. From time to time, I would bring people who were authorities in the history of science out to see the collections. I brought Stillman Drake out once, and it was Stillman, to some extent, who inspired Mr. Honeyman to concentrate on manuscripts. From the time of Stillman Drake's visit, Mr. Honeyman was very

receptive to any good scientific manuscript, so that he formed a collection of approximately 150 manuscripts from the tenth century into the nineteenth century of important works or original manuscripts by important scientists. The collection was moved several times. He bought a house in Rye, New York, and he shipped it there, and then he shipped it back. He shipped it into New York City, and then, finally, he brought it back to California. He built a special fireproof building on the ranch, with air conditioning, and temperature and humidity controls, and that was where the collection was housed. He took great pride in having all the books put into leather slipcases, and he took great pleasure in having the visits of really qualified people who weren't just curiosity seekers. Among others that I brought out to visit him was Dr. Ynez O'Neill on the faculty at UCLA.

Well, when Mr. Honeyman's enthusiasm for giving the collection to Lehigh cooled, he started to cast about for what else to do with it, and one day I learned. . . . Well, I must say, first of all, that I had taken Franklin Murphy out there, that I had taken John Burke, I had taken Robert Vosper, I had taken Lynn White out there and Rupert Hall and Marie Boaz when they were here--all with the idea of convincing Mr. Honeyman of the interest of UCLA in the collection. And then one day about two years ago I heard

suddenly that he had said to Ynez O'Neill, "Tell the people of UCLA that I will deposit the collection there with the proviso that it will become their property upon my demise. Now, you go ahead and find me an attorney who will represent me, and you tell UCLA to discuss this matter and come up with a proposal." I must say this was--it was not until many months afterward, approximately six months after that, Ynez O'Neill or the people at UCLA told me anything about this. And none of them actually told me--it was Franklin Murphy.

GARDNER: This was two years ago, you say?

ZEITLIN: Yes, about two years ago. And then suddenly I heard from Honeyman that he was very disappointed that the people at UCLA had not shown any proper interest, they had not come back to him with any proposal, and that he was damned tired of this thing. And then I called up the people at UCLA, and I said, "Look, if you want this collection, you'd better get busy." Well, there were several things that went wrong. Ynez O'Neill had been sick for about three months, seriously ill. The attorney representing Mr. Honeyman had gone off on a trip and had let the matter slide. And the people at UCLA had been told by this attorney that they were under no circumstances to communicate directly with Mr. Honeyman. And so they had just sat there and done nothing. Now, if I had been told

about this, I would have put certain things in motion. If Larry Powell had been told and known about it at the time when he was the librarian, he would have clinched this thing. And if Franklin Murphy had been the chancellor still, he would have clinched it, because it was some years earlier that I got Franklin Murphy to write a letter outlining what UCLA would do if Mr. Honeyman gave the collection to UCLA. When Franklin Murphy left, the people at UCLA--no one there (certainly not [Chancellor] Young) was imaginative enough to carry it forward. When [C.D.] O'Malley died, there really wasn't anybody who had the right kind of drive. And with the departure previously of Larry Powell, what UCLA lacked was the kind of person that could keep the contact up with Honeyman, show their enthusiasm.

Finally, Mrs. Honeyman said, "We're not going to give that collection to UCLA because they don't appreciate it." So I called up the chancellor's office, I called up Page Ackerman, and they called a meeting of all the deans and the people. They invited me. And then they said, "What can we do?" And I said, "I'll do my damnedest, but I'm afraid that it's like a love affair: it's cooled." But I said, "Sit down and write a good letter to Mr. Honeyman. I'll take it out and I'll go and see him." I went out to see him, and I asked him and Mrs. Honeyman to

reconsider, and then I asked him if they would let me bring Ynez O'Neill out. So Ynez and I went out and tried to revive this thing, but the final answer was no.

Then Mr. Honeyman said [to me], "I want you to do an appraisal of this." And for a number of months during the latter part of 1976, Josephine and I went out weekends and sometimes several days in the week and did a systematic listing of every book in the collection. Then I enlisted the help of Harold Graves, who I think is the most dependable appraiser in this country today. He was formerly the head of Scribner's, had handled a great many books in the sciences, and had sold a good many of them to Mr. Honeyman. And I must pause here to say that I wasn't the only one who sold books to Mr. Honeyman over these years. When he and I met in London in 1956, I believe, I introduced him to Dr. Ernst Weil. We went to Maggs Brothers together. He bought a great many books from Dave Randall at Scribner's, because he and Randall had known each other for many, many years, and I think that Randall had also gone to Lehigh. He bought books from. . . . Well, I'm sorry, I just can't remember the names, but he bought books from a great many other dealers besides myself, and, of course, continued to buy from the catalogs of Henry Sothern. But he bought from Quaritch, he bought from Maggs, and he bought--the man I

was thinking about was Goldschmidt; he bought a great many important books from Goldschmidt. He bought a lot of important science books from Warren Howell. Warren Howell [and I] worked together very closely and very amiably, and often we would go and buy books either jointly, or he would buy some and I would buy some.

Over the years, the collection grew. Mr. Honeyman, in the meantime, continued to give some of his books to Lehigh; he gave them all of his Darwin collection. Finally, at the end of 1976 or early in 1977, Graves and I completed the inventory of his library, which consisted primarily of works in the history of science but also contained a few very choice works in English literature and a considerable number of books on Roman archaeology and other classical archaeology. And then he said, "Well, I think I'll sell this collection." And I said, "Would you let me be your agent?" And he said, "Well, that all depends--how much do you want?" And I said, "I will do it for 5 percent." The inventory which we prepared and the appraisal that went with it brought the value of the collection up to over $5 million, and this was a conservative figure, because we had no intention, and neither did Mr. Honeyman, of inflating the value. He wanted to have a conservative market valuation on this library, and that's exactly what Graves and I tried to do. Early in 1977, I prepared a

summary of the library in which I told something about the collection, including the fact that it was an assembly of collections, made up of whole collections of books, such as the Struve collection of twentieth-century astronomy, the Jacobsohn collection of nineteenth- and twentieth-century science, and a very significant collection of original contributions by [Otto] Hahn, [Ernest Orlando] Lawrence, [Lise] Meitner, [Enrico] Fermi--all of the important people who had contributed to the discovery of nuclear fission--as well as the literary items, which included the first edition of The Imitation of Christ, The Confessions of St. Augustine, the first four folios of Shakespeare, large paper editions of Robinson Crusoe, a very fine first of Paradise Lost, Gulliver's Travels, and so on. And I listed some of the outstanding books in the various fields, such as archaeology, nuclear fission, astronomy, mathematics. Among other things that Mr. Honeyman had specialized in was books of exchange; that is, the little handbooks that the people who exchange money at the fairs and in the markets in Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth and eighteenth century had beside them in order to determine the comparative value of different national coinages. These have become very scarce, because from year to year they were discarded; but they're the best key to the values at different times of the coinages

of different countries. He had decided that this would be something very desirable to collect, and he accumulated a number of these. There was an outstanding collection of early arithmetics, beginning with the first printed arithmetic and other significant arithmetics. His collection could only be rivaled by the collection at Columbia University, which had been formed by Dr. Smith many years ago; this was indeed a distinguished collection in itself. In addition, he had attempted to collect every edition of Euclid from the first until the end of the seventeenth century; and at the time that the collection was sold, I think he lacked only about five of the editions of Euclid which had been printed during that time. The classics which were included in the collection were far greater than in any other single private collection that I knew of. The Horblit Collection could have been lost in one corner of the Huntington Library. Bern Dibner's collection was larger in the numbers of books, but in terms of the quality of the important individual items and the rarity, I don't think Dibner could approach Honeyman. He had a first edition of [William] Harvey's _de Motu Cordis_, and he had the 1472 edition of Valturius's _De Re Militare_, the greatest book in the history of military engineering. He had first editions of [Andreas] Vesalius and one of the few copies, probably the only copy in the United States,

of [Dimitri Ivanovich] Mendelejeff's work in which he set forth the periodic tables--things which simply . . . if you find one of them in one collection, you will not find the others. So that his collection is certainly the greatest any private individual ever formed.

TAPE NUMBER: XIV, SIDE TWO

JUNE 27, 1978

ZEITLIN: It was early in 1978 that Mr. Honeyman finally gave me a written authorization to represent him. In the meantime, I had talked to the people at the University of Arizona. Larry Powell and Dr. [John Paul] Schaefer came out to visit Mr. Honeyman. Honeyman actually made a trip to Tucson; they showed him their new library and impressed him immensely. And one of the reasons, really, why I feel that I would rather not have this interview made available is because Mr. Honeyman wrote into his will a proviso that if he should die before he had otherwise disposed of the collection, the collection should go as a gift to the University of Arizona. He was very much impressed by the enthusiasm of Powell and of Schaefer, and he also was impressed by the new library and the arrangements they had made for the care of special collections, including temperature and humidity control. Finally, early in 1978 . . . [aside conversation] I started approaching various people in 1977, and one of the first people I approached was Peter Wilson, the head of Sotheby's.

GARDNER: What is the date on that?

ZEITLIN: Well, the first correspondence that I have isn't here, but early in 1977 I brought Peter Wilson out to

see Mr. Honeyman. I had previously attempted to interest the University of Toronto. I had written letters to a number of other places and got no favorable response. The amount was staggering to most people. Finally I said to Mr. Honeyman, "Would you object to meeting the president of Sotheby's and getting their idea of what they'd like to do about the collection?" He said no, so I brought Peter Wilson out; I think it must have been in January of 1977. Then in March he came back with Lord John Kerr, the head of their book department. Later that month, Lord John Kerr wrote a letter of intent in which Sotheby Parke Bernet would purchase the Honeyman library for $3.8 million, payable in various installments over a period of two years, and also telling me that they had made arrangements to send a representative from London, their rare-book man, John Collins, over to go into the collection in more detail. So all of this was subject to John Collins coming over and verifying Lord John Kerr's views as to the value and completeness of the library. Of course, they were very enthusiastic, and the idea of making a series of sales of the Honeyman collection appealed to them greatly. There followed a continued series of visits and discussions. Peter Wilson came back, and finally in early 1978, John Collins did come over, and he looked over the collection, was very

enthusiastic, and reported back to them. (No, this was late 1977, somewhere in November, I think, of 1977.) And another proposal was made for a total value of $4 million, with 6 percent interest, and this was to be in the term of a series of irrevocable letters of credit. Well, it was not until January 1978 that I did receive a letter of authorization from the Honeymans agreeing to pay me my commission (all my work previously was just on the basis of a mutual understanding of intent). And then Peter Wilson, in March of 1978, came back again and drew up two proposals: one proposal in which they wished to undertake to sell the collection on commission from Mr. Honeyman; and the other in which they undertook, through some principal other than Sotheby's themselves, to buy it. I advised Mr. Honeyman not to consign this collection to auction for many reasons--not only because you couldn't tell what the proceeds might be in the end, but also because books have a way of disappearing when they go to auction: autograph letters and manuscripts cannot be guarded against pilfering, and I just didn't want to see all those complications develop. In March, Mr. Honeyman agreed in principle to the price of $4 million. Then started some very knotty complications. First of all, the principal did not want to pay interest on $4 million, so it was agreed that the purchase price

would be $4 million less the interest on the balance-- I mean, to include the interest on the balance of the payments. So that in the end, the total price paid to Mr. Honeyman would be $4 million. This was very complicated. And the terms of the sale were to be that he would receive in April of 1978 $750,000, and then not until September 30, 1979, would he receive $1,625,000, and from then on, until 1981, the balance. However, this was to be paid in the form of irrevocable letters of credit drawn on the Morgan Guaranty Bank, and we then learned that letters of credit given to the seller within the year of the sale constituted a claim on the part of the Internal Revenue [Service] for the capital gains tax on the entire sale, which meant that Mr. Honeyman would be putting out more money in the first year than he would be taking in. Then started the hassles, and they continued. Finally, on March 7, 1978, I did receive a proper agreement from the Honeymans, stating the terms of my commission, and I was legally authorized. At that time Sotheby's offered me an additional 2 percent finder's fee, which would have been very nice. And I went to Mr. Honeyman and said, "Do you have any objection if it's not going to be out of your pocket?" And he said no. So I stood to gain not only 5 percent on the sale but 2 percent from the purchaser as well. And so it stood for

a while. About that time, Warren Howell decided to see if he couldn't get Stanford to buy the collection. So Stanford got into the act.

GARDNER: Was this now separate from you?

ZEITLIN: No, it was through me. Warren and I agreed to share the commission, and, of course, I would have preferred to see the collection stay in California. So Warren Howell put on a big drive, and there were many visits back and forth, but I'm sorry to say that they could not get together enough money. Wallace Sterling came up. All of their big officials came up. They made all kinds of proposals, but the amount of cash which they proposed to put up was not enough. I think if they had come forward with $2 million cash, Mr. Honeyman would have donated the rest of the value.

Then along came the Huntington Library; Dan Woodward called me in great agitation and said, "Is there any way that we can have an opportunity to buy this?" And I said, "Yes. I know Mr. Honeyman would be glad to have a visit from you. He would be glad to give you an opportunity. He would prefer to see it stay in California." So I took Cary Bliss and Dan Woodward out there, and we spent a day visiting and seeing the collection. And Dan Woodward then went to a foundation and tried to get money, and I must say he tried very hard. I stalled the negotiations

with Sotheby, because I, too, would rather have made less commission and seen the collection stay here. But in the end, Woodward simply couldn't get any foundation or any of the other sources that he had to come up with the money, and he very tearfully (and I must say that I joined him) informed us that it couldn't be done.

So we resumed our negotiations with Sotheby's, and finally I called Mr. Peter Wilson in London, and, in turn, I was told to talk to John Marion in New York. I said, "We have got other people interested. There are some institutions that would like the collection and have come forward with offers." (In fact, Stanford did finally come up to a million and a half.) "So if you want this collection, you had better do something firm." Finally I received a cable from John Marion on March 22, in which he said that they were confirming that they were agreed to purchase the Honeyman collection and that they were commencing the paperwork, and I was asked to extend the date during which they could carry this out (this is, mind you, 1978) until May 1st. And then started more correspondence concerning the terms of payment and the necessity for the first payments to be large enough to cover the capital gains tax. And there was very much discussion of the terms, and so on. On April 11, 1978, Mr. Marion suggested a down payment of $1,750,000, with $750,000 to

follow within the year and the balance to be paid over a period of three years.

GARDNER: Still with the $4 million.

ZEITLIN: Four million. In April of 1978, we received from a Mr. [John] Ames, the attorney for Sotheby's, a proposed contract. This was drawn up by a Wall Street lawyer who had no idea of what libraries consist of and how you go about dealing with them. He filled it with impossible terms. He called me, and I discussed it with him, and I said, "You cannot do it this way."

GARDNER: What were some of the things?

ZEITLIN: Well, he wanted, first of all, that Sotheby's were not the purchasers but agents for an unnamed purchaser and were to be relieved of all liability. The second thing is that the sale was to be made FOB London, and the title was to be given there; that there was to be no contract until the completion of delivery, which meant that we would be checking the books, packing them, and shipping them without any signed contract in the hands of Mr. Honeyman; also that Mr. Honeyman was to guarantee completeness of every item in the collection and was to guarantee the collation, and they were all in absolutely flawless condition. The seller was to indemnify them against all loss, liability, damage expenses which may be incurred, and so on, and full of all kinds of legalese. That hassle continued until, finally,

I set forth the terms that Mr. Honeyman wanted, which were that the sale should be FOB the premises of the seller and that, in order to avoid any liability for sales tax, the shipment was to be made through a broker, and they were not to get possession of it until delivery in London. The title they could have when they paid for the collection, but not possession. Also, no bill of sale would be executed before completion of all payments, and authenticity was at the risk of the buyer, who has previously inspected the collection and accepts it as is without warranty by seller. The agent must accept liability to the seller, and all brokerage fees and other fees were to be paid by the buyer.

Finally it looked as if the whole thing was going to fall through because of this lawyer in New York, and Mr. Honeyman said, "To hell with them. I'll give it away. I don't give a damn!" [laughter] So I called John Marion and said, "John, it looks like we're not going to have any deal. I think you'd better get in touch with Peter Wilson in London, and I'm going to call him tonight. A few other people want that collection. You'd better get that lawyer off this thing and tell him that we won't accept those terms." Well, I called London, and the next thing, I got a call from John Marion, saying, "If you will waive your fee to Sotheby's, Sotheby's is prepared to offer

Mr. Honeyman $4 million cash for the collection. Do you think he would be interested in that?" Well, Mr. Honeyman said, "There's about $24,000 worth of books there that I want to keep, and we can take that off. But," he said, "I'll go for that. Let them send us a new contract." So a new contract came, and they had written into it things that were not in the first contract. And there had to be more negotiations back and forth, and it looked like it was going to die a second time. So I again called London. I got ahold of Peregrine Pollen, the second-in-command of the international company, and explained things and said, "Now, if you want this collection, you are simply going to have to explain to this lawyer that there are some things that can't be done. If you and Mr. Honeyman were face to face, I don't think you'd have any trouble at all. This lawyer's trying to earn his money, and I'm sure that he means well, but these are conditions that simply can't work in this case." Finally, it looked like the thing was going to fall through again, because they wanted Mr. Honeyman to sign a contract agreeing that the books could be checked, packed, and delivered within fifteen days. And I said, "I won't let Mr. Honeyman sign an agreement like that, because your man's got to come over there. We've got to check through 5,000 books. They have to be packed, and packed in such a way that they will arrive safely. We've got to make

all kinds of arrangements, and I don't want any time limit. You can be sure that we will act as quickly as possible, because he's [as] eager to get his money as you are to get the books. There's one thing he wants. He wants to check before the shipment leaves his grounds." So, that was all written into a contract. Oh, there were other factors. They wanted Mr. Honeyman to guarantee title on all books in perpetuity, that any books that were in the collection--if anybody should ever claim that they had been illegally removed or illegally come by, that they were still the property of some claimant; that Mr. Honeyman was to guarantee the full amount of the loss, according to the value in the inventory. I succeeded in arranging a compromise so that Mr. Honeyman agreed to guarantee title but nothing else for two years, and that he was to guarantee the value up to 80 percent, and also that their representative was to come here and check the books with me, and that if there were anything missing, they were to accept books of equal value which had not been valued in the inventory for a value agreed upon between their representative and mine. Well, this almost brought things to a halt again. And again I called London at three o'clock in the morning. Finally the lawyers in New York threw up their hands and agreed to our terms, and their representative went out with the

contracts, and they were signed somewhere about the twenty-fifth of May. And before the first of May, John Collins, their representative in London, was here. Mr. Honeyman erected a magnificent canopy in front of the library. He provided carpenters and helpers to build boxes. Richard Tse, who is my right-hand man, undertook negotiations for the clearance through the brokerage houses, and we got a team of men. On the sixteenth of June, the entire collection was loaded onto a container, and the container was sealed, and it stood there at the ranch while the final agreements were signed. The bill of sale was signed by Mr. Honeyman, and then we discovered that Mr. Honeyman's notary was not in the office, so we had to wait another hour before we found the notary. [laughter] And upon the notary's appearance, the final agreements were signed. Everything was notarized, and John Marion, president of the local Sotheby Parke Bernet, delivered two checks--one to Mr. Honeyman and one to Mrs. Honeyman--for a total of $3,976,000. And the signal was given and the truck moved off. [laughter] Wednesday night the shipment left for New York, Thursday night it flew out of New York, and Friday morning it arrived in England at the airport. Mr. Honeyman and Mrs. Honeyman took their checks and sent them off by registered mail to Dallas, which is where they have their account. And last Monday morning, Mr. Honeyman called up and said,

"Jake, we're in business. Come out and get your commission check."

GARDNER: Terrific.

ZEITLIN: So Josephine and I drove out, and we received two checks--one-half from Mr. Honeyman, and one-half from Mrs. Honeyman--for a total of 5 percent of the sale price, and joyfully came home . . .

GARDNER: How wonderful.

ZEITLIN: . . . and finally drew an easy breath.

GARDNER: At long last, after two years! [laughter]

ZEITLIN: Yes, after two years. But I must say that Mr. Honeyman behaved in a very graceful manner; that both parties--both Sotheby's and Mr. Honeyman--had great confidence in me, and trusted me, and gave me a considerably free hand in conducting the negotiations. And also Mr. Honeyman wrote a letter, finally, to Peter Wilson expressing his satisfaction in the way that I handled it as negotiator; and the way that Richard Tse, who was in charge of the packing and shipping, handled it; and in the way that John Collins, their representative, and I arrived at an agreement which evened out all shortages and left the deal completely free to be concluded.

GARDNER: Sotheby's will have this up for sale, then, within the next two years, I assume.

ZEITLIN: Sotheby's will have started to catalog the books.

There will be, they told me, a total of nine sales, and they've asked me to do the foreword to the first catalog.

GARDNER: So the connection doesn't stop. [laughter] Now what's going to happen when . . .

ZEITLIN: . . . and when the books come up for sale . . .

GARDNER: . . . right, and collectors come to you . . .

ZEITLIN: . . . I'm going to be there bidding for some of my customers as well as myself, because I know more about the books in that collection than any other single person.

GARDNER: That's wonderful.

ZEITLIN: So, it hasn't stopped yet.

TAPE NUMBER: XV, SIDE ONE

SEPTEMBER 21, 1978

GARDNER: Okay, you said first of all you'd like to tell me a detective story.

ZEITLIN: Well, this is something that happened within the past couple of months, and I think it is especially interesting because it illustrates the advantage of having been in business a long time and having a wide range of contacts. I think it must have been a month ago, on a Tuesday morning, as well as I can recollect, Glen Dawson called me and said, "There's a man in here with two books that are very unusual and in your line, and I thought I ought to ask you about them. One of them is a first edition of Copernicus's _De Revolutionibus_, 1543, and the other is a first edition of Galileo's _Siderius Nuncius_, 1610." I said, "It's very unusual for two books of such rarity and importance to come up for sale at the same time. What does he want to do about them?" Glen said, "He's not sure he wants to sell them. He'd like to just see if I can give him an idea of value." And I said, "You think you can hold him there until I get over?" He said, "No. But," he said, "I'll try and urge him to come over and see you." I said, "Find out what you can from him, where he got them and so on, if he'll tell you."

After a while, Glen called back and said that he had not been able to get the man to wait; he also hadn't been able to get the man to say he'd come to see me. But he said the man had mentioned a lawyer in Providence, Rhode Island, and that the books had come from the estate of a relative in Providence. I said, "That's very interesting." He told Glen that he had been in the merchant marines and that he was staying somewhere near Riverside. And I said, "Well, that is even more interesting."

When Glen hung up, I said, "There's only one place in Providence that those books could have come from, and that is the library of a man by the name of Albert Lownes," who's a very old man, somewhere past eighty-five. He had started collecting books on the history of science very early, far ahead of most of the other collectors, and had built a great collection. I had been to see his library some ten years ago. He was a very courteous, very quiet, modest man, who lived in an old wooden house in Providence. He was a very important officer with one of the insurance companies there.

I called up Thomas M. Adams, who is the librarian of the John Carter Brown Library at Providence, and said, "Tom, what has happened to Albert Lownes?" He said, "He's a very sick man, and he's now in the hospital." I said, "There's a man out here offering two books that he says

came from Providence. I think you ought to go over to Lownes's house, if you can get in, and find out if these books are there." He said, "Well, his daughter is living there, so I'm sure I can get in."

I knew that Lownes had willed his books to Brown University; among them, a first edition of Audubon's Birds and a great many other important science classics. Tom went over and had a look, then called back and said, "We found an empty place on the shelf where the Copernicus should be, but we don't know exactly where the Galileo might have been." I said, "Well, I know that Lownes bought a very special copy some years ago from John Fleming and paid a record price for it. And I think it was a presentation copy." And he said, "We can't find the book. Albert is in too bad shape for us to talk to him." So I said, "I'll look into this further."

Then I called Glen again, and I said, "What did the man say his name was?" And he said, "Basche." Also he said he had sold some books to Jeremy Norman.

So I called Jeremy and said, "There's a man around here who's been trying to sell a Copernicus and a Galileo, and I understand he's sold you some books and offered you some others." And he said yes, and he said, "I bought a Camerarius De Sexu Plantarum from him." I said, "There are only two people in the United States

who have a Camerarius: one of them is Bern Dibner, and the other is Albert Lownes." And I said, "Did it occur to you that this man might be selling you some books from the Albert Lownes library?" He said, "No. Why do you think that?" I said, "Well, he refers to a lawyer in Providence." Jeremy said, "Yes, he gave me the lawyer's name for reference, but I didn't think I needed to call." He also said, "I bought the Camerarius from him." I said, "Didn't you buy something else?" He said, "Yes, I bought a couple of other things."

So I called Tom Adams in Providence again, and I said, "Tom, I think you've got an FBI case, because the value of the books is over $5,000 and they have crossed state lines." He said, "We've already alerted the police and the insurance company." And I said, "Well, you ought to see if they won't bring the FBI into it."

Within a couple of hours I got a call from a local FBI man asking me for information, and I referred him to Glen Dawson, and Glen gave them the information that he had. Then I referred them to Jeremy Norman. They called him, and by Friday they had the man in custody. He had taken twelve books in all.

GARDNER: How did he take them?

ZEITLIN: He was a male nurse, and he had been working at Albert Lownes's house. He had said, "Mr. Lownes,

tell me about your books." Lownes loved to talk, and this was an attentive young man, so he told him about his books. And the nurse said, "Mr. Lownes, which are the most valuable books in your library?" And Mr. Lownes told him. Of course, the Audubons were too big to carry away, but there were these other smaller books, and apparently when Lownes went to the hospital, this man removed a total of twelve books.

So it seemed that Jeremy was out about $4,500 dollars. The man was in custody here in Los Angeles. They evidently moved very quickly through the courts, because last week I had a call from the FBI saying that the man had been tried, and he had pleaded guilty, but they had recovered only eleven of the twelve books; the other book they hadn't been able to identify--they didn't know exactly what he took. They couldn't find out from Mr. Lownes because he's still very ill. And the thief wouldn't tell, because sentence had yet to be passed, and they assumed that what he was doing was bargaining for a reduced sentence if he revealed the title of the missing one and where it was.

Following this, the FBI telephoned and said they would come down and have me pack the books for shipping and sending them by air. About three days ago the local FBI man called up and [asked if we thought] that airmail

is safe for these valuable books--asked Josephine; I wasn't there. She didn't know what had gone on before, and she said she would hardly send anything that valuable by airmail. The man said he really thought these books deserved a courier, and so he thought it would be nice to fly to Boston, where he had friends. And according to the last I heard, he was going to take them there himself and deliver them to the people from Providence.

GARDNER: But just eleven.

ZEITLIN: Just eleven. The FBI was hoping they might get the information out of this man, where the twelfth book was. And now I understand that the rest of the books are being removed from Mr. Lownes's house and are going over to Brown University Library. I have had a phone call from Stuart C. Sherman, who is the librarian there, concerning it. They are very pleased. So I seem not only to have helped them recover these books but also to have precipitated their being placed in safety in the library.

Another interesting detail is that I told the story, as far as it had gone, a couple of weeks ago to Roger Stoddard at the Houghton Library at Harvard, and he said, "That's very interesting." It seemed this list of twelve books had been offered to Goodspeed's, and among them there was this Camerarius. Roger said he was really very

hopeful that they were going to get this book, which is one of the foremost rarities in the history of science.

GARDNER: How many copies are there altogether, do you know?

ZEITLIN: I would say less than ten. I don't think anybody has yet thought of going to Goodspeed's and asking them--I've already passed this on to the FBI--what the list of twelve books were, because if they did, they might find out what the missing book is. I think I will make another phone call tomorrow.

GARDNER: Fascinating. Jake Zeitlin, FBI agent.

ZEITLIN: No, I wasn't an FBI agent. The FBI was complimentary to me. They said that one of the hardest problems in the case of stolen books or jewelry or anything of this sort was to get the trade to cooperate. Here, for instance, was a case where it was necessary for me to tell them what I knew about Jeremy Norman's being involved. And Jeremy Norman took a loss, of course, because he had bought this stolen property, and they had reclaimed it, and he had no recourse. In general, the trade is always afraid they'll open up other cans of worms, and there's hardly an important rare book in the world that hasn't been stolen at some time in its history, whether it's recently or 500 years ago. The FBI men were most complimentary to me for having told them about other

people in the trade and giving them other clues.

GARDNER: Is this the first time you've broken a case that way?

ZEITLIN: No. I'm trying to think--my memory isn't very good tonight. I have on one or two other occasions--I can't pinpoint them right now--been involved in the discovery. . . . There was a young man who came in to see me and offered me one book in a Doves binding. It had cost marks written in which looked like Harry Levinson's. I called Harry, and I asked the young man to wait. Harry came over, and he said, "Oh, yes, these are my books, and this young man has been coming in and out of my shop." And he said to him, "Where do you live?" The young man told him, and Harry said, "We're going to drive right over there." [laughter]

Harry proceeded to drive the man over to his house. When they arrived, the man said, "I can't let you in until I've talked to my wife, because she's been sleeping here. Would you allow me to talk to her before you go in?" Harry said, "Not unless I come in with you." Harry started to push his way into the house, and I said, "Harry, you'd better not do this, because you will be making a forcible entry of his house. If you do that, you'll get yourself into trouble." So he abstained from doing that, but the young man then came back and let him in, and Harry

found a number of other books which he claimed. I didn't go in--I decided that it was not wise for me to go in there--but Harry recovered quite a few things. And then the next morning this boy's parents' lawyer called up and threatened to sue Harry.

GARDNER: For what?

ZEITLIN: For forcible entry and for--they had a lot of charges against him. You see, Harry wasn't satisfied to turn the job over to the police, who know what their legal rights are and could have proceeded legally by getting a search warrant. Before he was through, Harry was very glad to be just let off the hook by the parents. They didn't want the boy prosecuted, and Harry didn't want a lawsuit on his hands.

But you have to be very careful when you find that something has been stolen from you. If a man has it on his person while he's in the place, you cannot take it away from him. You have to follow him out of the place and take it from him, because if you take it from him on the place, he can claim that all he was doing was keeping it on his person until he could pay you for it. And of course, he can charge you for having publicly humiliated him, with creating a confrontation, false accusation, and so on. You have a very difficult time. And the thing is that these people all know their rights. I don't remember

right now other cases, but I have been involved in several where there was a theft. The problem, as I said, is if you know a man has stolen something of yours and he has it in his possession, you [then] have a serious problem if you accuse him and threaten him with police, and he challenges you; also you may have a false-arrest suit on your hands.

GARDNER: Is it hard to establish proof of. . . ?

ZEITLIN: It's very hard to establish proof, and the district attorney's office is not very cooperative. And in spite of the fact that we did a very thorough workup on a case where we had a theft of about forty books from us that we discovered this past year, the district attorney's office did not feel that they had a very strong case. The man did not come up for arraignment; he skipped bail. Later he did return; was tried and sentenced.

GARDNER: You did figure out who--an alleged suspect, or however you put in in legalese.

ZEITLIN: Well, these are not the very expensive books we lost. These we've never recovered. These were a group of about forty books which were offered to Bennett and Marshall. And Danny Geiss called up and said, "There's a man over here in a Hollywood Boulevard apartment that's got a group of books that look like they came out of your place. What's more, his descriptions all look like your descriptions."

GARDNER: Oh, you mean he left the descriptions in those volumes?

ZEITLIN: He inked out our price and put the equivalent price in French francs, thinking that that would be a way of getting the best value for them. Danny said to this man, "Look, I can't make you a fair offer without doing a little research. Do you mind if I make some notes?" He wrote down the titles and descriptions of the books and then called us when he got back to the place. Then we went through our files and we found our descriptions and the date when we had last seen them. Then I got ahold of the police. It took me a full day to get them into action, but they finally did go over.

At first they were going to do a stakeout, but finally they just went right up to the door and knocked and said, "May we come into your place? We're looking for some property," and he said, "All right." They came in and found our books on the living room table. Then under a mattress they found all of our descriptions of the books.

They brought the man in and booked him. They wouldn't let me see him because they felt that might prejudice his rights. I went over the books themselves and identified them as books which I knew we had owned. The man wasn't even held for twenty-four hours. They just took him right

before the desk sergeant, I guess, who set bail at $2,500, and the man reached into his wallet and took out twenty-five $100 bills and gave them to the police. All the police could do was hold the books.

He finally didn't appear for arraignment. His attorney called up and said that he'd been so nervous he couldn't come, but if they would not issue a warrant for him on bail-skipping, the attorney would bring him in within a week. A week passed and the man didn't come in, and by that time he'd gotten all of his affairs together and was able to skip the country. Now, this man had a police record of two similar offenses, and yet, when one of us went down to the city hall to attend the arraignment and appear as a witness and identify the books (we had a lot of cooperation from the sergeant of detectives at Hollywood), the distict attorney's man walked in five minutes before the hearing was scheduled, looked at our evidence, and said, "I don't think we're going to be able to hold the man." He came back, was arraigned and held for trial. I was never advised of the outcome.

We do have the books back, and we've sold some of them. There was a total of over $7,000 worth of books in that lot.

GARDNER: But those expensive ones you never recovered?

ZEITLIN: Never recovered. I have no clue, but I suspect

the man--he had some connection with an airline, he may have been a steward or something, or his wife may have been a stewardess, or his girlfriend. In any event, the more expensive books weren't there.

GARDNER: Well, okay, that puts you on one side of the law. I thought perhaps you could recall for us some of the times that you were on the other side. You've always been active in the fight against censorship, and there are two or three cases I know of, and I thought I'd ask you to think of the important ones to you and then other ones as they come to your memory.

ZEITLIN: Well, I've really not directly been involved in many cases. I remember that when the [Memoirs of] Hecate County case came up I was not directly consulted, but I was asked if I knew of some respectable-looking lady who would appear as a witness for the defense, to testify whether Hecate County was a book containing obscenities and was an indecent book. And I knew a very charming, very presentable lady; white-haired, dignified. Her name was Margarete Clark, and she'd been a member of the school board and active in a number of political campaigns, very fine-looking woman with a great dignity. . . . And so Hecate County lost.

Now, the case I was involved in was called Zeitlin, Ferguson v. Arnebergh. [Roger] Arnebergh was the city

attorney of Los Angeles. This was a case in which I was not the defendant; I was the plaintiff. I was in no jeopardy, and there isn't any special credit to me, but what Ferguson and I sued for was: I for the right to sell, and he for the right to buy this book.

GARDNER: Who is Ferguson?

ZEITLIN: He taught English at L.A. State College. And what we based our suit on was the fact that in San Diego County a man had been acquitted for selling _Tropic of Cancer_, and then in Los Angeles he had been found guilty of selling _Tropic of Cancer_. Here was a case where there was a conflict which we felt should be brought before the state supreme court, so we carried it from the municipal court to the superior court, from the superior court to appellate court, and finally up to the state supreme court. And we got a very wonderful judgment throwing out the conviction, or rather declaring that. . . . Well, what it did was, it effectively brought to an end all the prosecutions on grounds of obscenity in this state. The decision was written by Justice [Mathew] Tobriner, and it was a magnificent decision, one which I wish could be reprinted because I don't think there's ever been a finer statement with regard to freedom of the press, freedom of speech, and freedom of the right to communicate ideas.

Well, Arnebergh was the city attorney, and later I had occasion to realize what the consequences could be for being the plaintiff in the case. But in the meantime, he lost the case; and, as I say, this effectively brought to the end any prosecutions on the same basis as Tropic of Cancer.

GARDNER: About what period would this have been--what year? Do you remember?

ZEITLIN: I think it was 1955. In any event, the case of Zeitlin v. Arnebergh is in the law books, and it is a landmark case in the history of the battle against censorship. Although it isn't mentioned in the newest volume on banned books, it is mentioned in several other anthologies and bibliographies.

GARDNER: Weren't you involved in something with Connor Everts?

ZEITLIN: Yes. That was much earlier. I was involved, but I made no court appearance. Richard Sherwood, who is a member of the respectable firm of O'Melveny and Myers, became the attorney for the defendant in this case. Connor Everts had exhibited some drawings in a gallery on La Cienega Boulevard which were regarded as being obscene. They evidently were rather explicit drawings of the pudenda of women and the sexual organs of men, and at that time the district attorney's office had a

man attached to it--I think his name was Casey--who was a deputy specially placed in the district attorney's office for ferreting out violations of what were considered the decency laws. Dick Sherwood asked me if I could provide him with any examples of explicit sexual art by great masters, and it happened that I had an etching of Rembrandt's _Joseph and Potiphar's Wife_, and so I lent it to him to present as evidence, in order to sustain the argument that the subject matter of great artists had not avoided the explicit illustration of the sexual organs of people. This was one of the telling exhibitions. Connor Everts was acquitted, I think, and that case went down in the records as one of the important defenses of freedom of expression in art. But I was not a witness.

GARDNER: Were there any other cases you can think of?

ZEITLIN: None that I was associated with.

GARDNER: You've always been close to the Los Angeles art community, but more so, say, through the first thirty years.

ZEITLIN: Yes, that's true. I was giving original exhibitions to artists because there were very few galleries, and artists had few opportunities to exhibit their works. The County Museum was not showing much in the way of contemporary art, and there were only a handful of galleries around, and many of those were so far up on the scale that

they didn't want to be bothering with the small, local artists, the beginners in the field. So I had exhibitions like Edward Weston's first photography exhibition; Peter Krasnow, exhibition of lithographs. There was a very fine woman artist by the name of Grace Clements; a man by the name of Anders Aldrin, who was a distinguished artist; and Fred Sexton, who had great promise. I showed drawings by S. MacDonald-Wright. There was a very considerable group of artists, some of whom became well recognized, that I showed first at my place. I did sell some watercolors, some of the California watercolors group--of people like Millard Sheets and Tom Craig and Phil Paradise, Milfred Zornes, Jim Patric, Phyllis Shields, and Arthur Millier--some of whom were forgotten and may never be resurrected, others who are commencing to be rediscovered. One of the people that I'm most proud of having exhibited was Paul Landacre, whose prints I showed for the first time in any gallery, and who did illustrations for some of my announcements. In time he became well known as an illustrator of books by Donald Culross Peattie and did a number of illustrations for the publications of the Limited Editions Club.

GARDNER: When did you begin to drift away from the local art scene?

ZEITLIN: Well, I did show other artists a long time ago.

I showed people like Käthe Kollwitz in 1937.

GARDNER: We talked about that.

ZEITLIN: And I had exhibitions of a good many of the English etchers of the time: John Austen, G.L. Brockhurst, Eric Gill, Muirhead Bone, who were all from quite a distance. I had a sort of working arrangement with Weyhe Gallery in New York, which was then managed by Carl Zigrosser, who became a prominent authority on the history of the print in America. He used to send me exhibitions of various artists. Rockwell Kent was one of them. Then I had exhibitions of Orozco and Siqueiros, mostly of their graphics. When I moved over here on La Cienega, my wall space commenced to shrink as the book stock grew, and I had less and less exhibition space. The other problem was that living artists commenced to crowd in on me so much, demanding that I look at their portfolios, that they occupied too much time. It interfered with my work, interfered with my ability to tend to business. I had to finally announce my policy that I was not exhibiting any living artists. This was unfortunate, in a way, because it didn't give me the opportunity and didn't give the artists who were deserving of attention the opportunity to exhibit. But it was also fortunate in that I didn't have a great many of the problems that came along with the temperaments of some

of the artists that I exhibited, people who were often outstanding as artists but a little less than outstanding in terms of their sense of obligation.

GARDNER: It's ironic, in a way, that at the time you moved to La Cienega, La Cienega was becoming the center of the Los Angeles art scene in some ways.

ZEITLIN: At the time I moved here, in 1948, there weren't any galleries showing contemporary art. That all came after I moved here.

GARDNER: But the point I'm trying to make is that at that point the galleries are out here, and yet you're pulling away from the contemporary art scene.

ZEITLIN: Well, yes, of course it's always been my policy to pull away from competition. If the competition got too strong, I left the field to them and carved out another area. And I've always been able to discover new areas, where the competition was less, into which I could go. That's been true throughout the history of my bookselling and my art selling. When everybody was selling abstract impressionism and the New York School, I went back to selling some of the old fogies. I was having exhibitions of people like Whistler and Forain and Dürer and Rembrandt because there was no competition; there were no dealers exhibiting these things. In the late forties and early fifties, black-and-white graphics had practically no

market. There were very few outstanding collectors around the country and a few very quiet amateurs who were collecting the people they liked. Certain high-spot etchings were bringing what then seemed to be extremely high prices: in other words, Adam and Eve of Dürer would bring a high price. Three Trees of Rembrandt would bring a high price--or the Hundred Guilder print of Rembrandt--but a lot of the other things were bringing very little money. There was at that time a considerable interest in people like D.Y. [David Young] Cameron. But the great drive was to buy Matisse and Picasso and Cézanne and Chagall, and I wasn't handling them. Except for an occasional rare graphic, I was not trying to cater to those kinds of customers. I mostly sold the kind of art that went with books and that appealed to the people who were collecting books or who were essentially tradition minded; they looked to the past rather than the future.

GARDNER: What about dealers? Were there any art dealers you were particularly friendly with, close to?

ZEITLIN: Well, the great model for me in the field of graphics was a man by the name of Irwin Firman, a very brilliant man, a man who had been an outstanding chess player. At one time he had been a business reorganizer. He decided to liberate himself from the pressures of

business and opened a little gallery out in Hollywood, on Sycamore Street. Irwin Firman had the choicest prints of anybody of his day or since in this part of the world. He had really first-class Whistlers, first-class Rembrandts, first-class Dürers, and nobody since--and I'll include myself--has ever had so fine a collection as he had. He had a small clientele, overall, except for the people from out of town who would come and buy from him. When he started to close out, he sold me his reference books and some of his prints, but I was not perceptive enough and I didn't have capital enough to buy the major prints that he had in stock. I'm sure that nobody before him or since him has come near Irwin Firman in the quality of the materials that he had. I knew him quite well; we cooperated, and we were friendly. I also knew Earl Stendahl, who was a delightful buccaneer, a very engaging man who'd been a dining-car chef, who loved to cook, and who, when his business was most successful on Wilshire Boulevard, used to start in and manufacture candy every year before Christmas and take advance orders. I used to put in orders for about 100 two-pound boxes of chocolate. They were very good and made great Christmas gifts for my customers.

In modern art such as Picasso and Matisse, Frank Perls, who came here in the early forties, was above all

the outstanding dealers. He was also a man of great integrity, unsparing in his hatred of fakers and charlatans.

TAPE NUMBER: XVI, SIDE ONE

SEPTEMBER 24, 1979

GARDNER: As I mentioned to you, I have three topics that I'd like to discuss, in no particular order. So let me start out and ask you to talk about the museum that Bart Lytton was involved with, which you said was a motion picture collection, since Mr. Mink has instructed me to inquire into that.

ZEITLIN: Well, that began with a man by the name of Mogens Scott Hansen, a very charming Dane who came over here to Hollywood as the UNESCO representative to the film industry, the idea being that he could get the film industry to slant their productions in one way or another to build up support for UNESCO and the United Nations; spread it around the world where all the films were going. Scott Hansen was a very charming, highly cultivated man. His wife [Elin] was as charming a woman; her father [Karl Henriques] was the leading private banker of Denmark. Of course, being the leading private banker of Denmark makes you about the equal of some of our small-town bankers around here. But he was a charming man, too, and an international figure, a man of great understanding and tolerance and remarkably liberal. Their idea of a progressive banker in Denmark would make him into a socialist here.

That's a digression, except that Scott Hansen had over the years been very much interested--he was a film producer in Denmark, and he'd been engaged in forming a collection of the history of the cinema before the modern motion picture: everything from the itinerant traveler with a magic lantern to the different devices which were used to create the effect of moving figures. He had assembled a great collection of praxiniscopes and magic lanterns, camera obscura and so on; it was one of the finest that'd ever been formed. He'd spent many years at it. Around 1945, he went back to Denmark, and he wrote to me that he'd decided to sell this collection because he wanted to buy a place in the country--they didn't have the money otherwise, and did I know of someone.

At that time Sol Lesser, who had also become a friend of Mogens Scott Hansen's, was developing the Hollywood Motion Picture Museum. I got in touch with Sol, and I said, "Scott Hansen wants to sell his cinema collection, and it's almost a museum in itself. Wouldn't it be great if you could join it to the Hollywood Motion Picture Museum that you're promoting?" He said, "Yes, that's fine. Let me think it over, and I'll get in touch with you." Sol Lesser is an unusual kind of man: if he says something like that to you, he means it, and he will surely get in touch with you. In a short while he called

me, and he said, "Write a letter to Bart Lytton, in Lytton Savings and Loan; tell him about the collection, and tell him that I suggested that you get in touch with him."

Bart Lytton had come to Sol Lesser and said, "I want to do something in connection with the museum, but I don't want to just make a trifling gift. I want to do something important for which I can get the benefits of publicity and credit for having done it." And he said, "After all, I was a film writer, I'm interested in films, and I'd like to help promote this museum." So Sol had called up Bart Lytton and said, "Bart, you always said you wanted to do something special for the museum; now, here's an opportunity." And Lytton said, "Well, fine, have Zeitlin write me a letter giving the details and give me the poop on it." I had an album which showed all the different pieces of equipment and described the collection. It was very well prepared by Scott Hansen. I sent it on to Lytton. Then I got a phone call from Lytton's lawyer to come over and talk to him. Lytton at that time had space in the lower floor of his savings and loan at the corner of Crescent Heights and Sunset Boulevard. He was setting up a kind of a cultural activity which included exhibition by different artists around town, lectures, and recitals. He had an auditorium. He had

decided to link himself to the cultural side of the community activities as a way of getting his bank noticed and attracting a certain type of depositor. He had a very fine, brilliant woman [Josine Ianco-Starrels] who was running it, and he had a publicity man by the name of Herb Klein--not the same Herb Klein that was public relations man for . . .

GARDNER: . . . Nixon?

ZEITLIN: . . . Nixon.

GARDNER: No, your friend Herb Klein.

ZEITLIN: Nor my friend Herb Klein.

GARDNER: Not that one, either? [laughter]

ZEITLIN: No. He was another man by the name of Herb Klein, who was in charge of public relations and particularly in charge of this sort of cultural center that went with the bank.

Bart Lytton's attorney called me in and said, "Mr. Lytton will buy the collection." Then he gave me a written contract which Lytton had signed and which I was to sign in which they agreed to buy the collection for $45,000. I assumed that this was all done with Sol Lesser's knowledge and that it was going to the museum, but after I signed it and I reported to Lesser, Sol said, "What do you mean? This guy isn't buying this for the Hollywood museum. He's buying this for his own private show over there at the Lytton

Center." Lesser was quite indignant about it. He had as his lawyer the most powerful lawyer in town at that time, at least in the motion picture industry, Mendel Silverberg. Sol came to me and said, "I want you to rescind that contract. I want you to just notify Lytton that you will not deliver those things to him on the basis that"--you see, I hadn't delivered them yet; they were still in transit, and so I hadn't been paid--"on the basis that he had misrepresented me. You can say that you were led to believe that Lytton was buying this for the museum. Now it turns out he's buying it in order to set up his own museum of the history of the cinema." Sol Lesser also said, "I will give you an absolute warranty. I will sign a contract agreeing to defend you against all suits or any demand for damages that might come from Bart Lytton."

I went to my lawyer, and my lawyer, who was then Bob Kenny, and Mendel Silverberg worked out a contract which was intended to protect me, and then I wrote a letter to Bart Lytton notifying him that I was rescinding the contract. Bart Lytton, of course, was indignant and threatened to sue me for breach of contract and so on, and I simply didn't do anything. Sol said, "You leave it to Silverberg and me."

The collection was in transit. Fortunately, it was directed to the Los Angeles County Museum, where it was to be stored so that Mr. Lytton couldn't lay hands on it,

couldn't take possession. The museum people took possession because it was directed to them, according to the forwarding papers, and then they went into conference with Mr. Lytton. They got Mr. Lytton to agree that he would give it to the motion picture museum. In the meantime, he would have the right to exhibit it until the motion picture museum was built; that is to say, he could set it up and install it in his establishment and exploit it, and the motion picture museum was to get it, provided they had a museum actually built and set up to function within five years. After five years he was no longer obliged to give it to them if they did not fulfill the plan. I paid off Scott Hansen. Bart Lytton then set about working out a plan to wreck the motion picture museum.

The motion picture museum--through funds that Sol Lesser had been able to accumulate in various ways, and through the funds that the county had appropriated--had acquired land opposite the Hollywood Bowl. When the properties were condemned, there was a big argument. One of the tenants there refused to move. He was an ex-marine. He barricaded himself with guns, and got a great lot of publicity. They finally evicted him, and like so many of the things where eminent domain is invoked, to this day nothing has been built on that spot.

Bart Lytton worked very shrewdly. He got together with Ernest Debs, who, I think, had learned various ways to line his pocket without taking it out of the public till. And between them they got into an arrangement with [William] Pereira. Pereira came up with what he called the Pereira Plan for a museum to be built on the ground which had now been acquired for the Hollywood museum. The Pereira Plan was presented to the committee of the board of supervisors, was found to be unacceptable, and the entire plan for the museum . . .

GARDNER: . . . was scrapped.

ZEITLIN: . . . was scrapped. Mr. Lytton got his way . . . insofar as he got to retain the collection. But of course he didn't keep it for very long, because Mr. Lytton, while a brilliant man, was also a megalomaniac and had very poor discrimination when it came to matters of what was ethical banking and what wasn't. The Lytton bank often had more funds than it could properly lend out, and the practice of savings and loans and banks who can't lend out their money directly under the conditions of banking laws is for them to lend the money to other banks at a lower rate of interest: other banks that need more money can borrow the money from them for, say, 6 percent, whereas they're paying their depositors 5 [percent], so that they make a little money, while the funds are not applied to more profitable loans.

Mr. Lytton had several million dollars at the time to deposit with other banks, and there were other banks who could use the funds; but whenever he lent money out to the other banks he made a condition that they should make him personal loans for some of his investments, so that if he lent them $2 million or $3 million through the Lytton bank, they often would lend him in turn $100,000 or $200,000, which he could use for making loans that would never pass the bank examiners. He had friends who were in the quick-profit jerry-building business and using federal financing. There were structures which went up in Hollywood which purported to cost a million dollars, and there was probably $300,000 of excess charges in there that were fed back to the people who participated, the difference being what were the inflated charges that were put into the mortgage that the federal money had financed, and other things like that. The only trouble is you couldn't--a bank couldn't lend that money to these kind of promotions, so they had to go to private lenders, and in turn they paid what then was a considerable rate of interest: 12 percent, whereas the average rate of interest was 6 percent, so it would appear to be very lucrative.

In order to get these loans, these personal loans, so that he could lend the money to his friends who were promoting these scams, Mr. Lytton would have to put up his own stock in

the Lytton Savings and Loan, put that up as collateral for the money that was lent him. And after a while the amount that was lent to him commenced to increase, and some of these scams didn't work, and he didn't get his money back from some of these promoters that he was involved with. And one day the banks got together and discovered that between them Mr. Lytton owed an awful lot of money, and they were holding his controlling stock. So they closed down on him, took over his controlling stock, and took away his voting powers in the Lytton Savings and Loan. And Mr. Lytton found himself virtually out--certainly out of control--and a pensioner of the banks. When that happened, the leading stockholder who took over the Lytton Savings and Loan (they couldn't afford to let it go on the rocks, because that would have been bad for the whole savings-and-loan industry) was Glendale Savings and Loan, and apparently Glendale Savings and Loan in turn was one of the many subsidiaries--as far as I am informed--of MCA. Jules Stein, Lou Wasserman, and MCA in turn owned Universal. So Universal Pictures, without being required to bid competitively against anyone else, was allowed to purchase the cinema collection from the Lytton bank, and the cinema collection is now out in Universal City; the idea being to create a motion picture museum someday in the future.

GARDNER: And in the meantime, nothing?

ZEITLIN: In the meantime, nothing. The Scott Hansen collection is in storage, as far as I know. I made several attempts to go to the officers at the Glendale Savings and Loan, which had taken over Lytton, and buy the collection. I told them I was prepared to bid competitively. I had been asked to do this by Sol Lesser, who still wanted it to go, as it originally was intended, to the Hollywood museum. But they ignored my efforts and my approach, and sold it off for a token sum to Universal.

GARDNER: And there it is today.

ZEITLIN: There's where it is.

GARDNER: Well, that was a fascinating story, and I'm glad that Jim Mink prompted me to inquire. I suppose that his personal interest is that he too would like to see materials like that made showable.

ZEITLIN: Well, there was a considerable amount of books, and broadsides, and early prints, and other literature in this collection. The library was quite extensive having to do with the forerunners of the modern film.

GARDNER: To shift subjects now, subject number two (which was originally my subject number one): since this is your definitive biography, in a way, I'd like to try to catch up with and get some idea of your family structure--your wives in order, your children, and where did they come from?

Your first . . .

ZEITLIN: That's a complicated . . .

GARDNER: Oh, I know it's a complicated tree, but. . . . We talked about Edith Motheral, right, your first wife?

ZEITLIN: Edith Motheral, yes. She was my first wife. I married her in Texas, in 1925. I sent her out here to Los Angeles to stay with some friends of friends of mine.

GARDNER: The Calverts.

ZEITLIN: She stayed with the Calverts. I just got a letter last week from the granddaughter of Mellie Calvert telling me she had died. I'm very sad about that because Mellie was a lovely woman, a wonderfully kind person and one of the kind of people that makes the world as good as it is. And if there were enough of them, they'd make it much better.

Edith came out here in April of 1925. I hitchhiked out, and I arrived, as well as I remember, in May. I was stunned. I had never been in a city where there were such crowds. I was completely dazzled by the enormous numbers of different kinds of people and how they streamed down the sidewalks and across the streets. And I remember the first time I went downtown, Edith had to take me by the hand and lead me across the street.

GARDNER: Edith was with child, wasn't she?

ZEITLIN: Yes, she was--we were expecting a child, and I

went to work. I hitchhiked across from Texas . . .

GARDNER: Right. Well, that story's already been . . .

ZEITLIN: . . . I've already told in a previous part of this all too long narration. [laughter] And so we were very kindly allowed to stay in the Calverts' house, but there was very little room: there wasn't enough room for them. We started immediately to look for a place to stay, and there were ads for people to work--they were supposed to be apartment house managers, and they were to be given an apartment in exchange for managing the apartment house.

GARDNER: When was the child born?

ZEITLIN: Well, the child wasn't born, but we didn't have any money. I went around job hunting. I got a job first in Boos Brothers Cafeteria, and then I got a job for E.L. Doheny's oil company as a gardener. And we answered one of these ads, and we were given an apartment in the St. Catherine Apartments over in Hollywood in exchange for which Edith slaved all day long and did all the laundry, all the vacuuming, all the cleaning, was kept busy from dawn till dark. What these people got in exchange for their apartment was full-time slave labor. Well, she was expecting a child, and we couldn't remain there very long. This woman didn't want a baby in her apartment house. She didn't want a man who came home from working spreading manure all day, and smelled like it and looked like it, coming in through the

front door, and I wouldn't go in the back door. It was a matter of maintaining my ego with me. And so we finally found a small apartment out near USC. I think it was Twenty-Eighth Place.

GARDNER: And this is the place that burned down.

ZEITLIN: Yes, and this is the place that caught fire and burned down. Edith and I moved sometime afterwards to Landa Street, which is at the north end of Echo Park Avenue. It was down a dirt road, and there was a little group of redwood houses there. I don't know who owned them, some woman to whom we paid something like thirty-five dollars a month, and it was a charming place--lovely view of the river below and the railroad yards and Forest Lawn and the Sierra Madre range, Mount Wilson. And we had some nice neighbors.

GARDNER: Now, has your first child been born yet?

ZEITLIN: The first child was born in October of 1925. That was Judith Louon. The name Louon seemed to have had a special attraction for Edith. And Judith was my contribution. It seemed to me that a child with a name of Louon would have a great handicap when it started to go to school. Something like "Judith," which could be contracted to "Judy," would be a little easier to cope with. And we remained on Landa Street.

GARDNER: Now, the next question is a tricky one. How long

did the marriage last?

ZEITLIN: Well, she had a breakdown in the summer of 1927. I had been in the Barlow Sanitarium, and I came home and was just getting started, and one night I got a phone call. Edith had taken a job distributing samples of soap for Procter and Gamble Company. They had teams of people who went around and just knocked on people's doors and left samples of soap and cleaning powder; this was a rather nice job. She traveled with this crew and made us a little more money. In the meantime, I was recuperating, and so I was staying home, taking care of the child.

One night I got a phone call from San Diego, from a Dr. Arthur Cecil, a man I never knew and never met before, and he said, "I'm calling you from San Diego. Your wife was at the Coronado Hotel, and she was obviously very much disturbed. So I talked to her and I could see that she needed care. I have taken the liberty of putting her into a sanitarium here until you can get down and bring her home."

I got a friend by the name of Charlie Dunning, who was a friend of Carl Sandburg's, to drive me to the station. I took the train and went to San Diego, and when I got there it was morning, and I went to the Coronado Hotel and met this Dr. Arthur B. Cecil, a southern gentleman who was a notable urological surgeon from Los Angeles. And he arranged for me to go over to this sanitarium, and when I got there I

spoke to the attendant, and the attendant said, "I don't think you'd better go in and talk to her. She'll only be more violent." And when I went in the room she was very violent, and I had to leave the room. Suddenly she was violent towards me, and I went back to Dr. Cecil, and I called some friends in Los Angeles.

The woman had been my secretary during the time that I was trying to get my business started from my home. She wasn't very well paid, but she needed a place to stay, so she had stayed there in the house. Her first name was Henrietta; I can't remember her last name. But she by that time had met a very close friend of mine, a man who had been very good to me and a patron, bought books from me and sort of kept me alive, a man by the name of Maurice Warshaw. He was an accountant. Maurice Warshaw had a great reverence for literature and everything having to do with books, and for some reason he had taken me under his arm.

So Maurice Warshaw and Henrietta came to San Diego. A nurse was assigned to come with us and take care of Edith. She was put under sedation and we drove back to Los Angeles. And Dr. Arthur Cecil, who owed me nothing, paid the entire bill for the sanitarium and for the nurse and for her care until we got down to Los Angeles.

GARDNER: How marvelous.

ZEITLIN: When we got to Los Angeles, I had another group of friends, some people by the name of Levine. She was a social worker, and she arranged, first of all, for Edith to go to Dr. Aaron Rosanoff, who then was the leading psychiatrist in Southern California. He talked to her, tried to evaluate her, and recommended that she be put into a sanitarium. And he said that she was a manic-depressive, that her condition was advanced, and that there was no hope that she would ever recover, which was rather a blow to me, with a child to look after, two and a half years old by then. Edith did have periods when she was lucid and cooperative, but they never lasted very long, and so we remained married until 1929. During that time she would disappear at times; she would take up with people who were as unstable as she was, mentally. It was a [pauses] hard time for me.

GARDNER: It must have been incredibly difficult, with the new business and with the baby.

ZEITLIN: I had no money. I was being helped by friends who bought books from me. I was being helped by friends who lent me some money. But of course the most disturbing thing was that she would disappear, that she was rebellious, that she was hostile, that she couldn't look after the child. She . . . she simply was not a disciplined person. And finally it was she that decided that she would be better

off if she could divorce me. She got the notion that there was some magic in divorce, that if we were divorced that she could somehow or another be liberated and go her way in the world, and that I wouldn't stand between her as a sort of a disciplinary figure. I was advised by the psychologist, Dr. Rosanoff, I was advised by the social workers that I consulted, and by friends, this was the thing that I should do. I didn't like the idea. I'd made such a gesture of defiance to my family and the whole background out of which I'd come by marrying her and going away and undertaking to start without anything. It was an admission of failure. And I had no idea how I would keep the thing going, but I did not like the idea of getting divorced.

Well, finally that's what happened. She became interested in weaving, and she got to be a very good weaver. By that time I had a little shop going, and I was able to give her some support, and she, I think, got some WPA funds as well, so that she had a weaving shop out in San Fernando Valley. She was doing weaving of fabrics. It was good therapy for her, as long as it lasted. But as soon as she found herself with other people of similar instability, they all sort of blew up. The first thing, they became so infatuated with each other--that they were the most wonderful people in the world, and as long as that lasted, it was fine.

And then, of course, they fell out, and it was a crash, a mental crash, and everything else. I continued to provide her with as much money as I could, and to sort of step in when there were crises.

I had taken a house in the Echo Park Avenue area near Elysian Park. I hired a housekeeper, and I kept the little girl at home with me. I had a neighbor by the name of Hester Scott, and she had a son a little bit older than my little girl. And so we had this duplex house, and we were able to trade off on babysitting, we were able to entertain mutually, and we were very good friends. We were enamored, to a degree. But I certainly had no idea of becoming involved with her, or marrying her. I had a feeling that this was not the kind of person I wanted to marry.

I had a number of other women friends, and the one that I really was very much attached to, devoted to, was a young woman much younger than me, Marjorie Rosenfeld, who had a fine family; her mother was a beautifully groomed woman who entertained and had a good home. They used to invite me there a great deal. It was sort of a second home. I was always free to come and have dinner. They had many parties and so on. And the one evening Marjorie's brother Pete Rosenfeld asked me if I would pick up a young lady by the name of Jean Weyl--this was

approximately 1931 or '32--and bring her to a party at their house one evening. Jean Weyl's father was a superior-court judge. Her father was of a San Francisco Jewish family but not very much identified as a Jew. Her mother was of French origin. She'd been a Catholic, but. . . .

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GARDNER: Continue the story of Jean Weyl and her mother.

ZEITLIN: Her mother's maiden name was Moisant, and the Moisants were a very spectacular family who had been in the ship-channeling business in San Francisco. One of the brothers was John Moisant, who was a pioneer aviator and who crashed in New Orleans; Moisant Field in New Orleans is named after him. One of the sisters was Matilda Moisant, who was the first licensed woman flier in this country, although she yielded number one to a woman by the name of [Harriett] Quimby, because Quimby wanted to make a profession of flying and wanted this special prestige mark. The Moisants were very well off. Matilda Moisant had barnstormed in this country and in Mexico. As early as 1912, 1913, 1914, the Moisants had a flying school on Long Island where they taught people to fly airplanes. It was the first flying school, I think, in the United States. Then the Moisant brothers had gone down to Central America, to San Salvador, had acquired coffee fincas and become very large landowners, and had become part of the ruling junta of San Salvador.

So this was Jean Weyl's family. She was little, she was sparkling, she had a great deal of physical charm, and I was quite infatuated with her. And I thought, well,

this is a young woman with good background, her father's a judge; she has a stable home. I like her, she seems to like me, and it's time I stopped trying to live alone, bring up my child without a mother. We got married. We were married by Rabbi [Max] Dubin at the Wilshire Temple. Then we got into my car, we drove down to Mission San Luis Rey. As we walked through the mission just as it was getting dark, she burst into tears and told me that she didn't really want to get married. She hated the whole idea; she wasn't ready for it.

GARDNER: Oh, Lord! How old was she at this time?

ZEITLIN: Well, I suppose . . . well, I was about thirty-one; I think she was about twenty-six. And that's the way that marriage began. [laughter]

GARDNER: I take it from the way you say that, that things didn't get better.

ZEITLIN: Well, I was determined that it was going to work out. The Depression was on. Her family was struck by it very hard. Her father by then no longer had a judgeship; had run for reelection and lost, and entered into the practice of law. He and his wife were separated. He moved out. Her two brothers were just getting out of school and college. They were undergoing hardship. The two aunts really felt that she had married beneath her. I had this bookshop going which was just barely creaking along,

but I was able to keep the house going to provide the turkey for the family Christmas dinner, and we had a child, David, a very sweet boy. We moved up to a house on Altivo Way, which is also at the north end of Echo Park Avenue, a house hanging off the cliff, partly, just below the house where Neal Harlow and Marian Harlow live right now. Marian Harlow's father owned the house, and he was very friendly and sympathetic, and if my rent got to be a couple of months past due, he never threatened to evict me.

GARDNER: Why can't I find landlords like that? [laughter]

ZEITLIN: I don't know. The times are different. There's not a depression. And a man who paid his rent once every three months was better than a man who didn't pay any rent at all. [laughter] But his name was Gardner, as I remember, and this was one of the houses they had lived in. The house up on the top of the hill was the house that he had lived in, but then he'd moved out to Orange County and rented out the house. So Jean and I lived there until about 1935, when we moved over to Waverly Drive. It was not very far [from] near where Alvarado starts to drop off into Glendale, overlooking Riverside Drive again but further west. We lived there until 1937. My daughter Judy, and David, who was Jean's son, lived there together with us, but all along she was dissatisfied. She was

discontent. I was a struggling, small merchant, and I wasn't showing promises of making a fortune or being able to provide her with the kind of life--what she felt she should have. And she was immensely jealous; she was temperamental. She could be very charming. She was attractive to men; other men made her all kinds of attractive promises, as long as she was married. Finally, in 1937, I went off on a trip around the country. I went to Texas, to Louisiana, then to New Mexico and visited Frieda Lawrence and met Aldous Huxley, and when I came back Jean informed me that she was getting a divorce.

GARDNER: So at this point you were 0-for-two, and a year later your home run came into your life, right?

ZEITLIN: No, I met Josephine in the summer of 1937, before I left on this trip. However, I had no intention of becoming involved with her. I was very much attracted--I felt that she had the qualities that I'd always wanted in a woman--but I had also made up my mind that I was married. I'd failed once, and I wasn't going to let anything bring about a dissolution of a second marriage. I was going to stay with it no matter what. But when I got back from my trip, Jean had in the meantime made her own plans and decided that she wanted a divorce.

GARDNER: Fate plays a strange hand.

ZEITLIN: Well . . .

GARDNER: As a result, you've now been married to Josephine for over forty years.

ZEITLIN: Well, we didn't get married right away. I rented a house separately and moved into it, overlooking Silver Lake. And Josephine would come up there and visit me on weekends, and we got to be closer and closer. A friend of ours--Katy. . . ? I can't remember it. She was a designer and a sculptress and a little, perky woman, wonderful spirit, and she had a husband, Charles, who was not very much. He couldn't keep a job; she was the one who was the person. She was going to have a baby, and they had no house. So Josephine and I rented a house, which we occupied jointly with them, so that they could have a place to live. And that went along fine until some mutual friends of ours said, "This won't do. You and Josephine can't go on living together. It's going to alienate a lot of people that you need, your customers, friends and so on--people that your place in the community depends on." Especially Remsen Bird, who was the president of Occidental College then, counseled me. Josephine moved into a separate apartment, and I moved into the bookshop, which by then was over on Carondelet Street. We had an apartment upstairs over the bookshop, and I lived there. Josephine would come over

evenings and prepare meals, and she had a job meantime with the Haines Foundation. It was not until October 28, 1939 that we were finally able to get married. One of the reasons for that is that Jean had thought things over in the meantime and decided she really didn't mean it, that she didn't want to be divorced. But things had gone too far, and I couldn't turn back. And I certainly couldn't ask Josephine to step out after the support she'd given, and I'd had a taste of what the good life could be. [laughter]

GARDNER: Forty years next month! You'll celebrate it in London.

ZEITLIN: Yes.

GARDNER: So, two children by your final marriage.

ZEITLIN: Josephine and I had a son, Joel, who's now thirty-seven years old; and then two years later we had a daughter, Adriana. And from the time I met Josephine on, my life has been very content. I've been a very contented man, and life has been much more peaceful than I ever dreamed it could be.

GARDNER: Right. So wonderful. I would like to ask you to say a few words about your children. I know about a couple of them. What is Judy doing now? I met her at the "Diamond for Jake."

ZEITLIN: Yes. Well, Judy lives in Laurel Canyon. She

has for many years had an acting bug. She's gone to a number of acting classes; she's taken a lot of schooling; she's really dedicated to it. And I must say that when I've seen her perform I've been astonished at how she simply is transformed into the part she plays. I don't think she will ever be a great actress, and I don't think she thinks so, but it's what she wants to do, so she won't take any other jobs. She's now a member of the Screen Actors Guild. She's a member of AFTRA. She manages to get several days of acting a month. I don't know--she's a grandmother. She has a house she rents out. She lives in another house on the property. With my occasional help, she's able to live. And on top of that, she is a very good person. There's no malice in her. I've never heard her say a resentful thing about anyone. She's never said a resentful thing about either of the husbands she was married to (she's been married twice, but she had both of her children by her first marriage). And when someone else is in trouble, when her younger sister was ill for a while, she just dedicated herself completely to being supportive, to looking after her. Whatever lack of practical success that she may have is certainly outweighed by her wonderful human qualities, her sweetness. So I find myself very pleased with her, all in all.

GARDNER: David is next. David has a reputation of his own

around town as a guitarist and guitar teacher.

ZEITLIN: Well, David has always been a very lovable person. When he was quite young he was interested in music, and he used to drive Josephine mad--with his drums, with his trumpets, with all the instruments he could master. And he seemed to have a very quick grasp of any kind of a musical instrument--and so far as that's concerned, any kind of mechanism as well. He's very good at taking apart and reassembling complicated things like clockwork, and building motors and fishing reels and things like that.

When he was quite young, I had a visitor, a man by the name of Sam Eskin, who came to see me because I had collected a number of folk songs. And from time to time I would be looked up by people like John Lomax and Leadbelly and other people who were interested in songs and got the idea that I had some that they hadn't picked up before. Carl Sandburg had taken some of the songs I knew and put them in _The American Songbag_. This man Eskin, who had been quite a successful engineer with the United Parcel company, had set out to be a folk-song gypsy around the country, and traveled with his van and recording equipment. And he would come to our house and play the guitar and also encourage me to sing songs which he would record. I had a set of [Thomas] Percy's _Reliques_, a collection of

ballads that Bishop Percy had collected, and this was an especially good set because the footnotes and the annotations were more extensive than the text itself. He wanted the set and said he'd like to buy it, and I said, "Well, instead of buying it, why don't you find me a guitar?" So he went to a hock shop and found an early Martin, a pre-Civil War Martin with a lovely tone, and he traded it to me for this set of Percy's Reliques. Of course, he then set out to try to teach me, and I discovered that I cannot play the guitar; I cannot coordinate two hands, and I cannot keep time, and I cannot stay on key. Otherwise . . . [laughter]

GARDNER: Other than that . . .

ZEITLIN: Yes, I'm a good musician. But the legend still persists--among people that I met forty, fifty years ago--that I used to play the guitar and sing folk songs.

GARDNER: Wilbur Smith tells that.

ZEITLIN: Yes. Well, I never played the guitar. I only clapped my hands. I could keep time by patting my hands. And yet there are people who will swear that I used to play the guitar, and I can't contradict them. It's no use. They're eyewitnesses, and you know how reliable they are.

But David took this guitar and started to play around with it. My friend Sam Eskin showed him a few things about it, and he quickly picked it up, started to play it. And

then I sent him to a Mexican guitar teacher here in town by the name of Ylloriaga. I've been told since that Ylloriaga was the worst possible teacher I could have sent him to, [laughter] but I didn't know any better; and, you know, David, while he admits that the method was terrible, learned a great deal about playing the guitar, about classical guitar. From then on he got engagements to play for parties, play at coffee houses, and in some of the small Sunset [Boulevard] night clubs, and then he started teaching. And he's an excellent teacher. Really, he's a good performer for small groups, but he has no ambition to be a performer. He loves teaching, and he's taught hundreds of young people around town who remember him, who are very fond of him, and he's fond of them.

GARDNER: He's been associated with McCabe's for years.

ZEITLIN: Yes, he's been with McCabe's for years, and he earns a living that way. He's married, and now he has a little son, Benjamin, two years old, and they're about to have another.

GARDNER: Move on to Joel, next. I have a particular affinity for Joel since he has the same name and same birth year as I do.

ZEITLIN: Yes, well, Joel is a very warm, easy person. He was a golden child. He had golden hair and he was

slim and self-assured, and he was lovable from the very beginning. I think he got a great many of his equable qualities from his mother. And I think as he grew he just seemed to do things the right way. He never excelled in any of the sports: he played on the basketball teams and so on, but he never was a very good basketball player. He quickly picked up games which required brains. He liked playing chess. He was not a chess prodigy, but he got to be a pretty good chess player. And he was an attractive person. He was a leader among his friends in school. He gave us very little trouble; he was never a problem child. And he went through high school with a pretty high level of achievement. He went to UCLA; he majored in mathematics. He got his degree, doctorate. It's all seemed to come in natural order. Now he is grown up, married. He was married once before, to a high-school sweetheart, a girl that was the daughter of friends of ours, Gregory Ain, the architect--didn't work. They were divorced after a very short while--I think it was a year or so, they were divorced. She felt that she had married too soon. They were both nineteen; it was too young for them to get married. It was a blow to him--I think it unsettled him to some degree--but he never lacked for girlfriends, and he recovered, and he ultimately met Ann, his present wife.

They lived together for quite a while, then got married several years ago. He'd discovered that he really isn't a research mathematician, but he loves teaching. He does it well. He is a responsible person. He seems to be very active in taking his share of the duties that go with departmental activities in the school itself, at Northridge, and I understand that he gets on well. People think well of him. And he lives a good life. And what's more, he's very good to me. [laughter]

GARDNER: That's wonderful. I remember one evening that we sat, and the two of you exchanged commentaries on the history of science. And I found that fascinating that you, with your interest in history of science, should have spawned one scientist. It seems reasonable.

ZEITLIN: Well, I think I stimulated some of it in him. I wish I'd been able to stimulate more, because I think if he had specialized in the history of science along with his teaching mathematics he might have developed a very useful specialty that would have served him well in his academic career. But then, it's not what I like and what I want that's important. I have had to learn that my children must find their own way of life and live it as best they can.

GARDNER: Well, that brings us then to your fourth child, Adriana.

ZEITLIN: My fourth child, Adriana.

GARDNER: Your next-door neighbor.

ZEITLIN: My fourth child, Adriana, was always a very volatile child, and very self-assertive. She was, I think, rather obsessive. When she was quite small, she dressed in older people's clothes; she tried to appear beyond her age. And she was, I think, competitive with her brother. I don't think Josephine or I ever told Joel or Adriana that we expected them to excel, but I think it got across to them. [laughter] She was a leader in high school, did very well. But then when she went off to the University of California at Santa Barbara, she discovered in her first year that there's quite a difference when you're on your own and when you have to make your way through the educational maze on the basis of your own resources. I don't think she was prepared for it. So she left for a while, and she came back here, had rather a hard time. She simply had to take time out. And she was going with a young man that she'd met in high school, a man obsessed with jogging and with athletics who's become a sociologist of sports. She went back to school at UCLA and got her bachelor's, and they were married and went to Santa Barbara, where they had two children and he got his bachelor's and doctorate--he got his bachelor's at UCLA, got his doctorate at Santa Barbara,

in sociology. And they moved back down here. Then they discovered some strong incompatibilities. It's hard to be judgmental because we are of course partial to our own child. But finally, for reasons which I think were very good, she decided they could no longer live together, and they are now divorced. She has the two children and is very happy and in a very good mental state. She comes into our shop, she helps Josephine with her part of the business, and she also substitutes as a bookkeeper. And she is a very quick learner. She has sharp intuitions. I think her judgment of people is remarkably good, and her intelligence must be of a very high level because she can master anything she undertakes. Somewhere along the way I think she had a blow--it may have been that first year at the university eroded her self-confidence, and it's taken a long time for her to acquire her self-assurance again. But I think she has. She is more like my mother than any member of the family. My mother was the kind of person who seemed to quickly grasp a situation, know the right thing to do, wasn't afraid of emergencies. Adriana is like that. If anybody is injured in the neighborhood, she's the one takes them to a hospital or does anything that needs to be done. If some woman decides to have a baby delivered at home, she's the one that goes and takes care of her and helps with the delivery.

She is this little, thin wisp of a woman who has got a whim of iron and a tremendous amount of strength. And so I think she will continue to grow into being a fine woman.

GARDNER: A question I feel I really should ask, since we have talked about generational bookshops and so forth and so on, Did any of your children ever exhibit real interest in getting involved in the book business? Did you ever encourage or push that, or did you. . . ?

ZEITLIN: No, as well as I could tell, none of them really wanted to go on with it. It may be my lack of ability to involve them. All of my children at one time or another have worked in one way or another at the bookshop, but they always seem to feel that they couldn't learn what I know. Well, I've said to them I didn't know it when I started; it's taken me years to learn a little bit, and you can certainly learn as much as I can. I don't think salesmanship or bookselling is a special gift. I think it's a learned technique, and I think anybody of ordinary intelligence and acceptable personality could learn to do it as well as I have. The only thing that has made me successful to the degree that I am has been the pressure of need and the awful fear of failing. As long as I've had to do it, I felt that it should be done as well as I could do it. And I also never had a moment, until the last

four or five years, where I could feel economically secure. But none of my children seem to want to carry on the business, or feel equal to it, and I don't think we're going to inveigle them into it. I think our daughter Adriana is going to come the nearest to it, because she at least has stepped in and learned something about what goes on.

GARDNER: The actual operation.

ZEITLIN: Yes. I think if she had a will to, she could really get to be very good.

GARDNER: You have been very successful, clearly, as a bookseller, through the years. Do you ever regret that you abandoned poetry?

ZEITLIN: No. I have no illusions about that.

GARDNER: Are you content to have been a bookseller?

ZEITLIN: I'd like to have gone on and written something serious. The things I wrote to the point in my life where I tapered off writing were either love lyrics or expressions, of a certain degree, of my own philosophy. But unless you can learn to draw the long bow, there's no sense in going on writing love lyrics and minor poems, and you can't do that unless you dedicate your whole life to it and give [it] all of your thought. I don't think you can be a good part-time poet.

GARDNER: Isn't it true of anything?

ZEITLIN: Well, I don't know. I think that Wallace Stevens seems to have been able to do it, but he was in a peculiar position: I think that his job with the insurance company was a sort of an off-and-on job where he wasn't held to much of a performance standard. But poetry has to be a constant concern. You can't start off the day thinking about composing that sales letter you're going to have to write or doing a big pitch about a book that you want to sell, drawing up a proposal to buy a collection, and have much of the kind of spiritual energy that you need to write poetry.

GARDNER: And yet, at the same time, it requires the same sort of energy and concentration to create the bookselling business, not to mention acquiring the vast range of knowledge that you have through the years. It required that same sort of dedication.

ZEITLIN: Well, the thing is, you don't have to focus it so much. It's a matter of quantity rather than quality. You can expend a lot of energy in a lot of different directions and get a percentage of good results; whereas when you're writing poetry, you can't have near-misses, you have to either produce or nothing.

GARDNER: Well, we're nearing the end of the tape. Do you have any final comments you'd care to make, any sort of overviews about your career, your. . . ?

ZEITLIN: Well, I think I've been very fortunate. I've been able to live the kind of life that I could live most successfully with my peculiar personality. I think of a remark that John Graves, a writer down in Glen Rose, Texas, made when he was being interviewed by Bill Moyers recently. He said, "The only thing you ever own is your own knowledge, the ideas that you've mastered. Those are the things that can't be taken away from you. You can't sell them, and you can keep them with you no matter what else you lose." I think that's a pretty good summing up of a good philosophy. Knowledge, and sensitivity to experience, sensitivity to the world in which we live, growing in sensitivity as we live, growing in knowledge, to the extent that we can know anything, is the greatest reward we can get out of life. I've been lucky in that.

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