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Box 1, Tape 1/7, Side 1 – January 25, 1975

Main Subject of Selection: Walton's novels *Pyramid*, *Delta Queen*, and *You
Wouldn't Believe It*

People mentioned:

Chapman, Loring
Chapman, Pandora
de Longchamps, Joanne
Mascott, Lawrence
Mayberry, Florence
Steinheimer, Rae
VanderHoeven, Mary
Walton, Marie Jeanne (Marijo)
Walton, Myrtle Foose
Walton, Uncle Charles
Walton, Vivian
Walton, Wilber G.

I would like to make a correction for the record. *The Delta Queen* was begun after *Pyramid*. [I don't find any earlier “record” of these novels.] *Pyramid* was the

first book, that I began after my return from the big exhibition in San Francisco [presumably his one-man exhibition at the de Young Museum in 1950. But in my “October Moon” file for Walton is a typed page by Walton stating that the three books were written in 1952. On that document he again mentions the de Young show, so that throws doubt on 1952. He also says there that “Mariejo” was instrumental in arranging the de Young show.]

[There is a gap in the tape here, presumably an erasure.]

And as soon as I finished *Pyramid*, I started *Delta Queen*, to write a totally different kind of a thing. The romantic tract of *Pyramid* was completed, and so I tossed it aside, and now I want[ed] to write a very plain one. Now rereading this thing, one would think that I wrote the plain one first, but I did not. And as I have mentioned [?], I – as Joanne de Longchamps, who was one of the few people who ever read it. Vivian and Mary VanderHoeven have read it. But very few people have read *Pyramid*. I think Loring read it. But Joanne is a poet and I respected her opinion, and she called – she said it’s a poem.

Having written that, I realized that I had documented two separate sections of my experience: my growing up and family background and the WPA years and art school was documented in *Pyramid*. And clear up through the postwar, into the early postwar, World War II. Then I thought what I should do, to do this book, to document – I’m always documenting. I have no other compulsion, I wish to document things. I’m not as inverted as some think me, because for one reason, I’m always thinking about the documentation of the world about me. And I think I’ve seen things that want to be made a matter of record. And for that reason I wrote *You Wouldn’t Believe It*. I did it in a light vein, and it’s a comic line to it. Because things were funny as well as serious in those years, and I preferred the lighter touch. And I also had a great respect for Ludwig Bemelmans, and I saw that art characters around Reno had their own qualities, in that meaning. And now all that world is gone.

Rae Steinheimer was quite sensitive about – “Well, Walton,” he says, “writes about his friends.” Well as I understand it, a writer has to. You either write about your friends and your personal experience, or you’re not writing at all. Hemingway said you better know something, or don’t write about it. . . .

So that puts the writing of those three books, the December of 1950, and January ‘51, February ‘51. I recall they were done in thirty days each. That was a real wrestle. But it was a pleasurable experience, to know you’ve written three books, I’ll tell you that. Whether they were any good or not. And they in their ways stand up over a long haul.

And the experts disagree with me on plot. Well, I felt about *Delta Queen* that if you open the door – the front door – and go through the house, go out the

back, that that's book enough, for me. I didn't want any phony plot. I wanted the record. Now this agent in New York, he criticized it from the point of view of plot. And a plot is a shoddy fabrication, compared with the real thing, in my estimation. And for my part, I have to question: May I not forget about what they call plot? I'm not in the slightest interested in their story line. Now Mascott is very heavy on that. So is my sister [Florence Mayberry], and they're both reasonably successful in their ways. My sister's very successful in her plots. And I cannot read that crap. And Mascott can't write at all. And he makes movies. Cannot write at all. Except he does have tempo, he has a skill in that. My sister has a skill. There's a certain skill they both have in doing these things. . . .

. . . I wrote *Delta Queen* in my own name. First person. The first draft was written from the point of view of the individual called 'I'. I even used my father's name [Wilber G. Walton], and my uncle's name [Charles Walton?], and my mother's name [Myrtle Foose Walton] – all the names were used, even to the secondary people. Then I knew I couldn't publish such a tract, 'cause I was being as honest as I could write it. I didn't want to do that kind of damage to people. And I was very hesitant about that book, putting forward – I only sent it out a couple times. Sent it out to one publisher of the vanity press. Vantage I believe the name of it. They wanted to – No, it wasn't Vantage, it was another one. They wanted to publish it. Well, it cost a few hundred dollars to get it published, but there was no point in that. The money wasn't much, it was like fifteen hundred dollars to publish this book. Well, that would be possible to do it. But you wouldn't have a big house promoting it. But what's the point? And I also felt, well, a vanity press is an embarrassment to get into that. And I didn't want several hundred books around here, stacking against the wall among the pictures. I've got enough remainders of my life! So I'm determined to have it published properly, even posthumously.

So You Wouldn't Believe It, however, had a plot. It's a very intricate plot. I picked up the storm. I blast right into the subject matter, with the characters, then I pick up a storm. Way up the valley, at Verdi. And a little leaf is tossed along. And the wind. Follow the wind, along the Truckee River into Reno. This is a harbinger of things to come. Then there's this great flood, ultimately. And there are an enormous amount of characters, and they're the lead ones, and it's balanced out. It gives me an opportunity to have everybody in the Reno community around that Riverside section, to treat them and develop this little nest of plot. Well, it's a very thin plot. Mainly it's the storm and it's what happens to these people around the storm. Around the great flood. . . .

Now *Pyramid*, *Pyramid* has a plot of circumstance. The two people meeting at the back of the pyramid, at Pyramid Lake. And he's there first, and she comes along, and then they camp overnight. And she's gone. But what happens, they have

these conversations, and he unburdens himself. And well, say it's a male chauvinist book, but by God it was the female who won the day. I mean, he's the one that got left behind. She went on to conquer other fields. She was indestructible. And he was entirely destructible. Well, then you say that's a male sorry for himself. Of course – my God! – sorry for myself.

I wrote it without any names, the first draft. Then I felt that it brightened it a lot to give specific nameology. And I struggled and struggled for names, and finally I settled on Loring Chapman's little girl's name, Pandora. There was no other name – female name – I could think of that fit the thing. I could have called her Jess or Jo or some- – I – Jo, my God, I mean, I think if I did it over again I'd call it by a man's name [suppressing that 'Jo' is Marijo]. But it was written without name, on either side. Then I added the names. And it seemed to add a dimension to the book, when you called him a name.

Now, in the book, he describes to her his experiences, and there is a talking down element, is in that thing. But a lot of people would say, well, this is a talking down, a male chauvinist. But little by little, his position is totally destroyed! He's not the winner in the thing at all. She's triumphant. And she also represents the women's lib, at a time twenty years before we spoke of it in that sense. She was a forerunner. She's a libertarian. And goes her own way. And marriage means very little, and lovers are not permanent, and she has a very extreme regard for independence, gets in all kinds of mix-ups, because society has a structure of its own. But it's a hell of a story. And it has a snapper on it. You go along, everything's just idyllic, and then suddenly on one word you break the camel's back. And he's destroyed in a word. From then on it doesn't take long. He's just destroyed. The whole concept that he thought he had, everything is just lost. Finished, just in a word.

So, so much for plot. God, do I hate the typical plot. Oh, God! Well, now, I decided – I wrote to that agent – I forget his name right now – I have it tacked on the wall. The literary agent has a great function. I think that they might be good bill collectors for writers. I hear complaints, I read complaints about authors that have a hell of a time getting paid by publishers. . . . Now I'm having a hell of a time getting seventy-five dollars from County Beautiful Corporation on a photograph they purchased from me. . . .

. . . These people: you see them on the street, and you can understand how this is a pretty sick people, these Americans. They always were sick.

Box 1, Tape 1/7, Side 2 – January 25, 1975

Main Subject of Selection: Cornelius (Neil) Vanderbilt, Jr.

People mentioned:

Ball, Lyle
Bartlett, Dorothy
Vanderbilt, Neil (Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr.)
Walton, Marie Jeanne (Marijo)

I would come to know Vanderbilt . . . during World War II. He would be in uniform. He had some kind of an understanding with the military that he would wear the uniform. I don't know what his position was – was it uniformed correspondent or what-the-hell. I'd see him many times around the Riverside Hotel in uniform. He was a particular friend of Dorothy Bartlett. And after the war he'd kind of hang around Magnin's. . . . And Marijo worked for Magnin's as a window decorator. But I'd seen Vanderbilt a lot of times. . . . After work was done, he'd wait around, and he had associations with some of the clerks. . . . That was just before the war, I guess. But Marijo had worked for Lyle Ball doing show-card {?} work – it was *during* the war! Then she went over and worked for Magnin's. . . . I remember having conversations with Vanderbilt from time to time – he was a great mumbler. You had a hell of a time understanding him, he mumbled so. It was kind of an Eastern affectation. But he was a pleasant chap, and Reno needed anchors like him in those years. He gave it color.

Box 1, Tape 1/15, Side 1 – November 13, 1974

Main Subject of Selection: Robert Caples' personality

People mentioned:

Caples, Robert
Leger, Fernand
Leger, Mrs. Fernand
Stark, Inez Cunningham
Swanson (Caples), Bettina
Thomas, Helen Marye

Walton tells a story about Inez Cunningham Stark (see Tape 1/16) getting a bill for a Fernand Leger cigarette box after receiving it, she thought, as a gift from Mrs. Leger. Leger had exhibited at the Renaissance Society preceding Walton. Then: Bob Caples had that experience with Helen Thomas. One time one of the interim wives – Bettina – sent Helen a bill for a painting, and that was a sensitive thing. Helen may have ordered that painting, it wasn't a gift, but that outraged – upset Caples, he was a very slow boil guy, but he didn't appreciate that at all, because it upset his social values.

Box 1, Tape 1/16, Side 1 – January 31, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: Walton & his sister Florence; Walton & Caples;
Walton's 1936 exhibition in Chicago; WPA

People mentioned:

Berry, Frances
Berry, Bill
Brundidge's
Caples, Robert
Danysh, Joe
Mayberry, Florence
Ross, Gilbert
Stark, Inez Cunningham
Wilson, Professor (father of Tom Wilson)

She [Florence] had said she was very close to me in her psyche, until I got to be a big boy, and then I went crazy, I was not pleasant anymore after about eight years old, I guess. This occurred in Fresno, I guess an incident where I got into her dime bank, which is a crime, an unforgivable crime, I'm aware of that. . . . I learned my lesson right there, because Florence packs a hell of a wallop. She was a big girl. . . . I was showing my independence, she said, I was becoming obnoxious. . . . She stuffed me in the davenport and sat on it, and I've been phobic ever since about enclosures of that kind. Now this gave me a psychological problem: Ever since that time, I've had a pronounced fear of big young girls.

. . .

[Florence] used to go to parties [at the house of Frances Berry, of whose husband, Bill Berry, Caples made a portrait drawing. Walton saw the portrait there,] not a very good one. That's the first I'd heard of Caples. . . . He's marked my life as much as any person on this earth, past or present. . . . A very under-judged man, Robert Cole Caples, very under-judged. . . . He did these portraits for fifty dollars.

. . .

[Walton and Caples exhibited drawings in Brundidge's window in the mid-1930s.] So it was because of one of these window displays that Inez Cunningham Stark came by. And she was the art critic for the *Chicago Tribune*. And she wanted me to contact her, and I did. And she lived at Professor Wilson's house [father of Tom Wilson] up on the hill near the university, University Terrace, she'd rented for the summer. . . . So I had an exhibit at the University of Chicago [1936], sponsored fully – all the shipping and my ticket there. And she was a most gracious hostess. I lived the life of Riley there for a month. Joe Danysh went to Gilbert Ross, the administrator of the WPA, and urged him to keep me on the payroll, because it was

such an honor for a Nevada artist to be given an exhibition of this importance in Chicago. And I was maintained on the rolls, I didn't miss a check.

Box 1, Tape 1/17, Side 1 – Undated

Main Subjects of Selection: Brundidge's Art Supply; Inez Cunningham Stark & Walton's 1936 Chicago exhibition; Robert Caples' generosity and his connections

People mentioned:

Brundidge, Al
Brundidge, Mrs.
Caples, Robert
Garbo, Greta
Johnson, Evangeline
Stark, Inez Cunningham
Stokowski (Johnson, Staples), Evangeline
Stokowski, Leopold

Al Brundidge . . . was a grumpy bastard. . . . The first Mrs. Brundidge was a very sweet and kind person. . . . There was an incident. I put in some paintings – this was after my early work, exhibiting there, and I put in some paintings that were rather extreme, and I put high prices on them, a thousand dollars. And the customers, the people would come in and say, “How about two of those thousand dollar paintings, haw haw.” And he couldn't stand it. And that ended the exhibiting, he wouldn't show anybody's work anymore. He said it was too damn much trouble. And that was Al Brundidge. I'm indebted to Al Brundidge for having brought Mrs. Stark into my life. . . . She was the president of the Renaissance Society [at the University of Chicago] as well as being the art critic [of the *Chicago Tribune*]. Later on Mrs. Stark went on to become editor of *Poetry* magazine. . . . Mrs. Stark and Evangeline Johnson, these are people of breeding. I met Evangeline Johnson because of Robert Caples, and this brings Al Brundidge's store into the picture again. This is about a year later and Bob asked me to meet him at Brundidge's, and I met him down there, and he said, “There's somebody I would like you to meet, that I'm to meet.” And he said, “It might be worth your while. You'd be interested in meeting her.” And along came this very large and very lovely woman. . . . And she introduced herself to me at one time as Evangeline Staples. . . . She was actually Evangeline Stokowski. Stokowski was off touring Europe with Greta Garbo at the time, and they were lovers, and Evangeline Johnson came to Reno for a divorce and thought she would be pursued by newspaper people. . . .

Box 1, Tape 1/18, Side 1 – c. March 6, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: Robert Caples & Frederic Taubes; Walton's marriage to Marie Jeanne Etcheberry; Santa Fe Hotel; Biscaya

People mentioned:

Arla, Ambrose
Bartlett, Judge George
Biscaya
Caples, Robert
Caples, Shirley Behr
Esain, Martin
Etcheberry, Jeanette
Etcheberry, John, Jr.
Etcheberry, John (Jean Pierre), Sr.
Etcheberry, Paul
Hadlock, Shorty
Orriaga, Josephine Gaston
Orriaga, Martin
Orriaga, Mary
Etcheberry, Louisa (Maria Simona Larralde)
Mayberry, David
Mayberry, Florence
Millar, Monte
Taubes, Frederic
Walton, Marie Jeanne (Marijo) Etcheberry

Now I had been living at Verdi. Bob [Caples] got in touch with me, and I met Shirley. And Bob explained about the matter of Frederic Taubes and his extraordinary information on the technique of oil painting. He said that he and Shirley had arranged to have Taubes with them in Santa Barbara, and to give them a special seminar. And Bob said he saw no reason why I shouldn't join in on the seminar. And that it might be uncommonly helpful in my struggle with the oil medium. . . . Bob and Shirley would sponsor all expenses, and I'd be a guest in their home. Well, I arranged for a leave of absence from the WPA . . . and Bob and Shirley and I left Reno on the train. . . . I was gone for a week.

. . .

On my return, I was to persuade Marijo to marry me – young as she was. [Therefore they married in 1938.] I didn't know how young she was. I think maybe she fibbed to me about her age. Age be damned, I wanted to marry her. So David and Florence [Mayberry] one day – I remember picking up Marijo, I remember sitting there, and this was a portent of things to come: she was very – took a very prolonged time to fix her face up. I thought for a time she was stalling – she may well have been, but she always used that as a device for time, a prolonged

making-up period. She was a career make-up person, it proved to be. Anyway, finally made it, we got to the car, drove up to Virginia City, got the licence – and she lied about her age, said she was eighteen – I don't know if I thought she was eighteen – hell, I don't know. I thought she was eighteen, I guess. She wasn't, she was sixteen. So we were married in the office of the justice of the peace. . . . Well, it happened that Marijo had a small part in the Little Theatre, a walk-on part. . . . She insisted on carrying it through. . . . I was heart-broken from the beginning in this marriage, because I spent the honeymoon alone. She stayed in Reno with me out at Verdi, a newly married man. A young man. Well, that was a very hard experience for the both of us. I think David went to talk to her, told her about my condition of despair – I was in tears, to tell you the truth, all the time, constantly mourning for my lot – my god, I was abandoned. Finally she came out.

Well, . . . she had told her mother, Louisa Etcheberry, said, "Well, I'll tell Papa. Let me do it." Well, I found out later that Papa, when he heard, was hysterical. He went to his lawyer to see what could be done, and the lawyer said, well, customarily, an annulment can't be forced through. He said the judges typically won't annul. And he said the best thing for you is just to see how it works. So he gave up on that front. And was to come up to the ranch at Verdi. And it was a very pleasant afternoon. John Etcheberry, Senior, Louisa Etcheberry, the former Marie Jeanne Etcheberry – who originally had been named Jeannette, but she was fascinated with the name Marie Jeanne, which is a common enough name in the Basque community, had adopted the name Marie Jeanne. Of course the hosts were my brother-in-law and sister.

Well, we were told that Ambrose, the bartender, was going to marry Marie Jeanne's cousin Mary. Mary, whose mother operated a little hotel up the street. Aunt Josephine. So Ambrose and Mary were to be married at the big church on 2nd Street, the Catholic church. Now this was like a mafia funeral. Crowds were there from the Basque community from all over the state. And Marijo and I were the honored guests at this occasion. We stood up with them. I was the best man for Ambrose, and Marijo was late – late – late – she took her time, man, did she drag her feet. I think it was because – she was so late that I went down alone, because we were gonna be too late for the ceremony. She was so late – finally she came. She stood up with Mary, and arrived dreadfully late! Of course there were pressures on her that I don't know anything about. It had to do with the whole scene – many pressures. She didn't want to go at all! I'd bet. I don't know it, but I would guess it. I guess she wanted to crawl away and go hide some place.

Well, there was a very, very big celebration of both marriages. It was a joint celebration, at the Santa Fe Hotel. Now, at the Santa Fe Hotel there was a dining room in back where they served the typical family style Basque table. They had

two tables – I mean, many tables put together – a long, long thing – they served many, many people. It was a big affair, and lavish, lavish service. I mean, many, many dishes, the Basque prepare. The French regard them as country folk, which they are, but many of their dishes are better than the French dishes. Some aren't. But this was a mountainous cuisine, and much champagne. And the dancing. And with Ambrose dancing – he was an expert dancer. Ambrose Arla was just one fine dancer. And he did the hat dance. He danced in the hat. And still dancing pick up the liquor and drink the wine. And he was good at drinking from the zagi, they would have certain contests with this. It was my virginal experience with the Basque revelry. I was to become very familiar with it. One of the wondrous things of society is the Basque celebration. Well, we had a big one.

Later, when Marijo and I would go to the hotel, she was very flippant in her nervousness. And I couldn't interpret this. I felt just derelict. She was flippant about me – “Oh, him, you know, this is my spouse,” she would say, which is a kind of a strange word to use for that occasion, but she didn't know what to do, she was so nervous about the damn thing, that I'm sure that she didn't know, and it was hurting me, to be treated – I was never treated so in my entire life. I'd been always a kind of protected individual, as I see it from here. But I felt looked at, without being stared at. I was surrounded by strange language. One didn't know if they were talking about the news of the day, or sheep, or was it me, was the question. Once in a while, I'm afraid, it was me. I'd see the glances, and you'd hear the laughter. Well, I don't know how deep I'll go into this. I don't know, but I guess there were some that felt they had good reason for the laughter. I overcame this in the fullness of time. I was to become, as they said of Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., in England, I was to become almost one of them, but not quite. They had a running gag about white people. They would call the rank-and-file average American a white man, and they'd laugh like hell about it, because they make such merriment about their minority status – and I was well aware that I was a white man in this, not hostile, but strange environment. And I was to have through the years some of the dearest friends, some of the warmest relationships, there at the Santa Fe. Most especially I remember my friend Martin Esain. Martin was to be the bartender, Ambrose was to go into a new situation in his marriage to Mary, he went to Austin, ultimately. Josephine married a Basque gentleman who had a large ranch, he was a very small man, a very witty man, from Austin. And he had the ranch at Silver Creek [north of Austin], and this was a big holding, a big enterprise – he was very successful. He had so many cows, when the war broke out, that he didn't know how many . . . because he'd taken over other ranch properties in the Depression, and had inherited all this range stock.

Well, Marie Jeanne's brothers, John and Paul, were also to come out to the

ranch at Verdi, to visit us, briefly, one Sunday, and that began my relationship with them, which in years and years to come was to mature, as a friendship on two distinct different levels. John was to be rather close to me, in a unique way. I was to owe very much to Johnny, in my understanding of building things.

Now, we stayed there through the winter. And in the spring, got an apartment on 8th Street in Reno. Had the WPA truck move out those masonite panels to the new residence. . . . [Walton talks about laying out the Tom Sawyer panels.] I remember bringing over my friend, Monte Millar, Judge Bartlett's daughter, the poet, who wished to see the painting – I'd seen her in passing, and invited her over to see it. . . .

About this period, the Federal Art Project was dissolved on the West Coast, and I was assigned to the Education Project, which had tragic overtones for me [involving his mother's co-ownership of the Vanity Dress Shop]. . . .

Marie Jeanne's mother told Marijo to have me talk to Papa, about a house. She said that Papa wanted to build a house for us, and that I should talk to Papa. Now I don't know what Louisa told Marijo, the conversations were in Basque right before me, and I never knew what the exchange was, I would get the translation – I would wander off and do something else while they were talking, and perhaps the conversation would have occurred down at the hotel, back in the kitchen while I was at the bar with a cold beer. Well, Marijo made it clear to me that what I was to do was to bring the subject up with Papa. Well, it was a warm summer evening. I saw John Etcheberry, Senior standing by himself in front of the hotel, and I broached the subject as best I could, and I dare say he'd never heard of it. I thought that I was talking into his desire, that he had brought the matter up himself. But it appears to have been some kind of a strategy on the part of the well-meaning Louisa. I was utterly confused, didn't know what I was talking about. Well, then it went into process. I never mentioned it again, and regretted it at once – I was utterly humiliated. In fact it was difficult to talk to John Etcheberry, Senior about the time of day or anything. I had no communication with him at all. And he had a very deep resentment of me, because he had had some place in his fantasy – he had in mind to take Marie Jeanne to Europe, he wanted to take her abroad back to the old country at a certain point, foreseeable – now this is all shot down, and he was bitter about that. He was always bitter about, uh, the situation. Because of these omissions in his personal life. He had been robbed. Well, Louisa, I was to find out, would have her way in all things. Although she didn't run the establishment, he was boss, he had the large sheep operation out in the hills, and he maintained the hotel, and she managed the kitchen and the hotel proper. He took care of the bar affairs and the sheep business. But for those who understood about the Basque traditions, they're fairly matriarchal. And the men seem to front things, but the

women get their way and they engineer things. Louisa was a master at this. She did just about what she pleased, and she was a generous, kind and gentle and well-meaning person, but things happened according to Louisa's schedule. And Louisa had in mind that the house should be built. Of course, I felt like an appendage all the way in these things, and knew I was. However, Louisa didn't see it that way. . . . Basque men have a unique position in the Basque society. It's my judgment from long witnessing that the women are the managers. And the men have the tail feathers. They front things. But the women are the doers. So a house was built.

[[Interpolated from later in the tape:] The property had a mostly put together rock wall, the clutter of the clearing of the field was piled up . . . – I remember kind of meadow grass that sloped down, and there were cottontails that lived in that rock wall. It was a very charming place in the beginning. And the new house looked like an intrusion on the landscape. . . .]

And her brother John, who was an enormously talented young man, Johnny built the house. He had a young friend of his, Shorty Hadlock, was his assistant.

[Following concerning Biscaya incorporated in my file "Biscaya," "Biscaya 2" and/or "Biscaya3." Other passages added to "Walton Notes" elsewhere.] And there was another gentleman who was to help in the construction of this new house. That was Biscaya. Biscaya dug the hole for the oil tank, removed a rock of enormity. He had been a miner in Montana and knew how to handle big rocks. . . . Biscaya was not house-broke. He was a fearsome person. As his name implies, he came from Biscay. He lived on a chicken ranch, in the tiniest little shed – little home, little house – like a wood shed, only it was – I was to see it ultimately many years later. But he would grunt at you, and he was fierce, and he might hit you with something. He was a man – he was a caution. Shorty Hadlock had been up in the rafters somewhere, doing something, and he had asked Biscaya to hand him a board or tool, and Biscaya hadn't been communicated with properly and the tool was not forthcoming, and Hadlock cussed him. Well, when Hadlock came down, Biscaya got after Shorty with an axe, and chased him around and around the house. And Shorty quit the job, he wouldn't go back, until they got rid of Biscaya.

Well, they sorted them out, and Biscaya would do something and then they'd take him away – Louisa would go pick up Biscaya in his little hovel, up by Sun Valley on this ranch, where Biscaya had a canvas erected as a sort of a tree, to give him shade. And the big airplanes would groan over on their way to the airport, with that crawling cast shadow sweeping over in and out of the hills and vales. And Biscaya could not stand aircraft. I have seen him, in later years, when he was assigned by Louisa to mow the lawn – he would do it with a sheep shears, he wouldn't do it with a lawn mower. He'd cut it with a sheep shears, and I've seen

him drop his sheep shears, and shake his fist at the airplane overhead, yelling at the top of his voice, "Christo! Christo!," shaking his fist. Marijo once asked him about the airplanes, and he told her in Basque that they had devils. That they were chickens. In his sense, the chickens meant that they were crazy, they were devils: they had chickens. When he would shake his hands, and the airplane didn't go away, he ran – he would run to his left, and run to his right, and run back again and back, like he was going to be pounced upon by this airplane. He'd just run, scatter when he saw an airplane directly overhead. Oh, how he hated airplanes. He regarded them as objects of the devil, and the pilots insane. Well, I've seen him clip an entire lawn with sheep shears. I have Biscaya's sheep shears with me yet. And the cloth in which he wrapped the handles was long on them in later years. . . . He was tall and skinny, with a hatchet face and a black moustache, and wore a leather cap, an old one. He also wore tennis shoes, and the tops of the tennis shoes he'd cut with a knife, cut them down sort of halfway between shoes and Oxfords. He couldn't stand the confinement, the restriction of those uppers of the tennis shoes. He also cut off – ripped off, tore off or scissored off or cut off the bottoms of his pants – he always wore overalls, bib overalls. And sometimes a jacket. Sometimes he would walk to that property, through the years to come. Other times, Louisa brought him in the car. Now he would talk to Louisa – no one else, he wouldn't communicate, he would "Ruh! Ruh!" to anybody, but he would talk to Louisa. Not much, but they had a community. He had a high regard for her, and she for him, an enormous sympathy for him, and understanding of him. Biscaya was not crazy. Biscaya was just not for this society. There are animals like that, too. I once had a dog named Cuddly Puppy, who was a cross between a German Shepherd and a Great Dane, and he had to be put away. He couldn't adapt. . . . I will say, in this early period, I saw him standing on a rock in the field – you see, there were a lot of sheep grazing up there, the Etcheberry sheep. This was farmland at this time, no housing – as I said, it's all houses now. Biscaya standing on a rock, urinating, in a great arc. The cars passing, and he paying no attention at all, to hell with them. He had to pee, pee anyway. And he would.

I had had in mind from the beginning a much more modest situation, something that we could handle with my meager income. But Louisa would get ideas that we should have this and that, and she was so generous and kind, by god, the first thing you knew, there it was. And through the marriage she was so generous that she would give all manner of things – chickens and coffee and sugar and all kinds of things would materialize from the Santa Fe Hotel. Well, later I was to find out that it's a Basque tradition for the workers who work for the lord of the manor to go home with certain things from the kitchen. And that the owners of the house understand that that's traditional, in the Basque country. Well, she continued

the principle from the Santa Fe Hotel; and we didn't buy any coffee for years. . . . Marijo and I were married for almost 20 years. . . .Such a generous woman, and so sweet. But even continued when the hotel was taken over by Martin Esain. . . . Well, she worked like a slave in that kitchen. Oh, I never saw anybody work like Louisa. Poor thing had the varicose veins in her legs, and she'd been a very pretty young woman, one could see, but she was just beaten with the labors . . . and didn't know any other life style. That was it. She was a most respected cook. Oh, she had a big reputation as a cook. She performed miracles at the oven. Well, this didn't do my ego any good. There was no way to discuss this. Marijo wouldn't talk about it ever, anything that had to do with her family I could never even discuss. Couldn't even discuss it at all. . . .

Box 1, Tape 1/18, Side 2 – c. March 6, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: Walton's work with Dr. Caples; Co-Arts; Walton's marriage; Walton's religious explorations with AME Episcopal Church and Baha'i

People mentioned:

Booker, Mrs. Emmer
Booker, Rev. Emmer
Caples, Dr. Byron
Caples, Robert
Griffing, Helen
Jenkins, Marian
Mayberry, David
Mayberry, Florence
Merezhkovsky
Peckham, Dorlan
Ruth, Marian
Thomas, Father
Thomas, Mrs.
Walton, Marie Jeanne (Marijo) Etcheberry
Walton, Myrtle Foose
Wilson, Tom

[Walton was "humiliated" to be working as a janitor for the Post Office.]

Along about this time Bob Caples came through. He had joined the Navy [in late 1942]. And, I was to find out that he had suggested to his father, Dr. Byron Caples, the chief of Venereal Disease Control with the State Department of Health, he had been urged to consider me for the job of investigator, that perhaps I could take care of some of that follow-up work and do some artwork for the advertising campaign of the program. Dr. Caples contacted me – either he or Bob did. I went

over and talked with Dr. Caples, who I had known socially for many years. And I accepted that job. . . .

That threw me into contact with Tom Wilson, who I had only met on the occasion of the opening of the Co-Arts Gallery, an enterprise of perhaps 1940, I guess. [Actually Co-Arts was formed at the end of 1941 following Pearl Harbor.] A cooperative gallery in the basement – Dorlan Peckham was one of the leading lights there, that's how I met Marian Jenkins, who became Marian Ruth, the wife of the sheriff. She had a previous marriage and a young daughter. Marian was doing commercial art, had a little studio down there, which she shared with Dorlan, who was also a commercial artist in the Reno community. Tom Wilson had brought over a watercolor he had done. That's the only painting I know about him having done. Then, as they say, that advertising people are very often disappointed artists. . . . Well, Tom Wilson had just opened an agency. . . . He moonlighted his advertising operation and took care of his job as administrative officer of the Venereal Disease Control Program under Dr. Caples. . . . And he would go down to his office now and then, which was in the same building, the Clay-Peters Building. . . . That was the same building in which I'd had a studio opposite the studio of Bob Caples – actually I had a closet, Caples had a small office which he turned into a studio.

So those were for Marijo peculiar years. Here her young husband the artist was a venereal disease investigator, who was obliged to go out every night to work on his cases, that's the only way he could find the people who had been reported. . . . So my regimen was to show up late in the morning, perhaps 10 o'clock, and I worked all night long. . . . Well, Dr. Caples and I had a very flexible investigator and doctor-in-chief relationship. We worked it very smoothly. . . . We were very close for just about four years. Meanwhile, an erosion was occurring in my private life. Marijo never knew for sure where I was. I was gone night after night after night, and what was I after? I was after girls, wholesale. Also, I had a certain amount of education work, and there were occasions when I would have to go out of town on investigations. In the late term I had to be gone for a week or ten days at a time, promoting legislation. . . . Under the pressure of the environment of our marriage, and the fact that we had two separate worlds, Jo and I grew – tended to grow apart, as time went on.

Well, before the war [late 1930s, I believe], we had a profound religious experience. Speaking for myself – I know Marijo had been a traditional Catholic. Although not identified with the church as a member, she'd been raised in a Catholic environment. And I had no formal connection with organized religion. And we were both hungering for a connection with society. Well. It just happened that the Education Project [of the WPA] had sent me down to the African

Methodist Episcopal Church to see Reverend Emmer Booker, who had appealed to them for assistance for a Halloween program, that the church was to put on. [According to the City Directory, Booker was with the Bethel African Methodist Church.] I contacted Dr. Booker, who was a young minister – a beautiful man! A most handsome man. We became very dear friends. I helped him with that – in fact, Marijo, when she heard about it, threw herself into it, delighted to assist in this pageant. And we did a crepe paper display, sort of stage back-up for their tableau, which was a very charming production, with this rich native talent. They had some men from Peavine Alley come down and sang a most engaging bit. And various performances. Rich in talent. I mean, just off the tips of their fingers, just talented. It was tremendous. Well, I was delighted to be associated with them. And Emmer Booker, who was prematurely gray. . . . And I was to see a great deal of Emmer. And we would have long talks, heart-to-heart talks. And I explained my concern for spiritual existence in society, and we could concur on – our social views were very close, and he was prone to socialism and so was I. We didn't call it anything. . . . Well, there seemed to be no end of the Depression, which only was ended incidentally when they invented war for that era. . . . I came to be known by that entire congregation personally. In fact, I was to meet the bishop and inquire about the possibility of becoming a minister in their church. These conversations occurred. Emmer couldn't see any reason why not.

At the same time, I was not limiting my inquiry into religious faith. I had entered an exhibition at the St. Stephens Church, which was the headquarters of Father Thomas, a rather young, vital, busy Episcopal minister, who was active in community affairs, and involved himself in the Reno Art Center, and was a very close personal friend of mine. It was in his office that I found the pint of whisky behind a copy of *Jesus the Unknown* by Merezhkovsky by accident. He was a liberal, and his wife was a great hand at making stewed kidneys and Maryland eggnog. . . . But I was more responsive to a more vigorous approach to spiritual matters, and I found the answer in Emmer Booker. . . . Well, about the same time, my mother [Myrtle Foose Walton] and my sister [Florence Mayberry] and my brother-in-law David [Mayberry] – we'd all go over there, Marijo and myself, the whole family, every Sunday we'd go to the AME Church to hear Emmer Booker. We just loved them. Became very fond of them – of him personally. And later I found out that was to be a disturbance in his home life, because his wife didn't understand that, that my mother and my sister were very outpouring – it wasn't easy to interpret their ideas, they were so frankly friendly that it could make you nervous. Screaming and squealing and yelling and cheering when – so excited and happy and pleased to see their friends. And this could be misunderstood.

Well, in any case, Helen Griffing came along into our life about that time.

Helen was a pioneer – a Baha’i pioneer in the Reno theater. And she made a very heavy project of our family. . . . Ultimately, we were called to join the Baha’i faith about that time, largely through the care and understanding of Helen Griffing. . . . So I was to become a Baha’i lecturer, my sister and I spelling one another on many occasions. . . . Marijo threw herself into Baha’i work fervently. Her best efforts were in the publicity department, which was her more natural medium. She was not much of a public speaker. . . . [Walton had problems with church doctrine.] Well, I just figured that I was the cause of difficulty, and in the faith, one of the main principles is if you’re the causer of difficulty, you remove yourself. So I removed myself. I knew I was going to cause nothing but trouble. And went into a kind of limbo. Well, I knew that that wouldn’t work, but what could I do? The group irritated me fitfully [?] because of these inconsistencies with the letter of their law. . . . Well, Marijo maintained her connection with it. This further split us.

Box 1, Tape 1/19, Side 1 – March 6, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: Walter Van Tilburg Clark; Biscaya

People mentioned:

Biscaya
Clark, Walter Van Tilburg
Etcheberry, John, Junior
Etcheberry, John, Senior
Etcheberry, Louise
Etcheberry, Paul
Walton, Vivian

Walter Van Tilburg Clark told me, before his first book [*The Ox-Bow Incident*] was published – well, that’s his second book, he published his first one himself, in a vanity press, *Seven Women in Gale’s House*. I’m indebted to Rae Steinheimer for that piece of information. . . . I was complaining to Walter about rejections by publishers. I said I get all these god-damned notes all the time, and it makes you tired. I said the best I seem to get is a letter now and then. I said the last one I got was from *Atlantic Magazine*. . . . He said, “Well, I’ve got a whole suitcase full of rejection slips,” he said, “you’re doing better than I am.” He said, “I never get a letter.” Well, then he went into orbit.

. . .

[After a long discussion of receiving rejection slips and letters for his writings, both articles and books:]

Well, that’s the way it’s been with me, I’m a man of near misses. Vivian said today, “It’s a lot easier in the painting field than in the writing field, isn’t it?” I said, “Well, it would appear so.” I’ve done really well when I was in a position to

hustle paintings. And when I'd get a mural, I did better. So it goes.

But I have this urge in my life to do certain things that aren't painting. I've written *The Mark of Man*, which is now destroyed and only exists in certain quotes, a book of valuable theory. The theory has been salvaged. And I started several different books, and halfway through, maybe, I'd lose interest in myself. I, however, completed the Pyramid text, *Delta Queen*. And *You Wouldn't Believe It*. And then did the Virginia City book, with text and photos. And now this large work of my life, which I propose to call *October Moon*, which is the subject of these tapes. It's a catch-all. And the tapes I will make available fifty years after the giving of them to some archive establishment. Because there will be material in there that I won't want mishandled. Moreover, I look forward to the possible reissuing of the book, posthumously, with the expurgated tape material included by editors. It is clearly a device in the manner of Marquis de Sade. I have a conviction that the Marquis de Sade wrote sexual material and the strange content of his works because he was a frustrated writer, knowing full well that if he made it sexy and weird, that sooner or later it would emerge, as it has. He proved his case, because a student reading the works of Marquis de Sade, a scholar, will find a hell of a lot more in that material than sex mania. . . . You don't have to agree with him, but his critique of society is valid. . . .

. . .

Now I, on occasion, would go out to the sheep camp, after John Etcheberry, Senior had passed away. Paul, his younger son, had taken the reins, had quit his job in the tire department of Sears & Roebuck, and went out to manage the Etcheberry affairs in the hills and the desert. John, the older brother, was working at the ironworks as a welder. He also was active as a contributor to the sheep enterprise, as a baseman in Reno. . . . Paul was the executive handler of the sheep camp.

Now to understand this situation at all, one must appreciate the geographic scope of the sheep operation in the West of the United States. . . . In the summertime the sheep are to be found in the high Sierras. In the wintertime, the sheep are to be found in the desert, in those flats just east of the range of the Sierra Nevada. My brother-in-law Paul ran the sheep in the tradition of his father, wintering just east of Lake Pyramid at Nightingale Mine, which was his base name. . . . Nightingale looks toward the Lovelock country on its eastern slope. . . .

I went with Paul to the Nightingale Mine in the early spring or late winter on one occasion, at least it was before the sheep had moved to the high ground. And I was always enchanted to go with Paul. Paul and I didn't have the cleanest communication, I had a little better rapport with Johnny for other reasons. Paul, it seemed to me, had potentials toward intellectualism, that were a little more clear than Johnny's, but Paul freely – there was no money in that kind of thinking, and

so he wouldn't even begin. But he had an aptitude toward intellectualism that he didn't even start. Johnny had none. Johnny was a different cut altogether. And I accepted both as my brothers-in-law at their declared levels. I never expected more than that which they entertained for themselves. And that's important in human relationships, it seems to me. So when we were together, we were always complete. What they expected of me, I do not know, I've no idea – to keep my chin up, I suppose. They were never critical. The Basque community doesn't seem to be a community that criticizes, like in the general American community. . . . They play a tight game, holding their cards close to the chest, and I respect this – this is a thing of cultural achievement. . . . You may feel a sodden unacceptance at certain points, but not specific criticism. . . .

And it was pleasant to go with Paul to Nightingale Mine, and it was always pleasant to associate with the sheep camp life, and to become part of it. I enjoyed that very much. And to be accepted by a shepherd was a mark of honor in my book. I felt wonderfully redeemed when I saw that one of the employees at the sheep camp would accept me, genuinely. And sometimes they could scarcely talk English. . . .

So the sheep move from the desert over to the middle ground. In the case of Paul's sheep, they were moved up to Madeline's Plain [Madeline Plains, in Lassen County, CA], from Nightingale, which was miles and miles above Pyramid Lake into California from Nevada, above the north end of the Needle territory of Pyramid Lake, up and up and up to Madeline Plain. Now this camp was at Rye Patch. The intermediate camp for lambing and for marking was at Rye Patch. And the sheep would come over Madeline Plain. . . .

I went a few times to help with the lambing and the marking, because always the sheep camp was short-handed. . . . So therefore it left the door open they asked me if I would go. This was the middle of the war, and I'm a VD investigator.

Box 1, Tape 1/19, Side 2 – March 7, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: Sheep camp; Biscaya; ranch and house on Marsh Avenue

People mentioned:

Biscaya
Etcheberry, John. Jr.
Etcheberry, Johnny-Pete
Etcheberry, Louise
Etcheberry, Paul
Hinch, Nicky
Walton, Marie Jeanne (Marijo) Etcheberry

And that is how I came to gather the material for the short story, "Ride 'im, Cowboy." It was lambing time, and I was assigned the duty of camp tender. Now there are two forms of camp tender. One is the boss. The camp tender at that level would have been Paul, my brother-in-law, who would periodically take the pickup truck out into the mountains or desert to join with the shepherd and get him his periodic supplies. Now, there's another type of camp tender, which I was on this occasion, and that is the camp tender who cooks the meals, and tends camp, keeps the fires going at these periods of emergency such as lambing time or marking time. And on this occasion at Rye Patch, in the middle of World War II, it was lambing time. Now they lamb at a time when the snow may fall. It's as early as they dare. They dare not breed the sheep at such a period – it's very controlled . . . the sires, they turn them into the flocks in a controlled pattern. . . . The lambs are born when the snow still may fly. Now this long narration of mine related to Biscaya, actually. Biscaya is my subject, but I have to top you up on the background of what a sheep camp amounts to. Now later on, after the lambing time, then there's a period of marking time, when they stamp the tar mark on them and dock their tails. . . . From this point they go on up to the high Sierras. In the case of Paul's sheep, they went up Westwood deep in the mountains – there's a lake up there, Lake Almanor – beyond that country, into the slate hills. And the herder moves them around from area to area, letting the sheep graze. And Paul would go every so often, perhaps once a week or so – meet them in rendezvous, at a prescribed place. The shepherders would tie a cloth on a bush to indicate that his camp was nearby . . . and the pickup truck would stop when you find the cloth – and [would use] his country wit to find the tent. . . . The mountain people know how to handle themselves. And Paul was expert at this. He was a beautiful figure. He had inherited all of the great intuitions of the sheepmen. And Johnny, too, for that matter. Johnny could have handled it as well as Paul. He liked to stay at home – he was married and had little Johnny-Pete, so he didn't want to – he was not a natural for that assignment. . . .

At Rye Patch I learned the art of cooking the sheep camp stew. Now they butcher a yearling – that's the prime meat, of the yearling, not the lamb. Now you've got mutton, on the one hand, if they get too old. But the sheepmen that I have known do not prefer lamb at all. They prefer yearling lamb, which is a full-bodied young sheep. It was male, of course. They never butcher the female. So I would prepare these stews in their tradition – Paul would show me how. It's a vegetable stew. You make squares of meat, about an inch square, let us say, loosely. You braise that in oil and seal it. And you pour off the excessive [sic] oil and then you include your vegetables – carrots and potatoes and cabbage, etc. With

a good deal of garlic, and onions. And this is in a Dutch over. . . . It's highly seasoned with California mild chili powder. And with a heavy lid, it steams on the top of the sheep camp stove. This is a rectangular stove – wood stove, with a flat top. And in the morning it's whoever shows up first in the main tent starts the fires. It may or may not be the camp tender. It's anybody. And at the sheep camp they've got their "Kafia," the coffee in the morning. They make the big coffee pot. And the herders drink their coffee in their bowls, with much sugar – five inch diameter, perhaps six, about two and a half inches tall. And they'll pour the coffee in that, and add milk, and break bread in that. And this is kind of a veritable coffee stew. Not coffee in the American sense at all. This is their morning drink. Well, it varies. The new generations tend to go for their coffee in the American style. But the old shepherders from the old country drink their coffee with the French bread – not French bread, it's – Paul made the bread, it's Basque bread, sheep camp bread. Shepherd loaf. . . .

Well, I was camp tender at Rye Patch, and I'd finished cleaning up at the camp, and took a walk, at random. All the hands had gone out to the sheep. Lambing time. Biscaya was with us on that occasion. He didn't often go out to the sheep camp, but he was a weirdo – he was weird. And among the shepherders he was strange. He was remote from all, not only the white people but from the Euskaldunak, which is the Basque name for the Landsmann. Biscaya stayed by himself all the time. Ate by himself. Joined in with no one. Well, he was night man. He was so incompatible with society that he only would accept the job of night man, the man who sits with the sheep all night long. But the sheep have difficulties in this lambing period, and they need help – sometimes the breech birth. And the herder will have to reach in with his arm, clear up into the sheep, into the vagina, and twist the lamb so that it will emerge properly. It's the most pathetic thing in the world, to see a ewe down, with an impossible birth.

One twilight, Marijo and I were driving home, and she said, "Stop! Stop!" She said, "Stop! There's a ewe in trouble." And we were all but home, and on the edge of the property, with this ewe down in a ditch – depression. Marijo ran out of the car, ran over to the ewe. The poor thing was just suffering – just suffering as though in her final hours. Agonized, twisting and suffering and straining and straining. And Marijo was in tears. And Marijo in her town clothes kneeled down to the sheep's side in this muddy ground and reached inside the ewe's vagina to feel for the lamb. And she felt the lamb, and she tried, she tried to turn the lamb about so it would emerge properly. But the feet were already started out, and she could not. She struggled as she could to turn those feet, those legs – those long legs were twisted in there, a breech birth. And finally she had to give up, and in tears we left the ewe to her doom. Marijo cried all night.

So this will explain Biscaya's duties as night man. Well, it was perhaps ten o'clock in the morning. Furthest from my mind was Biscaya. In fact, you'd only see him sitting on the edge of the campsite from time to time, totally to himself. Sometimes whittling. Well, my chores were done, and it was a clear, sunlit morning, and I took this random walk. And it was some distance from camp, mounting a little rounded hill, and I heard a song, faintly, I picked up this song, and I was attracted to this song, this familiar song. Stronger and stronger I heard it. And finally clearly, it began, "Mexicali Rose, I love you. I'll come back to you some sunny day." And peering over the knoll, it was Biscaya! By himself, overlooking the sheep. Crouched there, with his leather hat, his jacket, his overalls, and his severed tennis shoes. I backed down the way I'd come, without turning, and when my head was out of sight, I turned around and left, with Biscaya still singing, "Mexicali Rose, I love you. I'll come back to you some sunny day." And that's how I came to find the true Biscaya. Who knew English better than anybody suspected.

Now, on other occasions, Biscaya came to accept me a little more, but never very much. It was an acceptance of tolerance. After New York [1946], Marijo and I were so happy to be back in Nevada and home, we decided to build a sort of patio at the Marsh Avenue place. And we came to the Comstock, to Virginia City, to find old brick. We inquired about, and were told there were bricks down below the power house. When we found them, we made other inquiries as to who owned them. We were told that a person called Nicky Hinch owned them. Well, we negotiated with Nicky Hinch, who was a character in his own right. . . . We paid him twenty-five dollars for brick, as many as we wanted. Ultimately, he said, "Well," he said, "I'll sell you the whole property for another twenty-five dollars." And we were so pleased to be back from New York City, and so joyous over the opportunity of acquiring a piece of property on the Comstock for fifty dollars that we went up to the courthouse and negotiated the transaction and bought this property – this property from which I am taping at this moment. Well, in a sense. The adjacent property. Because the property Nicky Hinch had waved his arms over [laughs] he didn't own – he owned part of it. And when I had all the parts of this house ready to be delivered, I had the survey made, I found out I didn't own what Nicky had sold me. But the thing is that then I acquired it from the county, very cheap, for fifty dollars a lot. He had nine lots down here. I bought a parcel of six – actually I bought a parcel of three from Nicky, legitimately, which were just mining dumps, I mean the most barren earth, flatlands beside the mining dumps. So we had access to these bricks. What the bricks were were bricks from the old gas plant that was here, the historic gas plant. The Virginia City Gasworks, which is this property.

So Marie Jeanne had a rapport with Biscaya. She'd talked with her mother and her mother suggested, well, Biscaya would be helpful in loading the bricks on the truck. . . . Well, we loaded bricks on this pickup with Biscaya's help. Marijo and I went out to the chicken ranch toward Sun Valley, between Reno and Sparks, to pick up Biscaya. And we were several days on this project. Biscaya lasted two days, and the third day, he wasn't available. And nobody in Virginia City, absolutely a deserted ghost town, with a little action on C Street in those years. Nothing like it became. And finally Marijo asked why Biscaya wouldn't go anymore, and she said Louisa reported that Biscaya said, "Too many Americans." Well, I was the only American around, that was one too many for him. But he didn't like the awareness of other society – he accepted me [?].

The second day that we picked up Biscaya at his little cabin, I checked the oil of the car as he was sitting beside Marijo. This strange figure of a man, this unnerving image of who was Biscaya. Well, I checked the oil, and I tore my hand on some wire or something – the blood, my god, the blood spurted. And Biscaya paled! And I hold my hand and wipe it off with Kleenex, and he just paled, and he said, "Zhu! Zhu! Zhu!" and he jumped out of the car and he ran to the cabin, yelling, "Yai! Yai!" – he beckoned me, he didn't speak, he just beckoned and he grunted. And I followed him in there, and in his cabin were wires – strings. Across strings across the ceiling he had many, many sacks. Very old stained stacks. Instead of a wallet, he carried his money in a sack. He would go into a store and take out a sack, a cotton sack, and – this cloth in which he tied his money, and he would untie his money, pay them, and tie it up again, put it back in his pocket. And his cloths were everything to him. He had all these cloths up there. He wrapped bacon in them, all kinds of things. They were terribly stained, and just half-washed. He insisted that I wrap my hand with that – oh, I was torn between blood-poisoning and Biscaya. So I wrapped the hand with this cloth. And drove to a drug store near the underpass at Fourth Street, and went in for a bandage, a band-aid. And I took off his cloth and put on a band-aid, and he was most disdainful of that band-aid. He just was disgusted with me. Well, I was terrified of blood poisoning. But in any case, Biscaya had paled at my injury. His human mercy was just overflowing. And that was the depths of Biscaya that should be on record. Now, here is the biggest brute that I ever met in society – just seemingly the most complete brute of my acquaintance, this brusque man. So he refused to go with us anymore.

Biscaya was a familiar figure at the home place on Marsh Avenue. Bear in mind, the Etcheberry home, the original ranch house, is beside this newly constructed house that was built on the occasion of our marriage. The two were isolated, an eighth of a mile before there was another building. A sheep ranch. And

perhaps a horse or a donkey. Chickens. Louise kept chickens. Louisa would bring Biscaya to the home ranch to do chores, one thing or another, whatever the hell had to be done. Dig something, he'd dig. One time they told him to dig a row, they wanted him to dig a little ditch, pointed it out with a string – had to put a string on with a stake, because he wanted to be told, he didn't want any mistake. And they put this string out and told him to dig along that line. And when they came home to pick him up to take him home at dark, at twilight, Biscaya was way down the country! He was a hell of a worker. He dug past the end of the second stake and kept a straight line. He had dug a ditch for eighth of a mile! He'd dug this ditch. They'd only meant for him to dig from stake to stake, but hadn't explained it, so he kept on going. He dug clear across the property. He was a hard man to communicate with.

As I said, he would cut our lawn with a sheep shears. He disdained a lawn mower, it was anathema. But I was told by Louisa in the morning. She had communicated with Marijo, and this was by relays I'd get the information. Louisa would talk to Biscaya, and then Louisa would talk to Marijo and then Marijo would tell me that Biscaya would – be sure he had some bread. Well now, about noontime, there was a terrible battering on the back door! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang-Bang-Bang-Bang! Oh, my god, I dropped my painting, I rushed to the back door – there was Biscaya, with his black leather hat and his jacket and his overalls, four-five inches above his ankles, and his cut-down shoes.

He said, "Girl! Girl!" meaning Marie Jeanne, who was not there, she was in town. "Girl! Girl!"

I said, "Marijo isn't here. She go! She go! She go! She go town! She no here!"

"Ugi-la! Ugi-la!"

Well, I knew 'ugia' meant bread, so I turned and got him some bread, and he took the bread – he just grabbed it from me, he just "Ruh!" He grabbed it from me and just turned his shoulder and went away.

Now that was after I knew that he accepted me, tolerated me. That was after the bricks. Shorty Hadlock was in his right senses when he ran away when Biscaya was after him with the axe.

At long last Biscaya had been to the store and he was walking home with his slight provisions. And the boys would torment him, the small children would throw rocks at him and torment him with cat-calls. And Biscaya had chased them, waving his arms and shouting things. Well now, Louisa officiated at these negotiations, she being his only point of contact with society. The authorities gathered him up. And they committed him to the state mental hospital. Not because he was insane, but because there was nothing else to do with Biscaya.

Well, that's not altogether sad, because the last I heard was that Biscaya was very happy. That they let him garden with his hoe, and that he would work as he pleased in the state hospital garden, working with his crops, and he could sit and roll his cigarette, and sing, and be to himself to his contentment. He was happier at the state mental institution than he would have been in society. And Louisa consistently went to visit with Biscaya, to communicate with him. He didn't mind it at all.

Now that finding conforms to material given to me by my Uncle Lawrence in Stockton, when the inmate said, "You ought to come and join us. Come along anytime," he said, "we have a good life," said the inmate. He says, "They clothe you and they feed you," he said. "You have a home." He said, "If you don't come home in time, they come and get you in a car. . . . Come and live with us," he told my Uncle Lawrence.

So I've never been sorry about the fate of Biscaya. And I always think of him as one of the dearest people.

Now on that occasion when I was camp tender at Secret Valley, Paul had left us and had gone to Reno, and on his return – now this was in the middle of World War II – on his return he had the big news: President Franklin Delano Roosevelt had died. It was shocking news. And as Paul told it, I looked across the way – we were outside the main big tent – and there was Biscaya, squatted down, whittling. And in spite of the magnitude of the news, I was compelled to say, "Biscaya," who hadn't paid any mind to the report, "Biscaya!" And he turned his head to me, and I said, "President Roosevelt died!" I wanted to see his reaction. And he looked from me to Paul, as though he didn't quite understand me. And Paul said to Biscaya, "Presidente Roosevelt, he die!" And Biscaya looked back at me, right in the eye, turned his head, and he spat! And kept on whittling. Such was the reaction of Biscaya to the death of the greatest man in the world in his day.

Now I have before me the November, 1948 issue of *Nevada Magazine*, and midway in the publication is the story, "Ride 'im, Cowboy," written by myself. . . . [NOTE: The story does not appear in that issue.]

. . .

Later in the week I was having dinner at the Santa Fe, and I noticed a large heap of what appeared to me to be asparagus. And I served myself from this tray – there were many trays: chop tray, steak tray, potato tray, family style all along the line, after the soup had been removed. I thought it was asparagus – I'd never seen such asparagus, prepared in a sauce. They were lamb tails. A great delicacy in the Basque cuisine, and one occurring once a year.

. . .

Box 1, Tape 1/20, Sides 1 and 2 (combining material from the 2 sides) – March 9, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: Home ranch and sheep camp

People mentioned:

Etcheberry, John. Jr.

Well, the home ranch had a function relative to the sheep camp, and to the range. The home ranch is the base of operations for the entire field project. Repairs were made there. Johnny was the chief mechanic, he would repair any mechanical device that needs repairing, including the trucks. And it was a place for the bummer lambs. Those lambs that couldn't make it would be placed with the – would be brought to the home ranch. Many lambs would die when their mothers died. But when a sheep had lost a lamb, they would skin the dead lamb and put the skin on one of the bummer lambs, and very frequently the ewe would accept the new lamb, the strange lamb, as her own. Now, when they wouldn't, the lambs were sometimes brought to the home ranch in Reno, on Marsh Avenue, where they were cared for and brought into their maturity. . . .

Box 1, Tape 1/21, Side 1 – March 8, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: Recollections of Etcheberry shepherders: Trini the Mexican and others.

People mentioned:

Esain, Martin

Etcheberry, Paul

Fermín

Ontenti, Pete

Palani

Trini

Walton, Marie Jeanne (Marijo) Etcheberry

Which brings me to my thoughts of the men of nature that I found at the sheep camp, during World War II. Nor all of the shepherders were Basque. Occasionally there were French. And I had met a Mexican, by the name of Trini, at Secret Valley, during lambing time.

Now I've been called all sorts of names in the sheep camp, and in the Santa Fe Hotel. Different assorted names. Dick was one of the favored names. Martin Esain, who had strong French influences although he was Basque – Martin called

me Ree-shard. There was one herder I knew very well who called me Richie. He was the only one who did. Trini apparently couldn't say Dick. In his mouth, it was Neek. Now maybe he thought they were saying Nick. . . .

Trini was a very kind man. Trini had come to the United States as a boy, a teenager. His parents had died in Mexico, and he had gone to live with his uncle in Mexico. Then, he had another uncle, by Salinas. And it was decided that Trini would do better in the United States. So he made his way to his uncle in Salinas. He had been outfitted with a bedroll and a few things. And in looking for work, he bummed his way to a new location, and had made camp in a culvert. Trini would tell me his story in the cook tent.

Now the cook tent was a tent with a large center pole, on which candles were placed in candle holders stuck into the pole. There were two cots in the cook tent. One was Paul's my brother-in-law's, the other was my own. And in a free corner were many supplies, potatoes and carrots and cabbages, etc., all kinds of supplies piled in one corner, the free corner. In another corner was the stove. It was a rectangular stove a little over knee high, and the vent went right out the side of the tent and then upward. This was a large tent with a center pole, and could accommodate half a dozen or so people.

Now it's to be observed that the shepherd is very comfortable sitting without a chair. The squat of a shepherd is quite like the seated position of the typical aborigine, just squatting on the heels, without benefit of a chair. And many of them sit that way for long periods of time. I could never sit that way for very long. Another thing is, the shepherd is very comfortable with the earth. And he can put himself down, and lie down on the earth or lean on one elbow in the most comfortable attitude. So, although they have no chairs out there, they're very comfortable with their world. And I have found as a hunter, in later years, in my archery period, I finally discovered a rapport with the earth, and I understood how comfortable the earth is, sans furniture.

In any case, Trini and I would have long talks. He told me – oh, we're not alone. There's other conversations going on. Paul's talking in Basque to the Basque herders, and Trini and I in our own conversation to one side. Trini told me about his early days, coming to California. And he said he had made his camp in this culvert, left his bedroll there and gone down to the work center to see about employment. That when he came back, his bedroll was gone. He could not understand this. That how people would steal a man's bedroll. Well, any American knows that you couldn't leave anything for a minute. But apparently in Mexico he could have left it. He thought that – this was a shocking thing to him, that somebody would steal his bedroll. He could not understand it. He was still sore – I mean sore in the sense of touched. He was not peeved, I don't mean peeved. He

was still hurting over the idea that anyone would steal from his brother.

Then he told a very poignant story of watching the girls dance at a party. He was a stranger, the absolute stranger. A young boy. And he said he wanted to dance with the girls so badly, and he knew that he wasn't acceptable. That was before his sheepherder days with the Miller and Lux Company. Miller and Lux I remember from my childhood, seeing the signs, Miller and Lux. They were a very large land company in California, and ran stock. Trini was one of these herders. Well, he would tell me these stories of his treatment by Americans when he was young, and he'd say, "Neek," he said, "The Americanos, they are mean ones, Neek." He would shake his head. "They are mean ones." . . .

This was after the war. Marijo and I were in Westwood. Fermín was a tall Basque, a man in his middle fifties. And he was very proud of his boots. He had expensive Western boots, for after is [inaudible]. Fermín always smelled of garlic. He just loved garlic. He would eat it like an apple. And on one occasion, he prepared a garlic soup, when Paul was gone and we were shifting for ourselves alone, Marijo and Fermín and myself, and perhaps another herder. And Fermín decided to make a garlic soup. It was just a puree of pure garlic. And he loved it. I couldn't even taste it. Fermín smelled of garlic. His boots – even when I saw his boots by themselves, on one occasion – and passing those boots, the boots smelled of garlic. What you eat gets into every pore of your body, apparently. Fermín was so high, he was very difficult to be close to.

But Fermín had his trouble with the English language. But he made an adjustment. And one time I asked Fermín where Paul was, and Fermín said, "Paul, he I go Susanville, I see you." I worked on that one. My conclusion was that there was a key to the structure of the Basque language. . . . which meant, "Paul went to Susanville, you'll see." . . .

There was one herder who had a very fatherly love for Marijo. He was telling me about how she was as a young girl. She was very plump as a child. And he never called her Marie Jeanne, 'cause that was an affectation of later times on her part. He called her Jeanette. He called her Jeannettine, he said, "You know," he said, "we used to call her Jeannettine, Patatine." What that meant was Jeannettine being little Jeanette. Patatine – little potato. Jeannettine, Patatine. The language is beautiful. Even the corruptions, I came to adore.

There were the corruptions of Palani a Frenchman. Palani was a slight herder, slender. On one occasion, I remember he had been drinking very heavily the night before. I saw him about noon, at the bar. Oh, he was hung up. Oh-ho-ho, he had the headache and all, and he looked up to me and he said – Incidentally, Palani would always preface whatever sentence he had, he would preface it with "Alors." He said, "Alors, I lose-a my guts, you know."

Then there was Onenti. I remember Paul making camp with Onenti. I went with Paul on one occasion up to Westwood. I was not camp tender or cook this time, we were just camped there prior to our tour to New York. We camped out that summer, and were at Westwood for quite some extended time. We went to take the supplies to Pete Onenti. And the newspapers. The Spanish papers published in Los Angeles, which Onenti could read. And there was a photograph of Mickey Rooney and Ava Gardner, concerned with their divorce. And Onenti said something – in the middle of his Basque to Paul, I heard him talking about Goering and Goebbels. And then he went into some remarks on Mickey Rooney and Ava Gardner. Now Goering he called Gorenga. And Mickey Rooney was Macaroni, and Ava Garbage. . . .

Box 1, Tape 1/21, Side 2 – March 9, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: Recollections of Etcheberry shepherders (continued);
Santa Fe Hotel fire and rebuilding

People mentioned:

Artoes, Pete
Gaillard

And there was Gaillard, that red-faced giant of a man.

After the Lake Street fire, and after the Santa Fe Hotel had been torn down and rebuilt – it had not burned, but it had been condemned. It occupied now double the space that it had originally occupied. While the building area was the same, there had been a laundry at the corner of Douglas Alley and Lake Street. Well, the whole thing was Santa Fe Hotel now. They did build a barber shop in there – there had been a barber shop, also, next to the laundry. The Santa Fe Barber Shop was a very popular place for the herders, and many of us.

Gaillard was to become ultimately a cook in the new Santa He Hotel. I would call on Gaillard occasionally, because we were – couldn't talk to each other, very much. Neither of us understood the other one in depth, but we were very fond of each other, Gaillard and myself. And I would call on him, and wish him well. "I would say, "How are you, Gaillard?" "Very good, very good!" Well, I remember him sweating in the kitchen over a pot. The last I saw of him. Then later he'd come to the bar, take his drink and then go back to the kitchen. And that was goodbye, Gaillard. Because I was told that he had a heart attack, and was no more.

Now what happened to Pete Artoes [sp?] I do not know. Pete Artoes looked like John the Baptist, unreformed. He was a handsome man with a black shock of

hair, curly hair, and totally uncivilized. Artoes was the terror of the prostitutes at Lake Almanor. There was a whorehouse outside of the community, at the edge of town – of the scattered resort area. But there was a whorehouse. And I was told that Pete Artoes would crouch over in the bushes, come up – leave his sheep and go over to the edge of the property and peer at the prostitutes hanging up their laundry. They wanted nothing to do with them man, they were terrified of him. But he would like to look. Now, he was not a trouble man. He was a gentle man. But he was rough-looking – Oh! And he had a gruff voice. He was really a great poetic image. And there was one thing that he loved to say. He was always, always impressed with whatever small thing was told him, by whomsoever. He would say, “Son of a gun,” with great surprise. “Son of a gun!” Now, he told me – we were together, getting water at a creek, and half of his conversation was in broken English, and the other half was in gestures. He acted out everything he said. What he was telling me was that this was the spot, where we were getting the water in a large milk can – that across the stream, he has “see coyote.” And he knew that the coyote would threaten his sheep. And he told me, he said, “Over there! There!” He said, “I see it! Coyote!” And he raised his staff – he always carried a large staff. He said, “Two coyote! Two. I aim at coyote. I aim, I shoot! One coyote I shoot! I got two coyote.” I then asked him if he skinned them out for the pelts. And he said, “No.” He said, “I had no gun.” He had just aimed his stick at them, but he’d shot the both of them.

How he also described to me on that occasion about how he caught the fish. He said, “Oh, son of a gun.” He said, “You take dynamite – dynamite!” He says, / [The mechanism of the cassette broke at this point, making the tape unlistenable.]

Box 1, Tape 1/24, Side 2 – February 13, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: *The Mark of Man*

People mentioned:

Caples, Robert
Chapman, Loring
Frankenstein, Alfred
Mayberry, David
Mayberry Florence
Rodman, Selden
Star, Eddie
Star, Jules

I would like to freely review some theoretical things, things that were contained in the manuscript, *The Mark of Man*. This book was mentioned at the

house of Selden Rodman. He suggested, without seeing the manuscript, suggested from the overtone of my remarks, that it might be for New Directions, who were very advanced publishers. So I went to their office subsequently, left the manuscript, and picked it up before returning West. They were not responsive to it, and for good cause. It was not well written; it didn't know what it was; however the theory that I put forward there appears to be valid. As I mentioned before, a friend of the Star family, a friend of Eddie Star's father, Jules Star, who published strange books, took a liking to it, suggested that I rewrite it, and stay with the theory – take out the other stuff. And I just wasn't up to it. Frankly, I wasn't author enough to do it.

Well, I don't want to write a book of extended theory yet. I have no intention of doing that. However, I will take this occasion to review briefly the theories. Because the only thing of any consequence is the theory. I think I can carry this off without it being too painful.

Now, there are some things in these theories that I have not heard of. Part of my reasoning was based in the logic of Ouspensky, in *Tertium Organum*, a very complicated book, a hard book to read. Well, I read it in the days when I was with my sister [Florence Mayberry] and brother-in-law [David Mayberry] in Verdi. I read that, and was absolutely charmed with it. Those were the days when I would lie in my cot at night and see the moonlight in the panes – the window panes of the chicken coop studio that I had redone. Looking at the window, I would see the moon in every pane. That chicken studio, my studio, was just a shower of light, when the moon was coming up, because of these reflections in the panes.

Now, I mentioned that to Robert Caples. I said, "Bob, look," I said, "it looks like a fella could set up a glass – window glass – in certain ways to pick up the angle of the – to pick up a given light, and multiply it." He said, "No, nonsense, you can't make something out of nothing." Now, since then they pick up the sun's rays with reflectors, they have solar heating devices, and they multiply these energy sources many times, because, apparently, the source can be amplified. [Not the same thing, as it seems to me.]

Now, thinking along that line, I was very fascinated with Ouspensky's concept of time: that a man walking toward you, but you do not see him, then emerges and crosses a given line forward, and then goes off to the right and out of sight – Well, he put forward: de he not exist when you didn't see him? And once past, did he not exist after he went out of your vision? When is the point of now? was Ouspensky's question. Was it when you first thought of him? When you first saw him? When he just disappeared? Or on a given line you put out, called now? So he held that there is no such thing as now, that time is an infinite thing, and that now is forever. That you have to see it in one sweep.

So that sparked my young mind, and I began to apply, not the theories, but that type of reasoning to other matters, principally vision, and the shape of things.

Now, let me give you quickly conclusions. I think if I give a review of conclusions, then we can work backwards on them, and make some kind of sense out of it. Otherwise, it might get very heavy if I reviewed how I arrived at those conclusions. Let's get to the conclusions first.

In my findings – these are graphic findings – in *The Mark of Man* I was concerned about the shape of space. And I was very concerned about symbolism at that time. I settled on the cross as a significant symbolic image. And I expanded the elements of the cross into other dynamics. I had found – I read the considerable literature on the symbolism at that time in my life – exhausted the Reno library, which was not too good a library at the time, but it had enough books to give me what I needed. I found out that the cross is a very old symbol, like the swastika is a very old symbol. Well, the lotus image is a very old symbol. Well, the cross – Let's take the cross. The cross predates crucifixion. The crucifixion is something applied upon the principle of the cross. However, the cross was a very apt symbol to pursue.

Now, I found a point – determined a point: a point is also, in this reasoning, is also the point of two intersecting lines, such as a cross is. I used that as a symbol of infinity, because the point was infinitely small, or, with its wings of the cross pointed ever outward, was infinitely large. So I used it as a symbol of infinity. It was infinitely small at the point, and infinitely large in its ever-expanding arms.

Now, I suggest in this, as one shape of infinity, was an infinite number of crossing lines, at the point – crossing at the point, like a ball of tin, pointed ever outward infinitely, an infinite number, to give some concept of what the cross implies. Now, in other words, an infinite number of points would be a solid, pointed out into infinity, into outer space, infinitely? [Would it be a solid? A point has no extension, and a line has no width.] Now conversely, if these lines were pointed infinitely inward, in a space-time fold [?], we begin to see a shape of infinity, which is inconceivable to the graphic eye of the human being. It has to be done in the farthest reaches of the imagination. A ball of crosses, all crossing at an infinitely small point, which fold and converge infinitely inward.

Now, I said, expand the ball to outer space and to the edges of the universe itself – the universe of imagination – and make it a continuum of solid-packed lines still intersecting at the common point, and this I put forward as a symbol of infinity. Which would be best and most logically handled by the simple element of the two lines crossing at the common point.

Now, because of my meditations on the reflections of the moon, in the chicken window of the Verdi studio, I said, now, if at some point on the radiating

lines you set in space mirrors in every direction about the point, at a distant planetary point – let's say Mars, the distance of Mars – we have mirrors in every direction around the globe, and our point is in free space, it is not a parcel of earth, but in free space, with mirrors picking up its image, therefore we find that if you have a strong enough device, you can pick up an image at any distance, depending entirely upon the strength of your device, your instrument, in this case, the mirror.

I put that forward as another dimension of the shape of space. That our pictures, our persons, our individual selves, can be picked up in outer space by devices, and at any point in space, if indeed we were in free form, in free space. So therefore, our image can be intercepted from any point: a foot away, a mile away, or a hundred thousand miles away. And infinity would be to expand this theory to infinity. And therefore, that would be another shape, graphic shape, of infinity.

Now, I also put forward the inner significance, from the point inward: that if you were able to do that, if you converted inward on the space fold, then you begin to see space inward as well as space outward, on both sides of the point, or the plane of our human consciousness.

Now another thing that appeared to be a matter of importance to me in *The Mark of Man* was the theory of the penumbra. I stated in that manuscript that – this is read from it:

Man exists in a half-light, between the light of truth and the shadow of ignorance. Or stated otherwise, man exists in a penumbra between light and shadow. Let us use the penumbra in this sense, and also in the sense that man exists penumbally between the parent force which created him and his own force. Man is a penumbral point at the intersection of a penumbral cross. Penumbral points, in a creation, existing in a penumbra between the forces of life, including its own. The penumbral point is an individual. On one side are the converging lines of the cross. This side constitutes the wedge of the parent force, the pre-point wedge. On the other side are the expanding lines of the other side of the cross. This side constitutes the wedge of the individual's point force, the post-point wedge. A penumbral circle is around the point. It may be any size and contain any number of events. It intersects both wedges at a place determined by its diameter. The circle is an instrument of measurement and a convenient device to help us consider given sectors in the areas of force. With it, we can determine the power and growth of the post-point wedge. We can also examine the facts lying in the pre-point wedge. The circle symbol can be considered separately from the cross, but not separately from the point, for the purpose of simple illustration. A greater consideration

would be that the cross is inseparable from the point, because the intersection of a cross is a point. The circle can be used to chart events in either wedge, the events preceding the birth of the point and the events following its birth.

We must bear one fact in mind: the science of the penumbra has no dimensions. It is a figment of the imagination, a fabrication. It does not exist in the material world, it's a symbol. While it can be written about, spoken of and drawn, it cannot be found. The penumbra is a formula of the world with no dimensions. Its point is nowhere, its cross is not a cross, its circle does not exist. However, the science of the penumbra is factual. It clarifies the immortal world called id.

Now, I was using the idea of the penumbra, the penumbra being that area of a shadow, let us say, which is neither light nor shade. That blurry sector that is neither fish nor fowl, so to speak, was useful to me in the sense of the Ouspensky thought that where is now? You know, is it the line right directly in front of us or is it the past of the – or is it the future, it being – life being a continuum in the Ouspensky theory. One would draw – throw a circle around a given area, because you can't freeze the point or you kill it. You have to consider it as a circle, an area of movement. So that is the theory of the penumbra, as this little considered area of life's moving force.

Now, I see on page 42 of this manuscript that I'm using an expanded mirror ball, the size of the earth:

It is not unreasonable to imagine the picture of us from its round inner surface. Expand the ball infinitely.

Now there we have the mirrors, a mirror ball.

A powerful instrument on the moon could receive our picture, but the instrument would create nothing. It would mere function according to the behavior of light rays reflecting from us. These two examples establish an impression of man outward. Our pictures may be intercepted at any cosmic point, radiating outward from us and converging inward before they cross over the nucleus of our final atom.

Well, we found out that the atom breaks down into even smaller points.

If we swallowed a camera about the size of an atom, a theoretic X-ray set-up might get us a picture about the size of an atom [with a sub-atomic emulsion?]. That is, a picture of us inward. Are we not pictures to other men? Are we not pictures from a point on the moon? Are we not pictures from the atom? Are we not pictures on every inner surface of the infinite mirror ball? Do not our pictures intersect

one another like a boxful of penumbras?

So now there we begin to see the family of selves. The manuscript goes on to say:

Where are we? Are we the top of our skins, the flesh, the bone? Is the picture of the inside of our skin greatly different from its outside picture? Is the picture from our atom camera a true picture or is it only true accompanied by the photomontage of the great mirror ball? Are none of these true pictures? Is a picture of man only complete with his past, present and future, and is the picture only true of his relation to the cosmos? Is there no beginning and no end to these pictures?

Now there we begin to see the function of the penumbra. You can't freeze a human being at a point in time. You have to draw a bracket around him, to give him room to move in. To include time past and time future. Now the text goes on:

The surface of the skin, or outer picture we are accustomed to, is the manifestation of the penumbral point called man. The position of this point is not in a central atom in its belly. It can be found thereabouts. It merely is, and has no geography. We are considering the world we know, the world of every day. A non-geographical point of view is important to the majesty, power and comprehension of symbolism. And important reality is money –

And so on. So it goes on to theorize.

Well, down below, I see:

The penumbral point is a point of being on the line of time. The parent force converges on a point, man. Man has the power of creation. His point is also a circle. Extend two converging lines to another point, the point of man's work. Extend the pre-point lines of man's work back past the point or circle of man and beyond, toward the outlying force of space. In this way, the symbol of the great parent force serves as a key to all locks, and is shaped like a point, a circle and a cross. The picture of anything is inconceivable. Where is the artist who will paint the portrait of man, the picture bigger than the moon, smaller than the atom, and existing thereabouts at a point on the line of time. Its spark dividing a minute ago from a minute from now, a symbol of life running through Adam and Eve and the future of their kind.

So, that is the kickoff for the idea of a base for symbolism. The thing the manuscript is shooting at is that man himself is a symbol, from a certain point of view. That life, existence is symbolic. This *Mark of Man* text gives credence to symbolism at a level heretofore unexplored, as far as I know.

In Chapter 4, the manuscript gets into picture words. It says:

If we can't make a picture of man, –

Which was determined impossible if you use the mirror ball and penumbral cross theory – inconceivable aspect of an image of a being –

If we can't make a picture of a man, can we make a picture word of a man? A form, its picture and its word have an interchangeable meaning. The force character of spirit, for example, a fish, is apparent in varying degrees in, one, the fish itself, two, the word fish, and three, the picture fish. Categorically, we have seen a species of fish, and have expressed the fact through an expression concerned with the single fish. More familiarly, we see this fish, and we say, "this fish."

And the text goes on to say:

An adequate symbol for God is inconceivable, but may not [sic] be suggested by the slightest dot, a symbol of unity, a point. A dot is also the symbol for the eternal circle. Could a dot picture word for God suggest His magnitude by its very smallness? Can we think of any symbol as large for him?

Then the text gets into the question of fine arts, and its nonexistence. It's pointed out that if there are fine arts, then there usurely must be unfine arts. And it says:

If so, can we draw a line, divide it in the middle, put fine to the right and unfine to the left?

Well, it goes into a parody on that kind of thinking.

Then in the manuscript, the theory is put forward that everyone is an artist potentially. That to see a work of art has a kinship with painting it. And that to paint a work of art is an art act, and to look at it is an art act. And the work itself is an artwork.

And the text goes on to state that:

The mind is a penumbral circle containing the total human experience, symbolized or recorded on the brain. At its center is the penumbral point of self. Natural events occur on the line of time, intersecting the penumbral point. The line comes from the penumbral pre-point wedge cause, and continues into the post-point wedge effect. The body exists in a separate material world, converting form into feeling. The conversion occurs at the penumbral point on the line of time. Within the penumbral circle of anything are its total attributes. Investigation of these circles reveals characteristics which are communicated to the mind of the investigator. The investigator may express the nature of these characteristics in foreign media: paint, etc.

Then the text delves into symbolism of colors, that each color has some kind of symbolic meaning to people.

Now, at this very moment, the onion-skin carbon, the last remaining copy of the text of *The Mark of Man* is now burning in the fireplace. I have milked off in these remarks the substance of my theory. The rest of the words were nonsense, and I don't care to be remembered for my mistakes.

Now, in the years to come, I wish to add to this theory of the shape of things. And I have before me a paper that I wrote and sent to Loring Chapman. And it is on – it's a summary of my findings, that I can give you in simpler terms. The – I was very involved with [Michael William] Harnett at one time, and fake realism. Not with the idea of becoming such a painter myself, but interested in why it looks so real. More real than anything, even than reality. And it was determined the reason that the Harnett type painting, or fake realism, looks real is because Harnett painted on a limited field, and that the mind, the eye sees – eye and mind being a unit in a sense – that the human eye sees from point to point. You focus on one thing at a time. I'm looking at the dog, Freddie, and I see the nose, I don't quite see the ears. When I see the ears, I don't quite see the nose. And Chapman told me that it has been concluded that a person doesn't see everything in focus, but that your seeing reality is a matter of scattering your point of focus. So if you look at a man's nose, you don't see his necktie. But you're aware of it in the penumbra, or the side vision, which is the penumbra.

So, a letter was written to [Alfred] Frankenstein, the San Francisco art critic, on this. I've misplaced his answer someplace. He was quite interested in my findings, along the American fake realism. The shallow field, I told him, determined the reality.

Now I was able to isolate – one of my aims was to see if I could paint what I could paint to maintain this impact of realism in free space; if it could be done. Because I have found that Harnett failed the minute he opened a window and painted the scene outside. Well, the reason the scene outside the window failed was because the mind rejects the focus of the egg, or the thing hung on the wall . . . , and then should he paint an open window, as the Flemish realists did, and you show somebody two miles away, hard real, the mind rejects that [?]. So it will accept anything as real in the shallow field.

So using that as a base, I did a series of paintings on these conclusions, that if a person – if you take the position of a person, put him on earth, and imagine earth as being a sphere, like an orange – a man standing upright, therefore – the only difference between an orange and the earth is a matter of miles – so shrink the earth to the size of a balloon or maybe fifty feet diameter, stand a man on that balloon: There is no difference between a man standing on the balloon and a man standing on earth, except that the mountains have a ragged shape. Well, I recognized that, and went to Monterey on a field trip, so I could meditate looking

at sea. And I was to see some strange things!

Now, I was troubled in Nevada, looking at the horizon, because I had all these mountains in my way [!]. And on the ocean I could look at the shape of forms without this disturbance.

Now, one of my conclusions was that if I stood in a room and – the ceiling directly overhead was point of placement, and looking forward, this line goes down on a radius to the vanishing point, like the railroad tracks. And if I turn around and look the other way to a vanishing point with a diminishing volume, that means that directly over my head and directly underfoot, a line is a tent. That the two lines would cross at that point, into making a tent. Well, I know very well that the ceiling is not a tent, it's a solid line. So therefore, this line is a curve.

[Tape on this theme continues for about another 15 minutes.]

Box 1, Tape 1/25, Side 1 – March 9, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: Walton's short novel, *Pyramid*; Walton's marriage to Marie Jeanne Etcheberry, his relationships with his brother-in-law John Etcheberry and mother-in-law Louisa Etcheberry, the relationship between the brothers John and Paul Etcheberry

People mentioned:

Connolly
Dudley, Jack
Etcheberry, John. Jr.
Etcheberry, John, Sr. (Papa)
Etcheberry, Johnny-Pete
Etcheberry, Louisa
Etcheberry, Paul
Hardin, Lyle
Kafoury, Sam
Kaiser, Henry
Pandora [fictional character in *Pyramid*]
Pinsler, Jerry
Sammy
Steinheimer, Rae
Walton, Marie Jeanne (Marijo) Etcheberry
Walton, Vivian

. . . Pandora, who is a composite. And also a creature of pure fiction. Absolute invention. But based in real persons at the same time. However, I am impressed with the fantasy of the author. Myself. I'm beginning to understand a little more about myself, the man of those years. In this process of near-psychotherapy, the taping of one's recall. I think we can explore parts of this, in the chapter ending of

Pyramid.

Now this is a book of a clandestine meeting at Lake Pyramid [sic], back of the pyramid, between a painter and his lover, a married woman. Now, they have made love on the shores of the lake. And there is a bit of fantasy that occurs here, and is recurrent throughout the book. It describes the agony of the author, actually. An agony that was fulfilled by writing this fiction, of no one. This is not a real person talking. And the author never intended the reader to ever have an idea that it was real. This was a lapse into pure fantasy. The author writes:

As Cain finally dissolved into Pandora, she grasped his loins with hers, unwilling to have him leave her necessary last moment. And in this trap, Cain's mind was not communicating, and he felt unborn. After she released him, Cain found the wine, and fell back with his billy cap resting on his nose.

"The lake is still today.

"The lake is still, and your cracks [?] are coming around the point. And the blue sky was never so blue," said Pandora, adding softly, "And I love you."

And the blue sky was never so.

Now, if you balance that out with the author in the marriage where he reaches out toward his wife, in the morning, as she passes, just to reach to touch her, and she twists away, and goes on into the dressing room, to sit there to put on the make-up, the armor for the day. And he is so lonesome, that he writes this god damn book, about a creature of utter fiction. Because the two principals who make up the book from reality had failed him in his understanding, which is all the individual soul has to work with.

So, his lover, in fact, the author's lover, had abandoned him. And his wife had abandoned him. And he was living in this purgatory, of loneliness.

And another chapter ends. Where – Let's see. Oh she's such a – Let's go on to another, deeper one, than what I had in mind there. Fact – I was just thinking – Whoever's listening to this tape has certainly got more time than I have. So I hope she'll be patient. This is not a very long book. Let's see what we've got here. That's no good. Let me cut this off.

Well, I found another one of those bits of euphoria. Now he has used a four-letter word someplace, and she reprimanded him, because she doesn't like four-letter words – the word was 'shit'. He said, in regard to Roosevelt, he had mentioned – he called him "our American," and ending, "fear itself," he said that the whole nation was in fear when he died.

"The United States shit its pants that time. Crap was knee-deep in Washington."

“I wish you wouldn’t say things that way. It bothers me. I love you most when you tell me things nicely. The dirty destroys the beauty, and I feed on beauty. It is the beauty of you and the beauty of your ideas and the beauty of your eyes when you’re angry that I love.” Pandora took Cain’s hand to her cheek, then turned it and kissed the palm and said, “And the beauty of simply being with you, that I love.”

[Walton’s voice here has the same muted quality as when he talks about Marijo.]

Well, that would seem to be a paragraph written by a very lonely son of a bitch. Self-sorry guy, who is hungry for some kind of a creature that didn’t exist. And he certainly never found a creature like that. And I don’t know if [laughs] it would be desirable to find one.

Now let’s see if there’s another segment that I can pick off here. Oh, yes yes yes, here’s a beauty. They’re in bed, in the pickup truck. And she drew him – This is at nighttime, they’re sleeping overnight, they’re staying overnight.

And she drew him closer with the new owning which came with the crying and the talking, in the slow development of the moment. A faint perspiration was upon them, and neither spoke. His face was warm against hers, and his chest was hot with their moisture, soddly cold with the intrusion of a vagrant draft. He tightened the covers by a motion of the shoulder, without interruption. And as they completed themselves at the same moment, Pandora pulled him tight and said, “Give me your sons. Give me your many sons.” Then she held him, as the queen locust, and he remained without end. And gently they slept together.

Let’s see now. Well, this is the chauvinistic tract, because I don’t know if it’s a woman’s book at all. It may be, it may not be. I don’t know. And there’s another part where they’ve been awakened in the night, and says, after finding a kangaroo rat in the campsite – he had said,

“I don’t know what the kangaroo’s gotten into, and we’re arguing like an old married couple.”

“Well, aren’t we?” said Mrs. Manley, and hit her bottom, and Cain [inaudible]. Then taking his free arm, she pulled it to her, snuggling into him. “They do look like kangaroos,” she said sleepily. With his left arm over her, he fell asleep wondering where to put the right.

Well, the author had experienced that awkward position, in reality, that was not fantasy. This is a strange concoction of fact and fiction. And I’d like to clean up all of these references that I have to demonstrate the condition of the author. Because we are now – in this general taping – we are reviewing the author in the

very time – the period that he wrote the book. Because he’s torn apart. We’re about to get into some greater depth. But this is his point of view, his psychology. The man writing a thing like that, actually to himself. Although the book began as letters to an illicit love.

Now it says later – Let’s see:

“And I don’t know what I mean. It sometimes seems that many of the important things were made by [inaudible].” Cain felt the soft cloth of her slacks with his cheek.

And Pandora soothed his head with her slender hand, and said, –
And boy, this is a beauty of euphoria. This is an author’s corker –

“And heaven is a place, for I am there. And the head of my lover is in my lap, with his skull resting in the thighs and pressing that line between. And if by error I was made this way, it cannot be my fault. And if I must hide my love, it shall be hidden behind that Pyramid, and in the ungodly sight of the white ones of the island there. And when I nod to that place, it is with knowing and without, dear. And the unholy island is as good as the altars, and better. And the feathered whites are better than the painted angels, and the stars are real stars, and there have been days when I have seen them with the sun. So it is the pelicans who are dancing to the unholy music. Oh my lover, we are truly a joyous clod.”

Well, I think the author is trying to point out Pandora’s unreality. And, in fact, he is giving vent to his own unreality, his own mythic invention: a Frankenstein woman, the love. And yet, he’s suspicious of the love process. Untrusting. He had been rejected by two in a row here and left derelict. He’s floating. So, what’s he know? What do we have here, that he puts – This male writer puts these words into his Frankenstein woman. She says to him:

“Hurry back. I don’t like being alone. Can’t I go with you?”

“You say you are often alone. Someone must tend the fire.”

“Alone often, yes. If I know I am alone and will be alone, it is different. But knowing you are near and not quite with me is not the same. Hurry back, and hurry, and do hurry. I don’t know why, but hurry. I might do something crazy again if you leave me too long.”

“Foolish girl,” said Cain.

“No, I might, really might. You don’t know how it is with me when I’m alone in this way. I’m not always me, not the me of us. Come back. Come quickly back. Never leave me alone. Never.”

So, let’s pursue some more of these Frankenstein monsters. Oh, he’s in a fine state of dreaming. Now let’s see. Let’s see. And this is an element of where

he's bitter. He's bitter. The author's bitter. And the author, to his Frankenstein Pandora, he assigns these lines after she has really failed him. And he has raped her, after losing her for two days, and for two years. It comes to rape. They really had a tangle. And then he puts the [inaudible] woman to work. [?] And she says to him:

“I'm glad you made love to me. If anyone touches me, they will know. A man would know, wouldn't he?” Then looking at Cain with faun eyes, Pandora said, “I will do as you say, and having you inside me will give me strength. And I will see you before me, and none other. When they speak, they will speak as strangers. And I will come to you with my children and we will love you. How am I so fortunate? You must promise never to leave me, and you know why How is my face? Am I so awful?”

And then the girl leaves him. But that's really the bitter man writing, because if – if – he had a complicated life at home [with Marijo]. And the [inaudible] author is a very self-sorry son of a bitch. And he has his principal [inaudible]. In the last chapter. And oh, is he sorry for himself. This fellow. And he only [inaudible] [Walton's voice has become muted as when he speaks of Marijo]. The sun's going down, and there he goes. Let's see, he has all kinds of beautiful thoughts of her in his fantasy. And he says the forbidden word, 'shit'. And she scolds him. And finally he really craps out. It says:

The figure on the red rock no longer worked the hands, and the purging had stopped. The cold fingers had stiffened on the steel and the feet were somewhat fishtailed. Below them were the rattles Pandora had dropped. Above the hard pack, among the rocks, in back of the driftwood target the lizard was well-hidden. Beyond the cave, the pelican circled, then gliding long and heavy-bellied went straight to their island, and settled down. Twilight came after the last sunlight left the gold water. The Dutch Channel was calm, and the belly fish rocked gently in the grotto of the great snake. And the lizard was upside down, clinging to the rock and looking from its cave, and the eye that didn't blink saw nothing.

So, the author has to kill his man, because he knew he had to resign from life as he had known it. And that was the final resigning from the author's life, was in killing his principal character. And the Frankenstein monster called Pandora in this book gave vent to his hate, his fears, his mercy, his sense of pity, and to a fictional craving for a mythical love.

[(Summary written before much of above transcribed:) Pandora was the name of

the love interest in Walton's short novel, *Pyramid*. He calls the character "the Frankenstein monster of Pandora," but describes her, in retrospect, as a fantasized love compensating for the lack of love in his own life. He speaks on the tape about the male character reaching out to touch his wife, her shrugging past him to go to her make-up table to put on her armor or mask for the day. Walton doesn't draw the connection to his own first marriage, but this sounds like Marie Jeanne – what Walton said about her devotion to make-up, and what Jim Hulse said about her sexual rebuffs of Walton. (Jim speculated that Walton thought, though Walton had never said so directly, that Marie Jeanne's sexual distance had resulted from her being sexually abused in the sheep camp as a child.) Jim also spoke about an affair Walton had with an artist's model, by whom he may have had a child.]

[Following his discussion of *Pyramid*, Walton went on:]

And in the author's misery, he found some form of respite in the form of his brother-in-law, Johnny. Johnny had been helpful from the beginning, as a neighbor. If something broke down at the house, Johnny knew how it could be fixed, and if the job was too big for Marijo and myself, Johnny would fix the thing. I leaned on him too much. But Louisa had kind of taught us to do that in a way. Johnny had asked for it by his perpetual willingness to be imposed on. Well, it wasn't every day. However, Johnny was to help me build the little car. . . . When gas was to be rationed, I had that big Nash roadster. Sold it. . . . Johnny was a good friend! He was a friend in need. . . . Well, I learned a lot of things from Johnny. . . .

My student from Chicago, Jerry Pinsler. . . . Rae Steinheimer used to rather dream Jerry, because Jerry was an example of of how young men should not treat their elders. He would never offer anybody a seat. He would sit there and let older people stand. Well, Rae was – Jerry was very young, and Rae was much his senior at that meeting, and he felt that in his tradition, the younger men would offer their chairs to senior. Well, that's up for grabs, but Rae's not with us anymore, so he can't defend his position. Jerry became a serious painter and went back to Chicago. . . . Jerry came out and studied with me for about a year. . . .

He [Johnny] was an excellent carpenter. Later he was to build, in a partnership with his brother Paul – was to build up that entire section of Reno, on the bluff. I mean, many lots. The Etcheberry property was extensive, and they developed it as the post-war building boom occurred. So Johnny taught me the little I know about putting things together. Ultimately he was to be my advisor on the erection of the studio house in Virginia City where I am now taping. He told me how to put up the boards and the strings and to get it level, and he was very proud of me, because when he came with the transit to check my work out, he said, well that's closer than he gets 'em, on the level. And I'd used a little 3-inch line level. And then he showed me how to put up the walls, and Johnny-Pete, his son –

It was Johnny and myself hoisted the walls, and braced them crossways with wires, and left the job for me to continue. And he was here on another occasion when the roof was to be started. . . . So he wasn't here much, he didn't do a great deal on the house. I did most all of it myself, with the help of a few friends. Come by and spell me on digging or something of the sort. Lyle Hardin was helpful in that way. Lyle Hardin has a segment [on] of his own. But Johnny was just a man who could do any kind of chore that came his way. He was kind of a genius in the handyman version, doing just anything at all in the way of construction. He had an enormous reputation around the Reno area. People loved him. They were devoted to him. He was so shy, and a little embarrassed if he spoke. And although he explained to me one time that he knew that it was wrong to say it, he called someone who had a cheap and grasping quality about him, he'd say, "That Jew." So that's a racist remark. It was a long time ago, before racism and racists [inaudible] very strongly. And he said, "I know, I don't mean that, I don't really mean Jew." He had just called his brother, "that Jew Paul." He often said, "that Jew Paul." Well, he knew that that wasn't Jews. But that was a word. It was not a race, but a word for a condition, that the thoughtless Americans applied all too loosely. I report this because it showed some of his negative views of Paul's ways. Paul was a very tight-fisted businessman. And he's watching every angle. And Johnny didn't approve of him. And he had a reputation for being rather sharp, Paul did. And Johnny was just the most generous person.

And also their attitudes toward animals were different. Johnny was the most indulgent and loving person to dogs, and Paul, while he loved dogs, he was a hard master. And the dogs around the sheep camp were generally rather cringing, cowering creatures, except of Capitan. And although Paul had had a Llewellyn Setter of show quality, and then later he had Timothy, the – Not a Weimaraner, what the hell do I mean? German Shorthair, who fell asleep back of the wheel of a truck, and the driver – the truck ran over him and killed him. But Timothy hated me. He was my dog Sammy's father. I had a Labrador, Dunkel, that Timothy mated with at random, and from this union was born my dog Sam, who helped me build this house and lived with me for so many years. He was a loyal friend. Sammy thought I was crazy, and that he could take care of all things better than I could. But he was a little jumpy because of the shorthair in him. He was not the docile Labrador. He was a dog to be watched, he could bite somebody. Well, [inaudible] on one occasion, Marijo said, when I was gone to Los Angeles and Sammy was used to sleeping in the house, and he howled. And Paul had him discontinue that, shall we say. Well, even Marijo didn't know what to do about that. She was a little set aback.

Well, anyway, Johnny – I cite this, because the same animals – No, Dunkel,

it was the mother of Sammy. I named Sammy for Sam Kafoury. But Dunkel – Marijo tells the story Johnny was Butchering. He would buy a quarter beef and freeze it. And he was cutting up this beef – Half! Half a beef, not a quarter, half a beef, he'd buy it by the half. And the beef was strung along the meat block and hanging down, one end of it. And she said she went out there and there was Dunkel sitting down and chewing on one end of it. And she, "Well, my God, look at that Johnny!" And he's cutting off steaks and he didn't stop, he was sawing or something, sawing a bone, and looked down and says, "Oh, she's always eating," and kept on sawing, didn't even reprimand her.

Well, it shows kind of the root attitude of the two brothers. They were entirely different. Johnny was very broad-shouldered and strong – my goodness, he was so strong! Tended to be a little bald, and rather blond. Paul was dark and tall and a pretty strong guy. But in their earlier years, they had raced boats. They had won many of the Pacific Coast titles, in outboard [inaudible] boat of their class. They had beaten, very often at Lake Tahoe, they beat Family Dollar and Henry Kaiser's boat. And they had the championship at Lake Merritt one year. I went down with them. This would be about 1939, I believe, that they took the championship. Paul would drive, Johnny would prepare – he'd be the mechanic. He'd prepare the boat and Paul would drive. Paul had a reputation for being absolutely insane at the wheel. And this meant for his trucks, too. He was a mad driver. Johnny and Paul also won prizes when they went to camp, ROTC camp – The National Guard, rather. They won the rifle championship in a certain category. They were expert in all manner of things. Whatever they touched, they could handle very well. But Paul was the driver of those championship boats. And the other drivers were a little bit scared of him. He'd fling himself into the thing.

Well, ultimately, after I'd left Reno and built the house in Virginia City and had married Vivian, we were going down the hill, the Geiger Grade one day, and we saw a woman dashing up the highway waving her hands over her head, stopping the car [sic]. And we saw a sheriff's car drive up and stop. The sheriff got out and talked to the woman. And we wondered what it was, what had happened, and we drove on to town, only to find out that an airplane had lost a wing, and had plummeted to earth, that was piloted by Johnny Etcheberry. And we had missed witnessing his plummeting death by mere moments, coming down Geiger Grade. We had just missed it. He was test-piloting a plane built by our mutual friend, Jack Dudley, with whom – I'd built a sports car with him. He had built this plane, and Johnny was checking it out with an aeronautical investigator, who was an examiner. And they lost a wing. Well, Johnny – My friend Connolly was an examiner at that wreck. An old-time crop-duster pilot. Connolly said there's an eyeball on the plane's dashboard. Said it was an absolute mess. He said no one

knew whose eye it was. He also said that there had been a bolt missing, that it wasn't Dudley's fault. That a bolt had been missing in the wing, in the original manufacture of the plane. And that this was not an oversight of Dudley's. But that it was an obscure part that hadn't been touched. And so the wing was weak. So both Johnny and the aeronautical examiner met their death together. No one knew for a fact who was at the controls. However, when I finished my sports car, I remember Johnny wanted to have the virginal experience. So he jumped in first and backed it out and drove it around at great speed, in the first test run. And when I myself got in it, even after I'd seen him drive it, I drove it like it was an egg about to drop off of a table. I didn't know if it would lose its wheels or what. I'd put it all together with his advice. . . . And I dare say, if he were at the controls, he pushed that wing off. He knew how. The plane had been in a test dive. Off came the wing. Well, I suffered a loss. Although Marijo and I were divorced, I'd remarried, the loss of my former brother-in-law Johnny was just too much. How I loved Johnny.

And in separating myself from the life at Marsh Avenue, it was not easy to walk off from Johnny and Louisa. I knew that it was the end of all that closeness and love. At the end, Louisa spoke to me for the first and last time, personally. Except for that remark on the occasion of the funeral, the remark about Papa. But this was a direct communication to me and for me, from Louisa. She explained to me how I was a son just as Johnny and Paul were her sons. That she regarded me as her son.

Box 1, Tape 1/25, Side 2 – March 10, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: The Laxalt family; Father Robert; the Etcheberrys and the Santa Fe Hotel; Frenchy Dupont and Lyle Hardin; the ubiquity of romance

People mentioned:

Bastian, Jarvis
Bastian, Pat
Beebe, Lucius
Capooch, Johnny
Debold, Robert
Dupont, Frenchy
Dupont, Frenchy, Mrs.
Etcheberry, John, Jr.
Etcheberry, Louisa
Etcheberry, Paul
Hardin, Parilee (Mrs. Lyle Hardin in 1975)
Hardin, Lyle
James, Will
Jellefe, Father Robert
Larralde, Joe

Laxalt, Dominique
Laxalt, Paul
Laxalt, Peter
Laxalt, Robert
Steinheimer, Rae
Walton, Marie Jeanne (Marijo) Etcheberry

Paul Etcheberry, my brother-in-law, was to marry into the Laxalt family, a cousin of Robert and Paul Laxalt. Robert Laxalt was the brother of this Carson City pair of Basques, who was to write material on his Basque ancestry, principally on the sheepherder community in Nevada. They were born from a sheep-raising family. I knew their uncle personally, the father [Peter Laxalt] of Paul Etcheberry's bride. They [Peter Laxalt (see below)] for some time rented the Etcheberry ranch house next door to Marijo's and my house, the studio house on Marsh Avenue on the Etcheberry ranch. The father was a very engaging man. He was always in good humor. He was a rather red-faced, portly man, an elderly man with an ample moustache. And I remember him as a very warm person. Marijo had told me that he once got into trouble and served time in Carson City Penitentiary for having been found guilty of rustling, if my memory – it was a horse had been involved. Well now, he was no crook, but somehow that happened. I suppose in the range life there are certain areas of latitude that permit one to involve himself in a fringe appropriation. [Laughs] I don't know what happened! He wasn't a basic crook. He was one of the nicest men I had ever met. And I recall him very warmly. Now this is the uncle – one of the brothers of Paul and Robert Laxalt's father [Dominique Laxalt].

Now Rae Steinheimer used to mention Paul Laxalt – so many of these Basques are called John or Paul. Well, in this case they got out of the groove and called one Robert, the writer. But Paul Laxalt was a young lawyer when I first heard of him. I had been long familiar with the Laxalt name. But Rae regarded him, Paul Laxalt, as a young lawyer of extraordinary talent and promise.

Well, I met Paul Laxalt on one occasion – I don't know quite how it happened. I must have been out in the fields with a bow and arrow, because I remember it was in the sagebrush, and the young man walked up to me with some spirit, a very pleasant expression on the face, extending his hand and shook my hand and introduced himself: "I'm Paul Laxalt," he said. Well, that was the early politician. He may or may not have known me by reputation, I don't know, I had a pretty big reputation in the state of Nevada at that time. And now, of course, that's all changed, with the influx of population that has shifted the [inaudible] reputation. But he did walk up to me in the sagebrush and introduce himself. Little did I realize that he was so intent upon becoming governor. Well, he finally made that, and then he declined to run, and in 1972, October 20th, I received from him

an answer – he went back into his law practice after being governor. And I had written him a query – I was in the middle of my Virginia City documentary material, and was doing the piece on Father Robert [Jellefe], the Catholic priest who had been rather railroaded out of Virginia City, because of his advanced views. And he had been sued by a cripple, who claimed that Father Robert had pushed her out of her wheelchair. Well, he countered by saying that the two ladies present there on that occasion had beckoned him in, and on his entrance they began to tear his clerical garments off. And he said in protecting himself the crippled lady fell out of the chair. That was his contention.

Well, it ended with Father Robert being transferred out of Virginia City, and apparently, for all I know, out of this world, because I didn't pick him up again. And he was my good friend. He stored some paintings for me while I was building this house. Anyway, I knew that Paul Laxalt had defended the crippled lady in this action – defended, no, defended – he was the complaining attorney, prosecuting – no, I mean suing – suing Father Robert. I asked him some kind of a question here. . . . “Dear Governor Laxalt” – now this was after he was governor, you continued to call him governor, of course. “I am presently putting together a book of photographs of Virginia City, with the expressed interest of one of the country's leading publishers of Western Americana,” and so on. Let's see. “In the spring of 1958 I myself built a studio in Virginia City, and was then so occupied. I didn't follow closely the case of Father Robert Jellefe as close as I wished I had. A friend told me the other day that you represented the lady who had sued Father Robert for what I believe was assault, the story that she, a cripple, had been pushed” etc. etc. So I wanted to find out the disposition of that case for the record. So he answered me very promptly, said, “Dear Mr. Walton: The end result of Father Robert's suit was that it was dismissed. Frankly, I don't recall the exact year, but the newspapers at that time gave it broad coverage. These can be checked at the state library. Thank you for contacting me. It brought back memories of an interest time and a most intriguing person.”

Well, the interesting time was the utter ruination of Father Robert and all of his dreams of a university and art renaissance stemming from Virginia City, where he was doing – with his group of monks, were achieving stained glass windows and certain art projects being fulfilled for churches throughout the country. He was just getting started on this, and if he had gone but, I think, another year, he said, the pope would have made – they were going to appeal to the pope to make it a permanent order and then it would just stay there, the fixed institution of the Catholic faith. He wanted to institute a university dedicated to art, music and liturgy. But he was smashed down. Lucius Beebe helped.

So, that is the Laxalt family as I have known it.

There was one occasion when Marijo and I were about to leave the house, having negotiated its sale – she was not communicating – Robert Laxalt, the writer, who is currently the head of the University of Nevada publishing instrument, had invited her to cocktails at the Riverside Hotel, as I remember it, and he'd come by to pick her up, and also invited me. Well, he was abashed when she said, "No! No! No! You can't go!" He didn't understand it. She was flatfooted. She didn't want me there, and he didn't know that the whole scene was wrecked. And he was rather paled by it. Taken aback and confused, because he didn't know but that everything was normal. He had had experience in Spain, and she was about to go to Spain, and wanted to talk with him about it. That was the occasion.

Paul Laxalt, the political brother, then entered the senatorial race of last year, I believe, and is now the junior senator of the state of Nevada.

Paul Etcheberry, on the other hand, was to become the representative of an automatic door company, and from that built a number of mini-warehouses, and became quite wealthy. Built up the Etcheberry addition on the bluff at Marsh Avenue, after having it – someplace in the middle there he involved himself with these automatic doors, for garage doors and doorways, and I have an idea he thrived in that enterprise. I haven't see Paul very much since then, if at all, since I left marsh Avenue. I did see Johnny regularly. Johnny and Paul didn't get along in some respects; in other, business, respects, they made it all right. But Johnny wasn't too warm to some of Paul's attitudes in business, Paul being very aggressive.

Now there was a time, some years before all these difficulties, that one of the beloved members of that little tight community at the Santa Fe Hotel drank too much – this was at the new hotel. He got pretty well stoned, and passed out or had a heart attack or something at the top of the stairs and fell on down – anyway, he died. Well, I remember the man, can't recall his name, I remember him in life as well as in death very well, because I was asked, being a photographer, would I please go to the funeral parlor and shoot a photograph of this man in the coffin, so that it could be sent to the old country, to prove to his relatives that he was really dead. That seemed to be some kind of a necessary condition, to establish death to their satisfaction. . . .

There was another aside that occurred at the Santa Fe, at the barber shop. One of the barbers there, who had operated this establishment long after Frenchy Dupont had disappeared from the scene – Frenchy having been its operator in the early days – Well, I can't help but relate the barber chair to the story of the girl in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. And it seems that a barber chair is a sexual device. And one of these owners of the Santa Fe Barber Shop had been known for his gambling. And he would pick up ladies in his rounds, in the casinos, and bring

them back to the barber shop, and swing back the barber chair – He used it as a love couch. So that confirms the story of the girl who was raped in Spain in the barber chair. It's a practical device, apparently.

Now, Frenchy Dupont is part of the Santa Fe story. Frenchy Dupont had it [the barber shop] for a while. Frenchy, he was a flashy gentleman, with dark curly hair and rather handsome, and rather a devil with the ladies. He was very attractive to a certain kind of woman. And I remember him being married to this brunette with dyed black hair, obviously darker than dark. A beautiful girl. I remember her. Frenchy rented the same house that the Laxalts had occupied, the Etcheberry farmhouse. And I recall one night nearing a scratching, a yelling and a scratching. And I looked on the window, on the screen, I looked out and there was Mrs. Frenchy Dupont naked, scratching the screen. I didn't know what to do. She wanted to get in. I was afraid to let this woman in. I didn't want to tangle with Frenchy, who was an unstable person. And they were heavy drinkers, and I felt this was part of a – the end phase of a drinking bout. It was said that they dipped Frenchy in ice water to straighten him out. But what had happened between them, I don't know. Ultimately she got tired of scratching on the screen and went back to the house where she'd come from. But it had been said that Frenchy married this girl as a prostitute – she had been a prostitute, I can't confirm that. That was the general scuttlebutt.

But Frenchy was to open a guest house down by the Truckee River, not far from Paul's location with the storm doors. This was a two-story frame house out in the farmland by itself. I mean, out in the field somewhere. No farms around here. They have a few horses and things. Sometimes these larger properties outside of town. Frenchy was operating a guest house.

Now my friend Lyle Hardin, who was here with his wife Parilee [sp?] this last Sunday, which was day before yesterday – and Lyle enters this story. This was just after the war. Lyle Hardin found himself in Reno, which he was fond of – always had some kind of an idea to go work at the Washoe Pines Guest Ranch, which has been the historic site of its one-time owner, Will James, the artist – the cowboy writer and artist. Lyle was a great traditionalist, believing in the buffalo and open range, an [inaudible] horseman. A little guy, and strong! Stout man. Strong. I mean, stout in strength, not in overweight. Well, he was in his prime at this moment, and he had been sent out to the – he'd arrived at Frenchy Dupont's guest house, by cab I believe. And he said he was upstairs, preparing to go to bed, and he heard this ruckus downstairs. And he went downstairs, and there Frenchy Dupont was beating up his wife, this brunette. And Lyle, being an old style Western gentleman, interceded, and clipped Frenchy so severely that he went down and out. Lyle said that he simply turned on his heel, went upstairs, put his clothes

back together, and left.

I remember this period because I recall that Frenchy Dupont had been in an altercation and was in the Washoe General Hospital. And he was there ever so long. Lyle confirms this, that this occurred. And God knows what Lyle did to him, but Frenchy was in the hospital for a very long period. Lyle just speaks of one blow. It's possible that his wife put the boot to him [laughs] after Lyle left, I don't know. A very dramatic bunch.

Now there was some kind of a polarity between Frenchy and his convertible Nash that I acquired. Because it seems mystical to me that I should buy this automobile, this very striking classic, and then court Marijo at the Santa Fe, parking it exactly before Frenchy's barber shop. The Santa Fe Barber Shop. That Nash had been there before. Like an old horse, it seemed to know its way back.

I should index an additional anecdote. Marie Jeanne was always available to her mother [Louisa Etcheberry] as an assistant in an emergency. If her mother needed an extra hand at certain festive occasions at the Santa Fe Restaurant, Marijo would help her. Either there would be a special party, or perhaps someone had gotten ill, such things as that. In this case, her mother had asked her to help her with the rooms. They were shorthanded. So Marijo made herself available as chambermaid briefly, to assist her mother. Now Jo, she gave me a report of the day, on one occasion, which was very enlightening. She said she knocked on the door of this room, and opened the door to go in and change the sheets, and she says, "My goodness," she said, "there was a couple in bed. The sheepherder was making love to this prostitute. And," she said, "without interruption" – the prostitute saw her come in, the sheepherder didn't know, – saw her at the door. And she said, "The prostitute looked up and wiggled her fingers hello, without interruption." Marijo closed the door and left.

So it has been my experience in life that no matter what corner you find yourself at, there's a record and continuum of romance beyond imagining. And the Santa Fe Hotel at the corner of Douglas Alley and Lake Street was no exception in either its early establishment or its later new building. One could close his eyes and turn around and go a quarter of a mile and stand still, take the blindfold off and see what was before him, and there would be a record of romance at that given site. It reminds me of when Debold and I were kidding about these things. We had seen a femme fatale with her cowboy in Austin, Nevada, when we were deer hunting. And she was a very petulant young woman. Apparently had been born and reared in Austin. And she stomped into this bar in a real peeve, in her high heels and gingham skirt, leading the way and this cowboy. And she had the little slave bracelets around her ankles. And she was giving him a very bad time. Later that night, I said, "Bob," I said, You know, I believe you could strike out into the desert

flat in any direction of your choice, continue for fifty miles, and stand still and wait for a while, and sooner or later there'd come some trouble in the shape of a woman."

We found that born out when we went to – Well, we were going into the obsidian country, the High Rock Canyon. And there's a town called Empire up there, which has a manufacturing plant for the making of Gypsum boards, building boards. Its companion community is Gerlach. Well, on the way to Gerlach, Debold and I had seen all these road signs, advertising this Johnny Capooch Club [375 Main Street, Gerlach]. Well it showed can-can dancers, and they were almost like Burma Shave ads, they were so evenly spaced. Come and see Johnny Capooch at the Club Capooch. And they showed the girls – the drawings of the girls dancing can-can. So we went to the club of Johnny Capooch, the bar, and which was an empty bar, a very long bar, and quite empty. And at the back was a lunch counter, also empty. Pat – [inaudible] Pat, Jarvis's ex-wife, Pat Bastian was with us. This was during the period when Debold and Pat saw a lot of each other. And we'd gone together as a trio to find obsidian, or possibly petrified wood. This was still possible, to gather such things. Well, Johnny Capooch was barely higher than his bar. He was the shortest man I've ever seen tending bar. A very friendly gentleman. We had a beer with Johnny Capooch at the bar, and then we went to the counter to have coffee and a sandwich.

So while we were waiting there for our service, we heard a skid and a desperate stop in the gravel, at the side door. And a glance showed that it was a pickup truck. In stomped a very nattily attired young woman with high heels and silk dress. Her skirt was rather short for that period. She had also – She had lace – the black high heels – French heels with the black laces around the ankle. Very starkly dramatic. She stomped up to the restaurant stool, sat down and lit a cigarette and nervously tapped the ashes off into an ashtray, and was bouncing – had her legs crossed and was bouncing one foot up and down fitfully. And smoking a cigarette in hasty puffs. And about three puffs of that cigarette and she smashed it out, dashed out, got in the truck and raced off, in a cloud of dust.

So the Santa Fe Hotel was merely holding up its end, in the traditions of the State of Nevada. Those traditions include love, romance, disappointment, birth and death.

I have some cleanup notes on this segment, and it has to do with Marijo's response to Robert Laxalt's book on his father and his people, the sheepherder Basque father of Paul and Robert Laxalt. She was amused, when she read the book, because in her own words, their father had been one of the biggest bootleggers in the area, and that was not mentioned in this account of nostalgic recall. Most – so many, not most, because most of them are sheepherders – of the leadership of the

Basque community had hotels, bars – in the later time, they were bars. They often had dining establishments in connection with some sort of hotel. They typically served wine all through the prohibition years, it was my belief. And I had been taken to these places where wine and sometimes hard liquor was available, both in California and Nevada. I remember I'd been taken to the Tuscana Hotel in the prohibition period. Almost every other place in Reno was a bar – you know, a speakeasy. So it seem. I mean, they were just prevalent in downtown Reno. Marijo's own father was a bootlegger. The Santa Fe Hotel, one of its rooms upstairs was outfitted as a bar during the prohibition time, I was told. And Marijo's Uncle Joe – Uncle Joe Larralde, Larralde being her mother's maiden name – Uncle Joe operated the Peavine transfer. And she said he got into that business because he was trucking and storing so much sugar, during the prohibition days. He provided – Uncle Joe was the provider of sugar. Well, that's no longer shocking material, because the United States finally acquiesced before the pressure of reality. . . .

Now, Frenchy Dupont's marriages gained him considerable national notoriety. He was the object of national attention at one point, and his marriages – Lyle and I tried to count. We agreed that it was either twelve or thirteen. He was one of the most married men in the United States.

Box 1, Tape 1/26, Side 1 – December 7, 1974

Main Subjects of Selection: Jean Varda

People mentioned:

Caples, Robert
Hiler, Hilaire
Varda, Jean

We spent an afternoon with Hiler, and he was very gracious. He was a little bemused, because we were youngsters, for god's sake, we were just out of art school, really. He was a mature guy and a sophisticated son-of-a-bitch. And he had a familiar around the place, a young woman that was acting like a servant. But I've seen that same thing over at Varda's ferryboat by Sausolito, a young girl [in] that same role – not really a servant, but background person, you know. And these guys, these painters, they get the young girls from the art world, and they fix them on themselves, apparently. Varda always had a few, I guess, from what his reputation is. And I visited him [Varda] one day at random, and we talked about our mutual friend Caples. Varda never liked me very much, I don't know why. I wasn't what he liked in society. He liked a very pleasant, sociable kind of a thing that – I'm too aggressive sometimes, I don't know. Varda never fully accepted me,

as an artist. I don't know. He didn't allow any room for me. He was full of shit, Varda. Varda had plenty of it. But I respected him. I respected him as an artist and he had an enormous influence on me – But both these guys, Hiler and Varda, had young girls there as attendants. They weren't quite people, they were just young girls, and they were there while the men talked. Ha. God damn. [NB: James Hulse described to me (2018) how, when he was one of Walton's "boys" on Marsh Avenue, Marijo and any young females who came with the "boys" were sidelined while the males talked.]

Box 1, Tape 1/27-1, Side 1 – February 10, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: *The Mark of Man*; Walton's time in New York in 1946

People mentioned:

Caples, Robert
Etcheberry, John, Sr.
Etcheberry, Louisa
Etcheberry, Paul
Fanning, Paul
Saroyan, William
Walton, Marie Jeanne (Marijo) Etcheberry

[Walton is reflecting on his unpublished book, *The Mark of Man*] One of my points being that what we saw was not the fact, that light rays constitute a symbol in the brain, and that you don't see the reality, there's no way to know a reality, and what you see is only a picture – which is a symbol. And I pursued the theory that all of it was symbolism if we would but understand it as such. And that even the most realistic painting was therefore a symbolic painting. And that we can find common ground on this if we could but assert the value. And I wanted to see a great coming together in the postwar world, with great art overtaking the nation. . . .

. . .

Marijo's father [John Etcheberry] had died early in the war with the pneumonia, in the hospital, and his son Paul had taken over. . . .

. . .

[Walton discusses a 1946 trip to New York with Marijo] Well, we wanted to stay at the Great Northern Hotel on 57th Street. Bob Caples had suggested that. Bill Saroyan had written stories about that hotel, it seemed like the place to stay. It was right there in the middle of where we wanted to be. We tried to stay there. We were going to rent a place for the month [near] where Caples stayed. This was all arranged ahead of time, in our writing to Robert. But on the night of arrival, we found that there were no rooms at this hotel. But they had a service in New York, and they were very gracious, and put us in touch with that service, and a hotel was

found some blocks away. . . . Well, we went from that hotel to the rooming house on 56th Street where Robert lived [101 W. 56th Street, according to the title page of “The Potter and the Lizard”]. He was going to the Art Students League at that time. . . . The next morning after our arrival, we went over to the address that Bob Caples had sent us, the place where he himself maintained a room. And he had spoken with the landlady, who proved to be a very interesting woman. He had made all the arrangements for our stay there. And we finalized them with her. . . . Bob had recommended it not as a very sumptuous place but as right in the heart of the action for an artist who was concerned with gallery hunting. Well, I can’t think of this lady’s name just off, but she had been an actress. She was quite old, and a little creaky. [Walton describes her a vain, unable to pass a mirror without pausing to primp.] Now we had a room on the corner of 56th and Avenue of the Americas [Sixth Avenue]. Well, that room was motorized. It was jumping from the moment we arrived till the time we left. Never stopped vibrating. It vibrated less in the late hours of night and the hours of the early morning. But as soon as you awoke, that room was vibrating. . . .

. . .

Now Marijo’s mother, who was the cook at the Santa Fe Hotel in those years, and a very renowned person, Louisa Etcheberry – Now Louisa had given us a hard jack cheese. It was deep black, and it was a most extraordinary item. It had been acquired in California, where she had some special connections. This cheese we carried across the nation. And it was just hard-rock hard. Well, that cheese was carried to Pyramid Lake for over a week, it was taken to the mountains of California, the sheep camp, and down to Santa Paula [where Walton’s mother lived]. It was wrapped in a paper sack. And the only place where we could carry it was on the floorboards. Well-covered it was, and Marijo covered it with ample material, and had her feet on it. And the engine would get warm – that was a very warm temperature there. The ants got in the cheese in Santa Paula. And I took it out and hosed it off, washed all the ants off. I wasn’t going to lose [laughs] – like my father [who had a grocery store/restaurant], I wasn’t going to waste a whole cheese. Cleaned it up to my satisfaction, and rebagged it. And on leaving, we carried that through New Mexico, and down through Texas, and through the bayous in Louisiana, and up through Mississippi and over into Washington, DC through Tennessee and into New York. Well, a strange thing had happened to that cheese in transit. It had matured. That was the best cheese you can imagine. It was not quite Limburger, but it had joined that family to a degree. It had gone from a rock-hard cheese into a rather soft cheese. Now, this is a secret process of maturing a gourmet cheese. And it’s lost to all time. Who could ever duplicate that route? I swear, that’s perhaps the best cheese I ever ate. . . .

...

We soon visited with Robert when he came home from the Art Students League, and the next day we went over there to see the League. He was a student on the GI Bill. Poor Bob had been in the hospital before he severed his relationship with the Navy. He'd had a prolonged stay at Bethesda. But Bob was never very strong. He had some insistent illness. But that didn't trouble his spirit. He was still the same wry and wonderful guy that I had known years before. Now, he warned me, be careful – I'd met some people. And – well, I'd met them through an interesting chance. Bob was very concerned about Marijo, he was afraid that I should be very careful in New York with strangers, because of her safety. Well, we were in good shape. [Walton goes on to discuss a chance meeting with Paul Fanning, an old artist friend, with whom he falls in, with further adventures in the art and gallery scene.]

Box 1, Tape 1/27-2, Side 1 – ca. 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: *The Misfits*

People mentioned:

Edwards, Florence
Miller, Arthur
Monroe, Marilyn

I was an extra at Dayton [in *The Misfits*], 'cause they wanted people, and went down – and Florence Edwards was one of the crowd, too. And on that occasion saw Marilyn Monroe, and I was so sympathetic for her, her hair was so bleached, and she was so alone under that parasol that they would hold for her, and on call like a trained animal. And so wistful. And Arthur Miller chewed on his pipe, preoccupied, and I could see that something was wrong with their relationship. . . .

Box 1, Tape 1/28, Side 1 – February 23, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: Walton's novel *Pyramid*; cui-ui as an eating fish

People mentioned:

Clark, Walter Van Tilburg
Smith, Homer W.
Smith, Margaret

Now, in the matter of cui-ui, I should add that I found that the cui-ui's filets were not the candle. Now they were a staple for the Paiutes. But I found the meat

very soft and spongy, like one sometimes finds fish in the waters about Southern California, like the sole is sometimes spongy and rather textureless, not firm at all. . . . Well, the cui-ui is just as soft and textureless as one might expect the flesh of a sucker to be. They feed on the bottom of the shallows there, and the Truckee River is a sewer. It's the Reno sewer. So it is fed on sewer mud, at this time of the world. And it tastes to me just like one would imagine sewer mud to taste. I always thought of it as catching cui-ui on the Lower Wee-Wee. . . .

It occurs to me, these twenty-five years since writing *Pyramid*, that I might well have dedicated the book to Homer and Margaret [Homer W. Smith, author of *Kamongo*, a novel about the lungfish], our brief friends, who were to stay so long in our recall. So let me leave the thought that I have of those dear people with this continuation of this part of *Pyramid* that I am so drawn. This book surprised me, when I wrote it. Hemingway had something to do with kicking me off in it. So did Walter Clark. I felt Walter Clark had fallen short of doing his right job for *Pyramid*, and that Hemingway had fallen short of doing a book at all in *Across the River and into the Trees*. And the sneaker was *Kamongo*. It was in my sub-conscious. And I know it now, and used the form as a vehicle of conversations, this encampment of the lovers at *Pyramid*. I used the occasion of *Pyramid* – somehow that picnic took its toll, to continue with the reading from *Pyramid*, from the last line, “The clear cloudless sky was blue”:

Gradually, inward, conewise and inverted, closing in and folding his own transparent fingers, and on the inner side, conewise and palmwise, gradually clenching without crushing, the unseen hand closed from the end of the sky to the brim of the earth bowl. The transparent fingers folded over the furthestmost ridges, where sagebrush was dotted lace on lavender, then mauve, then brick-red or iron-red or Venetian red or English red or Indian red: earth red. And as the transparent fingers came to the closest inner hills of brown and ochre, and without it, the field of green, which was actually gray and called silver. And as the fingers came inward, the sage was intimately alive with communities and villages of small life, of ants and ticks, bugs uncountable, living the life in the lush and shaded and heavily perfumed world the hand knew better than they.

Bounding between the scented brush on crooked paths in the distant sage hills, the hearty jackrabbit remained. At the perimeter of the lake, near the monument, the land was dry and so dry. In the near-lying region, the transparent hand, while closing over the packrat, had left the hearty jackrabbit with the lavender and the mauve. The hand closed toward the water cup of the great palm,

tapped the red red rock of the elbow and the white-gray and granite-white flat stones as the only straight line, and the sentinels and waterlines one by one. And gradually, since the blue hills of unseen brushland, those of jackrabbits and moles, and since the pre-Stravinsky waterlines, which covered the land farther than the airplane could see, and now which were in the cupped hand, and at the wake of one man.

Now, [change of subject]. . . .

Box 1, Tape 1/28, Side 2 – February 24, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: Loring Chapman and “the Boys”

People mentioned:

Armand, Pat
Bastian, Jack (Dr. Jarvis)
Cantlion, Henry
Chapman, Eleanor
Chapman, Loring
Chapman, Sydney (or Sidney)
Chapman, Thornton
Chapman, Toy
Dubray, Rene
Halstead, Dr.
Glass, Bob
Guigas, Gunter
Kafoury, Sam
Mérida, Carlos
Scott
Shelly, Carl B.
Steinheimer, Rae
Varda, Jean
Walton, Marie Jeanne (Marijo) Etcheberry
Wolff, Dr. [sp?]

My thoughts are concerned with Loring Chapman and “the Boys,” that remarkable group of undergraduates from the University of Nevada, which congregated at the house on Marsh Avenue in Reno, around 1948, intermittently, missing one here and one there, through the years until – through 1957. And our kingpin in this group was Loring Chapman. Loring was brought to the drawing classes of March Avenue by Pat Armand and Gunter Guigas. And Loring and I had had a chat. After his first class, I quizzed him about his purposes for taking the class. He was not a career artist, or even a serious amateur. Loring was concerned, he told me, about the development of his outlook. That he felt isolated. He was a pre-med student at

the University of Nevada, and simply wanted to extend his horizon. And as I mentioned before, I had a feeling that Gunter Guigas especially had the same view. Both were to be career scientists.

Now Loring – Loring was a child of divorce. He proved to have a remarkable maternal family, in the local sphere. And his father was an outstanding person. His father's name was not Chapman. Chapman is the name that was taken by Loring as a young boy, the name coming to him through Thornton Chapman, Thornton having married Loring's mother Eleanor. And he had a sister, Sydney [or Sidney]. She was a good deal younger than Loring. Now, in later years she was to marry an automobile dealer's son, who later became the senior member of the firm in Reno. And there was the aside of her winning the Lux Radio Theater contest second place – a national contest – in relation to my photograph of her. About 1950, I guess. The photograph appeared in *Life* magazine. A girl from Texas won it. Syd won some kind of a movie shot. The opportunity came to little. A screen test, I believe, was part of the prize.

Loring's father's name was Scott. His father was a prominent bookdealer in Southern California. I believe his headquarters were in Pasadena. Loring said the concern was large enough that a railroad siding pulled in. They sold a lot of textbooks, a lot of books to the school system, the state school system in California. His mother, Eleanor, had married one of the wheels of the newspaper in Los Angeles. I forget the name of the paper, forget the name of the man. But that was Sydney's father.

So it was a family somewhat like my own, my sister being a half-sister and my own lot was as a child of divorce. Well, this brings a lot of people to Reno – at least it did in those years. I don't know what the divorce situation is in the 1970s.

So, in any case, this didn't have any scars that showed, and Loring proved to be a very personable young man. He was of slight build in those years, and he was not very tall. And a perceptive person. You could see that his intelligence was extensive. For that reason, we hit it off into channels of a certain depth from the beginning in our exchanges, neither of us hesitant to discuss anything. And there was no pussyfooting in this relationship, we were immediate friends. Although he was so much younger than me, perhaps fifteen years. He was said to be the youngest student at the University of Nevada at that time, and he was a year ahead of all of his friends. He had skipped a grade someplace along the line, and was accustomed to being in the lead scholastically, in whatever arena. And that applied evenly throughout the years. Loring was to finish his pre-med work at the University of Nevada, and was to go on to Chicago, the University of Chicago, a school he favored partly because a person could take his exams for a PhD along with his master's. You could take the test under the Robert Hutchins policy – you

could take the test if you could pass it. You could go out with your degree. And this appealed to Loring, because he was not one for losing any time.

He was to go on, after our early acquaintance, when he took the art classes – he was to go on to pursue his physiology degree. He got his master's at the University of Chicago, and on the same occasion he arranged to take his doctorate, and passed it. So he was launched into his field immediately. He was to become the assistant of his department chief at the University of Chicago, Dr. Halstead [sp?], and later to go on to Dr. Wolff [sp?] in New York, Dr. Wolff being an international figure in the area we now refer to as behavioral biology. The term was not yet invented in those years.

So Loring just zoomed ahead. And at first the papers that he gave were to be released jointly under Dr. Wolff's name and Loring Chapman's name. These were later – Loring released some of this material – Loring told me as late as a year ago, or two, maybe two years ago, that he had done material in Chicago, in his research, that he hadn't had time to release. But it was just unwieldy to report out this material. He's written many books, technical books on – especially on the subject of pain.

There was an open field after Dr. Wolff died, and Loring seemed to be standing alone in a world in his field. And psychiatrists and doctors of many kinds relating to mind and medicine know Loring Chapman and his books. He's a familiar figure in science arenas, from Vienna, London and New York and anywhere there's one, he'll be there. South America, Mexico, the world over.

Now this is my "boy," who came to the door, and you must remember there's a great deal of difference in years, when one or the other of you are in your teens and somebody else is a grown person. The spread is very great in the beginning. Well, today it's less so. Loring has his gray hair as well as I do myself. And today he's approximately forty-five years old, and is currently the head of the Department of Behavior Biology at the University of California at Davis, with tenure and with the full professorship, which are conditions, I understand, in the academic world that are significant. Of all the "boys" that came along in that group, Chapman seemed to have gone the farthest.

Well, we spent many, many hours together. And after the drawing classes, Loring would stay in there. And I understand that I tended to lose him some time at the University because of these conversations – would kind of screw him up. But he has no regret about it. He feels that there's something that we shared in those years that were invaluable to him and [inaudible] to come. Our talks were extended along technicalities of life, and some of his problems, as well as ponderings into the world of art. We would get bored pretty fast talking about art. So, he wasn't a precious soul at all.

Now, Loring was a great clown, in his youth and has remained so through all of his serious years. A great sport for some kind of gag. And in his undergraduate years, he and “the boys” would – which included Bob Glass and Sam Kafoury and Henry Cantlion, among others – And on one occasion, after a Nevada Day celebration in which they had celebrated their new homecoming queen, they had promised to bring her to the house, to deliver her on the porch. Well, they failed in that brag. Instead of that, they brought a post that they had dug up, a post with an enormous cable that they’d taken from the parking lot at the University of Nevada, wishing to bring me something. Well, in the morning I went out and there was that post, this great big 12 inch square post about 6 feet long, with this great cable. Not many of those practical jokes. Bob Glass – his father was a local banker who appraised properties, was very well regarded – and Glass grew up as a deviate within his own family. The family was very conservative, and Glass actually was conservative, but he had aberrations that put him at arm’s length from what you call normal. He had a wild sense of humor. And “the boys” would go sledding, and they’d come up in – twelve, one o’clock at night with some car towing a sled. You could hear their voices before you even heard the car.

And so I became “Uncle Richard,” and those were to be some of the richest days of all my years, to be surrounded by these harum-scarum but brilliant young lads from the University of Nevada, who were attracted to the studio life on Marsh Avenue.

Marijo was patient and indulgent of those wildcat visitations. They were welcomed by us both. And they used our studio room as kind of a club. It was almost a public place. I’ve heard some of them remark on this in later years, with perspective.

But Loring had no extreme talent as an art student. But he had an extreme appreciation of the occasion. He had a peculiar touch that came out in his self-portrait. If he had wished to, he undoubtedly could have made a plunge into the arts. He would have been one of those wild talents in left field. He had very little discipline as a draftsman. He had all his discipline in the academic world, however, at the university. One of his techniques – Jack Bastian was one of his fellow students at the University of Nevada. Jack Bastian is otherwise known as Dr. Jarvis Bastian, University of California at Davis in the psychology department. And at the University of Nevada they often took classes together. And Jarvis Bastian was impressed with the workings of the Chapman mind in class, about how difficult it was, and what annoyed him was to see Chapman sleeping in the lectures, and just loafing, taking it easy. Well, there’s a pattern behind this. I remember this very vividly. There was a period in the summertime when Chapman would disappear. He’d say, “Well, I won’t see you for a while,” he said, “I’ve got

to do some studying.” He would go to the library, get all the books on his subject, and he had the ability to sweep-read – he would speed-read. He could scan a page and get the meaning without wasting time on the chaff. Chapman never reads the nonsense in a given article. He would scan the rest of it just looking at a sentence. He could look at a page like a sentence, and go to the next one. And in this way he swept through these technical books. And he had a vast memory. He’d commit all this stuff to his memory bank. And when it came time for the lectures, he knew more than these professors at the University of Nevada level. He was way ahead of them. And he passed with the highest grades, and I was told he slept through most of the lectures. And was a phenomenal personage on the campus. Well, he always played in the band, and was a participant in musical – the band affairs at the university. And they’d have their wild moments up there as the children they were. They were big [inaudible] kids. And once the curtain caught fire during a performance – I don’t know who set that one off. They were playing with fire all the time, these guys. During ROTC, Chapman and his associate started a bonfire – tore up some papers and things, started a little fire in this armory – a cement floor, and I remember that report. The sergeant came in and said, “You’re apt to start a fire that way.” Well, that’s what they had in mind.

Well, he went on – he was late in the game, this curious, almost juvenile sense of humor. He was at a conference of medical doctors and scientists of various sorts, seeing a film, this technical film on the treating of certain animals with drugs, and the mating of odd species – cross over a chicken with a monkey or something – you know, they had it for each other. But anyway, this was a deviant chicken had been given this material, and I think the chicken was trying to hump a monkey or something. And Loring shouted out loud, “Go, Go, Go, Man!” in the middle of this serious crowd. Well, I doubt may joined with him in laughter. But he can’t restrain himself. And he was to marry a girl [Toy Chapman] who played along with him in these things, and they both are adventurous – they were in their young years of marriage. And even yet they do strange things. But they were admonished for necking in a railroad station on one occasion. They decided to do it for fun, and got kicked out. And at Davis they were rather sportive, in some dimension.

But in the early years, he took some paintings – he was to – well, when he was in Chicago as an undergraduate [?], he had seen about an exhibition for me, knowing I’d had a show there in 1936. Now this is about 1950, perhaps ‘51, ‘52. He secured an exhibition for me at the University of Chicago again. And these were “Malefactors.” Well, I was to hear later that during the show, that there was a big article – Oh, I was congratulated by a public relations man from the Reno Chamber of Commerce. He said, “Congratulations.” I said, “What?” He said,

“Well, there’s a big article in the *Chicago Tribune*.” I said, “Oh, really?” I said, “What’s it all about?” He said, Oh,” he said, “I saw a full page – full length of the page article on your exhibition there.” I said, “Where’d you see that?” He said, “The Chamber of Commerce.” And I said, “My God, I’ll look into this.” So I rushed right over to the Chamber of Commerce, told the secretary there, a lady, the receptionist. I said, “Now, I was just told the story –” and I repeated the thing, and she said, “Oh, we wouldn’t have that.” She said, “We just measure them and throw them away.” So they assume that their local people know all these things. Well, it seemed to me that a phone call would have been in order. The Chamber of Commerce measuring such material and taking credit for it in their annual report.

Well, about a year later Loring was to go to Mexico, and he insisted on taking with him – Oh, he forgot to go down – forgot to look in the papers, he told me – This is a matter of embarrassment to him even yet. He told me about that article, I said, “It never occurred to me to look in the paper.” So I never did find out what the art critic said about that show.

So anyway, about a year later [mid-1950s] Loring was to go to Mexico, and he wanted to take some – he had an idea that my paintings should be seen down there. Well, it seemed to me an idea, maybe it would give a fellow a little international kick in the pants. And I said, “Well, that’d be fine, but they’re kind of big.” And he insisted on taking them anyway. An armload. All he could do is carry them. One of these is big. I gave it to him later, he had it in his office, and he has it in his home now. It’s rather a large one, about three feet by almost – two feet by three feet. And he carried this and others on the airplane to Mexico. And then while he was in Mexico, they found out that it’s not easy to get paintings out of Mexico. So in a sense, he smuggled them out when he left. He carried them out on the plane. He just carried them through, nobody questioned him, he went right through with them. But there was a matter of some apprehension before he left.

While there, while in Mexico City, he went to the Palace of Fine arts, to the chief of the federal – the government chief of – the big man in that field for an interview. And showed him the paintings, and the man said, “Well now, there’s very little activity here in abstract art, and there’s only one painter that he knew of who was interested in abstract painting, that is involved in the abstract field.” And he said the one that you should see is Carlos Mérida [Walton mispronounces the name with stress on the second syllable]. So he gave him his address. Loring said – went over there and this big house with the laurel all about the grounds, and he was met by a lady who worked for him there and let him in, and went back to announce him. And he said in a little while he was shown back to a room distant – way back – and there was this very well known painter doing some small work, crouched over a table doing this fine, fine work. And he said, “I told him why I was there

with the paintings, and wanted to get a show – make a connection for Walton. And he said, “Well, why would he want a show down here? Why doesn’t he go to New York?” Well, I’d just been to New York. The thing was, I thought maybe an oblique strike out of Mexico might be valuable. I wanted to – I always had delusions of rapport with the outer world. And I don’t know how – I don’t know what Loring told him, but he said I was concerned about Mexican painters, and wanted to become acquainted with them and wanted them to become acquainted with my work, and wanted a closer rapport. Well, he said there’s little doing in the abstract field, especially with outsiders, foreigners. And he had no hopes for any action along that line. But Loring said he was enormously concerned with the paintings.

In that period, I had some work with the lineal treatment of special form. I would paint a masonite panel with flat black color of commercial variety, which house painters paint interiors with – Treasure Tone, flat black it was, a product which has since been abandoned by them. Let that dry, and then give it another coat. Now while – that second coat would set up soon, to where you could touch it with your hand or a piece of paper and it would not come off, yet it was not dry. It’s soft. I would take drawing paper, about six inches square, and paint the paper. [Walton goes on at some length further about the technique.] . . .

Now, Carlos Mérida asked Loring endless questions about “How’s he do this? How’d he get this effect? How’d he do this? How’d he do that?” And Loring said it was very interesting to him, to Chapman, because he said it appeared to him that Mérida was working on something, trying to do something at his table that I had achieved on a large scale in these paintings. And he said he was very engrossed with the method. And I was delighted and flattered that this great man, who I had been acquainted with by reputation for many years – that this man had this response to my product.

Well, in later years, it is my understanding, Mérida was to become a profound influence on Mexican painters, younger painters to come up, that drifted off from sociological painting into design. That the abstract arts became more important as time went on, and Mérida was their leader.

Well, Loring bundled those pictures under his arm and boarded an airplane and returned to the United States without incident, very unhappy that he was unable to secure an exhibition for me in Mexico. But this shows Chapman’s adventurous interest in helping me down the road as time went on. Many years later, he was to be instrumental in securing an exhibition for me at Davis, which was a show of rather Letterist paintings, and one that discouraged me very much. I had hoped to attract some interest among the students at Davis, and they were very hard to stir. In fact, I felt patronized and a certain condescension all the way along

the line. This being in the middle of the so-called youth revolution, and everywhere you turned, the feel that the older people are useless. Even the older people felt that. So it discouraged me profoundly. From that point on, I haven't been quite the same person, having lost heart – lost some of the spirit of the adventure of – involved in this painting quest.

Now, in one of his summer visits, which were periodic during his term at the University of Chicago, Loring found me preparing to have a[n] exhibition in Powning Park across from the post office across from the Riverside Hotel, right there near the Virginia Street bridge. Well, we had two such exhibitions, they were community exhibitions. And I had been active in large public showings with the WPA, and it was a natural for me to pull together a show of this magnitude. It's easy to do. We published a little notice in the press, and some meetings, and we stimulated the whole art community.

Well, I had had a show at the Little Theater, and I – someone had taken offense at one of my little paintings. It was a stylized torso and had a waist, about five inch line, just a line, one line waist, and a triangular rib cage and a rather bulbous pelvis. Inspired somewhat by Minoan figures. An altogether abstract creation. Well, I had used – I'd been using collage as let us say a simplified shadow area – was rationalized, and replaced by an area of red, let us say. Well, I finally – I was doing it with paper, and then I decided, well, the paper – Varda, Jean Varda's having such a time with his paper collage fading and popping off and buckling panels, that I would use the paper, and then I will paint in that area flat. Not use the paper, getting some of the effect of collage without the hazards. And this was one of those, and it led me to the painting of papers and my so-called stamp-on technique [described above in connection with Mérida and Mexico, partially elided there], which I used for decades. This little torso was early in that scheme, and it had a shadow underneath the arm, and to turn the belly of the torso, I put a little shadow of red at the crotch underneath the tummy. And I never did figure out exactly what the objection was to that. It had some sexual connotation to the objectors, and this one lady had objected to her relative who was on the board. And he took it on himself, being the chairman of the board, he jerked the painting out of the exhibition. Well, that happened overnight. When I went back the next morning, after I'd hung the show, to see if the pictures had settled, to straighten them, which is practice – otherwise, I wouldn't have been there for a week, till the show was over, during the play's run. Well, I missed the painting. I said, "Well now, there's a painting missing. Where is that?" Well, they didn't want to talk much about it, they said, "Well, Mr. Shelly had it removed." So I called Mr. Shelly, who ran a hardware store in Sparks, the town's sister city, of Reno, a few miles east, and I asked him what was wrong, what the objection was, and he

wouldn't discuss it [Carl B. Shelly, Shelly's Hardware, 440 Greenbrae, Sparks]. He said, "You know very well." I said, "But I don't. I don't know what your objection is." Now if he had some kind of a background thought that it was sexual, I didn't know – I really didn't know whether it was the time of the month in his mind, or if I [sic] thought that red-hot flaming genitalia, or what. But he wouldn't discuss it, and the end of the conversation occurred when he slammed the received down in his rage.

Well, Rae Steinheimer happened to be sitting there. And I said, "Well," I said, "I can't let this go, just without objection." I said, "It forces me to remove the paintings, all of them. So Rae went over and together we pulled down the exhibition, and brought it back to the Marsh Avenue studio. And Rae said, "Well now, what we have to do," he said, "I know the Reno newspapers, the *Gazette* and the *Journal*, won't touch this kind of a story. But there's a new newspaper trying to make a go of it, called the *Reno Reporter*. And he said, "Let's go down and see them." And we went down there, and Rae did all – did the majority of the talking. To Rene Dubray. And the chap at the counter was very involved – concerned about the abuse of the arts, and came on with this front page story, which the headline said, "County Commissioner Bans Painting." [1949; Check the *Reno Reporter*] Well, the man's newspaper proved to be a former ballet dancer [sic]. And at this present recording I can't think of my friend's name. He became a very good friend for a number of years. And I was to know him much better. But he had been a premier ballet dancer at the Chicago Opera Company and had had a wide experience in Paris. And a very well-trained and experienced ballet dancer. So this loaded the rifle toward the arts. Loaded the balance. The end result was that I decided to exhibit that painting publicly. Got permission from the City Council to use Powning Park and the bridge for a large exhibition, a summer exhibition of paintings. And sent out the notices, and put the notices in the paper, and there was a very heavy response from all over the state of Nevada. I was to hang the offensive picture in the middle of the Virginia Street bridge, subsequently to be photographed with two little kids, two little boys, looking up at the painting, and I was sitting beside it by the lamppost with the small, inoffensive painting being viewed by these children. Well, the Associated Press was to come along and run that story. I don't know what was done with it outside of town. But they picked it off. And the result was that I got an apology, a letter of apology, from the Reno Little Theater board [inaudible]. At the top of the list of signers of this letter was the name of Carl Shelly. And then with [inaudible] names below that. People of – outstanding persons of the community, who supported the Little Theater, many of whom I knew personally. But in any case, we made up for the banning of the painting, at the Reno Little Theater. Now they had – the article had said, "County

Commissioner Bans Painting.” Well, he wasn’t acting as a county commissioner, he was acting as a member of the board – he was the chairman of the Little Theater, who coincidentally was a county commissioner. But that was a rift.

Well, that accounts for the exhibition in Powning Park. And on one of these occasions, Loring came through for his summer visit. And he threw himself into a four by six foot panel, a masonite panel. Painted up a storm. And he hung it – he wired it to a tree. It was a strong painting [laughs], but it was one of utter enthusiasm. And as he said later, it was done in homage to his teacher, which [inaudible] rather sensitive about the thought. He did it as a gesture. So Loring has always been vastly loyal, and helpful as he can. The Chapmans, Loring and Toy, were to have receptions for me at their house, and they were the sponsors of the reception at the Davis gallery. And the peer group, the academic peers, came in numbers to the opening. But I missed the youth. The youth – I guess the word had gotten out, they fought shy of it. Although this was some of my most extreme work. But, you know, I do believe they were critical of it because they were against painting that was decorative in essence. And this was not altogether decorative, because it had the Letterist drive, which has nothing to do with – it had a graphic involvement. Largely influenced by Tapaclus [?] and the abstract symbol of language, creatively used, rather two-dimensional surface. Well, that will be discussed in its deserved depth in a segment concerned with the development of my art.

I was later to try to develop an interest in my case in the department as a photographer on special projects.

Box 1, Tape 1/29, Side 1 – February 27, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: Loring Chapman; Walton’s 1969 exhibition at UC Davis

People mentioned:

Armand, Pat
Caples, Robert
Caples, Shirley
Chapman, Loring
Guigas, Gunter
Mascott, Laurence
McChesney, Robert
Taubes, Frederic

. . . This is on our first talk, after he’d come to see me to arrange for these classes, having been referred to me by Pat [Armand] and Gunter [Guigas]. It was in the

afternoon. The weather was fair. And we'd had our talk. I was terribly drawn to him. And Loring always had a little quality of embarrassment, a little quality of not knowing what to do, which way to turn, when he is faced with an impasse of people. And he always defaces himself. But this is a vanity, too, because he has an ego which is the equal of Napoleon's. We'll get into that at some other point. But however he appears to be enormously shy on these occasions of self-embarrassment, not knowing, as we say, whether to shit or go blind. . . .

Loring had been a quiz kid. In the days of radio there was a very famous program called "The Quiz Kids." The quiz kids were the brightest children in the United States. They paneled them on this radio show, and asked them all kinds of obscure questions. . . . Well, need I say, Loring was a quiz kid in his time. . . .

Now among his other accomplishments is his instrument, the clarinet. I owe Loring a good deal for opening my eyes to elements in Stravinsky and in William Walton, my namesake. . . . Oh, and in Samuel Barber. . . .

. . . The draft board was after him all the time. Well, he had certain deferments because of his unique scholastic position. But had wear out [sic], that ran out of gas from time to time. . . . Then he was to join the Marine Corps, until they found out how short he was. Well, the reason he joined the Marine Corps was the draft board was after him to induct him in the Army, and he had no intention of going in as a private, so he joined the Marine Corps, with his credits from the University. They accepted him, and then they found out they'd overlooked a detail. He was too damn short. So they gave him an honorable discharge. Well, here he was armed with two things. In the first place, when the draft board closed on him, he was in the Marine Corps already, so that washed them out of the picture. And then when the matter came up again, the Marine Corps had given him an honorable discharge. So how can you perfect your case any better than that? They never laid a glove on him.

. . .
Loring had high hopes for a project relating to world hunger. He told me that they had developed a corn, a high protein corn, in the agricultural work in the University of California at Davis. Chapman's program, his project, involved a community he knew about in Mexico where he felt the population was such that he could manage this program [which involved feeding half the population on the new corn and half on its traditional diet]. . . .

Just after my exhibit at Davis, when Chapman was deeply concerned about involving me in a fringe program – As he said one time, "They won't allow me to run a WPA." Well, that was a bit offensive to me, but I don't think he meant it that way. [laughs] If he could invoke a WPA, he would have done it. I needed it. I needed income badly. I needed my self-respect. I needed direction, so badly. And

in these last years, the picture is very bleak. Even my friend McChesney finds it bleak. And he enjoys a status beyond my own on the West Coast. This is a dread picture for the painters. Well, Chapman knows that – he knows that. He was trying – I was trying to adapt and he was trying to adapt, and we tried to work something out.

Well, I had acquired a Bolex 16mm camera, and was just acquiring the essentials from my side. . . . Now I'd had a certain experience with Mascott Productions, [inaudible] images, with my friend Laurie Mascott in Los Angeles, which I will have recorded on one side or the other of this [sic] tape. [Walton describes detailed budgeting for a film on Chapman's hunger project.] Well, I was not about to involve myself in an amateur production. And I know we were fiddling with the federal government. He had the highest prestige. We were appealing to the National Institutes of Health, and I had my Mascott experience behind me. [Further on the proposed film.] Well, the budget was \$30,000, which was a drop in the bucket in his overall budget, which was in the millions. . . . It was a fantasy. It was a Leonardo kind of a project, . . . but it didn't come through. . . .

[Walton describes another film project with Chapman which didn't materialize.]

[Walton describes Loring's pain research.]

[Walton describes Chapman's involvement with Aldous Huxley involving experiments on artists before and after taking hallucinogens. Huxley from his own experience on hallucinogens thought he had discovered the secret of Van Gogh's painting (see Walton's opinion below).]

Now let me say that when I was in Santa Barbara, waiting until dinnertime in my room, getting cleaned up, sat on the bed in the home of Bob and Shirley Caples, on the occasion when I took the seminar with . . . Fred Taubes. . . . Anyway, I sat on the edge of the bed and I was looking at the mirror, and I saw – I saw a rainbow of colors occur around this cut glass edge all around the mirror. And the more I stared at it, I saw the faster it went. And I stared and stared. And there's a prismatic separation that escalated and went around and around and around! Now I knew damn well that wasn't happening out there forward, but that was happening in my receptivity. Well, I have always been inclined to relate that incident of the flashing fire, the separation of the spectrum on the mirror, on that meditation in Santa Barbara at Bob and Shirley Caples' – I've always related that to the report of Aldous Huxley on the drug scene. . . . [Note that Walton would have learned of Huxley well after the 1938 episode in Santa Barbara.] [Walton describes seeing Van Gogh originals and concluding that Van Gogh was a brilliant technician and that his effects cannot have been the result of a perceptual experience as per Huxley.]

Box 1, Tape 1/29, Side 2 – February 28, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: The Chapmans; the Davis show

People mentioned:

Berry, Barnes
Berry, Frances
Berry, Halley
Chapman, Eleanor
Chapman, Loring
Chapman, Pandora
Chapman, Robbie
Chapman, Tony
Chapman, Toy Farrar
Farrar, Robert "Bob"
Glass, Robert
Kafoury, Emma Mae
Kafoury, Sam
Sanders, Maurice
Steinheimer, Rae
Walton, Marie Jeanne (Marijo) Etcheberry

Well, I forget what year it was, but it was early in the game of their college years. Loring and Bob Glass, to while away the time that was on their hands, went into this testing office – Well, they saw on the bulletin board that the test was open for ferry boat pilot. They went in – They had some time on their hands – went and took the test and passed the test, without having any particular knowledge on the subject. So they emerged licenced ferry boat pilots. Not knowing a damn thing about it. Passed the test.

. . .

I believe it was the second show in the park, Powning Park, in which Loring painted the picture and tied it to the tree in the center of the park. I believe my own paintings were on the bridge again. . . .

Now, I have a note on Letterism, after the Davis show. Well, I knew that my form in that period was Letterist. I hadn't had the word, I forget what I called it. But the month following, my copy of *Art in America* or some kind of slick magazine that I subscribed to in that time came through, and they had a review of a Parisian art movement, that seemed to be occupying much of the Paris thought. It was Letterism had arisen in Europe. And little did I know that. I had not heard of this. And my show went by ignored, by the art buffs of Davis, Davis being the foremost art movement in the United States, in the University circle at that time. And no response to my Letterism, yet at the same time Letterism was the going

this, the fashionable thing, in Paris. . . . Well, these things happen. And even in a time of action painting in New York, I was told, when people saw some of my standpoint painting – “Oh, they’re doing that in New York. . . .” Well, you’re not isolated, no matter how original you think you are. . . .

. . .

Well, the thing is, Toy [Farrar Chapman] and Marijo knew each other independently. Now, Toy Farrar was born and raised in Reno, and was the child of an old historic family on the mother’s side. Bob Farrar, her father, had worked on the Comstock. She was married to a chap who was involved with ski equipment as a salesman. And Robbie Chapman was adopted by Loring later. Robbie was the natural son of the first marriage. Later on, Toy married Barnes Berry. Barnes, the son of Frances Berry, who came out to the classes in Idlewild Park with his brother Halley. The marriage to Barnes ended in the middle of the Korean War. Barnes was . . . in the ski troops. And then Toy would appear in our lives on Marsh Avenue, as the date of Maurice Sanders. This was a very brief interval for them both. And Rae Steinheimer came into the picture. Well, he had known her father a long time. Rae was a good deal her senior. Rae had told Toy about Loring, this extraordinary young man, who was this budding genius at the University of Chicago. Toy some way met Eleanor [Chapman, Loring’s mother], and she turned up Loring on her own. Toy has a very inventive mind. Well, on one of his tours to Reno, they were married. They lived in New York for a time, and they had a house outside of New York after that period. And then he came West, got the job at Davis, and they have a home there. . . .

They have two children, Tony and Pandora.

This is a five minute gap [an erasure].

. . . They have random feelings overtake them. They feel uncommitted to a bad scene. They’ll take right off. Now there was another occasion where – They play games. One time we went down to a display of Christmas gifts with the Kafourys in Los Angeles. The Kafourys and the Chapmans and myself. I was there on a sales tour for the late winter of that particular year. And – Oh, it was a fine show. The dolls from Japan were so beautiful. They were so real looking. My, I couldn’t believe it. I wanted one of my own. In any case, Toy picked up all kinds of things, she brought to the counter. This great Christmas purchase. And the girl, the checker, a young woman, was figuring – registering – counting all these things up, and Toy was watching the cash register, and one item came up there – “What’s that for?” You see? And the girl said, “Well, that’s for the doll.” She said, “I thought the doll was so-and-so.” And the girl said, “No,” she says, “Thus-and-so” – a higher price. And Toy said, “Well,” she says, “if that’s the case, I don’t want any of it.” And she just walked off, left the girl with a counter full of toys. Well,

Christmas purchases. I don't get fully the jazz on that. But that's a quality of those [inaudible]. And I see it as an imposition on the clerk, not as funny at all. But, I mean, you can't discuss it. I mean, there's no discussing of it. This characterizes some kind of a playful thing which they both will engage in from time to time. It's only funny to them. . . . [Walton gives two more examples involving both Loring and Toy.] So they exist in a kind of a world of their own.

Box 1, Tape 1/33, Side 1 – August 7, 1975 & January 5, 1983

Main Subjects of Selection: Walton builds his home in Virginia City; finds Vivian

People mentioned:

Etcheberry, John Senior
Etcheberry, Johnny
Hardin, Lyle
Hinch, Nicky
Mayberry, David
Mayberry, Florence
Shastal [?], Eric
Tuttle, Bud
Tuttle, Nadine
VanderHoeven, Mary
Walton, Marie Jeanne (Marijo) Etcheberry
Walton, Myrtle Foose
Walton, Vivian Diane Washburn
Walton, Wilber G.

In reviewing my tapes, I found a terrible omission. Something I apparently tried to avoid saying. That is, in 1958, Marie Jeanne and I separated. She went to Spain, and I stayed in Nevada and built a studio home. The studio home was purchased in modules, nothing over ten feet long, a Butler Building. It had been a former Navy hospital in the Bay Area. A flier had been sent to the rural service of the Bud Tuttle [wife Nadine], stating that these buildings were available in ten foot modules. You could buy ten feet from here to Siam. So my dad [Wilber G. Walton] and I went down to South San Francisco, and examined those buildings. And having built the roadster with Johnny Etcheberry's help, I knew I could build a Butler Building. Put it together and fur [?] it. Johnny Etcheberry would be my advisor.

So the property was uncertain, where it would go. I knew I could get ground in Storey County, in Virginia City, somewhere. Well, we had bought three lots from Nicky Hinch. He had waved his arms – that was in 1948, Marijo and I – and he had waved his arms rather broadly and included the whole valley. Well, he

didn't own but a little small part of it. So I did get six more lots from the county. And substantially we owned this little section between the C & C shaft and Union Street, about 300 feet deep and 100 feet wide, one section. Then there is a county ground for a mythic road that never was. And the three lots Nicky Hinch sold me were down there, part of which had been the mining dump. So I refused to let a bulldozer on the place and I chopped out the sagebrush and leveled the ground myself, and built the building largely singlehanded. Had help once in a while from Johnny Etcheberry on the strategy, how to handle this and that. Other friends helping hold impossible timbers – timbers, no: members – this is all steel, the building. Lyle Hardin helped me erect some of the front, Eric Shastal [?] helped me dig the sewer, and Eric was to stay with me for a long time, too. He was my taxi-driving friend who would return to the military.

Now, when I found myself facing Christmas on the first year here – I lived in a tent and a trailer, slept in the trailer, cooked in the tent – had provisions there. The trailer was the Etcheberry family trailer John Etcheberry, Senior had used in sheep camp before he died. I bought it for a very small sum. Well, that Christmas, '58-'59, facing the new year, I sent cards to all my dearest friends to let them know where I was now. I was no longer in Reno. The house had been sold there. Marijo was in Spain and I was building a studio on the Comstock, and I urged them all to come by.

Well, the first one to take me up on that was Mary VanderHoeven, who had been my former student and a firm friend of the Mayberrys and my mother. And she had studied with me as an artist with a background from Hollard. But using the WPA classes out at Idlewild Park as a studio. So Mary showed up with her daughter Vivian. She had showed up before with Vivian in Reno. Vivian was about eight years old and she hated me. And now that she was pressing on fourteen and had a fascinating ponytail and a straw hat, she didn't hate me that much. Here I was in my forties and Vivian was fourteen, just past thirteen, and five years later, when she graduated from high school, we were to be married. And that accounts for Vivian Diane Washburn, who was one quarter Dutch, her mother being half, and that a very strong half.

So his accounts for the omission. There's some detailed omissions of the personal interplay that I am just not getting into, where the subject for the divorce – on the other hand, for cause, when I got it, I would not give any details. I just said it was for our mutual advantage. And the separation had been for sufficient time that under Nevada law, that if you applied for divorce, it was automatic, because of the separation.

Now, presently Marijo is remarried and living happily, for all I know, in Reno. And I've done these many years on the Comstock. Vivian and I were

married in 1963, and the years between – those twenty years, twenty years it is, this is 1983 – have been very happy years, and very productive years.

So this accounts for the emergence – the sudden emergence of Vivian, and her poetry. These poems are from very early childhood, and her mother saved them, and in the continuity, the flow of these tapes, suddenly I came on Vivian's poems, and no accounting for her. So now you have it.

Box 1, Tape 1/33, Side 2 – August 7, 1975 + January 5, 1983

Main Subjects of Selection: Vivian's childhood writings and drawings; Vivian's grandmother's visit from Holland

People mentioned:

VanderHoeven, Jan

VanderHoeven, Mrs. Jan

VanderHoeven, Mary

Walton, Vivian

Now Vivian's mother turned up some of her drawings and writings when a child. There was a drawing of a donkey called Butterfly. And a poem called "My Pony":

My pony goes trot-trot-trot.

I turned on the water to give it a drink,

And it was hot-hot-hot.

Now he spelling took my eye. She has 'gse' for 'goes', and 'it' was spelled 'ti'.

She had also a short story, entitled "The Troublesome Boy":

Once upon a time there was a little boy who was always getting in trouble.

One day he was playing. He was riding a horse. He saw a little puff of smoke over by the barn of Mr. & Mrs. Brown. He rushed over by the barn.

There was no one there. Quickly he let all the cows and horses out and tied them safely to a post nearby. Then he rode to the fire station and told the firemen all about it. And then the fire was out, the firemen said, if it hadn't been for Mike, all the animals would be dead.

And that's the end of the story.

[Several more stories here.]

...

In 1950, Vivian's grandmother visited Kenwood. And it wasn't an easy visit for the grandmother. In many ways, Vivian was a terror. But there's a piece from a Newspaper, *Santa Rosa Press Democrat*, of 1950, that mentions the visit of the grandmother. The headline says, "Hollander Visiting Daughter in Kenwood." The

dateline is Kenwood:

“Mrs. Jan VanderHoeven of the Netherlands is visiting her daughter, Mary VanderHoeven, of the Holland House on Sonoma Highway, on her first visit to the United States in ten years. Mrs. VanderHoeven formerly resided in the Hague, but moved into the country during the war. There with other Netherlanders she shared in the risky but vital work of the underground. Mr. VanderHoeven, who has an import-export business in Rotterdam, did not share this visit, she being accompanied by another daughter who is now touring the United States. A native of Massachusetts, Mrs. VanderHoeven was graduated from the Baltimore Conservatory of Music, and then went to Paris to study. She met her husband on one of the transatlantic crossings, and has lived abroad since her marriage. She will also visit a daughter in Ventura while in California.”

Box 1, Tape 1/34, Side 1 – December 19, 1974

Main Subjects of Selection: “I’m a plain product of this American experience”; friendship with Jim Hulse; interview of Lyle Hardin

People mentioned:

Bennett, George
Caffrey, Dorothy
Camilla
Caples, Byron H., M.D.
Caples, Robert
Chapman, Loring
Corwin, Norman
Debold, Robert
Hall, Eric
Hardin, Elizabeth “Betty” (= Smoky?)
Hardin, Lyle
Hulse, James
Hulse, Mr. [Jim’s father]
Hulse, Mrs. [Jim’s mother]
James, Will
Kerensky, Alexander
Pearly [?]
Smoky. *See* Hardin, Elizabeth “Betty”
Walton, Wilber. G.

It will be noted that I’m aware that I’m a complicated quantity. And the more I consider the recordings, the clearer I see how complicated I am. It’s not a matter of vanity, it’s a matter of fact. I’m looking at these rather exotic paintings from my inner self, that I’ve painted over a period of decades. One up here’s from

1947. I see another, 1960s. Some the middle and late Sixties, and they're rather – I'm a different person! – than my origins. And the beginning man is a different quantity. I can't relate it to this. It's some kind of a dream, it involves – and the painting, reading for a dream, and I'm – This exotic thing on the wall here of this [inaudible] and – You know me now, you know me plenty. Somehow, it's not alive but it just is another side, a totally different side. I have these exotic tastes. Yet I'm a plain product of this American experience. And I can't shake it.

Well, Jim Hulse used to tell me – he'd come to see me, when he was an undergraduate in Reno. The other "Boys" were a little more advanced than Jim. Loring had gone on, he was pursuing his PhD, his doctorate and his masters coming at the same time. Hulse was the same generation but a little later in the scheme of things. So everyone had left, and Jim had come my way. He would come up to the house after they put the *Journal* to bed. And he was a very busy guy, with his duties with the newspaper and with his work. And also his community work. He was very active in defending the university, and saved it, damn near single-handed, from my view. Others think that they participated heavier than – my view is supported, because Jim would give me a running account almost every night about what was happening. And Jim was in there needling all the time. He was in there where it counted, at the legislature and the university and the social – the community meetings on the subject. And in any case they that very severely – deep-seated problems of the University of Nevada, they got it corrected. [Not the Richardson Affair (see below).]

Jim would go to these socials at the Caffrey house, along with her favorites. She had a large room, second story, and as I understand it they all gathered around her feet, sit on the floor. George Bennett told me – described it, Jim didn't. But Jim – George Bennett was a member of the group, too. And so was Eric [inaudible] Hall, my friend Hall. So I got the word. Jim didn't describe this, he's not inclined to flamboyant things. But she'd sit there and preside, as I gather from my other witnesses, and these were all her young people supporting her aim. Well, it was kind of a Fabian Society, that was south of Reno, out in the farmlands. And we laughingly called it – some of us called the Fabian Society, Dorothy Caffrey's Fabian Society.

But Jim told me – speaking of vocabulary – they were on the subject of vocabulary at one of these meetings. All these people. Now I was pretty well known, in that time of the world, in the Reno section. A lot of people liked me and a lot of people didn't like me, I guess. I guess I give them plenty of reasons. Again, the frontal thing. I'm not the most polite man. And this has to do with the split personality of me. Jim said, on the subject of vocabulary, he says, regarding vocabulary, he said, "Walton has one of the largest vocabularies of anyone I

know.” And he told me that they just laughed! Everyone was just rocking in laughter. The image of that statement. And he said, “I said, ‘No, no, I’m serious. He has the largest vocabulary of anyone I know.’” And to defend his position, he said, ““He certainly has a larger vocabulary than a whole lot of PhDs on the campus. The University.”” And they just laughed him down. And he told me – Jim was shamefaced about it, he said, “There was no way to get it across.” He said they were just laughing. And that doesn’t do you any good.

Well, now, I suppose that part of this – I can see how part of that is accounted for. Jim knew me very well, and he’d been around a long time. These other people knew me in passing. And I have a notion that I must appear in passing as a rather rough human article. Not a smoothie at all. And I think that that’s an impediment for me, all my life. And I think that that’s like my relationship with Bob Caples and Dr. Caples and all those people. I never went anywhere in the presumptive social set. Never got along with the millionaires, the socialites. Didn’t ever go very far with any of them. Because, I believe, this family thing, of my roots, was just a little heavy. It doesn’t matter all that much, because you get over there where it counts, and you outdistance these people, and you leave them way in the back. But in the in-between, they’ll laugh at you. And maybe this is something that should be a matter of record.

Well, I will say that Jim has distinguished himself. He went on from the University of Nevada, with his masters, with a great deal of support from people who counted at the university, for his PhD at Stanford, Palo Alto. I visited him one year down there. On one occasion, he had me set up in the student building in an empty room. I stayed overnight in there. Put Sammy down the line, down insome town ten miles away in the dog hotel. And Jim and I went up and had dinner with my father in San Francisco. That was a very wonderful occasion.

Well, then Jim got the PhD and they published his paper, Stanford University Press. And then he was connected with a university in the Northwest for some time, history department. And then his dream came true, he came back to the University of Nevada, where he is an important member of the history department. His specialty is Balkan history. They have a big library on Balkan history at Stanford. And he would see Kerensky there at the campus. It did Jim some good even to see Kerensky in passing. The Kerensky government, democracy in revolutionary Russia, just before communism swept through, kicked the Kerensky government out. Well Jim knows all that stuff backwards. I mean, whatever’s the written word, he’s perused. And he gets sabbatical leave and goes to Holland and London and here and there to do his work.

Well, Jim did a little book that was published by the Oxford University Press, that Stanford wouldn’t even look at, but finally Oxford took it up. And it’s

called *Revolutionists in London*. It's about five revolutionists, Bernard Shaw – and it skips the obvious ones like Karl Marx, and treats these other figures of socialism.

And I was a subscriber to *Anarchy* – on his way through Washington, D.C. where he was doing some study relating to this project – Jim had acquired a paper called *Anarchy*, and he sent it to me, and I was just charmed to have a magazine *Anarchy* – I was thrilled. I subscribed to it, wanted to know what these people were thinking. And, you know, because of that – aw, it's my luck again. They have these long, belabored articles. And I thought, well, when Jim's book came out, I had a desire to see some word of it in the *Anarchy* publication. So I put myself down and wrote a review of his *Revolutionists in London*, which I have in manuscript, and also I taped it and sent it to KPFA later, the radio station in Berkeley. Well, I don't have any idea whether they used it or not, I never even had an acknowledgment, so one never knows, I just sent the tape on speculation, hoping that it would give him some needed publicity. Authors of obscure books like that don't make any money, for God's sake, out of the book, it scores them for the academic need. It helps them in their peer group. But my paper hit the *Anarchy* editorial staff at a time of change. They had changed from one format to another. Oh, they were coming up-to-date, and my piece was too long. They said some complimentary things about it, but it was too long. So I had the honor, anyway, of paraphrasing his book, *Revolutionists in London*. This will be a matter of record.

Jim Hulse, as I said, is a product of Pioche. Pioche is a kind of a forgotten place, way out in central Nevada, almost at the Utah border. His father was a mining superintendent. His Mother's a very good community woman. They're a very Christian family, and he's influenced fantastically by his grandmother. Now I met the family. He's got a lot of brothers and sisters. And they're very solid, down-to-earth people. A large Mormon influence on his father's side. The earlier people came out of Australia to Utah, during the Brigham Young era. So they have – their roots are deep in Nevada. And Jim is very loyal and deeply involved with Nevada – he's written a history of Nevada for the public school level. However, his expertise, as I say, is Balkan history. Yet Jim does not – he's not a radical at all. He's most conservative. It's funny – Corwin, for instance, got horsewhipped for being a radical. He's not a radical by any manner of means. That was back in the McCarran days, of the McCarran committee. Well, Jim Hulse is the most conservative person, he's not radical at all. Yet he is well versed on anarchy and socialism of all kinds.

I've tried to inspire him to a more radical position, which I've regarded cleaves more closely to the need and the truth of life. And it was always my inspiration, when he was coming up those evenings to me, to edge him over to more of a clear position, to get him a little more radical, 'cause he was so

conservative. And I also tried to save Jim. He'd come with these problems that he had with – and I was afraid that he was gonna hurt himself in these community collisions, do himself some injury. And we would talk and talk and talk about these things. A lot of the strategy was worked over at my studio up there in Reno on Marsh Avenue, those nights with Jim Hulse. We'd talk over his problem, and I'd say "Hosanna" and "Yea" and all those things, and try to keep him from hurting himself. He was quite young. But that doesn't mean that he took my advice. But I had some kind of an influence, and I would leave that for Jim Hulse to determine. We were rather close there for some time before he graduated. [Hulse graduated in 1952; the Richardson Affair occurred in 1953, so that can't be what Walton was referring to earlier].

Now, since he's back, he's so involved with the academic scene at the University of Nevada and his other affairs that we don't see much of Jim. And I miss him very much, and he still stands high as one of my good friends.

...

[The following interview of Lyle Hardin is a rare instance where Walton tapes another voice than his own. There is another voice recorded on Tape 2/107, Side 2, which did not seem worth transcribing. And several in the tapes not gifted in 2000.]

W: What the hell was it you were going to say before I interrupted you, Lyle?

LH: Oh, about workin' on the ranch, the big cattle ranch up to the north –

W: Oregon.

LH: – where we had 18,000 head of cattle. And, oh, there were so many things happened there, you wouldn't believe it. The rodeo every morning' – they had a lot of mean horses, buckin' horses. And we'd have a rodeo every mornin', and sometimes during the day. You could see an old cowboy goin' out across the country, his old horse just a'buckin' and a'bellerin' – maybe one would run through a fence and turn over. All that kinda stuff. The time my horse run away and started buckin', bucked me and the saddle both off, and almost killed me.

W: You know, there's one of your stories – Hey, could you tell me, who was that cowboy artist, the writer, who used to own the ranch down there, the Washoe Pines, before you people got there?

LH: Will James.

W: That was Will James. And didn't you tell me he used to shoot up the roof and things like that? An emotional guy, wasn't he?

LH: Well, he was, yeah. He'd write and paint for two or three days, and you wouldn't see him, and then he'd come in and have some drinks and really blow off steam.

W: I see.

LH: I didn't know him.

W: Yeah, but you heard tell about him. Who was it that – some folks down there you knew must have known him. When was it you took over the Washoe Pines Guest Ranch? What year was that? Your first acquaintance? Didn't you work there first?

LH: 1940.

W: '40.

LH: First went there.

W: That was just before the war then.

LH: Yeah.

W: and you'd come down from Montana, hadn't you? You'd been – you told me stories about Montana. After you left Missouri, you went to Montana –

LH: I'd been up in Oregon, at that CX. And I was headin' back up there when I ran across Smoky there in Reno. She talked me outta the notion of goin' out to this ranch. I didn't think I'd stay but about three days. Two or three days, I'd say.

W: You made it a career.

LH: Stayed twenty years.

[According to the time line in *The Divorce Seekers*, pp. 377, 380, Lyle came to the Pines in the late 1940s *after* the war, in which he had served, as wrangler and then manager married to the woman who became owner, Elizabeth "Betty" Cathles Silverthorne Hardin. They were divorced, then Betty, now remarried, sold the property to the Millers in 1961. I'm not sure whether or not Betty is Smoky. I'm figuring Lyle was at the Pines closer to ten than twenty years.]

W: See. Well, Lyle, I'm fudging here, but Lyle told me one time – of course you're right here within speaking distance of us. You might [inaudible] if I talk too frankly, but Lyle said he had a girl every six weeks. [Laughs] For ten years!

LH: Yeah, sure enough.

W: [Laughs] Well, there's one story that Lyle told me, when he was a buckaroo in Montana, that I don't know if it bears repeating or documentation, but it's a story that has always fascinated me, when he got himself cold, and it disciplined him so to wear longjohns all year round. So he knows what I'm talking about. [Laughs] I don't know if we want to explore the word of that winter or not.

LH: Now that was a bad winter.

W: Do you want to talk about that, or are you too shy?

LH: The time I froze up?

W: Yes sir. That's the greatest buckaroo story that was ever told! I see you getting red around the ears.

LH: I don't think I told Parilee about freezin' up out there.

W: I see. Just tell her. See, I'll get him in trouble yet. There are things that I won't tell [inaudible] about, but there's not many. [Laughs]

LH: Well, those old saddles get mighty cold, ridin' out across the country in 40 below zero, 35.

W: When did you leave Missouri, Lyle, what year was it?

LH: I don't know. I was about sixteen, when I first left there. Sixteen years old. What? '27. I think I left there before that, too.

W: You were born in 1913?

LH: '11.

W: 1911.

...

And there's another correction: my references to my aversion to – the aversion that exists between us, the polite society and the wealthy. I said that somehow we never did get together, but there's an exception: Camilla [sp?] of Washoe Pines. Camilla – Lyle was here the other day, and we spoke of Camilla. Camilla was an extraordinary person, one of the creatives, the revolution and the new young people of the nineteen – let's see, this was when I was rabbit-hunting and deer-hunting with Debold, and we'd go out there in our hunting gear, above Washoe Pines, in the hills nearby, not adjacent. But we were welcome to drop by for coffee and a good morning at the Washoe Pines, and we knew it. And we did this, we dropped in – Debold was a familiar to the place. And that's when I first met Camilla was in my hunting togs. We were pretty rough-looking guys, Debold and myself. And Camilla was a random person, wearing blue jeans, sweatshirt and very informal. Well the thing is, Camilla gave me ultimately a kabuki record, which I treasure yet. And she has visited us twice here on the hill. Once just before Betty Hardin's death, and then not too long ago, with a friend, a girlfriend of hers. Well, Camilla has been active in a lot of the arts revolution activities, in New York and Los Angeles. And she's a pretty bright girl.

Well, we were enormously fond of each other. I will come by her name next time Lyle comes – he'll be here at Christmas, at Christmas eve, we're having our dinner. And I shall ask him for Camilla's last name, which will fill in. I never did zero in on her name, that last name of Camilla didn't push me around very much. But the reason it's important, is that Lyle was saying the other day, he says, "Well," he says, "Camilla had inherited some forty million dollars." Her people had some interest in gas, natural gas of some sort. In any case, Camilla is the only

person I can think of that had any interest in me, and I in her, in any depth. And I just adored her. We were devoted to each other. And so, it's one for the record. An exception to the rule.

Box 1, Tape 1/38, Side 1 – Undated, probably November or December, 1974
Main Subjects of Selection: Joanne de Longchamps' story about Syvesti; the youth revolution and going one's own way; Joanne de Longchamps and Eddie Star; Berrys and Chapmans

People mentioned:

Andrus, Zoray
Berry, Barnes
Berry, Frances
Berry, Halley
Chapman, Loring
Chapman, Toy
de Longchamps, Galen
de Longchamps, Joanne
Kraemer, Peter
Star, Eddie
Syvesti
Varda, Jean
Walton, Vivian

I think I would like to tell you a Christmas story. Years ago, mid '40s, Joanne de Longchamps told me this tale. I had met her neighbors. The lady was of Greek birth, her name was Syvesti. And Joanne and Syvesti and Galen and [inaudible] – I can't come up with his name right now . . . but they became fast friends. And so Joanne was reading Henry Miller at that time . . . and she read a piece called "A Night with Syvesti," which was a pretty lurid account of events, what a hell of a lover Syvesti was and one thing and another. Henry Miller was a pretty outspoken fella. So Joanne copied that poem, and stuffed it in with a Christmas present, which she gave to Syvesti. And the next time they met, after Christmas day, Syvesti, who had a deep, low Greek voice and accent, he was charming, a very handsome person, he said, "Oh," he said, "I was trying to forget. [Laughs] It was Syvesti! He was *the* Syvesti. And was trying to forget. Henry Miller, Henry Miller. He pops up now and then. He was a good friend of Varda's, down on the coast.

. . .

[Discussing Jackson Pollock in connection with his own explorations of Impressionism] Impressionism is a deep subject, and I didn't dare be disturbed.

Now I got disturbed during the youth revolution. And when I get disturbed, I'm apt to quit. I mean, I just stop! There was a boy here at Christmastime, came up with the Peter Kraemer crowd one time around Thanksgiving, I guess. Viv and I were just leaving, and we closed the house and we didn't tell anybody that we were closing the house, and Zoray suggested, "Oh, everybody's here, let's have a turkey – I'll buy the turkey, and you fix it." And so, they brought it over, and we had all the stuff packed away. Didn't say a word about it. We unpacked what we needed and did that turkey thing for about fifteen people. I'd never cooked such a big meal before, and I don't want ever to cook another one! Because they ate all the salami while the cook is still in the kitchen, he never sees a thing. The olives and the salami just disappeared like that. All the hors d'oeuvres are gone, and we have a bunch of these assholes asking me, "When is dinner gonna be ready?"

This one lad was here, and the next day he came by. And he was talking about the honesty and truth in relation to the social revolution – the youth revolution of the time – the days of Berkeley. And that you must reevaluate yourself and all that. And you know, I took it straight as hell, and did this reevaluating, and – and I just quit painting. For ever so long. [Laughs] It stopped. And for that reason, I didn't look around, for years, I didn't dare look around. Because I'm a peculiar article. If I start looking around, I start thinking, I get stopped. And now I'm beginning to get back. A long time, I got stopped at Davis, stopped cold. And it's unlike me to be stopped. I've produced so much in my life. But just let these people go the way they wish to go, and – An artist of consequence is not to be fooled with. You must leave him alone. Like suddenly with Bach, let us say. You give him a whole new social revolution, and say, "Bach, you've gotta shape up, man. You gotta go like Stockhausen," and destroy him. And Bach would know that. And Stockhausen would know that, now that he's older.

...

This is a story of Eddie Star and Joanne de Longchamps. Joanne would stand in a relaxed way, thrusting her tummy out a little bit. Eddie Star came up to her in a market in high humor. This occurred in the middle '40s. Eddie Star saw Joanne at the meat counter at Eagle Market, in Reno. And she said she was just standing there, and waiting for the butcher to deliver the meat, and Eddie came over and he says, "Aha!" he says, "Oh, and what have we here?" And she said, "He patted me on the stomach." [Laughs] She says, "I had nothing there! He thought I was pregnant." She was beside herself on that one.

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[Frances Berry's sons were Barnes and Halley. Barnes married Toy Chapman before Loring met her. Loring was her third marriage. Toy was a friend of Marijo's.]

Box 1, Tape 1/40, Side 1 – December 13, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: Z-Axis

People mentioned:

Chapman, Loring
Corwin, Katie
Corwin, Norman
Etcheberry, Johnny
Kafoury, Sam
Kienholz, Edward
Luginbuehl, Hans
McChesney, Robert
Roscoe
Vargas, George

Now on one of my tours to Southern California, when I was a houseguest of Sam Kafoury, I asked Sam – who was an engineer at Douglas aircraft – I said, “Sam, what do they use in the symbology of mechanical drawing – what do they use as symbol of the line forward, without perspective but directly from your nose to my nose as we look at each other: that line, a point. He said it was described [represented] as a little diagonal line to one side. And I said, “What is that called?” He says, “That’s the Z-Axis.”

Now that’s the first I heard of the Z-Axis. But I have always been sensitive to that dimension, rather than the dimension of diminishing volume. I have used the Z-Axis from the beginning intuitively. I was never attracted to the perspective dimensions at all.

Now I appreciate in Cezanne his very liberal use of those perspective dimensions, using them freely to his own order. And I’m aware of that. But this doesn’t attract me. The stereopticon Z-Axis space formula has always attracted me, from the beginning. . . .

Now, in my early inquiries into this area, which occurred in the fifties, I was in a continuing correspondence with Loring Chapman. . . . “Loring, could you tell me some references, where there are some books I can read on this subject, the shape of vision – not the eye. I don’t care about the eye, I mean the dimension, the graphic shape of what we see.” He wrote me that he knew of nothing in the literature, that I was on my own . . . and that these were original investigations, as far as he knew [what about perceptual psychology?]. . . .

[Walton got into conversation with filmmakers.] I was trying to explain to them the Z-Axis and the T and how you could juggle the T up and down, and if you used the spatial trinity of the [William] Harnett, the Matisse and the Monet, you could get an impact unprecedented in a film, that would lay its audience in the

aisle. . . . And I explained the trinity of space, and how you get this impact of extraordinary realism. [Why did Walton think this could be used in film but not painting?]

The only time I used this theory in the outer world is – in the world of reality – was in the Cirque Room [at the El Cortez in Las Vegas]. And that ball just came off the wall into the room. A very strange thing to see in a Cabaret. But it looked like – The table that was seat below that ball looked like the table – the ball was somewhere on their table.

Now I have – since that time, I have – I didn't paint any more of those. I intend to paint an example or two, to have the larger form – I have only painted one pure one. I have it. It is an egg against a broken sky, a triangular piece in the right corner with an egg with a cast shadow. And Bob McChesney came on one of his visits, he saw that and he couldn't believe it. He just stood there and looked at it! And he's not one that's easily impressed. He has no idea where I've been. One time when he first met me I was in the lyrical painting thing of the kings and queens, those fantasies, the genre paintings of the casino world, that I had a little luck selling to the film people in Hollywood. And he thought I was stuck there someplace with illustrative painting. But this egg had been done a long time before then. And all this theory was done in the fifties.

I shall paint a heroic job. The largest one I ever did was the one Norman Corwin bought, his bird and egg. But I object to the bird being there. It makes kind of a joke out of something that – as I told Roscoe, the difference between being wry and being funny. And I don't see it as comic at all. The bird was too humorous. But, I was successful with just the egg and just the piece of India red and the broken gray sky, the Monet-type sky in the background.

I have a very high regard for Monet. Monet would know what I'm talking about. He knew it. He knew it. He knew it very well. But he didn't know too well the Harnett. And the cast shadow on the flat is apparently by own contribution. You may not paint the flat into a table. You may not make it a table, because it fails then. Because then the egg and the table become a unit. You have to separate these into three steps: broken, the flat, and the round. With the shadow. With the shadow. The shadow does it. Or else the round joins the flat, oddly enough. You have to have the shadow.

Now in these experimentations, I painted many pictures using the T, up and down, this way and that. The – I also extensively painted fake real paintings, for a time. Johnny Etcheberry acquired one. I have a rifle that I painted and – in that manner – and I painted some for George Vargas, the Reno attorney. And the best of the paintings for Vargas – although he acquired also some watercolors – was a small painting, or about 5 inches square, a fishhook stuck on a board. I painted that

with masonite, but I painted it like plywood. And then I stuck the fishhook in the board. I had stuck fishhooks – little fishing flies – on a plywood board, and I painted that, with a little shadow. And it was – it ruined my eyes. One art dealer in Reno, Hans Luginbuehl at the Riverside Hotel, Luginbuehl's shop, wanted me to paint more of those. Oh, I could sell those, he said. Well, I would have to get new eyes to paint that stuff. I would never stay in that field. The miniature field would kill me! I'd be blind today.

Now, I do think that I owe it to my collection to paint a large succeeding piece of my spatial find. Not with the T. The T was breaking – kinda like breaking the sound barrier. The T – I dropped using the T. I felt the most useful form, if indeed one wanted to use spatial impact of this kind, giving that Harnett hard real thing within a spatial theme quite like Bauer, the non-objectivist, whose paintings I saw in New York – very austere, to be very abstract. But with this orb, these orbs, these forms just thrust into the room with you – God knows what you could do with that, I have no idea. It's up to each individual to explore that for himself. I will do my egg in its sober phase, yes. On a monumental scale. I think I should do that next.

Now I have before me a Kona 3, which has the stereopticon effect, it has the Monet variety background, and a very lineal form, which is the Matisse. But you see, I paint knowing these things, and it is not through lack of knowledge, it is a knowing – I do it knowingly, and I'm aware that I have these various forces that can be invoked, and either choose to invoke them or not. And paintings of credit can be done one way or the other.

But some – Mac [McChesney] – Mac, I'm sure, doesn't see my dimensions, because he has expressed himself with his hands – “well,” one painting, he said with a gesture of arms, he said, “Oh, this is fine. It has this” – You know, and he put his – he punched his arms together, kind of like squeezing something. That it had a unity of – two-dimensional-across unity, up and down and across. Well, he said, “This is the only I've seen of yours that was that way.” Well, that was that series of tapa cloth-like – Symbolist, Letterist of paintings. That was what he was talking about.

Well hell! I've been into this Z-Axis for years! Nobody knows about the Z-Axis. They don't think in Z-Axis. It's a product of my imaginings, and findings. And it satisfies some far-out need of mine. And some painters see it as a disunity, that I don't know what I'm doing, that the one form is out of gear with the other. But it is a conscientious approach. And in my hands it's a valid one. Because this is my form. And I've done it again and again. Yet even my closest friends are not very aware that anything has happened. And my painter friend, McChesney, is not alert to it. He sees it as a not coming off thing in his area. Well, God know it

doesn't come off in his area, it has nothing to do with his area. And we never discuss theory at this depth. And I just let it pass, and someday somebody may dig what this is all about.

Now it doesn't mean that this is so damned advanced that it's the only thing in the world. I don't feel that way about it. But it is a different point of view that I have husbanded through long years. I have painted years of disciplined things in the fake real manner to arrive at these conclusions.

And – he was roped in, though – it pleased me when McChesney was captivated by that egg. He knew what he was looking at there [didn't he say not above?]. That egg popped right out on the floor. It was amazing – Well, painters have tried to contain their pictures within a frame always. I mean, having a little cosmos of frame, and everything happens in there. And to thrust anything out from the frame into the room, well, it succeeds far more – far more than Harnett. Harnett forms don't come forward like that. Because I have opened the window and made the window succeed. And Harnett couldn't do it. He didn't know about it. He didn't – That wasn't his area. That wonderful man had a different tune to play. And – What a wonderful man! Well, when I was a little boy, I used to see the Harnetts. I came by the influence as a youngster.

Now I have a couple of references on my mind. I mentioned the Monet from the rooftops, looking down at the carriage on the boulevard, and the trees of the street. A very well-known painting. Now another such painting was done by Pissarro. Perhaps Pissarro did it first: I don't know and neither do I care. The thing is that Pissarro achieved a flatness, of a two-dimensional pattern of Pissarro, which influenced in turn Gauguin and his form. But now, over to Monet, God knows when he did this. It's the same point of view from the rooftops looking down. Monet has the dimension that concerns me, in my Z-Axis researches.

Now, another matter, concerning paintings that were done at the time tangent to my field trips to Monterey, in which I looked at the boats on the ocean and looked for the curve, having educated myself to be receptive to the curvature of the half-ellipse, which is never – the end of the egg is never formed, because it goes into the Japanese perspective theory. I looked for the warp, and the reason – the distortion of the radius theory, and I could see the boats riding wrongly out there, in my vision. I could see it. I saw with the piers and the boats, I could read this thing. But you have to educate yourself to see it. And when I arrived home in Reno, I painted a painting of this concept. And Katie Corwin was responsive to that painting. Now she liked it for, I believe, other reasons, although it makes her feel responsive to some esthetic in there, is for her. But the thing is, the perspective is most sophisticated along the lines of the Z-Axis analysis. Only there is not. This is just a painting of the boats, using the half ellipse perspective, which is not

resolved in the distance.

Now I would like to say that for many years I painted a painting which thrust simply from the wall into the room on the Z-Axis. And for very many years, I used the stamp-on pigment to pursue that dimension. Many of my paper painting have that.

Now, in Bob McChesney's constructions, in his bones series, he built with the actual bones on a flat surface, and thrusts the image forward into the room. It is exactly Z-Axis. He doesn't see it in paint, but he knows about it in the sculpturesque relief of his bones. So – But he does not transpose it over to my line. Now, I have seen it – Part of my disconnection, or to him inconsistency from a painterly point of view is this clear space, plein air, the plein air theory of the Impressionists, brought over into the graphics area. This is not plein air, which is divided stroke, but this is plain air through the axis [eyes?]. It is quite the same thing as the job Ed Kienholz covered the driftwood with the nails, and I said, "You'd have something if you could paint it."

Well, that was an unfair remark, because this was not his drift. This was not his bent at all. And he succeeded amply well in his true form. Totally different direction than my remark would indicate. But I was seeing in terms of Z-Axis as a painting. And I could have done it. I did driftwood quite like that. I don't know, had to have some up here when he came through – not that he saw them. But Kienholz saw my Z-Axis things, some of them. I did agree with Ed that we had to get into new dimensions. That a new dimension was pregnant and was about to burst upon us. And we did concur in the dimension. Course he went into this other dimension of his, his tableau orientation. The McChesney – Not satisfied with his flat paintings, got into his bones, and he so occupied himself for many years. And yet, I do not understand why he does not see the Z-Axis in my paintings. People who are not painters see it more clearly.

I'm trying to think if there's any reference besides Harnett in this area. And Harnett always glued his to the picture plane. He put the thing on the wall. I'm seeing the same line, directly forward, without benefit of actual light. As I stretch my mind to think who might be interested in this dimension, the only one that comes to mind would possibly be Irene Rice Pereira.

Now, my bishop painting, that chess piece painting, which is monumental, starts from the wall and thrusts forward toward the room, into the room, on Z-Axis. That's one of the best examples. It is a maze of light intersecting light forces that basket into the room, nest into the room. Soft, vertical, rectangular area of light projection, shallowly forward, on Z-Axis. Now, that's one of the very best. I painted this way for many – many, many paintings. But then, I had an idea: What can I do if I break the wall and go into the background? I knew that Harnett had

not been able to do this, when he opened the window. But all we needed was Monet. The broken paint. Seurat would be charmed with these meditations.

Now I have a few additional observations, and one is that the white writing of Mark Tobey would qualify for the Z-Axis. And regarding other perspectives, there are perspectives of lenses, as we see analyzed in the camera analyses. These are very elaborate analytical understandings. Of – My particular concern is with the human outlook, and not the distortions of camera. . . .

And concerning the projected light that I mentioned, this has little to do with the light shows of the youth revolution, which were variously produced, and roving, moving lights. Very stimulating, bombastic productions were achieved there. In that period, it occurred to me that I should project light in the manner of slides – some of those slides that I had, instead of swinging on the – projecting them on the projection screen, I began playing them on the walls, on the curtains. And some of these paintings that have been monumentally conceived are released when they hit the walls, the architecture. And when you walk through this light, it's something to see, because this light is very carefully designed, from the point of view of color in the beginning. And strange and wonderful things happened. I've often wanted to see murals projected.

This is February 14, 1975. . . .

I have some notes before me that I made after taping that. There's a – I don't want to make this report too jumpy, but these are summary notes following the conclusion of the basic report on *The Mark of Man* variety of space thought, and then the additions, the so-called Monterey meditations. Now, I will read the notes as they're jotted down, for what they're worth, because I don't want to dwell on this too much. But it seems to me sometimes I leave some odds and ends that need cleaning up. It says:

The so-called vanishing point is the exact projection of an individual's spot in space, valid as reversed inward, back to the place of self. The self-point in space.

Now, another note says:

That which one sees is not the reality, but a symbol of the reality, in terms of mind's reception, or an image of reflections of light. Otherwise, impressions via sound, etc., and never the full reality. On this basis, everything creatures know are [sic] but symbols of reality. Therefore, a painting of reality is merely a symbol, and is in the same category as any stylized image, even calligraphy. Abstract Expressionism, or any form of art, sculpture or painting, is also a symbol of light reflections and celebrations. Everything is a land of Letterism via mind.

[Here, or earlier, he seems to go from reading to improvising.] An object is not an object, but it is a symbol of the object. Now, this means as processed in the human reception. Ouspensky had it, that the miracle was that the object was to be intercepted at all! He says, why does not my hand pass through this? This is just a series of atoms. He says the mystery, the miracle of it all is that my hand stops in the third dimension. And feels this plane. However, what we see is a picture in our heads, and is not the object. And you never get the truth. It's too complicated. What you see is what I have termed a penumbral object, a little circle around a point, or thereabouts. The sovereign space of the known.

Now, the note here states:

And action or a behavior is a symbol of the fact, not the fact, not the fact in full dimension, the full dimension being unknowable in its totality. This elevates all meaning to its cosmic utmost, and promises the mystical, or the ultimate God concept of all things.

Now this is where religion crosses over into everyday meditation. We are forced to operate on the surface level of symbolism, which if accepted as the operational reality of our condition lays the foundation of future understanding, and new potentials for human exchange in expressive forms. All we know, have seen, and all we do are fragmentary symbols of reality on the plane of mind. There is no objective reality. There is no existence in substance, just living impressions after the fact, in sweeping time, and intercepted as sensory impressions. Nothing exists of itself. Reality is its own sum and total.

...

I do have a note on Orphism that should be entered. Delauney was the prominent exponent of Orphism in Paris in the early part of the twentieth century, the first quarter. As painted, Orphism appeared to be an extension of a rather chromatic painting scheme going forward from the picture plane of – laterally rather than forward, spilling over onto the frame, and, as I understood it, he would even paint his walls, in a painter's attempt to rather project a painted image on the wall. Now this means a spilling over of the painting onto the frame, into the room, into the living space. And as far as the painting which were exhibited were concerned, all that could be shown in a traveling exhibition would be the painting spilling onto the frame. Now still, you have in the examples I have seen, you have a very frozen image within the picture plane, and the projected image has a chance to free itself. You can jazz it around and freeze it from its picture plane concept, and create even more magic than he intended.

Now the dictionary meaning of Orphism is not precisely the Delauney

meaning of orphism.

Box 1, Tape 1/41, Side 1 – February 2, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: Walton's theory of success; explaining a painting of his; "my socialist group is not on this earth as yet"

People mentioned:

Chapman, Loring
Fuller, Mary
Halstead, Dr.
Hulse, James
Mascott, Laurence
McChesney, Robert
Varda, Jean
Walton, Vivian
Wolff, Dr.

. . . Now, I pointed this out to Chapman, Loring Chapman, and he was offended. I said, "Loring," I said, "this is a theory of mine," and I explained about the Mascott Litton success [Mascott made a film documentary for Litton Industries], and about the Tom Sawyer going right along. And in his own case, that after he'd graduated and received his doctorate, he joined forces with a successful department – a famous man and Chicago [Dr. Halstead]. And then he went on – transferred to Dr. Wolff, who was even a bigger man. Wolff had the big reputation. And Chapman came in as his associate, doing chores for Wolff, with a hyphenated authorship of some of these findings. And it was tailor-made. He couldn't have failed. Chapman has a nose for doing the right thing. He wouldn't touch a thing unless it was gonna promote his situation. These people don't ever get mix- -- Mascott, Chapman, Hulse – never make a mistake of picking – singing a wrong song. They identify with a successful movement. And play a role in that movement. And this has brought Chapman great fame. Hulse some moderate success. Mascott a certain success with some of his adventures.

Now, you apply that theory to anybody in show business. . . . That's why all of these artists in the art departments of the universities of the academic structures, so-called, are doing reasonably well. They've joined the academy, the academic song is theirs.

There are artists who can't conform to this at all, it's against their nature. But most of these academic university-connected artists are very conformed. They keep up with the changing art styles. And as all these functionaries in the academic scene have to have a book published, or a paper published, they have to keep active along that line. Well, the way the artists do it is they keep up with whatever's

happening: op, pop and poop. You just change right along. Apparently you have no soul, you have no inquiry of any substance, you wouldn't dare go at right angles to the current.

Now, I had a hell of a mistake in my vision. I felt that I had to seek within my inner self, innermost center of my being, to have a meaning emerge. And I've been responsible to my painting in that sense. And I've been resistant to a lot of these things that have come along, these different movements. And I have a – I'm looking at a painting this morning – I was painting on this Kona Three [?]. I – It's a glowing spot is there. It's a glowing spot, it's sun light, but it isn't a sun. It's a painter's image. And if anyone asked me what it was – “Is it an abstraction?” – I said, “I don't know if it's an abstraction, because one of these years that an abstract art is abstracted from nature, from something.” I said, “This – I don't even know what it is. It's just color. It's a spot. It's a glow.” It's certainly – You could call it a sun, Well, a sun glows. But this is a burning spot like that, but God knows it's not a painting of a sun. Well, I've painted a lot of things I've called suns. You could call it a sun. I mean to put my lineal motif in charcoal on top of that. And this has taken me a long time to paint. I began it some months ago. And I have to wait in the wintertime for these colors to dry hard enough to over-paint. And then when I get it just exactly where I want it, I have to let the entire thing set up to receive my charcoal treatment. Then I'll fix the charcoal on top of it. It's give a tremendous flowing lineal motif.

Well, this form of art doesn't fit anything I know about. This comes from my innermost convictions. It bears no relationship to any movement that is in vogue at the moment. And I can't understand how people change their tune. I understand some of it, but I can't understand an artist not referring to his soul, for his product.

Now show business people, they have a – they're playing a lighter game. Most of these show business – what I'm calling show – I don't mean actors if they're great at depth, I mean the entertainer group. They're very – a flippant group. And for them – they borrow widely from each other. You have a whole rash of singers in the same style. And they – they're the artists of today. Those fellows on the television – it's amazing. They have apparently very low integrity. They'll steal from anybody. And it's a matter of stylism. You'll get some Barbara Streisand come along who is original, and you'll have half a dozen imitating her who have considerable reputations. . . . [Politicians the same, says Walton.] Apparently they have no soul.

Now to some degree these things occur in the people I mentioned [Mascott, Chapman, Hulse]. If they had innermost convictions – If Chapman had an innermost conviction, I know he would sit on it, and do something else, to keep his

success going. Mascott the same. I never hear Hulse getting out of line – never at right angles. These people are never, never – I never hear them at odds with the system that supports them. Now that is the story of success. You have to sing the song of how it is.

Now Chapman, I know – All these people think they're absolute individuals. I have never, ever known any of the three to get at odds with the system. Never do it! They're absolutely housebroken. No matter how big – Chapman's the big one among them, and he's absolutely housebroken!

Now, he wouldn't get out – he wouldn't – God, he would never put himself in a position that would sully the academic song. Never! Never!

Now, a man like McChesney is a different bag! Mary and Mac, man, their soul's right in their navels. Everything they say, everything they do comes from their individual id! Everything! And, Mac is in despair, because he's not one of the painters of record, so he said. Well, he is. He doesn't know it, he won't recognize it. But Mac is one of the great men of our time. Mary's an extraordinary person. I don't know the measure of her talent yet. That's not clear to me. I know the measure of Mac: Mac is infinite! He is – He is the world! Well, the McChesney's play their own tune. They believe – Now, they're at odds with me on several points, but I recognize them as intellectually pure. They're the only intellectually pure people that Vivian and I know, that I can think of just right now. God knows Varda wasn't. He was a beautiful guy, but he wasn't pure in this sense. He was true to himself, though. He was true. The artists tend to be true. I mean, he was not an academic artist, but Christ almighty, those guys had their world experience, but they didn't – they didn't subordinate. These people don't subordinate their psyche to an academic program! If they have a conviction, they follow that conviction.

Now this is what's wrong with artists. Now I automatically played the tune – I believed in Tom Sawyer, I believed in America, I believed the American cause. I was – I believed, I believed through my grandfather! Through all my people! I believed America! I lived America! I breathed America! I was America! When I was a young painter. And then they lost me. And I realized I had to be responsible to the world. But through a region, through your place and your people. But America – the United States has been a pretty sad place! In the last two decades. Its great heroism was handsomely displayed in the New Deal years. Then we came on with an extraordinary war effort in – God almighty. That was a dread situation! But then we played the war game for money. Harry Truman knew what he was doing with Korea. He didn't want those soldiers coming back on his neck, unemployed. . . . [Same Eisenhower, Nixon, Ford, Kennedy, Johnson.] And now the United States is well in the direction of becoming a second-rate nation. . . .

Now, regarding success, I do believe that my *Pyramid* book and my *Delta Queen* book will have an hour. 'Cause *Pyramid* has in it the saga of the New Deal years. And *The Delta Queen* is a book of the years of Depression. The time will come around again. . . .

Now, I have a note that says "It's a wise head that knows the tune." And I have not been wise in regard to tunemanship. I've had a hell of a time playing the group song. Unless the group fit me, I couldn't sing. And that's my failure. Now if the group ever sings my tune, it will be a different situation, perhaps. I do not know. I know that Tom Sawyer, when the tune came around to the Smithsonian, and I knew – I could see that that was happening, and – Oh, they acquired that just one two three! And then, of course, I pulled the whistle and on the publicity and get a rash of publicity. Well, with a little success along that line, with Tom Sawyer, some notoriety happened. But they had to join the group, and play the tune. And maybe that's the wisdom behind what some see as groupism. Young people want to join a group, to gain strength in their souls. And they join a group with – the motorcycle people and put on the leather jackets, and they wear the long hair and they grow the beards for this reason. And my God, I doubt if I'd ever've grown a beard if it had been a group movement when I was in my teens. I raised a beard, by God. When it was an obscenity on the streets of the United States. Well, I'm so used to one I still have on. But I've had my beard since I was a teenager.

Now I recognize it's one of my key problems, is that my socialist group is not on this earth as yet. And I have prayed for my socialist people throughout my life. And I hope that posthumously that we will find each other. And that's why I make this rather elaborate effort to record so much of my thoughts.

. . .

I should say that my analysis of playing the tune does not imply that Mascott, Chapman and Hulse have nothing to offer. That's far from the truth. All things being present as regards talent, and even genius, my thought is, one must pay credence to the playing the tune theory to make even a talent or a genius condition workable. And oddly enough, so many of the artists are undisciplined in this respect. You take a science mind, however, the very nature of his work appears to be disciplined, of that kind. Because he has no tools to work with at all. Well the artist – the muralist – has no tools to work with, unless he has a building, so that automatically makes a muralist a politician of some kind. In Mexico they were the radical politicians at a time of radicalism. And in they went. They played the tune. But they couldn't play the tune of the other establishment. . . . But I did not mean that any of the men mentioned did not have enormous ability. You can have that ability and still not make it, if you're at odds with the tune.

Box 1, Tape 1/41, Side 2 – February 6, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: Phyllis Walsh and Frederic Taubes; Phyllis Walsh and Helen Marye Thomas; Robert and Shirley Caples in Santa Barbara, with Frederic Taubes and Walton; Phil Paradise's letter of introduction of Walton to Robert Caples for the WPA; Walton's novel *Pyramid: the Federal Art Project*

People mentioned:

Bufano, Benny
Cahill, Holger
Caples, Robert
Caples, Shirley
Danysh, Joe
Lorenzo
McMahon, Audrey
O'Connor, Francis
Paradise, Phil
Taubes, Frederic
Thomas, Helen Marye
Walsh, Phyllis
Walton, Vivian

[Vivian was a 21 dealer at Harolds Club.]

[Vivian] brought home a *Nevada State Journal* the other day which had an article about Phyllis Walsh and her friendship with Frederic Taubes. Now I hadn't known some of this material about Taubes – I studied with Taubes when Shirley Behr and Bob Caples arranged to have him give them private lessons in Santa Barbara. I have reason to believe – I've never discussed it with Robert – but I have reason to believe, on the basis of this article, there's reason to believe that he and Shirley met Taubes at the S-Bar-S Ranch. Because I know that Taubes did some Pyramid Lake paintings. [Interpolation by Walton: Confirmed by Caples, 1976.] Let's see what it says here. . . . Now Phyl was the companion of Helen Marye Thomas at the S-Bar-S. . . . I did a big piece on Helen Thomas in the Virginia City book, and we've been friends for so many years – of course, Helen is gone, but Phyllis survives. . . .

([Interpolated correction, Nov. 14, 1976, which comes later in the tape but belongs here]: Phyl Walsh said that she was never a companion, that she was just a friend. This is a question mark. . . . Phyl was very sensitive about the difference between a companion and a friend, a companion being paid. She said Helen had never paid her a cent. Well, she was pretty beholden to Helen. She was like a servant. And that may be just like a technicality and show some of Helen's frugality.)

I believe the year I first met Fred Taubes was 1938. Shirley and Bob had just been married, and they were living in Santa Barbara. . . . [Taubes said to Walton in private:] “Well, you know,” he says, “I charge \$500 for this.” And I said, “Well,” I said, “I was asked by Bob and Shirley to join,” and I said, “I’ll speak with them.” And so I told Robert that Taubes had asked for \$500 for me sitting in on the thing. And Bob said, “Why that son-of-a-bitch.” So I suppose that he was a guest at their house, too, at the same time we both were. And Bob and Shirley had a downtown studio they’d rented to paint in. And Taubes gave his seminars – demonstrations – there, in downtown Santa Barbara. No mention was made of money after that. I guess Shirley paid him some increased money. Well, Shirley had so damn much money, it’s not even funny. I mean, she was a multi- -- eighty million dollars, was what Robert reported. Well, I appreciate everything she did, but that’s a whole lot of resources represented there. It’s not the same as she was broke.

Taubes was an irritable bastard. He had rather chocolate red hair. He looked like a merchant. Wholly unartistic in appearance. About the artistic presence of Matisse, and had the mind of a merchant. Everything he did – a thought, he’d express it again and again in merchant terms. Everything of art. It was a little distressing, but he did know about the detail [sic] of the old master methods. And that’s where I started from, in my oil painting. He gave me a lot of mistakes, too, to make. Especially that retouching varnish. A boo-boo, that stuff. However, I’m indebted to Frederic Taubes, because *Tom Sawyer* couldn’t have happened if I hadn’t had a seminar with Frederic Taubes. There is no question about that. So I give my thanks to Robert Caples and Shirley – Shirley Behr Caples, and to Frederic Taubes. And to Phyl Walsh: if there had been no Phyl Walsh, I guess I wouldn’t have met Frederic Taubes either.

We were talking about the letter of introduction from Phil Paradise to Bob Caples on this tape the other day on this tape. And I have the manuscript of *Pyramid*, and I see the matter of the letter is covered. It says the principal people here are Rex Kane and Pandora. Those are the only principal people who appear. All the rest are appearing in their conversations. . . . [Reading from *Pyramid*:]

“I asked for a letter of introduction from an instructor who knew the supervisor. But the introduction negated itself with every other word.”

“How was it received?”

“It wasn’t.”

“They wouldn’t accept it?”

“I wouldn’t. I threw the letter in the toilet and tried to flush it off. It took thirty minutes flushing before I stopped.”

“It finally went down?”

“Not by a damn sight. I took it out with salad tongs and carried it to

the incinerator in the backyard, threw it in with the other trash, and bent the shitty tongs over my knee. But it was too wet to burn. Day after day I tried to burn it, but only small parts went at any one burning.”

Soon Kane gets into some of the detail of the WPA experience. He says,

“I was received well, and went through the federal inspection called certification. Later, the kindness of the beginning atrophied. The examiners changed personalities when new directives came down. . . . But as I think of it, there were some of the certification people who were never kind. Monsters in the pork barrel.”

[A long passage of Walton/Kane imagining himself as a pre-invasion Native American on the Truckee River, and other matters. Then he talks about the Federal Art Project and WPA:]

“Our project was the smallest part of one of the largest art movements, including Egypt.”

“Surely no larger. How can you say it? What about Mexico?” she [inaudible].

“Both the Egyptian and Mexican projects were spread over a considerable period. And while the rule of Roosevelt was unusually long, only a part of it was involved in art. When war came, art went out the window. It was the same in Sparta.”

And she says, [can’t be sure if this and subsequent he/she says-es are Walton for the sake of the recording or part of the text of the book]

“What about the Mexican movement? Orozco? Rivera? When you told me to get the books on those artists, I couldn’t believe how huge they worked.”

“The Mexican movement was not nearly so inclusive,” he said, “as the American, although the product was superior. The American project involved more artists than Egypt’s, with less talent and less slave labor. There were many thousands of registered artists in New York alone. The art project of New York was probably larger than the one in Mexico. Add the projects in the nation, and early Mexico wouldn’t be in the running.”

And she says,

“Then why wasn’t the American project as great as these three?”

Kane answers,

“It was designed to fail. There was colossal organization, with no right purpose. The American project was actually a one-man show of the ability of FDR. The Mexicans had succeeded in the same century,

with a natural talent for walls, and we didn't discover our bankruptcy in this area until it was all over. Even Jackson Pollock was painting like Benton."

She said,

"That's hard to imagine. I thought Pollock only painted dribbles."

And he answered,

"If there had been three artists with Roosevelt's genius at that time, the art movement would have been a surpassing success. What genius there was among the artists wasn't coming through."

"But," she said, "you said the project was a success."

And he answers,

"Only as a piece of organization. Still, I am forgivingly proud of having been a segment of the movement and the failure. The concept exceeded Lorenzo's. In each region, we had someone like him. Our Western Lorenzo was the adviser to a group of artless states, and his chief Holger Cahill was in Washington, near the center of inspiration. Joe Danysh had his hands full with the Twin Peaks project in San Francisco, and that was only one among many, yet taller than the Statue of Liberty."

And then she asks,

"What was wrong with the federal program?"

And Kane answers,

"Wrong in evolution. Wrong because it was welfare. Its sister program under the section of Fine Arts was not welfare, but was also wrong in evolution. The talent either wasn't there or the artists couldn't paint a federal scene they didn't believe in. Political crap! In Mexico and Egypt, they had paintable myths. Anyway, these art programs were wrong in timing."

And she says,

"How wrong?"

He answers,

"As much as a hundred years. Probably wrong in geography, assuredly in evolution."

And she asks,

"What killed this wrongly evolved and greatest of all art projects?"

He answers,

"Perhaps it was killed by women in dark suits and flat hats, hard-eyed females with cigarette holders, sexless desiccated politicians. Perhaps killed by the worn-out minds in Washington. Perhaps by

administrators with chewed cigars in smoke-filled hotel rooms.
Perhaps by our half-assed artists. Certainly by wrong evolution.”

And she said,

“Did it hurt to see it die?”

He says,

“To see it dead didn’t hurt. To watch it dying did. In a way, many of us died with it.”

And she says,

“But the work you did? All the work since? The project kept you going.”

He answers,

“Yes, there was production, but we failed. Not just personally, but generally. And having failed together didn’t mean that everyone failed individually. Most of the senior American artists seemed to have been on the project. We failed on a grand scale, and I think Benny Bufano’s Twin Peaks St. Francis can speak for the failure as well as anything could.”

She asks,

“Was it ever begun?”

And he said,

“As I understand it, all the plans, all the models done, and even the steel had been shipped by tandem flatcar. We’ll let this unusual commitment be a symbol. It was nauseating.”

She said,

“The movement was bad?”

He answers,

“No. The bigness of the failure nauseating.”

And she says,

“Just the little ones succeeded?”

And he answers,

“Again, no. Some were bad and some were good. But they were needed by a culturally starved society, which is still [inaudible] people in these respects. It is nauseating to be good enough, needed, and yet unwanted, however great [inaudible]. Maybe the projects failed because the artists were unwanted.”

She says,

“How good? How great? How unwanted?”

He answers,

“Good enough. Great was unimportant. Unwanted to the extent of total

destruction.”

And she says,

“What is good enough?”

He answers,

“Good enough is a lot better than what is deserved or understood.”

And she says,

“The great [inaudible]?”

He answers,

“That’s out of our hands.”

She says,

“What about the destruction?”

And he answers,

“With the war came a bright new way of public spending. Industry went on relief and displaced the artists, to put it simply. Make-work became military. And this is still not ended, although it bridges three wars. Public art was preempted, along with theater, ballet and concerts. Art centers were forgotten, and the art, if the word is allowed, was liquidated.”

“What about yours?” she said.

And he answers,

“Found on the bonfire. A few paintings saved by chance.”

And she says,

“How terrible – the vandals!”

And he answers,

“I have heard that Mark Tobey lost a mountain of work in the Seattle Project’s liquidation. It would be worth a fortune now. Other art was sold at auction as scrap. Painters were buying back their work from junk dealers. This happened at the precise time when Americans were deploring Germany’s book burning.”

And she says,

“You say they burned your work?”

And he answered,

“They did.”

She said,

“How much was saved from the fire?”

He answers,

“Less than a fifth.”

She says,

“Makes me sad.”

And he says,

“And the fire at our feet is sad. I must be doing something about it.”

She said,

“I hadn’t noticed. It isn’t dead.”

And,

“No, not dead,” said Rex Kane, “the fire is sad, but not dead.”

And I would say that the book of O’Connor, Francis O’Connor in *New Deal art [Art for the Millions: Essays from the 1930's by Artists and Administrators of the WPA Federal Art Project]*, and his pieces from – The thunder of the art project was really Audrey McMahan [Director of the New York region of the Federal Art Project, 1935–1943]. But, however, in the Roosevelt hands it grew beyond the proportions of her imagining.

Now, in the following chapter, they’re continuing on this subject. It says,

Rex Kane had the fire going –

There is this – The great desert light [inaudible] behind the moon, at Pyramid Lake, is one of the wonders of the world. It’s just utterly barren, and a vast blue lake, and these desert tufa formations – The most romantic place you could imagine. It says,

Rex Kane had the fire going again, when Pandora said, “Why wouldn’t the government have projects in art today? It seems to me this might give the young revolutionaries something to relate to.”

And he says,

“What in God’s name are you suggesting? Do you want politicians destroying art again?”

And she says,

“Don’t you yell at me!”

And he said,

“Do you want administrators telling our new artists what they should do? Is that what you want? I’m not yelling!”

“Yes you are.”

And he goes on,

“Do you want government bosses all over the landscape? Did you see the job Rockefeller did in Albany? Is that what you want? . . . There’s no right place for for the arts of this century.”

She says,

“Many buildings could use paintings.”

And he answers,

“Adding on paintings won’t do. What we need are dynamic new communities, autonomous cities and world peace. Liberated countrysides and diversified farmlands intermixed. Independent power

sources science has been sitting on. Resources for the taking, for creative using. People controls – My God, art everywhere, art anywhere. The new art forms are mismatched with lagging folkways. In the cybernated era, art will take inconceivable forms. There's no way to outguess potentials, no way to build now for that world. Life will give society patterns. First the ecology must survive, or life cannot. In a way, the pelicans are more important than people. Save the pelican, and maybe you'll save what's left of the planet.”

Then after the climax of their particular drama, Rex Kane is on his way out of this world, having been subjected to a lethal seizure. . . .

This book was written as a love piece for Pyramid Lake. And in the beginning, in the writing of the book, this [that follows] was the first part of the book. But realizing that a novel has to step off with some form of tempo, I left this part and put it in an epilogue:

Above the hard pack at the water's edge, above the first deep ridge of sand with the hard rim and well out on the upper sand, dusty and loose, began the monoliths, composed variously but in the same mood, and by the same hand, of time, of earth and the sinking sea, the monoliths rose, rigid sentinels as big as buildings and as small as the eye could find. The monoliths were of many stones, of several, and of myriad millions. Stone the eye could not find, so small, though deeply set, and so covered by the mortar of the master hand, the lake, and left bleakly in the open hand with the deep cup in the center of the palm. Above the sentinels, and the long walk over the hot sand of the one straight line of flat white and gray rocks above the red rock, the rock of the steel floor and the cracked elbow, above the pickup truck and the road it had come, the powdered trail winding with bouncing and bouncy with pocks, and smooth-worn stones of rounded points that weathered. Above the Indian cattle, the six head grazing by the first beach band – grazing on what? Above this entire desert world, in front and in back, straight up and suspected straight down, but found on the far horizon juxtaposed and past, leading off in all directions, the clear cloudless sky was blue. Gradually inward, conewise and palmwise, . . . [This passage, which is probably from the original 1950 or 51 manuscript, Walton read on Tape 1/28 as rewritten in the late 1960s or early 70s, copied here:] Gradually, inward, conewise and inverted, closing in and folding his own transparent fingers, and on the inner side, conewise and palmwise, gradually clenching without crushing, the unseen hand closed from the end of the sky to the brim of the earth bowl. The

transparent fingers folded over the furthestmost ridges, where sagebrush was dotted lace on lavender, then mauve, then brick-red or iron-red or Venetian red or English red or Indian red: earth red. And as the transparent fingers came to the closest inner hills of brown and ochre, and without it, the field of green, which was actually gray and called silver. And as the fingers came inward, the sage was intimately alive with communities and villages of small life, of ants and ticks, bugs uncountable, living the life in the lush and shaded and heavily perfumed world the hand knew better than they.

Bounding between the scented brush on crooked paths in the distant sage hills, the hearty jackrabbit remained. At the perimeter of the lake, near the monument, the land was dry and so dry. In the near-lying region, the transparent hand, while closing over the packrat, had left the hearty jackrabbit with the lavender and the mauve. The hand closed toward the water cup of the great palm, tapped the red red rock of the elbow and the white-gray and granite-white flat stones as the only straight line, and the sentinels and waterlines one by one. And gradually, since the blue hills of unseen brushland, those of jackrabbits and moles, and since the pre-Stravinsky waterlines, which covered the land farther than the airplane could see, and now which were in the cupped hand, and at the wake of one man.

[Resuming Tape 1/41] Now, one line was changed in that. I had that piece in the beginning of the book, and I had it, "and at the feet of one man." And using it as an epilogue, I changed the word 'feet' to 'wake'.

Box 1, Tape 1/42, Side 1 – February 16, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: *October Moon*; Eddie Star; Jim Hulse

People mentioned:

Bruce, Irene
Cantlion, Henry
Carlton, Dr.
Chapman, Loring
Debold, Robert
de Longchamps, Galen
de Longchamps, Joanne
Glass, Bob
Herrmann, Benny
Hulse, Dan
Hulse, Jim
Mayberry, David
Mayberry, Florence

Tuttle, Bud
Tuttle, Nadine
Walton, Marie Jeanne (Marijo) Etcheberry
Walton, Vivian

[Speaking of *October Moon: A Time of Harvest*:] All my dear friends are to be in it in a brief way. I'm not presenting it as critical material, I'm not telling everything that I know – I know too much about too many people. . . .

. . .

[Speaking of the anniversary of Bud and Nadine Tuttle, Bud being one of “the Boys”:] I welcomed the chance to talk to Jim [Hulse]. I went to see Jim at the university one of these days [sic]. He was trying to set me up with the University of Nevada Press, with an interview to discuss the possible publication of my photo book of Virginia City. And he asked about that. . . . Well, I told Jim about Eddie Star [who was hospitalized following a suicide attempt with pills], and said, “Perhaps I ought to go see him.” He said, “I hate hospitals [Jim’s brother Dan was hospitalized, my impression is in a psychiatric hospital]. I’ve got a bellyful of hospitals.” . . .

I told Jim about the *October Moon* effort that I’m making, that I was doing it as a work in depth, kind of a biography as well as an autobiography. That I meant to do it in the third person, and see myself as an individual as well as give this intimate report that I’m taping.

And later I told Joanne, I said I’m doing sort of a biography of my own life. She said, “You mean autobiography.” I said, “No,” I said, “oddly enough, I’m taping my recall and then I mean to comment on it – critical comments as an outsider.” I said, “Gertrude Stein did it in the Alice book, and,” I said, “it’s not quite an autobiography.” Well, I think that Dr. Carlton put it right when he referred to my letters as “self-interviews.”

Well, I told Jim that he was in the Walton woof, many times, in the taping. It was inescapable. However, I didn’t give him carte blanche, because I landed on him critically at one point. And Jim prides himself in his democratic outlook, and he said, “Well, that’s all right.” . . . “What it was,” I said, “I was talking about success and playing the game, and I used you as an example of success, and [Loring] Chapman and a few others. [Inaudible] Talking about Benny Herrmann. . . .

I said to Jim that “You function in the academic world, and you do nothing to violate it, and I think would do nothing to violate it. . . . You play a pretty clean academic line up there at the university.” And I said, “One thing that I’m pointing out is that you are a socialist in your heart, and yet you don’t declare yourself as such. I understand that, and maybe you can’t afford to. But,” I said, “here you are a socialist – I know you as a socialist.” He said, “Yes, I’m a Fabian socialist.” Well,

[inaudible] watered down right there. He prides himself on his identity with Bernard Shaw. Well, he sees Shaw as the future. Shaw was a very careful man. I told him that this *October Moon* had in it sections that were very socialistic. . . .

He says, "What I've done, I've already written to them, the university, that I will not accept any more outside assignments, committee work – none of that. I'll take care of my classes, I like that." He said, "I enjoy the classes, but," he said, "all this extra load that they put on me," he said, "I cannot do, because I have to have more time to write." He said, "I'm going on a year's sabbatical soon, and I will get into the material on religion and socialism." He said, "There's a lot doing there." . . . Sometimes, in our conversations, Jim comes alive again. I hate to see it when he's bogged down. I've seen him in his public functions when he's among the strangers and preening himself in his accomplishments, and his status. I don't much like that. But he was himself yesterday, and it was the old Jim. I told Jim that when I'd first seen him, so long ago, when he had a part in "Three Men on a Horse," . . . and I spotted Jim as a comer, I could see that Jim was one hell of a fine boy. And I told myself, "Well, I have to see more of him." I said this to Jim. And I said, "So I set everything up so it was easy for us to meet, and for you to come along – come into the group." I said, "I was losing my boys. Chapman was about to go to the University of Chicago to pursue his masters, Bob Glass was leaving. Henry Cantlion was going to the Naval Air Force. And everyone was drifting off." So I said, "I did this with both you and Bob Debold, I made it easy for you to come into the fold, because I needed replacements badly, I was adrift. And I didn't want to be lonely. I wanted to keep in touch with your category." And, well, I don't think Jim thought about that before. So we became friends. . . .

. . .

In the case of Joanne de Longchamps, it's been years. I used to talk with her. I told her, I said, "Joanne, in doing these tapes" – I explained about the nature of the book. [Walton repeats the conversation about biography vs autobiography.] I said, "You appear stronger [in the "book"] than you would imagine. I said, "You're back and forth throughout the text." . . . I said, "I do appreciate that there was this time in my life, when I was with Marijo, that I needed you very badly. I needed to talk with someone, to share, and to explore." And I said, "Since I've married Vivian, there's been no one – that does not apply to my marriage to Vivian, because we have a community of that sort." But I said, "All through the marriage with Marijo, there was always some person, some woman, from time to time, with whom I could talk." I said, "You can't talk to men very well – at least I can't. But I can talk to women."

. . .

Now, she's a very bright person, she has a very good mind. Accomplished poet and accomplished painter. And she came to my classes, not so much in the spirit of a

student as in the spirit of community activity. And she knew plenty. Very perceptive. She's easily ten years younger than me. . . . Now the thing is that Joanne has suffered this illness. She had the mastectomy some years ago, and now she's come up with multiple sclerosis. . . . Now Joanne's not crippled up yet where you would notice it, but her face shows the illness. She was the most radiantly endowed person – you could see her from a block away, when she was sixteen, eighteen and twenty, and twenty-five–thirty years old. And older. She was an extraordinary person, and very lovely. One of these showy lovely girls, very flashy – you could see her for two blocks away, you'd see Joanne coming. My god, there was somebody. The only thing wrong with her in her appearance was her posture. Her posture was always a little sloppy. She had a good figure, but her posture was careless. A turn in modeling school would have straightened that out. Or just a hippie walk [laughs]. Either one. Either one. But I think maybe she was careless that way because she was rather a large girl. Well, she married a very large guy – made her look small. About seven feet – he's terribly tall. [Two people who knew him tell me he was perhaps 6' 6".] Galen, whom I have known since boys – around town, I'd seen him around, you know, since a young guy. . . . He's a good deal my junior. . . .

Now I have a note on the painting that Joanne and Galen de Longchamps acquired from me so many years ago, a little farmer's cart of some kind, so kind of a rig I found at a farm that fascinated me, and I painted it in a Van Gogh style, so to speak. . . . Well, Joanne tells me that that's Galen's favorite painting, and that they have it out in their schoolhouse summer quarters, which they have acquired and decorated. Joanne says it's the only painting of anyone else's, besides her own collage that she has hung there. And that's another point of honor, Joanne being the poet and the artist.

She did remind me – and I had forgotten this altogether – that I had sold that painting in desperation, because I had needed a new carburetor. . . . I knew that she had liked it and Galen had liked it, and I took it over to them, as I remember, in desperation – I needed that carburetor, so it was sold at some considerably reduced price. None of us had any money. Galen was – I believe he was a lifeguard out at the swimming pool at Idlewild Park, working summer. That was a pretty skimpy life for them. Or it was in a slightly later period when he worked for the sanitation inspector. Well, Joanne said that maybe those were the good years. We haven't seen much of them since I – Vivian doesn't know them at all. She's met them in passing in Reno, here and there. But it's been a long time.

Now the other day I remembered where I first met Joanne and Galen. My sister and my brother-in-law, Florence and David Mayberry, were new Baha'is, and either through the Baha'i work, or through her interest in writing, or a combination of

both, Florence had met Irene Bruce. Irene was a very able poet, and was then. Now, I believe it was through Irene, they met Joanne de Longchamps, who was a poet at that time more than a painter. And I remember meeting Joanne and Galen at a picnic at Bowers Mansion, under the trees. A picnic which had been arranged by my sister. That's the first I recall meeting Joanne. But I remember Joanne more than Galen, because I had seen her before: a bright, attractive, striking girl, on the streets of Reno, with the flaming hair. Incidentally, Joanne had red hair. [Walton talks about "Reno red hair," dyed.] But Joanne doesn't do that. Her hair is not bright today. She looks very well, except for the illness that shows in her face.

Tape 1/44, Side 1 – February 19, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: Walton builds his house in Virginia City in 1958; his eyesight.

People mentioned:

Tuttle, Bud
Tuttle, Nadine

When I built the house, in 1958, increasingly I was having difficulty seeing the nails, when I was doing the carpenter work. I built this thing – the interior, altogether – by myself, and put it together as a tinker toy of metal. But the interior is all my handiwork. Now, absolutely. The outside, too, for that matter. But I did have help. Once in a while somebody'd come by and help me lift something. But basically, it's my deal.

Now, I couldn't see the nails. Well, Bud told our friends, they made a contribution – made a pot – and sent me off to have an eye examination, and to get glasses. That was a gift, of my friends, the Tuttle – are of that stripe. And I never forgot it.

Box 1, Tape 1/50, Side 1 – May 26, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: Walton trying to get his Virginia City book published by University of Nevada Press

People mentioned:

Cady, Nick
Clark, Walter Van Tilburg
Gainey [sp?]
Hulse, Jim
Laxalt, Robert
Walton, Vivian

On the morning of the 27th, Vivian and I went to – which was a Tuesday – [NOTE: May 27, 1975 was a Tuesday] Vivian and I went to Reno to pick up the manuscript at the University of Nevada Press. And she was rather impressed with the way the conversation went over there, and impressed with the easygoing life in that office. Nick Cady, editor, explained to me that the layout was superfluous, that – this was a word of friendly advice that – Of course I knew that they weren't going to seriously consider this thing. I had told him that all I wanted to do was to get them acquainted that the material existed, the Virginia City photo book. And perhaps in the fullness of time he might even be chief of this organization and would possibly remember that this material existed, at some better hour. Well, it was clear that wasn't the way the system was working now, and these are pragmatic people. They go along with the design of the immediate system very well. And it seems to be a tight club, this organization.

I started to say that he had in a friendly way advised me not to include the layout, because the publishers would want to do their own selection of paper – their money and all those things would flow into that. I said, well, the layout is not sealed. It's not terribly set. In my view it only offers guidelines to my basic thought in the matter. After all, the captions are written to a given space in every section. I said the whole book is designed. And I said somebody might be upset at that, because it would give them nothing to do in that area, if they care to go along with the layout. But he was solid on his thoughts of a book goes to a book designer, and the printer, and the publisher has little to do with the thing.

Well, I began to wonder what they do over at the University of Nevada Press, if they don't lay them out and if they don't design them, what the hell is the office all about? Of course, I'm used to magazine work. In the magazine, everybody pitches in and gets the thing out, design and all. Even the – He had told me earlier that the proofreading on the thing was done by students, it was farmed out. So with all this farmed out work, I began to wonder what the editor and publisher does over there, except that Bob Laxalt is writer in residence, and has certain freedoms. He was on what they call writer's sabbatical the day I was in there, the day before, so – oh, a month ago. Almost a month now. When I was in there before, in any case.

Gainey [sp?] has a book published by the University of Nevada Press. I saw two in there by Jim Hulse, one a school textbook and the other the history of the University of Nevada. Their main thing is the Alf Doten papers, that Walter Clark threw together. And one gets the impression it's a closed club. And Cady rather tipped his hand at one point. I said, "Well, if you and I" – when we were talking about layout – I said, "All those photographs were taken, partly by the demand of the subject matter, the other was suggested by the need of a more vertical picture to

fit the ordinary style of book.” And I said, “Often I went out and shot pictures for a considered layout. I always had that in mind.” And I said, “This is a rare privilege, where you’re able to do it all. I mean, to design the book, as well as throw the material together.” Well, he looked very lost at this level, and I could see that he was rather innocent, in some ways – I’m innocent in other ways. But I had the feeling that I would do better if I were talking to someone in New York, than in Reno, Nevada. He’s a nice lad, but he doesn’t seem too experienced. And their products are really not in their hands, they’re produced by a contract process, and I really wonder what they do besides just answer the mail. The publishers do some scanning of contributors’ material. But when I told Cady that if you and I had a hundred thousand dollars and wanted to do a photo book on a given subject, I said it would be a hell of an advantage to go out there and have a suggested layout, throw it together, and shoot the pictures according to our mutual idea of what the book is. I said, “If we had a hundred grand to work with, that’s be a lot of fun.”

“Oh,” he said, “if I had a hundred thousand dollars,” he said, “there are a lot of other things I would do.” And he just beamed with this thought. So that explained very clearly to me that any contributor entering this closed society of the University of Nevada Press hadn’t a prayer. They have dreams way ahead, and I’m sure they’re all lined up within the power structure there, with books. And it was naive to go forward expecting them to publish – well, I didn’t! I did want them to know that the material existed. Because he might be eighty years old one day, and I’m long in the grave, and somebody will say something that’ll bring memories. Then he’ll know that the material exists. And he can contact my widow, Vivian.

Well, she was not impressed with the thing, although she agreed that he seemed to be a pleasant chap.

Box 1, Tape 1/50, Side 2 – May 29, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: More on the Virginia City book; thoughts on Vivian, on Marie Jeanne

People mentioned:

Stone, Charles
Walton, Marie Jeanne (Marijo) Etcheberry
Walton, Vivian

. . . Now what I’m going to do with the Virginia City material is, reedit the thing, edit out the personal stuff, I mean the people, the contemporary feel, and print these extraordinary photographs of documents and all sorts of material, to present to one of the historical organizations down there, which I hope should be irresistible

material. There's something personal in my approach to the people and events, like the horses and the people around here in 1972 and 1973 that I documented as samples. Well, that can only be valuable in the fullness of time. I had in mind a certain type of rather entertaining popular book. But there is this valuable historical material, and my vision of the details of the aerial painting of Virginia City, is a view that no one's ever seen of it, except the artist, and he's not seen it in detail – the 1875 artist. And there are photos that I've copied that were in the public domain – those photographs that I secured from Charles Stone largely. I have reprinted and processed them and deepened the values of them, to where they do not resemble the originals at all, except in the graphic line. Now, this material must be seen, because it opens the eye to a new view of sometimes old material. . . .

. . .

. . . For some reason it flashed through my mind that not only did I love Vivian, but that she was the nicest person I had ever known. . . .

. . .

Well, after my art classes in Reno dropped off, and my experience with the *Nevada Magazine* had occurred, I tried to swing my affairs over to a more realistic area. The money I had made in those years with the art class on Marsh Avenue didn't amount to anything. Marijo and I weren't happy, but we had kind of a loving kindness situation, and lived together not as strangers, but – it was strange. And from this point, one can see that it was an impossible situation for both of us.

Tape 1/53, Side 1 – June 29, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: Youth revolution

It was dreadful for me, not to be accepted wholeheartedly by the younger people coming on.

Box 1, Tape 1/53, Side 2 – July 2, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: Irene Bruce's hard widowhood; Robert Caples' Indians; Bea Brooks and Pablo Olarte; Zoray Andrus's personality; Caples' influence on him; Bettina [Caples] Swanson described; Phyllis Walsh and Helen Marye Thomas; Frederic Taubes in Santa Barbara

People mentioned:

Andrus, Zoray
Bridgman, George
Brooks, Bea

Bruce, Harry
Bruce, Irene
Caples, Robert
Dali, Salvador
Deanne [Peter Kraemer's partner]
Fuller, Mary
Garland, Helen
Garland, Ted
Henderson, Ruth
Kraemer, Peter
Martinez, Ed
Olarate, Pablo
Swanson, Bettina
Taubes, Frederic
Thomas, Helen Marye
Walsh, Phyllis
Walton, Myrtle Foose
Walton, Vivian

Irene Bruce, who lives in a trailer in Carson City, called me today. And she was saying how hard it was to live in a trailer and get along on this [government] pittance that she receives, something – \$80 a month, she lives on, with some extra employment she has. . . . As a widow, it's very hard for her to get by. And she stressed how much she missed her husband Harry. . . .

. . .

[Talking about a conversation with artist Ed Martinez, who in 1975 had an exhibition with Indian subjects.] Caples had done very well with his Indians in years past. I said, "However, a lot of those arrangements were made after the drawings of George Bridgman, from the Bridgman anatomy book." That he couldn't draw hands like that without that Bridgman book. And the *Hands at the Bar*. And the facial anatomy of those Indians is just lifted right off of Bridgman, and transposed to the Indians. . . . And the fishes and loaves of Jesus and the Disciples [*Last Supper*, 1937] were the same. And all of his early work of illustrating with those hands – *Hands at the Bar*. All hands at the bar were taken from the book. I said, "He was very innocent about it." I said, "He gave me that book, that's why I know this, because they were all labeled, with the titles underneath each picture." Well, I had given that book to [inaudible] many years ago. Circling around someplace is this book of Bridgman, with Caples' own hand in there, giving the titles of his various characters. And obviously this nails the source. Well, it transposes over. A lot of people don't mind using somebody else's work for their own needs. . . . I don't quite understand the position. . . .

. . .

Now I hadn't known that Bea Brooks even knew Irene Bruce. The reason Irene had called was to scold me for not having told Bea about the *Tom Sawyer* acquisition by

the Smithsonian Institute. I was rather surprised that I had not told her, after Bea had spoken with me. Vivian and I are eager to see Beatrice. Now that Mummy's gone [Myrtle Foose Walton, apparently], we will schedule an evening with Bea Brooks and her Basque. Irene was impressed with him. She says he's not as young as she had thought he would be. And she said that she was surprised by Bea's attitude about Spain. She said just visiting Spain gives people one attitude, but living there gives you another. She said, visitors to Spain don't appreciate how easy they have it in the United States. . . . Well, we hope to have the Garlands and Bea Brooks and her friend soon.

. . .

Zoray hopes to visit the Comstock, asked if I had room. I said, well, I have the little back writing room which serves as a guest room. We put up a cot, that's where Mary [Fuller] stayed. And I said, "My mother-in-law is due in ten days, and after she departs, I'll be available." So Zoray didn't know what her scheduling would be. She gave me her phone number and her address down there where she's staying with Peter and Deanne. And I shall call her, as soon as we get the line straight.

Now we must have Bea Brooks and her friend, her husband-to-be, this not-young and interesting Basque, according to Irene's description. And the Garlands on that same occasion, so they can exchange notes on Spain. I don't know if Ted's been to Madrid, which is Bea's town – city.

Now, Zoray has just moved from the border of Mexico, to Alameda, having left that ranch which is such a famous place for people who wish to lose weight. Rancho La Puerta. Zoray made inquiring remarks, which is her style. The inquiring remark about Helen Garland. It's voiced in a negative turn, and it's this statement within a question. It's the inquiring remark – I don't even know anybody else who does that! Right off I don't. But this is Zoray. Let's see, how would you put one? Well, it goes rather this way: "Who died? I hear the corpse was purple." [Laughs] There's nobody like Zoray. She's a negative force for good. And I think it would be a calamity to have her visit while Mary is here. In fact, I won't have it. This would be a collision of moment.

So, Zoray said, "Well, I wouldn't want to take your writing room." She said, "I'll just sleep in the front room." I said, "Well, you would have no privacy there." And I said, "We put up the cot in the back room for guests." And I said, "In any case, I couldn't write anyway with somebody here." So this is a double remark on my part! [Laughs] It announces that the time limit is important for visiting. [Laughs] So, people like Zoray and Bob Caples have taught me how to go down the road. If it weren't for some of my people, I wouldn't know very much today. Because I was innocent when I came to Nevada. Completely innocent. I didn't know what irony meant. Or innuendo.

Now, speaking of Bob Caples, Zoray told me yesterday that she saw Bettina in San Francisco. Bob and Bettina had Godfrey, the little shop named for the golden Cocker Spaniel. They were on the Comstock for quite some time. Bettina's well know and well remembered. I remember her best as a malefactor in New York, when she tried to borrow my car to go upstate to see some of her relatives. Well, the car was in the garage already, with its first gear being replaced. So I was a little reluctant to offer it. However, I'm very fond of Bettina, and she has visited this studio, in deference to the old days, and – I remember that day she visited. It was a long afternoon for her. She didn't know quite what to do with herself, and I was doing photographs. I was in the middle of the Virginia City book material. And I explained to Bettina that I had to carry on with my work, and she – “Well, that's all right. I have no place to go, and would you mind if I just stayed here?” And I said, “Certainly, make yourself at home. I'll go ahead and work.” Just don't come through the curtain, because I'm in here, see, I'm doing photos.” And I went in the back. And my darkroom is double-curtained, the light's all blocked off. It's not for negatives, it's only for printing. And the lavatory is just inside the curtained area, on the darkroom side. Well, at one point Bettina went to that room, and broke right through the curtain, and destroyed a box of my paper. So I won't forget that visit very quickly. It's a shocking thing, when you lose a whole box of paper. . . .

. . .

[Walton attended the funeral or memorial for Ruthie, Ruth Henderson, in Virginia City] I went to the table at which was seated my dear and longtime friend, Phyl Walsh – Phyllis Walsh, the friend of Helen Marye Thomas, of S-Bar-S note, and the great banking family of Virginia City. Well, Phyl had been her friend for so many years, had lived with her so long, many people thought of her as a companion. And she did perform certain practical chores for Helen that I myself witnessed many times. But at one point, Phyllis told me that, as had been written on occasion that she had been a companion of Helen, that she was never a paid companion. . . . And that she had just been her friend. So she straightened out some other things that had appeared in print, in regard to Fred Taubes. . . . Phyl said that she had never been a professional tennis player. . . . So I had a very lively conversation with Phyl, who is one of the most worldly persons of my entire acquaintance. And she topped me up on the latest word on Fred Taubes, whom she sees with some regularity. She also mentioned that in between visits at the S-Bar-S Ranch, that he had come to this area with Salvador Dali on one occasion. That Dali painted some pictures, and that he had put people's heads on pelicans, a surreal interpretation of Pyramid [Lake]. And Taubes himself had put palm trees around Pyramid. She had asked Taubes why he had done that, and he says, “Well,” he says, “if it's all right for Dali to put heads on pelicans, I can put palm trees, can't I?” Well, she told me what a financial success

he'd been, especially because of his books. And he'd done well in the stock market. And I said, "Well, Fred Taubes had appeared to me rather like a businessman in Santa Barbara on that occasion." and I said, "He was very astute concerning business, and rather talked in those terms all the time, regardless of what the subject was. So I am not surprised that he has been a success financially." She mentioned that Dali and he at a midtown gallery had had a joint show on one occasion. . . .

Box 1, Tape 1/54, Side 1 – June 20, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: Ralph Caples' Stutz

People mentioned:

Caples, Byron H., M.D.
Caples, Ralph
Frandsen

Now I was charmed by a piece . . . the comeback of the old Stutz. . . .

Oh, I must say something about the Stutz that I had the great privilege of parking when I was working [in 1931] for the Three-A [AAA] Garage at Sierra Street and First, before that Sierra Street bridge was put in, many years ago, working for the Frandsen estate there at the Three-A. And I was a night man, and I would dust off all these cars, and we had to park whatever came in. Well, in came a 1930 Stutz, the same era. The car belonged to Dr. Caples' brother, the president of the Union Pacific Railroad. A metal style top, a special body, and the sedan part of the body was covered by a very heavy black leather, that had a Moroccan pebble to it. I remember those doors shutting, and they clicked quite like a refrigerator door, or an icebox door. . . . And I remember the door-latching mechanism was housed separately, it wasn't contained in the door, it was on the inner surface. The car of Ralph Caples. But that was an extraordinary automobile.

Box 1, Tape 1/56, Side 1 – Undated, probably mid-1975

Main Subjects of Selection: Marie Jeanne's art gallery; Eddie Star's depression; friendship with Joanne de Longchamps

People mentioned:

de Longchamps, Galen
de Longchamps, Joanne
Star, Eddie
Tuttle, Nadine
Walton, Marie Jeanne (Marijo) Etcheberry

Eddie [Star] told me that Marie Jeanne was opening a gallery this week, and that she was gonna handle just paintings and watercolors and sketches. And that's good news. I hope it thrives. . . .

Thoughts of Eddie and his state of depression still burden my thinking. I don't know what the hell to do about Eddie.

I was just talking with Joanne de Longchamps – I had asked Nadine Tuttle to invite her to our Pony Day celebration on the 24th. . . . I felt a little shoddy in letting Nadine call Joanne, I felt I owed it to Joanne to call her direct myself. And so I did. And Nadine hadn't told her about it, and I urged them to come. And she said count on them. If there was something else that come up that she would cancel it out, and she and Galen would be here. God, I don't even know if either of them have been here at all since I've been on the Comstock. We used to see such a great deal of each other in the Reno days.

Box 1, Tape 1/57, Side 1 – June 25, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: friendship with Bea Brooks

People mentioned:

Brooks, Bea (Beatrice)
Brooks, Debbie
Brooks, Dudley (Junior) (Chip)
Brooks, Dudley (Senior)
Chapman, Loring
Edelstein, Ed
Kraemer, Deanne
Olarte, Pablo
Walton, Marie Jeanne (Marijo) Etcheberry
Walton, Vivian

Now last night the telephone rang, and Vivian answered: it was Bea Brooks. Now Beatrice Brooks is one of my oldest friends. We came together after World War II, when she was selling records in Saviers record department [Saviers Electrical Products Corp.] at Second and West Street in Reno. Later we were to meet her again in some way that I've forgotten, and we became her dinner guests, at the apartment near the University of Nevada campus. Her husband of those years, Dudley Brooks, was getting his degree and she was supporting the family. They had a small child. And she worked for Saviers. When Dudley graduated, they seem to have gone different ways, [inaudible] with two children then, Chip [Dudley Brooks, Junior] and Debbie. And there was a lapse of time before I heard of Bea again. And she turned up as a school teacher in the Bay area. Now Bea Brooks – regardless of

whatever name she has, I know her as Bea Brooks – I [inaudible] can see her, a very attractive girl at Saviers record counter, approaching Loring [Chapman] and myself in a very forward manner. Very relaxed. He was liberated long before the words Women’s Lib came along. And fell into easy conversation. Loring and I were looking for Mexican records. There was a record sale, and we were looking through these remainders. They had a large number of Mexican records, and remainders, and Loring and I acquired a great number of these. . . .

Now Bea was to come into the picture much later in the game, when I was on the Comstock. And we were to visit them at Foster City, which is near San Mateo on the Bay in California. And often, she and her crowd – because there always was a crowd – would summer here. She came to marry a very magical guy called Ed Edelstein. Although when you wrote to Bea you tended to say Bea Brooks on the letterhead. But you never knew if she was married or not. And then finally she turned up married. But Ed was a very shy, not very large fellow. But he had magic. Ed was mature, and decided one day that he wanted to be a ballet dancer. This surely pleased Beatrice, because the whole family was ballet for years, in the Bay area. Beatrice was one of the strong supporters of the arts for a long time, especially in the San Mateo area. And she spent a very busy life – only part of her life was spent in her craft of teaching, in the system. Now she knew Deanne Kramer, and Deanne Kramer’s mother – in fact, Bea was outspoken and critical of Deanne. She said to me, she said, “Deanne can be a great dancer, if she wants to, but she won’t work at it.” She says, “I told her.” And Deanne isn’t too pleased with any mention of Bea Brooks. Bea – well, she’s opinionated. She’ll tell me right out, you know, “I like this, this is it,” you know. And then something other, equally good, you know, in my judgment, she says nothing about. But, “Oh, I like this.”

So Bea said, “Why haven’t I heard from you?” I said, “I – didn’t you get my Christmas cards?” We always exchange those cards. I [sic] said, “No, I didn’t.” She says, “Well, I’ve been in Spain for two years.” And it’s about two years that I haven’t heard from her. . . . I said to Bea, I said, “Well, look, I hope you didn’t leave any money over there,” I says, “it’s not too easy to get it.” She says, “No, you can’t get money out very well.” But she says, “I intend to live over there.” She said, “I have with me a Basque whom I’m going to marry [Pablo Olarte].” So I look forward to meeting this Basque, who must be a very interesting person. And Bea comes up intermittently through the world on the Comstock with persons of most interesting bent. She brought the premier dancer of the San Francisco Ballet on one occasion, who had sustained a fitful sunburn at Lake Tahoe, as Beatrice and her crowd generally sleep on the beach – at the public beach at Sand Harbor – in the old days they did, and although this is forbidden, Bea pays no mind to restrictions of that sort. And then she would come over to see us. Well, this ballet dancer, whose

name escapes me at the present time, was, oh, terribly burned. And he and a friend retired to the bathroom to put ointment on his severe burns. They used all the toilet paper. Now there was one girl with them, who just before they left, she went to the bathroom. She was in there ever so long. And they were honking the horn and they were eager to go, the girl was still in there. And finally she came out. And shame-faced she said goodbye. We waved them off, and when I went in there, I realized that there had been no toilet paper at all. And I can only think that that was the hang-up with this young lady who was just dreadfully embarrassed.

Well, Beatrice cooked an economy casserole, with tuna and rice, that is one of the drabest concoctions that I have ever eaten. But it's an economy dish, and I suppose you can hand it to her sense of the economy dish, because she raised those two children – two lovely children – they were very tall kids. God, they're much taller than Bea, and Bea is tall. Although I had not had the husband in reference – was small. All this magical guy, this Ed Edelstein [who wasn't the father], when I saw him in Foster City – Vivian and I, we saw him – he was doing some commercials for television. And that's the first I heard of the importance of touching the product. . . . But his heart was wrapped up in – well, not only ballet, but in his cats – he was crazy for his quantity of cats, which he fed – he wouldn't eat with the rest of us, he ate – he lived in a house next door! He wouldn't live – they didn't even live together, they lived next door, would come in the garage and feed his cats and communicate with us, and reveal the wonderment of Ed, and then disappear! It was like two trains passing at 7 pm. Well, I elected to think that that was their own business, and here, by golly, Bea says that they're getting a divorce. That's why she's in Reno now. And she's infatuated with this Basque. I don't know if he's young or old, but I said, "Well, I'm half Eskalduna myself." She said, "Oh, I didn't know you were Basque." I says, "No," I said, "I was married – Marijo was my first marriage, to a Basque girl. They used to have the Santa Fe Hotel on Lake Street in Reno." She says, "No, I didn't have any idea." [Walton and Bea met in 1948 when he was married to Marijo.] Well, there are some thing we don't get into, even old friends, I suppose. It always surprises me, I'm supposed to be so talkative. Well, Bea said she lives now in Madrid, and when she gets her divorce, she will go back. Now this is a typical case of the subterfuge of Nevada [divorce] law. . . . And of course, this state is founded in lies, in lies, and in certain minerals. So, I told Bea to hold still, and we'd get back to her in a couple of days, what's her phone number? And we'll get in touch with her soon, and get the word from Spain. [Discusses other friends he has in Spain.] Now we have Bea Brooks in Madrid. If Bea's there, I'd be willing to go. . . .

Box 1, Tape 58, Side 1 – August 4, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: friendship with Bea Brooks

People mentioned:

Brooks, Bea (Beatrice)
Brooks, Debbie
Brooks, Dudley (Junior) (Chip)
Bruce, Irene
Dennis {Pecoraro?}
Garland, Helen
Graham, Don
Gump, Dick
Kraemer, Eric
Olarate, Pablo
Rowley, Anita
Thompson, Bertha
Walton, Myrtle Foose
Walton, Marie Jeanne (Marijo) Etcheberry
Walton, Vivian

Bea Brooks – Olarte soon to be – had been with us, and this is the subject of conversation which came after her surprise first visit the day before. Bea had had her breakfast with us, she had not eaten. . . . I did get her mother's address: Mrs. Bertha Thompson in San Francisco. Bea told us that I was her oldest friend, that she still knew consecutively. This brought thoughts of Anita [Rowley?], that I was one of the first persons that she had known in the United States, and so therefore I'm one of her oldest friends. This is strange, coming up within the same six months. I asked Bea about the Hemingway appeal [in Spain; discussion thereof].

She said she had brought a gift for me and she was so rattled she had forgotten to bring it up – she had left it with her mother. I Said, "What was it? Please tell me." She said, "It's a little picture, and on it, in Spanish" – she gave to quote, and the translation, "Drink, brother. For life is short." I took the occasion to check up on some matters relating to Columbus, having researched the old boy rather extensively at Washoe Library. . . .

Now she left us with a firm new point of view, which she declared, saying that things would be different, she had her stability now, thanks to the new insight after our talk. And she was radiant as she started off. Then she realized she'd left her nighty, came back for it.

Now, the occasion of Bea's situation has made me think of my mother is love, and of these other women, presumably all in love: Helen Garland, and my wife Vivian. And I tell you, there is no standard. Bea told me that her grandmother had been a Creek – I find in Bea's bone structure a suggestion of this reality. Vivian said I'm out of my mind.

Bea was telling us of the Flamenco and about the other dances, . . . and she did some of the steps, and she's very skilled as a dancer. And she kicked the smoothest, tallest kick you would care to see, with the leg coming down very controlled, slow, thoughtlessly so. Totally a kick at ease, and which shows the enormous training she's had at ballet.

Now she speaks of her daughter Debbie as being in funds, and not knowing what to do with her money. This is odd for a dancer. I'm so delighted that Debbie's having it this well. And Chip has hung in there as a dancer, in part because his very tall sister needs a tall partner. Now she says Chip is studying Indonesian dance. She said he was showing her some of the positions. She said you can barely get out of them once you get into them – very difficult.

Now this morning – no, by God, it was last night, that she went to bed in the midst of all this drama – the missing being was Pablo, her expensive charge, whom she said she would not leave derelict in the United States, which he regards in the Spanish word for shit. He says the United States is shit. Well, I regard that Pablo's expensive tastes are only exceeded by those of Bea, the gourmet woman in love. And as Vivian went off to bed last night, she said to me as she walked off, rather a mumble, "I'd rather have a crippled old man with a cane." Which is my good fortune [laughs softly]. Well, I do know that I made it clear [Bea] that she was sailing on a collision course of diminishing returns. That there was a hospital out there in her possibility, with a white door, and there were bars on the other side. That she had to maintain the [inaudible] relationship of reality in these days to come.

(Now, I saw Eric Kraemer the other day, and I wish to note – this is totally aside – I wish to make an entry for fear I didn't mention it at some point earlier. Eric Kraemer was at Stanford. His roommate . . . was Dick Gump. And that my teacher, Don Graham, was one of their fellow students at Stanford.)

Bea wants to live to be 150 years old. I said I had no such desire. She said, "Oh," she said, "perhaps you're like Chaplin. You're going to live forever." I said, "That's not my interest."

. . .

Bea said that she could teach English in Spain. That that was a source of income, that a lot of people did work in Spain, Americans, foreigners. She said that it would be very easy for her to teach English. So my mind is eased a bit, for her well-being. This morning, I mentioned something about the Spanish men, without being specific about it, to Dennis at the grocery store [Virginia Market on C Street]. And Dennis – [Discussion of sexism in Spain.] . . .

I asked Bea this morning about her grandmother, who I previously mentioned was a Creek Indian. And I said, "Was it not a fact that Irene Bruce was part Indian?" she

said, “Yes.” . . .

. . . Now Bea had told me that the favorite festival dance was the Hota. . . She said she had a tape of this festival that she had attended, and that she would send it to me for copying, and also a narrative of Spain in her voice. I hope she doesn’t forget it.

Today is her divorce date, and God willing, all goes well for Bea Brooks. And Pablo. We may not hear for years. Bea comes and goes. [Laughs] And there are these long gaps. She’s promised to keep in closer touch henceforth. For some reason I meant a very great deal to Bea, and to her children. Far out of context to what I had understood.

. . .

Now I had thought of the incident with Marijo, years ago, and brought it up with Vivian, in regard to Bea’s situation in Spain. This has to do with that time that a relative had died, and all the family had become heirs to the property. But that the family of Marijo had – this was on her father’s side – the family had all signed a waiver to their interest in the chateau that had been left. And this being in France, the attorney sent the paper back and the letter explaining that Marijo’s husband had to sign it. That his signature was mandatory. Now that showed us that women had a different legal position in France than they do here over heritage. So the property rights in even a more strict country, such as Spain – a far more constricted legal system – must be in effect. It was very hard for the free-swinging ladies of the United States to accept the legal situation in some of these other countries. I don’t know if Bea thought this through. And I had failed her – I had failed to bring the matter up. And chances are I won’t see her, very soon.

Box 1, Tape 1/59, Side 1 – August 19, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: Hunting; Walter and Barbara Clark and hunting; Rae Steinheimer and Robert Caples’ sarcasm

People mentioned:

Caples, Dr. Byron
Caples, Robert
Clark, Barbara
Clark, Walter Van Tilburg
Steinheimer, Rae

Now there is a story I remember Rae Steinheimer telling me, a story about Walter Van Tilburg Clark. Rae was always very sensitive about some of the attitudes of persons on the anti-hunt side. Walter Clark was one of them. Rae had objected to a story [“The Buck in the Hills”] – I think it was a short story – at least it was an

account Rae said Walter had written about a deer hunt. That the hunter had wounded the deer and had followed it down the draw before giving the final shot – had pursued it, and rather herded it near the camp where he delivered the final killing shot, because the hunter had not wanted to pack the deer down the mountain all that way to camp. Well, it's a common concern of hunters – believe me, if you've got a big kill a long way from camp, you've got a hell of a problem. Well, I imagine – I don't know, I've never read the story, but I remember Rae telling me about it. Rae was incensed by it. He said that no hunter he had ever known had ever done that. And this is offensive matter to the hunter Rae Steinheimer. . . . I know that Rae Steinheimer would never have herded any wounded game into camp just to save lugging it down. And this is a fantasy, it seems to me, of the mind of Walter Clark.

Now, Rae countered that with a story that he had heard, that Walter was anti-hunt, and that – Rae said, at least that Rae believed it – that Mrs. Walter Van Tilburg Clark went out and shot a deer herself. Now I've only seen the lady once, just shortly before she died. I think she was a victim of cancer, some dread disease that was just slowly chewing her away. She was a rather grim image. I had stopped by – as I rolled down Taylor Street I saw them on the porch – I had something to say to Walter and I got out. Walter was never very friendly to me actually. But hell, I had known him so many years that it was unseemly for me not to ask him a question if I had a question in mind. But we never socialized ever, and I had never met Mrs. Clark except that one time. But Rae was convinced of the authenticity of this story, that she had gone out and got her deer. Well, perhaps this is a fantasy of Rae's.

Now Rae – this would be no fantasy and it fits the glove – Rae was always sensitive to the attitudes of Walter Clark's best friend, Bob Caples, my old friend. Rae had been at a party. Caples had arrived, and everyone of course had drinks in their hands. A large assemblage. Steinheimer said that Caples had worked his way through the crowd and came his way, and he says, "Well," he says, "how's the hunter?" And in the inflection of the word hunter was an insult. And every time Rae mentioned that, he would get red-necked. Rae's neck would flush. He was always sensitive to that kind of a Caples barb, and that I recognize as authentic. "And how's the hunter?"

So what would be a person's position on this question: are you for the sarcastic anti-hunter, or do you understand the hunter and his vistas? Oddly, I have a view of both, and I don't feel that it's justified, this being sarcastic to the other side in the Caples manner. Actually Bob Caples inherited that from his father. And god knows where Dr. Caples got it. There may have been an endless line of Caples forbears who had offended people for hundreds of years with such inflections. I would never have done that to any outdoorsman – this almost sexless assault. You were safe in

such assault by the politeness of the company. You know no one will strike at you. You're virtually assured of the peaceable occasion. To be sure, Caples was no match for Rae Steinheimer, drunk or sober, as in the [inaudible] departments, it's inconceivable that Caples would ever have challenged him in any of those ways. Inconceivable. So he always resorted to the rather obvious sarcasm. Once you get the clue, it's obvious, and Steinheimer was sensitive to the obvious in that way. So when you say, "Well, how's the hunter?" it's really obvious. It is not really as sly as the person who delivers the barb thinks. It's not sly at all. And once you're really onto it, you can anticipate hit, you can call it before it happens, and it comes right down to the line with the ticking of the clock. And while I do not support the hunter's position, neither do I support this other hunter's position. In a way, it was the same.

[There is a different interpretation of "Well, how's the hunter?" that I favor: not sarcasm, but irony, in fact ironic detachment. I'm supposing that Robert was a person who saw the foible in all our pursuits and postures, not least his own; and when more so than at a party, where the host provides the drinks and the guests bring their personas? Robert's problem was, he was too self-centered, perhaps narcissistic, to realize that most people aren't in the frame of mind of ironic detachment, especially at parties, which test identities. Moreover Robert would probably not have acknowledged that such an approach can be controlling, therefore defensive, if ever so wise. Nevertheless, wouldn't he have welcomed, "Loaded for bear! And how's the great starving artist?" or "How's the gigolo?" Well, maybe not gigolo. But in any case Rae Steinheimer wasn't in that place, and it was Robert's shortcoming not to understand that.]

Box 1, Tape 1/60, Side 1 – August 30, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: Z-Axis

People mentioned:

Fuller, Mary
Gagliani, Oliver
Kafoury, Sam

. . . I was surprised by the appearance of Oliver Gagliani at the door. He brought with him his book of photos. And this book establishes Gagliani as a major artist of our times. Web had a very pleasant interval, a conversation again, about a half hour. Mary [Fuller] was here and she met him. And Oliver Gagliani said, "Say, what was that you were telling me about perspective?" He said, the "point" and the

“unperspective.” I thought for a minute and – He said, “What was that word?” And I said, “Oh. Oh, you mean the Z-Axis.” He said, “Yes, I never heard it before.” I said, “Well now, I had never heard it either. Sam Kafoury, my chief patron of these days, and my old friend, who was a Douglas engineer, told me when asked about the line – that line from point to point, that is represented by a dot, in a sense, was drawn to one side of a draftsman’s page and called a Z-Axis. Which means the line forward that has no perspective.” He said, “Well,” he said, “you know, I was thinking about what you said, and I have composed that way always. I always think in those values,” he said. And he said, “I just had to find out more about it.” He said, “Do you have it written?” I said, “Well, I wrote it once in a bad book, which was destroyed. And – However, I have taped all that material that was in the book on the Z-Axis.” And I said, “I spent two years in research of it.” He wanted me to tell him more about it, and I went through my song and dance about my perspective findings.

And when it was finished and [inaudible] was gone, he said he wanted to go out and get some photographs. The light was improving. And I realized I’d forgotten something. So I wrote a letter that is dated 7-30-75 [the same day]:

Dear Oliver:

A major omission on Z-Axis. I forgot to say, as you may well know, that we see in a shallow and limited field, with a constantly shifting focus, not steady as in staring. We don’t see the neck as we look at an eye, but shift gaze to complete a sort of montage of human seeing. There is no steady vision. Perhaps this is why we go to sleep if we look steadily at anything. And the Hypnotists know best.

Dick

Box 2, Tape 63, Side 1 – October 4, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: Walton’s miscellaneous projects; on his painting “in heats”; Fred Hobbs’s movie *Godmonster of Indian Flat* filmed in Virginia City; *October Moon*; Walton on his art career

People mentioned:

Andrus, Zoray
Austin, Lloyd
Beebe, Lucius
Chapman, Loring
Dali, Salvador
Gagliani, Oliver
Glass, Robert “Bob”
Hilarion, Brother

Hobbs, Fredric "Fred"
Kafoury, Sam
Kienholz, Edward
Mascott, Lawrence
McChesney, Robert
Star, Eddie
Steinheimer, Rae
Stone, Kay
Subramuniya, Master
Walton, Vivian
Walton, Earl
Walton, Wilber G.

I was thinking the other day of all the different projects that I've involved myself in. And I've listed a few on my blackboard, which may bring a continuity into focus.

There was the little project called "Tommy Teeth," which I did in collaboration with my pediatontist friend, Lloyd Austin. Dr. Austin had come to me through my friendship – in fact, our mutual friendship with Kay Stone. And we were to get together on this children's educational project, called "Tommy Teeth" as a tentative title. It's not so original, but we wanted something flat and plain.

Now the plates were made and photographed and copyrighted, and shared equally in this as a joint venture of the two of us, Dr. Austin and myself. He had referred me to one house that involved itself in dental education, and sent them to them, and the – sent the slides to them – and they felt that it wasn't quite up-to-date. Well, I'd leaned on Dr. Austin's advice altogether on the material. This is plates for children, small children, the beginning education of – to get them into the habit of brushing their teeth, and telling them what a water pic is. And I had kind of an alligator, a crocodile image, a monster, a little dragon called Sugar-Gooby in those, which is rather personable. And I think – we both think – that it's quite a device to introduce to little children some of these homely things that all well-informed people should know about caring for their teeth. Of course, the kiddies are starting from scratch. Well, these are colorful plates. They're rather comicin kind, and it's just as gentle as anything could be, with this shocking creature, the dragon called Sugar-Gooby. And I had thought that they should be filmed as a series on a film strip. But that's one of those projects that just sits here, and went as far as being photographed and copyrighted.

And this was brought to mind because I saw one of his former employees at an S. & S. White Company, the dental suppliers, where I ordered and was to receive Vivian's Eucalyptol. And she also advised that Vivian should freeze her wax rings, and then be very careful, because they get brittle. But to render off some of those tool marks, freeze them, and then do them while they're cold. . . .

So anyway, “Tommy Teeth” was mentioned by this young lady. She identified myself, and we soon knew who each other was. . . . So “Tommy Teeth” was one of the projects. And I even installed a projector in his ceiling. A little carpenter work was involved. And for some time Dr. Austin projected “Tommy Teeth” on the wall in the waiting room. But he found out that it was too expensive in bulbs. So there’s some other way to use “Tommy Teeth.” To project them in slides is not practical. But as a film strip, it would be useful, it seems to me, in the usual film strip production outlet. So that sits there.

I also did a children’s book called “A Grocer’s Cat,” about twenty years ago. It was basically The Golden Rule Food Store of my father [Wilber G. Walton], and the principal character, the owner of the store, resembles Dad. Well, Mama Cat is never identified as Mama Cat, but Mama Cat was the model. We always called her Mama Cat. But the story was based in fact. Dad got the cat, and the cat drove the rats upstairs, and the hotel guests were outraged, and the management threatened my father, and the guests would threaten him. And it was a hell of a mess there for a long time. But Dad always kept cats, and the rats were throughout the hotel thereafter. And it deals with that subject material. A little picture book.

I sent it in to – soon after I made it, I sent it in to one publisher, I believe it was Simon and Schuster, and their answer was that it was too adult. Well now, since then the pendulum has swung a little father to the left, and nothing is too adult for a small child anymore. So that sits in my racks: “The [sic] Grocer’s Cat.”

Now these are completed projects that are ready for the printer.

And there’s the thing called “The Walton Rabbit.” “The Walton Rabbit” is the very brief anatomy book, which at least one person thought that *Playboy* magazine should print for the man who has everything. They’d call it “The Anatomy of the Bunny,” and rename it, call it “The Bunny Anatomy Book.” And it’s actually a bunny in fact. I mean, an animal – rabbit, and not one of those girls with the cotton tails. Well, this is a thorough-going analysis of the anatomy of the rabbit. And that sits on my shelf. I never did do a thing with that.

Then there’s “Cinnabar.” And I’ve never done a thing with “Cinnabar.” Cinnabar was a little cowboy, who rode a tiny horse. And I did it as a cowboy film idea. These would be in sections of about twelve – I think it was twelve – sequences of twelve incidents in a cartoon flow. And Cinnabar’d be riding down the country, and maybe go in and clean up a bar, whip everybody. Or riding past an Indian – I did one – these are samples – I did about three of them, to establish the characters. And never did do a thing with them. Little Cinnabar and his horse. He’d ride by an Indian, and he’d pick up the Indian squaw, put him [sic] on the back, and ride off in the distance. It was rather dry, light-hearted stuff.

Then there were those other projects that came later. “The Artist and His Tools”

was a long winter's work. I wrote this account of the technique of – I put everything I knew about painting down into short strips, and taped it. And copyrighted the material. This once was put forward by a person acting as my agent, as a basis for franchises over the country. There was some hope there at the time. I've never been able to do anything with that. This was a complete taped program, where a person could use it as a basic art education" how to paint. And it's the artist's own voice. And the thought was that a franchise could be set up – franchises sold over the country, and almost anyone who has some insight into painting could conduct an art school, using these tapes. Well, in any case, that's an extensive series of tapes. And they sit in the vault.

Then there was my long winter's project one year of my brainstorm, "Calendar Date." I thought that with plates – beautiful plates, designed plate, photographed with the prism lens, to give this swirl of numbers, with the feature number central, lovely color – that that could be projected on the television screen, and the voice-over could give these very short – this is very brief – reference to the day: what happened on the day. This is calendar date thus-and-so. And on this date thus-and-so happened. And – well, they're doing it right now, with Two Hundred Years Ago. But I wanted something that would never end, and so "Calendar Date" would go the twelve months, and it could be used over and over again. Now, that sits in my vault. It's completed. I even taped half of it, six months of it is taped in my own voice.

Well, there was another one I did that I don't have listed on my blackboard. I had an idea of a series of things that could work in the Today Show, in the morning. And I thought with the artist reading his piece – these were little blurbs of recall. And they were very freshly written. And sent them back to the NBC director of that program. He answered me very kindly and gave it some thought in his answer. He said, well, it's too sophisticated for – too egghead! Egghead! Egghead! It's too egghead for Today, the Today program. And he says, "I suggest that you contact FM stations, which use more of an egghead content." So they are rather simplistic in national television. But I had hoped that the worm had turned, and could something a little more sophisticated in what they had been using – it wasn't so damned sophisticated, all it was like the review of the recall of Salvador Dali flowing through the window, and things of that kind. Something about Ed Kienholz. This is not outlandish material, but it was a little too austere for the Today Show director, anyway. But I appreciated his answer to me.

Now, let's see. Then there were my series of books that I did in about 1952. *The Delta Queen*, which was a novel of my – I wrote it in the first person, in the beginning, then fictionalized the names later on the rewrite. I wanted to be flat and as true as I could to that experience, yet I wanted to report things that I in no way felt I

should report – under my own name. And so I fictionized everything to get my subject off the hook. I didn't want to malign – not a maligning, it's telling the truth! Things that occurred. The truth in my judgment. But it freed my hand to fictionize it. It also set up a little feeling of.....fiction quality that seemed to soften – however, the portraits of my father, my uncle are fantastically accurate. And I thought that would go, as a kind of a narrative of the style: novel, novelette. Any of these books are not terribly long, about 30,000 words. Now – maybe 40,000. Anyway, *The Delta Queen* sits here, in manuscript.

Then there was *You Wouldn't Believe It*, which was an account of my Reno experiences in the post-war years. There for a period of about three, four years, when Reno had gone into a second phase, and – the early casino hotel, resort hotel phase, when there was a colorful, rather [inaudible] community existing there. In it my friend Eddie Star played very heavily. And [Loring] Chapman is in there with all the other – well, Bob Glass, and Sam [Kafoury], and ever so many of my friends are in there in disguise. Rae Steinheimer plays a feature part, as Roberto Von Holst, the don of Carson Valley. Well, now that he's deceased, I can say that. But it is truly a novel, no question about it. It is absolutely fiction, and based in reality, in reference to some of these events. But it is fairly fictionized. Well of course most of your major writers have to drain from their personal experience.

Now *Pyramid* was also a novel, which lauded that great lake. And it gave me an opportunity to unburden myself about the middle years, the art school years and the WPA years. And also some of the more current material. The romantic involvement of first person.

Now, the first book that I did was entitled *The Mark of Man*, which had a lot of theory in it. But it was a poorly written book. It was not a well-[inaudible] book. But the scientific material, or analysis of vision, was in that. And I have retrieved that material, and kept it clean. That was once sent to a publisher [Dorrance & Co. (See Box 10)] who was a friend of Eddie Star's family. And he published rather esoteric books on obscure spiritual matters, and theoretic matters. And he was interested that I should rewrite it. And I should have done it then, but I was incapable.

Then there was my more recent book, *Virginia City*, the documentation in which I took 2,000 negatives of Virginia City, and stayed right here, didn't even go beyond the divide [between Virginia City and Gold Hill]. The book is a portrait of a town at a specific time concurrent with the bicentennial of the United States. And it was a good time to document Virginia City, because many of those places, even in the few years that have passed since completing that job, do not exist in their old form. They town has had a face-lifting. It no longer is the ghost town that it once was. And I was lucky to get in under the wire, with my portrait of Virginia City.

Now I sent that to the original publisher who had encouraged me along, and it was too much for him. Then I found out that the major publishers are not interested in such confined material. They never questioned the value of the book. Always stressed that it was too specific for them to invest that kind of money in, was my impression. It would take several hundred thousand dollars to put that book into print. Yes, indeed. Oliver Gagliani's *Monogram* cost \$30,000.

Now, then there were my seminars. I invested a lot of the money that my father left me in equipment and material to have these seminars on art in the studio at Virginia City. And I could not persuade anyone to respond to that. It was a complete flop. And I collected one of the great collections of slides of international art, the history of art. We have one of the most complete collections perhaps that exists in the world right here in this house. And I have everything available on the work of Paul Klee in slides. And everything I could get on Monet. But especially complete is Paul Klee. I wanted one evening of an artist alone, without the progression of art history. And I decided that Paul Klee was the man, because he was not controversial, he was easy to have a response with, and I understood his methods very well. So I did zero in on Paul Klee. This is not singling out Paul Klee as the greatest artist. That's not my intention. My intention was to cover an artist that wasn't particularly controversial, and one who I understood rather well, technically.

So, the seminars were to be a five day proposition, and I didn't get anyone. I have given the seminars only – I ran through them once. Twice. Once with the Hilarion ashram group, Master Subramuniya's unit over at Zoray Andrus's former Nevada Brewery. They came to us . . . Brother Hilarion. Hilarion was my friend, and he brought his group from the ashram. And we went through the seminars. Now, I also gave them at the Free University at the University of Nevada, which was related to the University of Nevada but it was unofficial. We gave the seminars in the Catholic Church, the chapel across the street from the university, over a period of weeks. It took about five weeks, and we had them on a given night. And had a very good response, good audience, and I'm sure they must have picked up something. But the purpose of the seminars was to use the slides and to promote open discussion, to find out what had happened and where art was going, in our group judgment. And I was to be the leader in that. And it was a good idea, but it was too far away from a metropolitan area. I was told it would have succeeded had I done it in the Bay Area.

So, here I sit, with all these adventures. And they have cut in on my painting time, but somehow or other I've managed to paint at the same time. I don't like to paint continuously. I like to paint in heats. And I like periods of relief from the monkey of painting. And I don't like to feel that I have to turn out another painting. That's a bad – that's a hostile feeling. And now that it's October I'm squaring away for a

series of paintings over the winter. . . .

. . .

There was another phase of my life that rather surprised me, when Fred Hobbs came to Virginia City with his film production crew [1973]. Fred Hobbs is an artist from the Bay Area, and he has some reputation in the field of fine arts. He is a very vain man, and he gives the impression that he has completed a vast reference of art production, that he is secure in the museums in the world. But I think this is fantasy. However, he does have some scores on his side. He occasionally comes out with some kind of an idea and gets a rather widespread publicity. But I had expected more of this film that he did than has happened. [*Godmonster of Indian Flat* never received theatrical release; it was issued on videotape in 2001.] This was a fantasy film. It had to do with a monster. A sheep had been born that was a throwback to some other form. And it became a monster. And in it he worked in some kind of an aberration of Lucius Beebe, that is vague.

But it was a Western film, and he needed a lot of extras. He used many of the townspeople, paid them five dollars a day when they were before the cameras, which was about fifteen dollars a day less than usual crew pays when they come up here from the film center of Hollywood. I confirmed that by – after the Hobbs production was ended, I went down to Dayton on another project, and found out that their extras were paid a good deal more. Well, Hobbs was running on a short budget. It was the first time that this informal filmmaker had been given a chance to make a major film, which was sponsored by one of the large studios.

Now, Fred Hobbs is – Fredric Hobbs – is a very personable guy, he's a very intelligent guy, very informed and widely experienced. He has a sharp tongue, and typically he has a court about him, in one of these seasons of production. And I had heard about him for many years, and had seen some publicity on him. And as a matter of fact one of my first brushes with our mutual friend, Bob McChesney, had to do with an exhibition at the Hobbs gallery in San Francisco – Fred Hobbs then had this gallery. I went in there – no one was in there. I wanted to buy a print, which is a rarity for this artist. And I always have loved Bob McChesney's work, and I was fascinated with these prints. And – prints or drawings, I don't know what the hell they were. They were just extremely fetching. And no one was about, so I never even found out what they were worth.

But since then Hobbs has given up the painting and has involved himself in film making. He did a couple of different films that were avant garde and got a lot of attention. So this – his major film to be coming through at this hour. But I was asked to be an extra by Fred himself. And I put on the Western garb, these black hats that he passed out. And it seems that when McChesnet saw the film, he said I was all through it. I didn't have any idea at the time that he would be using me that

much, in the stuff that was shot. So as an extra I got in more acting time there, apparently, than was anticipated. So this is the extent of my career as an actor. I left that production because Fred was – as I say, he had a sharp tongue, and he popped off to me one time, and so I was what in my mind I can't just anybody else, and I don't feel like anybody else, when I'm working with what I would call one of my peers. And if he departed from that peerage concept, the word is fucking. And so I left the set. And so, the word was, fuck Fred Hobbs, and we parted in that friendly way. I've not seen him since. I've heard tell of him now and then.

Now, let's see: Other adventures I have had in films, of course, had to do with Lawrence Mascott, in which I was an adviser, in certain material, and occasionally an art director [for *Brave Rifles* and at least one other documentary]. Then I have done a lot of script writing on my own, which are experimental short scripts, and almost partly poems in concept. I see the whole script form as having some kind of a future in the prose-poem idea. For reading as well as for possible shooting. . . .

. . .

I have a note on the painting career, the periods and the number of paintings – Well, there have been thousands of paintings that I've produced. And there've been dozens of periods that I've been into. And this always strikes me as a bore. And I'm going to leave that up to the experts to review, if indeed my case needs covering. They're going to have to do it, because I'm not going to bore anybody with that kind of material. I've avoided discussing painting throughout this tract. And I don't mean to get into it now. The professional community is simply going to have to stretch its arms and get into that on its own, because I can tell you right now, that I've painted thousands of paintings and I've destroyed thousands. And I have a tight group of perhaps a thousand prime examples remaining, of drawings, paintings, oil on paper, oil paintings, and things in various media. It's up to the professional world to do their bit. I feel that I've absolved myself. I've purged myself. And I'm not going to be redundant, and run through my painting record. It offends me to even think of doing it. That's for others to do, not me.

Now, in *October Moon*, I'm going through all my friends, and through a chronicle of a year, to reveal what one year is like. And this, even for my own enlightenment, because now that I've recorded a year's events, and notable things that occurred in this mind as worth noting, I know that a strange thing has happened, in this last period. And I have the record of it. Moreover, if they give up the written word, and the printed word as a practical device for society, at least they have the voice on tape. If indeed the tapes survive.

Now, as a photographer I have been largely amateur. Occasionally professional. . . . The largest project I got into was Chapman's *Behavioral Biology* at Davis, when we did that series of technical slides of the children in the Sonoma State Hospital.

That was a massive project.

Now....Oh, God! It would be nice to talk about the paintings, but I can't talk about painting. It means that much to me. It would be like describing my intimate times with my love life.

Box 2, Tape 64, Side 1 – January 7, 1976

Main Subjects of Selection: Zoray Andrus

People mentioned:

Andrus, Zoray
Bowers, Don
Bruce, Harry
Bruce, Irene
Darch, Bob
Edwards, Florence
Garland, Helen
Garland, Theodore "Ted"
Garland, Colleen (Ted's 1st wife)
Girado
Kraemer, Deann
Kraemer, Eric
Kraemer, Helga (Eric's sister)
Kraemer, Janet
Kraemer, Mrs. (Eric's mother)
Kraemer, Peter
Salmon, Nell
Star, Eddie
Steinheimer, Leila Robin
Steinheimer, Rae
Varda, Jean
Walton, Vivian

. . . Zoray said that Varda's funeral [1971] was the best party she had ever gone to. .

. .

Zoray arrived by train. Took that long-taking train from the Oakland area to Reno. And I met the train. . . . Now, while Eric himself was disdained, he made every effort to be pleasant. And we had him over on one occasion, while ex-wife Zoray was here. And he was really pleasant, and she was hateful to him, in a kind of an ignoring way. I thought for a time that there was some element of coming together. But they apparently are both allergic to each other. . . .

Now, to Helen Garland she made the charming comment: "You look exactly like Colleen." Now, Colleen being Ted's – Mrs. Garland number two, who was a popular figure on the Comstock before marrying Theodore. And then immediately

to Ted, in the next sentence, she said, “How many wives have you had?” Now that’s before them both. That’s pure Zoray, percolating her best. She knows exactly what to say. . . .

Here’s a note, number 13, about her [Zoray’s] hostility to Deann, and Deann, who is apparently ruining Peter’s life, according to Zoray. Well, I guess Zoray would think it a good solution to have Deann go, leave the apartment for Zoray and Peter, and then the children could be put in a day school someplace, where they could give them proper training. Pete, meanwhile, trying to compose, as he told me before, with the running criticisms of his mother. . . .

Now, Zoray had to return by November the third, for a reunion of her high school class. And so she had no need to find another place to stay, she said. So she stayed here the full ten days. She was going to scatter herself around. Well, the reason that’s important is because Zoray knows that she’s a handful. . . .

Now, oh my. I had some vulgar drawings on my blackboard, this for Zoray’s benefit alone. I drew the genitals of a male so she wouldn’t be without the image of a man during their stay here. And she didn’t want to wipe out a drawing somebody had done on the blackboard. [Laughs] And wiped it out and drew some other atrocity. So I’m forgetting what I did. Anyway, she inspires me to great heights. She asked in the end if I was always dirty like that. And Vivian told her, “Only with you.” Well, she inspires me [inaudible]. She gets so red in the face. Yet she’s so outspoken.

Now, Eric took Zoray to Carson City to see Irene Bruce, and do Zoray’s laundry. That was a nice thing – she doesn’t appreciate those things at all, she takes them as her just do, to hell with him. . . .

Irene had a recording of her deceased husband Harry’s piano playing, on C Street, his ragtime piano. And, by god, Zoray and Eric fairly took it out of her hand – Eric did, in fact – and said they’d have it copied, and disappeared with it. Irene called me, and she was terribly upset. And I said, “Well, look, Irene, it’s going no further than this. I’ll explain your concern.” So I copied it here, and got it right back to her immediately. Because that’s a good way to lose track of that very valuable and lone tape of Harry’s actual playing. So that’s all been resolved. I have a tape of it I made for myself, and one for Peter, and one for – a copy for Irene.

Now, Zoray told me that Janet Kraemer, the deceased Janet Kraemer’s mother’s sister married the head of Fuller Paint. . . .

She said that Eric Kraemer’s mother taught at Stanford, and he had a sister by the name of Helga, and – little known things about Eric.

. . .

10.29.75 note, which says, Nell won’t be looking today.” I was always afraid to take a leak out here, for fear Nell Salmon was looking out her kitchen window. And

this was the 29th, the day after Nell's death. And, by golly, I was wandering around – it was a nice day – and I was wandering around with a glass of wine, and I thought, “Well, Nell won't be looking today.”

Irene told me that Harry knew over three thousand, three hundred piano tunes, and he was believed to have possessed a perfect ear. Three thousand, three hundred songs. As many as Eddie [Star] knows.

. . .

Zoray has a marvelous memory. She said it was Bob Darch who used to come to C Street to play that ragtime piano. He was an [inaudible] man. Bob Darch. Yes, I remember those days. They'd parade on festive occasions from bar to bar.

Zoray also recalled that Rae Steinheimer's Leila, one of his wives, in his Jaguar period – well, her name was Robin. Leila Robin. We called her Robin. She had been married to an Indian by the name of Robin. And then she came for divorce, and married Rae.

Now, there's a hell of a mix-up on Don Bowers. Zoray and Peter both told me that he was a hopeless alcoholic. Peter told me how sick he was because of his alcoholism. And I went with Zoray to Nevada Day parade in Carson City, and then we were invited over to Don Bowers, who was having a party, and so help me god, he is so ill – he has some terrible disease, debilitating disease where his muscles are wasting away, and the fact that he drinks is of no moment. . . .

. . .

Zoray had some inside information of Florence [Edwards], because she predates us all around here, this Zoray of ours. She said that Florence did not buy the Silver Dollar from a settlement from her husband, but had insured her ex-husband for forty thousand dollars, and had allowed two thousand five hundred in the Silver Dollar. That the hotel was a going hotel before Florence touched it, and Zoray, who is awfully hateful about some of these things, swears that it was better than when Florence got her hands on it. She had bought the building from Girado, and old-timer here who had a kind of a grocery store, and owned some property.

Now, Zoray claims that when Florence first came to Virginia City, she was shy and retiring! Which is very hard to believe. She said that the hotel had been reopened by others, and that the lobby was better than when Florence had it. She said also that it had once been a post office. Well, a lot of post offices in Virginia City used to float all over the place. . . .

Box 2, Tape 2/75, Side 1 – May 16, 1976

Main Subjects of Selection: Marie Jeanne and Moana Nursery exhibition; Bea Brooks and Pablo

People mentioned:

Brooks, Bea
Herrmann, Benny
Olarate, Pablo
Walton, Marie Jeanne (Marijo) Etcheberry

Marijo called, and she said there was a nursery opening on Moana Lane, near the Gordon fish store, the shopping mall where we buy our crab. And she said they have a little gallery area, and wants to know if I will show there. I said certainly I would, and I described the paintings I'm doing of Polynesia. And she said, "Well, the thing isn't set yet. I don't know if I'll take it on." She's apparently at some advertising agency now, and she said, "I don't know if I'll take the account, we haven't come to terms yet, but I'll report back." And so with the ammunition of my Polynesian exhibition in this nursery, she came to grips with the thing, and took on the account, and signed me for a month exhibition, starting with a special invitational opening that they are having. . . . [Exhibition to open June 17]

. . .

And then I received a call from Bea Brooks, and she says oh so many things have been happening down here, she said, "When are you going to Hawaii?" I said, "We just got back." She said, "Well, I wanted to know because I found the Herrmann record, and I want to send it to you." And I said, "Well, how's Pablo?" She says, "Oh, so many things have been happening," she said, "I'll simply have to write to you." And she said, "Meanwhile, so-and-so is waiting, I'm going out to dinner with him, and I have to run. I just wanted to see if you were there." And she said, "I'll write you a letter and tell you all about it. So much is happening, I can't tell you on the phone." So I expect to get a letter soon from Bea Brooks to see what the hell happened to Pablo.

Box 2, Tape 2/76, Side 1 – September 12, 1976

Main Subjects of Selection: Reno in 1920s & -30s; pretensions of the Caples family; Vivian as Nevadan; Walton's novel *Pyramid*; Reno in 1940s; Walton's property in Virginia City

People mentioned:

Abrahamson, Al
Abrahamson, Jeanne
Andrus, Zoray
Beebe, Lucius
Berry, Bob
Blake, Deacon

Boegle, Carl
Butterfield, Roger
Caples, Dr. Byron
Caples, Ralph
Caples, Richard (John)
Caples, Robert
Conforte, Joe
Conforte, Sally
Debold, Robert
Edwards, Florence
Emrich, Duncan
Four-Day Jack
Hardin, Lyle
Hinch, Nicky
Hulse, James "Jim"
Lane, Gordon
Lazari, Bronco
Leonard, Hobart "Hobie"
Marks, Billy
Marks, Mr. (Billy's father)
Mascott, Lawrence
Richards, Robert "Bob"
Sammy
Walton, Vivian
White, Pearl

The townspeople [of Reno in the 1920s and -30s] had an easy familiarity with people they could in no way meet in New York. This set a tone for Reno, as a party town – it always was a party town. And its middle classes had affectations of social position, simply because of this influence. . . . But these upper middle classes were certain to have affectations. Now it always seemed to me that my benefactor and friend, Dr. Caples, was a gentleman of upper middle class. But this would offend him – I can see him getting red in the face – and his son also. They always associated with the wealthy and such high and mighty as they could come by. And I've met some very prominent people through both Robert and his father. But of course the uncle [Ralph Caples] was a tycoon, was the president of the Union Pacific Railroad [no]. But what this does mean for a man socially, I don't know. I mean, I know money helps. But Dr. Caples' son Richard [John] was one of the chief partners of Batten, Barton, Durstine, Osborn and Dermody [don't know where Walton got Dermody]. And all of Bob's recall had to do with the social mighty and the rich. He thoroughly enjoyed somebody who's quite poor, if they're colorful. But they typify pretty well the upper middle class of the Reno area. . . .

I was always hostile to classism. I was unaware of class, truly, until I came to Reno. And I always assumed that I was middle class myself, and I would tend to say middle class American, because that identifies it a little more finely. . . .

. . .

I suppose Vivian is as much a Nevadan as many of these people with presumptions. She was born in Reno. Her father's people came from the Wadsworth district, where they had an early ranch, and still have the home place in the hands of one of the family yet. She has many relatives in this region. And although she went to grade school and high school in California, she always had this nostalgia for Nevada, and was eager to come visiting, before we were married, when she was in her teens. And then she came to make her home here, in this studio. She commutes from this mountain down Geiger Grade to Reno daily, and I don't see how she could have any loyalty to one county or another in any depth. So although she has not seen large parts of Nevada, she has a good framework for being thought of as Nevadan. She has more purity in this sense than many people.

Now she's been to Las Vegas, but I don't think she's gone – I don't know if she's even been – she's been through Fallon. I think we went – No, by God, we went through Yerington on our way to Las Vegas. I don't even know if she's seen Fallon. I don't think so. Oh, how weird. So she's very thin in this dimension. Her dimension travels pretty close to the California state line.

Well, I myself have rich memories of Elko, Ely, Wells, Winnemucca, Pioche, Panaca, Palisades, Primo [?], Fallon, Fernley, Las Vegas, the Valley of Fire, Beatty, Tonopah, the northern corner, near Oregon, on tour with my movie-make friend, Lawrence Mascott. Bob Debold and I made many tours over the land back of the Seven Troughs country, looking for chukar partridge. . . . This state stands out in my mind as one great wonderful backyard. . . . Although I was born in San Francisco, and raised variously in Indiana and California, my life seems to have begun in some strange way when I came in on a train, in the late Twenties, and looked out the window just above Verdi, when I picked up the feel of this country. It was in winter, and I will go to my Pyramid book and see what I have on that.

Now this book may not amount to anything more than a sentimental tract by a greenhorn writer. But the principle character says, at one point when asked:

“When I was a boy and came here, not to this place but to this country, I'd not yet started smoking. Sometimes I'm afraid that I am still on a train, and didn't stop and get off for all the years. The first day I was impressed. The water was cold and clear, and I was a valley lad and used to valley water, flat and deader than all the dead fish squeezed together in the boxes at the Chinese store. And what you have is valley water. The air fine and cold, and snow was on the streets of the biggest little city. I was impressed. Overnight on the whistle-stop train, waking in the pine hills, opening my eyes and looking from the berth window. The trees, the trees, the trees. And the

mountain feel, racing down the draw where the tracks run. . . .

So, I entered Reno, got off the train, and was never quite the same. . . .

But after World War II and the latter-day period of the casinos, the town was changing into a tourist Mecca, and the people were changing. The affectations of grace, and grace itself, had gone into decline. The town was getting grubby. It was diversifying into shopping-centerism, and my own life was shattering. . . .

. . .

. . . I found that I didn't even own the land I thought I owned when it was surveyed, and I had a truckload of house parts, this Butler Building, coming in from the Cleveland Wrecking Company in South San Francisco imminently. Fortunately, I was able to acquire these six lots upon which this house sits. Well, it takes – it strides over at least two. The house is 60 feet long, and it uses substantially two of the lots. . . .

But when we came in, Sammy and myself, I got out with an axe and chopped my way through sagebrush and rubble. This was a dump, as Bob Berry said not long ago, not more than ten days ago. He told – He says, “Well,” he said, speaking of this property, he said, “Yes,” he says, “it was a dump.” So the dump had been cleaned up and has been graded a bit, and planted. And it still looks a bit wild. But I swear, it will have its manager before Christmas. We'll put in its final posts, and do the final pruning. The final edit, of the brush. And such brush, sagebrush and bunny-brush as remains will be permanent. And I mean to encourage samples of each native plant. . . .

Now, I was slow, coming to Virginia City. I didn't get here until after the war. Oh, I got here officially as an investigator during the war. But I didn't take it seriously until I knew I wanted to leave Reno. Well, just before that, I had come up to see Zoray at her Brewery. Bob Caples was here, Roger Butterfield, Duncan Emrich, and it was an exciting feeling to the town. Lucius Beebe was just getting his start in this area. Had not yet bought the *Territorial Enterprise*. As a matter of fact, he offered Jim Hulse its editorship of that paper [sic]. They had their luncheon together, a discussion of it, and Jim declined. Then he got Bob Richards later. But Beebe was always a notable guy to see. And important just because of his pressure, of his personality. But he had no real appeal for the people I mentioned, he was just an aside. The people of the Comstock were very rich in character, and the old-timers were still here: Four-Day Jack, Deacon Blake, and cronies of Bronco Lazari and his Union Brewery saloon, in the pre-Gordie days. Billy Marks' father had the Crystal Bar in those years, and earlier years. And this is a very quiet town. It wasn't a tourist trap. People came here to see it, people who loved it. And Florence Edwards operated the Silver Dollar Hotel. Now she was a key to the whole town in her time. I think that Florence Edwards is the most colorful character

Virginia City has ever known, including Old Virginy. And I think that can be substantiated. She operated a hotel that was a masterpiece, having decorated those rooms in her taste, in the fashion of the century past. But with a random hand. In the upper story, there, she had an upper flight, the second floor I believe, she had a mural of the hanging of John Millain. There were murals in the bathrooms – not as good as the hanging. But she would give these artists a free hand. And she was very astute. And quite testy. Oh! Everyone who really had any insight into her character loved her very much. Even though she would get hostile occasionally. She was very fast on the comeback. This Bostonian lady. She spent a lot of time in Honolulu. And she was very well raised, and bred, and had married a person of substance. And Lyle Hardin was one of the earliest to know her, at the Washoe Pines. She was there as a – in the company of a quite wealthy woman.

Now, already, Florence had gone into some decline. This is a person who had known Pearl White in Paris, and she'd ridden yaks in Tibet, and a world traveler, and knew hundreds of prominent people. And they responded to her case. They would come and stay with her at the Silver Dollar Hotel. We had many parties there, especially Christmas, with Al and Jeanne Abrahamson coming up with their gang from California. And it was kind of a party for the town.

But, I tell you, when Florence passed away, it left a hole in this community. It's as though the mother lode had sunken into the bowels of the earth. And now the hotel is no more, in its pristine sense. The lobby has been changed utterly in an attempt to catch tourist money. It doesn't even resemble the hotel lobby of tradition. That was the Silver Hotel in the beginning, when Lyle Hardin brought Florence up on horseback, when she was a guest of the Washoe Pines. And Lyle tells me about the time that she hit a horse and killed it, on her way to Reno. She was pretty well liquored up, and ploughed into the animal. And that was a real disaster. Destroyed the car and the horse as well.

But Florence was also the girlfriend of Bronco. And she always seemed to be near tears at the mention of Bronco seriously. She must have loved Bronco terribly much.

Now Gordie maintains the traditions of the town at the Union Brewery, as does Billy Marks over at the Crystal Bar. Those two places anchor the town. I can think of no other places in Virginia City that resemble the original Virginia City that I myself knew.

Now, the Virginia City of the earliest days I knew it was a ghost town situation. It wasn't the city of the [inaudible] bonanza. The town was new in the time of bonanza. And then it went into the decline of the early nineteen hundreds. In the 1920s it was in its low ebb, and continued through the Depression at its lowest ebb. And was called a ghost town. People don't call it a ghost town anymore, indeed it is

not. Every house is occupied. But when I first came here, it was an empty place. A hundred dollars would have bought a substantial residence. As a matter of fact, I've heard people say they've bought many houses for twenty dollars. For firewood. So the ruins of this place is not being protected, have been destroyed for one reason or another. Carl Boegle took down – took apart the gasworks here, which is this property, and sold it for scrap. Well, that was before the war, and all that scrap went to Japan and was shot back at us. That was going on all over America.

So, I know that if I were away from here for a while I'd look back with a different kind of love an affection than I feel right now. There's always a hostility that goes with Virginia City people. There's so much antagonism here that you're a little huffy about it. You mention Virginia City and you divide them into rights and lefts right now. And you're the subject – you're the victim of that when you come to town. People won't talk to you here for – In the old days, it'd be ten or fifteen years before they'd even say hello, some of these people. There's people in town that won't speak to me yet. And I've been here now for fourteen years, No, for – Let's see, wait a minute. Vivian and I have been married for twelve – I've been here for seventeen years! This is the seventeenth year. And there are people here that won't even say hello. It always was so. And yet, on the other hand there are the most friendly, affable people on the other side. And I don't understand this, except it's just a small Western town, and that obtains.

So hard to – How do you mention them all? Hobie Leonard all the time, you say I should say something about Hobie. And you don't know how to put it. There is as much for him as there is against him. And you congratulate yourself that that's the truth. And you know you loved the guy. And he's irascible as hell. And there was Nicky Hinch who sold me this place. He sold me, waving his arms to the land. There never was a survey until much too late, and what Nicky had sold me had been a fraud. I didn't own what he said. Well, Nicky's rather simple. Bob Berry told me the other day that Nicky had been dropped on his head, when a baby. He never was right. So Nicky died deer hunting, had a heart attack. He was grossly overweight. Had one whisker.

So, you just can't go through these people one by one. Then there was the matter of scaring the town. Afraid that the whoremaster, Joe Conforte, was going to take over Storey County utterly. Well, he did – he does run it. He runs it, in a sense, you know. I mean, he brags that you can't get a political office in Storey County unless you clear with him. Well, I dare say that's true. He's got the biggest payroll down there at the whore house, and he concerns the county. That's the big taxes. And from the principles of this nation, he's a respectable businessman. And I've had occasion to look into the scare that the town was – heavy gossip up and down C Street. They were afraid of some weird takeover. And I couldn't stand this pressure,

and having been a VD investigator, I came forward to look into the situation, balance it out, and set things in their places the best I could as an individual. And I made my report to the county commissioners in public, insisting that they make it part of the record. That I felt that if a grand jury were called, I wanted them to be able, if they so wished, to use my own researches in passing. It might clue them to existing situations. I did not see that the county would go into an investigation of the facts. Well, there was nothing. I looked for Conforte: [it was] as though he didn't exist. And little by little he existed. But not on the county record, as the owner of a brothel or the Cabin in the Sky, because that was in his wife Sally's name. Sally Conforte is – Joe Conforte doesn't technically – scarcely exists here. As a businessman he doesn't exist. Now, he had his own reasons for doing this, and I think it just pleases him to keep it that way. Although in the beginning there was a feeling that an ex-felon – because he did serve time in the penitentiary at one point. But having served his time, he's in the clear and he maintains himself in the clear.

...

... Vivian, you know, wasn't feeling well, and she retired early. I gave apologies for her. She was just bushed. She works all day down there at that casino, and for God's sake, it's my humiliation, but that's chauvinism again. So I swallow my chauvinism, and accept the fact that she's got the steady job around here.

Box 2, Tape 2/76, Side 2 – September 13, 1976

Main Subject of Selection: [No selection, only to note that Walton spent a month preparing a report he presented to the Storey County Commission regarding Joe Conforte.]

Box 2, Tape 2/82, Side 1 – July 7, 1976

Main Subject of Selection: Robert Caples' visit with Walton in Virginia City, 1976

People mentioned:

Bartlett, Dorothy
Brittain, Rosemary (Rosemary, Jr.)
Caples, Byron H., M.D.
Caples, Ellen Fletcher
Caples, Hazel
Caples, Ralph
Caples, Richard (John)
Caples, Robert
Caples, Rosemary
Caples, Shirley
Chapman, Tony

Drackert, Harry
Hall, Emily [*see* Von Romburg, Baroness]
Lake, Denny
Smith, Homer
Steinheimer, Rae
Stokowski, Evangeline Johnson
Stokowski, Leopold
Taubes, Frederic
Thomas, Helen Marye
Von Romburg, Baroness [Emily Hall]
Walton, Marie Jeanne (Marijo) Etcheberry
Wertheimer, Louis & Mert
Wilson, Thomas C.

Surprise of surprises: Bob Caples drove up, and we had an almost two hour conversation. And he had some plain gin without ice, and I had some gin with ice, and we talked over endless stories from the old days. And I do wish to note that his wife's name, of course, is Rosemary. I am speechless. We had a pleasant, pleasant afternoon, just like the old days, and he has only now driven away. And telling me how he thinks of our times in Carson City in the Thirties, the [inaudible] Hotel, and in Chinatown.

He told one story about his father. Of course, his uncle, his father's brother [Ralph Caples], was the head of Union Pacific Railroad [no]. And he and his wife [Ellen Fletcher Caples] had driven up to the Caples house in Reno. And Bob took ever so long to describe this extraordinary paint job on this Stutz, which wasn't a paint job at all: it was a leather automobile. And I quickly interjected that I had handled such a car in the Three-A Garage [AAA Towing Service (Scott Motors, Ltd) at South Virginia and Ryland]. Now this could well be that car! A leather Stutz. Around 1930. And they had tea on the lawn – drinks, or whatever it was. And it was time to go. And they started the exodus. And on the way, he [Ralph] noticed this leather-bodied car, and he said – he always called Doctor “Don” – which Hazel always called Dr. Caples “Don” – he said, “Don what a wonderful car you have here.” And Dr. Caples says, “It is a very nice car, but it's yours!” He says, “Oh!” [Laughs]

I could go into Christmas past, talking with Bob. He says his wife Rosemary has a problem with inheritance factors. That she wanted to give the furniture to her children [Rosemary, Jr. = Rosemary Brittain, and Denny Lake], and the lawyer said, “You can't – You'd better not do it. You can't do it. They'll be owing the government, there'll be nothing left.” And so she had to begin right away, at the rate of \$3,000 a year, to designate this one to that child, this one to the other. But the rich and the poor apparently have the same problem as the painters with the Internal Revenue.

They are staying at the Drackert ranch [The Silver Circle], and Bob drove up here

to see me specially. I had feared that Harry Drackert had died – somebody had said that, perhaps because they saw the ranch was for sale. Well, Bob said that when he and Rosemary heard that the ranch was up for sale, both having loved it for so many years, they decided to have one last visit, and this is the visit. I said, “My god,” I said, “I thought they’d sold the ranch, and that Harry Drackert was dead.” He said, “That’s 1977 – you’re a year ahead.” [Drackert died in 1991: <https://www.nytimes.com/1991/01/02/obituaries/harry-drackert-dude-ranch-operator-86.html>]

Memories of Evangeline Johnson Stokowski came up, and he said that he had had the pleasure of being a guest at the house. He said, in later years, he said that she changed very much, and she was such a sexy, beautiful, monumental image in 1930s – 1936. She was a breathtaking woman, when she was here for a divorce from Stokowski. But he said she’d rather changed, she’s a princess now, and she leads a very withdrawn life, surrounded by certain barricades, and pretty hard to get to. And she does buy some art, and is rather a different person than we had known. And he confirms that in his best judgment that this is the Johnson & Johnson family. And I said, “Well, she bought a couple of my paintings. She and her sister bought a painting apiece from me.” I said, “I suppose that was kind of a duty purchase.” I said, “Surely she bought something from you.” He says, “Well, I believe she bought a drawing, and had used it for a Christmas card.”

Bob had been here for a couple of weeks. He said he saw my exhibition at the Moana Nursery. And he said that he didn’t care for paintings anymore, that paintings put him off. And he said that the poetry world was even worse than the painting world. So he’s – in his esthetic value, he’s isolated himself from painting altogether, and showed no interest in my sea painting on the wall – which doesn’t trouble me at all. But he knows the values of it, and it’s something once upon a time he would have liked. But he showed more interest in my photographs, especially those taken in [inaudible] Valley and Kawai. And was quick to pick up on the difference between those taken in the gardens of the Royal Hawaiian Hotel and the ones taken out in the field – which you’d think details of tropical leaves would be a stand-off, whether in a garden or in the field, but not so.

I said, “Would you be surprised if your father arrived outside in the old Cadillac convertible?” He said, “No.” I said, “Well, he’d come in and he’d say to you, ‘Caples!’ And to me he’d say, ‘Sleuth’.” And when he left, he said, “Well, if father comes,” he said, “tell him I just left.”

...

Now, when Caples was here the other day, I was talking to him about Stockton, and he says, “Why would you let yourself be born there?” I said, “Oh, I wasn’t born in Stockton, I was born in San Francisco in the Haight, University of California

Hospital.” I said, “My people had a store, a residence over at Divisadero Street, not too far away from Haight Street.”

And there had been the mention of Dorothy Bartlett. I’d told him about that time when Marijo and a friend of hers from Magnin’s, a woman also – well, a clerk – Marijo was doing the window trimming – and this woman had befriended her. Well, we were having cocktails at the Corner Bar, just before the Wertheimer regime changed the premisses. And I told Bob that I saw Dorothy staggering through the bar – this is a very big room, a large room – this used to be a bank site – staggering through the tables, both arms reaching for support. And I told him that I could not bear to see this, having known the family and having adored Dorothy since 1929 [i.e., before Walton went to Chouinard and before he knew Caples] – this now was after World War II . . . just before we went to New York, that’d be about 1946. So I excused myself and said that I had to take Dorothy home, no question about it. And I went over to Dorothy, and said, “May I take you home, Dorothy?” And I did. And there’d been laughing among the patrons at the bar, laughing at this distinguished person, from a great family, a person in her proper mind who could handle the brightest of them with great facility. “Bob says, “Oh. It’s a wonder she didn’t strike you with her arm.” I said, “I knew she was a handful. I knew that.” But I said, “I’d always adored her, and I could not help but take her home.” I said, “I heard about that later, because Marijo’s friend was filling her in on what she would do, and what her attitude would be if her husband did that.” For Christ’s sake! This old friend.

. . .

I had told Bob that Tom Wilson and I had been surrogates for Robert and for his brother Richard [John], the advertising genius – although Wilson didn’t appreciate the depths of the allusion. I told him I also had met his brother in uniform, at his father’s office. And then in thinking more about that, by golly, that is also the time that I met his uncle, the president of the Union Pacific Railroad, who was with him. It may have been one of the last times that Dr. Caples saw either of them [?], for all I know. They didn’t see each other frequently. For some reason, I was told, by Bob, that his brother was very close to his uncle.

Now, Robert and his wife Rosemary had both been suffering from illness. Bob himself had pneumonia this past winter, he said, and he looked tired, a little saggy in the face. He brightened, though, after being here a while. But he’d lost a hell of a lot of weight. He looked better in that respect. More like the old Bob, who was rather paunchy, had some kind of a bay window the last time he was here.

. . .

Caples told me that Doctor’s wife Hazel is now living in the Arlington Towers in Reno. I didn’t know where in the hell she lived. I mentioned that Rae Steinheimer had considered her the most beautiful woman that ever arrived in Reno. And Bob

conceded that she did have a face like the face on the dollar, this extraordinary nose. And then he described at length how, when she was annoyed, she had the capability of closing one eye and raising it – lowering it very slowly, and raising it slowly, in some form of derisive reaction. He said it was most unnerving to see this one eye close and open again all the way, without affecting the other. [Laughs] There was always a war, there at the Caples house. It never came to blows, but the perceptive were aware of it. I told him that there was this combat between the Doctor and Hazel, too. And always contention. And he said, “Well,” he said, “she having been married to a Cuban, the first marriage, rather looked down on people in the United States, and that always caused trouble.” And I told him the story about the throw [?] and the piano, and how Doctor had cut her down when she was talking about all the things she was gonna do about that. [inaudible] And how she was going to convert it, and that Doctor said, “Well, not before dinner.” And then, I guess, the eye raised and lowered.

Now, I reminded Bob of the dirty trick he did to me in Santa Barbara, when I was visiting there many years ago [1938], when the Baroness Von Romburg [the former Emily Hall] came, and I’d been explaining just before her arrival – I’d been giving these stories about my people in Missouri to Taubes and Bob and Shirley, who were rolling with laughter. Then, by golly, the baroness arrived, with her mink coat almost to the floor, wearing slacks, having arrived in that spotless Cord convertible, L-29. And Robert urged me to tell her the stories. He said, “Oh, do!” And I did. And the first one had no reaction, nor did the second, and on the third, I died. Later on, he told me about her facial affliction, like Buster Keaton’s: the Baroness was incapable of laughing. Bob said – after laughing about it himself, to be reminded of this incident, said, “I don’t think that I could resist it!” He said, “I’d do it again!” [Laughs] And he would.

I asked Bob if he had met Dr. Homer Smith, because Smith was a friend of Helen Thomas, and certainly Robert was a familiar at the S-Bar-S Ranch. And he said no. I said – well, I just described who Homer Smith was, and what he’s written, and [inaudible] carrying Einstein forward. And Caples said, “Well, I guess, a very small one.” [?] He said, “You know,” he said, “I have a note from Einstein.” And he said, “His signature is very small, a very tiny signature,” and he measured off about 3/4 of an inch. “Well,” I said, “I had had the pleasure of knowing two people personally who had been acquaintances of Einstein, if not friends.”

Let’s see – Robert was interested. His eyes fell on Tony Chapman’s card, which had the petroglyphs from Utah, and they caught his attention. And I thought to tell him about Tony, but there was – it’s too elaborate. He’d think well of Tony, but it’s impossible to tell people about other people, sometimes.

Well, in thinking about Dr. Caples and my course of penicillin with this ear, I

remember Dr. Caples having treated a toothache, explaining to me with some pride – this was when penicillin was brand new, he was just experimenting with the drug. He said, “I’ve had this remarkable experience,” he said. “I had this toothache, and I don’t have the time to go to the dentist.” And he said, “I’ve been treating myself with penicillin.” And he said, “The infection’s gone away.” And he was delighted with this result.

Box 2, Tape 2/94, Side 1 – September 29, 1976

Main Subject of Selection: Zoray Andrus and the Kraemers

People mentioned:

Andrus, Zoray
Caples, Robert
Kraemer, Eric
Kraemer, Janet
Kraemer, Peter
Spann, John
Walton, Vivian

. . . Eric said that he was sending Peter the income from the Bottle House [?] property on C Street. That he had explained to him in a letter that he had deducted some of the money for the taxes and expenses of maintaining the building so it wouldn’t come out of Eric’s pension. And this check amounts to a hundred and twenty-five dollars a month.

During Zoray’s visit with Eric, they had argued over Peter. She said, “You had never done anything for Peter through those years when I was at the Brewery and starving. You never sent him a gift.” And he cited one gift certainly that he had sent. And she was so ugly about it that Eric said, “Well, why don’t you get out of here then?” She was staying at the house. And she removed herself, went upstairs to bed, and in the morning she came down and she said, “ Well,” she said, “I will admit you did send him” thus and so. Which was an enormous concession for the firm Zoray.

So Eric had explained to me that he had only married Zoray because she – he had felt sorry for her. And that she had written him a letter and said, “Why don’t I come up to the Comstock and live with you?” And he said, “I didn’t have to marry her, but I did anyway, I got sentimental about it and I did.”

Well, Vivian says that Zoray would have something else to say about that.

Eric said that he had thought for a time that now that Janet was gone that maybe for the sake of the grandchildren that maybe Zoray and he could get back together again. That it would mean a pension for her if he died. The income. But then this

experiment of being together even for one night alone showed that things were absolutely impossible.

I said, "Well, you're better off alone, Eric."

He said, "Well, it gets very lonesome." And I'm sure it does. But he'd be in hell itself if Zoray were to go back to him. He said that Zoray had so many times accused him of sexual incompetence, that he said it drove him to prove that this was not true. And I guess that's the story of a lot of guys. So Eric went out on free society and finally found Janet. And actually they had a very congenial life together over several decades, in spite of her drunkenness. He reminded me of her having thrown the Venetian blinds at Johnny Spann at her apartment in San Francisco, and I said, I vividly remember that apartment, when you and Johnny had been living in the former Caples room that you sublet, and we went over to visit Janet down the block someplace, and upstairs a couple of flights. And she had told me herself that she had thrown the Venetian blinds at John Spahn for one of his insults.

And I told him that Janet had never, in my witnessing, said an ill word of him. That she'd spoken bitterly of Zoray, and was critical of Peter, but never had she ever said one derogatory thing about Eric in my presence.

Box 2, Tape 2/103, Side 1 – February 22, 1977

Main Subject of Selection: Walton on Reno; letter from and conversation with Craig Reardon about Bernard Herrmann biography

People mentioned:

Corwin, Norman
Herrmann, Bernard
Reardon, Craig

[Walton reads Craig Reardon's letter introducing himself; Reardon was directed to Walton by Norman Corwin. He says he's planning a section of edited verbatim interviews.]

Dropping down into Reno – Reno looks pretty good coming in there [driving from California], and when Harrah's gets its Harrah's World, they're going to call it out there, then Reno'll be something, with that MGM Casino and Harrah's on the other side. It's a beautiful view of the town from there. And so I simply accept Reno for what it is, and forget the old days. The beautiful thing they destroyed. Everything beautiful is shot down and renewed. It's like shedding skin. So I have to accept Reno on its own terms. It's a hell of a lot more interesting small area than anything I know of in California.

[Walton resumes the subject of Reardon after having a phone conversation with him.] . . . [I] told him that by relationship with [Bernard Herrmann] – in fact, the relationship with his Nevada friends was an aside, a little pocket to one side, that it didn't relate to his other experiences at all. And it may reveal something about the man that would otherwise be kept hidden. . . .

Box 2, Tape 2/104, Side 1 – February 26, 1977

Main Subject of Selection: Norman Corwin and Bernard Herrmann; John Garfield had eyes for Marie Jeanne

People mentioned:

Chaplin, Charlie
Corwin, Norman
Garfield, John
Herrmann, Bernard
Herrmann, Lucy Anderson
Hitchcock, Alfred
Reardon, Craig
Shepherd, Norma
Stokowski, Leopold
Walton, Marie Jeanne (Marijo) Etcheberry

[Bernard Herrmann was critical of Norman Corwin's political commitments.] I didn't argue with Bennie about it, as I didn't about – I didn't argue with Bennie at all, because I was there so briefly. It was not my position to row with this irascible man, who was my dearly beloved friend. Otherwise, I would be no better than any of his other friends, if I lived there and had to suffer his continuum. But fortunately I was only there for a spell in the winter. And this very often occasioned many of those old friends of his to gather round, using me as a catalyst. Often they wouldn't see each other from year to year until I came. It just was a catalyst element. It didn't mean that I had any pressure.

But he was often critical of Norman for allowing him[self] to be used by his times. He described Norman as the spokesman for the New Deal. And then he would say that no artist should permit his talent to be secondary to what happened. That he should keep himself clear of political events. . . .

. . .

. . . Certainly I never saw him [Herrmann] as anything but an equal myself, and he treated me as an equal. And I didn't have any big reputation, just a little special one. He would tell people, he said, "Well, he's the only man I know who does exactly as he pleases." That's far from the truth. But anyway, Bennie told all sorts of people

that. Among them was Alfred Hitchcock. But that's a bunch of crap, because I wanted a personal studio as big as a Warner Brothers sound stage, and I didn't have that, and so therefore I wasn't doing what I wanted. He always wondered why I didn't go abroad. Well, I knew why. God damn it, I didn't have the means, and I wasn't gonna be strapped abroad. That's why I never did go back to New York. And my back was to the wall here in my studio in Nevada.

Bennie often said [that] in his declining years he wanted to come to Nevada. But by God, he didn't have any declining years. . . .

. . .

The story of the Hollywood witch hunt continues. . . . Like that good man, John Garfield, who died of a heart attack three days after his committee testimony. Well, it was John Garfield that had eyes for Marijo. But before this happened, he died soon after that. Marijo had gone to San Francisco to see about my art exhibition, my 1950 one-man show at de Young. And Garfield was addressing the ladies of the de Young in a gallery next to where she was seeing paintings. And he saw her there – she poked her head in, and he invited her in, insisted she come in. And it was not long after that that he died. . . .

. . .

Well, never before had I considered my influence on Bernard Herrmann, until Reardon showed up and told me that Bennie's last wife [Norma Shepherd, m. 1967] was very young. I do know that he regarded Lucy as young, and that he prided himself with Charles Chaplin and Leopold Stokowski, and he would chuckle over their dinners together, and the chit-chat, the banter across the table about their young wives. So perhaps my example, in the late phase of Bernard Herrmann, was a little much. . . .

I questioned his right to compose music for films. I said, "Bennie," I said, "why the hell do you fuck around with the movies? A man with your talent." And he would give these lame excuses. "Where else can I get an orchestra?" And I can understand that. . . . And I understood, too, that Bennie liked the good life. . . .

I first came to Bennie through his piano concerto when I didn't know him at all, sitting in the Majestic Theater in Reno, alongside of Marijo. . . .

I did so revel in our relationship, and I never would let argumentation enter into it, because I so treasured him as a talented man. As a great man. As one of the great composers of the world in his days. . . .

And I will repeat that as with so many of my married friends, I enjoy relationship with the wives that is a separate relationship which stands by itself. . . .

He was so damned nervous he wouldn't stay still very long. . . .

Bennie was a ponderous, insufferable bastard to live with, I'm sure of it. . . . The last time I saw them [Herrmann and Lucy II] together, they were barking at each

other like dogs. . . . Then I last saw them each separately.

Oh, he was a bastard to help. To people, people waiting on him. . . .

Box 2, Tape 2/104, Side 2 – February 28, 1977

Main Subject of Selection: Bernard Herrmann

People mentioned:

Beebe, Lucius

Herrmann, Bernard

Herrmann, Lucy Anderson [Lucy II]

Kafoury, Emma Mae

Kafoury, Sam

Murray, Lyn

. . . Boy, he had a baleful eye, God love him. I do want to say that he gave me a blanket once, a Chatham blanket. He wanted to care for his friends. I don't think Lyn Murray ever understood how much Bennie was concerned when Lyn had an eye operation, about 1954, I suppose it was . . . and Bennie was up here in Reno, it was rather a honeymoon for he [sic] and Lucy [Anderson Herrmann, Lucy II]. . . .

He was an ugly soul about half of the time anyhow. I don't think he quite understood how ugly he could be, Oh, and he was self-sorry. And he had this warm love, this abiding concern, for his close ones. I remember him calling me every morning, about 10 o'clock, when I was staying with the Kafourys in San Fernando Valley. And Bennie would call from North Hollywood in the morning and ask me what I had done, what I was doing, what I planned to do. And when could we meet again. And then he'd ask me for brunch, and sometimes dinner. Sometimes we'd go out, the three of us, Luncy, Belnnie and myself. Hell, we had good times together. .

. .

And I've had thoughts of the day that I introduced Bernard Herrmann to Lucius Beebe on C Street. We had parked my car at the Delta parking lot, next door to the Territorial Enterprise. And I saw the towering figure of Lucius Beebe headed toward his newspaper office [Beebe bought the Enterprise in 1952, so thereafter, and presumably after 1958 when Walton build his house in Virginia City]. And I hailed him, and told him that I would be pleased to introduce him to my composer and conductor friend Bernard Herrmann. And Beebe snapped to attention and strode forth, offering his hand, which Bennie accepted. And they had a brief word or two. And the great moment was ended. It was Bennie snorting through his nose, in a not unpleasant way. Bennie always liked to meet the high and mighty. And who was higher and who was mightier than Lucius Beebe on the Comstock of those years?

Box 2, Tape 2/105, Side 1 – March 1, 1977

Main Subject of Selection: Bernard Herrmann's biographer Craig Reardon;
Walton's tapes and his intention to make a book from them

People mentioned:

Corwin, Norman
Herrmann, Bernard
Reardon, Craig

[Walton reads a letter from Craig Reardon of Redondo Beach, CA, a 24-year-old who has written to Walton following a phone conversation requesting an interview for Reardon's proposed biography of Bernard Herrmann, who was friend and patron of Walton from the 1940s and later. As far as I can determine, the book was never published. Walton then reads his reply to Reardon, from which the parts concerning Walton's own writings have been selected here.]

. . . As I mentioned, I have been putting together my life story and over two years of chronicle are included. I am urged to suggest that we work out a way to have you hear the relevant sections concerning Bennie. . . . These tapes are the raw material for my proposed rewrite, or in the case of my death, they would be the raw material for some biographer, god knows who. I had been asked for my papers by the Archives of American Art, who will eventually get them. [The Walton archive appears from the online finding aid to contain materials pertaining only to the Tom Sawyer murals acquired by the Smithsonian.] They will be microfilmed and filed in their offices for use by scholars in time. . . .

A failure in career planning was not to get to New York, save for one fruitful visit after World War II. My "Hollywood collectors" kept me going in the West [Bernard Herrmann, David Raksin, Norman Corwin, John Williams, the Gregory Pecks]. Bennie was the key to about half of that pattern. It seems to me that there can be a way for you to take notes from the Herrmann tapes and from further talks with me without jeopardizing my rights to use my own material in the face of prior publication of your book. Think this over. . . .

. . . I do all the cooking here. . . .

. . . I have a long memory and am talkative. Corwin will tell you that. Any of my friends you meet will remember me as talking too much, perhaps at dinner. Corwin himself pleaded for a word. But I listen, too. . . . [Walton mentions that the Corwins bought eight paintings of his.]

Box 2, Tape 2/105, Side 2 – March 2, 1977

Main Subject of Selection: Walton's novel *You Wouldn't Believe It*

People mentioned:

Corwin, Norman
Herrmann, Bernard
Star, Eddie
Steinheimer, Rae

Now it is my pleasure to review one of the three books that I wrote in 1952. This one is *You Wouldn't Believe It*. It is a novel, a fantasy of Reno at a time of flood. The flood was the climactic event that did not close the casinos but threatened to as it spread through the central part of that gambling town. Actually *You Wouldn't Believe It* was an excuse to set down a group of friends. These are not the exact people. I took an author's liberty in revising all circumstances and revising all names, as a novel should be done. And this comes from a knowledge of people, and the people are really shades of themselves, as found here. This is not specific. This was inspired by Rae Steinheimer, Eddie Star, and Bernard Herrmann is among the many friends here. There's a creature called Andre Castlemeyer, who was suggested by a maitre 'd friend of mine. And these are purely imaginary circumstances, done in a broad and sweeping hand. But however, it will give some insight into the presence of Bernard Herrmann, who is called, in this case, in the fantasy image, Bernie Bernfeld. It's easy to play with Bennie's name. Corwin called him Beanie.

Now let's see, where do I pick this up? Well, Hymie Fink – Oh, some book has been published since then using the name Hymie Fink. And that's the name I happened to use so many years ago. And I can't see it any other way than Hymie. And what do you do about that? Well anyway, Hymie Fink and his wife Sandra had left a little gift shop, which I had placed alongside the river, across [from] the Riverside Hotel at Virginia Street, in a fantastically large building dominating all the casinos.

Anyway, Hymie Fink had just left the little gift shop. And on page 15 of the original manuscript – you wouldn't believe it – I find:

When he had gone, a head moved above the green back of a leatherette chair. It faced the wall at the rear, where its occupant enjoyed a measure of privacy. Slumped in the severe modern chair was a man who resembled Napoleon. He sat like a wet sheet, and held a book with boneless hands. His hair was brushed forward like Dmitri Shostakovich. Bernie Bernfeld was also an international composer, and

wore the unshakeable signs. When Hymie left, he looked over the rims of his glasses and said, “Schnorrer.”

Now, on page 16 of the manuscript, Chapter 2 takes up Wilmer Flage [sp?] and Bernie Bernfeld. Flage was the owner of the gift shop.

“Old man,” said Wilmer Flage, “this is a very simple matter, you simply must accept women as inferiors. They were never the equals of men and they never will be.”

Bernie Bernfeld closed his book. His hands hung over the dust jacket like two dead fish, his fingers splayed along the title: *Havelock Ellis on Life and Sex: Essays of Love and Virtue*. Two volumes in one. The art of making love and the art of being virtuous or harmonious, and essentially the same among all peoples. . . .

“You’re a Victorian,” said Bernie Bernfeld, with his back to Wilmer Flage.

“Once I tried to be a model husband,” said Wilmer. It simply didn’t work.” [They debate.]

. . .

The friendship of Bernie and Wilmer was a freak of nature, like a calf on the premisses with two heads and a leg on its shoulder. . . .

The maestro was a familiar figure to a hundred famous names who came and went from his own home as easily as Hymie Fink. . . .

Now, on manuscript page 37, we – after having Roberto Von Holst introduced, who is the parody of my friend Rae Steinheimer, who was Herrmann’s friend, and mine. I will start with the entrance in the bookshop of Von Holst.

“Hi, Will,” repeated Von Holst, breathing both was in deep enjoyment [?], then beamed with buoyant second wind. Laughing nastily in his throat, but not pornographically, he said, “Hi, Will.”

Wilmer Flage had to smile. He felt like a fool but felt good.

“This is the day. This is the good day, and the true day. This is the day of the ‘Hi, Will.’ The sun is shining, and the world is good. It’s good to be alive everyday, because when you’re dead, you’re real dead. You’re dead long and deep and cold. Too dead. Dead.”

“Across the river already and into Craftwood Gifts,” said Bernie Bernfeld, hidden in his chair. Von Holst struck his forehead. He the simpleton had forgotten. He looked at Wilmer, smiled, cocked his head and clapped his hands once.

“Yah ha-ha,” he said, feigning nastiness, “a quorum.” He hopped to Bernfeld’s chair, went up on his toes and shook hands. “Bernie!”

“Von Holst,” said Bernie, shaking hands like a caught fish.

“You old son of a bitch,” said Von Holst. “I should sit here so long that you should come in.”

“What brings you to town?” asked Wilmer.

Von Holst gathered himself for man talk. His chin was on his vest and he spoke business like the meat. “I brought him the meat.”

“Caveman,” said Bernie.

Von Holst was modest. “I had a lucky hit this morning.”

“Drucilla,” said Wilmer, “did you find Mrs. Thompson’s check in the waste basket?”

“No, Wilmer, but I’m looking. . . .”

. . .

“A lucky hit. I saw the five pointer in the back field. I hadn’t drawn blood yet this season. That’s the breaks. It was a lucky hit. Lucky.”

“Ellis says D. H. Lawrence is muddleheaded,” said Bernie.

I can’t seem to find it, Wilmer,” said Drucilla on her knees behind the counter. She raised and said, “Wilmer, I can’t find it.”

Von Holst was stunned at the sight of her. “Drucilla,” he said with a smile. Many times he had told Wilmer how it was, that he, Von Holst, could die happy if he could but see the huge blond walk out of Pyramid Lake in the nude, like a Rhine maiden. Wilmer had seen this a number of times, and could not understand his friend.

The girl smiled back and maneuvered her eyes, indicating suppressed desires. “Hello, Robert.”

. . .

Well, on manuscript page 43, the beginning of chapter 4, takes up the three friends.

. . .

Box 2, Tape 2/109, Side 1 – May 5, 1977

Main Subject of Selection: Cal Bromund

People mentioned:

Bromund, Cal

Dennis {Pecoraro?}

Martinez, Ed

. . . This atmospheric effect surely would appeal to Cal [Bromund]. And I ran into him a bit later at the grocery store. I’d already been surprised by seeing Dennis

there, back from the Caribbean. Well, I did say to Cal, "I saw you in the post office, and it occurred to me that you might be interested in a painting that I'm doing. Underwater. There's nothing there but water, except for some impression of the sand below, and some sea urchins." And Cal turned from me to Dennis, ordered his groceries, without saying a word of response of any kind. And Dennis looked at me and smiled.

Now how to you account for that? He had an expression of one completely dumbfounded, Cal Bromund. Dennis understood this situation. And I shall have to mention it tomorrow to him. This is even a dimmer response than one gets from Ed Martinez. And so go the arts in Virginia City.

Box 2, Tape 2/111, Side 1 – June 13, 1977

Main Subject of Selection: Cyclopean vision and the Z-Axis

People mentioned:

Chapman, Loring

. . . I have been long aware that my space illusion related to some central mind process. And I've been calling it the Z-Axis, this spatial line that I operate on. And it also applies to what the author intends [regarding Cyclopean vision]. It's the Z-Axis. Loring confirmed that. I told him, "This is the plane which I've been working with for years." And he says, "I know."

Box 2, Tape 2/112, Side 1 – June 19, 1977

Main Subject of Selection: Phone conversation with Bea Brooks

People mentioned:

Brooks, Bea

Brooks, Debbie

Brooks, Dudley

Brooks, Dudley (Chip)

Olarte, Pablo

Walton, Vivian

When Vivian arrived home last night something after 8 o'clock, I was on the telephone talking with Beatrice Brooks Olarte. She called me from her apartment in San Francisco. She was in one of those depths of despair that come her way. She said that if it wasn't for her children, she would jump off the bridge. Later, I told her that there were sharks in the water, and that she'd better give it a second

thought. The response to that was that she was actually an optimist, and that it wasn't her style really. I said, "You're probably such an optimist that if you did jump off, halfway down you'd look around and say, 'My god, why didn't I do this before? I think I can fly!'" Indeed she is an optimist. One of the most remarkable of the friends.

She said that they've been having a terrible time. They're about to lose the apartment in Spain. That the law is not equal across the board between those who sell as individuals and those who sell as builders. And when one buys from a builder, that the builder can evict you precipitously, whereas if the individual sells it to another individual, the buying individual has six months to get out. And she says in Spain they'll just put your stuff on the street. She said, "All of our property is in the apartment, and we just aren't able to make ends meet. Things are so tough. That we've had a series of troubles, automobile accidents and reverses of all sorts, and Pablo's employment has been dubious." That he'd worked for a time in a restaurant in Sausalito, where they did him the indignity of making him dishwasher. He was about to quit, and they said, well, we'll make you a waiter. But he's in pain. He was host for a while. And he could be a very excellent maitre 'd. He has the style, and he has the background. But trying to become a qualifier for more of an executive position, and is going to school. But this isn't just as smooth as one might think, because he's depressed, and when he comes home, he isolates himself, because he must put all of his thought into his improvement. And he simply locks himself in his room and doesn't communicate with anyone. Bea told me this. I said, "Well, when are we gonna see you?" She says, "Well," she says, "Pablo is no communicating, and doesn't want to see anybody." Not even her. And she said she doesn't know anyone who's happily married anymore. Not one. That all the wives are complaining about the husbands and the husbands about the wives.

And she told me a terrible story about two of her male friends who had been in love with her, and who – she hadn't known this, but somehow the information trickled down – but one of the chaps had decided that pleasure was the purpose of life, and that the fulfillment of the individual was all, and that he should only be concerned about himself, and he sold his buddy on this idea, and they had – a blooming love occurred between them, and now the two lovers are in trouble, because the one who's concerned about himself has found another attraction, and has left his old friend. They had not been homos until the point of this revolution. Although before they had been attracted to Beatrice, both of them.

So she leads a complicated existence. She's an enormously fetching female, there's no question about it. Not the most beautiful woman in the world, but she has a character, an attraction of character. She's a person of great depth. And, my god, she's so complicated now. She's in despair. Her father died less than a year ago,

and left nothing. She said, – I'd explained that Vivian was in probate now with her father's estate, and to try and work things out wasn't easy. And Bea said that her father had left nothing. She was eager to give the new address and phone number, and the phone number of her mother. I have her mother's particulars, but I don't know [but] what she may have moved. Beatrice said they have a cheap apartment in a bad area of town, and that the winos are sometimes found on their doorstep. She said with Pablo's dog, who is a mastiff and bull terrier, with that dog they cannot rent an apartment. People will not rent to dog owners, and therefore they're reduced to this neighborhood, which leave a hell of a lot to be desired. So she's trying to dispose of a ring, and among her friends she cannot find anyone who will advance any funds on it, even though they're people of means. I told her, I said, "Beatrice, you mustn't lean on your friends in those directions." I said, "If it's of that value that you say," which is of several thousand dollars, – she wants to avoid putting it in hock because of the exorbitant fee. But I said, "If it's of that value, it must have some commercial value. So, I mean immediate value. It's best you work it out at that level. You can't lean on friends too much." I said, "It won't work."

So Beatrice said finally, she said, "Well," she said, "only you and Dud are the only two people that seem stable to me." She said, "It's funny that Dudley should come up this way. You remember Dudley." I says, "Certainly I remember Dudley." Her first husband. She said, "Well," she says, "we thought that something was wrong with Dudley, but it was only because he was sane."

Well, when she listed all that she'd been having these past months, car accidents – she was rear-ended by a semi at a stop sign. Guy'd been thinking about something and ploughed right into her. And then, by golly, after the car was fixed she was hit amidships, somebody blowing a stop sign. And this injured her a good deal, and she said she'll never be right again, but she's not crippled up, but she won't be right. And then they totaled that car, and they've been leasing an automobile, and one of her students stole it, and crashed it. It had been sitting out where he could see it, and he stole it, and it was found wrecked. And she said they fixed it, but it'll never be right. And so troubles and troubles. Her main concern is losing the apartment in Spain. And I don't know how that will work out. And, by god, trouble.

I asked about Chip and Debbie. She said they are now in New York, and that they're on short rations, and she feels terrible that she can't advance them any funds. But I said, "Don't worry about them, they'll get along. They'll make it somehow. I have faith in Chip and Debbie in New York." Where they are trying to get into a ballet company that's very tough to crash, because the company is small.

I told he she would have a hell of a phone bill if we didn't conclude the call. She said, "Well, there's so much trouble, that's nothing." And, well, finally we did say our goodbyes.

Box 2, Tape 2/114, Side 1, July 1, 1977

Main Subject of Selection: Gaps; recipe contents

[Walton announces that there is a six and a half minute gap on this tape, and so there is. There are gaps on a number of tapes, and I can only assume that most or all of them resulted from erasures of material Walton thought better of recording.]

[On this tape Walton talks about entering a recipe contest staged by Uncle Ben's Rice. Walton prided himself as a chef. On Tape 105, Side 1 he mentions that he did all the cooking for himself and Vivian. Well, She was going to a job.]

Box 2, Tape 2/114, Side 2 – July 6, 1977

Main Subject of Selection: Rae Steinheimer

People mentioned:

Berry, Bill
Berry, Frances
Chacon, Arthur "Art"
Garland, Theodore "Ted"
Lovelock
Mulcahy, Walt
Steinheimer, Carl
Steinheimer, Dorothy
Steinheimer, Mr. [Rae's father]
Steinheimer, Rae

. . . Oh, it was a pleasant afternoon, being with Walt [Mulcahy]. He's long-winded – worse than I am with the wind. He can talk forever. And he was leisurely and enjoyed himself. And we had nostalgic memories of Rae Steinheimer. And Walt said that Rae and his wife – and he didn't remember her name. His first wife, he said, used to come over to their place when the Steinheimer's lived on Wells Avenue, in an apartment. Walt lived in that vicinity too. That would be Dorothy. And I told him about Dorothy's background. And Walt had known Rae's father. He said Rae's father had – he'd heard the story many times and it had been confirmed by Rae Steinheimer, that his father had made his fortune in Gold Hill high grading! He bought gold from the miners who filched it out from the diggings, which they themselves actually didn't own. Rae never told me that. Walt said that Rae told him that that's how he got his start.

Well, he had not known that Rae's father had sold wagons for Studebaker in Gold

Hill, and also the first automobiles. And thereafter he was a Studebaker agent in Reno. Walt knew all of the Steinheimer property over by the agency, and had a vivid memory of Rae's father. I don't remember Rae's father at all.

Now the Steinheimer myths continue. I don't know whether to chronicle this bit of crap or not. Walt is not a liar, he tells it straight as a die. He said it was his understanding that – and he asked me very penetrating questions about the first marriage and about the first child. I said, "Well, there was only one. That was Carl. He said, "Describe him to me." And I did. I mentioned the round face. He was small, and he had the big lips, like Rae, and which was a characteristic of Rae that was rather pronounced, rather full lips. Well, this may be the basis of this funny story. Somebody's always trying to hang one on Rae, that I don't credit. He was very, very Germanic, in his esthetics. In his needs. And he said, "Well," he said, "the story was that their first child was born black." And that later it paled, and – but however at the first it was a shock, and that Rae blamed his wife and his wife blamed him, so Walt said. And finally it was established that it was Rae.

Well, that's one of the stories that Walt believes, and has believed through the years, from the Twenties. Well, it couldn't be much in the Twenties. I told him I had met Rae, when he was single, at Bill Berry's house – Bill and Frances Berry's house, when he just returned from Tahiti. And that I'd been so impressed with his beard, how handsome he was. And that he had worked for the highways. He said, "Yes yes, he worked for the highways, the state highway." And Walt believes this story absolutely. I don't know where it got – where it generated. Other stories like that circulate about Rae Steinheimer, who continues to be the mythic creature. Wasn't it Ted Garland who went to a party, he saw Lovelock, of Richardson – Lovelock Ford Motor Agency, an old friend of mine, who told Garland, "Well, Rae was Jewish." Why do they put these ideas? I don't know why. Maybe his lofty manner inspired them to try to cut him down any way they could. Though on the one side, those who didn't like Jews would call him a Jew and those who didn't like blacks called him a Negro. Because of his lips. The only connection I can see. Well, Walt's not a hostile, he didn't care, but he said that was the story.

I described the beautiful Dorothy Steinheimer, and that's the girl he remembers, all right, as Rae's first wife. Though Rae was only married many times later. But now I cannot conceive of Rae Steinheimer confiding this kind of material to anybody. He wouldn't have told me, unless he was in a state of shock. He did tell me intimate things, yes. But I don't know. I don't know if that time of the world – well, if he'd have – he – certainly at our time of the world, Rae wouldn't have told anybody a thing like that, if indeed he was that disturbed by it. And believe me, he would have been. That part's true, in this mythology. He would have been. It would have killed him. Yes sir. Of course, nowadays, who gives a damn about those matters? I bet

three fourths of the whites would just shit if they had that problem, even yet.

So, I discount the whole business. I think that there are just people used to make those kinda stories about folks. . . .

I think Steinheimer's name came up when I told Walt about Chacon Island. And he said Rae Steinheimer had always wanted to have Steinheimer's Beer Garden there. And he was jealous of Art Chacon's brilliance. He said, "Why didn't I think of that? The most valuable property in town: Steinheimer's Beer Garden." He said, "I can see it now." Well, maybe the installations at Belle Island brought this to Rae's thought. I had not known about the carnival on Belle Island.

Box 2, Tape 2/115, Side 2 – July 12, 1977

Main Subject of Selection: The Etcheberry family

People mentioned:

Connolly
Dudley, Jack
Esain, Martin
Etcheberry, John
Etcheberry, Johnny-Pete
Etcheberry, Louisa
Etcheberry, Paul
Etcheberry, Sarah Murray
Evans, Ed
Murray, Bea [?]
Murray, Harry
Murray, Mr. [Harry & Sarah's father]
Walton, Marie Jeanne (Marijo) Etcheberry
Walton, Vivian

[Harry Murray arrived unexpectedly with a French woman from Southern California. I believe Harry was the brother of Sarah Bea Murray, wife of John (Johnny) Etcheberry.] Obviously there's been a divorce in Harry's life – at least trouble. In any case, they wanted to see the paintings, and it's wonderful what a depth of affection Harry Murray has for me. I hadn't known. He said the whole family has this extraordinary regard for me. That's Sarah Bea and Johnny-Pete and everybody.

He said that Paul had gotten everything of the Etcheberrys' values [valuables]. It seems that he has thrived and no one else has, in that family. Sarah had only had a \$10,000 insurance policy, that was all her assets. And they were buying that place [?]. And Harry was working for Paul at the time, he said Paul didn't want him to do this, but he built five apartments in one of the other buildings on the property. And

that's the entire income for Sarah, and has been, ever since Johnny died. He said he worked at every odd hour, way into the night, and Paul would chew him out because he was bleary-eyed in the morning, and had no sympathy with what he was trying to do. He said, "You'll never get anything out of it, why are you doing this?" Well, that's pretty straight.

So, I don't know. Harry didn't think that the Etcheberrys had an interest in the Santa Fe Hotel. I told him, I said, "Martin Esain didn't have time enough to pay off that debt." I said, "That's gone back to the estate." Probably that sounds like Paul, this million dollar holdout to Harrah's Club. Well, he agreed to that. So they really don't know much about it. Apparently Harry and the family think that Marijo has nothing, that she doesn't own any of that property, it belongs to her mother. Of course, she's living – has a little house in the back – she's paying rent, she said, to her mother. And he said Louisa is a chambermaid at some hotel downtown. He said she's in good shape. She's working everyday. Well, and Paul is rich as Croesus, they say.

Well, we couldn't talk about Johnny. I told Harry that I didn't go back because I didn't want to cry on the floor. I said I couldn't stand to see any of them, because I was in no shape – Sarah grieving, and I should go up to her and collapse. I said I couldn't stand it. I said even now I can't bear to think of it. And Harry would be in tears, right here. He had gone to the scene of the accident. I told him the story of Vivian and I driving down just the moment after the accident, with the lady coming out on the highway waving her arms. And then the sheriff's car. And we drove on and found out later it was Johnny. In that crash. Harry said that there had been a hole driven right into the ground. He said, "Did you ever fly with Johnny?" I said, "It was my first flight was with Johnny." He said, "Well," he said, "one time we were flying over Lake Tahoe, and the motor conked out." He said, "No, Johnny would deliberately shut the motor off. Then he would put it in a steep dive and start it again." And he had some idea that Johnny had – that the motor – they had heard the motor fail on this Luscombe of [Jack] Dudley's. The examiner was with Johnny to check Johnny out for his new licence, that was what was being checked. And obviously Johnny was flying the plane. He said that they had heard it sputter, and the next thing you know it was in a steep dive, then a wing came off. It dove into the ground. Well, he said, Johnny would put them into a steep dive to start the motor. That he'd done it with him. And he said he blames himself partly for the thing, because it was his urging that got Johnny back into airplanes. So he said – and he could barely say it – he said, "I went back to see the wreckage. And looking around at the parts," he said, "it was awful." He says, "You know, the grip for the control," he said, "– I found the ball. I picked it up." And he said, "There was the end of a finger that was broken off, with the finger nail, the thumb, embedded in

that ball.” Well, Connolly had said there was an eyeball on the dashboard. Oh, it was an impact.

. . . I asked him individually about the family, and Sarah is not too well off. The inquiry of Bea’s well-being, I said, “Now she married very happily, didn’t she?” “Oh,” he says, “that’s trouble now. He says, “There’s going to be a divorce. It looks like she’ll be getting a half million dollar settlement.” He said the man she married – the whole family had a lot of land. They’re big ranchers. And now it’s over. But she’ll be all right financially. And he said that she is in very good condition. Bea was so pretty.

He described Johnny-Pete’s huge beard that he’s worn for some time – Ed Evans had told me about Johnny-Pete’s beard. [Discussion of Johnny-Pete as a specialist Volkswagen mechanic.] And Johnny-Pete does his work there at the home ranch, where Sarah lives yet. Although Johnny-Pete is married, to a very beautiful girl. They live elsewhere in Reno.

And not very long ago, Mr. Murray died. . . . Well, it was family with Harry, because he was the kid around the Etcheberry ranch. The Murrays were always at arm’s length, but this devotion that Harry described in the family, this lingering, persisting love for me comes life a gift. I know that I have always loved the Murrays, though, the whole family, absolutely. . . .

. . .

It was Johnny who taught us to be men, it was Paul who taught us to be ever vigilant.

Box 3, Tape 3/121, Side 2 – August 21, 1977

Main Subject of Selection: Rae Steinheimer’s colonial tourism

People mentioned:

Rae Steinheimer

I remembered yesterday that Rae [Steinheimer] had told me a story of falling in love with a Tahitian girl. He’d also made the caustic remark that they go all to pieces when they get mature. Get flabby and fat, although they’re pleasant, they’re nothing like their old selves, when they have the flowers behind their ears. Steinheimer was always a pragmatist when it came to marriage, despite the way things looked.

Box 3, Tape 3/123, Side 2 – October 14, 1977

Main Subject of Selection: McChesneys and Zoray Andrus and Peter Kraemer; Don McBride of the Bucket of Blood at Gordon Lane’s Union Brewery.

People mentioned:

Andrus, Zoray
Campbell, Roscoe (Ross)
Fuller, Mary
Glass, Bob
Kafoury, Emma Mae
Kafoury, Sam
Kraemer, Peter
Koch, Merle
Lane, Gordon
McBride, Don
McBride, Mrs. Don
McChesney, Robert
Pecoraro, Dennis
Salmon, Clint
Walton, Marie Jeanne (Marijo) Etcheberry
Walton, Vivian

Zoray's on the shit list with the McChesneys [Robert (Mac) and his wife Mary Fuller] for having brought a neighbor on the mountain up – she came up with this woman they cannot bear, because she was a developer. And Zoray messed herself. Well, actually, she hustled a ride up there, she's got no way to get around unless she leaned on somebody. Well, that happened a long time ago.

Now, last night Mac was very mellow, and we played Merle Koch's album, and then I put on Peter's "Hello Hello" album. Mac was terribly impressed with Peter's handling of the thing, and he loved the tempo and he was absolutely delighted. I shall pass the word on to Pete. However, he was very critical of some of the numbers, they're really juvenile and Mac picked up on that very fast.

So when they [friends of the McChesneys] break up you inherit one friend, you can't have both – sometimes you prefer the other. Oh God, That happened when Marijo broke up, and I remember the Kafourys after a trip to Reno once, came back to Southern California, they told me, they said, "We know Marijo's our friend, too, and we can't just be sympathetic with you." And I said, "I understand that." But then I knew – I knew. Bob Glass and Ross Campbell, all these people she especially adored – she loved Glass and Roscoe so much. They never see her. And I knew it would go that way, I knew how their characteristics were and that they would find me and couldn't find her. Or wouldn't. Although they adored her. And so, they kept me and might have preferred to have Marijo. Well, it was both of us, if the truth were known. And so, life changes. Metamorphosis.

...

He [Mac] asked if Pete [Kraemer] was hanging in there, and I said, "Well, he had his troubles, but he was making some kind of a comeback in the Bay Area."

...

Don McBride was at Gordon's bar, with his gold coin neckpiece and his golden belt buckle, and his brilliant bright red vest, looking like the bartender off-duty which he actually is in fact, although he counts the money. Later on, I took the McChesneys for a tour of the upper town, showed them the mansion that McBride lives in. They think he's an odious character. Now, after he came back from a visit to the toilet, McBride put his arm around my neck and was telling me about his complaints about the system here. He explained that he was a good Republican, and he launched into an attack on the county commissioners and incumbents, and wondering where the hell the second license fee for Conforte's whore house went. The \$4,000, he says, for the first one, and he says \$5,000 for the second, he says. "Where did the \$35,000 [sic] go?" And he cast all kinds of aspersions. And he's very concerned about the Conforte-incumbency situation. Now, he leans over you too close. I can't stand people talking to me two inches away. But for Don that was a high social moment, and I should appreciate it. Because he has arrived in coin. Now, he laughed and returned to the ladies at the end of the bar.

Pretty soon even McBride was gone and the crowd thinned out, and I went back to take a pee before the McChesneys and I came back down to Walton Flats. So help me, on the horseshoe toilet seat there was a big spot of shit – I never saw such a thing. It was like a birthmark. When I returned, I told Gordon, I said, "You know, Gordie, I hate to inform you, but," I says, "you'd better go back in the men's room and take a look." I said, "Somebody wiped his ass on the toilet seat." I said, "Don McBride was in there last." And then we left. [Laughs]

...

They [McChesney's] wondered if Vivian's inheritance would leave her free from the casino, and I said, "I don't think so. It's not that big." I Said, "She'll be all right when I die."

...

Now Clint Salmon was at the Virginia Market, unloading Dennis Pecoraro's truck. I said, "What's goin' on here, Clint?" I said, "You're back in the store again, huh?" He said, "Actually I was waiting for you." . . . I told Clint that I'd had house guests [the McChesneys], and wouldn't dare turn on the television. He understood that. And I said, "Anyway," I said, "if I even mentioned the World Series, they'd laugh at me."

...

[Walton mention's Don McBride's wife's gold Cadillac.]

We motored on down, and I showed him [Mac] the Clyde Amsler house, which fascinated them both.

...

[In connection with confirming the size of the snake Walton saw with Marijo at Pyramid Lake once:] . . . I could not get confirmation because Marijo was not responsive to my – ever, to any of my calls. I said, “Had Vivian been there, maybe I’ve have had a witness.”

Box 3, Tape 3/126, Side 1 – October 22, 1977

Main Subject of Selection: Spain

People mentioned:

Brooks, Bea
Garland, Helen
Garland, Theodore
Olarde, Pablo
Walton, Marie Jeanne (Marijo) Etcheberry
Walton, Vivian

What’s a mystery to me is this bounce from Spain all the time. The only country left in the world. Well, it checks out with Pablo and Bea Brooks, even to a degree Theodore Garland and Helen. That’s where they wish to go. Well, the culture hasn’t changed that much. The exchange is still favorable. But of course Bea’s attracted by the culture more than the exchange. Yet Vivian says Bea has lost everything over there. I said, “I guess she has. I don’t know for sure what the end of that is.” Well, Spain always in the story. Marijo leaving here, when I was building the house, she and Spain.

Box 3, Tape 3/129, Side 1 – November 4, 1979

Main Subject of Selection: Robert Caples and Bora Bora

People mentioned:

Caples, Robert

. . . [Reading from notes made at Bora Bora:] I wonder at times if I have spent all these years dreaming of Tahiti, and all this effort to get here, just to send Bob Caples his card from Bora Bora.

Box 3, Tape 3/135, Side 1 – November 14, 1977

Main Subject of Selection: Etcheberrys, especially Johnny-Pete Etcheberry

People mentioned:

Aurora
Biscaya
Bishkabooba (*see* Biscaya)
Etcheberry, John (Johnny)
Etcheberry, John (Johnny-Pete's daughter)
Etcheberry, Johnny-Pete
Etcheberry, Louisa
Etcheberry, Lynn (Johnny-Pete's wife)
Etcheberry, Paul
Etcheberry, Sarah Murray
Kramer, Louie
Murray, Bea (Harry and Sarah's sister)
Murray, Harry
Star, Eddie
Walton, Marie Jeanne (Marijo) Etcheberry
Walton, Vivian

. . . A car drove up, and I went outside. It was a van. And standing in the gravel yard was a husky young man with a flaming red beard, that reminded me of the beard of Louis Kramer, of my ancient past, the days of [inaudible] Chicago. He said, "I'll bet you don't remember me." I said, "Through all that hair, how could I?" He said, "I'm Johnny Etcheberry." I said, "Johnny-Pete," and we fell into each other's arms, two of us huskies. [Erasure]

And it was a strange evening, where I told him stories that he himself did not know about himself and about others of our circle. And Biscaya – he did not know who I meant when I mentioned Biscaya. He knew him as Bishkabooba, which was an invention of his father [Johnny Etcheberry]. . . . I said, "Well, that's Biscaya." And I explained why he was called Biscaya at all.

And so we had pleasant memories, and – he told his wife, "Walton was the first hippy. He had a beard when no one in Reno had one." And I said, "Well, it was also that way once in San Francisco." But true to the spirit of his uncle, Harry Murray, Johnny-Pete loves me dearly. And little did I ever guess. And he has so many memories. And he said, one, he said, he used to go in our house. And I remember he'd take the arrows [Walton was a bow hunter at one time] in his career [?], and I'd find them in the field. He said one time he went in there and there was a naked woman. Well, that must have been Aurora, when she was posing. And he said, "Wow-ee, naked not a stitch on." And, well, he was a growing boy.

So Johnny-Pete has this long love for me that is hard for me to understand, but it is a fact. And when you mention Marijo or Paul, and of those, he says, "Who's that?" He never sees them. It's just as though they don't belong to his life. And so how I inherit all this love under those conditions is curious to me. Oh, how he adores Louisa. [Erasure]

. . .

But Johnny-Pete arrived. And it's curious that he was to say that he passed here many times, and saw the sign often, on his way to Fallon. So he would route himself over Virginia City, pick up the highway down below the hill, and go to Fallon. And he said he always thought, "Well, perhaps he isn't here," and drove on. Well, I understand that quality of fear, because I have had it in my reluctance to visit Sarah. I just didn't want to rake up the old coals. And I told him to tell her that I said how I felt about it, that I didn't want to visit my grief on hers, and compound our miseries. Those who loved him best tend to cry when they talk about John Etcheberry, two – for Johnny-Pete is three, and he appears to have the fourth in his daughter, whom he calls John. She may have another name. . . .

The subject is Johnny-Pete's young daughter. When I was looking for something for a child, there was nothing, no soda-water, nothing. Vivian found crackers. I apologized to the young lady, addressing her for the first time, because I was so involved with J-P. I said, "I'm sorry, I have nothing to offer you, unless it would be some Clorox" – I had some under the sink. "Perhaps a glass of that might do." And she caught the candle, and flickered into a smile. And I had her with me, as I generally can make it with kids. And then I rattled off a few of those things. Pine-Sol – Pine-Sol was there. And I said, "You can have some of this." Then I picked up some other abomination in a red plastic – some Whisk, a bottle of Whisk. And I said, "Or we have this," and I made the gesture of pouring, and she was in laughter now. And Johnny-Pete said to me, he says, "I'll take some of that myself." So, you see, they have dimension, the whole family has dimension. And I see utter love in the eyes of the wife, and in the daughter. And in the game I played with the daughter, I have only Dr. Rowley to thank for having educated me in the technique. I should also say that Johnny-Pete's wife was named Lynn.

Now, they stayed for the afternoon. Johnny-Pete had gone up with me to help me turn on the water. We walked together up to the corner where the water meter is. And we discussed his work with the cars, with his super job of tuning those Volkswagen motors. . . .

The subject remains Johnny-Pete and our relationship. And I did not know I had so many people who loved me, that were not coming by. Apparently all the Murrays have a high regard for me. And Bea and I – his Aunt Bea – almost had a collision during the war. I told Johnny-Pete, I said, "I turned the back real strong and walked dead ahead away from her!" [Erasure]

The conversation with Johnny-Pete had come to big dogs, which he said he was afraid of. And there was a reason for this, because Cuddly Puppy, the dog that Eddie Star had given me, had bitten Johnny-Pete right in the butt, going through a fence one time. . . .

The subject still is Johnny-Pete, and his Uncle Harry and me, through the years, a love I in no way deserve. And I know his father loved me. And I had told Johnny-Pete, who had accompanied me up to the water main. . . . En route, I said, “You know, you and I and so many others are better men for having known your father.” I said, “So many things I could not have resolved.” And I said, “I built the house only because he taught me.” . . .

Box 3, Tape 3/135, Side 2 – November 14, 1977

Main Subjects of Selection: Etcheberrys (continued); Walton’s letter to Joanne de Longchamps describing his postcard to Robert Caples from Bora Bora

People mentioned:

Caples, Byron H., M.D.

Caples, Robert

de Longchamps, Dare

de Longchamps, Galen

de Longchamps, Joanne

Etcheberry, John (Johnny-Pete’s daughter)

Etcheberry, Johnny-Pete

Etcheberry, Jeanette (see Walton, Marie Jeanne (Marijo) Etcheberry)

Etcheberry, Lynn (Johnny-Pete’s wife)

Walton, Marie Jeanne (Marijo) Etcheberry

I told him [Johnny-Pete Etcheberry] a story he had never heard of his aunt. And he said, “Who’s that?” And I said, “Marijo.” “Who’s that?” I said, “Jeannette.” “Who’s that?” I said, “Well, she’s your aunt. And she was often called Jeannettine by the herders.” And I said, “It wasn’t an easy life for a young pretty girl in a sheep camp.” And his wife Lynn said, “I’ll bet not.” I said that I loved her most in such moods that she had with the animals, the chickens, the goats. She adored the goats. Had one goat whom she was most attached to, called Silly. And I said, “It was goats of that period, they were young kids, that had climbed up on my Ford Coupe in the moonlight and fallen through. And this is the car that I gave you, as you say your first automobile – which you were to smash.” Well, Marijo and I were returning from town, she in her town clothes, and told me to stop the car. [Story also told on Tape 19, Side 2] I stopped. She got out, ran to the ditch beside the road, where there was a downed ewe, giving birth. And she had recognized the agony of the ewe, and reached into the ewe, up to her elbow, trying to turn the lamb aborning, which had breeched. And she could not do a thing about it. And when I drove her back, she was in fitful tears, cried the whole night through. The lamb was killing the mother. And this was killing Marijo, who in some strange way related her own existence to that of the animals of that farm.

...

We are now alerted for a reception for the circus clown, Magoo, tomorrow afternoon. And meanwhile, of course, Joanne had sent me her book of poems, with its inscription [I can't find the place on a tape where Walton quotes Joanne's inscription, calling Walton a "magical" painter, and where Walton says the first poem is about Dare de Longchamps, Joanne's suicided son, and he can't bring himself to read it], and I wrote her a letter on 11-18-77: "Dear Joanne: Awaiting my return from the South Seas was one creature, which I shall place among my central treasures, a very personal piece to be read at the gentle times. How do you tell an old friend you've been honored to find yourself on the winning side of what must be a restricted list? I feel assured that Robert Cole Caples was sent one, and this will be two factors from this direction, your book and the mere postcard from me, sent the other day from Bora Bora. It was Robert who gave me my copy of *Moby-Dick* on Christmas, 1937, at a time when we were close. I'd not read the book before, had seen the film with John Barrymore, knew about a white whale – what more? Yes, a peg leg. But I had not known Melville. It was Caples who had an idea what Melville would become to me. Even the Rockwell Kent drawings were there. So, when I got to Bora Bora, I worded a postcard in the style I had learned from Robert and his father. I reversed some of the language of the RCC words broadly put on the [inaudible] papers: 'To the Bell Street Ahab: When gliding by the Bashee Isles, we emerged at last upon the great South Sea. From *Moby-Dick* Walton, the Sparks whale. Hotel Bora Bora, 11-4-77.' The pictorial side of the postcard had the color imprint of the Gauguin, *La Rêve*. . . . I had never seen the painting before. It represented a sleeping woman with another figure sleeping somewhat behind her. The limp bodies reminded me of the boneless figures of the *Last Supper* [by Caples, presumably] which used to be at the library building of the old arrangement of the U of N Reno. I had considered the card a find in the boutique at the Lagoon Hotel. What can I say about that island? The lagoon floor even more beautiful than the island. Love to both you and Galen, R."

Box 3, Tape 3/136, Side 1 – November 24, 1977 or September 20, 1979

Main Subject of Selection: The book Walton hopes to make of his tapes, and an apropos story from Robert Caples

People mentioned:

Caples, Robert

[Walton has been explaining how his tapes altogether might amount to a book of 7,500 pages, but that he envisions cutting it down to about 1,000] I remember Bob

Caples' joke about the guy who got the big novel down to one word, and then finally threw that away.

Box 3, Tape 3/138, Side 1 – September 17, 1979

Main Subject of Selection: Etcheberrys; Bea Brooks' children Chip and Debbie, and Tony Chapman

People mentioned:

Brooks, Beatrice
Brooks, Debbie
Brooks, Dudley (Chip)
Chapman, Tony
Etcheberry, Lew [?]
Etcheberry, Louisa
Etcheberry, Paul
McChesney, Robert
Randall, Byron
Reinhardt, Ad

September 17, 1979. I'm in the Gorham Hotel, Room 306, at 9:15. We joined with the Etcheberry family, oddly enough, on take-off out of Reno. And I boarded with Louisa and Paul and Lew [?] Etcheberry and cousin. I flew with them all the way to New York. We both changed at Denver. And then I waited for four hours at the airport, and went on by Braniff to Washington, D.C. . . .

. . .

I told him [Tony Chapman] I wanted him to meet Debbie, the tall, slender ballerina, and that I would give him her address and phone number, and would do likewise with her, and that if I didn't see him, that he could get together with Debbie on his own. I told Tony also about their mother, Bea Brooks, and about her [Debbie's] dancing brother, Chip Brooks. And I shall call them soon. . . . I told him that Bea and Debbie had been at the house for dinner when McChesney and Byron Randall were there, and that Ad Reinhardt had been a good friend of McChesney. . . .

Box 3, Tape 3/139, Side 1 – September 18, 1979

Main Subject of Selection: Bea Brooks' children Chip and Debbie, and Tony Chapman; Walton's frustrations gaining recognition as an artist

People mentioned:

Brooks, Debbie
Brooks, Dudley (Chip)

Chapman, Tony
Jackson, Ward

Tony is most anxious to meet Chip and Debbie. And when I told him about Chip's South American tour, with his dance group, Tony asked me if it was something like the Nikolais Dance Group. He said he has a friend who is in that and has just returned from South America. I said, anyway, Chip has described to me the new tour – the departure of that tour is imminent, and I'm very lucky to be able to see him at all. He said he was going to the Orient, Hong Kong and he named any number of places, including Bali. And I'll find out soon exactly his tour stops. . . .

. . .

Having lived a career-long neglect at the hands of the University of Nevada Art Department, who controls their gallery, and in despair, I turned from the West Coast, Nevada in particular, Reno especially – turned my back and come to New York, at great cost: this is costing all – well, in the neighborhood of \$1,500. . . . And here I am, I go to the Guggenheim, and get in the basement, and Ward Jackson, and he goes through his huge ledger . . . and comes up with the University of Nevada, that's where I should go for an exhibit. I was so impressed that I forgot to mention that the last exhibit was at the University of California at Davis.

. . .

Tomorrow we plan to all join – Debbie and Chip and Tony – and we will go to Coney Island to see the aquarium.

Box 3, Tape 3/139, Side 2 – September 20, 1979

Main Subject of Selection: Bea Brooks' children Chip and Debbie, and Tony Chapman; Walton's frustrations gaining recognition as an artist, continued

People mentioned:

Brooks, Debbie
Brooks, Dudley (Chip)
Chapman, Tony
Chapman, Toy
Nikolais, Alwin
Rutters, Dr. George
Star, Eddie
Steinheimer, Rae

This Thursday afternoon was spent with Tony, Chip and Debbie. I found out that Chip is to fly to [inaudible] at 11:00 tomorrow morning. He goes to Taiwan. He's not [inaudible] in Korea. He goes to a place called Taipei and also Taichong, and goes on to Hong Kong, and Singapore, Koala Lampur, Java, Jakarta, at a place

called Joquakarta, which is the center of dance in Java. Then in Bali at Denbasar [?]. They go to Manila and back to New York City. All those towns mentioned are performances. The next tour will be to Puerto Rico, and that's the coming scene in the next year. And after that, they speak of touring Central America, and then, after that, possibly Norway. It's a very popular outfit.

Now, Debbie is not too happy with her situation. It's explained to me that it's a gymnast type group, and they had some exotic, almost religious ideas that the director insists on putting on, and it interferes with their creativity, and disturbs Debbie.

Chip's outfit is called the Nikolais Dance Theater, and it is the company of Alwin Nikolais. It's very well-known. Tony [Chapman] has a couple of friends in there, separately from now – Chip. And it's a good thing that they've come together. They automatically liked each other.

But there was a miss there. Tony and Chip met here, at the room, and we went on down to the underground, the subway. And when we got the train, Chip said he's arranged with Debbie to wave at her and she'd get on that train. And so he had to go forward, so he leaped forward, said, "I'll go get in front." So he leaped forward, this long-legged dancer, and by god, Tony decided to follow him. And it was like the funny dwarf. And I was following Tony. Well, the train pulled away without us and left us there, and ten minutes later we got another F train, to Coney Island. So it separated the pair of us, and we didn't see them for an hour. They waited at the end of the line for us to get off, we got off ahead of the line, since we saw the aquarium.

So then they joined us in the aquarium. But meanwhile, entered the aquarium and asked to see the director, according to my instructions from my Guggenheim friend. And how wrong you can be. These people are running a very small aquarium. If they had enough money to buy a painting, they'd buy another beluga whale. And the director was gone, I got the assistant director, and he was totally bewildered. They never had such a situation as an artist asking to make their acquaintance in passing. I showed him the [underwater] paintings, and I could see the look on his face. Later I understood, because he saw into that water all day long, so to him, so what? Another body of water, but without fish. So it was a peculiar day, and it clarified the fact that my advisor in the basement of the Guggenheim is someplace screwy. So, however, he depends very much on his books, which he insisted that I buy. Well, I do have one, I will get the other, and maybe I can get some values out of. Now this is Dr. George Rutters [Director of the aquarium].

Well, so, on the way back I sat beside Debbie, and I put my hat on her head, and she is just stunning! High-style model, lights up her eyes, with that new Irish

stroller hat, she is absolutely stunning. But it just made her need the clothes, about a thousand dollars worth of clothes would have dressed her out. But she likes her hair in that long flow.

And so I won't be seeing Chip and I won't be seeing Debbie, and I will be seeing Tony regularly, until I leave. . . . Now, Chip will be flying out tomorrow at 11:00, and he promised to send me – he got my address and said, "I'll send you cards from everywhere." That'll be a lot of cards. I said, "I'll save them all. It'll be a delight to get them." And Debbie said, "Well, I'll send you one from Queens."

Debbie's dance company is called Mussawwir. It's a gymnastic group. And she's not happy at all. Oh, she's so lovely in that hat! My god, she looked like a millionaire's girl. She's so beautiful in that hat! And then she took it off, and she's beautiful anyhow.

. . .

There's a funny thing going on. About the same time, all the same: Tony was in Canada, smashed his finger. Chip smashed his finger. And I about took the end off of my forefinger before I left. All about the same time. And Chip and I still wear the bandages.

. . .

I can say that Toy [Chapman] was certainly right. It was a great pleasure to be with old friends. Old friends. Old friends. These young people. Well, you lost Eddie, you lose Rae, you gotta fill in with somethin', and I guess Debbie and Chip and Tony will do just as well as any riff-raff off the street.

Box 3, Tape 3/156, Side 1 – June 24, 1982

Main Subject of Selection: Santa Fe Hotel & Martin Esain's picon recipe; Walter Desiré Wohler

People mentioned:

Esain, Martin
Esain, Martin (Little)
Grey, Zane
Wohler, Walter Desiré

. . . As though drawn by a magnet, I turned over toward the Santa Fe Hotel and dropped in. And it was empty except for the bartender and a woman straightening up the television. And these are strangers to me now. And I mentioned to the bartender that I'd been an old friend of the former owner, Martin Esain. And I asked about Little Martin, he said Little Martin had died four years ago. That was about when I lost sight of him, Little Martin who gave me the impromptu interview in

front of the former Parker's location, which is Harrah's club now. He didn't know quite what had taken Little Martin away, but he said he got thinner and thinner.

Now, while I was drinking my picon, the door brushed open and in a large – well, he's six foot one and looked six seven because of his manner, a very large man, a rather dusty complexion, came up to the bar with familiarity and ordered a picon, had the picon. And it was a little awkward. I wanted human companionship, and I didn't know whether to intrude on him. I tend to be a little forward. I sat on that. But at long last I said something about the picons. I said it's not easy to get a good picon. He said, "No," he says, "few know how to make them." I said, "I suppose a drink like that, it costs you two and a half down the street, or even more." He said, "Yes, more." The drink in the Santa Fe bar is a dollar and a quarter. Well, certainly in Papeete [?] that would cost you three or four dollars.

But he did everything right, this bartender, except swirl it. And I described how Martin Esain had told me how the best picon is made. With the high quality Amer Picon, and the best cognac. Used to be a lot of Hennessy poured there at the Santa Fe bar. Well, what we were having was bar brandy and a standard Amer Picon. But it was a good drink anyway. However, it was fractured by the spoon. Martin Esain, I told him – my new friend – did it with one swirl, telling me it was important that the three not be thoroughly mixed. That the flavor should change as you drink it down. Of course it's topped with a squeeze of lemon and a float of brandy.

Now, it turned out I could not figure out the background of this man. I wondered: Spanish? That seemed wrong, and he was speaking French to the bartender. And he said, "Well, I often come here, I always like to come here for a drink." And he said, "I'll come for dinner," and he asked the bartender what was for dinner. It was stew and steak, which is rather, I think, standard for that operation now. 'Twasn't in the old days. And he said that he was coming back, he told me, for dinner. And he mentioned that he was a Tahitian. . . . Well, this gent is a seaman. He's a marine engineer, retired, and lives in the Bay Area, and his name is Desiré Wohler. And his first name otherwise, he wrote for me, is Walter Wohler. . . . Now he had also said that he had been in a crew with Zane Grey, and he said, "You'll read the account of it called 'The Cruise of the "Fisherman" Number Two' by Zane Grey." He says, his name was Warren Grey." And that he [Desiré] was a young man about fifteen years old." [*The Cruise of the "Fisherman"* by Romer Grey, Romer being Zane Grey's given name and Zane his middle name, was published By Harper & Bros. in 1929, with the subtitle *Adventures in Southern Seas* – no "Number Two."]

Box 3, Tape 3/98-D, Side 1 – December 3, 1976

Main Subject of Selection: Readings from Walton's book *Virginia City* about:

Union Brewery; Robert Caples in Virginia City

People mentioned:

Baer, Max
Bruce, Harry
Caples, Bettina
Caples, Robert
Caples, Rosemary
Clark, Walter Van Tilburg
Clegg, Charles
Emrich, Duncan
Lane, Gordon
Lazari, Bronco
Saroyan, William
Shetler, Roy

One of the best-known bars in the United States, The Union Brewery Saloon, had also been the best loved. Tenderly spoken of by knowledgeable drinkers everywhere, it achieved a wide reputation for its unchallenged quality. One once might have found something suggesting it in the back country of Honduras, or in a Grant Avenue basement in early San Francisco. Izzy Gomez came close to that city in his Saroyan heyday. The Union Brewery Saloon maintained an open door, off-the-street atmosphere, offering easy welcome to all those disavowing hustle in favor of friendly drink. It has given respite from a hostile world for as long as living memory called. In the city of five breweries and 110 saloons at Virginia's prime, this establishment outlived serious competition with the addition of growing bric-a-brac rather than change. Dust of the past seemed organic to its installation, and the ashes of John Mackay's cigar might yet be before the coal scuttle where they fell.

A late owner who relished traditions was Bronco Lazari, an outspoken Italian. Unafraid of pope or president, he personally attracted an assortment of patrons, ranging from whores to towel boys and authors of consequence. Duncan Emrich, folklorist and writer, published a piece in the *Virginia City News* during the summer of 1948 in which Bronco's death was falsely announced. Prophetically, Bronco died the next year in similar circumstances. Lazari cherished his spider webs, and the day's fallout was posted as it came. Pennants and a soiled flag were shown along with a card announcing the Oakland bout of Max Baer with Tiny Abbott, predating Baer's heavyweight championship. Insults involving the name of the bank of Italy were placed alongside "Keep Cool With Cal." And worthwhile personal messages were on the walls and mirrors.

The collection had substantially survived the years, and was augmented in the hands of his successor, Gordon Lane. Bronco's persisted as the place name, until

the reality of Lane's own considerable personality spread, and the Union Brewery got to be warmly called Gordie's, with Gordie becoming the toast of obscure corners in the world where liquor was consumed in melancholy.

A kitten, Girlie, joined Lane in 1952, and 21 years later posed on the bar with mature indifference. The dogs of the house had a harder time. Major of the crooked leg passed on, to be replaced by Lancer, another Shepherd of less than show propensities, who could take a spot at the bar on call. Otherwise, he was snoozing in some warm nook in winter, or at the door in summer. Familiars often stepped over Lancer to push back the famous stool, noted for blocking off tourists, with regulars replacing it on entrance. The Union Brewery Saloon earned a reputation for hostility to progress, the foot-long hotdog, and snow cones.

Lane was in the submarine service, and after World War II settled in Virginia City, where he found reality on his own terms. Sought after for electronic repairs, evidence of this enterprise was strewn over a corner desk, where Girlie liked to sleep. Gordon Lane avoided most odd jobs with skill, while responsibly maintaining a community TV system. A legend for his drive over Ophir Summit, he succeeded in installing a TV line to isolated Virginia City. Gordie was admired for obeying a Health Department writ by brush-painting the saloon walls, but spraying its cobwebs. He allowed no telephone, and would be seen in person at the bar at impossible morning hours. After an abbreviated sleep, he was often found a little later the same morning high overhead wiring a pole. While the Businessmen's Association contrived ways to attract even more tourists, Gordon Lane was resolute against insensitive intrusion in his dedication to the ghost town of the imagination.

In the late 1940s, the Howell & Black Building was occupied by the Nevada artist Robert Cole Caples and his wife Bettina, a sort of studio shop open in part to the public. In the rear of the warped structure, later removed, was a sun deck. It was in fact the exposed flooring of the rear second story of an actually three-story building, whose ground level was on D Street. A two-story building on the east side of C Street customarily was three in the rear, and dug into the hill. Similarly, a one-story building on C Street would be two stories on D Street. When Caples left these quarters, the building was acquired by Charles Clegg, and rented to a former wild west showman and local entrepreneur, Roy Shetler. Shetler achieved an admirable dream which lasted briefly. For a time, the building had an old-fashioned soda fountain and candy store, authentically appointed, and augmented by the grand glass doors from Reno's past Waldorf Saloon. . . .

Before his occupation of the Howell & Black Building, Robert Caples, just returned from New York, opened a small shop in which he offered paintings and other products of his hand. The establishment was called Godfrey's in honor of his golden Cocker Spaniel, often seen at the door. Life was then mellow and

uncrowded in Virginia City. Mobs had not discovered the Comstock in their later numbers, and just enough visitors struck a balance for both sides. The broken-down buildings gracefully took the dust of the unpaved streets, and silver whiskers covered old boards in ways pigment cannot. The unsteady step of some old-timer would drag at any of a dozen bars, make the turn, and drop in for a few words and a beer. The nights were joyous when Harry Bruce was at the Alaskan piano. Perhaps this was the best of times for Virginia City. Perhaps the best for its author, Walter Clark. They might even have been well-remembered by his lifelong friend, the proprietor of Godfrey's, on later occasions at Caples' Connecticut retreat on Turtle Hill.

Box 3, Tape 3/98-D, Side 2 – December 4, 1976

Main Subject of Selection: The book *Vision and Visual Perception*

People mentioned: None

. . . The subject is the book *Vision and Visual Perception*. I'm taking smacks and smears from this great work, because clearly it would take a very long time in the university to get through such a dictionary of theory. And I have no intention of becoming an optometrist. But there are parts that are valuable to me. . . . Perhaps I can find some information that is relevant to the painter's case, and certainly to my own. . . . I've made many notes from my first scanning of this book. But I miss my recorder, because I can backtrack on this information and get it wrote [sic], if I have it on the tape. . . .

Box 3, Tapes 82-A through 82-E

These tapes all concern the correspondence between Walton and Robert Caples. In part the recordings consist of Walton reading the correspondence aloud for the tape. Walton's comments, not contained in the actual correspondence of course, are also recorded. Walton recorded these tapes beginning on February 28, 1980, that is, about three months after Caples' death.

Note that with one or two possible exceptions, the letters are contained in the documentary part of the Walton Archive – originals in the case of Caples' letters, copies made by Walton at the time they were written in the case of Walton's.

The codes associated with each item were assigned to copies made the transcriber, Anthony Shafton, was writing *The Nevada They Knew: Robert Caples and Walter Van Tilburg Clark*. Those coded copies, with my notations, can be found in the

Anthony Shafton Papers held by Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno.

Because the primary documents and hard copies are available, in most cases only the beginning of each communication is transcribed here, enough for an interested person to be certain they are looking at the correct item when they peruse the documents, either at the Nevada Historical Society or Special Collections, UNR.

Tape 82-A, Side 1 – February 28, 1980

Main Subject of Selection: Walton/Caples correspondence

People mentioned:

Balthazar, Mrs.

Caples, Byron H., MD

Caples, Robert

Clark, Walter Van Tilburg

Slater, Margaret A. (Margot)

Walton, Myrtle Foose

I left Los Angeles and the Chouinard Art Institute in 1936, in the late spring, and came to Reno, and contacted Robert Caples as supervisor of the Nevada [Federal] Art Project. The result was that we were to become rather close for a couple of years. And then Bob was to leave this area and sporadically visit. And he would live in Southern Nevada after Santa Barbara and a period in San Francisco. But this was to be a long and solid friendship over the years, a long span, with long periods of silence on both sides.

Now, at Christmas, 1937, we'd only known each other six months, and he gave me a copy of *Moby-Dick*. In it was a little drawing on one of the end papers, a drawing in pencil of a whale, and a scriggly sea. He says, "For Moby-Dick Walton, the Sparks whale, from the Bell Street Ahab." It's signed "R." Below, it shows "Christmas, 1937." This book is illustrated by Rockwell Kent, and it's been my treasure through the years.

The next year, I was to receive from Robert a copy of Van Loon's *The Arts*.

• Caples CXXXVIII

Now, nine years later [May 2, 1946] I have a skeletal fish on a desert plain, from Robert. It shows a little mountain range, and it is signed by his usual "R." And there is no message, except that fish, which has been a symbol between us, for curious reasons, all through the friendship. On the photo side of this postcard is a broad view of downtown – midtown Manhattan. Bob was about to enter the Art Students League and be there for a while, on the GI Bill.

• Caples CXXXIX

Now we skip some time here. We weren't correspondents until the end phase of our relationship. This is Christmas, 1972. It's a card, and curiously that year we

both picked out the same card. This a [inaudible] drawing of an eagle – it’s one of my favorite cards, and he said to me, too – in it is a little piece of verse from the Japanese:

Long walking lantern
disappears into some house –
desolate white hills
– Shiki

That is pasted inside, and his message: “Christmas, 1972. And I was just thinking of you. So that’s how it goes, right? . . .”

- Caples CXL

On July 9, 1973, he sent me a card. He had visited, but it was a sad visit [that visit was at the end of September or beginning of October, 1971, almost two years earlier]. Walter Clark had gone into his decline, and I had written Robert a message, that I did not keep a duplicate of, telling him to – he’d better get here quickly if he wanted to see Walter again. “Dear Dick, I think the picture you took is better than the picture I took. . . .” Inside was included a color photograph of the tombstone [at the Masonic Cemetery in Virginia City]: “Walter V. T. Clark,” and it shows his birthday as August 3, 1909. Well, I had sent Robert and black & white of the same, that I thought I’d put in my photo book of Virginia City. And the book he refers to in the card is the Virginia City book.

- Caples CXLII [This and the next item are recorded in reverse chronological order]

And in 1975, he sent a card at Christmas time [postmarked December 21, 1975] which shows some little birds of Oriental origin: “Now, this is the kind of Christmas to have. . . .”

- Caples CXLI

And, on March 21 [1975], “Spring!” just underneath the date, with an exclamation mark: “Dear Dick, yes I have to good and long-deserved word about your paintings going to the Smithsonian. . . .” Included in that is the great rabbit of Albrecht Dürer, of 1503, and a note is on the back of this postcard: “And this is your Easter rabbit. . . .” And “Happy Easter” is broadly written in orange.

- Walton X

On 11-4-77, I sent a card to Robert from the Hotel Bora Bora in French Polynesia. It was a postcard showing one of the few paintings they have on Tahiti by Paul Gauguin, called *La Rêve*, 1892. . . . And it’s a strange, little-known Gauguin of a sleeping figure, with a little baby in the back. And sleeping also, the female figure in the foreground. I’d long looked forward to sending this card to Robert. I wanted to send it to him because of the Christmas gift of *Moby-Dick* in 1937. So: “To the Bell Street Ahab. . . .” [See Tape 135, Side 2] I made a botch of the first card, that’s the reason I happen to have a copy of the card actually sent to him.

- Caples CXLIII

In 1978, on March [?], I received a letter [dated March 8, 1978] which was to be the beginning of a long exchange between us. “Dear Dick, It’s true, Washington did have two birthdays. . . .”

- Walton XI

And on 3-11-78, I wrote to him: “Dear Robert, you began dying when you were born. . . . My mother was a close although brief friend of the lady [Mrs. Margaret Slater (Margot)] your father was planning to marry when the car crashed. In fact, the women at the Vanity Dress Shop, which was half-owned by my mother [Myrtle Foose Walton] and Mrs. Balthazar, along with a few other friends, chipped in to buy the outfit for the burial. Your father [Byron H. Caples, MD] hadn’t cared for it, and apparently passed some wry quips in the shop, when she brought him [inaudible]. I’ve never mentioned this to either you or your father, but it points up his good taste in people, and gives depth to a memory. . . .”

Now, I wrote on 3-11-78, a piece that is stapled to that letter, perhaps an addition in the same envelope that was sent: “Who else but you can imagine it? The canvas was 6 ft. square. It had a foot-wide border. . . .”

- Caples CXLIV

On April 5, 1978, Wednesday: “Hi Dick, I’m down here in the barn, a most agreeable building, ancient and wonderfully a part of the land. . . .”

- Walton XII

And on 4-10-78: “Dear Robert: Just got your barn letter with the bees and geese. . . . [The reading of this letter continues on Side 2 of the tape]

Tape 82-A, Side 2 – February 28, 1980

Main Subject of Selection: Walton/Caples correspondence

People mentioned:

None in the excerpts

- Caples CXLV

On Tuesday, April 18, 1978: “Dear Richard: Thank you for your long letter, longer perhaps than I can reckon with at this hour. . . .”

- Walton XIII

On 4-20-78: “Robert: I once saw the brother of the Grand Lama on TV and was impressed with him. . . .” And I amended that on the same date 4-20-78: “Dear Robert: I have your letter of the silent stones and the nagging urge to draw. . . .” [Walton comments in this letter about the book his tape recordings are for, and mentions that some of his papers, presumably those connected with the Tom Sawyer paintings, are at the American Museum of Art.]

- Caples CXLVI

June 23, 1978: “Dear Dick, A long, long time I know. . . .”

Tape 82-B, Side 1 – No date, c. early March, 1980

Main Subject of Selection: Walton/Caples correspondence

People mentioned:

Sheppard, Craig

VanderHoeven, Mary

- Walton XIV

7-3-78. “Dear Robert: I’ve spent the last 30 minutes setting my calendar watch, having run past the day on the first try. . . .”

- Caples CXLVII

July 14, ‘78, Friday. “Dick, Indeed it must be so. The pupfish are gone. . . .”

- Walton XV

7-18-78. “Dear Robert: Since my pupfish letter, I’ve sustained an operation for hernia. . . .”

- Walton XVI

7-21-78. “Dear Robert: Before some straight face says it wrong, I will tell you that Craig Sheppard turned belly up. . . .”

Now beyond that postscript [not transcribed here] is stapled a sample piece of wrapping paper from Greece that my mother-in-law [Mary VanderHoeven] came with. In my longhand is written: “My mother-in-law just returned from Greece. . . .”

- Walton (no code)

7-29-78. “Dear Robert: This afternoon while extending spacial selections of big Bora Bora Lagoon. . . .”

- Walton (no code)

7-30-78. “Dear Robert: Scrambling outdoors, the Great Dane chased the porch lizard beneath the deck. . . .”

Tape 82-B, Side 2 – No date, c. early March, 1980

Main Subject of Selection: Walton/Caples correspondence

People mentioned:

Caples, Rosemary

Meinecke, Father Paul

- Caples CXLVIII

August 1, 1978, Tuesday. “Dear Dick, It seems to me that for us, seeing as how we write every ten years or so, . . .”

- Walton XVIIa

8-7-78. “Dear Robert: Rosemary may like to know that that wrapping paper was cut from a sheet that protected a girl’s headkerchief. . . .” [Walton tells a version of the story of Father Jellefe. Caples’ contribution to the subject is in his letter of August 18, 1978.]

Tape 82-C, Side 1 – No date, c. early March, 1980
Main Subject of Selection: Walton/Caples correspondence

People mentioned:

Bohannon, Ray
Bradbury, Ray
Caples, Rosemary
Chapman, Loring
Chapman, Tony
Huston, John
Jellefe, Father Paul

- Walton XVIIIb

8-7-78. “Dear Robert: On May 9, 1952, in a handout published by Ray Bohannon, called ‘Reno This Week,’ . . .”

- Caples CXLIX

And on August 18, Friday, **1978**, came one of the extraordinary hand-printed letters of Robert’s. A clipping was pasted on the first page. It was a Siamese twins pair. I’d never seen it myself as a newspaper piece. They had their arms around each other. They rather resembled the capital letter M. August 18, Friday. “Dear Dick, Your letters have not only overtaken me, they’ve passed me by and are waiting around the next bend. . . . I’ll be thinking about your letters down there, that will help too.”

[Walton:] Now I’ll intersperse this. He had repeated ‘me’ and crossed it out, going to the second page. And that is only the second error I have observed in all of this hand-printed letter writing. One was a mistake in spelling that occurred in his last letter, when he was certainly ill. And this was a double ‘me’, crossed out.

[Caples:] “So, to continue, . . . I knew Father Robert [Jellefe]. . . .”

[Walton:] Now for some reason I’ve tacked on a postcard from Loring Chapman in this assemblage. I will read it because it will qualify to us all why I did this [laughs]. From Foundation Mate [?] – that’s printed on the card – 06570 St. Paul. Below is printed: Braque, *Les Poissons*, Mozaeck [sp?], 1963. Loring writes: Drove to the south of France. . . . Back in Paris, bumped into Ray Bradbury, the science fiction writer. He spent a year in Ireland doing the script of *Moby-Dick* for John Huston. . . .” Now, there’s some notes scrawled around here at the bottom: “. . . Fish

looks like 1948.” Now that’s my fish of 1948, and this, of course, is Braque’s of 1963 [the year of Braque’s death]. It does resemble something that I might have designed for. The same image, the same lineals. On another note here, in ballpoint: “Tony graduated in cinema from UC Santa Cruz, was one of 20 accepted as American Film Institute fellows in Beverly Hills. . . .”

- Walton XVIII

Now I had – in my answer to Robert – I had the caps on, and I’ve got an asterisk and a dollar sign and an and and another asterisk, representing 8-24-78, didn’t bother to erase it, but I did put the date in brackets. . . . “Dear Robert: On reading one of the last letters from you, in which Rosemary and Greece were connected. . . .”

- Walton (no code, perhaps not copied, not in Anthony Shafton Papers. In fact, this item may have been removed from his papers by Walton before donating them to the NHS because it contains a long discussion of learning how to avoid income and inheritance taxes through offshore accounts.)

9-3-78. “Dear Robert: Am returning from a three-day visit to the Bay Area, where we stayed with the McChesneys, . . .”

Tape 82-C, Side 2 – No date, c. early March, 1980

Main Subject of Selection: Walton/Caples correspondence

People mentioned:

Caples, Rosemary

- Walton XIX

9-8-78. “Dear Robert: Sometimes it takes the slightest reality to get one back to his senses. . . .”

- Caples (no code, not copied – extant?)

And received on 10-10-78, a card. “Dear Dick, Lord, what an astounding city this is, and full of Greeks. We’re [Caples and wife Rosemary] having a wonderful time, and who wouldn’t? Love, Old BC”

The picture on the face of the postcard is one of those extraordinary night shots of Athens, with the great ruins on the hill overlooking the city.

- Caples CL

And I received a letter [postmarked February 7, 1979] some time later, after a lapse. January is gone. February is under snow. March has wings. The envelope shows 2-12-79. “Dear Dick, I wish I could remember where we are in our letters. We were going along at a great clip there. Then came our trip to Greece, or rather the islands thereof. Surely I have written you since I returned. And yet, so help me,

I can't be sure. . . ." [This letter continues a reading of Caples' "Letter to a Recent Reader" on the next tape.]

Tape 82-D, Side 1 – No date, c. early March, 1980

Main Subject of Selection: Walton/Caples correspondence

People mentioned:

Bufano, Beniamino

Garland, Ted

Garland, Ted, Jr.

Jastrow, Robert

Johnson, Dr.

Kendall, Abe

Leinecki, Otto

- Caples CL (continued reading of Caples' "Letter to a Recent Reader" followed by Walton's comments)

Now I have stapled to that Xerox copy of his letter to his reader – his one reader – it never occurred to me to tell him that I had thought the questions, especially that one, "Was the Potter God?" And if so, what so? – it never occurred to me that that was something to write to him. So I didn't do it. I would have been his second reader, then, in his mind. Anyway, so much for Robert.

I have stapled to this group a postcard that he had included in the letter, the Winged Victory of Samothrace. And thank god it has no arms, as our mutual friend, Beniamino Bufano, had said, it's not sculpture if it won't roll downhill. It's a wonder the wings didn't come off too, in this case. It says: Received from Robert dated January – is gone, I guess the envelope is gone, or the date received. . . . And with that group is my own letter to him.

- Walton (not copied – extant?)

3-6-79. "Dear Robert: The dear lady who runs Otto Leinecki's letter press concern single-handed, going to work at 4 a.m. and leaving at 7 p.m., and who this week lost her voice, sends you fond regards and her many old Reno memories of your tribe. . . ."

- Walton (no code)

3-22-79 [3-23-79?] "Dear Robert: Received Kendall's copy of *Potter*, and will deliver it when I see her. . . ." Now the reference to Andrew had to do with a twenty dollar bill he had sent to me at Lovelock when my Nash convertible broke down when I was hauling a mural to the post office at Buhl, Idaho for installation [1940]. I burned out a rod, one of the main bearings, just outside of Lovelock at almost the same spot as where I'd burned out one so many years ago, about 1931 – '32 it was, I believe, when I worked for the Nevada Rock and Sand Company. And so disaster

revisited it on the same spot. And I sent a letter to Robert – I'd already borrowed money from Dr. Johnson to make the trip to Buhl, Idaho for the installation, and so I could only think to send to Robert for his twenty bucks that was sorely needed, to pick up that main bearing. And he telegraphed it to me in the telegram. He said, "Andrew screamed when I opened your letter." And there was Andrew looking up at me from the \$20 bill.

I did cut out the address on the package in which the book had come. It was so typical of Robert's hand, and I wanted some memory of it.

• Caples [could this be the card in an envelope, or the March 19, 1979 letter?]

And canceled April 10, 1979, from New Preston, Connecticut: "Hey hey! Look, here's a fine bird for Easter. Glad for your recent word. It will be answered. I finally cleaned up my sagging table. All of your letters are in one packet now. Impressive. Yes, the long table looks almost spacious now. Lo, I'm the one who sags. All the things unattended to, years of such. I find no place of beginning. Someone with the improbable name of Jastrow said, 'Our pursuit of the past ends in the moment of creation.' He's talking about stars. Do you suppose the same goes for down here? I wouldn't mind a bit. I hope you all have a most agreeable Easter. But well to this side of Venus[?]. It's too nice here, and spring is just beginning. Shalom, Robert." .

. .

• Caples [I have no document corresponding to this date]

And April 29[1979], Sunday. "Dear Richard, Moho Bay looks like a dream of a place to me." Well, it was Maho and he read it o-o. "It's unlikely that I'll ever see it, this side of transmigration. But the color slides you have sent me bring it near. But the big thing to me now is that damned lizard. Now how was it that he came flowing out of the sky? Or up into the sky, whichever the case may be. What did you do, have someone bounce him in a blanket? Could it be Agama himself? Did the whole constellation of Laertes come tumbling out of the north, darkly compressed into a Starwell [?] happening? I mean it, I'm awestruck that your camera should have closed upon such an impressive instant of space/time. How the hell did you do it?

"As anyone might gather, reading The Potter, the ancient lizard was used by Myrios, one assumes, to erase a great body of occult doings that the potter had developed in the dust in front of his house that early morning. It was taken from us, then and there, to enjoy and fancy advantages in our raw beginnings. Rather it was given that the snake, the turnip and the frog speak through us, finding their voices in our voices, their clay in ours, cooled by the same moon. So I'm wondering if your lizard is like Agama, launched on some erasure mission. Naturally I'd like to know what's immediately below the soaring reptile. Some guru friend of yours, about to pull the cosmic plug? There's something in the air besides the lizard, I'd like to

know what. And tell me some time, did you ever hear a turnip scream? I'm guessing it's something we'd never forget. I read somewhere that Rabindranath Tagore could hear the grass cry out. . . ." [I recognize this, so have to figure out which document April 29, 1979 corresponds to.]

- Walton [Again, I recognize the text but made no notation with the date, so have to figure out which letter this is]

5-3-79. "Dear Bob: A moment of magic respite stolen out of chaos is where I'm writing you when I've no business to. But I should answer the matter of the lizard. Young Ted Garland, Jr., once my neighbor and still friend, was a smallster of perhaps six when his father had him at my door. . . ."

Tape 82-D, Side 2 – No date, c. early March, 1980

Main Subject of Selection: Walton/Caples correspondence

People mentioned:

none

- Walton XX

5-22-79. "Dear Robert: The 65th year seems a tough one to get by. . . ."

"Virginia City: 101 Selected Photographs" – Walton's working title?

- Walton [Again, I recognize the text but made no notation with the date, so have to figure out which letter this is]

7-15-79: "Dear Robert: I'll be flying to New York City in September, and will get another plane for Baltimore. . . ."

- Caples CLII

Postmark Waterbury, CT, June 17, 1979. June 16, Saturday. "Dear R, Richard is a heavy name. I can say Dick easily enough. . . ."

- Walton [Again, I recognize the text but made no notation with the date, so have to figure out which letter this is]

6-20-79: "Dear R: Two Rs do not a Rolls-Royce make. . . ."

- Walton XXI

6-21-79. "Dear Robert: On the matter of names, I've been called so many...."

Tape 82-E, Side 1 – No date, c. early March, 1980

Main Subject of Selection: Walton/Caples correspondence

People mentioned:

Garland, Ted

Garland, Ted, Jr.

Hardin, Lyle

Kendall, Abe (or his son?)
Lee, Bob
Swanson, Bettina
Tuttle, Bud
VanderHoeven, Mary
Walton, Marie Jeanne (Marijo) Etcheberry
Walton, Vivian
Winnemucca, Avery

• Caples CLIII

July 27, 1979, Friday: “Dear Dick, Hey, three great big bees just stung me as I stood by my ancient wooden door down here. . . .”

And attached to my letter is my check to him for the book,

• Walton XXIII [dated in my records as July 22, 1979]

7-29-79. “Dear Robert: A message from Bob Lee confessed uncertainty about how to get to where you are. . . .”

Now, the reference there to Colbrandt’s is the old Colbrandt’s on Virginia Street [147 N. Virginia] in Reno, where we used to have the beers. Now. I had not fully accepted that he actually was going to Greece.

• Walton [no record of this document, but the brook trout sound familiar]

“Dear Robert: There’s a large lizard who lives under the front porch. I see that he shed his skin today. Yesterday I saw him or her a bit bewildered, it seemed to me, for the reptile had a skin ruff wide about its neck like a self-portrait of Rockwell Kent in Greenland. About its middle was a sort of skin skirt which flounced to its owner’s crawl, moderate now in the changing skin parka.

“I have a letter sent by computer by some, I don’t care what organization. What grabs me is, the letter slipped inside the envelope, something like the lizard in its old skin. Maybe this chancy thing describes something none of us have ever quite faced. For there I was, hard Guy Walton, for the Ric of Richard was covered by the left edge of the see-through envelope window. Hard Guy.

“No, you never told me your lizard story, I welcome it. Marijo had a lizard story, which was an abomination, which made her blush, and which made me wonder about children, which you will agree with, no matter which or what. She said, ‘When we were children, we used to tame lizards.’ I said in full credulity, ‘How did you ever do that?’ ‘Oh, we just stuck pins through their necks, and they were tame.’ God knows she blushed as she spoke, for it had been the truth.

“Now Ted Garland’s son, also a Ted, is to be a biologist. He’s been an animal expert since a child. He switched from being a veterinarian at U of M Southern. Ted, Jr. Once bagged a dozen lizards on my property, to my chagrin. He used a loop – always good at it. Catches snakes, as many animals left with his mother to support. TJ dated [?] Kendall on his last visit, and plans to repeat, and together they

may be here at the house soon. Well, Tuesday or so. TJ's on his way to examine things at UC in California. He recently told his father by phone that he'd been surveying lizards for an impact study, and marking them by removing a toe, so they'd be identified later. I told his father I had a vision of TJ limping off the airplane, and when asked why, saying, 'Some bastard conservationist caught me in the men's room at thirty thousand feet, and clipped off my toe.' So, you don't have to fly to Greece to see them cry, you can see them cry between Las Vegas and Reno, if you come across the man with the clippers doing his work. Love to both of you.

"I have a broken sink in our big camper which we inherited, because of my mother-in-law [Mary VanderHoeven], a sort of Greek with stories. I affixed a note to the drain: 'No use plez. Is Greek.' She'd had trouble with the plumbing in some sacred isle. R"

Now, a number of things were to happen in the coming months. I went to New York. Didn't see Robert. And then returned to Reno, and Vivian and I flew again to Tahiti. And on to Bora Bora, where I sent another card [apparently not extant] to Robert, from the island, a card with a beautiful photograph of Bora Bora, with a grand wave. . . . And I have no record of what it was I said. Something pleasant about Bora Bora.

When I returned from Polynesia, I found a card in my box [extant?], a postcard picturing two dolphins together, a noted mosaic from Crete. The card is dated September 30, Crete. And of course it's 1979. "Dear Dick, as you see the brook trout were a little bigger in early days. You look in better shape than I do. Maybe that's how it's always been. S'agapo [I love you], R."

Now, I have a letter with a note on it. The note is the same date as the letter. The note refers to a phone call, and it is dated 11-21-79. "Garland called this morning with the news of Bob's death Saturday past in Rosemary's arms, according to Ted's informant. Bud Tuttle called in five minutes to say about the same, and will save the news piece for me. My loss is so heavy that I feel simply heavy. The rains will come later."

And the letter is 11-21-79 [copied, I'm sure] "Dear Rosemary: Friends are calling, telling me of Robert. Isolated as I live, I depend on them for news, good and bad, and Robert would say, perhaps, 'What is the difference?' . . ."

And the clippings [which Walton reads]. . . .

I can't resist the idea that Cubism is not geometric painting, and that Caples is never a Cubist. He used principles of geometric thought in one period.

Now I have a piece here that I put together, after reading another article. My note says – as a piece excerpted from one of his letters – the note states: "On June 21, 1979, in answer to the Robert Cole Caples turkey letter of June 16, 1979, in hope of

getting him back into painting, which could have eased his haunted situation, “Turkeys? Yes, there are too many turkeys. You and I won’t paint turkeys at this hour, and you know it, Mr. Interrock.” That note is dated 12-15-79, and the reason it is on here is evident from the content of this article [announcing the coming memorial service for Caples in Reno]. . . .

Now attached to this clipping I have some notes from his letters: March 8, 1978. . . . and so on.

Now at that service I saw Phyl Walsh, and Phyl had seen to it that Chief Winnemucca – Avery Winnemucca – was there, with any number of Indians, who sat in the front row. Lyle Hardin was with me, and Bettina Swanson, formerly Bettina Caples, was also there. [Continues on Side 2]

Tape 82-E, Side 2 – No date, c. early March, 1980

Main Subject of Selection: Walton/Caples correspondence

People mentioned:

Arno, Peter
Caples, Rosemary
Chapman, Tony
Chapman, Toy
Farrar, Tom
Swanson, Bettina
Walton, Marie Jeanne (Marijo) Etcheberry

[Continues from Side 1] At that service, I did have a chance to see old friends. And had a talk with Rosemary. Tom Farrar and his sister Toy Chapman, and Toy’s son Tony came up from Davis. I had called him. Toy cherished her memories of Robert. It was a small gathering of people, and of every generation. A wide variety of ages. I had a poignant few minutes with Bettina in the lobby after most everyone had gone, and we parted.

• Caples, R Sr VI

On February 4, 1980 I received a letter [I believe the letter is dated February 4]: “Dear Richard: I just finished reading your letter of 8-11-79 about the lizard story of Marijo’s. . . .”

[Includes: “I enclose a few photographs so that you may see what I am up to in the studio.” Is this the sources of the photos of Robert’s studio which are surprisingly decorated or polished-looking, which puzzled me for that reason?]

• Walton XXIII

2-11-80. “Dear Rosemary: It was wonderful to hear from you and to find how busy you are in the studio. . . .

“Did you ever find the fractured Arno Portrait? R”

Now, I had, on a phone call, relating to the memorial in Reno – Rosemary had called me from Connecticut when she was trying to get people together to attend it, and I did make several calls. She asked me if there’s anything I wanted. I said, “Well, the one thing I would want is a photograph of the portrait of Robert Peter Arno made in the early Thirties in Reno.” I said, “I remember that hanging on the wall by the door in his Clay-Peters studio, and I would like – could you send me a photo of it? I would just love it.” She said, “Better than that, I’ll send the portrait itself.” Well, that may or may not come along. But I would like a photograph of it.

Box 3, Tape 3/33-D, Sides 1 & 2 [Side 2 begins at Photo 218] – February 14, 1980

Main Subject of Selection: St. Mary’s of the Mountains; Walton’s Virginia City book

People mentioned:

Addis, Charlie
Allison, Lu
Andrus, Zoray
Antunovich, Matthew
Beebe, Lucius
Best, Katie
Beymer, Floyd
Beymer, Marguerite
Blake, Deacon
Brown, Mary
Brumond, Cal
Byrne, Alice Hinch
Caples, Robert
Carlson, Tiny
Clegg, Charles
Coletti, Edward
Curran, Louise
Edwards, Florence Ballou
Eggenberger, Judy
Eggenberger, Rolf
Emrich, Duncan
Gallagher, Hugh
Haffey, Len
Hardin, Lyle
Heick, Bill
Hilliard, Katie
Hinch, Nicky
Hobbs, Fredric “Fred”
Kaminski, Doc
Kopp, Dick

Kraemer, Eric
Kraemer, Peter
Lane, Ann
Lane, Gordon
Lazari, Bronco
Manogue, Father
Marye, George T.
Meinecke, Father Paul
Murry, Mildred
Pecoraro, Dennis
Piper, George
Piper, John
Rapp [a VC brewer]
Reick [a VC brewer]
Richards, Elizabeth
Rutledge, Clyde
Schnitzer, Rosa Reick
Seeger, Rudy
Shetler, Roy
Stone, Charlie
Subramuniya, Master
Tessadio, Jack
Turney, Jim
Twain, Mark
Wagner, Leroy
Watkins, Neal

[Apparently reading from ms of the Virginia City book] . . . St. Mary's of the Mountains. Representing the oldest parish in Nevada, St. Mary's of the Mountains was a particular project of Father Manogue, who was to become Bishop. The first St. Mary's church was destroyed in the fire of 1875, but not dynamited, according to Father Meinecke, who had said there was photographic and other proof that the structure was rebuilt on the original walls, but with Gothic windows instead of the first Roman arched ones. An ornate church for the old West, it was designed in the tradition of much larger houses of worship. . . .

Pastor beyond the Beebe period, Father Meinecke faithfully held 10 o'clock Sunday mass until his suicide in 1974, and was active in community affairs, spending his spare energy in the restoration of the county hospital, where an art center was established. It had become a hospice for artists, known as the St. Mary's Art Center. An art gallery and gift shop was found [sic] by artists on the lower level of the church, entering from the rear, and enjoyed the attention of Louise Curran, who long oversaw the enterprise.

A tragic amputee with an unhealed leg, Father Meinecke arrived at his post believing the church had been stripped to the point of vandalism, its walls cracked and pillars bare. Adornment was missing, and the first floor of the east end seemed

the antithesis of reason. Meinecke threw himself into a program designed to set things right. The altar wall was repaired, exterior needs were met, and the chaos of the lower floor was corrected. Tirelessly improving the building toward his values, Father Meinecke spent winter vacations in world travel, surprising some neighbors, neither close nor Catholic, with Christmas cards postmarked Acapulco.

Admired and respected for the nondenominational memorial he gave Florence Edwards, the community was accustomed to finding morticians' limousines at St. Mary's doors. Then they would recall gravediggers' blasts from the cemetery. The Catholic cemetery was a special project of Meinecke's. Vandals had freely made off with interesting objects, while destroying others for sport. A cleanup of the grounds was made, and unreadable headboards were carefully relettered. Since then, authorities tightened security, and the Catholic father brought in the remaining Stations of the Cross from the Julia Hill [?], where their safety had been sullied.

How many tourists had strolled from C Street through the ornamentation of St. Mary's portals. Beyond pews and pillars, twentieth century multitudes had seen a painting of credit behind the altar, before which was a railing for prayer. Returning to C Street, they found it bustling day and night with steady tourists in twos, threes and sixes, blasted by the growing self-repeating horn that blared by count to a neighboring recorded spiel. . . .

[Walton's now reads three lists pertaining to his Virginia City book: first chapter titles (56 chapters), then descriptions of photos (334 photos), and finally captions of photos, all with page numbers of the book as he meant to design it (361 pages). The captions vary somewhat from the list of photos, both as far as identification and with respect to wording, some of them being quite extensive. Why he thought he needed both descriptions and captions of photos is puzzling. I transcribed and tabulated the former before realizing the latter came next on the tape. So below I have tabulated chapter titles and descriptions of photos, and left the captions.]

Note that a number of them are historical photos, not taken by Walton himself, which he either owned or knew of in archives. Also at least one Gus Bundy photo.]

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[Below only chapter titles are transcribed, except for excerpts of particular interest.]

~ The Arizona Comstock Mill ~

~ Fourth Ward School ~

A close look at the graffiti on the walls of the Fourth Ward School showed such names as Edward Coletti and Hugh Gallagher, pocket-knifed for posterity. Coletti was to become justice of the peace, and Gallagher the principal of the new brick school across from St. Mary’s. . . .

~ Two Classics ~

~ Cemeteries ~

. . . Hebrew script kept its secret from most graveyard visitors in the removed Jewish plot, once violated by playful young riflemen who shot up and smashed headstones after the site had been found in the brush, and tidied by others. . . .

~ The Nevada Brewery ~

The artist Zoray Andrus made her studio-home in the Nevada Brewery after her marriage to Eric Kraemer. They bought the property from Rosa Schnitzer, who came to Virginia as Rosa Reick, the niece of an early owner. In 1963, Reick and Rapp, two brewers who left a business in Downeyville, built the building in brick and incorporated the stone express station which had seen the early stage days. The rest was wood. Here Zoray Andrus reared a son, but the marriage ended, with the building becoming hers.

Rapp's day had been brief. He was of German nobility, with a brother the Graf of Baden Baden, according to Zoray Andrus, who sold the brewery to Master Subramuniya, of the Christian Yoga order. She then took her pubescent son Peter to California, to eventually be acclaimed for writing the hit song "Hello, Hello" and others he performed with San Francisco's Sopwith Camel.

The Nevada Brewery periodically changed, becoming Schnitzer's Brewery, a studio home, and the Hilarion Himalayan Ashram, afterwards known as the Wailua University of the Contemplative Arts. The land once had seepage from the forgotten cold spring, with pioneers watering at the brewery well. In time, the town ladies came to socialize on afternoons at the beer garden. In another century, friends of the Kraemers dropped by to see Zoray and Peter. Then the old brewery was transformed into offices, a print shop, teachers' and students' quarters and a dining hall, with monks and nuns directed from Hawaii by American-born Master Subramuniya. Yogi youth were encountered in numbers at the barely recognizable Nevada Brewery, either in meditation or in play or in fervent work for the cause.

~ Paiute Heritage ~

. . . Paiutes like Matthew Antunovich, the last Indian born resident of Virginia City, who even as the man of Nazareth was a carpenter. . . .

[What appears to be a postlude to the book:]

The hundredth anniversary of the nation was celebrated by the rebuilding of the town after the Great Fire of 1875. But in the next one hundred years, its mines declined and its buildings wasted. Through the 1920s, the '30s, the '40s it endured,

half legend, half living, to be ultimately engulfed in the cosmetic prosperity of tourist times, the nation itself caught in a petrochemical impasse. Yet the odds still favored that Sun Mountain would face a new morning.

[Photo captions:]

31. Tourists at the Enterprise Building.

The pillars of the Enterprise were borrowed from an adjoining property. . . . Elizabeth Richards was manager of accounts and coordination. Mildred Murry was circulation manager, while Roy Shetler was business manager. James D. Turney, master printer and later a fireman, was job manager. Richard Guy Walton painted the above oil in honor of the days Mark Twain spent at the Territorial Enterprise. The 1939 work depicts the dead cat scene of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn. Former wild west showman Roy Shetler was admired for his boardwalk horsemanship. Shetler operated the Trading Post, and in 1949 was photographed by pillars later removed to adorn the Enterprise. Shetler had a rough voice and a hearty manner. He also operated a related museum on the Enterprise lower floor, as well as opening a short-lived but grand candy store in the then Clegg-owned Howell & Black Building.

56. A triumph of the art of period lettering was found on the transom of the doorway of Gordon and Ann Lane's upstairs apartment.

59. The stool in the doorway [of the Union Brewery Saloon] was put there to discourage tourist browsing. Regulars stepped over Lane's dog Lancer, and pushed the stool aside, putting it back once inside. The stool was honored by the national press, and Lancer stood at the bar for a drink before the movie lens of Bill Heick [and] Frederick Hobbs, chief cameraman in a Comstock film involving a mutant sheep, called "The Monster." Hobbs's own handmade baby monster was left at the saloon he long knew and loved. [Hobbs was director of *Godmonster of Indian Flats*, a god-awful movie which had the virtue of showing Gordon Lane behind the bar, and Caples' 1948 painting of Virginia City on the wall.]

61. The Union Brewery's irreplaceable light globe had been documented. Gordon Lane decided to clean it, but it slipped from his hands and smashed on the boardwalk below. There was no record of how long the globe had been there, possibly since the coming of electricity. Thus it joined the rolls of lost history.

99. A rocket photo of St. Mary's and St. Paul's, taken by [Leroy] Wagner shortly

before his Easter Sunday suicide.

100. Loner Leroy Wagner believed colonization of other planets might free homo sapiens from Earth's crisis. Formerly a brothel, his workshop home still had red lights over the doors. The artist Bob Caples briefly used the right section as a studio in the mid-1940s, when it was no longer a brothel and before Wagner's outdoor collection [?] existed.

112. The native-born receptionist of Piper's opera House, Mrs. Alice Hinch Byrne, sister of Nicky Hinch. Visitors received her summaries of Virginia's and Piper's facts. Alice Byrne was also a student of the Fourth Ward School.

116. Shakespeare, as depicted by John Piper's artist son George. This son was Paris trained, and had been on the teaching staff of the Art Institute of Chicago, and later on the board of directors. Often called a painting, this work was in charcoal, and long installed on the proscenium arch, until carefully removed by Matthew Antunovich (see p. 350) for preservation. It was then photographed by Doc Kaminski, and a facsimile print was installed after retouching. [Continued on Tape 1/33-E, Side 1.]

Box 3, Tape 3/23-C, Side 1 – February 14, 1980

Main Subject of Selection: Text of Walton's Virginia City book, beginning with an epigraph.

People mentioned:

Beebe, Lucius
Clegg, Charles
Edwards, Florence
Griggs, Louise
Thomas, Helen Marye

Within sight is all that remains of a once-great city of 30,000 people. Nearly a billion dollars of gold and silver came from its mines, to create scores of millionaires. The Comstock Lode was the largest body of precious metals ever discovered on earth. At its zenith in the seventies, Virginia boasted the finest of everything. There were four banks, twenty laundries, fifty dry goods stores, six churches, five breweries and the wholesale liquor dealers serving 110 saloons. Mansions of the nabobs rose behind the town, and the water system – still in use – cost 3½ millions.

~ From a Territorial Enterprise Historical Road Sign

~ The Historic Past ~

When they drew the reins and the wagons stopped beside the Carson River, Thomas Orr's party of Mormon immigrants made camp beneath the cottonwoods shading the desert-weary strangers. Young, eager to explore for Western wealth he'd heard of, William Prouse might have felt foolish when he took up a milk pan in this unlikely place. But he headed for a nearby creek and made the first gold strike in what was to become Dayton, and the year was 1850. With the Prouse incident behind them on their hopeful journey to California's gold fields, the wagons were blocked by spring conditions in the High Sierras, so a more permanent camp was made where the party's plight could be discussed. But the leader's son, John Orr, and Nicholas Kelly went back to the creek where Prouse had made his find.

In the depths of prehistory, an enormous rift fractured the Virginia Range, situated a few miles east of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Imperfectly closing, the rupture was held open here and there, propped wide where massive rock crashed down into great gaps and at various depths, some following shallow. A set of pockets, many joined by crooked fissures, cracks beyond description, became the hidden store of untold years of mineralization, occasioned by hot springs in the region, which boiled up deposits to become precious in the sweep of unrecorded time.

It was distant from the main mountains that Orr and Kelly found themselves. Well below the elevations of the surrounding pinyon hills, John Orr prodded with a knife, searching crannies and washing country rock in the little stream which began a few miles uphill in American Flat, where it made its meandering way through sagebrush and between hills, finally bending eastward toward the water-carved rocks of the small canyon where Orr worked, then onward into flatter desert, heading for the cottonwoods along the river valley. The dust panned by Prouse had been float, originating in the country above. And how Orr's nugget lodged itself in the rock before him was a story told in eons, terminated by a twist of the young man's blade. Orr called the place Gold Canyon, the stream Gold Creek.

When the miners heard the news, they left their California diggings to try their luck in what they hoped would be richer ground beyond the Sierras. And as the placers multiplied, a mining camp took shape, the population growing to a couple hundred hearty prospectors in the seasons of high water.

Then one miner brought up a crew of Oriental sourdoughs called John Chinamen. It was their assigned purpose to build a placer from the Carson River to the diggings. But the failure of the enterprise only swelled the population of Gold

Canyon, with the community coming to be known as Johntown.

Hosea Ballou Grosh and brother Ethan Allen had sailed to California, where they worked in different claims with some technical knowledge. Dissatisfied, they decided to try Nevada, and were to establish themselves above Johntown at the base of Grisly Hill, near the wouth end of the present Silver City. Prospecting widely, the Grosh brothers wrote home of a silver ledge. But before they developed the property, Hosea struck his foot with a pick and died of the wound. Heading back for California financing, [Ethan] Allen Grosh was joined by a young man named Bucke, Dr. Richard M. Bucke. With the two of them soon caught in November snows, Allen's feet were frozen. And he too died, taking to his grave the last knowledge of the initial discovery of Nevada's silver and its whereabouts.

With the dwindling of Gold Canyon placers, the miners spread to higher ground. Among those was James Finney, a prospector from Virginia known to history and his contemporaries as Old Virginny. It fell to his lot to be first in finding gold in a place soon called Gold Hill. At the time, Mt. Davidson was open lands sagebrush, pinyon pines and junipers, interspersed with rabbit brush. Here, in the imagination of James Comstock, but not on paper, was a dream ranch he was quick to mention when he saw Patrick McLaughlin and Peter O'Riley pan some gold dust at the head of a mountain spring. Comstock declared himself and an associate in for shares, which were plainly given on the spot. They clumsily worked the property for some time before an ore sample found its way to Grass Valley, California for assay.

Up to this time, Comstock miners were having trouble separating a blue mud from the gold they found, and discarding it in disgust. After an inaccurate first assay, a second was made at the request of the mill operator, Judge James Walsh of Grass Valley, and the mud was determined to be silver worth just under four thousand dollars a ton. Walsh and his associates were quick to arrive at the new claim, where shares were bought in what was to be known as the Ophir Diggings.

These events heralded in the "Rush to Washoe," [Washoe being] the Indian name for the general area in those days, and soon the city of Virginia had its beginnings, a scattering of glory holes, tents and shacks which gave way to later saloons, mills, mansions and hoisting works, mingling without pretension.

Old Virginny, for whom the city was named, died in a fall from a horse. And Frank Comstock's chief importance was that history took his name for the Comstock Lode, while other names of the original pioneers lingered mostly in association with significant claims and mines later operated by Bonanza Kings. The names of Mackay, Flair, Flood and O'Brien, Sharon, Sutro and Diedesheimer were to emblazon the years.

Dan De Quille and Mark Twain found plenty to write about in a mining camp that became the rival of any American city west of St. Louis, and was visited by

President Grant and other of the mighty in those times. Its citizens were entertained by world-famous talents at the opera houses which served an overall community claimed to be 30,000 at its zenith. A testimony to its high living was found in the trash left behind, which abounds with large, chalk-white oyster shells and broken champagne bottles, byproducts of Bonanza millions.

Many fires threatened the early city of Virginia, which always rebuilt, as it did in the wake of the Great Fire of 1875, wholly consuming the central city, its works and churches, along with the brothels of D Street. Proud accounts tell of its rebuilding. Endless trains of supplies rolled one after another into the Virginia & Truckee yard, and within a year the city was more substantial than before, boasting the finest fire-fighting equipment in the nation. Its International Hotel was to be known among the best the West was proud of. Edwin Booth, James Corbett, Lotta Crabtree, Maude Adams, David Belasco and John Barrymore were in the show parade stretching across they years at Piper's Opera House, where Mark Twain spoke at a time of new national note. The prostitute Julia Bulette, murdered for her jewels, became deified in sentimental memories, and the hanging of her apparent killer was celebrated by a reveling population as the mines deepened and all but died.

By 1876, the main ore bodies had largely worked out, and some mining elements engaged in questionable financial maneuvering. Mills stopped shipping, or shipped less. The big names of Virginia City were already associated with a rising San Francisco. The aggressive and talented moved on, while at last the hillside metropolis dwindled in stalemate. Houses were bought for firewood, hoists were left to rust, while tunnels and shafts became laybyriths of misshapen timber molding in the heat below. Forests of square-sets braced the hollow hill, settling slowly, compressing into conformations like petrified wood. And what was left by the 1930s was a quaint deserted town, depleted of major buildings, reduced to sun-bleached squalor, which twenty years later Lucius Beebe, its come-lately scribe, loftily called "slum." Was it a fact that those who loved the old wreck best were the loyalists staying behind, sometimes joined by impressed strangers who found there a frail freedom known only to lost places in the West?

Photographs of the 1920s showed Virginia City a shadow of itself. And in the 1930s its circumstances clearly justified the term of ghost town. Visitors would recall this shaken-down, dust-filled deserted community, its broken buildings barred, its stores iron-shuttered. And through the years of World War , a nucleus of saloons thrived on occasional trade, while a lame restaurant or so slept it out. A few hotels remained somehow, offering meager services, while an old Indian took the sun on the boardwalk.

~ Kings and the Castles ~ [NOTE: On the list of chapters, it's Kings and Castles]

The Bonanza Kings were not the discoverers of gold and silver, but the developers. John Mackay arrived early at the Ophir Diggings, having sailed to California as a youth. He left the Golden State in 1859, striking out for Washoe, and became a superintendent at the Ophir, then later got control of the Kentuck at Gold Hill, in 1865, where a rich vein was opened at a shallow depth. Here Mackay made his first fortune. He later diversified his interests, and set a pattern of Bonanza control, joined by James C. Flood, William S. O'Brien and James G. Fair, among others at the Consolidated Virginia operation. Both Fair and Mackay were superintendents, the former noted for a false 1875 report of nonexistent ore at the turning point of the Big Bonanza, well worked out by 1876.

In 1864, William C. Ralston and D. O. Mills were associated with getting William Sharon to Virginia City to open a branch of the newly organized Bank of California. As branch manager, Sharon was to lend money generously during the depression of 1865, at the reduced rate of 2%, when rates were 5%. By foreclosures and pressure, the bank crowd controlled most of the mills and mines, and formed the Union Mill & Mining Company.

In 1869, Sharon began building the Virginia & Truckee Railroad, eliminating freight wagons as the Comstock had known them. With the success of these activities, grand homes were provided superintendents, and were at times tangent to the mines they represented. Furnished with the best of the day, these homes became legendary mansions of reference, and later were opened to the public at a price.

~ The Consolidated Virginia & California ~

The body of ore between the California and the Con Virginia property was worked by sinking the shaft known as the C & C, or the Consolidated Virginia & California Works. In its final years of operation, it was owned by Zeb Kendall, spoken of like the last of the Bonanza Kings, although the Big Bonanza was then history.

~ Bonanza Ruins ~

For a bustling city the size of Virginia to be reduced to a few shrunken blocks testifies to a process that was complete before anyone knew it. The Fulton Iron Works once produced enormous castings of wheels like houses, essential for massive hoisting. Of the plant nothing remained, and the Fulton home itself was moved to Reno and installed along the Truckee River, near the center of town, then eliminated. The new International Hotel burned in 1916 at Union and C Streets, and

one by one other prominent buildings either collapsed or were burned.

It was the garbage dump that survived eloquently until the 1940s. Wagon remains and early autos had long gone their way, and it got difficult to find an unbroken vintage bottle. Businessmen tried importing questionable items they tried fitting to the historic period, and low-grade Indian crafts came from the out-of-state Southwest. Rusted tins, rubble, pots, pans, and parts of broken stoves, hinges square nails and with luck some placer parts could be seen on off-road walks outside of town. At times the street was widened, and historic situations were liquidated, but this was to happen less as interest in preservation grew. Then restoration itself was found to frequent [sic] disaster.

Mining dumps of country dirt, mistaken for tailings, had come from deep shafts dug to the ore bodies, and their resulting mounds resembled the pyramids of Egypt. A few hoisting rigs decorated the Lode, and a cage might have been found where it fell. Foundations outlined the great mills, but nothing was left of the Consolidated Virginia, which became bare ground where a late twentieth century dig was made to recover lost flasks of quicksilver, without avail.

The Consolidated California burned, to become a hole in the yellow clay. So it was the smaller operations on the outskirts of Virginia City that weren't entirely spoiled by fire, restoration or tourism. On walks, hazardous air vents were confronted like booby traps into straight-down voids. There were quite rare miner's shacks, more washtubs, and sometimes a disintegrating ore wagon surrounded by barrel hoops in the hills. But in-town artifacts have been shifted from one site to another, until few would attempt to trace their sources. Pillars from some open ruin would be taken to decorate a porch front, falsely attached to a building never having neither. Safes and ore carts were to be seen as displays, and a donkey engine was plastered with signs.

Still, two unaffected establishments yet thrived on C Street, unchanged by either greed or tourism. These were the Crystal Bar and the Union Brewery Saloon. The Union Brewery was known for unbridled reserve, with the management defending the first cobweb. Otherwise, visitors searched the imagination for an authentic past century, disarmingly brought back by a discovered lock or its enormous keyhole.

~ Borrasca to Bonanza ~

The effect of Mexico on Virginia City was often overlooked. Eliot Lord gives an account of Don Ignacio Parades and his peons working in Gold Canyon. Spanish Ravine lies directly behind the town between Mt. Davidson and Ophir Hill, and the Mexican Company was formed when Gabriel Maldano bought part of the original Ophir ground. He was to work Mexican miners in their traditional way, carrying leather ore baskets strapped from their foreheads as they climbed notched logs to

upper levels. Individual Mexican prospectors had a winnowing method of dry placer mining, using the wind to carry off waste, with the gold remaining. And their reduction method was advanced for the early days on the hill. The arrastra milling system was originally Mexican. Chollar was a Spanish term, and there was a lexicon of Spanish terms in mining. Borranca was the word used when a mine was out of ore, while Bonanza meant the opposite.

Virginia City ended its dormant decades only when the second American migration followed World War II. By plane, bus and private auto, the West Coast was deluged with people from all parts of the nation. A swollen population in California chiefly accounted for Virginia City's tourist bonanza, and the merchants of C Street counted visitors by the thousands, until the streets were filled with licence plates representing the states of the union and many foreign countries.

~ The Territorial Enterprise ~

Nevada's first newspaper the Territorial Enterprise, opened for business in Genoa in 1858, Moved to Carson City, and was later published in Virginia City, before it was prominent in the Bonanza years, with writers Dan De Quille and Mark Twain, the pen names of William Wright and Samuel Clemens. Clemens came West, apparently avoiding the Civil War, to be near his brother Orion Clemens, Nevada's Territorial Secretary, as well as to satisfy his spirit. Adept at mining camp humor, his style was to be clumsily copied in the paper's twentieth century revival. Banker William Sharon bought the paper when running for US Senator, and won the office, which he was said to have ignored.

In the late 1940s, the Enterprise was purchased by the New York expatriot Lucius Beebe, who made his residence at number 2 South A Street, behind Piper's Opera House, attracted to Virginia City as a tax refuge. Straight gin was Beebe's martini, and it was told that every saloon kept his cold champagne on the ready. He affected the Dickens mode, and costumed his large person in top hat and tails, towering through the town rubble at high noon, Fieldsian to some, Edwardian to others. Constitutionally offended, Beebe published and wrote for the Enterprise with a staff of credit, and Charles Clegg his editor. His writings abetted the rich and famous, deplored failure of any kind, and ignored the poor. Leaving a small fortune to his second St. Bernard, to be called T-Bone Towser, he left a large one to his intimate partner Clegg, who kept on the legal residence at the same address.

Bob Richards was managing editor of the Enterpriuse through the Beebe years, and witnessed its last days in Virginia City under other ownership.

~ The Howell & Black Building ~

Situated on the northwest corner of C and Taylor Streets is the Howell & Black Building. It had been a source of excitement during most of its years, largely because of its peculiar construction, which occurred in relays. It's first phase, flush to C Street, was finished as a routine one-story building, to which another was added. Perhaps because of the Great Fire of 1875, which wiped out that part of the city, a barrier of bricks was installed in the attic, and this abnormal weight was countered by wall-to-wall metal rods, running through to prevent collapse. Beyond memory, the building took a pronounced lean northward, and had so remained for decades. The seniors recall registered warnings when time was young: children were never to walk near the building for fear of collapse. Impressed that the structure had held together in their witnessing, persons born and raised beside it paid no more heed to its lean than would a tourist from Pisa.

In the 1970s, it was said that the Howell & Black Building was on the move again, and this information was brought to the attention of the County Commissioners, who conceded that action was urgent. A series of charges and countercharges ensued, with the owners defending property rights, and showed an examiner's report regarding it as safe. Reports were shown on a window for all to see, and a large sign saying "Optical Illusion" was fastened to the rear of its remains, in a place where an upper story had been removed. A measure of agreement seemed promising, when funds appeared to be available from a group concerned with the preservation of historical landmarks. And there the case languished until county condemnation. The building once was the seat of territorial government, had been the first stock exchange west of Chicago, and had housed a saloon and a photography studio in early times, in addition to being the site of one of Nevada's bloodiest murders, when John Black bludgeoned his brother Sam in a family quarrel, shooting him as well.

~ The Virginia City Vintners ~

An understandable extreme of building occurred at the Virginia City Vintners, which was to occupy the premises of Godfrey's. The building was not a candidate for exact restoration, and became a project better termed rebuilding, although original elements remained beneath. As it was, the old structure could not have survived long. Restoration was apparently unwarranted, and it was even defensible that a coat of paint would have destroyed its look. Correcting warp amounted to destruction of its ghost town charm, and not doing anything was out of the question, if it was to be used. An almost new structure was made over the original framing, with the rear completely new, and needing over a hundred years of neglect to

restore its mellow mood.

~ The George T. Marye Room ~

Virginia City's banker, George T. Marye, was credited with building wharfs both in San Francisco and Stockton before coming to Virginia City. The Marye Mansion was built on B Street, almost directly behind the new post office and the Virginia Market, or due west of Town Hall. It was said that banking business was conducted on the first floor, and that the upper quarters were residential. The large, square-like building boasted an impressive high entrance porch, with large columns and steps up either side, suggestive of the South. It burned to the ground in the time of the builder's descendant, Helen Marye Thomas, who also suffered a fire that destroyed a Wadsworth ranch [S-Bar-S] and a classic Lincoln Continental she adored. Helen Thomas was one of the few Virginia City descendants of means who played a part in preserving the once-great mining city. A personal friend of Helen Thomas, Florence Edwards, took special pleasure in situating the George T. Marye Room on the second story of the Silver Dollar Hotel, overlooking C Street. No room in the establishment exceeded its elegance, although many other rooms were given the names of personages more easily recognized.

~ The International Hotel ~

The first, one-story International Hotel was built in 1860, and was replaced by a larger structure, begun in 1862. The fire of 1875 swept away the second International, along with the other buildings of central Virginia City. The last International Hotel was erected in 1876. And in 1916, the fabulous hostelry was again taken by fire, leaving a gaping space where its heralded events occurred. The land where it once stood became a parking lot. But the high life of the champagne supper days was well illustrated by the Christmas menu of 1879. [Walton: "Now the text includes the menu. . . ."]

~ Piper's Opera House ~

Grocer John Piper left his small market beside the Belle of the Union on Portsmouth Square in San Francisco in 1862 for a brilliant future as an impresario on the Comstock. For he was to own three opera houses, and to lose two by fire. His great-granddaughter, Louise Griggs, of Englewood, New Jersey, was to engage in the task of restoring the frame structure, which outlived many buildings of stone and mortar.

On his arrival in Virginia City, Piper got a job with Maguire's Opera House, on the east side of D Street near Union, in 1863. He bought out Maguire in 1867, and was to see his building burn. Rebuilding, he suffered the same fate, with the final Opera House constructed on B Street across from the International Hotel. His son Edward was to have followed [sic] in his footsteps, even establishing a vaudeville circuit serving part of California. Another son, George, studied art in Paris, and became a prominent member of the staff and board of the Art Institute of Chicago.

A complete list of stars who appeared at Piper's would include anyone who was anybody at its prime. In 1925, Piper's quit operations after becoming a silent movie house, in addition to other roles, with the further decline of the mines.

~ C Street ~

Some said that B Street was the principal thoroughfare of Virginia City. B Street had the Courthouse, Piper's, and the International Hotel. But C Street had boasted the hotel's tallest side. The Old Washoe Club, the first Roos Brothers, the Howell & Black, and the Territorial Enterprise Buildings were all on C Street. The Brass Rail was relatively untouched in the tourist era, but less so [sic] than the Union Brewery Saloon.

C Street's Western flavor has thwarted schemers of all kinds. With few items of export beyond belches and toothache, crafts workers began making inroads on C Street, once only noted for its many bars. Questionable music was pounded live in some establishments, with costumed performers gaudily trying for a Bonanza effect. Juke boxes were plentiful, and old pianos played for coins, with a music box now and again, delighting new ears. The Crystal Bar's orchestrion nobly offered wracking drum rolls and clattering piano notes, made like popcorn to a wheezing undertone, a large quarter's work in bad times.

Visitors could get candy, liquor, leather sandals, foot-long hotdogs, or the week's groceries, could have fortunes told or could squint at photographs past. They could stay overnight, gas up, get gassed, have wonton or eggroll, or eggs over easy with thousands of their like, on a street where cars were bumper-to-bumper all summer long. In winter the crowds thinned, until the street was almost its old self.

Box 3, Tape 3/23-C, Side 2 – February 14, 1980

Main Subject of Selection: Text of Walton's Virginia City book, continued.

People mentioned:

Avencino, Louis

Beebe, Lucius

Best, Katherine
Boegle, Carl
Clegg, Charles
Clouatre, Arsine
Davis, Harry
Davis, M. J.
Davis, Susie
Etters, Olga
Evans, Abe
Gallagher, Hugh
Gerbatz, John
Giuffra, Millie Murry
Hart, Pat
Hilliard, Katherine
Kolodziej, Mr.
Kolodziej, Mrs.
Leonard, Hobart
Leong, Lynn
McBride, Don
McBride, Mrs. Versal
McBride, Versal
Murry, Jack
Palmer, Edith
Rule, Ken
Turney, James D.

Versal McBride ran the Bucket of Blood as a popular saloon, which displayed a large collection of antiques. McBride was impressive in his tall boots, and Mrs. McBride was warmly remembered for showing her glassware personally. The contested portrait of the notorious Julia Bulette made its appearance in their time, and when their son Don took over, the barroom doubled, and an antique shop was opened across the street. The International Hotel site became the Bucket's parking lot, and Don McBride took a hand in promotions. Instrumental in bringing the stars of the television program *Bonanza* to Virginia City, the young McBride gave each principal a gold belt buckle similar to his own, but with their names. He was consulted on most local questions, and his views carried weight. Tourist- and family-minded, his public policy was conservative, and contrasted with any that would tend to throw the town wide open.

The north half of the Bucket of Blood Saloon was once the Ald [?] Cafe. In older times, the restaurant was under Chinese management, with whites eating upstairs and Orientals downstairs in an atmosphere of sharp racism. Late Lynn Leong, Chinese-American owner of the Sharon House Restaurant, became one of the town's most popular figures.

Faint remains of the sign painted on the Bucket of Blood iron door recall the Depression of the 1930s: "Meals 25¢"

~ Fraternal Organizations ~

Chowder and marching societies were held to be traditional in Virginia City. Each club, fraternal order, community guard and friar organization had marched in their own uniforms at the drop of a hat. But a sober Miners Union contributed early funding to Adolph Sutro, desperately hoping that he would save the mines threatened by both heat and flooding. Enormous pumps had been used, but Sutro came up with a new way to drain the mines, by a tunnel, whose outlet was to be his own town, called Sutro, near Dayton. Here he would mill Comstock ore and dominate the mining scene. Acting in good faith, the miners believed his plan would keep the mines open. With the failure of his project apparent, the now-wealthy Sutro left the tunnel in other hands, to eventually become San Francisco's mayor. The miners bit early and hard.

The Odd Fellows Hall finished its career as a theater, before it was demolished. But the Knights of Pythias survived on B Street near Miners Union Hall, separated by the open ruins of the Moran Building, whose front wall alone remained until the restoration project of the Julia Bulette chapter of E Clampus Vitus took it in hand.

Fire fighting organizations were prominent in early affairs. Having their own uniforms, it was a matter of pride to belong to one or another of these rival handcart companies. It was claimed that their real purpose was political and social, rather than fighting fires. Rivalries were shown in public displays temperish [?] vanity.

A modern form of chowder and marching society was hopefully revived by a social set. But however laudable were intentions, the move never compared to the glorious parades of uniformed dandies marching in plumed hats to the music of the big brass bands, a populace cheering on both sides of B Street. Daintily held parasols were in the hands of pale ladies wearing billowing skirts and pinching corsets below ribboned bonnets, with their children waving as the marchers passed.

~ Houses ~

Before Olga Etter went to Mexico, she had achieved one of the best restorations in Virginia City in her former house at the corner of A and Taylor. While its three stories were all seen from the east side, the smaller effect on A Street had more appeal. Here its proportion of ginger bread to wall was in effective balance. Too much was often disastrous. Houses which never had it suffered from its being tacked on, after being designed by people who didn't understand the period. At times, restorers would accent in gingerbread that would overcome the house, producing an unreal Valentine.

The Kenny and Cobb Houses were untouched examples of how the upper classes lived. And the Beebe and Clegg House once had been painted in mustard and liver hues similar to Beebe's Rolls-Royce. Later, the front trees were cut down to let sunlight into a shaded front room, and the house was repainted without hue or a colorist's synthesis. Beebe's bidet bathroom Clegg described as a Roman bath, and was changed into a guest room, but visitors could still imagine Beebe at his desk or putting his hat on the hall hanger.

The restoration of the Kolodziejs – Mrs. Kolodziej, the well-known operator of Edith Palmer's gourmet Country Inn on South B Street – were in good taste, but highly seasoned with ginger bread. The Nevin House hulked high on C Street, and was at its best from below.

Looking at the mansions and better homes, the fact remained that most houses had been plain, even shacks. A large community of underprivileged Chinese dominated the east side of town, and good architectural examples were at a premium at any time, in the first smog city in the West. One miner said, "I bought many a house for forty dollars for firewood." The destruction of buildings staggered the mind when a city of 30,000 came back into focus, a place knowing wickiups, boarded caves, shacks, sheds, and mansions, the first of which had been build from milled timber taken from Six Mile Canyon. Hills in all directions were stripped of anything resembling wood, demanded by buildings, mined and stoves.

~ The Spite House and the Katies ~

Writers Katherine Hilliard and Katherine Best long lived beside the Spite House, where they collaborated under the name The Katies. Before their tenancy, their house was built beside the property line of the owner of the next lot, who retaliated by moving his house as close to the other as possible. Called the Spite House, it was restored by the Kolodziejs. The Katies were on the Comstock through and beyond the Beebe era.

~ Neglected Houses ~

Neglected houses soon had nails backing out of lumber, and especially so if nails were driven straight in. Not all builders observed the practice of slanting nails in opposing directions to make a claw pattern, which resisted pulling out when temperatures were extreme. Natural contraction and expansion in semi-arid areas such as Nevada affected buildings severely. Virginia City buildings were not well maintained in the middle years of the ghost town period. Its great works, its mills and mine buildings, were often dismantled for salvage. The landscape became

cluttered with unwanted materials – metal sheeting, cables, wire, worthless plants and boards, short parts of huge mine timber, old wooden spools of unbelievable size once used for cable, both square and round nails, enormous bolts, butts as large as a hand, bricks of several kinds, piles of mortar, huge building blocks quarried in the hills, and heaps of rust where once-recognizable metal articles had completely dissolved. A family of cottontails might live unsuspected beneath a rusty panel of sheet metal, half-buried in the ash-heavy soil, left from the fire of a great hoisting works. Frame houses lost windows. Doors were blown in, and winter snows drifted over floors year after year. The result was an utter loss. One marveled why some buildings stood and others fell. The seemingly substantial would dissolve, and other buildings collapsed with underground cave-ins.

When roofs blew off, walls of brick and mortar might melt in a few years, after standing more than a century. This was partly due to what people called Chinese bricks, bricks of low-fired poor material made by early Chinese laborers. Those salvaged frequently dissolved in a year or so, though seemingly sound. In new situations, the balance of former protection was forfeited. Rain, snow, and following hot sunlight alternated with freezing temperatures, making them undependable. Builders learned not to re-use them, although they looked inviting.

~ The Storey County Courthouse ~

At first Virginia City had a routine city government, but when mining declined it was governed by Storey County Commissioners in what threatened to be a ghost town. And the community never fully qualified as a city, with its stable population set at about 500, to increase with tourism. In the later 1950s, new houses were occasionally built, and in twenty years construction was familiar. These houses never dominated the old clusters of original charm. People were faced with a dilemma: whether to imitate the old or contrast with different motifs. Good new buildings might have made old ones rich by comparison. But it was understandable when the county took a hard line in favor of the old. This would be a blow to those who enjoyed near-anarchy. Many had come for freedom.

For long, the county was plagued by two issues: land development and prostitution. Skilled operators moved into areas long fallow on the outskirts of town. The state and county adopted a stern view of carpetbagger development, too late to be effective. Lame duck commissioners on their way out of office passed an ordinance on prostitution which in effect put the county in bed with the brothel business and high licences. Virginia was divided on the issue, and at that time it was the only ordinance of its kind in the nation. Press and TV publicized the situation, while prostitution remained a question to pressured voters. Locals were stunned to

find the river prostitute district outvoting them, under a new US Supreme Court ruling, by which prostitutes could send in an absentee ballot from anywhere after their brief crib stay. Residents seemed threatened by the loss of county government, while the District Attorney's office sent proud copies of the ordinance to interested places, including Seattle and even Formosa. Other businesses dealt with roads, sewage, general licencing, water problems, and hearing out frustrated citizens at Commissioners' meetings, where an open forum was observed, effective or not.

~ Virginia City Fire Companies ~

Former master printer of the enterprise, fireman Jim Turney, said the buildings of Virginia City had been insured by different companies, with fire companies responsible only for the protection of certain buildings. "They would fight each other if a fire company showed up at the wrong building that was ablaze, instead of fighting the fire." Turney would point to a handwritten and framed document prepared by the local school principal, Hugh Gallagher, who came from an early mining family. Gallagher had called his paper "A History of Organized Firefighting in Virginia City, 1860-1962."

The first firefighting outfit was a bucket company organized at a citizens meeting at the International House [Hotel] in 1960, when it was a frame building on B Street. Their only equipment were buckets, and the company disbanded the next year. Its nucleus entered new companies called Virginia Engine Co. No. 1 and the Hook & Ladder Co. No. 1, with both acting together. Gallagher's account shows the Young American Engine Co. No. 2 as being organized in 1862, on March 17, with an improved engine costing \$6,000, manned by 80 members and with 600 feet of hose. The Eagle Engine Co. No. 3 was organized in August, 1863, after buying the hand engine from Vigilante Co. No. 9 in San Francisco, a Jeffrey make costing \$3,700, with 600 feet of hose and 80 members. The Washoe Engine Co. No. 4, organized in August, 1863, with a similar engine to Co. No. 1 [sic]. In the summer of '64, a Knickerbocker Engine Co. No. 5 was launched. On October 19, 1864, the Confidence Engine Co. No. 6 was organized, changing its name to the Monumental Co. No. 6 in 1866. The came the brief Hand in Hand Hose Co. No. 1, which concluded all the volunteer fire companies in Virginia City.

Gallagher found that all apparatus was lost by all companies, as well as unrelated buildings they owned, in the Great Fire of 1975, with the exception of that of Monumental No. 6 and Young American No. 2. Hook & Ladder No. 1, Virginia Engine Co. No. 1, and Young American No. 2, Eagle No. 3, the Knickerbocker No. 5 and Monumental No. 6 owned buildings from which they derived income, and which were lost.

In 1876, the State Legislature passed an act authorizing paid fire departments, and

the volunteers were disbanded. Engine Co. No. 2 was incorporated as a building association, with 20 members. The Monumentals kept their equipment and organization as auxiliaries of the paid department.

A new water supply changed fighting methods. New pressure was great, and made obsolete the old hand engines, called man-killers. Hydrants were increased, and a system of hose stations were [sic] set up, and in the late 1870s, Virginia probably had the best-equipped fire fighting program in the nation. Its equipment included one steam engine, one hand engine, one hook and ladder truck complete, five extra ladders, two horses in harness, two one-horse hose carts, one four-wheeled hand hose carriage, 8,000 feet of hose, a full supply of nozzles, axes, ladders, etc., 96 hydrants, 21 cisterns through the city, extra ladders at various points, with 25 hose depositories.

K. B. Brown was first chief, and was displaced by William Rennison, who was displaced on political grounds by John Reardon after the consolidation of Virginia City and Gold Hill.

There were many fires through the period of 1860 and 1880, with the fire companies preventing total destruction many times. The first notable fire in Virginia occurred on August 29, 1863, breaking out in the rear of Patrick Lynch's saloon, with the loss of property amounting to \$700,000. The fire area was from Taylor to Sutton, from A to B Streets, and part of C, running east and west in the principal business district. A fire starting at the Fountainhead Restaurant burned on from Union to Sutton, and from B Street east and Sutton west, costing \$400,000 and occurring on September 29, 1865. A lamp burst at a music hall on September 23, 1866 to cause a fire of note. And on September 19, 1870 Lonkey & Smith's Lumber Yard at the corner of D and Smith Streets burned from D east and incurred the explosion of 100 pounds of Hercules powder at 11 p.m., which was stored there under the bedroom of Maror General Von Bocklen. He was killed with nine others, and the loss was estimated at \$250,000.

The Great Fire of 1875 began on October 26, in an A Street lodging house, involving the total destruction of the business district, at a loss of \$12,000,000. It was bounded on the south side by Taylor Street and Carson on the north. It burned as far as Stewart west and the Chinese area east. Powder exploded here and there, Gallagher wrote, with a gale blowing soon after the fire began. On November 2, eight days later, a snowstorm fell, with welcome effect. Three hundred businesses had been lost, 1,000 dwellings. The Consolidated Virginia Mill was lost, along with all early firehouses on B and C Streets.

Tom Peasley later divided the city into four wards, and built a tall red fire tower high on the mountain, with watchmen observing both day and night, a system which operated for 57 years. This structure was situated just off B Street, at a point

beyond the Castle.

From early 1880 to the time of the Gallagher report, the fire company operated with both paid firemen plus volunteers. Horses were used until 1932, when a Chevrolet fire truck was acquired. Gold Hill and the Divide, an area between Virginia City and Gold Hill, always used manpower to get equipment to fires.

The fire companies used to parade on holidays, and were politically influential. Each had military bands and owned uniforms. The last fire company protected 30,000 people in the growth of the 1880s, which necessitated increased firefighters, with additional volunteers, the latter unpaid. The fire horses were put to pasture in 1932, and the fire watch with the tower was ended. The new fire truck was kept at the Virginia Garage until 1934, and was moved to a vacant saloon, later Town Hall, north of the National Guard Hall.

On March 2, 1942, the Storey County Fire Department was organized under the Storey County Council of Defense, Department 24. John Gerbatz was president, and Carl Boegle was chief, with a new Ford fire truck and train laymen [?].

In the late 1940s, government surplus equipment was obtained, with Virginia City seeing its first tank and pumper truck. A surplus ambulance was also acquired. In 1958, another pumper was added from Carson City, with a new International ambulance, and a new fire house was constructed in 1962.

~ The Virginia City Water Company ~

Before the Virginia City Water Company was purchased by the county in the early 1970s, the Leonard name had long been associated with it. Hobart Leonard inherited the responsibility of running the utility which made possible life on the Comstock. Generally called Hobie, and in a crisis Hobe, he had been closer to the community than any saloon owner, merchant or politician. When pipes froze, it was Hobie who would be on the job with his crew, fighting through snow-covered frozen ground. He had been seen a thousand times with his pickup truck, his men in a barricaded hole, with Hobie making decisions. At times, seemingly endless underground pipes would have to be thawed, using an electrical device carried on truck number two. His father had chiefed the company, with a side interest in a mine situated within a stone's throw of Julia Bulette's grave.

But it was the visionary giants who brought water to the Comstock first. Springs had been all too few on Mt. Davidson, and the infrequent wells had been drained by the mines. With the mills needing lots of water, one of the world's largest syphons was built to bring it from Lake Marlette, high above Tahoe. Water was to flow into a huge pipe, which went downhill across the valley floor, then up the next mountain to Virginia City. Remains of ruined flumes made a serpentine course, trailing

around Mt. Davidson and Ophir Hill, through forgotten diggings above Virginia City.

~ The Telephone Company ~

Hand-cranked telephones were still in operation in Virginia City during the mid-1970s, the last of their kind in the United States. Cranks were turned to activate a switchboard at the telephone company on C Street, completing the action when receivers were lifted later. Names were sometimes used instead of numbers, with the operators knowing everyone in town. Locals could call the operator and say, "I won't be home for a while, I'll be at Gordie's. If anyone wants me, have them call the Brass Rail." In the old days, when such a call came through, Pat Hart would have dashed from the Brass Rail Saloon to the Union Brewery next door, saying, "You're wanted on the phone."

Personal service was long appreciated by a community fearing those days must end, to conform with the computerized society. Bell of Nevada kept the system on as a monument to past days, and in accord with local polls. Calls not local were all long distance and costly, but the luxury of a housewife hearing an operator say "Alice, I think Ruthie is at Martha's" can't be counted in coin. Affectionately remembered was telephone operator blind Susie Davis, who despite her handicap learned to handle the switchboard deftly, the switchboard itself making a part of the telephone permanent display at the Nevada State Museum in Carson City.

The early telephone company was the M. J. Davis Stationery & Book Store on C Street. The Bell system took over the company from its historic family when it was one of the oldest exchanges in the West, in the early 1960s, without changes of policy. On a razor's edge, the townspeople accepted that the phones would have to go sometime, but were generally glad that day had not arrived. Harry Davis, an employee of the Nevada State Highway Department, was usually busy as one of the perpetually occupied crew which kept the highways in top shape. In blizzard conditions, Geiger Grade could be tough going. Fondly called Highway Harry by friends, Davis had said that his Great-aunt Susie, who operated the switchboard, had been struck in the eye with a pitchfork at Sutro when a child. She'd been looking through a knothole while playing, and was blinded in one eye, with the other also going blind as an aftereffect. He said she had studied Braille, and could hear where the telephone numbers were without seeing them.

The stage curtain at Piper's Opera House was filled with signs advertising local establishments of bygone days. Among those was the ad of M. Davis, dealer in books, magazines, fancy goods, etc.

~ The Virginia & Truckee Railroad ~

Mark Twain's contemporary newswriter Dan De Quille called the Virginia & Truckee Railroad the crookedest in the world, and tempered the impact of his words by describing the many 360 degree turns the road made getting from Carson City to Virginia. In Eliot Lord's *Comstock Mining and Miners*, an original report to the United States Government of the Interior [sic] said there were seventeen coils of track in thirteen and a half miles, quoting from the railroad's designer, I. E. James. It was the Virginia City branch manager of the Bank of California, William Sharon, who in December, 1868 assigned James to build the railroad in record time. With English rails, the road was completed in November, 1869, with H. M. Yerington its superintendent. It was said that Sharon boasted of having built the road without spending a cent, having got \$500,000 from the counties involved and \$700,000 from mine owners, leaving Sharon and his people in control of a \$1,200,000 railroad, which was to cancel the threat of Adolph Sutro's tunnel that promised cheaper milling.

The V & T replaced wagon trains, as they had been known, and was to haul timber from the Sierras to meet demands of the mines. Some of this timber was floated down the Carson River, and picked up by the V & T and taken on. A system of sidings accommodated mines, and the tracks crossed a tressle at Gold Hill, then went through a tunnel to enter Virginia City a bit below the Chollar Mansion, then headed into the central city. On reaching that area, they passed through a short tunnel in front of St. Mary's, emerging on E Street, midway between Taylor and Union Streets. The northern headboards of the tunnel were a colorful sight, until removed in the 1960s as part of the street improvements of the late Carl Boegle, then in charge of county roads. Some years before, the tower of St. Mary's was found to be leaning westward, due to the old tunnel, which was then caved in purposely by heavy equipment, to be resurfaced as an improved E Street.

The Virginia & Truckee freight depot was one of the dominating sights of the community after the great hoisting works and mills were gone. In the later period, its platform timbers were often broken or dislodged, providing insecure footing for the curious. The yards about the building, which had known multiple tracks, were replaced by a dirt street, which became lined with automobiles and campers in season, and crowds during camel race days. The outer walls of the depot were inscribed with the names of passing generations. Peace symbols were interlaced with the scrawls of forgotten youths of the past.

In his barbershop, formerly occupying the lower rear of the Brass Rail Saloon, town barber Louie Avencino would recall the days of his youth by telling such stories as the one about the whisky car. The V & T yards were directly below his

big window. “They used to leave the flatcars on the sidings, and sometimes they were loaded with barrels of whisky. When we were kids, we’d slip out at night and meet beside the whisky cars with our Mason jars. Then we’d knock down a barrel hoop, drill a hole and fill our jars with whisky, drive in a wooden plug, break it off, and pound the barrel hoop back in place over the plug. Then we’d go to the next barrel, until we had all this whisky, and nobody was ever the wiser.” Louie, amused by his memories, was fondly called Louie the Barber. He took a stern view of the younger generation, claiming they were shooting songbirds with 22s. In a few years after telling his story of the whisky barrels, Louis the Barber, who had kept a long vigil over the V & T freight yards, joined the increasing ranks of the richly remembered.

Arsine [sp?] Clouatre restored the earliest passenger and express depot of the V & T, in existence before the railroad reached the site. He acquired it from the widow of Jack Murry, Millie Murry Giuffra, who became responsible for several properties she shared with Murry, an antique enthusiast and breaker of mustangs. Among their properties were both the freight and passenger depots. A second passenger depot was situated further uptown, well remembered by Ken Ruhl [sp?] and by Abe Evans, who said he used to carry bags from the depot to their hotel, for traveling drummers.

The Clouatre station was a grand example of railroad architecture, especially on the west end. Its porch roof was designed with the fiddle grace [filigrees?] and braced with engrossing ironwork. Corner curves winged over with authority, suggesting the architect had a ball. Playfully worked gable patterns vented an attic, adding fruit to the cocktail. The building, situated at the south end of the railroad tunnel site, where headboards had given in, saw the tunnel filled with earth at that end, but an intact retaining wall just outside the tunnel survived, with its deadman cables still anchored in the bank. Here passing trains could long have been imagined.

Box 3, Tape 3/33-E, Side 1 – February 15, 1980

Main Subject of Selection: More captions for Walton’s Virginia City book, with the caption for page 111 continued from Tape 1/33-D, Side 2. Then Walton’s “Introduction” to the book.

People Mentioned:

Allison, Lu
Beymer, Floyd
Beymer, Margaret
Eggenberger, Rolf

Hardin, Lyle
Kopp, Dick
Kraemer, Eric
Kraemer, Janet
Pecoraro, Dennis
Rutledge, Clyde
Salmon, Clint
Salmon, Nell
Stone, Charlie
Wagner, Leroy
Watkins, Neal

116 (cont'd). Visitors thought the photograph to be the original, which actually was torn and stained, but in fair condition for such a hard-used charcoal drawing. . . .

129. A Virginia City Market window reflected St. Mary's at the Christmas season. Dennis Pecoraro bought the market from County Commissioner Clint Salmon and his wife Nell. Salmon, a fighter for social justice, was, like Pecoraro, [inaudible] of the evils attendant to prostitution, and against unsound land promotion.

133. . . . Charlie Stone's "Virginian" gift shop and saloon.

143-43. "Veni-Vidi-Vici Mexican Mustang Liniment."

162. In Depression years, the north side of the Bucket was the Ald [sp?] Cafe.

165. The Unicorn's Rolf Eggenberger had worn leather knickers and sandals of his own making, while busy at seemingly endless crafts, including jewelry and metalwork, made to the music of medieval recall.

171. The Molinelli was also called the Carney Hotel. . . .

205. Doubting Thomas Neal Watkins, owner of the Sutro mine, said the "values" were never silver, but secretly stockpiled platinum, exchanged for cheaper English silver by internationalists.

206. Margaret Beymer, of Floyd's Agate Shop, named for her husband, might have been a model for the American scene artist Grant Wood. . . .

208-209. Afteryears on the San Joaquin delta, painter Charlie Stone opened the "Virginian" on C Street.

212. Missouri-born Lyle Hardin was a Montana cowboy before coming to Nevada.

213. Dick Kopp had a truck with a sign saying “Artist, Author, Bum,” and had long operated a museum.

215. Ecologist Clyde Rutledge conserved aluminum beer cans from an endless barroom supply, and was also found in traffic at the wheel of a sedan with chicken wire windows. Its name “Phydeaux” was one of his cluttering signs, such as “Bring Out Your Dead.”

217. One-time rodeo barrel racer Lu Allison.

228. The Castle on B Street. . . . The above house was restored by Janet and Eric Kraemer, with the expert help of Leroy Wagner. It was believed to have been the office of a lumber yard and was two stories tall at the rear. The property made a small but charming residence.

257. Brush fire near the hospital, later an art center.

~ Introduction ~

As a boy, Christopher Columbus . . . [Yes, Walton begins his book about Virginia City with Columbus! The “Introduction continues on Side 2.]

Box 3, Tape 3/33-E, Side 2 – February 15, 1980

Main Subject of Selection: “Introduction” continued.

[Walton makes his way through Cortes, de Leon, Capt. Cook and so on to Fremont.]

Box 3, Tape 3/33-F, Side 1 – February 17, 1980

Main Subject of Selection: A reading about Florence Edwards; a reading of what appears to be a short foreword to Walton’s Virginia City photo book.

People Mentioned:

Abramson, Mr. & Mrs.

Beebe, Lucius

Butterfield, Roger

Edwards, Florence Ballou
Green, Mr. & Mrs.
Huston, John
Mack, Effie Mona
Pecoraro, Dennis
White, Pearl

In the crisp days of winter, Florence Ballou Edwards of Virginia City's Silver Dollar Hotel brightens the mention of a new season. It meant the end of [inaudible] thaw, better weather, and people from exciting places. . . .

Before I knew her, Florence Edwards had achieved fame as a savvy hotel keeper, ever proud of an expired 3A rating, advertised on a painted rock north of town. Her talk was broad when she spoke of the hotel's *Holiday* article, and she tacked its illustration of the lobby on her kitchen wall, near a nationally circulated caricature of her Epicurean Lucius Beebe, whom she thought of as an equal.

The kitchen was at the rear of the lobby, separated by a buffet area, where the New Year would ring in guest-given booze, platters of sliced ham and turkey, with heaps of caviar and a thousand hors d'oeuvres of different kinds, brought up from Hillsboro, California.

The hotel keeper told of yak rides in Tibet one moment and shooed off unwelcome sightseers the next, "This is an operating hotel. Do you wish something?" The San Francisco Chronicle missed no bet to print her name, and the hotel became a Western Valentine. Aloof to intruders, she was a gregarious conversationalist, with the understanding that she would tolerate no interruption, yet sharing experiences with those she valued, so long as the chat wasn't serious. And she might come one with a tale like her adventure abroad with the silent film star Pearl White. She'd met the actress during a visit to France, and they became immediate friends. Hilariously recounting the incidents of the champagne party at Pearl White's villa, located in a bois outside of Paris, she explained it had been a gift from a gentleman friend, a Middle Eastern prince interested in Miss White. Among other gifts was a matched pair of ornately trapped donkeys from his homeland. "After all that champagne, we saddled the donkeys and raced full tilt through the bois in the dark of early morning, bells swinging and our hair flying in the wind," she said with her eyes moistening for joy. Her cheeks, already red, betrayed her enchantment before she'd made her point.

Florence had a cloying way of howling down scale. Perhaps she'd laughed all night. "I have this elderly gentleman who's been a guest of the hotel, and we've only said good morning and good night. But last night he'd been drinking. It was late, and I was going upstairs myself, and had followed him a bit behind. Halfway up, he stopped short and turned to me with a gracious bow, saying, 'Mrs. Edwards, would you care to join me in a sedate sexual dalliance before retiring?'"

Florence Edwards never hesitated to cut down the high and mighty, and she did it one time before a scattering of familiars outside the hotel. She sat in a rocker, watching the street parade with us, when one of Nevada's biggest casino owners passed with his current blond wife. They slipped by like two playing cards on ice, with Florence eyeing them unashamed. "He looks exactly like a spawning salmon," she drawled.

My senior, Florence often asked me to escort her to social events, whether or not she herself had been invited. She had the crust of a madam and the presumption of the Vanderbilts, with her unwary friends swept along by her royal certainty. She invited me to a party of other of her friends, saying, "They're all women, and we need a man. A party's dreadful without a man." Regulars knew everyone in town, so her take-over raised no local eyebrow.

It was a reception for John Huston, who'd been shooting *The Misfits* at Dayton that week with Marilyn Monroe and Clark Gable. No familiar actors were found, and the festivity seemed mainly for staff. But why it included a number of fence-top camel riders, who'd brought up animals for the town's annual spectacle, I never knew. Lucius Beebe had been erected near Huston at the main table, and, after buttery words about the film director from an unknown, Florence Edwards took the floor, her face radiant with martinis, pulled herself together and eulogized Beebe as the savior of the Lode. The fence gang tried to boo her down, but she came on stronger than all of them together, articulating her last unhurried words full volume, then sitting down hard.

Dr. Effie Mona Mack, Nevada's eminent historian, afterwards was seen soliciting the autographs of Huston and Beebe, which were written on a Sharon House menu, assuring the day a place in history, if only on the files. [Elsewhere on Walton's tapes, not transcribed, Walton described his surprise when Mack next proceeded to come and solicit his, Walton's, autograph to accompany those of Huston and Beebe.]

Another time, I escorted Florence to an opening at the Chollar Mansion, where she had been invited. But her demeanor was constant, invited or not.

There'd been countless New Year's parties at the Silver Dollar, to which most of the town was welcomed by yearly visitors, who adopted the townspeople. The Abramsons and the Greens always brought up a high tide of Bay Area friends with them, and there was to be a last party after her death, in the hope that she might just show up anyway.

I passed a funeral one time on my way to C Street, and said to grocer [Dennis] Pecoraro, "Whose funeral is it? I feel I should ask for fear of passing up my own." As I left the market I ran into Florence and repeated the story, wishing later I'd told her some fluff she doted on, for it was the last time I would see her.

Haughty, vain, acid-tongued, testier by the year, offended easily, an unctuous pal of the rich, a name-dropping, well-bred, hearty and beloved hotel keeper, she had more friends out of pocket than in. For some years, she'd been the fond employer of a loyal and lovely Indian girl, who as far as I could tell spoke to no one. And when the spirit of Florence Ballou Edwards left the Silver Dollar, the girl vanished.

...

In his foreword to *The American Past*, its author [sic] Roger Butterfield, a former Virginia City resident, wrote: "Pictures can lie, and often do. It might also be argued that nothing can lie so effectively as a picture. A carefully chosen picture can distort almost any fact. By the same token, some pictures can tell the truth in a way that words are powerless to match." Using this credo in a loose way, I have avoided the depiction of Virginia City's tourism, its automobiles and snow cones. A book of an entirely different spirit could have been made on the eve of the energy crisis, a chock-full town of tourists jamming the boardwalks with strange legs in miniskirts and unbelievable men in Hawaiian prints, or even profiles of Storey County authorities pondering split decisions. Instead I have made an effort to get unobstructed shots of buildings I knew would be in the clear when snow fell and cars would be forbidden for the duration of snow removal. Otherwise good negatives were rejected because of overlooked bumpers in forgotten corners. I shot the hardware, and certain people, supporting an earlier meaning. The cameras were carried into the surrounding mountains, and underground too. My lungs fairly burst on the climb up Ophir Hill for a single shot on one long-awaited day and hour. I have defied Greyhound buses in the middle of C Street from the top rungs of a ladder. Over 3,000 were the lot, hoping for one in ten.

Box 3, Tape 3/33-F, Side 2 – February 17, 1980

Main Subject of Selection: Duncan Emrich's hoax story on Bronco Lazari's death; Zoray Andrus with Tallulah Bankhead at Julia Bulette's grave; portraits of Leroy Wagner, Len Haffey, Frank Polk; miscellaneous other personalities, including Neal Watkins, Nicky Hinch and Father Robert Jellefe

People Mentioned:

Addis, Charlie
Andrus, Zoray
Bankhead, Tallulah
Beebe, Lucius
Best, Katherine
Beymer, Floyd
Beymer, Margaret

Blake, Deacon
Boegle, Carl
Booth, Claire
Bromund, Cal
Bromund, May
Brown, Mary
Bruce, Harry
Byrne, Alice Hinch
Butterfield, Mrs. Roger
Butterfield, Roger
Caples, Robert Cole
Clark, Walter Van Tilburg
Edwards, Florence
Eggenberger, Rolf
Emrich, Duncan
Garbage Mike
Haffey, Len
Hardin, Betty
Hardin, Lyle
Hart, Pat
Hilliard, Katherine
Hinch, Elmer "Nicky"
Jellefe, Father Robert
Kendall, Abe
Kienholz, Edward
Knickerbocker, Nicky
Kopp, Dick
Kraemer, Peter
Laxalt, Paul
Lazari, Bronco
Meinecke, Father Paul
Miller, Arthur
O'Keefe, Kelly
Polk, Frank
Richards, Bob
Ruhl, Ken
Stone, Charlie
Sunara, Four-Day Jack
Swinerton, James
Tessadio, Jack
Wagner, Leroy
Watkins, Neal
~ Bronco Lazari ~

“It was a shocked and grief-stricken city that learned yesterday of the sudden passing of Bronco Lazari, a death made more tragic because of the gruesome and heartrending manner of his demise.”

This was the opening line of the page one banner story of a 1948 summer edition

of the *Virginia City News*, a hoax contrived by author and folklorist Duncan Emrich, on leave from the Library of Congress. Emrich valued his association with Bronco and the cronies, among whom was [sic] Charlie Addis, Jack Tessadio, Deacon Blake and Four-Day Jack Sunara.

Emrich's story went on: "Mr. Lazari suffered the agonies of the damned for four full hours before friends found him in a desperate and hopeless condition." The story related that when Lazari was "stricken and cried out with the pains of hell in his stomach," residents assumed that no more than "a normal bout was in progress." The story said it was actually Bronco alone, "thrashing from bar to spittoon to door, unfortunately closed, in what must have seemed an eternity. It appears that Bronco's first fatal pangs were felt at precisely 1:43 pm yesterday, Friday, June 25. At that time, Mr. Roger Butterfield, well-known historian and resident on the Lode, left Mr. Lazari's palatial bar, unwittingly leaving behind him the change from a five dollar bill. As Mr. Butterfield passed the Silver Dollar Hotel, he recollected his money and immediately returned, 'not wasting a moment' according to testimony. Unaccountably, the money remained on the bar, but there was no sign of Mr. Lazari. It would seem that Mr. Lazari was stricken in the act of reaching for Mr. Butterfield's change – to return it to him if he could find him on the street – and had slumped behind his rosewood bar. Mr. Butterfield, therefore, was in the presence of death as he picked up his \$4.50."

Emrich's account stated that it was Deacon Blake who first found Bronco after seeing a trickle of blood running under the door. "What met his gaze was horrible in the extreme. Stretching and writhing on the floor was the twitching body of Mr. Lazari. His feet were extended toward the famous China spittoon, while his hands grasped horribly for support towards the rich plush benches at the right. With one hand, Bronco had even clawed through the heavy [inaudible] carpet to dig into the timbered floor. Resting upon Mr. Lazari's back was a great mounted deer head which had decorated the back bar. Two points were embedded in Mr. Lazari." The story conjectured as to how this occurred, and described funeral arrangements calling for the playing of "The Beer Barrel Polka" from C Street juke boxes, and that Mr. Lazari's bowels had been secured for the state museum as remarkable items of fabulous drinking. The firehouse was to play "Nearer My God to Thee" as the cortege passed beyond the sounds of the polka, "a hymn which Mr. Lazari is also known to have loved."

Bronco's family was said to have taken the news as gospel, and was shocked to find him alive behind the bar, when Bronco explained as best he could. . . . A year later, almost to the day, Bronco died behind his bar, under somewhat similar conditions.

~ Julia Bulette~

[Walton recounts the history of Julia Bulette, which includes an account to Tallulah Bankhead visiting the grave with Zoray Andrus:]

In a letter, Zoray Andrus wrote an account of her visit to what she always believed was Julia's grave: "The Julia Bulette grave was not where it now appears. It was behind one of those pinyons, and a charming cottontail lived in it. There was a wooden headboard that gave her age, I think thirty-seven, and she died in 1867. There was a small footboard that had her initials on it.

"When the grave was still in place and intact, I took Tallulah Bankhead and her entourage up there, where she gave the four of us a truly great performance. She climbed the fence and planted some wild red flowers on the grave, and with tears streaming said some kind words, wishing that Julia's soul might rest in peace."

Zoray's letter went on to say that she once discovered a cashbook in her Nevada Brewery residence in Six Mile Canyon, which noted that Julia Bulette had been replaced by a Spanish girl named Clementine.

[Walton speculates that Julia Bulette may therefore not have been a madame after all, rather only a working girl.]

~ Leroy Wagner ~

Fabrication, carpentry, plumbing, gunsmithing, welding, machine and foundry work, and antique restoration were his bag. But he had buried gunsmithing in the middle, and could have added rocketeer. Leroy Wagner was a master machinist, who made superb firearms, including muzzleloaders, from raw material. Loved by Virginia City friends and repelling others, it was his sense of liberty that attracted both responses. A moody figure, phantom-like on his long walks, the memory of strong-armed Leroy stalked the streets, and his cumbersome stride persisted.

Leroy Wagner had labored well for many, rebuilding old houses of the town. Yet he was looked on with suspicion by those who did not understand his elaborate but clear mind. Few knew why he launched his rockets. At the nose of each was a tiny plastic camera, triggered as the rocket turned, to make aerial photographs of Virginia City. He made little money, but put a thousand dollars into no more than a dozen final pictures.

Preferring cokes and candy to all sustenance save hot dogs, Leroy personified why some people lived in Virginia City. He was documented with that in mind, and, in the coming winter, his melancholy style caught up with him. He landed in a hospital, but was home in springtime, dangerously undernourished. He looked strong and was, but hadn't changed to live.

His workshop home once was a brothel in other days. Prostitutes would use Bronco Lazari's Union Brewery Saloon as a thoroughfare, going down the back stairs to work just below. The house with two sections was on D Street, directly behind Pat Hart's Brass Rail Saloon, and above the doors were red light bulbs. Unoccupied for some time, one of the units on the north side was briefly used as a painter's studio by Robert Cole Caples, before opening Godfrey's. In later years, the two parts were one, and became the place where Leroy Wagner installed his tools and a lathe his craftsman friend, Rolf Eggenberger, believed Leroy slept on.

On Easter Sunday in 1973, a few short months after his photographs were taken for this record, Leroy made an inventory of repair items and attached owners' names. He'd been seen wearing an unfamiliar Civil War cap, with eyes downcast and lumbering along dejectedly. He'd painted his door in the national colors. Then, convinced his society was doomed, and with nothing left in his personal account, Leroy Wagner aimed a large caliber muzzleloader upward beneath his jaw and launched the last skyrocket.

~ Gambling ~

Gaming in Virginia City almost became the exclusive domain of the slot machine. . . In the 1940s, Len Haffey operated a Wheel of Fortune at the Delta, but with the passing of this gentle, hard-cut man, the wheel was another memory. It was a long time since anyone had seen a faro bank on the Comstock. Chuck-a-luck, craps, roulette were items of the past, and poker was softly mentioned when a private game was going upstairs.

Cowboy sculptor Frank Polk, when a regional resident, designed slot machines in human-like form, using his wood carving of light-hearted coyboys as a background for his work. It was reported that the Polk slot machines had become valued collector's items. They were generally surreal, and could yet find their way into the Museum of Modern Art. Innocently made, they suggested the radical work of Edward Kienholz, the master of tableau, who at one time lived in Reno when Polk's machines were there. They pleased tourists on the Comstock, and their owners prized them. . . .

~ People ~

Old-timers were once routinely found in saloons and on boardwalks, but a new society peopled the hill even before the time of Lucius Beebe, who himself never integrated. At one time, the descendants of lingering families inherited all the important jobs as a kind of natural reward to those who had not left when the mines

petered out. This dominating minority suffered the Depression of the 1930s as had other Nevadans in mining towns, like Goldfield and Pioche. A Western place often got the better of good judgment, with some viewing an outer world as either intimidating or unacceptable.

Individuals were still found on the Comstock, measuring up to Garbage Mike, Four-Day Jack, Nicky Hinch, but gone were Carl Boegle, Abe Kendall, the Katies, Lucius Beebe, Walter Clark, Florence Edwards, Bob Richards, Deacon Blake, Charlie Addis, Bronco Lazari, Kelly O'Keefe and Harry Bruce, who breathed the same air in their time.

Neal Watkins, who'd come to Virginia City in more recent years, a retired Navy man, acquired a mine he called Sutro, and saw mining in a unique perspective. An extensive reader, Watkins alarmed Comstockers with deductions, concluding it hadn't been silver but unrecognized platinum. He said that silver didn't come like Comstock ore, and that English processors had stockpiled the platinum, while returning cheaper silver around the Horn.

Margaret Beymer of Floyd's agate shop, named for her husband, was a respected C Street figure who plainly looked forward to moving on.

Mary Brown the fortune teller continued a tradition begun by the Washoe Seeress, Eilley Orrum, who became the wealthy Mrs. Sandy Bowers.

Charlie Stone, horse trader, was missed even before he sold out his saloon and gun collection to head for Canada.

The town had also known Nicky Knickerbocker, Bob Caples, the Roger Butterfields, Zoray Andrus and her son Peter, who had been among the permanent on the hill, who left by ones and twos.

Abe Kendall oddly told how Nicky Hinch got his nickname. When a small boy, Elmer Hinch would ask for nickels on the boardwalk. A wag saw him coming, and when asked for a nickel, the man held out coins of all sorts in both hands. As usual, Nicky took a nickel, and the bunch around them laughed at his simplicity. Asked why he didn't take a dollar, Nicky drawled back, "Then you wouldn't do it anymore."

His sister, Alice Hinch Byrne, told a story of how Nicky had asked a stranger for a nickel, with the man turning his pockets inside out, saying "I'd give you one, but I don't even have money to eat on." Nicky left, but later found the stranger again and gave him a handful of nickels, saying it wasn't right, not eating.

Slow-speaking, overweight Elmer Hinch, sharp in a deal, both in youth and maturity, suffered a heart attack on a deer hunt, to join the legendary figures of the Comstock, equal in his way to Old Virginny.

While St. Mary's had sponsored an art center at the old Storey County Hospital overlooking Sugarloaf Mountain and Six Mile Canyon, embracing artists of many inclinations, three Virginia City artists were uninfluenced by changing styles not in keeping with the Western dream.

Missouri-born cowboy artist Lyle Hardin had spent most of his life in the saddle, and had operated the Washoe Pines Guest Ranch with his then wife, Betty Hardin, who came West with an Eastern social background, assuring their success. Lyle had been a wrangler at Washoe Pines before he and Betty ran it, and was personally known by many socialites and other prominent divorcees coming to the Pines. The ranch had been the model for Claire Booth when she wrote *The Women*, made into a popular film of its day.

Lyle painted in a somewhat primitive Western style, and became well-known for his boiling sky effects, reminding some of the English painter Turner. He left the ranch and painted in Virginia City for over a decade, before leaving in the 1970s for the Black Rock Desert in Northern Nevada.

Dick Kopp had called himself an artist, author, jeweler and bum, but was no bum in setting turquoise in silver. He painted humorous Westerns and occupied a museum beneath his upstairs C Street gallery.

Cal Bromund had restored a large home at 101 N. B Street, where he and his wife May showed visitors paintings and antiques. Cal was renowned for his little prints and traditional Western-style mustang paintings, whose dramatically sad story was documented in Arthur Miller's *The Misfits*. Bromund respected the work of desert painter James Swinnerton, and believed in the values of [inaudible] painting, heedless of the inroads of younger artists expressing their thing. A watchmaker and jeweler by trade, Cal Bromund declined a Paris art education when young, but spent his senior years painting.

~ The Virginia City Gas Company ~

The Virginia City Gas Company at G and Union Streets was near a holding tank. But the gas was made further downhill, at Union and M, where there was a works with several outbuildings, a house, and another tank, all beside the C & C hoisting works. The gas company was to be surrounded by a growing dump on its north and eastern [six] sides. The Consolidated California dumps were not of workable value, although the matter was investigated by earthmover Ken Ruhl, the son-in-law of gambler Len Haffey, and Nicky Hinch, who favored a hopeful outcome. Ruhl was frequently called on by property owners for grading and big digs with his tractors.

~ The Dream of Father Robert ~

You could get a fight any day on the subject of Father Robert [Jellefe]. A bit before [Father Paul] Meinecke's term in Virginia City, word of another priest was spreading through the West and beyond, intriguing dreamers anywhere. Father Robert Jellefe had become a ship of hope to searching youth of artistic bent and holy persuasion. Friends called him Father Robert, a gentle, pale but well-built young man, seemingly in his twenties but no doubt older, of vibrant manner, entering a room like a new idea. His voice was authoritative, pleasant, and was shot with excitement as he called for nations as quickly as men. He sought money and means to good ends, handled rightly for his cause. As a priest, he believed he could get it, on one coast or another, no matter. What really counted was his holy order of brothers. They were dedicated to religious art, music and liturgy. The young father said that if they but held on a little longer, their cause would be presented to the pope, and, if approved, their order would become an everlasting part of the Catholic Church.

"This is a building as well as a place of worship, and the building should be used. Downstairs is a workshop. There we're making stained glass windows for new churches. This will be a center of art, music and liturgy. Across the valley, above the grave of Julia Bulette, we're building a new university. Artists, writer, musicians and composers are welcome. Lay artists needn't be Catholic. Funding is my job. Many are contributing. Altar pieces will be carved, metal worked. There'll be paintings of the stations of the cross. Materials are free. Artists, pay no rent, no board. Commissions are coming in. Finished work will go out."

Such was the plan of Father Robert. The lower floor was a makeshift foundry. There were, lathes, power saws, tools of every description. A side room was a chapel for secluded prayer, where effective hangings backed an altar that held an abstract crucifix, the work of Father Robert himself. A tiny office was illuminated by a window he'd covered with bright-colored papers, simulating stained glass.

But many townspeople were hostile. Some accused the brothers of sexual immorality. Others struck out, plainly hysterical. In removing what he believed was undesirable ornamentation, he said the church was to reestablish its historic architectural simplicity, with an uncluttered impact, intended by its builders. He said people were really seeing it for the first time, a new gothic triumph. A collapsing balcony had been removed, and he had explored a crack in the altar wall, removed plaster, and uncovered a serious split.

The story unfolded that he said that he had been beckoned into a C Street shop by two local businesswomen of those years, one in a wheelchair. He claimed he was forced to fend off an attack on his clerical garments, and that the cripple fell from

her wheelchair in the excitement. She later claimed she was deliberately shoved out of it, and forthwith sued through her attorney, Paul Laxalt, who later became Governor and then U. S. Senator. When asked, Laxalt said the matter was settled out of court, and that Jellefe had been an exceptionally interesting person. But the wide press and town anger were coupled with Beebe's broadsides in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, to make such notoriety that Father Robert and his order of brothers quietly disappeared.

Box 3, Tape 3/33-G, Side 1 – February 17, 1980

Main Subject of Selection: Walter Van Tilburg Clark; letter to McGraw-Hill about Walton's book on art and visual perception

People Mentioned:

Chapman, Loring
Clark, Walter Van Tilburg
Pollar, Ellen

~ Walter Van Tilburg Clark ~

Nevada's novelist, Walter Van Tilburg Clark, saw two of his books made into films, with one rivaling *Citizen Kane*. *The Ox-Bow Incident*, his 1940 novel, is said to have surfaced repeatedly on Manhattan screens. His talent for tension was epitomized in the hanging of three innocents, orchestrated by a psychotic father who insisted his son participate like a man. The sensitive boy couldn't stomach the role, and only contributed to a botched horseback hanging of a strangled victim, feet tied under the horse below the hanging tree.

The City of Trembling Leaves was another novel, published in 1945, and *The Track of the Cat* of 1949 was also made into a film. Clark published his short stories in a book called *The Watchful Gods* in 1950, his last important publication before his death 21 years later.

Born in Maine, he spent his youth in Reno, where his father was president of the University of Nevada. He sometimes lived and worked in Virginia City, and restored a house below St. Mary's, where he hoped to complete his work on the papers of the historic Gold [Hill] editor, Alf Doten.

Mortally afflicted, his once athletic figure inched from Jeep to post office in the long days before his merciful death on November 10, 1971. Events at the interment of the author's body recalled a scene near the wind-up of *Ox-Bow*, when snow clouds parted for an interval of clear sky. Sunlight briefly fell on the cemetery. Then, as mourners straggled off, the clouds closed in again.

[On February 19, 1980, Walton wrote a letter to a McGraw-Hill senior editor, proposing a book on art and visual perception. The letter, which he recited in full for tape, begins:]

Dear Ellen Pollar:

Dr. Loring S. Chapman, head of the Department of Behavioral Biology at the medical school of the University of California at Davis, has suggested that I ask you if you'd want to see an outline with a completed chapter from my proposed book on art and visual perception. . . .

Box 3, Tape Unnumbered following 3/33-G, Side 1 – Probably February 26, 1980

Main Subject of Selection: Reading from a manuscript titled "Elliptical Perspective" [NOTE: As elsewhere, the paragraphing is mine, since there are no explicit paragraph indications on the spoken tape. In most cases, the paragraphing isn't crucial, but for this treatise it may be, for incorrect paragraphing may cause misunderstanding of a text which is already difficult by any measure to understand.]

People Mentioned: None

Elliptical Perspective

Straight line perspective doesn't describe a spherical planet. It produces a square globe in four connected continuous views, with the Earth represented as a perspective box-top. Human visual perspective combines its individual views in time, as a celebrated composite surrounded by a total gray scale associated with an apparent cone of vision. This cone terminates before reaching a conical point, and is not a true cone. The contour of a true cone joined with another form a ridge incompatible with the curve of the ellipse. The term cone is used to indicate a section of the ellipse, as in "the cone of vision," which has no point. Two combined three-dimensional visual fields, north and south, constitute an ellipse, with the distant smalls resolved as a two-dimensional transformation, confronted at the diminishing end of the single-view half-ellipse. The cone of vision is curved, and potentially continuous in the two-dimensional phase. An unseen abyss is imposed behind the viewer as a potential scene that time completes with the joining of two opposite views mentally combined. A continuous world is perceived. A small

unformed end of the visual cone terminates softly without a point. There is no vanishing point.

The visual field is widest near the plane associated with the viewing point, which is at a right angle to the line of vision. Three-dimensional lineal convergence applies to its sector of the visual field. But the theory of the vanishing point is obviated by the terminating consequence of the softly blending two-dimensional outer field. A full three-dimensional true cone is not evident in the visual experience. Its termination would start in the middle distance of the visual field, and would be finalized in two dimensions. The conceptual vanishing point is not a proper instrument to describe a part of an optical system. A vanishing point is but implied by apparently converging forms. Such convergence is absorbed in space, where the two-dimensional effect is met. Lineal forms, or line-like forms, obey the spherical contour of Earth, with atmospheric interference ending the global scene. Observations at sea level have set the optically unrelated global disappearance at 3 miles from the viewing height of 6 feet above sea level. Parallel railroad tracks do not join at a vanishing point, despite the illusion. The implied point is lost in space. A graphic image representing a vanishing point, when placed in the imagination on the line of sight – the direction of sight –, is a wholly abstract designation that can be altered by altering the path of vision. The term “line of sight,” although still useful, is not a line. It is a direction, represented by the symbolic term “line.” In nature, the viewer sees no line. Such apparent lines are progressive particles in their order. Points, straight lines and curved lines, like geometric circles and triangles, are useful inventions of the creative mind, and do not portray nature.

The conformation of the globe is in opposition to the shape of the visual field. It presents a directional conflict in the middle distance of the scene, later resolved in the two-dimensional distance. Distant forms, such as mountains, step over the natural horizon, and as they blend into surrounding forms and images near the natural horizon, their chromatic and tonal blending comprise a camouflage of picturesque effects, promoted by atmospheric color phenomena. The invisible lineal system, which is used to represent the shape of the visual field, is otherwise expressed by objects surrounding the viewer. Half of this display is unseen in the potential of a single static view, which an instant of time can consolidate. The separation of vision from time is unnatural, and promotes static reconstruction. The unseen half of the surrounding objects are [sic] situated in the abyss at the viewer’s back. The invisible lineal system relating to the seen half of the viewer’s world can be considered in terms of converging lines form[ing] a cage about the viewer. The lines in this egg-like cage are potentially continuous in time. The straight line does not apply to an optical view. Einstein established that light is attracted by gravity, that starlight curved near the sun. Vision is dependent upon light. Objects and forms

are surrogates of light.

When parallel forms seem to join in the distance, it's an illusion. But a lineal cage can be imagined as pairs of parallel lines. Contrary to optical curvature, the globe drops down, with its image disappearing. One accepts that it continues in space, but this is a belief, not something seen. There's no way to see this from a point on the same globe. It's a belief that's understood from other evidence.

The line of sight relates to its own horizon, called the sensible horizon, which is determined by an imaginary plane running the eye [transcription error]. When the line of sight is at a right angle to gravity, it parallels the true horizon, designated as a plane at the center of the Earth, also at a right angle to gravity. In this position, the line of sight is above the visible horizon. This promotes a sense of conflict, for a single term is used describing a dual situation. The sensible horizon could meet at a point on the visible horizon, if the line of sight was lowered. But the visible horizon would express the curvature of the globe. The spherical shape of the planet occupies but a small section of the entire visual field, with the open sky segment giving a larger section. The Earth of the foreground restricts the visual prospect by seeming to be parallel to the right angle line of sight.

Meanwhile, the optical distortion in the form of apparently colliding objects in telescopic distortion clutter [sic] the lower half of the visual field. There is also a zone of aberration associated with convergence, which is further accompanied by a rising optical curve. Add telescopic distortion with its compression of images to the dropping of horizon forms on Earth's curve, and the function of a foreground three-dimensional field is cited as the solution to an enormous problem. The binocular, or stereopticon effect, helps clarify the scene, which is tighter in binocular vision. The visual rise toward the line of sight increases the problem of optical confusion, for the elliptical cone is contrary to the globe. It is as if a ball were mismatched with an egg. In fact, the lower part of the visual half-ellipse, the shape to pass through the dense Earth foreground, as it does through the transparent sky [sic]. The viewer sees from a personal hill, wherever he might be, for the individual occupies a global apex, as a gravity-fixed astronaut whose habitat is the buffer zone between the Earth's surface and outer space, a zone characterized as atmospheric.

The trail of an aircraft describes the outer contour of the atmospheric field, which gives the viewer the sense of existing in a sea of air, while watching a larger fish in the upper sky.

The lineal cage imagined about the viewer is in the general shape of an egg of many layers. The egg-like hull of vision can be related to a floor, a ceiling and two walls, a hall terminating in two dimensions of outer space, which oddly seem like a stage curtain. This hall, with its egg-shaped middle, describes the widest part of the

immediate visual field, where the lineal cage makes its greatest bulge. Seeing but half of the whole egg-shaped field, the surrounded viewer can swing about to put the potential field together, to find one world in time – the interval of about-face.

Where floors and ceilings would echo Earth's bend as responding to forms that curve with gravity as well as with Earth, the visual cage would not, being responsive to an independent line of sight, which is also mobile. This laf-ellipse of many potential layers can be extended to any useful point, until the zone of two dimensions is encountered.

A brilliant cone characterizes the area of focus achieved by retinal cone and [inaudible (sounds like 'phobia')], cones designed for color reception. The retinal cones, though thinly scattered in the rod area surrounding [inaudible (sounds like 'phobia')], may yet be found to have a saturate color role that backs up the gray scale function of retinal rods. The gray scale is often miscalled black and white, those entities that purity are inconceivable [sic]. The ever-blinking eye, along with eye shift, sees from point to point in small areas of shallow focus, in a field of limited depth. The sensation of depth is augmented through continuous eye shift, in an effect that seems one view.

For this reason, the paintings of Harnett and others associated with fake real representation function best in the shallow field, and fail when a window is open. Intense realism is lost, with the viewer detecting sharp focus throughout the picture plane. On the other hand, the machine-produced f64 photo has less impact than the well rendered fake real shallow field painting.

The visual fields can be summarized as being in three main parts: (1) the three-dimensional; (2) the modified three-dimensional; and (3) the two-dimensional, where middle distance distortion ends. The stereopticon effect is at best [sic] in the nearby foreground. Telescopic compression intrudes in the middle distance, then accelerates into broadly distorted imagery, until the field merges with the seemingly flat two-0dimensional stage curtain of distant earth and sky.

Two stars, light years apart, may seem but stellar decorations, and can be visually equated with manmade light from the Earthly horizon, with time spatially stalemated. . . .

Box 3, Tape Unnumbered following 3/33-G, Side 2 – Probably October 3, 1980
Main Subject of Selection: Riemannian geometry

People mentioned: None

Now back to the book, *Euclidean and Non-Euclidean Geometries*, Marvin J. Greenberg. And I've just described the egg and – in the other tape. This is figure A-13, and this is the half egg. I'll recap that last paragraph. [Walton reads, then comments.]

. . . That's all he [Greenberg] gives on – Can you believe that? Now that's what he gives on – That's what he's got on – [shouting] There's no more! That's all there is to say! All there is to say! All you need to know! All there is to know about Riemannian geometry in its relation to the non-Euclidean geometry is right there! Right in my hand is everything I have to know, according to this guy Greenberg. Marvin I'll call him. Bullshit!

I will say, on the cover is a fascinating design. It's – The circle is in red, and it has a black line, and the most marvelous mechanical drawing here of curves. Gives you a gorgeous design. God Almighty! Geometry can be beautiful. I mean this kind. Regular geometry's not much, but gee whiz, this is beautiful. I'll read about those other geometries, I guess, but first I've got to understand Riemann as best I can.

[Walton reads some document of his own on the Z-Axis and Riemannian geometry.]

[In Box 7 of the Walton Collection is the table of contents of *The Shape of Space: Visual Perception and the Artist*, part of the book proposal Walton sent to McGraw.]

Box 14, Tape 14/79, Side 1 – October 10, 1980

Main Subjects of Selection: friendship with Bernard Herrmann

People mentioned:

Alexander, Jeff
Corwin, Katherine (Katie)
Corwin, Norman
Harrison, Lois
Herrmann, Bernard
Herrmann, Kathy
Herrmann, Lucille Fletcher (Lucy I)
Herrmann, Lucille Anderson (Lucy II)
Herrmann, Wendy
Hitchcock, Alfred
Hunt, Marsha
Kaufman, Annette
Kaufman, Louis (Louie)
Mathieson, Muir
Murray, Lyn
Presnell, Robert (Bob)
Raksin, David

Rocha, Nicholas
Steinheimer, Rae
Stokowski, Leopold
Walton, Vivian

I have had some rare musical experiences with Bennie Herrmann. When first visiting my Reno studio in 1948, I played my newly purchased recording of the Holst “Perfect Fool” ballet for him, Bennie and I were diagonally across the large studio room in Reno. After the introduction of the horn – [Walton sings the horn part] – with that strong beat that follows, Bennie began conducting me as though I were the full orchestra, nodding his head before my entries on all the instruments, then pointing his hand at me on cue. We finished the full score together, you know, in peculiar silence.

Before Bennie came to Reno in 1948, the year of the divorce from Lucy I, Lucille Fletcher, author of *Sorry, Wrong Number*, I had seen the film *Hangover Square* [1945, music by Herrmann], and had been amazed that such a piano concerto would be in a film, never to be heard again. Later I connected the composer, Herrmann, with his role on the Sunday “CBS Symphony” program I routinely preferred over the more familiar Toscanini broadcast on NBC. Bennie programmed more adventurous music. It had been Bennie Herrmann who introduced the music of his friend Charles Ives to me, as I found out later.

After taking me to the Republic studios to meet Alfred Hitchcock, Herrmann and I went on to the Warners’ lot, where he had a recording session with the Hitchcock film, *The Wrong Man* [1956], starring Henry Fonda. Bennie sat me in the middle of the huge sound stage on a straight back chair, all alone. When the session was over, he had the full orchestra play the samba music of that film, without telling the musicians why. They had been practicing that part of the score, so they had it ready for my visit. Bennie later yelled at me, “They say I can’t write a samba. Now you’ve heard it.”

I met many composers at the Herrmann house on Bluebell Avenue in North Hollywood, always by coincidence. At a birthday party in the early 1950s, I first met my good friend Lyn Murray, Jeff Alexander, and soon after, the violinist Louie [Louis] Kaufman and his pianist wife, the noted Annette Kaufman. The writer, and my collector, Norman Corwin came together at the Herrmann party, and we have been friends and correspondents for thirty years. I’ve been told that Corwin calls me “the painter Walton,” and has referred to me in letters as “the painter of the house,” although Norman and Katie, the actress Katherine Locke, have others including a fine Irene Rice Pereira. I’m sure Norman Corwin was his closest friend, while I was a Nevada brother to Herrmann. We saw eye to eye as artists, and Norman called him Beanie.

I ran into Nicholas Rocha on Sunday morning at the Herrmann house. On another Sunday when I was there, the great English composer Muir Mathieson dropped in, just arriving from London by air. Both Mathieson and Herrmann believe film music should be written as a serious art form.

The greatest of all my musical experiences with Bernard Herrmann was when he insisted I stay at his Bluebell house well after midnight. The film *Citizen Kaine* was playing again. I was to sit beside Bennie on his bed watching this film, his first, and he would quickly brief me before each scene, then follow the score spread on our laps with his finger. At one point I saw a notation, and stupidly said, "That must be a big noise." Bennie said, "And you can go home." I said, "I mean, a big sound."

. . . I have but one bit of tape in Herrmann's voice. Our mutual friend was telling a tedious story about an imaginary creature called a Rarey. To solve a problem it had been ripped off a truck into the Grand Canyon. Herrmann corrects the delivery of the Rae Steinheimer joke. The popping and crackle of the fireplace bangs the mike set up at the Walton Reno studio in the early 1950s. Bennie had a divorce with Lucy I, and had married Lucy II. This is a very strange situation. {inaudible} the marriage. Lucy II had been Lucille Anderson. Now the Fletchers and the Andersons were close friends. And the Andersons both died, and Lucy was adopted by the Fletchers, and raised as their own. She was a bit younger than Lucille Fletcher. But they were sisters – sisters absolutely in spirit.

Now Bennie had two little girls by Lucille Fletcher, Lucy I, Kathy and Wendy, whom I had seen. Lucy II had expressed to me her feeling of responsibility for the children, to repay the great kindness of the Fletchers – and Bennie, she loved Bennie enormously. However, Bennie was a tedious guy to live with, and I could see this coming down as years went on. Lucy and I were close in our own way – Lucy II. And she's still available for interviewing, should that need ever arise. So, the second marriage collapsed. Lucy II had married Bennie, and they had a good life at Bluebell Avenue for a long time. The Bluebell Avenue house had been purchased by Bennie. It was the love of his life. It had a grand – it was rather English in the way the grounds were set up, with the sculptures down by the swimming pool. It was a large area, it was on a different elevation. It was in a very residential part, an indifferent part of North Hollywood

Bob Presnell, the writer – Robert Presnell, the husband of the film star Marsha Hunt, who was very gracious to me when Bennie was in London. I was to have dinner over there, on occasion. Had met them at the David Raksin house. I had met David Raksin the composer quite separately from Herrmann, although it's kind of a tandem story. I had met a mutual friend of Raksin's and Herrmann's at the birthday party, Lois Harrison. And it was she who took me to David Raksin later. But Bob Presnell told me that Bennie used to stay at their place, which was at the head of

Bluebell Avenue, {inaudible} Boulevard. They showed him this house and he bought it. He always wanted {inaudible}. In the divorce settling, I understand that the house went to Lucy II, but then he rented it back from her. It's interesting. When he was in Hollywood, he'd stay there.

The last time I saw Bennie Herrmann, he'd just come in from England, and was down Ventura Boulevard someplace, at a hotel that he liked. It was raining, and he was out of sorts, because Alvis, his convertible coupe, the Alvis, was leaking. It needed a new top. And he was out of sorts because of the divorce from Lucy II. I myself had been recently remarried [1963] to a much younger person. Bennie had always been bemused by that circumstance. He was pleased – I mean, in his own wife, he was so pleased that Lucy II was young, at Stokowski, Leopold Stokowski, would often be a house guest at the Herrmann house on Bluebell Avenue, and stay at the Cabana, which was filled with my paintings. And Herrmann had joked with Stokowski about his marriage to Gloria Vanderbilt, she being younger than Leopold by a good deal. Herrmann always called Leopold Stokowski Sto-COW-ski, very heavy on the ow.

I have an anecdote in my life. When he was traveling with Greta Garbo [here retells the story about Caples introducing him to Evangeline Stokowski].

Bennie Herrmann would often speak in light heart of dining with the Charles Chaplins, and made light talk about there they were with their young wives.

Now, on the last occasion, Vivian and I drove down to that hotel where he was staying. He met us at the door. We went in and had dinner with him as his guest. And he was unforgivably miserable to the waitress. He could be mean and small and petty. And he complained in a whining, growling way to the waitress, and made her just miserable, oh, about some small thing, like the water was late or some fool thing – inconsequential matter. I could see he was well out of sorts. Well, he was pushed from every side, and he {inaudible}.

Oscar Levant, who was a pianist, a concert pianist of credit, especially on the Gershwin material – Oscar Levant had written a book called *A Smattering of Ignorance*, and in it he referred to Herrmann as the most disliked man in Hollywood. He was viewed with suspicion generally in Hollywood, because no one knew when he'd jump down their throat. He was the artist always, considered himself a serious musician, and I will say for the record that, concerning orchestrators, he told me that they made shit out of chocolate. He spurned any assistance in that direction. They disliked him – the professional orchestrators disliked him, because he wouldn't use them. Had no place for them. In time, he got distressed with the movies as they were coming down. The last score for Hitchcock had been *The Birds*. And he was pretty upset about that, he was rather bitter. He loved Hitchcock and Hitchcock loved him, but the movies were changing their

form, and he had orchestrated the bird sound in the film called *The Birds*. Soon he would be removing himself to London, where he married, I understand, an English girl, whom I did not meet, although I look forward to it, someday. Bennie was a mixed person. On the one hand, small and mean and petty and whining, always whining around the house, very tedious to live with. But I would visit down there so briefly. I always deferred to Bennie because he was the great man in my life, and I shouldn't argue with him. Although I didn't agree with him on a lot of things, I just let things pass. When he brutalized me, I'd just take my blows. But I valued his company and I loved him as a close, dear friend. And there is the story about the sweater. One year, I called, and he had just returned from London, and he said, "Oh, I bet you think I'd forgotten you when I was there." He said, "I'd not forgotten you." He left the room, and he came back with a sweater. And – one that buttoned up the front. It was a lovely thing. We were about the same size. I may have been a little taller than him, not much. But we're the same girth, both heavy guys. He handed me the sweater, and I tried it on, it was a perfect fit. And he says, "There, now," he says, "I haven't forgotten you" – and this warm, oh, almost like candy, his warmth, his Jewish warmth. He said, Now!" He said, "Something to keep you warm in the winters when you're working." [Isn't there another story like this, with a negative twist?]

His art tastes were peculiar. He had, perhaps, the worst collection of my paintings of any of the people who gathered them together. None of them went together. None of them. And, with his heavy-handed way, he'd be the insistent designator of which painting was gonna be in the expanding collection. Oh, that had at least six or eight. Many of them were all right, if they were hung apart from each other. But he'd hang them right together. And that cabana was a strange display of Walton paintings.

He had collected a lot of English musicians' prints – engravings. He had some British redcoats, andirons in the fire place, and a big world map over the bed, which before the marriage ended Lucy had acquired – Oh, I gave them the painting. She hung it over the bed and replaced that map. When I went there that time, I thought, Oh-oh, there'll be trouble. Bennie didn't want anything changed. The whole house was – everything came from the previous life, the Lucy I period was there for the Lucy II period, which to me seems to be a blunder. But in any case, he gave me a Cruikshank – drawings by Cruikshank that had been given to him by a director – I thought Hitchcock, he never did say. But they were the two little drawings, the two reproductions from the Cruikshank book, engravings – were framed, four pictures altogether, side by side. I still have that.

And on the occasion of one Christmas, he gave me his score – the published score of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. The librettos were written by Maxwell Anderson,

and Bennie had done the score. Oh, there were any number of things – He gave me a woolen blanket to keep me warm. He was concerned that I'd get cold up here, I guess, in the Nevada snows. He was always giving me something to keep me warm. And he would tell Vivian to take care of me. In his kind way. Well, my father said the same thing exactly. He said to her, this young girl, eighteen years old, "Take care of Dick" – Dick was forty-five. [NOTE: If they married in 1963, as Vivian says, then he was 48 or 49.] She thought I was thirty-five. I didn't dare tell her any different.

Bennie Herrmann mainly gave of himself. He's a great gift, when he'd invite you to brunch. He invited me many times to brunch. Oh, those were nice visits. And he loved my dog Sam, my black Labrador, but he was terrified of big animals. He had a small dog that he found as a stray outside the studio where they were recording "Twilight Zone." He called the dog Twi. And, the cats. Half a dozen cats. And it was a big chore, every evening, feeding the cats. He fed them the fresh lights, chopping up the liver, kidneys and what have you, for those cats. They ate well, they were all overweight. Twi would just crawl over Bennie, her adored her. He adored my big Sam, my Labrador, but he always stood back, adored him from a distance. He wasn't the bravest man in the world in those ways. He was afraid of physical things. But he was an intellectual monster. He'd attack anybody. He would tell Gabriel, "What do you know about music!" I know he would. Indeed if he ever hit the pearly gates, and Gabriel got the shot.

...

Now it's one of those regional realities that in Northern Nevada, many people have for a long time known that Lawrence Black, a principal figure in Walter Van Tilburg Clark's *City of Trembling Leaves* is actually a portrait of Robert Cole Caples. Caples and Clark were best friends since they were boys. And it happens that I wrote a book called *Pyramid*, an unpublished work. It treated the Pyramid Lake country where Bob Caples liked to camp. Often he stayed at the places of friends. And I'd see him there easily in my line [?].

[Walton reads from *Pyramid*.]

Box 16, Tape 16/138, labeled "Hardin" – September 10, 1975

Main Subjects of Selection: Lyle Hardin's autobiography

People mentioned:

Hardin, Lyle E.

Hardin, Parilee

McMurtry, Els [?]

McMurtry, Hob [?]
Page [?], Al

Now, when Vivian and I were at the Hardins' Pine Tree Ranch, as I have [inaudible] of it – Hardin's Pine Tree Ranch at Dayton – His old friend, Al Page [?], had the Pine Tree Ranch over here in the valley, toward Reno. I said, "Lyle, you're gonna have to call this the Pine Tree now," and he was rather pleased.

Now this is under the handle, "Lyle E. Hardin, September, 1975." And, of course, I acquired it last Sunday. This is a copy given to me by Parilee. She copied his original biography. This biography was prepared by Lyle on the request of his dealer. And the dealer hoped to get several articles on him in horsemen magazines and journals in an attempt to promote his {inaudible}. So Lyle sat down and sketched out this piece. Now Parilee wants to do a far more ambitious tract on the case of Lyle Hardin, and sticking with the colorful matter of the original Lyle. So Lyle writes:

Born in the beautiful Ozarks on September 8, 1911, I spent most of my childhood drawing, painting, modeling in clay, riding horseback, helping my grandfather with his cattle, going horse-trading with my Uncle John, working as a mule skinner and roaming the hills hunting wild game. When our father died, my brother {inaudible} and I decided we would keep the family together, our mother and the four younger children. He stayed working on the farm, and I headed for the Sand Hills of Nebraska to work on the Flying M Ranch owned by the McMurtry brothers, Hob [?] and Els [?], friends of my father. Later I work for the San Hill Land & Cattle Company, riding the range and breaking horses in the summer months, and feeding cattle in the winter. At that time the company owned about ten thousand head of cattle.

As breaking colts and riding the range was more exciting at that time in my young life, I decided to live the free roaming life of the cowboy.

...

Box 16, Tapes 16/154 through 16/157 – 1992, plus typescript, Box 18

Main Subject of Selection: Walton's novel *Harry*

[Below are transcribed parts of Walton's typescript book *Harry* (1989), which he recorded on tape in 1992. Tape 16/154, Box 16, "Harry I" is broken and unplayable. Midway through transcribing, the manuscript was unexpectedly turned up by Vivian Walton. Therefore, preceding the transcriptions from tape are excerpts from

or comments about the beginning and the ending of the typescript. Note that on the tapes Walton read from a different manuscript, for the page numbers don't correspond. Or the discrepancy may be due to the fact that the book manuscript begins with a 5-page introduction paginated 1-a through 5-a, while the body of the book consists of pages 1–98.]

Box 18, *Harry*

[*Harry* presents itself as a collaboration between best friends, a writer and a painter. In fact, these characters represent two facets of Walton's life as a creator of art, the verbal and the visual. The writer is Harry, while the first-person narrator is the painter. The book's chapters consist for the most part of an introductory narrative by the painter describing the life and personality of Harry, followed by a piece of writing by Harry. In reality, these writings of Harry's, poetry and prose, are Walton's own, resurrected – some not for the first time – from Walton's lifetime output of unpublished works, including poems and short stories (not autobiographical) not found elsewhere in Walton's papers or tapes. The painter's little portraits of Harry progress chronologically, where Harry's writings are those of Walton from different times. And the narrator's portrayal of Harry amounts to Walton's parody of himself, in part by exaggeration, in part by contrast – Harry, for example, seldom speaks up in company, where Walton was notoriously verbose, a monologist; and Harry fully expects to get rich off poetry.]

[The introduction, pp. 1-a through 5-a, however, has Harry speaking in the first person about the painter. The voice, however, is pretty much indistinguishable from the painter-narrator of the chapters – which is to say, both voices are unmistakably Walton's. These pages, meant to introduce the reader to the fictional collaboration, for the most part relate highlights of the artist's – Walton's – career as an artist, negative highlights explaining why he failed to achieve major success. His major works, it seems, gave offense in different ways: *Tom, Huck, and the Dead Cat* offended the WPA administrator and the Washoe County librarian, before being picked up by the Smithsonian when Walton was in his sixties; viewers of *Self Portrait* symbolically condemning Hitler thought the artist was a fascist; *Venus* showed genitalia down to the individual hairs and couldn't be hung; and so on.]

[So what we have is Walton the painter, who believed he didn't achieve all the success deserved, introducing the works of Walton the writer, who entirely failed to achieve the success he deserved, so he believed.]

IV

Few understood the dimensions of Harry, where he really got his money or his

second hand automobile although he simply explained he made his way writing poetry, but who would swallow that one? Not even me, his best friend. Harry would steal ideas from all of us and whether he was ever in Las Vegas is doubted but he liked the sound of it for another of his chosen towns and situations as in this untitled work:

He was doing a soft eighty near Indian Springs
at the wheel of her topless Ferrari when
the girl from Las Vegas unbuttoned her blouse,
unhooked her brassiere – breasts in the breeze,
laughing at the desert, and causing a near head-on
when motorists saw her coming their way
but he drove on to the dunes
where fingertip flowers bud flat to the sand
and they made love in the skinny

..... not waiting for July.

[The above is one piece which justifies (not all of them do) Walton's dedication of *Harry*: "For the birds and the bees."

Box 16, Tape 16/155 – "Harry II" – August 23, 1992

Main Subjects of Selection: Walton's book *Harry*

People mentioned:

Beebe, Lucius

[The first tape is broken and can't be played. The second tape begins at Chapter 9, page 38:]

Now and then Harry would disappear for a week or so, and when that happened, he had not been discouraged if the poet had blundered into a creative impasse. Still, he kept his hand in by dropping his {inaudible} verse in favor of the heavier stuff called prose. Was it two weeks before we saw him again? Then he'd throw me a sheath of typed papers and he suppressed something funny. What it was he didn't say, even later. He suddenly turned on his heel and left the house without taking his papers. Like the sucker he believed me to be, I put them in order, and before I realized it, I was reading his short stories. "Murder in the Sage."

It {inaudible}, leaving Maggie and the kids. Bad enough any night, but they heard the news flash listening to the television left running during dinner. He might have known he'd have to rush Elmo Pass on the double. Was it a minute ago that his editor, Sy Croft, called him from the newsroom.

"Okay, okay," McLaren said, "consider me gone." He was running through the door with Maggie after him, bringing his still hot coffee as he pulled on his frayed

trench coat, loping for the driveway. McLaren's shaved head bobbed up and down in the moonlight as he rushed to the family sedan, more dependable than the beat-up coupe that he was leaving in front of the bungalow. It would be a stiff climb up the grade to Elmo. He made it fast. Rounding the bend into Elmo pass, the star reporter of the *Gazette* dropped into second gear and groaned uphill to the County Building. The sheriff's wife was in the office as acting dispatcher in this emergency, and she gave McLaren instructions, with the mention of the red light above the front door.

Back in the car, McLaren eased down the mining camp's steep hill, and past the Christian church he took a left and saw four county cars and the coroner's Buick. Were matters even worse than McLaren had thought? He couldn't help smiling. A little excitement went a long way at Elmo Pass. He pictured Maggie holding his coffee in their brightly lit doorway, and believed she'd catch the late TV news, if the situation was as bad as it appeared to be.

He took the steps of the porch two at a time to the front door of the dingy frame house know as Belle's Place [a brothel]. Through a window he caught a flash of Sheriff Matt Gladden and his deputies, and decided he'd not bother to knock before going in. Belle wasn't expected, anyway. Surveying the scene, McLaren noted the sofa and end table, overstuffed chairs and a number of straight chairs in a row to accommodate the action. He wondered why an open *Gazette* had been left on the floor, and why a John Wayne rerun was on the tube, with the sound off.

McLaren found the sheriff busily talking to Belle in her kitchen surrounded by deputies. Matt Gladden spotted the reporter.

"You're late, Termell."

"Did my best, Matt," said McLaren. "Sy made it plain I should be here. What are the facts?"

"The facts are still wandering around, but the truth is, we found Scanlon skulking in the brush holding his belly. The neighbors reported a shot, and considering I'm running for re-election this fall, I though you wouldn't mind doing a story on the shooting. Had Maggie call Sy from the office. Glad to see you, pardner." He offered his hand.

"What are you worried about, Matt? The voters of this county have given you a landslide for thirty years."

Gladden was pleased with this and smiled back to his interested deputies and then went on. "Scanlon was crouched out there holding his belly, with a dent in his belt buckle to fit your knuckle in. We got him back to Belle's and have tried to make sense out of his story. He claims Carl Bleecher shot him. That Bleecher came back to town unexpected and was sore about him and Belle. You wonder about that. Belle agrees that Bleecher came back all right, but says she doesn't know what the ruckus was about. She heard them having words outside, but heard no shot. Too

busy in the kitchen. Scanlon sais Bleecher went crazy, drew a Colt and plugged him in the belly. The slug hit Scanlon's belt buckle and put him down. We believe Bleecher thought Scanlon was finished and made himself scarce. We were soon on the scene."

"Where's Bleecher now?"

"Scanlon here" – the sheriff nodded to a cowboy sitting at the kitchen table – "says Bleecher took off after the shooting, but my boys found his car locked in front of Curry's joint on Main Street. My deputies have searched the brush with spotlights. He could be anywhere by now. Peculiar he'd get riled up over Belle Striker. Belle never was trouble in Elmo. Pays her taxes, buys her licence, and everybody likes Belle. Before Bleecher there was Charlie Long and Belle. Then it was Clint Bradley. Scanlon has been her neighbor for years. Why would a gent like Bleecher give a hoot about Scanlon? The cowboy has been a Belle regular right along."

"So, you have to find Bleecher."

[Stopped transcribing at 29 to end of Chapter 9, when Bleecher is discovered dead in Belle's cellar, hanging and bloody.]

Chapter 10.

With Harry's astonishing leap into prose, I wondered if I should encourage him along the new adventure or let nature take its course. It would have been wrong for anyone to interfere in matters affecting his development and direction. But before I committed myself, he popped up with a poem I was to become really fond of. There were times when I'd asked him to read it to me over the phone, and while he never so much as suggested he had dated this girl, I had reason to believe he knew who she was or had been told who she was.

At the graduation picnic
I asked where Helga went.
Kruger wouldn't say,
But I later found out
A dozen couples had gone into the woods,
Helga with the fullback Artie Foss,
Who had a seat from his Mercury
By one hand, and Helga by the other.
That fall, she married Hugo,
Had Debbie in the spring.
You know, Helga could make a cup of tea
With spider legs, Lapchang Soochong
And a pinch of Darjeeling
That really was a cup of tea.
Later, as she caught Hugo in the store room

Of her uncle's delicatessen,
With his hand under her cousin's skirt
As the girl was bent over the dill barrel
Spearing pickles. Helga's revenge
Was delayed until Hugo was in France
With Eisenhower. Then Helga took off
With a salesman. Hugo returned
To be divorced,
Helga getting custody of Debbie,
Hugo wedding the cousin.
Now, Debbie looks like Helga
At the graduation picnic,
and eloped last May with a singer
From the Daddies and the Dolls,
A group from Philadelphia
Backed by a publisher who was
Printing scored before Helga was born.

Chapter 11

It was as though nothing unusual had happened. Harry came by during my second cup of morning coffee, and before I could put it down, he showed me an almost blank piece of typing paper. There were {inaudible} lines of his typical verse in the middle of the page. Seeing the opening line, I couldn't help thinking, Now what the devil does Harry know about sailors? Noting my hesitation, he grabbed the sheet back, reading as he walked through the doorway, and was gone that fast.

When he saw me the next day, he explained he didn't come the day before, that I must have been dreaming again. In a week he admitted the truth, only because he liked the image of himself leaving the house that way. When he told me the poem had been destroyed, I certainly didn't believe him. And sure enough, it later turned up with his other stuff.

The old sailor would tighten the line each morning,
But the rope was always longer, and the boat farther way.

[This is a Walton parable – *search in* selected transcripts]

Chapter 12

To those of us who cared, it was obvious that Harry was in some kind of trouble with his poetry. Wasn't his verse getting shorter and his words fewer? He was also experiencing a political crisis. He'd grumble about the high cost of living, and tell me what a soft time I had when I was on WPA. But none of us cared to argue with Harry, knowing his outbursts would subside in a cloud of careless prose or verse, as the case might prove to be. The down side of the man was widely suspect, but many

in our crowd took a negative view of the national economy.

He tried correcting his mistakes, enraged by a price tag on the eraser. [Another Walton parable]

Chapter 13

As a painter, I objected to Harry's intrusion into my professional world. He certainly had no business making judgments in an area beyond his dubious expertise. While I recognized his right to express himself, there was no reason why he should cart his fantasies in the {inaudible}. As sure as I'm sitting here, Harry believed he had an unnatural connection to his maker, and that this in itself justified whatever opinions he fancied. We all knew there was no way to strike back, Harry being another chosen son, with the rest of us a choir of gadflies. Painting fifty years, he turned to writing, and when accolades became cavalcades, galleries became boring.

Chapter 14

He pushed his case up to the edge of metaphysics, although he'd never heard of Ouspensky, and the rationale of Freud was ignored. Regarding himself as a social realist, Harry stumbled into the divine like a barn boy pitching manure. When I put it that way, he countered, "Don't you forget it: The birds of paradise find sustenance in the seeds of degradation." He didn't even leave us ways to say Bullshit!

Exploring the ridge, he uncovered a vein and struck it rich when he saw gold we all had missed.

Chapter 15

If there was anything Harry didn't tolerate, it was the emancipation of women. Try reasoning – nothing doing. We could tell that Harry liked girls, but even as I read what I am writing, the concept has something demeaning instilled in it. Men so often find themselves painted into a corner when it comes to explaining women. All at once we have put them in a gross category, and they'll see about that! Harry himself went through this in his own way, and it could have had something to do with his setting aside verse in favor of prose. There is even a patronizing drift in the act of describing the female by poetry. "Who in the hell did Shakespeare think he was?" said Harry, when I brought this up, and he didn't bring a poem for a month. When he struck back I couldn't believe it.

Women's Lib:

A curse on your head,
A curse on your hair,
A curse on your bed,
A curse on your stair,
A curse on your fumble,

A curse on your gate,
A curse on your mumble
With consummate hate.
Come kiss me, my fool,
I love you.

Chapter 16

We knew Harry had never seen a vice admiral, anymore than he'd actually seen Gloria Steinem, Gladys Swartout or Lucius Beebe. "What does it matter?" said Harry. "It is all grist to the mill of the gods, and no one's business but my own."

As a free spirit, he wrote as he pleased. So Harry pressed on with his vice admiral and the matter of the creek. It was the first time he had asked for help. He found it hard to accept that his readers would understand his terseness, the lean as opposed to wordy fat, was how he said it. Some of us agreed that Harry could have trouble with one-word sentences, and others thought Harry was in his rights doing as he wished. Someone suggested that the single word was superior to the labored sentence. Others though this direction would send poetry into the quagmire of free form painting, that content would disappear from art altogether. Harry would not enter these discussions with any firm position. He called this process of his "float." And while his poetry had started a heated argument among friends, Harry sat in a corner with his head down as a man who hated noise. There were moments when he'd rise to his feet as though to speak, but without talking he'd sit back down and drop his head again as we went on with the debate.

The next poem he wrote was a {inaudible} bit on the favored subject of Albert Einstein.

{inaudible} each day,
Was able to extend his worry about the unsolvable problem.

More than his piece about the Einstein motif, and despite the fact that Harry would never make it with Gloria Steinem, Swartout or Beebe, he wrote another bit that week which made us think. Of course Harry's imagery is, as usual, ridiculous. Some of us kids had waded in water deeper than we thought, and in this time of the world, what creek bottom isn't covered with crap of every description, the modernity being what it is? We agreed that Harry was a product of his day, and that if an admiral of any rank was much of a man, maybe Harry had something in the second verse of that week.

The vice admiral was searching the creek bottom
Up to his braids in quick sand,
Groping underwater with both arms
For a broken bottle that cut his foot
One day in June, when he was ten.

Chapter 17

It disturbed Harry to read a bulletin that books in the Library of Congress, where he believed literature was preserved, have been given up for lost, with the paper they were printed on turning into dust because of modern improvements in the paper-making process. Harry was concerned that the situation left no future for American bums, who will have no place to sleep in the afternoon. With books disintegrating he thought libraries were finished, and that snoring patrons usually napping in the newspaper sections were doomed. That snoring patrons dozing off in libraries – that’s too much to remember, as within two weeks’ time bathing.

Old men on their way to the library,
Young men in rolled sleeves,
Old ladies in mothballs,
Young girls with powder to burn.

Chapter 18

Harry never saw Lucius Beebe, and it was impossible to describe the Bostonian briefly, but somebody must have tried. You would think Harry knew Lucius, if you didn’t know better. It can be said that the poet had a memory for detail, and had he known Beebe slightly, I can swear what Harry picked up was on target.

Lucius Beebe was at the Delta Saloon.
“I’ll have a martini in a large glass,
Two part gin, no olive, ban the onions,
Without vermouth. Salutations”

Chapter 19

We assumed that Harry knew few personages if any, and among the missing was Charles Chaplin. With his customary presumption, Harry slipped a poem under my door, rang the bell and left before I could answer.

Hoping to save a line before it slipped my mind,
I ducked into a drug store to get a pad and pen,
As well as a newspaper. And what did I see?
“Chaplin Cleared!” My God, I thought,
What is Chaplin into this time? Remembering
That the comedian once left America in disgrace,
I quickly read the lead: “Jury Frees Chaplin.”
Eager for details, I spread the paper out, reading:
“Jacksonville, Florida–AP. Navy Chaplain
Andrew F. Jansen was found not guilty Friday night
On a charge of misconduct and adultery.”

Chapter 20

Was it my own fault? Had I been speaking too freely to Harry? So long as he was

into poetry, the outrage of his borrowing ideas and the inclination to probe into my private life did not alarm me. But the fellow was getting into short pieces of prose, and prose like a reciprocal dream state associated with verse. I suppose my guard had been down. At this moment I have no way of knowing which of my closest friends will become grist to the mill, as Harry puts it. I have told him to avoid reaching into intents and purposes of friends I have exposed to this monster. There is no way to stop him from writing these transparent pieces of his. I said, "Harry, what makes you think you know so much about people you've never seen? Just because you have a flair for writing doesn't give you the right to invade *my* privacy, or the privacy of those I have known and spoken of in confidence. Conversation at times is a sacred trust, and your dim theory of grist to the mill doesn't go with me. Back off, Harry!"

But I might as well have been pouring water in the sand. In a week he came by with a Xerox copy of his latest adventure into prose. He no longer trusts me with the original as he did with his poetry. There's a dark side to the man, and in the depths of his particular gloom, he put together a macabre fantasy that I hope will never see the light of day. What does a person do when he finds himself trapped like this?

Box 16, Tape 16/156 – "Harry III" – August 23, 1992

Main Subjects of Selection: Walton's book *Harry* (cont'd)

(This tape comprises Chapters 20–26, beginning at p. 39 (that or the pagination of the previous tape is wrong, since the latter says p. 38).

People mentioned:

Belli, Melvin
Belli, Toni
Caen, Herb
Herrmann, Bernard
Miller, Arthur
Walton, Myrtle Foose

[Chapter 20]

The Whitely Report

My name is George Whitely. I first fell in love at sixteen. My mother was a seamstress, and my father left us when I was twelve. I like chocolate cream pie the way mother made it, three inches high. No, that's wrong. All settings should advance. Switch over to Dream 6, if you must.

My name is George Whitely. I first fell in love at sixteen. Her name was Paula, and poppies were in bloom, and we turned off the highway and had gone down a dirt road and turned off again. I stopped the roadster in hub-high grass. No, you can't

schedule me, I must do it this way.

My name is George Whitely. I first fell in love at sixteen. We were in the roadster and grass was hub-deep a few miles out of Fresno in early May. Poppies were blooming. Her name was Paula, and her father grew figs. She said she loved me with our first kiss, and I still see the strand of her light brown hair over one eye. I brushed it back, kissed her again. Her young body was hot in my sweating hands, Paula trembling, {inaudible} the joy of expectation. You know, we made love too fast, but it was still real anyway.

My name is George Whitely, and I first met Paula at sixteen. Her arms were smooth, and her legs so soft. The memory is real. I hold her now. My hands feel her body, her underthings.

My name is George Whitely, and my mother was a seamstress and my father was a cracker salesman. He left when I was twelve.

Try the late setting. Try Simeon 3. Try my setting. Okay, go!

My name is George Whitely, and my mother made three-inch chocolate pies with real meringue, not aerosol, made them stand high.

Are you on the new setting?

My name is George Whitely. I fell in love at sixteen. Poppies were around the roadster parked in hub-high grass. My mother was a seamstress. My father left when I was twelve. Mother made deep chocolate pies.

No, it's all of it or nothing! Oh, the foot! My damn foot! Caught by the elevator, all jelly. Get the hell off this setting! Get me clear. They're cutting out my leg! Where's my foot?

My name is George Whitely. I first fell in love at sixteen. My mother was a seamstress and my father a cracker salesman. I was twelve when he left. Hub-high grass, poppies and the roadster, I kissed her and said, "Paula, when I was twelve my father ran off with an Armenian girl on raisin day. They said she worked in a Van Ness Avenue bar. My father sold crackers and left us for a cocktail girl.

Then take another thing, try anything!

My name is George Whitely. I was on a service elevator going to my car when my foot slipped. I fell in love at sixteen. Her name was Paula.

My name is George Whitely. I first fell in love at sixteen.

"{inaudible} call for this afternoon, Marjorie," Dr. Stanton said to his assistant at the console, then turned to a man in a sports jacket. He had been monitoring the equipment of a large glass case where a human brain was kept living. It was connected to Stanton's console, in an arrangement developed in the experiment the press had named Simeon 3, the work of the late Dr. Whitely, former chief of Behavioral Biology at Colorado Control. The scientist had given his brain as a last contribution to Project Brain Bank.

[This story is Walton's projection of his books.]

Chapter 21

He was one of those characters who slips into your life by social osmosis. Semi-permeable he was, and the treacle in his aspirations glued you down before you realized it. At times I felt like a fly being consumed by a strange meat-eating plant. Harry was more than awful, he was insidious. But not inane. And if you listened to him at all when he arrived at your door, the first thing you knew, Harry had got inside your privacy again, and without facing your plight, you found yourself chatting with Harry as though he was a true person and not an artistical writer.

Artistical was a word my late composer friend Bennie used for those hang-about in the culture frame of the going thing. Were I the type, I might cross myself with both hands, hoping for double absolution. But leaving it to Harry, had he seen this, you'd somehow know he'd spot it as a double-cross.

Near everyone of us were fond of Harry, despite our suspicions. He could still make it as a creative person, should the tide drop that way. One day's crap is another day's creation, Harry might say. But what would I be to put words in his mouth? Words he had plenty, and he needed no help, nor did he ask for guidance. Whatever you said in kindly offering fell of his person like water from the duck of time. You would be thankful the next day after one of those near misses with Harry. No, you didn't blow him away with the pistol in the hall. There he was again. Thank God it was a short poem that certain people might even like.

Red lettuce, garlic, game hens,

Pickles, blueberries, wine.

W. H. Auden

Chapter 22

No sooner was I myself again, then there was Harry challenging my complacency. Believe it, he wouldn't forget a word you said in a weak moment. The thought of any attorney getting on your case was sobering, but try Melvin Belli. Any tangle with Belli is automatically no secret. And hadn't I seen Nevada lawyers groveling across from him at the cocktail hour? What wouldn't a politician do for the man? If it hadn't been another row with Harry, I would not have signed away my right to edit his contributions to the book we proposed. No quitter, Harry pressed his concept of freedom of speech, going far beyond the precepts of the constitution. He would not allow either of us the right of edit, save for spelling and punctuation. That in itself should have warned me. But the book's publication was so unlikely that I got careless, and this will have to account for his piece concerning the Belli caper. The title alone is jarring.

A Tale of Moe

At a time when Jack Ruby was unheard of, and Tammy Fay Baker was untouched, Herb Caen's girl photographer, then Toni Belli, called my friend from the Reno airport even as she was restraining the Basset Hound Moe. The dog was a pedigree running a fair mile. But training Moe had none, neither indoor or out. And it was made known that the current Mrs. Belli needed a Nevada home for her Melvin's dog. On a path of untold divorce, the now-deceased second wife of the king of torts was a family friend of the painter who got hooked on Moe. The ears, the belly. The Basset Hound's Belli had a new home. But the husband, feared coast to coast, reported the dog as missing, not knowing his wife had swiped Moe from their apartment house light well, the dog's make-do kennel. On the spur of the moment, she had flown Moe to Nevada in a private plane to find reasonable sanctuary. And at the dog's new address, the untutored beast cut out after wetting the lawn. And to get him back, the painter ran an ad describing the dog along with a vague reward.

That afternoon, Moe's finder came to the door claiming the money, adding, "We saw the tag and called San Francisco. If you are smart, you'll protect yourself. The law is after the dog."

The painter wrote a fast letter:

Dear Melvin Belli:

You may not remember me, but when you were in Reno one summer, we dined together as guests of your wife.

You were the honored speaker at a legal conclave.

And I hasten to say that Toni has given me the Basset Hound Moe, saying the dog shouldn't be living in an apartment house light well. And that he was too much dog for you.

There was an urgent reply:

Pursuant to your letter, of course I wish the return of my Basset Hound Moe.

The painter hit the phone. A lady law partner answered the call, saying Belli was presently East. So it was arranged to fly Moe United, and she would pick him up at San Francisco International on arrival.

It would have been easy if United States Senator Bible in Nevada hadn't booked two flight kennels for his own dogs' trip back to Washington. No kennel could be had. So remembering the legal conclave, the painter raised his voice: "Ma'am, call the senator, and tell him it's Melvin Belli's dog."

And this is how the Basset Hound Moe got a senator's kennel and flew back to Baghdad by the Bay.

[NOTE: The story of Belli's dog is on one of the tapes Walton gifted in 2000, Tape 2/97 I believe. I didn't transcribe it from there.]

Chapter 23

We didn't know if it was a sign of improvement in Harry or simply an extension of the original man. Some of us missed his sporadic verse, and there were those who believed he might make it as a straight writer. But who lost sleep over header [?]. When the problem of his next item came up, none of us could account for the graveyard business. He was not a morbid person, so we supposed that something about graveyards intrigued him. But the girl he called Myrna had in fact that name is a question. And the girl he met in a New York elevator had to be an overheard experience. Harry ventured no further east than Sparks. And when Nevadans think of Sparks, it fails to stir the blood. East Sparks was once an historical train stop for the correction of mishaps for rolling stock in the heyday of earthly transit. So if you think he found an exciting girl in east Sparks, my number's in the book. But what is this fiction about the New Orleans Modigliani Hotel? As in his other tales, one suspects the elephants' presentation was cut from the same cloth.

The Elephant Graveyard

He'd speak of forgotten things once said on the hearth of Great Bay [?]. No longer corn [?], they might have been right, perhaps true, for good things run out of gas. He spoke of the body of humanity spawned in a lonely world swamp in a sea of hearts. The hand, it was being lost in London or in Prague. Did anyone confirm his travels or what books he finished reading? Small wonder I was bothered by his prattle. "There was this Nubian weaving rugs in the alley, or "I grabbed the phone from the grandfather clock." He fell in love with an octoroon, he tells us, a beauty behind a candy shop counter across from the Modigliani in New Orleans, bought a bag of pralines from her and didn't forget it. He had a light side, though. He spoke of {inaudible} breaking his spotless terrier Spot. When Spot would piss the floor, he would drag the pet to its wetting and shove its nose in it. In a week the dog caught on: pissed the floor, stuck his nose in it, and went to the door without being told. Spot's master wasn't hung up on memories, but he had a regard for them. There was a girl from Ohio, whom he met on an elevator in Manhattan, a brunette of heroic thrust who said she was a student of Hans Hoffman. But he said he deliberately

turned from her and had coffee by himself at a 57th Street Automat, put off by his fear of becoming a New York artist because of this lovely student.

With no hesitation he changed the subject to the time he saw a girl who had gotten off their train and who floated past his Pullman window. Her blonde hair caressed her back and her gorgeous face was beyond description. Telling her, she threw out his arms, shook his head and could say no more.

In moments his voice was back, rambling on about love and magic and the girl in the park who wrongly decided he was unavailable. She had said, "Oh, you're married! I can tell. All the good ones are married!"

Such encounters he carried with him throughout his life, as he did the incident at the county fair. This girl was showing a [Inaudible], when he was on duty as a member of a boy scout encampment with tents in two rows beside an operational Ferris wheel.

And no less important was the prostitute who had chosen him as her virgin client, when he had come to town with the rest of a construction crew. Having come with the gang, there was no other ride back to the job, so he wasted the hooker's time, asking how a nice girl like her was working in a place like that. Meanwhile, the construction men were upstairs with their women taking care of things.

But what about the girl from Honolulu? They parted in tears as they tried to say goodbye in the doorway of a corner drug store. Was it any wonder that he would see the little green men running across his bed? He'd say, "They're real! Real. I could have touched them!"

Had he fallen for Myrna before he saw her Christmas window in 1948? Her apartment was on the upper floor of a two-story rooming house. They had met at the vegetable counter of a local market, and he had taken her home a few times. In her window was a display of the Nativity, a patchwork of painted papers fixed to the glass with Scotch tape: a palm tree, a donkey and the three wise men. He had asked himself if the other cutouts represented the holy family. Upstairs, he was given a cup of tea, and he saw the window from inner Bethlehem. By then he was calling her Myrna, and had learned her family was circus. They

had done a highwire act with Barnum & Bailey. So to keep her hand in, Myrna had erected her circus rig behind the rooming house, where people going to work would see her warming up. Commenting on her nativity scene, he said something about symbolism. And she had wrinkled her brow, assuring him she knew about symbolism. For she had once taken a job at a burlesque theater, without realizing what was expected of her. She said, "It was so embarrassing standing there naked before all those people with me holding a fur muff as the spirit of winter. Symbolism. I know what you mean." Later, she married the manager of an auto supply firm and vanished from the area. He said, "She was one of the lost girls who went to the elephant graveyard. You can't guess where they'd gone."

Chapter 24

[See "Work Tape" above, where the final part of this story with variations is transcribed – so this is another repurposed bit of Walton's writing.]

While I may have told Harry about Newport, Indiana, where I once lived with my maternal grandparents, I swear that I never heard of Lordstown, nor could I have repeated something about the private world of Hoosier girls. Here's another example of the writer's talent, or should I say aptitude? Lord known you wouldn't say God given. He possibly could have made it had he finished school. And with a little time in college, it wouldn't have been left for me to correct his spelling, which I myself am not so good at.

Where he got his notion about the inner world of young girls is anyone's guess. Think it over. Harry took a lucky shot. Hoagy Carmichael couldn't have helped him, and Jane Pauley wouldn't have given him the time of day. So where does that leave the Wabash probability?

As compiler of Harry's output, I have agreed to a severely modest role. Brick streets in Newport, Indiana may have been passed on, but what would a boy of ten know concerning girls? There was no way that I could have told Harry about anything, except the world of a little boy.

The Drainage at Lordstown

Rain all day. Christine had been dreaming when she came to school, had dreamed through breakfast and before leaving home. Still dreaming, she guessed it was after 2. How could she tell? The bell would ring at 3. It was raining harder now, as she looked out of the rain-streaked window in her classroom at Lordstown High. She was chewing a yellow pencil and

considered biting it, but instead she leaned into her desk, with her breasts getting something back. Too young to die, she passed that over, and thought about becoming a nun, or an actress, or at least a nurse.

Lordstown, Indiana had been plain even in Lincoln's time. It was said that he'd stayed overnight at the Wabash Hotel across from town square. Lordstown was a community of five hundred residents, a town of trees and red brick streets with deep gutters to handle the heaviest rainfall, and was doing it now. Off the school grounds were highly arched {inaudible} curving over the deep gutters. It was said that Lordstown had built the sewers of Chicago, and it was true that a tile plant had once flourished there. The rain didn't let up.

Lawrence Pratt drove Christine Barker home after school in his family's Dodge sedan. As Christine was rushing off, Lawrence called after her, "Can I see you tonight?" Hesitating at the front door, she called back, "Not tonight. Maybe Saturday."

Lawrence Pratt was driving away when she heard her mother ask, "Is that you, Dear?" Mumbling in answer, Christine ran upstairs to her room, slammed the door and peeled off her damp coat, draped it over a chair, then falling to her bed, she turned on the lamp, and later a small radio on an end table. Kicking off both shoes, she swept up a magazine in what truly was one finely articulated youthful action. But she ignored her name when Mrs. Barker called from downstairs, "Christine?" The voice had been gentle, and as Christine settled back into her pillows, she heard her mother again, "Oh, Christine dear." Soft as this was, and coming from below, Christine may have been justified ignoring it. And she turned up the radio volume and threw the magazine across the bedroom, and swung around lying on her stomach with her arms beneath her head, looking sideways at the window curtains, which alone seemed to be keeping out the rain. The folds of the curtain lace may have had something to do with Christine closing her eyes, and inside her head were images that quickly came on their own. Some she rejected and others returned. Half thoughts seemed as clear as she'd managed lately, Stuffing the pillow under her taffy head, she pushed her curls aside, then clung to the pillow in a firm embrace. It seemed a person, almost someone. Could it be a

girl? And she imagined the hand of another girl on her body, and failed to think of Lawrence Pratt doing this right. Finding her so funny [?], she thought with her eyes closed on her pictures, with the second girl going away with the first of Christine {inaudible} anyone. Then said in part to {inaudible}, "Anyone." When her mother stepped outside her door, stopped her thoughts, Christine smoothed her skirt, and seemed to be napping when the door opened. "Christine, I'd like your help with dinner."

"Oh, Ma," Christine said with annoyance. And with her eyes still closed, her pictures were shattered, and the room had become a hard place, even as it had been soft, warm, and unmotherly.

Mrs. Barker said, "But you're not coming." And Christine just looked at her.

When Mr. Barker sat down at the dinner table, Mrs. Barker was on her way with a platter of round steak she'd been warming in the oven. She returned to the kitchen and came back with a bowl of country gravy flecked with charred bits the steak had left in the skillet. "Where's Chris?" said Mr. Barker.

"Upstairs."

He rose from the table and went upstairs and down the hall to his daughter's room. "Chris." There was no answer, so he said, "Chris! Dinner's on the table." Barker was afraid to open the door for the single reason that he was afraid of women, and he had been noticing Christine Barker as a woman. He didn't touch the doorknob, waiting there with this fear of his. Instead, he put it in a pleading way, "Chris."

"I'm not hungry," Christine said, and her father left.

Soon, Mrs. Barker rapped on the door, saying curtly, "Christine! Dinner's waiting!"

"Oh Ma!" said Christine, and followed her mother down the stairs, sent back exactly ten years by the disgusting word 'waiting' and all its {inaudible}.

The daughter finished eating before her parents did, and when she was gone, Mrs. Barker said, "I don't know what's got into that girl," and Mr. Barker may or may not have heard.

It had been raining the afternoon that Christine Pratt's daughter came home from school. Frank Jenkins brought her in a used

Porsche. And soon his passenger was upstairs in her room before Christine had seen her. But her mother the door shut, heard shoes hit the floor and heard the television. She was satisfied when Lawrence Pratt came home on time, for dinner was warming in the oven, and the gravy was already ladled in this expectation. At least Lawrence had been dependable. Christine put the gravy between the meat platter and the bowl of boiled potatoes, and she was untying her apron when she went upstairs. At her daughter's door, she softly said, "Martha honey, dinner is waiting," believing Martha had heard.

But Martha Pratt was on her bed, watching television in a miniskirt, and the shoes she had thrown across the room had really been boots. She was looking at a teenage magazine while three guests were talking at once on a game show. Martha Pratt couldn't have cared less about the drainage of Lordstown, and the boy with the Porsche could blow it out his ear, while the red brick gutters outwore the tiles of Chicago.

Chapter 25

The first of this month began with a bang. I was certain Harry would get into his novel now that he had a few stories behind him. We had talked about it on the telephone, for I hadn't seen him in a week. He said he was too busy to drop by, that the novel must not be gone into without solid grounding. He had the beginning and the end. And having seen a PBS special on Buster Keaton, he was telling me the middle of the work would take care of itself. I reminded him that Keaton had been an actor, and a comic actor at that. Which is different from a comedian or a stand-up comic, and Harry knew all of this, adding his respect for Keaton as opposed to careless readings of Hemingway or Arthur Miller. No way would he listen to what I knew on the subject. It wasn't so long ago that I had urged Harry to read the classical masters of prose, considering his drift in that direction. He told me to take care of my own career, and he would take care of his. For he was into this work as a serious comment on our times, that the novel for appealed to him as the way to achieve the dynamic in prose. I wished him luck, and didn't expect him that day, but there he was with what he called the outline for his historical novel he named *Number One*. Telling him it wasn't like any outline I'd seen written by serious writers I had known, I suggested he expand the details so that readers could follow the plot and not get lost.

This projection of presidents and kings is a bit heavy for a guy who has spent most of his life in a Nevada county where we have had neither of the above. So far, although certain politicians seem to have that in mind. In an hour Harry returned

with a copy of his novel's outline, and I suggest you read it for yourself, and think of what a new writer like Harry should be told.

Number One

How often are presidents or kings seen on the Comstock? We heard the news: Nixon to speak on C Street. There'd be a swing through Nevada, then back again to Washington. A time before Agnew, wasn't Ike chief of state?

Nixon came to Virginia City in a chopper, officially met by Republicans running for offices rather than oval. That day I took the Labrador Sam to our dump, and we emptied two cans beside the federal bird parked on the flat place at the dump site. Sam circled the fliers, then lifted a leg, honoring Air Force One Half in a crisp canine salute.

Asking Harry if that was all of his outline, he said it was the beginning and the end, and what was good enough for the master, Buster Keaton, was good enough for him. That the middle would take care of itself. He said all sorts of things could happen in the middle, things he could never anticipate. He said, "Who can anticipate a tidal wave? There could be an earthquake of 6 on the earthquake scale." I mentioned that the scale had a proper name that was often heard on the TV news, and he should keep a note on it, in case he decided Nixon would get shaken up. At this, Harry got angry and said, "Details, details," and left in a huff.

Chapter 26

Peeved insufferably, Harry didn't show up for weeks. Knowing his calendar in a put-off season, he was on target after his wound-licking session. None of us let on that anything had come between us, for he customarily blamed the lot of us for infringements brought to bear. There were those he wrote off out of hand, while some of the lucky ones he'd again see in a year. In my case, I had undergone isolation every time my observations concerning his writing produced a belly shot. No heavyweight in the counterattack, our friend preferred the enforced silence by ignoring us altogether, although he was aware of the missed parties and casual get-togethers we had going as usual. When his agony of removal gnawed the gut beyond his actually fragile endurance, he came back to the fold as though nothing had happened, showing up at this house or that, and became Harry again. Was there a trace of remorse in his return to earth? In other hands, I would suspect this was a variety of apology, but he was never one to apologize, nor would he surrender a chair to an elder. His obstinance was a sort of armor needed in his joust with the surrounding world, limited as it was in our district.

Over the years, I had spoken of Myrtle, my mother, as though the latter condition didn't seriously apply. She herself was a character with a degree of warmth for utter

strangers that was at times woefully misunderstood. Myrtle loved life more than passionately, for her outlook folded life on the moment as a soufflé in the hands of first chef. Harry picked up on her nature, and when I saw myself on Market Street in San Francisco, I knew the poet had been listening.

Dolly. Dolly Kerchy [?] was in furs. When Myrtle left him standing alone on Market Street, they said her small son waited exactly on the spot until she returned from shopping at the White House, the City of Paris, and Rouse Brothers. When she got back, the lad was always waiting, with his Dutch-cut hair, watching trolleys coming from the Embarcadero, where Bay ferries docked before New York existed.

Box 16, Tape 16/157 – “Harry IV” – August [February] 23, 1992

Main Subjects of Selection: Walton’s book *Harry* (cont’d)

(This tape comprises Chapters 27–37, beginning at p. 81.)

People mentioned:

Corwin, Norman

[Chapter] 27

My own remorse was unexpected. Had I been too harsh in the matter of the poet’s outlined novel? There are moments when all of us blurt out remarks, only to regret them later. Presently I can’t recall where it was that I said, but when a writer exposes his underbelly as Harry had with the outline, an unintended slight can cut one’s heart out.

As his new poems arrived at my doorstep with more frequency, not only I was aware that I had applied the brakes of common sense. So when I read the verse concerning Caesar, I said nothing as I handed back the page with an assuring smile.

His old brain dreamed of Caesar
As the car went straight ahead,
Turn signal flashing, Left – Left.

[Chapter] 28

In his attempt to steer life back to normal, certain of his verses one might call endearing, except that man among me outlawed the term. A woman might have told Harry, “That’s sweet of you to think of this.” But what red-blooded man talks to another in that way? Christ knows, none of us left here are fags. So what can you do when there’s an urge among men to say something tender? Is that a good word? [?] It is difficult to set wrong modes aright, so grown men will say, “What the shit!” Or “Go crap in your hat.” And I once heard an otherwise inarticulate woman tell a man, “You can piss up a rope!” Which are not terms to solve problems. And this

could account for untold wars through the ages. Coaches will say, “Go get ‘em, tiger!” And In Indiana in 1924, we would say, “Atta boy!” or “That’s the old vinegar” – whatever that meant. At best, I can explain it. It is similar to a quarterback patting his center on the butt before the football arrives. This indicates that men have few terms in life to do the job.

In my poverty of spirit, I did nothing more than thank Harry for remembering that the other poet I personally know [Norman Corwin] took me to lunch in North Hollywood when I was painting titles for a documentary film. Harry got the depth of the poet’s expansiveness at a time when we were munching hot dogs at an open air table some young people had set up under parasols. It had been a poetic idea to go there for a snack. It would be a chance to talk, although the fumes from the passing traffic were unbearable. I respected my host for his heroic record, but Harry only knew him as having written the script for a famous film based on a one-eared artist.

Thanking Harry three times, I began to wonder if the son-of-a-bitch wanted me to lick his boots for a lousy poem that never should have been written. To tell the truth, he didn’t get the hot dogs right.

Sarcophagus

They sat across from each other
At the cafe on Ventura Boulevard,
Elbows on the round table,
Drinking coffee, eating hamburgers,
And the poet spoke of {inaudible}

[Chapter] 29

He had never been seen at a town meeting, and wasn’t asked how he’d voted, nor would Harry answer a direct question on politics. Is it any wonder that we were astonished by his position on racism and poverty in the streets of the nation? He’d turn his head at the mention of *Star Wars*, federal intervention he loathed, Internal Revenue was not voiced to him, nor was the cost of living, the price of pork bellies, the effects of inflation, drought, flood or famine. Effectively isolated in a world of his own, he would blame no one for putting his down, yet there was an aura about Harry that seemed to come into a room with him, saint [?] that he wasn’t, and you could call him bull-headed when it came to religion. He would only discuss St. Francis because of animals. The rest of Christianity he viewed as unproven theory. Yet he showed signs of compassion if the grass was cut or trampled. So who would believe that Harry had his next poem in mind?

[following poem is adapted from *Mark Twain* (see above).]

They came in wagons, came without tents,
Blasted the Indian, his government,

Lied about passage, lied about trade,
Lied about Jesus, lied unafraid,
Diseases in blankets, syphilis in bed,
Do you want gonorrhoea or chancroid instead?
Would you like my consumption?
Would you take typhoid, too?
Don't answer my question!
Don't look annoyed, you!
 They've come with their gutters,
 Their curbs, long-term credit,
 Their truths and their papers,
 The papers we edit,
For there's nothing like truth,
And there's no good in evil,
From the good Book of Ruth
To the Devils Primeval.

[Chapter] 30

There were those who thought Harry was afraid of dogs. But I know differently. He was quite attached to my Welsh Corgis, who would keep a suspicious eye on the poet as the dog looked up from the floor. Corgis widely behave as though human beings are simpleminded, and at times for good cause. There was no polite way for me to suggest that Harry should blow his nose before reading his verse, and if he were reciting it from memory, there would be words in one line that should be in another. And believe it, some of those recited sentences were wild. It seemed to me that the process of recitation either confused him or stirred his blood to the point of incoherence. And putting that together with his nasal twang presented problems. Getting his papers away from him would not always work, although he enjoyed others reading his poems aloud, or for that matter, anything else he wrote.

It sounded like he was coming down with a bad cold the day he arrived with his Corgi material. And you should have heard him wheezing away on how no poet had written verse expressly for dogs. And my Corgis heard every word of this. You could believe Freddie understood. Harry's inflection came from his nose in an obstructed cross of Gaelic and the original Iberian tongue, although he had no connection with either language. Try putting a clothes pin on your nose and recite Lincoln's Gettysburg address in thirty seconds.

[adapted from "Work Tape" *above*]

He licked his leg
He licked his neck
He licked his ball

He licked the deck

He licked his dick
He licked his pan
He licked the bone
The shoe, the man

He licked his paw
He chewed his claw
He licked his paw
And said, "I see you!"

He licked his back
He licked his chest
He licked his rump
He licked the rest

He licked his lips
He licked his nose
He licked his tail
[inaudible] pose

[Chapter] 31

Another production that Harry spent a lot of time on got hung up in his display of the word. We all appreciated the endless time and energy that went into his work, even when we saw a brief piece come out of weeks of concentration, with Harry missing meals and passing the news on television. Loyal to Tom Brokaw for reasons of his own, he wouldn't turn that broadcast on when he was involved in what he later laughingly referred to as his doggerel, which Webster's Dictionary describes as loose and irregular verse. The poet wouldn't hold to any formula, however lenient.

At the time, the dappled Dachshund was part of the menagerie I lived with, and the poet's particular favorite. The dog would rub in his own potty, and rub his back against Harry's trousers, but it didn't matter in their relationship. As a matter of fact, Harry wrote for any dog turning up in the neighborhood.

I got you! I got you!
Got you by the sock, you!
I got you! I got you!
Got you by the toe!

Round and round the table,
Round and round the floor,
Round and round the kitchen,
Round and out the door.

I got you! I got you!
 Got you by the sock, you!
I got you! I got you!
Got you by the pants!
 I got you! I got you!
 Got you by the sock, you!
I got you! I got you!
Got you by the toe!

When I commended Harry for writing poetry for dogs, he agreed it was a breakthrough into an untapped resource, and that publishers hadn't faced up to the enormous body of readers representing an untapped field. He said, "Imagine the number of copies to be sold at dog shows across America. Britain alone is a fabulous market. A dog's book of verse could be translated into Dutch, and there's a French market not to be ignored.

While not sharing his optimism concerning Europe, I had attended Western American dog shows, so I agreed that they might buy anything with a dog on the cover, advising him to have the dust cover in color for sheer sales. Harry said, "I think you're right. Dog verses have magic. And as many times as I have read mine, I never tire of the syntax."

Asked what he meant by the syntax, he said, "I always enjoy reading them."
[Chapter 32]

In his enthusiasm over his dog book of poetry, he was inclined to be careless in his delivery of the subject. Harry had his own vocabulary which he believed he shared with dogs, and this meant the poet might use any term he found dogs responsive to. I suggested this could have something to do with attitude, or the way he was speaking to them, tone of voice being important. Body language could have an index in this instance. Giving him an example, I said, "If a pretty dog owner breathed, 'Coochy coochy coo' in a pleasant voice while smiling, and if there was no threatening gesture, a toy poodle or a Pekinese would not likely be alarmed. But if a guy like you, Harry, rushed up to the same animals yelling 'Coochy coochy coo' as you were throwing your arms around – you know, you do that, Harry – there could be trouble. And you might be bitten. Saying the same words, though well intended, has a different effect. And if you go to the next dog show to try this out, you could be arrested for disturbing the peace."

[Transcribing suspended at this point, upon learning from Vivian Walton that she has the manuscript of *Harry*!]

[The last poem in the last chapter of *Harry*, p. 98:]

He pulled
the alphabet
over him
and disappeared
without a word.

[Here ends the transcription of *Harry*.]

Box 16, Tape 16/165, Side 1 – January 16, 1977

Main Subject of Selection: Walton delights in children; Walton on older women

People mentioned:

McMahan, Thomas
Walton, Vivian

Well, in a way, it had been a day of small children, because at one point I was in the Sears can. There're two little kids, just about knee-high. One was a tiny girl! In the men's toilet! And barely reaching over to the faucet – they're both about the same size. The boy seemed a little bigger. They were filling paper cups, and here this little girl was, filling a paper cup with water, barely reaching the faucet, and throwing the water all over the can! [laughs] It was a marvelous, marvelous demonstration. And I came out – and let them out the swinging door, which is rather heavy for such small children, and asked the young lady at the counter if she knew where their mother was, 'cause they were in the men's room. And she said, Oh, there's the mother over there, and the kids were running up and down, and the mother was concerned. But they'd gotten away from her entirely and had had a ball in the men's toilet, throwing water.

Now, then I went on to downtown Reno, and in the bar was another such child, about the same size, leaning on a ledge in the window, looking out into the street with cars passing. Now, he was so cute, this little towhead, with his sweater and his waist showing as his sweater hiked up, and his shirt, because there was a very old man, at least ninety years old, a familiar figure around that bar. And he always sits at the end. He's a beloved person. He's very small. He's rather shriveled up, but he appears to be in good health, and he has heavy nicotine stains on his left hand where he was holding his cigar. When he got through with that cigar, he rolled a cigarette.

But there was a young man in his thirties, who was about half drunk, and in a maudlin way patronizing the old man. Asked his name, and then asked his first name. His name was Thomas McMahan. And the young man was boring him to death with this patronizing thing. The old boy was trying to answer him as smoothly as he could, and the boy kept saying, "And may the saints preserve you, sir!" And he'd repeat it like he couldn't hear him. He heard perfectly well. "May the saints preserve you!" He told him that four times, and the guy just acknowledged it as pleasantly as he might. Now the young man left. At that time I noticed that little boy in the window, and here at the end of the bar before him, about fifteen feet away, was Thomas McMahan. I drew his attention to the child, and he said, "Oh," he said, he says, "I always enjoy seeing him." He said, "He's generally running up and down." Apparently he belongs to the management or some of the waitresses. The kid's a fixture. Well, this child was having as much fun as those two little kids in the men's toilet at Sears & Roebuck. He has playing with the mustard [laughs] after he got a bellyful of looking at the traffic, which had just fascinated him. Now this little boy is about knee-high, he's tiny! Ah well, he knew about the thing – the behavior of the mustard, the salt cellars and all that. He [inaudible] the pepper shaker – he'd stir the mustard, take the lid off, stir it around, put the lid back, and didn't get any mustard – out. Then he took the pepper shaker, turned it upside down and shook it, shook it all over the table, took a napkin and wiped it up. And he'd do this again, and again, four-five times he shook pepper on the table and wiped it up. And then he took a tall bottle of mustard which fortunately had a cap on it, and he shook it upside down. Well, he wasn't such a disaster as you might think. That little towheaded girl could have shown him how to handle things.

So, to my right was an outdoorsman, with a happy face, a man who proved to be from Minnesota in the beginning, but he's a cowboy. And he would say – I heard him, I heard him in conversation, "By Goshen" – he'd precede every sentence with "By Goshen." And he told a story. He had been with a sideshow, a circus, as a roustabout of some kind. And he told about how the man who didn't alert him as cutting a head off with a big sword had gotten rid of a troublesome young Irish child. He told him that he had cut a child's head off with the sword and put it on backward. That the boy always walked backward after that. And he said the Irish boy ran away. So, it's a harsh way to get rid of children.

...

Yesterday had been a complete day of small children, from the tots in the men's can to the little boy in the window at the bar. Even this persisted at Raley's, when we bought our supplies. There was a small black boy on a tricycle going his merry way down the broad aisles.

...

Vivian was suggesting that some woman of my own years would take an interest in me while she's gone, I'd better watch out. I said, "Well," I said, "I am put off by crepey butts." I said, "If I want to feel a crepey butt, I'll feel my own."

Box 17, Tape 17/180 – labeled “The Many Times Tree etc.” – undated

Main Subjects of Selection: Readings of “The Many Times Tree” and more Walton writings.

“4,280” *This is either a scenario for a short experimental film, or a prose piece in the form of such a scenario. Elided as indicated.*

Designated ‘N’, a girl called Navel is at a swimming pool. N’s midriff opens the action with a close diffuse shot of her navel, which sharpens as the distance increases. . . . as her navel expands into the glistening wet eye of origins. During the saga of N, a voice fades on, with a laudatory review of the life and wonders of Buffalo Bill Cody, including his bison kill of 4,280. Then the voice fades off.

See also manuscript in Box 19.

“The Gulls” *This is either a scenario for a short experimental film, or a prose piece in the form of such a scenario. Elided as indicated.*

High in the mountains at the edge of Virginia City, gulls are found flying, although the elevation is 6,000 feet. A blue sky, cotton-white clouds and pinyon hills are in the background, as the soaring gulls, ever circling, perform their aerobatics, to a harmonica rendition of “America,” which fades off with the last shot. A tilt down to a lower group of gulls, who as a continuous part of the flight surrounding them are seen picking through the garbage at the town dump.

“Nexus”

[The quotes headed “Mark Twain” are excerpts from Twain’s *Roughing It*, Chapters 15 and 19. The form and punctuation of Walton’s verses are surmised.]

X into Y, two Vs minus eyes, chickens, a cock or two, users on binges, swingers on hinges, criminal cabbages and arms for the Greeks, virginal ravages, cardinal sins, nothing, zoology, reason, ecology, Hapsburg,

horology, din, finders keepers, losers weepers, dread dollars that sound in low C.

Mark Twain: *Originally, Nevada was part of Utah and was called Carson County.*

Goods into garbage, holes into hills, bonanzas, barrascos, and Bowers, even the Heinzes, Cadwallader, Kleinses, McCormick, the Meinzes, Jerry, Rubin or Ted, flagging and bagging, smelling the wind, darkies and niggers, the colored – not Bl

Mark Twain: *It was along in this wild country somewhere, and far from any habitation of white men, except the stage stations, that we came across the wretchedest type of mankind I have ever seen. . . . I refer to the Goshoot Indians.*

Ladies, do you know that tomorrow is Father's Day? Kiddies, tell Mom to get Dad a new Frontenac, the car that safety built. With Pop, it's Frontenac, two to one.

Reading, teaching, endlessly preaching, yakking, wise-cracking, guessing, caressing, chiseling, blessing, prat-kissing, piddle and palsy with crud on their chins, moon

Mark Twain: . . . *inferior to all races of savages on our continent; inferior to even the Terra del Fuegians; inferior to the Hottentots, and actually inferior in some respects to the Kytches of Africa.*

Do you have that ache-all-over feeling? Do you have itchy toes, hot breath, hard-to-hear murmurs? Cure your ills with asswipe, the nation's choice.

Winnemucca, mutations, his younger relations, posteg [?] plants and sage, mountains for miners, grace mountains to use for Redskin recliners, flatly refused to integrate into the white man's dream. Cui-ui and wee-wee, rabbits and lead, Babb

Mark Twain: *Such of the Goshoots as we saw, along the road and hanging about the stations, were small, lean, "scrawny" creatures; in complexion a dull black like the ordinary American negro.*

Inflation, nations, expansions, mansions, freeways and halls, curves, gutters, things that one mutters, flyways, byways and balls, long vacant scrotums, Teutonic totems, oil slicks and rusting beer cans, dead ducks, God will, and

Bob Dylan, and hordes of black chillun continue to carry the calls of the peoples, rich peoples, poor peoples, peoples political, all. Say it: Give me five, brother.

Mark Twain: . . . *a silent, sneaking, treacherous looking race; taking note of everything, covertly, like all the other "Noble Red Men" that we (do not) read about, and betraying no sign in their countenances . . .*

Purpor [?] Soups have been consistent gold medal winners since 1892. Transfer for chicken broth for tasty homemade goodness that informed chefs envy. (Contains excessive salt and may be harmful for those on a restricted diet.)

Cancers, dancers, silver and gold, hunger, privation, starved babes looking old, our land in their fingers, our land in their tills, land-loving lingers, always land will, until that last mother-loving one of us is poisoned dead, gassed or otherwise executed, in [inaudible] knowing, insure the owing, Winnemucca, your flatlands of alkaline were given to railroads, so won't carry no one, no more, ask Geronimo, buffalo, passenger pigeons know.

Mark Twain: . . . *indolent, everlastingly patient and tireless, like all other Indians; prideless beggars--for if the beggar instinct were left out of an Indian he would not "go," any more than a clock without a pendulum .*

..

War bonnets, sonnets, arrows and bows, with Blue Bonnet on it, it's better, one knows, but oleomargarine, oleo-oh, oleo-lay-eee, oleo-ho, oleo-lady, oleo-gent, came with a wrapper and with wrapper went, gluteus maximus, gluteus Mickey Mouse, gluteus more, latissimus dorsi, and monsignors galore, pussy to wink at, pussy to screw, he'd screw a pussy, I would, wouldn't you? Get a haircut. Ships are leaving every day.

Mark Twain: . . . *hungry, always hungry, and yet never refusing anything that a hog would eat, though often eating what a hog would decline . . .*

Young Vietnamese patriots over ten can now call Saigon 111-2308 and sign up for Tet. Chewing gum and candy for all those enlisting, with or without the consent of their dad. This announcement was sponsored by the folks of the Central Intelligence Agency, who say, "A corpse in time saves mine."

Muhammad Ali, Mecca and Rome, Gauguin in Bali, Vincent in Nome, Nixon in China, Mitchell a Red, God's in his heaven, enough has been said. Buffalo Billy, Buffalo where? Rocks, sand, their soil, your land. Love, hate, plain just don't care.

Mark Twain: . . . *hunters, but having no higher ambition than to kill and eat jack-ass rabbits, crickets and grasshoppers, and embezzle carrion from the buzzards and coyotes . . .*

Not like it was sir. Tailings on dumps, bullion in lumps, wasteland higher than hills, shafts perpendicular or carted by hand, buildings that melt in the mind, rotten soft buildings bonanza kings left, wickiup women, wickiup men, space travelers in modules of three, launching futures of debt, moon garbage. R is to ache as S is to pain, look at the fallout, radiation, not rain.

Mark Twain: . . . *savages who, when asked if they have the common Indian belief in a Great Spirit show a something which almost amounts to emotion, thinking whiskey is referred to . . .*

If your girdle pinches, binds or bunches, buy Lady Love the next time you're shopping. Lady Love girdles are guaranteed to fit bottoms both large and small. And remember to save the Lady Love labels, for you may be a lucky winner in the Lady Love two-for-the-price-of-one contest.

They came in wagons, came without tents, blasted the Indian, his government, lied about passage, lied about trade, lied about Jesus, lied unafraid, diseases in blankets, syphilis in bed, do you want gonorrhea or chancroid instead? Would you like my consumption? Would you take typhoid, too? Don't answer my question, don't look annoyed, you!

Mark Twain: *The Bushmen and our Goshoots are manifestly descended from the self-same gorilla, or kangaroo, or Norway rat, which-ever animal--Adam the Darwinians trace them to.*

See what we've brought you, see all that we own, time clocks and gas engines, percepts on your loans, neckties and true haircuts, pressed pants, pleated skirts, we're priced awful good but priced awful hurts, all lines form

on the right, we've come with our gutters, our curbs, long-term credit, our truths and our papers, the papers we edit, for there's nothing like truth, and there's no good in evil, from the good Book of Ruth to the Devil Medieval.

Mark Twain: . . . *a thin, scattering race of almost naked black children, these Goshoots are, who produce nothing at all, and have no villages, and no gatherings together into strictly defined tribal communities—a people whose only shelter is a rag cast on a bush to keep off a portion of the snow, and yet who inhabit one of the most rocky, wintry, repulsive wastes that our country or any other can exhibit.*

[From this point, Walton repeats some of his verse from above, repeats a Twain quote, begins to repeat more verse, then breaks off. Perhaps he became confused, or resumed recording and lost his place. The whole piece may as well end here.]

Box 17, Tape 17/187 (reel-to-reel) labeled “Work Tape” – undated
Main Subjects of Selection: Readings of “Oliver” etc.

“Oliver”

The old man stood for the valley,
fertile land, growth, accomplishment,
loved children, kids [inaudible],
had a field, blackberry bound,
weed covered and given to young wind.
There was rather a baseball diamond,
trail for horsebacking,
a kind of racetrack, too,
for swinging hotrodders in sedans of mud,
homemade Hornets, buzzing turf clear up
to the first block of Gladder [?] Street,
an open square seasonally bound
in frog music and April streams
sogging about the field
which in drier times had a cockeyed depth
through the middle and crookedly aimed
at the town school bell.

The old man's field belonged
to sniffing superdogs, who raised
a thousand legs in one amber salute
from fronds of [inaudible] to blackberry row,
never drying until word went around
that an unwelcome variety of mushroom
was sprouting [inaudible] mustard high,
Easter flag, in memoriam.
Breezes shuddered when the lost stream sighed,
there being something the whole loose mixed up
disagreeing yet compatible population shared:
Faith.
Faith in what they knew,
in who they were.
Kids to come would wild-ass hotrod circles,
flinging mud from the old man's weeds
clear past Mars.

It was time Oliver paid a visit.
Forty years ago he was on first base,
never had a car, was bitten by a dog,
allergic to blackberries.
A couple things about Oliver:
he listened to frogs, and the path was his.
Catching the old man in full attack
near six foundations, neatly rowed,
Oliver listened to right of way,
footage, streets that wag,
sidewalks, lights and pipes.
Oliver heard ready cement.
Then the old pride raised his head
like a treed brontosaur
with six shares of General Motors.
There'd be a shopping mart there
and a parking lot here.
His gray words paled in the children's myth,
as the old man winked an eye.
After all, Oliver, when the chips are down
money talks.

[The above poem was rewritten in chapter VI of *Harry*.]
[Next, an original (?) children's street song.]

[Harmonica music played and composed (?) by Walton]

[untitled prose piece – which could be a poem – and which could be called “Harry” – in fact, this “prose piece” is a pastiche drawn from Walton *poems* which he incorporated into his book *Harry* (1989) , e.g., paragraphs 2 through 4 immediately below comprise one poem:]

The horse's head pressed against his own, yet drifted back, always slower,
and no one saw his silent suffocation, although a glass away on the other side
of the windshield.

He was almost sixty when he asked himself, could he ever write without the
hatred. Harry was impressed with anyone who could get a book published,
although he couldn't read it.

When told an author paid for a book's publication, Harry said it was
laudable, but didn't answer when he heard the author's wife was a
millionaire.

His great work was never written, and a description of his morbidity is
beyond telling. He kept records of the dead, but when an account was closed,
he couldn't forget the entry.

Harry claimed he didn't remember what he stole from what he made up, and
that life was either a cheat or a thief, that what he had was a bag of empty
beer cans, and the bartender was in the John.

He was sympathetic to a young clerk who was in love with a girl who came
into their office and left forever. But Harry said the youth had no sympathy
for this old man.

He talked to the grass. He'd find some place where a dog had been, and he'd
say “Shit.”

How did he look when you last saw Harry?

[Titled parables:]

“Letterism”

He pulled the alphabet over him and disappeared without a word.

“The Line”

The old sailor would tighten the line each morning, but the rope was always longer, and the boat further away.

“Time”

He awoke earlier every day, and was able to extend his worry about the unsolvable problem.

“Upmanship”

There was never a time when he was at a loss for words. When almost lost, he'd hold the word overhead with both hands, thinking.

“Discovery”

It seemed to him the smooth fold of a woolly fortune cookie. And when he got the message, it was: “Congratulations, you have just met your maker.”

[untitled prose piece – which could be a poem – and which could be called “Christine” – Walton read the whole piece with minor variations on Tape 16/156, or “Harry III,” transcribed below:]

Peeling off her wet coat, she hung it on a chair, and falling on her bed, switched on TV. Then kicking off her shoes, she caught a magazine in one smoothly articulated action as she heard, “Christine?” The voice was gentle, but Christine settled into a pillow, hearing her mother again saying, “Christine?” Soft as it was and downstairs, Christine felt justified in ignoring it, turned up the television, threw the magazine off the bed and fell on her stomach with her arms beneath her head, looking sideways at the window and the rain. The rain had something to do with her compulsion to close her eyes, making images inside her head, coming faster by themselves, leaving quick as she cared, some returning, half-illusions as good as the best [inaudible] lately. And rolling around with the pillow in one arm, it seemed a person, almost someone. She imagined the hand of another girl – why boy? The hand was on her body, the hand of the other girl. Hard to imagine boys doing it right. “Body hurts,” she thought, eyes closed on her pictures, and the second girl left with the first, with Christine inhaling a hard to hush breath,

“Anyone! Anyone!”

[An untitled prose piece about a girl named “Pandora” with affinities to the non-Marie Jeanne female character of Walton’s novel *Pyramid* rewritten as *Pandora*, but also affinities to Marie Jeanne herself.]

After one of the parties, she was hung-over in his bedroll with her poor little head, when Jean Pierre came running up the hill shouting at the top of his voice, “Pandora! Pandora! Jackass the coffee pot. I lose it!”

She pulled on her jeans and went along with him to find the pack mule he’d been loading, and they caught it at the next campsite, to which they were moving that morning. The mule knew where it was going and saw no reason to wait. It got the pack saddle twisted under its belly, and they found the load strewn along the trail. She adored young [inaudible].

Pandora once told me, “Life is different with us [Basques]. The outer world is strange.” She felt the strangeness since childhood, knowing nothing except love. She was raised by her grandfather with the neighbor’s curious help and two cousins, who showed her the difference in a red barn in an open field.

She can still feel the hay. Twelve lads in a circle took turns on Pandora, laughing at her cousin making out with a broom handle between her legs, while his [sic] brother blew off Charlie Clark. Pan said the boys teased her about her face until the time for lipstick came, and she showed them.

She spent eight thousand summers at as many thousand feet, where herders sang to garlic one song to garlic one song and another, changing verses, of ten lines. Pan said when herders made love to her in bed under the sky, with a pinyon mat below them, herons flew to the meadow, and chip-i-munks cried.

“I was not yet ten, and the wife of four herders, Grandpa unsuspecting,” she confessed. The old man headed for Reno, calling back from the truck, “Jean Pierre, keep an eye on Pandora!” Jean Pierre would yell back to him, “Pandora, he I okay. I see you” – “You’ll see” in his lingo. When the Ford left, he’d throw his hat on the ground, dancing on the brim, Pan bringing the wine sack Jean Pierre held with a fountain of burgundy from as far as he could reach. Then drawing the leather sack close, he’d snap it down carefully, not missing as he would that night sooner or later, squirting Pan, and embracing the child and the wine sack, from the Pyrenees to the Sierras, roaring with mock surprise, [inaudible] and merriment, “Son of a gun! Alor!” She had long conversations with the wetback, Antonio. He’d break into chocolate, and say, “Pandora, the Americano’s a mean one,” making the case with the heel of his hand to a soggy chin, always bowing, though she was but

a child.

She loved Simón, Jean Paul and Antonio, but Jean Pierre especially. Far back in the wood, on a U-shaped [inaudible] road, Pan forgot her strangeness. The same went for Capitán, a long-haired, white-eyed sheepdog stolen from a Paiute Chief from Nixon. Capitán had a coffee can of dog rice and his good eye on Rose when Pandora returned. At the home ranch, she had a girlfriend, Basque like many herders, who knew one hell of a lot about things unmentioned. “Gradually,” Pandora said, “we discovered ourselves,” establishing a weapon used well in school, ultimately in church.

As a social service, Pan drove a priest to Austin every week, until he said no. And when asked why, she knew why. He was young and handsome, and she was using the weapon. She told me, “We made love in the car until they saw the lipstick on his collar, and sent Father to Siberia or to Rome.”

We were flying East via United with the Great Salt Lake below when Pandora took my hand. “I get so involved yet I love my husband. When the twins came, I’d hoped things would resolve themselves. I love them dearly. And I love their father, though differently than you. With you, the strangeness is unimportant – the strangeness of the barn, the stubble and the hay. The hatred for my father I reconciled in you. Love is infinity, where you and I belong. Strangeness and all people have flown to other worlds. I sometimes think the plane is taking us to heaven, the after death, the true life. Somehow, though, we’ve died and left forever. How involved. But one thing I know: I can’t be happy without seeing you. I *would* die. I would. And I believe that.”

[More titled parables:]

“Inflation”

He tried correcting his mistake, enraged by a price tag on the eraser.

“When in Rome”

His old brain dreamed of Caesar, as the car went straight ahead, turn signal flashing: Left! Left!

[Harmonica music, then Walton sings over music a sort of nonsense song a little reminiscent of “A Horse Named Bill”]

He licked his leg
He licked his neck
He licked his ball

He licked the deck

He licked his dick
He licked the pan
He licked the bone
He licked the man

He licked his paw
He did the claw
He licked his paw
And said, "I see you!"

He licked his back
He licked his chest
He licked his rump
He licked the rest

He licked his lips
He licked his nose
He licked his tail
[inaudible] pose

Box 17, Tape 17/194 (reel-to-reel) labeled "Oakland" – undated

Main Subjects of Selection: an antiwar demonstration

[Live recordings including descriptions and interviews made by radio reporters covering an antiwar demonstration brutally suppressed by police at the Federal Induction Center in Oakland, probably the one on October 22, 1967

(https://www.sfchronicle.com/chronicle_vault/article/1967-Vietnam-War-protest-photos-show-savagery-by-12338190.php#photo-14135355). Reporters are John Klein of WBAI, of New York City, and a reporter for KPFA, Pacifica Radio of Berkeley, both public stations belonging to the Pacifica Foundation.]

. . . "Yes, I've seen worse police brutality here than in Selma, Alabama." . . .
. . . "clubbing people" . . . "smashing [CBS-TV] equipment" . . . "There's nothing left of the cars parked in the lot. They're completely crumpled." . . . "Policemen are beating the people very badly, beating and beating them [with clubs], continually, smashing the people in the heads, again and again and again. Smashing them . . . as hard as they can. Young girls, old men. . . . I can see 700 policemen

from here. . . . There's been so much inhumanity here today, it's hard to describe. I saw some people lying on the ground and being beaten by policemen. . . ."
[Demonstrators sprayed, tear-gassed] . . . "I've seen it in L.A., but it wasn't near as bad as this." . . .

[Superimposed at high speed along in the tape is Walton first discussing with someone, possibly Vivian Walton, the balance on the two tape recorders he is testing, then reading midstream a description of his technique which he called paper painting.]

But this time he will use it as a tool, like a brush or a palette knife. When he gets it full of paint, as needed and flat, thick enough but not so thick as to go where not wanted, he will press the paint edge down to the painting, and peel the printing paper off, transferring the paint to the painting. He will then load the printing paper again and repeat this method as he sees fit.

Box 17, Tape 17/196 (reel-to-reel) labeled "Walton Reader" – undated

Main Subjects of Selection: Walton is reading sections of one or another version of his first novel *Pyramid* later rewritten as *Pandora*, which here he seems to title *The Walton Reader*.

This is *The Walton Reader*. Chapter One: Arrival. [Here Walton reads text identical to that recorded on Tape 76, Side 1 – September 12, 1976, describing his first arrival in Reno by train, from his novel *Pyramid*.]

Box 17, Tape 17/198 (reel-to-reel) (without box) labeled "Play{:} Darling I Love You" – undated

Main Subjects of Selection: Walton's Play "Darling I Love You"

"Darling, I love you." The play is staged in an artist's studio. There is one set. There are several easels and a general studio clutter. One project is mammoth. It is a student work, a broadly modern nude in different technique than the other work, of the teacher. A rather realistic nude is on the teacher's own easel. Other, unused easels lend a feeling of [inaudible] and business, and provide clutter. No pictures are on the wall. Seeming hundreds are strewn in corners and against walls. Paint cans are myriad. Toilet paper is used instead of rags. Old brushes are piled in large cans. Cans of thinner and oil and varnish are about. At least two palette tables are used. An arrow rack and

several bows are on the wall, with a quiver and an arm guard, binoculars and other archery gear. A deer skull is on the wall. Elsewhere, outlandish still life is hung at random, but never a painting.

Seemingly the studio is in two distinct moods. It is a room of business and a room of residence. The clean modern touch is in the decor, and the woman's hand is felt. The room is a contradiction. A window is on the left of the artist's working position. A ladder is set up before the large student painting. The coffee pot plays a large part, and a thermos bottle will enter later. The business of the coffee pot must be well planned, made realistic and yet workable. A wheel chair will appear. Props in reserve will include ample bandages. No comment is made about the toilet paper, which is merely used as paint rags [inaudible], and is a phenomenon simply accepted. It will be used under strict directional control, and must not steal scenes at wrong places. Whenever dialogue is lacking or an actor seems flat, it should be a convenient device in tweaking length.

The bearded artist is what is known as typical. His polarity lies between the young and healthy and contemporary Marlon Brando, and the Victorian Monty Woolley. He is a regular fellow and at once lofty and [inaudible]. He is subject to sudden insanity. He has a true and gentle love of his friends, a surmounting love for his wife, and a taunting and knowing tolerance of his adversaries. His dress is casual, and is not arty. While there is no comment concerning it, he is a man who loathes the artistic. He also loathes mediocrity. His hunting gear is, on the other hand, outrageous. (The student's trousers have large pockets which can accommodate at least a thermos bottle, a [inaudible] that may be used, and the large hunting shoes he wears throughout the play.) In changing clothes, the artist can wear the hunting pants over the others for fast change. The shoes [inaudible] evade the cuffs without trouble. In the hunting scene, the archer in full gear wears ultimately a quiver of broadheads and a few field points. He may wear either ostrich fingers or a glove, an arm guard, even though beneath the [inaudible] down parka, a billy cap, and a hitherto unseen businesslike attitude.

The student's archery gear is somewhat different than the artist's. The student is rather [inaudible] without intention. He will either wear a great brimmed hat with one side turned up to clear the bow string, similar to the great Aussie hat, or he may wear a yarn hood like a medieval knight, if available. Not [inaudible]. His dress style is army surplus. His shoes follow the line of the artist, and while the trousers can be similar, they would best be sloppier, if that's possible. He has wrapped himself up like a man with a [inaudible] fear. He dreads weather. While the artist appears overdressed, the student is

bundled for Arctic blizzards. It is a subtle difference [inaudible]. If one archer wears archery fingers, it would be an idea to let the other wear a glove. The student fumbles his gear and seems complaining. His attitude is that all things are wrong due to causes beyond his control – the weather, the gear, etc. Meanwhile, the artist is [inaudible] professional with the project. This is treated at such length because no alliance will [inaudible], and it is entirely a matter of attitude and business.

In the other scenes, the student wears surplus army clothes, worn and sloppy. He is not an artistic type. He seems a butcher boy. On the other hand, the artist is an artistic type, but doesn't face it.

Gloria Whitehead, the artist's wife, is as beautiful as casting allows. She is not sophisticated, but she knows she is young. While she is not bitter, she seems to have had it. She is dressed casually, but neither domestically or artsy. There seems to be no parallel between Gloria and Tom Whitehead. Their marriage is an enigma. Gloria wears a hat in one scene, never dresses hard sheik, but is sheik. Never flowery. Never severely. No peasant frocks here. No Bohemia, except in the undeniable studio itself.

Mary is the standard ingenue. She is younger than Gloria.

Theresa [McDonald] is a femme fatale, at least older than Gloria in a sense, a woman without roots, the itinerant stranger.

Hector is the solid citizen in revolt. He is a professional man in a business world. His hobby is town dog. He is a man of horizons unfulfilled who settles for easy sex. He is repetitious to a fault, and will be played gaudily but coolly. He considers himself sophisticated, and holds the world in disdain. His philosophy is geared to a considered fact that women are inferior. He has known the artist and his wife for many years, almost Uncle Hector, though no older than Tom Whitehead.

Lois Hesmoholt [sp?] is a random wench, wrested from a town pub. Her [inaudible] concerning liquor is a matter of position only. Decrying beer, her preference would be whiskey.

Frank is more of a solid citizen than Hector. He also is from the normal world. He is a conformist, and his role is that [inaudible] outsider. What Gloria sees in him is a womanly mystery. He actually is not taking Gloria seriously, but is not really bright enough to know his own position. Without being a true cornball, he is a product of that civilization.

Carl King is a gentleman. He is a landed aristocrat obsessed with self-destruction. He is courteous beyond reason, and to the point of rudeness in fact. He does not suspect that latitude. His ample income is a mystery. He dresses according to Brooks Brothers. His cuffs are high, the trousers pegged.

He holds himself stiffly as a student prince. He frowns with mythical problems. Everything presented is a problem to be taken seriously. Conversely, he has a ribald wit, and occasionally goes insane. He has a sympathy for classicism. King finds the classic in the nothing at all. He is immensely proud, and considers himself modest beyond all men. He also considers himself the fiercest of men, and brooks no bravado. Essentially silent in philosophy, he demands the floor. He can be rendered only in the knowledge of his split. His speech is deliberately gentle and spaced. Hector's second girl, Miss Alice Thrum [?], would best be extremely tall and relief to two others who would only be normal in stature. All of Hector's girls had all [sic] best be on the cheap side, almost frowsy and easily had. The third Hector girl, who is never introduced, can be shyly curious, and must stand back of the action until her final play, and could be played gawkily, or like a shy whore in a china shop when an earthquake hits. Clearly Hector's girls are Hector's tomatoes. He himself plactically does not know them before their appearance on the stage. The effect is that they have never heard of him, although they are at once dead familiar.

The time is evening in the studio. Lester, the art student, is high on the ladder singing as the girls [inaudible] enter.

[What follows is a reading with actors reading their parts. There is no announcement of the name of the character speaking, something surely written in the script. Names are supplied from context.]

Mary: Lester [inaudible], what *are* you doing? You needn't answer, I suppose.

Lester: Answer what?

Mary: Any of my questions.

Lester: I'm sorry, what Question? I didn't hear any question.

Mary: Sorry, sorry – Is that all you can say?

Lester: I'm sorry.

Mary: You idiot.

Lester: So, what's the good word?

Mary: I haven't any. All my words are bad ones. That's not so. I was all right until you – you make me so mad.

Lester: Mary, I love you.

Mary: Oh, Lester!

Lester: As I live and breathe! [Inaudible]

Tom Whitehead:

Disgusting juveniles, flaunting sex in the face of a lame old soldier. . . . Really, children, am I interrupting something?

Mary: Oh, I'm sorry, I wouldn't want you to get a wrong impression.

. . .

Tom: "Quite well." Quite well doesn't do it. Cezanne in all his cubic volume did not paint quite well. He painted wizardly. [inaudible] Quite well? Quite well indeed. And Picasso – all the time quite well? Quite awful and still the God of Lazarus. Quite well doesn't do it. . . .

Gloria Whitehead:

If he hasn't got the floor he's miserable. And as a good wife's proverbial aim is to make her husband happy, I give him the floor. In fact, it would be nice to see him on the floor.

Tom: What will Mary think? You're deliberately warping her maidenly mind. And she about to marry.

Gloria: Marry! Pooh! . . . You aren't interested in anything but yourself.

. . .

Tom: I love you most when you're mad.

Gloria: I'm not mad! I'm certainly not mad! I never get mad! What makes you think I'm mad? [inaudible] You never listen to me. You're always shutting me up. Whenever I say anything, *I'm* supposed to be stupid. When I open my mouth, you only begin shouting me down. When I part my lips for a cigarette, you say I'm always interrupting you. And I think it's just about time I had something to say around this house, you selfish ham!

Tom: What's selfish about me? . . .

Gloria: I don't know how I've stood it. If he doesn't win every time the whole week is ruined. He's impossible.

Tom: Gloria elaborates. It's a womanly sin, elaboration.

Lester: I found this in town. Trouble is the inscription. [Lester has bought a bracelet charm in the form of an arrow, with the following words inscribed on it, which Tom reads:]

Tom: "Darling, I love you."

Lester: . . . a pretty good arrow.

Tom: I hope Mary likes it.

Lester: But I bought it for you. . . . I thought it would look good on your quiver.

. . . [After some other business, Tom is alone on stage when Theresa arrives. They flirt.]

Theresa: Are you my personal devil? You *are* my personal devil.

[Gloria returns on stage in time to hear the Gloria's last remark addressed to Tom.]

Gloria: And as far as I'm concerned, you can both go to hell!

Tom: What's this?

Gloria: What's this indeed!

Theresa: We were joking.

Gloria: Some joke, kiddo!

Tom: That's no way to talk to Theresa.

Gloria: Don't tell me!

Theresa: Tom! What [inaudible] do?

Tom: If this were ten years ago, I'd say I'd paint. But as it isn't, and as I see my old friend Hector about to barge in, I shall greet him and his latest acquisition as though it were an occasion. And it is. And so: Hector! . . . Theresa was making violent love to me and Gloria caught us.

. . . [Frank has arrived. He and Gloria are on stage alone. Frank protests Tom's ill treatment of Gloria and declares his love for her, but she rebuffs him:]

Gloria: Thought it out! I don't think I ever thought anything out in my life. If I thought things out, I wouldn't get out of bed in the morning. If any of us really thought things out, we wouldn't have courage enough even to eat a grapefruit. . . . When I married Tom, if I'd have been thinking I would have locked the door when he came to the house for me. I would lockeed the door and put the sofa against it, and would have hidden in the bathroom. . . . I would have been still as a rabbit. I would have listened so intently for the footsteps going away. I would have been so small, so tiny and so very still.

Frank: Then you didn't love him. Why did you marry a man you didn't love. Gloria. Gloria. Good God, Gloria, why?

Gloria: I didn't say that.

Frank: Assuredly I heard it.

Gloria: That would be the trouble with us, Frank. Tom understands me this way. Often when I say things about me, he doesn't even act like he heard. And I hate him then. How [inaudible] that we clear up so quickly, Tom and I. You must understand this. No, I don't think I love Tom in a way you'd expect. There was a thing between us, and when we were together, all the rest disappeared [inaudible]. I didn't marry Tom – Tom married me. He

- understood that I was simply [inaudible], but terribly alone, frightened [inaudible]. When he would come to me, all this fright business went away. When we would argue –
- Frank: Life must have been hell with him. Forever arguing. Sweetheart, we would never argue, you and I.
- Gloria: Frank, you haven't got it. You haven't got any of it. I can't explain very well. This is when Tom stands in for me, and I dislike him speaking my thoughts for me, but he always says the words I can't find. One of us is the catalyst for the other, and Tom says this works in two cycles, to take care of the both of us. I could have told you this without explaining, and you'd have thought me quite the philosopher. Tom will always say it right. Tom is never at sea in these things.
- Frank: How do you stand him shoving words down your throat? I can't bear seeing him push you around. Sometimes I know I'll hit him. For your sake, I must control this impulse.
- Gloria: For your sake too, my dear. You've never seen Tom in action. He's not much to look at, but he manages to get plugged into the nearest socket, when the chips are down. He's like Popeye on the spinach, I wouldn't try it.
- Frank: You don't think for a minute that I'm afraid of him? I'm pretty handy in these matters, if I do say it myself.
- Gloria: We're talking nonsense. Of course I love Tom. We mustn't discuss this, you and I. . . .
- . . . [The recording ends with the play incomplete.]

Box 17, Tape 17/206, Audiocassette labeled “Finis–Kermis” – Side I – after 1983

Main Subjects of Selection: Rolf Eggenberger; Mary Vanderhoeven; Walton reading *Beyond Holland House* autobiographical material: Tony Chapman's film about WPA art; Lyle Hardin; travel; the Santa Fe Hotel; Rae Steinheimer's Temple Day; the Picon Punch and Martin Esain's recipe

People mentioned:

Bruce, Edward
Cantlion, Henry (Hank)
Caples, Robert
Chapman, Loring
Chapman, Tony
Cunningham, Ben

Eggenberger, Judy
Eggenberger, Rolf
Esain, Martin
Etcheberry, Johnny
Etcheberry, Louisa
Etcheberry, Marie Jeanne
Etcheberry, Paul
Frandsen, Frank
Hardin, Lyle
Herrmann, Bernard
Mayberry, David
O'Brien, Pat
Pecoraro, Dennis
Presnell, Robert
Ross, Gilbert
Steinheimer, Rae
Subramuniya
Unterman, Mike
Vanderhoeven, Mary
Welles, Orson
Winnemucca, Avery

Rolf Eggenberger kept in touch with Subramuniya and both Eggenbergers visited the master on Kauai. Still, Rolf confided in me, believing I was a father image, he'd say, "Uncle Walton, I can talk to you but never could talk to my own father. We would soon argue." The father had married a Dutch girl, and, as an Austrian, was an officer in the Nazi army during World War II. . . .

Mary Vanderhoeven had planned our Elburg [Netherlands] visit . . . [After they returned, Dennis Pecoraro told Walton:] "Didn't you hear? Rolf killed himself some time ago." . . . [Mary returned to Fairfield, becomes ill and dies.]

"*Beyond Holland House*, page 535, Chapter 38." [Walton reads (surrounding quotes omitted):]

Word went out to Tony Chapman that September might be a bad month for shooting a film on the Comstock, if any of the crew were a victim of hay fever. [Walton was to be interviewed for Chapman's documentary on WPA art. Walton discusses Chapman's filming of him.]

Caples introduced me to Cunningham. When the illusionist painted the Reno Post Office ceiling, I recall the scaffold. Non-objective. A composition of space, planes and cadmium reds. A startling open space ran down the long lobby, radiant and free in rectangular depths that ledgerized [?] through the ceiling. It was the most profound visual experience I had to that moment, and have not seen anything as great since. It was a peak in the American architectural experience, although the building itself was routine. Told the story [to Chapman's camera and mic] as my brother-in-law David Mayberry related it to me. Dave was secretary to the

postmaster at the time, and had typed all of the postmaster's letters. He said the postmaster didn't like the mural, and because of his complaints to Washington, it was painted over by another artist. The overpaint was slate green, a formal design of no distinction, worked around the light fixtures. I said [on film], "Ben Cunningham's Reno ceiling was the best work of its time. Personal friends of the artist came my way forty years later, and I taped our conversation with their wholehearted cooperation. Cunningham was broken by events. Bitter. The postmaster retired and died soon enough after destroying America's best ceiling, the high point of Roosevelt years in art."

I would relive Cunningham's experience myself, when an outgoing administrator refused to allow me to use my customary color in the Reno Federal Court mural on Booth Street. "Unsuitable for a federal building" was the term Washington hit me with. And [so] I did it in tones. Things had gone too far for me to quit. I had to pay my expenses. Mind you, the WPA gave me no problem. It was always administrators.

[More in the Chapman film, particularly that Chapman intended to film without any script:] Robert Presnell – an experienced film [radio and TV] writer [*Meet John Doe*; *My Man Godfrey*] – had quick advice when award-winning Mike Unterman had prepared a film on my painting. He said, "For God's sake, have a script or you'll go nowhere. You must have a script." I told the crew that, and at the same time gave them the story of *Citizen Kane*, according to Bennie Herrmann, who was on the set as an innovative composer. The *Kane* experience might liberate Tony's need. It is my understanding that Orson Welles didn't stick to a script. If you have a script, even an outline of some kind, you wouldn't have to stay precisely with it, but it would be something to lean on. Seeing the pain on their faces, I told the crew about Herrmann's opera sequence in *Kane*. Bennie said the music had to be written before the scene was shot. You could tell I was talking too much. . . .

[Further on the documentary, and Chapman's film education.] They now would shoot the film as an exploration of the Nevada [Federal] Art Project, an example of the national movement. There were several specific requests. Could I get them Chief [Avery] Winnemucca? He'd know Caples. They could shoot Caples' Indian drawings at the University, where they were kept. And would I go with them to Idaho for the shooting of the mural? I said the post office mural had nothing to do with the WPA. It was painted under contract as a part of the program under the Section of Fine Arts of the Federal Buildings Administration, chiefed by Edward Bruce. It was not a relief program. WPA art was not installed in new federal buildings. Other public buildings, yes. Caples did the Indian charcoals before WPA, to the best of my knowledge. It was a Treasury program in an earlier set-up. At least this should be checked out. He did a Treasury Department mural for

the Washoe County Court House in Reno on an Indian theme too. He did other work under WPA, and this should be discussed. . . . The Buhl mural wasn't my best work [inaudible], I was under pressure. The Buhl job had precise restrictions. I was under pressure to perform their way.

To this I added the story of the installation of the original four large panels of the Tom Sawyers in the Washoe County Library. A hundred people were crowded into the children's room, if you counted those spilling beyond the door. My associate, Pat O'Brien, had handled the publicity. Par taught sculpture at the Reno Art Center, a WPA project under the Adult Education Program, my employer in the completion of the Tom Sawyer murals that were underway when the Nevada wing of the Federal Art Project was terminated. The national structure was designed to end, at least by Congress. The Adult Education Project [sic] inherited my mural assignment, which involved sponsorship by the Washoe County Commissioners. Pat O'Brien had the mayor of Reno there, who gave a speech on fair play and sportsmanship. The administrator of the WPA for the state of Nevada spoke to the gathering. I recall him saying "On these walls" – and if there was more I've forgotten it. When the ceremonies were over and the crowd was thinning, the administrator, Gilbert Ross, wedged up to me with a red face, hotly annoyed, saying, "Why didn't you paint Brownies?" . . .

[Tony Chapman's crew shot] dozens and dozens of representative periods of my best paintings. . . .

Tony was nervous about the validity of my perspective views he'd urged me to describe on camera. What if I was wrong? . . .

Tony buried himself in the film, according to what I was hearing from his father [Loring Chapman]. A year passed, or was it more? The film was then on a videocassette that could circulate, and available for a Las Vegas preview, where I was having a mini-retrospective [1982], sponsored by the humanities group of that city. Eager to see the cassette when I got to Vegas, my sponsor said the film was so confused she refused to show it to her audience and sent it back. Another woman was peeved at me (as well as Tony): Why did the film have Chief Winnemucca talking about Caples, whose Indian drawings were terrible! After unloading that, she said, "Why didn't you send us the paintings we saw in the movie? I didn't know your work was so beautiful."

Try as I would, I could not see the film. . . . His father thought the footage was somewhere in storage. Tony wouldn't say where.

"*Beyond Holland House*, page 544, Chapter 39: Bonaire [an island in the Leeward Antilles in the Caribbean]" [Walton read (surrounding quotes omitted):]

Returned from London and gave Lyle Hardin his Turner print. We hung it together in his midget studio east of Dayton. Then he stood back admiringly to say,

“Wouldn’t it be terrific if a feller could paint like that!”

I was next at his funeral in Carson City, when all that was left of my cowboy friend, soon to be sent to the family plot in Missouri [sic]. You could hear Lyle if the wind was right and you had an ear for it. [Here Walton quotes from the Lyle Hardin interview, Tape 1/34, Side 1 – December 19, 1974.]

[Here Walton discusses the trip to Bonaire, then changes to Reno from the old days observed upon his return. Mentions Frank Frandsen, Henry Cantlion.]

So you’re at Lake Street, . . . and you turn north toward the SP tracks. Harrahs all the way, except for an island of humanity that didn’t take an offer which would make the block a clean casino sweep. No, sir. For whatever reason, the Santa Fe stayed. It had been built by the Etcheberry brothers’ construction company after the Lake Street fire of 1948. Johnny and Paul erected a new structure on the site of the hotel that survived the fire. Why not a new one? They hadn’t asked me. In a different decade, I was reading the inlaid letters below the door: Echia Eskualduna [sp?]. What the Basques have shown Harrah they had shown Charlemagne in a different theater of war.

It was where Rae Steinheimer and I had once come to observe Temple Day. Uncertainly set, Temple Day found itself through Rae’s intuition alone. Occurring not more than once a year, the observance could skip a couple as the seasons of rain and dry country. Temple Day was dedicated to the ladies he’d loved. After lifting his glass to one, we clicked glasses to another, with Temple Day encompassing us both in a series of toasts that leaned hard on memory. Midway down the afternoon’s empty bar, we were drinking to the recall of the more important girls, maybe four to a drink. An edit was indicated if you were drinking Picons. Two you could handle, and the third could get you smashed. Picons all night would see you carried home. One, plenty; two are enough; three watch out.

Picons. Amer Picon. Liqueur à l’orange. Imported from France is part of the label of this classic, imported and bottled by Picon Company, Lawrenceville, New Jersey. While there are two recipes on the label, it is the Picon Punch that concerns us. It calls for two ounces of Amer Picon, a dash of Grenadine, club soda, brandy or Armagnac. You’re instructed to stir Amer Picon and Grenadine together with ice cubes. Fill with club soda. Float brandy or Armagnac on top. Garnish with a twist of lemon.

Picon Punch is not a drink taken lightly. It is a seductively sweet drink that reminds some of us of a Coke when mixed according to the label, as most every bartender does. In fact, I have known only one bartender who underestimated the true potential of the Picon. If Martin Esain was right, the original designers of Picon Punch little understood the true potential of the gold they had in the palm of the hand. A great Picon is a drink of order and style.

Properly made, the lemon rind may or may not touch the upper lip as it reaches the glass, but you smell it. For the oil of lemon generates an enhanced perfume in the company of Amer Picon and Grenadine. It is a scent of lemon at its very best, gentle, slight and exotic. It is the first sensation of a proper Picon, correctly met. A slow process. A devoted follower of the Picon is in no hurry. As the cold glass is raised, there is a considerable pause in which all worldly things and immediate company are lost. For pleasures of the Picon should be known and respected, and even made love to, with patience, adoration and care. This marriage of drinker and drink, triggered by the scent of a twist, is hit by the power of straight brandy, at best the highest of quality, at worst, carry on. The brandy, being the opposite pole of the mere scent of lemon, throws that sensation off. You may not think of it again. The lemon was your deflowering and the brandy raw sex. Your tissues burn. The meek may be angry. The initiated know what's coming. It's around the world, upside down and right side up, sixty-nine and a hundred and eighty in a medium glass. You haven't even started. One Picon can be an all night stand, two a lost weekend in a 4x motel, a meal ticket at Mustang. Rightly made, the Picon's thousand and one nights of creeping delights were the property of a champion of the French way: the departed Martin Esain. I regard his recipe for the exact Picon as his monument to man.

Martin bought the Santa Fe Hotel and Bar from the Etcheberry principal, Louisa herself. The children had signed over their estate interest, as I understood it. What interest the Etcheberry brothers had in the hotel were unknown to me. I did know that Marie Jeanne had signed off her interest. No matter. The new Santa Fe was owned and managed by Martin Esain, whom I counted as a best friend. And respecting our relationship, Martin gave me the secret of a right Picon that he didn't get off the label. It came from his contacts with France. For no Basque bartender I ever had shared his accomplishments on the Picon. He called me Richard [ri-SHARD]. We had spent uncounted hours at the old bar in discussions unrelated to that address. He would speak of life in the Pyrenees, and of its French aspect. Largely Loyalist, the French connection was strong. Martin spoke English with a French inflection, not Basque, although he was certainly one of them. A sentimentalist, he worshiped the recall of his village.

On the subject of the Picon, he was absolute. He said, Richard, the secret of the Picon is not the ingredients altogether, although a right Picon should always be made with the best brandy, and only with imported Amer Picon. From then on, ingredients of an ordinary Picon and a good Picon are the same. The Grenadine and the Amer Picon are not stirred together evenly. The crushed ice chills the glass as swirled. There is the heel of Grenadine, the portion of Amer Picon, the club soda, a touch of brandy. And this is stirred with but a single swirl of the spoon, which must

be learned. The ingredients must not be evenly mixed. After the single swirl, the floater of brandy preceded the lemon twist, which is effected low at the glass so that the oil of lemon is not lost.

The Picon is to be taken slowly, for the enjoyment of its several phases. First, the sensation of lemon, then brandy, the Amer Picon complementing the strong floater of brandy. Then as drinking turns to good conversation, the Picon grows richer to its sweetest, when the Grenadine clings to the bottom where it has been first placed for this reason. . . .

Box 17, Tape 17/206 labeled “Finis–Kermis” – Side II – after 1983
Main Subjects of Selection: Martin Esain’s Picon Punch; sheep camp

People mentioned:

Andrus, Zoray
Beaupre, Louis (Louie)
Berry, Bill
Brooks, Beatrice (Bea)
Brooks, Debbie
Brooks, Dudley (Chip)
Bundy, Gus
Caples, Robert
Chapman, Loring
Chapman, Toy
Clark, Walter Van Tilburg
Crider, Jack
de Longchamps, Galen
de Longchamps, Joanne
Esain, Martin
Etcheberry, Marie Jeanne
Fey, Marshall
Fuller, Mary
Garland, Ted
Garland, Ted, Jr.
Glass, Mila
Hardin, Lyle
Hofmann, Hans
Hulse, James (Jim)
Kafoury, Emma Mae (Em)
Kafoury, Sam
McChesney, Robert (Mac)
O’Kington, Camilo
Pecoraro, Dennis
Pecoraro, Leah
Sanchez, Babe
Scrugham, James (Jim)

Seeger, Elsa
Seeger, Rudy
Sherwood, Vicki
Siegriest, Louis (Lou)
Slocum, Click [same as Dick?]
Swinnerton, James
Walton, Vivian
Wohler, Walter Desiré

You will not find a rainbow Picon easily. Martin Esain was the only master I knew.

Leaving Reno for the shearing, we would find ourselves working the sheep shoulder to shoulder in the holding pen in Secret Valley beyond the Etcheberry spring base. Calling them “My little darlings,” Martin would carry lambs to the docking bar, nuzzling his cheek against the black-faced youngsters, with endearing affection. . . .

He wound up his instruction saying, “Richard, the secret is in the spoon.”

. . .

[Walton discusses Walter Desiré Wohler in Santa Fe – same or nearly the same as Tape 3/156, Side 1 – June 24, 1982. Then he talks about dogs; then the 1982 Las Vegas show, Jim Hulse, Elliptical Perspective, Swinnerton, and being in Las Vegas.]

On his last visit, Mac [Robert McChesney] said the identical words Caples wrote me before the pearly gates. I think I have it right: “It isn’t fair. I have no time for that.” Mac said, “It isn’t fair” in the same context. When old RCC passed the holy Laser, he’d soon cultivate the upper class of heaven. Walter Clark would have paved the way. They shared the sainted. When they said “Our Father,” they meant that. In Northern Nevada, the deity wouldn’t question it. You could forgive Gus [Bundy], had he done something wrong and didn’t admit it, and Caples the irony. Nothing to forgive Lyle [Hardin] for. McChesney and I are playing Russian roulette, and sooner or later one of us will hit the chamber with the bullet, so I needn’t forgive him anything yet. Being so much older than Mary Fuller, I forgive her in advance, for reaching between my legs and grabbing my basket when I was talking to Vivian and Mac. You could forgive Hulse for saying he should see you more often and not doing it. But do you forgive Joanne de Longchamps spelling that name in high French for the Reno telephone book: de Longchamps. Do you look for it under ‘D’ or ‘L’? Of course, none of us look for it anymore, with no Joanne. And Galen in London.

When I first saw Joanne, she was the most striking girl in Nevada, Marijo too. They were both the most striking girls in Nevada. Why lie about it? Forgive Jo all things, but not Joanne. She caved in by degrees, wasting off in a wheelchair like

dear Mila Glass, who cut 90 and died on Christmas, stuffing down chocolates, you suppose. Mila who said, "Mr. Walton kept this crowd together. Hadn't been *he* left us one Christmas." You hated to see Joanne in a wheelchair. That was the night of her university exhibition of paintings. Some believe she kept alive for that. A poet, Joanne had collected all issues of the 1952 *Reno This Week* for my photos and captions. She was one of the few who read my book-length manuscript *Pyramid* [not the revision, *Pandora*]. Had called it a poem. Got what I meant, when I described entering Nevada in my teens: "the trees, the trees, the trees."

All shows at UNR weren't that heavy. Older than me by somewhat, Lou Siegriest was the only one to laugh on his opening night [in 1983], when I took his hand and said, "Lou, I'm hot-wiring my coffin: I'm writing my memoirs."

There was a print show from San Francisco at UNR. Zo [Zoray Andrus] had the best. She'd [inaudible] the point over to Hans Hofmann. Can't take a compliment without taunting you. Speak of a dog and Zo will say, "Hans Hofmann had a Doberman and its name was Fido."

Hadn't seen Ted Garland all year, when he tapped on my truck window at a parking lot. This called for a drink at the Liberty Bell Saloon, where he was meeting the late Congressman Scrugham's son Jim, about my age. They were joined by a ski pro from Mr. Rose, who knew Bill Berry, whom he said hadn't been well. We'd hoped to see Marshall Fey, who owned the Liberty Bell, and whose grandfather invented the slot machine. But Marshall wasn't there. Ted said TJ [Red Garland, Jr.] would soon have his doctorate.

Loring and Toy [Chapman] were divorced that summer. Sam and Em [Kafoury], too Dennis Pecoraro closed the Virginia market and Leah [Pecoraro] left town. We'd see Sam Kafoury in the fall. The divorce hadn't changed *some* values. Sam winterized the Fallon home of his former mother-in-law. After all, he was her Sam. Em kept on the Kafoury name, and he got the Boston whaler after they split the estate. Before he came, Sam phoned from Miami, saying to me, "You're what's left." He couldn't get away with that. I said, "So, Sammy, there's Loring. When you're cut, he bleeds." Vivian had said, "Now there's no more Sam and Em."

When I visited Loring in Sacramento, he was living in a disturbingly empty condominium, watching the ducks mate on a lawn that edged an artificial lake. I advised him to keep the apartment empty, and furnish the unit next door. With two apartments, he could get lucky. The female abhors the male vacuum. A dozen ladies in the complex could bring him cookies, so long as they didn't know he lived in the furnished place next door.

Kafoury wanted Em to keep their painting collection, looked forward to life without possessions. Of their houses he kept two. Em had the house in Fallon, and the one I knew on the Miami River. Not seeing Em in Nevada, I wrote her, saying I

loved them both the same. And this got a call. I recognized her voice.

“Em!” I yelled.

She said, “I had to call you. There was no one to tell what happened tonight.”

I said, “Sounds like there’s a Scotch in your hand.”

“There is,” she said, and went on. I’d set the table for dinner. Remember the glass table? I’d made yellow rice, and was taking the pan to the table when a shoulder strap broke. I grabbed it with my free hand and dropped the pan on the table, breaking it in two, dumping the dinner plates on the floor with the rice and everything else. I Had to tell someone who’d understand, and there was no one but you.”

Asking if she was alone, she said “Yes,” and laughed. But who understands what Emma Mae meant when she laughed?

On schedule to call at his mother’s grave, Babe Sanchez said he’d thrown off the luminous rock. But he left it on the ground in a halo that still glowed. Babe himself mailed me a Xerox copy of his latest official certificate when he returned to California. It had been issued by the United States Coast Guard. “This is to certify that Roman Sanchez, having been duly examined and found competent by the undersigned, is licenced to serve as Master, ocean steam or motor vessels, any gross tons.”

At Christmas there was a card from Bea Brooks with a scribbled note. Debbie had left New York and was living with her. Chip would be there soon. Only signed ‘chip, Debbie & Bea.’

New t-shirts now come from the Seeger Sundance Saloon. They have a number of portraits of Louis Beaupre as drawn by Chick Slocum. When I turn in, I have a choice of nighties, either Louie’s or Hemingway’s.

On a Sacramento run to pick up a Circle-J horse trailer at Critter Corrals, I was in Jack Crider’s office with a check. A paver who’d been mending the blacktop entered and told me, “When I came in, I thought you were Kenny Rogers.”

Before the Vegas show, Vivian bought an Appaloosa mare I first saw at Equest Center in Washoe Valley, where Vivian takes riding lessons. The operation is owned by Vicki Sherwood [now Cliff], who later trailered Flicka to Virginia City. It took time to put up fences and a barn. When you buy a horse, it comes with a name it knows, and you’re stuck with it. Flicka proved to be a sure-footed refrigerator, the equal of our mountains. And now Vivian knows the trails of the Virginia Range and those of Long Valley. As barn boy, I feed the horses and pick up corral fertilizer for our trees. They are doing well. It doesn’t take long to fall in love with a horse. With time, the feeling is mutual. Vivian’s riding instructor at Equest was a former captain from the Chilean Olympic team, representing his country in the Olympic three-day event, having twice won the Chilean national. As

a riding master, Captain Camilo O’Kington is recognized by the federation, Equestra Internacional, FEE, and he has told me, “Watch out for horse affection, they break your arm.”

Our new friends the Seegers kept on the name Sundance Saloon when they went into t-shirts. Elsa Seeger has been learning to ride a noted but aging endurance horse called Blackjack. We’d see Elsa and Rudy Seeger in their truck, commuting to the horse corral a couple of blocks away. But when winter came, they sent Blackjack to pasture in Washoe Valley below Slide Mountain. When a dam broke in a spring runoff, the pasture was inundated [Memorial Day, 1983]. Houses, cars and animals were swept away, with some livestock marooned in the sand, among these Blackjack. When he was lifted out by helicopter, the sling broke loose, with Blackjack dropped to his doom.

That summer, we graded our lower section, put up a two-stall barn with breeze way, and hay room, and fenced the property with v-wire. When we divided the space into a couple of corrals with portable fencing, a post driver from the valley said he saw the accident, asking if I’d ever flown a helicopter. He described the position of the sling release as easy to hit reaching for other controls. Who really knew what happened to Blackjack?