Kentucky Craft History and Education Association, Inc.

Interview with Larry Hackley

January 22, 2009

Interview conducted by Greg Willihnganz

WILLIHNGANZ: This is Greg Willihnganz interviewing Larry Hackley in Berea, Kentucky, on January 22nd, 2009, for the Kentucky Crafts History and Education Association. Thank you, Larry, for doing this interview. We appreciate this.

HACKLEY: Oh, thanks for coming.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay. I'm going to talk a little bit about your history, and some of these questions I know you sort of answered . . .

HACKLEY: Mm-mm.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . but maybe you want to elaborate on them, and . . .

HACKLEY: Sure.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . we sort of…be interested . . . how would you characterize in one or two sentences what your, your career has been?

HACKLEY: Well, it started out . . . [Chuckling] it . . . basically . . . in art school, and . . . sort of assuming in the beginning I would be (audio sound interruption) artist, I suppose, and . . . made some, made (audio sound interruption) for a time and . . . and then, I (audio sound interruption) out of grad school I got a teaching job, taught (Audio sound interruption) at the University for three years, and then . . . (Audio sound interruption) in Kentucky Arts Council after that to be an artist in the schools, and . . . did some residencies in (Audio sound interruption) County, and then did some various small—short terms residencies after that…around the state for about a year, a year and a half. And then . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: (unintelligible) One second it's . . .

HACKLEY: Okay, yeah.

WILLIHNGANZ: It's crunching a little bit because . . .

HACKLEY: Oh.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . it's rubbing . . .

HACKLEY: Oh.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . on your shirt.

HACKLEY: Okay. Let me see.

WILLIHNGANZ: Sort of being exposed out there somehow.

HACKLEY: Okay . . . well.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah, it should be turned that way (unintelligible) . . .

HACKLEY: Because if you put . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah (unintelligible)

HACKLEY: . . . this ri . . . right here, over here?

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah, fine.

HACKLEY: Yeah, I see . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay.

HACKLEY: Yeah, okay.

WILLIHNGANZ: So, did you grow up in Kentucky?

HACKLEY: No . . . Virginia, Northern Virginia. I, about an hour…actually I w . . . I grew up about an hour out of…hour plus out of Washington, D. C., in what was . . . what is a, an Appalachian county, and . . . in the country, a little town called Amesville, Virginia, and . . . actually not a town, it's really just a crossroads, a vil . . . a village, and . . . in a county, that when I was growing up, was only five thousand people in the entire county. And this is like very, when you consider it's so close to Washington, it's, it's fairly remarkable. Half of the c . . . moun . . . half of the county is in the mountains, bec . . . and became the George Washington National Forest, and . . . even, even though we were that close to Washington and . . . the county still remains very rural. The . . . the residents there have somehow staved off [Chuckling] any, any kind of serious development in the county. There is not even a c . . . a . . . a . . . stoplight in the county still, after all these years. But it's, the, the wolves are at the, at the border [Laughing]. The . . . subdivisions are built right up to, right up to the county line at this point, but it's going to change at some point, but . . . it was a sort of an I . . . sort of—kind of an idea . . . idyllic . . . you know, childhood, growing up in the country. My dad was a merchant and farmer, and had a gr . . . a general store, and . . . so it was a very quiet kind of, kind of life on one, one regard.

WILLIHNGANZ: How did you get interested in art?

HACKLEY: Well, I don't know, I gu . . . as a kid I, I'd, I, like a lot of people who, who get interested in art, they draw things, and as a kid I'd, I was a, one of a, I drew things and . . . and I—also both sides of the family had . . . had an interest in making things. My grandmother on my mother side made quilts, and my aunts and, and that's how of they, m . . . made a lot of quilts and things. And then . . . in the household I grew up on my father's side of the family, my grandmother left behind, when I was a w . . . I

was a wee child when she passed away but . . . she left behind things like family quilts, and there were a lot of traditional pieces of pottery in the house that they had actually, you know, early in the century…and before had used as a storage vessels, and that kind of thing. But, they were decorated with cobalt, and there, and that kind of stuff. We, and a lot of that stuff remained in the house after she passed away, and . . . I mean they were basically doorstops [Chuckling] …a lot of …but they were interesting visual things to grow up with. I can remember as a kid, in the fifties . . . my father would sell . . . at a . . . would . . . once a week he would go to Washington to buy produce, and he would buy local chickens and eggs and things, and take them in to Washington, and sell them to the . . . merchants in the, in the . . . this one part of town where they were all, all of these . . . business…wholesale basically, that supplied merchants around the c . . . in the area, and I can remember ladies coming into the store bringing in eggs, in traditional egg baskets, and I can remember on one occasion trying to convince my father he should buy the ba . . . the basket as [Laughing] well as the eggs [Laughing] you know, because I, I f . . . I thought it was really interesting thi . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: (unintelligible) Insurance.

HACKLEY: I thought it was a really interesting thing, and [Laughing], and so I've always been sort of interested in . . . visually, in things, I guess, as much as anything else, and . . . so . . . and then it'll, you know, what, what in addition to just looking at stuff, I was also interested in making stuff as well.

WILLIHNGANZ: Did you do much . . .

HACKLEY: Hum.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . of this in school?

HACKLEY: Well, I had art in, in high school, and . . . we had . . . you know, small little arty projects in, in elementary school, that kind of thing, but we actually had organized art classes by the time I got to high school and . . . so there was, there was some, you know, some encouragement there, at least. And then I went . . . I went away to Virginia Commonwealth University, and I got my bachelors degree in sculpture and . . . with minor in ceramics, and then I . . . grad school at UK . . . in the early seventies.

WILLIHNGANZ: So, when you went to . . . to school and you got your bachelors degree . . .

HACKLEY: Mm-mm.

WILLIHNGANZ: Were there particular artists who basically were mentors for you or, who showed you things that interested you?

HACKLEY: Well, I had, I had a p . . . a . . . one professor . . . a guy named [Chuckling] Jose Pugh who was a Spanish . . . sculptor who, who was teaching at

Virginia Commonwealth at that point, and . . . he was, he was one of my first teachers, he was a scul . . . sculptor, sculptor teacher was . . . was one of the things I sort of gravitated to, I'd always been much more thr . . . interested in three-dimensional objects than painting and drawing and that kind of stuff, and . . . but he was a re . . . sort of a mentor and a, a, someone who really encouraged me there. And then I, at that, at . . . Virginia Commonwealth, the other teachers who were probably more—most influe . . . influential would have been . . . re . . . Regina . . . Meadows and . . . who was a weaver, and . . . Richard Butts who was . . . one of the pottery teachers at that point, and . . . they were . . . you know, enthusiastic about the kind of stuff I was doing.

WILLIHNGANZ: Were you interested in weaving?

HACKLEY: Not so much weaving. I've, I [Chuckling] …my perch has always been . . . more art oriented than crafts, and . . . weaving per se, w . . . and I, I actually own a loom and I did a l . . . I have done a lot of weaving, that kind of thing. But . . . it's usually the, the, the . . . the weaving per se usually ends up being much more sculptural and . . . three-dimensional and something that's just flat on the loom, that kind of thing. And so . . . I mean I, I appreciate that kind of stuff but I'm, it's not something I'm going, I would have made a lot of. I did a…I made a few things but it was usually taking things off the loom and then mani . . . manipulating them and making them more three-dimensional.

WILLIHNGANZ: Adding seashells or something else (unintelligible)?

HACKLEY: Yeah. Yeah. That kind of stuff. And then, also I did . . . with the textiles, I also did a lot of dyeing . . . batik and . . . tie-dye and . . . some very . . . s . . . sort of . . . shaped, they weren't like shapes . . . they were flat but they were shapes and, and were meant to be . . . hanging in free space and they had a s . . . a, a, a superstructure underneath with a, it was made at, either out of wire or metal that would support them, and so they were not, they weren't square, they were shaped pieces that hung off of monofilament that kind of thing, and . . . but again, as I said, like I say, they so they were either tie-dye or batik, and so you got this . . . fa . . . fi . . . sort of, they were kind of like . . . the, it's, it's the same kind of idea that you get with stained glass, you know, that there were three-dimensional and out in space, so you'd get light behind them and the, the transparency of the fabric is what made them interesting . . . as much as the shaping and stuff . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: And then you're working in ceramics as well?

HACKLEY: Yeah, yeah, actually the pottery was, I was more interested in pottery that, in that phase of my, my life than I was in . . . t . . . in textiles, probably. I did a lot of . . . again, you know, in pottery class you have to learn how to make pots, pots and that kind of stuff and I, I was skilled enough to make—pa . . . make pots . . . they were good enough to sell to people at fairs and that [Chuckling] kind of thing, but the, you know, just as functional pottery . . . that didn't really particularly int . . . it interested me, but not to the point that wasn't the most interesting thing, and I was much more

interested in making . . . things that were three-dimensional . . . and, and during the . . . the years I was in . . . Richmond (Clears throat), at Virginia Commonwealth, I was mostly doing stoneware . . . sculpture . . . that were very organic and . . . plant-like to some extent, but also they had a sort of sensuous . . . or . . . sort of eroticism about them and I would combine those pieces . . . I would f . . . first of all fire them in stoneware, stoneware kilns and then . . . follow up with doing . . . luster glaze . . . glazing parts of them with . . . low fired luster glaze that, that gave them metallic finishes like gold and silver and platinum and that kind of stuff, and then would come back in wo . . . into those pieces and . . . and include . . . feathers and, and other soft materials . . . and contrast them to the hard, hard ceramic materials. And . . . (Clears throat) and then . . . later on, when I came to Kentucky . . . I got interested in . . . traditional potteries a lot, and . . . at that point at UK, we were doing a lot of salt firing and . . . not at UK, but a, a couple of people here in Kentucky at that . . . in the early seventies built wood-firing kilns and so we were doing salt, wood-fired, salt-fired pieces so you . . . very much in this sort of Japanese tradition, and you'd get all this fire—flashing from the fire and the ash on your piece, on your pieces of pottery and, and sculpture and that kind of thing. And . . . so it, it evolved over time from one, one method to another . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: What made you chose UK?

HACKLEY: Well I was . . . I . . . ha . . . was somewhat interested in folk art . . . a little bit and I, and we had a talk by a guy named Michael Hall . . . who came to Virginia, and gave a talk . . . I guess it was in my junior year, and he . . . talked about a l . . . a whole, a whole range of contemporary folk art and he was seeing and he was also a, a very interesting sculptor as well, and [Chuckling] I came to Kentu . . . to Ken . . . to Kentucky sort of expecting to, to work with him, because he was teaching here at that point, and the summer I . . . it was the summer before I arrived here, he moved to Cranbrook [Laughing] and, and so I already, I had already been accepted at UK and . . . it's, it looked like the guy who was taking Michael's place was going to be an interesting . . . person to work with, and I actually had a friend of mine who would . . . I, I'd gone to school with in Virginia who was already at UK, and he was a very enthusiastic about the program here, and so I came to Kentucky, and . . . as it turned out . . . even though I didn't get to study with the p . . . the people I thought I was going to s . . . be studying with, I ended up studying with some pretty interesting, interesting professors after all, so.

WILLIHNGANZ: Now you didn't stay long, actually in production, did you? I mean . . .

HACKLEY: Well, you mean production, you mean . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: Yes, making . . .

HACKLEY: . . . making, making all kind of stuff?

WILLIHNGANZ: pots, yeah.

HACKLEY: Well I, I continued to make pots . . . probably into the late seventies . . . off and on . . . basically to make ends meet [Laughing] doing a lot of summer fairs, that kind of thing, between . . . other jobs that I had, because right out of college, I ended up at . . . Kentucky State University teaching ceramic—ceramics and sculpture, and . . . half a dozen other things I wasn't hired to teach [Chuckling] as well. There was just starting of a program at that point, at . . . Kentucky State University. And . . . so . . . the three, three or four teachers of a, they were on a faci . . . who were on staff there ended up teaching everything that had to be taught, and . . . so summers . . . primarily, I was . . . making pottery and functional pottery, and . . . and then during the school year, when I had time, I was making the other art as well, but . . . the, the functional potteries always kind of come in as a handy, was during that, that period came in as a kind of handy . . . extra income, as much as anything else probably.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay. And then . . . you sort of seemed to have drifted out of that a little bit . . .

HACKLEY: Yeah . . . like I said, I was always interested in . . . since the late sixties, I was . . . interested in folk art, and . . . not re . . . sort of not really having realized that I had grown up with a lot of folk art around me like the pottery and baskets and that kind of, quilts and things, in our family. But . . . when—the first week, when I came to Kentucky . . . a friend of mine took me out to meet Edgar Tolson this very famous woodcarver in Campton, and . . . it was . . . the sort of amazing revelation that, that . . . someone working out of a tiny little . . . trailer . . . as a studio, was making . . . with materials at hand just . . . trees that he cut down, a pocket knife, basically, was making this wonderful, these wonderful carvings, and . . . and then on the top of that Edgar was a very interesting . . . eccentric character as well, which made him just as in . . . made him even [Chuckling] more interesting, and so anyway struck, struck up a friendship with, with Tolson and . . . and then eventually . . . in the s . . . in the mid-seventies he asked me to help him sell his work because Michael Hall had been . . . promoting his work from the late seventies into the mid-seventies. And then Michael moved away. He went to Cranbrook and wasn't getting back to Kentucky very often, and so Edgar sort of left in a lu . . . in a lurch and didn't have anybody to sort of promo . . . promote his stuff and help him out, and . . . so he asked me if I, if I knew of anybody who'd buy the stuff, and so I, I . . . I knew a few people who were interested and collected, but . . . on, on long weekends and holidays away from . . . the artisan school's program, when I was teaching . . . in the, the, for the arts . . . the arts council . . . I would run to Chicago, or Washington, or New York, and take a few carvings and . . . and s . . . to s . . . see if we could sell them at the galleries in, in those towns, and . . . quickly discovered that there was an interest in this kind of work and that . . . they were looking for other people who made that . . . folk art, and . . . and then I got back in, into Kentucky and, and thrashed around a bit and began to s . . . discover some people, and sort of thing kind of took off from there, and . . . so, actually when wha . . . each of my sort of phases or career has kind of overlapped one another and . . . one has kind of allowed me to, to . . . fall into the next one, I've been lucky in that regard, I guess [Chuckling]. This has all—the whole thing has been kind of experimental, as life has

gone along. No one, no one would have believed in the seventies that you would be able to make a living selling . . . contemporary folk art. This wasn't . . . something that was happening back then, and . . . it was b . . . basically you had to create the, create a market for it and . . . but luckily there were things that, that, that seemed to push it along, like the b . . . the . . . the bicentennial and, and interest in things American and Americana and, and that kind of thing seemed to . . . peak people's interests in them when they began to see things that . . . were coming out of . . . out of . . . Appalachia, basically in the south.

WILLIHNGANZ: So, when did you come to the realization that you were more of a dealer than a, an artist, a creator?

HACKLEY: Well I don't know that it, it, it, that it happened, you know, the, I don't think there was one . . . clean break from one to the next, but . . . it, it so . . . it's wha . . . it was some point the . . . it, it, the . . . the, the crea . . . being a creative artist and being a dealer are very, very different things, and . . . they both require your full-time attention and at some point, it became clear that . . . and, and also it was very f . . . sort of fulfilling for me to be, to be, be . . . helping these artists create their, creating these careers for people, and . . . probably too, the fact that I was traveling. The travel made—was mo . . . made it interesting. I got to s . . . to see places I'd never been to before and I got to go to museums and, and . . . meet interesting people, and . . . and that kind of thing as well, which, which you would of, you know, can do as eas . . . just as easily at probably being an artist, but . . . I don't know, at some point, it just, it sort of took over [Laughing] and, and it wasn't that, it wasn't . . . all that conscious of a career move at all, but . . . it seems to have . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: In your notes . . .

HACKLEY: . . . to move along.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . you describe going to pretty much any museum that was down the road and handy and . . .

HACKLEY: Mm-mm. Well . . . well the other thing is growing up close to Washington my, my folks, folks would take us into Washington on weekends and, and that kind of thing and so w . . . it was very . . . normal for me to spend a lot of time in museums looking at things because, and because I was a looker . . . and . . . so . . . it, you know, anytime I g . . . [Chuckling] anytime I can ferret out on a new museum or anywhere near, near a museum that I, that I like, I, I'm, I'm apt to, to spend some time there if I can. It's just . . . and is, and, and being a, being a visual person an, an ar . . . being a s . . . an artist-slash-dealer . . . you know, the more you see and the more you can absorb, the better you are at . . . either making things or selling things, the better case you can make for selling things if you can, can . . . position, position an artist in a, in a particular . . . period or . . . you know, if you can show people how they, how certain artist work stacks up beside other . . . well known artists and that kind of thing.

WILLIHNGANZ: So when . . .

HACKLEY: It helps.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . you approach people at museums or whatnot, representing an artist . . .

HACKLEY: Mm-mm.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . then, do you do a whole sales presentation based on what this art . . .

HACKLEY: Yeah, it, it . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . (unintelligible) showing (unintelligible)?

HACKLEY: . . . it would var . . . it would vary. Museums usually . . . you know, usually at, in galleries and museums you're talking to people who are, who are . . . knowledgeable to begin with, so you don't have a lot of explaining to do, at, you may, you may want to, fill them in on the biographical background of an artist and that kind of thing. It's . . . the general public, you may have to bring them up to snuff on, on . . . you know, how, how important a particular artist is in the, in the bigger s…bigger picture. But . . . usually the, usually the sales, the sales pitch is that . . . either you try to present it as, as best you can . . . and as . . . and . . . like . . . ideally in a sort of clean white space [Chuckling] if you can, and, and . . . and if the artist is good enough, it's goin . . . the art is going to sell itself, usually anyway. But . . . like I say the, the, the wrap that you would gi . . . would give to most professional people is basically biograph . . . biographical information and . . . that kind of thing.

WILLIHNGANZ: Mm-mm. So, how many artists do you represent in any given time?

HACKLEY: Well I'm, I'm representing only a few less . . . artists these days, because I'm sort of semi-retired, having closed the gallery, but at one point there were . . . I don't know, several dozen, probably, maybe fifty at one point, that I was working with on a regular basis, you know, and most of them Appalachian and from the south. But Appalachian because I am here, and I'm particularly interested in wood carvings, there are a lot of woodcarvers from east Kentucky, and . . . it's, it's one of those things that because of the Tolson . . . so, he kind of pioneered . . . I mean there were wood carvers here before Tolson obviously, but he w . . . he became the most famous . . . celebrated of the Kentucky wood carvers and . . . is known all around the country and ar . . . all around the planet for that matter. But . . . the . . . the woo . . . the wood carvers personally interest me as much as anybody else. But then the pottery as well and, and the, when I was a grad student at UK, we would . . . some friends and I would get in a c . . . in a car and go to . . . to visit some of the traditional potters who were still working in the seventies and they were old timers like Bill Craig in, in North Carolina, and . . .

Eleanor Matters in, in Georgia, and . . . n . . . Norman Smith in Alabama, who is still firing with wood. They were digging their own clay out of the ground. They were making their own clays out of ashes and local clay and, and . . . materials were right at hand, buying very little materials out of, out of . . . from out of the area, and . . . we would go visit those guys and watch them fire their kilns and works and, and that kind of thing. And I became very excited, and . . . and so I did d . . . in the ‘70s and into the ‘80s and ‘90s continued to b . . . to buy . . . traditional pottery and . . . face jugs like this guy here, and other things like that and . . . sell as well, in, in the, in the greater, greater self and try—and having to g . . . you know, go see those potters there are other folk artist that you hear about, that are going to be in between Kentucky and wherever they live, and you drop in on them and see them along the way.

WILLIHNGANZ: You’ve seen LaVon Williams’ work?

HACKLEY: Mm-mm, yeah in Lexington, sure, sure, yeah.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah.

HACKLEY: Yeah, interesting, a very interesting guy.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah, I had the . . .

HACKLEY: Yeah.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . chance to interview him . . .

HACKLEY: Mm-mm.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . and . . .

HACKLEY: Mm-mm.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . he is a, he is not a polished interviewer but he had a lot to say . . .

HACKLEY: Mm-mm.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . interesting guy, and . . .

HACKLEY: Mm-mm, yeah, he is.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . I like looking at his work.

HACKLEY: Mm-mm, yeah, yeah his things are, are very interesting, yeah.

WILLIHNGANZ: So . . . at this point, you're sort of semi-retired because you've closed your gallery, is that right?

HACKLEY: Mm-mm, yeah, yeah . . . I, I, I have some health, health issues. I've got . . . I have gout and then . . . I have . . . neuropathy in my feet that was . . . unfortunately was a . . . side affect of, of some of the statin drugs I was taking at one point and . . . so I don't walk very well anymore [Laughing].

WILLIHNGANZ: Mm, I'm sorry.

HACKLEY: And—yeah, and so . . . that, and then my doctor has loaded me up with a lot of pills, and I wasn't really paying as much attention as I should have, and I've been paying and . . . I went through a phase where I was a li . . . a little . . . strung out and depressed and, and . . . I'm, I'm, I'm attributing a lot of it to the pills, because once I got off the pills I felt a lot [Laughing] better, so, I think, I think there, there was really something going one with taking way too many, way too many meds. And . . . so I wasn't spending a lot of time at the gallery because I was so strung out and crazy, and . . . so . . . it, it, it . . . and I have to th . . . I have to say also that the tourist . . . part of the job, having a gallery . . . the, that wasn't as interesting to me as . . . it wasn't as much fun as . . . selling to collectors and, and that kind of thing. There're, the, the sort of, the sort of tourism . . . industry I think is, is based on . . . through entertaining people, and then also having some small inexpensive object for them to take home, and . . . that's not really what—I'm more interested in, in creating careers for people, and to do that you have to s . . . be able to sell things at a certain price point for them to make . . . to make more than just a minimum wage. And so . . . the time was right, and . . . so I closed the gallery and am back to being a private dealer right now, now.

WILLIHNGANZ: Oh.

HACKLEY: Yeah.

WILLIHNGANZ: Now, one thing that I wanted to ask you about is . . . the . . . the somewhat curious . . . symbol that you have for your gallery here.

HACKLEY: Mm-mm.

WILLIHNGANZ: This looks to me like . . . like the Statue of Liberty which is down here mixing a pot with her other hand. What's all that about?

HACKLEY: [Laughter – Hackley] Well, actually it's not a pot, it's, it's actually a piece of Kentucky folk art by . . . a fellow whose name . . . I've forgotten off of the top of my head. That was designed by a friend of mine . . . Skip Taylor and . . . he owns that piece, and it's actually a, a, it's a piece of metal, it's a silhouette that this guy cut out of the Statue of Liberty and so she is holding a statu . . . a, a, the statue is actually made of something like a sparkplug [Laughing] or something I think. It's all welded up and [Chuckling] and the other hand it, it's actually a tablet that she is holding in her hand,

and he cut, he cut the, the . . . piece off at the bottom so you don't see the b . . . full base and everything. So I guess it does look like she is ma . . . maybe churning butter or something [Laughing].

WILLIHNGANZ: Well this gal, interesting look [Laughter – Hackley and Willihnganz]. Now, tell me about what art organization do you belong to? You—were you involved with a Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen?

HACKLEY: Yeah, I joined the Guild in '70, the spring of '72, I believe, the first spring I was here, and I heard about the fair, and . . . I got juried into the f . . . into the Guild, and . . . (Sighs) became a member and . . . basically, in the beginning, just do the fairs, and . . . which were a lot of fun, and . . . and then in . . . gee, I'm forgetting the years, but . . . for two terms I was on the board of the Guild for a while, and . . . and then Mike Imes who was president . . . at one, in one, during the 25th anniversary celebration, he asked me to . . . if I would do, put together an exhibit and . . . a catalog for the 25th anniversary celebration. So, we ended up writing a, a history of the Guild at that point, and . . . and doing this, an exhibit that was at . . . shown at the . . . Water Tower . . . gall . . . was it . . . or . . . gallery or what is it called?

WILLIHNGANZ: It was the Louisville Visual Art Association at this point.

HACKLEY: Yeah, okay.

WILLIHNGANZ: And . . .

HACKLEY: Yeah, okay. I think it was called the Water Tower, or something, or rather at that point. But anyway, that, it was at the . . . the Water Tower . . . Gallery in Louisville at that point . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: Right.

HACKLEY: . . . and . . . it was fun. I had, I hadn't realized how—because I wasn't around during the b . . . beginning years of the Guild. I hadn't realized how interesting it was, and that they had a train, that they toured all around the state and, and . . . that was, that was really, really interesting . . . to research all that stuff.

WILLIHNGANZ: So, who were some of the people you knew when you were in the . . . Guild on the board there?

HACKLEY: Huh . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: Was this after Richard Bellando was . . .

HACKLEY: Oh yeah, he was on, he was, well he was on there very early on I think, in the '70s, and, or, rather . . . '60s and, and '70s. I, I may . . . I don't think I was on the—I think it was in the '80s when I was on the b . . . in the, on the board. It may

have b . . . yeah, I think it was early . . . early '80, mid '80s, something like that. I'm really bad, I'm really very bad with dates, but [Chuckling] but . . . well . . . at that point . . . there were . . . people like Gwen Heffner and . . . Mike, Mike Haines . . . had, I—well actually he had just moved away. I think, when I, when I got . . . got elected to the board. Wyman Rice who is a potter . . . well known potter . . . Virginia Petty . . . who is here in town now. She used to be out in western Kentucky, Emily Wolfson . . . Phyllis Alvic . . . there are a lot of the, the usual characters [Chuckling] . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: The usual suspects.

HACKLEY: . . . still around [Chuckling], yeah, yeah.

WILLIHNGANZ: I'm, I'm actually going to interview Gwen Heffner on Tuesday, I believe.

HACKLEY: Oh great, yeah, real good, yeah.

WILLIHNGANZ: (unintelligible).

HACKLEY: Yeah, yeah she is a . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: I get a little more history that way.

HACKLEY: Mm-mm.

WILLIHNGANZ: What . . . what did you get out of being involved with the, the Guild?

HACKLEY: Well . . . I mean, I, obviously its fun to meet other artists and . . . that sort of . . . comradery that you have with other, other artists, it's always fun. I mean, obviously the . . . and I think this was true of . . . an awful lot of people that joined the Guild was that it was a venue for selling things and . . . I think that was . . . I think that's als . . . I think that's a very positive thing but it, and, and, and . . . but I think it's one of the things that makes the Guild difficult to, to, to r . . . as an organization to run, because it is an artist-run organization and . . . wh . . . when I was on the board, we ha . . . we had lost a director and we weren't financially able to . . . hire a new director and then [Chuckling] and, and so the, the board was trying to run the, run the organization and . . . it, it's, it's very difficult to do, to, to do that, I think . . . when you, when people have a vested interest in, in what's going on. You really need someone with the objectivity who isn't a, an artist to . . . to be the spokesman for the organization, I think and, and so there were some difficult times during that phase . . . when I was on the board. I was on the board, we had to close the gallery in Lexington and . . . there was a lot of unpleasantness about that [Chuckling], and, and . . . and fortunately it was one of those things where . . . though only maybe less than ten people who were really benefiting from that . . . gallery being open, there were, they were actually selling things on a regular basis out of that, out of that venue, and . . . it was, but the cost . . . for running

the, the organi . . . the, the gallery were way pass what, what was coming in and, and . . . it took a long time to, to convince people that we should shut the doors there and . . . so it was kind of a . . . an unfortunate situation, but . . . it, you know, whenever you get a whole bunch of artists together it's kind of like herding cats, and getting [Chuckling], getting everyone, everyone . . . going in the same direction and, and . . . trying to make it, make things work as a difficult kind of situation. I think the Guild has, it, I always thought the Guild had great potential as a, because it is a state-wide organizati . . . organization, and I think the one thing that the Guild never really achieved was its . . . political clout. It should have had a good deal more political clout, because of the fact that we had people all, all over the state, we had f . . . five or six hundred members at one point, and . . . if we had had a really strong director who . . . who, you know, was able to . . . plead our case . . . to . . . various powers that be, I think the organization could have been a lot, a good deal stronger. It would have been good for education, it would have been good for tourism, it would have been good for . . . you know, artists making a living, that kind of thing. And I don't think it ever really quite reached its potential in that regard.

WILLIHNGANZ: Now it sounds to me like over the years, you've developed a lot of expertise in marketing art . . .

HACKLEY: Mm-mm.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . craft work or . . . or visual art or whatever, and I'm wondering, did you develop that through your contacts with the, with the Guild, or is that something that you got outside of the Guild or . . .

HACKLEY: I think it's a, I think . . . well partly through the Guild, but, but I think that . . . by the time I got to the Guild, I was . . . pretty wo . . . pretty aware of how the ea . . . art world worked, you know, I . . . when I was an undergraduate student they, at, in Virginia Con . . . at Virginia Commonwealth . . . it, it had, it was clear to me that . . . if you're going to be a working artist that you had to get things, you had to create a resume and to do that you have to get into . . . important exhibitions and you have to get your work into museums, and by the time I was . . . by the time I was a graduate student, I had things in f . . . I don't know, half a dozen museums and . . . in Virginia and North Carolina, that region that I was in, and . . . then I came to Kentucky, the Kentucky Arts Council bought some pieces and, things like that. And so . . . it was, it was, you know, the b . . . the, this sort of big picture was kind of clear in my head, even before I became a, a marketing person, you know, I would say sort of knew how, how things had to happen. I think one of the things that I lo . . . one of the reasons that I took s . . . say Edgar Tolson's work to . . . New York and Chicago and Washington, the major cities was that—and I took them to major galleries, was that . . . if you're gone, if you're really going to make an ar . . . a living as an artist, you have to . . . your work has to stack up, it has to, it has to m . . . you have to be able to put it on a pedestal next to somebody else who is really famous, and . . . and so you can't, you can't just do that in a tent [Chuckling] in a, a fair, you know, I mean that's, fairs are fun and . . . and . . . and then also you can't do it in a . . . you, it has to be a, it has to be a ga . . . in a gallery of a

certain stature, and . . . I, I didn't see that many galleries of that stature in Kentucky at that point either, I have to say. There may have been, there are a couple in wa . . . in maybe in Louisville, but . . . I didn't see any in Lexington, I didn't see any in Berea, and . . . but I knew about galleries in al . . . in other cities and I knew that there was—and also . . . the people weren't spending and, and the reason for that, the, Kentucky didn't have any major galleries that people in Kentucky didn't spend money for art at that point, and . . . or didn't seem—they were spending money for art, but not a high end things, and . . . so you just have—you have to g . . . you have to go to where the, where the money is, you know, it's kind of [Chuckling] follow the money, money, I guess, was the reason, but . . . it became very clear early on that you had to do, that was the approach I had to take.

WILLIHNGANZ: Well, one of the concerns I guess, you dealing primarily with . . . art galleries and things where it's very clear this is not a folk craft per se . . .

HACKLEY: Mm-mm.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . and so you don't get into the conflict that . . . for instance some of the potters get into with . . . the amount of production they're going to, they're going to do when . . .

HACKLEY: Mm-mm.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . when the . . .

HACKLEY: Mm-mm.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . craft, the Kentucky Craft Marketing started out and they started pushing for connections with the New York vendors . . .

HACKLEY: Mm-mm.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . major department stores and whatnot, you know, some of the . . . the potters for instance, Bybee Pottery was approached with these massive orders . . .

HACKLEY: Mm-mm.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . that they decided they could not fill . . .

HACKLEY: Right.

WILLIHNGANZ: They just could not take that on, because . . .

HACKLEY: Mm-mm, right.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . it would compromise their whole process.

HACKLEY: Right, right.

WILLIHNGANZ: So, it doesn't sound . . .

HACKLEY: Yeah.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . like that was a, actually a conflict for you though, because you were dealing with individual art works, is that right?

HACKLEY: Right.

WILLIHNGANZ: Is that right?

HACKLEY: Right—yeah. We weren't going to get into a production situation, and in, and in fact I never encourage an artist to . . . to crank out or repeat the same kind of imagery again, and again, and again. And I always, I'm always more interested in let—allowing them to do whatever they want to do, and I find that if you allow . . . an artist—you just sort of leave them alone, let them do what they're going to do. They're going to make things out of their own, their own experience. For instance . . . I have an artist . . . Earnest Patton, and . . . he, he is one of the people who sort of followed after Edgar Tolson and he, he lived near by and, and he is sort of distantly related to Edg . . . Edgar's . . . wife, and he's, he began carving, and he was making little figures and animals and that kind of thing, and it, and at some point then he started doing . . . s . . . a small tableau, utile scenes and . . . I, I drove in there one day and he had done a wonderful piece of a hog killing, and there is this, this . . . wooden hog hung upside down and his wife is standing beside it with a big [Chuckling] butcher knife, and [Laughing] and, and he, and he's standing, standing off to the side as well. And I said, "Where did you get the idea for that?" And not really thinking and he said, "Well we butchered hogs last week" [Laughing] and it's, it's a f . . . you know, a f . . . just a fabulous thing. I c . . . I could never have thought of that for him to do, I wouldn't have ever, you know, requested that as a subject, you know, and I'd, and like I say, I don't normally re, request subjects of, of artists but just allow them to do what they do, and . . . and it's, you know, and people have requested tri . . . to do others, to do, repeat that subject, but . . . and every time he does it, it's you know, somewhat different, you know, it's more of, it's . . . becomes—sometimes they're painted, sometimes they're not, that kind of thing. And . . . it's, I, you know, it, it's and it sort of allow people to, to do what they know and it's always going to be more interesting than anything you can suggest, I found. Although people, like Edgar Tolson did get into a trap, he did this very sa . . . famous series that he did of Adam and Eve and the fall of men and so they got these, the two . . . Adams two, Adam and Eve . . . naked and a, a, an apple tree and a snake. It's a very beautiful f . . . piece of sculpture . . . but you know, unfortunately, Edgar probably spent . . . way more time making those. I mean he, he obviously needed the money, so he made, he made as, as many as he could when they were requested. But he probably could have made more interesting things over a period, of, of course in his

career, if he'd been allowed . . . to make what he really was interested in making or could of f . . . he would have discovered the subjects on his own.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah, when you're marketing for other artists, you of course don't have time to be an artist yourself.

HACKLEY: Mm-mm.

WILLIHNGANZ: Do you miss that, or . . .

HACKLEY: Yeah I do . . . and I've been thinking, that now that I am, now that I'm not as . . . not on the road as much as you used to be that maybe I, I can maybe get back into making some things again, and . . . I've been, I've been mulling that over a bit. And I've always ma . . . I've always made little sketches and drawings and the things I have ideas for, all that kind of, kind of thing so. It, it's, you know, it's kind of the back of my, my m . . . mind at the p . . . present time actually.

WILLIHNGANZ: It seems to me that . . . marketing is the toughest piece for artistic endeavor, it's just . . .

HACKLEY: Mm-mm.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . it's the thing where most crafts people in particular, but any artist as I suspect, have their downfall because they can't actually market what they make.

HACKLEY: Mm-mm.

WILLIHNGANZ: Now they focus on the creation itself, and . . .

HACKLEY: Mm-mm, right.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . I have been surprised by the number of people that I've interviewed for these series who are not full time artists, and . . .

HACKLEY: Mm-mm.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . I know that they're working at stunning stuff . . .

HACKLEY: Mm-mm.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . it's just beautiful, but they have a daytime job, and they're either teaching or they're . . . doing something else, or running a business that's totally unrelated to what they do outside of work.

HACKLEY: Mm-mm.

WILLIHNGANZ: But they haven't really gotten to where they can market it appropriately . . .

HACKLEY: Mm-mm.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . to . . .

HACKLEY: Right.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . really get sustaining.

HACKLEY: Right. Well, I do think, I do think that artists are probably their worst, their own worst marketers, you know, it's, it, it . . . [Laughing] it's always easier for somebody else to talk about you and to present your things than for you to present them, because you have so much emotional attachment sometimes to pieces and you're sort of, you're emotionally involved in the piece, and . . . I find that . . . I, the, the people who are really successful usually have somebody else doing the marketing for them if they're, if, it's very rare you have somebody who is a, who's personally marketing their own stuff in a big way. And, but on the other hand, I find that artists are notoriously suspicious [Chuckling] if somebody else is go . . . —that somebody else can make some money on their work. They r . . . they really hate the idea that galleries are going to take fifty percent and fifty percent is the standard these days, yeah . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: Whoa!

HACKLEY:. . . and . . . but if they, if the, if the gallery does a good job for you . . . it's worth it, you know, in the long haul, because otherwise your stuff is sitting around collecting dust and . . . and if, and if it, if it allows you to work full time and to make thousands of dollars rather than hundreds of dollars . . . it, it, it's probably worth it, you know. Like I say, people—I think artists have, they have a real reluctance and . . . it's, it's a, it, part, it's partly emotional, it's partly they don't really think it through, you know, and, and determine, you know—also, I think that people that do work at it part time . . . maybe think that they, they really do have the extra time to do it and they, but, but, if they're working full time at something else, and making art part time, there is not [Chuckling] much time left, you know, and so they, none of it gets done well, you know, and . . . so I think, I think that . . . I really d . . . I really do . . . it, it took me a while to, to come to that realization as well, that . . . that a re . . . that . . . the artists the, they are out, artists who are out there who really do well, are generally people who have somebody else doing the marketing for them, and I can always sa . . . I can always say . . . you know, I can always say, glowing things about somebody's work that they would be embarrassed to say about their work, you know, and I can explain it—I can . . . I can't always explain it like the artist might explain it, but I can explain it . . . or talk about things, about the work . . . that . . . can—you know, like I say, I can, I can t . . . can contextualize their work in the bigger, in the bigger picture of the, and . . . they may not, may not even always be able to do that themselves.

WILLIHNGANZ: Mm-mm.

HACKLEY: But . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: Now you're still involved with the Guild?

HACKLEY: No. No, I left, after [Chuckling], after my two board . . .experiences [Laughing].

WILLIHNGANZ: Is that b-o-r-e-d, or b-o-a-r-d [Chuckles – Willihnganz]?

HACKLEY: Yeah well, I wasn't, it wasn't boring, it was not boring [Laughing].

WILLIHNGANZ: Was it funny?

HACKLEY: It was, it was, yeah, it was frustrating…it's what it was, and . . . I came away just . . . you know, rather . . . distraught that we hadn't really achieved much while I was on the board, and . . . it was, I just, it just seemed like it was going to muddle along for a while, you know, for a while longer, and I just, I wasn't, I had other things I had to [Laughing] to get on with [Laughing] and it's a real commitment to be a board member, especially on a statewide organization because when we were meeting, we would have one meeting in, in maybe Berea, and the next meeting would be in Bowling Green or some place, or Paducah, or so . . . and so you had a lot of traveling to do, and . . . so it was, it was a, it was, it's a real commitment when you get on the, that kind of board. So [Chuckling], so . . . you know, I, I . . . at that point it was . . . and I, and at that point I wasn't making art, any art either so . . . it was just sort of the time for me to move on.

WILLIHNGANZ: Have you been involved with other . . .

HACKLEY: No.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . organizations . . . Southern Highlands Guild, or . . .

HACKLEY: No, I was never a member of the Southern Highland's Guild . . . that . . . and I'm not, not ever, not ever served on any o . . . any other . . . boards per s . . . per se. I've joined other organizations but . . . I've . . . been lucky enough to stay [Laughing] stay out, stay out of, of that I guess. I, I, I . . . because what, because what I was doing with the folk art was so different from what was happening with . . . like, like, like when the, what the Guild is doing and I kind of think, it . . . and, and, and the artist, the folk artists I'm dealing with aren't parts of those organizations either. So, well, that's so . . . maybe a cou . . . a few of them are but . . . but most of them weren't and indeed I actually tried to get some of the artists from Kentucky, I was working within into the Guild, and none of them could ever pass muster for some reason. You would think the people like Donny Tolson who makes, makes things like that, and [Chuckling] would be

. . . would be—he would easily get in, but . . . some, for some reason he didn't get pass the jury and . . . we tried a few other artists and didn't get in, in either, and I think it was . . . some, in some case the things were way too primitive probably, they weren't finished enough, they didn't have . . . they weren't shellacked or whatever you know, they were, they were these minor criticism that in, in retrospect were really not . . . relative to the, to the art and the people were looking too much at the, at the sort of, the minutia of crafting rather than the bi . . . the bigger art issues I think, and . . . so never quite got pass the . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: So . . .

HACKLEY: . . . jury.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . are you basically . . . opposed to the whole jurying process or . . .

HACKLEY: No, I thin . . . I think it's, I think it's valid . . . I think it's a difficult thi . . . again I think it's a difficult thing when you got . . . a variety of people doing the jurying every time and people coming from different perspectives and, and . . . I think I, I don't know how the Guild is doing it these days, but I d . . . I know that from time to time the jurying system has changed [Chuckling] almost on an annual basis, and sometimes they have like committees, that just look at woodwork and s . . . and committees just look at pottery, and that kind of thing. If other, but other times, when they would have a committee of six, and they would look at everything. And if that, if they didn't have somebody on that committee with a particular ex . . . expertise and something comes in that nobody knows anything about, or they don't think they know anything about . . . it just gets, you know, rejected and . . . so unfortunately . . . there is this domino affect too because it makes people mad if they got rejected [Chuckling] when they should have gotten in. Or they feel they should have gotten in and . . . and so it, so there is these sort of hard feelings and they don't re . . . re-jury or, you know, there was, it, it's . . . they're, they're with the . . . with the jurying processing, there needs to be a lot of hand holding I think and sort of bringing people into the, into the fold and I'm . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: Although they're trying to do that, they have a mentoring . . .

HACKLEY: Yeah.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . program now . . .

HACKLEY: Oh good, okay, okay.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . where they're helping people through it . . .

HACKLEY: Okay, yeah.

WILLIHNGANZ: I don't know how long . . .

HACKLEY: Yeah, yeah, mm-mm.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . they've had that, but . . .

HACKLEY: Yeah.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . I know I've interviewed at this point a couple dozen people who have been members or are members . . .

HACKLEY: Mm-mm.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . and . . . they seem to take great pride in the number of times they were turned down [Laughter – Hackley and Willihnganz]. They compare—I was, I was, eight times, I was (unintelligible) before I got in [Laughter – Hackley and Willihnganz], and I, it's always kind of . . .

HACKLEY: yeah, well [Laughing].

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . (unintelligible).

HACKLEY: Well good for, good for them [Chuckles – Hackley and Willihnganz] …yeah, if I think, I think the idea of a mentoring system is really goo . . . a good one, I think . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah.

HACKLEY: . . . it, he real . . . they really needed more of that when I was, when I was involved I think, yeah.

WILLIHNGANZ: What are your thoughts about . . . government involvement in art in general?

HACKLEY: Well I mean I think, I think that . . . [Laughing] I think that, that . . . I know because I've, I, I've actually applied for . . . grants for certain artists and of course I've written grants for . . . various kinds of programming for organizations and that kind of thing, and I think that . . . it's some government funding is great as seed money . . . and, and, or, as long as it's matched, and as long as it's somehow . . . creates a situation where the, whether, you know, art gets made and there get and more art, art gets made. I think that, I think some of that, I think that some of that's especially beneficial. I don't know, I know the only downside would—that I can see is when, when . . . government officials, you know, want to . . . somehow (Sighs). I wouldn't say . . . well when they, when they get involved with contents of, of arts and that kind of thing, which we haven't had any much of a problem with here in Kentucky, but . . . in some cases I think there, you know, there have been situations of where certain kinds of art were not . . . going to be allowed to be . . . shown or documented, that kind of thing.

WILLIHNGANZ: Well, I'm . . . I'm less concerned about censorship, although I think that's a valid issue to be concerned about that, than just the, the whole trend or movement toward mass marketing, and, you know, when . . . when . . . Phyllis George got involved in the, set up the, the Kentucky Marketing thing and they all went to New York and they got all these big orders and stuff, and it changes the content of what we're supplying, and I just wonder if we are compromising our art in some ways then (unintelligible).

HACKLEY: Well I, I think there, well…you can…there is a case to be made for that, but . . . here in Kentucky, I think, to some extent . . . the crafts have always been kind of . . . in a situation where . . . people were being asked to make a certain kind of thing. I think of the, the . . . settlement schools and . . . the . . . well even, say, even say Berea College, you know, they had, they have a certain, at Berea College they have a certain ki . . . a certain kind of designs they have students making, and . . . in some cases, some of those furniture designs have been made [Chuckling] since the twenties. I don't think they've changed a bit, and [Chuckling] so I think [Chuckling] I think that you know, there're, there're those kinds of issues that . . . perhaps, and that kind of carries over into the, into the . . . sort of government sponsorship of marketing. I think that can happen. I think that there was some of that happening during the Phyllis George years, obviously. But that's—we, we don't have Phyllis around any more. And I, one of the, one of the other things that I think was really bad in that, I didn't personally experience this (clears throat) although we were approached . . . since those years about doing catalog sales, and that kind of thing with some of the folk artists and, and it was very clear, really quickly that there is no way that these artists were going to be able to do that because . . . even if it was making a little chicken or some little twig chicken or something like that . . . the n . . . when you talk about making thousands of anything by hand . . . it's just not . . . you know, workable in, in, specially on a short term, sh . . . short term basis that they need to turn around usually. And so I think, I think that's a bit of a problem . . . or can be a little bit of a problem. I had a, I had a Phyllis George experience, where we . . . boxed up a whole bunch of canes by, you know, two dozen—well maybe not two dozen makers, but maybe a dozen makers, and I boxed them up to send to . . . some store she was working with in New York, and . . . I had these b . . . they, big long boxes because they were [Chuckling] canes. The smallest long box I could get to go UPS and I packed up like twenty boxes of cans and sent to New York, and they did this promotion and . . . and then it took forever to get paid…and get…and then get the stuff back if they didn't sell…and when the things came back they didn't sell, they never opened all the boxes. They, you know…they had only opened like five or six boxes out of the whole [Chuckling] bunch I sent to New York, and so I was pretty miffed after [Laughing] all that, not, you know . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: They didn't even look at the other boxes?

HACKLEY: I don't think they ever, no, I'm sure they didn't even o . . . even opened them up. They just, you know, ripped my labels off, and put their labels on, and sent them back, you know, [Laughing].

WILLIHNGANZ: I could see where that would be very frustrating.

HACKLEY: And everything had been, you know, bubble wrapped and, and peanuts and the whole, you know, the whole nine-yards.

WILLIHNGANZ: Whoa!

HACKLEY: And, it was really, and, you know, I, I know that other people had that kind of experience, you know, it was, it was, you know, you were sort of led to believe that they were was going to be this huge promotion, and you'd sell lots of stuff and, and all of that, and, and for the, I think for the one-of-kind things like the canes, the walking sticks that I was . . . showing . . . there is . . . again there wasn't the market, the price point wasn't low enough and . . . because these were canes they were going to have to sell for a hundred and fifty to three hundred dollars a piece, probably, you know. It doesn't sound like a lot for New York maybe, but, but . . . when you're selling them out of a department store, hee you know, maybe it is [Laughing].

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah, maybe it is [Laughter – Willihnganz]. Okay, let me just . . . glance with these questions that you originally had to see about probably most of this stuff. Let me . . . maybe at this point we can go around and you can show me a little bit of the, the things that you do here, and talk a little bit about them. Let me . . . dis . . .

HACKLEY: This . . . clay piece is by . . . Robert Brown of . . . from North Carolina, and he is from a traditional potting family. The Browns are like eight, or nine, or ten generations now of making pots in America, and . . . he . . . learned potting from his grandfather and father, and . . . the Brown family is one of the families that makes a . . . probably more face jugs than, than anybody else, they've been making them since the . . . early part of the century . . . started out making them in Georgia . . . in the . . . twenties, and . . . have continued in North Carolina making them ever since.

WILLIHNGANZ: Tell me about these walking sticks, are they (unintelligible) …

HACKLEY: Oh, those are by Denzel Goodpaster, a little fellow from out at . . . Ezel, Kentucky, and . . . he was discovered at the Sorghum Fest . . . by a friend of mine, many, many, in, back in the seventies, and . . . he makes f . . . made a lot of really colorful canes with figures and Dolly Part . . .

[Audio Sound Interruption]

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay, what else?

HACKLEY: Well, huh (Sighs) I don't know, we can . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: Tell me about this piece here.

HACKLEY: Oh, okay. That's . . . by Donny Tolson, the son of Edgar Tolson, the famous woodcarver from Campton, and . . . it's a fairly recent piece by Donny. It's . . . Abraham . . . about the sacrifice Isaac . . . with the ram, with his horns co . . . caught in the bushes and . . . the . . . dove and the snake.

WILLIHNGANZ: It's quite a piece.

HACKLEY: Yeah, it's really great, isn't it? (Clears throat).

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay. How about these?

HACKLEY: These are . . . walking sticks by several Kentucky . . . carvers. I—we did a . . . the f . . . actually the first state survey on walking sticks back in, I think it was '88, at the . . . what's now the Museum of Arts and Craft in Louisville, and . . . I ran around, ran all over the state looking for people who were making walking sticks, and we . . . put together and, historical as well as contemporary sticks, but we found, I think there were . . . fifty or more cane makers altogether from that group that we put together.

WILLIHNGANZ: Tell me about the one you're use right now?

HACKLEY: Oh this is by an old fellow . . . Henry York . . . one of the people—actually one of the people we discovered doing that show. I had a, we had a li . . . we put out a press release around the state to all the small newspapers ask…telling we were doing the show, and we had a social worker who sent us a letter and say, "You got to meet this guy, he's got [Chuckling] …he makes walking sticks, and he lives in an old-folks complex in Albany. And, he works out of the back of his station wagon, because they wouldn't let him work in the, in the . . . apartment he lived in. And . . . he had all his tools and things in the back of the station wagon, and all the pieces of cedar, and he had a, a . . . set of, a carving of a set of yoke of oxen with figures on the backs, and they were all bungee corded to the top of his station wagon [Laughing]. And, he would drive around Albany with these, these figures on the back of his sta . . . on the top of his station wagon [Laughing] …quite a local character [Chuckling].

WILLIHNGANZ: At this point I have to change the tapes.

HACKLEY: Okay. Charley Kinney…he was one of the people that I worked with for many, many years. Also . . . who with his brother . . . above made the art up in . . . outside Vanceburg in . . . Lewis County and they lived up a ho . . . real remote hollow and . . . they, I'm first met them when they were . . . first came up (unintelligible) making music, they were all time musicians and . . . they—Charley was a fiddler and his brother played, Noah played . . . guitar, and . . . and then Noah carved and Charley painted, and they became very famous actually, there . . . over the years. Charley is [audio sound cut] twenty-four American museums, which is more than a good many [Chuckling] (unintelligible).

WILLIHNGANZ: (unintelligible)

HACKLEY: So, [Chuckling] yeah.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay. Those figures there?

HACKLEY: These?

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah.

HACKLEY: Yeah. Those are by Carl McKenzie, another artist that I work with. He's . . . passed away now but . . . he wa . . . he lived out in . . . near the Red River Gorge, at Nada, and . . . he was one of those traditional whittlers he, he would just pick up a piece of wood of any kind and turn it into something and . . . (Clears throat) he just constant . . . was constantly carving since the time he, he retired in '69 . . . he whittled every day and . . . made just thousands and thousands of pieces over the years . . . traditional, traditional pocket knife carving, bright colors that kind of thing. This is a Duddle Family, the [Chuckling] the wife and husband and children and their pet snake [Chuckling]. The kids have matches and kindling to keep the fire going [Chuckling] (Clears throat). Yeah, he was also a musician. He would play . . . saw and he ma . . . he, he played what he called his tinging bow, just a, a . . . bow that he made with a piece of . . . guitar string and a piece of wood, and he would plunk it, put it off, a, against his teeth and plunk it with his thumb, and, and, and make, and make music with it. It was a lot of fun.

WILLIHNGANZ: Whoa! What about those figures up on the top up there?

HACKLEY: Those were also Carl's . . . again there is a Statue of Liberty and then a nurse and some birds, and a, a big rabbit in the center. The carving on the r . . . on the left hand side on the far end of the . . . shelf is . . . General Schwarzkopf by one of the Webb's from Tennessee, Tennessee carver.

WILLIHNGANZ: Uh-huh.

HACKLEY: Yeah. That was made right after the . . . first Iraq War.

WILLIHNGANZ: Oh.

HACKLEY: Yeah.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay, down here a little.

HACKLEY: Do you want to go down there? Oh, well, it's a, it's a [Chuckling] it's a hodge-podge of stuff from different artists. The bird on the bottom shelf and this alligator kind of . . . creature here is by Ed Lamdin from . . . east Kentucky. He almost always made things out of . . . just sections of trees and twigs for legs and . . . and that

kind of thing. He also made a lot of monkeys and, and . . . things out of . . . burls and, and . . . most of those things are animals for the most part. The Noah's Ark in this . . . next shelf up is by Harry Jennings, another east Kentucky carver and . . . he . . . a very . . . busy guy, very simple . . . sweet pieces as well, and this . . . piece of the possum is by Minnie, Minnie Black, M . . .—I'm sorry Minnie [Chuckling] Adkins . . . one of the better known Kentucky carvers.

WILLIHNGANZ: Which one is the possum?

HACKLEY: The possum is this gray, gray thing here.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah, I want to make sure I got the right (man?) [Chuckles – Hackley].

HACKLEY: Okay. And . . . yeah, she, she and her husband, Garland, started out carving in . . . the early eighties. Actually she had carved as, since . . . like she was a child, actually, but . . . they became well known in the mid '80s and on, and . . . they made large versions of that and foxes and bears, and all kinds of animals for the most part. And . . . the turtle there is also by Ed Lambdin, in front, yeah. And the pieces on the top shelf are . . . the cat is by Noah Kinney . . . Charley's brother and . . . the . . . farmer and his wife are by . . . Calvin Cooper . . . from out near Morehead, in east Kentucky and . . . the Santa Claus is by Lonnie and Twyla Money, from . . . east Kentucky as well.

WILLIHNGANZ: Why is that holding a . . . duck in his hand?

HACKLEY: [Laughing] that's a good question [Laughing].

WILLIHNGANZ: That's funny, how about the bird here?

HACKLEY: Oh that's, that's another . . . Harry Jennings piece.

WILLIHNGANZ: So . . .

HACKLEY: Whew!

WILLIHNGANZ: Good God, another tied down, tighten up. Hold on a second; let me turn this on focus to you again.

HACKLEY: You know that dragon, you got it?

WILLIHNGANZ: Oh yeah!

HACKLEY: Huh?

WILLIHNGANZ: The dragon, yes.

HACKLEY: Oh! The dragon is ag . . . by Minnie Black. She was a wonderful . . . old woman from down at East Bernstadt, Kentucky, and she made things out of gourds. And that's all, everything there, except for the eyes maybe, are gourds that she cut up and reassembled and, even the wings are Loofa gourd and . . . she had a g . . . a museum, her gourd museum that she—it was an old grocery store they'd had, and she filled it up with . . . dozens, and dozens, and dozens and critters and people—figures of peoples out of gourds and that kind of thing. She was . . . the queen of the Gourd Festival in Ohio every year. She . . . she would go up and they'd have a parade and she would ride in the, ride in the parade.

WILLIHNGANZ: How amazing. What about this stuff?

HACKLEY: Well, again it's a number of artists. The angels by Harry Jennings, the . . . the Incredible Hulk, the green guy, is by Earnest Patton, and . . . there is a piece of African [Chuckling] art off to the left of that, and . . . the two figures in the back on the left . . . a man and woman chopping wood are also Earnest Patton, and . . . the f . . . the family in front . . . I forgot the name of the guy who did that, it's a piece from West Virginia, who was actually a neighbor of a very famous . . . carver by the name Dazel Jones and . . . The bird houses are by Willie Massey from out in western Kentucky . . . and, let's see, the turkey is Lewis Lamb from outside Berea . . . that . . . the next couple of things are anonymous, I don't know who made them, one of my flea market finds [Chuckling].

WILLIHNGANZ: Whoa!

HACKLEY: Yeah, I'm sorry things aren't displayed better.

WILLIHNGANZ: Oh, that's all right.

HACKLEY: But . . . anyway, there's still—let's see you're, yeah you're headed in the still there is also by . . . Carl McKenzie the fig . . . the fellow who did all the figures in the other table. He remembered actually s . . . seeing those stills in the woods like that…

WILLIHNGANZ: Whoa!

HACKLEY: . . . when he was a kid.

WILLIHNGANZ: And you have some figures over in the corner there.

HACKLEY: Huh . . . yeah those are . . . again Harry Jennings and . . . there is a smoke stand that . . . came from a company in Louisville, actually.

WILLIHNGANZ: Huh!

HACKLEY: I forget the name of the place but it was made downtown Louisville. It has a stamp on it.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay. Well, I guess that . . .

HACKLEY: Hum? Enough?

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . covered enough. Thank you very much . . .

HACKLEY: Sure.

WILLIHNGANZ: . . . for your time.

HACKLEY: Sure.

WILLIHNGANZ: I appreciate it.

HACKLEY: Yeah. I'm glad we hooked up, finally.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah. Even though it's not . . . not as organized as you would like it, it's an impressive collection [Laughter – Willihnganz and Hackley]. Thank you so much.

HACKLEY: Well, I'm sorry it's a mess, we'll . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: It's okay.

HACKLEY: . . . it will be in an exhibit you can see sometime, see it . . .

WILLIHNGANZ: That will be great.

HACKLEY: . . . see it set up right.

END OF INTERVIEW