



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Miriam Colwell

Funding for this interview and transcription provided by the King and Jean Cummings Fund. Funding for the digital preservation of this interview was provided by a grant from the Save America's Treasures Program of the National Park Service.

Archives of American Art
750 9th Street, NW
Victor Building, Suite 2200
Washington, D.C. 20001
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/>

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
General.....	2
Scope and Contents.....	1
Scope and Contents.....	1
Biographical / Historical.....	1
Names and Subjects	2
Container Listing	

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Miriam Colwell
Date:	2005 June 10-11
Identifier:	AAA.colwel05
Creator:	Colwell, Miriam, 1917- (Interviewee) Larsen, Susan C. (Interviewer)
Extent:	46 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Miriam Colwell, 2005 June 10-11, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Miriam Colwell, 2005 June 10-11, Digital Sound Recording (Excerpt)

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

This interview is part of the Archives of American Art Oral History Program, started in 1958 to document the history of the visual arts in the United States, primarily through interviews with artists, historians, dealers, critics and administrators.

Biographical / Historical

Miriam Colwell (1917-) is an author from Prospect Harbor, Maine. Susan C. Larsen is an art historian from Tenants Harbor, Maine.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Miriam Colwell conducted in her home 2005 June 10-11, by Susan C. Larsen, for the Archives of American Art, in Prospect Harbor, Maine.

Scope and Contents

Colwell discusses her family's long history in Maine; the ancestral home in which she still resides; her mother dying of influenza and her father, an invalid; living with her grandparents, who spoiled her; the dinners her grandmother hosted for Summer residents; graduating as valedictorian and enrolling in the University of Maine, Orono; dropping out after one year; meeting Chenoweth Hall through her friend, Louise, who worked at a restaurant "Chennie" frequented; visiting Chenoweth in New York City and deciding soon afterwards to move there; immersion into the cultural world of New York; working as a salesperson and a consumer

researcher; returning to Prospect Harbor with Chenoweth; working as town postmaster; moving into a house on the beach with Chenoweth; their many acquaintances in the arts, particularly Marsden Hartley; Hartley's death; and the different ways in which she and Chenoweth approached the arts. Colwell also discusses her delving into a literary career; the relationships with publishers and literary agents; the inspirations for "Young" and "Wind off the Water"; her and Chenoweth's frequent travels; being on a trans-Atlantic passenger liner that caught fire; a never-published novel about a group of Maine expatriates in Israel; selling the movie rights of "Young" and the movie's failed production; Chenoweth's multiple talents; Chenoweth teaching at University of Maine, Machias; the onset of Chenoweth's Parkinson's Disease; spending winters on Jekyll Island, Georgia; Chenoweth's death; and the subsequent handling of Chenoweth's estate. Colwell also recalls Erle Loran, Christine Watson, Ruth Stone, Ken McCormick, John Marin, Bernice Baumgarten, Katherine Hathaway, Malvin Albright, Ivan Albright, Berenice Abbott, Paul Strand, Vincent Hartgen, and others.

General

Originally recorded on 3 sound discs. Reformatted in 2010 as 3 digital wav files. Duration is 3 hr., 27 min.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Women authors

Types of Materials:

Interviews

Sound recordings

Names:

Hall, Chenoweth, 1908-1999

Hartley, Marsden, 1877-1943

Occupations:

Authors -- Maine