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Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Bob Stocksdale

Funding for this interview was provided by the Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America. 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.

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Bob Stocksdale
Date:	2001 February 16-March 21
Identifier:	AAA.stocks01
Creator:	Stocksdale, Bob, 1913-2003 (Interviewee) Mayfield, Signe (Interviewer) Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
Extent:	52 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Digital Content: Oral history interview with Bob Stocksdale, 2001 February 16-March 21, Transcript Audio: Oral history interview with Bob Stocksdale, 2001 February 16-March 21, 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

Bob Stocksdale (1913-2003) was a woodworker from Berkeley, California. Signe Mayfield (1942-) is a curator at the Palo Alto Cultural Center in Palo Alto, California.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Bob Stocksdale conducted 2001 February 16-March 21, by Signe Mayfield, for the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America, in Berkeley, California.

Scope and Contents

Stocksdale speaks of his childhood growing up on a rural farm and learning from watching and experiencing; his early education in a one room schoolhouse; how he learned to whittle as a child; buying his first lathe for twenty-seven dollars and fifty cents; his job at a furniture factory called Caswell Runyan Factory; life through

the depression; joining the Conscientious Objector's camp during World War II; working for the Civilian [Citizen's] Conservation Corps; his acquaintance with Helen Weinnemore, the director of Winnemore's Arts and Crafts in Columbus, Ohio; how he received wood while in the CO camp; his visits to museums in the city; his trend of signing and dating his bowls; becoming a member of the International Wood Collector's Society; developing tools with Jerry Glaser; two stores he sold items at, Gump's in San Francisco and Fraser's in Berkeley; different collectors including Bob Anderson, who he considers a legend; his exhibitions and how they have evolved; his travels to England with Kay his wife; the difficulty in establishing a price for his bowls; the change in American craft throughout his lifetime; the many types of wood he uses, which come from all over the world; the importance of wood as a means of expression; his first date with Kay and her influence upon his work; different curators he's worked with; the pieces he has within his home; and his current exhibition Bob Stocksdale: Eighty-Eight Turnings at the Museum of Craft and Folk Art in San Francisco. Stocksdale also recalls Fran McKinnon, Forrest Merrill, Walker Weed, David Pye, James Prestini, David Ellsworth, Art Carpenter, Griff Okie, and others.

General

Originally recorded on 6 sound cassettes. Reformatted in 2010 as 9 digital wav files. Duration is 4 hr., 41 min.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Decorative arts
- Turning (Lathe work)
- Woodworkers -- California -- Berkeley -- Interviews
- World War, 1939-1945 -- Conscientious objectors

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings

Names:

Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America