

Voices from the Past

Art and Artists of Madison & Fremont  
Counties, Idaho

Interviewee: Oliver Parson

August 3, 1982

Tape #28

Oral interview conducted by Harold Forbush

Transcribed by Theophilus E. Tandoh      October 2004  
Edited by Lisa Blaylock      January 2010

Brigham Young University-Idaho

HF: Art and artists in Madison, Fremont Counties in the state of Idaho. It is my privilege this early morning of Tuesday, the third day of August, nineteen eighty-two, to interview Oliver Parson. Who has been involved in the subject matter for many years, and we are most delighted to have him come to Rexburg. Mr. Parson would you state your resident, well let's have you state your full name, your residence and your occupation?

OP: Well, I am Oliver Parson, and Rexburg has been my home since 1954. I came to Ricks College at that time and was heading the Art Department and served in that occupation for nineteen years, and then after twenty-five years I retired. So at the present time, I'm a retired Art professor, I am a painter, I do workshops in different areas but at the present time I have just returned from a mission in Canada in the Montero Canadian Mission, where I served for eighteen months.

HF: So you are not really retired. You are still very much involved in painting and pursuing your love of painting?

OP: Yes, I still am. In fact whilst I was on my mission I taught a number of art classes to non-members and had several art exhibits in Canada of my paintings. And I brought a number of paintings home, in fact I sell them in Texas and some in southern Utah on the way home from my mission.

HF: Where were you born and when?

OP: I was born in Kansas in 1916, in a little town called Hanra, Kansas it's just a very small place, it had about maybe hundred and fifty people.

HF: And when?

OP: In 1916, December the 24, 1916.

HF: Okay, and would you share with us just a little about, of your background, your ancestral background, both sides of family?

OP: Well, my parents were farmers, from farmer families. And my mother's parents were German background; they came from Iowa, and were pioneers in central Kansas. My father's parents were also homesteaders in that area of the Parson name, searching genealogy, we've had some success in finding out that they came from Pennsylvania and my father's mother was a Roger and that line is a little bit harder to find and we think they came from Oklahoma or something, it is a little bit harder to find.

HF: What were the various factors or motivating circumstances that led you into formal training as an artist?

OP: Well, I've always wanted to be a carpenter, as a small lad and I used to go to all the cowboy movies that I can see and attend. And then I started to draw the cowboys and the horses and when I was in grade school, I used to enjoy the romantic life of the outdoors.

And I started to paint when I was in the seventh grade. I really didn't have much formal training. I was from a small school, I went to high school. We didn't have art in high school, but I still painted and it was sort of self taught until I reached the age of a junior in college, where I really learned my first formal training. I remember when I was small, my grand parents had two homes, one was the regular home and then they had this little two room house that we lived in some of the time. And on the wall they had little painting that was about 8 by 10 that some artist had done, and I used to just look at that and that wasn't the original. I think probably that was of the places that I got the idea that maybe I would like to be an artist. And I think as far as paint and to be an artist or a painter that was where I got my inspiration and probably it really wasn't a very good painting, but it was one that I enjoyed.

HF: At that time did you know anything about Charles Russell?

OP: No.

HF: And Remington?

OP: No, I didn't really know our history at all, in fact many of the things; I didn't have any background in any art history at all. I used to like, like I said cowboy movies and I learnt to read while enjoyed cowboy stories and I think, ah I can think of it, a painter whose work I like very much. He wrote a story - Will Jane, and the story's smoky. And in one of his books he had some beautiful paint drawings and I really enjoyed those, in fact I copied, used to copy them. And so that was probably my first association with outdoor drawings. And I used to enjoy the covers on the Saturday Evening Post, and then eventually I enjoyed Charles Russell. I didn't really become acquainted with the Remington's art for many years. I like Charles Russell, I thought they were tremendous.

HF: How about the influence maybe of Thomas Myron?

OP: No, like I say, I really didn't come across their work, we didn't have any art books in the school where I went, and I had no art books on my own. And so my closest associations with illustrations were from the Pope Westerns that were on the market at that time. I used to enjoy the drawings and the paintings in the books and the covers. I remember my uncle used to read those Western books, Western Pope Magazines as they were. I used to hang on to the cupboards and tear out some of the pictures for scrap. I got some scrap that I've had for many many years. Scrap is we call it is when you collect pictures. In fact I've looked in through some of my stuff just recently that I've collected since the '20's. I remember in one of the news papers and magazines they used to have an adromy that was put up by one of the commercial, art correspondent courses, famous and less famous artists. Anyway, I drew that and I sent it in and that was in, or I was going to try this, I think it is in the early '30's or maybe in the late '20's, 1920's and I sent those in and I think have a little book that they sent me. So I wasn't very old.

HF: Professor Parson, you indicated that you came here to head the art department at Ricks in 1954, what formal training had you at that time and maybe did you get formal training afterwards or just what was they?

OP: Okay, maybe I came last in 1937 and had just graduated from high school. And like I said, we've had no formal training and I went to Weber College and they didn't have art at Weber College at that time. I was still interested in it and I used to do chalk cups for entertainment on the stage, at ward functions. And a man by the name of Carson in Ogden saw me working one day and he contacted me and he was a window decorator. He liked my work and so he offered me a job as painter. He didn't do any painting, but he did do animated window decoration, so I did all these paintings for about four years. And I had finished my schooling at Weber College.

Then I went to University of Utah and took art from one of my favorite western painters or landscape painters, was a man by name of Lucan Stewart, he was the head of the art department at University of Utah. So down there, started taking art from the university art department, I did pretty well in my first quarter there. I went from an average from a C student to a straight A. But like I said, I had very little background in it. But I remember Lucan Stewart said, "You got a good feeling for landscape painting and you will do alright". So I got my degree from University of Utah and education and was a major in art. And I went to Colorado State to get a minor which was in industrial log. After graduation, I taught school in Salt Lake for two years and it was about the time of the war. And so I left teaching profession and worked for Remington Armforce. And we built ammunition fifty caliber machine gun volts is what I was working on and I was a tool guy repair man there for a couple years.

Then I went in service for two years and then when I came back I went back into teaching in Antonia, Ogden. My first job when I came back out of service was in elementary as I taught art to fourth, fifth and sixth graders. And I remember I had thirty classes a day, not part in those thirty classes. I had thirty students and we had, well anyway, every half hour I had a new group of students. And then from there I went to another school in the same Ogden city school system and taught two more years in junior high. Then I got a job at Spring Ville high school as a garden instructor there and I was also the curator at Springville High School and went back to the University of Utah and got my masters degree.

HF: Now just a little diversion here, Spring Ville does have a quite famous art display, or what is it?

OP: Yes, it has an art gallery there that was built during the depression era years by the Derive Gaye, and it is a beautiful art gallery. It has, well I should say an art museum, because they have about ten or twelve art rooms in that building and they have a collection there that's really, I think probably the most outstanding in the inter-mountain west.

HF: Is this picture, original, or prints?

OP: Oh yes, no no it's all original.

HF: All original. Is it primarily of western painting?

OP: Not necessarily no, it's all times. And every spring they have national show there, where they had bringing paintings all over the United States, and anyone is that is well known they try to get very good art there.

HF: In your opinion, in your manner is there a way of classifying or grouping art and say artists who follow a certain line or philosophy or style?

OP: I think that you can probably, there are a number of -isms but you can probably break it down into realism, or abstraction and realism, if you want to just break it into several categories, but there are other areas in there for instance: cubism, and impressionism. For a number of years abstraction was the going thing but the pendulum has swung in that direction where most of the colleges were teaching only that type. Still there are some of them still going that direction but the people here in the upper valley at least at Ricks College we try to teach fundamentals and some of these Collages; they taught in such a manner that they really didn't give them the basics. They didn't want to destroy people's ability to do their own thinking, so they wouldn't really give them a direction. In my feeling I think people really need to have a good foundation and then they can go any direction that they want go.

HF: And so that's been your effort as an instructor to give a lot of good basic training.

OP: That is right. Yes and then they can go abstraction or cubism or any direction that they want to, but they need to have a foundation.

HF: Now when we talk about western paintings, is that part of realism?

OP: Yes, yes but its subject matter and its matter that people can recognize; the subject are recognizable. And in this western paintings you can have quite a bit of freedom you have all freedom that you want to have.

HF: You can emphasize maybe action?

OP: Oh yes, many of the western painters now. Some of them go back into history and some of them paint the west as it is, at the present time really; they don't go back into history. They are influenced by the ranches, and cowboys, and the Indians who actually are with us today, some of the painters don't necessarily go back into history or try to paint things as they were then but as they are now.

HF: In other words they get their inspiration from what they see.

OP: That is right.

HF: With the abstractism or abstraction type painting it's from what, imagination?

OP: That is right. It's ah, what they do is they do work with probably the principles of art and elements of art. But some of those paintings are only for the people who had done them to interpret them. You really don't know what they had in mind when they when they were doing it. If you just have to look at them and say well, it has good color, has good line you may enjoy it, but as far interpreting it you may not know for what sure what the artist had in mind when he was painting.

HF: Let me just pinpoint some things here and get your reaction Mr. Parson. The subjects I guess which Remington and Russell used, the plain Indian and cowboy-can you respond to some beautiful paintings in that area and painters other than those that I've mentioned. Are there those that seem to want to perpetuate what Russell and Remington did, can you call in mind any art, piece of art that somebody has done and somebody the name.

OP: You mean well, we've only mentioned Remington and Russell. At one time Remington's paintings were thought of as commercial. He is known as a commercial artist. But I am going to deviate just lightly from the question but his paintings now are in my estimation are real masterpieces, there are fine arts they are really beautiful. I just saw an exhibit of his last winter and Ogden Burg, New York. It was; they are really beautiful. Dare Stab did western things and Myron both of them did the west, they Myron enjoyed the Grand Jury of yellow stone he did some beautiful things of the Yellowstone area and Dare Stab did the western mountains. And as we come on down, there was a group of people probably who were most influential after those painters there, there was a group of people who came to Taos, New Mexico and started an art college and there was about five or six of them who went in there first. George and Henry Sharp were one of the first men in there, Philips, Bloominshine.

HF: When were they, what the late nineteenth century, or even in the twentieth century?

OP: I don't know if any of those groups are still living or not, Freemon Ellis I still see some of his paintings. But I think if he is living he is very very old. Seems to me like some of those other men have passed away, but seem to me like they came in, in the thirties and established the colony there.

HF: Were they influenced by the scenery?

OP: Oh yes, the people the Indians the quietude of that country thing. Beautiful light and the color and the Indians and Mexican people who were in that area. Sharp did most of the Indians ... Bloominshine did the canyons. There was another man who did a lot of work in that area and he was Delano. He was quite famous and William Ali was another, at the same time.

HF: In the Taos?

OP: Yes, in the Mexico area.

HF: Well now, since you came to the Upper Snake River Valley in 1954, what particular landscape here in this Upper Valley has influenced you?

OP: Well, I like all trees along the river. I think it is beautiful in the fall. This is nice I use; when I first came here I spent a lot of time in the Rexburg bench, on the bench there. The homestead the old buildings that were there, first came here. I did a lot of those old buildings.

HF: You take your belongings with you and your paintings?

OP: Go out and find those areas and paint them, most of them are gone now. I enjoy the Tetons, most my paintings at the Teton have been from the Idaho side and the Jackson side.

HF: Who, would you give, up along the distance or would you go right up there in the mountains?

OP: I did a lot of my paintings just south of Tetonia around Tetonia, because you get those trees' foreground. I used to like to have something in the foreground and the creeks there and that gives a nice foreground. Then you have those tyrant peaks in the background about the area.

HF: Now do you take photographs?

OP: No, I used to paint, I am getting older now so that I [inaudible] But at least I have a good background of painting directing from the things. You have knowledge that you like. Sometimes photographs are hard to work with unless you have a lot of experience from actual painting on the scene. It is harder to work from the photograph I think.

HF: Now how do you, do you like capture events, social things?

OP: I like going back to the wagon and buggy, I like to put horses and wagon like the pioneer things in my paintings. In recent I've been like I say like wagon and people going to town and from town, covered wagons. In fact, I sort of lived in that area a little bit. When I was a youngster we moved from south Kansas to western Kansas in covered wagon and we lived in a dug outs, didn't have a wood flow in then, but snakes were pretty friendly with us. So I did live with the wagon and buggy experience when I was a youngster.

HF: And you tried to bring people into those?

OP: Yes I do, I go to, I also like rendezvous trapper subject of this rendezvous, where you can actually get a good scrap, good photos of actual people on and their equipment. And you have authentic reference to work from.

HF: Have you ever done anything with the Perez rendezvous 1832, the gathering of the ... up here in Teton basin?

OP: No, I haven't, I should; they have a rendezvous up in that area.

HF: Every year now.

OP: So I need permission on that, because it is good painting material.

HF: How about portraits of people, do you have people sit [inaudible]

OP: Yes.

HF: You did that?

OP: Yes do portrait and I enjoy portrait painting very much it's really enjoyable to have someone sit for you. You have a rapport or a relationship of learning their characters, their inner thoughts drawing their portraits.

HF: What's the most enjoyable painting that influenced you and you just always loved down through the years?

OP: That's probably, I really don't know whether I can say, well I enjoy this painting more than anybody else's. If you go back to portraits figure, you back to sending the impressionist from France, I enjoyed their work very much- Degour, Remont the two that I enjoy very much. There were several people whose work I used to enjoy that were from the twentieth century, Ogden Pliers he may be dead now, I am not sure, but he was a water colorist that I enjoyed. I like his work very much. And probably as far as water color is, I probably was influenced by him and then the others. I used to hand his work when I was a curator at the Springville, Art Gallery and looked forward to seeing his work pretty much.

HF: Now do you personally, did you start out by using oil and canvas?

OP: Yes, my first painting was, I found a canned and when you open it up the oil on top is usually different than the pigment underneath. So I remember the two different colors like I said, the oil is one color and the pigment below was a different color. So I started analyzing that and I used to use my mother's blooming for part of my equipment. I didn't have much equipment when I was young crisis tend sent is enormous to paint with. I remember the first oils I had they were about the tubes are probably, maybe two and half inches long and smaller than your little finger. And they were so precious that I really never did use those paints. You know I used to open up the tube and squeeze out just a little bit. But after the flood, I found some of those tubes that I still had and that would have been all forty-five years old.

HF: Now, in getting supplies, I suppose it isn't difficult to procure your oils now days?

OP: No, no.

HF: And your brushes?

OP: Brushes and paints are easy to keep now.

HF: They are not probably too expensive.

OP: Well, they don't give them away. But they are much easier to get hold of than what they were when I was a youngster.

HF: Now the material that is referred to as canvas, what is that material, is that something of fabric out the real canvas?

OP: It's a fabric; it is woven just like the canvas [inaudible]

HF: Very tightly woven.

OP: Yes there are different materials, you got a cotton canvas, most expensive and probably better I don't know, whether it's really better but the linen canvas it cost you more. There also you can paint on what is known as canvas board, they are probably the least desirable, masonize is a good material to paint on, and I have been doing some paintings on masonize. Many artist paint on masonize, most of them will paint on the smooth side rather than on the rough side. They put a coating on it or seal it, which usually gesso, couple of coatings, gesso is put on there and it gives it a good seal. And it is a good background to paint on.

HF: Now Mr. Parson, we've talked about oil and canvas, what other media is used for an artist to express himself?

OP: At present time they have a guarsh, which is a water soluble material but is sought like poster paint. You can use water color also, which is a water soluble pigment. And you paint on most generally is painted on paper but the paper is a very good quality, is usually made rag paper. There is also acrylic, which is a material that is just recent development and drives extremely fast and it's very durable. I usually don't enjoy using acrylic because it drives too fast. There is a pastel which is another media that you might say well, it is short like charcoal is. It is the good pigment that they use in these other materials like the same pigment that you have in oil and water color only it's in a dry stick form, and it's a good media to use. It is rich in color. Both water color and pastel have to be under glass to protect because it could be smeared or get damaged if anybody touches it because it. We also have pen and ink, pencil charcoal; those are good medians to use.

HF: Those called paintings or just sketches?

OP: No they will be called drawings.

HF: Drawings.

OP: This is just viable as paintings are. And they can carry the same message and be just as expressive and just as enjoyable as these other things.

HF: Now you've used the oil and canvas, the water colors?

OP: Yes, I've used them all.

HF: All of these that you've been describing, you've used them all.

OP: One that I have never done egg template which is a good medium, it is used with water color and we use the yokes of eggs as your vehicle or as a media to thin your paint with. And it's very durable and it dries very quickly. Andrew Wyle who is one of the top painters in our country and he does, many of his paintings are done in egg template dry brush. It's sort of a water color medium but it's beautifully done and you can get very accurate detail because of the method of putting it on just a little bit of a time.

HF: Well, now as a professor here, the head of the art department, what was used up here, what schemes and what types of art did you teach and was provided here in Ricks College in these awesome twenty five years that you were professor?

OP: I think we've covered most of the things we've been mentioning here; we used all the media here.

HF: Did you?

OP: Yes, when I first came out I was the only member of the art department and I taught everything. And I was by myself for six year. So I taught all the classes, taught all the subjects in the art department. Brother Powell was the first instructor that came to join the art department and he taught when he first came, he taught some lettering and ceramics. We just sort of divided the area up by, I thought mostly the oil paintings and if I remember right he did teach some of the water color. By the time I left Ricks, we have added five more instructors besides me. At the present time, there are six art instructors at Ricks College. And they cover all the facets.

HF: That will include the area of sculpture or sculpturing.

OP: That is right. I taught sculpture for many years and then eventually, John Marfid came and took over the sculpture and then after John Briggarin was the sculpture teacher. At the present they are getting a new sculpture teacher. Briggarin is moving down to Brigham Young University.

HF: Does sculpturing appeal to you as equally with painting?

OP: I love it very much. It is more time consuming. It takes a longer time to get a piece of art created during sculpture work.

HF: What was your first piece of sculpture?

OP: My first piece of sculpture as you go back was probably some alabaster carving and some animals that did... and the crafting line. And I did some horses, fighting stallions and in wood, I carve some in wood and eventually did those in clay and then I worked with the clay quite a bit. My first one in doing people was a pioneer man and his wife. They were only about ten inches high and that was my first attempt.

HF: And this was out of clay?

OP: Yes, that was out of clay.

HF: What did you do, fired that, and make sort of pottery or something?

OP: Yes. And you can work with oil clay that has to be cast, if you use oil clay you have to cast, though you can work with wax and this has to be cast.

HF: You cast it into metal?

OP: You make a mold first and then you can either cast in plaster or cement or have them cast in bronze; that is the most durable, it is quite expensive.

I might go back and mention that Ode Coles was added to the faculty at Ricks after him brother Powell and then Robert Earl came as one of our faculty members.

HF: Have they trained in a particular way, focusing attention on some facets?

OP: Yes.

HF: For example just indicate that.

OP: Well, brother Coles worked one period of time. He worked quite abstractly, and he was doing very well with his painting and he was winning prizes at exhibits. So you look at peoples work and see what they are doing also how much recognition they are getting in different areas and so that is a good criteria as to adding him as faculty member. Also, we like to have fun and have some experience in teaching. Usually we look and see whether we are successful in our school where they were teaching. Many of them went to high school before they came to Ricks. After brother Coles, we added Brother Marefed and then Richard Bird was commercial artist, who was doing very well in commercial art field. And after he received his masters degree in Brigham Young University we added him to our faculty. He's going to commercial field. When I retired my son Leon who had

trained in Los Angeles at the art centre was doing Freelance work down there and he came and took over some of the commercial art areas at the art department in Ricks.

HF: Now with the department acquiring this new facility in the...what is this building up here?

OP: Oh the fine art building?

HF: No, no over in the other building. They got the new; they put the new addition on the Kirkham and all.

OP: Oh, that sculpture and poetry, yes for ceramic. That was added after I left.

HF: That is a new dimension to the art department.

OP: The facility didn't change the instruction because the instruction was being given for many, many years before that building. It's just a nice facility; it is a good physical facility. But the instruction has been given for many years. So I just made it better as far as it facilitates the teaching area.

HF: So that will expand the opportunity for students to do more things bigger and better things?

OP: I don't think they expand the opportunity for them to do much more. It just makes it more comfortable.

HF: I see.

OP: Because we've been doing the same thing that they are teaching now for many years.

HF: Now, brother Parson, down through the years as an instructor here with the art department has there been a display of an exhibit what the students do in the art department. They've been displayed?

OP: When I first came to Ricks. I was desirous.

HF: The interview will be continued on side two of this tape. Side two continuing the interview with Oliver Parson pertaining to art and artists in Fremont Madison County of Idaho. Now you were commenting about a place to exhibit and demonstrating art.

OP: As I started to say, when I first came, I was desirous to have the upper here known as an art area. And I remember soon as the Kirkham auditorium was built I made sure that the ball room had facilities to hang painting in there. And we had many exhibits in the Kirkham. We invited one known artist to have one man show, we had group shows there and the students we usually had a student showing in there. And then when the new Manwaring Center was built, it was also fixed to have paintings and oil and I should say

exhibits in there. And we had stands that were fixed so we have excellent shows and a number of years we had invitational show compared to what we had in Springville, Utah. And we had artists from all over the country send paintings and I also made trips to many different cities and picked up paintings for that show, but it was finally discontinued. I felt that it was rather unfortunate that it was finally discontinued, because it gave the people in this Upper Valley the opportunity to see an exhibit, which for many people they have no opportunity at all to see a national show.

HF: Was it discontinued because of lack of genuine demands for both interests in the thing?

OP: Well, probably administrative, I don't know. Maybe they felt that it was too expensive, I don't know. But it was conducted in such a manner that the whole community was involved in it because the people who conducted the tours or who acted as hosts were from the different communities or different wards in Rexburg would be given a certain day that they were to come and act as a host for the show. And many people were becoming involved and becoming acquainted with different medias and many people didn't even know the difference between the water color or an oil or acrylic. So it was an educational thing that I felt that it would have been nice and it could have been continued.

HF: That gives rise to the question that I have here. What can we do locally to assist and spread the good word as far as knowledge, exposure and assisting the artist in a disposition of their works selling them?

OP: Well, that is ...

HF: That is a tough question isn't it?

OP: Yes, tough question, people need to become acquainted with the artists who are in this area. You don't find many communities, with the population of size of Rexburg, with the number of artist who are participating in this area. It's probably very few people; people in this area owned the original works of this artist. Most of the artist works going to out of state.

HF: To go out of the area to sell.

OP: They are sending their work all over the country and a very few people here that never see their work.

HF: What can we do to remedy this situation?

OP: Well, it would be very well if we could at least have an art exhibit. I remember that it when I was running the exhibit here it was rather hard once I put the show up to get keep the show up because if they had a dance while they hold and pull a hundred thousand

dollar exhibit down so that somebody could have a dance in the ball room which was the only facility where we could hold the shows.

HF: I bet you've been frustrated I think.

OP: I gotta say you got an exhibit maybe even more than a hundred thousand dollars of the paintings and people want to pull them down or move them out. I think that people ought to become acquainted with the artist that they have here. They really have some excellent artist here.

HF: Why don't you name some our artist and designate those who as you name them indicate whether or not they were students of yours?

OP: Well, probably if we mention some of these art faculties, Franchis Richard Bird, an excellent artist one of the excellent teacher then.

HF: What does he specialize in?

OP: He specializes in...

HF: Commercial.

OP: Commercial work but his fine art work, he is doing his water color, just beautiful water color work. And he was one of my former students actually I think he started taking art with me about the second year that I taught here. And I probably messed his life up because I think he was going to be a chicken farmer until he found a life of interest and the excitement being an artist. I've had a number of Dawn Ricks' sons, as students and Dawn and his four sons are in the area. They are...

HF: Doug...

OP: Doug and Russell.

HF: Doug and Russell?

OP: I think he has four of them are painters here and they all live in this area. And most of their work goes out of the state.

HF: What are they classified, what type of paint?

OP: They are doing westerns. I know Doug is doing beautiful water color and oil, Indians and TP's.

HF: Did he have to sell them in Texas?

OP: Most of them go to; a lot of them go to Texas. My son is Dalen, does a lot of work for the church. And his work, he's also a freelance artist; he is sensitive work too in Texas and Arizona and to Wyoming. Most of it goes out to the state. Very few people in fact he could see any of these artist work. Lyon who filled my vacancy when that I made when I retired, many of the people see his work if they look at the outdoor life. He's been doing the cupboards for the outdoor live since December. And he also sends his work to the galleys out in the state. One of my other sons is also in this area is painting. Like I said; you have many people here who are painting the Le French's...

HF: Ronny...

OP: Ronny is one of my former students he teaches art down at the art school. Carolyn Coal Clarkson...

HF: She is a student of yours?

OP: I think so, I am trying to think whether I am sure I've had hers student in the old Clement. I've had Robert Whirl, Robert Whirl, he is one of the professors up there, but he is one of my former students. John Morphed who is sculpture work and he is a former student. Tim Witworth has taken art from me, Marion Cheney. Arlene Hampton who lives in St. Anthony at the present time is doing some beautiful past stuff. I just saw some of her work recently. And she is from one of my former students; in fact she started taking art from me just about when I arrived here. And that's very funny. This might be interesting when I first came here it was sixty years old. Who came to all the art that I taught. She finished her degree and taught art three years and then she retired and continued painting until she was in her eighties. Sister Lennon was really a good artist. I talked with her just before my mission. And she said oh, how happy she was that she had our art and she continued to paint. She said many people came to her and wanted her to do paintings for her. She was also a very good musician and pianist. But she said they didn't come to her home to listen to her music to enjoy her paintings. And so she was happy to have had the experience of taking up art. I've had many people at the present time who are quite successful in art. It's rather hard for me to pin point names, I thought well maybe I should have gone back and looked through my role books and picked up someone.

HF: Who are involved and making it a livelihood.

OP: Oh yes I have many of them who are making a livelihood and good livelihood in the art field.

HF: What particular type of paintings did the public seem to really go on?

OP: They like realism; they get right close to a painting and see that the anatomy is correct on whatever people would like to see the anatomy of which trees and the rocks are correct. They seem to want paintings to be quite photograph.

HF: Can you suggest what for a good painting?

OP: There are artist who very well established their paintings in the three thousand mark. You are going to some of the paintings such as, Tom Level or John Claimer who belong to an American Callaway artist association. Their painting's selling at fifty to eighty thousand, eighty five thousand. It's very lucrative.

HF: Where did they place these paintings to lift together a price like that, any place in here in west?

OP: Oh yes, in Jackson, you go to Jackson, Wyoming and there are some galleries over there. There are some paintings about four or five galleries in Jackson trail side of the galleries.

HF: Did they place their paintings on some kind of a consignment?

OP: Yes on a consignment. And the galleries tend to take the paintings. A lot of these paintings that the French's mentioned are sold from the very high are sold in auctions, some of them along with the livestock's auction where they have price, animals, horses and cattle. And they also have these exhibits and the paintings are auctioned. There is an exhibit usually in October in Phoenix, Arizona where the cowboy artists in America have an exhibit and they exchange hands there on horse in a million.

HF: Brother Parson, in the Upper Snake River Valley, is there an annual guild or an art exhibit or some kind of an art show where in our local people can make disposition of their paintings?

OP: At one time we had the Upper Valley artist guild and it was organized just soon after I came here we had quite a number of artists in that group and we...

HF: Here in Rexburg?

OP: Yes, at the present time I don't know of any of art guild here. I think there may be one in Anthony, but I don't think there is an exhibit here. Usually [inaudible] and see some of these artist work and also at the Madison County fair they usually have a fairly art exhibit at the Madison County fair and you can see some of local artist. Like I said some of these artists don't put their work in, so those those maybe go to their studio and see them before they ship to fifth west. [inaudible] I think maybe he has a galley down on the Arture Limon road.

HF: Do you have one?

OP: I have one in my home.

HF: Of your own, and your sons or just of your own?

OP: No just mine.

HF: Of your own. I would like you to comment on purchasing art at an auction as an investment for future speculation and resale profit. Is it a good thing to get into, do you know what you are doing?

OP: If you know what you are doing it's a good thing for instance, some of these that I mentioned, some of these works that may be way up in the thousands. I am sure that some of these people who put their self pieces of work are purchasing as an investment. Because some of their works like art that are costing maybe fifty thousand dollars in the future may go to as much as a hundred and fifty thousand dollars or even more than that. I know that some works go for more than a million.

HF: What do you think of just attending an art show and picking up a few nice ones which kind of appeal to you for fifty, or hundred, two to three hundred dollars and then holding on for a few years, is there a good chance that you can....?

OP: If you can find somebody whose work is going up in price, who is well established or who looks forward to establish themselves; some artist whose work has quality enough that in the future they going to be worth some money. A lot of people who buy art are really buy it for their home to enjoy, unless they move into someone's work that is fairly established or look like they may become established.

HF: What happens to your spirit, your mind, your sense of values when you do a lovely painting and look at it, stand back and look at it and you are really proud? What takes place?

OP: I think probably it's like a new creation, I think if you come back to your own children and they accomplish something and you feel like that's my son or that's my daughter. Look like they have accomplished, maybe really well, a piece that you've created is still a thing that you've created and you look at it and you enjoy it. And you always feel that it hasn't to reach your expectations. I've often said, since a person says oh, that is my master piece and they are finished.

HF: You are still waiting to paint; you are the most successful painting artist.

OP: So you ah look forward to the next one that you do and they are better than the one that you get finished. There is always seems to be imperfections in that you've done and you always striving to do something better.

HF: Oh, Idaho Rexburg too, has been an artist place for art and gallery and so forth. What recommendation would you make where in we could maybe have an art spring art festival? Something of this nature or people like the names you've mentioned could come in and put their art on display?

OP: I think that if they would organize an exhibit and really go to these artists and see if they could get them to co-operate; like I say, at one time we had good exhibit here but I don't remember having knew exhibit here for a long long time. Maybe I've moved out but I don't know. It's like the many like I said, many of these artist who are really working at the present time whose work is moving, they feel like since they have a piece finished they need to go where they can move it or sell it. And that is what they are doing, because that is where their livelihood is coming from. It is the pieces that they sell. So when they finish a piece of work they usually try to get it to a gallery that could find, move it on to customers.

HF: Actually we could maybe have a period of time a week in the spring when their art could be displayed and people could share it and come to appreciate what art is. And then if there is no sale for it, then they could pick it up on goes to what is gonna be sold.

OP: Well, actually it has an exhibit anyway and the work that was shown there would be sent on to their galleries that handle their work. I think if we are to go to these artists and maybe contact them and see if they would be willing to exhibit. But you need to have a place for it and be showing and it needs to somebody needs to do some proselyting and get the people to go to. I remember the first show that I had, first of my shows that I had in Rexburg, show opened and my wife and I were there. And we had one person attend the show that day. And then it was advertised.

HF: As we close is there any good counsel that you could give to the artists or anyone who might one day listen to this interview.

OP: I think that they've got a lot of beautiful new kids of artist in this area and people ought to consider trying to get a piece of original work and put in their home. It really enhances the beauty. When I go into a home, the first thing I do is, I don't look at the kind of car they drive. I look at their wall to see what they have surrounded themselves with. They have any original piece of work or any original pieces of work or ceramic or sculpture or all sort of kind of books that they have.

HF: Brother Parson, I want to tell you how much I have appreciated you being here this morning and sharing with me and maybe hopefully some listeners of this tape, your expertise and your good will and your spirit. That has created wonderful area of the art.

OP: Well thank you, I really enjoy it very much and I hope that my comments would be of a benefit.