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HARRIET THORPE BAILY
RETIRED PROFESSOR OF ART
DELAWARE WOMEN'S COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

Interviewed by:
John H. Gauger
September 19, 1966

Transcribed by:
Marie McNulty

HARRIET THORPE BAILY
INTERVIEWED SEPTEMBER 19, 1966
PERSONAL DATA SHEET

Born in Atlantic City, New Jersey

Columbia University Teachers College, B.A., M.A.

1929 Head of Art Department at the Women's College

Studied abroad in summers

1956 Retirement

This interview is with Miss Harriet Baily, retired professor of art, first at the Delaware Women's College, and then at the University of Delaware. The interview was conducted on September 19, 1966, by John H. Gauger.

Interviewer: Miss Baily, where are you from originally?

Professor: Oh, I come from Atlantic City, New Jersey. That's a place you never think of people living, but my father was a doctor there, so I was born and brought up there.

Interviewer: Where did you attend school?

Professor: Oh, I went to the Pratt Institute of Fine Applied Arts School, and then I got both my bachelor's and master's degrees from Columbia University Teacher's College with work at Columbia University as well. Then I studied abroad quite a bit in summers. I studied a great deal in the art galleries, museums, and studied architecture from the actual things themselves.

Interviewer: I believe you taught before you came to Delaware?

Professor: Oh, yes, I taught at the Women's College at Georgia State College for Women at Milledgeville(?), and I also taught at the Children's University School in New York City, which was a private school for children from first grade through high school. As a matter of fact, I went there before I went to the Women's College in Milledgeville.

Interviewer: Miss Baily, what was the Women's College like when you first came to Delaware?

Professor: When I first came to the Women's College at the University of Delaware in the fall of 1928, it was a small college, and probably for that reason had a more or less personal atmosphere. Students and faculty knew each other quite well. I lived in one of the small temporary dormitories all but one of the semesters of the ten years that I lived on the campus. These small dormitories were former First World War barracks, and though called temporary, they were in use until Squire Hall was built in, I think it was about 1956. It was fun living in the small dormitory for we were all very friendly, three faculty and freshmen, I suppose about 20 in all.

I remember Kent dining hall of the early days as very nice indeed. The room itself was beautiful in proportion and color. Miss Alma MacDougal, the dietician, cared not only to have good meals, but to have the round tables always attractively set up with lovely flower arrangements which came from our Women's College flower garden. Such special attention made for gracious living.

But I would rather talk with you about art department events, which seem to me were outstanding in those early days. One of the interesting aspects of the art department in its early years was the fact that though a small college, we had an art gallery with regular exhibitions. These always were, I thought, such an important part of a student's education.

When I first arrived, the room at the top of the present Memorial Hall was our art gallery; but it had no heat, so

we could have exhibitions only the warm months of the year, for in late fall, winter, and early spring, it was much too cold. I soon, however, persuaded the administration to put in heat and to add a proper background wall covering so that we could hang whatever we wished to display. I may say that for a number of years we had a budget of only \$100 a year for all of our exhibitions which tasked our ingenuity to provide something worthwhile. Fortunately, the faculty of the art department had artist friends who kindly lent us exhibitions of their work, and even came to meet the students at the openings. We also had other good contacts that helped us to good shows at very little expense. As time went on we developed collections and fine reproductions that proved to be excellent study material. We sent out interesting announcements of these exhibitions designed by art department faculty which helped to make us friends who either lent or gave us things for our collections. By the time I retired, we were having regular monthly shows of some importance, for through the Cultural Activities program of the university, we had an enormous increase in our budget.

I should like to mention a few of our early shows. Mr. Henry Francis duPont gave us his collection of Flemish 17th and 18th century tapestries which he had made over several years. The tapestries filled the gallery. We had a nice tea to introduce them to the college and the public. Mrs. duPont kindly poured at that occasion, and Mr. duPont was there to answer questions about the tapestries.

Miss Jane Maxwell of Newark was a friend of mine. Many years before, her father, as an engineer, built a railroad over the Peruvian mountains; and in digging, he found a fabulous Indian mound filled with Ratician(?) and Peruvian pottery. He brought these art artifacts to the United States and gave quite a collection to the Fogg(?) Museum at Cambridge. But fortunately for the University of Delaware, he kept a great many himself, and Miss Maxwell gave them to our art department. To introduce them to the college and the public we had a fine exhibition, and an outstanding speaker for the opening. Doctor George Valiant, then director of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Art was our speaker. He had done much excavating in Latin America and was well equipped to tell us about that specific period. We have shown this fine collection to many college generations.

Another occasion of supreme importance was a joint program of the history and art departments. Doctor Munroe wished to have an Inter-American Institute. He asked me to take charge of the art end of it. I arranged a stunning exhibition of original Latin American paintings from the Museum of Modern Art. It contained such well-known artists as Diago Rivera, Arosco, Cecaras (?), and other eminent Latin American paintings. We were able to get Doctor Robert Smith, then at the Hispanic Foundation of the Library of Congress in Washington to come address us on Latin American painting in the art gallery. He was young, enthusiastic about his subject, as well as learned

in it, and he delighted his audience. He is now a professor of art history at the University of Pennsylvania and a valued faculty member in the University of Delaware Winterthur program.

When the Women's College and Delaware College became coeducational, our exhibition program expanded for we had a larger budget under the Cultural Activities program. Also we had added more faculty members to our art department staff, and could do more exciting installations in the gallery and have even more interesting announcements of our shows. I think the announcements helped to make the art department better known throughout the state.

Another interesting program with which we cooperated was one on American art as a theme for the Institute of Delaware History and Culture. Doctor Dillerman was president to the Institute of that year of 1964, and he asked me to arrange the program. We had Mr. Lloyd Goodrich, director of the Whitney Museum of Art in New York give us an excellent lecture in the morning on the history of American art. In the afternoon we had an outstanding tour. Mrs. Wheelwright invited us to her home to see her superb collection of American art. She was an engaging hostess, telling us about her various art objects. The Delaware Art Center displayed its American art, and also made available its collections by Delaware collectors of art. The Historical Society of Delaware in Wilmington also had displays for us to see. This whole day proved to be both stimulating and illuminating.

In summer of 1952, we had an internationally known sculptor in residence on our campus, Mr. Archipenko, who died just about three years ago. He is well represented in museums in the United States, Europe, and Latin America. At the university he had a superb exhibition of his sculpture. He not only taught classes in creative sculpture, but gave a public lecture as well. We are fortunate in having a patron of the university who presented the art department with one of his fine figures (name of figure garbled).

The Winterthur program with the University of Delaware began under my regime, and I always remember it with great pleasure. When things begin, there is a certain amount of experimentation and pleasant, intimate relations that is stimulating. The program began, as I said, with the cooperation of the art department, and we were fortunate in having on our staff a young man, Doctor Summer, with a fine background, not only in art history which he taught for our department, but also a major interest in anthropology which he taught for the sociology department. This combination of subject matter made him especially well equipped to develop the Winterthur Museum viewpoint toward American art history. He taught in this program for several years, and then was made first coordinator of the university Winterthur program in 1953-54, which position he held until he resigned. He is now a full-time member of the Winterthur staff doing research, as well as some teaching.

The first Fellows of the program I remember with enjoyment. I knew them fairly well, for I entertained them at dinner at my home with some of our special Winterthur University speakers who lectured in the fields related to American art and life. There are some of these lecturers who come to my mind especially: Sir Anthony Glunt(?), curator of the Queen's Collection, London, was such a delightful, easy guest, as well as an illuminating lecturer. The curator at the Worcester Museum in Massachusetts was a fine scholar, and a friendly woman who was easy for the students to know. Mrs. Parker of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, an authority on American painting, was another friendly person. Other people interested in the Winterthur program entertained in their homes too, so that our Fellows right at the beginning of the program had exceptional opportunities to meet important people in a friendly, easy atmosphere. The beginnings of things are fun, and the program has developed now to fabulous proportions.

There are still two members of the present art department who were faculty when I was chairman of the Department, Miss Gardiner and Mrs. Allen. They are my very good friends, and I am always interested in what they are doing. And I am also very good friends with the faculty that have come since I resigned. I find them stimulating to know and to talk with. I am very happy to have been a member of the art department in its early days, and I am extraordinarily proud of how splendidly it has grown and developed since my retirement in 1956.

INTERVIEW ENDS