

(Voices in background of this first interview make it difficult to understand)

JEAN HAYNES: —1977. And it was put on by Survival Arts Media and the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System, and (inaudible) Community College, and so forth and so on. And this is some of the things that we had there(?). We had local film and video makers, and among them, James Maychaud(sp?), who's now a real estate tycoon in Chautauqua County; John Davis went to New York, where— last heard from, which was about ten years ago, he was taping Bar Mitzvahs, which he said got pretty lively after twelve o'clock at night; and Chris Bend(sp?) is still around. And let's see... Then Doug Miller and Carol Ramsey. Carol Ramsey... They both went to Hollywood, and Carol is very well known as sort of a set— not a designer, but furnisher, you know? She picks up the things at the thrift shop that were just right for that era and that kind of thing. And let's see... Then Howie showed the *Artist and Craftsman's Anthology* and... That was about craftsmen in the country. And...

HIGH: (inaudible) some of them were makers and some of them were (inaudible)

HAYNES: Here we are, all this stuff. Then these are some of the other people that came to visit, Nancy Cain, and Bart Friedman(?)...

HIGH: So what (inaudible)

HAYNES: (inaudible) Howie and Judy(?) Gutstadt's tape. Henry Geldzahler(?) was there, Davison Gelati(?), Beatrice. It was just fantastic. And then we had, that same year, Media Mini-season(?) at Chautauqua, where we had— Howie and Mollie(?) did a workshop on videotaping, and we had a super 8 workshop, and we showed films by a guy from Dunkirk, who— his name was Halicki, and he made a film called *Gone In Sixty Seconds* in Hollywood. It was about car theft, and chases and stuff like that. And let's see... You wanna know how we circulated the tapes and things like that?

HIGH: Well, I'd love for you to state your name, and also talk about...

HAYNES: My name I Jean Haynes, and I was the Film and Video Librarian at the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System for about twenty years, from 1967 or so till 1986, or less. And during that time, we had a 16 millimeter film collection. And the way I got involved with that was I had worked at the Brooklyn Public Library and they had a 16 millimeter film collection, which they urged us to use; and I said to myself, "No way am I gonna show anything about any Bunsen burners and test tubes and stuff like that." So they had a workshop and they showed a Pennypacker(?) work and a film called *Streets of Greenwood*, about the Civil Rights Movement, and I was an instant convert. So when I came to Jamestown, and they had the 16 millimeter collection—which was funded by the Library Services and Construction Act; it was part of the Great Society—I asked if I could have that, and they said yes. And I knew about independent film, because I was a constant reader of Jonas Mekas, you know? And so I was looking for it. And at that time,

HAYNES (Cont.): the state had a library consultant that went around to the systems and held workshops. Her name was Joan Clark(sp?), and she was very interested in independent media, too, and urged us to buy it. And so with our Library Services and Construction Act money, we did buy that. And then when that ran out, we approached the New York State Council on the Arts, and their interests were similar to ours, and the collection developed.

And the films were extremely popular. We had one of the highest per capita circulations of any library system, and we got must marvelous stuff. And supported by the Council, we did have visiting filmmakers at our libraries, and... Fred Weisman(?) came. We arranged for Chautauqua, the institution to have Fred Weisman come one time, and he did come and talked about filmmaking. That was just great, because we... I remember driving him back to the airport, explaining to him how backward the Chautauqua administration was, but that we had really convinced them to put independent media right up there in a 10:45 lecture, where it belonged, you know? (laughs) And let me see, what else can I tell you?

HIGH: Kim told me that there was a— they used to take video decks and projectors out?

HAYNES: Yeah, right. Yeah. So after— that was the 16 millimeter collection. Then, as the PortaPaks became available and video art was produced, we began a collection of that, too. And Howie Gutstadt and Molly Hughes of Survival Arts Media came to

HAYNES (Cont.): Jamestown and— to help us. And they had a workshop and taught people how to use the PortaPak. And we had this Spring Media Festival, and let's see, what else? And the... We also acquired three-quarter-inch equip—... We had this PortaPak equipment, and— from some source, some grant gave us, which we loaned to people. And then we got three-quarter-inch equipment, and we began to develop our collection of tapes. And in order to get the people to see the three-quarter-inch tapes, we circulated them to different libraries, like the player and the TV set and a collection of tapes, and then...

HIGH: Really?

HAYNES: ...that would be at a member library for a couple weeks, and then go on to another library. Because we didn't want the stuff just to stay on the shelves; we wanted it to be seen and to be used. And it was. And we also had showings in museums and art galleries and... To try to get it out there. And some of those, like the Chautauqua Art Gallery shows videotapes today, and... It's good. And let me see...

HIGH: What were some of the first videotapes that you remember collecting?

HAYNES: Oh, good question. Well, I have here... We showed the Love(?) tapes on cable. (laughs) And here's Wendy Clark's(sp?)— not Wen— *The Breakfast Table*. We

HAYNES (Cont.): had that. We showed Howie and Molly's *Artist and Craftsman* series on tape on cable, too; and got cable rights to several other things. And we...

HIGH: (inaudible)

HAYNES: You know, (inaudible) how many people watched, but— as they said last night in a meeting I was at, but some people do see these. And there must be a list in here of... *Stag Hotel*, I just love that film. *Giving Birth*, we had; *Bag Rushes*(?). And by Henry Linhart— Henry Linhart was one of our borrowers. He lived in an old hotel on Lake Erie and used to borrow 16 millimeter films from us, before he went on to become a video maker.

HIGH: That's great.

HAYNES: And let's see... Among our borrowers, there was Dennis Drew of the Ten Thousand Maniacs. He used the PortaPak, and he was a video freak. And we got to be friends with some people in Buffalo.

HIGH: (inaudible)

HAYNES: This is Dennis Drew checking out the PortaPak. (laughs) Hardly see him. He was much younger then than he is now—unlike me. This is the Chautauqua Art Gallery program, and it has some video— showed some of our videos. We showed at the Ithaca Video Festival every year, and so... And I saw other festivals. And that was a real help in selection, so... And then we would preview things. And I... There was a Film-Video—and still is, a Film-Video Roundtable and Media Library in New York State, and people like the librarian at the New York Public, Bill Sloan(sp?), was very helpful, yeah.

HIGH: What made you really want to do this? I mean, I understand how it operated and how, you know, it functioned. What compelled you...?

HAYNES: Yeah. Drove me to do this?

HIGH: Yeah. Besides the fact that you liked some films. I mean, really, it's a big thing that you did.

HAYNES: Yeah. Well, I don't know. When I was... (laughs) I think this is the reason, or has something to do with it. They ne— my parents did not let me go to movies. They thought that they were the work of the devil, or somebody very much like him. (laughs) And so I had seen very few movies shown by the time I was in high school. Of course, after that, we went to the movies all the time. Before we found something more interesting to do. But anyway... But I didn't have Hollywood in my genes, you know. So

HAYNES (Cont.): when I met independent film, I thought: Oh, gee, this is really something that I like. And the same thing about independent video. I guess I was a reader, and there's more evidence of reflection in video art and independent film than there is in Hollywood movies, and I think that's the quality that I like.

HIGH: (inaudible)

HAYNES: But... I don't know.

HIGH: That's great. Thank you.

HAYNES: Yeah. You're welcome. Appreciation comes out of that religious background, in a way. So it's not just a rebellion; it's a sort of reconciliation.

HIGH: Yes.

HAYNES: Yeah.

HIGH: And finding what you are compelled by.

HAYNES: Yeah.

HIGH: So it's like defining yourself.

HAYNES: Well, I hope so. (laughs)

HIGH: Yeah, it's quite a definition, too. (they laugh)

HAYNES: So thank you.

HIGH: Thank you. (tape stops, re-starts) So tell me your name, please.

CARLOTTA SCHOOLMAN: My name is Carlotta Schoolman.

HIGH: Uh-huh. And how did you first come to this video making, video art field?

How'd that happen? Tell us the story.

SCHOOLMAN: It happened because of Ralph Hocking. (High: Uh-huh) Ralph was a good friend. And he—he was a good friend of the person who became my husband; he was my husband's teacher in college, and he became my good friend. And he would come to Manhattan and stay with us. And I don't remember, when was that, you know, important show at the Howard Wise Gallery? I remember, you know, Ralph came home from that show, and he had met Nam June, and you know... Major, enthusiastic excitement. And then before I knew it, Ralph started to buy equipment. And he would



SCHOOLMAN (Cont.): come to New York, and he would spend (laughs) twenty-five-thousand dollars on PortaPaks, before, you know, I had ever heard of a PortaPak. (laughs)

And you know, I'm...

HIGH: He was living in Binghamton then, right?

SCHOOLMAN: Yes. He had just gone from Allegheny College in Meadville, Pennsylvania, to SUNY Binghamton. And I guess, you know, he had figured out how to create an experimental television situation there; before ETC actually, you know, went off campus, it was on campus. And he had discovered the Council and whatever, you know, administrative kinds of things he was able to put together that allowed him to purchase equipment. (High: Right) And I'm sure he started smaller, and maybe he never spent twenty-five-thousand; but whatever, you know.

So I called him earlier to refresh my memory. And he told me that his first... His first videotape must've been the first videotape that I saw. And it was in 1969, and it was a fabulous tape called *Experiment*. And if you ever have a chance to see it, it is truly worth looking at. I remember it very well. And he was...

HIGH: Can you describe it?

SCHOOLMAN: Yeah, kind of. He was working with layering. And he made it in the basement at SUNY Binghamton.

HIGH: Just moving over here because of the wind.

SCHOOLMAN: Ok. As he said, you know, he wore a striped shirt that would mess up the raster. He was wearing, like, you know, one of those... What do you call those? Like a sailor shirt, with a boat neck. And set the camera on a tripod. And he recorded himself making— putting the tape on the deck, and then he would play that tape back on the mon— and there was a monitor in the frame, also. It was a wide angle shot, and you could see the monitor, and you could see him walking over to the deck and making the recording. And then he started to work with the layers. And so he would take the first recording that he made, and then play it back onto the monitor in the room, and then record, on another tape, that playback. And then he would take that playback, that recording, and play it back and, again, make another recording. And so it was going back and back and back and back. And it was just this, like, brilliant, brilliant exposition of this medium. It's a really... (laughs) As he said, "It's probably my best tape; I should've stopped." You know? Like so many people, like, the first tape is, like, everything. You know?

HIGH: Yeah.

SCHOOLMAN: It's like your whole life is in your first tape, you know?

HIGH: Right.

SCHOOLMAN: And so that must've been the first tape that I ever saw. And then... One time, when he came into New York—and he really did buy a lot of PortaPaks, and...

Ralph was so exceedingly generous. And *is* exceedingly generous. I'm an emotional (laughs) type.

HIGH: Oh, how sweet. Oh, that's fine. You want me to turn it off?

SCHOOLMAN: Just for a second. (tape stops, re-starts)

HIGH: Alright, so we're rolling again.

SCHOOLMAN: So I think the second tape that I really remember catching my attention was also a tape that Ralph showed me. And part of his incredible generosity and his big idea about having the equipment at SUNY Binghamton was he just wanted other people to use the equipment. And one day this student named Angel St. Nunez asked to borrow the deck, the PortaPak. And Ralph said, "Fine. Just bring it back." And Angel took it home to Bedford-Stuyvesant. And he made tapes in his community that were so incredibly exciting. Did you see them?

HIGH: No.

SCHOOLMAN: Oh! They're fabulous. They're re— you must see them sometime.

HIGH: Yeah.

SCHOOLMAN: And, you know, it was just, like, it was another look at the way the video medium could be used, you know? I had seen it used in the service of art; and now I was seeing it used in the service of, like, totally opening my eyes about another aspect of society. And Angel lived in Bedford-Stuyvesant, and he went home with this camera and he just was, like, talking to people. Talking to his former friends on the street, like, addressing the issues of, like, you know: he went off to college, they were still hanging out on the street; who was alive, who was dead? Who had overdosed, who was in jail? You know, it was a very, like, dynamic conversation that he had with the PortaPak. And he made a series of tapes, where he would, you know, go back and forth and talk to these kids. And so that was, like, the second tape that really caught my attention.

And Ralph reminded me when I talked to him this morning to get these dates right.

Angel's tape was in 1970. Ralph's tape was in '69. And he reminded me that an amazing thing happened. Angel took the tapes that he had made about Bedford-Stuyvesant and his, you know, friends that he had left behind to come up to be a university student, and he showed them around town. And Ralph went and spoke at one of these places. But he

SCHOOLMAN (Cont.): said Angel mainly did it. He went to the Kiwanis Club and other, like, service organizations in Binghamton, and showed them the tapes of these Bed-Stuy kids. And they started, like, a fresh air kind of program. And so twenty, thirty kids would come... He— in other words, he raised money to bring twenty or thirty youngsters from Bedford-Stuyvesant to the country every summer, on SUNY's campus.

HIGH: Oh, my God.

SCHOOLMAN: So that was, you know, a very— another really palpable and very beautiful outgrowth of those tapes—and I'm gonna get all choked up—out of Ralph's generosity. You know? (High: Yeah) I mean, I heard, you know, David Ross sort of bemoan the lack of community. And I was thinking: That's not right. You know? Because there're all different kinds of community. And you know, just that one catalyst of Ralph loaning this student, no questions asked, you know, a PortaPak... And maybe that's not a community that still exists in any coherent form, but nevertheless, it's a very powerful example of community.

HIGH: Absolutely.

SCHOOLMAN: So, you know, I felt— I was thinking back on some of that. So then one day when Ralph came to town, he said to Jamie and me—Jamie, my husband, Jamie Dearing—and he said, "Well, you know, I'll leave one with you." (laughs) And this

SCHOOLMAN (Cont.): must've been also the seventies, you know, like I mean, 1970(?), must've been the same year. And so we had this PortaPak in the house and those, you know, CD(?) PortaPak. And Jamie is an artist and, you know, he started to work with it a little bit. And I'm not an artist, but I started to play with it a little bit. And actually, the first tape that I remember, like, actively being a part of, my friend Constance DeJong came over, and we had just had very fancy haircuts. (laughs) And so she said, "Well, let's, like, make a tape of us." And so we put our faces, you know, side by side, she looking one way and me looking the other way, and we just rotated for the camera. And then I remember afterwards, I put a soundtrack on it—which I think was a diary that I heard on WBAI, (laughs) of a pioneer woman, that she kept. Someone had read it on WBAI, you know, in its entirety. And I think I put that over. It was about her journey west. (laughs)

HIGH: Wow.

SCHOOLMAN: But so I had this PortaPak in the house, and I started calling people up. I guess somewhere along the line, I had gone to the Castelli Gallery. I lived on West Broadway, 379 West Broadway, and I had gone to the Castelli Gallery up the street, and I had become aware of the fact that Keith Sonnier and some other artists were also working with video. And that was, like, very exciting to me. And Keith was very... I didn't know him at the time. But he was, you know, doing studio work. He was very interested in, you know, what the special effects generator that they had in the industrial

SCHOOLMAN (Cont.): studios in that day could do. And so I looked at his work. And I was aware of Bruce Nauman's work. And I just became very intrigued. And so I started... I called Dave Deowe(sp?), who worked at the Whitney, who I knew through my husband, and I knew he knew everybody. He's a painter. And I asked him for (laughs) all these phone numbers. And I just started calling people. I called Joan Jonas, I called Keith Sonnier, I called Richard Serra, I called Nancy Holt. I don't know who I called, but I just called them all up and I said, "I have a PortaPak in my house. Would you like to come and make something (laughs) on it?" And I'm normally rather shy. I don't know, you know, what impel—I guess it was, you know, enthusiasm.

And some of them took me up on it. And Richard, in particular, I remember; I met Richard Serra. I was, like, very happy to meet him. And he came over, you know, with a piece of lead or something and, you know, made a tape. And I was really excited, the other day, to look at the Video Data Bank list and see that many of the tapes that I produced in that period, you know, have wound up in the Data Bank archive, because Richard and the other artists with whom I worked, many of them were in some way or another associated with the Castelli Gallery. And all those Castelli-Sonnabend tapes went to Data Bank. So I was really happy to see that many of them have been remastered and still exist. I would really like to see some of them again. I never even *kept* copies of half the things. I just wasn't interested. I wasn't interested in, like, maintaining the object, so to speak. And so I was just interested in, like, getting it made.

HIGH: And how were they shown? Like, literally. Once you would make one of them with, I don't know, say Richard Serra, (Schoolman: Well, you see...) what would happen with them?

SCHOOLMAN: Nothing would happen. What would happen?

HIGH: I mean, how did they end up at Castelli? Did Castelli show them?

SCHOOLMAN: I guess— no. Well, every once in a while, Castelli would— like, there would be an exhibition where things would be shown, or there would be a performance where, you know, a tape would be part of it. In my own world, the way they started to get shown was that some years later, in— I guess it was 1974... No, no, no. The way they got shown initially was I put them all on cable television, because the public access channels had just hit New York. And I was very aware that the public access channels were about to break through because I— the first job I got when I got out of college—I graduated from NYU, and I went to work for something called the Sloan Commission on Cable Communications. And they were studying the new cable industry. And so I was very aware of the fact that part of this whole process was that there were going to be public access channels. And one of the directors at the Sloan Commission suggested to me that I go and talk to Experiments in Art and Technology when the commission ended, because they were housed at Automation House, where Ted Kheel was, you know, was— Automation House was going to be a satellite uplink, and it was gonna be,



SCHOOLMAN (Cont.): like, an important component of this new communication infrastructure. And there was a television studio in the basement at Automation House. And, you know, God bless Billy Kluver and Julie Martin, they hired me. I was so belligerent and so naive at the same time, but they hired me to help them put together a public access cable series that was going to be broadcast from Automation House. It turned out it didn't work like that at all. It never did become an uplink. But they also invited me to work in the studio down there. And so now, instead of inviting... Ralph had long since taken back his PortaPak. (laughs) And I had actually begun to apply for funds from the New York State Council on my own, to produce works by artists. And so all of that kind of came together for me at Automation House, through Experiments in Art and Technology. And Billy and Julie wanted... They had lots of ideas about what should go on cable. And a lot of it was film. And so I— again, I was calling all these people that I didn't know—Nancy Graves and Lucas Samaras, and people who had made, you know, films that I really loved, and inviting them to put their films on public access cable. And then I integrated into that many of the tapes that I had produced on the PortaPak or— you know, on Ralph's PortaPak, or on the equipment that I had acquired through the funding that I'd received from NYSCA. And of course, nobody had cable. you know, at all. So I arranged for several bars— only the bars had cable. So you know, there was a bar on the corner of Lafayette and Bleeker. And so they agreed to show it. And then—what's his name, the guy that ran Max's Kansas City, one of his bars. Nicky, whatever his name was. He had a bar that had cable. And so we had one site uptown. I forget where it was; it's, like, on the Upper West Side. It wasn't Max's, it was, like, Max's Two. And this,

SCHOOLMAN (Cont.): like, little nothing bar on Bleeker and—no scene at all. Not like a Max's scene—on LaGuardia and Bleeker. And so I would go, you know, and watch it. And I would be so surprised; there would be other people there. You like, like Liza Bear was there one night and... I was just shocked to see, like, who would come, you know? So anyway. That was... A lot of the tapes that I produced in that period, that was one way they got shown.

And then I went to work at the Kitchen and— in '74. And so that was another way that... One of the things I did was, you know, exhibit some of these pieces that I had produced. And of course, then I became aware of, you know, a very wide group of artists of all different stripes, you know, who had been working here and there in video and... And so that was an exhibition venue. And then every once in a while, you know, Castelli would show them. Or they would distribute them to museums around.

HIGH: What about— I'm gonna ask you about a specific tape, just because it gets shown a lot; the tape with Richard Serra that you made, *We Deliver Television*...

SCHOOLMAN: *Television Delivers People*.

HIGH: *Television Delivers People*.

SCHOOLMAN: Right.

HIGH: That was...

SCHOOLMAN: When was that made?

HIGH: ...produced in '73 or '74?

SCHOOLMAN: Actually, I'm gonna look it up, because (High: Ok) it's on this Data Bank thing.

HIGH: Yeah. Because...

SCHOOLMAN: See if their date agrees with my date.

HIGH: That'd be interesting.

SCHOOLMAN: 'Cause I grabbed this 'cause Sherry sent me an e-mail, you know, about...

HIGH: Right. (inaudible)

SCHOOLMAN: ...talking on tape, and so I grabbed this list of tapes that I wanted to name. The first tape I made at Automation House was *Anxious Automation*. I invited Joan Jonas to come. And she brought Richard with her. And then I noticed it's actually Richard's tape now. They agreed that it was more his than hers. But *Television Delivers People*— oh, *Surprise Attack* and *Television Delivers People* were both made in '73. So *Surprise Attack*, he made in my loft. And that's the one that I haven't seen in so long, and I would really like to see it. It's based on game theory, it's black and white. And I remember it as being a really wonderful tape. *Television Delivers People*, I guess it was the same year, '73. And that one, we didn't really talk about it very much beforehand. I knew that he had a text. And I knew where he had acquired the text. And I knew that he wanted it to, you know, run across the frame and that we needed a character generator. And I also knew he wanted, like, elevator muzak. And I forget I went. Somehow, I went to... I couldn't interest the TV Lab. The TV Lab was the only resource that I knew of for something as sophisticated as that. And I couldn't interest them in it. And so I don't know who I called, but I went to, like, the normal side of Channel 13. (High: Inaudible) Not the TV Lab, but like, the normal side. And they rented me access. I had money from NYSCA, and I just, like, bought time at Channel 13. I don't know how I even thought that it would be possible, but they said yes. And I brought my (laughs) half-inch open reel deck. I had a Panasonic half-inch open reel deck, because we were making it on two-inch, I suppose. And I knew I would never, you know, have another opportunity to playback a two-inch tape. Well, I was worried about that, so I brought my half-inch open reel tape, and I had to, like, you know, beg them to plug it in. (High: Inaudible) You know. And I

SCHOOLMAN (Cont.): wasn't allowed to carry it. You know, it was a union shop and all of that. But eventually, they were very, very—they were very nice. They really were, they were very, very nice. And it was, like, a totally professional situation. And they, you know, had a CG operator and they, like, did this— put the sound where it was supposed to be, and... They allowed me to roll a half-inch open reel. I still have it. It's— you know, some of the footage in the closet is Rita Myers (laughs). I'm sure I still have it in the closet; let's hope it's not in a plastic bag. And that's how it got made. And I think it's, what, two minutes or six minutes or something like that. And at the time, I was— six minutes. And at the time, I was, you know, operating under Fifi Corday Productions. And I told Richard, you know, that I had made enough tapes that didn't have my name on it and, you know, I wanted it to have my name. And I wanted it to have Fifi Corday Productions. And he was, (laughs) you know, not threatened. He was— it was fine with him. You know? He knew... It was just so... But he didn't want, like, the whole thing about producer and director and this, that, and the other thing, so it was— we just compromised, and he graciously included my name in the credits. And so, you know, people who are familiar with that era of video associate my name with that tape—as opposed to, you know, many others. (laughs) Many others. And I thought it was a really smart tape. I was really happy to have helped create that. And, you know, it still gives food for thought, that tape does. You know? Whenever I've had an opportunity— you know, every once in a while over the years, I put together a cable series, or a this or a that, and I always try and include it, because it still is so relevant and so provocative and

SCHOOLMAN (Cont.): so insightful. And... You know, he lifted that text from a theorist; I don't know (laughs) it was, but he was very smart to appropriate it.

HIGH: That's great. Do you have anything else you wanna...?

SCHOOLMAN: Let's see... I don't know. I guess, you know... Then I started—I should just say something about, you know, the Kitchen. (High: Yeah) When I was invited to start to work at the Kitchen, Bob Stearns(sp?) was the director, and it was he who had invited me. It was Keith Sonnier who had recommended me—which was very sweet. And Bob came from the gallery world. And there we were in SoHo. The Kitchen had just moved to Broome and Wooster. And Bob said, “Well, you know, we should have, like, ongoing video.” And so all of a sudden, it was my task to program an ongoing video series. And we structured it just the way the galleries, you know, structured everything; it's like it changed every month. And so all of a sudden, you know, from a rather haphazard... And when I first started to work there, it was just haphazard, you know. I mean, we'd invite somebody to do an installation, I would invite somebody to show a tape. But then we realized: No, let's just do it; let's just have a monthly show. Every month, we'll have a show; it'll go from ten till six every day. And it'll rotate. And so I think, as far as I know, it was the first, you know, regularly scheduled ongoing video exhibition program that I was aware of, in New York, anyway.

HIGH: And do remember when that started (inaudible)?

SCHOOLMAN: That was right away, like 1975. I started to work there in... I believe I started to work at the Kitchen in December of '74, so it was right away. You know, we started it right away, either in '74 or '75. And so there was, like, a viewing room. And that was really interesting to me to program, because all of a sudden then I started to, like, really find out who was making tapes. And, you know, then I found out about Lainesville(sp?) TV, and you know, Harry Teasdale(sp?) would just, like, pull the van up to the (laughs) telephone pole and... You know, that was very exciting. And then installations. You know, we had a big space at the Kitchen.

HIGH: Where was the Kitchen located at that time?

SCHOOLMAN: Broome and Wooster, above the Joe Laducci(?) Gallery. And I had just produced a series of videotapes about the Grand Union. Wonderful series of recordings of some really extraordinary concerts of a dance group called the Grand Union, downstairs in that building, so I was really happy to begin to work upstairs, on the second floor in that building. And just as an aside, I'm really happy... Yvonne Rainer called me not so long ago, and I think Data Bank is going to finally get those videotapes out of my cabinet and into the public domain, where they belong. But that huge, wonderful big space upstairs on the second floor. And so, you know, I began to program installations in there. And, you know, I'll just mention a few that really, like, were very important in my mind, you know, and in my experience. And in no particular order. You know, like Beryl Korot, *Dachau*. You know, I just... I was so stunned at the complexity and the sophistication

SCHOOLMAN (Cont.): and the power of that work. And you know, I just had met Beryl; she was a writer, as far as I knew. And then— I had no idea that she was a maker. And then she came with this, you know, extraordinary installation called *Dachau*. Very... And she had been a weaver, and a lot of the aesthetics from weaving entered into the way she structured that work. And Shigeko— I won't try and describe them in any great depth; I'm sure you can get the artists to describe their work or, you know, the documentation. And Shigeko. I invited Shigeko, and like Beryl, it was her first exhibition in New York, as far as I know. I think. You'd have to check with her. But I think it was her first exhibition of any— certainly, of any scale. And she did this fabulous piece to Marcel Duchamp. And it was a huge vertical stack of, you know, monitors that went from the floor all the way up to the ceiling. It was, you know, like sixteen, seventeen feet— they were high ceilings. (laughs) And then a mirror on the floor, in front, that had this, you know, just really beautiful reflection of the color imagery. And she was working in a process way; Beryl was working, you know, with real images that she fashioned something very abstract, but it was based on real images. And Shigeko was probably working on the Paik-ABE(?) synthesizer at the Experimental Television Center; I don't know where she made the tapes. But, you know, there were all these processed color images reflected, and this incredible soundtrack of her wailing at the grave of Marcel Duchamp.



SCHOOLMAN (Cont.): And there was a wonderful installation of Ira Schneider's. You know, he taught me... I was the new kid on the block, you know? And all those people who'd been around a while, you know, they came to check me out, you know? And so we were installing his show and, you know, he taught me how to gaff cables. (laughs) Very sweetly. I always appreciated that. (laughs) And he— it was a really nice installation called *Manhattan is an Island*. And it was also spread out. And then Lawrence Wiener and Rita Myers and... Lots of people. And, you know, at that time, if you programmed somebody, it was also like a commission. You know, because they had an idea, and you would say, "Ok, well, let's do that." But the idea wasn't made yet. And so you would have to help them make it. (laughs) You know? (High: Right) So you had the deck in the back room, or the camera at home, or you know, you'd borrow it, or you'd drive upstate to Lainesville or Downsville(?) or, you know, one of the places that had— or to the Experimental Television Center, one of the places that had more equipment than you could get your hands on. And you'd schlep it down and help the people make their work. You know. And so that was a very nice bonus for somebody like me, who really liked to be involved in the production and the commissioning of work—which I guess is the direction that I've followed, you know. In my own work, I've been very involved in commissioning. So I don't know. That's about enough. (laughs)

HIGH: (inaudible)

SCHOOLMAN: Oh, I didn't talk about the one show that I did. (High: Ok, ok, here we go) I wanna talk about this one. So mostly at the Kitchen, and you know, in Fifi Corday Productions, it was always about other people's work—which was the way it was supposed to be. (High: Right) But there was an artist, and—oh!—I have been unable to remember his name. An artist whose work I really admired. Kind of a conceptual artist, George-something. And he negotiated with the Jet Propulsion Lab and NASA, and he would show... I exhibited some of his tapes that he made, that showed images from the Jupiter fly-by that was happening. And it gave me the idea to do an exhibition of NASA imagery. And so Bob Stearns, God bless him, gave me a little bit of a budget, and I went to Washington. And it was the first time I was working without, you know, an artist. And it felt so different! You know? It's like I had to do it all myself. But I went to NASA, and you know, they just had— you know, they would have a live video camera on, you know, the one that went to the moon, and the one that went around the earth, and there would be live images coming back. And I was trying to get my hands on a lot of those pictures. And they had transferred them all to film; I never understood why. But they were all available on film. So I had to, like, do the viewing, you know, in this little, like— the way you look at film in one of those little things, and then transfer them back to video. And someone who worked at the Kitchen, the younger version of Michael Schamberg, not the TVTV Michael Schamberg, he helped me put it together. And so we got these wonderful, wonderful images of astronauts cavorting in zero-G, and various pictures, you know, from outer space and... You know, which were really, like, powerful, powerful images. And close-ups of scientific experiments that the video camera, you know, was, like,

SCHOOLMAN (Cont.): zooming in on. And that was one of my favorite exhibitions that I got to make when I was at the Kitchen. And we put it on all different size monitors, and we called it *Earth, Moon, Mars, Jupiter*, because those were the planets that were represented at that time.

HIGH: What year was that?

SCHOOLMAN: Ooh, I don't know.

HIGH: Mid-seventies-ish?

SCHOOLMAN: Somewhere in the seventies, yeah. (High: Inaudible) Somewhere in there. Somewhere before '77, because in '77, I left the Kitchen and went to India for a year. So it was somewhere before '77. Then when I came back to the Kitchen, it was to produce *Perfect Lives*, the Robert Ashley opera. So thank you for giving me an opportunity to...

HIGH: Thank you. Oh, God! (tape stops, re-starts)

CHRIS HILL: Ok. Ready? (High: Yep) Ok. So I'm Chris Hill. And my first experience with video was going to school at Visual Studies Workshop in 1980. I was interested in photography, and wasn't exactly sure whether I wanted to pursue that or not, so I was spending a semester there. And I found that actually, I really liked video. It was the first time I ever worked with video, but I really liked it because of the audio. I had been counseling for ten years, and I had found that working in video—I had found that working in photography was strangely isolating and silent; and while I really liked thinking about the images, there was no sound, there was no voice. And so the first thing that I made, I think, was actually, like, experiments with voices, and editing different tracks on their audio mixer. And then half way through the semester, the Ithaca Video Festival came through. I don't remember—it was— so it was 1980; it was, I think, fall of 1980. And there was a range of tapes in that program that was completely new to me; I had never seen independent work before. So it was kind of—it was curious. I wasn't really sure... I had really mixed reactions to it. I was more comfortable with documentary than with experimental work, for sure. And then... So I'm not really sure that the tapes inspired me so much, as they maybe got me to ask some questions.

The next semester, I decided to go to graduate school, to actually enter graduate school in Buffalo, because they had a video program, and I had actually decided that I was gonna pursue video and not photography. And Steina and Woody were teaching there; that was the last year that they were teaching in Buffalo. And I took a course from them, and Woody was talking about, like, making tapes without using a camera image. They

HILL (Cont.): actually only had one camera in the studio, and it was pointed out the window, and it didn't matter what the image was on the camera, because the image was just used to really, like, look at the signal. And he would hook up an oscillator into the system and produce, like, these bars or flashing— you know, flashing at different rates of speed. And he'd talk about frequencies, and he'd talk about scan rate and frequencies and, you know, the frequencies that were used in video and the frequency that was used in audio. And I sat there for about six weeks, and couldn't understand anything, what he was talking about—and then one day had an epiphany, and really realized that (laughs) what I was looking at was generated by these frequencies, and... And I understood this whole sort of, like, you know, paradigm of working without looking through the camera. And it was pretty astounding to me, and...

And then I got interested in working on the system that happened to be set up at the time, which I think was really Bill Hearn's system, that had probably been fixed a couple times; I know it was breaking down a lot. And I, you know, took some real time image and played with it and, you know, added... I think there were two images; it was a little bit like Steina's *Switch! Monitor! Drift!*, but a pretty, you know, simplistic version of that. But I found it pretty fascinating, and... So that was, you know, that was, like, the first year of working in video and kind of really understanding ways in which video was not photography, and maybe ways in which it was more musical and, you know, moving into a much more complex idea of image, sound, and system.

HIGH: And from there, if you wanna just trace that history a little bit further? 'Cause then you went on to work (inaudible) Hallwells (inaudible) that was about...

HILL: Right, right. So the following— so that year— after that year, Steina and Woody left, and the following year, Tony Conrad took over the video program, and had a very different approach to working with those tools. Certainly involved a lot more performance. And so I start... You know, I spent another sort of half semester trying to figure out what he was really talking about; sort of had another epiphany, when I realized the relationship that he was getting at in his work—or at least in the work that he was encouraging us to explore. And towards the end of that year— I think it was at the end of that year that, Kathy, you invited me to work at Hallwells. And I had become very interested in what was going on at Hallwells. It also was, like, a complete mystery to me, and took me, you know, (laughs) a number of visits to really figure out what it was that was going on there, and you know, what real poss— what questions were really being asked.

And the one thing about Buffalo that was really important during that period was that the structures were very open. And there were a number of structures. There were structures at the university, in terms of classes and ideas, available ideas, projects that you could understand that were quite different; there was Hallwells; there was also Sepa(sp?) which was a gallery that was sort of centered in photography; and Media Study(?) was open. And all of these places had, you know, overlapping communities, sort of different

HILL (Cont.): foci. And I remember having a conversation—actually, it was with Tony—before I moved to Buffalo. Somebody said, “Oh, you should call Tony Conrad, he teaches at the university. If you’re interested in moving to Buffalo, he can tell you about the media community.” And I remember him saying that you— if you were interested in doing something, that Buffalo had interesting possibilities, and there were lots of niches where you could sort of move around and make it your own. And I found that to be absolutely true, and that Hallwells was an extremely welcoming place, and that... I remember having incredibly long conversations with you that first semester, because I didn’t know how to do anything. Like, how do you do, like, a mass mailing? (laughs) Like, how do you make this postcard? Like, what am I supposed to... You know, I hadn’t worked in a not-for-profit, sort of where you do everything yourself, (laughs) environment. I couldn’t believe that people were staying all night in office buildings downtown, without being worried that, you know, somebody was gonna break in and, you know... I was just amazed that this community actually worked. Like, you know, people said, “No, it’s ok, you can do that.” And in fact, that was true. And you didn’t have to be afraid of the public. You could welcome the public. Like, they weren’t gonna, like, trash your installations and steal your equipment. And I was astounded, and found it to be incredibly welcoming, and spent the next eleven years there, very happily. (laughs)

HIGH: And what do you think of this conference?

HILL: Well... I mean, having spent a lotta time in the last eight years working on video history, 'cause I curated the program for the Video Data Bank, and...

HIGH: Could you state the name of that?

HILL: Yeah, *Surveying the First Decade: Video Art and Alternative Media, 1968 to 1980*. And developed a resource textbook for that; and have done a lot of interviews with people from the period; and, you know, was really looking forward very much to having an opportunity to talk with people about doing histories, as well as meeting more people that were working during that period. And I feel like the conference has been an excellent beginning and, you know, it's... I feel like there's a lot more to talk about. I wish that there were two more days to really begin to break open some of these issues, and to have sort of concentrated conversations with, you know, with some of the people that, you know, I probably won't see now for another couple years. But I hope maybe there will be some online conversations, and maybe this will stimulate some more of that in other places. I'm really glad that it happened; it's certainly a wonderful beginning. And it's good to see old friends.

HIGH: Thanks. Anything else you wanna add?



HILL: I guess one of the things that I'm thinking about is how important upstate is in all of this. Having just moved to Ohio, I'm keenly aware of what's here and not in other places at the moment. And thinking about upstate in a slightly different way than what's happened in the city. I think, of course, the city has its own life, and upstate benefits tremendously from having constant interaction with the city. But the other thing that's happened with upstate is that you do have these communities, which over the last twenty-five years, have in some ways been isolated and certain sort of discourses have developed there. Not necessarily one discourse, but let's say maybe, you know, like, it would take place for a decade, and then it would slowly shift, but...

But the other thing that's happened is that there has been this folding over of sort of sustained contact, and then sort of sustained—I wouldn't say isolation, but I would say, like, a diverted attention, one... Like in Buffalo, where you know, there's a lot of things happening, but you know, you're not... And you're going to New York City, but you're only going, like, a couple times a year. You see people in Alfred once a year; you go to Syracuse once a year. Or maybe twice a year. But so there's this way in which you're—you know, you're working on your own; and then you come together, and ideas fold over each other. And when that happens year to year, you don't see the shifts as much; but when you look over a fifteen year period or a twenty-five year period, what you find is that it's this very interesting oscillation, where these practices and discourses reinflect each other and create this incredibly rich texture that's... But it's really based in making media; it's really based in what it means to sustain sort of a long period of, like, being

HILL (Cont.): immersed in this and working on issues. And I think that's different than what happens in New York, where things have to become new a lot. I mean, there is that happening in New York as well, but it has a different flavor to it, because it's the center, and because people's careers are being made. So there's a very, very interesting texture that happens here. And I think that this conference, as much as anything, has sort of made— that brought that into focus for me. And I'm actually really thinking that I need to think more about what that means. It's really very important for the field. And you know, I mean, it comes out of... I mean, one could easily start talking about the collectives that started in each of these upstate areas, and you know, you can begin to spin the story with those collectives and then— and how they move back through each other and influence each other, and the discussions that have happened and... It's quite interesting. Is that ok? Yeah.

HIGH: Yeah, that was really good.

(END)