

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE
TAPE 8 OF 11; 1988-102

INTERVIEW WITH: Harlan Hubbard
CONDUCTED BY: Joanne Weeter
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LOCATION: Payne Hollow, Kentucky

JOANNE WEETER: I'm Joanne Weeter and I'm here in Payne Hollow, Kentucky, with Harlan Hubbard. We're conducting the tenth of an oral history interview. Harlan, would you go on with the discussion which was so abruptly ended on the last tape?

HARLAN HUBBARD: I'll try to pick it up again. I was telling about how much nature meant to me in a different way than most people. It was purely aesthetic and spiritual; it wasn't so much a matter of hunting and fishing or gardening but it seemed like it meant as much to me as the whole Christian revelation. Then I began to see the difference between this earth that we live on and the lives of the people. They don't live on the earth at all; they live in a sort of cloud which is made up of the customs of today and the urban atmosphere and surroundings and they live, that means so much to them that they very seldom stick their head out and see what the earth is like. I felt so strongly that I began to be afraid. I felt like I was living in a new frontier, which in, just standing on the earth and look up into the blue sky. It wasn't just a blue sky, it was clouds sailing across as if they were cut out of paper, it was a vast, empty space where life was impossible because the conditions were too severe and nature itself was so relentless. I feel that the savages understood that and they consoled themselves by inventing gods, someone that they could appeal to in their misery and derive comfort from the fact that they believed that the gods would help them.

JW: Do you think that serves a useful purpose?

HH: That's a good question because it's the same thing they do nowadays; they've invented a whole theological scheme that people turn to and if things go wrong they'll pray, pray to God for relief. But I've seen the earth so closely I can't believe anything that I haven't seen and I haven't seen anything like Heaven except on earth. The earth itself is a heaven, couldn't be more beautiful or more adopted to man. Of course, it doesn't spoil him and make him a pampered darling; it's rugged, you have to, even the ruggedness about it is appealing to a person who understands what it's all about.

JW: Let's back up just a little bit. When you were growing up and around your parents and your brothers, did you grow up in a religious environment at all?

HH: Not a very deep or strong one and neither of my brothers were religious. My brother, Lucien, married a Catholic girl and she prevailed on him to become a Catholic at the end of his life and Frank and I discussed that. We could hardly believe it. It was so foreign to our own notions and we decided he did it entirely for his wife and it made no difference in him, he was just the same afterwards as he was before. [chuckle]

But when I was young I went to Sunday School pretty well, but I never did take to Jesus, for instance. He never appealed to me. I think it was because I associated Him with my Sunday School teachers whom I found rather disagreeable and not the kind of people that I would like to live with.

JW: Did your mother take you to church?

HH: I used to take her to church; that was later. There was a church in Dayton, Kentucky -- we left the old church in Belleview where I was enrolled in the cradle roll -- and

went to a church in Belleview. It was conducted by a man named John Irvin, a Scotsman, who was really a remarkable man, I think. I really enjoyed him, I enjoyed his sermons.

JW: What denomination?

HH: Presbyterian. My mother, I used to take her in the car because we couldn't walk, it was too far.

JW: What did you enjoy about the Scotsman's services?

HH: He had an imagination. It was different from most preachers who are entirely wrapped up in their religion and their religious outlook. But I still never became a good Christian. I just couldn't figure how it would work and I finally decided, and still believe very firmly, that there's no supernatural power that has any affect at all about what goes on, on earth. And no amount of prayer will make any difference.

JW: Would your mother have been disappointed in that?

HH: Would be disappointed?

JW: Would your mother have been disappointed?

HH: I don't think so. I think she might have understood it. I don't remember her ever uttering a word of prayer or reading the Bible, either. I believe the Bible is a wonderful book but it's a collection of many things. Some of it's really dogmatic and some of it is historical and some of it is really the invention of clever teachers and leaders to bring people under the sway of the church. I think they insist too much on good and evil, they seem to base the whole thing on that and they tell people, or used to anyway, if you're good, a good Christian, you'll go to Heaven. But the Heaven they describe, even as a boy, I couldn't see

any particular reason for wanting to live there. I'd much rather live on earth and I still believe that way.

JW: Is there a Hell?

HH: Just as much as there is a Heaven but it's not the identical Hell that they used to talk about with fires and pitchforks and devils poking people into the fire. That would take a pretty low mentality to accept, I think; I don't see how they put it over as long as they did. And it seems to me now that the whole Christian church is just coasting along because there has to be something like that and people go to church. . . . There is something nice about a country church and the sound of the organ and people singing.

JW: That sense of community appeals to you?

HH: I never had a feeling of community when I was at church. I felt like I was an outsider in there on false pretenses.

JW: The two people that you mentioned that had an influence on your life: Charles Hoehn -- am I pronouncing that correctly? -- in New York and Cornelius Wilson, were either of them religious?

HH: Well, Nellie Wilson was a reprobate, had no religion at all but he was a good man, generous and he had a wider outlook than most people and wasn't bigoted at all. Uncle Charlie, I think he is, religion was very practical. If you helped people all you could and behaved, didn't harm anybody or take advantage of anybody. . . . He was really helpful, he was a good man but it was just sort of a fraternal lodge; he belonged to the Masons and I think it was pretty much the same thing as religion, it was all about the same. And that's not

a bad outlook either, you know; I think if everybody was as fair and honest as Charles Hoehn, it would be a good world.

JW: When you were in upstate New York working on the farm did you ever visit his church?

HH: Yes, I did. I don't think he went every Sunday. I think his wife was more likely to be in church than he was. But I thought the country church was rather a novelty and I enjoyed it.

JW: Can you talk a little bit more about Anna? You said that she was religious, or that her family was?

HH: Her family was but I don't think she was. I think she had so much of it and so driven into her as a girl that she reacted against it. I know we had no religious feeling between us; we never read the Bible or went to church or . . . the nearest thing we had to religion was music and art and reading.

JW: She played her music in a church, though, didn't she?

HH: Not exactly. She played for her father who was a choir director and at all rehearsals she was his accompanist. And I think maybe when they had a concert, too, that she would play for them. She was never a church organist or anything like that. It was more like choral singing that she was interested in.

JW: When you all were married, were you married by a justice of the peace?

HH: No, oh, I told all about that, going up to Maysville and being married by a justice of the peace, yeah.

JW: Justice of the peace rather than a preacher or minister.

HH: Yeah. There was no religious ceremony at all. And when Anna was buried there was none. Didn't have a preacher around. I tried to make a speech but I didn't get very far because I was . . . but the whole point of my speech was something that Anna said when she was in the hospital and some good friend, certain good friends had left and she said, "I wish I could tell them how much I love them." And that's as near as she ever came to religion, I think.

JW: Hm-hm. What do you think about organized churches now?

HH: Oh, I think they're a farce. I think it's all worn out. I think they insist, as I say, too much on sin and too much on the Bible, which is not reliable all the way through.

JW: It seems as though there have always, or at least in more modern times, have been debates as to whether they should have prayer in school.

HH: Yeah. I don't remember that I ever had any religious ceremony in school at all. I know the New York high schools were very free of it.

JW: Because they were so diverse? Because the peoples were coming from such a diverse background?

HH: Yes, partly and because I think they were more advanced; in a small town or country they're more likely to try to have religion in school. It's a big problem. And my friend, Priscilla Robertson was editor of the, gosh, I can't remember the name of it, I take that back because I don't remember what but it was, the whole point of the organization was to keep religion out of the schools, not make it official. That was the *Phi Beta Kappa* magazine, wasn't it, that did that?

JW: I'm not familiar with that.

HH: She was editor of that.

JW: When this country was founded, it was founded with one of, with the separation of church and state.

HH: Hm-hm. I think that was a forward-looking move, too, because the whole background was strongly religious. I admire Thomas Jefferson a great deal but he was religious, I'm sure, but he's not dogmatic about it.

JW: Do you believe, then, in Darwin's theory of evolution?

HH: Well, I don't think anybody really believes in that anymore. The scientists have gone beyond it but if I was concerned in any way when it first came out I would have been for it definitely. But I never read the *Origin of Species* but I did read the journal he wrote of his voyage around the world in a Beagle and that's the kind of thing that means more to me than . . . [chuckle]

JW: Because it was on a boat?

HH: Yeah, it was a boat and it was a voyage and it was, he was doing things, too.

JW: So then you don't feel that it's so necessary to use religion to explain the way the world is?

HH: I don't know. I think religion has always been poetical and imaginative rather than scientific. I think I would follow Bertrand Russell more than . . . The thing is though, I don't take all this very seriously I've been talking about because I have other things that are more important to me. And the one thing I say is the earth is so beautiful and so perfect -- not perfect exactly but just perfect enough; of course, a man takes a sporting chance of being frozen to death or being hit on the head by a falling rock or a tree or

something -- but that's another thing that I'm convinced of is that there's no life after death, either Heaven or the people who meet all their old friends and I don't see how people can swallow that today.

JW: So what does happen to a person after they die?

HH: It's just like when a dog dies or an animal or a melon rots or something, it just goes into the earth. That's one of the mysteries of life that you can't solve; all you can do is enjoy life and enjoy the earth which seems like a great opportunity when you think of the vast forces that . . . and no other place in the universe that man could live like, I guess, and he just happened to respond to these favorable conditions and over the ages he was developed from much lower forms of life and I don't think the whole structure though that they put out about Heaven and Hell and salvation and all that. . . . There's no reason they should have to make people be good by threatening with punishment or torture. Being good is more fun and more pleasure than trying to take advantage of people and doing things that aren't fair and being cruel to people.

As I say, I couldn't write a book on this because my ideas are not, they're the soft side; I'm more interested in the earth I'm living on than what might come after I'm dead. All these things are, should be more important to me now, because I'm closer to being dead than most people than when I was, ten or twelve years ago, of course. But I still can't see anything to be alarmed at. The worst thing would be to endure perpetual punishment and torture for not being a good person on earth. But I don't claim to be good but I have enjoyed life and I can't imagine any Heaven that would be more beautiful. And that's the remarkable

thing: the way the people have turned their backs on it and destroyed it is comparable to the crucifixion of Christ in my mind. It's just about as dramatic and meaningful as that.

JW: You mean by taking advantage of the land and. . . ?

HH: Yes, by thinking they're taking advantage of it for their own purposes and not thinking of what they're doing to the earth and destroying it for themselves and they can't live without it is all very foolish and complicated.

JW: Would you think that cemeteries are more for the living or for the dead?

HH: Cemeteries? Some of the dead don't enjoy, I'm sure. [chuckle] I think it's just part of that whole religion system. But they're getting away from that too, you know, they're having cemeteries without tombstones and the idea of fisherman that are. . . .

JW: So is religion something that you don't usually talk about because it doesn't affect you?

HH: I never talk about it. I've never talked about it as much in my life as I have to you in the last ten minutes.

JW: [laughter]

HH: But I've never -- I've felt it all the time but I just, there's no use talking to people about these things because even people who don't go to church, they're still under that shield of protection from religion, you know, that they're going to enjoy something after they're dead. But if you don't enjoy life, you're not going to enjoy anything after you're dead, I'm sure.

JW: Hm-hm.

HH: I hope no one ever reads this, until I'm dead, anyway. [laughter]

JW: I think those are all the questions that I had about religion. I've made an accomplishment if I've gotten you to talk about it longer than you ever have before.

HH: I don't regret anything I've said about it and after a while I'll probably think of other things I would rather say in addition but I think anyone would get the idea. Several people have asked me what's going to become of Payne Hollow when I leave it. I don't think I'm going to die and leave it but I might have to leave it because I can't meet the demands of it; living alone here presents, you have to be able to do some things, take care of yourself, you know, and if it ever comes to the time that I need somebody to take care of me I'll have to leave here, I guess. Anyway, I'm not much interested in what happens to Payne Hollow.

Other people have seemed to be more interested than I am; people come here and enjoyed it and admired the life that Anna and I lived and the house that we built and think it ought to be preserved in some way but. . . . I think the best way I could preserve it would be in the books I've written and the pictures I've made.

JW: Has anybody expressed an interest in Payne Hollow or the land?

HH: Yes, not a very strong or definite interest; it's more a wishful thinking, isn't it? One of them talks about getting a group of people who would keep the place up and live here part of the year, in rotation, I guess.

JW: What about Hanover College?

HH: Well, Hanover College, I think I'd be excommunicated if they'd ever hear what I said this morning. [chuckle]

JW: Because of religion? Are they a religious. . . ?

HH: Oh yes. They're very strongly religious over there. And all those good friends I have and the paintings they've accepted, all done by an atheist and a non-believer? I have good friends too, who are religious; Warren Staebler, for instance. Maybe he'll convert me some day and show me my errors but. . . .

JW: Is there anything that you haven't done that you'd like to do in terms of your life's work?

HH: Well, that's a question I hadn't thought about much. I'd like to take a long voyage on a steam ship but nowadays there are no steam ships; we all have to ride in airplanes so I don't want to go anywhere. There are things that I have not accomplished which I think . . . one of the things that I haven't developed enough, I think I have a strong feeling for music and if I could just . . . but I feel that that hasn't been developed at all because I made the mistake of thinking all the musicians could be somebody who played an instrument. I think if I could make music more a part of myself, more of a natural means of expression instead of something very complicated as playing a violin or something, I might have produced some music.

JW: Are there any elderly people that you looked up to as you were growing older that inspired you?

HH: Well, I mentioned a couple of them. Can you think of any others?

JW: I have not lived your life. I don't. . . . [laughter]

HH: I think I feel like Thoreau, he could learn anything from people who lived a long time because their life had been a failure and he couldn't help them any. I think

Thoreau comes closer than anybody to being a man I would like to be. On the other hand, I think he had certain weaknesses, too, which I've tried to avoid.

JW: What were they?

HH: Well, he . . . I don't know, this isn't something that I haven't thought too much about and I don't know if I could express it.

END OF TAPE 8, SIDE A

START OF TAPE 8, SIDE B

JW: I'll introduce us. Today is October 1, 1987. My name is Joanne Weeter and I'm in Payne Hollow, Kentucky, with Harlan Hubbard. Harlan, we were talking about Thoreau and our tape ended; can we continue that discussion?

HH: Yes, I think I had something more to say about Thoreau. For a long time he's been a very important figure in my life. It began I think in 1917 when I discovered *Walden* in the library when I was in a New York high school. I read all these other books; I think I've read just about everything, including the Dover Edition of the *Complete Journals*.

But I don't read so much anymore of Thoreau. I don't know why, whether I've gotten all I can get from him or my attitude has changed. I do feel that his early life showed great promise. That was the time that he knew Emerson and Emerson thought so highly of him. And when he wrote *Walden*. But after that there was nothing to come up to it and I think that his later life was a disappointment; it must have been to him because he gave up living by himself at Walden Pond and went back to living with his mother and father, his mother especially -- his father died earlier. And all those years that he lived there, he spent most of his time observing nature about Concord and it still meant as much to him, I guess, but it

seemed like it never progressed into anything and finally became a mere record of observation when plants, different plants bloomed and he observed the river and the current and the ice. The poetry seemed to disappear. And even his actual participation in nature.

And the last journals, years of his journal keeping seemed to be made up of the kind of entries that he ridiculed in his early years which were written by scientific observers whose only intention was to put different facts down so that. . . . I don't know, he died so young, though, when you think of it; what was he, forty-five? Forty-five years old. I think maybe if my life was cut off at forty-five, there'd be a great deal lacking in what I've done. On the other hand, he seemed to have lost all the incentive to experiment and be personally involved in nature.

JW: Why do you think he lost that incentive?

HH: Why? It might be disappointment, I don't know. His poetry, some of it is good, but it doesn't seem to be written by a person whose really inspired to write poetry; it's written by a person who admires poetry so much that he feels like he ought to try to write some anyway.

JW: Did you feel inspired to write poetry?

HH: Thoreau?

JW: No, did you?

HH: Oh. I think the less said about my poetry the better, after some of the criticisms I had. But everything I've written has been inspired by something very definite and I start with the inspiration, I don't start with saying I'm going to write poetry about a certain subject. I think it's a lot better than most people think it is but most people think of

poetry as, they have their definite ideas of what poetry should be and mine doesn't fulfill that thought.

But Thoreau was different; he wrote poetry that was not inspired, it was constructive. And maybe he realized that and gave it up and maybe that's why the rest of his life became so prosaic. He liked that personal involvement which he had when he started living in Walden. Anyway, I feel like I'm guilty of breach of faith talking this way about Thoreau because I still admire him so much and he did one thing that was really new and that is to see the importance of nature and how significant it could be in a man's life. And he separated nature from the world he lived in and that process has gone on now till nature has not only almost been partially destroyed by man but . . . it's like everything else, it's given over to specialists. Let's get into something else before I get too deep in this subject.

JW: Okay. We were, well, actually, the whole time that we've been conducting these interviews there have been various background sounds: we have Ranger, the dog, or Gloria, both of them contribute their fair share; and just the birds and things like that. But every once in awhile a towboat will go by and that lead me to wondering exactly what relationship you have with these towboats.

HH: Well, my relationship with commercial traffic on the river goes so far back that I still look with longing on those days when the steam towboats and packets were running and they were not these monsters that are diesel powered and shoving great pieces of steel barges in a canalized river as it is today.

I remember one time when I went on a shantyboat at Brent, a towboat tied up in the fog just below where our boat was -- and that's an unusual thing today, they don't tie up

anymore, they just go barreling through the fog depending on radar. But in the old days they used to tie up and they'd talk about a nine o'clock fog or a ten o'clock fog and the next morning it would be nine or ten o'clock before they got started again. I went down to this boat, I think I've described this before, but the point of it was that the captain saw me and offered me a job on the boat right then. Of course, it would have been a great temptation, it was a great temptation, but I couldn't walk off and leave Anna on an incomplete shantyboat very well. I had to decline but I often felt how nice it would be to take a cruise on a towboat.

JW: Did you ever work in a towboat?

HH: No, I can't say I did but I lived on them for awhile. When I was on some of those canoe trips, well, I just tied my boat up weathering the lock or somewhere and get a little bit acquainted with the engineer or somebody and when the boat left, why, I'd go along with them. Sometimes they'd pull my canoe out of the water and put it in a safe place and I'd ride for quite a long time on the boat and get my meals with them. The only work I ever did on a boat was peel potatoes. That was something. [chuckle]

But the boats going along now, I've heard from different people one went down just awhile back, just a few days ago, in a canoe from Pittsburgh, a young man, and he said the boat people were all very friendly and sometimes when he's in the lock with them they'd invite him to dinner and stuff, to have a meal with them. But usually they're a little bit leery; they couldn't hire anybody, for instance, because everything's controlled now by insurance and contracts and all. It's not as informal as it used to be; it used to be the captain was the

captain of the boat and he would, if he needed a man he'd pick one up wherever he could get him.

I still have contact with some of the boats that go by and I like to watch them, of course, and I think some of them are quite nice looking. They don't have the inherent beauty that the old wooden steamboats had because they were fashioned by nature. Now they're fashioned on a drawing board and the material is so strong that they can make any shape and it'll be all right but it used to be they had to consider the wood structure and the wooden hull. For one thing, they had to brace it because that big wheel hanging on the stern puts such a strain on the hull that it might break it up so they had a system of braces which are called the hog chains which were heavy timbers starting from the hull and going up through the roof into the air and it was arched over like a wooden bridge, and it was supported like an A frame. That gave the boat a rhythmical and interesting appearance that the old steamboats . . . the steamboats are a result of somebody's work on a drawing board and they can be most any shape and they all look pretty much alike. Some of them are better designed than others, though.

JW: Can you still identify the difference?

HH: I know a good many of them by sight, yeah. But then again, they belong to big barge lines and the barge lines consolidate or somebody buys the whole thing and the whole line is changed and those names of them are lost and I can't keep track of them.

JW: Do you think they know Harlan Hubbard when they go by?

HH: A good many of them do because they'll whistle: a long and two shorts or a long and one short.

JW: Is that just a greeting?

HH: Yeah. If they're going to pass anybody they whistle two longs to pass on the right and one long to pass on the left. But now with radar they don't even go for passing anymore, although it's law; they'll just agree, two pilots will agree by talking it over which side they're going to pass on. He'll say, "I'll pass on the two signal side," and the other will say, "Okay."

One time, though, Anna and I were sitting on the terrace, I think it was a summer evening and we'd had supper and a boat coming up the river blew a signal, two longs and a short and a long and a short which is a landing signal that the old packets used to use when they were announcing that they were going to land at the next landing, like approaching a town or something. And I said, "Well, what can he be blowing that signal for?" And I went down to the river and watched and he was gradually nosing in toward the bank and he kept that up until he got up to our beach down here and then by that time he was so close to the bank that he stopped and the crew was up there at the ladder and they put the ladder over, because the barges are empty and they have a, the top of the barge is nine feet above the water, so they put the ladder over and I said, "What's happening here?" The deck hand said, "Oh, the captain wants to come ashore and see you." It was a boat called the *Iron Traveler* and he had a fleet of steel barges, I think it was three lengths or four -- most of the time they're five but this was not more than four -- and the pilot, the captain had to walk from the pilot house over the barge gunnels from one end to the other. He finally got there and he came down the ladder and as he came down he said, "I'm Russell Carl, captain of this boat, and I've been blowing at you for twenty-six years in passing and I just wanted to stop and get

acquainted with you, see what you were like." So they kept the engine running all the time to hold the boat against the bank, they didn't tie it up, but they left the deckhand in the pilot house and the pilot and the captain and a young woman who was learning to be a pilot, they all came up to the house and we had a very friendly talk for quite awhile. They brought some things from the locker for us to eat and I gave each one of them a copy of *Shantyboat*. After that they went down and went on their way. But that's something that never happened before or after.

Captain Carl was from up around Pittsburgh and for quite a long time we got letters from him. He left the river, this was to be about his last trip and he wanted to, why he got to feeling strong enough to stop and see us because he may never have had another chance.

JW: Well, he must have known you were here also because you're marked on the navigational charts, too, right?

HH: Payne Hollow, yeah. I think most pilots are very closely related to each other and they pass news one from the other and they'll say, "Oh, there's a guy up there in Payne Hollow, if you blow a signal, you'll see him pop out of the bushes."

JW [laughter]

HH: And the next pilot would try that and he'd . . .

JW: Sure enough, it worked. [laughter]

HH: Because I always managed to pop out of the bushes and run down to the beach where I could be seen or somewhere and wave to them and then they'd give a toot or flash their lights. Sometimes they'd go by in the night and flash their search light in the

window and I'd light a flashlight and wave it among the trees. It's remarkable how with their powerful light they could still see that little flashlight.

Anyway, Captain Carl wrote to us for a long time and then he got a job as a fleet master on some barges up on the Monongahela River and after awhile we didn't hear from him any more so I guess he soon died after awhile. But that was a unique experience.

JW: I know that the seasons around, as they occurred dictate how you move along in Payne Hollow, but it must be something else to see the barges during different seasons going up and down the river.

HH: Yeah, they don't stop for much of anything except for ice, that'll stop them all.

JW: Has this iced over in front of us before, solid?

HH: Yeah.

JW: Has it?

HH: Several times it's frozen, enough ice to stop the boat traffic. It seems like it runs in about eighteen or twenty year cycles. There was a bad ice in 1918, that was one of the most destructive on the river. It destroyed a lot of steamboats. Then about 1936 or so there was another cold winter and I was living in Fort Thomas then and used to go down to Coal Haven which was a, there were some ice piers there and there's a big fleet of barges and towboats behind them out of reach of the ice. I got acquainted, I went on board and got acquainted with some of those fellows. I remember that real well. And then in 1948 we were frozen in the ice ourselves in the shantyboat down toward Owensboro. That's all told about in *Shantyboat*.

JW: And the sound of the ice you described as being very distinct.

HH: Yeah, it's not very pleasant. We slept on the floor of the boat and just a few feet away you could see those chunks of ice grinding along in the gunnel. I still, I guess there's something about a boat, no matter what kind of a boat it is that's worth looking at but I don't keep up so closely with the names and captains as much as I used to.

JW: Would you say that you're foremost a writer, a painter or, for lack of any other word, a naturalist?

HH: No, I don't claim to be a naturalist, that sounds too scientific; I think whatever I do I'm sort of an amateur, still, I haven't lost my amateur standing and I like that, too, because it throws off these people who judge things by a certain standards, you know. Poetry, for instance, should be like certain other poets that have written and been published. Anything simple is . . . and sometimes those simples -- things can be very complicated in ways that people can't see because they're prejudiced by their own ideas about what poetry should be. Paintings especially because I still paint, one of my prime objects is realism and I reverence the true proportion and shape and construction of things so much that I wouldn't distort them at all unless it's by accident. And that doesn't go with the art today, ever since modern painting came in, art has to, even if it's realistic, it has to have some quirk to it that'll make it not like the old paintings that they used to do which were simply copies of nature. But as I've often tried to say, I feel that there's more in my paintings than just realism but people can't see it because it's not emphasized at all. So I just move on and maybe somebody will understand that someday. But I'm sure that internal design of a painting, apart from its realism, affects people when they look at it, the painting, but they don't realize it.

JW: How do you choose your colors in painting?

HH: Well, I paint what I see but I organize it into a simpler pattern -- you can't paint nature as you see it because it's too complicated and if you did you'd lose the effect of it so everything is simplified. Sometimes the colors, I don't intend to exaggerate them but I know I do. It's just a matter of feeling, I guess; if you're trying to paint something that's very gloomy you make it, you let colors that make it look cheerful.

JW: I know that Carol Swearingin and your friend in Augusta have got quite a few paintings; are you planning any shows in the future?

HH: No, I'm through with shows. I don't know why but I'm not interested in selling paintings, especially -- I'm always glad to but I never try to get the top price for them and I'm just as likely to give some away as sell them -- I never seem to get enough together for a show now. Maybe my production is slower or maybe just people buying as they're produced keeps the supply down. The way I got so many on hand before, was that time between 1930 and 1944 when I went on the shantyboat, was very productive and I turned out a lot of things and, as I've told this before, when I went on the shantyboat I hadn't sold anything practically, a few maybe. So we put them all aside and didn't get them out again until 1968 and then they were looked upon more favorably and when I had a show they were very popular. So we had another show and had plenty of paintings to keep on until I lost all that reserve and that's why I don't have enough now for a show, I guess. And I'm more critical of my work than I used to be and maybe I've lost that spontaneity of the young man, too. I can't turn them out as fast.

JW: Well, we are nearing the end of our interview. This is, as I stated before, this is the tenth of our interviews and as you said before, we could whistle till the end, until the tape runs out. [chuckle]

HH: Well, we might be able to do something a little better than that.

JW: But before the tape runs out I'd just really like to thank you for letting me come in and interview you in intruding somewhat and hopefully getting to share a few things with you.

HH: Well, I've enjoyed it, Joanne, and I appreciate your taking all this time to get these interviews. I'll miss you when you're gone. [chuckle]

JW: I know, I'll miss you, too. Well, I think I'll maybe keep the tape recorder here for a little while so that I have an excuse to come back and visit you. [laughter] We've gotten into quite a routine.

HH: Yeah, I hope you're satisfied. I know we can't be quite, you know, we always think it could be better and I know I've been awkward about speaking sometimes and expressing myself but I've told some people about this, like Anna's sister, for instance, and she said, "Well, that's certainly a surprise to me that you're doing anything like that because you're not much of a talker and you seem to try to . . . I don't see how you could do it," she said. So maybe that's the reason it isn't so good. But at least we've done the best we could and I'm sure I said something that's valuable and if anything that anybody takes, makes an objection to, I think I wish they'd be a little lenient and realize that it was hard for me to do all this. If I was writing it and could do it over again and over again I would get it just as I wanted it. But to speak it and have no chance to correct it or change it is really a hardship.

JW: Well, I guess the important thing is that there's a record.

HH: I think so. And I hope if anybody is interested enough to read all this and listen to it that they will understand that nothing is definitive, it's just trying to give you some idea . . .

END OF TAPE 8, SIDE B