

Walter I. Farmer

The Safekeepers

Cultural Property Studies

Schriften zum Kulturgüterschutz

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Walter I. Farmer
The Safekeepers
A Memoir of the Arts
at the End of World War II

Revised and prefaced by
Klaus Goldmann

With an introduction by
Margaret Farmer Planton



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Preface

German reunification on October 3, 1990, was a historic date for East and West German museums and a turning point for the Berlin State Museums. The Berlin collections had been involved in negotiations during the Cold War. The Soviets and later the German Democratic Republic (GDR) asked for the return of all the art that had been evacuated from Berlin at the end of World War II from the area which had become the U.S. and British Zones of occupation after V-E-Day. After the capitulation these parts of the Berlin collections found their way to Allied Collecting Points for safekeeping and returned to West-Berlin during the fifties. Before WW II most of the State Museums collections had been housed on the Berlin museum island; since 1945 the museum island was in the Soviet sector. Therefore the Berlin collection became 'twins' – one in West Berlin and one in East Berlin. The curators in the East were not allowed to contact their colleagues in the West; in reality they have been good partners, but nobody could speak about this fact, then!

With Germany's reunification the 'reunited' State Museums started intensive research on the post-war history of their collections in the East and the West. At the same time the Soviet Union opened many archives and the world learned that many parts of the State Museum collections remained in Russian strong rooms, when officially 'all' spoils of war had been returned to the GDR in 1955–59.

A lively discussion arose and is going on world wide questioning what happened at the end of WW II when the western Allies found most of the art and archives the Germans had captured during the war. All German owned collections were taken into custody by military law to establish their rightful owner.

The most prominent parts of the Berlin State Museums collections had been transferred from their bomb-proof shelters in Berlin in March and early April 1945 to a saltmine at Merkers/Kaiserroda in Thuringia where they were found by Patton's 3rd Army. They were evacuated from the mine in mid-April and brought to the Reichsbank-building at Frankfurt/Main. In August 1945 they were shipped to the U.S. Central Collecting Point in the former Landesmuseum in Wiesbaden. This Collecting Point gave shelter to many German owned collections which had been taken into custody. The architect, organizer, and first director of this institution was U.S. Capt. Walter I. Farmer, MFA & A, who had been given the responsibility for a crucial part of Germany's cultural heritage. His memoirs give a detailed and personal account of this important chapter in the history of the Berlin State Museum collections.

The author, Walter Ings Farmer, wrote the manuscript with the assistance of Dr. Ruth K. Meyer in the early nineties. It was revised later in close cooperation

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with Walter's daughter, Margaret Farmer Planton, when many new files in German, U.S., and Russian archives could be evaluated. It can be shown that the Berlin State Museums played a major role not only during the cold war but also in world politics at least since 1939.

Berlin, Germany
July 2000

Klaus Goldmann

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Abbreviations

ADHG	American Defense – Harvard Group
Advisory Committee	Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy Preparation
AMG	Allied Military Government
CAD	Civil Affairs Division of the War Department
CCCR	Committee on Conservation of Cultural Resources
CORC	Coordinating Committee of the Allied Control Council, Germany
DP	Displaced Person
EAC	European Advisory Commission
ERR	Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg
GDR	German Democratic Republic
I. G. Farben	Interessen Gemeinschaft Farben (German Chemical Trust)
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JDC	Joint Distribution Committee
KFM	Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum (Berlin)
Land	State Government in US Zone of occupation
MFA & A	Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives
NGA	National Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C.)
MacMillan Committee	British Committee on the Preservation and Restitution of Works of Art, Archives, and Other Material in Enemy Hands
MP	Military Police
OCS	Officers Candidate School
OMGUS	Office of Military Government for Germany (U.S.)
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
RDR	(Division for) Reparations, Deliveries and Restitution
Roberts Commission	American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in War Areas
SWNCC	State, War, Navy Coordinating Committee
SANACC	State, Army, Navy, and Air Force Coordinating Committee
SHAEF	Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

X**Abbreviations**

UNRRA	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitations Administration
USFET	US Forces, European Theater
USNR	US Naval Reserve
USGCC	US Group, Control Council
Vaucher Commission	Inter-Allied Commission for the Protection and Restitution of Cultural Materials
VE	(V-E) Victory in Europe
V 1	Vergeltungswaffe 1 (German V-Weapons, Flying Bomb)
WAC	Women's Army Corps
WCCP	Wiesbaden Central Collecting Point
YIVO	Yiddish Scientific Institut Library (Vilna, Lithuania)

and:

KG	Klaus Goldmann
MFP	Margret Farmer Planton
RKM	Ruth Krueger Meyer
WIF	Walter Ings Farmer

Introduction

When the Russian tanks rolled into Berlin in the Spring of 1945, Germany presented a scene of utter devastation. Years of bombing had destroyed communication and distribution networks, devastated cities, and left urban populations dispossessed. Groups of refugees wandered the roads, seeking food, shelter, and a return to their homes. Allied armies guarded huge numbers of prisoners of war in massive prison camps. The occupying armies faced seemingly insuperable problems of administering the conquered areas, feeding and housing the populace, repairing the devastated infrastructure, and dealing with the ex-rulers of a defeated Germany.

During their thrusts across European territory, all of the armies had encountered cultural and historic properties, sometimes carefully hidden by their German guardians, sometimes in open display. While the Allied armies' primary tasks focused upon daily survival of the German populace in the summer of 1945, they also had to deal with artworks, cultural property, and monuments in the occupied areas. General Eisenhower had laid the foundation for this latter task with his order of 1943 that cultural property not be harmed if at all possible. In the occupying forces small groups of officers were given responsibility for cultural properties as they surfaced in their zone. In the US Army, The Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives group worked under the horrific conditions of a war-flattened Germany to identify and preserve items of cultural significance from further damage. (see Appendix No. I)*

Years later, Germany had not only been rebuilt but had become a NATO ally and an economic powerhouse. In the prosperous 1980's the search for missing cultural properties emerged as a topic in the media. Scholars had been studying aging paper records and were searching for surviving witnesses and staff to find out what might be known about what had happened to some of the greatest treasures of the German and other European museums as Allied armies had followed the bombers through European cities in 1945.

This memoir, *The Safekeepers*, brings my Father's life to the pivotal date of 6 November 1945 when he received a command he could not accept. My Father, then Captain Walter I. Farmer, was Director of the Wiesbaden Collecting Point. He received a telegram from the highest US command to send at least 200 premier German-owned artworks to Washington. The safety and protection of masterpieces had consumed all his energies for months, this order was contrary to everything he and the other 34 Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives officers had been working so hard for. His direct call to action brought 32 Arts officers to his

* See page 121

office on 7 November 1945 to discuss this outrageous order, collectively they wrote a protest to their army orders, a protest for which they could have been subject to court martial. This 'protest' took on new significance in 1987 when Germany's search for missing art treasures led Dr. Klaus Goldmann to interview my Father in Washington D.C. This interview brought the story of the 'protest,' now called the "Wiesbaden Manifesto," forward into international view after years of silence.

Dr. Goldmann was joined by Lynn Nicholas and others in sending Father a stream of questions about the Wiesbaden Collecting Point. I became involved in 1987 in my family's story as I helped Father write, edit and translate various materials. My parents, Walter and Renate Hobirk Farmer, had often shared with me the story of how they met and the love of art and beautiful things they shared. Father was the Director of the Wiesbaden Collecting Point from June 1945 through March 1946. Mother was the Chief of Staff at the Wiesbaden Collecting Point from July 1945 to May 1947. Now, years later, I helped Father organize the extensive archives he had kept. I edited his field notebook, reviewed original documents, created lists, translated articles from Germany, and transcribed the letters he had written home to his first wife Josselyn. The letters show the boundless enthusiasm he had for the work and the gratitude he felt for the opportunity to preserve art masterpieces.

In the 1990's art became a politically heated topic with Russia acknowledging that they had confiscated and had been hiding German and other European museum collections. The publication of Lynn Nicholas's *The Rape of Europa* brought the issues to a wider readership and awareness. In January 1995, Father was one of five US arts officers who spoke at The Bard Graduate Center symposium "The Spoils of War: World War II & Its Aftermath." This decisive international assembly ended with German Ambassador Hagen Graf Lambsdorff acknowledging the Manifesto's importance to Germany when he read the entire document aloud. On February 9, 1996 Father accepted the Grosse Verdienstkreuz, signed by German President Roman Herzog, on behalf of all MFA&A officers from German Vice-Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Klaus Kinkel. This honor was followed in May 1997 by the 'Humanitarian of the Year Award' from Die Grossloge der Alten Freien und Angenommenen Maurer von Deutschland.

Before Father passed away in August 1997, I promised to finish working on his memoirs. It is my deepest gratitude, affection and respect that I finish his story. It has been a unique and rewarding time for me as an adult to work so closely with my Father, Mother, other arts officers and Dr. Goldmann to write about my parents' war time work. I was fortunate to be able to accompany Father to New York, Bonn, Berlin and Fürth. The recognition he received from the German government and the Masons meant a great deal to him. The deep friendship with Dr. Goldmann and his family shows the depth of personal commitment to establishing the truth that he has guided all the research.

Father also wished to express his gratitude to Dr. Ruth K. Meyer, former director of the Taft Museum in Cincinnati, Ohio, who prepared the first draft of this memoir in 1994. She interviewed many arts officers and checked archival sources. In 1998 and 1999, Dr. Goldmann, Dr. Martin Albrecht and Renate Farmer have helped me finish the story of the Wiesbaden Manifesto.

Father continued to hope that all missing artworks will be recovered. Now in 2000 it seems likely that some collections will be returned to their pre World War II homes as international legal debates continue. There must always be hope and room for further honorable actions in world history.

Chillicothe, Ohio
June 2000

Margaret Farmer Planton

Chapter one: My Castle

As a child I had constructed an imaginary castle where I could live as I pleased undisturbed by my parents or my siblings who never shared my real world interests. As I grew older the castle became a metaphor of a place for spiritual refuge and a space inside me to which I withdrew for private fantasies of what my life might become. For the period of my military service that will be told later, I forcibly adapted myself as an individual who disguised his interest in the arts and culture so as to survive in the company of men who would not have understood. With my cultivated tastes well hidden I was able to excel in my position as the Colonel's chief administrative officer while embracing the regimental motto *Honest Duty*. I was astonished when Bell called me "the culture of the regiment" in his inscription of the book that preserves the history of our military service. I thought my castle walls had been thicker than that.

I was born on 7 July 1911 in the northern Ohio town of Alliance, 50 miles from Cleveland. As the fourth and last child of a couple who were already in their forties at the time of my birth I entered a well settled household and my coming did little to disturb long established routines. Father was an executive at a steel factory and mother led a moderate social life. Without their noticing I moved with rapidity into a precocious adolescence. I had discovered reading, music and collecting at a very early age and for my interest in these pursuits I was rewarded with adult friendships and encouragement.

From my own pleasant home I had wandered to the house of two maiden ladies, the Vale sisters, who gave me music lessons, showed me how to examine works of art and taught me to cultivate a garden. The Vale sisters also guided me into genealogical research and they began to instruct me in the drawing of a family tree. I plunged early into a lifelong study of genealogy. My uncle, the Honorable David Adams Hollingsworth, a prominent Ohio politician, published his autobiography in 1920. I took his book to school and the teacher read aloud from it to our class. Suddenly, at the age of nine, I discovered the pride of being "somebody." Hollingsworth served as Ohio's attorney general and in the US Congress. From his book I learned that my family came to America with William Penn. A few years later I attended the huge family reunion he hosted and was given a family heirloom. My parents indulged my enthusiasms by buying me a piano and allowing me to expand into my older siblings quarters when they moved away from home. In the top floor of our house I began to shelve and arrange my own collections into a personal museum of carefully chosen family heirlooms, nature specimens and other treasures.

My own father's career provided me with a model for success, although his pursuit of it meant that he was frequently absent during my youth. Father was an

executive for the Morgan Engineering Company, the principal industry in Alliance, Ohio. He had been apprenticed as a machinist in Wheeling, West Virginia, and became an expert estimator of fabrication costs for the heavy cranes and other machinery the Morgan company manufactured.

When it became clear that America would intervene in the First World War father's skills were put to the service of the US government as Morgan prepared to manufacture munitions and heavy ordnance weapons. For a hectic period of time father kept residences in New York and Washington as he shuttled between the bureaucrats and the financiers who were preparing the nation for war. Immediately after the war work slowed dramatically at the Morgan factory and father went on the road looking for business, so I saw little of him. Still I have wonderful memories of him when he was at home and especially of his kindness to everyone. He instilled in me the Quaker heritage of responsibility for the welfare of others. Modestly, but not humbly, one offers one's service to humanity by fitting into a community. His death in 1927 when I was sixteen deprived me of his guidance just as I entered young manhood, but I tried always to live by his example.

Continuing my genealogical research I discovered my kinship with Lydia Farmer Painter, a great Victorian explorer who had written a book about her adventures. It was through a search for her book that I gained a new paternal influence in my life. Her son, Kenyon Vickers Painter, lived in Cleveland where his Farmer ancestors had moved to direct the management of the Pittsburgh Cleveland Railroad. There they had prospered and his father had built for Lydia an 80 room mansion that still stands at the corner of Lee Road and Fairmont Boulevard.

Knowing that Lydia was dead, I wrote a letter to Kenyon Painter asking him how to get to see a copy of her book. Impressed with my youthful enthusiasm for family history Painter invited me to visit him in Cleveland. There he took me into his home where I found displayed all the treasures his mother had collected. Kenyon Painter was adding to that accumulation and embellishing their estate with gardens, a zoo and an aviary.

The house was like a museum containing paintings, sculptures, tapestries and masses of rare books. My visits to Cleveland were extended and I took on the task of cataloguing his library. Although Painter was married and had children of his own, they were still too young to share his collector's passion and moreover, he wanted to parent a fatherless boy. Through his mentoring I began to see the future directions that my life could take in the arts and in architecture.

The structural design of the house had been appropriated from Compton Wynates, a Tudor manor house in Warwickshire, England, and Painter was actively importing "gothic" paneling and furniture to complement the exterior. When the paneling arrived I was given the pleasure of arranging the installation of the

panels. With Painter I traveled to New York going to see art dealers and attending auctions to buy works to enrich this magnificent setting.

Through this period of time my life in Alliance was that of a typical high school student and I attended my share of parties and entertainments when not in Cleveland. Painter's influence in my life was stronger than that of my classmates and when he offered me a chance to go on a hunting expedition to Africa in 1929 I was ready to leave school and postpone my graduation. Over the summer my trunks were prepared, but the advancing crisis in the stock market led to the cancellation of that trip and I was graduated from high school in January 1930.

Painter had taken over the direction of my education and thought that I should spend a year after high school exploring the world of work before enrolling at Yale University, his alma mater. Among his many enthusiasms, Painter was a wild game hunter and trophy collector. He had sponsored expeditions led by Carl Akeley, a famous taxidermist and the inventor of a motion picture camera who had a studio in New York City. In the summer of 1930 I was given a job with Akeley's firm and on a salary of twenty-five dollars a week took up residence at Sloan House in New York.

The next six months completed the transformation of a precocious small town boy into a worldly young man. First to go was my broad Ohio accent eliminated by means of reading aloud and imitating the vocal tones of my new companions. I enrolled in night school classes at Columbia University, took riding lessons in Central Park and spent money intended for food on feasting my eyes and ears at the opera and at concerts. I was nearly frantic to experience at once everything the city could offer.

When I returned to Alliance for the Christmas holidays I was nearly unrecognizable to my mother, sister and brothers. I was painfully thin and acutely nervous having been virtually electrified by all my new passions. My mother was horrified and would not hear of my returning to New York. My nervous system had long been a concern to my family who had observed my excessive energy and abundant high spirits wondering how my enthusiasms and obsessive interests in the arts were to be channeled into a normal and productive life.

The powerful influence of Kenyon Painter was waning. My mentor was beset with his own problems brought about by the stock market collapse and threats to the Union Trust Bank of Cleveland in which he was a principal stock holder. As the depression worsened, Painter's Cleveland holdings were wiped out and when he died his wife sold the great house to an order of nuns.

Without my father's earning power our family's fortunes had suffered along with everyone else's. I had received a small inheritance from the estate of my uncle D. A. Hollingsworth and this established a college fund of \$ 5000. To afford the four years needed to earn a degree I chose Miami University at Oxford, Ohio,

where a course in architecture had recently been established. I enrolled for the 1930–1931 winter term and settled once more into a small rural town, albeit with an academic atmosphere.

It wasn't New York, but Oxford did have a cultural life which I embraced by joining the clubs and activities for music and theater students. Shortly after arriving I went to hear a dramatic reading given by Mrs. Wade McMillan and immediately acquired a new mentor. Marian Thayer McMillan was a scholar and an author who gave lectures around the country on the arts and other spiritually motivated topics. She had great dramatic presence and the content of her lectures gently challenged the provincial minds of her audiences. Henry James had been a special mentor and she had published their correspondence. Appropriately mirroring her style, she also wrote a book called *Reflections: the Story of Water*.¹ It is basically a photographic album in which tranquil views of lakes and their shorelines are rotated 180 degrees so that the horizontal becomes vertical and mirrored images can be read like the Rorschach inkblot. Her texts accompanying the images blend Eastern religions, myths and folklore to provoke the viewer's interpretations. Marian's sister-in-law, Mary McMillan, was also a poet who wrote Sapphic verse and enjoyed an equally ardent following. In Oxford, the McMillans held a salon where the arts were debated in a lively fashion.

My decision to study architecture at Miami represented a realistic compromise. I would have vastly preferred a course in museum studies or even the field of interior design since my experience with Kenyon Vickers Painter's house and collections had uncovered a talent for these vocations. But, at this time one could study art history only at the Eastern universities and there were no college programs for interior design in the United States. Only with the Parsons School faculty in Paris could one really take courses and study the historic styles that influenced the practice of decoration internationally. Alliance, Ohio, had produced a Parsons' graduate, Bill Tollerton, near my age and proud to show me the beautiful renderings he had produced in Paris. The Miami program in architecture was in its second year of existence when I joined the class. Our curriculum was dominated by the revival of Classicism promoted by the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris and sustained in America by most of the other schools of architecture. The modernism of Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe was unknown to us and the International Style to which they contributed was not to be named until the end of our decade when Philip Johnson organized his landmark exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art.

We learned to draw columns in the proper Doric, Ionic and Corinthian orders while studying the mechanics of engineering a building. In addition to these

¹ Thayer McMillan, Marian. *Reflections: the Story of Water*. New York, Greenberg, 1936.

courses that demanded a great deal of studio time I studied in the school of liberal arts. When the first summer of my college career arrived I left for the University of Colorado to earn credit for courses missed by my late arrival at Oxford. In Boulder, Colorado, I supported myself by giving English riding lessons, a skill acquired in New York's Central Park.

In my second year I continued the pattern of studies and social life I had quickly established on my arrival in Oxford. In my sophomore year I was consumed with planning for a summer abroad in 1933 with my mother to visit England and look up our Farmer and Ings relatives. We were planning to be gone for four months. We would rent a car and I intended to see every English cathedral and as many stately homes and formal gardens as possible along the way. Old issues of *Country Life* magazine were my guides for an itinerary that would benefit both my architectural education and my genealogical interests.

The trip was an enormous success thanks in part to my advance planning and the years of genealogical research I had done on the Farmer family. Arriving in London I stated my mission to the staff of the English Speaking Union who were delighted to help me write the required letters to owners of the great houses asking for admittance. They also coached me in proper conduct and forms of address used when meeting the landed aristocracy. This help proved invaluable for at each stop we received a wonderful welcome. Our hosts were surprised to meet a young American college student who was already so knowledgeable in English life and customs. During the course of the trip I enlarged my library of books on English architecture and decorative arts and started a collection of prints and drawings.

Returning to Oxford, Ohio, after this glorious excursion I settled down to my junior year and architectural studies. Enriched by my recent travels, I began to draw a project for an Adam style townhouse only to run into conflict with my professor who disputed my designs. Although I knew he had not been to England or seen what I had freshly experienced, I tried to bear his criticisms until his interference provoked me to a towering anger. Fortunately, the head of the School of Architecture, Russell Porter, came to my aid and I was released from my critic's tutelage. Dean Kratt took over as my advisor and my academic performance began to measure up to the high expectations that I nurtured for myself. He encouraged my musical interests and, with his approval, I was able to add courses to my program to graduate with degrees from two colleges, one in architecture and one in mathematics.

With graduation day approaching my classmates were debating what to give the university as our departing gift. I suggested that we raise funds to acquire a base for a statue of George Washington by Jean-Antoine Houdon that needed proper elevation and that we have the schools' modest collections of paintings cleaned and restored. For the second project I went into Cincinnati where picture

restorers at the A. B. Closson Company showed me how to remove layers of dirt that were clinging to the varnished surfaces. At the time I never thought that a few months later I would find my first job with this firm.

Although I longed to go east and continue my studies in architecture at Harvard where I had been admitted, the money for my education was gone. By 1935 all of the family members who had prospered before the crash of 1929 were dead and their fortunes had expired with them. Once more I was grateful to Russell Potter, who recognized my situation and introduced me to interior designers in Cincinnati. Potter knew I lacked training in the structural requirements of architecture and that because of the depression there were no apprenticeships in the field. To study interior design had been a part of my original motivation and I might have a better chance immediately in that profession.

The A. B. Closson Company, known familiarly as Clossons, offered me the opportunity to work in a large firm employing many designers and serving a regional clientele. The store had a strong reputation and drew shoppers from the three state area. Their merchandise reflected the broad market they served with departments for gifts, home accessories, prints and paintings as well as furniture and draperies. My architectural training came into use when it was found that I could draw perspective renderings for the decorators' presentations. I earned fifteen dollars a week. The downtown Cincinnati location put me in the heart of things. I started my career with enthusiasm and set about making new friends and continuing my studies and contact with beautiful things in Ohio's second largest city.

When I entered the Clossons work force in the fall of 1935 it provided employment for a team of interior designers who served a wealthy Jewish clientele residing in the suburbs of Clifton, Walnut Hills and Hyde Park, but most notable in Avondale where the crenellated mansions of the German settlers were thickly clustered. Cincinnati's earliest residents had come directly from England and the American colonies at the turn of the Nineteenth century. The German settlers had arrived shortly afterwards and established a tightly knit and rapidly prospering community. There were two aristocracies, Gentile and Jew, and they mingled freely for the purposes of business, government and philanthropic causes, not the least of them the arts. But, social clubs were segregated and neighborhood borders were defined.

Clossons was housed in a five story building on Race Street in the heart of the downtown district with showrooms on the street level for gifts and accessories as well as furniture. The second floor featured the Red Velvet Room where traveling dealers in fine arts and prints would offer showings to local collectors. Next came a floor for the storage and display of the fabrics from which the designers fashioned the draperies and home furnishings for which the store was noted. Another floor displayed Oriental rugs and tapestries and finally there was a top

floor of offices. When I arrived after my college graduation my first assignment was to fold and shelve the extensive collection of fine fabric samples which the decorators drew upon when planning for their clients.

Among the decorators were Vashti Cohen, a graduate of the Parsons School in New York, Evelyn Lindahl and other young women of my age. Mrs. Erma Wald was my special mentor for she introduced me to her Jewish clients. As the daughters of these clients married and set up housekeeping I began to build my own clientele from among them and their friends.

After a year or more of widening my social and professional contacts I began to teach at the Cincinnati Art Museum. The museum had an extensive program of lectures and classes for children and adults. Women were particularly interested in courses in interior design and lectures on fields within the decorative arts, such as silver, porcelains, and fabrics and also on the design of gardens. Ernestine Evans, the museum educator, encouraged my teaching and she soon became a frequent social companion.

The art museum classes developed my natural fondness for holding forth on various subjects I had studied and they brought me into contact with potential clients. My world expanded even more when I began to make appearances on the local Ruth Lyons radio program.

As respect for my talents grew I endeavored to maintain the principles which I felt were so necessary to being successful as a designer. I saw myself as a doctor of design called in to minister to an ailing house where the residents had all but given up hope of making a home. Many young wives were struggling to cope with older houses that had been built in the previous century according to contractor plans and without the benefit of an architect. Although located in desirable neighborhoods, these houses always featured awkward arrangements of mantelpieces, bookcases, inglenooks, and columns. With my background in architectural design I did not hesitate to order the removal of these elements when they stood in the way of opening up a room to more light and better circulation.

While enjoying every aspect of my social and professional life along with all the young men of my age group I followed the political events in England and on the Continent where the Nazi party was beginning to menace the freedom of Germany's neighbors. Political sentiments among my friends favored isolationism and non-interventionary measures. But when Adolf Hitler invaded Poland in 1939 the likelihood of the United States staying out of the war diminished. Young men in our group began to talk about enlisting in the Navy, the Army or the Air Force and applying for officer's training.

It seemed I would gain nothing but rejection from a voluntary induction because of poor eyesight and having worn glasses since childhood. Much as I admired

the courage of my friends and even envied their opportunities to prove their patriotism, I would have to wait and see if the Army would draft me.

Events in Europe were taking on new importance for me. By 1940 I had formed a friendship with a Polish family, the Liszniewskis, who were connected to the international worlds of both music and diplomacy. Mme. Marguerite Melville-Liszniewska, an American child prodigy, studied in Vienna with the great pianist, Lisezitsky, and there had married Dr. Karol Liszniewski. He found employment in the diplomatic service and Madame became assistant to Lisezitsky. Their daughter Josselyn and her brother John had been born in Vienna. After the First World War the family had moved to London and thereafter came to Cincinnati where Madame Liszniewska was engaged to teach master classes in piano at the College-Conservatory of Music.

Josselyn Liszniewska was outstanding among our circle of friends who were fascinated by her array of continental accomplishments. Of course, she was beautiful in an elegant way that appeared exotic to our Midwestern eyes. Raised in the Middle European milieu, she spoke eight languages and had begun doctoral studies at the University of Cincinnati planning to earn degrees in both French and organic chemistry. I cannot recall exactly when I realized that I was in love with Josselyn.

The entry of the United States into the war in Europe abruptly altered the tempo of our lives as the young men whom I had grown to know professionally and socially started marching off to war. I had to move from the large apartment I'd shared with five friends to a smaller place with a young physician, James Ruegger. Soon he too went off to join the Navy.

During 1941 I was called up for military service four times by the Army and four times rejected on account of my eyesight. These rejections were intensely disappointing. In spite of my tastes for beauty and refinement in living, I was no less ready than any man of my age to serve my country and believed it to be my duty. I tried to enlist in the Navy with no success and then an older friend who had connections with officers at a base near Dayton drove me there personally to try to gain my admittance to the Air Force. Once again I passed all the tests and was rejected because I could not read without glasses.

Returning to work at Clossons I was caught up in the bustle of the 1941 holiday shopping season. My courtship of Josselyn was becoming more ardent and she had made a trip to California to make a farewell visit to another admirer. After that trip she said she would marry me and we announced our engagement at an elegant Christmas dance given by Jack and Babs Emery at their Indian Hill estate, Peterloon.

It was difficult to get to know her because she studied all the time and when she wasn't studying we were in the company of her family or out with other couples.

The two months of our engagement did not offer us time to become better acquainted. She had exams and I worked long hours keeping my customers at Clossons happy and to afford to be married. On the day of our wedding I moved to the home of Dr. Liszniewski where I had renovated and furnished a flat for us. I knew I had married a real European princess.

Five weeks later, in March, 1942, I received another Army induction notice. Thirty years old, I was to be drafted into service with the Medical Corps where my eyesight would not be a problem. At the induction center in Ft. Thomas, Kentucky, I found myself among a group of recruits from the hills of that state and West Virginia. We left for Ft. Sam Houston in San Antonio on Good Friday. On Easter Sunday I began my military career quickly resolving to disguise my privileged background. I listed my occupation as “draftsman,” for I certainly didn’t want anyone in the Army to know I had been an interior designer.

Determined to maintain a protective cover around my personality, I did dare to speak up when one of the sergeants asked if anyone in our unit could use a typewriter. I raised my hand and in that instant I was lifted out of the ranks and suddenly given the opportunity to rise into the Army’s bureaucracy. Recognizing my lucky break I concentrated all my efforts to display my attention to detail and willingness to work. The Army rewards such diligence and I was soon promoted from private to 1st class. I became the assistant to the First Sergeant, who was in charge of all the details of personnel management. In this role I processed all the company’s paperwork and deepened my knowledge of Army procedures.

From this vantage point I could study how to get myself into Officers Candidate School. First I applied for the Quartermaster Corps. Fortunately, a kindly officer questioned my request and suggested I would do better in the general service engineers where my architectural training would be put to use. Miraculously, I was accepted as officer material and was sent to Ft. Belvoir near Washington to attend Engineers Officers Candidate School.

My chances for a spot in OCS might have ended suddenly when once again I was scheduled for a physical examination. Just as I walked into the medics pyramidal tent for the final procedure, a vision test, the doctor was turning over the eye chart. Before he flipped it to its blank side, I glimpsed it quickly and memorized the first few lines so that when the time came I recited them perfectly. Pass. But, making the grade at Ft. Belvoir didn’t mean staying the course and I soon discovered that the training officers would do everything in their power to eliminate older candidates like myself. We were challenged, threatened and intimidated in every conceivable way as we learned army discipline and the futility of questioning orders.

In late fall 1942 we spent our time learning to build bridges on the Potomac River. The barracks were unheated and we were constantly outdoors in cold,

rainy weather. If my health had broken at any moment I would have been sent back to the medics. To make myself useful I volunteered to teach reading, writing, and how to decipher maps. Now I would have to learn to fire a gun. I learned to shoot and to perform military drills and even served as company commandant during a particularly rigorous inspection. With good luck and with some covert assistance from the guys in my platoon, I managed to survive the weapons training.

There remained one final physical exam, one more eye test to pass. Another miracle occurred when the exam was canceled because it conflicted with the Christmas holidays. In January 1943 I was graduated and commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Army. After a few days leave spent in Cincinnati, I was ordered to Camp Claiborne in Louisiana where a new regiment of engineers was to be formed.

My new rank entitled me to have Josselyn join me in what she imagined to be the glamorous life of a military post. She drove down from Cincinnati in my car and we rented a small farm house some distance from the base. There we confronted the fact that Josselyn had never learned to keep house. I arrived home for dinner one evening where Josse presented me with a live chicken which she planned to serve for our supper. Neither of us had ever begun preparing a meal quite literally from scratch. Our married life did improve when we were able to move to an apartment closer to the base. But, I was frequently absent on training maneuvers and thoroughly exhausted when I did manage to join her. Josselyn returned to Cincinnati as I boarded the train east. Joss and I had been married for only 100 days.

Many of the officers at Camp Claiborne were being called up from the reserves and most had served in World War I. New battalions were formed as more men arrived and the organization was fluid with possibilities for soldiers to arrive and make their marks through their demonstrated commitment to the regulations and their leadership skills. Naturally, everyone was showing off hoping to earn their superior ratings and receive their own commands. In this atmosphere of strivers I met my training officer, Colonel Frank F. Bell, a World War I veteran who had been recalled to active duty from his prosperous career as a civilian engineer in the town of Uvalde, Texas.

Colonel Bell worshipped the army's regulations and adored the fact that every detail of military life could be ordered by the book. It was absolutely clear how one could please this colonel and I quickly adapted myself to his style. When he got his regimental command he requested that I join his headquarters staff as adjutant even though I did not have the rank of Captain that was usually required. But this was wartime and earning the rank was anticipated. As the Colonel's adjutant I would be his office manager handling all the paperwork for the two battalions under his leadership. I was thankful not to be an aide, for that was a

servile position requiring all sorts of personal attendance. An adjutant was required to be a manager I learned, and he controlled the destiny of many, many soldiers through the organization of office systems. But one had to be consistently fair and perfectly neutral. These were qualities I admired in others and determined to strengthen in myself.

I had made first lieutenant on my thirty-second birthday, 7 July 1943, and now held a significant appointment, so I felt my military career was proceeding nicely. On 14 October 1943, we got our overseas orders. We were headed for England to train as support troops for the pending Allied invasion. Ten years had passed since my first trip to England with my mother and I hoped to contact my relatives. Our troops gathered at Ft. Miles Standish in Taunton, Massachusetts, from where we would be sent to board the liner *Mauretania*, which was now serving as a troop ship. Sailing on the 31st of October without a convoy we made the crossing in little more than a week and landed at Liverpool on 9 November 1943.

