



THE RUTH ANN OVERBECK
CAPITOL HILL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with John Harrod

Interview Dates: May 19, 2009 and June 16, 2009

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INTERVIEW 1

TAPE 1/SIDE 1

LEWIS: This is Elizabeth Lewis with the Overbeck History Project. It's May 19, 2009, and I'm here at 4016 Ely NE with Mr. John Harrod. Thank you so much for being willing to talk with us because we won't have a complete story without yours.

HARROD: It's my pleasure.

LEWIS: Let's start from the beginning—were you born in Washington?

HARROD: Yes. I grew up in Anacostia, on Howard Road right off of Martin Luther King, and lived in Southeast most of my life.

LEWIS: So not too far from where you are now.

HARROD: That's right. Yeah. I lived on Capitol Hill for many years also.

LEWIS: Where did you live on Capitol Hill?

HARROD: I lived on Fifth Street.

LEWIS: And was that when you were with the Market?

HARROD: That's right. And I lived here also and worked at the Market. I came to the Market about '69—whenever they put a man on the moon, I think. I think that was '69 or something like that.

LEWIS: I think that's right. Yeah I think it was, that summer.

HARROD: It rained for about a week, remember that? [laughter] Any everyone was saying, "They shouldn't be up there messing around!"

LEWIS: Right.

HARROD: Well, while they were putting a man on the moon, we were painting the floor in the Gallery, and the rain was coming and washing it all away. It rained for a week and just flooded the Gallery, took all the hard work away that the people did.

LEWIS: So, it came in under the doors? What had gotten you to that building [North Hall of Eastern Market, which became Market 5 Gallery] in the first place? Wasn't that a storage facility?

HARROD: It wasn't like any kind of official, organized thing. The Transportation Department would store broken parking meters and whatever, and at one point, you could drive trucks in there through the North Carolina Avenue door.

LEWIS: Oh really?

HARROD: The door was about 15 feet high and very wide, and they would bring trucks in there and wash them down and things like that. I came to the Market in this way: Mayor Washington had a very dynamic Commission on the Arts Director by the name of Leroy Washington who came up with this idea of promoting the arts on a neighborhood level all over the city. And, I think the city had six wards, I might be wrong about that. And Capitol Hill was Ward 5, therefore "Market 5 Gallery."

LEWIS: Oh, I was going to ask you about the "5."

HARROD: And so the mayor appointed people to be on local commissions all over the city, in each different ward, and I was one of the appointees on Capitol Hill.

LEWIS: How did that happen? How did you get to be an appointee?

HARROD: I was just active in the arts and I guess they were aware of my work.

LEWIS: What were you doing with the arts before Market 5?

HARROD: I was working developing arts programs for young people in the schools and out of the schools. As a matter of fact, at one point in time, I was working at Friendship House. And, at one point in time, we had a program with the public schools that allowed young people to come from different public schools in the city to Friendship House and to take classes in the arts, various disciplines of the arts, instead of an elective class, and get credit for it.

LEWIS: That was before 1969?

HARROD: Yeah, before 1969.

LEWIS: Are you an educator or an artist yourself?

HARROD: No. I was an athlete!

LEWIS: Really?

HARROD: Yeah, but life takes different turns, and it just so happens ... Actually, how I got into the arts was that I had worked at the Peace Corps at one time, and I was befriended by a guy there by the name of

Cliney Murphy. He was a PhD—I worked in the Selection Division of the Peace Corps, and the Selection Division was a lot of PhDs that evaluated applicants to determine their psychological fitness to serve in the Peace Corps—and he was one of those PhDs.

LEWIS: How do you spell his first name?

HARROD: C-l-i-n-e-y ... Cliney, I believe. And he was sort of a mentor when I was there, trying to get the street out of me and refine my stuff, right? And after the Peace Corps, and after I had gone to school, we met again and he was working with kids at risk. And he wanted to have some place, activities to get these kids involved in. He had a photographer that wanted to teach classes somewhere, and so I arranged for National Capitol Housing to give us a three-bedroom apartment over in Arthur Capper. Do you remember Arthur Capper, the tall building?

LEWIS: I do remember Arthur Capper, yeah.

HARROD: We went over there and got a three-bedroom apartment. They gave it to us. Thought we were crazy to put photography equipment in there, but we did it. I hired the two roughest guys in the neighborhood and nobody ever bothered us, and we had scores of kids in there, in and out of that program.

LEWIS: Teaching them photography.

HARROD: Yeah. And that got me stuck on the arts, watching them get so excited, just like they got excited about football.

LEWIS: Exactly. I've often thought arts and sports can do the same things for kids.

HARROD: Thank you! [laughter] I can't convince some of my friends on each side of that issue that that is true, but it is. They have a lot of things in common, too.

LEWIS: Like what?

HARROD: Well, imagination, and both folks have incredible discipline. You have to, both areas. If you've ever seen a male or female dancer in ballet, they are incredible athletes.

LEWIS: Absolutely.

HARROD: And it just goes on and on.

LEWIS: So it was early, then, that you got ...

HARROD: Yeah. That got me hooked. That you could reach ... All I knew then was to have a pool table, basketball team, that was what I knew about. This was a new area, and it was kind of exciting. So I read up and got involved as much as I could. Right then there was a community arts movement going on across the country, where people were using photography and dance and theater and things like that to not only involve youth, at risk youth, but also communities, John Public, in the arts and the value that that has.

LEWIS: So you were bitten by the bug before 1969. So how did you actually connect with the actual building at Eastern Market?

HARROD: Well, Leroy Washington and Mayor Washington set up these neighborhood arts councils all over the city. This one here was the most aggressive, and somebody—I can't remember the gentleman's name—but someone else on there found the North Hall, knew about it, that it was just sitting there. And we arranged to go and look at it. There were some on the committee that thought it was unusable, and it was. I mean, no restrooms, no way to heat it, no way to cool it. And some thought there's nothing that's going to happen in this place.

But, if you remember, back in those days, the Bicentennial was an event where everyone thought these millions of dollars were going to come into the communities of the United States to help do events like that. It disappointed many people on this committee. When it didn't happen, that committee sort of fell apart, and the gentleman Leroy Washington, actually talking on other issues, sort of suggested maybe that that space could be used for something and [wondered] whether I was willing to do it. And, well, I was, on the condition that if they gave me that space without charging me any rent for it, I could make some kind of use of it for the public. It hadn't been used for a hundred years, almost, for public use.

You know, when I was signing the lease for that place, I can remember sitting across from two gentlemen who represented the city, who almost couldn't sit in their chairs, they were laughing so hard at me. [laughter] "You're going to run a program in a place that doesn't have any restrooms, cement floor! Can't heat it, can't cool it! Have you ever been in a city in the summer?" they were saying, and laughing. Oh they were just, I felt like a ...

LEWIS: How did you feel? Did you feel doubtful?

HARROD: Of course! [laughter] I actually always felt doubtful!

LEWIS: I read somewhere that you said that there was gunk all over the floor.

HARROD: Oh, you couldn't believe it! There was years of just tires melting. I've been in that place when it's been 117 degrees in the summer and they'd leave a truck in there for so long in that heat. And in that building, I don't care what it is outside—if it's 100 degrees outside, it's 120 in that building. And if it's 40 outside, it's 20 in that building. The brick just expands anything that it is!

LEWIS: Yeah. So who did the work to get it into shape?

HARROD: Well see, coming from Friendship, I had these kids, I had friends who were crazy people—you know, artists. That's the history of this place, that's the reason that it's lasted 30 years. It's these amazingly crazy folks that for some reason thought this was worth putting so much energy and love into.

Anyway, before you could paint the floor, you had to get this stuff up off the floor. How long have you been on the Hill?

LEWIS: Over 20 years.

HARROD: Do you remember the Duron place on Eighth Street?

LEWIS: Oh, yeah,

HARROD: Well, that guy was like [laughs], we were like learning from this guy! “What can we do about this? How can we make this floor ...?” “Take this gook and use ...” And we'd just ... It was quite exciting, actually.

LEWIS: Exciting?

HARROD: Yes, absolutely. It got all that stuff up off the floor somehow. And they landed a man on the moon and it rained for a week and washed all our good work away!

LEWIS: [laughs] Well, at least the gunk was gone.

HARROD: The gunk was gone, but we had to paint again. Actually, what this gentleman did is he realized we were going to have traffic through there and he said, “Look, you're never going to keep paint on this floor. Go up there and put ...” You'll be here for three days if I keep this up!

LEWIS: That's alright!

HARROD: “ ... go up there and put two-thirds deck paint in this pan and two-thirds polyurethane, and you're going to keep a gloss on that floor.” See, the floor is the secret to the Gallery. If you come in there and the floor is glowing, you don't look up there in that ugly ceiling.

LEWIS: You know, that's true.

HARROD: And that's, absolutely. It's the only reason ... we could pull off two things a week . Up until today, two things a week. Three things is a challenge.

LEWIS: You've pulled off a lot on that floor, a whole lot! Another thing I've read is that the lights were made out of bean cans?

HARROD: Well, do you remember the exhibit walls?

LEWIS: Yes.

HARROD: Well, I got the material for the exhibit walls from a gentleman named Ted Gay.

LEWIS: I remember him.

HARROD: He did a haunted house in there in the early days. And he said, "I don't know what to do, I'm going to give this plywood ..." Not plywood—what's the material? Anyway, he was going to give it away. For some reason, I asked him, "Well let me hold on to it for awhile."

And then an artist by the name of Lillian Burwell and Joseph, whose last name I can't remember, approached me about doing an exhibit there. I had done exhibits in there. I had done an alternative to the annual Corcoran show in there, where the artists hung their work on the primitive walls. But I didn't have any exhibit walls, you know. And so, they came in and said "Can we do it?" And that's how a lot of stuff happened: "Can we do something in here?" "Are you kidding? Absolutely! *Please* do something in here!" [laughter]

And they said, "What are you going to do with those walls?" "I don't know yet." And this guy Joe said, "I can make some great exhibit walls out of those things, and if you pay for the material, and give me one of your staff guys, I'll design an exhibit place in there for you." I'd never thought of that yet. I hadn't come to that yet. It was just the walls there, right? Hadn't gone beyond that yet. And he took me beyond that. And he did these great walls.

And he said, "What are we going to do about lights?" And somehow, he came up with the idea of these chili cans, and so we got Prego and—who else was on the block then? We got a couple of the food places across the street to save their chili and those large cans for us, which this guy ... He drilled a hole in the top. He put in light fixtures that would go through the can, right? Put in 150 watt light bulbs, painted the cans white, then put weather stripping that goes on the door on top of the lights. That way, the weather stripping bent, and you could put it on top of the wall, and the light would curve like that. [gestures] Once

I had this very funky thing that we did. Once I had a sculpture exhibit in there, where I could take the weather stripping, straighten it out, and point it directly on the sculpture. It was wonderful!

LEWIS: So the lights were art too!

HARROD: The lights were art too! [laughter] And [unintelligible on tape] would say, “This is just ghetto stuff,” but it was mind-boggling to me that people were coming up with the ideas they were coming up with to make this thing happen. Because Burwell and Joe, boy, they wanted a place to exhibit. And you know what, they were incredible artists.

LEWIS: What kind of artists—painters?

HARROD: She did, yeah, she was a painter. And they were associated with an organization called DC Art Alliance. They were members of—art teachers in the public school in the city. And there were some incredible, now well-known, artists that were part of that Alliance—Peter Robertson and Lillian Burwell and folks who now are icons in this city for their work in the arts. Then they were young people that shared my energy and they were incredibly important because then I had walls to exhibit anyone.

LEWIS: So did word of mouth bring in other artists?

HARROD: Oh, absolutely. Let me tell you a story. Around this time I was exhibiting—do you know Paul Richards, the art critic? Paul Richards did shop at the Market all the time. I heard this from a friend, or neighbor there. He was at a party on the Hill and [someone asked] “What do you think about that new gallery at the Market?” He said, “You know what, I will never cover an art gallery at a market, a food market.” Three years later, he had us on the front page of the *Post*, the Style Section, with a critique.

LEWIS: About what year was that?

HARROD: What year was that? I bet you it was about '73 or '74. Let me see, there's an article, the archives can bring up that article. The article is entitled, something about the Howard School.

LEWIS: Okay. We'll find that.

HARROD: Okay, good. It was in the early 70s.

LEWIS: Well, that was great. Did you ever have a chance to remind him of it?

HARROD: I never met him, never spoke to him. Never had a chance. Actually, that was one of, in the course of its history, it's one of four front page Style Section articles that the Gallery ... You know, if you

had told me that when I was painting that damn floor and the paint was coming up, I would never, never have believed it.

LEWIS: So what did keep you going, then? The dream?

HARROD: That's a good question. What kept me going was the incredible challenges that ... It's kind of weird, but nothing was supposed to happen in that place. And every time folks would come in, we'd put our heads together and work real hard on something and come up with an idea of how to make it work. It was so much fun.

LEWIS: That's the definition of art, really.

HARROD: Yes it is. And it's got to give you that kind of satisfaction because you're not making no money down there [laughs].

LEWIS: I was going to ask you—how did you make money?

HARROD: You know, in the beginning, we didn't. I can remember—you know the Capitol Hillbillies? Joel Bailes?

LEWIS: Oh, yes.

HARROD: They used to have a, I think it was a Wednesday night hoedown in there, and to make that thing work and for the band to play there, I could only take about 15 percent of the door that came in. Right? So that Bailes could pay all the musicians and the music and whatever. I can remember having to walk across—I was living in Anacostia then—having to walk across that bridge, at night, around 1:00 in the morning, after the event was over, so I could save enough money to get my kids on the bus tomorrow to get them to school. You know? Because maybe I'd take away five dollars out of that. Sounds like a stupid thing to do. *It was!* But the event was a wonderful thing! And Joe and I had the same idea about how you do stuff. I was having a great time, but not making no money.

LEWIS: Well, I'm glad you stuck with it. I'm glad for the neighborhood that you stuck with it. [adjusting microphone] So at this point, you are having exhibits and you are having—still teaching classes for kids there?

HARROD: Yeah, I still had some classes for kids, and later me and some kids formed a theater company called the Players of Capitol Hill.

LEWIS: Where are those kids from? What year?

HARROD: Well, this is an interesting kind of story. Do you know anything about the Summer Youth Program of the District?

LEWIS: A little, yes.

HARROD: In the early days, the Summer Youth Program was designed to give opportunities for lower-income young people to be involved in jobs and stuff. And later, after Washington left office and Marion Barry was in office, they started to branch out. You remember, Barry used to use the Summer Youth Program as his main campaign thing, you know?

LEWIS: So did he use the kids to campaign for him or to make connections?

HARROD: No, he would use the Summer Youth Program as a major accomplishment of his administration.

LEWIS: Gotcha.

HARROD: And let me tell you a little-known story about that deal, a true story. As I was saying, it was mostly for young, underprivileged kids, and some of us who were in the program were getting incredibly frustrated by the fact that some young middle class kids that really wanted the job couldn't get a job because their parents made too much money. And we had little ways of dealing with that—if you just listed one parent on your application, you might be able to get through. Never told them to break the law, but they were sharp kids. And then over on the Hill, I was having kids come to the Gallery and then to Hine, that's where my classes were, at Hine, and they would come into me, all young black kids.

And then [laughs] these white kids came up to me one day and said, "Mr., can't we use this place?" And I said, "Well, what makes you think you can't use this place?" "I've never seen no white kids in here." So Barry put into place something called the art section of the Summer Program, where kids who wanted to get into the arts could get in. I went to the director and I said, "Man, look here, you've made a Bull Connor out of me."

LEWIS: Made a what?

HARROD: You know, Bull Connor was a police officer who was beating blacks back who wanted to vote? "I feel like Bull Connor because they want to come in here and they can't because they're white and their parents make ..." So he called Barry immediately right there and told him the problem, and two weeks from then Barry announced that any kid who wanted a job could have a job. And we were in business!

LEWIS: Yea!

HARROD: So these kids there said, “We want to do theater.” And we worked out a program. I sat down with them and it took us a week or so, but we came up with a program whereby the kids would do theater there. They would be in charge of anything that went down on stage. The promotional part of the thing would be handled by other kids who worked in the office, who did the PR, the letter writing, all the stuff like that. They would direct it. There would be a director who could stay director of the Players for two years, and then he had to move on and someone else had to come in. A young lady named Mary McVie—do you know the McVies? They lived on East Capitol. Had three girls, I believe.

LEWIS: No, that’s probably just a little bit before my—when was that?

HARROD: That was like ’74 or maybe something like that.

LEWIS: It’s a familiar name but I don’t know them.

HARROD: Anyway, anybody could get a summer job in the District, and the Gallery played a part of that, and that’s because of the diversity of the neighborhood that I was in and the insistence of the kids in that neighborhood ...

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 1

TAPE 1/SIDE 2

LEWIS: So they did *Our Town*?

HARROD: And *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *Frankenstein* ... They did many American classics. God, I have so many pictures of the kids doing that! My only insistence was that the group be diversified, a diverse group. And they did, had no problem with that. As a matter of fact, one of the young African American kids that was in that group now has one of the most conservative newsletters in the country, I understand.

LEWIS: Who is that?

HARROD: His last name was—there’s a picture over here, but I can’t remember his last name. You know who I heard it from?

LEWIS: Who?

HARROD: One of the kids that directed *Frankenstein* and *Arsenic and Old Lace* was a kid by the name of Zev Berman, he lived right on East Capitol Street. Zev Berman now is doing ... Zev Berman’s last film was, like, a seven-million-dollar production out of LA. He does commercials out there and he also does

films. And the last time he was in there, we were talking, and he said, “You know, I still list the Gallery as my first directorial job.”

LEWIS: Really?

HARROD: I said, “You’re kidding!”

LEWIS: That is amazing.

HARROD: It is amazing, isn’t it?

LEWIS: We ought to interview him for this project, too.

HARROD: There are people who have his number. And his films are on, what’s that, Netflix.

LEWIS: Okay, I’ll find it. That’s a great lead. [They are *Borderland* and *Plain Dirty EL*] I bet a lot of those kids stayed in touch with each other, too.

HARROD: I bet they have.

LEWIS: It’s a very bonding experience. I wish my kids had done that.

HARROD: I wish they had too. They would have enjoyed it. The kids were incredible. Walking across that bridge could not have taken away from this thing that we were doing together. We were kicking it! I mean it wasn’t lovely things all the time, but man I would go home feeling really incredible about it.

The young lady that does my website—have you ever seen my website?

LEWIS: I have. It’s a good-looking website.

HARROD: Well, her name is ... Her mother is a very well-known artist, her mural is coming out on some Metro site downtown. Her name is ... I’ll remember it, I’m having a senior moment here.

LEWIS: I know all about them, too.

HARROD: Anyway, this young lady does our website, and she also does websites and maintains websites. This is what she does now. She does our website for free. It’s her way of giving back for what she feels the Market has done for her. Anyway, she was in the company, but when it was time for her to direct, she wanted to pass up. Why? She knew that to direct players, you had to kick butt. [laughter] It wasn’t a playground thing, it was serious, and you had to take it like a job and you had to be a professional. That’s how we carried it, right? And, man, she’d cry sometimes, she wanted to keep her

friends. After two years, though, you could see her growth and confidence, and I feel she's almost like family. She *is* family to me. Even though I can't remember her name right now!

LEWIS: Well, that's family! Now, did you have professional people helping these kids or did they just learn by doing?

HARROD: See, that summer program back there was no joke. What we could [do] was send our technical people up to Duke Ellington for the latter part of the summer where they started working on the set and things. And then, a week before the performance, start constructing the set in the place. I mean, it was very well done. I wish we could see another—that much energy going into dealing with young people, because the kids came from everywhere and, interestingly enough, I had Miss Manners' daughter, DC government officials' children, I had Dellums' children ...

LEWIS: Ron Dellums?

HARROD: Ron Dellums' kids were in there. That was the place to be. Do you know how hot it could get for those kids while they were there? But they wanted to come to that place and because the way the program was carried. It was not only carried that way in the Gallery, but it was carried that way in Hine and Hart, and we had another school we worked with on East Capitol Street where, I think, dance was taught over there. The program allowed the host agency to get funds to pay these teachers. So I could put a jewelry teacher or a filmmaker over there at Hart Junior High School or a dance teacher over at another school. Three or four schools.

The people at Hine and I built a darkroom down at Hine for that school. Had a woman by the name of Camille Pasley taught photography there and built a dark room that the school used throughout the year.

LEWIS: What was her name again?

HARROD: Camille Pasley. P-a-s-l-e-y.

LEWIS: So you had a lot more going on than the Market 5 Gallery. You were a major part of that whole summer program.

HARROD: Yeah. Well, I had been since Friendship House.

LEWIS: When did that end?

HARROD: The summer program? It's a good question, when did it end? You know, I think it ended about the time I almost couldn't do it anymore. In the first part of those years, if I could get two things going on in the Gallery a month—and I'm only talking about the months of April, May, June, July's too

hot ... The summer kids were there, but there wasn't anybody wanting to use the place during that point in time. If I can get two things going on in those months, in September, we've done something. I used to leave the Gallery in October, closed it up and didn't come back until April. Until people wouldn't let me go home, you know, like that.

LEWIS: So that was in the days before you had the vendors on the weekends?

HARROD: Yeah.

LEWIS: Before the vendors came along, then, the main business was the summer program and the exhibits?

HARROD: Exhibits, and a few rentals throughout those months, April, May and June, right? People talk about the winter, but July and August are really brutal doing business in that place. So, yeah, that was pretty much what was happening. People weren't desperate to use the place.

LEWIS: Yeah.

HARROD: I had to come up with stuff to make people come in, maybe have a little money to put on something where they'd get paid to do something, just to have something going on there.

LEWIS: Well it's hard to have events when you don't have restrooms available!

HARROD: It absolutely was. People would swear, "I'm never going to that place." But they did, they came there because something happened there that they just had to be a part of.

LEWIS: Just the energy ...

HARROD: Yes.

LEWIS: Sounds so good.

HARROD: Am I talking too much?

LEWIS: Absolutely not! This is really interesting. I've never seen any of this background anywhere before and I'm fascinated.

HARROD: To take you from there to the [intelligible]. At one point afterwards, when I couldn't get anybody to come in that place you know. People would come up to me and they'd say, "Can we use this place?" I'd say, "Please!" I grabbed them! "What's your name? Get his name quick!" [laughter]

This place, these ideas weren't coming from just John Harrod and his staff. They would come from these beautiful people who had these wonderful ideas about stuff, some stuff you thought, "I don't think we can do that." "Just try!" [they'd say]. "You want to try, then we'll do anything possible to see if we can do it." Sometimes we could do it.

LEWIS: What's the most outstanding long-shot like that that you can think of? A crazy idea that worked?

HARROD: Yes. A bunch of them. When I was at Friendship House, a woman by the name of Paulette Bell had developed a theater company, and she had a sort of philosophy about how to deal with kids, and one of her things was writing. She had kids begin to do work—they had to do their own soliloquies for stuff. Now these were street kids, some serious, hard-core street kids. And somehow, these two kids who were together—Buddy Alibra [sp?] and Danny somebody—wrote this play. They wrote this outline about a play that was a box, six by six by four. And the concept of it was, you know how it was, these people trapped in this neighborhood, couldn't get out of what was literally a box. And it was just an outline. These kids Paulette Bell had taught to write took this play and did their soliloquies, and then a young man by the name of John Bean, he was a dancer ...

LEWIS: Bean, B-e-a-n?

HARROD: Yeah. One of the most brilliant people I've ever met in my life. He took these kids that this woman had taught to write and taught them how to dance, made them go to class. Bean and these other people—Buddy Alibra and them—were friends outside of my theater company and Friendship House. Those [people] got together, he taught those people how to dance. They came up with a play called *Six by Six by Four*. It was one of the most incredible pieces of theater I've ever seen. And to do it, they had to build the stage ... [interrupted by telephone].

This Bean kid, I've never seen such a thing. First of all, he worked with this gentleman named Martin Kinsella [sp?] and he designed a stage, the stage at the gallery, but had a platform about 15 feet above the stage, maybe 20. And in the play, the concept this kid put together had soliloquies being done by these two lovers on each side of the stage. He knew how to light stuff, you know, the young girl would talk about her love for this guy who was obviously struggling with an addiction and stuff like that, and then the lights go dark then and come back. And there's a part in the piece where one of the leading characters gets hit by a car. Who was the car? The car was the players, who came on stage, moving like that, and they formed a car, the human bodies! And struck her and then disseminated. It was a wonderful piece of work. This kid later went to Europe and started doing theater over there.

LEWIS: The dancer?

HARROD: Yeah. He was this brilliant thing that came through for a year and was gone the next year, doing stuff overseas.

LEWIS: Wow. How old were the kids that put on the play?

HARROD: They must have been then about 17, 18, 19, something like that. They still come to the Gallery, some of them.

LEWIS: When I look back on my own life, the most intense memories I have are being in plays in school.

HARROD: Is that right? Where?

LEWIS: In North Carolina, where I grew up. Just really in school, but I think it's such an intense experience for children to work together like that, and to be creative, you never forget it.

HARROD: The arts have that effect on folks, the passion that people bring to it.

LEWIS: Yeah. It's really magic. Is there more from this part before I start asking you about when you got the vendors to start coming there?

HARROD: I don't know. Let's see. We were just struggling, always broke! One time I owed Pepco about \$500 or something like that, and I had a concert by the New Jive Bombers. The Jive Bombers were a folk group that was popular in the 30's or 40's or something like that. And these guys were the New Jive Bombers, right? And they were supposed to do a concert there, and Pepco had turned my lights out *that* day! And these guys came and I told them, I apologized, "I can't rent a generator and I can't get it going." And they said, "Well, we'll do it by candlelight." And we did it by candlelight! The concert went off. Obviously we would have preferred to have ... But they never tried to make me, you know, fail my end of the contract, which actually, I had, you know. Somehow we did that thing and people thought it was kind of cool. Some people didn't.

LEWIS: Yeah, I was going to say, it's more memorable that way.

HARROD: But we always were broke! And I can remember that, since that time our lights stayed out for about a month! We couldn't come up with the \$500 to get it done. And Jim Mayo and I went to the Black United Fund, I believe, and he never gave us any money, just called Pepco and said, "I'll pay you to get it back on." And they put our lights back on.

LEWIS: And that was the United Fund?

HARROD: Black United Fund, yeah. And then, I figured that I would always know who my contact was at Pepco because I was going to have that problem quite often in the future—and I did.

LEWIS: Were they pretty understanding?

HARROD: Of course. Hey listen, think about it, there's absolutely no reason that the Gallery should exist! No landlord can operate in that manner! No running water, no restroom—in a public space? Give me a break! And you know some of the heating things we used to do?

LEWIS: I know there were propane heaters.

HARROD: The Fire Department's thing, if they complain, they're going to come down and confiscate those heaters and shut you down. Don't have complaints, they aren't going to mess with you. I mean, nobody ever said that, but it was understood that it was popular, people wanted it to happen. If not too many complained about it, they were going to let it happen.

LEWIS: So there, you didn't have to struggle with getting a license ...

HARROD: How could I get a license? [laughs] To get an occupancy, you have to have restrooms, running water, something that resembles a regular building!

LEWIS: Was this all unmentioned between you and the city?

HARROD: It was mostly unmentioned. Sometimes it would come up. As a matter of fact, in one point in time they were actually trying to find a way to give me an occupancy permit if I could get the guy at the swimming pool to say that he lets me use his restrooms.[laughs]

LEWIS: And that worked out?

HARROD: No, it didn't work. The effort was out there, that was the thing about it. It never happened. We could have gotten a permit but they wouldn't press us if, you know, people wouldn't press them.

LEWIS: Yeah. Now, don't you have a board, a neighborhood board?

HARROD: From all over the city, they are. A lot of folks live on the Hill and many live in other places.

LEWIS: When did you start that?

HARROD: About '73.

LEWIS: So from the beginning, you had a sounding board there for some of that.

HARROD: Oh, yeah. Absolutely. I've had some incredible people on the board. They've always been ... We would never have survived without them. I had Ralph Rinzler, one of my board members, he's the founder of the Folklife Festival. I had Warren Robbins, who's founder of the African Art Museum on the board. Peter Robinson, one of the great artists of this generation on that board. Jim Mayo, Ted Gay, Bruce [sp?] A lot of regular people and a lot of very high profile people.

LEWIS: That's an achievement, too, to put together a group like that. And so, at what point did you bring the vendors in?

HARROD: This is how the vendors got there: I didn't know that stuff happened down there on Saturday during the day, because mostly when I was there, the Seventh Street door was closed. You couldn't get in or out of it at one point. The city pointed the exterior of the building ...

LEWIS: They pointed it?

HARROD: Pointed the brick. And they fixed the door. Remember that door I told was 15 feet high? They took that and brought it down to where it is now and did a similar one on Seventh Street. And then we found this wonderful thing going on out there on Saturdays, right?

LEWIS: So that was just spontaneous that vendors would come on Saturdays?

HARROD: No, no the farmers.

LEWIS: Oh, the farmers, right, right.

HARROD: There were no vendors there. And the crowd was mostly incredible loyal neighborhood folk who would come down there and shop for their flowers and fruits and vegetables and whatever. And on Sundays, the place was closed. But one day I was watching a PBS special on Faneuil Hall—actually, they said Quincy Market—and right away, I said “Oh, there's a market in Boston that's, you know ...” And they showed these gentlemen juggling scarves in mime costumes and whatever outside of Faneuil Hall, and they had musicians there, playing. I said, “Wow, that's cool!” I hadn't seen anything like that before.

So I called the Rouse Corporation, who was the developer of that project, and asked if I could come up and see what they did. They are commercial, but they were quite nice to us. I took my chair and my board up there. We spent, like, a whole weekend up there, looking at this stuff, and learned a couple of things.

Faneuil Hall, Quincy Market, was this big commercial thing—not much I could learn from that—but what they did have was these tables outside that local artists could rent and sell their wares—jewelry,

clothing, hats, whatever. [We thought] that could work at that place [Eastern Market], something like that. And the musicians. And we would just hang out there and see why people—there's no parking around this place at all—but people hang out there because they can get some food and sit down and people watch. And all those kinds of things were in place at Eastern Market, if you think about it, we just weren't using them. Only outdoor stuff was Tunncliff's and Tommy's stand, back then it was. And so, in '79, I did the first one of ours there, asked artists to come in.

LEWIS: Just artists that you happened to know?

HARROD: I advertised for it, and word of mouth, and they came in. I may have gotten about 19 or so people who came down. *The Post* did an article called "The Arts Join the Fruits and Vegetables at Eastern Market," there's a *Post* article of that in the Style Section.

LEWIS: And that was in 1979.

HARROD: Yeah. I've got these articles somewhere, if you have any problem let me know.

LEWIS: Okay. So, did it take a while for it to catch on?

HARROD: Oh, Lord, yes. And I couldn't get artists to participate.

LEWIS: Something new.

HARROD: I wouldn't charge them but ten dollars, and I would cut my fee to five if you were an artist. [laughs] As a matter of fact, I had a woman who came all the way up here from Berkeley Springs before I had one artist from the city out there. I had people selling potpourri, Angie the flower lady used to sell prints there, copies of commercial stuff.

LEWIS: So she's been there since the very beginning.

HARROD: Yes. Before she was a farmer. And then I had a friend named Alex that would come up there sometimes, but not on a regular basis. So I had damn near everything—I had German pastry that a woman made, I had spring rolls done by Malien. Asian woman who is still there.

LEWIS: Silver, now, right?

HARROD: Yeah, silver, right. And I had potpourri. Then, over the course, different folks would come with different stuff. It took a while before it got interesting. But then it did get interesting.

LEWIS: And this was only on Saturdays, so you had the farmers that were coming on their own ...

HARROD: Then against the wall, I had the vendors, and then on the front against the building ...

LEWIS: You must have exercised some sort of selection process, because you seem to have always gotten good people.

HARROD: I advertised about it, at first. Then I stopped. Every time I'd get someone, they said, "Somebody said I should be here." And their stuff would be—wow!

LEWIS: So there was a sort of selection process that was going on informally.

HARROD: Going on informally. It was working well. It was slow, but it started to pick up, the quality of the people who were coming—even today, I mean, folks will come, and you ask them, "Where'd you hear about the Market ..."

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 2

TAPE 2/SIDE 1

LEWIS: So you were saying that you were the novice artist?

HARROD: No, I was the novice. If it wasn't for a gentleman named Alex Madison ... If somebody came to me and asked me to look at this stuff, and I'd say "Alex, what do you think?" And he knew his stuff. And I had him until his death, until he passed away. And he was an incredible person. I've had people come to the Gallery to hang work and they'd take measurements, they'd take a ruler and they hung for the Corcoran or they hung for somebody else and they'd make these things ... But this is the way he worked: He'd have a cup of coffee and a cigarette, and when he wasn't coughing, he was smoking a cigarette and drinking the coffee and he'd just look around. You must ask other people about Alex because they'll give you ... He was an artist's artist because he didn't care about nothing else but painting. Nothing! [laughs] Nothing was important to him—maybe jazz. That's his work. This is his work here [points to picture on his wall].

LEWIS: Oh, it's great.

HARROD: That's his work there. That's Miles Davis over there. I had a better, I had another piece up there, but my son stole it from me. And he would visualize what he wanted to do. It would be all in his mind. He never used a pencil or anything. He would go [gestures] and he's put up ... and he'd look at it, sometimes he'd change it around. But he was beautiful to watch because all his stuff was this guy's creativity, and it was an art form to see him do what he did. And sometimes I'd have 70, 80 pieces of

work that had to go up on the walls. How do you make an exhibit out of all this stuff? Somehow, he would do it, man. And, you know what, I would give him maybe fifty bucks.

LEWIS: Really? So he would just hang the exhibit for you?

HARROD: He was the Gallery's—he needed a place to do his work, so I gave him a place in the back. And he did my stuff, and he advised me on stuff, what I didn't know, he'd tell me, right?

LEWIS: Right.

HARROD: And I had his perspective on what art was and this is because ... The Gallery wasn't a place for modernists or abstract artists, it was a place for Art. I didn't know anything, so ... And because I don't know anything, during the course of this thing I'd run into people who did art. They weren't all that good. By most standards, they weren't that good. But talk about love and enjoying what they were doing, this thing that they were doing was so important to them, filled them with so many things. And I, not being a purist, I said "I want to give them an opening, an exhibit." And people would come in a say, "What the hell have you got this stuff on the wall for?" But I had it on the wall because this thing that these guys, these people, so much a part of their lives, had a chance to give it up to the rest of the world. And you know what? I justified this because my son didn't play ... I once saw my son play a football game when he was about 13 or 14 years old. It was a great football game, best I've ever seen. And none of these kids would have gone to the pros, but this was something they enjoyed doing. They went at it and produced a great thing. And evidently the arts, sports, or anything other than that that one has a passion about and feels something—it ought to be appreciated as well as the great.

LEWIS: Absolutely. And you say you're not an artist, but what you have achieved is creative. That's your creativity, to hang those shows even though you didn't think they were the greatest art. There was another reason for that. That's a creative act, too.

HARROD: Thank you. I felt that way. And we felt that way.

LEWIS: It's amazing.

HARROD: I told you you weren't going to be able to shut me up. There's so much ...

LEWIS: Well, keep going!

HARROD: ... so much I'm thankful for.

LEWIS: Like what?

HARROD: Well I'm just thankful that when I started that job, before I got there, my jobs were ... I worked in the federal government, you know? I worked in the Peace Corps, worked for Manpower development, USE, places like that. Had to wear Brooks Brothers suits, had to keep my hair short and parted in the middle. Do you remember when African Americans ... Back then that's the way we dressed. Then all of a sudden, I was wearing jeans and my hair was nappy [laughter], had a beard. I was having a good time.

LEWIS: Everybody was feeling a little freer around those days, I think.

HARROD: Yeah, that's right. Good days.

LEWIS: They were.

HARROD: I'm about to come up with somebody's name that you need to know. Dierdre Cohallen [sp?]. You ought to talk to Dierdre some time.

LEWIS: What's her last name?

HARROD: Cohallen. Her mother is an incredibly monster artist.

LEWIS: Oh, okay. And Dierdre's the one who does your website.

HARROD: Yes. She does my website. And if you need numbers, this is who you call. If you can't get it from me, you call Diane Freeman. Do you know her name?

LEWIS: Is she on your board?

HARROD: No, she works for me.

LEWIS: She does, no I don't know that I know her. I met somebody at the Market the other day that said she ...

HARROD: Caribbean?

LEWIS: No.

HARROD: White?

LEWIS: Yeah.

HARROD: Crazy?

LEWIS: I don't know that I'd call her crazy. Anyway, Diane Freeman is somebody that I could call?

HARROD: She works at Angie's stand inside the Market on the weekdays.

LEWIS: Okay, great. I think I know who you're talking about.

HARROD: And her phone number's [undisclosed].

LEWIS: Okay, great.

HARROD: And a lot of years I probably couldn't have done that thing without her.

LEWIS: Really? Was she like your right hand person?

HARROD: Yeah. Is now.

LEWIS: That is interesting. And you had people, eventually, having to allocate all that space to the vendors, right? Did you have people eventually helping you to set people up outside? Because that got to be a traffic jam, didn't it? After a while you had more vendors than you had space at some point.

HARROD: Oh, my God, yes, yeah. I had to sit them down, and we were such sissies, I mean. It would almost break your heart to have to send somebody away. And, plus, they knew that, and they would play it on us, man. And then you give them a space, a terrible space. You knew they weren't going to make no money and they'd be mad at you at the end of the day. But we had to send people down to the schoolyard, because the space is only limited up there. I mean, they had just so many spaces on the plaza, then indoors, and there would be times during the year when people knew people were there making money. And there are people there making money, even today. And they say this is not the heyday of the thing, but there are people who don't work anywhere else but there on Saturday and Sunday.

LEWIS: Wow!

HARROD: So, you know, when I started, people were coming and they were doing something else, and then coming there for "extra," you know. And it's interesting because at first I couldn't get any visual artists. All of a sudden, when I started to get like two or three, then it happened.

LEWIS: The visual artists selling, you mean?

HARROD: I would cut my fees in half, and then when I would go up on the other people's fees, I would still let ... I was charging everybody else 20 and still charging visual artists five dollars, and still couldn't get as many as I wanted.

LEWIS: I see.

HARROD: I've always had some merchandise that was questionable whether a crafts fair would accept. But they were creative in meeting our guidelines. [laughs]

LEWIS: Like how?

HARROD: They take something and do something with it. They had ways—they'd take stuff, or they could find people who were merchandising handcrafted stuff some place. You know what I'm saying? And our guidelines don't say that you have to make it. Somebody could be making it in Brazil, and you found it and you were porting it there. As a matter of fact, the merchandise that started bringing people there for nonfood vending were people who were bringing in Guatemalan, Peruvian, and Bolivian handicrafts, clothing. One of them is the all time best vendor there, Bill Griffin. He does the Thursday night Tango.

LEWIS: Oh, he's the one, yes. I was going to ask you when the tango got started.

HARROD: This is now I met him: He was my first, big-time, serious seller. All of a sudden you'd see people wearing his stuff.

LEWIS: What does he sell?

HARROD: He was selling Peruvian sweaters and these Afghan hats. All of a sudden, I was seeing some of the guys around the Market were wearing these Afghan hats, and I said, "Wow!" And all of a sudden, in the early part, those people who were coming there to shop for their vegetables and stuff would happen to look over and ... Now all of a sudden people were coming there particularly to look for nonfood things. Which was interesting, because the people across the street, the antique place, the construction there that has little boutiques in it, were maybe saying, "Hey, is this fair for people to be paying \$20? I'm paying \$2500, \$3000 for this space, and across the street some guy is selling something similar to me and paying \$20." Legitimate question, actually. Until they saw what eventually happened—they started bringing people to that block looking for nonfood sales, to buy stuff. And if a guy came for antiques, a couple or family came for antiques, and didn't like what we had over here, they could over to the—remember the antique place on the corner?

LEWIS: I sure do.

HARROD: They would go over there. It started working together. The shops over there, just think about it. You have about 90 people there that need coffee in the morning, sandwich, a lunch. This economic thing is starting to tie in whereas "I thought these were going to be my adversaries" and maybe have a

legitimate point against unfair competition, but they started working together. Saturday started becoming their biggest day of the week, and then when we started Sunday, it was their second biggest day.

LEWIS: Did you make an effort from the beginning that there would be more crafts and arts on Saturday and more flea market on Sunday?

HARROD: I'm glad you asked. This is how Sunday started. A friend of mine over at the shop, a friend of mine's wife, or somebody I knew's wife, opened a shop down below C Street on Seventh. And one day, the three of us were talking and she said, "Listen, how come you guys don't do something like you do on Saturday on Sunday so we can get people to come here? They certainly would help my business." I thought about it and talked to my staff and they said, "Hey, let's try." And so initially, we tried to do a crafts fair on Sunday. Something wasn't right about it. It didn't work, and it didn't feel like Saturday. people would come to it ...

LEWIS: They would come but just not ...

HARROD: We didn't know whether people would come there on Sunday, because nobody came there on Sunday. You could have shot a shotgun down that street and wouldn't hit anybody, there was nobody there. Market was closed, most of the stuff across the street. But, tricklings. I could sometimes have about 15, maybe 20 vendors there, sometimes less than that. And people wandered in. And all of a sudden, you'd hear people saying something about "seeing you last week," which meant they were coming back.

And what was happening is that my staff was running that and on my case about working that extra day. I didn't want to work that extra day, we were working six days a week as it was, until ... But you could feel that something was missing about this thing. It didn't have what it needed. And then a gentleman approached me and said, "You know, you ought to do a flea market on Sunday." "Why?" I didn't know a damn thing about flea markets. "Why?" "Because I used to run flea markets. You could get some choice furniture around here. People pay a lot of money for those things, and you could charge a lot of money. And we could start getting people here. And I used to do that." He was in his 70s. And I said, "You want to do it? Manage it." And he said, "What are you going to pay me?" And I said, "I'll give you a space free. I ain't got no money."

LEWIS: What was his name?

HARROD: I don't remember. I know who knows, though. One of my board members is ... A woman by the name of Virginia Warren, you know her? She's a watercolorist, lives on D Street. Virginia Warren.

LEWIS: I do know that name.

HARROD: Cindy Warren is her daughter. She's on our board. Her mother brought him to meet me, and I said, "Hey man, look." This was around '81, and how I know that is the Redskins went to their Super Bowl that year. And this guy started putting some organization to that, but it was still mostly artists who would come down. It was going to be a flea market. And this guy passed, and I didn't have anyone, and I was going to lock the place up but they wouldn't let me. People got me there and people said "Look, I'm used to coming down here and drinking my coffee and talking to the people inside." And they said "Where else are we going to going to?" Like it was all my thing about their lives!

LEWIS: You had to entertain them, now.

HARROD: Right. So I said, "I'll tell you what. I'll come down there and open up but I won't charge anybody anything, just don't bother me. Right? I'm watching the Redskins game! Redskins are going to the Super Bowl!" And they're out there ... And then a guy by the name of Tom Rall had been doing auctions there on Saturdays, like, once a month or something like that. These great auctions he was doing on Saturdays. They were incredibly popular.

LEWIS: In Market 5?

HARROD: In the Gallery, yeah. He said, "Man, is that your idea of a flea market?" I said, "Look, don't talk to me! All I care about is the Redskins are going to the Super Bowl. Those people are harassing me." "Why?" The other guy had passed away and I was stuck. He said, "Because I'm pretty good at that. Are you interested in somebody managing that?" I said, "Yes. Let me check it out."

You know, I never sat down and said, "You know, this is the way you've got to do this thing. This is the way the way I want you to do this thing." But he brought the same vibe and love, commitment, focus to that place, and he had a job.

We ran into something that people were normally coming to at the Market already on Saturday, but Sunday had to be *built*. And this is my deal with him to start: you build this thing up. Charge what you think you need to charge. You take care of your staff and advertisement and your salary and give me, I think I took 10 percent of whatever they made, 20 percent, something like that. Whatever it was. "That will get you paid and get the Gallery something." And he said, "Ok." And we shook hands on it. That was a 20-year handshake. Two guys lost in the '60s! [laughs] And you've seen what he's done.

LEWIS: Oh yeah. I have a theory about why the Market is so appealing to people, and I really think it's because it preserves the unexpected. You know you're going to go on a little adventure when you go there. It's not like when you go to a mall, you know what you're going to find. At Eastern Market, you just don't. And that's what makes you want to come back.

HARROD: Yes. Yes. It's weird.

LEWIS: Yeah.

HARROD: Tommy and I hate each other. The Glasgows.

LEWIS: You do?

HARROD: Yeah.

LEWIS: And why is that?

HARROD: I don't know. We just don't like each other.

LEWIS: Too much history?

HARROD: We maybe, I don't know. He's an old school good old boy, and I'm who I am, you know? And nothing about run-ins with the farmers. But think about it, together, we built a world-class market there. And our fighting only inspired us.

LEWIS: Inspired you to each do what you do ...

HARROD: Yes, good. And they do what they do *good*.

LEWIS: It's a chemistry. What came together is a chemistry, and it's created an attraction and people want to come there.

HARROD: Yes. The city hired a strip mall firm to come and manage the market. And the farmers get there sometimes around seven in the morning. Did you know that?

LEWIS: No.

HARROD: They get there around seven in the morning. They pick their spaces, I mean they come to their spaces. They know where their spaces are. They know where their spaces are. And they start setting up in there, and they don't mess with each other. They don't go "Oh, this space is a little bit ..." They stay right in their space because they know the other person is ... And they've been doing this for a hundred years, maybe. And the people they hired get there at 9:30. The thing is set up! [laughter]

LEWIS: They thought this is an easy job!

HARROD: And they're gone at 1:00! Farmers set up there, they're ready to go to business. And people come to that market, these are their friends! They're people that they've been doing business with for,

how many years? And it's important for them to come down there! If they don't see them one weekend, it's almost like they miss an important part of their lives.

LEWIS: It's not just an economic transaction, is it?

HARROD: No. It brings something to them. Why do you think these people have fought so hard over these years not to change *one item* of it? "It stinks!" "I don't care!" [laughter]

You know, at one point in time the sewer around the market was just decaying so bad that the odor around the market ... I was at a meeting one day and somebody said "Well we've got to get that sewer ..." "If you touch that sewer ... don't touch it!" That was their view because they didn't want you to spoil this thing that, maybe they couldn't put their finger on what it was, but something about that was very important to them.

LEWIS: Where were you weighing in on those issues in terms of renovation and that kind of thing?

HARROD: The community's been very clear ever since I've been there about what they wanted the city to do. And if you hear any conspiracy stuff about the fire, five million has turned in 22. And I was always on the minimalist side of the issue.

LEWIS: The minimalist side—not to do too much?

HARROD: Let me tell you this story. There is this group that's with ... These groups would always convince the city to set up some kind of commission who would be supposedly representing the community to tell the city what the community wanted to do with the market. They didn't have a clue what the community wanted. They had a clue what the people that they know wanted. I can remember one study that they were doing, this is about '82 or so, '83 maybe, where the people at the market couldn't be a part of it. I couldn't be a part, Glasgows couldn't be a part, no farmers could be a part. Only this advocacy group who claimed that they represented "the community" and knew the community's wants. And how the thing was supposed to go is that they were supposed to bring the city and this group's proposals for us to look at and comment on. And one Saturday they had told us they would come around with their renderings about what the Market was going to look like. And this was the plan back then: they were going to put a mezzanine in the South Hall.

LEWIS: I remember that!

HARROD: Do you remember that? And their rendering of it was these people in suits and ties and cocktail dresses sitting around a table cloth and things with a candle on it and cocktail glasses with *bubbly stuff* coming out of the glass! And they came and showed that to Jim and I, and we said, "That's very

interesting.” And then they left and we said “People are going to tear them a new one!” [laughs] Do you remember that?

LEWIS: I remember the story of the mezzanine, yes, and Faneuil Hall does come to mind. That’s hilarious about the renderings—what a funny image!

Now that you’ve mentioned the fire—are you worn out with this yet? Are you tired yet?

HARROD: Unfortunately, I’m just starting. There’s so much for you to know. You’ll probably take all this and cut it down to whatever, but listen, I haven’t been able to talk about the Market with somebody for so long. I’m having the best time.

LEWIS: Oh, I’m so glad! So you’re not too ...

HARROD: Oh, no.

LEWIS: Well good, because this is a real luxury for me. You mentioned the fire. When did you first hear about it?

HARROD: That morning. Do you know Jack Means? He’s a crazy kid that runs in the neighborhood. He’s the guy that gets out in the street some times and directs traffic. I met him when he was about 16 or something like that. Some kids were about to jack him a new one down on Seventh Street and I stopped it, so I sort of inherited him. He called me and said, “Hey, the Market’s caught fire.” Could not believe it.

LEWIS: Did you go down there that morning?

HARROD: Oh, hey, absolutely! Jumped out of bed, ran, got down there, and it was like a dream. “This can’t be happening!” I never thought the Market could catch on fire with how thick those walls are and whatever—but it could.

LEWIS: Were they still putting out the fire when you got there?

HARROD: I think it was out when I got there. Still smoldering. See, it came up to the North Hall and just stopped.

LEWIS: Because there was a double wall between them, I heard.

HARROD: I don’t think so. Because you used to be able to get from the Center Hall into ... there’s a place, a bricked in place now, that ... Can you stop one minute, I want to check on my grandson. [stop tape]

LEWIS: Sure. [pause]

HARROD: All the psychics—I have two psychics at the Market.

LEWIS: Psychics that have tables there? Oh I didn't know that!

HARROD: Yeah.

END OF TAPE 2/SIDE 1

TAPE 2/SIDE 2

LEWIS: So, the psychics claim they stopped the fire?

HARROD: Because of their power, the fire didn't come into the North Hall! [laughs]

LEWIS: It's good they were working together, I guess.

HARROD: Who knows what they're talking about? If it was something good, they had something to do with it! [laughs] "Maybe you'll drop me down five dollars off the rental fee or something! Give me a better space!"

LEWIS: That's great. Actually, for this documentary that we're making, just a ten minute film that I told you about, that we want to get you for, we found that the Fire Department had taped about ten minutes of the fire, so we are going to actually have footage of the fire. I have it on a DVD which I could get you if you want to look at it.

HARROD: No kidding. That would be good.

LEWIS: It will break you heart.

HARROD: You know, people are writing books on Eastern Market. Do you know that?

LEWIS: I know that Steve Ackerman is writing one.

HARROD: I haven't heard his name. Who is he?

LEWIS: I don't know him. He's a local author and we're interviewing him for this project. He has a lot of historic photos from the Market, and I hope that we're going to be able to see some of his photos. And then there's a book that came out last year by a professor at GW that does mention you.

HARROD: Does it?

LEWIS: Uh huh. It's a very academic book. It's a lot about economics and the use of public space, but it's real interesting. There are stories about—who are the people that you had working for you that gave out the vendor spaces on Saturday? Was it William?

HARROD: William Coats works on Sunday. Other people worked on Sunday—Charles Ellis works on Sunday.

LEWIS: Charles. There are stories about how they allocated that space. Some of that is in there.

HARROD: What's the name of the book?

LEWIS: *When Culture Goes to Market.*

HARROD: I've got to check that out.

LEWIS: It's not a history book. I'd like to see a book with lots and lots of pictures. I think it would be interesting to learn more about what it was like when it was first a market.

HARROD: Well, you know, it's interesting, because back in the time, in the 1800's ... I've seen photographs of people with their stands there and actually it was diverse back then, even. African American farmers coming up and selling. And diverse too and ... Not a lot, but we've seen people with shoes on their table that had been made in the country. I think other things gave us the impression that occasionally the people who came to sell at the market sold—the majority of what they sold was fruits and vegetables—but also they sold other things that were made down on the farm or in the village, the hamlet where they were coming from.

LEWIS: I never thought of that. Do you know where the photographs are that you saw?

HARROD: Do you know Mary Farrell?

LEWIS: No.

HARROD: Oh, you don't! Oh, you've got to ...

LEWIS: You know everybody!

HARROD: You've got to know her! And she probably has everything that you ever want to have in terms of data or documentation on Eastern Market and Capitol Hill. She's an historian.

LEWIS: And what's her last name?

HARROD: And a friend, I believe, of Ruth Overbeck. Her name is Farrell, F-a-r-r-e-l-l-.

LEWIS: Okay. I'm sure that people who have been on the Overbeck Project longer than I am know her, then.

HARROD: She's a contagious agitator.

LEWIS: What do you mean by that?

HARROD: Well, she agitates for stuff that she believes in.

LEWIS: And infects other people with the same enthusiasm?

HARROD: Sometimes, and sometimes the other side. But she's a great person. I like her. I'm glad that she lived there, because she brought something to the table. I can get you her number. I don't have it in my thing, interestingly enough. I think I have her email. I sent her an email at one point recently.

LEWIS: Well, I'm going to have to call you about a lot of these names and things anyway, so I'll put that on my list. It may be that somebody on the project has already been in touch with her, too, because I know they've tried to interview lots of people and see what photos they might have.

When was the last time you've been up there?

HARROD: I haven't been up to the Market in over a year.

LEWIS: In over a year?

HARROD: Yeah. After the fire, in February, I got ill, and so my folks were doing our thing there and in touch with me every day and more than once a day. Oh, I *have* been there, I've been since then, but only to do drive there, meet with whoever it is that wanted to meet with me in my car, and that was it. My folks were running the Gallery. Actually, they were doing the jobs that they were doing when I was there. I just wasn't there overseeing them.

Anything else you want to know?

LEWIS: Well, I could listen to another full tape of stories if you have them.

HARROD: My daughter's taking her son to the doctor. Then she'll be back about a quarter to three or three o'clock. Then I've got to have her take me to Pennsylvania Avenue to a lawyer's office to pick up a letter I've got to take to someone and so ... if we don't finish and if you don't mind coming to my home, I'll be happy to meet with you again. I enjoy your way of conducting this interview and I always enjoy talking about the Market.

LEWIS: Well, that's great. This is a lot for us to have done in one sitting, definitely. As I said, I want to put you in touch with our person with the camera at some point. I don't know if you'd like for him to meet you here or if you would like to go to the Market and see him or what.

HARROD: I'll work it out with you and you tell me what works best for you.

LEWIS: I don't know that he has anything in mind that he wants from you. He just wants to have you tell a story ... Just to make sure he's got you as part of that tapestry he's weaving on film.

When the Market reopens are you planning to ...

HARROD: I've been kicked out of the Market.

LEWIS: What do you mean?

HARROD: My lease with the city has not been renewed. Well, actually, that's not correct. The city is moving on with the Market without the Market 5 Gallery. Moving on with the North Hall without the Market 5 Gallery, so there will be some legal stuff and some protest stuff, I imagine.

LEWIS: What's that like for you?

HARROD: Well, I'm broke. I'm bored, and I'm broke! [laughs]

LEWIS: Oh, gosh. That doesn't seem right.

HARROD: But! Hey, it's been this way for 30 years. Look, at one point in time, the business guys there—they were right in the theory that the Market needed a grocery store as an anchor. That's the traditional way that situation worked—packaged goods, a food thing. And at one point in time I had them, I took them up to a number of organic places—co-ops, places like that—that would fit in a renovated ... This is what I was trying to get them to do: leave the Gallery alone and renovate a place in the basement at the C Street entrance that would have a co-op store with paper goods, and organic and bulk merchandise could be sold.

Do you know Don Denton? I had Don Denton and a couple other guys saying, "The arts, are you crazy?" Like, I was taking them up to Yes! [Market], and to different places and things, and for a minute I had them. Made a little sense. Plus, there were three proposals that the city was considering at the time, and the one that had a co-op store in the basement, the arts in the North Hall, and the fresh food stuff, was the one people thought—if we're going to do changes—let's do that one instead of kicking the arts out of there. Put in the basement or {?} whatever.

LEWIS: But that didn't go ...

HARROD: No. It died. Why did that die? I'm not really sure. The mayor at the point in time, I think, was Marion Barry. Barry's administration endorsed that, and they were going to do it. And we had support from the neighborhood to do it. And support from the artists in the city to do it. But it didn't get done. Too bad. It was a good idea.

Also, the '87 plan was a good idea. That was for a second floor which I would go up on. It was the only time I think my board and I have been at odds.

LEWIS: Oh, really?

HARROD: Yeah.

LEWIS: They weren't for that plan?

HARROD: They weren't for me to go up there. We still loved each other, but they wanted me down *there*. And I was just dreaming of all the stuff I could do up *there*. But! You know, this is the interesting thing about the Market. Sometimes I would be sitting out on that Seventh Street door, and young people would come by there, and I'd look at them and I'd know that they hadn't ever been in the Gallery, really. Probably hadn't been in. And their parents being in town visiting, they were showing them the Market. They'd walk by and say, "That's our market there ." The idea of it, coming by there, and the art on the wall—it was what was important to them. They liked the idea of it. It didn't matter that they didn't come in there for any of the plays or stuff like that. It was their gallery.

LEWIS: For my children, it's been such a part of their lives.

HARROD: How many children do you have?

LEWIS: Two. Teenagers now, one's in college.

HARROD: And how has it been that?

LEWIS: We would just go in there and look and ... When they were in strollers, of course, we were down there all the time, and they used to call the Market "banana" because Mrs. Calomiris would give them a banana. But just the gallery, the fact there was art ... At that point, they didn't know the difference between that and the Smithsonian. They were kids, they just think art is something they can do, and they liked to look at. It was just part of the fabric of their childhood, which is what you are I think to the neighborhood.

HARROD: That's nice of you to say. I appreciate that.

LEWIS: I hope you are resting on those laurels.

I would love to hear what you have to say about the direction of that space for the future.

HARROD: This is what is important to me, John Harrod. Before I got to Eastern Market, what I was doing was developing performing arts companies—African dance, modern dance, theater, stuff like that. We started with kids and the people who, these instructors who were teaching them, were so good they performed all over the country. People were inviting them to Rhode Island to perform for the Black Arts Week up there, or to Duke University, they performed down there, they performed in Florida. They were being credited for their development. We come back to the city, we couldn't afford any other place to go to—you know, a nice, 150 seat auditorium. That's what the Gallery became.

It was a ... In 25 years there, not one community group or art group has not been able to use that place because they didn't have a dime in their pocket. There was a way to work it out. Not because we were goody-goody, but because there was a way to work it out financially. Not as a great money-making thing, but a way to survive and do it.

LEWIS: Right.

HARROD: I've been there when six people have been in that audience; I've been there when 600 people have been there for stuff people would never *think* they would come to! And, if a group didn't have up-front money, we'd do a percentage. And if they didn't draw anyone, they didn't make no money, and we didn't make no money. If they did well, if they did *real* well, then we did well. And that was the purpose: to develop a space that was successful and affordable, where artists could come and experiment, succeed, and even fail at stuff. Right?

LEWIS: Absolutely.

HARROD: And, people came, and some of them helped make the place happen, and then they moved on to other and bigger and better things. There needs to be ... The Gallery served as a bridge. Why in the hell else would there be a place like that? You don't have nothing!

Plus, the [?] off the wall! [laughter]

LEWIS: So you would like to see that spirit continue.

HARROD: Yes. We want to ... The city has to have a place like that. There has got to be some place like that, and the Gallery is ... And frankly, those artists that have performed in there—and going in the Porta-

Johns, have to use the Porta-Johns before their performances—ain't going to want to hear that there are going to be restrooms in there now! And the place, and there shouldn't be ... The city can, if they're creative in their financial thinking, we can make it financially work. It can work. And people can use it, reasonable, right? They don't see it yet because they're ... Look, the Office of Property Management is running the thing, and they're the organization that negotiates for you and I on taxpayers' properties against developers. What am I talking about? That's what's going on! You've got to get the dollar, every dollar, that's their job to think that way.

LEWIS: Right.

HARROD: Well, we just have to get some more creative thinking in there. Get the Commission on the Arts involved in that space and, you know, I'm talking beyond John Harrod, you know? If he's the problem ... The issue here is having a space in this city where that can go down, and the things that can happen for the public's good are unlimited.

LEWIS: That is just so important.

HARROD: Have you ever been there and looked up in the ceiling, the trusses in the ceiling?

LEWIS: Uh huh.

HARROD: The psychics tell me that there's a pyramid shape that's up there.

LEWIS: Oh really?

HARROD: Yeah. Which means that the Gallery is protected by, according to them, the strength of the pyramid—a sign that is found so many places in nature. Did you know that?

LEWIS: Exactly.

HARROD: I learned that from them. But! I got to admit, some weird stuff has happened over the years. You remember I had to pay people to get them to come to use the space, encourage them, threaten them, to come and use the place. And once the Jazz Arts Society was a group that promoted some very well-known jazz musicians, nationally known jazz musicians, in the city. And they had gotten bumped out of a space, the Ethical Society I think they were supposed to perform at, but they called me at the last minute, about a week before this performance, and this was the first time I was going to have a musician ... Do you know Oscar Brown, Jr.?

LEWIS: Uh Huh.

HARROD: His story is going to be on PBS, I'll show it to you before you leave. And Oscar moves to the Hill. Was living on Independence Avenue for a while. He's an interesting and wonderful guy. Anyway, the Jazz Arts Society was going to ... And he had been a hero of mine since I was about 16. I followed his music, and I thought he was an incredible lyricist and, anyway, they said, "Oscar Brown Jr. is coming!" And I said "Oscar Brown Jr.? In this place? My place?"

And this was in October, and when they called me, the temperature was, maybe, in the '60's or something like that. And the night of the event, Oscar Brown Jr. was going to come to Eastern Market—my hero, this guy that I'd admired for all these years, was going to be at the Gallery! When I woke up that morning, Elizabeth, the temperature was 37 degrees! And, this was before I knew how to ...

LEWIS: Propane?

HARROD: Yeah, I wasn't hip to that yet! And I said, "Damn, this can't be." So I arranged to get some kerosene heaters and blowers, but they were just choking up everybody in the place, so much I had to cut them off. And I called these people, and I said, "Look here. Man, it's going to be cold in this place tonight. I don't know what you're going to do. You might want to think about even canceling this thing." And I wanted so much to see this guy in this place if nothing else ever happens in this place, ever.

LEWIS: That was breaking your heart, wasn't it?

HARROD: Yeah. Right. Well, at twelve o'clock it was about 42 degrees in town, and at 7:30 it was 65 degrees!

LEWIS: The pyramid?

HARROD: And, over the years, people have said, even some times when we messed up so bad—mistakes, you know? Not keeping an eye on the ball or whatever, it would turn out the right way. We concluded that this was something that was meant to be, and we were care holders, we're a vessel in this thing, for this thing to happen, and no matter how bad we can get at it ... Sometimes it would happen that we were doing the wrong thing for the right reason or something like that.

LEWIS: That's a great attitude. It fits, that it's going to work out.

HARROD: Well, I hope that this is going to happen with this thing. We'll see. And if it doesn't, it doesn't. But I think that ... There is in this city folks who are incredibly talented, and not in the concert halls, that need a place to do their thing at—and when there is a place, an affordable place for them to do it, the community, the city, benefits from it.

LEWIS: Yeah. Gary Peterson was just telling me about the Capitol Hill Orchestra that used to meet there.

HARROD: Who was telling you about that?

LEWIS: Gary Peterson?

HARROD: God, somebody remembers that?

LEWIS: Yeah. He said he once had to deliver instruments there for the concert that night!

HARROD: The band didn't have instruments?

LEWIS: They just didn't have anyway to get them there.

HARROD: Oh, okay! [laughs]

LEWIS: He said that went on for a while, and they performed original symphonies.

HARROD: Oh, yes. They were great, they were wonderful. The "Shoe String Orchestra" they called themselves at one point, and the guy that did it was, I can't remember what his name was, but he and his wife were very eccentric people who just wanted to have an orchestra, and they could make some *great* music, you know?

LEWIS: Gary said it was fabulous. It's been such a part of so many Hill memories.

HARROD: Wonderful idea and mission of this guy who did this, but his presence there also brought Montgomery County Community Orchestra there. Orchestras from around the region would come there and perform and rehearse and join with Shoe String to do concerts there for the community, which I believe mostly were free. That was, if the Gallery is anything, those chances ... When those kinds of things happen, those individuals come.

But I can't let you leave without telling you this one story. During the Shoestring Orchestra time, there was a gentlemen who lived in that apartment building right across from the park from the Gallery, right on the corner of Seventh Street, whose name escapes me now, but there are articles on him. And he was a mandolinist, if that's a word. We played mandolin.

LEWIS: It gets meaning across, so it's a word.

HARROD: [laughter] And he would do concerts there, mandolin concerts. [some conversation about dog entering the room] He would bring in ... Do you know there is a mandolin newsletter?

LEWIS: No, I did not.

HARROD: They keep in touch with each other on activities involving mandolin playing around the area. First time I'd ever seen a person play the mandolin in person was him, and he was very, very good at it. And he would do concerts there, like, once a month, or something like that. And one time, he did a concert where the all of the composers were of African descent.

END OF TAPE 2/SIDE 2

TAPE 3/SIDE 1

LEWIS: You were asking me if I knew any African Americans that played mandolin? I don't know any people any of any color that play mandolin, personally! [laughter]

HARROD: Me either. Let alone composers! And he did a three-day concert on [African American] composers! Now, hey! On the Saturday he was doing this thing, somebody came into the Gallery and said, "A three-day series on people of African descent who compose for mandolin? There's no other place in the world that this could happen but Market 5 Gallery!" [laughs] And I don't know whether to believe it or not.

LEWIS: That's great, so interesting.

Well, I'm not going to say goodbye. I'm just going to say until next time.

HARROD: Until next time.

END OF INTERVIEW 1

INTERVIEW 2

TAPE 1/SIDE 1

LEWIS: This is Elizabeth Lewis with part two of the John Harrod interview. Today is June 16, 2009, and we're here with Mary Farrell [historic preservationist active in Eastern Market issues in the 1990's, old Harrod friend] also, whom we'd like to interview all on her own one day, but we've invited her to chime in if something sounds good.

So, hello again.

HARROD: Nice seeing you again.

LEWIS: Good to see you. I hear you have some more stories.

HARROD: Yes. I wanted to see if I can get on the record a couple of things concerning the history of the Market 5 Gallery. One is the political history, the use of the space by politicians and political parties. I think that eight presidential and vice presidential candidates have either had fundraisers there for their campaigns or announced their campaigns there or in some way appeared at the Gallery for some kind of event there. And I think those people, I wrote it down because I didn't think I could remember and now I can't remember what I did with it! I think that Ted Kennedy, Harkin, Dole, McGovern, Hart, Ferraro, Jackson, and Nader have all at some point in time had events there to support their candidacies of whatever.

One time, I walked in the office and Jesse Jackson was sitting in my chair at my desk! And Rudy was standing next to him, because Rudy was the man who turned the television off when he was watching and put it on the news [??].

LEWIS: Now who is Rudy?

HARROD: Rudy was Rudy Keys [Coates?], Tom Ralls' assistant manager. He's the kid that I met when he was about 14 and brought around with me.

And Jesse was sitting looking at the news, Nader was standing up on one line, and Ferraro was sitting at Diane's desk—had three of these guys in the office! And Karen [?] says, "Rudy, does John know that Jesse Jackson is sitting in his chair?" [laughter]

LEWIS: So, what did you say?

HARROD: She asked Rudy did I know. Nobody was ever supposed to sit in my chair, ever, right? And there was Jesse, and Karen says, “Does John know that guy’s sitting in his chair?” Man, I was just in awe that they walked in my office! [laughter]

LEWIS: What were they doing there?

HARROD: There was a fundraiser that I believe was given for Ferraro who had been nominated as the vice presidential candidate. I believe that’s what was going on.

Let me just start at the beginning, to go over what I told you before. I don’t know the year that Kennedy ran against Carter, was it ’79, ’80?

FARRELL: I can tell you actually, it was ’76. That was his first term, it might have been ’79 or ’80 that he ran again. He was competing with Kennedy for the nomination.

HARROD: 1976. Well, that year, whatever year it was, as I told you before, I got a call from the Senator’s office to see if they could use the Gallery for him to announce privately to his friends and family that he intended to challenge Carter for the nomination. And, of course, I couldn’t do it. My contract with the city wouldn’t allow me to do any kind of political events there. When we thought about it, nobody could figure out why. So anyway, we got permission to do this thing and that was the first of a number of ...

And during this period in time the Gallery was, we were having events there that people just adored. People would have events there and say afterwards, “We’ve got to use this place again.” But they were talking about next year maybe, or six months down the line, and what we didn’t have was anything that was helping every Wednesday or every Thursday. So it was in that area of program development. Here was this major political figure attempting to do something at the place. And more importantly, Kennedy was urged to run against Carter primarily because the folks urging him the most were the Minnesota delegation in Congress. I believe the gentleman’s name was Jim Inhofe. After we did that thing with Kennedy, we gave a little jazz group, a trio, and he liked the way the Gallery operated and how cheap it was, and he urged other congressmen to use it. That’s how that got rolling.

What’s interesting is that it got so we were getting all the traffic wanting to use the Market 5 Gallery rather than the Democratic Club because of how cheap it was and the flexibility you have there. And the fact that we began to be able to provide them with security. From our staff, we could provide them with security, bartenders. You remember when the five and ten was down the street [Kresge’s]? We’d fix the guys up with bow ties and white shirts [laughter], they’d bring black pants, they’d look good, you know? Put them on each side of the room ...

FARRELL: Remember that security guy that had a big sock in his holster?

HARROD: [laughter] That was for the weekend. That was Chuck.

LEWIS: Tell me that story! He had a sock in his holster?

HARROD: Getting near Christmas, people would start trying to hit my vendors and stuff like that. So we dressed Chuck up in a security outfit with black pants and whatever, and we bought him a holster. I didn't have a gun! And all you could see was half of the holster, so we put a sock in it so you thought it was a pistol in it. Mary loved that.

LEWIS: Oh, that's so funny. Well you know, in some of our interviews, some of the indoor merchants have talked about having guns themselves. I'm surprised ...

HARROD: Having guns? Why?

LEWIS: To avoid robberies.

HARROD: Did they get robbed?

LEWIS: I think they think it was about to happen a few times and they showed the gun and prevented it—that's what somebody said in one of the interviews.

FARRELL: Sounds like a Glasgow story.

HARROD: Well, they pulled a gun on me once. They didn't pull it, they showed it to me.

FARRELL: Was it Richard or ...?

HARROD: No, it was a black guy that worked for the fish joint. The first musicians we put outside had wandered under the shed. Man, that was ... They were called Pandemonium and the Dragonfly, these two women from Paris that the Commission sent over there.

LEWIS: I didn't understand that.

FARRELL: They had the temerity to set up under the shed?

HARROD: It started raining a little bit. You remember, there was never any music out there like that, and to some it was an irritant, and to others it was kind of quaint, nice, you know?

LEWIS: And so the Commission sent some musicians and they were called ...

HARROD: These guys had just come in town. This woman was about six feet tall. Her name was Pandemonium and she had dated a famous mime, right? I don't know his name ...

LEWIS: Marcel Marceau?

HARROD: I don't know. Whoever he is, he works markets, outdoor things.

FARRELL: In France or here?

HARROD: In France. And they got in town, and they went to the Commission about where [they] could work. And so they said, "Why don't you check in with the Market 5 over at the Market?" And they came. I thought they were wonderful, beautiful. I do have pictures somewhere of them. One of them played, you know, that little eight-sided instrument, it's an accordion but it's not round. And the other one played the flute.

LEWIS: Pandemonium and Dragonfly?

HARROD: Dragonfly. And they were quite beautiful ladies. They were wonderful.

FARRELL: And so that prompted the gun thing? The brandishing of the gun?

HARROD: Well, see I didn't think you wanted to hear that kind of story, but anyway, they went under the shed and somebody said Chad put all his guys out there, and he said, "You can't be under the shed, you've got to stop playing." And they were right in the middle of the song, and he made the mistake of grabbing her instrument. A musician, you cannot ... She knocked the crap out of him! Somebody came in and got me, and I went out there and they were all upset. I mean, the guy, poor little guy had just been slapped by this tall, six-foot woman. And they got mad at me, right? They had me up in a corner, showing me their stuff. I was like this [gestures]?

LEWIS: Showed you ...

HARROD: He pulled up his shirt.

LEWIS: Who was that that did that?

HARROD: Who was that black guy, used to work at the fish?

FARRELL: No, I don't. See, Chad and Richard managed the Market, the entire Market, and they had very proprietary feelings about the shed, and this was an intrusion, see?

LEWIS: I got you.

FARRELL: And then there was a physical assault on top of the intrusion.

HARROD: It was my fault.

LEWIS: That's so funny.

FARRELL: So it got serious.

HARROD: Very serious.

LEWIS: Well now, how did you get the permission to use the Gallery for political purposes?

HARROD: Right after Peggy Cooper called me. "You're not letting Senator Kennedy use the Gallery, John?" That was the first thing she said to me. And I said, "I'd love to let them use it, but you guys wrote it in my contract I can't." She changed the contract that day.

LEWIS: Oh good.

HARROD: Called me back the next day and we got started on it. Once we had Bob Dole and McGovern on the stage at the same time receiving the Golden Carrot Award.

FARRELL: Golden Carrot, what's that?

HARROD: It's an award that this group gives out every year to folks who've made contributions to consumer ... righteousness across the country, I guess.

FARRELL: Might be Consumers Union.

LEWIS: I can look that up [sponsored by Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, the award goes to food service professionals who are having an exceptional impact on the health of children in schools].

I went to a wedding there just a couple of years ago.

HARROD: Really? Whose wedding was it?

LEWIS: Holly O'Donnell. Her dad was Kirk O'Donnell who worked for Tip O'Neill at one point. They lived on the Hill forever.

HARROD: How young is she?

LEWIS: She is, I'd say, early thirties.

HARROD: All those, Amy Mauro, and all those young women, I remember them.

We've had every kind of wedding that you can think of. We've had African weddings, we've had Jewish weddings, gay weddings, you name it. And because we had weddings like that, somebody listed us in this book on unique wedding places. So every month or so we get a call from somebody saying, "How much does it cost to use [the Gallery]?" And I say, "Five hundred dollars." They say, "WHAT?" [laughter] I say, "Wait a minute, let me tell you about the Gallery ... We don't have any running water, no heat, you have a cement floor, no bathrooms!" [laughter]

LEWIS: Well I think you could have charged a little more for the atmosphere.

HARROD: Well, there were some people, there's nothing you could do to keep them from having their wedding at the Market. You know what I mean? They come down there every Saturday, they get their flowers and their meats, their vegetables, they stop by maybe inside. They are going to have their wedding! Once a lady called me, she wanted to have their wedding there, and she told me what they wanted to do. It was going to be really unique. They were going to have the wedding in the church, but they were going to have the reception in the Gallery. They were going to dress this way and that way, and so I said, "Well, when do you want to rent the place?" And she said, "January 12." And I said, "Ma'm, I can't do that. You can't rent this place." "Oh, no, no, we've GOT to have it there!" "Ma'm, I don't have any HEAT!" And this was when I had the tall ones, remember those? And I said, "Listen. I only have portable heaters, propane heaters. There's no way, if the temperature drops below 45, I can make that place comfortable." They had to have their reception at the Market. They had moved here from some place and the Market was so much a part of their lifestyle. They FROZE to death! But you wouldn't have told they didn't have a good time.

LEWIS: Oh, that's so great. We covered so much ground when we talked before, I had some questions that I needed to ask you to fill in the blanks. It's mainly the stories, though, that I don't know to ask about that I think are so great.

FARRELL: What did you have in mind when you called and told her to come back, John?

HARROD: The political thing was a significant part of our programming. It was about a third of our program, a third of my income. Before the no alcohol thing came in, the wedding things were important. There was a third thing that I thought you might be interested in ... I should have written it down. If Mary starts talking, I'll remember it.

[portion removed by request of interviewee]

FARRELL: I started to talk about people that have become a problem to the Gallery over the years, but I ...

HARROD: How can you explain it?

LEWIS: I don't know how to ask questions about it because I don't have any background in that myself. I've just enjoyed the Market and never really paid any attention to the dynamics down there. And I don't know that you want to talk about it either, because this is your story.

HARROD: No, I don't want to get into that. You want the history of the Gallery. That [other story] will be another history played out in another arena.

LEWIS: Yeah. Well, we've got lots of good stories about the Gallery. Some of your quotes will go up on this exhibit next week, I don't know which yet. [Note: the final exhibit used during the June 26, 2009 reopening of Eastern Market included a current photograph of Mr. Harrod, but did not make wide use of quotes and other photographs.] I think people will really be interested in it because I don't think they know. A lot of people didn't know about the big doors at the end, they didn't know they had been changed. People didn't know real vehicles had been parked inside.

HARROD: You're kidding. Actually, when you stand in front of it, you can see the color of brick where the new brick was added on.

LEWIS: People didn't know that you actually had to wash the floors to get moved in. Do you want to tell me about some of these pictures so I'll have it on tape in case?

HARROD: Well this is the man, this is Alex Madison.

LEWIS: He helped you hang all the shows.

HARROD: He didn't help me, he DID it. I didn't know a damn thing about hanging anything. This is Alex's modus operandi. I've had people hang for me that hang at the museums, and they'd come in with tape measures and levels and everything like that, Jim hung like that, Jim Mayo.

FARRELL: Have you talked about Jim? He was very important

HARROD: I don't think we talked about Jim.

LEWIS: That's a familiar name. Who is that?

HARROD: Jim Mayo was chair of the board for a number of years and ...

FARRELL: The Director of the Anacostia Museum, he worked for the Smithsonian.

HARROD: Well, let me finish with Alex and we can talk about Jim. Alex's operandi was to sit with a cup of coffee and cough, and drink coffee, and look at it. He would lay stuff down on the floor and then he'd go and he would visualize what he was going to do and put that sucker up, and it would be different from whatever anybody came in there ... I liked his work, the way he saw stuff and the way he hung it. He had a great sense of that whole deal. And you know when he died, kids came back around who were interested in art to tell me how much he had encouraged them to pursue their dreams in that field.

LEWIS: So are there pictures here that ...

HARROD: Well, that's Tom Mauro and his wife there. They and their daughter were very important to the Gallery.

FARRELL: They lived down the street on North Carolina, 600 block.

HARROD: He was chair of the board for a while. And that's Carol Schwartz and myself at a gala. When she was running for mayor she came in and participated in that event.

Archie, remember this man? Archie Stewart. He played outside under the shed on Saturdays and Sundays for years.

LEWIS: Oh, let me see. Oh yes! Can I take this with me and get this copied? I don't know if we have the ability to copy something that big. Archie Stewart. I don't want to take everything you have. What do you think is most significant? Who is that?

HARROD: Mary, who is that? Kate? Kit _____. She works at the Library of Congress.

LEWIS: And who is this dance troupe?

HARROD: They're a famous youth dance company that came there. I think that was a show they were doing for Dance Week.

LEWIS: Do you what year this is?

HARROD: That's about 2000.

That's a political fundraiser for Inhofe. I've got so many pictures here. This is a hand dance event there. You know what hand dance is?

LEWIS: I think I do, but tell me to make sure.

HARROD: It's my generation's jitterbug. My mother was jitterbug and what they did to jazz, we did to rock and roll. That's the difference.

That's Temple by the way. And these are outdoor concerts we did.

LEWIS: You know about what year this is?

HARROD: About '95, '96, something like that. Here's a political fundraiser. That's the performing arts council. Mary's secretly in love with one of these guys.

FARRELL: I am? Which one am I in love with?

LEWIS: Maybe you'd better tell us which one.

HARROD: The second one from the left, that's Celine [?].

FARRELL: That's [unintelligible] first husband? That's right, I am.

END OF SIDE 1

TAPE 1, SIDE 2

HARROD: The one on the right is my goddaughter, Diane's granddaughter. The one in the middle is Peter's daughter, remember Peter from Yugoslavia [?]? And the one on the left is Yanos [sp?], does that sound right?

FARRELL: What happened to Brian Drainer [sp?]?

HARROD: Inez met this drummer from Cuba. She went to Cuba and stayed.

FARRELL: What did Brian do?

HARROD: What could he do?

FARRELL: Get remarried.

HARROD: I don't think he got remarried. The kids tell me he started dating somebody, but I don't think he got remarried.

These are friends of Market 5 up there. Mary calls them my harem.

LEWIS: That's Malien, right?

HARROD: Here's another performing arts event.

FARRELL: That looks like Marta. And the one on the left is Diane. And I don't know who this person is. And that might be Kit Errington there, I'm not sure. Oh that's Diane's daughter Wendy, I think.

LEWIS: Can I take this picture of you and Schwartz?

HARROD: And this is the man—this is Dr. Hot Pepper. [laughter]

LEWIS: Who is Dr. Hot Pepper?

HARROD: I told you about Dr. Hot Pepper. He's the guy who put his hand on Sly Stallone's mother's behind.

LEWIS: Oh yes. Tell me that story again, because I think [we stopped the tape before] we got to that story.

HARROD: Well, Pepper was doing the MC'ing for Junior Walker and the All Stars, remember them?

LEWIS: I do.

HARROD: "Shotgun." Kind of famous rhythm and blues. And he invited us to the Cellar Door, and my date that evening was Suzanne, what was the lady's name? There's a picture of her in here. She worked on the arts for Clinton and Gore with us. That was my date. We went to see Pepper, and there was another couple, too. And Pepper treated us royally. We didn't have to pay nothing. It was a great show. He invited me backstage to meet the guy and I did. And then we were all going to this place that Pepper played the blues at. It was a French restaurant on M Street. And we went back there and sat back in the rear. And Pepper was immaculate [unintelligible] only a [unintelligible] guy like that can dress and look so perfect, you know? He had an Edwardian shirt with, not a suit, but it was buttoned to the top, it was just right. He had these glasses on, and I don't think it was a hat like that [points to picture].

But anyway, we are sitting there, all having a great time, everybody knows Pepper in that restaurant because he plays there. We're getting great treatment in the joint, and the waiter comes up, Mary, to Dr. Pepper and says, "Mrs. Stallone would like to meet you." And he said, "Yeah, just give me a minute." And he went into his breast pocket and pulled out a compact, opened it up, nothing like powder or anything in it, but a compact with a mirror. To check himself out! [laughter] Only Dr. Pepper can pull something like this off! He's looking good! And he said, "Tell her to come on back." He didn't go to her! Do you remember her? She was quite a ...

LEWIS: I remember her. She wrote an autobiography.

FARRELL: Sylvester Stallone's wife?

LEWIS: Mother.

HARROD: Mother, yeah. She was an attractive woman for her age, in fact, quite vibrant. Anyway, she came back there, to the back of the restaurant, to see Pepper. And she was with this young guy, must have been in his thirties. She was maybe in her fifties then. And Pepper got up ... went right in the middle of them while the guy was adjusting to take his picture, and he put his hand on her rear end, and the guy stood there, and it was a perfect example of who Dr. Hot Pepper was.

LEWIS: So did he perform at the Gallery ever?

FARRELL: All the time.

HARROD: Oh yeah.

LEWIS: Was he from Washington?

HARROD: No, he was from Kansas City. He was quite a guy.

FARRELL: When he saw you, he would always plant a big wet kiss on you.

HARROD: Yes. [looking at pictures] Can't tell you what that one's about.

LEWIS: There's a story somewhere in there, that's for sure.

FARRELL: Who's this, John?

HARROD: I don't have a clue. Don't remember. That's Diane. She developed a group called Market 5 Gallery Dancers that performed various places for ...

LEWIS: I met Diane. I went down to the Market and found her.

FARRELL: She's a real mainstay.

HARROD: Absolutely. The last year, she co-ordinated everything there. If you see things in there you like, I'll talk to you about them.

Mary, think you can fix my printer for me?

LEWIS: I want to take one of those. It would be great to get some of the dancing shots.

HARROD: This is Jim Mayo.

LEWIS: Now, you were going to tell me something about him.

HARROD: That's on Freedom Plaza. We did a thing there, Artists for Clinton and Gore. Tom Rall was involved in it. All my guys, all my folks were involved in it. And I was vice chair of that group, right, so all my guys were involved in it—Rall and Alex—and we did the sound for them, and Alex did the banners.

This is the guys you like so much, from the barber shop.

FARRELL: Archie Edwards. He lost the building.

HARROD: Why?

FARRELL: Because they didn't have enough tenacity to hold on to it. So the barber shop is gone.

HARROD: Oh, really? That's too bad because this program that they put together was just incredible. Absolutely ...

FARRELL: They're fabulous. They lost the barber shop.

HARROD: That's too bad. I thought it was a historic building.

FARRELL: Of course it was. It should have been a cultural site. [Councilmember] Harry Thomas should have made a case for it and gone after it.

HARROD: Why didn't he?

FARRELL: He was just too preoccupied in other things to get into that argument.

HARROD: This is Pepper performing. Probably had a cape on. [laughs]

FARRELL: This is the Archie Edwards Blues Heritage Foundation? I don't recognize these guys.

HARROD: Those are people he brought in that were performing with them that night. It was really ...

FARRELL: Was Archie Edwards alive when this was done?

HARROD: No. This is Batoff [sp?]. He's in one of those shots, I believe.

FARRELL: Is this Mike Batoff?

HARROD: Yeah, I think so.

FARRELL: I'm in love with Mike Batoff, too. He's in my pantheon of men I'm in love with.

LEWIS: These are good because these show activity that was in that space.

HARROD: I'm going to find some others.

LEWIS: They've got the recent picture of you that Elizabeth [Dranitzke] took. I like some of these of you, too. That's such a good photograph [of Alex] ...

FARRELL: That's the only shot you have of Alex, that one?

HARROD: I think I have another one but it was at the District Building. We were down there with Shelly Larson, who was messing with us about something. Here, this might help now. That's the love of my life doing a poem for Alex.

FARRELL: Who's that?

LEWIS: Who is the love of your life?

FARRELL: Who is the love of your life?

LEWIS: We've got to get that on tape!

HARROD: [laughs]

LEWIS: Now who is this? Is that your daughter?

HARROD: Is that my daughter! That's the same woman.

FARRELL: Who is that?

HARROD: It's Joy Alpert. She's an artist, a poet.

FARRELL: Oh, I remember her, she was very beautiful.

HARROD: Still is. She's a gorgeous girl. That's Pepper some more.

FARRELL: You still in touch with this woman?

HARROD: Yeah.

LEWIS: She is beautiful.

HARROD: [looking at photos] Just think Mary, I'll never have to mess with another propane tank in my entire life! [laughter] That took a whole bunch of years off my life!

FARRELL: This is Brian! Right there! And one of his beautiful daughters. That's the little [unintelligible] I was telling you about.

HARROD: That's my goddaughter. And you know what, on Christmas I used to make eggnog for the community and dress up in a Santa suit. The kids used to help me.

LEWIS: Would that be on a weekend day?

HARROD: On Saturday. And we would make spiked—this was a great recipe I had, somebody gave me years ago. It was a wonderful recipe for eggnog. Then we'd spike it up. We'd have one spiked up and one the kids could drink.

FARRELL: You know who else was really a wonderful presence in the Gallery ... Is this Hot Pepper?

HARROD: Uh huh. Your boy and the other people—I think that guy on the right worked in the South Hall for years, you remember him?

FARRELL: I don't, no. But I think that's Maureen in the background.

HARROD: That's Maureen in the background.

FARRELL: Now is this Tahira's first husband here? She's gorgeous.

HARROD: Yeah. She's a real cutie. She was here about three or four weeks ago.

LEWIS: The leg up.

FARRELL: The portrait painter, that lovely portrait painter ...

HARROD: Remember him?

FARRELL: I do. What was his name?

HARROD: Are you kidding me? I can't remember my name sometimes. These are Hines kids here.

LEWIS: What's happening in this picture?

HARROD: I'm getting some money from the mayor to run my youth program. He's awarding us. And I think that that is the youth we're talking about in that picture and the one you have in your hand.

LEWIS: Oh great. This is great.

FARRELL: That's a nice early picture of the plaza—arts and crafts exhibitors or flea market exhibitors.

LEWIS: I think I've got a little bit better one.

FARRELL: You have some really nice old photographs here.

LEWIS: Is this you?

HARROD: Yeah, it's [unintelligible].

LEWIS: [laughs]. And Eleanor Holmes Norton. And who is this?

HARROD: That's Doris, the Bee Lady. Mary, you remember that woman? She went to Florida, and she still comes up every now and then.

FARRELL: And what is this a picture of?

HARROD: That's a fundraiser.

FARRELL: What we should do is scan these and put caption information in them.

LEWIS: Soon as I leave here I'll take these over and they will scan the ones they want and I'll bring the originals back. I'll call you first. The Hill Rag is in charge of the North Hall exhibit.

FARRELL: I'm a great admirer of Andrew Lightman. I think he's done a remarkable job with that newspaper. It's a real newspaper now.

LEWIS: It is a real newspaper.

FARRELL: It's really terrific. He's really added a lot—it was always beautiful, but now it's got substance and it's still beautiful. This is a good photo. It's a photo of somebody selling their artwork, I'm not sure who. One of your artists. Here's another political fundraiser.

LEWIS: I think I'll take that too.

FARRELL: Chair caning. This might be Brian Stahl.

HARROD: It is.

LEWIS: Is he still there?

HARROD: No, he's not. Brian doesn't come up any more.

FARRELL: He disappeared.

HARROD: Once a year that family would have, they lived in the Shenandoah Valley, and every year we'd have a picnic, a vendors' picnic, down there. And we'd go down after the Saturday market, and this would be my vacation. We'd always do it in August and I'd stay for two weeks. The vendors would come down and spend the weekend. We'd have dancing until four o'clock in the morning and drumming until

four o'clock in the morning. It was a wonderful event, and the vendors would come down and they'd stay with me until Monday and then they'd go home and leave me alone!

LEWIS: Where were you?

HARROD: I would get a rental down there. And we'd have the picnic. The [unintelligible] had a lot of property, a big property. We'd go out there and build a bonfire and drink lots of beer and dance.

LEWIS: That's why all the vendors have such a network then, if you had that sort of thing.

HARROD: Yes.

FARRELL: Is this the crazy Russian? Is he still around?

HARROD: Yeah. Absolutely. He's the only male Diane doesn't mind kissing me on the cheek!

FARRELL: Kisses you?

HARROD: Absolutely. On both cheeks.

LEWIS: Should I give that picture to them? The crazy Russian.

FARRELL: This guy is so crazy. He's wonderful.

HARROD: When I'd come in in the morning to work, I'm "Comrade Harrod." After he's been into that vodka all day, by the time he leaves, I'm "Commissar." [laughter]

LEWIS: That's where some of the party atmosphere comes from.

FARRELL: He tipples all day. Here's a great picture of Berman!

LEWIS: We've got some great pictures of him, Michael Berman, the artist.

FARRELL: He gave me this painting right here. A number of artists gave me paintings just to thank me for the work that I did. It was a really great tribute.

LEWIS: If you don't mind, I'm going to take these and get them scanned. [more discussion of photographs, no specifics]

END OF INTERVIEW 2