WARREN: This is Mame Warren. Today is the fourteenth of September, 1999. I’m at the Peabody Archives with Elizabeth Schaaf.

Elizabeth, you know that I’m here because you are the early history of the Peabody, and you know it better than anybody. But I’d like to start by talking about your history and what first brought you to the Peabody and when and how you got here.

SCHAAF: Well, I came to Peabody in 1965, and I wanted to come here as a student. My options were to get a job and pay my own way, and so the logical thing to do was to get a job at Peabody, which meant that I was right in place, and it worked out very well. I’ve worked here in a number of capacities over the years, and took classes and studied voice and minored in early instruments. It couldn’t have been handier. If I needed a class, to go to class, I just said, “Excuse me,” and ran down the hall or up the steps or down the steps, as need be. I got to see the institution in two different ways, as a student and as a member of staff. So it was an interesting process the conservatory was going through, an interesting period, and some of it good and some of it not so good.
Warren: Tell me what you mean by that.

Schaaf: Well, Peabody was really sort of heading for the ropes, was having terrible financial problems that would be a decade, about a decade before things got sorted out or at least headed in a more positive direction. There was also an upheaval on the administrative side. Charles Kent was director when I came to Peabody, and he had been dean under Peter Mennin, his predecessor.

Mennin, who was a composer, who went on to become head of the Juilliard School, had brought him in as dean. He was a fabulous teacher, a born teacher. He himself was a composer. He was interested in contemporary music and electronic music. He was a brilliant acoustician and taught acoustics, a very sympathetic man and very much in touch with the students.

It was a good time. The director’s office was then in the conservatory building in what was initially envisioned as the Maryland Historical Society rooms. The upshot of this meant that the director had to walk down the hall to go to the men’s room, and so he couldn’t avoid talking to the faculty and talking to the students, and there was no cafeteria that if you needed a Coke, you had to walk upstairs to this little sort of informal lunch room on the third floor.

So there was a lot of give and take among the students. The director wasn’t a remote figure; he was somebody that you had in class and somebody that you ran into in the hallway. This would change in later years, and then most recently it’s changed back. The director is again walking down the hall to the men’s room and teaching and being more approachable to the students and to the faculty, which is a very good thing.

Warren: So you studied voice here?

Schaaf: Yes.
Warren: Were there any faculty who made a difference to you, anyone in particular who was very special for you?

Schaaf: Well, you know, there were a lot of remarkable people on the faculty, and one of the nice things about working at Peabody while I was going to school is that I had contact with people that I, as a student, probably wouldn’t have. So I got to talk to other voice teachers about how they approach different problems. There were a lot of wonderful people here. I mean, there was Flore Wend, who was a fabulous soprano. She was a Swiss-born Parisian who was a wonderful technician, just authority on French vocal literature. Frank Valentino, who was a former member of the Metropolitan Opera, just lovely, amiable man. And Wayne Conner, who’s still on the faculty today. And Alice G____ Duschak, with whom I studied, who was a transplanted Viennese.

And there were people like Stephan Grové, who taught theory and composition. I still have my notes on his baroque orientation classes. I mean, he’s just a fabulous teacher.

Warren: Why was he so fabulous?

Schaaf: He was a brilliant man and a brilliant theoretician, terrifying to study with. He had very high standards. Paula Hatcher tells this wonderful story about a theory examination that was just so incredibly difficult that only two people passed it. She was one of them and Ray Sprenkle was the other, and both are now on our faculty. But the student body split down the middle. I mean, there were those who felt very confident and respected his teaching and had the guts to take his courses, and then there was the other half who were concerned with making sure their grades
were good and took theory with the amiable Dr. [E. Louis] Cheslock, who was a very sweet and sympathetic soul, whose classes were considerably less challenging.

And Sam DiBonaventura, who taught music history and who was an authority on Marx Brothers films, and made the best spaghetti sauce I’d ever had. [Laughter] But it was a really interesting collection of people. You know, Britt Johnson. Most of the principal soloists in the Baltimore Symphony were on the faculty. It was a stunning group of musicians.

As weak as Peabody was in those days, the director was having serious health problems and the place was being operated on a shoestring, but there were all of these wonderful people on the faculty. As Bob Pierce put it very recently, Peabody’s strength in those day was definitely its faculty.

Warren: I’ve heard that the building was in great disrepair at that point, too.

Schaaf: Actually, during those days—I mean, there certainly were problems. I mean, I remember during the dress rehearsal of Carmina Burana when a fire broke out backstage because of bad wiring. But Peabody had its own housekeeping staff, and during the summer everything was freshly painted and spiffed up and polished, so when you came back in the fall, it looked like a million dollars. Even though I’m sure that it was like an aged lady with a fresh coat of makeup, but it looked good. Sadly, the problems occurred after the Hopkins affiliation.

Warren: Oh, do tell.

Schaaf: Well, because the housekeeping staff was let go and they had a contract service to come in and do the housekeeping. It wasn’t like the nice lady who took care of Shapiro House and another nice lady who took care of the conservatory building.
Warren: Oh, that must be what I’m hearing, what I’ve heard about.

Schaaf: It was just awful. And then they were all, I’m sure, just paid minimum wage, and I think half the maintenance staff had some sort of physical infirmity, but somehow managed to keep the place looking good and keep it working. But one of the early cost-saving measures was the transition over to contract maintenance, which immediately made the entire place look terribly shabby after about a year. It had implications for morale, as you can well imagine, but that’s a small thing.

Warren: Well--

Schaaf: It is and it isn’t.

Warren: I’m trying to decide which direction we should go. Should we go back to the beginning and work out way up to the affiliation with Hopkins? It’s probably a good idea to begin at the beginning.

Schaaf: All right.

Warren: So we have a bit of an idea of how Elizabeth got here. Let’s find out how the Peabody got here.

Schaaf: Well, like all of Peabody’s endeavors, Peabody was a place without a precedent. Peabody wasn’t interested in--

Warren: When you say “Peabody’s endeavors,” you’re saying the man, George Peabody.

Schaaf: Yes. George Peabody’s whole approach to—he basically handled his philanthropies like he handled his business. He was constantly looking out for new ways of doing things, better ways
of doing things, and he was not a conventional person by any means. He sought good advice from highly competent people and listened to them and took their advice. And he did the same thing when he started building up his—I mean creating the institutions that he supported. He consulted a number of his former colleagues in Baltimore.

Excuse me, I’m going to have to see him.

Warren: Just a moment. [Tape recorder turned off.]

Okay.

Schaaf: So anyway, when it came time for the Baltimore benefaction, I mean, Peabody had stayed—you knew he had moved to London permanently in the year Queen Victoria ascended the throne and basically lived there the rest of his life, but he stayed in close contact with his friends here. He had lived in Baltimore just about all of his adult life until he left to go to Britain.

So he was in touch with people like John Pendleton Kennedy, Charles James Madison Eaton, [Elisha] Riggs, [Osmond] Tiffany, who was involved in raising money for the Maryland Historical Society. Some of them were businesspeople and some of them were people who were very much involved in the cultural life of the city. Kennedy was very interested in things literary. I mean, he was himself, in addition to a legislator, a best-selling author, and one of the first to use American themes in his writing. Eaton was similarly interested in the visual arts, sponsoring American painters and developing American talent. And Peabody himself was very interested in music. He had boxes at the opera and Royal Albert Hall, and enjoyed going to concerts.

So when they started talking about what he could do for Baltimore, they tried to get him to rescue the Library Company of Baltimore, and Peabody wasn’t interested in rescuing anything
or shoring up some faltering institution. He was really interested in new ways of coping with problems.

Baltimore's problem at that point was its cultural wants. There was no public library, there was no resident orchestra, no resident professional orchestra, at least. There were theater orchestras and the like. There was no gallery of art. There was no place where people could come and exchange ideas. So he ended up founding the Peabody Institute, which was the country's first cultural center, and which in one broad swipe gave the city an orchestra, the scholars library, which was a public library, the gallery of art, and the academy of music.

The institute did exactly what Peabody-Peabody wanted: an institution that would create a cultural revolution in Baltimore, and it did. The Peabody Library made it possible for the Johns Hopkins University to get itself up and running and attract a respectable group of scholars to Baltimore because it had a research library, which the young university obviously wasn't in a position to create out of whole cloth. Peabody men founded the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Baltimore Opera, and even today Baltimore Choral Arts, Ragtime Ensemble, I mean the number of Baltimore Chamber Orchestra, if you look around, it's staggering, the number of institutions that have grown out of this place.

Fundraising events to establish the Baltimore Museum of Art were held here at Peabody, and Peabody trustees were involved in creation of that institution. William and Henry Walters were both chairmen of the Gallery of Art Committee here at Peabody. It did just exactly what Peabody wanted.
Warren: And he selected an interesting group of trustees to make this happen. Tell me about that. I just know that much. I'm really not feigning ignorance here. I really don't know.

Schaaf: Well, he put together this large list of men that he knew and men who were recommended by men that he trusted to draw the board from. It was a list—I think that he called it Baltimore’s most respected citizens. It was men like Severn Teackle Wallis, Riggs, with whom he was a partner. I mean, it was quite an impressive list. And it was from that list and from their descendants that future members of the board were drawn.

Warren: One of the things you told me about the other day, when I was here back in February, you got me excited telling me about this early relationship between the university and the Peabody and how the Peabody really seemed to almost appreciate what the university would be more than the university did. Or something to that effect.

Schaaf: Well, when the university was founded, and there were overlapping trustees again, as there were with many of the other major institutions in town, the first thing the trustees did was pass a resolution that the two institutions should be affiliated at the earliest possible time. That affiliation ultimately did take place exactly 100 years later. This is Baltimore; things move slowly. But there really was a very close association between the two institutions from the very beginning. I mean, it was a given that if you were looking for a Hopkins faculty member, you walked down the Peabody Library and you found them there. The Herbert Baxter Adams vaunted Historical Studies Seminary functioned here at Peabody, not at Hopkins.

Warren: Really? I didn’t know that.
Schaaf: Yes. It had rooms here. The Peabody Collection was developed with the needs of
Hopkins clearly in mind. The letters to the librarian are full of letters from faculty and also from
the library at Hopkins, saying, “There is a wonderful series of books,” or, “There is a wonderful
book out. We don’t have the budget to buy this. Would you consider adding this to your
collection?” And it usually ended up in the collection. So the Hopkins Library collection, the
Peabody Collection, kind of grew in tandem.

Then when you work in the Peabody Library, you can work right up to the time the
Hopkins Library moved up to the present campus, and when you get to that point, then you need
to get on the shuttle and go up to Hopkins and you can continue research. But the two libraries
very much enhance one another, and that’s the reason why, because of the number of Hopkins
students and Hopkins faculty working here. They used the collection of pasts and antiquities for
classwork. The students observed. They used to send their students up to the Peabody Gallery of
Art to study the casts.

The lecture series, there was a lecture series of scholarly lectures. Many Hopkins people
took part in that. There were people invited from other—you know, Harvard, Yale. There was a
scientific lecture series. Any of the nineteenth century scientists who are anybody were invited to
participate. The lecture series was formulated in cooperation with Hopkins, who had a similar
series. When the scientific lecture series was eliminated later, all of the scientific apparatus was
turned over to Johns Hopkins University. Also when the preparatory department got itself up and
running and was outgrowing its initial space, by that time Hopkins had moved up to the present
campus and the Peabody Preparatory functioned in rooms of the former Johns Hopkins University
building. So there's always been this kind of gentlemanly give and take between the two institutions.

And Peabody Orchestra played for Hopkins' graduations and functions. Sidney Lanier, who was a member of the Peabody Orchestra—it was the city's first professional orchestra, one of only five in the country—Sidney Lanier came to Baltimore to be—he was, first, a musician and, second, a poet, in his own words, and he was hired here by Asger Hammerick, who was director of the conservatory and conductor of the orchestra, as first flutist. Of course, he fell passionately in love with the library and had ample opportunity to write when he wasn't acquitting himself, his obligations to the orchestra. Then later on—I mean, he lectured on the Peabody Lecture Series and then was later hired as a faculty member at Hopkins.

Warren: Did it work the other way around? Did Peabody students take classes at Hopkins?

Schaaf: The first exchanges, I think, took place around 1917, and the Peabody Summer School, was a joint venture.

Warren: Tell me about that.

Schaaf: Well, they were able to take classes at Hopkins and at Peabody, the Hopkins students and Peabody people. That was the first summer school that Peabody had held, and it was a joint session between the two institutions.

Warren: Do you know much about that, what kind of classes they offered?
Schaaf: Gosh, I did at one time. I haven’t looked at the course offerings in some long time. But it wasn’t long after that, that it was possible for Peabody people to take courses for credit at Johns Hopkins. So the affiliation of the 1970s really had much in the way of precedent.

Warren: I know that the original Hopkins campus was very close by. Can you describe that geographical proximity?

Schaaf: It was just over by Howard, and I think there’s still an existing building over there. So it was quite literally down the street and intentionally so, so they would have easy access to Peabody Library.

Warren: How did the Peabody choose Mount Vernon Place? How did that selection originally happen?

Schaaf: A wrangle between the trustees, and Peabody had to come over and basically settle it.

Warren: Really?

Schaaf: Oh, yes. They had proposals for—there were offers of property all over the city, and there was quite a fuss, because here is this very large, very important institution getting ready to create itself within the compliance of the city, and it would definitely have an impact on the surrounding property. So people who were speculating in property offered patches of property where they owned additional land, and the area across the street from the Basilica, where the library is now located, was a possibility.

There was an area out by the reservoir, which was a larger tract of land, which would have been closer to where the present university is located. That was another possibility. That was
Kennedy's option. He wanted plenty of room for the institution, because it was going to be a growing entity, and he wanted to have it provided with plenty of room to grow.

Eaton, on the other hand, wanted to keep it downtown. He wanted it near Maryland Historical Society. He was very much involved in the historical society. Wanted it to be city oriented. And this was out of town—I mean, it was Howard's woods—and overlooking the bulk of the city. I mean, granted there were lovely buildings already in this area. So this was a kind of middle ground. It was out of town. You could still buy property. The original building is on the side of an old marble yard, so this was a compromise. It wasn't a sole choice.

Warren: So did they just use that marble to build the building?

Schaaf: No. It's Baltimore County. It was a marble yard. It wasn't a quarry.

Warren: So describe the structure here for me.

Schaaf: Initially there were these four major divisions, to be headed by a provost who also was librarian of the George B. Peabody Library, which worked out just fine for a while. By virtue of his position, he was sort of the grand Pooh-ba of intellectual affairs in the city, and often quoted in the paper and used as a local oracle on various subjects.

The conservatory, which was slower to get off the ground, was with its third director. [General] James Monroe Deems, who was a Civil War hero, was the first director, and he basically got the academy of music going with its public offerings. He led an orchestra and got musical activities under way here. Southard was the one who started working on the educational part, the training professional musicians. But Southard never really—I mean, he had wonderful pronouncements about how he was going to make it like Paris Conservatory and how he was
going to make it like all of these grand European conservatories, and it just wasn’t getting off the ground.

It wasn’t until they brought Asger Hammerick in, who was a Dane, who was a protege of Hans von Goulot [phonetic], to take it over, that the place took off. He wanted to make it a peculiar kind of American conservatory, one that would provide a forum for American artists. He was a composer. He championed the performance of new works and encouraged other composers to find American themes to incorporate into their music. Did get the orchestra up and running, made it an orchestra of national stature. And all of a sudden he was getting more press and in competition with the provost, which, quite naturally, led to some friction between the two. The provost considered the library as the centerpiece of the institute. The conservatory was actually quartered in a row house up on Mulberry Street. It wasn’t even located here. They were grudgingly allowed to use what the provost called the lecture hall, which is now Friedberg Concert Hall for the concerts, but only grudgingly. Morrison thought it was even inappropriate to have rehearsals in “the lecture hall,” sort of demeaning. So the upstart conservatory really was quite a thorn in Morrison’s side.

Warren: So when did the conservatory move to this location?

Schaaf: Well, it kind of insinuated itself gradually over the years. It was almost the turn of the century when it had really gotten itself, and it continued to encroach, because the gallery of art was a major—people don’t realize that when that second building was built, the Peabody Institute building was done in two stages as a cost-saving measure, what we call the 1857 building, which housed the lecture room, as Provost Morrison styled it, and then overhead was the library, and
then the building that went up in the 1870s provided the library, the burgeoning library with this grand room that we know today, and the second floor, the whole great second floor of the conservatory, what we now call the conservatory building, was devoted to the gallery of art. There was no condition for conservatory quarters on that floor. The third floor had a few small rooms partitioned off for the conservatory, for music rooms.

But over the years, the fact that the art gallery was supposed to be funded by Tennessee bonds, which Tennessee was the only state that never redeemed its defaulted bonds, meant that the growth of the gallery of art suffered as a result, and the conservatory, as the gallery was limping along, the conservatory was booming under Hammerick and growing by leaps and bounds, and gradually taking over the rooms that had been appointed for the gallery of art.

**Warren:** You mentioned the library, the room. We should describe that. Just assume I have never walked into that room. Prepare me to walk into that room. Tell me what I’m going to see.

**Schaaf:** Well, the trustees wanted a building that would be safe. There had been a number of fires in the city. We hadn’t even had the big one yet, you know. But fire safety was a great concern, and they had this French salesman come in, who was selling this revolutionary building material called Tiehl.

**Warren:** Tiehl?

**Schaaf:** Tiehl. There’s a chunk of it sitting in the next room. It was imported from France. It was a nineteenth century building material, very new.

Back up a little bit, the building itself was as forward-looking as the institution was. It really reflected very well the kind of institution Peabody had in mind. When you go into the hall,
you realize that apart from the back, where the small balcony is located in the back, there are no pillars in that room. It was one of the largest unpillared halls of its time, and it was made possible by using bridge construction in the ceiling, and very clever.

Edmund G. Lind, who was the architect, English-born architect, who was also a musician, by the way, and wrote a marvelous paper on synesthesia—synesthesia is a phenomenon where people hear music and associate colors with particular tongues. So he created this fabulous room using this bridge construction. When they built the library building, which is the one you were asking about, Lind used bridge construction again, but this time a new metal bridge type construction that allowed him to create this marvelous room with tiers of stacks overhead. So there’s this wonderful—it’s a wonderful lofty room. I mean, you can just sort of feel your spirits rise up when you walk in there and see all of the beautiful cast iron.

So they used this Tiehl material in the walls and the buildings so there wouldn’t be a fire hazard. The cast iron was a concern because in a fire, the cast iron will melt. So the supporting girders you can’t see. What you see when you go in there are the beautiful decorative exterior girders, and the only wood in the room is actually the shelving that the library books are packed on. Books, actually, when they’re packed up like that, don’t burn very well, so they’ve pretty well done their job. But the end result was this stunning, stunning room.

Warren: It certainly was. It certainly is. I’ll always remember the first time I ever walked in there as a child, having my breath taken away.

Schaaf: It is. It’s quite wonderful.

Warren: And the staircase. Tell me about the staircase.
**Schaaf:** The spiral staircase, the iron work, all that beautiful cast iron work was all made here in town by Hayward Bartlett, as was the decorative iron work in the Peabody Library. If you look at the decorative motifs in the balconies that encircle the room, you can see them echoed in some of the Hayward Bartlett roof crests on some of the buildings in town. Mount Royal Terrace has a roof, one of those beautiful cast iron roof crests that has that same pattern that you see in the Peabody Library.

**Warren:** You must have a lot of fun as you go around and see the relationships between this place and the city where it’s set.

**Schaaf:** Yes, I suppose so. I just consider it part of the fabric of the city, so it’s a sort of seamless entity. But the Baltimore County marble matching the monument. They sent a delegation of trustees over to Washington to look at the buildings in Washington, to pick out what kind of model to use, and they ended up deciding that the Baltimore County marble was the most suitable finish for the building.

But the most interesting thing about the building is the fact that it was, in the words of the trustees to the architects who were competing for the job, they asked for a building that would be “capable of harmonious adjustment,” because they knew that the institution would change over the years and the building had to be able to change with it, which I suppose probably gives preservationists a bit of a pause, because what do you do with a building that was conceived as a changing entity over the years? Well, I guess just what we did with it. It’s grown with us and we have this fabulous nineteenth century building, and inside of it we have a state-of-the-art
electronic music facility, wonderful recording facilities with the latest digital equipment, and yet these wonderful, wonderful spaces, beautiful nineteenth century design.

Warren: Yes, it really is a very special place.

Schaaf: You hear people talking about how conservative Peabody is and tradition-bound, and it is in many ways. But its tradition from the very beginning has been to look forward, and it has been in very many ways a futuristic place. It’s always been a place—in the best of times it’s been a place to try new ideas and to explore new ways of doing things.

The conservatory had the first scientific studio for examining music, the scientific side of music, and that was back in the early ’30s. That studio was run in conjunction with Hopkins engineering and Hopkins medical institutions.

Warren: Really? I don’t know anything about that.

Schaaf: Oh, yes. And I think there’s a photograph in here. Otto Ortmann, who established that, Ortmann would later become director of the institute, a fine scholar. His book on the physical aspects of piano performance is still the leading work on the subject.

Warren: While you look for that, I’m going to turn the tape over.

Schaaf: Okay.

[Begin Tape 1, Side 2]

Warren: Let’s talk about major events in the history of Peabody. We’ve sort of glossed right over the first major event, the dedication. We have that glorious photograph. Tell me what happened that day. Tell me what you know about it.
Schaaf: Oh, goodness. Well, there was a series of things. I mean, there were festive dinners, hundreds and hundreds of schoolchildren paraded in front of the institute, and there were concerts and speeches, and it was a time of reconciliation. The Civil War was over. Our trustees were divided. We had people like Severn Teackle Wallis, who got arrested in the middle of the night and taken down to Fort Warren, was a Southern sympathizer. We had men like Enoch Pratt, who was selling horseshoes to the Union Army. So it was the first time many of the trustees had spoken to one another since the outbreak of hostilities.

And Peabody, too, had been under a lot of criticism. He maintained his friendships with people who had allied themselves with the South. Peabody himself, I mean, was New England-born and worked very hard to keep the Union together in London, because there was a great effort to swing Britain around to back the South. And after the war, when the South was just practically—well, it was in ruins, he created the Southern Education Fund, which provided the basis for public school education in the South. One of his dearest friends was [William Wilson] Corcoran, who was Southern in his leanings.

And Peabody kept his friends, continued cordial relations with them, and was solidly criticized for it, even though he made very sure that none of his business dealings aided the South. He wouldn’t involve himself in businesses that were likely to provide an advantage for the South, and was most definitely pro-union, but was still subject to some fairly harsh criticism.

So when he gave his talk to the hosts assembled for the dedication, he used it as a kind of reconciliation and also to explain why he didn’t feel that he should disassociate himself from his friends. So it was a very emotional time and time of great excitement, too.
Warren: So he actually came for the dedication.

Schaaf: He was here for the dedication, stood on the front steps, welcoming all the dignitaries, and kissed all the girls, or as many of them as he possibly could, the schoolgirls that marched past. He had a deep and abiding appreciation for attractive women, you know, even though he was really bad at getting himself settled down.

Warren: Well, I guess, in a way, thank goodness.

Schaaf: Like Hopkins.

Warren: It probably wouldn’t be here.

Schaaf: Right. [Laughter]

Warren: If he had been luckier in love.

Schaaf: Right.

Warren: How about his relationship with Johns Hopkins the person? Do you know anything about that?

Schaaf: He was credited with--John Work Garrett and several of his cronies were desperate to get Hopkins to come to grip with his fortune, and were trying to get him to settle on a major benefaction, and hadn’t been able to pin him down. I mean, Hopkins was used to being pursued for various endeavors. There’s a letter in the archives from our provost before he came, Philip Uhler, who was a naturalist before he came to Baltimore, who tried to get Hopkins involved in setting up a Museum of Natural History in Baltimore, and he managed to brush Uhler off in fairly easy strokes and sent him on his way.
But Peabody was loathe to tell anybody how to spend their money, and figured that was a very personal decision and not something that he should really do, but he agreed to come to dinner at the Garrett mansion to talk to Hopkins about his own benefaction, and he told Hopkins about the Peabody homes and what they meant to the poor of London, and told him—I think he chided Hopkins about the fact that he was the only person who enjoyed making money and holding on to it more than he did, and explained to him that the only thing that had given him greater pleasure was the benefactions that he had created over the years, in his later years.

But I should point out here two things. One, Peabody is forever being described as this saintly person who spent no money on himself, who lived in rented rooms, and was a parsimonious fellow. Absolutely nothing could be farther from the truth. He loved to spend. He spent money on clothing. He loved making sure that he was turned out in fairly grand style. He lived in rented rooms because he had enough people to manage in his business, and since he didn’t have a wife as an unpaid manager of his home, I mean, he just couldn’t deal with all of that. So his rented rooms were hardly dismal surroundings. I mean, he managed to place himself in very comfortable circumstances, and he spent more money on his salmon fishing vacations than probably most people during that time would earn in several lifetimes, and had his own very fancy carriage and his boxes at the opera and at Royal Albert Hall.

He loved entertainment and hardly spent his whole waking hours working. He did keep banker’s hours indeed in the traditional sense, and was usually at dinner with friends by seven in the evening. So he enjoyed his life very much and enjoyed congenial company and a beautifully set table.
And his benefactions weren’t new. I mean, he was giving money to various charities when he was a young businessperson here in Baltimore. There was a tradition of philanthropy in Baltimore, even in the early years here, in the nineteenth century, and this was not something that visited him late in life when he decided that he needed to himself with his maker.

But Hopkins did, in fact, after that dinner, do his will creating what made possible the creation of the university and the hospital.

Warren: Now, you say that dinner took place at Garrett’s house. Would that have been Evergreen?

Schaaf: I think it was. You know, I’m not sure. I’m not sure. But I thought it was downtown.

Warren: Okay. That would have been completing the circle if it were at Evergreen. But we won’t jump to that conclusion.

So fill me in. What other major events should I be looking for in Peabody history?

Schaaf: Goodness. Major events. How do you deal with that? It was a major event finding a marvelous talent like John Charles Thomas, who was the most popular singer in the country, who went from being a star on Broadway to being a star at the Metropolitan Opera, and enjoyed a fabulous career on radio. Finding somebody like James Morris, who was the most sought-after name in the world of Wagnerian opera today. My goodness. Or hosting a fantastic performance of the orchestra that makes you wonder how in the world young people could play like that. How do you define a grand and wonderful event? It’s so taken for granted here. You can almost on any day of the week in the springtime walk into Griswold Hall, Leaking Hall, concert hall, and hear a performance of such quality and so impressive that it’s just mind-boggling. We’ve all gotten very
complacent about it. We’ve had wonderful, wonderful people here over the years, and fabulous faculty and visiting artists. It’s hard to think of a time when something incredible wasn’t going on.

**Warren:** Well, now, that puts things in perspective for me. Then let’s leap ahead to the one that is most apropos for my assignment, talking about the affiliation with Hopkins and how that came to be.

**Schaaf:** Well, it was one of these situations born out of necessity. Steven Muller was the person who spearheaded the effort. Peabody had gone public with its plight. We had kept the wolves at the back door instead of the front door. Richard Goldman finally decided that it was time to let people know how desperate the situation was, and went public.

Then Peabody was approached by Hopkins with the idea of an affiliation, and I think Provost [Harry] Woolf was very much involved in those early discussions. He was a very gentlemanly and amiable man who probably contributed a lot to that process, but it was definitely the strong influence of Steven Muller that made that affiliation happen. It was a very good thing for the institution, and I can’t think of another institution that would have made that affiliation as gracefully as Hopkins.

A few years ago the Peabody College in Nashville, Tennessee, affiliated with Vanderbilt, and I was surprised when I went down there, how much—I mean, things still seemed raw and uncomfortable. There was a bit of friction between the two institutions, and clearly the Peabody needed rescuing there every bit as much as Peabody here needed rescuing.

But I think Hopkins, with its wonderful decentralized diadem of institutions, made that affiliation possible in a much more graceful way than its Southern counterpart. I’m always struck
by the fact that Vanderbilt and Peabody were good friends, and these two institutions have both affiliated with Peabody benefactions, appropriate of nothing new we’re talking about. But as with any event of that sort, there were bound to be a lot of frayed nerves and apprehensions about the future, and here was a large institution up the road from us trying to figure out how a conservatory functioned and what do you mean, there’s only one teacher for one student? We’ve got lots more up there, you know, and it’s cheaper.

So they had to learn how a conservatory of music functioned, and quickly. They were a quick study and respected what was going on here. They saw the strength of the institution and were in very good position to do something about the weaknesses of the institution. And it’s been a wonderful fit.

As far as the archives is concerned, I was delighted to have people like Nancy McCall at Hopkins, the medical institutions’ archives, to go to for advice and counsel, and people like Jack Greene and—oh, gosh, you’ll have to help me. I took I don’t know how many classes with him, and I can’t—his name is just totally gone out of my head.

Warren: You have to give me a clue.

Schaaf: A member of the Hopkins history faculty.

Warren: What’s his specialty?

Schaaf: Radical politics, race relations.

Warren: Franklin Knight? No.
Schaaf: No. Utopian societies. I was just thinking of the classes I’ve taken with him over the years. Fabulous teacher, just fabulous. How embarrassing.

Warren: It will come to you.

Schaaf: It will come to me. I’m sorry.

Warren: That’s all right. It will come.

Schaaf: And John Heim, who writes like God.

Warren: So this is the opportunity you have to take classes?

Schaaf: Well, not only classes, but being able to go up and talk to them about the importance of the institution, the importance of the records I was working with, and to get a wider perspective on this institution’s place in history, in the broader picture of the times, whatever time it was I was concerned with.

It was just wonderful, you know, having this incredible pool of talent, this very deep well to draw from, and it was so wonderful to find out how generous they were with their time and with their counsel. They were just terrific. I know it helped me immensely in building up the archival collection here, and it helped me understand what it was I was charged with doing. And they were just terrific. It was also wonderful to see them step in to shore up the library and get good and competent people staffing the library. I mean, there have been fabulous people there in the past, and much needed to be done. So I think, on the whole, it’s been a very happy affiliation and it’s been very good for Peabody.
Warren: Tell me about Steven Muller as a person. How did he come in here as a human being and make his proposal?

Schaaf: Well, I mean, obviously I was privy to only some of that, and there are probably many other people who could respond to this. Actually, a lot of them are dead already, come to think of it. That’s a frightening thought. It seems like such a short time ago, but I guess it’s not.

President Muller is a very forceful person and seemed, to me, to be a real visionary. From my limited perspective, he seemed to me a person who seemed to be able to look beyond initial impediments and initial problems to see where things were going. I think he saw the benefits, the common ground that the two institutions shared, which I think few people were aware of, and saw where the institution could go with Hopkins’ help. And, good heavens, it certainly did go.

But in the years after the affiliation, the faculty was shored up. After the affiliation, there were some very shaky years when the administration was quite weak, and having Hopkins there to shore that up was a tremendous help. But it’s just been amazing to see the transformation in this institution since the 1970s, when that affiliation took place. I can’t imagine. It would have been, I think, a very hard thing for most people to have shared that vision, because everybody was looking at Peabody as this hopelessly encumbered institution with a terrible burden of debt, with few dreams flying around, let alone the money to make them happen. The transformation is—I mean, all you have to do is just look at the campus to see how the whole block has been transformed and the whole institution has really come into its own.

Bob Pierce came in as the successor to Elliott Galkin, and managed to pull the faculty back together again. He is a wonderfully dignified, soft-spoken man who is probably—I mean, after
working with him, I could see why he was the head of the union negotiating committee for the symphony. He has just tremendous powers of persuasion, and he really had a very—he was very healing, and things really did start to go very right under his administration.

**Warren:** Was he here at the time of the affiliation?

**Schaaf:** Yes, he was on the faculty.

**Warren:** But he wasn’t director?

**Schaaf:** No. He was appointed acting dean to replace Irving Lowens, and he was a wonderful choice because he was a person of great integrity. Certainly no one could fault his stature as a musician. He was a respected member of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra for many years, a fine teacher. My goodness, a number of his students have wonderful careers. I mean, not one, but a number of them. And a man who enjoyed the respect of his colleagues, so he was absolutely the right person to step in as first acting director and then director of the institution.

Bob Sirota was a brilliant choice as his successor, just a—’I mean, he is a real visionary, a phenomenally bright man. He’s always two jumps ahead of everybody else, and it’s interesting he’s a composer. Most of our directors have been—many of our directors have been composers, Deems, Southard, Hammerick, coming right up. Harold Randolph was a pianist, Peabody-educated, first American-born and trained pianist to achieve a first-rate career.

**Warren:** Who’s that?

**Schaaf:** Harold Randolph. It was under Harold Randolph that the preparatory department was brought into the Peabody. The department was headed up by May Garrettson Evans, who had
tried to interest Hammerick in taking it on. Hammerick thought it was a great idea, but never got around to bringing it under the aegis of the conservatory. So May Garrettson Evans just went off and established it herself.

Warren: Tell me about the prep. That’s one of the things I have on my list to talk about.

Schaaf: Well, she was a Peabody-trained musician. She was a newspaper reporter for the [Baltimore] Sun and a rare flower indeed during those days. She went down to apply for the job as music and theater critic, which her brother had, and he had gone on to another post. The editor asked her why she thought she could do this job, and she said, “Well, actually, I’ve been writing a lot of my brother’s reviews when he didn’t have time to go to this concert or that event,” and pointed out which ones she had actually written, and they were pretty good.

So she got the job, and she was actually beating the bushes for a news story and there wasn’t a thing happening, and so she decided to go up and interview Asger Hammerick. There’s always been this problem of musicians coming into the conservatory with inadequate training. “Don’t you think it would be a really good idea for Peabody to run a preparatory department, where they could get first-rate training by Peabody-trained faculty and they wouldn’t have to go through this agonizing process of relearning how to play and da-da-da?”

And he said, “Yeah, that’s a very good idea.”

So she went back and wrote this big story about how Asger Hammerick was contemplating the institution of a preparatory department at Peabody. She kept after him about it, and it just never happened, so finally she just went ahead and did it herself, rounded up a bunch of her friends, including Harold Randolph’s wife, who had become the next director, and rented 17
East—I think it was 17 East Centre Street. She figured they’d use the first floor and rent the rooms above, which would pay for the building, and she put a big ad in the *Sun* paper.

She not only had enough students to fill her projected list, but ended up having to use every square inch of the building for music lessons. She had a tremendous enrollment, and she had several hundred students all of a sudden. The place just went like gangbusters.

So when Hammerick left, he was replaced by Harold Randolph. Randolph was very much interested in the education of musicians, and bothered very much by the fact that if you’re good, you perform and you have a career. If you’re not so good, you teach. This was something that really bothered him. I mean, that’s not to say that even then all the people who taught were second-rate musicians, but there were, in fact, a lot of second-rate musicians who were teaching, who hadn’t really been trained to teach. He thought that it would be a very interesting idea to start a program geared specifically to training teachers.

So they started the teacher training program, which was a very new thing at the conservatory and in a conservatory. The idea of having this preparatory attached was perfect, because it would provide a laboratory where these young teachers could teach and be supervised, and there would also be master teachers on the faculty who would be an example, whom the younger teachers could go to for advice.

So it was May Garrettson Evans who brought the Peabody Graduates School, which is what she called it, because the faculty were all graduates of Peabody, and brought that into the conservatory. The preparatory was brought into the conservatory of music as a subsidiary of the conservatory and to educate young musicians, to give them good, solid early training, and also to
provide a place where young teachers could get experience, good first-hand experience, in a supervised situation.

Warren: Great.

Schaaf: And it soon became the biggest institution of its kind in the country. May started settlement schools in poor areas of town, and it was the first institution of its kind to teach Native American dance. Toward the end of her tenure, May Garrettson Evans and her younger sister Bessie and her sister Marian took themselves out West to an Indian reservation and did some of the earliest studies of Native American dance. They presented the fruit of their work at the American Museum of Natural History in New York and at the Peabody Museum at Yale. Bessie and May published a book on Native American dance, showing the dance steps, which was so well done that recently our director of the preparatory department wanted to have some of the students perform these dances.

I had just come from working with my colleagues at the Peabody Museum at Harvard, and I knew that there are a lot of sensitive areas there. I mean, this is not an area I knew a lot about, but I knew that this is an area that you really needed to ask somebody about before you did it. So I said, “Before you do this, it would be a good idea to contact the curatorial person at Peabody Museum at Harvard, to let them know what you’re doing.”

So they sent the diagram of the dance steps out that they wanted done, and they got a frantic call saying, “You can’t do this. This is a very serious, very sacred dance that white people aren’t supposed to know about.” But May had apparently made such an impression on the teachers that they taught her all of these secret dances, very sacred works. And Bessie went home
with May and wrote them up and published them! [Laughter] So this book is a very important thing, and they said that she had done a phenomenal job. The illustrations in the book were actually done by a Native American illustrator. They’re quite handsome. They’re very beautiful.

Warren: That’s an interesting story.

Schaaf: But isn’t that amazing.

Warren: You may have stopped a major scandal there, Elizabeth.

Schaaf: I mean, you know, it’s just—they wanted to be very respectful of this genre, and they wanted to make sure they weren’t going to offend anyone, and it was a good thing we checked.

Warren: I think so. Do you think you can say that—and in many ways you’ve already answered this question, but succinctly do you think you can say that the Peabody has a personality?

Schaaf: Yes, I think so. Years ago, there was a magazine called Dwight’s Journal, and it was like Musical America today. It was the leading voice, I mean national voice in periodicals. Dwight’s predicted that Peabody would probably more than fulfill its destiny if it provided a decent place where young musicians could get a decent traditional education. I don’t know whether Asger Hammerick read that. I’m sure he probably did. But the people who have governed Peabody from early on have had a just different take on things.

It’s always been, even from Hammerick’s day, the place where the traditions of music are respected and honored and perpetuated, but it’s also a place that’s very much oriented toward tomorrow. It’s an institution whose business is the future. I mean, that’s why you train young
musicians. And it’s always been a place where you could try out new ideas and look at new ways of doing things and to hear new voices. I really think that’s been its strength over the years.

We were the first conservatory to have an electronic music studio. This was in 1965-1966 season. I was here when they brought the first synthesizer in the door at Peabody. My interest was early music. I mean, I had no interest in contemporary music when I came here, but I got caught up in performing contemporary music because it was so exciting and there was so much going on here. And it wasn’t happening at Juilliard. It wasn’t happening at Curtis. It wasn’t happening at New England. It was happening here in the conservatory that was limping on from year to year, wondering whether there was enough money to pay the faculty.

It’s just an amazing place. It’s a place where somebody could decide, “Gosh, we should teach Native American dance,” and so they did, and did in a very serious way. It’s wonderful to respect the past. It’s wonderful to keep those traditions and honor those traditions, but it’s really great to have your eye on the horizon, and Peabody’s been very fortunate in having people guide this institution who kept their eye on that horizon.

Warren: You’ve answered my next question in answering that, as well as the one I asked you. You’re doing a great job, Elizabeth. What haven’t I asked you? What should we be talking about that we haven’t?

Schaaf: Oh, my goodness. Well, we’ve talked about so many things. We’ve talked just about a few of the students who have come out of here. One of the things that I guess we haven’t talked about is how so many people from Peabody have insinuated themselves into the fabric of our lives
locally. It's hardly possible to visit a school, a church, synagogue, that doesn't have a Peabody musician in it or several Peabody musicians.

The music education program at Peabody that Harold Randolph started all those years ago, after the turn of the century, has just turned out generations of really fine teachers. There's a member of our faculty who started studying in Cherry Hill as a Baltimore school child and was taught by one of the young women who was educated in the music education department, Shizona Thornton, who's a wonderful musician. And Gary Thomas, who's the head of the jazz department, studied with Shizona Thornton.

You can drive up Charles Street and tick off the organists and choir directors and church musicians who graduated from Peabody, who attended Peabody, who are currently on the Peabody faculty. It's hard to go to a symphony concert, you know, at Kennedy Center, with visiting orchestras without running into Peabody people sitting in the chairs. Atlanta National Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Boston, Berlin, I mean, they're just everywhere. Obviously somebody's been doing something right for a very long time here.

Warren: Obviously. Elizabeth, we're at the end of the tape. I can put in another one, but I sure have what I want here.

Schaaf: Good.

Warren: You probably have other work to do. Thank you so very much.

[End of interview]