

**The following is an extract from the unpublished memoirs of
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The Olsens: Friends and Patrons

Fred & Florence Olsen were Kit's first American patrons and remained our friends for almost forty years. We spent a lot of time with them in their house in Alton, Illinois in 1951 and 1952, and visited them often at Old Quarry, Leete's Island near Guilford, Connecticut from 1956 on. In that year we spent five or six summer weeks with them, and later we often visited them for a week or two whenever we were in the States. They came to stay with us many times, at first putting up at the Spread Eagle in Midhurst, later when we had a nice guest house in the garden of the Old Cottage they stayed there. When they were in London to sell one of Fred's many collections at Sotheby's they came down frequently. After Fred died in the mid-eighties (in his nineties), Kit and I visited Florence in April 1988, five months before Kit died.

When we first arrived in New York in 1949 with \$45 between us, my cousin (and guarantor) Ernst Mayer who was then still in charge of the Black Star photographic publishing company, often spoke of his painter friend Hans Moller who was working in New York and had a patron who bought his work regularly. E. (as he was always called in the family) hadn't met Fred Olsen but had heard of his collection of modern paintings and his generous patronage. He told us of this partly to encourage us, partly probably to encourage himself. Though he had known many impecunious artists of all sorts, painters, writers and musicians, and had lived a bohemian life in Berlin where he had worked for various famous publishing houses (possibly Ullstein, certainly Rohwolt), he felt responsible for us and hoped that we would 'make out'. At that time, before the 'beats' and hippies, the American work ethic was still very strong, and artists were expected to be 'regular guys' and to earn a living by teaching or doing commercial work.

After we had settled in New York, E. and his wife Clara introduced us to Hans and Helen Moller. They seemed to me a very much older couple, but could hardly have been so, but when one is young almost everybody seems much older. Hans exhibited at a well-known gallery in New

York. He was an amusing man, jokey, and a bit of a mimic. Helen seemed to me rather 'stodgy' & their life very 'German' and staid. There was no question, however much the men could talk about painting, that we would become real friends.

A little later Hans and Helen invited us to dinner at their midtown apartment. It was near the Waldorf, and they told us that their friends the Olsens had arrived in town unexpectedly that day, were staying at the Waldorf as usual, and would join us after dinner if they were not too tired. I remember not feeling at ease with the Mollers, disliking the 'Germanic' note. I felt myself to be very much an Englishwoman, and was still sensitive about speaking or hearing German, most of which I seemed to have forgotten. I remember Hans reminding me of a rather risqué rhyme which I'd never realised before had a double meaning.

When we got to the coffee and cake stage of the evening (and I knew how Kit would hate this, preferring a drink after dinner), Fred and Florence Olsen arrived. Fred was immediately jovial, always lively. He was a goodlooking man, not very tall, slim, with a fine, intelligent face, light-brown hair, very attractive but somewhat daunting. Florence seemed stiff that first evening. I thought her looks typically 'American', blond, smart, pleasant looking. She wore a bright green dress, and I noticed that her spectacles had exceptionally thick lenses.

We moved from the dining table to a sofa and armchairs, the conversation touched on politics, and John Foster Dulles was mentioned. Kit made some derogatory remark, and Fred said that Dulles was a close friend of his and a very fine, highly intelligent man. I felt more and more depressed.

Worse was to come. Helen Moller said to Florence: 'Kit is the brother of the poet George Barker whom you admire so much,' then turning to us she told us that Florence had recently had a cataract operation and, being fond of poetry, had memorised a great many poems for the time (necessary then) when she would have to 'go blind' before the operation could be done.

'Why don't you recite one of George Barker's poems,' Helen suggested, and Florence, without demur, sat back and said 'To My Mother'. Poor Kit. After all, she was his mother too. It was both embarrassing and painful for him. He was very homesick at that time, and it must have been really hard. I felt acutely uncomfortable. It seemed so extraordinary to have that poem said in those circumstances.

Soon after this the Olsens excused themselves. They had flown up from Alton and were tired. Fred turned to Kit and asked him for his address. 'I'd like to see some of your paintings sometime,' he said, but Kit and I agreed on our way home that we didn't think anything would come of this, that we hadn't 'clicked' with the Olsens.

We lived in 'Puerto Rican Harlem' in a fifth floor walk-up 'cold water' apartment. There was no telephone. A few weeks later we came home one night after a movie to find a visiting card stuck in our door. It was from the 'Canadian Club, Waldorf Astoria'. Fred had written on it that he had called on the off-chance of finding us home, that he would like to take us out to dinner the following evening, and would telephone me at work to arrange a meeting. Next day he phoned me at the office, and that evening we met him at the Waldorf, first for a drink, then for a meal at a splendid French restaurant around the corner.

Fred was always wonderful company. He was so many-sided, knowledgeable and interested in so many things, there was much to talk about. Throughout our friendship we tried to keep off politics, understanding that he was a keen Republican and that as guests in the U.S. we should not comment on American politics. I think it remained our only point of disagreement, sometimes painful when it could not be avoided (later Fred and Florence sometimes said they voted chiefly to cancel out their children's votes.)

At the end of a lively evening Fred said he would take us back home by taxi and look at some paintings. This would be a journey of over 60 city blocks. He asked the taxi driver to stop at a certain place, apologised, got out and went into a very grand confectioners. When he got back into the taxi with a prettily wrapped box, he told us it was a shop where he always bought chocolates for Florence. After getting out at 121st Street and climbing our five flights of stairs, he presented me with the box when he entered our flat. A narrow dark passage led to the kitchen with an icebox where a block of ice (delivered by the iceman every few days) dripped into a bowl and where there was a bath and a cubicle with a loo. There was a small room on either side: a narrow single bedroom and a slightly larger livingroom.

We sat drinking the coffee I had made, and Kit and Fred looked at paintings and drawings. At the end of the evening he bought two and took them away with him. We were delighted and amazed.

After that he often took us out to dinner when he was in New York and always brought us back home and bought a painting or drawing. I remember one occasion when he had his daughter Liz with him. She was studying art at Bennington College at the time, would have been about 20. She was friendly, somewhat shy, a bespectacled girl with an interesting face and a fringe, whom Hans Moller painted at about this time, a painting I always considered a brilliant portrait. As I remember it, he painted her face green which did not detract from the likeness or the attractiveness of the painting. He could probably have been a great portrait painter, sometimes portrayed himself when he painted figures of clowns and harlequins.

When we went to Yaddo for four months that winter, Kit and Fred corresponded. Kit had told Fred that he wanted to do wax etchings, a technique he had experimented with some years before. Fred, being an industrial chemist, was very interested in this and sent Kit packages of various kinds of industrial wax which Kit used successfully, layering the wax with colour and engraving into it. He showed (and sold) several wax etchings at the exhibition he had that winter (Jan. 1951) at the Weyhe Gallery in New York.

We had been planning to travel to the West Coast by Greyhound when we would end our stay at Yaddo in March (1951), and Fred had written that he and Florence would like us to stop off for a while at their house in Alton, Illinois. He suggested we let him know when we would get to the bus station at St Louis, and that he would collect us there.

We had travelled for 24 hours without stopping from New York to [Indianapolis], arriving there at midnight and had spent the rest of the night at a cheap hotel leaving early in the morning. I think we arrived in St. Louis about 2 or 3. Fred was there in his tan-coloured Cadillac. We were still (I can't imagine why) on 'Mr. and Mrs.' terms, and Fred told us that we wouldn't, unfortunately, find Mrs. Olsen at home, that she had had a gallbladder operation and was still in hospital. He said that they had decided not to tell us about it, in case it made us change our plans, fearing we would not be welcome. But, on the contrary, Florence was looking forward to finding us installed when she got home the following week. I found this most wonderfully kind and touching, often think of it as the keynote of our long and happy relationship, symbolising their warm and humane regard for other people.

The house was imitation-Tudor, very large (with at least six bedrooms on the first floor) in a very big garden, the whole part of a park-like estate of big houses outside Alton. The Olsens had

furnished the dark oak interior with modern furniture, had replaced some of the 'casement' windows with big picture windows, and had had a beautiful modern wall-to-wall carpet for their huge livingroom specially designed by Stuart Davis. The big hall with its carved oak staircase was tiled in small terracotta glazed octagonal Mexican tiles. Fred had told us in the car that we would find few paintings in the house, that they were being shown in an exhibition of local collections at the big museum in St. Louis. They would be back in a couple of days.

The bedrooms were modern and very comfortable, the colours muted and pleasant. We had our own bathroom. The kitchen was enormous and presided over by Mattie, a black cook out of a storybook or Hollywood movie. She had a heart as big as her grin and her huge arms which bulged out of the short sleeves of her white overall. She was a marvellous cook. The family at this point consisted of Fred and Florence, Fred's father 'Grandfather Olsen' in his mid-eighties, and their son Freddie with his young wife Betty who was a painter. Freddie worked with Fred at Olin Industries, was also a chemist, trained at MIT, in his later twenties. The young people lived a life of their own, and I cannot remember seeing a great deal of them, though I had some talks with Betty whom I liked and who told me some of her troubles; she had been trying to have a family and so far been unsuccessful. It did not occur to me at the time that we might have been intruding on them, that they might be jealous of the attention Kit was receiving from Fred who installed him in a big bright studio adjacent to the utility room with its washing machines etc., and told him to use his account at the local artists material store.

Now at last we got on Christian name terms over the 'toddies' Fred served before dinner each night, and began to learn a little about our hosts' background, and this seems a good place to write about this.

Fred was born in Newcastle-on-Tyne in England. His father was Norwegian, had been sent to England as a young man to 'make his fortune' and gone into the paper business. He had married a Newcastle girl, and Fred was the only child. Prodigiously clever, he had got a scholarship to the local Grammar School & had just obtained one to Oxford when his father went bankrupt and took the family to Canada.

There Fred at first worked as a lumberjack to put himself through college, then taught school while he was himself studying, getting degrees in chemistry and mineralogy at the University of

Toronto. He became a successful industrial chemist, met Florence, a Canadian girl, and they married in 1917 when she was 17 and he maybe five or so years older.

I have their wedding photograph, just the two of them. They are wearing ordinary clothes, she is in a dark dress with a wide white collar, a pretty, serious girl with fine, thoughtful features. Fred has a great grin on his face, is wearing a stiff high collar with rounded edges, a dark suit with a waistcoat. His forehead looks enormous, and his ears stick out.

Around this time Fred was asked to go and work for the Government of the United States, becoming an American citizen in 1922 when he was appointed Head of Explosives and Ammunition Research for the U.S. Army. He invented 'smokeless gunpowder', always rather a mystery to me. (I connect it with the small cartridges which were said to be his invention [but not meant for this purpose], with which Grandfather Olsen always lit the barbecue, gloating over the miraculous little gadgets which were kept in a container afloat in some substance and ignited the charcoal without any trouble.) Fred & Florence lived in accommodation provided by the Government near the plant where Fred worked.

Later, when Fred became Director of Research at Olin Industries and became a wealthy man, and after his mother had died, Grandfather Olsen came to live with them, first in the town of Alton, then in the house we knew. Olin Industries which, I think, owned or was connected with the Winchester Factory in New Haven, were located in Alton but later moved to New Haven, and when we first knew Fred and Florence, Fred often went to New Haven in the company plane. A few years later the Olsens built their house at Leete's Island within easy reach of New Haven and moved there in 1953.

The day after we arrived at the Alton house in March 1951, Fred took us to see Florence in hospital. She welcomed us kindly and told us she was looking forward to seeing us at home, that she would have to rest a lot but was sure we would amuse ourselves.

When we got back the paintings had arrived. Fred suggested that since we had no idea how they had been hung before, we should all three choose where to hang them, thus giving the house a different look. It was a lovely job and we enjoyed ourselves very much. I remember my amazement at the gorgeous colours of the many large Hofmann paintings. There was one with a great magenta band which we hung over the fireplace where I looked at it every evening when we had our toddies at that end of the big room. The Motherwell under glass went in the hall, the small

Picasso of a bowl of cherries, very thickly painted, was hung beside the fireplace and near it the Miro rug which was later used on the floor of the Connecticut house. I begged Fred to let me hang the Klee in our bedroom, and we had an early Jackson Pollock watercolour over our bed. It was difficult but fun to hang some large paintings in the stairwell. We clambered about on ladders, and in the end everything had found a place. I think it was then that I first saw the various Hans Mollers, the green portrait of Liz in Fred and Florence's bedroom, the Marygolds, which I always liked, in the breakfast room, and many more. I think Fred and Florence already had the table Hans had made for them. The tiles were painted with some of his special themes, flowers and the harlequin which bore his face.

Once Florence was back, many of her friends called, many of them wives of Olin Directors, some living nearby, all exceptionally nice, cheerful, especially Bea Elfred, full of bawdy jokes, so soon to die of cancer. Kit spent a lot of time in the studio, and Fred was delighted to come home each day to some new paintings. 'Two a day,' the newspaper cutting says. Before we left three weeks later, Fred arranged an exhibition in the studio, and friends and the press turned up in force. The article was in the Alton Evening Telegraph (no date, but it must have been early April 1951), and there is a big photograph of a large painting 'Woman With A Headache', with Kit crouched on the floor to one side, explaining something, and me standing on the other side. The painting (which I remember as more or less monochrome) is of a 'Henry Moorish' female figure, her two hands holding her head (the shape of an attenuated horizontal rugger ball) which floats some distance above the body. It is a very attractive piece.

We made friends with some young people connected with the arts whom Fred and Florence invited to the house, and left after a very happy three weeks to continue on our way via Lawrence (Kansas), Denver, a month in Taos (New Mexico) to San Francisco where we stayed for 11 months, arriving back at Alton a year to the day of our first arrival there: St. Patrick's Day. This time Fred wore an even more outrageous St. Patrick's Day tie!

Kit had had a beautiful exhibition at the Palace of the Legion of Honor in S.F., had taught at the California School of Fine Arts, and I had my first novel published while we were in San Francisco. Fred and Florence had suggested we come to Alton again and spend the spring and summer at the house while they were at times in residence, at others in New Haven. Freddie and

Betty had moved away in the meantime, and we were able to keep Grandfather Olsen company. We were given the run of the house, the cars and the liquor cabinet.

Fred and Florence were probably there half the time. Fred was still collecting modern paintings, and crates of paintings often arrived which Kit helped to open and unpack when Fred got back, and then there was the happy task of hanging paintings again.

Fred was a natural collector. I don't know what he collected as a boy, the first collection I heard about was one of coins. That may, of course, have started very early and only reached its fruition when Fred had money to spend on it. While he was connected with Olin and therefore Winchester, he started to collect guns and also to go out duck shooting. This led him to paintings of duckshoots, and I think this was the beginning of his interest in paintings. The coins and guns had certainly long gone, but his interest in modern paintings continued to the end of his life by which time he had accumulated many other collections and given them away, sold or dispersed them.

Though he had bought one or two well-known paintings at first, like the Klee and the Picasso, his interest was almost immediately captured by young, mostly abstract and chiefly American painters. His fascination must have been like a love-affair, he wanted to know all about it, he wanted to find out what produced creativity, and 'how it was done'. His interest in the source of creativity continued to the end of his life, and he later took part in seminars and lectured on the subject. This also made him start painting himself, and he and Florence had gone to Provincetown one summer to join Hans Hofmann's classes.

Going flat out for any subject that interested him was typical of Fred, and Florence was never left behind. Not long before we knew them, probably when they first acquired the Alton house in its extensive garden, they became interested in plants and flowers and joined a course in Botany at Washington University, St. Louis. When his company asked him to take part in tennis tournaments, Fred and Florence went to a tennis coach to reach tournament standard. Probably deprived of such tuition in their youth, they went to dancing classes in the forties.

While we were in Alton, Fred mainly bought paintings by Hofmann, John Ferren, John Grillo, Panos Ghikas, Moller, and continued to add some of Kit's paintings to his collection. Kit was still painting in the downstairs studio. His paintings had become more abstract in the intervening year. After the birds, fish etc. and the big Crucifixion of his New York show, he had become fascinated

with abstracted forms of catherine wheels and pendulums, leading to the completely abstract paintings of this time which he exhibited that summer in various shows in and around St. Louis, including a big one-man show at the St. Louis Artists' Guild which Fred arranged for him. They were very positive and dashing, painted thickly in strong, bright colours and had such titles as 'Echoes of the Clavicord', 'Negotiate the Pendulum', and 'Linear Arrangement on Papal Field'. I remember a large green painting of that time 'Green Hero' which Fred and Florence bought on one of their returns to the house.

We enjoyed our time at Alton, delighting in the unfamiliar mid-western spring with its lovely delicately flowering dogwood bushes and the trilliums under the trees, the amazingly scarlet cardinal birds, the speed of growth as the weather got hot. Kit went in for archery in the grassy 'bowl' beyond the big picture window, we took the car down to the Mississippi once the hot weather made evening cool desirable, and drank a bottle or two of beer. Once we went down the Mississippi in a canoe with one of the young friends we had made, a delightful and seemingly unhazardous trip down that huge river under the extraordinarily man-made looking bluffs. The summer weather became very hot, and we used Fred's leather-lined study, the only airconditioned room in the house, and sometimes had to have cold showers in the middle of the night. We went about in the Cadillac or the Chevy, but were often broke. The only money we were earning was from the occasional sale of one of Kit's paintings, and the irregular cheques from San Francisco where some of our friends had bought work for which they were still paying. I was under contract for another novel with Putnams, but I was not working as well as Kit.

We had made pleasant friends with painters in St. Louis, especially Wallie Barker and his wife Tookie. Wallie had been a Philip Guston student, and we had a lot of things in common: painting, youth, even our surname. We spent much time together at their St. Louis apartment and at the Olsen house also, going for picnics and excursions. We met other St. Louis painters and some of the Museum people of the time.

At the house we were looked after and spoilt by Mattie and the 'house boy' Walter, an amiable black youth who was studying to be a mortitian. He used to recite his lessons while sweeping the hall or balcony, pushing the dust this way and that, moving his feet elegantly to some internal jazz rhythm. Sometimes he asked us to 'hear' his gruesome lessons.

Grandfather Olsen was amiable, delighted to be asked to light the barbecue, bored us with tales of the paper trade, and sometimes kicked over the traces by walking out and going to the races. Though nominally 'responsible' for him, and once awake half the night waiting for his return, we didn't take too much notice of the old gentleman. He sometimes had 'turns' when he stayed in bed. Mattie took him some food and reported on his progress. At that age we took our responsibilities lightly! He liked to play gin rummy at toddy time before dinner, and Kit and I obliged when Florence wasn't there. She was incredibly kind and patient with him.

One of the pleasures when Fred and Florence returned from Connecticut were the reports they brought back of the progress of the new house. They had engaged an architect-trained painter called Tony Smith to design it. I remember the first plans of the house spread on the dining table at Alton. They were more like abstract drawings, not unlike Kit's, with big swirls showing the dynamics of the building Tony hoped to design.

I think it is one of the most exciting and successful modern houses ever built. The site, an old granite quarry (the granite is pink) is part of a small peninsula which sticks out into Long Island Sound. The house sits on one of the highest points and overlooks both the Sound and, looking inland, a little bay with houses and boats. The rocks fall away steeply on three sides, the fourth is the approach road. One can clamber down to a lower level (taking care, to avoid the poison ivy) where, by the shore, Freddie built himself a house at that time, later adding a studio right beside the small dock.

Fred and Florence's own house has, in the intervening 35 years, been slightly altered and added to, but these alterations are completely in line with the original concept. The main house is a one-story building, curved like an open hand which half encircles a central swimming-pool. The building was at first divided by a covered passage linking the large sunbathing deck around the pool with a cantilevered deck sticking out high above the rocks and facing Long Island Sound. Later the two parts of the building were linked up to make it into one continuous room, only partly divided three quarters of the way along by a short piece of wall which holds the kitchen cabinets, freezer and fridge, so that the kitchen is open to the living area, and on the other side a corridor leads to the bedroom which ends the building to the north-east. The house sits above the garage and a large gallery for the various collections and, excavated later, libraries and work rooms for Fred, a small bedroom etc. for 'help', a big utility space for workshop and washing-machines. From

there a small circular staircase and a delightful little lift go up to the big room above, the lift loved by children and much used for transporting vast quantities of liquor.

To the north of the swimming pool, the guest house stands on tall tree trunks. It is built of wood with a balcony overlooking the swimming pool and the house, and a smaller one looking inland. There is a double bedroom at each end, and in the middle a kitchen and bathroom with shower. The kitchen windows look away from the house to the little bay. We've had wonderful times there, sometimes sharing with friends whom the Olsens allowed us to invite.

The guest house is approached by a high-stilted ramp, originally just roofed, but now the bottom part is glassed in and makes a greenhouse space for Florence's beautiful tropical plants. She has always been an inspired gardener and despite the salty air and water has cultivated some lovely shrubs and flower-beds as well as great masses of periwinkles on a knoll topped by a large abstract sculpture.

At one end of the huge livingroom an enormous window, probably over 15 foot high, overlooks the drive and neighbouring woods, and this room is divided into living spaces by the placing of a desk and sofas, by different colour-schemes, and by a circle of chairs around the free-standing, acorn-shaped fireplace which another architect 'Rib' Ribley designed. He also devised the lights on the ceiling made of many individual triangular lamps painted in pastel colours. Beyond the fireplace and before reaching the kitchen area, there is the long dining table and a TV corner. Big southwest windows face the Sound, (there are wonderful sunsets), but there are also great wall-spaces for paintings, especially as the end with the great window is very high, curving down to the ordinary height of the kitchen and bedroom area.

Tony Smith was for many years a frequent visitor at Old Quarry, and when we were there in 1956 he was often part of a large crowd of young people who were variously employed and/or entertained there, people like Bill Murray who was helping Fred install his newest collection of Pre-Columbian art. By then Freddie and Betty had had two children and were living in the house below, Liz and her husband Hank lived not far away with their baby, and everybody came to swim, for barbecues and parties. One of Tony's party pieces was reciting the Anna Livia Plurabelle passage from Finnegans Wake, while Fred could 'say' the whole of The Waste Land. I remember his once keeping us spellbound most of the way from Alton to St. Louis. Florence, who knew a lot of poetry by heart and wrote poetry all her life, could always remember a quotation or poem when

needed, but I do not remember her ever joining the poetry recitals of the men, and although she kept her end up with gin and tonics, she was quiet, more interested in serious conversation than the (sometimes raucous) singing of songs and general horseplay. But she had many funny stories and a wonderful sense of humour, nor did I ever feel that she resented the way her house was taken over by so many young strangers. Kit often sang on those occasions, and Florence still has a tape he made during one of our stays. When we lived in New York he had once sung on a WQXR folksong programme.

I remember parties down in the 'gallery' among the Pre-Columbian figures (and an occasion when an inebriated guest picked up one of these priceless treasures by its small head), on the deck by the swimming pool (the cantilevered deck and alcohol were mutually exclusive!) and under the guest house where there was a little rocky glade, and where the barbecue was occasionally set up. There were expeditions for more bottles by Fred and willing helpers, first to the 'cellar', then to the Liquor Store on the main road which never seemed to close. It was my first acquaintance with gallon-size gin bottles!

Some years later and somewhat soberer, we met in London. There was one occasion when Fred and Florence stayed in Half Moon Street, and Kit and I in a small hotel in Marylebone, when we met every evening to go to the theatre. The early start of London theatres didn't allow dinner before the curtain went up, so Fred devised the two-tier dinner, and we would eat hors d'oeuvres or smoked salmon at the hotel before the theatre, and come back for the rest of the meal afterwards. An admirable arrangement. We had a wonderful time. In 1961 we were at Old Quarry again.

In the mid-sixties, on one of Fred and Florence's annual medical check-ups, Fred was found to have cancer of the bowel. Before we knew anything about it he was taken into hospital and operated on. What was found was so serious and extensive that nothing could be done about it. He was told that he had no more than 6 months to live and proceeded to 'put his affairs in order', making sure Florence would have no problems when he was gone. He had already given some of his modern collection away, now sold the famous Pollock 'Blue Poles' which had hung in the New York apartment they had acquired in the fifties. In 1954 he and Florence had established the Olsen Foundation which toured American colleges and museums with a collection of modern paintings, Pre-Columbian, Coptic and Persian art. Some of the modern paintings were given to local schools and libraries. (When Kit, Thomas and I were at Old Quarry in 1972, we went to hear Fred give a

slide lecture on the Arawaks at the local school and walked down a corridor flanked with Kit's paintings.)

Later that year they came to London where we met. I remember well going to their room high up in the London Hilton, then quite new, with its wonderful view over the city. We had lunch together, Fred and Florence as cheerful and good company as ever, and at one point Fred said, 'Just look at my suit,' showing me a sleeve on the point of fraying, 'It's really a disgrace, but I don't see why I should buy new clothes if I'm not going to need them.' They had accepted his imminent death stoically.

For a while we were constantly afraid of bad news from Connecticut, but he lived another 20 years. The doctors said the cancer had sealed itself off. Among family and friends it was known as 'Fred's miracle.'

Following his interest in Pre-Columbian art, Fred had become fascinated by the Arawaks during his many stays on Antigua where they had owned a house. He created the Mill Reef Museum, and began excavating at English Harbour on the island and to study the origins of the Arawaks, lecturing and writing on the subject for some years which culminated in his fascinating book 'On the Trail of the Arawaks', published by the University of Oklahoma Press in 1974. These studies filled much of the last years of his life.

But Fred was never exclusive and kept up his interest in modern painting. He could never resist a painting he liked and always went home with another one or two of Kit's when he and Florence visited us. In the early seventies, on one such visit, having just fallen in love with three of Kit's paintings (one of them of Cattle Grazing on the Gower Marshes which was hanging in the downstairs library when we were last at Old Quarry), he reiterated that his time of buying paintings had really come to an end, that there wasn't any more space at Old Quarry, that he was now going to concentrate on ancient cultures and artefacts. To conclude his years of being Kit's patron he commissioned him to paint one last canvas 'as large as you like' on any subject.

When Fred and Florence had left, Kit erected scaffolding in his studio and painted a seven foot long canvas of a series of waterfalls which was rolled, and airfreighted to Connecticut. It was the perfect size for the large space nearest the big window in the livingroom there and still looked wonderful when Kit and I visited Old Quarry in April 1988. In the scribbles of the rockfaces and falling water, Kit hid Fred and Florence's names.

When we visited Fred and Florence with Thomas (aged 9) in 1972, life was still much as it had been, though Fred suffered from arthritis in his knees and admitted to being in constant pain. He walked with a stick but was 'game' to walk about the village and harbour of Mystic, Connecticut, where Thomas much enjoyed the schooners and whalers. Fred had a special rapport with Thomas who was his happy assistant in working the lift and fetching bottles, putting on slide-shows, going to the post office, etc. To alleviate Fred's arthritis by making the swimming pool useable all the year round, it had been enclosed in a great tent-like structure. It spoilt the look of the house but did a great job for Fred's disability.

We swam in it again, and Thomas paddled Liz's canoe in it when we visited Fred and Florence in 1978. Fred was less mobile, had aged, but things were still very much as before with slide-shows and wonderful dinner parties with family and friends. It was soon after this that Freddie suddenly died of cancer and Fred's health, and especially his eyesight, began to deteriorate.