

An Interview With Jeanmarie Joyce

Quotes from Jeanmarie Joyce

“My parents rented a house on the Borderland estate and she would call the house once or twice a week and ask if we could come over to the mansion for a visit. When I met her (Blanche), I was 10 years old... my father and I would walk over to the mansion. My father would have coffee and Mrs. Ames and I would go out and collect the chicken eggs in the chicken coop. We would walk around the grounds and she would point out her favorite trees flowers, cows and horses. During the summer, she would call Dad and let him know that it was okay for him to come over and swim in the pool. My two brothers and I would walk to the mansion (1 mile) and go swim at the pool. The pool was a stone-lined pool that was spring-fed. It was very cold. She (Blanche) would come down and sit by the edge of the pool and we would talk about her life at Borderland.”

“Mrs. Ames was very down to earth. She fed the chickens and called them by their names, but she also would like to go out in the field and would show me how she experimented with balloons to try and stop the Nazis from bombing England. She explained how important it was for women to be able to work on their own and she would let me ring the bell that she rang every day from the time her house was built until women got the vote. She believed in supporting her husband by illustrating his books, but at the same time she had her own identity as an artist. She also showed me her copies of the masters (paintings) which allowed her to learn their methods of painting and allowed her to improve on her own method in painting.”

“One thing that I got from Mrs. Ames is the fact that she used objects in her daily life to help the world: balloons to catch planes, sounding a bell to bring attention to women’s rights, and developing a color method to categorize her own colors that is widely used in the artist community today. Mrs. Ames felt that women had a right to their own opinion, and would voice that opinion even if it was in conflict with her family’s views. Her own sister-in-laws, the other Mrs. Ames, did not believe that women should have the right to vote.”