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I remember most the comradery. I was young, teaching Western art from the seventeenth century to the present, my identity as an “Americanist” inchoate and ill-formed. Being in the same hotel conference room and in conversation with the likes of Milton Brown, William Homer, Wayne Craven, and Matthew Baigell was so affirming. We all felt a bit rebellious, like separatists in Puritan times, creating our own church. We laughed about our new acronym—“AH-HA”—trusting it would be taken seriously. Those leading the movement were faculty from the CUNY Graduate Center, the University of Delaware, and the University of Illinois at Chicago. As I recall, the early AHAA gatherings consisted of a CAA session dedicated to American art, followed immediately by a business meeting. There would be an agenda for the meeting, but mostly the floor was open for announcements, queries, and reporting of members’ projects. It was wonderful to hear what people were working on and to put faces to names. I recall something like twenty to thirty people at the very first meetings; the numbers grew exponentially every year as our field exploded. The newsletter reported that one hundred people attended the CAA AHAA meeting in 1986.

There was one item of business that we could count upon annually. We were to pay our yearly \$3 dues (eventually \$5) right then and there to cover the cost of mailing the newsletter to members three to four times a year. The hard-working and deeply committed David Sokol and the staff at the University of Illinois at Chicago compiled the newsletters from information that individual members voluntarily mailed to them about exhibitions, dissertations-in-progress, books and catalogues published, programs, queries, and announcements. At least once, an obituary. David compiled the information on mimeographed sheets—anywhere from five to eighteen pages—and mailed them to members from 1979 to 1987, when William Homer and the University of Delaware took over. I always looked forward to these newsletters for their information and for the ways they expressed AHAA’s missionary spirit and cohesiveness. Archive lover that I am, I filed away the first ten years of them.

One other memory I have is of an early panel discussion AHAA sponsored on how to comply with requests from commercial art galleries and auction houses to authenticate works of art. To this day I follow Jules Prown’s tips on giving pro bono opinions: use plain paper (never letterhead) and employ language carefully to thwart the possibility of lawsuits. When some questioned whether art historians should have any involvement with the marketplace, Pat Hills argued passionately to wield our training in connoisseurship and expertise to help keep fakes and copies out of circulation. I have followed these guidelines ever since.

Another tidbit: I gave my first CAA paper at the January 1978 meeting, in a session Milton Brown chaired titled simply “American Art.” My knees still knock remembering how nervous I was. The volume 1, number 1, Spring 1979 AHAA Newsletter announced that “The

Association of Historians of American Art was formed following the final sessions of the College Art Association on January 28, 1978.” It also stated that the office of AHAA was located at the CUNY Graduate Center, and although no name was mentioned, that was where Milton Brown chaired art history. So maybe I was somehow “present” at AHAA’s inception at CAA in 1978, and my anxiety about giving a paper drowned out other reminiscences. What I easily recall, however, is that once launched, AHAA immediately became my intellectual home at CAA meetings.