

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with

HERMAN R. FRIIS

Former Director, Center for Polar Archives

Major Biographical Information:

Born, Chicago, Illinois	1905
B.A., University of California at Los Angeles	1931
Credential, Summer Institute, Imperial University of Japan, Tokyo	1931
Graduate Student, Stanford University	1931
M.A., University of California, Berkeley	1932-1934
Graduate Student, University of Wisconsin	1935-1937
Instructor, University of Southern Illinois	1937-1938
Geographer-Archivist, Division of Maps and Charts, National Archives	1938-1942
Lieutenant (Officer-in-Charge) to Captain, Cartographic Branch, Arctic, Desert, and Tropic Information Center, Army Air Corps	1942-1944
Captain (Officer-in-Charge) to Major, Map Division, China Theater, Office of Strategic Services	1944-1946
Assistant Chief, Division of Cartographic Records, National Archives	1946-1952
Chief, Division of Cartographic Records	1952-1959
Chief, Technical Records Division	1959-1961
Senior Specialist in Cartographic Records	1961-1967
Director, Center for Polar Archives	1967-1976
Retired	1976

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Former Director, Center for Polar Archives
Interviewed at Washington, DC

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Philip C. Brooks, Interviewer

BROOKS: Herman, as indicated on the list of topics I sent to you recently, I am primarily interested in your comments and interpretation, your memory of what are the important aspects that should be dealt with by any person who is doing a history of the Archives, or persons who are doing training work, or current administrators or scholars interested in the National Archives or records problem of the Government. In the first place, I always ask people for a little of their own background so that we could see what kind of people came into these places in the very early days--their background, their special competence, and their interest--that certainly has a great deal to do with the development of the National Archives. So, you have a processed outline of your main academic professional activities. Since that is available we don't have to duplicate it, but I hope you'll talk a little bit about your background, with special reference to how it qualified you for or affected your work here in the Maps Division.

FRIIS: Thanks very much Phil. This is, in a sense, a considerable measure of reminiscence because it goes back 35 years of employment here in the National Archives. You, of course, were here before I was. A very wonderful and rewarding 35 years it has been. Indeed, I have been

privileged. You ask me to discuss briefly my academic or professional background for the period prior to my being employed by the National Archives.

I received my B.A. degree (a double major) in geography and geology from the University of California at Los Angeles in the early spring of 1931. For some 3 years I had been a geology major with a minor in geography. But the "Great Depression" by 1930 had seriously affected employment in geology so I then emphasized my work in geography in order to receive a double major and hopefully to major in geography in graduate school. I was totally dependent on my own resources so had a variety of jobs usually between 6 p.m. and midnight. My major in geology emphasized invertebrate paleontology which is a field closely related to exploration for petroleum.

Shortly after I changed my major to geography I was invited by Dr. George M. McBride, Chairman of the Geography Department, to accept a position in the Department as map curator. This was of particular importance not alone because it gave me a small but useful salary but importantly it served to whet my interest in historical cartography.

Also, importantly, late in 1929 the University of California at Los Angeles moved from its so-called Vermont Avenue campus in the city to a beautiful new campus in the rolling hills of Westwood a few miles west of Beverly Hills. The Geography Department had been allocated large new quarters in Royce Hall including several special rooms for the map and atlas collection. I was made responsible for arrangement and description and of custodial servicing of the collection to members of the Department faculty.

Upon graduation in February 1931 I worked on the campus in order to save money for a planned 5-months to and in the Japanese Empire. Here I planned to travel and locate a region for field reconnaissance and intensive study hopefully for a Ph.D. dissertation in historical geography and cartography at the University of California at Berkeley.

In Japan during the months of June and early July I attended a summer session in an Institute (in English) in the Imperial University of Tokyo, 1 week of which was held in the Imperial University in Kyoto. The Institute emphasized professional subjects such as geography and history of Japan. During my attendance at the Institute in Tokyo I taught a class in conversational English at the Tokyo YMCA. Here I met and made friends with Japanese businessmen and teachers who were very helpful to me in making contacts for obtaining cartographic, photographic, and general geographic information, especially about the prefecture of Niigata on the west coast and Sakhalin Island, the two regions I was to reconnaissance for final selection for a dissertation subject.

During the latter part of July all of August and early September I did travel extensively in Niigata Prefecture and in Sakhalin Island. I returned to the United States in September and matriculated in the Graduate School of Stanford University. During this quarter (October thru December) I was a graduate student in the History Department with specialties in Far Eastern history. I returned too late from Japan to matriculate in the second (1931) semester in the Graduate School at Berkeley. My work at Stanford was an interim specialization, especially with Professor Ichihashi in Japanese history.

In January 1932 I became a graduate student in the Geography Department of the University of California at Berkeley. In addition to taking a full course of study I worked nights at various jobs and was given a readership. I minored in history (United States and Far Eastern) and a minor in junior college education. My graduate work here under Professors Carl O. Sauer and John B. Leighly gave me an insight into and encouraged my interest in historical geography and historical geography. In 1934 I completed my work for an M.A. in Geography with minors in history and education. I also received credentials for teaching in Junior Colleges in California.

In 1934 I received word from the Department of Geography in the University of Wisconsin in Madison that I had been awarded a teaching assistantship and a research fellowship, the latter working in historical geography under Professor Glenn T. Trewartha whose special fields were the Geography of Japan and Historical Geography of the United States.

By 1935 the Japanese had moved into Manchuria and were at war with China. It was obvious that I could not return to Sakhalin Island to complete field reconnaissance and research for a Ph.D. dissertation because even when I was there in 1931 I was given continuous surveillance by Japanese agents--the southern half of this Island Karafuto was controlled by the Japanese Colonial Office and the Japanese military.

My minor was American History. Several courses in the American Frontier and the American West given by Professor John D. Hicks and courses in historical geography by Professor J. Russell Whitaker and Professor Glenn T. Trewartha excited my interest as a substitute for historical geography

of the Japanese Empire, especially Sakhalin Island because circumstances of war in Asia made it impossible to return.

My research toward a Ph.D. dissertation now was directed to a demographic study of the distribution of population in Colonial America 1625-1790. This was to be a textual-cartographic study. I completed the Ph.D. exams and course work in a minor, history, as well as course work in my major, geography. During 1936-1937 I was appointed by the University to be geographer-cartographer on a salary in charge of cartographic work on Wisconsin being done for the American Guide Series of the Historical Records program of Wisconsin. The maps and related compilation were reproduced in the American Guide Series volume on Wisconsin.

In July 1937 I received an invitation from Dr. Thomas A. Barton, chairman of the Department of Geography and Geology in the Southern Illinois Normal College in Carbondale, to accept a 1-year appointment in his Department. The salary of \$2,700 was better than average during these Depression years. Professors Vernor C. Finch (Chairman), Loyal Durand, and J. Russell Whitaker were my mentors who sponsored me for the position. During the summer I had sent my credentials and application to the United States Civil Service Commission in Washington and had received a passed rating as geographer that placed my name on the register for a possible position with the Climatic and Physiographic Division of the Soil Conservation Service and for service on the staff of the Tennessee Valley Authority. During my stay at the College I was responsible for developing a course program and teaching in geology and several courses in geography.

An important turning point in my career occurred in December 1937 when I was invited to meet with Mr. W.L.G. Joerg, then President of the Association of American Geographers, having its annual meeting at the University of ^{Michigan} Nudugan in Ann Arbor. Upon my arrival at the meeting I was met by Dr. S. Whittemore Boggs, the Geographer of the Department of State in Washington. He informed me that Mr. Joerg was ill and had asked him to interview me and several other applicants for a position in the Division of Maps and Charts in the National Archives, of which he (Joerg) recently had been appointed chief. Early in January I received an appointment as a P-2 (Professional Geographer-Historian) in Mr. Joerg's Division. Dr. Roscoe Pulliam and Dr. Thomas A. Barton kindly offered me a permanent position at the college. However, I was especially impressed by the seemingly limitless opportunities for research, publication, and work in historical geography and cartography under Mr. Joerg. Drs. Pulliam and Barton privileged me by allowing me to break the contract. I left for Washington late in February and became officially employed in the National Archives on March 1, 1938.

So my nearly 38 years (1975) in the National Archives began with a very real challenge under Mr. Joerg whose background in geography, especially in the American Geographical Society, and his internationally recognized scholarship were well-known to me. I was indeed specially privileged. This was a change of work that I have never regretted.

BROOKS: What do you think brought Mr. Joerg here? We have a pretty good resume of his background in a number of places, one of which is the National Archives Register for 1937. And I see that his only employment apparently

was in the American Geographical Society from 1911 to 1937; but he had done a great deal of writing and meetings, speeches, and papers; including Polar exploration interests. Was this a special interest of his?

FRIIS: Very much so. His biography and publications could fill three or four volumes of what you have here because of his very considerable interest in research and publication; particularly publications pertaining to historical cartography and exploration and discovery in the polar regions.

BROOKS: What do you think brought him here?

FRIIS: Mr. Joerg mentioned to me a number of times the reason for this, at least what he thought were the reasons. He was very much intrigued by the fact that here in the National Archives was an opportunity for research and publication in the fields of his professional interest and competence, namely, historical cartography and historical geography. Also, from his experience in the American Geographical Society (1911-1937) he was fully aware of the remarkable opportunity to build the Division into one of world-wide recognition and one of the great primary treasure troves for the history of official United States mapping specifically and historical geography generally.

BROOKS: He had some experience with the professional activities of the Government, because he had been on various Government Committees and Commissions.

FRIIS: I am glad you raised this subject. He had indeed been appointed

to quite a number of commissions and committees in the Federal Government and during that time he had made this close friendship of many leading geographers, cartographers, and other scientists who were in charge of geographical and cartographical offices and agencies. For example, he played a leading role during and shortly following World War I particularly in regard to the geographical and cartographical research done for the American Commission to Negotiate Peace. He was such a modest man that it isn't generally known that he was Dr. Isaiah Bowman's right hand man throughout Bowman's direction of this work on the above Commission. Mr. Joerg was one of the several members of the Science Advisory Board which was created in 1933 as an adjunct Commission to the National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council to survey in detail and to report and recommend to President Franklin D. Roosevelt the reorganization of mapping services of the Federal Government (published in Washington, D.C. in September 1, 1935). It is my understanding that Mr. Joerg did much of the research for and writing of this nearly 200-page report.

Mr. Joerg once told me that perhaps the most important personal reason for coming to Washington was financial. The American Geographical Society, a private organization, did not have the resources to pay good salaries and it had a very insecure retirement program. In 1937 he was in his early fifties and viewed coming to the National Archives as substantially improving his retirement.

BROOKS: In the report of the Advisory Committee of 1930 on the National Archives in which the prime movers were J. Franklin Jameson and Louis Simon, there was provision for a division of Maps and Charts.

FRIIS: Yes, I recall this reference.

BROOKS: And the same thing in the organizational memo that Mr. Hyde wrote in December 1934, when he and Mr. Connor were the only professional staff members. He outlined the organization of the National Archives including the Division of Maps and Charts, without very much discussion of its functions. In the first Annual Report of the Archivist where there was a little more complete discussion: the functions of the Division were to provide advice to the Archivist and to accession maps and to provide reference service.

FRIIS: Right.

BROOKS: Now, would you say any more fully than that what were the objectives of the Division as you understood them first, as they were explained to you when you came?

FRIIS: I am glad that you asked this question because Mr. Joerg and I discussed it on a number of occasions. I should emphasize that prior to 1952 the Division almost never had more than six or possibly seven positions. The permanent professional staff included Mr. Joerg, Mr. James A. Minogue, a very capable, cooperative, and knowledgeable geographer with an M.A. in geography from Clark University, and I.

BROOKS: How long was Jim Minogue with you?

FRIIS: Jim Minogue came to the National Archives about the time I did, though it may have been several weeks earlier, perhaps in February 1938.

My recollection is that Jim left the National Archives to go into military service, the Navy, about October 1942. As I recall he was assigned as a Lieutenant Junior Grade to the U.S. Navy Hydrographic Office in Suitland, Maryland. After the War, I believe in February 1946, he returned to the National Archives for several months. Then he transferred to a much better position as a geographer in the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the Pentagon. He retired from career-service in the Federal Government I believe in 1970 or 1971.

When I met Mr. Joerg on March 1, 1938, in his office in Room 302 of the National Archives he did review with me in detail projects he had in mind and the general objectives of the Division. I was Mr. Joerg's Assistant Chief, being responsible for the Division during his absence. He was rather much discouraged when he came to the job because our offices and reference map collection were 300, 301 and 302, that is on the third floor. Our stack area and search room (improvised) were 3E-1, 3E-3, 3E-4, 3W-3, and 3W-4 all on the ground floor. Though Mr. Joerg did have plans for the Division he was for the time being reticent about putting them into operation because he wanted to play things by ear for a while and to the extent possible dovetail his plans into those of the custodial divisions rather than operate apart from them on our own. He also was distressed by the word "charts" in the "Division of Maps and Charts." He felt very strongly that we should not be in the so-called "oversized materials business" because already he was being invited to receive a wide variety of organization charts, posters, and the like. I do not recall just when we were successful in having the title changed to Division of Cartographic

Records.

BROOKS: Was the discouragement you spoke about largely and with respect to other agencies. Or what were there?

FRIIS: No, we were very fortunate because Mr. Joerg had a very wonderful rapport with the personnel responsible for most of the principal mapping agencies. They respected him and were aware of his excellent professional background. He had been to Washington for service on committees and commissions quite a few times before he came here to live in 1937.

BROOKS: You didn't run into real problems of objections on the part of the other agencies to transferring.

FRIIS: With one major exception.

BROOKS: When Dorsey Hyde wrote his memo on organization, he went to the Library of Congress in preparation and talked to a number of different people, and his own background was in reference libraries. Naturally the organization that he set up was a library type. One of the big jobs around here for the next four or five years was to change it over to records divisions organized by agencies or groups of records. I think it probably didn't affect your division too much.

FRIIS: Yes, I believe it did, Phil. I think that's the reason for Mr. Joerg's waiting.

BROOKS: When Hyde first went to the Library of Congress he talked to my friend Colonel Lawrence Martin.

FRIIS: Yes sir.

BROOKS: And it was evident from Hyde's report ^{that} was Colonel Martin told him about the authority the Library had from 1903 to acquire maps from various other government agencies, and Martin made it rather firm that he didn't want the Archives to interfere with that. I would guess that is what you are talking about. I believe you told me that the same thing still goes on, right?

FRIIS: Somewhat more I would say.

BROOKS: Well, what were the discouragements if they didn't come from other agencies?

FRIIS: The discouragements were we might say that of personalities. Mr. Joerg was soft-spoken, modest to the nth degree, intellectually a giant, he measured his words carefully, he bent over backwards to try to understand the other person's point of view. Colonel Martin on the other hand was (for the record) very aggressive. He was definitely interested in doing for himself that which would benefit him. He took credit for doing things that others do with him and/or for him. I know this from my own bitter experience. He was not cooperative except when it would really benefit him. He sometimes was quite nasty to Mr. Joerg. He would enter Mr. Joerg's office and call him "Wolf." This hurt Mr. Joerg because his full first name was the German "Wolfgang" which during World War I he had dropped for only a "W". Mr. Joerg's other names were "Ludwig" and "Gottfried." So he rarely after the beginning of World War I used other

than "W.L. G. Joerg." Colonel Martin knew this and rubbed it in whenever he could, which many of us thought and still think was unbelievably nasty. It is a tribute to Mr. Joerg that he let it go as part of the character of the man that was better to accept and forget than raise an issue.

BROOKS: Mr. Joerg and I became good friends although there wasn't any great closeness of our functions. He was interested in the problem of disposal I was involved in, but he just was a fine, likeable person and he and I got to be very good friends just as soon as he came.

FRIIS: Mr. Joerg admired you a great deal and spoke highly of your professional integrity.

BROOKS: What about those discouragements we were talking about.

FRIIS: Colonel Martin's eccentricities were in evidence in other ways, one of which was his condescending attitude toward the Division of Maps and Charts specifically and the National Archives generally. Martin repeatedly applied what he believed were his rights, even after the National Archives Act, to examine the official records in agencies of the Federal Government and extract as transfers to his Map Division any items he felt he wanted and should be in the collections in his Division. He continued to do this even into the early days of World War II.

One of the earliest major accessions of very valuable archival map collections were the cartographic records comprising the Headquarters Map Files of the Office of the Chief of Engineers. Many of these maps, mostly

manuscript, were created prior to 1850. Shortly after we accessioned these maps we cross-checked them against early ledgers and recent type-script lists of maps accessioned and for which specific file notations had been given. We were shocked to find many gaps of what appeared to be very valuable maps. One of my first jobs was to review the annual reports of Martin's covering the accessions of maps by his Division. We were surprised to find that many of the gaps in the map series could be filled by the maps Martin had accessioned, often as gifts from the Office of the Chief of Engineers.

BROOKS: As individual maps rather than as series?

FRIIS: That is correct!

BROOKS: Martin was an interesting person. He helped me in my own research, and did a little special section in the report of the Library on his function as Occupant of the Chair of Geography.

FRIIS: You are exactly right he was an interesting and very capable but I felt untrustworthy person.

BROOKS: And he devoted that space to the Melish map as referred to in my book. And he was very agreeable, a friend of Dr. Bemis, but he was a prima donna from the word "go."

FRIIS: Yes he was!

BROOKS: Were there disappointments here in the building?

FRIIS: Phil, to the best of my knowledge there were no disappointments in the National Archives building as such. The disappointments we had were primarily in the equipment which seemed to have been designed by persons who lacked the professional know-how and experience of an archivist. Mr. Joerg was shocked to find that the many map cases that were put in place in neat rows in the five stack areas were much too large and the drawers much too deep. In fact we got to calling these excessively heavy and very large map cases "super dreadnoughts."

BROOKS: I wanted to ask you if he had anything to do with selecting them.

FRIIS: No, to the best of my knowledge Mr. Joerg had nothing whatsoever to do with the design and construction of the map cases. In fact he often referred to these cases as a perfect example of the kind of map case that fits all of the bad features and none of the good. These four drawer map cases were received generally a hundred at a time and were set up in the stack areas. When they arrived Mr. Joerg would visit the stack areas where they were being placed and somewhat dejectedly would say, "What, more of those big ones? When are we to receive the small ones?" They never came, that is until about 1950 when we did receive several hundred of the excellent, so called Hamilton Map Case: shallow-drawers with dust covers and secure bases.

BROOKS: I asked Thad Page at an interview what his first impression of the building was? He said that it looked as if an awful lot of money had been spent, and that stack equipment reminded him of a battle ship.

FRIIS: Mr. Page's and Mr. Joerg's observations surely have been borne out

as correct.

BROOKS: With shallow drawers because you don't have to thumb through so many things to get what you want, right?

FRIIS: Mr. Joerg's long experience with the optimum map cases and shallow drawers at the American Geographical Society convinced him beyond a shadow of a doubt that the map cases being installed in the stack areas at the National Archives were white elephants--a great waste of money and space. He repeated that the first or cardinal principle of a useful map drawer is that it is shallow, say an inch to an inch and a half. These drawers in our stacks were a bit over four inches deep. In thumbing thru these deep drawers one can't help but break, fracture, and tear the items in the folders in the drawers.

BROOKS: Well, I think this question of equipment is important along with the building because the equipment apparently was partly devised, I don't know about the map equipment, by the architect, the supervising architect Simon, not John Russell Pope. Apparently some of it was gone over by the very early Archives people, mainly Harris, who had a good bit to do with it. I think the main emphasis was on protection, but the records divisions very often had the same idea that Mr. Joerg did that that they were too heavy, and of course eventually, I think under the aegis of Dr. Buck and many other members of the staff, they were replaced by the cardboard boxes.

FRIIS: A saving of a third of the space.

BROOKS: Did you go out and survey maps in other agencies? Did you take part in the preliminary survey? Did the deputy examiners survey maps among other things or was that divided up?

FRIIS: Yes, we did go out on surveys of records in mapping agencies. I personally recall going out on surveys of mapping agencies such as the Geological Survey and the General Land Office with Oliver W. Holmes and to the Office of the Chief of Engineers and the Adjutant General's Office with Dallas Irvine. I recall going to the old White House garage on a survey but just now I cannot recall the records involved. Very early, perhaps the spring of 1938 just after Minogue and I arrived, Oliver W. Homes worked with Mr. Joerg on the survey and their offer of the very valuable Bureau of Indian Affairs map collection--a unit of some 20,000 maps.

This collection was brought into the National Archives from the Bureau in blocks from the agency. Several years were spent in this program. One of the agreements Mr. Joerg made with the agency was to flatten, cloth back, and catalog the maps in this collection. Mr. Joerg assigned Jim Minogue to supervise this job of preservation, arrangement and cataloging. Some 18-20 WPA workers were brought into assist, especially in the cataloging. Minogue and Mr. Joerg worked closely with the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the preparation of the contents to be placed on the 3 x 5 inch catalog card. The Bureau wanted to receive one copy of this card for its use and as information regarding what maps they had in the

Division. The contents of the card, though fairly standard, have served as a basis for subsequent item-by-item catalog descriptions done in the Division. This project lasted in the Division until about the time 1942 (October) that Minogue went into military service. He did an excellent job. Miss Laura E. Kelsay, who came to the Division as a geographer during World War II has to this day faithfully carried on the work for each accretion and accession of maps to this collection.

Mention should be made of the program of preservation. A small unit of perhaps four or five people under the supervision of a Mr. DeVries, an experienced map mounter, occupied the room off G-13 in which now the vault is located. Maps in need of flattening and mounting or remounting of the collection noted above--were sent to him. He cleaned the maps and cloth-backed the maps and sometimes when it seemed best crepe-lined the face of the map. This was the pre-World War II method of preservation. A number of thousands of maps were preserved in this manner. After World War II this method of preservation was abandoned in favor of cloth-backed lamination, though even this does not appear to be entirely satisfactory except on maps up to approximately 3 x 3 feet.

BROOKS: Was cataloging done in that much detail for other agencies, others collecting the maps?

FRIIS: A few special collections or subgroups of series such as the excellent special list or catalog of the Headquarters maps of the General Land Office compiled by Miss Kelsay. This activity is very time-consuming

and cannot be justified except for a body of especially valuable, frequently used maps. We have found over the years in the Cartographic Records Division that once a subgroup or unit of maps is arranged in final order by series the optimum solution as to a finding aid is to follow the National Archives procedures established for the preparation of Preliminary Inventories. Over the years quite a few of these finding aids have been prepared for cartographic and related records. However, we have not prepared a finding aid such as this to the cartographic records by record group and subgroup until we are rather certain we have the records in final arrangement.

BROOKS: I talked to Oliver Holmes and he mentioned those maps in the Interior Department. And, of course, when he was around on the preliminary survey he was much interested in geography and the West. The primary interest in the preliminary survey necessarily was on quantities of records that might come into the building and they surely couldn't do a very detailed analysis of the map collections in the preliminary survey by the deputy examiner. Would I be right in supposing that your division took over pretty much from him?

FRIIS: As I said earlier we had excellent rapport with our professional colleagues in the other Divisions in the National Archives. Quite often we were invited to assist in the preliminary survey of cartographic and related records discovered(?) during surveys of textual records. Normally our report was included with the generally much longer report of the textual records as a kind of Part B. This was the Identification Inventory.

BROOKS: Generally in 1938, Oliver Homes had finished the preliminary survey about the time you came in.

FRIIS: I don't recall that specifically but I do recall that during the years that Oliver Homes was Chief of the Interior Department Records Division and later the Natural Resources Records Division we did work very closely with him and his assistants in surveys. The same holds true for Dallas Irvine. This was fortunate because it was in the Departments included under each of them that the larger and older collections of cartographic were located.

BROOKS: And the Division of Interior Department Archives was set up and he was made chief in the summer of '38. But, after that am I right in my memory that there were a number of groups of maps transferred from the records divisions to your Division?

FRIIS: May I backtrack a little bit. When in 1938 Minogue and I were added to Mr. Joerg's staff he had just previously been assigned the five large stack areas off the Ground Floor (3E-1, 3E-3, 3E-4, and 3W-3). During the spring and summer of 1938 these stack areas were being "furnished" such as linoleum or asphalt tile was placed over the rough concrete floors and map cases were placed in rows according to plan (designed by the architect).

The first stack area to be furnished and completed for use was the easternmost or 3E-1. You will recall perhaps that our offices and reference map collection was on the third floor, the stacks on the first or Ground floor. When we moved into 3E-1 we set up a flat top area of some eight or ten of the new green metal long tables so that we had a continuous

flat surface for the viewing of maps by searchers. We also had several desks and related office equipment. "Pop Stiles" our excellent building manager was interested in our program of setting up a search room in 3E-1 and it was he who designed and supervised the installation of a battery of diffused lighting over these tables. Through this was in a sense all an improvisation it did serve us well until after World War II to about 1949 when our offices were moved from the third floor to G-5 and G-6 offices on the Ground Floor just opposite the central entrance to our five stack areas. Since G-6 was a large room we converted it to one office (mine) and a library, a search room with excellent facilities, and importantly a centralized finding aid unit near the excellent flat top for the servicing of maps to searchers. Mr. Joerg's (and upon his death in January 1952 my) office and that of the secretary was G-5. This was a great improvement. We also were granted two or three new positions.

The first body of records to be accessioned were a valuable, but poorly kept collection of some 2,000 maps, mostly printed, of the Senate. These, I believe, were surveyed by Mr. Joerg in 1937 during the time that Mr. Page and/or his assistants were surveying the textual records of the Office of the Secretary of the Senate. The records were stored in the attic of the Senate Office Building. They were essentially without arrangement. Mr. Joerg had prepared a general description of the contents of the forty or more bundles of maps.

Jim Minogue and I spent such time as was available arranging and describing the individual maps as nearly as possible by Congress and Session and Document. This generally was readily possible for most of the maps because

that information was on them. About 1939 Dr. Martin P. Claussen who was in Classification, with Buford Rowland and Harold Hufford also there, were arranging and preparing a preliminary inventory of the large volume of Senate records recently accessioned. Marty Claussen reviewed the rather preliminary arrangement we had prepared and improved on it immeasurably. He prepared a classification sheet for each map and through research was able to complete the identification of each map, many of which were manuscript. It is from working with Dr. Claussen that he and I, on our own time during 1939-1941, compiled a 102-page publication--A Descriptive Catalogue of the Maps Published by Congress, 1817-1843, published in Washington, D.C. 1941. This then was the beginning of the accessioning, arrangement and description activity in the Division.

BROOKS: Anyone could get along with Page.

FRIIS: Right!

BROOKS: The Senate accession consisted generally of maps that had been submitted to Senate Committees accompanying hearings, reports, and so forth?

FRIIS: Yes, that is correct. However, I should say that the bulk of the maps were printer's copy that had been sent to the Secretary of the Senate for proofing. These together comprise a partial record set of published maps of the Senate. The more valuable group of items accessioned were for the most part manuscript and annotated maps which apparently had accompanied this related textual record, such as a report, that because of its "oversize" character was placed in the attic away from the textual record and so because lost. It is these several hundred manuscript maps

especially that Dr. Claussen so nicely related to the specific textual item.

BROOKS: So you didn't have as much reason as I might have thought to work with the Division chiefs.

FRIIS: Yes, we did, but mostly with Dr. Holmes and Dr. Irvine. During this early period of the Division's history Mr. Joerg assigned to me the very intriguing project of reviewing in detail the multi-volume mimeographed Survey of Federal Archives. Over a period of several months when time permitted I noted on a special form in order by volume and page all the many entries regarding the agency, location and description of Federal cartographic records outside Washington city. This disclosed a large number of cartographic records some as early as the 1770's (in Boston). The objective was to then write to the depository for specifics and to proceed to accession them. Lacking personnel we managed to only get started before World War II changed the effort. This was most unfortunate because when I tried to revive the program in the 1950's through the Records Management programs in the agencies, notably the Defense Establishment I found to my considerable concern that few of these valuable items could be located. Indeed, the very valuable Revolutionary War maps identified as being in the offices of the Corps of Engineers in Boston in the 1930's when viewed by the Survey of Federal Archives personnel could not be located.

BROOKS: When were the Maps that accompanied the treaties generally filed in the State Department as I remember with the Treaties, accessioned?

FRIIS: Those that we accessioned from Mr. Boggs' office (the Office of the Geographer) in the State Department included particularly the very valuable cartographic records (mostly manuscript). These were among the best arranged, described and preserved maps ever received in the Division. It is my understanding that this was possible, as it was for the related textual records, because Dr. Hunter Miller (the Historical Advisor) supervised this program which was needed for use in connection with his remarkable volumes on the Official Treaties, etc. of the United States. It is my recollection that a Mr. Arthur Beach was the person in charge of this excellent program which importantly also included a very comprehensive 3 x 5-inch card catalog to all of the maps. These accompanied the maps to the Division.

BROOKS: One of those men, who may have been Hunter Miller, said that the State Department records would come over to the Archives over his dead body. In Archiviews of 1946 there is a picture of you and a group of people looking at the Mitchell Map and the citation says, "Mitchell's map, the copy used by the framers of the Treaty of 1783." That presumably in the State Department would have been filed in the State Department with its copy of the treaty.

FRIIS: Yes, except I believe there is a real question as to whether this is the copy or whether it is simply a copy (of many published) that was used. It is true that it is annotated on the back but this quite possibly was added a number of years later.

BROOKS: But they were separate when they came here?

FRIIS: That is correct!

BROOKS: The same is true with the Treaty of 1819. I know that a copy was filed in the State Department with the Treaty, but not the copy that was used in the negotiation. But that would have been separated here and the maps would have gone to the Division of Maps and Charts?

FRIIS: Perhaps 98% of the maps we received had been separated from the related textual records in the Office of the Historical Advisor in the State Department. This may have been done at the time that Mr. Beach arranged and described these items during the several years prior to their transfer to the National Archives. May I add just a little note of interest here that occurs to me. It is I believe indicative of the mentality of ~~so~~ many keepers of records in Government agencies during the 1930's and 1940's and doubtless at other times, before, may I say, the Government-wide Records Management Program in the 1950's.

It is my recollection that Mr. Willoughy, Chief of the Division of Treasury Archives in the National Archives contacted Mr. Joerg possibly in 1940 or 1941 regarding a survey of a room in the Department of Justice, across Tenth Street west of the National Archives. I was invited to accompany the Archivist to the office. The room or office was perhaps 15 x 20 feet in floor space. It was rather fully stacked with records many of which appeared to be tax records for the period of the Civil War and more recent. Included were Records of the Freedmens Bureau. We asked the elderly man

in charge of these records a series of questions. These included the following dialogue.

"What kind of controls do you have over these records? How do you find what is asked for? Do you have a list, an index, a register, or a card file?"

"Mister he said, 'I don't have nothing, I have it up here (pointing to his head). Why should I have such a record. If I did I would lose my job. This way persons have got to come to me.'"

Interestingly, many of these records appeared to relate to the so-called "forty acres and a mule" program in South Carolina just after the Civil War. Most of the records in the room soon were transferred to the National Archives. Among those accessioned by the Division of Maps and Charts were survey field notebooks and maps. Most important was a manuscript map about 4 x 4 feet cloth-backed in a wooden frame. The paper of the map per se was very brown apparently from having for along time been exposed to sunlight.

Subsequent research indicated that the map is exceedingly valuable because it is a composite map of St. Helena Township in South Carolina compiled from the above-mentioned detailed survey field notes. It is related to and reflects the program "forty acres and a mule" land disposal shortly after the Civil War. In order to have a more permanent record of the map a series of overlapping, and a composite infra-red, photographs were made. These revealed nearly vanished information.

BROOKS: Well, I think these specific examples are useful as illustrating problems and, for example, that cast of mind. Many people thought if the records had finding aids, or if they transferred the records to the Archives they would lose their jobs. Was there a problem in defining that early what was a record copy of a map?

FRIIS: Yes, there was. We were aware of this need but were postponing the final decision until the National Archives policy in this regard was more firmly fixed. In 1948 I believe during Dr. Solon J. Buck's regime as Archivist we did issue through his Office a several page statement regarding cartographic records. It was at best a preliminary policy. The detailed descriptive statement came with the issuance I believe in 1952 of General Records Schedule No. 17 Cartographic, Photogrammetric and Related Records. I had the pleasure of being responsible for preparing this. It was reviewed and tidied up by Dr. Elizabeth Drewry and Dr. Edward G. Campbell and published with the authority of Congress as applicable to all agencies of the Federal Government.

BROOKS: Yes, I think it was in the early forties, and somehow I connect Lacy with it that means it was after '43, that you and I worked on the definition of a record copy of a map.

This must have been a problem in connection with finding aids. Now Mr. Joerg was on the original Committee on Finding Mediums. It was appointed by the Archivist in the Spring of 1940 and later continued, to determine how the various Finding Mediums as they then called them should be drawn up. Beginning in January 1942, the Central responsibility for

finding mediums was taken over by Holmes when he became Director of Research and Records Description. But I remember we worried in writing that circular about whether you should have a manuscript map or the first printed copy, or what you should have as the record copy.

FRIIS: Yes, I believe you are correct. I do now recall that we did discuss this subject rather extensively especially during your regime in Dr. Buck's office. You really were the father of this issuance and suggested to us the usefulness and need of it.

In this we recognized the importance of the published record set whereas years before the emphasis was on the manuscript map. This emphasis had become a fetish because it did not consider the various stages in the making of a modern map which really as a total record is the published or printed map--that is one copy of each printed map including each variant (edition, etc.) thereof. During the past century or more the manuscript maps preliminary to the published map generally represent stages in the development of the map so that they are intermediate. Generally if there is a composite manuscript compilation it is modified for each new edition or variant thereof. In short the moment changes are effected on that map for a new edition, at that moment its permanent record character is lost so far as the earlier edition is concerned.

BROOKS: You must have acquired many manuscript maps for their historical value, right?

FRIIS: Yes, indeed, there are many scores of thousands of manuscript maps in the collections of maps in the Cartographic Archives Division. These maps are unique so that their record quality is fundamental and must be preserved. Examples of this are most of the manuscript maps compiled prior to about the Civil War. This also includes the manuscript maps prepared in the field on the basis of observations.

BROOKS: A great many of field notes were accessioned. Were they usually put into a records division or the Maps Division?

FRIIS: Field notes prepared for use in making maps, geodetic controls, observations, etc, and related materials cartographic related normally have been appraised by professional personnel of the Cartographic Records Division. When General Records Schedule 17 was compiled and published in 1952, it reflected the judgment of and was prepared by the Cartographic Archives Division.

It is of interest to note that the general practice has been to send the field notes to the Division and Branch having responsibility for the textual records. There have been a few exceptions as for example, field notes relating to the land plots of this General Land Office, which are with those plots in the Cartographic Records Division.

BROOKS: I was going to ask you about the effects of the war on the Division of Maps and Charts. One would be, as you have said, the changes in the way of producing maps. Are there less preliminary things leading up to a map, or more, as a result of aerial mapping and so forth?

FRIIS: Yes, World War II as indeed it appears each war in which the United States has played a role, has been a period of rapid advances in the field of mapping. This has been especially significant since the development of photogrammetry, the science and art of aerial photography. This has expedited tremendously the area and frequency of map coverage. There also have been new developments in map reproduction. These and many related innovations have required a continuous program of records management aware of the specific series of permanent records and those that have but temporary or transitional value.

BROOKS: Were these preliminary materials, like the field notes, being accessioned by the records divisions?

FRIIS: Yes, that is so. I suppose a good reason for this is that though these are records fundamental to the making of a map they are considered to be textual and require shelving such as volumes of textual records do. General Records Schedule 17 prepared by personnel in the Cartographic Records Division covers the disposition of these records.

BROOKS: Another effect of the war on that division was, like all the divisions in the place, the depletion of the personnel. You and Jim both went into military service and Mr. Joerg, I gather, had not much left in the way of people to help him.

FRIIS: That is correct. He had two, and sometimes three professional personnel. The most conscientious, well-qualified, and knowledgeable of these was Miss Laura E. Kelsay, a professional geographer who came to the

Division from the Office of Geography in the Department of the Interior in 1944. She has been there to this day and is responsible for some of the best inventories, specialists, and published catalogues of records in the Division. She is a tireless worker.

BROOKS: She is still in the Division?

FRIIS: Yes, she is there today and has been for 30 years.

BROOKS: Your own career in the military was still in geographical work, and you first went into the Arctic, Desert and Tropic Center of the Air Force, right?

FRIIS: In December 1942 I received my commission as a First Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Air Corps with orders to report December 25 to Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. Almost immediately I was sent to the Air Corps Officers Training School for 10 weeks. This was in Miami, Florida. Upon completion of this training I was assigned to the Arctic Branch of the Arctic, Desert, and Tropic Information Center at the University of Minnesota in St. Paul. The Director of this Branch was the famous polar scientist and President of Carleton College, Dr. Laurence McK. Gould. This assignment and my commission were closely related to my publications and research in Arctic matters and my being on loan from the National Archives to the U.S. Army Chief of Staff for the preparation of several then security classified projects relating to the mapping and scientific exploration and aerial navigation in the Arctic, particularly northeastern Asia, Alaska, Greenland, and Svalbard.

In the summer of 1943 I was named Chief or Officer in Charge of the Map Intelligence Branch of the Center. One of the most important products of our Branch was the compilation of a topographic map of the Northern Hemisphere north of latitude 39°. This detailed map measured about five feet by six feet and was printed in color on two sheets. We also prepared a gazetteer to accompany it. The map was prepared primarily for use of the U.S. Army and Air Corps General Staffs. It was used in planning arctic operations.

BROOKS: Then you went to China?

FRIIS: In October 1944 with Arctic operations pretty well in control of the Allies the needs for intelligence information about those regions were curtailed, I received a call to consider transfer to the Office of Strategic Services. The transfer as a Captain was made in November. I had been appointed to establish and to be in charge of a Map Division in the China Theater of Operations. Following training in several places, one of which was 2 weeks of survival and combat training on an island off the coast of California. I was sent to Kunming, China in January 1945. My passage there was by air through northeastern Brazil, all of north central Africa, Arabia, India, the Brahmaputra Valley and across northern Burma by way of the "Hump" to Kunming, China.

BROOKS: You spent a bit of your time intermittently in Washington.

FRIIS: Yes, I recall your hospitality with particular pleasure.

BROOKS: We rented you a room.

FRIIS: You surely did. In those days that was the single most important concern of each of us.

BROOKS: You told me that you assembled a rather large collection of maps in Kunming.

FRIIS: Yes, you refer to the Map Division of the Office of Research and Analysis of the Office of Strategic Services in Kunming, Yunnan Province, Western China. I arrived in Kunming early in February 1945. The Office of Strategic Services occupied a compound of about five acres of land surrounded by a ten foot high brick wall. It was located amidst a large flood plain consisting of intensively cultivated rice paddies just a mile or so south of Kunming City. Within the compound were several two story brick buildings. Our Map Division was assigned four rooms or offices on the ground floor.

When I arrived there were already there several men who were members of the Division. I was Chief and Officer in Charge of the Division. By June our personnel included about 10 men most of whom were military with experience in drafting, map compilation, and or geography. Four were professional geographers.

Our Division was divided into (1) Map Intelligence Unit; (2) Map Collection Unit; (3) Cartography and Drafting Unit; and (4) my Office as Chief. Our primary objectives were two-fold (1) to gather cartographic intelligence for transmittal by air to the Map Division of the Office of Strategic Services in Washington, D.C. and to research for, compile, draft, and

reproduce maps and related geographic materials for the various covert and overt activities of the OSS and the Fourteenth Air Force based in Kunming. Two members of the Division were assigned to the collection of information and the drafting of target charts for use by Fourteenth Air Force.

I recall one of the major coups in which our Division played a major role. Several of our personnel who had parachuted behind the Japanese lines out east near the coast of China covertly obtained a master plan of the proposed Japanese offensive in southern China. Two cartographers and I were given some dozen maps in this Top Secret report to reproduce in manuscript. We were locked into our drafting room and hand reproduced in color these maps. We slept and worked in this room during several days. The maps in detail which we compiled as copies of the "originals" were given to the Colonel in Charge for transmittal with the copy of the report by special courier to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington. The set that was captured by our men behind the Japanese lines were returned thereto.

During the nearly 10 months I was in Kunming our Map Division collected from a variety of sources some 200,000 maps. We compiled and drafted some 125 maps. Perhaps forty to fifty of these maps were reproduced as printed maps, some in several colors. The printed maps were reproduced from presses in a secret place called Detachment 101. It was in India. Copy was, of course, flown there and back to us by planes flying over the "Hump."

I was one of the last to leave our compound. The last several weeks in October were spent screening out of our large map collection all maps that were to be buried and those that were to be sent to the Map Division OSS in Washington. I carefully arranged as nearly complete a record set of the maps we had made and a collection of manuscript and printed maps which we had received either from Chinese sources or had captured, and boxed them for transmittal before I left in November to Washington. A record set of the maps we made and considered to be records were specially marked for transmittal ultimately to the National Archives. Some 7 or 8 wooden boxes about 3x3x2 feet in dimensions were sent to Washington. It was hoped and it was requested in writing that these would be retained as a unit collection of the Map Division, China Theater. In February shortly after my return to Washington I inquired about these boxes and the record set for the National Archives. I was informed after a diligent search that the maps had been interfiled in the large map collection of the Map Division of OSS in Washington. When OSS was disestablished and became CIA the map collection became part of its very large map holdings. Later, quite a few were transferred to the Map Division of the Library of Congress.

BROOKS: Let's talk about the use of the maps in the Archives, which as with most of the records in the building generally falls into use by Government agencies and use by scholars and others from outside. The character of reference service through the years changed a good deal. There was an emphasis during the war naturally on Government related services, or service to Government agencies, and it took a long time for the scholars to become acquainted with holdings of the National Archives. The use of the Archives by scholars developed in varying degrees depending

on how much the scholars had known about the records in the agencies before they came. They all used State Department records still after they got here. What would you say about the character of reference in Division of Cartographic Records.

FRIIS: Prior to about 1946 or 1947 the larger collections of cartographic items in the Division were the Headquarters Map Files of the Office of the Chief of Engineers which included the historically very valuable map files of the Bureau or Office of Topographical Engineers and its predecessor administrative cartographic offices; the map files of the General Land Office; and the map files of the Office (Bureau) of Indian Affairs. Together the cartographic records of these three in 1946 or 1947 totaled 100,000 or more individual items. These files extend back to the 1780's or 1790's, there being a few maps (manuscript and printed) for the period of the Revolutionary War and even the U.S. colonial period. Fortunately there were available reasonably useful though poorly arranged finding aids, except the catalog cards for the Office of Indian Affairs prepared under Mr. Minogue's direction and kept up to date by Miss Kelsay. Consequently, servicing of these records was relatively easy though a thorough search required much cross-referencing because whoever in the agency in the nineteenth century decided in which series each item should be placed and what kind of notation should be made on the catalog card was quite inconsistent. Together these three collections (sub-groups) include one of the basic sources of cartographic information on geographical exploration and surveying and mapping by agencies of the Federal Government. Another collection of very considerable value to researchers but rather smaller and

more specialized than those just mentioned are the well-arranged, preserved, and excellently catalogued maps received from the Office of the Geographer of the State Department.

From time to time we did have rather difficult problems with searchers who generally expected "service on a silver platter" rather than doing their own time-consuming search thru our finding aids, which included index maps such as those we made to show coverage of General Land Office plots in the Division, and special lists of series descriptions of maps in the "collections" by Record Group and Subgroup.

I recall for example a telephone call from the Guard desk one day, perhaps in 1947. He mentioned a professor who had just arrived, and he was sending him into see me. He had not been in my office more than several minutes when he said, "Mr. Friis I am in a big hurry. I am on my way by train for New York with a manuscript of a book. The publisher has asked me to stop in here and pick up a half dozen or more maps for use as illustrations." I asked him to try to be specific as to subject, area, and approximate time period. I also informed him that we could not do a useful search for him in the hour he had and without knowing what he or his publisher wanted. Also he could not borrow the items and a photo-reproduction of each would require several days. He was flabbergasted. Then he said, "Well, why don't you just select a half dozen maps for me for use as illustrations--something colorful." I must admit I was a bit surprised because he was a "scholar" of some standing. All of us in the Division chuckled over this quite often because it was not unique even

among so-called "scholars."

BROOKS: What did you do for him?

FRIIS: We finally did have a look at his manuscript and selected several subjects of cartographic interest and showed him several maps. We informed him that he could not borrow the maps as he wanted to do. Photoreproductions could not be available to him for several days. I said in rather emphatic terms that next time he needed illustrations he should do his homework before coming to us for help.

Then there is the incident several years later of a lady who came to us in rather belligerent mood: "Look, I know there is a map here that I must see." She gave us a really difficult time. We asked her how she knows there was a map here. She said that she had just been in the Interior Department Archives and on one of the General Land Office dockets was a statement that a map accompanied the dossier. The date of this dossier as I recall was about 1850 possibly 1860. She asked rather brutally, "Now are you going to produce the map or aren't you?" We asked for more certain information such as file number, series or subgroup in which the dossier was, the date, etc. She did not have these--but she did have the area. She fussed and fussed because we asked for more specific information we were about to call the person in the textual branch where she had been when she said in a huff, "Now if you can't produce that map I'm going to see the President of the United States and report your incompetence." With that she left. Of course, we were glad she did. We

never heard more of her or from the President.

BROOKS: Did you produce it?

FRIIS: We did not produce it or a map for her because she could not give us the facts. Later we checked with the person in the textual records branch who had essentially the same difficulty with her.

BROOKS: Yes, lots of people don't know how to ask questions. Tell me a little bit about the changes in the character of reference service. Was it largely to Government agencies during the war?

FRIIS: Prior to about 1950 most of the reference services were to Government agencies, especially regarding the agency's records in the Division. Often these were written requests they had received. If we could answer them even in addition to those in that agency's records we received the reference request.

The rapid increase in cartographic records in the Division and the number of different agencies from which records were received were responsible for the increase in potentials for services. This was especially true following the major program of surveying and describing the records in mapping agencies after about 1950. This was related to the reports of the Hoover Commission, and especially in close collaboration with the newly organized Records Management Program and the records surveys of all Government agencies. This steady rapid increase in the holdings of the Division amounting in 1960 to about 1,250,000 different items, perhaps 500,000 of which were manuscript maps. This remarkable centralized resource

became increasingly more of use and interest to scholars.

Then too this better reference servicing was made possible because we had more personnel and had arranged all of the records by record group, subgroup and series and described them accordingly in preliminary inventories most of which were for in-house use. We had far better control of the information.

BROOKS: Which were the most used maps? Which agency, Indian Affairs?

FRIIS: Quite certainly I believe this is the Records of the Headquarters or Civil Works Map Files and the Fortifications Map Files together comprising the Cartographic and Related Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers. These, importantly, include the records of the Bureau of Topographical Engineers that cover the period prior to about 1862.

BROOKS: How about after the war, did private scholars come in in larger numbers? Of course one obvious fact is, that during the war private scholars were busy themselves in service or something else so there was somewhat of a pickup of research to private scholars after war.

FRIIS: Yes, private scholars did come in increasingly greater numbers as additional records were received and as we developed better controls (arrangement) and published finding aids and periodic reports as in the American Archivist, the American Historical Review, and similar periodicals with a wide circulation. The period 1948-1954 were six years of rather important transition in the Division.

BROOKS: What was the main nature of the change?

FRIIS: During World War II when there were but three and sometimes four professional geographers on the staff many maps were received from many different agencies. There was not the staff to arrange these records (duplicate copies, i.e.). I recall that shortly after I returned from the Service in March 1946 I found in one of the stack areas several large wooden boxes that had been sent to the Division by an Engineer Mapping Agency. The boxes had not been opened. When I did open them I found a topographic map in some ten matching sheets on a large scale. But the problem was that there were some 500 copies of the map. Our job was to have one set of sheets comprising the map and to dispose of the others by sending them back to the agency of origin with a statement of policy. This same problem was repeated many times over so that our first project was to follow this same general procedure in disposing of all duplicate copies of printed maps. This took time.

It became evident that our first project was to arrange the records of each of the agencies by Record Group, Subgroup and series. By about 1952 or 1953 we had pretty well accomplished this.

In the meantime several of us were invited to team up with the Records Management Program to work closely with them during their official and comprehensive survey of the records by series in each of the mapping agencies. These included the United States Geological Survey, the General Land Office (Office of Land Management), the Army Map Service, the Office of the Geographer in the Interior Department, the Office of the Geographer in

the State Department, the Geography Division of the Bureau of the Census, the Forest Service, the United States Navy Hydrographic Office, the Coast and Geodetic Survey, the Weather Bureau, and the Soil Conservation Service. There were a good many more.

We were given ready access to the records and had the full cooperation of the staff of each agency. We prepared a rather detailed description of the records as nearly and often as possible by series. The result for each agency was the preparation by us of Disposition Schedules, copies of which were prepared with statements of appropriate disposition. Each schedule was signed as well by the person in charge of the agency and by the responsible person in the National Archives.

From these most revealing surveys the Cartographic Records Division received a substantial and continuous orderly transfer of records hopefully arranged and described by series. Often this arrangement was done by us while running the survey in the agency for the records scheduled to be transferred to the Division. Here there was a major policy change and the experience that was necessary in order to firm up a workable policy regarding the disposition of cartographic records.

I was invited to consider and to prepare a General Records Schedule covering Cartographic, Photogrammetric, and Related Records during 1949-1951. This now was possible because the detailed records survey we then were running gave us a very comprehensive view of the kinds of records by series that were involved. The quantity and quality of the cartographic and related records was staggering. My recollection is that I completed a typed draft

of this early in 1951 and had copies made for review by the persons in charge of mapping agencies. Many discussions with them were helpful in modifying the Schedule to fit the overall records program. The final product was published in 1952 as General Records Schedule 17. This I have already discussed. Each U.S. Government Mapping Agency is bound by law to abide by the requirements set forth in this schedule unless it can justify otherwise to the Archivist of the United States.

BROOKS: But you had started this line of thinking before the establishment of the Records Management office?

FRIIS: Yes, it is true that the basic idea was developed during the period 1946-1950 during the period we were trying to resolve the problems of what to do with the large mass of cartographic materials that were sent in often without forewarning by agencies of the Federal Government. However, it was not until we ran the records surveys in the agencies and prepared the individual agency disposition schedules that we realized fully the possibilities for preparing a useful General Records Schedule.

BROOKS: Would you say the biggest post-war problem in the Division was catching up on accessions of the war period?

FRIIS: Yes definitely. We did have full cooperation of persons in the agencies.

BROOKS: I'm not really up to date as to the finding aids, such as the preliminary inventories, was a good deal done in that way?

FRIIS: Yes, that is true. We had prepared Special Lists, Descriptive Catalogs, Preliminary Inventories, and other finding aids to records in accordance with the procedures worked out for the textual records and discovered that contrary to general belief this was fully as possible as for cartographic records. By 1960 a dozen or more such publications had been compiled by members of the staff, but only after the records had been arranged in final order by subgroup and series.

BROOKS: And you have examples of preliminary inventories there?

FRIIS: Yes, that is correct. Here are Preliminary Inventories by Miss Laura E. Kelsay, Frank Burch, J. Bert Rhoads, Charlotte Ashy; several index maps published to accompany inventories by H.R. Friis and an excellent Special List by Miss Laura E. Kelsay. We began the preparation of a Guide to Cartographic Records in the National Archives. This was published in 1969 or 1970 as I recall. It is a bound or hard-back volume.

BROOKS: I'm tempted to digress on a personal interest; the Panama Canal records were from the Army?

FRIIS: No, as I recall these records came to us from the Panama Canal Company offices on 10th Street between Pennsylvania Avenue and E Streets. The FBI building now stands on the site. It was an old red brick and sandstone building. I recall surveying the records there and bringing them in.

BROOKS: When did they come over? During the Forties?

FRIIS: As I recall they were accessioned in 1949 or 1950. Bert Rhoads came to our Division I believe in 1953.

BROOKS: I didn't know that. I was down in Panama in 1954, and they still had 700 cabinets of records down there including every time card and everything else for the period of the building of the Canal. Very detailed records, and they had a big job to do which I worked on down there. We didn't run into any maps, I guess because they had sent them up here.

FRIIS: Yes, I believe that is correct. My recollection is that the very valuable French maps (done during the DeLesseps regime) were transferred after 1950 from Panama to New York, then to the Headquarters here and to us.

BROOKS: Mr. Joerg was still Chief of the Division until his death in 1952, right?

FRIIS: Yes, that is correct, until his death on January 7, 1952.

BROOKS: His special interest was just in the things you have been talking about.

FRIIS: Perhaps I should say for the record that Mr. Joerg was not really so much interested in the mechanics of running the Division and developing the various approaches to arrangement and description and to running records management surveys. He really was not physically well the last several years of his life. He never complained or spoke of his

health though those of us who had worked with him for several years sensed that he was not in good health. Mr. Joerg's principal interests were in the scholarly use of the records and importantly, because he had the highest respect of men who were in direct charge of mapping agencies, in smoothing the way for contacts with agencies and running the surveys. He also was superb in reviewing all that was written, proposals made, and suggestions offered by members of the staff. He always gave full credit to people working for him and others with whom he made professional and administrative contacts. He was professionally honest to the core.

BROOKS: You published an article about Mr. Joerg?

FRIIS: Yes, that is so. It is a "[Biographical Sketch of] W.L.G. Joerg," Annals of the Association of American Geographers, vol. 43(4), pp. 255-283, 1953.

BROOKS: In this matter of publications, you told me one time that the publications were what he most wanted to be remembered by.

FRIIS: I am glad you brought that up. On a Saturday (I believe it was January 5, 1952), just two days before his death we were standing in the doorway between our two offices as so often we did speaking about various subjects mostly geography. Rather suddenly he said to me, "Herman, if there is anything I should like to be remembered for it is my research and publications." This, of course, was a portentous remark and it was most appropriate. It was portentous because two days later, Monday

morning about 9 a.m., Mrs. Joerg called me at the office and said that, "Mr. Joerg had a rather difficult night, and now that he is sleeping soundly I shall let him sleep." At about 10 a.m. an hour later she called and informed me that Mr. Joerg had just died. This indeed was difficult to believe.

BROOKS: What was the cause of that?

FRIIS: The information I have I believe from one of the sons is that Mr. Joerg had died of a cerebral hemorrhage. This may have been with him for several weeks or more because my recollections then were that at times when I was speaking with him he would seem to be in a daze and his response was a bit erratic.

BROOKS: Is there anything else you want to say? I know that you were in something of a digression in charge of the Photographic Archives, (still photographs, motion pictures, and so on). And in 1967 the Polar Archives Center was set up. What led to that?

FRIIS: Yes, if I may I should like to mention just a bit about the Center for Polar Archives, of which I have been Director since its inception in September, 1967. Several times in 1966 and in 1967 Bob Bahmer would speak with me about the need to preserve the papers of our Country's polar explorers. He was pretty well aware of the large scientific program our Country has had and was having in the polar regions since the 1920's. We had as early as 1960 been offered the large volume of papers of Admiral Robert E. Peary. After a week of my working with his daughter

Marie A. Peary Stratford in her home in Brunswick, Maine in 1960 and accessioning the papers and being responsible for them and subsequently the papers of Dr. Paul A. Siple, Dr. Carl Elelund^{E. Klund}, and others during my short regime as Senior Specialist in Cartographic Archives, Bob asked me to prepare a program for setting up a Polar Institute or Center and of what its program should be.

At the time I was completing the rather major job of reading page proof on A History of Geographical Exploration of the Pacific Basin, Special Publication No. 38, American Geographical Society, New York, 1967, in 512 printed pages. Since my childhood I had been interested in the polar regions and had published papers and given lectures in the field. So after the final edit of the aforementioned volume I did prepare a program for a Center for Polar Archives. Bob discussed this with Dr. Wayne C. Grover who was Archivist at the time and he agreed to it.

So on September 7, 1967, we opened the Institute officially with an all-day program of scientific papers by leading polar scientists and explorers and a major address in the evening. This ceremony attracted some 250 polar scientists and explorers from all over the country. This I am pleased to say has been another of these wonderful challenges that have come my way and for which I am deeply thankful. The papers and proceedings of this all-day meeting are published in Herman R. Friis and Shelby G. Bales, Jr., United States Polar Exploration by the University of Ohio Press, Athens, Ohio, 1970, 199 pp. This was the just of the National Archives Conferences held twice a year since then.

BROOKS: I like to think that maybe his mentioning an "institute" to you partly results from his experience with the Truman Library Institute. It was the first organization of this kind set up by NARS. It was very much the idea of Wayne Grover. He was impressed by the fact that Roosevelt Library never had a comparable organization to provide a medium of association of the Library with the scholar. There were various other things that the Institute could do that couldn't be done with appropriated funds by the Library itself. Until recently that was the only one of the Institutes attached to the Presidential Libraries or any other place.

FRIIS: Is this still the case or is there one at the Johnson Library?

BROOKS: There is. It is just starting and something was started at the Hoover Library several years ago.

There has been a problem around the Archives for many years, a personnel problem--how to recognize people for research ability and accomplishment, without making them get into administration. It was sort of an unfortunate fact that if you advanced you got into supervision. Many people didn't particularly want to do that or that wasn't their forte. They needed to be in research jobs I can remember talking about with or hearing them talk about it Buck, Bahmer, and Grover. The problem was just what to do to utilize the ability of people who were primarily research people.

FRIIS: Yes over the years, particularly during the first decade we have had a good many people who were good scholars and research specialists.

BROOKS: Yes, that's right. You and Irvine were among the examples.

FRIIS: Irvine certainly has the qualifications. So does Oliver Homes.

BROOKS: That's an interesting development. Anything else you think we ought to put on this tape?

FRIIS: Phil, I want to speak to the record. During the nearly 35 years that we have worked here in the National Archives and Records Service to me you have been a most cooperative and challenging co-worker. I also know that Mr. Joerg valued your friendship and competence highly and considered you to be one of his best friends. Surely you have given us over the years much valuable advice and kept us informed about policies and programs that have affected the forward progress of our Division. And I want to say in closing that your friendship has meant more to me than I could ever put into words. After all true friendships are the most valuable attributes of life.