

NATIONAL ARCHIVES ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Oral History Interview

with

Gerald K. Haines

February 26, 1985

at

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Arlington, Virginia

Interviewed by Rodney A. Ross
(National Archives Employee)

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Gerald K. Haines. Arlington, Virginia, February 26, 1985.
Interviewed by Rodney A. Ross.

Haines is currently a historian with the National Security Agency. From 1974 - 1984 he was an archivist with the Diplomatic branch at the National Archives.

The interview with Haines telling about his background before he became an archivist and about how he got his job at the Archives. He describes his training experiences upon joining the Archives.

He discusses the make-up of the Diplomatic branch, its personnel and its responsibilities. He comments on how his work in preparing a preliminary inventory for RG 239 led to the publication of his 1976 Prologue article, "Who Gives a Damn About Medieval Walls." He then discusses other scholarly projects with which he was associated at the Archives.

On tape 1, side 2 he talks about appraisal work at the National Archives. Also, he mentions professional groups of historians and archivists with which he was active.

A highlight of this interview is Haines' discussion of the antecedents of the Emergency Committee to Save the National Archives, an ad hoc group set up in response to Admiral Freeman's efforts at decentralization. Haines goes into detail in describing differences of attitudes between staff archivists and those in top management positions at the National Archives. He names approximately two dozen archivists whose activities, along with those of historian Pete Daniel, led to the formation of the Emergency Committee and later to the establishment of the National Archives Assembly.

On tape 2, side 1, he talks about the role of the National Archives Assembly regarding the movement for Archives independence.

He tells of his association with the FBI task force, his teaching in Texas under the Intergovernmental Exchange Program and his work on the Department of Justice appraisal project.

Finally, he talks about why he resigned from the Archives, especially in regard to the attitude by the Archives leadership on the question of journeyman archivists versus subject specialists.

Conversation with Gerald K. Haines
26 February 1985
at his home - [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
Arlington, Va.

TAPE 1, SIDE 1

Mr. Haines' Background

Gerald Haines was born in Detroit, Michigan in 1943. His father was a school teacher in the Detroit public schools. Gerald went to public schools through high school and then entered Wayne State University, graduating in 1965. He taught for two years in the Detroit public schools while he was studying for his M.A. at Wayne State. He decided to go on for his Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and was there during the riots of '68. He left Madison in 1971 to write his dissertation, a comparative study of U.S. relations with Latin America and German relations with Japan and the Far East and how each nation thought it was developing a sphere of influence in the two areas.

Two Years at the Archives

Gerald Haines and his wife Joanne came to Washington in 1971 with all their possessions in their car and no place to live. Joanne was going to work for the National Historical Publications Commission under the direction of Oliver Holmes. Holmes offered to let the couple stay in the Dupont Circle brownstone house his wife was using for her business and there they stayed for the two years it took for Haines to complete his dissertation.

Back to Michigan
...then job hunting in Washington

Haines finished his dissertation in 1973 and returned to Detroit. He took a job in his wife's father's job shop as a welder and moved up rapidly to plant manager. He stayed there for a year and a half, all the while looking for an academic position. Discouraged, he decided to give himself a month in Washington looking for a job and distributed his resume all over Capitol Hill. When nothing came of his efforts, Oliver Holmes, with whom he had been staying while in town, offered to take him to the Archives. Al Thompson offered him a job as a GS-5 but Haines turned it down.

He spoke to Milton Gustafson in the Diplomatic branch, and Jane Smith (another Wisconsin graduate), but nothing was available at the time.

Finally, his luck broke, and at that time Ralph Huss of the Diplomatic staff was about to retire. He learned later that it was through the influence of Jane Smith that he applied and got the job - a plum position for an outsider. Haines was unaware of the significance of the appointment at the time.

Experience at the Archives Orientation

In September of 1974 Gerald Haines came onboard as an Archivist GS-9. He went through a training period of one day a week for about six months. The training classes consisted of formal classroom lectures which he admitted did not do much for him. He talked about Mabel Deutrich's presentations. He also discussed the field trips. His class was one of last to go to Hyde Park and to tour the the Maryland Hall of Records. Frank Evans was in charge of the training program in those days. Haines recounted Evans' position on historians as archivists.

Charles South took over the program. Haines mentions Clarence Lyons and Claudine Weiher.

Experience at the Archives
Diplomatic Branch

The Diplomatic branch when Haines came onboard was divided into two sections:

Current - 1930-1945 - upstairs
Early Records - downstairs

Haines received most of his training downstairs under Archivists Ron Swerczek and Kent Carter. He mentions in some detail two technicians who were major forces in the vault area: Pat Dowling and Kathy Nicastro.

Haines told the story of Sandy Rangel, an archivist with Diplomatic who had taken some valuables from her previous place of employment. When this fact became known, the Archives fired her.

Makeup of the
Diplomatic Staff

Archivists Milt Gustafson
Clarence Lyons
Ron Swerczek
Kent Carter
Sandy Rangel
Gerald Haines
Sally Marks (hired four months
after him)

Technicians Pat Dowling
Kathy Nicastro
2 or 3 others not named

Philosophy of the
Diplomatic Staff

The philosophy of the staff was to be involved in everything. The theory was that it made you a better archivist - a better reference person. Involvement included description, microfilm, preservation, and accession projects. Haines was also involved in a declassification project. It involved reading the declassification orders, reading the documents, and basically rubber stamping the documents "declassified according to Executive Order....". It was a lot simpler operation than is in effect now.

One large project he undertook was the description of the "lot files" for three record groups. Lot files are those files maintained by individuals within the the State Department that would not get into the central files. These descriptions were done before the NARS A1 system came into effect, or at least Haines was not aware of them. When he came into the branch the preliminary inventories were sadly out of date. By the time he left at the end of ten years, he had finished descriptions of three record groups:

- Record Group 353 (Interdepartmental and
Intradepartmental Committees)
- Record Group 43 (International Conferences,
Commissions, and Expositions)
- Record Group 239 (American Commission for the
Protection and Salvage of
Artistic and Historic Monuments
in War Areas)

Prologue Article

His description of the last mentioned Record Group, referred to as the Roberts Committee, led to Haines' publishing an article in Prologue, the magazine of the National Archives. Haines described how he came to write his article "Who Gives a Damn About Medieval Walls." Prologue, Summer 1976, pp. 97-106.

He then discussed "research time," a benefit for archivists whereby they might have up to four hours a week to do research for independent writing. The people in his branch worked it in such a way as to accumulate two days a month to do in-depth study without interruption.

Staff members also used "research time" to go to school, if they took job-related courses. Haines thought the Archives might be the only agency in the Government with this program.

Other Scholarly Projects
While at the Archives

An article about the correct way to cite Department of State Records in the National Archives.

Major project - Complete Guide to the Department of State Lot Files. Haines used research time plus some of the homework he had done for the appraisals of the same type earlier. He had a hard time convincing Archives management that it was a worthwhile project. Ron Swerczek, his immediate boss thought it was a great idea, as did the rest of the scholarly community. Management insisted that the NARS A1 system would cover it. With the advent of a new Archivist, Kevin Flood became head of publications, and he thought it was a great idea, but it was too late for in-house publication. Haines had already signed a contract with Greenwood Press to do the work. That publication was due to come out the month following this interview.

In a similar vein, Mike McReynolds and Haines were contracting with Greenwood or Scholarly Resources Publishing companies to do another guide to the F.B.I. records.

Basically, this is the end of
side 1 tape 1.....

TAPE 1, SIDE 2

Appraisals and The Appraisal Staff

Leonard Rapport
Mary Walton Livingston
Lee Johnson
Maygene Daniels

Haines discussed the workings of the appraisal staff. Ron Heise did formal appraisals of State Department records, but he went along with appraisal judgements of lot files by the Diplomatic branch. Haines told how he felt about NN units losing the appraisal function.

Membership in Professional Groups
While at the Archives

SHAFR - A small organization of diplomatic
(Society for historians. Haines was a member of a
Historians of couple of committees that awarded
American Foreign prizes for the best article.
Relations)

SOCIETY FOR THE HISTORY OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT - Haines
in on the ground floor in setting up this
professional group. The first meetings
were held up at the Supreme Court with
Maeva Marcus, David Trask. It was felt
important that federal officers recognize
and promote the importance of history in
the Federal Government. There is a mutual
distrust between Historians and Archivists
in the Government. He and others worked
very hard to make sure that Archivists were
well represented in the Society. He
believes it is a very healthy organization.

SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARCHIVISTS - was too expensive, so he never joined officially, although he went to most of their conferences. Thought it more important to belong to the ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN HISTORIANS at that point.

Admiral Freeman's Tenure at GSA and The Emergency Committee to Save the National Archives

There was an announcement in 1980 that the Archives' records would be decentralized and sent all over the country. There wasn't much reaction in the working staff, but management took it very seriously.

Bert Rhoads, Jim O'Neill, Claudine Weiher, Walt Stender, Jack Landers, Mabel Deutch characterized as administrators.

Haines also discussed their attitudes toward archivists and the make-up of the archival staff in the 1950's and 60's versus archivists of the late 1960's and 1970's.

Haines then told of Admiral Freeman's order about decentralization of records and the response by archives administrators, including Claudine Weiher drafting a proposal for which records were to be moved.

Ross and Haines discussed the regional branches of the Archives. Haines emphasized that he and fellow archivists thought that the massive records transfer being discussed would destroy the integrity of the National Archives.

Haines characterized the attitude of Archives managers toward their staff.

One response was the coming together of young professionals, characterized by Haines as "The Young Turks" who felt they had no voice in what was happening to their agency. These included:

Mike McReynolds
Sam Walker - Educational Programs
George Mazuzan - Presidential Libraries
John Rumbarger -
Elsi Freivogel (Freeman)
Virginia Purdy
Lee Johnson
Lee Tyson
Dave Van Tassel

Those on the basketball team who became active with policy questions were:

Clarence Lyons
Roger Bruns
John Vernon
Ed McCarter
Gerald Haines
Mike McReynolds
John Butler
Doug Helms

And the volleyball team:

Chris Rudy
Marilyn Childress
Mary Ruwell
Richard Smith
Sara Strom

After the games team members, most of whom worked at the Archives, would meet at the Keyhole Inn and discuss what was happening with their agency.

Pete Daniel was a historian and Senator Morgan's assistant. He played ball with the archivists and was amazed at the stories they told. He was also afraid that the new policies would affect his research, and that of the whole academic community.

The major bone of contention among the archivists was that the GSA was causing the problem. The question was what could they do about it.

Mike McReynolds' attitude characterized.

Pete Daniel's role discussed.

Decision of Daniel and Haines to involve the historical community.

They put together lists of people who would be active and have some clout:

Maeva Marcus
Anna Nelson
Dick Baker
Nate Reingold
Ira Berlin
Walt Rundell
Ray Smock

These people used to go to Pete Daniel's apartment on the Hill and talk about ways to get people involved.

Charlene Bickford got involved at this time.

The group began to think about independence of the Archives from the GSA. They put a letterhead together, using Bob Warner as a figurehead, and they began to contact the big names.

Role of Trudy Peterson discussed.

The Archives Assembly

The Archives Assembly seems to have grown out of an incident whereby Ron Swerczek, the archivist in charge of the research involved in an exhibit that was to travel to Morocco was passed over to go on the road with the show in favor of an Educations Program man, Al Meisel. Lee Johnson and Haines got together and wrote up a petition on Ron's behalf. They spent a week gathering signatures and then submitted it to Rhoads. Well...., all the Branch Chiefs were summoned and given the warning that in the future all such matters should go through channels.

It caused an uproar.

This incident, plus the decentralization of the records, made the "Young Turks" feel alienated from management. There was no avenue of expressing professional opinion and a committee made up of the following was formed:

John Rumbarger
Bill Valentine
Elsie Freivogel
Virginia Purdy

While these people were sympathetic to the Emergency Committee to Save the Archives, they were more vital in setting up the Archives Assembly. They were more concerned with the internal affairs of the Archives. Rumbarger and Purdy held meetings in their offices trying to set up some kind of professional organization. Some examples they studied were university faculty senates, the senate at the Smithsonian, and the professional organization at the Library of Congress. The timing was right - a new Archivist was coming into the picture, and now was the time for input from a professional organization. They set about organizing the Assembly and got a tremendous response. The first meeting was held on a Saturday and over 200 people came. The Assembly was open to all employees.

Regarding the relationship between the Assembly and the Union, Haines characterized the Union leader, Carmen DellaDonne, and discussed the interplay between the Assembly, the Union and the Archives management.

The Archives Assembly now meets for two hours every quarter.

Meanwhile, the attacks on the Archives by GSA became sharper. The Emergency Committee to Save the National Archives was becoming bolder in their quest for independence. And finally, the management began to look upon this same committee as an ally against GSA.

Attitude of Frank Burke characterized.

Haines mentioned George Scaboo's directive dating from 1983 or so that top administrators in the Archives were to join the Assembly.

End of Tape 1, Side 2.

Tape 2, Side 1.

QUESTION: WHAT WAS THE ROLE OF THE ARCHIVES ASSEMBLY TO THE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT IN THE LAST TWO YEARS?

ANSWER: Independence was the central issue of the Assembly. It was the main goal. But every effort was made not to make the Assembly a one issue group. People offered input in different areas of expertise: description, appraisal, building space, reference.

Haines gave an example of a report that his officemate, Fred Greenhut, gave about the air filtering system of the building. Greenhut compared the filtering system at the Library of Congress (the new system in the Madison Building) and had some of their people look at our own. The LC visitors were appalled at our system. They stated that the only thing it filtered out were the birds and the butterflies. Management made use of this Assembly report when it installed a new filtering system.

Haines also discussed Greenhut's position toward the Archives management vis-a-vis GSA and mentioned Greenhut's meetings with Admiral Freeman.

Haines and Virginia Purdy also had meetings with Admiral Freeman on behalf of the Assembly. Haines gave his impression of Admiral Freeman.

Independence

Just as the issue of Independence was getting really fired up, Haines left for six months to work for the FBI task force which involved a lot of travel, and then he went to East Texas to teach. He was kept well informed as to what was happening, though, by Cindy Fox and Mike McReynolds. He also wrote and talked to Page Miller and Charlene Bickford. The latter had a major role in the Democratic party in Arlington, and Haines' wife was a campaign manager for the treasurer in the same town, and so they often met at Democratic functions and talked Archives business.

About this time, also, Bob Warner and George Scaboo and Claudine Weiher were giving the Assembly information.

Ed Gleiman came to a few Emergency Committee meetings at Pete Daniel's and it was there that Gleiman got a more favorable impression of archivists. Gleiman got the idea that archivists took the move for independence seriously and they wanted his support.

Ira Shapiro was instrumental in the movement for independence but Haines didn't get to know him.

Senator Morgan lost the election and shock waves went through the committee to think that they had lost their main man on the Hill for independence. It was at this point that Charlene Bickford and Page Miller took over.

The FBI Task Force (This episode is mentioned after the teaching period in Texas, but chronologically, it took place here)

The task force was set in motion when the Merepol Brothers sued the FBI for the Rosenberg papers. The court had issued an injunction forbidding the FBI from throwing out any more files from the New York field office relating to the case. The FBI and the Archives started pointing fingers at each other. The FBI asserting that the Archives had given permission under some records disposition document to dispose of certain records. The Archives responded such was not the case - that J. Edgar Hoover would never let us near any of his files. So.... the court ordered the Archives to set up a group to appraise the records of the FBI. Eighteen people were chosen, all with impeccable academic credentials to be impartial and above suspicion under Congressional scrutiny.

The group set up a form, reviewing a certain percent of the cases in each classification which ranged from espionage to auto theft. Halfway through the assignment Haines went to Texas to teach and only received reports on how the group was voting.

Teaching at Texas

Haines was the first person in the Archives to take advantage of an Intergovernmental Exchange Program -set up to bring government executives into business and vice versa. It happened just about the time of the RIF (reduction in force) in the government. Haines had been with the Archives seven or eight years at this point.

The opportunity came about when a fellow former graduate student from Wisconsin, now teaching at the University of Texas, asked if he were interested in coming to Texas to teach for a year. The University would pay the salary of an associate professor and the Archives only had to pick up the rest of his salary. The Dean at the University sent a letter to the Archives, Haines went through channels, met with no opposition, and was on his way to Texas.

When he returned he wanted to set up an exchange program - an internship between the Archives and the University of Texas, but no one was interested. The exchange program fell flat.

Department of Justice Appraisal Project

Haines did this unwillingly, but, as a good soldier, went anyway. The project had been an ongoing thing for over ten years, and the schedules that resulted had not been acceptable to either Justice or the Archives. Haines believed that the branch that had custody of those records should supply the personnel for the appraisal, and he never did understand why he was picked to be involved with it.

It was about this time that Haines understood that what he would like to see happen to the Archives was fundamentally different from the direction that management was taking. He would have liked to have seen archivists develop an expertise in the documents and records they were in charge of and not just be information managers.

Elaboration on the Question of Journeyman Archivist vs. Subject Specialist

Haines told of conversations with different people. Jim Moore (NN) expressed the belief that all Archivists were interchangeable parts and could perform equally well in any branch of the Archives. Haines tried to convince him that with 10 years of experience behind him in the Diplomatic Branch, that he had some valuable expertise to contribute. Haines characterized his feelings after talking with Moore.

Haines next took his case to Bob Warner whom he thought would be more sympathetic to the approach. Instead, he was given a lecture about the coming age of technological information retrieval and that those people who were experienced only in one field would one day be "dinosaurs". Haines characterized his feelings after talking with Warner.

Decision to leave the Archives.

Haines stated that he had always had a love-hate relationship with the Archives. He had been there ten years through some exciting times and with Independence coming some good things would be happening at the Archives especially with Frank Burke and Trudy Peterson in charge. At the same time he expressed unhappiness with trends he saw.

He received an offer from the National Security Agency as Deputy Historian. Another offer came along from Texas Instruments to set up the company archives in Dallas, Texas. He decided he wanted to get back into the field of history. He took the job with NSA.

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE

Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interview of

Gerald K. Haines

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I,

Gerald K. Haines of Arlington, Virginia
(name) (city and state)

do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title and interest in the tape recording and transcript of a personal interview conducted on February 26, 1985 at 202 N. Highland St. in Arlington, Virginia and prepared for deposit in the National Archives. This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

- (1) The tape recording shall be available to all researchers upon its being accessioned by the National Archives.
- (2) The transcript shall be available to those researchers who have access to the tape recording, as soon as the National Archives' processing schedule allows sufficient time for transcript preparation.
- (3) I hereby assign to the United States Government all copyright I may have in the interview transcript and tape.
- (4) Copies of the transcript and the tape recording may be provided by the National Archives to researchers upon request.
- (5) Copies of the transcript and tape recording may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the National Archives.

Gerald K. Haines
Donor

Robert W. ...
Archivist of the United States

2/26/85
Date

March 18, 1985
Date