AGREEMENT WITH THE
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE
AS TO ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

I, Karl L. Trever, of Arlington, Virginia, in accordance with the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended (44 U.S.C. 397) and regulations issued thereunder (41 CFR 101-110), hereby assign to the United States for administration by the National Archives and Records Service all my rights, title, and interest, including any literary property rights that I may have in them, in the tape recording and transcript of the interviews with me conducted by Philip C. Brooks on behalf of the National Archives and Records Service, Washington, DC, February 20 and March 29, 1973.

It is agreed that the tape (or sample portion thereof), and transcript will be available under the regulations prescribed by the Archivist of the United States as soon as the final form of the transcript has been deposited in the National Archives. It is also agreed that only the National Archives and Records Service shall have the right to publish or authorize the publication of the interview in whole or in part, aside from quotation in the normal concept of "fair use," providing that I or my heirs, legal representatives or assigns retain the right to publish in other form the statements or facts set forth in the interviews.

Signed Karl L. Trever

Date May 21, 1975

Accepted:

Signed James B. Rhoads
Archivist of the United States

Date June 12, 1975

TO THE READER:

On August 8, 1974, after reading the transcript of the recorded interview I had had with Dr. Philip C. Brooks earlier that year, I wrote to him as follows:

> Now that I have the transcript of my interviews I face the problem created by (a) inelegant, even ungrammatical language; (b) erroneous or misleading off-the-cuff statements; (c) unintelligible remarks and non-sequiturs; and (d) mis-identification or non-identification of individuals, events, or dates and the like. Even a casual reading makes one dislike himself--at least instills in him an urge to "pretty things up," as you say. The question now arises to what extent may the interviewee pretty up his own words in the transcript in view of the exiating tapes?
>
> I think it would be wrong to present to the future historian of the National Archives inaccurate or misleading, or confusing information, tapes or no tapes. Indeed, I worry more about this aspect of the business than I do about the language and the impression of me that the user might get . . . But if the reader can get a more correct, intelligible and readable transcript by careful editing of the transcript I think he ought to be allowed to have it . . .
>
> I would like to edit the transcript down to manageable proportions without (1) doing violence to facts, subjects discussed, comments on events or personalities; (2) vitiating the purposes and intent of oral history as a viable tool of research. This I believe I can do if permissible for me to do so.

In consequence of a letter I received from Dr. Brooks on August 16, 1974, I have revised the original transcript along the lines set forth in my letter to him on August 8. Much of the original language of the tapes still remains in the edited transcript (although not always in the same order) and I believe all of the original factual statements have been retained (although again, not necessarily in the original order). No statements have been added to the transcript of a substantive nature except in two, possibly three cases--and these are clearly identified on the transcript. My sole effort has been to make the transcript more readable, meaningful, and accurate for the reader. I feel that this purpose has been achieved.

Karl L. Trever

1655 N. Greenbrier Street
Arlington, Virginia
October 10, 1974

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviews with
KARL L. TREVER
Former Special Assistant to the Archivist
Washington, DC, February 20 and March 29, 1973

Major Biographical Information:

Born, Halle, Germany (of American parents)	1903
A.B., Lawrence College	1923
M.A., University of Wisconsin	1925
Instructor, University of Wisconsin	1924-1925
Assistant Professor, Illinois Wesleyan University	1926-1930
Graduate study, Harvard University	1930-1933
Instructor, Boston University	1930-1933
Research Assistant, Library of Congress	1933-1936
Archivist, P-1, National Archives	1936
Archivist, P-2, National Archives	1936-1938
Associate Librarian	1936-1944
Assistant to Director of Research and Records Description	1944
Assistant to Program Adviser	1944-1947
Archivist, Natural Resources Records Division	1947-1951
Chief, Exhibits and Publications Division	1951-1957
Special Assistant to the Archivist for Presidential Libraries	1957-1964

Retired	1964

Major Events in National Archives Career:

Enshrinement Ceremonies, Declaration of Independence, and Bill of Rights; Bill of Rights Day	1952
Lighting Ceremonies, National Archives Building	1954
Completion of film, "Your National Archives"	1956
Truman Library Dedication	1957
Rayburn Library Dedication	1957
Grover's 10th Anniversary Ceremony	1958
Buck Portrait Committee Fund	1960
GSA Library Survey Committee	1960
Transfer of Kennedy pre-Presidential papers	1961
Preparation of motion picture from Ford Film Collection	1963

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with Karl L. Trever
Former Special Assistant to the
Archivist of the United States
Washington, DC
First Interview--February 20, 1973

BROOKS: Karl, I think it's important with any of the people that were on the staff in the early years to learn something of their background that might have qualified them for giving them a special interest in working with the Archives, and also to learn something of what brought the Archives to their attention and brought them into the place. I wonder if you'd talk a little, informally, about that sort of thing.

TREVER: Surely. I think my family background had a little to do with what I did in life. My father happened to be a college history professor, very much interested in classics, very much interested in the ancient records. He taught at Lawrence College in Appleton, Wisconsin. And I was more or less brought up with an interest in this sort of thing, seeing my father looking at old documents. I suppose, though, that there were two things I wasn't going to be: one was to be a professor and the other was to be a minister (my father was both) and I didn't turn out to be either one. But I did get into an allied field of education--the archives field.

I started out with the idea I was going to be a businessman--I was going to go into the paper business. But about a half year of that was enough to convince me I wasn't suitable for that. It was alright until I had to go out on the road to sell paper. I was no salesman. I had no success at all with that and shortly went into teaching, partly because I was able to get a job very easily, having had a fairly good college record.

I went to Lawrence College for four years from 1919-23. There I majored in history and political science and the two together welded an interest that served me in good stead later on. I went on to the University of Wisconsin and to Harvard for graduate work and in each case I majored in history but got into political science as well. By 1925 when I left the University of Wisconsin and went into high school teaching for a year I was much interested in political science. I shortly took a

job at Illinois Wesleyan University, where a good share of my teaching was in political science. I taught at Illinois Wesleyan four years, leaving in June 1930 to go to Boston University, where I again taught political science part time and attended Harvard graduate school. I think all this had a lot to do with my eventual interest in Archives. Particularly in the administrative history side of Archives.

But something else had even more to do with my career at the Archives. When I was at Boston University I took courses at Harvard. One day in either James Baxter's or Arthur Schlesinger's class (I forget which) I met a man who turned out also to be teaching at Boston University. His name was Fred Shipman. Fred was a young fellow who had been working in the State Department on the Territorial Papers Project. He also had worked, I think, in the Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress. He was a good friend of Dr. Clarence Carter and Dr. J. Franklin Jameson, head of the Manuscripts Division. At least I understood he was. We got to talking off and on, visited each other's homes, and studied together. Fred left Harvard in 1931 but I stayed on two more years. He came down to Washington and again went with Dr. Carter at the State Department. But before he left he told me that he had virtually been promised a job on the National Archives staff when it was established. This was something new to me--I didn't know anything about it.

BROOKS: How early was that?

TREVER: This was in 1931 or 1932.

BROOKS: Was the promise made by Jameson?

TREVER: No, I don't think so. I think probably it was Carter who made the promise, because both Carter and Fred knew Jameson well. If you ever have an interview with Fred I'm sure you can get the answer to your question from him. Anyway, Fred said to me: "If I ever get a good job I'll let you know and you do likewise." Of course those were depression days and so this was one friend trying to help another as so many of us did in those days. Well, I came down to Washington eventually to do research for my thesis and, in the meantime, got a rather small job at the Library of Congress. Whenever I got a chance I would run over to the State Department Archives Division and do some work.

BROOKS: That must have been 1934, because I met you up there before . . .

TREVER: Probably. One day who should walk in to the Archives to see Mrs. Natalia Summers but Fred Shipman, and we renewed our acquaintance. Well, it went along until March of 1936, when Fred called at my house one day and informed me he had just been named a division chief at the National Archives. This was to be what was then known as the Division of Department Archives No. 2. He said he was going to have a vacant position in the division and he'd like to have me come with him. I thought this was fine and said: "Sure." I can very well recall how Fred took me in an old beat-up car out to Rock Creek Park, where we sat and talked over the possibilities of this.

Well, the funny thing about this was that about the same time I had met Mrs. Elizabeth Buck, wife of Dr. Solon J. Buck, during my work in the Library of Congress Study Room Reference Service. We had hit it off very well and I think she got the idea I was smarter than I was. At least she liked me, which was important, and she must have told Dr. Buck something about me at least--how helpful I was, or something like that. At any rate, one day a call came for me to come down to the office of Martin Roberts, then Superintendent of the Reading Room. There I found two men from the National Archives whom I did not know and had never seen before. I was asked to take them around and show them the Library. I didn't know at the time that they were Collas G. Harris and Dorsey W. Hyde.

BROOKS: Do you know approximately when that was?

TREVER: Yes, this was in March or April of 1936. And so I took them around. I had been cleaning out a closet on Deck A of the Library and I was quite dirty at the time, sleeves rolled up, and everything else.

BROOKS: Was this a general tour?

TREVER: Yes. I was just to show them around. In the meantime they talked and asked me questions. Well, I later learned that there was a vacancy as head of the National Archives Library. Dr. Hamer had not yet been appointed Librarian--he was still serving as head of the Survey of Federal Archives, which was about to be closed out. The Archives was looking for someone to take over the librarian's job and so I guess Mrs. Buck must have said something about my availability. At any rate, when I went to the Justice Department Building, where the Archives then had temporary offices, to put in my application for Fred's job, they seemed not at all surprised to see me. When Shipman called for my application papers--I think it was Form 57 even in those days--he was

told that the Archivist had them.

For several days I had heard rumors of this through Miss Ethel Armes, who wrote Coal and Iron in Alabama and was then working for the Robert E. Lee Foundation that runs Stratford Hall. She had a study room on Deck A and she tipped me off that she had had inquiries from the Archives about me as a possibility for the library job. So of course for a while I was sitting on top of the world--I thought I was really going to get a fine job of some sort--much higher than I had dreamed of. Well it turned out, of course, that eventually Dr. Hamer became the librarian, as he should have, being far more qualified than I was in many ways. And I ended up, very gladly, very happily accepting a position with Fred in Department Archives No. 2 as a P-1 Archivist. This was really a thrill for me because it would be a marvelous opportunity to work in an agency that was beginning with a clean slate, you might say, setting up a whole new organization and a new system for handling the records of this country. I thought I was truly honored to have this position, though it was one of the lowest grades in the professional set-up!!

BROOKS: Let me interrupt with a question, because that reminds me. In the next few years various members of the staff sometimes argued over whether an archivist should be a historian or not, and whether the people hired by the Archives were really interested in the Archives or whether they were just looking for jobs during the depression. Now I used to be very angry at some particular people who bore down heavily on this idea that most people came here just because they needed a job. It seemed to me that there were a good many staff members, I thought of myself as one, who really had some sort of interest in the Archives as such. And this background that you give would indicate that you had too.

TREVER: I think so. I had a job. I didn't have to come to the Archives. As a matter of fact, Martin Roberts, who was then Superintendent of the Library of Congress Reading Room and my boss, tried to keep me from leaving. When I turned in my resignation he practically wept tears that a young man who really wanted to work in the scholarly and intellectual field was going to what he called "that political institution on Pennsylvania Avenue." But I really did think that I was going into something that was not only worthwhile and that fitted into my background and interest, but also something that to a degree I had been trained for. I really believed that the historian and student of government could probably become a better archivist. And if you didn't have this idea to start with, I think

you soon got it because there was a great enthusiasm among the professional and even the sub-professional and clerical people here. And no where did I see this feeling more than at some of the early meetings of the Society of American Archivists, where lots of people who had been unemployed but were now working in the National Archives, the Historical Records Survey, and the Survey of Federal Archives, were filled with just tremendous enthusiasm for this business. I just don't see that kind of enthusiasm around here among the young people as a general rule now.

BROOKS: Evidently there's more of a morale problem than used to exist.

TREVER: Well, I think in every agency there is a morale problem at one time or another and it fluctuates up and down for a variety of reasons. But by and large I think the morale was better here in the first years--say up to World War II--than it has been since. I think there was a tremendous esprit de corps then. Sure, there was a lot of personal backbiting. I mean some people didn't like Mr. Hyde, some people didn't like Mr. Price or Mr. Kimberly. Some said that Dr. Connor was too far away from the staff and that sort of thing. But as a group we were very, very enthusiastic for what we were doing and thought that we had a great future.

BROOKS: It seemed that way to me.

TREVER: I'm glad you agree.

BROOKS: Do I get the impression that now there is more of a morale problem?

TREVER: Well, I don't know. If there is it may be because there are less opportunities to get ahead now to the top level.

BROOKS: There are less top level jobs vacant.

TREVER: Yes, I think so. Most of us who came here in the early days stayed throughout our Government careers. Some went away and came back, like you did, but most of us stayed and this, of course, created a problem for the young people who came in at the lower levels later on. There was little opportunity for promotion to top level jobs. Later this was more true due to filling of top level positions from the outside. I think this contributed to a decline in personal enthusiasm among both professional and non-professional personnel. But this is just an opinion on my part.

BROOKS: Well partly, I suppose, because the place is bigger . . .

TREVER: I don't think the National Archives is all that much bigger. NARS is that much bigger. I don't think it's just that. There are all kinds of factors in it. But I suppose we shouldn't discuss that in this interview.

BROOKS: Well one thing I wanted to ask you about was what your impression was of the Archives when you first came? You've already indicated something of that.

TREVER: I was really very intrigued by it and my first contact with many of the people was a very attractive one. Of course I had known Fred earlier. Arthur Leavitt impressed me to no end as the gentleman scholar. I thought it would be wonderful if I could be like he was--well read, fine background, always considerate, always thoughtful--a hard worker and a good organizer. There were some, I guess, who didn't think as highly of him as I did.

BROOKS: Well, I thought most everybody did.

TREVER: I thought he was one of the finest men in the place. He and Fred gave me an excellent start. Mr. Leavitt was then working on his translation of the Muller, Feith and Fruin Manual, and that got me interested in the business of training, which I know you'll want to talk about later on. But the fact that I had met him was an influence on my career.

BROOKS: He was more of a scholar, in a way, although he was not an academician, and he knew more about archival theory than most of the staff.

TREVER: I sometimes thought he might have been happier if he had had Fred Shipman's job, since he had been a Foreign Service officer and would have been very much interested in handling the State Department Archives No. 2.

Unlike you, as a youngster I had a lot less contact with people on the higher echelon of the Archives. You came in as a special examiner and I came in as a junior archivist. I had very little to do with Dr. Connor, Mr. Price, or those people at that time. I always thought of Dr. Connor as sort of an Olympian figure. If I had ever tried to get very close, I'm quite sure now Marjory Terrell would have guarded the gates.

BROOKS: He was a much less frightening character than she was.

TREVER: Oh, I should say so.

BROOKS: There were four of us hired as Special Examiners, you know . . . That was sort of an after-thought. That wasn't the original plan of the Archives. I think that perhaps the original principal officers didn't understand the problem of mass records anyway.

TREVER: Well, during this whole period that I was in the Division of Department Archives No. 2 and its successor, the Division of State Department Archives, my contacts were largely with general administrative people like Henrietta Canby in the Personnel Office and with people who came in from day-to-day to Shipman's or Leavitt's offices. My first contact with the Special and Deputy Examiners came, I think, about the time the State Department Archives were on the way into the building.

BROOKS: That was '38 I believe.

TREVER: That was in '38.

BROOKS: And by that time the Special and Deputy Examiners had been pretty well eliminated and we were all distributed among the divisions. The reason I mentioned the Special Examiners was that just by a stroke of luck we worked closely with Mr. Hyde down in the office next to the Archivist, although we had 5-W, and we used to go in there and chat. Mr. Connor would come through on the way to his office and always be very cordial and informal. In the first few months there Mr. Connor came through one time and he saw George Ashworth and said "Hello, George," and went on into his office. And Ed Leahy said, "That's nothing, he calls me George too." But we did get to know Dr. Connor very well later; I did especially through the Society of American Archivists, and had the highest regard for him.

TREVER: Two experiences I had while with Shipman might be worth mentioning in this interview. I happened to hit the place just about the time they began bringing in from the Veterans Administration the military pension application and bounty land files--all those records now a part of Record Group 15. These were to be taken care of in the stacks by Shipman's division. The Revolutionary War pension files were in nice envelopes, neatly filed, but most of the rest were wrapped in bundles

and filed in long galvanized tin cans that looked like window boxes with handles on them. These were brought in to the stacks on specially designed dolleys that looked like big bookcases on wheels by laborers who came from what was known in New Deal days as "Space Control." It hired people who didn't have jobs to help with moving records, office furniture etc. Many of them were well-qualified for better work. One of these young men, I remember, who came from Space Control was Albert Whimpey, who works in the Records Center set-up still, I think.

TREVER: They brought in these files day in and day out for weeks, and in order to keep the records moving Mr. Shipman had us hand them down the stack aisles and shelve them. They put the tallest man at the end of the line, usually Asa Thornton, who could put these things on the highest shelves as we passed them along to him. Shipman always had an "eager beaver" standing in the middle of the line to keep the stuff moving from both ends. It was really quite an exhausting experience, but we got the job done. There is an interesting story, perhaps apochryphal, about these galvanized tin cans. We had a man in the Administrative Secretary's Office named Preston.

BROOKS: Yeah, Jim Preston.

TREVER: Jim saw these cans and thought what wonderful things he could do with them--make window boxes etc. So he went to Frank Wilson, our Supply Officer.

BROOKS: Harris' brother-in-law. He was Supply Officer.

TREVER: Was he Harris' brother-in-law? I didn't remember that. Well, anyway, he was extremely meticulous in handling supplies and equipment. He said he was accountable for everything and he wasn't going to take any chances. As a matter of fact he had gotten into trouble once when he had worked in a Post Office somewhere, and said he was never going to get into trouble again. At any rate, Preston wanted a half dozen of the tin cans which they were going to get rid of anyway. So he asked Wilson for them. Wilson told him he couldn't give them to him--that they were Government property. And Preston said, "Oh, you're going to throw them away anyway. You're going to send them to surplus." Wilson replied, "Well, that's not my problem." Preston went back to his office, looked out the window on the main floor, where Dan Reed's office is now, and saw the pile of guano that the pigeons and starlings used to deposit underneath the columns . . . He picked up the phone and called Wilson and said, "Look, there's a lot of bird

guano under the window outside my office. I wonder if I could take a few shovels of that home, or is that Government property too, since it's on the building?"

BROOKS: Wilson would draw that kind of response. He's that kind of guy.

TREVER: Remind me, when we talk later about my stint in the Library, of another similar problem with Mr. Wilson. A second interesting experience I can well remember--I can't tell you the exact day--but there had been hints from Fred Shipman that maybe something big was in the offing. He was at the State Department a good deal and I could put two and two together that something was going on. But you can check with Fred on this as my memory may not be accurate. One day when Fred and I were in the stacks, Dr. Connor came in and walked up to Fred and very quietly said "The National Archives had come of age. The State Department is turning over its pre-1906 records to the National Archives"--or some words to that effect. This was one of the big events, of course, that helped put the agency well on its way to success.

BROOKS: One of the two big hurdles.

TREVER: In the early days of the Archives the newspapers, particularly the columnists, kept needling the Archivist all the time about not having important records. Why was he taking in such things, for instance, as those old Veterans records and Weather Bureau records and Railroad Administration records and all such things, which, to their minds, weren't considered important enough to go into a building like this. You know, these columnists always thought that Dr. Connor was filling the building with useless papers, while it was intended for such things as Presidential papers and the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, which the Library of Congress then had. We had a beautiful shrine and had nothing in it, they said. So when Dr. Connor got the State Department records, he must have felt tremendous pride in his success. There's a long story here, if you can get it out of somebody who knows, how and why this was accomplished. I've heard various versions of how it happened, but I wasn't in on it so can't really say. Most of my time in those early days were spent in what later came to be known as packing and shelving and handling what reference work there was. There was a lot of reference work once we got the Veterans records and that meant a degree of administrative work for me, because we hired 8-10 people to search those records. And also there was some small beginning in preparing

shelf lists and that sort of thing. Mr. Shipman was very meticulous about keeping track of where everything was put and listing it as it was put away. I doubt, however, that much of the finding aid work that I did in those days was worth very much, but I suspect some of it is still lying around here somewhere, perhaps even being used--I don't know.

I think I came here at a salary of $2,000.

BROOKS: In 1937?

TREVER: In April 1936. I had been getting about $1,800 at the Library of Congress. I don't know how long I was at the National Archives--but it wasn't too long, perhaps 8-9 months, something like that when I was promoted to Archivist P-2 and this brought me $2,600. I can remember writing to my father and saying if I get this "I will have it made." This raise really meant a good deal to me, and I thought "Well, I'm in a business where I can feel at home and comfortable. There were periods in my career, of course, when I might have been temporarily disillusioned, like some others at the Archives, or unhappy for some reason or another. On a couple of occasions I even made slight stabs at going elsewhere--but never really willingly--but because I thought I had to for financial or other personal reasons.

BROOKS: The fact that you were doing packing and shelving work didn't disillusion you?

TREVER: Oh, no.

BROOKS: Some people got quite impatient with the routine.

TREVER: This didn't bother me at all. I can recall one person--you know him of course, Don Dozier--who came here from Harvard. He had his PhD already. I went out of my way to help him get the job, but Don was never happy working for Shipman and he resented, I guess, having me temporarily as supervisor. I shouldn't say this I guess. But he was one of those people who just thought his talents were being wasted doing such work. I'm not sure of that, however, because I have seen altogether too much material in the Archives which is improperly, badly boxed--where there is relationship between what's on the label and in the box is nil. I think that there's no harm done in having such work done by persons who know something about history and organization of the agency that created the records. It may be that in these days such knowledge may be necessary only for supervisory personnel, but in those days the material

to be boxed had been in storage and kicked around for years. Much of it had been gathered together and identified by the Deputy Examiners for the first time and brought in here. It seemed to me important then to have professional people do the packing. We had a similar situation in the Central Search Room, where we had PhD's on the central desk. That would be laughed at today--yet I am sure that Edna Vosper and Vernon Setser and people of that type must have made a tremendous contribution to the searchers of their day. If we had some people like that there now I think it would be helpful.

BROOKS: I agree with you a hundred percent.

TREVER: I think at this point perhaps it might be well to say something about my transferring over to the National Archives Library. This had a definite effect on my career. I forget the exact date, but it was sometime in 1938--it may have been in June. I was at work one morning when Dorothy Reed, a lovely red-headed gal who was Shipman's secretary, called to say Collas Harris wanted to see me. Well, Collas was one person in the Archives that I truly was afraid of. I don't know why, for he had never done anything to me. Perhaps it was because I thought he had a great deal of power over what happened to me.

BROOKS: This was probably before we went under Civil Service and Harris could decide a whole lot of things. And he enjoyed power.

TREVER: Well, I was trying to remember what in the world I had done--was I in trouble and why? At that time Harris' office was where the Archivist's office is now. I had to go through the anteroom to open the door. I rapped timidly, opened the door, and went in. Harris was sitting at this huge executive-type desk. I wasn't used to that kind of thing, I'm sure. He had his head down looking at a batch of papers and he didn't say "Hi" or "Come in," or anything of that sort. He just started to read from a piece of paper "You are hereby notified that you are appointed Associate Librarian, National Archives, at grade so and so." He then looked up and said "Does that satisfy you?" Of course I was quite satisfied, and also surprised, because I hadn't known about this. I had known that there was a reorganization in the offing and that Dr. Hamer was going to leave the library. I think he went temporarily to liquidate the Division of Accessions and then later to head the Division of Reference. For some reason or other "they" had decided on me. I suppose "they" had dug up my old record at the Library of Congress and my application of 1936. Maybe by this time Dr. Buck, whom I had come to know somewhat, and Mrs. Buck, whom I'd gotten to know even better, may have had some

influence. At any rate, I was named Associate Librarian. And it turned out that within a few months, after Mr. Hamer liquidated the old Accessions Division, he came right back, in a sense as librarian and my boss, for he was Chief of the Division of Reference and had supervision over the library.

BROOKS: Was Dr. Buck your supervisor when you first went into the position?

TREVER: No. Vernon Setser, was Acting Chief of Reference, and he was my supervisor. You remember Nelson Vance Russell, who had been chief of Reference from the beginning, left about this time, and they reorganized the Division. Newman McGirr was already in the Library when I came in, but for some reason they wouldn't give him the job. I never could quite figure it out whether it was personal or not, but "they" gave Newman a very hard time. He was a marvelous man and he knew books. But he would have been no administrator. He was too kind and good. And more than that, he had a mortal fear of Collas Harris--it was pathetic. And he was equally afraid of Dr. Hamer for some reason. If you don't mind I'd like to talk a bit about the library because I had a lot to do with it.

BROOKS: I think it's very important because when you came in, it was the first time, I think, that there was real planning as to what . . .

TREVER: I wouldn't go that far. Dr. Hamer had done one of the most remarkable jobs of gathering a collection of the most significant works on history, government and archives ever gathered together in one place in so short a period of time. I don't think the study room reference collection of such works was any better than the one Dr. Hamer developed here for the subject fields mentioned. Because of his connections with the Survey of Federal Archives and the Historical Records Survey he knew where all kinds of important materials could be had for the asking. Having been a professor of history and a teacher of graduate students, he knew historical literature and he knew archives literature because he had been associated with the archives business for some time. So with a good initial appropriation for purchase of books in addition, he gathered in here thousands of important books and government documents in a relatively short time. He got them by purchase, exchange, gift, or just picking things up from defunct libraries or surplus of Government agencies. For instance, he acquired complete sets of out-of-print things like American State Papers and Peter Force's American Archives and sets of old congressional documents from embassies and other places that no

longer needed them. So Dr. Hamer had a tremendous role in making the library not only an excellent one for the staff but also for scholars who come here to work as searchers.

BROOKS: I should have remembered that. There's a pretty good summary of what he did in the early annual reports of the Archivist.

TREVER: That's right. And he made the beginnings of getting the house in order by picking a good library staff. He got some of them when the Archives Catalog and Classification Divisions were broken up. He picked catalogers who were very good and hence extremely important to the National Archives Library's development. So I had not only the advantage of Dr. Hamer's tremendous experience in getting this collection together, but I also had the advantage of having as head cataloger a young woman he had selected named Matilda Hanson. She turned out to be a remarkable person in organizing and developing the classification and cataloging procedures of the library.

BROOKS: She was from the Cataloging Division, too, wasn't she?

TREVER: Yes. I don't know how many books we had at that time, but it must have been somewhere close to 100,000 volumes, and the only title that had been cataloged was a set of the Congressional Record. And whether Hamer's staff had put those call numbers on or not I don't know. I stayed in the Library until March 1944 and by that time we had finished cataloging all of the non-document materials and had made a splendid beginning on a system of short-form cataloging our collection of Government documents which are separate from other books. This was not only a great achievement for Matilda Hansen and her catalogers, but I take some pride in it because I kept it moving and going in the right direction. I think we were generally quite successful with it.

BROOKS: Were you well supported in the way of funds to purchase books?

TREVER: We didn't have anything like Dr. Hamer's rather big initial appropriation for purchase of books. I don't remember what our funds were but they were gradually whittled down to an annual amount based largely on what it cost to get continuing serials plus a limited amount in each field for the purchase of books. We never had any vast sum, but most of the time it was adequate. Certainly up until the war period when prices began to go up. Dr. Hamer had done such a good job of book selection that we were then chiefly engaged in buying newly published materials and a few out-of-print items that Dr. Hamer had been unable

to acquire. Dr. Hamer and McGirr had built up a want list of titles. One of our jobs was to go through dealers' catalogs to locate these items. We also searched publishers' catalogs for materials of professional interest to archivists, books that were based in whole or in part on records in the Archives, and books that would be helpful to users of its holdings. These were the main areas but of course every once in a while there would be a period of popular interest in some subject like administrative history or office management. Then there would be a flurry of demand to purchase books in such fields.

In the early days, at least, the book buying business was in part controlled by a library committee chaired by Dr. Hamer. We had periodic meetings. I would have to come in with a list of recommended titles I wanted to buy and these had to be approved by the committee. I am not sure of this, but I think Dr. Hamer as the head of the committee and my supervisor could say, "Oh, go ahead and buy this, that, or the other thing," but there were certain types of things that I had to get formal clearance of the committee to purchase.

BROOKS: The reason I asked the question about financial support was that I've heard the comment made, well, since the war when I was out west, that the National Archives Library hadn't been given the resources to keep itself up as well as it did before.

TREVER: That's right. There are other things besides finance, I think, that cause a problem and we might get to those later on. I'd like to keep if I can to this earlier period while its fresh in my mind. The library committee was composed of representatives of the various divisions or activities of the Archives. There were four or five people on it--Dr. Lewinson, for example. Your old boss, Dr. Percy Scott Flippin, was once on it, and I think Marcus Price was on it for a while. It represented both administrative and archival activities and the result was that there was a continuing effort made to see to it that publications of interest to archivists working with War Department records, or Treasury Department records or motion pictures got a fair shake in library buying. In other words, it ensured that all wasn't being spent for one organizational unit and its interests. I think it worked out very well. Of course there were times when the committee got into the hair of the associate librarian--I was never, strictly speaking the librarian of the National Archives.

BROOKS: Was anybody?

TREVER: Dr. Hamer was, really. And later on, when I went with Dr. Holmes I suppose he was. The associate librarian's job was a P-3 grade and it never, at least in my day, paid more than that. At any rate, the library committee was of some help, but also a tremendous hindrance, and sometimes things got to be ridiculous. If it's not too bad to tell a story which is amusing but not of any importance, I'll tell it. It's a story about Dr. Flippin and the library committee. He had a great desire to have us buy up the remainder stock of some books on the Food Administration and the Grain Corporation. We already had bought two copies of the books and he wanted us to buy four or five more. When his request came up in the committee I said we already had two copies of these items. Dr. Flippin pointed out that these copies were getting heavy use and sooner or later would be worn out or lost and then the Archives would be without the main works dealing with the administrations whose records we held. The Flippin argument led Paul Lewinson to tell the story of a state inspector of mental institutions who was checking out the southeast corner of a building. He opened up a door and there stood a little old man standing in a ray of sunlight, stark naked, with a tall silk hat on his head and a cane in his hand. The inspector asked him, "How do they treat you here?" The inmate replied "Oh, they treat me fine. I'm very happy here, and everything's just fine." The inspector then asked, "Well, how come you have no clothes on?" "Oh," the inmate replied, "just think of all the convenience and the time I save." "Yes," replied the inspector, "but why the tall silk hat and the cane?" "Well," replied the inmate, "sometime, somehow, somebody might come for me and I want to be ready to go." The story, meant to ridicule the idea that sometime, somehow, somebody might need Flippin's extra copies, brought a laugh, but Dr. Flippin was very unhappy. He never came to another meeting of the library committee as far as I know.

There was another problem that I had in 1938-39 and that was the business of getting rid of a tremendous surplus of duplicates. We had acquired, of course, with the big sweep that Dr. Hamer made, thousands of duplicates--something in the vicinity of 30,000 pieces. We had them stored in stack areas which had to be vacated.

BROOKS: Did some come in with the records?

TREVER: Some came in with records. But a good share of them came in large shipments--whole boxes of materials from some embassy or office that was closing out. But this duplicate material had to be gotten rid of and it had to be disposed of through Mr. Wilson. He was almost a black devil at my front door because he insisted on our making surplus lists

showing author and title of each of the thousands of books. We then had to circulate these lists throughout the Government to see if anybody wanted any of the books. People would come over here and take a look at the surplus and pore over it, much as they do at the Library of Congress Gift and Exchange Division, in hope of finding something worthwhile. Of course most of it was material other libraries already had or didn't really want. So it took years to get rid of the stuff, but we finally did. Mr. Wilson certainly didn't make it any easier and Mr. Hamer would doubtless make some rather caustic remarks about the problem were he here to be interviewed on the subject.

Another thing of interest happened during that period. Dr. Hamer had the idea that an archivist worth his salt had to know what current literature was being published, what was coming into the library. He insisted that the library issue an accessions list. These lists first came out once a week and then once a month. They were multigraphed or multilithed and distributed.

BROOKS: I remember those.

TREVER: Some of the biggest educational experiences of my life were in Dr. Hamer's office, he leaning far back in his chair with my library accessions list slips stacked up on his chest, looking down at them, cogitating over them. He was quite a heavy smoker at the time. He'd take a puff of his cigarette and then put it down; he'd look at the slips deliberately one by one. I don't think my work ever got any more meticulous going over. I wish I was as careful now as I was then, I was going to be absolutely sure that I had made no mistakes punctuation wise or otherwise on those slips. In any case, the lists came out regularly for a long time. Dr. Hamer also liked bibliographies, so we got out bibliographies on a number of subjects. I don't know how worthwhile these were, but at least they were compiled and a lot of energy and time was put into them by--mostly, by me. The accessions lists and bibliographies did draw a lot of people in to the Library, however. It was always amazing to me how much use was made of new materials. There were some people you could always rely on who came in regularly, not just when a new list came out. They were the ones who usually had their names first on the waiting list for new books. There is no question that the library was used then--much more so than I think it is now--I may be wrong but I don't think so. We were very fortunate in having some very interesting, capable people on the library staff. Mrs. Lethbridge, who is now Information Officer at the Library of Congress, used to work at our library loan desk and later with government documents.

Dorothy Martin, who for many years was a very capable cataloger with us, later became head of the Clements Collection at the William C. Clements Library in Detroit. She was quite active in the Society of American Archivists, too. May Fawcett, who headed the National Archives Motion Picture Division for a long time, also had charge of our government documents section at one time.

BROOKS: Have they kept up the same size staff?

TREVER: I don't know how large the staff is now, but I would doubt it is as large. First of all, they don't have to have as large a cataloging staff. After the backlog of 70-80,000 volumes was cataloged in the first years, fewer catalogers were needed. Matilda Hansen, who was our head cataloger, ultimately became associate librarian when I left in 1944.

I said Dr. Hamer had a tremendous influence on me. I think I learned more from Dr. Hamer than anybody I ever worked for--more of the fundamentals. He was a hard taskmaster. Sometimes I was afraid of him, sometimes I didn't even like him and I set out to try to get another job. Fortunately that didn't occur. He must have been an excellent teacher as a professor in graduate school. I never forgot things he taught me, especially about being accurate and careful--but in the years since I'm afraid I've become very sloppy again.

I suppose the other person in the Archives who had a great influence on me was Solon Buck. It was a long time before I really got to know him, for instance, to the point that he would call me Karl.

BROOKS: Did he always call you Karl?

TREVER: Oh, no.

BROOKS: I could always tell if the phone rang and he said "Mr. Brooks," I was in trouble. When he called you by your first name, you were all right.

TREVER: But he had a big influence on me, not only because I am sure he had a role in my coming to the Archives in the first place, but also in my becoming librarian at the Archives, I am just positive about that. Of course, this last was partly through Mrs. Buck, who much later, as you know, worked on my staff in the Exhibits and Publications Office. From the standpoint of scholarship and interest and activity in the Archives

these two men probably had more influence on me than any others. Dr. Buck let me take his early training courses, including the one on administrative history. He told me he thought I'd be interested in administrative history, thought I would do well in it. He encouraged me to write a paper on Administrative History and the Federal Archives, which later on was printed in the American Archivist. He also got me interested, to a degree, in the training field. So Dr. Buck was a big influence on me. But the person who led me out of the doldrums and into a practical chance for professional advancement was Oliver Holmes.

BROOKS: Before we get onto him. I've talked to several people who worked with Buck in different capacities, and the consensus seems to be, and what I feel, is that he was a person of great knowledge and great aspirations and ideas about the direction of this institution. But at times he was an extremely difficult person to work with. His forte was not handling people. Either inside the organization or outside. Would you agree with that?

TREVER: He could make you furious, and . . .

BROOKS: I can remember his making you furious.

TREVER: Oh, yes. I remember one time he sent a memorandum down attached to a dictionary, and he had a marker in it showing when to use "which" or "that." I very dutifully returned the dictionary, telling him that I had read and taken note of his comment--that henceforth I would be as careful as I could be to use these two words properly--provided the next time he sent me a memorandum addressed to me he would spell my name Karl Trever and not Carl Trevor. This took a lot of nerve--but I was mad. And you know, until long after he left the National Archives, he never failed to address me as Karl Trever.

BROOKS: Angel told me a somewhat similar story about how Buck made him so mad because he did something similar--Buck was just that kind of guy.

TREVER: Yeah, and I had one very bad run-in with him once when Dan Lacy was here. It happened over in the Federal Trade Commission cafeteria. You probably heard this story from Marcus Price.

BROOKS: This was the one I think I witnessed.

TREVER: Yes, you may have been there. He said things to me that I didn't think any young person who was trying hard to do his job had any need to take, and so I got up and left the table. And later in the afternoon Dan Lacy came to see me and told me that Dr. Buck felt very badly about this, and he wanted to apologize. Here again, for some strange reason, I said "If he wants to tell me that he can, but I don't need to have you come here to tell me." It straightened itself out all right, but you know I know he sincerely felt very bad about it. I know some people who didn't think so.

BROOKS: He probably did. He just didn't know how to deal with people.

TREVER: Dr. Buck opened up the whole way for me in the Society of American Archivists. You probably know a good deal more about how it came about that I got on the Editorial Board and got to be Editor of the American Archivist, than I do. But I am sure he must have had something to say about it.

Another person--not on the Archives staff--who had a lot of influence on me was Ernst Posner. I was one of the first members of the Archives staff to meet Posner. As a matter of fact the Archivist had me take him around and show him the National Archives.

BROOKS: The first time he was here?

TREVER: The first time he was here--the first go-round. So I got to know him fairly well. He had an awful lot of influence on me, and I had a tremendous respect for him--I think we all do, so I don't think I need to go into that. Another non-Archives person who had an influence on my career was Earl Gregg Swem. I don't know whether you know him or not.

BROOKS: Oh, yes. At the Library of Congress, then at Williamsburg.

TREVER: He was at the Library of Congress with that Virginia index project.

BROOKS: Right.

TREVER: Then later he went down to Williamsburg as librarian of the College of William and Mary. I got to know him, like I got to know Mrs. Buck, at the Library of Congress. He liked me and I loved him--I thought he was a wonderful man. Twice, when opportunities arose for me to make

a change and leave the Archives, I went down and talked to Earl Swem. One of these was the possibility of my going as Archivist at the Virginia State Library. I doubt that they would have hired me, for by this time I was a Government employee thinking in terms of annual leave, retirement privileges, and so forth, which they didn't have under the Virginia Civil Service System, and I asked about these things. At any rate, I went to see Swem before my interview. He said "Have everything perfectly clear and definite before you accept, if you decide you want it, but I want to tell you, I think my advice would be stay at the National Archives. I think you have it made." And so I finally did stay. They didn't ask me and I stayed at the National Archives. Later on Van Schreeven did go and I'm glad he did because he did well there. And I'm glad I didn't, because I know I would not have done well there.

BROOKS: You mentioned Oliver. The library came under his supervision, didn't it?

TREVER: Yes, when he was Director of Research and Records Description in 1942-44.

BROOKS: You went under him as in charge of the library?

TREVER: I brought the library with me, so to speak.

BROOKS: Oh, I see.

TREVER: And Matilda Hansen was in charge of it, then subsequently she became completely independent of me. I didn't have any extensive responsibilities in Research and Records Description because we weren't there long enough. But the transfer did mean a grade raise for me, which was very nice.

In July 1944 Holmes became Program Adviser and I was named his assistant. We moved downstairs to the office where the Deputy Archivist now is, next to Dr. Buck's office. Dr. Holmes, of course, was extremely close to Dr. Buck in the whole business of post-war planning and all that kind of stuff. I don't recall whether the library as a function went along with it or not, but somewhere along the way Miss Hansen got shed of me and my relationship to it.

There really wasn't a job for me to do there in the Program Adviser's Office. The work in that office really was a one-man job, requiring a thinking man--one who could sit and think things out and write out the

necessary answers to questions. It was very closely knit to Dr. Buck's ideas of the role of the National Archives and the archival profession should be in the world of international affairs. This Oliver was doing, and there really wasn't anything for me to do.

This was another of the periods when I think I got a bit bored and a little bit uppity and began looking around for another job. I happened to know a man named Harry Dexter White--who at that time was a big shot in the Treasury Department, and there was a vacancy in the Treasury Department Library. I wrote a letter to Harry Dexter White and asked him to help me get the job. If I had known Helen Chatfield well at the time it would probably have done me more good. I didn't get the job. White never did me any harm; the only reason I knew him was because he once taught at the college where my father taught. I found him a very personable, likable guy, as far as an individual is concerned. I didn't know anything about his politics.

At any rate, I finally did rid myself of the library, but I have never lost my interest in it. I grieve sometimes to see what has been done to it, or what has sometimes been contemplated with respect to it. I do not mean to say that the people who now are directly in charge of the National Archives are not competent or they they haven't the interests we had earlier, or anything of that sort, because I think they do. I think the National Archives administration, however, has lost interest in the library as an integral part of the Archives. The problem of the library in any archival institution has always been difficult, because the first emphasis naturally is always on the archives--the library is a secondary thing, a facilitating office, a tool in a sense. This leads to problems not only with funds and personnel but even more to problems of space. Maybe I'm wrong, but I think there has been, in the last years of my career here and from what I have observed since, a lack of interest by some in management. This has been sufficient to suggest that perhaps they think they don't need a library--at least not as we have known it. I think the Archives needs a Library and it needs a good one. It would be a crying shame if it isn't kept in top shape.

During the war years the National Archives temporarily fell into financial difficulties, appropriation-wise. In order to bail itself out, it shipped personnel around to other agencies on a reimbursable basis. There were two or three of us, at least, who went to the Emmett Leahy-Herb Angel records management shop in Navy. I went over there for a stint of 90 days and they extended it for 30 days. Adeline Barry and one or two other people there tried to make my life easy and to understand what I was doing.

But I never really did know what it was all about. I don't know what they ever did with the material that I worked up. It couldn't have been very useful, at any rate. But for this period my salary was paid to the Archives out of Navy Department records management program funds.

BROOKS: This was while Leahy was still there?

TREVER: Leahy was still there. Angel was his deputy, and Adeline Barry, Charlie Sterman, and a number of other people--really keen people--were on the staff.

BROOKS: Angel reviewed the names of a lot of people the other day for me that went from here to the Navy. Of course there was a great demand then for people in the operating agencies, especially during the war, who knew something about records.

TREVER: Well, this experience in records management didn't jell with me. I don't know why.

BROOKS: It didn't for a lot of people.

TREVER: I just didn't fit in with that sort of thing, and I was unhappy, and I tried to get out of it at the end of the first 90 days. I said I wasn't doing a good job, and so on, but Herb Angel said "Look, that's for us to decide whether or not you're doing a good job." I can't imagine how I could have, because I didn't know what I was doing--honestly. So I did stay another 30 days, and then I came back to the Archives. During the period I was in the Program Adviser's office Dr. Posner was working at the Archives compiling his famous guides to archival repositories in Europe and Asia that were faced with attack. I was there too when Fred Shipman returned from his tours in the European theater for the President.

BROOKS: That was in '44 to '45.

TREVER: And Lester Born, Ken Munden, and Seymour Pomrenze came to report to Dr. Holmes on how records and archives were being handled over there during and after the war. This was really an intriguing and thrilling thing to be involved in and I can remember some very interesting conversations with Fred Shipman when he came back from the first of those trips. I envied him. Of course, he was supposed to be Library Director of the Roosevelt Library at this time, but he was spending a good deal of his time elsewhere. But when the Program Adviser got deeply into the post-war planning and UNESCO and that sort of thing, I was

transferred to the Natural Resources Records Division to work with Herman Kahn in the Interior records.

BROOKS: Herman had been in charge there ever since Holmes went to be Director of Research and Records Description.

TREVER: That's right. And shortly after I got there Kahn organized the place into two separate sections. The Agriculture section was headed by Carl Kulsrud, and I headed the Interior section. Later Jane Smith was to head a third section with GSA, WPA, and related records (the last mentioned is not noted on my interview tape).

Two things happened that made it possible for me to make this change and get back to records work after all those years in other fields. I think one was the departure of Bob Claus to the United Nations Archives--the other was the transfer of Frances Bourne to the Budget Bureau, to work with Helen Chatfield who, by the way, had a big role in the training of archivists and records management people. To follow in the footsteps of Bob and Franny wasn't easy. I think of Bob, as Herman Kahn once said of Bob Bolton: "He's an archivist's archivist." Franny was a specialist in records scheduling and disposition, and a real perfectionist. The Archives really lost something when she left. She went out, I believe, when the Archives had trouble with the appropriations committee in Congress over people on the staff who had formerly worked with the WPA.

The first thing I should say about this, as far as I was concerned, is that I had been away from records work for a very long time and had a lot to learn. By this time many new aspects of archival and records management work had developed in the branches--functions that had not been part of the branches work before the war. Accession, disposal, inter-agency contacts, scheduling, and the like were new to me. Inter-agency contacts made the job almost a public relations job. So it wasn't easy for me, and I've always been very grateful to Herman Kahn for the patience he showed in training me on the job.

One of the first tasks I had to face was a whole batch of retention and disposal schedules initiated by the Atomic Energy Commission at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, while Franny Bourne was still on the job. About this time they were opening up the village for the first time to the public and they had a very large concentration of record material which related to the wartime administration of Oak Ridge as a Government town. The AEC records officers sent up the completed schedules and lists to

Washington and they were assigned to me for handling. Some of the schedules were very complicated, others not clear as to the nature of the material proposed for retention or disposal. I tried my best to appraise these proposals at the Archives, but it finally became clear I couldn't do so without actually seeing the records involved. So I finally talked the problem over with Mr. Kahn and Mr. Holmes and it was later arranged that I should go to Oak Ridge to complete the work. I stayed down there for a week or ten days, living in one of the dormitories they had built to house the men who had constructed the town and the atomic buildings. I was one of the early visitors to Oak Ridge, probably the first from the Archives. I remember one day while I was down there by accident they gave me the wrong badge that permitted me to go into places that I didn't have any business to go to. When I came back they had found out about it and there was quite a furor over it, but everything turned out all right. I got to know some very interesting people as a result of this trip. Among them were Tom Pugliese, Joe Gorman, Terry Beach and others who were long closely associated with not only AEC but also with the Records Management Office of NARS. They remained my friends for years, and I still see some of them from time to time. It was also on this trip that I met Sidney Hall of the TVA records office.

Most of my appraisal, disposal and accessioning work, of course, related to Interior Department records. I can't recall details now, but we must have brought in a good deal of material during those years. I do remember the records of PAW and the Coal Mines Administration and some Bureau of Mines records we accessioned. (This last statement is not on my tape interview). I recall much more the reference activities, because most all of the reference letters . . .

BROOKS: Was your time about equally divided between them?

TREVER: I would say I probably gave more time to in-house activities than outside... Franny Bourne had been very active in the whole business of developing disposal lists and schedules and she'd done enough so that after a while there wasn't an awful lot of that to do. She had even completed the PAW schedules and lists covering that agencies records I handled. (This statement also not on the interview tape). I do remember going over to the Interior Department and seeing in the old gymnasium Harold Ickes had had built in the building for his employees tremendous rows of cabinets and boxes of stored records. The place was filled to capacity with records of New Deal and wartime agencies.

My activities seemed to me more or less routine. We answered inquiries and helped write reports and whatever assignment Mr. Kahn gave us. I remember with a great deal of fondness some of the people who worked there. And some not so much, of course. There were some controversial people there as you know. One of these was Margaret Jorgensen. I recall getting into somewhat of a hassle over a rating I gave her one time, which apparently, was better than some others thought it ought to be, so there was some difficulty over that. But by and large I found working with people in the Interior Department Archives Section of the Division a very great pleasure, and I think we did a very good job.

One of the things, by the way, that we did (I don't know whether anybody does it anymore) but we kept a copy of every significant reference letter that went out, and these were filed and indexed in such a way that if you got a second inquiry on the same subject you could go check the index and find the answer to the inquiry without any trouble at all.

BROOKS: I don't know whether they still do that or not. We used to regard that as very important in the Foreign Affairs Section, continuing a practice brought over from the State Department by Natalia Summers.

TREVER: It saved a tremendous amount of time. Sometimes you could get leads not only into record material to answer questions but also sometimes these old letters were sufficiently well-written that you could use them again.

Working with Kahn was an interesting experience. My relationship with him was exceptional--I think he probably was more free with me than he was with almost anyone else who worked with him then. At least that is my guess. During the time I worked with him I had the feeling that he and I were very sympatico. Twice after he went to the Roosevelt Library he tried to bring me to Hyde Park as assistant director. Of course my whole career would have changed greatly had this happened. The first time I didn't go because my wife balked, and I suspect she was probably right. The second time it actually got to the point of officially being approved by the Archivist, I believe, when the Administrator of GSA froze employment so I couldn't go. So as you can see my relationship with Kahn was pretty close. And I have the highest admiration for him as a person and as an archivist and as a scholar. I do say, however, that I might have found a different situation working with him as his assistant director at the Roosevelt Library.

Kahn apparently had a higher opinion of my work than I did. He was, as I say more than cordial and cooperative. He probably gave me more breaks than I had coming. I had a good many discussions and talks with him about archival problems, particularly those relating to records of the Interior Department. Sometimes after working hours we would sit and talk for a while. But I never got to be absolutely sure I really knew him.

BROOKS: He always played things close to his chest. He has not been one that delegated very much.

TREVER: He sure did. So you were never quite sure how things were going. On several occasions I thought we'd been working along together and I thought something had been completed--then find he had held it to think it over a while. Of course, this was his prerogative, but this practice was a little disconcerting at times.

I think his greatest strength was in the reference field. He was uncanny in handling reference inquiries, and knew just how to handle them. I think he was one of the best I ever knew in that field. He was a good reviewer of letters, too. He had a remarkable memory. He could remember things that the average person would have forgotten ten times over. I can recall watching him dictate, for instance, a speech or informal remarks made at a meeting, after the event. He could sit back, close his eyes, and dictate to his secretary almost verbatim what he had said hours or even days before. It was a fantastic performance because I, who had heard him, knew just how close to the original text his dictated text was.

Well, I stayed in the Interior Department Section when Mr. Kahn went to Hyde Park and Oliver Holmes took over in Natural Resources Records Branch.

BROOKS: For four more years you stayed there.

TREVER: Yes, until 1951. Kahn and Holmes both had a lot of influence on me and on the Archives as a whole.

BROOKS: I don't doubt that. Both of them.

TREVER: Becoming editor of the American Archivist was, of course, a tremendous opportunity for me. I was interested in the Society from the very earliest days, but I did not attend the organization meeting,

although I was later put on the list of so-called "founding members." I don't know how that list was developed.

BROOKS: Well, we put everybody on the list of founding members who joined before the organization meeting in December of '36 in Providence and everybody who joined before the first annual meeting in June '37.

TREVER: I attended meetings quite regularly then and was quite active in one way or another. Subsequent to my delivering a paper on administrative history at the 1940 annual meeting, I was put on the editorial board. I don't know who was responsible for that at all. My associations within the Society were, of course, closer with you than anyone else, because I think you were Secretary all those years.

BROOKS: From '36 to '42, and then on the council.

TREVER: Yes. Then I had a close relationship with Theodore Pease, the first editor of the Society. Pease did a wonderful thing for me. He gave me the confidence that I could write something that someone would publish. When I demurred at giving him something I didn't think was good enough, he said, "that was for him to decide--after all he was the editor, and he didn't intend to invite me a half dozen times for my manuscript." He reminded me somewhat of Connor and Jameson in that he seemed to be a "father figure"--quite aways away from me, yet close. Eventually I succeeded Margaret Norton as editor of the magazine. Her helpfulness throughout the whole transfer of the work established a friendship that has lasted all the years since. Margaret and I still correspond about archival matters. I must say she's one of the really grand people of the profession--somebody who had a tremendous influence on me. She had done an excellent job with the magazine. I think my role was pretty much one of just carrying on what she had done. I felt that Margaret had established a good, viable magazine, a good format. The membership seemed satisfied with this, so I decided that I would just carry on. I made no effort whatever to be innovative as some of the editors have, making format changes, changing printers, or getting a lot of new ideas and so on. I did two things, however. I started the "Writings on Archives and Manuscripts" as a department of the magazine. In cooperation with Dr. Posner, we worked out a system of subject headings under which entries were to be filed. I had a good deal of help from Mary Jane Lethbridge and people on the library staff, who were helpful in gathering material.

BROOKS: Was the index project started right away?

TREVER: The index project was started then, too, but we never finished it for one reason or another. It was subsequently finished under Bauer's editorship. He hired somebody from one of the historical magazines, who finally completed the index (for the first 10 years). We tried to do a cooperative index.

BROOKS: With whom?

TREVER: Margaret Flory, Elizabeth Buck, Flossie Nichol and others who were working with me in the Exhibits and Publications Section tried to make an index of the first ten volumes of the American Archivist. We got to a certain point, then we all dispersed and it was never done. So Bauer's people finished it.

I started another department called "The President's Page" but I found some resistance to it, because the presidents didn't want to be put in a position of having to write something every quarter.

The hardest thing about editing the magazine was to get copy for it. Sometimes I would get down to the point of having nothing but articles that had been read at annual meetings, and this was a real serious problem. I was introduced to the so-called "editor's ditty bag" by Theodore Pease, when he told me he was handing over the magazine to Margaret Norton with very little in the "ditty bag." Margaret handed me the magazine with something in the "ditty bag," but there were many times afterward when mine was pretty close to empty. I don't think the editor has that trouble much now. It wasn't that people didn't want to write for the American Archivist or that they didn't have interest in it. It's just that...I don't know, I can't explain it--but I couldn't get people to write and submit new material. I tried to start the idea of giving a prize for the person who contributed the most significant article on an archival subject to the American Archivist during each year. But Hank Edmunds, archivist of the Ford Motor Company made fun of it in one of the Council meetings, calling the idea "Trever's Corn Ball Award."

Subsequently there have been efforts made to make something of this idea in order to attract articles to the American Archivist. The Gondos Award and the Leland Prize are examples of that effort. The Gondos Award never seems to have had much effect in this direction. I have never quite understood why archivists or people who are really interested in archives, would not write and contribute on subjects of interest. We have

to rely in large part on what comes out of the annual meetings.

BROOKS: A lot of them can't write, and a lot of them don't want to take the time.

TREVER: I used to think that if they were allowed to do part of the work on office time it would work out, but that hasn't proved to be the case. I don't think the plan has succeeded at the National Archives, either. I doubt that a great deal of production has come from the amount of official time staff members are being allowed for personal research and writing at the National Archives.

BROOKS: I think you are right.

TREVER: I am not so sure that this policy has paid the kind of dividends that it ought to. I don't know whether it hasn't been closely enough supervised or what, but it certainly hasn't produced much material for the American Archivist.

Some of the traumatic situations for the editor came from necessary changes in publisher. I must say, though, that of all the people who were really friendly to the American Archivist and to the Society during my time, the head of the Torch Press, Mr. Paul Strain, was outstanding. He was a fine human being and did a great deal for me and for the magazine and the Society. The Torch Press is out of business now, but Swain did a lot of work for the Society free that I know he could and should have charged for, simply because he felt kindly toward the Society and its business. Over the years the "Writings on Archives and Manuscripts" became larger and tended to include everything but the kitchen sink. So at various times there have been efforts made to take all this mass of bibliographical data that has appeared in the "Writings" over the years and boil it down. Frank Evans "Bibliography on Archives and Manuscripts" is the best example. I might add that the annual compilation of the "Writings" is a long and arduous task. Hence the October issue of the American Archivist may be delayed in publication. Recently, I believe, it's delay resulted in the magazine having only three issues one year. I think the "Writings" could very easily be issued as a near-print separate publication that could be sold by the Society, thus saving space and cost for the magazine itself.

BROOKS: The bibliography?

TREVER: Yes. There was also a controversy when I was editor over whether or not the editor should be ipso-facto a member of the Council and have a vote. I was ex-officio a member and had a vote, as I recall. There was an element in the Society that objected to that. Today the editor is not a member and has no vote, but can attend Council meetings, I understand.

BROOKS: I remember being involved in that discussion, I suppose when I was President in '49 to '51, but I don't feel strongly about it now as I did then, whichever way I felt, and I don't remember that.

TREVER: I think one of my best friends was one of the prime movers in trying to eliminate the editor's vote in Council matters. Morris Radoff was very much against the editor voting. At the annual meeting in Annapolis...

BROOKS: In '51.

TREVER: Yes, I think so. At any rate, the Society was meeting there with Radoff as host. I was on the program and talked about "The American Archivist: Voice of a Profession." It was a coincidence that the question of the editor voting came up at this meeting. At that time the change was not made, although it was made subsequently. I don't remember too much about Society politics in this and other matters, but you may want to ask me some questions about it.

BROOKS: What about the charge that was made at times that the National Archives dominated the magazine--that the National Archives staff wrote most of the articles in it--and that the State and local archivists didn't get a fair shake?

TREVER: Well, as far as the magazine is concerned, I can say categorically that the National Archives did not control either its contents or its contributors. I had hard enough time getting people to write as it was, and I don't think most of the people that wrote for the magazine in the seven years I edited it were members of the staff of the National Archives. Perhaps articles resulting from participants on annual meeting programs, which at times were dominated by Archives people, made it look that way.

BROOKS: My impression was that the people in the National Archives just had the energy to do more, and there were more of them.

TREVER: There were more of them. And there wouldn't have been any magazine if the National Archives hadn't more or less subsidized it to the extent of giving the Society part of my time. Although most of the work was done at home on my own time until Mrs. Buck, thank God, came into the Exhibits and Publications Office and she helped out. The Archives gave her compensatory leave sometimes when things got too tough and she couldn't get the work done. The Archives also allowed the typists in my office to type up the manuscripts and that sort of thing occasionally. But I don't think the Archives dominated the magazine in the sense that the Archivist or his staff dictated what was to go into it or what it's editorial policy should be.

There were a couple of occasions when, admittedly, some pressure was brought on the editor, rather, not to do something. One case involved a review of the World War II Records Guide. Dick Wood was the review editor at the time and he asked Donald Mugridge, who was a good friend of the Society by and large, to review it. He reviewed the Guide and took it to task for some things. I don't think Dr. Hamer liked the review and I don't think some other people liked it either. I was given to understand that I ought to be more careful in the selection of my reviewers. I said I was editor of the magazine and had appointed Dick Wood review editor and if he accepted Mugridge's review the only thing I was concerned about was that it was well-written and presented honestly the man's viewpoints. I didn't think I had any right to tell Wood or the reviewers what kind of viewpoint the Archives wanted expressed. Well, this wasn't received too well by some. Subsequently I had a hassle over another piece. I shall not mention names of the people involved in it, but I was told in no uncertain terms that if I didn't withdraw or drastically change a certain article the Director of Archival Management (my boss) would go to the Archivist about it. Very much concerned about it, I went to see Oliver Holmes. He may long since have forgotten, but he said, "If I were you, Karl, I'd stand my ground." I did. The next morning I told Dr. Schellenberg that I didn't intend to make the change, even if it meant my job. He took one look at me and said, "I didn't think you had that much guts." From that time on he and I became very good friends.

But this supposed domination of the Society of American Archivists by the National Archives, to the extent that there may have been something in it, affected me and therefore merits some comment. The Archivist of the United States, because so many of his staff are active members, is in a position to control nominations. He can do this by passing the word that so-and-so would be a good candidate. This has been done, and you and I both know it. But that doesn't mean that others can't and don't do the same

thing. Thus I remember one election in which you were involved, where you won by one vote.

BROOKS: That was in Quebec in 1949.

TREVER: I personally was accused once of being a stooge for the Archivist of the United States with respect to the Society of American Archivists. I was even accused of conniving to keep somebody from becoming President of the Society of American Archivists. Which, of course, was certainly not true. I was once on the nominating committee and there has always been some question in my mind as a result of what I later learned, as to whether or not the nominations by the committee were ever actually accepted or whether some other names "out of the hat" were put up as nominees. I have a feeling that the person or persons receiving the greatest number of votes coming to the committee from the membership as reported by the chairman weren't always the persons finally nominated. I can't prove this, but I always had the feeling that at least one person who got the most nomination votes from the membership wasn't presented to the business meeting as candidate for president.

BROOKS: I don't think this was generally true. I was pretty close to the work of the nominating committee off and on for a good many years.

TREVER: This was quite late. Dorothy Martin and I were on the Committee at the same time. Both she and I were disturbed at the time, but I never was able to convince myself that the Archives officials were knowingly involved. I can honestly say that no pressure was ever brought on me by the Archivist while I was editor.

Second Interview:

(Note: Trever would like to point out that Dr. Brooks stated off tape that the suggestions for nominees received from the membership by the nominating committee in number were usually less than 10% of the membership--these were requested by the committee only as suggestions, not votes. He believes there were never enough votes in number to matter. I agree this to be true, but I am still not convinced with respect to the case I mention. KLT).

TREVER: As we all know, the National Archives was set up as an independent agency with the Archivist of the United States appointed directly by the President. Since that time the National Archives has become a part of the General Services Administration. I think it might be worthwhile

for me to say a word or two about the days when the National Archives was independent and how we all looked at it then. I think there is a good deal of significance in what went on then, and a degree of merit that ought to be kept in mind.

In the first place, most of us felt that there was a good deal of advantage in having this independent status. We felt there was a degree of Presidential interest in the National Archives, which gave it sort of an "in" position which it would not have had, had it been part of the Library of Congress or some other agency. I think we also felt that as head of an independent agency the Archivist would have a little more latitude for beginning a new Federal organization and staffing it with professional people--something that had never been done before in the records field in this country. Certainly more so than if we had been under an old-line agency. I think independence played a great role in the early success of the agency, especially in its dealings with other departments and agencies. There are some people today who think the National Archives should still be independent. There's been a good deal written about it, but I do think that in the early days independence had genuine advantage.

I think we were very fortunate that Dr. Connor became the first Archivist of the United States. There may be some who disagree, but I think we were very lucky. First of all he was experienced in the archival field. He had also had much to do with the AHA Committee on archives that sponsored Archives legislation. He was a scholar--but more importantly, he was a very knowledgable individual politically. There is a story that he was appointed because he was a southerner and a democrat. It may or may not be true--I don't know--but it seems to me as I look back on those days, that Dr. Connor was an invaluable arm to get the agency launched. He had the personality, political know-how and savvy required to do it.

BROOKS: There are really very few people who wouldn't agree with that.

TREVER: I think this is true. On the other hand, we had a Director of Archival Service who probably was not all he should have been. It might have been better if we'd had a man like Schellenberg at the beginning instead of Hyde. But be that as it may, I think Hyde's weaknesses led to something which all of us watched with some wonder and interest. That was the developing role of Collas Harris, the Executive Officer, in the management and direction of the National Archives under Dr. Connor. It led to almost complete control by the Executive Officer not only of the management of the building and business procedures, but also of archival management. There was hardly an aspect of the work of the National

Archives that Mr. Harris wasn't involved in in one way or another. This created a good deal of tension and opposition among the professional people on the staff--the people who had come to think of themselves as archivists, not just civil servants but people appointed because of their experience and merit to do this particular kind of work.

BROOKS: The fact they weren't under Civil Service was one reason that Harris was able to swing a big stick. That and the fact that he got some influence on the professional divisions, sort of filling a vacuum.

TREVER: I think this is true. Hyde's inability to carry forward the programs certainly led to increased power for Harris. But I think there was much less political influence in the selection of the staff of the National Archives than one might normally have expected.

BROOKS: Would you make a distinction between the professional and the administrative staff that way?

TREVER: Perhaps. Possibly there was more political interest in the selection of the top management people. I have no way of knowing that. But I do know that with respect to my colleagues there wasn't very much of it. In my case, so far as I know, there was no political influence involved at all.

BROOKS: I meant on the clerical side of the administrative staff. Was there more political influence?

TREVER: I'm not sure how far down it went. I got the impression that there were four or five people who had a good deal of political influence wielded on their behalf. The rest of us were more or less...well, take the case of Fred Shipman. I'm quite sure Shipman didn't get into the National Archives on the basis of political influence, and I doubt very much that you did.

BROOKS: That's for sure.

TREVER: I know I didn't. And I can probably guess many more that didn't. I do know one person who had personal letters in his files from both Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt--that was Newman McGirr. As far as I know he was the only person who had anything remotely like that.

BROOKS: McGirr got to know Roosevelt when he was a Philadelphia book dealer, right?

TREVER: That's right. He sold Roosevelt books and manuscripts and even a lot of Naval prints. Later, when McGirr's financial difficulties became more than he could bear, of course Roosevelt helped him out.

I think the development of the staff without reference to Civil Service examinations had a tremendous influence on the future of this agency. In this particular period there were lots of people with excellent graduate training who didn't have employment and it was possible for the National Archives to get people on the staff from the very beginning who were exceptionally good for the kind of work the Archives had to perform. So I think we developed a rather unique staff from the beginning.

BROOKS: Some people have said that a good many of the professional staff were over qualified. That the high-powered academic degrees were really not necessary for work in the Archives.

TREVER: I don't believe that. I didn't believe it then and I don't believe it now. I think there is much more need for professional work even now in the National Archives than people in charge here today are willing to admit. It's my belief that the Archives would have had a much more difficult time getting going if it hadn't been able to establish itself as a professional operation. I don't think we could have sold our bill of goods to the agencies and the public otherwise. They expect the Archives staff to be professional--scholars, who were trained for the job. And we, the staff, set out to convince them that the National Archives was a professional organization and that archivists were a specially trained group of people who were able to do certain things better than anyone else. I think the staff got pretty well imbued with this idea. Now it may be that degrees were not the important thing, but rather the professional outlook, that they had had or sought some professional training in subject fields pertinent to the records with which they would work.

When you walked into the Central Search Room in those days, it was Dr. Edna Vosper and Dr. Vernon Setser who met the searchers--not only the genealogists but also the scholars from the best universities or the authors of magazine articles and books. I'm not degenerating at all the type of people who are in the Central Search Room today, but there was a "scholarly" front presented by the National Archives that was important then and I think it still is important. I would like to see more of that sort of thing done. I think one of the best things Dr. Rhoads did in recent years was to bring into the reference set-up a special group of people whose job it is to talk with and help searchers with their

problems. Mary Johnson and her associates are able to help the searchers because of their broad knowledge of the records in the National Archives.

Now, I want to say one more thing about the National Archives and the Civil Service. When the original staff was blanketed into the Civil Service about 1939, and these people got "permanent status," the chances of many of them leaving very soon was limited. Because of the financial conditions of the time, followed by the war, a large percentage of the original staff stayed on until retirement. And this had an effect on agency recruiting and the chance for young people to advance rapidly. Over the years one of the big complaints I heard many, many times from youngsters, good youngsters, who came into the National Archives and wanted to work here was that there was no chance for promotion--no chance for them to really get anywhere. The old staffers all sat on the top and there was no chance for them to get ahead, so the youngsters went elsewhere. I can name dozens of good young people that this happened to. I do think we got excellent quality personnel to start with--I don't say they are all that much better than we have now, but they were a very devoted group of people.

BROOKS: It seems to me, and this may get ahead of what you want to say, that there's always been a problem of training around here as pertains to academic background and training on the staff in actual archival functions. And it's been handled with varying degrees of success from time to time. I would like sometime to talk about this.

TREVER: I'm willing to do that, and this is just as good a time as any.

BROOKS: I know you wrote an article on the training of archivists and you've been interested in this at various times.

TREVER: Yes, I have, but I was never really one of the training program people. At the beginning of my career here, Dr. Buck, Dr. Posner, and also Dr. Hamer, were leaders in the training program, as you well remember. These training courses were almost the same thing as taking a graduate seminar or graduate course. At first they were restricted to professional employees above a certain grade. You almost had to be invited to some of them.

BROOKS: You're not talking about staff seminars, within staff.

TREVER: No. I'm not talking about those from the outside--American University and that sort of thing. Dr. Buck, who was then Director of Publications, and Dr. Hamer--before Dr. Posner came--began training programs on their own--probably at the direction of the Archivist. These were for people on the staff who claimed to be or wanted to be professional archivists. There were regular meetings--the nearest thing to graduate seminars I ever attended. The one that had the greatest influence on me was the one Dr. Buck and Dr. Hamer gave cooperatively on Administrative History. Of course it led to my writing an article on the subject and I became sold on the importance of administrative history in the work of an archivist. I still think it would be a good thing if some of the people who are now working with records around here knew a little more about the administrative history of the agency whose records they are servicing. But they don't.

These seminars went through all kinds of variations. There were also seminars on archives administration. Subsequently seminars were held at what we then called the divisional level. For instance, the War Department Archives held weekly sessions and somebody would have to present a paper or discuss a filing system of one of the record groups, or explain the problems of arrangement in a particular record group. Some of these reports were really excellent. In later years, when Dr. Buck became Archivist, there was the Conference on Administration. And I think this was very valuable as an instrument of staff training. Not being around now, I don't know what Dr. Rhoads is doing along these lines, but I don't believe Dr. Grover ever had much of that sort of thing. There was a tendency to run this sort of thing into the ground--almost holding meetings for the sake of holding them. Planning meetings and producing the minutes of the Conference on Administration was one of the things I had to do while I was in the Program Adviser's Office. But I think this internal training program was very worthwhile, and I think when we allowed the American University program to overshadow it we lost something. I don't mean to say the American University program wasn't a good thing--because I think it was a wonderful thing for the profession as a whole. Dr. Posner's courses had a tremendous effect. But I think the National Archives lost something when it virtually stopped the kind of training we had in the early days. It didn't start up again until Schellenberg's time.

BROOKS: Some of that was due to the pressure of the war.

TREVER: I'm sure that it was.

BROOKS: You refer to divisional seminars. I remember Grover talking about how valuable Irvine's was. I was in charge of one in Navy Archives in '38 and '39. After the war I had one in General Records Division.

TREVER: Well, I think these seminars were splendid things. I can remember attending some in divisions other than my own. I think they are worth holding still, but I don't know if there are any being held now.

In connection with the Civil Service and the training program, I would like to make one point I think is worth making. And that is that the personnel of the National Archives, its administration and operations were greatly influenced by the establishment and temporary existence of the Historical Records Survey and the Survey of Federal Archives. I can't think of anything that had more beneficial results for the Society of American Archivists than the meetings which brought these people and the Archives staff together. It greatly bolstered what the National Archives and the Society were trying to do in developing a profession and an archival program.

BROOKS: Luther Evans used to call Conferences of Regional Directors of HRS at the time and place of the SAA meeting.

TREVER: That's right, and this is one of the reasons why the SAA membership and influence grew and spread as the HRS people went out into other state, local, and federal jobs. This whole process was a part of the general program which created a big group of trained archivists. I think probably one of Dr. Buck's greatest contributions, not only to the National Archives but to the profession as a whole, was in the field of training. His programs may not have had the immediate, direct results among outside individuals as Dr. Posner's did.

Training programs brought to the fore something that probably existed from the beginning--emphasis on the difference between archives and libraries. We made a great point of the fact that the National Archives was not a library and that archivists were not librarians. Archival procedures were different. We therefore had to have special training. We made every effort to make it appear that an archivist, or archivist, as Morris Radoff says, was a professional person--a separate species from the librarian. Yet the National Archives began with a library-type organization, complete with accessions, classification, cataloging and reference divisions.

BROOKS: That we have discussed a great deal in previous interviews. Hyde went to the Library of Congress in the first weeks he was on the staff, in the fall of 1934, before Harris came on the staff. And I have a copy of a memo Hyde wrote on December 1, 1934, outlining a whole library-type organization. It took five or six years to get it changed around.

TREVER: That's right. I lived through that, as you did, but I'm not so sure that it was all so much wasted energy or money. In the first place, while I think it was good that we learned fairly soon that some things we tried to do couldn't be done, there were a lot of things that were done that did work and are still working. For example, the kind of work that the Classification Division did on the Legislative records. I'm not so sure it couldn't have been applied to the records of other agencies if we had had the time and money--especially to records of the early period of American history--the record book period, as we call it. When we had registers of letters received, endorsement books, letters sent books, and their related categories, which were controllable, you could classify and catalog and assign numbers in the same way libraries classify books and manuscripts. Classification and cataloging did work with Legislative records, and I must say from my work with them since my retirement, that these records are now the easiest records to find items in of any record groups we have. You can find what you want quickly and easily.

BROOKS: In Senate and House records?

TREVER: Yes. I find their arrangement satisfactory from that standpoint. But I think there was no question in the minds of almost all of us that sooner or later the library approach had to be abandoned--not only from the sheer quantity and bulk of the records but from the cost of applying classification principles and symbols to records which were already well organized and which, if reorganized to fit a classification scheme, might lose some of their physical relationships that were extremely significant from an archival viewpoint.

BROOKS: I think that is a very important point. Also as you said, we just couldn't deal with the modern records that way.

TREVER: I think you are right. As I said before, as long as you worked with 19th century records you could make out with library-type organization. It probably would have cost more, but I think we could have done it. There are people who said its too bad that all that money that was

spent on this was wasted. I'm not sure it all was wasted--but when the war came and we had a tremendous bulk of modern records dumped on the National Archives, we had to change procedures fast.

The change led to the first agency-wide reorganization, as I remember it. It was a bit horrendous because it led to the moving about of a lot of people, and some were very unhappy about the whole business. It also brought to the fore two other problems of administrative organization that had been with us for some time.

The first was the question of departmental organization of archives--that is do we have administrative units for records of the major departments, like State Department, Treasury, or War Department records? Or should we establish administrative divisions based on broader subject-type groupings, like labor records, diplomatic and judicial records, natural resources records, etc. It brought up almost immediately the idea of consolidating divisions and archival functions in fewer but larger administrative offices. Over the years since there has been almost continual conflict between these two viewpoints, and it has been an element in almost every reorganization the agency has had.

I think there may have been a grave danger, had we gone on for much longer with just State Department Archives Division, Treasury Department Archives Division, and so forth, of the divisions getting so tied in with a single agency that the staff almost became employees of the agencies. If I'm not mistaken the Illinois State Archives ran into this sort of thing, not only because they had "departmental vaults" that belonged to specific agencies, but also the archives employees tended to become aligned with their agencies. I know I got to feel like I was in a way part of the Interior Department after a few years of constantly working with agency employees and records.

Usually consolidations are defended on the grounds of economy and efficiency. Whether or not this is true, or whether consolidations save money or not, I think basically the broader subject area organizations are better.

BROOKS: During the war, Holmes and I--Holmes dealing with the record groups and records description, and I with records administration and with the allocation of agencies for liaison as we called it--were both concerned with record groups and group creating agencies. And there were far too many agencies creating records...for example, GAO, that would not fit into one of your patterns of departmental...

TREVER: You almost ended up with one of those independent agency groups in this kind of thing.

BROOKS: So every division had one or two major departments, and a whole lot of related independent agencies. That was certainly true of the war records that I had charge of at one time.

TREVER: A second problem of administrative organization that cropped up when we had our first big organization was the business of centralization versus decentralization of archival functions. At that time we had a big central reference department, a big classification division, and a big accessions division.

These divisions in their operations cut across all the so-called custodial divisions. Now there were many more of the custodians than there were people in what we then called the "front offices." And I suppose, inevitably, the people who had custody of the records might expect because of their sheer numbers to win out in any power struggle. The centralization of functions had become very great. Reference letters, even when drafted in the custodial divisions, were written and rewritten and signed in the Reference Division. I think the Reference Division was one of the biggest targets of the custodial division chiefs--they wanted to get rid of it if they possibly could. And of course, they didn't have much problem because Nelson Vance Russell made it easier for them by some of his antics. And there was a strong feeling against the uncontrolled entrance of classification, cataloging, and reference personnel to the stacks. I can remember one time Fred Shipman saying, "Look, if I'm responsible for the custody of these records, then they're going to have to come to me for the keys." And for a while he was actually enforcing this rule.

BROOKS: He felt quite strongly about having reference division people come in there and handle the records requests and rewrite his reference mail.

TREVER: That's right. And you had exhibit and other people who were doing similar things. So there was a strong reaction against all that centralization. We had a tremendous decentralization of archival functions and authority. For a long time the records divisions were almost independent little bureaucracies, each running its own show, doing the gamut from appraisal and accessioning on down to disposal and reference. Now where the happy medium should be in this whole thing I don't know.

BROOKS: I don't think the problem has ever been solved.

TREVER: I don't think it has, and I don't think it is likely to be. We have been going back and forth on this thing, but we have never gone back--strictly speaking to the library-type organization, nor have we ever gone fully back into the old centralized organization. I think from the standpoint of the degree of centralization and decentralization that those few years when we had the Schellenberg-Bauer arrangement were the best. Whether Schellenberg and Bauer were the personalities who should have been the head of it, I don't know, but there was a fairly happy medium between centralized control and decentralized operation. You may not agree with that. I suspect you don't.

BROOKS: Right. I don't.

TREVER: At the time I thought it worked fairly well. There also developed in connection with the centralization-decentralization struggle a series of personal conflicts, some of which ended in people leaving the agency. I won't mention any names, but some of them were pretty unhappy, as were some who stayed on. There also developed about this same time the idea of the "journeyman archivist," in contrast to the specialist.

BROOKS: This was part of the problem of adjusting our professional training to those damn standards that had to be developed in connection with Civil Service Commission grades.

TREVER: This is right. Now I have always had one thing that has stuck in my craw about the National Archives, and that is that a man who, for example, is deeply interested in foreign affairs and the records of the State Department, has experience, and really knows his records cannot get a promotion sheerly on the basis of his knowledge and ability as a specialist. He must take on some administrative responsibility if he wishes to advance, and the more administrative responsibility he takes on the less he has time for his speciality. Eventually he gives up his specialty. So the Archives every so often goes "outside" and hires a specialist in some field or other. Which never has the same beneficial result as if we had used an experienced specialist from the staff.

For example, I cannot understand why Harold Pinkett wouldn't have been the best man in the world to be the negro history specialist in the National Archives, but nobody ever seems seriously to have suggested it. I don't know if this is a good example of what I mean, but I can think of several

people who would have been happy to have stayed and worked here for years in one records division steadily developing and sharpening their expertise. But they simply couldn't. They had to move somewhere else in the Archives or go outside if they wanted to get ahead. People who are superbly equipped to service military records transfer to accessions work or the center in order to achieve advancement. There is nothing that has bothered me more about the National Archives promotion policy.

BROOKS: Well, it's been a problem. It's partly tied to this business of adjusting to Civil Service grades, and so forth, which require some supervisory activity for grade promotion. But I've heard every Archivist since Dr. Buck worry about this same thing. About the best examples of people who have been made specialists and advanced as such are Irvine and Friis.

TREVER: Yes, but I don't think it's entirely true they've advanced merely because they were specialists. I think this brings up one more thing that might well be said with respect to National Archives reorganizations. Not only has the National Archives had about as many reorganizations as one could imagine, the reasons for these organizations are not always what they appear to be on the surface.

BROOKS: That's been quite true. These moves are always complex. The people in charge are most concerned with the ability of certain people to do certain jobs.

TREVER: That's been quite true. But I think if you look closely at some of these reorganizations you would find that their purpose was either to build up or to bring down individuals. I think there has been a good deal more of this than one may be willing to admit. And usually the same people are involved--they just shift them around. You've seen it yourself--you've been involved in it.

BROOKS: I think very often people assume that such and such a change is made for the personal advantage of somebody or other, whereas the primary consideration of the supervisor or boss is who can best do the job.

TREVER: Oh, I think this sometimes is true. Where you have a conflict between two people or a strong conflict between someone and the head of the agency, something has to be done about it. I admit that, but there is a good deal to the personality business.

Now I'd like to say something about building management in the early days. We were really proud of this place, we showed it off with glee. We even had guides in those days showing tour groups through the exhibition hall, the search rooms, and even the stacks. We were very fortunate to have a man on the management staff who had been an architect--at least he could appreciate architecture. He appreciated the building, what it cost, and how it was built. I think "Pop" Stiles was a very remarkable person in that respect. The National Archives benefitted greatly over the years from his work. He instilled in others an appreciation of the building and its contents. Of course, he got in the hair of management in his later years, because he was constantly saying you couldn't do this or that because it violated the architect's plan. And of course the job of a man like this, I suppose, is to tell the Archivist not why he can't do something, but how he can do what is needed. At any rate, the Archives building has never been so well cared for or as well managed or as clean as it was in those early days. Of course the building was new.

BROOKS: And it wasn't very full.

TREVER: True. But we had a lot of rules, and the rules were posted everywhere about smoking, eating, and so forth, and they were enforced. I can even remember one period when I was working for Mr. Shipman when we were not even allowed to bring our lunch bags into the office. We had a cabinet out in the hall where everyone put his lunch bag. I think the flood gates were opened by relaxing these rules. One of the worst things we ever did, I think, was to open the National Archives to a food vending operation. I'm agin it, I was agin it when it came in, and I'm agin it still. I think we have gone too far in our opening up of so many areas for smoking, and I'm a little bit disturbed by the buffets and cocktails served on the main floor, sometimes adjacent to the main exhibit hall. I have enjoyed some of these affairs, but I think we have gone too far in this, too. In 1952 I became chief of the Exhibits and Publications Section. But before I got to this period, you said you wanted me to say a bit more about my years in the Program Adviser's Office. Shall I do that now?

BROOKS: Yes, because I don't have much about that and I'm not really sure I'm going to get it, as to the activities in the Program Adviser's Office, for example, the International Organization planning, which were unique. No other part of the Archives had anything to do with it.

TREVER: This is something Oliver Holmes should be interviewed on, of course, because it was very important. It had a lot to do with (a) the protection of archives and historical monuments in times of war, especially in Europe and Asia and (b) the care of archives and monuments after the war. Of course you will remember Dr. Posner was involved in that, too, and he worked through the Program Adviser's office unofficially--at least he had a desk there. As I said earlier, we worked too with Fred Shipman, Lester Born, Seymour Pomrenze and others who served as archivists overseas at various periods.

In Europe that was a very active and closely guarded operation. Later Dr. Buck brought the Program Adviser into the business of planning for the United Nations Archives. I think probably Holmes had more to do with the Archivist's "One World" speech and the development of that program than anyone.

BROOKS: I think that's undoubtedly true, and I hope very much that I will be able to interview him.

TREVER: I hope you can. This was pretty much a one-man operation, as I said earlier, and there wasn't very much that an assistant to the Program Adviser could do in that line. But there were a lot of other things going on. For example the Program Adviser had charge of developing and directing international training programs. Foreign archivists, particularly from Latin America, were brought to the National Archives for training. There were funds available for this from some grant or other--I don't remember now. They brought some one from every one of the South and Central American nations, and some stayed for quite some time. We had to arrange their training schedules, travel and housing arrangements.

BROOKS: Some of them came through the exchange of leaders program in the State Department, some were, as you say, fellowships for student types. And I think some of them the United Nations had, UNESCO had something to do with it.

TREVER: That's right. They had something to do with it, too.

BROOKS: I was involved in--well in connection with Panama--in bringing people up a little later. And also here, because at one time, well two or three times, I was in charge of the division that included the State Department Archives of some of the trainees. Basu worked in that program--you remember Basu?

TREVER: Yes.

BROOKS: He worked for nearly a year with us in Treasury Archives.

TREVER: There were some very intelligent and very competent people who came here on this program, and their enthusiasm was very great. A similar program for Latin American archivists was conducted under Schellenberg's direction, after he had written his book, you remember. The tragedy of these programs is that very few of these people ever went back to their countries and went into archival work. They went into police administration, foreign affairs work, and that kind of thing.

As assistant in the training program I had a role in helping to plan the itineraries for these people, develop programs of indoctrination and training, make arrangements with the branch and division chiefs for temporary duty assignments, and so on. Then also in getting people lodging, transportation tickets, and all that sort of thing. I can remember one lady archivist from Peru (she really was a lawyer). If she didn't give me a hard time! She was going to do what she wanted to do and go where she wanted to go regardless of regulations. I finally had to give up on her with respect to finding a hotel she would be satisfied with. A friend of mine--Carl Scharf--heard about her and took this lady into their home, thinking they would have an opportunity to improve their Spanish. I guess they really had their hands full with her. Carl later worked for Sherrod East in the Center as a German language expert.

The Program Adviser had all kinds of policy and research assignments coming in from the Archivist. Should the Archivist do this or that--should the Archivist adopt this program or that. Some of these things spilled over onto my desk and I would do research and write memos for Oliver. And then, of course, there was the Archivist's Conference on Administration which Oliver was responsible for keeping going for Dr. Buck. Developing the programs for it, getting the speakers, and then taking and transcribing and distributing the minutes was pretty largely my job, although Oliver did the initial program planning... I think Oliver did a tremendous job in this office--a very worthwhile office. Dr. Buck knew how to utilize the unique abilities that Oliver had along this line.

After that Office was abolished or, perhaps shortly before, I was transferred to the Interior Records Division, which became the Natural Resources Records Division.

BROOKS: Let me ask you one question about that. You had been in a records division before, when you were with Shipman.

TREVER: That's right.

BROOKS: So you went back to that side of the shop several years later.

TREVER: Yes. I had been away a long time...since 1938.

BROOKS: Would it be accurate in summarization to say that when we started, although some scholars had been waiting for this set-up in the National Archives, and wanted to use it, most of them didn't know too much about the Archives or how to use it, and the inherited Government reference service was predominant, especially during the war. There just weren't so many scholars active, and the Government was very active. Then by the late '40's their reference service to scholars picked up a good deal proportionally, is that correct?

TREVER: Yes. After the war we had tremendous numbers of veterans who came back from the service and went directly to graduate school.

BROOKS: Right.

TREVER: This led to a great increase in scholarly use of the Archives. And, of course, there were a lot of people who had books to write and had put off the writing during the war. We had all these people. I think, too, there was a good deal of promotion on the part of the Archives in an effort to bring it into closer contact with the scholarly world and particularly with the individual scholar. Because when we started out scholars led the Archives movement. The first President of the Society of American Archivists, for instance, was of that scholarly group. Indeed, many of its early members were not archivists at all, but were people who were interested users or were anxious to see the Archives movement succeed. The National Archives sort of lost touch with these people along the way, and I can recall one early session of the Society of American Archivists at which Dr. Buck undertook to do something about this. Dr. Roy Nichols gave a speech about the scholar and the Archives.

BROOKS: His paper was "Alice in Wonderland, or the Historian Among the Archives."

TREVER: "Alice in Wonderland," yeah.

BROOKS: 1937, the first annual meeting of the Society.

TREVER: That's right. Later he and Dr. Buck arranged with the National Research Council to send some people here to evaluate the National Archives holdings for research purposes of several scholarly disciplines. One of these people was a very nice lady named Sara Tucker. Last year NHPC had a young lady working during the summer named Tucker--she was the daughter of Sara Tucker who had written one of the early survey reports on materials in the National Archives.

But we'll leave this now, because in 1952 for reasons I have no knowledge of, I was asked if I would become head of the Exhibits and Publications Section. I've always suspected that Betty Hamer had something to do with it, or that Elizabeth Buck may have had something to do with my being selected for this job. I don't know.

BROOKS: Was that the time Betty went to the Library of Congress?

TREVER: Betty Hamer was transferred to the Library of Congress and that left the position open. There were a number of people who certainly deserved a crack at the job. One of them, of course, was Bess Glenn. Bess had worked on the Freedom Train exhibits operation while in Mrs. Hamer's office. I think Leisinger also may have had a crack at the job at the time, too, because of his knowledge of microfilming publication programs. Whether Grover was the person who first proposed my name or if Schellenberg did it, I never found out. At any rate, I ended up in the Exhibits office.

I should like to say one thing about Bess Glenn. Bess really wanted that job terribly, and she told me, almost with tears in her eyes, that if anybody got the job and she didn't, she would rather I had it than anybody else. It made me feel pretty doggone good. Actually, I can understand her feelings, in view of her experience. I think she felt it was a man's world and that there wasn't anything she could do about it, although a woman (Betty) had just left the job.

Getting started in this operation, which was something quite new to me, and it wasn't easy to follow after somebody like Betty Hamer, who had become almost a legend because of her role in the Freedom Train operation, was no joke. She had a flair for entertainment, ceremony, as well as editing which, at the time I certainly didn't have, of course. I remember one day before I took over I came into her office and she noticed a button was off my coat and said, "You can't go around like that when you are head of this office." I got my wife quickly to sew it back on, I can tell you. At any rate there were a number of big things that happened while I was in this office, and if you'll bear with me--it's not bragging--I'll discuss them.

Of course the biggest thing was the transfer of the Declaration of Independence and the Consitution of the United States and the Continental Congress papers from the Library of Congress to the National Archives.

I have often wondered whether my selection for the job had any connection with the possibility that Dr. Grover knew this was going to happen. Personally, I doubt it. I never learned from Dr. Grover, either, why the transfer took place when it did, or what negotiations were conducted to bring it about. He always said to me simply that--"The Federal Records Act of 1950 required it." I believe also, however, that there must have been some degree of a promise that the Archives would build something to preserve and protect the documents better. The location at the Library of Congress was not considered safe by some. But I think the Library of Congress could have done what we did here just as easily. There is something in the background of this transfer that I have no knowledge of.

BROOKS: It had been an issue way back.

TREVER: Of course through all those early years, the Connor years.

BROOKS: Roosevelt was much interested in it. Connor didn't want to get into an argument with the Library of Congress, so he deferred it. Grover and Luther Evans...

TREVER: They negotiated but on what basis I don't know. I'm sure it was done over the opposition of all kinds of people, including Dave Mearns and Verner Clapp. I'm sure the decision was made and the transfer arrangements were well along before they knew anything about it, however.

BROOKS: I got involved because I was assigned to work with the Library on the transfer of all the other Continental Congress Papers.

TREVER: Did Dr. Grover ever tell you anything about why it happened or how it came about other than this same sort of vague reference to the Federal Records Act?

BROOKS: It was a long-standing thing that he wanted. He told me a year before hand that he was going to work on it.

TREVER: What happened in my career in the years from '52 to '64 was pretty much tied to the accomplishments of Wayne Grover, because I got involved in so many of them. Some of the planning involved in the transfer, the building of the vault, the enshrinement program and all fell into my lap at one time or another.

BROOKS: Was Harris much involved?

TREVER: Harris was involved, yes. In the early stages of the game he was very much involved, and I must say I didn't find Harris ever blocking progress or not doing what he was asked to do. I don't think he got on too well with Grover at times, however.

BROOKS: He's quite proud of his role in designing the cases and so forth.

TREVER: Now I didn't have anything to do with the technical side of that. But I thought Harris was an effective person at the time and we got along far better with him than we did with Mr. Kimberly during the same operation.

We had a young woman as exhibits officer whom I had inherited from Betty Hamer. For some reason or other she didn't get across with Dr. Grover, so he put Leisinger in that spot to help me work up the new exhibits program he wanted developed. Except for a few major exhibits in the National Archives, such as the Surrender Documents, the Hitler will and that sort of thing, our exhibits never drew a big gate. Our exhibits would be a flash in the pan. A big crowd would come in for the opening of an exhibit, and a few tourists would trickle in thereafter. Until we got the Declaration and the Constitution over here, I don't suppose our total exhibit hall gate was ever much over a hundred thousand a year. From the very beginning Dr. Grover said, "I am not going to be satisfied until there are one million people coming into this Exhibit Hall." And of course Leisinger and I wondered about that.

First of all, how were we going to take care of such numbers. Grover had some very definite ideas of what he wanted to do when the documents were transferred. He wanted not only a shrine, he wanted an enshrinement program in which the President of the United States would participate. He wanted to have a series of related exhibits and publications that we could point to with pride and that would bring in money to the trust fund. The result was that Leisinger and I were assigned to develop the exhibits, one of which was to be the Formation of the Union, based largely on the Continental Congress Papers. The second was to be a larger exhibit relating to the States of the Union, and this was to be exhibited in what we called the Circular Gallery. Finally, he wanted produced, for sale at low cost, facsimiles of the three great charters of freedom, with accompanying text. Refurbishing of the exhibition hall, the building of the vault and shrine, and the exhibits and publication all proceeded simultaneously--nearly every effort of the Archives seemed to go into this work.

Although most aspects of the program connected with the transfer of the Declaration and Constitution were obviously Wayne Grover's. I must say that many of the details resulted from the imaginative thinking and hard work of Al Leisinger, who was extremely effective in developing the exhibit theme, selecting documents for display, and particularly in planning the layout of individual panels and cases. He was also the key figure, I think, in planning the design and layout of the Charters of Freedom and The Catalog of the States of the Union Exhibit. Leisinger also worked very closely with me in developing a new exhibits staff. We were allowed to pick people from almost anywhere in the Archives staff. We picked a number of people who worked with us throughout the whole period. One of these was Nathan Reingold, who is now head of the Joseph Henry Papers. Another one was Frosty Williams, who currently heads the Washington Federal Records Center. There was Royal Hart, who has been prominent in Maryland politics, and Ray Hornung, a very brilliant youngster from the mid-west, who was a tremendous worker. I might add that Nate Reingold was one of the best "bird dogs" I've ever seen for finding records suitable for exhibit purposes.

This was a very trying time for all of us in NEP because there was tremendous pressure, time wise, to get the job done. The entire exhibition hall was closed. It was cleared and new lighting put in. The construction of the vault was accomplished and all the machinery that goes with it was installed. Of course the program development was largely Wayne's idea, and he did get President Truman to come to the National

Archives to rededicate the reenshrined documents.

There were a couple of things that stand out in my mind about all this. I remember one of the things Leisinger and I wanted to do was to arrange the exhibits in such a way as to avoid long lines forming to see the Declaration, Constitution, and Bill of Rights. We wanted to display them separately in the exhibit--one in the middle and the others at either end...thus avoiding the crowds pushing towards the center. Grover wisely would not go for this. He wanted to continue the idea of the shrine as it was in the Library of Congress and I think he was right, although they still have traffic problems in the Exhibition Hall. Another thing we had some difference with Wayne was on the development of the layout and design of Charters of Freedom. As a matter of fact when we pressed for our preferred design too hard once Grover did say to Leisinger, "What are you two fellows trying to do, sabotage my ideas?" But everything did work out very well, and I must say that Grover certainly gave Leisinger and me tremendous leeway.

Getting the exhibits ready was a slow and tedious process. Leisinger introduced a lot of new ideas and techniques for displaying archival materials not before used at the Archives. The general tone of the exhibits was greatly improved. They were more nearly like the Freedom Train exhibits in quality than anything we had ever had in the Archives. I think real kudos are due Leisinger for this.

In the course of our work we had something of a run-in with Arthur Kimberly. He wanted to do some things by way of preservation to certain documents from the Continental Papers that neither Leisinger nor I felt should be done. There was then a question of whether we or Kimberly would get backed up by Dr. Grover. It ended up, strangely enough that we won our point, although neither of us could be considered preservation experts by any remote stretch of imagination.

BROOKS: What was that about?

TREVER: It was over the question of whether certain Continental Congress papers we were going to exhibit should be laminated, and also whether these items had been damaged earlier by excessive use of paste in the silking process. We were able to show that Mr. Kimberly was in error in the latter case and Grover also agreed the documents should not be laminated. Kimberly never forgot this. He didn't let us forget it either.

BROOKS: As I told you, I was very much involved in the identification and transfer of those documents from the Library of Congress. The ceremony of the transfer of the Declaration and the Constitution was December 15, 1952, and I think the other documents came shortly after that.

TREVER: It seems to me that the transfer was on...

BROOKS: Bill of Rights Day. That's one of my favorite memories because it was a very impressive occasion. Did you have to do with the tickets, invitations?

TREVER: Our office did draw up lists of people to be invited and so forth. But Grover made up his own VIP lists. He had complete control over the conduct of the program as well as of the ceremony. This was necessary since the President was a participant. Like you, I can well remember how they brought the Charters down from the Library in an armored car along Constitution Avenue under military escort and the glittering, impressive ceremony at the shrine in our Exhibition Hall, and President Truman's address. It was the culmination of a lot of hard work for many people in the Archives, and especially for my own small staff.

The months preceeding the ceremony were very hectic for everyone here. The Bill of Rights, which had been at the Archives all along, had not been sealed in helium like the Declaration and Constitution had been long before. So this work had to be done at the Bureau of Standards in order that we could display the three Charters together. Meanwhile, a tremendous engineering operation was going on here at the Archives...building the vault and refurbishing the Exhibition Hall. The exhibits and the related publications had to be developed.

I must confess that about three weeks before the ceremony I got a bit scared. It looked like nothing was ever going to get done--it just seemed like everything was going on endlessly. We were still searching for just the right document for just the right exhibit case, and so on. Finally it got to me enough that I pushed Leisinger a little bit too hard, and he said: "Karl, if you'll just let me alone I promise, I guarantee you'll have an exhibit you can be proud of, and it'll be in there on time--you have nothing to worry about." And of course he was right.

In the meantime Flossie Nichol, Mrs. Buck, Mary Johnson, and Margaret Flory were worrying about getting the Charters of Freedom and the States of the Union Catalog through the press. Here again, Leisinger played a big role in keeping the publisher up with his deadlines. Genevieve O'Brien and Helen Lewis were pounding the typewriters night and day--sometimes till two in the morning--typing caption cards and related materials. This was the most devoted group, under pressure, it has ever been my privilege to work with. Everything came out exactly on time and perfectly. I was extremely pleased, and I think the Archivist was too, judging by the little thank-you notes he sent to each of us.

There is one thing I'd like to call attention to here, though, and that is how at this time we went outside the Government Printing Office for our publications. We contracted out the printing of the Charters of Freedom and the States of the Union Catalog to the Waverly Press, so we could sell the Charters for 25 cents. I don't recall now the price we asked for the catalog. The idea was that instead of these items being sold by the Government Printing Office and the money going into the Treasury the profit from the sales would go into the National Archives Trust Fund. We didn't realize that we had a best seller on our hands with the Charters. I don't know how many printings it went through before the format was changed some years ago, but it must have sold over a million copies. It was a good money maker for the Trust Fund and it opened the way for contracting other National Archives publications in the future. Leisinger, again, played the chief role in getting the favorable bids, although Collas Harris was most helpful also.

Another thing that followed logically from all this was the illuminating of the National Archives Building. It had been so constructed that there could be exterior lighting to make it a monument. With the three Charters now enshrined there, Grover determined to do this. I have no knowledge of how he accomplished this, but he was able to get GSA to let contracts and get the lights installed. Then we had a big lighting ceremony on the Constitution Avenue steps during the 1954 Convention of the American Legion. I developed an appropriate ceremony and we had a large attendance. It was an impressive event.

We had one momentary scare, however. Mansure, who was then Administrator of GSA, was supposed to press a button at the height of the ceremony and turn on the floodlights. He pressed--and nothing happened. He turned to me, and said into the microphone, "What's the matter, hasn't the National Archives paid its light bill yet?" But they did come on, and for my part in arranging and directing the ceremony I did get a letter of

commendation from Mansure--replete with Mansure blue letterhead and blue typewriting.

The success of this venture led Wayne to say, "We are going even further in this business. It all stems out of our getting the Declaration and the Constitution. We're going to have a National Archives movie--in color." The one we had been using for years was a black and white film made when the Archives was first opened. I think it was made by one of the newsreel companies.

BROOKS: The narrator of that first film was Brinkley?

TREVER: No. He narrated the one we did. The earlier film was narrated by a news commentator, though, probably a Pathé News man. At any rate, Wayne said we had to have this movie, so he asked me to explore the possibilities. The more I explored the more I found that the National Archives didn't have the kind of money to do what he wanted done if it had to be done commercially or even through the Agriculture Department Film Service. So we began to think in terms of trying to find a way to do the job ourselves--with help.

I had no knowledge of movie production. I had never written a script. I had never filmed anything--as a matter of fact I didn't know which end of the camera was which. About this time, through Harry Baudu, I got acquainted with somebody over in the Agriculture Department Film Service and got some pretty good instruction. I came back to the Archives and got to talking with Collas Harris, who was still with us. It was Collas who said, "Look, we've got the Air Force photo unit in this building, we've had them here for quite some time." They had, in fact, been in the building beginning from the end of World War II. So Collas said, "Why not get something out of this? Let's ask them to let us have a movie crew to make a film?" An approach was made, and while the Air Force said they were not in the business of producing movies for others, they could give us a trainee crew.

At first they sent over a staff sargeant for a crew leader, whose name I have forgotten, but it was impossible. He had no idea what the Archives was, what its purpose was, or why we needed a film, and he could care less. We finally got him replaced by a young officer, Captain Tom Fields. Tom had some color filming experience over in Europe and got the idea of what we wanted right away.

With the cooperation of Ray Hornung and Mrs. Buck I developed a script and a group of staff members to play roles in the several scenes. I selected the documents we would use and located the sites where the individual scenes would be shot. Tom then adpated our materials to the film technique and carried the whole thing through segment by segment. Some days he and his crew would work all day long, and then they might not show up again for two or three weeks while they were assigned to something else. But we finally got through, and much to our surprise the film, which we called "Your National Archives," was a great success.

BROOKS: This was the one Brinkley narrated?

TREVER: Yes, this again was not my doing. You remember Herb Plummer, who was Public Relations Officer at GSA?

BROOKS: Yes.

TREVER: I liked Herb very much and he apparently liked me. He was much interested in our film because of its public relations possibilities. One day when I was in his office he said, "I know somebody who might do the narration for you. I have a young television reporter that lives in my neighborhood named Brinkley. I'm going to see if I can get him to do it." Of course at that time Brinkley was not part of Huntley-Brinkley, and he agreed to do it.

About this time I had to go on a trip somewhere and then I took a week's vacation. In the interval, Mrs. Buck sat before one of those movieola for hours on end timing the script, cutting it and timing it again, until she finally had it so perfect that script and picture synchronized. Herb Plummer then arranged for us to use the Pentagon sound studio for taping the sound track. I was supposed to stand at Brinkley's shoulder and squeeze his arm when each script sequence was to come on. He really didn't need me at all, once he had read the script, for he was already an old pro. We got the taping all done and went home. It was a very pleasant experience, although Brinkley was not a particularly talkative guy. As a matter of fact at times he was almost taciturn. He was friendly, and that was about it. Well, a couple of days later we learned that the sound equipment had not been working properly and we had to go and do it all over again. So he went through the whole thing twice. So far as I know he never charged Archives or GSA anything--he never expected to get anything from it, I guess. But his narration helped a great deal later on when the film was shown to the public. But

do you know, GSA would never let us put Brinkley's name on the list of film credits. It was a GSA production, as far as they were concerned, and I don't think we even managed to get any film credits for the Air Force crew. I lost track of Tom Fields after that, I'm sorry to say. He was transferred, got divorced and remarried and went to parts of the world unknown. So all this was very closely tied up with our acquisition of the Declaration and Constitution. The whole relationship between the National Archives, the general public and scholarship took a turn as a result. Grover had not only made up his mind to draw a million people a year in here to see the Charters--he was going to use these documents as a means of getting all these other things.

At this time he also embarked on putting heavy pressure on my shop for more editorial production--inventories, lists and that kind of thing. A great deal had been done by the Office of Research and Records Description and its predecessor, and the Guide was out of the way by this time, and the record group system was well established. So we didn't have to worry about that sort of thing. But there was a tremendous backlog of finding aids to be edited and published. I think I can say without any qualification whatever that the period between '52 and '57, when I was in the Exhibits and Publications Section and Flossie Nichol and her staff of editors were in charge of editing, more finding aids were processed and issued than at any previous period in Archives history. I think that can be proved.

Flossie and her editors were a remarkable group. I don't suppose anybody knew the ins and outs of the record group system any better than Flossie Nichol did. This helped greatly in the business of rapid production. Mrs. Buck was an excellent editor, too. Although she was getting old by this time, she had a knack for words and style. She could take almost anything that was given to her and put it into better shape. However, as I found when I was editor of the American Archivist, sometimes she could not only get herself but her boss into trouble by practically rewriting somebody else's material. Mary Johnson was a fine editor who had several other capabilities, especially in the microfilm field, and Margaret Flory was an indexing expert.

Another thing that Dr. Grover insisted on having was some sort of Archives journal. Now that we were under GSA we had practically lost the possibility of getting out a National Archives annual report which would serve as a professional as well as an administrative report. He wanted us to have a regular journal something on the order of the Library of Congress Journal of Acquisitions, or something like what Smithsonian

was getting out. For a long time we had been issuing a quarterly list of National Archives Accessions--a little 5x7" thing listing everything we got the preceeding quarter. It replaced an annual listing of accessions in our old annual report. Such a list of accessions was required by law and, as a separate it was distributed to colleges, universities and scholarly journals.

Grover's idea was that we should turn this into a quarterly journal, as with scholarly articles, news notes, and other pertinent data as well as notes or articles on acquisitions. We called it the National Archives Accessions Journal--because that was the only way, at that time, we could get a quarterly journal by the Rules of the Joint Committee on Printing. It's purpose was to inform the public of the holdings and facilities of the National Archives and alert them to developments of interest in the archival field at home and abroad. It was also hoped it could be used to report on professional problems and developments to archivists everywhere.

Well, the journal, too, was tied in with the transfer of the Declaration and Constitution. The lead article in the first issue was a splendid article on the Continental Congress papers by Carl Lokke.

We managed to make the journal go fairly well for two or three years, but then we ran into difficulties. Accessions fell off and there was less need for quarterly listings. Then we found it harder and harder to get people to write for the journal--it got to the point where our people just wouldn't write at all. Whether that was my fault as editor or whether it was the fault of all of us who were trying to get articles, I don't know.

BROOKS: I've always had that problem with staffs working under me.

TREVER: This was true also at the Archives. They were perfectly willing to write and publish in XYZ journal, even if they didn't get paid for it. But to publish in the "house" journal--they seemed to be reluctant. I'm very pleased that the new Journal, "Prologue," which began its issuance under Rhoads with Herman Viola, who now is at Smithsonian as editor, is a much more successful venture. Herman succeeded where I failed. But I think times are quite different now--one factor which helps "Prologue" is that the editor may accept articles from outsiders--we couldn't, so far as I can remember. Moreoever, Herman had much more financial backing than we got.

Another thing Grover was trying to develop was a better and broader public relations program for the Archives. He started a program of showing motion pictures from the film holdings of the Archives. I don't know what we called this program in the 1950's, but the one they have now "Movies at the Archives" or "Films at the Archives" is more successful. We had great success with certain films, such as "The River" and "The Plow that Broke the Plains" and a few others, but after we ran out of such films we ran into trouble. Eventually we had to give up because we couldn't get crowds big enough to warrant the effort. One problem was we couldn't get the kind of publicity that today's programs get. Then, too, the Archives had famous films, like "The Birth of a Nation," which we couldn't use because the industry insisted we charge a fee to see them, and we couldn't do that.

Grover also wanted to make the National Archives Exhibit Hall a stop for the sightseeing tours, especially for the VIP visitors to Washington. We worked out a relationship with the State Department Protocol Office whereby the Archives was a tour stop on their VIP tour schedule. Most of the distinguished visitors from abroad during the Truman and Eisenhower years did come to visit the National Archives. Some of my most interesting memories are of these people.

One of the highlights of the period when I was in the Exhibits and Publications Section has to do with Grover in a different way. It was to be Wayne's 10th anniversary as Archivist in 1958, and some of us began talking about its observance before I left in 1957 to become Special Assistant to the Archivist. At the time of the anniversary, Wilbur Poole was President of the National Archives Association, I think, and he asked me to chair the ceremony. We had gotten up a book of pictures, signatures of the staff, and things like that to present to him. Administrator Franklin Floete came for the ceremony. Faye Geeslin and Floete's secretary connived to get him to call Wayne and say he wanted to take a look at the National Archives theater as a possible place to hold a meeting. Meanwhile, we assembled the staff in the theater, and when Wayne came in with Mr. Floete the staff stood and gave him a big hand. I made a few remarks and handed him the book which had been prepared. Except when he retired, that's the only time I ever saw Wayne almost completely speechless. It's the only time I ever saw tears in his eyes. I felt closer to him that moment, I think, than in all my career, and I certainly was with him for a long time.

Grover had a relationship with Mr. Floete that was rather unusual, I think.

BROOKS: Yes, I think so too.

TREVER: It was almost a father-son relationship, although Wayne was obviously his own man as Archivist of the United States. Mr. Floete had a tremendous respect not only for Wayne but for the National Archives as the repository of the records of the Nation's history. He was really sincere about this.

BROOKS: All people in GSA have come to think of the Archives as the glamour agency of GSA.

TREVER: Yes, it's a glamour agency to them, but Floete really had an interest in it. Now, that brings us down to 1957 when you and I both got into the Presidential Library business.

BROOKS: We reported to Grover's office on the same day in 1957.

TREVER: I don't know how I got to be Special Assistant for Presidential Libraries. Did Wayne ever tell you?

BROOKS: That I don't know.

TREVER: I don't know either. I do know a little bit about your selection.

BROOKS: He talked to me a good deal about that off and on for several months.

TREVER: From the very beginning he was very open with me about your going to be Director of the Truman Library. I'd like to say here that as I read it now I am very much struck by the idea set forth therein that these libraries would develop special staffs trained to function, in a sense, as presidential specialists--archivists of the highest caliber. That from this specialist corps would come the leadership of future libraries. To see how it was applied at the Truman Library really made me believe that what was said in the hearings was true.

BROOKS: We were fortunate in being able to carry it out much more in accordance with the stated principles at Independence than in any other locations of Presidential Libraries.

TREVER: This rises from two or three factors, I think. One was you had a living President who lived there and made his office there--who had a real love for the library, who really felt it. As far as I know there

never was any doubt that the man recommended to head the Library by Grover would be accepted by President Truman. There never was any thought of the President selecting his own man and telling the Archivist to appoint him willy-nilly.

BROOKS: Grover had me at a luncheon with David Lloyd in November of 1956. Lloyd was master minding the project for Mr. Truman, and at that time Grover had not made up his mind as to whom he was going to appoint, but he had got it down to a couple of people. I had to go up and meet Dave. I didn't meet Mr. Truman until March of 1957 when I went out there to take the job. For three months I couldn't be appointed Director because GSA didn't take over the Library. Later that spring, when you were out there helping us, I was still archivist-in-charge.

TREVER: This has never happened since.

BROOKS: No.

TREVER: This business of Presidential Library specialists was one of the things we always made a point of in writing or talking about the system. I wrote many an article or release on presidential libraries for Wayne, and he made no bones about my ghosting them. I envisioned a system in which young men and women who went out and did their spade work and got their training would become a reservoir of specialists who would be ready to staff the Eisenhower Library and future libraries as they came along--that perhaps even the future Directors would be selected from this group. But it just hasn't happened that way, and I don't think it's ever going to happen that way. I want to say more about this later, so let's move ahead.

You went to the Truman Library and I stayed here. We worked very closely, of course, with the Truman Library Corporation and Dave Lloyd. There were a lot of people back here, though, who did all kinds of work on the Library. Pop Stiles was one of them--it seems to me he and I were forever making drawings of some sort.

BROOKS: I had more relations with Baudu on the design of the photo lab.

TREVER: Incidentally, these designs were well enough done so that they were pretty well applicable to almost every one of the subsequent libraries.

BROOKS: Bolton started in Grover's office soon after you did, right?

TREVER: It was later. He was then working on the Eisenhower pre-Presidential papers. Bob went somewhere in New York City area to organize these papers. I think he might have also been at Columbia.

BROOKS: He worked on the Columbia University Eisenhower papers. You and he both, I believe, worked on something that was later of great importance to us, which was a card file on officials of the Truman Administration.

TREVER: That, too, was Grover's idea.

BROOKS: It had about a thousand names, and from it we selected the people to go after for gifts of papers and oral history interviews.

TREVER: I think some people thought this was kind of a boondoggle, but I always thought it was worthwhile.

BROOKS: It was extremely valuable to us and still is, I think.

TREVER: Working up to the dedication and opening of the Truman Library was probably the second most interesting and exciting experience of my life.

BROOKS: And wearing.

TREVER: Yes, I can remember two or three mornings when we lay stretched out on the floor of your living room trying to get up enough energy and will to go to work.

BROOKS: You were there how long?

TREVER: I was there nine weeks. Part of that time both Wayne and Dave were there. And of course they both pushed us. The problem was partly Wayne's hours and methods of working--they were not quite the same as yours or mine. Wayne didn't want to start working or for some reason or other couldn't start working, when he was away from home, 'til about ten o'clock in the morning, whereas we all had to be there earlier. And then, of course, he had no sense about when to quit. He would keep on working, and sometimes we wouldn't go out to dinner until eight-thirty or nine o'clock, when most of us were used to eating at six or seven. But the worst part of it was that Wayne's way of relaxing was to have several drinks before eating, so that by the time we had the drinks and a lot of good talk, it was ten o'clock before we sat down to eat.

But it was a marvelous experience overall--one of the greatest in my life for two reasons. One was that I saw Mr. Truman almost every day. He talked to me as if he had known me all his life. Whether he would ever have remembered me again if he saw me several years later, I don't know, but I suspect he would have. Most politicians can do that. The second was that I had the opportunity to hear Mr. Truman tell his stories of the Presidents. Some of these historical accounts were fantastic. I was also privileged to hear him express his opinions of some people and events of the time. These were things I have never said much about to anybody. I suppose they were common knowledge, but somehow or other I felt like I was a guest in his house and that I didn't have any business going around telling stories that Mr. Truman told in my presence.

BROOKS: Well, we all felt that way.

TREVER: So I just didn't do it.

BROOKS: And I think a lot of people have made too much of--emphasized that salty, candid phase of his character too much in relation to other characteristics.

TREVER: He was tremendously interested in the Library. He wanted it just right--and the interesting thing to me was that David Lloyd had an almost "bird dog instinct" for what Mr. Truman would consider right, what Mr. Truman would consider fitting and what he would not. I recall, for instance, that we installed an exhibit of political cartoons, some quite critical of Mr. Truman. Mr. Truman liked cartoons. He didn't care if they were good, bad, or indifferent just so long as there was a real point to them or weren't just plain vicious. The cartoons exhibit was very successful, therefore, at the Truman Library. Later, at the Eisenhower Library there was no such acceptance of cartoons, and we had to rip out an exhibit of them the morning after we had put it up. I wished then that we had had a David Lloyd around.

I didn't see Mrs. Truman very many times during my stay in Independence--perhaps two or three times. The night before the dedication there was a cocktail party...

BROOKS: A thousand people at the Muehlbach.

TREVER: Well, I went through the receiving line and out of all those people there Mrs. Truman managed to remember me as a worker at the Library. As Mr. Truman passed me along the line to her, she looked at me and said,

"I hardly recognized you without your working clothes."

BROOKS: They were both extremely good that way.

TREVER: They were great characters. I enjoyed working with Dave Lloyd, although he certainly gave me a bad time with those exhibits. We stayed up three nights, I think, 'til two and three o'clock rewriting exhibit headings and caption--not because they were wrong factually but because he thought the wording or emphasis ought to be changed to reflect Mr. Truman's sense of fitness. He even moved items from case to case and within cases to achieve the right balance. He knew what was required to gain Mr. Truman's approval almost instinctively. Incidentally, I also remember we brought the Presidential Exhibit out here from the National Archives because Mr. Truman had placed so much interest and emphasis on the history of the Presidency.

BROOKS: You personally brought it out there--two state rooms or something like that.

TREVER: Yes. I had a couple of bedrooms on the train--it was a great deal. At any rate, I got out there and had to reinstall the panels in your new exhibit cases. Somehow I got the first two panels installed backwards. I thought Grover would shoot me, and I was almost in tears I was so upset about it. But he took it as just something that can happen in the course of human events and let me get away with it without giving me a hard time.

BROOKS: I remember one time during the period--Lloyd was extremely intelligent and perceptive as you say--but he also dealt with us with a pretty firm hand sometimes. One morning Wayne came in and said, "Today there's going to be just one boss, and I am it."

TREVER: That's right, and you know that Lloyd took it and that was that. We were having some problem with one of the temporary helpers. We had a very fine museum specialist--Gary Yarrington, who was superb--he's now at the Johnson Library. He also had a young woman working with him--De Lou Nebgen, who was also excellent. But he had a young man--whose name I have forgotten, who was a problem. He didn't like me and I ended up not liking him.

BROOKS: Well, eventually we just had to let him fade out.

TREVER: Well, he was a real problem and Grover had to step in and take over when the situation between us became disruptive. That was the day Grover said, "There's only one boss here and I am it." That put me in my place as well as it did Lloyd.

BROOKS: Those three young people were students from the Kansas City Art Institute that we took on temporarily.

TREVER: Later on we used Yarrington as a consultant at the Truman Library and elsewhere. You may have some questions you want to ask about the Truman Library. If not, I would like to say that the Truman Library assignment led directly into one of the biggest experiences of my life.

Sam Rayburn, Speaker of the House of Representatives, was at the dedication ceremony. Of course, you know how close he was to Harry Truman. After the ceremony he got to talking with Wayne Grover about plans he had for a little Rayburn Library in Bonham, Texas. He asked Wayne if he could give him any help. Wayne replied that the law took care of our work on Presidential Libraries and papers of the President, but he couldn't use that law to help the Speaker. The Speaker proceeded to tell Grover what he had in mind, and Wayne said that perhaps under the Federal Records Act we could help him with his "records problems." The Speaker then apparently talked about who could help and asked who did the job of setting up the Truman Library. Of course Wayne couldn't offer Dave Lloyd or Phil Brooks as possible helpers, so he said, "Well, Karl Trever was involved in this, and I think he could help you." So that's how I got to work on the Rayburn Library.

BROOKS: Fairly soon after our dedication, wasn't it?

TREVER: Yes--it was the same year, 1957. I went down there the first time at the end of July for a week and then went down again in September and stayed nine weeks. It seems strange that both my tours of duty at the Truman Library and the Rayburn Library were nine weeks.

The Bonham experience was something that could fill a whole tape, so I will say only a couple of things about it. One is that I don't think I could have done what I did at the Rayburn Library if it hadn't been for Grace Quimby, the Librarian at the National Archives. I never made any claim to having invented the techniques, procedures, and gimmicks that were used to get the library properly set up on time. Much of the advance planning was hers and she worked closely with me, by mail, when I was

in Bonham. I almost got to the point where the ideas seemed to be mine, though.

The other thing I want to mention is that Mr. Rayburn and his staff gave me unparalleled assistance. From the very beginning the Speaker said, "You were sent down here as the expert. It's your job to do this, and you remember that. And when I start telling you what to do, you let me know." I assure you, there never was any trouble on that score.

BROOKS: That's a very great thing. I always felt that way with Mr. Truman. Shortly after the dedication he said to me one day, "The Library belongs to the Government and it's up to you to run it."

TREVER: I had this sort of thing happen to me in other instances. When I became editor of the American Archivist, Wayne Grover told me, "You're the editor of this thing, and if I start telling you how to do it, you let me know."

There's one little anecdote I am going to tell, however, because it characterizes the man Mr. Rayburn was. One afternoon he came in from the ranch hot and tired to see what was going on at the Library. It was getting toward the end of the preparation of exhibits, and I had laid out a lot of documents to depict his congressional career. Among these were several certificates of election signed by the Governors of Texas over the years. He greeted me, and looking at the pile of documents said, "What do we have here?" Then he saw, on top of the pile, a certificate signed by a certain Texas Governor, who shall remain nameless. His face became red as a beet--he seemed to me flushed from shoulders to the top of his bald head. He was so angry he was almost livid, and he said, "I don't want that so-and-so's name anywhere in this Library." He grabbed the document and made as if to tear it in half. I reached out and said, "Wait a minute, Mr. Speaker, don't do that, that's the proof that you were elected to that particular Congress." He stopped and looked at me--kind of a second take, you know, and then calmly said, "Well, at least you could find my first one." To which I replied, "Well, I'd like to, but your staff has been unable to find it." "Well, how about the last one?" he replied. But of course that was in Washington and I didn't have time to get it. Then, rather bashfully, it seemed, he looked at the certificate that caused the eruption and said, "Karl, do you suppose I tore that first one up too?" Of course I knew he hadn't, but he had lost a good many of his most important records--particularly those for the Roosevelt Hundred Days period--when he and Speaker Martin exchanged offices one time. He thinks they were lost

or tossed out accidentally at that time, but nobody knows for sure. Hence he was very sensitive about it and got very upset when anyone mentioned the matter to him.

BROOKS: That's what Congressman Dick Bolling told me--that some of the Rayburn papers were lost.

TREVER: Another remarkable thing about the Rayburn Library experience was the way he turned his staff over to me. Practically his entire staff was involved before it was over with. They were most cooperative, and did they ever work! Here I was, a guy who had absolutely no official control over them, and they didn't have to do a darn thing for me if they didn't want to--yet their love and respect for the Speaker was such that if he thought Karl was doing all right, then they were willing to do what Karl wanted done. It was terrific.

BROOKS: A pretty big part of the time was cataloging books?

TREVER: We cataloged books, we put up exhibits, we made a shelf-list of the Rayburn papers. Even Mr. Sonnenschein, one of the architect's chief assistants on the building, helped us by hanging pictures for some of the exhibits. It was the same sort of cooperative venture that we had at the Truman Library, with me as temporary boss. It was a great thing, and I shall not forget these people as long as I live.

When Wayne sent me to Bonham he said, "It's your job to keep Mr. Speaker happy. Give him what he wants." This was quite an order, because I had heard a rather lurid story about how Mr. Rayburn handled a certain retired librarian, whom the Library of Congress had recommended to him as a consultant. Because the man told Rayburn he thought it would be foolish to build a library in Bonham for his papers--that it wouldn't work, Mr. Rayburn got very angry and virtually kicked the fellow out of his office. So I was alerted to this from the very beginning, and decided that since this was Mr. Rayburn's library, he'd get what he wanted. As a matter of fact, Wayne used to put it this way, "What Lola wants, Lola gets." Wayne really wasn't that subservient, of course, for if he didn't think something should be done, he wouldn't do it, regardless of what anybody said. But in this particular case there wasn't any reason why Lola shouldn't get what Lola wanted, so Lola got it.

BROOKS: What portion of the Rayburn papers were down there?

TREVER: None of them. He brought them all down after I got there. The moving was directed, I think, by Fishbait Miller and his crew. All his papers, books and memorabilia were trucked down shortly after I arrived. Later we went over to the Rayburn House and actually took things off the walls, took silverware from the dining room, to make up exhibits, and took many furnishings from his ranch cabin as well. He was extremely proud of all this.

But coming back to Wayne Grover's role in it all. I wrote to him regularly and made progress reports, but he never replied. I finally got to the point where I was beginning to feel a bit hot over it all. Here I was away from home, living in a lousy motel, eating out at very indifferent restaurants--some of them were pretty sad--and working my tail off, and he didn't answer my letters. In fact if it hadn't been for the air conditioning in the library and the periodical invitations to have dinner with the Rayburn's, it would have been almost unbearable at times. I finally was at the point where I felt, my God, Wayne has put me down here and is leaving me to the wolves. So about four days before dedication, I sat down and wrote a particularly long report of the situation in my quite illegible handwriting--how Wayne ever read it I'll never know. Nor do I know whether this letter or any of the others I sent him are in the archives or in his personal papers. But the day or so before dedication I got the message which restored my sense and good humor--it was, simply, "It looks to me like you've got it made." Well, you know from that point on everything was wonderful.

Without my knowledge Mr. Rayburn had his Washington office get in touch with my wife, gave her a first class ticket to Dallas, and since she had never been on a plane before, her first flight was to Texas--free.

BROOKS: You didn't know she was going to be there?

TREVER: I knew she was going to be there, but he didn't tell me until the last minute. He sent me to meet her in his car, so we had the fun of enjoying the dedication ceremony together. Mr. Rayburn had a way of doing things like that and not telling you. He'd come walking into the Library with a bottle of bourbon or a carton of cigarettes for me, and you never could tell when he was going to invite you to his house for a drink or a meal. He even invited me once to a dinner party when he got together with all his old cronies. His political manager, Buster Cole, and I were probably the only people there under the age of 70. I shall not get into that further, except to say that it was a privilege to see in

operation a form of politics that I don't think operates anymore, even in the South.

Mr. Rayburn had all the dedication ceremonies put on film. In the course of his dedicatory remarks he said some very kind things about me--and I have a framed copy of those words, signed by him, hanging over my desk at home. All this gave me the lift that was necessary to carry me through the work on the Eisenhower and Hoover Libraries.

BROOKS: You were at Abilene for the Eisenhower Library dedication?

TREVER: I was at Abilene a number of times. The operation was very different from the Truman operation. First of all, the State was involved--the State Architect was involved.

BROOKS: John Brink, right?

TREVER: Brink was either a Cherokee or Choctaw or of one of the other Oklahoma tribes. He was a very proud man--also a very profane one. He reminded me of Jack Harrison in that respect. He used cuss words like an ordinary person used "if," "and," and "but".

BROOKS: That's right.

TREVER: We didn't always agree with him, but he did build an elegant building. We had a lot of interesting experiences, architecturally, with that building.

You know, maybe Grover wasn't an architect but he did have an innate sense of what was needed in these places and how to go about getting it. One of the principles he followed, and I think a damn good one, was never to build a library as big as you think it ought to be--build it about two or three times as you think it ought to be. He felt the same way about record centers. Every single one of the libraries he built was bigger than many thought necessary. "You will never fill it," people said of the Hoover Library. But how many additions has the Hoover Library had? Two, I think.

BROOKS: Yes, two.

TREVER: In fact the Hoover Library had had an addition even before we got in the act. There has been an addition at the Roosevelt Library and one on the Truman Library. I know very well the Kennedy Library is

going to be far larger than originally intended, and look at the size of the Johnson Library.

BROOKS: His principle might be responsible for the fact, too, that we had a full basement under the original Truman Library--and we'd have been lost without it.

TREVER: So I think you can count Wayne Grover's contributions and they are all major to NARS. The National Archives was the core of things, but he brought all these other elements into it. Even the publication of the Papers of the Presidents, edited and issued by the Federal Register, was correlated to the other activities I have described...

Bob Bolton got involved in the Eisenhower Library operation because of his experience with the pre-Presidential papers. He was close to General Schultz, Eisenhower's Military Aide, Schultz trusted Bob. I finally got so Schultz and I hit it off pretty well. I don't know, but I always had the feeling that Wayne had it in the back of his head that I might develop into a person suitable to become a Presidential Library Director.

As a matter of fact, quite early in the game I got the idea that I was to go to Abilene. Just when the change occurred, I don't know, but somewhere along the line he either felt he needed me more here or else he decided I wasn't quite the guy he wanted to send to Abilene. In any case, about this time Thad Page was going to retire as head of Legislative Archives and Schellenberg asked me if I would refuse that job or accept it, if offered to me. I don't know whether he had any right to make the offer--or even if Wayne had suggested the offer. I told him I would consider it, if Wayne was agreeable to the change. Subsequently, I think, Wayne must have gone along with the idea.

There was a period of waiting expectantly for a directive to go work with Thad for a while to find out how things operated, but nothing happened--I wasn't sure whether I was going to go to Abilene or not. I finally asked Wayne one evening as he was leaving my office what his plans were for me. It was about 5:45 and getting quite dark. Instead of going into his office, we went into Bob Bahmer's office. He put his foot up on the windowsill and stood a few seconds looking out into the night at Kann's store lights, and then said, "I don't know, Karl, whether you ought to go to Abilene or stay here. I'm inclined to think I need you here more than they need you out there. But I don't know yet what I'm going to do." No mention was made, as I recall, of my going to Legislative to succeed Thad Page.

I had always said I would go or stay, as he wished, but at this point I suggested to him that he send Bob Bolton to Abilene as acting director--for Bob was persona grata to the Eisenhower people I knew. Of course, I didn't know Harry Darby then, and that was to make all the difference on how Bob would make out at Abilene. But in any case, Bob finally did go out as acting director.

Wayne once said in my presence that when an opportunity for promotion occurred, even if it meant going into the field, if you didn't take it that was your chance--that's where you went or else. Well, I don't know whether my not going to Abilene did or did not have anything to do with my future role in the Presidential Library operations. I doubt that it did, for I went ahead as Special Assistant, becoming deeply involved in the Herbert Hoover Library and the Kennedy Library planning operations, as well as actively working on Eisenhower Library affairs.

The Hoover Library project was one of the most difficult and frustrating assignments of my career. I don't particularly care to go into the details of my role in the operation, but Wayne certainly backed me one hundred per cent in my efforts to carry out the assignment. He never gave me any intimation that he was anything but pleased with the way I conducted myself out at West Branch. But it was a miserable experience for me, in many ways, and for him, too, I think. But we finally got the addition to the Library built and dedicated, the papers transferred, and a Library staff in operation. But it was a long while, I think, before the Hoover Library became a viable institution. Here, again, we had a problem of not only picking a Director that was acceptable to the President, but also a staff that would meet the demands of Mr. Hoover and his advisers. It seemed to me that both Director and staff were selected without regard to experience or training.

Finally, I must talk a bit about the Kennedy Library project, for it was the biggest and most exciting assignment of my career. The most important factor, to me, was that I was able to get into the Kennedy operation very early in the game--well before his inauguration. Herman Kahn once intimated that he was the one who was responsible for my being able to get the pre-Presidential papers of Mr. Kennedy for the National Archives in the first place. This is entirely possible, for he supposedly had made some suggestions to Arthur Schlesinger and other Kennedy associates at the AHA meeting in 1960.

In any case, I received a call one day from Mr. Oshins, an official at the Democratic National Committee, inquiring if I would be interested in taking over the pre-Presidential papers pending the Kennedy decision on a library. I jumped at the chance, of course, and quickly informed Wayne, who authorized me to go ahead with negotiations.

Mr. Oshins introduced me to a Mr. Fred Holborn, who was to have responsibility for moving the Kennedy papers and memorabilia from the Senate Office Building and the Capitol. I went to see Holborn a couple of times and came away with the understanding that I would hear from him later as to the removal of the papers etc., to the Archives. Time went by and nothing happened, As inauguration day approached I got worried and called Holborn and asked, "When is this going to take place? We haven't heard a word." Holborn's reply was simply, "Silence means consent."

So about three days before inauguration I went up to the Capitol with Poyner and his men to bring the papers and memorabilia to the Archives. It was really quite a job to assemble, pack, and move the Kennedy materials, because they were stored all over the place. They had taken over a big hearing room in the Capitol to store and arrange for packing and transfer the mountain of gifts Kennedy had received during the campaign. They had several offices filled to capacity with current files of the Senate staff and especially of the administrative assistants. They had numerous storage spaces in the Capitol and in the Senate Office Building filled with non-current records and memorabilia. Besides these, there were numerous boxes and crates of paintings and other objects that had been acquired by Mrs. Kennedy and left, unidentified for the most part, in the offices. All of this material had to be packed carefully with the best arrangement we could figure out and moved in just a few hours. The last load was brought down the avenue just as the great snow began to fall on inauguration eve. I sat in the front of the truck with Ford, holding on my lap the famous coconut that saved the lives of Lt. Kennedy and his crew. In one hand I had a fragile ship model and in the other a beautiful example of scrimshaw from his collection of this kind of art. Everything was safely lodged in the Archives Building by 6 that evening, and I owe a great debt to Leon Poyner and his men for their efficient and willing work that week. Because of the heavy snowstorm I didn't get home that night until about 3 a.m.

Most of the materials were placed in storage on the 18th and 19th tiers East, as I recall, and we hardly had room to store it all. When I asked Wayne who was going to help me process and service the Kennedy papers, he said, "I've got just the guy for you." That "guy" turned out to be Frank Harrington from the Military Records Center. Now I don't know how well Wayne knew Frank or whether he brought him over on recommendation of Sherrod East, but he was, in every sense of the word "a good guy." He did a most remarkable job, virtually alone, of arranging and describing the pre-Presidential papers. It was so good, in fact, that we had an almost perfect record in giving positive answers to reference calls from the White House.

You have no idea of the chaotic condition in which Frank found the papers. John Kennedy once said to Wayne and me that he guessed he wasn't a very good record keeper. If so, neither were his people. But Frank did a great job of putting things all together, and still today, I hear, they can use Frank's finding aids.

At this point I want to say a few words about the Presidential Library operation of those early days, because I am always amazed at what we got done, considering the facilities and personnel we were given. Until very late in the game I did not have any regular secretarial help. If I had something to be typed, I had to go to Faye Geeslin. She was a sweet thing, and I certainly have high admiration for her. But if she didn't have time or didn't feel just then like typing anything for me, I would have to go to Joyce, the young lady who was Bahmer's secretary. If she was busy--it just had to wait. Things always got done eventually, but it was always frustrating for me. It wasn't until a year or so before I retired that I was given a secretary who could take dictation and do my typing. She was Mrs. Lee, a fine lady, who unfortunately developed arthritis and couldn't type very well.

I was expected to do all kinds of work for Wayne. I drafted articles and releases, even helped with some speeches. Earlier in 1954, I was helpful to him while he was President of the Society of American Archivists, and at the end of his term I got a terrific letter of thanks and commendation from him for this help--it is a beautiful letter.

I never had more than one archivist assisting me during the seven years I was special assistant, except when their tours happened to overlap briefly, as with Bolton and Harrington. Yet we had, for much of the time, four going libraries and one in the planning stage. So I could never understand this--the understaffing--but we made out somehow.

Midway in the Kennedy Administration, Herman Kahn, who was often referred to as "Mr. Presidential Libraries" indicated that he was unhappy and, for some reason, wanted to leave Hyde Park. Maybe because of Ann's health.

At any rate, he wanted to get away, and having been quite close to him over the years, I knew it.

BROOKS: His wife's health had a lot to do with it.

TREVER: He wanted to make a change. I think he felt he'd been there long enough. One day he called me from here in Washington. He didn't say so, as I can recall, and he might deny it now, but I felt quite sure he was or had been at the White House talking with Arthur Schlesinger, with whom he was very close. At least the nature of the questions he asked me, and the fact that he asked me to keep his call confidential, led me to believe this was the case. The next morning Grover called and asked me to get him in touch with Kahn. I told him I didn't think I --that he had been "in Washington yesterday, but I didn't know where he was now." Grover seemed surprised to hear Herman had been in Washington--and, of course, I realized I had said something I shouldn't have and that I had let the cat out of the bag, unintentionally. When I called the Library they said they couldn't tell me where Herman was but would try to find out and call me back. Instead, Herman called me shortly from someplace in Washington and he got in touch with Grover shortly after that.

I never did know what Wayne wanted of him, but I do know that shortly after that Herman Kahn came back to the National Archives. A short while later Wayne called me to tell me Herman was coming back--at least I knew of it before I read it in the papers--and said, "Now just keep your shirt on. There's only one way I can bring him in here and that's to bring him in as Special Assistant to the Archivist. I'm going to give him a different assignment and I'll take care of you later." I always believed and still believe that Wayne meant what he said about "taking care of me later", but things just didn't turn out that way for reasons I'll mention later. At any rate, it wasn't too long before I found myself working for Herman Kahn for a brief period, a situation that led to my retirement.

I'd like to end my discussion of the Kennedy Library operation with a few words about one experience of my career I shall never forget. Perhaps it was the high point of my career. A few days after Kennedy's inauguration I received a telephone call from Fred Holburn. He said, "The President wants to see you and Dr. Grover tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock. He wants to thank you for your work in helping with the transition." I just couldn't believe this and when I told Wayne about the call, I'm sure he didn't either, especially since the call didn't come through channels. But I think this was sort of typical of the way Kennedy operated--he went where he wanted to and talked to whomever he wanted to, regardless of channels. At any event the next morning the newspaper had Karl Trever and Wayne Grover as being on the President's appointment calendar.

So that morning at 10 we were in the White House, not knowing what to expect--I know I didn't and I suspect Wayne didn't either. We were ushered in by Kenny O'Donnell. The President was dictating into a machine when we entered the room, put the machine aside, and rose to greet us. It was a very gracious and charming meeting.

The President made the usual pleasantries, made comments about his not being a very good record keeper, and said he pitied anybody who had to read his handwriting. He disposed of me in half a dozen short sentences, very graciously, and then he turned to Wayne. I think he took Wayne a bit off balance, you know, when he asked him if he didn't think President Eisenhower made a mistake in having his library built where he wasn't going to be in retirement. Wayne did some pretty quick thinking and did a remarkable job of answering the question.

All the while we were in the Oval Office, I could see Ken O'Donnell was keeping track of the time and when he made a motion to the President and it was obvious we were to go, Mr. Kennedy held us back and asked Wayne some more questions.

This was the beginning of the three busiest years of my life, I think, and it was the beginning of a fine relationship between Wayne and the White House Office--it was just superb for both of us. Had the President not been assassinated and the Kennedy administration been continued, I feel sure I would have stayed on another two to four years before retiring, if Wayne had been willing to keep me. But Kennedy's death made a great deal of difference, not only to me, but to all of us who were connected with the Kennedy Library program. It led to the creation of the Office

of Presidential Libraries, which Herman Kahn inevitably came to head.

There had been "handwriting on the wall," so to speak, and I had seen these changes coming for some time. I stayed on for some months in the new office, but I retired in April 1964, not out of pique nor in anger, but because I felt I didn't want to begin all over again with a new administration under a new office. Frankly, I must admit that my health had not been too good in the months after Kennedy's death, and Wayne knew this. I had no cause for complaint when he made Herman head of Presidential Libraries Office--given the personal and political situation, he couldn't do much else.

In conclusion, may I say I think if anybody is to be called "Mr. Presidential Libraries," it should be Wayne Grover. His contribution to their development was very great from beginning to end.