

1. Would you begin by telling something about yourself in terms of date and place of birth, family background, educational credits and job experience prior to your assuming your present responsibilities for Senator Mathias?
2. How did it happen that Senator Mathias came to be actively involved in the issue of Archives independence?
3. What was the nature of the interplay between Senators Mathias, Eagleton and Hatfield, and their aides, regarding the language and Senate actions regarding S-905?
4. How did it happen that basically the Senate bill provided for a straight-forward achievement of independence rather than an increase in authority for the Archivist?
5. What effect did Senator Roth's lack of support for the bill have on the holding of hearings or on Senate passage?
6. Was Sen. Mathias at all involved in Sen. Hatfield's efforts to enlist the support of Dave Stockman at OMB?
7. Was a similar battle fought for the support of Ed Meese?
8. How did it happen that the false announcement of Senate passage on June 19th came about?
9. Could you describe the scene on the Senate floor during debate leading to the early summer passage of S. 905?
10. What role did Sen. Mathias play?
11. From your perspective what role did Archives officials play in the independence battle?
12. What impact would you say Page Miller or Charlene Bickford had on the Archives bill?
13. Were you at all surprised by the timing or the nature of the House action on HR 3987?
14. What kind of behind the scenes activities took place during August regarding Archives officials, OMB, agency representatives and legislative assistants?
15. Once Congress had agreed to the Conference Report did you have any doubt but that the President would sign the bill?
16. I think we've covered most of the points I wanted to cover, is there anything you'd like to add?

National Archives



Washington, DC 20408

NATIONAL ARCHIVES ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Oral History Interview

with

Marion Morris

January 31, 1985

at

the Hart Senate Office Building

Washington, D.C.

Interviewed by Rodney A. Ross (National Archives employee)

Basic summary abstract prepared by Donnie Eichhorst (National Archives volunteer)

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Marion Morris. Washington, D.C. January 31, 1985. Interviewed by
Rodney A. Ross.

Morris is staff assistant for Sen. Charles McC. Mathias on the Subcommittee on Governmental Efficiency and the District of Columbia, which is a subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs.

In the interview Morris talks about Sen. Mathias' longtime interest in independence for the National Archives. She discusses his role and that of Senators Mark Hatfield and Thomas Eagleton in their work on behalf of S.905.

Morris presents a detailed picture of Senate floor action on the night of passage of S.905. She also discusses her central role in helping to coordinate persons and events which led to the bill's enactment. She notes concerns of various Senators concerning the bill, especially that of Sen. Robert Dole, and explained how these concerns were resolved.

The interview, approximately 28 minutes in length, was conducted in Morris' office in the Hart Senate Office Building. Both parties can be heard fairly well, although occasionally remarks of the interviewer aren't easily understood.

Abstract of interview with Marion Morris in Washington, D.C., on January 31, 1985.
Interviewer: Rodney A. Ross
Tape length: Nearly one full side of a 60-minute cassette (i.e., 28 minutes)

QUESTION: Background?

ANSWER: Morris' educational background is a B.A. in American history and a M.A. in American city and regional planning. She worked with the District of Columbia government in a variety of positions and with the Federal government prior to coming to work for Sen. Charles McC. Mathias.

QUESTION: What is your position with Sen. Mathias?

ANSWER: Morris works with Sen. Mathias on the D.C. subcommittee (the Subcommittee on Governmental Efficiency and the District of Columbia). It is a subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs.

QUESTION: How did it happen that Sen. Mathias became actively involved in the issue of Archives independence?

ANSWER: Sen. Mathias has been interested in Archives independence at least since 1968, and probably prior to that when he was a member of the House. In fact, he is quoted in a number of books on the subject. One of his more famous quotes had to do with his never having understood why the General Services Administrator was simultaneously the keeper of storerooms, washrooms and lockers and the keeper of the National Archives.

QUESTION: In the mid-1960's Wayne Grover and others attempted to have President Johnson change the status of the Archives by executive fiat. Is it correct that at that time Rep. Mathias introduced a bill to accomplish this end?

ANSWER: Morris thought that was the case, but she added she didn't work for him at the time.

QUESTION: In what year did you begin working with him?

ANSWER: 1975.

QUESTION: So you were around when Admiral Freeman began talking about decentralizing archival holdings?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: Sen. Mathias was a Senator at that time, right?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: Did he play a role in that episode?

ANSWER: Yes. Sen. Mathias interceded with the President regarding Admiral Freeman's proposed reorganization of documents and records from Washington to regional records centers.

QUESTION: What does "intercession" mean?

ANSWER: Sen. Mathias wrote to the President, but Morris couldn't recall if he wrote by himself or with other Senators. The issue found its way to Capitol Hill from a variety of user groups and from the professionals in the field who felt this was not the way to proceed.

QUESTION: Was Sen. Mathias involved in the efforts to save the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC)?

ANSWER: Yes. He has been a sponsor of legislation to authorize the Commission and he was also involved in seeking the appropriations in the last four years.

QUESTION: For S.905 could you describe the interplay between Senators Mathias, Eagleton and Hatfield and their aides regarding language and subsequent Senate action on that particular bill?

ANSWER: Actually, Sen. Eagleton and his staff were most responsible. Sen. Eagleton was the chief sponsor of S.905 in the Senate. One key accomplishment was securing the markup of the bill in the Governmental Affairs Committee. Supporters of Archives independence had managed hearings in the past but had never generated enough enthusiasm for markup, the first step for getting the bill before the full Senate.

Morris recalled this was the last markup the Governmental Affairs Committee held for the season. Supporters got the bill out with very minor changes in text. Supporters had continued to have conversations with their House counterparts at the staff level. The House bill had more substantial changes in authority for the Archivist. Morris felt one of the reasons the Senate supporters were successful in getting the bill out was that it was a straight reorganization bill and did not raise any bid issues of turf.

QUESTION: Senator Roth, chairman of the committee, did not support the bill. Was it not remarkable that he still permitted markup to be held?

ANSWER: No. Senator Roth has voted against other bills that were reported out by his committee. Morris had no idea what his reasons were for voting against it. She didn't think the committee had yet had Executive comments on the bill. Presumably there was some informal communication from GSA or the White House to Sen. Roth saying it wasn't such a hot idea. Senator Roth being chairman of the committee and of the same party as the Administration probably felt he should be against it. Since he didn't file any minority views there's no way of knowing his reasoning.

QUESTION: Did Sen. Mathias play a role in helping Sen. Hatfield persuade David Stockman to support S.905?

ANSWER: Not to Morris' knowledge. She understood Sen. Hatfield's role from his perspective as a board member of NHPRC. Sen. Hatfield had a long-standing interest in history. He was at a fund-raiser or a Republican dinner when Stockman was present. Morris thought that at the time Sen. Hatfield spoke not with Stockman but with someone else in OMB or the White House. Sen. Hatfield expressed an interest in seeing the Administration support this bill. Sen. Hatfield pointed out there would be no substantial cost and it was really no skin off anyone's nose.

As a result of Sen. Hatfield's being in the right place he was able to get to Joe Wright, the Deputy Director of OMB and convince him that this bill was not something OMB needed to take a stand against. That subsequently led to two letters from OMB to Sen. Hatfield. Keep in mind that Sen. Hatfield was not even on the Committee on Governmental Affairs. Based on those two letters the staff set out to respond to the concerns of OMB.

When the bill was called up on the floor it was at the very end of the Senate session. It was late at night. Supporters had been on standby for about three nights. For the floor action the statements and the floor amendments were all prearranged. Morris delivered the packet to the floor with each Senator's signature on their amendment: Sen. Mathias to Sen. Eagleton to Sen. Dole, who had the tax amendment. The deck got bigger and bigger; it was at least two inches of paper which Sen. Baker simply handed in to the desk.

It was a night of about thirty other bills of all sorts of substance. These passed under what is called a "consent calendar" meaning no Senator had raised objections to them being called up without a roll-call vote.

QUESTION: How many Senators were on the floor at the time?

ANSWER: Morris wasn't sure since she was listening from her office. It was 11:30 or 12:00 at night. Morris doubted there were more than four Senators on the floor.

There had been a number of holds placed on the bill in the Senate despite the fact that almost half the Senators were cosponsors of the bill, thanks to yeoman efforts of Page Miller and others. Morris thought the holds were because of the intercession of the former GSA Administrator who didn't want to see any part of GSA go off on its own.

QUESTION: What does it mean to put "holds" on a bill?

ANSWER: A hold means that a Senator wishes to speak on a bill when it is called up or he has a problem with it and wishes to offer an amendment. This means the bill cannot be called up on the "consent calendar".

If there are holds, the problems have to be worked out with the Senator in question. At the end of a Senate session that means time, which the supporters of independence didn't have. Supporters identified those Senators with holds, called them up and identified what some of their problems were.

QUESTION: Could you identify some of the Senators and what their concerns were?

ANSWER: Sen. Dole was concerned about the privacy of tax return information. Supporters of the bill talked with Sen. Dole and sat down with the IRS to resolve these concerns. The IRS agreed to an amendment which independence supporters accepted along with a lot of legislative history that was repeated in the Congressional Record, which tells which statute will prevail in certain situations.

Sen. Helms had a hold on the bill at one time, but he never revealed what his problem was. Sen. Baker as majority leader had imposed a rule which said holds had to have a legitimate reason. Under Sen. Baker's position if after so many days one hadn't voiced objections or offered an amendment, the hold would come off. Other Senators had holds, too, but none of substance.

QUESTION: Who, in effect, acted as floor leader for the debate?

ANSWER: There really was no floor leader. The entire thing was based on a script, written by staff in advance, and signed off on by respective Senators in advance. It included an amendment and some technical amendments that were added to make sure the bill said what was desired.

The floor action was a perfunctory thing. the majority leader came over, picked up the stack of material and handed it in at the desk. He asked for unanimous consent for the calendar number, not ever the bill number, and it was done.

QUESTION: Was there a role that Sen. Mathias, as a Republican, could play that Sen. Eagleton could not?

ANSWER: Sen. Mathias is known among his colleagues for his interest in history. He is respected for his judgment on both sides of the aisle. When he writes Dear Colleague letters explaining a bill and asking for cosponsorship, Senators are willing to take him at his word.

In persuading other Republican Senators one example was Sen. Mathias' successful effort to stop a certain segment of Republican Senators that were trying to stop the bill. The Republican Policy Committee put out a piece of paper describing the bill. Its tone was such that it made the bill look like a terrible idea. It was a highly irregular procedure to put out such a document. The document was sent to all legislative directors of Republican Senators.

Sen. Mathias spoke to the chairman of the Republican Policy Committee and other Senators on that committee, including Sen. Goldwater and Sen. Tower, and said erroneous information had been put out. Subsequently the Republican Policy Committee retracted that paper and put out another one that explained the bill. It was necessary to have someone on the Republican side who could take that kind of rear guard action.

QUESTION: Did Sen. Mathias have contact with people in the White House, such as Ed Meese?

ANSWER: Not to Morris' knowledge.

QUESTION: What about contact with agencies? Did you work with Tom Persky at IRS or Bob McConnell at Justice?

ANSWER: Yes. Morris met with Persky at least twice and with Sen. Dole's staff to work out the problems with the privacy of individual tax returns. Morris did not meet with McConnell, but she did meet with representatives of his staff and with persons from the FBI who had concerns over privacy of grand jury information, electronic surveillance information and other things they felt would be available to the Archives. Their concerns were principally due to misreading of the statute. Morris and Ira Shapiro were able to explain that that was the case. There was at least one sit-down meeting with Justice people and a number of letters between Senators and the Attorney General on the issue.

QUESTION: Were there any other agencies involved in the discussion of the Archives bill?

ANSWER: No. The two principle agencies which raised problems were Treasury (IRS) and the Justice Department (FBI). GSA never came forward with persons or letters.

QUESTION: The Senate bill was a transfer of independence while the House bill would have increased the Archivist's authority? Were you surprised by the House bill?

ANSWER: No.

QUESTION: Was the Senate the principle actor for Archives independence?

ANSWER: Morris replied that action by both the Senate and the House had been needed. The bill on the Senate side had always been a straight-forward reinstatement of an independent Archives. During the two hearings in the previous four years the issue of additional powers was never brought up for committee attention. Without some basis in the hearings there was no justification for going any further than what the bill proposed. It was clear the Administration was not prepared to go much further. That meant a number of Senators would not vote for a bill that extended any new authorities to the Archivist.

QUESTION: As you viewed things, was there a central nerve or a coordinator for strategy -- you office, Ira Shapiro's, Page Miller's or someone at the Archives?

ANSWER: Once the bill was reported, Morris felt she had kept her hand on it. Once the bill had made it to the Senate calendar, and it was clear the House was equally ready to pursue a movement, and there was a constituency in both the Archives and in user groups, Morris tried to keep in daily contact with people in the Archives and with the staff of the House Government Operations Committee. Sometimes it was only a matter of telephoning to keep them focused on things.

QUESTION: Who were some of the Archives liaison persons you spoke with?

ANSWER: Dick Jacobs was helpful during the hearings and when Morris needed additional information. Claudine Weiher was the person Morris remained most constantly in touch with. Dr. Warner, too, was helpful.

QUESTION: What kind of behind-the-scenes activities took place during August after the House and Senate had passed different bills and before the conference?

ANSWER: There was a limited amount of time before the 98th Congress would come to an end. Morris knew it was necessary for the staff to work in advance and try to work out all the problems ahead of time. Morris talked with Sen. Roth's staff who all along had been helpful throughout in convening interested parties.

Morris talked with Ira Shapiro and with their House counterparts (John Parisi, Steve Daniels, Ed Gleiman, and someone whose name might have been Ed Jones). She called them and suggested they get together to go over the fifteen points of disagreement which Morris had put together. During the summer the various people got together.

QUESTION: Was the meeting in the Hart building?

ANSWER: There were several meetings alternating between Senate and House sites.

QUESTION: Once Congress had agreed to the conference report did you have doubts about the President signing the bill?

ANSWER: There was still doubt in Morris' mind.

QUESTION: Because of the Attorney General's position?

ANSWER: Yes. The Justice Department continued to raise issues up to the last minute in spite of the fact they had had ample opportunity to write, phone and testify prior to the bill being reported. Morris found this unnerving and was afraid the President would be persuaded not to sign the bill.

QUESTION: Did Sen. Mathias intervene at all to make clear to the President that a majority of Senators supported the conference position?

ANSWER: Not to Morris's knowledge. There was a very thorough record in the Congressional Record at the time the bill was called up and there was a good committee report which is what the White House would have looked at. The staff tried to make a logical committee report that stayed away from politics. The argument wasn't made that the Archives needed to get out of GSA so the Archives could better represent its budget. Instead, the argument was made that the Archives and GSA had incompatible missions. In the name of governmental efficiency it was better to separate the two agencies.

QUESTION: Anything else?

ANSWER: No. Morris was glad the Archives is on its own two feet. She looked forward to a nominee for Archivist who would be able to take the Archives into the next century.

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE

Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interview of

Marion Morris

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

Marion Morris

of Washington, D.C.

(name)

(city and state)

do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title and interest in the tape recording and transcript of a personal interview conducted on January 31, 1985 at 442 Hart S.O.B.

in Washington, D.C. and prepared for deposit in the National Archives. This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

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

Marion Morris
Donor

Robert M. Kane
Archivist of the United States

1/31/85
Date

February 6, 1985
Date