

U.S. National Archives and Records Administration
Transcript of National Archives History Office Oral History interview
Subject: Thomas “Tom” Nastick
Interviewer: Eric Rhodes
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MR. ERIC RHODES: My name is Eric Rhodes. I’m an intern with the History Office. It’s December 16, 2015. I am sitting here with Tom Nastick. Tom, could you give your full name and your title?

MR. TOM NASTICK: Sure, I’m Thomas Christopher Nastick and my title is, official title, Audiovisual Specialist in the Office of Education and Public Programs, but informally, I’m a Public Program Producer for that office.

MR. RHODES: Great, well, we like to start things off sort of, chronologically as historically minded people. So could you talk a little bit about where you were born and what your childhood was like?

MR. NASTICK: I was born in Washington, DC. I lived there for not very long—when I was a baby my parents and my family moved from Washington out to the Maryland suburbs. We settled in Rockville, Maryland. I was born in 1961. I grew up in Rockville and around 1968 or ’69, we moved to the Silver Spring area, which is nearby Rockville. Let me go back, I went to elementary school first at St. Jude’s in Rockville and then at St. Andrew’s in Silver Spring. I went to high school at Our Lady of Good Council High School at Wheaton, Maryland, and graduated in 1979.

I was accepted at American University in Washington, DC, and entered into the School of Communications, as a Communications and Cinema Studies candidate for my major. I graduated with a BA in 1983 from American University (AU). I started working for the federal government while I was at American University, as a part-time employee at the National Weather Service doing just basic clerk/typist kinds of duties. That’s where I first learned how to operate a word-processor, which were very new at the time. I started my federal career there.

After graduating in 1983, I worked full-time for a time at the Weather Service. Then I applied for a job at the National Audiovisual Center, which at that time—this would have been about 1984—was part of the National Archives. It was like a clearing house or distribution point for government-produced audiovisuals: videos, films, slideshows, things like that. I worked in the customer service department beginning April 1984. It was there that I met a gentleman by the name of Bill Blakefield who was working at the National Audiovisual Center at that time, but had just been hired to come down here to the downtown building to restart the Public Film Program here at the National Archives.

And I got to know him and told him about my background at AU and film study and working

with film, producing film, and editing film. And it just happened that they were looking for somebody to be a Projectionist and Audiovisual Technician for the downtown building. They were just in the process of beginning renovations to the old theater which used to be up on the fifth floor of this building. So I applied for that job and I got the job.

In April 1985, just as the National Archives became independent from GSA and became an independent agency, I was hired as the Audiovisual Technician and Projectionist for the old theater at Archives I. So that's how I got to NARA downtown.

And almost immediately Bill Blakefield got me involved with not only just providing audiovisual service to the staff and to the public programs we were doing at that time, which basically meant that I was projectionist for the theater, as I mentioned, but I also would set up in various rooms in the building for meetings and things like that. At that time it wasn't very complicated, it was slide projectors and over-head projectors, that kind of thing, not like it is now.

Then through Bill's encouragement and mentoring I gradually got into doing some programming myself. The first film series I ever programmed here was a series on films from the Great Depression era that I selected from our holdings, and we did those. I think that was around 1991 or '92. Then in 1994, Bill transferred to another division here in the Archives and became the Archives first webmaster actually. He became the first manager of our very first efforts putting out web pages and things like that. At that time, I sort of took over the running of our public programs in the old theater.

I don't know if you want me to stop there?

MR. RHODES: Well, I do have a question for you.

MR. NASTICK: Sure.

MR. RHODES: I wonder, firstly, did the old theater have the capability to do A/V before you arrived?

MR. NASTICK: Yeah, I mean they had been doing film programs here in this building since almost the very beginning. The theater was original to the building in 1935. They had 35 millimeter projectors in the theater. When I got here what was in the booth in the old theater were two 35 millimeter projectors that, the story I got, weren't the original projectors, but they were projectors that had somehow been donated to the Archives, that were used at a World's Fair or something like that and had been donated to the Archives. Again, this may not be accurate, but this is the story I was told. So, when I got here, as I said, Bill had just started renovating that theater, which meant that the projectors were converted from, or the lamp-houses on the projectors, were converted from the old, sort of carbon arc lamp-houses, which required the projectionist to actually, before every screening, put in these carbon rods which would strike together and create the light. They would ignite and create the light that projects the film onto the screen.

So for the first, maybe year that I was here, I learned how to do that and then we converted to what are called Xenon lamp-houses, which you just push a button and it turns on, you don't have to worry about them burning out halfway through the film or anything like that. We installed a new screen, so we could do wide screen projection. We purchased a video projector so we could project video as well as a computer when that came along. We upgraded the lighting system and upgraded the sound system. So that theater was, for the time, in the early '90s, was pretty state-of-the-art. And most of the material we showed was the film from our own holdings, but we also started doing screenings of things from outside the holdings, mostly documentaries.

MR. RHODES: It takes a lot of vision to put together a program. How would you decide on, say a particular documentary? A particular speaker?

MR. NASTICK: Right.

MR. RHODES: Can you talk a little bit about when you landed, when you became the programmer, you know. What was that like and how did you create that sort of vision?

MR. NASTICK: Well, the vision was, sort of, already in place. The tradition was that public programs, obviously, were connected to our holdings and our mission, but beyond that they usually were connected to something else that was going on at the time, either an exhibit that was being mounted, or an anniversary, those sorts of things. We kind of based our calendar on those sorts of ideas.

We did a lot in conjunction with whatever the latest exhibit was, any major anniversaries that came along. But aside from that we would also keep very in tune to what was happening out there in the world that was new, in terms of documentary, books, speakers, and as long as they had a connection to our mission and our holdings, would make a great public program that would draw an audience, then that is something that we would be interested in. We did a lot of really interesting things at that point. I remember a whole series of things we did. There was an exhibit on the history of Washington, DC.

I'm sorry, I don't have all the years in my head right now, but you can go back and look those up if you really need to. We did a series on local Washington television and we had a reunion of something that was called *The Milt Grant Show* which was during the '50s, was like Washington's answer to *American Bandstand*. It was a sort of a rock-and-roll dance show for teenagers. We hosted, basically, a reunion. We got Milt Grant, the host of the show to come back and he invited a lot of the then middle-aged people, who had been on the show during the '50s, and that's just one example of the kind of thing. We did 3D showings in the theater. We figured out a way to convert the projector, so that we could project 3D. And we did some 3D movies like *House of Wax* and *Dial M for Murder* and things like that, feature films.

This is when Bill was still around doing public programming. I assisted him with this, but he actually produced a 3D slideshow on the Civil War and also the sort of opening of the West

leading into the Civil War, I should say, to get the timeline right. He actually created 3D slides and did a music soundtrack and all that stuff, so it was a great thing and just an example of how we were thinking outside the box. I think during those years we did a lot of good stuff. I tried to carry that on after Bill moved on, and I started taking things over myself.

MR. RHODES: Do you see the National Archives as serving an important purpose within the, sort of, intellectual scholarly community of historians then?

MR. NASTICK: Absolutely. I think there's so many scholars, not only scholars, but film makers, writers who use the National Archives to create what they create. I think it's a responsibility that we have, and I've always felt this way, to showcase that to the general public who may not be aware of how our holdings are used for those sorts of things.

Yeah, and I think, over the years we have established ourselves as one of the premier places here in DC, and now nationwide with the Internet, where people can come and learn about our holdings in a less research oriented setting, you know, where it's available to the general public.

I think that's a mission that not only the public programs has, but our exhibit programs, our education programs have, and I think it serves a really important function. I think over the years we've become in an area with really stiff competition with the Smithsonian and the Newseum and everything else. We've carved out, sort of, a unique niche in the cultural landscape of DC with our programming.

MR. RHODES: Can you talk about what the state of affairs was in, say, 1985 or 1981, when you started?

MR. NASTICK: Right.

MR. RHODES: And then how maybe leadership, sort of, influenced that, how maybe you operated within, you know?

MR. NASTICK: Well, in the very beginning, in the mid '80s for that 10 year period, it was kind of, I don't want to put this in too negative a light, but a lot of times it seemed like we were doing a lot in a vacuum. You know, we were reaching a public, but we weren't really, as far as the management of the National Archives goes, we weren't really at a place where we were valued as well as some other things that were going on here.

But I think that all changed during the administration of John Carlin when he was the Archivist. And the whole effort started to establish The National Archives Foundation, that then was the Foundation for the National Archives, and...

MR. RHODES: Sorry, what year about? Carlin?

MR. NASTICK: I'm talking around 1997/'98. It all sort of came together, the establishment of The

National Archives Foundation, who the first president was Charles Guggenheim, a four-time Oscar-winning documentary film-maker, who used our holdings a lot in the creation of his films, and was a real friend of the Archives, and obviously valued our holdings, particularly the motion picture and photographic holdings.

I think the direction was set, but he sort of played a great role in emphasizing the importance of public programs and as a result of that the idea that we needed a new theater to go along with all the other spaces they were planning: the new exhibit spaces; the Boeing Learning Center; the online presence, all of that came together as what was then called "The National Archives Experience." Part of that was the creation of The William G. McGowan Theater, which opened in September of 2004. It was all a perfect storm of things that came together to really boost the exposure of our public programs.

When the McGowan Theater opened in 2004 we got a lot of press coverage and there was a real effort to make sure that that theater was active, and that we did a lot of programming and it just put us on the path to, as I've already said, become one of the premier locations here in DC.

MR. RHODES: What type of input did you have in the new McGowan Theater?

MR. NASTICK: I actually had a lot. The original plans for the theater didn't take into account a lot of the things I thought were important in order to have the presentation of not only film, but what was needed to make sure that there was state-of-the-art, in terms of sound systems, lighting systems, that kind of thing.

I did attend a lot of the meetings, put in my two cents about what I thought was needed based on what we had done in the old theater, what we had done out at Archives II, because I was also on the staff when the auditorium out at Archives II was all planned and built as well.

So there are obviously lots of people involved with that project, but I like to think that what I had to say was listened to and eventually resulted in The McGowan Theater, as well as the auditorium out at College Park being state-of-the-art, in terms of the presentation of public film and other public programs.

MR. RHODES: I'm also wondering about, I guess anecdotes from programs that you've had, or particular programs that you put together that were exceptional in your mind.

MR. NASTICK: Yes, there are a lot of things. Obviously, I've been doing this a long time.

MR. RHODES: Yes.

MR. NASTICK: I'm just now into my 30th year here at the Archives.

MR. RHODES: Congratulations.

MR. NASTICK: I think I, I haven't actually kept count, but I would imagine that I've been involved with, at least 300-350 programs here, as well as at one time I was doing a lot of work with exhibits, helping to create a lot of the video components to the exhibits, not so much anymore, because a lot of that is done by contractors now. Yes, there's lots of things that I'm particularly proud of. We did a traveling film series in 2008 to correspond with the 75th anniversary of the New Deal legislation. I put together a series called *The For a Better America: Films of the New Deal*. Not a very imaginative title, but that was it.

We actually took it on the road and we went to Hyde Park for the FDR Library; we went to Chicago at Columbia College; we went to Santa Fe, New Mexico, because a lot of the people involved with celebrating the 75th anniversary of the New Deal were based in Santa Fe. Let's see where else—oh, we went to a place called Trussville, Alabama, which I had never heard of, but there was a whole town down there that was built during the New Deal and they contacted me because they were interested in the series so we took it down there as well.

That was the first time we were able to turn something and make it sort of a national program, which was great and I had a lot of fun doing it. So that was good. Other things I'm proud of is, I've been doing a series for a long time now called *From The Vaults* where I'd basically go into the motion picture holdings and select some short films, that relate to a particular topic or theme, again usually corresponding with what we're doing or an anniversary or something like that, and present them as day time screenings, first in the old theater and then in the McGowan Theater.

That's something I'm proud of because I've always enjoyed going into the holdings on these fishing expeditions to find things that are rare and haven't been seen often. Because there's a lot, when people think about the National Archives, I think, and particularly the film holdings, first thing that pops into their mind are these sort of mundane training films and how-to films and stock footage, things that when you think about them they don't really lend themselves to entertainment and something that's for general audience.

What I've found over the years is that the truth couldn't be more different. There's a lot of creativity with the films that the government has produced since it started making films in the early 1900s. You know, particularly during the war years, the United States Information Agency films during the Cold War era. The Park Service films, I could go on with examples, but there's a lot of creativity. There's a lot of interesting things, weird things, funny things that are represented in the holdings. Those things are the kind of things that I have tried to highlight and make sure the public knows about. That's something I'm particularly proud of over my time here.

We've done individual programs—we did a program in 2010 to commemorate the 75th, I think it was Elvis's 75th birthday. We have that photograph of Elvis and Nixon which they keep saying is one of the most popular, or one of the most reproduced photographs from our holdings.

Well, my idea was why don't we get people who were in the room at the time of that meeting, and get them on stage and talk about how that happened and what it was like? So sure enough I contacted Bud Krogh, Egil "Bud" Krogh, who was one of Nixon's advisors, and he was in the room when Nixon met Elvis, as well as one of Elvis's friends, I can't remember his name. Hold on. Excuse me, I have to look at my notes, Jerry Schilling, who was one of Elvis's Memphis mafia guys, one of his friends and advisors, handlers, whatever you want to call him. He was in the room at the time.

So Bud and Jerry got on our stage and it was moderated by Tim Naftali who was then the Director of the Nixon Library. They just had a fabulous conversation. It was funny, it was interesting, the only bad part about it is that we had to stop it after 90 minutes because they could have gone on. I consider one of the best discussion programs I've produced, one of the best ideas I've ever had. That is something I'm also particularly proud of.

We did one to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, where I compiled a bunch of radio reports, film clips, images that we projected on screen, and I got Marvin Kalb, the veteran journalist, to basically just sit on stage and walk people through the story of how America first found out about the attack on Pearl Harbor—another idea that really panned out and turned into a really interesting program. So those are just a few examples of things I'm particularly proud of.

But it's not just me; since 2004, when the McGowan Theater opened, there's also been a team of people who produced public programs here. Doug Swanson was doing the noontime book lectures and did a fabulous job of bringing in the newest and most relevant books and authors for what became a very popular series. Susan Clifton, who is also on my team, has produced some great panel discussions and evening programs in the McGowan Theater as well, and really thinks outside the box to try and get some really fun, not only interesting and timely, but also, sort of, fun programs in the McGowan Theater. So we're continuing with that tradition.

MR. RHODES: I wonder if you could speak a little bit about how, when you go into the archives for this, *From the Vaults*, that you do. Can you describe a little bit of the process that happens, you know, when you confront the archives, and maybe how that has changed?

MR. NASTICK: Oh it's changed a lot. When I first started doing them you couldn't do things online because there was nothing online. When I first started the motion picture research room and the still images research room were in this building. It involved basically taking on the role of researcher going through the card catalogs, making selections, actually viewing things on the flat-bed film viewers, or going through the file folders, and the Hollinger boxes in the case of photographs.

As time went on everything moved out to Archives II, and then it became a matter of going out there and basically doing the same thing. It was a much more efficient way of doing it. They started getting a little better with the finding aids and the equipment was improved, and they started transferring a lot of things to reference copy video tapes, so viewing things became

easier. They didn't have to pull the actual film prints in order to look at things. As they started putting things online, with the different databases that they've had over the years, a lot of times, it doesn't really require that you actually go to the research rooms anymore. You can look up things online, you can view things online.

So in that sense it's become easier and less time spent going back and forth to Archives II and those sorts of things, so that's the way technology has helped that effort. I'm sure it has made, for the actual film-maker, doing research, it's made it a lot easier for them as well. The Motion Picture branch has really kept up with technology and continued to, and I can envision a day when most, if not all, of our material will be available in a digital or online format. So it's just amazing when you consider the amount of material we have that they have so much available already in that way.

MR. RHODES: Is there a particular decade where we have either an exceptional amount of film or of exceptional quality? Can you talk a little bit about that?

MR. NASTICK: Yes, I've often thought of it as golden ages of government film production, and I'm sure this is my own thoughts, I'm sure other people who know the holdings and have used the holdings may see it differently, but I always thought the first golden age was during the Great Depression and with the films that were produced to highlight and promote the programs that the government was putting in place to try to help people get jobs.

MR. RHODES: Pare Lorentz.

MR. NASTICK: Yes, Pare Lorentz is the best example of that, with *The River* and *The Plow that Broke the Plains* and the establishment of the U.S. Film Service. It was short-lived, but in the time that it was an entity, the Film Service really did a lot to not only increase the level of production, but the level of quality. Because that was always Pare Lorentz's idea that the government film should be what he called a film of merit, which basically meant it should be on par with what the Hollywood Studios were doing. And, so, yes, I think that period was the first golden age.

The second golden age, I think, is obviously the World War II years when there was so much film being produced. I think it was probably, in terms of productivity, the highest period for government film because all the Armed Services were making films not only to educate the servicemen and women, but also the people at home. Basically doing films for both the warfront and the homefront so that people at home knew what their stake was, and appealed to their sense of patriotism to help out with the war effort. That was the period of time when many established Hollywood film-makers like Frank Capra, George Stevens, William Wyler, and John Ford were all making films for the U.S. government either for the Armed Services or the Office of War Information. It's just an incredible period in terms of output and creativity.

Then finally, as I mentioned before, the United States Information Agency in the years roughly 1960-'67, when George Stevens Jr., the son of George Stevens, who was making films during

World War II, was hired to be the Head of the Motion Pictures and Television Service of The United States Information Agency. He really revitalized that—he brought in a lot of young film-makers and established film-makers to make the films that the USIA was making for foreign audiences to promote democracy, the American way of life, culture, those sorts of things, in line with the policy, the overall policies of the United States Information Agency.

Again, in terms of number of films, I think the USIA motion picture holdings have the most number of films in it. That's a collection that I've tried to highlight over the years, but I think we've only scratched the surface of what's in that collection. There's still a lot to be found, a lot to be presented. Mostly, because until 1990, I believe, they were not allowed to be shown in this country. They were only for foreign audiences because the Congress was concerned about the perception of propaganda.

And all that changed in 1990 when the first President Bush signed an act that made those films available for domestic dissemination. I believe it was 12 years after their year of production. That opened up a huge amount of films that we were now able to show and other people were able to show. But having said that I think there's a lot there that still hasn't been seen or hasn't been seen enough. And again it's another great era of creativity by the Federal government.

MR. RHODES: Talk about your daily schedule. What do you do on a daily basis? Or, have done in the past and how has that changed?

MR. NASTICK: I spend a lot of time doing research, either in the research rooms or more so now online, researching and planning programs because we average between 90 and 100 public programs a year in the McGowan Theater, and so it's a constant process. We plan two months in advance for a particular month, so you're always in a period when you're planning something, and contacting speakers, contacting distributors, making plans, arranging for travel, working with the foundation, doing publicity, doing marketing.

That takes up a lot of time, and then of course there's the actual execution of the programs. Because of the size of our staff, the producers also have to double as the people who actually work at the programs, take care of the audience, take care of the speakers, work with security, work with the A/V team in the booth, which by the way, we have one of the best A/V teams here that would I match them up against anybody. They're just fantastic. I can say that because that's the job I used to do, so I know what the demands are and they're even more so now because back when I was doing it there's a lot of things we didn't have then, mostly computer based things that they have to deal with now.

I'm also involved with other things having to do with visitor services, some exhibit work, the goals of LE in general, the Education and Public Program staff. For instance, right now we're all really involved with programs and exhibits in conjunction with the 225th anniversary of the Bill of Rights, the *Amending America* project. The thing I'm most working on is that we're planning a series of what we're calling National Conversations that will take place in 2016 and into 2017—basically symposiums that will be presented not only here in Washington, but in Chicago,

in Los Angeles, in New York, in Dallas and maybe other locations as well.

So it's a pretty big undertaking, it's something that we haven't done before, so that's taking up a lot of my time now. I just got back from New York a couple of weeks ago visiting the site up there and making plans. So it's becoming more of a national program in line with the wishes of the Archivist, who has been talking about this for quite a while. About turning it into a National program, finding common themes, common anniversaries to celebrate that not only we do here in Washington, but that we do at the various locations around the country.

Amending America is the first one of that. Plans for the future include one on Vietnam for 2017, and for the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment. We'll be doing programs, national programs, connected with that as well. So that's very exciting, so we're sort of branching out.

That's really what I do. I'm not really involved with audiovisual support anymore. Other people are doing that now, so it's basically all involved with planning and executing public programs and making sure that they are in line with the mission of the National Archives, the wishes of the Archivist, and other programs that are being put on by the Education and Public Program staff.

MR. RHODES: Have you ever had to deal with any controversy around the programs? I guess, what I'm getting at is, how does one balance the Archive's pledge to be non-partisan?

Mr. TOM NASTICK: Yes.

Mr. ERIC RHODES: When we're all humans.

MR. NASTICK: Right. That's been a struggle because we do programs on very timely topics, occasionally things that are in the news, things that can be very divisive, particularly where you stand politically, so it's always in our minds that we have to be as balanced as possible. Oftentimes that means putting people on stage who don't agree with each other. We've done that and we've had some heated discussions on the stage.

I think the real key to doing that is a) relating it to the holdings of the National Archives, putting it in historical context, to let people know that these debates have been going on for a long time. They're not just things that are happening now. Also, all of our discussions usually are moderated. We have a "neutral party" on stage whose job it is to keep it civil, but also, if certain views are not presented on the stage to make sure that they're talked about in some, bringing them up, so that, again, we have as balanced a discussion as possible.

There's always the disclaimer that we put out there that the usual statement is: "The views expressed on stage are not those of the National Archives, but the people on the stage." I think people are aware of that and they know that. You know, Jim Gardner, who is the Executive of Legislative Archives, Presidential Libraries, and Museum Services (LPM) says it really well when he says--and this came up when we were talking about these National Conversations that I

mentioned before--the National Archives should be a safe place for unsafe conversations. Basically, saying that we can talk about these things here because we have the evidence in the holdings to put it in context and to keep it grounded in a civil discourse, about a particular topic. I totally agree with that philosophy and it's something that we've always strived to do.

MR. E. RHODES: Well, so you'd have to have a lot of notes, I guess. And I couldn't possibly touch on everything. So are there things that are missing here, that are part of your story, because this is the time for posterity. So please...

MR. NASTICK: Yes. Well, there are, I should mention that there are things that we don't do anymore because the people who did them aren't around anymore so they probably don't have a voice in this project.

So I should mention that at one time there was a person on the staff who did what was then called—and we're talking about from the mid-'80s, probably up to about 1995/'96. There was a series of programs called, "The Arts and Culture Program," which was part of the Office of Public Programs.

Basically it was bringing live theater, sort of pieces and music pieces and doing them on stage. They actually commissioned plays based on our holdings, for example, there was a playwright who went into the holdings and researched woman suffrage records, and wrote a play, and I'm trying to remember the name of it [*Failure is Impossible*]. I can't think of the name of it right now, but basically it was a play about woman suffrage. Another one was done on Japanese internment, *The Rice of Strangers*.

Anyway, the playwrights would write the play and then we'd perform it on stage, or a music piece or something like that. I was sort of technical director for those presentations at that time. I worked very closely with a lot of these theater groups that came. They were mostly done in the old theater. By the time the new theater came, we'd sort of moved away from that. We did things outside; we did a program, basically what it was, was a recreation of a USO show to celebrate [*In the Mood*], I think it was at that time, the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II. We did that out on the steps. So, you know, we did programs like that, and that should be mentioned.

What else? I guess, I should mention the flood, the McGowan Theater flood. That was very devastating. That was in June of 2006, the theater had only been open for a little less than two years. I was at home actually because my wife and I were getting ready to settle on a new house. The DC area had just gotten three straight days of really intense rain. What happened was that Constitution Avenue flooded, and for various reasons the water came in through the sides of the building where the entrances to the moat are—the moat is the area around the National Archives Building. That's sort of the way you get into the loading docks. It ran through the emergency doors that lead to The McGowan Theater, down the steps of the theater and basically pooled until about the second row of seats in the McGowan Theater. I'm at home and I get a call from the gentleman, Bob Borland, who was then the Visitor Services Manager,

basically saying, “Have you heard about the theater?” And I said no. And, he said, “Well, it’s underwater.”

The facilities people, the contract people, they sprang into action. I was told basically, “There’s not much you can do, you might as well just stay home.” Anyway, a long story short, the theater was down until October 2006. It could have been a lot worse. The facilities staff here did an incredible job, first getting the water out. It wasn’t just the theater that was flooded though; the bottom part of the building was flooded. Thankfully, no records are stored down there so no records were damaged. But a lot of the infrastructure, electric equipment was damaged.

It took awhile for us to get back online, but we did, and you really can’t tell now. There’s no evidence down there of what happened. I hope that’s the one disaster that befalls the McGowan Theater and that something like that never happens again. As I said, it could have been a lot worse and through the good work of a lot of people the damage wasn’t anywhere near as bad or the lasting effect wasn’t as near as negative as it could have been.

So that’s always a milestone when I talk about my time here at The National Archives. So, yes, that’s kind of it.

MR. RHODES: That’s it. Okay. Hey, right, well thank you very much for the meeting Tom.

MR. NASTICK: You’re welcome.

MR. RHODES: I really appreciate it. I’m going to stop recording now.

MR. NASTICK: Okay.

[END RECORDING PART ONE]

[START RECORDING PART TWO]

MR. RHODES: This is Eric Rhodes with Tom Nastick, December 16, 2015. It’s a continuation of our discussion about Tom’s career at NARA.

MR. NASTICK: Yes, one thing I should have mentioned when I was talking about things that I’m especially proud of and great things that we’ve done in the theater is some of our partnership programs that we’ve done. One of the major ones has been the partnership that was established, a result of the partnership that was established between The National Archives Foundation and The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

We do a number of programs in partnership with them that are featured every year the week before the Academy Award Ceremony—we show all of the nominated documentaries in short subjects in the five days leading up to the Sunday of the award ceremony. We’ve been doing this for 11 years; we’re getting ready to do the 12th one in February of 2016.

So that's been especially gratifying, not only in terms of the exposure that it's given us and being connected with the Academy, but being able to bring those films to DC audiences, all at one time and free is especially gratifying. We always sell out the theater, or come close to selling out the theater. We've shown some, obviously, incredible films that way. Not just the documentaries but the short, animated short subjects, the live action short subjects and the short documentaries which has been, the short documentaries have always been my favorite. That's been terrific.

And I should also mention, and I mentioned Charles Guggenheim before. Since 2005, another partnership that the foundation established was with Guggenheim Productions and a lot of the film programs that we've done have sort of fallen under the umbrella, if you will, of the Charles Guggenheim Centre for Documentary Film, here at the National Archives.

I've worked very closely with Charles's daughter. I knew Charles before he passed away in 2002. I had known Charles, I met him a few times. I had helped him when he used to come here and screen a lot of his work prints and dailies and things in the theater, just to see how things were going on his films. Incredible human being. Lovely man. He was one of those people who always made you feel like you were the most important person in the room even though you were just a lowly projectionist.

I've kept the relationship up with his daughter Grace Guggenheim. She's been very helpful on a number of programs. We have Charles's Oscar for his first award-winning Academy documentary, *Nine from Little Rock* on display outside the McGowan Theater through the generous loan from Guggenheim Productions. When people come to the McGowan Theater they actually get to see an Oscar and the little story behind it, on display, so that's very nice too.

These are two examples of the partnership programs we've done over the years.

I've done a lot of programs with the Environmental Film Festival in The Nation's Capital (DCEFF), which is every March, and the American Film Institute. Another way that our programs, particularly the film programs have gotten more of a prominent place is through those partnerships.

MR. RHODES: Thank you.