

Oral History Interview

with

PHILIP D. LAGERQUIST

Archivist, Harry S. Truman Library, 1953-92.

Independence, Missouri

January 15, January 22 and February 16, 1988

by Niel M. Johnson, Harry S. Truman Library

The Harry S. Truman Library

Independence, Missouri

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Summary Description: Mr. Lagerquist discusses his educational background, his military service and his Government career in the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Department of Labor and the National Archives before coming to Kansas City to work on the Truman papers in 1953 when President Truman left office and returned to private life. He first worked on the Truman papers at the Federal Courthouse in Kansas City while Truman had his office in the Federal Reserve Building. The papers were moved to the Memorial Building in Independence in the fall of 1954 when James R. Fuchs came out from Washington, DC to help Mr. Lagerquist with processing the Truman papers - White House Central Files. He discusses all sorts of archival terms and processes including declassification of security classified documents and the evaluation of the Truman Library and its growth especially after the opening of the President's Secretary's Files after the death of President Truman in 1972.

Names mentioned by Mr. Lagerquist include Dean G. Acheson, Eugene Bailey, Thomas Hart Benton, Dennis E. Bilger, Philip C. Brooks, James F. Byrnes, Oscar L. Chapman, Donna Clark, Harry Clark, Jr., Clark M. Clifford, Rose A. Conway, Thomas Corcoran, John T. Curry, George H. Curtis, Ben Cutcliff, Margaret Truman Daniel, Jonathan Daniels, Robert Donovan, Dwight D. Eisenhower, George M. Elsey, Robert H. Ferrell, Frank Freidel, James R. Fuchs, John Gimbel, Robert Goe, Dr. Wayne Grover, Alonzo Hamby, Willie Harriford, W. Averell Harriman, Anita Heavener, Francis Heller, Betty Hershey, Jerry N. Hess, William Hillman, June William Holloway, Louis A. Johnson, Herman Kahn, John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Richard Kirkendall, Catherine Lagerquist, Walter Lagerquist, Walter Lagerquist, Jr., Dr. Richard W. Leopold, David D. Lloyd, Robert N. Lovett, Dr. Francis Lowenheim, Helen Luckey, David

McCullough, Donald McCoy, Douglas MacArthur, George C. Marshall, Joseph Mehl, Joseph Mehl, Jr., Richard B. Miller, Charles Morrissey, Erwin J. Mueller, Charles S. Murphy, David Noyes, Charles Warren Ohrvall, Thad Page, Milton Perry, Doris A. Pesek, Monty Poen, Kenneth Prescott, Jack Romagna, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Julius Rosenberg, Clinton Rossiter, Theodore Schellenberger, Cecil Schrepfer, Arthur Schlessinger, Jr., Nikolai Sevachev, Ruth Springston, John R. Steelman, Harry S. Truman, J.C. Truman, Henry Ulasek, Harry H. Vaughan, George Wallace, George Washington, Robert Weatherford, Lawrence Yates and Dr. Benedict K. Zobrist.

Donor:
Philip D. Lagerquist

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[1]
JOHNSON: I'm here in the Library interviewing Philip D. Lagerquist. What does the D stand for?

LAGERQUIST: Debold.

JOHNSON: Just some brief background, Phil. I know that you probably consider this peripheral, but we'll do it very briefly. When and where were you born?

LAGERQUIST: August 31, 1917 in Evanston, Illinois.

JOHNSON: And your parents' names?

LAGERQUIST: My father's name was Walter and my mother's name was Catherine.

JOHNSON: Walter; I understand he was an economics professor?

[2]
LAGERQUIST: At Northwestern.

JOHNSON: I know you at least have one brother. Is that all your brothers and sisters?

LAGERQUIST: One brother.

JOHNSON: And his name is?

LAGERQUIST: Walter also.

JOHNSON: And your education, briefly, to summarize it; what schools did you attend?

LAGERQUIST: I attended a public grade school in Evanston, and then we moved to Westchester County when I was eight years old, I guess.

JOHNSON: Around New York City?

LAGERQUIST: Suburban New York City. Went to public schools there and then in high school I went to a private school, Horace Mann School, which was connected with Columbia University.

JOHNSON: Was your father transferred up there?

LAGERQUIST: He took a job with a bank.

JOHNSON: So he got out of teaching.

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

[3]

JOHNSON: Is Horace Mann a boarding school? Did you board there?

LAGERQUIST: No. It was a day school, like Pembroke.

JOHNSON: Did you commute?

LAGERQUIST: Well, it was not a long commute. Yes, I commuted.

JOHNSON: Then what did you do?

LAGERQUIST: Then I went to Yale, to college. Graduated in economics. Then, almost immediately after I got out of college I went into the Army.

JOHNSON: Do you remember why you chose Yale?

LAGERQUIST: My father went there; that's part of it.

JOHNSON: Your father's alma mater.

LAGERQUIST: I suppose there were other reasons.

JOHNSON: How about professors at Yale? Were there any that were especially memorable and influential?

LAGERQUIST: I don't think so. None that I can say now.

JOHNSON: In economics.

LAGERQUIST: Well, my major was economics, but I took a lot

[4]

of history and other courses. My subject fields were pretty broad. It was a degree in humanities really.

JOHNSON: Did they require a senior thesis, a big seminar paper, or anything like that?

LAGERQUIST: As I recall, there was some sort of a requirement, a senior thesis.

JOHNSON: Did you do any research at that time in original or primary materials?

LAGERQUIST: I don't think so.

JOHNSON: I know they've got some good manuscript collections there at Yale.

LAGERQUIST: You're probably thinking of the Beinecke Library. That was built since I was there. Yes, they do have a large manuscript collection.

JOHNSON: So then you got your BA in 19...

LAGERQUIST: '41

JOHNSON: The spring of '41, and then you say you went into the Army.

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: Were you drafted?

[5]

LAGERQUIST: I volunteered for the draft. See, that was before the war. You could volunteer for the draft; at that time you just went in for a year and got your year over, and then you would go on about what you wanted to do. Of course, the war was started by the time...

JOHNSON: In other words, instead of being a year it ended up how long?

LAGERQUIST: Four years; almost four years.

JOHNSON: In other words, if you had not enlisted in early '41, you probably would have been drafted in '42, and that might have been three years instead of four.

LAGERQUIST: Well, I also might have been shot. I might have gone someplace where I would be shot at.

JOHNSON: What did you do while you were in the Army?

LAGERQUIST: I was assigned to the Quartermaster Corps. I had basic training at Camp Lee, which was a Quartermaster Corps training camp; it's now Fort Lee I think. Just as soon as I was through basic training, I was sent down to Jamaica, in the West Indies. Ordinarily, later on, if you hadn't had any leave before you were sent overseas you got a furlough, a month's furlough, or two weeks furlough, something like that. But that was something that came later on, so I

[6]
didn't get home for several years.

JOHNSON: You didn't even get a furlough after basic?

LAGERQUIST: No.

JOHNSON: You were still in the Quartermaster Corps. In the West Indies?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. In Jamaica.

JOHNSON: So you served in the West Indies.

LAGERQUIST: Mostly in Jamaica, and then a little while in Puerto Rico.

JOHNSON: Do you remember when you were sent down there?

LAGERQUIST: It was in '42.

JOHNSON: You were there until?

LAGERQUIST: I was there until '44. Then, my last year I was shifted around from here to there, and I was back at Lee for a little while, for about a month. But my last year in the Army I was at Jeffersonville Quartermaster Depot, which is right across the river from Louisville, Kentucky.

JOHNSON: Just in general terms, what kind of work did you do in the Quartermaster Corps?

[7]

LAGERQUIST: It was clerical work mostly. When I first went down there it was working in the section of the Quartermaster department that processed food and distributed food, that sort of thing. Then, for a while I was in a sort of a bookkeeping job. My last job was in personnel. I was taking care of the personnel records for...

JOHNSON: Your last year or so.

LAGERQUIST: Well, both down there in Jamaica and also when I got back here to the United States.

JOHNSON: So that apparently got you familiar with certain kinds of records, personnel records for example, which are now part of the Military Personnel Records at St. Louis.

LAGERQUIST: Well, supposedly.

JOHNSON: What do you think happened to those records that you were dealing with? Were some of them disposed of, and some retained?

LAGERQUIST: I would hope that some of them would be disposed of.

JOHNSON: Did any of that material go into 201 files?

LAGERQUIST: The term "201 files" applied to officers files,

[8]

I think. In the Army decimal filing scheme -- I'm not too familiar with it -- the file number 201 was the file number for personnel.

JOHNSON: When were you discharged?

LAGERQUIST: In the fall of '45, sometime in October. I don't remember exactly when.

JOHNSON: I always ask this question: do you remember April 12, 1945, when our esteemed Vice President Harry Truman became President? Do you recall any reactions at that time to the death of Franklin Roosevelt?

LAGERQUIST: I can remember when I first heard about it. We were fortunate there at Jeffersonville; the enlisted detachment was quite small and they didn't have barracks facilities for enlisted men, so we lived on a rations and quarters arrangement. We got so much a month for food and quarters, and we went out and rented a room. In other words, it was almost like a civilian job. I remember I went home one evening after work and the man who owned the house said, "Roosevelt's dead," and showed me the paper and it was spread all across the paper. That's the first I heard about it.

JOHNSON: Then you were discharged in October. What did you do after that?

[9]

LAGERQUIST: I just took it easy until after Christmas, until after the New Years probably.

JOHNSON: And then went back home to Westchester?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: Your father was still living?

LAGERQUIST: No, he died during the war.

JOHNSON: But your mother was still living?

LAGERQUIST: My mother was still living, yes. I didn't have any particular career in mind. I don't really know where I would have ended up if there hadn't been a war. In any case, somebody suggested, or maybe I decided on my own, that with my background in economics, I might go down to Washington and look around and see if anything was available in the Government.

JOHNSON: So you went down to Washington.

LAGERQUIST: I think I went down in January or February, and stayed with friends. I spent a good deal of time looking around, and I soon found that getting a job in the Government at that particular time wasn't as easy as it would have been a year earlier, because the Government was having a hard time taking care of the returning veterans who had previous jobs with the

[10]

Government. They had to take care of them first.

JOHNSON: And they probably had to lay off people that they had hired during the war.

LAGERQUIST: Yes, temporary workers. Maybe somebody suggested this to me, I don't know, but I decided that I would get into Government service by taking a clerical job.

JOHNSON: Were you trying for the Bureau of the Budget?

LAGERQUIST: Any job.

JOHNSON: That had something to do with economics.

LAGERQUIST: Economics, for which I would be qualified. At that particular time there wasn't anything available. So I finally decided in order to get myself into Government service and get my Government status, I'd start out with a clerical job.

JOHNSON: Did that mean you'd have to take a Civil Service exam?

LAGERQUIST: Not at that particular time. I was hired as what they called a "war service employee," which meant you were working for the Government. You worked for the Government for the duration of the war, plus six months. All of the employees hired during the war were

[11]

hired on that basis, as so-called war service employees.

JOHNSON: So you had a guarantee only of up to six months following the end of the war?

LAGERQUIST: Following the official end of the war, which of course, didn't come until '46.

JOHNSON: Okay, the official end. What did you take then; what did you get to start out with?

LAGERQUIST: The Bureau of Labor Statistics. A clerical job; I've forgotten what the title of the section was now.

JOHNSON: The Department of Labor?

LAGERQUIST: The Bureau of Labor Statistics.

JOHNSON: Did they have GS grades at that time?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: You started at what GS level?

LAGERQUIST: I started in as a 3. In that particular section we were compiling statistics that were based on reports of building permits issued all over the country.

JOHNSON: You'd do some analysis, statistically, on these.

[12]

LAGERQUIST: Well, it wasn't even that; it was pretty...

JOHNSON: Just compiling statistics.

LAGERQUIST: Just compiling statistics mostly.

JOHNSON: What did a GS-3 pay in those days?

LAGERQUIST: I think \$1,900 or so, more or less.

JOHNSON: So you found an apartment in Washington.

LAGERQUIST: Well, a room.

JOHNSON: At what address?

LAGERQUIST: Oh, I lived in a number of places in Washington. My first room was up near DuPont Circle, around 17th Street.

JOHNSON: So you just rented rooms then to live in.

LAGERQUIST: Yes, I didn't get my first apartment, until, I think it was 1950, '49 or '50.

JOHNSON: How long were you in this position?

LAGERQUIST: I was in that job for two to two and a half years. As soon as they resumed giving Civil Service examinations -- they hadn't done any of this during the war -- I started taking anything that I was interested in and was eligible for.

[13]

JOHNSON: Did they start giving promotions? Did you get promoted in that job?

LAGERQUIST: Yes, I got one promotion. I was a 4 when I left.

JOHNSON: When did you leave?

LAGERQUIST: That would be in the spring of '48 I guess.

JOHNSON: In the spring of '48, in order to do what?

LAGERQUIST: I was offered several jobs, most of them outside Washington. For one reason or another I turned them down. I don't even remember what most of them were. One of them was with the National Labor Relations Board in, I think, it was Atlanta. It was a job in which you went out and helped conduct voting on union representation. It might have made interesting work for a while, but I inquired into it, and I found out that most of the really good jobs at the NLRB were held by lawyers. You had to have legal training to qualify for most of the professional positions at the National Labor Relations Board.

Well, anyway, one of the exams I took was for the archivist series. The exams at that time were for what was called Junior Professional Assistant.

JOHNSON: What grade level was that?

[14]

LAGERQUIST: That was a 5. I received a call one day asking if I would be interested in applying for a job at the Archives. So I went over and was interviewed. It turned out to be a replacement for somebody on the staff in this particular section of the Archives -- the Treasury Section is what it was called at that time -- who had taken a leave of absence to work on his Ph.D. They needed somebody to take a temporary job, just for a year. After thinking it over, I

decided maybe that'd be the best way to get started in the professional ranks. That's how I became an archivist.

JOHNSON: Where did you work?

LAGERQUIST: I worked in the Treasury Section. Incidentally, this fellow whose job I took, who had taken temporary leave of absence was named Mehl. He's the son of Joseph Mehl whose papers are in the Truman Library.

JOHNSON: What was his first name?

LAGERQUIST: I believe his name was Joseph too.

JOHNSON: Did he ever come back?

LAGERQUIST: He never came back. So eventually my status was changed from temporary to permanent.

[15]

JOHNSON: And you were in the Archives Building?

LAGERQUIST: In the Archives Building, I think Room 11E.

JOHNSON: And how long did you stay a 5?

LAGERQUIST: I was a 5 for two years. My job the first year was searching passenger lists for names of individuals, who were mostly people who were applying for Social Security and had no other way to prove their age.

JOHNSON: These were 19th century passenger lists?

LAGERQUIST: Oh, they went up to 1919.

JOHNSON: That lasted how long?

LAGERQUIST: That lasted for about a year and then they got me into other work, in microfilming pension records, writing reference letters, and in a variety of other tasks.

JOHNSON: Did that mean a transfer to another section, or branch?

LAGERQUIST: No. I was in the same section and branch all the time I was in Washington. It was the Treasury Section in, I think, the Legislative and Fiscal Records Branch.

JOHNSON: So you then got into reference work, and how long

[16]

did that go on?

LAGERQUIST: I was a 5 for two years, and then I got a promotion to a 7, and was just given more responsibility. When I was a 5, my only responsibilities were those passenger lists, and then other Customs Bureau records. When I became a 7 I became responsible for all the fiscal records, including Internal Revenue Service records, for instance, and SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission) records.

JOHNSON: You were in this section until when?

LAGERQUIST: I was in that section all the time I was at the Archives, until I came out here.

JOHNSON: And by that time you had gone from a 7 to what?

LAGERQUIST: I was a 9 when I came out here. I was promoted to a 9, in '52, I believe.

JOHNSON: When did you first learn about this job out here in Kansas City? How did you learn about it?

LAGERQUIST: Well, we can go back a little bit. When I was promoted to a 9 I was given the responsibility, with the assistance of a couple of other people, of reviewing the records of the General Accounting Office for possible transfer to the Archives. The General Accounting Office had never transferred any records to

[17]

the Archives; they always said, "Well, we may need these records to settle a claim or to substantiate our position in a law suit." So they had records going all the way back. I think the earliest records were dated around 1776.

JOHNSON: Is that right?

LAGERQUIST: So in one fell swoop in 1952, or thereabouts, they offered all their records, old records, up to 1900, to the Archives.

JOHNSON: Do you have any idea how many feet that was?

LAGERQUIST: No, but it was a lot. They were starting to run out of space. Records were stored in a warehouse over in Alexandria, Virginia at the so-called "Cameron Depot." I don't know whether that's still in existence. But anyway, there were three of us; I was in charge of the task force, so to speak, and two other people assisted me. For a period of about four or five months, we'd go over to this warehouse at the Cameron Depot, which was an Army installation, and go over the records -- make a list of them, date coverage, the series title, so on and so forth. Then, we'd make our own recommendations as to what should be done with them.

JOHNSON: So by this time you had had some experience with arrangement and disposal?

[18]

LAGERQUIST: Not so much at disposal, but description, a wide range of archival tasks.

JOHNSON: A lot of reference work?

LAGERQUIST: Yes, a lot of reference work. As a part of that whole business, some of the branch heads back in the Archives came over to this depot and examined the records which were of particular interest to them. Among these people was Phil Brooks, the first Director of the Library, who at that time was head of the Diplomatic Branch at the Archives. Another of the people who came over was Theodore Schellenberg, who at that time was head of the National Archives itself.

JOHNSON: Had he published his book yet on archival theory?

LAGERQUIST: I don't believe so. He had the job which Trudy Peterson has today; it's a comparable job.

JOHNSON: So that's the first day you became acquainted with both Brooks and Schellenberg?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. That's how Schellenberg became aware of my existence, because he was interested in this general business of bringing the GAO records into the National Archives.

When Mr. Truman first talked about putting his papers in the Library here in Missouri, an individual

[19]

from the National Archives had been selected to sort of go through the White House papers and make recommendations and...

JOHNSON: Do you know who that was?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. His name was Ulasek, Henry Ulasek, who I knew just mostly from contact in the National Archives bowling league. We were both participants in the National Archives bowling league.

But I'm not sure when I was aware that he was working on Mr. Truman's project. Anyway, he was supposed to come out here and work on the papers, once Truman left the White House, and the Truman papers had been transferred from Washington to Missouri. For some reason, he, at the last moment, said that he couldn't come out. He actually had previously come out here and met Mr. Truman and got the Presidential blessing so to speak. I think at that time he had every intention of coming out here and taking the job. One thing that I heard was that he had a hard time getting rid of his house in Washington. I don't know if that was true, or if his wife had objections to coming out here. I don't really know the full story. But anyway, the Archives had promised Mr. Truman that in return for his donating his papers to the Government and placing them in a National Archives facility, the Archives would supply

[20]

an archivist to work on the papers in the interim between his leaving office and the completion of the Library building. When Ulasek withdrew, they sort of panicked. They felt they had a moral obligation to send somebody out. I suppose Truman could have changed his mind, and said he was going to give his papers to some university. They felt they had to get somebody out here right away. I was the right grade; they were setting up the job as an 11, and I was a 9. And I was a bachelor so I could move quickly. There wasn't any business of getting rid of a house.

JOHNSON: You were renting an apartment at this time.

LAGERQUIST: I was renting an apartment, yes.

JOHNSON: At what address?

LAGERQUIST: I was living on Florida Avenue, in an apartment right across the street from the Washington Quaker meeting house. It was about a block from the Cosmos Club on Massachusetts Avenue and about a block or two blocks from the present Washington Hilton Hotel.

JOHNSON: Did you take the bus to work in those days?

LAGERQUIST: Yes, and sometimes I'd even walk.

JOHNSON: What time are we talking about?

[21]

LAGERQUIST: I came out here in '53, so it would be in the early fifties.

JOHNSON: When you got the offer, there wasn't any time between that and actually coming out?

LAGERQUIST: Just a very brief period of time. The person who first told me about the job was Thad Page, who was the branch chief. He was the head of whatever it was called then, the Legislative and Fiscal Records Branch of the Archives. He notified me that Dr. [Wayne] Grover, who was Archivist of the United States at the time, and who didn't know me from Adam, of course, wanted to talk with me about this job. Well, as it later turned out, it was Dr. Schellenberg who had become acquainted with me in my work through this GAO project, who had recommended me to Dr. Grover.

JOHNSON: Dr. Schellenberg had recommended you to Dr. Grover?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. So I went up, and saw Dr. Grover in his office. He told me that they had had the FBI run a quick name-check on me and found out that I wasn't a Communist, or a Communist sympathizer, and he offered the job to me.

JOHNSON: You were already to accept right then?

[22]

LAGERQUIST: Well, of course, this came out of the blue. I was in the middle of going to school, for one thing, working on my masters, and...

JOHNSON: Whereabouts?

LAGERQUIST: At George Washington University. It meant I would have to do something about that. And then I liked Washington, I'd been there seven years, and I would be leaving Washington and going to a strange city. So I asked for a few days to think it over. I talked with a few people -- friends, and relatives and so forth -- and finally decided to take the job.

JOHNSON: You were working on a master's in history?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: Did you get that?

LAGERQUIST: Yes, but not there; out here.

JOHNSON: You finished it out here.

LAGERQUIST: Which, of course, meant losing some hours.

JOHNSON: So you packed your bags.

LAGERQUIST: I'm not quite sure which came first; they sent me up to the Roosevelt Library first. This was in, I believe, August.

[23]

JOHNSON: August of 1953?

JOHNSON: And you hadn't been out here yet?

LAGERQUIST: I don't think so. I think I went up there first and then came out here, though I'd have to look at the records to be sure.

JOHNSON: That would have been your first visit to a Presidential Library when you went up to see, was it Herman Kahn?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. Herman Kahn.

JOHNSON: The Director.

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: And what was your reason for going up there?

LAGERQUIST: Oh, they wanted, of course, to show me the filing scheme of the Roosevelt papers. The Truman papers [scheme] is just about the same. It was just to give me a briefing on the White House filing operations during the Roosevelt and Truman years.

JOHNSON: Did you borrow, or get a set made of their finding aids there, or did you just make notes?

LAGERQUIST: Both. I think I made copies of some of their finding aids, and made notes. I talked to Herman and

[24]

some of the archivists. I also talked to the fellow who was in charge of the museum, and I talked to Miss Suckley who was in charge of the photographic collection. She was a Roosevelt cousin. I think she was the one who gave Roosevelt the little dog, Fala.

JOHNSON: Oh, Fala.

LAGERQUIST: Fala, yes.

JOHNSON: So the White House filing scheme under Truman was the same as under Roosevelt. So they decided the filing scheme in this Library should be approximately the same as the one at the Roosevelt Library, since they had used the same filing schemes in the White House?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: So you got briefed on that at the Roosevelt Library, and then you came out here. Do you remember the date that you started the job?

LAGERQUIST: I came out here with Dr. Grover and Dave Lloyd, and Herman Kahn, to go through the motions of getting a Presidential briefing, or blessing.

JOHNSON: So you met Truman for the first time.

LAGERQUIST: I met Truman.

[25]

JOHNSON: Do you remember what date that was, approximately?

LAGERQUIST: It was early in September.

JOHNSON: Early September of '53. So you met Truman in his office.

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: At the Federal Reserve Building?

LAGERQUIST: At the Federal Reserve Building. I remember we had a luncheon -- not for me necessarily -- but this was something that Truman did once a week for a while. There was a luncheon in one of the so-called parlors at the Muehlebach Hotel, attended by myself, Dr. Grover, Lloyd, and then the people who were working on the Memoirs, including [William] Hillman.

JOHNSON: The first group?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. Hillman, Lloyd...

JOHNSON: Harris, wasn't there a Harris?

LAGERQUIST: Dr. Harris and Goe and there was one other researcher. There were two researchers.

JOHNSON: Now what was the other name?

LAGERQUIST: [Robert] Goe. You'll run across that name.

[26]

JOHNSON: And the third you don't remember.

LAGERQUIST: Not off hand.

JOHNSON: Okay, so they all met together at this lunch, or had lunch together with Harry Truman. You had already met him in the office, though, here in his office.

LAGERQUIST: That was the very first thing. We took the plane from Washington to Kansas City...

JOHNSON: Do you remember what he asked you, his first words to you?

LAGERQUIST: No. In fact, most of the conversation wasn't with me, it was between Truman, Lloyd and Grover. We weren't there for a long time. Then, I think, we probably must have gone over to the Courthouse to see the papers.

JOHNSON: They were in the Courthouse.

LAGERQUIST: The papers were in the Courthouse. The OF [Official File] and the PPF [President's Personal File], the files of the various staff members, and a number of Presidential commissions. They were in an unfinished courtroom on the fourth floor. The General File, the alphabetical file, was in another area, on the 10th or 11th floor.

[27]

JOHNSON: So you go to take a look at that. You looked at that and then you went over to this lunch at the Muehlebach?

LAGERQUIST: I forget now what the sequence was. After Lloyd and Grover went back to Washington -- they were here just for a day or so -- Kahn stayed behind and briefed me on what he thought I should do over the next year.

JOHNSON: But you were actually on the job now?

LAGERQUIST: No. Then I went back to Washington to wrap up my personal affairs. I came back permanently on September 26. On that day the temperature was in the 100s, and I was wondering whether I was coming into a...

JOHNSON: No air-conditioning?

LAGERQUIST: No.

JOHNSON: You had a little space for an office?

LAGERQUIST: Behind this unfinished courtroom were the unfinished judge's chambers, a conference room and two office rooms. When I first went there, I had all that space.

JOHNSON: A desk and a chair and some filing cabinets, is

[28]

that about what it amounted to?

LAGERQUIST: There was a desk and a conference table -- that's the one that's back of the stage now -- they brought it over here by mistake. It really belonged to the county. The papers at that time were still in filing cabinets.

JOHNSON: Four-drawer mainly?

LAGERQUIST: They had been excess filing cabinets. I don't know where they got them, but some were four-drawer, some were five-drawer, and some were transfer cases.

JOHNSON: They emptied all these filing cabinets in the White House?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. They left the good filing cabinets in the White House, and then put them in these...

JOHNSON: Put them in these surplus filing cabinets and brought them out here.

LAGERQUIST: By Army truck.

JOHNSON: Had they brought all of the White House Central Files for that time?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. They came, I think, in January. I think they moved them out before Truman actually left office.

[29]

JOHNSON: Where did you first live then? What was your first address here?

LAGERQUIST: I lived two years on Jefferson Street, between 10th and 11th, up in Quality Hill. I was just within easy walking distance of downtown.

JOHNSON: Have you ever owned a car?

LAGERQUIST: No.

JOHNSON: So you came in all by yourself, for how long?

LAGERQUIST: For a year.

JOHNSON: For a year all by yourself. No clerical help?

LAGERQUIST: Well, I never did have a clerical assistant. The clerical help was supplied by the regional office of NARS. I and Jim [Fuchs] when he came out here, we were attached for administrative purposes to the regional office.

JOHNSON: That was housed at the Records Center?

LAGERQUIST: Well, at that time there was a regional or an assistant administrator, I guess he was called, for the National Archives.

JOHNSON: Who was that?

LAGERQUIST: When I first came out here, that was J.C.

[30]

Truman, President Truman's nephew.

JOHNSON: When did you first meet J.C. Truman?

LAGERQUIST: I'm not sure. I think I met him for the first time on my initial trip out here.

JOHNSON: Did he come over to see the archives while you were here, or did you have to go over there to meet him?

LAGERQUIST: At that time the GSA office, including the archives office, was in the old Federal Office Building at 911 Walnut Street. The 12th Street building had not been built, and the GSA building out on Bannister Road hadn't been built at that time either.

JOHNSON: Well, where was the Records Center?

LAGERQUIST: The records were divided between two rented warehouses; one was, I believe, on 14th Street.

JOHNSON: You mean downtown Kansas City.

LAGERQUIST: Well, east of downtown. Then they had another one housed down in the bottoms, the West Bottoms, near the railroad tracks, which had been flooded out in the 1950 flood. A lot of records were ruined in the flood.

JOHNSON: A lot of paper was soaked?

[31]

LAGERQUIST: They didn't have a separate archives at that time; it was just the Records Center, and the staff was quite small.

JOHNSON: Was J.C. Truman's office on Walnut?

LAGERQUIST: Yes, 911 Walnut.

JOHNSON: So he was not very far from you I guess.

LAGERQUIST: No. I used to go over there to pick up my check and to sign for my leave, or if I had any typing to do.

JOHNSON: Did J.C. Truman ever talk to you about the material that you had, or ask about them?

LAGERQUIST: No.

JOHNSON: How long did he stay on that job?

LAGERQUIST: I don't remember exactly when he left, but I think it was sometime during the first year I was out here. Of course, he got that job in the first place, to some extent, because his name was Truman. He was the President's nephew and a Democrat. Eisenhower was now President; the Republicans were in control. He said that the Republicans were after him because of his name, his associations. He fished around for something a little more permanent, and then he found that the

[32]

Clerk of the District Court's job was open [U.S. District Court for the Western District of Missouri]. It was a job that once you got it, it was a lifetime job. You could keep it as long as you wanted to. I think there were three district judges; I think he said the chief judge was a Republican.

JOHNSON: Was that a state or Federal court?

LAGERQUIST: That's Federal. In fact, one of the judges was Judge [Richard] Duncan, who had been appointed by President Truman from the St. Joseph district.

I don't think it was too long after I came out here that J. C. Truman left. They couldn't seem to agree on a replacement, so for at least a year, Don White, who was head of the Federal Records Center, was acting as Assistant Administrator, or whatever the title was. Finally they settled on Ben Cutcliffe, who had a long career in working with Federal records. I think all during the war he was in a Federal Records Center, either in Omaha or down in at Atlanta. Finally, after GSA had been established, he became head of the Personnel Records Center in St. Louis.

JOHNSON: Was this kind of assistant to the Administrator for the Archives? Was that how they labeled that position?

[33]

LAGERQUIST: They had a Regional Administrator for GSA, and then under him there'd be an Assistant Administrator for NARS, Assistant Administrator for Public Buildings, an Assistant Administrator for Federal Supply and so forth.

JOHNSON: So this Cutcliffe was Assistant Administrator for NARS.

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: So then you worked for about a year by yourself. If you needed clerical help you could get it from Don White, or from the Records Center.

LAGERQUIST: From that office.

JOHNSON: Was that what you needed generally, typing assistance?

LAGERQUIST: Typing assistance, yes. I used to send my reports to Grover, first every two weeks, and then every month or so, as the whole project stretched out. It was originally thought we were going to be moving into a building in a year or two, and the first thing we knew it was four years. Well, Cutcliffe's secretary generally typed that sort of report, and anything of that nature that had to be done. The finding aids, the shelf lists, these things were sort of farmed out among

[34]

other girls there.

JOHNSON: That raises a question. You had a kind of mountain of material over there, and rows of filing cabinets. What finding aids did you have when you came here? What finding aids were available from the White House?

LAGERQUIST: In the first place we didn't stay with the filing cabinets for very long. There again, the people in the regional records center helped out, Don White and his people. They emptied the filing cabinets and boxed them in these gray boxes.

JOHNSON: That heavy-gauge gray box that we still have?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. And they put up shelving and moved the filing cabinets out. I don't know where they took them.

JOHNSON: So you had the physical labor that was necessary to do that job, and you kind of kept tabs on it, and I suppose did some other things.

LAGERQUIST: As they boxed the material and put it on the shelves as we do today. I made temporary shelf lists, so I'd have some sort of control over it.

JOHNSON: Was that a folder title list, or was that just a container list?

[35]

LAGERQUIST: Just a container list.

JOHNSON: A list that showed maybe the first and last folder titles in each box?

LAGERQUIST: Just the file numbers. The old PPF and OF numbers -- that's all we had.

JOHNSON: That's right. You were just dealing with OF and PPF. But what did you have already as a finding aid for that material?

LAGERQUIST: Two finding aids came from the White House, one was a numerical list.

JOHNSON: Numerical list -- in what format?

LAGERQUIST: Like this.

JOHNSON: A 6 x 9 three-ring notebook.

LAGERQUIST: That's what the White House gave Miss Conway. There's one for the OF and the other for PPF.

JOHNSON: Okay, nothing for the General File of the White House Central Files?

LAGERQUIST: No, because that's more or less self-indexing.

JOHNSON: Alphabetical?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. And then along with that I had the

[36]

alphabetically arranged card index, which is now in the upper stacks.

JOHNSON: Okay, so you had the card index, which was color coded. Salmon colored were...

LAGERQUIST: PPF, and the white cards were OF.

JOHNSON: The folders in the PPF were all salmon colored?

LAGERQUIST: Right.

JOHNSON: How about your appointments file, the card file? Was that part of it too?

LAGERQUIST: No. That was entirely self-indexing.

JOHNSON: But that was prepared in the White House?

LAGERQUIST: Yes, that was prepared in the White House, in Connelly's office.

JOHNSON: But that was available to you at that time?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: So you had the card index of the Official File, the President's Personal File, and cards for the Appointments File. They're all filed by the name and subject?

LAGERQUIST: The appointments file by name and organization.

[37]

JOHNSON: Was the PPF and OF card file just the one file? In other words, was it a file that combined the OF and PPF into one?

LAGERQUIST: Just one file.

JOHNSON: Which is subject and name.

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: Then you didn't have a numerical file for that?

LAGERQUIST: This.

JOHNSON: Okay, the 6 x 9 was the numerical file.

LAGERQUIST: This is what was prepared in the White House.

JOHNSON: That's strictly numerical?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: So if you wanted a subject or name guide, you had to go to the cards.

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: Okay.

LAGERQUIST: Any time they'd add a new subject, they'd add another number to the index.

JOHNSON: What was the last number they had there?

[38]

LAGERQUIST: OF 3480 was Rosenberg, Julius Rosenberg.

I didn't know how to start. The suggestion of Herman Kahn was to go through, first, the OF and then the PPF numerical listings and compare it with the papers, and see if what they said was in the file was actually in the file.

JOHNSON: You had to go to each folder, in those two collections, and compare it with the list in that 6 x 9 notebook file, or guide. Did you find some discrepancies?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: Omissions?

LAGERQUIST: Omissions mostly.

JOHNSON: You prepared slips, or how did you correct and update the guide?

LAGERQUIST: Well, initially I made annotations in the numerical lists and at some place along the line, I also compared the lists with the card index. Wherever there were any omissions there, I added a card.

JOHNSON: So you had to do at least two comparisons.

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

[39]

JOHNSON: Well, that took some time, didn't it?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: And attention to detail.

LAGERQUIST: After I finished that, which took a good amount of time, I prepared 3 x 5 slips for each number in the OF and PPF.

JOHNSON: A 3 x 5 slip for each.

LAGERQUIST: One group of slips I left in numerical order; the second group, the duplicate set, I arranged in alphabetical order.

JOHNSON: Does that mean you had to actually write them twice or did you have a duplicator or...

LAGERQUIST: I've forgotten now whether I used carbon paper, or...

JOHNSON: You didn't have any Xerox machine.

LAGERQUIST: No Xerox machine.

JOHNSON: No duplicating equipment at all.

LAGERQUIST: Mr. Truman, I believe, someplace along the line, received a thermofax machine.

JOHNSON: Thermofax or verifax?

[40]

LAGERQUIST: Thermofax. I don't remember whether he got that one when he was still in Kansas City or if he got that after he came out here. Anyway, one set we arranged in alphabetical order, and using those two sets of slips, or four sets really, two for the OF and two for the PPF, the girls at the Records Center typed these up.

JOHNSON: Then they typed these sheets and guides to the OF and PPF, subject, name and numerical, all three, from the slips.

LAGERQUIST: From the slips, yes.

JOHNSON: Then what did you do with the slips after that was done?

LAGERQUIST: We had them around for a long time. Unless they're around the building someplace, they eventually just got junked. But we had them for a long time.

JOHNSON: But in the meantime you already had that card index and you had typed up cards to replace, or to insert, where there were omissions.

LAGERQUIST: That's right.

JOHNSON: So now you've got the guide accurately compiled for the OF and the PPF.

[41]

LAGERQUIST: I was just pretty much to the point where I had completed those slips for the OF and the PPF, at the time that Jim [Fuchs] came out.

JOHNSON: Okay, now. Before we get to J.R., your partner, who finally came in 1954, there's mention here of staff meetings. You made a note in October '53 that "at the President's request I'm sitting in on weekly staff meetings he holds every Friday morning to consult with Dr. Harris' staff on the progress of the book." Do you remember those staff meetings?

LAGERQUIST: Yes, vaguely. But as soon as they got rid of Harris, they dropped the staff meetings. They didn't go on.

JOHNSON: That's too bad. I bet they were interesting. They were talking about how they were going to put these *Memoirs* together?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: And what was your role in that?

LAGERQUIST: Just as a spectator, or as a historian, I suppose.

JOHNSON: Harris and these first researchers would have had to deal with you directly to research the material.

[42]

LAGERQUIST: No, because, with the exception of a few files, as I remember, all of the writers got their information from the PSF.

JOHNSON: Okay, the President's Secretary's Files. Where were these located?

LAGERQUIST: In the Federal Reserve Building, in Miss [Rose] Conway's office.

JOHNSON: Did you have to deal much with Rose Conway?

LAGERQUIST: No. The only direct dealing I had with her was that during the first three or four months I was out here, I had to take the key to the file room in the courthouse back to the Federal Reserve Building every evening and pick it up the next morning.

JOHNSON: You mean get it from Rose?

LAGERQUIST: She was the one that had it, yes. But after three or four months, I sort of told J.C. I thought that was kind of foolish, and he arranged for me to keep the key.

JOHNSON: What were your impressions of Rose Conway?

LAGERQUIST: She was very hard-working, faithful, and close-mouthed.

[43]

JOHNSON: Did she have custody of the President's Secretary's Files?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. Those impressions really were formed more after the Library opened, because I really didn't have much contact with her in those days.

JOHNSON: She never came over to look into your files, and materials?

LAGERQUIST: No.

JOHNSON: So she had custody of the President's Secretary's Files. Anybody that wanted access to them had to go through Rose Conway?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. Nobody did get much access though, other than the researchers working on the *Memoirs*.

JOHNSON: So you didn't have to do anything with the President's Secretary's Files at this time. When did you first get involved with the PSF?

LAGERQUIST: After Truman died. After his will was probated.

JOHNSON: And this included a lot of classified material.

LAGERQUIST: It included practically all of the classified material. All of the classified material we had [in the White House Central Files] was in one filing

[44]

cabinet. It amounted to practically nothing. On much of that, it was questionable whether it was really classified or just that the White House staff failed to properly mark declassified materials.

JOHNSON: This was a locked filing cabinet.

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: With the other cabinets, or was it put in a separate room by itself?

LAGERQUIST: No. We didn't originally have a locked filing cabinet. What classified material there was in the OF just wasn't locked up. We occasionally did run across classified material, or papers which had classified markings. The White House handling of classified material in the Truman years -- I wouldn't say it was sloppy, but it was much looser than it is today.

JOHNSON: Now where would those have been found? Where would you have found them?

LAGERQUIST: They were in various files.

JOHNSON: Of the OF?

LAGERQUIST: The OF and in some of the Presidential committees, and commissions. I think that what very often happened was that when somebody in the White

[45]

House decided that a classified document could be declassified, they just put a pencil line through the classification marking. There was no other indication on the document that the document had been declassified, so just to be on the safe side we locked the material up.

JOHNSON: And then later on that material was mostly declassified? Virtually all of it?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: So you had Presidential commission records here; you had the files of the White House staff...

LAGERQUIST: Shortly before he left office, Truman sent a round-robin memo to his White House staff members asking them to send their files to the Central Files, so that they could be put in his Library, the Library he was proposing to build. What happened was that the various staff members turned in the materials that they wanted to throw away anyway, and took away the materials that they wanted to keep.

JOHNSON: For what reason do you think that they wanted to keep these?

LAGERQUIST: I suppose for various reasons. Some of them wanted to write, and some of them thought they would

[46]

have to refer to them for various reasons, for articles and so forth.

JOHNSON: So what they left behind was designated files?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. Originally, in the case of each staff member the whole caboodle had been one file. Most of what they took away with them, later came to the Library in their personal papers, but originally in each case they were one file.

JOHNSON: But are the files which they left behind considered part of Harry Truman's papers?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. Legally they are part of the Truman papers.

JOHNSON: And what was then brought back, was donated, was papers of that individual. So you didn't have the "papers" of these people, but you had the "files." You also had the

Presidential commission records, not all of them I guess. Did you have all of the Presidential commission records?

LAGERQUIST: No, no. There again, some committees and commissions, when they went out of existence, sent their records over to the Archives. Those are the ones we got later on. Some of them left their records in the White House; those are the ones we got along with

[47]
the Truman papers.

And then we also had the records of the various White House operating offices such as the Social Office, the Social Correspondence Office, the Telegraph Office, the Telephone Office, and so forth.

JOHNSON: How about donor-closed material? Was there any donor-closed material, besides the security classified, national security classified? Do you remember any material that was donor-closed? Of course, I guess the only donor really would have been Harry Truman at this time.

LAGERQUIST: Well, there wasn't any donor at that time. The papers didn't legally become the property of the United States Government until the Library was opened. So, we were working with Truman's personal property. For that reason we were told not to do too much rearranging or throwing away of material, and that sort of thing. This wasn't Government property; it was still Truman's property.

JOHNSON: Was Herman Kahn the most important advisor, so to speak, on how you went about the procedures, these early procedures?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: Did he advise you for instance against rearranging

[48]
or disposing of anything?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: So you didn't dispose of anything to speak of.

LAGERQUIST: We couldn't, really, legally dispose of anything.

JOHNSON: Of course, I guess you wanted to observe provenance and original order.

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: And there was reasonable order to the material?

LAGERQUIST: Yes, a good deal.

JOHNSON: Except, I think I came across a note that the Senatorial papers were in bad order.

LAGERQUIST: The Senatorial papers had been stored, I think, in the basement of the Treasury Building. Harry Vaughan arranged to have them sent out, sometime while Truman was President, to the University of Missouri at Columbia. At that time, this whole business of the Truman Library was up in the air. And then when Truman decided to build the Library he asked that these papers be sent to Kansas City. They arrived while we were still down at the Kansas City courthouse. They were in wooden boxes, and we didn't open up the boxes until we

[49]

moved to Independence to the Memorial Building.

JOHNSON: So they just stayed in those boxes, in these wooden boxes, crates sort of?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: Until you got out to the Memorial Building, which was in...

LAGERQUIST: In the fall of '54.

JOHNSON: Yes, in October of '54. So by that time you had J.R. helping, J.R. Fuchs, helping you with that. You are implying that the material was pretty well labeled and arranged, and no great problem with that. No great problem with security, no closed material as such. Were you asked to review for closing?

LAGERQUIST: No.

JOHNSON: They just assumed that everything would probably be accessible or open eventually to researchers, or was that...

LAGERQUIST: No, it wasn't for that reason. It was, again, that the material wasn't Government property, so the Archives didn't think they had the authority to screen material for possible closure.

JOHNSON: So this final review wasn't to take place until it

[50]

officially became Government property. Was it expected, or was it planned, that you would review all of this material once it was turned over?

LAGERQUIST: And we did.

JOHNSON: Through every sheet of paper?

LAGERQUIST: Not through the General File, the alphabetical file, but through the OF and PPF. Well, there were a few large segments of public opinion that we opened without reviewing. We consulted with Herman Kahn about this, and he suggested that these segments didn't need to be reviewed.

JOHNSON: The Files include materials from files which have been sampled. Had this been sampled in the White House, the public opinion mail, on some issues? Had they simply retained a sampling rather than the whole collection, like all the mailing that came in on Taft-Hartley?

LAGERQUIST: Yes, they weren't consistent at all about sampling, but toward the end of the administrations they did some sampling, after consultation with the Archives. In fact, I think Phil Brooks got in on that.

JOHNSON: Before he came out here, they had already disposed of quite a bit of...

[51]

LAGERQUIST: I don't know what it amounted to percentage-wise. I've forgotten even what year it was, I think it was '50 or '51, they did a sampling of some of the public opinion, especially that received in regard to Palestine. Some of the opinion mail -- well, that on the firing of MacArthur is a notable example -- obviously they didn't sample it at all.

JOHNSON: Kept the whole...

LAGERQUIST: Kept the whole thing. Also on OPA. I would say that on the majority of the cases concerning public opinion mail, they kept the whole thing.

JOHNSON: You think we have all the mail on OPA (Office of Price Administration)?

LAGERQUIST: I think so.

JOHNSON: How about Taft-Hartley? Do you think we have all of that?

LAGERQUIST: I think they did some sampling. You can tell, of course, by going down and checking the collection.

JOHNSON: We do have a series, don't we, of just public opinion -- called public opinion mail? Is that separate from the OF or PPF?

LAGERQUIST: That was what remained when they did their

[52]

sampling; that's what they kept as a sample. But they didn't sample on a regular, consistent basis, as I understand they do at the White House now.

JOHNSON: So we may have a larger percentage of all the mail that came to the White House that would be true of more recent Presidents.

LAGERQUIST: I think so, yes.

JOHNSON: How about the Roosevelt Library? What had been their policy? Do you know if they had any sampling done, or did they keep their entire collections?

LAGERQUIST: I don't know whether any sampling was done during the Roosevelt Administration. They have done some sampling since the Library was opened; I know that.

JOHNSON: Might they have discarded the General File?

LAGERQUIST: I think so.

JOHNSON: But we've never discarded any General (Alphabetical) File material, have we? Or any other, is that right? We haven't disposed of any White House Central Files, material that...

LAGERQUIST: The sampling, that we've done, has been mostly in the post-Presidential collections.

[53]

JOHNSON: Birthday cards for example?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: There was mention of restrictions on the Presidential commission records.

LAGERQUIST: Some of the President's committees and commissions did have security classified material. But that, by and large, had been retained at the National Archives. We didn't have that. We received that material later on.

JOHNSON: But you mentioned that there was material which had been stamped SECRET or CONFIDENTIAL, and some of those markings had been lined through.

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: Were there any other markings, restrictions, that we don't have now? There was SECURITY INFORMATION RESTRICTED, or something like that, wasn't there in those days, which we don't use now?

LAGERQUIST: Well, there's RESTRICTED DATA, but that's still used, involving Atomic Energy, but we didn't have any of that material. One big restriction category that was used then that isn't used now is RESTRICTED.

JOHNSON: Just RESTRICTED?

[54]

LAGERQUIST: They had just four categories at that time, TOP SECRET, SECRET, CONFIDENTIAL, and RESTRICTED.

JOHNSON: Restricted under confidential; that was the lowest category?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. That's no longer in use.

JOHNSON: Well, when that category was discarded, did that mean that all of that became declassified in general?

LAGERQUIST: It either became declassified, or if they wanted to keep it classified, they had to upgrade it.

JOHNSON: Do you remember an interview with Tony Leviero, of the *New York Times*? Was this the first article about the Archives as far as you recall? He was out here apparently for Truman's 70th birthday, and he talked to you as well as others.

LAGERQUIST: I guess he came over to the Courthouse on his own, and then I talked to him and showed him the filing room. I remember leaving the building with him.

JOHNSON: Was this the first reporter that you remember talking to?

LAGERQUIST: No. And incidentally, Leviero said, "I'll see you at the dedication." Of course, he dropped dead sometime later. The first reporter -- and maybe the only

[55]

reported interview -- immediately after I came out here was from the *Star*, a fellow named George Wallace.

JOHNSON: Is he one of the Wallaces?

LAGERQUIST: I don't think he was one of them.

JOHNSON: Did you give talks to groups, like the Rotary?

LAGERQUIST: No.

JOHNSON: How about preservation? Did Kahn ever say anything to you about preservation?

LAGERQUIST: No, preservation wasn't that big a thing in those days.

JOHNSON: What did you do about rubber bands, paper clips .

LAGERQUIST: Oh, we removed paper clips and rubber bands, that sort of thing.

JOHNSON: That's about as far as it went?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: How about rodents and insects? You mentioned there was some insect problem at one point with some papers, and you mentioned rodents.

LAGERQUIST: That was after we came out here to

[56]

Independence.

JOHNSON: Oh, to the Memorial Building?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. There was a lot of flap, correspondence back and forth, and finally they decided to get the Orkin firm to fumigate. The local Orkin manager agreed to, or volunteered I guess, to fumigate the building, so they fumigated the whole building.

JOHNSON: Was it silverfish then? Do you remember what kind of insect it might have been?

LAGERQUIST: I'm not sure.

JOHNSON: You had no problem with insects or rodents over in Kansas City, at the Federal Reserve Building?

LAGERQUIST: No.

JOHNSON: Then Bill Hillman came in to work on the *Memoirs*, didn't he?

LAGERQUIST: He was here right from the beginning. He didn't actually do much writing; he was sort of Truman's literary agent.

JOHNSON: Would he come over and see you once in a while?

LAGERQUIST: I think he came once, he and Truman, [David] Noyes, Rose Conway -- the whole group.

[57]

JOHNSON: David Noyes and Bill Hillman. Were they around Truman most of the time, say, in that first year?

LAGERQUIST: They were in and out. They weren't here all the time, but they were in and out.

JOHNSON: There were those two plus Rose Conway, who were his confidants?

LAGERQUIST: And Eugene Bailey -- the fellow who committed suicide.

JOHNSON: Oh, yes, his secretary, his male secretary. I know who you mean. So those were the staff people that kept things going, I guess, for Truman. I understand he did have to pay for a lease; that is, he had to pay the Government, didn't he, for the use of that space, his office space?

LAGERQUIST: He paid the Federal Reserve Bank, first. The Federal Reserve Bank is sort of a quasi-Government organization.

JOHNSON: But he did have to pay a monthly lease?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. He had offices on the 11th floor, and then down on the 10th floor he had an additional room where the researchers worked, where the *New York Times* and the *Congressional Records* and various other

[58]
research materials were stored.

JOHNSON: Now the ones who worked on the *Memoirs*, there was [Francis] Heller, from Kansas University...

LAGERQUIST: He was the last one.

JOHNSON: Professor Heller. And who else?

LAGERQUIST: Well, Harris was the first one.

JOHNSON: And he drops, he and his assistants.

LAGERQUIST: He wrote a series of chapters, and they were submitted to whoever had the contract to publish them, *Life* magazine I believe. They didn't like them, and so they dropped him, and he left. Then there was a fellow from Georgetown [University]. I don't know who he was, but he didn't last very long.

JOHNSON: He followed Harris.

LAGERQUIST: I think he was the one that followed Harris. There may have been another fellow in between, I'm not sure, but Heller was the last one.

JOHNSON: Heller had a couple of people working with him, didn't he, a couple of research assistants?

LAGERQUIST: Well, there were two research assistants that Harris had brought in, who left just about the same

[59]

time he did. Of course, by that time I wasn't coming over to the office that much, and so I'd just get to see these people occasionally.

JOHNSON: So they didn't draw from the OF and PPF?

LAGERQUIST: No.

JOHNSON: It was all PSF.

LAGERQUIST: And the *New York Times*. And, of course, the interviews that are in the *Memoirs* file.

JOHNSON: Did you know that those interviews were going on?

LAGERQUIST: No.

JOHNSON: Was it noticeable to you that these people were coming in to be interviewed?

LAGERQUIST: See, I didn't get over there that much. In fact, once we came out here to Independence, we very seldom got into Truman's office.

JOHNSON: You were moved out here in October '54 for what reason?

LAGERQUIST: Sometime in '54, either '53 or '54, the people of Missouri approved a bond issue to add some judges to the various courts around the state, including the courts in Kansas City. So they needed that courtroom

[60]

that we were using, and had to finish it off for the use of one of these new judges. Well, that meant we had to leave. June [William] Holloway was the regional administrator for GSA, and because of political reasons, he didn't want the papers moved out -- at least at that time -- to Bannister Road. By that time, the new GSA Building on Bannister Road had been completed, and was in operation. But he was a political appointee himself. He was very sensitive, at that time, to what might happen to him if it became known that he was taking care of President Truman's papers. Various other places were offered. Finally, the Mayor of Independence...

JOHNSON: Was it [Robert] Weatherford?

LAGERQUIST: Weatherford found out about this and he offered space in the Memorial Building. That's where we moved. It wasn't really a very satisfactory place, because the rooms were lined with wood, and we were right next to the furnace room. And for various other reasons, it wasn't considered very satisfactory.

JOHNSON: Was it cramped for space?

LAGERQUIST: Well, it was a little bit crowded, but that wasn't the problem.

JOHNSON: That meant that you had to take all of that

[61]

shelving down that you had set up over there?

LAGERQUIST: All that shelving had to be taken down and brought over and reerected, and all of the boxes had to be brought over.

JOHNSON: Put back into their proper places, which meant that you had to kind of diagram it. It took some doing, didn't it?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. Again, the people at the Records Center were very good in assisting in this, and they did a very good job of it.

JOHNSON: They would have had to have a crew of a half a dozen or so.

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: Moving day must have been something. So you and J.R. Fuchs got a workout I suppose there, a little extra workout.

LAGERQUIST: You mean in the moving?

JOHNSON: Yes.

LAGERQUIST: No, we didn't do much of the physical moving.

JOHNSON: How come no Steelman papers? Apparently we didn't get any papers of John Steelman, although we do have

[62]

some files of his.

LAGERQUIST: Well, Steelman, apparently during the course of his business at the White House, would from time to time retire to the Central Files much of his working papers, as they were no longer needed.

I found when I came out here a couple of filing drawers of materials that had been sent by Steelman to the Central Files for refiling, right at the end of the Administration. So that's one reason why there aren't any Steelman papers. Now, whether in addition to that he does have some papers of his own to turn over, I don't know.

JOHNSON: He's deceased isn't he?

LAGERQUIST: No, he's still alive.

JOHNSON: Then you had some magazines and *Congressional Records* to handle, too, apparently. Were they set up or were they just kept in boxes?

LAGERQUIST: As I recall, we just kept those in boxes. We still have them; that's the set in the stacks, an almost complete set of the *Congressional Record* from the time Truman became Senator until the end of the Presidency.

JOHNSON: Do you remember this film by Phil Koury, I think

[63]

it was called "Man of Independence?" Brooks in his report said, "And it had fine performances by Lagerquist and Fuchs, playing the part of archivists."

LAGERQUIST: I remember.

JOHNSON: The summer of '57.

LAGERQUIST: I remember, vaguely.

JOHNSON: That's when you were moving out here to the new building.

Three dimensional objects, museum artifacts and photographs, how did you deal with those?

LAGERQUIST: I was trying to think where the photographs came from, because we didn't have a separate file of photographs, or photographic audiovisual material of any sort there, when we worked at the Memorial Building, or downtown.

JOHNSON: They were just mixed in with the papers, I mean the photographs?

LAGERQUIST: Mixed in with the papers, and I suppose some of them were kept elsewhere. A lot of them were in those White House scrapbooks. There were scrapbooks filled with photographs, which were removed from the scrapbooks.

[64]

JOHNSON: But those were in your area over there too?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. But we didn't make any concerted effort to develop a separate audiovisual collection, or do any finding aid work, or that sort of thing with those materials. Insofar as the museum collection is concerned, the museum objects were kept in the old Federal Office Building at 911 Walnut Street. It was originally a bank building, and the museum objects were in the vault, which is still in place in the basement of that building. They were there until the Library opened.

JOHNSON: That did take up some space too, although a lot of museum objects have been acquired since this building was opened, apparently.

LAGERQUIST: Yes. But what percentage of the total collection was acquired since the Library opened, I don't know.

JOHNSON: The White House prepared an inventory of that, didn't they? And these were in three-ring notebooks. Did you have custody of those, or were those over in the vault with the objects?

LAGERQUIST: The three-ring notebooks, I believe, were part of the PSF. They were in Miss Conway's office. We didn't have anything to do with the museum objects

[65]
until this building was opened.

JOHNSON: Maybe we've got time for one more question before we call it a day.

Now we're over at the Memorial Building, and you're there in '55. In May of 1955, they broke ground for this building. Do you recall just when it was that you began to transfer the materials from the Memorial Building over to this building? Did that start before the dedication?

LAGERQUIST: Before the dedication, but not too long. Brooks, as I remember, came out in March...

JOHNSON: Of 1957.

LAGERQUIST: And it was after he came out. It was in one fell swoop that they moved the material up here.

JOHNSON: Did Helen Luckey come with him? She was his secretary. She started work at the same time that...

LAGERQUIST: Well, other than Jim and myself, she was the first person hired. She was working, again, over at GSA; I forget which section.

JOHNSON: She had not worked with Phil Brooks before?

LAGERQUIST: No.

[66]
JOHNSON: So he came out from Washington.

LAGERQUIST: No, around '52 or '53, while I was still in Washington, he transferred from Washington to San Francisco as head of the Records Center out there.

JOHNSON: So he came from San Francisco.

After Helen Luckey, was it [Willie L.] Harriford (Jr.) and John Curry the next ones to be hired, as you recall?

LAGERQUIST: Harriford and John Curry, and Cecil Schrepfer, to handle photographs. And Betty Herscher to be librarian.

JOHNSON: To handle the books.

[67]

Second Oral History Interview with Philip D. Lagerquist, January 22, 1988 in Independence, Missouri by Niel M. Johnson, Harry S. Truman Library

JOHNSON: There is one question I don't think I asked you last time, and I will lead off with right now. You mentioned in your reports that some of the White House staff files had been disarranged, badly disarranged. Do you remember what criteria you used in those days to rearrange collections like that?

LAGERQUIST: Well, I don't recall offhand just which collections I was referring to, but my offhand recollection is that most of the office files had some sort of arrangement, but that they were in disarray. I would just try to reconstruct the original arrangement; but, again, it was pretty obvious it was either an alphabetical file or a chronological file. Those are really the two alternatives.

JOHNSON: As far as series arrangement is concerned, would you start out with correspondence files, or diaries?

LAGERQUIST: With indexes to the correspondence, and then the correspondence files and subject files.

JOHNSON: Is there any particular principle or rule that applies to how you arrange a series, in case you have a collection that's not logically arranged or arranged as the originator had intended?

[68]

LAGERQUIST: Generally speaking, I think as I have said, first would come the indexes to correspondence files, and then correspondence files, and then subject files. Then, any overall files which would cover the whole career of the individual would come next, then the individual series which would cover segments of his career, or segments of his work. Then, the series would be arranged either chronologically or alphabetically.

JOHNSON: Publications and scrapbooks -- are those almost always placed in the rear, or the back, of the collection?

LAGERQUIST: Of course, scrapbooks would not be physically a part of the collection, but would be placed someplace else, so in the arrangements you would probably put them last. All the publications and maps, printed items, would come last.

JOHNSON: Did you have to buy special equipment, to handle maps for instance, or over-size items?

LAGERQUIST: Insofar as containers are concerned, when I first came out here, or even shortly before I first came out here, the Library Corporation -- not the government -- the Library Corporation, purchased archives boxes. The number that comes off the top of my head is

[69]

5,000 letter-sized archives boxes. They thought that it was proper that the Library Corporation purchase the boxes, rather than the Government doing it, since the Truman papers were still his private property. I think somebody thought there might be some criticism if the Government purchased containers, archives containers, for papers which were not yet Government property.

JOHNSON: Well, that isn't the rule nowadays, is it, as far as you know? Are these boxes considered part of the building that is constructed by the foundations?

LAGERQUIST: Well, see, this was even in advance of the building being constructed. Of course, there was always the possibility that Mr. Truman might change his mind, or that Congress might vote down the bill, so there wasn't any absolute guarantee that the papers would become property of the Government.

JOHNSON: That hadn't been legislated yet, I guess.

LAGERQUIST: No.

JOHNSON: Not until 1955, and these were purchased in what year?

LAGERQUIST: This is in '53 when I first came out here.

JOHNSON: And all of these were letter-size.

[70]

LAGERQUIST: These were all letter-size. Of course, we did not have a great deal, but there was some legal-size material. Most of the records of the Presidential committees and commissions were that size, and I reported back to the Archives and the Archives sent out between 500 and 1,000 legal-size archives boxes.

JOHNSON: The White House Central Files were all filed in letter-size boxes, isn't that true.

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: So those that were legal-size, that you decided to put into legal-size boxes, those had to be filed in another area apparently. In other words, when they moved into this building, these boxes were filed in the lower stacks? There is a legal-size collection downstairs.

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: How did you select those, because there are still legal-size items in the White House Central Files that have been folded in order to fit in?

LAGERQUIST: That was done by the White House, White House personnel. The legal-size materials in the so-called legal-size collection in this building were in legal-size cases in the White House.

[71]

JOHNSON: Oh, the ones that are in legal-size boxes were filed that way in the White House?

LAGERQUIST: In the White House. You notice that at the top of the materials in that legal-size collection for the Official File, and also the President's Personal File, that the White House staff marked the file number, and then "legal case."

JOHNSON: Okay, but that does tend to separate those materials from their original location, doesn't it?

LAGERQUIST: You mean what fashion they were separated, in the White House? I don't know. There must have been a different location, different sized filing cabinets for one thing.

JOHNSON: Were they filed in both size cabinets in the White House?

LAGERQUIST: Now, it's so long ago it's hard for me to remember. Those weren't the original filing cabinets that were used in the White House, you understand. The material was transferred from the White House's filing cabinets into second-hand cabinets.

JOHNSON: Surplus property.

LAGERQUIST: Surplus material; transfer cases, filing

[72]

cabinets, a little bit of everything.

JOHNSON: So those filing cabinets stayed in the White House.

LAGERQUIST: And they were used again for the next administration, the Eisenhower Administration. They were considered Government property.

JOHNSON: I wonder if they are still being used.

LAGERQUIST: No, I think now they're using a rotary type of filing device.

JOHNSON: But we never got any of the actual filing cabinets that were used by Truman?

LAGERQUIST: No. They were considered not Truman's property, but property of the White House.

JOHNSON: Then, also, there was a separation of cross-reference sheets in the OF and PPF.

LAGERQUIST: Yes. Of course, this didn't happen until after the Library opened, but eventually we had to go through, in accordance with Mr. Truman's deed of gift, we had to go through the Truman papers, all of them, and remove certain types of material, mostly materials which would cause embarrassment or harassment to living individuals or their relatives. As you know, for every

[73]

document in the White House files there are probably anywhere from one to ten cross-reference sheets, so that they would have to be closed too. And this would take days, months, years of time to do this. At the suggestion of Herman Kahn, we removed all of the cross-reference sheets from the files. They had done this at the Roosevelt Library as part of their screening process. Herman Kahn, who was Director of the Roosevelt Library at the time, suggested that we do the same thing, to save ourselves from a lot of extra work.

JOHNSON: So then those were boxed at the end of the collection?

LAGERQUIST: Originally, the cross-reference sheets had been interfiled with the original documents themselves, and they just went through them all.

JOHNSON: Yes, there have been some interfiled, but not completely.

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: Now, the brown boxes that we have, I guess there is a story to that that we haven't talked about. These are unique with the Truman Library, the color and size?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. When they were ordering shelving for the stack area, the first floor stack area, stack area

[74]

number one as we call it, for the Library, somebody goofed in ordering library shelving, instead of archives shelving. That meant that if the standard archives boxes, which I guess are about 5 inches wide were used, we would lose more than an inch on each shelf I think it was. So we decided in order to use our shelf space in the most effective way--since the boxes didn't fit the shelves -- we'd order new boxes.

JOHNSON: Custom made?

LAGERQUIST: Custom made to compensate for that.

JOHNSON: The Institute purchased those?

LAGERQUIST: No, the Government paid. That was after the opening and the Government had taken over the building. I do remember we picked up about two to two and a half rows of shelving.

JOHNSON: And of course, it made it look better. They fit the shelving.

LAGERQUIST: Looked better.

JOHNSON: I think it is called Sahara sand color, which is non-standard, I suppose, the brown color.

LAGERQUIST: I've seen boxes both here and at the Archives in all sorts of colors -- blue, green, gray. For a

[75]

while, when I first went to the Archives, green was a standard color. I don't know why. I don't know if there is what you would call a standard color.

JOHNSON: It's a shade of gray now, it seems like.

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: Then there was something about the height of the shelves too, that they were too high, and so they took the kick-boards out of the bottom. Do you remember that?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. The rows in the first floor stack area are lighted by fluorescent lighting which goes the length of each row, at the top of the shelving. The lighting is placed in such a way that it was impossible to put boxes on that top shelf. Somebody -- I think it was Jim Fuchs -- got the idea of removing the kick-board -- is that what they call it? -- at the bottom of each compartment, and lowering all of the shelves four or five inches. Now, we can use the top shelf and not run into any problems there. That was another example of poor planning.

JOHNSON: But you were able to solve it.

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: How about the stairway?

[76]

LAGERQUIST: For some reason, when they planned the stack areas, the architects didn't make any provision for an access stairway between the first floor stack area and the basement stack area, and the Archives didn't catch that. So, again, in order to provide access, which you just about have to have between the two stack areas, they had to take out a row of shelving and knock through the concrete floor and put in an access stairway.

JOHNSON: That was done sometime between the opening of the building in July of '57 and 1959 when researchers were given access to the collections?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

Originally when the building was first planned, the designs called for an elevator inside the stack area between the two stack areas. Perhaps that's the reason that there was no stairway, I don't know.

JOHNSON: But then the elevator, of course, was put just outside the stack area, I suppose for pragmatic reasons. In other words, administrative people and others could use the elevator without having to get into the stack area.

LAGERQUIST: Yes. And there was something about saving money, too; I'm not quite sure.

[77]

JOHNSON: Apparently the Archivist of the United States, Wayne Grover, wrote a thank-you and compliments to you and J.R. Fuchs for your help in getting the building ready for the public in July 1957. Was there kind of a rush there, and even overtime work that was necessary?

LAGERQUIST: Well, of course, there was just a very small staff at that time and everybody on the staff had to work overtime to get ready for the dedication. The building was originally supposed to be dedicated on May 8, Mr. Truman's birthday. Well, in March or April, the early part of the year, there was a builder's strike so it was just impossible to get ready on the 8th. So they postponed it to July 6, and even then it was a rush to get the building ready. The museum exhibits weren't in place. They opened the museum for one day, the day of the dedication, and then shut down and most of the rest of the summer was spent in finishing the exhibits.

JOHNSON: Well, does that mean that you had to leave your work on the papers and help the museum people with the exhibits? You didn't open any of the stack areas did you?

LAGERQUIST: Well, yes, that's true. We really didn't start work on the papers until September or October. There

[78]

wasn't any museum staff, you see. The Archivists were the museum staff.

JOHNSON: How about Milton Perry?

LAGERQUIST: He wasn't here. He came in '58 I think.

JOHNSON: So you were the curators and the archivists?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. Dr. Grover was here during the month or so before the dedication, but the planning and installation of museum exhibits was superintended mostly by Karl Trever who was Dr. Grover's Special Assistant. I guess that was his title.

JOHNSON: The original arrangement was largely Trever's idea?

LAGERQUIST: Plus input from the rest of us.

JOHNSON: There's a [Kenneth] Prescott from the Kansas City Museum that was used as a consultant out here.

LAGERQUIST: Prescott was hired early in the year, shortly after Dr. Brooks got out here, to be a special consultant to help set up the museum, to plan and install museum exhibits. At that time, he was director of the museum in Kansas City, the Kansas City Museum. He drew up a very detailed plan for a museum exhibit based mostly on Mr. Truman's life. It excited

[79]

Dr. Grover, and Phil Brooks decided that just as a matter of courtesy they ought to show this to President Truman and get his pro forma approval. The exhibit, as I said, was based on Mr. Truman's whole career from the cradle to his leaving the Presidency. Unexpected to Dr. Grover and Dr. Brooks, Mr. Truman turned the thing down. He said he wanted the museum exhibits to lay emphasis on the development and the growth of the office of the Presidency, and not to emphasize the career of the "old man," as he put it. So then they had to start from scratch. I think Prescott's attitude, rightly so, was that he did what they had asked him to, and from then on he just sat back and acted in an advisory capacity. It was then that we got into this production of the "six jobs of the Presidency."

JOHNSON: How did that come about?

LAGERQUIST: Well, this was April I think, and the museum was supposed to open in July, so they didn't have much time to come up with something. It happened that I had just recently read Clinton Rossiter's book on the Presidency, and he talks in a number of places about the various jobs the President has, the six jobs of the President. I suggested to Dr. Brooks that they might emphasize the various aspects of the President's job

[80]

rather than Mr. Truman's career itself. He took it to Mr. Truman, and he looked on this idea with enthusiasm, so that's what we did.

JOHNSON: The "Six Jobs of the Presidency." And that was placed in what we called the President's Room.

LAGERQUIST: Right. On the right hand side. On the left hand side of the President's Room, there was a picture and a document signed by, or associated with, every President of the United States up to then.

JOHNSON: That would be on the left side as you come in from the lobby side. These were documents from each of the Presidents?

LAGERQUIST: There was a document, I remember, a letter written by George Washington. One of the original documents in that exhibit was the Monroe Doctrine. They had some pretty valuable documents. These, of course, were all on loan from the National Archives. The cases in which these were installed, the frames, had originally been on the Freedom Train. I guess that's where we got those.

JOHNSON: I recall taking the remainder of those documents to Washington in May 1978 after the room was remodeled.

In the east foyer, you know, with the overlook, was there anything there that you recall? Did we have

[81]

a Persian rug for instance on that wall?

LAGERQUIST: That whole wall, indented wall, in that foyer was built just for the Persian rug. I don't recall offhand just what else was in that.

JOHNSON: How about other rooms?

LAGERQUIST: In the Garden Room we had Presidential mementos. It's somewhat like it is now.

JOHNSON: The helmet, the Greek helmet, was that out there to start with?

LAGERQUIST: The Torah was there. I think maybe the Greek helmet was, too; I'm not sure.

JOHNSON: Some pottery?

LAGERQUIST: Pottery, yes.

JOHNSON: And what is now the '48 Campaign Room?

LAGERQUIST: No, that wasn't there.

JOHNSON: In that lower floor.

LAGERQUIST: It was unfinished.

JOHNSON: Where we have the Tibetan objects in the lower room, below the east foyer, what was there?

LAGERQUIST: The Philippine table was there.

[82]

JOHNSON: With the Mossadegh rug underneath?

LAGERQUIST: I don't think so, no. Of course, on exhibit up in the first floor area in that east foyer there was a Bible exhibit, a collection of Bibles that had been presented to Mr. Truman by the American Bible Association.

JOHNSON: How about the west foyer, on this side?

LAGERQUIST: In the west foyer they had one case devoted to labor, because the labor unions had given so much money to the Library. I think that was the reason. There was a case devoted to Masonry, because of Mr. Truman's enthusiasm for Masonry. There was a case, I think, devoted to Jewish people, or to Israel. There was a case of miscellaneous items which was labeled "Gifts of the American People," just odds and ends, similar to the oddities room at the Roosevelt Library.

JOHNSON: Was there anything on White House renovation at that point?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. There was a case with the beam.

JOHNSON: Well, we've had Masonic exhibits since then, and we've had some White House renovation, Gifts of the American People, but what about labor? Was that the only time we had an exhibit on labor?

[83]

LAGERQUIST: Specifically on labor, I think so.

JOHNSON: When was that removed? Do you have any idea?

LAGERQUIST: No, but it was there for quite some time.

JOHNSON: Is that an area that we're neglecting in the museum, the topic of labor?

LAGERQUIST: I suppose that considering the importance of the labor movement in connection with the Truman Administration, perhaps consideration should be given to it.

JOHNSON: But did we have much in the way of objects?

LAGERQUIST: That's the problem with many of these subjects -- labor, legislation, housing -- how to illustrate concepts in a museum exhibit.

JOHNSON: I suppose we had a veto message on Taft-Hartley as part of it. After you were at least over the hump, so to speak, on museum work, you had to turn back to the Archives I suppose. You had to get your attention back to boxing and shelving the collections, the Truman papers.

LAGERQUIST: Well, of course, the shelving didn't take all that much time. Initially, the collections were mostly on the first floor. We didn't even have shelving in

[84]

the basement area initially. Shortly after the dedication of the Library and the reopening of the museum to the public in September, we turned our main attention to going through the Truman papers, starting this business of going through the Truman papers and pulling out materials which were to be closed under the terms of Mr. Truman's will.

JOHNSON: What kinds of materials would those be?

LAGERQUIST: Anything. The deed of gift required that the Government, for the time being, remove anything that might be embarrassing to living individuals or the descendants of deceased individuals, anything that might contain information given to the President in confidence, or anything relating to the national security of the United States.

JOHNSON: Was there much, if any, national security-classified material in there?

LAGERQUIST: Practically none. There may have been a few items. I wouldn't say there was none.

JOHNSON: You had the vault all ready for those items?

LAGERQUIST: No. There wasn't even a vault in the building.

JOHNSON: No vault.

[85]

LAGERQUIST: No.

JOHNSON: When was that put in?

LAGERQUIST: That I don't know, but it was sometime later. All of the security material, the classified security material that we had, we could butt in one four-drawer filing cabinet.

JOHNSON: And that cabinet was locked?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: A combination lock?

LAGERQUIST: With a combination lock.

JOHNSON: And that was in the stack area over here then with the rest of the material?

LAGERQUIST: Yes, on the second floor.

JOHNSON: Did you have a cage yet? When did you set aside an area for closed materials?

LAGERQUIST: There wasn't a cage there when the building first opened. The caged area was put in, oh, sometime during the first year or so we occupied the building.

JOHNSON: This would be for closed material and for original copies of important documents?

[86]

LAGERQUIST: No, because there wasn't any Xerox at that time; they didn't make copies. It was solely for closed material.

JOHNSON: What would have been the date of the first entry in the accessions log?

LAGERQUIST: Well, I suppose it would have been the day that Mr. Truman donated his papers. I'm not sure, because I wasn't keeping the accessions log at the very beginning. The first collection, of course, would have been the Truman papers.

JOHNSON: Who was keeping the log?

LAGERQUIST: Jim. Originally, of course, we had a much smaller staff than we had later on. But originally the work was divided up between Jim Fuchs and myself. I had charge of the reference work and screening the material, taking out material that had to be removed from the various collections at the request of the donors. Jim had charge of the work in the stack areas and preparing finding aids and in accessioning materials, keeping the accessions log and doing processing work.

JOHNSON: And the processing.

LAGERQUIST: It wasn't until after the oral history business

[87]

started in 1961 that I took over the work that Jim had been doing, and that it was combined in one chief archivist.

JOHNSON: This format of the accessions log, the bound journal-type book, was that requested or recommended by the Archivist of the United States? Was this the standard way of logging material? Is that the way the Roosevelt Library did it?

LAGERQUIST: I'm not sure whether the Roosevelt Library did it that way. Of course, it is a customary procedure for any archival institution to keep some sort of accessions log. Some institutions do it on 3 x 5 cards; some do it in journals such as we use. There are various ways of doing it.

JOHNSON: What's the advantage of the way we're doing it, the journal type?

LAGERQUIST: I suppose it's the particular advantage of using a journal over using a card index. It's easier to follow up on what you've already done. I don't know whether I could really answer that question.

JOHNSON: One thing -- it would be harder to lose the pages.

LAGERQUIST: Oh well, yes, physically it has an advantage too, I suppose.

[88]

JOHNSON: Maybe it's easier to spot changes that were made. In fact, that format discourages changes doesn't it, like erasing or substituting a new description for the original description? It's not easy to alter, and I guess you want to discourage altering accessions logs, isn't that true?

LAGERQUIST: This is true, yes. I think it's required now by the *Presidential Libraries Handbook*, which is sort of our bible. The maintenance of an accessions log is required by all Presidential Libraries.

JOHNSON: Did you have a handbook to start with?

LAGERQUIST: No.

JOHNSON: You didn't?

LAGERQUIST: No, that didn't come until much later.

JOHNSON: About when?

LAGERQUIST: I would say it would be in the late '60s.

JOHNSON: And some of that was patterned, probably, or based on experience here at the Truman Library, and the Roosevelt Library.

LAGERQUIST: Yes. And the Eisenhower Library at that time, too.

[89]

JOHNSON: The first large collection of papers to be accessioned after Truman's papers apparently was Oscar Chapman's.

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: Was that actually the first one?

LAGERQUIST: I think there were some smaller collections, earlier.

JOHNSON: You set up a card file too. You assigned a number to each accession its own number, and then set up a card file that was alphabetical.

LAGERQUIST: It's alphabetical. I don't think the card file was set up until I took over the accession log.

JOHNSON: So that was just a convenience, and not a requirement.

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: Also, they had the first meeting of the Truman Library Institute, the day before the dedication, wasn't it?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: And you were a member of that?

[90]

LAGERQUIST: No.

JOHNSON: But you sat in on the meetings?

LAGERQUIST: Not on the first one.

JOHNSON: When did you begin sitting in on the Library Institute meetings?

LAGERQUIST: As I recall, I think Jim and I began to sit in regularly the following year, but I'm not sure.

JOHNSON: They started a grants program to assist researchers at the Library.

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: What year did that program start?

LAGERQUIST: Again I'm not sure of the year, but I think it was almost right at the beginning.

JOHNSON: Do you remember if Gene Schmidtlein had a grant?

LAGERQUIST: He was the first.

JOHNSON: The first researcher?

LAGERQUIST: I think he did have a grant.

JOHNSON: So they started out right away with the grants program for researchers. You weren't able to open up the archives for researchers until May of '59. That's

[91]

when Gene Schmidlein came out?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. It took us two years to go through the material. It was a long drawn-out process.

JOHNSON: And this was all Truman papers. Were there any other collections that were opened at that time in May '59, or was it just the Truman papers?

LAGERQUIST: Just the Truman papers.

JOHNSON: Then, of course, we didn't have any post-Presidential materials yet.

LAGERQUIST: No.

JOHNSON: So it was all pre-Presidential and Presidential collections.

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: What do you recollect about that? Anything that might be worth noting of that event in May '59 when the materials were opened? Were there newspapers out here to cover it?

LAGERQUIST: They had newspaper coverage, yes. I believe it was on television. Schmidlein was one of [Richard] Kirkendall's students. Kirkendall, of course, during those first few years was sending us a steady supply of researchers.

[92]

JOHNSON: But Kirkendall himself, when did he start doing research?

LAGERQUIST: Almost right away.

JOHNSON: So these are mainly from the University of Missouri. Then I suppose KU started sending researchers over.

LAGERQUIST: KU sent some, too, but never as many as Missouri.

JOHNSON: Okay, then the Oscar Chapman papers came in, the first major collection other than Truman's that are accessioned. Did you help process those?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: You and Jim Fuchs both worked on those?

LAGERQUIST: They came in, I think, before he was working on the processing. Now wait a minute, he had charge of the processing; that was before oral history started. I'm not quite sure who worked on that. By then we had a larger staff. I think maybe John Curry worked on it.

JOHNSON: Did you prepare written procedures on how to process the collections?

LAGERQUIST: No.

[93]

JOHNSON: You just, you might say, imparted your information and knowledge orally.

LAGERQUIST: Orally, and by example.

JOHNSON: Not necessarily in specific terms, but what procedures did you decide to follow in processing the collections?

LAGERQUIST: Well, most of the collections we got in the early days were in fairly good order. The Chapman papers were an example. So it was mostly a matter of determining what the main series were to start out with, and drawing up some sort of filing scheme and then boxing material according to that filing scheme. Then, we prepared a shelf list, and then, of course, screened the material. We had to go through almost every collection reviewing to...

JOHNSON: The procedure right from the beginning?

LAGERQUIST: Well, of course, at that time, we were much closer to the [Truman] Administration and we were dealing with fairly recent papers, so we had to be fairly careful.

JOHNSON: So you did close some of Chapman's material?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

[94]

JOHNSON: That would bring embarrassment or cause harassment?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: Or it was slanderous?

LAGERQUIST: Or was information given to Chapman in confidence.

JOHNSON: Were you pretty liberal in interpreting privacy, rights of privacy?

LAGERQUIST: In the early days when we hadn't much experience in doing this sort of thing, and also because the papers were fairly recent, we were quite conservative I would say in our reviewing.

JOHNSON: Cautious in other words, about what you open. So, in other words, you closed more material maybe then than you did later on after...

LAGERQUIST: Yes, we probably closed some material that needn't have been closed and certainly we closed material that in many cases, had it been 10-20 years later, we needn't have closed, or we wouldn't have closed.

JOHNSON: How did you identify material that was closed?

[95]

LAGERQUIST: We just physically transferred from the open files to the closed files. Other than that we didn't make a list.

JOHNSON: Withdrawal sheet?

LAGERQUIST: No withdrawal sheet. The withdrawal sheets came later.

JOHNSON: So there was no what we call "pink sheets" in those days?

LAGERQUIST: No.

JOHNSON: Was there any indication that these had been withdrawn?

LAGERQUIST: No.

JOHNSON: Well, how did you know where to put them back when you interfiled?

LAGERQUIST: Well, of course, for the White House files or the OF and PPF, there was a file number on each document, so there was no problem there. The other collections -- we wrote on the back of each document the collection name and folder title.

JOHNSON: In other words, if we see a penciled notation of location on the back of a document that's in the open stacks, that tells us that at one time that was closed.

[96]

LAGERQUIST: That's a good indication, although the location might have been put there for some other reason.

JOHNSON: Like if it was going to be put on exhibit?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: Anything that you learned from those early days? Was it trial and error then sort of? They had certain principles I suppose that were standard, but were there any innovations?

LAGERQUIST: Are you talking about the reviewing?

JOHNSON: And the processing, in general.

LAGERQUIST: I don't know that we learned anything in the processing, at least not in the first few years. In regard to reviewing, after we'd been at it for about six months, Herman Kahn made another trip out from the Roosevelt Library and reviewed what we were doing and gave us a few suggestions.

JOHNSON: How about this business of paper clips, rubber bands, acid-free folders...

LAGERQUIST: Paper clips and rubber bands, we did remove right from the beginning.

JOHNSON: Did you staple those things that were clipped?

[97]

LAGERQUIST: Yes. You just about had to. If you don't attach the documents that are associated together in some way, they're going to become disassociated.

JOHNSON: And you used standard staples?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: Later on I guess you tried brass?

LAGERQUIST: We did try rust-free, the brass.

JOHNSON: But those broke down didn't they?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. They didn't work out, somehow. About acid-free folders, again, acid-free folders were not a big thing then. When you got folders they were from GSA's Federal Supply, and that was it.

JOHNSON: Did you just use the original folder to a large extent, just leave them in the original folder?

LAGERQUIST: Unless the folders were torn up or beat up. It happened many times that the folders were overloaded, and then you had to break them up.

JOHNSON: Then you'd have to type up new labels.

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: But you didn't necessarily type up new labels for

[98]

every folder of the collection, is that right? If the label was adequate that was already on there, you wouldn't necessarily...

LAGERQUIST: No, not at that stage.

JOHNSON: But there was some typing of folder labels that had to be done, and there was some typing of the shelf lists, or the folder title lists. And that was the basic finding aid.

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: The folder title list. This was something that the Roosevelt Library had been doing for years, had it?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: So that was just a standard procedure, the shelf list. That's the standard finding aid. Original order usually was clear, so you didn't have to rearrange the material?

LAGERQUIST: No, there were a few collections where there wasn't any apparent order, on which we had to improvise. The Senatorial papers, I think we mentioned this last time, was a good example of that.

JOHNSON: The Senatorial?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. Not that there hadn't been some sort of

[99]

order originally, but I think what had happened is that when the material was removed from filing cabinets and packed in boxes, they just weren't careful.

JOHNSON: It seemed to be pretty much alphabetical, by name and subject?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. This was back before we moved into the Library Building, back when we were down at the Memorial Building -- I was the one that opened the boxes in which the Senatorial materials were stored, and placed the folders in archives boxes. It was during that process, the process of making the shelf lists for the Senatorial papers, that it became apparent that most of the materials from the first term were missing. I conveyed that information back to the Archives and there was a big search made and they came up with nothing.

JOHNSON: Was that when they came back and said that the last time they were seen was in an attic, or in a building in Washington, D.C.?

LAGERQUIST: Well, yes, we found the evidence over the years not right then at the beginning, but over the years, that most of the material -- not all of it, but most of the material -- from the first term had been taken out of Truman's office and stored in what was called the

[100]

Senate attic. After the Senate appointed a historian back in the sixties, we wrote and asked him whether there was any chance that the Truman papers might be floating around someplace. He

wrote back and said, "Well, if the material was stored in the attic, you might as well forget about it."

JOHNSON: It had been cleaned out I suppose. How about the White House Permanent file? Well, it's filed between the White House Bill file and the Senatorial file. That came out later?

LAGERQUIST: That came out later, yes. The Permanent file, the White House Permanent file, contains documents which, because they had information that was of a precedent-setting nature, was retained at the White House after the Administration left. It was kept for reference purposes, and we didn't get the Permanent file material for the Truman Administration until sometime in the sixties.

JOHNSON: After the Eisenhower Administration was over?

LAGERQUIST: I think so.

JOHNSON: Now, was that considered part of the White House Central Files?

LAGERQUIST: Yes, I think that was kept in the Central File.

[101]

JOHNSON: How about the Confidential File?

LAGERQUIST: Yes, that was part of the Central File. In the Confidential File, they filed material that was sent to the Central Files for safekeeping; it was either classified or had sensitive information of one kind or another.

JOHNSON: It was in a special area within the Central Files?

LAGERQUIST: Within the Central Files, yes.

JOHNSON: In locked cabinets or a cage, or something like that?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: That was considered a very important addition wasn't it, to the White House Central Files? So we do consider that part of the White House Central Files, too, the Confidential Files?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: Then there were the President's Secretary's Files. What was the history on those?

LAGERQUIST: Incidentally, that title wasn't the title they used in the White House. It was just a title that was sort of dreamed up at the Roosevelt Library for the

[102]

files that were maintained by the President's secretary, and we just adopted it. That file was retained by President Truman during his lifetime, first in his office in the Federal Reserve Building in Kansas City, the four years he was out here; then, when the Library building was opened it was moved into his wing of the building here at the Library. His will provided that any papers that the Library didn't already have would be transferred to the Government after his death. Well, that, in essence, meant that the Library, or the Government, would get the President's Secretary's files, the PSF, after his death.

JOHNSON: In his will in 1957, he specified that all of his writings, all of his creations that were in the Library, would become Government property. How about Truman letters that were in the hands of other people? Could they be considered in the public domain? There has been some question about the literary rights, and copyrights.

LAGERQUIST: Unfortunately, the way Truman's deed of gift is written, the transfer of literary property rights from Truman to the Government applies only to materials in the Government's possession. It doesn't apply to writings in the hands of other individuals.

JOHNSON: Even if they are written by Truman?

[103]

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: Do you think that he intended it that way?

LAGERQUIST: Well, of course, he really was just taking the advice of his lawyers. I don't know whether he had any realization of what was involved one way or the other, or not.

JOHNSON: Well, in letters that were donated to the Library, such as the [Monrad] Wallgren collection, there are quite a few original letters of Truman's. When they were donated to the Library, those letters that he wrote, are they considered in the public domain?

LAGERQUIST: I'm not exactly sure how Truman's transfer of property rights is worded, but I would say offhand that anything in the possession of the Library written by Truman would be in the public domain.

JOHNSON: And Wallgren's letters, presumably the deed of gift specified that they also became part of the public domain, when he donated them to the Library. Isn't that the intention that there's free use of the donors...

LAGERQUIST: Of course, Wallgren legally wouldn't have any control over property rights, or copyrights on anything written by Truman.

[104]

JOHNSON: No, but his own writings.

LAGERQUIST: His own writings, yes.

JOHNSON: Don't we in our deed of gift usually have them sign their rights over to the Government, to their own writings?

LAGERQUIST: If they are willing to do so, and most of them do. There are a few cases where people retain the property rights during their lifetime.

JOHNSON: Did you ever get involved in writing up deeds of gift?

LAGERQUIST: Originally, Brooks handled it himself, and Jim handled it for a while. John Curry did, also; I don't know, there were a number of people involved.

JOHNSON: John Curry took over acquisitions work from Jim?

LAGERQUIST: I think that's the way it went. John was in charge of the book collection for some time. I don't think he had charge of acquisitions in the same period. It seems it was sort of shuttled back and forth for a while.

JOHNSON: Of course, Harry Truman was here using his office from July 1957 until July 1966 when he became ill and started staying at home. So, at least you were within

[105]

sight of each other for all those years.

LAGERQUIST: Yes. Of course, the Truman staff and the Library staff, were two separate creatures. The main, or perhaps almost only, contact between the Library and the Truman wing was the Director of the Library.

JOHNSON: Phil Brooks, the Director, used this office we're in right now, is that right? This was his office, and everything across the lobby here was the Truman wing?

LAGERQUIST: That's right.

JOHNSON: So that's sort of the separation point, the north door here, depending which direction you went. That separated those two operations. Yet Truman did come out into the museum; he did come into the auditorium.

LAGERQUIST: He used to come out to speak to school children very frequently. Sometimes he would bring visitors out, through the museum, depending on the time of the year.

JOHNSON: Would he go down the hallway here, past the Research Room, and stacks, and office areas?

LAGERQUIST: Sometimes. During the summertime he didn't do that very often because he was so bothered by people wanting to shake his hand, and wanting an autograph, and so forth. So the public wouldn't see him very

[106]

often. Sometimes he would come down the hallway when he was able, and frequently he would cut through the research room.

JOHNSON: Where was your office at that time?

LAGERQUIST: Well, I had a number of offices. This is my fifth office in this building. I started out in that corner office where Glen [Sprague] is now. I had three different offices in the row of offices beyond the research room.

JOHNSON: Did he ever bother to stop and say hello to archivists?

LAGERQUIST: Oh, if he passed you, he'd say "Hello." My main contact with him, other than passing in the hall, would be if a researcher wanted an interview with the President, and the Director wasn't here, I'd take him in. The Director would generally take the researcher in, otherwise.

JOHNSON: Did this have to be arranged in advance before the researcher came out here, or would he agree to an interview just more or less on the spot?

LAGERQUIST: Both. It happened both ways.

JOHNSON: But he wasn't always willing, I suppose, to be interviewed, or did he always accommodate researchers?

[107]

LAGERQUIST: I would say that he almost always accommodated researchers, if he didn't have some previous appointment, or if he wasn't out of town. The researchers didn't generally get a great deal of information, especially if they had been working in the field of foreign affairs. He would say it was all in the *Memoirs*, pretty much in the *Memoirs*, you know, all the information they wanted.

JOHNSON: How much time would they expect from him if they were interviewing him?

LAGERQUIST: Oh, generally, I would say 15 or 20 minutes.

JOHNSON: That's about it.

LAGERQUIST: If he got interested, or if somebody perhaps sparked his interest, it would last longer.

JOHNSON: Before we leave Truman, his activities here, were there Truman birthday parties that staff members were invited to?

LAGERQUIST: Are you talking about the Talge affairs?

JOHNSON: No. Didn't they have parties here in the building?

LAGERQUIST: Just one that I recall at the Library, that included staff members.

[108]

JOHNSON: So you got a chance to tell him "Happy Birthday" at least.

LAGERQUIST: They presented him with a scrapbook, I remember.

JOHNSON: Did he ever talk to you about the arrangement of the papers, or about how archivists do their work? Did he show interest in how archivists arrange papers?

LAGERQUIST: No. I think like most any businessman, the way papers were arranged was up to the secretaries, and didn't concern him at all.

JOHNSON: As long as he had his files back there, the President's Secretary's Files, to refer to, he never came out to consult the White House Central Files by himself?

LAGERQUIST: No. I don't think he even had much idea of how the papers were arranged in his own office. He left that up to his secretary.

JOHNSON: But you don't remember him reading through shelf lists or folder title lists or anything like that?

LAGERQUIST: No.

JOHNSON: But he did answer an awful lot of mail. I suppose most of his time was taken up by answering mail.

[109]

LAGERQUIST: And talking to visitors. He had a great many visitors. And then going out and delivering addresses of course. At one time, right after he left the Presidency, he was supposed to have received more mail than any other private citizen in the state.

JOHNSON: I wouldn't be surprised.

LAGERQUIST: There'd be big bags of mail out there in the reception room every morning.

JOHNSON: Do you remember Eisenhower coming out here to visit him?

LAGERQUIST: I wasn't here. I was on vacation.

JOHNSON: How about Jack Benny? Did you get to see him rehearse in the museum at all?

LAGERQUIST: That's kind of vague in my mind, of course. That's way back, but I think we did go out there and listen.

JOHNSON: How about the publication of the series, *Public Papers of the President*. You got involved in that. When did you get involved, and what was your involvement?

LAGERQUIST: The person who did the most work on that was Jerry Hess. On the first four volumes, from '45

[110]

through '48, they did most of the work in Washington. What we did was to check any facts that they were uncertain about -- dates, spellings of names. We did an awful lot of work on the first four volumes.

JOHNSON: The reference work?

LAGERQUIST: Reference work. As I say, Jerry Hess did almost all of the work, at least the preliminary work on the project. In the '49 through '52 volumes, we did all the preliminary work on the basis of suggestions by them, and then we sent it into Washington.

JOHNSON: Was Jerry Hess hired to do this primarily?

LAGERQUIST: No. He was hired as an archivist early in the history of the Library, in the fall of '57. When the Library first opened, we hired Willie Harriford. You may recall seeing that name. He was here a few months and then was drafted and we hired Jerry to take his place. Willie and Jerry were in the same class at the University of Kansas, and they were right next to each other on the Civil Service list.

JOHNSON: So Jerry came in and took Willie Harriford's place.

LAGERQUIST: Just as an archivist.

JOHNSON: Did Harriford come back after his service from the

[111]

Army?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: How many years would you say he was here before he left?

LAGERQUIST: I don't know. When did Martin Luther King die?

JOHNSON: '68.

LAGERQUIST: Well, he went down early in '69. He went down to work on the Martin Luther King papers, in Atlanta.

JOHNSON: And Jerry Hess got into the oral history program too, then later didn't he?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. Charlie Morrissey was the first oral historian on site in Washington. After the Kennedy assassination, they drafted Charlie to work on the Kennedy oral history project, and Jerry was sent to Washington to take Charlie's place.

JOHNSON: So, it was a promotion.

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: Well, he and J.R. Fuchs both worked on the oral history program when it started?

LAGERQUIST: Jim was in charge of it and supervised the thing, and did some oral histories himself. Since so

[112]

many of the Truman appointees were still either in Washington or in New York, up and down the east coast, they felt that it would economically pay to have one person stationed fulltime in Washington.

JOHNSON: Was Morrissey assigned as chief oral historian for the Presidential Libraries?

LAGERQUIST: No. I don't think there ever was such a thing. Morrissey was originally a Truman Library employee, for a short time, and then he went to Washington as a Truman Library employee and interviewed Truman employees. Then, when Kennedy was assassinated, they felt they needed somebody right away to run around and interview Kennedy people, so they transferred Morrissey over to that. He was no longer a Truman Library employee, and we sent Jerry to Washington to take his place.

JOHNSON: Of course, Morrissey is one of the top men in the field of oral history, so I guess they...

LAGERQUIST: But he's no longer with the Federal Government; he hasn't been for some time.

JOHNSON: But the Truman Library was a training ground for some notable oral historians.

Well, back on the *Public Papers of the Presidents* project, what files were basic to that project?

[113]

LAGERQUIST: Well, the *Public Papers of the Presidents* -- not only the Truman volumes, but all of the public papers volumes -- are based on the White House press releases. So you take the White House press releases as a starting point, and then you go and eliminate press releases which aren't actually Presidential statements. If it says not that the President said it, or that the

President spoke, or something like that, but "the White House said," or "the White House released" such a statement, you eliminate that. Then there are routine letters of congratulation, or accepting resignations, that sort of thing; most of those you eliminate.

JOHNSON: There are several press release files actually in the collection. Which of those was considered authoritative as the final version? Isn't there an annotated, or a corrected, press release file that [Jack] Romagna actually edited or corrected, annotated, whatever, to make the final speech?

LAGERQUIST: Well, he was the White House Official Reporter, but all of the press releases weren't based on Romagna's work.

JOHNSON: But he did make corrections?

LAGERQUIST: On Presidential speeches, yes. But he wasn't always right either. This is sort of an aside. On the

[114]

last two volumes we went back and compared Romagna's final press releases in the case of speeches, and the tapes, and it became obvious in some places he just made a mistake, and inserted the wrong word. But the basic documents are not in what Romagna did or anybody else; it's the press release as actually released by the White House, as mimeographs.

JOHNSON: Yes. But I'm thinking of the speeches that went out in mimeograph form could have ended up a little differently when he actually gave the speech, or the talk. That's where Romagna would make notes, if the President actually read a press release, but read it a little differently, he would make a note of that, is that right?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: Was it Truman's own annotated reading copies that were the basis for most of the speeches that you have published in the *Public Papers*?

LAGERQUIST: It's the release which says that it is a copy of the speech as actually delivered. In some cases, as I say, Romagna goofed. Of course, they depended upon Romagna to insert all of these little asides that Truman would have made during the speech, and sometimes Romagna just didn't understand what Truman was saying,

[115]

correctly. For the first four volumes, most of the work was done in Washington and they didn't have these tapes to refer to, so I'm sure in the first four volumes there are a lot of small mistakes.

JOHNSON: Well, you didn't have the reading copies in the speech files of the PSF either then did you?

LAGERQUIST: No.

JOHNSON: And these are the ones with Truman's own editing of the speech. You didn't get those until the mid-seventies, so they had nothing to do with what went into the *Public Papers*, that is, the speech files of the PSF?

LAGERQUIST: Of course, Truman had these reading copies, that he may have annotated, little changes throughout, the speech, but on top of that he could have made other changes, which didn't get into the reading copy. The only way you could be absolutely sure that you got everything, just the way he said it, is to listen to the tapes.

JOHNSON: But there weren't tapes available of every speech either, were there?

LAGERQUIST: Well, not at that time, no.

JOHNSON: In fact, didn't they use wire? There was wire

[116]

recording, but were these mainly disc recordings? You don't remember seeing any tape, tape recordings, by the White House?

LAGERQUIST: No. Cecil transferred the speeches that were on disc recordings to tapes after a while.

JOHNSON: But they were almost all on disc as you recall?

LAGERQUIST: As I recall, yes.

JOHNSON: How did you announce openings of new collections in the early years? How was that made known to the public?

LAGERQUIST: Occasionally, as I recall, there was a press release. I know there was a press release in connection with the Chapman papers. There was a big deal made out of that. In the case of the average collection, what was done was mostly through the *National Archives News Notes*.

JOHNSON: Quarterly news notes? Was that in existence right from the beginning?

LAGERQUIST: As I recall, it was.

JOHNSON: So every quarter you would report to them what collections were accessioned and opened. Did you write some articles about the Library, about its collections,

[117]

and have them published?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. I wrote some articles. Phil Brooks wrote some articles. Dave Lloyd wrote one or two articles. Betty Herscher, as I recall, wrote an article on the book collection. I think somebody, I guess it was Milton Perry, wrote an article on the museum.

JOHNSON: Do you remember where yours was first published?

LAGERQUIST: There was one published, I think, in the *Library Journal*.

JOHNSON: Was it Phil Brooks that had the first article published about the holdings here?

LAGERQUIST: Well, the first article about the Library was published prior to the Library opening, as I remember, in the *American Archivist*, by Dave Lloyd.

JOHNSON: But the second one probably was Phil Brooks?

LAGERQUIST: Probably, yes.

JOHNSON: Did that seem to attract researchers? Did these articles seem to have an effect?

LAGERQUIST: I think perhaps in those years it drew more interest in the museum than the Library, because at that time the amount of material -- and especially the quality of material -- that was available was rather

[118]

limited, because we didn't have the President's Secretary's Files. This is especially true of people working in the foreign affairs area.

JOHNSON: Did the researchers complain about that on occasion?

LAGERQUIST: Some of them did.

JOHNSON: The White House Central File's General File was considered a sort of a cross-reference file for all of the White House Central Files. How does it happen that it serves that purpose? Could you give us a brief description of the General File?

LAGERQUIST: The General File, which is also called the Alphabetical File, contains correspondence, telegrams, and letters which for some reason were not considered important enough to fall either into the OF or PPF. It also contains cross-reference sheets, filed by the name of the correspondent, to material in the OF and PPF. In addition, as perhaps the biggest category, it contains lists of correspondence that were referred by the White House to other Government departments for reply. Most people, or many people, don't realize, I think, that a large part, perhaps the majority, of correspondence addressed to the White House, is not answered by the White House, or even acknowledged by

[119]

the White House, but is referred to some other Government agency for reply. For instance, if you write to the White House asking about the best way to grow your tomatoes, the letter would be referred to the Department of Agriculture. The White House wouldn't even answer it.

JOHNSON: So most of those original letters would end up in another department, an executive department, and if they were retained they would be in the National Archives, of course, in Washington, and we would just have a reference to the fact that they were transferred or sent on to that particular department.

LAGERQUIST: For our purposes, however, the main value of the General File is its use as an index, the main index, to materials in the OF and PPF. If somebody's interested in any material that was signed by Homer Brown, he would go to the General File and try to find out where the Brown correspondence is found in the OF and PPF.

JOHNSON: There's a chronological name file in the PSF, which is outgoing, just outgoing correspondence. Does that refer only to letters that are in the PSF?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. There isn't any connection at all, insofar as the filing system is concerned, between the

[120]

Central Files and the PSF. For all practical purposes, the PSF is just another office file, just as Clark Clifford has his office file; Charlie Murphy had his office file. This is the office file of Miss Conway.

JOHNSON: I suppose when collections like Clark Clifford's came out, and of course, Oscar Chapman's, that would bring some researchers into the Library that would not have come otherwise.

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: So the number of researchers did tend to increase, I suppose, over the years. Has that been kind of steady, or has it been pretty fluctuating?

LAGERQUIST: I'd have to go back to the statistics to prove my point, but I think the number of researchers has remained pretty steady over the years until after Mr. Truman died. Then I think the number rose fairly dramatically.

JOHNSON: Especially after the PSF was opened.

LAGERQUIST: After the PSF opened.

JOHNSON: How about the trend in reference workload over the years, not just in numbers of researchers, but in the number of written inquiries -- maybe even the types of researchers and the types of topics. Is there anything

[121]

we can identify in terms of trends?

LAGERQUIST: Well, the great interest I think has always been the field of foreign affairs because that's where Mr. Truman perhaps made his great accomplishments.

JOHNSON: But that has been a more recent phenomenon. In other words, in the early years was it mostly domestic issues?

LAGERQUIST: Well, I think it was mostly, but not because people weren't interested in foreign affairs; it was because the material was not available.

JOHNSON: But even Clifford's papers, and Elsey's and Ayers'. Were they a lot stronger on domestic than on foreign affairs?

LAGERQUIST: Once we started to get the files of some of the White House staff, for instance Clifford and Elsey, which did contain some foreign affairs material, we did have more people working in foreign affairs, but that was later on.

JOHNSON: How about foreign versus American researchers? Did you notice a trend there in the proportion?

LAGERQUIST: Well, initially we had very few foreign researchers. That has grown considerably.

[122]

JOHNSON: Especially since when?

LAGERQUIST: Well, I'll wager again and say that is especially since the PSF has opened. But we've had some foreigners not only from the European countries, but from Israel and India, right from the beginning. Of course, the biggest change, as far as foreigners is concerned, is that for a while there we were getting quite a few -- relatively speaking -- scholars from Russia. That in very recent years has stopped almost completely.

JOHNSON: Was that a part of that detente in the early seventies?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: In the early seventies is when there was a noticeable increase. Who was the first Russian researcher, do you recall?

LAGERQUIST: I don't recall.

JOHNSON: But the one who was most often here was -- what was his name? There is one who died recently, a couple of years ago.

LAGERQUIST: [Nikolai] Sivachev.

JOHNSON: Sivachev. Were they interested in getting into

[123]

the NSC and the CIA records?

LAGERQUIST: They were interested in foreign affairs, some of them, and some of them were interested in domestic. I think that trend has been counterbalanced to some degree with the rise in recent years of researchers from Japan and China.

JOHNSON: Especially, I guess, the People's Republic, the opening to China.

Could you identify what seemed to be some problems that might have been persistent or sticky over the years, in any of these areas, whether it's some phase of the processing, or declassification, or whatever? Or copyright, literary rights?

LAGERQUIST: Well, the copyright problem, of course, has not been a problem with us; that's really more the researcher's problem. I think probably one of the biggest problems has been the field of acquisitions, trying to get papers that we feel should have come to this institution, which ultimately wind up someplace else.

JOHNSON: What are some of those that we didn't get that would have been a real asset?

LAGERQUIST: [James] Byrnes, [George] Marshall...

[124]

JOHNSON: Averell Harriman?

LAGERQUIST: Harriman is one of the biggest ones.

JOHNSON: We don't have Brannan's yet, Charles Brannan's.

LAGERQUIST: [Edward R.] Stettinius.

JOHNSON: Of course, we didn't get [Harold] Ickes.

LAGERQUIST: He was mostly in the Roosevelt years. Yes, Ickes is another one. There's [Louis] Johnson, Secretary of Defense. And [Robert] Lovett, who said he didn't have anything.

JOHNSON: You have a file. When did you start this file on the location of collections that relate to the Truman administration, but which are not located here? You do have a location list?

LAGERQUIST: Yes, I did that almost from the beginning.

JOHNSON: You started that on your own. So we are able to tell researchers, or those who write us, that even though we don't have the papers we can direct them to where they are located?

LAGERQUIST: Well, theoretically, the best way to do this is through use of the *National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections*, but sometimes that's rather difficult to use. While that's a little more complete, for our

[125]

purpose, my file is certainly a lot quicker than...

JOHNSON: NUCMC?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: Yes, when did we start reporting to them our collections?

LAGERQUIST: Well, I can't give you the date offhand, but it was right from the beginning.

JOHNSON: Have all our collections been registered, so to speak, or recorded with NUCMC?

LAGERQUIST: Just about. Maybe a few of the most recent collections haven't been.

JOHNSON: So that's pretty comprehensive.

LAGERQUIST: Again, they've had financial problems, and had to have cut-backs in staff, so their publications aren't published nearly as quickly as they were originally.

JOHNSON: How about our *Historical Materials in the Harry S. Truman Library*, the listing of all of our collections. When did we start publishing that?

LAGERQUIST: Well, I can't give you the exact date, but that came out as a result of the old fuss they had at the

[126]

Roosevelt Library. Professor [Francis] Lowenheim went to court, claiming that some materials had been withheld from his use.

JOHNSON: Is this back in the sixties, you're talking about?

LAGERQUIST: Yes, at the Roosevelt Library. As a result of all that there was an investigation by the OAH and the AHA. One of the results of all this was an order by the Archivist of the United States, Bert [James B.] Rhodes at that time, that in the future the Presidential Libraries would make lists of all our collections available to researchers. As a standard procedure, the new researchers would be given a list of the Library's holdings, its historical materials.

JOHNSON: Everything that's open. Of course, that has to be updated periodically, which you are still doing.

LAGERQUIST: The Roosevelt Library was the first Library to make available such a list. I think the Eisenhower was the second. We were the first one to put one out in the present size and format. I think all the other Libraries have followed suit. I think they are all pretty much alike.

JOHNSON: And with the introductory material, describing some collections, and notes about copyright and copying and so on and so forth.

[127]

LAGERQUIST: Use of the materials, citations.

JOHNSON: How about the early years in regard to copying? We're talking about xeroxing materials.

LAGERQUIST: In the earliest years, there was no xeroxing, and we didn't have a photostat machine. Photostats were expensive anyway. Copying was a question of microfilming, and we had a lot of microfilming to do.

JOHNSON: So if they wanted a copy it had to be a microfilm copy?

LAGERQUIST: Right.

JOHNSON: What did they charge for a frame, do you recall?

LAGERQUIST: As I recall it was ten cents a frame. I wouldn't swear to it.

JOHNSON: That's kind of a hassle in a way. You have to run some microfilm through and then crank more through, and cut it and hope you didn't fog it, and all that sort of thing.

LAGERQUIST: And then you had to make target sheets for each order, and target sheets for the separation between one series and another.

JOHNSON: Did they have the tabs that we use now? When were

[128]

those introduced, as well as, of course, the reproduction order form?

LAGERQUIST: You mean the tabs that we use for the xerox?

JOHNSON: Yes, to flag the material.

LAGERQUIST: I think that we started that system after we started to use xerox.

JOHNSON: Oh, after we started using xerox. How did they flag it before that?

LAGERQUIST: As I recall, at the beginning, before a series we had an 8 x 11 sheet that said "Papers of Oscar L. Chapman" and then the series title.

JOHNSON: The research topic card file, when was that started?

LAGERQUIST: I think that was early in the sixties. There wasn't any at the beginning.

JOHNSON: After we had gotten a few collections? So that was generated as you worked with researchers. I mean you didn't make any special effort to go through collections to subject-catalog, is that right, or did you?

LAGERQUIST: No, I think the way that got started is that we had certain subjects on which we had inquiries, like

[129]

the recognition of Israel, over and over and over. And rather than having to go through the process of reviewing the collections again and again, we used this method of research topic cards.

JOHNSON: Was this something that you introduced yourself? Or was this something that came down from somebody else?

LAGERQUIST: No, I did.

JOHNSON: As far as you know, no other Library was using this, or developing this sort of file?

LAGERQUIST: Something like that had been used in other institutions, I'm sure.

JOHNSON: The Roosevelt Library didn't have a research topic file by this time?

LAGERQUIST: No.

JOHNSON: So we were the first ones to have it among the Presidential Libraries?

LAGERQUIST: As far as I know, we're the only ones, even today, that has anything exactly like this.

JOHNSON: So they didn't necessarily copy us. They used other approaches. It's the closest thing that we have to a subject catalog for the manuscript collections,

[130]

isn't that right?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: And we only update it as we notice items that we haven't already put down when we're doing reference work, or possibly even review in some cases.

LAGERQUIST: Originally, if we'd get an inquiry on a large subject like, say, India, then we'd go ahead and make a research topic card, so we'd have something to show the researcher when he came to the Library. But now we have cards on almost every subject.

JOHNSON: Maybe this will be one of the final questions, at least for now. What has been the standard procedure in responding to reference inquiries, either by letter or oral inquiries?

LAGERQUIST: Reference inquiries have gone to somebody who sorts out the inquiries, and he makes some decision as to whether it should be answered by the person in charge of the book collection, the museum, or the [manuscripts] reference area.

JOHNSON: The Assistant Director?

LAGERQUIST: No it is. For many years it was the chief archivist.

[131]

JOHNSON: So you received all of the reference letters directly yourself, or through the Director?

LAGERQUIST: No, the Director didn't see them. The person who distributed the mail, Ruth [Springston] or her predecessor, distributed the reference mail, on the basis of contents. Anything having to do with the manuscript collection, when a reply would necessitate reference to the manuscript collection, would go, in those early days, to me. If the letter was a very simple matter, or had something to do with grants, if it asked what year was Mr. Truman born or something like that, I would generally answer it myself. Otherwise, I'd distribute it to one of the other archivists and they'd answer it in a letter. If there was any particular collection, or other reference source that I thought that the archivist should consult, I'd just jot that down on the letter and then I'd distribute the letters to be answered by the various archivists, and returned to me. I'd go over them, and in the early days I'd sign the letters. I'd give the letters to one of the typists, and she'd type it up for my signature.

JOHNSON: For your signature. Under Phil Brooks you're talking about?

LAGERQUIST: And under Ben [Zobrist] until after George

[132]

[Curtis] came.

JOHNSON: Until George Curtis came, you were signing reference letters.

LAGERQUIST: I signed the letters that pertained to the manuscript collection. Liz would sign the letters, or John Curry before her, that related to the book collection. Milton Perry would sign the museum letters.

JOHNSON: Would we always advise them to address their inquiries to the Director in those days, or would it be someone else on the staff that they would be advised to direct their letters to? I think now the policy is that every communication to the Library should be addressed to the Director. Has that always been the case, as far as you know?

LAGERQUIST: I don't think that we advised them one way or the other. Generally speaking, they just naturally would address it to the Director. And nine out of ten, if they received a letter signed by me, and they wanted additional information, they'd probably address the letter to me.

JOHNSON: Or to your attention.

LAGERQUIST: When I drafted a reply, or one of the other

[133]

archivists drafted a reply, if I thought the letter was of sufficient importance that it should be signed by the Director, I'd draft a letter for the Director's signature. If it was to another GSA official, or a member of Congress, or somebody prominent such as Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., or one of Ben's personal friends, I drafted the reply for his signature.

JOHNSON: What did Phil Brooks seem to emphasize, or was there anything noticeable about what he tended to emphasize in the years he was here? I guess he was here about 13 years wasn't he? Wasn't that early '57 to 1970 when he retired?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: Thirteen years. Did there seem to be a certain approach or emphasis that he placed on certain things or priorities that he seemed to establish?

LAGERQUIST: Well, I think if anything there had been a certain continuity. I think perhaps he was especially interested in the archival end of the operation since he had been a lifelong archivist. That would have been his...

JOHNSON: Well, for instance, would he put reference ahead of everything else, or description. Of course, you'd have to divide your time, but if you had to establish

[134]

priorities, what would he say to handle first?

LAGERQUIST: Probably the reference, and I think that would not be because it was particularly his preference. You just about have to.

JOHNSON: Was he pretty strong on description?

LAGERQUIST: Well, yes.

JOHNSON: He had written articles, I think largely about description of material, or finding aids. Yet, he didn't get into preliminary inventories, or registers, or anything like that?

LAGERQUIST: Not here, no.

JOHNSON: This wasn't prescribed by Brooks. There were no inventories done, or registers before Brooks retired? Did he feel it just wasn't time to do this sort of thing?

LAGERQUIST: Partly that. We did start drawing up registration sheets.

JOHNSON: You mean under Brooks?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. But it was my idea actually.

JOHNSON: Registration sheets.

LAGERQUIST: Sort of like this. Are you familiar with this?

[135]

JOHNSON: Well, it's been a while since I saw that. But you have a binder, and do you have the only set?

LAGERQUIST: No. There used to be several sets, over the years. There used to be a set in the Research Room for instance.

JOHNSON: Okay, this is a register, with brief descriptions of each of the collections; description and restrictions. But there is no series description or a breakdown of the collection.

LAGERQUIST: No. This was patterned after something that they did back at the Archives. They had registration sheets at one time for each of the record groups.

JOHNSON: Does this information also go to NUCMC? Is this the same that you would send to them?

LAGERQUIST: No. There is a different format for that.

JOHNSON: Different format, but it's still a brief description like this.

LAGERQUIST: Yes. Basically, that's the kind...

JOHNSON: Okay, this might also go into the log. Were the entries in the log perhaps even briefer? Would they necessarily have this description?

[136]

LAGERQUIST: The entries in the log would be very brief.

JOHNSON: So this would be perhaps a little more complete than the log. But it's not as complete as a preliminary inventory, of course, so it's somewhere in between a listing and a preliminary inventory. We did get into preliminary inventories a few years back. Does that seem to be on hold?

LAGERQUIST: It seems to be.

JOHNSON: So we do have a few inventory descriptions. Was this register used to some extent then?

LAGERQUIST: Well, yes. I still use it. Sometimes if I get an inquiry from a researcher asking for such information, I'll send him a copy of that.

JOHNSON: Okay, you have these filed numerically. Do these numbers correspond to the accession number?

LAGERQUIST: No. Those are arbitrarily assigned. Those would correspond to Record Group numbers in the Archives, but we stopped doing that.

JOHNSON: Record Group numbers? But private papers, how would they...

LAGERQUIST: We call them "historical group" numbers.

JOHNSON: Okay, if they're not Federal records, they're just

[137]
"historical groups?"

LAGERQUIST: The last of these was made in 1971.

JOHNSON: So since then, if you want basic information you go to the log, or to a press release possibly? Or if there's a preliminary inventory, you go to that?

LAGERQUIST: Well the shelf list, you generally would refer to it.

JOHNSON: Shelf or folder-title list -- which contains no narrative description.

If we think of something that we haven't covered that would be worth getting on the record, why we'll get together again.

[138]
Third Oral History Interview with Philip D. Lagerquist February 16, 1988 in Independence, Missouri by Niel M. Johnson, Harry S. Truman Library

JOHNSON: There were a few things that we didn't cover in the previous two interviews, Phil, and one of those things pertains to document security. Somewhere along the line we started stamping documents. I notice you have an order here relating to this.

LAGERQUIST: The original order, insofar as we're concerned, is dated September 16, 1964. Briefly, it says that "to protect the valuable documents in the National Archives," which would include the Presidential Libraries, "a systematic program of document stamping is being inaugurated. To complete a project of this size will require many years."

JOHNSON: And that started what year?

LAGERQUIST: September 16, 1964. Actually, I don't think we started to implement the order until 1965.

JOHNSON: What collections would you say are probably not yet stamped as of 1988?

LAGERQUIST: Part of the Official File, I think.

JOHNSON: How about the Post-Presidential?

LAGERQUIST: The Post-Presidential. Any collection that was

[139]

accessioned after the date of this order was stamped as part of the processing procedure.

JOHNSON: During review.

LAGERQUIST: During review, or after review, as part of the processing. The collections accessioned before that, we stamped as time allowed, and starting with what collections were more apt to be in demand.

JOHNSON: Does it say where the stamp was supposed to be placed on the document?

LAGERQUIST: Well, it at first gives the stamp design. "This stamp will be used to identify documents deposited in the National Archives." The stamp is the size of a dime, and it says "National Archives of the United States." We modified the design to make it applicable to records here in the Truman Library. We found though that in the course of time that a stamp that small tended to smudge, through the stamping process. So, after a while we ordered new stamps the size of a quarter, and those are the ones we are using now.

Now, stamp locations. "Every sheet whether bound or unbound, will be stamped on one side only. The stamp will be applied in blank spaces in the heart of the document where the impression cannot be easily cut

[140]

out.... Documents of special historical significance such as a major peace treaty, will be stamped on the reverse side."

JOHNSON: Is that for exhibit reasons, do you think?

LAGERQUIST: I think so.

JOHNSON: Now, those with signatures, does it say anything about putting the stamp near the signature?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. "The stamp will be applied in the heart of the document where the impression cannot easily be cut out, for example: 1. In the blank space to the right of the salutation of letters, or of similarly placed heading in other documents, 2. To the left of the complimentary close or signature, 3. In the indentation of the first line of a paragraph, or 4. After a short line at the end of a paragraph."

And this paragraph regarding stamp location concludes by saying, "When all the materials in a folder or container have been stamped, the folder itself or the container label will be stamped to show that that work has been accomplished."

JOHNSON: Have we ever had any incident of theft or mutilation or documents that you know about?

LAGERQUIST: Not that I know about, but of course, that's

[141]

something pretty hard to ascertain, unless it's a document that's pretty well known.

JOHNSON: What kinds of procedures were applied in the research room at the beginning? Were they any different from what they are now?

LAGERQUIST: As far as surveillance is concerned?

JOHNSON: Yes, and as far as bringing in briefcases, overcoats, that sort of thing.

LAGERQUIST: Well, this restriction on bringing briefcases and attaché cases, boxes, that sort of thing, wasn't in effect when the Library first opened, either here or at the [National] Archives. That came later on. So, at the beginning we did allow people to bring in briefcases and attaché cases, that sort of thing.

JOHNSON: Has there always been the rule that one of the staff people is in the research room all the time? Whenever there is any researcher in the room, there has to be a staff person, of course. And the hours have been the same, 8:45 to 4:45?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. The office hours of the Library, right from the beginning, have been 8:30 to 5:00. When the research room first opened in '59, they decided that we would have hours of 8:45 to 4:45, which would give us

[142]

fifteen minutes at the beginning of the day to get material across into the research room and fifteen minutes at the end of the day to pick the material up and bring it back over to the stack area.

JOHNSON: We've always had the same kind of identification card for researchers, what we call the "blue card?"

LAGERQUIST: It's always been blue. The design has changed a bit over the years. For one thing, the seal is different; the National Archives seal has been changed.

JOHNSON: Earlier, we got into declassification work and management of the vault downstairs. Was Harry Clark the first one to be in that area of declassification?

LAGERQUIST: Harry was appointed, was sort of put in charge of declassification, around 1970. It was before Mr. Truman died anyway. And it was after the vault was built. The vault wasn't part of the original building. The vault was built after the building was built.

JOHNSON: When was that?

LAGERQUIST: In the late sixties I think.

JOHNSON: Harry Clark was the first archivist assigned to the vault, and he remained in that position then until he retired?

[143]

LAGERQUIST: Yes, with other duties too, of course. For the first few years after we got the Truman papers, that was a full time job, just taking care of classified material. Toward the end of Harry's service, when he had done about as much as he could do as far as declassification is concerned, he took on other duties. But that was his primary duty.

JOHNSON: Was it the opening of the PSF in 1974 that made that almost a full time duty for Harry?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. It was after Mr. Truman's will was probated, and the PSF was turned over to the Government. Harry and I spent, I would say, at least six months almost full time processing the PSF.

JOHNSON: The research load was rising too, then, wasn't it?

LAGERQUIST: Yes, but it didn't really take off until after the PSF was accessioned.

JOHNSON: When you and Harry were very much involved with the declassification work, what archivists were there available to deal with the reference work and with the researchers?

LAGERQUIST: Warren [Ohrvall], Dennis [Bilger], and Erwin [Mueller].

[144]

JOHNSON: Just those three?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. I think by that time John Curry had been transferred to his present position, as sort of in charge of outreach and the newsletter.

JOHNSON: Public programs, and acquisitions too?

LAGERQUIST: Public programs. There was one point in there that Jim Fuchs was in charge of acquisitions. In fact, I think he was in charge of acquisitions at two points during his service at the Library.

JOHNSON: Doris Pesek, did she work with him in acquisitions when he was acquisitions archivist, with J.R.?

LAGERQUIST: I'm not sure. I know that she worked with him for a time in oral history.

JOHNSON: I understand that Donna Clark worked first with J.R. in transcribing oral history, and then Doris also helped for a year or so.

LAGERQUIST: Originally Doris was in the research room. She had the job that Anita Heavener has now.

JOHNSON: Let's see, Pauline Testerman came in and had that job in the research room, did she not?

LAGERQUIST: Yes, but there were a couple of other people whose names I can't remember offhand in between.

[145]

JOHNSON: Between Doris and Pauline?

LAGERQUIST: I think so. Several people have held that job through the years.

It might be a matter of interest, that in processing the PSF, Harry and I sort of divided the work up. Harry took care of processing the materials that consisted primarily of classified items, such as the NSC [National Security Council] files, which meant that he spent most of his time for several months typing up withdrawal sheets.

JOHNSON: What we call the "pink sheets?"

LAGERQUIST: Pink sheets. I processed the files that had had very little or no classified materials, such as speech files, press releases, political files, and so forth, but if I did run across classified material, I would hand that over to him and he would make up a pink sheet.

JOHNSON: Over the years since then, most of that material in the PSF has been declassified, is that right?

LAGERQUIST: I would say that there's quite a fair amount that is still classified. I would say -- and this is just a wild guess -- that the amount of classified material still remaining in the vault is between a

[146]

third and half of what was originally classified.

JOHNSON: As a percentage of the total collections, it's what?

LAGERQUIST: Minimal.

JOHNSON: It's just a small fraction of a percent, of one percent, I suppose?

LAGERQUIST: And most of the remaining classified material is NSC material, I think. Practically all of the State Department and most of the Defense Department material has been classified.

JOHNSON: We do have quite a few pink sheets, where everything has been declassified on that sheet. Then those sheets have been retired to the security cage, has that been the idea?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. Open everything when the sheet is complete.

JOHNSON: What's the purpose of that, keeping those sheets?

LAGERQUIST: So that you have a record. That's the way the order that came out from the Office of Presidential Libraries reads. Two sets of pink sheets are made out.

JOHNSON: Two sets.

[147]

LAGERQUIST: One goes with the document and one goes in the open file. One is in the file that the researchers use, and the other copy goes with the classified file.

JOHNSON: With the document itself.

LAGERQUIST: Right. And the purpose of retaining a copy is that you have a record, a history, of what has happened to the document.

JOHNSON: You know, in the open stacks, we have a lot of them grouped together on one sheet, a number of different documents that are in that box that were classified. They're all on one sheet, but in the vault, each document has its own withdrawal sheet?

LAGERQUIST: I haven't worked with this stuff closely for some time, but as I recall, there are two copies of the so-called withdrawal sheets, and everything in a folder that has been withdrawn from the folder is listed on that sheet. There are two copies of that. One goes into the open file which the researchers see, and the other goes into the cage. But there is also a top secret cover sheet, I think it's called, a separate sheet for each top secret document, and I think that that is what you're talking about.

JOHNSON: That just goes with top secret?

[148]

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: There have been about a dozen archivists that have been hired over the years, and perhaps half of them have retired, or got transferred elsewhere.

LAGERQUIST: Maybe a dozen. Of course, we've had retirements in the past few years, but as a general rule, I think we've probably had less turnover among the professional staff at this Library than any other Presidential Library. At some of the other Presidential Libraries, it's practically like a merry-go-round.

JOHNSON: How about the orientation of new archivists? What has been the procedure in orienting new archivists, newly hired archivists, just in brief? What points and principles would you especially stress?

LAGERQUIST: It has been so long since we've hired a new archivist -- I guess that you're the most recent one.

JOHNSON: I suppose that I could testify.

LAGERQUIST: You probably could.

JOHNSON: I think that I erased handwritten, pencilled labels on boxes, my first act as an archivist.

LAGERQUIST: The initial work as an archivist, I think, is

[149]

something along those lines, something pretty elementary. Of course, when I've been teaching new archival employees, I've started with something simple and worked them into something fairly complicated.

JOHNSON: There's been a two-week course, full time course, at the National Archives. When did that start?

LAGERQUIST: All of the archivists have taken that course except Jim Fuchs and myself. I think they decided we didn't need it. I think everybody else has taken the course. They first started an archival training course at the National Archives, just shortly after I came out here in 1953. That was Dr. Schellenberg's course. The present archival institute that members of the staff have attended is sort of an outgrowth of that course.

JOHNSON: Of course, I had that in May of '78, which was a little while after I started. So I had on-the-job training, so to speak, before I got into that.

LAGERQUIST: I think that that's true of all the archivists. None of the archivists have taken that before they started.

JOHNSON: Also, my first main job was to write up a story line for the renovation of the museum. That did get me acquainted with the collections from the researcher's point of view, and to some extent, of course, from an

[150]
archivist's point of view.

How about these descriptive inventories? When did we get into the descriptive inventory on collections, and how far has it gone?

LAGERQUIST: It hasn't gone very far. Years ago I started to make up what I call registration sheets. These were patterned after similar sheets that they used and make up for each of the record groups in the National Archives, and I don't think that they do that any longer. These are dated, mostly in '65. Here is one dated '71.

JOHNSON: So that was not continued after what, about 1971?

LAGERQUIST: 1971 seems to be the latest.

JOHNSON: But in the meantime you're also preparing the research topic cards.

LAGERQUIST: At the same time, yes. That started about the time we opened for research in 1959.

JOHNSON: A preliminary type of inventory, like the National Archives has done, or perhaps a combination of the preliminary inventory and the Library of Congress registration sheet, that apparently was adopted, or that approach was tentatively adopted at the Library?

LAGERQUIST: We never have gotten very far with it.

[151]

JOHNSON: When did we start with it? Do you recall about what year?

LAGERQUIST: Well, that would be about five years ago, I would say.

JOHNSON: About 1982 or so? Did we come up with a model?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: Which one do we consider the model?

LAGERQUIST: I don't know if there was any one individual, because you have both the papers of individuals and the collections that are the records of organizations, presidential committees, and commissions, for instance. But I think that the first one that was approved was the [Jesse] MacKnight inventory.

JOHNSON: We've done how many of these, would you say, about a dozen?

LAGERQUIST: At the most.

JOHNSON: And it's been on hold for a couple of years or so.

LAGERQUIST: Another finding aid that we have worked on is the NUCMC sheets. We have submitted descriptions of almost all of our collections to the *National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections* of the Library of

[152]
Congress.

JOHNSON: So that's been kept up-to-date?

LAGERQUIST: That's up-to-date. The only collections that you don't submit to NUCMC are collections with less than 100 items (of course, an item can be a 200-page report or a one-page letter) and archival materials such as the records of the Library and the Institute.

JOHNSON: What do you think is the priority for the descriptive inventories? How do they compare, say with the research topic card as a finding aid?

LAGERQUIST: Of the two, if there has to be priority, I would say the research topic cards are the most important. Unless you're making up a new research topic card, I think it's pretty easy, now, to keep the research topic cards on a current basis, because I think we probably have cards for not all, but most, of the subjects that we're dealing with.

JOHNSON: Of course, they are subject oriented, whereas the descriptive inventories are collection oriented. So you would almost have to index the inventories then to get a subject file to the inventories. Was that ever done? They do list subjects in the description; have you ever heard of an index?

[153]

LAGERQUIST: No. Some of the National Archives inventories, preliminary inventories or final inventories, are indexed. But, of course, their collections back there are much, much larger than anything we have.

JOHNSON: So that's a big difference too. The only real intellectual control that they have over their collections is the inventory. Is that a true statement, for the National Archives? I suppose we have to include their *Guide to the National Archives of the United States*.

LAGERQUIST: That and the *Guide*. Of course, they're in the process of preparing a new guide. Another thing that we've been doing over the past few years, and for which I have been responsible for doing most of the work, is that we have submitted to the Archives information on our Federal collections.

JOHNSON: Yes, Federal records. But that's only a very small part of our collections.

LAGERQUIST: A very small part. Hopefully, some day both the Truman Library, and I would think the other Libraries, would want to prepare guides to their collections. I think we're at the point now where we could do that. That was one thing I was supposed to do when I was made research or reference archivist --

[154]

reference archivist I guess was the title -- and somebody somewhere changed his or her mind, so it was never done.

JOHNSON: This will be a guide of just the Federal records?

LAGERQUIST: No, this would be a guide for all our collections.

JOHNSON: But we do have the Historical Materials booklet.

LAGERQUIST: The *Historical Materials* booklet is really just a listing of the collections, an alphabetical listing of the collection, with information on procedures. It was first published in...

JOHNSON: January 1970; I've got it right here in front of me.

LAGERQUIST: It was a result of the "Lowenheim affair." Are you familiar with the Lowenheim case?

JOHNSON: Yes. Will you briefly recount that?

LAGERQUIST: Dr. Francis Lowenheim of Rice University, who incidentally thinks the Truman Library is the greatest -- he thinks we're a wonderful institution -- was doing research at the Roosevelt Library in preparation for a documentary publication of Roosevelt-Churchill correspondence, something of that sort, and he claimed

[155]

that the Roosevelt Library held documents out on him. He claimed they failed to show him everything he asked for. And so he wrote his Congressman, and there was a big "to-do" about it. The American Historical Association and the Organization of American Historians appointed a committee which was chaired by Professor [Richard W.] Leopold to hold a big investigation on this whole matter.

Well, the end result was that the Roosevelt Library was held blameless, but one of the things that came out of this was that all of the Presidential Libraries were ordered from then on to give each new researcher a list of the Libraries holdings. Previous to that, at the Roosevelt Library at least, not only did researchers not get a list of holdings, but the shelf lists, the finding aids, were not made available to researchers. Herman Kahn who was Director of the Roosevelt Library in those days had a theory that if you show the researcher a list of folder titles, he'd ask for a lot of stuff that didn't have anything of interest to him. You would know that, but if you tried to tell him that, then he would think you were holding out on him. So that's the background of the *Historical Materials*.

The Roosevelt Library issued the first one; then the Eisenhower Library issued the next one, which was

[156]

long and narrow. We issued the first one of the size that we are using now, and all of the other libraries have copied us. So we set the standard in that regard.

JOHNSON: So ours has been a model then for the Roosevelt Library. And that started apparently in January 1970, our first publication of the listing.

LAGERQUIST: So now each researcher, unless the thing is out of print, gets a copy of the *Historical Materials*. In addition we have a mailing list of about 250 colleges and universities that we send a copy of the *Historical Materials*. We send a copy to each university in the country that gives a Ph.D. in history or political science, and to institutions in the immediate area; Missouri, Kansas, Iowa and Nebraska that give an M.A. in history.

JOHNSON: The Library also has an information sheet for researchers? When did that appear?

LAGERQUIST: That came along a little bit later.

JOHNSON: So they have both, access to both.

LAGERQUIST: Some of these handouts, such as the information sheet, the sheet on the use of the period after Mr. Truman's middle initial, the short biography of Mr. Truman, and Mrs. Truman, these have come along as the

[157]

situation dictated.

JOHNSON: How about the transportation and lodging information? When did we start putting that out?

LAGERQUIST: I would say in the past ten years; that's fairly recent.

JOHNSON: Was that kind of a model for the rest of the libraries then?

LAGERQUIST: I don't know, but I think some of the other libraries have the same thing.

JOHNSON: But we might have been the first?

LAGERQUIST: We might have; I don't know. I think we perhaps are the first, and I'm guessing, to have the researchers, when they want to buy electrostatic or xerox copies of documents, list the materials on a sheet.

JOHNSON: On a reproduction order form?

LAGERQUIST: On the reproduction order form.

JOHNSON: We instituted that?

LAGERQUIST: I think I was the one who drew that up.

JOHNSON: Then we make a copy of that to go along with the material that they order.

[158]

LAGERQUIST: So the researchers can check against us and see whether he gets everything that he wants.

JOHNSON: It also helps with his footnoting information.

LAGERQUIST: That's right.

JOHNSON: What collections seem to be used the most that we have? What gets the most use, from your vantage point?

LAGERQUIST: I'm sure it's the President's Secretaries Files, although portions of that probably don't get very much use. But there are series within that that get heavy use.

JOHNSON: How about the non-Truman papers?

LAGERQUIST: Among the non-Truman papers, and this just comes off the top of my head, I'd say Clifford, Murphy, Elsey...

JOHNSON: How about Acheson?

LAGERQUIST: Portions of the Acheson papers. Acheson is like so many other large collections. There are a few series within the collections that are used over and over again, but the rest of the collection is probably only of interest to a biographer.

JOHNSON: But next to the PSF, in the non-Truman papers,

[159]

what would be the most important for foreign policy? Would it be the Acheson?

LAGERQUIST: The Acheson memorandum of conversation series, and the Princeton Seminar series, yes.

JOHNSON: Apparently that opened in 1973, August 1973, and the PSF opened in December '74, so there was more than a year's gap there. But after the Acheson papers were opened, did that bring researchers in to work on foreign policy?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. But not to the same extent as the PSF. Of course, on the PSF, we didn't open it all at once. We opened it as it was processed and reviewed.

JOHNSON: By major series?

LAGERQUIST: By major series. We'd take it downstairs, take the materials downstairs, from where they had been stored in Mr. Truman's wing, and either Erwin or Dennis would put the material in acid-free folders and make a shelf list. Then it would be opened.

JOHNSON: Did that require quite a bit of rearranging, or invention of series titles and so on in the PSF, or was it well ordered?

LAGERQUIST: It was pretty well ordered. We did have to invent a few series titles because Miss Conway didn't

[160]

have series titles.

JOHNSON: Well, of course, there were the speech files, and then there were daily sheets, or appointments file, and then you get into, what, the historical series. Did you have to invent some of those?

LAGERQUIST: Some of those we had to invent.

JOHNSON: Titles, like historical...

LAGERQUIST: Well, the subject, that overall subject file, we invented that.

JOHNSON: The subject file series is probably the heart of the collection, isn't it? And that includes some NSC material, I believe. But then you also have an intelligence file. So you did have to study that collection.

JOHNSON: We studied it first and then we made a decision, I guess I was the one who made the decision as to what we would call the various series, and then the sequence in which they would be processed.

What we did was to process the files that could be opened almost immediately without very much review, such as the press release file and the speech file, so that we would have something to open right away. Once the material had been transferred to the Library, of

[161]

course, we got reference requests from people who wanted to examine it.

JOHNSON: Does that mean that the later part of the file, like the personal series, were these among the last of the...

LAGERQUIST: At the very end -- the White House files, the personal and family file -- those and the [Tommy] Corcoran file were the last hundred or so boxes accessioned. Those files, those series, Margaret [Truman] didn't turn over to the Government at the very first go-around. She waited about a year and then made up her mind. I say Margaret; I mean of course, Mrs. Daniel. Then those series were turned over to us about a year after the greater part had been transferred to the Library.

JOHNSON: We mentioned the Confidential File, before, but did that come in before or after the PSF?

LAGERQUIST: The Confidential File, of course, is part of the White House Central Files. It's the file series within the White House Central Files in which classified material, or material that is otherwise of a sensitive nature, was filed. When I came out here in 1953, the Confidential File was at the Jackson County Courthouse along with the PPF and all the rest of the

[162]

Central Files.

Dave Lloyd, who was executive secretary of the Truman Library Corporation, thought that Mr. Truman would need that file in the course of writing his memoirs. So he arranged to have that file transferred to the Federal Reserve Building where Mr. Truman had his office.

JOHNSON: Well then, when was it opened?

LAGERQUIST: I'm not sure; I'd have to check.

JOHNSON: You didn't open it until after the PSF? I notice it's filed right after the PSF on the shelves.

LAGERQUIST: Yes. We put it after the end of the PSF.

JOHNSON: But were researchers using that before the PSF was opened?

LAGERQUIST: I don't believe so, no.

JOHNSON: Just off the top of your head, what are some of the most notable researchers that we've had in terms of the time they spent here and the amount of publication they have done?

LAGERQUIST: Barton Bernstein, professor of history at Stanford; John Gimbel, who is a professor at Humboldt State in California...

[163]

JOHNSON: Schmidtlein was the first one though.

LAGERQUIST: Gene Schmidtlein; he was one of [Richard] Kirkendall's students.

JOHNSON: Did Kirkendall become known more or less as the foremost Truman scholar at one point?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. He was planning to be the Frank Freidel of the Truman Administration. Freidel is the one who wrote extensively about the Roosevelt Administration. Of course, Kirkendall was, for that reason, quite unhappy that the PSF wasn't available for him to begin with. He said so on a number of occasions. He spent considerable time here at the Library over the years and ordered I don't know how many thousands of xerox copies of documents, but then he became head of the department down at the University of Missouri, the History Department, just at the time when they were having all of the faculty troubles and student troubles back in the late 1960s. And he just sort of bowed out for a while. Then he moved on to Indiana and became executive secretary of the Organization of American Historians. He has come back from time to time, working on Truman and on various Truman topics, but he never...

JOHNSON: And then he edited that book on research fields.

[164]

LAGERQUIST: Yes, that was in relation to one of our conferences.

JOHNSON: But there was someone else at Indiana that sort of took his place, I suppose, Robert Ferrell.

LAGERQUIST: Yes, in a way, although I've never heard Ferrell express an ambition to do a Freidel type or Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. type of biography. And then, in addition to working on Truman himself, while he was teaching his course in recent American history, Kirkendall sent us, I suppose, as many as ten graduate students, maybe more.

JOHNSON: Out of Missouri University.

LAGERQUIST: Out of Missouri.

JOHNSON: Before he went to Indiana.

LAGERQUIST: He sent us a steady flow.

JOHNSON: And Robert Ferrell's done something of the same, hasn't he, at Indiana?

LAGERQUIST: Yes, but not nearly to the same extent.

JOHNSON: Don McCoy became a scholar on Truman, too, Donald McCoy, from K.U.

LAGERQUIST: Yes. Well, I think Don was interested in the

[165]

Presidency as an institution. He's written on the Presidency, and he's written a book on Coolidge, I think. He has written, as you suggested, a book on Truman. Of course, McCoy has an interest in the Library from an archival viewpoint; he started out his career as an archivist at the National Archives. In fact, he and Jim Fuchs worked in the same section at the Archives. Then he decided he wanted to move on and get his Ph.D., so he left archival work, and went to the University of Chicago. He later began his teaching career at Kansas University.

JOHNSON: David Noyes was out here much of the time that you were here. When did he start?

LAGERQUIST: He was here when I came out. Both he and Bill Hillman were here off and on up until the publication of the *Memoirs*. Then, after that they still were here from time to time. Hillman was Mr. Truman's literary agent, and Noyes was sort of an unofficial adviser, as he had been previously.

JOHNSON: But didn't Hillman drop out before Noyes? Or did Hillman die?

LAGERQUIST: Hillman died, yes.

[166]

LAGERQUIST: Yes. Noyes came to be known as sort of an unofficial adviser.

JOHNSON: Wasn't he also a ghostwriter for Truman? Did he ghost-write a lot of his post-Presidential speeches?

LAGERQUIST: Some of the speeches. In the beginning, I think, much of that was done by Charles Murphy and Dave Lloyd. Murphy, of course, got back into Government. He was Under Secretary of Agriculture, so he didn't have the time to do that sort of thing. Lloyd died.

JOHNSON: Noyes sort of stepped into that vacuum?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. He not only wrote speeches, but also letters in the course of the day.

JOHNSON: I guess you saw Benton when he was out here with Truman, Thomas Hart Benton?

LAGERQUIST: Oh yes.

JOHNSON: Did you get to talk to Benton at all?

LAGERQUIST: Oh, I suppose I did exchange a word with him occasionally. He worked out here every day for I guess it was a year. He used to come into the coffee shop and talk to us.

JOHNSON: What was your impression of him then?

[167]

LAGERQUIST: He was very friendly.

JOHNSON: A friendly fellow. Did he talk politics at all?

LAGERQUIST: No.

JOHNSON: What did he talk about; paintings, art?

LAGERQUIST: Yes, paintings for one thing.

JOHNSON: Any other researchers that stand out in your mind for the amount of time they spent here, and the quality of their publications?

LAGERQUIST: Robert Donovan.

JOHNSON: He used Larry Yates as his researcher, did he not? So Larry was here for quite some time wasn't he?

LAGERQUIST: Yes. Of course, what Larry did was to pick out the documents and sent them back to Donovan and he did the writing. Donovan was out here on several occasions.

JOHNSON: Okay, Donovan's two volume series is probably still the...

LAGERQUIST: Standard volume.

JOHNSON: Political history of the Administration?

LAGERQUIST: Of the Administration. It's not a biography.

[168]

JOHNSON: McCoy's one volume work has also been rated well by reviewers.

LAGERQUIST: Yes. For biography, of course there are several being worked on right now. To date, Jonathan Daniels' [*Man of Independence*] is probably...

JOHNSON: Jonathan Daniels' book still stands out?

LAGERQUIST: I think so. He cuts off at '50 of course. It is good for the early years especially.

JOHNSON: To some extent Richard Miller's [*Truman's Rise to Power*] has certainly added to the pre-Presidential writings.

LAGERQUIST: Well, Miller has added some things. Monte Poen, [Alonso] Hamby...

JOHNSON: And, of course, [David] McCullough now.

LAGERQUIST: And McCullough.

JOHNSON: You've contributed to *Whistlestop*. When did this publication start? Do you have any idea?

LAGERQUIST: Again, I can't tell you the exact date, but I think it was after Mr. Truman's death. It was after Mr. Truman died that they realized that they would have to scurry around to get some funds if they wanted to

[169]

keep the Institute going, especially the grants program. Before his death, when Mr. Truman went on a speaking tour and was given an honorarium, he would always hand it over to the Institute. "Give that to the educational fund," he would say. Of course, that source had dried up. With Mr. Truman's death, they thought now was the time to raise money if they were ever going to do it, because the Truman enthusiasts, and people who knew Truman when he was President, were dying off. It was really now or never. Probably, if they started now they would not have the same success that they did have. Well, anyway, they were going to engage in these fundraising campaigns. There were a number of campaigns, and they thought they should offer the contributors something for their money. So they came up with this Honorary Fellow program. For \$25 a year, you would become an Honorary Fellow and could visit the museum without paying the entrance fee, and so on and so forth. One thing that somebody dreamed up as one form of repaying the Honorary Fellows was a newsletter.

JOHNSON: So that was the first newsletter, that started after Truman died?

LAGERQUIST: Yes.

JOHNSON: What was the first meeting you attended of the

[170]

Institute? The first one in '57?

LAGERQUIST: I suppose the very first one.

JOHNSON: And you've been part of that ever since? What is your role with the Institute?

LAGERQUIST: You mean insofar as the meetings are concerned?

JOHNSON: The meeting, and of course, the grants program.

LAGERQUIST: As far as the meetings are concerned, all I do is sit there.

JOHNSON: But you are a member of the Institute then?

LAGERQUIST: No. The only member of the staff who is officially a member of the Institute is the Director. The Director has always been Secretary of the Institute.

JOHNSON: Why is it that you sit in then on the meetings?

LAGERQUIST: Just to answer questions I guess. I don't know. That's the way it's always been. The Assistant Director attends. Jim Fuchs always attended, I attended, and sometimes John Curry, and sometimes the museum curator. It has varied.

JOHNSON: Do you handle the grants? You are kind of a conduit for the grants?

[171]

LAGERQUIST: As far as the meeting is concerned, my functions in recent years has been to write up the minutes.

JOHNSON: Oh, so you write the minutes.

LAGERQUIST: Donna Clark types a draft up from the tapes. From what she's typed up I write the minutes.

JOHNSON: And you sent information out on the grants program?

LAGERQUIST: As we explain to these various grantees, there isn't any direct connection between the Library and the Institute. The Institute was formed in '57 to support the Library in its various educational activities, and one of the things it does, and perhaps it's most important, is the grants program. What we do is the paperwork.

I've taken care of that in one way or the other for years.

JOHNSON: Well perhaps we have run out of subjects. We will terminate at this point. I appreciate your contribution.

[172]

INDEX

Brooks, Phil, 78, 79, 105, 133

Chapman Papers, 93-94, 116

Copyright, Truman Papers, 102-104

Document Security, 138-140

Files On Collections Relating to Truman Administration, 24

Filing Scheme for Truman Library, 23-24, 128-129

General Files of Truman Library, 118-119

Grover, Wayne, 78

Harriford, Willis, 110-111

Hess, Jerry, 109-111, 112

Hillman, Bill, 56-57

Historical Material in the Harry S. Truman Library, 125-127

Lagerquist, Philip D., 19-20

Education, 2-4

Employment to coming to Truman Library, 11-15

Military experience, 4-8

Work at National Archives, 17-19

Lagerquist, Walter (Father), 1-2

Meeting Mr. Truman, 24-25

Morrissey, Charles, 111-112

National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections, 124-125

Opening of New Collection Library, 116

Prescott, Kenneth, 78-79

Public Papers of the Presidents Series, 109, 112, 114-115

Romagna, Jack, 113-114

Schellenberg, Theodore, 18, 21

"Six Jobs of the Presidency" 80

Steelman, John, 61-62

Trever, Karl, 78

Truman, J. C., 29-30, 31-32

Tulasek, Henry, 19