ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH

HARRY BUTOWSKY RESTON, VIRGINIA MARCH 16, 2020

INTERVIEWED BY DEBORAH HARVEY

AUDIO FILE #BRVB031620 – HARRY BUTOWSKY

# EDITORIAL NOTE

This document is a rendering of the oral history interview as transcribed by the interviewer from the audio recording. Although effort was made to provide a verbatim transcription, for easier reading of the transcript, verbal pauses, repetitions of words, and encouraging words from the interviewer were omitted. Also note that the interview and recording occurred in a public room of a large hotel, so background noise occasionally made it difficult to discern words on the recording. These events are noted with “[unintelligible].” The resulting oral history interview transcript was provided to the informant for review and, if necessary, correction. Mr. Butowsky made some minor modifications to the draft transcript. For the original interview, please refer to the audio file.

# ABSTRACT,

Mr. Harry Butowsky describes how he first started working for the National Park Service in 1977 doing Section 106 compliance reviews. From there, he moved on to writing for the Park History Division, including doing planning studies, investigating and reporting on adverse uses of park facilities and how the National Park Service spent its funds. Mr. Butowsky then began working in the National Landmarks Program, which eventually led to writing the Theme Study on national sites associated with the U.S. Constitution. As a result of this work, he eventually met Cheryl Brown Henderson and became involved in the effort to get Monroe School in Topeka, Kansas, designated a National Historic Site. Mr. Butowsky relates his conversations with Senator Bob Dole regarding the Alternative Study written to explore the possibilities of establishing the Monroe Elementary School as the Brown v. Board National Historic Site. He describes the work he put into this effort, including writing the enabling legislation for Senator Dole to introduce. Mr. Butowsky also describes in some detail the various celebrations he attended in Topeka related to the establishment of the park, including the Dedication in 2004, which features President George W. Bush as the keynote speaker. He describes some of the other projects he has worked on for the National Park Service, as well.

# PERSONS MENTIONED

John Bond, General Ulysses S. Grant, Harry Pfanz, Ben Levy, Jim Schere, Ed Bearss, Chief Justice Warren Burger, National Park Service Director William Penn Mott, Jim Charleton, Governor [George] Wallace, Martha Hagedorn-Krass, Leola Brown Montgomery (Mrs. Montgomery), Oliver Brown, Cheryl Brown Henderson, Linda Brown, Senator Robert Dole, Bob DeForrest, Mark Stueve, Deborah Dandridge, Bob Lamb, Sändra Washington, President George W. Bush, [Reverend] Jessie Jackson, Mike Bierman, Justice [David] Souter, Senator Gordon Halley, Jerry Rodgers, Thurgood Marshall, Richard Kluger, Senator [Nancy] Kassebaum, Don Castleberry, [Ernesto] Miranda, Barry McIntosh, Vince DeForest.

Harry Butowsky, 2020

# ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH

**HARRY BUTOWSKY**

Interviewer: This oral history interview is for the Administrative History of the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site in Topeka, Kansas. The interviewer is Deborah Harvey, with Outside The Box, on behalf of the Midwest Regional Office of the National Park Service. Interviewed today is Historian Harry Butowsky. The date is March 16, 2020.

This interview takes place in Reston, Virginia.

So, Mr. Butowsky, as you probably know, the purpose of an Administrative History is to document the development of a unit of the National Park System. Oral histories are one way to get information that might not otherwise be available in the documentary evidence. We try to get as much information as we can from as many different perspectives as possible. This will be used by future park administrators to inform their decisions as they navigate future developments. However, I should inform you that not all the information we gather will be used or included in the final Administrative History. That depends on how the information advances our understanding of park development. But I do want to tell you that we appreciate that you are spending your time and giving your time to tell us about your work with Brown v. Board. Okay?

Butowsky: Good!

Interviewer: So, we’re going to start with the easy question, and that is – Butowsky: What do you mean, “easy question?”

Interviewer: Your easy question is, I need you to say your name and spell your last name. Butowsky: Harry Butowsky. B-U-T-O-W-S-K-Y.

Interviewer: Okay. I’m going to move this [recording device] a little closer to you because I know you are not close to the table where this is sitting. So, to start with, what was your – when did you first start working with the National Park Service?

Butowsky: Started working with the National Park Service March 28, 1977, going to work in the Midwest – not in the Midwest, the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office. I was brought in to do Section 106 compliance. And I had no idea what Section 106 was at the time. And they said, “Would you like to do Section 106 compliance?” and I said, “Sure!”

Interviewer: ’77? Okay. (Laughs) How did they happen to ask you to do that?

Butowsky: Well, they took my name off the Register – Federal Register. I was applying for jobs all over the country then. At that time, I had finished teaching at Monmouth College – now Monmouth University in Long Branch, New Jersey, and I was teaching part-time at Brookdale Community College – a community college in Philadelphia, and one or two other – and one or two other colleges. I was looking for more permanent employment,

and then I got this letter that said they had this job in Philadelphia, and it paid seventeen thousand dollars a year, and I – which I thought was a fantastic amount of money, and I went down there.

Interviewer: (Laughs) I wonder if I could get you to speak a little louder. Butowsky: Okay.

Interviewer: Thank you.

Butowsky: Okay. It’s my congestive heart failure. Interviewer: Oh, I’m sorry!

Butowsky: So, they said, you know, “Seventeen thousand, fifty-six dollars a year.” So, I thought, “That’s a lot of money.” So, I said, “Sure.” They say, “How would you like to do Section 106 compliance?”

Interviewer: And you said, “Sure?”

Butowsky: I said, “Sure.” I had no idea what Section 106 compliance was. So, that’s what I started doing, Section 106 compliance, filling out the reports, which was a blast because I would fill out these reports. I don’t know if you know what Section 106 is.

Interviewer: I do.

Butowsky: Okay, you know what it is. You decide whether it has no effect, adverse effect – or no adverse effect, or adverse effect. So, I was tearing through these things in about a month. I mean, I’m just poppin’ them out, like, three or four a day. Never visited the site. So, I would just write them off – you know, just formulaic.

Interviewer: They didn’t require that you visit the site?

Butowsky: Nah, they didn’t. They didn’t require that I visit the site, they just wanted them done and get out of the office. And I remember I read one – and I think it was for Appomattox Manor or Appomattox Courthouse, and I looked at that, and I thought, “This is going to have an adverse effect on the park.” So, I wrote down there, “You know, this is going to have an adverse effect on the park,” and then my supervisor – his name was John Bond, he was a very nice man – and he came to me, and he said, “Harry, very nice report. We like your words. But I – we like your work, but I want you to understand something. We don’t like the word, ‘adverse effect’.”

Interviewer: Okay. So, you cannot say, “adverse effect?” You can only say, “No adverse effect?”

Butowsky: Cannot say, “adverse – no adverse.” I said, “Oh, oh, oh, oh, okay. Now I understand. Let me change that.” So, I crossed that out, so it became no adverse effect. So, I did – I did that for – well, I did that for several months. I was always doing that, but then they gave me research reports to work on.

Interviewer: Okay, what kind of research reports?

Butowsky: Well, I had to do a report on Hampton National Historic Site, which is in Maryland. Interviewer: Right. So – but, I mean, was it a Special Study –?

Butowsky: It was a Special Study. It had about twenty pages, twenty-five pages. And you report on the Graff House in Philadelphia, which was no longer there; it had been demolished.

And they were thinking of rebuilding the Graff House. And then, the longest reporting – it was a study of Appomattox Manor, City Point, which was in Petersburg, which was the headquarters complex of General Grant during the Civil War. So, I worked on that. That was – that was – that was a nice one to work on. That was about four hundred pages.

And I went down there – it was my first trip – and I went down there, and I visited the park. I talked to the superintendent. I was pretty smart. Sat down with them all [unintelligible], and I said, “Okay, so, what is it that you want to know?” He says, “I want to know about the family. I want to know about the railroads. I want to know about the telegraph. I want to know who visited here. I want to know about the harbor – the port – the harbor facilities.” So, that’s what I did. First chapter, the family; second chapter, the railroads; third chapter, the port. Whatever he wanted, I put it in there. The only thing I was disappointed in is, when I – when I handed it in, you know, I – Appomattox Manor was the ancestral home of the Epps family. It was one of the oldest titled landowning families in Virginia. They had patented the land about 1630, and they had slaves there from 1630 down through the Civil War. I thought the Epps family was interesting, so I got into the archives of the Epps family in Richmond, Virginia, and I wrote up about a seventy- or eighty-page chapter on the Epps family and the plantation before the Civil War, and I handed it in. And then, later, my supervisor said, “We don’t really need to know that much about the Epps family. Get rid of it.” So, I cut it down to about ten or fifteen pages. I think I took the original chapter and put it in the files of the – of the park. And then, you know, that was before the time of type – of computers, so I had to write it out by hand, and then –

Interviewer: Did you type it, or you wrote it out in longhand?

Butowsky: Well, I wrote it out by hand, and then I wrote it out by hand again, and then I typed it on a Royal manual typewriter. Because I didn’t – they didn’t even give me a secretary or anything, and I had nobody to proof it. So, I – you know, I handed it in, and then – after my, you know, rough draft on the – on the Royal manual typewriter. And then I got another job, and I was cycling out of the office, but they had a secretary re-type it. So, that’s –

Interviewer: Why were you cycling out of the office? Butowsky: Well, I got another job in Washington. Interviewer: Oh, different from the Park Service?

Butowsky: Went to work – yeah. Went to work for the Park History program in Washington. I spent – I spent half my time while I was in that office looking for another job. I mean, it’s all I was doing. I was just looking around the Park Service for other jobs. I applied for other jobs. I applied for a job at Valley Forge, and –

Interviewer: Oh, so you were looking for jobs within the Park Service? Okay.

Butowsky: Yeah, within the Park Service. And I – they had a position – that office was vacant, but I kept getting screwed up by Civil Service. I couldn’t get on the list; or I got on the list; I wasn’t high enough on the list. It was very frustrating. But I finally – I finally got a job in the Washington – Park History program in Washington with a GS-5-7-9 position. There was a potential to an 11, so I took that job, and I went to work for Harry Pfanz, who was Chief Historian of the National Park Service. I came down to Washington in ’78 – in March of ’78, and, you know, there was nobody else in the office. It was just Harry Pfanz. So, I was in the office with Harry Pfanz by myself for about a year, and then, after a year, he hired another historian, Ben Levy, who showed up, and then there were two of us, and then we operated the office for two years.

Interviewer: And what were you doing?

Butowsky: Whatever needed to be done. Mostly, I was just reading Park Service reports. Interviewer: Were you writing a report – you said it was “Park History”?

Butowsky: Yeah, it was the Park History program. I was reading reports that were done by the Denver Service Center, done by the Regional Offices. They were supposed to submit these reports to Washington for review.

Interviewer: And the reports were on –?

Butowsky: They could be Historic Structure Reports, Historic Resource Studies. They could be park Administrative Histories, whatever. They could be planning studies. They – I mean, whatever it was, they just sent it down. And then I also – you know, Harry wasn’t interested in programing and anything to do with the flow of money in the Park Service – how you get money to the parks, and whatever. I thought that was interesting, so I wrote a research paper on how the Park Service Washington Office handled its money – about twenty page paper, and I whatever – and I interviewed all the officers and found out who they were, what their phone numbers were. And, you know, the money starts here, and then it goes from here to here to here to here to here. So, it was a nice [unintelligible] figuring out where the money was. And then I used that – so, that’s one – that’s one thing I did. But, I mean, it – then, there would – there would be other jobs that would come up, like Congress wanting to know, you know, what were the adverse uses happening in the parks? What were people doing in the parks that they shouldn’t do? So, they sent –

Interviewer: Right. Did you want to tell them everything the people were doing?

Butowsky: Well, I didn’t – I didn’t know – so, they sent – they sent – that was one of my first road trips, they sent me down – they sent me on a trip. I went down South. And I went to North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia. I went to New Jersey. They sent me to about a dozen parks, which was nice. The most interesting park was – adverse use was in New Jersey, Fort Hancock, Sandy Hook. One of the adverse uses up there was body dumping.

Interviewer: (Pause) Yeah, that would be an adverse use!

Butowsky: Yeah, people were dumping bodies in the park all the time. So, I wrote that up. And, again, you know, that’s the Park Service. Wrote up about a twenty-page report, and I handed it in, and then the bosses up above thought, “Oh, that’s too much! We don’t need to tell Congress all that.” So, they cut it down to about two or three pages, and they sent – then they sent it up – and then they sent it up to the Congress.

Interviewer: Okay, they sent your report down to two or three pages on adverse uses? Butowsky: Yeah, they cut it down to two or three pages.

Interviewer: Oh, they didn’t think Congress could handle more than that?

Butowsky: Yeah, they didn’t – no, they didn’t – they didn’t – they didn’t think Congress could handle that. I’ve written a lot. I wrote a lot of reports, and, even afterwards, I wrote – you know, I wrote landmark theme studies.

Interviewer: So, how did you get – let me just interrupt for a minute – how did you get to the Constitutional study?

Butowsky: Well, I – that started because, in ’81, there was a re-organization. The Landmarks program came into our – my office. But it came in with only one person. That was Jim Schere. And then, you know, I had – they had studies that needed to be done. Congress had mandated, for example, we would do a study of the American space program, and they didn’t have anybody to do it. And I was always interested in the space program, so I said I would do it. So, I wrote four reports on the American space program: *Recon Study, Man in Space I, Man in Space 2*, *Man in Space Alternatives Study* – just popped them out, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom! Travelled all over the – all over the country. So, that’s how I got into the – and then, I did Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, an NHL study, which I could spend a half hour and talk to you about, but you don’t need to hear me in that much detail. And then, after I finished that – and there was another requirement that came down from the Congress to do a study of the war in the Pacific. And they had assigned a retired Park Service historian to work on that, but it was – it was too massive a study. He couldn’t get it done, and so I talked to them; we split it up. I said, “You take the land side sites, and I’ll do the naval ships.” So, that’s what I did. I did the naval ships, and it took me nine months to do it. I traveled all over the country. I visited surviving war ships. That was nine hundred pages. And I was very – I was very proud of that. I remember, I got that done in nine months. I came in on the weekends and I worked on it, and, at the end of nine months – and my boss was very good, Ed Bearss. Yeah, he would leave you alone. “Whatever you need, okay, but just, you know, don’t bother me. But, at the end of the time, hand it in. Hand in the study.” So, I remember I came in, and I put it down on his desk, and I’m really proud, you know. I did all the ships, had photographs, had everything in there, and he takes about ten minutes, and he thumbs through it. And he looks up, and he says, “Butowsky, can I tell you something?” “Yeah, sure!” He says, “We’re not running a vanity press here. Lose half the photographs.” Oh, okay. But I didn’t listen to him. I took it and sent it in to be printed the way it was. And the reason was, by that time, I was handling all the money in the office. And he didn’t know where the money came from or how much money we had.

Interviewer: So, you knew – you knew you could afford to print that?

Butowsky: Yeah, I knew I could afford to print it. And I knew, if we couldn’t afford to print it, I would just take the money from another office. I would just put other offices’ account numbers on the [unintelligible], because nobody ever checked. Nobody ever checked. So, I printed – I printed that one. But I was – that was – they turned it over to a really cheap-o printer. You know, it was nine hundred pages, and you open it up, and the spine would crack on it. The pages – the pages –

Interviewer: Oh, that’s too bad. Well, nine hundred – it should have – should have had comb- bounding, probably?

Butowsky: Yes. So, that was – that was the second one that I was working with. And then I finished that one, and then I was getting ready, you know, to work on another one. And this time, they said I could pick the one I was going to work on, and I was always interested in science, so I wanted to do a five-volume theme study on the progression of American science. And the first one was American astronomy, so I was outlining astronomy, but at that time, they had this Constitution Theme Study, which –

Interviewer: Now, how did that come about?

Butowsky: It came about because, in 1985, the Director of the National Park Service went to a cocktail party in which he ran into the Chief Justice in the Supreme Court. And the Chief Justice, who was Warren Burger at the time, said, “Mr. Director – Mr. William Penn Mott, what is the Park Service doing to commemorate the two hundredth anniversary of the signing of the Constitution of the United States and the beginning of the Supreme Court?” Mr. Mott said, “I don’t know.” So –

Interviewer: (Chuckles) Did he say, “I don’t know, but I’ll find out?”

Butowsky: “But I’ll find out.” So, he turned it over to – well, it came down the line. One day, Bearss said he’d decided to do a Constitution Theme Study. And that was originally going to go to another historian, Jim Charleton. He was going to do that. But Charleton was in the middle of a Recreation Them Study. He had a hundred sites in there, and he couldn’t finish it up. I was all finished, and I was always interested in the Constitution. I used to teach Constitution when I taught American History. I used to spend two class periods on it, six hours, and I had a lot of books in my office on the Constitution.

Interviewer: Now, a Theme Study – when you talk about a Theme Study, were you – were you looking at sites that had a connection to whatever the theme was?

Butowsky: Yeah, all sites around the country that are associated with that subject. I mean, so, with the Constitution Theme Study, they all had to be sites associated with legal cases that came before the Supreme Court or people who worked on the Supreme Court or lawyers, whoever were, you know, in cases that went before the Supreme Court, so that’s what it is. If it doesn’t have anything to do with the Constitution and the Supreme Court, then forget about it. So, I sat down, and I put that together. It wasn’t too hard to put together, but I was lucky because I could work at the offices of Covington & Burling,

a big office in Washington. It had two floors – a wonderful office, and I would go over to the Supreme Court building and use the records in the Supreme Court building. So, I rapidly, you know, outlined about a dozen or two dozen studies –sites, that I thought would be good to look at. Of course, you had the fifty-year rule, so there were a lot of studies – a lot of cases that were good but, you know, were within the fifty-year rule, so I couldn’t look at them. And there – then, there were also a lot of sites that hit within this study, but they had been done before – previously identified. But, when I – you know, I looked at it, I came up with Brown v. Board of Ed. And there was opposition in the office.

Interviewer: To that?

Butowsky: Yeah, to Brown v. Board of Ed, because, at that time, it was only thirty years old. Don’t forget, this was 1986, and they said, “No, you can’t – wait, you can’t do that. You have to wait until fifty years to determine national significance. Well, that’s – and I looked at Ben Levy, and I looked at Ed Bearss, and I said, “You gotta be nuts!” I said, “This is a – this is a case that’s nationally significant now! There’s no doubt about it, so, I want to do Brown v. Board of Ed.” And I knew Brown v. Board of Ed was the Monroe – not the Monroe School, the Sumner School in Topeka, Kansas. So, that’s how I started. I did the Supreme Court Building; I did Brown v. Board of Ed; did the Pennsylvania County Courthouse, and, you know, two sites in Philadelphia. The rest had already been done, or they were – they were too recent. Some of the sites, particularly like the Scottsboro case – the Scottsboro boys in Alabama – I found the courthouse. They had a picture of it. It looked exactly like it did in the 1930s. So, I went down there, and I, you know – and I walked into the courthouse, and I said, “Wait, something’s wrong here. It’s a modern courthouse!” What they did was, they had demolished the old courthouse, and they had kept the façade.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. Façadectomy! (laughs)

Butowsky: It didn’t have integrity. But that was good, because, while I was down there in Huntsville, Alabama, I met Governor Wallace of Alabama. So, that’s how I got to Topeka, Kansas. I just sent them the notice letters.

Interviewer: Okay, so – but they told you that that was too recent, and you –? Butowsky: Yeah, they said – they said it was too recent.

Interviewer: And you went ahead and did it anyway?

Butowsky: And I did it anyway. I argued – I argued with them. I said – I said, “You know, it could have been done yesterday. I said, “It’s nationally significant. There’s no doubt about it, and, you know, I’ll prove it in the documentation.” So, I sent out the notice letters and made my first trip out there in 1984 or ’85. I think it was 1985. And the first place I stopped off was the Kansas SHPO office. And I met Martha Hagedorn-Krass, who worked in the Kansas SHPO office, and I talked to her and the SHPO about it, and, you know, they didn’t take a position one way or another. They thought it would be Landmark quality – again, the fifty-year rule – and I said, “Well, why haven’t you nominated it the

National Register?” They didn’t have staff to nominate it to the National Register. So, we drove over, and I looked at the Sumner School, and –

Interviewer: So, originally, this was – the plan was for Sumner School?

Butowsky: Just the Sumner School. I didn’t know anything about the Monroe School. You know, somehow, I missed that in my research. I didn’t – I didn’t know – I didn’t know the – I didn’t know the people out there. I mean, all I dealt with was the SHPO. So, I went out there, and I looked at the – at the school, and it’s a beautiful school. I don’t know if you’ve been out there to see it.

Interviewer: Are you talking about Sumner?

Butowsky: Sumner. I don’t know if you been out there to see it. It’s a – Interviewer: Yeah, it’s not – yeah. It is. it’s not in great shape.

Butowsky: Well, when I went out there, it was – it was in good shape. It was an operating school. Yeah, I’ve heard it’s fallen on hard times, which I find very sad. But, yeah, I went out there, and then I – then I came back, and I wrote up the nomination. And that was in –

Interviewer: For?

Butowsky: For the Sumner School. Interviewer: I mean, for Landmark status?

Butowsky: Landmark status. It was in my Constitution Theme Study, and it sailed right through. I got it right through the Advisory Board. Then, after it got through the Advisory Board and it became – was designated about – well, they invited me out to do the – to give a speech for the dedication of the plaque. And I came out, and I gave the speech, and I remember I met Mrs. Montgomery – you know, the widow of Oliver Brown. She was there. And that’s where I met Cheryl. I don’t really remember Cheryl. I just remember –

Interviewer: So, you didn’t work much with Cheryl?

Butowsky: No, I didn’t work with Cheryl at all. I didn’t know Cheryl. And I don’t even know if Linda was there at the time. But I met Mrs. Montgomery, and I was really impressed with Mrs. Montgomery. I mean, “Wow! Now, this is –”

Interviewer: Was she someone you worked with to get information? Butowsky: No.

Interviewer: No. Only the SHPO?

Butowsky: Only the SHPO. I didn’t need any information. Its’ all documented. I mean, there are books!

Interviewer: Right. There are books and books and more books!

Butowsky: Books! I mean, I knew – I knew exactly what I was going to say. So, I went out there, and I did the Landmark nomination. And I did the – and I went out there, and I gave the speech. And, when I gave the speech, Robert Dole came out there. And he attended the speech. And, I remember, I was so – I wrote this nice speech, about five or six pages long. And then they invited the head of the Fire Department out there, retired, and he was a black man – to give an introductory remark to introduce me for the speech.

Interviewer: Why did they invite him? Butowsky: Who knows?

Interviewer: Oh, okay. It was important to them?

Butowsky: But they invited – it was important to them. It was important to me. And it was – it was summer. It was really hot, and the sun was shining down. They had all the kids out there. And I remember, waiting there, and this guy goes on and on and on and on. And he talked for about twenty minutes! And I thought, “Everybody’s going to have heat stroke here!” So, then, it was my turn, and I finally got up there. So, I got up, and I said, “Okay. Well, here I am. I’m from the Park Service. The school is now a Landmark. Here’s the plaque.”

Interview: (Laughs) “Goodbye?”

Butowsky: Goodbye speech. And I gave a copy of the speech – Interviewer: (Laughs) And they were all grateful?

Butowsky: Yeah. And I gave a copy of the speech to Bob Dole who printed it in the Congressional Record. So that was alright.

Interviewer: Oh, okay, so the speech that you prepared, you didn’t actually give? Butowsky: No, I didn’t actually give –

Interviewer: You gave a Reader’s Digest Condensed Version?

Butowsky: Yeah. I thought somebody would have a stroke or something out there, sitting in that hot sun, that guy was talking so long. I run into that in Topeka, a lot of times. I want to go out and do a public meeting, and I’m supposed to give a speech and have somebody introduce me. They tend to get up there on the platform, and they drone on and on and on and on. One thing I noticed, though, when I went out there, you know, they – it was in the local news, whatever, the papers, whatever – we were having the Dedication. And there were all these people showing up on radio and TV and in the newspaper, saying how much – how hard they’d worked for – on – and all the work they did on it, and they were so proud –

Interviewer: For getting Sumner School on the - as a Landmark status?

Butowsky: Yeah, a Landmark status. I didn’t know who they were! You know, people coming out of the woodwork! I didn’t – I didn’t know who they were. They were claiming credit for the nomination. I didn’t care. So, the Sumner School became a Landmark. And after it

became a landmark – about two or three months later, I got a letter in the mail from Cheryl Brown Henderson. Do you know who Cheryl is?

Interviewer: Yes, I do. I’m interviewing her later.

Butowsky: Okay. And Cheryl wrote me a letter. It was a calm and reasoned letter. She just sent me a letter noting her support for the Monroe School in addition to the Sumner School. “You did the study, and you picked the Sumner School, but what about the Monroe School?” I said, “What’s the Monroe School? I don’t know.” And then, you know, she sent me, “Monroe is the black school.” And then I’m getting ready to write a letter back to her, saying, “Thank you very much, but, [unintelligible] usually, you know, we only pick one site per Landmark, and everybody knows the Sumner School’s the site for the Landmark.” The Sumner School seemed to be the right school. So, I’m getting ready to write that back, and then I get a call from Bob DeForrest. Have you ever heard of his name?

Interviewer: DeForrest? No.

Butowsky: DeForrest. Bob DeForrest. Bob DeForrest worked in Washington. He was a black man. He didn’t have a college degree. He was an Army veteran. But he saw it as his job to get black sites in the National Park System. He was always promoting black sites. So, Cheryl got ahold of Bob DeForrest, and Bob DeForrest got ahold of me. And I knew Bob DeForrest. We were old – we were old drinking buddies. And Bob DeForrest said, “I want you to – Cheryl’s coming into town. I want you to meet her.” “Okay.” So, I went down, and we went to a local hotel, and I met Cheryl. And I’m listening to Cheryl, and I’m thinking, “She’s right! I only got half the story. I only got the one school. I didn’t get the black school.” After talking to Bob Deforrest, I agreed to look at the documentation again and examine the Monroe School. Now, I’ve got the problem. I’ve got to Landmark for the black school. How do I do that? Do I do another Landmark? No, what I do is I make the original Landmark include the Monroe School.

Interviewer: Was this the first time that a Landmark had included two separate buildings?

Butowsky: Yes. So, I said, “That’s what we’ll do.” And then, I’m talking to Cheryl, and we’re talking around the table there, and she was saying it, and the more she talked about it, the more enthusiastic I got, and I said – well, I said, “You know, we don’t have to just make it a Landmark.” I said, “Why don’t we make it a National Park?” And her eyes lit up like that. And that was the beginning. That’s where the idea came from to make it a National Park. So, another trip to Topeka, Kansas. And then I went to the Monroe School, and I met Cheryl out there. I spent a day with her. I met Mark Stueve, who was the owner of the company that owned the school.

Interviewer: Yeah, at the time?

Butowsky: The school had been – yeah, the school had been sold off. He was trying to use it as a warehouse, but business is bad, and nothing had happened, and I went back to the SHPOs office again, and I held a couple of meetings.

Interviewer: Did you have trouble getting them to agree that you were going to put two buildings in the same Landmark?

Butowsky: No.

Interviewer: It just had never been done before, and –?

Butowsky: Well, it wasn’t– I don’t know if it had never been done before, but it wasn’t very usual. But, you know, I made a mistake. I missed half – I missed half the site. And the story. So, I wrote the nomination up for the Monroe School. Then I had to get that through the Park System Advisory Board. Got that through the Park System Advisory Board.

Interviewer: How long did that take?

Butowsky: Oh, that took about two years. And it wasn’t easy. And then we got it through the Park Service Advisory Board. And I had asked the questions about – you know, the rule on why we should do the Sumner School. And I didn’t want to take out the Sumner School. I said, “We have two sites. And I just missed – I just missed one site.” So – and then we got – we got the Monroe School, and I went out for the next – the next Dedication. And they did the same thing –

Interviewer: (Chuckles) Was it the same speaker?

Butowsky: I think it was a different speaker, but it was another guy – another black guy, [unintelligible] in the local community, got up. And the sun is shining down, and I’ve got my big speech, and he’s yakking, yakking, yakking, yakking, and so, “Here’s the Landmark.” But that was it. That was - that funny. By that time, it had been a Landmark, and I had already worked on the Alternatives Study. The Park Service initiated an Alternatives Study for the site and started –

Interviewer: What does that mean?

Butowsky: You look at a site and you say, “Well, what should we do with it? Should we just not do anything? Do we make – do we make it a park? Do we make it an affiliated area? Yeah, what are the alternatives, and what are - what do the alternatives cost? And I remember I had the alternatives – and they – and in the Alternatives Study, you’re not allowed to say which is the preferred alternative. So, I did the Alternatives Study, and I remember they had a reception in the school. Mark Stueve arranged it. And the school, you know –

Interviewer: In Monroe School?

Butowsky: In the Monroe School. School wasn’t fixed up or anything, you know. It was still pretty much of a wreck. And Bob Dole was there. And Bob Dole – Bob Dole comes in. He’s got my Alternatives Study. And I looked at it, and I said, “Senator Dole, I see you – I see you have my Alternatives Study. Do you like it?” “Yeah, I like it, Harry,” he said, “but I’ve got one question for you.” “What’s that?” And Senator Dole says, “What am I supposed to do, use a goddamn Ouija board to figure out what you guys want?” So, “Well, you see, Senator, we’re not allowed to say, but I think National Park. National Park.” And from

that time on, I started to work with Bob Dole and Cheryl Henderson to make it a National Park. And that was a concerted campaign, and –

Interviewer: Okay. So, the Alternatives Study was: no action; have the State make it into a park –? Butowsky: Or have – it was – there was no action, have it become an affiliated area of the National

Park System, become a National Park, or become a State – a State historic site. And I think those were the alternatives. There might have been a fifth alternative, too. I don’t – I don’t remember. And then, you know, you just outline what the cost/benefits are and what the Park Service –

Interviewer: Oh, I see. Right. What the Park Service would have to do in order to fulfill that alternative?

Butowsky: Yeah. The Park Service, in my opinion – and this is my unofficial opinion – didn’t really want a park out there. I didn’t get any help or cooperation from the Midwest Regional Office. I had the feeling of distinct hostility on the part of the Midwest Office.

Interviewer: Why, do you think?

Butowsky: Well, I have a feeling it was because they saw this as the Washington Office, me, coming in and –

Interviewer: Forcing a park upon them?

Butowsky: And ran in their back yard. Well, alright. So, what do you want me to do? This is the - it was my job. It was the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. So, we worked on that, and I worked on that with Cheryl and with Bob Dole and with – I don’t remember who else. Deborah Dandridge was another one. We worked on there. And we worked on that for a long time. And I helped write the enabling legislation for the park. You know, the Senator wanted to introduce the legislation. When the Senators and Representatives introduce legislation, they don’t write the legislation themselves. They go to the Park Service. So, I was the one who, you know, went to the – went to the public about – the Legislative Affairs Office and Bob Lamb. We wrote the enabling legislation for the park, and then Bob Dole introduced it. Then it actually –

Interviewer: Okay. And did – let me ask you this, just – was Cheryl – was the Brown Foundation and Cheryl involved in writing the legislation?

Butowsky: Yes.

Interviewer: Were there any special requirements that they wanted to have in there?

Butowsky: Not that I remember. I mean, I – I mean, whatever we wrote, I sent it to them. I worked very closely –

Interviewer: Oh, you just – they reviewed it?

Butowsky: Yeah, they reviewed it. I worked very closely with Cheryl. And I – by that time, I had a high opinion of Cheryl and her father, and of Linda Brown. And I mean, this is a site that is very close and personal to them, and I wanted to make sure I didn’t put anything in

there that was, you know, not correct. You know, they were very closely involved. Again, Cheryl was right there. And, of course, Cheryl had started a – well, she had started the Foundation. And she wanted to do something, you know, with the site, and she wanted to, you know, set up an organization that would help get the story of Brown

v. Board of Education out. They were getting a lot of letters from schoolkids all over the country asking for information, and we needed to institutionalize this, so I thought, you know, a great way to do it is make it a National Park. So, that’s what we did. We made it a National Park. And I think I remember it became a – it became a National Park, what? 1992 or ’93.

Interviewer: Approximately. I know the first site superintendent was there in ’94, I think. ’93 or ’94.

Sändra Washington.

Butowsky: Yep. ’93 or ’94. I remember – I remember the – Sändra Washington brought us down there. Sändra Washington opened up an office in the courthouse. And that’s the courthouse where the case was originally held – heard, I should say. Yeah, so Sändra Washington was there, and then it took another seven or eight years before it got fully funded and established. And they didn’t have the official Dedication until about 2002, 2004.

Interviewer: 2004 is when that was. Did you go to that? Butowsky: Oh, yes, I went to it. And it was – Interviewer: (Chuckles) More talking in the heat?

Butowsky: I was walking down – it was in the heat. Yes. They had George Bush there. I remember, George Bush flew in on his big jet, overhead. And I’m saying to myself, “If I knew George Bush would get to do the Dedication, I probably wouldn’t have done the nomination – wrote the –”

Interviewer: (Laughs) Well, you had no way of knowing who was going to be president at the time, so –

Butowsky: I know that. But I remember going – I remember going in there. And they had Jessie Jackson there. Jessie Jackson [unintelligible] that site. And they had the, you know, the Senators there. And they had the Secretary of the Interior there. And they had the Director of the Park Service there. Had all these people there from the local community who got up and how proud they were, and all the work that they did on it. Oh, bullshit! They didn’t do any work on it! I did all the work on it, along with Cheryl.

Interviewer: You and Cheryl did the work?

Butowsky: Cheryl and I did the work. We created that park. And, you know, Mike Bierman, from the Denver Service Center, he helped a little bit. But it’s amazing that – how people come out of the woodwork and just take credit for something.

Interviewer: Well, of course, Bob Dole helped.

Butowsky: Yeah, Bob Dole helped. Bob Dole was instrumental. So, I was – I didn’t even get – I didn’t even get to be on the platform. I was sitting there –

Interviewer: Did they ever mention your name?

Butowsky: Cheryl mentioned my name. I was out there with the masses, you know – you know – you know – in the sea of – one, in the sea of – in the sea of faces there. But that was nice. I remember they had a reception in the courthouse that night, prior to the Dedication. I remember I was out there with my wife, and I was saying, “I know that guy over there.” He was a man standing by himself. And I said, “I think he’s a reporter in Washington.” So, I walked over, and I said, “Hello, I’m Harry Butowsky. I’m with the National Park Service.” And he says, “Oh,” he said, “good to meet you Harry. I’m Justice Souter. I’m with the Supreme Court.” (Laughter) “Good to meet you, Justice Souter.” What do I know? I was using their library. I wasn’t – I wasn’t engaging in the Court. But then – but then we got the – hey, we got the – we got the park established.

Interviewer: And so, do you remember when you first saw Monroe School? Because, I suppose, when you went to Topeka the first time, you went to see Sumner.

Butowsky: I didn’t see it. Yeah, I didn’t see it. It was only when I went back to – the Landmark was done in ’96 or ’97. And then, when I went back again [unintelligible] in ’98 or something, that’s when I saw it, and I met Mark Steuve, who was the owner there, and –

Interviewer: Right. So, that would have been in the ‘80s?

Butowsky: Yeah, it would have been – it would have been in the ‘80s. Then I met Cheryl while I was out there, too. And I wanted to meet Cheryl, you know, to talk to her about it. And I also – I was also interested in what other – the other Black sites were in Topeka. Because, you know, you just don’t have the Monroe and the Sumner Schools, you have satellite – other sites associated with other recent people and the other participants in the case.

So, we took a tour of Topeka. Unfortunately, most of the property had disappeared. Like Cheryl’s home, you know, where her and Linda originally lived, that had been – had been demolished. So, I –

Interviewer: What did you think of Monroe School and the surroundings when you first – you were thinking in terms of being a National Park.

Butowsky: Well, I thought – yeah, I thought it was beautiful. I looked at it. I mean, they were – all the – all those schools were done by the same architect. Done in the Italianate style. Did the High School. They are all beautiful buildings. And I’m thinking, “You know, this could be a National Park.” And, I mean, “Okay, so I don’t see buffalo out on the south forty.”

Interviewer: (Chuckles) But, usually when you’re – when you’re doing that, there’s a Feasibility Study to make sure that –

Butowsky: Yeah, suitability, feasibility. I did the Suitability/Feasibility Study. Interviewer: Okay. Looking for parking and bathrooms and –?

Butowsky: Parking and bathrooms, I did all that. But, no, I thought, “Look, this is great! I mean, it’s a contained building.” You got the – you got the [unintelligible]. And there was some question whether or not – there was a proposal of the city that they were going to put up a – not a shopping center, an industrial park near the – near the school. And there was a question, if it became a Landmark, what was going to happen to that industrial park. I don’t think that idea went anywhere, but, “Yeah, this is – you know, this will make a good park.” And I kept – I kept seeing school buses coming up. And the key to this park is going to be the interpretation. Want a park staff, want a qualified Historian, qualified park interpreters who know the law, know the Constitution, and know the history of the case and will really give these students an education in civil rights and why we had to have a case like Brown v. Board of Education, and how this relates back to the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States. And how the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, Fifteenth Amendments relate back to the drafting of the Constitution of the United States.

Interviewer: Right. Yeah. Okay, did you – in the course – it sounds as though, in the course of writing the National Landmark nomination, that it was pretty smooth sailing. You didn’t have any hiccups and bumps on the – in the road?

Butowsky: I knew the history.

Interviewer: You knew the history and you talked to the SHPO, and –?

Butowsky: SHPO didn’t know the history. And the people out there didn’t know the history. Now, what you have to do is, you have to look at my Landmark nomination. Have you read my Landmark nomination? You have to read it. And then, you have to go to a publication called *CRM Bulletin*. Yeah, because I wrote a number of articles for *CRM Bulletin* on this. Oh no, I knew the history backwards and forwards. If you look at my Constitution Theme Study, I have a hundred and twenty cases there, and they’re all tagged to certain clauses in the Constitution. Now, you had – you had to know the law, and you had to know the legal history. I wouldn’t – I wouldn’t say the SHPO knew.

Interviewer: So, you didn’t have anybody say, “No, this shouldn’t be a Landmark?”

Butowsky: Well, you know, they were concerned about the thirty-year rule. I did have – I did have one person out there say it shouldn’t be a Landmark. You know, I listen to this person, “Fine, thank you very much.” And then I went on. You have to know the history. You know the history, then, I mean, you’re on – you’re on steady ground. And I held public meetings out there.

Interviewer: Okay, and the public came to them?

Butowsky: Yeah, the public came to them. Had about forty – Interviewer: What did they say?

Butowsky: About forty or fifty people there. And I explained what a Landmark was and why we were studying it, why we were amending it. And then they asked questions: what did it mean, and, you know, why didn’t we do this at first, and whatever. And I said, “Well, I’m

sorry. I screwed up. I made it the wrong site.” No, I didn’t screw up. I picked the right site, but – I picked one of the right sites. So, if you do a Landmark theme study, you have to know the history. That’s the thing. And then, that can – and that’s what we did in the Landmarks program. We knew the history. When I did the study of the American Space Program, I knew the history. I would argue with the Air Force historians and the NASA historians about the American Space Program. I wouldn’t – I mean, Naval history, usually, that wasn’t a problem. But, when I did the Astronomy Study, they hauled me down before the Association of American Astronomers, or whatever, and, boy, were they giving me a hard time down there! So, I mean, I looked at them, and I said, “Well, if you think I’m wrong, come before the Advisory Board, and you present your case, and I’ll present my case, and we’ll see – and we’ll see which one they agree with.” I even got into a tremendous argument with the Smithsonian in Washington. Smithsonian didn’t want me to nominate their Saturn 5 in Huntsville, Alabama, and they gave me all the reasons why we couldn’t nominate it. Basically, they saw it as a Park Service intrusion into, you know, a property that they owned. And they didn’t – they didn’t want the Park Service putting its stamp on their Saturn 5. And I remember, I finished that meeting, and they said that, if I didn’t back off, they were going to sue me. I looked at them, and I said, “Sue me.”

Interviewer: Oh, my goodness! Did they?

Butowsky: No. I didn’t care. I said, “Sue me.” I didn’t – I didn’t mind because I knew the law. I knew this – I knew the history. I was – I was within my bounds. I always kept within the regulations.

Interviewer: You stayed in your lane?

Butowsky: Yeah, I stayed in my lane. So, I mean, they all had their notice letters. I was totally within the confines of the requirements of the Historic Sites Act of 1935 and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. And, I mean, I – sometimes, the Park Service would have to rein me in because I would go up before the Advisory Board and I’d get some of the idiots on the Advisory Board, “Well, why are you doing this? Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah,” you know? “You’re – aren’t you hampering national defense?” I remember one of those people saying that was Senator Gordon Halley of Nevada. And I’m just about ready to tell him, “Look, you dummy,” I said, you know, “you were in Congress when the law was passed. You were in Congress when the law was passed setting up the Preservation Act of ’66. You were in Congress when the law was passed saying we would do the study. I’m simply doing the study. If you don’t like the way it’s done, according to the law, then go in and change it!” The Senator – but they wouldn’t do that. My boss,

Ed [unintelligible] Bearss – which was Ben Levy, and Ed Bearss, and Jerry Rodgers – he was always worried about me because I would get up in front of a meeting, and he would say, “Alright, Harry,” and then go and meet the Assistant Secretary or the Secretary,” and say, “Harry, I want you to go in there. I want you to – this is what your going to do. You’re going to address points a, b, c, and d, okay?”

Interviewer: (Chuckles) “And nothing else!”

Butowsky: Yeah. He says, “And then as soon as you finish, I want you to shut up and sit down.” So, that’s what I do. I go “a, b, c, d,” and I shut up and sit down. Then, I remember the Assistant Secretary looked at me, and he says, “Thank you for coming in, very much, Harry.” He said, “I guess you don’t really understand about this too much, do you?” And I kept my mouth shut. I understood everything, but I couldn’t say anything. Everything that I knew was documenting. Footnoting. And that’s how – that’s why they – you know, they couldn’t get – they couldn’t get me. When I did the study on the American Space Program, I came to the conclusion that it was the Air Force Base - that [unintelligible] Air Force Base sending a letter and lied. And that was the significance of the property. They didn’t let me go to that [unintelligible] meeting. I wasn’t allowed to attend that meeting, but the Associate Director went. So, what I did was, I gave him about a two-page paper, and I documented everything, so he’d have something there.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. So, he’d have some talking points there? Okay. So, after Brown v. Board was established as a park, they had some – there – once a park is established, there’s always a flurry of studies that need to be done after that, and one of them was an Interpretive Themes Study. Do you recall going to that?

Butowsky: Yeah, I worked on the Interpretive Themes Study, but, by that time, I don’t really remember too much about it. It was a long time ago. It was thirty years ago. Yeah, I worked on the Interpretive Themes Study, and we had a – we had the lawyer who had represented the School Board at the time. I don’t know if you’ve heard the story about the lawyer who represented the School Board. When the suit was filed, the School Board in Topeka, Kansas, said, “Okay,” they said, you know, “we’ll just integrate all the schools. No problem.” No, they didn’t want to take it to court. But Thurgood Marshall said no.

Interviewer: “No, you can’t do this integration?”

Butowsky: Thurgood said, “No, we want to go to court.” Of course, it was the perfect case, you understand. You know, the schools were equal.

Interviewer: Right. Well, the facilities were equal. The teachers were getting equal pay.

Butowsky: The facilities were equal. Teachers were getting equal pay, and there was great pride in the black community that the – you know, their education there was as good as, if not better, than the education they got in the white schools. But even though it was equal, “separate but equal” had a detrimental effect on the black students. And that’s why – that’s why the NAACP and Thurgood Marshall wanted to use Brown as the [unintelligible] case.

Interviewer: Yeah, I read *Simple Justice.*

Butowsky: Richard Kluger? Yeah, well, that’s the best book on the subject. So, we had a – we had the attorney for the School Board there, and he was – you know, he came to the thing with – about the themes, and then we had another attorney who worked with Thurgood Marshall, a white guy, who also wrote a book about it. I can’t remember his name. He was the only white man on the whole [unintelligible] team.

Interviewer: Is that right?

Butowsky: Yeah, and he was – he was there. I have his book. And I had him sign the book. I don’t know what happened to it. I think in my various moves, it might have –

Interviewer: Do you remember – do you remember anything in particular about the Interpretive Themes program?

Butowsky: No, I don’t. I don’t remember.

Interviewer: Okay. Well, there were a number of participants that I thought – I didn’t understand why were –d they were there.

Butowsky: Well, I didn’t understand why they were there, either. But I know – I know – Interviewer: Oh, okay! So, I’m not going to ask you why they were there.

Butowsky: I know why they put some people there. Some people came to that meeting, and they were – they were put in there because – can I be brutally frank?

Interviewer: Sure!

Butowsky: For diversity reasons. But they didn’t know the history. Interviewer: Oh, I see. Well, that’s unfortunate.

Butowsky: And they contributed nothing to the – I came before that Interpretive Themes Study, and I gave a tour – or a lecture on the evolution of constitutional democracy, the Magna Carta, and the Brown v. Board of Education. You know, I traced it all out through English constitutional law and through the American Constitution. But I remember there was – there was one young girl there. I shouldn’t say young girl. She was a Black girl.

Interviewer: It seemed like there was a sorority or a fraternity cohort there.

Butowsky: Well, I don’t remember a sorority or fraternity cohort, but not all the people there were knowledgeable. They – and they didn’t understand the history, and they had nothing to contribute to the history. They were put there for showcase purposes.

Interviewer: Okay. Well, that’s too bad, because it makes it difficult to formulate some interpretive themes if the people you’re talking to aren’t familiar with the story.

Butowsky: Well, Mike Bierman and I knew what to do. Mike Bierman was the DSC Planner who was in charge of it, and I knew what to do. I mean, Cheryl knew the history. And I was – I was the key person. I don’t want to brag, but I knew – I knew that history in and out.

Interviewer: Okay. So, what would you say were the biggest challenges to – well, let’s just say, getting the park – getting the Monroe School to be a National Park?

Butowsky: Oh, it wasn’t that there were so many challenges. There were just so many steps you had to do.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. It’s just the lengthy process?

Butowsky: It’s a lengthy process, and you had to stay after it, day after day after day. You had to – you had to write the legislation. Well, it didn’t get passed this term of Congress, so I get the legislation re-introduced again, and then there are questions that come down. Had to answer a question that came down. So, it was just a – just a lot of time and you had to stick to it. And I was good at sticking to it. And I worked closely with –

Interviewer: (Chuckles) You harassed people into submission?

Butowsky: Yeah, I worked closely with Senator Dole, and I worked closely with Cheryl. Cheryl had the political contacts in Topeka and – that I didn’t have. I didn’t have the political contacts. Because you have to have the support of the local community, and she got the support of the local community. And Cheryl had the contact with Senator Dole and Senator Kassebaum and the Representative for the area. But it just – it doesn’t come about – you know, parks aren’t created overnight. It takes years, sometimes. Sometimes they are created overnight, but they’re not very good parks. But it just – it just took a long time. I mean, they had to pass legislation. And Congress would adjourn, so [unintelligible].

Interviewer: Right. You had to keep re-doing it?

Butowsky: You had to keep re-doing it, and you had to – you had to keep after it. Interviewer: Do you happen to recall Don Castleberry?

Butowsky: Yeah, I know Don Castleberry, the head of the Midwest Regional Office. And – Interviewer: Right. What his involvement was?

Butowsky: His involvement was zero. Interviewer: Oh. Up until –?

Butowsky: Am I – am I brutally frank? Interviewer: Yeah.

Butowsky: He had no involvement. He had no interest. Nothing. Now, I don’t know –

Interviewer: Okay. So, is he one of the people that you felt had a rather negative attitude toward –?

Butowsky: No, I wouldn’t say that he had a negative attitude. I didn’t talk to him. Cheryl would know it. I didn’t – I didn’t interact with him at all. I was in the Washington Office. But I never saw any – I never saw any interest or support from the Midwest Regional Office. I had – I had the feeling that they resented the fact that we were doing this park, and we were, sort of, pushing it on them. And they didn’t really want this place to be a park.

Now, I’m just giving you my personal opinion.

Interviewer: Yeah. That’s one of the reasons we do oral histories, is because you can’t always tell what really went on from the documents you can find.

Butowsky: Okay. Yeah. Don Castleberry – I mean, he was a nice guy. He was – he was the Regional Director. But Cheryl knew him. Cheryl interacted with him.

Interviewer: So, ask Cheryl?

Butowsky: Yeah, I didn’t – ask Cheryl. I didn’t – I didn’t – I didn’t interact with him. I was strictly Washington Office. And I reported up the line in the Washington Office. And I worked with Cheryl Brown Henderson, and I worked with the SHPO out there. And the SHPO was supportive, you know. And Martha Hagedorn-Krass was a very good person. She would write the architectural descriptions and so on. I didn’t know what architectural – I’m not an architectural historian. You know, it’s got four – it’s got four windows on it, and it’s got a door. I’m not – I’m not interested. I’m not interested in that. But I’m not saying that Castleberry was opposed to it.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. He just didn’t seem to be involved?

Butowsky: He wasn’t – he wasn’t involved at all. And I’m not sure who in that office was involved from the Midwest Regional Office. The first – the first person in the Midwest Regional Office that showed up was Sändra Washington.

Interviewer: Okay. Yeah. She claims Don Castleberry tricked her into coming (laughs). Butowsky: Oh, I don’t – I don’t have any knowledge of that.

Interviewer: So, of all the things – of the things that you did for Brown v. Board, what would you say was the thing you were most proud of doing?

Butowsky: Getting it on the list! Interviewer: Getting it on the – which list?

Butowsky: The Landmark! The Landmark Study list. I mean, putting it in the Constitution Theme Study. I consider that to be the jewel. I mean, I had – I did the Supreme Court building.

Interviewer: Right. So – because you had to fight to get that one on there?

Butowsky: And I know – yeah, and I did the First Bank of the United States. That was another battle. The Philadelphia – the Philadelphia office didn’t want the First Bank. There was an argument. You don’t make a Landmark site if it’s a National Park. Well, you know that’s not true because the site may have significance beyond which the National Park was established. The Bank was put in the park for its role in funding the public debt of the United States. Well, the First – you know, the First Bank had a Constitutional significance beyond that. So, I did the First Bank, the Second Bank. I gave the Supreme Court building and the Brown v. Board of Ed. I did the Pennsylvania County Courthouse at Pennsylvania County, Virginia. But a lot of the other sites, they really would have been great, but the Constitutional study had already been done.

Interviewer: Right. So you didn’t need to do them?

Butowsky: I didn’t need to do them. And then there were some sites that, you know, I knew, you know, I should have done, but then you could apply the thirty-year rule. There was one

site I wanted to do – I wanted to try to [unintelligible]. And it was, you know, [unintelligible] – you read the – the police have to read you your rights when you’re arrested.

Interviewer: Okay. Yeah, the Something Act (laughs).

Butowsky: Yeah. Well, that’s a court case, and that – oh, that was – Interviewer: Miranda.

Butowsky: Yeah, Miranda. So, I went down there to Alabama, and I visited the – I actually visited the defense attorney who was then in charge and represented Mr. Miranda. And I went to see the – you know, I was going to do the building where he had been arrested. He had been, you know, breaking into a tavern. And I went to look at it. The thing – the thing was a shack. It was barely standing. So, I said, “Oh, Christ!” you know, “by the time I get back and do the nomination, this thing is going to be collapsed.”

Interviewer: Yeah, and I think – wasn’t that one of the problems with the other four sites for Brown

v. Board – was that the schools in the other states weren’t suitable for making into a National Park?

Butowsky: I didn’t investigate the schools in the other states. They had – Interviewer: Oh, okay. You just went for Monroe, and that was it?

Butowsky: I went for the Sumner School because – the case is Brown v. Board of Ed. And, you know, they picked – they picked Brown – I mean, they just happened to put him at the head of the case, and then, the story of Linda. And, of course, the story of him taking them to the school whenever – that’s not necessarily a hundred percent true. But I didn’t – I didn’t investigate the other – the other schools in there because – I mean, I knew there were other schools, but you had to pick one site, and that’s the site in the popular mind that’s associated with Brown v. Board of Ed. And then you [unintelligible] people. And you have a photograph of Linda in front of the school. So, no, I did not investigate the other schools. So, it’s not that I looked at them and I rejected them. I just – I just went – really, I only had about nine months to do the study. And, you know, you’ve got a study to do, you have a certain amount of time, and you got a budget, and you had to get it in. And if I was – if I was doing a civil rights study, then I would have looked at some of those other schools, like the – you know, the one with the High School that they made a National Park –

Interviewer: Little Rock?

Butowsky: Little Rock. See, my mind is – my mind is –

Interviewer: So, I want to ask you something that’s only – that is peripherally related. Butowsky: Go ahead.

Interviewer: You said before we started the interview that you invented auto – Administrative Histories, so, could you just give me a brief summary of how that came about?

Butowsky: Yes. Well, we wanted an Administrative History program. Interviewer: But – I mean, did you –?

Butowsky: We had Administrative Histories before that time. Ed Bearss wanted to re-start the Administrative History program. But it hadn’t been formulized. So, Ed Bearss, Barry McIntosh, and myself sat down and said, “Okay, let’s re-start the Administrative History program. What is it that you need in an Administrative History? And we talked it over, and then Barry wrote it down, and it’s up on the park history program website: “How to Do an Administrative History.” That’s what we wrote. And –

Interviewer: Okay. But, before you did that, there had been Administrative Histories written, but they were, maybe, not standardized?

Butowsky: Not standardized. Barry McIntosh had done an Administrative History in 1969, and that’s why – that’s why he was – he was very good. Administrative Histories are some of the most important studies that we do in the Park Service.

Interviewer: And they’re fascinating!

Butowsky: And they’re fascinating! And they have been done for many years. But there had never been an Administrative History program.

Interviewer: Okay. And when was this?

Butowsky: So, Ed Bearss wanted to set up an Administrative History program. So, we set it up in 1982. And I had an alternative for doing that. I was a GS – what was I? A GS-13 at the time. And that was going to be a 14 slot, so I wanted to set it up, and I wanted to apply for it, and I wanted to become the 14 – the youngest Bureau Historian. But, by the time we got it established, I’d been only a – I’d been a 13 only for six months, so they – I couldn’t – I couldn’t apply for it. That was alright. I had other studies to do. But – I contributed to it, but the main authors of that were Barry McIntosh and Ed Bearss. And, you know, that document is now on the park history program website. Which, incidentally, the website for the park history program is terrible. I created that website. It hasn’t been updated in eight or nine years.

Interviewer: Oh. At the time, it was great because it was new, right?

Butowsky: Yeah, but they would – they would never update it. I’m very, very distressed over what’s happened with the role of history in the National Park Service. It’s collapsed. Do you ever read National Park’s *Traveller* magazine?

Interviewer: I do not get it, so I don’t.

Butowsky: You don’t have to get it. You get it on the Web. I’m always writing op eds for that magazine on the state of history in the Park Service. And the state of history is collapsing in the National Park Service. Our trained Historians are leaving and that’s a longer issue we can get into.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay. Well, we have talked for over an hour, and so I want to ask you one last question, and that is: when I made the appointment for this – we’ve talked about a lot of different things. Was there anything that you wanted to talk about that I haven’t asked you about?

Butowsky: Well, I would say there are three key paid people responsible for the creation of that park. I mean, besides myself.

Interviewer: Okay. Besides you?

Butowsky: You know, I’m the center of the hub. But then the other two people were Cheryl Brown Henderson and Bob DeForrest. And you’ve got to give credit – Bob DeForrest died many years ago – got to give credit to Bob DeForrest. I had a lot of respect for Bob DeForrest. He didn’t have an education. He was just an Army veteran, but his job was to have Black sites in the National Park System, okay?

Interviewer: That was his goal?

Butowsky: That was his goal. And it was through him that I met Cheryl, so –

Interviewer: So, what was his position? I can see what his goal was, but what was his – what about his position made it possible for him to do that?

Butowsky: He didn’t – he didn’t have a position. He was just a private citizen. Interviewer: Oh, is that right? Oh.

Butowsky: Yeah, he set up something called the Institute for African American Studies in Washington, D.C. He got one or two contracts to write, you know, Landmark studies for the Park Service. But he was, you know – you know, he didn’t really prosper in that. He was just a – you know, agitating for Black sites.

Interviewer: That was just a passion?

Butowsky: Yeah. And then he had a brother, Vince DeForrest, who worked in the Park Service. You never could give anything to Vince DeForrest because, whatever you lend, you never get it back again. But Bob DeForrest was instrumental. I would say the three key people were Cheryl Brown Henderson, Bob DeForrest, and myself. And then, you know, Bob DeForrest because he introduced me to Cheryl, and –

Interviewer: Okay. And, if she hadn’t – if you hadn’t talked to her, you wouldn’t have known that Monroe School should be on the – a National Landmark and –

Butowsky: Well, I knew about the Monroe School, but I was – when I got the letter, I was hostile, you know. I mean, “What do you mean? I’m a historian on the subject. I know about this.” And I knew I knew the history. And then I talked to Bob DeForrest and I’m thinking, “Well, this is Cheryl Brown Henderson. She’s the family. You know, maybe there’s something I could learn here. So, I’ll go, and I’ll meet her, and I’ll sit down.” And I went, and we met, and we sat there, and we had lunch, and she talked to me, and I

thought, “She’s right! I only got half the story! I should get the Monroe School.” And I didn’t know anything about the Monroe School. I didn’t know what it looked like, or –

Interviewer: Or where it was?

Butowsky: Well, I sort of knew where it was. But, when I went to Topeka, and I went to visit the Sumner School, I didn’t – I didn’t even look at the Monroe School. And the SHPO’s office, they weren’t suggesting that I look at the Monroe School.

Interviewer: Hmm! They thought – they were perfectly okay with just going with the Sumner School? Butowsky: Yeah, they were perfectly okay going with Sumner School. But then we got the Monroe

School. And then, afterwards – after that park was established – see, my idea always was that that park would be two units.

Interviewer: Both schools?

Butowsky: Both the Sumner and the Monroe School. And I still would like to see it be both buildings, but I don’t think that’s ever going to happen. I know the Board of Education got out of the Sumner School. I guess it’s not in that great a shape anymore, which is – which is sad. But I consider Brown v. Board of Ed. to be one of the five keystone parks in the National Park System. You have Independence National Historic Site. You’ve got Brown v. Board of Education. You know, Independence interprets the Declaration of Independence and the writing of the Constitution. Brown v. Board of Education talks about the implementation of civil rights which resulted in the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments. It’s – of the – of the cultural – of the cultural parks, it’s one of the top five. It’s a beautiful gem of a site. It’s a gem. I would be proud to be the Superintendent of that site.

Interviewer: Yep. (Laughs) Okay. Well, I’m going to turn this off. I want to thank you for coming by to tell me these things.

END OF INTERVIEW