

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

WITH

NORMAN J. REIGLE

DECEMBER 13, 1985

INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI

INTERVIEWED BY PAM SMOOT

ORAL HISTORY #1985-14

This transcript corresponds to audiotapes DAV-AR #3100-3102

HARRY S TRUMAN NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR



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ABSTRACT

Norman J. Riegle (August 12, 1937—15 December 15, 1992) was the first superintendent of the Harry S Truman National Historic Site. In this first of his three interviews, Reigle discusses the first two years' development of the home and the park headquarters; the persons and organizations involved in the process from his arrival in October 1983 to the Interview in December 1985. Reigle describes to contributions of such organizations as the City of Independence, the Jackson County Historical Society, and the Junior Service League.

Persons mentioned: Randy Pope, Thomas P. Richter, Benedict K. Zobrist, Bill Bullard, Sally Swank, Pat O'Brien, Barbara Potts, John Platte, Joan Sanders, Steve Harrison, Lisa Bosso-Houston, Jennifer Hayes, Brent Schondlemeyer, Thomas Melton, John Kawamoto, F. A. "Andy" Ketterson, Jr., Jim Ryan, Warren Hill, Margaret Truman Daniel, Sarah Olson, Sue Kopczynski, David McCullough, Jim Schack, Elizabeth Safly, Pat Kerr Dorsey, Vietta Garr, Rick Jones, Skip Brooks, and Cindy Ott Jones.

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH

NORMAN J. REIGLE

HSTR INTERVIEW #1985-14

STEVE HARRISON: This is an interview with Norman Reigle, Superintendent of Harry S Truman National Historic Site. The interview is being conducted December 13, 1985. Conducting the interview is Pam Smoot, historian with the National Park Service in the Midwest Regional Office, Omaha, Nebraska. The interview is being conducted in the administrative offices of the National Park Service at 223 North Main, Independence, Missouri.

PAM SMOOT: Mr. Reigle, would you please tell us your full name, address and birth date, please?

NORMAN J. REIGLE: We are ready to go? Okay, yes. Norman J. Reigle, birth date, August 12, 1937, and my current address is National Park Service Superintendent, Harry S Truman National Historic Site.

SMOOT: Where is your hometown?

REIGLE: Lebanon, Pennsylvania.

SMOOT: Where are you employed?

REIGLE: At National Park Service, Harry S Truman National Historic Site.

SMOOT: Were you employed prior to coming to Harry S Truman National Historic Site?

REIGLE: Yes, I've been working for the park service since 1968. Previous assignments included Grand Teton National Park, Lassen Volcanic National Park, Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Cape Lookout

National Seashore, the Denver Service Center, Rocky Mountain Regional Office, and Ozark National Scenic Riverways.

SMOOT: When did you first come to Independence, Missouri?

REIGLE: October 2, 1983, was my EOD date.

SMOOT: EOD date? Would you explain that, please, for the record?

REIGLE: Entrance on duty. That was when I officially transferred from Chief Ranger at Ozark National Scenic Riverways to Superintendent, Harry S Truman.

SMOOT: And why do you think you were selected for this position?

REIGLE: If you find out, tell me. I don't know why I was selected for this position. I think you'll have to ask Randy Pope, the Acting Regional Director at the time who made the selection.

SMOOT: Okay, can you recall for us your first day on the job in Independence?

REIGLE: Nope. My first day on the job in Independence, we . . . Let me back up. I actually visited Independence on an advance house hunting trip about a month before arriving. The first day on the job was spent like many other first days on the job, running around and trying to get myself acclimated and so forth.

At that time, the park was operating on an interim basis. Tom [Thomas P.] Richter was the ranger in charge up till that point, and the park service was operating out of a room at the Harry S. Truman Library and Museum. We were there as the guests of National Archives and Records Service, and operated out of a one-room office facility on a temporary basis.

The first day was generally spent in orientation by Tom Richter,

who introduced me to some of the principal contact people in the community at that time, which included Dr. [Benjamin] Zobrist and his staff of the [Truman] Library. It also included key officials in the city of Independence, particularly the mayor and the planning director, Bill Bullard, some of the members of the Jackson County Historical Society, including the executive director Sally Swank, Pat O'Brien, who was at that time the historic preservation officer for the city of Independence. The first day was basically an orientation, familiarization with the site itself, the operations, and the community involvement.

SMOOT: Were you the only one being orientated? Were there any other staff members there?

REIGLE: No, I was selected as the first superintendent. There were no other staff on board at that time except for Tom Richter.

SMOOT: What were your first impressions of the home?

REIGLE: Well, the first time I went into the Truman home was when I had come up on an advance house hunting trip about a month before, sometime in September of 1983. At that time, I contacted the guard on duty through Tom Richter, advised him we were coming to go through the house. I was accompanied by my wife at the time. I think probably the most vivid recollection I have of that first tour through the house was at the conclusion I had been more or less guided through by one of the guards at the time, my wife and myself.

And as we were leaving the house, the guard asked the question, he said, "You know, I think it's kind of strange." He said, "You went through

the house and you asked very few questions, and you also didn't touch anything or look inside any of the drawers or bureaus and so forth." I reflected on that since and I think that reaction basically came about from the fact that to me the house spoke for itself, it didn't require any questions. I think the reason I didn't touch anything or open any drawers or look in any closets was that I don't think I would walk through your house as a guest and open your drawers or look through your closets. And I believe that impression kind of . . . I think the impression was basically I was a guest as I walked in that house. I'm sure I was most impressed. I think I was deeply moved by the experience of having been in the house at a time when very little had been rearranged.

SMOOT: Do you remember what the guard's name was?

REIGLE: No, I don't.

SMOOT: What type of attitude did the community have toward the National Park Service coming in and sort of taking over the house?

REIGLE: In terms of taking over the house, there were very, very positive feelings by the community. I was not aware at that time and am not aware at this time of anything other than a very positive feeling for the National Park Service, a very positive feeling for the park service management of the Truman home. I think the community in general was very proud of the Truman home and was very anxious to get the Truman home on-line, not only for the opportunity to see it themselves, but also for the opportunity of the tourist potential and the potential revenue into the community that would be generated from getting the Truman home on-line.

I will say that at the time I arrived there was a very strong controversy raging over expansion plans of the First Baptist Church. That had started prior to my arrival and was in full gear by the time I walked in the front door. Battle lines were drawn, the sides were split, it was pretty much of a no-win situation. The First Baptist Church wanted to expand. The neighborhood residents and the preservation community, especially those not aligned with the First Baptist Church, were solidly against any expansion by the church. So there was a raging controversy brewing when we got here, and in terms of our community involvement at that time, it was pretty much of a no-win situation. Things were too deeply entrenched and there was a lot of . . . There immediately developed an adversarial relationship between that faction of the community and the National Park Service. So there was an adversarial relationship set up on that issue, but it did not relate to the home itself or the opening of the home. It related to the authority of the National Park Service.

SMOOT: Can you recall any groups that the National Park Service got support from?

REIGLE: Well, yes. Right from the outset we had a very strong, supportive relationship first from our sister agency National Archives and Records Service, the Harry S. Truman Library and Museum, and their Director, Dr. Ben Zobrist. We also had very strong support from the city itself, particularly Mayor Barbara Potts, several members of the city council. We had very strong support and a working relationship with the city planning department, which under the structure of the planning department at that time, historic preservation and tourism were also under the planning

department of the city. That has been the department that we have worked with most closely and continue to work with very closely. We had strong support and a working relationship with the Jackson County Historical Society right from the onset. Later on, we developed some strong support from several service organizations in general, but the Junior Service League of Independence in particular. I think that's probably another item we may want to talk about at a later date, and how our relationship with that Junior Service League developed.

SMOOT: In what ways was support given to you by the Jackson County Historical Society?

REIGLE: Well, perhaps at this point maybe I need to get a few things on the record as to how a lot of things developed. I think maybe we need to . . . Let me jump beyond your question here.

When I first arrived in October of 1983, there were no solid plans relating to the operation of the home at that time. There were a number of things that were suggested, there were a number of things that were hinted at, there were a number of things that had been explored, but basically no decisions whatsoever had been made relating to operation of the Truman home, how it was going to be operated, and in what context. Perhaps the thing that was foremost at that time in the thinking of many would be that the park would operate out of the Harry S. Truman Library. In other words, that we would have our administrative facilities there, we would also have visitors originate out of there, whether they would get a joint ticket for the library and the Truman home, whether they would be shuttled down from

the Truman home from the library. There was talk about a joint sales facility at the library, also. Those things had been talked about and explored, but there was nothing firmly committed at that time.

Shortly after my arrival here, I went on my first trip to region for orientation and for general planning purposes. This was about three weeks after I got here; probably the third week in October or fourth week in October I went. At that point, we were of course too late to put much into the budget cycle under its normal budget cycle program. We had already missed the 1985 call; the 1984 call was long behind us and had been missed. We had \$250,000 allocated to the operation of the Harry S Truman National Historic Site and an FTE of three. FTE is "full-time equivalency."

I brought these problems up to then acting regional director Randy Pope. Randy assured me that we would not have carte blanche and that we were in dire financial straits as a region, particularly as it related to FTE and programmed operational dollars. I was then directed to return to Independence and give a plan on what I thought was necessary for the interim operation of the park. I returned to Independence, and over the course of the next several weeks, culminating in a three-day session at my kitchen table, drafted up a memorandum that did set the guidelines for the future of this park; and that memorandum, which was the initial planning mode for this park, is still being followed today. We do not have a general management plan at this point, and for all practical purposes, that memorandum I wrote in November of 1983, with minor exceptions, is as good today as the day it was written. And that has been the interim

objective of this park.

As I was writing that memorandum, we began to look around at what our options would be and what would be the best course to pursue. You have to remember that this is now nearly November of 1983, we've been charged with getting the home open by May of 1984, we have an FTE of three, \$250,000, Tom Richter and myself are the only staff members on site. We also have a general management plan in progress and we have a dedication in progress that has to be accomplished by May, also.

At that time, the city of Independence was highly motivated by the centennial year of Harry S. Truman, which would be the hundredth anniversary of his birth, 1984. They were beginning to formulate plans for a city tourism program. To that point, a city tourism program had been nonexistent. The key to this program were discussions relating to a city shuttle bus. Nothing had been firmed up on the shuttle bus, but there were discussions relating to the shuttle bus and they were preparing to go out on what they call a "Request for Proposal." We became very actively involved then in the negotiations with the City and discussions with the City relating to their proposed shuttle bus system and their proposed tourism program.

Also, in the meantime, in discussions with Dr. Zobrist and so forth, it became clear to both of us that there were a number of things that would be against the long-range continuation of an operational situation out of the Truman Library. For one thing, it was projected that our staff would be just too large to be accommodated within the existing facility at the Truman Library. During that original discussion, I think it was figured that the staff

might be two or three people; but it became clear as things were developing that our staff would expand beyond two or three people. It also became clear that the two operations operating, since we have such diverse purposes, would probably be incompatible with each other over the long run: the Truman Library being very research-oriented, very academic-oriented, the National Park Service being very operational. And in short, the facilities to accommodate our needs, in terms of storage, in terms of a place to permanently orient visitors, just did not exist, and did not exist in a manner that would be compatible in the long run. We could have gotten by there for a year or two, but in the long run it just wouldn't work, and our discussions clearly indicated that.

So, in my November memorandum—I forget the date, it was the third or the eighth or something like that—but I think in terms . . . This interview is being done primarily for the administrative history of this park. I think that is a very, very key document for any future consideration of an administrative history. All the groundwork was really laid in that memorandum.

At that point, it was decided that I would attempt to negotiate with the City for a staging facility that would be compatible with their tourism program. I had no one particular facility in mind at that time. Several things were bandied around. First, we had to have a city-owned structure; that sort of eliminated the courthouse right off the bat. They had the old log cabin courthouse. The fire station did not come into play at that time.

I did meet in a private closed-door session with Barbara Potts, the

mayor of Independence. I explained the situation to her, told her where we were going and why, why we wanted to get there, and explained the benefits to it. The benefits at that time, as I saw them and as were articulated to the mayor, were, “Look, you’re trying to get a tourism program going. You’re trying to get a volunteer program going and trying to get a shuttle program going, and you’re trying to get tourists into the square area, which is basically economically depressed at this point. Here’s how I see it at the time. If we go into competition with the City of Independence for volunteers, write off your volunteer program. We are not going to have any trouble getting volunteers to lead tours through the Truman home. They’re going to come flocking to lead tours through the Truman home, and I can see the Vail mansion and the Bingham-Waggoner going down the tubes. I’ve got limited dollars and a limited amount of people, and what I propose on doing is I work with the City of Independence for a volunteer program and we use our volunteers through the City, but the volunteers are used to dispense tickets to the home. Also, we locate in a City facility. That way, the tourists will be affiliated with the City, we’ll get the staffing we need to dispense the tickets, and we won’t use volunteers in the Truman home. That will keep the City’s program solvent, it will keep the volunteer program functioning under one main coordinator, i.e. the City, and you’ll be able to staff the Vail and the Bingham-Waggoner and the proposed ticket center.”

The mayor agreed with this, a strategy was developed, a political strategy was developed to implement this, and through working with the

mayor and several other council people at that time, we were able to sway the political opinion of the city council and get the job done. And we have lived up to our part of the bargain.

The [Truman] Library was very pleased in this solution also, because the library--and when I say the library I mean Dr. Zobrist--was very pleased because he could see that we would be giving added emphasis to other parts of the Truman story, we would be not in competition with his facility but would be aligned with it, and it was the best of all possible worlds.

At that time then, once the decision was made to work on that basis, then the question became where. Through working with the City and some of our contacts in the City, particularly Pat O'Brien, the historic preservation officer at that time, current Fire Station Number 1 was identified as a potential area.

At that time also, the Jackson County Historical Society, which operates out of the Jail Museum next door to that facility, was being administered by Sally Swank, who is the executive director. Pat and Sally had a very close personal relationship at that point in time also, so anything that was communicated to Pat got to Sally, no question about it. So I was approached by Sally that we would take a unified frontal assault in accomplishing this, that the Jackson County Historical Society would volunteer to staff the ticket center for us, in cooperation with the City. Volunteers would be provided by the City, and in return for that, the Jackson County Historical Society would be in a position to operate one

facility that could administer tickets to both the Jail Museum next door, could expand their facilities in the Jail Museum and would operate a gift shop downstairs. So the original scenario was this: The City would remodel the fire station downstairs, which at that time was being used as a shop facility for their city workers, parks people. Jackson County Historical Society would be responsible for getting the counters, display cabinets, that sort of thing, would operate a gift shop, would keep at least one or maybe two paid staff people at the ticket center at all times, and their staff would be supplemented by city volunteers. In other words, the city of Independence was paying for a shuttle system, paying to remodel the building, letting us use the downstairs facility rent- and utility-free. It was being operated by the Jackson County Historical Society in cooperation with city volunteers, and the park service was doing very little more than keeping our big grimy fingers out of the volunteer program. That's how that whole thing came about. That was the rationale for getting that whole program started downstairs, and for the first year it operated very satisfactorily.

At that point in time, back in October, that was putting us on the direction to take care of the staging component and the visitor facilities that would be needed to provide tickets and provide access to a shuttle system. What wasn't being taken care of at that point in time was the future administrative site for the National Park Service. At that point, only the downstairs was being considered, and it was only being considered for a single purpose. There still was not room for our administrative staff at the

library, nor had this provided any site support. When I say site support, I mean there was no place down there for curatorial work space, there was no space near the home for letting people wait out of inclement weather, there were no comfort stations there, there was no first aid facility, handicap access was a problem, and there were no office spaces available for employees.

So, in working with our regional office and so forth, an approach was made to General Services Administration [GSA], who are the people who are responsible for leasing buildings. Together, in concert with regional office staff and Tom and myself, we projected what our needs were going to be and established a set of criteria. All this is available in the files, the criteria that were established for leasing of an administrative site support facility. Are we about ready to break this up?

SMOOT: The tape is getting ready to run out.

[End #3100; Begin #3101]

REIGLE: Are we ready to go again? Okay, I was just explaining what the rationale was for going to General Services Administration to select a headquarters. The criteria were spelled out, and basically the criteria were that we wanted a place that had adequate space to house our projected administrative and site support functions at that time. We wanted it within two blocks of the Truman home, it had to have handicap access and so forth. We got excellent cooperation from General Services at that time. We worked with a very good group of people. I don't think it hurt at all that every time things bogged down a little bit . . . By that time, we had established a direct

pipeline to their regional director John Platte, and that kept things moving.

Basically, GSA found us an excellent facility at that time. It was to be located in a former funeral home that had been converted to offices at . . . I believe the address was 815 West Maple. It was about two blocks from the Truman home. This is all in the record. Although regional office laughed—and I saw you snicker—about moving into a funeral home, what the regional office never found out was that we were going to get the last laugh. The place was beautiful: all oak panel, a fireplace in nearly every room, a tiled fireplace.

General Services then entered into a contract. The building needed to be rewired electrically to meet safe electrical conditions, the floor coverings needed to be redone, there was handicap access to be provided, the building had to be remodeled to accommodate public restroom facilities, the walls were to be repainted, and the bottom line is it would have been a beautiful facility as well as a functional facility.

And at that time, one other thing that needs to be pointed out, we needed parking space, and we needed parking space near the home. A lot of this stuff didn't really come together until six goddamned weeks before the home was ready to open. But the City at that time was talking about just running their shuttle service from the beginning of May through October. It was obvious we'd have to have the home open year-round, so what were we going to do with people after October? Well, the only thing we could think to do would be to continue to stage them year-round, but regulate their flow to our headquarters the same way we regulate shuttles,

but parking would be provided at our headquarters. In other words, people would still come get a ticket, but, okay, you don't go down to the Truman home till eight o'clock or nine o'clock. Then, when you're finished, you come back and the next group goes down. That way, we felt we could probably get by with somewhere around eight or ten parking spaces down there because those spaces would be constantly fluctuating. So that was a very strong consideration, that there would be a back-up built into this thing for those periods of time when the shuttle was not operating. Because the shuttle was strictly experimental and it strictly was programmed just for what they called the tourist season, so something had to be done to handle those times when the tourist shuttle would not be operating.

Well, everything was going fine. Everything was right on schedule, the contract was let, the remodeling was being done, and things were looking just fine. Then, in March, late March, the city of Independence and Jackson County got hit with a horrendous ice storm, probably one of the . . . at least the papers at that time say it was one of the worst ice storms in years. There were lots of trees down, lots of wires down. We suffered quite a bit of damage at the Truman home through the ice storm. The Truman home was leaking, a number of branches had fallen off, and this was again late March.

Due to this ice storm, there were a lot of roofs damaged, naturally, and all professional roofers were busy fixing roofs. We were to take occupancy on April 15. The storm hit the last week in March somewhere,

the twentieth to the twenty-fifth. I don't know, you won't have any trouble finding that one. Just read the *Examiner* for that part of March, you won't miss it.

At that time, also, Joan Sanders had been on staff. I believe Steve Harrison was here. I don't know, were you here, Steve, by that time? You were here in March. We had Lisa here, Lisa Bosso, and I think we had a temporary working that week. I know Jenny was due to come on board April 1.

SMOOT: Jenny who?

REIGLE: Jenny Hayes. Jennifer Hayes, our secretary. And we were still in one room in the Truman Library. This one little room was probably twelve by fifteen. It had one desk, one telephone, one typewriter, six people, and on the fifteenth I think we had seven or eight more people to come in, so it was critical at the end of March that we have facilities to move the people into. We couldn't get fifteen people into one room, one typewriter, one telephone, so things were accelerating at repairing the facility at 815 Maple Street.

Okay, because of the ice storm, a minor leak was noted inside the building at the point of a little overhang on the back roof where the public restrooms were to go. They were just about to put in the wall coverings, drywall. So, in looking at it—they being the lessor at the time—figured, “We'd better get that roof fixed before we put the wall covering in or it's going to leak on the wall covering.” With no experienced roof repair people available because of the storm, as a personal favor, a former roofer

was contracted to do that job over that weekend, because it had to be done to keep on schedule to get the walls done, so the walls could be done to get the floor coverings in.

The inexperienced roofer at that time went up on the roof with a blowtorch, and in welding some of the seams, the structure, which was about eighty-five, ninety years old at the time, ignited. It ignited while he was on the roof. He attempted to put it out with a bucket of water, but by the time he got the bucket of water up there, it was so far gone that he had to jump off the roof. At that point, the building burned, completely gutted. This was on April 1.

I first got notice of this on April 1, when I was contacted by Brent Schondlemeyer, a reporter at that time for the *Kansas City Times* who called me and said, “Did you know your headquarters burned?” I did not, but I got in my car and drove down there, and sure as hell, the headquarters did burn. At this point, we have no headquarters, we have no site support, it’s April 1, the dedication is set for May 12, the staff is arriving April 15, the home is scheduled to open on May 15, six weeks.

I let the existing staff know about this by telephone that afternoon, and I guess if there’s one funny thing at this time, it was when I called our administrative tech Joan Sanders, told her what happened. Joan gasped a few times in disbelief. We hung up the phone. I contacted a few other people at that time. The phone rings again at my house and Joan says . . . Joan and I didn’t know each other all that well at that time, but I think Joan realized I had a sense of humor. But she called back and said, “Was this an

April Fool's joke?" And I said, "No, Joan, it wasn't."

The next morning, Steve was there. Total gloom, despair, and defeatism prevailed in our little one-room office. At this point in time, I think there was some real doubt whether we could open. I wasn't sure we were going to be able to pull it off. We told the press that yes, we were indeed going to make the attempt to open, and yes, indeed, we weren't going to abort at this time. But things were looking goddamn grim. I think the general feeling among the staff at that time was just one of regrouping. Having gone through it for six and a half months, right now we weren't going to let the bastards beat us at this point in time, although I frankly didn't know what to do.

But the calls started coming in. A lot of people came in and made some good offers at that time. Again, there was nothing much available at the library. I mean, we could have probably gone into the basement of the library. There was no time for GSA to make any other contacts for us. A couple of citizens—and I don't even know if I ever documented this, things were coming so hot and heavy—a couple other citizens did contact us with offers of places to move into.

But I think the real key came, and I believe the original suggestion came from Pat O'Brien. Pat said, "You know, the upstairs of the fire station is available." It had been used by the city credit union. "It is available. Maybe they would like to move in there." So I believe the way this came down is it was probably Pat O'Brien's idea—I can't swear to this at this time. It was probably Pat's idea, which was relayed to Bill Bullard.

Bill called me, and by God, I think by Tuesday we had come down, looked over the place. I had GSA here. We had ascertained that I could lease a place on a handshake, which is what we did, rent- and utility-free, and the decision was made by about Wednesday to move up here. By Friday of that week, not only had we recovered from all of our losses, we had actually gained a little ground and were back ahead of schedule by Friday of that week. In the meantime, we made contacts with the folks at the Center Stake to provide public comfort stations. We had made contacts with Reverend Tom Melton to provide employee parking and back-up parking in the event that we'd need additional visitor facilities. So we had made up for our lack of parking, we made up for our lack of administrative staff space, and we had our comfort stations all locked in through three cooperative agreements with two churches and the City of Independence.

Looking back on it now, it was probably a blessing in disguise. It's apparent now, but we didn't know it at that time, that for the majority of the visitors that come here, two blocks was a little too far to accomplish everything we wanted. Many of the older folks, two blocks is a little too far for effective site support, in terms of comfort station, general staging and so forth. We certainly could have made do with it. Where we end up in the long run at the completion of our GMP, I think we need to be a lot closer to the home than that. But some components of that may not have worked. The fact that as things developed the City decided to expand the shuttle service to year-round negated the need for the public parking that was a part of that component. But we then ended up upstairs in the fire station,

and through the efforts of Joan Sanders, by God, we were all moved in and ready to go on April 15.

SMOOT: Were there any other buildings considered prior to moving into the fire station and the building that burned? Were there any other buildings considered?

REIGLE: Nothing considered seriously. I think we need to separate that into again the two components: the component of staging for tickets and the component of administrative site support. In terms of the ticket staging component, that ball was kicked primarily to the City and a few things were kind of bandied around. Remember that Jackson County owned the courthouse. The courthouse had serious problems in regard to parking, for one thing. The only building that really got serious consideration was the fire station. In terms of our site support component, as best my memory serves me, and I think this is all documented, there were several other buildings looked at in the immediate vicinity of the Truman home.

SMOOT: Which ones were those?

REIGLE: Okay, one was what at that time was Park College. The other one was the building immediately adjacent to us across the alley, just south of the Truman home. I believe all this is in the record, why Park College was rejected, for a number of reasons, and they're all documented. The building next door was just not compatible, in terms of size or functionality, and would have required extensive, extensive alterations to meet the criteria that were suggested at that time.

SMOOT: Did you have direct contact with anyone in the regional office?

REIGLE: Oh, most assuredly.

SMOOT: Other than Randy Pope, of course.

REIGLE: Oh, yes. I mean, the whole region and the park and Harper's Ferry Center were all pulling together to meet this mandated deadline. At that time, we worked very closely with a number of . . . well, all components of the regional office at that time. We were setting up a park.

I think if I'm to name some names, which I'm happy to do, I think as far as the administrative history of this park is concerned, Randy Pope has got to be the real godfather of the Harry S Truman National Historic site. John Kawamoto and his staff were plugging away right from the beginning. John Kawamoto, Andy Ketterson, and the whole staff had long before I got here set in all the mechanisms in gear to take care of the cultural resources of this park. And mainly I've been concentrating on the operational aspects, which were the things that I was most charged to get ready. Branch Cultural Resources had already, long before my arrival, gotten a good start on the cultural resource management of this park. And most assuredly in the administrative history, the players I've named in this so far, particular Andy Ketterson and John K., really need to be discussed. We had to work very closely with Jim Ryan and his shop in programs and budget, personnel, all these components, to get things going. We had to work very closely with Warren Hill and the Operations people, particularly as it related to security and interpretive prospectus and interpretive planning, interim interpretive planning, and all these other good things that had to be done through Warren Hill's shop and so forth. So, in answer to

that question, did I have contact with the regional office at that time, no more than twenty-five or thirty times a day.

SMOOT: What role in particular did Andy Ketterson play?

REIGLE: What role did Andy play? Andy was really the first National Park Service representative here. Before the position was set up as . . . Before there was a position of Ranger in Charge, Andy Ketterson was park service liaison from Omaha to the Truman home, and Andy was very instrumental in developing the priority-setting, in terms of the major structure itself, in terms of the home itself, to get the home open to a position that it would be ready for the public.

Some of the major things that come to mind, without any notes in front of me, that had to be considered at that time were the electrical rewiring for the electrical safety of the building, repair of the sidewalks, stabilization of the roof, which was leaking. The exterior restoration was being considered at that time, but it was determined that we were not going to be in the midst of painting and having the scaffolding up when we were dedicating the house, and there just wasn't time to get that done the way it should be done in the eight months that were remaining. Randy Pope made that decision, a very, very wise decision in retrospect. Andy was key in getting the preservation and restoration of the Truman home off to a solid footing. A remarkable job.

SMOOT: When was the staff for Harry S Truman National Historic Site hired?

REIGLE: Well, it was a sequential, progressive thing. Tom Richter was here before I was. I think Tom came, oh, in January of 1983. I got here in October of

1983. The next position that was hired was that of an administrative tech, which was Joan Sanders. I think we had Joan on board somewhere close to Thanksgiving. It's all in the record. We worked a deal so we'd have an interim curator here. Through the efforts of Warren Hill and several others, we arranged to have a curator detailed from Morristown on an interim basis. I believe that was the next position to arrive.

Incidentally, Joan Sanders has done a little chronology, from the time she arrived up until the home was opened, and it's in a little file that I intend to . . . If I leave before the administrative history is done, it will be earmarked as an administrative history, but it's called, "For the Love of Harry." It kind of gives the sequence of who arrived and who arrived when, and it's a nice little summary from Joan's perspective, and it certainly needs to be consulted in an administrative history.

Backing up again, it was later decided to hire a permanent curator rather than the detail curator, and the sequence was that Steve Harrison arrived before too long, before we were open. I forget the exact sequence, but I believe Steve got here sometime after the first of the year. I believe Lisa Bosso got in before that time. Positions were being staffed as we could get them in, as they were commensurate with the FTE that we had at that time, with the dollars at that time, and with the need at that time. Obviously, our last need was for interpreters, so the interpreters were hired and brought on at the end. Obviously, our first needs were an admin tech to pull together all the paperwork and handle all that sort of thing. We needed a curator right now to get going on the objects. Essentially, about, oh, a

little less than half of the staff was on board before April, and the rest of the staff came on about the . . . of the staff at that time, came on right after April 15. April 15 was a big EOD date for almost everybody. Everybody that wasn't here by then got here around April 15 of that year. So, with one or two exceptions, one seasonal or two, I believe we had just about everybody on board that we needed to have on board for the dedication and the opening of the home by the fifteenth. But it was a slow progress, we dribbled in, and so there was constant orientation and so forth.

SMOOT: Okay, what year are you referring to? You keep saying, "after the first of the year" or "April 15." Just for the record, are we talking about 1983?

REIGLE: Okay. No, remember I got here in October of 1983. The home was to be opened in May of 1984. So, when I say April, I'm talking about 1984. When I say May . . . 1984.

SMOOT: Did you ever meet Margaret Truman?

REIGLE: [chuckling] Yes, on several occasions. The first meeting we had with Margaret Truman Daniel was . . . I believe it was November of 1983. Mrs. Daniel came out to participate in some oral history interviews, and I believe . . . Let's see, there was another reason she was out then. I believe that had to do at that time with the filming of the "Smithsonian World," so her first visit was towards the end of November. Again, remember I came here at the beginning of October, she was coming for her first visit around the end of November. This is all in the record. At that time, the primary things were to get her approval on the tour route, to do the filming for "Smithsonian World," to do some oral histories for the furnishings plan,

and also to have a little meeting with her and myself and Randy Pope.

The general events that took place at that time were Sarah Olson, the Chief of the Branch of Historic Furnishings, and I met Margaret Truman together the first morning. We were to meet her at the back door of the house. That was the first time I met her. She walked in and introduced herself, I introduced myself and Sarah, and present at that time were Margaret Truman Daniel, Sarah Olson, myself, and the acting curator at that time. What was her name, Steve?

HARRISON: Susan Kopczynski.

REIGLE: Sue Kopczynski . . . were present for that initial interview, which was in the morning. I had lunch that day with her and Randy Pope at the library, where we discussed other matters, and then Ron Cockrell and myself participated in an oral history interview with her that afternoon. Then I believe it was the next day or the day after when filming was done for the “Smithsonian World” series with David McCullough. That series, of course, is available in our file, the outtakes, the script, and the finished program.

I believe the most significant thing, the first meeting I had with Mrs. Daniel was that she immediately came in and started rearranging a few things, particularly in the study, before she even took her coat off. We were attempting to get things down to . . . some of the critical issues first. And the most critical issue at that time was her approval of what the tour route would be through the home. Are we still hanging in there?

HARRISON: Let's take a break.

[End #3101; Begin #3102]

HARRISON: This is the third tape of our interview with Superintendent Norman Reigle of Harry S Truman National Historic Site. It's being conducted on December 13, 1985.

REIGLE: Are we ready to go?

SMOOT: Yes, we are.

REIGLE: Okay, we were talking about my first meeting with Margaret Truman Daniel.

SMOOT: You were talking about how she began to rearrange things.

REIGLE: Oh, yes, I remember what I was talking about. Okay, firstly, I guess to say I was nervous as hell would be an understatement. I was. I didn't know what to expect. The major thing we wanted to get accomplished at that time was her approval of the visitor route through the home. This was of course pivotal, because it would affect everything else that was done in the house. From the standpoint of planning for visitor use, curatorial accountability, everything was hinging on getting this route planned. There had been a couple of preliminary stabs made from regional office staff, particularly Jim Schack. Margaret herself had put in several suggestions in the way she wanted to do things. Nothing was solidly firmed up. The ultimate decision on how we wanted to go through was made just the day before. The principal players in establishing the initial tour route were Sarah Olson and myself, and Tom Richter who was there and had his suggestions, but those were the principal players in setting up the tour route.

The tour route was set up the way it was, and the way it remains to

this day, principally with several things in mind. We wanted to have a smooth flow through the house, we wanted to show everything that was possible to be shown. It became clear right from the onset that we wouldn't be able to take people into the Gates' bedroom. It also became clear that we didn't want to have people walking into either the living room . . . The main reason we didn't want people walking into the Gates' bedroom is we didn't know at that point how the Gates' bedroom should be furnished, and we still don't to this day, but we didn't want to have to have a jam-up of people, because there was no way to get to the Gates' bedroom without going through the living room and back out of the living room. We also didn't want people to go into the music room--at least I didn't. And the study then became a problem. That's when the decision was made to let people look into the study and then exit through the kitchen. I think those were the key things.

To kind of set the scene, here's this terrified, new superintendent, and Margaret Truman Daniel in her fur coat. And Mrs. Daniel, subsequently we've gotten to work together very well, and I have no complaints, but at that point I didn't know what to expect, and I don't think she knew what to expect of us. She immediately took the initiative, explaining how things were to be done, but she was concentrating on the study, and really, we were more interested in getting a more systematic approach rather than hit this, hit that, hit this, hit that. And what Sarah Olson and myself were attempting to do at the time was to get her down, first show her the way we wanted to go through the house, and secondly

then, to discuss things along that route that would be needed to be done immediately.

At this point, after some massive confusion in the study, I made the suggestion that we show her the tour route first, and started out by explaining what we were going to do, and immediately disagreement occurred. Mrs. Daniel felt that we should walk through the music room and through the study. As I reflect back on it, I think to this day that probably the one thing that got us off to a solid working relationship between Mrs. Daniel and myself, and at this point I had known her for less than fifteen minutes, I explained, “Mrs. Daniel, this will not work the way you want to do it because . . .” and proceeded to walk into the music room with my hands out and graphically demonstrated how vulnerable the pictures and the piano were going to be, the vases on the mantel underneath her mother’s picture, and described a 250-pound woman trying to squeeze by the television set. I think that really set the tone for our relationship, in terms of the later feedback I got from Dr. Zobrist that she was . . . This had an impression upon her that, one, we knew what we were doing, we knew why we were doing it, and I think the fact that we were ready to defend our principles made an impression. And I think from that point on things calmed down considerably. We had a wonderful interview that day, and with some minor things along the way, things have been going smooth ever since.

SMOOT: You mentioned earlier about Margaret moving things around in the study. What types of things did she move?

REIGLE: Very minor . . . Okay, things like the chair should be this way a little further, the table should be over in this position in front of the chair, and there was a little stool in there—I believe it’s there now—that belonged underneath the table—very minor things. Of course, at that point interpretively we wanted the home to reflect some occupancy by the President, and that particularly intimate area of the home . . . I mean, there was no longer after, what, eleven years anything that he had left there of any significance. So we did want some books on the table, and asked her to select some books. It think that actually came about the next day when . . .

Actually, the books that are on that table now and the arrangements that are on that table were in reality done several days later, right prior to the filming of “Smithsonian World,” when it was just David McCullough, Mrs. Daniel and myself in that room who wanted it prepared for the filming of the “Smithsonian World” episode. David McCullough said, “We want some things here that your father would want here.” That’s when the books that are there now were placed there.

SMOOT: Did Margaret Truman Daniel rearrange any other furniture or any other objects in the home in any of the other rooms?

REIGLE: Not substantially. I’m trying to recall any real specifics. I believe her first concern was in the study. Her biggest concern, I believe, as I interpreted it then and now, was for the setting of the table, the dining room table. At that time, we had some help from some of the folks at the library, Liz Safly and Pat Kerr. Thanks, Steve. [chuckling] They had done the principal

setting of the table, and she had some disagreements on where this fork went, where that fork went. They were primarily the things. Let me think down through on a room-by-room basis. Remember, at that time the first visit was myself and Sarah Olson, and Sue Kopcinsky were here. The game plan was to have the home look like it did when her mother and father were occupying the home, and the game plan was to eliminate the impact of Mrs. Truman's prolonged illness and items that were moved to accommodate that illness and items that were moved by others who during the period of time we're trying to interpret the home were not occupants of that home. We're talking about Secret Service, the nurses, and those folks were coming in and making adaptive use of furnishings in the home. The movement of things was extremely minor. There were some little stacking tables that, you know, one of them had been put there for a purpose of the nurses, and it was moved back to where it was when her parents were still alive. I think a wastebasket was moved from one location to where it was kept when they were both there. There were not a lot of major alterations at the time.

Mrs. Daniel expressed at that time concern for a couple of items that she didn't want out; one was a picture of Lyndon Johnson. There were two Lyndon Johnson pictures on the piano; she felt one was sufficient. There was an ashtray there that had come from J. Edgar Hoover that had the President's fingerprint chart on it. That apparently was being used by some of the house help at the time. Mrs. Daniel did not want that exhibited. There was a small statue, a little plastic statue that came from a

game set on Presidents of the United States. It had little plastic statues of every President from good old George what's-his-name up to the present. When I got there, that was on the sink. Apparently, maybe it was Vietta Garr or somebody had liked that, but apparently neither her mother or the President liked that, and she requested that it be removed. For the most part, very, very little shifting of things. To reiterate, you know, in many cases it was just a case of moving a chair six inches one way or the other. Not a whole lot.

As I recall that morning, the first morning, there were probably ten minutes of rearranging, ten or fifteen minutes discussing the tour route, and the rest of the time on the oral history interview, which went almost till noon with Sarah. There just wasn't time to move a whole lot, nor was there the need to move a whole lot.

Before the home opened, Mrs. Daniel was in the house, I believe, twice more, and on each occasion very, very little moved around. I'm trying to really wrack my brains. Steve, can you think of anything else that was moved around? Say no for the crowd if I've missed any.

HARRISON: No. [chuckling]

REIGLE: Can you think of anything that was moved?

HARRISON: That visit that I and Lisa were there, I can't remember, just before the dedication, _____ before, when she set the kitchen table.

REIGLE: Yes, as Rick Jones recalls . . . Rick is a permanent park technician and one of the first park ranger tour guides here, and was in the kitchen on the day of the dedication. I think a table setting was altered slightly to make it

compatible with how it should look, as Mrs. Daniel was exiting the home on the day of the dedication. But mostly objects relating to the table settings, which, of course, were not set when we first arrived at the home, but were set for the public. She took a great deal of interest and provided a great deal of help. Can you for the speaker, Steve, remember anything else that was moved that I may have missed? It was such minor stuff. I mean, there were no major objects at all at that point that were moved or relocated at all.

SMOOT: As chief administrator of the Truman home, what type of provisions were made for the security of the home?

REIGLE: As the chief administrator for the Truman home? The title is Superintendent.

SMOOT: Excuse me, Superintendent! [chuckling]

REIGLE: Okay. You have conducted an oral history interview with Tom Richter, I believe, haven't you, on this? Did that question come up with Tom? And the reason I'm asking that is because the security system was set up when I arrived, okay? I had no responsibility in that at all. I can speak to conditions as they existed and conditions as I understand them, but Tom would be a much, much better person to talk firsthand about how things came about. In a nutshell, as I understand it, after Mrs. Truman died, the Secret Service was gone in about twelve hours and there was no protection. I know that a guard service was hired by the estate, and later on, after the legislation passed, the estate was reimbursed for that guard service, and it was something around . . . It's in the record. It was either \$4,000 or \$8,000

or something like that. I know that came out of my first year's operating budget. I mean, that had to come out of the top, out of my first year's ONPS monies, which would have been fiscal '84 money. We did reimburse the estate for that, then subsequently went to a guard service that was contracted at our request by Federal Protection Service, a private guard company.

We had guards in the home twenty-four hours a day until the day we opened. Then we did not keep guards in the home when there were rangers there. So, naturally, in the early recruitment of this park, not knowing what was going to transpire, we did recruit for some folks that had some law enforcement background. I retained my commission. Our facility management specialist Skip Brooks had a commission. We retained that initially. We hired a lead park tech, Palma Wilson Buell, who had a commission. We hired two park technicians, Rick Jones and Cindy Ott, later becoming Cindy Ott Jones, who we sent to Federal Consolidated Law Enforcement Training. Subsequent to that, when the rangers were in the home we eliminated the need for twenty-four-hour service.

The next move was we disarmed the guards for the next contract, which resulted in a substantial savings of money just because of the basis of their wage scale. If you arm somebody, they're called a Watchman I or some stupid thing, and if you don't arm them they're a Watchman II, or vice versa, but it means about \$3 an hour. And much to the screaming and chagrin of the Federal Protection Service and the potential contractors, we went ahead and did that, saved ourselves about \$30,000 a year. Do you

have to go to eat lunch?

SMOOT: _____.

REIGLE: Oh, okay. Is it about out?

SMOOT: No.

REIGLE: Well, anyhow, we saved about \$30,000 a year by doing that, and we saw no need for armed guards in the house with this situation where they've got a radio to Federal Protection Service and a telephone to the police department six blocks away. Being a law enforcement type myself, I was appalled by the quality of guards we had running around with arms on. With arms on they were banging up the furniture. I wasn't at all convinced of the amount of sensitivity training for the weapons they had. We had one instance of a guard drawing a gun on a dog, another one of a guard drawing a gun on a Federal Protection Service operator. In essence you get what you pay for, and we weren't paying that much, and we were getting low-quality guard service. I said, "To hell with it, no more guns," and that was it.

I might say while I'm on this roll that my philosophy, my personal philosophy from the very beginning of this park, was that I would initially set up very strict guidelines, and if conditions warranted loosening up rather than the other approach of going too loose and having to tighten up later. And that's why we originally started the tours with a trailer position. That's why I have been working slowly towards removing guards, period. And I'll say I don't regret it for a minute. Things have worked out very well by going in tight on the number of people we were going to take, the

number of tours we were going to take, how closely those tours were going to be monitored. I think for the protection of the resource and long-range protection, and also from a public relations standpoint, it is a lot easier to come down hard at the beginning in the early history of a park and loosen up later than it is to be loopy-goopy, let people get used to doing some things and then tightening it up later. Consequently, I said no a hell of a lot more times than I said yes in the first year.

I think we do need to . . . maybe when the tape turns, get a little discussion on our relationship with the Junior Service League, which is an interesting story that we might want to tape here. How are we doing on the tape?

SMOOT: We're doing just fine.

REIGLE: Shall we roll on the Junior Service League? I'll give you a little quick background on that one.

SMOOT: How long will it take you? We have about . . . Is ten minutes long enough?
We can probably go about ten minutes longer.

REIGLE: Oh, hell, I can re-describe the world in ten minutes.

SMOOT: Okay, knock yourself out.

REIGLE: Okay. A little background on the Junior Service League. At present we have a very, very successful working relationship and program with the Junior Service League of Independence called the Bess Wallace Truman Memorial Floral Fund. And a little idea how this came about, and I think it's important for the administrative history to just kind of say what happened here.

Shortly [after] I arrived, I was made aware of the fact that the Junior Service League, a very, very worthwhile organization, had in the past served as the senior docents, guides at the Truman Library as one of their projects, were among the first guides at the Truman Library, and were very, very interested in doing something related to the Truman home. There were some real strong political considerations at that time, going back to the early part of this tape when we discussed the whole volunteer program and the rationale for not using volunteers in the home for supporting the city's volunteer program. We also didn't want to set ourselves up where we had a volunteer clique. Be it the Junior Service League or anybody, we didn't want to have a little clique, where if we were using volunteers we were screening them and we were giving exclusive rights to a volunteer program to a specific organization. Bad business, bad politics.

I was aware the Junior Service League was going to make some sort of a proposal to do something for the home. I managed to put it off for several months, basically till I could get my thoughts together and my act together. I didn't really know what they were going to come in with. I had heard some rumors that they wanted to have a benefit, a preview showing of the Truman home. I doubt if I ever got to write any of this stuff down—there was just too damn much happening in those days to write it down—but I did subsequently have a meeting with three or four representatives of the Junior Service League, and the proposal was made, and I think we still . . . I'm sure there's a copy in the files of the original proposal, but the

original proposal was to have a preview showing that would be exclusively done by the Junior Service League that would be used as a fund-raising drive for their general community welfare fund, which I suspect covered a variety of worthwhile projects. I was not about to do this, and I clearly stated it to the folks at that meeting. While I agree that the Junior Service League is a very worthwhile function, if I have a special preview fund drive before the Truman home is open for the Junior Service League, I should have one for the Heart Association, the Lung Association, the Amalgamated Brotherhood of Unwed Mothers, and God knows who else.

So, at our first meeting with Mrs. Daniel—and this is part of the oral history transcript that Sarah did—it became clear that her mother anytime she was entertaining guests in the home loved to have fresh flowers in the house, fresh cut flowers. I knew at the time that, hell, there was no way I can keep buying fresh flowers out of ONPS money, the option being silken flower arrangements is about the best I can do. And we knew at that time that there were planter boxes outside, that if we were going to properly portray the house as something lived-in, not a museum, I think the philosophy from the beginning was: We're going to show a house, a home, a lived-in house and home, and we're not going to show a museum. So you're not going to put silk flowers in the planter boxes outside. There were always living plants in the house. There were living dead plants in the house.

So, when this proposal was made to have this benefit, I was ready with a counter proposal. The counter proposal was yes, I think we can

work out something, but here's the game plan. We set up a fund, and all the profits come back to the home, and they all come back in the form of a floral fund that will provide fresh flowers in the home. At that time, every time, too, we were going to have a filming in the home with Mrs. Daniel, we had to go out and buy fresh flowers for the house and had a hell of a time scrounging up the money. We'd get it out of prop money. I don't have a superintendent's fund. You know, I didn't even have enough money to buy lunch. Am I still rolling?

SMOOT: Yes, we're still rolling.

REIGLE: The Junior Service League agreed to do this and had their debut of the summer White House. It worked very successfully. It's been a very successful, continuing program ever since. In addition to that, the meeting was very successful because we had another little imminent problem at that time that I think needs to be articulated. And let's cut here now, we'll roll onto the over side. Let me tell you what else the Junior Service League did to us the first year.

SMOOT: Okay, this is the conclusion of tape 3.

END OF INTERVIEW

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

WITH

NORMAN J. REIGLE

NOVEMBER 20, 1989

INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI

INTERVIEWED BY SHARON SIRON

ORAL HISTORY #1989-14

This transcript corresponds to audiotapes DAV-AR #4098-4101

HARRY S TRUMAN NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR



EDITORIAL NOTICE

This is a transcript of a tape-recorded interview conducted for Harry S Truman National Historic Site. After a draft of this transcript was made, the park provided a copy to the interviewee and requested that he or she return the transcript with any corrections or modifications that he or she wished to be included in the final transcript. The interviewer, or in some cases another qualified staff member, also reviewed the draft and compared it to the tape recordings. The corrections and other changes suggested by the interviewee and interviewer have been incorporated into this final transcript. The transcript follows as closely as possible the recorded interview, including the usual starts, stops, and other rough spots in typical conversation. The reader should remember that this is essentially a transcript of the spoken, rather than the written, word. Stylistic matters, such as punctuation and capitalization, follow the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th edition. The transcript includes bracketed notices at the end of one tape and the beginning of the next so that, if desired, the reader can find a section of tape more easily by using this transcript.

Jim Williams reviewed the draft of this transcript. His corrections were incorporated into this final transcript by Perky Beisel in summer 2000. A grant from Eastern National Park and Monument Association funded the transcription and final editing of this interview.

RESTRICTION

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ABSTRACT

Norman J. Reigle [12 August, 1937—15 December 1992] was the first superintendent of the Harry S Truman National Historic Site. In this second of his three interviews, Reigle discusses the managerial aspects of his job as superintendent. He discusses the financial and personnel concerns which involved his six year tenure as superintendent. Reigle also discusses his relationship with the Truman Library and Margaret Truman Daniel.

Persons mentioned: Thomas P. Richter, Joan Sanders, Barbara Potts, Margaret Truman Daniel, Benedict K. Zobrist, Alan Wheat, May Wallace, and William Penn Mott.

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH

NORMAN J. REIGLE

HSTR INTERVIEW #1989-14

SIRON: I guess we'll just start with the basics, as your name?

REIGLE: Norm Reigle.

SIRON: And your title?

REIGLE: Superintendent, Harry S Truman National Historic Site.

SIRON: And the date that you started here at the Truman Home?

REIGLE: October 2, 1983.

SIRON: Okay, and what are your duties as Superintendent of the Truman home?

REIGLE: Basically, to oversee all facets of the operation of the Harry S Truman Historic Site. Principally, matters dealing with personnel and budget are the principal things.

SIRON: Okay. And where were you stationed before you came to the Truman Home?

REIGLE: Well, immediately before coming here, I was Chief Ranger at Ozark National Scenic Riverways in southeastern Missouri, and I was about a half dozen other places in the Park Service before that. Did you want those places as well?

SIRON: Well, I think we've got that on the other administrative history. My interest there is the difference between coming from a national park and being in charge of things there and then coming to a historic park, and the differences between those areas.

REIGLE: Okay, there was quite a change. This is really the first historic site I had ever worked in. In fact, I couldn't even spell triple-X when I got here, which is our

compliance document. There were a lot of differences. I was used to working in parks with a larger land base, with a lot more law enforcement. This is my first job as a park superintendent. Most of the rest of my career was either in planning natural resources or law enforcement. The parks such as Ozark and the Tetons and Lake Mead and some of those, my time was principally spent dealing with park visitors or things that impacted park visitors: things from safety and law enforcement, anything that would directly impact the park visitor. And although my last couple of jobs as Chief Ranger, I was not dealing directly with the public myself, I was supervising those who did.

Here I guess things are a lot more confining and more restrictive, in terms of most of the things that were encountered in the context of running a larger operation were not encountered here. We have virtually no law enforcement. And as you're well aware of, most of our dealings with the public are very pleasurable experiences; whereas before, I was dealing with . . . oh, the 10 percent of the visitors that got in trouble were taking up 90 percent of my time, as opposed to here where I have virtually no direct contact with visitors at all.

But a lot of difference between the two areas, but there are a lot of similarities, too. Although I had no experience working with historic resources, I had worked a lot with natural resources, and I think that basic sensitivity can be applied in either direction, whether it be a cultural resource or a natural resource. I think once you learn to care for a resource or have the feeling for a resource, that can kind of be transferred. Is that kind of what you wanted, Sharon?

SIRON: Uh-huh. Now, it seems as though coming from a Chief Ranger's position in a natural park and then coming to a Superintendent's position in an historic park would be quite a challenge. How did you make that transition?

REIGLE: Probably with great difficulty. [chuckling] There was a lot of differences. I guess one of the other factors is this was also my first superintendency, so I had not had previous experience as a superintendent, so I had to get that feeling. And there's a lot of difference between being a Superintendent and being a Chief Ranger, and it doesn't matter what the size park.

The principal difference is the autonomy, and once you learn to kind of work with that a little bit . . . As a Chief Ranger you were answering to a Superintendent who had the ultimate responsibility, and you were peers with three or four other division chiefs who had similar ranking in the pack order; whereas as Superintendent, then you have the whole operation under you. And that, I think, with anyone takes a little getting used to. Getting used to the autonomy of it was the biggest thing, and probably the most rewarding thing, too, in that I was a lot freer to make my own decisions, as opposed to having to run everything by another party. And I don't think the size of the park had much bearing on that. I think it's more the place within the structure of the organization.

SIRON: And making that change, were you given any training? Did you get advice from other contemporaries or colleagues?

REIGLE: Well, that kind of varies from person to person. In my particular case, I think really it was a sink-or-swim kind of thing. There was really nobody to get advice from at that point in time. The whole operation was totally new. But I

had had, oh, probably, gee, I came in '68, so I probably had sixteen, eighteen years of experience before I took the job. I got advice, solicited and unsolicited, from the Regional Director, the Deputy Regional Director at the time, and some of the people in the Regional Office, but I really did not get too much involved with other superintendents in the beginning.

And no, there was no formal training period. I think I was probably a superintendent for two years before I went to a training class on how to be a superintendent. [chuckling] So, there really is no formal training program within the Service that really you can say, "Okay once you complete this, you're going to be a superintendent." And once I got here, we only had a little less than eight months to get the Home open, and so things were so busy then it really precluded any kind of formal training. I really put off any kind of formal training until after the Home was open, and then the year or so after that, then I took a couple of formal training courses. Including after I had made all the decisions on cultural resource management, then I went to the Cultural Resource Management Training Program.

SIRON: Would it have been easier for you to be the superintendent of an already established park, as opposed to coming to a brand-new park?

REIGLE: Infinitely easier, yeah. It would have been a lot of easier if everything was in place. We didn't even have personnel when I got here. The only person that was here was Tom Richter, who was the . . . at that time he was Ranger in Charge and then later became Chief Ranger. He was the only person here at that time, so we really didn't have any of the procedures set up. We didn't even have an office space at the time, we had a borrowed room in the Truman

Library. So, yeah, I think it would have been a lot easier to go into an established park. In fact, maybe one of these days I'll go into an established park. [chuckling]

SIRON: Well, I'm kind of interested in the staff that you had and how it all came about. Were you given a list of actual positions that you needed to fill and then were filled by registers or . . . ?

REIGLE: No, with the positions, to the contrary. When I first got here and went to my first meeting in the Regional Office, I was told at that time that I would have \$250,000 and three FTE. An FTE is a full-time equivalent position. It's the equivalent of . . . you can do two part-time positions that total one year, or one full-time position for one. So I was told I would have three FTE. I think now we're around fifteen or sixteen. And that was a time when FTE was very hard to get, and so it was a real fight to get FTE.

No, I wasn't told at all what kind of positions we would have. Basically, what happened is after I got here, I went to the Regional Office, talked to some people up there, was told this little bit about three FTE, and after much screaming and gnashing of teeth, I was told to go back and work out what I considered a program. And so I sat down and sequestered myself at my kitchen table for about two days and came up with a little memorandum that was written sometime in that month of October, about the third week I was here, which I'm sure there's a copy of it in the files. In that I proposed what positions I thought we were going to need here and how many.

And the first position I selected was that of the Administrative Technician, Joan Sanders. So Joan came in, and after we had worked that out,

then right after the first of the year, it was right after . . . it was about the 3rd or 4th of January, Joan and I went up to the Regional Office and we presented . . . Joan had done all the position descriptions at that time, and we presented what we thought would be the appropriate structure. And the, what do you call it? the organizational chart, so that we had the organizational chart and the position descriptions. And that was entirely my decision. It had to be approved by the Position Review Board and ultimately by the Regional Director. And contrary to the first trip up there, which was utter frustration, that was total elation when we came back from that second trip, because we got virtually every position we asked for.

And I determined at that time what I felt was the appropriate structure, the appropriate number of positions, and that has stayed quite consistent over the last six years. I set it up with, as you may be aware, with four division chiefs: Administration, Cultural Resources, Visitor Services, and Maintenance. And those positions have stayed constant the whole time, the whole six years. And, with the exception of some switching around within the Ranger Division, there's been no major structural changes from the beginning of the organizational structure. For a while I eliminated some of the Permanent Technician positions, and then went back later and reinstated those.

The organization here follows a fairly common pattern throughout the Park Service. Most parks are organized along fairly similar lines, and this is a fairly straightforward organizational structure. Each organizational structure will generally have a Superintendent and then some division chiefs

underneath the Superintendent. The variation sometimes comes in how the duties are grouped underneath the division chiefs. Here, we may be a little unique in that we have a separate Division of Cultural Resources. In many organizations, that is lumped into another division somewhere, usually in the Ranger Division, but here that's broken out. But it's a fairly common organizational structure.

SIRON: And how do you determine the delegation of the duties between the division chiefs? For the obvious things, maintenance would be _____.

REIGLE: Well, initially I just looked at what work needed to be done. And it was obvious that a lot of maintenance work had to be done on the home, particularly at that time--it was in very bad shape. And I felt that just taking care of the exterior of the home and the grounds and the restoration that had been done was a sizable chunk for one person to handle. When I looked at the magnitude of the collection and the number of artifacts that are in the home, I felt that warranted the full-time attention of another person. And, of course, administration was fairly straightforward. I knew that I needed someone to handle the administrative chores of timekeeping and property and procurement, purchasing, and all those things.

The one area that was very difficult to ascertain right off the bat would be how the visitor services area would be broken down. We had absolutely no idea at that time how much of our activities would be involved in people management, how much would be involved in . . . whether we would have any law enforcement at all, whether we would have to have a strong presence just regulating people, getting them to the house. So I kept that kind of loose

in the ranger activities till we saw how things really went. As things happened, initially we came in with a very strong law enforcement presence. I think at one time we had the highest ratio [chuckling] of commissioned law enforcement officers to permanent employees in the National Park Service. I think we had eight permanent employees and five commissions, or something like that, or nine and five or four or something like that. Subsequently, we found out after we became operational that we really did not need that, and so we drastically cut back till now there's one commissioned employee.

But I felt rather strongly at the time, too, that we needed to present the house in the best possible way we could. And for that reason, I elected to not use volunteers in the house. I elected to initially use volunteers strictly in the visitor center and the staging and the giving of tickets and opted to go for quality tours where you could have direct control over who was going to be leading the tours. And I wanted to do that with rangers and uniformed rangers, so we put a large emphasis on developing a good cadre of interpretive rangers here.

SIRON: It's interesting that you had the choice of making that decision whether or not to use volunteers or actually rangers in the home. I didn't know that that was even something . . .

REIGLE: Well, there was a lot of pressure. There was a lot of pressure from within the National Park Service at that time to use volunteers, for the reason that everybody was trying to save money, everybody was trying to save FTE at that time. There were some political reasons for that as well. The strongest reason was, and will always remain, quality control. I feel it's difficult to

maintain good quality control when you're using volunteers, particularly in an interpretive situation. But the political aspects of it were: at that very time the City of Independence was developing a volunteer program, too. And I knew that the Independence program would go strictly belly-up if we got into a volunteer war, because all the volunteers would want to be in the Truman Home and none of them would want to be in the Vaile or the Bingham-Waggoner, the ticket center or any of these other places. So I stayed away from that, but I also left the reasons for my decision be known to the political powers that be in Independence, because it gave us a lot stronger bargaining chip on some other things. It gave us a good bargaining chip on the use of this building and getting volunteers in this building, which is how that whole volunteer program got started here.

SIRON: Well, that leads right up to how you got the City and local powers that be, I guess, and your relationship with them?

REIGLE: It has been quite good over the years. The relationship with any political entity is a dynamic thing that's constantly changing and something that changes with political moods of the participants, and it changes with each election. So generally the relationship of the National Park Service with the City of Independence has been quite outstanding. We tried to set up the organization pretty much as a partnership from the beginning, and we still enjoy the use of this building rent- and utility-free. We still enjoy a good, healthy cooperation from the City relative to the volunteer programs and so forth. It got off to a pretty good start in the beginning. I worked closely with the Tourism Advisory Board. At that time . . . City politics is an interview in itself, a long,

long interview, but they're basically . . . To understand the city politics here, there's no such thing as a Republican in the city of Independence, but there are different kinds of Democrats, and there are different kind of Democrat clubs in the city of Independence. And to be successful you've got to be able to deal with both sides, and that sometimes involves quite a bit of tightrope walking. The faction that was in power when we set up the park is not the one that's in power now. We've been able to work successfully with both sides and have tried to stay neutral, but it involves quite a bit of juggling sometimes. I don't think Independence is ever going to change in that regard. It's going to be a political little town, a political little animal. But I think most of the people that are in politics here realize the importance of tourism to the overall economy of this city, and that gives us a strong bargaining chip, too. And then I think it's one of those things also that Truman is a pretty sacred name in the city of Independence, and so that makes life pretty easy for someone in my position. You're going to get a lot of help and you're going to get a lot of assistance, and you're not going to get a lot of antagonism when you've got . . . when you're in a position to be commemorating the town hero, which is a real plus, and you don't have that in a lot of natural areas. And I don't expect to find that where I'm going. You know, it's just the opposite in some of the areas like the Ozarks where instead of the park service being welcomed in with open arms as we were here, you were met with a great deal of antagonism, which goes on for generations: "You took my grandpappy's land for this riverway. You're taking away my rights to run rampant up the river in any size boat I want and take as many fish as I want and shoot as

many turtles as I want.” They look upon the Feds as an antagonism rather than as a partner. So, going back to one of your earlier questions, that’s one of the big differences you’ll find. Most of the problems you encounter in most of the natural areas in the park service come from the dealings with the local people who look at it as *their* park. And that’s a lot differently than the citizens of Independence, who look at the Truman home as their shrine, where, yes, we did put a lot of constraints and restraints on people using the Truman home, but they were very willing to accept that because they knew why it was, and they knew that the long-range benefit would be long-term preservation of the home, as opposed to a natural area when you start putting a constraint on, you’re in essence denying something that had been done for years. So that was another good . . .

SIRON: I remember when we went to the Lincoln Home that Superintendent Davidson said that he had gotten a lot of pressure, as far as the amount of people that were allowed to take in, that he had really dealt with the politics on that issue of the park. Have you had any pressures, knowing that this is a very similar situation? Have you had any pressures in that sense?

REIGLE: Oh, a great deal. And I think most of it is . . . Well, to this day, I think the majority of the pressure, I guess the hardest pressure I had, came from within the National Park Service, as opposed to from without of the National Park Service or outside the National Park Service. Many of the people in our Regional Office were in mortal fear that we would be answering a thousand congressional letters a day, so there was a lot of pressure. And there’s still quite a few people that feel that we ought to be doing it a different way than

what we are, in terms of limiting the number of people. That's almost entirely within the National Park Service, and it's entirely within the management levels of the National Park Service that is concerned for getting a congressional letter or getting a complaint letter or that kind of thing.

Well, let me back up a little bit. The National Park Service has been so used to for so many years as an organization attempting to accommodate as many people as possible, because we have this broad constituency that keeps us as a popular agency. And it has been kind of against the agency ethic to take the great American public, who loves us and we love them, and say "We're not going to accommodate you today." And so that's been a difficult thing for a lot of the old-time park service people to come to grips with. It's happening more and more. The difference between what happened at the Lincoln Home and what happened here is that the Lincoln Home had a long, long precedent of allowing an unlimited number of people through, and they then had to back off and tighten up.

And I guess if there was one overlying philosophy I had when I set this park up, and that comes very much from my law enforcement background, was that I decided I was going to be as tough as I possibly could get away with when I set this park up. I was going to say no to everything, limit as much as I could to start out with, and then loosen up later on. And we've been able to loosen up on several things, but my idea was—and it's not my idea, it's just the way of life—it's a lot easier to loosen up than it is to tighten up. Once you have something and it's yours, it's a lot harder to take it away than it would be to give it to you in the first place. And so I think it

worked very well here. It didn't work very well at all for Gentry at Lincoln Home, and it will take years for that to sort itself out.

One of the fun things here is to go through our files some day and see how many complaint letters we got the first year relative to people not getting in the Truman Home, and just graph that down over the last six years. I think the bottom line is, I think it's been over two years since we've had a complaint letter written on the fact that people couldn't get into the Truman Home or about our system for getting into the Truman home. That has stopped. We got eight or nine of them that first summer, and two or three the next year, and one or two the following year, and it's been a couple of years since we've gotten any.

We've loosened up on a couple of things that we found we could loosen up. We found out we were doing some things which were a little bit unfair, and we've been able to modify those. But I think the overall principal of coming down real hard has really paid dividends. That first year I got a lot of requests for a lot of special uses of the home, lots of them. People wanting to have picnics on the back yard, entertain special groups, display things on the fence, and I just categorically said no to everything. And after a few no's, the word gets around. But I always tried to say no and offer an alternative when I said no. If I said, "No, you can't have this here, but have you thought about having it there?" and, "No, you can't do this at the Truman Home because we don't have room for it, but have you thought about doing it at this place?" And that's worked pretty good. And I think that we'll see what the next superintendent elects to do, but the mechanisms are in place to keep it

going pretty tight. And a lot of ways to see the Truman Home . . . Are you at a stopping period?

SHAVER: Yeah, let's take a break.

REIGLE: All right. Good, I'll get a quick drink of water because I'm getting dry.

[End #4098; Begin #4099]

REIGLE: That decision had been made before I got here, so we went along with it, but we've been able to divert a lot of that stuff.

SIRON: I think the most important thing would be being consistent. You know, if you backed off on one . . .

REIGLE: Well, that's important. If you let one do it, then you've got to let them all do it, and so you've got to be . . . It's impossible to be totally consistent on everything because the realities of life is there are people and there are things that are more important than other people and things. You know, this park has been able to buy a lot by using the park to sell the park. In other words, we've been able to get a lot of budget increases and a lot of assistance by being able to take selected people into parts of the home that aren't open to the public, which gives the park good little points, and also then can show people the magnitude of what's being dealt with. I mean, every Director and Regional Director that came into this park was trotted downstairs to the whiskey bottles or the wine bottles in the corner and shown what a terrible chore that was going to be. Which turned out to be a about a day and a half's worth of effort. [chuckling] But we were able to get a sustained \$25,000 a year for the last six years, you know, by emphasizing how tough those wine bottles were going to be to handle. But in the same respect, you're taking people into a closed area

and you're giving them kind of a preferential treatment, and that's the way the game is played. So you've got to always be balancing those things. Then there's always groups that need treatment different than other treatment. You know, Aunt Fanny's bus tour doesn't get the same treatment that you give to the folks that come in that were the staff for the yacht *Williamsburg* or something like that. So you've got to balance those, too. Are you still going?

SHAVER: Oh, yeah.

REIGLE: Oh, you are? You're back on it, again. Oh, we're on the air again, okay.

SIRON: Reading the General Management Plan as proposed by the Department of Interior, I'm not sure that's exactly . . .

REIGLE: Mm-hmm.

SIRON: Just going back to what you were saying about how the park service was putting pressure on you to let more people in, I know that their philosophy is to protect the resource as much as possible, and as far as use of the park, that is kind of outlined. Isn't it interesting that they would be the ones putting pressure on you to let more people into the home, knowing that it was a means of protection?

REIGLE: Yeah, well, that's kind of a hard one to explain. I always found it interesting that most of my pressure was coming from within, too. I think it's back to this general attitude of not offending our constituency. I think that's kind of the overriding one. All the people who were giving me pressure the other way also felt strongly to protecting the resource, too. It wasn't a neglect of the resource. You know, all these things are degrees anyhow, and you're counterbalancing these two things, use and research preservation, in every

decision you make. And maybe the way to explain it is that how you balance that is important in what . . . and when you're talking resource preservation, sometimes you don't have real hard, cold facts to go on. I mean, there is no magic formula that says eight people are going to be . . . I mean, it's not mathematically demonstratable, and it's not one of the great laws of the universe that eight people are what the house is going to hold. Whereas everybody realizes there's got to be a limit, it sometimes depends what that limit is going to be. And the limit, as best as we saw it, was the eight people per fifteen minutes. Others would see that differently. Others would see that as maybe you could get more people in. So there's always more pressure for more people.

There was pressure for the kind of walk-through that was done at the Lincoln Home, where we do a modified version of that now. But the nice thing about being a Superintendent—I guess, that was my old prejudice coming out too—I personally did not like the idea of a walk-through. It personally did not appeal to me. It would have been a much more expedient way to do it, in some respects, but I also didn't feel that was the best way to do things for that house, or the best way to interpret the people that lived in that house, or the best thing to do to honor the people that lived that house. So I felt that the smaller, more intimate group would be better. Those that were maybe not as close to the house emotionally as I was could make the argument, and maybe rightfully so, that the house could handle 500 people a day. Who in the world says 250? I mean, it's not written anywhere. So that's the joy of being the Superintendent: my will was the one that won out. So it's

up to the next Superintendent to see what their interpretation is going to be. That person could take an entirely different opinion and go for putting more people through. And that wouldn't say that that person was wrong and I was right. It just was my style of doing things, and another style might lead to more people in the house and might be found to be equally satisfying to people. I just didn't like the idea of traipsing hundreds and hundreds of people through there all the time. I think our records stands for itself right now, in that we've never lost or damaged an object in the home. I mean, we can demonstrate some wear and tear on the house, but not the wear and tear that the Lincoln Home had with traipsing 500,000 people through there a year, that the house was ready to fall in till they had to rebuild it from the bottom up.

SIRON: Considering your responsibilities as a Superintendent, what would you say would be your first priority, as far as the park is concerned, and your staff?

REIGLE: Oh, boy. Well, I think my first priority is and always has been, at least I would hope it would be, would be preservation of the home. And it gets back to that balancing. You know, you've got to balance use and preservation. I've elected to always try and err on the side of preservation instead of err on the side of use. And that's again where the conflict comes in. So my first priority I would hope would be, and I think it was and I think it still is, is preserving the house and the objects and that historic resource, as opposed to the priority of maximizing the interpretation for the maximum number of people, which is another common well-meaning priority. So I'd say resource is my top priority, yeah. As far as . . . well, were you asking about my style of management as it relates to people?

SIRON: Yeah, and on the other hand as far as your personnel goes.

REIGLE: Well, my feeling towards personnel management is that I like to see people satisfied in what they're doing. And I think if people take a satisfaction from doing whatever job it is, they're going to be a lot happier and a lot more gets done. I guess I like to character myself as the kind of manager who's pretty much mission-oriented and goal-oriented and likes to see the team working towards a goal. Because I think people are a lot more satisfied when they're a part of what's being done and they've got the freedom to do a little creativity and they're all going generally in the same direction. You know, these are not high-paying jobs, but I think people get a lot better satisfaction from the accomplishments of the task, you know. This organization was a lot happier when we had a lot more to do. In the early days when we were just putting things together every week where you could really just see things building, it was a much happier organization. Not that I feel it's an unhappy organization now, but, you know, after a while you get tired of counting how many people go through the house and your number of tours per day and how many objects you get catalogued that day. There isn't as much to do right now, in terms of the major accomplishments that there were in the first two or three years of this park. I try to put my emphasis of personnel management on a mission-oriented approach.

I like to see growth within the organization and then growth within the employee, too. I like to see employees develop. I think the best thing that can be said for an organization is to see how its people come out of it. So I like to see the people in the organization here come out, you know, going on to

bigger and better things. I think we've had a reasonably decent turnover in this park, and of the permanent employees, I think virtually every one of them went out on a promotion here. So that's good. I don't think we've had a lateral out of here yet, that I'm aware of, of a permanent employee. And I think we've got an outstanding record of seasonal employees getting permanent jobs out of this park, and so I like to see that as well. I think if you're getting growth within the individual, you're also getting growth within the organization. So that's kind of where I put the emphasis on that.

SIRON: Now you did mention having problems with the budget within the park service and the fact that these aren't exactly the highest-paying jobs available. Do you have any problems finding people that are good-quality people applying for the jobs, or having problems attracting people towards the park?

REIGLE: Oh, yeah. That's getting worse every year, too. And it's a problem that's bigger than Harry S Truman Historic Site. It's a problem that is pretty much Service-wide and government-wide. Well, I'll interject a little politics here. We stopped getting sociologists and mission-oriented people going through colleges when Carter got out of the White House, and now we're getting nothing but business admin. majors and people looking for the fast buck and so forth. And that's a fact of our society and the baby boomers, too, and it's nothing we're going to change here. It is getting more and more difficult to get people who are as mission-oriented as some of us who have been around a little bit longer, which is one of the reasons I went back and made a couple of the positions permanent. We've had so much turnover here with our seasonals that up until the last year and a half or so we were spending so much of our

time as an organization recruiting and training new seasonals that were staying on board two or three months and moving on to something else. I went back to the . . . as much as I didn't want to do it, for the reason that I was concerned with burnout in some of the lower-level permanent positions. You know, you can only take so many tours through the house in a year and keep it fresh, and you can only handle so many visitors downstairs, telling them what time they've got to be on the bus, and it costs a buck, and they've got to be there, and the time and so forth. This is not the kind of park that presents a great deal of diversity for the lower-level employees. It presents a great deal of diversity for division chiefs and the Superintendent, but it's one that the Indians are shooting at the same target all the time just about. From the standpoint of the individuality of this park, it is not one of the summer glamour jobs either. It's not Yosemite Valley, it's not Yellowstone, it's not the Grand Canyon. It's one where it's difficult to compete with those parks for the summer. We have generally been getting a much higher-quality employee in the winter than we have in the summer, because of the lack of winter jobs. Those people who are trying to get permanent jobs kind of flock into this park. So we've not had too much problem with our winter certs., but it's been our summer certs. that [loud, honking noise] have not been as strong. What was all that? [chuckling] Was that another tape?

SHAVER: No, that's the end of the tape.

REIGLE: It's the end of which tape?

SHAVER: This one right here.

REIGLE: I'm ready for it this time. [loud, honking noise] [pause in interview] Is that as

loud in there as it was out here?

SHAVER: Worse. [chuckling]

REIGLE: Okay.

SIRON: We were talking about employees and rangers here in the area. I know that you have an open-door policy as far as your supervisory . . . How has that worked to your benefit, do you think, for the park?

REIGLE: Well, it's a matter of style, I guess. I don't think about it too much. It wouldn't be me if it were some other way, I guess. Let's see, how does it go? I always try to remember who I was, where I came from, and where I was going back. [chuckling] I guess it's just not my style to, you know, kind of sit in an ivory tower. I think I probably should get . . . In fact, I probably should even get to the Home and out to the cave more than I do, but I find the load here . . . and my style is to let my supervisors run that operation, and so I try and stay out of their hair as much as I can, too. And if I see something wrong, then I let them know about it. I think it gives you a little bit more . . .

You keep in a little better touch with what's going on with the staff by keeping the door open. I've never had an employee here who has abused that or come in at any time, you know, just to pick up brownie points or something like that. I've never had a case here where anybody has tried to end-run their own supervisor. I've tried to make it clear that you answer to your supervisor. And, you know, the door is not open to come around telling tales about, "I didn't like what this one said. Now, can you change what they said?" Nobody has ever done that.

I try to keep a friendly organization because I think that's going to also

. . . that's the way we want the public to be treated, too. I'm not so sure you can project as an organization . . . If you're talking to the public, I don't think you can turn off that friendly bell one minute and, you know, come into your own organization and have a bunch of rigid people sitting around and "Yes sir, yes sir, yes, sir." And "Yes ma'am, yes ma'am," and then all of a sudden go the other way with the visitors. I just don't think that can rightfully be done.

And I think everybody has been able to respect that when I'm in here with . . . there are times when things have had to get done that I've closed the door, but I've done that on very few occasions. I've done it both to maintain some privacy when I'm talking to someone, or to have some uninterrupted time when I had something that really needed to be done. But those occasions have been few and far between. It's hard to answer you, other than to just say that's my style. I just don't think I could function any other way. I don't like to function in a vacuum. I just don't think it's a good way to go.

SIRON: Keeping in mind your style of running things, how do you feel your division chiefs adapt to that and use that in their own supervision?

REIGLE: Well, that's a hard one to answer because they're all different. Two of the division chiefs do not have a supervisory responsibility and each one the division chiefs that do has their own style, which I think they should have. I think you get in trouble trying to do anything that's not yourself. I mean, certainly people that . . . I mean I have had supervisors in this park that I have counseled on things that I thought they should or shouldn't be doing relative to supervisory style and so forth. But I'm not so sure. I don't know, I think if

I'm understanding your question, I think almost any organization . . . I think any organization pretty well reflects the style of it's leadership, and I think that's a natural flow from any organization. I think it's what the organization is supposed to do, and they all do adapt.

I think you'll see some tremendous changes in this park, because whoever you get is going to be a different person than I am. And you can really see it. I've been through three Regional Directors since I've been here at this job, and you can really see how the personality of the Regional Office and the personalities of the Regional Office people change with each new administration. And so, yeah, I think there is some filtering down to the style of the other division chiefs. But that's a normal thing that's going to happen no matter who is the Superintendent or who's ultimately in charge of the organization.

You know, there's certain things that I have to filter out that come down from above, too. Depending on who the Regional Director or the Director is, I try and filter things out; and I think a good supervisor at the next level down will filter out some things, too, and will use their own style. I think that the two supervisors we have right now are two different people with two different styles. I'm not sure, did that answer your . . .

SIRON: Yes.

REIGLE: Okay.

SIRON: Now, I know that being that you deal with the Regional Office and also the Department of Interior, and then also you have your supervisors and your rangers, there are several different levels of communication there. I guess we

can just start out with the broad sense in the Department of Interior and go down to the National Park Service and Regional Offices. But how do you keep those lines of communication open, and how important is it?

REIGLE: Well, that's a matter of style, too, I guess right now. Do you know how the organizational structure works coming down to me or going up?

SIRON: Generally.

REIGLE: Let me just go over it for you real quick, if you'd like.

SIRON: Yeah.

REIGLE: Okay, technically I answer to one person, our Regional Director in Omaha. That Regional Director technically answers to one person, the Director of the National Park Service, who then answers to the Secretary of Interior, who answers to the President. So it's a very, very short chain. No matter how low you get in the organization or how far down you get in it, there's always things that are going to filter down from the top, no matter what's it's going to be, and those things change with each administration and each new person that comes in. As you get a new President, that's going to change who is appointed for the Secretary of Interior, which is going to impact who's appointed for the Director the Park Service. And each one of those people has their own agenda and their things that they wish to get done, and there's no avoiding that.

I see part of my job as taking the things that are administrative thrusts and either using them for the good and betterment of the park or trying to buffer them as much as possible going down if there are things that may not be quite as beneficial. Each new administration has it's new thrust, whether

it's some little hokey little Take Pride in America program or drug testing or A-76, which is contracting everything. No matter what the program of the week is, if it's a good program we can take good programs . . . Well, we can take programs that may be good or may be bad, but we can take programs like the fee program and sometimes turn those things around to our benefit. Where before the fee program, we had absolutely no rangers in the visitor center, by taking the fee program, which a lot of my colleges felt was the worst thing that's ever happened to the park service, and turn it around to where we have nothing but green and gray down there, and take what some see as a rotten program and make it into something beneficial. On the other hand, we can take some of the stuff that's coming down and effectively ignore it if we want to, which is the nice thing about being here. Some of these things you can do something about, some you can't.

The lines of communication, it's important that it flows up and down. I guess my style is I don't pay too much attention to the stuff that's coming from above. We had one Director here, Director of the Park Service that used to put out such hokey memorandums I used to throw them away before anyone could see them because I was embarrassed. But technically it is important that whatever it is that's coming down that we try and let people know about it. But so much of that stuff that comes down from the Secretary of the Interior's level, or even the Director's level, a lot of it again gets kind of filtered out before it gets too far down. But it's important, and it's important for me kind of being in the middle, that I need to know what's bothering the seasonals, if it's something I can do something about. I can't do much about

pay and those kind of things and getting full-time jobs and all that good stuff, but if it's something I can do something about, it's important that it gets back to me if it's not being taken care of at an intermediate level. I don't know, did that answer that one?

SIRON: Mm-hmm, it sure did.

REIGLE: Okay.

SIRON: I talked a little bit to Joan about your personal philosophy in the park and kind of your challenges. The first thing she said to me was that when they handed you a lemon you'd try to make lemonade, that that was probably the most [chuckling] important thing that you accomplished here in the park as far as dealing with challenges to you. As far as that goes, what have you really done changing bad things to make them work for you?

SHAVER: Give us some of your lemons. [chuckling]

REIGLE: Some of the lemons? Oh, well, there were lots of lemons along the way. Boy, it's hard to remember some. The fee collection thing was a real lemon when it was handed down, and I think we made some very nice lemonade out of that. When our headquarters burned down we were able to turn that around rather quickly and end up up here, which turned out fine. Gee, there's been so many little . . . I think what she's referring to, there have been lots of little crises that started out bad on Monday and ended up pretty good on Friday. But there were a lot more of those in the early days when things kept falling apart at the seams on its way to getting the Home open on time that we were able to kind of turn around. It's hard for me to be real specific right now unless I probably go home and think about a few things. But every time something happens, you

know, if you look sometimes beneath the surface there may be an opportunity there. You know, a lot of people do that. I think instead of just saying “Oh, shit!” every time something happens, if you look sometimes, you might see something that . . . there might be something peeking out there that would be quite good.

Now, I guess a lot of people . . . a little upset to see the shuttle buses go, but I can look beyond the shuttle buses and say “Okay, there’s some good things coming out of not having the shuttle bus.” The good thing that’s going to happen out of not having the shuttle bus is it’s going to be a lot easier for us to explain to people how to get to the home and how to tour the Home. It’s going to cut back on the confusion that our people have, and we can spend more time . . . The primary mission of this organization is to tell people about Truman, not how to ride a bus, and not to get them confused with what Truman had to do with the Vaile and the Bingham-Waggoner and some of those other things, so we can concentrate more on what we’re really intending to do. And it also relieves us of some of our dependency upon other organizations, which can be a mixed . . .

[End #4099; Begin #4100]

SIRON: Well, speaking of obstacles, I know one big obstacle that recently will probably be in your way will be like the Graham-Rudman and budget cuts and things like that, is there any way that you propose to use that to your benefit?

REIGLE: Well, don’t let the Regional Director hear this tape. [chuckling] Yeah, we’ve already kind of . . . I guess it depends on when the cuts come, but yeah, Joan came in with that one the other day, and we were down . . . Let’s see, we were

down two positions until the morning was over and we gained another position with all the Graham-Rudman finagling.

Well, let me tell you how I did it once before. I guess this comes into the lemon/lemonade thing. When we first opened the house, we were open seven a days a week every day of the year, and then we got a budget cut along the lines of Graham-Rudman. And one of the other great taboos in the National Park Service is you don't close things down. I mean, again, this is against the constituency of the National Park Service. And when we got that, I realized that we were kind of overextending the house. I mean, we were just in it too much. I mean, there was no time to get in there to do the kind of things that the curators need to do. There was no one time, day of the year when the house had just a little bit of rest, a little breather to take care of these little things that had to be done, like carpets cleaned, systems put in and checked and all that thing—we were stumbling around people.

And so when this cutback came, all my colleagues kept on doing what they were doing. They just, you know, let a couple seasonals go and kept on doing what the seasonals were doing by making the permanents do it. And the organization had done that too long, which is why we never get any more money. We just get people doing two people's work and saying that's great. So I decided, well, geez, we should be closing the house a day a week anyhow just to do these other things. What a marvelous opportunity to say, "By God, because we don't have any money, we'll close the house down." And I've kept it closed ever since. And now we use that day for some wonderful things.

If Graham-Rudman comes, we'll close the house two days a week,

and one day a week in the summer. And a couple reasons for that, not that I feel it needs it anymore, but I would rather do that than really cut into the curatorial program. We looked at several options. One would be to eliminate most of the curatorial program beyond the permanent level. Or we could close the house down a day a week, which would mean we'd have to reschedule people. And when you're working with people that have five days on and two days off, if you're closed for two days, that's a lot easier to schedule than it is if you've got to operate for six days and you've got to fill in with part-timers and temporaries and all that other sort of thing. Besides, it does no good to let the public know their Graham-Rudman cuts are coming through if they don't see what's happening. And so the Graham-Rudman cut would give the house a little more break. And I really think in the winter, the way our visitation is now, there's no one . . . If those people that were going to come on Tuesdays would come on Wednesdays, we still have plenty of room for them, the same as when we closed down Monday. So, if I were here when Graham-Rudman hits, that's how I would basically handle it. The scenario was that we looked at the budget, saw what happened with Graham-Rudman, we'd have to make some serious cuts in the curatorial program, too. But to get ahead of Graham-Rudman and make sure we were getting some 302 money for curatorial, which is another \$25,000, which we've got, so if Graham-Rudman comes in, we'll do just what we've been doing before. If Graham-Rudman doesn't come in, we'll do more. We're positioned very well if Graham-Rudman comes.

But my style of management, too, is one of anticipation. I spend a lot of time thinking "what if?" If this happens, what would I do? If that happens,

what would I do? So we've already done all our "what ifs" for Graham-Rudman here. If Graham-Rudman comes along, why, we'll do some shenanigans that would get the public irate, which is what you want to do with that. You want to hit the public where they know that these things are having an impact on what they do, rather than quietly just phase out something that the public doesn't know you're doing anyhow. The easiest thing would have been to lay off all the museum aides, but the public wouldn't have seen that. But we're very well positioned for Graham-Rudman. If Graham-Rudman doesn't hit, we're going to have more money than we know what to do with it. But I don't want to see this transcript made while I'm still here. [chuckling]

SHAVER: Then we'll have to lock the tapes up.

REIGLE: Yeah, lock the tape up for a little while.

SIRON: I know that as a Superintendent, especially within the park service, you have available to you the use of private sector funding and campaign funds and money. Have you used that at all or taken the opportunity to do any of that?

REIGLE: No, I have not. Well, okay, I guess it depends how you want to demonstrate these things. In the six years I have been here, we tallied it up a couple weeks ago, I've saved the federal taxpayer something on the order of \$2 million, with the use of other alliances and so forth, if you figure in costs of shuttle buses and costs of buildings and volunteer help and that kind of thing. It was a little over \$2 million, about \$2.1 million in the six years that I have been here. That and fifty cents will get you a cup of coffee somewhere.

In terms of going out and directly soliciting corporate contributions, I have not done that. That's one of the administrative thrusts that I have been

avoiding like the plague. I hate going out begging for money in a corporate sense. A couple reasons I haven't, other than my own personal distaste for it, is one of the things is the Truman library already has a well, well-established friends group and it would be very difficult to compete with that. And I just couldn't really see the need for it here. I mean, this park is getting done what it wants to get done with cooperative agreements and through the regular appropriations process. I really didn't feel we needed to do that. That's been one of the areas that I have not immersed myself much in at all.

But we do have a very strong record relative to saving the federal tax dollar. I mean just the leasing of this building, for one thing is . . . And a lot of things that we do, Joan and all the division chiefs and myself, we look very closely at how we spend our money. And a lot of things we did at this park . . . Before you or Mike got here, this park went through some very difficult financial times. I mean, we went through some times when we didn't have too much. But what we tried, the approach we took early on in this park was that we put the emphasis on doing the things then that would save us money in the future. Okay? And so by putting that security system in early on . . . I mean, it was costing us close to \$80,000 a year for security in the home. It's costing us around \$5,000 right now. Well, that's \$75,000 that we got in place in the second year of operation here. So you take \$80,000 times the last five years, that's what's paying your salary and some of the folks down there. And we did it for the big things as well as the little things. When it was a case of if we could buy something one year and then save the money for leasing or renting that over the next few years, we bought the things that were going to save us

long-range money first and were able to effect those kinds of savings. So that's helped out a lot by doing that kind of approach to things. So we look very carefully at how we budget the money, and each year we take a slightly modified approach.

The same thing with personnel. The last couple of years we've been playing the game that instead of . . . And a lot of people will play the game that they'll hire people only when they know they absolutely have the money. I play the game figuring I'm going to get the money, and hire them up front and then keep them on all the way through when I get the money instead of cutting things off each fiscal year. And the last couple years I've been playing the gamble of keeping people on right through the beginning of the fiscal year, and then the money has been there. And by doing that we've been able to accumulate . . . Last year we were able to save \$18,000 back, which is . . . We'll probably be able to do that again this year, and that's what's keeping the cave operating right now.

SIRON: You've had the opportunity to see the possibility of the park growing through the expansion of the three homes. What part did you play in the proposals, the legislation, and the how has it affected how you see things happening in the future?

SHAVER: Tell us everything. [chuckling]

REIGLE: Tell you everything? Well . . .

SHAVER: What you can safely get away with.

REIGLE: Well, I think a pretty major part, in terms of the first thing that had to happen, was the General Management Plan. And there was a lot of internal in-fighting

early on on getting any kind of boundary expansion, and so it was a big fight from the beginning to get an approved General Management Plan which said yes, we would seek legislation. That was the first battle, and that was probably the hardest battle. The hardest battle was getting it into the General Management Plan in the first place, that we wanted three additional houses and we wanted it for this purpose. At that point, we were right smack dab in the middle of the Reagan administration, and it was like pulling teeth to get support for anything that would commit to long-range programs. You know, it's not a case of just getting those houses. Once you get those houses, they're going to have to be taken care of by the American taxpayer for eternity. And rightly or wrongly, the Republican administration was very much against any proposal that was going to commit any long-range open-end commit of dollars. And that's not all wrong either.

But I did a lot of fighting, with others, just to get that through and get that through the system. The Regional Director had to be convinced, that Regional Director had to convince the Director, who had to convince the Department to leave that stuff in there, and then there was a lot of fighting all the way along the way to get that in. Once it got in, at that point I did make a few phone calls to keep the momentum going on it, and did initiate some things. I was able to get the mayor to run the interference, to write the letters to Congress to say, "Would you get moving on this *now*?" Because I'm not the one . . . I'm not permitted to do any lobbying for legislation directly, but the thing you do in that case is you get somebody else to do it. And in this case, Barbara Potts was the one who did it for us and got that thing moving, so

that's back to what our relationship with the City is. Of course, she knew it would be beneficial for the City in the long run and would benefit the local government as well to have those structures. So, yes, it's been quite a bit of involvement all the way through. Once it got rolling into Congress, it's just an idea of keeping your eye on things and making the right phone calls at the right time and heading things off and playing the little political games that go along. They're still playing these little political games, but everybody knows how they're played now and what the deck looks like. I think getting those three houses through has been the thing that I put my greatest emphasis on over the last year and a half. The cave was something we worked real hard on, too, and once that was done we went to the . . . and they were both a part of the General Management Plan.

If I were going to be here a little longer, I'd start putting some real emphasis on the farm home now. Even though that's not a part of our GMP, I'd like to see that thing moving forward. And then sooner or later I'd like to see something done for better protection in the neighborhood. One of the things you learn is you don't go into fights you can't win, and at this point in time, that's not quite yet a winnable fight. But I'd sure like to see . . . That's something that needs to be kept working on is neighborhood protection. It may be someday, but I'm not so sure it's going to be . . . It's not now. It's not at all. It may some day, but I doubt it.

SIRON: You've had the unique opportunity to work with, or to deal with I guess, Margaret Truman, and I'm sure that presented you with a lot of difficult situations as well as situations that worked out well for the Home. But I'm

just kind of interested in getting a general overview of how you approached that.

REIGLE: Well, that's about a six-beer answer there. [chuckling] Maybe a seven-beer answer. Well, I'd say, all in all, the relationship has been quite good. It's had its ups and downs. I got an extremely nice letter from her the other day when I told her I was leaving. I guess how I approached it, I guess I approached it from several standpoints. Several things that I guess I did or was involved in with Margaret that my approach to her would be: I tried to empathize a little bit with her, what her feelings would be towards the house and how I would feel under a similar set of circumstances with the great unwashed American public tramping through my father's home or my mother's home. I think I could have some of that empathy.

I also tried to realize early on that Margaret had been dealing for twenty-seven years when I got here with the Truman Library, and that the new kids on the block could not go rushing in there like a bull in a china shop, and we had to work with and through Ben Zobrist and the Truman Library. And a lot of the help and assistance I had in dealing with Margaret really came about by working with Ben Zobrist to work with Margaret. And by teaming up with Ben, which was one of the things that we were able to successfully do together, and by working together and keeping each other very much informed of what the other was doing with Margaret, it not only strengthened our relationship but strengthened our ability to work with her.

I also took the approach, and many times to the consternation of some of my staff at the time, where you have to choose what your battles were

going to be with Margaret. And I tried to select the causes appropriately. There were times when Margaret wanted a couple little things out of the house, and several of the staff members thought this was the worst thing in the world, that I was giving up my sacred trust to protect these objects by letting Margaret have a couple little things in the house. And I felt it was silly to go the other way sometimes when she wanted a throw rug that we weren't using, and to fight her over that throw rug when you know that clearly the most important interpretive objects in the home are clearly hers. The piano is clearly hers—we tell everybody that comes through the house—and the portrait of her as you walk in the front door or you leave is clearly hers. And I thought it would be silly to fight over a two-by-three-foot throw rug with the piano and portraits and other things like that at stake. I took her on on a few of things, and some we won and some we didn't win.

I think one of the other approaches I took to her right away was I tried very early on to establish our professionalism with her. And within the first ten minutes I knew her, she wanted to run the tour route one way. She wanted to bring the tours through the music room and over into the library and out the library into the dining room. The first time she said that I said, “Mrs. Daniel, it won't work, and here's why . . .” And I went through and held my arms out and brushed against everything along the piano and along the mantel. At that point she said, “Well, you're right. You know what you're doing. You do the rest of it.” And that worked out fine. So I guess it's been a combination of things. I mean, she's a complex lady. She can be very antagonistic at times. I've tried to deal with her in several different ways.

Another thing I've done, rightly or wrongly, early on I decided I was not going to involve her in a whole lot of decisions, which was just the opposite of the way the Truman Library did, where they involved her in nearly every decision and that got to be an extra layer, and so very early on I took the same approach there as I did towards the hard-line management of the house, that I would just go ahead and do things and not consult her, and if I got in trouble, then she'd holler about it. But by not involving her in the day-to-day operation, and deliberately not involving her, I think we've gone a lot further than we would have the other way. It's one of those things I won't know.

She doesn't even know we have the cave. I mean I haven't even told her we've got the cave down there. For a couple of reasons. I don't want her to go near the cave. If she went near the cave and saw that junk we're saving, she'd go through there like a cyclone and throw that stuff out. She'd throw out every piece of junk we got in there, which is the whole cave. So even though we've got something there that we're very proud of, I think you have to understand Margaret, that she would wonder why in the hell we were saving broken glasses, pieces of old wood, and some of the junk that's out there. It would be very difficult to explain to her why it's important that we save the old sliding board that was in the basement and all that other stuff.

SIRON: Have you had any input from her about the expansion of the park service, as far as the homes?

REIGLE: She is very much in favor of it. Yes, I had quite a bit of input from her on that, and that would have never passed Congress without her support. I guess maybe I should have mentioned that a little while earlier, but without her

support on that, I mean, it wouldn't have gone anywhere at all. That was the first thing that had to be determined for Alan Wheat to take the ball and run with it. And I talked to her about that several times, both before and after Alan Wheat contacted her, knowing full well that with her having a vested interest in two of the properties . . . Of course, we talked with her about that in the context of the General Management Plan as well.

That was something that was building for a while, and I was able to get in the back yard with her and point out what would happen if we didn't own Aunt May's house, that virtually everything the poor person who tried to move in there would do would detract from our interpretation. I mean, their kids playing in the back yards, their swing sets out there, and their wash on the line, their visitors coming in the alley, you know, would all be . . . Aunt May is part of the historic scene, but the next person won't be, and so she understood that. She understood that better than the Director of the National Park Service William Penn Mott understood it. But she was able to give us good support on that. I talked to her quite a bit relative to Aunt May in particular, which is the one she cared the most about was Aunt May. So, yeah, she was a big help on that.

SIRON: Just generally we've talked about how the park has been effective and how it's grown through the years. Do you know of any parks that have actually failed administratively because of a lack of good supervision and superintendency?

REIGLE: Well, Mississippi might be the first. [chuckling] Well, there have been several things in the context of the administrative history of the National Park Service

that I guess have kind of come and gone. There have been units of the National Park Service de-authorized. I don't know of any unit of the National Park Service that maybe has failed because of a lack of leadership. I mean, it may have failed because of a lack of support. There have been several things that have kind of come and gone. There have been a lot of things that have languished. Maybe the best example in this region was Taft. We opened in eight months, and Taft took eighteen years to get their doors open. And I'm not so sure that was the fault of the superintendents or that kind of leadership.

I don't know of anything, Sharon. I don't know of anything that I guess you could consider a supervisory failure. I'm sure some have moved slower than others, and there certainly have been parks that have required a change in leadership and that kind of thing. And there's some that, I guess, have not gone very far, and it's more a product of their legislation. This one I'm going to now, it's certainly in a position to not go very far. Or it's in a position to go quite far. And some of those things the site superintendent or administer might be able to handle, and some are beyond their control. I don't see Illinois and Michigan Canal going very far. That's been operating for about four years; I haven't seen that one go very far.

SIRON: Do you have any advice for the new Superintendent?

REIGLE: Oh, geez. I can't think of anything. I think whoever comes in, that person is going to have to be their own person and do their own thing. I think whoever comes in is getting a good organization. It's got good people, it's got good . . . It's got the two most important things: It's got good people working for it and it's got a solid budget. I think the important thing about the next person

coming in is that they take a fresh perspective on the park, the organization, and the people. I think it would be . . . if that person asks me for any information, I would be happy to tell them. But I think the biggest benefit of a new person coming in is for that person to see everything with an entirely different set of eyes than I saw it with. Certainly no one person is going to emphasize the same thing as another person, and I think what any organization needs after a little while is just to take a whole fresh look at it and see what they do. I have certain things that I would stress, and I have certain things that I totally ignore. I have certain things that I just don't care about and I don't get involved in, and I have certain styles that . . . I'm sure if you ask anybody they'd say, "I don't know why he didn't do this more, or why he didn't do that more." That's just me. And the next person that comes in probably needs to be doing the things that I didn't do, or seeing the things that I didn't see. So I don't know, that's not exactly hedging the answer there. Oh, I could give that person some political advice perhaps, you know, who to watch out for. Usually the biggest question you ask . . . I'll tell you the question I'm going to ask when I go up to Mississippi next week is I'm going to try and find out the five people up there that can help me the most and the five people up . . .

[End #4100; Begin #4101]

SIRON: How have you felt about the reputation of the park as a whole, especially here in the community, as far as positive input?

REIGLE: Well, I think that there's the old saying, I don't know how it goes, but to see ourselves as others see us, that kind of thing. But my interpretation and my

feeling is that the park has an excellent reputation in the community here. I think the park as a whole is well-respected in the community, it's highly thought of, it's looked upon as very professional. I think over the years the folks that we've had . . . you know, that have gone around the community in the green and gray have, for the very most part, projected a good image for the Service and a good image for the park. I think, as far as the National Park Service is concerned, I think Truman has an outstanding reputation among historic sites and presidential sites. I think we'll know a lot by seeing how much interest there is in this job coming open. [chuckling] If nobody applies for it, well, then we've had a bummer of an organization. But I think this park has a good reputation, both within the National Park Service and the community. I haven't heard anything to the contrary. I don't know whether anybody else has. It is certainly my perception that we're well thought of.

SIRON: Have you had to overcome any negative feelings toward the park or the Service as a whole in recent years?

REIGLE: Well, I think here we've been real fortunate. It's kind of like I mentioned earlier, with some of the other parks that I've been in, this has been by far, by quantum, the least negative area I've ever worked in, and for a lot of reasons. There was a lot of negative community feeling towards the park service in the Ozarks, there was a lot of it back in Cape Lookout when I was there, there was a lot of it in the Tetons when I was there. Lassen was old enough that it had very little, it was a pleasure to work there.

But here there's been very little, with the exception of the business with the First Baptist Church. And to that extent there was quite a bit, and

there remains quite a bit of negative feeling towards the park service from certain members of the First Baptist Church. And that's like a lot of things, you're not going to change that. I mean, here you have some people that have some very, very strong feelings on that side because of the things that happened and were said and done during that period in late '83 or early '84. It might improve a little bit when I leave. I would think that, and time, because I took some stands then which had to . . . I'm sure that the park service in general, and me in particular, are not held in great esteem with some members of that church. And we've had to overcome that. I think that the feelings . . . With the exception of that, I think any negative feelings that I'm aware of in the community would probably be more towards me as an individual than as the Service as a whole. So I think that the next person that comes in is not coming into a snake pit of dissension. The next person that's coming in will probably have the opportunity to get some things . . . Well, I don't think the park service's position relative to the First Baptist Church is ever going to be good. That's the one I can think of most there. And this park is very unique in that respect, and it's one of the things that made this park easier than some, would be that we weren't fighting a lot of anti-park service community feelings.

SIRON: What would you say would make an effective Superintendent, for any park, not just the Truman Home?

REIGLE: Oh, geez. Well, I think a Superintendent has got to care about the park they're working in and the people that are working for them and the people that are coming to their park. I think a Superintendent needs to be decisive and

effective. Fair. I think fair is one of the key words. You have to make a lot of unpopular decisions in this job, and most of them relate to personnel. You have to try and be fair, I guess, and try and be . . .

I think one of the worst things a Superintendent can do is be too wishy-washy and keep deferring decisions. On the other hand, you've got to try to make good decisions. You can't shoot from the hip. There's a difference between just shooting from the hip and thinking a decision through, but then making it. And I think a very ineffective Superintendent is the one that, when is confronted with an issue, does not gather all the facts possible, and then right or wrong make a decision and then go with it. Sometimes the decision is not to make a decision, but you've got to make a conscious effort to make those.

I guess those are the things that I . . . Without thinking about it overnight, I guess those are the things that I think is effective. I would hope that the next Superintendent would get out into the community a good bit, probably would get out more than I would, more than I have. You need to keep those things cemented out in the community. I think a Superintendent has to know where the park stands and what's important for that park, and be willing to go out and get those kind of things, and go out and work with those people who can do those things and get those things for him. A good Superintendent has to be able to see what's impacting the park from the inside as well as from the outside. Many of the big parks, the Superintendent just takes care of the outside activities and the Assistant Superintendent takes care of the inside activities. A park like this, you have to do both, which there is

plenty of time to do both. I guess those are the things.

SIRON: Well, that's it.

REIGLE: That it?

SIRON: I'm done.

REIGLE: Well, very nice.

END OF INTERVIEW

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

WITH

NORMAN J. REIGLE

DECEMBER 22, 1989

INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI

INTERVIEWED BY MICHAEL SHAVER

ORAL HISTORY #1989-15

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HARRY S TRUMAN NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR



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RESTRICTION

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ABSTRACT

Norman J. Riegle [12 August, 1937—15 December 1992] was the first superintendent of the Harry S Truman National Historic Site. In this, the third of his three interviews, Reigle discusses, in depth, the hiring process and background of each of first personnel hired in order to open the park in time for the May, 1984 dedication ceremony. Reigle also discusses the Junior Service League, the development of the General Management Plan, and off-site storage locations.

Persons mentioned: Joan Sanders, Thomas P. Richter, Charles Odegaard, Brent Schondlemeyer, May Wallace, Steve Harrison, Don Cumberland, John Hunter, Benedict K. Zobrist, John Platte, Skippy Napick, Jerry Schoeber, Dean Rhinewalter, Art Sullivan, Randy Pope, Art Acker, Joan Sanders, Jim O'Toole, Sue Kopczynski, Warren Hill, Danny Beech, Lisa Bosso Houston, Pat Kerr Dorsey, Linda Joseph, Mary Jo Colley, Jennifer A. Hayes, Rick Jones, Palma Wilson, Cindy Ott Jones, Skip Brooks, Kenneth E. Apschnikat, Mike Lee, Chrissy Barker, Karen Tinnin, Larry Blake, John Whitfield, Jodie Adkins, Mark Newport, Gwen Harris, Jim Williams, Jackie Holt, Steve Marst, Mike Gillespie, Regina Klein, Brian Hoduski, Carol Dage, Margaret Truman Daniel, Clayton Connor, Dave Herrera, Harry S Truman, John Kawamoto, Jim Ryan, F. A. "Andy" Ketterson, Lee Jamison, Al O'Bright, Ron Cockrell, Jill O'Bright, Sarah M. Olson, Al Swift, and Diana Le Duc.

**ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH
NORMAN J. REIGLE**

HSTR INTERVIEW #1989-15

MICHAEL SHAVER: My name is Mike Shaver, and I'm conducting an oral history interview with Mr. Norman Reigle in his office at the National Park Service at 223 North Main Street in Independence, Missouri. Today is December 22, 1989, it's a Friday, and it's now 10:15.

And as we were talking about before we started, I wanted to cover some of the things that have transpired since the first oral history interview you had with Pamela Smoot back in 1985. And several things have happened in the park since then, like we were talking about earlier. At the time that you conducted that interview, you didn't have a General Management Plan [GMP] for the park. You were operating off of some new modes and some interim plans. You've addressed the General Management Plan once or twice before in some conversations we've had. Tell us the big picture. [chuckling]

REIGLE: The big picture of the General Management Plan? Well, I'll tell you what, before I forget, Mike, there was one thing we talked about before the tape was running, and apparently it stopped while I was still talking about the Junior Service League. I had mentioned there were two things that the Junior

Service League had done for us, and one having been set up the Floral Fund and put on kind of an invitation-only open house to the Truman Home the second day it was open.

The other big thing the Junior Service League did for us in that year, that we'll document before we go any further, was there was a real concern among those of us here that when we opened the Truman Home . . . When we were sitting in the Library, we were getting calls daily wanting to know when the home was going to be open, when they could go through it. This was mostly local people and there was an apparent intense local interest to see the Truman Home as soon as it opened up, and there was some real concern about how we would handle the large influx of local people and how that would impact out-of-town visitors and cross-country visitors and people from other areas. So it was decided that we would try and have a one-time-only series of tours in the evening, and this is documented somewhere but I forget what the exact hours were, 6:00 to 8:00 or something like that. But we decided to set up these evening tours that would start sometime in June and run through Labor Day or something. What we did was we asked the Junior Service League to maintain a phone for us and take those reservations, and they did this. It turned out to be a most successful undertaking, but it was really hectic for a while.

What we did was we put out a press release, and I tried my damndest to sneak it to the good old Independence *Examiner* before it hit Kansas City so that we could shove a little bias in there for the folks from

Independence. In their usual manner, even though I gave it to the Independence *Examiner* a day or two before I put it in the mail to Kansas City, the Independence *Examiner* only got it published after it was published in the Kansas City paper. But what happened was there was one person maintaining one phone line out at the Junior Service League clubhouse, and she practically filled all the reservations for the whole summer in about a day or a day and a half or something like that. It was phenomenal how many people called that number and made their reservations for a summer tour. The program turned out to be remarkably successful. The local people knew that they would get in the house at a certain time and date in the summer, and we had, to the best of my recollection, very few no-shows in the summer. The problems that we thought would occur between local people coming early and getting all the tours for the day did not materialize, so the program was most successful.

At the time we took those reservations we had a very, very small staff—I mean, just a real tiny little staff here. You know, I can't remember exactly who was here at that particular moment in time, but it was probably Joan Sanders and Tom Richter and myself and maybe one or two others. I hope that answers that. I wanted to do that because that's what we had talked about.

Now we want to talk a little bit about the General Management Plan. I don't know exactly where to begin on the General Management Plan. It is documented itself. I guess the only thing I can add to things that are not in

the plan—in fact, I can't think of much I can add into the plan, much that I can add that isn't already in there—other than to say that some of the things . . . I guess my feeling towards the General Management Plan, in the most part, it just kind of rubber-stamped what we were already doing and what we had already planned. My real feeling about that GMP was that it just legitimized what we were already doing and what we really planned on doing.

There were some strong wills in the development of that plan, and probably the two strongest wills in that plan were mine and Chuck Odegaard, our Regional Director. For one, I refused to consider alternative methods of interpretation other than what we were doing. I mean, I wouldn't even hear about increasing the numbers of people or doing some kind of a walk-through or whatever. I was very adamant on that, and right from the beginning I let it be known I wouldn't even discuss those kinds of options.

The best things I can see that came out of the plan were a legitimate documentation of several objectives in interpretation. We used that to justify our walking tours, it spelled out some of the things relative to a shuttle system, which is probably something we need to talk about at a later date without getting off [on] the tangent of a shuttle system right now. But I think I will say at this point in time that some of the things that were said in that document about the shuttle system may have in part come back to haunt us at a later time.

The big issues at that time that I guess were successfully resolved

were the interpretive things, the need for off-site storage. That was one thing that was debated. And I'd say, for the most part, most of the people were in favor of doing things the way we are now doing it, with the cave and the underground storage. There were a few voices crying in the wilderness, most notably . . .

SHAVER: Warren Hill?

REIGLE: Warren Hill, who felt, and with some justification, that once things are taken out of a historic house they are seldom put back in again. Of course, that will very likely be the case here unless some day in time other aspects of the house are decided to be interpreted. But those being some of the side issues that were kind of resolved on that.

The two big issues were neighborhood protection, and the whole plan came down to the issue of neighborhood protection, which I think I may have mentioned in the last tape, was one of the raging issues of that time.

SHAVER: You don't go into it too much. You kind of set the backdrop.

REIGLE: Well, this is pretty well documented. I think if there's one thing that's very well documented that I probably can't add much to that isn't in the files either through something Brent Schondlemeyer did or the newspaper clippings or . . . I have the entire transcript of some of the council hearings here: that whole issue of the First Baptist Church and so forth, and the historic district, that whole issue. So, really, the whole focal point, as far as public input and so forth for the whole GMP, focused on reopening and

scratching the scabs of the wounds from the Baptist Church issue. We were successful in getting something through which sets up that neighborhood trust, and I feel that the benefit of that . . . And I guess, if I could say there was a real benefit to doing the GMP, it's that that is in place and it will not get any political support until something dramatic happens in the neighborhood. The next time something dramatic happens in the neighborhood, it's going to take . . . It's going to take a case of "locking the barn door after the cow's been stolen" approach, but the next time the Baptists knock down six or eight houses over there, there'll be a big hue and cry and the park service will have its ducks in a row and say, "Look, this is what we told you back in 1985 or 6"—whenever it was—"that this is what needs to be done." And so that's in place, and it'll just need to be dusted off at the right time.

But I really feel there's absolutely no political support locally for that right now. The elected officials on the City Council of Independence, rightly or wrongly, feel that there is such a strong political influence from the Baptist voting bloc that they will not do anything to anger that voting bloc or offend that voting bloc. So there is absolutely no support among the city council, and consequently, there'll be no congressional support because Congress does not generally go against the wishes of the local government, so there'll be nothing on that. As far as many people are concerned, what we've got now is as far as it's going to go for a while. But I think those are the big issues on the GMP. I don't know, Mike, do you have anything . . .

SHAVER: No, it's basically the planning. I mean, the things that are found in the document, how the decisions were reached. Because as I gathered earlier, the idea of the neighborhood trust and bringing in a third party to run that wasn't the first idea that the people had arrived at. That was one of those—

REIGLE: No, it wasn't. I think that one came about in an elevator.

SHAVER: It was the administration's thrust at that time to try and take government out of direct ownership and management of parklands and try and do it with easements and third parties and cooperative agreements.

REIGLE: Yeah. If my memory serves me correctly on the evolution that one, and Chuck Odegaard should take the . . . takes the credit for that one. I know many of us had reached the point in the . . . Planning had gotten bogged down on that issue, and it got bogged down on that issue pretty hard. You know, all this stuff is in the record, but it had gone back to Washington once in draft form, which was a lot stronger than it is now, to some extents, but it didn't have the trust in it. It had a heavier park service hand, with easements and so forth, but not as much property for protection in a core around there. It came floating back from Washington at that time with some of the conservative stooges that were in the Interior Department at that time that it was the most—some of this is written down somewhere—that it was the most land-grabbing, empire-building plan they'd ever seen and all that kind of horse crap. So it came back and we were getting beat down. And if I recall, and boy, I'm slipping on this one a little bit, but just to keep things moving, we were about ready to back down. I know I was in an elevator,

just Chuck Odegaard and I, and I was just about ready to back down on the issue. And I finally got him alone and I was going to hit him with some kind of a compromise, and I can't remember what it was on that, and for some reason he changed his opinion entirely—I mean, he was the one that was trying to back off and back off and back off—and he got this spark of an idea for this trust—on the elevator! We went back into the room, and the whole tone of the meeting changed right there. I mean, this became Chuck's idea, then it became his baby, and then it kind of went through from there. So, credit where credit's due on that one.

I guess the other behind-the-scenes thing I remember is some of the nitpicking that went on, you know, over how often people need to go to the rest room. This was Chuck too, you know, and trying to convince him that a lot of old people have to go more frequently than people of his age, things of this nature—you know, really arguing the case for site support. But I guess the proof is in the pudding. We were all real adamant, the planning team and myself, on the issue of site support. But hell, here we are six years later, we still don't have any site support and we're still operating just fine. It's an issue that we felt was very important at the time, but all I can say is after six years of operation we've survived quite well without it. So that's anybody's guess. I think we'll be better off when we have some decent site support down there. I think it'll be more comfortable for the visitor when they can get out of the sun and get out of the cold and get out of the rain and go to the john if they need to. It'll be better on the resources if we can get people out

of the house, you know, get the coffee pot out of there and get the lunch bags out of there and get the refrigerator out of there and keep people out of the basement. It'll save a lot of wear and tear on the historic resource. You know, as soon as we can we'll get that moved across the street or over to Aunt May's or somewhere. I still think it'll be better, but certainly it was never an absolute necessity to have that site support, and we've gotten by without it. I don't know, Mike, anything else you can think of on that?

SHAVER: Well, one of the other issues that's addressed in the Management Plan was the need for off-site storage. I've always liked your phrase about "eggs in one basket." You could probably reiterate that. And then tell us how, at least from your perspective, the whole process started, from when we had a house full of artifacts to having a premier off-site storage facility.

REIGLE: Well, it was something that we all . . . I guess when I say "we all," I'm not sure who all that encompasses. It was not a decision that was taken lightly, but I know one school of thought and one reaction of people coming in the house, and myself included, was, "Oh, my God, look at all this stuff. How are we going to keep accountability of it? How are we going to know what's here? How are we going to know what's in that box? How are we going to know who's been in that box? How are we going to keep this stuff safe and secure from theft, and how are we going to keep this stuff in the best state of preservation in situ? Stuff was all over the house, top to bottom, piled in heaps in the basement, piled in heaps in drawers, piled in heaps in the attic.

And the other big concern in those days—you know, the very early

days—the electrical wiring was poor, the roof was leaking. It's an old wood-frame house. So there really was the concern about all the eggs in one basket, and there was a concern that . . . There was a feeling that the Truman legacy, in terms of its three-dimensional objects, would be much better served if things were protected so that one catastrophic event such what happened to the Lincoln stuff in the Chicago fire, or what happened to the stuff over at Roosevelt could never happen to the Truman stuff. And so we were quite comfortable in the fact that many, many of the Truman three-dimensional objects were safely secured at the Truman Library. Many of us felt that all of the stuff that's at the Truman Home could not all be protected where it was, so that there's a real comfortable feeling now knowing that no one catastrophic event is going to wipe out everything. It may wipe out a third of the stuff, but with some of it underground and some of it underground at the Truman Library, and some of it at the house—at least ultimately the stuff is all close enough together so that it can be seen by a bona fide researcher in a very convenient manner by visiting one site, the city of Independence—it still is greatly protected.

Kind of the other side of the issue was the concern I mentioned earlier by Warren Hill that once it goes out it's not going to come back, but I think there was kind of a general feeling, too, of not wanting to . . . touch or molest the stuff, and also the strong feeling of those of us that were privileged to go into the basement and to go into the attic and be here early in the game. The feeling that those who would come along later, be they

who they may, would never be able to have that same experience of this stuff, you know, scattered wherever it was in the attic. You know, it's, say, a day that the next superintendent will never see that pile of wine bottles in the basement, and will see it from a photograph but will never be able to appreciate it, or never be able to appreciate what the basement was like, nor the attic. I think that that gives you a certain feeling for the home and a certain closeness that when that stuff is gone, it may not be the next superintendent but it may well be the one after that, or the curator after that or the interpreter after that, who comes into an empty attic, as they do now into an empty basement, are not going to have quite the same appreciation for the objects, the magnitude, the family, or that kind of intimacy that people had. So I think that was the other side of that issue. I don't know, is that kind of what you wanted, Mike?

SHAVER: Yes.

REIGLE: Okay. Can we take a minute, I want to check . . .

SHAVER: Yeah. [tape turned off] Well, we talked about the need for the storage and the differing ideas about . . . The house had so much historic integrity, it just oozed it, compared to a lot of historic sites, and I guess we'd come to the point where we pretty well determined that there was a need for off-site storage, and it was addressed in the plan. You always tell the story so well when you have visitors come out to the cave about how everything kind of fell into place. Why don't you tell us?

REIGLE: A little bit about the cave? Well, of course, to get that facility, first it had to

come out in the General Management Plan and be the consensus of management that that is indeed the approach we wanted to take. So, once the General Management Plan came into effect, and even before then, a lot of the planning had started on that. And of course the real hero, I guess, in the success of the cave is Steve Harrison, who did the planning necessary to develop that.

I think the steps on that are pretty well documented. Some of the names slip me right now, but once that it was determined to go for off-site storage, then it went through a number of steps, and many of these were going on simultaneously. One was deciding how much room would be required and what kind of facilities that storage space would have to have, and that was all developed by Steve in concert with other museum professionals in the park service, Don Cumberland and John Hunter, and . . . I don't remember who else was involved in that, but I'm sure that's part of the written record, in determining what facilities would be needed. I mean, that's how a research room and a computer room and a lab and the drive-in entry and all that stuff were developed. Then, at the same time, some of the museum storage professionals were going around deciding how much storage space would be necessary to house those elements of the collection that would be ultimately removed and how much space would be involved to store everything that was in the house. So that was going on, that part of the planning was going on, and I may be off on my time sequence, but the dates of this can all be put together. But that was going on in concert with

the General Management Plan and shortly thereafter.

It was pretty well determined, I think there were a few of us, myself included, that were not going to let this thing go through unless it had some of the things we wanted, and that was one of the things I really wanted in there. At the same time, for, oh, several years in advance of actually moving in, Steve started developing a list of what items would be necessary to properly store that equipment, how many cabinets, how many drawers, how much shelving, what auxiliary stuff would be required in there, and so we had Steve develop that list. And every year for a number of years as year-end money became available, as John Hunter money became available, we would buy stuff and squirrel it away at the Library. Initially what we were doing at the Library was getting some of those things that did not take quite as much room to store.

The other big hero in this thing is Ben Zobrist and his staff at the Truman Library, who gave us a place to put stuff on an interim basis. I don't know whether it's been mentioned anywhere, but I'd better mention it now, but from the time we got here we needed a place to keep things that we had no room to keep either at the house or at our headquarters area, and so the Truman Library graciously let us use a room up there. So, as cabinets would come in and that sort of thing, they were stored there. So we were starting to get ahead of the game. I thought it would be awful to have a big storage space and then not be able to work on it for a couple years because you couldn't have the stuff to put in it, so we were buying stuff.

Then the next step, of course, was once we had all of that and decided what we need, then it was getting the approval, going to GSA and working with GSA, where we went through the normal steps of seeking space. And again there are several heroes in that process, too. I mean, the folks here and in the Kansas City area with GSA bent over backwards to help us; and certainly the relationship that this park had with John Platte, who was then the Regional Administrator, didn't hurt the situation either. So we had excellent cooperation with John Platte and the staff at GSA.

We were not able to specify underground storage specifically, but that was what both Steve and I had favored once we had looked at some of the options. It turned out that they had the low bid, the best bid, and even though GSA had never, ever leased underground space before, they were able to work well within their own regulations to make that a reality. And I know the people, Skippy Napick, who was one of the principal GSA people in those days, were real proud of it when they were finished. She brought her family out there to see it and all this sort of thing. Skippy's currently with Department of Commerce, but I know they were real proud of it too.

So, by the time that was done, then we were at such a point in our fiscal management so that within one year after we had everything out, that we had the space, we were able to buy off the rest of the cabinetry. With the plan being what it was, that like things would be stored together [regardless] of where they were found in the house, the decision was made as we started buying things to buy cabinets first and then lots of drawers second so that

things could be organized out there so that things could be assigned to certain cabinets, and then as they are catalogued they could be fitted into there. That's the long-range plan. That was the reason we bought things in the manner in which we did, but as it worked out, we had everything we needed before we even started storing the stuff, so we were well ahead of the game there.

I think those were the . . . That sort of simplifies the thing because we're looking at things that took place over a period of several years for it to come together, but it did indeed come together well. We were using various monies, monies out of Hunter's pot, monies that were saved out of ONPS, and so that . . . And as year-end pots became available, up to that point, the game plan being we would spend as much money up front on getting that facility and getting the equipment we needed for that facility . . .

[End #4102; Begin #4103]

SHAVER: This is the second reel of an oral history interview being done on December 22, 1989, in the offices of the Harry S Truman National Historic Site. My name is Mike Shaver, and here with me are Norm Reigle, the outgoing Superintendent of the Harry S Truman National Historic Site, and Joan Sanders, the Administrative Technician and general know-it-all here in the park, the lady who knows it all.

SANDERS: _____.

REIGLE: Yeah, sometime you need to give Joan one of these, too, probably not too long . . . In fact, you should plan on doing that next month. Why don't you

do that? Go through an oral history.

SHAVER: I'll have to catch her some Saturday and talk to her.

REIGLE: Yeah. Well, it doesn't have to be a Saturday. Go ahead, are we on now?

SHAVER: Yeah, we're on. One of the things that wasn't covered in the last oral history interview, and something that's never really been covered much in depth, is how the staff was put together here and some of the people who did serve on the staff when you first came here. I have heard stories on and off over the last few years about people and how they arrived and what they did. At least in my mind, a lot of the success of the park, besides the superintendent, was the staff they pulled together to make the park work. We have the curatorial facility, the fine administrative operation, the fine interpretive operation, all basically the result of these people at work. So tell us the story of how folks got here.

REIGLE: This will be fun. Okay.

SANDERS: Behind every good man there's a good woman. [laughter]

REIGLE: Yes, okay. Well, I guess we'll start first things first, how the staff was selected and so forth. We'll start first . . . the first person here, of course, was Tom Richter, who was detailed over as the Ranger in Charge. Tom came over from the Arch, and he was sent over here sometime in early '83, January of '83, and for a period of time then this area was more or less operated as a satellite of the Arch. At that time, Tom was apparently selected for a variety of reasons. He had been in kind of an intake program and had been over at the Arch for a while, and so there was a general desire to find

him another position. He was single and very mobile at the time and had just finished a stint as the acting secretary over at the Arch and where he got to know Jerry Schoeber quite well. So Tom was the first person here and did a fine job of holding things together, and so Tom was here when I got here.

Okay, the story of how I got here is one of pure speculation, too. At the time, I was Chief Ranger at Ozark Riverways. I had no particular interest in moving at that time. I was a GS-12, Chief Ranger. I recall the incident. For some reason or other, Dean Rhinewalter, who's now a Superintendent up at Grand Portage, and who at that time was Management Assistant at the Ozarks, and I were both in a room with Art Sullivan, in Art's office. I don't know what we were talking about anymore, but Art mentioned to Dean that the position of Superintendent was coming open up here and thought that Dean might be interested in applying. After we'd left Art's office, something struck me about the position, so I went back in and asked Art whether he would support me for the position and he said he would. I talked to Dean about it a little bit, and I don't think Dean ever did apply for it. I'm not sure why. Maybe he did and maybe he didn't, I don't know.

But I went home that weekend . . . And I had not done a 171. That was the only one I ever did at the Ozarks, so I had to do my 171. I did it at the kitchen table, and my mother-in-law was there being her usual pain in the butt while we were trying to type this stuff up, but got it in the mail and didn't feel that I had a remarkable chance at this position, but just somehow something about it sounded kind of neat to me, and I think it was the idea of

starting a new park that sounded kind of neat.

Then, you never know why, Randy Pope selected me for the position. You never know what goes through Randy Pope's mind or how things turn. I guess in my own mind there were probably several things that may have influenced his selection at that time. I don't to this day know who or how many people were on the register, nor do I care, but several things probably influenced Randy Pope's feelings at that time. There was a major disaster going on in the National Park Service at that time where Washington was deciding to decentralize and send all their deadwood out into the field, and so they were sending a lot of high-graded people from the central offices into these make-work positions in the field. And many of these people had come from HCRS or had had no field experience whatsoever. At that time, Art Sullivan did not want an Assistant Superintendent, but one got shoved down his throat. It was Art Acker [?], a very capable, competent person. Art had never worked in the field before, had come in as a Congressional Assistant and started out in the park service as a GS-13 his first job and had worked in environmental compliance or planning or something back in Washington. So, all of a sudden, over Art's objection, an Assistant Superintendent was sent to the Ozarks. That Assistant Superintendent did part of Dean Rhinewalter's job, part of my job, ended up taking my office. That didn't sit well with me. I wasn't particularly happy about it, and neither were a lot of the staff, and I think it was probably recognized that since I was the Acting Assistant Superintendent all the time

down there, all of a sudden that job was taken away from me. I think my personality was such that Randy Pope probably knew that it was probably better off for the Ozarks to get me out of that, so that may have had something to do with his selection.

The other thing that may have had something to do with my selection, and I'll never know, is the timing of certain things. Just at the very time this position was being advertised Art Sullivan went on vacation, and a few crises erupted down at Ozarks. I can't remember what they were anymore. One of them, I think, involved fish gigging and one of them involved trapping or some damn thing, I can't remember anymore.

SHAVER: Was the canoe controversy pretty much over with?

REIGLE: Oh, that was going on too, but these were in addition to that. I mean, it's just something that developed right from scratch. I think it was something that had to do with gigging of fish and removing that and placing a regulation that would prohibit gigging of fish. Yeah, as I recall, it had to do with the new park service regulations that came out and so forth. So it was causing quite a controversy down there. We tried to reach Art and couldn't, and I was in a position where decisions had to be made and they had to be made in a rather quick fashion, and I think I took some decisive action. But anyhow, whatever, it certainly put me in a spotlight for a short time, and so for a brief moment my star was kind of flickering away down at the Ozarks about this time, too. So those things probably had to do with my selection. Well, be that what it may, that's what I think, for whatever it's worth and whoever

might care. So I was the second person here. I got here in October.

It became immediately apparent . . . Well, when I first got here I was told I would have three FTE and \$250,000, so it was me and Tom, [chuckling] and we at that point had room for one other person. At that point, Tom was doing a magnificent job of secretary and AO, but I felt rather strongly we needed an administrative person here right away to start pulling things together. At that time, I was up in the Regional Office and was letting my thoughts be known as to what I needed, and several people up there strongly recommended Joan Sanders from over at Lincoln Home at the time. And I was in a position to go around and talk to a number of people up there, and at that time Joan had a very good reputation among the people in the region. At that time, too, there was a little disagreement with her and the then Superintendent at Lincoln Home, Jim O'Toole, and so Joan was available for a directed reassignment. And after talking to a number of people, I was convinced that Joan was the person we wanted. So we got Joan on an immediate directed reassignment, which meant we never advertised the job. We called her and offered her the job and she came over. So you got here about what time, Joan? You were here by . . . ?

SANDERS: I actually physically arrived December 1st.

REIGLE: December 1st, okay. So we had . . .

SANDERS: With five bookcases and two cartons of forms and supplies. [laughter]

REIGLE: Okay. And the first I ever met you was when you walked into the office looking sort of bewildered one morning. So you were actually the third

person here. Okay, in the meantime . . . When did Sue Kopczynski get here?

That's the next person.

SANDERS: Okay, Sue Kopczynski got here right around Thanksgiving, the week before.

REIGLE: So Sue was actually here before you were, right?

SANDERS: Yes, I think she'd come in . . . I got here on like a Thursday and she came in on the Monday after Thanksgiving.

REIGLE: Well, who's ever going to hear these things?

[tape turned off]

SHAVER: Whoever you want to hear them. You can put any sort of restrictions on it.

REIGLE: Why do I care? Okay. Yeah, I don't care who hears them, I really don't.

SHAVER: We'll probably sit on them for a while before we transcribe them.

REIGLE: I'm not going to say anything nasty. Okay, in the meantime, I had forgotten Sue Kopczynski came in here. Okay, it was also apparent that something had to be done with that collection, which reflects back to the reel we were talking about, where eight months I was sort of terrified as to what would happen to the collection and the objects in the home. Warren Hill, the Associate Regional Director for Operations, was attempting to be helpful. He was doing his best to be helpful, but Warren somehow had picked up that Danny Beech, who is a Superintendent at Morristown? Morristown. Had an employee who was real good, a crackerjack curator that could come out here on a detail. And at that time, we assumed that since I was a 12 that we'd probably be sorting out a curator somewhere at the 9 level. Sue was an 11, and so a deal was cut. At that time Warren Hill said, "Boy, such a deal I

got for you.” I mean, we didn’t have any money, we didn’t have any FTE, and this deal was going to be that, you know, they would pay everything except her travel or whatever. Well, it didn’t quite turn out that way. I think we got stuck for . . . What did we get stuck for? We got stuck for her travel. Did we get any of her money or FTE charged to us?

SANDERS: No.

REIGLE: I don’t remember how it worked out.

SANDERS: No, not the salary or the FTE.

REIGLE: But, anyhow, Sue came out on one of those details and was here for a short time. I was not pleased with her general attitude towards the collection. I felt she did not treat the collection with the same amount of reverence that I felt it deserved, and so I terminated her detail somewhat early, probably in January, didn’t we? So Sue was here just for a short time.

SANDERS: She was here three months and she was originally scheduled to be here six months.

REIGLE: Yeah, I think the straw that kind of broke the camel’s back there was when I could see the little white number on the Korean bell in the music room from the visitor path and when I could see the . . . when I looked in the back of the coat that’s hanging on the hat and coat rack and saw the number sewn into the lapel there. That just struck me with insensitivity and poor judgment, so Sue became [chuckling] the first victim, I suspect.

Okay, in the meantime, that’s about the time . . . Lisa would be about the next one, Lisa Houston-Bosso.

SANDERS: Steve came in a week before Sue went back to Morristown. Steve came in on the 19th of January.

REIGLE: Okay. All right.

SANDERS: Sue went home the following week, and then Lisa came on with us the 4th of March.

REIGLE: Okay, that worked out . . . Quite a bit of wheeling and dealing worked out on that one, too. Is your tape okay?

SHAVER: Yeah.

REIGLE: Okay. That one with Steve . . . Oh, I forget some of these things, but as we were getting rid of Sue, the Steve thing was starting to generate. And that goes back a short ways, too. At that time, Steve Harrison was working over at the Arch, and they were going to do the filming for *Smithsonian World*, and this would have been . . . this was before you got here. This was October, right? So this was the first month. So that our relationship with Steve goes back to that first month in October when I got here, sort of towards the end of the month, if I recall. The house had not been cleaned since the park service took it over, so it was obvious that we had to get the house cleaned and ready for Margaret's visit. And so I don't know who made the suggestion, it may have been Tom, how it came about that we bring Steve Harrison over here on a detail to clean the house. So Steve came over, and he and Tom and my wife Carol and I cleaned the house. Steve taught us how to clean, you know, how to run the rag one way, and we did our little chores up there. Mostly it was Steve and Tom that did the cleaning.

And we went out for a couple of beers afterwards, and this was before Sue got there, so Steve was cleaning the house one week and Sue got there a couple weeks later. Well, Steve was really the first curator-type that I had met, at least . . . I mean, I know about cataloguing, but I was not really in tune to the curatorial methods of cleaning and maintaining a historic house. I was very impressed with Steve. I was very impressed with his sensitivities, his care, his meticulous nature, and then afterwards we went out and had a couple beers and some pizza and talked and that sort of thing, so I got to know Steve. And then Sue comes. And even in a short time, it was apparent to my eyes that Sue Kopczynski was not a Steve Harrison. So almost immediately within weeks after Sue was here, and we also knew that Sue was only going to be temporary and that we really wanted a permanent position in there, so . . . When did we go up to get our positions done? That was . . . ?

SANDERS: January 4th.

REIGLE: January 4th, okay. So sometime early in there the seduction of Steve Harrison started, where Tom, who was a friend of Steve's, at kind of my . . . I try to stay behind the scenes here, but it was apparent . . . Tom was real helpful in people selections in those days. I will add, Tom has a good eye for horse flesh, and Tom began talking to Steve and putting the idea there that we could possibly do a directed reassignment on him as well, so that was kind of going on at this time. So about that time I had gone into Region with a list of positions I thought we needed at that time, and we had sent that stuff

up to the Position Review Board, as I understand?

SANDERS: We hand-carried it.

REIGLE: We hand-carried it up right after Christmas.

SANDERS: We delivered it in person.

REIGLE: In person. And we had a very productive meeting. I mean, we went in there feeling we were going to get crapped on, and we—

SANDERS: We went in with a budget request, we went in with an FTE request, we went in with a fully developed organizational chart, draft PDs and all the potential positions we were going to have, and we were just well-prepared, and they didn't say no to anything. We got the money, we got the FTE, and we got all the positions.

REIGLE: We got all the positions. So we came back in January and we started filling those positions.

SANDERS: Then we started going through the process of issuing vacancy announcements, recruitment bulletins, and what have you.

REIGLE: And so by that time the seduction of Harrison was pretty well complete, and we were able to just offer him a directed reassignment. So Steve was one of the first people to kind of show up.

SANDERS: He was the fourth one.

REIGLE: Steve was the fourth one, okay. Now, when we selected Lisa Bosso, who is now Lisa Houston, Lisa Bosso-Houston, to be the first Museum Aide . . . Refresh my memory. We did not rely on Sue Kopczynski to select her, which really teed her off.

SANDERS: No, we had to go through OPM to fill that position.

REIGLE: We had to go through OPM, but we had started that one pretty early too.

SANDERS: And she had some tough counseling from Tom Richter on how to fill out a 171 and do the KSAs. And when we got the cert. from OPM, she was the only applicant that had addressed the KSAs in any way, shape, or form, and she was more or less selected because Tom had been dealing with her early on since he'd gotten here. She had shown an interest in wanting to be a part of the staff, and she had been talking to Tom for several months and he was keeping in touch with her.

REIGLE: Her father had some connections through the Library, and she was also a personal friend of one of the library staff at that time. Oh, what's her name, who was sort of the acting curator at the time too?

SANDERS: Not Pat Kerr?

REIGLE: Yeah, Pat Kerr. Pat Kerr, yeah. So, yeah, Lisa came out very well in the interviews, very well in person, was great on paper. It turned out to be just the perfect person for that position to start out with. I mean, Lisa had all the sensitivities that we wanted, so she was ideal. So she came out through the local pool, but she was in a position to make herself known. I was impressed by the way she pursued things, by the way she came across, and so we kind of selected her off the register sometime right about that time. I don't know whether we even . . . I know we didn't consult Sue Kopczynski.

SANDERS: No, because she came on board the 4th of March. Steve had only been here two weeks when she came.

REIGLE: That's right, so I don't think we even consulted Steve. I think we said, "Here you are, Steve. Here's your . . ." But Steve knew she was coming and so we might have run that by him too. And I think the key in this one was again Tom Richter, who was very instrumental in bringing that portion together. I mean, Tom was working kind of behind the scenes on both these people. Tom had kind of spotted Lisa. Lisa brought herself to Tom, so Tom kept me aware of that, and Tom was real instrumental in doing the talking to Steve Harrison and telling him what we needed and giving him the pep talk. So that division sort of came together then in March, so we were still looking at April. So we were only looking at maybe six or seven weeks till opening then, so that was coming together without too much time . . .

Who was next? We hired . . . We were needing a secretary then. If God had only invented the word processor by then we wouldn't have needed to hire . . . But we had hired that one little airline stewardess for a bit to come in and type for a while. What was her name?

SANDERS: Linda Joseph. She came in as a Ranger.

REIGLE: She came in as a Ranger, but we had her typing until we hired a secretary.

SANDERS: We had problems. We had to go out three times for a secretary cert. Pitiful certs. Absolutely pitiful.

REIGLE: Yeah, the worst I've ever seen. Things like . . . I mean, we got certs. that were handwritten, misspelled. One I remember distinctively. And I just would look at a Secretary cert., and if I'd see one mistake on the application I'd throw it in the wastebasket. And it came to we didn't get one application

I even looked at or one person we called. One person even had on there [for] former employer and the phone number, she wrote: "It's in the phone book. Look it up." [chuckling] I mean to tell you. And then in the midst of all this, after we'd gone through . . . Did we go through three certs.?

SANDERS: Three.

REIGLE: Okay, we'd gone through three certs. At that time, I was trying to seduce a couple of secretaries away from Ben at the time, too. We had asked Mary Jo whether she wanted to ladder on to . . . It was a GS-4 at the time, and we asked Mary Jo whether she wanted to ladder onto the position, Mary Jo Colley. I thought it would be really helpful to have somebody who knew their way around the Library, knew their way around town, and knew their way around the Truman family, so Mary Jo really looked good to us and we wanted Mary Jo. She would have had a lateral into it. I told her it might go to a 5 but I couldn't promise that. Mary Jo was comfortable where she was, she didn't want to take the chance on going to another agency, so she turned us down. Then we approached . . . Who was the tall blonde over there at the time?

SANDERS: Her name escapes me.

REIGLE: Oh, good grief.

SANDERS: Yeah, and she's not there any longer. She was at Tom's going-away party.

REIGLE: Yeah, there was a tall, blonde secretary there who we offered the position to also who was a real efficient person. She didn't take it either. So here we were, we'd been shot down twice by Ben's staff and had three lousy certs.,

and Jenny Hayes walked in there. Apparently she had read in the paper that we were hiring positions, and she lived a block away from where our headquarters was to be so she thought this would be perfect. She could walk to work. She was only a block or maybe two or three blocks away from where our headquarters was going to be, where she was living at the time. So Jenny just kind of walked into our office one day and gave us an application. Her application looked good and Jenny came across well in the interview, and so Joan and I kind of together decided on that one, I guess.

SANDERS: And she had been a _____, so she had worked for the U.S. Marine Corps out on Bannister Road for a good number of years. So it was easy to pick her, and we could legally pick her up with no hassle.

REIGLE: Yeah, so she came in through reinstatement rights too. Probably if you go back to the early days of this park, nobody really came in the front door. I mean, everybody came in the back door, more or less.

SANDERS: No, Rick Jones came in the front door.

REIGLE: Well, now, wait a minute. We'll get to that one later. I wouldn't go so far as to say that one either.

SANDERS: On paper he did.

REIGLE: Okay, another selection at that time was Palma Wilson, later to become Palma Wilson Buell, later to become Palma Wilson, who had worked for me down at . . . Well, she didn't work for me directly, but Palma was an Interpreter down at Ozarks and we hired her into the Ranger Division. I had gotten to know Palma through a cave tour I took my family on down there. I

was impressed with Palma. I thought she was real sharp and a good interpreter. We were looking for a Lead Interpreter at that time, a GS-6, okay? Palma was a 5. Palma had also worked for Tom, and so she was connected through the Arch too. And when it came to talking that lead position, Tom and I, we both agreed that we wanted Palma for that position. So we approached her, advertised that position, and Palma came up to visit and was the kind of person we were looking for, so Palma came out successfully on the cert. But of course, we wanted Palma off that cert. all along, and things worked out so that she was available off that cert. So Palma was another handpicked person.

And I'll say for the most part I left the hiring of the Ranger Division to Tom, and I think Tom did an excellent job. Tom knew Cindy Ott at that time from the Arch. At that time, she was out in . . .

SANDERS: Lava Beds.

REIGLE: Lava Beds, and her fiancé, Rick Jones, was out there in administration, so a little deal was cooked up that we would try and hire both of them. So we brought Cindy in on a directed reassignment and we put a cert. out so that Rick could qualify for it. So Rick came off the cert. and we hired Rick and Cindy together. So we're still not batting anybody . . . We hadn't picked anybody up sight unseen yet. Who?

SANDERS: The next one up.

REIGLE: The next one? Who?

SANDERS: Skippy.

REIGLE: Skip Brooks, yeah.

SHAVER: Let's take a break.

REIGLE: Okay.

[End #4103; Begin #4104]

SHAVER: Skip Brooks.

REIGLE: Skip Brooks. Okay, Joan just reminded me we sort of legally hired Skip Brooks. We legally hired everybody, but we . . .

SANDERS: I mean, he was totally unknown to us.

REIGLE: Skip was the one person who was not directly connected to anyone currently on the staff at that time, and Skip came off the cert. But as I recall, there were only two people on that cert. and Skip was head and shoulders above the other person, who, as I recall, was more interested in returning to the location than coming for the job. Skip had some connections through Mike Lee in the Regional Office at that time and had some strong connections through Ken Apschnikat, who was the Superintendent over at Mound City, and Ken strongly backed Skip, so we hired Skip off the cert. So I guess, of the first permanent staff, Skip was just the only one that kind of came off as sort of one that we didn't directly go out and pursue.

SANDERS: _____.

REIGLE: Yeah, I guess it's safe to say he was the only non-recruited person on the staff. So if you stop and think about it, I guess you're right. Everybody but Skip Brooks was recruited here, rather than kind of throwing it open to that. The seasonal interpretive staff Tom put together. Tom did an outstanding

job of that. As I said earlier, Tom was a good judge of horse flesh and pulled together, let's see, Chrissy Barker, Karen Tinnin . . . And I don't think Tom hired anybody he didn't know. Chrissie was connected through the Arch, right?

SANDERS: No, she was connected through his . . . Let's see, she and her sister worked at two different parks. One of them worked at Fort Scott, one of them worked at Carver, because they're from Neosho. And I don't know which one was which, but I'm thinking that . . .

REIGLE: You've got to talk over here, Joan.

SANDERS: Oh, okay. I'm thinking that Chrissie came from Carver because of the Larry Blake connection, who was a good friend of Tom's.

REIGLE: That's probably right, okay.

SANDERS: I may be wrong on that one. I think that was it.

REIGLE: And Karen was working over at the Arch, so he knew Karen from the Arch.

SANDERS: Karen had worked with Tom at the Arch. John Whitfield, God love him, he came from the Lincoln Home—I'm very fond of that young man—but Tom had seen him in action over at Lincoln Home and was very impressed with him.

REIGLE: Okay, so they were connected through you at Lincoln Home and through Tom, see, at the Lincoln Home.

SANDERS: And then Jodie Adkins had done time at Lincoln Home as well as the Arch.

REIGLE: Okay, so there was another Arch-Lincoln Home connection. And then the only other one that came off of a real cert. was Linda Joseph again.

SANDERS: Right, who was the airline stewardess.

REIGLE: Who was the airline stewardess, and of course the fact that she was an airline stewardess immediately endeared her to my heart. So that was kind of our first staff. Are we forgetting anybody of that first group?

SANDERS: No. They all came on board the 15th of April: Palma, Skip, Rick, Cindy, and all the seasonals. Everybody came on board the 15th of April.

REIGLE: Yeah.

SANDERS: I would like to make one comment about Skip Brooks, because it was the first time in my park service career I had ever had to move a horse and find lodging for a horse in a new park. [laughter]

REIGLE: Yeah, that's right.

SANDERS: Which we did successfully.

REIGLE: We successfully moved Skip's horse here and found a place for it. I've also got to say something about Skip while we're reminiscing. [chuckling] I don't think I have ever, ever seen anybody come in . . . arriving in a greater state of confusion than Skip did.

SANDERS: Or anxiety.

REIGLE: Or anxiety. And subsequently Skip has moved three or four times, I guess, but he did quite well. Of course, much of that, I think, was kind of a spouse attack. But golly, Skip sure came in with anxiety and problems and horses, not knowing where to go or how to stay. And of course we were up to our armpits in alligators, and Skip was . . . besieged by his own logistical problems, and so that didn't really impress the hell out of me to begin with.

I thought, My God, what have I done here? You know, you try and hire somebody off a cert. and what happens to you? But Skip turned out to be excellent and has gone quite far, and rightfully so. That pretty well takes care of the first go-around with the staff, I guess.

SANDERS: Well, the last one, the last position was filled on the 29th of April, and that was a Stay In School appointment. We've only used that authority one time here, and that was a young man we brought on as a GS-1 Museum Aide to assist the museum aides.

REIGLE: That's right, we wheeled and dealed that, too. There was only one Stay In School, or two in the region, and somehow it came open and we grabbed it.

SANDERS: We got it because it was free FTE.

REIGLE: It was free FTE, that's right, and we got that.

SHAVER: Was it Mark Newport?

SANDERS: Mm-hmm.

REIGLE: What was his name?

SANDERS: Mark Newport.

REIGLE: Mark Newport.

SANDERS: Yeah, he really endeared himself to the Superintendent when he showed up with an earring. [chuckling]

REIGLE: Yeah. But I've got to say, we were very successful, I think, in our recruiting here, and have been successful in our recruiting. I have to say I'm disappointed that when we tried some of these special programs they most all fell on their face. Not all, but that Stay In School fell on its face. I mean,

that didn't work out at all. We tried the Co-op with . . . what was her name?

SANDERS: Gwen Harris.

REIGLE: Gwen Harris. That really fell on its face. On the other hand, we tried two intern programs here and they were both . . . Jim Williams came in right at the beginning, too. Wasn't he here the first year?

SANDERS: Eighty-five.

SHAVER: He was a volunteer, wasn't he?

SANDERS: I don't have him in here.

REIGLE: Eighty-five you think?

SANDERS: Because my notes only go through _____.

REIGLE: Yeah, I think you're right, maybe '85. But we've had two successful internships here—well, which Jim Williams was head and shoulders above—you know, a quality intern program. And then Jim came in looking for an internship, and the second intern program we had was . . .

SANDERS: Jackie.

REIGLE: Jackie Holt, who came from southeast Missouri, and that one worked fairly well. Jackie ended up working for us as an interpreter and as a museum aide, and then ultimately went out to Grand Canyon and ultimately got a permanent position at Lincoln Home. So the two intern programs worked out good for us. Those two special EO-type programs both went bust on us. That Gwen Harris thing was a disaster.

SANDERS: Well, when we used the VRA . . . Oh, we didn't use that. Yeah, he was a seasonal there and they used the VRA at Lincoln Home, and that blew up in

everybody's face.

REIGLE: Yeah, that one didn't work. That one blew up, too. That was . . . what was his name?

SANDERS: Steve Marst.

REIGLE: Steve Marst. Yeah, that one blew up, too. If you want a lesson: Go out and recruit known quantities to put together a decent staff. I think in subsequent years most of the people we've put together since then have come out of our seasonal ranks, Mike, Regina . . .

SANDERS: Brian.

REIGLE: And Brian.

SANDERS: And Karen.

REIGLE: Karen, and Mike Gillespie, have all pretty well come out of the seasonal ranks for our permanents. I think that's pretty well it. Carol Dage did not. We had some real trouble filling that later curatorial position; we put that out several times. We had trouble filling the Facility Manager position after Skip left, and we got Mike off the cert. on that.

SANDERS: We had to advertise two or three times for that one.

REIGLE: Yeah, we advertised that one a couple, three times. Yeah, that curatorial position, we advertised that one two or three times too. There's something to be said for recruitment. Geez, maybe I'd better start looking for _____ when I get out there. [chuckling] That's about it.

SANDERS: Don't let him kid you, he's already looking. [laughter]

REIGLE: Oh, I got another hot lead today, too, and I'll tell you about it when we go

off the tape. Okay, anything else?

SHAVER: So all these people were coming in, and there was no place to put them, right?

SANDERS: Oh, you've got to love this. Have we got time?

SHAVER: Sure.

SANDERS: I love this story. [chuckling]

REIGLE: You tell it.

SANDERS: They're coming on April 15th. We are moving from our one-room office at the Library, were scheduled to move on April 16th into the fire station.

REIGLE: No, no.

SANDERS: Yeah.

REIGLE: Into the fire station? Have we already decided the other place burned down?

SANDERS: Well, yeah, this is after we had the fire.

REIGLE: Oh, after we had the fire, okay.

SANDERS: Yeah, then we're moving. The moving date was established back in March that we were going to be moving the 16th. Originally we were supposed to move into this funeral home, but it was destroyed by fire on April 1st, so then the city graciously offered us the second floor of the fire station, and we readily accepted it. So then we made arrangements to move into the fire station on the same date we were originally scheduled to move into the funeral home. But Jenny and I, because Jenny had been on staff about two weeks—she came on April 1—and we were up here cleaning the place as the folks from the day labor company and Joe _____ from the regional

office were moving in the furniture, and the staff was filtering in. [chuckling] I mean, it was a real zoo because all the furniture wasn't up here yet, people were roaming around, and . . .

REIGLE: I just decided the hell with it.

SANDERS: Yeah, you took off. You were even out of town.

REIGLE: Yeah, I went to a zone meeting somewhere.

SANDERS: Right, you were out of town. Oh, that was a real zoo.

REIGLE: Yeah, so I was gone. But that 16th was kind of a big day. Everything with the moving and stuff.

SANDERS: Oh yeah, that was a great day.

REIGLE: So, by the time I came back, thank heavens, the staff was here and there were desks and . . .

SANDERS: Yeah, because I thought I was being so coordinated. I had the movers coming, had all the telephone companies coming, because it was involving AT&T and Southwestern Bell, and then, of course, GSAFDS had to get their two cents' worth in, too, and had all this coordinated. Then, with the new staff coming on board, it was a real nice couple of days in that week. [chuckling]

REIGLE: Where was I?

SANDERS: And you, you'd flown the coop. He wasn't here. [laughter]

REIGLE: That's what any good manager will do: delegate and run. That came together real nicely that week.

SHAVER: You got it all tied together. The dedication? Anything you remember of the

dedication, for either one of you?

REIGLE: Yeah, well, I remember it was pretty well thought out. We had everything lined up, except nobody had figured how high the steps were going to be on the van, and Margaret had to get on her hands and knees to crawl into the van.

SANDERS: Yeah, we had a fleet of GSA vans leased from the Motorpool over in Kansas City. What did we have, five or six of them?

REIGLE: Something like that.

SANDERS: Those like eleven-passenger vans? And Clayton Connor, [chuckling] the law enforcement specialist out of the regional office, was down here ramrodding that show. We had set tables in here.

REIGLE: Who did we have that was supposedly doing the legwork on that? What was his name who we brought down from another park to do some of the legwork on pulling this together.

SANDERS: Oh, we had that Dave Herrera.

REIGLE: Dave Herrera. Jesus.

SANDERS: He was out of the regional office at that time and then he got sent to a park shortly after. Because we were involved in the invitations and—

REIGLE: Yeah, and Dave was kind of coordinating some of that, and we were trying to get off—

SANDERS: Because we had the “Plan B” in case of bad weather, where all the school buses were going to truck these people over to the Chrisman Auditorium. Oh, it was living hell.

REIGLE: I don't know whether anybody in the history of the park service has ever been a brand-new superintendent in a brand-new park with eight months to open and started a GMP in the same . . . We were starting the damn GMP before we got the house open. And have a major dedication ceremony, all within an eight-month span.

SANDERS: The GMP team was here on the 9th of January for a week, right after we got back from Omaha setting up the positions.

REIGLE: Yeah, the GMP was here the 9th, so any one of those things, you know, starting a park, doing a GMP, or having a major dedication would be considered a major task for the year, each one of them separately, and we did all three of them in eight months, at the same time.

SANDERS: But when you think about the roadblocks that were thrown in our way on Saint Patty's Day—

SHAVER: Roadblocks? There were trees falling down. [laughter]

SANDERS: That's what I mean. On Saint Patty's Day we had that incredible ice storm, and they had just opened up the roof of the home for the repair of the metal roofing the day before. The contractors were at the motel, the project supervisor was on his way back to Omaha. They did not put any visqueen [?] or anything over the hole, and when the ice storm hit without any forecast, I mean it was a deluge in the attic because the whole roof was open, you know. That was one trauma we dealt with.

REIGLE: Well, Steve Harrison and Tom Richter were kind of the heroes of that one, I think.

SANDERS: And we thought, Well, gee whiz, what else can happen? And then two weeks later our admin. building burned to the ground. But that didn't stop us. [chuckling]

SHAVER: No!

SANDERS: Harry would have been proud. [laughter]

REIGLE: He would have been flabbergasted at some point.

SHAVER: I know there was some effort to try, or at least—

REIGLE: Actually, we had two weeks to spare at the end. We probably could have opened it . . . I've thought about this. We probably could have opened it seven days ahead of when we opened it, we were ready to go, so I actually went bird-watching those last seven days.

SHAVER: Had it originally been set to be opened later, past the centennial date, or . . . ?

REIGLE: Well, that date was set long before . . . We could have, you know. We set a date that seemed to be . . . that would tie in with the rest of the Truman Week ceremonies. So that date was selected long ahead of . . . I mean, that was the target date. We did not adjust that target date. That was the target date that had been set.

SANDERS: I know that was the date when I got here.

REIGLE: Yeah, that had been set. I don't even know if I had . . . I don't even know if I selected that date or not, but that date was selected, you know, in concert with Truman Week. It was like that weekend of Truman Week, and so that became the date somehow. But what I was saying about we could have opened it earlier, I mean we had been shooting for that date all along, and

then actually it came down to . . . We had our shit pretty well together by the end of the first week in May.

SANDERS: I mean, the last week was just relaxed.

REIGLE: The last week was just one of those weeks where you've trained and trained and trained and now you're ready to get in the ring.

SANDERS: Yeah, you're just waiting.

REIGLE: You know, it was the anxiety of getting it on and getting it over with then at that point in time. Those last few days were actually . . . You know, the adrenalin. I was always trying to think of things to keep myself busy because the stuff that we had to get done was all done. The only thing that ever fell through was that damn sign, that sign for the yard.

SHAVER: [chuckling] Tell the story. It's a good one.

REIGLE: No. [laughter] You tell it better than I do, Joan.

SANDERS: Okay. The folks in the regional office felt that there should be a typical National Park Service sign at the Truman Home.

REIGLE: In the yard.

SANDERS: Yeah, in the yard, and we didn't share those feelings exactly but they persevered and they ordered a sign and they had it sent down here. And when we opened it up—

REIGLE: Margaret was going to unveil it. The only thing that we had to do was make up the—

SANDERS: The bunting or whatever it was to cover it, so you could pull the string—

REIGLE: Yeah, which Lisa Houston Bosso had done. So Margaret was going take the

sign down. But go ahead.

SANDERS: Well, when the sign arrived it was an aluminum sign, like you see in many National Park Service areas, but the colors on it were blue and silver like you see for trauma centers on the highway rather than your brown—

REIGLE: I thought the letters weren't on it either. Somehow the letters didn't get on it?

SANDERS: Well, the letters were on it and it had an aluminum-colored frame around it that was peeling off. Plus, it also had the period behind the *S*, which was unforgivable. We may have been able to tolerate the color, but we could not tolerate the period behind the *S*. [chuckling]

REIGLE: But that whole thing looked like hell.

SANDERS: Oh, it was a piece of shit! Anyway, it wasn't manufactured by Unicorp [?]. Because of the rush job, it was manufactured by a sign company up in Omaha. And it was promptly returned to Omaha, and to the best of our knowledge, it's still in the basement up there in the regional office.

REIGLE: It may be still sitting up in the basement of the regional office. The sign coordinator at that time retired shortly thereafter, shortly after I saw the sign. [chuckling] But, oh well, with 20/20 hindsight, maybe I didn't need to be that hard because that was . . . I didn't want the damn sign in the first place.

We finally put a sign on the fence just as kind of my farewell gesture to John Kawamoto when he retired. John K. always wanted the sign down here. I thought, Why put a sign in the yard? But I finally put that one on the fence just to kind of express the respect I had for John Kawamoto who . . .

You know, if you're going to talk about people who are extremely, extremely instrumental in the success of this park . . . I mean, we talk about it from our own perspectives, but I think we've really got to talk about some of the people who were extremely instrumental in getting the job done in the beginning, and John Kawamoto has got to be number one on that list of people.

SANDERS: Well, when you take into consideration his shop was responsible for the electrical contract and for the roofing contracts that were awarded early in '84, with the intent that these contracts had to be completed prior to opening day, and the electrical contract was total rewiring of the whole house. With the folks he had down here, the project supervisors on those contracts—

REIGLE: Yeah, he made sure we got the money.

SANDERS: Right, and the work was done, and done well.

REIGLE: He made sure we got the help and made sure the work was . . . And then John K. had kind of a special love for Truman and this park.

SANDERS: Yeah, because he didn't come back in a box.

REIGLE: Well, no, you've got to say it right. He thought, and I agree with him, that the Truman Home has a lot more integrity than the Lincoln Home because Truman came back and Truman lived here. You've got to agree with him. Other people. Let's think of some of the other people who were really . . . I think Randy Pope was a pretty big supporter in those days. Jim Ryan was kind of a roadblock for a while but he finally got on the bandwagon.

SHAVER: You talked about opening this park in the midst of some real tight FTE

restrictions and money restrictions.

REIGLE: Well, there, with the money and the FTE, finally—

SHAVER: You had to have somebody up there who was—

REIGLE: Well, that's got to be Randy Pope. Randy Pope, who I already mentioned . . . I think John K. was the most important person in getting this park open, and then Randy Pope who was the one that gave us the FTE we needed when we went up there, and Randy had the final say on it. Randy was the one that bought off on the program we had and got us the money. I mean, that was in that first eight months, Randy Pope was Acting Regional Director, and I'm talking about the period that we were working to get the home open. And then there are so many people in John K.'s shop that worked down here: Andy Ketterson, Mike Lee . . .

SANDERS: Lee Jamieson [?].

REIGLE: Lee Jamieson.

SANDERS: Big Al.

REIGLE: Al O'Bright. Ron Cockrell. Jill O'Bright. I mean, a host of people from his shop that put a lot of effort into here. Sarah Olson worked real hard from Harper's Ferry. Al Swift was a good . . . big help.

SANDERS: What's that other little girl's name? Diana Le Duc?

REIGLE: Yeah, she didn't work as much as Sarah did. But we had a lot of people from the regional office who really, really pitched in and worked hard to get it all done. There was a lot of support for Truman and the Truman Home.

SANDERS: I can't help but think in the folks I was dealing with, as far as personnel

goes, like Sarah _____, she's the one that gets the vacancy announcements out and she's the one that develops the KSAs and the rating criteria and all that, you know, and it just seems to me when the folks up there realized, you know, that this was a staff down here that was really wanting to get this done—I mean, we were committed—and they just got on the bandwagon with us.

REIGLE: Yeah, we got a lot of good help up there, and I can't sell that short, can't sell the help we got from the region. There were a few real pain in the asses that came down, too, but they didn't last too long.

SANDERS: No, we sent them packing right away. [laughter] I mean, either you get on the stick or you go back home, you know.

REIGLE: We sent a couple packing. Who was the one that was always mouthing off at the doughnut shop? A real pain in the ass that was always mouthing off at the doughnut shop. You know, volunteered to take one of the doughnut ladies through the house.

SANDERS: God, I don't remember that.

REIGLE: Oh yeah, you remember that. He went packing real fast. He was one of the

END OF INTERVIEW