

INTERVIEW WITH
Christopher Russell

by

Maclyn P. Burg
Oral Historian

on

February 6, 1975

for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library



GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE
DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER LIBRARY

Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interview of
Christopher Russell.

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44,
United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions
hereinafter set forth, I, Christopher Russell, do hereby
give, donate and convey to the United States of America all
my rights, title, and interest in the tape recording and
transcript of personal interviews conducted on November 21,
1974, February 6, 1975 and June 26, 1975 at Washington, D.C.
and prepared for deposit in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library.
This assignment is subject to the following terms and
conditions:

(1) The transcripts shall be available for use by
researchers as soon as it has been deposited in the Dwight
D. Eisenhower Library, except that the portions of the
transcript indicated below shall not be made available until
1988: *(changed to 1999 per Russell letter of 12/20/89)*

- Page 17, line 9 through Page 22, line 11
- Page 24, line 15, last four words
- Page 24, line 17 through Page 25, line 11, first
6 words
- Page 25, line 13
- Page 25, line 18 beginning with the 4th word
through Page 26, line 1, first 11 words
- Page 31, line 6, last word on line through
line 14, first 11 words
- Page 33, line 16 through Page 37, line 8
- Page 38, line 1 through Page 40, line 9, first
11 words
- Page 42, line 12, through Page 44, line 6
- Page 45, line 10, last 3 words through Page 45,
line 11, first 11 words
- Page 53, line 1 through Page 54, line 2, 1st word
- Page 58, line 9, last 5 words through Page 60, line
14, first 11 words
- Page 63, line 14, through Page 64, line 9
- Page 66, line 10, last 2 words through Page 67, line 11
- Page 68, line 15, last 6 words through Page 68, line 17
- Page 72, line 12, through Page 74, line 18



(2) The tape recording shall not be available for use by researchers during the donor's lifetime. After the donor's death, access to the tape recording shall be for background use only, and researchers may not cite, paraphrase, or quote therefrom.

(3) During the donor's lifetime the donor retains all copyright in the material given to the United States by the terms of this instrument. Thereafter the copyright in both the transcript and tape recording shall pass to the United States Government. During the donor's lifetime, researchers may publish brief "fair use" quotations from the transcript (but not the tape recording) without the donor's express consent in each case.

(4) Copies of the open portions of the interview transcript, but not the tape recording, may be provided by the library to researchers upon request.

(5) Copies of the interview transcript, but not the tape recording, may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library.



Christopher H. Rensler
Donor

1 August 1981
Date

Richard W. King
Archivist of the United States

August 18, 1981
Date

INTERVIEW WITH
Christopher Russell

by

Maclyn P. Burg
Oral Historian

on

November 21, 1974

for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library



This interview is being taped with Mr. Christopher Russell in Mr. Russell's office in the State Department, Washington, D.C., on November 21, 1974. The interviewer is Dr. Maclyn Burg of the Eisenhower Library staff. Present for the interview are Mr. Russell and Dr. Burg.

DR. BURG: Let me begin, Mr. Russell, by asking when and where you were born?

MR. RUSSELL: I was born in Singapore, then part of the Straits Settlements in 1928, May 21.

DR. BURG: It would be very difficult to follow that opening, Mr. Russell. I was going to ask you, were you then educated in Singapore, the early years, or was it that your father was part of our diplomatic service and on the move?

MR. RUSSELL: My father was a doctor of tropical medicine with the International Health Division of the Rockefeller Foundation, and we did move about the Far East on a number of occasions. I was educated partly in Asia, one year in the Philippines, and two years in India. The rest of my education was in the United States.

DR. BURG: Now were those years at the secondary school level?



RUSSELL: Yes. We left Singapore when I was only six weeks old, came back to the United States for a short period and then went to the Philippines where we were until 1935. I think I went into the first grade in the Philippines. Then we came back to the United States, and then went out to India for six months. It was a sort of a reconnaissance for my father--to decide where he should be setting up the Rockefeller Foundation office in India. He determined that there was no place for me to get any schooling in Madras, India, which was the location they finally decided on; so I spent two years, from age seven to nine, with some close family friends in New Britain, Connecticut, and there had several more years of elementary school. Then my parents became persuaded that there was a school available in southern India, up in the mountains, a place called Hiclerc School in Kodiakanal in the Nilgri Hills.



BURG: Perhaps I should ask you to spell all of those names for the benefit of our transcriber.

RUSSELL: The name of the school was H-i-c-l-e-r-c and the name of the hill station in South India was K-o-d-i-a-c-a-n-a-l.

It had been established by American missionaries. It was a school to which the children of most Americans in South India went, and it went all the way through the twelfth grade. I was there for two elementary school years. Then when I was nine years old, that was 1939, my parents came back to the United States on home leave, and after a great deal of discussion among ourselves we decided that it would be better if I went to school here; that there were some problems with the education I was receiving in India. And so I was entered in 1939 into the Moses Brown School in Providence, Rhode Island. And my parents went back to India from 1939 to 1942 while I was a boarding student at Moses Brown which took me through the eighth grade.



BURG: Let me ask you, were there family relations here in the states that you could visit on school holidays or were you able to get over to India to see your parents during that period of time? How was that handled?

RUSSELL: I was fortunate that the family with whom I had stayed in New Britain, Connecticut, continued to live there, and I could spend some vacations with them. And my father's sister, my aunt, was head of the history department at Pine

Manor Junior College in Wellesley, Massachusetts, and I was able to go there on vacations. So I had a number of relatives that I could see and visit with. In those days it was not possible to get out to India. There were not plane flights, and the sea voyage was quite a time-consuming one. But my parents are great correspondents, and I received two to three letters a week from them during the entire three years that we were separated.

BURG: Let me ask you this personal question. Did that separation weigh heavily on you, or was there the resilience of youth to fall back on?

RUSSELL: Well, it was a period in which I often felt lonely, but I never felt abandoned because my parents had the ability, which perhaps is rare, of projecting through their letters the fact that we were still a very close family. So it never led to any estrangement or alienation from my family at all. In fact, it may have had the effect that in later years we've appreciated each other even more. My parents are both alive now. My father is eighty and my mother is seventy-eight, and we're still very close. In fact they spend six months a year



here in Washington in an apartment near where we live.

BURG: That's very good. I was interested in that sort of thing. What was the next move for you? That carried you into the war period itself, into '42.



RUSSELL: That's right, in '42. In '42 my father became very much aware that the U.S. military services needed his talents. He was well beyond draft age, but, as a doctor and an expert in medical problems which would be facing American troops in Asia, he was anxious to become involved. He had enlisted in World War I and then been sent back to medical school. But he wanted very much to get into it; so he was in touch with the navy and the army, and the U.S. Army asked him to come back in 1942 and be commissioned in the medical corps. And so my mother, father and my only sibling, an eight-year younger brother who was born in India, came back on a converted passenger liner which had been made an auxiliary cruiser in the United States Navy. It was an unescorted passage from India to New York at the time of the height of the German and Japanese submarine warfare. That was a remarkable trip, but they arrived safely.

BURG: Came around the Cape of Good Hope?

RUSSELL: They came around the Cape of Good Hope. It was the S. S. Wakefield, and, I believe this is correct, it had taken Canadian troops to Singapore just in time for them to be captured. Then with a bomb hole in its bow had gone to India under orders from the U.S. Navy to pick up any Americans in India who wanted to return to the United States. My family were each allowed one handbag apiece, bid farewell to their lifetime accumulation of furniture and possessions, and got underway.

BURG: And never saw it again?



RUSSELL: In fact they saw it all again. It was loaded onto a tramp ship, and it all arrived about a year later in New York.

BURG: That's incredible. That's hard to believe!

RUSSELL: They never expected to see any of it.

BURG: Of course not.

RUSSELL: My father's whole professional library he thought he was saying farewell to, but it all arrived safely a year later.

BURG: Now that ship would have made a rather fast passage, an ex-liner. She'd have a pretty good turn of speed and perhaps even in less danger than had she gone in a convoy where she'd have gone at the speed of the slowest ship.



RUSSELL: That I think was the theory, and it proved to be correct. They made the passage in thirty-five days with a stopoff at Capetown. And they, of course, observed strict blackout security and the rest of it. The passengers were told if anybody fell overboard there would be no turning around to fish them back out of the sea. And it was a passage which was successfully accomplished although they were picked up by two destroyers off the New Jersey coast and subjected to a submarine alarm. The destroyers went off and dropped depth charges on a submarine which was said to be making an approach. But they arrived in New York in good shape.

BURG: And you met them there?

RUSSELL: I met them there. Very happy reunion. We then came to Washington, D.C. where my father was commissioned and immediately set about the task of creating a malaria control program for the U.S. Army. After he had been in Washington for a few months he was invited out by General [Douglas] MacArthur, whom he had known from the Philippine days, to the South Pacific for six months to make a survey, malaria survey, of the whole area.

BURG: Has your father ever mentioned knowing General Eisenhower? Because he was there in the Philippines, you all were, at the same time that Eisenhower was an aide to MacArthur.

RUSSELL: I'm not sure of the dates. My family left the Philippines in 1935, and I don't recall whether Eisenhower was there at precisely that time or not. They might just have missed.

BURG: It might not have coincided. That may have been the year Eisenhower went out as a matter of fact.

RUSSELL: I get the impression that perhaps he arrived about the time they were leaving for India. Eisenhower, later in the war my father was under his command in an indirect sense because



after accomplishing the survey in the South Pacific my father was posted to North Africa where he was chief of an allied school training malariologists for the malaria control teams. Then he became chief malariologist of the allied forces in Italy and went over after the invasion of Italy to southern Italy. And so he was over there I think until 1944, then came back to Washington and was working at Walter Reed Hospital for the later months of the war. He was in the army I guess a total of a little over four years, '42 till '46.

BURG: Now when he came back in the autumn of '42, you would have been a freshman.

RUSSELL: That's right. I was entered in the ninth grade at Alice Deal Junior High School which was near the home that my family purchased in Chevy Chase, D.C., on Rittenhouse Street. And then I went from there to the Woodrow Wilson High School and graduated from Woodrow Wilson in 1946.

BURG: So there was no question of the military service getting you?

RUSSELL: No, I turned eighteen in May of 1946 just as I was graduating from high school. Now I had thought, we had all



thought, that perhaps the war would go on, and I had at one point looked into going into the navy upon graduation from high school, but by the time I did graduate of course the war was over. And it was then time to look for a college.

BURG: And what college did you settle on?



RUSSELL: It was an odd way of making a selection and a very youthful way. I said to myself that the two universities of which I had heard the most were Harvard and Yale, and somehow I thought that Yale sounded more manly, and therefore I would only apply to Yale. Nobody in my family had ever been there. '46 was a bad year from the point of view of crowded admissions because everybody was coming back from the war, but I just naively assumed there would be no trouble. So I applied to Yale, and I'll never know why they accepted me, but they did. My only choice, my only application went to Yale, and I was accepted and awarded really a very generous scholarship to go there in the fall of 1946.

BURG: Following what course of study may I ask?

RUSSELL: I majored in history in college, and I minored in English.

BURG: At the end of that four years, looking back on it now, were there particular instructors, professors, who still stand out in your mind as being of considerable influence on you and your thought processes, your development, intellectual development?



RUSSELL: Yes, I think so. I was, I considered, quite fortunate. One of the conditions of the scholarship was that you worked; you took what was called a bursary job, and I was obliged to work sixteen hours a week. The first year of that was in a dining hall, first in the freshman commons and then in the graduate school. That had very few intellectual advantages. The next three years, however, you were offered a more stimulating type of work, and I chose to work as an aide to the master of Saybrook College, Professor Basil Duke Henning. He had been my professor of English history in my freshman year, and by going to work in the college, a residential college, (Yale is a university divided into residential colleges) by working for a man who was both a master of the college and a professor and with fellows of that college, I was able, better than many people, to develop a fairly close relationship with certain members of the faculty. It was inherent in the job.

So I came to know well and respect very much indeed Professor Henning with whom I had a lot of contact. In my last year I was called office manager. I was the manager of the other bursary students, who were younger, and ran the college office which maintained the records on the students and the rest of it. So he would certainly be one.

There was another fellow of that college and his name was Douglas Knight who I think went on to become the president of a college in Wisconsin, Lawrence College? It could well be Lawrence College; I'm not certain about that. And then there were two professors, both named Lewis. One of them was a professor of English social history, and the other was a professor of English literature who I think gave me an enthusiasm for their fields which stands up.



BURG: You're remembering them in their capacities as teachers?

RUSSELL: As teachers and as people capable of capturing the imagination of the students. I took courses from several professors who have national and perhaps even international reputation such as Samuel Flagg Bemis, the historian of American diplomatic history, and F.S.C. Northrop, professor of philosophy,

and Brand Blanchard, professor of philosophy. I think they were very well known and estimable men, but they taught large courses with perhaps five or six hundred students in them. The professors I'm naming were almost all associate professors rather than full professors and had a knack for teaching. They taught smaller classes and they took much more personal interest in their students. Those are the ones I remember, and those were the ones that had the most influence on my tastes and perhaps on my competence to whatever extent the fields they were teaching are relevant to what I have done since.

BURG: As you think back on it, was there any outstanding work that captured your imagination at that time?



RUSSELL: Well, I chose to be enrolled in the, I think it was called the honors program. You had a choice at Yale in those days. You could either take a major which involved all course work and no writing requirement. I think it was called distributional major or something like that. You might take some courses in sociology, some in history and perhaps some in English, or you could attempt to obtain departmental honors by concentrating in one field and writing your senior thesis. And I chose the latter and worked in the history department and

wrote my thesis on the background of the All-India Moslem League, my interest obviously stemming from my several years of living in India as a child. And I'd say that the challenge of doing research, even at a rather primitive level, having available to me the facilities of the Yale library, which was a good library, and you had stack privileges if you were enrolled in this particular course. I also had a chance to get up to the Widener Library, and I got down to the New York City Public Library, and came down to the Library of Congress. Not having later pursued a doctorate, I think that this in a sense was the next best thing. It forced me to be disciplined in research and in writing, and I think it was the most useful educational experience in my four years at Yale.



BURG: Did you pursue a master's degree when you left Yale?

RUSSELL: No, I didn't. I wondered whether I should go into graduate school, which tempted me greatly. I thought even of going to the Yale graduate school and pursuing a Ph.D. in history or going on to law school. I finally decided that I wanted to get out of New Haven. I'm not certain that was the right decision, but after four years I wanted to do that. And

I decided that I wanted to go to law school. So although I took the graduate record exam and the legal aptitude exam, ultimately I made up my mind to apply for law school and applied to both Yale and Harvard law school and decided on going to Harvard, when given the choice.

BURG: I see. And that would be about 1950?

RUSSELL: 1950 I graduated from Yale, yes.

BURG: Now the Harvard Law School program was, I presume, a three-year program?

RUSSELL: That was a three-year course.



BURG: Any opportunity to specialize in some particular area of the law or was it a basic kind of training without much specialization?

RUSSELL: You were not given much opportunity to specialize, but I capitalized fully on the little that I was given. Although I had a reasonably good legal aptitude, I can't say I enjoyed law school. I particularly found uncongenial the basic courses to any lawyer--property law--I took two full years of property law

and found it very uncongenial. That's my fault, not the fault of the courses. They were taught by two of the most brilliant professors at the law school. Having a background in history, what one might call international history since I had taken the only available courses at Yale in diplomatic history, I decided at law school I would try to take the maximum number of courses in international and world law. In fact I was told by Professor Lewis Sohn when I graduated that I had succeeded in taking more courses in international and world law than any other undergraduate at the Harvard Law School. They had people who were there pursuing master's and doctorate degrees in law. But I had succeeded in getting the requirement to take trusts waived so I could take a course in world law. And I enjoyed those courses. Manley Hudson was the professor of international law, the head of the department at the time; I took his course. Then he died, and Lewis Sohn, in effect, took over the full responsibility. In my third year at Harvard Law School I took two seminar courses from Lewis Sohn and wrote papers for him in both courses, which was unusual. Normally you're supposed to write in just one course in an elective in your last year, but I wrote two because I really enjoyed that field. And he was kind enough

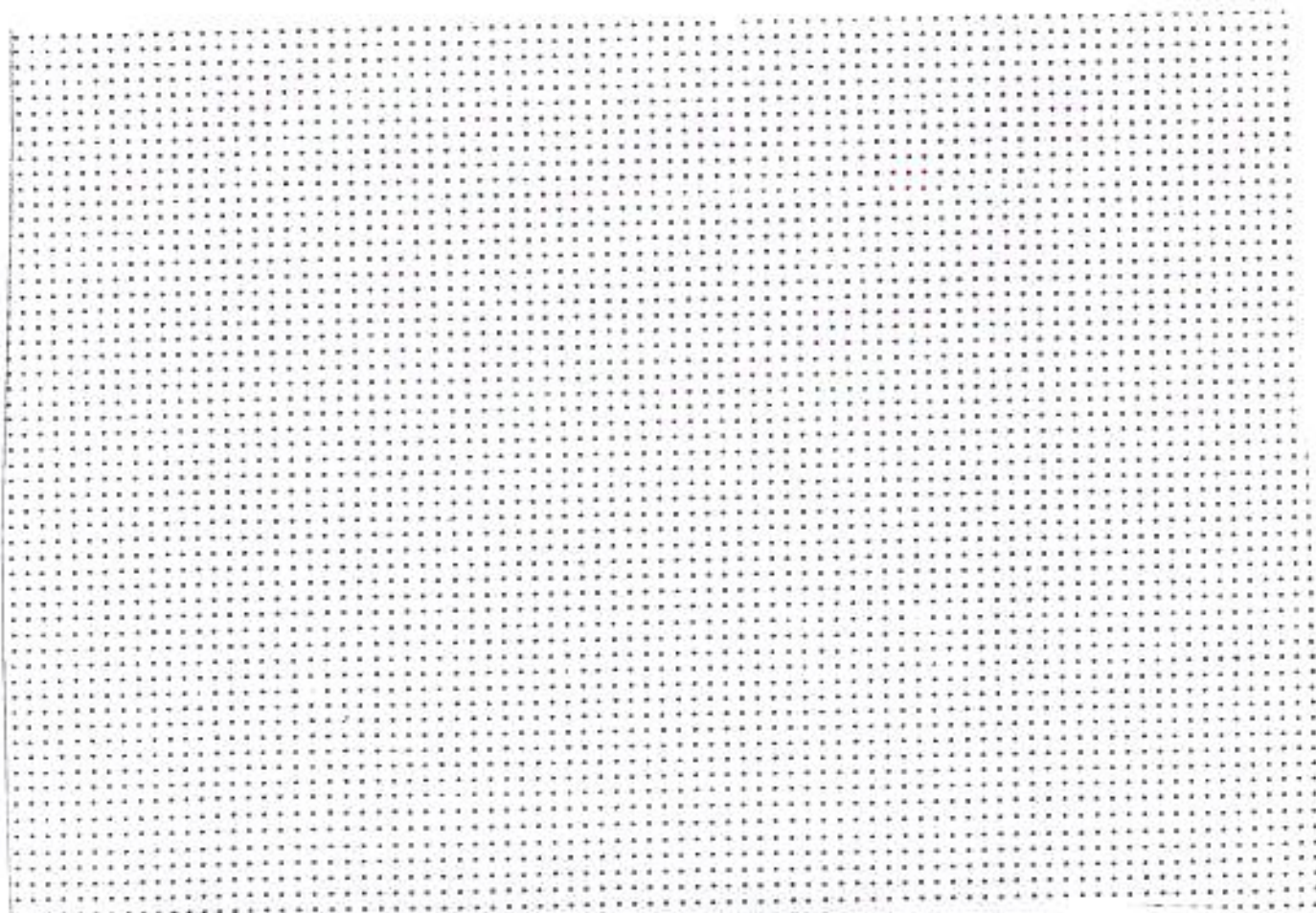


at one point to ask me to continue on for a graduate degree in law, working with him. I'm not sure today whether that might not have been a good thing to do.

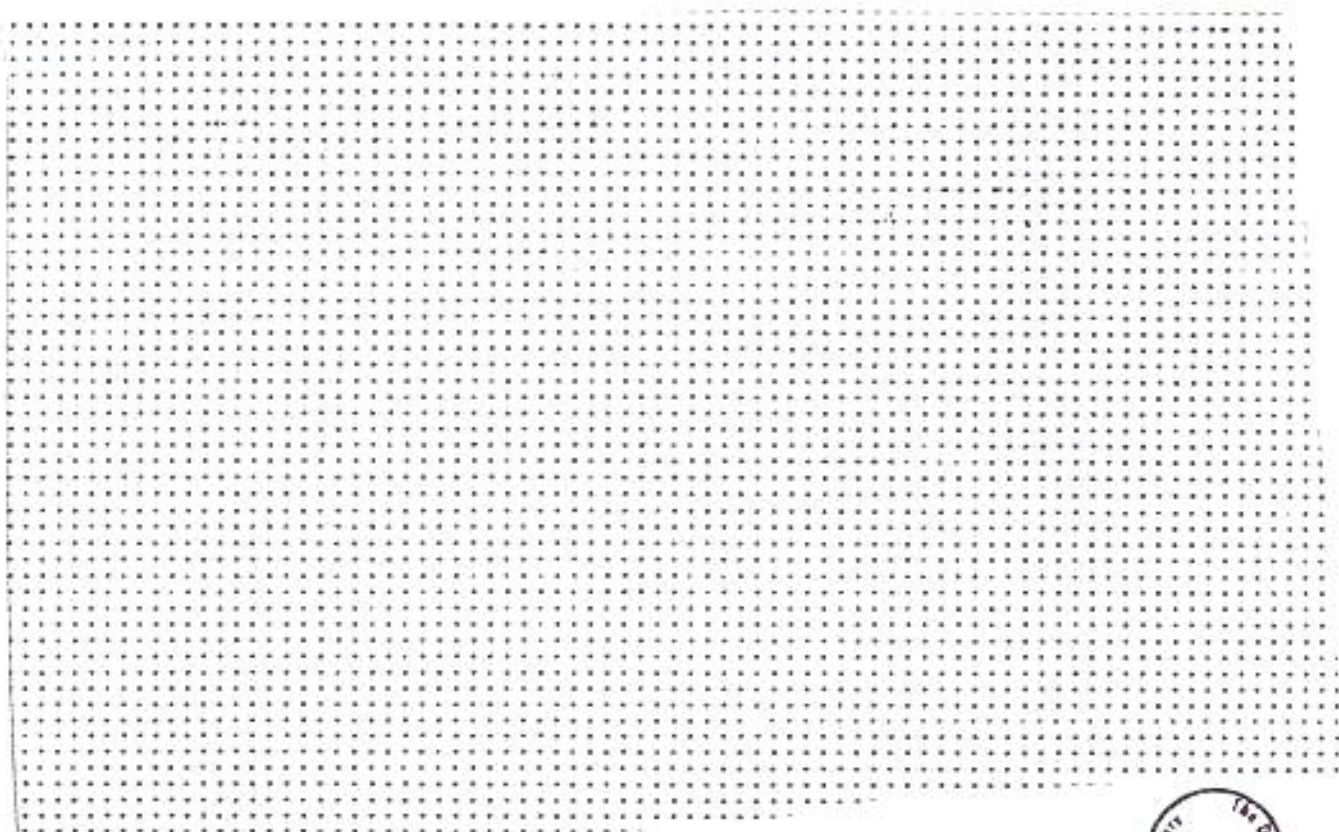
BURG: Now how did he spell his last name? S-o-n-e?



RUSSELL: S-o-h-n. He was of Polish national origin. He had come from Poland before World War II, and he has been a counselor to the Department of State over the years on problems in world law. Very distinguished scholar and a remarkable man.



Pages 18 through 21 have been removed in accordance with the wishes of the interviewee as set forth in the legal agreement located at the front of this transcript.



[Interruption]



BURG: What we want to do right now is go back into Mr. Russell's undergraduate career just long enough to pick up a summer session which he spent at Oxford in 1949.

RUSSELL: It was an interesting opportunity which I guess stemmed from the lack of hard currency in the United Kingdom. Some of the universities such as Oxford for the first and perhaps only time in their history decided they would hold a

summer term for foreign students. The International Institute of Education, I think it's called, in New Jersey was the outfit which screened the applications and made the decisions on who was to attend. And I applied and a group of us went over to the universities of Oxford and Edinburgh, I think they were the two, and I believe also London that summer had a program. And it was my first experience in Europe as a mature person, and I'd say as an educational experience was quite extraordinary because of the contacts and the touring about and the exposure to the arts--the Edinburgh festival attracted all of us at the end of the summer. There wasn't much academic content to the summer program, but to spend a couple of months at Oxford is an experience which leaves an indelible mark on anybody.



BURG: Yes, yes, I can well imagine. Now did you have to fund that trip yourself or were you given a grant to permit you to do that?

RUSSELL: There were some scholarships available, but the costs of the program were very slight. They arranged to take us on the Cunard liners, in what in the old days would have been called steerage. I remember we were four to a cabin on "E" deck.

BURG: Yes. If you hit an iceberg it would have come through the plating at your cabin. Yes, I understand.

RUSSELL: Exactly. So the costs were only a couple of hundred dollars for the summer, and my parents were kind enough to swing that, and it was quite a wonderful summer. I think it had more to do with shaping interests I would have in the fields of music or architecture than any other single experience that I had in my seven years of education, university education.



BURG: I see. I'm delighted you thought to mention that because that too is important to know. As I said to Mr. Russell while the tape recorder was off, we were discussing putting this on the tape, he would have been then at Oxford, although he did not meet there, Dr. Karl Harr who was later to be a colleague of his in the White House. Dr. Harr being there as a Rhodes scholar. Now, returning then to your enlistment, where did you do your basic training, your infantry basic?

RUSSELL:

[REDACTED]

I enlisted in Alexandria,
Virginia, in the army.

BURG: [REDACTED]



[Interruption]

RUSSELL: . . .and took a train down to Fort Knox, Kentucky
where I went through first basic training and then advanced
infantry and was fortunate enough during that process to be
selected for OCS. [REDACTED]

..... You had to be passed by a panel of officers, and you had to, of course, take the normal aptitude and intelligence test. But it worked out well for me because in high school I had been a high school cadet and I had learned close-order drill here in Washington. And so in my basic training company they had a close-order drill competition. I ended up being the sole survivor and therefore was made a squad leader in my basic training company and therefore got the recommendation of my company commander, my basic training company commander, which helped me with the board of officers and got my nomination to OCS. So it all worked smoothly, and I did in fact, after the four months of basic and advanced infantry, proceed fairly directly to Fort Benning, Georgia to enter the six month OCS program.



BURG: OCS was six months at that time?

RUSSELL: Yes, it was twenty-four weeks. And it was a period when the army didn't really want anybody to graduate from OCS. The Korean War was over. They had many too many officers of company grade. They had cut down to, I think, four to six cycles a year, having during the Korean War of course run

thousands of people through there. And they were tending to graduate, oh, about sixty guys out of these two hundred men from an OCS company. We did better than the norm. I think we graduated seventy-nine out of the two hundred at the end of our six months.

BURG: Did you find that training, well, not only physically demanding but did you find it complete and broad in scope. That is, did it simply concentrate on the handling of a rifle company, a rifle platoon, or was there considerable work in the weapons of that period of time; the basic weapons of the platoon, yes, but broader in scope?

RUSSELL: I'd say that there is no question that the school turned out technically competent and proficient company grade officers, platoon leaders. But the major impact of the school was on the psyche I'd say rather than on one's capacity to perform a particular job. What they were attempting to do, I don't think that they ever formulated it quite as carefully as say the Chinese communists would have, is to tear down the psyche that you brought in and build a new one. They attempted systematically through physical punishment, they never laid hands on you, but they were constantly causing you to do pushups and



situps and all the rest of it as punishment for infractions and constant harassment and four hours' sleep a night and five mile runs before breakfast every morning, they were trying to sort of break down whatever you brought into the course and then turn out somebody who would be, in effect, a small unit leader. And I'd say it was an amazingly successful program from that point of view. I think that when we left OCS we were, in some ways, changed people. It gave all of us some insights into ourselves in the field of leadership we had not had before and created certain confidence in meeting challenges that I think many of us had not previously had.



BURG: It was a kind of indoctrination. Kind of, it decidedly was a la marine corps, but you clearly do not reject it. You took it for what it was, and you found that it was of assistance to you.

RUSSELL: It was the hardest challenge I had ever faced which may seem strange after talking about Harvard Law school, but I was accustomed to dealing with problems in the intellectual area. I had always been a reasonably good student and so never felt that my survival in a line of activity was in question. At

OCS I thought from moment to moment I was going to get thrown out, that I was not going to be able to rise physically or in other ways to the challenge. So, in a sense, it was the most challenging I've ever done. I'm not going to by any means say that everybody ought to go through it or that it has great moral values. I'll just say that for me as a very unathletic, rather introspective quiet lawyer it was a very good experience. It developed new dimensions which actually proved to be useful over the years. There have been times when I have been very glad that I went through the experience.



BURG: Could you tell me, did it place any emphasis upon thought? One could easily visualize it placing a great deal of emphasis upon obedience, obedience to orders, duty. Were there problems associated with the training that were designed to create a thinking officer?

RUSSELL: I would say that the emphasis was very much on decisiveness. To be sure, obedience in the sense of adhering to rules and regulations, everything was done incredibly strictly, everything--all your garments having to be blocked with cardboard and your boots polished so you could see your face in them and

the floors the same way and all that sort of thing. You obviously had to be totally obedient or you got demerits and demerits in sufficient number would lead to your being thrown out. But all the time you were at OCS you were faced with problem solving. Every two or three days you would find yourself with a new rank within the OCS company. That is, one day you would be company commander; three days later you would be a squad leader; another couple of days later you would be a platoon leader; then you'd just be in the ranks, a private. But they were attempting to develop in you the ability to make decisions. They were not attempting to develop in you a blind obedience to orders you received from others. The premium was on making decisions yourself. You were told what your objective was and then it was up to you to, in a very decisive manner, to decide how you were going to get to your objective. Now certainly there's implicit in that kind of training the slogan, "Do something, do anything, even if it's wrong."

BURG: Yes. When in question or in doubt, run in circles, scream and shout.



RUSSELL: Do something. That's right.

BURG: Yes, you want to avoid that at all costs. Now, when you graduated from that OCS training cycle, what assignment was given to you then? You were then a second lieutenant in the infantry.

RUSSELL: Well then I was a second lieutenant, infantry,

[REDACTED]

and

I ended up with a regimental combat team at Fort Devens, Massachusetts as a rifle platoon leader. It was a regular army infantry regimental combat team, in the field most of the time, and I was the platoon leader of a rifle platoon in a rifle company in that RCT and spent six months doing that.



BURG: Must have been an enlightening experience for you too.

RUSSELL: It was a good experience. It was a chance to see whether in fact OCS had properly prepared one for the job. Obviously not the challenge that going into combat would be, but at least it posed a lot of the leadership problems and competence problems, and I must say the OCS measured up very, very well. I felt I was a good platoon leader. And I only mention this because it comes out in another connection. Objectively I guess I was because my platoon was the prize platoon in the battalion. The army conducts a series of unit tests and our platoon passed that as the highest unit, which brought me to the attention of the regimental combat team commander. That's relevant to why I got on the White House staff as I'll explain when that point comes.

BURG: We'll find that out later. Now let me ask this. Was this a regular army as opposed to volunteer army, a regular army unit that you were with?

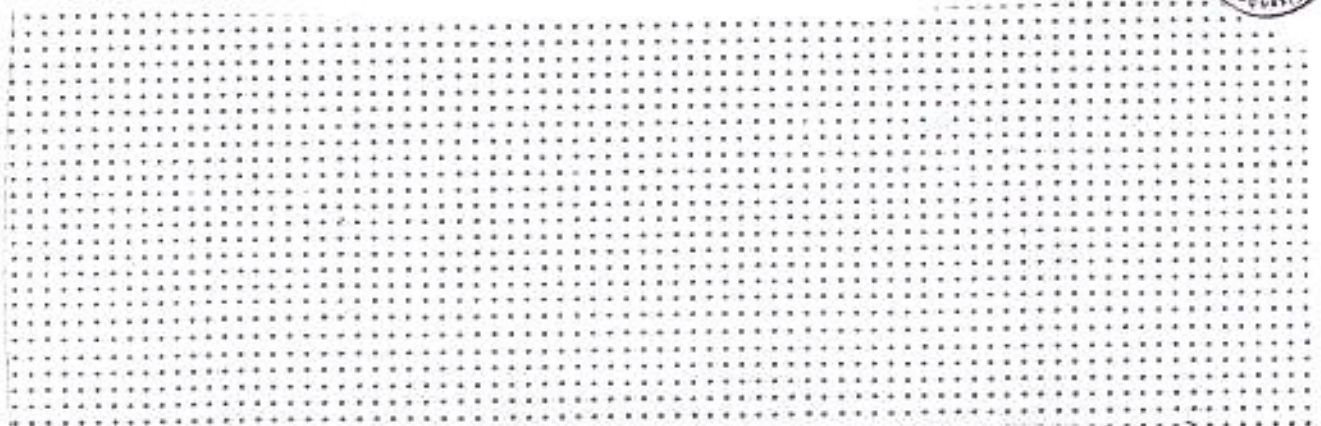
RUSSELL: Most of the people in it were veterans of the Korean War, and they were in two categories--they were either those who were what the army always called "lifers," career soldiers, or people who were anxious to get out, who had been in Korea and were now waiting for their enlistment period to terminate



and then be released. It meant it was a time with a lot of morale problems. After any war I guess the army goes through this period, and they certainly were going through it at Fort Devens. It was an outfit that had a lot of problems, and the only thing that kept it as a functioning effective unit was the fact that we were in the field almost all the time; so people didn't have a chance to dwell on their problems as they otherwise would have.

BURG: So we could feel that probably about half of your platoon would fall in that category of returned Korean War veterans awaiting discharge and the other half were the regulars, career soldiers.

RUSSELL: That's right. All of my squad leaders and assistant squad leaders had seen combat in Korea. They were very good soldiers.



Pages 34 through 37 have been removed in accordance with the wishes of the interviewee as set forth in the legal agreement located at the front of this transcript.

This interview is being conducted with Mr. Christopher Russell in Mr. Russell's office in the State Department, February 6, 1975, Washington, D. C. The interviewer is Maclyn Burg of the Eisenhower Library staff; present for the interview, Dr. Burg and Mr. Russell.

Page 38





In my last six months in the Army, on a couple of weekends, I went up to New York and was interviewed by various Wall Street law firms and during the last several months received employment offers from three firms: Sherman, Sterling and Wright; Sullivan and Cromwell; and Cravath, Swaine and Moore. I had friends in all of these firms who were in my class in law school and, after discussing the firms with them, I decided that I would accept the position offered with Cravath, Swaine and Moore because they offered one in their litigation department, and, because I'd done some court work in the Legal Aid Bureau at Harvard Law School, I thought



that would be the most stimulating challenge.

BURG: Let me ask you how the first partner's name was spelled.

RUSSELL: Two of the three partners whose names appear in it were long since dead. Cravath--C-R-A-V-A-T-H, is the first name. Swaine--S-W-A-I-N-E, is the second. And Moore, M-O-O-R-E is the third. Moore was the only one of the partners alive: I think he was in his eighties at the time that I joined the firm.

BURG: And all of the employment opportunities in New York that you ran down were the result of your having friends already in those firms--this was the kind of contact. You simply didn't reply to ads, you didn't place ads, "Young lawyer available--

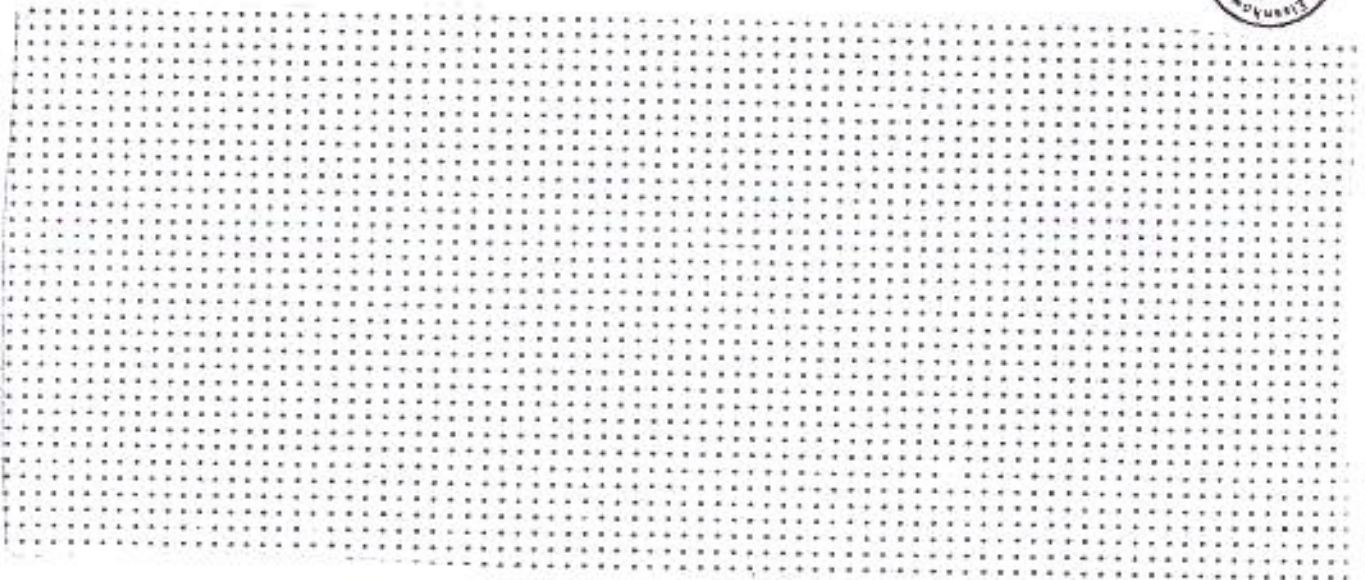
RUSSELL: No, these--

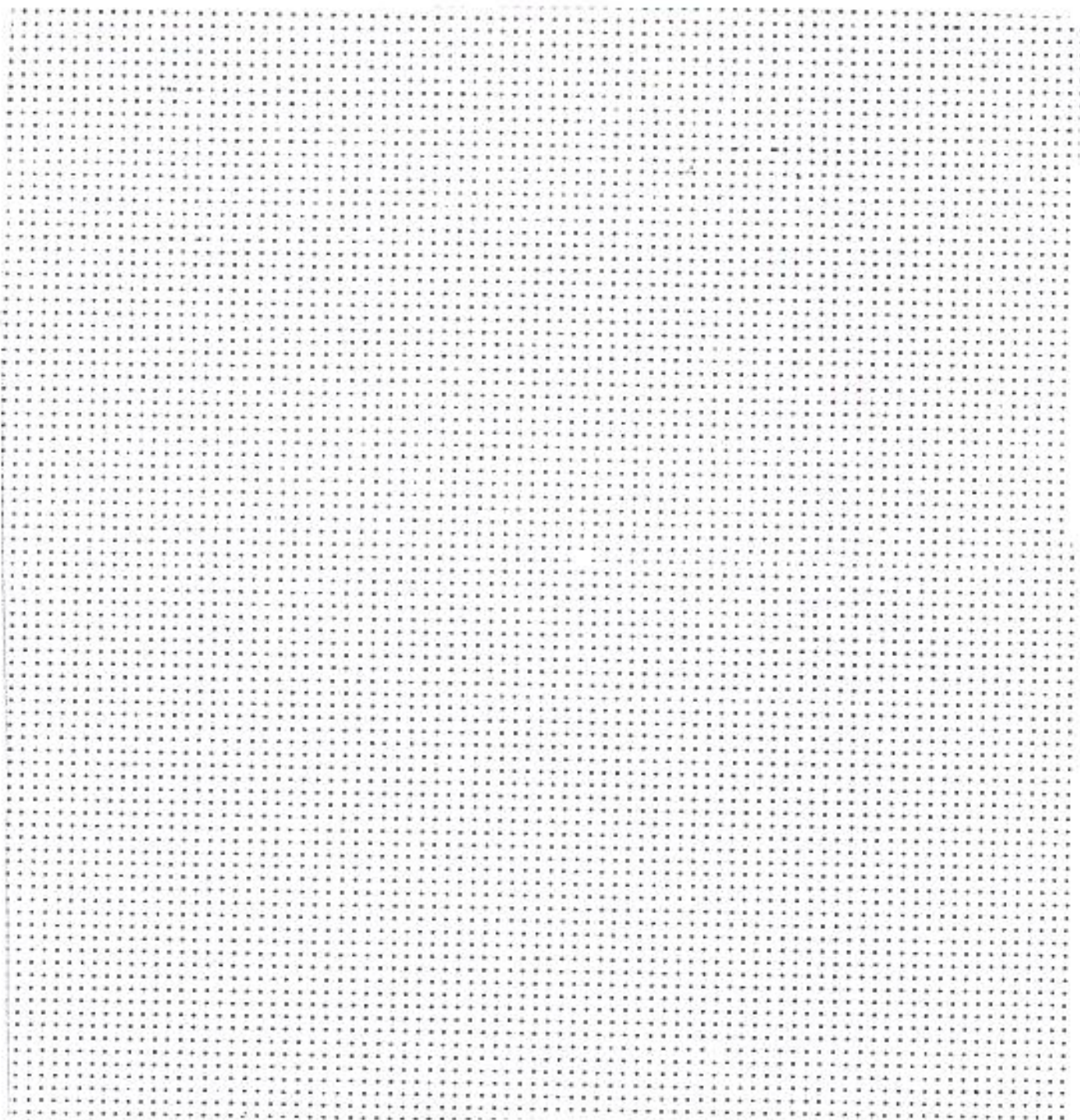
BURG: --at Liberty."



RUSSELL: That's right. These were firms which shared common characteristics. I had friends in them, and they were the largest firms in New York. Sherman and Sterling and Wright, I think, was then technically the largest; Cravath was the second largest; and Sullivan was certainly one of the top five or six

in terms of both size and reputation. Cravath had the reputation of being the "lawyers' lawyers". They were renowned for their professionalism, long hours, drive, and commitment. They were also renowned for being a very tough place to work, and they all operated on the system of "up or out". That is, ten associates join the firm; one of them becomes a partner, the other nine go somewhere else. It seemed to me if I was going to try law for what I thought might very well turn out to be a short period of time, I might at least try it in the most intensive way possible, and it seemed to me that any one of these firms offered that kind of experience.





BURG: Now having joined this particular law firm because you had some experience in litigation--did it work out as you thought it might? You're in a high-pressure, highly reputable firm. Were you given the kinds of assignments in that firm that suited you and that you reacted well too?

RUSSELL: I'd like very much to address that question. I think that I've got to fill in just a short period of time but with monumental events.

BURG: All right.

RUSSELL: Being released from the Army at the end of September of 1956, on the 6th day of October I married Elsbeth Gimmler, a young lady whom I met in Washington while I was assigned here. She was teaching school. She was a graduate of the University



of Wisconsin with a degree in education, and she was teaching in the Arlington public school system--

BURG: Two m's.



RUSSELL: G-i-m-m-l-e-r, and the first name is Elsbeth, E-l-s-b-e-t-h, and she's from Milwaukee. And she was a roommate of somebody that I had known from many years back from New Britain, Connecticut where I'd lived for a couple of years. We met early in 1956 and were married in October. She, of course, was the person with whom I was talking very carefully and in detail about whether we should remain in Washington or whether we should try New York and, reluctantly, I guess we both decided we ought to go ahead and try New York even though neither of us thought really we were going to like it very well.

BURG: She sympathized with your idea of finding out exactly... what a practicing lawyer's career was like?

RUSSELL: Exactly. She saw that I would always feel incomplete if I had not tried it after having spent three years in

law school. After our honeymoon we then went to New York City and established residence in Brooklyn Heights in a divided brownstone--we had an apartment in an old brownstone. And I took up my work with the Cravath firm. The case to which I was immediately assigned was an enormous anti-trust case. It involved the attempt at merger of Bethlehem Steel Company with Youngstown Sheet and Tube. They were respectively, if I recall, the second and sixth largest steel companies in the United States, and as soon as they announced their intention to merge, the Department of Justice, under Section 7 of the Clayton Act, moved to prevent the merger. And as soon as I joined the firm I was assigned to that case. Bethlehem was a client of Cravaths, perhaps its largest client from the point of view of billings. Cravath was counsel to Bethlehem, they not only represented them occasionally but they were in fact Bethlehem's counsel, and the senior partner of the law firm, Mr. Moore, had been Bethlehem's counsel for many years. The case was taken on at the behest of the chairman of the board of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation and was taken on because, I think, of this historic connection between the steel company and the firm. I know that



the firm counseled that the case would almost certainly be lost. It was a difficult, if not impossible case, but the steel company felt that this type of merger would solve many of its basic problems of access to markets and that in some senses it really would create competition by setting up a firm which would be on the scale of U.S. Steel. Bethlehem was second but substantially smaller than U.S. Steel. So my two-year experience in a law firm focused almost entirely on this one very large anti-trust case, and there were six lawyers from Cravath assigned to it--not full time, only several of us were assigned full time. But there was a senior partner, the senior partner from the litigation department, Judge Bruce Bromley, and a senior partner from the corporate department and then two senior associates, one from each of those departments in the law firm, and then two junior associates of whom I was one, one from each of the departments, litigation and the corporate department. And I ended up as the junior litigator, concerning myself almost exclusively with what you would call the "facts" side of the case as opposed to the "law" side. The lawyers in the corporate department wrote the memoranda of law, and in the litigation department we were preparing the facts, the facts being ones which bore on definition of markets for selected products, what constituted a market, what the share of the market was--



and these were the facts that go to the heart of an anti-trust case under the Clayton Act. So the work that I was assigned was both indispensable and intrinsically, necessarily extremely boring. Apart from trips to Bethlehem's Sparrows Point Plant [Baltimore, Maryland] and two weeks spent in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania observing operations of the steel company and obtaining information relevant to the case, I was engaged in doing a type of work which has very little to do with the normal conception of litigation. It wasn't young Clarence Darrow in court, instead it was sitting behind a desk amassing an enormous stack of papers on distribution of track spikes and buttweld pipe and other things around the country by the Bethlehem and Youngstown Steel Companies. I was also assigned a half a dozen smaller, much smaller, cases in my two years with Cravath which took me to court a couple of times, but my dreams of being an active courtroom lawyer were shattered and I found the work, really, quite unrewarding. I was fascinated by the way in which a law firm of 130 lawyers was organized, how it does its business. I was astounded at the resources that a firm like that has at its disposal and enormously impressed with the competence of the partners and my fellow associates at the firm. I have a great



deal of respect for the firm; I think it is rightly thought to be a firm of lawyers' lawyers--they live their work about fourteen hours a day. Their working hours were just as reputed; that is mostly you spent your evenings, until midnight or later, working downtown and frequently your weekends. And Cravath had a tradition that there was no such thing as a proofreader; only lawyers were capable of reading proof. So frequently we would be at the print shop reading proof until 3 o'clock in the morning. So it was a life of a great deal of hard work but unfortunately, in many respects, very, very dull. And the result of two years of this sort of exposure on my part was to cement my distaste for law. I'd suspected I wasn't going to like it; perhaps that was a bad attitude to take in, but my interest had always been in foreign affairs. Two years of doing this persuaded me I had been right to suppose I did not want to make a career of being a lawyer and so--



BURG: Might it have been possible, Mr. Russell, that had you arrived at another time--your arrival almost coincided with this enormous anti-trust litigation--

RUSSELL: Coincided exactly with it. I arrived just about the day that the Justice Department filed against the merger, and you're suggesting that maybe if I'd arrived at some other time, I would have been assigned very different duties--

BURG: Yes.

RUSSELL: --and might have liked it.



BURG: I wondered about the five or six cases, the smaller cases that you did handle. Did they, now in retrospect, did they more satisfy your vision of what a lawyer's life might be like?

RUSSELL: They were more interesting, but one of my problems was my exposure to practice in law school had been as a member of the Legal Aid Bureau. I'd been representing there, people--very disadvantaged people, otherwise they wouldn't have been eligible for our free legal services--and people with very poignant human problems, mostly of getting a good deal of physical abuse from drunken husbands and that sort of thing. And while I wouldn't want to have made a life doing that, at least I identified with the problems that I was tackling and also we won almost all the

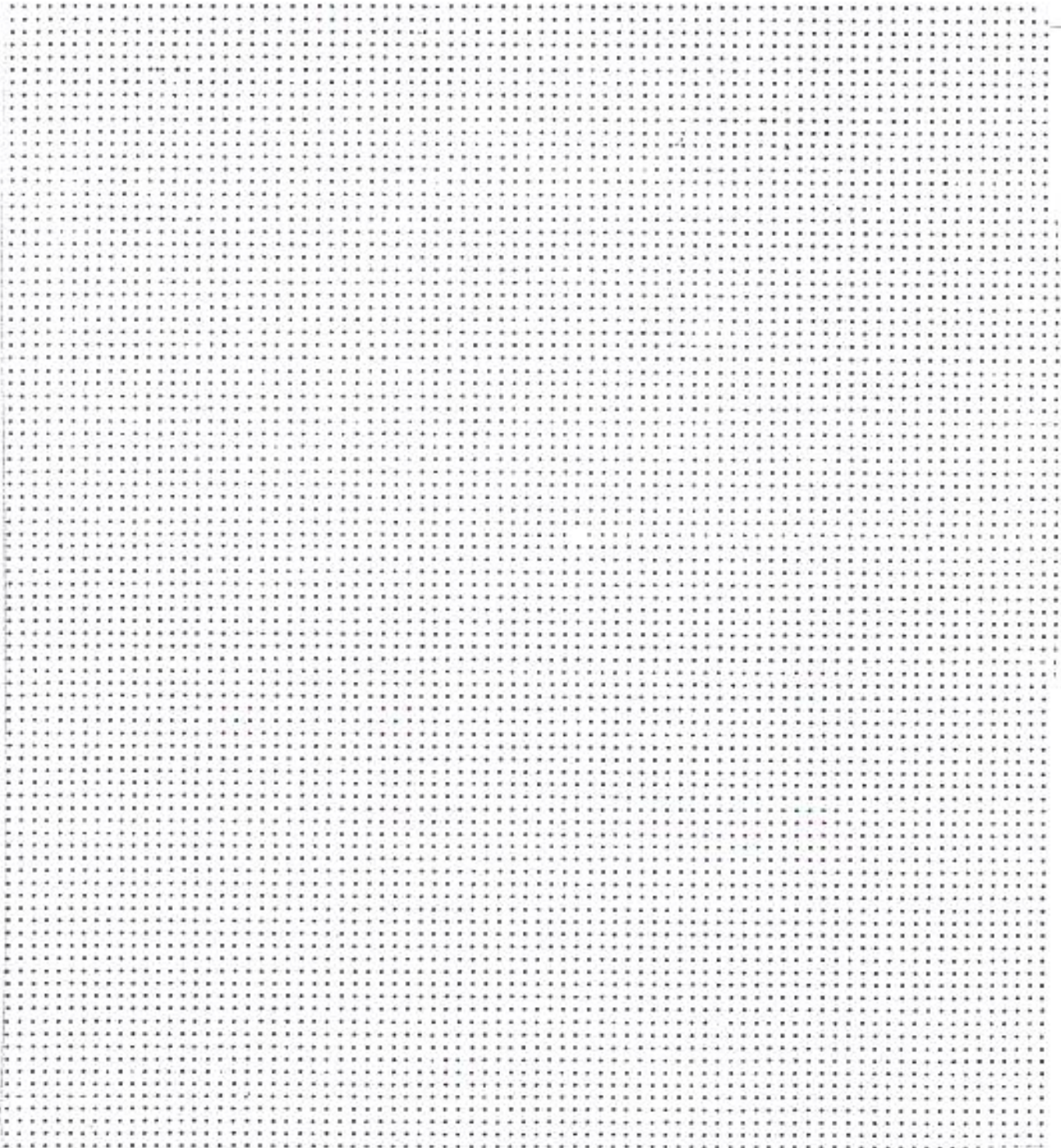
time. You could say, perhaps, justice was on our side in a very crude sense. Whereas in a very large law firm, you practically never represent people, you represent corporations and their problems are drier, they have less intrinsic human interest, and I guess my temperament inclines me towards being involved in something that has more human aspects to it. So I think it's an aspect of character which I have and which would probably mean that any work in a large firm would over time come to me to be less interesting than some other forms of employment. I think the choice really for me would have been if I had gone to a small firm and worked principally on more human problems, would I have liked that--I can't answer that--I might have, very much. It's possible, for example, if I had joined the Justice Department and been working on, oh, let's say civil rights cases or something of that sort, perhaps I would have engaged myself in a way that would have been completely satisfying.



BURG: But had you joined them and worked on the other side, the other end of this anti-trust case, presumably your response would have been the same; you found that rather dull--

RUSSELL: I think it really would have. I don't think that I would have ever felt emotionally engaged in anti-trust laws on either side of the courtroom--for the government or for the corporation. I think I have to feel a much more intimate involvement in what's going on; I have to feel that the human values are involved, and so I suspect that the experiment in New York was foredoomed failure. It was a very demanding two years because in the Army, as I've mentioned, I had nothing whatsoever to do with law. I passed the law exam in Washington before joining the Army. Passing it in Washington without having practiced thereafter gave me no rights in New York; therefore, I had to prepare for, take, and pass the New York bar exam after three years away from law school and away from law. And so I went to the Practicing Law Institute every night for a period of some months and I took the bar exam and I passed and ultimately, having completed the many, many documentary requirements that the Brooklyn Bar Association imposed, I was admitted to practice in New York, but that was on top of my duties at the firm. And adding it all together, I don't recall with any great pleasure our two years in New York.





RUSSELL:
..... The law firm was very generous. They had given me
a salary which was extraordinarily generous. They treated me as
though I had joined the law firm when I got out of law school in
calculating the pay; so they paid me as though I had been there
for three years instead of in the Army for three years, as my
starting salary. And then they had a policy for the young
associates that you'd go up about \$1,000.00 a year and, in
addition, get a Christmas bonus. So the financial attractions
and particularly the future rewards were clearly substantially in
favor of staying in New York. In those days, associates would
rise through annual increments in about eight years to about
\$22,000.00. In 1956-57, that wasn't bad pay, and then if they
made partner they would start at \$35,000.00 and two years later
they'd be at \$45,000.00 and five years later they'd be at
\$60,000.00. And then the partners went up to, oh, about
\$120,000.00. And then because of the tax structure they thought
it wasn't worth taking out any more; one reason they were able
to pay the associates so generously is that the partners, in
those days, didn't take out much--I don't know that anybody took



out more than \$150,000.00. Of course, partners don't talk about these things, but I had a friend who was a senior associate and became a partner while I was there and, in the period when he was going through the agony of being under consideration for the partnership, he did a certain amount of delving into these arcane matters and then passed on some of it to me. So I think my figures are fairly accurate, and so I had in mind a fairly accurate picture of what would be likely for me if I stayed on. I didn't really anticipate that I would be one of the ten who start as associates who made partner; I rather supposed I'd be one of the nine who went off at some point and did something else. But the Cravath practice, which was admirable as well as being well designed to benefit the firm, was to place its graduate associates in clients or in satellite law firms--satellite in the sense they were small firms to whom Cravath referred business and performed useful service. So if I had stayed and behaved like most associates, I suppose after five or six years somebody would have said to me, "You can always remain and have a crack at that one-in-ten chance of being a partner, but we think it's fair to say to you that with a \$15,000 raise, you could go out to be, oh, let's say, secretary and counsel to this client, business, or there is



an opening for a partnership in a firm with whom we have some dealings, a small firm, say mid-town,"--that kind of thing. And then the associate considers it very carefully and goes out, but he always goes out to a raise. Cravath practice is that the associates leave happy, because after all their years of hard work, the firm takes care of them; it places them advantageously. And indeed three of the vice-presidents of our client, Bethlehem, had been former Cravath associates. All of them were making more than \$500,000 a year and looking with some pity on the partners in Cravath who were restraining themselves to \$120 or \$130,000.

BURG: Most interesting. So a graduate school for lawyers with a sure job placement at good salaries.



RUSSELL: That's what they offered, really. A lot of hard work is what you had to put in, but very good prospects for the future was what they offered.

BURG: But you decided against even taking that path and returned here to Washington in preference to another two or three years, perhaps, of the kind of work you had been doing.

RUSSELL: That's right. I just thought that by then it was entirely clear in my mind what I liked and what I didn't like, or what I liked relatively less, and what I liked was government service in the foreign affairs field and what I didn't like was business and law, and therefore I would be wasting my time to remain in an environment which was less congenial than another one.

BURG: Did anyone at Cravath attempt to dissuade you, or had you talked about your plans with anyone at Cravath?



RUSSELL: I talked to the partner who hired me. He was, in fact, the hiring partner, that's a job that gets passed around among the middle range partners, a really fine person, a very sympathetic and thoughtful person. Then I talked to the second ranking partner in the litigation department. The attitude of the hiring partner, was, I found, very understanding. He knew that people had different predilections and he could understand why I had determined to do what I've said in my return to Washington. The litigation partner was astonished at my attitude--couldn't understand why anyone would want to work in government and particularly in a field like that and said that I was

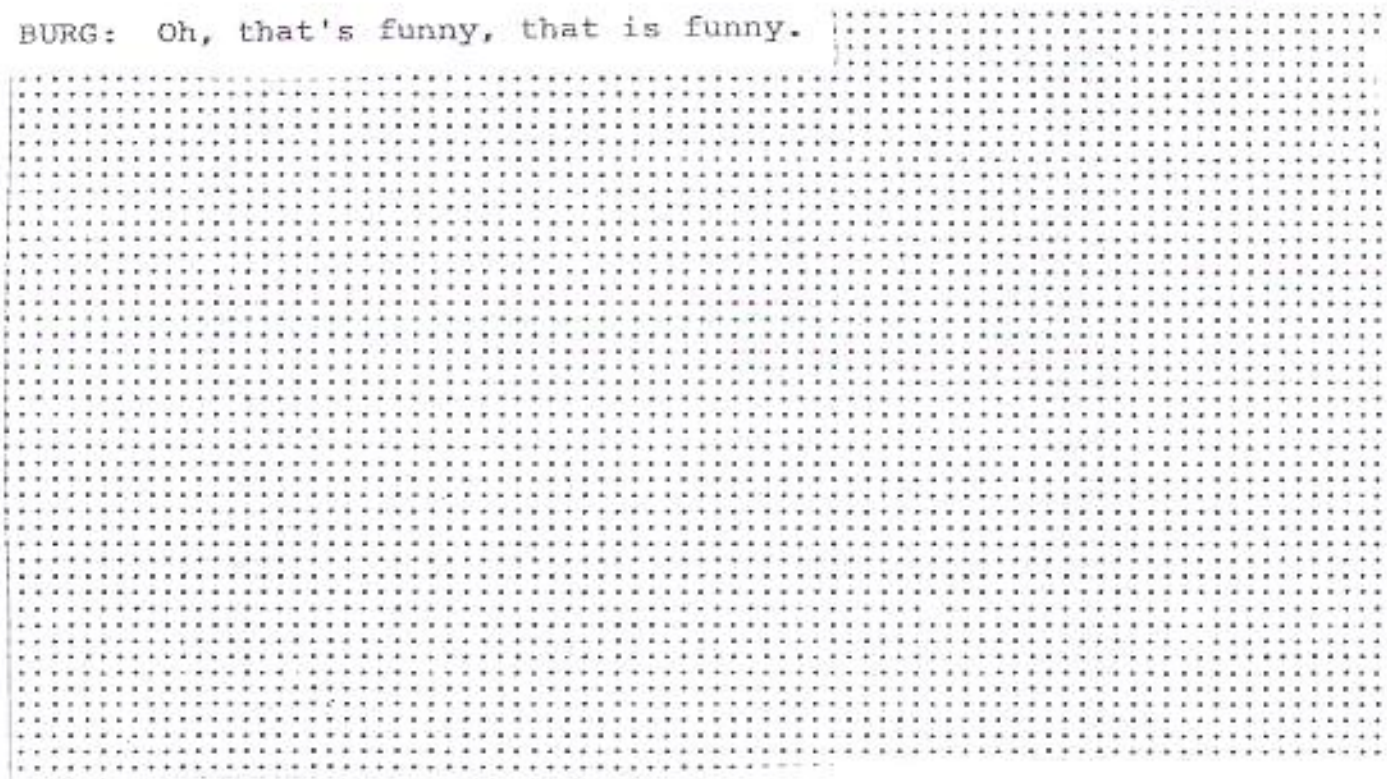
confusing my mind unnecessarily with thoughts of "What was all this legal practice in aid of? One shouldn't take that point of view." It was sort of like an ant colony: every ant had a job to do and all jobs were equally useful, and why wasn't I a happy ant.

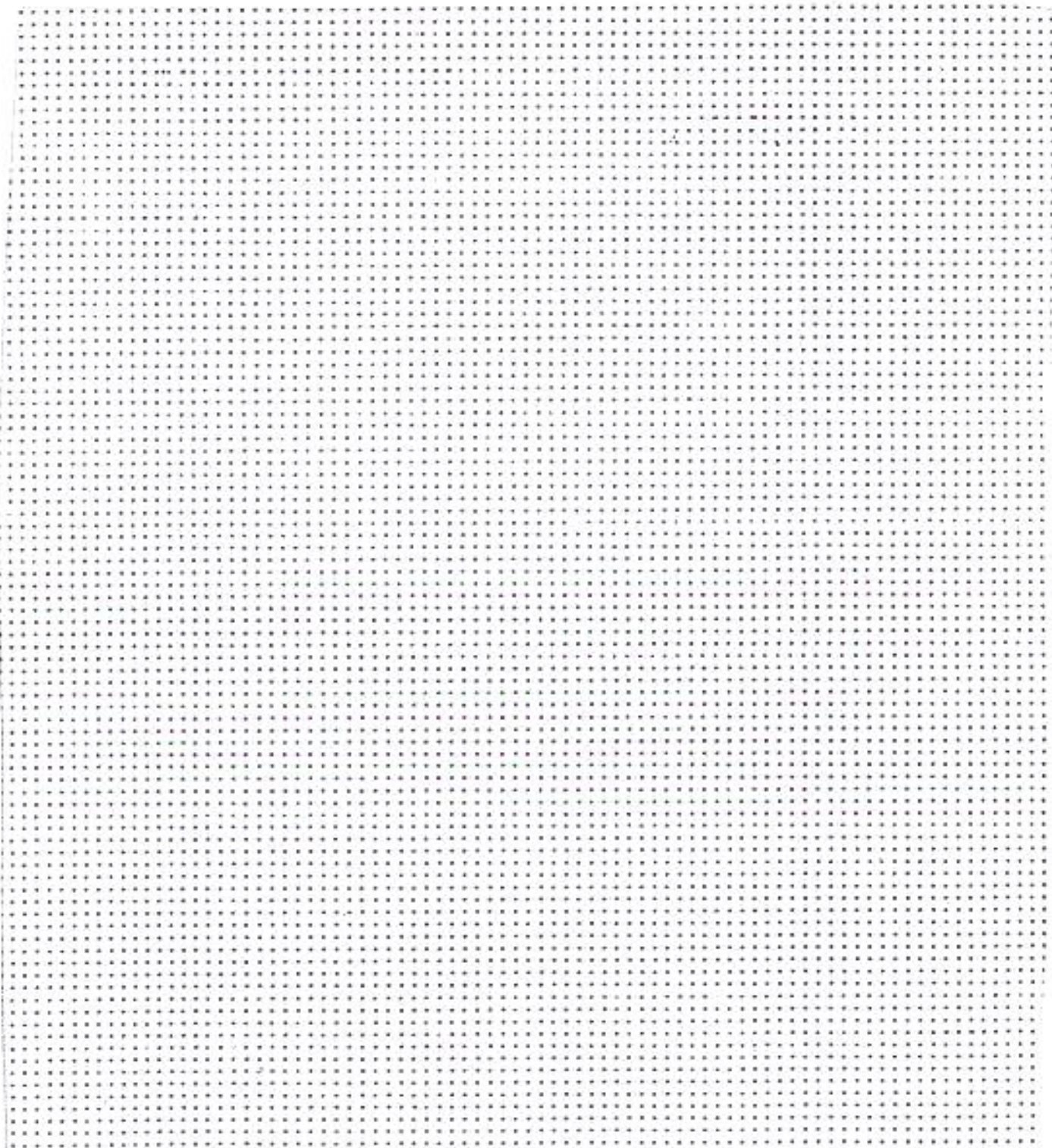
BURG: He'd never run into a warped ant before.

RUSSELL: He'd never run into a warped ant. I won't give his name: I'll just say that he was known in the firm as the "polar bear".



BURG: Oh, that's funny, that is funny.





And then I was invited one noon by a former roommate from law school to go over to the White House to have lunch with him in the White House mess. That was all that was mentioned to me when I was invited over.

BURG: What was the month and year, do you happen to remember?



RUSSELL: I would guess this was late February or early March of 1959. I had returned to Washington in July or August of 1958, having left the law firm after roughly two years in New York, and I then had the two jobs I've described. And then in February or March of 1959 I received a call from my old roommate, Tim [Timothy W.] Stanley, to come on over and have lunch with him. Perhaps I might digress to say how I'd known Tim. I think in my description of my childhood years I mentioned that I spent two years in New Britain, Connecticut with a family of friends--

BURG: Yes.

RUSSELL: --between the ages of 7 and 9. That was when I first met Tim Stanley. He came from New Britain and his parents were friends of the family with whom I was living, and I met Tim, therefore, at the age of 7 or 8.

BURG: I see.

RUSSELL: Then we encountered one another again, neither of us I guess knew previously that the other was there, in our senior



year at Yale. We were in the same class and didn't know it, and it was only in the latter part of the senior year that we discovered one another. And then in law school we roomed together for the second term of the first year at which point Tim got dragged off by the Army. He'd been in World War II, and stayed in the reserve. I think he may even have been in ROTC at Yale, I think perhaps he was, he was an artillery officer. And then of course with Korea, he was told that he was required to go back into the Army. They permitted him to finish his first year in law school and then took him away, in fact to Germany, not to Korea for two years.

BURG: He was part of that happy band of brothers who were snagged again. I remember.



RUSSELL: That's right. He was part of the group who got it twice. And so that was my connection with Tim; it went back to the age of 7 and then with these contacts at Yale and then rooming together in law school. So I did accept, with pleasure, Tim's invitation. Went over and was checked into the East Wing, went to his office and was introduced there to his boss, Al [Albert P.] Toner. If I recall correctly, Al joined us at

lunch and the three of us had a very, very pleasant lunch. I don't recall that any business was discussed, particularly, although I guess I asked them a lot of questions about what they did and about how the White House staff operated. Of course I was very impressed by the mess run by the Filipino petty officers on purely naval lines. Then we came back to the office afterwards and I was about to say goodbye, and then they both popped me the question, saying would I like to be considered to be Tim's replacement because Tim was going to go back to the Department of Defense from whence he had come to be, if I recall, the head of an office. He'd been at the White House for several years; they were looking for a replacement for him and he'd nominated me.



BURG: Did they sketch out for you what Tim Stanley's job was?

RUSSELL: Yes. During the lunch I think I must have asked about that and then they gave some further details on the nature of this job that Al and Tim jointly were accomplishing--putting together this daily report for the President.

BURG: A report which encompassed what, may I ask?

RUSSELL: As described to me then (of course I came to know a lot more about it when I took the job) it involved the active solicitation of information items from cabinet members, working



through their special assistants, which were to be shown to the President, not requiring his action, but in order to inform him. And it was made clear to me, that at least half of the job was getting the items and the other half was editing the items and making certain that you had all of the detail that was necessary as backup--in other words extracting the relevant core from all of the information that was provided and submitting that to the President, but being very certain that you had all the rest of the information and understood it so that if there were follow-up questions, you could provide the answers.

BURG: You then, on another day, went to talk to General Goodpaster.

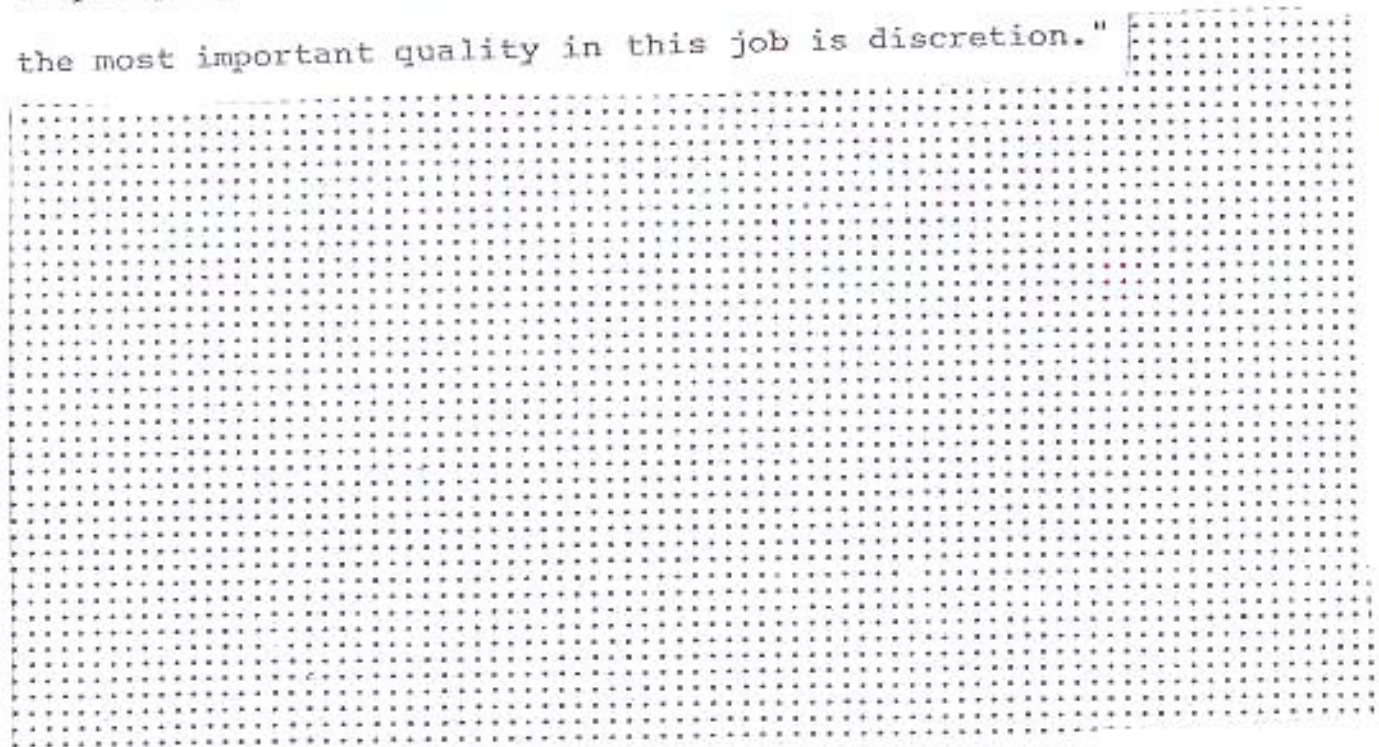


RUSSELL: Yes, I'm almost certain it was another day that I was called over to speak with him. I'm not positive about that, I think it was. And I remember going over to the West Wing to his office and sitting down with him and it was clear to me that he was looking at me from the point of view of qualities of loyalty and discretion and judgment more than making an exhaustive inquiry

into professional competence, which I think he presumed would have been disposed of by Toner and Stanley. I think he wanted to make sure that I was somebody who wouldn't betray confidences of the office and could be relied on not to cause difficulties with other agencies by comporting myself in some arrogant or supercilious manner.

BURG: The interview took that form?

RUSSELL: Yes, it was clearly along those lines. He said he was simplifying and he smiled as he said it. He said, "Really, the most important quality in this job is discretion."



RUSSELL: Yes, that is so. They were looking for somebody who was a lawyer. Tim was the second one in that job. His predecessor had also been a lawyer. Tim was a lawyer although he'd not practiced and they were looking for somebody who had legal training because they supposed, I don't know whether correctly or not, that that training might have provided a skill in analysis and editing of information. I think probably it had marginal utility. I'm sure somebody with a graduate degree in one of the



liberal arts would have the same skill. But they just started out by saying, "We've always had lawyers; let's get another lawyer".

BURG: Although Mr. Toner himself was not--

RUSSELL: He was not a lawyer.

BURG: --American or English literature.



RUSSELL: That's right. That's right. But his assistant, the second man in the office, had been a lawyer. Phil [Phillip E.] Areeda was the first one and Tim Stanley the second; so they were looking for another one to fill Tim's job. Then the second thing was that they wanted a bureaucrat.- They didn't care where he'd been a bureaucrat, but they wanted somebody who was a government employee. This was not a political job; it was not a patronage job; it was a job in which they wanted somebody who was familiar with how the bureaucracy operates. But they didn't care which element of the bureaucracy it was.

[REDACTED]

BURG: They were running heavily to Yale men, weren't they?
Areeda I think had been Yale--

RUSSELL: Phil had been Harvard College and Harvard Law.

BURG: Oh, he had not been at Yale.

RUSSELL: No, he had a very illustrious career at Harvard, gaining a summa in the college. But Tim and I had both been Yale undergraduates and Harvard Law. But that is three Harvard Law in a row, you're right.

BURG: The wrong pattern, but there was a pattern. I don't know why I thought Areeda had been Yale, but yes, I recall now, Harvard. Also summa in the law school.

RUSSELL: That's right, which is indeed rare, indeed rare. Just an aside, Phil might have been too modest to have mentioned this. There was no summa in my class at all. There was no requirement that there be a summa in every law school class and sometimes years would go by and there wouldn't be any, so to be a summa at Harvard Law was indeed an accomplishment.



BURG: Yes, yes indeed. Well, the Goodpaster interview went successfully, then, so far as you could tell.

RUSSELL: He asked me one question and way back in our interview, when we first started, I had said that my army experience turned out to be directly relevant to my White House employment, and I said I would explain why. General Goodpaster asked me who my commanding officer had been in the regimental combat team in which I had served at Ft. Devens. I told him it was a Colonel Hamilton Twitchell, and he said yes that he knew Colonel Twitchell who was a year or two behind him at West Point. I learned later that the first thing General Goodpaster did was pick up the telephone and call, I think perhaps by then he'd made General, General Twitchell, or certainly at least full Colonel Twitchell and asked him what kind of a guy I was. And because of the incident I related in my army days that my platoon had done well in some army tests and Twitchell therefore knew me and I had an exit interview with him when I left Ft. Devens, Twitchell apparently said some nice things about me and as far as General Goodpaster was concerned, because he relied on Twitchell's judgment, that



was his endorsement of my candidacy.

BURG: Had Twitchell said, "Damned good non-com, marvelous staff sergeant"--

RUSSELL: Yes, yes, that's right.

BURG: I remember that Twitchell had, as you young officers were leaving the regimental combat team, Twitchell was quite irked at losing you. He had said as much to you, that he'd wanted you to stay--

RUSSELL: That's right. He had been kind enough to say that he had a job in mind for me after I served as a platoon leader for a while on the regimental staff, and so I was just lucky that through an accident I had come to his personal attention and then when General Goodpaster wanted a reference he was able to get one.

BURG: Was it Toner or Stanley who was able to tell you that Goodpaster had gotten on the phone and--

RUSSELL: I think it was Al Toner--

BURG: --checked you out.



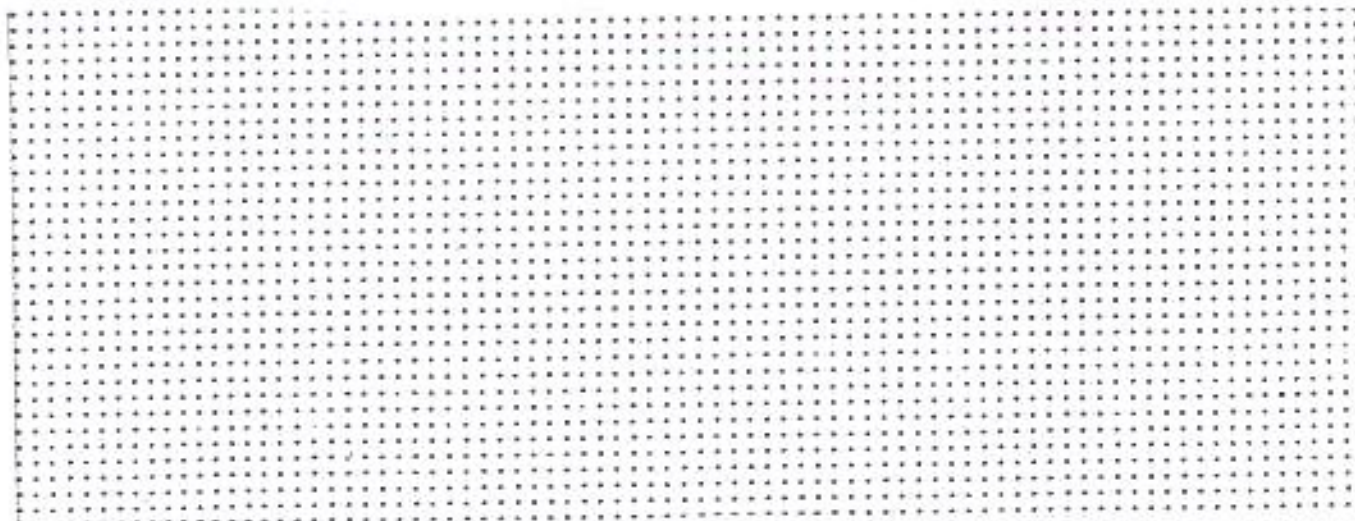
RUSSELL: --who told me about that later and recited that incident with amusement because he's a keen student of human nature and the way people behave and he was fascinated, but not surprised, that a career army man would naturally turn to a career army source for a character judgment.

BURG: Yes, Toner, that is?

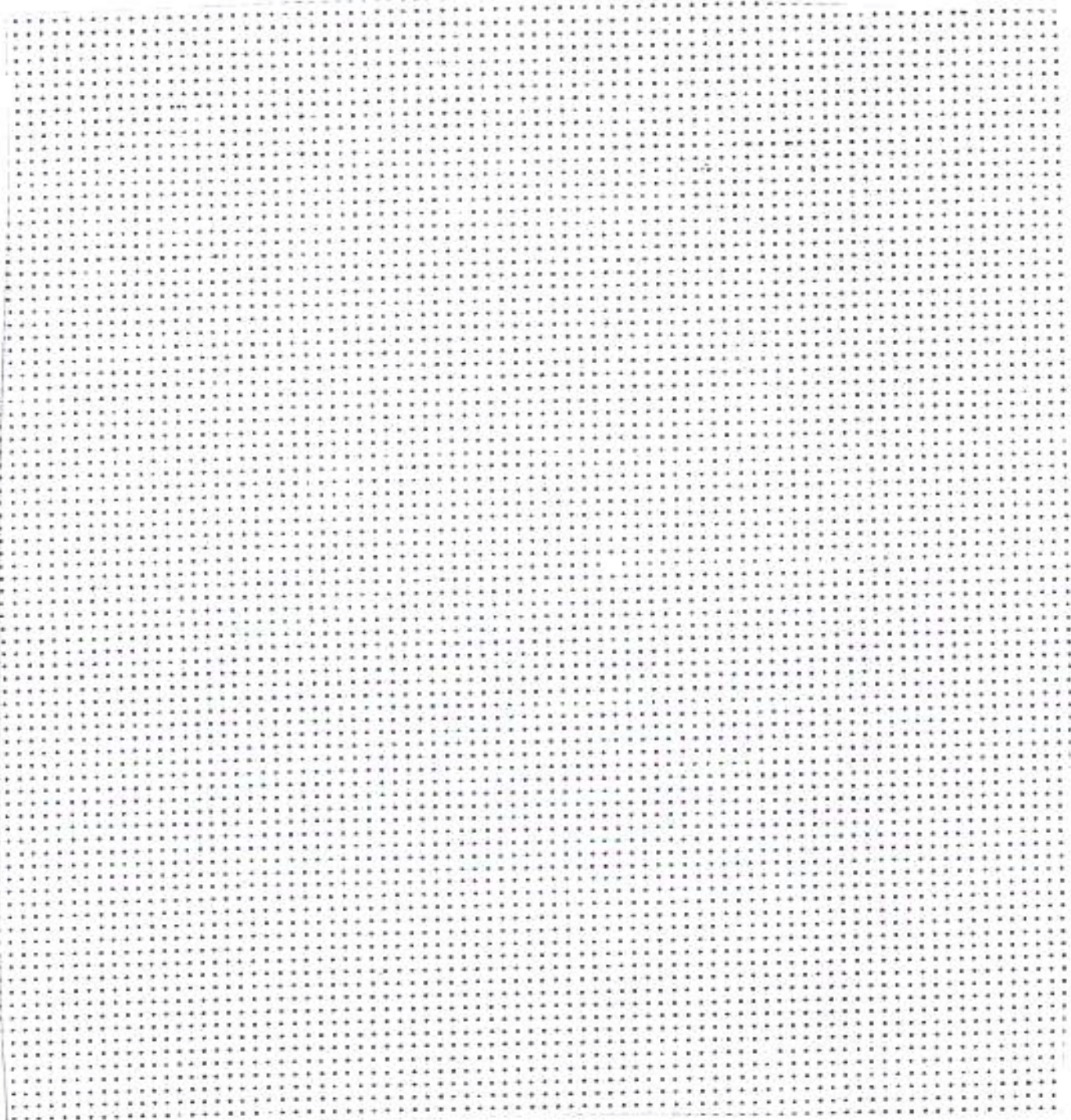
RUSSELL: Yes, Toner was intrigued by it.



BURG: Yes, that fits what I know of Al Toner. You were not told then on the spot after the Goodpaster interview, you were not told that you were coming on, but Goodpaster checked you out and made the decision then to invite you to join--is that how?







BURG: Now, where, physically, was your office in the building?

In the East Wing?



RUSSELL: I shared the office with Al Toner, and we were on the ground floor of the East Wing. And we started out being on the south side of the portico. You can drive under a portico on the east wing, there's a little driveway there, and our office was just on the south side of it. You went out our door and you then come next to the door that led you outside. And our connection was with the staff secretary's office; we were part of the staff secretary's office. Toner was called Assistant to the Staff Secretary and our business was done with him. So we were often tramping down the first floor corridor to the West Wing, to the staff secretary's office, which was inhabited by General Goodpaster, Lt. Colonel John Eisenhower, and Art L. Arthur J. Minnich. Art Minnich and John Eisenhower were both called assistant staff secretaries and Al Toner was Assistant to the Staff Secretary; that was the bureaucratic line-up. It was a very small office because there was just Goodpaster and a couple of secretaries and the two assistant staff secretaries and the two of us over in the East Wing--that was it.

BURG: The full force.



RUSSELL: The full force. I get the impression things have changed in recent years in the White House staffing structure.

BURG: If the budget is anything to go on, indeed it has. Yes, someone, I forget which man it was now, estimated, "There must be 250 of them over there." he said.

RUSSELL: I read in, an aside, in this year's budget, 500 or so are listed --

BURG: Yes, that's quite possible.

RUSSELL: --in the White House Office, of course excluding the domestic staff.

BURG: Yes, right. It's burgeoned something fierce. Your work would require that you go out into the departments; you have to be making phone calls or, presumably, in your new position you would want to meet the special assistants for example in Agriculture, Interior, Justice, wherever, so that they knew you on a face-to-face basis.

RUSSELL: That's right and Al Toner was very thorough and meticulous about that. He introduced me to all of our contacts



and our contacts were uniformly special assistants to the cabinet member or the head of the agency and there were more than twenty, the number sticks in my mind of twenty-six. I know they started with Agriculture alphabetically and I believe they ended up with USIA [United States Information Agency]. And it was every department and agency except the intelligence community. We dealt with all of the other departments and agencies. We also dealt with certain of the President's staff who wanted occasionally to give us some items. The Council of Economic Advisers, the Council on Foreign Economic Policy would give us items from time to time. So it was more than just the agencies and departments; there were some people on the staff who used it as a vehicle also.

BURG: To present material to the President?

RUSSELL: That's right.

BURG: To get material beforehand.

RUSSELL: Yes.

BURG: Before I ask other questions, would you have to accept that material and put it in; it was part of your function to



accept it no matter. Clearly departments and some of the other agencies, yes, you were expected to draw that, but if it came from the Council of Economic Advisers, it was a requirement almost that you fit it into the summaries?

RUSSELL: We were given some editorial judgement, one of the things I liked about the job. We had two vehicles. We had our daily report and our instructions were not to exceed two pages, and we followed that pretty rigorously. That meant in effect perhaps not more than six items. Then we put out periodically a report which could run longer than that, which contained items that we thought probably didn't require the attention of the President but that General Goodpaster should certainly know about them and then he could decide if any of them were ones that the President might want to see. So, from the stuff that came in, we selected and we didn't put in the daily report everything that was submitted from any source-- even other presidential offices, other members of the staff of the White House, or from any of the cabinet member's offices. But we made sure that ultimately every thing went forward, but the items of lesser interest we put in this supplemental report.



Our daily issue was called "Staff Notes", and I can't remember precisely what we called the supplemental. Perhaps it was something like that.

BURG: I was going to say, another title of stunning impact, descriptive if nothing else. When everything went forward, it went forward from Toner and Russell, was it General Goodpaster or was it more likely it might be John Eisenhower or Art Minnich who reviewed the whole list to determine whether there was anything else that needed to go forward.



RUSSELL: Well, it's my impression that "Staff Notes" were personally put on the President's desk each morning by General Goodpaster. Now I suspect that both John and Art may have seen them, at least from time to time, and perhaps regularly. But the person we dealt with was General Goodpaster and the person from whom we got back notes was General Goodpaster, except in the unusual occasion, which happened, when we got sent back to us by General Goodpaster, an issue with the President's notes on it. Occasionally the President would annotate one of these items, sometimes with a comment, sometimes indicating a desire to know

more about it, and these Goodpaster would send back to us. But it was my impression that we were essentially preparing this with the knowledge that it was going to be Goodpaster who would be taking it in to the President about the same time that he was also taking to the President the State Department top secret cable summaries and the CIA top secret, all sources, summary.

BURG: So he was receiving foreign and domestic intelligence in effect on a day-to-day basis.

RUSSELL: Yes, but the emphasis is on the word intelligence and information, this was not requiring action. But at one time, and that was early in the morning, President Eisenhower was getting information from various sources which did not require a presidential determination or action.



BURG: I want to ask you before our tape runs out, how did Al Toner go about introducing you to these people, perhaps as many as twenty-six people that you had to meet. Did you go to them or was it done in a varied kind of way?

RUSSELL: My recollection is that, a lot of them, he invited over to lunch at the White House staff mess, which of course was a pleasure for them as well as for us. We may have gone over to a couple of government agencies and seen people there, but mostly I think it was done through this device of inviting them over for lunch because I do recall having lunch with a fair number of them. Some of them had reasons to be in the building or to come over to the White House for lunch for one reason or another. There was quite a variety in special assistants to the cabinet members ranging from the very young to men who had had many years of experience and were in their 40s or 50s.



BURG: And a similar range, I would expect, in the way in which they performed their duties that related to you.

RUSSELL: That's right. Some of them were very senior civil servants and had clearly an important, substantive role in their own agency even though they were special assistants; they clearly got involved in policy making. Some of them, on the other hand, were young fellows in government for a couple of years, perhaps hoping to stay on if their party remained in power or whatever,

and their role was the typical assistant's role of someone running as fast as they could after their boss and keeping up with what he was doing and being a point of contact with other offices.

BURG: As I thought. I'm running low on tape and this would be a good place to stop. Then what I would want to do the next time I can see you is to look at the typical way in which the form in which these things reached your desk, the kind of thought and work that you had to put into it, things about the amount of time that it took, whether you checked it with Toner and the process thereafter as well as some of your impressions of not only Al Toner but John Eisenhower, and Art Minnich and General Goodpaster, others that you came into contact with. We'll have that then for our next session.

RUSSELL: That will be fine.



INTERVIEW WITH
Christopher Russell

by

Dr. Maclyn Burg
Oral Historian



on

June 26, 1975

for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

This interview is being taped with Mr. Christopher Russell in Mr. Russell's office at the Agency for International Development, in the State Department, Washington, D. C. June 26, 1975. Present for the interview Mr. Russell and Dr. Burg of the Eisenhower Library staff.

Page 83

DR. BURG: We'll start then with the first question aimed at finding out precisely what you did, because our last interview covered you up to going on board at the White House in 1959. You are working with Al [Albert P.] Toner.



MR. RUSSELL: Yes, I started working with Al Toner and worked with him until Al left to go to the Pentagon, about six months, I think it was, before the Eisenhower administration ended, at which point I did the two jobs that he and I had done. There was no replacement for me; I suppose that I, technically, moved up into his position and continued the job that we'd done together. The job consisted of putting out daily something with the glamorous title of "Staff Notes." Al had--

DR. BURG: A winning, fetching title, wasn't it?

MR. RUSSELL: Yes. Al said that he had thought long and seriously about other more grabbing titles, but decided that that was one which was sufficiently gray and innocuous and

it wouldn't cause trouble. So "Staff Notes" it was. And it was a daily publication and we also, occasionally, put out a supplemental, the title of which escapes me, but it contained items which didn't necessarily have to go to the President (it would go to General [Andrew] Goodpaster), items one might say of second-rank importance. And as we accumulated enough of them, we put out a supplement. And that was aperiodic whereas the "Staff Notes" came out every day. The distribution of "Staff Notes" was very limited, a copy for the President that went through General Goodpaster, and it's my recollection that we also made copies available to several of the top aides to the President. I think that General [Wilton B.] Persons received a copy directly and I believe that somebody (probably Bryce Harlow), the top man in the legislative office, also got one. Then a copy was delivered to Vice-President [Richard M.] Nixon in his office on the Hill and this was, I won't say clandestine, but no point was ever made of it. To the best of my knowledge, President Eisenhower never told those who were submitting information to him that an addressee was the Vice-President. I may be wrong; he might have



personally told them that, but my recollection, now rather dim, is that Al Toner used to tell me no point was ever made of that. But the Vice-President did regularly receive through his staff secretary, General [Robert] Cushman--then a brigadier general in the marine corps--a copy of "Staff Notes", if not the day that they were published, a day later. I think we made two or three distributions a week to General Cushman for the Vice-President, and I know from General Cushman that the Vice-President did read them regularly. So the readership then probably didn't exceed four or five people. The President, the Vice-President, General Goodpaster and perhaps two other members of the White House staff, the chief of staff, General Persons, and I think one other person, probably Bryce Harlow.



BURG; Did Al Toner ever intimate that there might have been furor raised had some of these people who were supplying the data for "Staff Notes" known that it was going to the Vice-President?

RUSSELL: No, he didn't say that. But the President, at

several cabinet meetings, told the members of his cabinet how anxious he was to receive "Staff Notes" because, as he put it, it, from time-to-time, saved him from substantial embarrassment in press conferences. He was asked questions sometimes on subjects that he felt should have been covered in "Staff Notes" and weren't. He wanted to make sure that these kinds of subjects were covered. He also emphasized that it was a confidential channel to him, a way of telling him about things which didn't require action but would keep him informed. And there may have been, I cannot ascribe this directly to the President certainly or to any conversation with General Goodpaster, but there may have been a feeling that if the members of the cabinet had known that the Vice-President got a copy, they might have been less candid. I won't say that's a conclusion I reached, but I think it's possible that that's the reason that it was never, to the best of my knowledge, announced that the Vice-President was an addressee. This is the rankest sort of speculation, but from one occasion on which I had to read through notes on all four and a half years of cabinet meetings on which notes were taken, that is from the



time of the establishment of the Cabinet Secretariat, I got the impression that the Cabinet tended to divide into conservatives and liberals. And the Vice-President was clearly in the liberal category from the kinds of interventions he made. And I've sort of suspected that there might have been conservative members of the cabinet who might not have reported some of the items they did if they had known that the Vice-President was also going to--

BURG: So nothing much would have come in from--

RUSSELL: Pure suspicion.

BURG: --Arthur Summerfield and Ezra Taft Benson.

RUSSELL: Yes. That's my feeling. But I have to say that I don't think that the most sensitive, from the point of view of the sender, type of information ever came through "Staff Notes" anyhow. We received some very sensitive national security information through "Staff Notes," but I have a feeling that that which you would call bureaucratic-political, which affected the vital interests of a cabinet member in



his personal and professional status, never came through "Staff Notes" anyhow. I don't recall seeing any item which, if a cabinet member had known it was going to the Vice-President, might have, in fact, caused him not to send it in. It tended to be quite factual pieces. Particularly, you mentioned Ezra Taft Benson, things that came in from Agriculture had mostly to do with crop prices and that sort of thing. And I guess there was some economic indicator information that came in just a little ahead of public announcement. It didn't beat public dissemination by more than a few hours, but I suppose that those who made that available to the President might have said to themselves, had they known it went elsewhere, "Well, really we wouldn't communicate it through this vehicle if we knew there were any other distribution." This again, the rankest speculation on my part. But it's just a sidelight to one aspect of what we were doing.

BURG: Well you gathered that data then from the various



executive branch departments and some of the agencies, all of the agencies; how did that work?

RUSSELL: We had a list of departments and agencies who were supposed to be submitting information through "Staff Notes." My recollection is it ran twenty-four or twenty-six in number; so it was not just those of cabinet rank. It included all of the cabinet rank departments and it included a number of agencies. It conspicuously did not include any intelligence agency at all. Intelligence did not come through this channel, ever. The biggest contributor was the Department of Defense. It was a time of an intensive missile development programs in the Department of Defense and they used the "Staff Notes" as a device for telling the President daily of the success of the missile firings. So we would practically, it seemed every day, get something that related to the development then of the Titan, Atlas, Polaris, and, I believe in the later days perhaps, the Minuteman system, although I'm not certain about that. I remember that during the two years, roughly two years, I was there, practically daily



getting reports which would indicate that a firing had occurred and whether the missile had successfully fired. Occasionally there would be reports of malfunctions or blowing up shortly after leaving the launching facility, and then ending with the circular error probability, that is where it had impacted, what the error had been in the impact. I got the impression that the President was keenly interested in the success of the development of the missile program and that he always followed this with considerable interest. I might just say this on the side--I'm impressed as I think back with the rapid progress of that program. I remember in certain programs, when I first got there, the number of missiles in which some system malfunctioned and then by the end of the two years that they were all successfully fired and landing within a very tolerable circular error probability. So probably the biggest chunk of information had to do with the missile programs. It also involved the launching of satellites. It wasn't just weapons missiles; it was also communications and intelligence gathering satellite launchings. That was covered.



BURG: So the biggest chunk in terms of the quantity of data supplied to you, or are you saying the biggest in terms of importance?

RUSSELL: Well, I think perhaps both ways. It's hard to ascribe qualitative importance. Certainly in quantity about forty to fifty percent of what we got, it is my recollection, came from the Department of Defense, not all of it on missiles. They would also report on progress in the development of other weapon systems, and they would report incidents, problems --a plane, there were very few happenings of this, but I think once or twice, a plane with a nuclear device on board went down and, of course, they reported that immediately. There was never, that I ever saw, any problem that arose from the crash in a nuclear sense, but, of course, any plane with a nuclear device on board that went down was something that the President had to know about. There was one--

BURG: Now I presume, Chris, in a situation like that, they were reporting it through "Staff Notes" but an incident of



that prominence would be reported directly to him I would assume.

RUSSELL: Oh, I think that's right. Yes. I don't think "Staff Notes" replaced a telephone call from the Pentagon to General Goodpaster at all. I think it was used in a case like that as a follow-up device to say, "We let you know about the plane that crashed yesterday--we just want to tell you as the result of the inspection by the team that there was no problem," or something like that. And so that would tend to be a follow-up. On the missiles, though, it was the device because it was daily that we got it and a courier came over from the Pentagon. There was a lot of information of a defense nature besides missiles. I guess mostly it had to do with development of hardware. But there was also a certain amount of what one would call public relations information. The services are never reluctant to advertise to the chief executive their successes or the public credit they've received for this, that, or the next thing. And when we spotted something which was patently a public relations



issuance, that would go into the supplemental I was talking about. We'd save that up till we had four or five of these back-patting items--

BURG: The Sunbathers Association of America has awarded Admiral X--

RUSSELL: That's right, yes.

BURG: --its Distinguished Conduct Award.

RUSSELL: Exactly. They tended to be sort of "Great White Fleet" type things about how well the cruiser had been received here, there, or the next place. And those tended to end up in the supplemental notes. And the supplemental notes tended not to go to the President. They always went to General Goodpaster; it was up to him to decide what to do with them. But it's my impression that very rarely did he bother the President with them. The President, through General Goodpaster, received, in those days it was twice a day, the State Department, Top Secret daily cable summary. The Secretary of State and the President were supposed to be the addressees of that



summary, prepared by the staff secretariat of the State Department. We did not attempt to duplicate what they were reporting. President Eisenhower got it from General Goodpaster, who went through it first, and if there were any questions that struck him, he would get in touch with the department directly. So perhaps our second biggest donor of items was the State Department, but the information they'd give us did not consist of the cables from the ambassadors which went into this Top Secret daily cable summary because they knew the President got that in another fashion. It was other types of information that they would report which didn't call apparently for any consultation with the President, but just something they thought he ought to know about. And those were interesting. If you're ascribing a qualitative index, not nearly as important as the Defense Department information. Then USIA [United States Information Agency] and the precursor of AID [Agency for International Development], I guess it was called ICA [International Cooperation Administration] in those days. ICA used to send us regularly its cable summary;



they did not send it to General Goodpaster; they sent it to us. We would go through it and when we saw something interesting we would call them and ask them if they wanted it given to the President or wanted to expand on it. And from time to time there would be something there that we would use. I can't remember with the USIA whether they had a daily cable summary or not, but they were a contributor and their items were decent quality. That was probably the only way that they got to the President daily, topical stuff. No doubt they took up through the State Department, or perhaps themselves directly, policy issues, but I think any daily information the President got, the topical information, he probably got through us from them. Then the rest were domestic agencies. AEC [Atomic Energy Commission] was a good contributor because the chairman of the board of AEC--I'm trying to think--it's a commission and I've forgotten what the senior man on the commission was called--AEC's been reorganized now, it's called something different. But there used to be a board basically--

BURG: Well they called him chairman or commissioner.



RUSSELL: Yes. I guess they were all commissioners and I can't recall that he was called the chairman. He had a political sense. He used to use "Staff Notes" to report on how things were going with his congressional oversight committees. I think it was a joint atomic energy committee; I think it involved the two Houses. And we would have reported to us information of a classified nature--we had to have Q clearances--on detonations, atomic detonations, and that would be the same sort of thing the Defense Department--. But unlike Defense Department, he would tell us how his conversations were going with the chairman of the congressional joint committee or with a ranking minority member or something of that sort. The President, I think, was interested in that and it always struck Al Toner and myself that that showed a lot of savvy on the AEC Chairman's part. To us it was quite remarkable the disparity in the perception of various cabinet rank and agency heads, cabinet rank officers and agency heads, as to the utility of "Staff Notes." It always struck us that the ones who were the smartest, at least in a bureaucratic sense, were most enthusiastic



users of "Staff Notes." After all, here was a channel which guaranteed that they could get something to the President which would be part of the, presumably, the data base he was using in making decisions. Although these weren't items presented to him to make decisions, they certainly formed part of that which he knew generally about their problems and their programs. We were astonished at how reluctant some departments were to send in anything at all, I think having a very mistaken notion that in some way it would cut down their ability to get to the President personally, face-to-face; and we were surprised, not surprised, but impressed with how other departments selected information which obviously was going to be interesting to the President and thus, in effect, increased their amount of time with the President. The government's a very big place and any given member of it who is subordinate to the President doesn't have much time with the President with his problems. "Staff Notes" gave the smart ones a chance to raise his level of understanding and consciousness of their problems and efforts. AEC stood out as being an agency that understood the utility



of this process. And obviously the Defense Department was another.

BURG: What remains in your mind as an example of an agency or department that seemingly failed to comprehend?

RUSSELL: Treasury, to us, was absolutely incomprehensible. There was a GS-18 career bureaucrat in Treasury. Just as an aside, most of the people we dealt with tended to be in-and-outers. They were special assistants to the cabinet members or the heads of agencies. They tended, therefore, to have some political dimension. I don't mean this in a party politics sense that they were, you know, party activists. But they tended to understand the political dimension within a bureaucracy. So they tended to be quite alert to the opportunity of present their situation. In Treasury it was a GS-18, he'd been there for thirty years; his principal desire seemed to be to protect his boss and so we never got anything out of Treasury. Even when the President was reminded they hadn't contributed anything at all and raised it at a cabinet meeting--he didn't single them out but he did make



quite clear his desire to be receiving information through "Staff Notes"--we still didn't get anything out of Treasury. That struck us as being not very intelligent because there was no doubt the Secretary of the Treasury was a very influential man who could get to see the President a lot, but he could have increased his opportunities if he'd bothered to use "Staff Notes". It also is an aside on how unresponsive even the best organized government is. A President can say three or four times at a cabinet meetings that he wants something; that doesn't necessarily mean he's going to get it.

BURG: How about Roger Jones, Bureau of the Budget?



RUSSELL: We didn't tend to get things from the Bureau of the Budget. Our notion generally was that something which was considered to be part of the office of the President, as Bureau of the Budget was, we didn't look to so much as the line departments. We figured they were, in effect, closer. But we may have gotten some things from them because there were some exceptions. We would, for example, occasionally get items from Raymond Saulnier, who was the chairman

of the Council of Economic Advisers to the President. We would sometimes get things from Karl Harr working in the Operations Coordination Board; he was the OCB adviser to the President. I don't recall anything from budget, but Al Toner might. I don't offhand recall anything. He wasn't a regular, it strikes me, a regular contributor.

BURG: No he was not. On one occasion he told you to mind your own business.

RUSSELL: Did he?



BURG: Yes. You had requested information from him.

RUSSELL: That's interesting.

BURG: And--

RUSSELL: Al Toner had or--

BURG: Yes.

RUSSELL: I don't recall ever talking to him.

BURG: Yes.

RUSSELL: Was it Al who handled--

BURG: Evidently it was Al.

RUSSELL: Yes.

BURG: Yes. You'd made a request for--please give us some information and he told you to mind your own business, said he had a direct line to the President; he didn't need you.

RUSSELL: He didn't need it.

BURG: He didn't need "Staff Notes."



RUSSELL: Well, he probably didn't. I would suspect that, you know, Gordon Gray or Jones in BOB would not need "Staff Notes." And it wasn't set up for them. It was set up for the cabinet departments and agencies. The fellows like Harr and Saulnier who gave us an occasional note usually tended to be people that we saw at the White House mess for lunch and were congenial people with whom we had friendly, personal dealings, understood exactly what we did with "Staff Notes" and figured that it was a good way of getting in an occasional

note when they'd rather not pick up the phone and try to get through to the President. So I think that was savvy on their part.

BURG: It makes sense then that Jones would be one of those who truly did not--

RUSSELL: Yes. That's right.

BURG: --need to use this particular channel.



RUSSELL: I wouldn't be critical of his judgment not to use it at all. I would be critical of the judgment of the Treasury. I think that was not very smart. And some of the departments didn't--I guess they never really figured out what they ought to be submitting. If you didn't call them constantly, they wouldn't submit anything. When you finally managed to get them to submit something, it would be fairly inconsequential. Agriculture would certainly fall into that category. I can't recall anything of consequence from Agriculture. Interior and HEW [Health, Education and Welfare] were much better about it, although curiously [Arthur] Flemming provided,

by not submitting something through "Staff Notes," the perfect argument for why there ought to be "Staff Notes." You may recall the great cranberry pesticide problem?

BURG: Yes. Yes, I do.

RUSSELL: They condemned the whole crop up in Cape Cod?

BURG: Yes.



RUSSELL: Flemming hadn't bothered to tell the President about that and the President was questioned on it in a press conference and didn't know anything about it. Mad as hops afterwards as to why he hadn't been advised about this problem. And that led to his next mention at cabinet meeting of how he wanted people to send in this kind of thing.

BURG: Did that up the production of notes then from Flemming?

RUSSELL: Yes, it did. Flemming was, it seems to me--a personal note--a very bright guy. And he was, for us, a pleasant fellow to deal with because he used to regularly

come over to the White House staff mess and just sit down at anybody's table. So, I guess, although I was a very, you know, junior member of the staff, I must have found myself at luncheon table with Arthur Flemming a dozen times in a couple of years. And he was a very accessible sort of person and we generally got pretty good stuff from him; I think the cranberry business was just a bad oversight. And, as I say, Interior--my memory is very fuzzy at this point; I kept nothing from my White House days. I took very seriously Goodpaster's injunction that these papers belonged to the President, so I don't even have a single representative copy of a "Staff Notes," nothing, no files whatsoever.

BURG: Well I would assume that we have those.

RUSSELL: You probably have them somewhere--

BURG: --full run?

RUSSELL: You could see the kinds of things. But my impressions now, all these years later, was that Interior was pretty good about picking out some of the more sensitive



political issues which didn't, again, call for Presidential determination but just to let him know what was going on. I seem to recall some items relating to oil leases and oil import quotas and that kind of thing. Which, of course, on the Hill would be guaranteed to have a lot of interest.

BURG: Indeed. And you were seeing these during Fred Seaton's time as secretary.

RUSSELL: Yes, that's right.



BURG: Did Al Toner ever mention to you that the quality of the notes or frequency of the notes coming from Interior had altered between the administration of Douglas McKay and Fred Seaton?

RUSSELL: No, he didn't. But he would have known that. Al would have perceived that.

BURG: All right. I'll check that with him.

RUSSELL: I get the impression we considered Seaton to be a good contributor. And the AEC man, I think it was McCone.

BURG: John?

RUSSELL: Yes.

BURG: John McCone?

RUSSELL: It's my recollection that it was McCone who succeeded [Lewis] Strauss; and Strauss attempted, there was an attempt made to make him secretary of what--Commerce--which was defeated because of the antagonism of one influential senator. I think it was McCone we were impressed by in the use of "Staff Notes". This is a very parochial point of view, judging them on their contributions to "Staff Notes", like heroes. With the Secretary of Defense there was a very fine special assisstant over there that we dealt with who really understood how the system worked.



BURG: Who was that by the way? Do you remember the name?

RUSSELL: I think he came in with Neil McElroy. He had worked in Proctor and Gamble and, sorry, the name, if I heard the name I would say, "Oh, yes, that's the man." But he was very, very perceptive about it.

BURG: The Proctor and Gamble relationship rings a bell with me and I think we'll be able to find out very easily who that man was. Yes. I should remember his name too.

RUSSELL: And then Interior was good and in State Department there was no problem. Something like Defense and State are so organized, they have their secretariat systems, it's not hard to plug in. Here in what is now AID I remember Don McDonald was the head of the executive secretariat. I've had something to do with Don in the years since I joined AID and he was always very helpful. The same was my recollection of USIA, that we never had any trouble of getting items from them, particularly after we brought something to their attention. And Labor, it was a mixed bag. I knew quite well the special assistant to James Mitchell. And we came to know Mitchell fairly well, too, because like Flemming he used to like to come over to the White House mess and just sit down with anybody. And I guess I must have had lunch that way with Mitchell a dozen times in the Eisenhower years. Mitchell played cards very, very close to his chest, and, as an aside, that's what ultimately drove my friend to quit because he couldn't follow his boss.



BURG: He couldn't find out what was going on.

RUSSELL: He couldn't find out what was going on. But we sometimes would get some good things there. Commerce was very much--

BURG: Your friend there, by the way--who was this?



RUSSELL: His name was Roger Kennedy, and I guess he was there for about a year. I'd known him because he was a year or so ahead of me in college, and as a bachelor officer in the army I roomed in a big house in which there were eleven of us who had all had some kind of past academic ties, and so I knew him pretty well. Then the Secretary of Commerce had a special assistant who'd been one of my roommates. His name was Van Galbraith and, of course, that was helpful. Although we didn't get a whole lot from [Frederick] Mueller, we did get some things. It wasn't an antagonistic relationship. I've undoubtedly forgotten a lot of the agencies that used to occasionally send us things.

BURG: Anything much come over from Justice?

RUSSELL: I think very, very little from what I recall, and certainly nothing in the security area. There was nothing from the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] for example. Again that was clearly under the injunction that we were not to deal in intelligence information--that was internal as well as external, never anything of that kind. The Justice Department itself, whether there might have been something sort of administrative it's possible. I don't ever recall getting an item that would have to do with pending litigation, for example, which would be a very sensitive matter and it certainly was not communicated through "Staff Notes."



BURG: Now the mechanism functioned on a daily basis. Would you tell me what the routine would be on a relatively typical day. I would assume that data begins to flow in almost as you arrive at your desk, or is it there already?

RUSSELL: Our day divided quite clearly, morning and afternoon. Morning for us was the time of acquiring leads. We would read four or five newspapers--guess I should say skim,

we weren't reading them, we were looking for items which involved the executive department agencies. That's where we picked up--

[Interruption]

BURG: --the manner in which material came in. You spoke for example of the cable summaries from various agencies being there as part of the morning work. Now may I ask: Had those come in during the night? Had they been brought in by courier, or did they arrive early in the morning?



RUSSELL: It's my impression that they arrived in the morning. I don't think they came in at night. I think even the State Department Top Secret summary, which didn't come to our office but went to General Goodpaster's directly, came over early in the morning. So during the morning this stuff would drift in, and I think I was beginning to mention some of the reports that came out of the internal agencies as opposed to Department of State and Defense. Agriculture, I remember distinctly, and I think perhaps several of the others, Commerce

I believe also, put out monthly or bi-weekly, or in any case, periodic summaries which would describe economic activity. Labor Department, I think, did the same thing. And very occasionally these would give rise to an inquiry of some sort. We'd take a look at it and say, "Well, something seems to be shaping up as a problem the President might be interested in." And then we'd get on the phone and call. Practically the whole morning was devoted to stirring up, getting ideas on what might be business and some calls around to various people. Sometimes would get hints, tips, from other members of the White House staff or other members of the Office of the President who would say, "Well, here's something that's interesting and why don't you get after so-and-so and maybe you can get an item."



BURG: They would have picked it up in conversations with people concerned, at lunch, social affairs, wherever and would pass on the hint to you.

RUSSELL: Yes, exactly.

BURG: A certain amount of material, I assume, voluntarily comes in during the morning, either phoned in from the agencies or departments concerned or in some instances, as I understood you earlier, couriers would be bringing in rather sensitive material for you.

RUSSELL: Yes. That's right. I don't recall our ever reporting something on the basis of a telephone call in "Staff Notes."

BURG: Oh, really.



RUSSELL: It may have happened. I think, though, that it was always brought in in written form, even if that involved a courier. And I guess that made sense from our point of view. Because we were editors, and we were editors in both the sense of cleaning up somebody else's prose and boiling it down, but also in going out and getting more information that was suggested by that which had come in. And it was certainly easier to be a decent editor if you had it in writing. And often they would send back-up stuff which you could go through, even though you wouldn't perhaps put much of it in the "Staff

Notes." Our procedure was, we had a list of contacts, agreed contacts, in every one of the departments and agencies, and after having gone through all of the material which sort of prepared us for the questions we might ask, then we would start calling people and making suggestions. And they were never more than that. We never felt that our mandate gave us the authority to order anybody to do anything. We tried to persuade them that it might be in their best interest to report something because it was likely to be important and the President might get asked a question on it and might want to know. So it was a missionary activity in large measure. I don't recall ever using threats. I do recall getting, remarkable, sort of follow-up calls on things. I remember one time we had an information item that came from the Department of Defense and the item clearly suggested that some more information was needed in order to fill out this story before sending it forward to the President. And the call I got was from the commanding general of some base in Texas about eight o'clock at night in a state of high agitation. Obviously the request had been passed on to him



through three or four channels and he thought it was the same as being directly from the President. And there was a great deal of "sirring" and carrying on over the phone from Texas. But we tried to be very careful about not leaning on people but trying to lead them to water, showing them that it was in their interest to drink. Before I got there, when Sherman Adams was chief of staff, he followed this with considerable personal interest, and Al Toner used to tell the story of how he would go in to Sherman Adams and tell him how the departments and agencies were performing with regard to "Staff Notes." And then Adams, who apparently enjoyed this kind of work, whenever he got to the name of a department which was not being particularly cooperative or hadn't produced in the past few weeks, with a kind of a steely grin, he would pick up the phone and tell the secretary, "Get me so-and-so," and then would ream so-and-so out well and truly in about thirty seconds of crisp commentary and then, with a pencil, check off the name, and then go on happily to the next one.



BURG: Putting the phone down, having left another friend

in the United States government.

RUSSELL: That's right. Adams was gone by the time I got there and I don't recall anybody ever doing that, although we did manage to get, through General Goodpaster, the President on a couple of occasions to raise the question of "Staff Notes" at his cabinet meetings, as I have mentioned earlier, in the mind of people who were to contribute.

BURG: Your impression then is that Wilton Persons did not follow with such interest, the "Staff Notes" as had Sherm Adams.

RUSSELL: I think that's certainly so. And it certainly wasn't Persons' style to want to get involved in the role of being a shotgun. I don't have any reason to suppose he enjoyed that, or would ever have appreciated our asking him to do it. So we were really pretty much on our own when it came to, after Adams' departure, on our own as to getting people to contribute. I have to rely on what Al said--I get the impression that the amount of information remained at roughly the same levels until the declining couple of



months of the administration, and at that point it certainly dropped off quite sharply from all the departments except Defense. Whether people had their minds on what their next job was going to be or what have you, they were no longer all that interested. So the last few months, in my recollection, last several months after the election, is that the number of contributions we got dropped off quite radically.

BURG: Did you pursue matters with the same vigor from November of '60 or did you--

RUSSELL: Well, I did personally. I--



BURG: Of course, that's right, you were it, at that stage.

RUSSELL: Yes, I was it. I had been it from some time, if I recall, in the spring of '60. I was it. I pursued it. There was no question about what I was going to do on January 20th, and I didn't have to spend any time worrying about where I was going to be thereafter; so I could keep on doing the job as I had been doing it. Certainly, on the White House staff, there were people who were not like

myself, bureaucrats, and did have to wonder what the next step was going to be, and of course they spent less and less time on official business and more and more in wondering what they were going to do next.

BURG: Yes. Now may I ask you: Did you and Al Toner divide up--you had mentioned perhaps as many as twenty-six sources for "Staff Notes"--did you divide these up in any particular pattern between the two of you?



RUSSELL: Well it was really up to Al to indicate which ones he wanted to pursue personally and which ones he'd like me to pursue. I don't recall a formal division. I don't recall that he assigned me any particular agencies. My recollection was more of sort of an ad hoc arrangement that we'd do whatever seemed indicated by the amount of work we had. If there were a lot of interesting things--Al and I would spend a good deal of time talking with each other about leads that we might pursue, and it's my impression that it was as a result of those conversations that I would get from him the idea of who I should be chasing and who he'd be chasing. So

I don't recall that we did it in a very formal way. We shared an office; it was one big office and the two of us were in there; there weren't any cubicles or anything. I think, frankly, it was a job that called for, considering the hours you worked, if you worked eight hours a day, it was clearly a job for two people. But considering the fact that we worked every night until 7:30 or 8:00, it was a job for about one and a half persons. And when it became my job exclusively, it was a job, I think I was able to handle by myself just by stretching my hours a little and bearing down a little more intensively in the morning. I'd say it was about one man's eleven-hour-a-day job, would be my feeling. Now the virtue in having two people, obviously, was that--but that's one man all year, no vacations, no days sick or anything. The necessity of having two people was that it would be covered at all times and that a person could be sick or could take a vacation. And we did take regular vacations. That is, during the two years I was there I didn't give up vacations nor did Al. So it required two. That meant that there was a tendency to try to get involved in a few little



special chores on the side. Again I'm hampered by not having any notes at all. I remember doing four or five special projects for Goodpaster, and they were a result of my not having enough to keep me working eleven hours a day and that was our regular daily schedule, plus Saturdays. We came in four or five hours every Saturday. So I would take on some other things to fill in some of those extra hours. The hours were required really because of the period during which deliveries were made. I've described the morning. The afternoon--



BURG: You would be fairly well finished with the work of collecting data, assembling it, editing things that need to be edited, preparing a typescript so to speak--

RUSSELL: Well the morning was devoted to the fishing expeditions, the reading and the fishing. The afternoon was devoted to the editing and the following up, basically, is the way it worked. The stuff would be drifting in all morning; some would come in in early afternoon. Then you'd sharpen your pencil. Now the editing job was in fact a

difficult job because we were under absolute instructions that "Staff Notes" were not to exceed two pages.

BURG: Had these come down from Eisenhower himself or had they come through Goodpaster?

RUSSELL: Yes, they had come down, these had come down from Eisenhower. And one day when we had more than the usual number of "Staff Notes" that we thought were really of critical importance, we ran two pages and a quarter. And we got a note back from Goodpaster saying that this excessive length ran the risk that we'd lose the attention of our audience. So Eisenhower took very seriously this notion that nothing was worth saying that couldn't be boiled down to about a page and we would run on the average six "Staff Notes" a day. One issue called "Staff Notes" but six individual paragraphs within it which we'd cram into two pages of each of those six would tend to come from a different department or agency. If I recall the format, it said "Staff Notes" at the top and the date and then there would be numbered paragraphs and each paragraph would be a



separate item and we would source the agency which was reporting it. And we literally were faced with the problem of taking sometimes as much as five pages of single-typed prose and boiling it down into something which was perhaps two to three inches deep, that is maybe nine or ten lines, single-spaced. So it wasn't the normal editing job; this was editing with a vengeance. And yet I don't really think that we failed to communicate the kernel of the essential information in more than one or two cases. I don't remember getting requests back in more than a couple of cases for additional information. We always kept the information. It was always there, and they knew that. If the President wanted more than what we gave him, he knew we had it. And there were a couple of cases where the request that came back from General Goodpaster was to send up the file, which might be four or five pages.

BURG: So you kept rather full files over the full period of time that "Staff Notes" was being handled by you or by Toner and these were left at the White House, presumably?



RUSSELL: Yes, I think so. It's a good question. Yes, I don't think we destroyed what we received. I think that there would be copies in the White House files .
Because we kept everything that we got at least--I think we kept it permanently. I remember requests coming in, very few requests coming down from Goodpaster for more information a day or two later. We occasionally got sent back--I think Goodpaster trying to cheer us up, make us know we were appreciated--we occasionally were sent back a copy of "Staff Notes" with the President's marginal notation. We know he read it because I physically have seen his annotation on a couple of items. I gathered he did this a lot, but Goodpaster sent us a couple just to show that we had an audience.

BURG: You were not working there in a vacuum--putting them into a slot that lead out into the disposal.

RUSSELL: We weren't working in a vacuum. That's right. And many more than a couple of times General Goodpaster himself might call us on the phone about an item and we might give him a little further explanation which he would perhaps give orally when he took the "Staff Notes" in to the President.



BURG: I see. Now you were preparing these on eight and one-half by eleven standard paper.

RUSSELL: That's right. Standard bond paper.

BURG: Was the copy typed with a carbon?

RUSSELL: Yes, and typed--

BURG: Or typed with several carbons perhaps.

RUSSELL:--with enough carbons to meet the whole distribution which was this four or five people I have mentioned--

BURG: And one copy--

RUSSELL:--and we kept a copy for ourselves.

BURG:--for your own files.

RUSSELL: That's right.

BURG: You had secretarial assistance? Or did you and Toner do the actual--

RUSSELL: Yes. No, we had two secretaries, and then I had



one secretary when I was alone. Again, frankly, it was an eleven-hour-a-day job for one secretary, but secretaries don't like to work eleven hours a day and so they would come in shifts. And would take their annual vacations and the rest of it. But we had one big square office, all four of us in there. And it would be a rather peaceful day until about 3:30 in the afternoon and then we would start the editing process and then there would, of course, be the frantic typing of the final version because Al, quite rightly, said that it ought to be done as meticulously as possible. Although I have known cases where to meet the deadline, ink changes were made in the final version. We tried to get it out about 7:30 and take it over to Goodpaster's office at 7:30.



BURG: I see. He, then, handled the distribution to the four or five concerned? Or for example, the Vice-President's copy, did you send that off with a courier?

RUSSELL: Well everything went over to the West Wing except the Vice-President's copy and either Al or I personally took

it up to General Cushman several times a week. That was how his copy got there. And we would stay while General Cushman read it and if he had any questions he would ask us right then about it. And then he would take them in. And he told us that Nixon read them with interest and that, well, he described Nixon's habits in some considerable detail. It was always a pleasure to go up and deliver them to General Cushman because he's a singularly fine guy, and I used to be interested to ask him what Nixon's habits were. And he said that Nixon was an extraordinarily attentive reader. He very much preferred to read things rather than talk face-to-face. Just in thinking back of some of the characteristics of the man--

BURG: Interesting.



RUSSELL: --were clear then. And Cushman said also that Nixon was a person who kept things very close within himself but that he knew that Nixon read those "Staff Notes" with great attentiveness. He used to say some interesting things about the problems of keeping the Vice-President informed. We got, to

our satisfaction, a lot of appreciation expressed by Cushman, because he said that it was terribly difficult to keep the Vice-President informed because of the attitude of executive branch departments towards Vice-Presidents. And he cited the State Department, and he said that the State Department refused to provide the Vice-President with the Top Secret daily cable summary. Indeed it was like drawing water from a stone to get any information from the State Department at all for Nixon. And that what he did was he struck a deal with the CIA and they bootlegged State Department cables to him, to Nixon.

BURG: Oh, Lord. Wonder if Mr. [William] Colby knows that? Or whether Senator [Frank] Church does?

RUSSELL: That's a good question.



BURG: What is General Cushman's first name, Chris?

RUSSELL: Robert Cushman.

BURG: And he is residing now in Washington, D.C.? Do you happen to know.

RUSSELL: Well I guess so. He had an interesting career. He had been a very, I gather, talented and brave marine in World War II. Had the Navy Cross. And was a brigadier general at the time that he was serving Nixon. I think, like Goodpaster, they're about the same age; I think he started as a colonel and then became a BG just as Goodpaster did, in a similar position, both staff secretaries. Then after that, at some point, after a number of I think Marine Corps jobs, Cushman became the deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency. It's in that connection that I last saw Cushman. The only time after the White House days when he came out to Pakse, Laos where I was the area coordinator for AID and he was out there to look at the paramilitary programs that were run by the CIA, and I had a chance to see him and talk to him again.

BURG: I see.

RUSSELL: Now since that time he's gone on to do something else, and I'm not certain what it is. Didn't he just retire as Commandant of the Corps?



BURG: I wonder if he didn't.

RUSSELL: I think so.

BURG: I think so.

RUSSELL: Under Nixon he was appointed Commandant of the Marine Corps and that he just retired.



BURG: So one of the best views that we could hope to have of Mr. Nixon during his Vice-Presidential years would come through General Cushman.

RUSSELL: It certainly would. It certainly would. Cushman was very close to him and a very professional guy. I have a lot of respect for Bob Cushman. I really thought he was quite a fine guy.

BURG: Well that's a most interesting thought, something that we will want to pursue because that's a vital concern to us. Well this pretty well clears up then how the "Staff Notes" were done. Rather long day, it finishes for you and for Al Toner at roughly 7:00 o'clock, 7:30 every night.

RUSSELL: 7:30 to 8:00 was about standard time to leave as I recall, under Al. My habits were slightly different. I would get really ginned up a good deal earlier in the day and would tend to leave if I recall about 7:00 and not have it all done at the end--it's a question of people's work habits.

BURG: Right.

RUSSELL: No consequence, but I--

BURG: Ginned up in the sense, geared up.

RUSSELL: Yes. As in "cotton gin".

BURG: Yes, I don't want to have Alcoholics Anonymous calling on you and offering their services.

RUSSELL: That's right.



BURG: Yes. For you, your own personal habits got you going on some of this work a little earlier than would have been typical for Al and--

RUSSELL: Yes. That's right. And, of course, I didn't have Al to talk to, and Al was a fascinating guy to talk to. And therefore, if I didn't have anybody to talk to, I'd have more time to spend directly on editing. Al was the finest editor that I've ever encountered. He had a felicity of style and an ability to reduce prose that is still wonderful for me to think about. I've been trained as a lawyer and lawyers pride themselves on, when they have to, being concise, but Al was better at it than anybody I've ever known. And I think that's one reason the days were long; Al really worked on it. He honed those words down until there was not a single unnecessary word left.

BURG: Yes. And Al's background, if I remember correctly, was in English literature.

RUSSELL: That's right. That's right.

BURG: He was very much interested in it and has a least one if not two degrees--

RUSSELL: Yes.



BURG:--in that field.

RUSSELL: He does. And he really has a most extraordinary vocabulary and has a real gift as an editor. There is a cartoon of Al and myself that was done by Earle Chesney; I don't know whether you've seen it or not--

BURG: No, I've not.



RUSSELL:--I have a copy at home. Earle Chesney, who worked in the congressional liaison side of things at the White House was a very skillful cartoonist. And he did a cartoon of every member of the White House staff. The cartoons were then circulated and every member of the staff, including the President, signed them. And I have at home a cartoon signed by the President and everybody else. But it's a picture of Toner and myself: I'm holding a stack of reports about a foot high and all of standard if not legal size paper, and Al Toner is sort of holding up his finger and saying, "These must all be boiled down to this size." And he's describing something about an inch square. And that was our job. I've been very candid about the fact that it wasn't a job that

kept us under breakneck pressure all day long. It did not do that. It was a job which gave us an opportunity to do that which I think was useful, though, to the President. Through membership on the White House staff and membership in the White House mess as a result of that, we got a chance to do a lot of missionary work at noontime. We were always waiting for people to drop into our net. And we used our lunches as ways of talking up our product and getting people to contribute. That's how we snared the people like Karl Harr and Raymond Saulnier and others. And of course we would never let a cabinet member who was unwise enough to sit at the same table with us go without trying to pump him for something or other. So there was, about our operation, something faintly journalistic; that we were always trying to get a story. And, I suppose, that the best environment for somebody in which to get stories is one which gives you a little time to make those extra calls and to read a few more publications and to talk to a few more people at the mess and the rest of it. I think it helped us insure good coverage for the President.



BURG: Now one last question: The coverage would be for five working days of the week--

RUSSELL: Yes.

BURG:--but there would be no coverage on a Saturday or Sunday?

RUSSELL: Sometimes there would be on Saturday, but not often. Usually Saturday was the day that we put in the supplement, the cats and dogs that had been coming in all week, the propaganda items, and we would do something with them.

BURG: But you were there on, let's say, Saturday morning so--

RUSSELL: Yes.



BURG:--there was a possibility for some coverage then had it ever been necessary.

RUSSELL: That's right. We were there roughly 9:00 to 1:00 every Saturday.

BURG: Do you ever recall anything breaking, let us say, on a Saturday or a Sunday, catching the President unawares

because you also had been caught unawares; it had not shown up in the Friday or in Saturday morning material that you'd received?

RUSSELL: I don't think so. I don't recall something that happened over a weekend that caught somebody unawares because of that timing. I think there were certainly things that caught people unawares, but I think those were ones which could have been reported and just weren't. Somebody just didn't think about it, just didn't bother. I think it's really important to note that General Goodpaster worked a killing schedule. He was there earlier than we were; he was there later than we were; he was there not only Saturdays but Sundays and the rest of it. He was always there. And I have the feeling that both Art [L. Arthur] Minnich and John Eisenhower were also there more often on weekends than we. So the staff secretary's office was never uncovered. Goodpaster was in effect on duty twenty-four hours a day. And so I think there was always a channel if somebody wanted to get something prompt to the President; there was never any time when we weren't able to do that.



BURG: That would make a great deal of sense. Well, we have run just about to the end of the time we have now so let us close with a thought that on a final interview I'd like to have your personal impressions, personal and your private assessments of some of these people with whom you were closely associated, and then I'd like to follow out beyond the White House the balance of your career. And I think that, as you told me, you have saved none of your papers; you left those in the White House; none of that data came out with you.

RUSSELL: That's right. I have some memorabilia of a personal nature, but that's all.



BURG: Because part of my work, of course, is to solicit manuscript material pertaining to the administration. All right, thank you very much Chris.