

A TEI Project

Interview of Lawrence Clark Powell

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1. Transcript

1.1. TAPE NUMBER: I, Side One (April 30, 1970)

[*Tape I is a re-recording of subject material from the first interview session (August 4, 1969)]

MINK

To begin, just for the record, I think you ought to put the date of your birth on the tape.

POWELL

Well, all right, I was born--I think I remember the date--September 3, 1906, in Garfield Memorial Hospital [Washington, D.C.]. And everything I have read in my mother's journals and notes, and everything she told me, was that I was a kind of a puny accident that came along, because she had had the two boys, Clark and George, in 1900 and 1901, and five years later I came along.

MINK

You weren't a planned child?

POWELL

I don't think I was a planned child, and she was run-down in health and my father was away from home a great deal. I think I was born in September, and he left very soon thereafter on his field trip to California. No, that was during the years before. We all went four months after I was born--the first time that he had taken the whole family to his winter work in Riverside. So I made my first transcontinental crossing then in December, 1905.

MINK

And of course you were totally oblivious. [laughter]

POWELL

I was oblivious but apparently not silent. My mother said I cried all the way across. I was not in good health the first two years of my life, she said. And I had what's called a diverticulum. What is that? Some strangulation of the navel cord? I had to have an operation on what's called the belly button. It's been great ever since, I assure you. I'm not like Lyndon Johnson--I won't show you my scar. My mother nursed me assiduously those first two years, and I think I owe my life to her, really, for what she did to keep me going. I was puny and I was the runt of the family, because I never grew over 5 '6", never

weighed more than 145 pounds in my life. I don't weigh that now, but I say this because I think it has some psychological importance. You've read studies of how little men think and act big to offset their own physical diminutiveness. I've read this was true of Napoleon and Caesar and Beethoven.

MINK

How about Barry Goldwater?

POWELL

Barry Goldwater--he 's not a runt!

MINK

He's a pretty good size.

POWELL

He's a pretty good-sized guy. He's perhaps a runt politically, but physically he's quite a man. Well, I probably attach too much importance to this. I think our essential character and nature is what it is, regard- less of our physical package. I was born aggressive and persistent, and this would have operated even if I'd been 6'6". I'd have been harder to handle if I'd been that large. I don't remember Washington, D.C., really, other than that old story of being awakened in the night in 1910 and carried to the front window in my mother's arms to see Halley's Comet. In April, 1910 it was making its seventy-fifth-year return. You remember, Mark Twain had been born when Halley's Comet was in the sky, and all his life he said, "I'm going to die when Halley's Comet returns." And he did; he died in April, 1910 at age seventy-five when Halley's Comet had reached its — what's it called — perihelion?

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

I remember vividly seeing the tail of the comet.

MINK

Surely you expect to see another one.

POWELL

Well, that isn't so far off is it? I'm sixty- four this year.

MINK

Just another ten years or so.

POWELL

It's a date. I also remember the swallow's nest in the big wall at the foot of our steps. Then there's the story when about 1964 we went back and visited the Castagnas in Baltimore. We all drove down to Washington, and I kept telling them that if the house is still there, there'll be a swallow's nest in the drain hole at the bottom of the wall. They all laughed. Sure enough, we found 1867 Park Road; where we had lived across from Rock Creek Park; and, sure enough, the steps are there, the house is there, and the retaining wall and the drainpipe hole at the bottom of the steps are still there sixty- years later. We photographed it; Ed took our picture there.

MINK

Were the swallows' nests there?

POWELL

No nests in it; but this was in autumn. This was at Thanksgiving, and the swallows had flown away, of course. The third memory then is of President Roosevelt.

MINK

Teddy?

POWELL

Teddy Roosevelt riding by. Was he president then--1906 to 1910? He went riding by on his white horse, Sunday morning, down Park Road to the park and waving to the children and people who stood on the terraces. I remember that. Those are my only memories of Washington. We moved out finally in 1911 to California. I never went back to Washington until 1946 after the war, when on my first trip as Librarian I went into Washington. I stayed in the old New Willard Hotel, and I went over to the Department of Agriculture to see

the bronze plaque that had been put up to my father's memory. It was a sentimental return. I went back two or three times to the Library of Congress and so on. But essentially I'm a Californian and a South Pasadenan, because there I grew up and there my friendships and my proclivities were all formed and developed.

MINK

Larry, when you came from Washington, you settled immediately in South Pasadena?

POWELL

No, we settled in Los Angeles. We went to an apartment hotel at the top of the Angel's Flight, called the Cumberland Hotel.

MINK

I don't suppose that's there anymore.

POWELL

No, I don't think so. Bunker Hill is pretty much renewed.

MINK

What were your first memories of Los Angeles in that period?

POWELL

I have none. I have none at all, unless it's of the Angel's Flight, and those are probably later ones, because I used to go in and ride it. I remember the nickel round-trip that you could take on it. We weren't sure where we would settle. I remember my folks looked in Hollywood and in Pasadena. And it was fortuitous, really, that we settled in South Pasadena. The reason was that our next-door neighbor in Washington-- their brother--owned two houses in South Pasadena. He lived in one and wanted to sell the other or rent it. I can't remember which. But in the beginning we went then to South Pasadena to one of those two houses owned by the Ashleys. And it was simply that that led us there.

MINK

It seems to me that this is true of many people. My family and all of our friends came here gradually, one because the other was there or lived there.

POWELL

This is I'm sure an ancient thing in migrations: the families and the friendships and the connections lead, because it's a very difficult thing for strangers to go into a community and decide where to settle. My father knew that he wanted to be within commuting distance of his work. With the Pacific Electric, it was not a problem then.

MINK

I think the Pacific Electric in South Pasadena had the ideal commuting program. There wasn't, it seems to me, in that little settlement there, more than a six-block walk to the car. It wasn't that big then.

POWELL

From anywhere, you see, and there was a choice of lines, Jim. At Oneonta Junction the Short Line turned north and went to Pasadena. The Oak Knoll went out Huntington Drive and then came up through what is now San Marino. But you could take any of the other fast cars out that were going on through to Sierra Madre, Glendora, Azusa, Monrovia; all came out Huntington Drive. They were limited cars, but they would stop at Oneonta, and so you could get off at Oneonta Junction and walk to your home. Sure, it was a marvelous network. I loved the big Red Cars. You remember them.

MINK

Sure.

POWELL

I knew the conductors, and we had scrip books and half -fare for kids. I loved going into the city. I did this regularly as a kid. I was a junior member of the Los Angeles Athletic Club, and I would go in Tuesday afternoon (when the plunge and the handball court and so on were open to the boys) and on Saturday morning, those two times. I went in all through the years and learned wrestling and boxing and handball and calisthenics, swimming. I loved that big building there.

MINK

Is this something your parents encouraged you to do or is this something you just did on your own?

POWELL

No, they encouraged me, I suppose, to take out this membership and to develop myself physically. I don't remember first settling in South Pasadena, Jim, until I got into school. Well, I guess I got in right away to kindergarten at Marengo Avenue School. I had those wonderful nine years in Marengo and then the four years in high school. I made friendships--particularly of Harry Ward Ritchie--that last to this day. It was a wonderful town to grow up in because there was no stratification of society, really. It was pretty homogeneous and free. You could move around in the community, and it was very permissive, in a good sense.

MINK

You could also know people all over town.

POWELL

You knew people. You had friendships in the different parts of town[^], and even in different schools. There were the three grammar schools. Of course, there was a bit of social grading: Marengo was the richer people. El Centre the poorer, and Lincoln Park then was for the minorities.

MINK

And later Las Flores, where I went, was fairly high class.

POWELL

That was upper class.

MINK

That was pretty upper class, like Marengo.

POWELL

Because it was east of Fair Oaks Avenue. That was the dividing line, and of course Huntington Drive was the dividing line south. Alhambra started south

of Huntington Drive, and east of Garfield Avenue was what became San Marino.

MINK

Well, another thing--you know, in the business of talking about the proverbial railroad tracks ("on the other side of the tracks" being the lower-class community), I wonder if this didn't really apply in some cases to South Pasadena with the Santa Fe line that ran up the other side of Fair Oaks.

POWELL

It ran the other side of Fair Oaks. It came across the Arroyo Seco at Mission Street and, well, Jim, I always thought of the other side of the Santa Fe tracks not as South Pasadena but as Los Angeles. It was another world.

MINK

At that point there was no Highland Park per se.

POWELL

Well, yes, I think there was; it was called Garbanza.

MINK

Garbanza?

POWELL

Yes. The place of the bean people. (Everett Moore would know about this. He grew up over there.) The Arroyo was an attractive place, and of course the Monterey Hills were our wilderness.

MINK

Well, for me it was the Raymond Hill.

POWELL

The Raymond Hill was a very exciting place, too. I had a great friendship there with the family of the head gardener, George Groenewegen, who came out here and planted and tended all of UCLA's trees in the beginning. He was in charge of all the planting here. Remember George? Well, they had come to South Pasadena when I was a kid, he and his two sons and two daughters and

a wife, from Holland by way of Texas; and I formed a friendship with Cornelius, the younger son. We were together a great deal through grammar and high school, and we went to Occidental. And when the father was running the Raymond gardens and all--he was in charge of everything--we used to go up to the big barn where they kept the horses and play there. And on the golf links, of course, we used to steal golf balls like mad, push them down gopher holes and then dig them out later. But it was quite a hill. Of course, the old hotel at the top was a romantic place.

MINK

When you were growing up in South Pasadena, the Raymond Hotel was still open during the season.

POWELL

During the season.

MINK

There were guests.

POWELL

During the winter. But was it closed when you came along?

MINK

Well, by the time I came along, of course, my youth in South Pasadena was the depression period, and the hotel was closed down. Finally, when I was still there, it was torn down. I remember its being torn down and the great auction of all of the interior furnishings and everything that was held when it was taken over by the Security Bank. And we used this as a great playground, and we weren't thrown off, of course, because the hotel was already in the hands of the receivers. We had this area, and we flew kites. It was a great kite-flying area.

POWELL

Yes. That would have been another romantic time. Of course, I enjoyed it in the late twenties, off-season, because we could take girls up to the top and park and neck. It was a great rendezvous, a romantic rendezvous at the top of the hill. You had this beautiful view over the valley. Our other necking ground

was in the Oneonta or Monterey Hills. Those were more removed. You could do a little more intensive or in-depth lovemaking up in the Oneonta Hills, because on the Raymond Hill sometimes the city cops would cruise by. My good fortune was knowing all the city cops. They knew I was a nice, clean young man [laughter], and I had no problem there. I knew the police force early on because I used to get into scrapes, and the neighbors were always blowing the whistle on me for raiding their fruit trees and stealing their drying salted almonds in the backyard. We raised a lot of hell as kids' gangs. I had my gang. We played games, all kinds of gang games, Run- Sheep-Run, and Ditch. During World War I, we organized a little home corps of soldiers and drilled and made drums of five-gallon gasoline cans. Oh, it made a hell of a lot of noise. The neighbors would always call the cops-- "Quiet these boys down." I remember my mother said, "Oh, he's being patriotic; let him make a lot of noise. After all, he isn't shooting off guns." My mother was permissive in one sense, and yet I had a certain limitation of discipline around my life. If I transgressed too severely I was punished, had to stay in at night, allowance was suspended, and I was sent to my room. My mother used to spank me sometimes. Her favorite method was to have me hold out my hand, palm up, and she would give it to me with a ruler. I made the mistake once of turning my hand over, and she caught me on the knuckles. I thought this wasn't fair. [laughter] But she was a good mother. My father was good to me because he was rarely home. He traveled a great deal in his work for the Sunkist people.

MINK

In his travels, were Sundays ever a time when he would take you out to drive, take you to Riverside or out through the valleys?

POWELL

Constantly. Whenever he was home, Sunday was the day for driving. We had these new cars in the teens, Franklin air-cooled cars, and then Marmons . He was a great driver, loved to drive, taught me to drive at about twelve. I had my first driver's license at fourteen. We visited lots of the growing and packing areas this way when I was a boy. He'd call on the prominent growers, or he'd go to meetings, and often Sundays at churches. I had this wonderful early vision of Southern California from a fruitman's point of view, the groves of the Santa Clara Valley--Santa Paula, Fillmore, Piru, and then the whole wonderful

Corona-Redlands-Riverside area. My father had holdings in San Dimas and in Corona that we held right up through the Depression--lemons. It was the sale of some of that lemon-grove stock at Corona that helped me get through school and helped me get to Europe. My mother and father were happy in one sense. They weren't deeply in love, I think. The great romantic period ended after ten years or so, and it was a working marriage of kindness to each other and consideration for the three boys. I always had the feeling that home was serene. They weren't given to quarreling. They were kind parents, and I really loved them. And of course now that they're both dead--my father for a half century, my mother twelve or thirteen years--I have great nostalgic feelings for what they did for me to set me up in a world of culture and education and form my values early.

MINK

What were the things that you remember in your earlier youth--grammar school and junior high and high--that your mother did to try to introduce you children to culture?

POWELL

Well, books, I suppose. Books and music. The house was full of books, and we had a piano and we had piano lessons. We had the early phonograph, and my chore was to play concerts on it for my parents when they were home in the evening. I learned music early. We took a lot of this for granted, Jim. It wasn't any conscious program of culture or education. This was just a way of life my parents were [instilling].

MINK

Can you remember when your parents [bought] --or did they ever buy a radio?

POWELL

No. The first radio I ever saw was at my uncle's in Berkeley, my Uncle Harold Clark, when I was working up there one summer in 1923. He had a peanut set. I used to listen to the Fairmont Hotel's dance music broadcast, with a peanut set and earphones. We didn't have a radio until 1929, I guess, when we moved over to Bonita Drive in the Oneonta Hills. My mother and I bought a big Victor radio- phonograph combination. That was the first one we had. That was real

late. I think that in grammar school the [best] teachers I had [were] Miss Crabtree, particularly, in the third grade and Miss Ballard, the Quaker principal at Marengo School. All through the grades I had good teachers, and I learned a lot in grammar school. In high school, my first three years, I didn't have what I regard as good teachers, and I was in conflict a good deal with the teacher of mathematics, Miss Meek; the teacher of biology, Miss Bickford; and the teacher of French, Miss Price. I rebelled against their strictness and their system of memorizing and repeating back things. I'd been given a much freer education in grammar school, and I wanted this to continue, and when it didn't, I rebelled. I remember once in Miss Meek's class in algebra or geometry I was impudent or insolent or out of line, and she said, "Go to the office." I got up and left the room, slammed the door, and the whole plate-glass frame of the door fell in with an enormous crash. I didn't go to the office, I hightailed it for home as fast as I could. My mother said, "What now? What have you done now?" I said, "Oh, I slammed the door and the glass fell in." She said, "Let's go back together." So she got me reinstated. It was helpful, of course, to have my mother on the school board. [laughter] And my father was an important person, and George Bush, the superintendent of schools, knew this; so I had protection on a high level.

MINK

Do you think the teachers looked upon you as that "rich man's brat?"
[laughter]

POWELL

Probably. I was probably heartily disliked by these teachers.

MINK

Also, do you think that maybe you took a little more liberty with the teachers because you felt that your position was reinforced by your [parents].

POWELL

No, I don't think I was that sophisticated, Jim. I don't think I ever thought this through.

MINK

Sometimes they say kids are smart. They get this early through intuition.

POWELL

I don't think I was that smart, Jim. I think I was just operating on a series of violent reflexes. I was either for or against.

MINK

There was no gray. [laughter] It was either black or white?

POWELL

That's right. But the great positive year came in my senior year in high school when I had two wonderful teachers--well, several, but two I remember--Miss Lora B. Evans in English and journalism and Mr. H. L. Wilson in history. These were more college-type teachers. They left a lot to the students. Ritchie and I were in these classes together.

MINK

Did you do a lot of studying together?

POWELL

We did a lot of reading, and that senior year in high school Ritchie was living with us, because his father had moved away. His parents had moved from South Pasadena over to the city, and he boarded with us.

MINK

So he could finish at South Pasadena?

POWELL

Yes. We were together constantly--classes, nights We even shared the same girl at one time! [laughter]

MINK

That doesn't sound too good. [laughter]

POWELL

Well, she was very accommodating and versatile. But we were always together. And he was smarter than I. He was more of a student. He had a better mind than I have--he still has. I had, I think, better judgment of people

and a quicker instinct and more of an intuitive flair, but Ritchie had the better mind. I think I learned a lot from him. He was editor of the yearbook and of the newspaper, and I worked for him on these staffs, and I learned something about writing. Of course, earlier than that, in grammar school, with Pat Kelley, the three of us had founded the *Marengo Literary Leader*, a weekly literary newspaper. That was my first writing. And I flourished in my senior year. I got all ones (or A's) and ended up in a blaze of glory. I was a member of the honor society and everything else. I had my dance orchestra then with Alonzo Cass and Malcolm Archbald. Cass was the son of the head of the telephone company, and Archbald was the son of a federal judge.

MINK

It seems that at the last [August 4, 1969] interview you spoke about Cass and the wardrobe that all of the children in the Cass family had.

POWELL

Oh, the Cass boys were fabulous. There were eight or nine of them and two girls. They had the huge house at Fair Oaks and Oak, a great two-story, old-fashioned redwood house, and tennis court, and tangerine and loquat trees. All the things for a good life were right there--billiard table--and one great common wardrobe for all the boys. They were not too far apart in age. There were either eight or nine. And they had no individual clothes. They shared common suits, shirts, shoes, underwear, ties, and handkerchiefs. Everything was in an enormous wardrobe. The laundryman would come and gather up everything and come back with fresh things, and when they got up in the morning, the Cass boys simply went to the wardrobe and grabbed the first thing they saw and put it on. Well, not only did the Cass boys share it, but we, the friends of the Cass boys, could come in and take anything we wanted. If we wanted to dress up a little and weren't home, we'd go into the Cass wardrobe.

MINK

What if you came home with their clothes? What would your mother say?

POWELL

Well, she'd say, "Well, these are the Cass' laundry marks, so you'll have to send them back." My mother straightened it out. They went on--all the Casses went on. Another interesting thing: as I said, A. B. Cass, Sr. was head of the telephone company; so they had a private line on which you could call toll-free anywhere in the United States. We didn't know anybody to call anywhere in the United States, but we did a lot of local calling on it. I even remember their telephone number, Jim. It was 35553. It was a cancrizan, wasn't it, that went backward and forward. Our own number was 35991. They put the Elliot prefix on that when you came along. Remember Elliot numbers? Well, at any rate, the Cass' was a great headquarters for us. The Cass boys were captains of the football team. Alonzo, who was our contemporary (Ritchie's and mine), was a remarkable boy, really--green eyes, red hair. He was the trap drummer in our orchestra. He went on to Stanford, became a leader up there, and he went on through Stanford Medical School, and became a noted pediatrician here in Los Angeles. He died just a year ago when we were in Europe, and Ritchie spoke at his funeral. He said there were more Casses at that funeral "than you could shake a stick at." They came out of the counties all over the Southwest, two hundred or three hundred Casses turned up for Alonzo's funeral. Well, I mention him at length because he became a crucial person in my life during the Depression. He lent us that \$1,000, no strings attached, pay-back-when-you-can, that enabled Fay and me to leave Jake's and go up to library school. It was Alonzo who did that. I took my time in repaying it--thirty years later! I'm glad I paid him back before he died.

MINK

I think you told in the last [August 4, 1969] interview about how he came to your house in Palms, wasn't it?

POWELL

No, we lived over on Lakeshore Drive in Edendale at that time.

MINK

Oh, you were in the kitchen with him.

POWELL

We were in the kitchen drinking wine, I remember. We really celebrated. It was a great thing in 1935 to have \$1,000 appear. You remember, Jim, money was scarce. It was a windfall. Heaven-sent.

MINK

My father's salary was in the two-decimal bracket, under \$100 a month.

POWELL

Well, I don't know how my father would have fared in the Depression (of course, he died in 1922), but in the teens we were rich because his salary then was \$25,000 a year.

MINK

That's a very fabulous salary for that time.

POWELL

It's a huge salary. The Sunkist people appreciated him. He earned it. He was great for them. We had lots of money. I didn't have it personally. I had a small allowance--fifty cents a week. That's all I had, and then later I began to earn money as a musician.

MINK

Before you earned money as a musician, what kind of things did you do as a child to earn money? Did you go out and pick oranges?

POWELL

No, I went out and gathered gunny sacks and bottles in the alleys.

MINK

And newspapers?

POWELL

I sold newspapers. We could turn in beer bottles, any kind of deposit bottle. Gunny sacks were a nickel apiece. We used to scavenge the alleys with a little cart we pulled, and then we saved this up in the garage, and then the rag-bottle-sack man came around with his wagon and horse and bought these things from us. We used to make a dollar or so when that happened. I must

say, Jim, in high school I also earned money in a more naughty [way], by shooting craps. We had quite a gambling circle at South Pasadena High School.

MINK

Did they clamp down on you?

POWELL

No, we never did it on campus. We left campus. We went to the place we called Crap Valley.

MINK

Crap Valley. [laughter]

POWELL

You know where it was. It was just east of the Raymond Hill on the grounds of the Marengo Water Company. There was a well there that supplied water and a pump- house, and there was a kind of a creek and jungle to the east of the Raymond Hill. Right now the Pasadena Freeway bends around and goes through there. But it was remote enough .

MINK

Was it east of Fair Oaks?

POWELL

Much east of Fair Oaks. It was east of the Las Flores Adobe. The adobe was there then. And why we went there was for two reasons: it was remote; and then one of the reservoirs had a great concrete square platform over it, which was a marvelous place to shoot craps on. So you could throw the dice and a lot of people could gather around this rectangle, and we shot craps after school. I was lucky. I used to make a bit of money. What did I do with the money? I suppose I bought candy at Merriman's stand at Fair Oaks and Mission Street. At Al Merriman's stand you could buy penny candy. I also bought a light for my bicycle, a new pump, a horn, a siren that you'd pull with a string. It went on the front tire and sounded like a police siren. I spent money for things like that. It wasn't big living, and I didn't have the feeling that I was a rich kid. We didn't live ostentatiously. We lived comfortably with a certain amount of quiet elegance.

MINK

Do you think that the people that lived up between Pasadena and South Pasadena east of Fair Oaks in that lower Orange Grove area were wealthier than you were, or did you think about it?

POWELL

I never thought comparatively, Jim. It's curious. I never thought comparatively of wealth.

MINK

Our family did because we weren't as wealthy.

POWELL

And I never thought of race. I never knew what a Jew was until I went to Europe.

MINK

Do you think it was the Quaker background in your family that caused racial discrimination never to be brought up as a topic of conversation at home?

POWELL

I think it had something to do with this. My parents were simple. We had great friendships with the Japanese help. We had a Japanese maid, a Japanese gardener. And on Bank Street, our first home, I lived across the street from Rust's Nursery, and I had many friends among the Japanese gardeners. I loved to play there, and I had an early facility for friendship. If people liked you they let you do things, and I liked to play with my gang in the nursery. And if they hadn't liked me they'd have driven us out. But the thing was not to destroy anything, to play carefully; but, my God, I loved that nursery, the smell of wet earth and plants growing.

MINK

I had an experience like that, too, when we lived on Brent Street, hacked right up to the nursery there that faced on to Fair Oaks on the west side.

POWELL

Brent Nursery?

MINK

There were a lot of nurseries around in South Pasadena.

POWELL

That's right. Rust's was the most famous. E. O. Rust was a pioneer, one of the founders of the Pasadena Public Library, I think, with Abbott Kinney. And he was something of an antiquarian. I didn't know any of this at the time. I just remember him as an old man with a beard and a limp, who walked with one short leg. My friend across in the nursery there, the head gardener, was Gay Sugimoto. I remember that he would come over Sundays dressed in his good clothes, and he'd have lunch with us. My father was very democratic, and he was much interested in horticulture. Sugimoto was the Japanese foreman, who apparently knew a lot about plants. Our cook then was a Lithuanian woman, Marie Elk, and we had many friends then of the Lithuanian colony who used to come and call on her.

MINK

Where was the Lithuanian colony, generally speaking?

POWELL

I don't know, Jim. They must have come out of the woodwork. I don't know where they were.

MINK

There wasn't a group together.

POWELL

No, but they would come Sundays. I remember they would be wearing, not a native costume, but with a scarf or something that identified them as Slavs. Mrs. Elk was a very large, strong, powerful Slavic woman and was very good to me. We went to a concert. I remember something I wrote about. She went with me to hear Rachmaninoff play. It was a great early concert that I've never forgotten. No, I didn't have any status complex at all. I mentioned the rich Cass family, but I also had a great friendship with a poor family, the Fugits. Mr. Fugit was a brakeman on the railway with the Southern Pacific, I think, and he

was home occasionally. There were almost as many Fugit boys as there were Cass boys; but they were poor. They lived on Oxley Street, right where that little line of the Southern Pacific ran up through the city--not the Santa Fe, but that one track that goes right up through.

MINK

It came up by Garfield Park and went up over Raymond Hill.

POWELL

That's right. That was the Southern Pacific spur that came up from Shorb up to where there was a Southern Pacific station in Pasadena. It was a feeder line to the main line, and they kept it for years to retain their franchise.

MINK

And they ran a freight every day.

POWELL

They ran a freight every day, exactly. So the Fugits lived right on the railroad track there. Oh, there were all kinds of Fugits--Harry, and two twins with lovely names, Rollo and Ralph, and an older boy's name was a marvelous name, Laurel Fugit. (Now was the father a Latinist or the mother a Latinist?) Laurel Fugit. Isn't that a marvelous name? I've often wondered-- I don't know what nationality they were. What would they be, Jim?

MINK

Sounds English, possibly. I don't know.

POWELL

Well, they were poor as anything; but, my God, they were good people. And I was welcome in and out of their home--Mrs. Fugit was a doll--and the house was very bare. They were poor but proud. They were very active in sports and everything we did. Then there was still a third family--a large family-- the McEniry family. They lived up on Stratford, I think. And there were masses of them. There was little Tommy and there was Kerwin and there was Jimmy and there was Bob and Julia and Mary, and they were poor Irish Catholics, very active in everything in the community, in athletics, in church, and so forth. Friendships operative then in the community regardless of wealth or position.

MINK

Did you know the Bilheimer family at all?

POWELL

I knew Ruth Billhelmer and Steven Bilheimer. Steve is president of the chamber of commerce now. Yes, I knew Ruth Billhelmer. She went to Occidental.

MINK

Did you know the Hoppings--the Hopping family that had the foundry up in Pasadena? They lived in South Pasadena.

POWELL

No, I didn't know the Hoppings. Oh, I could go through my high school annuals, or even grammar school ones and point out [others]. And that's why I want to write this boy a book that I have here in notes, which I'm not looking at, and try to bring some kind of a social milieu picture out of this, because it was an interesting community that hadn't stratified. At least, I wasn't aware of any stratification. We have got different insights into this, Jim, in our papers here. My mother's journals, which she kept all through these years, would give the parents' insights into society and the family. My brother Clark-- we have only part of his journals here, but I think those that he kept in the teens, when he was sixteen or seventeen, are here in the collection. And then my father's--I've just been reading his early letters back from California to my mother when he'd come out alone in 1904 and 1905. He wrote some very interesting letters on what Southern California was like at that period. It was, as you know, totally different from what it is now. It was pastoral. Tourists and agriculture were the things. There was no industry to speak of. The automobile was just coming in. It was a wonderful time to grow up, I think, and I'd like to try to get the real essence, the juice of it, if I can, not in these oral remarks which are too random and don't build to any points, but I think in writing I could put together a book. And I carry these two pages of notes with me now everywhere I go, because I never know when the book is going to spring loose and I'll start writing.

1.2. TAPE NUMBER: I, Side Two (April 30, 1970)

[*Tape I is a re-recording of subject material from the first interview session (August 4, 1969)]

MINK

You were going to talk about the beaches and the mountains and some of your experiences as a [younger man] .

POWELL

We were fortunate in having a vacation cabin up in Big Santa Anita Canyon, and that meant a great deal to all of us, my father and my brothers and I. We were up there a good deal; and then on wonderful summer vacations, every summer for a month or two, we either went to Balboa and rented a cottage, or to Big Bear Lake. Those are some of the great memories I have of my father--fishing with him, or catching bait and selling sand crabs to him, or trawling for trout in Big Bear Lake, or going out for skipjack and albacore off Balboa.

MINK

Do you remember your first trip to Catalina Island?

POWELL

Oh, I didn't go over there until late.

MINK

Not as a boy?

POWELL

No. I went over there when I was in college, I think, one summer, to try to get a job. No, I haven't got any memories of Catalina.

MINK

Do you have any memories of the harbor? As a child I was terrifically interested in the harbor, and my father used to take me to the harbor.

POWELL

I never saw the harbor, Jim, until I worked on the Yale in 1928 and shipped out of San Pedro.

MINK

You mean you lived in South Pasadena and you never went down to the San Pedro Harbor?

POWELL

No, I want to Balboa and to Newport. Our orientation was to there. I had one great summer East when I was about twelve. My mother and I went back to her girlhood scenes outside of Buffalo. She'd moved as a girl from Cornwall-on-Hudson to Buffalo. Her father was a lawyer and had gone up to Buffalo to practice. There was a family farm at Collins, twenty miles from Buffalo, and it was still there, and we went back one summer. It was my first grown-up (at this age of twelve) experience of a summer in the East, of trees and fields and all the rich lushness of a summer countryside in New York State. I had a great time that summer on the farm. I learned some of the facts of life, I think, from the farmer's boys and girls. It was a key summer, I think, in my growing up. I remember also going into the nearest town, which was Gowanda--all those Indian names--and going to a music store and buying sheet music. I was interested then in popular music and was beginning to play popular music on the piano. My brother had already begun to teach me the saxophone. Other memories I have that I haven't spoken of is the work I did. You asked how I earned money. I said I got allowance, I scavenged bottles and sacks, I made some money shooting craps; but I had two jobs as a boy. One was selling newspapers at Oneonta Junction. I got a roll of twelve *Evening Heralds* at about four o'clock every afternoon, and I would go up, and they would toss them (rolled up) off the car. I would unroll them and sell them. It would take me an hour or so. Lord, I think of the pitiful amount I must have made--maybe ten cents or twelve cents--maybe a penny a paper. No, I couldn't have made that much, because the paper sold for a penny.

MINK

Yes. You must have had more than twelve, Larry.

POWELL

Well, I must have, but I didn't have a big roll, I remember. The high point of that, of course, was once when I sold a paper to a man on a departing streetcar. He leaned out of the window and handed me what he thought was

a penny; and, lo and behold, it was a five-dollar gold piece. I must say, Jim, I ran after the car, but it outdistanced me. It left me behind. Here I was with this marvelous five-dollar gold piece. Do you remember gold pieces? They had a two and a half-dollar piece, a five-, a ten-, and a twenty-dollar piece. It was lovely money.

MINK

What did you do with that \$5.00?

POWELL

I probably bought books with it, Jim. I like to think that I was serious and motivated early. [laughter] I don't remember what I did with it. I had lots of toys that I played with, a steam engine, and actually a steam engine that fired up and made steam and ran, and then I had an electric train, and I had a magic lantern. I used to give shows to the neighborhood kids with a sheet for a screen, showing postcards that my father had sent home from his foreign trips, charge two pins or a penny for admission--all these simple sort of things. Do children do them anymore?

MINK

I wonder if they do. Did you put on plays? I bet you did.

POWELL

We did a play at Camden Court there in the parkway; Pat Kelley and I put on one. It was a kind of an Oriental fantasy.

MINK

Did you write them as well?

POWELL

We wrote it and directed it and charged admission. It was kind of a *Scheherazade*. I don't remember any details of it other than the pretty little girl we dressed in mosquito netting and called her an Arabian dancer. She caught cold and had to go to bed for a week.

MINK

You mean you just had her in mosquito netting? [laughter]

POWELL

That's all, yes. She was a little kid of about seven. She was a slave girl. You know these were innocent times. I wasn't a dirty little boy.

MINK

You didn't play hospital.

POWELL

Well, I showed them mine, and they showed me theirs, some of those little games. [laughter] But it was an essentially innocent childhood. We had play with each other. The little kids used to play with each other. Hell, I was certainly involved in this in a normal way, and it wasn't until later though that I learned it was much more fun to play with little girls. They weren't little anymore. I was grown up more when that delight came into my life. The other job I had was at Taylor's Drugstore jerking sodas.

MINK

Where was Taylor's located?

POWELL

Taylor's was at Huntington Drive and Fletcher.

MINK

That's getting down toward Los Angeles.

POWELL

It's a part of Huntington Drive which is not in Alhambra.

MINK

By that time did you have a car that you could go to the job in, or did you walk down?

POWELL

No, I walked over from Camden Court, or went by bicycle. I was a great bicycle rider.

MINK

Kids didn't hitchhike then, did they? There was no such thing as hitching a ride. I mean with the thumb up, you know.

POWELL

Very little of it. I remember one time Pat Kelley and I--I don't know how we did--got a ride back from Huntington Gardens to South Pasadena, and were picked up by a dashing man in a great open roadster; and, lo and behold, it was the movie actor Jack Holt who played in Westerns. We recognized him because we were great movie fans around age twelve, and he said he'd send us an autographed picture of himself, and he did. I jerked sodas there and ran deliveries, bicycled deliveries, and it was quite a rendezvous place because they had a good magazine stand. My favorite magazines then, as I remember, were *Detective Story* magazine, which printed the Fu Manchu, Sax Rohmer stories, serials ; *Adventure*, which was printing Harold Lamb; *Blue Book*; *All Story*; *Ainsley*; *The Red Book* --a lot of those pulps that we collected here years later in Special Collections. I could read them free in the drugstore on the magazine stand.

MINK

So that was one of the fringe benefits of the job.

POWELL

Fringe benefit. Exactly. And then being able to jerk my own soda now and then.

MINK

Would you say that they did a pretty good business in this store?

POWELL

It was a very prosperous business. It was the only drugstore in South Pasadena south of Monterey Road.

MINK

Did you get the job through your friendship with people your own age in the family?

POWELL

I don't remember. I probably went in and said, "I want a job," and they knew that my father and mother were good customers.

MINK

Generally speaking, what was the opinion of the *Foothill Review* among the people in the town at that time? Do you remember people talking about it?

POWELL

There wasn't any *Foothill Review* then. It was called the *Record*.

MINK

It was called the *Record*, the *South Pasadena Record*. Later it became the *Foothill Review*, I think.

POWELL

Oh, we read it for society news, I think. I know I got my brother Clark awfully mad at me once. He was at Cal in agriculture, and he used to bring home foreign students on vacations or weekends, and one in particular named Ahmed K. Ghamrawy was very highly connected in Egypt, we learned. His father was minister of agriculture, and he was wealthy, and he brought us presents. I remember when I graduated from high school in 1924, Ghamrawy gave me a camera, which I'm still using. It was an Eastman folding Kodak. Well, at any rate, I was impressed by his Egyptian connections and I wrote a kind of a phony society note and sent it into the *Record*. They printed it, about "Prince Ahmed Ghamrawy from the Egyptian dynasty visiting the Powells. He will return soon to Egypt to his houseboat on the Nile." It was a crazy sort of thing, and the damned paper printed it. My brother Clark was absolutely furious with me. That was another time he said to my mother, "If you don't do something about that boy, he's going to end up in San Quentin." And of course I did, forty years later. I was on the governor's commission on prisons and institutional libraries. We visited San Quentin on an inspection tour that year. John Henderson was on the committee, I remember, and I thought of my brother's prognostication. There I was behind bars. I went to San Quentin another time earlier. I was interested in prison libraries when I was working here at UCLA in 1938 or 1939, and I went up and visited the San Quentin library, intending to write an article about it, and it was so bad--this was

before Warden Duffy, I think, had reformed the prison. It was a tatterdemalion collection of public library discards. They had no librarian other than a "lifer" who was in charge of it, and what he wanted to show me was the electric chair, or was it the hangman's? --whatever they were doing then in 1938. It was before the gas chamber.

MINK

Electric chair.

POWELL

But it was so bad that I never wrote the article. It was horribly depressing.

1.3. TAPE NUMBER: II, Side One (August 11, 1969)

MINK

In [Robert G.] Cleland's history of Occidental College, I noticed that he speaks about this decade in which you attended Occidental, beginning what September of. . .?

POWELL

1924.

MINK

Yes, September of 1924, as a decade when the college came of age. Would you say from your experiences there that that's true, really?

POWELL

Well, I think it made great strides under Remsen Bird is what he meant . I think that was attributed to Bird, who was certainly Presbyterian-trained. He was a doctor of divinity, but he was also reaching out more and more into the community and bringing Occidental into the cultural stream. Before his time, under whomever it was--John Willis Baer--it had been really a parochial school and integrated only with the religious community. But Dr. Bird kept growing culturally, and inevitably the college grew with him. I don't think Dr. Cleland had much to do with this. He didn't start growing until after he left Occidental and went to the Huntington; then he broke through and entered the mainstream of western civilization. But, Jim, I don't know. I was an

undergraduate and I wasn't aware of any of this at the time. I was simply doing my thing, you see, as an undergraduate. I wasn't aware of the role of the college one way or another, except when it repressed me, when it cracked down on me for being a little too adventurous, too bold, too outspoken.

MINK

Yet, didn't Bird, in a way, through his addresses to the student body through the chapel sessions try to convey to the student body that this was so, and the reaching out into the community, the Occidental family, the whole bit?

POWELL

I don't remember. He probably did; but it didn't impress me at the time. I was impervious to moral uplift or cultural uplift. I wasn't awake really in those early years. I was just a green kid from South Pasadena, and the growth I experienced came through my classes with Stelter and MacIntyre, Fred Bird in political science, George Day in sociology--these [men] had nothing to do with religion. These were all agnostic professors I'm sure. Well, George Day wasn't. George Day was a Christian, but he was a radical Christian, remember. He led early parties into the Soviet Union, and he encouraged the most outspoken discussion in class. Did you have Fred Bird in political science? Frederick Lucian Bird was a marvelous lecturer and a critiquer of republicanism, I remember. He was outspoken. He wasn't a socialist; he was critical always of the status quo. And he taught us to examine the status quo, politically, always. I found him a very exciting professor. Cleland wasn't; Cleland was dull in his English history.

MINK

That's what you said in your book.

POWELL

Yes.

MINK

But I didn't find him dull.

POWELL

Well, he was beginning to grow when you came along. You came along ten years after me, didn't you?

MINK

1941.

POWELL

Well, you see. Sure, Cleland was being swept into the stream then. When I had him in 1924, and I think I had English history all my sophomore year, maybe 1925, he completely plodded through a textbook. I don't remember which book it was, but it was dull, and I had come full of hope of majoring in history. My first year I had had Dean Irene Meyers, the dean of women, in medieval history, and it was hopeless. Most of it she spent in disciplining the girls on the front row who wore too much lipstick or who rolled their socks. She was brutal really, dismissed girls, sent them from class, and was a tyrant. Was she still there when you came--dean of women? Well, these two courses in history— Meyers, medieval; Cleland, English--killed me off for history.

MINK

It really turned you off on history.

POWELL

They turned me off, and MacIntyre and Stelter turned me on. They were great teachers. Did you have either of them?

MINK

No.

POWELL

Mac had gone. Stelter had retired?

MINK

He had retired. What did Stelter look like?

POWELL

Stelter looked like a shot-putter--a great big Hercules. He was blond and must have weighed two hundred pounds, 6 '2" or 3", and had a great bull head and

neck. He was just a powerful fellow who used to sit at his desk, and every now and then he would stretch and the whole desk would go up and down where his knees moved it. He was a very impressive figure in class, and he taught the course on Robert Browning, and he put everything into it. He taught it like a shot-putter; he really made it alive and electric. I think someone who carried on his tradition that I think of whenever I've seen him on television is Frank Baxter of USC; they look much alike, and they have some of the same magnetism in teaching.

MINK

Larry, Ritchie said that Stelter never forgot anything, and in a way this was a great thing for him as a teacher, but it was a shame for his creative genius. What do you think he meant by this statement?

POWELL

Well, he had total recall of literature, that's all. He memorized everything, and he had an apt quotation and an illustration from literature for everything that was happening. He read the newspaper every morning, and then he came to class and related it to the stream of English literature. He brought poetic commentary on everything that was happening in the world, and he made literature part of life. This is why he was an important teacher--he didn't teach literature historically; he taught it as a living thing.

MINK

Not in a vacuum, in other words.

POWELL

No, not in a vacuum, right in the world. And of course he was always ridiculing and teasing Presbyterianism.

MINK

This made you happy?

POWELL

Oh, it made me happy because I was courting a Presbyterian girl then, Florence MacLaughlin, from Glendale, and she was very orthodox. Her father was an orthodox physician and she was an orthodox Presbyterian, and Stelter

knew this. She was a top student; she was Phi Beta Kappa in her junior year, I think. He was always needling her and teasing her.

MINK

How would he do this?

POWELL

Oh, he would pick out comments in Browning that were critical of orthodox religion, and he would read these and say, "You see what the master says." He'd tease her that way. And she'd get awfully mad at him, but she was a lady. She never broke out until after class; then she'd go up and just light into him. I loved all this, because I was courting her on the side, you see, and Stelter was helping me.

MINK

But to come back to the statement that Ritchie made, do you think that Stelter had creative writing ability?

POWELL

I never saw any instance of it. He didn't publish anything. As far as I know, the only thing he ever published was his doctoral dissertation, his concordance to Browning, which he and Lane Cooper did at Cornell. He was like our Majl Ewing here at UCLA. He taught and flourished; it wasn't publish or perish, it was teach and flourish. He was a great teacher, and it would have been very sinful if he had been expected to publish. He was creative in a teaching sense, which I think in college is just as important as publishing--even more important, I think!

MINK

Well, certainly Ritchie speaks of Mr. Stelter as being one person who influenced him, the other being, of course, MacIntyre. He has quite a bit to say about MacIntyre, and I wonder if you would begin by telling me what you think MacIntyre looked like.

POWELL

Well, he looked like a sort of a junior Mephistopheles. He really was a wicked-looking man. He was tall and gaunt. He was as tall as Stelter, but he was very

thin. He was built like a stork. He had wicked eyes that drooped at the corners and a very thin mouth and almost a hatchet face. And he was constantly on the move. He never sat still. Stelter came in the class, sat at his desk, and he never left it. He didn't gesture; he stretched now and then as I said. MacIntyre came into class, and he moved along the blackboard constantly, slouched along the blackboard. He was a great blackboard chalk- talker, and he had his own shorthand, which was a combination of Greek letters and his own English shorthand, and he illustrated everything with quick symbols on the board. He diagrammed the poetry and literature with all kinds of little hieroglyphic caricatures. He was a wonderful chalk-teacher.

MINK

Could you understand what he was saying?

POWELL

Not in the beginning, no. We were completely baffled by him.

MINK

Well, how did you learn? Would he explain, or was he impatient with a person?

POWELL

Oh, he was terribly impatient. He slaughtered you if you showed your ignorance. I don't know; we learned to be crafty. We learned to take him as he was. I suppose it took some time; but in the beginning it was the most exciting and fantastic sort of teaching we'd ever experienced. But we knew that something was happening. Anyway, he illustrated things from life, but generally from his own life. He made himself out to be a kind of a Don Juan and was always insinuating that he was debauching a different Presbyterian girl every night, that they used to queue up and apply for debauchery. [laughter] Oh, he was wicked.

MINK

They were knocking at his door.

POWELL

Knocking at his door, and I guess it was partly true. He lived out at La Crescenta about fourteen miles from the college, which he said was a safe distance. I think he was wicked. I don't think he was bragging. I think he was a real operator.

MINK

Well, if these Presbyterian girls were going up to his house, even being very orthodox during the day, I can imagine how you might be turned off by the hypocritical kind of atmosphere that existed.

POWELL

Well, I suppose it was true of all of America at the time. There was a secret life. Now the sexual act is more open. I think it's healthier, but it's damn certain it isn't as exciting.

MINK

You used to go with Ritchie to visit MacIntyre. Was this at his invitation, or did you just decide to go up there and see him?

POWELL

Oh, we probably did once and he told us, "Don't ever do that again. You let me know when you're coming." And we went after that by invitation.

MINK

Ritchie points out that occasionally you'd go up there, maybe on a Saturday, and you'd knock on the door and there wouldn't be any answer and you'd know that MacIntyre was inside.

POWELL

I don't remember instances such as that, but I do know that he was leading a very active life off campus and making wine in Prohibition. He had his own grapes. Well, his house was on the edge of a vineyard, and he used to buy grapes from the Italian farmer, and he made his own wine and made his own beer. We drank a little; we never drank very much. We weren't drinkers in those days. But it was exciting and wicked, of course, to go up there to this professor and have beer and wine and cheese and rye bread and poetry. He loved cats; he always had a houseful of cats--beautiful things that he brought

back from Europe when he was at Marburg. He wasn't a typical American at all. One course he taught was in comparative literature, and it was Greek and Roman and Egyptian even. He brought us out into a much wider stream of literature. Stelter had been purely English lit and Mac was world lit, and this was why he was terribly important to us. It was he and Stelter who both encouraged me--and Ritchie, too-- to go abroad. He was disappointed, though, that I didn't go to Germany. He thought it was a great betrayal of him that I went to a French university. "Damn frogs," he says, "frog women'll pox you. The German women are much cleaner." [laughter] Apparently he'd been poxed.

MINK

About his influence on getting you interested in books, do you really think in looking back that he really had much influence on you?

POWELL

Oh enormous, Jim, enormous influence. Yes, he encouraged us to collect books, to buy our own books, not depend on the library, and to build our own library. He posted reading lists, I remember, that were very exciting, unorthodox kinds of reading lists. He would post them in the library, needling the library generally. "You won't find any of these books in this library," he said, "but go out and find them." And he sent us first to Louis Epstein, a bookseller on Ninth Street, who became one of the great commercial booksellers of Southern California. Louie in those years had a little hole-in-the-wall shop, and he specialized in literature, and Mac always sent his students to Louie.

MINK

What did Louie look like?

POWELL

Well, Louie looked something like Mac. He was tall, thin, stork-like, not wicked though. He was, I think, probably an orthodox Jew. He was a very moral man, and he still is. Louie's been a great and good influence here, as you know, in Southern California. But he was a great kind friend to young college kids that were looking for out-of-print books. "Oh, you come from MacIntyre? Good,

I've got a little shelf of things that he wants you to have." And Louie would help us. That was my first introduction to the antiquarian booktrade.

MINK

I can see. Was he generous with you in the amount that he charged you?

POWELL

Oh, very. Yes. He wasn't greedy. He was like Jake. We met Jake Zeitlin a little later. Jake hadn't come to Los Angeles that early, but Jake was generous in the same way. They were interested in people far more than in buying and selling and a quick profit. They were interested in people, yes. Well, this was Mac's contribution I think to us. He shoehorned us into the book world as nobody else did.

MINK

You know, you mentioned the library. I believe it was around 1925 that Elizabeth McCloy was appointed acting librarian at Occidental, and you said that MacIntyre was needling the library and the librarian. 47

POWELL

Yes, she came actually, Jim, in 1924; she came in September when we did. She was appointed then, and she succeeded Dr. [George F.] Cook, who was professor of classics and was still there as librarian emeritus, a little old faded, weatherbeaten, wrinkled old man with a skullcap. He used to sit there at a desk, and God knows what he was doing--probably annotating Horace-- but he was there quiet and remote. Really, I should have come to know him; he must have been a terribly interesting man. I came to know his son Laurence Cook who was at the college later as alumni secretary. But Dr. Cook, I suppose, had been the first librarian. Did he go back to the beginning of the academy and the college?

MINK

I'm not certain.

POWELL

Must have been.

MINK

What did you think of Elizabeth McCloy?

POWELL

I didn't have any impression of her at the time. I didn't come to know her.

MINK

What did she look like? Can you remember?

POWELL

Well, yes, she was a mouse. She was a librarianous mouse. [laughter] Terribly mousy. She was a little Scotch woman. She was born, I think, in St. Andrews, Scotland--Elizabeth McCloy. And she was very precise and punctilious and proper and ladylike, and yet when I came to know her later, she had a sense of humor. She had a spark in her, and she did the best she could on what the college did for her, which was damn little. They didn't support the library as many colleges did in those times. It eked along on a limited budget. I came to know her later when I worked for Jake and was selling books. Then I used to go out and sell books to Miss McCloy, and she encouraged me, and Stelter did. But this is getting ahead of myself. I went into library work, and she said, "Yes, by all means," and Stelter said the same thing. They were great encouragers fifteen years later.

MINK

Well, I don't suppose maybe at the point you were a student, but later in your contact with her, would you say that she was depressed by the fact that she had so little and that there was so little support.

POWELL

I don't think she was depressed. I think she was naturally unimaginative. I don't think she had any large sights. I wouldn't compare her, for example, to Dorothy Drake, the librarian of Scripps College, who is not a mouse and is imaginative; and if she didn't have enough she darn well went out and got it. But Miss McCloy, as a conservative little Scotch woman, just didn't operate this way. She did the best she could. But I don't suppose an imaginative person would have lasted there. You see, MacIntyre only lasted four years.

and then only because Stelter gave him protection. If he hadn't had Stelter to protect him, he wouldn't have lasted a year probably.

MINK

Did you have any run-ins with the librarian?

POWELL

No, I don't think so. I didn't use the library very much.

MINK

You would have thought that an English major would have.

POWELL

Well, I was getting my own books.

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

And MacIntyre encouraged us, but Ritchie even more. Ritchie was a great book collector from the very beginning. He was buying books. He had apparently more allowance than I had.

MINK

Was his family wealthier than yours?

POWELL

Well, no. I think we were about in the same bracket, but I think I was--what was I doing with my money? --probably spending it on girls. And Ritchie wasn't. He was spending his on books. I think it was probably our different tastes, and then of course I used Ritchie's books a lot. We were very close, and he was very generous. I was in his home a great deal in South Pasadena, and his room upstairs was just loaded with books. He was buying constantly, putting everything he could, I think, into books. Interesting enough, most of those books have found their way back to Occidental. He's been giving them to the college over the years 5 and so have I.

MINK

I think Ritchie has pointed out in his interview that he attributes his big awakening and interest in book collecting to MacIntyre.

POWELL

Well, I'm glad that we're in agreement, because I feel the same between MacIntyre and Ritchie. It was Ritchie's copies of Robinson Jeffers that I first read. The college library wouldn't have had them then. They wouldn't recognize Jeffers as an alumnus in those years.

MINK

This brings up a kind of an interesting point. You had mentioned Cleland in your book and made reference to his orthodox Presbyterianism in connection with one run-in you had with him. I would like you to describe this in a little more detail in a minute. But I think also you mentioned that when you proposed to do your dissertation on Jeffers, Cleland was turned off by the idea because he felt that Jeffers was unorthodox, that he was, in fact, an atheist. How do you account then for the fact that in Cleland's history of Occidental College he included two poems by Jeffers in the appendix. These two poems which he included were "Shine Republic" and "The Rock and the Hawk."

POWELL

Well, Jim, I take some of the credit for enlightening Cleland.

MINK

This was 1937, by the way, when it was published.

POWELL

Actually, I'd done my work and it had come out and it had been recognized. You see, Cleland didn't discourage me when I proposed this; I didn't even propose it to him. I was working on him [Jeffers] in France and I wrote to Cleland about 1931 or so for a reminiscence of Jeffers, and he sent me a good one which I used. But he said at the end, "I recognize Jeffers' genius, but I would to God he had put it to better use."

MINK

Well, that's what you were quoting in your autobiography then. You didn't really have a face-to-face discussion with Cleland, then.

POWELL

No, this was by mail, and of course I didn't use that in my dissertation. That wasn't for publication. I used his other tribute, which was good. Well, all right, my dissertation was published, and then Ritchie published an edition of the book. When I came back to this country in 1934, Dr. Bird gave a reception (for Ritchie and me) at which Dr. Cleland was present, and it was the first public college recognition of Jeffers. This was in 1934 when the Primavera Press edition of my book had come out. Cleland began to realize that Jeffers was an important literary figure, and naturally he sought in his work poems that weren't unorthodox and that he could accept. And I think that "Shine Republic" and "Rock and Hawk" are examples of Jeffers' stoicism and pessimism that Cleland found acceptable. I think Ritchie and I, and Stelter, of course, who originally put me on to working on Jeffers, should have some credit for having moved Cleland along, and Cleland was a big enough man to grow.

MINK

It's interesting, Larry, that in the book I found no explanation of why these poems appear there, really.

POWELL

No. I can't account for this; this was in that 1937 history of Occidental College?

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

I don't know; maybe he thought he'd better do this, and maybe Dr. Bird said maybe you'd better put something in on Robinson Jeffers. I don't know the story. You really ought to go up and interview Dr. Bird in Carmel. There you'd get a marvelous tape, because he has a marvelous recall. He's in his eighties now, but he's still very much alive. Fay and I visited him just last September.

MINK

Well, we're getting a little ahead of ourselves, but I thought that was an interesting point.

POWELL

Yes.

MINK

Now, describe Dr. Cleland. What did he look like when you first encountered him in that English history class? Was he a young man?

POWELL

No, I don't suppose so. He was probably in early middle age. He was very homely. He had a kind of a Neanderthal underslung jaw, and very bad skin. I think he had some kind of a skin eruption that mottled his complexion, and he was an ugly son of a bitch. He really was! [laughter] God, Fay couldn't stand him; she thought he was a terribly ugly and unattractive man. And he was always taking this fatherly interest in her, you see, and trying to guide her along the path. She didn't like him one bit.

MINK

Do you suppose that Fay's aunt and uncle may have prevailed on Robert Glass Cleland to do this?

POWELL

No, I don't think so. I think he took it on himself. They left her quite free. But I think it was his feeling that he owed this to the chairman of the board of trustees to look after his niece.

MINK

Because Occidental was [being helped by the Bells].

POWELL

They were receiving benefits certainly from the Bells all that time, and Cleland and Alphonzo Bell, Sr. were good friends. They played tennis and they fished and they were socially compatible. No, Cleland was just doing what he regarded as his duty, and he had good reason to because I was a potential wicked influence.

MINK

Let's get a little more about that wicked deed that you did.

POWELL

Which one?

MINK

You were brought up on the carpet because you taunted the Sigmas.

POWELL

Well, that was just one of those examples of youthful exuberance. It was pledge day, I think, and we'd swept the campus and taken about fourteen pledges, and most of them away from the Sigmas. They were across the street from us there at Campus Road and Alumni.

MINK

Kappa Sigma.

POWELL

Yes, they became Kappa Sigma. Ironically enough, that was my father's and my brothers' fraternity; they all three were Kappa Sigmas. My father was a grand president of Kappa Sigma at one time,

MINK

Were the Sigmas the athletes at Oxy at that time?

POWELL

No, the Apes were, the ATOs, the Apes. We were Owls and Apes in those, the two locals. No, the Sigmas were the goody-goody Christers. [laughter] Anyway, it was pledge night, and when I came back--I'd been out playing at a dance--and I came in there about midnight, the boys were feeling no pain, and I just happened to have a five-gallon jug of wine in the trunk of my car, and I brought it in.

MINK

Where 'd you get all that wine in Prohibition days?

POWELL

Cucamonga, out at the winery. We used to go out to Cucamonga, and there was a little Italian out there that you bought it from.

MINK

Was it illegal to sell it?

POWELL

Yes, sure, it was bootleg. Or we would go down to Alpine Street off North Broadway, and there was an Italian there that sold us this awful stuff. Cucamonga was better; it really was good red wine. At any rate, they all drank a bit of this wine, including myself.

MINK

Five gallons?

POWELL

Five gallons, and most of the football team was there. We had a lot of football players in the house that year. Glen Rozelle and Jack Schurch and Launce Millar; and, Christ, they were big as a house, enormous guys. Finally we surged out of the house and across the street and began to heave dead cats through the Sigma windows and say, "Come out and fight, you yellow bastards." The Sigmas, of course, did nothing of the kind. They sat tight, and so there was a general insulting uproar, and I suppose some Sigma got on the phone to Dean Cleland as dean of men and said, "Look, we're being assaulted by the Owls, and they're being led by their president, Larry Powell." Well, my God, I was on the carpet the next morning, nine o'clock in Cleland's office. He was dean of men then; he wasn't dean of the college, he was dean of men. And he just said, "I want you to give me the names of all the members of the fraternity that were involved." And I said, "Well, no, I really can't do that. I'm not an informer for your office." He said, "Well, I expect you to resign; this is disgraceful; this whole episode is a disgrace to the college, and I expect you to resign as president of the house." (He was a member of the fraternity, too; so he had [force]. He was an old Owl and Key.) I said, "Well, I'll do that if the chapter wants me to, but I'm beholden to them, sir, not to the school in this matter, and if they ask for my resignation, I'll give it to them, but I won't give it

to you." God, he turned purple, and he was ugly to start with. When he got mad, he was uglier, livid with rage. This was at the football season; this was in the autumn. We were coming up to the big game, and I was anxious to keep the team intact. So I said, "Look, I'll take the rap and let's forget the other boys, it's all my fault." Well, everybody clammed up, and when the house learned that I was fronting for them, they said, "No, you won't resign; you'll stay in. We need you as our fall guy." So I didn't resign; they insisted that I not, and I took the blame. It wasn't a terribly noble thing to do. There I was. Cleland suspended me from campus for a week, I guess. So I just stayed down at the fraternity house, and the boys brought me assignments, and I kept current in the work. Of course, Fay came down to see me. We went out for a ride and I weathered it. It was no great scandal, because nothing really happened. It was just a general rout of the Sigmas and we were rejoicing. I think the Sigmas were a little unhappy about the whole thing. They thought the whole fraternity should have been suspended, you see, and their pledges should have been given to them. That's all, Jim. It was a typical coonskin coat prank of the twenties.

MINK

I noticed on the roster of the senior Phi Gams in that year that there were so many. I thought I'd just jot them down and perhaps you could, for purposes of the record, discuss some of these people briefly. Perhaps you can say whether you think they were significant or not. Maybe they came to nothing or maybe they had an important influence on you, or maybe they've had an important influence on the community. Bob Donaldson, for example.

POWELL

Bob Donaldson and I roomed together in the fraternity house, I think, my senior year. He went on and worked for the Committee on Economic Development. He became their field man and was very important in the forties in establishing CED programs on American college and university campuses and did a lot of work traveling. I used to see them in New York, he and Carolina, his wife.

MINK

So you came full circle with him?

POWELL

Yes, we saw each other in the forties a good deal. He unfortunately fell ill, and the last five or ten years even, he's been semi-invalid, I think, in Pasadena. He may have had a stroke. I see him at Alumni Day, but he is very withdrawn, and not at all well; but he did well. I remember him chiefly, Jim, because we were the same size and we shared a wardrobe.

MINK

I think you mentioned this in your autobiography.

POWELL

Yes, we had a common wardrobe; we could wear each other's shirts and suits. That gave us double sartorial splendor, you see.

MINK

So it was like the family you were mentioning at our last interview.

POWELL

The Casses, yes, with the big communal wardrobe.

MINK

What about Jim Campbell?

POWELL

Jim Campbell became a high school teacher in Glendale, period; that's all I know about him.

MINK

And what about Clifford Ham.

POWELL

Cliff Ham was a New England boy, and as I understand it he went back to the family fortune in Connecticut and has been living on it ever since. Ham was an incorrigible bummer of cigarettes. He never would buy a cigarette, and he always lived off the others. I remember about the close of the school year, we

decided to reward Clifford Ham; so he was seized upon by those he had bummed cigarettes from and tubbed. Do you know what "tubbing" is?

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

He was tubbed, and when he came out of the tub, dripping wet, he was handed one cigarette. And that's the way we revenged ourselves on Ham. He was a charming idler.

MINK

What about Don Imler?

POWELL

Imler became a captain of detectives with the Sheriff's Department here. I think he is captain of detectives in the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. Every now and then I get a message from him. We've never seen each other in all these years. Every now and then somebody comes along. Of course, if I was ever stopped by a county sheriff, I would say, "Oh, yes. Captain Imler . . ."

MINK

[laughter] You haven't had a chance?

POWELL

No, I haven't had the chance yet.

MINK

What about Thomas Capstick?

POWELL

He was a New Jersey boy who, like Ham, went back and lived off the munificence of his family. I don't know what became of Capstick. We pledged him actually because he had an attractive Chrysler roadster, and we thought we needed a good-looking car parked out in front of the house, so we pledged

Tom Capstick and said, "Look, Tom, all you have to do for the fraternity is leave your car out front to give us tone."

MINK

[laughter] What about Berl Goodheart?

POWELL

Well, Goodheart — we've kept in touch. He was captain of the track team, a great 880 man and miler, and a very attractive boy. He was from Sausalito. He came down from the north and went into the fire insurance business, and he's still in it . He's got a big agency over in Inglewood, I think, and every now and then he'll call up and we'll have a little chat. He's a very sweet guy, and he's never set the world on fire. You're not supposed to if you're a fire insurance agent, Jim, but he's prospered.

MINK

And what about Sidney Edmundson?

POWELL

Sid Edmundson, now there's an interesting chap. He was from down Compton way.

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

The last I heard of him--and I saw him here on campus about ten or fifteen years ago--he was the secretary or manager of the fisherman's union of San Pedro. He got into union work and was representing the big canners and fishery workers' union, and he was here for the Institute of Industrial Relations. And we looked at each other and both scratched our heads in disbelief. He'd become a union agent and I'd become a librarian, but we shook hands and agreed that we'd done all right. He and I used to play tennis together. We were tennis pals.

MINK

All in all, I would say that you probably had them all beat as far as the good life and success was concerned.

POWELL

Well, superficially maybe, Jim; I don't know. What you need to make you happy--some people don't need as much as I've had. They're happier on less, and can you say that they're less happy? No, I don't think so. That's the class of 1929- Of course, I regarded myself also as a member of the class of 1928, because I started in 1924, and should have graduated in 1928, but I took that year out to travel. So, I've kept in touch also with 1928, which was Ritchie's class, Gordon Newell's. And in some ways I feel closer to those people I started with and particularly to Ritchie and Newell.

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

We are closer now I think forty-five years later than we were at the time.

1.4. TAPE NUMBER: II, Side Two (August 11, 1969)

MINK

Now, you've been mentioning on the other side of the tape that you really identified more with the class of 1928, and with Newell and Ritchie, than you did with the twenty-niners. Now, that brings me to ask you about that year that you took off; you explained it in your autobiography as to why and how it came about. There was one statement that you made that I found difficult to understand: you said that you were not introspective and that all these places and the sights and sounds that you saw made no impression on you. I just can't believe that, you know, a person at nineteen with the opportunity to make an around-the-world trip, which is really what your mother wanted you to do.

POWELL

Yes, yes.

MINK

It was what MacIntyre wanted you to do?

POWELL

I probably was too extreme in that statement. What I meant is that it didn't impress me as much as it would have if I'd have done it ten years later--that is, when I went to Europe later in 1930. Everything meant much more to me. I'd come more awake; I guess this is inevitable. I was just not as sensitive to things at nineteen. Still, they did impress me, and I have memories of all twenty-six ports, particularly the crew on the ship.

MINK

Well, why don't you try to recall if you can for a few minutes about that, because really you dismissed this with three lines in your autobiography. I don't think that that's enough. I mean, that may be reasonable in a short autobiography that you were trying to write. On the other hand, if you could do it now on the record...

POWELL

Well, I did a foreword to one of Jack Reynolds' catalogs once which was a bit about that around-the-world trip, and about some of the reading I did. The people that I remember from that trip were some of the crew. For example, the refrigeration engineer was a German.

MINK

Can you remember his name?

POWELL

His name was Ernie.

MINK

Last?

POWELL

I don't know his last name; it was just Ernie. And he was reading *Jean-Christophe*, of all things, and he used to come up from the engine room, dripping with oil and grease, and swab himself off and settle down in his bunk and read Romain Rolland's *Jean-Christophe*. And we talked about reading and

literature, sitting out on the hatch in the tropical sunsets. I remember him very well. I remember the radio operator. I don't remember his name other than "Sparks." All radio operators were called "Sparks." I used to go up into the radio shack, and we used to talk. I don't remember what we talked about, but I had good sessions with this guy. He was a philosophical and thoughtful man. Another great friend on the ship was the barber. He was, I suppose a German Jew and was very shrewd. He was running a trading business all the time. He ran a shop in his barber shop, and in the foreign ports he'd buy works of art and things and sell them. So he said, "Any souvenirs and things you want on shore, my boy, you just give me your commission and I'll get them for you." And he did, he bought things. My aunt and uncle and my mother gave me a little money to spend for them. I put it in the hands of the barber, and he bought me crystal and cloisonne. He was very shrewd, and I believe he was honest. He probably made a profit on me. But I liked to go and sit with him in the barber shop. We ate together--the barber, the stewards and the musicians all ate at an early table in first class because the musicians had to be ready for the passenger serving. We played, you see; so we ate early. But I got to know the barber through this, and I don't remember his name even. Well, these musicians themselves, the chaps I went with, I wasn't close to. It was a throw-together-band.

MINK

You'd never known any of them before you went on board.

POWELL

Not really, no. We knew each other casually in South Pasadena, but I never had played with them and I never played with them again. It was a put-together-band for this occasion. I think I remember Honolulu, for example, coming in there. The first sight of a tropical island was terribly thrilling, and I've been back two or three times through the Island. When we went ashore, we'd go to the leading hotel there. The Dollar Steamship Lines ship orchestra always had an engagement with the leading hotel because they were an American band that was desirable. So we played when we were ashore there at the Moana, which is still an old stylish hotel at Waikiki. Probably it's doomed now by high-rise. It was a very beautiful, old wooden building, and two or three years ago, Fay and I spent Christmas in Honolulu, and I went back

to the Moana, sat there and listened to the orchestra play, and I thought, "Jesus, the wheel's really come around." And all the smells and sights came back. That was a poor statement in the autobiography. Of course I was impressed by this; I foreshortened it all there, ridiculously. I could go through all the ports on the trip. I think the tremendous impact was Europe. Genoa and Naples and Marseille, the first ports there in Mediterranean Europe.

MINK

Well, if you landed there today, you know and I know what the first things you'd do would be. Did you think about doing some of the things then that you would do now? I suppose not.

POWELL

Well, the first thing we did in Marseille, we made for a barber shop. [laughter] We had the works; the franc had just been devalued and we had tremendous treatment in the barbershop. Then we made for a sidewalk cafe, and then we went out to the Chateau d'If where Dumas [pere] had written *The Man in the Iron Mask*, and we went up Notre Dame du Mont, the cathedral. We did orthodox tourist things as kids, but it was terribly exciting to hear a foreign language, to hear French spoken. Genoa was so beautiful, the arcades, and the tremendous meals of pasta, and the colors, the colored stuccos and all. These were all exciting to an American from the Far West--to see the old world for the first time. Sure, I was impressionable. Don't believe a word about what I said in the autobiography, it just ain't true,

MINK

You think that your decision to go back to France later was in any way dependent on this sojourn?

POWELL

Subconsciously, perhaps, I felt at home there. I think Ritchie influenced me, because he planned to go there, and then M. F. K. Fisher and Al Fisher, who were in residence in Dijon, influenced me. They said it's cheap to live here and there's a good liberal professor; you can work on a contemporary figure in the department. That was probably the strongest factor.

MINK

But when you were in Marseille in 1925, you'd never heard of Robinson Jeffers.

POWELL

No, I don't think so. I probably heard about Jeffers that year I came back as a sophomore at Oxy and was in Stelter's class. You see, his first commercial volume was published in 1925, *Roan Stallion*. That's right, I wouldn't have heard about him, no, not until 1926.

MINK

Well, were there any of the other ports that particularly impressed you?

POWELL

Boston. We came into Boston in January in the dead of winter, and it was terribly cold. We went over to Harvard, I remember, because the former president of the Owl and Key House, the Phi Gam house at Occidental, was a graduate student in business at Harvard, Jack Cosgrove. And we went over and looked him up and called on him. That was my first visit to Harvard, first view of the Widener. I can remember its pillars--I don't remember its books, but I remember the great pillars-- walking up the stairs into the Widener. Like going into a church. I thought about this a lot last summer when I was teaching at Simmons. They did a little oral history tape on me there at New England, the editor of the *Bay State Librarian*.

MINK

Here I thought you were a virgin.

POWELL

No, sir, I've been had by Ken Kister. Didn't you ever see that in the *Bay State Librarian*? They did an interview based on this book; it was only a couple of hours. It was a good one; I'll show it to you.

MINK

Then did you come by train back across the country?

POWELL

No, we went on to Cuba, Havana, Panama, through the canal--completely around the world. And I was in New York for a week. The Dollar Line's Harrison was in port. That was the day I visited my father's sister. Mabel Satterlee, and my Grandpa and Grandma Powell.

MINK

Is this the first time you were there?

POWELL

It was the first time I'd been in New York, I guess. Maybe I was there as a child, but I didn't remember it. However, we went to musical comedies, and I was entertained there by my relatives. But it was cold as hell and I didn't like it--too cold! I didn't want to write about it; I cut that all off in the book because you see it would have opened a whole area that probably should be written about in another context, that youthful trip around the world.

MINK

Well, in what context would you write it? How would you cast it?

POWELL

Well, I don't know, Jim. When I come to it, I'll know. I don't know how I'd do it, but I'd like to do it in an expansive way, maybe a first trip to Europe and then returns to Europe, and write a kind of a European saga. But it didn't fit in the book I was writing. That autobiography is more a librarian's career kind of thing, and it didn't seem to fit.

MINK

Well, when you got back, it was in the early spring.

POWELL

The spring of 1926 .

MINK

And you went right back in school?

POWELL

No, I was working as a musician all that spring and summer.

MINK

Where?

POWELL

Up at Big Bear, mostly Big Bear Lake at various camps up there, with a different orchestra. I think it was largely a Pomona College group.

MINK

How did you get connections for jobs with these orchestras? Did everybody just know everybody else?

POWELL

Everybody knew. It was a network. You had a card file, really, of tenor sax players, alto sax players, trap drummers, pianists.

MINK

I see.

POWELL

We did a lot of switching around between Pomona, Oxy, and UCLA.

MINK

What on earth ever made you decide to take up the saxophone?

POWELL

My brother George was a saxophone player.

MINK

Did you like the way it sounded?

POWELL

Yes. I liked the way it sounded. I liked the way he played it. He was good. He played at Stanford a lot and in hands, and he taught me. I never took a lesson, I learned on his and I bought my own. I ended up with four or five, I guess. Lord, it took a pickup truck to carry all my instruments. It was imitative,

following in my brother's footsteps. We were very close as young ones, my brother George and I. He was a natural playboy.

MINK

And you thought you wanted to be like him.

POWELL

Yes. I wanted to be like him, and I started out that way, but I didn't stay with it. I was more serious. I don't know why; I branched off, I suppose, because I had this friend Ritchie and I had these good teachers. If he'd had this same experience of going to Occidental and having these teachers maybe he would have. I very nearly went to Stanford. When I got back in that spring he wanted me to come up. He was working in San Francisco for Dean Witter, I think, and he was living down the peninsula at the Kappa Sigma house and playing in orchestras So I applied and was admitted to Stanford, and then my Uncle Harold, who was still in [the] Link Belt [Company], wanted me to come to Berkeley. So I was subsequently brainwashed by him, and I applied to Berkeley. I very nearly went to these two northern schools, and then at the last minute I said, "No, I'm going back to Oxy."

MINK

Have you ever regretted that you couldn't have said that you were a graduate of Stanford or Berkeley?

POWELL

No, by God, no! I am very happy in the whole Occidental experience and in my relationship with the college since. I think it did an enormous lot for me, Jim, and I am grateful and loyal, and I like the way the college has gone, you see, under Bird, under Art[hur G.] Coons, under Dick Gilman. I think the college has gone farther and farther into the mainstream. I'm proud of it — aren't you, as an Oxy alumnus?

MINK

I'm not an Oxy alumnus.

POWELL

What do you mean you're not an Oxy alumnus?

MINK

I graduated from UCLA.

POWELL

You went your first two years?

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

I see.

MINK

What about Morgan Odell? Was he around when you were there?

POWELL

I think he was an instructor starting out. In philosophy?

MINK

Yes; the man impressed me very much when I was there.

POWELL

No, I never had any classes from him; but Merritt Moore was an instructor.

MINK

Was Robert Freeman instructing there when you were there?

POWELL

No, he was just a name as a Presbyterian minister in Pasadena. Merritt Moore was a young professor of philosophy that I enjoyed. He's Everett Moore's cousin, incidentally. I took philosophy from him in my senior year, I guess.

MINK

What about John Willis Baer? What did he look like?

POWELL

Oh, I don't think I have any memories of him, Jim. I've seen pictures of him, but I don't remember ever seeing him, unless he was a chapel speaker. No, I don't remember him at all.

MINK

And then Fred McLain would have been coming along about then.

POWELL

Fred McLain was the young assistant controller.

MINK

You probably didn't have anything to do with him.

POWELL

No, I didn't; I came to know him later, as an alumnus. There was Lowell Chawner, the registrar.

MINK

Florence Brady became the registrar about the time that you were going. POTOLL: She was assistant, yes, and she succeeded Lowell Chawner, who was professor of economics. But the only contact I had with the registrar's office later was sending for my grades and getting Jeffers' transcript of record. I did all these things from France. You know, if my father had lived, I think I would have probably gone to Cornell. I would have followed in my parents' footsteps and gone East.

MINK

Your mother never urged you to go to Cornell?

POWELL

No, I don't think she urged me to do anything like that. I felt that I should stay close to home. My brothers had gone and my father was dead and my mother was alone, and there was the opportunity to be with Ritchie--to go to college together and live at home with my mother. All these things conspired to keep me there, and not reluctantly at all. I was entirely reconciled to all of this.

MINK

Can you describe for a minute some of your experiences during the summer?
Now one summer you worked up on the ranch up north, near San Quentin.

POWELL

No, it was in Kern County. The Di Giorgio Ranch. Well, that was as a high school boy, really. Those were summers between my junior-senior high school and between my senior-freshman year, I guess. My brother Clark was up there as the Mexican foreman, and I went up and worked as a roustabout on the Di Giorgio Ranch. My God, I can still smell the sweat.

MINK

Could you remember about the general labor situation up there at that time? Did you know the discontent that always seemed to foment in that area around laborers?

POWELL

Well, I wasn't aware of it, and the laborers were mostly braceros . My brother was Mexican foreman; he spoke Spanish, and he had charge of all the Mexican crew. But they were a gay bunch. They were right up; they didn't speak any English, and I wasn't aware of any discontent. We lived rough. It was a sweaty, hot, wonderful life. I suppose the IWW's were moving in, but I was too young to be aware of it. We were protected as kids from social troubles; we were insulated by our youth and were able to be free and happy. That's why it's such a wonderful nostalgic time of life; we were without responsibility, without any social awareness; we were just young animals. I was one.

MINK

Well, I know that in your autobiography you describe a meeting of a Miss Shoemaker, who subsequently became your wife. But maybe you could describe in a little more detail how you first met her. When was the first time you ever saw her?

POWELL

On campus, I think, running between classes, wearing a short red coat and her hair streaming out behind her, running like mad. I guess she was late for class--she always was.

MINK

Did she notice you first, or did you notice her first?

POWELL

No, she didn't notice me; but she knew who I was. She had her cap set for me, she told me later.

MINK

Do you believe that?

POWELL

Yes, I believe that, because I'd played at a dance at Marlborough School where she was a senior, and she knew who I was. Then when she was going over to Occidental as a freshman (and it was my senior year), she was talking with her cousin, Minnewa Bell, who was at Oxy then, too, and they were talking about dates they were going to have. Fay told me she'd said to her cousin Minnewa, "Well, you can have whoever you want, but I'm going to go with the president of the Phi Gam house." I met her formally then, I guess, through Willy Goodheart, who knew her through her brother Norman, who was a freshman at the same time. He took me up to the dormitory where she lived. It was actually Orr Hall. It was a new dorm, wasn't it?

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

Very elegant and attractive place.

MINK

Did the guys make fun about it the way that we did?

POWELL

Yes, "Whore" Hall. [laughter] "It was good to have a whore hall on campus, have them all grouped together!" And then of course the one they built the next year, we made fun of because it was called "Turdman." Whore and Turdman. So I met Fay up at the dorm, I guess, the first time when I was

summoned up there to make a bid on playing for a dormitory dance. I guess she was on the social committee. We had this confrontation, and I got rid of her brother and Goodheart somehow, I guess, and said to Fay, "Let's go for a ride." So we went out for a long ride.

MINK

I think you said in your autobiography that it was full of non sequiturs.

POWELL

That's right. She was a very difficult girl. She didn't want to be questioned, and if you asked her a question, she made an irrelevant reply. She was very independent and skittish and a wild and untamed creature; but still she had all the social graces when she chose to exercise them. But she was a very difficult kid; she was only seventeen then. And I was, I guess, twenty- one. But she took me home then. She used to go home weekends to Bel-Air, the Bell house, and I met Mr. and Mrs. Bell.

MINK

Can you describe what Mr. Bell looked like?

POWELL

Oh, he was a very handsome man, Jim. He was very fine- looking man, with a large head and very fine Roman features, a Roman nose, and always elegant and courtly and gentle. He was a very attractive man, and of course Mrs. Bell was equally attractive as a woman. She was very dark, Spanish looking. They were an elegant pair, very gracious, and they lived without any ostentation. They really had a big house, of course. Capo de Monte was a big place, and they had a staff. But they were comfortable people. They lived with their affluence very comfortably, generously, and I liked to go up there because of the swimming pool and the tennis court and the big grand piano, which I used to play. The wheel came around of course years later when all the Bell family came apart and the houses were all sold and the grand piano was given to us by Mrs. Bell in later years--a beautiful ebony Steinway. But I used to play, and Mrs. Bell liked music. She still does, bless her. She's still living--ninety-three this summer--in a retirement home in Culver City, and we go to see her. She phones us, and we still have after these forty and more years pleasant family

social contacts. Oh, it was a lovely home there, Jim, that Capo de Monte-- landscaping and all the trees and the beautiful view out over the plain. It was a lovely place to go, a lovely place to court a girl. Tennis and swimming, music, the beach nearby. We were very fortunate, I think, in this kind of a beginning. We didn't know how far we had to go and what we had to suffer, really, before we finally came together. We didn't know and that was a blessing. But, Lord, we were happy as kids, wonderfully so.

MINK

So you'd go over there just about every weekend?

POWELL

Yes, other times she would stay on campus because of social events at the dormitory or in the gymnasium. I was busy as a musician, but we found time to do things. We used to go to Balboa to the big Bell house on the bay front. We used to go down there unchaperoned; but we weren't wicked or wild kids. She didn't drink or smoke, and I did very little of either. We lived a very simple, sweet kind of a kid life. At least, this is the way I remember it.

MINK

What did your mother think about it?

POWELL

My mother was tolerant. She didn't think I should marry, not only not Fay, she didn't think I should marry anyone. She thought I should not marry young. I don't think she was possessive, but she'd seen some problems that had occurred to my brother Clark who married at eighteen. I guess she didn't want to see that happen again.

MINK

By this time Clark was gone.

POWELL

Clark was gone off to South Africa. But everything came around, and my mother became a very good mother-in-law.

MINK

What do you mean "everything came around." Were there difficulties?

POWELL

Well, the Depression and the economic uncertainties and all of the problems of getting established, and my mother's suffering, losing her money in the crash. They were difficult times, and they brought us closer--all of us, I think--and we all came together closer as a family.

MINK

This is one of the things that I was curious about. You used to write to your mother, and it was "Dear Mother," and all of a sudden it became "Dear Gert."

POWELL

Gertie.

MINK

Whatever made you decide to call her that?

POWELL

I don't know how it started. I think it was when I grew up and I felt more co-equal with her as a man and a woman, and not as a son-mother. I don't know how it happened, Jim, but from college age on, I suppose, I was calling her "Gertie."

MINK

She didn't object to this.

POWELL

Oh, she liked it, and to the boys she was "Grandma Gertie." I don't know how it originated, but there it was.

1.5. TAPE NUMBER: III, Side One (August 18, 1969)

MINK

This morning, before we leave the Occidental period, I wonder if you could comment some on your participation in drama and music at Occidental.

POWELL

Well, they both came out of my high school experience, of course. I'd been in dramatics at South Pasadena, and when I went to Occidental, I tried out I think for what they called the Occidental Players. I was further taken by the drama coach, Miss Joyce Turner, who was a graduate of UCLA, and this was her first job I think, coaching drama at Oxy. She was a beauty--young and vivacious, dynamic--and a very strict disciplinarian, no nonsense; she wasn't giddy or flighty. She was a damn good, driving, drama coach., And she liked me and I liked her, and we did three or four plays together, I think, right up through my junior year. I played the young ingenue roles, of course--that ' s all I was good for--but I enjoyed it immensely. It gave me an opportunity to show off, which is what I always wanted to do. At the same time, I participated in debating. I was on the debating squad, I think, with Kenneth Holland who became president of the International Educational Union, or whatever it is, Kenny Holland. And in music, I had my own outside orchestra and I also got together an inside orchestra, which Included Kenneth Holland and a chap named Cline, Benny Nehls, who became manager of the telephone company; and we played for rallies and gymnasium dances and campus activities. So I was leading an on- campus and off-campus musical life. I never thought of the stage as a career. I wasn't good enough. In music I could have had a career as a dance musician, but it ceased to satisfy me in my various needs, so that tailed off. But that's really all it was, Jim.

MINK

Let's see, about that time, Fred Lindsay would have been coming in.

POWELL

Fred Lindsay was the voice and speech coach.

MINK

Did you know him?

POWELL

I knew him. He was my debating coach. I debated with him. We became good friends. He was a dispassionate friend to me, because he actually flunked me in my senior year in a course in public speaking, I think. I got so wrapped up in

courting Fay in that year, that I neglected my studies except those for Stelter and George Day in sociology. I found the way Lindsay was teaching public speaking to be very dry and boring.

MINK

Could you tell me a little about that? How did he go about teaching public speaking?

POWELL

He did it, and then he said, "Do it the way I do it." That is, he would speak a passage and then say imitate me. And I didn't think this was the way to do it. I think he didn't recognize individual abilities and talents enough. He intended to standardize it. I liked him more on the outside. I thought in the classroom he was rather pedantic, and I suppose in my inimitable humble way, I told him so. He says, "All right, an F for you." And so I dropped the course, and he flunked me.

MINK

I suppose at that time they didn't have recording equipment.

POWELL

No, nothing. You heard him ! He was your echo.

MINK

I take it you didn't for instance have to prepare a speech and have it recorded so that you could listen to it.

POWELL

No, they didn't have anything like that, Jim. These were the primitive days, pre-electronic days. I'd like to go back to them myself; then we wouldn't have this nonsense that we're doing now. [laughter]

MINK

I wonder if you could say just a little more than you did in your autobiography about Clyde Browne and about the studio and your experiences there.

POWELL

Well, I went to the studio first when I was a reporter on *The Occidental*, the newspaper. I was assistant sports editor, hah!

MINK

Is that the first time you ever met Clyde Browne?

POWELL

I met Clyde Browne when I went over to read proof or to take over copy. I was a runner, I guess, for the editor. I can't remember who the editor was. I think it was [J.] Phil Ellsworth, who became the graduate manager, the track man. I met Clyde then, and I was in and out of the Abbey San Encino. I was printing for the college yearbook and magazine then. In my senior year we had a comic magazine called the *Tawny Cat*, and I think Charlie Plummer was the editor, and I was a staff writer. I think one issue was suppressed by the college.

MINK

Why?

POWELL

Well, I think we had a naked something on the cover. I've never looked at those again, I remember I did a review of moving pictures for one issue. It was the first year of the talkies; I thought this was a terrible new trend. I did some book reviews. I don't want to confuse this with the *Sabre Tooth*, which was a literary magazine. And I did book reviews and poetry in it. I remember I reviewed MacIntyre's book which Ritchie and I published that year.

MINK

Did you work with Ritchie at all at the Abbey in setting up type?

POWELL

No, I never set type in my life. I didn't believe in getting inky fingers.

MINK

So you weren't at all interested in what he was doing in that area.

POWELL

Not technically, no; I was interested in what he was doing in a literary sense and in a publishing sense. But for typography as such, I never cared and I never have. I don't know anything about setting type. I don't have a mechanical gift. Ritchie had a great mechanical gift for working with material, but this didn't make us any less close, because we had all these other bonds.

MINK

Well, I know Ritchie pointed out that he set up in type a poem by Robinson Jeffers. I think it was the first thing he did.

POWELL

Well, not quite; it was one--"Stars" it was called.

MINK

He pointed out that he had a great deal of trouble with it, and after he sent a copy to Remsen Bird and Cleland, it turned out that there were a lot of errors in it.

POWELL

There were about seven misspellings in two sonnets. Every time we'd look at it we'd find another one.

MINK

Didn't you ever help him with the proof?

POWELL

Well, I tried; God damn it all, don't blame that on me! He never showed it to me until he had it finished. This was a kind of a surprise, I think, and then I really blew up when I saw all these misspellings. Ritchie still can't spell. He's a lousy speller, and he's issuing books today that somehow get through with horrible misspellings. He's a genius certainly, but a hell of a speller. We shared that studio for the simple reason that neither of us could afford the rent. We had to divide the rent. I think it was \$15.00 a month. We each paid \$7.50. It was a place to keep our books and a jug of wine, and while he was working at the press downstairs, I used to read and write and play music on a little phonograph. Fay and I used to go there and read and have a picnic supper, and I would go down and practice on the pipe organ in the chapel. I took

lessons, I remember, on the organ from--oh dear, what was her name? --Edna something; she lived in Highland Park and taught the pipe organ. I took a weekly lesson from her, and I paid fifty cents an hour to Clyde Browne to practice on the pipe organ for the use of the electricity and the instrument. It was a very nostalgic time, Jim, with the press grinding away, and when the press was going the whole damned Abbey shook. Then I'd get up on the big pipes on the organ, and it would shake the Abbey even more. Ritchie every now and then would turn off the press and come up and say, "For Christ's sake, stop that noise, I can't hear the press." [laughter] And I'd say to him, "Well, God damn it, Ritchie, turn off the press. I've got a priority here; this is a chapel, a religious place. Don't make so much racket!" So we had a very good time, really, between us.

MINK

During this period, Ritchie, as you had indicated in your autobiography, was promoted at Vroman's and you came in and took his job. That would have been in the fall of 1929.

POWELL

After I graduated in the fall of 1929.

MINK

I wonder if you could describe in just a little more detail what went on there, what your work was and how it. . .

POWELL

How it came to end?

MINK

How it came to the end.

POWELL

How I had a severance notice. Well, Jim, I took the job because it promised a continuing association with Ritchie. We simply liked to do things together. This meant we'd ride to and from work together, and it led me a little deeper into the book world that MacIntyre and Stelter and Ritchie had inducted me into--and, of course, my parents. The whole trend was toward a bookish life, I can

see now. And I thought, "My God, I'll be down in the shipping department of Vroman's where all the new books come in; I can read. Employees get a twenty percent discount on purchases; I can add to my library. I'll be able to drive the delivery truck." It seemed to me an ideal life. And it would have been if it hadn't been for the manager, Leslie Hood, a little wiry gamecock of a son of a bitch. He really was. He was highly organized. He could carry the whole book stock in his mind. He was a bear for procedure. He didn't need any computers or any devices in his time. Old Leslie Hood had it all in his head. He had ulcers. He was a very sick man, I realized later, and harassed and fidgety. He gave me a brief training of how to unpack books and arrange them on the great table in the order of the invoice, not check them off the invoice until they're all in invoice order. Well, I wasn't very systematic; I used to open the case and take out the first book and then look for it on the invoice. It of course slowed up the work, but I simply worked that way. And he didn't want me to; so we clashed. The volume kept increasing as Thanksgiving and Christmas neared, and the books just poured down that chute from the back alley. I was swamped, and they piled up all over the cellar and Hood would come down and rage at me. I got so I liked to be outside of the store on deliveries, our over-town days twice a week. Ward and I went in the big Dodge truck, anything to get away from Hood, to get him off my neck. In the meantime the books piled up, and he used to come down and light into them and in half an hour he could do work that took me a day. He was good and I wasn't. And then there was the incident of delivering *Lady Chatterly's Lover* and parking on El Molino under the camphor trees and reading it and forgetting to deliver it. The man who ordered it kept phoning, "Where is my book?" I got back to the store at closing time and Hood just looked at me and said, "You're a fine delivery boy, you are." And I knew that my goose was cooked. At any rate, after Christmas, I got my notice. It all turned out for the best, Jim, because I went back to college then, for a graduate spring semester at Occidental, and this meant that I could be close to Fay.

MINK

Is that really why you went, or did you really want to go? Had you really thought about taking a master's at all?

POWELL

Yes, it was to get a teaching certificate. Mac and Stelter said you'd better get a teacher's certificate so you can get a job in a high school or junior college.

MINK

Did you think you wanted to teach?

POWELL

Well, it seemed to me the thing to do. I apparently wasn't fitted for business and I wasn't a writer then that could earn a living. It seemed to me a way out or a way in. And to get a teaching credential, you had to take the required courses in education. That's where I ran into trouble. James Sinclair and Martin Stormzand. I had courses from them--Sinclair in Introduction to Education and Stormzand in Educational Statistics. Oh, that was a fiasco, really. First of all, I didn't care for education, and second, I had no gift for statistics.

MINK

What did you think of them as teachers?

POWELL

Oh, they were routine. They were interesting men, but they were routine educational pedagogues, I guess. And in Sinclair's course, I think we had to visit a kindergarten and evaluate the teaching methods. I thought this was the end. What the hell was I doing evaluating kindergarten teaching. I went to Stelter and he said, "A bunch of nonsense, Powell. Why don't you drop it?" And at the same time I was taking his seminar in Poetics, I guess, and loving it, and so I dropped Stormzand and Sinclair. I didn't flunk. I took withdrawals, and concentrated then on Stelter's seminar and I did very well indeed in it. I got top grade from him, and at the same time I was reading Jeffers and coming closer, you see, because in Stelter's Poetics we were studying Aristotle and the theory of poetry. And all of this tied in beautifully with what I was to do later on Jeffers.

MINK

Well, Larry, at this point, in reading Jeffers, I was wondering: I think that you had said in your autobiography that Ritchie actually introduced you to Jeffers. But I'm wondering if it wasn't really Gordon Newell, inadvertently, that did it,

because Newell had fallen in love and wanted to give a volume to his young sweetheart. Ritchie recommended Edwin A. Robinson's poetry and suggested that Newell buy a volume of it, but by mistake he bought a volume of Jeffers. Ritchie took the volume and started to read it, and then he handed it to you.

POWELL

I don't remember it that way, but if Ritchie says it, it's gospel. It could well have been; it was all sort of intertwined. I just don't remember, Jim. That's plausible.

MINK

It was *Roan Stallion*.

POWELL

Yes, *Roan Stallion, Tamar, and Other Poems*.

MINK

Was that the first of his poetry that you ever read?

POWELL

Yes, Ritchie's copy; and of course at the same time, Stelter once asked in class did anyone know who Robinson Jeffers is. I said, "Oh yes, that's the man who wrote a poem about a woman who fell in love with a horse." And of course the seminar laughed and Stelter slapped me on the wrist, but he said, "Did you know, Powell, that he's a graduate of this college?" "Well," I said, "No," He said, "Yes, he's the class of 1905. Why don't you go over to the registrar's office sometime and look up his transcript or record. Do me a paper on it." Well, I don't think I actually did a paper, but I did look up and verify this. I went to see Lowell Chawner and Miss Brady, and in the library I think I looked up some of his things he'd written for undergraduate magazines. So the lines were coming together, you see, from Stelter, from Ritchie, from Newell, all drawing together with me caught in the middle. It seemed inevitable that I'd end up working on Jeffers. The big push came after graduation when I went up and visited Newell at Carmel, spent a week with him. I can't remember if he'd married-- no, he wasn't married then, he was still courting Gloria Stuart. She became the actress. (Incidentally Jim, she lives over here in the Village now,

next door to my late uncle's duplex--right next door.) Gloria Sheekman, her name is now.

MINK

Well, what did Newell really think of Jeffers at this point? Or did he think anything of him?

POWELL

I don't know. I don't remember. But he was trying to impress his girl, Gloria, who was quite literary. She wrote poetry. I've got some of her unpublished poems here in my files, as a matter of fact. I think he was just trying to please her in the literary sense.

MINK

Well, when you went to visit Newell, I think that you said in your autobiography, and just a minute ago, that this was what sort of crystallized it. By this time was Newell pretty hung up on Jeffers.

POWELL

Yes, he was. He was caretaker in Carmel of a model golf course, a miniature golf course. It opened only I think in the late afternoon and early evening, and he had all the rest of the time free. He was living in a little cottage in the pinewood, and he was a sculptor then. He already was. I don't know how he got started being a sculptor, but there he was. The job he was working on was a redwood beam for the dining room of Stelter on Escarpa Drive across from the college. This was a commission Stelter had given him. You see, Stelter was always trying to help us, and he said to Newell, "Carve me a beam and I'll pay you for it." (Newell, incidentally, had carved me a pair of bookends at that time, which I have. He did me a bookplate. He was an artist.) So Newell and I spent a lot of time together in that week. After he got off the golf course, we used to walk around Carmel. That was the summer of 1929. The Jeffers were in Ireland, and the house and tower were deserted, and we walked down there. A new book of Jeffers had come out, called *Cawdor and Other Poems*, and I read the whole darn thing aloud to Newell evenings while he was carving. Then in the morning we drove down the coast. That was my first experience down the coast road. It went down then as far as Pfeiffer's Point,

out of Big Sur Canyon, and up over the point and then it became a wagon trail. Newell and I drove down there, and there was a wrecked steamer, I remember, off Point Sur. Newell said, "Look, we'll swim out to it and lay salvage claim to it." I said, "Newell, you do it." I'll be your representative on shore. [laughter] But Newell put one foot in the water and thought better, because you know the water along that coast is icy the year round. Well, this was all tremendously exciting and formative and critical, because I said, "Well, Lord, this is a poet that can be read in depth; it can be related to this landscape." And I determined then and there that if I went on for graduate work, this was what I was going to write about.

MINK

Well, would you agree with Ward's statement that probably Jeffers more than anyone else influenced your life and his?

POWELL

As a writer, yes; as teachers, Stelter and Mac; as friends, Gordon; and certainly as women, my mother and Fay. Those are the influences you see that were all operating.

MINK

Well, what about the poetry of Jeffers. What is it about the poetry of Jeffers that turned you on and turned Ritchie on?

POWELL

Oh, I don't know, Jim. Frost said something about it. He said, "When you find the poetry that turns you on, you feel as though the top of your head had come off." It's some kind of a kinetic experience; it thrills you. It was both the form and the content and the relationship to a landscape--I think, and maybe that latter most of all--the sense of place that you always feel when you go to Big Sur, even today, that, my God, here's the inevitable spokesman for this coast--the granite, the hills, everything about it--here is the inevitable expression of it. It was one of those mysterious catalytic coalescences, not at all reasonable, but a very deep and instinctive thing and has endured, because I feel this way forty years later.

MINK

You say at the same time, or within a very short time after that, that your meeting with [John] Steinbeck and Steinbeck's work was in a way influenced by the same kind of coast area.

POWELL

Yes, yes, the same area, inland a bit, of course, as I've written. Steinbeck was the poet of the land over the Santa Lucias and the Salinas Valley and the San Joaquin. Yes, that happened certainly. As I wrote in a *Westways* chapter last winter, my introduction to Steinbeck was by Paul Jordan-Smith. He came into Jake's shop once about 1934, and he says, "Powell, you like Jeffers, don't you?" "Yes, sir." (Jordan sort of reviewed my Jeffers wonderfully well in the *Los Angeles Times* when the Primavera edition came out in 1940) He said, "Well, you'll like this," and he handed me a copy of Steinbeck's *To a God Unknown*. He said, "Here's the prose laureate of that region, just as Jeffers is the poetical laureate." And he was right. I read *To a God Unknown*, and that led right on into all of Steinbeck's work. Then he was absolutely unknown, except to a few discerning critics like P. J. Smith. I'm glad to hear you're going to tape him, because I think more than any other literary figure in this community, Paul Jordan-Smith has had the influence on all of us. He's a very great man and, Lord, get him while he's still able to talk, Jim.

MINK

Ritchie spoke about William Van Wyck, who was more or less a dilettante and wrote a book about Jeffers. Did you meet him?

POWELL

I met Bill Van Wyck years later, I think, or maybe it was in Paris. He was living in Paris. I think MacIntyre sent Ritchie and me to him, and I think we all met at a cafe. Of course, the little book on Jeffers came years later, way into the thirties. Incidentally, it's a very beautiful little book, because it's the first book on which Alvin Lustig, the type designer, worked. This was a landmark book, really, and Ritchie discerned this kid Lustig, who's dead now unfortunately, and had him decorate this little book. Lustig also did the Huxley's *Words and Their Meaning* and then Fisher's *The Ghost in the Underblows*, then became designer for New Directions and for Yale. He had a tremendous career, and died young. But it was Bill Van Wyck's little book on Jeffers that launched him.

MINK

Well, could it have been that Van Wyck was struck by the fact that here was a young American in a French university writing a doctoral dissertation about an American poet, Jeffers. Did you discuss this with him?

POWELL

No, I don't think I discussed it with him.

MINK

Maybe Ritchie did.

POWELL

Ritchie might have. I'll tell you one person I did discuss it with in Paris. It was the head of the American University Union, or whatever it was called there on the Boulevard St. Germain. This was Horatio S. Krans. He had done his doctoral dissertation at Columbia in 1910 or so on Yeats. He was, I guess, a Quaker, and my Aunt Mabel had sent me to him when she learned that I was to go down to a provincial university. So in the summer of 1930's I checked in with Dr. Krans at the student union, and I really was told off by him. He said, "Powell, don't leave Paris. Don't go into the provinces; that's the end. There's no intellectual life outside of Paris on this street and the Boulevard St. Michel." He said, "if you're going to study in France, go to the Sorbonne. For God's sake, don't go to Dijon. In the second place," he said, "you're wasting your time to work on a contemporary poet. It isn't possible to come to a judgment while a writer's still writing." I said to myself, "Hey, bud, how about your dissertation on Yeats?" [laughter] He was very much alive in 1910, but I didn't say anything about that. But I didn't listen to him; I didn't pay any attention to either of his advices. I went to Dijon and I worked on Jeffers, and I never saw Dr. Krans again.

MINK

Well, of course, your decision to go to Dijon was more or less influenced by Mary Frances Fisher.

POWELL

M. F. K. Fisher and Al Fisher.

MINK

This was because of the fact that there at Dijon was a Frenchman teaching English who understood and appreciated American literature.

POWELL

Yes, he was liberal and permissive. The Fishers were there, and the cost of living was very cheap. These were factors--certainly the strong factor. Another was that after a month in Paris with Ritchie, and a couple of weeks with Fay before she went back to America, I realized that it would be very difficult for me to settle down and study in Paris. There was just too much doing. There were too many cultural distractions, and my best bet would be a kind of a self-imposed exile in a quieter town. I had the wit enough, thank God, to realize this. I never would have made it in Paris.

MINK

Well, weren't there two students there in Paris that you met while you and Ritchie were there, from Occidental?

POWELL

Whatever Ritchie said is a bloody lie. [laughter] I hereby categorically deny it. I don't know what he said, but it's a lie.

MINK

Well, weren't there two young girls?

POWELL

Jim, Paris is made up of young girls!

MINK

They were from Occidental College and had come over and you saw quite a bit of them, you and Ritchie together?

POWELL

No, no. Categorical denial. No. Ritchie may have. Ritchie probably had a dozen girls, but I was, remember, going into exile as a recluse, an ascetic, a devoted scholar.

MINK

I see.

POWELL

Interest in girls, nonsense!

MINK

We'll let that go. [laughter]

POWELL

You tried, Jim- -by God, you've tried. I'll have to read what Ritchie said.

MINK

You said that after a month in Paris you decided that Dijon was really where you wanted to go?

POWELL

Yes. Well, I knew it in the beginning, really. I was just having my last fling in Paris. Ritchie was writing poetry--to these girls! --and I was writing my first novel about music and jazz. I used to go to the Luxembourg Gardens and rent a chair--one of those iron chairs that you rent from the custodian, the old harpie. I'd sit there and write. Ritchie would be writing and we'd read to each other in the evening.

MINK

This novel and some of the earlier things that you did don't show up in your collection. What happened to them?

POWELL

Hah! Right here in these files.

MINK

You kept this material; you just have never turned it over to the Library.

POWELL

Some I destroyed that was hopeless, and a couple later versions I think are still there in the files. I'll turn it all over eventually because it's interesting practice work. I kept trying over and over; I must have written it three or four times over the next two or three years. It was good apprentice work, and it was getting stuff out of my system.

MINK

You said you wrote about the jazz age?

POWELL

Yes. Well, one is called *Jazz Band*. It's thinly disguised autobiography, dance musicians of the twenties. I didn't do a Dorothy Baker *Young Man With a Horn*, nothing as good as that; but I think it might be interesting in a period sense, eventually, showing some of the folkways of college dance musicians.

MINK

Well, when you got to Dijon, I think that you described quite well in your autobiography what went on there. I was wondering one thing--maybe two, one at a time: you said that the Fishers were the only Americans in Dijon, did you have any worries about going to a French university where you would be the only American? Do you feel you were accepted?

POWELL

Oh, I suppose I had some qualms, but they were not very deep. Remember, I was very young, and you don't worry when you're young. You have great resilience and confidence, and doubts haven't eaten away at you yet, and I just felt full of confidence. I took the summer courses for foreigners. Then there were a great many foreigners there, you see; there were Czechs and there were Egyptians and there were Germans and Poles and some Africans. The courses were specially to help you learn French and an introduction to French culture and literature. And I faithfully attended those courses, I suppose, during all of latter August and September. The term didn't start until October fifteenth. So I had six weeks at least of five, six, seven hours a day of these courses for foreigners. And this was my indoctrination. I'd seen Dr. [Georges] Connes and told him what I wanted to do. He said, "Well, go home and write me a precis of what you want to do." And I took about six weeks to

do that and then got his OK to go ahead. But it was a rash thing to do. If I hadn't been young and ignorant--Yeats says, "Young, we loved each other and were ignorant." But I had the luck, the fortune, and the friendship, you see. Fisher had gone on and broken the way for me and was an enormous help. He was the next great influence in my life, Jim, because he taught me to organize my thoughts, to outline my work, and to proceed with clarity. And of course I was in the ideal environment in which to do this, because this is the whole French way. But Fisher was very patient with me, and I tried ideas on him. We talked and we were together hours. He was working on Shakespeare, doing his dissertation, and I volunteered to be his typist. I typed his whole dissertation twice--*An Introduction to Shakespearean Comedy*. And I saw him through, was at his soutenance. We were very close; we were as close in Dijon as Ritchie and I had been in California. And of course Ritchie was still in Paris that year, and he used to come down sometimes for weekends and we'd have reunions.

MINK

Well, after you'd been there about six months or so, did you have the same feeling, or do you think Dr. Krans was right, or was he wrong [about life in the provinces]?

POWELL

Well, I thought he was wrong, completely wrong. I think this was so because my teacher Connes and the faculty there--Pierre Trahard, the dean, and Charles Lambert in classics, and Jardellier in current affairs, and Gaston Roupnel in folklore. Mademoiselle Bianchis in comparative literature--were all exciting people and lecturers. It was small, Jim. You see, it wasn't like the Sorbonne with 30,000 students.

MINK

Well, it would have been more like Occidental, right?

POWELL

It was more like a college, because the university was divided into faculties; they were all separate. The faculty of Science, of Law, and of Letters were all in three different places, and I had to do only with Letters. The student body

there must have been well under a thousand. There were fewer than a thousand--oh, there must have been three or four hundred in Letters. It was a very good environment.

MINK

You didn't speak much in your autobiography about the other students. Was it sort of just you and Fisher and his wife and Ritchie? What about other students?

POWELL

No, I didn't make any strong friendships. I had some acquaintances with the student body, with French and with some of the foreign students. We met at the students' club, but I was withdrawn in a sense. I had been a great mixer at Occidental, and I found that that dissipated my energy and thinned out my work. I was really changed, because at Dijon I was single-minded and concentrating on this work I wanted to do on Jeffers and on learning French, and I just didn't have the contacts. No, I didn't write about them because I really didn't have them in any deep sense. My best French friend, of course--and I did write about him in the book--was Jean Matruchot, the professor of English in the Lycee Carnot, the boys' high school. That's the school that Henry Miller wrote about in *Tropic of Cancer*, you see. Matruchot and I formed a very deep and wonderful friendship. I think I told in the book, when he first saw me, it gave him a great start, because I was the spitting image of his brother. He was a young sculptor, an apprentice of Rodin, who had been lost in World War I, and I with my beard and my dark complexion, you know, Matruchot said, "My God, it's my brother!" And he was drawn to me instantly; a man twenty years older than I, I guess, a bachelor, a misanthrope, a very dour and ponderous man superficially, but with a very tender side and with a vast knowledge of our literature. So he would hear me endlessly on Jeffers and on concepts in Jeffers. We met twice a week for two and a half years. In one meeting we spoke in English and then the second meeting in the week we spoke in French. This was to help him with his English, although he didn't need my help, really. He liked to learn American idioms from me, but it was an enormous help to me in learning French. We translated many passages of Jeffers into French. That's the way to learn English, certainly, to translate passages into another language, then you learn what it means in English. Well,

he was my best French friend. Connes, my professor, I had no personal relationship with; you don't have that in France. You have a strictly student-teacher relationship. I never saw him outside of his office and in a classroom until I'd finished my degree, and then he gave us a celebration and a supper. Then after that, in all these years, until now, we've been close personal friends. A very great man in my life certainly is Georges Connes.

MINK

I was wondering: you grew a beard and donned corduroy.

POWELL

I went native.

MINK

You went native. Why did you do that, really?

POWELL

Well, the reason I grew the beard was that in the pension my room was on the third floor, no running water and no hot water in the house, except downstairs in the kitchen, and you can imagine what shaving would be in the morning with cold water in winter, or a walk down three flights to the kitchen and bring up a pot of hot water. I said, "To hell with it. I won't shave; I'll let it grow." It was simply that. It wasn't the Bohemian, and it certainly wasn't artiness. It wasn't any striving for effect. It was just because, damn it all, I didn't have any running hot water to shave with, and I have a stiff beard. And the corduroys, well, they're practical clothes, Jim. You don't have to press them, and a dark worker's corduroy doesn't show spots. You don't have to fold it up at night, you just stand it in the corner. I had a beautiful blue corduroy suit made for twelve dollars. I was just realistic and I merged with the population. I didn't want to be outstanding. I didn't want to be the show-off and the extrovert that I'd been at Occidental. You see, it was a revulsion against this whole role; it was another life, and this is the way I lived it.

MINK

Do you think that the necessity of learning the language, of being able to manipulate your academic life in this language, made you more attentive to the lectures?

POWELL

Oh, very much so. Yes, very much so. You hung on every word and you sought to penetrate the meaning. The big breakthrough came, Jim, not in class but in the movies. I went many nights to the movies, and they were the talkies, remember. They'd come in then; and I went to the French moving picture theater and listened to the sound tracks--the *Actualite* (the newsreel) . I remember Charlie Chaplin's *City Lights* (*Les Lumieres de la Ville*). I went five times to that wonderful picture. And one night I didn't understand what the sound track was, and then the next night by magic it all came clear. And I think this is an experience in learning a foreign language. You come up to a point of total breakthrough and then it all makes sense. Well, this was my experience in French, and after that, and to this day, I can understand a rapidly spoken and a complex French. The only trouble I would have would be when the dialect or patois or argot with unknown words is used. But it was a great joy when I realized that I knew what they were saying and that I could say it back.

MINK

Well then do you feel that at the point that this happened, maybe that your work in school began to improve?

POWELL

Oh, definitely. Then I got my confidence, you see, and I could face my final examinations with equanimity.

MINK

How soon did this occur?

POWELL

Six months after I reached Dijon I probably attained comprehension, yes, and then I had another two years, nearly, to live in this milieu. It was probably six months, probably by Christmastime. But, mind you, I was living in a pension with the Fishers in which we didn't speak English. All the language at table was French; the people of the pension , the owners, didn't speak English. This was the advantage. The Fishers and I, when we were together privately, spoke English of course; but when we were with the others we all spoke French.

MINK

You all ate together.

POWELL

We ate together in a common dining room with the family.

MINK

How was the food?

POWELL

Oh, my God, how was the food? Jim, it was heavenly! Madame Rigoulot (she became Madame Bonamour later) was a great cook, and the husband was a great cook of omelets. He always did the omelet. And the food just floated through the air. You reached up in the air and drew it down--marvelous food. And you want to know what we paid for that pension, room and board, three meals a day, not including laundry? We paid thirty francs a day which, with the franc at 4 cents, was \$1.20 a day, for complete room and board. Laundry then would run about a dollar a month, and Madame would do our shirts and socks and things. It was incredibly cheap.

MINK

I'm interested in just what you had to eat? I think that it would be good to have some sort of description of what provincial cooking is like.

POWELL

Well, you'd go down for breakfast at any hour. The French don't have formal breakfast, you know. They would put out rolls and jam and butter on the table and milk. I would have a simple breakfast, then. Any time you arose in the morning you could go to the little dining room for that. Then lunch at twelve thirty and dinner I suppose at six thirty or seven were full courses, but boarding-house style, with everything put on the table, and you helped yourself. But it would include soup--always a soup--and then a salad, and then meat or fish or fowl or poultry, and dessert, and always wine with the meals, and then coffee afterwards out in the patio, in the courtyard, if you wished it. But there was lots to eat, Jim, lots to eat. And always on special occasions, birthdays or Christmas, there would be absolute banquets. These people that were keeping the pension were not ordinary people. They'd fallen on evil times. They were doing this to make ends meet. The madame was the

daughter of a confiseur, or a candy-maker, from Montbeliard, which is over in Franche Comte, near Switzerland, at Belfort, and she brought a large dowry to the marriage. Her husband had been the Peugeot garageman of Dijon, the agent; but he was a drinker and he'd gone through her dowry and was a pretty rough individual--Monsieur Rigoulot--and he was a woman chaser. They had three children, and life was pretty hard for Madame, who was having to keep the pension . She and her daughter would do a lot of the housework, and the dowry was gone. She still had fine linens and silver; so we had wonderful sheets and pillowcases and towels and service at the table, but they needed the money from the pension people. There were the Fishers, and occasionally there 'd be another foreign student or two. But it was a wonderful abundant household in spite of hard times. They didn't stint us, and I was fortunate, really, being cared for that way by this family.

MINK

Larry, we know what life is like in the university here, but did you find it somewhat different in the way that classes are conducted and in what you're expected to do?

POWELL

Totally.

MINK

Your examinations, for instance, and your assignments, how do they differ?

POWELL

Oh, it's very permissive. There aren't specific assignments. You have a general area to cover. I wasn't enrolled in classes as such. I simply would be held accountable at the time of my final examinations for certain subjects in Anglo-American literature. So I took any courses that I could take that would help throw light on this and that would improve my knowledge of French, but you weren't in actual course enrollment as a doctoral candidate.

MINK

In other words, you just went and paid a sum of money and went to school.

POWELL

That's right. And I was a graduate student, you see, which is much more permissive. There aren't the units and the credits to get through as there are here in that program that I was in. But the day of reckoning comes, of course, when you have your final oral examinations. Then if you've paid attention and if you've had courses or lectures from faculty that are on your examining committee, you have an insight into their mind. But you don't know who's going to be on your examining committee; so you go across the curriculum as widely as you can, sampling different professors. This is the way it was.

MINK

There would be no grades at the end of the term or anything like that?

POWELL

No, nothing like that in the doctoral program. No, it was utterly different from the American way--your dissertation and your defense of it and your subsidiary theses. I had two subsidiary theses, one on Shelley and Byron and the use of incest in their poetry, which tied in with Jeffers' treatment of incest, and then my other subsidiary thesis was the Pacific Coast in Whitman's work.

MINK

Yes, you've mentioned this. Is there a deadline on the subsidiary theses?

POWELL

You're subject to examination on them at the same time that you're examined on your printed thesis, but you select them early.

MINK

When do you hand them in? At the same time you hand in your main thesis?

POWELL

You don't; they aren't written. They're oral. You're not required to hand in subsidiary theses; you're simply required to defend them orally at the time of your examination. But you notify your professor what you've chosen, and you get his advice on choosing them-- this was Connes and I worked this out-- things that would relate to my main thesis, you see, the theme of incest and then the theme of the Pacific Coast.

MINK

Well, why does the theme of incest relate to Jeffers?

POWELL

Well, he treated this in "Tamar" and in an early poem called "Rosalind and Helen." He had been influenced by Shelley's *Cenci* and Byron's *Manfred* or whatever it was. Byron, of course, not only wrote about incest, but he was said to have practiced it with his half-sister. In the Bible, too, you see the theme of "Tamar." All these things Jeffers had been influenced by, so the point was to try to pin down these influences, I actually wrote out in French two statements of my subsidiary theses.

MINK

Did you hand those in to Connes?

POWELL

Tentatively he approved them, and then at the final examination I read them two subsidiary statements-- a precis of what I had done--and then waited for questions and discussion. Although I wasn't required to turn them in, I had them prepared in French, This was, I think, Connes' advice and Fisher's advice--not to leave it all just to oral chance, but to have them before me. I have those somewhere here in my papers.

MINK

Was this perfectly acceptable that you do this?

POWELL

Oh, yes.

MINK

Is it customary, or was this exceptional?

POWELL

I don't remember. But you can have all your notes, anything you want in front of you.

MINK

At any time during the exam?

POWELL

Yes, at any time. Oh, yes, sure. I was fortunate of course in having Georges Connes as my maitre. He wanted me to pass, of course. It's the same here. isn't it?

MINK

Yes sure.

POWELL

You have a protector in a sense if it gets rough, and he advised me in the beginning. He said, "Now let the chief examiner talk; don't interrupt him." The chief examiner was a Monsieur Cestre, who was head of American literature in the Sorbonne, Charles Cestre. He was a famous man in American studies in France, because he was old (he must have been seventy), and he'd held the chair for forty years. He wrote an occasional column in the *New York Times Book Review*. He'd written a book in English on E. A. Robinson, which I had of course. He had made his start, incidentally, in the high school, Lycee Carnot, where Matruchot taught. He was a Burgundian, and his first teaching had been in Dijon; so in a sense this was a homecoming for him. Cestre came down. You see, in a doctoral dissertation examination, they bring from any one of the sixteen French universities the person best qualified to head the jury.

MINK

Too bad they don't do that here.

POWELL

Yes. And this was, you see, the top man in American studies in France. He came down and headed the jury. Connes said, "Let him talk; don't interrupt him." So naturally when Cestre had the word, his first remarks were how good it was to be back in Dijon, and he began to reminisce of Dijon in the 1890's. And nobody said a word. Then he gradually picked me up in his sights and brought his guns to bear on me. And I was flabbergasted.

MINK

What did he ask you?

POWELL

Well, he said, "Now, Monsieur Powell, it's very interesting what you've written about the Carmel coast. Of course, it's not foreign to me," he said, "I remember my summers, teaching at Stanford, during which I went down on that coast." And he said, "It seems to me, sir, that you've not paid enough attention to the effect of fog in Jeffers' poetry." [laughter] He said, "I remember the sea fogs at Carmel. They came in and they stayed in; they never receded. I never saw anything but fog there. Don't you think, sir, that the weather had something to do with Jeffers' pessimism and made this man morbid." And, my God, he launched into a whole speech about how weather affects poetry. And I said, "Of course, you're absolutely right." ("Vousavez bien raison.") I encouraged him, and, my God, he gave us a dissertation on weather. He went back to [Robert Louis] Stevenson, of course, on the sea fogs, how they came in over Silverado, up in the Napa Valley, and he ranged up and down California. He wanted to show off his knowledge of California; and, Lord, I let him! But I think the wicked one on the jury was. . .

MINK

There's always one, isn't there?

POWELL

Yes. It was the dean, Pierre Trahard . He was the dean of the Faculty of Letters. Il etait bien mechant. He was a man who looked like a fox. He had a fox face--a red face, long nose, bristling mustache-- and he was a purist. I'd been to his lectures on what he called "La sensibilite francaise au dix-septieme Siecle." He was a great one on the seventeenth century-- on Racine, Moliere, and Corneille. I'd been to those lectures. He was also a great one on the French Symbolists. I'd followed him closely. He was a purist. He had no truck with slang or with any corruption of the language, and I could see the expression on Pierre Trahard 's face when he heard me speak French. It was like a man passing a peach pit. [laughter] His face screwed up; and, God, I could see the pain in it, and he shrugged his shoulders and said, "Well, it's the best the boy can do apparently. We'll have to put up with it." I was fluent, but I had an American accent, and this pained Trahard. So he bore in on me, I

think, a little on the subsidiary thesis. He said, "You haven't paid enough attention, sir, to the Bible and examples of Incest in the Bible." He said, "What are they? Can you enumerate them?" Monsieur Connes interrupted and said, "My dear colleague, I don't think this is relevant, is it? The subsidiary thesis is Byron and Shelley and incest, not the Bible." Trahard says, "Now wait a minute. . ." I just kept quiet, and the two of them, you see, got going at each other, Connes trying to get him off me because Trahard was trying to open up a whole new area.

MINK

Who won? I guess Connes did.

POWELL

Well, Connes said, "No, sir, I cannot allow this. This is a departure and I think it's entirely unreasonable, Monsieur le Doyen, to expect of my candidate." I said, "If you will allow me. . ." Connes says, "Nonsense; quiet. Let me settle this." [laughter] And God there was all this wonderful conflict on the jury, you see, and then Cestre said, "Now, now, gentlemen." He said, "My boys, let me have the word again. I want to go back to this matter of fog." [laughter] God, the audience of course was loving it.

MINK

They don't say anything.

POWELL

Oh, no.

MINK

It's absolutely quiet?

POWELL

Absolutely quiet. A roomful. It's a little — what they call a petit amphitheatre, the small assembly room.

MINK

Where do they seat you?

POWELL

Well, you sit like this at a table on the floor facing the jury, which is on a raised platform.

MINK

You have your back to the audience.

POWELL

Back to the audience. You're down there, a poor isolated little bastard, and the jury of four are seated up there. You look up at them, and they look out at the audience. Jesus, it's like a trial.

MINK

But of course you'd been to Fisher's before.

POWELL

I'd been to Fisher's. I had observed it.

MINK

How did he make out?

POWELL

Oh, he did very well. He had Connes protecting him, and then as chief advisor he had the head of English studies in the Sorbonne, Emile Legouis, a great authority on Wordsworth. And Legouis, incidentally, was Connes' father-in-law (Connes had married his daughter when he had been at the Sorbonne); so this was a family affair. Legouis then must have been seventy-five, a very distinguished man and a great authority, too, on Shakespeare. That was a very interesting examination, because Fisher was loaded with knowledge of Shakespeare and Connes had written a book on Shakespeare and Legouis; and, my God, they really took off. They dominated the whole discussion. The rest of the jury was wiped out. I'd seen all this happen.

MINK

Fisher didn't get much of a chance to say anything either.

POWELL

Well, he said just enough at the right times, but he let Legouis do most of the talking. That's the secret, of course, Jim, in any examination; it's true here in doctoral examinations that I've been through.

MINK

Many that we know about in the history department are very similar.

POWELL

I've sat on some of those committees with John Caughey and with Frank Klingberg once.

MINK

Later, we'll want to talk about them.

POWELL

That's getting ahead, isn't it?

MINK

Your mother had come and the Fishers had departed.

POWELL

They were in Strasbourg.

MINK

So Fisher didn't see your exam.

POWELL

No, he was in Strasbourg, I think.

MINK

When your mother came to take up cooking for you, there's something that I was curious about. She apparently later became interested in writing about this experience. Was this her own idea, or did you encourage her in it?

POWELL

I encouraged her later. She kept a diary all through this, and back in the United States in the Depression, when she was feeling blue and cut off and would

have liked to gone back to Europe, I suggested that she occupy her time with writing up her journals.

MINK

Sort of a vicarious kind of thing.

POWELL

Yes, that's right--reliving it that way. That's how she did it. Yes, I encouraged her very strongly and offered to type it all up for her. Of course, I started and I never finished it and then it got sidetracked and put away, and I didn't find it until after she died.

MINK

And then you did have it printed.

POWELL

I had it printed, and I always regret that I didn't do this in her lifetime, although she might not have agreed. Incidentally, Jim, it has been a very successful book. It's been read a great deal by people here and there that have written me. I put some in libraries and gave many away, and it's been a book that's made a good impression, because it's a very sweet quiet book. The title was mine-- *The Quiet Side of Europe*, a good Quaker title.

MINK

Also meaning, though, life in the provinces, in the quieter area?

POWELL

Yes, that's right. Yes, sure, a double meaning.

MINK

During that time, she did all your cooking.

POWELL

We took over the Fishers' apartment, which had a little kitchenette. The pension was closed actually then.

MINK

Had they just gone broke?

POWELL

No, they moved in with her parents, who had come to Dijon then, the old mother and father who still had some money. I think she was in the process of divorcing her husband, and the pension quarters they just rented. The other rooms were rented, and my mother and I rented the Fishers' top-floor apartment, which had this little kitchenette, as I say. There was running water; but by that time I didn't intend to shave, so I just let the beard grow.

MINK

What did your mother think when she saw you with a beard? Of course, she knew you had it, I'm sure.

POWELL

I think she was a little conventional about it. She preferred a clean-shaven face, but she never nagged me.

MINK

Then to write your dissertation, I believe you said you went to the Riviera.

POWELL

Part of that spring of 1932, I guess, my mother went over to London to be with my brother Clark, who was up on sick leave from South Africa.

MINK

Had this been after Clark's accident?

POWELL

No, before. You see, he didn't die until 1938. This was well before, but he had a sabbatical, or I think he had some kind of sick leave, too, and he came up to England. So my mother went over to visit with him. The Fishers had left Strasbourg and gone down to this fishing port and said, "Come on down." So I was down there about six weeks.

MINK

You said that by this time Al Fisher had grown more introspective; what did you mean by that?

POWELL

Well, he was, I think, reluctant to go back to the United States is what it was. He was brooding over that. The Depression was really deep, and he didn't see any job. He liked France very much. He liked the way of life. He's stopped writing the long poem "The Ghost" and was writing novels. I think he wanted to stay on and make his life in France, but he couldn't see it clear. I think he was very unhappy about this.

MINK

How was he getting along financially, anyway?

POWELL

Well, they weren't doing very well; I think her parents were sending them some money, and maybe his mother (his father had died). But I realized that's why he was unhappy.

MINK

Well, they were subsequently divorced, and I had wondered if this was leading up to that and if they were having marital problems?

POWELL

It could have been, but it wasn't obvious. They were still apparently happy. This came later in the thirties when they were living at Laguna.

MINK

Did you actually do some of the writing of your dissertation while you were down there?

POWELL

Oh, yes. I wrote every morning on it. I had a little summer house there next to the pension with a workroom. I was working on the first draft, a marvelous work period, and then in the afternoons, I'd walk on the beach or in the hills and go into Nice on the bus.

MINK

Well, all told, how long do you think it took you to write it--six months, a year?

POWELL

I think probably nine months. I probably started in January of 1932 and was working right up to October.

MINK

Well, it seemed to me to be such a short book. It didn't seem to me it would have taken you so long. Was writing hard for you at this point?

POWELL

What do you mean a short book, Jim, for Christ's sake!

MINK

It's not as large as your autobiography, for example.

POWELL

Yes, it was. [tape recorder turned off]

MINK

The point here is that the book is really (now that we turned the tape off and looked at it closely) packed. Is that it? POWELL: Well, it's concise. It's not padded. It's a concise introduction to the poetry--what his poetry consisted of, what his sources were, what his practices were, his vocabulary, his philosophy, a criticism of it. It's a concise introduction, boiled down. I suppose one point was that I had to pay for the printing of a dissertation, and costs were such—oh, Lord, but it was cheap, Jim.

MINK

Was this a sine qua non of getting the degree? You had to have a printed book?

POWELL

Yes.

MINK

Packaged to deliver?

POWELL

Yes, you had to furnish eighty copies to the university for distribution to French universities and foreign exchanges. Incidentally, that's a sore point, because the University of California, Berkeley, was on their exchange list to receive French doctoral dissertations. When I became a library school student later at Berkeley, I tried to find that dissertation that they had received, and they couldn't find it.

MINK

It was probably bogged down in the works someplace,

POWELL

I suppose. But you furnished eighty copies, and I had it printed there at the same print shop that had been owned by Darantiere, who had printed Joyce's *Ulysses* and Hemingway. Darantiere had left and it was owned by Bernigaud and Privat, but it was the same shop.

MINK

This was in Paris.

POWELL

No, Dijon. Rue Bossuet.

MINK

How come you didn't have it printed by Ritchie's.

POWELL

[F. L.] Schmied?

MINK

Schmied, yes.

POWELL

Oh, he was a fancy printer.

MINK

He would charge you too much.

POWELL

Oh, he wouldn't have done it. [laughter] He was a deluxe art printer. No, this was a working French provincial print shop. And I liked to think that it was out of this shop that *Ulysses* came and Hemingway's first book, and I was a little follow-up. They didn't speak English. The monotype operator (it was set in monotype) knew no English, and sometimes the proofs were a bit sticky. But I'd typed it myself; it was pretty good copy. I loved going there to the print shop--the clanking of the linotype and the monotype-- picking up the galleys, going and sitting on my ass at a cafe and reading proof, drinking a Vin blanc-cassis, the Dijon cocktail of white wine and cassis. Those were my drinking days then; I could take a bit of alcohol. It was a good life, Jim, there in Dijon-- quiet, uninterrupted, no distractions.

MINK

Did Connes advise you in this, or did he leave this entirely up to you? Just say, "Monsieur Powell, you must have your dissertation printed up."

POWELL

That's right. He said, "if you want advice, come and I'll talk with you, but this is your show." You outlined and you submitted trial sections. I gave him some work in progress at different times. He said, "Go ahead, go ahead; you're doing all right."

MINK

Well, here it's a little different, isn't it? Your thesis is typed up and then it's sent to the whole committee who reads it, and you don't have the go-ahead signal until then. What about there?

POWELL

Well, if you're admitted to candidacy and you submit specimens of your work, you're assumed to be competent.

MINK

Well, when are you admitted to candidacy?

POWELL

Whenever your professor decides that you are.

MINK

Well, how did Connes decide that you were? Did he talk to you?

POWELL

Well, yes.

MINK

Did he ask you questions?

POWELL

He approved a precis or outline or whatever, and you get an advancement to candidacy at some certain point. God, I don't remember when it was, Jim. But he says yes, go ahead. The time will be set up, and roughly it'll be in the autumn of 1932. But they don't tell you until about a week before.

MINK

Probably just as well.

POWELL

Oh, it's just as well. My God, it's just as well! You'd suffer agonies because it 's a rather frightening thing if you have any weakness, or if you haven't done your work. There you are, before a jury, not your peers but your superiors, and with an audience in back of you. You can be made a monkey of, and they do it, Jim. My God, they do it. They slaughter some of them. They absolutely slaughter them and wipe them out. So it's playing for keeps. The secret is to be prepared, to know your subject, to have absolute depth knowledge of what you're presenting, and I had this, by God. I'd had it, Christ, I'd lived with Jeffers. I'd just saturated myself.

MINK

Not physically, though?

POWELL

Not physically. I never met him. I had his work in my mind, backward and forward and related; and I'd sweated over it and annotated it and distilled it in this book, and I was prepared.

MINK

Well, now, for the sources, aside from the work of Jeffers himself, what else did you use? Commentaries on his work?

POWELL

There weren't many, but I had the ones that there were: George Sterling's book, Louis Adamic's book, and periodical writings; reviews by Mark Van Doren and Babette Deutsch and James Rorty. I had copies and I read all the magazine reviews. You see, I could go up to Paris to the American Library in Paris.

MINK

The Dijon library, I take it, was not very helpful.

POWELL

No, not at all, only for encyclopedias or reference works, and any reading on classical themes-- incest and that sort of thing. But I had my own Oxford text of Shelley and of Byron. I had works of Nietzsche and works on science-- Eddington and Jeans--that I thought had influenced Jeffers' cosmic views. I had Aristotle on *Poetics*. I have a list here of books that I owned. It's interesting, I came across it the other day in my file. [tape recorder turned off]

MINK

Meanwhile, you were corresponding with Jeffers; so I suppose that the correspondence in a sense was what you might call primary research material.

POWELL

Oh, it was wonderful. I had two or three letters from him, and a number from Una, and they've been printed in the Johns Hopkins' volume of his letters that came out last year [1968].

MINK

I was wondering what Connes might have thought about this kind of source material? You know, you're writing a book on a poet, and he's commenting on what you're writing. How valid is this for an appraisal of his work, because you're commenting on a self-appraisal. See what I mean?

POWELL

Well, I don't know what's wrong with that, Jim. That's what it is, sure; you take it for what it is. It's not definitive. It's simply tentative. I wrote questions to him and he responded, particularly about influences—Freud, Nietzsche, the Bible.

MINK

What he thought had influenced him?

POWELL

Yes. And his letters to me—I gave everything to Occidental. Incidentally, all my notes on my dissertation and on Jeffers are at Oxy; they aren't here. I put them over there because all my Jeffers' stuff is over there. There's a box a foot high, really, of my working notes. My copies of his books that are annotated I've kept because I want eventually to do a final book on him, and I suppose those would go to Occidental. Isn't that right? Most of my collection is here at UCLA, but the Jeffers' things, it seems to me, belong at Oxy.

MINK

I think so.

POWELL

Well, he wrote me finally, "When you come back to the United States, if you're ever up this way, come and see us." And that's why I did.

MINK

I wonder if you would talk about that first visit for a few minutes.

POWELL

Oh, it was really a wonderful sort of a frosting on the cake at the end, to go there with the work done, and to meet him finally and to discover what a sweet wonderful guy he was.

MINK

You had sent him a copy of the book?

POWELL

I think so, yes.

MINK

So he had read it by the time you met him?

POWELL

Well, I doubt that he had read it, Jim. He didn't read things about himself, really. I think Una read it; but I'm sure he didn't.

MINK

Really?

POWELL

No, he didn't read stuff about him. He may have looked at it, but he said that to read what's written about him interferes with his work, and he just didn't try to do it. He depended on Una. Then the twelve years he lived after she died, he just didn't pay any attention. He didn't answer letters and let everything slide. But it was a marvelous thing to come back to Carmel in, I guess, the autumn of 1933. I was broke; I'd hitchhiked across from New York. Well, I'd ridden the train to Chicago and stayed with Merritt Moore, who had been my philosophy professor at Occidental (he was then teaching philosophy at the University of Chicago) . I stayed with him. We went to the World's Fair there in Chicago. I remember we saw Sally Rand, the fan dancer, [laughter] Then by some connection, I got a ride from Chicago to Berkeley with a Pomona College student who was coming back to school in a Ford V-8 roadster, and he really drove like a maniac. We made it across hightail, and he dropped me off in Berkeley. I slept on the sofa in my Aunt Marian's apartment, and then I caught the Greyhound bus down to Carmel. I arrived there in the late morning, dumped out on the street. Newell wasn't there then, but he had referred me to a Helen Haight, who lived down near the point where Jeffers lived, with a Norwegian carpenter named Helmut Deetjen, and she would put me up and give me a bed for fifty cents a day or something.

So there I was on the main street in Carmel with two suitcases, a briefcase and a typewriter, and no transportation. The chief of police came along in a prowl car and I looked suspicious I guess. He said, "What are you doing?" I said, "Well, I want to get to Miss Haight's." "Well," he said, "jump in, I'll take you." This was a wonderful welcome, really. The chief of police [laughter] took all my bags and drove me down. This wasn't police brutality, this was police gentility; and I stayed then, boarded as it were, with Helen Haight and Helmut Deetjen for a week. I knew that Jeffers had a sign on his gate, "No Visitors Until After 4 PM," and I had a date set up for my first visit; but God I couldn't wait until four, I turned up at three, and Una Jeffers chewed me out. She said, "I know you've come a long way and you're eager to meet the poet, but can't you read?" [laughter] And she said, "Besides, I'm not dressed." She had on an old grey housedress, and her braided hair hung down (she hadn't put it up); and that's what she was mad about, really, that I'd caught her before she was ready. But she said, "Come on in." And then I met Robin, and he filled the room, really, Jim, with his presence. There he was, and you were aware of him. He was very handsome and quiet and a relaxed man, but absolutely at ease and not embarrassed at all. He just wanted to talk about friends and his student years in Switzerland at Laussane, Zurich, and he got to reminiscing of what it had been like to live there. He wanted to know what Dijon was like, and had I been to Switzerland. We talked about everything but his poetry. He didn't want to talk about his poetry, but I asked him about his reading. (I wrote it all up, Jim, in that chapter in the American edition of my book. There is an Introductory chapter which appeared first in *Westways*. It was my first contribution to *Westways*, 1934. The whole story's there of what we talked about.) I went back every day for a week; they were very kind and we drove down the coast, he and Una and I. I was working on another edition of the map that Ritchie drew eventually, and we'd stop everywhere. He'd say, "Well, I thought of this place as the setting." And he would comment and I would ask him, "Where did you place this action?" "Well," he said, "it was a bit of a composite of these canyons." And it was a helluva good topographical and poetical tour of the coast.

MINK

How far down the coast did you actually go?

POWELL

We went down to Pfeiffer's Point.

MINK

That's as far as you could go?

POWELL

The road was under construction, the big road. It wasn't open until 1938, I guess, through to San Simeon; but we went clear on down, I think, to where it was barricaded. It was very foggy one day that we went down; we couldn't see a damn thing. But, of course, it gave us a great opportunity to talk. He was a very kind and gentle man.

MINK

Did you say anything to him about the episode in your final examination of the fog?

POWELL

I think we probably talked about that. He was terribly amused. "Oh," he said, "no, my pessimism, if that's what you want to call it, is probably inherited. It's from a long line of Presbyterian clergymen." [laughter] And he had a sense of humor; he could turn a joke. But he said, "No, actually, I love the dark weather; I do my best and I write well when it's socked in." Of course, I feel the same way, Jim. I like the foggy mornings up the coast. I do my best work when I can't see anything but the pencil and paper in front of me. Oh, that was really a great reward. Probably the climax of all my academic work was to go there and spend those days with Jeffers, and then to go back and put the final notes together and get the American edition of my book. I sent a draft of that chapter about Jeffers to Una, and she tore hell out of it.

MINK

She did?

POWELL

Yes, she annotated it and scratched it through and sent it back, "You can't say this! Why do you say that?"

MINK

Did she like you?

POWELL

Yes, she liked me. She was critical though. She was defending him and protecting him and always on the defensive. She liked me, sure; we were friends right up to the end. She wrote me an enormous number of letters. They're all over at Oxy. I accepted a number of her criticisms, of course, and I didn't print what she said not to; that annotated chapter is over at Occidental in the archives. Somebody ought to publish it sometime--"Una on Powell on Robin." [laughter]

1.6. TAPE NUMBER: III, Side Two (August 26, 1969)

MINK

To begin this morning, would you talk a little bit about the Primavera Press and the people who were involved with its establishment, including, of course, yourself.

POWELL

Well, I came later; I wasn't an establisher.

MINK

Yes. [laughter]

POWELL

Well, I came back to Southern California in 1933. I met Fay again and we were married as soon as it was possible. My hope was to make a living by writing, editing--freelance, or any kind of writing. I would have taken a teaching job, but there weren't any. I talked with Stelter at Occidental right away. He wanted me to come into the English department there, but there wasn't any job of course. This was a deep depression.

MINK

Well, even if there had been, do you think you might have encountered some opposition from Robert Glass Cleland?

POWELL

I don't know; that's possible. But Dr. Bird was on top then. He was the very strong man at the college, and he was very much taken with my work on Jeffers. He gave a reception for us, and Ritchie was there and Cleland was there. It was at the Birds' home, and we really started to make it up then. No, I don't think I would, Jim. I think it would have worked out, particularly in view of the fact that I was married to Fay and that her uncle was still chairman of the board of trustees. Cleland recognized then that that was it. But the opposition would probably have come from Fay. She didn't want to go back to the college. She didn't want to be in the shadow of her aunt and uncle. And she didn't think it was right for us to go back there, and I think she would have objected to this--wisely, too, as I see it now.

MINK

I suppose it would have meant for her the role of a faculty wife and all that goes with that.

POWELL

Yes. She didn't want that. She married me, I think, for the Bohemian that I was, in the good sense of the word, and she wanted a free life, not structured in society and things that her aunt would have wished for her.

MINK

Before we get to the present, while we are talking about Fay, I hadn't realized that she had been married before. Was your meeting with her then accidental, or did you purposely seek her out?

POWELL

Oh, Jim, I don't think I want to get into the details of this. Let's say it was an inevitable meeting, and we realized that we were meant to live together and work together. And I still think it was right that we had the separation and the experience that befell both of us. It made us better prepared to marry. Well, at any rate, I had a little windfall then-- oh, something connected with the family--from either my brother or my mother, it was about \$200, and with the chapter on Jeffers that I'd sold to *Westways* to Phil Hanna, we had about \$250 capital. So we went to Three Arches, which is now South Laguna, and we rented a furnished cottage for three months for the grand total of \$45--\$15 a

month, furnished--and we set up housekeeping there, and I was writing. I was writing a number of things, travel pieces and starting a book on D. H. Lawrence, revising the book on Jeffers, getting it ready for American printing. I'd applied for a Guggenheim Fellowship, and we had plans to go back to Europe.

MINK

You haven't made it clear, have you, just exactly how it was that you became interested in D. H. Lawrence. When did this interest first occur?

POWELL

I think it was at college through reading. I think Dr. [Henry G.] Bieler--and I've never talked about him; I should because he was a great factor in my life, and still is--I think it was in his waiting room that I picked up copies of *The Rainbow* and *Sons and Lovers*, but it might have been in reading for Percy Houston or one of the teachers at Oxy. At any rate, I found him very sympathetic in his essays, his travel pieces, his novels. Back in England on my way home, I met some of his circle, although (he'd been dead since 1930) I never met him. At any rate, there we were at Laguna, and the Fishers were living there then, Al and M. F. K. Fisher.

MINK

Would you think that in any way, in this writing that you were doing at that time, that you were influenced by or trying to emulate what D. H. Lawrence had done?

POWELL

Not consciously. Possibly unconsciously. I was still working on the novel about the musical days, the third draft, and it kept getting a little better, but still not good enough. I'd sent out a lot of pieces to Eastern magazines--travel pieces.

MINK

You were discouraged, I suppose, during the Depression. Rejection slips were standard.

POWELL

Yes.

MINK

Were many people writing then?

POWELL

I was too young to be discouraged, Jim. I didn't know what discouragement was. Youth has resilience, blindness, all the marvelous built-in protections that come with youth. We didn't even know what the Depression was, except we didn't have any money; but then you had other things. We made it on the very margin, but we were happy then. We were preparing a Jeffers book, as I said, for publication by Primavera Press, which then was under Zeitlin, Ritchie, Carey McWilliams, and Phil Townsend Hanna.

MINK

How had they all happened to get together?

POWELL

Around Jake's shop. Jake was a great catalyst. And it was a little shop then at 705 1/2 West Sixth Street, just west of Hope. It was a great meeting place, and Ritchie and I'd go in there when we worked for Vroman's in 1929. That's when we first met Jake. We used to rendezvous there. Jake was an exotic, fascinating character, generous and interested in all kinds of cultural things that were going on, and he had imported books, one of the few bookshops in town that stocked Oxford University Press books, Faber and Faber's books. At any rate, Jake had the idea of a regional press. I don't know where he got it. You'll have to find that out from Jake. And Hanna was also interested, because *Westways* was then very much of a regional historical magazine. Carey McWilliams, who was a young lawyer with Black, Hammack and McWilliams, was interested in literature. He had written his book on Ambrose Bierce, which came out in 1929, and he was working on a book on Yeats. It was before McWilliams became interested in labor and its problems; the Depression brought that about. He was a man of purely belles lettres at that time, and Ritchie was valuable to them all because he was the printer; he was starting with his shop.

MINK

Could you describe Carey McWilliams as you knew him then? What did he look like?

POWELL

He looked like a college professor. He was a big chap with horn-rimmed glasses, and he was neat and precise, very much of a lawyer, not a Bohemian--not a literary figure at all--but a real crackling sharp mind and a tremendous flair for research. He could have had a great literary career if he'd chosen.

MINK

What about Hanna, what did he look like?

POWELL

Well, Hanna, of course, had been stricken down very early by some spinal ailment, and he had very acute spinal arthritis. He walked almost doubled over; he was far more stooped than I am. He was way over to the ground. But, my God, he was a handsome man, a Roman head, a Roman nose, the patrician of the highest sort, an expert on food and wines and Spanish language and literature and Western topography.

MINK

How was it that he came to be associated with the Automobile Club of Southern California?

POWELL

Well, he succeeded Bill Henry, I guess. Bill Henry, the sportswriter, was the editor of *Touring Topics* and I think Hanna was a young public relations journalist, got on the staff, and just stayed on and worked up.

MINK

He probably must have had the job that Bill Newbro had, being in charge of the public relations department perhaps.

POWELL

He did; he was public relations director and editor of *Touring Topics*. Newbro succeeded him, I guess, in the public relations end. Well, at any rate, here they were gathered around, and Jake knew I was back, and Ritchie knew we were

running out of money; and, lo and behold, Jake needed a typist-secretary-flunky, and Ritchie knew, furthermore, that I had worked in the early 1920s in my teens for my uncle in San Francisco as a stenographer at Link Belt [Company] .

MINK

You worked there in the summers.

POWELL

I worked there summers, and I was an expert typist through South Pasadena High School commercial courses.

MINK

Did you like working up there?

POWELL

In San Francisco?

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

Oh, yes, I had a helluva good time. I lived in Berkeley with my uncle and commuted on the Key System, and it was a very beautiful experience riding the ferryboat, going to the B and G Sandwich Shop for lunch, and then sitting in the lobby of the Palace Hotel. I was there when Harding died, 1922, I guess. Yes, that was my first taste of San Francisco, and I loved it. But Jake needed a typist, a flunky. I needed money. We were running out. Ritchie was the go-between. I came up once I remember for an interview with Jake. We sat on a bench in the Public Library park to get out of the shop, right around the corner. We talked about what I could do. He was impressed also with my doctor's degree. He thought this would be a nice addition to his shop.

MINK

Prestige element?

POWELL

Yes; prestige item for Jake, who's always felt his lack of formal education, and he liked people around him who have it.

MINK

I sensed that.

POWELL

It was an inferiority complex, if you will, and Ritchie and Hanna and I, all of us, enhanced Jake-- gave him more security, which is good. I'm not criticizing; I'm just stating it. So, lo and behold, down at Three Arches one day when we were down to the last nickel, we got a telegram from Jake: "Telephone me collect." I think Ritchie was there at the house having dinner with Fay and me at the time, and I went out and phoned, and it was Jake saying, "Come to work Monday." I said, "Well, I don't want a full-time job. I want to be a writer." He said, "Good, I can't pay a full-time salary; work half time."

MINK

Presently, how much was he making on the shop, or was he just making it?

POWELL

I don't know. I think Jake was profiting then. I think he was having a very good period, even in the Depression.

MINK

Was he always very closemouthed about his financial transactions?

POWELL

Yes. He didn't share the information, but he was paying alimony to at least one wife. He was married to Gina then and they were living well. Not Jake as much as Gina--I think she was a rather a . . .not a spendthrift, but she liked good living. So the living was taken out of the shop primarily by Jake, and then what was left over, his employees got.

MINK

You described him in your autobiography as a "more than exotic character." What did you mean by that statement?

POWELL

Well, I meant he was a man of character and of humaneness; he was interested in people and in furthering people's careers and talents and building a cultural center in the city. He was very exotic, certainly; but he was also a man of great character and genuine philanthropic cultural drive. He helped Paul Landacre. He helped Ritchie, of course; he gave Ritchie job after job to do printing.

MINK

How did he help Landacre? POWELL: He showed his work; he showed the woodcuts, had exhibits, and sold them.

MINK

In his shop?

POWELL

In his shop. You see, it was a little art gallery as well as a bookshop. That's how we got Rockwell Kent to illustrate my book when it came out. He had a little show in Jake's shop, and Jake said, "I'm publishing a book on Jeffers. Will you do chapter initials?" We all met at Ritchie's press, and that's how it came about.

MINK

It would be well at this point to describe Rockwell Kent, what he looked like.

POWELL

He was a little guy, bald as an egg. He didn't look like an artist; he looked like an outdoorsman or maybe an ice skater or a trapper. He wore rugged outdoor-type clothes. He wasn't a typical artist. But he was very sharp. Well, artists rarely look like artists-- that is, the real ones.

MINK

Was this venture in woodcuts for the Jeffers' book your sole contact with Kent, or did you have others?

POWELL

I had others later, because we had exhibits of Kent's work in the shop, and I corresponded with him for Jake, and I sold his books, pushed his books, and sent them back to him for autographing; but it was my chief contact with him. Well, at any rate, Jim, I went to work then in June or July, 1934, for Jake, half time, which was from nine o'clock in the morning until one in the afternoon.

MINK

You were commuting from the beach?

POWELL

No, we moved up. We had to move to town then. Lord, we went out in the Edendale district. I think it was either Ritchie or Gordon Newell who found us a house at 2306 Loma Vista Place, which is off Alessandro Street. And it was across the canyon from Jake. Jake lived over on Echo Park Hill. We were on Loma Vista Hill. It was quite a colony. Landacre lived on the Echo Park side, and Newell's studio was in that area, and Ritchie's press; there was kind of a colony there. It now borders Silver Lake. I was going to do a piece on it for *Westway* once, a kind of a literary map of this downtown art colony. I don't know why I didn't do it.

MINK

Who else was living in that area besides you people?

POWELL

That's all I can think of at the moment, Jim. There must have been others--I know there were others-- I had a list of them somewhere that I was going to go around and interview and talk to. Anyway, rents were cheap. We paid, I told you, \$15 for the furnished house in Laguna, but for the house on Loma Vista Place, \$10 a month. The little house was owned by the Bank of America. Why? Foreclosure! My God, they owned half the city, and they wanted people in their houses; so they would rent them cheap, semi furnished. And we scrounged other things of our own. My mother came back from Europe. We settled her up on the top of Loma Vista Hill, and she lived there for many years. This was a good arrangement with Jake. It gave us \$30 a month, which we could live on--\$10 rent and then \$20 for the other expenses. And I did everything. I typed, I delivered, I drove his little Ford delivery car, I dressed

windows-- I was a factotum. And I was learning all the time because Jake wanted us to read; he encouraged us. It was everything that Vroman's wasn't. You see, there was no such thing as getting sacked for reading on company time. Jake wanted everyone around his place to read and to learn and to pool their knowledge, and it was really a wonderful climate. Well, the Primavera Press came on, and I came closer to it because, you see, the books were largely printed at Ritchie's press and stocked there and shipped from there. Orders didn't go from the bookshop, although that was the address of Primavera Press. The real center of the press was at Ritchie's press on Griffith Park Boulevard. Fay and I found ourselves in charge of shipping. We used to go over in the evenings to Ritchie's press with the orders that had come in during the day to Jake's shop and fill and wrap and get them ready for the express pickup or take them to the post office. And Ritchie said, "Well, gosh, we ought to pay you for doing this, Larry. I'll take it up with the board of directors."

MINK

That being McWilliams, Hanna, and . . .

POWELL

. . .and Jake and Ward; so he did. And, lo and behold, we were added to the payroll at \$7.50 a month. That brought our income up to \$37.50. I kept working at this and doing their correspondence, and they finally voted me in as a director. In lieu of more salary, I was rated director. There was another chap who was in the press that we haven't mentioned that I mentioned earlier. It was Jim Groenewegen, the big Dutchman.

MINK

How did he get in there?

POWELL

Well, he was with Arthur Andersen, a certified public accounting firm downtown; he was working at that, graduated from Stanford, and we decided that the press needed an accountant. So, Jim Groenewegen, through his friendship with Ward and Jake and me, took that on as almost a volunteer thing. He audited and kept the books. So he was brought in, I think, and made a director, although I don't think his name ever appeared on the letterhead.

But C. E. Groenewegen was our fiscal authority. He went later with Federal Housing or whatever, and he's still with them.

MINK

Let me get this straight, Larry. This Primavera Press really then became Anderson, Ritchie and Simon?

POWELL

No, it was a publishing device; it wasn't a printing outfit. It was just a publishing device, and Ritchie at the same time was printing books for other publishers, or designing, and gradually for himself. The Ward Ritchie Press really succeeded the Primavera Press.

MINK

Yes. Then were you really a director for the Ward Ritchie Press or an investor from the very outset?

POWELL

No, not until 1966. I was close to it and just a colleague and proofreader and a "pickerupper" of scraps off the floor, all of which are at the Clark Library now in my Ritchie collection. But I never had a share in the press until I took some of Caroline Anderson's stock in 1966. No, the Primavera Press, I guess, just faded out in the thirties, ran out of manuscripts perhaps. Carey McWilliams became more and more interested in the migratory labor problems. He became Commissioner of Housing under Governor Olson, and he split off, eventually went East, you remember as editor of the *Nation*.

MINK

He still is.

POWELL

Still is. And Jake went through fiscal difficulties, a couple of bankruptcies.

MINK

How did this happen? Of course, Jake will probably describe this, but how do you feel? What was the main contributing factor?

POWELL

Well, the main contributing factor was that he didn't pay his bills. He bought and didn't pay, and he owed very large sums. This wasn't dishonesty on his part. It was just that he didn't have any money. He spent it for more materials where he had to pay locally. But his creditors that were out of town, who couldn't come in and knock on the door--I'm thinking of the English dealers, Maggs, Robinson, Pickering and Chatto--those were his big creditors. They finally lowered the boom on him, and he went through bankruptcy at least twice.

MINK

Would you say this was more due to his acquisitive nature, just the desire of seeing and handling these nice books, or was it more due to the fact that he wanted to build up the stock and expand his business? Do you see what I mean?

POWELL

Yes, I don't know, Jim. I think Jake would have to answer that; what his driving force was. He never really got solvent and made a go of it until he married Josephine, his Dutch farm girl wife, who took hold of the business fiscally and insisted that he be current. Jake is really heroic in surviving these vicissitudes. He always landed on his feet, and he kept his friends even among his creditors, and certainly of us who went through it all with him. I used to get tired of writing letters to creditors, stalling them off. My God, I typed scores of letters. And Jake would try to pay, but of course he had salaries to meet, and sometimes we went without pay. Oh, but Jim, the contacts, the friendships I made there--I brought this out in my book-- the people I met there were absolutely crucial in my subsequent career, like Elmer Belt.

MINK

I think, too, it would be good to describe the appearance of Robert Cowan, although we have a portrait of him, but his personality, as much as you could.

POWELL

He used to come in the shop Saturday afternoons, I guess. Everyone had a fixed time for coming in. Paul Jordan-Smith always came in on Wednesday,

after he "put the Sunday paper to bed." He would walk up Sixth Street doing the bookshops, and end at Jake's. He would come in talking and he stayed talking and he walked out talking. He was a marvelous talker. And Cowan would come in Saturday afternoon. Now theoretically I worked half time, but I'd get interested, and I'd get talking, and I rarely got away. And Saturdays I would often be there for a long time, meeting the people and talking with the people. Everett Moore used to come in when he was teaching at Webb School; that's where I saw Everett again after we'd known each other at college. Cowan was a real sartorial, elegant person. He dressed beautifully, always with matching colors, and his goatee always beautifully trimmed. Hell, why shouldn't he. He was on a \$1,000-a-month salary in the Depression; he was a rich man. Anyone who had any kind of money at all in the Depression, you see, could live like a prince. So Cowan lived like one and showed it. He would come in with his Havana cigars and flick the ashes on the carpet, and I would go around afterwards and either grind them in or sweep them up, I can't remember which. And he'd be talking with Jake; they were working on deals. They were working on one deal, I remember--the Lieutenant Archibald Gillespie papers.

MINK

How much can you tell me about that?

POWELL

Jim, I can't tell you anything, except that I typed up descriptions, and they were selling them to Bancroft, weren't they?

MINK

Didn't Cowan and Zeitlin make a trip up to Sacramento? Cowan had to leave and Jake was to be the front man .

POWELL

Yes, that may have been after I left the shop, but it was cooking, certainly. Jake, you see, was always cooking dishes and getting things ready, and it was always a wonderful air of bibliographical intrigue in the shop that I loved. I was really privy to it because I typed everything.

MINK

Didn't Jake subsequently sell these manuscripts to the husband of Catherine Coffin Phillips as a Christmas gift?

POWELL

Mrs. Lee Phillips. Yes, and then what happened to them? Did she give them to the Bancroft Library or sell them?

MINK

UCLA.

POWELL

We have them here?

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

That's right. That's all coming clear now. And of course Mrs. Richard Dakin was an angel for that.

MINK

Did she come into the store?

POWELL

She used to come in. I don't remember her well, but I knew her later. She came in--oh, everybody came in.

MINK

Did Henry Wagner come in?

POWELL

Oh, Wagner was in the shop. I remember once, my God, Jake said, "Look, here we have a Spanish derretero (a sailing guide) to the West Coast; I don't know what it is, and it's a difficult manuscript and all. Hightail it out to Henry Wagner and ask him if he will give us a quick description of it." So I got in Jake's old 1931 Ford roadster and went barreling out to San Marino, Winston Avenue, and called on Henry Wagner. I think it was the first time I'd met him.

And he said right away, "Look, what's the pitch. What do you want out of me? What's Jake up to? Do you want me to buy this? So I'm not buying; take it back." And I said, "No, sir, Jake would like your opinion of it: is it genuine? Is it valuable? What is it?" Wagner said, "Oh, he wants to use me, does he?" And old Wagner was salty as hell. He says, "Well, goddamn it, he ought to pay me for this." I don't know how I got around it. I soft-soaped a little. I said, "Well, you are the authority. Everything ends up here. We need your help." So I didn't leave, and he finally got interested and looked at it, and I took notes on what he said about it, wrote them down hastily, and then hightailed it back to Jake, typed them up, bucked it into Jake, and then Jake offered it, I think, probably to [Herbert E.] Bolton.

MINK

At the Bancroft?

POWELL

Yes; I think it may be up there now. That's the kind of thing we were always doing, picking brains.

MINK

Whose other brains did you pick?

POWELL

Well, Elmer Belt, certainly, on anything that related to Leonardo (he had started his collection then). On the history of medicine — Nathan Van Patten, the librarian at Stanford University, who was a steady customer, Dr. Le Roy Crummer of Kansas City; and Dr. Harvey Cushing, great brain surgeon from Boston, who was a customer of Jake's. Jake then had a growing interest in science which now, of course, is overriding; but he was developing literary, historical, and scientific interests. They were all going forward together, and that's why Jake was unusual. He had a wide capacity for learning. He should have been a scholarly rabbi and a teacher, you see. He was a natural in that area. Another great friend I had then was Bishop Stevens, the Episcopal bishop of Los Angeles, William Bertrand Stevens, who I came to know because he was a college fraternity brother. He'd been a member of Phi Gamma Delta at Columbia, as I remember, and he used to come to the chapter house at

Occidental and give us spiritual guidance, I suppose. At any rate, he used to come in Jake's and buy books, and he took a fondness to me for some reason, Jim. I guess he read my book on Jeffers and was interested in literature. I remember we used to go across the street to the Dairy Lunch and sit on a stool at the counter and have a glass of milk and a carrot salad. There was the Episcopal bishop of Los Angeles, with his great big ass perched on the stool, and I sitting there, and we had a helluva good time. He was a wonderful, big, burly, lovely man.

MINK

Would you categorize him as an intellectual?

POWELL

No, he wasn't an intellectual; he was a social- religious figure that was intrigued by this literary milieu. I think he liked the rub-off. He wasn't an intellectual but he was a learned man.

MINK

Was he a promoter of converts to the faith?

POWELL

No, not at all, no. We never talked religion, really. I remember my friend Newell, who had separated from Gloria Stuart, was teaching sculpture at Chouinard. He had a beautiful young Russian woman pupil, and he fell in love with her. They wanted to get married, and we thought we'd have a wedding at the Ritchie Press. The Russian girl wanted some kind of a religious wedding; she didn't want a civil wedding. She wanted a minister to marry them. So, hell, I called up Bishop Stevens, because you know, we were all members of Phi Gamma Delta, and I said, "Gordon and Ward are here and we all want a marriage at the press." And he wanted to know a little about the groom and bride. Gordon had been divorced, and he said, "Well, this really isn't quite comme il faut, but I'm fond of you boys." So he got in his little car and came tooling out, and we had the marriage there at the press, with the press still going, I think; and Bishop Stevens married them. Then we had a little snack lunch. Fay was there, of course, and Ritchie's wife, Janet Hathaway Smith. It

was a very wonderful milieu that we were operating in. Of course I romanticized it and I think back on it with nostalgia.

MINK

Back to Robert Ernest Cowan: I understood that he was a little bit grabby in the store--that is to say, he would follow people around to see what they were looking at, and then if it was something he wanted, he would grab it out of their hands. Is there any truth in this?

POWELL

I didn't see it happen, but I've heard that he was. He was always a bookseller. He'd been a bookseller when Will Clark hired him as a librarian, and he was always ready to buy and sell. And he was aggressive, certainly.

MINK

Well, his final bibliography, published by Nash, was done in 1933- That would have been several years before.

POWELL

Just a year before I was there.

MINK

Were you familiar with him? I suppose you were, working with him. Did you discuss it with him?

POWELL

Yes, we had a copy, and Jake was always turning up things not in Cowan and then challenging him- -"Why didn't you include this?" It's an imperfect bibliography because basically it's a bibliography of Cowan's collection. He didn't attempt, unwisely, to [do a comprehensive bibliography] .

MINK

How did Cowan defend himself in this?

POWELL

Oh, I don't think he would; I think he would ignore you. He wouldn't stoop to argue over this; he'd say, "Well, take it or leave it. It's a beautiful book isn't it?"

MINK

Was he disposed to continue to acquire things not in his bibliography, or had he stopped collecting by this time?

POWELL

No, he was collecting all the time. He was buying; Jake was selling. He ran an account constantly at Jake's, and I think at Dawson's.

MINK

Did his son accompany him into the store?

POWELL

I never met his son until later, the young Bob; no, I don't think so.

MINK

It would be your opinion, then, that young Bob's interest in Californiana was acquired later, after the senior Cowan's death?

POWELL

It was scraps and leavings, you see, up in the attic, the things that really should have come to us at UCLA in the purchase of the Cowan collection. In a sense, we were had, Jim. Mr. [John E.] Goodwin didn't really go after this thing aggressively; he should have gone after Cowan and gotten the things that Cowan was holding back. He thought he was buying the whole collection, but he sure as hell didn't. Cowan held out a number of things.

MINK

On the question of Jake, I've heard it said that in Myron Brinig's *The Flutter of an Eyelid*, Jake appears as a character. Is this true?

POWELL

Oh, yes, definitely; and Jake took action and had the first issue suppressed. There's a first issue that was withdrawn when Jake threatened libel, and it was

revised, then, and issued. Farrar and Rinehart, I guess, published it. I don't remember who Jake's attorney was, probably Homer Crotty or Will Clary. Those were the two best lawyer customers that Jake had.

MINK

Well this suggests, doesn't it, that Jake was involved in a lot of hanky-panky.

POWELL

Well, I don't know. This was Brinig's view of it, and you ought to hear Jake on Brinig, because he believed that Brinig libeled him--that is, he didn't tell the truth. He made a gross exaggeration of things that he had observed. He'd been a hanger-on. Jake's story was that Brinig was a hanger-on, picking up literary copy, and then he exploited it. But I wouldn't pass on the veracity of it all.

MINK

Did you know Brinig personally?

POWELL

No.

MINK

Never met him?

POWELL

No, I never met him. I don't think he ever dared show up in Jake's shop. When was the book published, 1934?

MINK

Somewhere in there.

POWELL

Right in there, yes. I think we have a first issue here. I collected it and put it in Special Collections.

MINK

Well, one of the things that you bring out in your autobiography is the fact that you were working dressing windows and doing all of this--a factotum--and then all of a sudden you went on to outside work, totally. Did you and Jake disagree? What happened?

POWELL

What do you mean, "went on to outside work?"

MINK

You describe the fact that you were assigned to outside selling exclusively.

POWELL

Ah, yes. Well, the whole of Jake's drive was that as he was sinking deeper into the slough of debt, was to increase sales. He had to bring in more sales volume, and he wanted everyone in the shop to be a salesman. We had a daily sales sheet that the bookkeeper produced every morning, showing the previous day's sales: who had made them; the gross profit and the net profit on everything. There was a running balance, and Jake's, of course, always led the rest by an enormous amount. It was a one-man business as far as sales went. Jake would try to give us jobs. I remember he gave me a couple of opportunities that I carried off. One was to sell the proof copy of the *Constitution of the Confederate States of America*. This was a nice item that had come in, and I was attempting to sell it to the Daughters of the Confederacy in Richmond, Virginia, and I think I did, finally, for \$500. I was then on a fifty percent of the gross profit. That is, if he bought it for \$200, and we sold it for \$500, there was a \$300 gross profit, of which I got \$150. The temptation in this kind of a sale was always to raise the sale price, to make as large a margin as possible.

MINK

Would Jake set the price, or would he leave it to you to set it?

POWELL

I think we would do it together. I had another good deal. I can't remember from where — I think a dealer in Rutherford, New Jersey, had advertised manuscripts of Thomas Wolfe. I'd read *Look Homeward, Angel* and was quite steamed up, and I wrote and got these manuscripts on consignment. It

included an early notebook draft of *Look Homeward, Angel*, and I think I sold this eventually to Harvard. I think it's in the Harvard College Library collection of Wolfe. One other thing--a marvelous event--someone pulled up in front of the shop in an old sedan and honked the horn like mad. Jake said, "Go out and see what they want." So I go out on Sixth Street, and it was some old character. He says, "I got a whole carton of old pamphlets in here; what'll you give me for 'em?" Well, I jumped over in the back seat and fished around in there; and, by God, there must have been 300 or 400 libretti of nineteenth-century English operas, what they call burlettas--little burlesque operas that were popular in the nineteenth century. There was a whole carton of them, and I rushed back into the shop and I said, "Well, it looks good; it's a great lot of nineteenth century opera libretti, and burlettas. What'll I give for 'em?" Jake said, "Oh, give him ten dollars." So I go tearing back out to the car and I said to him, "We can pay ten dollars." And he said, "No, I want more than that." I said, "How much?" Well, he said, "Fifteen dollars." So I rushed back into Jake and I said, "It's worth fifteen dollars." He says, "Take the money out of the cash drawer." I go tearing out with fifteen dollars and paid for it and rushed in with the stuff. We emptied the whole damn carton out on the floor, Jake and I on our hands and knees, poring through it. "Well," he says, "this is a natural. You get the sale now. I think you can sell this right away to Stanford University. They're collecting this kind of thing; I know from Nathan Van Patten." Well, I did. I sold it for \$500 to Stanford University. So I had 50 percent of the gross profit between a fifteen-dollar purchase. I had 50 percent of \$485. It's that kind of thing that makes the book-trade exciting, of course. You never know who's going to drive up and honk the horn. Well, Jake finally said, "Look, I used to call on the studios and on collectors and all with my book bag." (And that's the way Jake started, as a peddler in the 1920s in Los Angeles.) He said, "I can't get around this way. You go out, Larry. You take the bag and go out. Here's a list of people to call on." Jules Furthman at MGM. . .

MINK

I wonder why he decided all of a sudden that he'd done it, now you should do it?

POWELL

Well, Jim, people came into the shop and they wanted to see Jake; he found he had to be there more and more. He was pinned down; he couldn't be out. In the early days, he didn't have a shop when he was peddling; he was working out of his home. So he got me out, and I didn't like it.

MINK

What didn't you like about it?

POWELL

Well, I didn't like to have to wait on people and just sit on my ass in a waiting room maybe for an hour or two. I didn't like it; it offended my personality.

MINK

Damaging to your ego?

POWELL

Damaging to my ego, yes, that's right. I wanted to be welcomed, I wanted to be treated as a co-equal, not as a goddamned peddler. I don't know, maybe it was in his blood, that he had a certain Jewish tradition of selling that I just didn't have.

MINK

You didn't think you were a good salesman?

POWELL

Well, I was if I was properly received. Elmer Belt, across the street in the Pacific Mutual Building-- he and Dr. Donald Charnock had this clinic together.

MINK

If you want to call it that.

POWELL

Yes, that's where they treated doses of clap. [laughter] But they were primarily book collectors and then doctors; so any time Larry Powell came in with a book bag--the old patient lay there waiting--and they said, "What are you bringing us?" Elmer was marvelous. So was Don Charnock, bless him. He died last year. I loved going over there. Another chap I liked to call on was

Grant Dahlstrom, who was working then for Young and McAllister; he was their designer. I used to take him around the Limited Editions Club books and books on typography. He was a very sweet and wonderful guy. Delmer Daves, the film director, was another. I used to sell to Paul Landacre. He was beginning to make a bit of money and would buy things . I told the story, I think, of once going out to MGM and being made to wait by Jules Furthman, who was one of their top screen writers. I had this first edition of *Shropshire Lad*, and it was \$225 or \$250. And Furthman wanted to chisel me out of a sales tax. Sales tax had come in then. So I picked the book up and started out. Christ, he followed me out to the parking lot. He says, "No, I'll pay it; come on back." Oh, I came to know Furthman later, and he gave us a number of things here, didn't he?

MINK

Yes, he did.

POWELL

For Special Collections.

MINK

He's a generous donor.

POWELL

Yes. And, of course, the things Belt did for us eventually came out of those first contacts that I made through Jake. Also, my friendship with Paul Jordan-Smith. It was a very decisive, key time. Well, at any rate, I got more and more fed up with the outside selling.

MINK

Well, you say in your autobiography that. . .

POWELL

Well, if I say it, it's true!

MINK

You said that you were unhappy about the idea of having to deal in the kind of living that involved buying and selling; but what really you were unhappy

about was that you didn't like the kind of relationship that you might be thrown into in this kind of a thing.

POWELL

Yes, that's part of it.

MINK

In other words, I think maybe you're saying that you didn't have as thick a skin as is necessary to be a salesman?

POWELL

That's probably true. I always wanted people to have what they needed, and if some poor bastard came in and really coveted something on our shelf and couldn't afford it, I was always inclined to mark it down.

MINK

I suppose Jake didn't care for that?

POWELL

He said, "You can't remain solvent if you do this, Larry. You can't give this stuff away." And we were incompatible in that sense. So it was inevitable, I guess, that I point toward library work.

MINK

And I suppose that this really came, as you said, in the person of Mr. Read.

POWELL

Albert Read was the first one that said, "You ought to be buying, not selling, and you come with me," and he grabbed me and took me right through the door from the Order Department of the Public Library to Miss Warren's office (they connected with a door), and then she charmed me.

MINK

Was that the first time you ever met Althea [Hester] Warren?

POWELL

Yes, I think so. When did I do the Lawrence exhibit? Oh, that was 1937, at the Public Library; yes, that was the first time I met her. Albert Read took me in, and I went on, then, for advice, to see Stelter. We were still close. Fay and I used to go over and see them; he and Mrs. Stelter were very kind to us. I remember he got me one lecture on Jeffers to a women's club in Highland Park. It paid \$7.50 for an hour's lecture. He was always trying to help us get established. He said, "Yes, sure, there's a great field for male librarians. I think it's a great idea. Go over and talk to Miss McCloy in the Occidental College Library and see what she thinks." And Miss McCloy was encouraging. She said, "Yes, this is a good idea; get your degree." She said, "You have to get a library degree; Miss Warren is right." So those two people advised me. Fay teased me, of course, but she really was [for it].

MINK

Was her feeling that it wasn't a masculine thing to do?

POWELL

Well, she'd had a bad time at the College Library. The assistant librarian at Occidental was a mousy little woman named Miss Fales; she was employed because she was the sister-in-law of Dan Hammack, one of the trustees-- it was a kind of little sinecure. She had given Fay a bad time because Fay laughed aloud in the library and hadn't paid her library fines or something. Fay just had no use at all for librarians, and she recalled that image, you see, whereas I saw the image of Althea Warren. She was very vivacious, and yea-saying, a wonderful, red-headed woman. So we began thinking, you see, and corresponding, then, with [Sidney] Mitchell at Berkeley for the catalog and all. But the money was a problem until Alonzo Cass came to the rescue that one night we had dinner. He was a member of the South Pasadena Casses. He was a young intern or resident physician at Hollywood Hospital then. He said, "I'm coming into a legacy in April, and would \$1000 help?" "Good Lord," I said, "sure." So he said, "There it is." And it came.

MINK

That's when you threw the glass of wine against the wall?

POWELL

Oh, God, yes. We started all over again. Cass was a wonderful high-spirited guy. He died just last year. Ritchie spoke at his funeral. It happened when we were in England, otherwise I would have been there, and I wanted to speak, too, because I loved the guy. Very generous, wonderful man. Then, of course, when we finally went up to Berkeley, bless her, Mrs. Bell helped us, too, with an allowance, as did my Uncle Harold. I remember we found a flat in Berkeley that was \$37.50 a month--a furnished flat. I said, "All we can pay is \$30 a month," and Uncle Harold said, "I'll pay the \$7.50." We had help, sure, and then I worked.

MINK

You worked at the [University of California] press. I was wondering if you could tell me during that year in library school, when you were working with the press, some of the people that you became associated with?

POWELL

Sam Farquhar was really the only one and Hazel Niehaus who has just retired, I think.

MINK

Is that the first time you met Sam Farquhar?

POWELL

No, Sam, you see, came out of Jake's shop, because he was a great crony and customer of Jake's.

MINK

That's how you got the job then at the press.

POWELL

Yes, exactly, and also how I came to call on Bolton. Jake said, "Look, you're going to library school, you represent me. I'll send materials up and you show them to Bolton. I'll pay you a commission." And I said, "No, I don't think I want to do this. I'll go and talk to Bolton about anything that you write me about, but I'm not going to peddle stuff to him." At any rate, I went in to see Bolton. Of course, by that time Bolton was turned on, and never turned off. You never could get a word in; he was just talking all the time.

MINK

Did he have his map up on the board with his pins in?

POWELL

Where his boys were?

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

Well, I think so; but I don't remember it clearly. But he was a dynamic, dominant sort of figure. The other man that I enjoyed on the faculty there was T. K. Whipple in American literature. I had that funny experience of auditing his seminar, and he thought I was an FBI agent.

MINK

Beyond that, did you get acquainted with him after you told him that you were just a library school student?

POWELL

Not outside of class, but I sometimes went to his seminar. And he spoke well of my book on Jeffers. The other faculty member I had contact with was the young instructor in German. You see, I took German through the whole year because I'd never had it as a language, and Mitchell said, "You have to have German." So I took it for credit all through that year. What was his name? Melz, I think, and he came and taught here one summer session at UCLA. I knew him later. So I had a full year, Jim, between the curriculum, the German, and auditing Miss [Edith] Coulter's seminar in bibliography.

MINK

I see I've written down a question here.

POWELL

Yes, better get it in.

MINK

What is it about the Berkeley library school anyway? Why is it so bad? Did you find it that way when you were there?

POWELL

Yes.

MINK

Well, let me put it another way, were you disillusioned?

POWELL

No, I wasn't disillusioned, because I didn't expect anything. I had no idea of what to expect. I had never been conditioned to expect anything.

MINK

Well, what would be your assessment of that year as far as contributing to your overall knowledge of librarianship?

POWELL

Well, it was a good introduction, Jim. It taught me the field of personalities, the pioneers of librarianship, an overview of the literature. The great lack in the year, of course, was Mitchell's absence. He was on sabbatical; he was at Yale a good deal of the time, and Miss Della Sisler was in charge.

MINK

She was acting dean?

POWELL

She was acting dean or director. She was small caliber, let's face it, and she was really hostile toward men. There 'd been some duds going through--there 'd been some good ones, too: Ed Castagna had gone through and Ed Coman and John Henderson. But there 'd been some duds, and Mitchell was tending to admit them whether or not they were good, just to have men in the profession, and Miss Coulter and Miss Sisler were against this. So in Mitchell's absence, they, in a sense, ganged up on me, who was the oldest man in the class. They just resented men coming in and picking off juicy jobs.

MINK

Then there was a controversy about that, just as there was a controversy later on in the School of Librarianship. Why has the Berkeley school always been so controversial? Why have they had all this trouble?

POWELL

I don't know, Jim. Mitchell could have exercised stronger leadership, I think, but what weakened his leadership in this field was his increasing interest in horticulture. He gave so much of his time to horticulture, not to librarianship. He was editor of the California Horticultural Society quarterly or bulletin. He was breeding, and he was a great man in that field. But inevitably, he left a number of things in librarianship to these two women, Coulter and Sisler.

MINK

Well, besides them, who else was there on the faculty?

POWELL

Well, there was May Dexter Henshaw, who came down from the state library and lectured on state library law; and there was in Mitchell's absence that year, and who was my savior, really, was Katherine Anderson who came down from the library association of Portland and taught Mitchell's courses. She and I hit it off. And there was a wonderful secretary of the school, Karen Loynd, a Scandinavian woman who did for the school what Flo Williams has done for ours. She was a sort of consoler of bruised students.

MINK

Picker-up of the pieces.

POWELL

Picker-up of the pieces; that's right. [laughter] At any rate, I think that was part of the trouble.

MINK

Well, did you sense a decided antagonism in these people against Mitchell?

POWELL

No, not a decided antagonism.

MINK

Not an outward antagonism.

POWELL

No, but I sensed a latent resentment of a lot of Mitchell's ideas. And then there was the conflict between the library school and the library.

MINK

That was raging early then?

POWELL

It was strong, because, well, I don't know the whole background of it; but [Harold] Leupp was there then and Peyton Hurt was his associate librarian, who had no use for the library school. Miss Coulter, you see, had been chief reference librarian, and a lot of the library staff still would come and cry on her shoulder. Leupp wasn't a strong leader. There was too much-- oh, what shall I say--intrigue and crosscurrents and strife between the factions there.

MINK

I've often heard it said by students at the Berkeley school that the great highlight of their year there, and one of the redeeming features of it, was the course in reference which Miss Coulter gave.

POWELL

I think that's true.

MINK

Yet, you're rather disparaging of her, I think, in your book. You just sort of dismiss her.

POWELL

Yes, I know it; I didn't do justice to her in the book, and I tried to right that in this Coulter lecture that I gave--did you hear that? --the Coulter lecture I gave a year ago at San Diego. That's in press now. Grant Dahlstrom is printing it for CLA [California Library Association], and it should be out this fall. I want you to

read it, because I try to make up for this. Well, you see, I should have treated her more fully in the book. I had these ambivalent feelings about her.

MINK

Why?

POWELL

Well, they came later because of her attitude toward UCLA. She had no use for UCLA — it was upstart; it was going to take away their advantages at Berkeley; it was going to undercut them.

MINK

Was this in the formation of the library school here, that this came out; or was this before that?

POWELL

Even earlier. And another thing: she thought I should work at the Huntington Library, and I think she even maybe took a step or two to see that I might have a job there, a bibliographical job.

MINK

You didn't want to work at the Huntington?

POWELL

No, I didn't want to work there.

MINK

Why?

POWELL

Well, I wanted to work for UCLA, Jim.

MINK

Well, say, if you'd been offered a job at the Huntington, before you came to UCLA, would you have taken it?

POWELL

No, I don't think so. I wanted to be more in the midst of things. I thought it was too much of a retreat, as it was in the 1930s. It was a very remote place. It hadn't been opened up.

MINK

By the same token, wasn't the job you were offered at Scripps in the same category?

POWELL

No, I don't think so; it was less so. It was a college after all, Jim, with students; Huntington Library had no students.

MINK

Well, then the thing you really were interested in was working with people?

POWELL

With people and working at UCLA; I wanted to work here. I just knew it from the time I walked in this building in 1935. I noted in my journal at the time: This is the place . It was one of those deep, instinctive pieces of prescience. I knew this was the place I should work, and I applied for a job here when I was still in library school. I wrote to Mr. Goodwin.

MINK

Did you get an answer?

POWELL

No, I never got an answer.

MINK

Was he inclined not to answer his mail?

POWELL

Yes, he was careless about his mail. It piled up on his desk; I remember when I was applying at the library school, you see, for admission in the spring of 1936, Mitchell said, "Write to Goodwin and go out and see him for an interview." Well, I wrote and I never had any reply. So I wrote to Mitchell and I said, "Well, he doesn't answer me; what'll I do?" And Mitchell said, "Write again."

So I did; I wrote again, and I got a reply right back, because Mitchell had called him up, I know, and needled him. But when I did go to see Mr. Goodwin, he was very kind, and that was the first time I came in this building. That was in the spring of 193[^], I guess. I just knew that this was the place, but I wasn't sure that I'd get the chance; I wanted the chance, but I said, "It's fifty-fifty whether I get it or not," No, I didn't want to work at the Huntington; so when I told Miss Coulter that I wanted to work at UCLA, she said, "Oh, you mean the Clark Library?" "No," I said, "I mean the main campus. I want to work out there with the growing library." She said, "Oh, it wouldn't interest you; they don't have any books." "Oh," I said, "then I'll get them some." I said, "I'm interested in order work and acquisitions work; that's the job I want." She said, "Well, if there is a vacancy in the acquisitions department" (and I think the grapevine had told her that John Lund would probably leave eventually) "you'd be overqualified for it; you wouldn't be happy in it." Well, it was true: I was overqualified, and in a sense I was unhappy in it, but still I took it. So we had had antagonism between us, I think, and we made it up a bit in 1938, 1939, 1940, and 1941. She came down a summer or two and taught here. You see, Mitchell wanted a statewide school. He was giving these summer sessions at UCLA, two summers of which equaled the first semester at Cal. You didn't take those; you came later. Well, at any rate, Miss Coulter came down and taught, and we had her to tea with us, Fay and I did. I used to go see her every time I went to Berkeley, which was many times, on work I was doing, and we always talked of the work I was doing, but never of UCLA. I realized I shouldn't bring this up. That went on until I became Librarian here, and then our friendship lapsed. I suppose she thought I'd sold out to the enemy. [laughter]

MINK

Well, did you feel the same way about her reference course that so many of the graduates have spoken about? Did you have the feeling that it was a great course?

POWELL

It was a good course. She taught it with a great deal of wit and sparkle, and we certainly kept awake. But as I told in my Coulter lecture, I didn't approve altogether of her methodology. There was too much emphasis on Mudge's *Guide to Reference Books*, a rather cut-and-dried procedure; and we

differed sometimes over that. You'll have to read my Coulter lecture, Jim, and then we can talk about it sometime. But ultimately we were reconciled, and the last time I saw her was a very sweet occasion. She was certainly the outstanding teacher of the school--she and Mitchell. Miss Sisler, no; she was old-fashioned pedagogue, and yet there was a wonderful side to her. Do you know the story of her legacy to Helen Hendrick? Mrs. Hendrick was in the acquisitions department with me here at UCLA: we were colleagues there for five or six years with [Seymour] Lubetzky. And when Miss Sisler came down and taught in the summer session here, about 1939 or 1940, she fell ill. Mrs. Hendrick was kind to her and helped her up and down the stairs. Jo[hanna] Tallman was her catalog assistant that summer. Anyway, Miss Hendrick was very good to her. Ten years later, when Miss Sisler died, lo and behold, there was a legacy in her will of \$5,000 to Mrs. Hendrick: "For your kindness to me one painful summer. Take this money for a trip around the world. I remember you spoke of your desire to do that." This was a rather wonderful thing of Sisler to do. So, my judgment of her certainly is biased, as it is of all people.

MINK

I think our judgment of the library school faculty is inclined to be biased because of the position we see them from.

POWELL

That's right; they're much better than we give them credit for.

MINK

Well, would you describe in a little detail your work at Los Angeles Public Library after you were hired there--people you met and the trouble you got into, if you got into any.

POWELL

I never got in any trouble, Jim. I was a certificated librarian then; I was clean. [laughter] I was in acquisitions and the order department primarily, but I was also on call for branch library relief. Somebody fell ill, and I was on a temporary civil service appointment, and I went out to San Pedro, to Van Nuys, to University branch, which was across from USC, to Eagle Rock--for a

day just at each. Of course I had to get out there on my own; they didn't pay travel, and I was at \$125 a month.

MINK

You would be in public service work?

POWELL

That's right, on desk work; but my chief work was in acquisitions, and I was listing and working over gift collections that were coming to the public library. Mr. Read knew I'd had bookstore experience in evaluating. He said, "Sort out the sheep from the goats, and anything you think should be put through, put it through. The rest put in this room, here, and we'll have booksellers come in," So I did a lot of that work for Albert Read and his assistant, Elsie Truesdale, who succeeded him as head of order department, and Miss Warren and Ann Lydencker, head of science and industry. I came to know her. Oh, my God, Jim, I forgot to say my very first job there in the public library was in the teachers' and children's room with Rosemary Livsey who was head of that. Ruth Hudson was my superior; and Rosalie Higgs, who is working upstairs in the library school now as librarian, was in that department. Those were friendships, particularly with Rosemary Livsey, that lasted all through our careers. We've both retired now. But it was an exciting place to be because of Miss Warren. She would come charging in and out of most any department saying, "Hello and greetings." I guess I learned from her the advantages and the desirability of getting around, getting out of the office. She was very much aware of her staff.

MINK

That and the fact that Goodwin himself never did.

POWELL

No, he didn't do it; it wasn't his nature to do. It would have been wrong for him to try to do it; it wouldn't have rung true. What you must do is to learn who you are and be true to who you are, and Goodwin certainly was true to his own nature and was a very kind man in his way; but it certainly wasn't my way.

MINK

Larry, did you know at the time that you worked in the public library that discontent with the city administration about what the library was getting in the way of support and so on [was going on]?

POWELL

No, I was insulated from that, you see, down at the bottom of the totem pole, and I wasn't aware of this. I was aware of the awkwardness of the building, which has come out now of course in an enormous controversy. It's a very difficult building to work in.

MINK

More difficulty than this building--the Powell Library?

POWELL

Yes, much more; it's a bigger building, and there's less articulation between the floors and the departments. You sure as hell could get lost there. And it's like working in a mausoleum or a great big Egyptian tomb. I think it's a lousy building; I don't think it's an architectural monument at all, and I don't think it should be torn down. First of all, it 'd cost too much dynamite to blast it; it should be used as a gallery or an archives or a museum. But as a public library, it 's a flop. Well, let me say this: Miss Warren hired me on tolerance only. She said, "You don't belong here; you belong in a university library field." And she said, "I'll give you the job as long as I can, but you're going to get in the other field." She said, "Let's look at the university and college libraries in Southern California, at the age of their incumbent librarians, and you can see that you have a good future here somewhere." She was very realistic. We looked over USC and Claremont and UCLA and Occidental and Redlands and Whittier. It was sometime in that year that I did exhibits for her, one of D. H. Lawrence's manuscripts and one of my Steinbeck collection. The public library issued my catalog of the Lawrence manuscripts which I'd done for Jake when I got out of library school. Elmer Belt and Susannah Dakin paid for it, Ritchie printed it, and [Aldous] Huxley wrote the introduction. And we opened the exhibition with a public meeting at which Huxley spoke, and I introduced him.

MINK

How did you first become acquainted with Aldous Huxley?

POWELL

Through the catalog.

MINK

Through Jake?

POWELL

Yes, through Jake. Jake had brought Huxley to Southern California to work in films; because Jake was the entrepreneur and sold Huxley, I think, to MGM, or somewhere, as a scenario writer. Jake had sold Huxley's books--all the modern firsts of the English authors Jake knew. But this was bold of Miss Warren, you see, to do Steinbeck or to do D. H. Lawrence, to do these exhibits.

MINK

Was there any concern about security at that time in the exhibits?

POWELL

No, I don't think so.

MINK

The thought of exhibiting D. H. Lawrence manuscripts in the public library bothered me.

POWELL

I don't think anybody really cared. There wasn't the attention paid to him then or to valuable manuscripts.

MINK

One other question about the library down there: you said that you worked with the gifts, and I wondered if you could assess the quality of gifts that the library was getting then. Were they rich gifts?

POWELL

No, low.

MINK

Low quality?

POWELL

Yes, low quality; a lot of stuff came in from residents--"Come and clean out our attic."

MINK

Did you ever get in on any of these attic cleaning expeditions?

POWELL

I went up on Bunker Hill to a couple of them. Albert Read sent me up; I picked up stuff, but it was junk. There was never anything; there were no treasures. Read, you see, was an old bookseller; that's why he'd been sympathetic to me. He'd been with Fowler Brothers.

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

When he retired there, then he went to work at the public library. And of course after he retired from the public library, he went to Dawson's, and he finished his career again as a bookseller. I used to go in then as Librarian of UCLA and buy books from Albert Read. We often talked of how our roles were being reversed. He was a very sweet guy, wonderful little chipmunk of a man.

MINK

Well, I'm beginning, I think, to understand the statement that you made in your autobiography about your decision that you were going to be the Librarian at UCLA the first time you walked in the building.

POWELL

It wasn't a decision, Jim; it was an instinctive feeling that I would like to be.

MINK

Well, I thought that this was a little bit "presumptuous" perhaps, but I see that if you sat and talked with Miss Warren about coming into a place where the librarian soon would be retiring. . .

POWELL

Oh, but I had the feeling even before I knew her. I had the feeling, you see, when I came out to be interviewed by Mr. Goodwin. That was before I met Miss Warren. No, that didn't have anything to do with her in the beginning. It was just what I felt. It wasn't presumption; it was a deep feeling that this was where I belonged. And I hoped that I might have a chance. I didn't say, "I'm going to take this place over, goddamn it." No, that would have been presumptuous. No, I just said, "Jesus, this is it." That's what the old Mormon felt when he came over the Wasatch Mountains. Brigham Young said, "This is the place."

MINK

When you came to work then in February of 1938, where was it in this building that you worked first?

POWELL

In acquisitions.

MINK

The acquisitions department.

POWELL

Yes, which was then on the main floor, back of the Librarian's office. It's where the College Library has space now. There was the Librarian's office and the acquisitions and then the bibliography room and then the catalog department; we were in tandem. And I had a desk there--John J. Lund's desk. Remember, he had a Ph.D. in Germanic languages and taught Swedish, and was junior librarian. He had been here a year. He and [Gustave O.] Arlt had published this very critical article in the *Library Journal*, and Goodwin encouraged him [Lund] to leave, and he went to Duke. Well, that was the vacancy that Mitchell saw coming up.

MINK

Well, what was it that Gustave Arlt published in the *Library Journal*?

POWELL

It was an article on university libraries. It wasn't specifically on this one, but it was on the way a university library ideally should be organized and run. Lund collaborated with him, and Goodwin took it as what it was--a critique of the UCLA library--and he was mad as hell about it.

MINK

Did he call Lund on the carpet and chew him out?

POWELL

Probably. I don't know actually that he did.

MINK

This was before you arrived.

POWELL

Yes, before I arrived; it was in 1937.

MINK

Did Goodwin ever speak about this to you?

POWELL

No, Goodwin never spoke to me, period! We never talked about things except some of the exhibitions I was doing. And then about a couple of the unhappy experiences we had over the Upton Sinclair possibility and over the *Western Worker*. I told those two stories in the book.

MINK

Yes. I've wondered if the notes that Goodwin left-- that Fanny Coldren Goodwin brought to the library later, little jottings and reflections--say something about Goodwin's personality. There are so many comments about being on the downhill side of life, the sunset side of life. Would you think that he might have been a disillusioned person, or do you think by nature he was a retiring individual?

POWELL

I think both by nature, and the two things that hit him (that I escaped as my careers opened up) were the Depression and World War II. Those were two

body blows. They meant cutback of budget, of service, of the building program. I think these were the things, Jim. These were very bad blows in a career that in the beginning promised great expansion. He didn't get the money to buy things. He couldn't complete the building.

MINK

I know there was one particular note which in a way is ironic--the fight that he had with President Sproul about where the Cowan collection was to be placed, in the Clark Library or here. Did you have any knowledge of that? Did he ever speak of that to you?

POWELL

No, not at all. We never spoke of it, and it was a mistake, of course, to disperse the collection.

MINK

If it had been placed in the Clark Library, it would have been kept together, undoubtedly.

POWELL

Yes, but there wasn't the reference material to supplement it. It would have been in a vacuum. It belonged here, and it belonged in a special collections. But he wasn't ready for it, you see; he wasn't ready for any of these special things that were coming.

MINK

Was it that he wasn't ready for it, or that he saw the budgetary message on the wall?

POWELL

Both, I suppose; but he didn't believe in special collections and rare books. He believed the Huntington and the Clark should do these things, and that he should run an across-the-board university library. The only place for segregating and safeguarding here were two cages in the stacks--one on the fifth and fourth level, I guess, and one up on the seventh.

MINK

He also had a safe in his office, too, didn't he, where he kept things?

POWELL

No, no. Miss Bryan did at the loan desk. She had a locked cabinet. She kept the sex books there. I don't know what else. But it was awful, really, the things that happened to materials in the Fiske collection and manuscript volumes of Fiske. The first edition of Bernal Diaz's *True History of the Conquest* was stamped, perforated, pocketed and run through to the stacks. It's a book of great value, both for itself and the fact that it was Fiske 's copy. I found it badly mutilated. And then, of course, the WPA project was just butchering hell out of the pamphlets and other things. No, Goodwin wasn't ready for this, and none of his staff were. There was no one on the staff that had the least feeling for the book as something that should be cared for. I found for example in the reserve book room- -even under Deborah King, who was a good librarian, but she couldn't care less about the format of a book--a beautiful Grabhorn Press edition of *Two Years Before the Mast*, brought down from the stacks to the reserve book room and worn out, when there were texts available. You could go to a bookstore and buy a reprint of it; that's all the reserve book room needed. But to take a Grabhorn edition--it was this insensitivity that bugged me, and of course bugged collectors and many people. Jake I know was unhappy, Randolph Adams came--they all thought it was a kind of a butcher shop. Nobody gave a damn. I gave a damn, but I was keeping pretty quiet about it. I realized I would get farther if I didn't say too much, just go ahead and do what I could quietly. And they did encourage me. Goodwin said, "Well, what should we do about these pamphlets?" And I said, "Well, we'll make boxes, slipcases, or folding cases." Of course he immediately responded to any artifact or craft problem. When I got the Nash books from William Randolph Hearst, that was amusing because Goodwin said, "Oh, you couldn't write Mr. Hearst." I said, "May I?" And he said, "Oh, go ahead, but you won't get an answer." Good God, the two books came back, the biography of Hearst's mother and father. I took them into Mr. Goodwin. I kept my big mouth shut. He sort of grinned. He said, "Well, look, the covers are warping; I can fix that." He tucked the books under his arm and went trotting down to the elevator, down to the receiving room. I'm tagging along behind (he had a workbench down there), and right away he designed these boxes that they're still in, aren't they?

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

They are plywood with strings that keep their bindings from warping. Oh, he designed a lot of things. He did the return chute at the loan desk. Goodwin designed that and had the carpenters build it. Remember, he couldn't get money for card trays in the bibliography room, so he made those out of towel cartons. They were cardboard trays, Jim, of heavy cardboard, folded in the form of a tray and with a wooden handle. Goodwin designed and had them made out of discarded heavy cartons that the paper towels for the restrooms came in. Well, this was creative librarianship in the Depression. He made do. And, Jim, we must get this Linda West biography finished, because full justice must be done to this man. I haven't done it, certainly. I've seen it through my own eyes and made myself out the tin Jesus, which isn't true. He built this building. And when it was named for me, I had this terrible feeling that we were overlooking the old man; and I tried in my time--Fanny Alice [Goodwin] asked me to see if I could get it named for Goodwin, and I tried. Max Dunn, Westergaard and I recommended this to the regents, but Sproul turned it down.

MINK

Why?

POWELL

Well, he wrote and said that our policy is against naming a general service building for anyone; and it was true at that time. I took this to Mrs. Goodwin.

MINK

Well, they had named the Doe Library for Doe.

POWELL

He gave it.

MINK

He gave it.

POWELL

Yes, and he paid for it. At any rate, I took Sproul 's letter to Mrs. Goodwin and I said, "Look, can't we have a plaque or something to him?" She says, "No, it's all or none." Of course, she blamed me for this, and when I retired and Bob Vosper came, she went to Vosper apparently and Bob tried to have it named for Goodwin. And it was turned down again, Vosper told me. It was turned down twice.

MINK

By this time, Kerr would have been president.

POWELL

Yes, but it was turned down twice, and then it was named for me. Well, I, of course, had the relief carving of him done, which I thought was the wise thing to do in the beginning. I had David Kindersley make that marble likeness.

MINK

This was after Mrs. Goodwin's death.

POWELL

Oh yes. This couldn't have happened in her life.

1.7. TAPE NUMBER: IV, Side One (September 8, 1969)

POWELL

I didn't come here with the determination that I was going to be the Librarian; I realized that it was a very risky thing and a lot would depend on what I did in the next half a dozen years.

MINK

Did you ever have any doubts about your ability to do the work?

POWELL

Oh, no, I never had the slightest doubt at all about my ability; I was completely protected by a kind of blind faith in myself. It was a kind of blind faith in myself that is both good and bad. What it does is to protect one against self-

doubt. Self-doubt is a terribly weakening thing. And an absence of self-doubt, of course, makes one often insufferable and overbearing and impossible, and that's why people tend to take an extreme view toward me; they either like me very much or not at all, you see. And I'm reconciled to this, because this is my nature.

MINK

When you came in, your immediate supervisor was Virginia Trout.

POWELL

Yes.

MINK

Just an interesting question here: did Goodwin take you around and introduce you to her first, or did he just go and say to Virginia, "I hired this man." Did she have any say in your hiring?

POWELL

I don't know, Jim; I really don't know. I don't remember exactly, but I rather think that he was courteous and punctilious. I think he would certainly have walked me through and introduced me, and maybe at the time he was interviewing, but I don't think so. I think he and Mitchell made up their mind that they were going to hire me, and he told her. I don't think she participated in the decisions before they were made. But certainly once I came to work, he treated me courteously and introduced me to her, and then I didn't see him again for a long time.

MINK

Well, what was your first opinion of her?

POWELL

Well, she was a cool number; she was a very attractive young woman, very cool and self-possessed and efficient.

MINK

What did she look like?

POWELL

Well, she was sort of a sandy blonde, and she dressed beautifully. She spent a lot of money on her clothes. She was very well groomed and precise. I didn't care for her rather thin lips. She was the thin-lipped type of female, that you can tell a great deal about. She was not voluptuous or seductive in any way: she was a good little business woman and a tremendous asset to Goodwin. She was orderly.

MINK

That's what they needed then, I suppose.

POWELL

They needed that. She was really the secretary to the Library Committee. She did all the paperwork for the Library Committee, and there was more red tape in purchasing then. In other words, the committee approval had to be got, secured, obtained, for purchases over "x" dollars, and she'd present offers to the committee. She didn't attend committee meetings, but she fed everything in. Goodwin attended and took the minutes. What I learned from her, Jim, was one very interesting thing--to never go home at night until the top of my desk was clear. She worked that way; she came to work in the morning, got her work out of her drawer or her files, and worked hard on it all day, and by the time she was through at 4:30 (when we used to quit), the top of her desk would be absolutely clear, except for her pencils and her clock. She didn't say to me, "Do this," but I observed that this was a good working system and I used to follow that. I learned that from her. And she taught me bibliographical checking. You had to initial your cards, your initials up in the top left-hand corner, and there are still some in the wants file I think with the V. T. or P., and she taught me precision in bibliographical checking. I really didn't learn this in library school. And she taught me how to go to bibliographical sources. We had a good collection in the bibliography room, and she wasn't intimidated by me and my advanced degrees. She schooled me, corrected me when I was wrong, and I took it from her.

MINK

What was her education, qualifications, and experience?

POWELL

I think none other than a Berkeley B.A. and a Berkeley Library School degree, and came right to work here as a girl of twenty or twenty-one. It'd been entirely here under Goodwin. But that was good training because this was his prime. Those were the twenties and early thirties; he was in his prime then, and she learned everything, I'm sure, from him. She was a good supervisor in that she laid out the work--that is, we'd check in at her desk in the morning, and she'd give us the batches of cards we were to check, the departmental requests for books. I always did the French, and I did the Latin and Greek and Italian and Spanish. I did the Romance languages . Elsa Leocker, the German girl that was here, did the Germanic languages. Between us and Miss McCleary (there were the three of us checking) we did the continuations. Those came in on trucks, and we accessioned continuations and gifts. So we had the two jobs: one, of checking the current orders; and two, carding up and checking the continuations There was no serials department then, you see; all continuations came into the Acquisitions Department. And we carded; in other words, we had a typewriter and a table and a desk, and we divided our time between typing. And she said, "Don't spend all your time doing one thing; break your work." So I checked for a couple of hours at the public catalog on current orders, and then I'd go back to my desk and card. Well, I was carding Cowan and I was carding the Harding Unionist collection, and I helped card some of the Germanic collections when Elsa Leocker was swamped. The Burdach-Bremer-Dahlerup and, oh, all kinds of gift collections were coming in. You remember, Berkeley was very good to us. For example, James Westfall Thompson-- duplicates for the Thompson and the Morrison collection of the Morrison Reading Room at Cal. They had a great deal of the duplicates of it in storage, up on the mezzanine level, and those were all bucked to us. The big crush came, Jim, toward the end of the fiscal year when Goodwin and Trout wanted to build up the statistics for the year.

MINK

That sounds familiar.

POWELL

[laughter] Still goes on? Well, Christ, the trucks would pour into the Acquisitions Department, and Miss Trout said, "Can't we get one more truck through?" And we'd go crazy the last few weeks of June.

MINK

Accessioning?

POWELL

Accessioning. Beefing up the old statistics! This was important, and of course I encouraged. . . what the hell's that squeaking?

MINK

That's the tape recorder.

POWELL

Oh, that's just the tape. I wouldn't want the transcriber to think this was Powell wheezing. [laughter] There are different ways I came to know the faculty; you asked about how I came to know the faculty.

MINK

In retrospect, in that period, when you were reaching out. . .

POWELL

Growing.

MINK

. . . I gather you were trying to get out of doing the kind of routine work that you were doing in the Acquisitions Department, that you were more interested in, oh, for example, exhibits and that sort of thing; did she resent this fact?

POWELL

Yes, yes, surely. I was resented by all of the older women. Every young man who came was. John Lund before me had felt this and had left, and everybody had their eye on Mr. Goodwin who was aging and on the young men who were coming along. And there was a tension always. I don't think it's quite right to say I wanted to get out of this work, because this wasn't true in the

beginning. I was terribly happy in the routine work. I really felt that I was in a green pasture when I came to work here in 1938, because I hadn't held a job that was on appointment and that paid. You see, I'd been all through the Depression, all these years, and I'd never had a steady job, really.

MINK

Did you feel that there was some amount of prestige connected with being a member of the university staff?

POWELL

Yes, of course, I did; it was a fine place to be. I was proud of it, and the campus was a proud place. The library was large and impressive and professional; the basic collection was good. So in the first couple of years, I was immersed in it and happy. Well, then, opportunities started to come right away. I hadn't been here more than a few months when I was approached by MGM studios to be their research librarian at \$50 a week.

MINK

You were on like a moonlight job?

POWELL

No, it was a full-time job.

MINK

Full time?

POWELL

Yes, a full-time job; that's the job I guess Elliott Morgan has now. Well, at any rate, I went over for an interview. This came about through Stelter. One of Stelter's (and Occidental's) old students--his name was Chick--was a producer at MGM in charge of the library. So I had that in. They offered me \$55 a week, but no contract. Well, I went to see Mr. Goodwin, and he said, "Well, I can't promise you anything; you haven't been here long enough for me to know your work. I would think you'd better stay here and grow with the place." He encouraged me to stay.

MINK

But he didn't offer you any more salary?

POWELL

No .

MINK

After all, this was the Depression still.

POWELL

That's right.

MINK

By the time you'd come the salaries had been restored that were cut.

POWELL

Yes, they'd been restored, but still they didn't amount to anything. Well, then another offer that came soon was from Knox College. Merritt Moore who had been a philosophy professor at Occidental was at Knox, and he wanted me to come back there. It was a half-time appointment, a half-time assistant librarian and a half-time professor of something--English, I suppose. I met with the president, Carter Davidson, down at the Biltmore, and I said I wasn't interested, really, in going to a split appointment. If he could offer me the assistant librarianship full time, with the opportunity of succeeding the librarian in another year, I would come. The salary that he offered me for the split appointment was \$2,400 a year, which was about \$800 more than I was making at UCLA. So that job didn't pan out.

MINK

Of course, you told Goodwin about the job.

POWELL

I told Goodwin about this, and then Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota approached me.

MINK

What did Goodwin say about the Knox job?

POWELL

Well, again he said, "It's up to you, Powell, but it's better to stay in one place a little longer." And he was right, of course; it was too soon to leave. He said, "You must stay somewhere until you make a record." He encouraged me in that sense, not with promotion in mind, but just to stay.

MINK

You said something about Macalester?

POWELL

There was an offer from Macalester; then a fourth came from the Beverly Hills Public Library, to go over there as a kind of an assistant librarian.

MINK

Who was the librarian?

POWELL

Oh, it wasn't Lura Wallace; it was Lura Wallace's predecessor [Mary Boynton] . At any rate, these things kept coming along.

MINK

Did you keep all these in a file the way many people do?

POWELL

The file's right here in back of me. It's something I've never turned over; but I've got a folder there on employment opportunities.

MINK

Correspondence on that.

POWELL

Yes, correspondence. It's all documented, and this will come to Special Collections eventually, of course, with all my papers.

MINK

Well, what isn't documented, of course, is your opinions about these things.

POWELL

Well, these were good; these kept me stirred up and gave me a feeling that I was in the stream, and that if I didn't make it here I'd make it somewhere else.

MINK

So that built your confidence then.

POWELL

Yes, that's right. Other people wanted me; therefore, sure, my confidence was built up.

MINK

Another question, too, while we're still talking about these early years: you were mentioning a minute ago how the Faculty Library Committee had so much more say [on purchases]. How did you feel about what they were acquiring? Did you resent in any way the way it was being built up through the Library Committee?

POWELL

No I didn't, because they were doing some great things. The bulk of the money, Jim, was going for sets. And this was proper. They were buying; they were putting, I would think, the bulk of the budget into subscriptions, current subscriptions, and into back files of sets. And they were buying excellent things--from Gottschalk, from Stechert, from Harrassowitz, and from all the dealers. International dealers were offering sets. I recognized this as a basic acquisitions policy. Now, I had a great time, because Mrs. Trout encouraged me to make recommendations for bibliographical items, monographs, current and retrospective. And I was concurrently checking wants as I was doing the faculty cards. In other words, I had two projects going, and I was making want slips as I went along and filing them with her. And I will say that she never turned down a thing. The six years I worked for her she filed every recommendation I made, and I must have added thousands of bibliographical items--bibliographies, bibliographical works of various kinds in Letters and Arts and Social Sciences. We were very poor in all these fields.

MINK

I wondered about gifts. Were you able in this time, and did you purposefully, if so, encourage people or solicit on behalf of the library for gifts?

POWELL

Only in the cases when I showed exhibits. That led into some gift solicitation. Oh, I told you the story the other day about the Hearst books, that I wrote to Hearst. I must have written to a lot of people from the acquisitions department, requesting. I used to follow the "P. W." below the line, things that were free. We had a request postcard we'd send out. "Will you favor us?" And it was signed by the Librarian, per L.C.P. And I did soliciting around the country, and they encouraged me to do this.

MINK

Did Goodwin solicit gifts? I mean, did he go outside the library; did he make any purposeful solicitation?

POWELL

I don't think so.

MINK

Was Lindley Bynum then the man?

POWELL

No.

MINK

He wasn't yet appointed.

POWELL

Lindley came about 1941 or 1942.

MINK

Yes, and you hadn't yet been appointed.

POWELL

Not yet.

MINK

So there really was no one here at that time who was working on gifts.

POWELL

No. There wasn't a gifts librarian then. Wasn't Wilbur [Smith] the first appointment to that?

MINK

I think Neal Harlow.

POWELL

Neal Harlow was in Gifts and Exchanges. Well, exchanges were handled by little Catherine Phillips, and Neal came in and widened us a bit. We ought to come to Neal.

MINK

We will.

POWELL

Damn it all, Jim, I want to talk about the faculty.

MINK

All right. Talk about your first faculty contacts in the library. How do you first meet them? By meeting them at the catalog?

POWELL

Partly, but the very first came through the poet, C. F. MacIntyre, who had been fired from here. The year he was fired, in 1938, he transferred to Berkeley, and he got a Guggenheim Fellowship. That all happened at the same time. Before he left, when I was at library school and he was still on the faculty here, he'd written Mr. Goodwin and said, "You'd better hire Larry Powell." In other words, Mac was in there pitching for me. Well, this was a kind of a questionable reference. [laughter] Mac was on his way out, but Mac had a very loyal following here in the faculty, notably Fred Carey in classics; Majl Ewing in English; Bill Buell, in English; and I guess that was about it. [laughter] Oh, Ernest Carroll Moore was fond of Mac.

MINK

That's strange, isn't it?

POWELL

Well, he recognized his scholarship; Mac was a scholar and Ernest Carroll Moore recognized this. Well, at any rate, Majl Ewing was one of the very first that came to see me, and he said, "I heard about you from Mac." Majl was an instructor then. And he was to give a summer course in twentieth-century literature for the first time. It had never been given in the English department. And he came in to the department absolutely indignant and said, "There are no books." And he went storming up to Mrs. Trout and to Mr. Goodwin. They didn't have Hemingway or Joyce or D. H. Lawrence. A lot of these things were lacking. And Majl could be quite impressive when he was riled.

MINK

I know.

POWELL

They placated him with, I think, a \$500 grant.

MINK

Where did they get it?

POWELL

Well, out of the Librarian's Fund.

MINK

The Librarian's Fund, I see.

POWELL

They gave five hundred extra dollars to use for his materials for his summer course, and I did the carding up for this. Majl gave me some rough notes, and I did the cards and spent it all.

MINK

Did you suggest books? Did he have a list?

POWELL

I suggested some, but he was on top; he knew what he wanted. And then another key person came. I did the same thing for him; that was Dixon Wecter who came from Colorado as a full professor at age thirty-two to teach American lit. And he came in the department and threw up his hands and said, "My God, there 're no books." So they gave him money.

MINK

Do you remember how much they gave him?

POWELL

Oh, they gave him probably \$500; that was the old standard amount. [laughter] Goodwin kept \$500 gold bars in his desk and he handed those out. Wecter would do anything but work bibliographically. He was a born person to get other people to do the bibliographical work. Ewing was different; Ewing did a lot of it himself; and it was Ewing as the departmental chairman for books who did a lot to build up the library. Well, the word got around that there was a young man in the Acquisitions Department--it was called Accessions Department then, remember--who was interested in books. And the word spread and I got to know gradually more and more of the faculty, the young ones particularly, although through my work in exhibits I came to know Joseph Lockey and Waldemar Westergaard; and then Frank Klingberg in history discovered me. I guess it was through work I was doing in accessioning a collection of English historical materials, and Clinton Howard probably told Klingberg about me, and Klingberg said, "Will you come and talk to my seminar about the holdings of the library in history?" So I did that twice a year, I guess. Klingberg used to meet downstairs here in this building. (He had Helen Livingston as his secretary.) I sat in with that seminar; Sam McCulloch was a member of it. Oh, there were a lot of the first early Ph. D.'s here in history. Well, it was this kind of recognition; and then of course the Fiske project that Lockey blessed, and the research committee gave me the travel money to go to Boston, against Goodwin's advice. That was a key paper, I think, in what I did here, that paper on John Fiske.

MINK

On the Fiske collection, there is one anecdote I'm sure you're familiar with which maybe you would comment on. In Moore's book, *I Helped Make a University*, Moore pointed out that he had gone to the California Club, in the washroom of the California Club he encountered Colonel Seeley Mudd, and he spoke to him of the collection and the money came in that way to buy it. Is this true?

POWELL

I'm sure it is; it's characteristic of Ernest Carroll Moore. He and Rufus von KleinSmid operated in the same way, off campus and downtown; they used their contacts--the California Club, the University Club, and Dawson's Bookshop. This, of course, is what Goodwin should have been doing. MLMK: Moore was doing it for him.

POWELL

I suppose. But most of those early collections, the big collections that came, were the faculty's or Moore's or regents' work. Goodwin's great contribution was, I think, first of all the building, the basic bibliographic collection, and then the sets program. The Cowan [collection], you see, didn't come through Goodwin; it came, really, through Ernest Dawson who recommended it. Well, the exhibits came about because nobody else wanted to do them.

MINK

Were you asked to do them, or did you go and say, "I'll do them?"

POWELL

I don't remember, Jim. Maybe I volunteered. I think I came to work and saw empty cases standing in the rotunda.

MINK

Nothing in them at all?

POWELL

Nothing in them; and I probably said something to Mr. Goodwin, "Well, who does the exhibits?" And he said, "Well, we can't seem to get anybody to do them; would you like to?" Oh, I think he saw in my letter of application that I'd done exhibits at the [Los Angeles] public library.

MINK

Oh, yes, you did.

POWELL

I think that's how it came about, and he asked me, "Would you take this on?" And I said, "Yes." Then of course Mrs. Trout was very unhappy about this, because it cut into my work; so she really begrudged me any time to do it, and in order to have a better atmosphere I would come in on Saturday afternoons, and Sundays even, and put the exhibits in. I really did them on my own time.

MINK

And you would type the captions?

POWELL

I would type the captions; I did all the work. This made me enormous friendships among the faculty. Well, I did one when Lockey's book on Pan-Americanism came out. I did an exhibit on poetry when MacLeish was Charter Day speaker. One on Rilke, Yeats, and MacLeish. He came over to see it. We did the Hersholt collection of Hans Christian Andersen, which was Westergaard's delight. And I did one on the moderns when Ewing was giving the summer course. I did an exhibit on Hemingway and Joyce and Lawrence that enchanted, of all persons, Jens Nyholm, the head cataloger. He really hadn't known me before that. He said, "My God, you're interested in all these things?" And he was very excited; he translated some of these moderns into Danish. He was a great friend to me and Seymour Lubetzky in those early years.

MINK

Nyholm was also a good friend of Westergaard's I imagine.

POWELL

Yes, he was indeed, and Westy in a way would have liked to have seen Nyholm become the head librarian.

MINK

Was it really through Nyholm that you got to know Westergaard?

POWELL

No, it was through Jean Hersholt. I met Hersholt at Jake's, you see.

MINK

I see.

POWELL

I knew he had this Hans Christian Andersen collection. And when I was given exhibits to do, I found there were so few collections in the library that were exhibitable, the fine books had been chewed up, stamped, and perforated. I deliberately went outside, then, and made these borrowings.

MINK

Oh, you would borrow books.

POWELL

Oh, hell, I borrowed Hersholt's; I borrowed Ned Metcalfe's T. E. Lawrence collection and R. F. Burton, and Elmer Belt's Leonardo da Vinci.

MINK

This is interesting; did you ever get turned down?

POWELL

No, I never got turned down because I never asked anybody that I figured would turn me down. [laughter] In other words, I prepared the ground.

MINK

I suppose these people, private collectors, would be flattered to be asked to exhibit their collections in the library.

POWELL

Of course they were. That's right, and I didn't make any bones about that we would like to see them come closer to the library. And of course in Belt's case this is what happened. Twenty years later the whole Vinci collection came to us. In the beginning it was just the facsimile of the *Codice Atlantico*. I carried the whole goddamn thing out in the back seat of my little Studebaker sedan,

and the car was right down on the axle. [laughter] My God, this was heavy, and Belt was delighted. Well, these were contacts, you see, that came out of the early bookshop days.

MINK

Larry, were you given any money for your exhibits?

POWELL

No, I wasn't given any money.

MINK

I mean for paper; did they give you anything to do it with?

POWELL

I'll tell you what happened: First of all, the exhibit cases that were empty, Goodwin had bought; they were Weber showcase and fixture cases that he'd gotten at a sale.

MINK

Were they really more for department stores?

POWELL

They were jewelry cases!

MINK

These are the old cases that are still up in the College Library.

POWELL

Yes. They had three shelves in them so when you put books on the top shelf, you couldn't see the bottom shelves. I knew very well what I was doing. So I said to Mr. Goodwin, "These cases need a little carpentry and redesigning. We need to tilt the top shelf and we need to take the two bottom shelves and combine them with a little guard in the middle so books won't slide down, and make one big bottom shelf tilted and one top shelf." "Well," he said, "that is a challenge." Right away he started redesigning them. He called the head carpenter, Clarence Brown, and Brown came up. And Goodwin said, "Look, now you do this and this," and he was very clever and quick with a penciled

sketch. By God, those cases were out the same day, down to the carpenter shop. They were redesigned and brought up, and Goodwin was pleased as punch. And I said, "It really isn't proper to put typed headings when we have a distinguished collection. We ought to have some printed placards that identify the collection. Can't we have the University Press do this." And he said, "Well, I think so; just send it into me and I'll send it up to Berkeley." So Mr. Goodwin got all my printing done for me. Yes, he backed me, and I always went to him. Of course this probably didn't make Mrs. Trout happy, but she didn't have any interest or any sense about these things. He was the one.

MINK

Did she think it was sort of useless? Fool's errand?

POWELL

That's right. It cut into my time, and it was unnecessary foolishness. But before I was through, I did fifty exhibits.

MINK

We have a record of those in those volumes, showing the exhibits as well as the publicity.

POWELL

That's right--the scrapbooks. And then I think there are my working notes that I kept on all the exhibits. It was a deliberate thing I did to make myself useful and advance myself, but it also was a natural thing. It was something I liked doing. It wasn't just sheer ambition manifesting itself. It was something I got a helluva lot of fun out of. Now I think the work that's done in exhibits in the library by Marian Engelke and Roberta Nixon and the others is wonderfully sophisticated and advanced, but it comes out of a tradition that we had here of displaying what we had and what we borrowed.

MINK

Well, as long as we're on the subject, after you became University Librarian, the work of exhibits sort of fell to Everett Moore, really.

POWELL

I made an exhibits committee and made him chairman, and then it was up to him. The problem always, of course, was to get someone to take the time, because it took time. We had a number of committees and people-- Bill Bellin, remember, did tremendous things for exhibits, and his art work.

MINK

Whenever we've had people on the staff who've had an artistic inclination, I think that they have joined in.

POWELL

That's right; the tradition is very much alive, and of course they're infinitely better now than anything I ever did. But, damn it all, I laid the foundation for it and made it something. I did a piece in the UCLA magazine you remember on the exhibits. There were pictures and an article by Johnny Jackson. There's something I regret: I didn't give credit enough to the alumni in writing that book--the Alumni Library Committee that I formed--Johnny Jackson, Hansena Frederickson, Ann Sumner, Barbara Lloyd, Teresa Long, and Margaret Duguid Michel. I had them meet here quarterly or so and take an interest in the library. I wrote for the magazine, I talked to Bruin Clubs; I became a life member of the Alumni Association. And I was pulling them toward the eventual founding of the Friends of the Library, which came about years later.

MINK

Well, Larry, it was through the exhibits, then, that you made the faculty contacts, partially. What was your next move?

POWELL

Well, to publications, I suppose. I think it was Ewing who said to me, "You've done a book on Robinson Jeffers and you've done a book on D. H. Lawrence's manuscripts, and these are well and good, and as a teacher of modern literature I appreciate them, but you ought to do something more orthodox in research and publish something." And I think the Fiske paper came out of this suggestion, which was an orthodox bibliographical paper. MINK: Could you get very turned on about Fiske?

POWELL

Oh, I did before I was through.

MINK

Well, did the subject suggest itself to you, or was the subject suggested to you?

POWELL

I suppose looking through the locked cage on the fourth level, I saw some of the Fiske scrapbooks and photograph albums and materials that had been shut up and became interested in him.

MINK

Well, you accessioned the Fiske collection?

POWELL

No, it was done in the twenties.

MINK

Oh, that's right; it was an earlier gift.

POWELL

I suppose it came about just through my seeing this material.

MINK

But weren't you responsible for getting back some of the materials that had found their way into the stacks.

POWELL

Yes, that's right. And we bought more material; we bought some Fiske manuscripts from dealers.

MINK

I see.

POWELL

But the most substantial research work I did was on [Charles Edward] Pickett - Philosopher Pickett . That came about simply through my work on the Cowan collection, I saw in the Cowan collection bibliography his note on Pickett. It

intrigued me. I handled a few of the Pickett pamphlets; I read them. It interested me and I just [kept going].

MINK

Did you ever go to talk to Cowan about it?

POWELL

Sure, I went to talk to Cowan, and he said, "Well, let me go upstairs," and he went up to his attic. He came down with these letters of Pickett to Kern and William Heath Davis. They'd been in the Davis papers.

MINK

Well, why didn't they come in 1936?

POWELL

Because he didn't sell any manuscripts then. He sold some manuscripts, but he held out a whole swatch of them, don't you remember? --that we bought from the son in 1944 or 1945 for \$6,000.

MINK

Oh, that's earlier then.

POWELL

That was a sticky thing, because Goodwin thought he was getting everything Cowan had. But Cowan didn't part with these, and these included the Pickett letters, and they're now here. Well, at any rate. Cowan let me print those. I went to Bancroft--not in the Bancroft, it was in the University Library at Cal--and I found in the Collis P. Huntington collection half a dozen pamphlets. (Collis P. Huntington bought them from Cowan in 1895.) This gave me a bit of disillusionment in Cowan, because I found in Cowan's own 1895 collection at Cal many items that he hadn't put in his bibliography. I realized then that the Cowan bibliography is very largely a checklist of his collection that he had in 1930.

MINK

As it existed at the time.

POWELL

That's right. And he'd overlooked or forgotten or ignored earlier material. First of all, I thought I'd do a paper for the *Pacific Historical Review* on Pickett. It kept growing, and I realized that I had enough material for a monograph, for a small book. So I took my vacation in 1939, as I remember, and went to Berkeley (it may have been 1940) and I bunked with Jens Nyholm, who had moved up then as assistant librarian. I worked in the Bancroft and in the main library and did my work on Pickett, and then I went to the California State Library. The whole project--the research and the writing of it and everything--I did in about eight or nine months; it was a real push.

MINK

You must have worked steadily.

POWELL

Yes, steadily — a crash program. And I had a book manuscript and we were going to publish it here through Ward Ritchie. Majl Ewing said, "Nothing doing. You send this to the University Press; it should have the University Press imprint on it." So I did, and it was approved by the committee. The chairman of the Publication Committee was Gustave Arlt. I remember he called me and said, "It's been approved." I found later that the outside reader (they always send a manuscript to an outside reader) was Charlie Camp. He told me years later, "I read your goddamn manuscript, Powell. I told them to publish it." [laughter] Remember, he came and talked at our one-millionth volume dedication-- *Cheyenne Dawson*. That's when Charlie Camp told me, and I shook his hand and I said, "Thanks, Charlie. You did me a good turn." Well, they accepted it, but it was three years before they published it. It was the old lag there, and it was 1942 before it came out. Well, the thing that Goodwin did to help me--by God, the more I think of it, the more kindly I feel toward him--I told him that we had half a dozen of the Pickett pamphlets here in Cowan, but there were as many more again in Bancroft and State, and I said, "We ought to add those in photostats. Would the Library pay for this?" He said, "I think it would." And he did; he bought the photostats for my use, and then I added them. They must be in Special Collections.

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

One of them, of course, is a unique pamphlet. It's Pickett's pamphlet on Fremont--a campaign pamphlet, anti-Fremont. The only copy located was in the California State Library. We photostated that. And in all my subsequent work on Pickett and the correspondence and reviews and all, no other copy ever turned up. It is apparently unique. And I must say, although I did a quick job on Pickett, it's a definitive job. Nothing that's turned up in the twenty-five years since then changes it in any way. A few more citations to him and some more of his published letters in the press have turned up, but no more manuscript material. So it was done and it was well received and it led to friendship with *Pacific Historical Review*, which was edited then by Louis Koontz.

MINK

Louis Knott Koontz.

POWELL

Koontz suggested this article that I did for them in 1942 on "Resources of Western Libraries for Research in History," which was my first survey type of article. I corresponded with about fifty Western libraries.

MINK

Did you go to visit any of them at that time?

POWELL

I visited the local ones, and Berkeley of course, and I visited everything in Southern California. I published that; and it's a good article as far as it goes. Then another friend I made in history was your former mentor, John Walton Caughey. This came through reviewing what I was doing for the *Los Angeles Times*. I did quite a lot for Paul Jordan-Smith in those years. He sent me Caughey's one-volume *History of California*, 1940, and I gave it a good review.

MINK

This is the one that's used as a text here?

POWELL

Yes. I gave it a good review, because it is a good book. John Caughey was teaching in the summer at Albuquerque, New Mexico, and in my copy of Caughey 's book up there on the shelf there is inserted a letter from John, from Albuquerque, thanking me. Someone had sent him this clipping, and that led to friendship with John and La Ree Caughey. Caughey, of course, was bitter about the dispersal of the Cowan library.

MINK

Oh, he was?

POWELL

Yes.

MINK

He felt it should have been kept in one place?

POWELL

Yes, and he said so in his biography of Bancroft, I think. "The wanton dispersal" he called it. I used to say to John, "Well, it wasn't wanton; it was dispersed according to the Library of Congress classification." "Well," he said, "you know what I mean." So all these threads, you see, were tying me closer to UCLA.

1.8. TAPE NUMBER: IV, Side Two (September 8, 1969)

POWELL

Well, Jens Nyholm, the head cataloger, the "Great Dane, "--I may have spoken earlier of how he wanted to recruit either Lubetzky or me from acquisitions into catalog, and Lubetzky went.

MINK

Right.

POWELL

All right; a year or so later, Harold Leupp reached out and plucked Jens Nyholm out of the cataloger job and made him assistant librarian at Cal; that's when Peyton Hurt had left and gone down to Williams College Library; that left a big vacancy.

MINK

Poor Nyholm having to go and work for Mr. Leupp-- he was a difficult man I am told.

POWELL

That's right. So Jens went up as assistant librarian in charge of technical processes. Now he was on top of cataloging, but he didn't know a goddamn thing about acquisitions work. So we had lunch together when he was about ready to move north. And he said, "Powell, you come with me and you'll be head of the Order Department at Cal. Mr. Bumstead is retiring." (Frank Bumstead was head of the department.) And he said, "I'll make you head of the department at x dollars." I don't remember what the department head then got. I think the minimum department head's salary was \$2,700, and I was still at \$1,800 or whatever it was; I went up \$10 a month every year, from \$1,500 to \$1,900 before I left. This was, as I see it, a kind of a major decision. And if it had been just to work with Jens Nyholm I think I might have considered, but there was the vision of Harold Leupp. [laughter] I'd seen him when I was a library school student, and he was pretty grim. He was a tyrant, and I'd heard about him from Mitchell, and his reputation had permeated the library. He was a martinet.

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

He advised everyone how to dress and how to behave, and he was just a tough cookie. So I said, "No. The person to get is Frank Lundy," who was head cataloger then at the Clark. He'd had acquisitions experience at Arizona, and sure enough that happened. Nyholm took Lundy up as head of the Order Department at Cal. Well, this was of course good for my cause because it eliminated two men in one stroke from the hierarchy at UCLA. I didn't

deliberately think of this; but it's what happened. If Jens Nyholm had stayed as head cataloger of UCLA, he would have been successor to Goodwin. There's no doubt about it. Westergaard, with his strength, would have thrown it behind Nyholm as a Pan- Scandinavian, and he would have been in. Certainly he had seniority, he had more experience, he had administrative experience, he had everything. I didn't have any. He would have had faculty support, but Nyholm apparently didn't have this feeling that UCLA was the place for him, and he was enchanted by the San Francisco Bay region. And it was a quick advancement, because nobody knew when Goodwin was going to retire. The war was deferring this. So Nyholm went. I must speak perhaps of a confrontation I had with Mr. Goodwin.

MINK

Well, you had a number of them.

POWELL

Yes, well, when I turned down a couple of these earlier jobs, I said to him, "Well, you're encouraging me to stay." I think when the Macalester College thing came along, he said, "You'll eventually be a contender for my position." He was not reluctant to speak of this, and I said to him, I think, "Well, I really should have some intermediate experience, [laughter] I'm at the bottom and I've been here four or five years now, and I'm still at the bottom." Finally, I think, when I told Mr. Goodwin that I was turning down Nyholm's offer and I was going to stay, I said, "Well, nothing's really happening to me here. I'm still at the bottom of the heap." He said, "Well, Powell, the women won't stand for your being promoted over them." Gee, I was mad I guess.

MINK

I don't blame you.

POWELL

No, I was mad. And he turned his back on me and went and looked out the window. And I said, "Well. . ."

MINK

Probably he was as upset about it as you were.

POWELL

Yes, he was; he was caught, you see.

MINK

But you couldn't see that then?

POWELL

No, I couldn't see that he was embarrassed. But he knew the faculty was building up support back of me, that Lockey and Westy and Klingberg and Hussey and Caughey had all spoken about me to him--and Fred Carey. I said, "Well, Mr. Goodwin, I feel I've got to go and tell my troubles to President Sproul." I said, "I think you've let me down." He said, "Well, feel free to," and that was all. So I went to see Bob Sproul; it was the first time I'd met him, I guess.

MINK

Did you go to see him here when he was on campus?

POWELL

It was here, because he was running both campuses then. There was no provost then; this was before Clarence Dykstra.

MINK

So you would have gone to see him in his office there in front of the College Library.

POWELL

It was over in the new Ad Building.

MINK

At this time he was in the new Administration Building and had a office there.

POWELL

Well, I called Hansena [Frederickson] , of course; and she knew who I was because of the *UCLA Alumni Magazine* article I did. She said, "Yes, I can get you an appointment with Mr. Sproul." So I saw Sproul.

MINK

This was the first time you ever met him.

POWELL

I guess so. That must have been about 1943. And he said, "Well, you seem to be upset, Powell. What's the matter?" I said, "I've just gotten screwed."
[laughter]

MINK

You put it that way?

POWELL

No. I said, "I just had a dirty deal." He says, "Well, tell me about it." I says, "Well, Mr. Goodwin encouraged me to stay here and turn down other jobs, but he won't promote me." He told me once I'd be a possible successor to him, but he doesn't do anything for me." He said, "That's Goodwin's business , not mine. What do you want of me?" I said, "Well, would you regard me, sir, as a candidate for Mr. Goodwin's position eventually?" And he looked at me and he said, "Yes, I would." And by God, he wouldn't say anything more. He wouldn't do anything more. I was quiet, and then he laughed, a great big belly laugh, and I knew that was my cue to get out. I said, "Thank you, Mr. President." I got out. [laughter]

MINK

That was a short interview.

POWELL

Yes, it was a short interview; but at least he didn't say, "Well, Powell, you'd better get the hell out of here." He was interested in me. He knew who I was; he'd heard about me from the faculty, I know. This was his way of encouraging me. "Yes," he says, "you'll be a candidate."

MINK

You couldn't do that these days, could you?

POWELL

No .

MINK

The university was much smaller.

POWELL

Smaller and run much more in a tight, short chain of command.

MINK

Sproul didn't say anything to you about why you didn't go and see Ernest Carroll Moore.

POWELL

Oh, he was out.

MINK

That's right he was out, excuse me.

POWELL

Yes, Hedrick, you see, had been provost.

MINK

At this time the university would have been run by the committee--the Second Committee.

POWELL

Yes, with Sproul visiting the campus. That was probably in 1943. Then all kinds of offers began to whiz. I was seeing quite a bit of Henry Wagner, and he was looking for [someone]. They were looking for a successor to Lawrence Wroth at the [John] Carter Brown [Library]. Randolph Adams had become interested in me. I'd done those papers--oh, I didn't mention that--I'd done two papers on the problem of rare books in the library. They were read: one to the College and University Section of ALA and one to the Southern California Conference of College and University Librarians at Redlands. Both had been published: one in the *Library Journal*, one in *College and Research Libraries*, volume I, no. 1, 1939, I guess. And these had given me some national contacts, particularly with Bill Jackson and Randolph Adams. Adams had come out to

see me through Jake Zeitlin, and we'd gone to see Mr. Goodwin, and Adams had said, "Let Powell have a free hand here with rare books." Mitchell all this time had me typed, you see, as a rare books librarian. He didn't think of me as an administrator at all. We had very little contact for several years. In fact, we had no contact. There was a chance to go to the Library Company of Philadelphia; Adams was stirring these things up. I had other possibilities of going to libraries in the East; and then the Harvard one that I wrote about was put off by the war. Bill Jackson wanted me to come there.

MINK

As a what?

POWELL

As head of Order Department for the Harvard University Library. Philadelphia and Providence and then the Clark was coming vacant, and there was a committee on the Clark Library made up of Westergaard, Louis Wright, and Sigurd Hustvedt. They met and met and met, and nothing happened. Hustvedt was trying to put in his man from Philadelphia, and the other two on the committee were blocking him. So Westergaard said, "Well, there's a place for you, Powell, over, at the Clark Library, but just be patient; we'll bring it off." He thought of me as going there, and I know he was thinking of Nyholm coming back then as University Librarian, and then he could control him through their common knowledge of Scandinavian languages. [laughter]

MINK

Do you look upon Westergaard as an empire-builder?

POWELL

Westergaard was probably the most single important powerful faculty member here in those years. Sproul told me this.

MINK

Do you think Westergaard did this purposefully, or did the mantle more or less fall to him?

POWELL

Both. He was a very good politician. He was a very genial and sophisticated man. He was a scholar. He was a good seminar teacher. I know he brought people to his home, to his big library there, and he was active in all the key committees--research, budget, the committee on committees. And I know Sproul told me this. His appointment as chairman of the committee to select the University Librarian bore it out. Sproul said, "This is a key man." The other key man, a little more junior, was Gustave Arlt. Those were two men that Sproul regarded as the most able on this campus. They weren't political; they were free of political leanings, I mean, in the sense of party politics. They were true university men.

MINK

You were talking about the Clark Library committee, and you had said that Westergaard asked you simply to be patient. Meanwhile, you spent sometime in Westergaard 's home, didn't you?

POWELL

Oh, that was later. That was in 1945 or 1946.

MINK

After you'd been appointed.

POWELL

Yes. We leased his home for a year while he was in Denmark as our cultural attaché. No, the whole thing came about through Bill Jackson. Edward Hooker, the Dryden scholar, who was on sabbatical at Harvard, and Leon Howard, professor of American literature at Northwestern, who was at Harvard, they all had dinner one evening at Bill Jackson' s apartment. Leon Howard said to them, "I'm chairman of a faculty committee at Northwestern to bring a successor to Theodore W. Koch who is retiring. Who's a good man?" Jackson and Hooker both said, "Larry Powell." Hooker knew me here through English department contacts. Northwestern had also, through Leon Howard, approached Randolph Adams, and he said, "Larry Powell." They had approached Louis Wright and offered him the job (Louis Wright was then research man at the Huntington), and Louis had turned it down, saying, "Larry Powell." So from all these sources the word came in to Northwestern, "Get

Larry Powell." Well, it was in about July 1943, that the telegram came in from Homer Vanderblue, dean of the College of Commerce at Northwestern and chairman of their committee to select a librarian. Vanderblue said, "Will you come back for an interview?" Well, that was the big decision then, and I realized that I had no future with Goodwin at UCLA.

MINK

So did you go in and see Goodwin?

POWELL

No.

MINK

No?

POWELL

No, I didn't even go see him. I talked with Fay.

MINK

In other words, I take it then that after he turned his back to the window you just figured you were going to get nowhere with him, so you didn't have anything more to do with him.

POWELL

That's right. Well, he said as much. He said, "The women won't stand for this; take your case to Sproul. I'm through with you."

MINK

Did he actually say that?

POWELL

No. He wouldn't ever say anything like that. But this was clear, that there was absolutely no hope. Well, Fay was a very strong factor in this. She said, "You've taken enough you-know-what from him, and you either go back and take this job or resign. But you're through at UCLA." And I said, "Yes, I know it." So, through Charlie Adams of the Santa Fe, I got a reservation back to Chicago on the Super Chief.

MINK

How had you gotten to know Charlie Adams?

POWELL

Through the Zamorano Club. In 1940, I joined the Zamorano Club through Ward Ritchie's recommendation.

MINK

Ward Ritchie was in, and he wanted to get you in?

POWELL

Yes, I've been active in the Zamorano Club since 1940. There again this brought me close to the leading bookmen of the region.

MINK

Did you feel at that time that joining the Zamorano Club would help your career here, or didn't you think a thing about it?

POWELL

Oh, no; naturally, this was obvious. You didn't think about it; it was just obvious that it would, because it put you in contact with all the local bibliophiles. Yes, sure, all these things are obvious things. You don't even think about them, you just do them because they're the obvious moves to make. It wasn't the sole reason I joined the Zamorano Club; it was because these were my friends, this was a community that I was [familiar with] .

MINK

Well, I know you always felt that people on the University Library staff here during the years you were Librarian should join because it does.

POWELL

Yes, that's right. It's a key. So, as I took the train from Union Station to Chicago, I dropped my resignation in the mailbox.

MINK

Oh really?

POWELL

Yes, to Mr. Goodwin. "Dear Mr. Goodwin, I resign, I quit, je quit." [laughter] I didn't give any reason; I just said, "This is July. I will take my vacation in August, and would you terminate me September 1." I went off very light-hearted on the Super Chief and had blueberries and cream for dinner. I got along just fine at Northwestern. Vanderblue was very kind to me, and I met with the acting librarian, a woman who was holding the front.

MINK

She was not a contender, I take it?

POWELL

No, she was an older woman; she'd been Koch's assistant librarian. And she said, "We need you here; I hope you'll come." I spent the day with them and with the staff and with the faculty and with President [Franklyn D.] Snyder.

MINK

Did you not like the idea of living in the Midwest?

POWELL

That didn't bother me. Fay was born there, and we could have made out there. Evanston, [Illinois] was attractive; the Deering Library was very attractive. The librarian's office had a fireplace in it. [laughter] And looked out on the lake. So I came back, then, without an offer in writing, but Snyder said, "Well, I'll present this to the trustees, and I'm sure we want you. Will you come?" And I said, "Well, I have to see President Sproul first. I want to tell him what I've done." So when I got back, I called Hansena, and she said, "Well, Dr. Sproul's in Berkeley; you'll have to go up there and see him." I said, "I'm willing to; I'll go up there and see him." She gave me an appointment about a week hence.

MINK

Did you tell her all the time what you were doing?

POWELL

I don't know if I did; I don't remember. I suppose I talked to Hansena. People did talk to her.

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

This helped. She liked to know what was up.

MINK

This was her job, after all--to keep her finger on the pulse of the university here.

POWELL

Yes, that's right. And she inspired confidence. She is a wonderful gal. So when I went to Berkeley, then, to see Sproul a week or so later, he said, "My God, all hell's broken loose. All the faculty at UCLA are writing me angry letters-- Powell's resigned; why have you let this happen?" He said, "I haven't had such a snowstorm of letters since we fired Eric Beecroft." [laughter] I said, "Good. That's great." He says, "Well, you've got an offer to go back to Northwestern." "Yes, sir." He said, "Do you want to go?" I said, "Well, I'd like to stay at UCLA. I'd like to come back to UCLA." And he said, "But not as junior librarian?" I said, "No, sir. Nor as senior librarian." He says, "You want to come back as head librarian." "Yes, sir."

MINK

As a matter of fact that's what he said?

POWELL

Yes. I said, "That's right." "Well," he said, "you've got an awful lot of support, Powell." "Good," I said, "the faculty know what they want. It's their job; I hope you'll listen to them." He said, "Well, I always do. I'd like to take this under advisement; I'd like to have a committee of the faculty, a formal committee appointed to make a search."

MINK

Well, had Goodwin already indicated he was going to resign by this time?

POWELL

No .

MINK

I mean retire.

POWELL

Yes, in probably another year.

MINK

I mean, he had served notice then to Sproul that he was going to retire. I wouldn't think Sproul would appoint a committee, would he?

POWELL

Well, Goodwin was already over retirement, you see.

MINK

Oh, I see.

POWELL

He'd been called back because of the war, and it was just a matter of another year. I'm sure it was understood.

MINK

He must have been around sixty-seven then.

POWELL

Yes. So Sproul said, "How long have I?" "Well," I said, "the Northwestern trustees are meeting in another three weeks, and I told them I'd give them my answer then." He said, "Good. Three weeks it is." So I came back to Los Angeles, and my contact then was through Lindley Bynum.

MINK

He had already been hired then by President Sproul?

POWELL

Yes, he'd been hired, and we were good friends. We'd come together.

MINK

He had become disenchanted with the Huntington?

POWELL

Yes.

MINK

How had that come about?

POWELL

Well, I suppose the same problems that he had when he came here. He hated like hell to make a report in writing. He hated like hell to do anything formal, and they'd pressed him to make formal reports of his activities, and he said, "To hell with it." So they let him go.

MINK

They really let him go; he didn't resign?

POWELL

No, he didn't resign. And Sproul jumped in and hired him.

MINK

On the condition he wouldn't have to make any formal report?

POWELL

Probably. At any rate, "Pinky" and I had become acquainted clear back in the thirties through my work on Jeffers. Lindley was quite an aficionado of California literature.

MINK

And yet, I suppose, too, at that time he was a member of the Zamorano Club, finally.

POWELL

Yes, I guess he was. I knew him in several aspects, and he told me, "Well, Larry, I once thought I would succeed Goodwin and become University

Librarian." He said, "I realize there's too much work involved. I think you'd better do it." He was joking and he said, "Now I'm on the committee; Mr. Sproul's appointed me to the committee."

MINK

Was he the outside man?

POWELL

He was Sproul's man on the committee. He wasn't outside.

MINK

Well, he'd be outside the faculty.

POWELL

That's right; he was Sproul's representative on the committee. The others were Hustvedt, Westergaard, Huberty, Barja and U. S. Grant. And I've told the story in my book of how they met and how finally Hustvedt was outsmarted by Westy and Powell. And that's how it came. Franklyn Snyder of Northwestern was giving me trouble because he wanted a decision out of me, and I was holding off to get Sproul's word; so for a time I didn't have any job.

MINK

Well, this committee then was the committee that was to find a new University Librarian.

POWELL

Yes.

MINK

But six months before that, before you became Librarian, you were appointed Librarian of the Clark.

POWELL

Well, the committee recommended only the university librarianship. So I went to Sproul after this recommendation had been made, and he said, "Well, I have two jobs that I can offer you. The Clark committee has met for a year now and hasn't come up with a recommendation, so I'm going to act for them.

I'm fed up with their delay and I'm ready to offer you that position January 1; or the university librarianship, July 1, 1944. Which one would interest you?" And that's when I said, "Both." I said, "Put them together." "Oh," he said, "that is an idea." And I explained to him the advantages of coordination and elimination of duplication. I said, "They need to be coordinated by a single person." And he saw it immediately and he said, "All right. I have the power to do this now. Let's talk about salary." So I agreed to start January 1 at the Clark as the Director for \$4,000 a year and July 1 as University Librarian and Director of the Clark at \$6,000. So that was the way it was arranged. Then I told Franklyn Snyder of Northwestern that I'd accepted the UCLA job. He said, "Have you got any recommendations?" And I said, "Yes, Jens Nyholm, the 'Great Dane' at Berkeley, would be an excellent person." And Snyder made a note of this, and Nyholm got the job and held it for twenty years. So I was able to pay my little debt to Nyholm of his friendship and interest in me by swinging that job to him.

1.9. TAPE NUMBER: V, Side One (September 15, 1969)

MINK

Larry, what was Cora Sanders like?

POWELL

She was a lady.

MINK

In a real sense.

POWELL

Yes, in a deep sense she was elegant and well-bred, kind, discreet, was a wonderful person for Will[iam] Clark, I know. You see, she was a kind of a social front for him. She gave the library that kind of tone and quality that no one else could have given it.

MINK

Do you think that he was a homosexual?

POWELL

Well, I don't know, Jim; I never knew him.

MINK

You never met him?

POWELL

No, I never met him.

MINK

Well, you know this book that came out.

POWELL

Yes, Mangam's book.

MINK

Mangam's book. *The Clarks, an American Phenomenon*, and the story about the fact that he was advised by his attorneys to give the library to the university.

POWELL

Yes, Ed Stressing.

MINK

This was in order to whitewash what was going on in his backyard.

POWELL

Well, this was probably true. He suffered two losses--two wives died, one of cancer, one in childbirth-- and then his only son was killed in a plane accident. And after all these things, I think he turned to drink and to young men. But I don't think in the beginning he was; I think he was a perfectly normal man that tragedy and too much money drove in this direction. But I don't know anything about that other than hearsay. And of course Miss Sanders was a model of discretion; she never gossiped about Will Clark.

MINK

Did she ever mention this?

POWELL

No, oh no, and I would never mention it of course.

MINK

I see.

POWELL

You were very careful of what you talked about with Cora Sanders, because she was fiercely loyal to Will Clark.

MINK

When did you first meet her?

POWELL

I first met her in 1938 or 1939 when I first came to work at UCLA. Jens Nyholm, who was the head cataloger, had never been to the Clark.

MINK

He'd been here and he'd never been to the Clark?

POWELL

Well, he'd been here a year or two and had never yet gone. And I hadn't been, so he said, "Let's go over." So Mr. Goodwin gave us the afternoon off and we went over to the Clark. I think our names are probably in the guest register there; you can pin it down. Miss Sanders greeted us and gave us a tour of the library. Now that was the first time I met her.

MINK

You knew the Clark existed even before you came to work, didn't you?

POWELL

Yes, I knew of it through Jake and the shop and Cowan, you see.

MINK

Of course.

POWELL

The librarian, Mr. Cowan, used to come in Jake's, and I knew about it. But I didn't know about it as Ritchie did; Ward was over there way back in the 1930s. He took printing over to Mr. Cowan and to Mr. Clark. His name and Gordon Newell's are in the guest book way back about 1934. But, you see, in my work here from 1938 to 1943 in the Acquisitions Department, I did the bibliographical checking for Clark orders. All the cards for Clark purchases came to the order department and I was the checker for them. So, I knew the Clark's intake over those years.

MINK

Were you Impressed?

POWELL

I was impressed because the book selection was done by two people: Cora Sanders and Sigurd Hustvedt. Hustvedt was on the Clark committee, and he and Miss Sanders were the chief book orderers. They did marvelously well in building up Restoration drama, in building up all the minor figures of the age of Dryden.

MINK

Were they, at that time, giving attention to Wilde, too; were they building the Oscar Wilde collection?

POWELL

Yes, but not as actively as I did later. No, they were concentrating on Dryden because of Hustvedt's interest. And I think Miss Sanders felt that they had enough of Oscar Wilde, and maybe his and Clark's interests were a little too compatible. So when I became director of the Clark, we concentrated on Oscar, filling in gaps, translations particularly into foreign languages, and original material. So by the time I became director of the Clark, January 1, 1944, I knew the library's holdings, particularly in recent years. I knew the book dealers, of course, from way back, and I knew sources. I was in a good position to carry on this fine program.

MINK

I suspect the guest book would tell us; but what are your recollections of the people who were coming then to use the resources of the Clark? Were there distinguished people?

POWELL

No, there weren't any; there wasn't anyone coming, really.

MINK

It wasn't well used.

POWELL

No, it wasn't. Miss Sanders, you see, didn't encourage its use any more than Clark had--that is, they were friendly if someone came, but they never sought people to come. In the ten years she was curator (1934- 1944), she still regarded it in the sense that it was Mr. Clark's private library. And she had a running feud, and properly so, with Grounds and Buildings, particularly with Mr. [A. E.] Davie, "Deacon" Davie--remember him?

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

He was the superintendent of Grounds and Buildings, a rough, hard-shelled construction-foreman type, and he wanted to treat the Clark as another piece of Grounds and Buildings. She said it cannot be treated this way; it has to be treated with care and with elegance. So she virtually barred the doors to him and appealed to President Sproul to keep this roughneck out. Well, they would tear up the plumbing, they would tear up the brickwork, they would do all kinds of crude things; and she fought against this. And she was right, Jim; she was right.

MINK

So then early in 1937 Ralph Cornell came as consulting landscape architect, and he was anything but crude.

POWELL

They completed the landscaping of the grounds that hadn't been finished. He laid out a plan, and they spent quite a lot of money on this. Unfortunately, all the coast live oaks that he put in the four corners of the big lawn eventually died. We had to replace those; Cornell and I worked together when I became the director. We put a whole new planting scheme in there which is operating now. But we owe Miss Sanders and President Sproul the credit for holding the line for ten years on the Clark, to keep it from being pulled apart, bulldozed under. Everybody in the community wanted a piece of it, you see. The faculty was pulling and hauling on it; they wanted to make it a typographical museum, they wanted to make it an Americana collection, and Sproul just sat on it for ten years.

MINK

What did Davie want to do with it?

POWELL

Well, he didn't want to do anything other than, when something went wrong, he wanted to send a crew over and do a crude repair job. He didn't realize that it had to be maintained on a different scale than campus maintenance. That was the crux of the matter. In other words, the marble in the entryway was flaking, it had to be treated, and he said, "Oh, we'll just bring a spray gun over there and shellac it." And Miss Sanders said, "You will not." So she did nothing. And when I came, I looked into the matter and got an expert on marble to come. He said it must be treated with a thin kind of rubber glaze to prevent it from temperature change. In other words, we brought in specialists; we didn't depend on Grounds and Buildings. So she was an invaluable person, Jim, for those ten years. Anything could have happened to the place without her discreet and firm curatorship; and in this President Sproul backed her up. He was a great strength, as he was, indeed, later to me.

MINK

And you say no one was using the Clark Library; is this why the Clark Fellowship was established?

POWELL

Yes, one reason. You see, when I came in in 1944, I had a whole notebook full of ideas, things that needed to be done. From talking with members of the English department, chiefly Edward Hooker, the Dryden man, and with Regent Dickson, and with I don't know who else, I had ideas of what should be done. I was able when I negotiated the position with Sproul to mention some of these, and he said, "Well, I want you to meet with the committee on the Clark Library and then later with the Southern Committee of the Board of Regents and outline these things that you want to do. They included a fellowship; an annual open house, called Founder's Day; a publication, the first ten-year report; and an accelerated buying program.

MINK

Well, I suppose the idea behind all this was to make the university community, as well as the community at large, more aware of the Clark Library. Is that what you had in mind?

POWELL

That's what I had in mind, and Edward Hooker wrote me, or he may have written it to the president who gave it to me, what he called a "modest memorandum" on the Clark Library, which urged that we undertake buying not of high spots or expensive first editions, but of the minutia of the period, the bread and butter books; this was Edward's idea, and I took that over.

MINK

These wouldn't be rare books then?

POWELL

Not rare books, they would be early books; they would be seventeenth century books.

MINK

I see.

POWELL

But all of that I call the mulch of the period, you see, the ground strata in which literature grew. And as a result I began to concentrate more on the cheaper material--sermons, pamphlets, and theological works, culminating in

the year I spent in England, 1950-1951. During that year, we bought thousands of books.

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

Well, Edward Hooker deserves a great deal of the credit for this. But of course he wanted this material for the edition of Dryden; they needed it. The Clark had the high points of literature, but it didn't have the ground works, and we bought a lot of reference books and a lot of common books of the seventeenth century to try to make it more useful to scholars. One reason scholars didn't come to use it was the books weren't there--that is the working books of the period--history, philosophy, and travel.

MINK

At this point were there any people in the history department or the English department that were holding seminars at the Clark?

POWELL

No, I don't think so. The first seminars that I recall being held there were--now wait a minute, Hustvedt may have. And Hooker may have. That was before I came. After I came, I began to encourage this more, and Clinton Howard was one of the most active users. He'd have a class over there every week for years. Clinton was one of the first of the faculty to seize upon the Clark as a laboratory for students.

MINK

Yes, you were close to Clinton because Clinton was one of those that was always coming into the library. Right?

POWELL

He and Charlie Mowat . They were inseparable; they'd been Rhodes scholars together, or Clinton was the Rhodes scholar, I guess.

MINK

Was Clinton instrumental in bringing Mowat here?

POWELL

I doubt it. He was too young; he didn't have enough influence. It was probably Klingberg with his interest in Anglo-American humanitarianism. Well, another thing, Clinton lived in Beverly Glen. We were neighbors in the Glen, and we used to see them there. Well, at any rate, a lot of the people who came into the library, of the few who came, were visitors.

MINK

Periodically, you mean?

POWELL

Yes, well, not entirely--but people sent by Regent Dickson, by Ernest Carroll Moore. Both of them used to come and bring visitors. It was the thing to do (now we have Disneyland). But they used to bring distinguished visitors. Sproul did, too. A lot of the time of the staff was spent up in showing visitors through, rather than users of the library. This gradually changed.

MINK

When you became librarian of the Clark, was it physically inside about as it is now? Was that basement room there, for example, being used for a reference library?

POWELL

Miss Sanders had done that. They installed what is said to be the first fluorescent lighting in a public building in Los Angeles in that reading room in the mid- 1930s. The reference collection was downstairs in that storage basement. I rearranged the drawing room. I hung more pictures. We developed some exhibit cabinets and storage cabinets, but basically the library is as it was in Clark's time.

MINK

Was the idea of having the reference room downstairs to keep people out of the nicer show part of the library?

POWELL

No, not necessarily; it was to provide work tables. You couldn't put work tables up in the drawing room; there just wasn't room for them. It was really a matter of common sense, developing an area where you could have work room and staff room, all the processing, you see. I used to consult with the architect, Robert Farquhar who was still living then. He used to come by and we'd talk about it. People were pressing me to use the drawing room more, not as a reading room, but just as a meeting place, talking and so forth. Farquhar said, "Well, that's fine; but please don't change it architecturally." He said, "It's a beautiful room. Please leave it the way it is." And of course we have left it. He was sweet; the old gentleman used to come by and he said, "Well, of all the buildings I've designed, this is still my favorite. This is the only time in my architectural career that I was given an unlimited commission. Clark said, 'Build me an elegant building and damn the cost.'"

MINK

Well, most of the materials that went into the Clark were imported.

POWELL

Imported and handmade, that's right. It cost just short of a million dollars in the mid-twenties. And of course it could never be built again.

MINK

Well, did you have ideas about how to use the drawing room?

POWELL

Well, I wanted to use it for music and lectures and evenings. For example, I held a meeting of the Zamorano Club there in the early 1940s. It's a beautiful room at night. We had some discussion meetings up there; we had seminars, of course, in the rare book rooms upstairs. But I gradually introduced more and more use of the drawing room, and this has been carried out, of course, in the seminars that we've held, these invitational seminars. We had folding chairs that could be brought in. But what I was trying to keep it from, and Sproul helped me in this, was its unlimited use by the community as a meeting place--that is, the Native Daughters of the Golden West and the church groups, and anybody that wanted to come in and just have a place to meet, we were opposed to this.

MINK

Did you have many requests?

POWELL

We had a lot of requests.

MINK

That presented a hard problem, I imagine.

POWELL

I know it did; it was a problem of public relations. Sproul and I agreed that we would encourage use that was related to the library and its collections and its use, and not make it just a meeting room. And we decided to do the Founder's Day, to have one great big smashing elegant open house, once a year, rather than a series of open houses. That's how we did that.

MINK

Now, the Founder's Day was commemorating what?

POWELL

It was in honor of Will Clark, and we tried to hold it on the date that we received--well, it was the date of his death, I think, June 14, 1934. We used to hold it in mid-June in honor of Clark. He left the library in honor of his father, but we made the Founder's Day in honor of him; I worked programs out with Theatre Arts, with Music, with Ralph Freud and with Walter Rubsamen--those were my henchmen--and we did some elegant things: Dryden's *All For Love* and Oscar's *Importance of Being Earnest*. And in 1949, remember, we did *A Live Woman in the Mines*, Alonzo Delano's wonderful play.

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

We did *Patience*, Gilbert and Sullivan's satire on Oscar. I loved working with Ralph Freud, who was a great theater man, and with Walter and Robert

Nelson in the music department; they were seventeenth century buffs We had some great times there--Alumni Day, Founder's Day-- helping each other.

MINK

What was Alumni Day?

POWELL

Well, we held it together with Founder's Day, and we had 2,000 people there one year.

MINK

Well, what do you mean by Alumni Day?

POWELL

Well, I don't know, Jim, except that alumni were encouraged to come, a homecoming.

MINK

Oh, you mean alumni of UCLA.

POWELL

Yes.

MINK

What about Goodwin, did he ever manifest any interest in the Clark at all?

POWELL

Well, you mean before my time?

MINK

Well, after you'd come there to work, if you can remember?

POWELL

No .

MINK

Did he ever go down there?

POWELL

As far as I know, he never came there again. It was a strange place to him, and he was out of place at the Clark. He didn't understand it. He didn't have any feeling for special collections or rare books or special problems of research materials. He was embarrassed by it, Jim, really. And that's why he never developed a firm policy for it; he didn't know.

MINK

Well, we know for a fact that when the Cowan collection was purchased in 1935--the books--Sproul was under pressure to put them in the Clark, and Goodwin opposed it.

POWELL

Well, I think he knew that it was a seventeenth-century library primarily, and that it was an anachronism to put Western Americana there.

MINK

The Montana collection, which was Western Americana in a sense, was there how?

POWELL

It was an accident, really; Cowan bought it.

MINK

He did? I thought it probably belonged to Clark.

POWELL

No. Clark had no interest in it; he had no interest in his native state, really. He left them nothing. Cowan was a dealer before he became Clark's librarian, and he never stopped being a bookseller. He was buying and selling all the time on the side, and Charlie Kessler of Montana had this collection for sale, as I understand it, and Cowan bought it as a good buy. He thought it would honor Clark, and there it was. We haven't transferred it--have we?--it's still at the Clark. But it wasn't Clark's, it was really Cowan's hobby. Clark wasn't interested in the West. His interest was in drama and literature.

MINK

Well, when you came to work at the Clark as the librarian, Cora Sanders had retired; you were really replacing her.

POWELL

We overlapped a week or two. She stayed on, or I came early. I guess I came early in December at her suggestion.

MINK

You really weren't to come until the first of January .

POWELL

Yes. But she said come over a week or two early and I'll work with you every day, or maybe it was the last week in December and the first week in January. Anyway, she made every effort to turn over things to me. The only bad thing she did, Jim--and I don't know this; I'm told this by the staff that was there-- she went through the files during her last month and destroyed everything that she thought was irrelevant.

MINK

She was her own records manager.

POWELL

Yes, she was her own records manager, and she apparently destroyed a great deal of interesting material.

MINK

Well, Larry, the same accusation has been made against you.

POWELL

Hah, against me? Good God!

MINK

Yes, by of all people, Alice Humiston.

POWELL

What did she say?

MINK

She said that when you became University Librarian, which would have been six months later, that they didn't know what you were doing. You were in the office there and they knew that cardboard box after cardboard box of correspondence came out of the office and went onto the trash heap.

POWELL

Oh, no, that isn't true, Jim!

MINK

Why don't you set the record straight then?

POWELL

No, it isn't true. I think Miss Bradstreet would be the one to verify this.

MINK

I think this was in relation to our discussions that we had about the history of the library--Alice Humiston and I, you know, worked very closely on this.

POWELL

Well of course it was my idea that she do it; I put her to work on this because she had to have something to occupy her.

MINK

Well, this wasn't true then.

POWELL

No, it wasn't true. We found very little in the way of records in the office. Mr. Goodwin had not kept records in depth. I don't know what he had removed. I think he removed his personal papers, that came back to us later from his widow. But I spent--and Miss Bradstreet would verify this--the first several weeks going through the files. And the chief value of the files was the personnel records (he had kept these; he hadn't altered any of these, and I read through them all), and the files on the Library Committee, and certain correspondence files. But as far as I remember. . . Lord, that would be against all my nature to destroy any records. I wish there 'd been more of them! But

let me ask this: what is in the archives for the Goodwin years? What did I turn over?

MINK

That would bear out what you said; there's very little. The question of course is why, and now you've cleared this up. I hope you don't mind that I've brought this up.

POWELL

Of course not.

MINK

We have to understand why things are the way they are.

POWELL

That's right; no, I'm not sensitive. I'm slightly indignant. There must have been some basis for Miss Humiston's remarks because she wasn't a dreamer.

MINK

No.

POWELL

Brady would probably [know]; I'll ask her when I lunch with her this noon. What we probably threw out was closets full of furniture and equipment catalogs. This was never one of his great interests, and one of the great problems of opening this library was to equip it. As I remember, he kept every dealer's catalog clear back to the 1920s, and there was a closet full of this miscellaneous out-of-date equipment material. It must have been that, and that kind of housecleaning that we did; but anything related to the operation, administration, and history of the library, good Lord, we pounced on, and I read them and we segregated them.

MINK

Well, when you came to the Clark after that two week interlude with Cora Sanders, who were the other members of the staff there at that time?

POWELL

Well, Mate McCurdy was the head cataloger and Mary Louise McVicker was her assistant cataloger. In other words, there were two catalogers, and their typist was Theresa Forbes.

MINK

And that was the staff?

POWELL

No, there was Mrs. Davis.

MINK

Oh, Boffie.

POWELL

Yes, who was the reference and order librarian. That was the staff. Then there was Bill McKeown who was the custodian.

MINK

He was in no sense then a book restorer.

POWELL

No, but Miss Sanders was encouraging him. She was the one that deserves credit for encouraging him to go to night school. She knew some of the books needed attention and some cloth cases needed to be made, and because she had an interest in handicraft, she encouraged Bill McKeown to do this on his own time.

MINK

Where 'd he go, Frank Wiggins Trade School?

POWELL

He went to Frank Wiggins or one of the night high schools in Inglewood where he lived. I just pushed this a little farther and gradually made him--I realized that it wasn't a full-time custodial job, that he was not goofing off, but he had a lot of free time.

MINK

Well, why would they need a custodian if they had the Buildings and Grounds Department?

POWELL

Well, Buildings and Grounds never cleaned the building; they came over on special repair jobs. McKeown was in charge of dusting and sweeping and window washing, that kind of thing, that Mylan does now. So I gradually got Bill McKeown to do more of this, and it led eventually to establishing the shop out in the carriage house. We made that the bindery for about ten years; then he worked on backlog. Eventually he was full-time binding, and we had a replacement custodian.

MINK

I never thought that he was very imaginative in his repair work.

POWELL

He wasn't at all; he was a routine, and he had to be watched very closely or he'd be downright destructive. He didn't appreciate original condition, but we were very careful with him. Well, now, the staff, you mentioned--Bill Conway was a member of the staff on war leave. He was in the army in Europe, and I corresponded with him as soon as I became director. He wrote me and said he was coming back, would there still be a place for him. And I said, "indeed there will. There'll be a place for you, and you'll get your salary increases that you would have gotten if you'd been here." He came back; and then we were overloaded with catalogers. I think we transferred Mary Louise McVicker out. She didn't have the seniority. Mate McCurdy stayed, and she and Bill were there for a time.

MINK

Mary Louise came back to UCLA?

POWELL

Yes. Eventually Mate McCurdy came back here when Bill Conway came, and then Archer. You see, I brought [H. Richard] Archer in on July 1, 1944.

MINK

Where did you dig him up?

POWELL

Well, I dug Archer up off Sixth Street. He'd been at the College Book Company up from Jake's when I was at Jake's, and we knew each other as fellow booksellers. He'd gone back to library school, following my example, the same way Everett Moore did. He was then at Cal finishing; he had to go back and get his A. B. He did two years for his A. B., and then he did three years during the early 1940s, working part time in the student bookstore at Cal. And I needed a bookman. I needed somebody with book knowledge and an interest in printing and bibliography and book knowledge, and he developed this very strongly at Cal. In the library school he was the president of the Book Arts Club. He seemed to be just the person I needed.

MINK

Did you tell him that if he came to work there he would have to get his Ph.D.?

POWELL

He was working on it. I guess I got him from Chicago, actually. He had finished at Berkeley and had gone to Chicago and was working on his Ph.D., and our agreement was that he would complete this.

MINK

Did the Clark committee feel that there should be someone with a Ph.D. there?

POWELL

Yes. I think the feeling of Hooker and Hustvedt was that there should be someone with research experience in addition to myself.

MINK

Well, now there's something I can't understand here. I assume that your idea was ultimately that Archer would take over the Clark Library and be the director, and yet you had argued with Sproul that. . .

POWELL

No, Jim, that was never my understanding. I wasn't going to be superseded by Archer or by anyone. As long as I was there I was going to be director. Where did you get that idea?

MINK

Well, then why would it be necessary that there be two with a Ph.D.? Why would Archer have to have a Ph.D.?

POWELL

He would be the one that would be working daily with scholars. You see, I was there once a week, and I think they wanted someone in the situation. . .

MINK

Right there.

POWELL

Yes, right there. I didn't train him to succeed me--my God, no!

MINK

Well, were you satisfied with Archer's performance?

POWELL

I was in the beginning, yes; he was eminently satisfactory in the beginning, because he established a number of the routines there in processing, in bibliographical checking, in buying, and in catalog searching. He was a wonderful catalog searcher and orderer, and he brought an interest in the graphic arts and printing that had been one of Clark's major interests, but which none of the English department had ever shown or have shown.

MINK

While we're talking about this five-year period up to the time that you went to Britain, is it true that when you went to England in 1950-1951 you came back and found that he'd spent the entire Clark budget on graphic arts?

POWELL

No, no! Jim, that isn't true.

MINK

We're exploding a lot of myths today.

POWELL

Yes. No, he hadn't had any money to spend that year, really; the money was all placed at my disposal. I spent it in England, and I spent some of it on graphic arts. But, no, Archer never did that. He had his hands full checking lists and offers that I sent back. And I bought I don't know how many--I must have spent up to \$50,000 that year. I overspent. Sproul covered this and gave me more money.

MINK

You were spending it on what you called the "mulch."

POWELL

That's right. The Harmsworth books of theology, and all kinds of seventeenth-century material; but I did start the Eric Gill collection that year. I bought some original Gill's--blocks and books.

MINK

Were you interested in Gill, or what made you think that this was something that ought to be at the Clark?

POWELL

Well, first of all, we started collecting Golden Cockerel Press seventeenth-century reprints. They'd done some seventeenth-century texts in modern, and we saw Gill's work illustrating some of these books. I don't know, Jim; I think it was just my flair and feeling which Archer supported.

MINK

Was he interested in Gill?

POWELL

He was interested. He was a very able and good assistant in those first years. We had an excellent working relationship. And of course the planning of the first underground annex was carried on in those years after he came, because

he saw right away that we needed more space. Bill Jackson had come out as a consultant, informally, and advised us to go underground, and the year I was in Britain, Archer and Mrs. Davis and Mrs. McCurdy--if she was still there then--had the responsibility for building this. Construction work was carried out while I was abroad. What else do we want to explode?

MINK

I wonder if you would say something about the Harding collection, which came I think about that time in 1950--isn't that right?

POWELL

Harding?

MINK

The pamphlets.

POWELL

Oh, yes; no, those came earlier.

MINK

Earlier?

POWELL

Those came in the early 1940s when I was still out here at UCLA.

MINK

Oh, is that when that began?

POWELL

I can't remember who was responsible for that purchase; it was some professor that was abroad who wrote to Goodwin and said Unionist Library was bombed out or had to be moved and Harding, the bookseller, had the responsibility for selling it. It was not only pamphlets, but it was bound books, thousands of them; and we bought the thing for some ridiculous sum.

MINK

That would be a matter of records.

POWELL

It was some ridiculous sum. It was delivered and it was covered with soot and dirt. I accessioned it out here, but that came much before the Clark period.

MINK

How did the faculty buy the idea of graphic arts at the Clark? Were you criticized for this?

POWELL

Not to my face. I was probably criticized for everything behind my back. This is always the way.

MINK

Yes. [laughter]

POWELL

But I have a thick back and I never paid any attention. I went ahead and did what I thought was proper. I was following Clark's interest in this; he'd been tremendously interested as one of the patrons of John Henry Nash and as a collector of Kelmscott and Doves. And I concentrated, of course, on local Southern California printing. I was the first librarian, I think, here, that developed a strong regional collection of printers. And to spark this I gave the library my own Ward Ritchie collection, which is now priceless and irreplaceable because it has all of the so-called Ritchie incunabula--everything that he did when he was learning to print that I collected.

MINK

Well, I was thinking particularly of the Ritchie collection, that perhaps some of the faculty might have felt that this was sort of perpetrating the buddy system?

POWELL

Well, sure, but he was also a great printer.

MINK

But I wonder at that time whether he was recognized as such?

POWELL

Well, no, great printers rarely are in their time, when they're actually producing. It's posterity that hails them. But I knew Ritchie was good and was important, was a leading figure here in graphic arts, as he has panned out to be of course. The buddy system meant that I had this marvelous opportunity to collect his fugitive material, which otherwise would have been lost--the pamphlets and the very early, privately printed books. And of course I gave these to the Clark Library, and Ritchie continued the gifts; he has never cost the library anything. Most of the local printers' materials were donations. So we spent very little, actually, on local. Saul Marks, Will Cheney, Grant Dahlstrom, Richard Hoffman, Gordon Holmquist and Merle Armitage--that whole collection was a gift. The money we spent was on completing earlier collections--Golden Cockerel and Nonesuch. I never collected Grabhorn Press because the Huntington was so strong, but we were given many Grabhorn imprints. We have the Indianapolis Grabhorn imprints because Charlie Rush, when he retired at University of North Carolina, knew that I was interested in printing. And when I was visiting him at Chapel Hill, he said, "Wouldn't you like these." He had been the librarian of the Indianapolis Public Library when the Grabhorns were there. And he gave us these priceless Indianapolis Grabhorns. So I did a lot of receipting for gifts in those early years.

MINK

There had been, I assume very little in the way of gifts to the Clark in this period?

POWELL

Little or none.

MINK

Or is the area so offbeat that as far as what the resources of private collections would be in Southern California would be limited?

POWELL

Very limited. That's right.

MINK

Well, you started at the Clark on the first of January of 1944, and you started as University Librarian on the first of July of 1944. Here you were working at the Clark, going there every day, and all of a sudden you had this much bigger responsibility and you couldn't go down there, how did you feel about that?

POWELL

Well, I don't think that troubled me particularly. I had Archer coming and Mrs. Davis had been there and Mrs. McCurdy, and they were very capable of carrying on, indeed as Mrs. Davis has proved to be all these years. Well, Conway must have come back about that time in 1945, maybe six months later. And I went once a week. I went over traditionally on Wednesdays, went to the Zamorano Club lunch, visited the bookstores. I felt it was a natural step to take and that I could handle both jobs.

MINK

Well, actually, I suppose that this job as University Librarian at that point wasn't the job that it is today.

POWELL

No, the library was much smaller. The war was not yet over, and the campus population was down, and it was more like a large college library. The staff was small. I was young, Jim, and I had all kinds of energy and ideas, and I wasn't troubled by the split assignment at all. In fact, I thought this was great.

MINK

Well, now the staff here--what did you think about them? Was there anybody in particular you thought ought to go, or did you think that generally it was a pretty good staff?

POWELL

Well, I respected the staff. I'd known them, I'd been one of them for five years, whatever it was. But the one I thought should have gone--who has gone-- was Mrs. Trout. She transferred to San Diego to the Navy Electronics Library to finish out her twenty years service; then she could retire. And that left this opening that I filled with Bob Vosper. Miss Bradstreet, Mr. Goodwin's secretary, had come over to see me at the Clark.

MINK

Oh, she was Mr. Goodwin's secretary?

POWELL

She had been for six months only.

MINK

But you hired her.

POWELL

No, no.

MINK

No?

POWELL

Miss Coldren had hired her; she was the assistant in the Reference Department, the clerical assistant, and then she transferred to Mr. Goodwin's office. And she was half time his secretary and half time Mrs. Trout's accountant for keeping the book fund straight. In fact, there 'd never been a full-time position in the Librarian's office. There 'd been a split appointment with Order Department and Librarian's office. And I told Miss Bradstreet when she came over for interview--and this interview was arranged by an invaluable person to me. It was Mildred Foreman, the personnel officer. She and I'd been classmates at Occidental. (Here was the buddy system again, Jim.) We knew each other well, and Miss Foreman kept sending me tips that Miss Bradstreet would be the ideal person and wanted to work for me and would I interview her. And then she came over to see me. Incidentally, she came to be interviewed on the same day that Bob Vosper came down from Stanford.

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

That was an interesting conjunction, the three of us that day in the spring of 1944. So I told Miss Bradstreet I wanted her full time as my secretary. I

needed a full-time secretary, and moreover, I thought we'd need student help for her. I saw the office expanding, and this pleased her. And of course Vosper then would have a secretary full time of his own. This pleased him; neither of us wanted to share a person. We saw that it would be impossible with the load we would have.

MINK

This brings up a question: you were telling me last week about going to see Sproul, saying, "I'll take this Northwestern appointment unless you do something for me." In accepting the appointment and combining the two into one job. . .

POWELL

All right, Jim, you're sneaking up on me now. Go on.

MINK

Did you make any demands on him as far as extra personnel was concerned?

POWELL

Oh, I'm sure I did; I'm sure I said that I would need them. Yes, I did. I said I would need to expand this half-time position to full time. He said, "Well, we'll work this out; this'll work out." I didn't make any enormous demands on him; I told him I was going to replace Mrs. Trout. But Sproul wasn't interested in the details of this. He knew that I would need a little more help, and he said sure and I had no problem there.

MINK

Now sort of a general university question: could you tell me, if you can, did you sense what his attitude toward UCLA was at that time? Do you think he thought it was just still a boondocks type operation?

POWELL

No, I don't think he did, and I never had the feeling that he was looking down his nose at this campus. No.

MINK

Too many people have, you know.

POWELL

I don't think that's right; I think he wanted the place to grow. Well, I know he did, because he gave me the support that I needed to make the library grow. He never boggled at this, or said, "Look, Berkeley's going to have the big cut, and you'll take what's left." No, I had the feeling always in dealing with Sproul that he was statewide in his vision. I apologized I think, one of the times I went in and said I wanted some more money for something. He said, "Don't apologize, Larry. If you don't ask for it, who will?" He said, "I employed you to tell me what you need. If you can justify it and make a good case, I'll give it to you. But," he said, "make damn sure you make a good case. I won't give you a blank check." So everything I asked for I prepared carefully; he taught me to document whatever I wanted. And I suppose I over documented. I used to come in with masses of paper and stuff. He said, "Well, you say it's good; is it a good buy? Will this enrich the library?" "Yes, sir." "All right, here's the money." He was very good to me that way.

MINK

Did he ever turn you down?

POWELL

No, he never turned me down. He stalled sometimes. He took longer than I liked him to, but he never turned me down.

MINK

Would you say that he was an easy man to reach?

POWELL

He was for me, because Hansena liked me apparently. Miss Frederickson always helped me as did Miss Robb, his secretary at Berkeley.

MINK

Well, would you say that things piled up on his desk, oh, for months, and you didn't get any action on them?

POWELL

I'm sure this is true of some departments; but I don't believe I found this true. I think that I got action from him. The only delay that I remember, really, that annoyed me and kept me hung up was when we asked that Neal Harlow be raised from head of Special Collections to assistant librarian.

MINK

Would that be the first assistant librarian that you had?

POWELL

No, it was the second; Vosper was the first. I needed this other one, and Sproul didn't reply to me. And it came up to 1950 or 1951. We were opening and dedicating Special Collections with those speakers and others that were here, and I wanted to announce that day that Neal Harlow would be assistant librarian and Andy Horn would be head of Special Collections. And I didn't have any reply. Sproul had told me orally on a visit to Berkeley that this would be OK, but I didn't have the paperwork on it.

MINK

Would this have been a regental appointment? Would he have had to take this to the regents?

POWELL

I suppose so. But I didn't have the paper on it and I was reluctant, and I called Miss Robb at Berkeley and I said, "The president told me this was OK, but I haven't had the transfer of funds form approval." She said, "Well, he's got it with him and he's on vacation." I said, "Well, where is he?" She said, "He's at Echo Lake" (up by Lake Tahoe, where he has his cabin). And I said, "Well, I've got to reach him, because I must announce this now and I must have his final approval before I do." She said, "Well, you call him at your peril, but here's his number." So I telephoned him at Echo Lake and got him out of the hammock. "Larry, haven't you gotten that notice?" He said, "I told them to put it through two weeks ago! Of course," he said, "I approved it. Go ahead, yes, announce it." He said, "You'll have the paperwork on it." Bang! He hung up! And so I did; that was enough for me. But I was always very nervous when I didn't have approval in writing of anything. But he never went back on his word and he had a memory as long as a horse, or is it an elephant.

MINK

Well, one other question here: you told me in 1961. . .

POWELL

You've got a memory like an elephant!

MINK

. . .when you were turning over records to the University Archives, the records of your administration. . .

POWELL

You mean everything I hadn't burned?

MINK

. . .you told me that Goodwin didn't speak to you for six months after you were appointed as the University Librarian.

POWELL

Oh, six months--probably longer than that. I don't remember when it was that we made it up.

MINK

Well, what was the hang-up?

POWELL

Well, he didn't approve of my appointment.

MINK

Why?

POWELL

Well, I was an upstart. I'd had no experience. I suppose that was the excuse. But it was less personal than professional. I think he thought, and probably he was right, that I was totally inexperienced administratively. It was a risky appointment, and it was more or less done over his head. This is, the faculty committee had not consulted him.

MINK

Did he want to name his successor?

POWELL

No, he'd had this tragedy, you see; he never took any steps to name anyone. He'd had Jens Nyholm here, and he could have made Nyholm the assistant librarian, and it would have assured his succession to Goodwin, inevitably. That's why Jens left and went to Berkeley, because Goodwin wouldn't promote him from head cataloger to assistant librarian.

MINK

Had Nyholm worked on Goodwin to try to get him to do it?

POWELL

He asked him. Before he left, he said, "Is there a future for me here as assistant librarian?" Goodwin said, "Well, I don't see it." Nyholm said, "Well, I'm leaving." It was, I think, an inability to face the fact that he had to be succeeded and to take the necessary step. He had worked so long with this group of women--Miss Coldren, Mrs. Trout, and Miss Bryan--that was his administrative hierarchy, and he couldn't envision changing it. And I think it was that which kept him from it.

MINK

Well, certainly Miss Coldren was a capable person.

POWELL

Yes.

MINK

She was a fine reference librarian, I suppose.

POWELL

She was tops.

MINK

Ultimately she married Goodwin.

POWELL

Yes.

MINK

Would you consider Elizabeth Bryan as a good librarian?

POWELL

No, I don't think so; I think the place outgrew her. She may have been in the beginning, but it became too much for her. She became more crotchety and more prejudiced, and she favored people and she was not an objective administrator. Miss Coldren was infinitely superior.

MINK

And yet Miss Bryan was head of the circulation department in a far more distinguished library than UCLA, at Urbana.

POWELL

Urbana, yes. Well, maybe this was her prime. Maybe those were her best years. I don't know. But between the two of them, Miss Coldren was by far the better; and the staff she built, of course, was a testimony to this.

MINK

Tell me, who would you say for examples were good selections on the part of Fanny Coldren?

POWELL

Well, Hilda Gray was certainly tops and Gladys Coryell. Ardis Lodge, Esther Euler.

MINK

All those people were employed by her.

POWELL

That's right.

MINK

Some of them of course while you were here.

POWELL

No, I think they were all here before I came.

MINK

They were all here in 1938.

POWELL

Yes, they'd all come in the early thirties.

MINK

I see.

POWELL

And in the Catalog Department there was Sadie McMurry; she was head classifier.

MINK

Yes, except that she wouldn't have a responsibility for hiring people in the Catalog Department.

POWELL

No, that's right Philip Goulding hired her; and he was apparently an outstanding person. Goodwin, I believe, had brought him from the Huntington Library.

MINK

You didn't know Philip Goulding?

POWELL

No, he died while I was in library school; he died in 1936 or 1937, but he built up that staff of Sadie McMurry, who was a very bright person; Alice Humiston, who was certainly good in her time. But we didn't finish on Goodwin, how we made up our differences.

MINK

Yes, well, go ahead.

POWELL

Well, it came about I think through Sydney Mitchell.

MINK

Was Mitchell aware of this?

POWELL

Yes, of course; he knew it from me and he knew it from Goodwin. He was friend to us both. He was Goodwin's oldest friend, actually. They went to library school together.

MINK

Well, then you're making your assumption, basing it on what Goodwin told Mitchell, that it was more profession, really, than it was personal.

POWELL

Well, I don't know, Jim. I don't know whether Mitchell ever said this. I think this was just my assumption. I think it all came about this way: I had arranged through Dr. Bird of Occidental to give Sydney Mitchell an honorary doctorate. This was my finagling.

MINK

At Oxy?

POWELL

At Oxy. When Mitchell was retiring, or near that time, he and Mrs. Mitchell had come down. We put them up in the motel over at Beverly Glen and Wilshire, and I think I gave a luncheon in his honor. Sproul attended, Westergaard, Jean Hersholt--and at Mitchell's suggestion I asked Mr. Goodwin. And Mitchell said, "He certainly won't turn you down when I'm the guest of honor." So I asked Mr. Goodwin if he would come to this lunch which I gave in Westwood, and he did; he accepted. He was gentle and friendly; and we smiled at each other and shook hands and sat at the table. Sproul was genial, and Mitchell was animated, and Jean Hersholt told wonderful stories. I don't know who else was there; maybe Bob Vosper was there, because I tried

to include him in all the things that I did. This must have been in 1945 or 1946. We were then building the east wing of the library. It was partly built, and I said to Mr. Goodwin, "Would you like to see the east wing?" And he said, "I'd love to." So as I remember, we came back to campus together, and we walked through the unfinished east wing in which we are now sitting. Every square foot of it we covered, and he was full of great interest.

MINK

This would be his bag.

POWELL

That's right; this was his bag. And I think I might have asked Neal Harlow to join us, who was in charge of the building construction. We walked through it; I remember the plaster was wet and some fell on Mr. Goodwin's forehead, and I took my handkerchief and wiped the wet plaster off his dome. [laughter] So Goodwin, you see, was in his element; he was very pleased. He said, "Yes, this is good; this is the way I foresaw it." I saw him one other time. That was when he and Fanny Alice announced their engagement.

MINK

Fanny Alice Coldren?

POWELL

Yes Fay and I were then living in Westergaard 's house, while he was in Denmark. Fay and I gave a reception to the library staff and faculty in honor of them. They were either newly married to going to be married. We had a beautiful corsage for Fanny Alice, and a boutonniere for Mr. Goodwin. And we had a lot of his faculty friends there--Burton Varney and Frank Klingberg from across the street--and it was a very happy occasion as I remember it.

MINK

Now this would have been after the luncheon.

POWELL

Yes, this was after the luncheon. Then they were married, and I don't know how much longer Mr. Goodwin lived.

MINK

Not much.

POWELL

No. And the next time I saw him, I guess, it was at the funeral for him over here at Kingsley and Gates. But I'm awfully glad, Jim, that we had this reconciliation. I guess Miss Bradstreet was terribly pleased, and Hilda Gray, and the old-timers. Everybody was happy. He realized by then that the library wasn't going to hell and damnation, that I hadn't fired anyone.

MINK

Well, were these his fears, do you think?

POWELL

Oh, I'm sure that the whole staff felt that there was going to be a shake-up, and Powell's going to take vengeance on some people who didn't bear the guns for him.

MINK

Well, Larry, you know you gave us that impression when Mr. Vosper came.
[laughter]

POWELL

I gave the impression that what would happen?

MINK

Well, that things might be different.

POWELL

When he came, he came in 1944.

MINK

No, when he became University Librarian.

POWELL

Oh, you mean he gave that impression.

MINK

No, you gave me that impression.

POWELL

Did I?

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

Well, it wasn't true was it?

MINK

No.

POWELL

No, he kept them, and he's kept now most of the team that we had.

MINK

I think the only people that he eliminated were Bradstreet and Rosenberg.

POWELL

Yes, well that was proper too, I think.

MINK

Why?

POWELL

Well, they were of special use in relationship to me and you couldn't transfer that very personal relationship, personal-professional, that operated between us. And of course I wanted Betty. Well now, he didn't turn her out; I took Betty into the library school.

MINK

You wanted her?

POWELL

Yes, and she worked for him part time. Of course, Brady left out and out. Well, this is always a shaky period--isn't it?--in a change of administration.

MINK

It's a transition.

POWELL

Yes, a transition; there's gossip, there's rumor, and it's a shaky time.

MINK

So I can imagine that the staff probably felt this way about Goodwin.

POWELL

They were loyal to him and they had no reason to be loyal to me. I had to win their loyalty.

MINK

Exactly what was it about Miss Bryan that ultimately led, speaking about loyalty, to her having to choose between retirement and becoming librarian of the University Elementary School? She's dead now.

POWELL

She's dead, bless her. We were incompatible, you see, because in my years here as a junior librarian, she sensed--she had women's prescience--that I was going to rise up here, and she didn't want this to happen. I don't know what she wanted to happen. But at any rate, she was nervous. And Deborah King's star was rising. She was head of the Reserve Book Room. And I found that all the general assistance funds--student wages and all--were administered by Miss Bryan.

MINK

That's a very strange way of doing things, isn't it?

POWELL

Well, it was a working thing between her and Goodwin. It worked for them, but I thought all the general assistance money should be operated out of the Librarian's office; because the way it was the other department heads

complained to me that Miss Bryan was taking it all. In other words, Catalog and Reference, Miss Coldren was unhappy about this. Vosper said, "Look, I haven't any student money. It's all going to Miss Bryan." I said, "Of course it's going there; she administers it." So I simply said to Miss Bradstreet, "Look, we're going to take this over and administer it." And Miss Bryan fought like a steer--no, not a steer, a heifer-- [laughter] against this, naturally. This was cutting down on her empire, and I think that's where she began to buck and resist. And I didn't approve of some of her staff. There was Helene O'Brien, remember? She was the blonde with the hair piled on top of her head. She was classified as a librarian, senior grade, and as far as I could make out, she did absolutely nothing. She was a real goofer- offer. I think I suggested to Miss Bryan that she be transferred or counseled out, and Miss Bryan opposed this. But I found that there was great slack of administration within her department, which was verified by things that were reported to me. Oh, I wanted monthly reports from department heads, and Miss Bryan didn't want to make one. So it was a series of things; and I felt we were going to have to replace her and promote the most efficient person that I saw in the circulation field--that was Deborah King--to be head of the department.

MINK

Did you talk to Debbie about this in advance?

POWELL

I don't remember, Jim. I suppose I did. I suppose I felt her out: did she want to do this? would she take it over?

MINK

Of course she did.

POWELL

Yes. She wrote me a whole series of memos when I was working at the Clark that six months, and they must be in the archives. I don't think I ever destroyed them. Debbie wrote me typical memos from King. Remember how she used to pound them out on the typewriter--of her plan for enlarging the library, that is, the physical enlargement of the library and all kinds of ideas she had for extension. I listened; I received them and listened to her because

she'd been here from the beginning. She had a good head. And of course she and Neal Harlow planned the building expansion together. Those two were in charge of it. So I suppose I simply told Miss Bryan, "Here it is; I'm going to relieve you as head of this department, because I think that it's too big for you now, and I don't feel you have proper control over your employees or the use of them. You can either retire or take this lesser demanding job in the UES." Then of course all hell broke loose. She appealed this and went to Mrs. Sproul and to faculty women, and she did all kinds of things to block this. But I cleared it with Sproul beforehand. (I guess Sproul or Dykstra. Dykstra was probably here by then.) Anyway, I had clearance all the way.

MINK

Dyke was here by then.

POWELL

Dyke was here. We ought to talk about him, Jim. He and I had gotten along very well. But that was really the most unpleasant top-level experience I had in all my years here.

MINK

Let's talk about something more interesting. When you came, where did you think the big gaps were in collections as you had seen them? You certainly were at a good vantage point to look at the collection, being in the Order Department. What did you think as University Librarian you would want to build?

POWELL

I don't know; there were gaps everywhere, Jim. The sets--the want list that Goodwin and Trout had prepared--our learned society publications was far from completed; I thought that must be continued. The British Empire collection, the Pacific, the folklore (Wayland Hand was coming on). I think Vesper's earlier reports, his early acquisitive notes, would indicate the things that we were concentrating on.

MINK

Those were the things you were concentrating on, what about the things that were not here, but should have been here?

POWELL

Oh, gosh, I don't know, Jim. History of science, American lit, certainly, bibliography. Jim, I'd have to go back in my memory on that. It seemed to bust out in everything. We needed everything and more of everything--Continental publications, the wartime gaps we had to fill, you see--the money that Sproul gave me for that.

1.10. TAPE NUMBER: V, Side Two (October 21, 1969)

MINK

Well, Larry, you probably have heard that recently John and La Ree Caughey formed a foundation--the John and La Ree Caughey Foundation --and have given the library \$5000 for the collection of material on the loyalty oath. I think I mentioned this to you some time past, and at that time you gave me orally some of your recollections of your involvement with the loyalty oath. I wonder if now you would try to summarize some of the things in which you were involved at that time.

POWELL

Yes, I became involved by a direct approach to me from Regent Dickson. He called me at home one Sunday and said, "Larry, I'm getting a group of faculty together who are going to take a page advertisement in the *Los Angeles Times* in support of the regents' position on the loyalty oath, and I'd like to include your name." Well, this put me in a difficult position, because I was opposed to this special oath, and yet I was a friend and in a sense a protégé of Mr. Dickson. Well I hemmed and hawed for a moment, and he pressed hard and he said, "Well, you'd better know: that it's going to go hard with those who don't sign." And then he said, "I think you have a responsibility as an administrator of the library not to take any position which will jeopardize the recommendation in your budget."

MINK

You might say that was a little blackmail.

POWELL

Yes. Well, that was politics, and Mr. Dickson understood them. He brought pressure where he thought he could get results. I said, "Well, I'd rather not do this. My private feelings are that we don't need a special oath; we already have an oath to support the Constitution as state employees; we don't need a special oath for the university. And I don't want to take a position in this as an administrator; I want my staff to feel that I'm not coercing them one way or the other." "Well," he said, "I'm warning you." I gathered my forces and said, "Well, I just can't do it." "Very well," he said. As I remember the chronology, Jim, I called a staff meeting that week, I think, after that Sunday, and it was over here in the Physics Building; do you remember that by any chance?

MINK

I wasn't here at that point.

POWELL

Nineteen fifty, I guess.

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

We had a staff meeting. I can't remember who spoke at it, but I think some member of the faculty that I invited to speak. It may have been John Caughey.

MINK

The record will show.

POWELL

Yes, the record will show that. There was some kind of a meeting, and I don't know if I told them of the pressure on me by Mr. Dickson--I don't think I did--but I said that my position was difficult because I didn't want to jeopardize the library program by taking a militant stand. My main concern was the expansion of the library. Therefore, what I was going to do personally, I was going to sign the special oath and accompany that with a letter to the regents that I was signing it under protest. I wanted to go on record; I was going to, in other words, walk the fence. But I told the staff, as I recall, that "you're free to do whatever you have to do in your own intellectual honesty, and I don't

expect any of you to take one position or another; you're absolutely free." But I said, "Those of you who don't wish to sign the oath and won't sign it at all, I'll protect your position as long as I can. I'll attempt to keep you on the payroll by one means or another up to the last ditch; so go ahead and do what you have to do."

MINK

Larry, I suppose the record will also indicate that there was one that I know of, and there may have been others, who did not sign. Edwin Carpenter for one did not.

POWELL

Ed Carpenter, that's right.

MINK

Do you have any comment to make about this?

POWELL

Well, I think it was a tragedy to lose Ed Carpenter because he's one of the best Californiana bibliographers that we have.

MINK

Did you have occasion to discuss this with him at all?

POWELL

I don't remember; I just don't remember. Ed would of course. Ed would not only know the time and the place but what necktie we were wearing, what we had for lunch, and if he had one or two bowel movements-- the crazy bastard and his journal that he keeps! You say the record will show--I don't know what record there is of that staff meeting. We didn't have one.

MINK

No, I mean the record would show who didn't sign and who did sign.

POWELL

Yes, that's right. I just don't know what happened.

MINK

There were no other members of the staff who did not sign?

POWELL

No, I don't think so.

MINK

You don't know, actually.

POWELL

I think they all went along. And I don't know how many of them did as I did-- signed under protest. But I think a great number of them did. Well, the conclusion of this is that Mr. Dickson did not press against me in the library because I didn't lend my name. And incidentally, the ad did appear. You may remember it; and among the signers certainly was Dean [L. Dale] Coffman of the Law School, and I think maybe Charles Titus of Political Science. I don't know who else. I don't remember whether Gustave Arlt did or not. He was very close to Dickson; he may well have lent his name. Arlt could move about among principles rather nimbly for the certain time. Dickson did not penalize us, me or the library, for my stand in refusing to lend my name to the ad. He never referred to it again and our relationships were increasingly cordial from then on. In other words, he respected my position. He wasn't a complete politician; he also had integrity. Well, I suppose I was a damn fool to do this, but I tried to effect a compromise between Dickson and John Caughey.

MINK

You did?

POWELL

Yes. I didn't realize how strong Caughey's principles were. Mr. Dickson suggested that the three of us meet and try to work out some kind of a compromise position that would satisfy John's principles and also let Mr. Dickson have his way. I think I suggested this to John and he blew up, naturally. He refused absolutely to have any part of it.

MINK

You didn't meet, in other words.

POWELL

No, John wouldn't do it. I can't remember the compromise I had, but it may have been a signature under protest, or some kind of a device.

MINK

Do you feel that on the other hand, with Caughey, your position was less strong after that as opposed to Dickson, where it remained strong?

POWELL

Yes, I do indeed. I think first of all that John, and particularly La Ree, never forgave me--not for that specifically, but for my friendship with Mr. Dickson. We had a brannigan about this at the Caughey home one night. Along about 1953 or 1954-, after the Communist incident in my career, we were having dinner at the Caugheys, and La Ree opened up on Mr. Dickson.

MINK

And you felt constrained to defend him?

POWELL

Well, I defended him in a personal sense, in that I pointed out Mr. Dickson's sense of loyalty as he had exhibited it in my case, the minute this came up; and no one was more anti-communistic than Dickson. He came immediately out to campus and to my office and assured me of his support, and furthermore, as Sproul told me, that in a meeting of the Board of Regents, when Governor Knight said, "Let's get rid of that Communist librarian at UCLA," Mr. Dickson said, "I'll have you know, sir, Dr. Powell is known to me personally and professionally, and I vouch for his antecedents and character and loyalty. Does the governor wish to say anything more on this?" And Sproul said the governor dropped it.

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

Well, I said to the Caugheys, "This is an example of what I owe Mr. Dickson, because if Dickson had turned on me at that time, I would have probably been out." Well, the Caugheys said, "Well, you can't place personalities above principle." And they were right, and I was right; these were the two great conflicts that developed. I think I have more ways of working with personalities and ability to operate with personalities and to alter and compromise but not sacrifice principle, but to adjust to a specific pragmatic situation, than the Caugheys did. On the other hand, they had the higher and more honorable position of principle than any of us; so in a sense both of us were right, and it also made it impossible for us to continue our old friendship.

MINK

I have another observation to make on this, knowing Caughey as I do, which I wonder if you really would not agree with me upon. It seemed to me, from my own experiences with Caughey in the academic side of things when I was working as a graduate student under him, that he had many students, and all of them were very interested in the library and working in the library and using the library material. Then after I graduated in 1949 and didn't come back here until 1952, it seemed to me that on the other side of the fence there was a slackening off of the use of principally the Cowan collection by Caughey's students and perhaps even a slackening off of the number of students he had, and furthermore, a lack of interest demonstrated by him in the library. He very seldom came into the library. Would you agree with this observation?

POWELL

Oh, yes, absolutely.

MINK

You think it has anything to do with this?

POWELL

Well, I think it has to do with the fact that he established his priority as such; it's this whole field of liberties and intellectual freedom so that liberty became top priority with him. And it was almost an obsession and something had to give. As I saw John Caughey, he was a loner in a sense. He was out to do his own work, and incidentally he trained students. But his primary interest was in

his own work and in his own development, and if students could contribute to this, he was all for them. He did nothing to aid me in this development of the library, nothing at all. I could not interest him in field work or in acquisitions, or in support. He was busy doing his own work. I never criticized him, I never reproached him, and I don't mean to now. This simply was his nature, and what we have is his printed record: he did his work. The students he did train are remembered: Glenn Dumke, Bingham, Andrew Rolle, and some of the others. I've just finished a chapter of Charles Lummis' *Land of Sunshine*, and I had occasion to read Ed Bingham's dissertation. I think I was on his committee originally, and it's a first-rate job. It's a damn good dissertation. I'm saying in my chapter that it was good because it was done under Caughey who was a literary stylist. He set standards of style that were rather unusual. So my admiration and affection for John Caughey are unimpaired. I think I could criticize this situation, but it doesn't alter the feeling that I have, that we all owe him a great deal for the stand he took--an unpopular one, and one that involved him in great personal suffering.

MINK

Indeed.

POWELL

Yes, you know that better than I do, because you were a little closer to him.

MINK

Do you feel that following that--we won't call it confrontation--let's call it a discussion with La Ree, probably principally, that he did not approach you or try to interest you in civil liberties, or did he?

POWELL

No, he never did. I was a member of ACLU for years, and I think probably before John Caughey. Our contacts since then have been desultory, chiefly at the Faculty Center. I don't know that he ever reviewed anything that I did in the *Pacific Historical Review*. He never showed any interest in my development as a writer after the book on Pickett. He helped with that; he read the manuscript and he supported that, but that was way back, you see, in 1939 and 1940.

MINK

That's one of your first books.

POWELL

Yes, and also it coincided with a very strong review I wrote of John's 1940 *California* in the *Los Angeles Times*. The book's up there on my shelf. In October 1940, John Caughey wrote: "To Lawrence Clark Powell, reviewer par excellence, and to Fay Powell with the best of good wishes, October 1940." And he wrote me from Albuquerque, July 1940: "Dear Larry, Yesterday was a red-letter day. Fortunately I opened your letter on the way home and read your glowing review. Immediately thereafter, La Ree sequestered it and I've been able to get only occasional glimpses, though at times I hear a sentence read aloud. You have only a faint notion of how pleased we are. I hope that all the good things you said are so. No question about your sincerity; that has a most genuine ring. But are you blessed with judgment infallible. As a connoisseur of reviews, may I add with utter impartiality, that you did an excellent job of catching the spirit of my book and of pointing out the features that I had tried to give it. Many thanks. A few days earlier a most laudatory note arrived from Father Dunne of San Francisco University. Commended by churchman and heretic, I feel doubly set up. In the course of reading the page proof, I realized that it was probably Pickett that I was quoting. Three things deterred me from inserting any comment: I was not sure; it would have necessitated a footnote; and the discovery was really yours. The reprint of your most interesting item in the *Flumgudgeon Gazette* arrived safely. Should have acknowledged it, but I'm taking a vacation here from the social amenities. It has been hot here, but I've been busy on the campus, and we have been chasing Indians and scenery so feverishly that there has not been much chance to fret about it. Have a carefree month in the Rockies and leave a few peaks unclimbed. Come September, we must get together. With our best regards, John Caughey."

MINK

Larry, could you put into the record the date of your review in the *Los Angeles Times*, if it is on that clipping?

POWELL

It must have been in September or October of 1940.

MINK

I'm sure that maybe there's a copy in your collection; it's possible. Well, I suspect probably this business of the oath was in a way a difficult time for John.

POWELL

I'm sorry, Jim, to interrupt you; August 4, 1940.

MINK

Good.

POWELL

Here's another clipping, *Los Angeles Times*, August 4, 1940.

MINK

Did you feel that John gained friends and he lost friends?

POWELL

It was a divisive time and it also was an adhesive time; it brought people together and it separated people. Dickson and I, you see, were more political, compromising types and though I didn't support him, he didn't use this against me. He was able to go and resume our friendship and we became closer and closer as the years passed.

MINK

Of the other non-signers, two people come to mind: Charlie Mowat and Paul Proehl. I didn't know he was not a non-signer until recently.

POWELL

No, I never knew that.

MINK

What about Mowat? Did you have any opportunity to discuss with him?

POWELL

Well, Mowat was a much more relaxed type, and I saw him in Chicago after he went there. I had lunch with him in 1951 when I was driving west from New York. And then we've seen him twice in England, in Wales at Bangor, just this year or so ago. And he was a much more reconciled person. Besides he was glad in a way to go back to his native island. And it had no effect on our friendship. I will say that Caughey supported me in 1943. He wrote a very strong letter to Sproul on my behalf when I was up for consideration as librarian.

MINK

You can talk about Dickson and maybe begin by trying to recall your first meeting with Dickson and your first impressions of him.

POWELL

Well, I met him as a boy, but I have no memories, because he was in our home and we may have been in his. He and my father were associated.

MINK

Of course.

POWELL

Back in the wartime, when my father was with the Food Administration in Washington and living in the Mayflower Hotel and Mr. Dickson was back there on some wartime mission--both he and Mrs. Dickson--in the hot summer of Washington, my father arranged for ice-cold Sunkist oranges to be delivered to Mr. Dickson's room every morning.

MINK

Oh boy!

POWELL

Dickson never stopped talking about that up to the day of his death. He could still get that wide grin on his face and say: "I never forgot that; it saved my life. It got me through the hot Washington summer; what your father did for me with those chilled Sunkist oranges." My first memory of re-meeting him was in the early 1940s when the Clark Library was being pulled hither and yon by different factions who wanted to use it for their purposes, and Mr. Dickson

had an idea that it should be a typographical museum. They should set up Frederick Goudy there as the typographical director and be made a typographical center. Regent Frederick Roman wanted to take it over as a center for his educational forum. And they were pulling and hauling on the Board of Regents, these two. The committee to select a director, as I said earlier I think, was composed of Louis Wright, Waldemar Westergaard and Sigurd Hustvedt. The word got to me--this was in 1941, 1942, or 1943 I guess--that I was under consideration as director. I think Westergaard called me up once and said, "Mr. Dickson would like you to meet with him and Regent Roman at Mr. Dickson's home some evening and hear your ideas on the Clark Library." So I went to their home, and I realized then as I sized them up that Dickson was much the stronger of the two, and what he really wanted me to do was to agree with him against Roman's idea, which I was able to do without any sacrifice of principle, because I thought Roman was a nut. He was a nut, and we have to blame him on none other than our friend Elmer Belt. It was Elmer Belt that persuaded Governor Olson to appoint this nut, Frederick Roman, to the Board of Regents. Did you know him, Jim?

MINK

No, I didn't.

POWELL

He was nutty. He was an eccentric; he was in the old-time Southern Californian tradition of a nutty eccentric.

MINK

Like an Upton Sinclair.

POWELL

Without Sinclair's intellect. He was a gas bag, great gas bag, and he had this forum made up of silly men and women whom he swayed with his eccentric ideas of mass education. He was anti-liquor, anti-tobacco, and anti-everything else. Dickson saw right through, and he said that evening, "Well, Regent Roman, don't you realize that if we made the Clark Library the headquarters for your educational forum, we'd be in direct competition with our University Extension." Regent Roman said, "I hadn't thought of that." Mr. Dickson said,

"Now, Powell, shall we go on to other matters?" [laughter] And Roman was through then, and he sputtered a little, but Dickson checkmated him. Roman went so far as to buy a home near the Clark Library on Gramercy, and they moved in there and were closing in on the Clark Library. Well, Dickson was very pleased then when I said, "Well, I don't think that the Clark should be a typographical museum, but we certainly should develop typography there in the light of Mr. Clark's interests." Although the appointment didn't come through then until I made the arrangements with Sproul a year or so later, I think I had Dickson's support on the Clark Library from then on.

MINK

He pulled in his horns on Goudy?

POWELL

Yes. He realized that it wouldn't have faculty support; it wasn't a broad enough program. It was one aspect of Clark's interests, and I said the library should reflect all of Mr. Clark's interests: literary, historical, aesthetic, and typographic. Then the next time I saw Mr. Dickson, I think, was after I had been appointed University Librarian. No, I think in my six months at the Clark, he came by several times, bringing visitors. He liked to show it off. We had a meeting at the Clark in that spring when I was director of Clark but not yet University Librarian. There was a meeting of the Southern Committee of the Regents. I think I mentioned in my autobiography that we met there to consider the program that I had presented to Sproul. The Committee on Southern California consisted of Edwin Pauley and Dickson; and I think they squeezed Roman off of it. So he wasn't there. I don't know if Ed Carter was a regent then. At any rate, the two kingpins were Dickson and Pauley, and they were both, of course, old family friends. And the regents' committee meeting in the book room there to hear my program lasted about a half an hour. Then Mr. Dickson said, "Well, shall we go in the drawing room for some refreshments?" And they were ready. So we did; and it was really a social gathering. In other words, I had the confidence of these two men and Sproul, and they were green lights. The next time I saw Mr. Dickson was about twenty minutes after I entered my office on July 1, 1944, and there he was at the door. He said, "Powell, when are you going to open that school of the library?"

Well, he meant a school for training librarians, and this had been a bee in his bonnet since 1930.

MINK

That's a strange thing, isn't it? Or is it? I don't know. Why was Dickson so interested in the training of librarians?

POWELL

Oh, I'll tell you, Jim; it's very simple. He was on the Los Angeles City Library Commission at that time, and so was Rufus von KleinSmid of USC.

MINK

Another windbag.

POWELL

USC had a library school, and the appointments that kept coming up for ratification by the Los Angeles City Board of Commissioners of the Public Library were invariably graduates of USC Library School. And this galled Dickson. He couldn't stand it! He just couldn't stand it! And the graduates of education that were becoming superintendents of schools around Southern California. In other words, he couldn't stand this rivalry with USC, that they were winning. So he wanted the professional schools to come into UCLA to take over these fields, and the school of the library was one of them. Now in 1930, Mr. Everett Perry, the city librarian, when they discontinued the Los Angeles school, wrote to Sproul, and it came to the regents, asking UCLA to take over the Los Angeles Public Library School, and Mr. Goodwin and Mr. Mitchell killed it.

MINK

Why?

POWELL

They said, "We aren't ready for it."

MINK

They said, not Sproul?

POWELL

They advised Sproul. Sproul sought advice, you see. He did this constantly, in my experience with him. He always sought advice before he made decisions. First of all Mitchell said, "Well, we're going into the depression, and we're having trouble placing graduates from Berkeley." Goodwin said, "We have to build a library first." So these two people were opposed for different reasons, both of which in my opinion were valid: it would have aborted; it would have been a poor school. Well, nothing took it over then^, until USC did in 1936.

MINK

It would occur to me that maybe Goodwin would have wanted the school just to increase his own importance, and that he was forced to go along with Mitchell because Mitchell had been more or less responsible--you know, not responsible for putting him here, but because he was a good friend of Mitchell's.

POWELL

That's right. I don't think Goodwin was that self-seeking, Jim. I don't think he wanted to increase his own importance. I think he was selfless, really.

MINK

Was he?

POWELL

He was admirable in a way that some of us are not. He put the library's welfare always ahead of everything else, and I believe he thought he would weaken the library further. Also, he would have listened to Mitchell. Mitchell really called the shots. Mitchell was the stronger intellectually of the two.

MINK

Well, Dickson had long been a regent before Goodwin's appointment as librarian in 1923.

POWELL

Ten years earlier.

MINK

Did you ever hear Dickson comment about Goodwin?

POWELL

No. Dickson never spoke in personalities, really. He didn't gossip; he didn't criticize; he went after what he wanted, focused and zeroed in on what he wanted. "Mr. Dickson, give me time," I said, "I can't open a school of the library at this point. I've got to establish some kind of a library program. We're in the doldrums because of the war and staff demoralization. There's no classification or pay plan." I said, "Give me time." "Well," he said, "all right, but I expect you to do this." And I said, "I will." Let's see, it took me sixteen years. But I was right-- it needed time, and as a result we were ready when we did open.

MINK

Would it have come faster if Dickson had not died?

POWELL

He died in 1956?

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

Oh, I don't know; it was all snarled up then in the Master Plan. It was a very tricky thing. I kept budgeting for it, and it got as far as the chancellor or provost on this campus and then always died off in Berkeley, from about 1954 or 1955 until 1960. It wasn't until the Tom Dabagh Report that the pressure from SLAC and PLEASC and SLA broke the logjam. And of course Dickson was then five years dead. He never lived to see it.

MINK

To go on with Mr. Dickson, when was the next time that you had occasion to see him?

POWELL

I think when we were getting workings going for the east wing, along in 1945 or 1946. I was up in the old office upstairs and Mr. Dickson dropped in, I don't

know, for one reason or another, often to show off the building and the big reading room. He'd come in and say hello to me and he'd have visitors with him. I remember when he came into my office once, he drew me over in the corner and whispered, "Powell, I have to take a leak. Where's the nearest men's room? Don't you have one here?" I said, "No, sir. We'll have to go upstairs." "Well," he said, "get me up there." [laughter] So I took him by the arm and we went hustling off around the rabbit warren of runways, you know, where the office was hidden, on to the upper floor, and he relieved his bladder. Well, when we came to remodel and put the Librarian's office downstairs, remember, in Ernest Carroll Moore's old office, and I suggested to Carl McElvey, the supervising architect, that we have a toilet and washroom there in connection with the administrative office, he said, "Why that'll never get by. That's nonsense." He said, "We have to use the public facilities." I said, "Carl, you put this in; put in a good one, and it'll get by the Board of Regents. You bet it will." And I told him the story how Mr. Dickson had to take a leak and had to be hustled all over the place and nearly wet his pants. Carl came back later and said, "You're absolutely right. This came up to the Southern Committee of the Regents and Mr. Dickson saw this and said, 'You're absolutely right, there ought to be a toilet facility there; you never know when it'll be needed by important persons.'" [laughter] And this is not apocryphal; Carl McElvey reported this back. And of course we have the little toilet. You remember, it used to be called the Administrative Office Branch Library, I guess because I had books in there.

MINK

Well, now at this point I'm forced to ask you. . .

POWELL

Did Dickson use it? You bet he did.

MINK

. . .is there any truth to the tale that when Robert Gordon Sproul saw these facilities he nearly went through the roof and said, "Why I don't even have these facilities in my office at Berkeley."

POWELL

[laughter] I don't know, Jim. I guess I heard that, but I think it would show the relative importance of the president of the university to the chairman of the Board of Regents at that point. I think Dickson in the last resort got his way. Somebody suggested they put a plaque above the door--"The Dickson Facility."

MINK

Well, probably Sproul didn't know anything about it if it went to a committee of the southern regents; it was simply approved at that level.

POWELL

That's right.

MINK

It was never discussed with him. So I suppose maybe when he saw it, it came as somewhat of a surprise to him.

POWELL

But Sproul was always ready to accept an accomplished fact and to make a joke of it. I know we had meetings of the regents here in the new wing when the Board of Regents met. Remember? Were you here then?

MINK

No.

POWELL

We met upstairs. I remember one of the things about Neal Harlow (he was in charge of building and of course was head of Special Collections) : I went up to see the room after the regents had met--it was the Graduate Reading Room up on the top floor--and I caught Neal going through the wastebaskets . [laughter] I said, "What the hell are you doing, Neal?" He says, "I'm gathering source material." He cleaned out all the wastebaskets, took them down to Special Collections and checked them out to see if there was anything he should know about. Oh, my. Well, Dickson and I worked together then on founding the library school through the early fifties. It came to a climax at that regional conference that I called in 1955. We met down in Westwood Village at the Westwood House for lunch, and we had quite a gathering, Jim. We had

the chairman of the Faculty Library Committee, of the Educational Policy Committee, of the Budget Committee, the dean of the Graduate Division, and Mr. Dickson was there. The librarians from around Southern California were there: Hamill, Castagna, and Henderson; Kelley and Bennett from the Universities of New Mexico and Arizona. We published a proceeding of this, and called for the establishment of a regional library school at UCLA at the earliest possible date. Well, that was the last time I saw Mr. Dickson. I saw him to his car after that meeting. We came back up to campus, and I saw him to his car, and we talked a little about strategies. He said, "Well, budget again; I'll try to see that it goes on through." Soon after that he fell ill.

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

He was ill six weeks and then died.

MINK

Larry, it's really not the purpose of this kind of an interview to malign Dickson--and certainly there's no reason to; he was a great man--however, I think that if you would care to comment upon, how shall I say, his intellectual level. I think that it's demonstrated by some of the things that he did that he was very interested in a lot of intellectual things, but that he was not knowledgeable; I refer particularly to the Willits J. Hole art collection, for example.

POWELL

Yes, that was a fright--really was.

MINK

I refer to his so-called collection of fine printing. Would you wish to comment on any of these things?

POWELL

Well, I can only agree with you, Jim. He was an amateur, at a rather low level, and he was above all a newspaperman and a politician. His taste in art and in aesthetics was questionable, and yet he had a devotion to the idea and a vision, certainly, of a great university, but he didn't have the supporting

culture and education. No, this is true; he was taken in at times--by the Hole things. He always thought of quick increase of prestige. Anything that would raise UCLA above USC, he was for. When he saw a big collection of old masters, he thought right away, "This will raise us a notch." God knows, we had to be raised a notch, because we were a jerkwater country outfit--the old Southern Branch, merely contemptible. You and I know, as Occidental people, the contempt we had for the "Twig." We used to come over and beat the shit out of the Southern Branch, didn't we?

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

God, in baseball, football and track. Back in the twenties we had nothing but contempt for them, and this was the problem faced by Mr. Dickson, to bring this thing up to some kind of a level. Even worse than the Willits J. Hole fraud was the Carrie Jacobs Bond collection. Oh, God, I had to live with that for years, Jim. You know about that?

MINK

I know of it, but I wish you would tell me.

POWELL

Oh, God!

1.11. TAPE NUMBER: VI, Side One (October 21, 1969)

MINK

You were going to discuss in some detail the Carrie Jacobs Bond acquisition.

POWELL

Well, she was the venerable American composer-- "End of a Perfect Day" and "I Love You Truly" --living here in Southern California. Well, she had quite a collection of her own memorabilia: a harpsichord, a piano, costumes, music and manuscripts, and engraved music. Mr. Dickson met her socially, and I think, as I got it from him, heard that Rufus von KleinSmid was trying to get Carrie Jacobs Bond's collection for USC, so he leaped in and persuaded her to

leave everything to UCLA. Well, there was to be a museum, and I don't know what he promised her. But for an interim arrangement in the war--I guess she died--it was taken and stored in the Clark Library residence. And when I became director, one of the first things Mr. Dickson on one of his visits to the Clark said was, "Now let's go in and see the priceless materials of Carrie Jacobs Bond." And he said, "We plan to transfer this to the campus when they have a new music building, and it'll be installed as a unit of the new music building. I want you to get in touch with the chairman of the music department and have this understood." Well, I can't remember who the chairman was then. It was either Bob Nelson or John Vincent or Petran. No, it was Leroy Allen, the old trumpeter. It was Leroy Allen who directed the band. He came over and looked at it, and he was all in deference to Mr. Dickson--"Yes, of course, of course." He went out then and Nelson or Vincent came in with a much more critical view. They came over rather cynically and said, "Oh, we'll take care of this, you bet we will. Powell, don't you count on it; it'll stay right here in this old residence as far as we're concerned." I said, "You tell that to Mr. Dickson, you chicken shits." [laughter] And they wouldn't do it of course; and I was the fall guy in between. So it went on. All right, the showdown came when the new music building was to go up. I said to my boys, "I want to get this out of the Clark Library residence and get it over to the music building." All we could get the music department to do — and I think Mr. Dickson had died then-- was to take the manuscripts and the music and to put them in a case. They said, "You keep the harpsichord, the piano, the rugs, the costumes, and everything else," which were stored in the upper floor of the Clark. Did you ever see it when it was up there?

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

So there it was. Now Carrie Jacobs Bond's niece, her executrix, or friend, or both, remembered the agreement with Mr. Dickson and kept pressing the university: "When are you going to open the Carrie Jacobs Bond Memorial Museum?" Hah! The pressure kept mounting to do this, and everybody kept stalling. Vern Knudsen became chancellor after Allen, and Vern came to me once and said, "Larry, look, we've got to do something; the heat on me is

intolerable." He said, "Can't we get something here in the Clark Library residence?" I said, "Well, Vern, we're going to tear this goddamn thing down. It's a rattrap, it's a firetrap and everything else, and there's no point in spending any money here." Well, he said, "Look, I've got a little money and I want to spend it." He said, "Even though it's ephemeral, I've got to do something to salve my conscience and get them off my back." So God help us, we went into that ground floor of the Clark Library residence, into the old study. Hah, we furred over the beautiful walnut paneling with some damask wallpaper. We developed a little museum room in there, and we were going to transfer the stuff down there. Well, I guess Knudsen went out of office.

MINK

He was only chancellor for a year.

POWELL

Yes, and Murphy came in, I think.

MINK

Who's Carrie Jacobs Bond?

POWELL

Yes, who's Carrie Jacobs Bond. And a new business manager came. I think Paul Hannum was the new business manager. So Paul came over to see me and he says, "Look, we've spent a couple of thousand dollars on fixing up this room, and it was really a brainstorm, wasn't it?" I said, "Yes, I opposed it and yet I had to go along with Knudsen." And he said, "Well, have we any facility here for opening a museum? Can we accommodate people?" I said, "No, we can't receive people in this building; it's condemned by the fire department. We couldn't open it; it's totally impossible." He said, "Well, freeze the project." We sat down together and he said, "What'll we do?" And I said, "Paul, I think the smartest thing we can do is to give it back to the Indians." [laughter] I said, "Look, there's some valuable furniture here. Although the moths have eaten the rugs, there's some bureaus, and there's a harpsichord and the piano, and there 're a number of other valuable pieces of furniture." And I said, "I think if we emphasize that we've taken the music and the real memorabilia out to the university and we're honoring it, we might negotiate with the executrix (I think

the old friend of Mrs. Bond had died then and the executrix was alive) to give it back to them because we simply can't do anything here." Well, I must say to Paul Hannum's credit, he made a trip to San Diego, went down and saw the niece, brought the niece up, devoted a great deal of time to this and, by God, he brought it off. We gave it back to the Indians. And that was the end of the Carrie Jacobs Bond situation. But here it was Mr. Dickson's original lack of discrimination and taste in mistaking Carrie Jacobs Bond for a great American composer, which she was not. She was an ephemeral balladist, and yet he was taken in by it. Of course on the other side of the picture he was completely unappreciative of the Walter Arensberg material.

MINK

Oh, was he?

POWELL

Oh yes; there was a tragedy. We lost the Walter Arensberg Pre-Columbian and modern art collection because of Mr. Dickson. This was a tragedy in our area, and I was caught in it.

MINK

How were you caught in that?

POWELL

Well, I was a friend of Mr. Arensberg's because here again he was someone that I'd known when I worked for Jake. And I used to deliver books and art out to him. And at the time that I arranged the exhibition at the Los Angeles Public Library in 1937 of Frieda Lawrence's manuscripts of D. H. Lawrence, I went out to Mr. Arensberg's house and borrowed Knud Merrild's portrait of Lawrence, a beautiful oil portrait painted from life. I said, "May I borrow it for a centerpiece of the exhibit?" Mr. Arensberg said, "Yes, if you can find it." His house then in Hollywood was so full of art, he didn't know where anything was. He was getting older. I went all over the house and I found it on the landing of the staircase and borrowed it. Well, the collection was given to the university with the understanding that it would provide an art building to house it. And this got caught in the post- World War building program. The other buildings had higher priority. Besides Mr. Dickson thought it was a

bunch of screwball art--Picasso, and "Nude Descending a Staircase" of Marcel Duchamps and so forth. He just didn't appreciate it.

MINK

Let me just interject this. Is it true--and I think it is true--that at the time of the dedication of the Dickson Art Gallery and the Art Building, I suppose, Dr. With said to Dickson that the Willits Hole collection was nothing but shit.

POWELL

I never heard the word, but I was there at the dedication, and I saw their scuffling and so forth.

MINK

Then did Dickson turn very red in the face?

POWELL

Yes.

MINK

And he got very annoyed, and yet after that had a great deal of respect for Dr. With. Now my point here is: could he have realized in his mind that perhaps the Hole collection was a mistake, and not wanting to put his foot in it again, opposed the Arensberg acquisition on that account?

POWELL

Well, possibly; but he just didn't like the stuff. He had no appreciation of contemporary art. He had no appreciation of it. But I think I can blame the failure on somebody. We always want to blame somebody else. The chief failure was by Pinky Bynum. Bynum was Sproul's legman on this and the go-between, and Pinky just never brought it off. He should have been able to educate Dickson to this and show him that it was a prestige item, that other museums wanted it. If Dickson really had known that the Philadelphia Art Museum was ready to grab this, or if we could have planted in Dickson's ear that USC was going to grab it, he would have switched.

MINK

In defense of Lindley Bynum, could it be said that Lindley Bynum had his own little things that he worked on, and his method of working was slow, and he sometimes took years to bring off the acquisitions of a collection, when really the person gave it to the university more because they were a friend of Lindley's by this time, than because they were interested in the university. And he would be in this instance pushed by Sproul to pull something off very fast; that this wasn't the way he worked.

POWELL

Yes, I think this is true. It just wasn't his cup of tea.

MINK

Right.

POWELL

And this was Sproul's mistake, I suppose, in expecting Bynum to bring this sort of thing off. I don't know why Arlt didn't get into it. Arlt could have brought this off. Your story about With and Dickson is characteristic of both of them, I think.

MINK

That he would speak up and tell him what he thought.

POWELL

Yes. I was there at that dedication and I heard there was a lot of talk about how Dickson had turned on his heel and walked away, had been insulted; it got all over the place very quickly. And, of course, I knew Karl With; he's a great character.

MINK

Well, when I said what I did, I was simply quoting what I had heard about his remark.

POWELL

I think that's true, sounds like him. My God, he was really a rough jewel, old With was. A man of great scholarship and perception and taste and gusto.

MINK

Well, to come back to the Arensberg collection: what was the upshot of that?

POWELL

It was given to the Philadelphia Museum.

MINK

We failed to come through with the building.

POWELL

We never built the building for it. We didn't honor our commitment to Mr. Arensberg, he said, so he gave it to Philadelphia--valued at \$3 million.

MINK

Now, you were going to say something about your idea for the establishment of a Dickson Chair in the library school.

POWELL

Well, I thought this would really have been a happy ending--that Mrs. Dickson endow a chair in Mr. Dickson's memory. This was something that was very close to him. But I think she felt that he was more interested, and it was more fitting and more impressive certainly publically, that his name be associated with art. So the Dickson Art Center. She's done certain things in her lifetime, and I don't know what her will will be, but I don't expect there'll be a bequest to the library school. It would more likely be the art department. I talked to Gustave Arlt about this repeatedly and urged him to work on her to endow this chair, because Mr. Dickson--Lord, he would have been pleased when the library school opened, and I'd like to have seen his name associated with it. He was the one that first sought it, and he never gave up seeking it.

MINK

How did Arlt feel about this?

POWELL

Well, you never knew how Arlt felt. He was an operator, bless him, and he was frying fish in a dozen pans. He may have had his own ideas of what Mrs.

Dickson should do, and they weren't either art or library school. They might have been Germanic languages or Graduate Division or scholarships and fellowships in the field. There 're all kinds of things that would have been worthy. Well, Jim, the other controversy that I think that this would feed into naturally was the Bullock's Department store. Have you ever had any tapes on this?

MINK

No, we haven't, and I think we should have a good in-depth description of this controversy.

POWELL

Well, I don't know that I can give it as well as maybe Sam Herrick, who is now in engineering and astronomy; he was closer to it, but I was certainly drawn into it. I don't know the dates, but I would think 1945 and 1946.

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

It came to my attention first when I was in Dykstra's office when he came as provost. We got together; he knew who I was because his sister was married to Professor Walter Hartley of the music department at Occidental, whom I'd studied under. Edith Hartley was Dyke's sister. So when Dyke came from Wisconsin to UCLA, Edith, his sister, said, "You look up Larry Powell; he's the librarian out there." Well, a week or so after Dyke arrived, I got a phone call one morning, about a quarter to twelve, "Hello, Powell? Well, this is Clarence Dykstra; I want to meet you; I want to see the library." He said, "I'm coming right over." Well, I had a firm date then to go home for lunch with Fay in Beverly Glen and then bring her back to the Village for something. We didn't have a telephone then (we couldn't get a phone during the war); I had no way of reaching her. So Dykstra came roaring over to my office about six times as tall as I, stooping through the door and all. He said, "Hey, let's have a look at the library. What you got here anyway? Got any books?" So I went trotting along at his side; we made a whirlwind tour of the library and then he said, "Let's go get something to eat." I said, "Would you mind if I took you home for

lunch? My wife's expecting me." "Well," he said, "will it be all right; will she have enough for us both? I'm a big eater." "Sure," I said. We got into my Chevy; we went tearing up Beverly Glen. Fay was equal to it of course; she had great resilience. And that was our first meeting--at our little cottage up in the Glen. Dyke sat down to potluck with us at lunch. This was the kind of guy he was; he was great.

MINK

Yes, he was.

POWELL

He was a tremendous guy and, Lord, I loved him. And I got along fine with him after that. He gave me everything I asked for; he fought for me vis-a-vis Sproul, and when Sproul once made me a commitment that he forgot about, Dyke reminded him. I was in Dyke's office one morning, probably with my tin cup asking for a million dollars, and Dyke said, "What do you think about this, Larry? What the regents are doing to us." And he explained to me that the regents weren't going to buy a strip of land on the north side of Le Conte.

MINK

Known as the Janss Triangle, right?

POWELL

Yes, which the university thought it owned, but the Jansses had kept it, and the Jansses were selling it to Bullock's then to build a department store on what we regarded as the campus. And Dyke said, "Well, even some of the regents didn't know we didn't own this." The gates are there; it was inside the gates. It went from Westwood Boulevard over to Hilgard, that whole piece of land. And he said, "I think this is wrong." He said, "I'm going to take it to the senate." And he said, "I want your support, too; I want all the support I can get, because I think this is a terrible thing that the Southern Committee of the Regents and Sproul agreed to do." Well, this was characteristic of Dyke; he put his great, big, thick neck out there and opposed a policy of the university when he thought it was wrong. So the word got around that Bullock's was going to build a department store on what we regarded as university land, and the senate became aroused. And particularly zealous in the arousal was young

instructor Sam Herrick and his Colombian, South American wife--Betulia--a little fire-eater if there ever was one.

MINK

Why was he particularly concerned?

POWELL

I don't know how he got in with this, but, Jim, I know we have his collection. I got him to give his stuff on it to the archives.

MINK

Right.

POWELL

It's in the archives.

MINK

We have it in the archives. POTOLL: The answers would be in there. Well, he was an instructor without any tenure. And bringing pressure on the university to go through with this and honor their agreement with the Jansses not to oppose this, to let the Jansses sell this to Bullock's, was the pastor of that church, Jesse Kellams, who kind of installed himself as the university preacher; he was always at Commencement in his robes. And Dyke said, "I'll put a stop to this; we aren't having any damn preacher on the stage--the same one every time--we'll have a different one every time." At any rate, Kellams was heating the drums for this, and the Chamber of Commerce in Westwood Village and all wanted to put this over.

MINK

The Westwood Businessmen's Association.

POWELL

Yes, they wanted to put this over. So a lot of uproar was going on, and the student body got into it. And the president of the student body then was Gene, Edwin Lee's son. Gene Lee who's now the vice-president of the university, I guess. The senate was in it, and the alumni got involved in it.

Dykstra's whole point was that the university needed this land, that the regents should buy it.

MINK

Indeed they did.

POWELL

That's right; where the medical school is now. Well, the regents had said they wouldn't, that they wouldn't oppose Bullock's buying it from Janss. So we had strategy meetings. Dyke said to me once, "Fay, your wife, is the niece of Alphonzo Bell. Wouldn't it be wise to tell Mr. Bell about this? Because my records here show that Mr. Bell gave nine or eighteen acres to the university across Sunset Boulevard, out where the old poinsettia gardens were for faculty housing." That tract was given by Bell.

MINK

Right.

POWELL

And so I went tearing up Stone Canyon to the Bell corporation headquarters, to Uncle Alphonzo, and I said, "Look, the University needs your help." "What is it?" Well, I said, "We want you to go to Mr. P. G. Winnett, president of Bullock's, and tell him not to buy this and to let the regents buy it." Well, he said, "Do the regents want to buy this?" We said, "Not yet, but we think they can be persuaded." Well, Mr. Bell then was ill; he'd had one stroke and he was under doctor's orders not to exert himself, but he became concerned about this. I took him down; we looked at the tract, and he talked to Mr. Winnett and reported back to me. He said, "Well, Mr. Winnett doesn't want to do anything that would jeopardize the cordial relationship with UCLA; he's willing to withdraw if the regents say that. He said it's up to the regents." I said, "Well, Mr. Bell, talk to Mr. Dickson about this, because there's the key to it." So Alphonzo Bell did talk to Mr. Dickson and pressure began to build up. We had a strategy meeting in old Truman's Inn there (Mrs. Gray's Inn it was called) at Westwood and Wilshire in the dining room upstairs. It was attended by Dykstra, by Gene Lee, president of the student body, by Ed Lee, his father, by the Herricks, and I brought Mr. Bell. He was a very impressive figure then, on a

cane and all, and he spoke and he said, "Well, I certainly think the university needs all the land it can get." He said, "We gave it eighteen acres. We are glad we did, and we're still waiting for the university to build faculty housing on it." Dykstra said, "Yes, yes, yes, yes; let's not get off on another issue here." [laughter] So Bell needled him a little about that. And the pressure then kept mounting. Well, I had a phone call that night from Alphonzo Bell, Jr.

MINK

Uncle Al? Our congressman?

POWELL

Our congressman. He was then in the petroleum company. He says, "Larry, I wish you'd take the heat off my father. He can't stand this. The doctor said he's not supposed to get aroused, and you're getting him all aroused here, and God damn it, stop it!" I says, "Look, Fonso, your father can't live forever." And I said, "If he can go out fighting for a worthy cause--" I says, "he feels very deeply about this as a matter of principle, and it's a matter of duty and so forth." And Bell said, "Well, I know how Father feels, but please don't overdo it." So I had to tell Dykstra, "We can't get Mr. Bell involved too much anymore." Well anyway, it came up to the point where the regents held an open meeting to discuss this, in Kerckhoff Hall. And I'd been downtown and met with the president of the Alumni Association--it was Paul Hutchinson then.

MINK

I remember that name.

POWELL

And we developed the strategy that Hutch would appear at the open meeting of the regents and present the case for the university and Sam Herrick would speak and represent the faculty. That was a great meeting, Jim. Do you remember it?

MINK

Yes, I do.

POWELL

The spokesman on the Board of Regents was not Mr. Dickson; it was John Francis Neylan. That great big son of a bitch. He was as big as Dykstra. He got up, and I think he blamed it all on the Communists.

MINK

Probably.

POWELL

But Paul Hutchinson then gave, I think, one of the most eloquent presentations I've ever heard at a meeting of that kind. God, he spoke marvelously to this, that this land is needed by the university, the regents were derelict in their duty if they didn't take steps to acquire it, and he really nailed the regents. And by God, they took a vote and they reversed their action, their condoning this purchase by Bullock's and moved to reconsider and investigate the purchase of this for university purposes. And Herrick had been subjected to all kinds of abuse by this, threatened by Kellams and by various others.

MINK

He was going to see that he didn't get into heaven?

POWELL

To never get promoted.

MINK

Well, how did Kellams have influence in there? He's just a preacher.

POWELL

Yes, but he was damned high in university influence through Titus and others like Malbone Graham. He was really a voice in the university that Dykstra put a stop to; he muzzled him.

MINK

He was pastor of what church?

POWELL

That Community Christian Church at the corner of Hilgard and LeConte.

MINK

Oh, I see.

POWELL

That has a rare combination of Gothic and Renaissance in one building. And Romanesque. Soon after that, you see, the UCLA Medical School came, and that whole purchase of land was justified. That was a great fight, and the person chiefly responsible for doing this was Clarence Dykstra. This is a jewel in his crown.

1.12. TAPE NUMBER: VII, Side One (November 11, 1969)

MINK

Well, Larry, this morning we were looking at your ten-cent notebook. In the autobiography, *Fortune And Friendship*, you mentioned this, and some of us didn't believe that you had one. But we're looking at it, and we see that indeed it's an old notebook, and it has "ten cents" written somewhere on the front cover.

POWELL

Right there on the cover. Library Notes, ten cents. Western School Series Composition Book, L. C. Powell, October, 1943, Library Notes. On the first page I entered materials that I would need as office reference works. And here are periodicals and reference books. *Dictionary of American Scholars, American Men of Science, File of Library Surveys, File of Library Guides and Handbooks, Library Quarterly*. Install shelving-- no place to put any books when I moved into Mr. Goodwin's office -- he had no bookshelves.

MINK

Did Mr. Goodwin have any kind of a library of his own?

POWELL

Apparently not, he had the periodicals that he subscribed for, and he took most of those home with him. It came to us eventually, I think, when Fanny Alice turned them over, the *Library Quarterly* and so forth.

MINK

Was the library collection able to supply any of these works or did they have to go out and buy them all?

POWELL

A number were in reference and I left them there. A number were duplicates that I bought out of the equipment money. But I needed them right there. Well, then on page two, I jotted down a potential membership of the Senate Library Committee, as I knew that the Committee on Committees would be coming to me and asking my advice on the appointment of the Library Committee, so I had that ready. Westergaard, Huberty, U. S. Grant, Dudley Pegrum (who had been a bitter critic of my appointment, I thought he should be on the committee), Wayland Hand, Majl Ewing, Russell Fitzgibbon, Angus Taylor, Lindley Bynum (ex officio), and myself as secretary.

MINK

Why had Pegrum been a critic?

POWELL

Because he'd been an earlier member of the Library Committee, and when Sproul appointed a special committee to find a librarian, none of the Senate Library Committee was on that. Max Dunn was angry about it and Pegrum was angry about it. They thought it should have been represented, and it should have. Now the committee wasn't appointed by Sproul, this blue-ribbon committee to pick a successor; it was recommended by the Budget Committee. In other words, Sproul went to the Budget Committee and asked them, and they thought it best to have a completely nonrepresentative committee, no one who was connected with the library in any way. That's one thinking. Now I would have thought the other way, that the chairman of the Library Committee, who was Charles Grove Haines, I think, should have been on that committee, at least ex officio . Well, Max Dunn, the chemist, felt so riled up about this that after I had been appointed he had the Senate bylaws changed so that in the future, when a committee was set up to pick a university librarian, the Senate Library Committee should be represented on it. So that's why I wanted Pegrum and Huberty, who were on the Library Committee, to be represented. Well, it wasn't appointed just that way, because Committee on Committees' appointments always have to take into

account memberships on other committees, so there isn't one man on two major committees. I learned this in my last three years here, when I was a member of the Committee on Committees, you have to do a real chess game with personnel. At any rate, it was a good committee set-up. Now page three: I have here ten items that I thought we needed to work on. These were the things I thought about in my six years and I'd talked about constantly with the faculty, particularly young faculty who were critical of the library. Item one, the Library Committee and its function. I thought it should be redefined. It was more or less a rubber-stamp committee for the Librarian and a good one, and I thought it should be more active; and so I set that down. Item two, the University of California Library Council, which Mitchell and I had agreed should be appointed, made up of head librarians of UC and UCLA and the other campuses. Perhaps Library Committee chairmen from those campuses-- Bynum; the library school should be represented and a subcommittee of technical department heads. Well, that was something that came about in somewhat that form. Three, a library survey of UCLA, (a) of collections, and (b) of the building and its services. Well, remember Fulmer Mood was appointed.

MINK

Yes, he was.

POWELL

And then various surveys were done by Neal Harlow, and Herman Fussler of manuscripts of photography; Ray Swank of acquisitions. Item four, completion of the building. We were due to have an added stack and an added wing. And I put down, move Librarian's office to new wing (remember, the old office was hidden, hard to find) and use the present office for assistant librarian in charge of technical processes. More faculty research facilities, studies, etc. These were things that we needed. Five, reclassify jobs to distinguish better between professional and clerical. And I put a note: the role of the Staff Association in this. In other words, the staff should be involved in that kind of self-survey. Six, annual report. It should be a printed annual report, and perhaps one should be issued statewide for Berkeley and UCLA, including the Clark and the Bancroft. A section for each--the total to be edited by one person, that is L. C. P. [laughter] You see, before that there 'd been no annual reports issued. Neither Harold Leupp nor Goodwin had ever issued anything. The annual

report was typed up and filed. Or it was sent to the president. And there was no reporting at all to the staff or to the community. Seven, answer the question of keeping intact or classifying, dispersing collections. Now this, I think, was a result of Caughey's pressure on me, because of what had happened to the Cowan collection. Remember, we talked about this at another session here. And I felt we should have more of a known policy of what we were going to do with these valuable collections that came in. Item eight, form a division of rare books, special collections, manuscripts and archives, pamphlets and ephemera, with a curator. And as you know, that came about through the appointment of Neal Harlow.

MINK

First, as Gifts and Exchange Librarian, because I suppose there was no slot and no chance of getting one.

POWELL

There was no slot; there was nothing. Neal applied to me when I was appointed. Neal wrote to me from Sacramento. He was then Assistant Senior California Librarian in the State Library, and he was a UCLA graduate, former employee of the Bancroft, was interested in this area, and he wrote and said, "Are you going to have any such? Will you consider me?" The archives would show how our correspondence developed. It didn't develop well, I might say, because it nearly went off the tracks. We became angry with each other because when the Bancroft Library heard about this, that Neal might be moving to UCLA, they jumped into the picture and made Neal an offer. Eleanor Bancroft, who was really running the Bancroft Library at that time, came in between and tried to get Neal back to the Bancroft. Well, I blew up over this. I said, "Well, I have a priority." So I got in touch with Leupp and with Mitchell and with Neal and with Eleanor Bancroft and with everybody else, and I said, "The guy's mine, not yours. You don't have any right to do this." And Neal got caught in the middle of it. We exchanged a couple of annoyed letters, and then finally I think Neal realized that the priority was here and his interest was in coming here and doing something from scratch. So it worked out, and he came to that position of Gifts and Exchange and with a side assignment of developing the Department of Special Collections, and that's how it came to pass. But the first item on it, of course, is this notebook entry.

This was something I knew was important. Neal, of course, was God-given. He was the person to do it.

MINK

Would you say that Eleanor's interference just reflected a tendency at Berkeley to not want to see this campus grow, or what were her motives?

POWELL

Oh, I don't think so. I think she was very fond of Neal and wanted him back. I think she recognized his potential, and I think it was a simple wish to have him back on the staff, and when she heard that he might move, she acted. I don't think she was Machiavellian at all. On the other hand, there was always an unconscious feeling on the part of Berkeley that they had priority always for everything. And, of course, Harold Leupp had demonstrated this earlier when he jerked Jens Nyholm away from Goodwin and made him the assistant librarian at Cal without even consulting Goodwin. But Leupp and I had friendly relations, and then Donald Coney and I, and we never raided after this. Then the Library Council developed the policy that there must be consultation, and that a campus couldn't hire anyone from another campus at a higher step without total agreement.

MINK

Harold Leupp, Berkeley Librarian from 1919-1945, is almost legendary from the things that are said about him. Why don't you describe him as you knew him?

POWELL

Well, Leupp was a formidable man really. As library school students we all were a bit in awe of him because he was so formal and so apparently austere. I remember once as a library school student I checked out an item that was probably an early edition of Rabelais in the public catalog at Cal, and it was marked case "O". "O" was always supposed to stand for obscene, wasn't it? I asked at the Loan Desk for this. They said, "Oh, those are shelved in the Librarian's office." So I made my way into the office and of course I ran into Eleanor Hand, the tigress of the office who guarded the inner sanctum. And she said, "Well, you'll have to see the librarian about this." She ushered me in

and Leupp proceeded to catechize me about why I wanted it. I became angry and I said, "Well, it really isn't any of your business, is it, why I want this?" And he really burned, but he gave me the book. And on the other hand, I had another encounter with him. I think I wrote this in the *UCLA Librarian* at the time of Leupp's death, when we had a little memorial issue. I used to go into the stacks of the Berkeley library to nurse my wounds. When things got too rough in the library school, I used to retreat. And there are wonderful places to hide out, as you know, Jim. You probably did the same yourself. You got a little table and a chair and you could read up there. I was up on the very top level of the stack. I was up under the skylight where the academy proceedings were shelved, and I was delighted to come upon the proceedings of the Academy of Dijon where I'd gone to school- the Academie de Dijon et de la Cote d'Or. I fell on this with great nostalgia. It went clear back to the beginning--I think the 1740s or something. The academy, mind you, was where Jean Jacques Rousseau had made his start. He'd won the prize essay in the eighteenth century offered by that academy; it was a famous academic group in Europe. And I went through the set and was full of joy and nostalgia, and was browsing there when, good Lord, Leupp came along the stack aisle for some reason. God knows what he was doing up on the ninth level, and he showed me an entirely different side of his character. I guess maybe I said, "Well, Mr. Leupp, it's wonderful to find a complete set of the Academy of Dijon proceedings." He said, "I'm sure it's only one of thousands." And of course that's true; that was the heart of the riches of the Berkeley library, these tremendous runs of learned society sets. And he said, "Why are you particularly interested?" I said, "I went to school here. This is my hometown in France." And he gave me a very sweet gentle view of his character. I realized that he was a complex man. That's all; he smiled and said good and passed on. Well, I had other views of him through this whole series of young men that passed through his jurisdiction., I mean Archer and Everett Moore and Frank Lundy and Bob Vosper. They'd all worked a year or two, or a little more, for Leupp and had left because there was no future for them.

MINK

Did they regard him as a tough taskmaster?

POWELL

Yes. You dressed a certain way, always wore a tie, and you didn't chew gum, and you kept your shoes polished. All these things, of course, now in my advanced middle age, I heartily approve of. Jim, where's your necktie this morning? [laughter] But anyway, he was a taskmaster, and he ran a strict show. He was a military man originally, and I think when he retired he became the Ninth Army Corps Librarian, didn't he? He went over to the Presidio and worked a few years. But he was a bookman, too. I remember when I was appointed librarian, I went up to talk with him about the Library Council. I called on him at his home. He was recovering from the flu. Mitchell said, "Go up and see him." His house was full of books. It was a real bookish setting; it contrasted with Goodwin's home here, over in Calmar Court. Hell, there wasn't a book in it, really--or not one you'd look at twice. Leupp was a collector. His father was Francis Leupp, the Indian commissioner, and there's a town in Arizona (not a town, it's a crossroads) named Leupp, Arizona. That was Harold Leupp 's father. When I called on him at his home, he said, "Well, I'm on my way out." He said, "Powell, wait until my successor comes and you all develop these things that you want to do." And one of them was item nine in my list: a guide to the University of California library resources, a printed total guide. I don't mean a survey of the collections. I mean a guide to the collections--Berkeley and Los Angeles. And I had put a note in the margin here in pencil: the person to carry this off--Edith Coulter.

MINK

That's a very good idea.

POWELL

Yes.

MINK

She would have been marvelous.

POWELL

She could have done this. Item ten, and the last item on the list, was: an undergraduate library as separate from the main graduate collection. Well, I was thinking, you see, along that line in 1943.

MINK

Let's see, that would have been about the time that the Lamont Library was beginning to develop.

POWELL

I may have talked to Bill Jackson about this. Lamont wasn't dedicated until later in the 1940s.

MINK

But the concept had been formulated.

POWELL

I think probably I'd talked with Bill Jackson at Harvard about this. Because of course he and Metcalf were cooking up all these building developments for Harvard. At any rate, that's where it appears. There's more. I thought it was item ten only. There are nineteen items. Item eleven was to be a Clark Library ten-year report, 1934-1944, printed. "Note," I said, "the Morgan Library's five-year printed reports." That's where my idea came from. "Do a ten-year report for the Clark." And of course I did before I was through, I did three of them, covering thirty years of activity. Item twelve, send out a questionnaire to the faculty on the library. What did they think--that is, people that I never met or talked with. Item thirteen: "Require monthly written reports from library department heads." This was an old standard hassle I used to have, particularly with Debbie. I never could get Debbie King to turn one in regularly. She'd end up doing one every two or three months in which she packed everything. I must say they were worth waiting for. Item fourteen, establish the relationship between the University Library and the Clark Library, their buying policies and their reference services. Well, this is still going on, of course. Vosper has a committee that's working on this. Fifteen, develop a standard personnel record form for all University Library and Clark Library employees, professional and clerical. That is, it would be an evaluation--performance, and all these things. There was nothing in the office that you could tell about an employee's past or record of performance. Sixteen, issue a staff bulletin of information. And that was, of course, the *UCLA Librarian* that I had Everett Moore edit when he was the first one that came along that I thought could do this and that was interested.

MINK

Well, was the librarian's occasional letter to the faculty intended to fill this void to begin with, because I believe this preceded, did it not, the establishment of the Librarian ?

POWELL

The occasional "Letter to the Faculty." Yes, it was; and here item seventeen, a faculty bulletin of accessions. Now Vosper did this and called it "Acquisitive Notes." Item eighteen, refurnish the librarian's suite of offices. Well, we put a rug on the floor, we hung pictures, and we dressed the cell up a bit. It was very drab. Nineteen, inquire into photographic procedures. Acquire microfilm equipment at Clark Library, a microfilm camera, and send the films for processing to UCLA. Well, those were nineteen items that I thought we could do in the University Library, and I set those down in 1943 during October, nearly a year before I became University Librarian. In other words, all of these things were in my mind and came out of my talk with staff, with faculty and my own thoughts, and by and large they came to pass. We developed these things.

MINK

The Library Council, for example, you had to wait, really. As you said, you couldn't talk to Leupp about this, he was on his way out. How did Coney take to the idea of such a device?

POWELL

Eagerly. Because I think Mitchell had already brainwashed him.

MINK

I see.

POWELL

When Coney came up for an interview at Cal, of course he saw Mitchell. Everybody went to see Mitchell. And I think Coney's thoughts were--he came from Texas which had a dispersed system--that he was eager to do this. There were never any problems, and the early meetings of course were a delight. They were half social, half professional, as we rotated around. I remember one of the early meetings was at the Riverside campus. Margaret Buvens was librarian, and in our break she took us out into a grove of guava trees that

were in fruit. We all picked guavas, and on the table in the conference room she had pitchers of freshly squeezed orange juice. My God, we lived high, Jim, in those early years.

MINK

You said informal at first--did the concept of a Library Council have to have approval of the administration to have any force? How did this come about?

POWELL

Well, Sproul established it. It was created by the president, and it reported to the president.

MINK

Did you bug Sproul about this? Did you write him letters about this?

POWELL

Well, Coney and I suggested it, and we wrote the letter creating it.

MINK

Jointly?

POWELL

We drafted his letter, I think, establishing it. And I had talked with him about it in my interviews with him in the summer of 1943 at Berkeley when he said, "Well, what are your ideas, Powell. What do you think the library needs?" In other words, I'd talked about this with Mitchell earlier, and I said right away, "One of the first things we need is a Library Council." He said, "My God, yes." He said, "I wish you could get together the way Goodwin and Leupp haven't." He was very angry and embarrassed by the antagonism between Leupp and Goodwin.

MINK

There was then an antagonism mainly over Jens Nyholm?

POWELL

Oh, over everything.

MINK

Over everything.

POWELL

Yes. You see, Goodwin had broken the Berkeley policy that UCLA should never develop beyond 100,000 volumes. And in the beginning, when Goodwin came here, all the purchasing was done through Berkeley. The orders were placed at Berkeley, and this was intolerable, really, Leupp was glad to have all this continue because it kept his staff and budget up. No, it was a deep antagonism and feeling on the part of Berkeley.

MINK

Well, Goodwin had to develop the library because he had to support graduate work, first the MA and then the PhD in the late thirties. He had no alternative but to develop it beyond this minimal kind of a library, this college library.

POWELL

Yes, that's right, and he did.

MINK

I don't see how they'd hold that against him. The regents after all proclaimed that graduate work should be done at UCLA.

POWELL

Well, I don't know, Jim; you'd have to interview Leupp's ghost. [laughter] That's an idea. But at any rate, Sproul was for anything that brought the statewide systems together. He'd hit the table and say, "Yes, by all means, cooperation," and this was his whole platform. Well then on the next page, Jim, I have a heading: "Buying policies for the University Library." Now you asked me this at a previous meeting: what did you develop in the way of buying policies? Well, here are ten items that I set down. I think this was before Vosper was appointed. It was a result of my experience in the Acquisition Department. One, folklore. Two, history of science. Three, South Pacific. Four, Californiana, Cowan, Los Angelesiana. Five, Germanics, build on the strength of the Burdach, Bremer, Dahlerup, Koch collections. Six, French civilization--history, literature, art, travel. Seven, vertebrate zoology, the

Dickey collection as a point of takeoff. Eight, aeronautics. Nine, moving pictures. Ten, oil, petroleum. And to do this we should compile lists of desiderata; we should check standard subject and author bibliographies in all fields to be done by fellows in bibliography(?) , together with the Reference and Order Departments and the Librarian. The procedure here must be rigorously systematized. In other words, I foresaw appointments of graduate students, called fellows in bibliography.

MINK

Somewhat like teaching assistants that used to work in the Bancroft Library.

POWELL

Yes, and did we do some? We did something like this, didn't we? Well, you were an example, I guess, weren't you? You were a graduate student in history and working in the--but you weren't responsible for collection building.

MINK

No, no.

POWELL

You were stack supervisor; that's different. Two, develop standard printed forms for requests for bids on items, for acknowledgements of gifts, in order work, requests for quotations and reports on unfilled orders. I have a couple of pages on the Clark Library. "What to do at the Clark." One, subscribe to the Limited Editions Club and get their back publications. Develop local presses, Ritchie, particularly the printers of Los Angeles. Develop reference book collections at Clark (which they lacked). Acquire the British Museum Catalogue, which we did eventually in a reprint. Develop typography, the history of printing, the monuments of printing, the Gutenberg Bible facsimile and other incunabula facsimiles. Issue a ten-year summary in 1944, listing accomplishments and new directions to be taken. Eight, at the Clark, write for a back file and a continuation of other library reports--that is, the Huntington, the Houghton, Stanford, John Carter Brown, the Folger, the Morgan, the Wrenn, the Chapin, and the Library of Congress. Acquire at the Clark a union list of serials. Recent books on Montana; check and see that the Montana

collection is developed. Eric Gill (there it is clear back in 1943), develop Eric Gill, Nonesuch Press, Golden Cockerel Press.

MINK

Well, how were you going to justify all of the collecting of the fine printing?

POWELL

Building to strength. Clark had Nash, he had Kelmscott and Doves; he'd been Nash's great patron. It was building to strength, Jim. There they were, the beginnings, and I saw all the modern local printers could be had free. I primed the pump by giving my Ward Ritchie collection. It's now worth a hell of a lot of money. We appraised it then as a gift of \$1,500, but now you couldn't duplicate it, because I used to pick things off the floor, you see, in Ward's early years, empty the wastebaskets and all the stuff that's gone forever otherwise. And the Clark Library Committee, I had suggestions because it was an administrative committee appointed by Sproul, not by the Committee on Committees, and here were names that I wanted to be on it. Sproul as chairman, Ernest Carroll Moore, ex officio . And I had Goodwin's name here, and as I suggested to Sproul that at Goodwin's retirement he be given a membership on the Clark committee.

MINK

Was he ever asked?

POWELL

Well, it's struck through on my list. I think Sproul said, "Uh-unh."

MINK

He didn't want anybody outside of the university on it, I suppose. Could that be it?

POWELL

Well, he wasn't outside of the university.

MINK

Well, he was emeritus.

POWELL

Yes, well, course I'm a member of the Clark committee. Murphy appointed me lifetime honorary member; it's the same idea. And then Hustvedt has been stricken through, and I wrote Bynum.

MINK

Hustvedt was the one that opposed it.

POWELL

Yes, he wanted to run the thing. I wanted to keep him on the committee. Sproul said to dump him.

MINK

He opposed your appointment as librarian of the Clark.

POWELL

Yes, because he wanted one of his own protégés.

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

All right, Edward Hooker, Dixon Wecter, David Bjork, to represent history. And on the next page (and we're getting toward the end), Clark Library: to discuss with RGS before the first committee meeting (which would have been early in 1944 after I took office; this was written in autumn of '43). "Things to discuss with Sproul." One, the Library Committee and its role, the formulation of a policy for the Clark Library--its relationship to the university, to the research library, or museums of the region, and what to do about the residence, relations to the community, to scholars in general, and its buying program. Three, the administration of Clark Library after July 1, 1944 (after I became University Librarian, too). The appointment of a bibliographer, which was Archer. Four, purchase order routine. Dispense with a committee OK for items under \$100. That is, up to that point, everything that was bought at the Clark, even a fifty-cent pamphlet, had to be submitted to the committee on a typed list, and to eliminate that, I suggested at first for everything under \$100 I be

given carte blanche. This would save delay in dispatch of purchase orders from ten days to two weeks. It would save two clerical processes, the typing of lists and advance reservation letters to dealers. (Anything that saved money would appeal to Sproul.) Lists do not represent purchases because of the large number of cancellations. These were arguments in favor of this: (d) almost no items have ever been rejected by the committee; (e) the committee does not read the lists at present; it's just red tape. The director should be responsible for evaluating worth of possible purchases — one thing he's hired to do! -- within the limits of the buying program set by him and the committee. In other words, when you propose things to Sproul, you had to have the reasons laid out. You couldn't go in and say, "Look, I think it 'd be a great idea; turn the thing over to me." Uh-unh. You had to justify and give reasons. I learned this early, and I did it. And it always worked, because Sproul was a man of reason. You could convince him by a reasonable argument. Five, a monthly report to the president and the regents. Its desirability and usefulness. Six, why not a full printed annual report which can go beyond the walls. Seven, discuss the recent Montana items. Should we keep the collection up to date? Eight, establish a bindery (and I've written McKeown who was the janitor at the Clark who we made the binder) . Nine, get mechanical equipment at the Clark--a mimeograph card machine, an electric typewriter. Ten, consider putting exhibition cases in the hallway. Eleven, consider turning the drawing room into a seventeenth-century reading room with wall cases and tables. (Well, we never did this because it was architecturally impossible, really, to tamper with that room. And I consulted with Farquhar, the university architect, and we decided to leave it alone.) Twelve, put signs at the street entrance. Identify the place. We did; we had those bronze signs made on the three sides. Exhibitions to do at the Clark. Books mentioned by Pepys, books read by Dryden, Ned Ward, the seventeenth-century pamphleteer, John Taylor, the Water Poet, and Defoe. Issue handlists. Revise the leaflet for visitors. Prepare a manual for readers. Prepare a staff manual. Prepare a reader's card which will be revised and printed. That's it.

MINK

That's it.

POWELL

That's it. Well, what can I say, Jim? Whatever success I had was because I was prepared in theory to do these things. The practice or the carrying of them out was another matter, and it took time and they were modified; but in theory I knew what was needed--and why? Because, hell, I'd been in the mill here those years and lived with the library day in and day out and knew from the faculty what they wanted, and from the staff, too- There must be in the archives, Jim, the letters of Deborah King, or are they in my files here? In the six months I was at the Clark, Debbie wrote me about every week, things that she thought the library needed. Wonderful letters. You know how she used to beat 'em out on her typewriter at top speed, and she was full of ideas for remodeling the building. And of course when we came to enlarge it, I put her and Neal on the committee to do it. Debbie was full of good ideas. I think her father had been an architect, and she had a third-dimensional sense that I didn't have, and of course which Neal had. But all the things that we did here--sure, I was a paternalistic and "big daddy" type, but we had a lot of staff participation in policy formation. I tried to have people around me and working with me that knew more than I did.

MINK

Well, one thing I noticed there that isn't in the notebook that did develop, and I suppose it would be easy to check as to the exact date at which it occurred, was the department heads meeting that was held every week. When did you begin this?

POWELL

I don't remember.

MINK

Why?

POWELL

I needed help, Jim! This sounds like a lot of learned guff, and of course it is. It sounds like, Jesus, I knew it all; but, actually, I never administered anything. And I needed people out on the administrative line in departments and in divisions who could do it, and I suppose I wanted their experience always to draw on, that would reinforce and build up my ignorance, is what it amounted

to. I had tremendous confidence-- it's obvious--didn't I. I was pretty confident, almost a blind faith that I could do this job; but I had no day-to-day experience in running a library, least of all a library of this size and complexity. I know Vosper was a very fortunate appointment. There again, Mitchell deserves the original credit. He said, "Here's the man for you." Well, I looked at the picture and said, "Of course it is." I liked the guy's mug. But he showed this flair--we were just talking about it a minute ago--that is that Vosper is a faculty man. Well, he showed this in the beginning, that he was able to integrate his thoughts and action all his life with the faculty here--more so, I think, than with the staff itself. Isn't this true?--that he has a greater rapport with the faculty than the staff at large. He has bitter quarrels with his immediate contacts on the staff, but I think in the beginning, at least, I had a very strong rapport with the staff, down to the grass roots, to the shipping clerk, because I got around more. He would say right away, "You could; it was smaller." That's true. It was all in one building, wasn't it? The only branch library was chemistry with Eve Dolbee, who was the departmental secretary, and agriculture had a bit of an operation--didn't it?--under Martin Huberty. These were bootleg branch libraries. I brought Betty Rosenberg. As I recall Betty was the first agriculture librarian; I got her from the county library, probably through Debbie; she had worked for Debbie in RBR as an undergraduate, and then I got a group from the county library who wouldn't sign the county loyalty oath, remember? And then they came out here and ran into the same thing. Dorothy Harmon, Charlotte Spence, Betty Rosenberg, all came from the county library, and they're all here yet. What were we on, Jim; get me back on the rails.

MINK

The ten-cent notebook.

POWELL

Well, the heads' meeting I think was just--well, it was a way we operated the library.

MINK

Well, it was very much tailored to the time. You couldn't do that today.

POWELL

Why not?

MINK

I think that this has been one of the things that brought about the change in the administrative setup, where you have the meetings of so many department heads, of twenty-five people.

POWELL

It's too big.

MINK

You can't have a meeting like this that has too much feedback. It becomes an orientation meeting. The librarian gets together the department heads and tells them what he's done. He doesn't get them together to ask them what he ought to do. There's a lot of advice, but very little consent.

POWELL

Well, we actually developed policy in those heads' meetings on cataloging and on acquisitions, on reference, and particularly on building development. You see, that was the big overriding thing, I think, in 1944, 1945, and 1946--to get that east wing going. We had a blackboard and pinups, and we were kicking that thing around. We'd have the architect, Carl McElvey, and--who was the firm that built this, great big guy?-- Charlie Matcham. And we had Earl Heitschmidt. Heitschmidt and Matcham did the east wing here. Well, I'd known Earl Heitschmidt in the Phi Gamma Delta. He was a member of the Oregon chapter of the Phi Gamma Delta. I knew him in the graduate council here; so we were delighted to join up again in this project. We're sitting in it here, aren't we? This is the east wing. Well, sure, we met once a week to tool the thing up. I couldn't do it all by myself. I didn't know enough. Well, even if you knew enough, it wouldn't be the right thing to do. I'm a great believer in committee work that results in action, not in committee work just for committee work. But this was an administrative working committee that ran the library for better or worse. I don't think I ever brought out the ten-cent notebook. I don't think I ever showed this to anybody before, but you. It was my under-the-cover operating manual. But I couldn't have operated without it. That's what I always came back to.

1.13. TAPE NUMBER: VII, Side Two (November 11, 1969)

MINK

In the late 1940s there came along the beginning of the branch libraries, and I suspect that in some degree this was due to the student explosion after the war, students coming back and the need for additional collections in various areas. Could you discuss for a minute the concept of the branch library and when you first began to realize the need for it? Of course, the Engineering Library was the first official branch library.

POWELL

Was it?

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

Didn't chemistry become one earlier? Or did we still call it a departmental?

MINK

I think it was still a departmental library at this point. The Engineering Library opened on July 1, 1946 to become the first official branch library with Johanna Allerding Tallman as the head.

POWELL

Yes. Well, departmental meant that the departments, that is, chemistry and agriculture, paid the expenses of maintaining it. A branch library by definition meant that the library assumed all the costs of staffing and equipment and additions. And chemistry and agriculture both were interested in becoming branch libraries for the simple reason that they could unload the budget costs on me.

MINK

You had to resist this.

POWELL

Well, I thought, "If they're happy--in a sense they've got the books they want--let them pay for them." I suppose I did resist them. But when engineering came, there was a total new budget that everybody could dip into and Boelter, the new dean, apparently had all that he could do in staffing and instructing and researching, and he was willing that I should assume responsibility for the library.

MINK

Were your relationships with Boelter cordial? Did you find him an easy man to work with?

POWELL

They were always cordial, I think, although sometimes slightly strained, because all through his administration he kept making noises about seceding from the library system and having an independent engineering library; his faculty did not want this and voted him down time and again. We met in a jovial sort of bantering way, and I knew that I had the balance of power because his faculty wanted what I wanted and I had Johanna Tallman. Now she was a classmate of mine at library school. We were at Berkeley together. When she read in the newspaper about 1945 that an Engineering School had been established at UCLA, she either phoned or wrote me and applied for the job. She came out to see me. We didn't have the job yet, because the school existed only on paper. But I had a half-time job, as I recall, in the reference department, and I appointed Jo Tallman to that job, half time, and her other half time was to be spent in planning an engineering library. You'd have to interview her for the details of this, and she'd remember them right down to the last toothpick. She's never forgotten anything; I'm a little fuzzy about it. But essentially this is what happened; and Jo worked here on the reference desk and also with Dean Boelter. Now, our success in this area was due to Jo, not to me, because Jo was German, Boelter was German, and they understood each other perfectly. That is, Jo was born in Hamburg, as I remember, and she has all the virtues and vices of the North German square-head--tenacious, stubborn, humorless, dynamic. And Boelter found in her an ideal person, just as Staff Warren found in Louise Darling the ideal person to carry out his wishes. But he didn't reckon, I think, in the beginning, with Jo's also very deep and strong sense of loyalty. I'd appointed her, and therefore her basic loyalty

was to me, was to the University Librarian. She never swerved from this. A weaker woman would have been seduced by Boelter, as some of the later weaker appointments in some of the professional fields did, and they would have attempted to connive with him in pulling the library out of the system.

MINK

Would you say that the same situation pertained to Louise, or would you say that with her it was more loyalty to the UCLA Medical School over the years?

POWELL

Oh, no, no, no. I never questioned her loyalty to me, and there was never any question of pulling out. Staff Warren wouldn't have wanted it.

MINK

He wouldn't have wanted an autonomous medical school library?

POWELL

No. Louise had a passionate devotion to the medical school; but, my God, she was always, as far as I can determine, completely loyal to me and to what I stood for. Oh, they were both marvelous girls in different ways.

MINK

Well, it was said that when Mr. Vosper became librarian in 1961, then he had to do a little wing-clipping on Louise.

POWELL

Well, this could be.

MINK

There was a little more control over her budget.

POWELL

Yes, this could be. I know my last two years, I put a hell of a lot of time in fighting for Louise's position, to break it out of the classification and make it a separate position called the biomedical librarian, in order that we could pay her a higher scale than librarian V, which she was in. Now this was important, Jim, to me and to Page Ackerman. She and I did this together because Louise

was getting offers from other medical schools. She'd risen up to the top in the country as one of the leading medical librarians, and she also would bring in salary scales for other medical librarians showing how far behind we were. It was very important. Just as doctors and professors in the medical school were on a different scale than the ordinary faculty, she argued that the biomedical librarian should be. And by God, I had to fight this through the personnel office.

MINK

Where did you get the most static?

POWELL

From the personnel office at Berkeley.

MINK

Nothing comparable in the system.

POWELL

There was nothing comparable in the system, because at the other medical library at San Francisco the librarian was Dr. J. B. de C. M. Saunders, and the librarian, Carmenina Tommassini, was simply a figurehead, paid probably L-III scale. And I kept pointing out to the personnel office that Louise Darling did for the Biomedical Library at UCLA what John Saunders did for the San Francisco one--set policy and was the key person. They couldn't correlate her with Carmenina Tommassini, but they wanted to. They always wanted to have this kind of parity, you see. And, Christ, I went to Berkeley, and Page Ackerman and I drove from Sacramento to Berkeley at the time of the CLA conference to keep an appointment with the personnel officer. We had a university car and drove all the way down, and we had really a stirring meeting there with the Berkeley personnel officer. It wasn't Boynton Kayser, it was some woman in the office. This was the last big fight I ever waged in the personnel office, and I waged it along with Page because it needed my prestige and my office to do this, and we won it finally. Well, I suppose Vosper came in then and inherited Louise just as she'd been reclassified, and she had big ideas. But I left a lot of other problems for him, too, didn't I? Well, Goodwin left them for me!

MINK

Sure.

POWELL

This is the old chain of problems.

MINK

About the same time, the Institute of Industrial Relations more or less became a branch library. It was originally located in the main library, and I believe John E. Smith was the first industrial relations librarian. How did John come to the staff?

POWELL

Well, here again, wasn't he one of Debbie King's protégés in the Reserve Book Room as an undergraduate? He went on to library school, went into the Portland Public Library, the Army, came out of the Army, went to work for Ralph Shaw in the [United States] Department of Agriculture, decided he wanted to come back where the oranges hang on the boughs, and he came to see me one Wednesday at the Clark Library. I interviewed him there in the drawing room, and I hired him back. What the hell did he come back for--I think as agriculture librarian, was it?

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

Betty Rosenberg moved over to the Acquisitions Department, and John came in, I think, and was agriculture librarian, or departmental librarian in agriculture. Is that right, Jim? Do the records show this?

MINK

I believe that's correct; and eventually he went into the IIR.

POWELL

He went into IIR because, God knows why, it was a promotion. And Paul Dodd had had John as an undergraduate student. Paul Dodd was running it in the

beginning; he was the first director, I think. And John moved into it, and then, of course, Helen Schumacher succeeded Vosper as head of acquisitions, and when Helen left, her Army husband took her to Japan. I think John moved in from industrial relations to head of acquisitions.

MINK

Did you feel at that time that he was qualified to become head of the Acquisitions Department?

POWELL

Jesus, I don't know, Jim. I think he was a likely candidate because he had had experience buying for agriculture, for IIR, and he'd worked in order work, I think, in the USDA, and he was lively and personable and aggressive. What more could you ask?

MINK

Did he get along with the faculty in his appointment? This is the essential thing for the acquisitions librarian.

POWELL

Hell, I don't know. Why don't you ask John? [laughter] He'd say yes. I don't know; I never had anybody come in and say get rid of that son of a bitch, I don't think. I think he probably stepped on more toes than Bob Vosper did. He wasn't Bob's equal in tact. You're leading up, I know, to ask me why John ended up as librarian of the Santa Barbara Public Library.

MINK

Okay, why did he? [laughter]

POWELL

Well, I'll give you. . .

MINK

Shall we close the windows?

POWELL

No, I'll give you an honest answer.

MINK

Remember that any of this that you want sealed can be sealed.

POWELL

Yes. No, I don't think I should give you anything but honest answers all the way through. I'm very fond of John and his wife Lucille. We used to see them socially, and I found something in John that probably reminded me of myself before I'd gone on the wagon. In other words, under the influence of alcohol, I, in the early years, and John as I observed him socially, became indiscreet. I was a little concerned about this. And he got wild at times at parties and talked too much. At parties, I guess, when I wasn't there, John was given to even wilder talk about how he was on the way up, and if Powell ever left, why, he was cinch to succeed him. This came back to me, and I didn't like it. This offended me, not personally, but just that a person would get so out of line and talk this way publicly in a sense. It was wrong. And besides, I knew it wasn't true, that it wouldn't happen. John wasn't of university librarian caliber on this campus as I saw it. This would never happen. Well, it set me to thinking a little. I was always interested in seeing young men advance; if they wanted to be head librarian and it didn't seem likely here, then they ought to be encouraged to be head librarian somewhere else. I suppose that's the way my benevolent little mind worked, and at the same time I was in touch, for one reason or another, with Monroe Deutsch the former. . .

MINK

Provost at Berkeley.

POWELL

. . .provost, but he had retired and was living in Santa Barbara and had become chairman, I think, of a citizens' committee on the Santa Barbara Public Library and its future. We were in touch through things I'd written, I guess, or maybe I had met him up there at a Library Council meeting when he came in, sitting in as an invited guest at a council meeting. Anyway, he came to see me, I think, down here at UCLA once, and he said, "Powell, we need a public librarian. Have you got a bright young man who would qualify for this job?" My little computer mind thought, "Well, John Smith. Here's a chance for John." He'd been in the public library in Portland. That's all I could find in the

way of qualified experience; but he was personable and democratic and lively. I think I called him in and left him and Monroe Deutsch together in my office. And that's the way it happened. John got the job and he did well. He stayed eight or nine years in Santa Barbara. He was very active in civic groups and in politics as a good Democrat. I think he did a hell of a lot of good things for the public library that he wasn't able to do here because the job was too narrow. He was a good politician. He left there, I think, for the same reason that some others have left Santa Barbara--the future was nailed down tight on them. They were classified along with the chief of police and the fire captain. There was just no future there, and then the ambivalence of the community between the rich and the poor, I think, began to get on John's nerves. And you remember he went away twice overseas-- once to Iran and once to Pakistan as library specialist. That led finally, I think, to his appointment at Irvine. MINX: Right. Did you have anything to do with his appointment at Irvine at all?

POWELL

I think I had a little something to do. I think the chancellor, Dan Aldrich, talked to me about this, and I think John had expressed interest in leaving Santa Barbara when he was in Pakistan. I may have recommended him for some other things, too; I don't remember. I didn't play the same kind of role that I did in his going to Santa Barbara, but I did have something to do with it. And I think he's been a good person and done well, as far as I know, at Irvine.

MINK

Did your philosophy of collection building coincide with his, or did he have a philosophy that he expressed?

POWELL

I don't remember, or at least he didn't have it in the same way that Vosper had. He wasn't a collection builder in the Vosper sense. He was more of a-- don't misunderstand! --chief clerk and operational man in keeping the machinery going. Now keep in mind that at the time he was head of acquisitions, wasn't Vosper the associate librarian?

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

Well, you see, this had led to a little static between me and Helen Schumacher when I promoted Vosper to assistant librarian. To justify that job and to get it approved statewide, we pulled collection building and that responsibility with it off of Acquisitions Department into the assistant librarianship. In other words, it enhanced the new position and it decreased the old position. Now, acquisitions under Vosper was classified L-IV, which was the top classification then. Then Helen Schumacher, who had been his assistant head, I appointed to be head acquisitions librarian, and when she got her paper work on it she saw herself classified as Librarian III. My God, she came into my office in tears and said, "Well why aren't I an L-IV the same as Mr. Vosper?" And I said, "Well, my dear girl, first of all, you haven't the qualifications." (I transferred her from Reference Department, I think, to have that job.) "And in the second place, the job isn't the same as when Mr. Vosper had it. He's creamed off that job, now. You're an L-III, and don't forget it, sister." And she was in a real pet, "but I was absolutely right, and she had to reconcile herself to this. Well, Smith came into that L-III, but we were able then, because the whole library program had grown so, to build up the position again to L-IV after a year or two with John. But the real collection policy was carried by Vosper. And when he left, he was succeeded first of all by Neal, but then Gordon Williams really took that, and Williams was the collection policy man for the library as assistant librarian. So, this is the way you created new positions. Keep in mind, Jim, it was not easy to get additional administrative positions because always statewide personnel looked at Berkeley--what do they have? We had to go through this time and again; it had to look like what Berkeley had. I was developing positions that were entirely different in concept from Berkeley's. My assistant librarians (we ended up with two and then finally three) did things that Berkeley's didn't do, because I gave them responsibilities that Coney never relinquished. His assistant librarians were by and large a bunch of cheap clerks a lot of the time. But here they were people of stature, and we had to sell this to personnel.

MINK

Hard to do.

POWELL

Damn right, it was hard to do.

MINK

Now, when Mr. Williams came in, what qualifications did you feel he had for assuming the role of collections builder in the library.

POWELL

Well, he was a bookman. I found him on the curb, literally on the curb downtown at Brentano's which he'd been managing. Brentano's bookstore had closed up. They had a close-out sale. They had been run out of business by Broadway's, Bullock's, and Robinson's book departments.

MINK

They really had been run out of business; Williams didn't run them out?

POWELL

No, no, it was the old cruncher by them. They were undercutting and Brentano's never--no, it wasn't Gordon's fault; it was a sinking ship, I think, when he came. But I went down on the last day, and I'd met him in the bookshops at Dawson's and at Zeitlin's. I sensed in him a very bookish person, and I said to him as we stood out in front of the shop, "Have you ever thought of library work?" "No," he said, "but I'd be interested." "Well," I said, "the only thing I can offer you is a job on hourly wages in the periodicals department of the Reference Department." So he came out as a clerical, as I remember, at whatever we paid an hour. It wasn't very much then. When was this, Jim, in 1948 or 1949?

MINK

Yes, it'd be 1948, 1949, or 1950.

POWELL

Yes, well he came out and worked then as a clerical assistant and became interested. This was a trial to see if he was interested in library work, and he showed a flair and he got a fellowship and he went to Chicago to take his library degree. And when Vosper left (when I came back from Europe and Vosper went to Kansas), this meant that Horn moved up, and I needed an assistant librarian then under Horn, wasn't it, that would be in charge of acquisitions. And everything that Williams had done at Chicago was in this

line, because he'd worked all through his studies in the John Crerar Library. He was assistant to Herman Henkle. And he was doing collection work for the Crerar Library in science. Keep in mind Gordon's original major at Stanford was in psychology and behavioral sciences. He had a master's degree in one of the sciences--I guess, psychology from Stanford. This was a new area in collection building that no one in the administrative echelon had covered. They'd been humanists and classicists or historians--that is, Harlow and Horn and Vosper and myself, Gordon bringing in from Crerar, from Stanford, from his own flair, some responsibility working with the science departments in acquisitions, collection, filling out, and so forth. So I persuaded him to come, and of course I got into the same kind of hassle then that I got in with Harlow. Herman Henkle tried to hire Williams to stay full time at Crerar after Gordon had accepted the job from me, and I had to push Henkle's teeth down his throat and tell the son of a bitch to stay out, that Williams had already agreed, and this was unethical in the highest degree to come in after Gordon had accepted my position. Gordon was firm; he said, "You're right." And Henkle backed down. I never liked Henkle; I think he was a slippery son of a bitch, just to look at him. At any rate, Gordon came out. Now you see, the assistant librarian in charge of collections always was my liaison with the Library Committee. He acted as secretary of the Library Committee; he met with the Senate Library Committee, and he did all the paper work for the Library Committee. This was Williams' flair, this and the building programming. But he didn't have, as you know better than I, this rapport with staff.

MINK

How well was he able to work with the science departments?

POWELL

Well, he handled a terribly hot one with psychology, I know. They were raising hell with me. They wanted a branch library. They're a bunch of crooks, anyway, those psychologists, Jim; they stole from each other. The graduate students are the most dishonest, I think, next to theology students in the entire academic world. They stole and destroyed and mutilated, and they weren't to be trusted. You gave them a journal file over there in their department and the graduate students ripped it to bits. It's strange that they draw to them a very unethical type of person. Gordon handled this with

[Howard] Gilhousen and with--oh hell, I don't remember who else was in the psychology department; but he went over there and faced them and negotiated and manipulated and kept the bastards from taking over and shelving in the department everything that we had, which is what they wanted to do. And I knew that was sending it down the drain. We told them to buy their stuff out of departmental funds and butcher their own stuff, but leave the main library's material alone. He was effective in this kind of thing; he was a hard-nosed negotiator. The reason he didn't have staff rapport--I knew perfectly well what it was. It was not a lack of feeling for people; it was a blindness of concentration on what he was doing. He got so wrapped up in what he was doing that he never saw anyone else. He'd walk by you on campus. I used to walk with him and with other staff members across campus, one place to another, and I think if I had any gift it was for recognizing people and greeting them, no matter who I was with. If I was with the Lord himself, and I was walking across campus and old Billy McKeown, my binder and custodian, passed me, I'd say hello to Bill. I'd see him! Gordon, when he was walking with someone else, never saw anybody that passed him, and he would snub unconsciously all kinds of people that would resent this. Not only on campus, but in the library building, when we'd walk through the building, he wouldn't see his colleagues and they didn't like this. And I suppose, he tended to be a little ex cathedra in his pronouncements. Well, you know better than I, Jim; you worked with him.

MINK

What about the Chemistry Library then?

POWELL

I don't know--what about the Chemistry Library? Let me interview you.

MINK

Well, the understanding I had was that when he was brought to the Chemistry Library for the first time and saw it, the chairman of the department was along and he said, "Well, this is nothing like in the John Crerar," and so-and-so and so-and-so. And the chairman got turned off. Did you get any flack from there? POWELL: I don't remember if I did, but I think this was probably characteristic of Gordon. He'd just come from the Crerar, and it was one of the great science

libraries of the country, but he shouldn't have told the chairman of the chemistry department at UCLA this. Yes, he could be tactless; I'm sure this is true.

MINK

I think maybe that's the word that would best describe Gordon--a lack of tact.

POWELL

Yes.

MINK

And then his demeanor in conferences was very informal, like putting his feet up on your desk.

POWELL

Yes, this burned women on the staff; I got complaints about this in acquisitions and in reference. Of course, Debbie hated him. He was over supervising her, and she was always raving, "He didn't know what he was talking about." He probably didn't!

MINK

Is this why we lost Debbie's successor?

POWELL

Stubblefield? Possibly, but I think primarily we lost Louise Stubblefield because she was just not tough enough to follow into that place that chews people up, really, in circulation work; it's a rough deal, and she was a lady.

MINK

But wasn't it true, though, that this word "over-supervising" might again be applied to this situation?

POWELL

I don't know, Jim, but I think probably you're right. But that was a complex situation because there were members of the staff there and particularly the stack supervisor.

MINK

Don Wilson.

POWELL

He was still very loyal to Debbie, and he and maybe one or two others were still reporting to Debbie, and Debbie was meddling, too; she didn't pull out really in the total sense. Stubblefield had an impossible situation from that point of view.

MINK

Did Debbie approve of Miss Stubblefield as a successor?

POWELL

I don't know; I never asked her. I never appointed people with the approval of the ones they were to succeed; you just can't operate that way.

MINK

No, you can't.

POWELL

I appointed her because I'd been at Columbia that semester in 1954.

MINK

You got acquainted with her there?

POWELL

I got acquainted with her; she was head of the loan department at Columbia. I saw her at work, and I saw her supervising students, and I saw her running it. Second, Ardis Lodge, who had worked a year at Columbia, had been her roommate, lived with Miss Stubblefield, and Ardis recommended her highly; so I appointed her on the basis of those qualifications. But she never made it. Now, on Gordon, yes, I think that I've said that his great contribution here was the Research Library, and I've given him credit for that (I don't know that anybody else has around here). But the credit for that new Research Library, its nature and its location, are entirely Gordon's. We were trying then, you remember, to enlarge this building, to put another wing, a south wing, or an

additional building out there on that slope between the west side and the gym. Those were the plans that we'd always had.

MINK

You were trying, too--were you not? --to utilize existing space in other ways than it had been.

POWELL

That's right. And the A[rchitects] and E[ngineers] did two or three trial runs on this, on developing and on articulating old and new construction. God knows how much we spent on making preliminary drawings. And every time they failed; they just weren't workable. Then we found that plans for developing south of the library would not give us space there. The other buildings--the cyclotron and the history department and social sciences, which had planned to build a building where the physics extension is, where Knudsen Hall is now--were squeezed out by physics, and the physical sciences got a higher priority on that land. All right, that also weakened the claim for developing the Research Library in that area and extending it out in that area. We realized we couldn't build and articulate out on this slope to the gym. The A and E wanted to keep that a green space. Social sciences then we found all of a sudden had emigrated to the north campus over there with humanities, with arts, with business administration. And I don't know, one morning, I think, Gordon came in with his drawing board and said, "Well, why don't we follow them? Why don't we build a new research library over in that area which would serve humanities and social sciences?" Well, that was opening Pandora's box. Jesus, everybody was against it. At the heads' meeting, or whatever we were having, they all talked him down. But Gordon was stubborn about this and kept developing ideas, and A and E got interested. We won over the library staff, as I remember, and then we had the problem of winning over the schools and faculties. We had a whole series of meetings with divisional deans, with letters and science, Franklin Rolfe, with departments of all kinds. And Gordon and I generally attended those together, and he carried the argument. And by God, he did it well.

MINK

What were the major objections that were raised by the professional schools?

POWELL

Well, for engineering, for example, it would take out of the Research Library here and place way over on the north campus the key classifications, the T's and various things, and the life sciences would lose the Q's. They thought that the research collection should stay in the center of the campus, you see, and be within the College Library, but not go over to the north. Those were their primary objections: that it would force them to develop T's and Q's in their own locations. Well, we said, good, all right, this was to our advantage, because it meant more library resources in more places. We were not going to give them all the T's and the Q's out of the Research Library. We wanted a lot of those for general service. All right, so there was that argument. Then there was the other argument. The chief spokesman of it was Franklin Rolfe, that this would fragment the collections. There would be a collection here and a collection there, and they would have to walk back and forth. Rolfe never gave up; he fought down to the last. We met on it right up to the highest level. Gordon and I met, as I recall, with the chancellor's Committee of Deans, presenting this argument, McElvey with us. Then we had the problem of funding it. Oh, and then we really got screwed. We went up to Sacramento, Gordon and I, I guess; and Tom Jacobs, I think (the chemist) was chairman of the Library Committee, or it might have been Tom Jenkin, the political scientist. Anyway, it was some Tom--an Uncle Tom. And we went up to argue this capital improvements item for a new research library and the remodeling of this before the California House Assembly Ways and Means Committee, at which the state architect was present, Jim Corley, vice president in charge of lobbying. Paul Miles, not Gordon Williams, went up with me. We flew up in rain, and we had an evening meeting in the capitol. And the thing that really screwed us, Jim, was when they asked me, "Why do you need more library resources at UCLA?" I said, "Well, because we're far more than a campus service now. We're serving the whole southern community, including USC graduate students." I didn't know it, but I learned it mighty quick, that the chief architect of the state with the engineering department was a USC graduate. Oh, he burned up then. He said, "What do you mean you're serving USC? We've got libraries; we're doing our own work. Don't try to ride on our coattails." He lit into me, Jesus! Well, we went down the drain; we all adjourned then to the Hotel Senator bar. Jim Corley, Paul Miles, Tom Jacobs. Corley set up drinks for everybody, even me and my tonic water, and they all

toasted Powell who went down nobly, talking to the last. (You ought to interview Paul Miles on this. He was there and he could give you a blow-by-blow account of it.) Anyway, we were screwed but good. That was cut out. Then the problem was to justify this capital expansion, and I then "ate crow" and asked to come back to UCLA a man that I was having a kind of a running fight with in the Association of Research Libraries, none other than Keyes Metcalf. I'd always been troubled with him in ARL, because we were both on the advisory committee at the same time. And Keyes was always saying, "ARL should have special conferences and get special consultants and do all kinds of special things." And I said, "Well, why don't we do it ourselves." I was always saying, "We're the specialists." So we never agreed. I thought he was kind of a glorified housekeeper, and I said so. He wasn't interested in books, and he gave a seminar at Rutgers on library management and they didn't talk about books, and this pissed me off.

MINK

So Keyes was really one of the many people you had this running confrontation on library managers versus bookmen.

POWELL

Yes, that's right. He was always the guy I was shooting at. So I end up kissing his ass. And I did it with. . .

MINK

Finesse.

POWELL

. . .great finesse. I did it with finesse! And I got him on the phone and asked him if he'd come out as a consultant on this building program, and he said, "Of course I will." He said, "I always like a dirty job. I understand this is a mean one, and I need a chapter in my book on a dirty job." And he did. Well, then I had trouble getting the university to agree to it. I had a stormy meeting with the A and E and the chancellor and Bill Young, the vice-chancellor in charge of building development, who said that it was nonsense.

MINK

I'll have to ask him why, because I'm interviewing him.

POWELL

Well, interview the son of a bitch! At one time in the Administration Building I said, "Look, you either agree to what I want on this, or you get another university librarian." I said, "This is that important to me. If you don't do this, I quit." I was so mad at them, and they agreed. And we got him out here in 1959 or 1960, I guess. I know I was in Tokyo on that trip around the world for the Air Force, and Page Ackerman phoned me and said, "Bill Young's trying to sabotage this. What's your understanding?" I straightened it out on the telephone. Keyes came, and he really brought it off by his authority and his quiet way. We had meetings here in this building and over in the Administration Building with the state architect, with the whole Sacramento echelon, on this capital improvement item. Paul Miles and Keyes Metcalf led all these buggers on a tour through the old library. They ended up getting lost, and that finally convinced the state people that it was impractical to spend any more money on the old building. At the end of the tour, when we finally emerged alive into daylight, the big Sacramento wheel said, "Powell, you win. Go ahead and build your goddamn research library on the north campus." And we did!

1.14. TAPE NUMBER: VIII, Side One (November 19, 1969)

MINK

One of the things that appeared in the ten-cent notebook had to do with the idea of establishing some sort of a friends organization.

POWELL

Yes.

MINK

And I noticed that in 1945, right at the outset of your administration, you appointed an Alumni Committee to look toward the establishment of the Friends of the UCLA Library. Friends organizations at that time didn't exist as far as I know anywhere in the United States. Do you think this was a unique thing with you?

POWELL

No, there were friends groups, weren't there? There were the Yale Associates.

MINK

Yes, but are they the same really?

POWELL

Well, their object is the same--to get the stuff in.

MINK

I suppose.

POWELL

Well, I think, I was not pressured, but approached by John B. Jackson, who was secretary of the UCLA Alumni, as you know, and I'd done an article for him in the *UCLA Magazine* on exhibits. And we'd gotten acquainted, and he thought it would be great if there was a friends group. So I said, "Well, it's too early." It's just like Dickson who wanted the library school right away, I think Jackson wanted a friends group right away. I said, "Give me a little time; but in the meantime, let's have a committee with you and Hansena Frederickson and Ann Sumner." And I think Gold Shield--I recognized Barbara Lloyd, Theresa Long, who had been Ernest Carroll Moore's secretary, and Margaret Duguid Michel. You notice they were all pretty girls.

MINK

Ah, yes, that kind.

POWELL

Yes, there were some pretty ones at the time. I think Margaret Michel was one of the prettiest.

MINK

Ann Sumner was no slouch.

POWELL

Ann Sumner was a pretty girl and Hansena had a lot of "it." They were a swell group. Theresa Long with her wonderful copper-red hair. Well, they were a fine group, and Johnny and I used to meet quarterly with them, and go

through the library and have lunch. And I was trying to arouse interest and enhance the library image with the alumni, which I'd started to do in that magazine article. I went out and talked to Bruin Clubs; I talked to the Westwood Bruin Club every year. I went out to Covina. I went over to Hollywood and did a lot of outside work when Johnny would set it up. I didn't mention any of this in my book and it's important.

MINK

This is sort of grass-roots support then. . .

POWELL

That's right.

MINK

. . .for the library among the alumni.

POWELL

I said it would take some time and we would have to counteract the "little-red-schoolhouse" kind of propaganda. Of course, I didn't help it any when I turned out to be a Red; but they knew I wasn't really. I was really a dyed-in-the-wool, rock-ribbed Republican.

MINK

Were these addresses you gave to the Bruin Clubs prepared addresses, or were they extemporaneous talks?

POWELL

Well, both. I always had notes. I don't think they were manuscript affairs, but they were from notes on what we were trying to do--on the building program, on the collecting program, on some of the things that we had. They were great fun to do, because I found the alumni eager. I'm going to talk next month out at Riverside, I think I told you, at their 500,000th volume ceremony. Ivan Hinderaker and Tom Jenkin asked me to speak. And, as you know, their new librarian there is Don Wilson. I'm going to speak about the importance of the library being carried to the alumni and to the community. Now in the 1950s and early 1960s, every year the university sent out a team of its faculty to tour the state--it was an annual tour, wasn't it? --and I spoke time and again to

Sproul and to Clark Kerr that a library spokesman should be included. Of course, I probably meant myself. I would have been willing to do it if I'd been asked, but I never was.

MINK

What would they say?

POWELL

They said, "Great idea." But they never did anything. They sent around physicists and agronomists and anthropologists and a lot of distinguished men, chiefly from Berkeley. But I thought it was great opportunity to present the library program to the people. I'm going to say at Riverside next month that this should be done now. There should be a library spokesman go out, because cyclotrons go obsolete, but the library never does. Athletics are ephemeral; the library is lasting. So I was trying to do this, I suppose, for UCLA; and, by God, I did. I carried the word, and I found the alumni tremendously responsive. Fred[erick F.] Houser, who was lieutenant governor, John Canaday, who is a regent now, and Paul Hutchinson and Frank Balthis were excellent. We always invited the alumni president of a given year out to lunch, and we recognized Gold Shield and the Affiliates. And remember, at the Clark Library Founder's Day, we combined it the first year with the Alumni Homecoming Day. This is something that I felt was very important, and I still do. And I think Vosper has some of these ideas, but the trouble is now there's too much going [on]. It was simpler in our time, Jim. UCLA wasn't what it is now. It wasn't as large and complex and as demanding.

MINK

I think that's true. Did you realize any dreams from these talks for the library in terms of collections, books and so on?

POWELL

Well, yes. We had gifts from Gold Shield; we had gifts from Gold Shield later to the library school, a fellowship. We had an athletic fund gift, I think, and we had books given us. Of course, they weren't always Gutenberg bibles, but the idea was important, not the actual take, but simply the idea. The word got around, anyway, that the UCLA Library was something.

MINK

Did you make any contacts per se?

POWELL

Do you mean, pretty girls? Yes, we made many contacts, Jim. Yes, we rubbed flesh.

MINK

You know what I mean. [laughter]

POWELL

I don't remember, but I must have. Yes, what's that print collection [Grunwald] over in the art department--you know, the prints and etchings and engravings.

MINK

I know it; I can't think of it; we can get it in there.

POWELL

Well, at any rate, the man who gave that turned up in my office one day, Fred Grunwald. He was a rich shirt maker. He turned up in my office one day and said, "My son is just graduating from UCLA and we've read about the library in the alumni magazine and we've heard you speak, and I want to give a book in honor of my son's graduation." He was an immigrant, mind you, either Polish or Czechoslovakian, who had made his fortune in shirts. And he said, "I have two books here that I want to give. I want you to choose." Well, one was--who was the Greek writer on medicine? Not Hippocrates, but the other one. Great writer on medicine. Anyway, this was the original text. Who is it, Jim? For God's sake, the Greek writer on medicine after Hippocrates. [Claudius Galen] We both know and we can't say. At any rate, here it was, an Aldine imprint, I think, in italic type, and a beautiful edition. The other was some lesser item, and I recognized of course the important, valuable book, and I chose it, and the man was terribly pleased. We have it now; it's probably in Biomed[ical Library], I think of another example: Ray Morrison, the novelist who wrote *Angel's Camp*, and gave us the manuscript of it. I think I reached him through an alumni talk. I'd have to go back through my files here. There must

be others. That led eventually to the Friends of the Library. You know we founded it in 1951, wasn't it?

MINK

Who would you categorize, beside yourself, as a leading spirit in the actual founding of the Friends of the Library?

POWELL

I think W. W. Robinson, the first president, was very much a part of it. He represented the community and he was willing to take on the first assignment. Here within the library, I think the strongest supporters were Neal Harlow and Bob Vosper.

MINK

Could we talk about Robinson for a minute? When did you first meet Will Robinson?

POWELL

He says that we first met when I worked at Jake's. He came in during 1934 with a copy of my book on Jeffers. You remember Robinson was a poet in the beginning and published one or two books of poetry. He's a very interesting and complex man. And that was our first meeting, according to him; but I don't remember him then. I remember him when we both joined the Zamorano Club at about the same time around 1940, and our friendship developed from then--from 1940 until now, thirty years — through a mutual interest in writing and in California and in libraries and in books, and then when he edited *Hoja Volante*, the quarterly of the Zamorano Club and persuaded me to write for it. Those were the first bookish writings I did, those essays in *Hoja Volante* which we collected into that little book called *Islands of Books*. It was my first book of essays. He's one of my closest and oldest friends, really, in the community. He still is, now, as he approaches eighty. We see each other frequently, and as you know, he's been good to the library all through the years in what he's given us. Incidentally, he just gave his collection of my books and writings to Scripps College at my suggestion. They didn't have many and he placed everything out there, but his correspondence with me and mine with him is here in Special Collections.

MINK

Was he as instrumental in getting people to join the Friends as the library itself? Was it the library that went after it, or did these people like Robinson and others really go out and beat the bushes?

POWELL

I think Robinson's name was important. He may not have done any bush-beating, but his name on the original announcement carried great weight in the community. I think a great many people came in because of him. And secondly and equally important, I think, from the alumni was the work of John Jackson and Hansena and Ann and the others of the Alumni Library Committee. And then there was the library itself, but I think those two groups, Robinson and the community group and the alumni groups, were the chief recruiters.

MINK

There's been a criticism leveled at the Friends of the Library, which may be their fault or it may be the fault of the library, that unlike, for example, the Friends of the Bancroft Library, who raise large sums for the purchase of distinguished collections, this group tends to get together every so often for a dinner and speech and does actually very little in support of the library in an extramural way.

POWELL

Yes, I know it.

MINK

Would you like to speak to that?

POWELL

Yes, it's a problem; it ' s a real problem. I recognized it from the beginning. First of all, the matter of competition, that is in the field of Californiana (a field which we wanted to develop here and in which we're reasonably strong), we were out shadowed by the Huntington Library and by the Bancroft. We simply couldn't compete with them. We didn't have the prestige of holdings or the prestige of antiquity to compete. What fields did this leave us? Fine printing?

Children's books, which I thought was a field that we could get into and there wouldn't be competition, has perhaps been one of our most successful ventures, and it started, as you know, with our purchase of the Olive Percival collection in 1945. I guess it was one of the first purchases I made here of a collection en bloc. Secondly, there was the problem of a general university library of the state going out competing for private funds, when the headlines called attention to the size of its budget and the state appropriations and so on. Now the Bancroft is part of the state university, but it doesn't have special funding and it could appeal for private funds. Here in the University Library where we had very good legislative support, it's a problem going out and asking for private donations. Someone said, "Why don't you found a Friends of the Clark Library."

MINK

Who said that, Larry?

POWELL

Well, different members of the faculty or of the community or of the library staff. There our problem was that we're richly endowed. I thought we needed the private support more in the field of the general library than in the Clark, so we never pushed the Clark as a friends recipient. And finally, the success of a friends group inevitably depends upon the imagination and the energy and not necessarily the wealth of a few individuals. Now the Bancroft had the enormous benefit of Susanna Dakin, who not only was an enthusiast and a talented, magnetic, wonderful woman, but she was also a rich woman. You put all these things together and you can see what it did to the Bancroft. Before they had the trouble with him, they had the backing of Carl Wheat. They had George Harding. They had a number of people in the Bay area. They also had this rich Jewish philanthropist tradition in the Bay region to call on. The most articulate spokesman for it was James D. Hart, who finally has become director of the Bancroft. All of this they drew on. Now in Southern California, the Friends of the Huntington were drawing not on the Jewish community necessarily, but the total cultural community was being very richly tapped by the Huntington, in spite of the fact that with their \$12 million capital endowment, they still were bringing in thousands of dollars a year from the friends group, and this is a tough one to compete with. We had

Claremont, USC, Occidental, Southwest Museum, all these other friends groups going. At UCLA, we had some distinguished presidents. We had Dwight Clarke; we had Viola Warren, Harold Lamb, Marcus Crahan. But I think the most effective and the best individual supporter we ever had was the late Majl Ewing. He did for us all the things, in a lesser way, that Susannah Dakin did for the Bancroft. He provided taste, intelligence, and money. And it's a great tragedy, Jim, that we lost Majl. If he could have survived Carmelita and come into a little more affluence, God knows what he might have done for us. One of the last talks I had with him was in London in 1966 . He dined with us in Dolphin Square, and we had a long evening on some of his hopes and dreams for Special Collections.

MINK

Larry, what did he propose to do? Can you remember, because this is probably an undocumented and unrecorded conversation.

POWELL

He wanted to transfer the Victorian and twentieth-century writers from his own collection, of course, which we have now, eventually. But he wanted to use them as nuclei on which to build Special Collections. He just wanted to see a building-to-strength program go on on a lot of his own collections.

MINK

Of course, you weren't in any position at that point to promise him anything, because you were no longer the librarian.

POWELL

I was no longer librarian, but he came to me as the old friends that we were. And I will say that he had great feeling for Bob Vosper, great affection for him, great belief in him, and wanted to see him flourish, and he was very fond, of course, of Wilbur, too. I ought to speak here of the only time that I fell out with Majl Ewing, and it was a tough one. It was along in the last years of my library administration, I guess, and I was under mounting pressure from the Faculty Library Committee to achieve parity with Berkeley, to get more appropriations. Sam Herrick and Ivan Hinderaker, Tom Jenkin, John Galbraith and others on the Library Committee were very unhappy at the size of our

acquisitions and our budget vis-a-vis Berkeley's. And they particularly wanted to see all spending for the library channeled through the Library Committee. They didn't approve of the librarian going out and getting money on the outside, either from the community or from the administration, at the expense of the appropriations to the departments. This was a sticking point between us. I wouldn't agree with them. At least in the community, I thought I should have absolute freedom there. But as far as going to the president or to the chancellor and asking for special funding, they persuaded me that I should do this only with great reluctance. So, Majl Ewing came to me and said, "There's a chance that we can buy the remaining D. H. Lawrence manuscripts for \$12,000. Will you go over and see the chancellor and ask for this money?" And I said, "No, I won't do it; it'll have to come through the Library Committee as a request from the Library Committee." And he became terribly angry with me and we had a very unpleasant and stormy scene in my office, just the two of us.

MINK

Well, didn't you explain to him why you were in this position?

POWELL

Yes, and he said I had just turned into a god-damned bureaucrat and that I should be willing always as the librarian to bypass the Senate Library Committee and go when I thought necessary and ask for special funds. And he'd already phoned Chancellor Ray Allen and put in an appeal, and when he found that I hadn't followed it up, he was even madder. I know Wilbur was involved in this, too. And as a result, Berkeley bought the D. H. Lawrence collection for \$12,000. Well, it was a residue collection, which I explained to Majl. It wasn't the cream; it was what was left after the Frieda Lawrence manuscripts had been picked over. That was another reason I didn't think it was absolutely distinguished and worth going after. But Ewing, oh, he made a lot of threats, then, that he was going to cut UCLA and everything out of his will. He wasn't going to do anything more for us. He just raised hell; he walked up and down. I was upset, too, I guess, and I tried to persuade him that I was doing what I thought was right, and we were both of us virtually in tears with distress and anger and everything else. It was a real fuck-up!

MINK

Larry, you know this brings up naturally a point, that Vosper has thought nothing of asking for Regent's Contingency Funds, for Chancellor's Emergency Funds, for special funding for Turkish manuscripts or the Mennevee collection, which O'Brien found in Europe, or a number of other collections which are all in the record. How do you explain this? Did you ever discuss this with him?

POWELL

Well, it's easy. . .

MINK

Well, the problem you had with the Library Committee?

POWELL

Yes, of course we did, and he's referred to it, I think, particularly in the first talk he gave to the Friends when he came back from Kansas, a little pamphlet called, "A Word to the Wise and Friendly." He speaks of the troubles that Powell had in his closing years with bureaucracy, and he meant the Library Committee.

MINK

They weren't named.

POWELL

They weren't named, but that's what he meant, and I had to do all this. And the reason, Jim, is because we had a weak chancellor, you see. We had Ray Allen in those closing years of mine, who was weak, vis-a-vis Dykstra or Sproul or Murphy. He didn't operate as a strong person. Now, Vosper came in, of course, with an absolute fireball of a chancellor, namely Franklin Murphy, and a tradition of operating which they'd developed in nine years at Kansas. They simply transposed this to UCLA, and the Senate Library Committee recognized this, that if they didn't get tough with Vosper that he'd get far more in a direct relationship with Murphy than he would get channeling everything through them.

MINK

Well, wouldn't they still continue to be resentful of what they considered support from the administration for the library at the expense of their own departments?

POWELL

Well, one of the smartest things Murphy did-- you see, I worked a year with him as librarian before Vosper came back. I was serving as dean of the new school and University Librarian for that year. And he was a smart operator. We talked about this back in the winter of 1959-1960, when he was considering the job here. He came to see me twice, and the second time I had breakfast with him at the Bel-Air Hotel; he was out here to negotiate with the regents and we talked of all the problems. He asked me what the problems were, and I said, "One of them will be the Library Committee." And he said, "How should I meet this, because," he said, "I intend to deal directly with you whenever it seems advisable." I said, "Well, I think one of the smartest things you could do would be to meet straight off with the Library Committee and explain that there'll be more for everyone if they allow him to operate with the librarian." So Murphy asked the Senate Library Committee if he could meet with them, and this was very soon after he came to campus--that is, July 1, 1961. And we had a long session in my office. Murphy and the Library Committee, I can't remember who was chairman of the committee then.

MINK

It's in the record.

POWELL

Yes. Bill Lessa, perhaps, the anthropologist? Anyway, Murphy put all his cards out. He said, "Look, I want more money for everybody and I'm going to get it." He said, "I want more money for your Contingency Fund, I want more money for your departments, and I want more money for special purchases, and I want if necessary to be able to deal directly with Larry Powell." One of the nice things that he told Hansena was, "Always put Larry Powell through when he phones because I know it will relate to books." This was always true. I could always get through no matter, except in a regents' meeting, but anytime else. And, Lord, I played this for all it was worth as librarian and then in my remaining years as director of the Clark. I went to see him and this was with

the blessing of the Library Committee. And he always informed them. Murphy played rough, but he played fair. He'd inform people what he was doing. He'd say, "Look, stand back; I'm going to hit you." He'd give them a chance to get ready. I bought a number of things for the Clark. Oh, we had some marvelous times, because I was buying the Eric Gill, then, like mad from the estate, these great opportunities that came along. I remember once I went over to see Murphy with an offer from Bertram Rota of about 500 volumes, I think, from Eric Gill's own library; it was some \$2,000 or \$3,000 that we were to pay for it. I was waiting in the outer office to see Murphy and Vice-Chancellor Foster Sherwood came along. He says, "What are you up to, Larry?" I said, "I want some money from Murphy." "How much?" he asked. "I want about \$3,000 to buy this collection of books." Sherwood said, "Why are you always running to Murphy? Why don't you come to me sometimes?" I said, "You mean you'd give me \$3,000?" "Well," he says, "I'll show you." God, I walked into Foster's office; he called up Beverly Liss or Jerry Fleischmann, whoever was doing the bookkeeping work, and he said, "Transfer \$3,000 to the Clark Library fund for this purchase." Foster said, "You don't need to bother Murphy with these chicken-shit things." So I got the money out of Sherwood. Well, this was improvising, and I didn't do it again; I didn't go back to Sherwood for money. I knew that this was a kind of a gesture on his part to enhance his own position and ego, and I went right along with it, but I didn't go thereafter every time to Sherwood when I wanted money. Well, Murphy was great, and of course he and Vosper played this to the utmost, and that'll be a history when you interview Vosper--what Murphy did for him--that'll be a story.

MINK

Well, I hate to ask you this question, but I'm going to ask it anyway, because. .

POWELL

I hate to answer it, but I'll answer it.

MINK

Why then at the convocation on your retirement as dean of the library school, as it appeared to many of us, that Murphy gave a rather, shall I say, downgrading Powell speech. Really, it shocked many of us.

POWELL

Is that what it sounded like? I couldn't hear him very well, of course.

MINK

It was a bad room. Didn't people come to you afterwards and express surprise?

POWELL

No. What did he say, for Christ's sake, Jim?

MINK

I can't remember in context, but it left me with the impression that what had gone on before was pretty much small potatoes, but now we can look forward to a great era in library development.

POWELL

Jim, I don't think so. Of course, I'm terribly thick-skinned. I have a great, built-in protective skin, and if anybody's shafting me, it's got to be an awfully sharp shaft for me to feel it. But I didn't feel any pain. Of course, it was a kind of a euphoric day. And keep in mind also that Murphy was mad about two things: one, the lousy lunch; and two, the loudspeaker system which they didn't check out right. He was mad as hell. But he was working on the talk right then before he began to speak. I sat with him and he was jotting things down on his little 3x5 cards and was in pretty good humor with me, and he asked me a couple of questions--when did we get this, when did we get that? No, I didn't have this feeling, Jim. Of course, there's no text, is there, to go by, and we didn't record it.

MINK

No, we didn't; we probably should have. We've gone straight through here with the Friends and community support into Murphy.

POWELL

Let me just interrupt here while we're on this. If I thought any speech that day was not lukewarm but was not all out, it was Vosper's. That was the one that didn't turn me on. Remember his was an amusing speech about Vosper and

Powell always being taken one for the other. It was humorous and ironic, but it actually didn't have anything to say, really, about my contributions or what I had done. Nothing. But it was an amusing speech, and Vosper is very cagey in these matters. Inevitably I think it comes out of his deep subconscious as it does out of the subconscious of a number who have worked for me; I'm thinking of Neal, I'm thinking of Johnny Smith, I'm not thinking of Andy Horn. It's a sort of subconscious resentment that they did work for Larry Powell, and he beat them with a club sometimes and chewed them out. And I suppose this is the way that they express this. It isn't a resentment, but it's a kind of an irritant that's in their system. Do you know what I mean?

MINK

A little needling effect.

POWELL

Yes. Maybe you feel this same way, Jim? [laughter] I gave you trouble.

MINK

Man, you discovered me.

POWELL

Hell, I didn't discover you; we did it together.

MINK

Well, I just wanted to say that this has all been in the way of discussion of getting funds for the library, and I wanted now to go back to the area where we were in time and ask you about the appointment of Alice Humiston as permanent head of the Catalog Department in 1945. And this would have been one year after you'd been here. You came on July 1, 1944, right?

POWELL

Yes.

MINK

You came as University Librarian, so you immediately appointed Miss Humiston. Did you recognize in her great abilities as a cataloger?

POWELL

Good God, no!

MINK

Good God, no?

POWELL

Well, this was simply a matter of expediency, Jim. First of all, she'd been acting head of the Catalog Department, because Ben Custer, then head of the department, was on war leave. Now, Ben Custer, God bless him, was a real prick.

MINK

That's Arlene's husband.

POWELL

Well, I don't know that he was that kind of a one, but as a bachelor here he was a bad actor. He was always pinching the girls and fooling around with them in the corridors.

MINK

Nice.

POWELL

Yes, nice when you could get it, but they didn't like it, and there was a lot of resentment against him. He was a mama's boy. Remember, he lived with his mother here. He'd had one marriage that Mother came to live with them, and the wife went home. This was before Arlene (Kern) Custer. At any rate, it was a blessing when Ben Custer went on war leave, and he was still on leave when I became librarian, and I encouraged him not to come back.

MINK

How did you do that?

POWELL

Well, he took a better job, I think. Where was it? It was in Washington. The correspondence would show this, because it's in the records . I think I wrote him that I couldn't help, or maybe he wrote me and asked if he came back as head of Catalog Department, would there be an advancement there for him (he was thinking of an assistant librarianship) , and I think I wrote back and said, "No. There won't be."

MINK

Well, you'd had a chance to observe him in action, and what kind of an opinion had you formed of him? Is this what you said?

POWELL

I thought he was good technically and a good worker, but he was emotionally immature--that is, he was a mama's boy, and he couldn't have had the respect of the women that were working for him. He didn't have it when he was here and he wouldn't have had it when he came back. So I encouraged him not to come back. Well, I had the problem of my coming in as an upstart of recognizing the old guard. And here was the old guard really, three of them: Miss Bryan, and Miss Coldren and Miss Humiston.

MINK

Miss Coldren.

POWELL

Fanny Alice. There was no problem with her because she was competent. She was an excellent reference librarian and her department was outstanding. Miss Bryan I knew we'd run into problems with eventually, but there was nothing to be done about it until she started it. But with Miss Humiston, I thought, she'd been acting head for a year and a half, and it would have been bad not to continue her. Second, there was no one in the department then who was outstanding, I think. The chief classifier was the brainiest person, then--Sadie McMurry--but she wasn't an administrator; she didn't want to be one. Mate McCurdy was still at the Clark Library. Jeannette Hagan was too young. Rudy Engelbarts was a Mr. Milktoast. So it seemed the expedient, rational, and the political thing to do was to continue Miss Humiston, but right away I saw that she'd need help--well, not right away, but soon thereafter.

And you remember, I appointed what I called an Administrative Committee to help her run the department, and this was Mate McCurdy, who'd then been transferred from the Clark, and I think it was Sadie McMurry and Jeannette Hagan.

MINK

Did she welcome this?

POWELL

She welcomed everything that I did, at least in her meetings with me. God knows what she thought or said elsewhere, but she was discreet and cooperative. I don't know that I ever trusted her completely. Certainly I never confided in her, but I told her this is what was going to happen. It had to; she couldn't run the department by herself; and so that committee really ran it.

MINK

Mate McCurdy was on it.

POWELL

Mate and Sadie McMurry and Jeannette Hagan, and eventually Rudy, and then that led to Rudy's succeeding her as head cataloger.

MINK

The spokesman for the old guard, Miss Bryan, would have indicated that Miss Humiston was a sell-out and that she supported you; therefore, you made her head of the department.

POWELL

I think that's one way of putting it. Yes, that's quid pro quo.

MINK

Right.

POWELL

And basic in administration: you never appoint anyone as an administrative assistant who wouldn't support you, for God's sake.

MINK

In other words, when you came in, there was much opposition to you, but she immediately went over to your side and this was her reward.

POWELL

No, that's an exaggerated statement because Miss Humiston never did anything in a positive way. Everything was passive with her and she was passive. They all were passive--Miss Coldren, too. "Well, wait and see; watch and wait." They were right, Jim. Mine was an unprecedented appointment and a potentially dangerous one, I suppose, my being a man.

MINK

They felt.

POWELL

Yes, well, I think they were right, the appointment of an inexperienced administrator.

MINK

Well, did you feel that Miss Humiston carried out her work satisfactorily, that she did a good job in the Catalog Department while she was head of it?

POWELL

She worked at it, Jim; I can say that. She worked long hours. She was conscientious, she reported regularly and in certain depth, and I felt with the assistance she had--I'm thinking of Sadie McMurry, who was a woman I respected very highly.

MINK

Very sound.

POWELL

Yes, very sound and who really had a tremendous grasp of the Library of Congress classification. You see, I had observed her for years when her desk was in the Bibliography Room between the Catalog and Acquisitions Department. I did lots of checking in there. I watched Sadie McMurry through

those five years, at work in her quiet way, and I went to her many times with questions about the collection. If she had had more administrative get-up-and-get-at, I'd certainly made her head of the department, but she didn't want it; she wouldn't have accepted if it'd been offered to her.

MINK

Well, I think it's a foregone conclusion that the catalog section of the library attracts people who are passive and to a certain extent introverted. It also may attract people from time to time who clash with one another. Would you think that Miss Humiston 's role was that of a peacemaker, and did you ever have that in mind at the time that you made the appointment?

POWELL

Well, I thought it would be an acceptable appointment to the department. She had their respect--and affection, even--and I thought she would be kind of a quiet catalyst.

MINK

Were you aware of the in-fighting in the Catalog Department at the time?

POWELL

I don't think I was. No, I don't think I was.

MINK

And therefore, you did not appoint her with this in mind.

POWELL

No.

MINK

That is, as a peacemaker.

POWELL

No, because I'd never had a pipeline into that department in the sense that I had through Debbie or through my own experience in acquisitions, or in Ardis Lodge in the Reference Department, the way I had contacts with the younger staff members who were perceptive. I had none in the Catalog Department,

since Engelbarts was not articulate. (Ah, there's a guy hugging a girl out there, Jim, that's distracting me out on the steps. That's one of the advantages of this location.)

MINK

You're giving the editor a hard time, now. [laughter] And so am I. Well, I think that Miss Humiston did play this role. But let me ask you another question: you weren't really turned on by cataloging and really didn't know too much about it and weren't really interested as much in the Catalog Department as well as it ran--would that be a fair statement?

POWELL

That's an absolutely fair statement , yes. This was true then, and it was true all the way through. I simply didn't have the knowledge or interest, and I think this is true also of circulation work. I think Debbie used to say so. She'd say, "Well, really you're an acquisitions person; that's your chief interest, building the collection." And I said, "I know it. I have good people like you to run the other shows."

MINK

You really saw this as the role of the librarian at UCLA.

POWELL

At that time. At that time, sure, and it was my bag, too. It was what I was best fitted for. In other words, I didn't fancy myself as a universalist, as another-- what ' s his name in Newark? Dana--I wasn't another John Cotton Dana. I wasn't a universal brain in librarianship. I was a kind of specialist, and I recognized it. This was a weakness, too. I think a bad decision I made later in the cataloging was not to include subject holdings in the branch libraries in the main library catalog. You know that still haunts me.

MINK

It'll haunt you, but wouldn't it be fair to say that this decision--was this decision arrived at after much discussion in a long series of weekly head meetings?

POWELL

Yes, sure it was.

MINK

So you were taking into account the advice of the department heads on this?

POWELL

Yes, that's right.

MINK

Or were they all saying, "No, no, no." And you supported the other side.

POWELL

No, I think it was a consensus, as I remember it; the minutes would show it. But we had a survey of the catalog by a faculty questionnaire, and I think we had a task-force kind of survey of the public catalog. And did we have an outside consultant in?

MINK

I don't remember if we did.

POWELL

I don't remember.

MINK

The records would show.

POWELL

Not the way we had Swank. But at any rate, then we had a look at the general assistance budget, what we had for costs of maintaining and developing the catalog, and it just seemed that this was just one thing that we couldn't do, and so we didn't do it. I think a man like Coney at Berkeley, who was administering the Berkeley library, and who was much more interested in his grasp of cataloging and classification, might very well have come to a different decision. I didn't have the knowledge, really, to either discern that they were wrong and override them. I think it was a consensus that I went along with. Wasn't Gordon Williams then in charge?

MINK

He was a very strong advocate , and he was in charge of technical processes.

POWELL

That's right. I was depending on Williams' advice on this. And, God knows, we kicked it around in the heads' meeting week after week. The minutes would show this. There was endless discussion of this.

1.15. TAPE NUMBER: VIII, Side Two (November 19, 1969)

POWELL

I went over what I did say in the autobiography with Ralph Rice, incidentally, of the law school.

MINK

This is in relation to whom?

POWELL

Coffman, what I said about Coffman, led to his dismissal. We toned it down a little. I didn't want to get caught with a libel suit.

MINK

Right, especially with a lawyer. Well, can we begin then in this discussion of the Law Library, after those off-the-cuff comments, with the actual establishment of the law school. Word comes down that the money is being put into the coffers by the legislature, and in spite of Robert Gordon Sproul, the law school is founded.

POWELL

Yes.

MINK

So it's got to have a branch library. What were the problems as they came up on the horizon?

POWELL

Well, I think on the horizon came J. A. C. Grant, professor of political science, who was, I suppose, the closest to a lawyer that the political science department had, unless it was Charles Grove Haines. Grant did a great deal of his research in the [Los Angeles] County Law Library. He was the liaison with Tom Dabagh, the county law librarian, and with the lawyers downtown. Grant appeared in my office and said, "Here's what has happened--here's \$50,000 to start a law library with. How do we do this?"

MINK

How do we do this?

POWELL

Yes. And I said, "Well, we need a basic buying list." "Well, who makes it?" And how did we make it? I think Tom Dabagh probably in the County Law Library was the chief helper, and Cliff Grant. They put together a basic list. Who was head of acquisitions then?

MINK

Would it be Johnny Smith?

POWELL

Yes, and we either appointed or had on the staff then a little gal named Molly Hollreigh. I don't know whether we appointed her for this job or she was here and we drafted her, but she was a little gal from the Pacific Northwest, a graduate of the University of Washington Library School, and she had a lot of zip. She was a kind of a little female Johnny Smith, and we gave her the \$50,000 and said, "Get out there and spend it." And that's the last I heard of it. She and Smith and the Acquisitions Department did a crash job. They were based right about where you are now, Jim, down in that basement corridor in one of those rooms; that's where the temporary law library processing was. And as I recall, the buying also took in mind what we already had, but Grant (and this was the advantage of having a member of our non-law faculty on the committee) protected the general library in political science holdings and would not agree to transfer a great many things. He said, "We'll have to duplicate a certain number of things." Well, I think then the appointment of the law librarian was initiated and more or less carried out by this steering

committee on the law school. That would be Grant and Paul Dodd, and I don't know who else.

MINK

Well, that's in the record. Were you consulted by this committee?

POWELL

Yes — yes, indeed, and of course Vosper was assistant librarian then and was close to the faculty and to Grant and to Dodd; we were consulted and warmly endorsed. Of course, because we knew Tom Dabagh. We knew him through Sydney Mitchell. He and the Mitchells were great friends, you see, because Dabagh had been at Berkeley as law librarian, hadn't he, before he became county law librarian. He was Boalt Hall librarian at Berkeley. He was a great friend of the Mitchells, and we knew him in the — he'd been a member of the Librarians' Chowder and Marching Society. We used to go to it and we'd see Dabagh. We were pleasant colleagues, and we knew Bill Stern, his foreign law librarian who did lots of checking out here at UCLA in our bibliographical sources. So that was entirely with our blessing, and it was a wonderful appointment initially. But of course what screwed it up was the dean, L. Dale Coffman, who was on the surface a gentleman and a scholar, but underneath this he was a conniver and determined to establish an independent law library.

MINK

At this point, what note would you make of the fact that this is traditional in the United States, independent autonomous law libraries?

POWELL

I knew this, and yet I think I was persuaded by the development at UCLA, the pattern that we'd established here in a new place, that is, of biomedicine and of engineering, that all of the emerging libraries should be coordinated. I think here was a chance to do it, and there was administrative backing to do it, and also the wish of the law librarian and of Professor Grant that this coordination be effected. In other words, I had everything on my side at UCLA in administration, in faculty, and in precedent to do it differently, because the tradition had also been true of medicine that it be separate, yet we were

doing it effectively in a coordinated operation. So I went ahead on that premise that it would work. Well, it didn't. And there was a lot of hassling and a lot of dirty pool. I hadn't been in England more than a week, I guess, in September 1950, when I had a cable from Paul Dodd. Why it was from Dodd was because he was chairman of that committee that was running the university. Dykstra died in May of 1950, and in the autumn there was. . .

MINK

This was the interim deans' committee: Dodd, Knudsen, and Warren.

POWELL

And Dodd cabled me, "Is it true that before leaving the United States you agreed with Dean Coffman that the Law Library should withdraw and become its own autonomous unit?" I cabled back, "Absolutely not; it's a damn lie. I never made any kind of an agreement." Well, this was the kind of tactics that Coffman followed. He lied about it.

MINK

He was taking advantage of the fact you were away.

POWELL

Of my absence. Yes. But Dodd was shrewd enough to cable me, and of course I denied it. Well, then, it went on back and forth with all kinds of trouble. And Dabagh then became increasingly unhappy, because he found that Coffman did not want him to remain loyal to the library. He wanted Dabagh to join him, Coffman, and Harold Verrall, and the others in the law school who wanted to pull away. And Dabagh, a man of honor and integrity, did not want to do this. Of course, it ended up by Dabagh leaving, resigning, I don't remember the details of it, but I know it was a great loss to us, and Coffman's stooge, Louis Piacenza, became--what? acting law librarian. Oh, I had one marvelous blow-up. After Dabagh had left, I'd come back from Europe and I was in my office one day, and Louis Piacenza turned up with Miles Price, who was the law librarian of Columbia University, really the dean of American law librarians, and he was visiting UCLA for some reason or another--probably on accreditation for the Law Library kind of thing. And, of course, Coffman kept saying, "We won't get accredited if it isn't a separate institution. " He kept

saying this. I hadn't seen Piacenza since Dabagh had left and gone to Berkeley as Sproul's assistant. I just hadn't seen him, and there he was in my doorway with Miles Price, and I lost my temper. This was a very unfortunate thing I did because Price was a guest. I remember I said to Louis, "Any son of a bitch that's willing to put a knife in a man's back the way you did to Tom Dabagh has a helluva lot of guts to turn up in my office." I said, "If you want to leave Mr. Price here, I'll talk with him, but I won't talk with you." God, they were flabbergasted. They both turned on their heel and walked out. (Brady would verify this, because, my God, I was mad!) That son-of-a-bitch Piacenza. He ran right back and cried to Coffman. Coffman called up Ray Allen or wrote him a letter and said, "Our great visiting law librarian from Columbia has been insulted by Powell." So Allen called me on the carpet. I told him exactly what I'd done: that I was sorry that I'd made this scene in front of Miles Price, but I just couldn't stand the shock of seeing that son-of-a-bitch Piacenza, and I'd blown my top. And I said, "I'd do it again, I'm afraid. My sense of loyalty to Dabagh was outraged by the whole conduct." I walked up and down and Allen calmed me down. I didn't lose my temper very often--and Brady would vouch for this--one or two times, three or four, half a dozen maybe; but it was generally over a question of loyalty. I believe in loyalty even though a son of a bitch is involved. If Piacenza had been loyal and still been a son of a bitch, I'd have forgiven him, but he was disloyal and a son of a bitch. I know how hurt Dabagh had been. Well, this had repercussions later. I turned up at Columbia University in 1954 as a visiting professor in their library school. Miles Price was on the faculty of the Columbia Library School, and there we were at lunch and across the table from each other and I apologized to him then. I said, "Miles, I'm sorry I lost my temper. This is why." He said, "Well, I understood, but it was a shock." So we made it up there and he came back and called on me later. And believe it or not, Jim, I made up with Louis Piacenza; we got back on a speaking basis. Do you know how it came about? In a human way, through the big Malibu fire of 1956--no, not through that, through the Bel-Air fire, when Louis lost his house, but he saved their dogs and at some hazard to himself. They're poodles, and they brought them up to the kennels near us, the Malibu kennels, where we boarded our dogs, and they told me what Louis and his wife (his second wife, who was a very nice person, incidentally) had done to save their dogs. And I said, "Well, God, if that guy can do this for his poodles he can't be such a son of a bitch," and I called him up and I said,

"Louis, sorry you lost your house; I'm glad you saved your dogs." We had lunch together and we agreed that we'd forget all the hard times. Then of course when he died of cancer it was sad. His problem was, Jim, that he was a small peg in a big hole, and he knew it, you see. He had no law degree, he had no library degree, he was just a clerk that Tom Dabagh brought from the Columbia Library. Did you know that?

MINK

No, I didn't.

POWELL

Yes. He was a chief clerk in the Columbia Law Library that Dabagh had recruited. That's what I meant by a stab in the back.

MINK

You feel then that Piacenza worked with Coffman to bring about Dabagh's resignation, to force it.

POWELL

Yes, definitely. Tom told me. And the other snake in the grass was this Harold Verrall, a law professor who was chairman of the Faculty Committee on the Law Library. He was a rat.

MINK

I guess I was going to ask you, did you at any time attempt to reason (because this is your technique) with Coffman, to sit down and talk to him about this, to try and get him to see the whole picture and to see how the Law Library could benefit from its liaison with the main library?

POWELL

I did this, I think, chiefly through Andy Horn, who was associate librarian in those years, and Andy was our chief negotiator in this. I think Andy would bear this out. The file would bear this out. I think Andy negotiated with the Law Library Committee, and maybe with Coffman, too, but after Coffman's attempt, when I was in England, to undercut me, I don't think I ever got together with him after that.

MINK

Well, maybe the point here was that you were away in England on that first buying trip, and all of this occurred during that time. Had you been here, would you have attempted personally to negotiate with him.

POWELL

Yes, I would have. I did with Boelter when we had troubles, and I didn't need to with Stafford Warren. But that was my nature: to go and try to put out a fire myself, and with whatever prestige the office had and whatever personal effectiveness I might wield. Of course, I never liked the son of a bitch-- Coffman.

MINK

Were you ever called upon to present evidence to the committee which was established to review Coffman's deanship and to determine whether or not he would be relieved?

POWELL

No, I never was. My pipeline into the school from way back was Ralph Rice, the professor who was the leader of the anti-Coffman faction. He is the Connell Professor of Law now and one of my close friends here on campus, not because of that, but just because of general interests we have. He used to bring me up to date sometimes on things that were going on. No, I was never called later to give any evidence. I don't think I was needed. I think there was so much evidence.

MINK

Were you aware of the central problems through Rice, and what did Rice tell you?

POWELL

I think he told of Coffman's unfortunate reactionary political and anti-Semitic utterances in class and his attempts to indoctrinate the students in a particular point of view. He was of extreme right-wing political viewpoints, and anti-Semitic, anti-Negro, he was a real John Bircher. And this was what upset Rice, I

think, who was not a radical by any means. He's an extremely conservative-liberal, levelheaded guy. They couldn't stand this very much longer.

MINK

Were you aware of the Cota affair? He was the law student who claimed he was dismissed on anti-Semitic grounds by grade-tampering?

POWELL

I read this in the *Bruin*, I suppose. Wasn't it in the *Bruin*, it was busted open?

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

That's all I knew about it. Maybe Rice talked to me about it, but I didn't follow it closely. I figured the guy would hang himself. And I kept seeing Dabagh, now and then; he came through campus on special missions for Sproul. And, of course, the wonderful retribution and return of justice in the whole thing is that it was Tom Dabagh who really broke through and led to the founding of the library school. It was the special committee that he headed for the master-what is it?-- the commission, or what is it called? The coordinating committee,

MINK

To implement the master plan.

POWELL

Yes. Dabagh did a special task-force job for them, and he came to see us, and I was able to give him all the information that Page and Jim Cox had accumulated on the need for a library school. Dabagh then really wrote the ticket that led to the establishment of the library school, and not a helluva long time after that he died. One more thing on Dabagh, Jim, before we go on: when I withdrew in June of 1951 my candidacy for the state librarianship (I was looking at my files here the other day), I withdrew in favor of Tom Dabagh, who announced that he would be a candidate and would have been a great appointment. But instead they appointed Carma Zimmerman. But I had great feeling for Tom that we owed him a great deal for what he'd done to

establish the UCLA Law Library, and then later, of course, for what he did to establish the library school.

MINK

Yes, indeed.

POWELL

He was a sweet guy.

MINK

Now, in the Acquisitions Department--I wonder if you could speak about the appointment of [Richard] O'Brien and the problems that developed in that area leading to the [Raynard] Swank survey.

POWELL

Yes, that was a sticky one wasn't it? Well, let's see, Johnny Smith was head of the department, and we were convinced, as I said the other day, that he'd do better elsewhere. We were doing the things that led to his appointment as city librarian of Santa Barbara. In the meantime, we were faced with the problem of replacing Bob Quinsey, I think, who was in charge of the undergraduate library, the developing College Library. Quinsey had been pulled away by Bob Vosper to go to Kansas, and Everett Moore was not too unhappy about this because Quinsey apparently was giving Everett trouble.

MINK

How did he give Everett trouble?

POWELL

Well, I think he was acting emotionally unstable. He was getting into maybe a little jam with his female student assistant. He was going to see a psychiatrist, and Everett didn't feel that he was stable enough to head this. So when Vosper took him, everybody cheered. And Bob Vosper apparently never asked about any of these problems. Of course, they really developed when Quinsey was in Kansas. He had a lot of trouble there, which led to his leaving. At any rate, Vosper solved that one for us without effort on our part. But there I was faced, rather suddenly I think, with a replacement. I'd hired O'Brien originally in the class of 1950 from the library school, as I remember, and we hired him

and Dave Heron, I think, in the same class, for the Reference Department, and O'Brien appealed to me. Every new appointment in reference I used to give a special assignment just to see how they did, and this was with Everett's OK. O'Brien did a couple for me that showed that he had a good knowledge of sources, particularly, continental--German and French--bibliographical sources. And he did one job for me on a purchase of French newspapers that was well done. And then Jim Breasted, a professor who went over to the Los Angeles County Museum as director, remember, came to me once and said he needed a head of the County Museum library which was then both art and science and industry (it hadn't been separated). I didn't see any future for O'Brien in the Reference Department and here was a promotional opportunity, and we were always trying to bring these about outside the system when we couldn't do it within it. So we gave O'Brien to Jim Breasted as his librarian and he served over there very well for a couple of years, maybe longer. Breasted then, of course, got into a jam with the supervisors and was fired, and O'Brien made noises to me that maybe he wanted out, too. Just about that time Quinsey left, so I suggested to O'Brien that he come back and be the undergraduate librarian. This would put him back in Everett's jurisdiction (Everett was running that outfit). So that was going to happen. Then the Johnny Smith thing broke, and he went off to Santa Barbara, and then I had to replace the head, and I got the "bright idea" that O'Brien might even do better in acquisitions than he would in the undergraduate library. So I guess we offered him this choice and he took the headship. Well, I don't know how he might have done if the department had been staffed a little differently, but we had a real staffing problem in there because Betty Rosenberg was assistant head of the department, and she and Barbara Kelley, who was the chief accounting clerk for the department, were engaged in a kind of a Jewish- Irish hassle, a real brannigan. It got to the point where they weren't speaking to each other. They hadn't spoken to each other for about three months, Rosenberg and Kelley, and there they were at adjoining desks. And it was an intolerable situation, a kind of a polarization of the department. You were either Kelley or Rosenberg. So here comes O'Brien walking into this. Well, I don't know the chronology, but at one point I got so mad about it that I called Kelley and Rosenberg into my office one morning at eight o'clock and I said, "I'm bloody fed up with you two gals not speaking to each other. It's demoralizing the department and we're not leaving this room until you agree

to speak to each other and you've shaken hands and made up." And I said, "if you're not willing to do this, I'll have one or both of you fired, and you can appeal it just as high as you want, but I'll make it stick. You either play ball or get out, and if you won't get out, I'll throw you out." They just sat there and looked at me. And I sat there and went away signing papers and working at my desk, and about an hour passed I guess. The gals just sat there. Finally Betty says, "Well, I'll play ball if you will, Barbara." Barbara says, "All right, let's play ball." I said, "Well, what's your trouble? Who wants to talk first?" So I got them both to talk, each blaming the other. We were there about three hours, I think, and it was kind of a psychotherapeutic device. [laughter]

MINK

Did you envision yourself as a headshrinker?

POWELL

Yes, as a headshrinker. Where's the couch, girls? Well, it was good. They went into all the problems of their authority and their position, and I got a real insight, of course, into what was wrong with both of them. Well, poor O'Brien, there he was. I pushed him into the middle of this. They made it up and they did speak, but they didn't like each other, of course. I don't know what the immediate problems in there were, but I know that O'Brien's personality was just as problematical as these two girls'. He was strong-minded and blind to a lot of his own ways. He was tactless in a lot of ways, with a manner that put people off, didn't it? It was a kind of a patronizing manner, wouldn't you call it, Jim?

MINK

You're the one that's making the evaluation.

POWELL

Yes, help me, chum. You knew him. It was condescending, lofty, and with a New York accent and all, that put people off. I brought him in a couple of times and chewed hell out of him. He wanted to be promoted to--God knows what. What was he? Was he an L-III? He wanted to be an L-IV. I told him why I wasn't promoting him. And in one year I didn't give him a merit increase, and he came in mad as hell. I said, "Look, chum, you're asking for it; I'll tell you

what's wrong with you. You say the wrong things to people, including me and my wife Fay, for example." We were at a party, I think some affair on campus, and O'Brien's opening remark to Fay was, "Well, what are you doing here?" I said, "God damn it, don't ever ask a woman that, particularly when she's the librarian's wife and she's been here longer than you have and she's part of the university community. You don't ask her what she's doing here. You say, 'I'm glad to see you' or 'how nice you could come.'" And he said, "I realize that; I blurted it out, didn't I?" You see, if he did this to me, I fear what he did to the lower echelons. He must have really pissed them off. Well, we had the problem at the same time of Betty Rosenberg, who the longer she was in the department, the more she insisted on doing her work and everybody else's, too. She was a perfectionist and a revisionist. So she stayed after work and revised everybody else's work, but she couldn't keep up with it. The volume piled up and up and up, and the faculty orders were in arrears, and I was getting more and more complaints from the faculty that their orders weren't being checked. And when they were checked, they weren't being typed; Kelley blamed Rosenberg and Rosenberg blamed bad checking, and I guess they both blamed O'Brien for being authoritarian and God knows what else. Who was in charge of the department-- Gordon Williams?

MINK

Gordon was in charge of technical processes.

POWELL

Yes, and Betty didn't like him because Gordon used to come in and put his feet on her desk and make her mad, and he pushed O'Brien around, and O'Brien said, "Well, I'm the head of the department, but Gordon's got all the authority and all the classification." And for Christ's sake, it was one of those things. Then, of course, I had the problems between Bradstreet and Kelley (we ought to talk about those some time). This was a personal mistake I made to allow them to work in the same area, because they polarized everybody, you see. It was a mistake. I should have applied the husband-wife rule, that any two people living together-- man and a woman, or man and man, or woman and woman- - shouldn't be allowed to work in the same area. I think this was a mistake I made. And yet, the longer I was here the more I owed to Brady in the way of service and loyalty and devotion and protections against all the

demands made on me that I couldn't satisfy that she diverted. So I owed her a lot, and I suppose I rewarded her by allowing her to keep her roommate in the job next door. But it was wrong; it was a mistake--one of the worst mistakes I made.

MINK

Well, since you brought it up, I'll just ask you one question: did you have a feeling that this situation created a staff morale problem in that there were many on the staff who felt that Bradstreet and Kelley and those who they were close to were a spy system for the University Librarian within the system?

POWELL

Well, I don't know that. I didn't have the feeling that Kelley was, but certainly Brady was. She was ears and eyes, and I benefited.

MINK

Your own?

POWELL

Yes.

MINK

For example, for many years they rode back and forth with Tanya Keatinge, and then poor Tanya, bless her soul, was suspect. Were you aware of this staff morale problem?

POWELL

I was, and I could solve it only, I think, by transferring Kelley out. And if I did that I probably would have lost Brady. I had. . .

MINK

A real problem.

POWELL

I had a problem, and Brady was given to tears and she would crack up very easily. She was under all kinds of pressure. She was dominated by Kelley, and

of course they broke up finally, which was a blessing, and then Brady entered into a kind of a new life. It was an abnormal, bad situation, with Kelley really being a bad person. I don't mean morally. They weren't lesbians. They were not, Jim, at all; there wasn't any sexual relationship between them. It was one of those-- it'd make a marvelous play--kind of symbiotic relationships in the beginning that worked, and then it went bad. But I was boxed in and I didn't take the steps that I should have early enough. At any rate, here was all this situation that O'Brien was in the midst of, and I'm only amazed that he lasted as long as he did. Well, those were the problems; the main problem in the department was that we weren't getting the orders out and we weren't processing the stuff.

MINK

Well, did you come to the conclusion that this was more personality than it was actual work load?

POWELL

Both. I thought the personalities were wrong and the system was wrong. That's when I asked Ray Swank to come down from Stanford and do this survey. He spent about a week here, and he worked quietly and I think with great skill. I'd seen his work and knew him. He and Archer, I think, had been graduate students together at Chicago. He really got into that Acquisitions Department and didn't upset them at all. He worked quietly with them. He met with them individually and as a department, and then we all met in my office as a department and with Swank. We tried to communicate among us in every possible way. I wanted to do two things: I wanted to solve the personnel situation, and I also wanted to change the routines.

MINK

Before he began his survey was he aware, Larry, of the personnel situation in the department?

POWELL

Yes. His first day here he came up to Malibu and dined and stayed overnight with us, and we spent the whole evening, Ray and I, talking about it. And of

course Gordon Williams had talked with him earlier. So, yes, he was aware of everything.

MINK

He'd have to be in order to. . .

POWELL

That's right.

MINK

It had to be taken into consideration.

POWELL

Yes, another problem with Betty Rosenberg and her perfectionist ways was her high professionalization. She didn't believe that checking could be done lower than the professional level. She was opposed to clericals and student assistant use; she wanted a high degree of professionalization in the department. Of course, the whole trend of the Swank report was away from this; it was to de-professionalize, to use more clericals and more graduate student, TA-type of checkers. It was also to create the new position for Betty Rosenberg as a bibliographer where she would be by herself in a professional position. We talked over the results and the recommendations that was to create a new position of bibliographical assistant to the librarian. Well, it worked out from that point of view. It relieved the department of Betty--and I mean this in the best sense, because she was the wrong person in the wrong place--and put her in direct relationship with me. I was one person that she respected, as she didn't respect O'Brien or Gordon Williams. She respected me, and I knew more than she did, and she knew it--that is, about books and bibliographical matters--and she'd work her ass off for me, and she did. Good Lord, I used her, and this pleased her enormously; there was no problem. Well, I broke the whole thing in a departmental meeting; I called the whole department into my office and told them what we were going to do. We spent a whole morning talking about it. Betty spoke up and O'Brien spoke. Swank had gone then, I guess, but anyway, his written report was circulated. I think it did some good. But it didn't solve O'Brien's problems in the long run, and then they came to a head in my last years, I think, as librarian. He and Kelley came

into real confrontations. She was insubordinate and wouldn't do what he wanted, and I told him that he could fire her, that I would back him. And, of course, he did, through a transfer to another department. We unloaded her. I don't know where Brady was at that point. Did I do this or did Vosper do this, Jim? At what point did Kelley leave the department?

MINK

She left the department. . .

POWELL

After I left the librarianship. Wasn't it under Vosper?

MINK

Yes, I believe it was.

POWELL

You see, Brady had left, so there wasn't any problem. It solved itself; both of them left. I couldn't have done it, in other words, while Brady was still here without losing her.

MINK

Well, it was never said, but I assume correctly-- do I not? --that a sine qua non of Vosper's coming was Bradstreet's leaving?

POWELL

Yes. We ought to air that and get the record straight. Yes it was, and Brady knew this in the beginning and recognized it; but as the time came for me to leave and him to come in, she weakened. She didn't know where she'd go. Mildred Foreman had been working on a transfer, and there wasn't anything that opened up on that senior administrative level. So, Brady, bless her, with the mistaken idea that it would work, asked me and asked Vosper if she could stay as Vosper's administrative assistant. In fact, both of us had the courage to say no to her--no, it wouldn't work; he had to have his own. And she was a very unhappy girl for awhile.

MINK

Well, then he had to have his own, and yet he didn't have his own.

POWELL

Well, Sue Folz had only been in for a few months. It was the same situation, Jim, that I inherited when Bradstreet, who had been with Mr. Goodwin only a year, came over to me. She knew enough about this system and was not too devoted to the incumbent. So Vosper benefited from Sue Folz in exactly the same way that I did from Bradstreet. Well, then my real headache was that Brady didn't get placed, and the next thing she wanted to do was to go along with me to the library school. She thought that she'd go up there, and I was determined that I'd start fresh, first of all with Ellie Schuetze, who was Andy's secretary, who would be mine in the beginning, and that eventually I'd have an administrative assistant that was not involved in the hassles that had been going on, and so I had to say no to Brady. And, of course. Page Ackerman was doing everything she could to get Brady a place. Page at one point asked me if I would reconsider and take Brady up to the library school, but I wouldn't weaken. I knew that the cycle had played out, that she'd fulfilled her role with me and that there wasn't any more to do together. We'd done it, so I never weakened and I wouldn't do it.

MINK

Well, wasn't it also more or less a sine qua non that Andy Horn wouldn't have come as assistant dean if Bradstreet were to have been the administrative assistant?

POWELL

Definitely. Yes. Andy felt just as strongly as I did, sure. Of course, it was a bitter blow to Brady eventually, when we brought Flo Williams back, the woman that Brady had trained but who had been out of the system for several years and had never been involved. I think Flo was a real genius for relationships. She'd never been partisan, had she, to any; she was always above it all. She still is, bless her; she's a great woman. So we were terribly fortunate in getting Flo to come out of retirement back to the library school. Then the little fairytale ending was Brady's coming into her own as administrative assistant to the dean of [the School of] Public Health, and she's had this great life. She's not only a senior administrative assistant now, she's an administrative planning officer, I think-- a higher classification. She's probably making \$12,000 or \$13,000 a year and has been extremely successful

and happy in this position with public health. So the Lord provided. Well, that left O'Brien for Vosper to deal with, and that's another interview isn't it, Jim? Vosper has had problems with acquisitions. It's always been a problem. He replaced O'Brien with Bill. . .what's his name?

MINK

Kurth.

POWELL

Kurth, who was probably a low point in personnel appointments for the department. So, it's a department that's had its history, and I did good for it and I suppose I did bad for it. But in appointing O'Brien, I did the best thing that I could at the time and tried to make it work. I found O'Brien, in working with him with the Library Committee, to my point of view, extremely efficient and organized, and he presented his data to the Library Committee with punctuality, with skill, with tact. And I think my chewing his ass a few times probably did him some good in manners. I realized that he had these faults. We all need to be chewed at times. Of course. Fay chews me. She's my chewer, tells me the bad things I'm inclined to do. Everybody needs somebody like this--a devil's advocate--and I was O'Brien's. I like to think I did him some good. I don't know how he's done as a bibliographer, but I would think this was probably his cup of tea, just as it was Betty Rosenberg's. Of course, I brought Betty Rosenberg all the way along by taking her out of Vosper's problem menagerie up to the library school--although he knew her before I did because they'd been classmates at library school (the class of 1940), so I think Bob and Betty always got along. Maybe even Vosper possibly resented my taking her from the position that he would have had with her as assistant and making her lecturer in the library school, but I don't think so. I think I did everybody good by that move, and she's a great teacher now of acquisitions work.

1.16. TAPE NUMBER: IX, Side One (December 1, 1969)

MINK

This morning we were just mentioning that you hadn't talked too much about your theories of administration, and then after all you did go out and teach it. First, you practiced it and then you theorized on it.

POWELL

Well, this was by invitation. This wasn't my idea. This was Carl White's idea at Columbia. The first time I taught it Lowell Martin was on sabbatical, and Carl White needed a replacement to teach his course called "Theory of Library Administration." He asked me to come back to Columbia for a semester in 1954, and I took Martin's syllabus and redid it and taught that class and then taught an evening seminar once a week on problems in large libraries, research libraries. I had eight doctoral candidates and they had projects. It was an opportunity to examine what I'd been doing and thinking and to try to make it understandable to students. I didn't like Martin's syllabus, *Theory of Library Administration*. I had no theory; all I had was practice. So I tried to find out what I'd been doing, and it wasn't terribly complicated, Jim, what I'd been doing. I've been getting people, as I've said before many times, to do things that I couldn't do myself and coordinate their activity. I did a few things myself, but by and large, I gathered around me a group of very capable administrative people.

MINK

Well, by the time you went back to Columbia to teach in 1954, you were pretty well marked in the library world as someone who had a theory, an ax to grind. . .

POWELL

As a bookman.

MINK

As a bookman versus someone like Coney at Berkeley, purely an administrator kind of a person who might go out and run a nut-and-bolt factory.

POWELL

Yes, well, we'd gotten into this. I'd gotten into a piece I wrote in the *Stechert-Hafner Book News* -- "Chief Librarian, Bookman or Administrator?" Tauber replied to it and we were off to the races. Then I did a program at a mid-

winter meeting called, "Roasting an Old Chestnut," in which I had Tauber speak as a bookman and I spoke as an administrator. It was kind of a put-on, and it was great fun. Then I did--I think it was the best thing I did in the field of administration--that institute we held at UCLA in 1957, called "A New Look at Library Administration." Remember? Extension division and the library sponsored it, and we had enrollees from all over the country. We published the papers in the *Library Journal*. We had Coney and Castagna and Henderson and Hamill and a lot of the top administrative people from this area. We had Harlow, I think, and Horn. That was good, Jim; that was one of the best institutes I ever took part in--that "New Look at Library Administration." Well, I resented, I suppose, being categorized simply as a book person. I was a book person, but I was also capable of organizing and administering and getting things done. I used to kid about it. I did another talk, I guess, at that institute called, "Administration in One Easy Lesson," which was a kind of absurd reduction of the whole nonsense of administrative theory. Of course. Coney saw through it all, and he teased me a lot about it. I think one of the best tributes I ever had, Jim (I've reached the age where I can quote my own tributes, can't I? if I don't overdo it), was two years ago at Rutgers when we went down from Wesleyan. Neal asked us to come down to Rutgers and speak to the graduate library school. I'd been told, because one of their graduates was working at Wesleyan, he tipped me off, and said, "Give them some book talk. They're fed up to the ears; they have nothing but administrative talk down there. Give them some book talk." So I did. I talked like mad about books, and the class president got up afterwards, a very doll of a girl, and said, "Oh, thank you. you've refreshed us." Ralph Blasingame got up then, who teaches administration in the library school, and real cynically, he said, "Ah, don't be taken in by this guy Powell, talking about books all the time." And I thought, "He's really going to give me the shaft." But he said, "I was assistant state librarian in California long enough to know that Larry Powell is also one of the best library administrators I've ever known." Everybody cheered, and I clapped. And Blasingame was right, God damn it, I did perform as an administrator and was never fired. I think that's the test of it. Look around the country. There are a hell of a lot of incompetent library administrators that are getting the sack. Well, I might have gotten it, Jim, but I quit while I was ahead. I got out before I had to, and that's also a proof of good administration, isn't it? Who brought this up anyway?

MINK

I did.

POWELL

For Christ's sake--well, what else do you want to know about it?

MINK

Well, I want to know exactly what your theory of administration is, and don't refer me to the article in *Stechert-Hafner* . . .

POWELL

The gospel? The gospel according to St. Lawrence?

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

Well, what do you mean theory ?

MINK

Well, you said, of course, that Martin's syllabus had no theory; or you didn't like the word "theory."

POWELL

I didn't like it.

MINK

That's what I meant to say. So how did you go about teaching this course?

POWELL

I did a lot of it with case history, I think, by devising problems in library administration that would appear in a public or an academic library and enlisting student participation in solving them. I did a lot of case history teaching there at Columbia, based on my experience and on what I read. Of course, the school that's done the most on this is Simmons. Shaffer and his colleagues at Simmons have published a number of casebooks. But I did my

own, and the results--I kept a number of the Columbia papers, and you'll find them in the archives.

MINK

Yes, the papers from your classes are in the archives .

POWELL

Yes, well, a lot of those deal with library administration. And if you really wanted to know, which you don't of course, you're just teasing me. . .

MINK

For the record we want to know.

POWELL

For the record you want to know--well, God damn it, go and read all these papers. There's the dirty truth. I used Emerson as a textbook because I found that Emerson's essays were full of administration, of apothegms and all kinds of homilies that were useful in administration. I found it a much better textbook than a lot of the theoretical works that Lowell Martin had cited. I just junked them all and brought in Emerson. I haven't any theory. I'm a practitioner, Jim; I'm not a theoretician.

MINK

So I don't expect that you intend to teach the principles of administration or the corollaries of administration.

POWELL

God bless you, I never knew what they were. I never had any.

MINK

Well, for example, planning, organizing, staffing, reporting.

POWELL

Well, I did it all. But I didn't do it in the sense that it was a theoretical framework. It was just common sense; you planned, you staffed, you programmed, you budgeted, because you jolly well had to, and that isn't theory, that's practice, common sense. What did I say in my book? Well, I

won't look it up, for God's sake, but there it is, a paragraph or two about library administration. Get good people, give them responsibility, give them credit, and fasten your seat belt. And we rode out a number of storms here. I suppose I saw good examples around me--of Sproul, of Dykstra, of practicing library administrators. I never liked Coney as an example; I thought he was a poor administrator. I didn't care for Swank or Van Patten or Lew Stieg or any of the other library administrators around the state, except maybe Castagna.

MINK

Let's take them one at a time. What about Ray Swank, for example. What was it that you found about his breed of administrator that you didn't like?

POWELL

Well, I never cared for the auspices under which he came to Stanford, you see. He did the survey of the Stanford library with Louis Round Wilson, which ended up eventually by Swank being made the librarian. I thought it was kind of coming in the back door, dumping Van Patten. I was a friend of Van Patten's and I didn't like the way they treated him. He was a poor administrator, sure, but that was no excuse for kicking him in the ass and chucking him in the dustbin. I was prejudiced against Swank because of that. I came to know him later and I liked him very much as a human being. I found that he was a much better person than I thought. And maybe he was what Stanford needed at the time as a kind of corrective to too much Van Patten, and maybe what the Berkeley library school needed was a corrective to too much [J. Periam] Danton.

MINK

Well, Nathan Van Patten was more of a bibliographer, more of a recluse?

POWELL

Yes.

MINK

Would you say he was more like John Goodwin, except that he had more on the ball than Goodwin had?

POWELL

He had more in a bookish sense, but I don't think he had as much administrative sense. I think Goodwin had a great deal more planning sense and personnel sense. He had better people around him. I will say that Van Patten had the wit to hire Bob Vosper away from Leupp, and that I had the wit to hire Bob Vosper away from Van Patten. I wanted to work for Van Patten when I was in library school. I applied to him for a job, but they never had any then. They didn't pay anything. It was probably just as well I didn't, although I might have gone to Stanford and succeeded to the librarianship there, but I doubt it. I think the only place I could have made it was here at UCLA--the right person in the right place at the right time, and that was fate.

MINK

What about Stieg? What is it that you have to criticize about his brand of administration?

POWELL

Well, I think it was just ineffective. The whole use program was fuzzy, and he had terrible people working for him, by and large.

MINK

By choice or by inheritance?

POWELL

Both. I think his forte is teaching. You see, in the beginning he was both university librarian and dean, and they made the great mistake of taking him out of the library school and leaving him full time in the library, when I think it should have gone the other way.

MINK

And then they brought in Martha Boaz as dean.

POWELL

That's right. I think Stieg is a natural teacher, and I employed him two summers here in library school, and he taught with great success. But he should have known better; he should have known his limitations and not wasted himself on administering a half-assed library, which is what USC 's was and still is. It's a facade, really, Jim. It's a shell.

MINK

Has Stieg ever discussed with you in any intimate way what are the problems?

POWELL

Funding, I suppose, is. . .

MINK

Funding?

POWELL

Yes.

MINK

Why funding, because USC seems to ooze money?

POWELL

Well, but it goes into the wrong things--it goes into biological sciences; it goes into football.

MINK

Well, would you think maybe if there were a stronger man in the post of librarian, someone who would speak out for the library, that. . .

POWELL

Yes, sure, if they'd had Larry Powell as librarian. There again is an institution that I tried to work for. In 1937 I wrote to Miss Christian Dick, the university librarian, and applied to her for work when I was part time at the Los Angeles Public Library. The dean of men at USC then, Frank Bacon, was a family friend, and he went to Miss Dick and said, "Hire Larry Powell." And Miss Dick dithered; she never could make up her mind. I shouldn't say Dick went soft, [laughter] but at any rate, she never hired me, and I think the reason was that she felt that I was overqualified. She didn't want a young doctoral person; she wanted slave labor.

MINK

Perhaps she felt threatened.

POWELL

Threatened, possibly, yes. But I might have been over there, and I think I could have made it and done things for them in funding and all of that, with the zip I had at that time. Coney--well, that's another story. I admire Don Coney very much; I like his wit, I like his decency and his integrity. He has fine human qualities. He never went back on his word to anyone, I'm sure, and he has guts; but he was cold. He lacked a warm touch of dealing with his people. Gradually the library froze on him, and you know they ended up in a very bad situation. Also, he didn't hire the right kind of people. He had a lot of poor, mediocre administrative people there. But we got along very well, just, I suppose, by the attraction of opposites. We never fell out, and I respected him and liked him and still do; I think he's a wonderful guy. He was probably the right person at the right time for Berkeley.

MINK

On the other hand, you mentioned Ed Castagna, and you said that there was one that you really admired as an administrator. What did you admire, and what do you admire about Ed?

POWELL

Well, I liked his human touch, I suppose. "Something human is dearer to me than all the gold in the world." He had a great human touch with his staff and with the profession, and he was also intensely bookish. And yet he was a very good city official. He was liberal. He was active in the United Nations in Long Beach when it was not a popular thing to do. He was interested in staff welfare and staff morale. Our great mistake, I think, was in not seeing him become state librarian. When I turned it down, I wish (Castagna was a candidate then; he was interviewed by the committee) they would have picked him. He would have made a great state librarian. We lost him as you know to the Enoch Pratt [Free Library, Baltimore]. I've been there two or three times. Fay and I have stayed with the Castagnas. I've spoken to his staff, and I felt his presence in the Enoch Pratt, which to my mind is the greatest public library in the country. It's a tremendous public library, and Castagna was right on top there. For example, the staff gave a reception for me when I talked; it was the weekend of Thanksgiving. They gave a reception, and I talked to the staff. They had a very interesting staff room set-up. They had two opposite

ends of a great long table, and at one end of the table they had a sign which read, "A Passion for Cider," and it was the cider bowl. At the other end they had a sign that read, "A Passion for Coffee," and in the middle of the table, of course, they had a sign that read, "A Passion for Books." Well, this was a little staff fun for me. What I was impressed by at this staff party, which was attended by several hundred of the staff, was the way Ed Castagna knew by name every person that he addressed. He went around the room among these hundreds of people introducing me to them, and he knew their names, and these were clericals, these were librarians, these were Chinese, these were Negroes, they were all kinds. Well, this to me is good staff work and good administration. He had a rapport with his staff; you could see they loved him.

MINK

That brings up a point in our own library, as brought out in the report that Lattiman did (the Ph.D. candidate in business administration here a number of years ago) in which he said that one of the main causes of a low morale, so-called, in the library was that one seldom saw the university librarian or his lieutenants, and when they did, they didn't know their names. It's a problem when a library grows big.

POWELL

We talked about this the other day, Jim, and I saw it happening to me as the place got larger and the personal contacts became more difficult. But it's a challenge. The administrative people must work harder at it and give more time to it and set up priorities in establishing its importance. I tried to do this but, Jesus, it was hard; and my sympathy is with Vosper and Ackerman and Miles and Moore. But I don't think there can be any condoning it; you have to do this. Otherwise, you'll lose your staff. And if it means taking more time for human contacts and less time for planning and budgeting and traveling, then, by God, take more time. Otherwise, you end up a lone person with a staff looking the other way. It 's a tragedy. I think this happened to Coney at Berkeley.

MINK

As the staff grew larger?

POWELL

Yes, and more militant. You've got to identify with them. I don't know if I could have done it in these latter years as the staff became, not more militant, but more concerned with their own welfare, whether I could have met the challenge. But I'd like to have tried. It'd be nice to start over, Jim, wouldn't it, and do all these things that we learn toward the end that are important that you don't know in the beginning. You feel your way, and I'm sure I made a great many mistakes from inexperience.

MINK

Well, it would be hard for you to say, maybe, how you would feel if confronted with, for example, the establishment of the UCLA Librarians' Association.

POWELL

Yes. I don't know what I'd feel, because in the beginning, of course, I confronted the librarian in the same way. Remember, there was no staff association in 1938. Ardis Lodge, Jens Nyholm, and I were a committee to establish a staff association, Mr. Goodwin didn't like it, but we persisted. And a number of the professional people on the staff did not want to include the clericals, remember, and Nyholm and I and Ardis Lodge insisted that it be a total staff-wide organization. Some of the old guard didn't like this one bit. I was thinking the other day of some of the programs we had. We put on staff association programs based often on the library exhibits that I did--that is, we had Jean Hersholt talk to the staff; we had Edgar Goodspeed talk; Waldemar Westergaard talked to the staff when he came back from Denmark. The staff association was very active. And I think Mr. Goodwin approved of this. But when we talked about job classification and pay plans, I don't think he was pleased one bit.

MINK

The establishment of a staff welfare committee.

POWELL

No, he didn't believe in it; he was paternalistic. And I probably would be now, too. This is an inevitable part of the aging process. You get a paternalistic feeling toward the kids.

MINK

For example, how do you feel that you could cope with a situation where the librarians on the staff want a voice in reclassifications and in promotion. The incumbent librarian welcomes it as another ingredient in the decision-making process.

POWELL

Well, I suppose I would have; I had a staff advisory committee, remember, for personnel problems--Jeannette Hagan, Ardis Lodge, Bob Vosper. It wasn't exactly drawn from the depths, although Jeannette and Ardis were L-I's at that time. I shouldn't have had Vosper on it, I suppose. That would be a mistake now to put someone that close to you on it. It wasn't truly representative, was it, of the rank and file, if you had your assistant librarian or top department head on it. I tried in a limited way to have staff participation. They advised on the reclassification study. Ardis Lodge was a very key person in this. I suppose she took the same kind of interest in staff welfare and organization activity that someone like Jo Tallman is taking latterly, or yourself.

MINK

Larry, how much can you honestly say that you did for the development of the librarian status within the university community? When you became librarian, all librarians were lumped with nonacademic employees. During the time that you were librarian, they remained so. It was only after you left that the status changed. Did you see yourself as having a part, a role, in this change that came about?

POWELL

I don't think I did very much. I don't think it was in the nature of things to do very much. I suppose I thought I'd done my part in getting them a classification of their own and getting them recognized to that extent, getting the L-I, II, III, IV classifications and getting a better pay scheme. I suppose that was my role, and I didn't go beyond that because it wasn't the time to. That was another reason why it was time for me to retire, you see. I knew there was more to be done and that I wasn't the person to do it, and I welcome what is done now. I believe, though, that you cannot have faculty rank for librarians unless it's based on the same criteria that gives faculty, faculty rank. What I would say is that librarians should have rank. It should be a separate

classification with some benefits, but not identical and not categorized the same way. I touched on this in the Coulter Lecture, which is just published now. Grant Dahlstrom has just done it as a UCLA keepsake; and I say in there (and I remember Fay Blake didn't like it one bit) that "faculty rank achieved by any other means than the means the faculty uses--that is, by publication, research and teaching--is phony." And I know she chided me a little afterwards; she said, "Well, we thought you were one of us." Well, I was citing Miss Coulter as an example. She achieved faculty status by being faculty. And I still believe this. But I also believe that librarians are entitled to rewards based on merit, and these rewards would include travel benefits, sabbatical benefits, and recognition. But I found that a great many librarians, in my experience, wanted the rewards, but they didn't want to pay for them. They wanted the sabbaticals so they could have a year off. But it doesn't work that way; you have to do something with that year. Jim, have I answered?

MINK

Yes, I think so.

POWELL

The answer is, I didn't do very much.

MINK

Well, you said that at the outset; however, you've gone on to say things that you did do, and within the time context, perhaps, they were all that could be done. It seems to me that one of the problems that librarians face (and I'm sure that you've had librarians come and talk to you about this) is that with this lower status, it is difficult to deal with the faculty on an equal footing. Maybe they shouldn't be dealing with the faculty on an equal footing. Can you cite examples of how librarians, during the time that you were librarian here, have felt about dealing with the faculty in a lower position, status-wise? For example, have they ever come to you and cried on your shoulder about it?

POWELL

No, they didn't. The ones that achieved the compatibility, the rapport with the faculty were in three different areas, as I remember it. We had a top reference staff then--Hilda Gray, Ardis Lodge and Gladys Coryell and Helen Riley and Rob

Collison--and the faculty often came to me and said, "These are superb people; they've understood what I wanted and were able to help me and we thanked them in our books, and we regard them as absolutely tops." Well, this is because these librarians could identify with the faculty and could anticipate. You've found it, too, in your work in archives and in thesis advising. You have to put yourself in the faculty's place. But you're able to do this, because you did graduate work in an area other than librarianship. Now, in acquisitions it was the people who understood bibliography and the whole international network of bibliography. And I suppose the classic example of the person who achieved the deepest and closest rapport with the faculty was Bob Vosper. He did this from the beginning, as head of the Acquisitions Department in 1944. He immediately was recognized by the faculty. Oh, I say something--let me get one of my books. Here's a paper I read at Chicago to the Graduate Library School Institute on Education for Librarians (1948, I think). It's called, "Education for Academic Librarianship," and it appears in *A Passion for Books*, pages 115-134, and Bob Vosper helped me on this.

MINK

He helped you write it?

POWELL

He helped me with data. And I remember the paragraph here that Vosper helped on. It reads: "The ability of a librarian to achieve an advanced degree, or the mere interest in doing so, may indicate an effective concern for the essential work of the university or college and in the problems faced by the teaching-research faculty." I think these next two sentences were taken right out of Vosper's notes for me: "a desperate deficiency is that of more librarians who have knowledge and interest and sympathy of the same kinds as the faculty. On every academic library staff I have an acquaintance with, I can count on few fingers the number of persons who can establish intellectual camaraderie with the faculty. Until this can be done by the majority of a staff, talk of equal rank with the faculty is a waste of breath." Now that is pure Vosper, and I think it's still true. But here at UCLA, and I think also at other campuses of the university, and by and large in academic libraries throughout the country, there are more and more such people achieving this, and I think rank and recognition will come. Now, I've mentioned acquisitions and

reference, and the other area in which this kind of interlocking relationship is established was in the branch libraries. Louise Darling, in biomedicine, and Jo Tallman were both given lectureships on the faculty of those professional schools, you remember. They were lecturers in medical history and engineering bibliography even before the library school. That means they had been recognized as experts by their own faculties. Of course, the obligation of those librarians then is to draw people around them on their staff who have the same kind of rapport and increase this; then you'd get a truly faculty-oriented library staff. Has this been done? You know more about the staff now than I do, Jim. Have we got more and more such people here?

MINK

More people, and probably the ratio is about the same, wouldn't you say?

POWELL

Yes. The few are doing it and the many want it. I won't say they are incapable of achieving this rapport, but it takes time. It brings up my old belief that to be a good librarian and to achieve higher status means giving up many things and practicing more of the things that will be recognized and rewarded by the faculty. I touched on this in that "Administration in One Easy Lesson." It means choosing and giving up pastimes and games and sports and all kinds of competing interests. You know that publication and research take time, and you have to have very understanding friends and family if you're going to live this way. Vosper, I think, and I were both very fortunate in the wives we had, having been married to women who were very understanding and adaptable. I think Loraine Vosper has been a marvelous person for Bob Vosper. She's brought him a warmth and a humane sort of feeling for people and a social gregarious feeling that he might not have had on his own. Fay has done, of course, that and more for me. She's not as social and gregarious as Loraine, but Lord, she's adaptable. She's made over her life to fit mine, not always willingly. Sometimes she bucked and screamed, but she saw that it was the wise thing to do.

MINK

You had said a little earlier that you might mention the ways in which she had helped you in your writing.

POWELL

Well, I think she helped me more just in my living than in my writing-- just in my living and my work, in affording me a background and a concern and a love and a home to which I could always return to. And she was willing to hold me on a long leash, give me a lot of rope and I wandered pretty far and wide in my time, around the country and around the world. But she's the only woman I ever married and the only wife I've ever had. We're still together after forty years (we met forty-one years ago this fall), and I still think she's the inevitable person in my life.

MINK

Larry, to come back now to the contemporaries--you mentioned that Ed Castagna was a candidate for the position of state librarian when Mabel Gillis retired and also the then Carma Zimmerman, now Carma Zimmerman Leigh was . . .

POWELL

She may have been a good lay, Jim, but it's pronounced "lee." [laughter]

MINK

Excuse me. . .was also a candidate, and she won out. How would you say that the administration of the state library has been as a result of this?

POWELL

Well, it's been very good from one point of view. She's been very much oriented toward public librarianship. She was the State Librarian of Washington. She has had a good sense of governmental relationships, and I think she's done very well in this area. What I would have done, I think, would have made the state librarian more an institution to serve librarianship, period, statewide and not just public librarians. I would have seen the state library as a scholarly place, and I would have, I suppose, emphasized the Californiana, which is its great and glorious collection dating back to Fremont, as you know--1851. I think Castagna would have done more to make the state library truly a statewide, all-library institution. But Carma has done what she's done with a good deal of efficiency. I think she's a cold, uninspiring woman. Her talks are really dull; she can't talk worth beans. At district meetings at UCLA which she

attends, she's completely uninspiring, but maybe the state needed somebody like this. Maybe California deserved somebody dull. Anyway, that's what she's been.

MINK

Well, supposing you had to contrast her administration with that of Mabel Gillis' for example?

POWELL

Mabel Gillis was much more of a human person. She was much more interested, I think, in history and in culture and in the general cultural role of the state library. And she was more of a human human, but still Mabel Gillis was not my ideal of a state librarian. I suppose her father, James L. Gillis, was the greatest one we've ever had. He combined all of these things, with a great deal of flair for people and personnel work. Oh, I'm glad I never went to that job; that would have been a mistake if I'd have gone to Sacramento. But I'm still sorry that Ed Castagna didn't.

MINK

Did you ever meet James Gillis?

POWELL

The father?

MINK

Yes, the father.

POWELL

No, he died, when? Back in the teens, Jim. I guess I was in the sandpile.

MINK

Yes, that's right.

POWELL

Milton Ferguson succeeded him and then Mabel Gillis, the daughter. I think the high point--well, I know there were two high points in my relationship with Mabel Gillis. One was the conference in Sacramento in 1950, the centennial.

You were there, weren't you? Andy Horn was there and recorded a lot of the stuff. We had a tribute to the state library. Phil Townsend Hanna spoke in tribute to it. Idwal Jones spoke. That was a great meeting. Then we presented Mabel Gillis for the honorary doctorate here at UCLA. I'm glad we did it here, and I had the privilege of presenting her to President Sproul. We all gathered in my office, I remember, with Neal Harlow and Andy and Bob and a lot of other people. Maybe Bob Vosper was gone then, I don't know; was he still here? Yes, we got some pictures of that.

MINK

Is that all that you wish to say about Mrs. Gillis?

POWELL

Jim, don't marry her off, for God's sake, she was an old maid.

MINK

Yes, Miss Gillis.

POWELL

She was a formidable old maid, too. She could bite nails. She was really tough. No, it isn't all I've got to say, but it's all I will say. [laughter]

MINK

What about Richard Dillon?

POWELL

What about Dillon?

MINK

As an administrator. How do you think he's done?

POWELL

I don't think he has anything to administer, has he? The [Adolph] Sutro Library is really a joke. It's a creature, really, of Dillon's publicity. I was on a committee the governor or somebody appointed sometime back to study the future of the Sutro Library, when it was in the basement of the San Francisco Public Library, to find it a new home. I think Glen Dawson, John Henderson, and I

were the committee. I went up and spent part of a day in the basement of the San Francisco Public Library looking at what was called the Sutro Library, and I nearly threw up. It's really a junky, messy lot of culls. The best of it was their seventeenth-century English pamphlets and the Mexican pamphlets and broadsides. But its English literature and its genealogy were ridiculous. So I never took it seriously. I thought it should have been closed out. Of course, the Bancroft wanted its Mexican stuff; it would have probably been a good thing to box it all and take it over to the Bancroft and cream it off and junk the rest. But they made the deal with the University of San Francisco, and of course Dillon came along and he found it a perfect base from which to operate as a historian and a writer. I love Dick Dillon and he's a great guy and he's really productive and he's a great teacher (I brought him here to teach one summer); but as Sutro librarian, it's simply ridiculous--there isn't any! He has a beautiful sinecure. Any more questions?

MINK

Well, will you comment about Harold Hamill as an administrator?

POWELL

Well, I think here again Hamill stayed too long. He's an example of a city librarian who was fine in the beginning, but the place got big, and he found it harder and harder to keep in touch. The city became enormous. He was faced with a decaying central library, and he should have quit five years ago and gone over to USC, as he's done now in teaching, and let somebody else take the rap. The poor guy's taken nothing but rap: the parking lot, the obsolete building, and all of these problems which are really insoluble. It's a wretched building to work in. I know from having worked there off and on for a year. Every year in the library school, I took my students down to their open house. We'd come back afterwards and analyze the building. They thought it was the most dreadful public library structure and a difficult place to work in, to interrelate to the departments the way it's departmentalized. But to say this for Hamill, I found him always a man of great courage and integrity, and he always was on the side of the angels. When there was a dispute over censorship or anything else, Harold Hamill stood up and spoke. He had lots of guts. And in many of the controversies they had down there (some of which I joined him), he and John Henderson were brave and true men. Henderson was

the better administrator of the two, I think. Oh, I liked Hamill; I admire him in what he did. He was a good person, but he stayed too long.

MINK

About Ed Coman at Riverside--apparently Ed left Riverside under somewhat of a cloud, as far as I could gather, although this may not be true. I don't know. He certainly left before he was ready to retire. You were one who promoted Ed, and how do you feel that he lived up to your justifications as the first librarian for the Riverside campus?

POWELL

I think here again he didn't have the long haul in him. He had a short-haul performance. He did it, and he probably should have left even earlier. I don't know what the circumstances were under which he left, but I know for the job that was needed, in the beginning, he was the right person. I brought him there. You see, I served as vice-president of CLA under his presidency, and so I knew him for two or three years on the board, and I saw his capabilities when he was president. He was a good planner, a good organizer, and a good bookish person. He'd been eighteen years at Stanford. He was at a dead end, and he wanted another job. At the same time, Gordon Watkins, the new provost at Riverside, came to me and said, "I need a librarian." And right away I thought of Coman for several reasons: one, that he wanted another job; two, he was ready for another job, and three, he had a master's degree in economics, which was Gordon Watkins' field. He had his master's from Claremont, and he had business experience to mesh with Gordon Watkins, and this proved true. Those two were the only two people there in the beginning--the librarian and the provost. The original Riverside Library was in the old director's home of the experiment station. Ed put it all together. He planned the basic collection, he planned the building, he staffed and he integrated it with citrus, with Margaret Buvens, the citrus librarian. I don't know what happened latterly, Jim. I think probably the job became a little too big for him. I know he had a lot of success in the beginning, because Watkins used him as a faculty recruiter. Coman went around the country interviewing faculty--not librarians, faculty.

MINK

I didn't realize that. This is unusual for a librarian to be delegated authority of this nature.

POWELL

It is; but Watkins saw that Coman had this ability to evaluate and to establish rapport, which he'd gained at Stanford. He'd been a key person in the Graduate School of Business Administration at Stanford as a member of the faculty. And Watkins used him. So I would say he justified my faith in him up to "x" point. I don't know at which point "x" was located when it got beyond him. I think, by and large, his staff appointments were good. He seemed to take interest in staff. It's curious, I'll be at Riverside tomorrow. I'm speaking tomorrow night on an Extension Division program and on Wednesday at their 500,000th volume ceremony.

1.17. TAPE NUMBER: IX, Side Two (February 17, 1970)

POWELL

This is after about two months' vacation, isn't it?

MINK

Larry, you know I was mentioning, just before we turned the recorder on, that it seems to me that as I watched you, I think the question in my mind was-- and I know it was in the minds of others, because I've heard them say so--to what extent were you genuinely interested in your association with these people and to what extent were you basking, more or less, in their, you might say, glory, a question of reflected glory? To what extent did you cultivate the interest of these people to make brownie points with the administration and to what extent were you genuinely interested in these people as individuals? There's a question for you.

POWELL

Yes. Well, I don't think I've ever cultivated anyone that I didn't feel attracted to. An example is Irving Stone. He's a man I don't like, and I never have cultivated him. I never got his papers here; it was done by Andy Horn in my absence.

MINK

You never encouraged Andy Horn?

POWELL

I never encouraged him in any way. This is what Andy did as acting librarian. Of course, he brought lots of trouble to himself--to Andy and to the library.

MINK

What was it that you felt you didn't like about Irving Stone?

POWELL

He's a prick.

MINK

Well, besides that. [laughter]

POWELL

He's self-important, pompous, and essentially a journalist.

MINK

What is your estimate of his writing?

POWELL

Journalism. He's not a great writer. He's not even a good writer. I think he's a slick writer.

MINK

And yet Irving Stone in the depths of the Depression was making \$150 a week writing, while other literary people were starving.

POWELL

Well, I never cultivated writers for their earnings.

MINK

No, but isn't this some measure of his ability?

POWELL

Well, it's his ability certainly as a salesman. I first saw Irving Stone in about 1938 or 1939 when I happened to be walking by Mr. Goodwin's office, and I heard him having a dialog with Irving Stone.

MINK

Goodwin?

POWELL

Goodwin. Stone had come in to use the library, and Mr. Goodwin didn't know who the hell he was, and Stone blew up and he was giving Mr. Goodwin hell. He said, "Don't you know who I am? I wrote *Lust for Life*." Mr. Goodwin said, "Well, I'm afraid I haven't read it." And Stone was in a rage, and poor Mr. Goodwin--I eavesdropped deliberately; this fascinated me--just took a tongue-lashing from Irving Stone. I suppose that prejudiced me initially, the man's rudeness and crudeness. Of course, as writers, we all like to be known, and we're all hurt when people don't know us; but we control our feelings .

MINK

Well, you said a minute ago that he promoted, I suppose, his writing to a great extent. What author doesn't? You've promoted yours, for goodness sake.

POWELL

Yes, but I hope I did it in a subtler way than Stone. Stone, for example, got Majl Ewing down on him here in a big way, because Stone went to Ewing, who was chairman of the English department then, and said that he wanted to give a course, sponsored by the English department, on the biographical novel, which form he had invented. And Ewing blew up at that, of course. He said, "You didn't invent it at all; there are examples back through literature of the biographical novel," and simply that Stone had exploited it. And Stone wanted the library to put on a major exhibition of his work as the first biographical novelist.

MINK

And at this time you were University Librarian.

POWELL

I was librarian, and Ewing said, "If you put in such an exhibit, Larry, I'll come around with an ax and smash all the cases." He was absolutely livid with rage at Stone's presumption. No, Jim, I don't think that's true, that I ever cultivated anybody deliberately. I pursued them because I wanted their material, and I believed that we gave something for it. We served them-- Miller, for example. You couldn't bask in Miller's reputation at the time we were pursuing him, because it was so bad; it was running a risk all the time.

MINK

But then again wasn't that really more Andy Horn in the beginning than it was you?

POWELL

Good Lord, no; Andy'd never heard of Henry Miller.

MINK

No?

POWELL

No, of course not, Jim; Miller came to me in 1940.

MINK

Is that the first time you ever met him?

POWELL

Sure. He walked in the order department in 1940. He was sent to me by James Laughlin of New Directions. And we started serving him; I served him all through those war years when he lived in Beverly Glen.

MINK

You wrote about this in your book.

POWELL

Yes.

MINK

You would bring books home to him and take them back to the library.

POWELL

Sure. No, I introduced Andy to Miller; he'd never heard of Miller. In fact, Andy Horn had never read a modern book. He didn't know what poetry was. He was just a goddamned history Ph.D. here and was the most illiterate of all the graduates. He had no familiarity at all with modern literature. Neal Harlow had more, but he didn't have much. They were historians; their interest was history; mine was literature.

MINK

Were they interested in the idea of getting Miller's papers, or was Horn turned off by the idea of having them?

POWELL

No, I don't think Andy ever was turned off by any opportunity to get a collection of documentary material here. He was passionately interested in the amassing and arrangement and organizing of source material, and whether it was literature or theology it didn't really matter to him. Andy was more interested in the technique and procedure than in content, which has its good points. You aren't blinded then, and you aren't distracted by stopping to read. But Neal was the first one that became interested, and I took Neal with me up to Big Sur to record Miller. It was when Neal was head of Special Collections.

MINK

What were you going to record? Autobiographical material?

POWELL

Reading the works of Lawrence Durrell; I wanted to bring the two together.

MINK

Was the idea to read the works of Durrell and to interpret them?

POWELL

Yes--to talk about his friendship with Durrell. Of course, it was a great flop initially, because we got up at Miller's house and found they had no electricity.

MINK

This was before the time of battery recorders.

POWELL

Yes. We had that Lear wire recorder and no juice! So we packed up in the car and drove up to Big Sur Lodge. We rented a cabin and plugged it in there, and Miller made his first recording, reading Durrell's poem, "Alexandria," as I remember. I don't know, would they still have that?

MINK

I believe we do.

POWELL

Well, at any rate, he was an early one. And then another of the very first writers was Richard Aldington. And here again, I was interested in him as a writer. I'd read *Death of a Hero* and *All Men are Enemies*, all of his works on D. H. Lawrence. I was terribly interested in him as a writer, and then when I met him as a man, and his wife and daughter, I liked him. We had a personal friendship that lasted until he died, in 1962, I guess. So, most of these writers that I've gotten down here--Huxley, Harold Lamb, Guy Endore, Frieda Lawrence, Henry Miller, Bill Everson, Judy Vanderveer, Ray Bradbury, Kenneth Rexroth, Idwal Jones, Harvey and Erna Fergusson, Haniel Long, Frank Dobie--were men and women that I liked personally. And I didn't deliberately cultivate them to bask in the glory of it.

MINK

Did you ever hear anyone criticize you for this before?

POWELL

No, I never have, and if I had heard it, it wouldn't have affected me one way or another, because I never was affected by criticism; I have got too thick of a skin, Jim. I believed only in what reinforced what I was doing. This is a strength and a weakness, and it's a kind of a monstrous form of egotism I suppose-- "What I'm doing is right, and I'm going to do it, and I won't be diverted by criticism." So I never had any problem, really, of lying awake at night. It was a compulsion, you see, that moved me to do what I thought was right, come hell or high water, and I didn't care whether it was criticized, and I don't now. It wasn't a factor in my life and my work.

MINK

Well, there were a lot of people who said that you spent a lot of time running around chasing after people and not enough time minding the store (which I've been criticized for recently, too).

POWELL

Well, Vosper, too. This is always true; you do, I think, what's of greatest interest to you. I've found literature and literary associations that tied in with the library's programs always of great interest, and it was my way of minding the store.

MINK

Well, it's true, isn't it, that long before you ever became associated with the library in any way, you had pursued literary friendships and literary associations?

POWELL

Yes, through Jake.

MINK

Now this is one for your side.

POWELL

Thank you, Jim. Yes, through Jake. Jake was a great catalyst, bringing us together, and I've been writing about this. In a new chapter I've got coming out now on Idwal Jones, I point out that there was no bohemian center in Los Angeles the way there was in San Francisco at the Bohemian Club around Sutter Street, other than Jake's shop.

MINK

It was through Jake that you met Jones, of course.

POWELL

Yes, and Hanna, Carey McWilliams, Paul Jordan-Smith, and all the people that came in and out of Jake's shop; it was a real cultural center, Remsen Bird, Bishop Stevens, all the Huntington Library lawyers-- Clary Crotty, O'Melveny--

all those people used to come in and out of Jake's--Estelle Doheny. So, blame Jake; I think he's the one that seduced me in the literary ways, and of course Ward, too; and it comes out in Ward's memoirs that I've just been reading: that it was he that really drew me into an interest in Jeffers and into D. H. Lawrence. All of these books were on Ward's shelf before they were on mine. These are the forces that helped shape me--Ward and Jake.

MINK

I was surprised that he didn't mention you more than he did. There were times when it would go for maybe pages and pages in which he wouldn't make any reference to you.

POWELL

Well, that's because he took me for granted and I him. We were part of each other's lives almost in a very basic sense and an obvious sense, so you didn't have to mention someone. That's the reason. We were always operating on each other as we are now. And yet in the course of what I've been saying over these weeks, I'm sure that I've gone a long time without mentioning Ritchie,

MINK

Oh, yes.

POWELL

But, I could come back to him time and again, as I have to him and to Jake as being key people in my life, certainly.

MINK

About Stone, to go back to Stone.

POWELL

Oh, Stone, haven't we finished with him?

MINK

Well, no, because. . .

POWELL

Am I unfair?

MINK

You left him in Goodwin's office. [laughter]

POWELL

Oh, God, Jim, don't let me disavow John Goodwin.

MINK

Did you feel sorry for him?

POWELL

I felt sorry for him.

MINK

I can imagine.

POWELL

Yes. Well, I did. I had a human feeling for Mr. Goodwin. He was gentle; I'd get mad at him sometimes, but essentially he was gentle and kind and awfully tolerant of me. He never fired me; I quit. He was good to me. I know it now; I didn't know it then. I don't know where Stone came back into the picture after I became librarian. I suppose he came charging in and wanted us to borrow stuff for him on interlibrary loan, and I turned him over to Esther Euler who served him heroically.

MINK

Well, the point I think is that, for better or for worse. Stone has made his mark on American literature, and not much is recorded I don't think about him personally. I imagine as time goes on there will be. I just wonder how it came about--I can't remember myself--that we did get his collection. You said it was sort of foisted on us in your absence, and Andy Horn was the one that was sucked in.

POWELL

I don't know how it actually was.

MINK

Is that the straight of it?

POWELL

Well, you would have to ask Andy, because I think it occurred while I was at Columbia in 1954. Andy was acting librarian. Andy was eager to develop the collections; he'd be head of Special Collections, and I think he saw a big whacking lot of material here. Stone, of course, made a deal that if he gave it to us, we would microfilm it. Then of course we were never able to do this--were we? --because of the sheer bulk of it.

MINK

No.

POWELL

He kept threatening to withdraw it, and Andy finally, I think, told him to take it and stuff it. But of course by then he didn't. Now, I was just talking the other day with Bob Vosper, and the Stone collection came up, and this whole matter of the new law which prevents authors from taking income-tax deduction for gifts of their own collection, and Bob said, "Well, this is really going to knock poor Stone out, because year after year he's been claiming enormous deductions for his continuing gifts." I don't know if he's been challenged.

MINK

Maybe we better go back to the beginning of that: do you remember that after the falling out with Stone over his collection, when he decided he wanted to give it to the university for sure, even though we hadn't lived up to the earlier terms that you laid down, the precise indexing, remember, that he wanted done, when we decided to take it on the terms that at that time appealed to him more, namely, large deductions, then he went to the Library of Congress, and he got a very fat evaluation from David Mearns, remember?

POWELL

I don't think I knew this, but I'm following.

MINK

At the time--I can't quote it--it was just an enormous sum.

POWELL

One hundred thousand dollars?

MINK

It must have been like \$100,000, I believe, and everyone was appalled at this, especially the people in the library, because they couldn't see that value in the collection. Meanwhile, he had given a swatch of material relating to his book, *Love Is Eternal*, to the Illinois Historical Society, isn't that correct?

POWELL

That was the Lincoln. . .

MINK

The Mary Todd Lincoln biography.

POWELL

Yes.

MINK

Whose interview is this, anyway? [laughter]

POWELL

Gosh, I'm enthralled.

MINK

You were here during all this time.

POWELL

Well, but it never got up to the rarefied level, or as you would say, I was probably chasing around the country somewhere. It was acted on farther down the line. I knew that there was unhappiness over our custodianship of this.

MINK

Well, why didn't you do something about it?

POWELL

[laughter] Well, you guys got yourselves into this; I thought you could sweat it out! I never asked him for his papers. He's a tremendous example of an American literary promoter, and he's made a great success of it.

MINK

Perhaps in the future he'll be studied in that way by people in English.

POWELL

Yes. This is important to document it. I never said burn the collection, [laughter] but I didn't always go after the collections, either. Now when Franz Werfel died, I called up Gustave Arlt, who was Werfel's translator, and I said, "We'd like those papers." And Arlt did all of the work on the Werfel collection,

MINK

You never knew Werfel personally?

POWELL

No, I never knew him.

MINK

It never occurred to you to go after his papers.

POWELL

Until he died. I just read it in the paper that he died and I called up Arlt and said, "Get them."

MINK

That's another interesting thing that you got a reputation for, too--isn't it?--for being the kiss of death?

POWELL

Oh, all librarian collectors get this, Jim, of reading the necrologies; yes, this is inevitable. But with Miller, for example, it hasn't worked that way. He was seventy-eight his last birthday, and is still going-- not strong, but going.

MINK

Now, another thing about Stone: would you say that it was a pretty true evaluation of him that he was a brain-picker? For he went out to get ideas. I've heard it said, for example, that he spent a lot of time in the reading rooms of the Huntington Library picking the brains of bright young Ph.D.'s, especially women to whom he was very charming, apparently. Maybe they were flattered by his reputation, perhaps, and also by his appearance, because he's not an ugly man.

POWELL

He's a handsome man.

MINK

And perhaps a lot of the ideas that came for his books actually came from young Ph.D.'s.

POWELL

I would think they were the incidental, lesser important ideas; I think he was fully capable of generating the major ideas. He was a skilled researcher, both in using materials and using people. I give him full credit, for that, Jim.

MINK

Would you say that he was a manipulator?

POWELL

Yes, but all researchers are. Good Lord, I've been manipulating my way around the state for two years now, getting material on this California book, but I've not gone to young Ph.D.'s. I've gone to the survivors of the authors that I was writing about, their descendants and their colleagues, getting oral reminiscences and leads to collections. That's what I've been doing. But I give Stone credit for certainly doing his fieldwork and his homework, too. He's a worker; there's no doubt about it. I just didn't like him personally, in the way, for example, that I liked Harold Lamb, the historical novelist. You remember him, Jim, that sweet. . .

MINK

Lamb was a very gentle man.

POWELL

Sweet, gentle, unassuming. He didn't promote his own work openly, and yet sooner or later you got around to talking about his work with him, because he was so passionately interested in it. I think he's just a beautiful example of the opposite end of the spectrum from Irving Stone. Lamb in his way was just as successful financially, I believe. His books were serialized and sold--Book-of-the-Month [Club], Literary Guild. I think he made lots out of them.

MINK

Some of them were screenplays.

POWELL

Screenplays. But he is a better writer than Stone. He has more craft and more style, and I think more historical integrity. I remember the time I took Robert Payne--and we ought to talk about Payne, the young English writer. I became interested in Payne, I think, as a poet. He published a good deal, and I have told the story somewhere of how he turned up in my office once in the forties--a very slight, diffident, unprepossessing young man with a broad English accent. And I didn't relate him to this writer Payne that I'd been reading. I'd been reading his anthology of Chinese poetry, *The White Pony*, translated into English. I was terribly impressed by it as being a very good anthology that Richard Aldington had put me onto. Payne then formed the habit of coming into my office in the late afternoons. He would sleep all day and work all night. He used to get up in the middle of the afternoon, bring two suitcases full of return books back to UCLA and take out two full suitcases of charge-outs. He'd come into my office about four-thirty or five when the secretarial staff were leaving, and he and I would talk generally until six o'clock. Of course, he was a prodigious writer and researcher. I've written a chapter on him in one of my books, called "The Prolific Robert Payne."

MINK

Well, what would be the gist of these conversations, Larry?

POWELL

Books and writers and the books that he planned to do. They were always about him and his work; we didn't talk about me .

MINK

Yes? [laughter]

POWELL

But I found what he was doing terribly interesting, because he was sooner or later going to write a book, biography or a critical study on every major figure in Western civilization, and he's well on the way to doing it. I remember once I said, "How many books have you written, Robert?" He said, "Well, I don't know; my mother's really the only one that's kept count. We could go out to the card catalog and see." So we went out to the catalog and checked his titles, and he was very pleased that we had them all. I think it came to sixty-three, and he was then only forty years old. And we recorded him. I think we, Neal and I, took the recorder over to the San Fernando Valley and recorded him in his home there. He was living with a woman who had a little baby, and the baby kept squalling all through the recording. Payne then found that I knew and was serving Harold Lamb. He said, "I'd like very much to meet Mr. Lamb and to see his library. I understand he has a good library on seventeenth-century English exploration." "Well," I said, "I think we can arrange this." So I did; and I took Robert Payne to Harold Lamb's home one afternoon, five o'clock or so, for tea. Ruth Lamb greeted us and served tea to us. Payne and Lamb were immediately compatible over the book collection. I talked with Mrs. Lamb and drank tea, and these two writers got into a furious conversation; you can never think of Harold Lamb as speaking furiously. He got excited when he talked about books. Payne wanted to see what Lamb had on early English descriptions of India, and Lamb had all the key books of travels and descriptions of the Indian empire in the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries. And there was one folio that interested Lamb and Payne in particular; it was [Jean de] Thevenot's *Travels in India*, translated into English, and Payne went through it very excitedly I think, looking at the pictures and leafing through it all. Well, good Lord, in another six months Payne came out with a novel called *Blood Royal*, which was an account of the moguls in the seventeenth century, based on Thevenot. And maybe he'd gotten the whole conception of this book--before he came, but certainly it crystallized in that hour or two we spent with Harold Lamb.

MINK

My immediate reaction was: what was Lamb's reaction to this? Was he excited, pleased, annoyed?

POWELL

When the thing came--no. Lamb was never annoyed; he was generous, and anybody that used his material or he could help, he was pleased. You know how he was, Jim; he was a real Christian, none of these wicked ulterior motives that you and I have so strongly. I liked the whole picture of writers at work using books; I think this is what always interested me and what I like to see and like to further and like to encourage and like to serve.

MINK

Maybe that's why you were not too pleased with Stone. Did you see him using a lot of the books in the library? Did you see him using the library so much for his writing?

POWELL

No, not really; he was using people in the library to do work for him.

MINK

He had research assistants. He didn't come himself and do the work.

POWELL

No, it was more of a machine operation. Payne, on the other hand, did it himself; he had no help; he credited himself with getting so much done because he had this work schedule that Paul Jordan-Smith has--sleep in the day and work at night. There's no interruption. It's a great thing if you can turn your life around this way. Those marvelous night hours, Jim, when the phone doesn't ring and when there's no distraction.

MINK

You've never been able to do this, have you?

POWELL

No, you can't combine it really with married life, with family life, or with a job, a daytime job-- all of these reasons. I work in the early morning; I get up at five to six. And those hours from five or six to eight, when I used to leave for work,

those were always great productive times for me. And in the early years I was up until ten or eleven at nighty but I always slept from either ten or eleven until five or six. Well, that brings in some of the writers that I wanted to talk about. The whole picture of writers in the Southwest is another story, and my travels in Arizona and New Mexico.

MINK

Well, that brings up a good question, in a way, maybe, of introducing the subject of the Southwestern people if we're going to talk about that for a while. It's been said, and I think I mentioned this to you off the tape, that it was thought--well, I think that maybe this is a product of how staff people react to a prolific librarian: Vosper doesn't publish much and people don't talk about him; you did, and they used to talk about it.

POWELL

Did they? I never knew it, Jim.

MINK

[laughter] You never knew it.

POWELL

Well, in the sense we can talk about it now.

MINK

No, but you know that everyone would say, "Well, why is Larry Powell on this Southwest kick? It's a big promotional scheme. He's writing about these people. He's writing about Willa Cather; he's talking about Willa Cather. He's talking about Frieda Lawrence; he's writing about Frieda Lawrence. He's really doing this, you know, to promote himself and, incidentally, the UCLA Library and possibly to promote the collecting of Southwest material." I remember at one point you said, "Oh, well, now our major collecting area is the entire Southwest, which would be in competition with a lot of other libraries, not only in this region but in the Southwest region itself."

POWELL

Yes, it was overly ambitious, wasn't it?

MINK

Do you feel so now in retrospect?

POWELL

Yes. It was overly ambitious. We didn't have the resources to do it in the sense that the Bancroft has or the Huntington.

MINK

The in-depth collecting that went on in the early part of this century and, incidentally, in the latter part of the nineteenth century in some cases.

POWELL

We started too late, and we didn't have the resources to compete. So what we did was hit the high points and some of the dramatic peaks and some of the contemporary literary archives that we were able to pick up. But it was a product of enthusiasm, and I suppose I just liked to travel, Jim, and I loved the country and the people that I met. Writing for *Arizona Highways* was always an excuse to travel, and the talks--I gave many talks in Arizona, New Mexico and Texas.

MINK

I'm not sure I can recall how it was that you first became associated with *Arizona Highways* and were asked to write for them.

POWELL

Well, it was this talk I gave in 1953, I think, to the Arizona Library Association, called, "This Dry and Wrinkled Land."

MINK

Yes, yes.

POWELL

Remember? Carlson, the editor of *Arizona Highways*, read it and said, "Will you write something for me on the theme of books in Arizona?" Then when I published something in *Southwest Review* on New Mexico, a travel piece on New Mexico, Carlson wrote and said, "Will you do a travel itinerary?" In other

words, everything I wrote for *Arizona Highways* was asked for by Carlson, and the bibliographies, both *Heart of the Southwest* and *Southwestern Century*, appeared in *Arizona Highways* as a result of Carlson's interest. The work on Martha Summerhayes--he asked me to go over her whole itinerary, taking the book with me, and write about how it looked today. Well, these had nothing whatsoever to do with administering the UCLA Library.

MINK

Yes, but *Books of the Southwest*, the bibliography, came out under the imprimatur of the UCLA Library, and Betty Rosenberg did most of the work on that, didn't she-- most of the editorial work?

POWELL

No, she did the makeup. I did most of the annotating, and she put it together. We were a natural team, and she did a great deal of leg work on all of my bibliographies .

MINK

Yes, but why that? I mean why that bibliography?

POWELL

Well, I'll tell you. *Westways*, that I'd been writing for since 1934, "Books of the West," which brought the literature to me every month, either from publishers or from *Westways'* office, and it became more and more difficult to find space in the magazine to cover everything. And Phil Hanna, the editor, and then Pat Manahan said, "We can't cover the whole literature, Larry; what we want you to do in your column is to write more about fewer books, the outstanding books." And I said, "Well, what can we do with all the other books that we should mention?" And she said, "That's your problem." So that's when I conceived the idea of a checklist that would cover all the things that we couldn't include in the magazine. And if you'll read back in my column in *Westways* when we announced this, I think we gave the reason for it and said, "We've run out of space in the magazine. Therefore, we're going to have a monthly checklist. Please send two dollars."

MINK

I remember that.

POWELL

That's the way it started; and I did it all in the first six months, I guess--the makeup and everything else. I think Everett Moore helped, and then Betty came in about that time. This was in 1957, I think, that we started it. Betty came in as my bibliographical assistant after the survey, remember, that Swank made. Naturally, we were looking for jobs for Betty, for her job description. She had to be given new assignments, and this was a natural one. So I put her name on the masthead--Betty 's. Have we talked about her in this series?

MINK

Some, I think.

POWELL

She was extraordinary, really, a powerhouse. She could do double work in half the time because of her energy and drive and her understanding. When I said, "Betty, I'm going to do a bibliography of 100 books on the Southwest, and I want to get 500 in here from which to make the selection, you go out and--here's the general area that we want to cover--pull in 500 books." And within twenty -four hours, the books would be on trucks in my office. Then I'd make the selection, but Betty was always great at rounding up the work to be done and presenting it. She was an indispensable person, really, for me and everything I did; with all her prejudices and her brusqueness, roughness, she was a rare person.

MINK

Well, another example of the Southwest kick are some of the broadsides that were done.

POWELL

Yes.

MINK

The Southwest Broadsides.

POWELL

That's a nice one, that Horgan.

MINK

What prompted that?

POWELL

Well, Jim, I always liked to keep the local printers busy doing something that was really outside of their commercial run, that is, taking a text and making a fine printing of it. This isn't benevolence on my part; they didn't need this, and they never made any money off of it, but it gave them an opportunity to do something special and creative and outside of the stream of their regular work. Cheney, Dahlstrom, Armitage, Ritchie, of course, Holmquist, Carl Hertzog, and then that final one that you pointed to up on the wall was Grabhorn.

MINK

What's the name of that one?

POWELL

That's Paul Horgan 's text, "The Land Is Still Supreme in Nueva Granada." It's an essay Horgan wrote in the *Southwest Review* about 1934, and it's a literary appreciation of the Southwest. And you know what Frank Dobie said about it when I sent it to Frank (I either saw him or he wrote to me), he blew up and he said, "Oh, it's just goddamned belletristic bullshit." [laughter] I never told Paul Horgan that. He would have really been hurt, because he and Dobie were nominally friends and colleagues, but Dobie couldn't stand fine writing. He hated fine writing, and that is a piece of fine writing. Horgan has written better than that in later years. But it appealed to me at the time. It was just a damn fool example of my non relevant enthusiasm, Jim--the whole series .

MINK

Non relevant enthusiasm! Well, it was related to this Southwest kick, and you haven't really repudiated [my charge] on this; is it through?

POWELL

Well, refute what?

MINK

Well, the fact that it was a "kick."

POWELL

Yes, well, all my whole career has been a kick, Jim. I have never done what was entirely relevant. I've done what I wanted to do and found ways of justifying it and felt morally righteous.

MINK

[laughter] That's a very good point.

POWELL

Yes, [laughter] sure a lot of it's been irrelevant, but that's my life.

MINK

Well, we said it's been irrelevant only because they had. . .

POWELL

Well, they are in an analytical and cold-blooded way-- that is, if an efficiency expert came in and had me do a time-and-motion study, I'd have been fired.

MINK

You probably would have come out on the low rung.

POWELL

Yes, that's right.

MINK

But what do you think the impact of these has been? I can't judge this, really; you probably can judge this better than anyone else. Well, they are probably very valuable for one thing, now. I suppose they sell as pieces of fine printing, ephemera; they have some value there.

POWELL

That's all. They have literary aesthetic value. I think, in Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, they would dramatize an interest in the literature of the author

that I've chosen. I think my work had much more impact in those states than it did in California. I was known on various levels in Arizona and New Mexico; I knew the governors of both states and the presidents of the university and a lot of the citizens that were interested in libraries. I could have made my career in either state anytime. I was given offers to come over and write my own ticket in both the University of New Mexico and the University of Arizona as a professor at large. And I think I enhanced an appreciation of literature and libraries in both states by my writing and speaking.

MINK

Well, the interviewer has to ask, why didn't you do it?

POWELL

Why did I do it?

MINK

Why didn't you do it? Why didn't you go to Arizona?

POWELL

Well, because, primarily, there was always the dream and the goal of a library school here. And there would not have been one then in those states, and it was a feeling that I had that this must be done in accordance with Mr. Dickson's challenge and command in 1944, "When are you going to get that school of the library open?" He died in 1956, and it wasn't done. That's probably, Jim, the key reason. It wasn't the administration of the library, because this could have been, and was carried on by others; but there was no one else at that time that would have or could have done the library school. It just wouldn't have been done. Nobody was thick-skinned enough to take the reversals and not know they'd been reversals. So I suppose that was the reason. And then, Jim, I loved UCLA. You know damn well; here I am. I couldn't leave it.

MINK

But on what basis would you make the claim that it had more impact. . . just because of what people have said to you by word of mouth?

POWELL

No, I think it's in the renewed collecting interest in both Arizona and New Mexico of their own materials. They felt the threat of UCLA.

MINK

Who particularly would you name as having twisted their tails to start collecting?

POWELL

I think University of Arizona, their special collections, which--remember, we sent Brooke [Whiting] over to its dedication. It's modeled more or less after our collection here. The Coronado Room in the University of New Mexico Library--the curator of it at one time came over here and looked into what we were doing. They published a guide to their special collections that was inspired by the one you did here. I think the state library in Phoenix looked again at its whole collecting program.

MINK

I was a little bit appalled to see, in visiting Santa Fe in 1966, that the state library there has a very poor Special Collections Department. It's locked behind these rather. . .

POWELL

Bronze cases, yes.

MINK

There's nothing; it's fluff. It's nothing that we would have, for example, in our Special Collections Department here. I was a little appalled.

POWELL

Well, it's window dressing. I saw it last summer, or summer before last. They have a new head of it, Bill . . .?

MINK

Farrington, is it?

POWELL

Yes. Farrington had Navajo jewelry on, and he was very ornamental.

MINK

Very ornamental.

POWELL

But, of course, I was pleased, because they were using my bibliographies as collecting guides, but this is not for source material; this is for the obvious. At any rate, another example, I think, would be the University of Texas. Harry Ransom, who has been their whirlwind chancellor, who has put them on the map in modern Anglo-American literature, has said to me, and he said publicly, that he got a great deal of his inspiration in starting the Humanities Research Center at Texas from what we'd done at UCLA.

MINK

Well, then you really lit a bomb [with your ideas on special collections].

POWELL

A bomb that blew us up! (And we'll be there next year, I think, in residence.) The idea, he said, he got from me. I visited there in 1954, when Harry Ransom was then head of the English department and head of the graduate division, dean of the graduate school. I met with him and we talked about Frank Dobie, who was there. What he had to back up this idea was what we never had here, unlimited means--millions and millions-- the oil money that could be used for capital improvement. This was a great creative stroke. Well, Jim, actually, to get a critical estimate of my impact, you'd have to talk to those blokes, wouldn't you? I know the *Arizona Librarian*, a year and a half ago — Alan Covey, editing it out of Phoenix, brought out an issue of the *Arizona Librarian* that was devoted to me, reprinted my writings on Arizona-New Mexico. And Patricia Paylore wrote an introduction to it which kind of summed up what I'd done for librarians in that state.

MINK

Incidentally, what's happened at the University of Arizona Library to Paylore and Ball, who really pioneered there. They seem to have been sort of edged out.

POWELL

Well, Phyllis Ball's still in special collections, but she's not a leader in a sense. She doesn't have a library degree and she doesn't have status. Patricia Paylore moved over into the Arid Lands Project, and she's acting director of it now, and she is in the School of Earth Sciences and has published a great deal. I've got her books here on the shelf, on deserts and on arid lands; so she actually moved out at a good time into a good project and has not been lost. I'm not in touch with what they're doing in the library. My great friend over there is the president of the university, Richard Harvill, and we see each other from time to time when he's over here and when I'm over there. But I don't see much of Bob Johnson, their librarian. Don Powell, the associate librarian is an old kinsman, a bibliographer that I respect. The change is basic, you see: Lawrence Powell's been edged out of this library, hasn't he?

MINK

No, not quite.

POWELL

Being the chief edger.

MINK

Not quite; they haven't kicked you out of the office yet.

POWELL

I had enough, and when people have had enough, and if they're lucky, they know it, and they remove themselves. And my career's been fortunate in this respect.

1.18. TAPE NUMBER: X, Side One (February 24, 1970)

MINK

Well, Larry, this morning, then, as I understand it, you have a little rebuttal to our last tape, right?

POWELL

I've been brooding, Jim, over the criticism you said the staff voiced. You heard staff criticism, and this is probably a cover-up for your own opinion. I think these are the things you thought, and you passed it off on to the staff, you so-

and-so. At any rate, I used to cultivate authors because I liked to bask in their radiated glory, and I'd made some points how I thought this mostly wasn't true, and I thought a little more about it, and I came up with a list of authors that I helped and whose materials I collected, who are absolutely unknown-- that is, it was just out of sheer philanthropy and great-heartedness on my part that I cultivated them, such as: Judy Vanderveer down in San Diego County, who had a small reputation, but certainly there was no glory attached to it; Jay Leyda, who became noted as the author of the *Melville Log* and the book on Emily Dickinson and the translations of Sergei Eisenstein and Moussorgsky. Well, Jay came into me as a special student, a GI student, and he wanted stack privileges, and we helped him, and these books came out of that. Kenneth Maclennan, who was a sugar tramp, an itinerant worker, who wrote to me for books, and I helped him and met him. He was an old Scot, and I got him to write an autobiography which we were never able to get published. Scott Greer, who was a fire watcher, and Henry Miller said, "Will you send him books up in Oregon?" And I did. He came after the war, then, and presented himself and his wife, and I got him a job on grounds as a gardener and put his wife to work at the loan desk. Remember Dorothy Greer? She had the most beautiful breasts. She was a lovely bulwark at the loan desk; her breastworks, you see, would keep back the multitude at the same time that it lured them forward. The Greers I helped. Now he went on to become a poet. He took his Ph.D. here in sociology; he's now a professor at Northwestern. Lawrence Durrell, when I collected him, was unknown really in this country. Henry Miller, Idwal Jones--I could go on, but have I made my point? Have I convinced you? No. The answer is no, because Jim, you're too old to be convinced; your mind closed early and I don't see any hope for you. Would you care to defend yourself?

MINK

Well, really, if you did this out of sheer philanthropy, there must have been some motive behind this. Now, did you think, "Ah-hah, these people perhaps will become known in the literary world and then you'll have an in on their manuscripts."

POWELL

Possibly; but, Jim, really, most of my. . .

MINK

That's a weak defense.

POWELL

Yes, well, but most of my activity was not consciously motivated. That is, I have told you I was compulsive, and I operated from sort of compulsive reflexes.

MINK

Well, you know, Larry, that all of the people-- not all, but a lot of people--in the East, what you might call the Eastern establishment, are real turned off by your philosophy of bringing books and people together. And I think that maybe they thought, as perhaps some of the staff here thought, maybe me, too. . .

POWELL

Go on, be the spokesman, Jim; be the spokesman.

MINK

. . .that this was sort of a put-on, that it was a way of. . .

POWELL

. . .getting attention and getting the limelight--of course!

MINK

You took the words out of my mouth.

POWELL

Yes, of course it was; but that isn't necessarily wrong. No, you aren't saying it was wrong; you're just saying that's the way it seemed.

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

I'm sure that's true. But to understand me and my motivations, you must realize that I had this very early commitment to literature--not to librarianship, but to literature. It came first, really; and throughout my whole life, I was interested in writers and in writing, and more in the belles lettres, of course, than in social sciences or in the sciences. And it was really why I went into library work, because I saw a chance to be identified with literature, reading, writing; administration and the technical aspects of librarianship always were secondary. Now this was a weakness in one sense, because my library programs sometimes were technically sloppy because I didn't know enough. I made wrong decisions at times simply through a lack of interest and knowledge. But there is that commitment to literature that led me to identify with writers, with authors, with bookmen-- never a real conscious motivation, but just as my way of life. I think that's how I would explain it. And at the same time there was another deep need to be recognized, which I've stressed in my autobiography and these remarks with you. I was an actor; I wanted the stage, and I exploited any number of ways of getting attention from childhood on-- bad boy in school, simply because it got attention. But this is my own self-analysis, and it's always self-justificatory. At any rate, it was based on a need to justify what I had done, and I haven't gotten over it, you see. This rebuttal is an exercise in self-justification. Now go on, give me hell.

MINK

Well, you said you had two points.

POWELL

Yes, all right. Point two: I didn't like what you referred to as the "Southwest kick." Kick seems to me to smack of a temporary fad or enthusiasm, and I resent that, Jim, because I think my motivation was deeper than that. It was. I saw the Southwest as a source of support for that library school. You asked me last week why I didn't take one of these offers from the other states, and I said because I wanted to stay here at UCLA and get the library school established. Well, I did a great deal of fieldwork in those states with the state associations. I spoke both in New Mexico and Arizona, and in Utah and in Nevada and in Texas and in Oklahoma--all those states--seeking support, seeking eventual students. And also, I waged a campaign to see if I could get support from WICHE (Western Interstate Compact on Higher Education),

remember, that allowed for neighboring states that didn't have graduate training programs to give support to California that did. And I thought that we could get support from these other states that didn't have library schools, namely New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, through WICHE to support a school at UCLA. So I met high officials; I met presidents of universities; I met governors in two of the states. Always, this was one of my motivations. Now this was more than a kick; this was a deliberate campaign to get support.

MINK

I don't think you mentioned this in the autobiography?

POWELL

Not at length. But what we did get was when I called the two regional conferences. One was here at UCLA in 1955, just before Regent Dickson died. He was there and the various officers of the university and representatives from library associations in Arizona and New Mexico, the university librarian. We were all ready to roll, you see; and then Regent Dickson died, and the compact on higher education, or whatever it was, said, "Put it on the shelf for five years." Well, then another thing in 1955, we arranged that Rockefeller Conference at Occidental. It was a meeting of the southern district of UCLA and the annual Oxy conference of the Southwest, remember that? You were there weren't you? Well, that was great. That produced the [UCLA Library] Occasional Papers, two editions of it. It brought Erna Fergusson and Glenn Dumke and what was his name from Sonora, the university librarian from Hermosillo, Fernando Pesqueira, and Don Powell and Patricia Paylore and Ed Castagna. Remember? That was a good conference, and it served notice on the region that we were going to get a school established. Of course, when we did, there was a let-down and a feeling on the part of some in both Arizona and New Mexico that the school wasn't serving them. And the main reason was that our entrance qualifications were too high. We found very few graduates of the Universities of Arizona and New Mexico that could qualify for UCLA's Graduate Division.

MINK

Surprising.

POWELL

Yes. Now this wasn't my fault; this was the standard of the Graduate Division. We couldn't lower it. We did get a few over, and we did make some placements. The medical librarian of Arizona, the acquisitions librarian of the medical library. . .

MINK

That's David Bishop.

POWELL

Dave Bishop and Miriam Miller are from here. We sent Alan Covey to President Durham at Tempe, and he became university librarian at Tempe, and Tom Harris, who's the acting university librarian at Tempe was one of our graduates. So we did a few things for the area. Then, damn it all, Jim, this "kick" included also the course I taught at UCLA for six years on Libraries and Literature of the Southwest. And we did a lot of proselytizing for the literature and the librarianship of those regions. I have the papers my students wrote for me. I think the best tribute that ever came out of these classes was that of Josephine Archuleta, who came over on a State of New Mexico Library Association Scholarship from Las Vegas. She was a native daughter, born in Los Alamos. Do you remember her, Jo Archuleta? Well, she took my course about the Southwest, this native New Mexican, and she said to me after it was all over, "Dean Powell, you opened my eyes to my native state. I never appreciated my heritage until I had this course." And then there were the books I did: *Heart of the Southwest*, *Southwestern Century*, and *Southwestern Book Trails*. Now, the best tribute I ever had to *Southwestern Book Trails*, the last book I did on the region, was when my publisher reported last year that high schools in New Mexico had ordered seventy copies for their students. This is what I like to think I've done, reached down below the intellectual level to the grass roots and reached kids.

MINK

Well, when a man goes out into a region, the region, in toto, at this level, doesn't open its arms totally. Weren't there people that were saying, "Who in the devil is this man Powell, coming out here and usurping our function, something we should be doing here?"

POWELL

Exactly.

MINK

Who was saying this?

POWELL

Well, Harold Bachelor at Tempe, the university librarian then. He was jealous, I think, or hostile, and there were others. I don't have their names offhand.

MINK

What was Bachelor saying?

POWELL

Oh, he was saying that, "Powell's running a predatory operation. He's going to take our books and our women and enslave them. " And I think they felt this in New Mexico somewhat, too.

MINK

At the University of New Mexico at Albuquerque?

POWELL

Yes--that UCLA was a predatory institution. And of course it was , in a sense. But I said back to them, "Well, look, you let all your stuff go to ruin here. You haven't had a collecting program of your modern writers." And I simply said, "if you aren't going to do it, I will." And when Haniel Long died in Santa Fe in 1956, I didn't take his library, which his son said we could have here. I suggested it be given to the university in Albuquerque. And it was! Erna Fergusson's papers--I said, "Erna, even if you wanted me to take these to UCLA, I wouldn't do it, they belong in your native state." And they are at Albuquerque. So here again, I didn't strip them of everything. (I haven't said anything about the women!) But I didn't take all their books or all their manuscripts. Jim, I think those are the points I wanted to make. Now you want to get on with this. [Tape turned off]

[Continuation of Tape X, Side One rerecorded June 25, 1970)]

MINK

For the rest of this session, I wonder if we could talk about the Southwest Broadsides. First of all, really, how did they come to be issued? In your little foreword to them, I quote here: "I do not recall what it was exactly that inspired this series." But maybe if you put on your thinking cap you might recall.

POWELL

Well, I might recall; but that doesn't necessarily mean I'll say, because this is, as you know, a sneaky interview, and I'm doing my best to cover tracks, and you're doing your best to uncover them. So let's say that I don't recall; but I'll make up a fairly likely story. First of all, I was interested in the literature of the Southwest. I was working in it and writing about it and speaking and plowing those fields. And at the same time, I had a long, friendly, professional connection with local printers. Part of my whole philosophy of collecting here and of librarianship was to support local industry. I liked to find, whenever possible, jobs for fine printers, the local ones that I'd grown up with. So they'd print for me Christmas keepsakes and Zamorano keepsakes, and I always had something going with Ritchie and Grant and Cheney and Saul. So it occurred to me that an interesting project would be to extract texts from some of my favorite Southwestern authors and give them to my favorite local printers and ask them to make broadsides that I could give to my friends, to give away. Now, I don't know where "broadsides" came in, why it was "broadsides." I think maybe Dick Hoffman, the printer, had something to do with this. At some occasion, maybe when I became librarian in 1944, he presented me with that beautiful broadside of Whitman's "Song of the Redwood Tree." I think that was just an act of friendship on his part, or recognition of my advance. And I framed it and hung it in my office. You remember, Jim? It's in Special Collections, isn't it? At any rate, I probably thought, "Here's an idea: to ask printers to do this."

MINK

It says--if we can believe what you write--

POWELL

You can't, you can't, Jim; but go ahead and read it.

MINK

[laughter] It says here in the foreword that, "it was a state of excitement which was engendered by a trip to Tucson in April of 1953, to attend a Southwest conference." And then later the Southwest Conference at Occidental triggered three books that you did on the Southwest. What about the circumstances of the trip to Tucson?

POWELL

Well, that's when I'd reread Comfort's *Apache* and Haniel Long's *Interlinear to Cabeza de Vaca* and Willa Cather's *Death Comes for the Archbishop*; and they sort of coalesced in a kind of visionary experience. It was like flying over the region in an airplane and seeing the whole configuration of landscape laid bare. I had a visionary experience. This is what literature has always been for me, with certain books affording a transcendent experience. And I think the whole concatenation of the reading and of Pima County in the spring with the paloverdes blooming, and the friendships I made there, and the whole idea of a return to Tucson, where I'd been in the 1920s with the Oxy baseball team--it all really conspired to, I think, turn me in this direction of a textual series.

MINK

Well, Larry, then you had also as University Librarian become very wealthy, and you were able to dig down in your pocket and to pay these printers to get these out.

POWELL

Well, I had more money then, and money is to spend. MINK: Well, what was your motive in spending all this money?

POWELL

Well, to get rid of it, Jim, because money's a burning thing in the pocket. [laughter] I didn't want my pockets all burned through. So I got it out. I've always spent freely all my life, even when I had nothing. We've always spent, not all that we earned--I'm speaking of Fay and me--because we were always thrifty in that we never spent more than we earned, but we spent a hell of a lot of what we earned. She was brought up in the same, generous, openhanded tradition. Not profligate, but openhanded. Hell, sure, I had come into a larger salary, and I was making more money from writing and speaking,

and so here was this opportunity to spend some. That isn't very mysterious, is it?

MINK

No. Then the first one, of course, does come from *Apache*. Could you talk a little about the first one?

POWELL

Well, it doesn't come from *Apache*, actually; it comes from reading Will Comfort.

MINK

It comes from reading Comfort and your experience with *Apache*.

POWELL

Well, you and I, remember, began to chase Comfort's manuscripts, and Jane, the daughter, found in the closet the things that her father had left at his death. We got those over here, and you got into that making of *Apache* and published a piece in *Manuscripts*. We were filling out our holdings of his works and in that little pamphlet called "The Yucca Story" we found this text, "A Man Is at His Best." And of course I chose that in a sense as expressing what I felt had happened to me-- that I'd come into a position in the 1940s, where I could be at my best, where I could lose a sense of self, not completely but more than I ever had before, because I felt I was doing the work the Lord had intended me to do. So that Comfort text, "A Man Is at His Best," seemed a natural. "It made their dreams come true in matter, and that is what our immortal souls are given flesh to perform. Each workman finds in his own way the secret of the force he represents." Well, I don't want to be too goddamn mystical, but. . .

MINK

This was the smallest of the broadsides, and that's very typical of the work that Cheney did.

POWELL

That's right.

MINK

Why did you select Cheney as the first printer? He just happened to be at the Clark?

POWELL

Well, he wasn't at the Clark then. He came later. He was over on La Cienega next to Jake's. I don't know why, Jim. He probably was the one with the least backlog of work, who would be able to do something.

MINK

Is there anything about the typography of this particular broadside that you wanted to mention?

POWELL

No, it's just a clean little piece of Cheney printing. On all these broadsides, it was entirely the work of the printers. I had nothing to do with the format or illustration or type or anything else. I simply gave them a text and said, "Get cracking, you bastards, and turn this out within five years," and that was all I did. Here's number two: Pat Paylore's *Up in Coconino County*. It was an editorial that I'd read in the *Arizona Librarian*, when she was president, I think, of the ASLA. This seemed to me a wonderful Whitmanesque sort of exhortation to librarian students to get off their asses and do something. This appealed to me. She's a kind of a missionary over there. She and Don Powell did so much to spread the word around Arizona, and I admired her and him--still do--and I just liked this editorial that I read in the *Arizona Librarian*. So I turned to Ritchie.

MINK

And I notice that you commented here on that, that you recognized in Pat Paylore a kindred spokesman of what you held to be library gospel.

POWELL

That's right. She was a proselyter and an exhorter of the natives in the same way that I decided to be over on this side of the river. The format of this is interesting because Ritchie asked his staff artist, Cas Duchow (who's still with the Ritchie press--very fine artist) to do something characteristic, so that the

initial U, I think, is taken from a Navajo blanket design. And that's a pinon tree that Cas drew from a photograph, I suppose. Both of these ideas were Ritchie's and Duchow' s; they weren't mine. But it's a very interesting kind of a long, skinny broadside--quite different, you see, from Will Cheney's. But it's clean and good, you see; it's not fancy and not overdone. That's Ritchie at his best.

MINK

It would be natural that Dobie would come in for some attention in this, because it was all part of that picture, and it seems to me at that time he was here. Was he not here at the Southwest Conference.

POWELL

Yes, I met him for the first time. He was coming in and out of here, and I met him through John Caughey, I think. John brought him to my office the first time. It was Frank's bibliography, *Guide to Life and Literature*, that had given me the lead to Comfort's *Apache* in that 1953 talk. So it was natural I picked some texts from Dobie. Actually, I guess three out of the twelve were by Frank Dobie.

MINK

And this third one is called "Two Kinds of People."

POWELL

Well, I'd come to that through the *Southwest Review*, the quarterly, an essay called "A Writer and His Region," a wonderful piece of writing; and this piece from it I think is just typical Dobie, typical Texas. Here again Grant Dahlstrom selected--I don't know where he got this drawing at the head of the cactus and the rocks and the desert. Maybe his staff artist did it. It's a drawing, certainly. But there again, it's a two-column sort of thing, and simple and beautiful, really, I'm pleased with that.

MINK

In your review of the broadside, you stated this essay of Dobie 's expressed much of what you had been thinking about--the literary regionalisms of the Southwest.

POWELL

You see, Jim, the whole damn thing was an exercise in self-discovery or recognition, wasn't it? I was picking things that seemed to speak for me. My own bias was operating in the things I picked. But why not? It seemed to me a perfectly natural and normal thing to do.

MINK

Here's a fourth one, by Haniel Long, another Southwestern writer, "When We Peer into the Colored Canyon."

POWELL

Well, it's not a broadside; it's a leaflet--a four-page, folded leaflet. It was done by Saul and Lillian Marks. I suppose when I saw it and realized that it wasn't a broadside but a leaflet, I must have thought, "Well, I'd better tell them this isn't what I wanted." But it's so beautiful, and you don't tell Saul and Lillian if you don't like what they've done; so I kept my large mouth shut and accepted it. It's a beautiful piece, really--the paper and that colored title made up of type ornaments and type, you see. That's really a beautiful thing. Well, Haniel Long was pleased with this. He was crazy about it. I was over at Santa Fe and took him the thing when it was finished, and he gobbled up most of the edition, actually. And this is the one that's the scarcest of all, or maybe the Harvey Fergusson's *Rivers* is the scarcest because so many were spoiled in the printing. But the Long is very scarce, and no copies, and people are always asking for it.

MINK

Would part of that be due to the fact that people collect Saul and Lillian Marks' typography? POTOLL: Yes, certainly it is; and then people are interested in Long. People are interested in Powell, strange as it may sound. [laughter] So between all those nuts, there was a run on it. All right, that's number four.

MINK

Number five is Mary Austin's "Paso Por Aqui."

POWELL

Yes, that's a beautiful piece that Gordon did.

MINK

Did you ask Gordon to do this, or did he just volunteer?

POWELL

I think both, probably.

MINK

Both. [laughter]

POWELL

Yes. He saw them coming out and he said, "I can do one." He had his handpress. He was then assistant librarian, and assistant librarians never have enough to do. So out of pity, to keep Gordon busy in his home hours, I gave him this excerpt from Mary Austin. I'd been over to El Morro, I think, in the autumn of 1953, when I was doing that piece for Fred Hodge's eighty-ninth birthday, and climbed the rock, and this excerpt from Mary Austin's essay certainly expressed some of the feeling I had when I was up on top of Inscription Rock.

MINK

You speak about the quality that Austin conveyed to you, the land's undying quality.

POWELL

It's certainly true. Oh, two summers ago, when we were going over to Santa Fe, we detoured down from Grants to visit Inscription Rock and climbed partway up; it came over me again--I hadn't been there for a dozen years--what a great religious shrine it is. And Mary Austin, in these two paragraphs, certainly caught it. Gordon here went to local and meaningful designs, because he took Acoma pottery, I think, for this marginal decoration, and Acoma is the next stop east of El Morro. If you hold the paper up to the light, you see we used Will Clark's watermarked paper. It's WAC, Jr., and there's his coat of arms. It's some of that surplus Clark paper that he'd had made in Holland, and which we'd been using up for years in various projects. So this was on Clark paper.

MINK

Next is the speech of Henry Fountain Ashurst in the United States Senate.

POWELL

What do I say about that? Jim, you'd better cue me.

MINK

Yes, This one, I think, comes--does it not?-- from your association or your meeting of Henry Fountain Ashurst.

POWELL

It came out of a review I wrote in *Westways* of speeches he made in the Senate, which were collected by Barry Goldwater and published. And I got a review copy at *Westways* and read this speech given in the United States Senate (June 15, 1935), in which he torpedoed Huey Long. It was the same kind of speech, really, in Long's senatorial career, I think, that Senator Aiken of Vermont made against Joe McCarthy. It was a kind of a turning point. For the first time, one of Huey Long's senatorial colleagues held him up to probing and ridicule. And this was a typical rhetorical shaft, or harpoon, that Ashurst let fly.

MINK

And you say in your review here that you read the speech at the height of the McCarthy uproar.

POWELL

That's right. I was teaching at Columbia then.

MINK

Naturally, your feeling about McCarthy went back again to your 1948 experience in California.

POWELL

You mean 1952.

MINK

When was it that you were up before the Un-American Activities Committee?

POWELL

The autumn of 1952. Well, I don't think that had anything to do with it. That was past, and McCarthy was certainly riding high then, but I figured somebody would shoot him down.

MINK

But didn't you sort of resent this whole line of inquiry?

POWELL

Yes, of course I did. There at Columbia I was following the hearings that were being broadcast over the *New York Times* station. I used to come home from teaching at Columbia and turn on my radio and hear the bastards, McCarthy and his ilk, and that wonderful attorney for the Army--Joe Welch, wasn't it, who was really disemboweling the McCarthy gang. It was a great turning point, certainly, in our political history. So I loved this Ashurst speech. Of course, it led to a meeting with Senator Ashurst. A really high point, I think, was calling on him in his apartment at the Wardman Park Sheraton Hotel in Washington, when he was living in retirement, and presenting this broadside to him.

MINK

What was he like?

POWELL

Oh, he was an old-fashioned, courtly gentleman of the old school--not in a frock coat, but elegantly dressed and beautifully groomed and all. I went up to his apartment and presented this; then we went down for lunch. It was a kind of a triumphal procession. Everywhere we went in the hotel everybody knew him. He couldn't get over his old habit of stopping to kiss babies and pretty women. [laughter] It was as though he were campaigning for reelection. He'd pass through and bow and shake hands and embrace. It was really a tremendous sort of a procession from the elevator to the dining room. I loved the old guy. This was a real tribute of homage that I made in this broadside. And, of course, Dick Hoffman really pulled out the stops, printing it in red, white, and blue, and finding that marvelous eagle.

MINK

Gordon Williams had a hand in this, I think. He was the one that located the type ornament, wasn't he?

POWELL

Gordon found that eagle, I guess, in an annual of nineteenth-century American typography. The American eagle has never been more gloriously portrayed. Later, I know, Ashurst framed this, and Senator Barry Goldwater had one framed, too. In his office (he told me) when I called on him once in Phoenix. And a number of libraries-- I remember at Tempe in the Arizona State University Library, the framed copy of this was hanging at the loan desk. It's a great speech in the American tradition of political oratory, and I'm very proud of having this in the series.

MINK

And then the last one that we're covering this morning is the one that I like best.

POWELL

Jim, I like them all best. You see, I agree with you; this is a wonderful statement.

MINK

I just like the statement in that.

POWELL

Well, it's gospel. It's just as much gospel for us here in public service as Pat Paylore 's is for fieldwork in librarianship. These are gospel statements. This I drew from Charlie Lummis' great report he made, called *Books in Harness*.

MINK

The 1906 report of Lummis.

POWELL

Is it? Yes. He printed that in *Out West*, and then it was separately printed. I used it in my teaching, and we framed it. It hangs still, I hope, in the library school upstairs. It's what we are here for. I say time and again that Lummis is one of our great librarians, and this kind of utterance certainly bears me out.

MINK

This became a keepsake, too, for a joint meeting of the Roxburghe (northern) and Zamorano (southern) book clubs, too.

POWELL

Oh, I'd forgotten that; but sure, it was printed by Lawton Kennedy of San Francisco, who's a member of Roxburghe, and I guess I took a whacking lot up of it. Now, here, again, it's a broadside but on a folded sheet, printed on one page only. But it's a damn dignified piece of printing, and of course it's characteristic Lawton Kennedy. You couldn't miss it. That's his style.

MINK

It's a beautiful type ornament.

POWELL

Type ornaments and variation of type sizes and kinds. It looks so easy, but when you come to do it, only a master can bring it off.

MINK

Did you actually send them to people who were really not within the library circle but just personal friends of yours?

POWELL

Yes. [Friends] in the Zamorano Club, particularly, and locally, and on the staff. Didn't you get a set of them, Jim?

MINK

I believe I did.

POWELL

Yes. You probably can't find it today, because you're really a very bad housekeeper, Jim. Probably you ought to go to library school some day and get a refresher course in library housekeeping. This is pot and kettle, isn't it? Look at my stuff around here. I'm messy, too. All geniuses are messy, Jim. That's why we get along so well together now.

1.19. TAPE NUMBER: X, Side Two (February 24, 1970)

MINK

We are continuing on side two with the Southwest Broadsides.

POWELL

That's *Bent's Fort*.

MINK

Which is number. . . ?

POWELL

David Lavender, it's number eight.

MINK

Number eight.

POWELL

I think I picked it because I'd just met Lavender. He was then teaching at Thacher School, and he came down to use the library. I looked into his books, I guess, and got interested in him, read his new book, *Bent's Fort*, which, as I say, is in the northeast corner of the Southwest. It's actually in Colorado. And I gave it to Merle Armitage to design. Well, he went wild as you can see. He did a leaflet, really--a great broadsheet, folded into these four pages and a characteristic Armitage design, a six-shooter, a buffalo, a covered wagon, a mountain range, a fort, a longhorn and an Indian head. In other words, he's got everything but the kitchen sink. He designed and drew these himself. He didn't print it, of course (he never was a printer); he got Gordon Holmquist, of Cole-Holmquist, to print it. It 's a lovely piece of prose about Bent's Fort and the Arkansas River. I went up the Arkansas River a couple years ago, driving west from Boston; I followed the Arkansas to where Mammoth Pass--not Mammoth, but the pass that goes over to Aspen. I was at Bent's Fort--what's left--there isn't anything left but a marker. And I think this is beautiful prose; it's about the Arkansas and about the coming out of the Rockies, Raton Pass. It's very characteristic Merle Armitage. If you know Merle's work, there he is with all his flamboyant, marvelous bold sense of design, and Merle had a great time doing it.

MINK

Your relations with Armitage have always been quite friendly, haven't they?

POWELL

They were more or less up to a point. Then we fell out when I printed a second ten-year report on the Clark and mentioned all the modern printers' collections that we were proud of there, and unfortunately I omitted Merle.

MINK

Oversight?

POWELL

Yes, it was just an oversight. It made him mad as hell, and he waged a rather vindictive campaign against me.

MINK

What did he do to get back at you?

POWELL

He got his friends to write and say, "We hear that the Clark Library no longer appreciates Merle Armitage and is selling his collection, and we would like to buy it." [laughter] It was a pure lie on Merle's part. It wasn't true of course. I had to write to all these bastards and pin their ears back, sending copies to Merle. I pointed out that I supported Merle as a fine printer long before they'd heard of him, most of them. Remember, we had the first exhibition of Merle's here in the UCLA Library about 1939.

MINK

One that you arranged?

POWELL

One that I arranged in that series that I did, and Merle knew very well we'd been a friend to him. But it was my fault; I shouldn't have left him out. We made it up. Well, at any rate, number nine is really fantastic and beautiful, because here again it's a leaflet and an illustrated leaflet, not a true broadside. But I'll read you what I say about it because it tells a story. On a flight home from Houston (I'd been speaking to the Friends of the Houston Public Library),

I stopped in El Paso to meet Carl Hertzog. This was about 1955. And I asked him to print a broadside.

MINK

Had you this in mind before?

POWELL

I wanted to meet him. I wanted him to print one because I knew his work; we'd collected it at the Clark.

MINK

This again would be a matter of having a representation of. . .

POWELL

A regional representation of printers as well as of texts.

MINK

There just weren't any printers, were there. In the Southwest--New Mexico and Arizona--who were capable of contributing to this series?

POWELL

No, there weren't any other than Carl Hertzog in El Paso. There weren't any in Arizona and New Mexico. And there still aren't, really.

MINK

That's sad.

POWELL

I know.

MINK

You would think that in that area there would be, you know, with all that beautiful scenery and the inspiration that you get just from being there that it would attract printers like flies.

POWELL

Well, they have to have some economic base, and the economic base is generally in the cities unless they have private means. The economic base for Hertzog in El Paso was Texas Western College; he was the college printer. He did all their official work, and then he did all the work for Tom Lea and Dobie. Well, at any rate, while on the ground in San Antonio an hour or two earlier, I'd stretched my legs by walking about the airport terminal, and a paperback edition of Dobie's *A Vaquero of the Brush Country* caught my eye. And reading it on the next leg of the flight, I alighted at El Paso with a trans Pecos excerpt in hand, and I took it right in and said to Carl Hertzog, "Here's what I want you to print." I marked it in the paperback and left it with him. And as I say, there are other reasons, involving the headwaters and points below of the Pecos, why I chose it, but there's not room enough here for me to elaborate thereon. Well, I'd made a reconnaissance of the Pecos River once going from the headwaters down to where it meets the Rio Grande, near Del Rio, and the whole thing was gathered up in my interest in this very interesting Southwestern river.

MINK

What fascinated you about it?

POWELL

Well, I don't know. I think I like to see a water course from its headwaters to its mouth, and there aren't many that you can follow all the way. I followed the Rio Grande a great deal of the way, but the Pecos River I followed all the way, from the headwaters way up at Cowles and clear on down to where it meets the Rio Grande about 1,800 miles, on one vacation trip. It's just sentimental attachment to a little stream that keeps going. At any rate, Hertzog did it, and he got El Paso's number-one artist, Jose Cisneros, who illustrated many of his works, a native New Mexican and native Mexican-American. He drew a map of the Pecos from Pecos Village down to the union with the Rio Grande at Langtry and put in the various places that are mentioned by Dobie in the passage, with a skull and with the shading and all.

MINK

This is the second time a skull appears in the series.

POWELL

Yes, there's a skull in Armitage and here in the Dobie--it was my second choice of a Dobie text. And I say with his usual drive for perfection, Hertzog printed the leaflet in several color combinations, and please don't ask him or me which state is which; I don't know which came first. This is in brown and red. He printed it in blue and red. He printed it in brown and blue, and we had all these variants.

MINK

Gee, I wish we had a copy of all of those.

POWELL

Oh, I think we do, damn it all, Jim.

MINK

We should have them.

POWELL

We should have them. If you don't in the envelope, Clark might still have them. At any rate, that was number nine. Well, number ten--we hadn't finished with the *Vaquero of the Brush Country*. There was another passage that I was fond of. It was on the Brush Country itself-- J. Frank Dobie 's catalog, really, of the flora that makes up the Brush Country. It's really a tour de force of prose involving botanical names and a feeling for the place; it's one of the great passages, sort of a virtuoso passage that Dobie wrote about the mesquite and all the other chaparral. I went back to Dahlstrom--don' t ask me why; maybe he called me up and said, "Got any more of this kind of work for me; I'd like to do another." So he did this. It's very simple. It's one broadsheet in two columns with a heading in green. The touch of green, of course, sets it off. And Dobie liked it very much. I sent him a good many of the copies, as I did of the earlier ones. Well, number eleven is the scarcest of all, and for the reason that although the colophon says 150 copies were printed, they never completed that many. The silkscreen printing of this bold design stumped these two student printers that were in Dick Hoffman's class.

MINK

Oh, you went to Dick Hoffman again,

POWELL

Yes, Hoffman did it because--well, I don't know why. Maybe he said, "I'm ready for another."

MINK

This would be his second.

POWELL

His second. And he turned it over to his two students in the class. One was a Mexican, Rafael Gonzales. . . "in the graphic arts laboratory of Los Angeles City College under the supervision of Richard Hoffman. The illustration, drawn and stencils handcut by Gonzales, was produced in five colors by the silk-screen process. There were a few copies on Italian handmade Umbria paper, the rest on Shadow Mold Cover."

MINK

What's this on, Larry?

POWELL

I think this is Shadow Mold Cover. [tape off] Well, it's another passage about the Pecos, and it's Harvey Fergusson. It's from his autobiography *Home in the West*. He grew up as a boy on the Rio Grande and summers fishing on the upper Pecos.

MINK

The other day did you mention when you first met Harvey Fergusson?

POWELL

No, I don't think so. I mentioned Erna, perhaps

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

I met Harvey for the first time in Berkeley, of course, where he has lived for the past twenty years. He lives on the upper floor of a two-flat house. It's an old redwood house that belonged to Phoebe Apperson Hearst--to Mama Hearst. Fergusson has the upper floor; he did then when I met him. He's old and ill and in a rest home now in Berkeley. He's very ill. I probably called on him for the first time, taking him up one of these broadsides. We had a great deal in common--talk of books, of New Mexico, of writing. And there again, we did some reference work for him; we were given a good screwing, I'm sorry to say, by George Hammond of the Bancroft Library.

MINK

How did that occur?

POWELL

Well, I made a speech in Albuquerque, along in 1954 or 1955, about Harvey Fergusson as a native New Mexican writer and author and as a prophet in his own country I was honoring. It's a talk I called "Books Determine." It was a speech to the Southwestern Library Association, the regional group, which met every two years, and it hit all the Albuquerque papers. They gave a front-page story on Harvey Fergusson hailed in his hometown and so on. It led to meeting Harvey, and he said he would be glad to have his journals preserved at UCLA. Earlier, his friend, Quail Hawkins of the Sather Gate Book Shop, had sent us the typescript of Harvey Fergusson's *Grant of Kingdom*, the book about the Maxwell land grant. We had it here at UCLA. All right. I expected then to get his journals. Well, George Hammond of the Bancroft Library apparently discovered Harvey Fergusson for the first time through my talk; he ought to have known of him because he's been at Albuquerque for many years, but. . .

MINK

Hammond also was dean of the graduate school at the University of New Mexico.

POWELL

But Fergusson was not a historian in that sense. He was a novelist, and he wrote *Rio Grande*, a book about the river valley. He wasn't one of George Hammond's kind of historians. Hammond had overlooked him, apparently.

MINK

Can I interject something here? Wasn't this about the time that the Bancroft began, in a sort of self-avowal, to say that they were going to be the repository of California and Southwestern belles lettres?

POWELL

Yes, it probably coincided with this, and I like to think that it was my needle in their side. They figured we'd better do this or UCLA will pull the rug.

MINK

Well, we were already doing it here, weren't we?

POWELL

Of course, we were, yes.

MINK

So what did George P. do?

POWELL

He zeroed in on Harvey Fergusson, and he said, "Well, you shouldn't give those journals down to UCLA; you'd better give them right here to the Bancroft. We'll keep them for you and you can look at them any time you want." Actually it was a better deal from Fergusson's point of view, I must admit. Harvey wrote me and said, "I'm doing this." Well, Powell, with his typical Christian charity, instead of fighting back at George Hammond, turned the other cheek. What did Powell do? He wrote to Hammond and said, "You ought to have this typescript that we have, *Grant of Kingdom*. We shouldn't divide Harvey Fergusson's collection. Therefore I'm withdrawing it from UCLA and sending it up to the Bancroft." And I did; we sent him *Grant of Kingdom*, and that cleaned us out of Harvey Fergusson. I'm not bitter about it; I'm amused.

MINK

I've always been amused at the Bancroft Library because it's always been such a one-way street with them.

POWELL

It still is. Maybe under Jim Hart it might be a little more relaxed.

MINK

I don't know. I think for example of the Waterman papers in Berkeley at the time that I was working in the Bancroft. The Waterman papers came to light because of Waterman's daughter, who, as I recall, was somewhat of an eccentric. I believe it was his daughter; I'm not absolutely certain of this. I think through John Barr Thompkins, it was discovered that she was beginning to burn and throw away the Waterman papers. Well, they jumped in, but again, the large share of the Waterman papers dealt with his cattle ranch and in the San Bernardino area. He was a Southern California man--one of the early people from Southern California to become governor of the state, you know.

POWELL

Yes, well, remember the Teague papers, too: that was the classic example and how we bled and died.

MINK

The Charles Collins Teague papers, yes.

POWELL

We bled and died.

MINK

And then the Robert Kenny papers, too.

POWELL

Kenny papers, yes. Well, this is what happens when you're the little brother. You never can catch up with big brother. You can try.

MINK

It's always sort of "him what has, gits."

POWELL

"Him what has, gits." Of course, we've operated on the same principle vis-a-vis Irvine, Santa Barbara, and Riverside. We're big brother and we've gotten in

ahead of them. My father's citrus papers, for example. Riverside would have liked very much to have, and in a sense they belong at Riverside; but we have them here and they stay here, because I want them here with my family papers. And who's to say where they're the most meaningful. I tried always to take the large regional view. It always gives you a good feeling when you know that you're being a Christian and not being a mean son of a bitch and fighting back; and you can afford to be a Christian a certain number of times, Jim, but don't overdo it. Here's number twelve.

MINK

That's the last in the series.

POWELL

That's the last.

MINK

Had you decided in the beginning that you were going to have twelve and that would be it, or did you decide at the end that you had enough?

POWELL

I think I ran out of gas. I ran out of printers-- the ones that I wanted them to do, and I didn't want to go back too many times, I'd gone back twice to Hoffman and to Dahlstrom. And after all, I had to pay for these.

MINK

I was going to ask you about that. How much did all this cost you?

POWELL

I don't know; I never dared add it up. They gave me good friendly prices.

MINK

But you can deduct it from your income tax.

POWELL

No, I don't think I could.

MINK

As gifts.

POWELL

But not to charitable institutions. They were gifts to friends, individuals very largely. No, it was simply an enthusiasm; it was a kick. It cost me money, but what better use. Well, at any rate we had to have the Grabhorns, one of the greatest of all the Western printers, and my contact with him was through David Magee, the San Francisco book seller who was close to them, did their bibliography--he and Heller. And I think I sent the text up to David and asked him if he'd get Grabhorn to print it, and he did. The text is out of Paul Horgan's essay, "Land of the Southwest," from the *Southwest Review*. And I think I told you a couple of weeks ago what Frank Dobie's comment on the prose was-- "belletristic bullshit." I'd never tell Paul; Paul would really be hurt. But it's fine writing; it's early Horgan (1933). But it was a good way to end: "For it's the land which is still supreme in Nueva Granada. From its rusty earth must grow the grasses for the range in which the red cows rove. When winter withdraws before the southern breath of spring...."

MINK

Dobie just didn't like it, I guess, because it was poetical.

POWELL

Yes, that's right, fine writing.

MINK

He was more down to earth.

POWELL

Yes, more gutsy. He and Horgan were personal friends, but Dobie was the stronger writer.

MINK

Well, which of the twelve do you fancy the most?

POWELL

Gee, I don't know, Jim. I don't know. I never thought of it that way. I don't know; I like them all. As an example of prose--I think maybe Mary Austin's "Inscription Rock" is the most moving.

MINK

What about the graphic design? That was Gordon Williams', and he is strictly an amateur and couldn't be said to be in competition with people like Grabhorn or Dahlstrom?

POWELL

No, but he really rose to it, I think, and did a beautiful simple broadside on a handpress. It was Gordon at his best.

MINK

So maybe that's your favorite.

POWELL

Perhaps. Fay and I, a year ago last fall after CLA in San Diego, drove over to Santa Fe and detoured down to Zuni and over to Inscription Rock. She'd never been there, and I wanted her to see it. I hadn't been there since 1953. It's not a national park; it's a national monument. They have a headquarters building and a museum and a ranger-naturalist, which was all new since I was first there. But the rock itself and the path to it and all is absolutely unchanged. We had a beautiful day there in October of '68. I did another piece which came out of that interest in Inscription Rock. John Slater, who is an electronics engineer at North American [Rockwell] in Downey had read my piece, or had seen that broadside, and he was doing of all things this book on El Mor, Inscription Rock, which is a book of all the known photographs and drawings of it and transcriptions that he brought together and had Saul and Lillian Marks print. He asked me if I'd write a foreword. I'd met Slater only once at a library affair out in Norwalk, and I said, "Yes, I will." I wrote this little foreword to it which referred to the Mary Austin-- the fact that she wanted her ashes there and that Fred Hodge's ashes were scattered near there. And I think this is one of the beautiful books Saul and Lillian ever did. Slater paid for it. It cost \$10,000 to print, and he sold it through Dawson's at \$30 a copy. There're still

copies left. But here again, it's an example of what enthusiasm will lead a man to do.

1.20. TAPE NUMBER: XI, Side One (March 10, 1970)

MINK

Well, this morning I had said that we would like to continue talking about your writing. We talked about the Southwest Broadsides, and you said that you had more to say about some of your writing that is not a matter of record and perhaps that we're really recording for the future and not for the present, and maybe this part is going to be sealed.

POWELL

Well, I was thinking of so-called creative writing, which I've tried to carry on all through my career and really never published. And I don't think I will publish anything in my lifetime. I'll probably leave a number of unpublished manuscripts. Now don't misunderstand me, Jim--this isn't pornographic writing; this isn't writing that can't be published because of its content, but it's just writing that probably isn't good enough because I've never been able to give my full time to it. I have done it clear out on another side--that is, a lot of my published writing was on the side of a working career, and the creative writing was outside of it on a very thin margin. I probably ought to set the record straight on it because inevitably it will come out that I've done writing of this kind: novels, long stories, because in my correspondence there will appear reference to it from Henry Miller, from Brother Antoninus (Bill Everson), from ones that were privy to it.

MINK

They saw the manuscripts?

POWELL

Yes, M. F. K. Fisher and others, Ritchie and Newell and Dr. Bieler, my closest friends and confidants that I shared with. So why don't I put it straight: what the hell I was trying to do and how it came about. Is that fair enough?

MINK

You said you didn't think it was good enough to publish. Was it because these confidants told you it wasn't, or because you're just so self-critical yourself?

POWELL

Both, I suppose; although the closest friends are never your best critics.

MINK

True.

POWELL

They tend to be carried away by your personal relationship to accept whatever you do somewhat uncritically.

MINK

Well, since none of us have ever seen this writing, except your closest confidants, it's very difficult for anyone to interview you about it. So you'll just have to say what you're willing to say.

POWELL

Well, Jim, I will give you leads, you see, as a good interviewee. I provide you with leads, you see, and you can pick up, because I don't want to make this a total monologue; I think an interview is much more interesting when it's dialogue. And that, remember, was our criticism of the Ritchie manuscript, that Liz [Dixon] didn't enter into it enough. I want to encourage you, Jim, to be yourself and to be expansive, not to be intimidated by my august presence, and to participate, even though it's not done very intelligently at times. [laughter] I'll attempt to coach you so that you appear at your best. After all, I want you to be remembered as a historical figure, as well as I. Now. The whole thing goes back to what we've called my compulsive nature--compulsion toward expression, toward recognition, toward achievement, toward influence, to all these things that have motivated and goosed me into doing what I've done.

MINK

Your unflagging ego.

POWELL

That's right; that's right. And the thick skin, the pachydermist investiture in which I'm encased. [laughter] Yes; and it is and it isn't. There's always the sensitive, shrinking, shy-violet type, down underneath, I think, although I've never gone really in deep enough to make sure; but it's probably there. But I don't really care much about it. It goes back to, I suppose, that *Marengo Literary Leader*, the writing of the Fu Manchu and the desire to write something that would be read.

MINK

Were you always intrigued by Gothic novels? Were those your favorites?

POWELL

No, just the period, I think, the Fu Manchu-type period. I never went on and never continued this, and I'm not a Gothic buff now, and never have been. No, that was just a phase. I think then another thing I've said about my career that you can't understand unless you take it in terms of the parallel dedication to literature-- that is, I've been interested in writers and I've been friends with writers and I've been interested in writers' writers. That is the whole problem of writing itself. I've read a lot of literary criticism, and I'm interested in the relationship of writing to living, to what writing does for a writer in the way of a safety valve--every man his own psychoanalyst. And in my case, I think, writing has been a great therapeutic device that's given me an outlet, when actual living itself of a total and a compulsive sort was not possible--that is, in an academic career you can't live your entire life; you've got to hedge it and to contain it within the bounds of propriety. You can go underground or you can go in the air as far as possible, but still, your life is circumscribed. Now, I suppose this was part of my affection for Henry Miller, a man who didn't recognize this, who denied this. He never twitted me or said, "Larry, why don't you give it all up and be a writer." No; because he's not that kind of a guy. But he led that kind of life-- he gave it all up--and I suppose, I had a sublimated experience in Henry. This is part of the secret of our friendship, I think. He represented a life that. . .

MINK

You envied?

POWELL

Not envied, but admired.

MINK

Admired.

POWELL

Yes, I admired it; I didn't envy it. If I really wanted to, I would have, and I could have.

MINK

Well, you said you read a lot of literary criticism; can you buttonhole any literary critics that influenced you most?

POWELL

I think maybe Cyril Connolly, the English critic, was very strong. I read *Horizon* all through the war when he founded and edited it--his essays on writing in there.

MINK

What most about these essays influenced you?

POWELL

Well, always style. I was always interested in the feeling for words, both for their sound and their meaning. I think the highest tribute I ever had paid me as a speaker was once in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where I spoke. A librarian from the grass roots came up afterwards and said, "I just want to tell you that you choose words simultaneously for their sound and their sense." "Of course," I said, "that's my whole aim, to make the sound and the sense coincide." Well, Connolly had a great deal to say about this and he also. . .

MINK

About sound and sense?

POWELL

Yes, about the marriage of sound and sense in style. I always wanted to write well, and I didn't write well many times because I was too hurried.

MINK

The thing that's been said, of course--and I think this is already in the tape--that your writing has always been so personalized.

POWELL

Well, in essays perhaps, not in bibliography. I think I did a lot of bibliographical writing. I did all the *Westways* reviewing. *The Books of the Southwest*. All that Southwestern and California bibliographical writing was in a sense. . .

MINK

No. What I'm trying to say is that a lot of your writing relates books to personal experiences and not past experiences, but experiences contemporary with the actual writing.

POWELL

Yes, and this is both a strength and a weakness. It can be rich and it can be thin, depending on how skillful you are or how deep an experience it was. Yes, I know--personal and also repetitive. You said that I often regurgitated and lived on my own guts until they were really lived up, and this is true. This is part of the problem of having to produce. I was under the compulsion to deliver a lot in the form of talks and contributions and essays, but. . .

MINK

Well, Bob [Vosper] doesn't seem to be under this compulsion; he seldom publishes at all.

POWELL

Well, sure, we're different. People are different, Jim.

MINK

Well, you were under personal compulsion; you weren't under pressure from the university or from your wife.

POWELL

No, no, but from an involvement in the profession, let's say, as a conference institute speaker, that kind of pressure--I mean, being asked to be on programs.

MINK

The more you're in demand, the more necessary it is to chew on your own guts?

POWELL

That's right. I was just thinking in my last year here before I retired in '66, I had a whole series of talks to give. And retired, there was Tokyo, there was Tulsa, there was Norman, there was Chattanooga, there was Santa Monica, and there was Chicago, and then in Europe there was Aberystwyth and London and Zagreb. Running through six months there, I had ten or fifteen talks to give.

MINK

You didn't have enough personal experiences in this period that you could relate to books. . .

POWELL

No, that isn't it; I just didn't have the time to refine it. It all came too fast. I've always used travel as a device and written a lot on travel.

MINK

Relation of experiences on travel to books.

POWELL

Books and reading.

MINK

That you read while traveling?

POWELL

Yes, that's right. Well, we're getting off the track.

MINK

No we're not. Where did you get this idea?

POWELL

I got it from my mother and father in my genes.

MINK

Oh, now wait a minute--what about Gertrude Powell's *The Quiet Side of Europe*?

POWELL

What about it? I got her to write it; it was my compulsion imposed on her, because she came back from Europe in 1934, pretty much at a loose end and pretty discouraged because her money had all been lost in the Depression. There were writing contests open in the *Atlantic Monthly*, and various periodicals were offering prizes for writings.

MINK

During the Depression years, yes.

POWELL

And I suggested to my mother that she recoup her fortune by entering one of these. Actually, I think I remember this only by aid of her journal recently. I went back to 1934 and found it. It was in that year, '34- '35, that under my urging, she went back to her journals and her family letters which she'd written to her brother and sister and wrote that manuscript, and I began to type it and revise it. And I don't know, the contest closed; we never made the deadline, and her fortunes improved a little when my brother and her brother's earning power was rising, and she didn't have that same compulsive need. But there it was. She wasn't a compulsive writer in the sense that I am in the need for recognition. She wrote every day. She wrote these copious journals, and she was a great letter writer. She wrote right up to the end, but she never thought of herself as a writer in the sense of ever being published. Yes, you asked me how I got this way--well, it came from this heritage, I suppose of my nature, my parents, my mother and father. We're what they combine to give us, aren't we? And this was my nature. All right. I was writing pieces then in grammar school and in high school, generally on assignment for class or for a newspaper or a periodical, and in college for the *Occidental* and

for the *Tawny Cat* and some of those things. And when I met Fay and fell in love with Fay, I was, I think, motivated to write poetry. I wrote quite a lot of poetry to her.

MINK

Ward also wrote poetry.

POWELL

He wrote better poetry than I did. He was a better writer than I was earlier. I'm a better writer now because I've stayed with it. He was a better writer earlier.

MINK

Well, maybe, while I think of it, we might as well get this in the record and get your reaction to it. Wilbur [Smith] read the Ritchie manuscript, and his major criticism of it--and I wondered if you found this true-- is that he finds the same thing in this manuscript that he finds in Ritchie's speeches and in his writings: not getting the facts straight, not getting the whole story in.

POWELL

He's diffuse; he tends to be diffuse.

MINK

Particularly about his recollections of the machinations of the Smith episode of Dorothy and his father and Sarah Bixby and the like; he really didn't tell it like it was .

POWELL

Well, maybe he told it the way he remembered it, which is like it was to him in his memory.

MINK

I don't know whether I should put that on the tape, or not.

POWELL

Well, why not? Ritchie would probably agree. It was the way I remember it, he'd say. But his writing tends to be diffuse because it's highly marginal in a very busy, full career.

MINK

Perhaps he has not enough time to organize his thoughts and put them down on paper the way they should be.

POWELL

That's right yes. That's why my writing's getting better now as I age, because I have more time to organize and to compose. Well, a lot of the poetry, I think, came out of MacIntyre and Stelter and those classes at Occidental in literature and a wide exposure to literature through MacIntyre and his reading which was worldwide, comparative, very eclectic, and stimulating.

MINK

And of course, Jeffers.

POWELL

And Jeffers. So, when it really began in earnest was that summer of 1930 in Paris after Fay had gone home and Ward and I were living together in the Crystal Hotel. And he'd go away in the daytime. I think he'd started work for Schmied, and I was alone. I'd go over to the Luxembourg Gardens and rent an iron chair from the crone. With a pad and a pencil I sat there, and for some reason mysterious--an inner necessity--I began to write a novel, my first novel. And it poured out, a daily flood. And at night, I'd read aloud to Ritchie; and he'd end up with maybe three quatrains of poetry, chiseled, refined and finished, and he'd read to me. And those poems of his, he printed later in that little book *XV Poems for the Heath Broom*, under the nom de plume, Peter Lum Quince, in 1934. And then he produced a couple more books. *The Year's at the Spring*, when he had this wonderful, moving love affair and wrote these beautiful poems, with the Paul Landacre flower illustrations; that's a lovely little book. Then he wrote *A Few More*. He wrote it for Marka when they were married.

MINK

Yes, I remember that one. Well, what about your novel, Larry?

POWELL

Well, what about it? I went on writing. . .

MINK

The plot?

POWELL

Plot? It was a college novel.

MINK

A college novel.

POWELL

A college novel.

MINK

Did you have Oxy in mind?

POWELL

Oxy in mind, and music. It was an attempt, I think, to understand myself in terms of a change from a very hectic and scrambled life as a dance musician (which I led all through those years) and a growing intellectual awakening through my teachers and a commitment, then, more toward literature and possibly teaching.

MINK

Certainly scholarship.

POWELL

Scholarship--going through to the doctorate. It was an attempt, I think, to understand these divergent pulls in me, because I could have, if I'd have decided to do it, stayed with music and made it. I would have had my own orchestra and I would have been successful.

MINK

You would have been another Benny Goodman?

POWELL

Yes. Well, maybe not that good a man, but I would have certainly had some kind of life. But I had too much mind. My mind had been awakened by my teachers and by my heritage, I suppose. This didn't satisfy me.

MINK

Did you finish the novel?

POWELL

Well. . .yes. I finished. . .

MINK

The way you hesitate makes me think you weren't satisfied with the way it wound up.

POWELL

No, I finished it in the sense that I was through with it, but it wasn't a finished book in that sense. I kept writing on a draft all down through the months and in Dijon. I used to read it aloud to the Fishers, to Alfred and Mary Frances, and to Ritchie when he came down visiting. It wasn't good at all, it was chaotic and rather formless. It wasn't stream of consciousness, but it was wooden, it was lifeless. But it was important that I keep doing it, and Fisher used to tell me, "For- get all your ideas of form and style and plot. Just write simply as though you were talking to me." He kept encouraging me to be simple and direct and not arty. I had to learn this. I finished a draft maybe in a year and then junked most of it. I think I've kept of that draft one chapter. Then I started again.

MINK

You mean you threw it away?

POWELL

Later, I threw away all but one chapter of that first draft.

MINK

All right, at the point you threw that away were you mad?

POWELL

No, no, not mad. I was just starting another draft, and I didn't feel I needed to keep it. That was probably it, but there was one chapter that. . .

MINK

Sometimes when we do writing at some point we will just get inwardly furious, and we'll just toss the whole thing into the fire.

POWELL

Oh, I'm too cool a customer, Jim, for that; I'm not an emotional type. I'm a cool customer. I would keep what I thought might be useful.

MINK

You keep assuring me of this.

POWELL

Yes, I keep assuring--not assuring myself, because I have my confidence, but assuring you. All right I kept the one chapter because I liked it. It was about the Arroyo Seco, about a little idyllic time with a young lady.

MINK

Oh?

POWELL

A walk, a walk, Jim. Don't carry yourself to the precipice and jump over! Just a walk, and probably a description of the wild flowers. What I was doing simultaneously was trying to find my own way, and at the same time I was full of a sort of nostalgic appreciation of Southern California as an environment. You see, I was far away. I'd left it. I'd never left it for that long before, and I was looking back at the seasons, at the weather, at the college.

MINK

Ritchie was, too.

POWELL

Yes.

MINK

He brings this out, I think, in his memoirs.

POWELL

Nostalgia. Well, this was very good because it gave some more meaning to my dissertation on Jeffers. I could see California; I could see the whole thing, as I've said, through the wrong end of the telescope. It was tiny and far away, but it was crystal clear. I had maps up on the wall, topographic quads of Monterey and San Luis Obispo County, and I had a long map of California. I had Jo Mora's map of the Monterey Peninsula, that pictorial map. So I was working simultaneously on the dissertation, which was criticism and biography, and not personal in any sense; but at nights, either in my room or at the cafe, I was working on this novel. I had the encouragement at the same time from Fisher who was writing *The Ghost in the Underblows*.

MINK

Right.

POWELL

It was a great period, Jim, and M. F. brings it out in her book, *The Gastronomical Me*; the chapter on Dijon beautifully catches that. I only touched on it in my autobiography in a chapter, but I didn't go into any of this in that book because it wasn't that kind of a book. All right, we finished the degree; we finished the second draft, and we were in Florence, I think, and by God, I started a third draft. MIKK: And you threw out the second?

POWELL

No, I kept the second draft. It was better than the first. I kept the whole second draft. No, I didn't; I threw out the first eight chapters, I think. I have the ninth on through to the end of the second draft, and then I started it all over again with Fisher's criticism in mind: keep it simple, keep it direct. And it was still a novel of the college. It was still a novel of the young man seeking his way between music and literature. And there was an older teacher in it, a woman in music, but actually she was modeled on my drama coach, Joyce Turner.

MINK

I'll be damned.

POWELL

Do you remember her?

MINK

No.

POWELL

She's married now to Jerome Weil, UCLA, a lawyer; Joyce Turner Weil her name is. She was a marvelous drama coach. I did several plays under her.

MINK

Was she anything like Evalyn Thomas?

POWELL

No, she was one of Evalyn Thomas's protégés. And the last time I saw her and her husband was when Evalyn Thomas died here in the Village. Jerry Weil was her executor; and they called me down to the apartment of Evalyn Thomas, there by Ralphs.

MINK

Oh, and that's where we got all of the Evalyn Thomas material.

POWELL

We picked up the stuff. That's right. I went down and there I saw Joyce Turner Weil for the first time in fifteen years. She was a beautiful young woman and then a beautiful older woman. Well, at any rate, she was in the back of my head as a kind of a model, not that I'd had any experience with her. I had no personal relationship with her. Our relationship at Occidental was entirely student-teacher and professional, but you have to have models. All right; so I had a wonderful spring then in Italy writing this novel. I telescoped the whole thing, and where it had taken me a couple of years to do two drafts, now, in two or three months, I did a whole manuscript, and I have it complete. It was written really at top speed, and I finished it about the time I got back to London in the summer of '33, and my God, I started a fourth draft. I started to rewrite it; I was stubborn as hell, Jim, a real mule.

MINK

You hadn't thrown out the third; you kept the third?

POWELL

I kept the third, part of the second, one chapter of the first, two or three pages of the fourth, but then I came back to the United States.

MINK

Two or three pages of the fourth--you threw all the rest of the fourth away?

POWELL

I didn't do more than that.

MINK

Oh, I see.

POWELL

I just started it. I kept it and then the whole draft of the third. I came back to this country, and then everything got very complicated, economically, emotionally. I re-met Fay, you see. All of these drafts weren't her; she wasn't in them at all; it wasn't our story. Whatever I wrote about her was in these poems, but we came back together and I . . .

MINK

She had married.

POWELL

She was married then, yes. We were living together at my brother's in Pasadena while we were trying to find a way for her to be free and arrange with her husband to release her, and it all worked out of course--miraculously, really. Well, I got fed up then with all these bloody drafts of a novel that were synthetic in a way, and they'd served their purpose. And lo and behold I started to write a version of kind of a story of Fay and me--what had happened to us, how we'd come together, how we'd separated, and how we'd come together again. So I wrote a short sort of a novella, or a long short story, or a short novel called *A Personal Record*. And I whacked it out there while living at my brother's. Fay hadn't come there yet; she was still in Hollywood. But I found it a great solace to be able to write and keep my

nerves under control trying to find our way in this troubled time, and I whacked this out in longhand and then I typed it. And it served a good purpose, but it was lousy writing, Jim. It was lousy; it really was. It was so bad that some years ago, when I'd done a longer version of it and a much better version of it, I junked this one.

MINK

You mean you threw it away.

POWELL

Yes. I not only threw it away, I shredded it to bits. I deliberately destroyed it because it was simply a working draft, really, for what came to be a fairly long novel of the same story. That is Fay's and my story and the real Oxy story--the way it was then without all the artifice of the older teacher and so on.

MINK

So this was really an autobiography in a sense; it really was .

POWELL

Yes, I should have kept it.

MINK

You should have kept it?

POWELL

I suppose I should, as an autobiographical document, because it was as close to the truth as I could make it without literary artifice. Well, at any rate, let's go on.

MINK

You threw the whole thing away?

POWELL

Yes. I threw the whole thing away.

MINK

That's too bad, Larry.

POWELL

But I think maybe there's a carbon somewhere. That's amusing, isn't it?

MINK

You think ?

POWELL

Yes, I think there is if he still kept it, and it happened this way: One of my great friends through all these troubles--Ritchie was one, and Newell--was Dr. Bieler.

MINK

Dr. Bieler, yes.

POWELL

He was practicing in Altadena, and I found myself absolutely flat broke at one point. I hadn't gone to work for Jake yet, and I needed money, I think, to go see Fay on, to buy gas for the car or something. So I went to Dr. Bieler and I said, "Will you lend me five dollars?" He said, "Lawrence, I'll never lend you any money. I'll give you five dollars or I'll barter five dollars. You give me something. What have you?" Well, I said, "The carbon copy of a story I've just written." He said, "All right, I'll buy it for five dollars." So I think maybe he has a carbon.

MINK

You never asked him for it back.

POWELL

No, but I think he's leaving us all his papers. This'll be a terribly interesting file because it's the longest correspondence that I have and that's been kept. It's from 1930-1970)--forty years. He said he kept everything and will bequeath it to me, and of course it'll come here. I think he has that carbon of *A Personal Record*. All right.

MINK

Are you going to require that that be restricted.

POWELL

I think definitely. I think these are something time'll have to deal with--all this writing.

MINK

You don't intend to do a records management job on it?

POWELL

Nah, I don't think so.

MINK

Please don't.

POWELL

No, I won't; I won't destroy anything, now. All right. Fay and I resolved our lives. We married in '34, and all the slow climb up began, and here's where it becomes personal. Oh, in the late thirties, when I started to work here in '38, I think February 1, 1938 was the real watershed time, because it was a secure job at \$135 a month and. . .

MINK

Went a long way then.

POWELL

Oh, God, it did, Jim. And I had a great burst of energy in reading and writing; it was mostly critical work. I was editing Fisher's *Ghost in the Underblows*, I was writing *Philosopher Pickett*, I was doing the John Fiske study.

MINK

Was it in this time also that you were appearing in a series of radio talks reviewing books?

POWELL

Yes, I was doing a lot of things like that, and Fay, I think, got fed up with all of this. I was writing lots of letters and carrying on. This was at home, always at night, and I think she scolded me once and said, "I thought you were going to

be a poet and a creative writer, and that was really one of my strong interests in you and hopes for you, but you don't write that any more and everything seems to be gone and lost. Why don't you go back to some of that?" Well, I suppose this led me to think, "What shall I go back to; what is it that I'll write?" I don't know how it came about, but I suppose that I moved up then to the next segment of experience that I hadn't written about. I'd done the college, and so I looked back to Europe and the years that we were separated. And I don't know what the model was for it, but I wrote a short novel called *Quintet*. It was five profiles of women that I had known in Europe--three American girls, one Swedish, one French, and one mixed blood. [laughter]

MINK

There weren't any of those girls from Occidental that Ritchie talks about in his manuscript that were visiting at the same time you were in Paris with Ritchie?

POWELL

No, those were casual and trivial and just really fun stuff. These were. . .

MINK

Serious encounters?

POWELL

Yes, serious encounters. I don't know, I thought, "I'll make it as simple as possible and as meaningful [as possible] ."

MINK

Larry, should I ask you were they physical encounters as well as mental encounters? How do you put it? [laughter]

POWELL

Well, Jim, don't be so bashful. They were. . .

MINK

Affairs?

POWELL

They were affairs. They were studies in male-female relationship, with a plan, a moral. You see, I was a moral writer. The moral--and I think this has been operative all through my later life--was that the more you ask and demand of the woman, the less apt you are to get everything. If you can persuade a woman to give on her own and not make demands on her, you get far more. All right. Music was still in it, you see--"quintet . " These were five pieces, and I intended them, to be to the novel, to a long prose piece, what the string quintet is to a symphony--short pieces, mood pieces, and with key signatures .

MINK

And you found five women who would fit this?

POWELL

Yes, that's right. A *passionato*, a *molto tranquillo*, a *lento*, and so on. So I wrote it in musical terms--*molto agitato*, first movement violent, violent sort of a slam-bang encounter, and then going through a whole sequence to a final episode, *andante sostenuto*, I suppose, absolutely relaxed and undemanding and unconsummated in the sense that there was no actual physical consummation in the last episode, but intended to be the most rich and satisfying of all. The moral there is that there are different ways to satisfaction and consummation other than necessarily the physical. And the moral was that in each episode the man attempted to put into practice what he'd learned from the one before. So it's pedagogical, you see.

MINK

It's interesting. Then when Fay read it she got mad .

POWELL

Jim, how perceptive you are!

MINK

Well, of course. She got jealous.

POWELL

Yes, but I suppose, I . . .

MINK

She asked for it.

POWELL

Yes, that's what I said. [laughter] That's what I said. Well, I said, "You wanted me to write something creative." "Yes," she said, "but I didn't mean this." Well, I said, "I didn't plan it; this is what came. When you're a writer, it erupts and you do it."

MINK

And she thought you were trying to get back at her for having chided you.

POWELL

I suppose this was it, and it led to misunderstanding. Well, the great encourager I had at this time, was none other than my Beverly Glen neighbor, Henry Miller.

MINK

Did he read it?

POWELL

Henry read it. Well, I wrote the goddamned thing about four times, over and over. And, Jim, I got records conscious by this time, and I've kept everything. I have all those drafts.

MINK

I thought perhaps Fay would have made you destroy them.

POWELL

No, Fay is never aggressive to that point. It hurt her, but she respected everything--my need--and so it never came to that.

MINK

And she got over this?

POWELL

I think so. Well, Henry was terribly encouraging, and along into one of the later drafts he sat down and wrote me about a four-page, single-spaced, typed

letter about the goddamned thing. Wonderful letter, Jim; it's a great letter. It's not in the Miller collection; I've never released it.

1.21. TAPE NUMBER: XI, Side Two (March 10, 1970)

MINK

Well, we're continuing then on side two this morning from where you left off before I turned the tape.

POWELL

Well, Henry's letter was enormously encouraging. Of course, I won't get it out and quote from it, but it meant a great deal to him (this book about Europe) and he said, "It's the very opposite of my writing. I brutalize women and you tenderize them." And we had some wonderful sessions about this. I put in trains and eating and European travel. And the train plays the key — Leit motif — in all these episodes, so that there's a train coming or going in each one. It opens with a trains it ends with a train--an arrival and a departure.

MINK

It's effective, yes.

POWELL

Yes, it's a good device, and I used it unconsciously, really. All right, this carried me up through 1941 or 1942. I think Fay stimulated me to do the next piece of writing. She said, "Well, this is well and good: you can write without much effort romantically about Europe because it's essentially romantic, but can you bring the same nostalgia and romance to a piece of domestic writing?" And it kind of challenged me in that sense. I tried to write her story and mine, and had not succeeded in that draft that I junked, and I thought, "I'll do two things: I'll take a local theme and bring it to life, and I'll also write something that will dignify or ennoble or do something for her, because I had great love for her and a great appreciation of all she'd done for me, and she was a wonderful young woman."

MINK

Perhaps subconsciously you felt that you had hurt her with the preceding piece. . .

POWELL

Yes, I owed this to her. All right, so I went back to the goddamned college again, Jim.

MINK

Oxy?

POWELL

Yes. I began, then, in '42 or '43--I suppose it was in '43 that I began it. At the time, my whole career was boiling up here, and I was about ready to resign and go to Northwestern and all. I began this college novel, and it came out very strong and good stuff. I carried it on in the autumn of '43, when I was working over in the war plant for my brother, a long eight-hour day and an hour's ride each way, but I still had enough juice left to work every night.

MINK

How was this novel differing from the preceding attempts?

POWELL

It's just closer to the truth, more autobiography, closer to the truth.

MINK

Still a musician, a literary. . .

POWELL

Yes, a musician going to literature, but it brings in wonderful portraits of Stelter, of MacIntyre and of Ritchie and Newell.

MINK

Bird?

POWELL

Yes--I called him Lamb, Prexy Lamb, just a passing touch of him, but it's. . .

MINK

Were you thinking of Harold Lamb at that point.

POWELL

No, I was just thinking of a wolf in lamb's clothing. I don't know; I was just punning. I carried that on until I began work at the Clark in the spring of '44 and then, gradually, it dried up. I typed it; I got out maybe a 300-page version and began then on the middle part, another part. But it dried up, stopped, because my whole career then began to absorb me, and there it sits. It's an unfinished, long college novel. But its the best thing--the best, the final version of all these efforts that's the closest to being good. It's still overwritten. If I picked it up, as I will eventually, I think and redid. . .

MINK

Do like Ronald Reagan says, "Cut the fat out of it."

POWELL

"Cut the fat out," cut out the hyperbole and the crap. Well, what else?

MINK

I've been thinking as you've been talking, could you ever bring yourself to write about the university here? I don't know of many that have, and I don't think of anyone who's done a really good novel based on UCLA.

POWELL

I don't know, Jim, I might. I don't know, but I'd probably have to be away from it, be in Europe looking back. On what basis? I can't write totally objectively; it has to be tied in personally to my own experience. I couldn't write an emotional love story about the university and my life here, because I never had any. I was never involved.

MINK

Yes, but does writing have to be related to your personal experience?

POWELL

Mine does in order to come to life.

MINK

In other words, you could not do creative writing unless it was related to your own personal experience. You could not impose an imagined experience upon a setting and. . .

POWELL

No, no, I don't have that gift, I'm afraid. That gift wasn't given me. Otherwise I would be a successful novelist now. I have that limitation and I know it. Unless I feel the old fire burning my guts and remembering how I was lit up at one time, my writing is dead. It just doesn't come to life. All right. I'm not through yet, Jim; I've got more to say. I wrote one more short novel along in the forties based on an experience I had which didn't relate to the campus. It was off-campus. It was an emotional experience which didn't change my life, but it might have. Here again. Fay has always been an equalizer and has enabled me, I think, to keep my balance, and she's very important this way. But I suffered a lot, and I couldn't reconcile it until I was able to write it. And then in the forties I did another short novel that purged me and refined my emotions and got everything under control, and it's a novel of Beverly Glen and the Santa Monicas. A lot of good setting in it, local setting and characters; and it's really buried. Very few people have read it.

MINK

You don't want to talk about the experience that triggered it?

POWELL

No, I don't think so. I'd rather it just be a converted; I'd rather it just be known for what I made of it.

MINK

Oh, so that when the manuscript is seen, it will be clear from this interview exactly what happened.

POWELL

Well, if it's ever seen. I don't. . .

MINK

. . .know that you're going to leave it.

POWELL

Well, I don't know what terms I'll come to finally. I won't destroy it, but I don't know that I want it read. I don't have any illusions of my own worth as a creative writer. I think they might be historically interesting some time in any study of my career and me. They would be documents, and I'd leave them with that in mind. All right. Let's see, where are we?

MINK

You're in the forties.

POWELL

The fifties--nothing. I didn't write anything. The damnedest thing happened when I retired here on June 30, 1966, and I had six weeks left to teach in the summer session upstairs. Andy was the dean; I was simply a summer session professor.

MINK

You were an appendage.

POWELL

I was an appendage.

MINK

A lame duck.

POWELL

A lame duck, quacking once a day, ten to eleven o'clock every morning for six weeks.

MINK

That course was. . .?

POWELL

It was the Introduction. Just the one course. The other summer sessions I taught two courses; this last summer session I taught the one. All right, what did I do? I went into my files and I dug out that European novelette, *The*

Quintet, which I came later to call *The Music of the Body*. I took the damn thing over to the Faculty Center with me every day after my eleven o'clock class, and I sat down in the lounge before lunch and then after lunch; and I rewrote the whole thing during this six-weeks summer session.

MINK

What made you do that?

POWELL

I don't know. It was, I think, a great release, a great burst of energy and release of having won my freedom.

MINK

Relief?

POWELL

Relief and release from the administration. Andy was the dean, Vosper was the librarian, I was phasing out as a teacher, and I was doing what I originally set out to do--be a writer. It was really a symbolical act, you see. It had high symbolical meaning to me to do this. I didn't think this out; this just came. It was almost an unconscious [thing]. Well, I rewrote it in longhand, and then here in this study, I typed it.

MINK

In your office here?

POWELL

Yes. And then Bill Targ, my publisher at World that had done three books, knowing about some of the writing I'd done, he'd been anxious to see something; so I sent him this typescript, and he didn't like it at all. No. He said, "it's monotonous. It has no tension, it's mono-key, it doesn't have the gutsy tension of a proper novel." "Exactly," I said to myself, "I wrote it as a musical exercise not as a gutty tense novel." So actually his criticism validated my own intention, but he was disappointed in it.

MINK

Who was this?

POWELL

William Targ, who was editor at World, and when Times-Mirror bought World, he got out.

MINK

Yes, a good thing.

POWELL

He went to Putnam; he became their chief editor, where he is now. I talked to Henry Miller about this, I guess, before I went to Europe, and he said, "Well, if you ever publish this, you use my letter as an introduction. It'll be the best damn foreword I ever wrote to any book." And of course, it could be published just on the strength of Miller's introduction, now, because of his reputation. It's one of the longest things he's ever written about any book. But I don't want to do it, I think, Jim.

MINK

I think maybe this is where you are sensitive, and I think anybody is sensitive about the things they do.

POWELL

Yes, I don't want to be kicked around for my failures. I can kick myself around; that's fine. The other thing is I have enough recognition for other work, you see. If I weren't achieving recognition through my other writing and my other work, I'd probably be driven to do this.

MINK

Now, what you're really thinking is, "If I do this, people will read it and say, 'What is this guy Powell? What business does he have now doing this sort of. . . ?'"

POWELL

Yes, second-rate emotional. . .

MINK

Well, yes, but how do you know it's second-rate? You never know. A lot of writing that was considered to be second-rate when it was done is considered to be classical today.

POWELL

Well, one other person I showed this European novelette to was Frank Dobie.

MINK

What did Dobie say about it?

POWELL

Well, he said, "it has life, it has vitality." He said, "That's the main thing. All the writer workshops in the world can't put life into a writing." He said, "It has great breadth of life in it, no matter how imperfect it is in other ways." He was enthusiastic.

MINK

When did you show it to him?

POWELL

Oh, back in the fifties, when he was out here. We talked a lot. He was much interested in the conversion of emotional experience into literature. He's done some that's never been published, and we had a lot of frank talks about it, that's how it came up. I said, "Well, I've done something; would you like to read it?"

MINK

What do you think of Dobie as a writer?

POWELL

Oh, I think he's a great writer; he's a great writer, really, the way he's converted his experience and gone on beyond it. MINK: What do you think makes his writing great?

POWELL

Vitality, I think, and a sense of life.

MINK

Isn't it the regionalism, a feeling for the region?

POWELL

Yes, a feeling for the region, but his region is very wide; it's not just Texas.

MINK

Yes, well, it's the Southwest.

POWELL

Yes. Well, then I came to one more. When I was at Wesleyan two years ago, I was teaching a course in the English department on Southwestern literature, and I set my boys--four students who were all senior students-- to work on their final project, which was to write a story or a poem or something creative, using what we'd covered in the course in the way of literature of the Southwest and of their own knowledge of the region, if any (none of them had been out here more than on casual visits), and we would have final meetings of the class when we would read what we'd written. Then I thought it over after I'd given the assignment: I said, "Well, I'd better do something, too." So all the time I was there at Wesleyan, I wrote a story of the Southwest in terms of the struggle between Arizona and California for the water of the Colorado River, and in terms of hero and heroine. I'd long been interested in the whole water thing and dams on the river and so on, and had been over many times; and I had some types to work with, some characters. It's probably the most objective thing I've done because it isn't based necessarily on personal experience. So I shook them up at the last meeting when I brought in my own exercise and said, "Look, you little bastards; you hear this and grade me." And I read it to them, and it had quite an impact. We had a great time, really — these four great kids that I had, all totally different student backgrounds. It was a wonderful experience, Jim, to have, there at Wesleyan in '68, and all the rest of my time I was free to write. I was beginning the California book; I wrote four or five chapters of it there. Well, that's it; that's my so-called creative writing up to date. I don't know what I'll do next, but inevitably I will go on writing, whether I go back and redo or do something new or both is immaterial really. You don't plan these things out; they erupt and well up in you, and you deal with them as best you can. But, you see, it goes back to my

original intention--that is, to be a writer, not a librarian. The librarian kick was a thirty-year detour. I'm really ending up what I wanted originally to be--a writer.

1.22. TAPE NUMBER: XII, Side One (April 23, 1970)

MINK

In the interviews that are now coming up we'll be talking about the UCLA School of Library Service and your tenure as dean. And there was, as you know (for the record) a tape recording done by Norman Handelsman, who was doing an oral history internship in the library school in 1962. He was doing the '61-'62 class, I believe, under Elizabeth Dixon. Now, this interview is in the oral history collection--you have read it; I have read it--it covers, in general, the background of the school leading up to its founding, and some on the first classes, on the problem of accreditation. And I don't believe there is too much discussion, if any, of the selection of the faculty. This morning I would like to talk about that, and I'd like you to respond to the point that was raised by the ALA Accreditation Committee upon their visit here toward the end of the school year in 1962. They pointed out that on the core faculty there were too many Berkeley graduates--you, Andy [Horn], [Seymour] Lubetzky, Barbara Boyd, Tanya Keatinge, Betty Rosenberg, and then of course. . .

POWELL

Vosper?

MINK

Well, Vosper wasn't here at that. . .yes, he was here at that point, and was very shortly appointed professor. I wonder if you could respond to this. The idea would be here that you had a sort of an inner circle, and you certainly wanted to present a different style of library education which really, as I understand it, came about as a result of your objections to the type of education that was presented in the Berkeley Library School and in other schools around the country. Now, you had what you might call an inner circle here, and when ALA came and they saw this, they said, "Well, now, you've got to get with it and start bringing in people from other library schools." Now, Andy has been trying to do that, and now we find some people coming in,

some of whom are very good and some of whom he's not too happy about. What I'm wondering about is this mutual admiration society: is it critical of outside people or is it really better? Is the inner circle better, or is it critical of those who are coming in from outside, and unduly so?

POWELL

Oh, Jim, I don't know. I think the ALA was attaching too much importance to the library school background of instructors. I don't think the Berkeley Library School under Mitchell, Coulter, and Sisler ever had any copyright philosophy with which they indoctrinated their graduates. I think the personality of the instructors was what I was interested in, not the fact that they were from one library school. I don't think that matters. I think ALA'S criticism was that they just had to say something and they fastened on that. But the differences, for example, between Lubetzky, Horn, Powell, Barbara Boyd, Betty Rosenberg, Tanya Keatinge, for example--those were all Berkeley Library School beginners. Vosper, include him too--the differences of personality and style between these were enormous. It wasn't really a philosophical inner circle; it was an expedient inner circle--that is, here were the people that were possible to start with, without going through an enormous amount of nationwide screening. You simply couldn't have done that and got the thing open. In other words, it was expediency, Jim, really--not mutual admiration. We kicked each other around, for Christ's sake. So I think the criticism is irrelevant. I think your point is well taken now. I don't think you're ever irrelevant, Jim; don't misunderstand me. But I think ALA's was irrelevant. I never bothered to really answer it. I think when you have time to make a search and to make a selection, then you can do things that we couldn't do in the beginning. Andy just had the time. I don't think he, though, ever went about setting up different library schools and saying, "We'll get somebody from this and that school." No, he was looking for confidence, for personal ability to teach and research. I don't think it has very much to do with where you went to library school. I don't think library school was that important. And part of my idea was that it be made important. It should be an important year. It should be a critical year of indoctrination. But I don't think we have any single indoctrinating philosophy. I think we were a bunch of wild-eyed idealists in a sense, although we'd been pretty well seasoned in library work. I don't think the school now has any real inner circle kind of philosophy.

MINK

Well, you wouldn't think of taking someone, say, that had been in library work for three years, who maybe also had a Ph.D., and bring him in as a member of the faculty, would you?

POWELL

No, I wouldn't, I didn't. In fact, all of our original faculty were picked, really, on the basis of their success as librarians--and in some cases as teachers. I deliberately prepared myself for teaching by taking that assignment in the English department here, which was very good experience, and taking the semester at Columbia. Those were deliberate steps on my part, because I knew I needed teaching experience. I don't say it made me a good teacher, but it helped me teach, and when we opened the school I felt a confidence that I might not have had otherwise. Lubetzky had no teaching experience. I set up something to give me an insight into his ability. Although I knew him from back in the early years here, I still hadn't seen him operate in a public group. You see, I never ran with catalogers or classifiers, and so I missed all his work at the Library of Congress. So I set up a little project in 1958 or 1959, I guess. We had that Institute on Written Reporting at Santa Barbara. Remember? Didn't you go to it?

MINK

No, I didn't.

POWELL

You had to stay home and keep shop?

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

Well, at any rate, you remember it, and Betty Rosenberg edited the proceedings, that *Mean What You Say*, a [UCLA Library] Occasional Paper. I brought Lubetzky deliberately as a participant in that workshop, which is what it was, to see how he performed. It was my way of getting a line on his ability to operate before a group, both in formal presentation and then in discussion.

MINK

At this point he hadn't been asked if he would be interested in becoming a member of the faculty?

POWELL

I think he and I had talked about it as early as--the files would show; but it was Lubetzky who initiated it. When he saw an announcement or heard something that a library school was going to be here, he wrote to me from the Library of Congress and said he'd be interested in an appointment, whereupon I met him at midwinter, we talked some more about it. I invited him to be in this Santa Barbara workshop, and I was impressed with the way he performed. I also had my spies meet him at midwinter once and go into a meeting where he was with the classification group and give me a report from another source. These were secret spies of mine, Jim. I won't reveal their names to you. Actually, they weren't human. They were robots that we had operating at different centers. [laughter] So I got what's called "input" on Lubetzky. I was entirely satisfied that he would be a good teacher, although he'd never taught a class in his life, unless he'd been a TA at Berkeley. I don't know whether he had. I don't think he had. Who else? Mrs. Sayers, of course, we had no question about, because she'd been teaching for years. Andy had taught; Tanya Keatinge had not, but I'd seen enough of her in staff work here to know that she could deliver, and the same with Betty Rosenberg.

MINK

What about Barbara Boyd?

POWELL

Ah, there again, I got a line on Barbara Boyd-- in fact, I first became interested in her in another one of those institutes we had here under extension on library administration, remember, that we held over in Moore Hall. It was called "A New Look at Library Administration." I don't remember what Barbara's job was then; I think she was a field consultant in the state library. I invited her to be a--no, I didn't either. She was a participant in it. She wasn't on the program. She was in my discussion group. We broke up in discussion groups, and I was enormously impressed with her ability to operate in a group. She was a group leader and she was very good in what she said and how she

handled them. That interested me then in asking her to take the Public Library course. I had some other ideas of people to take that. Mind you, she wasn't--I don't think--the first choice. I think the first person I asked to fill that spot was Thelma Reid. Remember Thelma Reid who had been a field consultant at state library and then was city schools librarian of San Diego. And I knew her in CLA; I'd seen a lot of her in CLA work. I think I asked her and she backed away from the idea because we couldn't offer any tenure appointment. It would have been a lectureship. She wasn't interested in that. Then Page Ackerman had another idea of someone in public library work from North Carolina--Elaine something or other, who was public library consultant for the State Library Commission of North Carolina. I met with her at Midwinter and was impressed with her qualifications to teach public library work. But she really didn't express any interest in moving to Southern California. So in my way I went through some motions of recruiting and ended up with Barbara, who wasn't the last choice by any means. I think all these were going concurrently. And she pulled her weight. She was a Berkeley graduate of the same class as Vosper and Betty Rosenberg, but no three people could be more unlike than those three. What the hell has the library school got to do with it, Jim?

MINK

And yet she subsequently got the axe.

POWELL

Well, that was because she and Andy didn't get along.

MINK

You got along all right with her.

POWELL

Sure, I got along with everybody, Jim; you know me. Just a great good get-along-ing guy. I never fell out with anybody who played it my way. That's a joke.

MINK

Do you want to go into the matter of Barbara Boyd and why she was discharged?

POWELL

Well, really, Andy would be the one that would have to say that, because I think there was some kind of chemical disaffinity between them. They just didn't take to each other. And I don't know why. They'd have to answer that. She didn't like Andy and Andy didn't like her. There are probably reasons. I never paid much attention to it. It's kind of vague in my mind now. I wanted her to achieve more in the way of research and publication, and I set up projects for her. I think maybe I'm being unfair to Andy in saying it was personal antipathy. I think he saw her potentially unappointable to tenure, and he wanted to unload any members of the faculty that might prove embarrassing appointment-wise. Andy was always shrewder than I in seeing the weaknesses in people's appointability. Betty Rosenberg was a problem until we got her security of employment. I initiated that and secured that I think before I retired.

MINK

I'm not quite clear on this security of employment in an academic teaching situation as opposed to tenure.

POWELL

Well, it's the same thing, really. It's like the equivalent of a sabbatical leave, and it applies to senior lecturers. After a certain time they're reviewed by a committee of the senate, and even though they haven't the final qualifications of degree in research, by their service, by the quality of their service over X years, they're given this so-called security of employment. It's really the equivalent of tenure, Jim, without rank.

MINK

On this subject of tenure, did the fact that you could not give tenure to a lot of appointments, that you only had so many tenured positions on the table of organization, hamper your recruiting?

POWELL

I think it did, yes. I can't think of other specific cases, but I think it was the reason that Tanya Keatinge was operating here on leave-of-absence from the city schools. She wouldn't resign. She's a smart girl. She kept her position

there and finally went back to it, and that's when I got Chase Dane to come in on a double appointment. He maintained his position and yet he took-- it isn't ideal here for school library work, I think, to have such an appointment, but Dane was certainly a good person to fill it.

MINK

Well, you solved this question of tenure, of not being able to give tenure to a lot of people, did you not, by appointing people who wouldn't worry about whether or not they had tenure because they never could get it, people like Jo Tallman?

POWELL

Well, Betty Rosenberg in the beginning.

MINK

Why was the school so limited in the number of tenured appointments it could initially begin? It seems to me that this hampers a professional school from the very outset.

POWELL

Of course it does. And the school has been hampered from the outset by the restrictions and the limitations of the university organization. This is a sad thing in a way, and yet I can see its reason. It makes it terribly difficult to operate. I think it aged Andy enormously because he bore the brunt of it, and he still does. The feeling in the beginning that we weren't really a true graduate research discipline--the remark a gentleman on the faculty made to me when the library school was founded, "For God's sake, Powell, why don't you take that bloody trade school to San Luis Obispo!"-- in other words, affiliate with Cal Poly. A lot of people didn't and still don't regard librarianship as a true academic discipline. I don't know that I do myself. We called it School of Library Service, and Andy's protected himself in subsequent years by upgrading the curriculum, the content, and instituting the second degree, the M.S. in I.S. I take credit, I think, for interesting Bob Hayes. There was an answer, certainly, to the Accrediting Committee. We brought someone that wasn't even a librarian to the faculty. It wasn't easy to do. It was a long slow process of luring him. You want me to talk about it?

MINK

Yes, I do. I think that you mentioned him in the book, but why don't you go into it in a little more detail.

POWELL

Well, it came about I think way back in 1960 or 1959 probably, the year we were organizing. And I was in the Librarian's office and Andy was here as a lecturer to get the school set up, and this man Hayes came into my office of the University Librarian and introduced himself as a UCLA Ph.D. in math who was in private industry then--with an information outfit--and had been asked by the University Math-Engineering Extension to give an extension course in information science or retrieval, or whatever it's called, which he was prepared to do. But he said to me, "I'm weak on formal librarianship. I'd like a quick course in academic and general historical librarianship without going to library school for a year. Can you suggest what I might do?" I said, "Sure, I've got two men here who will give you the quick course, make a good graduate librarian out of you in two weeks." I rang for Everett Moore and Andy Horn, as I remember, and I said, "Everett, you give Hayes a quick course in reference work; and, Andy, you give him a quick course in the history of libraries." And they did, in some luncheon meetings or conferences. Hayes, of course, genius that he is, soaked it up. He did the readings; he learned very fast. He didn't need to go to library school. He learned it in a couple of weeks. He gave the course, which was a kind of crash course given over in the Engineering Building, four days a week every morning, or all day--I don't know how it was--but anyway, it was a very intensive course for librarians and for faculty people who were interested. I went over and audited one of them. I think maybe it was in the first one that he was to give the background of formal librarianship and library history. Jeez, he was a real old pro. He spied it and it was good. Jo Tallman was there; she could vouch for this. He spoke with real knowledge and authority on what formal librarianship was and the way it had to relate to keep up to date. So I was impressed right then and there with his teaching ability. He was a superb lecturer. I was still operating then as librarian, and as I saw the need to develop these new techniques of information science and relate them to what we were doing here, I asked Hayes if he would be a kind of an advisor. He was, and I don't know who was here then--was Paul Miles? I guess he was in charge of this business. Gordon Williams had left, hadn't he?

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

It was old Pablo and Cox and--I don't know who else. Anyway, Hayes was brainwashing them or being brainwashed by them. I don't know what went on. But at any rate, I kept drawing him in closer as an advisor, and he gave of his time without any appointment, without any remuneration. In the meantime, he was going on teaching this extension course. It was more and more successful, he was repeating it, and he was learning more and more about libraries from our people here.

MINK

And he was still employed in private industry.

POWELL

That's right. He had simply an appointment in extension, Math-Engineering Extension. So when we got the library school going, I think I had Hayes appointed as a lecturer without stipend.

MINK

Can you do that? Can you appoint somebody as a lecturer without stipend? As a consultant?

POWELL

I don't know what the hell he was, Jim, but he was something. I was trading on Hayes's desire to have an academic affiliation. He was devoted to UCLA where he took his degree--Just like Andy--and I suppose I exploited this, in the best sense, and gave him every opportunity to come back and got him more and more interested in library problems. And there was more and more university-wide interest in establishing information science procedures here, not only in the library but in the other offices. Registrar's and so on. I got Hayes, and maybe it was Bill Young and various people in the administration who were interested in Hayes and picked his brains. He came closer and closer. Finally I think we had him appointed as a lecturer with a stipend and then as a professor in residence for one year, and then we went all out and he was

appointed professor and he resigned his industry position. I don't know which year this was, but he came into the school and for the first time in any American library school, I believe, we required of all students a course in data processing for graduation. This was about '63 or '64, I think. Some of the students kicked like hell, particularly the ones going into school and children's library work, but by God we made them do it, and they ended up grateful, because Hayes is a great teacher. He is, I think, the best teacher we had: in his organization, in his presentation, and in his intellectual power. I recognize Lubetzky and Horn as superb teachers, but in my book I think Hayes was the top. I audited his class and I had him as guest speaker every semester in my Introduction class. He had this great sense of timing. Without ever looking at the clock he could zero in and zero out, interest students, and yet he was essentially a humble guy. He had no arrogance and no pretensions and no embarrassment or apologies, really, for not being a librarian. I think I helped him get over that in the beginning. I said, "Forget it. You don't have a library degree; you've got something else that we need and you're one of us." I tried to make him feel that, and I think he did. I also reconciled him and Mrs. Sayers, who were--I think she was--hostile.

MINK

What was their bag?

POWELL

Well, she was hostile.

MINK

Why?

POWELL

Well, this went against all her ideas of librarianship--the data processing, machines, and all this. You know, she's even more old-fashioned than I am, and she didn't want any part of it. She was not rude to Hayes, because she's a lady, but she was pretty damned cold to him until Hayes got smart and asked her advice on a reading list for his nine-year-old son. Oh, he's a fox. She got interested then in that problem and found that he was quite a warm human being, and they ended up, of course, doing this institute in extension on the

effects of automation on children, which was a real love match. [laughter] Yes, that was great.

MINK

Well, Larry, since we're talking about great teachers--you've mentioned Hayes, Horn, Lubetzky--you haven't mentioned yourself.

POWELL

Let me interrupt. I didn't mention Sayers either. Of course, she's in a class absolutely by herself. I'd put her over and above all of us.

MINK

Even Hayes?

POWELL

Yes, as an evangelical type of teacher. She was the archangel herself (Is there a female archangel?). At any rate, she was really transcendental. Well, they were all great, and, Jim, I believe that it's who teaches that is the important thing, not what's taught or where they're from or their pedigrees or anything else. It's the quality of the person teaching. I'm a disciple of Bishop [Nikolai] Grundtvig, remember, the great Dane who revolutionized Danish education. He said the curriculum is nothing, the teacher everything. And this is true. It's been true in my own education. The colossi that I had-- Stelter and MacIntyre, Georges Connes in France — these who by their personalities, plus what they knew, changed my life. And I thought this is what we should do here: we should recruit faculty with this overpowering sense of person. And I don't mean it in a flashy sense, but in this deep sense of commitment that Hayes had to his discipline, that Sayers had, that Betty Rosenberg has to acquisitions.

MINK

This is very good, this is a great thought, but. . .

POWELL

Yes, but what? for Christ's sake.

MINK

You were very limited in your recruiting, because in this context you could only choose those people with those personalities you had considerable contact and a certainty of. Now, what about recruiting people from the East or from the North, and so on? You don't know.

POWELL

Well, I'd go and know them. I wouldn't recruit in absentia . I would make a point of knowing them. I'd go with my Batman cloak and disguise and find out if they were any good.

MINK

This creates problems.

POWELL

Sure it creates problems. It's limiting, but it's simply the way I operate. It's limited, human, and biased and personal and all these things, but what man isn't limited in one way or another? These were my limitations and I recognize them. Sure. And it would work only when I was in charge.

MINK

Well, let's go back to you. . .

POWELL

Yes, let's go back to me.

MINK

. . .as a teacher. Now, in my way, I heard--you know, because people would come to prepare papers who were in your classes--that there were criticisms. And I suppose that you hear from those people that are turned off; you don't usually hear from the people that are turned on. What was your style of teaching? Now, some would say, "Larry Powell's course was really a course in Powell."

POWELL

Of course. [laughter]

MINK

Of course. Did you feel that the best method, for example, of teaching college and university library administration was not to give formal lectures on this based on the literature, books, textbooks, and so on, and require a standard text for the course, which I believe Berkeley did?

POWELL

Well, I did, too, but only nominally. We didn't limit ourselves to it.

MINK

Well, was it your feeling to give them more of your own personal experience--such as how to deal with a library committee, based on your experience in dealing with the Library Committee here--rather than to lecture on administration?

POWELL

Yes, sure, that's right. It was personal; it was derived from my own experience, but not just here, because I had traveled a good deal. I'd been active in ARL and ACRL, and I'd observed a great deal of university library practice throughout the country. I had a lot of contacts, a lot of second-hand experience which I used. It was a style based on my own flair and my own limitations.

MINK

Well, naturally, some people would be critical about this, but. . .

POWELL

Yes.

MINK

. . .I can't remember that we ever received at the Berkeley school anything from Danton (who was teaching the course at that time) on the structure of the university, vis-a-vis the library, the senate, the various committees, which has a general pattern throughout the country. I don't remember ever reading much in textbooks on library administration about this.

POWELL

Well, Wilson and Tauber have a certain amount on it. I used Kenneth Brough's book *Scholars' Workshop*, his dissertation based on those five university libraries. I used that, those two books. I went into the library committee and whether it was desirable to have the librarian a member or not. Remember, I was not, and Vosper is; each way has its advantage.

MINK

Would you talk about that a little bit?

POWELL

Would I talk about it now?

MINK

Yes, as if you were lecturing to me on it. [laughter]

POWELL

Well, I preferred not to change the system. I was getting, I felt, everything I needed and accomplishing what I wanted to accomplish without being a member of the Library Committee. And the fewer changes that I made, the fewer suggestions of change that I made to the senate, to the faculty, the better. I preferred to work quietly and get my work done and not say, "Look, you did it wrong; now let's do it this way." So I went along in the pattern that Goodwin had established. I felt, you see, that I had all the prestige and recognition and authority that the office required and that I required personally, and I didn't feel any need to change this. I think of incidents on campuses where a librarian would be on the outside and had to be a member of the committee; if he wasn't, then he should work to be a member. But I didn't feel that way. I don't know what Vosper's reasons for. . .

MINK

Insisting?

POWELL

Insisting, no. You'd have to ask him. I've never discussed it with him. I think maybe it followed the pattern he had at Kansas where he was a member of the committee.

MINK

He felt more comfortable in this kind of a relation.

POWELL

Yes. Also he came back in a kind of honeymoon glow: everyone wanted him back, he wanted to be back, and it was the time. I must say that when I came I also had the honeymoon glow in 1944, and I did some other things that I could have done then only at the beginning. Vosper's sense of timing was good. He had the change made right at the first. Well, I knew situations around the country where the librarian was or was not a member of the faculty committee, and I tried to point these out. I never tried to limit my teaching to my own experience at UCLA. I used it as a point of departure and a comparison. I think maybe that college university course that I taught in the spring semester improved with teaching, and I think the last year I got some excellent papers out of students. They used to come to you for archives, didn't they?

MINK

Sure.

POWELL

I had some excellent papers out of them, and I didn't give formal lectures because I wanted the student to be involved earlier than that. I didn't want him to be the target of my talking for forty-five or fifty minutes. I wanted a participation. So I generally worked from the topic. I had a syllabus and we worked from an outline, but I encouraged participation and interruption.

MINK

Well, my experience, of course, is limited in dealing with UCLA library school students. I'd never dealt with library school students at Berkeley. I'd dealt with librarians at Berkeley because I was in the school, but I must say that the people who came during that time from the school seemed to me to have had a very, very good sense of research methodology, a very keen interest. They were alert people and they worked well. I enjoyed that experience.

POWELL

You mean here.

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

Well, they got this not only from me, but they got it from Horn and from all the other faculty, their general philosophy. They were going forward concurrently in several classes, and I think Horn did a lot of indoctrinating in methodology in his historical bibliography class. So mind you, the people that were taking this college and university class--these were optional courses, you see, they weren't required--were really interested. My required course that I taught over here--the introduction--I had the bigger class then. And here again it was more of a free-for-all in a class up to fifty or so. There couldn't be the same amount of discussion that you could have in the smaller class. The college and university class used to run twenty or twenty-five students. The other class was double that. So I did more formal lecturing, I think, in introduction. Then we got down to the even smaller classes that I taught in advanced problems in acquisitions and in the Southwestern course. Those would be maybe a dozen students, more of a seminar kind of thing, and I enjoyed all three of those experiences--the large class, the medium, and the smaller. And I got great results. Oh, sure, you can't teach a course and have 100 percent agreement, and I didn't expect that. I had a couple of real smart-ass students that I used to have to whack. I just saw one of them at Davis. I was at Davis last week talking to the Friends of the Library, and this student came up to me afterwards. He was Whitten--young Whitten who was the son of Ben Whitten, Whittier's librarian. Remember, he came here to school. He was a very balky student. He was hard to turn on, his face expressed boredom, and even disagreement. And I used to needle him, trying to get him to react, and we had a couple of real confrontations in class. I finally told him off once, to either come alive or get out. "Don't sit there looking bored, even if you are. Put on a show," I said. "You bore me, but I'm trying to show some interest in you." So we got to laughing and I think we ended up friends, and anyway he went on to Cal to take his Ph.D. in the library school. But he dropped out and he's now at Davis taking the degree in English. He came up with his new wife, and we had a little reunion. There was another student who quit after a

month, John Schwartz. Did you ever meet him? They elected him president of the class. He was from Montana, had his M.A. in English, and he wanted to be a writer. But I don't think he really wanted to work for the library degree. I think he wanted to go on writing and make motions of taking the courses, and, you know, he got into trouble fairly early. I think I suggested that he drop out and he did. He quit. And it was a good thing, too, because the vice-president of the student body was that beautiful Rita Brenner, with the long dark hair. Remember, Jim?

MINK

Yes!

POWELL

She became president of the class, didn't she. Well, that was because Schwartz chickened out.

MINK

Or you chickened him out. [laughter]

POWELL

No, I think he really knew he had made a mistake; so he went into English to take his degree. I don't know what's happened to him. He published a novel since with Grove Press. I thought maybe he'd bring me one, but I haven't looked it up yet. But I should.

MINK

I noticed in one of the annual reports to the chancellor that you had pointed out that it was "hogwash," this notion that every so often the faculty in the school should go back into the profession and work to have a "renewal," so to speak, and therefore to bring back into their teaching more of what perhaps would be current practice.

POWELL

No, I thought it was a cliché. If they'd been good librarians, it's with them for life. They should read, they should travel, they should go to conferences-- they could do all these things as faculty members. I don't say they should go into the ivory tower, but they don't have to go back on a leave of absence into an

employment situation. This might be true if you're recruiting faculty that had limited experience.

MINK

The thing about that remark in the report was that I couldn't understand in what context it was made, what came up during your tenure to make you blast off at this?

POWELL

Jesus, I don't know. Maybe it was accrediting. I perhaps read some accrediting committee report, or maybe I'd been to a conference where this was talked about or maybe Danton had come down and sounded off. I don't know. Anyway, I was just sounding off myself. You mentioned at Cal what you didn't get from Danton, but certainly Mitchell taught more the way I did. I didn't have his course, because he was at Yale the year that I was in library school, but I heard enough about it from others. I think I was more in the style of Mitchell, and Andy was more in the style of Danton.

MINK

Well, yes. Now, as far as Danton 's style--and I see nothing wrong with an interviewer putting things in the record--it seemed to me that it was pretty stereotyped teaching, as I recall it. We did a paper; the paper had to be on a library, and we were told to select a library in the region. I selected the library at Cal State, San Francisco. We were asked to apply the 1949 ALA's standards to the library, and this required going there. And I remember going and interviewing Ken Brough at San Francisco State and then taking these standards and applying them and writing it up. Danton always insisted on succinct, precise papers. Any paper that was more than two and a half to three pages long usually got marked down just on the basis of the fact that it was longer than three pages. He put great emphasis on good English and correct syntax.

POWELL

Yes, Perry's an orthodox and conventional and Germanic, well-organized, totally unoriginal guy. He has no originality, no flair, no career distinction, really. He was an undistinguished person in American librarianship. Let's face

it: he had courage, he had methodology, he had thoroughness, and these are all good qualities, and he certainly has done well since he left the deanship.

1.23. TAPE NUMBER: XII, Side Two (April 23, 1970)

MINK

Well, we are going on on side two this morning with a discussion of J. Periam Danton. You were evaluating his teaching.

POWELL

Well, he shouldn't have been dean--that's all I ever said. He's a good researcher and a good seminar teacher. But he's not a good teacher of a general class, and he's not a good administrator. My viewpoint.

MINK

I think you said in an interview that you had with Handelsman, that in the organizing years of the school, Danton was a great help to you.

POWELL

He wasn't a help to me, Jim; he was a help to Andy. He and Andy, you see, had this teacher-student relationship. Andy had been his brilliant student. Perry once told me, "He's the most brilliant student I ever had, period, in any class, any year." They liked each other and they got along well. I never interfered with this. Perry did come down--now, I must correct that to say that when we were having that seminar in library education way back in the--when was it, the fifties?

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

We had those evening sessions. Well, Perry came down to one, do you remember?

MINK

I wasn't on that. POTOLL: Weren't you? I thought you'd been in everything here, Jim. You ask questions like you were.

MINK

That's all right.

POWELL

That's all right.

MINK

I'm not being interviewed.

POWELL

[laughter] At any rate, I asked Perry to come down and he did. He came down and spent some time with us, and he said the greatest problem we would have would be the recruiting of faculty. Well, actually it was the smallest problem we had.

MINK

He was probably looking at it from a different standpoint, wasn't he?

POWELL

That's right. More of the style that Andy's had to follow in nationwide recruiting. I was lucky in the beginning in having a task force more or less set up. I would think, though, Jim, if I were to do it again — and I talked a little about this at Colorado last month when I spoke at Boulder--that ideally a library school should be unaffiliated with an academic institution. It should go back before the Williamson Report and attach itself to a big library without any academic trappings or paraphernalia or restrictions. A training school.

MINK

The way that Perry did in the Los Angeles Public Library, in a sense.

POWELL

In P.L., and Munn did it in Pittsburgh and Gillis did in Sacramento.

MINK

Right. And [Melvil] Dewey.

POWELL

Dewey, certainly, pulled it out from Columbia and took it to Albany when Columbia got in his hair. And this is more my style. I would have done very well in that era.

MINK

Well, now, let me ask you about that: what would you see as the ideal advantages of this first of all, how would it help you in recruiting? Certainly, you could not attract an academic group of people as well, it seems to me, to a library school based at a library as you would to a library school based in a great academic institution such as UCLA.

POWELL

I think it would have to be limited pretty much to public library training.

MINK

You do?

POWELL

Training for public librarians and perhaps not school, because there again they're hamstrung with requirements, academic requirements, but work with children in public libraries. Be primarily a public library training school. Yes, you're right, you couldn't attract to a public library working-training situation those people who wanted special libraries--oh, it's totally impractical, anyway, Jim. I'm just saying I was born too late. I should have been born in the Melvil Dewey era. And I would have been more like Jim Gillis.

MINK

Well, you'd rather be your own man. I think it's pretty apparent that you were terrifically turned off-- correct me if I'm wrong--about the bureaucratic kinds of relationships that you get into in trying to run a library school in a university situation.

POWELL

Turned off?— I was never turned on. I never understood them, Jim; or I never chose to understand them, let's put it that way. I understood them very well, but I wasn't patient. You see, Andy is patient, and I wasn't. We can illustrate this in the way we went about the accrediting process. My whole position on

accrediting was that we do the minimum of paperwork on it, because the mere fact that we're a graduate school in the University of California is enough for me.

MINK

And you thought it ought to be enough for the committee.

POWELL

Yes, exactly, and I didn't want these chickenshit bastards coming in here [laughter], like the school people did, and telling off the University of California. No, I had great pride in the school's being in the University up to its standards, and I thought this was good enough. So I didn't propose to spend three weeks filling out the forms.

MINK

You wouldn't have had that in the library school that you. . .

POWELL

No, I wouldn't have had accrediting. [laughter] At any rate, the forms came to me first and I filled them all out, what I thought we ought to put into them, in one evening's work at home. I brought them into Andy and Flo, and they just heaved a great sigh and took them away from me and spent three weeks filling them out--to my mind with an enormous amount of unnecessary data. And I just didn't think it was worth all of that, or necessary, let's say.

MINK

Weren't you telling the library school about the importance of accreditation with what the ALA looks for in accreditation?

POWELL

Yes, but I thought we could display it or document it in much briefer form. That's where I differed from Andy and Flo. At any rate, the accrediting team finally said they'd never had such an avalanche of data.

MINK

It was very good, wasn't it, and worked out to your benefit, because it gave them an opportunity to attend classes. Usually, as it was pointed out in the interview, they spent most of their day-and-a-half 's visit asking for data.

POWELL

Yes, all right, you're right. I take it all back.

MINK

And Andy knew this. So he went ahead and he spent the time and he prepared the data, and it turned out better for the school.

POWELL

You've been talking to him, haven't you?

MINK

No, I read the interview. You read it.

POWELL

Oh, you mean the Handelsman one?

MINK

Right.

POWELL

Oh. Is it in there?

MINK

Oh, absolutely.

POWELL

Yes, I guess so. I wanted it both ways.

MINK

This is another interesting point.

POWELL

Well, I had it both ways. I had my way and he had his. So it was a perfect symbiotic relationship, which is what I always said. I was the spirit and he was the form. [laughter]

MINK

Handelsman— I have to take my hat off to him--he really got you.

POWELL

Did he?

MINK

When he tried to pull the same thing you tried to pull on me all the time. . .

POWELL

What's that?

MINK

Well, talking about the reaction of the first year's class to the accrediting team and the wild session that they had behind closed doors when you all were on the outside wondering what was going on.

POWELL

Yes, I think they had some booze in there.

MINK

And you asked Handelsman, "Well, you were in there, Norman, what went on?" And Norman said, "Well, I'm not being interviewed, but I'd like to know what your reaction is to what went on in there as you heard it." And you reacted a little bit. I wonder if you wanted to react any more. As you went on, did you really find out what the class said to those people? They were really primed. They'd been there nearly their full period at that point. It was late in the spring, wasn't it?

POWELL

Yes.

MINK

And they had some definite ideas about this school, and they had an opportunity to make them known. I think it's interesting, because I was talking with Dellene [Tweedale] this morning, and when Eric Moon [at the University of Pittsburgh], for example, found out that Dellene had gone to this school, he asked her to make a comparison between the Pitt school and UCLA, because he's interested in library education, but the blasted dean there wouldn't allow Dellene and him to be alone. He insisted on being at the interview. So Dellene had to simply quote statistics and say what faculty-student relationship ratios were and how many students were admitted.

POWELL

Was Lancour the dean then?

MINK

Yes, I think so.

POWELL

He's a jerk.

MINK

Yes. Well, these guys had a chance, without having you guys on the faculty around, to tell the committee.

POWELL

I didn't pull anything on Norman. I didn't try to pump him. I just was amused because it was such a ruckus. They were all laughing and having a hell of a good time. I think the students brought a bottle of booze and got the Accrediting Committee stoned, which is a good thing.

MINK

Well, what did the Accrediting Committee say after that?

POWELL

They just said, "These are a great bunch of students. They're really alive." That's all they ever told us. They said, "They act as though they're live human beings." So I took that as a compliment. Wasn't it? [laughter]

MINK

I hope it was.

POWELL

I hope it was. In other words, we hadn't knocked all the life out of them. They were finishing up their year with a good deal of spirit. Yes. Well, what else, Jim?

MINK

I think that's an interesting point, that you allowed this criticism--in fact, the annual reports show it, this give-and-take between faculty and students, which we were never allowed at the Berkeley school.

POWELL

I know; no, I wasn't either.

MINK

I remember that we met as a class about the second or third week of the first semester and passed a resolution to the effect that we were not about to do all the work that the dean required of us. Yes. We felt that it was just too much--you know, 150 reference collections every night, and what we considered to be just a lot of stupid busywork.

POWELL

Well, I mentioned this in my Coulter lecture. John Henderson told me that he'd led a student revolt in his year.

MINK

There must have been a lot of them at Berkeley. There must be something about the Berkeley atmosphere that foments revolt.

POWELL

Yes, that's interesting; yes, I think it is. I felt that when I was there. I revolted against Miss Sisler. Of course, neither of us had Mitchell, did we? You had Danton and I had Sisler as director.

MINK

But I had Merritt and I had Danton, and that was enough .

POWELL

Yes. Well, I suppose some of our students would say, "Well, we had Powell and X and that's enough." I couldn't reach them all. I reached some of them and I see them everywhere I go now. At Colorado, there's one on the staff. In fact, I went up to speak at Boulder because one of our graduates up there had charge of programs and brought me up . I saw several of our people at Davis. Don Kunitz is in special collections there now, editing the *California Librarian*. He was one of our good students here. I told you about meeting Ben Lasky out in Tokyo. Yes, I had a lovely time, Jim, really. I'm not terribly introspective or self-critical. I'm happy to go along doing my own thing. They were great years. They were the crowning years, really, of my career--the years here. And I know--I say again, and I will say it to my last breath--that I couldn't have done it alone. I had to have the support that Andy gave me. He made the school possible in a formal sense; he enabled it to be founded and to survive. I didn't have the skill or the patience to do this.

MINK

One thing that did disturb Andy, and it disturbed me, too: he was pointing out that in the last year of the school, which was the first year of the Higher Education Act, we could have had twenty fellowships if we wanted, which would have brought in \$2,000 apiece to the school, but you simply refused to apply for fellowships. Why?

POWELL

I never refused to apply for anything.

MINK

Why didn't you send in the requests? The point that was made: Andy was on sabbatical (this was your last year), and you simply said, "Well, that's up to him; that's for next year." So we lost out during that year.

POWELL

Well, yes. I didn't refuse; I just didn't do it.

MINK

Why didn't you do it? I mean, in the face of the fact that it would have meant \$2,000 for, say, twenty-- that's \$40,000 over and beyond what you would have had in your budget. I can't see you, Larry, passing up money like that.

POWELL

Well, nobody told me it in these simple terms, I think. Probably Flo showed me the forms, and I said, "Christ, I can't do these forms." And I just got through telling you I didn't have the skill. I didn't. I didn't have skill in doing this kind of paperwork. Just put it down to blindness on my part, not willfulness.

MINK

No, no, I wouldn't think so.

POWELL

I was just blind to it. And that's what I mean: Andy was on sabbatical, so it didn't get done. He was indispensable.

MINK

Well, you know, it came as a terrific surprise, apparently, to everybody concerned, that you decided just like that in 1965 to stop, period.

POWELL

What do you mean, "came as a surprise." Did it?

MINK

Yes, I think so. They didn't expect you to resign. Deans don't resign or go into retirement when they're sixty years old, for goodness sakes.

POWELL

Yes, I know.

MINK

You want to talk about it?

POWELL

Yes, I don't see why not. I'd have to go back in my files, but I think I initiated some correspondence with the retirement office in Berkeley way back as early

as '55 or earlier. No, not earlier. About then. I don't know, Jim, I just had this sense of fulfillment that was growing in me. I saw this as a kind of a peak, and if I could do it through these five years as dean I would have done what I was intended to do, and beyond that it was repetition.

MINK

Was there any feeling on your part of having seen other people in the university throughout your experience here staying around "too long."

POWELL

Possibly. Probably unconsciously it was a perception. I think I began to get sensitive in my last years as librarian, when I sensed ,an impatience on the part of younger faculty that we were moving too slowly.

MINK

The same impatience you had with John Goodwin.

POWELL

Yes, exactly. And I sensed in myself an inability really, to respond to the extent that they expected, and I had the precedent, yes, of Goodwin staying on. I think the war had a lot to do with this, you see; it kept him on. He would have retired, but the war kept him on. But it was a very sad final period. And I saw a rising impatience on the part of the faculty that we were lagging behind Berkeley, that we should try to achieve parity with Berkeley, and I saw also the impossibility of doing this as long as Berkeley was holding the reins and that our chancellor was an easygoing, an unaggressive person, such as Ray Allen. It had to be Murphy and Vosper--that team. And I saw this possible when I met Franklin Murphy in 1960, in the early spring or winter of 1960. He'd been appointed chancellor. He came to talk. We had that breakfast at the Bel-Air Hotel in which he wanted to know what the pluses and minuses were here. I knew right then that this was the time to step down as librarian and that this would give him an opportunity to bring in Vosper. We agreed on that at that breakfast meeting. So I was in a sensitive state of not wanting to be in the position of a target. I was getting too old for that kind of thing. I don't mind making other people targets, but I didn't want to be a target myself. I could see this happening perhaps in the library school with the move toward--oh,

what? --the information science and all of this, in which I could give lip service but no real creative contribution. I did help on the Library Council in establishing the Institute for Library Research. Swank and I were the deans then, and I was still librarian when that occurred. I don't know, Jim. Somebody said, "Well, you inherited money from your uncle, so this enabled you to retire," but actually the decision was made before that. That was one of those bonus things that came along. I'd made the decision before that. And let's bring this other thing into the picture, too--my increasing success as a writer. I'd published several books at the end of the fifties and into the early sixties. I had more work I wanted to do.

MINK

Did you make a lot of money off these books?

POWELL

No, I didn't make a lot of money off them, but I made maybe \$4,000 or \$5,000 in royalties off each of those World books. Yes, they paid a very good royalty.

MINK

A guy could almost get along on \$5,000.

POWELL

Plus retirement. I saw also that if I were going to do my best writing I was going to have to give more time to it. And to give more time to it meant less time to the university job, and I think, in conscience, I wasn't willing to do this. I never gave my daytimes to writing. I did it at night or early morning. I did a certain amount of the gathering, the correspondence and all, I suppose, in the course of the job. But I saw I was going to have to have more time, and this was another motivation to free myself in order to write. I don't know, Jim; I suppose it did surprise some, because I didn't discuss it widely. I think Miss Bradstreet and Flo and Andy--we talked about it.

MINK

You didn't have interviews with people on the *Daily Bruin* like Rosemary Park.

POWELL

No. Is that what she's done?

MINK

Yes, she's going to resign.

POWELL

Oh, I didn't see this. [It happened] while we were away, I guess.

MINK

I think maybe it's the same thing. I mean, people see forces shaping up in the university which really sort of bring on a handwriting on the wall, that your era is coming to an end and there's going to be a new one and you don't feel that you can adjust or be part of that new era.

POWELL

That's right, I think this was true. I was greatly relieved to have Vosper take over the librarianship, you see. I never shed a single tear over that, and it freed me for five years in the library school.

MINK

I think that there was some resentment on Vosper's part, however, that he was not able to take over the directorship of the Clark Library at the same time that he took over the UCLA Library.

POWELL

Was there?

MINK

I think so.

POWELL

He didn't ever indicate that to me.

MINK

Was it just because of your stake in the Clark or something that you didn't want to give that up at the time you gave up the library job?

POWELL

I thought I could do justice to it.

MINK

Do you feel that you did?

POWELL

Yes, I did. I do. I kept the seminar program going which I'd started. I kept it going. We initiated the post-doctoral program because of Mark Curtis 's original suggestion when he was in the graduate office. I made one buying trip abroad for the Clark in '63. The agreement was with Murphy in the beginning that I would keep the directorship of the Clark, and Murphy said, "Well, I have only one objection to that, Larry, I'd like the job myself. If you ever give it up, let me be director."

MINK

Murphy?

POWELL

Yes. He was kidding, of course, but he took a great interest in it, and we had some wonderful years. Do you really think Vosper resented this? How do you arrive at that, Jim.

MINK

From my informants, my secret spies.

POWELL

From your spies?

MINK

Like those you send back to ALA.

POWELL

Let me just interject this, that I said "Vosper didn't indicate this to me." His relationship toward me was always discreet and kind and generous, and if he felt this, he didn't make it apparent to me, which was kind of him. In other words, he swallowed it.

MINK

Well, I think maybe Mr. Vosper--and we've already discussed this aspect of it--felt somewhat hampered by this syndrome that you spoke about--Andy, the whole bit about the boss, you know--because I sensed that from some of my informants that it was sort of needling, you know, to be introduced to your old friends by Mr. Vosper (people that you have known twenty or thirty years longer than he had) as "my good friend Larry Powell."

POWELL

Yes. Well, we all eat a certain amount of shit, Jim.

MINK

I think that this is all part of that syndrome. I'd like to take this tack for a moment or two. There's another syndrome that you and I are very much aware of and exists in all--not all, but a lot of academic institutions where there's a library school, a library in juxtaposition, resentment that grows up on the staff of the library, that gets to the library students. And very happily here--I think through your and perhaps Andy's foresight, you brought Everett into the matter of selecting the laboratory collection, brought Ardis into this. So you started out on a very good working relationship with the library. Maybe this has deteriorated, because new members of the staff come in and they had no loyalty to you when you were librarian. Their loyalties are now different. Their understanding of the situation as it existed then doesn't exist. .

POWELL

And the school is twice as big. There are twice as many students.

MINK

Yes. Do you think that as you began to see it around '64 or '65, that this relationship was beginning to deteriorate?

POWELL

I didn't notice it. I was of course traditionally insensitive, Jim, to anything like this. I didn't notice it, and I haven't noticed it now.

MINK

I don't think it's really too bad.

POWELL

No, but it can grow. It takes work, because you and I know what it was at Berkeley--" the gloomy princesses," as we used to call the reference group, they hated us. Peyton Hurt, who was associate university librarian--we were beneath his notice. And it was a very unhappy situation. Ardis was responsible for a lot of this good spirit, and Everett, Page, and Andy, of course. Andy is responsible for an enormous number of things, as you and I know. He and I have never had, I don't think, any of the syndromes that might have operated between Vosper and me. I think Andy and I have had a more crystalline, transparent working relationship. I don't think he has ever had any feeling of resentment toward me.

MINK

There was one little bind that. . .

POWELL

Was there a bind, Jim, that I wasn't aware of?

MINK

No, not between you and Andy. When Mr. Vosper came, of course, the thing that had to be done was to appoint him to the faculty of the library school, right? So there was a question of what level he was going to be appointed. And as I understand it, you recommended him for associate professor. And this didn't sit very well with him. He thought he ought to have been a full professor. As I understand it, the reason that you recommended him at the associate level was because you didn't think you ought to put him higher than Andy.

POWELL

Yes, that was sticky. This never went to the point of a recommendation. It was simply in a matter of letter exchange between him and me. I asked if he would consider coming in as an associate, and he replied, no, he wouldn't. So I had to tell Murphy. Well, this was terribly unfair to Andy and I knew it. And as I remember, I arrived in New York from Europe in '60 and talked to Murphy by phone, and he said, "Well, I can't get Horn appointed at the highest level, and I

can get Vosper. Do you agree to do this?" And I said, "Yes, I will agree. If you will agree that at the earliest possible moment you will appoint Horn to the professorship." This was by telephone. Murphy was at a party here, and I was in the airport hotel at New York. And Murphy agreed I will say this: anything that Murphy ever agreed to, he did. You didn't have to have it in writing.

MINK

But he did drag his feet.

POWELL

Well. . .

MINK

Or somebody dragged his feet. I won't say Murphy did. Somebody did.

POWELL

Well, he had to feel his way as to his power-- how much authority he could use in voting against the Appointment Committee or the Budget Committee, or both, and until he established his prerogatives as chancellor he wasn't ready to overrule them. And they were adamant; they wouldn't give Andy the tenure. The appointment was finally made after two or three years, by Foster Sherwood and by Murphy, without any kind of appointment committee or anything else. They just did it, as I understand, and appointed Andy from associate to full professor. I don't hold this against Murphy. He was new here and he was cautious.

MINK

These are the kind of problems that can come up, and the reason I bring them up is to demonstrate what a touchy relationship there can be between the library and the library schools.

POWELL

Well, it could have resulted in a complete break between Vosper and me and Horn and Vosper, if Horn had been resentful. He could have never spoken again. This is the sort of thing that would have happened at Berkeley. But we were fortunate, of course, in Andy's Christian character. We really were. I suppose I goofed in the beginning. But here again, I was operating with Ray

Allen, who was an uncertain quantity, who left for Indonesia at a crucial time. And it was an all new area in which to operate, Jim. We had never done it before. Everything was being done for the first time and, Christ, I suppose we're thankful we made as few mistakes as we did.

MINK

How did you feel personally about having Gustave Arlt as chairman of the Advisory Committee?

POWELL

Very good.

MINK

You felt comfortable?

POWELL

Oh, yes, I felt comfortable with Arlt. I don't think I ever trusted him 100 percent, but I did 99 percent. He'd been very close to Eddie Dickson, and he knew how important it was to get the library school going and to get Andy appointed. The big foot dragging, of course, was when Earl Griggs was the chairman of the Appointment Committee on my deanship. Griggs dragged his feet for a year.

MINK

Purposely, or just. . .

POWELL

Just because he's a horse's ass, I think. I just think he's a colossal one. I've worked with him quite a few times here on a number of things, and I think he's a nit-picker of the worst sort. I was awfully glad when he left this campus. I think he's a phony.

MINK

How about your relationship with Foster Sherwood? Was there anything in that relationship going back over the years that made you feel that he opposed or blocked the progress of the school once it was established?

POWELL

No. I never had this feeling, Jim. I liked Foster. I always got along well with him. He was organized, and he had his data organized. He understood the academic machinery. The only person who ever understood it as well, in my book, was Andy. Foster understood it, and you had to present things to him in terms of the system.

MINK

But didn't you have problems, during the time that you were dean, in trying to get him to agree to appointments and so on?

POWELL

I don't think I ever had any problem getting him to agree. I had a problem getting people to accept, particularly the long hassle we had over the reference position after Tanya gave it up. You see, we brought [Arnulfo] Trejo here, which was a fiasco. But my God, give me credit, I solved it and got us out of it. I got him his other job--just in the nick of time, too--and sent him off back to Arizona with flying colors. I did that. I had to, for Christ's sake. It was hanging around my neck and I had to do it. But it was through my friendship with President Harvill of Tucson that I was able to do this. I tried to get Reuben Musiker appointed from South Africa. We had him as associate professor, but he wanted a full professorship and more travel money. I tried to get Rob Collison in the beginning, but he had just gone to the BBC, and he couldn't come. I tried desperately to get Roy Stokes appointed, you see, and had that agreed at the professor level, and then he backed out, chickened out at the last. I resented this because he had encouraged us to make the appointment, and then when we had it ready, he wouldn't accept it. You may have heard, he's coming to British Columbia as dean. We made up our differences, though. It didn't disturb our relationship over the long run. I taught for him last year in England. Then he came here and taught one summer for us. So these were not problems caused by Sherwood. I had these appointments all sanctioned by him, but I couldn't get the appointees to come, namely, Musiker and Stokes and Collison. No, Foster was good to work with. I respected him, and he was the one that put through Andy's promotion. He called me at home and told me. He said, "I'm delighted to do this for Andy. You call him up and tell him." So I did. What else, Jim?

MINK

No, I think that this will do for today. Unless you have something further that you want to put in the record.

POWELL

Well, on this retirement, did we chew that really into bits?

MINK

Yes, I think you've given your views of why you did it, and I do think that if you didn't discuss it with people widely, obviously it would have surprised them.

POWELL

And don't you agree it was a good thing to do for everyone?

MINK

No, I'm not going to say.

POWELL

You aren't, huh?

MINK

No.

POWELL

Well, I think it was a good thing, in view of my age and my limitations.

MINK

We all know ourselves the best.

POWELL

Yes, I knew my limitations of strength and vision and support here. It was time to go. And these four years that I've had since retirement have really been wonderful years--personally and selfishly.

MINK

Was Fay urging you or was she remaining neutral?

POWELL

Well, she never urges, and she doesn't remain neutral either.

MINK

That doesn't answer the question, but maybe it does. [laughter]

POWELL

Well, she operates in a different way, Jim. I sense what she wants, but she never asserts it. I know this pleased her because it meant more time together, and it was something we both wanted. Have we talked about her?

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

Have we before in another session?

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

What I really owe to her?

MINK

Yes.

POWELL

Well, let me say it again. I owe as much to her, really, as I do to Andy. She kept the home front, and he kept the academic front for me. I couldn't have done these things without enormous support (you know that). My support hadn't vanished, but my own self was diminishing--that is, my own contribution was diminishing. And I have so much ego that I couldn't stay on in a diminished situation.

MINK

Also, doesn't there come a time when you can't get up the enthusiasm for something--you're just not enthusiastic about it, it doesn't send you.

POWELL

No, my evangelical fire hadn't burned out, but it wasn't as bright as it had been--for steady burning, that is. I can go out and speak now and get an audience involved and I can write, but day in and day out, I'm no longer capable of doing the detailed, intensive, administrative decision and leadership kind of work that I did. I just don't have it anymore. And I jolly well knew it. And that's why. Damn it all, Jim, agree with me. It was a good thing to retire.

MINK

Okay.

POWELL

Okay.

1.24. TAPE NUMBER: XIII, Side One (June 25, 1970)

MINK

Well, Larry, this morning you said that in this last tape of this long, arduous interview that we've had, you wanted to talk about what you've been doing since retiring. You've already talked about your motives for retiring, but now we want to find out, if we can, what you've been doing to make your life useful.

POWELL

Yes, well, part of my motivation, certainly, was selfish: to do what I wanted to do; but also there was a continuing feeling that I had something yet to give and to continue to give to the profession.

MINK

I think you said there was a lot of writing that you did, that you talked about, that never has seen the light of day, and I suspect that maybe you wanted to do some more of that type.

POWELL

Yes.

MINK

You haven't had it really, yet.

POWELL

I hadn't what?

MINK

You hadn't done that type of writing, fiction and . . .

POWELL

I've done what I set out to do when I retired. I set myself four books to write or rework, and I'm just now finishing the fourth. So I feel very good that I've been on schedule in the writing program I set for myself. But, oh, I remember that summer of '66 everything came with a rush, really. On June 30, I gave up the deanship to Andy and moved down here to this office, which Norah Jones very kindly relinquished to me.

MINK

This used to be her office?

POWELL

It was her office for a good many years, and when she moved upstairs, the Reserve Book Room hoped they could keep this as a kind of a playpen, but Norah said it should go to Powell.

MINK

Well, isn't it true that every emeriti is entitled to an office?

POWELL

He's entitled to it if he can get it, but there's some that haven't been able to get one, or not as good a one as this.

MINK

I think Staff Warren is one that was rather shabbily treated for a while.

POWELL

Well, you have to speak up, and he might not have been aggressive enough at the right time. But I was speaking up with Space Assignment — with Vosper, with Jones, with everybody else--that I expected to be provided for, and sure enough, they did. This is a perfect work place for me because it's near the outside door, it has outside windows, there's no name on the door, no listing in the directory, no telephone. There's a wash basin and a hot plate where I can make that poisonous brew that you're drinking.

MINK

Maybe there should be a sign on the door that says, "Powell of Powell Library."

POWELL

[laughter] "Powell of Powell Library. Knock and go away." I never answer the door when anyone knocks. They rarely do. Sometimes notes are slipped under the door, which I push back out. In other words, this is a hideaway. All right. June 30, 1966, after that smashing retirement gala and three-ring circus that we held upstairs, I came down here and set to work. I finished as dean June 30, but I was teaching through the six-week summer session one course only. In the five previous summer sessions I'd taught two courses, morning and afternoon. In this final summer session I was determined to teach just the one course, the Introduction to the opening class, so I taught that from ten to eleven each morning, five mornings a week, for the six weeks. Then I went over to the Faculty Center, had an early lunch, and then either worked there in the lounge or came back here and began to write. I've been following this schedule, minus the teaching, ever since, whenever I've been here. This has been a real workroom. I finished what I'd set to do. I needn't go into details of the writing.

MINK

I think maybe it's rather apropos.

POWELL

Of what?

MINK

That this room is directly above where Betty Rosenberg spent so much of her time as your special bibliographical assistant, doing just about the same sort of thing, helping you with your research and your writing.

POWELL

Directly beneath here. Well, this is a good vertical polarity certainly. [laughter] There is good current operating here. I felt it. I also like the view out on the old Physics Building, and that beautiful deodar tree. There's a great wood engraving of this same view done by Paul Landacre--remember--in that California landscapes book of his. It's done here in the twenties or thirties--well, in the early thirties, before the trees had grown; so it's a really beautiful view of that building.

MINK

I also think it's appropriate, because it's reminiscent in a way of the ceremony which I witnessed as a student here in 1949. You stood on the porch right out here and cut the ribbon.

POWELL

Oh, yes, when we dedicated the east wing.

MINK

You dedicated this whole east wing of the library that was so long in coming because of the years of the Depression.

POWELL

That's right. It was John Goodwin's dream that we realized.

MINK

It was one of the very first things that came in that postwar building boom.

POWELL

It was, indeed, and I remember that ceremony. Dykstra, of course, and I put on a kind of a Mutt-and-Jeff act, didn't we. I came about to his belt--great big Dutchman. God, I loved him. And he was so pleased. Jim, what I remember

about that dedication is the way the people streamed into the building. They streamed into and filled all the reading rooms.

MINK

Right through this door. That's why I thought it was so appropriate.

POWELL

They immediately filled it up. Every seat was taken within an hour, which showed the kind of need we had for seating. Well, that was through the summer session of 1966, and then Fay and I planned this trip abroad. We left in August and flew to London and spent a week in the English countryside and then settled into Dolphin Square for the autumn. I had great trips then, both for pleasure and also for professional reasons. I'd agreed to go over to the library school of Wales at Aberystwyth and spend two or three days with the students, and I did that in the autumn of '66. That was a great experience. It was one of the liveliest, most jumping library schools I've ever been in. We had a wonderful evening with the students in their beer cellar, when they wanted to talk about Henry Miller. They did a beautiful keepsake for me, excerpts from Henry's books, things he'd said about me as a librarian. They'd had it printed and presented it to me at that occasion. We went on to Ireland in that same autumn of '66. I made my first pilgrimage to the Yeats country. County Sligo. I saw Yeats's grave, came down to Thoor Ballylee and saw the roundtower, which he lived in or wrote in, which is now a national monument. I saw the remains of Lady Gregory's Coole Park and had an idyllic week with a rented Volkswagen on the Irish roads. And then we had a complete change of pace. We went down to Yugoslavia. It was a visit that I'd promised to pay some day to Dr. Lela Markic. Remember, she was the Yugoslav medical librarian who had spent a year here in '62- '63 working for Louise Darling on Slavic exchanges. She also audited courses in the library school, including two of mine. She was a wonderful, beautiful, graying Yugoslav woman. Her husband was a lawyer, who came to visit her once during the year. She made a great many friends here. I had her speak to the class at the end of the year, and she astonished us all with this very shrewd, perceptive summary of her year and what she'd seen and observed and felt here. She said, "Well, I don't suppose you'd ever come to Yugoslavia; it's so far away." And I said, "Dr. Markic, one of these days I'll be ringing your bell and visiting you in Zagreb." Well, so it

worked out that four years later, on her invitation and our acceptance, we flew down to Zagreb and spoke to the Croatian Library Association.

MINK

Did you speak in Croatian? [laughter]

POWELL

I spoke in my version of Croatian, which was very broad American, and Lela translated.

MINK

While you were speaking?

POWELL

Following each paragraph, she threw it into Croatian. It's a beautiful tongue, of course, musical, and no meaning at all. But lovely music, spoken by a lovely woman. This was a great experience, because the president of the association got up afterwards and said in Croatian (which Dr. Markic translated) that this was the first time they'd ever heard a humanistic speech from a librarian. They'd always been addressed by technicians, Yugoslav or French or Austrian or Italian--any of their neighbors. Their whole concern had been technical, and here was a speech in the humanistic tradition. You know, just Powell; that's all. I just gave them my philosophy of laying hands on books. Well, we had a great time in Zagreb, and then down to Dubrovnik on the Dalmatian coast. Dr. Markic's husband, who was in the Yugoslav government, had paved the way for us, and we had a guide and all kinds of red carpet treatment. The Welsh and the Yugoslav experiences were refreshing and reconfirming, because retirement was an abrupt thing, you see. It was cutting a cord that had been between me and a profession and my colleagues and students for a great many years. I found very quickly that I missed it. So speeches such as this, visits such as this, were very important to me in restoring this line between me and working librarians and students.

MINK

While you were in Wales did you visit the Mowats?

POWELL

We had a marvelous reunion with Charles and Jo Mowat in Bangor. Yes, indeed; we went on up the coast and we had dinner with them and their son, John, and their daughter, Rosemary.

MINK

They were neighbors of yours in Beverly Glen.

POWELL

That's right. We were great friends here, and we followed Charles all through the loyalty oath conference and admired him very much. His son and daughter wanted to talk Henry Miller. But Charles--really, I don't think this was his cup of tea. But John, his son, was a Miller buff, so we were able to give him the gospel from the old guru at firsthand. For the rest of '66 we saw MacIntyre in Paris. It was the year before he died. We went on into Portugal for the first time and had that great experience and on to Madeira, to Funchal, for a week. Then we came back to California. We were here most of '67. That's when the Guggenheim Fellowship became operative. It was the second I'd had. It was a very fortunate break for me, because they generally don't give them to men of sixty and beyond. But I'd held my firsts fifteen years earlier. It was to start work on one of the four writing projects, a book on California landscape and literature. We spent a great deal of '67 in visiting and revisiting parts of California. I particularly wanted to see areas that I'd never visited, namely, the northeast and the northwest--Alturas, Weaverville, Susanville, the Trinity Alps, and all of that country. We had a good base for doing it, because Fay's mother lives in Tehama County, at Los Molinos, and we used that as a base for trips. I'd always known the long roads, the longitudinal roads of California, but I didn't know all the lateral roads. So a lot of the time was spent on crisscrossing on little roads. We did all the Sierra passes, for example, and all the Coast Range passes. Mendocino Pass, and then of course Tioga and Donner and various Sierran passes, making notes and looking at landscapes that I would come later to write about when I was rereading Frank Norris, Jack London, Bret Harte, and so on. We did the Mother Lode country, the desert country, Anza-Borrego, Mary Austin's country again. So that was fieldwork.

MINK

This was purely observation with note-taking, not consultation in libraries or research of that nature?

POWELL

No, none at all. I wanted to see the land.

MINK

Then the Guggenheim people paid you to do this?

POWELL

Yes.

MINK

This is very interesting.

POWELL

This was really a windfall. But that's the wonderful thing of the Guggenheim fellowships. They're often unorthodox and based on what a candidate wants to do, not what the foundation thinks he ought to do. While we were in London in '66 we had had this wonderful cable from Paul Horgan at Wesleyan University where he was director for the Center for Advanced Studies, an old friend from Southwestern years. Remember, he dedicated the library school here, and we'd been in touch, and he'd always been saying, "Someday you must come to Wesleyan." The cable came while we were in London in '66, offering us a fellowship at the Center for Advanced Studies for the next year--a whole year at Wesleyan. I wrote that I couldn't come in '67, that year '67-'68, because of the Guggenheim running through calendar '67, but that we could come for one semester in '68. So that was arranged. Then in '67 we were looking forward to a semester in Connecticut, and we planned to drive to New England. Well, we had the old station wagon. Fay's 16-year-old car, which really wouldn't do, and we had my Porsche. And Fay said, looking at the Porsche, "This won't hold all the baggage that we need to take, and I don't want to sit on the floor all the way to New England," the way the passenger does in a Porsche. I didn't want her to either. So I said, "Well, we'll get a new car, a more comfortable one." And in the autumn of '67 we were on our way over to the Ambassador to the ABA Book Fair and we went by the showrooms of Citroen cars, the French car, and stopped at a traffic light, I think, and Fay

looked in the window and she said, "That's the one I want." And it was the new Citroen DS 21 sedan. So we went in and looked at it, and she liked it even more. Its comfort and roominess and all of this promised well for driving to New England. Well, in my sneaky little head I wanted to go back to France to see my old friend Georges Connes and to see MacIntyre, who I think was still then alive, and so I parlayed this desire of hers into a trip for me to France to buy a Citroen at the factory. So it came. I flew over in October of '67 and bought the car and ran it in, as they say, broke it in in the French countryside, and then shipped it over to England and visited my niece and her husband, the Lawrences, and shipped the car from London. So when '68 came around we had the new Citroen to drive to New England in.

MINK

Larry, there's one thing that has occurred to me that I've wanted to ask you, and since this is the last tape it will be all right maybe just to insert it, if you'll try to answer it honestly.

POWELL

Well, you ask me honestly, now. No sneaky questions.

MINK

No, it's nice; it 's a question which you've got to decide how you want to answer it. You know, it seems to me that you and Neal Harlow were very close. But it seems to me that since your retirement, perhaps towards the end of your career, that you drew apart from one another. What really do you attribute this to, that you became more or less diametrically opposed in philosophies?

POWELL

Well, first of all, probably geographical.

MINK

With his going to UBC [University of British Columbia] .

POWELL

He was up there for ten years and he did ask me to come up and speak toward the end of my career, and I just wasn't able to in the year '66. And we never

visited him there. I'd been in the Northwest before. I think Neal's interests became more organizational. He became president of the Canadian Library Association and became more--well, I don't want to say "technical," but he certainly was more responsive to new developments in librarianship.

MINK

Less book-oriented.

POWELL

Less book-oriented, more progressive than I. I regretted all this: Neal's letting this take from him the great capacity he had for research and writing. And I wouldn't say we became diametrically opposed. We had all of those reunions at ALA Midwinter.

MINK

Well, let me say that I inferred this from the speech that he made at the end of the convocation.

POWELL

That wasn't a very good speech, I'll admit. He didn't give enough time and thought to it.

MINK

Well, you know, it just doesn't seem to me as though it's quite proper at a convocation for one to be critical of the person that it's honoring. When I use the word "critical," I mean in the sense that you're criticizing the philosophy of the man--perhaps not the man himself, not criticizing what you consider to be his mistakes, but just his outlook on life. POTOLL: Well, I'd probably have done the same if I'd been speaking at Neal's. I'd have got up and said, "Look, I regret that this guy has not been more like I think he should have been." You see, we tend to speak out of our deepest selves at these moments. Neal, I think, probably felt that I spent too much time on the theatricals of librarianship and not enough on the hard facts of a developing, technological librarianship.

MINK

He, of course, was a dean, too. He had been criticizing you from that standpoint as well.

POWELL

Well, yes, because at the Coulter lecture, at San Francisco at CLA, when Dick Dillon spoke and Neal-- or, no, it was the Coulter lecture which Neal gave, I guess. We spoke to the Alumni Association about our philosophy of librarianship, and I said very strongly that I thought Columbia and Rutgers were mistaken in admitting so many part-time, commuting kind of librarians, and that our philosophy at UCLA of almost all full-time enrollment was the best. And Neal got up and gently rebutted this and said, "Certainly there's room for both." He was right and I was right. But what I used to chide Neal for, I think, when we met at Midwinter, was the amount of time that he spent on the machinery of being a dean. He personally looked after all kinds of things that I delegated to Florence Williams and to the girls in the office here. Neal used to--well, you remember. He had a passion for doing things in depth. I think he and Andy Horn both have this. I just don't work that way. Well, these were differences. They weren't alienating differences, certainly. Neal and I always, I think, loved each other--still do--but we developed very differently. Our circumstances were different. Our styles were different. And then always, I think, people who have worked for me in a system of librarianship capacity have always been a little glad to get out from under, and . . .

MINK

Yes, the family aspect.

POWELL

And they felt I was a little too paternal toward them probably, and I remember joking at Midwinter, we-- Johnny Smith and Neal and Vosper and Williams and Horn and all--would always get together. They called themselves the Association of Refugees from Powell, and we'd have a great time. I understand this. I didn't insist on being the whole show here, but certainly I was the star performer.

MINK

Well, that was a little digression, but I think it was interesting because we hadn't talked about Neal too much.

POWELL

Well, Neal is back here, now, of course, and the other day he and Marian came up and had lunch with us at Malibu, and we took them on a long ride through the hills afterwards. It was in the spring and the flowers were just out, and Marian Harlow in particular knows a good deal about botany, and we had a wonderful time. But, I should say, and I will say now, when we come to the New England year, this involves Neal. So we drove East, Jim, in '68, in the Citroen, stopping in Yuma and Tucson and El Paso and Del Rio and San Antonio, and then through Louisiana, New Orleans, and the Gulf Coast, and then up the Carolinas, through Virginia, stopping in Baltimore for a visit with the Castagnas. We arrived in Middletown, Connecticut, on February 1, 1968 (it was just thirty years to the morning when I started to work here in this library) . We had a most beautiful spring semester. The Center for Advanced Studies was a kind of a junior Institute for Advanced Studies, similar to the senior one at Princeton, and its purpose was to bring together interdisciplinary peoples. We had a building of our own, a library lounge, and offices of our own. There were six of us fellows at the time, all from different areas--a Turkish physicist, an economist from the Federal Reserve Board, a Norwegian sociologist, a poet, a Milton scholar, and myself.

MINK

An interesting combination.

POWELL

And we saw each other at lunch if we wished to, at the faculty club, but every two weeks we dined together, Monday evening, in the Honors College, and one of us read a paper. Our acting director that year, Paul Horgan, was on sabbatical in residence. Our acting director was Phil Hallie, a philosopher--a wonderful fellow. We came to love him and his wife. And our colleagues there--it was a most affectionate and close and interesting year. A complete change really of intellectual milieu. Wesleyan is a very interesting, rich college, which has great resources from Xerox stock that it sold at an enormous profit, and the center was a way of spending some of this Xerox money. Not only did we have a facility there, an office, secretarial help, but we were given a house. Fay and I had a college house on the very edge of campus, completely furnished, a two-story. Cape Cod kind of house. Fay loved it. She had a great time there. We were able to walk to everything. Middletown is a college town.

Well, I also had a fine relationship with Wyman Parker, the college librarian, an old friend. I was taken in by the library staff there, in the best sense, and made to feel at home. I'd begun on that February 1 my book on California--the Guggenheim book.

MINK

On Literature and Landscape.

POWELL

I began to write it there.

MINK

I suppose then that some of these papers that you read at the institute were embryo chapters of that book.

POWELL

They were progress reports on Mary Austin, on Dana, on *Ramona*, on Robert Louis Stevenson. Those were the four chapters I wrote in Middletown.

MINK

Using the resources of the. . .

POWELL

The resources of Wesleyan, of Trinity in Hartford, and of the Beinicke at Yale. Of course, they were tremendous. . .

MINK

Very, very great sources.

POWELL

Great sources, particularly on Stevenson. Wesleyan either had what I wanted or borrowed it. Remember, their librarian had been Fremont Rider, and he'd been much interested in the West. He published or edited a guidebook on California, remember. *Rider's California*. For example, they'd been a member of the Book Club of California from the beginning. So there in Wesleyan in Connecticut, were the complete runs of the Book Club publications. These

were helpful to me, because of the things that Jim Hart and Franklin Walker did in this series of publications were pertinent to what I was doing.

MINK

Walker's work in the literary frontier?

POWELL

That's right. And Jim Hart on Stevenson and on Dana. So the fellowship, Jim, paid us well indeed. We received \$7,500 for the four months, plus house, plus office and secretarial help, telephone and everything else. It was a very comfortable arrangement. We were able to live very comfortably on that. The fellowship's terms were completely permissive. You had no duties, but if you wished, you could volunteer to do something, and most of us there, most of the six fellows, gave courses. I chose to give one on Southwestern literature. Paul Horgan had been teaching that course in the English department on Southwestern art and history and anthropology. I followed him, giving a course on Southwestern literature.

MINK

He was teaching anthropology in the literature department?

POWELL

Well, it was a cultural course, not anthropology, but the. . .

MINK

Ethnology?

POWELL

Yes, it was a composite kind of thing that Horgan could do, and did. It was a kind of interdisciplinary thing. Many of these things were true at Wesleyan, where the lines between the departments were quite slack. But it was difficult for me to follow, because Horgan is a brilliant man, a virtuoso, artist and historian, and a man of great personal charm. So I was a little nervous seeing what I would get. Well, Horgan recruited the students for me, continuing students out of his class. I had the marvelous total number of four students. But, Jim, these were some of the greatest I've ever had. They were seniors and four totally different guys. And they had all come to me when I was counseling

and telling them what the course was to be, and they said, "Look, you've got a great act, Mr. Powell. We just had Paul Horgan's course and we're interested to see if you can maintain the pace." And I said, "Well, I won't be able to in the same way, but I'll give you something that he didn't give you. I'll give you fiction and literature, poetry of the Southwest, and I'll expect you to work your little asses off." And Lord, they did. We met once a week, Tuesday evenings, in my office in the center, from 6:30 to 9:00. And I want to speak a little about these four kids, because they were great. New England college students are--let's face it--culturally, intellectually ahead of California. They've come from a more advanced cultural situation, and a senior at Wesleyan is the equivalent of any graduate student I've ever seen at UCLA. These were kids well prepared and sophisticated--not effete by any means. They were a very rugged group. Let me tell you about them. First, Larry Gross, from Orono, Maine, the University of Maine. His father is head of the German department there. He and his wife, mind you, had come to Wesleyan as freshmen four years before--a married couple--and they'd gone four years through Wesleyan (the man, of course, because it's a men's college) and had children while big Larry Gross was taking his degree in American studies. He was six-feet-four, had been summers a telephone linesman, and he'd been a timber cruiser in Maine. He was really a rugged guy. He was a shot-putter on the track team and yet a terribly sensitive and gentle guy that wanted to get a view of Southwestern lit. I had Charlie Hill, who was a New York State student from the Hudson River Valley. He was majoring in political science and was going to Harvard the next year for graduate work. Larry Gross was going to Brown. Charlie Hill was not a hippie, but he had a long, handlebar moustache and he dressed rather informally. The third student was Jack Michael from Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania--Chadds Ford being Andrew Wyeth's (the painter) hometown. Jack Michael had grown up with Jamie Wyeth, the painter's son, who is also a painter. He came from a very interesting cultural background. He had come out West in his sophomore or junior year and attended Occidental one year, because he wanted to get away from New England. And he'd roamed all over Southern California and had enough in one year, turned around, and had come back for his senior year at Wesleyan. He was the only one of the four who had ever been West. And the fourth student was probably the most interesting of all and was somewhat of a hippie type. His name was Ian Vickery, and he was the son of a Czechoslovak woman and an English diplomat

father. He'd been born in Czechoslovakia. He was bilingual, he was majoring in Russian studies, and he wore his hair long with a headband, wore beads, rode a motorcycle, and was said to live in the woods across the Connecticut River in Moodus with a woman! He was really an interesting type, Jim. He wore his hair long with a pageboy bob, was blue-eyed, very casual and unstructured, and in the beginning very--not hostile, but very skeptical of me, seeing in me a librarian, a square-type he was going to shoot down. Well, so it was a challenge, but I worked at it. And Wy Parker, God bless him, in the library had said, "Look, here's your reading list. I'm going to charge every single book that you want and you want these students to have to you and your study. They go there for the semester, and if anybody else calls for them, I'll tell them they're out." So I had my whole reading library there in my study, maybe 100 books, that I expected these kids to read.

MINK

This is idealistic-type teaching.

POWELL

It is. It's only possible in a college where you have 1,000 students, maybe, and a great deal of freedom and permissiveness.

MINK

No administrative bureaucracy to cut through.

POWELL

No, none at all. And Wy Parker, he's a Vermonter, he's a New Englander, he's just the salt of the earth, a great librarian. He and his staff, all of them all the way down, made it so wonderful for me. I told the kids, "Look, here are the books. Now, you're not going to read them all. If anybody reads all of these, I'll flunk them. I want you to . . ." We used my *Southwestern Book Trails* and *Dobie's Guide to Life and Literature* as required texts. They had to buy copies of these. I said, "You set up a project--what you want to do and what you want to report on--and pick your books there, and I'll expect progress reports from you." They milled around a while, for a week or two, and then they began to settle in and showed interest. We then spent our Tuesday evenings in a combination of my talking and they responding or talking about what they'd

been reading, working toward the final, which was to be this, Jim: it was to be an original exercise, a creative work of some kind that they'd write, either a story, a poem, or an essay, or something on the Southwest that would represent their reading and interest. And in only one case, that of Jack Michael, would it represent personal experience, because none of them had been West. So it was all what they got out of the books and out of me. We had great times, because it was winter then, and early spring, and snowy and cozy; and Charlie Hill would go downstairs to the lounge of the center and bring up coffee, and Fay would send over goodies. Sure, it was ideal study and teaching, Jim; this was the way it should be. We sat around in my study and did what we all wanted to do; and yet I was the director, and they knew that I knew more than they did. This is what a teaching relationship must be; you're not coequals. I was older and more experienced in reading and travel and I was able to lead them. But they were free to gallop off whenever they chose. They were outspoken and very critical of some of the books on my list. Vickery, the hippie, would come up with, "Aw, this is a bunch of crap. What did you put this on for?" And it happened to be something very dear to me, you see, and I would bleed, like Haniel Long. I said, "Well, I don't think you've really read it, Vickery. You're making a crap judgment." And I said, "I want you to read this *Interlinear to Cabeza de Vaca*, because that's a hippie piece of literature." "Well," he says, "it looks precious." "Well," I said, "look, you son of a bitch, read it and then talk to me about it. Don't make these superficial judgments." Well, by God, we hooked him on it. Haniel Long hooked him on it, because his exercise, Jim, at the end of the semester was to write in his way a kind of an imaginary hippie -epic of what it would be like to be a hippie Cabeza de Vaca 400 years later. He imagined going across the country on his motorcycle and meeting the natives.

MINK

A sort of an *Along Came Bronson* type of TV script.

POWELL

That's right. So he did this. It was a very interesting and creative sort of thing. Larry Gross, the big boy from Maine, came up with a very interesting short story which he wrote as though he were a telephone lineman in southern New Mexico, down there toward Texas, toward El Paso. He projected the story as

though he were a lineman and he'd been working on the telephone line of a Mexican family and looked through the window and fallen in love with a Mexican woman and figured a way to get at her. It was a really shocking thing for this big, discreet, married man from Maine to write. But it was a real release for him, because here he could commit adultery creatively, you see, and keep from being caught by the husband, because he heard that Mexican husbands with their knives are very jealous. Well, this is the kind of damn thing they came up with. Charlie Hill wrote a story about building a concrete dam, as though he'd been a cement wheeler on one of the big dams in the Southwest. It was based, really, on a summer that he'd had on construction work in New York State. He transposed that to the Southwest.

MINK

Did these students, in their short stories and essays and so on, manage to convey a realistic picture of the Southwest?

POWELL

Well, they did it in a synthetic way, because their data was pulled out of books and pictures and Horgan's course, you see, that they'd had, and mine, and the reading.

MINK

Was anything that came out of this thing published?

POWELL

I told them this, but of course they went away to graduate work here and there and nothing that I know of has come of it. Jack Michael wrote a story about Southern California--the boy who'd been at Oxy a year. He wrote a story about being on the beach at Santa Monica. It was a very strange story, really, based on his experience, and the odd types at the mouth of Santa Monica Canyon, muscle boys and all the Sunday confusion there. Well, I ended up, of course, reading them something that I was writing. I said, "Look, you guys came through and I'll read you something of mine." I was trying to write something about the struggle for the Colorado River in terms of human protagonists. I read them a draft of something I was writing and they said, "Well, we'll give you a passing grade, if you'll give us one." Wednesdays I had

lunch with my colleagues in the English department at the Faculty Club. I met the director of the Wesleyan Press, and all kinds of interesting things went on. Martin Luther King was assassinated that spring and then later [Robert] Kennedy. We were moved by all the reaction to this. The *Threepenny Opera* was put on by the students, which was a great affair.

MINK

Then you said that Neal Harlow figured in this, too.

POWELL

I made a lot of trips, you see, that spring, because I'd been invited to speak to the Connecticut Library Association, their annual meeting in New Haven, which I did. I'd been invited to dedicate the new library at Lycoming College in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, which we did. We drove down there and spoke and met the Methodists in their lair. A dry lair. Fay had a helluva time getting a drink before dinner, you see, because they're so militantly dry. They gave me a Litt.D. Where else did we go?--we went to Philadelphia. The Drexel Library School gave me its annual achievement award, which is hanging up there on the wall, that beautiful calligraphic manuscript there. We went to Philadelphia. Luther Evans had received the award in a previous year, and Emerson Greenaway, and Joe Wheeler. So all those previous recipients were there, and, bless you, I was introduced for the award by Neal. Really, he made up for any deficiencies of his speech out here.

MINK

Little indiscretions? [laughter]

POWELL

He gave me a wonderful introduction that really was touching. And then he invited me and Fay to come down and speak to the students at Rutgers the next month, which we did. We drove down from Middletown to New Brunswick and spent two nights with Neal and Marian.

MINK

How did you find the attitude of the Rutgers school?

POWELL

Well, I found them--and I teased Neal about it a lot--starved for books. I'd been cued because one of their graduates of the year before was on the Wesleyan staff and he cued me. He says, "Look, give them book talk, because they don't do that at Rutgers. Between Shaw and Harlow and all, they're talking about documentation and techniques."

MINK

I suppose this is why Ralph Johnson, who was a graduate of that school, has become so technologically oriented, although he began his career in Special Collections .

POWELL

It's very strong that way, coming from Shaw and then Harlow. So I teased them a lot. Neal introduced me again, beautifully. And we sensed, I think, that a lot of the--not alienation, but the distance between us had been closed. It was a very crucial visit in one sense, because Marian Harlow and Fay put their heads together, and Marian was determined that Neal do what I'd done, retire at sixty, because he was killing himself. You know how Neal works, all out, seven o'clock to seven o'clock on the job, and then later and earlier at home. And he was tired and thin and nervous--gaunt, even--and Marian said, "He's got to stop or he'll kill himself."

1.25. TAPE NUMBER: XIII, Side Two (June 25, 1970)

POWELL

The Harlows gave us a reception at their home for the Rutgers faculty, and then the meeting with the students. Neal and I and Fay and Marian were able to talk quite a lot about what retirement had meant to me in the two years I'd been retired, and I think this probably helped them toward a decision. I just encouraged them in every way to do the same thing.

MINK

And so he retired.

POWELL

Two years later at sixty. He was two years younger than I. And he'd completed his new building, done everything he'd set out to do at Rutgers, really, in the

same way that I had finished my program here at UCLA. It was a natural time for him, and so it proved, because we saw Neal last fall--remember, they took three months to drive west--and when he arrived here he was a new man, completely relaxed and had gained weight, looked fine. I think probably the most meaningful thing of all that I did, Jim, in that spring of '68 in New England, was to find my origins in New York State in the Hudson River Valley and my father's birthplace and where he's buried. I'd never been there since I was a baby, and I had no memory of visits as a little boy. It was about one hundred fifty miles northwest of where we were in Connecticut, through the Berkshires into the Hudson River Valley at Ghent near Chatham. We went over one spring day and found the village of Ghent, which was really a Quaker settlement, and Orchard Farm, where my father had been born and raised. And after some trouble we found the little Quaker burying ground, which lies on a hillside two miles east of Ghent. There we found a number of Powells and Townsends and Macys. On my father's side: his parents and their parents-- Aaron Powell, who'd been a great abolitionist, and Elizabeth Powell Bond, who'd been dean of Swarthmore, and my father, who was buried there in 1922. It was a beautiful hillside with maybe a hundred graves, no longer used but maintained, and each generation a member of the Friends has kept the graveyard. My first cousin, Mason Powell, who lives in Massachusetts, is in charge this generation of coming over once a year and repairing any damage and setting up any fallen stones. So it was a real return to origins. In 1954, I visited my mother's birthplace down river at Cornwall, so this was a rounding out. One more thing we did, Jim, was to go up to Williamstown and visit Archer. Here again was someone that we'd not been alienated from, but certainly our trails had diverged. But we had a fine visit with Margot and Archer and saw the Chapin and the main library and attended music, and they had a faculty reception for us, faculty and librarians at their home. These are things you can do in New England; everything is so comparatively near. I visited the various New England colleges, Amherst and Trinity and Connecticut at Storrs, and the various public libraries I came to know around Middletown. The town librarian in Middletown, whose name was Van Bynum, probably related to Lindley Bynum, if they ran it back. He was a great friend to me, because I found things in the public library that the college didn't have, notably on Jack London. Well, the semester came to an end and we took two weeks before I was due to teach at Simmons and drove up into Maine. It was

the first time either of us had ever been in the state of Maine. We loved it. We went up the coast to Boothbay Harbor and Bar Harbour. Just drifted up that wonderful, rainy, rock-bound coast for a week or so, and then we struck through the mountains, stopping first to visit my student Larry Gross and his parents at their summer camp on a pond in Maine. Then we made a rendezvous with people that you'll remember, Jim, this was Kay and Richard Hocking. Remember, he'd been professor of philosophy, or assistant professor, and had never been promoted, and then let go here.

MINK

I took classes from him.

POWELL

Did you? One of the best persons here--I don't know how good a teacher he was. . .

MINK

He was the son of the elder Hocking.

POWELL

Father Hocking, William Ernest. Well, they'd been at Emory all these years in Georgia, but they summered every year on Father Hocking's farm in New Hampshire. And, of course, Father and Mother Hocking had died in their nineties, and Richard and Kay and some of the rest of the family were up there on a 200-acre farm. We found them, then, deep in the woods, very remote, not primitive, but a pastoral place. And I think I helped Richard on a decision as to what to do with his father's papers. It was a tremendous collection of manuscripts, letters, and archives on Father Hocking's ninety-three years of life in a stone house that he'd built. There the archives were, in filing cabinets and boxes and every other thing, overflowing this great wooden house, and Richard didn't know what to do with them. The Library of Congress wanted them and Harvard wanted them. He wanted them to go to Harvard, but Harvard's problem was there was no room for them at present, and wouldn't be until they had some enlargement. So I think we worked out an intermediate arrangement whereby the Episcopal Seminary in Cambridge would have them on deposit for X years until Harvard could accommodate

them. And I believe that's where they've gone. Then we drove down to Boston, and Fay flew home and I stayed for an intensive three weeks' summer course in the Simmons Library School. I've long known Ken Shaffer, its director, and he'd been after me to come back, and this seemed to me to be the logical time, when we were in New England, and Fay naturally didn't want to stay in Boston in early summer. It was heating up. I'd be busy teaching every morning, so she flew home and I stayed and had a resident's head suite in one of the dormitories on a beautiful quad there on the Simmons campus. I taught a course that was listed in their catalog, but I turned it into my own kind of course, called "Resources in the Research Library," how to collect, to organize, to use the staff for research materials in libraries such as Huntington, Morgan, Bancroft. And it was a great experience, Jim. Here again, I found the need of linking up with students. I will never lose this. I must have this, I guess, as long as I live; and I had it there in a very rich sense. It was a course that met four mornings a week from nine o'clock to twelve o'clock. It was three hours, four mornings a week, for three weeks. It was the equivalent of a full course. They could take no other course. So they were mine in the morning and then their afternoons were free for their reading. I found Simmons a very live school in its own quarters, the whole floor of the college library. It's the only library school in New England, the only accredited school. Southern Connecticut has an unaccredited school, but it draws them from the Ivy League. The summer courses are coed. In fact, the library school is coed, although Simmons at large is a women's college. And I happened to have all women students, eighteen of them. That was great. Powell's harem. They were drawn from Ivy League schools. They were working librarians, most of them, finishing their degrees. They were from Smith and Vassar and Mount Holyoke, from Vermont and New Hampshire state universities, from MIT. And we had a helluva good time, Jim, just hammering it out there. I prepared a reading list, a course outline that had been mimeographed, and they had the supporting library materials. It was a very good way to teach, everything there under one roof. I lunched every day in the. . .

MINK

I hope you didn't neglect oral history.

POWELL

Oral history? No, I was interviewed in an oral history project.

MINK

No, when teaching, about organizing the resources for the research library.

POWELL

Jim, that's a course in itself, and you know it. That deserves a full semester. I was interviewed in an oral history project by the editor of the *Bay State Librarian*, the Massachusetts quarterly. Ken Kister, who teaches in the library school. And he did a hell of an interesting interview. Did you see it, with all the candid camera shots of me all the way through--Powell in action. It was based on my autobiography that had been published that spring. I think it's one of the best things of its kind I've ever participated in. The reviewer was-- well, like you, Jim--he knew something about me; so he was able to ask appropriately embarrassing questions as you do, trying to uncover my tracks. All right, we came home from that, and I drove across, stopped in Aspen and had a week with my friend Dr. Bieler, heard music day and night. I went down on through New Mexico to opera at Santa Fe, to opera in Flagstaff. I visited in Phoenix at the public library and in Tucson at the university library. I came on home for the rest of '58. I guess I was working on the California book. Then we took off once again in the spring of '69, last year, and flew to Italy, came up to Switzerland, picked up a Karmann Ghia, back to London, and were in residence again at Dolphin Square for three months. And once again I taught a course, a lecture series on research libraries in America, which I gave at Loughborough, at Roy Stokes's school. And here again was a totally different experience, certainly, from Wesleyan, from Simmons, from UCLA--commuting once a week 115 miles up the motorway to Leicestershire, lunching with the staff on Tuesday noon. And Beatrice Warde, the typographer, who was lecturing that same day in the same school, came up from London. We had these great luncheon sessions, then I lectured from two o'clock to four o'clock, then I had tea with the staff and then got in my Karmann Ghia and zeroed back to London for a late dinner with Fay. It was great. I had thirty students, I think. They weren't as live as the Welsh students, but I did recruit one to work in the book trade for a year. He is now working with Tony Rota in London. He's a Lancashire boy that I interested in the idea that bookstore experience can be meaningful in research librarianship. So that was one scalp out of that

experience. Well, Fay and I traveled, of course. We drove all over England. We saw a lot of my niece and nephew, the Lawrences. We were back in France once. And what else did we do, Jim? We did something unusual that spring, but it's blurred now. I can't think of what it was. Well, we came home; certainly, that was the high point. And we've been home, good Lord, ever since, for a year now, with trips to Arizona and New Mexico, to northern California.

MINK

You said that you had at the time of your retirement four definite writing projects in mind. Now, you talked about the California literature and landscape project. Could you mention briefly the other three?

POWELL

Well, the other was the autobiography.

MINK

Which, of course, you did.

POWELL

That I wrote in London.

MINK

And that was done mainly in London.

POWELL

Yes, altogether.

MINK

And then the printing of it was done in Amsterdam.

POWELL

No, it was at home, by Bowker.

MINK

Oh, that's right, Bowker did it.

POWELL

Yes. It was printed in New York. Well, the other two are more creative projects that haven't been published; so I'll wait on publication, Jim, and let my work speak for itself. One relates to the struggle for the water.

MINK

Chapters of which you were reading to your students at Wesleyan.

POWELL

Yes. So let's wait on those. But they're done in a sense.

MINK

They're fiction, or more essay-type or non-fiction?

POWELL

Just creative masterpieces.

MINK

Creative masterpieces. Now, one more thing that you have been involved in lately for the city--the selection of the librarian. Would you like to speak a little bit about that? Because I think it's something that professional people do become involved in, and we don't choose a librarian very often in Los Angeles. How much of it can you talk about?

POWELL

Well, I don't know if they've made the selection yet, but certainly we recommended the top three out of fifty-three applications that we evaluated, and we interviewed twelve. It was a very interesting experience, based there again on my Occidental background.

MINK

The experience which gave you bronchitis, I think.

POWELL

Yes, I cracked up afterwards; I was tired out. Interviewing is hard work. It was an Occidental experience because two members of the Civil Service

Commission of the city of Los Angeles are Oxy graduates--Guy Wadsworth and Herb Sutton of the Gas Company and Pacific Mutual. And Herb Sutton had read my autobiography and said to the civil service manager, Mrs. Morris, "We ought to get Powell in to help us examine." So I responded on that basis. And Ed Castagna came out from Baltimore and Bill Geller, the county librarian, and three leading businessmen, one of whom I'd gone to high school with, Steven Bilheimer of Silverwoods. We did the examining, and it was meaningful to me, because here was the library that I'd first worked in, the Los Angeles Public Library, thirty-five years after, or whatever it was, and I was helping pick the successor in that great tradition that goes back to Mary Foy up through Perry and Warren and Hamill. I think we creamed this great group of applicants and gave them three to choose from.

MINK

Who were you looking for, mainly?

POWELL

We were looking for. . .well, what I was looking for--and I think Castagna and I hammered home on this--was a cultural sophistication in addition to technical competence. We felt that the city librarian should be a person going clear back to the [Charles F.] Lummis tradition of a widely cultured person who is also a good manager and a good technician. And, of course, this is a kind of paragon, and damn few of the candidates would pass this. The fact that we eliminated out of fifty-three all but twelve, just on their paper applications, shows the standards that we were applying, and the twelve we examined, we really put through the ringer. We gave an hour to each. And in one hour, six people questioning you, one can really take you apart.

MINK

What kind of questions were you asking? Just a couple for instances.

POWELL

Oh, I'd ask people what they did in their free time. "What do you do when you aren't working eighteen hours a day? Or what means most to you in the opportunity? What do you think is the greatest thing you can do if you become city librarian? What's going to be your direction?" And Castagna

would always ask them, "What was the most interesting thing you've ever done in librarianship? What do you think was the high point of your career?" We got some very interesting answers. And the businessmen would ask them, "What do you want this job for? What does it mean to you?" And somebody would say, "Well, aren't you afraid to come to Los Angeles? Don't the problems here frighten you?" And we hit them from all sides this way. They were very sophisticated men--McDonald and Duggan — Dan Duggan from UCLA was one. He's from Coldwell Banker, the vice-president. And Steve Bilheimer, the Silverwoods man, is a very interesting character that I'd known fifty years ago.

MINK

I don't suppose you can say at this point who the three candidates are because they haven't chosen one.

POWELL

Well, but it has been published who they are.

MINK

Well, would you talk about the three candidates.

POWELL

Well, I think Walter Curley from Boston, library consultant with Arthur D. Little, former business manager of the Providence Public Library, represented stability and sophistication in a very dignified and strong sense and a rich background of library experience in New England, very strong managerial qualities, and a very cool and dignified and strong personal presence that we all liked. The second, and probably my favorite choice, was Wyman Jones, Fort Worth Public Library, who's an Oklahoman or Texan and had most of his experience there. He'd been assistant librarian of Dallas. He'd grown up in merchandising. His father was a Woolworth manager, and Wyman Jones had been an assistant manager in a Woolworth 's store as a young man and had good preparation there. But in Fort Worth he had had a lot of interesting community experience in taking the library into the community, and he was a very swinging kind of guy, very aggressive and alert and imaginative, I felt--the kind of person Los Angeles needs.

MINK

Something like Skip Graham at Louisville.

POWELL

But Jones even had a better background than Skip. It was not quite as eccentric, and a little smoother, a little more sophisticated and polished than Skip was. Well, I liked Jones; I thought Los Angeles needed this kind of person if you're going to bring the community together. And then the third choice was Ernie Segal.

MINK

Who is the present. . .

POWELL

Head of the main, central library. He automatically came on as number three because of the promotional exam feature--that is, anyone on the promotional exam who passes it has to come on and be part of the final panel. So he was the third. So it's between those three.

MINK

I personally like Ernie Siegel very much and feel that he does a very good job.

POWELL

He made a fine appearance, cool and honest, simple and straightforward, and a very appealing kind of guy. I think he would have the staff with him in a very strong sense. Well, it happened, Jim, that I came down with bronchitis after that, because I put a helluva lot into it, really, these two days of just probing and hammering away at these cookies. It's hard work, and it's an emotional drain. Castagna was our house guest; we had great visits with Ed. He came out alone and we commuted every day, and he's, I think, one of my closest friends and colleagues, of course, in the profession. He was a very strong factor in getting our school established here originally, you remember. Well, I'd had an invitation about that time to go down to San Diego and speak at the retirement luncheon for Clara Breed, the city librarian. The mayor of the community gave her a great luncheon, at the U. S. Grant Hotel. Five hundred came. Fay and I flew down. And everyone was there--the mayor, the city

council, the library, a lot of commissioners, and all her friends in the community, and a great many surrounding librarians.

MINK

Well, she's made a great reputation in California.

POWELL

Yes, she was in a great tradition, you see--Cornelia Plaister, Althea Warren, and Clara Breed. And I said, "This tradition must be continued; you must have a great successor." The city manager was present and he heard me say this. He called me the next day and said, "Well, we're going to be examining for the successor to Miss Breed. Will you come down and assist me examining?" It's not a civil service job; it's an appointment by the city manager entirely. But he asks help, and the city personnel officer took part. The city manager and I, the three of us, then, examined the three candidates--Marco Thorne, the assistant librarian, and Ernie Siegel, who came down because he'd been ten years in San Diego before he'd come to Los Angeles, and John Perkins from Inglewood.

MINK

There was no examination promotional connected with this?

POWELL

No exam. But I can't comment on this, because I don't think they've made a selection. I simply spent an afternoon with them, with the city manager and the personnel officer. I did have this compliment, Jim, by the city personnel officer who does all the interviewing for their key city jobs. He said afterwards, "Powell, you've given me a lesson in good interviewing. You really took them apart." I said, "Well, Goddammit, I've been doing this long enough in my own staff and then in all the library school applicants--I interviewed them all for six years, every goddam one of them that was local." And I said, "I had experience in getting at people and finding out who they are." I do this with pleasure. Part of the great joy I had, I think, was working with people in librarianship, not just these bloody books that we're always talking about, but the people themselves, the human material of which I am a piece. Not only that, Jim, but I got paid for it in San Diego. Los Angeles didn't pay me a cent; that was a labor of love. And I don't live in the city, mind you; I live in the county. I think they

ought to have given me gas money. We did have lunch in the Music Center, though; that was nice. But San Diego paid me very well, indeed. Now we're on the eve of another experience next spring. We've just been to Tucson and made arrangements with the president of the university to be a professor in residence next spring attached to him, to President Harvill, and to give a seminar in their new library school. Fay and I have just been over there and been entertained by everyone, and we're both very eager to be there next spring.

MINK

What will the subject of the seminar be?

POWELL

It will be something in academic libraries, research and academic libraries. We haven't really finalized it. It depends on the students that are enrolled, what their interests are. It's a new graduate school that is just getting going; so it will be open until this spring and we decide who's there and what we shall give them. I like their new dean, Don Dickinson, very much, and the faculty that he's gathered. And, of course, I love Tucson and the whole atmosphere and our many friends there--Don Powell and Pat Paylore and Dorothy McNamee (we all worked together) . Pat took Fay out to the Desert Museum to spend the day, and George Harvill, the president's wife, took Fay to Nogales for the day, and Dorothy McNamee gave us a dinner; the president gave us a reception. Well, Jim, this is the life of Riley, really. Retirement has been full of these rich and wonderful middle- aged rewards.

MINK

Not only rewards, but also a chance to really contribute in another way.

POWELL

In another way, that's right; and I hope to go on doing this speaking, writing, and traveling and writing. The California book is nearly done. Two more chapters to write and then Ward will publish it next spring. It's the best thing I've done by far, and I think even better work lies ahead, because I'm free. I have no administration, no committees, and I've not accepted any assignments that weren't close to my heart.

MINK

Like the Oral History Colloquium assignment.

POWELL

That's right. That was not central to what I can do. The best thing in oral history I can do is this, this kind of a talk, and I don't know what you'll make of it. Do I get to see it?

MINK

We won't make anything of it. We'll simply transcribe it, edit it, and send it to you for review.

POWELL

Oh, good, and I'll burn it.

And now I've decided not to! It goes into history, God help us all and keep us from burning. Let me say again how wonderful Jim is as an interviewer. He really knew how to turn me on, blast his black heart. Herewith my corrections, made June 11-12-13, 1971. Nothing to suppress. Nothing to add. It is not to be read until after my death, except if and when I give written permission to anyone undertaking an authorized (by me!) biography. Certainly not by students or staff.

--Lawrence Clark Powell

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