

ORAL HISTORY

Of

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WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

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Chapter 1 Early Years, Education, and First Positions as an Archivist

Dr. Jones: This is October 23, 2007 in the Woodcock Room of the Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs. With Dr. Mason's approval I will be covering, in a series of interviews, his founding of the Reuther Library and his long association with Wayne State University. In addition, I want to encompass his early life, education, career and personal interests. Dr. Mason will have an opportunity to edit the transcript and make any changes he wishes before the edited transcript is placed in the Archives and made available to qualified researchers.

Dr. Mason: Yes, I approve of these terms and I may want to place restrictions on some parts of the interview, which will be included in the Release Agreement.

Dr. Jones: That sounds agreeable. To begin, if I may, could you tell us something a bit about your parents and your early years?

Dr. Mason: I was born in Salem, Massachusetts on April 28, 1927. My parents were Homer Philip Mason and Mildred Trask Mason. My father was a Vermonter whose family came to that area in the 1780's and settled on the Connecticut River in Northern Vermont in a town called Barnet, located across the river from Monroe, New Hampshire. My father was trained as an engineer. He had his own farm, with a small dairy herd and some horses, too, as I recall. I lived there for several years in Vermont, although my birthplace was in Salem, Massachusetts adjacent to Beverly, Massachusetts, where my mother grew up.

It was the tradition then for the mother to be with her mother for childbirth. My mother was a trained nurse and was born and brought up in Beverly. Most of my early memories are of Beverly where I grew up and attended high school. My father came to Beverly in the 1920s to work at the United Shoe Machinery Company. I have a brother Wendell, two years younger than I, an older sister, Marjorie, (who died in 2012) and a younger sister, Marilyn. There were four children in our family growing up in Beverly in the 1930s and 1940s. It was a difficult time during the depression; a lot of unemployment, especially after the United Shoe Machinery Company, which was the major industry in Beverly, practically closed down. That was in the era before shoe manufacturing moved to southern states and to foreign countries.

Dr. Jones: Do you have any memories of any special events during your childhood years?

Dr. Mason: I remember the 1930's because of the depression which impacted the whole area. I also remember vividly one incident of my early childhood.

In 1938 in September while I was watching our high school football team practice, during a remarkably windy day I witnessed a football player kicking the football nearly a hundred yards. I couldn't believe it. Finally, at about four o'clock, the coach announced "We'll close up for the day; get home as soon as possible." During the walk home hundreds of trees and light poles came down. That was the hurricane of 1938. I was eleven years old. We lost electricity for a week. But the memory that I have is that we had no warning in advance of this hurricane; compared to today when a week before, the media warns you that a hurricane is expected days in advance. I also remember the news of the

Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. My uncle, Harold Estes, invited me to go with him to see the Boston Bruins play their arch rivals, the Montreal Canadiens. The game was interrupted with an announcement of the attack on Pearl Harbor. The fans were shocked at the news but, to my surprise, the hockey players from both teams skated around the ice, some arm in arm, after embracing each other. I remember that I could not understand this change of behavior on the part of the players until my uncle explained that they recognized that the United States would be joining Canada as an ally in the war against Japan and Germany. As I look back on this experience, I recognize why emotional events often remain clearly in your memory.

Dr. Jones: You mentioned your father. He worked for the United Shoe Machinery Company when he came to Beverly?

Dr. Mason: Yes, for several years before he became an engineer for the City of Beverly where he was involved in road construction and maintenance.

Dr. Jones: Did your father talk about his work?

Dr. Mason: Not in any great detail. He was forty when I was born and as a typical Vermonter, he said very little. I do remember that he worked long hours and instilled in me that "Yankee work ethic." During my summer vacation he always prepared a list of daily chores for me and my younger brother Wendell to perform. After the hurricane in 1938 when we had access to hundreds of fallen oak and maple trees, he assigned us to cut on some days a cord of wood with a cross cut saw. After this task was completed we could go to the local playground for baseball and other sports. At the time, I may not have been too

happy with this assignment but in retrospect, I enjoyed it. The work provided a goal and completing this and other tasks gave me great satisfaction. Although my family moved to Beverly permanently in the 1930s, the "Vermont work ethic" was carried on.

Dr. Jones: Your mother was a nurse. Where was she trained and where did she work?

Dr. Mason: She trained and received her nursing degree from the Brockton Nursing School about 1914-15. She worked in hospitals in Beverly and nearby Salem, Massachusetts and later in private nursing homes. She didn't work while her children were young.

Dr. Jones: Was it unusual for women of this era to be working, married women, in particular?

Dr. Mason: In general, yes. My father wasn't too enthused about her decision to work. He had been brought up in an era when the husband was the main provider and you were judged by your ability to provide for the family. My mother, on the other hand, did not share his views on work. She enjoyed working and being out and meeting other people.

Dr. Jones: How did your father express his views that your mother not work?

Dr. Mason: I would often hear him say "Mildred, you don't need to work, you should be home enjoying your life." Her six sisters expressed the same sentiments. But, despite the pressure, she continued to work when she wanted to. She was a very independent and forceful woman.

Dr. Jones: How did your parents meet?

Dr. Mason: When the depression hit the farm industry in Vermont in the 1920s, my father visited Beverly and got a job at the United Shoe Machinery Company. While there, he was introduced to my mother by her brother-in-law. They were married in 1923.

Dr. Jones: Do you have any memories of the Great Depression? How did it affect your household?

Dr. Mason: It certainly had a great impact on our community, especially with the decline of the shoe industry in Beverly. As I mentioned earlier The United Shoe Machinery Company suffered a major downturn when the shoe industry moved to southern states and abroad. Our family survived although there were often times when it was very difficult. My father commuted to his farm in Vermont for a year or so leaving my mother with four children. I got a part-time job in a local grocery store at a wage of ten to fifteen cents an hour delivering goods to nearby homes. In 1939, when I was twelve, I had my first paper route and in the summer, I worked as a gardener in nearby estates in Beverly Farms and Pride's Crossing. I also had a part-time position in Beverly's historic cemetery which gave me an opportunity to learn about life and religion in the 17th century. In high school I worked at a local golf course and was a substitute mail carrier in the summer months and during the Christmas season. The latter paid sixty-five cents an hour and qualified me for Social Security. By 1945, when I joined the U.S. Navy, I had accumulated about \$2,000 in my savings bank account.

Dr. Jones: Let's turn to your high school years. What were your favorite courses?

Dr. Mason: My favorite course was history, as you might suspect. The teacher, Carl Belmore, was an inspiration to me and other students. He was able to integrate local history with national themes and made us aware of the rich history of the Beverly-Salem area. English, on the other hand, was nearly my downfall. Miss Whelan, the teacher, believed – a view she shared with the class often – that the boys in her classes spent too much time and energies on sports and the War. I recall vividly one experience that was upsetting. My photo was highlighted in the local newspaper, on which incidentally, I served as part-time sports editor, showing me with a string of trout which I had caught on opening day, April 15, 1944. For missing her class that day, she gave me a special assignment of a twenty-page report on “Home Economics as a Career.” She also advised me that I should not be in the College Prep program and urged me to transfer to the “Manual Arts” curriculum. During my college years, Miss Whelan also expressed her doubts about me. After my second college year, I received notice that I had finished in the 99th percentile of my class. Boston University sent a letter to the principal of Beverly High School as well as the Beverly Evening Times reporting on this accomplishment. When Miss Whelan learned of this, she wrote to the Admissions Officer at Boston University claiming that they were in error, or that someone was using my name. The “Philip Mason” that she had for two years could never succeed in college. The Admissions Officer and my faculty advisor gleefully shared her letter with me. It must have been my “Navy experiences” that had matured me!

Dr. Jones: Were you interested in sports or other activities?

Dr. Mason: Baseball was and always has been my favorite sport. I played on our elementary school baseball team and later in high school. I continued with that sport. The Boston Red Sox captured my attention as a child and I avidly followed each session even though the Red Sox never won the American League championship. My first visit to Fenway Park was in 1934 when I saw Lefty Grove, the famous Philadelphia and Boston pitcher, play the last game of his career. I also saw Ted Williams play his first game for the Red Sox. Skating and hockey were also my favorite sports and during my senior year in high school, I served as captain of the latter team. In summer months I played in the American Legion Baseball league.

Dr. Jones: What about other high school activities, like drama; debating, etc.?

Dr. Mason: Sports and part time jobs took up most of my energies but I did serve on several clubs in high school. I was on the House of Delegates. In fact, I was president of that organization for two years. I should mention also that when I was fifteen, I joined DeMolay, a young men's organization sponsored by the Masonic order. Because of the war, when younger men, ages 18-22 were in the Service, the leadership of the organization fell upon the younger members. At age sixteen, for example, I was appointed "Master Councilor" of the local DeMolay Chapter. This was a very challenging and meaningful experience for me. As Master Councilor I ran the monthly meeting, managing the lengthy rituals that you had to perform. Also, as Master Councilor, I was invited to give a sermon in the Beverly Congregational Church. This was my first experience

in speaking before a large community group. I was apprehensive for days before the event but I survived and learned from that experience.

Dr. Jones: What other activities were you involved in during your years in DeMolay?

Dr. Mason: Well, we had a DeMolay baseball team, we sponsored charitable projects, held joint social affairs with the “Rainbow Girls” which was the female counterpart of DeMolay. With that group we sponsored musicals and plays. Incidentally, the DeMolay Chapter also performed an annual dramatic event. I remember one in particular called the “Meddlesome Maid.” I played the lead role, dressed as a young woman. My mother and several of my aunts attended. Afterward, I overheard my aunt comment “Philip isn't a great actor but he DOES have attractive legs.”

Dr. Jones: Tell me about your military experience?

Dr. Mason: Before I finished high school I enlisted in the U.S. Navy. I chose that branch of the service for several reasons. I lived on the Atlantic Ocean overlooking the bay between Beverly, Marblehead and Salem, the center of the Clipper ship era. Also, Beverly was the birthplace of the American Navy during the Revolutionary War – a tradition which was proudly celebrated by the residents of our community.

Dr. Jones: Tell me about your experience in the Navy and the impact it had on your life.

Dr. Mason: For my “Boot” training I was sent to the Sampson Naval Training Center on Lake Seneca, in upstate New York. It was my first time away from home and although the training sessions were long and arduous, I was, at first, terribly homesick. After hearing first-hand accounts from several of our officers who

had served in the Pacific earlier in the War, I realized that I had no idea of what I was facing. After this training session, I was sent on a troop train to the Naval station at Bremerton, Washington on Puget Sound. I was assigned for duty on the USS Mendoro, an aircraft carrier. On my arrival, the damaged carrier, the USS Franklin was being towed into port, listing to its side and badly damaged from a Japanese kamikaze attack. One of my high school friends had died during that battle, so the sight of this damaged ship upset me greatly.

Dr. Jones: What were your duties on the aircraft carrier?

Dr. Mason: I began as a Seaman 1st Class and after my promotion to Machinist Mate I was assigned for duty in the main propulsion center where the speed of the carrier was controlled. While on duty I received messages from the Bridge to set the speed of the carrier. This was accomplished by adjusting the steam intake forward and reverse wheels. My station was standing before a panel with scores of dials and two large wheels about two feet in diameter which controlled forward and reverse speeds. Another screen delivered messages from the Bridge such as "Full Speed, Flank Speed," etc. One day, which I shall always remember, the carrier was traveling "flank speed" to allow our planes to take off into the wind. I received a sudden message from the bridge "full speed astern" which required spinning one wheel shut and then opening the steam intake on the second wheel. I was trained to respond to this emergency situation but this was the first time I ever had to do it. The emergency resulted from a plane, which was taking off, falling suddenly in front of our ship; followed by a destroyer rushing to rescue the downed pilot. To avoid the

collision, the carrier had to stop and immediately reverse course as quickly as possible. The sudden change in speed was felt throughout our ship. Fortunately, we avoided a collision and the pilot was rescued. Shortly after the incident the Executive Officer of the ship arrived with praise for our prompt action.

Dr. Jones: As you think about your Navy experience what impact did it have on your future career? What lessons did you learn?

Dr. Mason: For the first time in my life I met with young men from all parts of the country and from all walks of life. For many, like me, it was the first time away from home. I learned a lot from this experience in the Navy, especially how to judge people and who to trust. I did observe how drinking often altered personalities. On one occasion, for example, I joined other sailors in going to a local tavern in the Panama Canal zone. To my surprise, one of my friends, a soft spoken, shy eighteen-year-old young sailor from up-state New York, became very belligerent after several drinks and started to challenge a group of Marines. The liquor seemed to change his personality and he became abusive as well. We were lucky to get him back to our carrier before a serious brawl took place. This to me, was a very unsettling experience. It made me aware of the influence of liquor on personalities. Also the experience of travel in the Pacific and Atlantic oceans was unforgettable and made me aware also of the horrors of war. I was just a young kid when I enlisted; I was much more mature when I was discharged from the Navy.

Dr. Jones: When did you leave the Navy?

Dr. Mason: I was discharged on August 6, 1946 and immediately returned to my home in Beverly, Massachusetts. Fortunately, I was eligible for the GI Bill which provided college tuition and a monthly stipend of sixty-five dollars a month. I started immediately to apply for college. I was always interested in Harvard where my uncle, Pliny Mason, graduated in 1902. He always encouraged me to attend Harvard; to him, it was the only choice. I soon learned, however, that Harvard's 1946 class was full, especially with returning veterans. I was encouraged to wait a year or perhaps move to New Hampshire and establish residence there since Harvard then had a quota system for states in New England. Not wanting to wait, I applied to Boston University and was accepted immediately. I started classes in September 1946. It was an experience that I shall never forget. Most of the enrolled students were war veterans; the average age was twenty-five. A large number of the students had not planned to attend college, and in fact, without the GI Bill they would not have been able to meet college costs. Their experiences in the War had changed their plans for the future. They had matured and wanted something better in life. I recall that several of the teachers at Boston University remarked that it was the most rewarding time of their academic careers. The program I selected was similar to the Monteith College, which opened at Wayne State in the early 1960s. I enjoyed thoroughly my four years at Boston University. After the first two years in the General College, I transferred to the College of Liberal Arts.

Dr. Jones: Did the GI Bill meet most of your college expenses?

Dr. Mason: Yes, for two years; then I was on my own. Fortunately, my grades were excellent. I finished in the 99th percentile during my first two years. As a result, and with the strong endorsement of several of the faculty, I was chosen for the Augustus Howe Buck Fellowship which covered my tuition, living and personal expenses, not only for my undergraduate classes but all costs of graduate study.

Dr. Jones: What were your career plans?

Dr. Mason: I thought about a Law Degree but during my sophomore year I decided that I would pursue courses and graduate work in history. I might add that I was greatly influenced by Professor Stephen Tryon, a distinguished American History Professor at Boston University. He was not only my advisor but my mentor as well.

Dr. Jones: Why did you select the University of Michigan for your graduate work?

Dr. Mason: I applied at Harvard and Columbia Universities but I finally decided on the University of Michigan. Dr. Tryon had a good friend and associate, Dr. Lewis G. Vander Velde who was a fellow graduate student at Harvard in the 1930s. Dr. Vander Velde was Chair of the History Department at Michigan and helped facilitate my admission.

Dr. Jones: Tell me about your graduate work at Michigan.

Dr. Mason: I arrived on campus in September 1950 and met immediately with Dr. Vander Velde, the Chair of the department. Professor Vernor W. Crane, the Colonial historian was assigned as my advisor, but later, Professor Sidney Fine persuaded me to work under him in American political and economic history.

Dr. Fine had received his Ph.D. from Michigan about 1948 and was well respected by his colleagues and graduate and undergraduate students. He was also a brilliant and recognized scholar. He set high standards for his graduate students, especially for those who had him as their advisor. Dr. Fine was also very demanding in his assignments and his seminars. He mellowed somewhat when he discovered that he was suffering from an ulcer and had stopped drinking coffee. He terrified many students in his seminars, including me. Nevertheless, I have always held him in high esteem and recognize the influence he had on my long career. After graduation and after the Labor Archives was established, we became close friends.

Dr. Jones: What fields of history did you select?

Dr. Mason: There were six for my oral exam. U.S. Constitutional History, Tudor and Stuart England, Renaissance and Reformation, Labor Economics, Historical Geography and 19th Century American Political and Economic History. Under the rules at Michigan, all of my A grades in History during my senior year at Boston University were accepted for graduate credit. I received an MA degree after I passed the French language exam early in 1951. During my second year I served as graduate teaching assistant for Dr. Vander Velde in U.S. Constitutional History.

Dr. Jones: In addition to Sidney Fine, what other faculty members had an impact on your graduate work at Michigan?

Dr. Mason: Dr. Vander Velde, the Chair of the Department was extremely helpful during my graduate work and later as a friend and advisor. Dr. Clever Bald, who

taught Michigan History and was also Assistant Director of the Michigan Historical Collections was in many ways, my mentor. He directed my work after I joined the staff of the Collections in 1951 as part-time manuscript curator and made me aware of the importance of archives and the study of regional history. Dr. William Haber, then Chair of the Economics Department, and later Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, influenced my interest in labor history. I also was greatly benefitted by Professor Vernor Crane whose courses in early American History and research methods were important in my studies. Nor will I ever forget my graduate work with Professor Albert Hyma on the Renaissance and Reformation. I was aware of Professor Hyma's earlier research and his book Erasmus: The Brethern of the Common Life published in the 1930s. But later, as he became deeply involved with a Detroit spiritualist, Mother Lee, his reputation suffered. He believed that Mother Lee could assist him in his research by helping him contact Erasmus and other Reformation leaders, channeled through Thomas Carlyle. She failed in the attempt to contact Erasmus but she was successful, according to Hyma, in reaching St. Thomas Aquinas and Thomas Eck, who prosecuted Martin Luther at the Diet of Worms in 1519. He also paid Mother Lee substantial sums to find the location of gold mines in Mexico discovered by Spanish Conquistadors. On occasion, he had invited Mother Lee to lecture and demonstrate to his classes the importance of spiritualism in facilitating historical research. This action and his publication, On Eternal Life infuriated the Regents of the University who froze his faculty position as Assistant Professor.

Dr. Jones: Was the public aware of Hyma's involvement with Spiritualism?

Dr. Mason: There were rumors but the controversy with Mother Lee and her church received further attention from a lawsuit involving Professor Hyma, which reached the Michigan Supreme Court. It involved the issue of whether Mother Lee's Spiritualist church could be sued. The Court's decision announced in December 1951 described in detail Professor Hyma's involvement with Mother Lee and her church.

Dr. Jones: What impact did the controversy have upon your graduate work?

Dr. Mason: As you may recall, I was tested in the field of Renaissance and Reformation in my oral examination, which took place shortly after the Court rejected Professor Hyma's lawsuit in December 1951. Although Professor Hyma was in Europe at the time, he prepared a written exam, to be completed in six hours. I was shocked when I first looked at the exam questions. They involved Thomas Eck and his prosecution of Martin Luther based upon information Hyma had received during his spiritual session with Eck. I realized immediately that I could not answer these essay questions based upon this source. So I took the matter up with Dr. Vander Velde, the Chair of the department. He too, was shocked and with the approval of colleagues, prepared a new series of essay questions. My examination was sent to Dr. Hyma and he not only approved of it but complimented me on the written essay. Nevertheless, the Hyma exam was terribly upsetting and made me apprehensive about the others. But, I passed the additional five exams in December, 1951 and then I turned my attention to my dissertation. The

subject "The League of American Wheelmen and the Good Roads Movement" had been approved by Dr. Fine and I had already started on the research before my orals. By the summer of 1953, after research at the National Archives, the Library of Congress, and archival collections in New York City, Boston, Madison and Cleveland and several Michigan libraries, I had made good progress on the research but there were still many sources to check.

Dr. Jones: During your graduate work at Michigan, you had a part-time job at the Michigan Historical Collections, now the Bentley Library. Tell me about your work there and the impact it had on your career.

Dr. Mason: First, the part-time position helped me meet my financial obligations. During my first year at Michigan I was notified by officials at Boston University that they had adopted a new policy relating to the Augustus Howe Buck Fellowship. Beginning in 1952 all recipients of the Buck Fellowship must attend Boston University in order to qualify for its very generous financial assistance. After consulting with Dr. Vander Velde, I decided to continue my graduate work at Michigan. Although I had a part-time job at Marshall's Book Store in Ann Arbor, Dr. Vander Velde offered me a part-time position at the University of Michigan Historical Collections, of which he was Director and indeed, its founder. He also offered me an assistantship in his course in U.S. Constitutional History.

Dr. Jones: What did your work at the Historical Collections involve?

Dr. Mason: My main assignment was to process manuscript collections. They were usually small, ranging from a handful of manuscripts to larger collections of

several hundred items. I worked under the direction of Dr. Clever Bald, the assistant director. He was not only a distinguished, widely published historian, but also a kind and gentle man. He had a great impact on my future career. In addition to processing manuscript collections, Dr. Bald believed that I should have experience in so-called "field work" which involved contacting prospective donors. He had me accompany him on several such visits to look at collections and to determine their historical value. On one occasion he recommended that I try to locate the family of Horatio S. Earle, Michigan's first state Highway Commissioner and Candidate for Governor. Since Earle was a big figure in the Good Roads Movement and a leader in the League of American Wheelmen, both associated with my Doctoral thesis, I was happy to do this. After some research and phone calls, I located Mr. Earle's daughter who lived in Detroit. I visited her at her home and explained the importance of her father's role in Michigan's history. She was delighted to talk to someone who knew about him, and agreed to give his diaries and other papers to the Michigan Historical Collections.

On another occasion Dr. Bald asked me to find out what I could about a colony or commune near Bay City, Michigan. The Historical Collections had earlier acquired the records of the Alphasdelphia Colony located in Galesburg, Michigan and the Sunrise Community near Saginaw. After considerable research, I discovered that it was located near Caseville, Michigan. Named, Ora et Labora, it had been founded in 1857 by the Reverend Emil Bauer, a Methodist preacher. He had persuaded a group of unemployed artisans from

Western Pennsylvania to move to the "Thumb" area of Michigan to establish a Colony. The Colony lasted until 1867. I located and visited Reverend Bauer's granddaughter who lived in Caseville, Michigan. After several visits I learned that she had possession of the Colony's records but was reluctant to part with them because she was concerned that her neighbors might think that her grandfather ran a "Communist Society" in Caseville. I invited Dr. Bald, whose father was a Methodist minister, to join me to meet with her and she finally agreed to place the records at the Historical Collections. I marveled at the way Dr. Bald dealt with her concerns.

Dr. Jones: Did you enjoy this work? After all, it was different than teaching.

Dr. Mason: I thoroughly enjoyed it. It opened my eyes to the valuable collections of historical records that were in private hands and the importance of preserving them in an archives so that they could be available to researchers.

Dr. Jones: In 1953 you accepted the position as State Archivist of Michigan. How did this come about?

Dr. Mason: I needed a full- time job to meet my family responsibilities. I was married in June of 1951 to Henrietta Dow and the following year we had our first child, Catherine, and soon after, Susan. Dr. Fine recommended that I apply for teaching positions at Mankato State University in Minnesota and at Ripon College in Wisconsin. Those positions paid about \$2,300.00 a year, hardly enough to live on. On the other hand, Dr. Bald and Dr. Vander Velde urged me to consider the new position as State Archivist of Michigan. I finally decided to pursue the latter and was hired, with a beginning salary of \$4,300.00 a year.

After my experience at the Historical Collections, I realized that I thoroughly enjoyed archival work. I could always explore a teaching position if the market improved.

Dr. Jones: When did you begin your new job in Lansing?

Dr. Mason: September 1, 1953

Dr. Jones: What were the nature of your duties as State Archivist?

Dr. Mason: I was responsible for appraising the inactive records of state agencies and arranging the transfer of those records which had permanent historical value to the Archives – and thus, making them available to researchers. This proved to be a very stressful task because little archival work had been done for years. The situation was complicated by the devastating fire in the Lewis Cass office building in February 1951. It severely water damaged and destroyed many of the records of state agencies located in the building, including those of the Michigan Historical Commission and the State Library. The records that survived were placed in a temporary warehouse on the outskirts of Lansing, which also included work space for the State Archives. The Legislature had authorized the construction of a new State Records Center with temporary facilities for the Archives. My primary duties involved the appraisal of those records that survived the Cass Building fire, and initiating contacts with other state agencies located around Michigan. I was also deeply involved with development of a records management program. As a result of our review of all inactive records the Archives I was able to facilitate the destruction of tons of inactive records that had no permanent value. This

work involved the development of retention and disposal schedules for each state agency.

Dr. Jones: Did you enjoy the records management function of your job?

Dr. Mason: I was not enthusiastic about this phase of my duties because it did not give me adequate time to review Michigan's archival records dating back to 1796. But, it was essential for an ongoing archival program. Furthermore, it gave me a better understanding of the important role of records management and the opportunity to meet and establish working relationships with the heads of state agencies.

Dr. Jones: Did you have many researchers using the Archives?

Dr. Mason: Not at first, but by 1955, after we had established preliminary control over our holdings, an increasing number of researchers arrived.

Dr. Jones: What other duties did you have as State Archivist?

Dr. Mason: In addition to the state agencies in Lansing, I was responsible for contacts with other state departments located in Detroit, and other cities. The State Archives, by law, had to approve the disposition of records of local public agencies. These duties gave me an opportunity to travel throughout the state and learn more about the rich history of Michigan. Another project assigned to me by the Historical Commission was to assist Dr. Clever Bald in locating suitable illustrations for his book, Michigan in Four Centuries, published by Harper and Bros. in 1955. As a result of this project which involved visits to the National Archives, the Library of Congress, the Public Archives of Canada and private photograph collections in Michigan, I became aware of the

importance of photographs and related audio visual collections. With the approval of the Historical Commission the Archives was able to establish a major photographic collection relating to Michigan.

Dr. Jones: What was the relationship of the Michigan Historical Commission and the Historical Society of Michigan?

Dr. Mason: The State Historical Society was founded in 1828 and merged with the Michigan Historical Commission which in turn, was established by the State Legislature in 1912. The former had its own Board of Trustees and the latter was made up of seven commissioners appointed by the Governor. In 1953 Dr. Lewis Beeson served as Director of both organizations. The Historical Commission had responsibility for the State Archives, the historic sites marking program and the publication of Michigan History.

Dr. Jones: Did you have any role with the Michigan Historical Society?

Dr. Mason: No, not officially, but during my work with out-state agencies, I was often invited to speak at meetings of local historical societies and community groups. In 1956 my duties included an assignment to tour the Upper Peninsula historical societies and community groups. These trips, which took place in late January started in Escanaba, and then included Iron Mountain, Iron River, Ironwood, Ontonagon, Houghton, Marquette, Sault Ste. Marie and St. Ignace. The schedule included talks at luncheon meetings with Rotary, Kiwanis and other community groups. The evening sessions were sponsored by local historical societies. These trips were often stressful because of the Upper Peninsula weather in January and the amount of background research I

needed to prepare my talks. But I must admit, though, I enjoyed these visits to the Upper Peninsula. They gave me an opportunity to meet wonderful groups of people from diverse ethnic backgrounds who were so proud of their communities. I learned also how pleased they were to be recognized by someone from the Lower Peninsula and the State Historical Agencies.

Dr. Jones: What was involved in your presentations?

Dr. Mason: I gave talks relating to the history of the Upper Peninsula and especially to the communities that I visited. At the time, I was doing research on Henry Schoolcraft, the Indian Agent for Northern Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota. This gave me valuable insights to the early history of the region and, in addition, I had access to the records in the State Archives which I was able to use in my talks. I was pleased to be invited back on a similar itinerary for several years.

Dr. Jones: Did you find that you missed teaching?

Dr. Mason: Yes, somewhat, but my work in the State Archives was so challenging and satisfying that I did not have time to have regrets about my career choice. Furthermore, I taught evening credit courses in Michigan history for Eastern Michigan University at their centers in Brighton, Lansing, Flint and Lapeer.

Dr. Jones: In retrospect, what impact did your experience as State Archivist have on your career?

Dr. Mason: Most importantly it made me aware of the importance of regional history and the need for active archival programs to preserve the valuable research sources. It also gave me a better understanding of the close relationship

between traditional archival work and records management. I learned a lot from my contacts with the state bureaucracy. For example, on several occasions I joined the Director of the Historical Commission in budget meetings with Legislative Committees. My work as State Archivist also revealed how easy it was to make mistakes. For example, before I was on the job a month, I received a reprimand from the State Personnel Office. It resulted from my decision to assign three clerical staff to inventory a huge collection of bound volumes of annual Michigan School Inspectors Reports, dating back to the 1850s. I had just rescued these valuable records from the attic of the State Capitol. It seems that they were infested with pigeon lice and after this was discovered, the three staff members were given two weeks of paid sick leave. I, in turn, received a reprimand for violating health standards. I was much more careful after that experience.

Dr. Jones: You were State Archivist until 1958, why did you leave?

Dr. Mason: My decision to resign was based upon several factors. First, the archival program was on a sound footing. We had excellent quarters in the new State Records Center. We had a good staff and had established a rapport with the major state departments, and also, we had developed an excellent records management program. Obviously we had much more to accomplish but we were moving in the right direction. On the negative side, the Historical Commission was having serious internal problems. Dr. Lewis Beeson, the joint director of the Michigan Historical Commission and the State Historical Society was not an experienced administrator. Nor was he able to deal with

the complicated state bureaucracy, and the State Legislature. Furthermore, he was constantly feuding with members of the Boards of the Historical Commission and the State Historical Society. This situation had demoralized the staff. To make matters worse, one of the Commission members, who wanted Dr. Beeson fired met privately with some staff members to solicit negative information about Dr. Beeson.

Dr. Jones: How did you feel about this situation?

Dr. Mason: I was deeply troubled. I had great respect for Dr. Beeson. He was a kind and honest man and an excellent editor. But, he was not a good administrator. He never shared his plans or priorities with the staff and did not establish good relationships with other state agency heads or the Governor's office. On one occasion that I recall, he forgot to appear at a scheduled Legislative hearing to review our budget request. At times he seemed to give more attention to his sheep farm than his job as Director.

Dr. Jones: Did you have an opportunity to discuss any of these issues with Dr. Beeson?

Dr. Mason: Yes, often, but never with much success. On one occasion that I recall vividly, I met privately with him and urged him to hold periodic staff meetings so that the staff would be better informed about future plans. Also, since the archives, museums and administrative offices were scattered in different locations, the staff members were often uninformed about the various projects or programs of other Commission units. Finally, after one session with Dr. Beeson, he agreed to hold periodic staff meetings and scheduled the first one late in December, 1957. On the day of the meeting, the staff waited somewhat

impatiently for Dr. Beeson to appear. Finally, we got word that the meeting was cancelled because of a crisis at his home, a farm in nearby Williamston. It seems that his herd of sheep had broken loose and he had to spend the day finding them. No other staff meetings during my tenure were held, but the “saga of the lost sheep” made the rounds of state government.

Dr. Jones: Were you engaged in other professional activities while you were State Archivist?

Dr. Mason: I joined the Society of American Archivists in 1952 and attended my first annual SAA meeting at Colonial Williamsburg in 1953. I was appointed to the State and Local Records Committee in 1953 and worked closely with its chair, Mary Givens Bryan, the State Archivist of Georgia and H. G. Jones, the State Archivist of North Carolina. During my tenure on that Committee, I wrote a brief report on the replevin of public records for a State and Local Records Management Handbook. In 1956 I attended a three week Archives Institute in Washington, sponsored by American University and the National Archives. This experience gave me the opportunity to meet Dr. Ernst Posner who directed the Institute, Robert Bahmer, the Assistant Archivist of the United States and Archives staff members. I also began long time friendships with colleagues who were enrolled in the course, including Everett Cooley, William Alderson and George Warren. The annual SAA meetings gave me an opportunity to get to know other professional archivists. Later, in 1955, Dr. Posner spent a week in Lansing conducting research for his book American State Archives published by the University of Chicago Press. His helpful

recommendations and personal advice was very important to me and to the Michigan Archival program. Another professional organization that I joined was the American Association for State and Local History and for several years served on its Awards Committee. I was later elected to its Board of Trustees.

Dr. Jones: Were you involved in any research projects or publications while in Lansing?

Dr. Mason: Yes, I started my work on Henry Schoolcraft, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Upper Great Lakes. I gave my first academic talk on "Horatio S. Earle and the Good Roads Movement" before the Michigan Academy of Arts and Sciences. It was accepted for publication in their annual volume in 1958. In 1957 I prepared a major exhibit on Civil War photography at the University of Michigan Art Museum which resulted in several publications.

Dr. Jones: In 1958 you resigned as State Archivist to take a position at Wayne State University. What prompted you to make this change?

Dr. Mason: As I explained earlier, the internal problems involving the Historical Commission and Dr. Beeson, the Director, was deteriorating. I still enjoyed my work there. The location of the Archives apart from the Historical Commission Headquarters in the Cass building spared me from many of the conflicts there. By 1957 I was aware that I had to give attention to my future career plans. Another factor was that I had a family with three children to support. Furthermore, I had completed my dissertation and was awarded the Ph.D. degree in 1956. The one situation which prompted my decision to change jobs came to a head in 1957. My colleague at the Archives who was

responsible for working with local public agencies had a serious drinking problem that was seriously affecting his work. He was often late for work, took 2-3-hour lunch breaks and on several occasions I had to drive him home because of his condition. The backlog of his duties was piling up, and I often had to replace him for outstate meetings. In October 1957 I met with Dr. Beeson and asked for his advice and counsel. I urged Dr. Beeson to persuade my colleague to get professional help, but he refused. He was aware of the situation and had received complaints from local officials. Dr. Beeson's response was that it was a personal matter and he didn't want to interfere and that I should expand my role to assume many of his contacts with local public officials. I told Dr. Beeson that this situation was unacceptable and that I would resign effective early in 1958.

Dr. Jones: Did you have another job lined up when you made this decision?

Dr. Mason: No, I did not. But I was confident that I could get one. Dr. Louis Jones, {not to be confused with the Dr. Louis Jones who conducted this oral history interview with Dr. Mason} the Director of the New York Historical Society at Cooperstown, New York with whom I had worked on the American Association for State and Local History Awards Committee, had earlier that year offered me a position with his organization. Also, he had also strongly recommended me for the position as Director of the Oregon Historical Society. Although I had declined both offers, I knew that there would be other opportunities.

Dr. Jones: How did you make contact with Wayne State?

Dr. Mason: In August 1957 I was contacted by Dr. Leslie Hanawalt, Professor of English at Wayne who was writing a history of the University. He was overwhelmed with the sheer volume of records stored in dozens of buildings on the main campus and the Medical School located in downtown Detroit. There was no archival program or facilities for the preservation of the records of archival value dating from the University's founding in 1868. With the approval of President Dr. Clarence Hilberry, Dr. Hanawalt was authorized to find an archivist to be assigned to the University Library. I agreed to assist Dr. Hanawalt in the search and identified several qualified candidates including Dr. Everett Cooley, Archivist of the State of Utah. He expressed interest in the position because his great grandfather, Thomas Mortimer Cooley, had been Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court and law professor at the University of Michigan. When Dr. Cooley withdrew from consideration in early November, Dr. Hanawalt urged me to consider the position. After meetings with Dr. Hanawalt, Dr. Purdy, Director of Wayne State University Libraries, and Dr. Alfred Kelly, Chair of the History Department, I accepted, with the understanding that I would have a joint appointment as University Archivist and Assistant Professor of History. It was also agreed that after I had organized a University Archival program that I could establish a research collection devoted to the American labor movement and related social, political and economic reform movements. I accepted the position, effective February 3, 1958.

Dr. Jones: What was the reaction of the Historical Commissioners to your resignation?

Dr. Mason: This created a minor problem because Dr. Beeson had never reported my decision to the Historical Commissioners, since he expected me to change my mind and remain. I didn't learn of this oversight until I met with the Commission in early January, 1958 to report on my progress on several projects. At that meeting I mentioned my new job. They were quite upset at not being advised of my plans and sharply criticized Dr. Beeson for not telling them. When I left the meeting they adjourned and went into executive session. They called me back later that day and offered me the position as Director, effective July 1, 1958. I declined their offer without any hesitation. I had not only made a firm commitment to Wayne but I realized that I could not be effective replacing Dr. Beeson, given the low staff morale and that the knowledge that the Commissioners had taken over much of the administrative duties of the Agency.

Dr. Jones: You began your new job at Wayne in early February 1958. Had there been any program to collect and preserve the historical records of the University?

Dr. Mason: No. The Library had accumulated a file cabinet full of newspaper clippings relating to the University, a few departments had maintained inactive records but no comprehensive or centralized program. Little attention had been given to separating historical records and the tons of records of no value. Dr. Hanawalt, of course, had been able to accumulate a group of important records especially from current and former faculty members and had made contacts with many University officials. With the assistance of Dr. Hanawalt, a highly respected faculty member and close friend of President Hilberry, I

prepared a six- month plan for the University Archives. First, since I knew very little about the University and its long history, I devoted special attention to reviewing all published sources. I gave special attention to the Medical School which was founded in 1868 as a proprietary school, the Detroit Normal School (predecessor to the College of Education) established in 1881, and the College of Liberal Arts. Up to 1956 when the University became a state university, the various colleges were operated by the Detroit Board of Education which provided another avenue to pursue. With the full support of President Hilberry, I set up meetings with the deans of all the colleges, key faculty members, department heads, and student and alumni groups. This provided an opportunity to explain and answer questions about our plans for a University Archives. These contacts were followed up by visits to University offices to review first hand their active and inactive records. As you may recall, the University in 1958 was housed in several major buildings such as “Old Main” built in 1896, State Hall and Science Hall financed with federal and state funds after World War II, Mackenzie Hall, which had formerly been a hotel, the main library and the newly built McGregor Memorial Conference Center. The offices of the President and key University officers such as the Deans of Colleges and the numerous departments were housed in former residences surrounding the central campus. A few Quonset Huts on Wayne Drive also housed University units.

The Medical School was located separate from the campus in downtown Detroit. All of the University facilities were so swamped with records that few

faculty and staff had adequate office space. In addition, the University had rented space in local buildings to store inactive records, often in unmarked containers. A related challenge was that some University officials refused to discard even those records which had no value. A case in point, was the situation in the head accountant's office on Putnam Avenue. That officer occupied a building filled with checks issued by the University since the early 1930s. He not only retained the check register but three extra duplicate checks "in case one got lost or misplaced." These checks were filed separately in three locations in the building and maintained by three clerical staff. Fortunately, when the chief accountant retired in 1959, I was able to get approval to destroy ninety percent of the duplicate checks. The clerical staff was reassigned and the building demolished for a new and urgently needed parking lot. The challenge for a new archives program was daunting. But I should mention that there was a very positive by-product for the new archives. A very significant volume of records with great historical value had been preserved.

Dr. Jones: Were the Archives located on Campus?

Dr. Mason: It was originally housed in the Wayne Room, located on the first floor of the general Library. This facility was the former meeting room of the University's Board of Governors. The room contained a large circular table which was located in the middle of the room with built-in book cases on the walls housing the "Leonard Simons' collection" of rare books relating to Detroit, Michigan and the Old Northwest. There were two desks, one for a secretary and the

other for the Archivist, a file cabinet and several chairs surrounding the table. I recall also, that the chair at my desk had one caster missing. When I mentioned this to Dr. Purdy, he jokingly responded, "Good, it will keep you on your toes."

Dr. Jones: Where were the archival records stored?

Dr. Mason: In the library basement accessed by a staircase in the Wayne Room. There were several rows of shelves assigned to the Archives. This spot was adequate for a year or so but as the acquisition of University records began to increase, and especially after the Labor Archives was established, we acquired additional shelving in the basement area. We also had access to a vault in the basement, used for rare books.

Dr. Jones: Did you have a staff when you began in 1958?

Dr. Mason: I was assigned a full-time secretary and several part-time student assistants. Later, as our program expanded, we were authorized to hire additional staff.

Dr. Jones: We can return to this topic later. But before we move on, where were the staff facilities?

Dr. Mason: At first, my secretary and I were in the Wayne Room and as new staff was hired they were assigned to temporary work stations in the Library basement adjacent to the Archives storage.

Dr. Jones: In addition to the records you surveyed on campus, did you locate any other archival material that were not in the custody of the University?

Dr. Mason: As I explained earlier, the various colleges which in 1953 became Wayne University were located in different parts of the city. Although in 1914 they

were officially placed under the Wayne County Board of Education, they still operated separately. There was no facility for the preservation of their records and as a result, many of the official records strayed from public custody or control. Let me give you an example. As I mentioned earlier, the College of Medicine, founded in 1868, was affiliated with Harper Hospital until 1883. The Medical School in 1958 had few if any records of their first half century.

My search for the early records took me to Harper Hospital where I finally received permission from Hospital officials to search the Hospital's sub-basement vaults. After several days of searching in that cold, musty area, I discovered a number of the early Minute Books of the Medical School describing its founding and early history. With the help of Dr. Hanawalt and the Medical School's Alumni Office, we obtained the names of all faculty and graduates from 1868. By checking the city directories, newspaper obituaries and other sources at the Burton Historical Collection, we obtained the names and current addresses of families and descendants that were available. I made contact with most of them, first by mail or phone and later personal visits. As a result, we recovered a wealth of important Medical School records, including additional minute books, correspondence, faculty lecture notes, catalogs and student records. From Dr. Januar Bovee, a retired Port Huron physician, and graduate of the Medical School in the 1880s, we received his class notes, school catalogs, the top hat that he wore at his graduation and his most prized

possession, a “watch fob” made of human skin acquired during his Pathology course.

Dr. Jones: After you conducted your survey, what steps did you take to implement the archival program?

Dr. Mason: The survey of key administrative units – even though preliminary in some cases --identified a number of important groups of historically valuable records. The voluminous inactive files of the President's office dating back to the administration of David Henry in the 1940s was immediately given high priority, and once located and with the approval of the President, were transferred to the Archives. The files of the Office of the Dean of the Medical School was another important acquisition, as were the inactive records of the Colleges of Liberal Arts, Education and Law. In fact, once many University officials recognized that the Archives could solve their critical space problems, we were inundated with their inactive files.

I should also mention that the University janitorial staff was extremely helpful to the Archives. We worked out an agreement with them that when University offices set aside containers of records for destruction, the Archives would be notified and we could examine and appraise them. As a result of contacts with one janitor, for example, we learned that the new Dean of the College of Education had decided to discard most of the College's inactive files. Fortunately, we were notified before they were destroyed, for among the records were the early files of the Detroit Normal College, (the forerunner of the College of Education) dating back to 1881.

Dr. Jones: Were University officials authorized to destroy records without approval of the Administration?

Dr. Mason: When I became Archivist in 1958 there were no specific regulations for destruction of University records, even though under state law, approval of the State Administrative Board and the approval of the State Historical Commission was required.

Dr. Jones: How was this issue resolved?

Dr. Mason: Following my recommendation, the University's Board of Governors established a policy that no University records could be destroyed without the approval of the University Archivist.

Dr. Jones: Did the acquisition of such a large volume of records put pressure on the Archives?

Dr. Mason: Yes, it did prove to be a challenge until we added staff. Let me give you an example. In 1959-1960, President Hilberry contacted me and asked me to personally look through his inactive files to see if I could locate his notes relating to his offer to the new Dean of the Business School. It seems that his memory of the terms of the employment and future salary raises differed from those of the Dean. The President's secretary was on vacation and not available to advise me, so I began the search under all the logical topics but without success. As a result, I had to review the contents of each folder, labeled from A - Z. It was not until I arrived at the file labeled "Z" that I discovered the relevant file. The President's secretary had filed other important confidential documents under the "Z" designation. I was overjoyed in completing the

search and locating the President's notes which incidentally confirmed his recollection of the commitment made to the Dean. Furthermore, as a result of the extensive search and the opportunity to review all of the files of Dr. Hilberry and his predecessor. I gained invaluable information on the recent history of the University.

Dr. Jones: Can you recall other challenges or issues you faced as you set up the University Archives program?

Dr. Mason: I do recall one incident which enhanced the reputation of the Archives. Shortly after I arrived on Campus, one of my colleagues in the History Department told me of a crisis he was facing when shelves holding hundreds of his books toppled on to the floor. The shelves were attached to the office walls and could not handle the weight of the books. After all, Mackenzie Hall, a former hotel, which housed most of the College of Liberal Arts faculty and administrative offices, were designed for over-night guests not for offices. I soon learned from contacts with janitors that this problem was widespread not only in Mackenzie Hall but also in many other make-shift offices on campus. The main culprit in many offices were the heavy, voluminous annual University catalogs. Some faculty members had retained complete sets of these catalogs dating from the 1930s on the remote chance that they might be needed. Furthermore, I discovered that many faculty members were reluctant to discard University catalogs and books. Based on my earlier experience as State Archivist, I proposed a solution. I notified all colleges, departments and campus units that the University Archives needed three complete sets of the University catalogs

which would always be available if needed. This proposal met with widespread support. Within a month hundreds of the catalogs arrived in the Archives and soon filled a huge semi-van for disposal. This episode did not solve the long range University space needs but it impressed many university administrators that the Archives could be helpful.

Dr. Jones: In discussing your work as State Archivist you stressed the importance of records management. Did you inaugurate a similar program at Wayne State?

Dr. Mason: Yes. By the summer of 1958 it was obvious to me that we urgently needed such a program. Despite the decentralized manner in which the University developed, made up of separate colleges, a large volume of inactive records had accumulated and were stored all over campus. Furthermore, the era of the "quick copy machine" had arrived by the 1950s and there was clear evidence that it would continue at an accelerated rate. We were also witnessing a breakdown in office filing practices at the University. The secretaries and clerical staff often made extra copies of correspondence, reports, etc. .and filed them in different locations to facilitate the retrieval of needed documents. The result of these trends was the sharp increase in records created and retained in offices and storage areas. I believed that a records management program was urgently needed at Wayne and was essential if the University Archives was to operate efficiently.

As a first step, we developed "Retention and Disposal Schedules" for the major units of the University. On these schedules made out for each University office, we listed each group of records and, with the assistance of the various officials,

determined how long such record groups were needed, based upon their administrative, legal and historical value. As a result, we discovered that at least ninety percent of inactive University records had no long-term value and could be destroyed systematically after a specified period of time. Other records such as master student records, Board of Governors Minutes and Reports should be retained permanently. Most financial records could be destroyed after three to five years and records that had permanent historical administrative value were transferred to the Archives. By developing these schedules, approved by the responsible officials and legal counsel, we were able to create an efficient system for units of Wayne State.

Dr. Jones: How was the records management program received by University officials?

Dr. Mason: In general, well received. After all, it resulted in the destruction of tons of useless records and called attention to the need for better control over filing systems. There was certainly no opposition to the role of the Archives in developing the records management program. In fact, we received a number of requests to assist offices with their specific problems. On one occasion, for example, an Accounting department official shared with me his concern about the sharp increase in the cost of quick copy machines and asked the Archives to review the matter. We conducted a survey of several University offices and found his concerns were justified. Aggressive copy machine sales representatives had persuaded offices to lease extra machines for backup in the event of a breakdown, and to order costlier machines with a larger monthly capacity than was needed. We were not able to estimate the savings

that could be made by introducing better controls but they were substantial - well in excess of \$100,000 annually. The Archives involvement in this and other cost-savings projects was not overlooked by key University officials who, I might add, determined our annual budget.

Dr. Jones: As you look back on the early days of the Archives, were there other projects or challenges that come to mind?

Dr. Mason: The issue of security has always been of concern but we gave it special attention after the Kent State University riot in 1970 and the numerous student protests nationwide. At Columbia and many other universities in the United States and Canada, student protestors took possession of the offices of key officials and destroyed important records. Several University libraries faced the destruction of their card catalogs causing very serious problems in servicing their holdings. Officials at Wayne State were worried that similar protests might take place at our University. Within hours after the incident at Kent State, President William Keast met with the faculty and staff to share his concerns and recommend guidelines for dealing with such disruptions. The Archives was advised to take special precautions to protect its holdings and to be proactive in assisting University offices to provide security for their records.

Dr. Jones: What action did you take? Give me some examples.

Dr. Mason: We gave special attention to the office of the Registrar which had custody of all student records. These records dating back to the 19th century were stored in file cabinets in the Administrative Services Building. Although we were

assured by the Registrar that there was no need for concern because they had microfilmed all of the student records in their custody, to my shock, I discovered that the reels of microfilm were stored in the same file cabinets as the original hard -copy records. The Registrar gracefully transferred the microfilm to the Archives for safe keeping. We also persuaded the Library to make copies of their general catalog for storage in a secure location. Following our recommendations, the Accounting Office transferred their inactive check registers and other important financial records to the Archives.

Dr. Jones: Did you have adequate staff to handle the records management program for the Archives?

Dr. Mason: Not at first, certainly. From 1958 to 1962 I was responsible for the program. As we received more support from the University, our budget increased and we were able to hire a full-time staff member to concentrate on records management. Our first appointment was Dr. William Saffady who served in this capacity until he was replaced by Gerald Hegal. With their assistance, the Archives produced two record manuals, and conducted workshops to train clerical staff in the development of filing systems.

Dr. Jones: As you developed the University's Archives and Records Management did you have models at other universities to follow?

Dr. Mason: In 1959, there were only about five or six universities that had established Archival programs. Harvard and the University of Michigan had archives but no academic institution, to my knowledge, had records management. I do know that our program served as a model for many colleges and universities.

Chapter 2 Wayne State University

Dr. Jones: We have discussed your professional career as Director of the Labor Archives, as well as your education, the beginnings of your archival work at the Michigan Historical Collections (now the Bentley Library) and the State Archives of Michigan. Although we have covered, in passing, some of your related professional activities, let's today, go into more detail about them. In addition to your role as Director of the Wayne State University Labor Archives, what other university programs were you involved in?

Dr. Mason: As I discussed earlier, I served as full-time member of the History Department from 1958 to my retirement in 2008. In this capacity I served on several departmental and university committees. I was also an advisor to many graduate students. From 1962 until 2005 I directed the graduate archival program, sponsored by the History Department and, after 1970, co-sponsored by the Department of Library and Information Science. This involved teaching the basic two semester courses in Archival Administration and supervising the additional archival related courses in Conservation, Oral History, Records Management and Research Methods. I also devoted a great deal of attention to assisting archival students in getting jobs. Because of my long-time association with the Society of American Archivists, the Midwest Archival Conference (MAC) and other regional archival groups, I was able to learn of archival vacancies throughout the United States and Canada. This enabled me to place students in full and part-time archival positions. In fact, during one

History Departmental review in the 1980s, nearly three hundred of our graduates were employed full or part-time by archival and historical agencies in the United States and Canada. I might add that in addition to the archival curriculum, I also taught courses in Detroit history and served as advisor to students in Library Science and Anthropology.

Dr. Jones: What other History Department assignments did you have?

Dr. Mason: In the 1960s I was asked to serve on a special committee to review charges made against two young colleagues in the History Department regarding plagiarism and unethical behavior involving their doctoral dissertations and publications. One colleague, who received his Ph.D from Columbia, was charged with plagiarizing extensive material from a MA Thesis written by a graduate student at American University. He denied these allegations, and argued that his research had involved the same archival sources and that, as a result, he and the other writer had made a similar presentation, and in some instances, "word for word." Although Professor William Leuchtenberg, his main advisor at Columbia University, wrote on Adams' behalf, he was asked to resign from Wayne State University. Nevertheless, within a year, with the endorsement from Professor Leuchtenberg, Adams was appointed Dean at Dalhousie University in New Brunswick, Canada.

Another dispute involved a colleague who was a University of Pennsylvania doctoral student. He had falsified not only sections of his dissertation but also a book based upon it by citing documents in the Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress that did not exist. This was discovered by the staff at the Library of

Congress when the staff was trying to locate the documents cited in his dissertation. When it was discovered that he had falsified the missing documents, he was released from the department immediately.

Dr. Jones: What was the outcome of these incidents in terms of the reputation of the department?

Dr. Mason: We were, of course, deeply embarrassed, but not as much as the dissertation advisors and the university presses that had published the two dissertations.

Dr. Jones: Were you also an advisor to graduate students?

Dr. Mason: Yes, I had several dozen students at the MA and Ph.D level. I also served as adjunct professor in the Anthropology Department and served on several of their Ph.D Committees. As I mentioned earlier, in the 1970s and 80s, I was appointed Adjunct Professor at the University of Windsor in 1985 and also appointed Professor of Library Sciences at Wayne State University.

Dr. Jones: What was your relationship with your colleagues in the History Department?

Dr. Mason: It varied. I developed a good relationship with Alfred Kelly, Raymond Miller, Sidney Glazier, Joe Norris, Winfred Harbison, R. C. Burks, Richard Miles, William Brazill and Norman Guice. On the other hand, there was a group of recently-hired colleagues who were neo-Marxists or the so-called "New Left." They carried a vigorous campaign against Dr. Kelly and Dr. William Brazill, Chairs of the Department, and were constantly involved in politicizing the department. I had no interest in their petty and disruptive agendas.

Dr. Jones: Did you have high regard for Dr. Kelly?

Dr. Mason: Yes, I did. He was an excellent chair, although at times he could be dictatorial. Also, he was highly respected by the Liberal Arts faculty. I had only one difficult encounter with him, which involved a tenure vote for one of the new appointees. The young historian was a good teacher and had a promising publication record but he had alienated some of his senior Wayne colleagues with his active and vocal criticism of the department's leadership. Also he campaigned actively for the United Farm Workers, placing UFW posters on the walls of Mackenzie Hall, where the Liberal Arts faculty offices were located. His outspoken views antagonized several senior members of the department who decided not to support his tenure appointment on the basis that he lacked "cordiality." The vote at the Personnel Committee was evenly divided, and although I had been excused from that meeting because I had just recovered from surgery, it turned out that my vote was needed to break the tie. Several colleagues, including Dr. Kelly, urged me to join them in blocking the tenure appointment. But after giving the matter close attention, I decided that I could not vote to deny my colleague tenure, since "cordiality" was never considered a requirement for tenure.

Dr. Jones: What impact did this issue have upon your relationship with Dr. Kelly and other members of the department?

Dr. Mason: In the short term, there was some tension, but in time I had re-established a very good relationship with Dr. Kelly and the senior staff. On another occasion after President Keast announced a new university policy that all administrative officers, including department chairs, had to retire at age sixty-five, Dr. Kelly, who knew

that I had a good relationship with President Keast, asked me to inquire if he could be given a waiver from this policy. Dr. Purdy made a similar request. As a personal favor to both Dr. Purdy and Dr. Kelly I did raise the issue of a waiver with President Keast but he explained that he could not set such a precedent.

Dr. Jones: Your resume indicates that you also had an academic connection with the University of Windsor.

Dr. Mason: Yes, I did. As I mentioned in an earlier interview, I developed a joint teaching program with our Canadian neighbors. It worked in this way. University of Windsor History students could enroll in our History Department in courses not available at their institution, including our Archival Administration program. In turn, Wayne State History students could enroll in Windsor courses, including Canadian History. Grades would be transferred to the student's University as well as tuition payments.

Dr. Jones: Did Windsor students enroll in your Archives courses?

Dr. Mason: Yes. Usually four or five each year. I might add that these students enhanced our program and about ten went onto important archival jobs in Canada.

Dr. Jones: What was your role in the Purdy Library, where the Archives was located?

Dr. Mason: I had a good relationship with the library staff, especially Robert Grazier, the Associate Director of Libraries. I attended their periodic meetings and after 1970 when the Department of Library Science became co-sponsors of the Archival Management program, I was more involved. In 1988 when President Adamany

appointed me Professor of Library Science, I took a more active role in that department.

Dr. Jones: Did you have other University assignments in addition to teaching?

Dr. Mason: During the fifty years of my tenure, I held a number of other positions. About 1972 I was appointed Co-Director of the Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations, which was sponsored jointly by the University of Michigan and Wayne State University. This was not a position I sought or even wanted. In fact, I turned it down, at first, but because of pressure from Executive Vice-President Edward Cushman and Vice-President for Urban Affairs, Ronald Haughton, I reluctantly accepted. In addition to Mr. Cushman and Mr. Haughton, I also had served on the Board of Directors of the Institute for several years and was familiar with its operation. Furthermore, Mr. Haughton who had served as Co-Director of the Institute for a number of years was anxious to be relieved of these duties. There is no doubt that a co-directorship was prestigious, but that was not my reason for accepting the additional assignment. Fortunately, a full-time archivist was added to our staff as a trade-off for my agreeing to serve as Co-Director of the Institute. But, in retrospect, I made a very serious mistake in agreeing to accept the position. From day one it proved to be a constant headache.

Dr. Jones: Give me more details of the problems you faced?

Dr. Mason: The Institute was established in the 1950s to provide services to the labor and management organizations in Michigan that included educational programs, research and publications and relationships between unions and management. In

carrying out the objectives, the University of Michigan was responsible for the research and publication projects and Wayne State, for education and training programs. The former was also responsible for the budget and the financial operations of the Institute. My first task when I became Co-Director was to review the program of the Institute, including the funds received from the State Legislature. I was quite surprised to discover that the University of Michigan was getting a larger share of the budget by retaining the money from the sale of the Institute's publications. This situation made me realize that Wayne was not receiving its fair share.

Dr. Jones: What was the reaction of the Institute staff at Wayne to your appointment.

Dr. Mason: Their reactions were mixed. The Director of the labor education program of the Institute, resented my appointment for two reasons. First, he believed that he, and not me should have been appointed Co-Director and secondly, he did not want his program reviewed. The staff member who was responsible for the management programs, on the other hand, did not care who was appointed as long as he could conduct his program without any supervision. He was quite upset when he learned that I wanted details about his operation. I soon discovered why he did not want such a review. It seemed, that he was involved in a serious conflict of interest. He not only conducted official Institute-sponsored management courses but he personally sponsored identical courses at university facilities utilizing the Institute's publications and teaching materials. For the latter programs he was paid by the students directly bypassing the Institute.

On another occasion, I was also shocked to learn that Ernest Martens, the director of ILIR Management, had written a memo to the University's personnel office complaining that an Institute staff member, an African American, had held closed-door meetings in his office with a white female staff member. He expressed his deep concern that such a practice would encourage "unhealthy" relationships between "Black" and "White" staff members. I was unaware of this memo until I received a call from George Morison, the University Director of Personnel, informing me of the damage that his memo would do to the Institute as well as the University if it were made public. Morison told me that he would be required to forward the Martens' memo to the University's Legal Counsel, unless it was immediately withdrawn.

Dr. Jones: What was your response to Morison's call?

Dr. Mason: I contacted Martens immediately for an explanation of the memo. After listening to his racial views, I directed him to go to the University's Personnel Director at once and retrieve his memo. Fortunately, although reluctantly, he agreed, and recovered his memo.

Dr. Jones: What action did you take?

Dr. Mason: I discussed the matter with Dr. Pieter Rol, the Associate Provost, and he directed me to issue a strong reprimand to Martens and deny him a salary increase. To my surprise, the Provost, Bernard Klein, over-ruled this decision and re-instituted Martens' adjustment salary. Pieter Rol and I were shocked at Klein's action but there was nothing we could do about it.

Dr. Jones: Did Klein ever offer an explanation for his decision?

Dr. Mason: No, however, I later learned of a possible explanation of his support of Martens. Following a complaint from the IRS, I learned that the Institute had not paid the tax for the \$2500 paid to Klein for two one-hour lectures he had given at Martens' Management programs. This represented a very substantial speaker's fee for two one-hour presentations, far in excess of our normal payment for lecturers. I had been unaware of these payments to Klein because all financial transactions of the ILIR were handled directly by the Institute's office at the University of Michigan. The "joint" sponsorship between the University of Michigan and Wayne State University was beginning to unravel—not only regarding financial and budget issues but in other areas as well.

Dr. Jones: Can you give me some examples?

Dr. Mason: Each year the ILIR annual dinners were alternated between Ann Arbor and Detroit. On one occasion Wayne State hosted the affair and, following a policy established by Wayne State's Board of Governors, that lettuce and the products of selected wineries that were being picketed by the United Farm Workers were not to be served at University functions. When the Co-Director at Michigan, who served as Dean of the Law School, learned of this policy, he sharply criticized Wayne State and threatened to boycott the dinner hosted by Wayne. The Wayne ILIR Board members were shocked by Michigan's action. It was another example that there were irrevocable differences between the two institutions. As a result Wayne decided to withdraw from the Institute and establish a separate labor program.

Dr. Jones: What were your personal reactions to the dissolution of the Institute?

Dr. Mason: I heartily endorsed this decision. My several years as Co-Director reinforced my view that the University of Michigan did not treat Wayne fairly or as an equal partner and thus, as a result we were not a "joint" Institute. Our Board decided that we could serve our labor clientele better if we were independent from the University of Michigan.

Dr. Jones: Were you disappointed with these developments?

Dr. Mason: No, not at all. I realized that my original reservations about accepting the position as Co-Director were well founded. I had originally given in to the pressure of Mr. Haughton and Mr. Cushman, which was a major mistake. The Institute was not only taking up valuable time that I needed to administer the Archives but the continual feuding in the Institute was taking a toll on my health.

Dr. Jones: One of your other major endeavors was the University Press. What was your role there?

Dr. Mason: I was first elected to the Editorial Board of the Press about 1963 when it was directed by Professor Harold Basilius. I continued to serve in an active capacity until 2004.

Dr. Jones: What were the responsibilities of members of the Board of Editors?

Dr. Mason: We reviewed all book manuscripts submitted to the Press after they were first evaluated by the Press staff to determine if they fit the Press' publication program. The main areas of interest were American history, Judaism, European history and literature. If the Press staff recommended publication, the manuscript was

assigned to a Board member for further analysis with recommendations, and if needed, for revisions. The Board later voted to accept or reject the manuscript.

Dr. Jones: I have heard a lot about the Great Lakes Series of the Press and I know that you were directly involved in its establishment. Please elaborate.

Dr. Mason: In 1985 the Board of Editors of the Press held lengthy discussions about broadening its scope of publications in order to increase its income. Several members of the Board recommended new publication themes such as African-American studies, television and the media, and American literature. During these meetings I expressed my views that the Press should also consider regional and local history.

Dr. Jones: What did you base this recommendation on?

Dr. Mason: During my career, first with the University of Michigan Historical Collections, the State Archives and more recently as Director of the Labor Archives at Wayne, I became aware of the burgeoning interest in regional history, not only in Michigan, but throughout the United States. For example, in the post-war years, several hundred new archival programs were being established in the United States and Canada. Historical societies, museums and local history programs flourished. This movement was accompanied by the introduction of courses in state and local history at Michigan universities and colleges, which in turn, attracted the attention of students and faculty members. The problem facing these researchers was that there were very limited opportunities for publication. The Press Board members, at first, were cool to my proposal believing there was no market for publications

in regional and local history. On that occasion after I left the meeting in order to teach my class, the Board approved my proposal but limited it to three publications because they had serious doubts whether there was a sustainable market for regional and local history.

Dr. Jones: Obviously their concerns were unfounded. How did you proceed to develop the new program?

Dr. Mason: The main challenge was identifying and contacting individuals who were conducting research on topics relating to regional history of the Upper Great Lakes area, especially Michigan.

Dr. Jones: How was this accomplished, and specifically, how were you involved?

Dr. Mason: Since I was the one who presented the proposal for such a project to the Press Editorial Board, I was appointed as Editor of the Series named the "Great Lakes Books." The first step was to select a group of historians, archivists and other scholars, to serve as the "Board of Advisors." The original Board included John Barnard of Oakland University; Francis Blouin, John Dann, and Robert Warner of the University of Michigan; Sandra Clark, Michigan Historical Commission; Justin Kestenbaum, Michigan State University; Jo Ellen Vinyard, Eastern Michigan University; Nora Faire, University of Michigan-Flint; William Miles, Central Michigan University, Larry Massie, Western Michigan University; Joseph Oldenburg, Burton Historical Collection; Gordon Olson, Grand Rapids Public Library; and Stanley Solvick and Charles Hyde, Wayne State University.

Dr. Jones: What role did this Advisory Board have?

Dr. Mason: They identified potential authors and carefully evaluated the manuscripts submitted to the Great Lakes Board. Our recommendations were then forwarded to the University Press Board of Editors for their review, approval or rejection. In addition to chairing the Great Lakes Board meetings, I assigned the manuscripts received to appropriate Board members, contacted prospective authors, and helped promote the published books.

Dr. Jones: What were some of the books you published?

Dr. Mason: One group of books was "Classic reprints" composed of out-of-print books relating to Michigan history, literature and Michigan novels. For example, in 1985 we reprinted Frank Barkus' *Freshwater Fury*; U.O. Hendrik's *Land of the Crooked Tree*; John Bartlow Martin's *Call It North Country, the Story of the Upper Peninsula*; and Walter Romig's *Michigan Place Names*. The following year we continued with William Ashnorth's *the Great Lakes: An Environmental History*; Bruce Catton's *Waiting for the Morning Train, An American Boyhood*; Robert Traver's *Danny and the Boys*; James Stevens' *The Saginaw Paul Bunyan*; and Edmund Love's *The Situation in Flushing and A Small Bequest*.

Dr. Jones: In addition to out-of-print books did the Series publish new books?

Dr. Mason: Yes, although it took several years to contact prospective authors and receive their manuscripts and then conduct the review, editing and the publication process.

Dr. Jones: Can you give me a few titles of the new publications?

Dr. Mason: *Deep Woods Frontier: A History of Logging in Northern Michigan (1989)* by Theodore Karamanki; *Walnut Pickles and Watermelon Cake: A Century of*

Michigan Cooking (1990) by Larry and Priscilla Massie; *Beyond the Model T: The Other Ventures of Henry Ford (1991)* by Ford Bryant; *Steamship and Sailors of The Great Lakes (1992)* by Mark Thompson; *Michigan in Literature* by Clarence Andrews; *Strangers and Sojourners: A History of Michigan: Keweenaw Peninsula (1994)* by Arthur Thurner; *Cobb Would Have Caught It (1994)* by Richard Bak; *Iron Fleet: The Great Lakes in World War II (1994)* by George Joachem; and *The Making of a Mining District: Keweenaw Native Copper 1500-1870 (1992)* by David Krause.

Dr. Jones: As I recall, at least one of your books was published under the Great Lakes imprint.

Dr. Mason: Yes, actually five. *The Ambassador Bridge: Monument to Progress (1988)*, *Copper Country Journal: The Diary of a Schoolmaster Henry Hobart (1991)* and *Tracy McGregor, Humanitarian, Philanthropist and Detroit Civic Leader (2008)*, *Detroit, Fort Lernoult and the American Revolution (1964)* and, *Harper of Detroit, co-author with Frank Woodford (1964)*.

Dr. Jones: How did you promote the books in the Great Lakes Series?

Dr. Mason: The Press published a very attractive sales catalog each year devoted to Press publications including the Great Lakes Books. It was widely circulated to libraries, bookstores, newspapers and journals. In addition, on the local level, the Great Lakes Books were featured at the annual meeting of the "Michigan in Perspective" and the State Historical Society conferences. I do not have at my disposal any information on the profits of the Great Lakes Books but I know they were very substantial, in the range of \$500,000, generated by more than 110 titles.

Dr. Jones: Did you continue to serve as Editor of the Series?

Dr. Mason: Yes, I served as Editor until 2004 when I moved to Arizona and Eagle Harbor in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. I still serve on the Advisory Board although I am planning to leave the Board soon.

Dr. Jones: What other University responsibilities did you have during your tenure at the University?

Dr. Mason: In addition to my duties in the History Department, I was also connected to the Anthropology Department and in 1968, President Adamany appointed me Professor of Library Sciences. I also served terms on the University Senate and chaired search committees for the Director of the Gerontology Institute and served on its Executive Committee for several years. I also chaired the search committee for the Dean of the College of Lifelong Learning and the College of Urban, Labor and Metropolitan Affairs. I also founded and served as the Chair of the Labor History Conference, which began in 1961 and still operates today. Another assignment involved the University's Folklore Archives. In 1971 President William Keast transferred this program to the Labor Archives. He had developed serious concerns about the leadership of Dr. Ellen Steckert, the Folklore Archives Director. I had no interest in the Folklore program but the President gave me no choice.

Dr. Jones: Was the President justified in his concerns?

Dr. Mason: Yes, although he only saw the "tip of the iceberg"! After a careful review of the program, and under constant harassment by Dr. Steckert, I discovered several severe and serious problems. First, for many of the important collections

received, she listed herself as owner, and not the Folklore Archives. She made it clear that she intended to take these acquisitions with her if and when she left the University. This represented a clear conflict of interest. Even more serious was her practice of assigning students to conduct interviews relating to very serious topics such as drug trafficking in Detroit. Some of the interviews actually named local drug dealers, corrupt police officers, and drug addicts. Transcripts and tapes of those interviews were placed in the Folklore Archives and made available to researchers. Not only was President Keast and the University provost, Henry Bohm, shocked to learn of this practice but the University's legal counsel recommended that the Folklore Archives be closed and the interviews destroyed. They were also deeply concerned about the safety of the student interviewers if their involvement in the project were identified.

Dr. Jones: What action did the University take upon learning of this situation?

Dr. Mason: After Dr. Steckert decided to leave the University the transcripts were temporarily closed to researchers. The supervision of the Folklore Archives was assigned to the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs.

Dr. Jones: How long did you have responsibility for the Folklore Archives?

Dr. Mason: As soon as Dr. Keast left the university, I arranged for its transfer to the English Department, which was responsible for the Folklore courses.

Dr. Jones: One of the highlights of your career at Wayne was the "Local History Conference: Michigan in Perspective." What were the origins and objectives of the Conference?

Dr. Mason: Shortly after I arrived at Wayne in February, 1958, I met with my friend, Henry Brown, the Director of the Detroit Historical Commission and the Detroit Historical Museum and professor Raymond Miller of our History Department. Professor Miller was closely associated with the Historical Society, having served as its interim director during World War II. During our preliminary meetings Professor Miller told us about early attempts by the History Department to sponsor an annual conference devoted to local and regional history. He asked Henry Brown and me to organize such a conference. Brown was enthused about the idea and agreed to be a co-sponsor of the Conference. During the summer of 1958 we developed a plan to host such an affair in October 1958. Later we invited James Babcock, Curator of the Burton Historical Collections of the Detroit Public Library, to join us in this endeavor.

We decided on a two-three-day conference to be held at the McGregor Memorial Conference Center on the Wayne State campus. I might add that we received the strong support of John Fraser, the Director of the Center. The McGregor Memorial Conference Center was the main site but because of the large audiences we held individual sessions at the Detroit Public Library, the Detroit Historical Museum and the Archives at Wayne State. In order to broaden our base, we invited a number of history-related organizations to join us in planning and participating in the conference. These included the Detroit Society for Genealogical Research, the Michigan Historical Society, the Folklore Society, the Fred Hart Williams Genealogical Society, the Michigan State and Wayne State University Presses, the

Wayne State University Archives, the Algonquin Club, the Great Lakes Maritime Institute and the Burton Historical Collections.

Dr. Jones: Was the conference well attended?

Dr. Mason: Yes, they were very well attended. From the beginning we attracted 350-400 people although the number declined after the Detroit riots in 1967. In fact, in the early years of the conference the McGregor facilities were not large enough to handle all of the conference programs and registered guests. The Friday dinner hosted the Henry Brown Memorial Lecture and always featured a distinguished speaker. For several of those we published a copy of the address.

One of the highlights of the conference was the reception sponsored by the Burton Abstract Company and held in the Reading Room of the Burton Historical Collections in the Detroit Public Library. In the early years the conference sponsored a gathering before the main dinner meeting featuring beer, wine, cocktails and hors d'oeuvres but later we had to eliminate liquor because some of the attendees became so intoxicated that they could not attend the dinner and the after-dinner talks. In fact, the situation became so serious that I made arrangements with the Belcrest Hotel, located adjacent to our campus, to set aside a few rooms for those "too inebriated" to drive home. One of the worst offenders was a colleague in Wayne State's History Department. It's true that some of his friends supplied him with an excess of liquor prior to the annual dinner session but since this occurred year after year he should have shown some restraints on his drinking. It finally got so embarrassing when his behavior became

upsetting to other attendees I decided to eliminate the alcoholic beverages hour from the conference.

Dr. Jones: What was your role in the Conference?

Dr. Mason: In the early years Henry Brown, James Babcock and I alternated as conference chair but by 1960 I took over that responsibility until 2008 when I resigned as chair. Fifty years was long enough.

Dr. Jones: As you think back on those fifty conferences what memories do you have?

Dr. Mason: I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to direct such a conference. It brought together organizations and individuals and gave them an opportunity to share their interests and establish professional relationships. There were challenges however, and I must confess, at times I wanted to step aside. The conference took a great deal of time and energy and some crises or serious challenge always seemed to arise at the conference.

Dr. Jones: What do you mean by crisis?

Dr. Mason: Well, let me give you some examples. At our first conference in 1958, I discovered when I arrived at the McGregor Center that another all-day session had been mistakenly scheduled by a faculty group, leaving little space for our sessions. Although the matter was resolved, it certainly was upsetting. On several occasions the chef at the McGregor Center let us down by serving food not properly prepared. On one occasion, an Archives staff member took the conference Registration records with him on a drinking binge only to recall the following morning that he must have left them at one of the bars he visited. We

finally located them in time for registration. Then, there was often an embarrassing situation when one of the main speakers failed to show up for his session. I had to learn the “art” of apologizing to the conference audience. But, overall, the Local History Conference was one of the most memorable highlights of my career at Wayne.

Dr. Jones: I noticed that after you stepped down as chair of the conference, it was taken over by the Michigan Historical Society and was moved from the McGregor Conference Center to sites in Oakland County.

Dr. Mason: Yes, that is what happened. The Director of the Historical Society of Michigan had earlier approached me about such changes. He wanted to broaden the Society’s base in Southeast Michigan but he insisted the conference site be moved out of Detroit to other nearby locations.

Dr. Jones: What was your response to these ideas?

Dr. Mason: I did object to his proposal to move the conference outside of Wayne County. Furthermore, I did not want to abandon Detroit, especially with our magnificent McGregor Conference Center and our core of active supporters. However, as soon as I retired as conference chair, Larry Wagenaar, with the strong support of Loraine Campbell, one of our conference Board members, and Mike Smith, the Director of the Archives, the Local History Conference was moved to Oakland County under the control of the Historical Society of Michigan.

Dr. Jones: Why did Smith want to give away the control of this respected conference along with its endowment?

Dr. Mason: He believed that the conference would be a “drain” on his “busy” schedule and that his energies should be devoted to enhancing the Archives’ “international reputation”, for example, by establishing contacts with Lech Walesa of Poland.

Dr. Jones: Was he serious about the Polish endeavors?

Dr. Mason: Yes, definitely. In fact, in 2010 he traveled to Poland and spent a month there for a meeting with Walesa and his colleagues.

Dr. Jones: Were his efforts successful?

Dr. Mason: There is no evidence that they were except on one occasion he arranged to have Walesa visit the campus. It cost the University a lot of money without any tangible results. Shortly thereafter, the University withdrew its support for these plans.

Dr. Jones: Didn't you also have a relationship with Poland during your tenure as Professor of History?

Dr. Mason: In 1971 I was invited to join President and Mrs. Thomas Bonner, William Brazill, and several other University faculty members to travel to Krakow, Poland to present lectures to graduate students at Jagiellonian University.

Dr. Jones: Did you enjoy this visit?

Dr. Mason: Yes, I certainly did. The rector of the University and members of their faculty treated us royally with tours of the area, luncheons, and receptions. In fact, many of my recollections are still vivid. I will never forget, for example, the reception and dinner given for us at the end of our visit. One of the highlights of that reception was the continual vodka toasts before and during the dinner.

Fortunately, I did not join in these festivities because of the medicine I was taking at that time, and consequently, I was the only one in attendance who was able to represent my colleagues. At the end of the evening program, the Rector thanked us for our visit to the university and presented each of us with a necktie with the emblem of Jagiellonian University on it. Being the only sober one left at the end of the festivities, I was asked to respond on behalf of the Wayne visitors.

There is one other memory that I recall about Krakow. During the several lunch breaks, I walked around the campus area to observe the various stores and shops. On one occasion I visited a store that specialized in postage stamps and amber jewelry. This was the year of the World's Fair in Moscow and the store had large quantities of stamps produced by various European countries and Russia. The stamps were not sold widely because the United States had boycotted the Fair. I purchased several blocks of Russian stamps and those prepared by their allies. I also bought some nice amber necklaces. Upon my return to Michigan I gave the stamps to my son, Christopher, who was a collector and the amber to my two daughters. Another memory of my Krakow visit was that each morning at breakfast I found an envelope next to my plate containing Polish currency. Since I was the only one of our group to receive such a gift, I tried unsuccessfully to find out its source and the purpose of the gift.

Dr. Jones: What did you do with the money?

Dr. Mason: I gave it as a gift to one of the young instructors who had earlier invited me to dine with his family followed by a tour around the area adjacent to Krakow. When I

learned that he was saving money to buy a house, I gave him all of the Polish currency that I had received.

Dr. Jones: I gather you enjoyed your trip to Poland.

Dr. Mason: Yes, I did, especially since it was my first trip to Europe. I might add that upon my return, I was visited by two agents of the State Department who asked for details of the visit and the people I met.

Dr. Jones: What were your responses to the questions?

Dr. Mason: I gave them a summary of my visit, my reactions to the program and the hospitality of the faculty and staff at the University. They wanted to know about the political views of the faculty but I avoided answering their questions.

Dr. Jones: Since coming to work at Wayne State University, I have attended sessions of the North American Labor History Conference. Were you involved in establishing this conference?

Dr. Mason: Yes. In 1958 I was involved in establishing this conference. By that time there was already a growing interest among labor historians to create a forum where students of the labor movement could meet, present papers relating to their research, and enjoy informal meetings. With the assistance of Ronald Haughton and Edward Cushman a Labor Conference budget was established. We held our first national conference in 1968. It was successful from the beginning and met the needs of hundreds of historians who were turning their attention to labor history. Within a few years, the conference was so well known that it attracted scholars from Canada, England and European countries. We had access to the

beautiful McGregor Memorial Conference Center to hold our sessions. The conference, which usually lasted three days, had other benefits because it gave scores of researchers the opportunity to spend time conducting research in the Archives. It also gave our staff the experience to participate in the planning of the conference.

Dr. Jones: What role did you play in the conference?

Dr. Mason: As chair of the conference, I invited the keynote speakers, funded the reception and arranged for media coverage of the conference.

Dr. Jones: How long was the Archives involved in the conference?

Dr. Mason: The Archives sponsored the conference for several years, with some assistance from the History Department. However, as the conference became more successful and well attended, I realized that it had become more of a burden than our staff could handle. The solution it seemed to me, was to persuade the History Department to hire a labor historian, whose duties would include planning the Labor Conference. Unfortunately, the History Department claimed that they had no resources for such an appointment and did not consider a labor position high on their agenda.

Dr. Jones: How did you resolve that issue?

Dr. Mason: Ronald Haughton and I met with President George Gullen and we persuaded him to approve such an appointment in order to ensure the continuity of the Labor Conference at Wayne State University. With this support the History Department was able to appoint a recognized labor historian, Robert Zieger for the new

position with the understanding that he would chair the Labor History Conference as a major part of his duties. Unfortunately, he did not enjoy the administrative duties in chairing the Labor History Conference and he soon left for a new teaching position in Florida.

Dr. Jones: In addition to the projects associated with the University, what other activities did you pursue?

Dr. Mason: After my retirement as Director of the Archives in 1992, I continued to teach the Archival courses until 2005, when I retired from the University. In 1989 the Archives was transferred from the office of the Provost to the College of Labor and Urban Affairs (CULMA).

Dr. Jones: Did you welcome this transfer?

Dr. Mason: President Adamany gave me a choice. The Archives would be transferred to the General Library or CULMA. Neither alternative was appealing but the latter seemed to offer us some advantages. In addition, in 1990, I was later appointed to one of the newly established university professorships, which reduced my teaching assignment to one course a semester.

Dr. Jones: Was President Adamany responsible for this appointment, given the strained relations between the two of you?

Dr. Mason: No, this decision was made by a Special faculty Committee.

Dr. Jones: What other projects captured your attention?

Dr. Mason: There was one other university position that I had to consider. Shortly after Dr. Ali Cambel, who had served as Dean of the Engineering School, was appointed

Provost of the university, he approached me and informed me that he wanted to appoint me Associate Provost of the university. I had serious doubts about such an appointment. First, I had made a commitment to Leonard Woodcock, President of the UAW, that I would remain as Director of the Archives. Second, after discussing Dr. Cambel's offer, I sought the advice of President Keast, with whom I had developed a fine relationship. Dr. Keast confirmed my decision not to accept the Associate Provost offer, even though it involved a considerable increase in salary and academic prestige. Dr. Keast strongly endorsed my decision because he intended to announce his plan to leave the university within a few months and predicted that there would be a heated battle to replace him as President. It was not an enviable position for a newly appointed Associate Provost to be in!

Dr. Jones: I understand you were also involved in a television program?

Dr. Mason: One of the most interesting and challenging projects I've had involved the production of a series of television historical vignettes for Detroit's Channel 4, (NBC).

Dr. Jones: How did you become involved in that project?

Dr. Mason: In the early 1990s the Dossin Great Lakes Museum, on which I had served as a Board member, was involved in the recovery of an anchor in the Detroit River accidentally lost from the Edmund Fitzgerald the famous ore carrier which was later lost in a storm in Lake Superior. The Museum organized a fundraising event to raise the anchor for exhibit at the Great Lakes Museum. Detroit Television

station Channel 4 covered this event that attracted a great deal of public interest. Following the event, I received an invitation from Henry Maldonado, Vice President of Channel 4 to talk about Detroit area history. He had recently come to Detroit and soon became fascinated by the rich history of Detroit. During our discussions, we developed a plan to produce a series of short historical, human-interest vignettes relating to the Detroit area and its prominent residents. My task was to write a brief account of each story, averaging about 1200 words, which Maldonado and the President of Channel 4 reviewed and then developed a short narrative for each session. They invited prominent persons to present the short narrative several times daily on Channel 4.

Dr. Jones: Who were some of the individuals selected to make the presentations?

Dr. Mason: There were many nationally-known NBC personnel who were selected including Tom Brokaw, Jane Pauley and Carmen Harlan and others. These two hundred historical accounts which were aired on NBC Channel 4 several times a day attracted a popular following judging from the letters and phone messages we received.

Dr. Jones: Was the Archives involved in any way?

Dr. Mason: Since I wrote and illustrated each presentation, the University was given credit as a co-sponsor.

Dr. Jones: Did you participate in the TV presentations?

Dr. Mason: I was featured in several of them.

Dr. Jones: Were copies of the TV presentations preserved?

Dr. Mason: Yes, Channel 4 has preserved the original recordings and I have a DVD containing all of them.

Dr. Jones: I would also like to learn about your association with the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan.

Dr. Mason: In 1991 I was invited by Judges John Feikens, Julian Cook and Avern Cohn to help form a Court Historical Society similar to the ones which had been established in other sections of the country. It took several months of planning before the Court Historical Society was formalized. A Board of Directors was appointed and a series of public meetings were scheduled during each year. The Society was well received by the Judges and the legal community of Detroit. The program was greatly enhanced by Judge Avern Cohn who gave the Society a generous grant to conduct oral history interviews with the Court's senior judges and other individuals associated with the Court. At the request of the Society, I was asked to conduct a series of lengthy interviews with about ten judges. Judith Christie, who was on the Court's staff, conducted a number of additional ones.

Dr. Jones: You also served on the Board of Governors of the William Clements Library at the University of Michigan. Did you have a special role on this Board?

Dr. Mason: I was first acquainted with the Clements Library during my graduate days at the University of Michigan. I was always in awe of the magnificent collection of books, manuscripts and illustrations relating to Colonial America, the American Revolution and the men and women who contributed so much to our nation. In 1992 I was elected to the Clements Associates Board of Governors and served on

it as a member, and, from 2001 to 2007 as its Chairman. Because of my close friendship with the Director of the Library, John Dann, I was involved in a number of special programs. For example, in 1991 I conducted a detailed security review of the Clements Library for the University's Board of Governors.

Dr. Jones: Did the Clements library have problems in this area?

Dr. Mason: No, not in a major way, but they were aware of major thefts at the Huntington Library, Yale, the National Archives and other major research institutions.

Dr. Jones: What did your security review concentrate on?

Dr. Mason: The major one was unauthorized access to the Library building. For example, the basement was accessed by a door that led to the maintenance tunnels under the campus. There was no control over who could enter the building from these sources. My review also revealed that someone had tried to get into the Library by throwing a rope over the edge of the roof and, after gaining access to this site, had begun the process of removing the metal cover over the chimney that led to the room below where the most valuable and rare historical records were housed. I also discovered the keys to the Library doors had never been changed since the Library opened in 1923 and that there was no record of who had the keys.

Dr. Jones: What was the reaction of the Board of Regents when you submitted your findings?

Dr. Mason: At first, complete "denial," but soon after, they recognized that the Clements Library indeed had a serious security problem, especially when they considered the collections in the Library were worth many millions of dollars. With the

support of the Regents the Library took immediate steps to establish better security.

Dr. Jones: I understand that you conducted similar security reviews at other archives and research libraries.

Dr. Mason: Yes, I conducted similar security reviews at several dozen archival and research institutions and later assisted the Society of American Archivists in developing its security program.

Dr. Jones: Another one of your areas of interest was oral history. How did you get interested in this endeavor?

Dr. Mason: As I may have mentioned earlier, when I was State Archivist, I attended the meetings of a number of historical societies in Michigan. I often was fascinated with the stories the "old timers" told about their experiences. Unfortunately, I did not have the equipment to tape record their accounts but I realized how important these reminiscences were. This lesson was not lost on me so when I became archivist at Wayne, where I conducted a number of interviews on tape relating to the labor movement. The information gathered in this way helped us supplement the written records in the Archives and helped us fill in the gaps in our archival holdings.

I also became active in the founding of the Oral History Association in 1965 when Philip Brooks, Director of the Truman Presidential Library, asked me to prepare the Constitution and by Laws for the Association. At the organizational meeting in 1966 at the Arden House in New York, I presented my proposal, which was

approved by the members. I continued to be an active member of the OHA and presented papers at a number of their annual meetings.

I helped found the Michigan Oral History Association. I was invited by the Michigan Council of Foundations to interview the founders of several Michigan foundations. These interviews were filmed by a professional film company and shown on local television stations in Michigan. I might add that one of the major reasons why the Council wanted such interviews was because many of the major Michigan foundations had little information on the plans and aims of the founders of secure storage space.

Dr. Mason: For example, the John Fetzer Institute and the Ruth Mott Foundation.

Dr. Jones: What did these projects cover?

Dr. Mason: I was invited to the Fetzer Institute in Kalamazoo to discuss with them the establishment of an archival program relating to the life and professional career of John Fetzer.

Dr. Jones: I know that Fetzer was associated with the Detroit Tigers, but I know little about him.

Dr. Mason: John Fetzer was one of the early pioneers in radio and television. After establishing WKZO in Kalamazoo, he added television to his business empire and he became so prominent in these communication ventures that he was appointed by President Roosevelt in 1943 to monitor coverage of World War II by American journalists.

Baseball, and especially the Detroit Tigers, had captured his interest as a child and he joined a group of business leaders to purchase the Tigers. Within a year he secured outright ownership of the team. In 1984 he sold the team to Tom Monaghan, owner of Little Caesar's Pizza.

Another major activity which dominated his interest from his college days in the 1920s was his fascination with the paranormal. He was an avid believer in reincarnation and other spiritual pursuits. He established the Fetzer Foundation in and following his death in 1991, its Trustees developed a program to carry out his wishes to study the concept of "Mind, Body and the Spirit."

Dr. Jones: Had Mr. Fetzer collected and preserved records that documented his career?

Dr. Mason: He was what we call a "packrat." His records date back to his early childhood in Lafayette, Indiana, and continued to his final days. They gave detailed information of his interest in baseball, his radio and television career, and his explorations in the paranormal.

Dr. Jones: Did he have any close friends to whom you could talk about his life?

Dr. Mason: Yes, but even some of his close friends knew little about his varied interests. He once remarked to his nephew, Bruce Fetzer, that he was like "a cat with nine lives" and few of his colleagues and business associates had any idea of the "real John Fetzer."

Dr. Jones: Did the extensive records he preserved provide a comprehensive picture of his life and interests?

Dr. Mason: His archives were extremely helpful, especially in giving a broad outline of his life and that of his wife, But, many of his accounts were misleading, perhaps purposely so.

Dr. Jones: What steps were taken to clear up these inconsistencies or fill in the gaps not covered in his archives?

Dr. Mason: Rob Lehman, the President of the Fetzer Institute's Board of Directors, provided the solution. He asked me to conduct an extensive series of interviews with persons who worked with Mr. Fetzer in his television and radio business, the Detroit Tigers, the founding of the Institute and his "spiritual" endeavors. This turned out to be a formidable assignment, involving interviews with thirty-seven of his associates and friends.

Dr. Jones: What information did these interviews provide on the life of John Fetzer? Were there any surprises?

Dr. Mason: The interviews contributed a great deal and proved to be worth the time and effort involved. They helped fill in the gaps in the written record and they cleared up contradictory information about his life and interests. The interviews relating to his television and radio ventures illustrated what a shrewd business leader he was and demonstrated how he was one of the pioneers in this field. They explain, for example, how he had acquired a number of items found in Adolph Hitler's bunker after the Allies occupied it. With General Eisenhower's authorization he was one of the first Americans to visit that historic site.

Fetzer's archival holdings and the interviews show how intimately involved he was in the operation of the Detroit Tigers. One of the most fascinating human-interest accounts revealed how he dealt with Mark "The Bird" Fidrych, the young Tiger pitcher. On one occasion after Fidrych had lost 2 or 3 games in a row, Fetzer invited him to meet with him at his headquarters in Tiger Stadium. During the meeting, Fidrych expressed his concerns and embarrassment resulting from the practical jokes to which he was subjected to by several Tiger players. For example, they had put birds in his locker and teased him constantly about his practice of talking to the baseball before he delivered it to the batter. Fetzer told him not to be concerned about these playful taunts of his teammates and about his "talking" to the baseball. He also told him that he believed that Fidrych did influence his pitching by talking to the ball.

Dr. Jones: Was Fidrych influenced by Mr. Fetzer's assurances?

Dr. Mason: Yes, although not until Fetzer demonstrated to Fidrych the power of "mind over matter."

Dr. Jones: How did he do this?

Dr. Mason: According to Dan Ewald, the Vice President for Public Relations for the Tigers, who was present during the meeting between Mr. Fetzer and Fidrych, the former cleared a table and placed a wire leading off its side to which a small metal object hung. Fetzer asked the young pitcher to sit and concentrate with him to make the pendulum move. In less than a minute it swung from side to side. Fidrych seemed overwhelmed by the performance, which was repeated twice. It must have had a

great impact on Fidrych because he continued his practice of conversing with the baseball before delivering it to the batter.

Dr. Jones: What was your reaction to this account?

Dr. Mason: I was suspicious, and asked Ewald if Fetzer could have activated a magnet under the table. Ewald, too, must have also had initial doubts because he later examined the floor and found no magnets.

Dr. Jones: Did your interviews turn up any further information about the spiritual interests of Mr. Fetzer?

Dr. Mason: Yes, based on several interviews and archival sources, I learned that he believed in re-incarnation and that in past life, he was a number of historical figures including Rameses II, Socrates, Louis XIV and Thomas Jefferson. In fact, in planning the Fetzer Institute headquarters, Fetzer hired a sculptor to prepare busts of these men and displayed them in a separate room. The archives also revealed that he had given major grants to researchers involved in extra-sensory activities and ways to contact the dead.

Dr. Jones: You must have enjoyed the challenges involved in this project.

Dr. Mason: Yes, I did. It confirmed the value of the study of archival sources and the careful preparation of oral history interviews.

Dr. Jones: Were you involved in other oral history projects?

Dr. Mason: Yes, several, one involved President William Rea Keast. Being a staff member during his administration and with access to his files, I realized how little credit he was given for managing the University during the Vietnam War and especially the

Kent State crisis and the Civil Rights Movement. When I discovered that he had retired and was living in Norwich, Vermont, I contacted him and asked if I could do a series of interviews documenting his life and academic career. Since my son, Stephen, also lived near Norwich, I combined several Vermont family visits to conduct the interviews. They gave a much different account of his tenure at Wayne and especially his conflict with the Medical School and the University's Board of Governors.

Although my initial interest was the interviews with Dr. Keast, President Adamany asked me to continue interviews with President Thomas Bonner, and the leadership team of the late President George Gullen. For the latter, I interviewed E. Burroughs Smith, Henry Bohm and Robert Hubbard.

Dr. Jones: Did you interview President Adamany?

Dr. Mason: I refused to do that interview.

Dr. Jones: Why? After all, he was President for a lengthy period?

Dr. Mason: I had little respect for Dr. Adamany and I did not want to confront him with questions about his controversial leadership and his numerous vendettas against Wayne faculty.

Dr. Jones: Are the interviews available?

Dr. Mason: Yes, I placed copies in the University Archives.

Dr. Jones: Tell me about your work with the Mott Foundation in Flint.

Dr. Mason: Maryanne Mott, the daughter of the auto pioneer, C. S. Mott, asked me to review the archives of the Ruth Mott Foundation. Mrs. Mott was the wife of C. S. Mott.

The Mott family estate called Applewood was located in Flint, Michigan. I conducted this examination and reported my findings and recommendations to Maryanne Mott and the Foundation's Board of Trustees.

Dr. Jones: What was the scope of the Mott Archives?

Dr. Mason: Let me first explain, that there were two Mott Foundations. One is the C. S. Mott Foundation, also located in Flint, but run separately and with a different mission. The Ruth Mott Foundation archives contained most of the Mott family records, photographs, artwork and memorabilia. It was a magnificent collection but little used by researchers. My recommendations involved the hiring of a professional archivist to develop policies relating to access and conservation needs of her collections. The Board approved of my recommendations.

In addition, the Board asked me to conduct a series of interviews with individuals associated with the Ruth Mott Foundation. These turned out to be very important from a historical viewpoint because they filled in many gaps in the archival holdings and provided insights in the operation of the Foundation and the interrelationships of C. S. Mott's children from separate marriages. I also interviewed Stewart Mott, Maryanne's brother, the talented "black sheep" of the family.

Dr. Jones: It is obvious from my recent visit to Eagle Harbor, Michigan located on the Keweenaw Peninsula on Lake Superior, that you have continued to work on a variety of historic projects there.

Dr. Mason: Yes, I became an active member of the Keweenaw County Historical Society, writing articles for their publication, the and participating in several summer projects. For the past two years along with my wife, Marcia, I have been deeply involved in the establishment of a new historical museum in Eagle River, which opened in August of 2013.

Dr. Jones: I think that we have covered, in at least a general way, your professional activities during your career. Let's end the interview here.

Chapter 3 United Farm Workers

Dr. Jones: Let's talk about the United Farm Workers Collection. How did you come to identify this Union as a possible donor?

Dr. Mason: I had heard about the Farm Workers and their charismatic leader, Cesar Chavez, in the early 1960s. He and his union were getting attention in the national media, especially as a result of their boycott of grapes, wine and farm produce. From my earlier labor research, I was aware of the failed AFL-CIO sponsored Agricultural Organizing Committee, or AWOC as it was called, and familiar with the unsuccessful attempts of the Industrial Workers of the World to organize migratory workers. My decision to contact the UFW resulted from a meeting I had with Walter Reuther to discuss potential labor collections that we should acquire for the Archives. He strongly recommended that the UFW would fit nicely into our collecting strategy. The day following this meeting, he phoned me to tell me that he had set up a meeting two days hence with Cesar Chavez at the UFW headquarters in Delano, California. I explained to Mr. Reuther that I had no idea where Delano was located. His response-one that I vividly remember – was “Phil, you have a PhD., I am sure you will be able to find it.”

Dr. Jones: Wasn't that a short notice to drop everything and rush to California?

Dr. Mason: Yes, although I had gotten used to this type of pressure from prospective donors who insisted that I meet with them at their convenience. At any rate, I arrived in Delano, located north of Bakersfield, California in time for the meeting. The Farm

Workers' headquarters were then housed in a small house on Albany Street and a new facility, called the "Forty Acres", about a half mile from downtown Delano, it was here that I first met Cesar Chavez. In the following several days I had an opportunity to tell him about our archival program and our future plans. I also learned that he and I had some things in common. We were the same age -- he was born on March 31, 1927 in Yuma, Arizona and I, one month later. We both served in the U.S. Navy and we both shared a keen interest in the history of the labor movement. He had studied the attempts of the IWW and other groups to organize migratory farm laborers and had interviewed a number of early labor pioneers.

Dr. Jones: Did he have records of the founding and early years of the United Farm Workers?

Dr. Mason: The Union did have a small accumulation but they were scattered around the offices and at the nearby headquarters of the Filipino Agricultural Workers, a union which had merged with the UFW in 1965. Chavez and other UFW officers maintained their personal collections in their residences. During our early sessions I was able to get a lot of valuable and relevant information about Chavez's family life and his involvement in labor and related social causes. Of particular interest to him was his work with Saul Alinsky and the Community Services Organization. (CSO) In fact, it was during his discussion of this work that he asked his secretary, Virginia Rodriguez, to locate his daily diaries, which he had kept during his years with the CSO. They could not be found, she reported to him. "In fact," she added, "...all of your records stored in an office closet on Albany street

had been recently discarded by Dolores Huerta, the Vice-President of the Union in order to provide space for filing supplies.” I discovered at that moment that Cesar had a temper. For her sake, it was fortunate that Dolores was out of town. The next day, as I recall, when he had calmed down, he told me to go through the other inactive records and ship them to the Archives.

Dr. Jones: Did Mr. Chavez get angry often?

Dr. Mason: Not in my presence, but he did have a reputation of being “strong willed.” He also had a good sense of humor, which I witnessed on my next visit to Delano. I had asked him and his secretary if they could recommend a good Mexican restaurant in Delano. He then told Virginia to call “Maria and Elena’s” and make reservations for me, since the restaurant was usually crowded. When I arrived at the restaurant that evening, the waitress seated me at once and told me that Mr. Chavez had already selected the menu for me. I don’t remember the entrée but I vividly recall the bowl of guacamole that I was served. At least that is what I thought it was until I tasted it. It turned out that it was a dish of green chili, and following Mr. Chavez’s directions, they made it the strongest the restaurant could prepare. I immediately started coughing and I discovered that a glass of water did not help. The next day when I returned to the UFW headquarters, Cesar asked, “How was the meal?” Before I could even answer, his staff burst out laughing and I suddenly I realized that I had been the victim of a well-meaning joke. I might add, that I tasted that chili concoction for two days! Several years later, I returned the favor when Cesar visited Detroit for a speech at Wayne State University to the

students, faculty and local supporters. He insisted that he wanted to go to one of the well-known Mexican restaurants for some “real spicy chili.” I took him to a restaurant in Mexican Village. Before he was seated as admirers who wanted his autograph surrounded him, I quickly told the waiter that he wanted the “mildest chili dishes available.” It didn’t take him long to figure out what had happened and he merely said, “Dr. Mason, wait until we get back to Delano.”

Dr. Jones: You mentioned earlier the Filipino unions who were allied with the UFW. How did that come about?

Dr. Mason: The Filipino workers had formed a union in 1962 before Chavez and his group of migratory farm workers organized into a separate union. In September 1965 the Filipino group led by Larry Itliong went on strike against local agricultural growers. This action took Chavez and his colleagues by surprise because they had wanted to delay a strike until their union was stronger. As a result, Chavez and his associates decided to join the Filipino Workers and merge their two unions into the United Farm Workers. In the election that followed, Chavez was elected president and Itliong, Vice-President.

Dr. Jones: Was this a merger of equal worker groups?

Dr. Mason: No, I don’t recall the actual memberships of each group but it was obvious that the Chavez faction, made up largely of Hispanic workers, would be much larger. Most of the Filipino workers were single since they had not been allowed by American law to have women accompany them from the Philippines.

Dr. Jones: Did you have an opportunity to meet leaders from both organizations?

Dr. Mason: Yes, I made frequent trips to Delano and their subsequent headquarters at La Paz in Keene, California. Also, during the boycotts, the UFW also maintained joint offices in Detroit and sent delegations of their leaders to run these operations. For example, Richard Chavez, Cesar's younger brother and Artie Rodriguez, Cesar's son-in-law and later president of the UFW spent many months in Detroit. On my many visits to California and other UFW regional offices, I also met other UFW leaders.

Dr. Jones: Give me some examples.

Dr. Mason: Among the Filipino leaders, I worked closely with included Larry Itliong, Peter Velasco and Philip Vera Cruz. After several meetings I arranged to acquire their records for the Archives. Pete and Dolores Velasco became very dear friends and were very helpful in keeping me informed of the operation and politics at the UFW. Dolores Huerta, a close friend and associate of the Chavez family, one of the founders of the Union and a recognized leader in National Campaigns for Women's Rights was, and indeed still is, a close friend. I also established a good relationship with Richard Chavez, Cesar's wife, Helen, and two of their children, Paul and Linda. Artie Rodriguez and I shared a great deal in common. A University of Michigan graduate student in Social Work, he became Cesar's most trusted ally, married Linda Chavez and in 1993 replaced Cesar as President of the UFW Union. I have maintained my contact with the Chavez family and other UFW leaders and have been to La Paz on several occasions since I retired as Director of the Archives in 1992.

Other UFW contacts that I worked with included Chris Hartmire, Jerry Cohen, LeRoy Chatsfield, Marshall Ganz, Marc Grossman, Ann McGregor, Susan Drake, and Mary McCartney, Fred Ross, a close friend and mentor to Cesar Chavez was also especially helpful in securing valuable material for the Archives. He too, was associated with Saul Alinsky and the Community Services Organization and supervised Cesar's work there. Fortunately, Ross had made copies of Cesar's diaries, and after the originals were accidentally destroyed, placed these copies in the Archives.

A number of clergy who worked closely with the Farm Workers were most helpful. Reverend James Drake, a Presbyterian minister, worked full-time as a UFW organizer and Chris Hartmire, the former director of the United Farm Ministry held different key positions in the Union. Rev. Victor Salandine, a Catholic priest, who made many contributions to the Farm Workers was also supportive. Monsignor George Higgins stationed in Washington, well known nationally as an advocate and supporter of the labor movement, became a close friend and advisor. He had worked with the UFW from its founding in 1964 and used his influence with Catholic leaders on behalf of migratory workers' rights.

Dr. Jones: Was there a close relationship between Monsignor Higgins and Cesar Chavez?

Dr. Mason: Yes, but the Monsignor could get frustrated with Chavez, a topic he often shared with me. In fact, he phoned me on several occasions to discuss the UFW, especially after my visits to Delano and La Paz. He told me about one event which upset him a great deal. In order to assist the Farm Workers, he had persuaded

several California Catholic bishops to host a meeting between Chavez and several leading growers to discuss the upcoming contract negotiations. The meeting was scheduled in Fresno, California for 10:00 a.m. The Bishops arrived on time for the meeting, as did the representatives of the growers, but Chavez did not appear at the scheduled time. At 10:15, according to Monsignor Higgins, as the Growers announced they were leaving, Cesar Chavez and two of his assistants arrived carrying a large blender and a bag of carrots. It seems that Chavez, under a new diet, needed fresh carrot juice before key meetings. Monsignor Higgins told me that he could hardly contain his temper during this delay, especially since the blender sounded like it was crushing rocks and not carrots. Fortunately, the face-to-face meeting succeeded in opening the contract negotiations.

Dr. Jones: Did Monsignor Higgins have a good relationship with other Labor unions?

Dr. Mason: Yes, he was highly regarded by labor leaders, including Walter Reuther, George Meany and others. He gave a fine address about Leonard Woodcock at the latter's memorial service in 2001.

Dr. Jones: In your earlier statement you referred to "La Paz" as well as Delano as the headquarters of the UFW. Would you explain that?

Dr. Mason: Delano, California, located in the San Joaquin Valley, was the original site of the headquarters of the United Farm Workers. In 1971 it was moved to Keene, California about forty miles northeast of Bakersfield in the Tehachapi Mountains. I first learned about it in 1969 when Cesar asked me to accompany him on a trip to the site of the former Kern County Tuberculosis Sanitarium in Keene, California.

The property and the buildings had been given to the UFW by an anonymous donor, quite possibly, according to one reliable source, by Steve Allen, the television celebrity. It was an unforgettable experience to tour those abandoned hospital buildings in such beautiful surroundings. Located in a valley surrounded by hills (to me they seemed like mountains), I was startled first by the quiet of the area. Only the singing of birds, and there were hundreds of various kinds, broke the solitude. It was obvious that Chavez was enthralled by the site and as we walked around, he talked about the need to have a quiet, secluded haven where he and his colleagues could work and also have time to enjoy the beauty of their surroundings. I wondered at the time how the staff, most of whom had come from urban areas, would embrace their new headquarters. I didn't get an answer to that question until a year later because at the time of my first visit to La Paz, the staff hadn't yet been informed. I learned a year later, that the move from Delano to Keene, now called La Paz, was not widely received. Since the village of Keene had no schools and few amenities, some staff members were concerned about the isolation of the new site. Some staff resigned but most of them moved. Delano continued as a Farm Worker regional center at the two-acre site along with the Filipino Retirement Village.

Dr. Jones: What facilities were available at La Paz for the staff?

Dr. Mason: There were about ten buildings, formerly the residences of the medical staff of the Sanitarium, the hospital which was converted into temporary quarters for UFW volunteers and about fifteen to twenty mobile homes for staff. At the

southeast corner of the property was a large building, formerly the children's wing of the sanitarium, which had been converted into offices for the UFW legal staff and other offices. Later, a warehouse was built on the property for the printing operation of the Union. Some staff that had financial resources purchased or rented homes in Tehachapi, about eight to ten miles north of Keene.

Dr. Jones: Did the staff receive salaries?

Dr. Mason: In the early years of the Union, as I recall, each staff member received five dollars a week.

Dr. Jones: What sort of entertainment was available on weekends or evenings?

Dr. Mason: In Delano, there were theatres, restaurants, sporting events, etc., along with weekly plays performed by staff. Luis Valdez, the musician who later received recognition for his play "Zoot Suit" often performed at Union affairs in Delano.

Dr. Jones: Did you ever attend these social events?

Dr. Mason: Yes, whenever possible. I always enjoyed the performances depicting the plight of the workers "abused by cruel, brutal growers", even though I didn't understand the Spanish or Mexican dialects. On one occasion one of the volunteers invited me to join a small group at a local tavern. I was glad that I accepted because it gave me a much better understanding of what they did and what prompted them to join "La Causa." Since I had resources that they did not have, I paid for about ten pitchers of beer, which livened up the evening and made me sort of a "hero."

Dr. Jones: The UFW was one of the youngest labor unions that placed their historical records in the Archives. Did they accumulate many records?

Dr. Mason: Surprisingly, yes. During my visits to Delano and La Paz in the 1970s, I was challenged by the extensive volume of records stored in offices, storage units and in private residences. At La Paz, for example, the rooms in the basement of the hospital were filled with mostly unmarked containers of records. The hospital's morgue had been converted to a storage area and the various rooms in the former children's hospital were used for similar purposes.

During the boycott campaigns against California wine, lettuce and other agricultural products, UFW offices were established in cities throughout the U.S. and Canada. When the boycotts ended, the offices were closed and the records, filing supplies, and other equipment were sent back to headquarters and put in storage or sent directly to the Archives. Except for the President's files, there was no organized system to their files. On the other hand, few records were thrown away or discarded which left a task of finding the hidden gems that remained for transfer to the Archives. I can vividly recall the hours that I spent at La Paz going through their records. It wasn't the most pleasant task but it was especially rewarding when I found valuable groups of records that otherwise would probably have been discarded.

Dr. Jones: Wouldn't it have been easier to ship everything back to the Archives for review?

Dr. Mason: Yes, it probably would have been, but I had agreed to make a list of what I was sending to the Archives for prior approval of the union office in charge of the records.

Dr. Jones: Did the Farm Workers have photographs and audiovisual files?

Dr. Mason: Yes, they had collected and preserved thousands of photographs, tape recordings of contract negotiations, radio programs, etc. With the assistance of a couple of the volunteers, I was able to make a selection of some of the unique illustrations, which captured key events in the Union's history. There were, for example, a number of excellent photographs of Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta, Larry Itilong, and other UFW leaders and staff. The famous, historic 230 mile "march to Sacramento" in 1966 was carefully documented as well as the well-known political figures, artists and Hollywood stars who visited La Paz. The main gaps in audiovisual coverage were the field workers and the camps where they lived. However, I was able to hire a photographer from the Fresno Bee newspaper to photograph workers in the fields. Fortunately, Cesar Chavez had carefully collected and preserved photographs of his family from the time they had a farm near Yuma, Arizona until they moved to California in the 1930s. This collection is now in the Archives and has been widely used by researchers.

Dr. Jones: How did the UFW fund the operation of La Paz, the Boycotts and their other Union activities?

Dr. Mason: This was a very difficult challenge for the Union. The dues of members were helpful but hardly adequate for the costs of organizing the powerful agricultural growers. Several international unions made annual contributions to the UFW, including SEIU, AFSCME and the AFT. The UAW gave generous financial support and provided the costs of a new administration building in Delano. Catholic churches in many cities provided accommodations for UFW boycott staff.

Another organization that gave valuable support was the National Farm Worker Ministry. Made up of the clergy from various Catholic and Protestant denominations, it not only provided funding but supported many Farm Worker organizing efforts in the U.S. and Canada. The UFW affiliation with the AFL-CIO on September 23, 1973 brought added benefits to Union members; even though it isn't clear whether this was a factor in the negotiations. Nevertheless, under the terms of the AFL-CIO contract with Master Card, a class of approved membership included union members who were employed part-time. As a result, several thousands of UFW dues-paying members were eligible.

Dr. Jones: I understand that there were many challenges to Chavez's leadership within the UFW. What was the nature of these disputes?

Dr. Mason: Within the AFL-CIO there were some union leaders who withheld support from the UFW because Chavez did not campaign to become an affiliate. The Teamsters were more forceful in their open antagonism to the UFW because they claimed that Chavez was challenging their control of the farm workers. In the 1970s the Teamsters carried on an active campaign against the UFW often using violent methods to intimidate UFW organizers. I can attest to these methods from personal experience. On one day in the early 1970s I accompanied a group of UFW organizers trying to persuade farm workers at a large farm in Arvin, California to join the UFW. During the sharp exchanges between the UFW organizers and the growers' representatives a group of motorcyclists from Los Angeles attired in their Teamster logos, arrived and started to threaten the UFW organizers. I noticed

that the Teamster interlopers wore a small ten-inch chain strapped to their wrists which they used very efficiently in striking the UFW organizers, even though several sheriff deputies stood nearby. Although I was merely observing the scene, I was hit several times so that by evening my back was covered with bruises. When I reported the incident to Cesar, he responded "It's a good learning experience for you."

Dr. Jones: How was the dispute resolved?

Dr. Mason: The AFL-CIO, and several international unions and the Catholic and Protestant churches put pressure on the Teamsters to stop its campaign against the UFW.

Dr. Jones: Within the UFW were there challenges to Chavez and his leadership?

Dr. Mason: The Filipino leaders were never strong supporters of Chavez and his associates. Their union was organized before Chavez entered the scene and even though Larry Itliong and other Filipino labor leaders were elected to the UFW Board of Trustees they believed they were marginalized by the Hispanic leaders. Later, after news of Chavez's visit to the Philippines and his friendly association with Imelda and Ferdinand Marcos, he was vilified by the Filipino workers and the Filipino press in California.

There were more serious internal feuds that erupted and threatened to cripple the Union. Chavez's somewhat autocratic style of leadership alienated several farm worker leaders. The issues ranged from personal disputes to differences in policies. Chavez's strong commitment to non-violence upset some members who wanted the Union to match the confrontational and brutal tactics of the Growers

and the Teamsters. Some Union members who associated with the Marxist- left once tried to take over the Union and were another cause of dissent. Perhaps the most important controversial issues, involved Union organizing. As the power and the influence of the agricultural growers increased, especially under Governor Reagan, Chavez abandoned an active Union membership campaign and devoted his resources to the use of sophisticated boycott techniques to win recognition from the Growers. His critics, who included several of Chavez's long-time friends and founders of the UFW, strongly disagreed and demanded that the Union concentrate its efforts on organizing new members. Chavez won the battle, and, as a result, many of his opponents abandoned the Union, and continued their sharp opposition to Chavez in the media.

Dr. Jones: These internal disputes and the other challenges he faced must have taken their toll on Chavez. Did they affect his health?

Dr. Mason: Probably, but I don't have many details of his medical condition. On one of my early visits to Delano I learned that he was bedridden at home for an indefinite period with a back injury. At his request I visited him there for several hours. He was lying on a plywood mattress and was obviously suffering from back pain, but he wanted to talk about Union problems. He told me that he must get better control over Union finances and asked me to send him accounting books that he could study while at home. Finally, Marion Moses, a trained nurse and Farm Worker volunteer, insisted that I leave immediately and let him get his rest. Later,

I might add, Marion received her medical degree and worked with a Farm Worker group in Toledo.

Dr. Jones: How long was he incapacitated?

Dr. Mason: Shortly after I met with him, Doctor Janet Travell, the physician who treated John Kennedy for a similar back problem arrived and correctly diagnosed and treated his illness caused by one leg being slightly shorter than the other. Another health issue resulted from several of his "fasts" which he endured during the disputes with growers. I visited him shortly after one of them and the severity of the incident was obvious.

Dr. Jones: How long did your association and friendship with Mr. Chavez last?

Dr. Mason: Until his death in 1993.

Dr. Jones: As you look back on your long association with him, do any other memories stand out?

Dr. Mason: I have many very pleasant memories of him and the discussions we had. On many of my visits he had a busy schedule including frequent travel commitments and little time to give to me except relating to Archives business. There were exceptions, which I vividly remember. During one visit to La Paz shortly after it had been occupied by the Union, he took me on a hike up one of the nearby hills surrounding La Paz. He wanted to show me a small spring he had discovered and for the next hour, sitting on rocks, he told me of his interest in "his heroes" Henry David Thoreau, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Pancho Villa the Mexican "revolutionary leader."

On another visit, Cesar asked me to accompany him to Oxnard, California. There he showed me where his family lived when they migrated from Yuma, Arizona during the Depression. He also showed me the building where he gave his first public speech when assigned to the Community Services Organization. He was so “shy and anxious,” he confessed, that he sat at the rear of the room and it was only when the Chair announced that Mr. Chavez must have been delayed that he stood up and introduced himself. He had never forgotten that event, he told me. This visit to Oxnard gave me a better understanding of Cesar, his early years and the impact that the Community Services Organization had upon his career. At other sessions with Cesar during my visits to La Paz and also his several visits to Detroit, he shared with me his future plans for the UFW and especially his deep concern for the migratory workers he represented. In the 1980s after the Union had received a huge settlement from the Growers, he proudly and enthusiastically told me about his plans to use these funds to subsidize a low-income housing development for farm workers. Each residence, he told me, must have space for a garden.

Dr. Jones: You mentioned earlier the dispute between the UFW and the Teamsters. Was that limited to encounters between Union organizers at worksites?

Dr. Mason: It was much more serious than that. On one occasion in about 1969, several men had broken into the Filipino Union headquarters in Delano, tied up the guard and left with locked file cabinets. Fortunately, the guard was not harmed and the cabinets contained only old newspapers. I had removed the files and shipped

them to the Archives the month before. On another occasion, a sheriff from Contra Costa County was arrested trying to sell UFW records that had been stolen from UFW headquarters at La Paz. These incidents were minor compared to the later one when the state police reported that they had learned from an informant that a "contract" had been placed on Chavez's life. The police took it very seriously as did the UFW. Armed staff was assigned to monitor all visitors coming to La Paz and armed guards and their dogs accompanied Cesar even when he walked around the La Paz Compound.

Dr. Jones: Were you concerned about your personal security at La Paz?

Dr. Mason: No, not really, except when I was on evening walks with Cesar. I remember looking constantly around the hills, which surrounded La Paz. I must have been concerned enough though because I reported my concerns to Senator Ted Kennedy in February 1972. I still retain a copy of his reply.

Dr. Jones: Did Cesar and the UFW have any recreational facilities at La Paz? What did they do with their spare time or weekend breaks?

Dr. Mason: They had a swimming pool at La Paz and a small play area for young children. Tehachapi, located about eight miles away had playgrounds, ball fields, a golf course and other sports facilities which were available to the union's staff and families. Cesar and his son-in-law, Artie Rodriguez, liked to play handball and often drove to the YMCA in Bakersfield to use their facilities. I, too, loved that sport and I joined them on one occasion that I remember well. I should mention, that handball was my favorite past-time and in Detroit I played four days a week.

I had no difficulty in winning and even after Artie quietly told me “Let Cesar win a game or at least get a few points,” I always seemed to have luck on my side in the games. Being a real competitor, Cesar did not like to lose, I found out from Artie.

Dr. Jones: Did you ever have other differences with Cesar?

Dr. Mason: A few. I recall on one visit to La Paz, I was invited to join the staff for their weekly session called “Games.” Cesar had gotten the idea from Richard Dietrich, the controversial therapist who had earlier introduced and promoted the “sessions” as a treatment to cure drug addictions. At each meeting a member of the group was selected as the focus and every participant would heap criticism upon the chosen colleague, emphasizing every flaw or fault in the person’s character, personal habits and views. This process, according to Dietrich, would help rebuild the individual and make them better able to serve the Union. Chris Hartmire, one of the key UFW officers wanted me to attend and participate. After attending the part of one session in which one participant was humiliated, I declined to attend any other meeting of “Games.” I learned later that Helen Chavez, Cesar’s wife, Pete and Dolores Velasco, and several others had also declined to participate. Cesar never brought up the subject with me but I made my views clear to Hartmire. Despite the overall aim of “Games” without access to professional psychiatric counseling, the program, in my opinion, could do serious harm. Hartmire’s response that I was just “a damned intellectual detached from real life.” I remained concerned why Chavez would support such a program.

Dr. Jones: Were there other issues on which you disagreed with Chavez?

Dr. Mason: There was one, which was very upsetting to me. In November, 1987 I was invited to La Paz to join in planning the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the founding of the United Farm Workers. Specifically, Cesar wanted me to review the accuracy of the historical account of the UFW to be published in the Anniversary brochure. I was shocked to find that the account had no mention of the role of the Filipino workers and their union, which preceded the founding of the UFW. At a preliminary session the members of the planning committee agreed with me and supported my recommendation for revision. When Cesar met with the Committee, he refused to consider any reference to the Filipino contribution. His sharp response was that the Filipino role was irrelevant and need not be included. I expected some support from the Committee but no one said a word. The exchange that day made me realize the power he exercised over the staff; at the same time, it left me very disappointed in him.

Dr. Jones: Did this incident affect his relationship with you and the archival program?

Dr. Mason: No, I don't think it did. He was upset with my recommendation relating to giving appropriate credit to the Filipino unionists. This was not the only time that I disagreed with him. I mentioned earlier my opposition to the "Games" program which he had endorsed. I refused his request to stay at La Paz during my visits to work on the UFW archives. On occasion he asked me to help get additional financial support from the UAW but I declined. On several occasions he asked the Archives to prepare a major exhibit for some meeting or program. If his request was unreasonable, for example, if he wanted it completed and shipped within a

week, I would tell him, "Sorry, Cesar, we don't have the staff or time to do it." He was often not happy with my response, and didn't hesitate to let me know about it, but I had to make it clear that the Archives had its own priorities.

Dr. Jones: Did your rejection of his requests affect his relationship with the Archives?

Dr. Mason: No. I think he respected me for being honest with him rather than making promises or commitments that I could not keep. His continued support for the Archives was evident in 1992 when he invited me to go with him to Santa Barbara for a meeting with University officials. They had proposed that their Library become the archival depository for the United Farm Workers "so that California students and faculty could have convenient access to the UFW records." This was a radical change in policy toward the UFW. For example, when I attended a meeting of California archivists in the early 1970s and reported my contacts with the Farm Workers Union, they responded that "I was wasting my time." They reported that no union of migratory farm workers had ever been successful and predicted that Chavez and the UFW would fail in a year or so. Furthermore, they argued that the UFW was led by a group of pro-Communist agitators. The archivist at Sanford who was a good friend, supported my efforts and reminded me that no California public institution controlled so strongly by agribusiness groups would ever support the use of public funds in support of the UFW.

At a later meeting at the University of California at Santa Barbara, it was obvious that the interest in the UFW had changed. That University, as well as several other California institutions, now wanted to become the archival depository for the

UFW. This view was clearly presented by the librarian, history faculty, and other Santa Barbara officials in attendance at the meeting. They argued that Wayne State University was too far away. I recall vividly Cesar's measured and controlled response. He explained that the UFW was not just a California labor union and that it had local affiliates in Arizona, Texas, Florida and other parts of the United States. He then reminded the group that in 1968 when he was scheduled to be a featured speaker at the University that "your governing board" forced the cancellation of his presentation. He also noted that the current members of their Board never asked why no labor union representatives were on it. Chavez ended his remarks with a conclusion that I shall always remember. "In 1968," he said, "when we started our Union in Delano, we asked for your help and support in preserving our historical records, you refused to help us. It was not until Phil Mason, Director of the Labor Archives at Wayne State University in Detroit, contacted us and offered his assistance. As a result, our voluminous collections of records, photographs and publications have been carefully preserved and are now available for research. The Wayne State University Archives is the official home of the UFW records," he concluded. To say that I was pleased to hear his comments about our Archives is an understatement.

Dr. Jones: You mentioned in an earlier interview that several of the early UFW leaders had left the Union and became sharp critics of Cesar Chavez and his leadership. What impact did such opposition have upon Chavez?

Dr. Mason: There is no doubt that he was visibly upset by the bitter and constant criticism of his policies and his character. The dissidents claimed he was a “ruthless dictator” and argued that he had stolen control of the Union. These views were widely publicized by the media and at several public meetings.

Dr. Jones: Did you make contact with any of these dissidents and try to get documentation to support their accusations?

Dr. Mason: Yes. I had many meetings with the anti-Chavez Unionists, but without success. Several were upset that I would not publicly endorse their views, even though I was anxious to carefully document their position.

Dr. Jones: As you think back on your numerous meetings at La Paz, do you recall any other incidents that shed light upon the Union and its leaders? For example, did they enjoy the solitude and isolation of the remote former Kern County Tuberculosis Sanitarium?

Dr. Mason: Some staff adjusted to the new living conditions although several told me that they missed Delano. As I mentioned before, some staff lived in nearby Tehachapi, which had schools, stores and other amenities. Also, several staff confided that they felt uneasy in living on former hospital grounds where so many had died. One occasion that comes to mind was a request by Cesar for me to visit and talk to his wife, Helen, about her recent distressing experiences at La Paz. She told me that a few weeks earlier while she was walking one evening, near the former children’s wing of the hospital, she saw a woman covered by a long flowing gown coming down the large hill, seemingly floating above the ground and entering the hospital

building. Helen, confided that as a child, she had been a patient there, so it was a particularly trying emotional experience for her. I was so surprised at her account that I didn't know how to respond or even advise her. I did suggest that she might want to talk to Monsignor Higgins or her local priest for their advice. Later, while talking to Barbara McQuire, a UFW attorney whose office was located in one wing of the children's hospital, she told me of an episode that she had recently experienced. On one evening about midnight, she said, while she was finishing a legal brief for an upcoming trial, she heard children laughing. At first she thought it was her children, who along with her husband, had come to bring her home. She searched the whole building without success. She was quite shaken by this experience. I reported these conversations to Dolores Velasco, a (former Catholic nun) the wife of Peter. She too had witnessed several strange happenings in her house once occupied by a hospital surgeon. She said she often felt the "presence" of another individual in the room while she was there alone and at another time, she noticed that the window shades in her living room moved back and forth, even though there was absolutely no wind outside. She confessed that she felt the residents at La Paz had strange experiences that were related to the past.

Dr. Jones: When did your association with Chavez and the Farm Workers end?

Dr. Mason: As you know, I retired as Director of the Archives in 1992 when I reached my sixty-fifth birthday. The University following a policy that all University administrators were required to retire at age sixty-five. I then returned full-time to my tenured

teaching position in the Department of History. I continued directing a number of projects, including the annual Local History Conference, "Michigan in Perspective" and served as a member of the Board of Editors of the Wayne State University Press. My last association with Cesar Chavez occurred in the spring of 1993 when he asked me to come to La Paz for a visit. I agreed, and in fact, took Leslie Hough, my replacement as Director, with me so that he could establish contact with the UFW staff. As Cesar and I walked alone around La Paz, Cesar asked me to elaborate on my earlier remarks about the need to groom a successor in case anything happened to him. I had earlier explained to him about the serious split in the UAW leadership following Walter Reuther's sudden and tragic death in 1970. On this occasion in 1993, he discussed this issue as it applied to the UFW. During our conversation he asked for my comments and advice about four UFW leaders whom he believed might have the potential for replacing him. I do not know what prompted this discussion because I did not know all of the candidates that well. At any rate, I never found the answer to this question because a month later, he died unexpectedly on a trip to Phoenix, Arizona. The Archives had lost an outspoken supporter of the Archives and I had lost a good friend.

Dr. Jones: Did you attend the funeral?

Dr. Mason: Yes, I did. In fact, the Chavez family asked me to be a pallbearer at the funeral. I, of course, accepted, considering it an honor. I still have vivid memories of that day. It was about 85-90 degrees and the walk started in Delano for a mile walk to the Union headquarters called the "Forty Acres." On one side of the heavy casket

bearing his remains was Jerry Brown, former governor of California, Jessie Jackson, the Civil Rights leader and Ed Bagley, a Hollywood performer. All were tall men. I was on the other side with Artie Rodriguez, as I recall, and one other colleague of Chavez, but none of us were tall. We carried the casket along the highway lined on both sides with several thousand mourners. Honestly, Louis, I did not know how far I could go on, the casket was so heavy. Artie Rodriguez who was also challenged kept telling me, "One step at a time, Phil, we'll make it." Fortunately, after about a half mile, others replaced us and delivered the casket to a large tented enclosure at the "Forty Acres" site. The formal funeral services commenced later that day and continued most of the night. There, scores of eulogies by friends, labor leaders, public officials and the clergy were given. I cannot begin to remember all of the speakers and mourners in attendance.

Dr. Jones: Where did the burial take place?

Dr. Mason: At a beautiful site at La Paz.

Dr. Jones: After the death of Chavez and your retirement from the Archives, did you continue your relationship with the UFW?

Dr. Mason: Not as an official representative of the Archives, but as a long-time friend of the Chavez family, Artie Rodriguez, who became the new president of the UFW, Pete and Dolores Velasco, Dolores Huerta and other UFW leaders. I attended several of their conventions and especially the 16th Constitutional Convention held in 2002. On one occasion and at the request of Dean Alma Young of the College of Labor and Urban Affairs, to whom the Archives now reported, I invited her to

attend one of the major UFW Conventions in Fresno, California. I have remained in personal contact with Artie Rodriguez, Dolores Huerta, Paul and Richard Chavez, Marc Grossman and have worked with them on a number of projects. In 2003 with the assistance of Mildred Jeffrey who served on the Board of Governors of Wayne State University, I was able to have the University recognize Dolores Huerta's contributions to Labor and the Women's Movement with an Honorary Doctor of Law – "honoris causa" Degree in December 2003.

Dr. Jones: In addition to the UAW, the UFW and the IWW, what other major Union collections did you solicit and acquire for the Archives?

Dr. Mason: By the mid 1960s and especially after we received the major UAW grant for an Archives building, we established a new collecting plan. With the approval from University officials, especially President William R. Keast, Arthur Neef, Edward L. Cushman and Ronald Haughton and support from Walter Reuther and Leonard Woodcock of the UAW, we gave priority to the following international unions: American Federation of Teachers; Air Line Pilots Association; the Newspaper Guild; American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; Service Employees International Union; and the Congress of Industrial Organizations. We were approached by other international unions who wanted us to become their official archival depository but we recognized that there were limits on our space and staff. I might add that when we could not take additional union collections, we always recommended other labor-oriented archives to be considered.

Dr. Jones: You mentioned that you acquired the records of the C.I.O. Why weren't those records placed in what became the official AFL-CIO archives in Silver Spring, Maryland?

Dr. Mason: In 1966, Walter Reuther contacted me and recommended that we move quickly to acquire the CIO files. Mr. Reuther, then the Director of the Industrial Union Department and former president of the CIO, decided that the CIO would soon disaffiliate from the AFL. It was no secret that he and George Meany were constantly at odds over AFL-CIO policies. In 1966 before he announced the separation of the CIO, he wanted to make sure that the CIO files were rescued and placed at Wayne State University. In order to secure these files stored at a warehouse at Rutgers, Irving Bluestone, Reuther's Executive Assistant, Carroll Hutton and I went there and examined and identified the CIO files and immediately arranged for their transfer to the Archives.

Dr. Jones: What was the scope of this collection?

Dr. Mason: It covered the years 1925 to 1955, mainly the records of James B. Carey, Secretary-Treasurer from 1938-1955 and George L. P. Weaver, assistant Secretary-Treasurer from 1940-1950 and 1953-1955. The Collection consisted of 120 linear feet of official CIO records and reflected a wide variety of activities, including civil rights, social security, universal military training, southern organizing campaigns, international affairs, World War II, union racketeering and the merger of the AFL-CIO. Also included were the files of Walter Reuther as president of the CIO, from 1952-1955 and later as president of the Industrial Union Department of the AFL-

CIO. Victor Reuther's files as Director of the CIO's International Affairs Department demonstrated the Reuthers' widespread domestic and international interests. The personal papers of other labor leaders were solicited to supplement the official CIO collections.

Katherine Pollak Ellickson, a prominent labor economist who served as assistant to John L. Lewis in the first year of the C.I.O., gave the Archives her collection which not only included her brief association with the CIO but also her long career in the labor movement. Included in her papers were the most complete minutes available for the first eighteen months of the CIO. Her service as Assistant Director of the Social Security Department and Associate Director of Research for the AFL-CIO, as well as her activities in organizing West Virginia coal miners and Southern textile workers during the Depression years, were carefully preserved in her collection. I conducted an important oral history interview with Mrs. Ellickson that supplemented her written records.

Dr. Jones: Did your success in obtaining the Ellickson Collection influence your decision to actively collect the papers of women active in labor, economic and political reform movements?

Dr. Mason: We already had included this theme when we founded the Archives. But the Ellickson Collection demonstrated the very important role women played in the labor and related reform movements.

Dr. Jones: Were there other CIO collections that you acquired?

Dr. Mason: Yes. The papers of August Scholle as CIO Regional Director in Michigan from 1937-1959; Irwin De Shetler, CIO Regional Director in Ohio; Tom Turner, Jett Lauck and Gene Saari In addition, many donors like Coleman Young were active in the CIO as well as other international unions.

Dr. Jones: Did your collecting scope include Canadian unions and their leaders?

Dr. Mason: Until the Canadian UAW separated from the UAW we acquired a number of UAW collections. George W. Burt, Director of UAW Local 7 turned over his files, covering the years 1937 to 1965, as well as the inactive records of UAW Region 7, Toronto sub-region, 1941 to 1968. The inactive records of several UAW Canadian local union groups, including UAW Local 199 from St. Catherine's, Ontario and Locals 200 and 240 located in Windsor, Ontario, and the files of several Canadian UAW leaders, including Allen Schroeder and Hugh Peacock were transferred to the Archives. We also acquired the records of Hugh Thompson who led the General Motors strike in Oshawa, Ontario in 1937, prompting Prime Minister Mitchell Hepburn to deport him from Canada as an "undesirable alien."

Dr. Jones: Let's turn to other major international union acquisitions. For example, why did you solicit the records of the Air Line Pilots Association?

Dr. Mason: As you may know, the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) was founded in 1932 to represent airline pilots and flight attendants from many of the major airline companies, including TWA, United, Delta, Eastern, Continental, Frontier, Pan American, National Alaska and Northwest. Professor Mark Kahn, a distinguished economist at Wayne State University, served as a moderator for United Airlines

provided us with contacts with the leadership of ALPA. After several meetings, at the Archives and at ALPA headquarters adjacent to Midway Airport in Chicago, they agreed to transfer their inactive historical files to the Archives. I made many trips to Chicago to meet the department heads, examine their large backlog of inactive records and arrange the shipment of the historical records to the University.

These ALPA trips to Chicago gave me an opportunity to maintain contacts with Fred Thompson and other leaders of the IWW. The location of ALPA headquarters near Midway Airport was also a plus since it avoided the long trip to O'Hare Airport. There was one notable exception to this preferred travel arrangement. In 1968, while I was in a meeting with Charles Ruby, the ALPA President, the session was interrupted and I was told that a taxicab awaited me to take me immediately to O'Hare Airport. "Don't even bother to check out of your motel. We'll take care of that for you." Midway Airport was closed as was the ALPA headquarters. The reason for this crisis was the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., earlier in the week. By the time I left in the taxi, large unruly and violent crowds were lined along 55th Avenue, the route to the airport. At the first underpass, rocks were being thrown at cars and one hit the back window of the taxi. As we hurried west on the Eisenhower Freeway, the glass started to shatter, and by the time we reached O'Hare, the window was gone except for the piece in my hair. When we reached Detroit, the situation was similar and I discovered

that the freeway to Detroit was closed. I finally returned to my home in Pleasant Ridge at midnight via Pontiac. I shall never forget that experience.

Dr. Jones: Did ALPA have regional or local offices located in other parts of the United States?

Dr. Mason: Yes, they had Joint Council offices representing the various airline home bases in Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Denver, Dallas, Miami, Atlanta, Minneapolis, Chicago and New York City. At the request of ALPA, I visited each of the Joint Councils, along with ALPA staff member Tom Dalton who was assigned to coordinate their Archives program. Although these trips were time-consuming, they provided me the opportunity to meet the leaders of the various airline pilot groups and to examine their files firsthand. I might add that ALPA paid all the expenses for these regional visits. Later in the 1980s, Warner Pflug, who was a former Navy pilot, assumed responsibility for contacts with ALPA.

Dr. Jones: Did you receive the personal papers of any ALPA leaders?

Dr. Mason: Yes, in fact, one of the most important ALPA-related collections was given to us by Marjorie Sayen, the widow of Clancy Sayen who was president of the Union from 1951-1962 and of the International Federation of Airline Pilots from 1952-1964. Mrs. Sayen, herself was a very influential partner with her husband and had carefully preserved all of the records covering Sayen's career as a Braniff Airlines pilot and later as president of ALPA. Following his tragic death on a United Airlines flight from New York to Chicago in 1965, Mrs. Sayen was employed by the United Airlines Master Executive Council in Chicago.

Dr. Jones: What was the relationship between the flight attendants and the pilots?

Dr. Mason: Not an entirely friendly one. Most of the flight attendants were female and they often resented the way they were treated by the pilots and the Union. I soon discovered the intensity of their discontent after several meetings with them. They eventually separated from ALPA and formed their own separate union. The Archives later became the official depository for this union's historical files.

Dr. Jones: You mentioned earlier that you had established a records management program for the University. Did you provide similar services to other unions?

Dr. Mason: Yes. Despite the time and resources involved, we set up records systems for major unions and other organizations that deposited their papers in the Archives. In several cases we received financial support for this work.

Dr. Jones: How did such a program assist the Archives?

Dr. Mason: As a result of establishing retention and disposal schedules for our major donors, we were able to carefully identify the small volume of records that had historical value and arrange for their shipment to the Archives. If we didn't adopt this approach we would be inundated with tons of useless records.

Dr. Jones: These records management programs also benefitted the unions, did they not?

Dr. Mason: Yes. We kept careful track of the savings which resulted and made the union officers aware of them. For example, at the headquarters of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) we emptied seventy file cabinets of useless records which provided workspace for several staff members. The savings from a similar program at the UAW was even more impressive. Several Detroit area warehouses filled with useless records were emptied resulting in substantial

rental savings. Records Management programs at UAW Regional offices and major union locals led to similar results.

Dr. Jones: What about the Airline Pilots Association? Did you have an impact there?

Dr. Mason: Yes, and after we demonstrated to ALPA leaders the important services we provided to them, they readily agreed to our proposal for an annual grant to the Archives. As I recall, it began at \$15,000 a year and was later increased to \$25,000 annually. Other unions, including AFSCME, SEIU and the AFT, have given the Archives similar annual grants for our services, which usually involved hiring an archivist to process and service their records. Also, as you know, the support of the UAW has been very substantial.

Dr. Jones: The American Federation of State, County, Municipal Employees Union and the Service Employees International Union, two of the largest and most influential labor organizations, have also selected the Archives as the depository of their historical records. How did you secure their endorsement?

Dr. Mason: Ronald Haughton, Vice President of Urban Affairs at Wayne State University, had been an arbitrator on numerous AFSCME grievances and had contacts with many of their leaders, including President Jerry Wurf and Bill Lucy, Secretary-Treasurer. With Haughton's help, I was able to meet the leaders and was successful in persuading them to designate Wayne State University as their official archival depository.

Dr. Jones: How did you get along with Jerry Wurf? As I recall, he was quite a controversial union leader.

Dr. Mason: You are correct in that assessment. He was constantly feuding with AFL-CIO leaders as well as the leaders of other International Unions. He also had sharp conflicts with members of his own Union, including Arnold Zander, who helped form AFSCME. Wurf was President Zander's chief assistant when he broke with him and replaced him as President of the Union.

Dr. Jones: Did you ever meet Zander?

Dr. Mason: No, he died before the Archives were founded. I did however, track down his daughter who lived in Texas. She shared valuable information about her father and gave me his diaries and other records. She did confirm rumors that I had received from other sources that her father had been a courier delivering large amounts of money to anti-Communist labor organizations in Central America. Within AFSCME, Wurf was continually involved in disputes with other elected officers of the Union, including the Secretary-Treasurer, Gordon Chapman and later Victor Gotbaum, leader of the AFSCME New York Council who challenged Wurf for the presidency.

Dr. Jones: Did these conflicts affect your work in any way?

Dr. Mason: I had to be very careful, obviously, in collecting the papers of AFSCME dissidents. Wurf was very upset when he learned that I had solicited the papers of his union opponents. He made his views clear to me several times but on one occasion when I refused to give him copies of the oral history transcripts of several AFSCME members so that he could "edit them and eliminate all the God damn lies," he denied me access to Union headquarters in Washington. As you recall, I had a

similar conflict with Walter Reuther relating to the UAW oral histories, but unlike Reuther, I did not receive an apology from Wurf.

Dr. Jones: How long did this expulsion last?

Dr. Mason: About six months, before I received a phone call from Mildred Wurf, his wife. She told me that her husband regretted what he had done and said that I would be welcome to return to AFSCME headquarters to continue my archival work. I was delighted to receive this news, and I immediately scheduled meetings with several department officials. When I arrived there and got in the elevator, Jerry Wurf was standing inside, but instead of a welcome, he said, "What the hell are you doing here?" He exited before I had a chance to reply.

Dr. Jones: Did Wurf place any obstacles in your work at AFSCME?

Dr. Mason: No, as a matter of fact, he eventually became quite friendly to me and insisted that I let his secretary know whenever I was in Washington. Indeed, on several occasions I was invited to his home for dinner, which gave me an opportunity to hear, first-hand about his and Mildred's career in the labor movement and get a better understanding of how his illness affected his personality. In November his health had sharply declined, so he moved to his home on Cape Cod to recuperate. He contacted me and invited me to visit him for a couple of weeks but Mildred interceded and told me not to accept "unless, Phil, you want to spend your time washing dishes and shopping for him." Although I was undecided as to what to do, his death resolved my dilemma.

Dr. Jones: Who replaced Jerry Wurf?

Dr. Mason: The top two candidates were William Lucy and Gerald Mc Entee. The former dropped out before the election. He didn't want the election to become a racial issue because he was African American.

Dr. Jones: Did this new leadership have any impact on the Archives program?

Dr. Mason: No, it was widely accepted by AFSCME staff and especially Bill Lucy who had become Secretary-Treasurer. Another positive factor was the strong support which the Archives gave to the newly established "Coalition of Black Trade Unionists."

Dr. Jones: Let's turn now to two other major Union donors, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). How did you make contact with them?

Dr. Mason: Actually, in the case of SEIU, its President, John Sweeney, acting on the recommendation of Lane Kirkland, the Secretary-Treasurer of the AFL-CIO, invited me to come to Washington to meet with him and Richard Cordtz, the Secretary-Treasurer of the Union. I had met Dick Cordtz earlier when he served as Director of the SEIU Council in Detroit. He was also a close friend of Ronald Haughton. The SEIU was at that time located on K Street in Washington. The Union was expanding rapidly and was preparing to build a new headquarters within a few years. Sweeney and Cordtz shared a keen interest in labor history and especially in the development of their union. They were also concerned about the loss of their early records, especially those confiscated by the federal government for a trial that led to the conviction of several SEIU leaders. I agreed to assist them on my own time from the eighteen days a year allotted by the University for

professional activities. During the next year or so, I reviewed their records in their main office and their storage units. I prepared retention and disposal schedules for their inactive files and made contacts with former officers of the Union. The SEIU moved into their magnificent new quarters in Washington.

Dr. Jones: Did you have any contact with any of SEIU Local Unions?

Dr. Mason: Yes. Mr. Sweeney asked me to develop a similar program for SEIU Local 25 in Chicago. With the assistance of the President of the Local, we set up a model for SEIU Locals. At the request of Mr. Sweeney, I also worked with members in Brookfield, Wisconsin and staff in Albany, New York.

Dr. Jones: Did you enjoy your association with John Sweeney?

Dr. Mason: Yes, I did. He was unpretentious, intelligent, thoughtful and a very effective Union leader. He was also highly respected by other union leaders, including Lane Kirkland, George Meany, and Leonard Woodcock. From frequent lunches, dinners and social meetings with him, I learned a lot about his union career. I was his guest at SEIU Conventions, which gave me an opportunity to observe the inner workings of the Union.

I do remember one occasion that demonstrated his sense of humor. At the annual SEIU Convention in Las Vegas in 1992, I prepared a major exhibit highlighting the historic events in the Union's history. On one evening at the Hilton Hotel, I kept a promise to my Detroit handball partner, Dave Anderson, that I would play twenty dollars on the slot machines. He recommended the one-dollar machine. Dave, I might add, traveled to Las Vegas several times a year to gamble. At any

rate, after three tries, my luck improved and I won \$250. The noise of the coins dropping into the metal container attracted a number of passers-by, including John Sweeney and Richard Cordtz. I remember Cordtz's comment, "Now we don't have to pay Phil's expenses." I don't remember what my rejoinder was, but I do recall the response when I entered the SEIU Guest Suite. Mr. Sweeney's secretary came up to me and told me that her boss had just told her that I had won several hundred dollars and that he was sure that I was a "professional gambler." Before the Convention ended, I was approached by several Union staff members who wanted my advice on gambling. Indeed, several asked me to point out my lucky slot machine. This rumor didn't end in Las Vegas. During my next visit to Washington, I had to respond to the rumor that I had won \$5000! No one believed me when I truthfully told them that this was the first time I had ever gambled.

Dr. Jones: That's a great story. Did you ever work with the man who later became president of SEIU?

Dr. Mason: Yes, I met with him often when he headed the Organizing Department of SEIU.

Dr. Jones: Did you remain in contact with John Sweeney and Dick Cordtz?

Dr. Mason: Yes, after he became President of the AFL-CIO, I had frequent meetings with John Sweeney even after I had retired as Director of the Archives. On one occasion after he was scheduled to take over the AFL-CIO position in December, he asked me to come to Washington to meet with him on an "important matter." After Sweeney's election to the AFL-CIO presidency, Dick Cordtz decided that he was going to campaign for the presidency of SEIU. Sweeney was concerned that such

a battle would split the Union and had tried unsuccessfully to persuade Cordtz to drop out of the race. Since I had become a good friend of Cordtz, he asked me to urge him to retire from the Union and thereby avoiding a damaging election campaign. I very reluctantly agreed to do this, but I failed to change Cordtz's mind. Before the election, a compromise was worked out. Cordtz would remain as the president of SEIU until the spring election and then would continue to have an office and secretary and an appropriate annual budget to pursue his special projects.

Dr. Jones: Give me an example of the type of project Cordtz had in mind.

Dr. Mason: There were several, but one in particular was Labor's International Hall of Fame, which I discuss in detail in another chapter. This organization was founded in Detroit in and was designed to give recognition to union leaders and rank-and-file members who had made important contributions to the American labor movement. It won great support from the labor movement, but it was seriously compromised when a labor attorney took control of it and used it to reward several of his business clients. By the mid-1980s it had lost its mission and was losing the support of many labor leaders. At this point Dick Cordtz led a campaign to replace the Hall of Fame leader and elect new Board members. One of the first challenges was to replace the operating funds, which had been squandered by the former board members. With the approval of John Sweeney, Dick Cordtz took on the leadership of the fundraising campaign. This involved contacts with other international unions to solicit their financial

support. One strategy adopted by Cordtz was to have sessions regarding the Hall of Fame at the annual winter meetings of the AFL-CIO in Florida.

Chapter 4 Creating our Archival Program

Dr. Jones: Phil, in previous interviews you talked about your work with the UAW, especially about the acquisitions from the Reuther family and other UAW leaders. What was your next major objective?

Dr. Mason: We continued, of course, in building up our UAW Collections and making contacts with several other international unions. We also solicited the personal papers of civil rights leaders, reformers and individuals campaigning for women's rights. Today let me devote attention first to the Industrial Workers of the World or the "Wobblies" as they were called. I first became aware of their historic struggles while I was a graduate student at the University of Michigan. In one of Professor Sidney Fine's seminars I prepared a research paper on the famous IWW-led Wheatland Strike in California in 1912. This gave me the opportunity to study the IWW and their role in the labor movement. It also brought to my attention the magnificent holdings of the Labadie Collection housed in the attic of the U of M general library. In addition to several rare collections relating to anarchism and other radical political movements, there was also a small collection of the IWW publications, newspapers, and other manuscripts. I was aware that during the Palmer raids during the Red Scare following World War I, the federal government had raided all IWW offices and confiscated their records. I learned from Miss Agnes Ingles, the curator of the Labadie Collection, that the IWW was still active, and still on the U. S. Attorney General's List.

In 1962 I went to Chicago to visit the IWW headquarters located on Halstead and Fullerton Streets. There I met three of the IWW leaders: Fred Thompson, Walt Westman and Carl Keller. Now in their late 70s, they had been active IWW leaders since the 1920s. They were very interested in our plans for a labor archives, but it was obvious, that they were deeply concerned about preserving the history of their union as well as the precious records they had carefully collected. I continued to visit them at their Chicago headquarters, but they remained very cautious about depositing their records elsewhere. One of their concerns was about our archives program and its permanent support by the University. They were not happy about the way the University of Michigan had preserved the Labadie Collection.

In 1963 we invited Fred Thompson and his colleagues to participate in an evening program at Wayne State called "Episodes in Labor History." This gave them an opportunity to visit the campus, see the Archives facility and meet its staff. This event was a great success. The DeRoy Auditorium on the WSU campus was packed with an overflow audience. Fred Thompson, Carl Keller and Walt Westman gave presentations about the IWW and its historic struggles followed by a talented folksinger that highlighted the evening program with IWW songs. The program was so successful, in fact, that we could not clear the auditorium until after midnight.

Dr. Jones: Did that program and the tour of the campus have a positive impact on the IWW leadership?

Dr. Mason: It certainly did, although they were already leaning towards accepting our proposal. Within a few weeks I received word that the IWW Executive Committee had agreed to designate the Wayne State University Archives as the official depository of their inactive files. We were delighted to get this news and we wasted little time in responding. In the coming months I made numerous trips to Chicago to examine and appraise their records and on each visit returned with an installment of their records. On several of these trips Fred Thompson arranged for me to visit local IWW members and listen to their accounts of their struggles as union members. With Mr. Thompson's active endorsement, I was able to acquire important records including IWW songbooks, dues books and IWW publications.

Dr. Jones: You mentioned earlier that the U.S. Attorney General had confiscated the files from various IWW headquarters. Did you ever recover them?

Dr. Mason: Sadly, no. The Attorney General had placed these records in a storage warehouse in Chicago and ordered them destroyed in 1924.

Dr. Jones: What files remained at their headquarters in 1963?

Dr. Mason: First, not all IWW records were taken by the Attorney General. Many IWW members had kept records at home and also, many IWW publications were preserved, especially after 1920. In addition, in our search for records we were extremely lucky. On one visit to the Chicago headquarters we found that the official IWW Minute Book had fallen behind a huge floor-to-ceiling bankers vault. It covered the period from 1905-1914, written in the hand of Vincent St. John.

Our good fortune continued after we received an urgent call from Fred Thompson in January 1966 urging me to come to Chicago as soon as possible. The Union had just been notified that the building which they occupied was shortly to be demolished and that they had to find another location.

I was accompanied on the trip by Stanley Solvick who was on our staff. After an eight-hour drive in a winter snowstorm, we finally arrived in Chicago exhausted but relieved to arrive safely. When I met with Fred Thompson the following day, he exclaimed "Good, you're wearing old clothes." Actually, it was only slacks and a sweatshirt. Fred then escorted me into the basement of the IWW headquarters and handed me a sledgehammer and told me "That brick wall behind the furnace has to come down." During the next two hours of hammering, the wall was destroyed and behind it we found three old dusty trunks full of records. They contained records on the trials of Bill Haywood, the labor agitator and other important IWW records. Fred Thompson explained that they had hidden them to prevent the federal government from confiscating them. As we drove back to Detroit with the trunks, arriving at the Archives about 2:00 a.m., we were overjoyed with our good fortune. I recall telling Dr. Solvick that I thought of Edgar Allan Poe as I broke through that wall.

Dr. Jones: Did you locate other IWW collections at other locations?

Dr. Mason: Yes. For example, with the assistance of Nick DeGaetano, we invited several elderly former IWW members to visit the Archives and share with us their experiences and records they might have retained. Quite unexpectedly one such

meeting ended up in a heated debate between two of our guests who had been imprisoned under the California Syndicalist Law for being members of the IWW. One was incarcerated at the federal prison at San Quentin, California and the other at Leavenworth, Kansas. Each argued that only the “elite IWW members” served time at their prison.

On another occasion a former IWW unionist who I visited at his home in Lansing, Michigan was anxious to describe in some detail his years at Leavenworth Prison. Each time his wife entered the room he suddenly changed the conversation to the current baseball season. After several interruptions he asked his wife to go to a nearby store to get a six-pack of beer so he that could entertain his guest. In her absence he returned to accounts of his prison experiences. He finally explained that he had to be evasive because his wife was afraid that his grandchildren and neighbors might discover that he had served time in prison. Nevertheless, he was very proud of that chapter in his life.

Dr. Jones: Did you tape record these two interviews?

Dr. Mason: The first one, yes. Although with a group talking all at once, we often could not identify the names. At the Lansing interview, however, his wife would not allow me to record it for fear of what her husband might reveal about his past.

Dr. Jones: What other IWW collections did you acquire?

Dr. Mason: As I mentioned earlier, the West Coast was one of the centers of IWW organizing and activity. The Everett Massacre in the state of Washington and the “free speech” fights in California were of special interest, and I made a concerted effort

to contact former Wobblies from that area. I wasn't too successful at first but later in the 1980s, after the IWW moved their headquarters to San Francisco, I made several valuable contacts.

There was one incident, however, that still stands out in my memory. I received a phone call from a Mrs. Frances Horn of Ventura, California who told me that she had heard about my interest in the IWW and that she and her sister had some items I should see. On my next visit to California I met her at an ocean-side restaurant in Santa Barbara where, over lunch, Mrs. Horn explained to me that her father, Charles Rudberg had migrated to the United States in the late 1890s along with a friend, Joel Hagglund who later changed his name to Joe Hill. She showed me the four postcards written by Hill to Mr. Rudberg, care of the Sailors' Mission in San Francisco.

I recognized immediately the historical value of the post cards, because Joe Hill items were so rare. He was a well-known cartoonist whose work appeared in IWW and related publications and the songs he had written were featured in the Red Songbooks published by the IWW. The postcards had a special interest not only because original manuscripts by Joe Hill were so rare but also because the cartoons depicted activities of Wobblies. One mailed from Coalinga, California depicted a young man jumping on a freight train accompanied by the caption "Oh You Hobos." Another postcard with a painted scene illustrating a family singing and dancing around a Christmas tree was of special interest because it was

postmarked Salt Lake City, December 24, 1914. Joe Hill painted this Christmas scene while he was in jail awaiting execution for his alleged role in a murder.

Mrs. Horn asked if these four postcards would fit into our IWW Collection at Wayne State. She told me that she had been offered \$35,000 for them from a writer preparing a biography of Joe Hill. I acknowledged that these documents would have substantial monetary value but unfortunately the Archives could not match that offer. I recommended that they should be kept together and placed, if possible, into an appropriate depository where researchers would have access to them. After a phone call to her sister, she asked me "What would you be able to offer for them?" I was aware that I had \$2,200 in my personal credit account, so I offered her \$2,000 with the understanding that they would need to be authenticated. She agreed and I returned with them to the Archives. After contact with an artist and handwriting authority, I was able to determine that they were indeed authentic. Since the Archives did not purchase collections, I asked Walter Reuther for assistance. He graciously paid for the Joe Hill postcards from a UAW account. The original postcards are in the audiovisual section of the Archives along with my article about the Joe Hill postcards published in Labor History.

Dr. Jones: Did you acquire any additional Joe Hill items?

Dr. Mason: No, we were constantly on the lookout for them because of their historical importance, but we never located any. However, let me amend that statement. Shortly after we obtained the Hill postcards, I received a large envelope from the

National Archives containing three packets of Joe Hill's ashes. Under the terms of Joe Hill's will, his ashes were to be divided and sent to each state, except Utah, for proper burial. The three packets had been intercepted and confiscated by the U.S. Postal Service and later ended up in their files in the National Archives. I never knew who sent them to me because they were mailed anonymously. After consultation and approval from Ronald Haughton, my immediate supervisor at Wayne State University, we returned the packets of Hill's remains to the IWW so that they could be returned to the appropriate location.

Dr. Jones: Let's turn now to the new archives building. How did that come about?

Dr. Mason: By 1964 it was clearly evident that the space in the Purdy Library allocated to the Archives was no longer adequate. Our collecting plans had been very successful, especially as a result of the active support of the UAW, the IWW and other union organizations. We were also acquiring a number of personal collections as we promoted the archival program through public meetings, in our series "Episodes in Labor History." We also received very positive coverage in the media. In fact, by 1964 we were being contacted by scores of individuals who wanted to give their papers to the Archives. We were able to locate temporary storage space at our Medical School Library, but it was soon apparent that our program would have to be drastically curtailed unless we could find new facilities. I discussed this situation with Dr. Purdy, but he was not optimistic about getting funding from the University or the state legislature. With his permission, I asked to explore other possibilities for financial support, especially from the UAW. Before going further,

I discussed my fundraising plans with Arthur Neef, the Provost of the University and Dean of the Law School who was in charge of campus planning. As I mentioned earlier, Dean Neef was a strong supporter of the Archives. Mr. Neef liked my proposal but first wanted to get the reaction of the President, Clarence Hilberry, Dr. Purdy, Mark Beach, the head of Campus Development; James McCormick, Secretary-Treasurer of the University; and other University officials. Within a month, Dean Neef reported back to me that contacts with the UAW should proceed. Dr. Purdy was the only one, according to Secretary James McCormick, who expressed reservations. He did not think that the UAW would finance an archives building, but he would not oppose the plan. "It will keep Mason busy and out of my hair."

Dr. Jones: What were your next steps in implementing your plan?

Dr. Mason: Before I even raised the issue of UAW support with University officials I had learned from my contacts in the UAW that the Union had a restricted multi-million-dollar education fund. I was also certain that such a proposal for an archives building would receive careful attention from President Walter Reuther and Vice-President Leonard Woodcock. When I discussed it with Carroll Hutton, my UAW liaison, he recommended that I prepare a proposal with a tentative budget and with details. With the assistance of Dean Neef and David Layne of the Campus Development Office we prepared such a document and late in 1965 presented it to the UAW.

Dr. Jones: What was the response from the UAW?

Dr. Mason: According to Carroll Hutton, Walter Reuther and Leonard Woodcock supported the proposal but that it had to receive the support of the UAW Executive Board as well as the delegates to the next annual UAW convention. Fortunately, I had already made contact with many of the board members in order to secure their records and to explain our efforts to preserve the history of the UAW. We had also been in contact with the regional offices and the key locals represented by Executive Board members. It worked in our favor that the Archives program and its accomplishments were widely known within the UAW. Within a few weeks, we received the welcome news that the Executive Board had approved the grant of \$2,300,000 for the archives building subject to approval by the delegates to the forthcoming annual UAW Convention to be held in Long Beach, California in 1966. Also, I was advised by Carroll Hutton that the convention would be faced with a number of competing proposals at the convention.

Dr. Jones: What was the reaction of the University to these developments?

Dr. Mason: They were, of course, very pleased with the news by the UAW Executive Board action. I, of course, shared that view--at least until I had a meeting with Walter Reuther in April 1966. He was aware of the Oral History Project involving interviews with one hundred and forty UAW members relating to the founding and the early years of the union conducted by the Wayne State University-University of Michigan Joint Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations. The Archives was the recipient of the bound and edited copy of each transcript. Mr. Reuther had reviewed the list of the interviewees and was shocked to learn that a

number of his rivals, especially a number of Communist members had been included in the Oral History Project. I was deeply concerned when he asked me to deliver to him about twenty transcripts so that he could edit them and “set the record straight.”

Dr. Jones: How did you respond to his request?

Dr. Mason: I told him that I had nothing to do with the selection of the union members interviewed; that the Labor Institute was responsible. I explained to him that I could not make the transcripts available to him since the Institute had provided them to the Archives with the stipulation that they would only be used for scholarly purposes.

Dr. Jones: What was Mr. Reuther’s reaction?

Dr. Mason: He was very angry and immediately ended the meeting. This response was very upsetting to me, and Carroll Hutton who was with me at the meeting, made me feel even worse when he lost his temper and said “Damn it, Phil, you’ve just lost your archives building.”

Dr. Jones: Were you able to repair the damage you had done when you refused Mr. Reuther’s access to the oral histories?

Dr. Mason: Frankly, I didn’t know what to do. The Labor Institute had promised each interviewee that access to their transcripts would be used only for scholarly research, and, as the archival depository for the completed transcripts, we were morally and legally obligated to follow these guidelines. For a week I agonized over this situation until I received a request to visit Mr. Reuther. He apologized to

me for his actions. "You did the right thing, Phil," he said. "I applaud you for your professionalism. You will continue to receive my support for your building."

Dr. Jones: How did you establish the budget for the Archives Building?

Dr. Mason: We prepared a building plan outlining the space and equipment needs for the program and the Campus Development Office along with Dean Neef, estimated that we needed \$2.3 million. This budget was submitted to the UAW for their review and approval.

Dr. Jones: What were the next steps?

Dr. Mason: The UAW Executive Committee approved the plan and placed it on the annual meeting agenda.

Dr. Jones: Did you attend this UAW Convention?

Dr. Mason: Yes. It was held in Long Beach, California in 1966. I do not have access at this moment to the schedule for the meeting but as I recall, the Archives proposal was to be presented to the UAW delegates and voted upon during mid-week.

Dr. Jones: Tell me about the Convention. Were there many controversial issues?

Dr. Mason: Yes. There were several in which the Reuther Caucus was challenged. One was the proposal, strongly supported by Walter Reuther and the UAW Executive Committee to build a major family education facility on Black Lake near Onaway, Michigan about two hundred and seventy-five miles from Detroit. It was to include meeting rooms, housing facilities for not only the UAW members and spouses, but a separate facility for the children of participants, a spacious athletic building large enough for several basketball courts, dining halls, a golf course and

scores of trails through the nearby woodland area. The debate started at once. “Where was Onaway?” the delegates wanted to know. “How would you get there from Detroit or southern California or the East Coast?” Some delegates proposed that a number of education centers be built at different locations in the U.S. and Canada. The cost of this multi-million-dollar facility was also fiercely debated by delegates. The education proposal was finally approved but another contentious issue arose. Paul Schrade, the Director of the UAW Region representing California and other western states, led a group of about fifty farm workers and volunteers with their “Huegla signs” marching around the Convention floor. They chanted slogans and asked for financial support for the United Farm Workers Union. I should mention, that the UFW had already received financial support from the UAW, but they wanted more.

Dr. Jones: How did this action affect the Archives proposal?

Dr. Mason: Walter Reuther and UAW officers were visibly upset at this unscheduled demonstration, especially following the opposition to the UAW Education Center Project. They decided to postpone action on the Archives resolution until the closing day of the Convention.

Dr. Jones: Did you become concerned about the delay and the possibility that the Archives proposal might be postponed?

Dr. Mason: Yes, especially since I was not privy to behind-the-scenes deliberations of the UAW leaders. As it turned out, my fears were unfounded and on the last day of the Convention, the Archives resolution was put up for a vote. I vividly recall that

session. Leonard Woodcock, the UAW Vice-President, chaired the meeting and eloquently supported the archives resolution. At the invitation of Walter Reuther, I was seated on the platform behind Mr. Woodcock and between Walter and Roy Reuther, which gave me an excellent view of the delegates. After Mr. Woodcock's presentation and following the union's procedure, he called for response from the delegates. Four or five union delegates moved to designated microphones to express their views. To the surprise of Walter and Roy Reuther, each delegate strongly supported the resolution. One member, Virgil Collins, of the General Motors plant in Southgate, California spoke eloquently about the need for an archives to preserve the union's history. After the resolution was passed unanimously and the Convention ended, I heard Walter turn to his brother Roy and say, "How did that happen? Those delegates seldom approve any of our recommendations?" At that moment, Roy put his arm on mine and said to his brother, "Ask Phil Mason." Walter turned, shook my hand and said, "Phil, you should have been a used-car salesman!"

Dr. Jones: That compliment must have pleased you.

Dr. Mason: At first, I was so emotionally involved that I didn't understand the background of Mr. Reuther's statement. In fact, it was not until the late red-eye flight back to Detroit that night sitting next to Roy Reuther, that I asked him the meaning of his brother's remark about the car salesman. "Was Walter annoyed at me?" I asked. Roy thought this was a big joke and told me that I should be more familiar with the history of the UAW. He then explained that Charles Wilson, the president of

General Motors had made that comment to Walter Reuther after the UAW had won a historic contract with General Motors in 1946. So much for my knowledge of UAW history!

Dr. Jones: What was the reaction of the University community when they learned of the UAW grant?

Dr. Mason: Very positive, especially from several University officers who did not think that we had a chance for the UAW grant.

Dr. Jones: What were the next steps in planning for the building?

Dr. Mason: The University contacted several architects for proposals including Suren Pilifean who had built the Purdy Library. They finally decided upon the architectural firm of Odell, Hewlett and Leuchenbach, of Birmingham, Michigan. Warner Pflug, Margery Long, and I started immediately to meet with Carl Leuchenbach and his staff.

Dr. Jones: Had that firm ever designed an archival building before?

Dr. Mason: No. In fact, we had countless meetings with Mr. Leuchenbach and his staff explaining how an archives operated and how it differed from a circulating library. Acting on our recommendations they visited several archival institutions including the Clements Library at the University of Michigan. On one occasion I joined them on a visit to Boston to meet with the architects planning the Kennedy Presidential Library.

The next challenge was the proposed location of the archives on campus. Dr. Purdy proposed that the archives be located on a narrow area bordering on

Anthony Wayne Drive and the Ford Expressway. Dean Neef however, was not enthused about this location because it was on the edge of the campus and not easily accessible to researchers. Walter Reuther and Leonard Woodcock, who was on the University's Board of Governors, were also concerned and instead recommended a location nearer the University Cultural Center. The site selected was on the corner of Cass and Kirby Avenues, then occupied by the College of Nursing in two former residential houses.

Dr. Jones: How long did it take to prepare plans and the rendering of the proposed Archives building?

Dr. Mason: By mid-summer 1969 the Leuchenbach firm presented their proposals to the University and to the UAW for review. I can't recall the University's response but the UAW voiced objections in no uncertain terms. Mr. Reuther responded, "The proposed structure looked like a mausoleum." He privately contacted his long-time friend, Oscar Stonorov, who had designed Solidarity House and was currently the architect for the new UAW Education Center at Onaway, Michigan, and asked for his ideas. The University was not aware of this action until Walter Reuther invited the University representatives to join him for a November evening meeting in the Scandinavian Room at Solidarity House. There were several UAW officials present, including Walter Reuther, Leonard Woodcock, Emil Mazey and Irving Bluestone. Edward Cushman and I represented the University.

Mr. Reuther opened that meeting with his strong negative views on the Leuchenbach building design. On this occasion, he likened the proposed structure

to a factory building, not one that would reflect pride in the American labor movement. Mr. Reuther then asked Mr. Stonorov to present the building plan that his firm had designed. He unveiled a model of a ten-floor glass cylinder surrounded by a moat. The model, which I learned later, cost \$25,000 contained interior lighting which Mr. Stonorov activated as he made his presentation. The Reading Room for researchers was located on the top floor with outdoor research facilities for researchers to use during the summer.

Dr. Jones: What was the reaction of those in attendance?

Dr. Mason: As I recall, Mr. Cushman said little, but serious objections were raised. Emil Mazey, the Secretary-Treasurer of the UAW, who was stunned by Stonorov's involvement in the project, and asked several times: "What is the cost of this building?" Mr. Stonorov tried to avoid this question but finally responded: "About fifteen million dollars." Mr. Mazey continued: "Where is this money coming from?" Walter Reuther replied. "Irv Bluestone will take care of the budget." When Mr. Mazey asked Stonorov about security in light of the recent tragic episodes at Kent State University, Mr. Stonorov turned on lights showing a moat surrounding the proposed archives building with a single bridge that could be raised in the event of a violent confrontation.

Dr. Jones: What was Mr. Cushman's reaction?

Dr. Mason: We were both stunned by Mr. Stonorov's presentation. Mr. Cushman turned to me on our return to campus and said, "Phil, I hope that you didn't have anything to do with those crazy ideas." I responded that I was as surprised as he was.

Dr. Jones: What happened next? Mr. Reuther was obviously aware of Stonorov's proposal in advance of the meeting?

Dr. Mason: Yes, he was but the outcome ended tragically. On May 9, 1970, Walter Reuther, his wife, May, and Mr. Stonorov were killed in a plane accident in northern Michigan.

Dr. Jones: Did the death of Mr. Reuther and the architect have an impact on the plans for the building?

Dr. Mason: Definitely. Leonard Woodcock, who was elected to replace Reuther, and Dean Neef approved my recommendation to scrap the Stonorov plan and start over. For the next year or so we met frequently with the Leuchenbach staff. There were several sensitive issues that had to be resolved.

Dr. Jones: Tell me about these.

Dr. Mason: The allocation of space in the building was one issue. The architects wanted the Director's office to be located on the fourth floor with a view of downtown Detroit. I disagreed; I wanted the processing staff to have their workplace there. From my own personal experience, I believed that the staff working six to eight hours a day processing collections, should have this well-lighted area. Another issue was the configuration of the Reading Room. I did not want private carrels for researchers and I insisted that the archivist assigned to supervise this area should be able to have a clear view of every researcher. The height of the ceiling of this room was another issue. We recommended a high, two-story ceiling so that the room would be more pleasant for researchers who often spent hours there. The architect, on

the other hand, argued that such a design would waste valuable space. We also insisted upon different shelving for our storage areas than the traditional ones used in libraries. Based on my experience as State Archivist, and the need to store voluminous collections of records, I recommended that the shelving be ten to thirteen feet high, with double vaulted stacks, designed to store records containers, two deep on each side. Collections that were used often were to be assigned to the lower level; closed collections would be placed higher, accessed by pulpit ladders. Such a shelving arrangement greatly increased our storage capacity.

Dr. Jones: Did the architects accept your recommendations?

Dr. Mason: Eventually, yes, although there were lengthy and sometimes heated exchanges. The most difficult issue to be resolved was that of security for the Archives building. This debate involved not only the architects but also the University's Campus Safety Department. By way of background, during the 1960s, archives and libraries were faced with an epidemic of theft, not only by over-zealous and dishonest researchers, but by staff and others who were able to get after-hours access to processing and storage areas. The Detroit Public Library, the William Clements and Bentley Libraries at the University of Michigan, and the General Library at Wayne State were victims. On one occasion that I will later mention in another chapter, I confronted two members of the University's police staff microfilming a restricted collection of records, housed in our storage area of the Archives. We also confronted maintenance staff looking through various

collections in the Archives. Based upon these incidents, the Board of Governors adopted regulations that after-hours access to the Archives be limited to designated archives staff. Maintenance workers and the engineering staff and campus police were not allowed in the building unless accompanied by an archive staff member.

Another related issue was the surveillance of researchers. We were aware that a dedicated thief could steal even from a closely supervised reading room. In order to discourage such actions, our security plans provided for a closed circuit television camera in the reading room. Even this proposal proved controversial. Campus security officials acknowledged the value of such a reading room camera and also recommended the installation of a key coding system documenting staff entrances to the storage area but insisted that they must be able to monitor the camera at the Campus Security headquarters. They also wanted the names of every researcher.

Dr. Jones: Did you accept these terms?

Dr. Mason: No, we believed that this constituted an invasion of the privacy of researchers.

Our reservations were reviewed and approved by University officials.

Dr. Jones: What if there was reason for the police or engineers to enter the Archives after hours?

Dr. Mason: In an emergency the campus police were authorized to enter the building but could only use the main stairway to reach the second floor. On several occasions after the Archives was closed, I received phone calls from campus security and

had to return to the campus to open the building for their review. For the engineers, the building included a separate entrance that gave them access to the heating and cooling equipment areas in the basement.

Dr. Jones: When was the name “Reuther Library” given to the building?

Dr. Mason: As you know, the original title of our program was “Labor History Archives.” In 1970 we changed the name to Archives of Labor History and Urban Affairs to more accurately reflect our collecting scope. The name “Reuther Library” title was approved by the University in honor of Walter Reuther as an internationally recognized labor leader.

Dr. Jones: Was Walter Reuther memorialized in any way inside the building?

Dr. Mason: We installed a plaque inside the building and a life-size sculpture of him at the entrance and a small exhibit on the second floor of the building highlighting his career.

Dr. Jones: Tell me about the dedication of the Reuther Library Building.

Dr. Mason: The building was completed in the spring of 1975 and we immediately commenced transferring our archival collections to our new facility. Although the Archives was located adjacent to the Purdy Library, it was a very difficult and complicated task. We had to determine the location of each collection based upon its potential research usage and then we had to carefully supervise the moving crew.

The dedication was scheduled for May 23, 1975. The two-day celebration included luncheons, a dinner, tours of the Archives and a major evening program

at the Community Arts Auditorium, featuring Senator Hubert Humphrey from Minnesota. He had been a close friend of Walter Reuther and had worked with him and other UAW leaders in a number of political campaigns. It was really a memorable occasion. We attracted several hundred guests and visitors from all parts of the country and every one of the Community Arts Auditorium seats was filled, with standing room outside of the entrance. I remember vividly Senator Humphrey's presentation. I had been advised by his aides that he needed to get back to the Detroit Metropolitan Airport by 5:00 p.m. so that he could get a flight back to Minneapolis for an evening event in which he was the featured speaker. Sitting near to him on the speakers' platform, I could see that he did not have a prepared speech; in fact, he didn't even have any notes. It was soon obvious that he didn't need any and that he had an excellent memory and an array of humorous anecdotes about Walter Reuther as well as some very touching and poignant stories about the former UAW leader. After an hour into his speech, Senator Humphrey's assistant held up a sign out of sight of the audience. It read "Wrap it up, Senator, we have a plane to catch." Another urgent message appeared fifteen minutes later. "We have only thirty minutes to get to the airport." The final note: "The plane just left." He finally ended his talk and would have stayed for questions but his aide grabbed him and hustled him to a police escort for a ride to the airport. I learned later that the departure of the plane was delayed for "maintenance check" in time for the Senator's arrival. He returned on time for his speech that night in Minneapolis.

Dr. Jones: Were the UAW and the University pleased with the dedication?

Dr. Mason: Yes, they definitely were. The local media devoted special attention to the dedication and Senator Humphrey's speech. The Archives staff was also pleased with the dedication; we had spent several weeks planning the affair and could now devote attention to the archives.

Dr. Jones: After the new facility was opened, did you have many visitors who wanted to tour the building?

Dr. Mason: Yes, we received a constant stream of visitors from union officials and members, faculty, staff, students and donors who had placed their collections in the Archives. Several UAW retiree groups from Flint, Lansing and Muskegon arranged for all-day meetings at the Archives. One of our first international visitors was King Gustaf the Seventh, of Sweden. He was responding to an inquiry that I had made to Swedish officials regarding the appeal that the King of Sweden had made to President Woodrow Wilson in 1914, urging him to pardon Joe Hill, the IWW patriot. The Swedish ambassador and Leonard Woodcock had arranged the King's visit to Detroit while he was on tour in the United States. In addition to the Swedish ambassador to the United States, the local Swedish counsel and other dignitaries and about thirty-five journalists and photographers arrived at the Archives for the ceremony.

I should mention, also, that the attention of the media was influenced by news that the young King had recently assisted in saving the life of a young woman involved in a traffic accident in Sweden. From the moment he entered the

Archives building, accompanied by Swedish officials and members of the U. S. Secret Service, he was surrounded by reporters eager for first-hand accounts of that incident.

Dr. Jones: Did he have a special reason for his visit to Detroit and the Archives?

Dr. Mason: Yes. He brought a selection of papers relating to the Joe Hill case, which he presented to us. Another reason for his visit to Detroit, we soon discovered, was that he wanted to visit the General Motors Proving Grounds so that he could test some of the new models. The Swedish Ambassador was not enthusiastic about this idea, especially since it was raining and he was concerned for the King's safety. He explained the situation to me and urged me to keep him in the Archives as long as possible. As we toured the building with him, I suggested that he might like to see the records storage area where our precious historical records were kept. He politely agreed and I escorted him to the locked storage unit and began our examination of section of the Archives. I would not say that he was enthused about this part of his visit, but he graciously asked questions, looked into manuscript boxes and even tested the pulpit ladder to see how it worked. That part of the King's visit ended suddenly when we were interrupted by shouting and pounding on the doors of the storage area. The doors had locked immediately when closed, preventing the security agents from entering. It was only after they located Warner Pflug who had the only other key to the area that they were able to enter. The King was amused at this breach of security but I was terribly

embarrassed by it, especially after I received a stern lecture from the Security squad.

Dr. Jones: Were there any further incidents?

Dr. Mason: No, not really. The visit had gone well, the reporters were pleased with their interviews and the King was especially happy because the rain had stopped and he was able to depart for the General Motors Proving Grounds.

Dr. Jones: The Archives staff must have been happy to move into this beautiful new facility with excellent working space.

Dr. Mason: Yes, although several were somewhat nostalgic about leaving the cramped, dusty and poorly-lighted basement area of the Purdy Library but we were soon faced with another challenge . Despite the beauty of the new Archives, its appearance was marred by the condition of Kirby Avenue immediately adjacent to the north side of the archives building. Once a desirable middle class neighborhood with beautiful homes and gardens, it had fallen into disrepair by 1970. Our Campus Development office recognized the problems but had few resources to deal with it. We were advised to wait until the State Legislature provided more funds, but we also recognized that the time was right to move immediately to take advantage of the strong public response to the new Archives Building. With the approval of Dean Arthur Neef, I approached Detroit Mayor, Roman Gribbs, for assistance. Fortunately, the city had grant funds to support beautification projects and along with a matching federal grant we were able to completely redesign Kirby Avenue adjacent to the Archives and turn into a pedestrian mall with the addition of about

one hundred and fifty mountain ash trees. For the entrance to the mall we were able to acquire the beautiful statuary designed by Oscar Stonorov. Named "The Dancing Maidens," it had been given to Walter Reuther and installed at his home in Rochester Hills, Michigan. Warner Pflug and several students somehow moved it safely to the Campus where it was placed at the Cass Avenue entrance to the Kirby Mall.

Chapter 5 Woodcock Wing

Dr. Jones: One of your final accomplishments as Director of the archives was the addition of the Woodcock Wing to the Reuther Library building. Can you tell me how this came about?

Dr. Mason: It's rather complicated but let me start by covering some of the relevant details. First, by 1985 the Reuther Library building was already too small and overcrowded. The Archives storage area was full and we had to secure temporary facilities in the basement of the University's Medical Library and in a rented storage facility on Cass Avenue, north of the Reuther Library. This situation did not come as a surprise since we had anticipated that the existing Reuther Library facilities would only adequately serve until the early 1990s. The excellent support we received from the UAW, AFSCME, AFT, UFW and other Union donors had facilitated the transfer of so many historical union and other related records to the Archives. Secondly, we were aware from the early 1980s that we urgently needed more secure storage space, and facilities for additional staff, especially for the increased number of graduate students who were enrolled in our Archives Administration program. We had originally planned on having our students assigned to the Burton Historical Collections of the Detroit Public Library, The Ford Museum and other regional archives, and historical libraries, but we soon discovered that those institutions not only

lacked staff to supervise our students but did not have adequate work space.

Dr. Jones: Given this serious situation which obviously challenged the Labor Archives' future, how did you proceed?

Dr. Mason: I first discussed the situation with Edward Cushman, the Executive Vice-President of the University, who was a good friend and advisor. He immediately recognized the problem we faced, in addition to the fact that I did not get along with President Adamany and could not expect any assistance from him. I was aware also that Mr. Cushman had little, if any, influence with the President, and he indeed recognized that his days in the Adamany Administration were numbered. The only advice Mr. Cushman gave me was to contact some of the UAW officers who were supportive of the Reuther Archives and get their assistance.

Dr. Jones: Did you follow his advice?

Dr. Mason: Yes, I certainly did, although I confess, that I had already been in contact with a number of UAW officials, including Douglas Fraser, Irving Bluestone and Ken Morris who, as you know, were retired UAW officials who still had close contact with the current UAW leadership. Also, Fraser and Bluestone had offices in the Reuther Library and served as part-time professors in the University's Industrial Relations Department. The proposal I presented to them was to request funds from the UAW for an addition to the library building in honor of Leonard Woodcock, a retired UAW President. I was

aware, of course, that Owen Bieber, the then current President of the UAW, was a close friend and admirer of Mr. Woodcock, under whom he had served as Assistant Director in the UAW General Motors Department.

Dr. Jones: Why did you decide upon Mr. Woodcock rather than other prominent UAW leaders?

Dr. Mason: For several reasons. First, Mr. Woodcock had a distinguished career as President of the UAW after Walter Reuther's tragic death in May of 1970. Under his leadership he had not only championed many successful UAW victories at the bargaining table with the automobile companies but he had also established sound financial changes in the union. Mr. Woodcock was also a recognized leader in the AFL-CIO, and he was also Chair of the Board of Governors of Wayne State University and a champion of the Archives program there. As early as 1962 he authorized the first of several grants from the UAW for staff positions in the Archives. He was recruited by President Carter to head the U.S. "Missing in Action" (MIA) in Vietnam to recover information and the remains of US soldiers lost there. Following this important assignment, he was appointed the first U.S. Ambassador to China by President Carter.

Dr. Jones: Did you know Mr. Woodcock other than his service on the Board of Governors at Wayne?

Dr. Mason: Yes, I had a professional relationship with him while he was an officer in the UAW. In fact, in 1970, after he was elected President of the UAW and

while he was hospitalized recovering from a recurrence of tuberculosis, he urged me to remain as Director of the Reuther Library. He was aware of several job offers that I had received. I had great personal respect for Mr. Woodcock not only for his support of the Archives program but also his distinguished leadership in the American Labor Movement.

Dr. Jones: What was the response of your UAW associates to your recommendation for naming the addition the Reuther Library for Leonard Woodcock?

Dr. Mason: I received strong encouragement from several UAW leaders, especially those who had worked with Mr. Woodcock in the General Motors Department of the UAW which, as you know, was headed by Mr. Woodcock before his election as President. I also received strong support from Irving Bluestone who had served under Mr. Woodcock in various capacities. In fact, Mr. Bluestone, on my behalf, approached President Bieber and told him of the tentative proposal to honor Mr. Woodcock. Mr. Bieber was enthusiastic about the idea and promised to recommend it to the Executive Board of the UAW with his strong endorsement. I was somewhat surprised that Douglas Fraser was cool to the proposal. He doubted that it would win UAW Board support and recommended that I should wait a few years before pursuing the plan to recognize Woodcock. I am sure that Mr. Fraser was giving me sound advice since, after all, he had just retired as President of the UAW and was friendly with many of the UAW Board members. I was also aware that there were strong feelings

between these two UAW leaders since 1970 when Mr. Fraser challenged Mr. Woodcock for the UAW presidency.

Dr. Jones: Did you follow Mr. Fraser's advice?

Dr. Mason: I gave his views careful consideration but with the endorsement of Irving Bluestone and Ken Morris, the retired Director of UAW Region 1B, I decided to go ahead with the proposal for an addition to the Archives building.

Dr. Jones: What happened after Mr. Bluestone told you of Mr. Bieber's response to the proposal?

Dr. Mason: He advised me to "sit tight" and wait for word from President Bieber, and at a meeting at Solidarity House, chaired by President Bieber and attended by several UAW officers, Mr. Bluestone and invited guests, President Adamany, Mr. Cushman and myself, we learned that the UAW Executive Committee had unanimously approved President Bieber's recommendation for a major grant to the University for a Woodcock Wing to the Reuther Library meeting. I also mentioned in an another interview that I realized that my days as Director of the Reuther Library were numbered, especially since Mr. Bieber had emphasized that the UAW Grant was to honor Mr. Woodcock and me, as Director of the Reuther Library for my work in preserving the history of the UAW. After delivering a scathing criticism of the Wayne State University president, Mr. Bieber

stated that he, and not President Adamany would make the public announcement of the grant.

Dr. Jones: What were the next steps in the implementation of the proposal and the planning of the Woodcock Wing?

Dr. Mason: Once the delegates to the UAW Convention approved the recommendations of its Executive Board we began to develop a plan for the new facility. This task was undertaken by Warner Pflug, Margery Long, and myself with assistance from a selected group of the Archives staff. The University's Building department was responsible for selecting the architect, approving the 4-million -grant and working closely with the Archives staff.

Dr. Jones: Was the new facility to be located adjacent to the Reuther Library or a separate site?

Dr. Mason: According to the original Archives plan, adopted in the 1970s, any future archives addition would be attached to the Library, west along the Mall on what was originally west Kirby Avenue. But these plans were abandoned when President George Gullen approved a plan to restore the Max Jacobs House on this site. Consequently, the University approved a design for the addition to be attached to the Reuther Library south on Cass Avenue.

Dr. Jones: What were your priorities in planning the use of the new facility? Having worked in the Labor Archives since 1992 I am aware of some of the new additions, but let's review them and the rationale for them.

Dr. Mason: One of our main priorities in 1987, as it is today, was storage facilities. Therefore, in the planning for this space an additional 25,000 linear feet of secure storage space in the Woodcock Wing was given major attention. Another priority was the care and availability of our magnificent audio-visual collections consisting of more than a million photographs, films, videos, television programs and recordings of hundreds of oral history interviews. Of special historical interest were the thousands of photographs and negatives from the Detroit News dating back to the late nineteenth century. The inactive photographs files from the United Automobile Workers (UAW); the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW); American Federation of State, County and Municipal Workers (AFSCME) the United Farm Workers (UFW), and other International Unions were also a part of the audio-visual collection. Since these film collections were in constant demand by book publishers, authors and film producers, it was essential that we plan for separate staff and storage facilities in the new addition.

Another needed addition was a conservation unit to house modern equipment and staff space to care for and restore the thousands of paper records in urgent need of attention. For the Archives' film and rare recordings of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra our architects designed a special cold storage vault with temperature controls at 40 degrees Fahrenheit. To replace the offices closed on the second floor of the

Reuther Library, five new offices were added on the second floor of the new facility. In addition, the fourth floor provided work space for about a dozen full and part-time staff.

There were three other special units in the new addition. First, a room with special equipment designed to conduct oral history interviews. Second, a large room for the preparation of exhibits, not only for the Reuther Library Atrium but for the preparation of traveling exhibits. Third, a conference room to accommodate groups of 20-25 to be used for archives-related meetings and archival classes. It was also designed to feature a permanent exhibit devoted to the life and career of Leonard Woodcock. In summary, our plans for the Woodcock Wing included the following eight facilities.

1. Conference Room
Accommodate groups of 20-25
2. Exhibit Preparation
 - Design and production of exhibits
 - Matting and framing of historical items
3. Fumigation Room
Vacuum chamber treatment
of contaminated items
4. Oral History Room
Videotaping and sound recording
of oral history interviews
5. Conservation Laboratory
 - Deacidification of paper documents
and books
 - Cleaning and restoration of documents

- Conservation treatment of paper, photographs, cloth and leather bindings, posters, maps, prints, and drawings
- Mylar encapsulation of documents, prints, drawings, maps and posters
- Preparation of archival documents and objects for exhibit

Monitoring of temperature, humidity, and air quality in archives research and storage areas

6. Audio-Visual Facilities

Photographic research room

- Photographic processing room
- Sound recording listening room
- Film viewing room
- Videotape viewing room
- Storage of maps, posters, oversize documents, photographs, prints, and drawings
- Storage of video and audio tapes
- Film cold storage

7. Processing

Well-equipped and expanded work areas for the processing of archival collections

8. Storage Space

25,000 linear feet of environmentally-controlled archives storage

Dr. Jones: It is obvious that some of the changes you recommended were made after the Woodcock addition was completed. Give me a summary of these changes.

Dr. Mason: Well, three of the staff offices on the second floor were assigned to Edward Cushman, Irving Bluestone and Douglas Fraser, the last two of whom were given University appointments to teach courses in the Industrial Relations

Department. To my complete surprise, the Oral History Interview Room was assigned to Coleman Young, who was the retired Mayor of Detroit. This decision was engineered by President Adamany who had agreed to give the former Mayor a part-time teaching appointment in the Industrial Relations Department of the University in return for a 1.2-million-dollar gift from the Mayor's so called, "Slush Fund." Also as part of this private arrangement, a major section of the Mayor's papers was to be given to the Archives.

Dr. Jones: Were you pleased to receive the Mayor's papers?

Dr. Mason: No. As a matter of fact, I had recently told Mr. Young that his official files as Mayor of Detroit should be given to the Burton Historical Collections of the Detroit Public Library, the official depository for such public records. To avoid further controversy, the Mayor divided his papers into three sections: one for the Burton Historical Collection; a second group to the Charles L. Wright Museum of African American History, and a final segment to Wayne State University. As you may know, the Archives had received earlier papers of Coleman Young when he was a union official and as a State Senator of Michigan.

Dr. Jones: Did Coleman Young teach many courses?

Dr. Mason: No, he did not. He was scheduled to teach one course a semester but because of ill health, he could not. As I recall, he participated in one of Mr. Fraser's sessions.

Dr. Jones: Did you get along with Mr. Young? I know you were very friendly with him shortly after you established the Labor Archives.

Dr. Mason: Yes, I maintained a good relationship with the former Mayor. I even thoroughly enjoyed listening to the arguments between Mr. Fraser and Mr. Young regarding the latter's earlier "honeymoon" with the Communist Party.

Dr. Jones: Please continue with the other alterations in the building plan.

Dr. Mason: The audio-visual facility was enlarged to provide suitable work space for researchers to review photographs and films. We had no idea in planning the facility that our audio-visual collections would be in such demand, especially by book publishers, film producers and researchers.

Dr. Jones: Was Mr. Woodcock involved in the planning of the addition to be named in his honor?

Dr. Mason: Not in any detail, although I reviewed the plans with him.

Dr. Jones: What about the UAW, did they get involved?

Dr. Mason: Yes, Warner Pflug and I met often with Gary Bryner, who was an assistant to the Secretary-Treasurer of the UAW. Mr. Bryner, who was a son-in-law to Douglas Fraser and formerly a prominent UAW leader at the Lordstown Plant in Ohio, was extremely helpful to us in working with the UAW and Owen Bieber, the President of the UAW.

Dr. Jones: Let's turn now to the Dedication of the Woodcock Wing. How were you involved in planning this event, scheduled for October 8, 1991?

Dr. Mason: I had major responsibility for much of the planning, involving the UAW, the University and Leonard Woodcock. I tried to keep President Adamany at a distance, but I did keep the Dean and other University officials updated on the planning of the event.

Dr. Jones: What did these plans involve? What were your responsibilities?

Dr. Mason: After we set the date for the Dedication, which needed the approval of Mr. Woodcock, President Bieber, and key University officials, we had a number of decisions facing us. The first of these was securing a keynote speaker for the Dedication. Mr. Woodcock recommended former President Jimmy Carter who had appointed Mr. Woodcock as Ambassador to China. Following Mr. Woodcock's request, I contacted Mr. Carter and extended him an invitation to speak at the event. Mr. Carter told me that he had great respect for Mr. Woodcock and his work as Ambassador, but that as a matter of personal policy, he did not accept such speaking engagements. However, he added, that for Mr. Woodcock, he would accept if Mr. Woodcock wanted him to be there under these circumstances. I reported my conversation with Mr. Carter, and Mr. Woodcock told me that he respected the former President's position. The second choice was Walter (Fritz) Mondale of Minnesota, also a close friend of Mr. Woodcock. He was delighted to be involved and agreed to our invitation immediately.

After securing the dedication speaker, we addressed other issues to be considered. In order to acquaint our invited guests with more detailed

information about Mr. Woodcock, we hired John Barnard, a Professor of History at Oakland University, to prepare a special publication devoted to Mr. Woodcock's life and career. Professor Barnard was writing a book on the early years of the UAW which covered Mr. Woodcock's impressive career in the Union as well as his contributions to the labor movement in the United States.

Dr. Jones: Did you have contact with Mr. Woodcock in the planning of the dedication?

Dr. Mason: Yes. I met with him on several occasions, including a two-day meeting with him at his residence at the UAW Family Education Center at Black Lake in northern Michigan. At these meetings we discussed details of the October event, including lists of special friends and colleagues whom he wanted to receive special invitations. Mrs. Sharon Woodcock, Leonard's wife, joined us at the Black Lake meeting and provided invaluable assistance in planning the dedication ceremony.

Dr. Jones: Please describe the program for the dedication ceremony. In what ways were you involved?

Dr. Mason: As Director of the Archives, I was deeply involved in all aspects of the dedication. Of course, everything was reviewed and approved by President Adamancy's staff and the University's Board of Governors, Owen Bieber, and UAW officials. Mr. and Mrs. Woodcock were also consulted. The date set for the ceremony was October 8, 1991. Mr. Mondale's

presentation was held at the Community Arts Auditorium. Mr. Mondale, spoke extemporaneously and eloquently. Following his talk about Mr. Woodcock, a reception was held in the Reuther Library. Both affairs were well attended by family and friends of Mr. Woodcock, key UAW and University officials and donors to the Archives. I should also mention that Margery Long, our Audio-Visual Curator, and her staff had prepared a major exhibit on the life and career of Mr. Woodcock, including his distinguished assignment as the first U. S. Ambassador to China.

Dr. Jones: Were Mr. and Mrs. Woodcock pleased with the dedication?

Dr. Mason: Yes, in fact I received the following touching letter from Mr. Woodcock on November 18, 1991.

Dear Phil,

It is now more than a month since the Wing

Dedication but my deep pleasure grows more with

the passage of time. I am deeply grateful for your personal effort

in this regard and the long hours you put into the preparation. I

regret that you will not be in command after next April but, at least,

you will be available for a continued input. Those buildings are

really yours.

All my best

Leonard Woodcock

Dr. Jones: Did you have an opportunity to spend any time with Mr. Mondale?

Dr. Mason: Yes, I did. In order to relax, he requested that we unwind in my office for about an hour. He was especially interested in my account of the earlier visit of Governor Rudy Perpich and Senator Mark Dayton regarding their plans to establish a labor research center and archives in the Iron Range in northern Minnesota. He also enjoyed hearing about my account of Senator Humphrey's lengthy oration at the earlier dedication for the Reuther Library in 1975. He erupted in laughter and said "That was our Hubert!"

Dr. Jones: Following the dedication of the Woodcock Wing did you remain in contact with Mr. Woodcock?

Dr. Mason: Yes, I did. I visited him several times at his home in Ann Arbor. As you may know, he taught seminars at the University of Michigan as well as at other schools in the United States. We had discussions about his career and especially the placement of his post-UAW papers at Wayne State. I was especially interested in learning more about his activities after he retired from the UAW. I had of course, known that he had been appointed by President Jimmy Carter in 1977 to lead a mission to Vietnam to determine the fate of Americans "missing in action" during the Vietnam War, and that in 1977 was appointed by President Carter to lead a mission to Peking, which in 1979 led to his appointment as the first U.S. Ambassador to China. In this challenging assignment he helped establish a more stable relationship with China highlighted by the first trade agreement between the United States and China. In 1981 he retired as

Ambassador. After Mr. Woodcock's death in January, 2001, I learned more about his life and career in my frequent meetings with Sharon Woodcock.

Dr. Jones: You were also involved in the Memorial Tribute to Mr. Woodcock in 2001.

Dr. Mason: Yes, in fact, Sharon Woodcock asked me to serve as "Program Moderator" and in giving the "Closing Remarks" for the Tribute. The Leonard Woodcock Memorial Tributes and Recollections was held at the Community Arts Auditorium and followed by an Exhibit Opening and Reception at the Reuther Library on Saturday, March 24, 2001 at 2:00 p.m.

Chapter 6 WSU: Archival Administration

Dr. Jones: Let's discuss now the increasing need for qualified archivists in that profession. Did the inauguration of the Graduate Archival Administration program have an impact upon the training of potential candidates for the Archives?

Dr. Mason: It had a great impact on our program as well as the archival profession. As you will recall, it took us more than a year to find a qualified person for our first professional appointment. But after 1963 the recruitment issue changed drastically when students completing our Archival education courses were available.

Dr. Jones: How did you get approval for the new graduate program?

Dr. Mason: Under the terms of my appointment as Archivist and Assistant Professor of History, I was scheduled to teach a labor history course. In the spring of 1962 Dr. Alfred Kelly, the chair of the Department of History, met with me and asked me to consider teaching a different course. Dr. Raymond Miller, who was teaching a course on the "American Populist Movement in the U.S.", felt that a labor course would infringe upon his course. Dr. Kelly urged me to consider teaching instead a full-year archival education course which I had proposed earlier. He explained his reasons in some detail. Because of the declining job market for college-level history teachers the department was having trouble placing its graduates in teaching positions. Dr. Kelly was also familiar with the problem that the Archives had faced in finding qualified applicants and the new positions approved for the

archives. He believed that providing some of our history graduates with archival training would qualify them for archival positions until the teaching market improved. Dr. Kelly also emphasized that many of the department's M.A. graduates were not qualified for teaching. "They were good B-C students", he said, but lacked the personality and ambition to get and keep a "college-level teaching position." The solution to this problem, according to Dr. Kelly, was an archival career. Another concern related to graduate students with disabilities. He believed that such students would do well in an archival environment. Dr. Kelly also commented on the increased number of women students enrolled in the History Department. He explained that he had deep reservations about the ability of female graduates to teach at the college level. Again, archival work would provide alternative job opportunities. I was surprised and dismayed at Dr. Kelly's remarks, but I realized from contacts with our colleagues in the department that his views were widely held.

Dr. Jones: What was your response to Dr. Kelly's recommendations for the archives course?

Dr. Mason: I was somewhat upset because I was prepared and keenly interested in teaching the labor course, especially with the research materials the Archives was accumulating. But the graduate Archival Administration course was very appealing although not for the same reasons that Dr. Kelly presented.

Dr. Jones: Did this encounter affect your relationship or opinion of Dr. Kelly?

Dr. Mason: No, not in the long run. Dr. Kelly was a nationally recognized scholar, an effective administrator who helped the department maintain a very influential position within the college and the university.

Dr. Jones: Did his reviews or those of your colleagues in the department change as the Archival Administration program flourished and was successful in placing many of its students in good jobs?

Dr. Mason: That's a difficult question to answer. Our ability to place our graduates in Archival positions was widely applauded, especially when our success relieved the faculty of finding teaching positions for their students. But, archival work was considered secondary in status to college teaching according to my colleagues at Wayne, and indeed, at other colleges and universities.

Dr. Jones: Over time, did these views change? Were archival positions eventually held in higher esteem by academic historians?

Dr. Mason: Let's come back to this question after we are able to later review the program.

Dr. Jones: How did the archival program fit in to the curriculum of the History Department?

Dr. Mason: As a bargaining point for agreeing to teach the archival courses, I insisted that it be a full-year program (In 1962 we were still on the quarter system.) and that the archives courses qualify as one of the approved fields for MA and Ph.D students.

Dr. Jones: What subjects or topics did you cover in your archives graduate program? Did you have any models to follow?

Dr. Mason: In 1962 there were only a handful of archival courses available in the U.S. and most, if not all, were 2-3 weeks in length. Harvard sponsored a short archives

course, as did the National Archives. Having taken the latter course under Dr. Ernst Posner, I selected that one as a model, although as a full year course.

I'll have to review my records later to give you a more detailed account but I do recall that some of the topics included the History of Archives in the Western World, collecting, processing, recent historical trends, forgers and forgeries, reference services, etc. During the last part of the course, students were required to review and process a collection in the Archives and spend a few sessions as an observer on the reference desk. As the enrollment in Archives Administration at Wayne increased to thirty to thirty-five students each year, we recognized that the Archives did not have the staff to supervise interns. To give the students this important experience, we made arrangements with other archives to provide such training for our students.

Dr. Jones: What other archives were involved?

Dr. Mason: The Burton Historical Collections at the Detroit Public Library, the State Archives, the Clements and Bentley Libraries at the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, the Ford Archives, the University of Toledo and the Windsor Public Library along with the University of Windsor. By the 1970s, the profession had expanded enormously and specialties had developed within the archival field, such as hired to specialize in separate disciplines such as conservation, records management, oral history, public relations and administration. Since grant writers were in great demand as archival institutions sought outside funding for their programs, we added such courses. These changes had an impact on our

archival education programs at Wayne. We also added special seminars, often during the summer months, to offer such specialties. Our one specific criterion was that we would offer such courses only if we could hire a highly qualified teacher. One of our first course additions was “Conservation of Archival Materials” and we were fortunate to hire Colonel Edward Gilbert, Chief Conservator at the Henry Ford Museum, as our instructor. Not only was he one of the leading conservators in the United States but also, to the great benefit to our students, the classes were held at the Ford Museum Conservation Laboratory. This allowed our students access to the latest equipment and methodology. Colonel Gilbert was also given adjunct lecturer appointment in the History Department. After he retired, we hired George Cunha from the University of Kentucky to teach this course for several summers. Like Colonel Gilbert, Cunha was a nationally recognized conservator. Later, Margery Long, of our staff, took over this conservation class.

Dr. Jones: What other special courses were added to the Archives Administration curriculum?

Dr. Mason: Our oral history course was begun in 1986 with Dr. John Allan Cicala, a recognized folklorist as instructor. For several sessions, Dr. Charles Morrissey, a well-known oral historian, joined us for the summer session. He was recognized widely for his oral history projects, including those featuring retiring members of Congress, the John Kennedy Oral History project and his leadership of the Oral History Program at Baylor University. Dr. Cullom Davis of Sangamon State University

taught the course for several years as I did after I retired as Director of the Reuther Library.

Records Management was also added to our teaching program. We recruited the records manager of the Ford Motor Company to inaugurate this specialty and he was followed by Gerald Hagel, Susan Goodman, William LeFevre of our staff and then Debra Gearhart. On at least one occasion we offered a credit course on "Grant Writing" taught by Maud Lyon, Director of the Detroit Historical Museum. Finally, our approved computer courses were held under the auspices of the Library Science Department and the "Research and Writing" course by the History Department.

Dr. Jones: It's my understanding that credits earned from these courses as well as the basic two semester sequence helped satisfy requirements for Masters and Doctoral degrees.

Dr. Mason: Yes. Twelve or fifteen hours of the Archival courses could be counted for advanced degrees.

Dr. Jones: In 1987 the University offered a new program of graduate certificates in various fields.

Dr. Mason: That is correct, and Archival Administration was one of them. The program was designed to give recognition to students who had completed twelve credit hours in approved graduate courses. A very significant number of our archival students received such a certificate.

Dr. Jones: How did you recruit students for the Archives courses?

Dr. Mason: In 1962, when the program began, the ten students who enrolled knew very little about archival work. Most were majoring in history and wanted to explore the archival field as a possible career path. By 1964 the students who had taken the archival classes were the main source of recruitment. Faculty members and community leaders familiar with the Archives program were also helpful in these efforts. As the number of new archives increased rapidly in the 1960s and 1970s, the need for qualified archivists to fill these positions encouraged enrollments in archival education programs.

Dr. Jones: During this period were other archival education programs available?

Dr. Mason: As I mentioned before, Harvard and the National Archives led the field but soon other universities established programs. I can't recall the exact dates of the establishment of the new programs but by 1980 the Universities of Wisconsin, Illinois, Colorado, Maryland and UCLA joined the field with archival courses ranging from a semester to a full year.

Dr. Jones: Did the Society of American Archivists assist in the placement of qualified archivists?

Dr. Mason: Yes, shortly after I was elected Secretary of the SAA, in 1962, we developed a SAA Placement Register. Archival institutions looking to find an candidate would describe their archival vacancies and candidates looking for an archival job position would send a brief resume. We would try to match the candidate and the position and notify them of our findings. Later the SAA Placement Register became more elaborate. In addition to the SAA, I established an informal

program to help our Wayne graduates find jobs and to facilitate their advancement in the profession. Under this arrangement, our graduates and colleagues notified me if they learned of a vacant archival position and I would, in turn, contact students who might qualify. With my contacts within the archival profession, I kept track of higher-level archival positions and would notify our graduates, often even before the positions were advertised.

Dr. Jones: Did the Public History initiative which I believe started in the late 1970s and early 1980s have an important role in training college and university students for archival jobs?

Dr. Mason: That was their objective but in my view some of those programs did not succeed.

Dr. Jones: Can you explain that?

Dr. Mason: Let me make it clear, that I was not familiar with all of the public history programs. I did attend a number of conferences sponsored by that group and I reviewed in detail some of the public history programs that featured archival education and training. I also examined the rationale of several universities which introduced such programs. The instructors in charge of many of their archival courses had neither archival experience nor ongoing working relationships with established programs that could provide in-service training. At a number of these institutions, the instructor was given the assignment because the enrollment in his/her major field had so declined that it could not be continued. The answer to this dilemma was to have the instructor take responsibility for these archival or public history programs. If you review some

of these one-semester courses, you will find that the archival component included only two or three lectures combined with other short presentations on museums, local historical societies, historic restoration, oral history and conservation. As an introduction to non-teaching history-related endeavors, such courses were commendable. But often, students were led to believe that such courses qualified them for archival and historical agency positions.

Dr. Jones: Let's give some attention to the students who enrolled in the archival education program at Wayne. Tell me about their backgrounds and their interests.

Dr. Mason: During the forty years that I coordinated and taught the course, the majority of the students were already enrolled in the Departments of History, Library Science or Anthropology. I might add that we had joint teaching arrangements with Michigan State University and the University of Windsor (Ontario) whereby their students could enroll in the archives courses as a "visiting" student and pay tuition at their own university. We also attracted candidates who worked in one of the numerous historical agencies in the greater Detroit area, or who wanted training in oral history, records management or conservation. Many of the older students enrolled in order to explore a second career. For example, this was the motive of many local schoolteachers who were overwhelmed with the pressures of their current jobs. Also, there were many students who enrolled because they had a deep interest in history. A number of women had returned to the university after their children had grown up and they had time to pursue studies which interested them.

Dr. Jones: These are some of the broad categories, but give me some idea of the background of students who contributed to the course.

Dr. Mason: As an example let me cite some of the types of students that we attracted and whose presence contributed so much to the program.

Capuchin Priests	Nuns	Episcopal Priest
Retired Oral Surgeon	Opera Singer	Authors
Police Officers	Airline Pilot	Mormon Missionaries
Attorneys	Hippies	Wife of U.S. Solicitor General
Vietnam Veterans		Ottawa Indian Leaders
Outspoken Activists		Novi Council Member
Former Drug Dealer		

Dr. Jones: That must have made for interesting and challenging classes.

Dr. Mason: Their presence and contributions enriched the program.

Dr. Jones: Can you give me an example?

Dr. Mason: On one afternoon two hours prior to one of the last sessions of the class, two surly men abruptly entered my office and demanded that I give them the address of one of the students. They also wanted to know the time and location of the archives class scheduled later that afternoon. I immediately called the student and explained the visit of these two men. I learned from him that he had worked part-time repossessing cars for a local Cadillac agency and had the night before located and confiscated the car from a well-known Mafia family. The student responded quickly, "I won't be in class again, can I take the exam by mail? I'm

leaving town immediately.” The two visitors did not cause any trouble because one of our students, a uniformed police officer who had just got off his shift in the Detroit Police Department arrived for his evening archival class. The two intruders left the building immediately.

Dr. Jones: Did you ever hear from the student after he left Detroit?

Dr. Mason: Yes. On one of my visits to Atlanta on SAA business he contacted me and invited me to have dinner with him and some friends at his apartment. It was an unforgettable evening. His friends, several of whom were his colleagues at an Atlanta law firm were friendly, gracious and made me feel at ease. The highlight of the evening was the dinner. Our host had prepared a large bucket full of steamed shrimp, several cases of beer and an excellent choice of wines.

Many years later, our host gave the University a \$500,000 endowment to support the Archives training program.

Dr. Jones: In 2001, Alma Young, Dean of the College of Urban, Labor and Metropolitan Affairs, hosted a reception for you on the 40th anniversary of the Archives Administration program. What were your thoughts on that day as you looked back on your teaching career?

Dr. Mason: I was too preoccupied on that day to give any attention to the many years that the program was one of the central parts of my career. In attendance at the reception, were more than fifty of our graduates, many in their important archival positions. As I look back today, I realize how much I enjoyed teaching

the archives program. Not only helping students finding an archival job but also seeing how much our students have contributed to the Archival profession.

Dr. Jones: In our earlier discussion, you talked about the predominant views of academic historians towards archivists. In the forty years of teaching and nearly sixty years of archival work, have these attitudes changed?

Dr. Mason: In some cases, yes, but in general, no! Historians still view archival work as secondary to teaching. The reasons Professor Kelly gave in 1962 for approving and promoting the archival management program has barely changed.

Chapter 7 Society of American Archivists

Dr. Jones: I see from your resume that you have had extensive involvement with the Society of American Archivists. When did you first get involved?

Dr. Mason: I joined the SAA in 1954 after attending one of their annual meetings which was held at Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia. Dr. F. C. Bald, one of my mentors at the University of Michigan, invited me to accompany him to that conference.

Dr. Jones: What do you remember about the SAA meeting?

Dr. Mason: I was somewhat overwhelmed seeing and meeting many of the prominent archivists and historians in attendance. The sessions were stimulating and one of the receptions, hosted by Henry Edmunds, Archivist for the Henry Ford Archives and the Ford Motor Company, was memorable. "Hank", as he was called by his friends, was Secretary-Treasurer of the SAA. He had formerly been Archivist for the U. S. International Monetary Fund and had many close friends in the National Archives and other major archival institutions. I also remember the crisis he faced at the conference when he learned that A. K. Mills, his main benefactor at the Ford Motor Company, had died suddenly and that Henry Ford II had taken over supervision of the Ford Archives. Edmunds was aware that Mr. Ford was not happy with the Ford Archives because of a number of critical publications that were based upon records in the Ford Archives.

Mr. Edmunds was a very gracious host and during the conference he introduced me to many prominent leaders of the archival profession, including Robert Bahmer, Assistant Archivist of the United States, Theodore Shellenberg, Oliver

Holmes, Ernst Posner, Alice Smith, Dolores Renze and others. While at the conference, I also met Mary Givens Bryan, Archivist for the State of Georgia. She asked me to serve with her on the State and Local Archives Committee.

Dr. Jones: What did membership on that committee involve?

Dr. Mason: Ms. Bryan was planning to publish a handbook on state and local records. She asked me to prepare a chapter on replevin, the process of recovering lost or stolen records. Later, after I had come to Wayne State University, I was appointed chair of the College and University Archives Committee and In 1963 I was elected Secretary of the SAA, replacing Dolores Renze of the Colorado State Archives. I served in this position for five years until the fall of 1968.

Dr. Jones: What did the latter assignment involve? What were your duties?

Dr. Mason: I scheduled meetings of the SAA council, planned the annual meeting, selected committee chairs and members, coordinated the placement services, handled the correspondence for the Society and resolved issues which arose. The Secretary also had responsibility for maintaining membership records that involved sending out dues notices. The first challenge I faced was that I had not received the membership records from Mrs. Renze. It took six months before they were discovered on the loading dock at the Colorado State Archives. When I finally received and reviewed these records I discovered that of the 1200 members on the rolls, four hundred memberships were in arrears, which I later deleted from the membership rolls. By the time I left office in 1968, the SAA membership exceeded 2000 dues-paying members.

Dr. Jones: As you look back, what were some of the accomplishments of the Society during your years as Secretary?

Dr. Mason: As a result of an active membership campaign, we added more than one thousand members to our rolls between 1963-1968. Most of these new members were employed by new archival institutions which had been established since 1960. I discovered that many of the new archivists could not afford to attend the expensive annual meetings of the SAA and were left out of the mainstream of the profession. One solution to this challenge was to establish regional archival organizations located in different parts of the country. Michigan established the first such regional organization in 1958. It sponsored annual meetings usually held at the annual "Local History Conference: Michigan in Perspective" held on the Wayne State University campus. It created committees and published a newsletter. Other states and regional areas followed suit including California, New England, Texas and the mid-Atlantic area.

The largest and most active regional archival organization, the Midwest Archival Conference, known as M.A.C. was founded in 1972. Its membership was drawn from Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and other adjacent states. Modeled after the SAA, with annual meetings, elected officers, committees and publications MAC gave hundreds of archivists the opportunity to meet, participate in special committees and establish friendships.

Dr. Jones: Did you have a role in the establishment of MAC?

Dr. Mason: Yes, very much so. I served on the founding committee, prepared and presented its Constitution and By-Laws and attended many of its meetings and conferences. Many of the staff of the Wayne State University Archives have also been active in MAC and have served as officers, committee members and presenters at conferences.

Another priority on my agenda as SAA Secretary was the recruitment of African-American archivists who, for the most part, were employed in archives in the southern United States. As Secretary, I also helped establish a Committee to represent them and allocated Society funds for this group to start a newsletter.

Dr. Jones: During your five years as Secretary of SAA were there any contentious issues brought before the Council?

Dr. Mason: There were several. One involved appointments to various SAA committees. Since I was largely responsible for appointing the chair and members of committees, I became aware during my first year as Secretary that there had been few changes in committee memberships for the past several years and that some SAA members served on several committees at the same time. This situation left little room for the addition of new members and left the control of the important committee system in the hands of a few members.

Dr. Jones: How did you respond to this situation?

Dr. Mason: With the approval of Council, I proposed new rules for committee assignments. First, a member could serve on only one committee. Second, the chairs of committees were required to submit periodic reports on the work of their

committee. Third, there should be a constant change in the make-up of committees in order to introduce new ideas and involve more members in the Society's business. During my second year I introduced a plan whereby members could request appointment to a particular committee and that the size of committees be enlarged to accommodate them. These changes opened up the operation of the SAA to a much more balanced cross-section of members.

Dr. Jones: Were there other controversial issues that involved the Secretary?

Dr. Mason: There were several, but let me select one in which I was deeply involved. Several weeks before the 1963 annual meeting to be held in Raleigh, North Carolina, Harold Pinckett, the Editor of *American Archivist*, and a key staff member of the National Archives contacted me with information that he and other African American members had been notified by the convention hotel that their reservations had been changed to another local hotel. The convention hotel was for "whites" only. This news shocked me as it did other Council members. The contract with the hotel, which as Secretary I had prepared and signed, clearly specified that all SAA members who made reservations before a specified date would be housed in the hotel.

Dr. Jones: What action did you take?

Dr. Mason: After getting legal advice and authorization from several Council members, I notified the hotel that they had violated our agreement and, unless remedial action was taken immediately, we would cancel our contract. The hotel finally agreed to our demands but this did not please some members of the Local

Arrangements Committee, who had helped select this hotel. I was accused of being hostile to Southern customs and just trying to foster a racial dispute for personal reasons.

Dr. Jones: Was the annual meeting successful? Was the conflict with the hotel aired during the meeting?

Dr. Mason: Yes. Fortunately, the conference and the individual sessions were well attended and there were no racial incidents.

Dr. Jones: After your five-year term as Secretary, did you continue to have a close relationship with the SAA?

Dr. Mason: Yes. In 1970 I was elected Vice President and the following year, President. I was elected a Fellow of the SAA in 1971. Also, I continued to be involved in several SAA programs. I served on the Education Committee for several years and tried unsuccessfully to get the SAA to adopt a plan for the accreditation of archival education courses. As I mentioned earlier, as the number of archival programs increased sharply after 1960, so did new archivist education courses at colleges and universities. There were no standards involving the scope and length of such programs, the qualifications of instructors, or the availability of archival facilities to give students' hands-on experience. For several years the Society discussed the need for the accreditation of educational programs but some of the SAA leaders were concerned about the costs of establishing and operating such programs. This issue was resolved, however, when the SAA and American Association for State and Local History received a generous grant from the

Council on Library Resources to establish such an accreditation program. But, following the principle that “no good deed goes unpunished,” the Society Trustees rejected the grant.

Dr. Jones: Why did they take that action?

Dr. Mason: I have never fully understood the reasons for this decision, although I was aware that several instructors who taught archival courses were concerned that their programs would fail to meet the new standards.

Dr. Jones: Were there other major SAA initiatives in which you were involved?

Dr. Mason: There were several. In 1968, for example, the Society established an Ad Hoc Committee to study the permanence of paper. This five-year study was conducted by the SAA and the National Bureau of Standards. Specifically, its mission was to develop information on the chemical stability of archival paper; to develop specifications for such paper; and to determine proper environmental conditions for archival paper records. The study also included quick-copy reproductions, ink, typewriter ribbons, mending tapes, and adhesive. The American Council of Learned Societies gave the Society \$2500 to conduct its first year’s work. Our goal was to raise from \$350,000 to \$650,000 over a five-year period.

Dr. Jones: What was your role in this project?

Dr. Mason: The SAA President Theodore Shipton, archivist at Harvard, appointed me to chair this Committee. In this capacity I met with several major paper companies

including Eastman Kodak. I don't recall how much we raised but it was substantial and allowed the Bureau of Standards to coordinate the project.

Dr. Jones: I understand that the Society during your tenure as Secretary devoted special attention to the recruitment of talented individuals to the archival profession.

Dr. Mason: Yes, this was one of my main priorities as Secretary. From the time when I started our Archival Administration graduate program at Wayne State in 1962, I was keenly aware that few college students had any understanding of the archival profession and the role of archival institutions. As a first step, the SAA produced a brochure "Careers in Archives" which we distributed to 30,000 students and guidance counselors in high schools and colleges. In 1967 when the Society inaugurated the "Placement Newsletter" which was distributed to the members of the Society, to archival institutions and to individuals seeking information on archival jobs. The newsletter included job announcements and resumes of individuals seeking archival positions.

Dr. Jones: Did this initiative have any impact?

Dr. Mason: Yes, although it was somewhat difficult to determine the exact number of positions filled as a result of this program, we did know that it had met its objectives.

Another related project that started in 1966 was a salary survey conducted in cooperation with the American Association for State and Local History. The result of the published survey was met with mixed reactions. The data collected encouraged many archival institutions to upgrade their salary structure for

archivists. Some SAA members, however, expressed strong opposition to the survey even though it called attention to the low salaries for archivists. Indeed, several archivists expressed the view that the survey was demeaning to the archival profession and that archivists served because of their commitment to scholarship and not because of monetary compensation. The Archivist of South Carolina, for example, strongly endorsed this view, explaining that he had no difficulty in hiring archivists at low salaries. In one conversation, he explained he often hired persons with disabilities for “humanitarian reasons.” He added that it was a sound policy because such disabled individuals were “happy to be employed” and “furthermore, disabled individuals don’t have many opportunities to change jobs, and as a result, we have never had to worry about losing staff.”

Dr. Jones: I have seen references to the Loewenheim case, which involved the archival profession, the FDR Presidential Library and the Society of American Archivists. Will you give me the background of this controversy and how you became involved in it?

Dr. Mason: It involved Dr. Francis Loewenheim, then an Associate Professor of History at Rice University. Based upon his research at the Roosevelt Library in 1966-67, he claimed that the staff of the Library “deliberately and systematically withheld from him six letters between Franklin Roosevelt and William Dodd, Roosevelt’s Ambassador to Germany, which he needed to complete a book he was writing.” The charges were turned over to the American Historical Association and the

Organization of American Historians, which appointed an Ad Hoc committee, made up of several historians. It conducted a thorough investigation and issued the report in 1970. The Committee concluded “that there was no deliberate and systematic withholding of documents from Loewenheim by the FDR Library.” The Report also stated that Loewenheim “should have been able on his own to locate at the Roosevelt Library or the Library of Congress, the few Dodd-Roosevelt letters that he lacked...” The Ad Hoc Committee also stated that the staff at Hyde Park might have made sure that he did, indeed, see them there. The publication of the report did not please Professor Loewenheim. He accused the Ad Hoc Committee of “conducting a biased and defective investigation, totally lacking in due process,” and that “the Report contained numerous and important shortcomings”. Dr. Loewenheim also alleged that the case was a part of a larger scandal involving other archival institutions and demanded that a “prompt and complete Congressional investigation” be conducted.

Dr. Jones: What was the reaction of historians and officers of the AHA and OAH to the Loewenheim allegations and to the report of the Ad Hoc Committee?

Dr. Mason: It is difficult to gauge the views of all historians, but we do know that on September 2, 1969, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* published a statement endorsed by twenty historians supporting Loewenheim’s charges and joined him in calling for “a Congressional investigation into the conduct of the nation’s presidential libraries.” Not all historians however, endorsed this position. In a sharp rebuttal, published in the *New York Times* (October 19,

1969), the distinguished Harvard historian, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., stated “It is extraordinary that professional historians should have signed Professor Loewenheim’s letter without bothering to get the archives’ side of the story, and indeed, without subjecting the letter to the elementary critical scrutiny that they presumably apply every day in the exercise of the historical disciplines.”

Dr. Jones: What was the response of the archival profession and the Society of American Archivists to the Loewenheim charges and the Ad Hoc Committee report?

Dr. Mason: Herman Kahn, the former Director of the Roosevelt Library, then Assistant Archivist of the U. S. for Presidential Libraries, and President of the SAA in 1968-69, brought the matter to the attention of the officers and council members of the SAA. Without dwelling on the merits of the Loewenheim charges, the SAA objected strongly that archivists were not invited to serve on the Ad Hoc Committee. The response of one AHA-OAH leader was that “to have a member of the archival profession on the Ad Hoc Committee would have tended to weigh it unduly and that historians would be more likely to accept the Committee’s findings if no archivists were included.” This explanation did not satisfy leaders of the SAA or National Archives officials.

Dr. Jones: Were you involved in this dispute?

Dr. Mason: As you know, I was Secretary of the SAA from 1963-68 and shortly after, as its Vice President and President. In addition to coordinating SAA involvement in the dispute, I contacted a number of AHA and OAH officials, several of whom had conducted research at the Reuther Library, and expressed my strong objection

to the decision not to have archivists represented on the Ad Hoc Committee. Also, at the AHA annual meeting in Boston in December 1970, Herman Kahn and I presented our views in a special session explaining the concerns of the Archival profession. We also urged the American Historical Association-Organization of American Historians to involve the SAA when similar issues arose. I might add, that Professor Loewenheim tried unsuccessfully to get a court order to cancel the session and prevent our presentations.

Dr. Jones: What was the outcome of the so called "Loewenheim affair"?

Dr. Mason: The report of the Ad Hoc Committee was widely accepted by the historical profession and helped block Loewenheim's attempt to foster a Congressional investigation. Regardless, the case rankled leaders of SAA.

Dr. Jones: Were there any positive results from the case?

Dr. Mason: The Roosevelt Library was cleared of obstructing Loewenheim's research project, and the AHA-OAH leadership, after pressure from the archival profession, acknowledged that the SAA had a legitimate interest in such disputes. In the early 1970s, shortly after the case was resolved, the Society was asked to join the OAH-AHA on a Joint Committee on "Historians and Archives." Two members from each organization were appointed to serve on the Committee and meetings were scheduled twice a year.

Dr. Jones: Did you serve on this Joint Committee?

Dr. Mason: Yes, I served for several years and attended its meetings held at least once a year.

Dr. Jones: How would you evaluate the work of this Joint Committee?

Dr. Mason: It gave archivists recognition – at least from the historians who served on the Committee. The Joint Committee was able to resolve a number of disputes regarding archival institutions and it gave the SAA committee members the opportunity to explain its programs, professional standards, and other important issues. We even succeeded in persuading the committee to change its name from the “Historians and Archives” to “Historians and Archivists.”

Dr. Jones: Let’s turn our attention now to the SAA “Committee of the Seventies.” This special committee addressed many of the key issues facing the Society of American Archivists. Since you were intimately involved in the work of this committee, can you tell me about its origins and what it accomplished? Please give me the details of its work.

Dr. Mason: First, the archival profession, and specifically the Society of American Archivists, was not alone in the challenges it faced in the 1960s and 1970s. Other organizations including the American Historical Association, Organization of American Historians, and the American Library Association were also disrupted by dissent among its members relating to political and social issues, and the membership and governance of their respective organizations. Even the Vietnam War became an issue, which erupted at professional meetings. Fortunately, the Society of American Archivists had not yet suffered such disruptions and controversy, but it was very likely that similar challenges would soon surface in the SAA.

Dr. Jones: As secretary of the SAA and later its president, were you concerned about these issues as far as the SAA was concerned?

Dr. Mason: I was deeply concerned. I was a member of the AHA and OAH and attended their annual meetings. I witnessed the intensity of the discord among their members and the disruption it caused. I also heard vivid accounts of this crisis from Dr. Alfred Kelly, who chaired our History Department at Wayne State University and who served as Parliamentarian at AHA meetings. I was also in close touch with Herman Kahn who in 1968 became President of the SAA. He had also witnessed first-hand the challenges facing the AHA and OAH and was deeply concerned that the SAA would be confronted with similar disruptions. Kahn proposed a creation of a special committee "to analyze the present status of the Society, its programs and mission, and its relationships with other professional organizations." Kahn added "that we must find ways to make the Society more democratic and more relevant to its members."

During his term as President of the SAA, Kahn, with the approval of the council, create a special "Committee of the Seventies." He asked me to serve as its chair, along with the following: Frank Evans, National Archives and Records Service; Willie L. Harriford, Martin Luther King, Jr., Library; Mary Lynn Mc Cree, University of Illinois, Chicago Circle; David Larson, Ohio Historical Society; Hugh Taylor, Provincial Archives of New Brunswick; Herman Kahn, Yale University; and ex-officio members, F. Gerald Ham, Wisconsin State Historical Society and Secretary of the SAA; and Charles Lee, South Carolina Department of the Archives and

incoming President of the SAA. The work of the Committee was organized into eight major areas: Organizational Structure and Operations; Relations with other Professional Organizations; SAA Committees System; Research and Publications; Membership Relations and Development; Education and Training; Annual Meetings, Conferences and Symposia; and Finances. Committee members were assigned to the sub-committee based upon their expertise and special interests. Two members were assigned to each topic and given the responsibility of preparing written reports on their findings and recommendations.

Dr. Jones: How often did the Committee of the Seventies meet?

Dr. Mason: With financial aid from a grant secured by Herman Kahn from the Council on Library Resources, the Committee met six times between December 1970 and February 1972.

Dr. Jones: Briefly, what were the final recommendations of the Committee?

Dr. Mason: 1) That the Society secure the services of a full-time, paid executive director to be selected by SAA officers and Council

2) That the current year term for the President should be retained and that the elected Vice-President should continue to accede automatically to the presidency but would be given added responsibilities. The size of the Council should remain at eight elected members. The Society “should strive for even more representative officers and council members by taking into consideration such factors as archival interest (i.e. church, college, business, municipal, records management, etc.) age, gender, geography, nationality, ethnicity and race.” The

Committee also recommended that the Nominating Committee be enlarged to include four elected by the membership and that a dual slate of nominees should be presented. The Committee also concluded “no person should be nominated for an SAA office who, in his or her job, flagrantly expresses or practices “discrimination in regard to race, sex, nationality, or political or religious ideology.” Finally, a recommendation that the election ballots should be mailed to a certified accountant was approved.

3) Regional Archival Affiliates – The Committee, recognizing the importance of regional archival organizations, urged that the Council consider various types of affiliations.

4) The Committee recommended that the Society encourage the establishment of joint committees with other professional organizations and to hold joint meetings with them.

5) Committee System -- In order to encourage more active participation in the affairs of the Society, the Committee recommended several changes: that Committee members be appointed for staggered three year terms; that the practice of multiple committee appointments be avoided; that better communication be established between committees, particularly those dealing with similar subject areas.

6) Research and Publications -- The Committee recognized the vital importance of the American Archivist, the SAA “Placement Newsletter” and other

publications sponsored by the Society but recommended an expanded publication program to include a Newsletter, manuals, technical leaflets and full length books.

7) Membership Relations and Development – To provide greater service to members, the Committee recommended that the Society expand its publication program to include comprehensive salary surveys, group benefit plans, etc., and respond to the needs of a larger segment of the membership. It also recommended that a membership recruitment campaign should be given priority with a goal of 4000 members by 1980.

8) Education and Training – The Committee recognized the importance of the education and training of archivists and recommended that special attention be given to faculty qualifications, accreditation and sponsorship, the development of instructional materials for academic programs and courses and for institutes and workshops. On the issue of the development of a meaningful accreditation system, the Committee could see little practical value at this time. Furthermore, the Committee remained convinced “that our best interests as a profession are not served by attempts to develop separate archival degree programs in our colleges and universities.”

9) Annual Meetings, Conferences and Symposia – The Committee recommended the continuation of annual meetings but that the programs be expanded to meet the interests for both the beginning archivists and the subject specialist. The selection of meeting sites must be given attention with

consideration given to overall convention expenses and the proximity of the site to the density of Society membership.

10) Finances – The Committee was fully aware of the financial implications of its recommendations. Additional funding sources were needed to implement many of the Committee’s proposals. The highest priority, according to the Committee, was the hiring of a full-time paid executive director.

Dr. Jones: After the Committee completed its deliberations and addressed issues concerning SAA and its membership, what were the next steps?

Dr. Mason: Following procedures approved when this Committee was established and a resolution passed at the annual SAA meeting in San Francisco in October 1971, that an Interim Report would be circulated to the membership for their review and recommendations. The Council later received the edited version for their action.

Dr. Jones: It is obvious that the Committee addressed a number of controversial issues in its deliberations. How did you, as Chair, handle the different views of the Committee members?

Dr. Mason: It was a challenge, but the Committee members recognized the need to resolve their differences (and there were many), compromise when necessary, and meet our deadline for an Interim Report. The process also involved on my part separate meetings with several of the committee members to determine how these differences could be resolved. The only negative reaction to the Interim Report came from Charles Lee, the incoming President of the SAA. As ex officio

member of the Committee, he had attended two of the meetings, expressed his views at those sessions and was aware of plans to publish the Interim Report. To the surprise of the Committee, Lee later presented a different view. He announced that as President, he refused to authorize the costs of printing the Interim Report and challenged many of the findings of the Committee. Specifically, he did not support the hiring of a full-time director. He didn't think that we could raise the necessary funds and recommended the appointment of a "Blue Ribbon" Committee to review the Committee's recommendation. As an alternative to a full-time director, he recommended that the Society contact a number of archival institutions to see if any "are willing and able to give financial support for salary and expenses for the Society position." Lee also urged that the Society cancel the SAA "Placement Newsletter" since "it costs more in time, money and effort than it is worth." He went on to charge that the Secretary had too much power, that the annual meetings have become increasingly less important and should be replaced by regional meetings and symposia.

Committee members were "surprised and shocked" at Lee's tirade. Herman Kahn expressed this view succinctly when he wrote: "I must say that I was a little puzzled at receiving this communication from Charles, chiefly because of the fact that he sat with us at our meetings, discussed these matters with us and it was my impression that he concurred with the Interim Report." Kahn also challenged Lee's proposal to fragment the function of the office of the Secretary. Lee's recommendation is "a recipe for weakness and decline." Kahn furthermore

noted that one of the major conditions of the grant from the Council on Library Resources was that a report be prepared, completed and submitted to the membership.

Dr. Jones: What was Lee's response?

Dr. Mason: He recognized immediately that he was losing this battle and agreed to release the grant funds for the printing and distribution of the committee's report. He also sent a lengthy letter to the members of this committee and council, stating that "my disagreement is comparatively mild and is concerned mainly with procedure and emphasis." He continued with a scathing criticism of the report and in a snide way, of its chair.

Dr. Jones: Did Lee's complaints have any impact on the SAA Council or the Committee?

Dr. Mason: Little, if any. In fact, his remarks lent added positive support to the work of the Committee. The membership at the annual meeting in San Francisco in October 1971 unanimously adopted the decision to print and distribute the Interim Report and later the SAA Council also approved.

Dr. Jones: What were the next steps in the review of the Interim Report?

Dr. Mason: The Council reviewed the Report and membership comments in 1972. They rejected the Committee's recommendation to hire an executive director or to create a Blue Ribbon Committee to explore the feasibility of raising funds for the position. They also rejected our proposal to pair candidates for all vacancies, and to have a CPA count ballots. The Council also vigorously opposed the proposal to "reject for candidacy anyone who flagrantly expressed or practiced certain

forms of discrimination in his job.” At the annual meeting of the SAA in Columbus, Ohio in October 1972, the membership reviewed and approved the amended report and adopted needed changes in the Constitution and Bylaws.

Dr. Jones: What was your reaction to the Council’s action, especially its rejection of several Committee recommendations?

Dr. Mason: I was very surprised and upset with their decisions, as were other members of the Committee. We were most shocked at their action on a paid Executive Director. Fortunately, SAA leaders addressed the Committee’s concerns and in 1974 found the resources to hire an Executive Director. Perhaps the most important contribution of the “Committee of the 70s” was that it identified and resolved many of the concerns of members. It helped avoid the internal dissention and disruption, which had plagued and damaged many other professional organizations.

Dr. Jones: Thanks, Phil, for your detailed account of the origins and work of the “Committee of the 70s.” The official published accounts of the Committee give only a partial picture of its activities and the inner workings.

Chapter 8 Oral History

Dr. Jones: You have referred on several occasions to your interest in oral history and its role in the WSU Archives program. How and when did you get involved in this project?

Dr. Mason: The importance of this method of obtaining important historical information was brought to my attention when I served as State Archivist of Michigan. As I mentioned earlier, I was often assigned to attend meetings of local and regional historical societies. This gave me the opportunity to listen to many individuals share first-hand accounts about their experiences in shaping the development of their communities. I was fascinated with their stories and the valuable information they provided. Unfortunately, I wasn't prepared to do a formal interview with a tape recorder at that time, but it made me aware of the importance of this method of obtaining and preserving important historical information.

Dr. Jones: Did you inaugurate an oral history program at Wayne State?

Dr. Mason: Yes. Under the auspices of the Wayne State University- University of Michigan Joint Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations, I was involved in an oral history project involving interviews with one hundred and forty individuals associated with the founding and early development of the UAW. I served on the Advisory Committee for the project along with Professor Raymond Miller of Wayne State and Professor Sidney Fine and the Dean of the Law School from the University of Michigan. In planning that project, we sought the advice of others, including two sociologists.

Dr. Jones: Did you conduct any of the interviews?

Dr. Mason: No, we hired Dr. Jack Skeels of the Wayne State University Economics Department and later, Professor William Sullivan, a historian, from Michigan State University. Our first challenge was to establish procedures for the interviews, the selection of interviewees and a policy governing access to the completed interviews. We promptly rejected the proposal of our sociologists to develop a standard series of

questions to be presented to each interviewee. This approach was popular among some sociologists, but the Advisory Committee decided that each of our interviews would be based upon the particular role of each interviewee in the history of the UAW. They were selected because of their involvement in the founding and early history of the UAW. We wanted not only UAW leaders, and key local union members, but also the spokespersons of the various political groups within the UAW.

Under the procedures established, each interviewee would have an opportunity to review his/her transcript and make any changes he/she desired. The interviewee could also close or restrict sections of the interview for a reasonable period of time. Furthermore, the completed transcripts were to be placed at the Wayne State University Labor Archives and the University of Michigan Bentley Library, where they could be used for scholarly research.

Despite the careful planning, serious problems arose. The Dean of the University of Michigan Law School was so upset at what he described as the "libelous" statements in many of the interviews that he strongly recommended that the tapes and copies of all of the interviews be destroyed. The Advisory Committee decided that the Dean's recommendations could be resolved by placing restrictions upon access to the transcripts, including careful review of each researcher, that copies could not be made of the transcripts, and that any conflicts should be resolved by the Advisory Committee.

Despite these regulations, several additional issues arose. Twenty interviewees refused to sign releases, maintaining that the interviews did not accurately reflect their views or that the interviewer's questions were too narrow. Roy Reuther, one of the interviewees, was shocked when he reviewed his transcript. He reported that his views had been misrepresented and the questions addressed to him dealt almost exclusively with inter-union conflicts and did not address the contributions of the Union. Reuther's complaint had merit. The Advisory Committee recognized these issues when it reviewed the list of persons interviewed and the questions

that were asked by by the interviewer. Not only had many key UAW leaders not been interviewed but the overriding theme of many of the interviews was limited to inter-union conflicts. The Committee somewhat belatedly learned that the interviewer was planning to write a book on such conflicts.

The Advisory Committee finally hired Dr. Sullivan to conduct additional interviews and restore balance to the project. Another serious issue involved the practice of the interviewer collecting records from interviewees for his personal research. This violated the guidelines that stated that all such records collected would be immediately deposited in the Labor Archives.

Dr. Jones: After the oral history transcripts were approved and placed in the Wayne State University Archives, were they used by researchers?

Dr. Mason: Yes, they were used constantly by researchers, especially, but not exclusively, by those interested in the UAW. The interviews with women, dissidents, and representatives of ethnic groups, were frequently consulted and cited in publications.

Dr. Jones: Did the restrictions placed upon access to the interviews affect their use by researchers?

Dr. Mason: Some researchers were upset with the restrictions, especially the policy of not allowing copies of the transcripts to be made. One researcher, a faculty member at the University of Montana was so angry at this policy that he contacted a number of interviewees directly and told them that he had been denied access to their transcripts by the Archives. He asked to borrow their copy so that "their role in the UAW would be included in his book." When I learned of his subterfuge, I immediately contacted him and officials at his University and demanded that he stop this practice. I discovered that he had received a grant from his University to cover the copying costs. The matter was resolved on our behalf by Wayne State University's legal counsel.

Dr. Jones: Was the UAW Oral History Project one of the first of its kind in terms of scope?

Dr. Mason: It certainly was one of the first such projects and served as a model for other archival institutions. But there were several earlier major oral history programs, that deserve attention. For example, in my own research on Henry Schoolcraft, I discovered that while he was the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for northern Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota, he conducted an oral history project involving Indian leaders within his Agency. In his interviews with them and through an interpreter he concentrated on their history, religious beliefs, customs, language and warfare, etc. Using this important material, Schoolcraft published several books relating to the Chippewa or Ojibwa tribes. One of these books – *Algonic Research*, devoted to their religious beliefs was the inspiration for Henry W. Longfellow's *Tales of Hiawatha*.

Dr. Jones: Were there other more recent oral history projects?

Dr. Mason: The Library of Congress conducted an extensive group of interviews in the 1930s with the children of slaves and Alan Nevins, the distinguished historian at Columbia, pioneered an oral history project in the 1940s-1950s with American leaders in politics, literature and the arts. By the 1950s the Presidential Libraries were conducting interviews with individuals who were friends or associates of the Presidents. The U. S. Congress had sponsored an oral history program with selected retiring members of Congress. These programs and the public interest they engendered encouraged other institutions including, archives, historical societies, etc., to conduct similar projects.

Dr. Jones: After the completion of the Wayne State University-University of Michigan project, did the Archives continue to conduct oral history interviews?

Dr. Mason: Yes, but on a selective basis, until we had additional staff. On one occasion in the early 1980s, Ken Morris, Director of UAW Region 1B, allocated about \$35,000 to the Archives that 1B had raised in a Golf Tournament. This helped us conduct a number of interviews.

In addition to UAW members we conducted interviews with leaders of other unions that had placed their historical records in the Archives. For example, I

conducted interviews with a number of officers of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, which helped immeasurably in supplementing their written records.

Cesar Chavez wanted me to undertake a similar project for the Farm Workers, but I did not have the language skills to converse with many of the key Hispanic union leaders. I did, however, train Marc Grossman, who became a key UFW spokesperson and he, in turn, conducted several important interviews.

Dr. Jones: You mentioned in an earlier interview that oral interviews were used extensively in the films you produced relating to conditions in the workplace. Can you elaborate on this?

Dr. Mason: In 1983, with the aid of a very generous grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, we sponsored three films entitled "Women Workers," "Younger Workers--Older Workers," and "Workers Dreams and Aspirations." Morton Parker, a Toronto film producer, filmed hundreds of hours of interviews with rank-and-file UAW workers for use in the preparation of the films.

Dr. Jones: Did you share the tapes and transcripts with other archival institutions?

Dr. Mason: No, because of the access terms governing our oral history program. The Archives did sell copies of the completed films and the oral histories conducted for "Rosie the Riveter" produced by the Columbia University's project. We also purchased some transcripts conducted by the University of California at Berkeley.

Dr. Jones: Was this a common practice to sell oral history tapes or transcripts?

Dr. Mason: No, but some institutions sold them to raise money for their oral history that their transcripts were being sold.

Dr. Jones: I understand that you and the Archives staff have been involved with several other oral history organizations.

Dr. Mason: Yes, We were the main sponsors of the Michigan Oral History Association founded in 1988. The organizational meeting was held in the Reuther Conference Room and the Archives devoted funds to underwrite the publication of their newsletter. I served for a number of years on the Board of Trustees and

William Gulley, formerly on the Archives staff, is still on the Board. MOHA, as it is called, was perhaps the first regional oral history organization in the United States and served as a model for similar regional groups.

I also played an active role in the founding of the Oral History Association. At the request of Dr. Philip Brooks, Director of the Truman Presidential Library, I was asked to prepare the Constitution and By Laws for the founding meeting of the OHA held at Arden House in New York in 1966.

Given my hectic schedule at that time, I declined to serve on their Board of Trustees, but I did attend annual meetings of the OHA and on several occasions presented papers relating to oral history issues.

Dr. Jones: As you review the various oral history projects that you have worked on, have you changed your approach in any way?

Dr. Mason: Perhaps not so much the approach, but I have learned a great deal about the process of interviewing and about memory mechanisms.

Dr. Jones: Please explain.

Dr. Mason: I soon realized that the more research I conducted on the interviewee and his/her background, the more effective I could be as an interviewer. After all, some of the persons I interviewed had hundreds of hours of memories that could be tapped. Since the length of most interviews were limited to two to three hours it was very important to know as much as possible about the person to be interviewed, the highlights of his/her career and the topics that should be given priority. On the average, I spent from ten to fifteen hours of background research for every hour on tape.

I soon discovered that some responses of interviewees were not accurate even though I could not always tell if the interviewee was knowingly distorting his/her testimony. This was brought out in the interview relating to the famous Flint Sit-Down Strike of 1937. From the archival records we know that only three UAW members planned the strike. They were aware that stool pigeons or labor spies had infiltrated the Flint UAW Locals, and union plans were immediately shared

with General Motors. Also, the UAW leadership was aware that General Motors was planning to ship much of its equipment at the Flint Buick plant to other GM plants, thus undermining the Union's plans for a strike. Thus, three UAW leaders, Roy Reuther, Wyndham Mortimer, and Bob Travis devised the following strategy. First, they notified the workers in Chevrolet Plant Number 9 that the strike would begin at the end of the afternoon shift on February 1st. General Motors officials learned of this plan and immediately transferred security personnel to Flint from other GM plants and also hired private police. As you know, a violent confrontation took place at Plant Number 9 and in the meantime, Reuther and his two colleagues persuaded the workers at GM plant Number 4 to remain in the plant and commence a sit-down strike. This UAW ploy worked, ending with a Union victory and a turning-point in UAW-GM relations.

The Strike received national attention in the media and was heralded as a dramatic victory for the Union. Yet, despite the solid evidence which we have in the UAW Archives including the detailed and closely guarded strategy plan for the Sit-Down Strike, several UAW members claimed in their oral history interviews that they were one of three UAW leaders who planned the strike. As a result of the ensuing controversy, some have argued that oral history interviews had little or no value and resulted often in the distortion of historical events.

Dr. Jones: What was your response to these criticisms?

Dr. Mason: We obviously could not respond to such issues because the literary rights belonged to the interviewee. We were aware, of course, that several persons whom we interviewed were prejudiced, paranoid and even used their interviews to win a political battle. We tried, whenever possible, to clarify such issues by questioning the interviewee in greater detail. For example, in our interview with Wyndham Mortimer and Henry Kraus about the Flint Sit-Down Strike, they claimed that Roy Reuther had no role in planning the strike. The Archives, however, had a letter from Bob Travis, a close political ally of Mortimer and Kraus,

praising Reuther for developing the successful strategy for the Strike. Researchers could critically review these conflicting sources before making a judgment.

Dr. Jones: Did the Archives edit the oral history transcripts?

Dr. Mason: We did check carefully for spelling errors, especially of the names of individuals cited in the transcripts and we eliminated “false starts” and obvious repetitions. We also checked for typographical and punctuation errors.

Dr. Jones: What responses or reactions did you get from interviewees when they revised their transcripts?

Dr. Mason: The responses varied. Some wanted to add information to their statements, others deleted words or even substantial sections of their interviews. On several occasions an interviewee denied making a particular remark, blaming the transcriber. Even when we re-played the tape recording for them, they still denied it and requested that it be deleted.

Dr. Jones: Did the interviewee have the right to eliminate statements that they had made on tape?

Dr. Mason: Yes. This option was made clear in the preliminary meeting with the interviewee. The interviewee owned the literary rights to the tape and the transcript. Furthermore, a signed release of the transcript was made only after the interviewee had approved the final edited version.

Dr. Jones: As you gained experience in conducting interviews, did you change your approach at all?

Dr. Mason: Yes. I studied a great deal about memory and the techniques of asking questions. I also became better prepared for the interview and conducted more background research before planning an interview. I also gave careful attention to other factors, that could aid recall of events or experiences.

Dr. Jones: Would you explain that statement?

Dr. Mason: Let me give you an example, although given your own experiences in conducting oral histories, it won't come as a surprise. In the early 1970s, I contacted Joe Salarno, the AFL-CIO director in Boston, who had been an active leader in the

UAW-GM Strike in Oshawa, Ontario in 1937-39. He was such a successful strike leader that Mitchell Hepburn, the Prime Minister of Ontario, had him branded as an “undesirable alien” and expelled him from Canada. In my first contact with Mr. Salarno he was very hesitant about giving me an interview, probably because like so many Canadian unionists, he was closely affiliated with several Communist Party union leaders. Finally, with the intervention of Lane Kirkland, the then Secretary-Treasurer of the AFL-CIO, he agreed to meet with me at his office in Government Center (formerly Scollay Square) in Boston.

I began, as I often do in such interviews, by asking Mr. Salarno about his family life, his education and career. To my surprise, he could not recall very much about his family and early years. I remember that I was concerned that this interview would offer very little relevant information. At the noon break, he invited me to join him for lunch at an Italian market center near the North Station. As we approached the restaurant, we passed a number of stalls where Italian food was sold. During the luncheon Mr. Salarno became very talkative, giving detailed accounts of how, as a young child, he accompanied his mother to this market where she sold Italian meats, cheese and bread. At two p.m. we returned to his office and with my tape recorder operating, he continued with his life story including his role in the labor movement. We ended the interview at about six p.m. because I had used all of my cassette tapes. We agreed to meet the following morning.

As I reflected on the interview that evening, I wondered whether some of my early questions had offended him or if I concentrated too much about his union affiliations. I raised this question, but he assured me that this was not the case. He then explained that it was the visit to the Italian market with its odors of fresh meat and bakery products that triggered his recall of his early years. This was a lesson that served me well in other oral history interviews. I also found that photographs work well, too.

Dr. Jones: You mentioned earlier your involvement in the oral history project of the Wayne State University-University of Michigan Joint Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations. Did the Archives ever re-interview those UAW founders at a later stage in their career?

Dr. Mason: We did conduct later interviews with some of these unionists in the 1980s with surprising results. For example, we again interviewed Ken Morris, the Regional Director of UAW Region 1B, an early leader at UAW Local 212 and close ally of Walter Reuther. In addition to his career after 1960, Morris described again in great detail his early years in the UAW. I was quite surprised that his later interview was almost word-for-word that of his first interview, conducted twenty-five years earlier, especially since he did not have a copy of the 1960 transcript to review. His role in the dramatic events of the 1930s and 1940s were carefully imbedded in his memory.

In contrast, some later interviews of UAW members were dramatically different from their earlier accounts of specific events. You would not know that the same person did them!

Dr. Jones: What conclusions did you draw from these conflicting accounts?

Dr. Mason: I'm not sure how to explain these differences. Perhaps, over time, and in light of events after their earlier interviews, they had access to additional information, which changed their accounts. But, again, it clearly demonstrated the need to use oral history interviews very carefully and critically.

Dr. Jones: In an earlier conversation you mentioned some problems you encountered in your oral history interviews?

D. Mason: Yes, I made some mistakes but I learned a lot from these experiences. On several occasions my recorder wasn't working properly and I lost important sections of the interview. On another occasion a staff member making the back-up security tape erased the original rather than making the copy. I encountered a more embarrassing situation when I conducted an interview with William McEntee, a leader of AFSCME and father of Jerry McEntee, the president of the Union. In

preparation for the interview, which took place in Bal Harbour, Florida in 1963 at the Union's annual meeting, I used a lavalier microphone attached to a long cord. The cord soon became entangled so we took it out on the balcony of his room on the 11th floor and dropped it down until it untangled itself. This strategy worked until we began to continue the interview. At that moment, three men barged in and demanded to know why we were tape recording their meeting on the lower floor. It seems that they were members of the AFSCME Pennsylvania delegation and were meeting to decide whom they would endorse in the forthcoming election. Their anger subsided when they recognized their colleague, Bill McEntee, and apologized and left. I was so relieved that the confrontation was resolved that I didn't mind paying for the repair of the door. I was embarrassed about the later jokes and remarks that I was "spying on the Pennsylvania delegates."

Dr. Jones: Did the Archives add staff to conduct oral history interviews?

Dr. Mason: We did hire several consultants to conduct interviews for us, including Glenn Ruggles, an experienced interviewer. Morton Parker, our film producer, conducted interviews with a couple hundred UAW workers, and our archival staff occasionally did interviews. We also received a large number of tape-recorded interviews from researchers after they had completed their projects. Unfortunately most of those interviews did not include a "Release" granting authority to make the tapes available to our archival researchers.

Dr. Jones: As I know from personal experience, Oral History was one of the approved courses given in the graduate Archival Administration curriculum.

Dr. Mason: Yes, this course was introduced in the 1980s to assist our students in qualifying for archival positions. We hired highly qualified and experienced oral historians to teach the course including Dr. Charles Morrissey, Dr. John Allan Cicala and Dr. Cullom Davis. After I retired as Director of the Archives, I taught the course.

Dr. Jones: Did you continue to conduct interviews for the Archives?

Dr. Mason: Yes, I was involved in several oral history projects. For example, after Dr. William Rea Keast had retired from his position at the University of Texas, I visited him in Norwich, Vermont and arranged to interview him relating to his years as President of Wayne State University. This proved to be a convenient arrangement because my son, Stephen, lived in nearby North Thetford, Vermont. I was especially pleased to interview Dr. Keast because of the many contributions he made at Wayne State University, had been overlooked. Furthermore, I wanted to call attention to the important role he played in the early years of the Archives. After President David Adamany learned of this interview, he asked me to interview Keast's predecessor, Dr. Thomas Bonner, and several key University officers who served under the late President George Gullen. These Interviews included Dr. Henry Bohm, Dr. Robert Hubbard and Dr. E. Burrows Smith. The transcripts of these interviews have been placed in the University Archives. I declined to interview President Adamany.

Dr. Jones: Were there other oral history projects?

Dr. Mason: Yes, several. At the request of the Michigan Council of Foundations I interviewed four individuals who had established private foundations in Michigan. These interviews were filmed by a professional company and made into DVDs for public television.

Another oral history project involved interviews with ten senior judges of the U.S. District Court of the Eastern District of Michigan. This was sponsored by the Court Historical Society with a generous grant from Judge Avern Cohn.

I conducted about fifteen interviews for the Ruth Mott Foundation relating to C. S. and Ruth Mott. I also helped the Foundation establish a new archives program for the Mott family.

In the 1990s, I worked with the John Fetzer Foundation in establishing an archival program at their headquarters in Kalamazoo, Michigan. As you may know, he was the owner of the Detroit Tigers from 1956 to 1984 and president of WK20 Radio and Television Company in western Michigan. Following Fetzer's death in 1991,

the Foundation trustees recognized that they knew very little about his business career, his private life and especially Fetzer's plans for his Foundation. I was asked not only to establish the archives program but also to conduct extensive interviews with his baseball and business associates as well as colleagues who were familiar with his spiritual and parapsychology interests. The interviews with his business and baseball colleagues helped fill in many gaps in his life and provided important information for the Foundation.

Dr. Jones: Tell me about the third area – his spiritual interests.

Dr. Mason: As a disciple of Nikola Tesla, the famous electrical engineer, John Fetzer sought to determine if there were "invisible links between the physical, the mental and the spiritual." For my interviews covering this area of the "Mind, Spirit and the Body" as he described his lifelong interest, I contacted a number of his religious and spiritual advisors. They provided a great deal of information about Fetzer that few of his colleagues were even aware of. Fetzer, for example, believed he could contact the deceased and had funded several serious studies in this area. He believed in reincarnation and believed that in past life, he was Socrates, Ramses, Louis XIV of France, Joseph of Aramethea, St. John of the Cross and Thomas Jefferson. In the Fetzer headquarters in Kalamazoo he displayed busts of these men.

Dr. Jones: How did you prepare for the interviews covering this part of his life?

Dr. Mason: I reviewed a variety of studies of spiritualism, the work of Nikola Tesla, Fetzer's extensive correspondence, his diaries and of course, the interviews with his spiritual advisors and close friends.

Dr. Jones: Can you give me an example of how the interviews helped explain Mr. Fetzer's spiritual interests?

Dr. Mason: Let me share one example with you. In 1983 John Fetzer made the "shocking announcement" that he had sold the Detroit Tigers to Tom Monaghan, the founder and owner of Domino's Pizza enterprise. This decision surprised the Sports world as well as Fetzer's business friends and baseball colleagues. The

Tigers had not been put up for sale nor had Monaghan had any experience in major league baseball. It was obvious that Fetzer could have sold the Club for more than the fifty-three million secured from Monaghan. Some believed that Fetzer's action was based upon plans of his close friend and baseball ally, Bowie Kuhn, Commissioner of the American League to retire in 1984. This view was widely supported but the oral history interviews told another story. According to several other Fetzer's spiritual advisors he hand-picked the new owner because he believed that when he was Louis XIV, Monaghan was his illegitimate son and, that by selling to him, the Tigers would remain in the Fetzer family.

Dr. Jones: What was your response when you reviewed these conflicting accounts? Did you believe that the "Louis XIV" story was a factor in Mr. Fetzer's decision to sell to Mr. Monaghan?

Dr. Mason: Frankly, my first reaction was that the Louis XIV account was so bizarre that it could not be true. On the other hand, there is evidence supported by reliable sources that John Fetzer believed in reincarnation and his former relationship with Tom Monaghan might explain his selection of Monaghan as his successor. Unfortunately Jim Campbell died before I could interview him and his papers offered little information about the sale of the Tigers. As you can see, it will be up to historians to review and evaluate all of the evidence before coming to a final conclusion. It is our responsibility to collect and preserve and make available source materials reflecting all parts of view. The Archives oral history program has helped us meet that objective.

Chapter 9 Archival Theft and Security Forgeries

Dr. Jones: From the archival literature and other sources I learned that you were recognized for your pioneering efforts in making the archival and library professions aware of the serious problems of theft from their institutions and the sale of forgeries. Let's begin our discussion today talking about your personal experiences on those topics.

Dr. Mason: As I recall, I first became aware of archival theft during my tenure as a part-time assistant at the University of Michigan Historical Collections. In addition to processing collections I occasionally had duties supervising the Reading Room on Saturdays. On one such occasion, a highly respected genealogist from Battle Creek, Michigan, who was working on a project relating to "Governors of Michigan" approached me at the reference desk and asked to borrow scissors since she had "forgotten to bring her own." She explained that she needed them to cut the signatures of several former Michigan governors from collections to add to her autograph collection. I was shocked at what she told me, as was Dr. Vander Velde, the Director who immediately banned genealogists from using the Historical Collections. This experience made me realize the care needed to supervise researchers, including those with established credentials.

Dr. Jones: Did you face similar challenges when you served as State Archivist of Michigan?

Dr. Mason: Yes, during my brief five-year tenure, there were several such incidents even though our careful surveillance of researchers usually discouraged such activity. There was one incident, however, that I cannot forget. It involved a researcher who wanted information on his grandfather who had served in a Michigan regiment during the Civil War. In order to qualify for a state pension, the soldier, a German immigrant, was required to prepare a lengthy written account describing his early childhood in Germany, his family's migration to the United States, and his service in the Union Army. This fifteen page handwritten statement, once approved, qualified for him for a state pension. His first-hand account obviously pleased the researcher but the latter's subsequent behavior surprised me. For about two hours he sat at the research table, often with his eyes closed. At closing time, I approached him and asked him if he was pleased with the document he had reviewed. It was of great personal interest, he told me, and then confessed that he had considered taking it for his family to enjoy. At first I was shocked at his confession but even more so when two weeks later I learned that he was a minister at the Congregational Church in Lansing.

Dr. Jones: These experiences must have better prepared you for your long tenures at Wayne.

Dr. Mason: Well, they didn't make me overly cynical about the nature of researchers, but they made me conscious of the need for carefully developed security

procedures at Wayne, and indeed, for the archival profession. In fact, within the first month at Wayne, in March 1958, I had to deal with a serious security situation. Immediately following a visit from a well-known historian from New York, I noticed that ten documents which he had been using, dealing with Communist activities in a labor strike were missing. After notifying our Campus Police, I contacted the researcher directly and told him to return the items immediately. He did so, explaining indignantly that he was merely “borrowing” them and planned to return them after he returned to New York.

Shortly after this incident, we were involved in the theft of a significant collection of the German writer, Hermann Hesse, which had been given to Wayne State University. Although this collection was not in the WSU archives, I had been asked by the University Humanities Librarian to retrieve the Collection from the Library vault and make it available to a researcher. As instructed, I did retrieve the box containing the Collection but immediately discovered that all the items were missing. It turned out that they had been requested by a University of Windsor graduate student a year earlier. The Library also discovered that most of the Hermann Hesse books were also missing from the Library shelves. By sheer luck, one of the archives staff who was checking the shelves where the Hesse books were located, noticed a researcher placing several of the remaining Hesse volumes in his brief case. I was notified immediately and

contacted our University police. They apprehended the young man as he was leaving the Library and discovered that he was a resident of Windsor, Canada. In negotiations with the Windsor Police Department, an agreement was reached whereby the University would not prosecute the young student if he returned all of the stolen items. He claimed that he could take better care of the Hesse publications and documents than the staff of the Library.

A more serious incident occurred on one Saturday evening when I had stopped by my office to retrieve some personal files. At that time my office was in the Wayne Room of the Purdy Library. When I entered the facility I noticed a flashing light coming from the archives basement storage area. My first impression was that it might be a faulty electrical connection so I immediately went to investigate. I discovered to my surprise that the flashing light came from a camera, operated by two men who were filming documents from the Collection of former Detroit mayor, Jerome P. Cavanagh. The files related to the Mayor's investigation of the Detroit Police Department during the Detroit Riots of 1967. I confronted the men, introduced myself, and asked for their names and the purpose of the filming. They refused to answer my questions and departed quickly by a basement door. Before they left, however, I heard a phone message they received that indicated that a break-in had been signaled at "ASB." Since this was an obvious reference to the

University's "Administrative Service Building" on our campus, I concluded that the two intruders were members of our Campus police force.

Dr. Jones: What action did you take?

Dr. Mason: I called President Keast immediately at his apartment in the McGregor Center and described the encounter. He, too, suspected that our Campus security officers were involved and told me to go to the University's Police office early Monday morning to see if I could identify the two men involved. I followed President Keast's instructions and arrived at the Campus Police headquarters at 8:00 a.m. on the following Monday. After recognizing the two officers, I again introduced myself and asked for an explanation for their actions. They told me that they were "merely curious" about Mayor Cavanagh's files on the Detroit Police Department. I also learned that they had official connections to the 17th precinct of the Detroit Police Department, located adjacent to our campus.

Dr. Jones: What was the outcome of this incident?

Dr. Mason: Acting on a request from President Keast, the University Board of Governors ruled that all areas of the Archives in which records were stored were placed off-limits to the Campus police. This policy was reconfirmed after the new Reuther Library opened in 1974.

Dr. Jones: Were there any other ramifications from the incident with the two Campus police officers?

Dr. Mason: Yes, within a few weeks after that event the Vice-President for Finance contacted me and demanded that I give him a master key to all Archives facilities. When I refused, he warned me that I would not get re-appointed as the Archives director when my term expired within a year.

Dr. Jones: What was your response?

Dr. Mason: I contacted Annette Riley, the President's secretary and requested her advice. Within a few hours, President Keast visited me and asked for details of this encounter. At the next Board of Governors meeting I received a new five-year appointment as Director of the Archives.

Dr. Jones: Before we go forward in the discussion of some of your recent activities regarding archival theft and forgeries, let's devote some attention to one of a few of your earlier experiences. Specifically, I want to cover in some detail your involvement in the famous, or perhaps more accurately, infamous Murphy theft and trial.

Dr. Mason: I became first involved with this case on November 3, 1962 when a woman, (very pregnant) came into my office in the Wayne Room of the Purdy Library, and introduced herself as Elizabeth Murphy. She asked to talk to me about some historic documents, which she wanted to sell. She told me that she had been referred to me by James Babcock, the curator of the Burton Historical Collections of the Detroit Public Library. He had told her of my research relating to Henry Schoolcraft, the U. S. Indian Agent for the Upper Great Lakes. In the course of our discussion she

showed me several documents relating to the activities of the Indian Bureau of the U. S. Department of War dating back to the 1820s, which she wanted to sell. They certainly looked authentic but as I explained to her, they didn't relate to my research topic nor did they fit into the WSU Archives program. Two weeks later at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association in Washington, D. C., I mentioned the meeting with Mrs. Murphy to my friend and colleague, Dr. Oliver W. Holmes, who headed the U. S. Indian Department of the National Archives. It was obvious to me that the documents which I had seen were of great interest to him. After answering many questions about the documents and Mrs. Murphy, he told me that he would be contacting me soon for additional information.

Dr. Jones: Did Dr. Holmes contact you further?

Dr. Mason: No, not directly, but during the first week of January 1963, I was visited in my office by two FBI agents who wanted further information about Mrs. Murphy and the documents that she was trying to sell. I couldn't tell them more than I had told Dr. Holmes, but fortunately, my secretary, Mrs. Patricia Higgins, who had overheard my interview with Mrs. Murphy, informed the agent that she had seen Mrs. Murphy at the nearby Detroit Bank and Trust headquarters conducting some business at the counter. Of the checks that she deposited were several signed by Ralph Ulveling, Director of the Detroit Public Library and James Babcock, the curator of

the Burton Historical Collections. The former transaction was for the purchases of historical documents for the Library, the latter for Mr. Babcock.

Dr. Jones: Did the agents contact you again?

Dr. Mason: Yes, about a month later, as I recall. I was asked to meet with the agent in charge of the Detroit office of the FBI along with the agents whom I met in January. At that meeting and subsequent ones, I learned a great deal about Mrs. Murphy and her husband, Robert Bradford Murphy. It seems that several FBI agents led by Harry Croon, had set up surveillance at the bank and observed Mr. Murphy emptying out his checking account. They followed him to his apartment on East Canfield street, near the Wayne State University campus and arrested him. There they discovered boxes of books and historical manuscripts scheduled for shipment to Chicago, as well as bus tickets for the Murphy's' and their four young children, also to Chicago.

Dr. Jones: Again, please tell in some detail about your involvement in this case and also what you learned about the Murphys' and their activities.

Dr. Mason: Following my meeting with the FBI officials and with the approval of Wayne State University's President, George Gullen, whom they had also contacted, I agreed to assist them in determining from whom the recovered books and historical documents had been stolen. It was obvious to me after a preliminary review that this was going to be a

formidable task. And, indeed it was! For the next six months prior to, and following the Murphys' trial in the U. S. District Court in Detroit, I spent one or two days a week, mostly at FBI headquarters on Fort Street in Detroit, not only conducting a careful review of the recovered items and the FBI records, relating to not only the Murphys but also to other similar thefts. In addition, I was briefed on the work of other federal agencies in their investigation of the Murphys.

Dr. Jones: Was their assistance helpful to you?

Dr. Mason: Yes, it certainly was! The FBI had extremely important resources, including the assistance of other federal agencies, to whom, and to the surprise of the FBI, were also conducting investigations of the Murphys. The U. S. Post Office Department, for example, had outstanding indictments against Robert B. Murphy for mail fraud.

Dr. Jones: Tell me more about your role in the preparation of the Murphy trial.

Dr. Mason: As a result of my research, I was able to provide valuable information gleaned from the recovered stolen material, especially the various aliases Murphy used as well as the numerous forgeries of historical documents that he had sold to several collectors. Despite the scarcity of information on Murphy's early life, the FBI learned a great amount of detail about Robert Murphy. The FBI was able to verify that he was born Samuel George Matz in Cleveland, Ohio on January 10, 1918. He served in the U. S. Navy from 1935-39. He was arrested for lewd cohabitation in Pocatello,

Idaho in 1947; his occupation listed as a poultry man. During his trial his wife testified that he was an antique dealer. Sometime in his life, Murphy became interested in stamps, old coins, guns, and rare documents. In 1959, using the alias Colonel Andrew Barnett and living in Independence, Missouri, he persuaded the New York book dealer, Charles Hamilton, to send him several presidential autographs. He failed to return them, and the Post Office issued an indictment against him.

It is not known when the Murphys first became involved in theft of archival materials, but in November 1961, Murphy visited the Georgia Department of Archives and History and introduced himself as Dr. Robert Bradford Murphy, "an historian, writer and consultant in western history for the Library of Congress." He reported that he was working on a book on lesser known Americans and asked for the original papers of Confederate leaders. After a few days of Murphy's charades and odd behavior, the archivists became suspicious and contacted the Library of Congress. The FBI was called in to observe Murphy, but no theft was observed. Some items had later turned up missing, but only after the Murphys' arrest were the items from the Georgia Archives recovered. On August 16, 1962, Murphy, posing as journalist R. O. Stanhope, preparing to write a history of Indiana, registered at the Indiana State Library in Indianapolis. Before he left, he had stolen several letters written by Senator Henry Clay, Benjamin Harrison and documents signed

by Schuyler Colfax, Ulysses Grant, and other famous statesmen. The documents were among those recovered from Murphy at the time of his arrest and later proven to be the property of the Indiana State Library.

Dr. Jones: After these successful ventures in the Midwest, where did the Murphys go?

Dr. Mason: The nation's capital was next on the Murphys' itinerary, the specific objective: the National Archives. On August 23, 1962, he registered as Dr. Robert Bradford Murphy as a journalist working on a book on "Famous Sons." He gave an Evanston, Illinois address. His approach, now polished with practice, was very convincing. He posed as an eccentric and short-tempered writer, and often shouted at the archivists on duty in the reading room. Just as he had planned, the staff avoided him whenever possible. He differed from most of the researchers in another respect. According to testimony of the National Archives staff, he refused to use microfilm and insisted upon seeing the original records in the evening when they were serviced in a central research room rather than in the divisional research areas used during the day. The reason was obvious. Researchers were carefully supervised from nine to five, but in the evening one or two archivists had to service a large reading room. This gave Murphy an unusual opportunity. He called for the files of the attorney general, the U.S. Land Office, the Justice Department, the War and Navy Departments, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and other major

governmental units. He pilfered at will. He even searched the files used by other researchers, after they had returned them to archival boxes on book trucks in the room. For three weeks, Murphy fleeced the National Archives of its precious manuscripts. Judging from the recovered items, which represented only a sampling of stolen documents, he did his job well. He knew the market value of letters signed by presidents and other famous statesmen. James Monroe was one of his favorites; about fifty of the stolen items were letters handwritten by the fifth president. There were letters by Presidents John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson, Millard Fillmore, John Tyler, James Buchanan, Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Johnson, U.S. Grant, Benjamin Harrison, Grover Cleveland, Herbert Hoover and others. Other statesmen and well-known Americans among his selections were Lewis Cass, John Eaton, Stephen Decatur, Sam Colt, P. T. Barnum, William T. Sherman and Hamilton Fish.

Dr. Jones: Did Murphy select these items for their market value?

Dr. Mason: Most of these items were valuable for their autographs alone, prices for which ranged from fifty dollars to several thousand dollars each; but in addition, some were valuable because of their contents. The stolen James Monroe letters, for example, concerned important matters of state, relations with foreign countries and the internal problems of the young nation. Each had great value—far in excess of that of the mere signature. The letters Murphy took from the Navy Department files were also of

great historic value. Several were written by Stephen Decatur and Edward Preble, famous naval heroes. One Decatur letter was written aboard the frigate *Chesapeake* in July 1807, just after the famous incident with H. M. S. *Leopard*, in which he described the location of the American ships in the harbor.

Dr. Jones: How long did the Murphys remain in the Washington area?

Dr. Mason: Murphy last visited the National Archives, according to their registration records, on September 12, 1962. In the weeks that followed, he traveled from Washington to Atlantic City, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New York City, apparently hoping to sell some of the stolen manuscripts. From New York, the Murphys returned to Washington and visited several book and manuscript dealers. On October 8, 1962 Murphy used the name Charles B. Williams, identified himself as an antique dealer from Frederick, Maryland, and approached Howard Wilcox, a second-hand book dealer. He offered Wilcox about 135 letters concerning Civil War espionage and explained that he had obtained them from a local estate. Murphy asked several hundred dollars for the set, but the crafty dealer paid only \$125. Murphy accepted the offer, but insisted on cash payment and left the store. The dealer immediately called in a business client who was a Civil War collector. The friend, Walter Pforzheimer, a trustee of the Yale University Library, was overjoyed at such a find and purchased the lot. After his return home that evening, Pforzheimer contacted Edwin Fishel,

who was writing a book on Civil War espionage. Fishel promptly examined the letters, turned to Pforzheimer, and said, "Walter, you have been duped. These letters were stolen from the National Archives. I used them there last month. Furthermore, I can prove it because I made a list of items in this collection and copied a number of the letters." Pforzheimer contacted the FBI immediately.

Dr. Jones: Judging from the valuable historical records the Murphys stole from the National Archives didn't the staff become suspicious? Also, when did the National archives finally become aware of the theft?

Dr. Mason: By October 1962, officials of the National Archives were already counting up their losses. Shortly after Murphy completed his research at the archives, staff members noticed that nine folders of letters were missing from the attorney general's files. Fortunately, a Stanford University law professor had microfilmed most of this file in July 1962. The archives obtained his film, checked it against the remaining files, and found forty-two items, mostly James Monroe papers, missing. Despite the magnitude of the theft, the National Archives neither publicized it nor notified other archivists and dealers. The Archives and the FBI believed that such disclosure might cause the thieves to destroy the precious documents. In fact, the loss was kept a secret to all but a few of the archives staff. The travels of the Murphys for the next ten or eleven months after their Washington ventures are not known, but among the books and historical

manuscripts recovered after their arrest were items identified as the property of institutions in Baltimore, Maryland, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Columbus, Ohio; Tampa, Florida; South Bend, Indiana; Louisville, Kentucky; New Orleans, Louisiana, and other cities.

Dr. Jones: As you have indicated earlier, the Murphys arrived in Detroit in November 1963, were arrested in January 1964 and faced trial in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan in Detroit in June 1964.

Dr. Mason: Judge James Thornton was the presiding judge and George Googshian was the prosecuting attorney. Robert Murphy defended himself and his wife despite the Judge's strong recommendations that they hire an attorney to represent them. Given the widespread publicity relating to the Murphys and the involvement of the Detroit Public Library, the trial attracted the attention of the local and national media, prominent dealers and collectors, and representatives of several federal agencies including the FBI, the U. S. Secret Service and the U. S. Post Office departments.

Dr. Jones: Give me more details of the trial. For example, who were the witnesses for the FBI and the Murphys?

Dr. Mason: Among the former were Mary Givins Bryan, Director of the Georgia State Department of Archives and History, Hazel Hopper of the Indiana State Library, James Babcock of the Burton Historical Collections of the Detroit Public Library and Robert Bahmer, the Deputy Archivist of the United

States, who incidentally, gave an articulate analysis of the National Archives procedures.

Dr. Jones: Were you also a witness for the prosecution?

Dr. Mason: Yes, for several hours Mr. Murphy questioned me about the difficulties of determining whether the recovered records were originals taken from the National Archives and other institutions or whether they were not merely back-up copies discarded by federal and local agencies.

Dr. Jones: What witnesses did Murphy present on his behalf?

Dr. Mason: Murphy based his case on the testimony of several dealers who were deeply involved in the sale of historical documents. In response to questions by Murphy these witnesses backed Murphy's claim that you could not prove that the historical documents recovered from Murphy were stolen from the National Archives and other depositories since none contained such identification. One prominent dealer testified that she would not hesitate to purchase a historic document if it contained no identifying markings. Judge Thornton was shocked at her response and asked the dealer: "Madame, if I gave you an expensive mink coat with no label on it, would you accept it?" After a brief interlude she replied, "No"! "Why wouldn't you accept it?" Because I don't know you that well, Judge." After this exchange you could recognize the reaction of the jury. Were there any "honest dealers," they must have wondered! This view was reinforced when one dealer insisted that Murphy return the

items that he had earlier borrowed from her. She announced promptly that she was afraid that “Murphy couldn’t be trusted.” Another witness also testified that he had been duped by Murphy. He admitted that he had purchased several historical documents from Murphy including letters that General Robert E. Lee had written to General Grant during the Civil War. During the trial, I was asked by Judge Thornton if I believed that the letters were authentic. It didn’t take me long to answer “No, these are obviously forgeries, Judge, they were written with a ball point pen.” Murphy had duped others with similar forgeries.

Dr. Jones: What was the decision of the jury?

Dr. Mason: Both Murphys were found guilty and each sentenced to ten years in prison. The Murphys’ children were placed in foster homes.

Dr. Jones: Did you have any contact with the Murphys after they were released from prison?

Dr. Mason: No, not directly, but I did learn from contacts in the FBI that several boxes of unclaimed records were returned to Murphy, even though we were able to determine the institutions from which a number of these were stolen.

Dr. Jones: I’m confused. Why were they not returned to their rightful owner?

Dr. Mason: Because the victims of the thefts had refused to admit that they had originally had possession of them. They were afraid that if their donors were aware of their poor security that their reputations would be

tarnished. I might add, though, that after the convictions of the Murphys, several of those archives and libraries contacted the FBI urging the prompt return of items stolen from their institutions.

Dr. Jones: The extent of the Murphys theft from all of these institutions is nothing short of “amazing”, you have explained how he and his wife carried out the thefts but how did they manage to sell the stolen books and historical documents?

Dr. mason: First, most of the items stolen had no ownership markings—probably because they only stole those items that could not be traced to an archival institution. He also acquired his own stamps which he affixed to the items. One, for example read: “Property of Eastern Historical Society” and then he added “Withdrawn.” The latter, was also stamped in scores of books they had stolen.

Dr. Jones: It is obvious from your account that Murphy used a number of aliases at the archives and libraries that he visited. Have you been able to determine some of the ones he used?

Dr. Mason: According to the FBI and the U. S. Post Office Department, the following names were used: Jerome W. Kane, Dr. J. Webster Kane, Wayne E. Martin, Bradley M. Armstrong, Robert Benson, Col. Andrew Barnett, Louise Murphy, John Adams, Robert Williams, Ashbrook Adams, Dr. Michael Anderson, William Van Kirk, John Walker, Ashland Adams, and Frank Murphy.

Dr. Jones: You had mentioned earlier that Murphy had also forged a number of historical documents. How did he accomplish this feat?

Dr. Mason: Among the boxes of recovered books and historical records, I found a box containing pens, inks and other chemicals for use in making various types of inks. I also recovered a dozen large end pages taken from bound volumes of the *Niles Register*, a newspaper published in Baltimore in the late eighteen and nineteenth centuries. He had obviously cut out the blank end pages for use in producing forgeries.

Dr. Jones: Did you find any samples of his endeavors as a forger?

Dr. Mason: Yes, there was one forgery for example, of a document supposedly signed by General Anthony Wayne, dated in 1796 when he had his headquarters in Detroit. I also found several forgeries of a letter written by General Robert E. Lee during the Civil War, accompanied by the original Lee letter which Murphy had stolen from the National Archives. This practice of making forgeries proved to be so profitable that Murphy hastened the process by using a ball-point pen rather than pen and ink. It is obvious that this ploy worked although on one occasion an irate customer recognized the forgery and demanded that the two-hundred dollars he paid for it be returned.

Dr. Jones: You must have been pleased with the outcome of the trial. What impact did it have on you, especially since you were so involved in the preparation of the prosecution and the trial itself?

Dr. Mason: It opened my eyes to a number of serious problems facing the archival profession. The extent of the Murphys' theft from archives and libraries demonstrated how lax such institutions often were in recognizing and combating this problem. The losses suffered by the U. S. National Archives, one of the most professionally administered archival programs in North America, was a "case in point." The skillful techniques employed by the Murphys reflected the serious problem facing archival institutions especially those with small and untrained staff. The Murphy case demonstrated the unethical practice of many dealers. I might add also that following this observation which I made at a public meeting, I was threatened with legal action by several dealers.

Dr. Jones: Are there any other comments you might have on the Murphy case and trial?

Dr. Mason: Following the axiom that "No good deed goes unpunished" when Murphy completed his ten year prison sentence, he was allowed to recover all of the unclaimed books and historical records. With them he opened a used book store in Pontiac, Michigan. I might also mention another incident following the trial when I received a very complimentary letter from J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the FBI, thanking me for my role in the apprehension of the Murphys and in the trial. A copy of the letter was sent to the President of the University.

Dr. Jones: This must have made you honored to receive his approbation?

Dr. Mason: Yes, it did for at least a few weeks until two FBI agents came to my home in Pleasant Ridge, Michigan and demanded the return of the Hoover letter. It seems that the Detroit Bureau of the FBI had been negligent in checking my records in their "Red" files relating to Communistic activities in the U. S. These "Red files" revealed numerous contacts that I had with Communist leaders as a part of my job in the Labor Archives.

Dr. Jones: Did you return the letter?

Dr. Mason: No, I had sent it to my father in Beverly, Massachusetts. He was a fan of J. Edgar Hoover and was delighted to have the letter.

Dr. Jones: What was the outcome of this fiasco?

Dr. Mason: Harry Croon, the FBI agent with whom I worked with on the Murphy case, was transferred to the FBI office in Montana, a site for FBI "outcasts." Mr. Croon resigned immediately and accepted a position as security director for Osco Supermarket chain in Chicago.

Dr. Jones: You spent a lot of time on the Murphy case – some four or five months, at least. Did you find that these efforts were worthwhile? Were you compensated by the FBI? After all, it was your friendships with several of the archivists who provided critical evidence for the prosecution.

Dr. Mason: Let me repeat, I received no compensation from the FBI, even though FBI officials offered me generous compensation for my assistance in the trial. And yes, the experience was extremely important to me, not only as Director of the Reuther Library, but also as Executive Secretary of the

Society of American Archivists. Several of the contacts I made during the trial developed into long-term professional friendships. More specifically, the Murphy case made me much more aware of the need for tighter security procedures for the Reuther Library at Wayne State University. As I recall I was able to incorporate a number of procedures for the newly constructed Reuther Library. Also, the skill of archival thieves helped me discount the common description of such individuals as “little old ladies in tennis shoes!” The indispensable role of dealers in making archival and library theft profitable was another lesson learned.

Dr. Jones: I am aware that you shared your experience in the Murphy case in several presentations at archival and historical agency meetings as well as in several publications. What was the response to these?

Dr. Mason: Even before the end of the trial, I was invited by a number of archival and library institutions to revisit their security policies. After the trial and the publicity it engendered, I received many more, including the William Clements Library, Yale, Vermont State Archives, New Hampshire Historical Society, Massachusetts State Archives, New York State Library, Ontario Public Archives, University of Illinois—Chicago Circle, University of Minnesota, State of Michigan Archives, University of North Dakota, Wyoming State Historical Society, University of Nebraska, University of Iowa, University of California-Irvine, University of Kentucky, Yivo Archives, American Jewish Archives, New York University at Albany, University of

Wyoming, Georgia State University and the University of Texas at Arlington.

Dr. Jones: Will you select several of these to give us a better perspective of the type of security issues involved?

Dr. Mason: In general, I discovered that many archival institutions had few provisions for the security of their research materials, assuming perhaps, that all researchers were honest, especially those with academic credentials. At the Library of Congress, for example, the fallacy of this approach was demonstrated when a distinguished Harvard historian who was working on a research project involving the Thomas Jefferson papers, returned to the Library with a number of Jefferson documents which he had "borrowed" several weeks earlier. The staff was shocked, not only because of the stature of the researcher, but because he had marked sections of each document with his pen with instructions for his typist! The University of Michigan's Bentley Library faced a major challenge when they discovered that an important segment of the Collection of Henry Crapo, Michigan's Civil War Governor was missing. The campus police contacted several researchers who had used the Crapo files but could discover no leaks to the theft. Several months later, however, the matter was resolved when a box containing the missing Crapo files were found at the entry to the Bentley Library. It was later confirmed that the records

had been taken by the wife of a prominent wealthy University benefactor. No action was taken by the Library.

The theft at the Huntington Library in Palo Alto, California was similar, but the outcome was different. There, a janitor had stolen a large group— (actually two boxes full) of valuable historical manuscripts and sold them to a dealer. It was only later when his automobile was involved in an accident that the California State Police discovered another cache of valuable Huntington records.

Dr. Jones: Was the Library aware of the theft? Did they suspect the janitor, a long-time employee?

Dr. Mason: The Library was aware of some of the missing items but they did not suspect the perpetrator.

Dr. Jones: What action was taken?

Dr. Mason: Huntington officials tried to put a lid on the theft but the California police refused and publicized the apprehension of the thief.

Dr. Jones: How did you become involved in this case?

Dr. Mason: Shortly after the conclusion of the Murphy trial and the publicity relating to it, I was invited by Huntington officials to come to Palo Alto and carefully review the security procedures at their library.

Dr. Jones: I assume that you accepted this invitation?

Dr. Mason: Yes, I did without hesitation. I had always wanted to visit the Huntington Library with its beautiful gardens along with its magnificent library. In fact, I even persuaded my wife to accompany me.

Dr. Jones: What were your findings?

Dr. Mason: I was shocked at what I discovered at the library. They had few security procedures, in fact, on one day when I was touring the gardens and other facilities, I visited the library to talk to one of the curators. To my surprise, there was no one on duty since the staff was on their lunch break. The doors were open, the reading room empty, and on the research tables were scores of priceless historical manuscripts being consulted by researchers. I might add that there were scores of visitors touring the gardens adjacent to the Library: “another theft waiting to happen”!

Within a few months after the Huntington Library episode, I was invited to Sacramento, California to examine security procedures at the California State Archives. The archivist there was a former archival graduate student at Wayne State University who informed me that based on one of my lectures that she recognized the importance of sound, archival security procedures. She must have overlooked at least some of my remarks because I soon discovered that she had failed to examine the storage area of her archives. It did not take me long after a tour of the facilities that I discovered two broken windows easily accessed by a large

tree adjacent to the archives building and inside I found the remains of bonfires and empty archives storage boxes.

Dr. Jones: Were you called upon by any of your colleagues in Canada?

Dr. Mason: Yes, I was on several occasions at the personal invitation of the Director of the Ontario Provincial Archives in Toronto. I learned that they were the victim of the theft of a number of important historical items which had appeared recently in the catalog of two well-known dealers. It didn't take long to discover how the theft occurred since the layout of the research room left three tables out of sight of the archivist in charge of the reading room. Visits to the dealers and by crosschecking the names of recent researchers and patrons of the dealers, I identified the thief. I might add that this challenge was not difficult but it did spread my "brilliant sleuthing" to other Canadian archival institutions who soon sought my advice and counsel.

Dr. Jones: Based on your own experience, was the theft from archives and research libraries widespread?

Dr. Mason: Yes, in fact, I was amazed to discover not only the number of thefts from such institutions that had taken place, but how little was known about them. The concern that such disclosures would discourage future gifts was often cited as the explanation for the silence of individual archivists.

Dr. Jones: Give me some examples of such thefts.

Dr. Mason: The theft of the Felix Frankfurter diaries and papers from the Library of Congress reflecting his important role on the U. S. Supreme Court capped a series of other thefts from that institution and led to a complete revamping of its security regulations. I personally encountered these new security procedures when I conducted extensive research there in the 1980s.

Dr. Jones: You have described an alarming situation facing archives and research libraries. How can you explain this trend? What has been the motives of the thieves?

Dr. Mason: Based on my experiences, I can identify a number of issues involving the theft of archival materials. First, there are individuals who steal such records merely for the challenge of “beating the system” and demonstrating that they were smarter than the custodians of those materials. Second, I discovered that some thieves were motivated to steal in order to purge the written record. For example, several files of the Indian Bureau of the National Archives have been stolen, and others altered, in order to prove or disapprove the legal rights of Indians to receive tribal payments.

In the 1960s at Wayne State University, I apprehended a researcher attempting to steal fifteen items relating to the activities of a member of the Communist Party. The justification of this theft was to protect the individual from surveillance by the FBI. A year later we observed a

researcher cutting a section of a document which alleged that Walter Reuther had been a member of the Communist Party in the early 1930s. In this case the perpetrator justified her action with the explanation that she didn't want Reuther to get any credit for the accomplishments of the Communist Party. Third, stealing for the resale value has been a major incentive of thieves. The theft of irreplaceable manuscripts, maps and rare books from the Sterling Library at Yale University is a classic example of this. Between 1970 and 1972, two men who posed as Byzantine priests stole hundreds of historical manuscripts, books and maps from Yale and other University libraries. They sold these rare items to book dealers in Chicago and New York and were apprehended only when one of the dealers offered the Yale librarian one of the items stolen from his institution. According to *The New York Times* the thieves planned to use the proceeds of the sales in order "to establish some kind of a parish in Hoboken, New Jersey." Also recovered from the pair, were rare books stolen from libraries at the University of Chicago, Fordham, Harvard, Notre Dame, Dartmouth and Indiana University.

Dr. Jones: You have cited a number of thefts from the 1960s and 1970s. Did the publicity given to them result in heightened security measures at archival institutions?

Dr. Mason: Perhaps to some degree by institutions which had become victimized but, for the most part, the thefts have continued. Finally, perhaps the

most serious concern of the archival and library professions involve staff members. Dozens of such thefts have been reported, but I believe, this is only “the tip of the iceberg”.

Dr. Jones: How is this possible? I would think that such institutions would be more careful in monitoring their staff.

Dr. Mason: There are several explanations for this oversight. Let me give you several. First, it is almost impossible to monitor all collections in an archives. Staff members usually have access to collections housed in restricted storage areas and can go there without being observed and then select items for their own personal collections or for sale to dealers. It is almost impossible to monitor such thefts even for those institutions which control access to storage areas. Some institutions require staff members to specify if they are private collectors, especially if they are in competition with the archival institution which employs them. I have cited earlier the situation at the Burton Historical Collections of the Detroit Public Library in which its director was buying historical manuscripts for resale or for his personal collection rather than for his institution. We also had a situation at the Wayne State University archives in which a part-time student was removing rare duplicate IWW posters to cover the wall of his apartment. We only discovered this theft when a young history department instructor approached me to determine if he could get similar posters for his apartment.

Finally, on the subject of “inside thefts” I should mention a startling situation which erupted in the late 1970s at the National Archives. Shortly after a senior and highly respected archivist there died, the cleaning of his office revealed a large storage box containing a host of valuable historical manuscripts that had been taken from various sections of the archives. Included were letters and documents written by Abraham Lincoln, Generals Grant and Lee and other notable Americans. Why the archivist had taken them and why they had been kept from researchers was never ascertained, but it was deeply embarrassing to officials of the National Archives and perhaps for that reason it was never publicized.

Dr. Jones: You have given me an amazing account of the “dark” side of the archival profession and that, despite constant attempts to curtail the theft and forgeries from such institutions, the problem still exists. How do you explain this situation? Do archivists not care about the precious records or their custody? Are the practices of thieves so insurmountable that archivists cannot successfully combat them?

Dr. Mason: I have given these questions a lot of attention during my career as an archivist. There is perhaps some justification to your conclusions about archival programs in the United States and Canada but the issues of theft and forgeries must be put in perspective.

Dr. Jones: Please tell me more about forgers and how they operate. Do they represent a major challenge to the archival profession?

Dr. Mason: Forgers of rare and valuable historical records will continue to be active and often successful in their endeavors. Mark Hoffman, who forged a score of Mormon documents, proved that he could fool many knowledgeable “so called experts” and make a fortune in doing so. Robert Bradford Murphy had some success with his forgeries but he got too greedy and was exposed, as I have mentioned earlier, by using a ball point pen to produce 19th century documents, and now, as we move into the digital age, forgeries will be more widespread as detection becomes more difficult. As for the theft of archival records, I think you can oversimplify the situation. The size of archival collections since the mid nineteenth century has increased dramatically. I have personally witnessed this situation during my career as an archivist. When I worked as a manuscript curator at the University of Michigan Historical Collections, we seldom received or processed large or extensive collections of historical records. We cataloged collections item by item. By the end of the century at Wayne State, it was not uncommon to receive collections totaling several hundred thousand items. Whereas theft of archival materials were common in the 1950s. Just consider the challenges that archivists faced by the end of the 19th century and the difficulty of determining what items might have been stolen. I suspect also that the theft of archival materials will continue as long as such items can be easily sold to dealers and private collectors.

Even those archival institutions which have up-to-date security policies are likely to be victims of theft. Furthermore, since many archives are short-staffed and may have a large number of researchers to monitor, the high incident of theft will unfortunately, continue. My final concern is the prevalent attitude of some archivists regarding the materials in their custody. There is a widespread view held by many archivists that researchers can be trusted to properly protect and care for the items they are using. I have been told by several archivists that their main priority should be to concentrate on digitizing their collections rather than devoting resources for security. In fact, several archivists have told me that there is really no need to preserve original records if they have been digitized.

Dr. Jones: I agree with these observations after having read about similar examples in the readings I have assigned for the introductory course in archival management I've been teaching. I want to thank you again for sharing your experiences on the topics of "Theft and Forgeries."

Chapter 10 Research and Publications

Dr. Jones: Let's turn our attention today to your research interests and your publications. Rather than a listing of them, please discuss them in detail and explain how you became interested in these publications and how you used your archival experiences in conducting your research?

Dr. Mason: My first major publication was my doctoral thesis, "The League of American Wheelmen and the Good Roads Movement." This was published by the University Microfilm Company in Ann Arbor, as were all doctoral dissertations. In 1955 I presented a paper relating to my dissertation on "Horatio S. Earle and the Good Roads Movement in Michigan" at the annual meeting of the Michigan Academy of Arts and Letters. It was published by the Academy in 1956.

As I have mentioned in another chapter, my first assignment at the Michigan Historical Collections in 1951 was to review and evaluate the hundreds of collections of diaries and travel narratives in the Historical Collections. This experience made me aware of the great historical value of such documents and especially of travel narratives. At the urging of Dr. Clever Bald, my mentor, I selected several of these accounts, carefully edited them and prepared appropriate introductions. Several were published in *Michigan History* and other historical journals.

Dr. Jones: Did you continue your interest in travel diaries and travel narratives?

Dr. Mason: Let me mention two related editing projects which led to publication. In 1954, while serving as State Archivist, I had meetings with various State Department officers regarding the public records generated by their agencies. On one of these occasions, Dr. Helen Martin, the State Geologist of Michigan, showed me a diary of Douglass Houghton devoted to his expeditions in 1832 and 1834 to Lake Itasca, the true source of the Mississippi River in northern Minnesota. She declined to transfer the Houghton Journal to the State Archives, but she did allow me to copy it verbatim.

Dr. Jones: Who exactly was Douglass Houghton and why was his journal of interest to you?

Dr. Mason: Douglass Houghton was one of Michigan's prominent leaders in its early statehood years. Trained as a geologist and physician he came to Detroit in 1830 to deliver a series of public lectures. During his visit he met Henry R. Schoolcraft, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Upper Great Lakes, who invited him to join an expedition to discover the source of the Mississippi River. In 1837 Houghton was appointed Michigan's first State Geologist, and during his eight-year tenure, he examined the state's mineral resources including the copper deposits on the Keweenaw Peninsula in the western Upper Peninsula. His reports led to the great copper boom in the 1840's.

Dr. Jones: Was the city of Houghton named after him?

Dr. Mason: Yes, as was Houghton Lake, Houghton County and other sites. He had a special place in the history of Michigan, especially after his tragic death in a drowning accident in October 1845 near Eagle River on Lake Superior.

Dr. Jones: After you copied and reviewed Houghton's journal, what did you do with it?

Dr. Mason: After reading it carefully, I recognized that it was an important historical document, not only because of his careful account of the Schoolcraft expedition from Sault Ste. Marie to Lake Itasca in northern Minnesota but because of the valuable historical information it contained. For example, Houghton not only described the trip in detail but also reported on the medical practices of the various Indian tribes at the village sites visited, his vaccination of the hundreds of Indians, and the lists of the plants he collected on the expedition.

Dr. Jones: Did you decide to publish the Houghton Journal?

Dr. Mason: After a careful review of the Houghton journal and Henry Schoolcraft's *Narrative Journal of Travels in the Year 1820* and his volume devoted to the 1832 Expedition, I decided that a more comprehensive edited volume of the 1832 expedition was needed. I then met with Lyle Blair, the Director of the Michigan State University Press, to discuss the project. He heartily approved of the more comprehensive publication of the 1832 Schoolcraft Expedition to include all relevant information including accounts of the other members of the expedition.

Dr. Jones: Didn't the MSU Press already have an interest in Henry Schoolcraft and his role as Indian agent and explorer?

Dr. Mason: Yes, they had already published two volumes, edited by Mentor Williams, relating to the Lewis Cass 1820 Expedition and Schoolcraft's collection of Indian legends.

Dr. Jones: In addition to the accounts of the 1832 expedition of Houghton and Schoolcraft, what else did you include in the publication?

Dr. Mason: After compiling a list of the men who accompanied Schoolcraft, I conducted a search to determine if they had left any information about the expedition. The Reverend William T. Boutwell, a Presbyterian missionary, had been invited by Schoolcraft to join the group in order to meet the principal Indian chiefs of the region and to determine the feasibility of establishing church schools and missions among them. I located his journal at the Minnesota Historical Society. Another was Lieutenant James Allen of the Fifth U.S. Infantry who was assigned to direct a ten-man military escort on the expedition and to keep a daily journal and prepare detailed maps of the trip; both of which were transmitted to the U.S. War Department. For the position of Indian interpreter and “baggage master”, Schoolcraft chose his brother-in-law, George Johnston, of Sault Ste. Marie, who could speak numerous Indian dialects fluently and had an intimate knowledge of the area to be visited.

Dr. Jones: Did you include the accounts of Lt. Allen and Reverend Boutwell in the book?

Dr. Mason: Yes, along with the reports and letters they wrote about the expedition and the numerous contemporary newspaper accounts, which described the trip. I also included detailed information about the twenty boatmen who were hired for the trip, the provisions, the canoes and Mackinac boats and presents for the Indians. The naming of Lake Itasca was also included in the book’s introduction.

Dr. Jones: Why did you include in the Itasca book the journals of four of the members of the expedition? Didn’t they give similar accounts of the trip?

Dr. Mason: Yes, there was obvious duplication in the journal entries but each one had a specific objective. Reverend Boutwell, for example, was interested in converting the Indians to Christianity. His entries also revealed his naïveté. He could not understand why the Indians to whom he preached would not listen patiently to his two hour sermons, even though they were in English which they did not understand.

The primary objective of Douglass Houghton was to vaccinate the Indians against smallpox. He also conducted a census of each band, description of each village visited and the medical practices and treatment they used. He also described the geology of each part of the trip and the distances between different sites.

Lt. Allen also kept details of the trip but his main objective was of a military nature. Following instructions from the War Department, Lt. Allen was directed to determine the loyalty of the Indian tribes in the event of another war with Canada. The influence of agents of the Hudson's Bay Company was also high on his agenda. A detailed map of the area visited was also given high priority.

Henry Schoolcraft also shared his companions' interest in the Indians, their customs, legends, the potential for new Indian missions and the geology of the Lake Superior region. But his main objective, approved by Lewis Cass, the Secretary of War, was to discover the source of the Mississippi River.

Although the daily journals of the four leaders varied according to their experiences and personal interests, taken together they gave an exhaustive and extremely

valuable picture of the life of the Indian tribes of the Lake Superior region in the early nineteenth century.

Dr. Jones: How long did it take you to locate and complete this extensive data about the 1832 expedition?

Dr. Mason: It took more than two years. This involved locating and editing the four journals, the relevant correspondence and newspaper articles relating to the expedition, and identifying the current names of the sites mentioned in the journals. I also did extensive research in records in the National Archives and the Library of Congress and the many research libraries that contained records relating to the trip and members of the expedition.

Dr. Jones: Did you encounter any specific research problems?

Dr. Mason: The naming of Lake Itasca proved to be a real enigma. For years it had been known to fur traders as Lac la Biche or Elk Lake, because of its likeness to the shape of the head of that animal. To the Indians it was "Omuskkos" – the Chippewa name for elks. Schoolcraft, not satisfied with these names, called it Itasca. He never explained the origin of the name in his *Narrative* of the 1832 expedition, nor did the other journalists. My research revealed that during the early part of the trip, Schoolcraft asked Reverend Boutwell the Latin name for "true source." Boutwell replied "veritas caput." Schoolcraft took the last two syllables of "veritas" and the first syllable of "caput" to form "Itasca". Although Schoolcraft never gave credit to the missionary for his contribution, he did admit publicly to a reporter for the

August 22, 1832 issue of the *Galenian* of Galena, Illinois that the name had been formed from these Latin words.

Mary Eastman, the author and wife of Schoolcraft's friend, Seth Eastman, challenged this account. In 1853 in her *American Aboriginal Portfolio* she reported that Schoolcraft had told her that Itasca was the name of an Indian maiden who was borne to the underworld by an evil spirit. Her tears for her lost lover formed the eternal spring welled up to form Lake Itasca and the Mississippi River. Schoolcraft later claimed that the name was from an Indian legend. Perhaps, he came to believe that the Indian myth was more poetic.

Dr. Jones: What was the response to the book?

Dr. Mason: The reviews in scholarly journals were very positive and complimentary. Since its publication in 1958 it has been cited and used by many historians and researchers. For example, and to my surprise, the accounts by Douglass Houghton of Indian medical practices have been cited often by students of medical history.

Dr. Jones: What was the response to the book by your colleagues at Wayne?

Dr. Mason: Dr. Alfred Kelly, the Chair of the History Department, complimented me for the book, as did other departmental members. Dr. Purdy, however, responded differently. After I had given him a complementary copy, he commented to Robert Grazier, the Assistant Director of the Library, "Doesn't Mason have enough to do in the Archives?" I should add that Dr. Purdy's remarks were not personal. He expressed the same views about Dr. Bruno Nettle, a Library staff member who published several books on folklore and music.

Dr. Jones: Did you continue your interest in Henry Schoolcraft?

Dr. Mason: Yes, the Michigan State University Press appointed me general editor of a series of Schoolcraft publications. I edited and prepared two: *The Literary Voyager*, which later appeared as *Schoolcraft's Ojibwa Lodge Stories* and *Schoolcraft's Notes on the Iroquois*. I planned to edit *Schoolcraft's Personal Memoirs of Thirty Years with the Indian Tribes on the American Frontier*, but I postponed this because of the travel expenses and time needed for research.

Dr. Jones: Among your scholarly work I noticed that you were editor of the book *After Tippecone: Some Aspects of the War of 1812*, published by Michigan State University Press in 1963.

Dr. Mason: Yes. This publication consisted of six articles presented by three Canadian and three American historians relating to their scholarly work on the War of 1812. Dr. W. Kaye Lamb, Director of the Dominion Archives and National Library of Canada, Colonel C. P. Stacy of the University of Toronto; and Dr. G. F. C. Stanley, Royal Military College gave presentations relating to Canada's role in the War of 1812. They were joined by Dr. Reginald Horsman, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Dr. Thomas D. Clark, University of Kentucky and Dr. William T. Utter, Denson University.

Dr. Jones: When I visited you last fall at your home in Eagle Harbor, I learned about the famous Cliff Copper Mine near Eagle River and your research and publication relating to a young schoolteacher who taught at Clifton during the Civil War. Please tell me about this research project.

Dr. Mason: As I mentioned earlier, I had a special interest in travel narratives and diaries. In 1970, while doing research at the Burton Historical Collections at the Detroit Public Library, I discovered an oversize four-hundred-page diary kept by Henry Hobart, a young, twenty-two-year-old University of Vermont graduate who had accepted a two-year contract (1863-1865) to teach at the Cliff Mine, on the Keweenaw Peninsula in Michigan. He had kept a detailed diary in which he described the routine life in the mining town of Clifton, the social and cultural issues facing the struggling inhabitants, the achievements of his students as well as his own professional and personal successes and disappointments during his two years on the Keweenaw. His diary entries also described the working conditions in the mine, the influence of alcohol, the struggles and conflicts between the diverse groups of Cornish, Irish, German and Canadian workers, religious life in Clifton and the crude living conditions he endured.

The Hobart diary was unique in its account of life in a frontier mining community, but it also mirrored the difficulties of a young teacher facing an average of 85 young students of ages 6 to 18 in a one-room schoolhouse. It was obvious to me after doing extensive research on the copper mining boom in the Upper Peninsula and the lack of detailed accounts of life in an isolated frontier mining community that publishing the Hobart diary would make a valuable contribution to the history of life in a mining village.

The next issue to be faced was what type of a publication did I envision? I recognized that the simplest approach would be to prepare a brief introduction,

add a few minor annotations and perhaps include a few photographs – if I could locate any. I finally decided that the Hobart diary deserved a more extensive coverage.

Dr. Jones: What did this second approach involve?

Dr. Mason: First, I decided to prepare a detailed introduction placing the Hobart diary in a broader prospective. This involved a brief history of copper mining in the Upper Peninsula, the discovery and operation of the Cliff Mine, and the life and times of the residents of Clifton. A thorough biography of Henry Hobart was also needed including information about his early life in Vermont, his family, education and his views on religion, education, the temperance movement, and immigrants. This proved to be a much more formidable research task than I anticipated. Fortunately, several Vermont libraries and research centers provided this needed data. Tracing his life after his Clifton teaching experience was also a challenge, but after discovering his move to Wisconsin, I found a wealth of information on his teaching career in that state.

In Hobart's diary, he cited about two hundred persons – miners, students, mine officials and others associated with nearby mines, residents of Eagle River and other mining villages. The progress of the Civil War also attracted his attention after receiving newspaper accounts of key battles and Union leaders. Time consuming as it proved to be, I was able to locate biographical information on all names cited in the diary.

Another challenge, was finding a photograph of Henry Hobart. After some research, I located a Violet Hobart of Underhill, Vermont, who was a descendant of Henry's. She showed me all of the Hobart family records stored in her attic. Among the cache of family heirlooms were ambrotypes, tintypes and photographs of the Hobart family including one of Henry taken in the 1860s, possibly while he was teaching at Clifton. She graciously allowed me to make a copy for the book.

Dr. Jones: What plans did you have for publishing the Hobart diary?

Dr. Mason: The Wayne State University Press was eager to publish the book and also the State Bureau of History, so it became a joint publication.

Dr. Jones: As you look back on the research for the Hobart diary, what impact did it have on you? I am aware that it took you several years to complete the research.

Dr. Mason: The publication of the Hobart diary was one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences that I ever encountered. It greatly expanded my knowledge of the important history of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and it confirmed the value of archival sources.

Dr. Jones: In our earlier discussions, you mentioned a unique experience you had with a retired mine inspector. Tell me about it again.

Dr. Mason: In the course of my research, I visited a retired Keweenaw mine inspector, William Forman of Calumet, Michigan. He provided very useful information on the Cliff Mine and volunteered to take me to the Cliff and talk about his role in closing all of its shafts. During our trip to the mine, Mr. Forman told me about his own experiences growing up in Calumet. He talked about several of his Cornish friends

who had roots in the copper country and described their love of preaching and especially of music – singing and performing in bands. As we reached the top of the bluff, he showed me the site of the famous #4 Avery shaft and then recalled an experience he had ten years before he retired as mine inspector. Following his assignment to check each mineshaft and make sure they were properly secured, he told me about the day he examined this particular shaft. After removing the concrete cover, he said he used his torch (flashlight) to look down into the shaft and was astounded to hear singing coming from below. Twenty minutes later, after he recovered from his shock, he said that he repeated the examination of the shaft and again he heard singing. I asked him if it could have been the wind? “No,” he replied, “the lyrics were different.”

Dr. Jones: What was your reaction? Have you heard of similar experiences?

Dr. Mason: No, I haven't, and cannot offer an explanation. I had read about the beautiful singing voices of the young miners, and reports that they often sang while climbing the ladders to the top of the shaft. Many older miners reported they frequently remained at the shaft openings to listen to the singing. I must confess that Mr. Forman's account had quite an impact upon me. I had read references to “ghosts” in the mines but I had never heard such a touching account as Mr. Forman shared with me.

Dr. Jones: Did you include this story in the *Copper Country Journal*?

Dr. Mason: No. Mr. Forman asked me not to include it as long as he was alive. He said he was concerned that his colleagues and family might think he was suffering from dementia.

Dr. Jones: In addition to the Schoolcraft and Hobart volumes, which you edited, what other research and writing projects did you undertake? You mentioned earlier the article you did on "Horatio S. Earle and the Good Roads Movement." Did you publish your doctoral dissertation?

Dr. Mason: No. I submitted it to several presses and received positive responses. In each case they wanted the manuscript expanded to include the period from 1905 to 1920 and to include the National Highway Act of 1919. I did however, publish two books relating to my thesis. One was *A History of American Roads* published by Rand McNally in 1961 and *Historical Development of Highways* in 1977. In addition, I wrote three articles for the *HyLighter*: "Indian Trails," "The Plank Road Craze: A Chapter in the History of Michigan Highways," and the "Founding of the Michigan Highway Department."

Dr. Jones: I notice from your bibliography that you devoted special attention to research related to Michigan and the old Northwest. What were some of these publications?

Dr. Mason: In the early 1960s, Henry Brown, the Director of the Detroit Historical Society and also a very dear friend and colleague, asked me to prepare a history of Fort Lernoult, the British fort that was built in 1778 to protect the British settlement from attack by American forces. The Detroit Bank and Trust Company, which

occupied the site of the Fort, wanted a publication on Fort Lernoult. I prepared a brief history of the Fort and the military role in the American Revolution. The Wayne State University Press published it in 1964. In addition, the bank was so enthused about the account of the Fort that it also published about 25,000 copies of a "Fort Lernoult Coloring Book." I did not learn in advance about this publication, even though it listed me as the author. It was very well received when it was distributed to Detroit area schools. In fact, I received dozens of invitations to visit schools to autograph copies for young school children.

Dr. Jones: In reviewing your publications, I also learned that you had co-authored a book about Harper Hospital. How did you get interested in this project?

Dr. Mason: In developing the archives of the Wayne State University Medical School, I had spent a great deal of time locating the early records of its founding in 1868. The Medical School was located on land adjacent to Harper Hospital and for about fifteen years it was affiliated with the hospital. In my search for early medical school records, many of which were found in the basement vaults of the hospital, I became interested in that institution. In 1961, Dr. Harold Basilius, the Director of the Wayne State University Press, asked me to write a history of Harper Hospital, to be published by the Press. I recognized the scope of such a project, so in order to promptly produce a completed manuscript I sought advice from my friend, Frank Woodford, a distinguished Detroit historian who had published several books on Detroit and its early leaders. I asked Mr. Woodford, who had

recently left his job as Editorial Director of the *Detroit Free Press*, to co-author the proposed book with me, and I was delighted that he agreed.

Dr. Jones: How did you go about this joint endeavor?

Dr. Mason: Dr. Basilius and I agreed that we would put Frank in charge since he could work full time on the project. I concentrated on the first fifty years and Frank the period since 1915. I also had responsibility for locating relevant archival sources.

Dr. Jones: Did this arrangement work out effectively?

Dr. Mason: For the most part, yes. But there were some delicate moments. Frank, for example, as a news reporter had always worked on deadlines. This was often a difficult approach for me since I had a full-time job at the University. But in the end we were able to finish the project on time.

Dr. Jones: Did Harper Hospital retain all of its records relating to the founding and its early years?

Dr. Mason: Not really. They had retained some of the early Board of Directors minutes, including the names of staff and affiliated medical personnel but very little relevant material on its early years as a Civil War Hospital. Fortunately, I was able to locate some important records at the National Archives. For example, I found many documents in the War Department files that explained why the Detroit site was selected as a military hospital. At the Historical Collections at the University of Michigan, I found the diary of a Civil War soldier who spent several years as a patient at Harper Hospital. His descriptions of life at the hospital as a recovering injured Union soldier was invaluable in revealing of the daily routines as well as

his medical treatment. By tracking down the descendants of the Hospital trustees and the medical staff, I also located extremely important records.

Dr. Jones: The Hospital was named for a Detroit citizen named Harper. Who was he?

Dr. Mason: Walter Harper was a retired Philadelphia businessman who after settling in Detroit had purchased a large parcel of land near Detroit. Nancy Martin, whose relationship with Harper was open to speculation, accompanied him to Detroit. At any rate, Harper gave his land to the Trustees of the First Presbyterian Church, which had established Harper Hospital. Nancy Martin, in turn, left a bequest for the support of the Hospital.

Dr. Jones: Do we know much about these two benefactors?

Dr. Mason: Very little is known of Walter Harper who was somewhat of a recluse. But Nancy Martin was better known in Detroit, even though there were conflicting accounts of her life and character. According to Harper Hospital officials, she was a highly regarded businesswoman who had a stall at Detroit's Eastern Market where she sold gourmet foods to wealthy Detroit families. Another source often cited in local newspapers related to her portrait, which hung in the Hospital's main lobby. This account cited a hospital employee who had observed a "halo" around her head on her portrait. This prompted the Hospital officials to speculate that the halo reflected her saintly character. This version of Nancy Martin was often used by the Harper Hospital Public Relations Department and in the Detroit newspapers.

Dr. Jones: Did you have any reason to question this story about the halo and the saintly character of Nancy Martin?

Dr. Mason: At first I had no reason at first to doubt the account of the halo, because several hospital staff members had also noticed its sudden appearance, but after further research in the Hospital records, I discovered the answer. One of the Hospital's maintenance employees had reported to his supervisor that after he had started to clean the portrait with a mild detergent, he noticed that his action had marred the portrait so he immediately stopped cleaning – leaving the halo above the head of Nancy Martin. Hospital officials overlooked this account, perhaps intentionally, to promote the saintly character of one of the institution's founders and benefactors.

As I continued my research, I found in a Detroit newspaper that a "Nancy Martin" had attacked a local grocer claiming that the bottle of "Red Eye" whiskey he had sold her was of inferior quality. The police reported that Nancy Martin was sentenced to "another" fifty days in jail for her attack. Further research revealed that she was not the gentle and refined operator of an Eastern Market stall. She, indeed, had a small market stall but she was better known for the off-color and vulgar stories she shared with patrons – especially the local medical school students who frequented her market.

Dr. Jones: How did you portray this revised image of the Hospital's co-founder?

Dr, Mason: We told the story of Nancy Martin, "warts-and-all".

Dr. Jones: What was the reaction of Hospital officials when they read your revised and colorful account?

Dr. Mason: At first they were not pleased and wanted it deleted from the book. The President of the Hospital, George Cartmill, believed that our account of Nancy Martin would jeopardize their upcoming fundraising campaign and might alienate several major donors.

Dr. Jones: What was your response to Dr. Cartmill?

Dr. Mason: Mr. Woodford and I decided that we would not change the description of Nancy Martin. We believed that an accurate account of her racy and erotic character would make her more human. Dr. Basilius, the Director of the Wayne State University Press, agreed with us and, finally, so did Mr. Cartmill. In fact, a year after its publication, Mr. Cartmill told me that our account of Nancy Martin only enhanced the popularity of the book.

Dr. Jones: You had given me some time ago a publication relating to the Civil War. How did that come about? Did you have a special interest in that event?

Dr. Mason: Yes, but not so much in the military history of the War, nor in the politics of the period. My interest stemmed from Civil War photography and the role of Civil War artists. When I worked at the State Archives, I was assigned to do a series of films relating to Michigan including "Michigan and the Lumbering Era," "Iron Mining in Michigan," and "Michigan and the Civil War." For each project I searched archives and research libraries looking for unique photographs and illustrations. For the Civil War project, I was able to visit the National Archives, the Library of Congress and several depositories in Michigan.

In the 1950s I was invited by the Directors of the University of Michigan Art Museum to prepare a major exhibition on "Michigan and the Civil War." With a very generous budget, I was able to locate and assemble a large collection of photographs and other illustrations to highlight the state's historic role in the war. I was also invited to deliver a major address at the University of Michigan on the war and the photographers and illustrators who documented it.

In 1961, shortly after starting my position at Wayne I was approached by the *Detroit News* and the *Associated Press* to write a series of articles relating to "Michigan and the Civil War." The articles were designed to present first-hand accounts of the life of Michigan soldiers, their attitudes towards the war, and descriptions of camp life and battle action. I relied heavily upon the letters and diaries of Michigan soldiers and the photos made by Matthew Brady, Alexander Gardner and Jex Bardwell. I was assisted by Paul Pentecost of the Wayne State University Publications and Press Relations Department who had a special interest in Confederate soldiers.

Dr. Jones: How widespread was the publication of these Civil War articles?

Dr. Mason: They appeared in thirty-one Michigan newspapers between January 23 and February 10, 1961 as well as a number of newspapers in Wisconsin, Illinois and Ohio. In addition, the *Detroit News* also published a special edition consisting of all of the articles and additional War photographs.

Dr. Jones: What was the public response to the articles?

Dr. Mason: I was very pleased with the hundreds of letters and telephone calls I received from all over Michigan and the Midwest. Some writers wanted specific information about relatives who served in the War and a number sent information about Civil War material in their possession. Some even sent original Civil War letters, diaries and photographs and asked me to find a suitable home for them. We also received many requests from teachers, students and libraries that wanted copies of the series for use in school classes.

Dr. Jones: Were you able to respond to these requests?

Dr. Mason: Yes, in a limited way at first, but after receiving a grant from the McGregor Fund of Michigan, the Press published them in a booklet *from Bull Run to Appomattox: Michigan's Role in the Civil War* in 1961.

Dr. Jones: I notice that in the 1960s you also co-authored a book on the Prismatic Club of Detroit. Tell me about that organization and the publication.

Dr. Mason: The Prismatic Club was founded in Detroit in 1866. It was the inspiration of Samuel Ripley Bartlett who was originally from Concord, Massachusetts. He came to Detroit in 1863 to join his brother, James, who was superintendant of the Detroit Locomotive Works. With the support of several Detroit friends, Samuel Bartlett founded the Prismatic Club based upon the famous Social Circle of Concord, Massachusetts, which in turn, had been founded during the American Revolution as a Committee of Safety. The Social Circle was limited to twenty-five members consisting of a doctor, lawyer, farmer, trader, miller and a mechanic. Among its members were Ralph Waldo Emerson, Bronson Alcott, Frank Sanborn,

Henry David Thoreau, Josiah Bartlett and other citizens. Samuel Bartlett believed a similar club would be ideal for Detroit, which in 1866 was merging into a major industrial, mercantile center. The stated objective of the Prismatic Club was “Social Culture” where “No subject of conversation shall be tabooed” and the club was a place “for the heretic and Catholic, for the aberrant and Protestant.” The Prismatic Club met weekly and each member was assigned an evening for a presentation on some subject of interest to members. The highlight of each season was the annual meeting which featured a magnificent dinner, usually including raw oysters, roast beef, turkey, partridge, venison, duck, quail and lobster, along with a variety of drinks, including expensive French wines and cigars. Fortunately, the Club membership included artists who contributed portraits of key members and recording secretaries who kept detailed copies of each presentation.

Dr. Jones: You were a member, Phil?

Dr. Mason: Yes, I joined in 1962 and was asked to collect all of the records of the Club, to be placed in the Archives at Wayne. As the Club approached its hundredth anniversary I was asked to co-author with fellow Prism, Paul Rankin, who was Deputy Director of Detroit Schools, a history of the Club. We divided the task; I concentrated on the founding and first half century, Paul Rankin covered the period since 1916. The results of our endeavor were *Prismatic of Detroit* published in 1970.

Dr. Jones: You have discussed a number of earlier publications. Now, let's turn to several of your recent ones.

Dr. Mason: In the late 1980s I was contacted by Richard Kinney, the Associate Director of the Wayne State University Press and asked to consider writing a history of the Ambassador Bridge, which, as you know, connects Detroit and Windsor, Ontario. The Bridge officials had asked the Press to select an author and agreed to compensate the Press for the costs of publishing an illustrated "coffee table" book. After careful preliminary research on the Bridge and its history, I agreed. But only on the condition that Bridge officials could not make any changes in the completed manuscript. Obviously, they could identify any errors for my review, but if there were any disputes, it would be up to Richard Kinney and the Press to adjudicate.

Dr. Jones: Did you have any concerns about this issue of censorship?

Dr. Mason: Nothing specific, but my experience with the Harper Hospital book made me cautious. Furthermore, my professional reputation was very important to me, and, as it turned out, I'm glad that I had this understanding because the President of the Ambassador Bridge wanted several changes that were unacceptable to me.

Dr. Jones: How were such differences resolved?

Dr. Mason: The Press supported me and agreed not to have my account censored or changed.

Dr. Jones: Did you have any prior interest or experience in bridges and their construction?

Dr. Mason: Not from an engineering point of view. But I had done a lot of research on road building and transportation systems in Detroit, Michigan and nationally. As an

aside, my father and uncle and brother were civil engineers and had been involved in the construction and maintenance of many bridges.

Dr. Jones: How did you proceed with the research phase of the book? Were there any histories or detailed studies of the Ambassador Bridge?

Dr. Mason: There were a few pamphlets but nothing substantial. Fortunately, the Bridge Company had preserved many records of its construction, its dedication in 1929, the impact of the Depression, World War II, and the challenges facing it during post war years. There were also important legal papers in their storage vault. The careful review and study of these records involved hours of research. I should also mention that the hundreds of available photographs, posters, cartoons, film, and other illustrative material had been preserved and were important for the book. Since the Bridge engineering consultants were located separately in New York, Pittsburgh, Montreal, Detroit and Windsor, professional photographers had been hired to document every phase of the construction. In addition, I was able to locate and obtain photographs from the Modjeski and Masters Engineering Company in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and the personal photograph collection of Hugh Pratley of Montreal, whose father, Philip, served as consultant on the Bridge. As a result of this magnificent array of illustrations, we were able to enrich the narrative in the book.

The next phase of the project involved a careful study of traffic patterns on the Detroit-Windsor corridor and early attempts dating back to post Civil War years to build bridges and tunnels across and under the Detroit River. Despite the urgent

need for a Detroit River crossing, every early attempt to build a bridge was blocked by the powerful Lake Carriers Association which maintained that any type of bridge was unsafe and would seriously impair the passage of vessels on the Detroit River. It wasn't until 1910 that the Detroit-Windsor Railroad Tunnel was built and assisted the transfer of railroad cars under the Detroit River. This Tunnel facilitated the shipment of railroad cars but it did nothing to meet the needs of the automobile traffic.

Dr. Jones: Were there any ferry services across the Detroit River connecting Detroit and Windsor?

Dr. Mason: Yes. But the ferries were limited in capacity and were unreliable during winter months when ice often covered the river. Because of the sharp increase in automobile popularity, it became obvious to public officials and business leaders that there was an urgent need for a bridge. Finally, in 1921, the American Transit Company and the Canadian Transit Company decided to finance and construct a Detroit-Windsor Bridge. When this venture failed in 1923, because of poor leadership and insufficient investment capital, Joseph A. Bower, a New York financier with earlier ties to Detroit, took over leadership of the Bridge campaign. With the support of business colleagues and financiers, he raised sufficient funds, hired the well-known engineering firm of McClintic-Marshall of Pittsburgh and the bridge engineer, Ralph Modjeski.

Dr. Jones: How did the Bridge Company select the site of the Bridge and get the support of Detroit and Windsor's residents, public officials and state and provincial agencies?

Dr. Mason: Several possible sites were examined including Belle Isle and Grosse Ile, but the current crossing site was finally selected. Getting public and official support for the bridge were more complicated but under Bower's skillful leadership, the needed endorsements were secured.

Dr. Jones: What was the timetable for the construction of the Bridge?

Dr. Mason: The work commenced in May 1927 and followed standard procedures, which included borings of the subsoil under the piers and anchorages; then the towers; the erection and hanging of cables and finally the suspended construction of the span and the pavement of the roadway. By January 1929 the work on the Bridge, now called the Ambassador Bridge, was well ahead of schedule and bridge officials were delighted with the progress. But their euphoria did not last long, however, for early in March after defective cables were discovered on a similar bridge under construction in Rhode Island, Bower and his engineers decided to halt construction and replace and install new cables. This proved to be a serious setback because it required the removal of the suspended span, the cables and anchorages.

Joseph Bower and his colleagues were deeply depressed by these delays and were forced to postpone the July 4th dedication.

Dr. Jones: When was the bridge finally completed?

Dr. Mason: For the most part by November 11, 1929, when the dedication was rescheduled.

Dr. Jones: Did your account of the Ambassador Bridge end with the dedication?

Dr. Mason: No, I also described the operations of the bridge during its first fifty- four years of operation and the men who guarded its fortunes through the Great Depression, World War II, and the numerous other economic and political crisis on both sides of the border.

Dr. Jones: As you review the extensive research you conducted and your contacts with bridge officials, do you have any specific memories of the project?

Dr. Mason: Yes, overall, my work on the book represented a most challenging and enjoyable professional experience. Although I encountered some difficult situations with the president of the Bridge Company, I enjoyed my meetings with the staff, the U.S. and Canadian Customs officials and the assistance I received from my colleagues in the archival profession. Also, I can't overlook the help of Richard Kinney and the staff of the Wayne State University Press.

As for specific memories, let me mention two. As I mentioned earlier, James Austin, one of the founders of the Bridge Company and subsequently its Treasurer, had an important role in the early years of the construction of the bridge. So, too, I discovered, did his sixteen-year-old daughter, Helen Austin. She was invited to drive the ceremonial stake to commence the drilling operations. On September 15, 1928, Bridge officials planned a major public relations event featuring the first "public" crossing of the Detroit River on the newly installed footbridge led by Joseph Bower, J. W. Austin, and other bridge officials along with a Pathe' News cameraman. The distinguished group rode the elevator to the top of the main tower to begin the historic event. They posed for photographs at the top of the

tower but then there was an abrupt change in plans. It seems that Joseph Bower was terrified of the height and according to one witness “was so scared, he could hardly stand.” While the group sought a way out of this embarrassing situation, young Helen Austin accepted the invitation of the paymaster of the McClintic – Marshall Company to join him with her small dog in walking across the footbridge. With a mink stole around her neck and high heels on her feet, she walked across the footbridge, and returned on foot when she discovered the elevator on the Windsor side was not working. She was greeted by an anxious father and bridge officials.

During my research, I visited Helen Austin Summer in her home near San Diego. She was so excited by my visit that she invited about twenty of her friends so that I could tell them about that historic day in September 1928. She also explained that Pathe’ News had recorded the historic crossing and, during the following week, Helen had invited her high school classmates to accompany her to a local theatre to see the film of her historic walk. It was accounts like this, that enabled me to include a human side to the story.

Dr. Jones: And the second account?

Dr. Mason: This involved Hugh Pratley, the Montreal Bridge engineer who conducted annual investigations of the Ambassador Bridge to ensure that it was properly maintained. On one of his annual visits to Detroit, he invited me to accompany him on his bridge tour so that I could better understand the complicated operation of the bridge. This involved investigating the roadway, the piers and the

underground anchorages. At the end of the day, he told me we could continue the tour on the following day, but he added, “don’t wear shoes with leather soles”. I didn’t understand what he meant until I met him the following day. “Today,” he announced to the office staff, “Dr. Mason and I are going to climb the cables to the main pier.” As I recall vividly, the staff looked somewhat surprised. I, however, was shocked. I told Mr. Pratley that there was “no way” that I was going to climb the cables and cross over to the Windsor side, 300 feet above the River. Despite assurances from the several members of the maintenance crew who often spent weeks painting the main cables, suspended wire cables and piers, I did not change my mind. During my research, I had learned that several newspaper reporters and photographers had to be removed from the span by helicopters because they became terrified during their climb. Surprisingly, my decision was confirmed six months later when Hugh Pratley confessed that several years earlier while conducting a similar examination of the cables on a bridge in Halifax, Nova Scotia, he suddenly had to stop thirty feet from the top of the pier until he recovered his courage to continue.

Dr. Jones: So these two experiences about crossing the Detroit River had an impact on you?

Dr. Mason: Yes, during the many times I approached the Ambassador Bridge, I thought of that young sixteen-year-old, Helen Austin, walking across the Detroit River on a swaying footbridge and of my own experiences.

Dr. Jones: Let’s turn now to your interest in Prohibition and the book, *Rum Running and the Roaring Twenties: Prohibition on the Michigan-Ontario Waterway*.

Dr. Mason: Although I always had a general interest in the decade of the 1920s, it wasn't until about 1992 that I devoted special attention to that era. The Great Lakes Maritime Institute, headquartered at the Dossin Great Lakes Museum on Belle Isle, had decided to install a major exhibit on Prohibition. As a member of the Institute's Board, I was asked to prepare a short account on the topic to accompany the exhibit. The Board response to my first draft of 3000 words was "expand it." As I continued my research, I finally decided that the topic merited a book-length study.

Dr. Jones: Had historians and other writers given much attention to Prohibition?

Dr. Mason: Yes, but most of the accounts were centered on the national scene with emphasis on the Eastern seaboard. There was one book on prohibition in Michigan by Larry Engleman, and numerous magazine and newspaper accounts, but these publications left huge gaps in the thirteen-year experiment.

Dr. Jones: What was the scope of your book?

Dr. Mason: The main focus was on the thirteen years in which national prohibition was in effect. But I also wanted to present a broader context by tracing the temperance movement that began in the mid-nineteenth century and the brief period from 1918 to 1920 when voters of Michigan had adopted Prohibition in the state. I also decided to include a brief account of Prohibition in the Canadian provinces and how lax regulation in Ontario greatly facilitated the illegal acquisition of Canadian-manufactured alcoholic beverages in Michigan. Obviously, an account of the

widespread operation of “speakeasies” and “blind pigs” throughout the Detroit area and other communities was also needed.

Dr. Jones: And you obviously devoted attention to the various methods of smuggling beer, wine, and liquor into Michigan?

Dr. Mason: Smuggling, or “rum running” as it was often called, was an important part of the story. The role of rival organized gangs, ordinary citizens and police, U.S. Coast Guard, and other federal officials is covered in detail. The revolution in morals and manners so succinctly described in Frederic Lewis Allen’s *Only Yesterday* also played an important role during the 1920s.

Dr. Jones: Aside from reports and articles in local newspapers and magazines, what other sources did you find useful in your research?

Dr. Mason: As I mentioned earlier, there was a plethora of publications, government reports and court decisions, which dealt with Prohibition. I also relied heavily on archival sources. The National Archives, for example, was the depository of the records of numerous federal agencies involved in implementing the Volstead Act, including the U. S. Coast Guard, U. S. Department of the Treasury, U. S. Prohibition Unit, U. S. Customs Service and the U. S. Customs Border Patrol. Congressional reports on smuggling were also valuable. The State Archives, the Michigan State Police and local police agencies provided a wealth of relevant material. So too, did the files and rulings of the U. S. District Court of both the Eastern and Western Districts of Michigan. Under federal law, these courts handled all cases involving violations of the Volstead Act.

Dr. Jones: Were you able to establish contact with any individuals involved in the smuggling of liquor from Canada?

Dr. Mason: Yes, to my surprise, individuals and families involved in smuggling were not at all hesitant in explaining, and sometimes even bragging, about how they smuggled liquor, operated blind pigs and stills, and hosted late-afternoon cocktail parties. In order to gather these first-hand accounts, I conducted a number of interviews with individuals who gave first-hand accounts of their role in smuggling liquor and violations of the Volstead Act.

Dr. Jones: Can you give some examples?

Dr. Mason: The operator of the Woodbridge Tavern in downtown Detroit not only described in detail how she and her mother purchased smuggled Canadian liquor but she also gave me a tour of the Tavern's basement to show me how it was hidden. Another informant gave me details on how he and his colleagues installed steel cables under the Detroit River between sites in Windsor and Detroit. The cables were used in the process of dragging huge sleds laden with cases of liquor across the river bottom. They were later discovered by the U.S. Coast Guard, resulting in the end of a unique smuggling venture.

Another enterprising smuggler confessed how he and his colleagues laid a pipe on the bottom of the Detroit River connecting a Windsor distillery outlet and a Detroit bottling plant. On one occasion, when I was invited to give a talk to a group of elderly women about prohibition, one of them told me about the embarrassing experience she suffered as a teenager. She described how she and two friends

slipped from home on Saturday nights to go to local speakeasies. They changed into different clothes, “put on rouge and lipstick,” and enjoyed wonderful evenings. This ended abruptly one Saturday evening when the Detroit Police raided the speakeasy and the names of all patrons were published in a local newspaper. When her mother saw her name in the paper, she and her friends were grounded and not allowed to leave their residences on weekends for several months.

This practice of getting interviews was also often touchy. During my interview with a man too young to be involved in smuggling, he told me that his two uncles were very much involved. It seems that a rival gang were raiding the two-mile stretch of the Detroit River that the uncles controlled as their “fiefdom.” I asked the nephew how the conflict was resolved. He said that in the following spring when the ice left the Detroit River, three bodies from this rival gang turned up on the shore. After this interview, I was extremely careful to avoid such inquiries. Premeditated murder has no statute of limitations.

Dr. Jones: I notice that your book contains a superb collection of photographs and cartoons. How difficult was it to locate them and get permission to use them?

Dr. Mason: It was one of the more challenging but enjoyable parts of completing work on the book. I gave it very high priority because I was convinced that such illustrations contributed as much as a carefully researched narrative. I, therefore, devoted a great deal of time and effort in finding them. Visits to the National Archives, the Library of Congress and numerous archives in Michigan and the Midwest provided

many of the illustrations. Another important source was the *Detroit News*, *Detroit Free Press*, *Windsor Star*, and other newspapers located along the Detroit waterway.

Dr. Jones: Were there costs involved in securing the illustrations?

Dr. Mason: Yes, very substantial in some instances. I would estimate that I spent about eight hundred dollars for the illustrations; a small investment actually, because they enriched the book so much.

Dr. Jones: One of your most recent scholarly publications involved a biography of Tracy McGregor, for whom the beautiful McGregor Memorial Conference Center on the Wayne campus is named. Tell me about the background for this book.

Dr. Mason: The McGregor Memorial Conference Center was opened in 1958, the year in which I came to Wayne. This new Minoru Yamasaki building and the sculpture pool surrounding it were widely recognized for its beauty and its architectural style. The University Archives received dozens of requests for information about the Center and its architect, which encouraged me to find out as much as I could about Mr. McGregor. I formed a close relationship with John Fraser, the Director of the Center, who helped me in my research. The Center, of course, had a special attraction to me since the Local History Conference, "Michigan in Perspective," held its fifty annual meetings there, starting in 1958. My interest in Tracy McGregor was enhanced greatly as a result of an invitation of Mr. William J. Norton in 1966 to attend the annual meeting of the McGregor Fund of Michigan

in Charlottesville, Virginia. I had come to know Mr. Norton, President of the McGregor Fund and a fellow member of the Prismatic Club.

Dr. Jones: What was Mr. Norton's role on the McGregor Fund?

Dr. Mason: He had served on the Fund since it was founded in 1925 and had worked closely with Mr. McGregor in establishing the mission of the Fund.

Dr. Jones: Why were you invited to the McGregor Fund meeting?

Dr. Mason: I was asked to present the annual address at the meeting. My speech was on "Forgers and Forgeries."

Dr. Jones: Did you enjoy your Charlottesville visit?

Dr. Mason: I certainly did. My wife, Henrietta, was also invited. We particularly enjoyed the train trip from Detroit to Charlottesville, the visit to the campus of the University of Virginia, and Monticello. My talk was well received, even though many people in the audience had imbibed too much bourbon at the reception preceding the talk. But, another highlight of the visit was the opportunity to meet Mildred White, Manager of the McGregor Fund. When she told me that she had to wait most of a day to get a bus to Washington, D.C. to visit a friend in a nursing home there, I offered to rent a car and drive her to her destination. She graciously accepted my offer which gave me a wonderful opportunity to learn more about Tracy and Katherine McGregor and Mrs. White's association with them and the McGregor Fund. Upon my return to Detroit, I visited her often at the Fund's headquarters that gave me the opportunity to learn even more about the McGregors. One of her key insights about Tracy McGregor was that he preferred

anonymity and avoided, whenever possible, newspaper interviews and any personal accounts of his life. Mrs. White also told me a lot about Katherine Whitney McGregor, who like her husband, kept her life very private.

Dr. Jones: Was Mr. Norton, the Fund's Trustee, and Mrs. White concerned that so little was known publicly about the McGregors?

Dr. Mason: Mr. Norton was, but especially Mrs. White who believed that the McGregors' legacy had not been given the attention it deserved. This oversight was highlighted one day in the mid 1970s when I received a phone call from Mrs. White who asked me to meet her at the loading dock at the National Bank building in downtown Detroit where the headquarters of the McGregor Fund was located. When I arrived, she directed me to retrieve fifteen storage boxes of records that had been discarded inside the dumpster. I did this, although when I discovered that several rats in addition to the boxes inhabited the container, I lost some of my enthusiasm.

Dr. Jones: What was in the storage boxes and how did they get there?

Dr. Mason: The boxes contained extensive personal files documenting the life of Tracy and Katherine McGregor dating back to the mid-nineteenth century. These records had been ordered destroyed by the chair of the McGregor Fund Board, who was concerned that there might be documents in the files relating to Katherine McGregor's mental illness during the last years of her life.

Dr. Jones: How was Mrs. White involved in this decision to discard those records?

Dr. Mason: She was not involved. In fact, when she discovered that the records had been discarded by the maintenance crew, she called me to help retrieve and preserve them.

Dr. Jones: Can you give me a clearer idea of what these files contained?

Dr. Mason: They represented a very extensive group of records relating to Tracy McGregor and his family. There were some important files relating to Katherine Whitney McGregor but, as I learned later, she had systematically destroyed most of her records. Tracy McGregor's files reflected his involvement in various humanitarian, philanthropic, and civic endeavors, including the McGregor Mission for Homeless Men from 1890-1936, the Toledo Helping Hand Mission, Associated Charities of Detroit, the Provident Loan and Savings Society, the Merrill-Palmer Institute, the Detroit Community Fund, the State Hospital for Epileptic Children, the Bay Court, the Visiting Housekeepers Association, the Detroit League on Urban Conditions Among Negroes, and the Detroit Patriotic Fund. McGregor was not only being deeply involved in the founding and operation of these agencies but also gave very generous financial support to them.

The political activities in Detroit were high on his personal agenda. Although he never ran for political office, he supported a number of public figures and in 1912, organized the "Thursday Noon Group" made up of a selected group of twenty-five influential professional and business leaders. At the weekly meetings the group members discussed Detroit's judicial, political, economic and social as well as

charitable challenges. They hired national experts to investigate the economic, political, and social issues facing Detroit.

Tracy McGregor was a deeply religious man, as reflected in his daily journals and correspondence. His marriage to Katherine Whitney, one of Detroit's wealthiest heiresses in 1901, and their happy life together was also revealed in the collection.

Dr. Jones: I understand that McGregor was also an avid book collector.

Dr. Mason: Yes, he certainly was. He had always been interested in books, especially relating to religion, history and literature, but it was not until the 1920s that he decided to actively develop his own library. With the close guidance of Professor Claude Van Tyne, Professor and Chair of the Department of History at the University of Michigan, and Randolph Adams, Director of the Clements Library, he focused his attention on Americana. He was fortunate to have the financial resources to develop his library and, with the help of Randolph Adams and the Clements Library staff, he contacted major book and manuscript dealers in the United States and Europe. He chose his book purchases wisely and by 1935 had amassed a priceless collection of Americana, which after his death in 1936, the Trustees of the McGregor Fund decided to give to the Library at the University of Virginia.

Dr. Jones: How did you get involved in writing a biography of Tracy McGregor?

Dr. Mason: After I reviewed the collection of McGregor's personal papers and other archival sources, I realized how he had indeed been overlooked by historians in their study of Detroit and its history. This oversight did not come as a complete surprise to me because very little attention had been given to humanitarians, philanthropists

and others who were involved in charitable programs. I discussed my research with several colleagues in the historical profession and with Mildred White and William Norton, Douglas Dow, and Lem Bowen who served on the McGregor Fund's Board of Directors. They agreed that the important role that Tracy McGregor had played in Detroit's public life had been overlooked and needed to be addressed. By the 1980s they were aware that many McGregor Fund Board members knew very little about the Fund's founder, including his future plans for his Fund.

Dr. Jones: From what you have told me about his amazing life and his many contributions to Detroit, why had he been so overlooked by historians?

Dr. Mason: As you know, historians up to the middle of the 20th century concentrated primarily on political and military history. Furthermore, local and urban history was given little attention by the historical profession. The McGregors' desire for privacy was also a factor. Finally, the McGregor Fund Board asked me to submit a proposal for a McGregor biography. With their full support I agreed to prepare such a study and as a result *Tracy W. McGregor, Humanitarian Philanthropist and Detroit Civic Leader*, was published by the Wayne State University Press in 2008.

Dr. Jones: From your earlier comments about your interest in American labor history in graduate school and your deep involvement in developing the Labor Archives, why didn't you specialize in the labor movement in your research and publications?

Dr. Mason: There were several reasons, but it was primarily an ethical issue on both a personal and professional level. As Director of the Archives, I had privileged access to

scores of collections, which were unprocessed or closed for a period of time. I also had a close association with many of our donors who not only gave their union and personal papers to the Archives but also shared with me sensitive information. In many of the oral history interviews I conducted, for example, I was given valuable insights into key labor incidents that helped explain or supplement written records. As a result, I decided that it would be unethical, for me to specialize in labor history or related topics because it would give me an unfair advantage over other researchers. Also, I recognized that the reputation of the Archives might be damaged.

Dr. Jones: Did the Archives inform researchers that some donors, like the UAW, SEIU and AFSCME had placed a ten-year closure policy on access to their archival records?

Dr. Mason: Yes, we did. This policy assisted researchers in planning their visits to the Archives.

Dr. Jones: What about unprocessed collections? Were they available to researchers?

Dr. Mason: No, nor did we publicize them until they were open to all researchers. This was a touchy issue, based on our experiences. On several occasions our staff members had been asked privately by researchers to obtain information about the contents of an unprocessed collection.

Dr. Jones: I notice that you did publish a number of articles relating to the Archives at Wayne.

Dr. Mason: Yes, they appeared in various historical journals like *Labor History*, *The American Archivist*, and various union publications. In 1992, Dan Leab, professor of history at Seton Hall University and managing editor of *Labor History*, and I co-edited

Labor History Archives in the United States: A Guide for Researching and Teaching.

It was published by Wayne State University Press and it included detailed accounts of thirty-seven libraries and archives that contained significant collections of labor materials.

Dr. Jones: During your tenure as Director of the Archives did you encourage your staff to pursue research projects?

Dr. Mason: Yes. In fact, research and publications were one of the major elements in the annual review of the staff. In addition, I worked closely with the staff in supporting their research ventures.

Dr. Jones: Give me some examples.

Dr. Mason: Warner Pflug, for example, published two major books: *The UAW in Pictures* and *A Guide to the Archives of Labor History and Urban Archives*; Dione Miles: *Something in Common: An IWW Bibliography*; and Margery Long: *Administration of Photographic Collections*.

Other staff members who published during my tenure included Patricia Painter, Roberta McBride, Richard Kesner, William Saffady, Gerald Hegel, Thomas Featherstone, Joan Rabins and Donald Haynes. If we included our graduate students, the list would be even more substantial.

Chapter 11 Historical Organizations

Dr. Jones: Would you go into detail about some of the historical organizations in which you were active? Select some of them and outline your interest and role in them and tell me how they related to your career as archivist and historian?

Dr. Mason: Several of these organizations were related directly to my career. They also provided me with direct contacts, and often personal friendships with archivists and historians in the United States, Canada and abroad. I was often able to consult these colleagues for advice and counsel related to the various challenges I faced at Wayne State University. In addition, they assisted in finding jobs for the students in our graduate archival administration program. Here are some of them.

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY of MICHIGAN

One of the first organizations that captured my interest was the Michigan Historical Society. I joined it in 1951 while I was a graduate student at the University of Michigan. In 1961 I was elected the Secretary of that organization and shortly after I was elected President. During my tenure, the Society faced many challenges. Following several years of heated internal disputes, the Society separated from the Michigan Historical

Commission, with which it had been closely associated for a number of years.

The Historical Society was established in 1828 by Lewis Cass, Henry Schoolcraft, Charles Trowbridge, and other leaders of the Territory of Michigan. The Michigan Historical Commission was created in 1913 by the State Legislature of Michigan. Although the Society was a private organization with an elected board of trustees and hundreds of members, the Commission members were appointed by the Governor of Michigan. The two groups occupied the same facilities provided by the state in Lansing and the director of the Commission, in practice, administered both groups. This arrangement worked well for a number of years, but in the 1950s serious differences developed and the Society decided to physically separate from the Commission and hire its own director.

Since I was president of the Society at this time, it was my responsibility to raise funds for a full-time director and to locate space for a separate headquarters for the Society. The latter was solved by Roscoe Bonisteel, a prominent Ann Arbor attorney, a member of the Board of Governors of the University of Michigan, and former president of the Historical Society of Michigan. He was also the legal representative for the Toomey family, which owned a large home on Washtenaw Avenue in Ann Arbor. Following instructions from the descendants of the Toomey family, Mr. Bonisteel had been directed to dispose of the property for educational purposes. Mr.

Bonisteel had originally decided to give the Toomey property to the Michigan Historical Society for its headquarters but later changed his mind and decided that the University of Michigan would be a more appropriate recipient because of tax considerations. Under the terms of the gift, the Historical Society could use the Toomey facility as its headquarters without any charges.

Most of the trustees of the Historical Society were delighted with Mr. Bonisteel's proposal but a few of the members wanted more information before giving their approval to accept it. To gather such data, Charles Snell, the president of the Society and who, incidentally, was vice-president of the Detroit Bank & Trust Company and I were asked to conduct a more comprehensive review of the Toomey property and to determine if it was suitable as the Society's headquarters. This was a wise decision because our analysis identified a number of serious problems.

First, we discovered that local zoning regulations limited the parking spaces to two or three automobiles, hardly enough for the Historical Society staff and visitors. Furthermore, we learned from the contractors which we hired that the facility would require costly improvements. A new roof was needed, plus a complete overhaul of the sinking foundation of the building. The restoration of the facility was estimated at a cost of more than \$250,000.

Dr. Jones: What was the reaction of the trustees when these findings were submitted to them?

Dr. Mason: They were astonished to get this information and voted to reject Mr. Bonisteel's offer. The Society did not have the funds nor did the Trustees want to commit this enormous budget to future members of the Society. Mr. Bonisteel was not happy with the decision of the Trustees but he understood our dilemma. Within a few weeks, he came up with a new plan and presented it to the Society. The Toomey property would be given to the University of Michigan with the understanding that the Michigan Historical Society could occupy the Toomey House as its headquarters without cost to the Society. This arrangement met with the unanimous approval of the trustees and, shortly after, the Society moved its headquarters from Lansing to Ann Arbor.

Several years later, the Society made a very serious mistake in accepting a new offer from the University regarding the Toomey property. The University offered to transfer outright, ownership of the property to the Historical Society free of charge. Unfortunately, the Executive Director of the Society and the Board of Trustees gladly accepted the offer without even reviewing the University's prior arrangement and discovering the Society's earlier decision to reject the University's offer. Nor did they check to determine the cost of the renovation of the building and the need to have the zoning regulations changed.

Dr. Jones: Didn't they ever consult with you, or Mr. Snell or the Society's minutes to learn about the earlier rejection of the University's offer?

Dr. Mason: No, they didn't, and when they discovered their mistake, they tried to place the blame on Mr. Snell and me for not advising them of the reasons for our earlier actions. The result of this fiasco was that the Society was saddled with a huge debt that would take years to pay off.

Dr. Jones: What lesson did you and your colleagues learn from this experience?

Dr. Mason: Be VERY careful about accepting gifts!

WILLIAM L. CLEMENTS LIBRARY-UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Dr. Jones: Tell me about another organization that captured your interests.

Dr. Mason: As you know the William L. Clements Library at the University of Michigan was devoted to the Colonial period of American history, the American Revolution and a series of 19th and 20th century topics including the Civil War, music, food, cooking and many others. I had first become aware of the Clements Library as a graduate student at the University. I later got to know Howard Peckham, the Director of the Library, and his successor, John Dann. Both became close friends as well as professional colleagues.

Dr. Jones: I understand that you were active in other Clements activities as well as conducting research there.

Dr. Mason: Yes, I was involved in a variety of projects. In 1991, I was asked by John Dann to conduct a review of the security of the Clements Library. It seems

that money in the petty cash drawer had gone missing on several occasions. Although the total amount missing was not large, nevertheless, the issue became very troublesome. Also, items in the staff dining area were often disturbed. I should explain that I had earlier conducted a number of security reviews for archival institutions and research libraries in the United States and Canada, including the Huntington Library, Yale University, the State Archives of California, the University of Minnesota, and the Ontario Provincial Archives.

Dr. Jones: How did you conduct your security review at the Clements Library?

Dr. Mason: I examined all of the exits and entrances to the Library, and especially the policy relating to access to the manuscript and rare book storage areas. In addition, I conducted interviews with staff members. It took me about five full days of onsite visits to complete this review.

Dr. Jones: What were your findings?

Dr. Mason: I discovered a number of serious security problems. For example, I learned that there were no controls over the issuances of keys to the Library. In fact, the current library door keys were the same as the ones issued when the Library was opened in 1924. Several of the first floor windows were not always kept locked, and there were no security cameras in the Library. A search of the roof of the Library revealed another shocking discovery. I found that there had been a concerted effort to gain access to the chimney on the roof above the special room containing some of the rarest and most

precious collections in the Library. The thieves had tried to remove the metal cover affixed to the top of the opening in order to gain access to the room below. The mystery of how the thieves gained access to the roof was revealed by an examination of the surface of the edge of the roof. Sharp indentations on the edge of the roof caused by a multi-pronged device obviously attached to a rope thrown from the surface in the back of the Library building. Fortunately, the metal cover to the chimney was so tightly secured that the thieves could not remove it.

Dr. Jones: Just how valuable were the contents of the room below?

Dr. Mason: They were worth many million dollars.

Dr. Jones: Did you identify other serious security issues at the Clements Library?

Dr. Mason: Yes, a surprising one, too, even for the staff. The University had a series of tunnels located under the building, on the main campus which allowed the maintenance staff to inspect the heating ducts and the electrical and telephone cables. A hidden panel in the Clements Library basement allowed unrestricted access to the building from one of the tunnels. There were no records maintained by the Clements staff as to who entered the Library in this manner and/or the purpose of such visits.

Dr. Jones: What was the response to your report?

Dr. Mason: John Dann and his staff were shocked and immediately took action to better secure the Library and its holdings. As a follow-up, Dann notified University officials of the situation and requested the funds to implement

my findings and recommended changes. Several University officials, including members of the Board of Governors were deeply concerned about the lax security policies at the Clements and invited me to meet with them along with John Dann and the University Librarian. After reviewing my report and questioning me, they acknowledged the seriousness of the Clements situation and the potential violations at University buildings.

Dr. Jones: Did you continue your contacts with the Clements?

Dr. Mason: Yes. John Dann and I worked on a number of other projects and in 1991 I was elected to the Board of Governors of the Clements Library Associates, and later served as Chairman of the Board.

Dr. Jones: What was the role of the Board and who served on it?

Dr. Mason: The Board's membership, national in scope, included past presidents of the University, prominent business leaders, book dealers, historians, writers, attorneys, and special friends of the Library. They served for four-year terms and were eligible for re-election to the Board. The Board met several times a year to conduct its business. This always involved a discussion on what items to buy for the Library from a list provided by the Library Director. Financial resources for the purchase of the items came from annual membership fees and special gifts. Often a Board member would buy a particular item and give it to the Library. In addition to the Board meetings, the Library sponsored public meetings each year devoted to major historical events and special collections of the Library.

Dr. Jones: What role did you have as Board Chair?

Dr. Mason: As chair, I scheduled the Board meetings, interviewed prospective candidates for the Board, and met periodically with the Director and the Library staff. I also occasionally attended the meetings of the Committee of Management which included the President and the Provost of the University, and two distinguished historians along with the Director of the Library.

Dr. Jones: Did you enjoy your association with the Clements Library?

Dr. Mason: Very much so. Just to be associated with one of the greatest libraries in the United States and Europe was very satisfying to me. There were problems, to be sure, and I often had to try to resolve them. For example, John Dann was continually feuding with the Provost and, as a result, was often in conflict with the President of the University. Also, there also were some disputes involving Board members relating to Board purchases and the sensitive question as to whether book dealers, who did business with the Library, should be eligible for Board membership.

Dr. Jones: Were you involved in fundraising for the Clements Library?

Dr. Mason: Yes, in addition to my annual membership fees, I gave the Clements Library several major historical collections relating to the Civil War, and my Schoolcraft Indian materials. They were valued by the Clements Library's appraisers for an excess of \$50,000.

I was also involved in raising funds for several purchases including the Charles Meyers' Indian publications and a significant collection relating to the slave trade in America. This latter collection was coveted by the Huntington Library and Yale University. The owners of the collection, however, chose the Clements Library and after lengthy negotiations, the owners lowered the price to \$250,000.

Another sensitive problem arose because our Library's acquisition budget was nearly exhausted. The University gave us an advance for the acquisition with the understanding that it had to be repaid in sixteen months. John Dann, who represented the Clements Library and I, as the Chair of the Library Associates, co-signed for the loan. I recall vividly that six weeks before the loan was due, I learned that only \$95,000 had been raised. I was especially concerned since I had personally co-signed the loan. My fears were mitigated when one Trustee gave us fifty thousand dollars and others promised to assist in meeting the deadline. Actually, we raised about thirty thousand dollars more than we needed.

Dr. Jones: I am aware that John Dann is no longer the Director of the Clements Library. When did he retire?

Dr. Mason: John Dann retired from the Library as full-time Director in the fall of 2007. The Trustees of the Associates decided to host a special retirement affair for him and the planning began in May of 2006. For the "Celebrity Historian" Lecture, we were fortunate to secure the noted historian, David

McCullough, who knew John Dann and who had visited the Library often. In addition to his standard \$50,000 speaking fee, one of our Trustees, Drew Pesler, provided a plane to fly him to and from his home in Connecticut. Following the McCullough lecture held at the Rackham Building amphitheater, a reception was held at the Martha Cook Garden and was followed by a banquet at the Clements Library. After the dinner, the evening was devoted to recognizing the contributions of John Dann to the Clements Library and the University.

Dr. Jones: What role did you play in these events?

Dr. Mason: As Chair, I was deeply involved in all aspects of John Dann's retirement affair. This involved assisting in a fundraising campaign for the retirement event, a John Dann Tribute Film, and a Clements Library film. I also served as Toastmaster at the evening program. At the evening banquet we gave the invited guests a reproduction of the rare Fitch map of the old Northwest Territory and a selection of the Clements Library's Walsh Portfolio of Watercolor sketches of US and Canadian historic sites in 1803-1805.

Dr. Jones: Was John Dann pleased with the events celebrating his retirement?

Dr. Mason: Yes, very much so! Although he had reservations, as did I, about some of the speakers at the banquet, as they talked mainly about themselves. John, of course, was very emotional at the event because it signified the end of a long and illustrious career at the Clements Library.

Dr. Jones: How long did you remain on the Board of Governors of the Clements Associates?

Dr. Mason: I remained on the Board until 2008, when I left Detroit for residences in Prescott, Arizona and Eagle Harbor, in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. I was asked to stay on the Board but I decided that, since I could not attend the meetings and participate in its deliberations, I should step aside for a replacement. I might add, that I had always retired from organizations when I couldn't participate or contribute to their programs.

Dr. Jones: Did this decision end your association with the Clements Library?

Dr. Mason: Yes, except that I continue my membership in the Associates and remain in contact with the new Director, Kevin Graffagnino, whom I have known from my work in Vermont. I also continued my friendships with Brian Dunnigan, the Associate Director and Clayton Lewis, the Curator of Photographs and Prints.

Dr. Jones: I notice by a recent publication of the Clements Library that you are still on the Board.

Dr. Mason: Yes, following my retirement from the Board, the Associates voted to elect me to the position of Honorary Trustee. I was honored, of course, especially since only two other retired Board members had received this honorary title.

Dr. Jones: Your resume` cites your role on the Michigan Advisory Committee to the National Historical, Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC). What was the mission of this Committee?

Dr. Mason: The NHPRC was established by the U.S. Congress in the 1930s to encourage research and publications relating to American history. Later, Congress added funding to support archival projects for not only the National Archives but also state projects in the nation. In order to facilitate the process, the NHPRC authorized the governors of each state to establish state NHPRC Advisory Committees. Their role was to receive and evaluate all requests for funding of statewide archival and historical organizations projects and then forward their recommendations to the NHPRC for their review.

As Governor of Michigan, Jennifer Granholm, appointed Board members representing archival and historical organizations in the state, including Alice Dalligan of the Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library, Frederich Honhart of the Regional Archives at Michigan State University, Francis Blouin of the Bentley Library at the University of Michigan, and David Thomas of Michigan Technological University. I was invited to represent the Archives at Wayne State University, and Martha Bigelow of the State Historical Commission was appointed chair.

Dr. Jones: What did the Michigan NHPRC Advisory Committee do?

Dr. Mason: It reviewed proposals submitted mainly by archival institutions, which in turn were assigned to committee members for their evaluation and recommendations. Based on their reports, the state committee discussed each proposal and forwarded their findings to the NHPRC.

Dr. Jones: Tell me more about the workings of the Michigan Committee.

Dr. Mason: At the day-long meetings held usually in Lansing, each proposal was reviewed and voted on. We forwarded our findings to the NHPRC in Washington.

Dr. Jones: Was there always agreement among your colleagues?

Dr. Mason: Yes, usually, although on a few occasions there were sharp differences of opinion. One of the most contentious issues involved the papers of the governors of Michigan. Starting with Governor G. Mennen Williams, all succeeding governors had placed their papers at the Bentley Library of the University of Michigan. This practice was in clear violation of state law but it was not challenged until Martha Bigelow became Director of the State Historical Commission. She demanded that the papers of governors at the Bentley Library be returned to the State Archives. She brought this issue before the Michigan Advisory Committee on numerous occasions, an action that always caused sharp disagreement among the committee members. Francis Blouin, director of the Bentley Library, defended his institution's policy and refused to return the Governors' papers or to

change his institution's policy of collecting the papers of the current and future governors.

Dr. Jones: What position did the Advisory Committee take on this issue?

Dr. Mason: It was very difficult to get consensus on this issue. Martha Bigelow and Francis Blouin were very set in their positions and neither was willing to compromise. This resulted in an impasse that lasted several years.

Dr. Jones: Were any steps taken to resolve the dispute?

Dr. Mason: Not while Dr. Bigelow remained as Director of the Historical Agency. She made the matter even more controversial with a publication in which she castigated the Bentley Library and accused several former members of the Historical Commission with conflict of interest because of their support of the Bentley Library as the depository of the papers of the Governors of Michigan.

Dr. Jones: Were you involved in this controversy?

Dr. Mason: I was asked by several members of the Michigan NHPRC Committee to see if I could work out a compromise between the State Archives and the Bentley Library in order to avoid a continuous stream of arguments which were interrupting the work of the Committee. It was obvious to me that neither Dr. Bigelow nor Dr. Blouin were going to change their positions, so I attempted to work out a compromise for their consideration. My proposal called for the Bentley Library to retain the official papers of governors already in their custody but not to solicit the papers of the

current and future governors. This seemed like a reasonable compromise, but before I was able to present it to the Committee or privately to Francis Blouin or Martha Bigelow, I heard from the latter when she stormed unannounced into my office at Wayne, and started shouting at me, accusing me of giving in to the Bentley Library. Her tirade was so acrimonious that my secretary considered calling our Campus police. I finally got Dr. Bigelow to calm down, although it took her months before she would talk to me.

Dr. Jones: Did you submit your recommended plan to the Advisory Committee?

Dr. Mason: No, although after Dr. Bigelow retired, I discussed the proposal with Dr. Sandra Clark, the new Director of the Historical Commission. She was in favor of the proposed compromise and invited Francis Blouin to meet to discuss the matter. At this meeting, to which I was invited, Dr. Clark submitted the proposed compromise and Dr. Blouin agreed to take it up with the Bentley Library's Executive Committee. Dr. Clark and I left the meeting confident that the contentious issue had been resolved. Our optimism lasted less than a week when we learned that the Bentley Library had picked up the first installment of Governor James Blanchard's papers two days after our meeting. This action abruptly ended any prospect of a compromise.

DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Dr. Jones: What role did you have in other historical organizations?

Dr. Mason: Shortly after I came to Wayne State, I joined the Detroit Historical Society and shortly afterwards I was elected a trustee and also given the position of Historian of the Society. Later, after the Local History Conference was operational, I became editor of a series of the Society's publications featuring several of the keynote speakers at the Conference.

Dr. Jones: Do you recall the names of some of those speakers?

Dr. Mason: Dr. Reginald Horsman of Marquette University, Dr. Philip Jordan of the University of Minnesota, Dr. Thomas Clark of the University of Kentucky, to name a few. Also, in 1974 I became involved as Editor of the quarterly Detroit in Perspective: A Journal of Regional History.

U. S. DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN

Dr. Jones: You had mentioned earlier that you were actively involved in the establishment of a Historical Society for the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan. Please give me more details, including how you became engaged in this project.

Dr. Mason: According to Chief Judge Julian Cook Jr., it was during a discussion with his friend, Irving Bluestone, a retired Vice-President of the UAW and a good friend of mine. Judge Cook told Mr. Bluestone that he wanted to establish a Historical Society for the U.S. District Court of the Eastern District of

Michigan similar to the one that had been formed earlier by the 9th Circuit Court. Mr. Bluestone advised him to talk to me because I had been involved in forming the Michigan Labor History Society.

Dr. Jones: What prompted Judge Cook to entertain such a venture?

Dr. Mason: Judge Cook and several of the senior judges of the Court were concerned that many of the new appointees to the Court knew little about the history and traditions of the Court. He also recognized that there was no program to assist the current and retired judges in preserving their personal and court-related records and that the Court's storage area was overflowing with them. At his request, I met with Judge Cook and two of his staff, Judith Christie and David Sherwood, to share my thoughts on how to proceed. I urged the Court to establish a "Court Historical Society" with membership open to all active, senior and retired judges and others interested in the Society and its mission. Members of the legal profession would also be invited to join along with community leaders and historians. I must have made a good impression because in 1991 I was asked to serve on a planning committee to establish a District Court Historical Society.

Dr. Jones: What was the response of the court justices and others to the proposed Court Historical Society?

Dr. Mason: Very positive, especially with the strong endorsement of Chief Judge Cook, Judge Avern Cohn, several of the Senior judges and most of the newly-appointed Judges.

Dr. Jones: Did the Society have a Constitution and By-Laws, along with a plan for meetings and a mission? If so, how were such provisions prepared and approved?

Dr. Mason: Based on my experience and involvement with a number of historical organizations, Judge Cook asked me to chair a committee to accomplish these objectives. Also serving, in addition to Judge Cook, were Judith Christie and David Sherwood. We held meetings in Judge Cook's chambers for nearly a year, drafting a Constitution and By-Laws before calling a meeting of all of the justices and others who had expressed an interest in a Court Historical Society.

At the first meeting of the Society the proposed constitution and by-laws were submitted and approved and a slate of officers and trustees were elected. Mrs. Dores McCree, the widow of the highly respected jurist, Wade H. McCree, Jr., was elected president. She was a logical choice because her husband, Wade, was so highly respected by the legal profession and she had close friendships with many of the court judges.

Dr. Jones: Was she an attorney?

Dr. Mason: No, she was a trained librarian, retired from the Detroit Public Library.

Dr. Jones: What were the responsibilities of the president?

Dr. Mason: The president planned and chaired the meetings, appointed committees, and set the meeting agendas. I should add, that because of health problems (osteoporosis), Mrs. McCree asked Trustee Stanley Winkelman,

a highly respected Detroit business and community leader to chair the meetings.

Dr. Jones: Did you serve on the Board of Trustees?

Dr. Mason: No, but Judith Christie and I were appointed as advisors and, in this capacity, we were responsible for the newsletter, The Court Legacy, planning meetings, recommending speakers for Court Society annual meetings and assisting the officers.

Dr. Jones: Did Judge Cook ask you to continue your involvement in the Court's History program?

Dr. Mason: Yes, he asked me, along with Judith Christie, to review all of the records of the Court not assigned for transfer to the regional Federal Records Center in Chicago as well as the personal papers of those retired and active judges whose records were stored in Court facilities.

Dr. Jones: Explain the scope of the personal papers of the judges.

Dr. Mason: The records of the Court committees on which the judges served, were one group which were considered personal. Several of the judges retained records that related to their careers prior to their appointment to the Court. The voluminous records of Judge Horace Gilmore, for example, included his papers as Attorney General of Michigan and his close personal relationship with Governor G. Mennen Williams. He had made no plans to preserve his records so he transferred them to the Court's storage facilities.

Judith Christie and I prepared an inventory of the papers of other U.S. District Court Judges which revealed that only a few of the Court judges had found a “home” for their personal papers. The University of Michigan and the Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library were the depositories of several such collections but most remained in private hands.

Dr. Jones: What was the reaction of Judge Cook and his colleagues to your findings?

Dr. Mason: They wanted advice on the options facing the retired and current judges in finding a depository for their records. To assist them, I made an inventory of the papers of all Michigan U. S. District judges that had been placed in an archives. In addition, I shared this information with the judges and the various archives in Michigan. Also, I advised the judges, especially those who had their records stored in the basement area of the Court, about the archival depositories in Michigan which might be interested in their records.

Dr. Jones: Did the Wayne State Archives have an interest in the papers of any of the Judges?

Dr. Mason: Yes, we contacted several judges including Judge Horace Gilmore, whom I mentioned earlier. Wade Mc Cree was another judge whose papers we secured for the Wayne State University Archives.

Dr. Jones: I have a lot of questions about Judge McCree, so, let's discuss him later. For now, let's continue with your work with the U.S. District Court. Were you involved with other projects relating to the Judges?

Dr. Mason: For several years I served the Court Historical Society in an advisory capacity. This involved planning the meetings, assisting in preparing the newsletter, The Court Legacy and recommending speakers for the annual meetings.

I was also involved in an oral history project involving the senior U.S. District Judges, a U. S. Marshal and the widows of several judges. This project was supported by a grant of \$50,000 from Judge Avern Cohn. My first interview was with former Chief Judge, John Feikens. Following a procedure that I followed in all of my interviews, I began each one with questions relating to their career prior to his appointment to the Court. Judge Feikens, for example, shared with me an account of his early childhood in a Dutch enclave in New Jersey, and his activities in the Christian Reformed Church. In high school, his parents had sent him to live with relatives in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He enjoyed this change, he told me, because it gave him more freedom. For example, he described how he would go to a local movie theatre on weekends without approval from his relatives. Another account related to the visit to Grand Rapids in 1929 during the presidential campaign of the candidates, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Herbert Hoover. He was more impressed, he said, with the former

because he remained in his automobile in the midst of the crowds, whereas Hoover spoke from the balcony of the Pantlind Hotel. Mr. Feikens, of course, devoted most of his interview to his term on the court, describing in some detail the challenges and problems which he faced during his tenure as Chief Judge.

Dr. Jones: Did Judge Feikens have an opportunity to review and edit the transcript of his remarks?

Dr. Mason: Yes, he did. I gave all of the judges that I interviewed this opportunity.

Dr. Jones: What was Judge Feikens' reaction when he read the transcript of his interview?

Dr. Mason: He was very pleased with it. He told me that it gave him a more comprehensive view of his career. His secretary said that he had tears in his eyes when he finished reading it.

Dr. Jones: Did the other judges you interviewed have similar reactions?

Dr. Mason: Most were pleased with their interviews, but there was one response by several judges that surprised me. They denied making certain statements in their interview and even suggested that I had added them. This response didn't surprise me because I had found that many persons I interviewed made the same remarks.

Dr. Jones: How do you explain this?

Dr. Mason: I believe that under the subtle pressure of being interviewed, they forgot that they had made such remarks.

Dr. Jones: Did you find these interviews with the court judges of value? Also did they provide information that added to the history and development of the court as well as their careers?

Dr. Mason: Yes, definitely.

Dr. Jones: Were any of the interviews challenging?

Dr. Mason: Judge Horace Gilmore, for example. Aside from the fact that he was seldom on time for his interview, he made it difficult for the transcriber to understand some of his remarks while he was eating his lunch during the interviews. Also, his habit of tapping the microphone with his pen did not endear him to the transcriber.

The transcriber was also perplexed with the interview that I conducted with the widow of Judge Orville Freeman. Mrs. Freeman had a small dog perched on her lap to whom she talked to during the interview. At first, the transcriber chided me for not mentioning the name of the third person in the room and was even more upset that I had not mentioned that it was a dog and not a person.

The interview with Judge Brody, the bankruptcy judge, provided a wealth of information about the workings of his court during his long career. He described in detail several of the important cases, one of which involved the machinations of his secretary whom he discovered was providing confidential information to a prominent attorney who was under

investigation by Judge Brody. Despite his condescending manner, I enjoyed my meetings with Judge Brody at his apartment in Southfield.

Dr. Jones: Were there other interviews that you remember?

Dr. Mason: There were two that were especially important to me. One was the U. S. Marshal, Mr. Anthony Bertoni, who was assigned to provide security for the judges. In one interview, he told me about a number of cases involving threats made against the judges and their families.

Dr. Jones: What was Mr. Bertoni's background that qualified him for appointment as U. S. Marshal?

Dr. Mason: He had spent many years of service as a detective in the Detroit Police Department. During the Detroit riots in 1967, for example, he was in charge of a special division assigned to monitor civil disturbances in the city. He told me of incidents in which his division persuaded dissident groups to abandon their plans to incite riots in the city. According to Mr. Bertoni he was prepared to arrest early leaders of the 1967 Detroit Riot but was ordered by Governor George Romney not to intervene. It seems that the Governor and President Lyndon Johnson were involved in a feud regarding the role of the federal government in providing troops to put down the insurrection in Detroit.

The other individual that I enjoyed interviewing was Judge Robert De Mascio. During several sessions he told me a great deal about his early life, his service in the U.S. Navy during World War II, the estrangement with his

daughter, his decision to become an attorney and the different legal positions he held prior to his appointment to the U.S. District Court. His work on the U.S. District Court was especially stressful as a result of his involvement in the school desegregation case in Michigan. Chief Judge John Feikens had assigned him to the case which included the public school system in Ferndale, Michigan. Judge De Mascio gave it his full attention for months. He met with Ferndale school officials, attorneys in other states who were involved in school desegregation disputes, and officials from the NAACP. He soon discovered, he told me, that he had to study the Ferndale, and later the Detroit, desegregation cases by himself. He questioned the practice of busing African-American students from one school to another which involved hours on a bus. Judge De Mascio's findings and the serious questions about the value of cross-town busing angered a number of judges who demanded his removal from the case. The Chief Judge agreed and replaced De Mascio with three judges to handle the case. This action by his colleagues on the court was a blow to Judge De Mascio which he described to me during the interview. He did mention that the attorney representing the NAACP later admitted that Judge De Mascio was correct in his findings.

I also recall vividly, that during my last interview with the judge in his courtroom in Port Huron, Michigan, I was surprised that day that he wore a hat during the interview. When I asked him to schedule our next

meeting, he replied that there would not be another interview. I couldn't understand the meaning of his announcement until Judge De Mascio removed his hat. His striking, beautifully groomed white hair was gone and he told me that he was suffering from cancer and didn't expect to live much longer. He was correct in this prediction. He died shortly after our final interview.

Dr. Jones: I can understand why Judge De Mascio impressed you. Did you share your experiences with any of the other judges?

Dr. Mason: I did tell Judge Cook and he asked me to give the eulogy for Judge De Mascio at the memorial service sponsored by the court, based on the information I gleaned from the judge during several interviews with him.

Dr. Jones: How were your remarks received?

Dr. Mason: From the comments of several judges and attorneys present during the ceremony, they must have been impressed. In fact, two of the judges who had been scheduled to speak about Judge De Mascio declined after hearing my presentation, saying that my remarks captured the spirit and character of Judge De Mascio so well that little more could be said.

Dr. Jones: How many other judges did you interview?

Dr. Mason: Judge De Mascio was the last one. I had other University projects so I persuaded Judith Christie to continue the Court Oral History Project, which she has done magnificently for years.

Dr. Jones: Did you have any further association with the court or the judges?

Dr. Mason: Yes, I did. I met with Judge Feikens several times on court-related and social occasions. The judge contacted me once for information on the construction and operation of the Ambassador Bridge relating to a case before the Court. On one occasion Judge Feikens invited my wife and I to the Court's Annual Dinner Party held at the Rattlesnake Club, which incidentally, was located next to Stroh's River Place where we had an apartment. It was on that occasion that Judge Feikens discovered that my wife, Marcia, was Dutch. They spent the evening sharing stories about their families and the Dutch communities where they had lived. I also met with Judge Cook to discuss issues relating to the Court Historical Society and on one very special occasion when he performed our wedding ceremony in his beautiful courtroom.

On another occasion Judge Avern Cohn called me (about 6:00 a.m.) and asked me to drive out to the Jewish Cultural Center as soon as possible and review the new exhibit featuring the notorious "Purple Gang" which had captured national attention during the Prohibition years. Led by a group of Jewish gangsters they were involved in many murders and attacks against their "rum running" competitors.

Dr. Jones: What was Judge Cohn's interest in the Purple Gang Exhibit?

Dr. Mason: The exhibit traced the relationship of the gang members to prominent citizens in the Jewish community causing embarrassment to several of those families and the Jewish religious groups they represented. Many

within the greater Jewish community wanted the exhibit removed immediately whereas others insisted that it remain intact.

Dr. Jones: What were your findings?

Dr. Mason: Following the Judge's instructions, I prepared a brief report that I sent to him later in the day. Basically, my conclusion was that the exhibit was carefully researched and accurately presented, although I questioned the exhibitor's decision to highlight the current families of the Purple Gang.

Dr. Jones: What was the response of Judge Cohn to your report?

Dr. Mason: He seemed to be pleased with it and thanked me for my efforts. But many of the Jewish leaders who read my report were not. In fact, I received a number of phone calls and letters criticizing it, claiming that my observations in support of the exhibit caused great embarrassment to many respected community leaders who were related to members of the Purple Gang.

Dr. Jones: The judge has a reputation of being irascible, demanding, and opinionated. Did you find him difficult to work with?

Dr. Mason: For the most part, no. In my association with him for more than twenty-five years, I learned that he was a very complicated individual. He was generous and often used his substantial wealth to support many important community programs, including the U. S. District Court Historical Society. I also recognized, first- hand, that he had a temper, which at times, he had difficulty controlling.

Dr. Jones: Can you give me an example of this type of behavior?

Dr. Mason: There was one incident that I shall always remember. At his request, I was asked to interview Mrs. Theodore Levin, the widow of the distinguished member of the U. S. District Court. Judge Cohn insisted that I talk to him before the interview so that he could suggest topics that should be included. I followed his instructions and made an appointment to see the Judge in his chambers. I arrived on time and, in the absence of his secretary, I entered the judge's office at the appointed time. I discovered that he was conducting a meeting with several attorneys relating to a windshield wiper patent controversy involving several automobile companies. When I explained to the Judge that his secretary had scheduled my meeting with him to prepare for the interview with Mrs. Levin, he chided me for interrupting his meeting. "Why can't you, with your Ph. D, conduct your own interview without bothering me?" His temper was evident, especially to the visitors.

Dr. Jones: How did you respond to his remarks?

Dr. Mason: It may surprise you, but I, too, lost my temper and reminded him that he had insisted that I see him before the interview with Mrs. Levin. I also pointed out that I, too, had a busy schedule and that he should have rescheduled my meeting. At that point, he quieted down and asked me to remain in the room until his conference had ended. It didn't take long to understand why he was upset. It wasn't me, but rather the New York

attorneys that upset him and this became clear when he asked the lead attorney whether he had gone to college and law school. If so, the judge continued, "Why have you never learned to write without constant spelling, syntax, and legal errors?" Before the flustered attorney could answer, the judge abruptly ended the conference and dismissed the participants. After the attorneys departed, Judge Cohn apologized and invited me to have lunch with him the following day. Despite his idiosyncrasies, I have great respect for Avern Cohn.

Dr. Jones: You mentioned earlier that you knew Judge Wade McCree as well as Mrs. Dores McCree. You also told me that you had met her when she was enrolled in the Archival Administration program at Wayne. You also described her role on the Board of Directors of the District Court's Historical Society. I would like you to tell me more about Judge McCree.

Dr. Mason: He was born in 1920 in Des Moines, Iowa, moved to Boston and attended the prestigious Boston Latin School followed by Fisk University and the Harvard Law School. Following service in the U.S. Army in World War II, he settled in Detroit with his wife, Dores. In 1954 he was appointed to the Wayne County Circuit Court by Governor G. Mennen Williams, the first African American to serve on that court. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy appointed McCree to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, a position he held until 1966 when President Lyndon B. Johnson chose him to join the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Court's Sixth

Circuit. In 1977 President Jimmy Carter appointed him Solicitor General of the United States. After leaving this prominent position, he joined the law faculty at the University of Michigan.

Dr. Jones: How did you meet them?

Dr. Mason: As I mentioned before, Mrs. McCree was employed at the Detroit Public Library, and in the 1970s she enrolled in my class in Archival Administration. Her primary interest in our archival sessions was to learn how to care for her husband's voluminous collection of records. She soon discovered, she told me, that this task had overwhelmed her and she then successfully persuaded her husband to place his papers in the Archives at Wayne State University. I was delighted with his decision because of his many accomplishments and his stature in the legal profession. It didn't take me long, however, to recognize the challenges of appraising and processing his collection. Judge McCree, I soon discovered, was what we called in the archival profession a "packrat." He had saved every piece of paper related to his career and every publication which interested him. These records were stored in a court facility, his home, and at the University of Michigan Law School.

Dr. Jones: Was this a difficult job for you and your staff that were involved in the project? Did you learn much about the Judge and his career?

Dr. Mason: Yes, during the many hours I spent with Judge McCree, he told me about his early life, his academic pursuits, his Army service in World War II and

his career in the judiciary. With Dores' prodding, he shared many stories about his personal life.

Dr. Jones: Can you tell me about any of these experiences he shared with you?

Dr. Mason: He told me in detail about his close friendship with Robert Kennedy who was U. S. Attorney General when Judge McCree was Solicitor General. They shared nearby offices and met often. On one occasion, Kennedy escorted Wade to a secret door in Kennedy's office which led, via a circular staircase, to a small room where Kennedy often met to discuss politics and play cards with his brothers and close friends. Another incident, which followed Judge Wade's untimely death in 1987, was when Mrs. McCree called me with the urgent request: "Would you look through the Judge's files and see if you can find his will?" I spent hours checking his files but could not find a will. This was surprising because, after all, he was a legal scholar and must have been aware of the importance of a will. But, I did find dozens of un-cashed checks relating to his service on the Boards of Trustees of a number of foundations, banks, etc. Dores was surprised and mildly upset about her husband's failure to cash the checks, let alone his failure to prepare a will.

Dr. Jones: After the judge's untimely death, did you continue your association with Mrs. McCree?

Dr. Mason: Yes, I did. I visited her home in Ann Arbor where on many social occasions I met some of Judge McCree's distinguished colleagues and members of

his family. During other visits, I reviewed the Judge's files stored in the basement of their home. Mrs. McCree also visited the Archives on many occasions to confer with the Archives staff who were processing the judge's papers.

LABOR'S INTERNATIONAL HALL OF FAME

Dr. Jones: I understand that you were also very active in the Labor's International Hall of Fame for a number of years and, during that time, you were deeply involved in projects undertaken by that organization. Give me some background on the Hall of Fame, its history and mission and your involvement.

Dr. Mason: The organization was founded in Detroit in the 1970s by a group of officers of several international unions and other individuals who wanted to give recognition to the men and women who made major contributions to the labor movement. Richard Cordtz, who was a union organizer for the Michigan-Wisconsin SEIU, was active in its founding and its early history. Later, after he became Secretary-Treasurer of the International SEIU, he renewed his interest in the Labor's International Hall of Fame. He soon discovered that the organization was now under the control of a Detroit attorney who represented several railway unions and that most of the recent inductees to the Hall of Fame were from these unions. A further review by Cordtz and his colleagues revealed that many who were selected

did not meet the established standards and criteria for election to the Labor Hall of Fame. Mr. Cordtz also discovered that the attorney had received substantial income from the unions representing the inductees and, furthermore, that he had refused to disclose financial information of the Hall of Fame.

Dr. Jones: How did you become involved in this dispute?

Dr. Mason: At the recommendation of Mr. Cordtz, I was elected to the Board of Trustees and worked with him and to investigate the financial operation of the organization. We hired a prominent Detroit labor attorney to assist us in our endeavors and to elect a new Board of Trustees. We were successful in these endeavors and in 1990 Cordtz was made Chair of the organization.

Dr. Jones: After a new board was in place, what were your responsibilities?

Dr. Mason: I was appointed by the board to chair the Selection Committee and serve with Dick Cordtz to raise money for the Hall of Fame's operating expenses. For the former assignment, I contacted a number of unions, labor archives, labor historians, and other knowledgeable individuals and asked for nominations for review by the Selection Committee. We also established a new policy to be considered for selection: the nominee must have been deceased for five years.

Dr. Jones: Who served on the Selection Committee?

Dr. Mason: Among those who served in this capacity were Douglas Fraser, retired President of the UAW; Douglas Holbrook, Secretary-Treasurer of the American Postal Workers; the Secretary-Treasurer of the AFL-CIO, and Irving Bluestone, retired Vice-President of the UAW.

Another duty I had was to prepare biographical information on the candidates and to aid the Selection Committee in their deliberations. In addition, I worked closely with Richard Cordtz in raising funds for our operating expenses, which also involved the printing and mailing of a newsletter, the hotel expenditures for the annual meetings, the preparation of an exhibit highlighting the careers of the inductees and a suitable plaque for each of the inductees. If the inductees did not get the financial support from the union that they represented, the Hall of Fame paid for their travel and hotel expenses to attend the Induction ceremony. In addition to these expenses, the Hall of Fame paid an annual retainer for legal services.

Dr. Jones: You said that you were also involved in raising an endowment as well as the operating expenses of the organization.

Dr. Mason: Yes, I was deeply involved in these endeavors. In addition to the annual membership fee of ten dollars a year, we contacted a number of international unions for their support. To assist in establishing contacts with the latter, John Sweeney, President of the SEIU, invited me to attend the annual meetings of the AFL-CIO held each year in February in Miami,

Florida. I was asked to assist Mr. Cordtz in contacting officers of a number of international unions to solicit their financial support for the work of the Labor Hall of Fame. Mr. Sweeney also asked me to make sure that Mr. Cordtz did not make promises or commitments that he couldn't keep. He was concerned that Cordtz might agree to support the fundraising campaigns of the unions in exchange for grants to the Hall of Fame program, and indeed, Mr. Sweeney was aware that Mr. Cordtz had hinted that he would secure reciprocal financial support from SEIU. Nevertheless, our overall efforts at the AFL-CIO meetings in Miami were successful, and we did succeed in our fundraising campaign. Cordtz and Sweeney graciously acknowledged my role in the project.

Dr. Jones: Did you enjoy the AFL-CIO Conventions?

Dr. Mason: Yes, very much so, for several reasons. First, I enjoyed meeting many of the union leaders during the fundraising sessions for the Hall of Fame program but also being a guest of Mr. Sweeney at several luncheons and dinners. Second, I was able to establish contacts with officials of several unions whose historical records I had been trying to obtain for the Reuther Library, and finally, despite the hectic schedule, I was able to enjoy the warm, sunny, Miami climate, especially when I heard the reports of snow and sub-zero temperatures in Detroit. But, I was willing to make the sacrifice!

Dr. Jones: In addition to fundraising, what other responsibilities did you have?

Dr. Mason: The selection of inductees and the planning of the annual meeting were two of my major responsibilities. For the former, I contacted a wide variety of organizations and individuals for their recommendations. These included unions, labor archives and research libraries, historians, women's groups, and labor journalists, etc. I provided them with the Labor Hall of Fame program and mission, a list of previous inductees, and the criteria for selection. I requested biographical information and reasons for the nomination. After I received recommendations from these sources and checked to see that our criteria were met, I prepared a short list of seven or eight candidates for review by the Selection Committee. From that list, we usually selected the top four.

The next step was to contact the proposed inductees and the unions or organizations they represented. I then prepared press releases for appropriate newspapers and a brochure with biographical information on the inductees along with details of the Hall of Fame's annual meeting where the awards were presented. After choosing the site of the annual meeting, we selected a union-endorsed hotel, or union facility, such as the spacious Ford-UAW facility in Detroit, a caterer, and selected a dinner menu.

Dr. Jones: Where were the sites of the annual meetings?

Dr. Mason: During my active years, they were held in Detroit, New York City, Washington, D.C. and San Francisco.

Other duties included making travel and hotel accommodations for the inductees and Hall of Fame trustees. With the aid of the staff of the Reuther Library, a special standing exhibit was prepared featuring the inductees.

Another challenge was the preparation of the dining area and the seating arrangements for the speakers and special guests. We usually had an overflow of guests who wanted to be seated at the speakers table. There was one notable exception, and that was the evening that the late Jimmy Hoffa was scheduled for induction into the Hall of Fame.

The meeting coincided with a contentious and violent dispute between the Teamsters and their rival, the Teamsters for a Democratic Union. James P. Hoffa, the President of the Teamsters, was scheduled to accept the Award on behalf of his father, James R. Hoffa. The meeting, held at the Westin Hotel in Detroit, involved the largest turnout ever sponsored by the Hall of Fame. More than a thousand guests, mostly Teamsters, were in attendance from all parts of the U. S. I was delighted with the turnout but soon became alarmed when I noticed a large contingent of Detroit and State police in attendance. My concern was heightened when several individuals assigned to seats at the speakers table asked to be excused and then found other seats. The message was even more apparent when several assigned to seats at the speakers table, including Douglas Fraser and John Sweeney, asked to have their seats changed so that they

wouldn't be seated near James Hoffa, who was accepting the award for his father. I soon realized the seriousness of the situation when a dispute broke out at one of the tables prompting the police to rush to the table and escort the troublemaker out of the room. This interruption sparked a more serious situation when a dozen Teamsters drew weapons to offer protection for Jimmy Hoffa who was speaking to the audience. I felt relieved that I was also seated at the end of the speakers table.

Dr. Jones: How long were you active in the Hall of Fame?

Dr. Mason: After Richard Cordtz died, I lost interest, especially since several of the board members had lost sight of the mission of the program.

GREAT LAKES MARITIME INSTITUTE

Dr. Jones: The Great Lakes Maritime Institute was another organization in which you were involved for a number of years. Give me some background information about the Institute and how you became involved with it.

Dr. Mason: The Great Lakes Maritime Institute had its headquarters at the Dossin Maritime Museum situated on Belle Isle in Detroit. The museum was operated and staffed by the Detroit Historical Society. The Maritime Institute had its own board of trustees, on which I served as a member for a number of years until I moved from Detroit. As I recall, I was introduced to the program of the Institute by Malcolm McAdam, who was a good

friend and neighbor of mine in Dearborn. He was an audiologist employed by the Oakland County School Department. He was also the “leading light” of the Institute, planning several meetings each year, which were often highlighted by nationally recognized speakers. The Institute worked closely with other maritime organizations located around the Great Lakes, and the several groups engaged in underwater research on sunken ships in the Upper Great Lakes.

The Maritime Institute was a major supporter of the Dossin Museum, assisting with the funding and preparation of exhibits, and other major site improvements. For example, the Institute provided funds for the construction of a secure parking lot adjacent to the museum. As I mentioned in an earlier interview, the Institute assisted Mal Sellars, the weather reporter on Channel 4, in raising the anchor that had been lost in the Detroit River from the famous ore carrier The Edmund Fitzgerald. The Museum benefitted financially from the televised coverage of the raising of the anchor and its placement on the grounds of the Dossin Museum.

Dr. Jones: How long did you serve on the Board of Trustees of the Institute?

Dr. Mason: Until about 2003 when I moved from Detroit to Arizona and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

As you may recall from an earlier interview, as a result of my work on the Edmund Fitzgerald project, I met Henry Maldonado, the Vice-President of NBC Channel 4 in Detroit. My contact with him resulted in the Television

Series, "Detroit—Our Story," and my work with Carmen Harlan and Devin Scillion. My involvement with Henry Maldonado led to an interesting personal incident. In the summer of 1999, Channel 4 (NBC) covered the arrival of the famous "Tall Clipper Ships" which stopped in Detroit on its tour of the Great Lakes. The TV program featured Carmen Harlan and Devin Scillion seated on a platform overlooking the Detroit River. At their invitation, I joined them and responded to their questions about the clipper ships, their role in the War of 1812 and other historical events. I should mention, that I originally did not plan to participate in the event because it conflicted with a program in Eagle Harbor in Northern Michigan where I was scheduled to speak. But, under pressure from Henry Maldonado, I decided to withdraw from the Eagle Harbor program, citing the need to be in Detroit for a doctor's appointment. I must confess, that I also gave my wife Marcia the same explanation for the trip. I planned to explain the situation when I returned to Eagle Harbor. But, alas, my ploy backfired when I discovered that the "Tall Ships" event was covered by NBC, which was viewed by local residents in Eagle Harbor! I paid a penalty for that "white lie"!

OTHER HISTORICAL ORGANIZATIONS

Dr. Jones: I know that there were other historical organizations in which you were active. Can you give me a brief account of some of them?

Dr. Mason: Yes, I'll be glad to. In 1951 while employed at the University of Michigan Historical Collection, Dr. F. Clever Bald, the Associate Director, invited me to join him to attend a meeting of the Algonquin Club in Windsor, Canada. This organization had been established in 1934 by a group of Canadians and Americans, mostly from Detroit and Windsor, Ontario, who were interested in the history of the border region between Michigan and Ontario.

Dr. Milo Quaife, the distinguished historian, former Director of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Curator at the Burton Historical Collections and Professor of History at Wayne University, was one of the club's founders. In 1951, despite an acute hearing problem, he not only attended every meeting of the club, but he felt compelled to give a brief speech at each meeting. In addition to local historians, the club invited other speakers from all parts of Canada and the Midwest. In the 1940s and 50s, Hazen Kunz, who was Friend of the Court in Detroit, served as president of the club. He was noted for his off-color stories, which, were undoubtedly responsible for the high attendance at the meetings.

Dr. Jones: How long did you remain an active member of the Algonquin Club?

Dr. Mason: Until I moved from Detroit. I should add that the club decided to alternate meeting sites in the Windsor and Detroit areas. As I mentioned in an

earlier interview, I coordinated the programs in 1961-1962, which featured three Canadian and three American historians who gave talks on the War of 1812. I edited these presentations, which were published by the Michigan State University Press as *Tippecanoe and After: Some Aspects of the War of 1812* in 1963 and reprinted in 2011. In 2008, the Algonquin Club gave the Local History Conference, \$5,000 in my honor.

Dr. Jones: Did you have a role in any of the national historical organizations?

Dr. Mason: I had memberships in several such organizations including the American Historical Association (AHA); the Organization of American Historians (OAH) and the Oral History Association (OHA) of which I was a founding member. I presented papers at sessions at all of these organizations and served on their committees. I also was active in the American Association of State and Local History (AASLH) and served on their Board of Trustees for several years.

On the state level, I was a founding member of the Greater Lansing Historical Society and the Michigan Oral History Association (MOHA).

Since moving to Eagle Harbor, I have been very active in the Keweenaw County Historical Society. My wife, Marcia and I coordinated the planning and design of a new historical museum in Eagle River, Michigan. This was a formidable task involving the renovation of the community building where the museum is now located, and developing personal contacts with

current and former residents of Eagle River in search of items to be used in the exhibit.

We also conducted extensive research on the history of the town and the nearby famous Cliff Mine. In the exhibits we gave special attention to the founding of Eagle River and the beginnings of the great copper mining “rush” in the Keweenaw Peninsula. The grand opening in August 2013 was a huge success, drawing over 250 people. I might add that Marcia has continued to supervise the Eagle River Museum, and each year prepares a new exhibit. The highlight of 2017 was the installation of the Pilot House of the steamer Tioga which sunk in Eagle River in 1919.

Chapter 12 Awards and Honors

Dr. Jones: As we near the conclusion of these interviews covering your long and active professional career, it is obvious that you still maintain the same “work ethic” today as you did sixty years ago. How do you explain this commitment, Phil?

Dr. Mason: The origin of this “work ethic” goes back before 1946 when I entered college. Even during childhood, living in Vermont and Massachusetts, my parents ingrained this legacy in me. They exemplified “hard work” as one of the major objectives in life. They set an example for me and my siblings to follow, working until poor health forced them to retire. As I may have mentioned in an earlier interview, I worked at part-time jobs from about age twelve, including paper routes, working in a grocery store, sports reporter for the local newspaper *The Beverly Evening Times*, and delivering mail. By the time I had enlisted in the U.S. Navy at age seventeen, I had saved about two thousand dollars from these work endeavors. Even after I enrolled in college and graduate school, I continued to work in a variety of part-time jobs to meet expenses.

Dr. Jones: In an earlier interview, you indicated that you received many commendations and recognition for your accomplishments. Tell me about some of them.

Dr. Mason: In high school I was honored to be elected as president of the prestigious House of Delegates, which gave me experience in managing and leading an organization. During my high school years, I was active in sports, including baseball and hockey. Also, at age sixteen, I was elected Master Counselor of the DeMolay Chapter in Beverly, Massachusetts. This international young men's organization provided me with the opportunity to develop leadership skills and to participate in community activities. One of the most challenging, for example, was to deliver the main sermon in the Beverly Congregational Church for two consecutive years.

A brief stint in the U.S. Navy was especially important to me in that it gave me the opportunity to work with a diverse group of men, some of whom had participated in several of the bloodiest naval battles of World War II, and who still carried their physical and emotional scars. As a result of a promotion from Seaman First Class to Machinist Mate Third Class, during my first year of service, I was assigned to an important position in the Main Engine Room of the aircraft carrier, the USS *Mindoro*.

Dr. Jones: You ended your Navy career in August of 1946 and immediately applied for college. Why didn't you take a year off to get re-acquainted with civilian life?

Dr. Mason: I was eager to continue with formal education and get started in college. At the urging of my uncle, who was a Harvard graduate, I applied first at

that institution but I was advised that the freshman enrollment for the fall of 1946 was already full and that I would have to wait a year or two.

As an alternative, and with the assistance of my high school advisor, I applied and was accepted at Boston University in September 1946. This turned out to be a wise decision for several reasons. Boston University was an excellent institution and was located near my home in Beverly, Massachusetts. The academic program catered to the special needs of returning World War II veterans and the university had a superb history program that reflected my academic interests. Furthermore, my election as chair of the Student History Club brought me into contact with its faculty advisor, Professor Warren S. Tryon, who soon became my mentor. I served as his student assistant, which stimulated my interest in the study of American History.

Dr. Jones: Did you enjoy your years at Boston University? Did you win any honors?

Dr. Mason: Yes, I did. My academic grades were exemplary, and according to the dean of the college, I finished in the 98th percentile during my first two years. With the support of Professor Tryon and Professor Warren Ault, the chair of the History Department, I was awarded the coveted Augustus Howe Buck Fellowship. Under its terms, this fellowship covered tuition, living expenses, travel, etc., and all other expenses of graduate work at any university in the country.

Dr. Jones: You must have been pleased to receive this prestigious fellowship.

Dr. Mason: I certainly was! It was not only a great honor to be chosen but also it provided the needed financial resources for my graduate work.

Dr. Jones: Why did you select the University of Michigan rather than one of the Ivy League schools?

Dr. Mason: I did consider applying to Harvard and Yale but, as I mentioned earlier, I was advised that they had a huge backlog of applicants including thousands of veterans who had been released from military service. In my discussions with Professor Tryon, he urged me to consider the University of Michigan, which then had one of the most distinguished History faculties in the country including such eminent scholars as Arthur Boak, Preston Slawson, Vernor Crane, Dwight Dumond, Lewis Vander Velde, Gerald Brown, and Sidney Fine. Additionally, Lewis Vander Velde, the Chair of the History Department, was a good friend of Professor Tryon from the time they were graduate students at Harvard. I was accepted within two weeks for the fall term in 1950.

Dr. Jones: How did you adjust to life in the Midwest?

Dr. Mason: As I recall, my initial reaction to Ann Arbor was mixed. I had worked with a diverse group of colleagues in the Navy but they were from all parts of the United States. Ann Arbor, I found, was more provincial. As I mentioned in an earlier interview, I was not prepared for the mannerisms of mid-westerners and the way they talked. Furthermore, I was shocked to discover that the History Department was in a state of turmoil.

Professors Dumond and Crane were at odds because the former had blocked Professor Crane's appointment as Chair of the Department; Professor Hyma had incurred the wrath of the Board of Governors and University officials for his espousal of spiritualism as a reliable resource in the teaching and study of the Protestant Reformation. The public spectacle of his feud with "Mother Lee," the head of the Spiritual Church in Detroit, and Professor Hyma's strange classroom behavior confirmed that he was suffering from serious mental problems. This was the Department that I had innocently selected for my graduate work.

Dr. Jones: You have given me an excellent account of what you faced when you arrived at the University of Michigan. You must have survived the difficulties you faced because you completed your PhD in five years and secured your first full-time job in 1953. During your Ann Arbor years, did you receive any recognition for your efforts?

Dr. Mason: I did face one major challenge, that Boston University changed its policy relating to the Buck Fellowship. After my first year at the University of Michigan I could no longer be a Buck Fellow unless I was enrolled at Boston University. This new policy came as a surprise but I understood why Boston University made this change. This put an added burden on me because I had to find other means to finance my education. I did this by first working in a local restaurant, later as a graduate assistant to Dr. Vander Velde, and as a part-time archival assistant at the Michigan

Historical Collections. Under the circumstances, I guess you could call these assignments an “award” especially because other students coveted both positions. Also, I did receive a Graduate School Award of several thousand dollars and, with the assistance of Dr. Vander Velde, a fellowship from the Michigan Chapter of the Colonial Dames of America.

Dr. Jones: In September of 1953 you accepted the position of State Archivist of Michigan and you remained there until 1958. What were the highlights of those years?

Dr. Mason: It was my first full-time job, and although I still had to complete my Ph. D dissertation, it was a wonderful learning experience for me. It gave me an opportunity to interact with a number of key state officials and to establish the beginnings of a fine state archives program. I have already covered my archival work there in an earlier interview but let me describe briefly my other activities.

First of all, I completed my graduate work and received my Doctorate in History in 1956. Between 1953 and 1958 I was active in the Historical Society of Michigan and was elected Secretary-Treasurer and then President of that organization. I was also active in the Society of American Archivists, where I served on the State Archives Committee.

Also, during my brief tenure at the State Archives, I began research on the career of Henry Schoolcraft, the famous American Indian scholar who spent twenty years as Indian agent at Sault Ste. Marie. As a result of my

discovery of a rare diary of Douglass Houghton who accompanied Schoolcraft on his famous expedition to locate the source of the Mississippi River in Lake Itasca, Minnesota in 1832, along with other first hand accounts of this famous expedition which I located, I published my first of several Schoolcraft volumes at the Michigan State University Press. For the Itasca volumes, I received a grant from the American Antiquarian Society.

In 1956 I attended the prestigious Archival Institute sponsored by the National Archives in Washington, D.C. This gave me the opportunity to meet and develop friendships with students in the class, most of whom held positions in state, university and regional archival and research institutions as well as officials of the National Archives. Included among the latter were Dr. Robert Bahmer, then Associate Archivist of the United States; Dr. Oliver Holmes, who headed the Indian Affairs Division of the National Archives; Robert Land, Director of the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, and Dr. Ernst Posner, an internationally known archival educator. I maintained contact with these men during the remainder of my professional career.

Dr. Jones: Let's turn now to your career at Wayne State University, which began, as I recall, in February, 1958. What was the nature of your appointment there?

Dr. Mason: I received a joint appointment as University Archivist and Assistant Professor of History. For the former, I reported to G. Flint Purdy, the

Director of Libraries and the latter, to Professor Alfred Kelly, the Chair of the Department of History. The exact conditions of my teaching assignment were vague with the understanding that I would begin teaching a course in labor history in the fall of 1958. But this changed in the summer, when Professor Raymond Miller decided that his course in "Native America" adequately covered the American labor movement. As a result, I was assigned to teach a course in Michigan history as part of the off-site extension program. I did this until 1962 when the department approved the archival administration program.

Dr. Jones: Given that you had a joint appointment, how was your work evaluated?

Dr. Mason: I'm not sure how to answer that question. Professor Kelly and Dr. Purdy were professional colleagues and my work as University Archivist gave me contact with other University officials including Presidents Clarence Hilberry and William Rea Keast, and their successors, the Provost, Winfred Harbison and Arthur Neef, Dean of the Law School. I had also developed good relationships with colleagues in the History Department and especially Professor Leslie Hanawalt who was writing the History of the University. At any rate, I was well treated by the University as reflected in the promotions I received: Associate Professor in 1960, Tenure in 1962 and Full Professor in 1966.

Dr. Jones: During your long career at Wayne, you received many awards and plaudits for your accomplishments. Why don't you select a few that were most meaningful to you?

Dr. Mason: There were several that were very special to me. In 1985 I was awarded the Distinguished Graduate Faculty Award, which was presented to me at the spring commencement ceremonies at Cobo Hall. I recall that event vividly because I was seated at the Speakers Platform along with members of the Board of Governors, the President and the Provost and the recipients of Honorary Degrees. (I remember hearing Alberta Asmar in the audience cheering!) There was also a stipend of several thousand dollars. Later in the year, I received another special commendation on behalf of the Michigan Association of Governing Boards at a ceremony held in Lansing. My daughter Susan accompanied me at this ceremony.

In 2001, after my return to teaching full-time, I was given the President's Exceptional Service Award and in 2005, the Alumni Service Award. These accolades were important to me because they illustrated my standing among my peers. However, the greatest honor bestowed upon me involving the University was the Distinguished Professor of History Award, presented in 1990. I was one of seven members of the faculty who was chosen for this honor, which carried a research stipend of \$5,000 a year for research and other academic pursuits. Aside from the prestige of this award, what pleased me most was that the faculty and not the

administration made the selection. In fact, President Adamany had tried unsuccessfully to determine who received this honor. I learned later, that it was Professor Bernard Goldman, the distinguished scholar and retired editor of the University Press that had actively sponsored my election. As a footnote to this, at the dinner, held at the Community Arts Center announcing the recipients, revealed President Adamany's hostility towards me. At the end of the meal, he asked each awardee to speak briefly about their research interests and their future plans. He called on each one except me, but Professor John Reed, another award recipient interrupted him and chided him for overlooking me. Since my name was clearly listed on the dinner program, he couldn't blame the oversight on his staff.

Dr. Jones: Let's give some attention now, to some of the awards and plaudits you received other than those granted by the University.

Dr. Mason: Let me mention first, my other faculty appointments. In addition to the Department of History at Wayne State, I was appointed in 1959-60 adjunct member of the Anthropology Department, which involved teaching two seminars in American Indian Affairs with Professor Arnold Pilling. I also served on a number of doctoral committees in several departments. In 1988 after the Department of Library and Information Services decided to co-sponsor the Archival Administration Graduate Program, I was appointed an adjunct faculty member and in that department.

Dr. Jones: Did this appointment represent a more amicable relationship between you and the President?

Dr. Mason: No, that was not his motivation. In fact, it was to give him and Peter Spyers-Duran, the Dean of the Purdy-Kresge Library, more control over me, requiring me to attend Library Science Faculty meetings, serve on their committees, and have any salary increases under their joint review along with the Dean of the College of Urban, Labor and Metropolitan Affairs (CULMA). Other academic appointments included adjunct history appointments at the University of Windsor and Eastern Michigan University. In 1984, I served as "Distinguished Visiting Lecturer" at the University of Manitoba. In addition to my appointment in 1963 as a member of the Board of Directors of the Wayne State University Press, I served as Editor of the Great Lakes Series of the Press from 1985 until 2010. I also was a member of the Editorial Board of the Michigan State University Press for a number of years.

Dr. Jones: Tell me about some of the awards you received from other organizations in addition to Wayne State University.

Dr. Mason: The first significant recognition I received was for a series of *Associated Press* articles on the "Role of Michigan Soldiers in the Civil War." These articles appeared in thirty-four newspapers in the Midwest including a special Rotograves supplement in the *Detroit News*. The articles were later published by the Wayne State University Press under the title *From Bull*

Run to Appomattox: Michigan's Role in the Civil War (1964). In 1964 I received an award from the American Association of State and Local History (AASLH) for the book *Harper of Detroit: The Origins and Growth of a Great Metropolitan Hospital* which was co-authored with Frank B. Woodford, and published by the Wayne State University Press in 1964.

As I mentioned before, the Society of American Archivists elected me a fellow in 1970, the highest honor presented by that organization. In a related honor, I was elected an Honorary Trustee of the Midwest Archival Conference, which as explained earlier, I was one of the organization's founders in 1963. My election in 1992 as a member and in 2001, the chair, of the Board of Trustees of the William L. Clements Library of the University of Michigan was one of the highlights of my career. It gave me an opportunity to work closely with John Dann, its Director, and its distinguished Board of Trustees. The Clements Library, as you know, is one of the great, internationally recognized institutions dealing with the discovery and exploration of North America as well as the American Revolution and selected areas of 19th and 20th Century America. In 2011 after I retired from the Board of Trustees, I was elected as an Honorary Trustee, one of three who had been selected for this honor.

Dr. Jones: You were also cited several times by the Michigan Historical Commission, the Historical Society of Michigan, and the Detroit Historical Society for

your accomplishments. Were any of these awards of special importance to you?

Dr. Mason: The Lifetime Achievement Award presented to me in September 2009 by the Historical Society of Michigan meant a great deal to me because it represented more than a half century of commitment to the study of Michigan and its history. One year earlier, in September 2008, I received from the American Association of State and Local History (AASLH) the Leadership in History Award.

Dr. Jones: You also received recognition for your work in the Upper Peninsula, correct?

Dr. Mason: Yes. In 2000, I received the Louis Leskinen Award from the Keweenaw County Historical Society for my research and publications relating to the famous Cliff copper mine, which commenced the great copper mining rush in North America. This Historical Society also recognized the work that Marcia and I did in planning and developing a major historical museum in the Community Center in Eagle River, Michigan. In April, 2008 the U. S. Senate presented a most prestigious award to me on the recommendation of U. S. Senator Carl Levin.

Dr. Jones: Let's close this chapter in the highlights of your career, Phil, with the affair that took place on August 27, 2015 in the Reuther Library.

Dr. Mason: I would never overlook that event. It has meant more to me than any other plaudits that I have received. It was entitled "An Afternoon with Reuther

Library Founding Director, Dr. Philip P. Mason” and chaired by Sandra G. Yee, Dean of the University Libraries and Library and Information Sciences and featured introductory speeches by Gary S. Pollard, the Chair of the Wayne State University Board of Governors, Erik Nordberg, Director of the Reuther Library, and three former students in the Archival Administration program: Warner Pflug, Associate Director (retired) of the Reuther Library; Dr. Frank Boles, Director of the Clarke Historical Library at Central Michigan University, and former President of the Society of American Archivists; and Kathleen Roe, Director of the Archives and Records Management Operations of the New York State Archives and immediate past President of the Society of American Archivists. The real organizer of the event was my former administrative assistant, dear friend and advisor, Alberta Asmar. She was responsible for much of the planning of the event and provided the wonderful assortment of mementos, exhibits and gifts to the 150 guests who attended the ceremony held in the atrium of the Reuther Library. Among the guests were several family members, including my wife, Marcia, my daughters, Catherine Phillips and Susan Mason, my son-in-law, Mark Phillips, my granddaughter, Sarah Phillips Garnham, and my great-granddaughter, six-year-old, Sophie Garnham. The conclusion of the afternoon ceremony was the unveiling of my portrait, shown when I was much younger, with hair and my favorite bow

tie. Finally, Louis, I am a little perplexed! What will the university do on my 95th or 100th birthday!

Dr. Jones: Rumor has it that Alberta has already booked Cobo Hall or Ford Field!!!!

Chapter 13 Consulting

Dr. Jones: In reviewing your resume it becomes clear that you were involved as a consultant in a number of projects relating to your archival career. Were these activities a part of your University responsibilities?

Dr. Mason: Not directly, but as Director of the Labor Archives I was given twenty days a year to pursue my personal professional interests including research on articles and books and as a consultant to a number of International Labor Unions.

Dr. Jones: Tell me more about your work with Labor unions.

Dr. Mason: In 1977 I was contacted by officials of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), one of the largest International Unions in the United States. They were planning to relocate to new headquarters on 17th Street in Washington but they had discovered that they were so swamped with active and inactive records that they had little space available for staff in their new facility.

Dr. Jones: How did you get involved?

Dr. Mason: I am not certain but I assume that the President of that union, Jerry Wurf, had contact with Walter Reuther and officials of the UAW. More likely, perhaps, it was Ronald Haughton who had worked closely with AFSCME as mediator. At any rate, I was invited to meet with Mr. Wurf and his key staff in Washington and to review their record practices.

Dr. Jones: Briefly, what were your findings?

Dr. Mason: That, like the UAW, AFSCME had a vast accumulation of active and inactive records not only in their current headquarters but in various storage units in Washington. According to my preliminary review I estimated that about eighty percent of these records had no permanent value and could be destroyed, and thus providing a very significant amount of space in their new headquarters and also, resulting in major savings.

Dr. Jones: Was President Wurf and his colleagues pleased with your survey and recommendations?

Dr. Mason: They must have been, for they agreed immediately for Wayne State to become the official depository for their historical records.

Dr. Jones: What other international unions contacted you regarding the preservation of their historical records?

Dr. Mason: The Airline Pilots Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the Service Employees International Union, The American Postal Workers Union, National Association of Letter Carriers, Communications Workers of America, United Electoral Workers, and the United Farm Workers. In addition, I provided similar services for many of the regional departments and major local unions affiliated with these Internationals. For example, at the request of John Sweeney, then President of the Service Employees International Union, I consulted with SEIU Local 25 in Chicago, and the International Foundation of Employee Benefits in Brookfield, Wisconsin. I might add that several other International Unions requested my assistance but I did not have the time to

take on any additional projects. I gave priority to those international unions, which had designated the Reuther Library as their official archival depository.

Dr. Jones: I noticed from your resume that you were also involved with the AFL-CIO. Didn't they have their own archival program?

Dr. Mason: Not when I first became involved with them. In fact, I helped establish their archival program and I was the main advisor for them in planning the new Meany Archives and Museum in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Dr. Jones: I'm surprised the AFL involved you in these projects since George Meany and Walter Reuther did not get along.

Dr. Mason: There was indeed an ongoing feud between the two until the death of the latter in 1970. My involvement was due to Thomas Donahue, assistant to Lane Kirkland, then Secretary-Treasurer of the AFL. Mr. Meany's health had been declining and Mr. Kirkland had taken over many of the President's responsibilities.

Dr. Jones: Give me some background on the AFL archives?

Dr. Mason: In the 1940s the AFL did become concerned with preserving their important historical records and hired a company to microfilm their inactive records. But, unfortunately, the filming was not done properly and thousands of the images were out of focus and impossible to decipher. Sadly, many of the original records were destroyed immediately after the filming.

Dr. Jones: Tell me about your involvement in the planning of the new AFL-CIO archives in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Dr. Mason: I had worked closely with Thomas Donahue and Wesley Reedy, two key members of Mr. Kirkland's staff, on matters relating to their archives and records management programs. During my frequent meetings with them the subject of the new AFL-CIO Archives and Museum were often raised and my advice sought. They were particularly interested in my experiences in the planning of the Reuther Library.

Dr. Jones: Was Mr. Meany involved in these discussions?

Dr. Mason: No, but after Mr. Meany's death in 1981, his daughters were consulted regarding the plans and scope of the facility. They demanded that the large exhibit area in the museum-archives building be devoted exclusively to their father. I considered their proposal but I recommended that the only permanent display featuring Mr. Meany be located near the entrance of the building and that the remainder of the museum feature changing exhibits on the AFL and its history.

Dr. Jones: What was the response to your recommendations?

Dr. Mason: The Meany daughters strongly objected to my suggestions but Mr. Kirkland and the planning committee agreed with me. A compromise was worked out to satisfy the Meany family.

Dr. Jones: In addition to your work with labor unions on what other projects did you serve as consultant?

Dr. Mason: As I have commented before, I consulted with a number of archival institutions regarding theft and security issues. In addition, I advised a number of institutions on their archival programs. I don't remember them all, but there

were about twenty-five including Yale, the University of Minnesota, Berea College in Kentucky, the University of California at Irvine, SUNY University at Albany and Long Island, University of Georgia, University of Kentucky, University of Colorado, University of Wyoming and the State Archives of California, Idaho, Michigan, Vermont and New York. I also served on the Planning Committee of the National Historical Publications and Records Commissions.

Dr. Jones: You have mentioned earlier the extensive work you did with the Mott and Fetzer Foundations. Are there any other consulting projects that you can recall?

Dr. Mason: My only other consulting work related to tax appraisals of donations to several archival institutions and libraries. This involved appraisals of the papers of G. Mennen Williams as Governor of Michigan and Under Secretary of State for African Affairs; Congresswoman Martha Griffiths; a private Lewis Cass collection owned by Roscoe Bonisteel and the Medal of Honors Collection at the Burton Historical Collections of the Detroit Public Library.

Dr. Jones: You certainly were deeply involved in assisting a number of labor unions and archival and community organizations in addition to your work as Director of the Reuther Library and your teaching duties at Wayne. What impact did your consulting activities have upon the archival program at Wayne and your professional career?

Dr. Mason: As I explained earlier, the University and especially my mentors, Ronald Haughton and Edward Cushman encouraged me to undertake this consulting

work. They believed, as did I, that It contributed immeasurably, to the program at the Reuther Library and to me personally. For example, my work with the international labor unions not only resulted in the acquisitions of important labor union records but brought me into contact with their leaders.

Dr. Jones: Give me some examples of some of these union leaders whom you met and dealt with.

Dr. Mason: As I mentioned before, I had several meetings with George Meany, the President of the AFL and his successors Lane Kirkland and John Sweeney. Cesar Chavez was a close friend for twenty-five years, as was Artie Rodriguez his successor as President of the United Farm Workers. I have already mentioned my friendship with Pete and Dolores Velasco, Paul Chavez and Dolores Huerta, Jerry Wurf and Bill Lucy of AFSCME, Douglas Holbrook of the Postal Workers also come to mind as colleagues. From the IWW, there was Fred Thompson who was responsible for the Archives receiving his union's records as well as the personal files of several IWW members. I could also cite the scores of UAW members who became personal as well as professional colleagues, notably Walter, May, Roy, Victor and Elisabeth Reuther; Irving Bluestone; Douglas Fraser; Leonard Woodcock; Ken Morris; Al Haener; Virgil Collins; Carroll Hutton and Millie and Newman Jeffrey.

Dr. Jones: You also had close friendships with many leaders of the archival profession. I know you were a close friend of Robert Bahmer, the Archivist of the United States, what others?

Dr. Mason: In the National Archives, I would include Herman Kahn, Oliver Holmes, Ernst Posner, Bert Rhodes and Philip Brooks. Theodore Shipton and Harley Holden of Harvard University, Martha Bigelow of the Michigan Historical Commission, Elizabeth Hamer of the Library of Congress, Andrea Hinding of the University of Minnesota, W. Kaye Lamb and Wilfred Smith of the Archives of Canada and Lester Cappon of the University of Virginia, also fall in the group of close professional colleagues.

Dr. Jones: You were also involved in assisting international labor unions in developing records management and archival programs. Since many of these projects resulted in Wayne's acquisition of important labor collections, please give me more details as to what extent you became involved?

Dr. Mason: It began in 1962 with the United Automobile Workers after they had decided to deposit their permanent historical records in the archives at Wayne.

Dr. Jones: After the UAW designated the Archives at Wayne as the official depository of their historical records, did you contact other International Unions?

Dr. Mason: Yes, we did. In fact, in planning the labor archives program we wanted to solicit the records of other unions, including those representing white collar unions, public employees and another industrial union.

Dr. Jones: How did you proceed with this plan?

Dr. Mason: Fortunately, we had two Wayne State University faculty members who had excellent contacts with important unions; Mark Kahn, an Economics Professor and Ronald Haughton, who also served as Vice President of Urban Affairs, and to whom the Archives reported. Both were highly respected labor mediators.

The former with the Airline Pilots Association and the latter, with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, and the United Farm Workers.

Dr. Jones: Can you be more specific? How did they assist you?

Dr. Mason: As I explained in an earlier interview, our contact with the United Farm Workers was Walter Reuther. He arranged for me to meet with Cesar Chavez in Delano, California in 1966. Ronald Haughton, who had earlier mediated the UFW-DiGiorgio Company lettuce and grape strike gave me valuable insights into the leadership of the United Farm Workers. Carroll Hutton, the Education Director of the UAW contributed in a major way to our archival program. He arranged meetings with key UAW officers and board members, leaders of UAW regional and local UAW organizations and often accompanied me on such visits. His strong endorsement of our archival program was a key factor in our acquisition of important UAW historical records. The Archives owes a special debt to him and his colleagues in the UAW Education Department.

Dr. Jones: In addition to labor unions you worked closely with a number of related institutions.

Dr. Mason: Yes, as you know, our collecting scope included social and economic reform organizations, including the National Farm Worker Ministry; the Workers Defense League; the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists; National Sharecroppers Fund, Peoples Song Library, Coalition of Labor Union Women, Brookwood Labor College, Dodge Revolutionary Movement, Miners for Democracy, and Teamsters for a Democratic Union. In addition, we actively

collected the personal papers of labor leaders, reformers, women activists and labor journalists.

Dr. Jones: Please give me some examples of such collections?

Dr. Mason: Among the many trade unionists I should mention, of course, several of the many UAW leaders including the Reuther brothers (Walter, Victor and Roy), Leonard Woodcock, Douglas Fraser, Emil Mazey, Richard Frankenstein, Homer Martin, Millie and Newman Jeffrey, R. J. Thomas, and Nick De Gaetano. Other union leaders include James Carey, Clancy Sayen, Richard Cordtz, Jerry Wurf, Carrie Overton, Cesar Chavez and Arnold Zander.

Dr. Jones: Let's not overlook the important collections of women activists and reformers. Please cite a few of these?

Dr. Mason: For example, a few of the ones I personally contacted were Mary Heaton Vorse, Phyllis Collier, Edith Christenson, Katherine Ellickson, Dolores Huerta, Matilda Robbins, Mary Van Kleek, Raya Dunayavskaya, Selma Borchardt, Mary Herrick and Olga Madar. This should give you an overview of some of my acquisitions. I also consulted with several members of Congress regarding the preservation of their records including Michigan Congressmen, Charles Diggs, Senator Carl Levin, Senator Patrick McNamara and Senator Jacob Javits of New York. As I mentioned in an earlier interview, I worked extensively with the City of Detroit, the City of Windsor, Canada; the United Community Services, and the United Way of Detroit.

Dr. Jones: Starting with Oberlin College in Ohio in 1958, you were involved with a number of colleges and universities. What was the scope of this work?

Dr. Mason: Many, as I have already discussed in some detail, related to theft and security issues. Legal problems such as replevin was one of the topics especially after the National Archives inaugurated a new policy in the 1970s of recovering federal records which had been acquired by non-federal archival institutions and research libraries. Finally, I was often invited to review the programs of a number of archival institutions relating to collecting policies and practices.

Dr. Jones: I can better understand now, what you described earlier as your “New England Work ethic!”