



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

Oral history interview with Harry Hewes and  
Jay Du Von, 1964 Oct

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# Transcript

## Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Harry Hewes and Jay du Von on October 1964. The interview was conducted by Harlan Phillips for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

The reader should bear in mind that he or she is reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose. This is a rough transcription that may include typographical errors.

## Interview

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Let's go back to, in your case, Mr. du Von, to Iowa. In the context in which you were then operating as the consequence of 1929, although it must have been deeper than 1929 in Iowa, but in the circumstances with which you were confronted from the point of view of livelihood, what did you yourself see as alternative as the New Deal came into being?

JAY DU VON: Well, those days in the early '30s were pretty rough. Now, I came back from school in Europe in the middle of 1929, just before the crash, and, of course, things spiraled rapidly downward from then on out. Unemployment kept mounting. I remember first the breadlines, and then the time when there just wasn't anything. The communities where I lived were Rock Island, Illinois; Moline, Illinois; Davenport, Iowa -- were largely producers of farm machinery. They just were not producing machinery because the farmers were not buying it. Those were rough times all the way around.

I had various kinds of jobs, all the way from running advertising for a furniture store to almost anything I could get. Meanwhile doing freelance writing and not getting paid very much for it. Writing for magazines didn't pay anything. An occasional story for *The Nation*, or *Scribner's* would pay me a little bit. So I think we were all excited with the New Deal, with the prospects that things were going to change, and I know we certainly were all excited by the idea that we were going to have work projects which would include jobs for writers, artists, and musicians. It was really a breakthrough all the way around.

I heard about the projects through Virgil Geddes, who was at that time sort of playwright-in-residence at the University of Iowa. He was an old friend of mine. He told me that [WPA national director Henry] Alsberg was a friend of his, and Alsberg was going to head up this American writers project. So, I went east with Virgil to see Alsberg, and I told him about my background, and he asked me to take the job in Iowa.

So on the 15th of October, 1935, I turned up at the state headquarters in Des Moines and announced to the state administrator that I had been appointed director of the [Federal] Writers' Project. His name was Steve Hill. He had been the public printer for the state of Iowa and undoubtedly was a prominent democratic politician. He had never heard of me. He had had nothing to do with my appointment, and he was very unhappy to see me show up. Besides, he told me that there were not any writers in Iowa, and if there were, they were not out of work, and if they were, what was I going to do with them and myself anyway.

I found a rather [cool] reception, and I had to work pretty much from scratch, even to get a desk for myself, and to find out the administrative machinery for employing people and putting them to work. So it was a real challenge, but it was not a literary challenge at all. It was entirely an administrative challenge of finding the people who were on relief rolls, who were writers, or who had some remote connection with it, such as writing insurance, or teaching in a school, or something like that, because as far as people who had made their living consistently by writing, there were not very many in the state of Iowa who were out of work. So the job was to try to pull together enough people of varied skills, plus an editorial group of about 10 who were non-relief employees, who would direct the work of the others. The total project in the state was about 130 or 140 workers, scattered in centers like Des Moines, Sioux City, Council Bluffs, Davenport, Dubuque, and a few other of the large towns. They were directed by these 10 non-relief workers, who did have pretty good editorial backgrounds.

From then on it was a real tough administrative job getting things done and getting the procedures set up. I did fairly well at it because they asked me then to take on another job, the supervision the rest of the projects in the Middle West, running from Michigan to Kansas, I guess. I spent two years at that and then went into the Illinois offices as director of the project for the state of Illinois. I was only there for about three months, and I came in here as assistant to Lawrence S. Morris. Lawrence S. Morris's title was executive assistant for Federal Project Number One.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes.

MR. DU VON: So, from then on, as long as the program was in existence, I was in that central group in Washington which had administrative charge of all of the arts projects. This I found fascinating because it was an administrative job of extreme complexity with a great many nuances, both political and otherwise, which was a very difficult thing to work out, but terrifically interesting. At that time, Henry Alsberg was director of the Writers' Project. George Cronin was his associate director. Nicoli Sokoloff for the [Federal] Music Project; Holger Cahill for the [Federal] Art Project; Hallie Flannegan for the [Federal] Theatre Project; Luther Evans for the Historical Records [Survey] Project. Then we had a couple of other little federal projects that were very interesting. One was called the Historic American Merchant Marine Survey and Historical American Building [Survey] Project, which were part of our total culture, but were not exactly in the arts fields.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes.

HARRY HEWES: The Index of American Design was part of the art project.

MR. PHILLIPS: You mentioned Iowa and working out procedures. What did you mean? Would you risk something specific which would give support for the kind of problem you confronted as an administrator, since you were taken pretty much out of the writing aspects of it and were sitting on top of whatever was necessary that you had to do for 140 - some - odd people - the procedures I'm interested in are what you confronted. Was it simply a payroll affair, or the design of what to do?

MR. DU VON: Well, it was a whole range of things, such as, first, finding out what you had available in the way of employees, which you usually found by way of local relief organizations; finding out which of those were certified for relief; finding out about their skills and capabilities. There was almost a personnel job involved in this. Then there was all of the documentation for getting them assigned to a project, or a sub-project. Then there was the matter of time sheets, this kind of thing. There was the matter of actually getting the paycheck in the pocket of the worker as rapidly as possible, because, you remember this, in the fall of 1935 it was [WPA head administrator Harry L.] Hopkins' theory to get the people on the payroll: "Don't worry whether they have anything to do. Don't worry if there isn't a shovel for them to shovel with or a brush for the artist to paint with. Get them on the payroll. We'll clean up the projects later."

Those were his words. It was a time of emphasis on the pump-priming aspects of the program rather than on the actual useful work which might be accomplished. So we were working under terrific pressure from that standpoint, to "Get them on the job! Get the money going into their pockets and out of their pockets into the grocery." and so on right down the line.

This [was] what we had to do, and this was not generally understood. This was where you heard all sorts of stories come out about leaf raking. There was some leaf raking. There is no doubt about it. There were people standing around without tools. There were people without offices to work in, or without typewriters to punch, or anything like that.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes.

MR. DU VON: Part of the administrative job here was first going through the personnel aspect of it. Getting the guys on the payroll, and then you had no sooner done that than you had to develop their work for them. In other words, give them tools and a place to work and get the projects rolling. Then getting the payroll checks coming in and that sort of thing. Then fighting off all sorts of interference that you might get from other officials of the WPA, which was pretty difficult because, in many cases, they were not interested in the arts project. They were even opposed to the arts projects. They were sensitive from a public relations standpoint to the kind of criticisms very frequently leveled against the projects, because they were a little out of the ordinary.

They were newsworthy. Reporters like to pick them up and make a nice story about how a fan dancer was put on a project somewhere, or some other thing which would attract the public interest. So we had a job in trying to convince the local WPA officials in the state that we had a job to do. We knew what we were doing, and we were doing a good job of it.

Of course, with the Writers' Project our principal job was to compile the guides to each one of the states. The guide book for the state of Iowa was to be the major outcome of all of our work. And of course, initially, we were told it would only last for six months. So this didn't make our job any easier, because you simply couldn't compile and write a book of the quality and depth that was expected in that length of time, particularly when you had to train your workers and get them on the job to do what they were supposed to do.

The projects did not end in six months, as you know. They went on and on. Then it was necessary to try to work out useful by-products out of this job. Useful by-products were usually local guides: a guide to Northwest Iowa, a guide to Southeast Iowa, a guide to Sioux City, a guide to Des Moines, a guide to the Lakes, or whatever the case might be. Then trying to figure out somebody who was going to publish these things for us, because, strangely enough, there was no provision made for the publication of any of these books. There was no money

available to publish these books. How were we going to get them published? Suppose we finished them? We would ask this question frequently. "Once we finish these, who is going to publish it? How is it going to be published?"

There was no answer to this. There was no money available to publish anything. So in a way, it was sort of an opium eater's dream. We were going to write all this stuff, but how was it ever going to be published?

Well, this thing began to work out. We found we could get local sponsors to publish it. The chamber of commerce in Cedar Rapids published the guide to Northwest Iowa. Through the efforts of the Washington office, they began to get the various national publishers interested, such as Houghton Mifflin, Viking, and so on. Eventually we had a big New York publisher who was responsible for each one of the 48 state books. This business of how we were going to get published was something that bothered me all the time.

MR. PHILLIPS: Were the problems different when you became a kind of coordinator of affairs for the Midwest?

MR. DU VON: Well, no. There was a certain common - that was why I could be useful, because I had managed somehow, by hook or by crook, to solve some of these problems for the state of Iowa. So then they would say, "This fellow in Nebraska is having one hell of a time! He just isn't getting anybody. He can't convince the state people that anybody should be put on his payroll. He is having this and that and the other kind of difficulty, and we want you to run over there and see what you can do."

I would go over there and talk to the state administrator and the state director of women's and professional work with the project director, and find out what his problems were. At least I would attempt to give him an idea of how I worked them out in Iowa, and try and help him to do the same thing. So that is why I was given these other duties in these other states - to try and see if the same techniques that I had somehow evolved would work in these other states in the West.

We had little personnel problems, like one state director turned out to be a drunkard and never showed up for work. Another one for various reasons really was simply incapable of getting along with any of his staff. These were management-personnel kinds of problems that had to be worked out. This guy would have to be fired. While you were there, you had to try and find another guy to do the job and do a real job of it. So I would find somebody and make a recommendation to Washington that this man should be put in as head of the project, that he would do a good job with his background, and all that sort of thing. These were the kinds of things that I was doing during this period. I was not doing any writing at all, or research.

MR. PHILLIPS: This was a kind of roving intelligence based upon the success that you had had in Iowa.

MR. DU VON: Right. Trying to solve the same problems if and where they occurred in the other states.

MR. PHILLIPS: Was this directed from Washington?

MR. DU VON: Right, from Washington. I traveled on Washington money when I was doing that kind of thing.

MR. PHILLIPS: Even though you remained head of the writers project in Iowa, this was an added - ?

MR. DU VON: An added duty, right.

MR. PHILLIPS: Right, yes. Was the shift to Illinois a comparable thing, or what?

MR. DU VON: Yes, it was. Illinois had been having a lot of trouble with its project, and it was a much larger project than the one in Iowa. It probably had, statewide, some 350 employees, something like that. It was three or four times as large, and they asked me if I would take that one over, at least temporarily until I could find someone to replace the director, with the idea that as soon as I could, they wanted me to come into Washington to work on the art projects generally. I was only three months, I think, in Chicago. I got someone to take my place and moved on to here, where I have been ever since.

MR. PHILLIPS: This is the - you know, the kind of detail, variety that one could bump into just the way when you open a window, air flows in the room, and you never know what you are going to run into.

You said something initially, before you ever turned this on, which I think perhaps you ought to state here before we talk about what transpired in Washington - that is, the real nature and the power that you had as state administrator under Federal Project Number One. I misconveyed my understanding of it. Yours conflicted with it. Mine saying that there was in existence - already in existence - a state organization for relief, but your memory seems to be at variance to what I said, and I think you ought to put that down as a correction.

MR. DU VON: Well, it ties in with a couple of other things. The genesis of the art projects finally probably rests in part in several projects which had existed under FERA [Federal Emergency Relief Administration], under local

sponsorship. One of these was a group of writers in Florida which developed a guide to Key West, which was very successful. There were, as I understand it, several other groups of so-called art projects across the country under local sponsorship, and with varying degrees of success. When WPA came into existence, a new set of federal offices was set up all the way across the country, with state administrators in charge. The FERA state organization became merely the certifying agency to certify to WPA the people who were judged worthy of work relief. So FERA did not run any of these projects. Some of these earlier projects which had been under FERA sponsorship became part of Federal Project Number One. We operated then independently out of Washington from 1935 until about '38 or '39, when Congress changed the law and required that there should be no more Federal Project Number One, that any units at this time should find local sponsorship if they were to be continued. This eliminated the direct federal control which Hopkins had wanted and which he had actually put into effect by setting up the art projects as Federal Project Number One.

They were sponsored by the WPA itself. There was no local sponsorship. The directors were appointed directly out of Washington, usually on the recommendation of the man who was technically in charge of each project. Alsberg, in effect, picked out his state directors all over the country. He was the appointing authority, so to speak, for those jobs. This was also, as I say, a source of difficulty, because the state administrators didn't feel that they were picking out their own employees, and it was a hard job to convince them that Federal Project Number One was not a part of the WPA the way the rest of the programs were.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes.

MR. DU VON: But Hopkins felt this was necessary in order to establish the standards of quality and excellence for an experiment that he wanted to run through those programs, and it was that kind of feeling that I think he inculcated in all of his national directors of art programs.

He didn't want, for example, the writers' program to produce a series of state guides which sounded as though they had been prepared by the chamber of commerce of Dubuque. He wanted real excellence and scholarship, research, objectivity in them. This of course, also produced all kinds of hell for us from time to time. When the Massachusetts guide came out, it had 17 different references to Sacco-Vanzetti all the way through it. Everybody blows his top in Massachusetts, and I can give you perhaps a half-a-dozen different examples of the same thing. Had it been produced, presumably, under the state administrators for the state of Massachusetts, he would have had some chamber of commerce character preparing the book and would have glossed over all the things that might be unhappy, or Massachusetts might not be too proud of. The same way with the art project, the music project. For the art project, he tried to get a person with a rather eclectic taste, with a spirit of experimentation, motivation. Someone who was not completely addicted to representational art, for example, but who would recognize a very wide range of application of art and art theory.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes.

MR. DU VON: So, this was really exciting, lots of fun.

MR. PHILLIPS: Your major source of wisdom and direction in this, while you were at Iowa, or while you were from Iowa and in other Western States and then at Illinois, was Mr. Alsberg.

MR. DU VON: That's right.

MR. PHILLIPS: You had steady communication with him.

MR. DU VON: Yes, indeed.

MR. PHILLIPS: In the design of the project itself, was it Alsberg's notion that guide books would be the thing that writers would work on?

MR. DU VON: Yes, it was. I think the success of this guide to Key West was the thing that sparked the concept that we might have a nationwide series of guide books to each state of a very high quality. They were to be very similar to a Baedeker [guide] of one of the European countries; that this would be the kind of work where the whole depth to American culture that could be explored through this type of thing; that it would be something that Alsberg believed, even very early in the game, could be actually produced by national publishers and sold very broadly - of a very high caliber, in other words. This was not the only activity of these projects. As I say, there were the local guides, folklore studies, and there were all kinds of things that depended pretty much on the ingenuity of the state director as to what kind of things could be done.

MR. HEWES: The guide books were the solid core of the whole thing on which you could tack almost all things. You could have a chapter in there on the folklore of the state. You might find one particular area of the state was a terrific source of folklore. You might tell the project in Sioux City, "Well, you have finished your section of the guide. Let's amplify the section of the guide on folklore as it relates to Sioux City and see what you can develop."

You might have found several people there who had become avid folklorists in the process, and so you just let them loose in that direction. Off they would go.

Henry had on his staff B.A. Bodkin, who was quite an expert in this field, and he would help to stimulate the efforts in this direction. So from the guide books you could just take off on tangents anywhere you wanted to, any place you felt your people had the capability to go. Of course, this required a little bit of imagination, also a little bit of sense, because of the things people would say to you, like, "What have you got this guy doing here? He is doing nothing but copying inscriptions off a tombstone."

I would say, "Yes, that is right. That is what he is doing, and he is turning up some damn interesting ones, too. We are going to do a little brochure on the tombstones of Eastern Iowa." "Well, that is a waste of time! What the hell, the newspapers will hear about that; they'll raise the very devil." You had to say, "Well, we are prepared to define the work." This was a very useful offshoot of the guide, and it produced some very interesting and exciting things.

MR. PHILLIPS: I think what is implicit in what you are saying is that there was a measure of discretion reserved for the state director.

MR. DU VON: Oh, very much so.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes. That is, it was impossible perhaps for anyone sitting in Washington to determine, in the last analysis, what you could do by way of the project beyond the general theme, which was, as I understand, a package already made before the -

MR. DU VON: There was an outline, a definite outline of the guide - correct.

MR. PHILLIPS: But then, thereafter it was a matter of -

MR. DU VON: Thereafter, and in the process you could adjust any kind of angle or change you wanted to. As long as the material that you were submitting for your guide was up to date and coming along about as well as the rest of the states, nobody was going to worry about what else you were doing, if it was interesting and would contribute in the long run to the development of the basic culture, I guess, of your area.

MR. PHILLIPS: And it would be the state director who would know the name and the nature of the people with whom he was working.

MR. DU VON: Yes. In the state of Arizona, for example, they not only got out a number of books on folklore, but they started the *Arizona Highway Magazine*. Are you familiar with that magazine?

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes.

MR. DU VON: Beautiful color pictures. That is where it got started. It was an offshoot of the guide project, and all the work on it was done by our employees in Arizona, but the state highway commission paid to publish it. We had no money to publish that, so we were glad to find anybody who would publish anything we did -- the chambers of commerce, the state highway commissions, historical societies, any group that would come along and provide the money to publish it - that was dandy. I had to lobby through the Iowa state legislature the money to guarantee the publication of the Iowa guide. We also asked [the Iowa] State Historical Society to turn over to us \$10,000, I think it was, to publish the Iowa guide. But that was the kind of job I ended up with. I thought I had a writing job.

MR. PHILLIPS: You became a diplomat.

MR. DU VON: I became a jack-of-all-trades - that's what it was.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes.

MR. HEWES: You know the Oxford University Press eventually bought most of the guides.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, very shrewdly, too, because they are still very good.

MR. DU VON: They are darn good books, and for the most part they are pretty objectively and carefully done. Nobody should be ashamed of having had contact with them.

MR. PHILLIPS: You mentioned a kind of training program for your people. I may have misheard you.

MR. DU VON: No, we had to have a kind of training program for them, because we had to indoctrinate them with what the guide was all about. We had to show them the outline. We had to explain what was to be done. We had

to tell them what kind of writing was going to be acceptable. We had to diversify the work. We had to piece it up. "You do this; you do this; you do something else." Then you had to have somebody bring it all together and smooth it out. I had an assistant director by the name of Ray Kresensky, and it was Ray's job to do this kind of editorial management of the project. It was a terrific job, and he did a beautiful job of it. He was a poet, and a minister. That was his background. He did a fine job.

MR. PHILLIPS: Was this merely putting into operation, so far as the state of Iowa was concerned, an outlined program for a guide book which had already been decided upon by the central agency?

MR. DU VON: Right.

MR. PHILLIPS: But then, left to your devices and within the means of experience of the people that you had in your program, you went ahead, and so there were variations in standards, as there would be. This was simply because the job designed centrally, was tailor-made ultimately in the state.

MR. DU VON: Well, except for this, as we finished portions of the guide, we would send them in to the Washington office. The Washington office had a central editorial group, of some 20 or 30 people. They would go over these sections page by page and line by line. If they found that they were unacceptable from the standpoint of literary quality, or the kind of information that was going into it, or even the approach, they would X it out and say that this needs to be amplified, this needs to be knocked out, and so forth and so on. They would send the whole package back.

They would be entitled "Tours" across the state, with a mile-by-mile description of everything of interest along the way. Those, of course, had to be actually traveled and checked on the speedometer, so that you knew that they were good. The "Tours" package would be sent in to the Washington office, and if it was a poor job, it was sent back. Some of the material from some of the states was just unacceptable. Someone who knew nothing about writing, or guide books, was doing the work. This would be the kind of problem we would have to go out on. Somebody - well, whether I was in Illinois or Iowa, I would go out and try to straighten the thing out. Or they would send somebody from the Washington office out, and perhaps replace the whole top staff of the organization with some new people and get across to them just what the whole thing was about, what was to be done, what was the deficiency of the material which had already been sent in. So you do get a fairly uniform quality in these 48 books, which you got through the central editorial office of the project.

The diversification comes on the tangents that the project went off on, and sometimes these tangents were good, and sometimes they were bad. But it was full of fun, and at least there was opportunity to do this and to amplify certain sections of the book. There are all sorts of stories; everything from cookbooks to books of music sometimes actually came out of some of these things; books of folk songs - all sorts of things came up.

MR. HEWES: One of the things George did was turn out a big [inaudible] on the notes of the early gospel singing.

MR. DU VON: I have a copy of that at home.

MR. HEWES: I gave mine to Jimmy Street, in the office.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, what you have indicated is that Hopkins' original notion was that you put people on the payroll. One then thereafter had to confront the detail as to whether the program as operating was meeting at least the minimum standard of what was required. This put the administrative - oh, the last desk - in Washington, so far as the section of review certain parts, so that you would have a minimum standard.

MR. DU VON: Yes.

MR. PHILLIPS: Which is good. But, then, you know the nature of interest - you mentioned running off on all kinds of tangents. This would depend also, I would imagine, on the imaginative bent of the people who were on the project.

MR. DU VON: It did to a large extent. If a worker came up with an idea, such as searching the tombstones for interesting epitaphs, you'd say "Gee, that is a hell of an idea! More power to you. Why don't you spend the next two or three weeks on it and see what you can do?"

If he came up with something interesting and valuable and of interest generally in the history of Iowa and the oddities of human nature, which had some flavor and warmth to it and all that, why you would say, "This is a good project. This is fun."

On the other hand, you might have to take him off that work for two or three weeks because you were rushed pushing a certain tour through that area.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes.

MR. DU VON: So there was a lot of leeway, but at the same time there was adherence to the national standard of the project.

MR. PHILLIPS: Did you get much in the way of visits from Alsberg, or Hopkins?

MR. DU VON: Hopkins was in Iowa twice when I was in Iowa. Alsberg, I don't think ever got out to Iowa at all. His field supervisor was Lawrence Morris. He was out there at least two or three times, in fact. Then I took over his job when he became head of Federal Project Number One here in Washington. I took over his job as field supervisor for those Middle Western states that I mentioned. Later on I went in to work for him.

MR. PHILLIPS: On Federal Project Number One?

MR. DU VON: Yes. We were housed in the Old McLean Mansion, 1500 I Street. My wife did a very interesting story about the project, which she sold to the Junior League magazine, with some very interesting illustrations of the people at work and the kind of quarters we lived in. If you ever run into that in your bibliography, you might make a note of it.

MR. PHILLIPS: Ah, yes. It might come out on the tape. I think one thing you can give insight to is the amount of time that one spent on this. This is all lost, you know. This nine-to-five approach, or this steam-heat approach to living that we have now, is not symptomatic of what was then in existence. I think that worth a word.

MR. HEWES: It would occur to somebody about a quarter after eight that about 14 pages on a specific report had to be on their desk by eight o'clock in the morning, and you would get it out somehow. Then it would lie there for maybe two weeks, but you would get it out.

MR. DU VON: Well, even in the field, we worked very hard. Everybody was not only excited about his job and what we were doing, and very grateful to have a job, by the way, but terribly interested in the end product of the project itself and willing to work any kind of hours to get it out. Of course, in the Washington office, as Harry indicates, my telephone would be ringing until nine o'clock at night, because the West Coast would be calling at nine at night, so I would still be at my desk at nine. This was true of nearly everybody. Nobody went home at five o'clock. It was not even conceived of. We were paid no overtime. Well, of course, we hadn't even heard of overtime at that point.

MR. PHILLIPS: Tell me this, was there any problem within the state generating statewide interest in the program through means of public relations, or the press, or stories which were planted in local newspapers, or columns which may have been printed on local history and so on? I don't know. I wondered how you handled Iowa. I don't remember whether Iowa was a Republican or a Democrat State at the time.

MR. DU VON: Democratic - Democratic initially, yes. Oh, we didn't have a public relations man as such, but the second year I put a young fellow on there who was trying to get as many stories as he could on what the project was doing. We tried to take excerpts from the guide and get them published in local papers. We got a lot of stuff in the Sunday supplement of the *Des Moines Register*. As I say, we were anxious to get everything published we could publish free, because we had no money to publish, and this was one of the things that bothered us. I hoped that, at one time, I could get a multigraph machine, so that some of these minor publications we could get out in multigraph form. We never succeeded in getting any kind of publishing mechanism of our own. We always had to depend on papers, magazines, historical groups, chambers of commerce, and groups of that kind to do the job.

MR. PHILLIPS: Was there any relevance between the work done on the writers project and others -- musicians, artists, and so on? For example, I could think of museums, exhibitions, illustrative things in schools, tours around the schools, interesting principals, boards of education, and so on. Even in local folklore or music, or folk songs, folk singing, instruments. I don't know. Is there any kind of - ?

MR. DU VON: Well, I can't speak for the music project, but one thing we did try to do was to interrelate these projects whenever we could. If we could work together -- if we could develop folk songs for the music project, we liked to do things of this kind. The art project would make posters for us - why, this would help. This worked beautifully in some states. In other states, it just didn't seem to jell at all. Nothing seemed to happen. Toward the end of the program, all of the programs were supposed to devote their entire energies to the defense effort in one way or another, and we got tied in with local civil defense organizations and things of that kind.

MR. PHILLIPS: The atmosphere did shift along towards the end, that is, away from the emergency kind of "Feed 'em" approach to the other interests that went beyond our borders, in the way of, ill-winds, let's say; so that this preparedness began to be felt in the late '30s -- 1938, 1939.

MR. DU VON: Oh, yes. That is right.

MR. PHILLIPS: Wasn't there always the fact that the funds had to be argued for and defended in Congress, and appropriations made, so that you were always on the brink, even though you were on a project, in a sense? When the scene shifted from the early atmosphere which was abroad in the '30s to the later one which was abroad just before the war, it made a difference in the approach, I would assume, which was taken, although I don't know it.

MR. DU VON: This memorandum I wrote on September 12, 1941, to my boss, who by this time was Mrs. Florence Kerr. By the way, have you got her name?

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes.

MR. DU VON: She is just out of the hospital from an operation.

MR. PHILLIPS: She told me she was just out of the hospital.

MR. DU VON: If you can see her, she is a charming, interesting, dynamic, person whom you will like very much.

MR. PHILLIPS: I will see her tomorrow morning.

MR. DU VON: Good, good! Good for you.

MR. HEWES: Let me interrupt; you saw Tom Parker Monday?

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, I did. Yes, I did see Tom Parker Monday.

MR. DU VON: Have you seen Luther Evans?

MR. PHILLIPS: No, but he is on my list.

MR. DU VON: Ellen Woodward?

MR. PHILLIPS: No. Who is Ellen Woodward?

MR. DU VON: Yes, well, Ellen Woodward preceded Mrs. Kerr as director of [the Division of] Women's and Professional Projects.

MR. PHILLIPS: Was she local here?

MR. DU VON: Yes. She is still. I understand she is not in good health.

MR. HEWES: Archibald MacLeish wrote about her in a big article in *Fortune*, that she was of a distinguished Confederate ancestry but knew nothing at all about the arts -- which wasn't quite true.

MR. DU VON: No, of course it wasn't. She was the one who had to defend the arts project before the Dies Committee [House of Un-American Activities Committee].

MR. PHILLIPS: She did.

MR. DU VON: Yes. She had a rough time.

MR. HEWES: She was a damn able person, too.

MR. PHILLIPS: Was she?

MR. HEWES: She later became one of the Social Security commissioners, one of the first ones.

MR. PHILLIPS: Oh. She had continuity?

MR. HEWES: She had continuity.

MR. DU VON: She was head of the International Affairs Division of Health, Education, and Welfare. She resigned.

MR. HEWES: She is in very bad health, I have recently heard.

MR. DU VON: George Cronin. Do you know whether George Cronin is still around?

MR. HEWES: Isn't he in New York?

MR. DU VON: I don't know.

MR. HEWES: I don't know. We thought we had Leonard Rennie for you, but he had to get away. He talks better on this point than any man you ever saw.

MR. PHILLIPS: Really?

MR. HEWES: He did the work on the World's Fair for us, in the building and the designing. He put it up, and he was our exhibit man.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes.

MR. DU VON: Suppose I have my girl make copies of this for you?

MR. HEWES: Why don't you put it on the machine downstairs?

MR. DU VON: Yes, because this is very pertinent to the point you made about the change in emphasis in the WPA as we got into the defense program. Here is the document that ended the WPA, which I wrote the first draft of.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, this is good. Yes, and what were you doing, Mr. Hewes, in 1935?

MR. HEWES: Ah, in 1935 the *New York World* had sold out. It had folded up. I was working for a little newspaper up in Scranton, Pennsylvania, until Nikolai [Esokolov, music project director] sent for me to come back here to Washington. You see, I had been - well, I've always been a newspaperman. I've been [Arturo] Toscanini's press man, and I've been Nikolai's press man at the Cleveland Orchestra. I handled his concerts, and orchestra. Well, then I came down here in '36.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, well, you've known two very fascinating people. Toscanini, among others.

MR. HEWES: I've known a third one. The two greatest American conductors I've ever known have been [Leopold] Stokowski and Nikolai Sokoloff.

MR. PHILLIPS: It is alleged I'm going to see him in California. I think he is in California.

MR. HEWES: I've known him for many years, and I've known him very well, but I don't know where he is. We have gone over thousands of miles together.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, do you know the background for the inclusion of musicians in this emergency approach?

MR. HEWES: Sure, a musician is a person who gets hungry. He also has a skill which is a very valuable one.

MR. DU VON: Harry, wasn't there also the same background that there was of the writers' project, that under the FERA there had been a few small music projects?

MR. HEWES: I don't remember that.

MR. DU VON: I think you'll find that is the case.

MR. PHILLIPS: I think in New York there was a thing called the Gibson Committee, and it, in conjunction with the College Art Association, tried to make funds available for the arts, generally construed, including acting and the theater. I don't know how successful they were, but it does indicate that there had been a kind of seedbed of possibility, so that there may have been in being, people who were thinking consciously along these lines. So that when an idea was floated, it landed in comfortable soil, as distinct from alien ground.

MR. DU VON: Right.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, you had known Mr. Sokoloff in Cleveland. Had he been in any number of cities as director?

MR. HEWES: No, he had only been in Cleveland as the director, and earlier in San Francisco.

MR. PHILLIPS: San Francisco - yes. You knew him in Cleveland? What sort of presentation did he make to you when he called you?

MR. HEWES: He said, "Hey, Harry come on down; I need you. Will you come on down for so much money?" I said, "No!" "Will you come for so much?" I said, "Yes." Money doesn't matter too much, but you have to have enough to get your laundry out.

MR. PHILLIPS: Oh, sure. He was in direct charge, wasn't he?

MR. HEWES: Sokoloff insisted that the music center, of the United States at least, was in New York, and he

rented a room over on LaSalle Street and lived in New York most of the time. I would be in New York much of the time, too. Nikolai had the idea of music for people, in the sense that I had never seen before. One day, Stokowski came in. He was head of the Philadelphia Orchestra. He came down, and the two people got talking sometime after lunch. They kept on, and they forgot to go to dinner. They talked way long into the night, the two of them, on what could be done. Stokowski was a great guy for having people in music - not social registries, but people. That is one reason why he so strongly got off the movement to put bands and orchestras in high schools and things of that sort. Assuming that the kid got some knowledge of music, he would be a potential music lover the rest of his life. But that didn't work out that way.

Nikolai came down very early in the project, and he saw the need for keeping the skills of these people as being a primary one. They might starve to death, and that would be very unfortunate, but if they had starved to death and lost their skills, it didn't matter too much. That isn't exactly true, of course, but it is on that point. I've got the figures all here, and I'll give them all to you on the various organizations.

The big men in music, Art Hansen was a big man. He still is. Mr. Stokowski, as I told you. Walter Damrosch was still living then. They were just giving their time to train these orchestras. We at one time were doing - well, more people played to more people than the Philharmonic Symphony played to New York. We charged them a dollar, I think, to get in. We could play anything that we wanted to play, that we thought was worth playing, and that is why we played 6,000 American -

MR. PHILLIPS: Compositions?

MR. HEWES: Pieces, compositions, when we were still about halfway through. You'll find all of those listed with their composers. I hope you will, up in the Library of Congress, the music section. When the government decided they wouldn't publish them, why, they offered them to the New York Public Library. They wanted them, too, but nothing happened.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, was part of the program designed to spur the writing of American music?

MR. HEWES: No, it wasn't designed to do that, but it developed in that direction. Ferdie Grofe was one of our very popular composers. During this time he would rehearse the orchestras. Then I've got a list of about 50 transcripts there of the composers forum, in which the composers would be asked questions, and the whole story of the composition of music is in them. There will be men in there like, oh, practically everybody who matters; Hanson, Hadley, all of them are in there, and those documents are all gathered together for you. You can write a big document there.

At the time, millions of people in America didn't know what a symphony orchestra was, and opera was something that only absurd rich people went to. We discovered once they had an experience with it, they would come again, and again, and again. They loved it. Perhaps they had no place else to go. Well, they had a choice of two or three places to go between the things the government was doing perhaps, but they would come to our concerts. I mean, thousands of Americans have heard Bach's B minor mass in Boston, Philadelphia, and where else it was given, and given superb performances. The critics never stunted us at all. They did a job for us. We could do anything we wanted to do, practically. We did one or two operas, for instance.

MR. PHILLIPS: Did you? Did you have facilities for the hiring of halls, rehearsal halls?

MR. DU VON: Tried to get them free whenever possible.

MR. HEWES: We got them free often, too. As I say, Nelson Rockefeller at that time had a center theater. It was a whale of a beautiful theater, which was turned over to us just on Saturdays. I think we got Carnegie Hall - I'm not sure about this - for a dollar a night. I'll have to look that up. I'm not sure of that, but it was a token fee. We rented the theater because it was our headquarters in other portions of the building, above 47th Street, 48th Street between Broadway and 8th Avenue, or 9th Avenue. I don't remember. Then we had, for our other headquarters, the old Friar's Club up on 47th Street. And everybody was so glad to help, except the communist boys, which damn near busted us up. They would just sit in, not just a sit-in strike, but they would bring their cots and sleep.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, I know.

MR. DU VON: The whole story in relation with [American Federation of Musicians leader James C.] Petrillo would be interesting to the music project.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, the union. I wondered what role the union played.

MR. HEWES: Well, mostly I knew 802. Petrillo was in Chicago. Eight-oh-two - I've forgotten the president's name -- George Boy told me an interesting story. He had played under Toscanini while Toscanini was at the Met, and

Toscanini always sings when he conducts. This guy said he always sang off-key. That is supposed to be a true story.

They were very much for us - the unions generally were. I remember Walter Damrosch speaking before the National Association of Music Teachers. He said, "Thank God for these Projects."

The music teachers were getting skinny as hell because in some places we were giving free instructions, and they particularly quoted Oregon. We looked up the records, and we never had an educational program in Oregon. That was a general education thing that they were doing out there. We made a flock of records of the better things. One typical orchestra down in Texas, in the Southern Pacific, added the line to send them all across the line, they were so good. We played in the Hollywood Bowl, of course. The Boston Orchestra took 11 of our players. The Houston Orchestra got its start with Stokowski as its conductor in the last year. They got him because they were taking our men from our orchestra in Boston from October and November into spring and would bring about 30 - I think it was 30 - they would transport down from Boston, and the Boston conductor, and that is how their orchestra got started. That is true also of Hartford, and it was true of Buffalo - a matter of community culture.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes. As a matter of service, were the orchestras taken to areas which themselves could not sustain an orchestra?

MR. HEWES: For instance, here is a typical case in the orchestra of North Carolina, that is the state orchestra. When they got together enough for rehearsals, they would play a whole state schedule, including concerts at Duke and concerts at Chapel Hill, and any other. And that lasted during the latter part of the project. What happened since, I don't know, but there are other orchestras which have been set up on a district basis, and regional basis. The point of it is that the people, once they heard them - that is, there was no snobbery about it - they just loved it.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes. Sure. And then there was this variety - you know - New York is not the window on America. I mean, it is a unique kind of thing, but what happens, let's say, in Patchpans, Iowa, or Bijou, Kansas, is equally American. I wondered whether there were tours or orchestras that might conceivably go through there, or whether there was a regional orchestra that might be made available to them.

MR. HEWES: Well, some of our orchestras, for instance, the orchestras at Scranton, and Louisberg, Pennsylvania, played throughout the anthracite regions.

MR. PHILLIPS: Sure, sure, I see. Yes, and this would be at local high schools, or at the city hall, or libraries, or -

MR. HEWES: Generally admission was charged. People were willing to pay. Instead of paying \$2.50, they would pay two bits.

MR. PHILLIPS: Oh, sure.

MR. DU VON: The main thing was to get enough money out of it to pay for the travel - you see, we didn't have any money for travel. We didn't have any money for rent. The money was to go into people's pockets. Every project was cramped from the standpoint of other than labor costs - unless the music project was able to pick up enough from admission receipts to cover the traveling expenses.

MR. HEWES: We could do that, or we could also sometimes have sponsors. Richmond had a very decent orchestra, a better one than it has now. It used to be awfully difficult to travel in buses and carry the four or six bass violins. They were only allowed three dollars per day when they were on the road.

MR. PHILLIPS: But, you did have this process where necessary, or where possible, to rely on a local sponsor to pick up that kind of cost which was not borne by the appropriations.

MR. HEWES: We got some also in the purchase of music.

MR. PHILLIPS: That's what I wondered. What about the purchase of music?

MR. HEWES: When Earl Moore finally took over, I took the thing up with him. I wanted a list of the music they had, and he didn't want to. Well, maybe he didn't want the work done, I don't know, but we should have had a list, because it's going into storehouses and is not doing anybody in the world any good. Probably it's deteriorated past use now. It could have been passed on to the organization like this if the [inaudible] started lived and remained with us. Some of them are pretty [inaudible]. I remember one program coming in from some small town in California. It said, "Secrets Farewell from Townhouse, by Verdict." And another one, "Compound Circumstances by Elger." I think you'll find most of these in Herman's book. I wrote them for him, anyhow, about how the orchestras have taken men right out of the relief orchestra, and the Boston Orchestra took, let's say, our

middle men and placed them, paid union dues enough to release them. They were that good.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes. Was there any development of the community center approach? Did music figure in this? Was it a catch-all? That is a bad word, I don't mean it. What I mean is that in the development in what is a community art center, was it limited solely to art, or did it have music ramifications? Plays?

MR. HEWES: I don't recall.

MR. DU VON: It depended on the individual circumstances. If you had a community art center in Sioux City and you also happened to have a unit of the music project and of the theater project, you would try to bring them all into the community center, so that it would be not only an art center, but all these things. In that particular community, there might not be a unit of the theater project; there probably wasn't. I don't know whether there would be one of the music project or not. There might be. If there were, this would be a place which the music project could use for its activities. This would be encouraged all the way through. It was just a question of whether it would work out that way, whether it was feasible. It was certainly encouraged.

MR. HEWES: The point of it is, that it was further well established as well as we could make it work from the central office, and -

MR. DU VON: We ran into such a variety of circumstances.

MR. HEWES: We did insist upon quality in the music, and quality in performance.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, did you have state directors?

MR. DU VON: Yes. Our state director in Michigan, the last time I ran into him, he had left Grand Rapids and had gone to Los Angeles and was manager of the Hollywood Bowl.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes. Well, this is one of the stories this whole period has to tell. I think you put your finger on it initially. It is not really the keeping alive of skills, but granting opportunity for growth, as well. So that a man could keep his hand on a violin to such an extent that he would continue to grow and keep on growing because of his opportunity. So, you know, it is like seeing one of my boys, what he has become as a consequence of being kept in tune with his skill all this period. Did you have children in mind?

MR. HEWES: We did a great deal of work with children, educational work.

MR. PHILLIPS: Was there an educational aspect to the music program?

MR. HEWES: Oh, yes, it was only second in importance to the concert to the public. That was carried on by I don't know how many states. Not all of them, but some. Particularly down South, the thing would be pretty poignant. These young sharecroppers' kids would get up and catch a ride on the milk trucks if they could come to their classes at eight o'clock in the morning - their music classes.

MR. PHILLIPS: People who ran music classes, were those who were quite apart from the orchestra?

MR. HEWES: They were teachers who had lost most of their livelihood.

MR. PHILLIPS: Piano, violin, cello, and any other instrument that would fit into an orchestra?

MR. HEWES: Yes. Some of the choral work was extremely fine. I mentioned the Bach B minor. I heard it twice up in Philadelphia - the Philadelphia organization. Although I followed music for many years, closely, the only other time I've heard the whole mass was in the WPA. They could do anything. There was nothing that was beyond their capacity. I don't think we even had to pay a rent fee for music. I don't remember anything to do with that. I mean, you know, like you pay a thousand dollars for the use of the score. I mean, everybody just wanted to help.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes. Well, your notion of the leaders, conductors, and so on, who would give unstinting of their time to work an orchestra into shape.

MR. HEWES: The conductor of the National Gallery here, Richard Bails, a very good conductor who is one of our boys from New York. He is a graduate of Julliard. Nevertheless, he got his orchestra training with us, and there are others. The one I saw recently, very important record man, a boy we had in Chicago, just came up as a musician and had this great big in for the conductor, the conductor of the orchestra. He is still conducting some place. Oh, there are probably eight or 10 of them.

MR. PHILLIPS: Gee, I remember going to Mt. Vernon, New York's public library on a Sunday afternoon to hear quartet music. Quartet music every Sunday afternoon in the '30s under this project.

MR. HEWES: Jack Gordon up in Hartford. Of course, his quartet was famous - Music Mountain.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, sure, but the notion that I could go to the library and hear quartet music, which I couldn't hear any other place and never heard it before, and suddenly was overwhelmingly in love with it. This is your point.

My other point is that a public building, mainly the library, which is usually closed on a Sunday, but for these purposes it was open on a Sunday afternoon precisely so people could come. You would be surprised how people crowded that library. Well, libraries being what they are, you put a row of chairs, and I guess they got chairs from local parlors, one thing and another, collected chairs; but there was a steady Sunday afternoon concert of string quartet music in Mt. Vernon. It was great!

MR. HEWES: Well, you still - and a string quartet is probably the most difficult thing in the world you have to sell to the person of little experience.

MR. PHILLIPS: Right, but it was like - it was a free lunch counter. It was, what else could we do? We had one ball, one bat that was broken. If you hit the ball over the fence, you were out, because the chances of losing the ball was so great. You know, they had novel rules which no longer pertain. So, what would you do on a Sunday afternoon? You went to the library. Everybody seemed to be going in that direction, and you were going to hear quartet music. They would vary sometimes. We would have a harpist play with piano, or piano and violin, or trios. There was this diet of music which you would not hear otherwise, and heck, my family couldn't afford a Victrola or the records in the '30s. This is what I meant. So I suddenly had a - you walk away whistling a tune, something that you found exciting, you know, this kind of exposure, but for this period, would not have been obtained at all.

MR. HEWES: We did awfully interesting work in a number of insane hospitals.

MR. PHILLIPS: Did you?

MR. HEWES: Yes. Therapeutic music. What the conclusion is, I don't know. When this project ended, it folded up, and that was it.

MR. PHILLIPS: It is interesting, I think, to note that in some businesses today they have music piped in. So it must have some effect, at least on, if not the insane, on those who are pleased to look upon themselves as sane.

MR. HEWES: It did have an effect on the insane.

MR. DU VON: We had one project in Indiana - it wasn't under the arts project, but it was hairdressers on WPA projects, whose function it was to operate in these insane asylums, and they found the therapeutic effect of getting these gals' hair fixed up and so on was terrific. When that hit the press, why it was like everything had hit the fan, you know, imagine wasting public money on that!

MR. PHILLIPS: Public funds on coiffeurs of insane people!

MR. DU VON: They were constantly gunning for us in one way or another in the press in those days. As administrators, one of our toughest problems was to fight off these attacks.

MR. HEWES: I doubt if the thing could be started again. I can't imagine the circumstances that would bring it back. I don't think there would be this terrific howl against it. I remember the mayor. I was talking to the mayor of Detroit one day on a series of interviews the office had me get on work. He said, "Of course we raked leaves, and we were damn lucky to have rakes. Lots of times we didn't have them." You don't hear that thing any more. The John Watchacallit Society might not approve it, but most decent people would.

MR. PHILLIPS: I think so. As a matter of fact, the whole notion, certainly down in Washington here, was reflective of what people were thinking. I don't care what the field was. "Do something! Let's move! Let's go up! Let's go down, but let's move! Let's quit standing still!" I doubt very much if the government as apparently constituted would allow the situation to deepen to the extent that it did in the early '30s. The '20s from this point of view was a wasteland.

MR. HEWES: We had some glorious presidents then, Mr. Harding and Mr. Coolidge.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, we did indeed. But, from the point of view of exercising powers of government for certain and specific purposes to aid people, period, was a view which would have made them all scream in the '20s, but in the '30s it was acceptable because the public needed it and was in favor of it.

MR. HEWES: Well, of course, when it's so hopeless and so helpless, you can't even dream about things. That's the way millions of our people were. Before I came down there, I had been living over in England for the first

part of the year, working on the papers over there. I went pretty deep. I heard a great deal of talk over there about the dole. I talked with a labor leader who had his master's from the University of London or something, you know. I remember this. He said, "So many of our workers have lived on the dole at the poverty margin and below it so long that they have lost any capacity for work." We had the manufacturers in the defense effort. In the war effort we had boys who could go back to work.

MR. PHILLIPS: Right.

MR. DU VON: This directory is fascinating.

MR. PHILLIPS: Isn't it?

MR. DU VON: And, at one time or another, I traveled in every state in the Union on these projects. So many of these names I remember.

MR. PHILLIPS: They come back?

MR. DU VON: Oh, boy. So hard and fast.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, do they illustrate the variety of problems that you had to handle?

MR. DU VON: Exactly.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, did you remain in New York?

MR. HEWES: No, I was in Washington, but my work would take me to New York.

MR. PHILLIPS: Then Sokoloff stayed in New York?

MR. HEWES: No, I was in Washington, but my [inaudible] was in New York.

MR. DU VON: He was commuting pretty much.

MR. HEWES: Right, it was the music center. The center of music rested in New York. It didn't rest on him. Besides, Nikolai liked New York better anyhow. Nikolai's whole story is so damned interesting. He got a scholarship to Julliard-Yale at the age of 13.

MR. PHILLIPS: Oh, no. I didn't know that.

MR. HEWES: You can get the full story, because I wrote it in a book called *Minstrels of a Wandering Tribe*. Do you know it?

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes.

MR. HEWES: Well, that is Nikolai's story. His family had been professional musicians for generations over in Russia, and they came to America. Nikolai was selling papers, and another newspaper [boy] said, "I saw something you would be interested in, if you can play a fiddle. They are going to give a lot of money free to anyone who can play a fiddle good enough."

He told him the date, and Nikolai had to sell his violin to get money to come to America, but he got a little fiddle of some sort. He worked, and he worked, and he worked, and he went up - I got the story from Nikolai and I got it from old Mr. Harper himself up at Yale. He went up on the day of the competition, and Harper said, "Well, my boy, that was a week ago today. It isn't today."

Nikolai began to cry. He was only 13. So he said, "Well, wait, I'll hear you play."

Nikolai took his fiddle and played about four minutes. Well, he pressed the button on his desk and sent for Richard Barker, who was then head of music up there. Barker came in quietly and listened to him and said, "This boy can't get away from us. We've got to keep him."

They gave him a scholarship at 13, and he got in the first fiddle section of Boston. Then he went abroad and studied. He came back, and the next thing I know, he was doing some concerts. Cleveland was looking for a conductor, and they got him. He hit the ball right on the head. He was a genius in taking an orchestra of not top-rate musicians and making them sound like a virtuoso outfit. Nikolai was also in the Seattle, I've forgotten, but he was there only a short time - I think one season.

MR. PHILLIPS: Do you know how he came to be selected for this?

MR. HEWES: For this job? Yes. They were looking for somebody to do it, and Nikolai was a more or less national figure. He was out in Cleveland. He held that for quite a number of years. Was there a guy there named Baker?

MR. PHILLIPS: Jake Baker.

MR. DU VON: Jake Baker.

MR. HEWES: Baker was more or less in a position to say who would get it, and somebody said, "Well, there is Nikolai Sokoloff." He says, "You mean the man from the San Francisco Philharmonic?" They said, "Yes." Baker said, "He is swell. We want him."

Nikolai left his farm out in Connecticut and came down here, and he sent for me.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, as in the case of the writers' project, was the music project designed here in Washington, D.C., before it was implemented?

MR. HEWES: I don't know about the writers' project, but very early, when the thing was proposed, Nikolai came here. He had a sort of governing board, an advisory board, with Guy Maynor up in Ann Arbor, Lee Pattison in New York, and three other men of that caliber behind him who were working at the moment on that one program. The thing caught on at once almost.

The problem was to weed out the people who would rather play a fiddle than do their daily job of work. It was restricted to the people whose livelihood rested in music. There was a lot of criticism about it because someone here could play the fiddle just as good as he could, and what's happened to him? He is working out in the junkyard. He played the fiddle incidently.

The first chair horn. First chair horn was Bruno Bioneekey. He remained first chair, but as he grew older, he passed the solo work over to Ruddy. Men like that were kept playing. The great pianist, I mean, Levine, all of them would just donate their work. Think of the young brilliant boys like Curtiss, Joulard, these two in Boston and New England. These kinds were good and would have their chance to play, and then some of the concert artists would do some of their coaching and rehearsing with those like Langherst. Then they would go on to Boston. It was excellent training, you know. They hired an orchestra to do their rehearsing. The public got the good music. I remember one of the famous old critics when we did the opera in New York. Frankie said the Metropolitan didn't have the resources to do the things as we had done them.

MR. PHILLIPS: But the policy decision to employ people where their livelihood was directly involved was one of the early things that was made.

MR. HEWES: That would be Nikolai all over. He was a very fine guy, very charming man; don't you think so, Jay?

MR. DU VON: Yes, indeed.

MR. HEWES: A man can be a perfect clown and not lose any dignity at all.

MR. PHILLIPS: That takes a rare quality.

MR. HEWES: Nikolai could do that. We were up to his house one day with some other people, and he said to someone, "I'm going to get you spanked with the town spanker."

That isn't very funny, but when he says it, it is awfully funny.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, how long did you operate on the music project?

MR. HEWES: I came down here in January of 1936, to stay until May, and I operated until 1940, I think. When the project was disintegrating, there was no need for it in a way of nourishing people any longer. Many of them were working. The defense orders indicated they were coming in, and then the war. The people went back to work. Musicians found employment.

MR. PHILLIPS: There was a gradual retreat from the project. In terms of its earlier days, there was shift in emphasis on the national plane.

MR. HEWES: From the emphasis on the matter of sustenance -

MR. DU VON: We had a lot to do with shifting that, too, the administration of the WPA. This memorandum you may want to read at your leisure. I think it will give you some idea of what we were thinking in 1941. This will give you the idea and the thinking, too. I'm not proud of the thing, but you ought to have it. It will give you the story pretty well.

MR. HEWES: That isn't the board I told you about. It was Guy Meare in this case, but that is the caliber of the people who took it. That's seriously. I was going to put this stuff together for you - I mean, with the folds in the folder. That is the - you may not want it now, but you'll want it in your background library - that is the interviews with the composers on the actual scene as their music is being played.

MR. PHILLIPS: Oh. I'd like to have that.

MR. HEWES: All I've got are clips holding it. I'll put it together for you. That's in New York, and these were in Boston, Detroit, Chicago, and Milwaukee, Los Angeles, San Francisco. But, that is a damned valuable thing. What makes the composer write? What is he thinking while he is writing? It is a good job. We had money to do that sort of thing.

MR. PHILLIPS: You did?

MR. HEWES: Yes, but I had the stenographers to take the notes.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, all of this should be in the Archives of American Art in Detroit. I'll read it over and send it on to them.

MR. HEWES: Okay.

MR. PHILLIPS: If that's all right.

MR. DU VON: Archives of American Art?

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, now the Archives of American Art currently.

MR. HEWES: I've written to what's-his-name up there.

MR. PHILLIPS: William Wolfenden.

MR. HEWES: Yes, on the day you called. Clyde Burroughs, you remember? Clyde was one of the closest friends I had back in the days when I was on the city desk of the *Journal*. We used to play poker twice a week, and we went to ball games together, and we were great friends. I know Ralph Chess, and I was more or less Ralph Booth's pet newspaperman, although I didn't work on his paper.

MR. PHILLIPS: So, they're operating in collection material along this part of American life under a grant from the Ford Foundation.

MR. HEWES: He wrote me that.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, and their purpose is not only to collect and tap the reminiscences that people may have of specific jobs they may have done, or part of a movement which they were in, but also whatever relevant papers they may have about this. There are some papers in the National Archives. This was sort of a sudden thing, and while there were certain administrative papers they have obtained, most of the stuff was a kind of play-by-ear wherever you were and make your decision on the spot. Whatever paper comes out of it by way of document is pretty ephemeral. It's elusive, so that anything that you have by way of written material will be helpful.

MR. HEWES: I have a beautiful history of the thing. It took us days and weeks to write it. Are you going to have any contact with the American Council up in New York?

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes.

MR. HEWES: Get ahold of Dan Berrick and tell him you want it. I'll write him a note.

MR. PHILLIPS: All right.

MR. HEWES: If it's stored down here in the warehouse, tell him to send someone down here after it. I don't know where my receipt is, but I've got one.

MR. PHILLIPS: Tell me this. How does the total project look from the Washington point of view? You've spent a good bit of time both in New York and in Washington. You've been down in the country, Midwest and so on. Dealing with the specifics as they came along. When you get down here and see the whole, what's it look like? Is it still so unique that there is no generalization warranted, or what?

MR. DU VON: Well, I think, for one thing, what probably struck all of us in all of the projects was the diversity of this thing the country over. In other words, like I mentioned earlier about the crusade, you could say something

was true of one part of the project, and probably it would be in one state. So, it was a very difficult thing. It was sort of like American higher education. How do you generalize about it with its tremendous diversity of public, private, and church-related and all that sort of thing.

The quality of the projects would frequently reflect the character, integrity, and imagination of the local director. He would take people, perhaps with varying and different qualities and background, and weld them together into an outfit which could do almost anything that he really wanted it to do. This also produced much of the diversity which you ran into. There would be cases where there was political influence, for example, inserted through the state administration of the WPA, which would color and perhaps harm the quality of the project in that particular state. Here, you were immediately immersed in this Washington chaos of trying to defend yourself. Individual congressman, and congressmen as a whole, trying to justify your program to the Bureau of the Budget, trying to justify your program to people higher up in the WPA who might or might not be sympathetic towards it.

Mrs. Roosevelt was a great tower of strength to us in those days. She was very fond of the arts project and supported it in every way possible. Hopkins himself did. Of course, we had periods when Hopkins would be away, or indisposed, or something of that kind. Aubrey Williams was a great support during the project. Jake Baker was a great supporter of Federal Project Number One.

MR. HEWES: We had a lot of friends who were awfully good up on the hill, too.

MR. DU VON: Yes, we did, as well as some enemies.

MR. HEWES: The first crack in the wall came when they cut off the theater project. That was cut off because of the *Congressional Record*. They quoted something from Harry Byrd and put it into this quite socialistic *One Third of a Nation* play, and Mr. Byrd didn't like to be lampooned on the stage. He got the boys together. He was the most powerful individual, perhaps, in the Senate at the time, and they cut the project out. At the time, they said that they didn't mean the music project.

MR. DU VON: That was the beginning of the end of the project. Plus the war effort coming along.

MR. HEWES: They were capable enough, but they were Reds. You see, there wasn't the same stigma against communists in those days that there is today.

MR. PHILLIPS: Not at all, no.

MR. HEWES: Many people didn't know where to go or where they were going, and anything that might make a change that might be different - and quite honest people would be pro-communists, but they would move along and so would the workers with them. We had them in our outfit.

MR. DU VON: Well, in the early days we were told absolutely never to discriminate against hiring a person because of his political belief, and in fact, it was in the law that we should not. So that we hired on the project anybody from the most conservative striped tie to right down the range, whether he was a communist or whatever he was. It wasn't supposed to matter to us. This was the first intent of Congress, that we should so operate. They were very worried that the WPA would be used as a political machine to perpetuate the Roosevelt regime. They wanted to be sure that it would be against the law to discriminate against anyone. Naturally, I think the arts project attracted more than its share of people who were liberals and leftists of one kind or another. I think it was inevitable that they would. Some of them were very shortsighted in their tactics, and it hurt the project. Plus some of these plays by the theater project. Hallie didn't believe in any kind of censorship of those things.

MR. PHILLIPS: Who does?

MR. DU VON: Of course not! So they would get things that would give offense to people. This is still one of the basic problems, of course, when you talk about the arts and government. It's still a problem today. What should the relationship be between the arts and the government? It was extraordinary that this period ever existed for as long as it did. We had all of these projects running with virtually no censorship, virtually no feeling of anyone imposing his sense of taste.

MR. PHILLIPS: Right.

MR. DU VON: Right, but encouraging diversity and experimentation.

MR. HEWES: The first attacks were from various leaders and state directors because somebody wanted their jobs.

MR. DU VON: Oh, sure.

MR. HEWES: I remember some Jewish people up in New York wanted someone up there fired because their nephew, or something, would be a better man. Nobody ever heard of him, except the family, I guess. I was up once before the National Labor Relations Board about a bunch of quibbles to this thing. Remember, Jay?

MR. DU VON: Yes.

MR. HEWES: My secretary in Miami was on a relief wage, happily married and a full-time wife, because she was a brilliant, smart gal. She had two degrees, and I fooled the Commie Boys because I said she damn well deserved more money, and it was a disgrace to have her work for that amount of money. Remember, Jay, I had all these boys introduce themselves for the record.

MR. DU VON: Yes.

MR. HEWES: I've been a reporter long enough to know evidence pretty well. I've been on some great big jobs.

MR. DU VON: One thing I should tell you about the writers project that I didn't mention was that we were under instructions from the national office that, when people showed unusual promise and capabilities, to ease off on their routine work on the guide books and to give them time to do creative work, and we did a good bit of this all over the country. We didn't say too much about it, but their duties were minimum duties along the routine lines, with plenty of opportunity to do creative work. I was just thinking about the Chicago project, where Richard Wright and Nelson Algren were working. They were doing a minimum amount work of their own. We had people like this that I could pick up from all over the country.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, so you did have this kind of discretion.

MR. DU VON: Yes, we did.

MR. PHILLIPS: So that a person who had unusual talent would be allowed to fulfill a minimum requirement and pursue whatever bent he may have had.

MR. DU VON: Right.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, this puts the writers' project in a kind of traditional individualistic sense.

MR. HEWES: Well, we would do the same thing.

MR. DU VON: This was the same with the composers.

MR. HEWES: Yes, if we found a man with uncommon ability, singular talent, we could even go so far as to get a special assignment to do an overture or something like that, with assurance that it would be performed publicly.

MR. PHILLIPS: One of the things that emerges, and it may be that New York is different than the rest of the nation, I don't know, but I suspect that it is -

MR. DU VON: I can assure you it is.

MR. PHILLIPS: That it is more parochial, in its own way, than the rest of the nation. That is, out of all these creative, individualistic, cussed people there emerges this concept of a collective approach, a joining, new ideas, thinking about new ideas. My feeling is that the nature of joining probably has certain ingredients to it, namely, a common employer - the government; the need for some social life.

Everybody was needed somewhere and the course of this exposure to - what is it - political thinking? religious thinking? - is like a safety valve, when you finally throw out ideas that you have kept inside because you didn't have anybody that you wanted to share them with, and over a cup of tea. And since you had whatever it is you had in your pocket for the first time with some degree of consistency, you made this an adult education, self-imposed, where you talked things over. You have a common grievance - you know - sick time, or sick pay, or when they began to pare down strikes. In terms of what is recorded in the press, he gave advance notice of this, that people were no longer people, but a certain percentage was going to be whacked off, come what may. Well, I don't know anyone who is being sustained in a manner to which he had yet to become accustomed who is going to take this lying down. You know, there is this kind of impulse.

So I think it is quite a normal thing to defend at long last - you know, the Elysian Fields and your right to walk in them. So it is a clouded period, I think, from New York, partly because of this organization, this collective -- these meetings. To be sure, there are some astute engineers or organizers in the crowd who have other purposes never mentioned, and for a wholly different purpose, but by and large the use of a brush to tar the WPA as a consequence of what some people may believe may have happened in New York is an unfair kind of judgment.

MR. DU VON: Yes, well, it was unfair, very unfair. If you'll read the hearings of the Dies Committee, you'll see that we tried to bring this out. We tried to explain that these things were atypical rather than typical examples of what was going on in the projects, but that it was inevitable, probably, that this sort of thing would happen in New York City, with the temper of the times.

Remember, everybody wanted to be organized at this time. This was the early days of the Taft-Harley Act, and the writers' project in Iowa organized on me and was about to pull a sit-down strike on me because a reduction in force had come along, and I had notified some of them that [what] they were doing would have to be dropped. Talk about administrative problems, those were the ones!

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes. The rough ones.

MR. DU VON: Oh, boy! Yes, that's right. They tried to blacken my name from one end of the country to the other, among all my friends, that I was a son-of-a-bitch, as though I, myself, had personally ordered this reduction in employment. I certainly had to take the rap for reducing the force. This was one of the administrative jobs. You see, I was only about 26 years old at this point, and I was taking some pretty rough beatings from the standpoint of the responsibilities that I had.

MR. HEWES: This was from the many whimsical people who we had in the project.

MR. DU VON: Oh, naturally, there were many such. We had every kind of screwball imaginable, just between you and me - every kind. This is to be expected.

MR. PHILLIPS: The purpose didn't allow you to say that you would take only five-foot-eight, broad-shouldered, hungry people, or what is it, Anglo-Saxon types, or X, nothing like that. The criterion was different. The fact that the project, once afloat and operable, the fact that there may have been a rich diversity, was a subject of criticism because it wasn't more tightly controlled -remember? Yet the grant opportunity was not by controlling it, as far as I can see, but you finding originality, creativity, and giving it its opportunity, so that you can now sit at this distance and say, "Well, it kept their skills alive." We gave them opportunity to utilize and develop their skills, but in the context in which it occurred, wow! - some of the criticism is just so mean.

MR. HEWES: You see, many, many thousands of people on the relief rolls realized that they were happy in doing what they were doing and hoping for something better. Still a little margin of terror remained with them.

MR. DU VON: Yes. That's right.

MR. HEWES: It was tailor-made for the Reds to use as propaganda.

MR. PHILLIPS: It was fanned, and they used it.

MR. HEWES: The Reds weren't all bedeviled like they are now.

MR. DU VON: No, there were lots of sincere people, I think, at that time.

MR. PHILLIPS: Drawing the relationship between you, as an artistic and creative person, and your society in the '30s is one hell of a job. I mean, to get it clearly in mind as to what your relevance to that society was - for example, there was this whole school of design. How to make the artist in tune with industrial society, which, in effect, once you put it into operation, showed that design aside, creativity aside, Mrs. Murphy the consumer, through the same salesman, determines the nature of your design. That's not original, nor creative, nor anything of the sort. The purpose was the profit motive, but nonetheless it was one of the things that you confronted as an individual in the '30s. Shall I turn my hand to this kind of job which puts me in some relationship with this industrial society? Or will I now turn my back on all of this and take the line of genteel poverty and -

MR. DU VON: Starve in a garret?

MR. PHILLIPS: Right, that is one way. The other way could be a kind of teaching gambit: I could have certain hours in which I could be creative; I might have to spend so much - you know, people had to sit down and wrestle their way through this in an effort to protect the impulses, maybe the one that really drove them, mainly the creative one. It is not easy. It is not easy now.

MR. DU VON: That's right.

MR. PHILLIPS: Except this period seemed to lend itself experimentally way beyond mere creativity, because we had experiments in the national organization of business with the NRA [National Recovery Administration], an effort that cut out the peaks and the valleys of our business index. All right, this is an experiment which is frankly loaded - only seen in retrospect - because when you get organized like this, you know, well, it is almost like a stranglehold on the free play of purchase and whatever you have by way of demand. You know, it is a way

to rig the game. All right, it may be necessary given this context. Later, it was thrown out, but it was frankly an experimental approach.

Well, take the coal fields, the Guffy Coal Act, you know, the hot coal. All right, so an imaginative miner knows he can dig down underneath the soil, and sooner or later he will hit a vein of coal. You would be surprised at the tons of "hot coal" that was marketed. It was fantastic. It shows that rather than be caught in this kind of system where I am used for a purpose which I can't design myself, to the extent that I can design it otherwise by "hot cargo," and the tonnages are fantastic things! All right, so this is American ingenuity. This, again, in the '30s. Take the change from the AF of L [American Federation of Labor]. It had grown fairly moribund as far as the industry was concerned, and the emergence of the "rank and filers," you know? The efforts in the steel industry in 1934 and 1935. Look at the torture in the attempt to draft and design what ultimately becomes the Wagner Act, [inaudible] we can now organize. We couldn't do that before, but '33, '34, '35, all this was being kicked around, so that an artist or a creative person caught in this -

MR. HEWES: I think [Arthur M.] Schlesinger [Jr.] has done an awfully good job on this. I read him twice now [*The Vital Center: The Politics of Freedom*. Houghton Mifflin, 1949.].

MR. PHILLIPS: Oh, have you?

MR. HEWES: Yes.

MR. DU VON: I'm waiting for the next one.

MR. HEWES: Well, it won't be out until next year.

MR. DU VON: Next year?

MR. HEWES: Yes, he has got the notion.

MR. DU VON: What is your own background by the way? Do you teach? At the university?

MR. PHILLIPS: My background is in the legal field. Largely administrative law, on the general theory that it is not so much what you do, but how you go about doing what you do that determines what happens. And I spent a lot of time talking with general counsels in various agencies in the government during the '30s. This was the land of opportunity for lawyers. Who wanted to go to some of the old law firms? They were discredited largely, and this was the land of opportunity. "Young men go to Washington."

MR. DU VON: That's right.

MR. HEWES: It is interesting - they say that the consumption of liquor per capita in those years must have been the greatest in all history.

MR. PHILLIPS: I don't know how useful their statistics were, but even so - so what!

MR. HEWES: The Checkerboard Room at the Lafayette Hotel had some awful good thinking done in it.

MR. PHILLIPS: It sure had. Well, Washington in this period - in every backyard on a Sunday afternoon, there was a group sitting around, kicking ideas around as to how you implement some vague phrases in a bill. And what the real meaning was and what seems or appears to be on the surface a direct prohibition. "Ours is an engineering gambit and how are we going to make this work?" There was thinking in every backyard; whether it was over tea or whether it was over good scotch is beside the point. There was a lot of that ferment of idea, a release of ideas. I'm not sure but that the pendulum swung too far in the other direction. I don't think we can have enough ideas of boldness, and in those days it was only the improbable, the bold thing, that worked.

MR. HEWES: You know something. The World Series - there was no television then - was supposed to keep you glued to the radio, had no larger drawing appeal than Mr. Roosevelt on a fireside chat.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes.

MR. HEWES: Remember all the people that used to turn him on?

MR. PHILLIPS: I know. This was, well, there was a sense of identification -- "My interests are in good hands." Did you make use of radio for the music program? Now that you have brought it up, radio was a brand new phenomenon.

MR. HEWES: We did use it tremendously in music in the small places. Of course, we would come against ASCAP [American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers:] if we got too close to the big spots. I knew Dennis

Taylor many years back when he was on the top of the world, and I'd want somebody to introduce some of our records that we made out in California perhaps - pretty good records. I'd write out something that I would suggest, and Dennis would say, "But it only costs each family in America 10 cents to support the whole thing for a year" - you know, introducing a record. Everybody was for us.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes.

MR. DU VON: As I recall, there was a little administrative requirement that Mr. Petrillo's permission had to be gotten before any records were made, or broadcasts were made.

MR. HEWES: I think so. In fact, I remember Petrillo was always a very good friend of ours.

MR. DU VON: Yes, he was, but he wanted to be notified. He wanted to say, "Listen, I approve every one of those before they go on the air, or before a record is made." He was in Chicago, but then he went to New York as head of all the musicians' unions - 802 was Chicago, wasn't it? Or was it New York?

MR. HEWES: Eight-oh-two is New York.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, but the American Federation of Musician's parent organization is in Chicago, where Petrillo was working.

MR. HEWES: I remember how that's his - I don't remember his name - he had an awfully nice little habit - after you'd been out for a long time, and he had to spend money or the union would be distressed that he wasn't taking care of things, he would take three or four of us over to Lindy's for cheesecake and things in the morning, about two or three o'clock, or something.

MR. PHILLIPS: This is the 802 man?

MR. HEWES: Yes. Literally they would - well, George Crandall went from our New York office to CBS as assistant public relations man, and later for years he was the chief public relations man. We were that high. Another one of us went as public relations chief at the Metropolitan Opera after Billy Grafton died. I mean, I remember a good many, and I know George would come down here. He'd say, "Look, you've got to take 20 tickets anyhow," and he said, "If I don't put in an expense account for this amount of money, they will think up in New York that I'm not doing my job." After the concert, we would go over to the Mayflower, which was rather expensive, have cocktails and dance until morning, all at the expense of CBS. George said quite honestly that if he didn't spend the money, they would think that he wasn't doing his job.

MR. DU VON: He would have to report who he took, more or less.

MR. HEWES: The press chief of the music project - I was legitimate.

MR. PHILLIPS: You mentioned ASCAP and BMI [Broadcast Music, Inc.] also.

MR. HEWES: BMI came afterwards. We were just about through when BMI came in, and while it doesn't have anything to do with story, but in those years or shortly after I came in AAA, which I needed badly to do, I was up in New York and talked at an AAA meeting one night, and the public relations man of ASCAP at the time had just come in AAA shortly before, and BMI had been talking to me about being their man - some of them. It never came through, I mean. You remember Walter Winchell's poem about BMI in its early years?

MR. PHILLIPS: No.

MR. HEWES: "Little Jack Horner sat in the corner and was ready for plum pie. He stuck in his thumb and pulled out a plum, and said what a bad BMI." I still remember, but oh, gosh, it was terrible for a while there.

MR. PHILLIPS: Did it affect in any way the music project?

MR. HEWES: Oh, no.

MR. PHILLIPS: No, that's what I meant, no.

MR. HEWES: And ASCAP - I didn't mean to say that ASCAP was in any way unfriendly to us, but it was just that they had certain obligations to be filled. I mean, I would be in my work as pressman. I would be up at ASCAP every once in a while. ASCAP has done a terrific amount of quiet, underneath the table, charitable work.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes.

MR. HEWES: One time I know the - I think newsmen spent over \$5,000, sort of a - not a pension and not a

retainer. Just something so you could keep up the music thing. For years, and the man makes a fair salary besides. I remember Bill Hawkins and the time he took me to the Williams Club, which is one of the sweetest little clubs in New York.

MR. PHILLIPS: Did Henry Alsberg remain head of the writers' project all the way?

MR. HEWES: Humm - didn't Reed Harris take over?

MR. DU VON: No, no. The man from Michigan, by the name of [John Dimmock] Newsom took over at the time that Alsberg left. I can't remember his first name, but that was very close to the end of the project. Probably the last year or two, something like that. Alsberg must have left around 1940, let's say.

MR. PHILLIPS: He is in New York, I believe.

MR. DU VON: He is? Is he still alive? I was asking today whether he was.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes.

MR. DU VON: He must be in his late 70s.

MR. PHILLIPS: I'm told he is.

MR. DU VON: Well, good. I hope you can talk to him, because he can give you more of an idea of the early genesis of the program than almost anyone.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes. Was he an imaginative man, easy to deal with?

MR. DU VON: Oh, yes. Very tolerant, very broad, and very liberal in his aspect. I remember one time, oh, I guess this was 1941, when an FBI man came in to see me and he wanted to talk about Henry Alsberg, and he said, "What is his basic political philosophy?" I said, "Oh, he is a democrat, new dealer, liberal. Basically he is a philosophical anarchist." This FBI man got all bothered about this. I said, "You know, like Thoreau." He says, "Oh, what's his first name?" We went through this business, "Where does he live?" I said, "Walden Pond." I think Henry was very broad, tolerant, and believed in diversity. He believed in individual talent and was responsible for this attitude of permitting us as much creative work as we thought could be justified. At the same time he was very proud of the guide [books], very insistent that it be well edited and a good job be done. That the total product of the 48 states be uniform in its format and in its approach, and in the quality of the work within it. In case of some of the very weak states, probably a good bit of the writing and editing was done right here in the Washington office to bring it up to the quality that Henry insisted on. But Henry was a charming guy, a charming guy.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, when you came in here to Washington, did you come in just on the writers' projects? Or did you - did the administration go beyond the writers' project?

MR. DU VON: Well, I came as assistant to Lawrence S. Morris, and Morris was in administrative charge of all of the arts projects. I was assistant to him, deputy to him. So we were supposed to run the thing from the Washington end, to solve the problems that were constantly coming up between these state administrations and the arts projects. We didn't pretend to direct these projects technically, but we had to get them out of all of the administrative scrapes they got themselves into from time to time.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, just like a fire brigade.

MR. DU VON: Yes, we put out fires; we tried to smooth over situations. The state administrator would come in to Hopkins and say, "I'm tired of this son-of-a-bitch in charge of the writers' project. He is a drunkard. He is drunk half of the time, and we've got to get a new man in there." It might be political motivation; it might be the local democratic committee had somebody they wanted to put in. We had to find out what the situation actually was and see whether the man should be supported, whether he was doing a good job or he wasn't. If he was a lush, he ought to be kicked out. So we tried to handle problems of that kind. By the way, in connection with the historical records project, do you have Luther Evans' name?

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes.

MR. DU VON: Good, because he is available in Washington, here. A very good man. Luther went on to become secretary of UNESCO [United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization], as you know.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes.

MR. DU VON: Terrific job.

MR. PHILLIPS: He was one of the librarians of Congress.

MR. DU VON: So that was our job, plus to see that things were relatively well managed, and we had to develop the justification of budgets and administration, worry about statistics, and all that kind of thing.

MR. PHILLIPS: But you had the - not only the writers but the musicians and the -

MR. DU VON: Oh, yes, all of the arts projects.

MR. PHILLIPS: Then whatever came up from whatever section by way of difficulty, where it had reached an impasse. I've discovered any number of these, and they are as varied as the human problems.

MR. DU VON: Right, they are!

MR. PHILLIPS: And perhaps not even well enough understood even by the participants, except that somehow something has gone wrong and it becomes a clash of - well, it is blown up into a clash of personalities. There may be some deep-seated things which never are articulated. The fact that, you know, how you can believe something is happening to your own work without your having any say in it at all, and some son-of-a-gun who doesn't quite understand what you are doing is really putting his thumbs on your eyeballs, and before you know it, you're off and running to the races. It can get out of hand.

I wondered about that now that you've told me that, until a given time, the arts projects were autonomous. It is hard enough to run an autonomous shop. It is quite a different thing when an autonomous shop is turned into something other than an autonomous shop. It creates a wholly new arena of difficulties which were not confronted before. Oh, and this goes to the lack of imagination, or the lack, or limited understanding of a local administrator who had nothing to do with them in the first place.

MR. DU VON: Right.

MR. PHILLIPS: And there is not even receptivity there, the fact that this was going on. Plus the fact that there were other drives abroad in the land at that time. There was other thinking, political thinking, America First, you know.

MR. DU VON: Sure.

MR. PHILLIPS: Or for the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, which was on the other side.

MR. DU VON: Right, right.

MR. PHILLIPS: And three cheers for them.

MR. DU VON: We also had the war in Spain going on about that point.

MR. PHILLIPS: Oh, the Spanish thing is a blot on America, but it is interesting to know that the people who passed resolutions with respect to it, and when those resolutions as passed later came back to haunt them, are in the arts field, whether it was the Writers Guild, or the Lawyers Guild, or the Artists Guild, the [American] Artists Congress, the Artists Union. But the notion that through this kind of collective thinking you could play a role, and say, "The Hell with the damned fascists in Spain!" Of the few rights that you had, one of them certainly was the right to thumb your nose.

MR. HEWES: Gerald Nye didn't help things greatly in those years either.

MR. PHILLIPS: No.

MR. HEWES: Remember?

MR. PHILLIPS: There was a clown abroad in the land out from Michigan.

MR. DU VON: Father [Charles] Coughlin?

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes. The radio priest, but another was Gerald L. K. Smith, you know.

MR. HEWES: He was almost a complete bastard wasn't he?

MR. PHILLIPS: Almost? I stood as far away from him as I am from you in California and I feared for my safety. This man had great power of speaking and great power over his flock who was there. I - you know, this was a curio to me. I went to see him with a sort of, I suppose, with a smug, self-satisfied expression on my face. You know, fresh out of college, and here is the great L. K. Smith. Finally, I was very happy to get out of there, but the

steady mounting power of intense hatred. He was a man being creative in the field of hate, and painting a portrait, or etching a portrait on the faces of his followers, the like of which I've never seen. I'm - I don't want any part of him, but the whole scene did change so much, other interests going on, but the residue was the fact that you had exposed the nation to a cultural side and a sharing in a rich variety of cultural experiences.

MR. HEWES: Which they liked.

MR. PHILLIPS: Which they enjoyed and which they didn't lose.

MR. HEWES: Which was a complete experience, new, to many of them.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes.

MR. DU VON: And there was another thing there that I know we did with the writers project. It was one of the - even ourselves in the very early days of this would say, "Kansas, what the hell is there interesting about Kansas? Dull, drab prairies. What in the hell can you write a guide book on Kansas about?"

Well, of course, what we found as we got into it was that there was no state that wasn't full of an interesting past. That wasn't full of historic spots of interest, of real beauty of its kind, in a way. That didn't have a real rich history and folklore and past, that once you got down to it, you found Kansas was just as interesting as any other one state in the Union - full of fabulous figures in the early development of the state, and so I think America, in a way, was made aware of its heritage through those books from those projects in a way it would probably have never have occurred otherwise.

MR. HEWES: Look how valuable they have been for reference documents!

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, yes, even to the point of making catalogues of the holdings in terms of state letters, state documents in libraries. It's one thing to possess them. Who can use them? Because they are a huge sprawling text. But you get a key to use in a catalogue which gives you some hint as to just what is contained in the documents. Just like opening a treasure chest, and you're right about the identification that America, the conscious identification that America had a past, and that it wasn't all plain, uninteresting, and dull. There was excitement about it.

MR. DU VON: There was!

MR. PHILLIPS: I remember little pieces in the paper coming out continuously about comparisons - what happened 50 years ago. These things came out of somebody's not merely looking into the newspaper 50 years ago, but other things which were available in the library which nobody knew we had. So, it was - it was a way in which a lot of information, a lot of joy was spread; a lot of awareness was quickened, whether it was sounds, music, singing, or whether it was the knowledge that John Jones was a painter, by God! Look what he has done. Or a traveling show came through, or you at long last could take a trip around your own state and do so with far greater certainty as to what to see and what might be of interest than you had ever before. So it really, for Americans into it, where they had been all the time without any guide book -

MR. HEWES: I wondered how many communities learned that there was another play besides *Uncle Tom's Cabin*?

MR. DU VON: Yes.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, I've probably exhausted you.

MR. DU VON: No, I found it very interesting. Are you going to be in town long?

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, the rest - let's see - tomorrow, then I'll be back on Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday of next week.

MR. DU VON: Why don't you stop in next week? Meanwhile I'll go through my records and see what material I have, now that I know the field of your interest - see what stuff I can pick up.

MR. HEWES: I'll see if I can't run down some more things, too.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, because the more the merrier.

MR. HEWES: Well, the Library of Congress will occupy you for a long, long time. I'll go up there with you if you want me to.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, the Library of Congress, I've been up there and they are putting that stuff on microfilm for

the Archives, which is helpful.

MR. HEWES: Are they doing the composers?

MR. PHILLIPS: So far as I'm aware, they have taken the whole arts program under the WPA.

MR. HEWES: Because I had files that will fill this room.

MR. PHILLIPS: Oh, did you?

MR. HEWES: Yes, I have all the works, descriptions of the work; where there was a critic for a paper, we got him. Composer's birth, where he got his academics, where he studied. It's a pretty fair little job.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, well, I'm sure that I didn't handle that expressly. Someone else in the office has contracted various repositories of material, and some of it is elusive; some of it will turn up.

MR. HEWES: It would be awfully interesting if you could get a - probably you would have to go to New York; I doubt if you would have it in the office here - get a copy of that 1936 or '37 *Fortune* which devoted its whole context to the projects, the whole -

MR. PHILLIPS: I think they have that, yes.

MR. HEWES: I think so, that would be a logical place to keep it.

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