

INTERVIEW WITH

C. L. Brainerd

by

M. P. Burg & T. F. Soapes  
Oral Historians

on

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for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library







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Ed. Brainerd  
Donor

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James B. Rhoads  
Archivist of the United States

September 26, 1977  
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This interview is being conducted with Mr. C. L. Brainard at his home in Abilene, Kansas, on May 5, 1976. The interviewers are Dr. Thomas Soapes and Dr. Maclyn Burg of the Eisenhower Library. Present for the interview are Mr. Brainard, Dr. Burg, and Dr. Soapes.

DR. SOAPES: First, Mr. Brainard, will you tell us where and when you were born and about your formal education.



MR. BRAINARD: I was born in Greeley, Colorado in 1903. The family moved to California so that I took my primary education in California and I returned to Colorado for high school education. And about that time I was taken with a spell of illness and stayed out of school for four years. Prior to that, I'd made up my mind that I was going to be a mechanical engineer and had my credits accepted at the University of Colorado at Boulder. But in that four-year interim I decided that engineering wasn't what I wanted; I wanted to be an architect. At that time there was no school of architecture in Colorado. So Kansas, being the closest, I came to Kansas to take architecture. And while I was in school there I met Donna Duckwall; she was also taking architecture, and she was from Abilene. And following graduation in 1930 architects were a dime a dozen, didn't have any use for them unless janitors were needed. So

I went to teaching at the University of Minnesota and I taught up there for seven years and, in the meantime, married Donna. And her father, of course, was connected with the Duckwall Stores. And about that time he decided that he was getting more buildings than he wanted to look after himself; so he prevailed upon me to quit my job at the university and come back to Abilene and take care of the Duckwall store buildings. So that established me in Abilene.



BURG: Your degrees had been at KSU?

BRAINARD: Yes.

BURG: They were the ones that you had from the architecture school.

BRAINARD: Yes, I had the bachelor of science degree and the professional degree from there.

SOAPES: And your teaching in Minnesota was in the architecture department as well.

BRAINARD: Yes. And, of course, here in Abilene when Eisenhower became well known and the people decided that they would like

to have some memorial to him, and, of course, Ike and his brothers decided to give the home to the foundation. And then when he started to run for president they conceived the idea of the museum and started working from there. And that was about the first time that I became involved with the Eisenhower Foundation or the Eisenhower Center in any way.



SOAPES: Had you had any contact with the Eisenhower family while you were here?

BRAINARD: Yes, through Milt. See, Donna was in school--I think she was a freshman when Milt was a senior--and she had been in school with him. And so when Milt came back to Kansas to become president of Kansas State University, Donna was on the alumni board and we got to know Milton better then. Of course, Milton was very diplomatic about it.

Donna said, "I didn't think you'd remember me at all."

And Milt said, "Well, after all I was a little older than you were."

Didn't say whether he did or he didn't. But that was where we really became acquainted with the Eisenhower family.

BURG: Now you had been too young for service in the first World War--

BRAINARD: Yes.

BURG: --and at the awkward age, a little too old for service in the second World War.

BRAINARD: That's right. I was in the high school ROTC, and the war, World War I, ended before I was old enough to be involved in it.

BURG: But you were back here in Abilene before World War--

BRAINARD: No, see I was still in Denver at that time, 1915--

BURG: I was thinking World War II.

BRAINARD: Oh, yes.

BURG: You had come back here, I assume, around 1937 or--

BRAINARD: 1937 is the exact year.

BURG: Your work here and your contacts here never brought you into contact with either Mr. Eisenhower in his declining years or Mrs. Eisenhower.



BRAINARD: No. Matter of fact, as architect for the Duckwall stores, most of my work was out of Abilene, because we just had the one store and warehouse here, and so I was working out of town rather than in town. And it was only through weekend contacts that I had any acquaintance at all.

SOAPES: Prior of course to 1942, Eisenhower was not well known. I suppose that the Eisenhower family itself was not that well known here in Abilene.



BRAINARD: No, when he came back, I believe it was '46 was the first time that everything broke loose. And of course he came back by train and they had quite an event downtown then.

BURG: Did you see him on that occasion?

BRAINARD: Yes--

BURG: And as a spectator?

BRAINARD: Through Milt. I think he was over at Manhattan for a homecoming parade or something that way and he turned out to be more of an event than the homecoming. And then shortly after

that they were having a meeting here in Abilene at the hotel to promote this whole center idea. And one of the attractions to get more people to come out was to have Eisenhower here. So Milt brought him and, as I remember it, Alf Landon, the former governor, Alf Landon was here at that time. And I remember one incident--Alf and I were talking together (I had met Alf when he was running for President out in Estes Park. He had the old McGraw Ranch for his summer headquarters and I'd met him out there). So we were visiting and so many people were talking to Milt that Ike got away from him, and he came on over and introduced himself and I introduced him to Alf Landon then. And in the meantime Milt looked frantically around and said he'd lost his brother. And he came over and he saw that I was introducing him to Alf Landon and he said, "Oh, I'm glad you found him."



BURG: So it appeared to you that that was the first time that Mr. Eisenhower had ever been introduced to Mr. Landon.

BRAINARD: That's right. I know Alf wanted in particular to meet him. Of course Ike hadn't condescended to run. See that

was before he went back as head of SHAEF over there. And so he wasn't considered as a politician then, but Alf did want to meet him.

BURG: Did the two men get into their, before Milton found him, did the two men carry on any kind of a conversation that you can recollect?

BRAINARD: Oh just the, "It's good to be back in Kansas," and "Good to meet you," and that sort of thing. There wasn't any deep thought on politics or anything of that sort.



BURG: Just a pleasant kind of meeting.

BRAINARD: Yes.

BURG: It's most interesting for you to have--

BRAINARD: Yes, yes. I was quite pleased it came out that way.

SOAPES: To turn back to Milton for just a minute. You did know him. I was just wondering--your impressions about Milton, his characteristics that most impressed you.

BRAINARD: Well, I think you probably have heard that quotation that Eisenhower made when they were talking about Eisenhower for President. Ike said, "Well, you've got the wrong Eisenhower; it should be Milton." Because Milton had had some work with Franklin Roosevelt. He was, oh, let's see, he wasn't in the cabinet, but he was on some mission for--

SOAPES: He was in OWI [Office of War Information].

BRAINARD: Yes, that's right. And I know at one of these alumni meetings somebody asked him what he thought of Roosevelt--and of course in a Kansas community where it's always Republican, and there was quite an implication to that. But Milt handled that tactfully. He said, "Well, I don't know a man that you can like so well personally, and disagree with so much."

[Laughter] So, Milt was very tactful.

And of course we were pleased because he kind of got Kansas State out of the rut. Kansas State had been, oh, sort of a stepchild, and the presidents that we'd had, Jordine worked very well, but Farrell had been just content to let things go. And Milt saw the need to get an active alumni association, get



endowment funds going, and he was instrumental in getting the state started towards better program for improving the college. And I think it was during his administration that it was changed from Kansas State College to Kansas State University.

BURG: Now you as a private observer, would you say that he was highly regarded in the state?

BRAINARD: Yes.

BURG: And the reactions to him here in town. He was, after all, the youngest of the boys--

BRAINARD: That's true.

BURG: --the last one on the scene. I wonder how some of the older town's people who had known the whole family, how they regarded him in comparison with the others.

BRAINARD: Well, I think perhaps they liked him--they knew him better than they did Ike, because Ike with his military career had been away more. And Milt worked with the newspaper; he was with [Charles] Harger on the local paper, and people knew a



little more about him than they did of Ike. And I don't know that he took any great active part in the fund-raising or that sort of thing because I don't think he wanted to push himself. But he was helpful in many ways.

SOAPES: As to his personality, you said he was a tactful person. Was he an easy conversationalist; hail fellow, well met?

BRAINARD: Oh, yes. Yes. See--I've forgotten his wife's name now--



SOAPES: Helen?

BRAINARD: Helen, that's right. When we had this rose garden, somebody had wanted to make a contribution in memory of Helen; so we put the sundial in here and, well it was criticized. And a lot of people got upset about that, that this was Ike's memorial; we don't want to get into family personalities. But Milt felt a little bit badly about that because he did want to have something there to show remembrance of Helen and he was a little bit disturbed that people criticized that. But aside from some little petty thing of that sort, I don't think there was anything that could upset Milt.

SOAPES: What we wanted to do now is to look at the way in which you did become involved with the foundation. Its beginnings, I know, were in '45-'46. When did you first have some contact with it?

BRAINARD: Oh, let's see. Well this was in '53, this, the rose garden, was after the ground-breaking for the museum. But at the time the museum was built they wanted to provide landscaping around the home and the museum, the grounds, and, due to the fact that that land is very flat down in there and the drainage is poor, it presented some problems. They had asked Hare and Hare of Kansas City to make a landscape recommendation for it, but they didn't feel that they had the money to go ahead with it as they proposed it. So they asked me if I would work with them in developing the landscaping. And one of the things that we did, we asked all of the landscape nurseries in Kansas to provide plantings for this so we wouldn't have to purchase them. I think that's the remarkable thing about the whole center is that, the major portion of it, came through contributions, voluntary contributions. So after drawing the plan,



we itemized all the plants that we needed and sent out a list to all the nurseries and asked them how many of those we could depend on them furnishing. And that became a little complicated having to check off so many privet hedge and so much this and that. But it was through work in that that I became more acquainted and more a part of the Eisenhower Foundation.



SOAPES: Who was the person or how were you contacted to get involved in this?

BURG: To come on as a trustee?

BRAINARD: Sam Heller and Emmett Graham. See, Sam Heller was the president of the trust company of which I was one of the directors, and Emmett Graham lived down the street here. And I suppose they both knew my interests and asked me if I wouldn't be a director in the foundation and also if I would take over the landscaping.

SOAPES: This would have been 1953.

BRAINARD: No, that was before that; that was the culmination of it. I think that's probably about 1948, '50, along in that time.

SOAPES: And you went on then as a trustee at that point.

BRAINARD: Yes.

BURG: But when you spoke of the fact that you were director of the trust company, was that United Trust?

BRAINARD: Yes, the United Trust Company; it's recently been sold.

BURG: I think maybe we want to ask Mr. Brainard your own comments, if you would, on Mr. Heller and Mr. Graham. What kind of people are these men; now gone from here?

BRAINARD: Sam Heller was a very good man at promoting ideas. Now he wasn't as well acquainted with Eisenhower as Mr. Harger. Of course Mr. Harger was one that helped on getting Ike the appointment to West Point. But Mr. Harger was old enough that he wasn't quite as active and he more or less turned the foundation over to Sam Heller. See Sam was president of the Eisenhower Foundation. And so Sam became better acquainted with Ike then and entertained Ike in his home and that sort of thing when Ike was here. Emmett Graham was the secretary of the foundation, but



he had a little bit of a drinking problem and he wasn't always dependable. He was a good man and he was capable and all that sort of thing, but sometimes he got carried away.

BURG: Yes, literally.

BRAINARD: Yes. Of course they were the nucleus that kept the foundation together, and kept it working. They didn't have any trouble getting people to become members, but they had trouble getting them to work. And they were sort of the nucleus that kept it working until the time of [Harry] Darby. Then of course when Darby came into the picture, that changed that considerably.



SOAPES: In what way do you remember Mr. Darby coming in and having an impact?

BRAINARD: Well, the first meeting that I can remember with him was at the time, 1952, when Ike came out here to open his presidential campaign. Darby was on the board of the Santa Fe Railroad, so he provided the access and the train for Ike to come out for the opening the campaign. And we had a sort

of a ground-breaking down at the Eisenhower Museum--see it was started in '52 as I recall--and he laid the cornerstone for that at the same time that he opened his campaign publicly. And Darby was the driving force in that. Of course later on Darby became a senator to fulfill a term of a senator that died. But I think that was where he became acquainted with Ike, more acquainted with him, to sort of lay the groundwork to that.

BURG: You were not politically active yourself, were you, Mr. Brainard?

BRAINARD: No. No. I'm not too much of a handshaker. And after all of this, and after the center was turned over to the GSA [General Services Administration], some of them thought I should run for the local state representative. I know Cal Strowig came down and wanted to talk to me and I said, "Well, I don't know. I might do it if I were elected, but I wouldn't campaign. I have an aversion to going around and telling people, 'Well now I'm better than somebody else and you better put me in there,' and that sort of thing."

And Cal said, "Well, I appreciate your point, but there's



no use in your going unless you're going to get out and shake hands and pat people and all that."

BURG: What I wanted to be sure of was that you were not playing some active role in that visit in 1952 to kick off the campaign.

BRAINARD: No. No, I was part of the parade committee and that sort of thing and helped organize the parade and set up the park out there. We had the address out at the park; there wasn't enough room down at the home to get a crowd so we had it out at the park at that time. Mine was all more or less mechanical, either involved in construction or the layout of the grounds, that sort of thing.



SOAPES: Do you remember any major problems or anecdotes about that day? I remember there was that great rainstorm that caused some problems.

BRAINARD: Just a little humorous incident. We had the podium set out and we had two podiums made--one for him to use at the cornerstone laying and another one out at the park, which is now Eisenhower Park, it wasn't at that time. We had them made

identical so they'd be familiar to him and his hand-holds were all there and everything he wanted. We had this one on the platform out there and we got off and looked from the angle that the television cameras would be seeing the thing and it looked rather blank. So we decided we had to have grass around it so it would look right. It was up on a platform. We didn't have any grass available, so we went to one of the funeral parlors and borrowed some of their pads that they use under the canopy at the burial service. And one of them was a brand-new one and he was very proud of that. He says, "Now be sure and take good care of that." So we set that up there and set the podium on it and then, what are we going to do with these wires; we've got to get the wires over to the amplifier. So we poked a hole through the pads. [Laughter]

BURG: Did he notice it?

BRAINARD: The funeral director did.

BURG: It was his contribution to the Eisenhower campaign.

BRAINARD: That was his contribution. In fact, he should have put that in the museum.



BURG: Truly it was a grass-roots--that he was involved in.

SOAPES: You may want to strike that from the record.

BURG: Yes, we probably should.

BRAINARD: I do remember that after the parade--the parade got by very nicely, it showered a little bit before the parade started, but through the parade it worked very well. And then the opening of his campaign at the park was to be in the afternoon, and that's when it literally poured and people had trouble getting out there. And they'd taken all of the parade vehicles and made them in sort of a circle around this place so that people could see them, and they were mired in mud, and it was two days before they could get them out of there. But Fred Waring was furnishing the music for it; he was a very avid backer of Ike anyway. And I can remember when they sang the National Anthem, it was raining and here were people--I think Ike didn't even have a rain hat or anything on and the rain just running down his face--but they were still singing the National Anthem, and Fred Waring helped him very well. So the crowd was cut



down, considerably, but it was amazing how many people did show up for it. The head of the milling company in Minneapolis who had worked with Ike and was one of those that was promoting him for President--I don't know whether he was state chairman or what. I had left my car in a spot that was fairly close to where Ike was speaking. And he and, oh, Ike's sister-in-law, I believe it was, sat in my car while it rained and listened to his talk on the radio because the thing was, just having--well--no raincoats or umbrellas they needed protection.



SOAPES: On the size of the crowd, do you remember approximately how many people were there?

BRAINARD: Oh, no. I imagine there were three or four thousand people in addition to the local people that were here for the parade. It was quite crowded. Not as crowded as some of the times when Ike came back after he was President, but it was probably cut by half to the ones who actually listened to his opening address there.

BURG: So it would be that very next year then, in '53, that Mr. Brainard is suddenly plunged into all the landscaping for the place.

SOAPES: One thing that I would like to get into before we get back into the specific landscaping and land acquisition, some of the things I've read about the foundation involving fund-raising up to this time were that they had a great deal of difficulty.

BRAINARD: Yes, they did.



SOAPES: From your position coming into the foundation in the late '40s, early '50s, could you explain some reason why they were having trouble?

BRAINARD: Well, I think Kansas hasn't been too rich, monetarily anyway, and I think there was perhaps some resentment. Well, for instance, Texas said that he was born in Texas--why should we develop anything in Kansas for him? And before he was President there wasn't too much agitation to help Kansas provide this memorial. They did at one time consider hiring a professional fund-raising concern, and I think the expenses ran more than the contributions. And they kind of gave up on that. And really to finish off the museum building itself, Hall, of Hallmark--

SOAPES: Joyce Hall.

BRAINARD: --Joyce Hall of Hallmark put up the last forty thousand for that and they had a note--I think Don Nicolay could tell you more about that. But they had this note from Joyce Hall and they just kept it and said that they would pay it back to him and he says, "Okay, when I need it I'll call it back." And to my knowledge it has never been paid. But that was where they finally got the money to finish it off.

BURG: It's our understanding too that that forty thousand dollars is still a problem because when they approach Mr. Hall about it I don't think Mr. Hall is a bit willing to--

BRAINARD: No, he doesn't want any part of it. Of course up to this time, up to the time that he ran for President all that they were providing money for was the museum, and incidentally it was just this first part of it. That was before the wing was added on to it. I'm sorry I don't have this, but--

BURG: You have only the original.

BRAINARD: It was just this part of it.



SOAPES: Yes, what's now the west end of the museum building.

BRAINARD: And that was all that they were considering. They weren't even thinking in terms of the library because that came four years later in '56.

SOAPES: Was it your impression then that Darby and Hall were people who provided a great deal of impetus for new money coming in?



BRAINARD: Yes, that's right. Abilene itself contributed fairly well for it. And, if something came up that they needed more money, they generally scrounged around, got it out of Abilene, although the state did very well, too.

SOAPES: Now getting into your specific activities in '53, you were involved with the landscaping--

BRAINARD: --Landscaping of the museum.

SOAPES: And I believe you already described something to us about getting the various plants and trees donated from Kansas nurseries. Wasn't there a firm outside of Kansas that they also had gone to at one time?

BRAINARD: Well that was about the time that Eisenhower started running for President. See his family home had been in Pennsylvania, and of course that's why he went back to Gettysburg. And the head of the American Rose Society was also the landscape director for the Hershey estates in Hershey, Pennsylvania. And he conceived the idea that a rose garden would be a beautiful attraction to add to this. And he got the rose growers throughout the United States to do much as the landscape nurseries had done in Kansas; they provided the flowers for this rose garden. I think there's, yes, there's the rose garden of the Eisenhower Foundation. That's a list of the different people that had contributed roses, giving consent for them.



BURG: May I see on the sketch where the rose garden was physically placed?

BRAINARD: Right on the west end of the original building. Between the little office where [J. Earl] Endacott used to be and--

BURG: Yes, and the museum.

BRAINARD: This part was a tulip garden; this formal section in here was the rose garden. And it became quite well known in this part of the country.

BURG: We might add that Mr. Brainard is showing us and will be showing us throughout the interview a notebook with plastic protected sketches, landscape sketches, and plan views of the center as it developed, and our comments will be referring to these various sketches and plans that he's showing us and photographs in this book. Well, you know, I had not realized that there was such a thing there. I came here in '70; was it in existence then? Am I just forgetting it?

BRAINARD: No, by '70 it had been given to the General Services Administration, and they don't want to maintain things of that sort, anything that requires a horticulturist to take care of. Now I'm not casting any reflections, but that was part of their thinking.

BURG: It doesn't take a lot of watering and fertilizer on asphalt. [Laughter]

[Interruption]



SOAPES: You were saying about the home, what your objectives were there.

BRAINARD: Well as part of our project of this landscaping we also renovated the gardening and the flower gardens around the home and tried to make it look as nearly as possible as mother Eisenhower had kept it. In fact, where rose plants or flower plants had died, we went around to neighbors who had similar ones so that we could replace them as nearly as possible as Mrs. Eisenhower had them.

BURG: You must have then used quite a number of sources--

BRAINARD: Yes.

BURG: --to piece together how it had actually looked.

BRAINARD: That's right.

BURG: Do you remember some of the people who helped in recollecting how it had been?

BRAINARD: Well, that's where we used Earl Endacott a lot. He knew more about that and see, he was our sort of local



historian. He'd taught history in the schools here. And I think probably he'd done a little prying and found out where these things originated. And also he talked to the brothers, and to the best of their recollection they would tell us how things were planted and where they were. We went around and got all of the old sidewalk brick we could and tried to replace paths with sidewalk brick because that was the sort of thing that they used in those days.

BURG: And there were brick sidewalks then--

BRAINARD: Especially out here along the parking and--

BURG: --on the west side of the house and--

BRAINARD: Well and then we made a new, wider path coming in to the front porch there.

BURG: And since there were people still living across the street, and really Mrs. Eisenhower had--she'd passed away in 1946--

BRAINARD: That's right.



BURG: --so it wasn't that far in the past; I suppose people across the street might have helped.

BRAINARD: Yes. At least they would be familiar with what she had in her garden. Of course this area, on out, was where the boys had planted their family garden, the corn and the squash and the potatoes and that sort of thing.

BURG: Was there an orchard at one time out there, Mr. Brainard, that you know of?

BRAINARD: Not that I know of. Of course this old walnut tree, I'm not sure whether that's still there or not. It tried to die a couple of times and we had to do some work on it but we were able to preserve it for quite some time.

BURG: I don't remember whether that is still there or not.

BRAINARD: One of the other problems that came up--now let's see, we put in this other wing while Ike was in office.

BURG: The east wing to the museum.



BRAINARD: Yes. He came out, I'm quite sure, for the dedication of that and that was one of his appearances here in Kansas. And as I remember it that was after the rose garden was built and Erdman, this man that I spoke of from Hershey, Pennsylvania, came out and he took an immense number of pictures around at that time. But one of the problems that came up then, see actually this building is about where Olive Street would come through, and of course Olive Street would be on this side, but we had it vacated by the city here. But the sewer went down that way.



BURG: Although the street itself, Mr. Brainard, had not, it did not cross the south--

BRAINARD: No, it was just left to field then.

BURG: Right, so there was no street.

BRAINARD: But on the city plat it was platted as a street and the sewer went through there. So when they built this wing, here was the sewer, and you got to build a building over a sewer. Well that made a lot of controversy. Of course

actually the building doesn't have any basement under it, so it didn't make any difference.

BURG: But it will, sir, if there's ever a break in that line.

BRAINARD: Since then we've gone around it.

BURG: Ah, I see.

BRAINARD: We supplemented that. But at the time we started the library building, this was still in here. We didn't want to have the same mistake made at the library, so from here on we turned it around and got it away from that.



BURG: Turned around and ran the sewer out actually to the southeast as it crossed Fifth Street.

BRAINARD: Yes. Went through about down here. Well that's kind of getting in aside from that.

BURG: These are things though that we want to know, and--

BRAINARD: So by 1956 when it became known--well in fact Eisenhower signed the bill to provide for presidential libraries.

SOAPES: 1955.

BRAINARD: 1955, yes. But it was by 1956 then we decided that there would probably be an Eisenhower Library and the members of, I suppose Sam Heller and others approached Eisenhower with the idea of what he was going to do with his papers. And he said, well he would like to see them left in Abilene with his museum and the home if a building could be provided.

BURG: Did they approach him by means of a letter or personal conversation on a trip out here, do you remember?

BRAINARD: I really don't know--whether they went back to Washington and contacted him. There again, Don Nicolay or even Harry Darby might be able to tell you about that. So in 1955 the legislature created this library commission, and we were actually appointed in 1956. And the first commission was Paul Harris of the Hutchinson Herald, and I, and Franklin Murphy, president of Kansas University. We were the three Kansas members and then William Robinson, the chairman of the board of Coca-Cola Corporation, bridge buddy of Ike's, and Thomas Stephens were the out-of-state members of that commission.



BURG: Was this the Thomas Stephens who was appointments secretary?

BRAINARD: Yes. Not the one that did the picture. And our first meeting was held at the governor's home down in Topeka. Bill Robinson was the only one that didn't show up for the meeting. And Harris was named as the first president and I was the secretary for the library commission. We set up a meeting then to meet later that year in New York, and we went back, Bill Robinson entertained us in New York--we had our meeting there and everybody showed up for that meeting. And they had read the bill a little more completely and they found out that there was one statement in the bill that they didn't like. So they brought out that the last sentence in the Kansas state senate bill number 300, which created the commission, stated, "All contributions so received shall be paid into the state treasury and the state treasurer shall credit the same to the presidential library building fund, which fund is hereby created and which fund shall only be used to construct and equip such a library building as the legislature shall direct." Well that was like waving a flag at the library commission; if we're



going to build a building do we have to take everything down to the legislature and see if they'll okay it? So they said, "Well, we'll buy the properties." Or I guess by the time that meeting was held in New York we'd already bought them. "We fulfilled our job; we've provided the site for the library, and we don't have a fund-raising group, so why don't we ask the state to turn the fund raising over to the Eisenhower Foundation which already has a setup for it?" And we made a resolution, I think in fact, yes, "The Commission agreed, the prime purpose of the commission was to purchase a site for the presidential library which it should do at once." Well then we hadn't done it. "And that following the purchase of the site, the commission should be dissolved and further that the January '57 legislature of Kansas should be asked to deed the site to the Eisenhower Memorial Foundation of Abilene with the foundation compensating the state of Kansas for the land, and further the Eisenhower Memorial Foundation instigate a committee for raising funds for the presidential library which can include the members of the commission, and finally that actual fund raising be delayed to the proper time. The securing of important papers for the



library was discussed." So what they were saying was that we want to build a building, but we don't want the legislature to tell us what kind of a building we can build. And I was to send copies of this to the governor and to the speaker of the House and that sort of thing so everybody'd know what our thinking was. And for some strange reason I don't find any minutes of a meeting from 1959 til, oh, I don't know, 1960 or so. There was an interim in there where we didn't have any meetings and I think everything was done with correspondence. And that's where I think Darby can help us out on what happened in the meantime. Because we wrote to the attorney general to ask him what the powers of this commission are and do we truly have to submit all of our plans to the state legislature for their approval. And I have no copy of any letter received from the attorney general, just to what we did.



BURG: Though you were the secretary of the presidential library commission.

BRAINARD: Yes. The only thing I know was that by the time we had the next meeting in 1959--see this was in '56--we were meeting in Chicago and the fund raising was on in full swing,

and Harry Darby and [Governor] George Docking were co-chairmen of the governor's fund-raising committee. Of course in between that time we'd had Ben Fairless and his group working on fund raising. Docking worked with him also and Darby. Maybe we had three chairmen; I don't recall just how that worked out. But the fund raising was going on by the time I have it in the next minutes of the meeting. So in the meantime this thing must have been resolved somehow with the state, that they agreed to let us go ahead and build the building on our plans without submitting it to their approval, or the voluntary fund-raising committee was organized by the Eisenhower Foundation as we recommended in this resolution that they be. And they had gone ahead with the fund raising. But, as far as the commission was concerned, we didn't do a great deal of fund raising as a commission. We did that through this voluntary committee, although most of the members of the commission were active in some form on this fund-raising commission. In other words, we were holding two hats here, doing one thing as a commission to secure the land and build the building and another thing as raising the money.



BURG: Let's ask Mr. Brainard, if you don't mind Tom, did you know Mr. Harris, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Murphy prior to appointment?

BRAINARD: No, I didn't. I had met Robinson; he was out here, oh, one time when Ike was out and we had a dinner here. He was out for that occasion and I had met him at that, but that was all. And Harris had been active in the presidential election.

BURG: Here in Kansas.

BRAINARD: Here in Kansas. And of course Tom Stephens was sort of the "People for Eisenhower, chairman."

BURG: Right. And Mr. Murphy, you said, connected with the Hutchinson--

BRAINARD: No, that was Harris that was--

BURG: Oh, I'm sorry, Harris was with them, yes. So they were all relative strangers to you.

BRAINARD: Yes.

BURG: And your meetings, I take it, were relatively infrequent and, in fact, for one period of about three years, non-existent.



BRAINARD: I don't have any minutes. Now I gave all of these minutes to Endy [Endacott], he was going to write up a deal on this, but I'm sure that there couldn't have been any minutes mislaid.

BURG: Even when you gave them to Mr. Endacott, even at that stage, you knew that there were no minutes actually for about a three-year period of time.

BRAINARD: Of course, there's two things on that. We're sort of a close-knit group and we knew what we were doing but we weren't telling anybody else what we were doing.



BURG: The presidential library commission.

BRAINARD: Yes. And I think we kind of slipped up. In fact I don't know, even as best recollection that I can have, that we had any formal meeting. Now we may have gotten together on some occasions, or part of us. I know several times I went down to talk with Jack Harris in Hutchinson and a couple of times Franklin Murphy met us and the three of us in Kansas would have a little group meeting, not as a commission but just to kind of review what we were doing.

BURG: Then would you make contact with Stephens and Robinson?

BRAINARD: Then we'd write. Now that's why I say some of that may be in the correspondence that I turned over some time back on the building construction, and there may be some correspondence in there that'd be relative to that, copies of the letters are in there without having any formal meeting. We didn't do any voting by mail or any of that sort, but we'd just ask them for comments on what we were doing.

And, of course, at that time we had the land bought; we knew we had fulfilled that part of our mission. True, we weren't collecting all the rent we should have collected, but we were sort of holding fire waiting for the fund-raising group to get the money together so that we could go ahead and proceed with plans.

SOAPES: I'd like to go back just a second on this land acquisition. I know we discussed that before we started recording and I would like to get it on the record about when you started buying land for the library site. Now that was a residential area and homes were there.



BRAINARD: That's right. Well that was in the summer of '56. See we had this first organization meeting in the governor's office in January or February and then we had the meeting in New York just a couple of months after that so that we started in in the summer of '56. We got three appraisers as was required and they were supposed to be disinterested parties. And after we had the three appraisers we took the average of those and that was the price that we were to get for the houses. The absurd part of that was that fifty thousand was appropriated, and the whole bunch of houses down there at that time, any one else could have bought them for twenty-five or thirty thousand, but since they knew the money was there, even the appraisers were a little lackadaisical about making appraisals and they gave unusual prices for that. But we did end up buying it all for around forty-eight thousand. We had a little bit of money left over after the purchases were all made.

BURG: Could we turn to that sketch, Mr. Brainard, the one that shows the land.

BRAINARD: That was all of this in through here. Now there were six houses as I remember it in through here.

BURG: All in the range from Campbell, the line of Campbell, down to the range of Kuney, about six houses there in that stretch.

BRAINARD: Yes. There was one that was a little concrete block house built on a slab and there was no way of moving it. So that was the one we turned into a press room for the ground breaking and used it for the construction shack after that. The superintendent made his headquarters in that building. The others were moved off. We sold them and they were moved off the property. And strangely enough we actually got money for all of them. Nowadays they'd charge you for tearing them down, but we sold them all, got the money out of them. I think we got about six thousand dollars out of all the five houses.



BURG: Mr. Brainard, are we right in assuming that when we cross old Fourth where it ran through the center, if we cross onto the side where the Eisenhower lived, there were no houses there and had not been since the museum? One at the end?

BRAINARD: Yes, one at the very end of the block.

BURG: One at the east end.

BRAINARD: Yes. That was deserted by the time we started building; there was no one living in it by the time we started the library.

BURG: I'm quite sure that neither Tom nor I have never seen photographs that show these houses, either south of Fourth or this one at the east end, on the north side of Fourth. Were they of similar quality to the Eisenhower family house?



BRAINARD: Well, one of them was just practically nothing more than a mobile home that was set in there, and Violas owned that and were renting it out. The one directly across the street was a fairly good home and that was the only one that didn't want to sell. Of course, the reason that we asked this to be done by the state, we wanted them to give us the power of eminent domain. And that was the only one that was threatened. They were going to make us sue to get it. But they were good Catholics and Father Roach was a great admirer of Eisenhower

and so we went to Monsignor Roach and asked him if he would talk to his parishioners and see if he could convince them and he did.

BURG: And I presume you didn't want to know how that--as long as it was done. [Laughter]

BRAINARD: We didn't know if they were excommunicated or what, but they came through very well.

BURG: And then there was another house on the west side of Kuney, on the south side of Fourth, that one too had to be purchased as a--that was a separate.



BRAINARD: But that was a separate purchase because the bill only provided that we buy this land.

BURG: The stretch which now immediately rests in front of the library was the stretch the state provided for first.

BRAINARD: Yes, that's right.

BURG: And one out of those six houses was similar to the Eisenhower house, and that's the one directly across the street.

BRAINARD: Yes. Directly across. It was a very nice house. I would say it was built probably a little later than the Eisenhower, but it was a good quality house. One of them down here was a two-story, kind of ramshackled place. The fellow died that owned it and he left it to six heirs. We had quite a time contacting them all. But they were happy to get rid of it. They were happy to get the money out; they wanted the money rather than the property.

BURG: So when it came right down to it, for that piece of expansion, the state never had to exercise its right of eminent domain.

BRAINARD: No, never did. By that time they had appreciated what the library was going to be. In fact the library was built by the time we got these properties.

BURG: That is the properties on to the west of us.

BRAINARD: So they went up, especially this filling station here on the end.

SOAPES: The area where the chapel is now.



BRAINARD: That's right.

BURG: What kind of filling station was that?

BRAINARD: It was an old, I don't know whether it was a Phillips-- oh, that brings me up to another--politics get into this whether you want them to or not. Boots Adams was one of the strong admirers of Ike, and he was one of the fund raisers for that. This was a Phillips station, and a director of Phillips was this Boots Adams. So we didn't have any trouble.



BURG: I see. I see.

BRAINARD: The fellow didn't want to give it up, but he conceded that it was a good thing.

BURG: You used pressure wherever the pressure was.

BRAINARD: Well--

BURG: From Monsignor Roach to Boots Adams and Phillips 66. Was the price, by the way Mr. Brainard, was the price on the service station terribly inflated in consequence of the library or--

BRAINARD: Well, more than it would have been five years earlier. That's about the only thing I can say on that.

BURG: But not terribly out of line, I presume.

BRAINARD: No. This might give you some concept of how the things looked. This was at the beginning of construction. This is the little construction shack I spoke of, and you can barely see the house, which would be this one over here.

SOAPES: The one to the east of the museum.



BRAINARD: See there's quite a bunch of trees in here.

BURG: Ah, yes.

BRAINARD: And this is the way, as I told you, we had drainage problems. And these are the steel pilings that we drove into the ground. See we didn't depend on footings and foundations to hold this. We built it like they had to build in Chicago. You know Chicago is built on a swamp. We drove these pilings down until they hit something solid. Some of those went down forty feet or more before the gravel and subsoil was strong enough. And after these pilings were driven into the ground,

then we built the footings on top of those, then the building.

BURG: I see. I had no idea that there was that much underpinning beneath the building.

BRAINARD: Some of the foundation sections would have six or more of these pilings driven into one section. And, of course, this was taken from the same angle after the library was up.

SOAPES: So that photograph would have been taken from the southwest looking northeast.



BRAINARD: Yes, see here's the same one, elevator over here. And this is after the land was raised. See at first this thing was sitting up there five foot above the ground and--

SOAPES: The library building was sitting up.

BRAINARD: Yes, sitting up. And then we hauled in the dirt afterwards and filled in the dirt around the building after it was put in.

SOAPES: About how far out from the building did you have to go to make that fill?

BRAINARD: Oh, we terraced it off almost out to the street. You'll notice that the walk as you go into the library, it's on a slope.

BURG: Look, Tom, you can see in the photograph, this is evidently on the Rock Island tracks. And that low ground with water there between the Rock Island tracks and the library, all water soaked. One can imagine how much fill they had to put in.

BRAINARD: Well, this is about where the staff parking is now, right in through here. And you know that's up on quite a slope, it's quite a little above the tracks.

BURG: Yes. Now I was going to ask, too, if we drop back to the other sketch, property sketch, there is immediately behind the Eisenhower home another--

BRAINARD: Yes, there was a private home in there and that was occupied at that time. And I believe the foundation bought that. See they were still acquiring money and they had investments by that time that they were getting--except that they never paid off the forty thousand. And they acquired that.



And then it was given to the General Services Administration at the same time the museum was given. See the library was given to General Services first, then the museum was given later.

BURG: And we should probably note, too, I just remembered that the library itself, all the way out to Buckeye, between Campbell and Buckeye, stands on land donated by the railroad.

BRAINARD: Yes. See there was twelve hundred and sixty feet there that they had from Campbell to Buckeye.

BURG: The Rock Island railroad.

SOAPES: Yes, the dimension reads a hundred and seventy by twelve hundred and sixty, so that comes out to a line running directly in front of the library building.

BRAINARD: That's right.

BURG: Down to the line of the tracks.

BRAINARD: It would go about right through the steps, the front steps as you come in there.



BURG: Now, Mr. Brainard has also told us and we might get this on the record, that the old Rock Island depot, wooden depot, was across the tracks, on the north side of the tracks, on that property that we have just described. And this was sold by the foundation to private purchasers who then were willing to move it south of the tracks to where it now stands in Old Abilene Town.

BRAINARD: Yes. We gave them a ninety-nine year lease on it.

BURG: Oh, you didn't sell it--gave them a lease on it, ninety-nine year lease.

BRAINARD: Ninety-nine year lease.



BURG: So that, except for the school, the Lincoln School property which has just recently been added, that completes the rectangular area which contains the present center.

BRAINARD: This is the basis we worked on and what we ended up with.

SOAPES: Were there any other purchases of land at this time outside of that area?

BRAINARD: No, but I think that letter was included in the file that I turned over--the Rock Island wanted to use this for a tax claim.

SOAPES: The land that they gave.

BRAINARD: Right. So I gave them the figures for the land that we had purchased and an estimate of the value of this, and they used that--I forget what their claim was. I think their claim was for some ninety thousand dollars, the value of that that they--. And this generated another problem.

SOAPES: Referring to the elevator.

BRAINARD: The elevator. Well, in fact, in our budget we budgeted ten thousand dollars to move that, and the state architect had made that provision in his plans, that we'd move that elevator out of there. They balked; they said it was going to cost them twenty to twenty-five thousand to move it and they ought to have some compensation in addition to that, so they wanted, I don't know, thirty thousand or more.

BURG: Was it a sheet metal structure?



BRAINARD: Yes, and very crude. Well I was stubborn enough on that so I asked the Rock Island to send me their lease that they had with them and they said, "Well, we'd be glad to do it, but according to the lease they have to move it on a month's notice."

BURG: Oh.

BRAINARD: On railroad property. They had no claim to it at all. They were just using railroad property because the railroad wanted their business. They were not paying rent as I understand it. So instead of giving them the ten thousand dollars to move it, we gave them notice.

BURG: Gave them thirty days to shift it off there.

BRAINARD: Yes. And it created some hard feelings I'm sorry to say.

BURG: This was owned by local people?

BRAINARD: Yes.

BURG: Are they still in town, Mr. Brainard?



BRAINARD: Well, they sold out. See they sold to the ABM Mills, it was owned by that same flour mills, Abilene Flour Mills owned it. It was the Welsh interests and Laing. Laing is the only one that's still here.

SOAPES: R. B. Laing.

BRAINARD: Yes. Well, that's the only thing we could do. We were tied on that.

This is a little humor on the side. This appeared in the Kansas City Star in 1958. This was after the library commission'd been formed and it was, I think, our first fund-raising dinner that we had here in Abilene. And they said we can't raise funds if we don't have a picture of what we're going to raise it for. And we didn't have any architect then. Of course the state architect did draw the plans. So they told me, "You'll have to make a sketch of the building."

I says, "I don't know what it's going to look like; we haven't decided yet."

"Well, you draw on what you think it's going to look like."

So I drew up this sketch and mounted it on a big board and



we put it at the end of the hall there where we had the dinner. And when the Star took the picture, Donna and I were seated in front of the picture.

[Interruption]

BURG: Did Mr. Brink, the state architect, do you suppose that he saw that sketch and was at all influenced by your idea?

BRAINARD: I never knew.

BURG: Never found out.

BRAINARD: See John was in school down at Manhattan same time I was and we're both members of the American Institute of Architects. So when this planning started to develop--it was a crash program, to use the term--because no one architectural office in Kansas could have developed this whole plan in the time that we had to work with. So you might say it was more or less of an American Institute of Architects project. We had three different architectural offices working on it. One of them was working on the general plan; one was working on details; and one was working on the construction side of it. As I remember it, Floyd Wolfenbarger and Associates over at Manhattan was doing the details, and Kenneth Miller and some of



his group was working on the construction, and Wendell Park and his group were working on another part of the planning. So by each of those using their staff as full as they could without interrupting their own work that they had on hand, they pooled their resources and we got this plan together so that we could start into the building because we had to have that ready by the time Ike got out of office, preferably before so that some of the papers could be shipped. And we had Ted Griest from Topeka. He was a very well-known architect and he had had a heart attack. The doctor told him not to do any heavy work or long continued work, but a little bit would be good for him. So he was the coordinator for this. And everybody sent their plans to him; he would check them against each other to be sure everything fit together. And oftentimes he and Jack Brink would come out here and we'd sit at the dining table there and go over these things to be sure we were getting coordinated. And then we had various engineer organizations working with us too. So by pooling resources, and all of them fitting together, there was no rivalry; there was no cross purposes of any kind; everybody worked together very well. And one other



thing that helped immensely--we wanted to have an architect supervisor as well as a contractor supervisor. And a man down in Wichita, who was one of those that, who was very particular about details and he reads plans quickly and he could make good decisions where a plan had to be adjusted, he had just retired. And we got him out of retirement and had him as a architect supervisor, because we had a general contractor, a plumbing-heating contractor, electrical contractor, and we had several different contracts all working and they had to be worked together too. And, rather than having to go back to the state architect in Topeka for any arbitration on these, by having our local supervisor, he can make all those adjustments right on the job. And we got Chet Simmons to do that.

BURG: Could I run back in time just a minute? I'd like to have your impressions of Bill Robinson and of Tom Stephens, the other members of that commission, too, as you saw them in action.

BRAINARD: Well, Bill Robinson had retired as the president of Coca-Cola, he was chairman of the board, and he was in the position that he really didn't want to be too involved. He wanted



to see the project go, but he said, "You fellows out there in Kansas are the real ones that are going to have to see this thing through. I'll do all that I can; I'll help work on the campaign; I'll get workers to raise money and that sort of thing." But I think he felt that he was just an honorary member of the committee through his association with Ike and that sort of thing.

BURG: Had the governor chosen him?

BRAINARD: Yes.

BURG: As he chose all of you.

BRAINARD: Well, Sam Heller made the recommendation on all of these.

BURG: Oh, I see.

BRAINARD: And I don't know how he got that recommendation to the governor. He must have done it with some intermediary because the governor didn't think too much of him, that was Governor [Fred] Hall at that time. Sam Heller had not helped elect Hall. Of course the other governor had made the appointments later on, so--. Well here's a letter



from Bill Robinson that I think kind of explains his attitude as much as any other.

BURG: Tended to give that credit for the pushing of the library to you.

BRAINARD: That's what his attitude was. Of course, I think he knew me better than he did Sam Heller. I think Sam and the others should have had the credit there rather than I, but I was the one that had made the contacts with him and met him in the meetings and that sort of thing; so that's the reason he did that. Now Tom Stephens was, oh, I'm not sure if Tom's still living. Bill Robinson's dead I know.



BURG: Yes, I'm sure that Robinson is, but I think Stephens is not.

SOAPES: I think Stephens is still alive.

BURG: I think he is.

BRAINARD: I think he felt his place was more with the work in New York and Washington. See he was in the White House a large part of the time that he was on this commission.

BURG: Oh, yes, of course. That did give you a kind of access to the White House.

BRAINARD: Yes. He was congenial, he was a nice fellow to deal with, but his knowledge of building and construction didn't carry him along very far; so there again he was more interested in seeing the project go than paying attention to detail.

SOAPES: Did you find in working with him that his position in the White House was helpful or useful to you?

BRAINARD: Oh, only that he'd report Ike's reactions to things. Whether Ike was happy with it or that sort of thing.

SOAPES: Did he ever report that he was unhappy with anything that was going on?

BRAINARD: No, no. I have a letter in here from him somewhere where he said that--I know it was a letter from Ike--he said Tom told me what you were doing, or something of that sort.

BURG: I think our impressions of Stephens are based on the fact that he's known to have been quite a joker.



BRAINARD: Yes, he was. He'd get some of those--and he enjoyed a drink, the good time part of it.

BURG: How about the other gentlemen on the commission. How do they stand out in your recollection?

BRAINARD: Well those varied all the way through. Robinson and Stephens and I were the only ones that stayed through. Jack Harris died, Murphy moved to California, so they put Jim McCain on in Murphy's place--

BURG: From Kansas State University.

BRAINARD: --from K-State. And then John Montgomery, they wanted to make this bipartisan so they got John Montgomery from Junction City took Jack Harris's place for a while. And then when Montgomery dropped--he said that his interest took more of his time, see he was in newspaper work--then we put Darby in and then when McCain dropped out we put Skip--

BURG: Scupin.

BRAINARD: --Scupin in. So we ended up it was Scupin, Darby and I from Kansas and then the same two from New York and Washington.



SOAPES: This would have been still in the '50s when Scupin comes in?

BRAINARD: No, this was long after--I think Scupin came in after the building was built. I would have to check back in that but I think that's about right. See this is at the dedication; you've got these down there I'm sure.

BURG: Yes, I think so.

BRAINARD: John Montgomery was still in when we dedicated it. Darby came in after the dedication.



BURG: I did want to know something about these other men if possible because we haven't heard as much about them and what they did.

BRAINARD: Well, I think most of them thought they were honorary positions. They had the attitude that they were more or less, just as Bill Robinson said here, "You're doing the work out there and you go ahead; you're doing fine."

BURG: When it boiled right down to it, there was only one man here on the scene every day.

SOAPES: Right.

BURG: Mr. C. L. Brainard was the man, our man in Abilene, in this whole enterprise.

BRAINARD: Well--I got along well with this Chet Simmons, the architects' supervisor. Oh, once in a while he would decide that, something he shouldn't be making a decision on, he'd call my attention to it and then we'd settle it with the contractor. And I probably took more liberties than I should, but I felt that we were anxious to get the building up. I wasn't going to go into too many arguments just to slow it down. This picture, you have this down there and I know it's been blown up, is quite interesting. Of course here we have General Eisenhower, Ben Fairless, Darby, Milton. This was the then head of the Secret Service, James something or other, Jim, what was his last name? This is Docking, and this was Ike's driver. That's about all of them that I recognize.

SOAPES: That would have been at the groundbreaking for the museum?



BRAINARD: Groundbreaking for the library.

SOAPES: For the library.

BRAINARD: This was in about 1960 or--

SOAPES: '59?

BRAINARD: This is the groundbreaking ceremony of October, '59. Just before his birthday.

BURG: The photograph shows him turning a shovel full of earth and a huge crowd and--

BRAINARD: In October, you know what condition Kansas ground's in like that. We ran the water on that from the night before to get it wet down so he could get a shovel in it.

BURG: Did he know that? Did he remark on that?

BRAINARD: I think he did. He didn't say anything, but he knew it.

BURG: Old Kansas boy, he probably knew darn well.

BRAINARD: Sure he did.



SOAPES: I note in looking at the photograph, the pylons that were over in front of the museum, now those are the same ones that are now at the head of the--

BRAINARD: Yes. They're encased in a stone frame now but they're the same pylons.

Well I don't know what we've left out, we had those of the building. Of course this is after we changed governors, we changed architects because that's kind of a political job so Jim Canole finished up the library although Jack Brink started it.



SOAPES: Did that change of architects cause any difficulties?

BRAINARD: Oh, not really, because the plan was enough completed and actually the state architect, he has a staff in there, and the staff was doing the work. By that time the other architects that I mentioned, Wolfenbarger and Parks and all, they'd more or less prepared the plans and they'd completed their part of it.

BURG: Mr. Brainard, when you speak of one of these architectural

firms doing detail, what should we as non-architects expect that to include?

BRAINARD: Well, those brass, bronze railings and all of those, they're worked out full-scale.

BURG: So they are indeed architectural details that enhance the building.

BRAINARD: Things like this, all that bronze work on the front and minute details. The drinking fountains and every little thing had to be worked out and sent to the supplier so that he could provide them to match the building and everything that went with it. For instance, here one fellow might be designing a wall and the other fellow designing a drinking fountain to go in the wall--they have to be sure that they come out together.

BURG: Well the amount of coordination work, it seems to me, would be amazing. It's hard to imagine putting all of this together because one firm is drawing up, let us say, the basic plans for the building.

BRAINARD: That's right.



BURG: The location of floor space, but another firm, simultaneously, is designing the detail that is going to go, ornament this building inside and outside.

BRAINARD: Yes.

BURG: So I suppose that working drawings as soon as the one firm has them done go quickly to the second firm and their people then say, "Ah, ha, here looks like a nice stretch of blank wall; we could put a drinking fountain right in the middle of that."

BRAINARD: Except that a large part of that was going on at the same time.

BURG: Without even consultation between firms?

BRAINARD: That's where Chet was in there. He said, "Now this is the wall and so many feet from this end you're going to put a panelling with this decoration in it." And when you've completed that, then he sent it to the fellow. But the other fellow's doing everything, just leaving that space blank on his drawing until that fellow sends in the correct detail.



BURG: Sends someone out a good idea, what should go there. If you don't mind, Tom, let me ask another thing. I tend to think of that building in terms of whatever work I've had to do with architects as a school teacher where groups of teachers were called in to work with architects on the drawings, because we were the ones who were going to inhabit the building with our students and try to make it work. And out on the coast, often times the architectural firms worked with these teachers and the drawings were modified in accordance with their wishes. You, in effect, had an absent clientele; they were not here. How did you do that?

BRAINARD: Well, Grover--

BURG: Wayne Grover.

BRAINARD: Wayne Grover met with us from the beginning until all of the basics were completed.

BURG: As far as the drawings--

BRAINARD: Yes. And when he was satisfied, well then we went ahead and worked it out. But I can remember going down to



Topeka to John Brink's office there, and we had a room about this size with all of these architects around the table and Wayne Grover and we were going over the sketch plans to make our changes as this thing developed.

BURG: Had any of the three architectural firms, and particularly the one that did the general drawing, ever done an archives-type structure before?

BRAINARD: No. Of course we went down to Independence. We studied Truman's deal down there. I remember stopping off there with Franklin Murphy on the way back from Chicago, we looked at it. Harry told us, "Don't build one on that swamp; the building'll get flooded." But anyway, we tried to go at it with the idea, now these were the mistakes that were made before; we don't want to make those mistakes again. And of course Grover insisted on that, too.

BURG: The people at the Truman were pretty candid about--

BRAINARD: Where they'd had problems. Of course, one of the things, and everybody, Harry admitted that himself, was they



had too many architects. He built about so much building and then he didn't like the way the architects were doing so he changed architects. And I think he had three different architects on that. And he didn't have any coordinator to tie it together like we had in Ted Griest here. So the other thing was on the allotment of space. The first architect decided to build a monumental building but he didn't pay any attention to whether it was usable or was functional or not. And so, roughly, what we asked Wayne Grover, "Now what do you want? How should it be organized?" I think we finally conceded that we could build it one story as the Truman was but it had spread over too much and it might not help too much anyway. So we went to the two-story deal with a four story archives section. And the other thing that we decided from the beginning, we didn't want the service building, heating, air-conditioning, all that part in the main building. We wanted that as a separate building so that if anything would go wrong with it, it wouldn't disrupt the building.

BURG: I see.



BRAINARD: That's why we built it separate.

BURG: That was pretty much your own idea rather than that of Dr. Grover.

BRAINARD: Yes. Well, he said, "Well, that'd be fine." He wasn't too much interested in that part of it except that we had to have it.

SOAPES: In designing office space area for staff and that sort of thing, what size of staff were you envisioning?

BRAINARD: Well, I don't think we had too much to go on because none of the libraries were at their full capacity at that time. And that was why we ended up with one room over there that we called just a general staff area. I could direct you to it down in there--

BURG: I believe that must be the room--

BRAINARD: It's across the hall, one end of it faces the court. You know, when you come in the main front entrance, then you have this gallery in here in the front with the Eisenhower office down on the end on the second floor. Then around on



this, you go through the door from the Eisenhower offices and come back into the staff area with the individual offices and the research room along the south side. Well, between the Eisenhower office and the courtyard there's one large room in there.

BURG: I believe this is the one that has been divided up into a reception room, Dr. [John] Wickman's [Director, Eisenhower Library] office and the conference room.

SOAPES: Right.

BRAINARD: Yes. Well, see, that was the left-over. We said, "Now that gives you space that you can doctor around as you need to later on." That was to be just a general staff room with maybe desks and people working in there at the time.

BURG: It was known, of course, that this building, when completed, was to be turned over to the federal government.

BRAINARD: Oh, yes.

BURG: The federal government only provided Wayne Grover as the man who would say yea or nay.



BRAINARD: That's right. Yes.

BURG: I find that rather surprising.

BRAINARD: Well General Services didn't have a staff of their own at that time, hardly. Of course since then--so when the addition was put on the museum, they've been much more involved in that sort of thing. [Laughter]

BURG: Yes, they certainly have.

BRAINARD: As my neighbor says--see the neighbor next door here, Frank Cayton designed the original west wing of the museum.

BURG: Oh, I didn't know that.

BRAINARD: And then he came back, or he and his partners, to do the addition to the museum. And he said, "How times have changed."



BURG: I'll bet he did say that. Yes, indeed. But just imagine that, only Dr. Grover really responsible for how it actually was done. Now he presumably consulted with his staff in the National Archives and you people had consulted with the Truman Library, and really at that time there were not many libraries

to which you could go. That is the Roosevelt, the Truman--

BRAINARD: Well the Roosevelt was using an existing building so you couldn't say that was designed.

BURG: Yes, right.

BRAINARD: And the Hoover hadn't been built yet.

BURG: I didn't think it had. There would have been a few state archives and operations that one might have seen.

BRAINARD: Yes. I think they had something they used for Lincoln's papers, such as have been released. But, oh, Lady Bird [Johnson] came up here and she just went through this with a fine-toothed comb. She knew what she was going to do for the Lyndon library down there.

BURG: Right. And as we know, that solution was a great deal different from the solution employed by the Truman and Eisenhower Libraries.

BRAINARD: Yes, that's right. Of course there they adapted it to a university campus.



BURG: Right. And I suppose pretty limited space, so they went up.

BRAINARD: Yes. I was visiting at coffee this morning and we said that if we had to build the Eisenhower Library now, we probably wouldn't get it built; we'd be in about the same condition that the Kennedy Library is, because the costs have gone up so much that the two and a half million that we raised for this wouldn't have built the archives section alone, let alone any research or other facility. I might say that--this is off the record perhaps--but people have a different attitude towards contributing money to the library now--they can go to the government for everything. We've got a federal government; that's going to furnish money for anything we want, fund-sharing or what have you.



BURG: So you think that private contributions--

BRAINARD: Private contributions couldn't build this now.

BURG: May I ask, in your capacity as an architect as well as friend of that enterprise, how costly did the very lovely Italian marble, how much of an expense was that?

BRAINARD: I really feel that that was their contribution to the library because they've quit book-matching now. You know they take a block of stone and cut it up and lay it out and they cut two more and lay them out. They quit that; that's too much trouble and no longer done. You buy marble, you just buy so many slabs and take it as it is--take it or leave it. But they had that much respect for General Eisenhower that they did that out of regard for him. And they took special pride--those crates came out marked just where they were to go.

BURG: They, too, had received copies of the general plans and they had been told how much of it was to be faced--

BRAINARD: That's right.

BURG: --and to what height. And the cost came out of the funding that had been contributed.

BRAINARD: Yes.

BURG: How about the terrazzo areas of flooring? Now was that done by American firms?

BRAINARD: Yes. American, but their nationality, most of them, Italian. We've used terrazzo in some of our stores and you just



can't hardly find those that aren't either of Greek or Italian origin that do that work. And there again, to show how deterioration has come, by the time we built the chapel, you know, we had terrazzo for the public area in that chapel or Place of Meditation, and they had to carpet it because the terrazzo went to pot, except down in the crypt itself, that's still there. But those areas where you walk in and around, it started going to pieces.

BURG: To you indicating a decline in the techniques used--

BRAINARD: Either the technique or the material used, I don't know. Now perhaps you've noticed down in the main foyer there where that adjoins the courtyard.

BURG: Yes.

BRAINARD: Where the sun shines in there, some of the marble, it's a conglomerate marble and the natural cementing material that holds those particles together has deteriorated where the sun hits it. Now I don't think that would happen over there, but Kansas sun is--. Maybe it's a combination of strong



detergents that the janitors used in cleaning it, but something in combination--you can see that that's pitted in there. I think they did go back with epoxy or something and reinforce it where it had really gone bad. But there's just one of the things they come across.

BURG: Tom, pardon me--I'm interested in architecture.

BRAINARD: We've rambled around so much here--

SOAPES: Yes, we're getting close to the end of the time that we had originally agreed to talk this afternoon, but I did want to talk a little bit about the community reaction to the library. We did discuss that one incident of moving the elevator that caused some ill feelings. How would you describe the Abilene community's response to bringing in this large institution?

BRAINARD: Well, I think it was very good. See, in order to start these drives for funds, they felt that the state of Kansas, where it was located, should be the prime mover. They should complete their drive first and then they could go to the other states and say, "Now this is what they've done in Kansas--and



they'd have so many people there--we think that you can come up with so much money." And of course this board that they had set up, they told each state just what they were supposed to produce. And in order to start it off in Kansas, they wanted Abilene to contribute theirs first. And I think their goal was to raise some twenty-five thousand in Abilene. A lot of these people had already given money to the museum, so here they are being hit again and again and again. And they did better than that; I think they gave somewhere around thirty thousand for Abilene. Well, you see, on a population basis, if you take that across the United States, why, oh, they were shooting, I believe, for about three million. And I don't remember the allotment for each state, but of course that was and should be, per population they were paying a lot more here in Abilene and in Kansas than were any other. But the only criticism that I think may have occurred was some of the, well, less affluent people thought that--well they began to feel then more like they feel now, that the government should build it, that there's no reason that the people should be contributing that money. They'd just as well take that money out of the



federal government. The cost was just too much for them; they couldn't comprehend putting that much money in a building. And while they were happy to have it and proud to have it in Abilene, they didn't see where they were involved in contributing the money to it. They didn't have it. There was a spell of time in here when quite a number of people were ashamed to admit that they hadn't been down to see the library. Why here we've got this library, people coming here from all over the country and all over the world, come to see it, and I haven't even been down there.

BURG: Yes, I've run into that in town. The sort of rueful shake of the heads--just got to get down there sometime and see what you've done there.

BRAINARD: Yes. I go down to Kansas City to see something but here we have this at home and--. I have heard one remark, and I don't know who to attribute it to, and that was that this is one of the last classic buildings to be built outside of Washington.

