

US NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
Transcript of National Archives History Office Oral History Interview
Subject: Darlene McClurkin
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MS. KRATZ: Today is December of 11, 2018. I am Jessie Kratz, Historian of the National Archives. Today, I'm at the National Archives Building in Washington DC, interviewing Darlene McClurkin. Darlene is an Exhibits Information Specialist with the Exhibits staff in Legislative, Presidential Libraries, and Museum Programs at the National Archives. Thanks for joining me today.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Thank you.

MS. KRATZ: Before we talk about your career at the Archives, I just want you to set up your background—your early life and how you eventually got to the National Archives.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Well, after studying film at the University of Maryland, I had this wild idea that I was going to make documentary films with the Department of Agriculture, like the "Plow That Broke the Plains in the River." But by the time I got there in 1974, the fall of 1974, the USDA wasn't exactly making those types of films. I mean, they were making more short spots that they would distribute to TV stations across the nation, updates in farm machinery, updates in seeds and grow, all kinds of tips to the farmers. And they were making a few documentaries, but nothing like the New Deal films that I admired so much. But I was only there not quite two years when there was a Reduction in Force, even that early. So, this is '74.

And I found another job at the Department of Agriculture in the Photo Unit. But while I was in the Motion Picture Unit, there at USDA, we had gotten films from the National Archives because we had printers that could handle the really old shrunken film that the Archives had. I had no idea that the National Archives had film. I mean, I knew as much as a lot of the general public knew about the National Archives: The Declaration, the Constitution—the Charters of Freedom.

So, first of all, I was amazed. And I talked to somebody at the National Archives and I think it was William Murphy—Bill Murphy, who was head of the Motion Picture, Sound Recording, and Video Unit. And he said, well, we'd love to have somebody with a film background. And so, I'd study film and history, and I got a job—Bill Murphy hired me. And it was called the Motion Pictures, Sound Recordings, and Video Branch, which was part of the Audio-Visual Archives headed up by James "Jim" Moore.

So, Bill Murphy was the head of the Motion Picture Unit. Jim Moore was head of the Audio-Visual Archives and we were here at Archives I. Well, there was only one Archives at that time! So, it was a whole new world for me, the historic film, I mean, it's just so great. One of the first projects I worked on was reviewing Record Group 341, PBB, Project Blue Book. And believe me, I couldn't believe my good luck. And my friends were like, what? No one believed me. And I mean, we don't have a lot of film like that. So that was very unusual. In those Project Blue Book films, they were films that people submitted from the public, so you had 8-millimeter, you had really small consumer format, so it was not indicative

of the other type of films that we have. But anyhow, that was fun to start out with. And then I learned about more and more. I worked in processing, I worked in reference, I worked in preservation. I did almost everything in Motion Pictures. And I guess I especially did like the reference part, because back then everything was mostly film—this is the '70s and early '80s—and we didn't have the load of researchers they have nowadays. It was mostly television networks, documentary filmmakers, main feature type stuff. So, you didn't have that many researchers come in, but this is before video was so predominant. And I just remember rolling the book carts with those big heavy film cans, especially 35 millimeters—it's the same size as the still picture, 35 millimeter—big, heavy can. We had to roll those carts in and out of the reference room. The researcher could have 25 films a day to look at. And we had to rewind the film, so we had a power rewind in the back. So, we had to rewind each film and then take it out. We had to help the researchers find footage.

And Motion Pictures back then—I'm trying to think how the best way to explain this. I think with a lot of records this may be true. So, a lot of it is military. The military was using film early on for all kinds of different things—documentation, recruitment, training. So, we had a lot of military film. USDA had had a Film Production Unit since the '20s. They had silent films. We have some great ones here; you have to see them sometime although they look kind of laughable now. Like the animation, they'll have a paper man with the jointed arms doing stop animation; really, really archaic type of production. But we have a lot of USDA film footage. And one of the most amazing things was we have some newsreel, theatrical newsreel footage.

And I do remember when I came—in July 1976 is when I came to NARA. It was NARS then, National Archives and Records Service. I kept hearing about this Universal Newsreel that they had just accepted as a donation. It was not a government newsreel. It was donated by Universal Pictures. And supposedly, I don't know all the ins and outs and I don't really know what other people thought, higher-ups and management, but it seemed like it might have been a little controversial at the time. Why are we taking on this huge bulk of film? And half of it, at least up until World War II era—I should say, it dated from 1929 to 1967 is when it ended. Prior to World War II or up—actually, including World War II, I should say—the footage was on nitrate-based film, so very flammable.

So that was the thing. Well, this has to be converted. I mean, not only is it dangerous, it deteriorates quickly, so you'll have nothing if you don't convert it. I don't know when, there was a regulation about nitrate-based film being stored in the DC—in the District, so we had a vault out in Suitland.

The Library of Congress also had one. That's where our nitrate film was kept. So yeah, the Universal Newsreel—I mean, you see it everywhere now. You see it everywhere because it was donated without any rights restrictions, and it's in the public domain. People come and they have to pay for reproduction, of course, but it's nothing like when you go to other places and you have to pay thousands of dollars per second.

MS. KRATZ: Right.

MS. MCCLURKIN: So, it's been used. We use it in our exhibits, we've used newsreel stories. And it's kind of fun to hear the ones that actually still have the sound—some of the audio didn't get transferred—to hear the narrator describe the story of the day and to kind of get that feeling of this is how it was back then. I mean, of course, a lot of news—filmmakers who do research here will come and use it as B roll, like sort of background while somebody's talking. But I also like to see the newsreels as they were. You

kind of get a feeling of what people were all riled up about it back then. So, the Universal Newsreel, I worked a lot with that. And it was very interesting seeing—I really did see—I think a lot of people at National Archives have seen this—the change in technology, in media, starting with the film and—I mean, the older films are 35 millimeter, they're big, wide films and then they go to 16 millimeter around 1930s, definitely World War II. And then we start getting video tape in 1- inch, 2-inch.

And nowadays, if you were to go to the Motion Picture research room over at Archives II, they would say, oh, that footage is on that hard drive over there. And actually, it's wonderful. I mean, it's such a breeze. I'm like, gosh, I wish it would have been this easy back then. I mean, it used to be that, well, people still do it—items that only have a viewing copy on film, you put it on a film viewing machine, usually the brand is Steenbeck viewing machine, like an editing machine—and you sit there and watch that flickering screen. And what I've done in my research for exhibits is I've taken my camera and take a picture of this screen, so I can bring something back for us to look at and review and say maybe we should use this film footage.

MS. KRATZ: So, when you first started, Archives II obviously didn't exist. Where were you located physically in this building?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Well, that's a good one.

MS. KRATZ: If you can remember.

MS. MCCLURKIN: That's a good—yes, I can. Because I do remember coming in and thinking, where am I? Because we were on the 20th Tier. This is a public research room, 20E—20 East. So, they took me up in the back stacks and I thought, oh, this is like a submarine. And then, when we got up to 18—you know, the main stack elevators go up to 18—then they took me on another elevator up to 20. And of course, you could walk the steps, that's usually what I did. Yeah, that was bizarre. It was a little, small research room. And as I was saying, we didn't have the volume of researchers back then. It was mostly feature film people and television network people. No cable yet.

So, I think it was 20E, 1 or 2. And then, across the stairwell there were some other the rooms that I sat at mostly. It was like a preservation room where we prepped the film. I did orders when people wanted to order film. So, having the film background really helped, because it's complicated, just like anything else related with film and photography. You had to know what elements you had and what the customer wanted to get out of that.

So, we were there and we also had offices above on 21, the tippity top. That's where the catalogers sat. And one woman, Roseanne Ernst—and she's deceased, sorry to say—but she was a character, a little short woman and she had that Bronx accent. She liked to say that she was in the back of the truck when the Universal film came into NARA, that she came with it. I think she actually did. And she knew the cards. She spent her career updating cards. They gave us a huge, I mean, like a room-wide bank of drawers of cards—index cards, because with the newsreels, they really needed to describe shots and know where to find it to reuse it. They did that a lot. They would do a "25 years ago today" thing, especially in the '50s and '60s, and so they go back and get their old footage. And actually, that's what saved us for the footage that was lost and I will talk about it later, in the 1978, I think, fire, nitrate fire at the Suitland film vault.

MS. KRATZ: Yes, we just commemorated the anniversary.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. And a lot of that was World War II-era films, which we have a lot documented by the military, so if there had to be anything to lose, you might say, but still, you know, if you go to the Motion Picture research room now, you look at what they call synopsis sheets. There were sheets that the Newsreel sent out to the theater saying, here's the stories this week. And you'll see, especially for that particular area that was destroyed in the fire, just destroyed, destroyed, destroyed, destroyed, and you're like, oh, that's the story I wanted. But we do have coverage in the military footage of a lot, especially if it dealt with the war or anything militarily.

So, we were located on 20, 21 and then, I remember there was a lot of film on the 12 level, I used to go down there, pushing the carts. The carts, those book carts weren't really—many times it's a wonder that my legs are not bluish because I had many a big film cart fall on me. It was a little dangerous, actually. But anyhow, we had film there. We also had a stock film library in—they later moved to Pitt Street?

MS. KRATZ: Oh, is it Pickett Street?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Pickett Street. Yes, good, thank you. I'm sorry, it can't be Pitt, it's Pickett Street. And actually, the Pickett Street complex, it sounded like—I don't even know if I've been out there—they had—cartographics was there.

MS. KRATZ: Cartographic was out there and was the Nixon out there?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Nixon project was out there—exactly. I don't know if the stock film library, part of us, was always there? I think they were somewhere else in Alexandria and then moved to the—I might be wrong.

MS. KRATZ: Could be down at the Record Center in Alexandria?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Maybe so. And I didn't know a lot about the stock film library. I think that came about—was it EPA? Or one of the agencies—oh, no, it was NASA. NASA had a lot of film that they were making like an edited feature film or edited documentary film with that they wanted—that people wanted to use, so they wanted to keep those outtakes, so they started this stock film library and some other government agencies also had extra footage they had shot. I think EPA was one. So, I don't quite know—and I think there's—hopefully there's somebody else that has a better background. Carol Church actually is still here, she worked out there. And she's still in Motion Pictures at Archives II due to leave next year. So, she'll have a better idea about how that stock film library started. I don't think it was really extensive. I know they had cards; everything is—we're still doing cards at this point—so they had cards. And so, there was this staff out there that cataloged the shots. But gee, if you're a filmmaker and you wanted footage of a hurricane or a huge forest fire, you're not going to go out and do it yourself.

MS. KRATZ: Right.

MS. MCCLURKIN: You're wanting to use stuff that exists. Nowadays, it seems so simple. Of course, you can just pull it off online. But back then it was—people really had to hunt for this stuff. So, I think it was used quite well and especially the NASA stuff, all the space shots. There was nowhere you could get those. So, there was a whole staff out there. And yeah, then we moved downstairs to right on the Pennsylvania Avenue entrance to the National Archives Building. There used to be a little niche there. We were right behind the guard's desk where—the big area now where the public computers are.

MS. KRATZ: Oh, yeah. Where the research center is now.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. There used to be a corridor. There were entrances on either side that you would go to. And then, actually, if you went straight back where the Charters monitoring system is. And so, the public was going right past that. I mean, it was locked, and we had some stack areas over there. But our research room moved down there and that was better so researchers didn't have to go up to the 20th tier. One other comment about or story about the 20th tier. So, there was one researcher, I think she was from CBS News or something. She had been there for years and kind of a grumpy lady. But we had a fire drill and you're not supposed to take the elevators and she did not want to walk down those 20 tiers; they're tiers.

She did not want to walk down and we really had to keep—Ma'am, I'm sorry, you do have to come down. Yes, we realize it's a walk. Finally, she did leave, but she did not want to go down. While we were up there, I'm just thinking of some other things now like any notable people. There probably were some producers and maybe filmmakers that were very famous. But one person I remembered was one of the Getty sons, not J. Paul Getty, but one of the Getty sons, I think he had been kidnapped and they chopped off his ear?

MS. KRATZ: Huh?

MS. MCCLURKIN: He was there. He came in to look at footage. Yeah. I mean, he was released. I can't remember his name. I think he's still alive, too. He was in looking at some footage. So, every now and then there would be some notable person. I think some feature stars had come in. Sometimes, though, they would look at old newsreels. This is before, again, newsreels and footage were so easy to access online. People actually had to come in. So, you don't see that so much now. But he came in and there were some others. When we were downstairs, when we move down to the first floor behind the guard's desk, as I said, I do remember, Sammy Hagar, I think he's some country star.

MS. KRATZ: Oh, yeah. He's a rock musician.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Right. And Leon Redbone, I know his music. So that was interesting. He was interested—I guess he's of Armenian descent and he was interested in World War I footage, especially in relation to Armenia. And I wish I had known more about it so I could have helped him more but I don't know if he found what he was looking for. He was there. And I do remember at one point this guy came in with the hair just standing up all—this big 1980s glam rock and he had leopard skin tights on. His girlfriend had hair—and I'm looking at them, thinking they're not in the right place. But I watched my colleague sign them in and I tried to be very gentle about it. I came, I said, what are you looking for? They wanted to listen to music, something about music copyright. I said, I bet you meant to be at the Library of Congress. They said isn't the Library of Congress? So, I think they must have told their taxi driver the—

MS. KRATZ: The wrong place?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah.

MS. KRATZ: What were your impressions when you first started? What was the culture like? What did you think about the agency?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Oh, wow. Well, I did study history, too, at Maryland. But it was very different. I mean, there I was at USDA, that's a whole, another story. But they were more introverted and more scholarly

type of people here. And everybody was very professional and friendly enough, but not too outgoing. And I came in, [laughter] and they say I get this from my mom, who's a mountain girl and just talks to everyone. And yes, I was like a little puppy [laughter]. But I also found that talking to more people, I found out more, I could learn more. I did feel that being in Motion Pictures, I really wasn't able to make the connections that my friends in Textual did. The people that worked with Textual Records really had a network and they worked with each other a lot.

I really felt that Motion Pictures—I guess all the special media or special archives, it was called, were kind of standoffish. Not standoffish, but—how should I say? They just weren't linked in with the other groups. There was a lot I didn't realize it goes on. I mean, talking about your own little world. We had our problems, of course—the formats of the media changing so rapidly, and just storage is hard, and everything. But dealing with the researchers that started coming in—when cable came into being in video was more predominant, there were hordes of people at the door. I remember one time being alone in the research room and there was somebody who was supposed to come up and help me. But there were four groups coming in, all lines on the phone were on hold and I was thinking to myself, there's just no way I can really manage this. But I just had to make everyone take their turn. But with the History Channel, they were in every day. Once people realized that they could get this footage without having to pay royalties.

Oh, and the phone calls. I can't tell you how many calls I got from well-meaning but sweet, young things. "I have a shot list here." And I mean, at least with the textual, you think most of the people coming we're sort of used to scholarly research or academic, that with the media. And I guess that the Still Picture branch had the same thing—especially people in television or filmmaking and they really don't understand. They want to give us a shot list and they think we can just pull stuff out.

I will say that one time somebody wanted, I think it was somebody from the Coke corporate headquarters in Atlanta. "Ma'am, we'd like to have some footage of the soldiers drinking Coke in World War II." And I'm ready to go through my spiel in a nice way. Well, I'm sorry, we can't really dig out stuff like that. It's kind of hard. But I'll do a quick check and I'll let you know and I'll send you some information and maybe you can hire a researcher. But I went over to the Army card file. You know the military, they had the staff and the money to catalog everything, every scene, and their uncut footage. I went over to World War II era. I went to, I think, R and R or something, some major category. I saw dining and under dining I saw beverages and under beverages, I saw Coke.

MS. KRATZ: Amazing.

MS. MCCLURKIN: I had to go back and say, well, I actually did find it within five minutes. So yeah, the military film was always cataloged well. And they had a lot of unedited footage, which is what a lot of filmmakers want to use, like for the B roll. And then they have edited films, too, like training films. And those can get pretty boring, just showing them as they are, because they were made for different audience. And that's what you have to remember with the films that we have in our holdings. The audiences they were made for. Like the USDA made films for farmers, informative films, and they're just not the most interesting things, that's for sure.

MS. KRATZ: Well, you mentioned Suitland. Did you ever have to go out to the film vault in Suitland? And what was that like?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Well, I tell you when I first went after the fire in 1978.

MS. KRATZ: Maybe we should talk about that now, I guess.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Okay.

MS. KRATZ: And maybe you talk a little bit about that fire?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. So, we had a staff. When you asked about our offices, I forgot to say that we had people out in Suitland in the film vault there, in the nitrate film vault headed by Viola Ward. She was not 5 feet even, feisty lady, but she knew her stuff about the film. She kind of lorded—you know, she was the queen of the vault. And she had two people that worked for her, maybe more, actually. Vernon Early, who was our past union president, and George Rowe, he worked for a long time for us and then he moved over to the sound studio. He's since retired. Two really big strapping guys and she was, as I said, really teeny lady. They did everything for her and she loved them.

Okay, so I don't know all their procedures, but obviously, nitrate film disintegrates on its own and you have to be super careful. There's a whole report about the fire that was written by GAO, I think. I'm not sure if it's GAO, but there's a report and I'm sure it's in our library. I used to have a copy. Anyhow, I think what happened is there were contractors doing some work in the vaults. And I think this is what they found, in the report, that somebody had left something plugged in. It could have been something not even dangerous in normal situations, but again, with the atmosphere with the nitrate, so yeah. So, the fire started and it was devastating. And I don't know that I went out the next day. They probably did investigations, probably didn't have the people on the scene. But maybe a day later, a group of us who went out to help with the recovery and it was raining.

So, if you've ever seen a fire—fire debris in the rain, it is a mess. I just remember I had a long trench coat I'd got at the Army surplus store, and somebody commenting, "oh, boy, you really look good." I said, well, I'm here to help, okay? But that was a mess. And then I was detailed out there to help with the recovery. And we took what film was salvaged on nitrate base and prepped them. The Universal Newsreel would take each story—usually there's just like six stories a minute long for a Newsreel. It was about six to ten minutes. But physically, you would see these little rolls of film, not even on a core. So, I had to go in and put leaders on them so they could be prepared to be transferred, just identifying them, match them up with cards, and things and sort it out.

So, there was a team of us and Carol Church might have been on that team, I'm not sure. And we did that for I'm not sure how many months, and then the film was preserved and then there was a whole lot of work involved in that in bookkeeping. And again, this is before a lot of automation, so a lot of it was done by hand.

MS. KRATZ: What were you transferring the film to?

MS. MCCLURKIN: To acetate-based film. Yeah. I don't think at that point we were doing video copies yet. So, they were making—they called it safety film.

MS. KRATZ: Safety?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Safety copies, so yeah.

MS. KRATZ: And how long were you detailed out there?

MS. MCCLURKIN: You know, I not sure. I think about six months. So, I forgot when it happened. Was it in—

MS. KRATZ: Did you say '78?

MS. MCCLURKIN: I think '78.

MS. KRATZ: Yeah.

MS. MCCLURKIN: But was it fall or summer?

MS. KRATZ: This time of year, I think.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah.

MS. KRATZ: I just read something about the anniversary.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. So, I guess through the winter. It's funny, I don't have a lot of—

MS. KRATZ: I was going to say, what was it like out there and what was it like in Suitland for six months?

MS. MCCLURKIN: I just remember going and doing my—I guess the thing that bothered me was driving, you know, trying to get there all the time.

MS. KRATZ: Did you have to drive there?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah.

MS. KRATZ: And then when you worked here, did you drive here?

MS. MCCLURKIN: No. When I worked here, I lived on MacArthur Boulevard. I had my own little place, \$165 a month, had no central air, but it was a little apartment building with a walkup, with three floors and had like, arch—you know, rounded archways. I loved it. And I took a bus.

MS. KRATZ: Bus?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah, I took a bus. And then when I moved out to Takoma, got married in '79, they were just building the Red Line.

MS. KRATZ: I was going to ask if it was about that time the metro was starting to be built?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah.

MS. KRATZ: Then you started taking the metro?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah.

MS. KRATZ: When did the Archives stop open?

MS. MCCLURKIN: That's a good question. Because I always took the Red Line.

MS. KRATZ: And then just to Union Station or Chinatown?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. Chinatown. Actually, I usually jump off at Judiciary just get a walk in.

MS. KRATZ: Oh, yeah.

MS. MCCLURKIN: But right, right, yeah. God, it's been so long. I mean [laughter].

MS. KRATZ: Well, I wanted to ask you, also, what the area was like around here when you first started, because it's changed it so dramatically?

MS. MCCLURKIN: It's changed. I had a picture, it's from our holdings. I was using it as a background on social media for a while. I should find that and show it to you. Because, yeah, Pennsylvania Avenue, it wasn't that pretty. And right across the street—okay, you're standing in the entrance to the building, you're looking across the street, across Pennsylvania Avenue. To the left across the street, on the corner of Pennsylvania and Ninth, was—oh, something Hut—it started with an H. That had mixed reviews from people. So, some people thought it was deplorable and some other people said, oh, I like to go there and drink. Well, and then there was the old Kann's Department Store. I think that was still there. My aunts used to work there and I would get boxes from my grandmother, usually a night gown—just what you wanted when you're little—from Kann's. And I always wondered, where's Kann's? There it was, empty. There was the Lansburgh Building up the street and we kept film up there.

MS. KRATZ: Okay. I thought we used that space.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah, we did. I never went up there, but I heard stories about, "I think I saw a rat."

MS. KRATZ: They saw a lot of rats.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Also, again, if you're looking going east across the street there between Seventh and Sixth, there was a row of stores and I remember there was a greasy spoon, Barney's or something. There were all kinds of little shops there. They were much more smaller places. There was a place on—let's see, what is—I'm not sure what the road is, maybe E Street or—that's parallel to Pennsylvania Avenue? Fuhrman's Cafeteria. I mean, I could have gotten so fat. They had like Southern cooking and, oh, just everything you wanted; biscuits and gravy and all kinds of great stuff. Like, in that greasy spoon that I mentioned earlier on Pennsylvania, it wasn't as good cooking, but, you know, it was comfort food, I guess you would say. There's also a place on E Street, Cuban and Italian. So, there are all these little places that if you talk to people who used to work here, they're "oh, I remember that little place." And they're long gone.

So, I mean, now we have Chopped, which is better for you and I really prefer it. Really. But yeah, those places, they were individually owned, not chains, and they were something. Not the healthiest of places, that's for sure.

MS. KRATZ: Did you go out to lunch a lot or after work, going out to drinks?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah, I didn't hang out too much in the city, but by then I was married and I was an old married lady and inherited two great kids and so I couldn't hang out. And I didn't go out to lunch that much. I did go to some of these places and, yeah, back then when you could have lunch less than \$20. Now it's, prohibitive.

MS. KRATZ: So, you said you worked in a bunch of different capacities when you were working for Motion Pictures. What was your favorite thing that you did while you were there?

MS. MCCLURKIN: I think that I did like reference. It was frustrating, but you got to hear about people's projects and you really felt like you were part of it. Just as I was ready to leave—I wonder if I have this straight my mind. And I got a job in Public Programs, '91, and I had been at Motion Pictures for about 15 years. But I think I remember Blackside Productions and I think they were working on the "Eyes on the Prize" PBS specials. They were doing a lot of civil rights footage. I remember Ken Burns' researchers coming in. I worked with them. I remember they were doing some of the Civil War. Of course, we didn't have Civil War film, though I did get the question—did we have footage of the Underground Railroad? I said, first of all, do you know what century that was? And second of all, you realize it wasn't a real road. Without being too dismissive. But I was going to say—I got sidetracked. I'm sorry, Jessie.

MS. KRATZ: Oh, no, that's okay.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Oh, you were asking about a favorite thing to do.

MS. KRATZ: Yes.

MS. MCCLURKIN: So, I worked on a lot of Ken Burns documentary films and there's so much work. I mean, just like anything else, someone writing a book, I think that's what all Archives people know. You just don't know how much work people put into it. You look at the finished product and you look at the film program and you think, yeah, it's only an hour and a half. But it's hours and hours and hours and hours and hours of going through footage, going through documents. And that I've learned a lot in exhibits, actually, just how much—you look at one document on display and you think, yeah, who couldn't do that, put a document on display? And the stuff that you guys post, too, I know that everything you write is just hours of work, so I liked working in Motion Pictures, just because that was a love of mine to make documentary film and history. History and film, when I came here, I was in heaven, because it mixed the two things I love so much. So, I would say working with the public, making stuff accessible. And I think I've carried that through in Exhibits, too. I think it's so cool to show people what we have. They have no idea. They think we're part of the Smithsonian, usually.

MS. KRATZ: Smithsonian, the Library of Congress,

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yes, exactly. My family finally, finally understands where work.

MS. KRATZ: Well, what made you want to move from the Motion Pictures to the Public Programs?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Public programs? Well, I had been there long time and I kind of felt like I was going nowhere. And really, when you talk about media film, you're restricted to a certain time period. And coming into Exhibits, Public Programs, and suddenly working with documents and things, it really expanded my knowledge of what we had. I mean, I've learned so much being in the Exhibits branch. It just great. I mean, we do different exhibits each year, so there's something to focus on each year. I learn more and more and more. You know, you just never stop learning. There's always something new.

MS. KRATZ: So, in 1991, you moved over, and that was the same time where the Archives was gearing up to move to College Park.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Right.

MS. KRATZ: Were you involved with the move at all?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Not really, because by then I had moved. Yeah. Actually, maybe a little bit, my last years in Motion Pictures they were doing some shifting around, maybe in preparation. I do remember one incident. That was being in the stack areas in this building. Having people move stuff up. I think that's what it was for. I think it was related to the move, but it was, excuse me, sometime in '91.

MS. KRATZ: Were your colleagues in Motion Pictures told they will be moving to College Park?

MS. MCCLURKIN: I guess there was talk of it, but I don't think at that point. Yeah, I guess there was, I guess that was the assumption, that we'd be moving, that's right. Because I think some people were trying to consider should they move, look for houses. Especially the people that lived in Virginia. I remember being very concerned, I don't blame them. And see, I lived in Takoma Park—it wouldn't have been that big of a deal for me.

MS. KRATZ: Right.

MS. MCCLURKIN: So, I was fine with anything, although I like being in town. I'll be glad not to have to commute. But I like being around—I keep saying, I can go out to any museum, but I usually sit at my desk.

MS. KRATZ: Well, can you take me through the steps of you leaving Motion Picture and moving over to Exhibits? Did a job open? Were you interested in it for any other reason?

MS. MCCLURKIN: I've had been interested, but never really time to investigate and then—oh, I know. What I think happened was— thinking back about this—John Vernon—I don't know, did you know him?

MS. KRATZ: The name is very familiar.

MS. MCCLURKIN: I think he worked at Suitland and he worked in various textual units. He worked in education, exhibits and education. And now there's a proximity here, because as I said, we were on the ground floor where the computers are now, and education and exhibits were down the hallway, going towards G-12.

MS. KRATZ: Okay.

MS. MCCLURKIN: They had that bank of offices. Yeah, G-12 was the office head, Linda Brown, another—

MS. KRATZ: Little woman?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. Helmet hair. And so, John would come over there. John— big, tall guy, very friendly—and he had an interest—you probably have seen his articles—he had this passion for Jackie Robinson.

MS. KRATZ: Okay.

MS. MCCLURKIN: And he did a bunch of articles. He was writing a book, I don't know. He wasn't getting it anywhere, unfortunately, because he couldn't get access to Rachel Robinson, the widow. But I think he did a little exhibit with David Pfeiffer, another retiree, out at Suitland about baseball, baseball cards or something. So, he wasn't in Exhibits, but he just had this passion. So, he would come in. I guess he was looking at some of the footage, some of those newsreels. All of all of those Universal Newsreels would have a sports story; it could be collegian, it could be professional, they always had a sports story.

So, I guess he was coming in—I don't know for sure—to look at some of the footage and started talking to me and thought I was helpful. And when people think you're helpful! I guess he mentioned to me that they were looking for somebody to help out. Not exactly in Exhibits, not exactly in Education, but it was the education—let's see, Exhibits and Education Division headed by Edith James and there was an opening. And he and Walter Hill were running the Modern Archives Institute. And they said they could use somebody to help them run that and do some other things in Public Programs. Was there a job? I can't even remember if there was a specific job opening. There must have been, there must have been. I must have submitted my—back then it was a 171. And yeah, I got the job. I was very happy. Who hired me? I think Emily Soaps, might have hired me. And they needed James, ultimately. And so, I worked with John Vernon and Walter Hill in the Modern Archives Institute. I didn't even put that down.

MS. KRATZ: I was going to say, will you talk about that a little bit, because we don't do that anymore?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah.

MS. KRATZ: So, I think a lot of people aren't necessarily familiar with what that is.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. Well, I came in late, it had been going for years. And really what I did was I was the registrar and really just help them run the program. So, the head, at that time, was John Vernon and Walter Hill. And it was a two-week—one-week or two-week program and they had it twice a year. They had one in the winter and one in the summer, I think. And people would sign up and get funding to attend and then sign up—people that were interested in working with their archives. A lot of religious organizations sent people. And I tell you, when there was some—when was it? Different times when the economy was really down and there wasn't money floating around, the attendees would drop, but there'd always be somebody from a religious organization. They always found money to send somebody. And they wanted to keep their records. You know, they wanted to know the right way to keep their records. That was really interesting because you got to meet people from all over. And they were staying in the city for like a week or two and they felt kind of lost, so they kind of liked to get real friendly and I enjoyed that. So, then the Modern Archives Institute was run out of Public programs.

MS. KRATZ: Okay.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Different people at the Archives would teach different classes, on arrangement, on description. We had public programs even, and different experts would talk to them. Brenda Kepley taught a lot. I'm trying to think who all—definitely somebody from Conservation talked, I guess, Kitty Nicholson or Marylynn Ritzenthaler. They always had a session. People from Still Pictures, from the media, because especially attendees wanted to know, what do I do with this? So, we definitely had people from Still Pictures. I think Ed McCarter and Nick Natanson might have spoken. And then had someone from Public Programs. So, I learned a lot myself. And that was usually here. They had it on the 5th Floor for a long time.

MS. KRATZ: Was it in a theater?

MS. MCCLURKIN: No. There was a conference room way at the end of that—

MS. KRATZ: Oh, the hallway? Yeah.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. Now, there—are they SKIFs?

MS. KRATZ: The SKIFs, now. Yes.

MS. MCCLURKIN: One of them was not much bigger than this room but maybe a little bit longer. And yeah, they had to sit there all day. But the people that came in with their carts and showing samples, they were just mesmerized. They were all so excited. I remember the last year, I think, that I did it, a woman from a Native American tribe had won a scholarship. I think the Colonial Dames of America sponsored a scholarship each session or maybe each year. And this woman, she really wanted to come, but she didn't have a place to stay, so she kept calling me and I was really trying to help her. I was just short of saying do you want to come over to my house? But I thought that was great that she was able to come. I can't remember the outcome of that, frankly. I met a lot of great people in the archival profession. Somebody Gray—there's this is one dynamic speaker and I can't remember his name, that's bad—but he comes from Texas. David Gray or something like that. Anyhow, there are few people that weren't from NARA. And they also had a day at the Library of Congress. The Library of Congress and NARA, we would coordinate and it felt cool, because people really that were getting this information, they were just in heaven, so that was wonderful. So, then it went to Mary Rephlo. And now they don't do it.

MS. KRATZ: No.

MS. MCCLURKIN: It's got a long in history; I think the last ones I worked were—or as register were like the 41st or 42nd, so it—

MS. KRATZ: So then what else were you doing in the Public Programs?

MS. MCCLURKIN: I did that and I helped with some special events that they had. I'm just laughing because one image that comes to my mind is there's another—she worked, I think, back here, Leah, who did special events and I remember she—maybe she just happened to be there innocently, but knocked over a table of glasses in the Rotunda, and the sound that that made, oh.

MS. KRATZ: I can imagine.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. But did—

MS. KRATZ: Well, were there a lot of events in the Rotunda?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Not a lot. Not of theirs, no.

MS. KRATZ: Right.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah, not a lot. And I can't remember what that was, it might have been an exhibit opening or some kind of thing. July 4th, we worked on July 4th. The Ford Foundation took over, we used do it with special events. And film screenings, we did it when the theater was on the 5th floor. I do remember that. When I was in Motion Pictures, I remember, I don't know, maybe they didn't have enough staff, but I had to actually take people up. The public came in Pennsylvania Avenue, I had to take the public up to the 5th Floor. I had to escort them.

MS. KRATZ: For the show at the theater?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. For the screening. This is at night. I did it several times. And at one time I had to actually do the introduction and get up there and speak. I was shaking, I was like oh, I don't know what to do.

MS. KRATZ: Did you ever have to actually—since you had a film background—do any the screenings yourself, any of the behind the scenes—

MS. MCCLURKIN: No.

MS. KRATZ: —production room?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. Oh, well, I did, yes; again because of Tom Nastik. Bill Blakefield, I think, was the first—well, no. They must have had—the theater was built in the '30s.

MS. KRATZ: Yeah.

MS. MCCLURKIN: When I came in Bill Blakefield was doing the film programming and he got Tom Nastik, who was at the National Audio-Visual Center. I think they were part of us, yes.

MS. KRATZ: They were part of us, yes.

MS. MCCLURKIN: And Tom, was out there. He says Bill saved his life. May be another good one to talk to, Tom Nastik, for sure. And so yeah, Bill and Tom took turns projecting and then I think Tom did it, mostly. But a couple of times I had to do in introduction, take people up and yeah. I didn't really make the film, but I helped screen it. Yeah, that theater is a great—there are some great pictures that a researcher, a film researcher found, maybe from a magazine or a newspaper of the theater production—

MS. KRATZ: The old theater?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. I should see if I can—I'll forward them to you. I think he e-mailed them to me. I don't know if we have any of our video of RG 64—but it was really pristine. I'm trying to think of how it must have, you know, been a really pretty cool little theater. I always liked it.

MS. KRATZ: Yeah. Did you have staff meetings in there? Did you spend time besides during public programs in the theater?

MS. MCCLURKIN: I don't remember a lot of meetings in there. I do remember the one time I ran the projection room. Tom couldn't be there and it was a kickoff to the CFC and so I supposedly was supposed to be in there doing the video. And Linda Brown in the office hands me all this and I couldn't get the projector to work. I was switching the stuff out and the next thing I know, she's at the door. So, I went out and said, I'll be just a moment, I'm sorry. But other than that, I guess for the things like that, yeah. I guess there must have been agency-wide stuff. Although it was a small theater. I don't know how many—not like we do now. I mean, Tom would know how many seats.

MS. KRATZ: Yeah. I remember going to a meeting or two in there.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah.

MS. KRATZ: But I don't remember what it was for.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah, yeah. And you remember Nancy Malan had her office there?

MS. KRATZ: That was great!

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah, yeah. So that's right. So, we must have it. Because I remember seeing her at one point walking through, climbing the ladder.

MS. KRATZ: Yeah, that ladder, it—yeah.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah.

MS. KRATZ: And there were no windows, no—

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah.

MS. KRATZ: They made her finally leave.

MS. MCCLURKIN: She loved it. I was like, oh, I think I climbed up there once. I thought, oh, gosh. It would be my luck, I'd fall down. But right, right.

MS. KRATZ: I wonder if that space is still there?

MS. MCCLURKIN: I know.

MS. KRATZ: Because the projection room is still there.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah.

MS. KRATZ: That'd be interesting.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Exactly.

MS. KRATZ: What other kinds of programs did you work on?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Well, I wasn't there that long, let's see, so Modern Archives Institute—just assisting with different setups and things. And I can't even remember because I think back then they were even doing the thing where outside agencies could rent the room. I think they were doing that. I might not have that straight, but I remember assisting with some stuff, but I really wasn't sure what it was. But I think that was only a couple of years and then I was pursuing—I hope I'm not jumping too quickly.

MS. KRATZ: No, go ahead.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Then I was asked if I wanted to work in Exhibits and I said I didn't really have a museum background, but I thought I could be more useful in Exhibits, especially with the audio-visual job I had; that's my background. So, then I started working for Emily Soaps

MS. KRATZ: And what was your title?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Well at first, I think, I still was a Senior Archives Technician, but it might have been Exhibits Support Specialist. Was that '91?

MS. KRATZ: '91 to '97?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. Okay. I was still Archives Technician. Hope I'm not telling you anything unusual, but I do remember, I don't know what their purpose was with their titles, but what they didn't want was for me to be grabbed in any reorganization. They were trying to think like how can we keep her here and not be snatched. I don't know. Maybe I just made that up, but I was puzzled why they kept worrying about what my title was. I thought it had something to do with if there was a reorg and I might be pulled out. I don't know.

MS. KRATZ: There were several reorgs. Do you remember them?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. Well, I remember because we were Office of Public Programs. We were office level. Linda Brown was the senior manager. And so, when John Carlin came in and wiped out the Office of Public Programs, and Agency Services, which I felt was so odd, because here was a woman in at office head, there was an African-American office head. I thought that was odd, but they obviously had other ideas about what to do. We were put in the Exhibit and Education Division under Michael Kurtz's Office of National Archives.

MS. KRATZ: Okay.

MS. MCCLURKIN: And I always liked to explain that people, I'd say, if you looked at the telephone list of the offices, here's Michael Kurtz and here's all the custodial units and there we are at the bottom, and that really, you know.

MS. KRATZ: It doesn't really make sense.

MS. MCCLURKIN: It didn't. And I mean, at least with Linda Brown under Office of Public Programs, it was Exhibits and Educations Division, it was publications. Chuck Bender, Charles Bender, was head, and David Blass was under him. There was technical coordination and that was the film, and then publications, the editors, they were all under publications.

MS. KRATZ: Oh, okay.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. We were all one big office.

MS. KRATZ: You worked with Mary Ryan? Did you work with her?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah.

MS. KRATZ: Okay.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. I mean—

MS. KRATZ: Sandra Glasser?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Right, right. We didn't work with them closely—

MS. KRATZ: But they were in your team?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Right. They were part of the big office. We did the special events, in that special events office and I worked really well with Tom and Bill and Pat—and let's see, she just passed away, Pat El-Ashry. You know, people knew where to go. If you needed an image from July 4th, we went to Pat El-Ashry, she had them. She had the file there. And then after that it was kind of confusing. I mean, who's

doing this and who's doing that and where do I find this? We had a couple programs—I mean, special events. I can't remember right after the Office of Public Programs was disbanded. But it—you know, it wasn't like it used to be.

So, I do remember working with Edith James and Paula Poulos to make these little—would you call them little books, little booklets trying to explain the value of publications and the multiplier effect, how many people we've reached with education, how many students they've reached. And I think we were building bridges. And then, I'm not sure how it all happened, but these things together and then with John Carlin the decision was made that yes, we are going to build a big museum, we're going to enlarge it. And to do that, we need more—you know, we were really on the burner for a long time. We had these nice exhibits, but it wasn't really any splashy. I mean, we had the Rotunda.

MS. KRATZ: Okay.

MS. MCCLURKIN: And we had the Charters of Freedom flanking cases and then we had the Circular Gallery, I don't know if you ever saw that.

MS. KRATZ: I did.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah.

MS. KRATZ: Yeah. I remember that.

[Laughter]

MS. MCCLURKIN: And their designers got good at putting images up on this curved wall. I think that was amazing. So yeah. I mean, we get word that they're going to build newly built great museum. And to do so, they'd have to raise money. Then that money was given to create office to raise money. And then they got Jill Glenewinkel, but they were going to hire a new person. Yeah, they put up the job for Head of Exhibits in Education. We actually got to interview—

MS. KRATZ: Really?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yes. The candidates.

MS. KRATZ: And what year was this?

MS. MCCLURKIN: I guess it was 2000, 2001, maybe. Let's see, we left the building and went to temporary location at Archives II.

MS. KRATZ: And did you move to All, I was going to ask—Carlin came in and a bunch of folks moved to Archive II earlier and then you had to move. Was it during the renovation?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yes. Yes. 2001.

MS. KRATZ: Or 3; I guess it reopened in 2003.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yes. Yes. That's right. So, I've been doing—I'm forgetting. I need to check.

[Laughter]

MS. KRATZ: So, was it Marvin who you eventually hired?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. Yeah. They hired, but—okay. [Laughter] We were definitely differing. But you know, people have their feelings about this and that. A lot of big fuss he was too of a micro-manager, but he's definitely was a big vision guy and I think that you need that with that group. He definitely had that—it was amazing to just listen to him. He could talk a lot about big change. So, we were lodged at Archives II, but we were working on the exhibit, so sometimes we'd have to come down here to do research and—

MS. KRATZ: Right. So, you're working on what would become *the Public Vaults* at that time?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Right. *The Public Vaults* and also a little bit on—well, Stacey Bredhoff was working on opening a *New World's at Hand*.

MS. KRATZ: Oh, the exhibit that flanks the Charters.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. Yeah. We had just finished—gee. Was that five versions of *American Originals* starting in '95, and '96—there was a new version each year—and it ended up with *Treasures of Congress* on the occasion of the Anniversary of Congress.

MS. KRATZ: Yeah. Something like that. I have the catalog in my desk right now.

[Laughter]

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. And then the *American Originals* travelled and I helped with that. Yeah, that was a huge—I mean, some of them were originals and so that was pretty huge. And then we started working on *Public Vaults*. Gosh, how did we have time to do all of it. I will say that, you know, I tell you, for *Public Vaults*, we did have some people from other units that detailed with us. And really, you know, so many staff contributed. I'm the one who said that and they should be acknowledged. But we had Michael Hussey. Michael went from a State Department in Textual, to come work with us and Kate Flaherty from Still Pictures was on detail with us, and then Kevin Bagley from Motion Pictures. I'm trying to think if there was anybody else. Yeah, because otherwise, when I look back, I think, geez, we had Chris Smith and Bruce Bustard and they hired Will Sandoval. And Meghan—we had a student aide. You know, that's very few people for thousands of records. It was a lot of work; it was a lot of work. I do remember getting some dental work done and I always call this my tooth that I should have taken care of.

MS. KRATZ: So, you missed being in the building for most of the renovation, then?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yes, how is that? Oh, I can't imagine.

MS KRATZ: [Groans]

MS. MCCLURKIN: I guess they were still working when we moved back.

MS. KRATZ: I think it's when they were doing the stacks though it went on for much longer. So, then you were out in College Park about two years, probably?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah.

MS. KRATZ: And then you moved back. Where were you located then? I guess we need that. The whole building was really different. I mean—

MS. MCCLURKIN: Right, right. And actually, we couldn't go into the moat because Cindy Fox's group was there, and we were supposed to go there, so we were up on—you know where the education—where the resource room is? We had some offices there.

MS. KRATZ: Yes, okay.

MS. MCCLURKIN: We were in there for a while. That was a little office area. Yeah, Room 144, I think. I guess it's not there anymore. That's right. So, we were there for a year or so, until I guess Cindy Fox's permanent space was ready.

MS. KRATZ: And that's where you've been since?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. Yeah, gosh, so for a long time now.

MS. KRATZ: So, what was it like opening the *Public Vaults*?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Oh. Wow, that was fantastic. It was really exciting. I mean, I just felt like we had a little team, but we did so much. And yeah, I remember the days leading up to it. The exhibit fabricators, I think they were working around the clock and seeing stuff that was like, oh, my God, they're never going to finish that. But somehow they did. I mean, there were some tweaks that needed to be done, but we had a great team.

Chris Smith—you know, I just can't praise enough. She really was a great manager. And Bruce was a great curator and everyone had their part. Will Sandoval, he was a great guy trying to push the contractors to get the stuff done. He was good at that, project manager and push, push, push. And you need that because you know how it is. People come in and not everything is finished. Oh, we'll get to that. Well, you know, if you don't keep on them. So yeah, even with the Circular Gallery—we've put some video production. But back then, Tom Nastik—I'm sure we were all ready to start doing them—and we were really limited with what we could put in and trying to put any kind of media, you know, in the Rotunda. We've tried, but it just echoes.

MS. KRATZ: Yeah.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Oh, there's so much I haven't gotten around to making—part of that Exhibits in Education, under the Office of Public Programs, we even had an Arts and Culture woman who would put on plays in the theater.

MS. KRATZ: Oh.

MS. MCCLURKIN: We would contract it out as a way to draw in our audiences. She—Cynthia Hunt is her name. So—why was I telling you that? Oh, I remember her hiring an acoustic guitar player. I just thought to myself, I don't think anybody can hear this. So yeah, they've tried different things. And we never had the space, you know, to really do stuff like that. So, with *Public Vaults*, finally there was space to put in more A/V so we did, although by comparison to other museums, it's not a huge space. So, I remember, if you know where the Record of America corridor kind of goes—and you kind of see things change, hand-writtens, and printeds, so then the media. And I knew that that modern time period over on the far side—not that we have a lot of sound overlap, but when it does, wow. Yeah. I thought it was really great and people were really moved. I mean, we heard good feedback from everyone. We got such great press; we got a great review in the *Washington Post* by Jacqueline Trescott who called it the

“Magical History Tour.” And I remember Miriam Kleiman from Public Affairs—they had tracked down some of the people who were in the records we were showing.

MS. KRATZ: Isn't that amazing?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. That was amazing. I loved to see that. And one of them was a blind man who had written a letter in braille to President Eisenhower about school segregation and the problem and the violence. It's in the *Public Vaults*, yeah. And he was there with his family. He was so happy. I actually took him on my arm for a while, he was just beaming and he was just so proud. A more poignant incident was the Medal of Freedom citations, that Medal of Honor, the wife and daughter of someone who died—I can't remember—who died saving others in his unit by falling—they were there. So that was really—that was great. And that month, you know, the movie *National Treasure* opened. So, it was like, whoa. So, you know, finally we go from oh, you know, a little mention somewhere in the weekend section of an exhibit to suddenly having people go “oh, you work at the National Archives?!”

MS. KRATZ: And it was called the “National Archives Experience.” Do you know how that name came about?

MS. MCCLURKIN: I think that was something with Marvin and maybe the Archivist. I'm sure there are other people who came up with that. I think maybe it was for a fundraising but don't go with that. So, the theater, the new theater, the new renovated Rotunda. So, I think they just wanted to put it all together to say, hey, you're going to be impressed. And maybe for some reason, I'm not sure why—but I tell you what—as far as that long list I was trying to envision, the phone list of National Archives and us at the bottom, Marvin got us moved up to “Center for the National Archives Experience.” It's like Center for Legislative Archives and it had, I think, a bigger role, bigger voice, you know. And of course, I mean a very real problem that Leslie said is that this is a limited space and there were hard feelings from other units about space being taken from them and used for public space. So, I don't know, I think it's too bad. I mean, I understand how people feel, I really do, but you know, location, location, location. We're right here on the mall.

MS. KRATZ: Well, were you involved with the opening of the O'Brien Gallery and how that came about? Because that came a little later, as I recall.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yes. Well, I do remember when they started talking about rebuilding the exhibit area, I think I heard that okay, we're going to build this new permanent of exhibit and that's it. You'll have this new permanent exhibit space that surrounds the Rotunda. And I just remember heated discussions about, you know people need to see something change—you know, changing if you want people to come back, and we need a changing exhibit gallery. I do remember people making that point over and over again and finally they said, okay, here's a changing of the exhibit space to be included in, and I certainly don't have the full story about all that. I wasn't party to all the discussions, but I do remember people feeling very adamant about that you can't just build an exhibit and expect it to last forever.

MS. KRATZ: Right. Fifteen years.

MS. MCCLURKIN: I know. I know. And now they're talking about replacing it, so —

MS. KRATZ: Yeah. I imagine it's quite an agenda.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. Anyway, so yeah.

MS. KRATZ: So, now the *Public Vaults* is open. It looks like 2005 you became an Exhibit's Information Specialist 2005?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Right.

MS. KRATZ: So, what was that change?

MS. MCCLURKIN: That wasn't a whole lot. Maybe because I started curating more things like A/V and I was doing some feature documents.

MS. KRATZ: What were some of your favorite exhibits that you worked on?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Oh boy. Well, I loved all the *American Originals* exhibits in the Rotunda. As far as the changing gallery, wow, I liked them all. Food was fun with Alice Kamps, she's so great. *Spirited Republic* with Bruce was great and the footage. Boy, that was a big thing, Prohibition. Boy, the newsreels are like, yay, whoopee. And interesting, and I always thought this but I'm just a little surprised it was so prominent in the newsreels. You know, the industries were all like, come on, we want to sell our liquor!

[Laughter].

You know, they were really pushing it. That was fun. And I'll tell you what, when we first started talking about the Vietnam exhibit, gosh, I have such memories because I knew people who had been drafted. I have a family member who went over to Vietnam. Actually, it started with the end of the footage. It just brought back really vivid memories. I wasn't prepared for that, I was like, oh, man. Yeah, so much of this stuff was before my time and you can look at it from a distance but that really hit me. So, I really appreciate the memories of the Vietnam exhibit. I perused through it and I also realized what little I knew, while I was out on the street protesting, how complicated it was, all the different factions. Like, I guess I always felt the Vietcong were regular North Vietnamese troops, not really knowing all the differences. So, I think it's admirable to take a difficult subject and explain what she did in that little space. I think there's an introductory—I don't know if you've seen the animated videos of the beginning. They go so fast-paced, it's like, what? What? But I think they help kind of set the stage.

MS. KRATZ: Can you talk a little bit about how the relationship with the Foundation has evolved with the different exhibits?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Well, they really were part of this. In fact, they started when we were still temporarily located on Archives II is when they hired Thora Colot and Frank Cordes. [Laughter] And I remember them vividly just, you know, thinking okay—are we going to get much done here with just those two people?! But yeah, I mean, Thora really built up a team. She worked really well with Marvin and I think—did he work—she worked at the Phillips Collection and Frank worked with the Phillips. I'm not sure that Marvin did, or maybe Marvin worked on a special project with him? They worked well together, and I think that made a big difference. They were really in sync. I remember the Foundation really going over each part of the exhibit, but you know, once we got the rhythm in, it seemed to go. It's really hard when you have to have so many people weighing in. I know right now it's like, you know, everyone has to have a say and let's do this and let's do that. But back then we knew we had this mission and we just hung in there and we worked well. I think nowadays we're trying to find—then there was the reality of the Foundation—when we had the reorg, the last reorg. I can't remember. The Foundation has been very strategic—see, I can't even remember anyone!

MS. KRATZ: There have been a lot of changes.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. There are others, communications and so, you know, it's kind of awkward now. And we're constantly working with them. We've talked about how we work with the Foundation, just trying to be there. I think this happens everywhere. There's a problem and then they overkill, meeting after meeting.

MS. KRATZ: Right. I know we have been going for about—almost an hour—hour and a half now.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Oh, sorry.

MS. KRATZ: No, no, no. We can go as long as we want and we can always take a break and do it another day, but I just wondered, did the various—because you worked under a lot of different Archivists.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah.

MS. KRATZ: Did their administrations change the way you work? Or were you able to stay under the radar and still get your job done?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. Good question. I don't know how other people feel. It seems like I've always been in a unit that wasn't really the top. How do I do that? I remember when they were doing some of the remedial work and having all those focus groups. I remember just sitting there listening. They said they were trying to figure out who the main custom of NARA is.

MS. KRATZ: The most recent re-org?

MS. MCCLURKIN: No, I'm sorry. This was um, probably in '96. It might have been the strategic direction.

MS. KRATZ: Okay. The Carlin one?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah.

MS. KRATZ: Oh, okay.

MS. MCCLURKIN: And I hope I'm not wrong about that, but I think it was that one. Or maybe it—I'm sorry. Actually, I think I was in Public Programs. Yeah. I was in Public Programs then. So, it was interesting, I thought to myself, I wonder who the people in this group think and they came, and they said, we think the ultimate customer are the agencies. And I remember just thinking, really? I wanted to say, really? Do you know close to a hundred million people visit the exhibits—and this was before a lot of online stuff. But, yeah, I guess when the Office of Public Programs had been abolished and we were tucked under the Office of National Archives under Michael Kurtz, I remember thinking, oh, you know, they just don't see the value of Public Programs and this is really sad, really sad.

And as I told you, I know Edith and others worked really hard to persuade the Archivist that it could be very valuable. And I think—don't quote me again, but I think Jerry George, who used to be with AAS, what is it? State and Local Archives? I think he was head of that. I think that he was someone who really pushed that we should improve our museum program and education, it would be really beneficial to the agency as a whole. And, yeah, so once he started, he got behind that push, and I think that was really a huge thing for us, and different. I don't know again what the rest of the people in the agency thought. They may not appreciate that, but I thought it was great. I thought I was doing the right thing. So, prior to that, when I came, the Archivist was James "Bert" Rhoads.

And the office head was Mabel Deutrich. Mabel—I met her once. And then Jim Moore and then Bill Murphy, that’s the chain of command. I can’t say that—working in Motion Pictures, we kind of felt the same way. It was like, I got the feeling from Bill Murphy and the disreputable Les Waffin now, [laughter] who is deputy, that oh, they don’t care about us. We never get what we want. And I think every unit has that feeling, but I did feel like we were kind of not outcasts, but kind of standalone, because I think a lot of people didn’t think of media as really a valuable archivable record. Oh, that just film, you know, that kind of thing.

And I get that feeling a lot from going on YouTube that we weren’t listened to. I think every unit is always fighting for their resources. That’s a reality. So James “Bert” Rhoads and getting out of GSA—so, I remember going to a big assembly at GSA and Gerald Carmen was the GSA Administrator, and Carmen Delle Donne, head of the union, and he’s a little guy, but he could speak his mind, stood up and said something, you know, challenged Mr. Carmen and Mr. Carmen said, “does he represent you all?” And there was a resounding, “no!” And poor Carmen sat down and I thought, well, yes, he does, but I can’t remember what the issues was.

MS. KRATZ: Well, I was going ask you what was it like during that time, during the independence movement from GSA?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah, I don’t remember how it affected us specifically and we were so involved in our little world and just getting stepped on, but I know that people felt very strongly, especially at the top level and they thought things would be easier and better for us. So, we were all for it. I think I might have a t-shirt. I’ll never fit into it, but yeah. It was again, not at my level, I don’t think I could really say that I was aware of, you know, what the differences were, but obviously everyone felt so strongly about it so that was exciting. That was ‘85, yes, so I was still in Motion Pictures, that’s right. So those were the big things. I didn’t mean to go back—

MS. KRATZ: Oh, no. We don’t have to go in chronological order.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Okay. Yeah, but as far as the other Archivists, Trudy was acting for a long time.

MS. KRATZ: A couple years.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. And that was interesting. I kept thinking, oh, it would be great to have a woman Archivist. Will it ever happen? And then Frank Burke was acting, I think.

MS. KRATZ: Yeah. He was acting between Warner and Wilson.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Oh, Wilson, yeah.

MS. KRATZ: And then, Wilson, Trudy.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Oh. Wilson, Trudy —

MS. KRATZ: Carlin.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Carlin, yeah. Okay. I used to know them all—I’ve tried to look into the history, too. I really enjoy your blog and what other people write, Alan Walker, because I’ve always wondered about people. I’ve looked at the pictures of former employees and you know, I wonder what their life was like. I’m really jumping back again. When you asked me earlier about what the atmosphere was it like here. I

told you how I felt like a little puppy and you know, like everybody else is like, get her away from me. Saying hello to people who you'd pass 50 times a day, and never say anything. I just thought, well I'm going to say hello. But there was Mary Livingston with her little hat and her white gloves and her handbag. I mean not everyone was like that but there were a lot of people that were very professional and very genteel but they knew their stuff. They really knew their stuff. If you had to ask a question, you knew you could get the answer from them.

MS. KRATZ: You were really here during the transition from the very professional academics to more reaching out to the public, more like a public history type institution than more academic. You got to see all that over your years.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. Yeah. I think so. I really think so and yeah. That's been really cool and then I keep thinking, well, being in the Exhibits division. I mean, that's what we're all about is reaching out, but you know, I think the other people in the textual units like to as well; I mean, even if they aren't doing outreach, per se. I think people are more open. The type of archivists we get now, I think I feel it's easier to ask questions. And that's a good thing. I think it's a good change.

MS. KRATZ: Now in the early days when you were in Exhibits, could you go in the stacks yourself?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yes.

MS. KRATZ: Hold the records.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah, we could. I would be very careful about it and always alert whoever that we were in there, because I totally understand the need for security. But now we can't, I don't know. I think they're working on it. I think for special projects people have gotten special permission.

MS. KRATZ: To go into the stacks would be easier.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. Yeah, I think Alice has been able to go in for certain things, but it's just not letting anyone in. And when I was working in Motion Pictures, since I used to work there, some of the staff would walk me back. There are associated paper records for some of the audiovisual stuff. And that helps with, like, for *Discovering the Civil War*, I was looking to find out more background about a film that the National Park Service made about a reunion in 1938.

MS. KRATZ: [Interposing] Oh. Civil war veterans?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah.

MS. KRATZ: Was that Gettysburg?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. Yeah, Gettysburg, exactly. So, I wanted to find out about that film but there wasn't a whole lot of paperwork for that. Actually, I don't think I found any at all, and I even did some research in textual records looking for it, but you know I think something that specific, unless it was very controversial, would you know.

MS. KRATZ: Overall, how do you view your time at the National Archives?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Oh, well, gosh. What would have life been—my friends—I mean nowadays, the young people like my step kids, it's like, you were there that long? The same employer? They can't get over it. My dad worked for the Government Printing Office, my brother, so I have government employees in my

family. I have actually about four people worked for the Government Printing Office. And then other relatives worked for DOD, you know live in this area, of course. And so, they were long timers. That just seemed like a natural thing to me.

I guess when I first came, I didn't know that I would stay so long, you know? I thought about going back to school and doing this. Oh gosh, I thought I was going to get tired of the history thing and felt that I was going to get nowhere and people complaining, and I even went back and thought I'll be a physical therapist. But then I took calculus and [laughing] and physics and like, no. Well actually, the thing that really turned me off was I realized you have to make hurt and I didn't have the nerve to do that. So anyhow, I just said, no, no. I'll continue here.

MS. KRATZ: And so, you've been here now for 42 years?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yes.

MS. KRATZ: And the Government for 44.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yes. Yeah.

MS. KRATZ: Very impressive.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. But people don't do that anymore, right? They just don't. So yeah, I never thought I would be here this long. And National Archives, I've had other opportunities. Somebody, a friend of mine worked at the Holocaust Museum and when they were starting up, they have a lot of film footage. And they got a lot from us. They got a whole bunch from us. But, you know, I just thought, the Holocaust, that's heavy-duty stuff and I guess you would get used to it, but the Archives, there is such a rich variety. There's such a wealth. You know what I mean? It's just you're not stuck in—I mean, maybe if you're in a certain unit, but it's just so interesting. I mean, you just never stop seeing new stuff, you know? There's always a new discovery. Who wouldn't want to live here? And then after National Treasure, of course, it was like, wow! Oh, now I understand where you work. [Laughter].

MS. KRATZ: Well, do you have anything that we missed, we didn't talk about?

MS. MCCLURKIN: I can't think, uh, the strategic directions. We're looking at this picture.

MS. KRATZ: Yeah, I'm going to include this photo in your file—

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yes. Yes, definitely.

MS. KRATZ: —so folks can see what we're talking about.

MS. MCCLURKIN: I had a picture of me with the Modern Archives Institute. I think it's part of the photos that are with the records, so I can't locate it now.

MS. KRATZ: We might still have those. I think Jeff Reed has some of those.

MS. MCCLURKIN: But, um....

MS. KRATZ: I also saw a picture of you and Bob Hope when I was looking for something else.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Oh, Bob Hope? Yeah. So, Bob Hope came in to Motion Pictures—that's the room behind the guard's desk and there were red pipes, they're painted red hanging down in the room. But

he came in because, I guess we were building—do you remember there was a Bob Hope USO Office over there on Indiana Avenue on the corner. It was right next to where Au Bon Pain was.

MS. KRATZ: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. It used to be there; it's moved. It's long since moved. So, I think it was connected with that. He was coming in to look at film footage of him entertaining the troops during World War II. So, I was trying to help him. We were kind of fighting over who's going to help him, and Mark Meader went out and he had everything all lined up mostly—we had some footage from the military. A lot of that military film though, unless they were making an edited film, they would just, for the record, document it would be silent.

MS. KRATZ: Okay.

MS. MCCLURKIN: They would have pictures of Bob Hope walking out on stage, sometimes they had sound. But the newsreels would usually have some kind of sound with them. Many times it's the narrator. It's not actually the person on the film but still we showed him newsreels and he was a nice guy and he stood for the picture. I had my camera and I noticed that Bill and Les had to get in. They pushed everyone out of the picture. But that was exciting. So—there was somebody else I met. I can't think of it—Treat Williams? Treat Williams was there. There's been all these people that would come in to look, I think I heard Robert Redford was in.

MS. KRATZ: Oh.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Looking at historical footage, you know, before it became so easy to do so online, that they would come in and review our films. So, I'm sure there's people I'm missing, but I just can't think now, but um, yeah.

MS. KRATZ: I'm sure you have a million stories.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Well, and I told you that one about being locked—

MS. KRATZ: [Interposing] Oh, yeah, I love that. Can you tell that one again?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Well, let's see. I was telling you we were on 20 and then 21 at the very top of the penthouse with Roseanne Ernst, that was her domain and she did a lot of the cataloging, especially the Universal Newsreel that she came down in the truck with. And anyhow, I'm up there and it's Friday around 5 o'clock and one of my coworkers who worked the floor below—and there was a spiral, metal spiral staircase connecting the two floors. Of course, you'd go out in the stairwell, so Bob came out and said, all right. Well, have a good weekend and I go back—there're some vaults back there and there's a door to the vaults. And then there's these vaults; we stored film back there and the Presidential Libraries were back there. So, I go to the back to refile something and the door shuts and when I come back, after I refilled, the door would not open. And there is no lock or anything that I could see. There was no phone in there, there was no water, there was nothing. And I kept jiggling it, jiggling it, trying to get it unstuck and I started to really panic. This is Friday night. And the guards don't come up there, to my knowledge they don't come up there. I think they just patrol the corridors. This is inside a room, so I am really panicking and I took a broom—there's a broom in there. I smacked the floor. They're concrete floors. [Laughter]. But I finally heard, tap, tap, tap, tap, feet on the spiral staircase and I hear Bob Finley—Darlene, is that you? [Laughter].

I'm like, oh, my God, yes. Thank you. Thank you. Open this door. And I did write a report to someone. I said I didn't realize that this could happen, and I hope this doesn't happen to anyone else, because this could have been serious if somebody needed help. I could have been there all weekend long. I guess my husband would finally say, oh, where is she? So that, yeah. Just like I was talking about with the film, the nitrate film, some things to worry about. Okay. Well, anyhow, so, I was talking about the strategic direction—sorry, I don't mean to hop around but was telling somebody else this.

So back then—going through Exhibits offices in 3E, you know where G12 is and then down the corridor? I guess references there. So, we had to go in there. And I get a call—and this is back when everyone has a phone on their desk and there's lines. You answer your own phone. And I hear, "is this Darlene McClurkin? This is John Carlin." And I actually know a banjo player named Bob Carlin so I'm thinking it's got—

MS. KRATZ: It's him?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah, because I could not conceive of John Carlin calling me. And I go, oh, hi, how you doing? And there was a pause and I realized he's not Bob. And he said, well, I'm starting this group for the strategic direction, but he said I don't know if he said this, strategic direction, but he said, starting a group and we're going to go out and see what staffs concerns are all over the nation and I want you to be part of it. Okay, I'm thinking, "Mommy!" So, they had meetings out at Archives II. By then, of course, Archives II is made. First meeting I'm in a big backup, there was an accident in traffic and so I'm couple minutes late—bad form on my part—and I walked into the room and it's all these people and the Archivist and Ren Cahoon sitting there smiling, zeroing in on me. So, I sit down and I'm thinking, I have no idea what's going to happen, they're talking about how we're going to gather this information and find out what they think. So, I did different things, there were some people who really out there organizing the sessions and they had great ideas how to do these classes, sort of like registration for classes and I played very little part in that. What they had was they divided up into teams of three and usually it's an office head and then two other people and they would travel to different locations and put on these values and then another session about a vision. We used hexagon like made a hexagons to capture people's thoughts and try to move them off together. They had this whole way.

MS. KRATZ: People have mentioned the hexagons before.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Hexagon lexicon. There were some people on teams, so they got part of this big strategic directions team are people from everywhere, so there's people from Presidential Libraries, Mary Evans, Shirley Burton from Chicago, Stacey was from Boston then, I think.

MS. KRATZ: Who is that back there? [Looking at a photograph]

MS. MCCLURKIN: That's Greg.

MS. KRATZ: Oh, Greg. Oh, I can't see his face.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah, I know. He's, yes, I'm probably down. The only people still here would be him. I think Maurice is still here from the Federal Register. Everyone else is gone. Some people deceased. Hank Leibowitz, gone.

MS. KRATZ: Oh, and Adrienne was on it, it looks like.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yes, Adrienne. All the offices. Yes, yes, yes. And Jerry George, Dave Peterson, Nancy McGovern, Lew and Lynn.

MS. KRATZ: Oh, yeah.

MS. MCCLURKIN: So, the each of these teams, I was on a team. At first, I didn't think I was going to travel, but then it turned out I was replacing somebody, Michael Kurtz, Burton Fletcher—he was from LBJ Library. I think he was more building maintenance, but he was a real friendly guy and that's what I really think they were really looking for people.

MS. KRATZ: For friendly, who can talk to people.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yes, exactly. Who wouldn't feel threatened, you know, wouldn't be threatening? Actually, at first, I have to say, I did wonder, because we've always had this tension with the rest of the archives, the public programs, rest of the archives. Why are we spending money on public programs? We need more staff. And I noticed that, me, the lowest person on the totem pole, was asked, the only person from public programs, and I thought—but you know, thinking about this, they weren't really—well, they did get some of our ideas when we had different sessions about how should we do this and we did have some sessions where we kind of talked about our ideas for the agency, because I kept thinking they just didn't want the public program agenda to be pushed, maybe. I don't know, I just thought it was odd. It may be easily just that they wanted people that knew others and weren't afraid to speak. So, I go with Michael Kurtz and Fletcher Burton and our trip is to New York. And they usually try to do a Regional Archives, a Federal Record Center and a Presidential Library, if possible.

MS. KRATZ: When they're all three in the same area?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah, right. So, we're going to New York so, I was kind of excited, but the first place we're going to was the Federal Record Center at Bayonne, as you know.

MS. KRATZ: Bayonne yes. Because, that was the Record Center then.

MS. MCCLURKIN: And I was mortified, because Michael said, Darlene, I really want you to introduce and talk, you know, get us going. And all I kept thinking was, oh my God, these people know this Federal Records Center is closing. He was supposed to talk to John Carlin to see if he could get more information about it and he said, no, I didn't get to talk to John. And I'm just like, oh God, what am I going to say? And then I finally felt, I'm not supposed to say anything. I'm here to collect their thoughts, so I finally—you know, I can work myself into a tizzy very easily. And we're going on a train up to Hudson Valley, beautiful scenery, I kept thinking, oh just shut up, stop thinking and enjoy. When we got there, that's the first thing—

MS. KRATZ: That everyone asked?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yes. Please don't take our jobs away. If you have to relocate the records, please, do it in the New York area, you know.

MS. KRATZ: Yeah.

MS. MCCLURKIN: And that's back when I think one the main—correct me if I'm wrong—one of the main results of this information-gathering was that hundreds, thousands of intermittents in the different regions and Federal Record Centers were finally—some of them were finally made permanent. There

were intermittents who'd been working for 20 years as intermittent, on call. A lot of times a married woman who had other source of income, because, you know, how could you depend on that? You couldn't—I don't think that they had benefits, I don't know, I might be wrong. There are people in the audience there at Bayonne who said we can't move because my husband's job's here, but please don't take my job away. So, we copied and passed along the information, but then of course, I think what happen was the records were sent to Lenexa. They were sent to midwest, I think somewhere, and some of them stayed at there, right? Or—but not a lot of records in the area.

So, I think, a lot of people lost their jobs, I suppose. Then we visited the region in New York and I realized why people live in New York when they took us out to lunch. It's like, oh, I'm sure they don't eat like that all the time, but it was like, oh God this great Italian food so close to you. And that was fun, that was when they were Varick Street. Then we visited the FDR Library and I really wish we would've had more time because I wanted to tour it but we were just there in to do the sessions and out.

MS. KRATZ: With just one day?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. Yes, and we spent the night in New York City and then we went up to—did we stay? Yeah, I don't think we stayed there. We went up to the CIA the Culinary Institute of America. That was nice. It was very interesting, so that's what that was all about. And—

MS. KRATZ: And did they take your recommendations? Did you feel like they listened to you, what you compiled?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Well, I think so. For instance, the intermittent problem, I mean I went to one location, but I think, when we came back and compiled, I think that's what the most other teams found at the Record Centers especially, that they needed to do something about the intermittents and so they did. They did do that. As to the others complaints, I don't know. I think we still struggle with some of them and people wanted ways to advance and I think, you know, they work on that now, but it was really interesting and being able to work with these people. I just haven't ever had experience like it. There was a funny feeling.

One funny thing that happened was they're doing these exercises to get us to know each other so, they all are sitting in the circle office heads and us, underlings. Okay, we're going to go around the room and we want everyone to tell us three things about yourself that others might not know and I'm thinking to myself, I'm sure Michael Kurtz and Adrienne Thomas and Lew Belardo want to hear something about me. But anyhow, it was—

MS. KRATZ: [Interposing] Do you remember what you said?

MS. MCCLURKIN: I think, I said that—actually, I got good feedback. I said that—this was stupid, but anyhow—that actually John Carlin reminded me of my dad. I know that's strange. And I said that that my dad's generation really struck me as a generation that he could fix anything and was used to taking matters in his own hands. I don't even know why I said that, but there was something that was making a connection to that it was a different generation, we had new problems and blah, blah, blah, blah. I don't know. Yeah, now that I say that I think, why did I say that? I'm not sure. I guess, just trying to make a connection. I thought that was something people might be able to have the same kind of experience. But you know, it was kind of weird. Maybe they do more of this now, mixing the office heads in with

other people is just—so, I don't know. I don't know if whether all this— I don't know what's written about this reorg.

MS. KRATZ: Yeah, no. I like to look at all the different reorgs, because we've had so many and just compare them to our most recent one.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. I was just thinking the day, because I was in contact with someone who I didn't talk to a long time, but I remember him, I shall not name him when I said, oh, I'm on the strategic directions team and we're going to have values and visions sessions and we want to hear what you have to say, and I just remember him rolling his eyes and—oh, for God sakes, not again. I thought, oh, okay, guess I won't get with you have to say.

MS. KRATZ: Well, I know you were here a long time and we can't possibly cover everything, but was there anything else do you wanted to say before we wrap up for at least today? We can also schedule a follow up interview.

MS. MCCLURKIN: I don't know. I'm thinking about going through my stuff; oh, I have so much stuff, but you think about people in the past that were so helpful to you and like Sarah Stone. Gosh, I just don't know—when you think about it there is so many people that have influenced you and I've just known a lot of great people here. I have to say, I don't have a lot of comparisons to other agencies, I only worked at GSA, I mean USDA, but I just made a lot of great friends.

MS. KRATZ: What do you think you're going to miss most when you retire?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Probably the people and working with the records. And of course I can still do that. I do plan to do some research, all these projects I put off. My husband's father was kind of high up in the State Department and he was Director of North-Eastern Asian Affairs, early 50's, Korea, hot seat. He died early, I never got to know him. He died at like age 46 or something. At first, they thought it was meningitis and then they thought he had dengue fever when he was in India during World War II. So, I did see his records listed in the finding aid, the records of Robert James George McClurkin, so I'd like to do that.

So, I will be around. But I've made a lot of friendships, I mean, being here this long. And I do like helping people, it's great. One of my highlights, I think I did it in my embarrassing little video they did at one of the Archivist's Award ceremony. I've become good friends with Edith Lee-Payne, the young woman in the picture we use over and over again at the march on Washington with the banner. And she's been a buddy, she calls me all the time and she's—

MS. KRATZ: That's great.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah. I'm trying to get her to write a children's book. I said you could be some inspiration and tell kids to get out there and be part of things and not to be afraid and you never know, you might end up being a part of history. So, stuff like that, having exposure to people and that's not to say I can't have that outside of NARA, but you do get a sense of security, you know people. The idea of going to another agency just never appealed to me unless it was some great opportunity, but I just felt like oh, I work with everyone here.

MS. KRATZ: It's very comfortable here.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Yeah, it is comfortable. So that's why I stayed here. I didn't mean to, but—

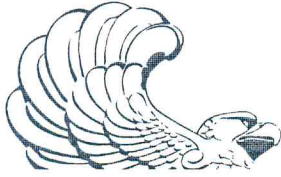
MS. KRATZ: When is your last day?

MS. MCCLURKIN: Well technically, it's January 1, yeah, but of course it's a holiday, but I have to tell you that I didn't think I would do this, sign on as a volunteer, only so that I can—well, not only—so I can do some things, but especially so I can give some time to do something with our A/V stuff which really needs some organizing. I've just never had time to do it, so I'm going to try and just make that short-term project, so I will be around.

MS. KRATZ: Great. Well, thank you so much.

MS. MCCLURKIN: Oh yeah, I'm sorry, I can tell more and more.

[END RECORDING]



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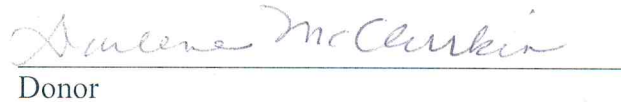
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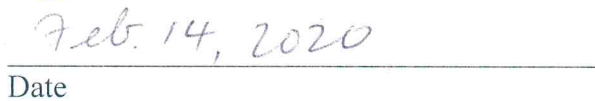
I, Darlene McClurkin, do hereby give to the National Archives History Office the recordings and transcripts of my interviews conducted on December 11, 2018.

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