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AS TO ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

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Signed *H. G. Jones*
Date 8-17-72

Accepted:

Signed *James B. Roade*
Archivist of the United States

Date Sept. 1, 1972

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with H. G. JONES, Raleigh, North Carolina
January 22, 1973

Major positions held:

State Archivist, North Carolina Department of Archives and
History -- 1956-68

Director, North Carolina Department of Archives and History --
1968-73

Administrator, Office of Archives and History; Department of
Art, Culture, and History -- 1973-----

President, Society of American Archivists -- 1968-69

Author, The Records of a Nation, New York 1969

National Archives and Records Service

Oral History Project

Transcript of Interview with H. G. Jones, Director
North Carolina Department of Archives and History

Raleigh, North Carolina - January 22, 1972

Philip C. Brooks, Interviewer

This is to be an interview with H. G. Jones, Director of the North Carolina State Department of Archives and History. Dr. Jones came to the Department as State Archivist in 1956 and became Director of the Department in 1968. He has been active among the state archivists for all the time that he's been at Raleigh and has been active in the Society of American Archivists, of which he was president in 1968 and 69. He is also the author of a book, Records of a Nation, in the course of the preparation of which he gave more attention to the history of the National Archives than most other people have done. Therefore, I think he is usually competent to talk about the relations of the National Archives with other professional organizations, state archives, manuscript curators, and so forth, and its general position in the archival and historical field in the country.

BROOKS: H. G., what was your first impression of the National Archives when you came here? How was the National Archives considered by the state archivists? Did it have a good reputation? Had it done well in building up cooperation with the state archivists?

JONES: Phil, I'm not sure how it was looked upon by others, but I can tell you my own experience. I became the State Archivist without any qualifications whatsoever for being state archivist, except for my graduate work, my teaching work, and my research. And so when I came here in June 1956 and Dr. Crittenden set me down at my desk--which was R. D. W. Connor's original desk--and put a large . . .

BROOKS: Do you still have the desk here?

JONES: Yes, yes, we still have it . . . put a stack of books on my desk and said, "This is the budget for last biennium; you have 15 days in which to get your budget ready for the next biennium," I knew that I had to learn a lot fast. One of the first things that I did, and Dr. Crittenden saw the need for this and arranged for it, he got Dr. Wayne Grover to invite Mrs. Memory Mitchell, who was then Mrs. Memory Blackwelder who was in charge of our records center at that time, an invitation for Mrs. Blackwelder, as she was then, and me to go to Washington and take a tour of the National Archives. This was the first time I'd ever been in the building. I'd of course heard of it, but like most Americans I'd never been to it. And I was so impressed with what I saw

and awed by it because I simply had not seen the workings of an organization such as that. Some of the people I met there at that time later became very close friends, of course, and colleagues. I'm sitting and pointing out several developments because they will indicate the role that the National Archives has played in not only North Carolina but I'm sure in other states. The next summer, 1957, I went up and took the Archives course taught then by Dr. Ted Schellenberg. And here again . . .

BROOKS: Was it the Summer Institute?

JONES: The Summer Institute, right. It was 6 weeks I believe at that time, was it not? It was much longer than it is now. It's been cut down to maybe 2 weeks now. At the Institute I had a chance to work on some projects under Neil Franklin in the National Archives, projects relating to North Carolina, and this made me feel really a part of something much bigger than the small archival program in North Carolina. I began meeting people from other places around the country and learning who was who in this profession, and one thing that I was pleased to see was the role that several North Carolinians had played in the National Archives, starting of course with Connor. Now from that time on, and perhaps even before then, our program has been consciously influenced by the National Archives, consciously on our part. As you know, we were one of the first states to go in the direction of records administration. Morris Radoff says that our state records center here was the first state records center in the country. This followed along the lines of the discussions in the National Archives. Our records center opened in '53, so it came very soon after the National Archives and Records Service had begun its records center program, including the idea of microfilming for economy. We have always had our eyes on the National Archives because we look at that as the organization with the means to investigate, with the means and personnel to do the preliminary studies, the testing, the information from which can be transferred on to us.

Let me give a specific example, and I'll hop around here because they occur to me as we go along. Just recently we had something of a crisis in document restoration. The cellulose acetate which we use is being discontinued by all manufacturers and the question is how are we going to continue restoring documents by the Barrow method? All right, the various state archivists began getting all excited over this. We had calls from various people. Fred Coker came in very upset. I said, "Fred look, you get on the phone and you call Jim Gear up at the National Archives and see what he thinks about this situation, because this can be worked out if someone coordinates, determines what the needs are, and then contacts manufacturers who would be willing to manufacture it." So I'm sure that this problem is going to be worked out. We turned immediately to the National Archives as a point at which this problem can be solved.

BROOKS: This emphasizes to me the opposite, it isn't just a matter of the National Archives wanting to impose its way on everybody. The National Archives has a responsibility because of its resources, because it necessarily has a larger staff to pave the way and it should do that.

JONES: Of course it does, and its facilities of course in the 1930's when the National Archives was opened, these facilities were the outstanding facilities in the world; and when we needed to design facilities, we simply got our friends at the National Archives to furnish the specifications. Let's take an example. In this new building that we're in right now we needed a cleaning table, vacuum cleaning and so forth. And so, let's see who did that--as well as I know him his name slips my mind now--in your agency sent me the specifications of the one in the National Archives. We needed map tables with those interesting slots so the map could go down in, and so your map man . . .

BROOKS: Herman Friis.

JONES: Herman Friis, drew this personally--a penciled copy--and sent it to us and we gave it to our architect, who had the tables built. These are things that we would waste so much time on and probably come out with something unuseable if we had to do it by trial and error in all instances. The microfilm blemishes, Phil, would be an excellent example. You know what the furore was, the excitement in the country over this. And I think perhaps more than anyone, the National Archives calmed us down and said, "Look, let's study this thing and work it out." And working with the National Bureau of Standards and the various other large users, I think it has been taken care of.

BROOKS: Now most of the examples that you've mentioned are technical matters. Would you say that the same kind of paving the way and experimentation and guidance has taken place in the matters of archival processes?

JONES: Oh certainly. One has only to look at the American Archivists, the journal, and look at the Bulletins of the National Archives. Now as you remember in my book, one of my most critical parts concerned the discontinuance, or the slow down, of the output of this type of material. But the American Archivist is studded with articles from people on the National Archives staff, the specialists in various areas.

BROOKS: In fact at times I've heard people outside the Archives say that the National Archives hogged the show; that most of the articles in the American Archivist were by people from the National Archives and that that was unfair domination. Well, we had more people to write articles.

JONES: Of course, and you had competent people. Phil, it's only natural. I've lived long enough to see that those who don't produce are jealous of those who do, and I think it's only natural. But your question is a valid one--and let me try to answer it--and that is whether in my view the National

Archives has attempted to dominate, or to overly influence the states and so forth. I've never seen it. As you know, in my early days in the society I was very close to a number of state archivists. We tended to have more in common perhaps in our day-to-day activities and so we would tend to gravitate together and I'm sure that I sometimes felt, you know, that because we had two vacancies on the council of the American Archivist, one of them had to go to the National Archives and one of them had to go to the states. This was not done because of some set formula or something. But I think it was only a reasonable arrangement because when we turn, take a look at the membership of the Society, the membership itself was very heavily people in Federal Government.

BROOKS: And necessarily so because there simply were more archivists. This is something that used to worry me when I was Secretary of the Society from '36 to '42. It's quite natural because we had the biggest organization. We had a large segment of members of the Society and contributed to the journal and so forth, and occasionally I would hear somebody in the state archives field say well, the National Archives was hogging the show, as I said. It was difficult to avoid but at the same time it did entail, it always has, a responsibility for leadership. What I really am getting at is whether or not the National Archives has carried out the responsibility fairly and well.

JONES: Let me give an example of the American Archivist itself. What private institution or state agency could afford to devote to a professional organization the time and manpower to edit that magazine other than the National Archives? It's only natural. Now undoubtedly some of those who like to criticize have said, "We ought to move the American Archivist out of the National Archives because it's dominated by National Archives people." But they don't, what they haven't stopped to realize was that we would have no American Archivist if it wasn't for the support given by that institution. You know, in my study of the National Archives I was always impressed with what happened after 1900. We had the formation of archival programs in a number of states, and the development of an embryonic professional group, people like Connor and Leland and Owen; the early archivists, not only those who were interested like Jameson, but those who actually worked at it, even on the Federal and state level, but we had no national program, of course. Now gradually it was these people who with, of course, all sorts of help and finally through congressional action, led to the development, the establishment of the National Archives. Then with this marvelous new building, marvelous equipment, and what we think in North Carolina was a good Archivist of the United States, R. D. W. Connor, and the accident of the times, the depression period, when so many young historians were available at low salaries to join the staff of the National Archives. I've always thought that this was one of the lucky breaks of the National Archives. You yourself came in.

BROOKS: Very definitely. The salaries weren't so low and they were better than a lot of us could have got teaching. I used to be bothered by people who said that the National Archives staff was made up of a lot of frustrated historians that just couldn't get jobs anywhere else because I insisted that some of us were really interested in archives as such and were glad to go there for that reason. But what you say is nevertheless true, that at that time they were able to recruit a lot of people that they wouldn't any other time.

JONES: Now as I read the story, Connor did not go out and rob the states of the few people who had some experience.

BROOKS: That is correct.

JONES: Instead, there in Washington an inexperienced group, in effect, who developed out of a hodge-podge of things that we've gotten handed down to us, largely from European archivists, began developing a professional attitude, a professional procedure, the theories, it seems to me that though not always originated were coordinated and made to fit into our American experience there at the National Archives. So few--there were so few--people outside who have contributed significantly in this area--of course people like Margaret Norton one would recognize immediately for her contribution and Ernst Posner who was not connected officially with the National Archives--but it seems to me that there in the beginning towards the late 30's we have a body of literature, we have the bringing together of many ideas and putting them into some cohesion, some understandable presentation.

BROOKS: It was a painful process and as you say most of the people didn't have much experience and didn't know much about European archives. There were very few people that really knew the European archives, the lessons of their experiences, and this is one thing I want to get at in this project, how the original organization and procedures of the National Archives were devised. Many of them were done by people that had no archival experience nor historical training.

JONES: Some of them had no published works. Jenkinson's book, you know, was only revised I believe in 1937 and so although it had some influence the Dutch manual wasn't translated until 1940 and, except for those who could read foreign languages, there wasn't much available.

BROOKS: We all got busy and read those things but much of what they said wasn't applicable.

JONES: Right. It had to be fitted into . . .

BROOKS: The language was a problem.

JONES: But the bulletins of the National Archives, those little blue back bulletins, we go back to them now. We've got the bound set, you know, and we go back to them constantly, even the one on document restoration which is so out of date and yet it's basically . . .

BROOKS: Adelaide Minogue's.

JONES: . . . it's basically good. That's a long way of getting around though to answer your question very simply, and that is has the National Archives done too much? That's not what you asked but the implication was, has it tried to do too much and force itself upon other agencies? My criticism of the National Archives, as you know, is that it hasn't done enough. As a state archivist I would like to see it do more.

BROOKS: And I gather you feel that it's done less proportionately in the last 20 years or so than it did before.

JONES: Certainly in the way of publications. I have a feeling that there was some loss of mission. I think that you fellows there in the 30's and 40's knew what you were doing. That you were charting something new. That you didn't have a precedent to go by. You were a distinct organization that everybody was looking at--not many people knew anything about, but they were looking at you anyway and wondering what was going on up there in that big building with all those records in there. But I don't know, I maybe misread the spirit of the times but it just seemed to me there that you were aware of your uniqueness and you were proud of it, and not that the staff itself has ever lost that. But I think that when you get to be only a part of a picture, fewer people see you than when you form the entire picture itself.

BROOKS: I think that a certain fairly large portion of the staff has tended to lose that sense of mission as the place got bigger.

JONES: Yes, this would sort of be natural . . .

BROOKS: And in a sense more stratified. This is one thing that has disturbed me a bit. That "sense of mission" is perhaps a good term.

JONES: Nobody can be a good archivist . . .

BROOKS: Except at the top levels. We certainly had it continued it there.

JONES: To be a good archivist, a person has to have a sense of mission, because the work is not fascinating to enough people. And it takes that person who gets an excitement out of seeing or feeling or smelling something that has an intrinsic value. Something that carries a message. I've seen it here as we try to train new archivists. You can never predict whether a person's going to be a good archivist or not. But you can soon find out when you watch him.

There's a certain respect for the document and I suspect that as we grow, as each institution grows in size, and as we try to divide up the labor, you know--let one do this and one do that--and no one has a sense of having completed this thing, "this was my project and I've done it from beginning to end," we do lose a lot. And maybe that sense of mission will be more difficult.

BROOKS: You know I'm afraid that's true.

I think that maybe we've had more problems in relation to people that called themselves, quite properly, manuscript curators traditionally, than with state archivists as such. Of course, we've tended to feel that the term, and this was true at the time the Society of American Archivists was established, that the term "archivist" was broad enough to encompass all of them, and some of the manuscript curators have not welcomed that. I think that most of the state archivists are in even more of the same position that the National Archives is, that it has a responsibility both for what in the old traditional sense we were regarded as public archives as distinguished from personal papers. Certainly here you have both and to some extent we do in the National Archives, certainly in the presidential libraries. So I think maybe the state archives people understood the problems of the National Archives better than some of the manuscript curators in private agencies and agencies outside. But still I always felt when I was Secretary of the Society of American Archivists that there were people among the state archivists who felt that the National Archives was really not quite fair with them in this whole business of dominance and leadership and so forth.

JONES: Don't you guess, though, that's a natural reaction to a successful, a large agency? One that could, if it so chose, dominate the voting, say in an election for officers at an annual meeting. And I suspect at times it was done, but I wouldn't be critical of that because I would certainly understand if most of the representatives of one institution voted the same way. I know that here in our local state elections we tend to vote for people that we know and that we have learned to depend on. This is only natural. And it's true it was particularly bad, Phil, back in the early 60's. There were several archivists who were forever making hay by accusing the National Archives of trying to take over our programs and saying, "if we don't watch, we'll be under their complete domination." It never bothered me because the things that I saw going on at the National Archives I liked a lot better than the things I saw going on in the states of those who were making these charges. It was a political maneuver. These were people who were either in power or sought power, and so you tend to try to unite others around you on the grounds of that great big enemy over yonder. "We've all got to ban together." It's natural and it's just part of the game that goes on in any institution, I'm sure.

But on the matter of manuscript curators and archivists, this is a very difficult one. It hasn't been solved yet, and I don't know whether it ever will be solved. It is true that those who handle small quantities of manuscripts or even those in the institutions that handle exclusively private manuscripts--their procedures are not strictly archival procedures in most instances. They do feel that records management there in the 40's and 50's became too significant; too much attention was given to records management insofar as they were concerned. But that's because they were not concerned with that particular problem, and of course when they picked up the program, say of the SAA, they saw there were several sessions on records management. "Well I don't want to attend those; I don't have those problems." But on the other hand I've heard the same criticism by the records managers in the Society of American Archivists--that not enough attention was being given to records management.

BROOKS: That's true.

JONES: Here again I think it's the way one looks at things. But the problem of manuscripts and archives, the different procedures, and here would you repeat your favorite saying on manuscripts and archives?

BROOKS: Oh, I told you the other day that I remembered saying fairly early in my time at the Archives when we talked about the definition of archives that all archives are historical manuscripts but not all historical manuscripts are archives. And I remember this so vividly that I even came to believe that perhaps I'd invented it; but I found during last week in looking in the papers of R. D. W. Connor that that appeared in an article by Charles McLean Andrews written years before the Archives was ever set up.

JONES: Well, there is a difference and I can give you two examples of this. As you know, I had great respect for Dr. Schellenberg. He was a great deal of help to me in my training and I had just tremendous respect for him. But his last book was a tragic mistake. Not in content so much as in title. He wrote a book called The Management of Archives. That entire book, practically the entire book, related to the management of historical manuscripts. I'm doing him an injustice there because it would take too long to explain this. What he was trying to show was that archival principles could be applied to modern manuscript accumulations that no longer had the attributes of the old miscellaneous collection but had an organic character. But the title of his book, The Management of Archives, was a terrible mistake.

BROOKS: It just rubbed people the wrong way, didn't it?

JONES: Right, because archives wasn't what his book was about; it was intended for manuscript curators. Now at the present moment I'm a member of a committee of the American Association for State and Local History to advise Kenneth Duckett at Southern Illinois University who is to write a book on the care and

preservation of historical manuscripts, and I have cautioned Ken in advance of our first meeting to be prepared for crotchety old H. G. Jones to hammer away at this point. Make your, clarify your definitions, because here we're going to be dealing with manuscript materials, some of which, much of which perhaps, will be adaptable to archival procedures because of the organic nature of the collections. But we are not talking about public archives; and I think in the public mind the word archives is usually associated with government, though of course it includes organizational records and many types of organically-created records. This is a real problem because the way that one handles historical manuscripts of a miscellaneous nature and archives of an organic nature are so different. We have the problem right here in the Department because we go along with the idea of provenance and respect de fonds, and so forth, and then we come to a private collection. The archivist working on those say, "Well, it doesn't make sense, you can't apply it here." And this is true. But there is some feeling and there is a place in the Society of American Archivists in particular for the coverage of the interests of at least three closely related groups: Archivists in the terms of state archivists or archivists of the National Archives, manuscript curators in terms of the staff of the Library of Congress and the private manuscript repositories, even our own staff members who work in private collections; and third records managers.

BROOKS: I have a feeling this whole problem of whether or not manuscript curators should be encompassed under the broad title of archivist in the relationship of all these people has been greatly complicated in the last 25 or 30 years by the mass of materials, and by the whole development that led to the presidential libraries. I won't say the presidential libraries themselves, but the difficulties that public officials have with their own materials. The whole business of definition has become more difficult as the materials have become more complex. I should let Dr. Posner speak for himself, and I shall because I'm going to interview him; but I well remember his saying one time a good many years ago that he was going to lead a movement to abolish the term "historical manuscripts." I think it was when he worked on his book on state archives. And in more recent years he said that he's not sure that organization of a body of materials is essential to its definition as archives. The development of Dr. Posner's own thinking has been quite interesting.

JONES: Phil, you mention presidential libraries, and I suspect that is one area of criticism that has more justification than these petty things that we're accustomed to hearing in groups. One area that's a concern on the part of people out in the states has been the presidential libraries. As you recall on several occasions, manuscript curators in particular have indicated a great concern over the practice of the presidential libraries seeking out and accepting what you in the National Archives agree, and I disagree on, are private papers--of cabinet members and people who might be associated with a particular president. I don't know whether it's true--and I'd like to have it corrected

now if it's not because it's widespread--that Hemingway's papers will go to the John F. Kennedy Library. If this is the case, this type of relationship is so tenuous that I can understand the concern of some of the manuscript people around the country. They feel that they're at a great disadvantage as opposed to the Presidential Library system where there would be much greater prestige for one's papers to go, say to the Kennedy Library, than to the "X" state repository.

BROOKS: Well, it is true that a large quantity of Hemingway manuscripts, which I think are largely unpublished manuscripts of his writings, are going to the Kennedy Library. This was a very personal thing on the part of the Kennedys and the National Archives and the Presidential Library didn't have anything to do with it.

JONES: You have to take the blame for it, of course.

BROOKS: There are a number of things, just by the nature of the situation in the presidential libraries, that we've not been able entirely to plan ourselves and sometimes they don't always exactly go along with our thinking as to how things should be. I think, however, that it's safe to say that something like the Hemingway situation should not be taken as representative of the policy of the National Archives and Records Service. I can see where it would disturb people, and I don't think it fits the pattern myself, but our policy on this we have tried to make fairly clear. I don't know whether we've been always successful or not.

There was some disturbance, some feeling of uneasiness on the part of the manuscript curators when the Roosevelt Library was set up, but a much greater expression of uneasiness when the Truman Library was set up. At the joint meeting of the State and Local History Association and the Society of American Archivists in Columbus, Ohio, 1957. This was brought to a head and expressed on both sides quite fully at a meeting on presidential libraries. I think Herman Kahn did most of the talking for us and Howard Peckham for the State and local people. Howard was one of the people who was most disturbed about this. And the manuscript curators said, and gave the impression, that presidential libraries were going around to rival manuscript collecting agencies in all the states. Well, what we have always felt is that if a man, no matter where he came from, was closely related to a presidential administration that that perhaps was the most important phase of his career and there was a very good argument for putting his papers in the presidential library if he so chose. Now we have always been absolutely consistent in simply laying before a prospective donor the possibilities of his putting papers in the presidential library; the historical society or some private manuscript collection would also lay the choice before him and it would be up to the donor to choose. And there are some papers of Truman Administration, that we would very much like to have out there that have gone other places; not many collections since the library was set up, some before the library was set up. But I'm sure that in some cases prominent officials of an administration would rather put their

papers in their states than they would in a presidential library. The idea of the unity of the presidential administration and the papers of people relating to it we've always thought was a valid concept, and it's proved useful to researchers.

JONES: I would agree with you and we use the same reasoning here for governors. See, our Governor's papers, Governor's records rather, are official records and therefore come to us automatically. But we use the argument that your childhood papers, your career papers, and the things that you create after you are governor ought to be in the same repository for convenience. So, it's a good point and I bring it up only because there has been criticism of the competition--the feeling that the National Archives should be concerned only with the official records of the nation. Now, you can appreciate then the concern of those of us who disagree with the idea that the presidential records are private records, because if that is true then the National Archives is concerning itself with private papers also; and you can imagine then the Library of Congress, which supposedly has a concern for private papers, saying, "Well the National Archives is taking over our responsibility." There are some definitions there that get crossed up.

BROOKS: I read the other day in the Connor papers at Chapel Hill a very entertaining address by Archibald MacLeish, who was Librarian of Congress, at the dedication of the Roosevelt Library. He had to recognize both the long-standing interests of the Library of Congress and also what the Roosevelt Library intended to do. Mr. Roosevelt was more than I realized involved in the planning of what they were trying to do. And I don't want to be contentious but the National Archives and Records Service is fully authorized by law to accept private papers. There have been one or two other cases in which I think perhaps in delicate situations the National Archives may not have succeeded entirely in its public relations. One was in the case of the Lewis and Clark papers . . .

JONES: Yes, this was another concern of the manuscript people.

BROOKS: . . . and later the "Sender papers" from New Mexico. From those two cases, particularly the one involving the Clark journal, I know the manuscript curators, some of them, developed a horrible bogey that the National Archives was going around and taking things from private collections.

JONES: Exercising the act or law of replevin--I recall a meeting in New York on that. Bert Rhoads tried to reassure the Manuscript Society people that this would not often happen. They were afraid that the National Archives would indiscriminately use the right of replevin.

BROOKS: Right. Whereas the National Archives never had the intent of so doing. I talked about this a great deal with Wayne Grover, that the only time the Archives would enter a situation of this sort would be where it appeared the papers were going to be lost to public research.

JONES: I was impressed by Bob Bahmer's explanation of this and I accepted his word completely.

BROOKS: There's a more entertaining and much less significant, but it probably was irritating, example of our public relations that I must look up before I tell anybody else about this story, but in the early days of the first 2 or 3 years of the National Archives a bulletin was issued, a little pamphlet, about the National Archives that said among the hazards to records or archives were fire, and atmospheric conditions, and bugs, and autograph collectors. This really set the autograph collectors and the kind of people that . . .

JONES: I can imagine members of the Manuscript Society were upset over that.

BROOKS: That was before the establishment of the Manuscript Society. It was just that group was irritated. Just one little thing like that can do a lot to . . .

JONES: Well, you can see though, if an individual or a group of individuals want to find something to be afraid of they could say, "Look--in how many districts now are there records centers located?" I've forgotten the number of districts.

BROOKS: Ten records centers, and then there are a lot of what used to be annexes. I think there are 14 now, altogether.

JONES: But a person could say, "Look, down at East Point, Georgia, is a Federal Records Center. If we don't watch they're going out and start competing with us in getting things, private papers." But here again I think we're dealing in human nature. I don't believe that the National Archives-- I think it's well that the National Archives is aware of the possibility of the things that you have mentioned. But I don't think that there's been any sign of excessive influence. As I say, my criticism is not of the National Archives so much as just of Congress for failing to provide the wherewithall to get it done, and maybe occasionally the leadership in not putting what I would think is priority in the right place. It's what has not been done, and my book calls for more things to be done rather than fewer. So, we here in North Carolina certainly have not had this experience, and I suspect that we have been as close over the years--Connor, Newsome, Crittenden--as close to the National Archives as any State in the Union.

BROOKS: I'm sure that's true.

JONES: We certainly have had cooperation and I don't say that simply to be complimentary because we couldn't have operated otherwise. Now I learned long ago that the way to improve things is to steal ideas, and I love to steal ideas, and then take them and if they don't fit my situation adapt them to my situation and improve on them. Our local records program that we're so proud of here, the germ of that I had simply by seeing what was happening in courthouses. But much of the substance came from Mary Bryan in Georgia. When I first heard her ideas I thought, "Well this is a woman trying to put ideals into a practical situation." But we steal these things and adapt them to our own use. And we've stolen everything we can from the National Archives.

BROOKS: Well I'm sure the National Archives stole a great deal from other people. That's the way you make progress.

JONES: One other point you might be interested in. You recall that we had an event called the Civil War back over a hundred years ago, and as Sherman marched on Raleigh all of our State records had to be piled on wagons and taken over to Durham Station, put on the railroad, and taken west. Eventually most of those records came back, but two volumes didn't come back. These were Governor Vance's letterbooks. The current letterbooks, you know. They were captured and taken to Washington. And we couldn't even get copies of them, even after Vance went to the United States Senate after we got admitted to the Union. We couldn't get copies for many years, but even after we finally did we could not get the originals back.

BROOKS: The War Department had them.

JONES: The War Department had them and were holding them, you know, for evidence. But in 1961--it was 97 years later, so that would be 1962 I guess it was--we happened just to casually mention to Wayne Grover, "Wayne, when are you going to give our records back?" Of course they were in the National Archives at that time. He said, "Do we have any of your records?" We said, "You have Governor Vance's letterbooks." He said, "Well why don't you write me a letter?" And we wrote him a letter and shortly thereafter under the National Archives Act, we received back the letterbooks of Governor Vance, and had a little ceremony of the presentation.

BROOKS: Very good. That's a good illustration of the kind of cooperation that we certainly all want to achieve.