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## Oral history interview with Ann Cronin, 1965 March 30

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## Transcript

### Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Ann Cronin on March 30, 1965. The interview took place in New York City, New York and was conducted by Harlan B. Phillips for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This interview is part of the Archives of American Art's New Deal and the Arts project.

Poor audio throughout the interview led to some words being inaudible; however, the original transcript was used to clarify some names and words. These names and words are given an -Ed. attribution. The original transcript was edited. In 2022 the Archives created a more verbatim transcript. Additional information from the original transcript that seemed relevant was also added in brackets and given an -Ed. attribution. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

### Interview

ANN CRONIN: I have seen one person since I talked to you who [inaudible] very much in the picture except that she really was with the NYA [National Youth Administration], and that was Elizabeth Wickenden. Do you know her?

HARLAN PHILLIPS: No.

ANN CRONIN: Well, she's consultant to the National Social Welfare Assembly, and she has never really got out of the picture of social service in Washington, and statistics and so on. And she was fascinated to know what you were doing. And I just didn't know whether she was on your roster or whether she was too far—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: I think they are some—

ANN CRONIN: Someone—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: —from the NYA.

ANN CRONIN: —doing the NYA.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Who was the head of it down in the—

ANN CRONIN: Aubrey Williams and he's just died within a couple of years.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: I know. I tried to reach him twice when I was in Washington, and his wife begged off. I even had an appointment scheduled and when I got down there to keep it, she begged off again.

ANN CRONIN: Oh, did she?

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: Well, Elizabeth Wickenden was his, you know, Girl Friday, just as I was with Ellen Woodward's.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ANN CRONIN: So, that we used to have a lot of exchange. [Laughs.]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: They were just one floor above us, you see, so in and out all the time.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah. Let's go back to the '30s.

ANN CRONIN: All right.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: What were you doing in the '30s, before this other possibility came on the scene?

ANN CRONIN: Well, I had been in retail personnel work—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ANN CRONIN: —most of the time, since getting through college. I'd gone to Prin [ph] School in Boston, which was specializing in retail personnel. And then I had a degree from Harvard in education. And I went into retail work in Boston and I gravitated toward the training side of things. And then I would have two years in—then, I went back to Prin [ph] School and taught, then I went to Halle Brothers in Cleveland as a training director, and then I went back to New York. I was training director at Gimbels and subsequently personnel director there. So, it had been very solid retailing for maybe 10 years.

And then I decided retailing really was not profiting me much. I enjoyed it tremendously, because of the excitement. But then I just went to Washington on the general notion that this was something maybe I could do.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. How did the idea come to you?

ANN CRONIN: I'm not perfectly certain at this distance. Of course, there were always—it was Depression time and the store had had a lot of reorganization, which simply resulted in my promotion. But I didn't like too much to see the layoffs and all of the Depression things, and I thought I should be doing something more useful and just trying to—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: So, you're holding the [inaudible]—

ANN CRONIN: [Laughs.] Hold the ship steady.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: And so, I quit. Without a job, I just quit.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ANN CRONIN: You know, no sense but—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Like turning a corner.

ANN CRONIN: Thought I'd go to Washington, and I did. And I didn't know, you know, what—I didn't even know the initials WPA, and they were just changing at that time anyway. It was the summer of 1935.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ANN CRONIN: And so, I knew only one person there, but she had been there long enough to say, Why don't you go here? Why don't you go there? And I was electrified at all the people who could use me, because naturally, I was diffident and timid and didn't think I knew much about it, which I didn't. And the first real offer I had was from Ellen Woodward which came in about three days. And then subsequently, two or three other people called me up, Why did you settle so soon? We wanted you, including NYA [laughs]. And one of the other people in WPA. But I had said yes, so there I was.

So, I came home to get ready with the understanding that I'd come back in a week. And I got a telegram saying, "Come tomorrow." And it was devilishly hot. I mean, buildings were not air-conditioned, but I did have a beautiful big office anyway, and two secretaries and a desk much more stacked up than this one, and they said, Just read everything. So, I began to read it. And then in no time at all, 18 people found things for me to do. And I think I told you before that one of the first things they went on the idea that, She's been in retailing. She knows how to buy things. In a week, they gave me responsibility for buying all the textiles for all the women sewing projects, which simply scared the lining [ph] out of me. But in those days, you had to do something, and you just needn't question it, you just figured out how to do it.

[00:05:10]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Right. Did you get down in Washington sight unseen really, to shop?

ANN CRONIN: Just to shop.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Just to shop.

ANN CRONIN: Just for the idea—I believe in this, I think and—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ANN CRONIN: —maybe I could be useful.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Did you have an interview with Mrs. Woodward?

ANN CRONIN: Oh, yes.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: How was she on the interview?

ANN CRONIN: Well—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: She's very—you know—

ANN CRONIN: [Laughs.] She was her amazing self. Very charming, very full of soft sell, and very gay fashion. And I had intimations that there was a terrific steel in her and that she was working like crazy night and day, and didn't know night from day, which of course was true. .

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ANN CRONIN: And—which I found out after the third day, because I expected to work hard and I always had worked hard, and retail being a very good proving ground. And I was electrified to be called at 11:30 at night and asked a question, and I just thought that was a little bit much, you know, [laughs]. But I got very used to being called at midnight or at 6:30 a.m. And it was always an emergency and it was always, Do this, or why didn't you do that, or when are we going to do this. And I stayed with it, that's all.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: She was on top of her job.

ANN CRONIN: Yes, she definitely was on top of her job, fighting like crazy to learn everything she could. And not sparing herself or anybody, at all.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ANN CRONIN: And then I found that she—as I say, had no idea of hours and she would say, Well, come on home with me, we'll get a bite to eat. And then we'll go up to my room. Or she'd say—she'd call up and say, Come on over, and I would go to her room. And like as not she'd be in bed with papers, papers, papers, everywhere. And then she'd say, occasionally, See if this is in my closet, and there would be more papers in there, along with about ten evening dresses, some of them on the floor and some of them, you know, [inaudible] stages of disrepair. And in the midst of talking in telephone and so on, she'd suddenly say, What am I going to wear tomorrow night? And we'd have a fitting [laughs] and we'd find out what she was going to wear tomorrow night [laughs]. Usually, it meant getting out the ironing board. And since I was handier with that than she was, maybe I would do it because I liked to do it. I knew I could do it better than she could [laughs]. And that was—I'm sure I remember telling you about the tea party that she blew up one afternoon. She wasn't given much to tea parties but somebody very distinguished came to Washington. So, she suddenly decided she'd have a tea party and she couldn't [phone ringing] get home because there was going to be a meeting, so—

[Recorder stops, restarts.]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: You were talking about tea party that suddenly burst onto the scene.

ANN CRONIN: Oh, yes. Well, that day there was great excitement because she hadn't been giving tea parties. And I thought I'd better get on the ball with that one because it was somebody very important, and she invited half a dozen people. And so, I stopped my apartment and picked up the things I was sure she wouldn't have ready; even if she owned them, she wouldn't know where they were. So I picked up, you know, spoons and napkins and anything I could think of. And I went to her apartment. And I threw up in the icebox to see what the prospects were, and there was one dead banana and one dead orchid. And there was not one other living thing from that icebox, [laughs] showing how little care about the domestic side of

things. But we gave a tea party. And she appeared at the last moment, slipped herself into a tea gown and was just as gracious and gay as she could be. Everything was all done. And somehow, you just got things done for Ellen because there it was, had to be done and there were always ways of achieving it.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Did she have a capacity for outrage?

ANN CRONIN: She had, of course, red hair and she had a tremendously demanding way of expecting things to be done. But—and she could outrage everybody by her demands. And the saving grace, however, was that she worked just as hard as she expected you to work, and she had a wonderful sense of humor.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Did she?

ANN CRONIN: And in the midst of something absolutely excruciating, when everybody was at everyone else's throat, she would see the funny side of it, and she would throw her head back and whoop laughing. It was a very pretty laugh. And it always beguiled me to know that this drive still had some perspective to it. She knew just how funny and impossible she was in expecting so much to be done.

[00:10:15]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: But her one motto was no matter how difficult: Well, we'll be caught trying. We'll be caught trying. And we were always caught trying. So, she was really an amazingly driving person, and the only driver, either man or woman, that I've ever seen who had that saving salt [ph] of humor. If you've known people as I have, both men and women, who just want to get short—you know, a straight line in the shortest distance, and ruthless about everything else, she was like that. But then she did know that this was a great act she was putting on. She was a good actress. She's had a little dramatic training, a very dramatic [inaudible] [laughs] in a way.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah. But a set of blinders is necessary.

ANN CRONIN: Absolutely.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Otherwise, good gracious.

ANN CRONIN: And I will say she was very—had a very saving sense of humility too. She knew that this was an awfully big thing and that she had always thought big and aspired big but that it was too big for her. So, that's one of the reasons she used everybody. And one of the reasons that she was very good about trying to understand everybody's viewpoint, even when she seemed most domineering. Of course, I was very close to her and perhaps, I made more excuses than other people who had no occasional context [ph]. Somebody might hop in from Oregon and expect something and be furious because it didn't happen.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ANN CRONIN: But I always knew how hard Ellen was trying, and how genuinely she was learning and giving and trying to see your viewpoint even when she didn't seem to be [inaudible] endeared her to me.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Did she understand the whole concept of the relief program, was she in sympathy with it, or was it an administrative job for her? You know, loyalty is a funny thing. I suppose you can have it [inaudible] and you can have it for an idea as well.

ANN CRONIN: She had a fanatical devotion to anything Harry Hopkins wanted done. And yes, I think she did grasp this program. Of course, she was instantly loyal to the Roosevelt administration.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ANN CRONIN: She was a born politician, as everybody is, but she really worked at it from the time she was a child. I think she became much more liberal than she ever would have been by training, but she was very just and generous. I don't think she was emotionally too involved. If you could say that she was devoted to the cause, but didn't see the people so much as getting the job done. Now, I could be wrong. But after all, she was born in Mississippi and raised there,

very gently. I don't suppose you [inaudible] what you and I do about integration, for instance.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: But she was always considerate. She is an imported a girl from Mississippi. And she had been working—Ellen had been working very, very hard on our wage scales and so on. And this was a bright girl who had gone to some kind of normal school, pretty girl. And since Mrs. Woodward didn't know anything about hours for herself, Mona had to work pretty long hours sometimes. And Mona was bright enough to come to her at the end of the month and say that she had figured it out and she was being paid about 25¢ an hour. That was one of the jokes that Ellen told on herself. She thought that was hysterically funny. [Imitating Ellen Woodward] "Well, I guess I don't have any recourse from that one." She has me cold. [They laugh.] So, I think she both cut the hours and raised the salary a little. I think it was I outrageous to her instincts to think that she brought this girl here, was treating her beautifully and giving her all these privileges of meeting the nicest people and working for them. But after all it was [pretty logical (ph)], and she thought was pretty funny. She told the story about herself. [Laughs.].

HARLAN PHILLIPS: If she could have loyalty, in personal terms, for Harry Hopkins, for whatever Harry Hopkins had in mind to do—

ANN CRONIN: Yes, she—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: —that's a fierce kind of thing.

ANN CRONIN: She had a veneration. I don't know if he ever realized how absolutely abject she was to his lightest tone of displeasure or frown. You know, it's just tragic [ph]. He had to be taken care of. She had to [inaudible]knew what's right because he wanted [inaudible].

[00:15:10]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: But they were worlds apart.

ANN CRONIN: Oh, absolutely.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: Absolutely.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Mississippi traditions. [Laughs.]

ANN CRONIN: Uh-huh [affirmative].

HARLAN PHILLIPS: And then Iowa tradition.

ANN CRONIN: Plus, all the other training.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Accumulated, sure, experience.

ANN CRONIN: But this she bought and of course, I wasn't there in ERA and she had been—

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ANN CRONIN: —and it was just at the break for WPA when it was suddenly obvious that she needed more help. And she was casting around and I don't know whether she had known she needed it except she saw me and suddenly there I was [laughs]. And so—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: How did she get on with this strange assortment [of people -Ed.] that she had under her? The—

ANN CRONIN: Well, of course, that was one of the federal projects and all the others. Um—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: That must have been trying for—what—I've only known her through her testimony in Congress.

ANN CRONIN: Yeah.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: And that's right down the pipe in defense [of her kids -Ed.]

ANN CRONIN: Well, yes.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: This is a fierce kind of loyalty.

ANN CRONIN: There again, I don't think she selected them. They had just been selected when I arrived.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ANN CRONIN: All except Luther Evans, I think he—we were still talking [inaudible]. And the other four had been, and of course, Hallie Flanagan was known to Harry Hopkins. I never did know how he came up with Eddie Cahill and the others, [inaudible].

HARLAN PHILLIPS: [Henry Alsberg -Ed.]. [Cross talk.]

ANN CRONIN: I just don't know how he did.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: I think it was probably partly through Jake Baker.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yes.

ANN CRONIN: And then there was a lot of discussion as to whether they belonged to Ellen's department or to Jake's but they went into Ellen's department. So, there they were. But again, anything she had for an assignment—and of course, she liked the theater, she had studied music, I think she had done some singing, playing piano. I think that was probably as far as it went.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ANN CRONIN: I don't think she had much art appreciation, but she was so observant. Everything that came along, Ellen would absorb. And this was great.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: She made it exciting—

ANN CRONIN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

HARLAN PHILLIPS: —even if she didn't understand.

ANN CRONIN: Yes.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: I mean, the defense of Theater Project, Hallie Flanagan, incredible.

ANN CRONIN: Absolutely.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Incredible.

ANN CRONIN: Stupendous.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Particularly in the light of the palace guard background of Mississippi.

ANN CRONIN: Yes.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Husband a judge.

ANN CRONIN: Father a state senator, wasn't he?

HARLAN PHILLIPS: [Inaudible.] It just doesn't make—it this doesn't add up as a sort of sale that she'd make. It's incongruity, and yet the testimony—wow.

ANN CRONIN: And wasn't she astute?

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Oh boy.

ANN CRONIN: And of course, before those hearings which took much too much of our time in a very busy [inaudible]—everybody was priming her, and everybody was busy getting the testimony on the record for what might be asked and what she would say. And she was a

magnificently quick study. She would sit up all night and then she would know her part by heart.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Litmus paper.

ANN CRONIN: Litmus paper. Every question, she was just ready. Of course, sometimes if I was sitting beside her, she would give me a quick, [Imitating Ellen Woodward] "Ann, do you know where that is? Can you find it quick?" And so, I would shuffle and find it quick and stick it into her hand. In one minute, she would be, [Imitating Ellen Woodward] "Right on top of it. [That one (ph)]."

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Well, you know—

ANN CRONIN: She made speeches, you see, but not too many. Like she memorized the timing, the phrasing, just exactly when she'd smile, when she'd lift her chin, and I think she would stay up till four a.m. and get that down. And never look at the paper, it would be there, but she'd never looked at the paper. Once in a while, I went out for her, you see, and I would take cards and talk. And she'd say, [Imitating Ellen Woodward] "I couldn't do that. I have to know what I'm going to say." She did know what she was going to say, she knew every word.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Theatrics.

ANN CRONIN: Theatrics.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Pyrotechnics.

ANN CRONIN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: [Inaudible] for the effect. Was she vain in a sense or no?

ANN CRONIN: Oh, I'm sure.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Was she?

ANN CRONIN: I'm sure she was, because she had to prove herself, and I don't think—although I knew her as well as anybody, I don't think anybody would ever really know Ellen. She was a solo performer, and she was performing for herself, a self-realization of some kind.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:20:15]

ANN CRONIN: No question.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: It's interesting.

ANN CRONIN: At least I think there wasn't a question about it. I gave it some thought naturally [laughs], being so close to her.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Well, [they laugh] you've described her as coming out of the sea or mountain of paper, to wonder about what [I will wear (ph)].

ANN CRONIN: Oh, yes.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah. Which is a normal question to pose but, in the context, it's not a normal question when you're—you know, when you're immersed in a sea of troubles.

ANN CRONIN: Well, you asked if she was vain, and of course, every woman is vain. I think everybody should care about what kind of public appearance they make. So, she was vain, and she wanted to look just as nice as she could, but she didn't think she was especially pretty. She knew she had a pretty voice and pretty ways, and she made the very best of them. And she wanted to look suitable and nice, but she didn't spend a lot of time buying dresses and fitting them. It was just, you know, at the last moment, [Imitating Ellen Woodward] "Oh, what do I wear tomorrow?"

HARLAN PHILLIPS: [Inaudible.]

ANN CRONIN: So, it wasn't that kind of vanity. Just—[inaudible]



HARLAN PHILLIPS: No, no, that's why I asked it, because you describe the closet being filled with papers, and a few clothes on the floor [they laugh], as if it didn't make any difference, really. How is she—

ANN CRONIN: Well, that, I think was very southern, of course. [Inaudible]—She'd always had someone to pick them up and [inaudible].

HARLAN PHILLIPS: [Laughs.] [I have some daughters and I suspect that it's somewhat northern, too. -Ed.]

ANN CRONIN: Maybe just par for the course, but I've had some southern friends and I know all of them [inaudible]. But I've had had the kind of southern friends who dropped their clothes on the floor with confidence, because they're brought up that way. Dark hands will pick them up, and I think Ellen—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Expected as much?

ANN CRONIN: —always had had dark hands, and here she was without them, which is why she imported her lovely Mona. [Laughs.] And then Mona took over and did all those things.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: How did this go across in the hearing rooms, to the Congressmen, were they deferential?

ANN CRONIN: I wish I knew.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: You don't hear this? You just [inaudible]—

ANN CRONIN: [There was an awful lot of stinkers there, and there was a good deal of surface deference. -Ed.] I think they thought that she would be an easy person to bully, and I think they were just dazed. Absolutely bamboozled by the adroit way she would just [inaudible]. I don't think they could have failed to admire her.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. This has to be put in its context, too. Woman as a general agency administrator was a new—pretty much a new way—

ANN CRONIN: [Inaudible.]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yes. Yes

ANN CRONIN: And there was some very, very able women, of course, throughout her whole program. She—I think she picked very good people, and I don't know whether it was a good sense or good luck. And then she gave them her great confidence. And they all did a fantastically good job without background. I was the only person around who had really been a working woman. It might be said, knew something about how to work. But these people just did the unbelievable and did it with good sense, they wrote good reports. They—when they called up [they all had their ducks in a row, got each item ticked off -Ed.]. We were very businesslike. I was quite amused fairly early in the game, when they had a meeting in Aubrey William's office about something. And Aubrey, who impulsive and very emotional, was disgusted because something wasn't getting done right. We were getting bad publicity. "We're so inefficient! Business wouldn't stand for the way we're working." Well, I roared laughing because I just come from business, and I thought the comparison was very favorable. And I also thought the quality of devotion was so much higher, and the honesty and the integrity of the people who were giving themselves to these almost impossible tasks, you see.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ANN CRONIN: It was stupendous, so I told him so after. He still didn't think so because Aubrey had never been in business, so he just thought [laughs] something very efficient and we [weren't efficient (ph)].

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Well, what you described, this is a—you know, to the extent that an agency succeeds at all, it's related, I suspect, to its capacity [phone rings] for internal criticism. [Inaudible] that? [Recorder stops, restarts.] —institutional training, the vitality is related to its capacity for internal criticism, throughout the hierarchy of whatever kind, and where it's not permissible, where sycophancy [ph] becomes the scale, it leads to sterility. Now—

ANN CRONIN: I don't know if we had any sycophancy [ph] to any degree. Of course, you had

some hacks, wheels that would do anything they were told. But no, this was a very vocal group. And yes, Ellen would give them a fight, but she listened, and nobody had any feeling that she wouldn't. They might come in like turkey cocks blazing with indignation about some director that they didn't like. [And they always got a hearing. -Ed.]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: In fact, she usually called a meeting and we all talked about it, which I think was very good. She would never trust herself to make decisions.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: That's the judge, granting a hearing.

ANN CRONIN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Always.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: And everybody would at least say they participated, even if the thing comes down to *x*.

ANN CRONIN: And of course, that was what was so disconcerting, because you would be busy as you could be [over such a complicity of details, and suddenly we were going to meet at -Ed.] 2:30 and you wouldn't have had any lunch, and it would be two o'clock, get so and so and so and so and so and so on. They all got there and we [thrashed is out -Ed.]. It was, I think, very good.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. I think there's something that's general overall spirit that—

ANN CRONIN: And Harry Hopkins had a good many meetings too—forgive me for interrupting.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: [Inaudible.]

ANN CRONIN: On major things.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: And we all had a chance. And I remember taking it so much at face value. Of course, I was so new to government that I was a complete dope, I remember first or second meeting where all the regional directors were in. I was sitting in the back of the room when somebody said something, and I had a viewpoint, and I wasn't especially assertive, but I figured it was time for me to speak up so I spoke up. And he was, of course, very easy to talk to. He thought it was amusing, I guess, because it was [laughs] someone he had never seen before who was talking. But the point was important enough so that everybody discussed it. When we were going down in the elevator, one of the regional directors said, Well, when [did you get in town? You obviously haven't any -Ed.] special awe of the boss, have you? Well, I felt like, Well, I have. But I also thought, Nobody had mentioned this, and it was important, and then you all discussed it as if it were. He said, It was. Good for you. Surprised, but everybody was [inaudible] —

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Was Hopkins a forceful person in a meeting, or no?

ANN CRONIN: Oh, wonderful.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Was he really? Was this hypnotism or—

ANN CRONIN: Hypnotism, but magnificent. He had a great gift, I felt, of letting everybody talk, and really drawing out every viewpoint. And then sitting in the back of his neck, you know, half asleep, hardly saying anything. He would half sit up and he would wrap it up, and tick off the points, and make the decision [or if he felt there was a -Ed.] consensus. It was one of the most beautiful jobs I've ever seen. I used to just get thrilled. Sometimes it was important enough—I remember the first time I saw it was one night—something— emergencies, of course, overlapped so fast, [laughs] you didn't know when they were coming—he called us out to his house. And there weren't enough chairs and we sat around on the floor and everywhere, and I saw him in action for the first time. Stupendous, really.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ANN CRONIN: Very well able to make a decision, but not dictatorial.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Jugular [ph] oriented—

ANN CRONIN: Yes.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: —but kind.

ANN CRONIN: He wasn't just kind. Of course, I cherished him because he seemed to make no distinction between whether a man or a woman had something to say or a job to do.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ANN CRONIN: The standards were exactly the same, and the rapport and the attitude were just the same. And I figured he got that from his social work background, working with so many women social workers who were used to deciding things and it was very fine, I felt.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: But the discloses, you know, regard to the intrinsic. No matter what your background, your physiognomy, no matter what—

ANN CRONIN: And the only time he got—ever got forceful was when there was a chance of somebody holding up the payroll or something of that sort. "These people are going to be paid and nothing"—[what do you call it? A furor—can't name it now. -Ed.] But anyway.

[00:30:18]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Over the budget?

ANN CRONIN: The budget, yes. [Qualms about a payroll, in one little place. Didn't have to be our -Ed.]—anyplace, if he heard there was trouble on the payroll—everybody got that payroll out. And if the project was being held up for some technicality and there was a real dire need, he would storm right over to the project development get three people pushing that through, and get everybody on the phone and find out why—make the decision quickly, and better or worse, get it through. So, that those people could go to work, that was his—of course, he was so ardent for the cause. And that's why I say I can't say whether Ellen was ardent for the cause, except that she accepted that with the whole job.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: Yes, she believed in it, but it wasn't the same kind of belief though [laughs].

HARLAN PHILLIPS: He wasn't removed from the workers either, was he?

ANN CRONIN: Not a bit.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: That's always good, and yet apart in the sense of decision-making, that kind of framing.

ANN CRONIN: And he picked up the phone and called anybody he wanted.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: At any time.

ANN CRONIN: Any time.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Irrespective of what are laughingly referred to as channels.

ANN CRONIN: Oh, yes, I found that out, of course, after he had left and Colonel Harrington came in, who was charming and very easy and debonair. The outward forms were just the same, but Mr. Hopkins [would pick up the phone and call me, and I would pick up the phone and call Mr. Hopkins -Ed.] but very soon it became obvious we had a little infiltration of army colonels and captains. A captain was with me one day, we were chatting about something and finally didn't understand so I said, Well, Let's find out from Colonel Harrington. [I reached for the phone, and he said, Just a moment, Ms. Cronin. -Ed.] And he said, It would be better if Mrs. Woodward asked Colonel Harrington. And I said, Well, why? She's not here, [she's gone. -Ed.] [Inaudible.] Maybe I could talk to Colonel So-and-So, he could talk to Colonel Harrington. I said, What is this? He said so apologetically, he said, This is protocol. [Laughs.] So—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Paralysis.

ANN CRONIN: [Laughs.] This was protocol. I couldn't talk to Colonel Harrington and I had never had any hesitation—I just wasn't supposed to have [inaudible]. And I would romp up to Mr.

Hopkins office and talk to his secretary, if necessary, but I would just go there as spontaneously and naturally as anything. [It didn't occur to me to do anything differently. -Ed.] I soon found out all our correspondents changed. We put it in army terminology and, you know, [it was different. -Ed.] And I went to Pennsylvania. By that time, I was [regional supervisor and -Ed.] I went to Pennsylvania, and the director there was a very interesting woman. She said, Let's walk through the project. They wanted to see the difference. And I said, What do you mean? What's different? Everybody got jobs outside? Well, I don't mean that A lot of the same people are here. But we're military nowadays, everybody's clicking heels and snapping to salute. I said, Yeah? She said, Yeah. [Laughs.] It just got—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: It radiated down.

ANN CRONIN: As fast as that.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: The picture was different.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: That's interesting. But the bypassing of channels with Hopkins, he wanted to get this thing done.

ANN CRONIN: Absolutely. I don't think he knew—well that, of course, was one of our great advantages. We were not civil service. We didn't have any tenure. We were all hired and told this is a temporary job. All you have to do is work yourself out of it. One year, two years, five years, you know that this is not a career.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: And therefore, we were so lucky. I did have to go to the procurement office on textiles and they were a little bit horrified to see a woman. At that point, I was a young one. [Inaudible.] And to think that I would actually having authority to make sales and sign purchase orders [of such magnitude, jolted them. And they kept saying, Young woman, do you understand? I would say, I'd like to know all you could tell me about it. I think I understand. -Ed.]

[00:35:01]

And if necessary, I knew Mr. Hopkins would say, This [is all right. You just had that complete assurance. The Bureau of the Budget was -Ed.] worried about it, had a lot to do with it. And we didn't break any laws, but we just weren't bound by all these channels. [Inaudible.]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: But there weren't any procedures established for this agency anyway, carving new ground—

ANN CRONIN: [Initially, sure. -Ed.]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: —so that you had to work out the details.

ANN CRONIN: Oh, of course, [we carved them, and one of the very intelligent chaps I talked with who was sort of a bright boy from Chicago, one of my assistants, -Ed.] one day, we were hammering out procedures. And he said, I came to Washington to crusade against the red tape and now my job is tying the bow. [They laugh.] Well, we tied all the bows that we could, but we still didn't have [that awful obstacle that—"Oh it can't be done!" -Ed.]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah. I know the one person with whom I talked, Julius Davidson, indicated that the old-line crowd viewed with alarm the activities of this temporary organization.

ANN CRONIN: Oh, sure. And you see, we had just enough old-line people. I remember the chap in charge of the [inaudible] office was an old-line government worker, and we were always beating his ears down, because we were going to do it, hell or high water, you see.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ANN CRONIN: And he would tell us we couldn't. And of course, sometimes we couldn't. But we [laughs] had a good try. And Julius was wonderful, he was so gentle and patient. And then he would go tie some more bows, just to make it all come up smooth so that nobody would be in too much hot water. The person I was mentioning who [was so bright -Ed.] was Bob Asher, have you bumped into him?

HARLAN PHILLIPS: No.

ANN CRONIN: He's great. He's at Brookings Institution and has been for a number of years.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: In Washington?

ANN CRONIN: Yes. And he was, as I say, very young but, oh, such an astute thinker. Naturally, Parkinson's law, of course, we all attracted the people we needed. And Ellen had me, and I had Bob and a half dozen others, and he was great.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ANN CRONIN: So, [inaudible.]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: I'm sure an emergency like this threw to the surface people who were gifted enough to handle it. [Inaudible] and the quality of leadership that you had in Hopkins and Mrs. Woodward, [got the boat off and away from the dock -Ed.].

ANN CRONIN: It really did.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: It really did. Of course, I hope this happens to the anti-poverty program, if they [do a little free wheeling -Ed.] I don't see why there aren't—so many good people, in every state people were so capable. Of course, when you got into the states, you really got—we didn't have politics bugging us. They did in the states, you see—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: —because almost every state director was more or less political. And although he embraced the cause and all the rest of it, he was doing his best to take care of a few of his friends. But even there, they were pretty much crusading. And when they appealed to us, we had no hesitation at all cracking down on any [complete freedom, if the damage hadn't been done -Ed.]. A lot of times it [laughs] had been done. But it was amazing how [free of the ordinary politics that organization was -Ed.]. Of course, the internal politics grow up immediately. But I mean, the graft [ph] sort of politics.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah. But, you know, in terms of creating an organization almost overnight, which is what was required here, and across the land—

ANN CRONIN: Across the land—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: —sounds like flying blind.

ANN CRONIN: It was. I talk about flying blind—I know you're supposed to learn the most between the ages of two and five, but I think I learned more in that first year about these United States, just because you had to.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: You had to know every county, you had to know every regional director, state director, assistant, and project director, because they are felt free—there was the freedom, you see, to call if they didn't like what was going on or if they needed help.

[00:40:07]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ANN CRONIN: And I, being far enough down on the totem pole, was the person who a great many of those calls went to. So, that was a constant business. And someone would call up and say, This is Mr. Laney [ph], and I'm down here in [inaudible] county, and they tell me you can help me. And he thought I knew all about his project, and I jolly well had to signal to somebody to get it out the files, so, I'd have it on my desk and he'd say, Now, do you know what I'm talking about? And I'd say, Yes, it's right here. We did manage somehow.

In general, you had a feeling of producing—there was a terrible snafu, of course, all the time, because of the new situations coming up. But you didn't have the feeling of ever being

embarrassed and being caught too short because everybody was in there correcting something as fast as possible. Of course, there were certain things that we just never did get done [laughs], [and we kept worrying -Ed.] about them. But it was not a frustrating feeling.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. But in terms of the multiplicity of projects that came throughout the land, they were tailor-made largely to fit the local roles.

ANN CRONIN: Sure.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: And so that you had a great variety even within that category.

ANN CRONIN: And always, somebody would fight for, Well, now, let's not turn this down until we find out. Maybe it's such and such a situation. There was always an advocate to ensure that we weren't just getting too, you know, governmental.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah. Even then the answer that needs from Washington, D.C., where the needs are designed locally, to give them, like, leg men, ideas, help, a lifesaver, whatever it is they needed and yet to leave as much discretion as was left in the local area required enormous discipline too.

ANN CRONIN: It did.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And there was somehow—a faith that just got generated, that this can be done. We don't know how to do it, but we'll be caught doing it. It was very interesting.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Well, there were certain problems, certain geographical problems, not the least of which was New York. [Ann Cronin laughs.] And good old Colonel Somervell.

ANN CRONIN: Well, I think Colonel Somervell—[heavy sigh].

HARLAN PHILLIPS: [Laughs.] I can't—you know, I can't picture Mrs. Woodward—though she might not have been there then. I don't know. You know, with the military tradition, Harrington was one thing even with his channels, but Somervell, but for Harrington might have been where Harrington was, [was pretty sticky -Ed.].

ANN CRONIN: Well, you see that was what Somervell really wanted. He was a man who was terrifically ambitious. And this was his stage. And this was the hardest nut of all to crack. And of course, he tried frightfully hard to lay on the charm, which he thought he had. He figured he could talk anybody into anything.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ANN CRONIN: And initially, it was very plausible. I remember coming in initially to—on a Sunday morning, to talk to him because he asked me specially if I would and [he had a cause to plead -Ed.], and it was very plausible, and I spent a lot of time understanding it. He thought he was sweeping me off my feet. And I began to see some of the bugs in it. And he said, You're backing down. [You're just welching on me. And I said, No, sir, I didn't do any such thing. I came here to find out what the problem was about -Ed.], and I can't see this. Well, he tried to be aggrieved, and I was such a disappointment to him. And this was his tactic initially, all charm. I wasn't giving my Sunday morning, he was giving me his Sunday morning, [laughs] you see.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yes.

ANN CRONIN: So, then when I came up here as the regional supervisor [he and I just had an armed truce -Ed.], because he did run things pretty much to please himself. And he didn't want any part of me or anybody else. However, he couldn't control the federal projects and it killed him [laughs] because this was—this was really what the whole hassle in New York was about.

[00:45:00]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yes.

ANN CRONIN: [Inaudible.]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Well, federal projects got somewhat out of hand.

ANN CRONIN: Yes.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: That's probably not a good use of words. What I mean by this is that individualistic people who were artistic were abroad in the land in terms—

ANN CRONIN: Don't you know—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: —of union.

ANN CRONIN: Sure.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: And the popular front was on everybody's mind.

ANN CRONIN: We had delegations every other day, of course, while I was still in Washington. And of course, it could be Orson Wells and Burgess Meredith and everybody else, and they were names to conjure with, but I don't think you could ever have done anything different from what we've done in the Federal Project.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Well for a while—what was it—the administrator here was Harold Stern [ph] I think.

ANN CRONIN: Harold Stein.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Harold Stein.

ANN CRONIN: That was only a temporary thing.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: Harold had been in Washington most of that time.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yes, but he came up here on—whatever the issue was, it seems to have been between some effort to get a kind of special—not policing but administration for the Federal Project.

ANN CRONIN: As I recall it, and I don't recall it too clearly, Ellen got terribly worried by, frankly, the bad publicity. And she felt that she couldn't get the truth unless she had somebody from her own staff here who was reporting to her. And the reason for picking Harold was simply that he had lived in New York. [It was like my buying textiles. -Ed.] [Laughs.] He had lived in New York, so he must know how to run New York. Well, that wasn't so easy. [Laughs].

HARLAN PHILLIPS: No.

ANN CRONIN: And Harold was not the boy to do it because Harold was really bright, but very thin-skinned, very hot-tempered, and never administered anything.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: And Harold was most able, but of course, it was putting him in a terrible position.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: I know because these [laughs] other people had developed a vested interest in what was going on and they weren't about to let it loose.

ANN CRONIN: No.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: And then I think they went so far even to imprison him in his own office.

ANN CRONIN: Oh, I [think for a day or so -Ed.].

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah, which shows the nature of their concern with this monstrous thing called administration.

ANN CRONIN: Yes.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Or whatever is implicit in the word quote red tape [laughs] unquote, which they weren't about to accept. There wasn't any way for them to accept it. But I can't help but

believe that [Somervell didn't do the matter -Ed.]—

ANN CRONIN: A bit of good.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: None at all, because he played the numbers game in the papers. And he may have been under strict orders from Washington, D.C. to cut back and cut back, I don't know.

ANN CRONIN: I don't think he was at all. I think it was his idea. I think [he would have gotten out the -Ed.] dogs, and guns, and tear gas to get rid of this bother. [Inaudible.]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah. Well, it must have made the administrative job in Washington that much more deadly and difficult.

ANN CRONIN: It was very difficult.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: In fact, it was just nightmarish for a while. And I don't think I took it seriously enough. I thought it was funny. [Laughs.]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: That other people would do this?

ANN CRONIN: The whole business.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: What's at stake? Yeah. [They laugh.]

ANN CRONIN: And I knew it would blow over.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: And I'd seen so many delegations, and I felt so strongly for them at the same time, that you couldn't possibly have done the things that they dreamed up that you should do just by waving some kind of wand. I remember one red-eyed little chap who came down from New York tell me—I'd [very often sit with delegations -Ed.]. And he came to tell me—he pounded on my desk, which by that time looked pretty neat because I had two secretaries keeping it clear—and told me about the miseries, and I said—well, I knew some of them [inaudible] from New York. But I said, Have you thought about the situation [in Kansas -Ed.]? He knew the word, What's with Kansas? So it was very fresh in my mind [—either Kansas or Vermont was—so I told him a few sordid facts -Ed.] and it obviously startled him out of his skin because he just never even thought of Kansas. But he said, But there's only so many people in Kansas, it's just a little bit of a state. And I said, It's quite a big state, but there aren't as many people as there are in New York.

[00:50:00]

On the other hand, if somebody in New York is out of work there are a great many agencies to take care of them pretty quickly, but if somebody in Kansas is starving there isn't much machinery there. Well, he didn't want to hear any of this. It was completely foreign to him. New York was all he knew, and nobody understood what the tortures were that they were being put through. They just couldn't understand. But that was New York and it just seemed to me very pathetic, but this is not anything to make a federal case of. But Somervell was all for making a federal case, [of course, it was pretty wild -Ed.].

HARLAN PHILLIPS: But how did the—I don't know that you came in contact with them—certainly while you were with Mrs. Woodward—what sort of problems are presented by the Federal Project in Washington? For example, how good an administrator [was Hallie Flanagan -Ed.]? [They laugh.] I say that with a smile, she had plenty of dash and fire, for sure.

ANN CRONIN: Hallie was not a good administrator, of course. She was all for art and theater. She also had a little corps of very valiant workers. Howard Miller was a great help to her. And she usually had somebody in Washington while she was in New York. Hallie came to Washington less than anybody else because she didn't want anybody [laughs] crossing her tracks. But nevertheless, Hallie was thoroughly earnest, honest, and worked night and day. She was just as much in it as anybody else, soul and body. [There was not another thought in her mind except what she was doing, but she just figured she had a divine revelation about how it should be done and that was that.



HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah. And of course—

ANN CRONIN: And Hallie could make anything the way she chose it to be. She was that theatrical and she could tell you a set of facts which you'd heard already. Only they came out just a little bit different, and you knew perfectly well her version was cock-eyed. But Hallie didn't.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Self-convinced.

ANN CRONIN: Well, I haven't met many people that are just naturally romanticizers, but Hallie was one, she just idealized everything. This is the way it should be, so this is the way it was.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: That's all right provided the view—the overall view is a positive one, when it gets to be a negative one, I'm not so sure.

ANN CRONIN: Hallie had red hair too, and of course, she was [from Iowa and she felt that she had extra dispensation to run it -Ed.].

HARLAN PHILLIPS: [Inaudible] she really did have a cause, even within—

ANN CRONIN: She did.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: —her own—you know, within her own state.

ANN CRONIN: Yes.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: She had a cause and she—how anyone could be so out of tune with the niceties of public relations to include commentary directly from Senators in the plays.

ANN CRONIN: I know.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Well, I mean, that's sort of a—you know, I love it. That's an American characteristic. [They laugh.] Incidentally not enough of it, really.

ANN CRONIN: Right, they've [inaudible]—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Right. But this was a kind of—not a challenge really, it never occurred to her, I suppose, she was going to tread on somebody's toes. If it just did it—

ANN CRONIN: Well, if it did, those toes should be trod on, you know. This was for their own good.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: I don't think Hallie was snobbish at all. She just wanted to raise everybody up to her height.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: But if they [were such slobs that they couldn't go along with her, then their toes should be jumped on -Ed.].

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah. That's good.

ANN CRONIN: It was, really exciting [ph].

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Although, you know, it stirred up the animals, with [the net effect that I guess the whole way in which the Federal Projects had been handled was altered. The Theater Project was killed and I think the other were then placed under the states -Ed.]

ANN CRONIN: That's right.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: But that, of course, was sort of toward the end, and by that time, they had enough momentum so that [while they were curtailed and it was a damn shame -Ed.], I think they had achieved a great deal, even [on the stage -Ed.].

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Well, how did Mrs. Woodward [get along with a creature like Sokoloff -Ed.]?

ANN CRONIN: [Laughs.] Oh, Nikolai. [They laugh.] Well, of course, she always told me she loves music, and she came to enough concepts to prove it. And Nikolai, I think, probably paid less attention to the rest of the route than anyone else. He had a couple of good girls who were taking care of his procedures. And I think Nikolai just really wasn't there in spirit. Now, this may be my feeling at this distance, but he never seemed to be as much involved in the goals as the others.

[00:55:11]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yes, I can see [inaudible]. Well, I've had him described to me as—of the men, Alsberg, Cahill, and—

ANN CRONIN: Sokoloff.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Sokoloff. The most vain of the three. And in that sense in the service of a kind of fury. Have no—can see himself on a podium conducting an orchestra, but not as a genius in administration. This was something which was—

ANN CRONIN: Yes, that he had to put up, if somebody else wanted to do it that was all right. Well, I think that's true. I think it was his chance to be a conductor [and to be a national figure - Ed.]. And I always had that, without ever bothering to say it, it just didn't seem important. [Nikolai was for Nikolai. -Ed.]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: But Eddie Cahill, of course, was the great diplomat and was always trying to smooth everything out for everybody, and interpret everyone to everyone, very successfully.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: A very complex fellow.

ANN CRONIN: Very complex. And with a wonderful gift of words, a maze of words but usually, a very clear concept—and such a sweetness to him. I think of all the federal people, he most cherished Ellen. The others all thought of her as something to be put up with, not realizing how wonderfully loyal she was to them. But I think Eddie did his very level best, which was pretty good, to keep the others in line. And he had a great feeling for all the projects. So, he was a really broader person that could get the feel of the theater and music, as well as the art.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: I don't know to what extent he was a good administrator but his background —

ANN CRONIN: [Cross talk.] Well, he had Tom Parker. [Laughs.]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: —is public relations and—yeah, well. His background had been public relations, which would have made him the interpreter, the spokesman, the peacemaker. Maybe not peacemaker, but, you know—

ANN CRONIN: Not peacemaker, but keeping things oiled—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: —and moving.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah. For the purposes [inaudible]—[Cross talk.]

ANN CRONIN: And everybody speaking to everybody. Yes.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah. And in that sense more public relations minded perhaps than administration. But Alsberg was—[Ann Cronin laughs]—was a monopolist, in a way.

ANN CRONIN: He was [laughs].

HARLAN PHILLIPS: All roads led to Henry Alsberg.

ANN CRONIN: Well, all roads lead to the Guides. I think Henry and the Guides, you could hardly tell the difference between, you know. He was completely immersed.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah, he couldn't see anything but.

ANN CRONIN: No. You don't mention Luther Evans and he was, for a while, considered a federal project—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Oh, well, Luther Evans comes, in a sense, out of the Writers' Project. And—

ANN CRONIN: He broke himself out. Very able chap.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Oh, indeed. [Ann Cronin laughs.] When you put Luther Evans in the context of Hallie Flanagan [Ann Cronin laughs] and Sokoloff, and Cahill, and, Alsberg, at long last you had a real razorblade operate.

ANN CRONIN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

HARLAN PHILLIPS: A man was also ambitious and ruthless, too.

ANN CRONIN: Very.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: But tidy. Tidy to the point of [laughs]—

ANN CRONIN: There wasn't a single detail—and the procedures were spread out, ironed out, redone, and everything was just [inaudible].

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: Of course, I think he also had a great vision. I think he really had a vision of the Archives, which nobody else had ever succeeded in doing. And of course, since then, he's done so many things. His name keeps popping up. It's amazing.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Well—he's about—you know [these other were out of the -Ed.] liberal tradition I'm not entirely sure what Luther Evan's tradition was, liberal or otherwise. I don't think it makes any difference.

ANN CRONIN: It's liberal now.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: I think he had an idea and was seized by an idea and had to make it work and was compelled to make it work. This isn't necessarily true of Henry Alsberg. Henry Alsberg had an idea and it just seemed to lend itself to the situation and it was so deeply entrenched that nobody could dislodge it after awhile [laughs].

ANN CRONIN: That's true. [Laughs.]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: It isn't because Alsberg was a powerhouse or had any concept of power. I'm not sure that he did.

ANN CRONIN: No, he was just a natural—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Right, but Evans had the—

ANN CRONIN: —individual.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: And of course, Evans was the typical organization man, but the way he was going to run it.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: That's right. He had that concept of power as to how it should be run and knew how to run it too. He couldn't have been a congenial person, but then the people who've been [inaudible]—

[01:00:03]

ANN CRONIN: [Cross talk.] Yeah, he is.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: —get things done somehow or another are not necessarily congenial. Pardon me, was he?

ANN CRONIN: I think he is. He is and was. I see him going by the window occasionally, now. He lives right here.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: And I think he has broadened a great deal. I think he's a true liberal now. I don't know if he was at that point, he just was in love with an idea and he saw his chance to get there. But I think Luther has never forgotten anything he ever learned. He is a [mine of facts -Ed.] and everything [is grist for his mill -Ed.].

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ANN CRONIN: He just—he's one of those people who acquires facts, knowledge. You wouldn't call him creative but, he sees an idea and he adds to the idea and he moves in that idea. Amazing.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. But some people are consciously products of all their yesterdays.

ANN CRONIN: [Inaudible.]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: So [that when you throw the switch you throw it all on -Ed.].

ANN CRONIN: [Cross talk.] Yes.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. I've met him, talked to him in conferences about archives, and I had this impression that when you raised the question, all this man's experience came out in the answer. It's that kind of intensity, and clarity.

ANN CRONIN: [Inaudible.]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: [And it's a little frightening. -Ed.]

ANN CRONIN: And he seems, of course, calm but the intensity of that voice—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Right.

ANN CRONIN: There's no calm [in his soul (ph)].

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Not at all.

ANN CRONIN: And those cigars that he chewed—he never left my office, where we had many, you know, small meetings, but there weren't two cigar butts left in the ash tray. I would say, Get those out of here [laughs]. Sometimes I'd say it before he left, Will you go, and take that with you. Why, yes, I will. [Perfectly good-natured. -Ed.]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: I feel very friendly toward him, [and also his cigars -Ed.].

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Was he humorous?

ANN CRONIN: No. He likes to laugh, but when you say humorous, no, he was not humorous. He's not witty.

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Some people use wit and humor as a stiletto.

ANN CRONIN: He doesn't.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: [Inaudible.]

ANN CRONIN: No, no.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Holger Cahill could do it, and do it masterfully. He'd almost unseat a person without them ever knowing. It's kind of a game.

ANN CRONIN: Well, words, of course, enchanted him. He had a love affair with words. It was just beautiful. [Laughs.]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah. But he could use them.

ANN CRONIN: [More and more and he was still winding them out. -Ed.] [Inaudible.]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah, but there was something about Eddie Cahill too, there was a kind of paralysis before a large group. He was marvelous [à deux -Ed.]—

ANN CRONIN: Yes.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: —when he was talking in a small group, or in a barroom with some of the boys. And he could lend himself, while a leader, to rubbing shoulders with the boys in a public relations kind of thing, which may have—except in New York—stilled some of the [smoldering embers -Ed.] here and there. I can't imagine him taking a frontal assault as I can imagine Audrey McMahon taking a frontal assault.

ANN CRONIN: Yeah.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: You see, they're two different—

ANN CRONIN: Well, that is true. That is very true. You said it very well. You've certainly learned a lot about this. [Laughs.]

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Well, I've talked about Audrey McMahon, and you—

ANN CRONIN: Have you talked with Audrey lately?

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yes.

ANN CRONIN: Is she in New Jersey? I haven't seen her in years.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: No, she's down in the Village and she's working—

ANN CRONIN: Is she?

HARLAN PHILLIPS: —somewhere in New York. I don't remember at the moment what she's doing, but she's fire and brimstone.

ANN CRONIN: Oh, [Audrey is very sharp -Ed.]. [Inaudible.]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: But she was put in a really pretty rough position—

ANN CRONIN: Yes, she was.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: —between Somervell and Washington and Cahill.

ANN CRONIN: I think she took more from Somervell than anybody else did. I don't know exactly why.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: Maybe because somehow or other those pictures you couldn't get away from. You could close a show and you could forget about what was between the covers of a book, but Aubrey did take an awful beating, and she stood up to it.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: She parried not a little.

ANN CRONIN: She did. [Inaudible.]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: I [laughs][inaudible]—I get the impression that she—where his conclusions would come out, sort of, you know, iron-fisted, by the time she got through, she had converted the iron fist into the iron separate from the fist [inaudible].

ANN CRONIN: Well, of course, Somervell was an awfully intelligent man. And he knew when he had a foe worthy of his steel, and I think he sometimes knew that he had bitten off an awful lot to chew. [And I think he did get rather fond of Audrey. -Ed.] He didn't usually like people to stand up to him.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: No, but that's the—

ANN CRONIN: Like she did.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: —military tradition, yeah.

ANN CRONIN: Oh, yes, that of course. Instinctively he was outraged, particularly if it was a woman.

[01:05:03]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Of course, the more so. And particularly, if she would—what is it—parry for time and do as he pleased.

ANN CRONIN: She was much more astute than anything else.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: But I couldn't picture of Holger Cahill doing that.

ANN CRONIN: No, you're right.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah, he wouldn't—he couldn't—

ANN CRONIN: He didn't like loud noises.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: It's alien to whatever it is he was. And even if he had a deep interest in the idea, he couldn't fight on that kind of level.

ANN CRONIN: You should have seen Margaret Bacher [ph], who was a big Texan, who was in charge of all of the homemaking projects, the housekeeping, and so on. You should have seen her and Somervell if you really want to see Arkansas and Somervell—and Texas. Woo! [Laughs.]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Something to behold.

ANN CRONIN: Really, that was fun.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Well, you know, we never know that somehow—that the success of any idea sometimes depends upon the sparks that fly.

ANN CRONIN: Yes.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: And the intensity with which one goes at the defense of what one's doing.

ANN CRONIN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

HARLAN PHILLIPS: And Audrey McMahan struck me as that kind of person, although, you know, the far reaches of the West, it was less oppressive, you know. It was less congregated like in San Francisco or in Seattle.

ANN CRONIN: Of course, the air was freer there.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Right. And they were far enough away so that they could exercise perhaps even more discretion.

ANN CRONIN: And of course, New York was always going to be so hot and bothered, really.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah, I don't think that there was anything that could be done. You know, you look—you ask yourself as you reread this, what could anyone have done in Washington, D.C. to have eased the rancor.

ANN CRONIN: Well, I'm glad you say that because I had that feeling.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: [Inaudible.][Laughs.] could have been done?

ANN CRONIN: I think things take over and according to who's on the spot, the complexion of one situation may differ from what it would have been if another person had been there. But I think this was something you just couldn't have done very differently [after it got rolling -Ed.].

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah. To get it rolling at all—

ANN CRONIN: Was a marvelous thing.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Right. And from that moment on, whatever momentum it had depended upon the locality.

ANN CRONIN: And the loyalties of the people and the energy were, in the main, pretty good and pretty well directed. And I don't think—I think in the balance, it comes out as a pretty good picture.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: I do.

ANN CRONIN: I do.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: I do too. And of course, if you look at it from just New York, you overlook the fact that New York was dominated by Fiorello, the racket busters were on. I mean, all this is a part of the atmosphere in which [inaudible]—

ANN CRONIN: And of course, that was where all the fever was. I finally [came up here as regional chief supervisor with Florence Kerr -Ed.] succeeded Ellen Woodward. And I had then [the states down through Maryland -Ed.]. Then I was so much in call [outside, you see -Ed.], that I saw the other states more so that I could tolerate New York. [Although my headquarters were here, I came back every night and lived here -Ed.] [laughs] but still I would be in upstate New York, where I was really having trouble with those upstate New Yorkers. They were the ones who dug their heels in the [ground. What was his name? -Ed.] [Inaudible.]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: [Oh, Herzog. -Ed.]

ANN CRONIN: Herzog.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: Amazing person. Much more astute than Somervell, and got his own way much better than Somervell [laughs] ever did. And so, it went with each state. You see, you had a problem which was just as exciting in that state, but New York was on the front pages every day.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Every day, yeah. Well, as the '30s deepened and we shifted the scene from self-concern to an awareness of the ugly [rude forces -Ed.] abroad, there was a, you know—I remember this discernible change in the direction of the thinking, atmosphere, the work, it was almost like you passed through a doorway and left whatever was on the other side behind. And it made, I would think, the whole WPA concept an eddy in the stream as distinct from part of the mainstream that it had been.

ANN CRONIN: Oh, it was a pretty big eddy, and of course, it immediately—distance lent it a little enchantment. Immediately, it was easy compared to what was coming up but it was all right. It suddenly wasn't so bad.

[01:10:04]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ANN CRONIN: Because this other thing was, you know, blood and war. And restored some perspective.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: But the handwriting was on the wall.

ANN CRONIN: Well, it should have been. I mean, it had done its job.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Was there any effort to mold it, reshape it in the light of preparedness?

ANN CRONIN: Oh, yes but not very much because it was so obvious immediately, you know, what with the munitions makers and everything there would be jobs.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: I think there was a feeling that this probably should stop. And we had the feeling, you know, that it was a matter of months. And nobody resented it, nobody—we just tried to do it as tidily as we could.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: With complete feeling that we never expected it to go on. It had gone on as long as it should.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Then it was gone, vanished.

ANN CRONIN: Which was—of course, that was when everybody has been around keening [ph]. [Nobody will ever know what we did because there are no records. That's why it's so interesting. -Ed.]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah. It's true. Records of the Art Project were loaded on a barge.

ANN CRONIN: Right. That, of course, did just about breaks us all up. Again, we'd become so philosophical about living in a state of high excitement, and with constant criticism, that somehow or other, we got a little fatalistic about, This will pass because the world is always—Not very wise. But we did think it was awful not to pass on the real accomplishments and the techniques which has evolved in case they ever were needed again. There was no attempt to salvage these. That got me pretty [indignant. The human race just never did learn. -Ed.]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: You did not little traveling then, didn't you, after a while?

ANN CRONIN: Yes.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Sort of spot-checking where problems occurred?

ANN CRONIN: Yes, and it was a fairly—the states were very, very—as I have indicated, very eager to have direction.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ANN CRONIN: And I would be in a position when I was here, that was only about a year, of being in such demand that I would have to decide, well, will go to Maryland or will I go to Pennsylvania. And of course, the big states took more time. I spent more time in Pennsylvania, New York, Massachusetts, than I did in Maryland and [laughs] Delaware. But I went there on regular—whenever they had any kinds of meetings and conferences. And of course, I had four or five assistants. [I had a marvelous man in charge of the research and records, and a woman for all the women's projects—sewing projects, housekeeping, and a dozen others. -Ed.] And a man for recreation. And we didn't have much liaison with the arts, except through Washington, except that I had been there, so that I had some personal [contact -Ed.] with the heads of the Projects. And then I had another woman, she was wonderful. [Now what was her specialty? I'll have to call her up and ask her. I still see her a lot. -Ed.] She must have provided research and records with Ed Bennett, I believe. Ed Bennett was simply wonderful, a very quiet man who always got his job done with a minimum of fuss. He could see a couple of legislators and he walked in looking so inoffensive, you know, that you could overlook him any time. And Ed would be just very pleasant and speak up with a quiet little question. And pretty soon, they'd think he wanted to know this and they'd tell him. [He'd digest that, and then he'd say, "Well, now, if this is so what do you think of this plan?" Which of course was what he wanted to do anyway. He would wrap any group around his fingers without any trouble at all, and never was recognized, because he was so quiet. -Ed.]

[01:15:05]

Florence Kerr, who was from Iowa too, and, you know, very much flat-footed in some ways, said, "Bennett is sneaky." I'd say, "Bennett is not sneaky, Bennett is great." "Well, I just don't know what he's doing." "He's getting more work done than any five people." "Well, I think he's related to you." I'd say, "You know he isn't [laughs]." But really there was so many people like that down the line who did yeoman work where it needed to be done.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: And always with heads of city departments and all kinds of political people and so on. Ed could smooth anything out. Just amazing.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Was there much concern in the central office in Washington about the press the WPA was getting?

ANN CRONIN: Yes, of course. And yet, we knew so much of it was all lies. We just hardened our hearts to it [laughs]. I can't explain it. One of my assistants, the one who did the women's



projects, who was marvelous, she stopped reading the newspapers. She said, I haven't read anything that wasn't a lie. I will never trust anything I read in the papers again. And she was very, very funny about it. She was a very logical thinker, and she usually was so right. She'd say, This doesn't ring true. So, finally, she said, I'm not going to read the newspapers. The rest of us thought we had to, you know?

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: We had to face up to it. This is what it says today and what do we say when someone asks us about it. We just had to. [Marion McKee said, "Don't read them. It's lies. I'll tell them the truth if anybody asks me about it." -Ed.] [Laughs.] So, everybody had his own defense, I guess.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: You could pick up these stories on hand, and read a Chicago paper—

ANN CRONIN: That's it.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: —which would have something about—something critical of the WPA, something that was going on in California and there was no way to verify it.

ANN CRONIN: Right.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: I never checked the California papers, but I'm sure that they would include something from out of California [inaudible]—

ANN CRONIN: [Inaudible.] Terrible hassles.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Oh, yeah.

ANN CRONIN: [Inaudible]. There were some real minor scandals in California. But they died down, too. [They laugh.] You know, six of one, six of the other, it wasn't all true.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: But there wasn't anything that could be done, I think. Put it this way, it was an emergency program, almost a crash program the way it started. Get the checks into their hands by Thanksgiving time and worry about what to do later on. Establish the program after, in effect, but get the money out [was Hopkin's view -Ed.]. [Ann Cronin coughs.] So that, you know, getting an organization to do this, overnight practically, you're bound to have problems—

ANN CRONIN: Yeah.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: —of all kinds. It's a wonder you didn't have more.

ANN CRONIN: Sure, if you get two people together in the room, you have politics, and you have a difference of opinion or difference—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: But the thing that sustained it to the extent possible was the general overall spirit of dedication which people brought to their work because it was new, it was without precedent.

ANN CRONIN: I don't suppose anybody would have got in and stayed in, in any kind of important job, unless he had iron in his soul, you know, that's what it really amounted to.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ANN CRONIN: You just didn't unless you could stand [the gaff -Ed.].

HARLAN PHILLIPS: But the Congress presented a continuing problem to the central office largely because of the way in which appropriations were made. Of course, this was miserable. So that you couldn't depend on three months, [laughs] or four months.

ANN CRONIN: [Piecemeal. -Ed.]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: There was always a deficiency appropriation. And in this sense, I think, Congress—or those who were in power in Congress, or had power over this particular matter, probably never were convinced that a dole wasn't the better thing than kind of make-work program which people were involved in something they could respect—that this was not the thing to do.

ANN CRONIN: Well, I think there were—of course, it was spotty, and I think there were a few who were very helpful. [Jerry Voorhis was one. They weren't all Martin Dies. It just seemed that way. -Ed.] But—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: It could be a John Taber from New York—

ANN CRONIN: Oh, John Taber was really—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Well, he was dragged kicking and screaming into the [laughs] 20th century. [Inaudible.]

ANN CRONIN: He was, and he and Mr. Goldwater certainly would have enjoyed each other.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: [Inaudible.] [They laugh.] But this is a power that you have to reckon with.

ANN CRONIN: You do, and you know it.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: And that's why I say you wouldn't have stayed if you couldn't stand the gaff somehow or other.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: That's why I wonder whether the—maybe the times lost some momentum when Ellen Woodward vanished from the scene and was replaced by Mrs. Kerr.

ANN CRONIN: Oh, I think so.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Although, Mrs. Kerr herself was not un-astute in terms of Congress. She just was—

[01:20:10]

ANN CRONIN: She's much—she was more of a deliberate politicker. Ellen was—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: She looked hungry.

ANN CRONIN: —a natural politicker. It was in her blood and bones, you know.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: That's right. It didn't come out as a neon sign. She just was what she was. You know, I've talked to Mrs. Kerr.

ANN CRONIN: Have you?

HARLAN PHILLIPS: She's—

ANN CRONIN: Very bright woman.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Oh, boy. But ambitious where it shows.

ANN CRONIN: Really?

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Oh, yeah. And, you know, that is when she talks about it, it comes over that way. And yet again, dedicated to the overall idea—

ANN CRONIN: Oh, yes.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: —knew Harry Hopkins and [inaudible]—

ANN CRONIN: Very much—and of course, philosophically, she understood it so well, and really embraced it.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yes.

ANN CRONIN: And everybody brought his or her own equipment to it and, of course, she brought this very wily, cool, shrewd approach to it, which is belied by her appearance.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Indeed. [Inaudible] But not the kind of almost a missionary zeal—joy that Mrs. Woodward had.

ANN CRONIN: That's right, the exultant.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Right.

ANN CRONIN: [Inaudible.]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: I've seen the future, let's go. I mean, this kind of thing. And walk off on a cloud.

ANN CRONIN: You're right. That was it. It was a vision.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: [Laughs.] Right.

ANN CRONIN: It was. And she was the standard bearer, and excelsior all the way. And absolutely devilish to work with.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: But [heady wines in old bottles brand new -Ed.]. You know, you look for qualities that make a difference in the development of an idea where it's institutionalized. It's surprising how in this particular instance, as you come back to people like Hallie Flanagan—

ANN CRONIN: [Inaudible.]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: —then from straight administrative side, though it's not that, it's almost like the mother hen with her chicks, in a way. That fierce kind of loyalty.

ANN CRONIN: Oh, yes, absolutely.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: That was a wholly new cup of tea.

ANN CRONIN: Which Hallie didn't earn, really, because she didn't give the kind of cooperation. She was going to do it her way, but Ellen just said, All right. Tell me how it is, and then that's my way. She got much more than she deserved, really.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: Not that the cause didn't deserve it, but it was just—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: [Risk for risk it -Ed.] took a lot of courage. It did, because the whole thing was placed in jeopardy in that one minute.

ANN CRONIN: And you haven't talked to Mrs. Woodward?

HARLAN PHILLIPS: No, I talked to her on the phone. She's almost unreachable.

ANN CRONIN: Well, I hear she's not in the best of health.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yes, she keeps telling me that over the phone.

ANN CRONIN: Well, and she doesn't—I guess, she doesn't recall as well as she would want to, and of course, it would hurt her pride terribly.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: I thought that over the phone. And so, I haven't called her in some time. The last time I talked to her over the phone what came forth from her was a sermon on the greatness of all the people who were involved.

ANN CRONIN: Really? Isn't that lovely.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Well, this was a generalization [in support of which I wanted her to to risk specifics, but specifics were not forthcoming -Ed.]. I didn't want to press.

ANN CRONIN: I guess, she just has a wonderful glow, and doesn't remember all the specifics. And maybe it's just because she spent herself [so darn hard -Ed.].

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah. Well, she begs off every time I've called her.

ANN CRONIN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. That's too bad

HARLAN B. PHILLIPS: Yes, because this is a catalyst.

ANN CRONIN: Yes, it is.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: And while—

ANN CRONIN: So, you have to take in second and third hand. That's too bad.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Nonetheless, it may even be—you can put it this way, she wanted to be at her best—

ANN CRONIN: I'm sure.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: —and she may know that she's not at her best, but in consequence, it would be a retrospective catalyst, it may not do it justice.

ANN CRONIN: That's right. And I don't—I still think, again, that it's not too much personal vanity. Ellen always wanted to have the show good, and everybody had to be—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: [Top drawer (ph).]

ANN CRONIN: —absolutely [good, and you had to rehearse and rehearse so that you -Ed.] wouldn't let the cause down. And I think she wouldn't want to let it down herself.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: That's the impression I got talking with her on the phone, that she'd love to. If I went over for tea, it would be marvelous—

ANN CRONIN: And of course, probably you'd be unassuming, unscary enough so that she would find herself recalling more clearly than she thinks, but I bet she thinks that she couldn't remember, she [inaudible]—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: She told me [that, in effect, she doesn't remember the details -Ed.]. [Inaudible.]

ANN CRONIN: It would come back to her.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: I think it would, because I'm sure it was the high point her whole life. I don't think anything ever was—

HARLAN PHILLIPS: You know, it's hard to invite oneself up. [Laughs]

[01:25:06]

ANN CRONIN: Yeah, it is. Isn't it?

HARLAN PHILLIPS: You know, diplomatically. It's not even protocol, it's bad manners to arrive with a machine and say, Well, here I am. What do you say? I couldn't do that, you see. I've talked to her over the phone—

ANN CRONIN: Well, I think she's pulled away because I sent her Christmas cards, you know, for years and she returned them, and then the last two or three times, no return, so I figured she just wanted to pull away, and I just stopped.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: You never know when she sends a signal—[They laugh.] [Inaudible.]

HARLAN PHILLIPS: It's not one thirty in the morning.

ANN CRONIN: Yes. No.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: No. She does go for drives occasionally, she told me. And she's always forever catching a cold.

ANN CRONIN: Yes, and you know, she never would get into any physical ills when she was working, practically. She did have a delicate throat, and she would have a husky throat and she'd be so concerned because she couldn't speak well. But she almost never went down for a day. Just if she went down for a few hours, she'd be up again.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Maybe she's earned this—

ANN CRONIN: I think she had.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: And I think—I used to fret because you could see from the state of her icebox how she would eat. She never cooked for herself, and she just didn't care. Although she ate with good appetite. But at any time I would—[you'd think I'd been raised on a Kansas farm myself -Ed.], I would—you know, about twelve thirty [a.m.] begin to feel a gnawing, by one thirty [a.m.] I'd be tired. It wasn't that I was hungry so much as I was tired.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.

ANN CRONIN: She would think nothing at all of going right through without any lunch. And she [would say, "Ah, Ann, why, you poor child, you haven't had anything to eat, have you? Why don't we get a sandwich?" -Ed.]. It was so easy getting a sandwich, [laughs] you know, we didn't have any cafeteria. It was quite a trick. And—but it—and then if any food came, she was just delighted and fell on it like a wolf, but she just didn't think of when she was going to nourish herself.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Unimportant to her.

ANN CRONIN: [Inaudible.] She had a good healthy appetite, but the Lord should provide or something, because [laughs] she had to work.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Well, I'm grateful to you for this second shot through this.

ANN CRONIN: It was very nice of you to take a second shot.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: We ought to check it to make sure that—

ANN CRONIN: Yes.

HARLAN PHILLIPS: Shall we?

ANN CRONIN: Oh, you think so? [Laughs.] Yes, I guess we should.

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[END OF INTERVIEW.]