

## PREFACE

When the Senate elected its first Secretary of the Senate in 1789, among other responsibilities it assigned to him the role of chief disbursing officer. The Secretary paid the Senate's salaries and bills, and kept its financial ledgers. For many years the Disbursing Office operated out of a room adjacent to the Secretary's, with a bank-like, grided teller's cage where senators and staff collected their pay, in person and in cash. Eventually the Disbursing Office moved to other locations in the Capitol, and the duties were assumed by a Financial Clerk who reported directly to the Secretary. The tradition of payment in cash continued through the 1960s, when the phenomenal growth of the Senate staff forced the institution into the computer age.

William Ridgely served in the Disbursing Office from 1949 through 1977. He started as a clerk, became head bookkeeper, and rose to Financial Clerk. During those years he observed the dramatic changes in the institution from his side of the teller's window. In his oral history interviews he recounts the problems of paying for the Senate's expanding business, including its staff, committee work, and special investigations, as well as the Disbursing Office's dealings with the Appropriations and Rules committees.

In later years, Ridgely also handled arrangements for the Senate's participation in the International Parliamentary Union. He describes the purpose and planning of these trips, including an eventful meeting in Havana, Cuba. Ridgely retired from the Disbursing Office in 1977, and served as a consultant until 1979, when he returned to full time duties as Assistant Secretary of the Senate. He held that post until his retirement in 1981.

William Ridgely was born in Upper Marlboro, Maryland on May 9, 1922. He served in the United States Army Air Corps during World War II, studied accounting at the Eastern College of Commerce and Law, and worked for the Internal Revenue Service before joining the Senate staff.. After his retirement, Ridgely moved to Rhode Island. He died of a heart attack in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, on September 14, 1996.

## Assistant Secretary of the Senate

### Interview #1

Tuesday, February 9, 1982

**RITCHIE:** Lately you have been spending most of your time working on Interparliamentary Union material. I know you've been exceedingly busy with that. Could you tell me what the Interparliamentary Union is, and what your functions have been in regards to that?

**RIDGELY:** Well, the Interparliamentary Union is the oldest international organization in existence, and the United States Congress has participated in it since 1889. The members of the Interparliamentary Union are members of parliaments only. So you have these people from the parliaments meeting twice a year, head-to-head. There's a good interaction. You say, what is it all about? First of all, whatever the Interparliamentary Union comes to a conclusion or decision on, has no mandate on any country. There are now ninety-nine countries who are members and have national groups in the Interparliamentary Union. They all have the same thing that they are concerned about, such as inflation, terrorism, air piracy, the kidnaping of parliamentarians and other officials of government, human rights and other common problems. That basically is what the IPU is all about. One thing I will add, there are two former presidents of the Interparliamentary Union who have won the Nobel Peace Prize,

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which I think is significant. This goes back sometime, I don't know who they are right now, but I've heard their names and they were people of renown.

**RITCHIE:** Are the members of the Senate who go to the IPU a regular delegation or do they change each time?

**RIDGELY:** They change. On an *ipso facto* basis all members of each parliament are really members of the IPU. In our Congress, the House side is limited to naming twelve members to any one meeting. On the Senate side there is no numerical limit on it, but the thing is that you wind up with two or three or four Senators on a trip. I keep looking at a 12 to 3 ratio on the IPU, the same ratio that there is between the Senate and House. Sometimes there is only one senator sometimes there are maybe only six or seven House members. It all depends on the situation at the time of the year, and the year. For instance, 1982 is an election year and any delegation might be a little thin. I don't know, it's hard to tell right now. It all depends on the primaries, the opposition the members have, and whether they are running for reelection, and then the general election in the fall. With the fall meeting of the IPU being in

September, it's six weeks before the election and may make it tough for some of them to participate.

**RITCHIE:** Do the majority and minority leaders decide who will go?

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**RIDGELY:** Yes, under the law, that's who names the Senate delegation. They recommend them and the President of the Senate then appoints the delegation and then names the chairman and the vice chairman. The Senate has a chairman and vice chairman of its Senate group, and the House has a chairman and vice chairman of its House group.

**RITCHIE:** Do the members tend to be members of the Foreign Relations Committee, or do they come from all over?

**RIDGELY:** My recollection is that the law requires that some members of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate and Foreign Affairs Committee of the House be named, unless the leadership determines that it isn't necessary. We have had Foreign Relations Committee members on the delegation. I think that was written into the law because it is an international organization and the Foreign Relations Committee and Foreign Affairs Committee normally take care of international things for the government, as far as the Congress is concerned. The United States group is required by law to make a report, which is a printed report on each meeting.

There is a staff member of the Foreign Relations and of Foreign Affairs Committees who attend all of these meetings and work on the substantive matters with members all the time. They are the ones who develop the report. The report really emanates from the two committees because of the operation of the IPU, as far as the United States

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group is concerned. The Senate handles the finances and all other arrangements and the report during odd numbered Congresses, and the House handles it during even numbered Congresses. It switches back and forth. So for two years the Senate staff member develops the reports with a review and editing by his House counterpart. Then when the House is handling things the House staff member develops the report and his counterpart on the Senate side helps him with reviewing and editing. So it is really coming out of those two committees.

**RITCHIE:** Well, what are your responsibilities?

**RIDGELY:** I'm the financial officer of the United States group. I'm handling the finances while the Senate has control of it, and making all the arrangements for the trips and getting everything set up. Right now I'm working on the trip that's coming up in April.

**RITCHIE:** You're going to Nigeria this time?

**RIDGELY:** Yes.

**RITCHIE:** Is it posing any particular problems?

**RIDGELY:** Not yet. But it's a place that you don't hear many good things about, really. Somebody said: "Boy, you're going to the pits of the earth!" Of course, when you stop to think about it: gee, Nigeria, we're buying ten percent of our oil from them. They're really an oil rich country with plenty of money. But I read an

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article in the paper, I don't know whether it was the *Wall Street Journal* or the *Washington Post*, about Nigeria, it said anybody can be bought over there, anybody. So, how much effect that's going to have on us, I don't know. That's their internal problem, not ours! But I'm near the point right now where I'm going to find out how things are going to start gelling for the group.

**RITCHIE:** Nineteen eighty-one was an unusually exciting year for the IPU. First you had the delegations come to Washington, and then you went to Cuba.

**RIDGELY:** Well, we had the spring meeting in April in Manila. Then there is the Committee of Ten Plus, which is, you might say, a Western Alliance Group. Maybe not quite so. It started out with the ten European Common Market countries, or nine of them at first, now it's ten. Then they added these other countries, the Baltic Countries, Denmark, Sweden, Iceland. It also includes Canada, the United States, New Zealand and Australia. What they do is get together for a one day meeting prior to the regular IPU meetings. Now the Committee of Ten Plus is unofficial as far as IPU is concerned. It's just a little coalition of representatives from these particular countries. There are twenty-two countries involved in this now. When they were in Manila they asked us to host that Committee of Ten Plus meeting. We did that, and the meeting was held on September 10th. We had the one day meeting and everything went

very nicely. Everybody had a good meeting, and then of course for the regular IPU fall meeting we went to Havana, Cuba.

**RITCHIE:** For these preliminary meetings, do they get together to plan some strategy for the IPU meeting?

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes. I think this is really what it's about. They get together for a meeting of the minds, or to see how they all feel about the upcoming IPU agenda. Because the one thing they are always concerned with is the Communist bloc. They do the same thing. The Communist bloc countries have a meeting too. If you want to call it planning strategy, I guess that's a good terminology for it, and that's what they're doing.

**RITCHIE:** When they were here, you made all the arrangements for where they met, hotels.

**RIDGELY:** Yes.

**RITCHIE:** Was security a problem?

**RIDGELY:** No, we didn't have any problem. Of course, what we have to do to protect people like the guests who came to this country is far different than what happens when you go to other countries. For instance, in the United States group, some of our members have been threatened. Representative [Edward J.] Derwinski and Senator [Robert T.] Stafford both have been assigned personal bodyguards for

some of the IPU meetings. I remember the time we went to the meeting in Caracas. Gosh, we landed there at the airport and went into the terminal and my God that place just filled with soldiers and they were armed to the teeth. But of course, you have to bear in mind, this was just after an American businessman was freed who had been a prisoner of a terrorist group for about three and a half years--he was an officer in one of our big companies. It was right after that, and they reported having maybe four or five terrorist groups down there, so there were policemen and military all over the city

during the whole meeting. You had to have IPU identification to pass certain places. They really did protect us. But here we don't have that concern. We don't have any terrorist groups. Of course, you might have a few nuts around, which we do. But all the delegates for our meeting in Washington stayed at the Hyatt-Regency, which is nearby. We provided them with transportation, and everything worked out very nicely for us and them.

**RITCHIE:** How do they fund all those operations here in Washington? Do they have a separate IPU fund?

**RIDGELY:** You mean for the United States group or the Committee of Ten Plus? Well, first of all, there's an appropriation for the United States contribution to the Interparliamentary Union itself. That money is appropriated through the State Department, under the heading in the Appropriations bill for contributions to international

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organizations. The IPU is included in that. Then there is ninety thousand dollars a year provided, appropriated money, for the travel expenses of the United States group--travel and other expenses. So from that ninety thousand a year the group takes the two trips and does whatever else is required, in the event they host a meeting like they did here.

**RITCHIE:** Looking back through some of the newspaper accounts of that meeting, some of them said that the Reagan administration tried to dissuade the American delegation from going to Cuba.

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes.

**RITCHIE:** Was that true?

**RIDGELY:** Well, whether the Reagan administration did or not, I do know that some members of Congress opposed it. They didn't think that we should go. I guess you can say the Reagan administration opposed it because they would not let us use a military aircraft to go down there. The understanding I had was that it went right up to the top man before the final answer came out of there. So we had to charter airplanes to go down there. The members of Congress said that it was a Congressional item and they felt, and Senator Stafford said it: "We have never shirked our responsibilities to the IPU because the meetings were held in a Communist country." They met in the spring of '79 in Prague, Czechoslovakia and in the fall of 1980

it was in East Berlin. Before I was involved, I know they had a meeting in Yugoslavia. So they've gone to these countries before.

The thing with Cuba though is a little bit different. They are right at our back door, and our relations with them are different. We have diplomatic relations with Czechoslovakia; we have a consular office in East Berlin; and I guess we have diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia. We were friendly towards Tito, maybe not towards some part of the government otherwise. But anyway, it's easier. In Cuba we have nothing but a United States interest section working out of the Swiss embassy. So it made it a little more difficult. However, by and large, except for the transportation we had no problems. Without charter aircraft flying direct from here to Havana, the only way you can go to Havana is by way of Canada and Mexico, a much longer trip and more costly. So we arranged for charter flights.

**RITCHIE:** Did you have to take care of all that?

**RIDGELY:** Yes. It was kind of a hair shirt at the very end. We were supposed to leave at ten o'clock Monday morning, the 13th of September. I got a call from the President of the company that I was chartering these aircraft from, Page Airways, and he said that Page Airways had just been bought out by a foreign firm. He said, "None of our airplanes can leave the country because we don't have any officers yet, now on this new thing." I said, "Holy smoke!" Well, this was Sunday afternoon, and I worked all the rest of the day

getting things lined up so that we would have airplanes, working with him. He found other companies that had comparable planes that could handle our requirements. It wasn't until 11:30 Sunday night that all of this was locked in. So we did have a lot of fun with that.

**RITCHIE:** You flew out of Florida?

**RIDGELY:** No, we flew out of Washington National. One of the planes was able to fly nonstop with proper customs clearance. The other two had to stop at Miami for refueling, and of course they went through customs there. But it was just a lot of backing and filling, and wondering at the same time

whether or not you were really going to make it. You know, we talk about people opposed to the United States group going to Cuba, but when we go down there, at the opening ceremonies there is always an address by the head of state. Castro gave one, and he stood there, his address was for more than two hours, but for one hour and fifty-four minutes he did nothing but lambaste the United States. I mean he came down hard on us.

One of the things we found out was that the other delegations were very happy that we had members there who did take issue with what he said. It is interesting to note, I found out, that Third World countries were particularly upset with him using the IPU meeting as a forum to jump all over us. So it was good that we had members there. The members of the British delegation were delighted that we were there. I got the feeling that with us there, with our

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members getting up and saying something, they felt they could get up and say something. I guess you could speculate as to whether or not they would have felt inclined or even wanted to do that if there was no representation from the United States. That part of it, for the reasons that those who opposed the United States group going down there, I guess that's fine and dandy, but on the other hand I think everybody was glad--those at least who were there and sat through that experience--that the United States did have representation.

**RITCHIE:** It was something of a breach of protocol.

**RIDGELY:** Oh, indeed, absolutely. As a matter of fact, I heard someone talking at a reception, some of the people were upset to the point that there was talk about even expelling Cuba from the IPU because of this. But I think the issue may come up. I don't know, it will be up to the Interparliamentary Union Council to lead the way on this--about that incident or what if it should happen again.

**RITCHIE:** During Castro's harangue the British ambassador and a representative from China got up and walked out. There was some controversy over whether or not the American delegation should have sat through it or departed. Was there any sense in the delegation about what they should have done?

**RIDGELY:** Well, our head of the United States interests section did get up and walk out. Senator Stafford was on the podium since he is a member of the IPU Council. I know that there was something written about a walkout but I sat there and listened to it. Others did too, and there was some mention of whether we should have left. I guess individually you wonder: do you get up and walk out and not hear



it, or do you sit there and listen to it so you'll know what was said? I guess this is part of it. The British and Canadian delegations were seated near us and after it was all over with, I went down to some of the folks who were here in Washington, and said: "Well, I guess you all won't want to speak to us anymore." They all laughed about it.

If the United States had gotten up as a group and walked out, I don't know whether any others would have followed or not. And yet I think there was a little bit of wonderment before the meeting whether Castro would take the opportunity to do this kind of thing. He sure as the devil did. Nobody liked the idea, I think particularly from the standpoint of what the IPU is. This is not a political international organization, although sometimes politics of sorts come into it, but it is not a viable political organization. These people get together and as I say this is what they believe in, what the IPU stands for, and that's why they're there. And some of those members have been in the IPU for twenty years or more, working together.

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**RITCHIE:** You mentioned that Senator Stafford is on the Council. Has he been associated with the IPU for some time now?

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes, and so has Mr. Derwinski. I guess there are three of them that I've been working with: Senator Stafford, Representative Derwinski, and Representative [Robert] McClory. Those three I know have been involved in the IPU for ten, twelve, maybe fourteen years.

**RITCHIE:** I gather there are a lot of committee meetings and other duties when you get to the IPU.

**RIDGELY:** Yes, one of the things about the IPU is that neither the United States group nor any other national group is writing the ticket or directing traffic. The IPU headquarters sets up this meeting, the Council sets the agenda, the meeting schedules are all set, you know all this before you get there. So you know what's going to happen, at what times, and on what days and dates. And it's a busy schedule. They have for instance at the spring meetings, five working committees who meet regularly. They have their different areas of responsibility and jurisdiction. All of these things are submitted by the different countries and they go over it and then submit it to the Council. Then at the fall meeting, which is considered the plenary session, the whole IPU meets as a body to consider and act on the committee resolutions. If you want a similarity it would be like the Committee of the Whole in the House of Representatives. They

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have an item that the committees have worked on, then the whole House operates as a committee, then it resolves itself into the House of Representatives for the vote. Well, the IPU has its committees, they submit items for consideration at the plenary session in the fall, the Council decides on the agenda, and then at the fall meeting they sit as one group and have their debate and discussion and then act on the resolutions. The idea has been brought up to change this. The meeting in the spring usually lasts one week. The meeting in the fall lasts almost two weeks, ten days to two weeks. They've been talking in terms of possibly, because of the fact that the committees meet in the spring and there is four or five months intervening, and with the volatility of world affairs, things happen that maybe have to be cranked into these subject matters.

So they have been thinking in terms of leveling out both meetings, and making both meetings a week or ten days long. At the spring meeting, certain committees would meet at the front end of the session and then they'd have the plenary session on the committee recommendations right then and there. Then, at the fall meeting the other committees would meet the first few days followed by a plenary session, so that things are taken care of on a current basis. A lot of them seem to like that idea. I guess in today's world where things are changing so rapidly that it's not like thirty or forty years ago where you could decide something and three or four, five months later it would be pretty much the same. It will take a while

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for them to do this. They'll do it slowly like other things, make sure that all the right things are in the right place to do it this way.

**RITCHIE:** I know the press always likes to belittle congressional travel as junketeering, but it sounds to me as if the IPU really is a working session.

**RIDGELY:** It is.

**RITCHIE:** If someone goes to it they've got committee assignments and that sort of thing.

**RIDGELY:** Absolutely. And they are very diligent and dedicated to their committee work. Our members get upset at us if we don't make sure they know where they are supposed to be and they are

there when they're supposed to be. And the meetings go on and on. I remember when we were in the Philippines. Mr. [Antonio Borja] Won Pat from the House was covering a committee meeting. He didn't get back until 8:30 that night from it, and it started at 3 o'clock that afternoon. This is the way they do. They get on a hot subject and they will run those meetings. It's just one of the things.

I experience long days myself. I am also a member of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliament, a suborganization of IPU. Normally my day will begin at 6:30 and never end before midnight. I not only have to make sure that things are taken care of

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for the delegation, that the members get where they are going and other things are taken care of for them, and then I would have meetings of the Association which I participated in.

**RITCHIE:** What type of issues would be discussed at any given IPU meeting? What types of things do the various committees handle?

**RIDGELY:** Well, they have a committee on human rights, they have a committee on juridical problems. I could get the titles of those committees and insert them later.\*

**RITCHIE:** So they are concerned with current events.

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes, indeed. Apartheid is one of the things that they are concerned with. Terrorism. Air piracy. Kidnaping of government officials. Kidnaping of any high official, but particularly people in high government positions.

**RITCHIE:** What about the Association of Secretaries General?

**RIDGELY:** Well, this is the organization whose membership is composed of people in parliaments, or in our Congress, in positions similar to the Secretary of the Senate, the Assistant Secretary of the Senate, the Clerk of the House, and the Deputy Clerk. Each country that is a member may have two members from each house of its parliament--so the United States group can have four members in the

\*see appendix

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Association, compared to Israel, which only has the Knesset and is entitled to only two members. You can see that the Association is composed of people who are at the highest administrative level of the parliaments. While our positions are Secretary of the Senate and Clerk of the House, in the European parliaments and other legislative bodies the positions are Secretary General.

**RITCHIE:** And what types of issues would they discuss?

**RIDGELY:** We discuss items that are, I think, common to all of us in terms of our duties, such as methods of voting, remuneration of members, treaty making powers of parliament, parliamentary procedure and many other topics. For instance, one of the latest topics concerns candidates and members who have been convicted of criminal acts, what happens, etc. This is very new.

**RITCHIE:** Very timely for the Senate with the Harrison Williams case.

**RIDGELY:** Yes, it really is. We had a topical debate on this topic at the Havana meeting, as a matter of fact. What will happen--let's take that one for instance since it's the newest subject matter--is that they will appoint a rapporteur. After the topical debate, which will decide whether there is enough interest and substance involved in it to be of value and interest to the whole organization. The rapporteur then will develop a draft questionnaire,

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which he will bring back to the Association. All of the members will go over it, question by question. They will do some deleting, they will do some editing, they will do some revision of the draft. Once that's finalized, then the rapporteur will develop the final questionnaire and send it out to every member of the Association and ask them to answer it. Once he gets the responses, he develops a draft report and presents that to the Association. The draft report is sent out to all members, in advance, for review and editing. The draft report will be brought up at one of the Association meetings and they will make their revisions. What they have done in the past too is to delay a final report to get more countries to respond to the questionnaire.

I know that Ken Bradshaw from Great Britain who was rapporteur of the topic, "Methods of Voting", and had not heard from certain countries and wanted to get them involved in it. I might add that he was particularly interested in the response of the United States and sent a special addendum questionnaire to further develop what happens in the United States. So they may delay, but once that is done then the

rappporteur will prepare another draft report. The Association will meet on that, approve it, and print it. The Association has a quarterly journal that they put out and the adopted reports are printed in the Journal. Then, maybe some years later, depending on

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the subject, they will review whether or not it would be appropriate to go back and update that subject matter again. Maybe ten, twelve, fifteen years later.

**RITCHIE:** Now, is the information provided to assist parliaments in making rules? For instance, how would their deliberations over expelling a member be of use to the Senate now when it is actually debating that issue?

**RIDGELY:** It wouldn't be of any direct use. I think what it is, the purpose of the Association is of course to assist the Interparliamentary Union and be a support part of it, from the standpoint of the top echelon of the administrative level. But to the Association itself, I think what is important is that once again you have an interaction of the people who are the highest level of employees of each parliament. They interact and find out the different rules and the different ways that things are going on. Not that it will really have an effect on any country. I think it just broadens your intellect on how other parliaments operate. It's very interesting, it really is.

Night sittings was a subject matter that they talked about. There's no such thing here. You know, a lot of the parliaments in Europe don't sit during the day time. They sit at what they call "night sittings." They convene in the evenings so people can be there, and for the convenience of people who are members of

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parliament. So I just told them when we got on that subject, I said there's nothing I can offer the Association on the subject because there is no such thing in the United States. The normal meeting hour for the Senate and the House is twelve noon. If it goes past the dinner hour, I said, it's just a continuation of the day session, except for special times, such as joint meetings of Congress when the President comes up to address a special session.

**RITCHIE:** But those are really just perfunctory meetings in the Senate Chamber before they proceed over to the House.

**RIDGELY:** Yes, that's what I told them. So I said, "I cannot help you all with this, I cannot give you anything except to say we don't have such a thing." But you do learn a lot. I talk to a lot of these people and we get to chatting about the different things that they do in their parliaments and what we do here. You really broaden your horizon.

**RITCHIE:** Are you more often struck by the differences between the American Congress and the other parliaments, or by the similarities?

**RIDGELY:** Well, on some of these things I will say that I keep thinking to myself: By God, I still think we've got the best system!" You really do get that feeling. For instance, in Norway they have such a thing as a substitute members of parliaments. A

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substitute doesn't serve until he is called to serve in place of a certain member. Let's say that we had substitutes for the Senators from Maryland. Well, if Senator [Charles] Mathias or [Paul] Sarbanes had a death in the family and were excused from the Senate and they were going to be gone for a week, and the Senate was in session. They'd tell the substitute--and the substitute cannot refuse--to serve. Very interesting, but I don't really know what's gained by that. Maybe you do, it must be important to them. It keeps a full representation there.

But you stop and think, for the Senate if a Senator dies in office usually they wait until the funeral and then within two or three or five days, you might miss a week or ten days at the most that you don't have a senator to represent the state. On the House side they call a special election. Well, except for those states that have one member at large, they won't be hurt. If you take a state like New York or California, the loss of one member for a period of thirty days, lets say because it might take that long to hold it, won't make much difference. Look how long Maryland did without its representative when Gladys Spellman was stricken by illness.

**RITCHIE:** The only difference is that if they die this issue can be settled right away, but if they are incapacitated then there's a problem.

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**RIDGELY:** Yes, that's so. Her's was a unique thing. But with a death in the House, a Governor can call an election within thirty days and for the Senate he can name some one as soon as he wants to.

**RITCHIE:** Senator Karl Mundt, I know, had a stroke and stayed in the Senate for about a year after that.

**RIDGELY:** Yes, it's a very difficult thing, and I think that the House was certainly very fair in the case of Gladys Spellman and waited to make sure that there was no possibility that she could ever recover.

**RITCHIE:** I've never heard of the Senate doing anything like that. Can they declare a seat vacant if the member is still living?

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes. The Senate can expel a member.

**RITCHIE:** But is that the same thing as expelling a member? You wouldn't say that Gladys Spellman was expelled from the House.

**RIDGELY:** Oh, declare a seat vacant you mean? I guess expelling and declaring a seat vacant--circumstances might dictate the use of one of those terms or the other.

**RITCHIE:** But usually, in cases where senators become seriously ill, they are not replaced.

**RIDGELY:** That's right.

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**RITCHIE:** Carter Glass from 1941 to 1944 never showed up in the Senate at all. He collected his salary but he was in his eighties and in very poor health. Mundt, and Clair Engle, I remember, were incapacitated.

**RIDGELY:** Well, Clair Engle's illness was not nearly as long lived as Mundt's was. Mundt's ran on in my recollection a couple of years at least. I guess you'd call it a matter of senatorial courtesy. In a way they say: the states elected them and who are we to say they should go; particularly when they are living and incapacitated. I think today that you'd probably get a lot more notice of something like that than you did when Senator Mundt was ill. I think the news media would focus on it. I guess it would depend

on who it is, too, how much hammering they would do at it and get people riled up about it.

You know, one of the things is that here in Washington, I've often said, we're right at the pulse of our government. Everything in our paper is national news, and we're so up on it. One of the things that my daughters and my sons miss the most about not being in Washington is having the Washington newspapers to read, because where they are the things that are front page for us are back page there. They really do miss it for a while, but I guess they get used to it. We go up to Rhode Island to visit our second oldest daughter and her family and you sit there and listen to the television news and

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it's all local stuff. People don't appreciate--they really don't know what's happening. So you could go out into a state our west that is not heavily populated, maybe the Dakotas, Montana, Utah, Wyoming, and put a big blast in the papers about their senator being sick and he maybe ought to be taken out of office, the people would start wondering about it. Here it's understood more, where they wouldn't out there. I know my wife's relatives, they're cynics and have one-track minds. It's amazing.

**RITCHIE:** On what?

**RIDGELY:** They think everything in Washington is rotten to the core. I get in such a battle with them--verbal battle with them--that now it's gotten to the point that it ruins any visit we have, so I don't even discuss it any more. If the political situation is brought up I just ignore it, because there is no way--there is no way--that you can bring them around to a compromise attitude on something like this. All I can say is that it's a little bit of a part that makes up this grand old world of ours!

**RITCHIE:** I meant to ask you when we were talking about the trip to Cuba if you had a chance to see any of Cuba while you were there and what your impressions were on that trip.

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**RIDGELY:** What I saw, and what I was told, in talking to our people in the United States Interest Section and to some of the people who are Cuban natives who work for our United States Interest Section in non-sensitive jobs, they were helping out the United States Interest Section with the duties they had to take care of for us, you know, Castro talks about progress, but I came away saying that the



only thing that happened when Castro went in there was that the poor got poorer and the rich lost every blessed thing they ever owned. And that's just the way it is. The government owns the land, they own all the buildings, all the homes, all the businesses, and the souls of the people. For instance, all private homes were confiscated by the government. The only people who still own their homes now, are those people who were living in that home twenty years ago when Castro took over, but when that last person leaves that home who was there then, it automatically becomes the property of the government with no remuneration. They have a whole generation of men and women down there who have never seen a Babe Ruth or Hershey chocolate bar or anything comparable to it. They don ' t have such a thing. We have a grown woman in our control room there, somebody went in and got to talking with her about the cheese in the cans that you use for parties and decorating, she said, "No way." He took a cracker in to her with some of the cheese. She couldn't believe it, and she was a woman in her thirties and had never seen such a thing.

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They can't buy anything. One of the ladies who was helping out and was very good, she said women's lingerie is one of the most difficult things to buy down there. The rationing of things: you get eight ounces of meat per person per month! They get either three or four meters of yard goods per year, so they can make their own clothes. They have shops with clothing in them, but the average Cuban can not go in and buy them. They have a good medical system. Our delegation was accompanied by a doctor who was of Puerto Rican origin and spoke Spanish very well. He took time to go to a couple of the hospitals there, and agreed that they have a good system. There's nothing else good. The buildings are falling apart. It's a beautiful Spanish architecture, and I said the only reason those buildings are standing is because they're made of stone. Otherwise if they'd been brick or frame they would have come down, because in twenty years they've had no maintenance, and you can see it, readily.

**RITCHIE:** Were you able to get away from the hotel at all when you were at the conference?

**RIDGELY:** Yes, we went to a couple of places. They have, for the accompanying persons, a schedule for visiting different places. The conference center where the meetings were held was a good ways off and you ran through some of the communities there. We were right on the Gulf of Mexico waterfront, but I found out that Havana has only one park.

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The average wage there, median wage if I remember correctly is \$230 a month. I don't call that progress. When the people can't buy stuff, if they've got the money to buy it, you can't call that progress. The schools are very regimented. Everybody from the lowest grades right on up are in a school uniform, and there are different color uniforms to designate the level of school that they're in. Their formal education doesn't cost them anything, but not everybody can go--they're selected, the elite, if you want to call it that, the better students, the A students. It's depressing. It was depressing when we were in Czechoslovakia. I've often said about Czechoslovakia, you walk down the street and you could pass a hundred people and you'd never see one of them smile. I compare that to F Street here in Washington, where people are walking along speaking to each other, total strangers, smiling, chatting, joking, all of this. You don't see any of that in these countries.

**RITCHIE:** Were there any signs of Soviet presence in Cuba when you were there?

**RIDGELY:** No, except for the members of the Soviet delegation.

**RITCHIE:** Tell me, since so many of the members go back to these meetings frequently, do they build up relationships with members of other parliaments?

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**RIDGELY:** Oh, indeed. I know that Senator Stafford and Mr. Derwinski and Mr. McClory, and others, have built up a very good, and strong relationship with many of the other members of parliaments. Of course, Great Britain, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia, there are strong relations there, and the European countries the same way. And with some of the African countries too, and South America. They do that, yes, because they're working with them for a good number of years. These people too are long standing members of the IPU from their countries, just like some of ours are, who get interested in it and dedicated to its cause. So they do have some very close friends, yes.

**RITCHIE:** I meant to also ask you: how long have you been working with the IPU? Was it when you became Assistant Secretary of the Senate, or did you have any connections with them before.

**RIDGELY:** It was 1979, when I became Assistant Secretary.

**RITCHIE:** Is that a traditional function of the Assistant Secretary now?

**RIDGELY:** No, because when Darrell St. Claire became Assistant Secretary he brought it with him. It had been with the Foreign Relations Committee before that. Darrell was handling it when he was chief

clerk of the Foreign Relations Committee. When he moved up to the Assistant Secretary job the IPU came with him. Up through the

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95th Congress the Senate always handled the financial affairs and arrangements. It was with the 96th Congress that the exchanging back and forth between the House and Senate began. The 96th Congress was the first time that the House had had it. It came out of Foreign Relations when Darrell was Assistant Secretary, and that was during Frank Valeo's tenure as Secretary.

**RITCHIE:** So a function which transferred with an individual has now in effect become institutionalized.

**RIDGELY:** By law too. Other things happened when they wrote that law to change things, because the executive secretary of the United States group could be anyone. As a matter of fact there was a Doctor [Jeffery] Zinn from the Library of Congress who was the executive secretary. Now the law says that it must be an officer or employee of the House of Representatives or the Senate, so it cannot be anyone outside of the institution.

**RITCHIE:** It sounds like it has become one of the more interesting functions of the Assistant Secretary.

**RIDGELY:** Yes, but I don't know what the future will hold. Right now when I'm finished this year, Senator Stafford will no longer be chairman, and my involvement in this, since I retired as Assistant Secretary, will be over. He asked me if I would consider working as a consultant to help him out with the IPU trips remaining

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during the 97th Congress, so that's going to wind me down in September, once we get back and I get all the foreign expenditure and travel reports done and I turn it over to the House side. Then I'll be finished. Then during the 99th Congress, when it swings back to the Senate, I really don't know what the situation will be. I do know the Secretary is a member of the Association, and I am a member on behalf of the Senate, and because I am involved in helping Senator Stafford and being the financial officer, he has kept me in as a member of the Association because I'm going to be there.

My successor [as Assistant Secretary], Marilyn Courtot, will become involved in it as a member of the Association when I am no longer involved with the United States group. For instance, she can get

involved in this thing because if Bill Hildenbrand [Secretary of the Senate] is not able to go and he says "Marilyn, will you go?" he can write to the Association and name her as his substitute, so she can sit and participate just as though she were a member, and she can get acclimated, if she gets a chance to go on one of the trips between now and the end of the year.

**RITCHIE:** Well, this is great, because what we're trying to do here is to record the collected memory of the Senate, and the way this function has changed over the years, from the Foreign Relations Committee to the Secretary's office, and your taking it over and passing it on to Marilyn Courtot, is something we do want to

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record. Often Senate functions develop because of some particular person and then change because of individual relationships between one senator and one staff member, but it's very hard to look back and find anything written about why the change took place, why some individual has the functions that he has.

**RIDGELY:** That's true. As I say, the United States group has always been authorized by law to participate, but the structure of it was not spelled out. The chairman of our Foreign Relations Committee normally was the president of the American delegation, because I know that Senator [John] Sparkman was, up until the law changed where the United States group would elect its president and two vice presidents and a secretary and a treasurer, its executive committee. When the House is handling its affairs the president would be a House member, when the Senate is doing it the president is a Senate member. Also on the administrative side, they've created in addition to the executive secretary an administrative secretary. So when the Senate is running things the executive secretary is the Secretary of the Senate, the administrative secretary is the Clerk of the House. Then it just switches when it goes back to the House.

So both sides have their administrative officer involved in it, which wasn't before when it was strictly a one man show. Right now we work together. Everything I get or know about, I give notice of it to the House people, a copy of it or whatever, so that they'll

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know what's going on. They do the same thing when they're handling it. A lot of times we both get the same thing, and we just touch bases and see if each has gotten it. But we keep each apprized of what's

going on because it's equally important to them as it is to us. It works out pretty well now.

I think the big difference between the IPU delegation and other delegations is that the course of the IPU is well established. The goals are things that they are all genuinely interested in. A lot of our delegations are formed for special reasons, you have investigatory committees, you have committees that are authorized to travel to support what they are doing as far as legislation is concerned. They have to travel. With the IPU it is busy all day long. Even when we have to stop for refueling, like going or coming home, if we have a long trip, the members make arrangements to get a briefing from somebody in a foreign government or our own government on something they are interested in.

For instance, when we went to Manila we couldn't fly nonstop from Washington, so we stopped in Honolulu, and what we arranged there were two briefings by CINQPAC. One was a non-classified briefing, the other was a classified briefing which the members only attended. We were there a whole day, and it took us the whole day. So they weren't joy riding or anything of that sort. And this is done all the time. When we went to Norway we stopped in Iceland. We got

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a briefing by the government there, by our embassy there, and by the NATO command there. This group takes advantage of those situations.

**RITCHIE:** You don't get a sense of that from the newspaper accounts.

**RIDGELY:** As far as the Interparliamentary Union is concerned--and this is felt by many, many of its delegates, not just in the United States groups but in other groups too--although it is the oldest international organization in the world, and is non-political, dealing with these things on the level that it does, and although the United States is one of the earliest members, having participated since 1889, even in today's mode of communications it gets less coverage or write ups than any of them do, as far as I know.

**RITCHIE:** Why would you say?

**RIDGELY:** I don't know. I really don't know. I know it got a write up back when Art Kuhl was Assistant Secretary of the Senate, in either '77 or '78 when they had a meeting in Germany. A news reporter from the *Washington Post* was nosing around and asked a few pointed questions and Art answered them and gave very pointed answers on them. He made big headlines. They ran about a five article series on this thing. We got pretty good coverage out of Cuba, because there were many

newspaper people down there. A very interested reporter was from down in the area in which Representative

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Claude Pepper--former Senator Pepper- -represents in Florida, because he has a large Cuban constituency. Senator Pepper is a big IPU member but he couldn't make this trip. It wasn't deliberate or anything, to my understanding, but he just hadn't planned on going on this trip to begin with. Of course, they were interested in whether or not he, who represents a Cuban constituency, was going to go down there to Cuba. So we got coverage out of that.

I don't know what kind of reporting you would call that, that would create such a situation. I think one of the things that helped it get coverage on this trip was that the President had come out and really was coming down hard nails on Cuba and everything. But by and large the members put items in the *Congressional Record* and that's probably the most coverage that it gets. Newspaper wise, I guess you have plenty of people from the press in the areas where the meetings are held, but by and large we don't get much here.

**RITCHIE:** That's interesting, especially when you consider that Washington has such a negative image to people outside of the city, and foreign travel by Congress is often belittled by the press, and yet in the case of the IPU with its serious and unglamorous work, the contributions of the organization are ignored, and that perhaps reinforces the negative image.

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**RIDGELY:** I guess in a way you would call the IPU the working horse and not the show horse. But they've accomplished things and they have an excellent history of things they have debated and come to resolutions on that have come to pass. They have a good track record. I don't know how much coverage the IPU would get even say in the European papers. I would suppose it would depend on who is in the delegation from the particular countries that creates some attention. I guess that's the way it will be.

End of Interview #1

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## The Senate Disbursing Office

### Interview #2

Monday, February 22, 1982

**RITCHIE:** I understand that the Ridgely family has been in Maryland for quite some time. Have you looked back into the history of your family?

**RIDGELY:** Not as much as I should, but it's my understanding that the Ridgely family were part of the original settlers in Maryland. What I have been told, and know about right now, is that one brother came over in 1634 and then two other brothers came over in 1636. One stayed in southern Maryland, one went to the Eastern Shore, and the other went up to the Howard County-Towson area. So the family does date back to the original settlers of Maryland, although I don't believe they were of the gentry class. Some of them made their mark, I think, in the history of Maryland. From my understanding, the one that stayed in southern Maryland and the one that went to the Eastern Shore were farmers; from the brother that went up to the north Baltimore area came the professional and industrial part of the family. That part of the family, I understand, became quite wealthy.

It was also from that branch of the family, and I haven't done any research on this, that Governor Ridgely of Maryland came. As a

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matter of fact, the wife of Governor Ridgely, Eliza Ridgely, is portrayed in a painting in the National Gallery of Art. That was done by Sully, and Jim Ketchum [Senate Curator] told me that it's considered to be one of the finest paintings of a woman of that period. It shows her standing in a long dress; it's a very pretty picture.

When my mother died, I got a letter from the grandson of Dr. Samuel Mudd. He had been working for so many years to clear his grandfather's name in connection with the Lincoln assassination. He wrote me a letter and asked me about the Ridgely family because there was a Ridgely in Baltimore who was an attorney and who had represented his grandfather. He was inquiring of the Ridgely clan. So there is a long history of the family in Maryland.

I was born in Upper Marlboro, in Prince George's County, and lived there until I went into the military service in World War II.

**RITCHIE:** Isn't there a Ridgely Mansion in Towson?

**RIDGELY:** Yes. The Hampton House. It's on the National Historical Register. It's a very beautiful place and every once in a while you see an article about it. It's considered to be one of the finer old Maryland homes. I have an article from the *Washington Post*

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and *Maryland Magazine* that goes into it considerably.\* The Ridgely who started that apparently was considerably wealthy because he wound up, as the article says, with something like 10,000 acres in that area. That part of the family appears to have done quite well.

**RITCHIE:** You grew up in Upper Marlboro. Did you go to school there?

**RIDGELY:** Yes. I went to St. Mary's Catholic School down there--eight grades of elementary school and two grades of high school. Then I finished my high school at St. Anthony's in Northeast Washington, in the Brookland area near Catholic University.

**RITCHIE:** That's where I live.

**RIDGELY:** Is that right? Then I left high school and went to work, like most people did then. Back then, college was not the thing that it is today. Everybody was willing to get out and get themselves a job, and that's what I did.

**RITCHIE:** You worked for the Internal Revenue Service. How did you happen to get a job there?

\*see appendix

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**RIDGELY:** Well, while I was working somewhere else, Mr. Hampton Magruder (which is another old Maryland family), who was an attorney and was the Collector of Internal Revenue at the time in Baltimore, had some openings up there and so, I suppose, he figured he'd give some of the local people jobs. One day he called my home and asked me to come by and see him, and so I went down to see him. He asked me if I'd like a job with Internal Revenue in Baltimore. I said, "Fine, great." So I went to



work there.

**RITCHIE:** What had you been doing up to then?

**RIDGELY:** Oh, I had worked in a filling station, worked in a restaurant, I worked for a beer distributor, and I worked for a theater, doing different jobs. Some of them I worked two at a time. When I got out of school in June of 1939 I worked at these odd jobs until January 1941, when I went to work for Internal Revenue, so it was only about a year and a half that I worked at these other jobs.

**RITCHIE:** I guess that the IRS was expanding at that point because they were trying to raise additional revenue for the military.

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**RIDGELY:** That could very well be. We had started the draft in 1940, wasn't it? So the military was expanding. There were additional people being put on and there was some activity, but the people who had been there would have noticed it more than I would know about it.

**RITCHIE:** Wasn't it in 1942 that they instituted the first withholding tax?

**RIDGELY:** Nineteen forty-three. See, I worked there for one year before I enlisted in the military service, and then went back there after the war, after I got discharged. Then I went into night accounting school, while I was working in Internal Revenue, and I completed that education, and at that point in time I evaluated my situation in Internal Revenue and decided that there had to be greener pastures elsewhere; because what I had to wait for as a young man was for somebody to retire or to die. I was in the cashier's division and I had seniority over everybody because my military service gave me that much edge over some of the other people who had come to work during the war. But I guess I was not willing to wait as long as it may have taken.

**RITCHIE:** What were your functions with the IRS?

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**RIDGELY:** When I first went to work there I was a clerk checking out delinquencies. I did that for

that one year. Then when I came back I was put into the cashier's division. When I left I was handling all of the revenue stamps, those little strip stamps that go over liquor bottles, and everything that the distilleries needed as far as Internal Revenue stamps are concerned; all of the stamps that doctors needed for prescribing medications that contained opium and other drugs; all of the beer and wine stamps that establishments needed; and at that time there was an Internal Revenue tax on gaming devices, pinball machines, one armed bandits and all of that. I was in charge of that section and handled all of that. It kept us very busy, because we had several distilleries in Baltimore and they all were working strong.

**RITCHIE:** Wasn't Maryland famous for slot machines and pinball machines back then?

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes. Slot machines were a big thing, particularly in the resort areas. As a matter of fact, before the war they not only had the one armed bandits, but they had the regular pinball machines that also paid off in cash. It cut quite a bit out when they outlawed it.

**RITCHIE:** In 1942 you enlisted in the Army Air Corps. Was there any problem about being drafted at that point?

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**RIDGELY:** I wasn't old enough to register for the draft at the time. I went ahead and enlisted. The funny thing is, as it happened, I've never registered with a draft board, I've never had a draft number. When I got my discharge I went into the inactive reserve, and I was told that as long as I was in the reserve I didn't have to do anything about the draft. The war was over and everything was of course being tuned down.

**RITCHIE:** What led you to join the Army Air Corps as a branch of the service?

**RIDGELY:** I really don't know. I can't recall that there was any particular thing. The only military background I had was that my Dad was in World War I, and he was in the Army. That was not a factor and I frankly don't know why I went in the Air Corps, but that's where I wound up.

**RITCHIE:** What duties did they assign you to?

**RIDGELY:** I went to aerial radio school at Scott Field, Illinois aerial radio operators school; and then went down to Harlingen, Texas to aerial gunnery school, and was eventually assigned to flying on B-25s. I wound up in Alaska, in the Aleutian Islands. That's where I spent my duty outside the

Continental United States.

**RITCHIE:** So you flew as a radio operator?

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**RIDGELY:** Radio operator and gunner, yes. The way things happened up in Alaska, the Japanese came in there and they took some of the Aleutian Islands. They came up as far as Dutch Harbor and did some damage, but they did not land on the mainland of Alaska, they stayed on the islands. Of course, the effort up there was to drive them out of the islands. We had other squadrons, we had the fighters and B-26 medium bombers up there. When we went up there we replaced the B-26 medium bombers with the B-25s. It was just a matter of keeping at them until they were out of there.

**RITCHIE:** How do you look back on your experiences in the war?

**RIDGELY:** A real education, it really was. I mean, Upper Marlboro at the time I was a boy was a small town, a country town really. Washington, of course, was not developed to the tune it is today. And going into the Air Corps, the almost four years that I spent in there, the people that I met from different parts of the country, young fellows from all walks of life--it was a great education and a great experience. Although it was not the best conditions, it was nonetheless a great experience.

**RITCHIE:** So you served until 1945 and left the service as a staff sergeant and you went back to the IRS, and at that same period you were taking night classes.

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**RIDGELY:** Yes, let's see, I went back to work I think within thirty days after my discharge. I went back and told them I was out and ready to go back to work. I talked to the personnel director and he asked me what I wanted to do. I told him I would like to get in the Field Division, because I knew that the Field Division was a little better paying area, there was more activity in it, and you could round yourself out a little better out there in field work. He said, "Well, do you have any accounting?" I said, "No, I only have a high school education." He said, "Well, you need accounting to get in the field." So he suggested I take the Internal Revenue correspondence accounting course. I said fine. I applied for that and by the time I got the first three lessons, I took them home and started to work on them, and my

wife said to me: "Bill, you know, if you really want an education, why don't you consider going to night school." That was very interesting, she bringing that up. I said fine.

So I looked into it and signed up for night school under the GI Bill and spent almost four years in night school in accounting, and graduated. Then I looked at my situation in Internal Revenue and started sending out applications and answering ads and just looking for a better job. I went so far as to answer an ad of the Continental Oil Company for a job as assistant controller down in South America. It would have been a two-year stay. My wife and I sat down and we figured out: well, OK, if I get that job, I'll go to South

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America for two years and she'll take the baby and go out to her parents' home in Wyoming. I figured, Continental Oil, big outfit, go down there for two years, come back here and maybe have a good in-road with the company. But of course that never transpired. I really answered many ads, both in Baltimore, where we were living at the time, and different parts of the country.

Then one day I got a telephone call. Somebody said there was a vacancy in the Disbursing Office over here in Washington. They said they wanted the application in long hand; they didn't want it typed, they wanted it in long hand. So I sat down and wrote a letter of introduction and background to Oco Thompson, who was the Financial Clerk at the time. Then later on I got a call, they wanted me to come over for an interview, which I did. I got the job, and that's where it started. I started to work here in the Senate, June 1, 1949. Then I spent twenty-eight years in the Disbursing Office before I left there.

**RITCHIE:** I guess they wanted it in long hand so they could check your penmanship.

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes, that was definitely it, because when I came to work there, all of the checks were written in long hand, all of the ledgers were maintained in long hand, all of the pay records-everything. And of course I had taken penmanship when I was in school and I developed pretty nice handwriting. So that's the job I

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got when I got in there. I was writing all the checks, keeping all the ledgers in long hand, pen and ink.

**RITCHIE:** What was the Disbursing Office like when you first got there? I imagine it must have been different in those days than it is today, a smaller operation.

**RIDGELY:** Yes, it was because when I went to work there were ten people working in the Disbursing Office, ten people including the Financial Clerk, Assistant Financial Clerk, and Chief Bookkeeper. Back in those days it was a time when the Senate did not meet year round as they are doing now. They worked short office hours, because people did leave Washington more so than they do now; the activity was not nearly as great. When they put on office hours, 10 to 3, that's the hours you worked. It was far less active than it is now, but I think too, you have to remember that the only payroll deduction you had then was income tax that was mandatory. Coming under retirement was optional then as it is now, but not too many people signed up for it. You didn't have much payroll work except keeping track of the monthly payments.

**RITCHIE:** The Disbursing Office was located across from the old Senate chamber, wasn't it, in that room they just recently left?

**RIDGELY:** Yes. They located there in 1935.

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**RITCHIE:** It looked like a little bank in there--it had the counter that went across the front. They did have some banking services, didn't they?

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes.

**RITCHIE:** Travelers checks and those sorts of things?

**RIDGELY:** Well, not when I went to work there they didn't have travelers checks. The only thing they had there at the time that I went there was cashing checks for senators. It was practically limited to members of the Senate only then. It began to grow as the Senate grew and the need for more services grew. It was while Bob Brenkworth was Financial Clerk that we put in travelers checks--worked out a way to save people money on travelers checks and accommodate them. The accommodation was the biggest thing, rather than worrying about the charge that they had to pay on them, but as it worked out it did save the people money who were working in the Senate.

**RITCHIE:** In those days, also, salaries were paid in cash.

**RIDGELY:** Yes.

**RITCHIE:** Was that twice a month or once a month?

**RIDGELY:** Twice a month.

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**RITCHIE:** So would everybody in the Senate staff then come in and line up?

**RIDGELY:** Everybody, yes.

**RITCHIE:** On the same day? Or did they have it staggered?

**RIDGELY:** No. The payday when I first went to work was the 15th and the last working day of the month. Most of the people came in on that day, or they could come in any day after that and pick up their money. They did pay a few people by check, but that was once a month, and so we had maybe--oh, I bet if we had twenty-five on that list it was a big list for checks. But by and large the rest of them got paid by cash twice a month.

**RITCHIE:** They would just come and line up?

**RIDGELY:** Come and line up, identify themselves. We had two people at the counter: one who took the envelopes out of the drawer and the other one who handled the receipt that had to be signed by each person and checked the names and signatures on them. Those of us who were at the counter, I dare say we would know just about everybody. We'd recognize them by name, by face, and office, we'd know them. We could move people through there. As a matter of fact, I timed it one day and we moved five hundred and fifty people through there in one hour. So it did move the line along pretty well.

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**RITCHIE:** You know, a number of people I've talked to, the one thing they always remember is the fact that they could walk into the Disbursing Office and people would have their envelope ready for them when they came in.

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes. I used to pull a trick on some of the people that worked there. It would just happen every once in a while. The line would be there, and you're looking down the line pulling envelopes so that you didn't have to wait for people to come up to the counter and then you pull it. I'd maybe have ten or twelve envelopes laying on the counter. Nobody could see them because it was a two-tiered counter. I'd have them there and just slide them over to my associate, who was getting the signatures. But every once in a while you'd have an opportunity--you'd look down the line and you'd see somebody you recognized and they're chatting with somebody you've never seen before. So you'd look in that group, and the envelopes were arranged in the pay drawer by offices, and you'd see only two envelopes in there, and you'd take a chance and pull both of those: one of them the person you knew, the other the other one.

I remember one time a young lady got up to the counter and the person in front of her I knew, and I pulled both envelopes. She gave me her name and I said, "Yes, I know, I have your envelope right here." And she looked at me so strangely and said, "How did you know?" I said, "Well, I really don't want to tell you my trade

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secret." You could do that just every once in a while, you couldn't do it all the time. But we had a lot of fun paying people off, it was a lot of fun knowing that one of the things they liked more than anything was the fact that you recognized them when they came in.

**RITCHIE:** Well, the Senate staff was smaller at that point.

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes.

**RITCHIE:** And there was more of a sense of community, I gather.

**RIDGELY:** Yes, there was. Looking back to 1949, I'm sure that there were less than 2,000 people working here in the Senate at that time. I really don't know the count on it, but if I were to really give a guess I would talk maybe in terms of 1,600. That would include the committees and the senator's offices, the same as it is now. Where now it is running probably 6,500 to 7,000 people, about tripled I would guess, maybe better.

**RITCHIE:** Did the senators have to line up to get their pay?

**RIDGELY:** Oh, no.

**RITCHIE:** Did some one from their offices come down and pick it up?

**RIDGELY:** No, for the senators we either mailed their check to a bank in their home state, or we delivered to a Washington bank, or it

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was hand delivered to their office. I think we handled that in the same way most people did for the senators. With the hundred senators you can do almost any thing for that number, but you can't do it for the greater number. Knowing the senators, that they're busy, we can accommodate them a little bit differently than you can accommodate the entire Senate payroll. So that's how we would handle it.

**RITCHIE:** What was it like to come to work for the Senate in 1949? It must have been quite a change for you, coming in from Baltimore.

**RIDGELY:** Well, I remember one of the women over in Internal Revenue, when I said that I was leaving and I was going to work in the Senate, she said, "Oh!" and then made some remark as to "hey, what a place to go!" But my own recollection is that I was a little bewildered when I first came to work here, to go to work in the Capitol. But I will say this: there has never been a day in my life that I have ever gotten up and said I wished I didn't have to go to work today. I've always lived in Prince George's County--not because I was born there but it was because I was able to find a place to live out there--but always coming in from the east I always marveled at that beautiful building every time I came in here. I even do it now, for that matter. It's been very rewarding for me, everything, all the work that has had to be done, and the people that I've met and known. I think it became nicer as my time with the Senate grew.

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**RITCHIE:** It's nice to be able to look back over a career and feel that.

**RIDGELY:** Yes, there have been some wonderful people here, and some people of renown that you get to know and become associated with.

**RITCHIE:** Well, starting at the beginning, you said you worked for Oco Thompson. How was he to



work for?

**RIDGELY:** Oco, he was, well let me put it this way: some time after I had been there I raised a question about how come something wasn't done. I guess I was a young whipper snapper, you know, and I said something to someone about it. And they told me very politely that Oco Thompson believed in the old saying: "If it works, don't fix it." But that's the way it was, he was not open to any suggestions. It was a low keyed operations to begin with. The Disbursing Office was non-political and non-patronage. It had an autonomy of its own, you see, because many years ago they took it out of the realm of patronage. The Financial Clerk was privileged in determining who was to go to work there, and he made the recommendation to the Secretary of the Senate who appointed the employees. He had control over the people who worked there; he didn't hire anybody on account of politics.

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It was a low keyed shop, and Oco kept it that way. He sat in the back and did what he had to do as chief of the office, and so things went along. Really there was not very much detail that caused problems. It was a very simple type of operation. The difference in what was being done there as far as the accounting for the money was concerned, you had to get your money by appropriation, you got that, and you kept your records. Except that then, of course, with the way the Treasury was working at the time, we got bank statements just like you and I get them from our banks now. I had to reconcile the statements with Treasury just as I did with any bank account. Then with the evolution of a better accounting system, all of that went by the wayside as being unnecessary and unneeded. Oco oversaw everything. He took care of the senators when they came in with their problems or needs. His brother George was the Assistant Financial Clerk, and Joe Ellis was the Chief Bookkeeper. Those were the three top positions, and they were out front--in the front office, the one you said looked like a bank. They took care of cashing checks for the members, new appointments, and other papers that came in and were processed back through the office.

**RITCHIE:** I think of the Senate as a place that really honors its traditions. They still have the spittoons and snuffboxes. Basically, would you say that the Disbursing Office is an old-fashioned operation that continued on doing things because they'd been done that way for years--at least when you first came there in 1949?

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**RIDGELY:** Yes, and in accordance with the standards of the government at that time too. You know, I guess the government in a way really hadn't started its modernization yet, even though there was an Accounting Act of 1921 that set the standards for everybody. That first year that I came to work in the Senate, the total appropriation for the Senate was only around ten million dollars. Now it's close to three hundred million dollars. There's a lot that has caused that, of course, not only more people, higher salaries, more expenses otherwise. The Senate appropriation is, I'm going to say, seventy-five to eighty percent salary money, so you can see that there wasn't a lot of accounting. Vouchers for other payments were very low and processing and getting them paid wasn't difficult. I think of 1949-1950 and compare it to the year I left there, which was 1977. When I left there we were processing anywhere from 25,000 to 30,000 vouchers a year, compared to maybe a couple hundred back then a month.

**RITCHIE:** Vouchers would be for travel expenses . . .

**RIDGELY:** Travel, payment of other expenses, committee expenses, Sergeant-at-Arms, Secretary and these other functions, newspaper subscriptions, magazines, reporting services, and all other things.

**RITCHIE:** Did you have a series of rules and regulations as to what was legitimate for committee expenses?

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**RIDGELY:** Our Committee on Rules and Administration always set the ground rules for expenses. That is because there is a law on the books that says that no payments may be paid from the Contingent Fund of the Senate without the sanction of the Committee on Rules and Administration. So that means before any payments can be made they have to be approved by the Rules Committee. They are the ones who set the rules. Take travel expenses, for instance, we had no guidelines for anybody to hand out or anyone else to say "now these are the travel regulations for the Senate." Back when Bob Brenkworth was Financial Clerk, he talked to Rules Committee and asked about doing such a thing; so three of us from the Disbursing Office, got a hold of the travel regulations from downtown and we used that as a guideline to write the Senate's travel regulations.

**RITCHIE:** By downtown you mean the Executive Branch?

**RIDGELY:** The Executive Branch, yes, because they did have something set down. So we used that and we adjusted it for the purposes of the Senate. Then it was presented to the Rules Committee and they approved it, and then we printed up little booklets that we could give to people so that they would

know what they could or couldn't get reimbursed for.

**RITCHIE:** That must have become more important as committees began to send out investigators.

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**RIDGELY:** Yes, it did. That's really the thing, because our voucher work, processing travel vouchers and the questions and the problems we were having in connection with this was growing. A lot of people were coming in from outside of government, and some of them, there was no question about it, were used to working for firms who gave them a "blank check" for their travel expenses. They'd get a little bit unhappy about the fact that the Senate was so restrictive in what they could get reimbursed for. We ran into problems like that and it finally came to where we thought maybe it might be well to have some guidelines, have something documented for people to follow. Then if there are exceptions the Rules Committee could handle it, and they did take care of any exceptional things that would come along. It's all in the evolution of the Senate, the demands on the Senate and the Congress going from a part year to a full year institution.

**RITCHIE:** You mentioned the Contingency Fund. Could you define what that is?

**RIDGELY:** Well, the Contingent Fund of the Senate contains, or did at one time, about ten appropriations. I can name a few of them, it was for the Majority and Minority Policy Committees, it was for automobiles and maintenance, it was for folding documents, which was for hourly people over in the Service Department when they needed extra people, miscellaneous items which I used to refer to, and

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others did too, as our "housekeeping account," and that figure was composed of a number of items. But all of these things were under the control of the Rules Committee. The other appropriations we had were the salaries of senators and the expense allowance of the Vice President, salary of the Vice President, and we had salaries of officers and employees. Now these were not under the Contingent Fund, so Rules Committee had no authority over them. That was something that the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee would handle, because that composed the money for the positions for all the different offices and the allowance for the Senators' offices and for the committees. So the

Appropriations Committee kept control of that. But the Contingent Fund was nothing more than a place where certain appropriations would be placed to be under the control of the Rules Committee.

**RITCHIE:** In the sense of "contingent," does that mean that a certain amount of money is set aside and then it's distributed in the way that the Secretary of the Senate or the Financial Clerk sees fit? How do they draw from the Contingent Fund?

**RIDGELY:** The allocations really were already made in the Appropriations bill, except for one, which was miscellaneous items. This had money in it for different items which had allocated amounts. They were specified for the different offices, Secretary, Sergeant at Arms, or whatever. All of these were controlled from the records in

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the Disbursing Office. We kept individual accounts on each one of these appropriations. We kept memorandum accounts on a lot of the others, like under the miscellaneous items we had to maintain memorandum accounts. We had an appropriation of X number of dollars for this, but it may have been divided into ten or twelve different allocations, so we would have to monitor those individually. The Contingent Fund really began--I think at one time there was only one appropriation, that was for the "Contingent Expenses of the Senate." They would appropriate so many dollars for it, and they'd pay for all these things that were not taken care of otherwise. Then it came to pass where this amount apparently started growing to a point where they felt they wanted to break it down. So they had a heading, "Contingent Expenses of the Senate," and then the subheadings, the line items, and that's what we have today.

**RITCHIE:** So in effect, the appropriation is a general appropriation rather than for specific items.

**RIDGELY:** Yes, although budgets have to be submitted for each one of these.

**RITCHIE:** But it does give some discretion to the administrators.

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes, it does, and of necessity too.

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**RITCHIE:** Now take, for instance, when you first came the Kefauver Committee was investigating crime. They would have a specific legislative appropriation for that special investigation? Or would they be under a larger Contingent Fund?

**RIDGELY:** Well, under the Contingent Fund there was a line item for "Inquiries and Investigations." This money was appropriated and was for the use of Senate committees when they were authorized. You mentioned the Kefauver Committee, by Senate resolution that committee was created and it was authorized to expend a certain amount of money over a certain period of time. Usually these special committees or ad hoc committees were authorized for one year periods each time. They had to renew their authority and funds for the next year if they wanted it continued. Then it was from this appropriation of "Inquiries and Investigations" where this money was drawn from.

**RITCHIE:** Now the Kefauver Committee, for instance, had investigators all over the country. So they would send things in through the committee and then would the committee present you with all the bills?

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes. A committee that was as active as the Kefauver Committee at that time would have a clerk that was probably dedicated to doing nothing but preparing vouchers and checking out the travel expenses of people that came in, prepare the vouchers, the

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traveler had to sign them, the chairman had to sign them, and they'd come to us for audit and over to the Rules Committee for approval.

**RITCHIE:** What would happen if a committee like that exceeded their allotment?

**RIDGELY:** They wouldn't.

**RITCHIE:** They wouldn't?

**RIDGELY:** No, because we couldn't pay them. We couldn't pay the vouchers. Our records were maintained on a checks issued basis, which means a balance at any time was based on the vouchers paid at that time, as vouchers came in. You see, the clerks of the committees were responsible for maintaining an account of their own. Their's was on an accrual basis. They would register their vouchers as they were sent to Disbursing. They knew whether or not they were running short before we did. But many times we would run into situations where the committee would get down too low and we'd have vouchers to pay and we couldn't. Then the committee would have to go in for a supplemental amount.

There was nothing else they could do there.

**RITCHIE:** Are printing costs, at the end when they print up their thirty volumes of hearings and so on, is that all part of their budget?

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**RIDGELY:** No, that goes to the GPO [Government Printing Office] and is charged to the appropriation for Congressional Printing and Binding. That's a separate appropriation that is neither under the Senate nor the House. It's in our Legislative bill, but not appropriated to either the Senate or the House.

**RITCHIE:** You mentioned Bob Brenkworth a couple of times. In 1951 he became the Chief Bookkeeper, and he eventually became the Financial Clerk, was that in 1953?

**RIDGELY:** He was Chief Bookkeeper and then he was Assistant Financial Clerk. Oco Thompson retired and George, his brother, was appointed as Financial Clerk. Then George had a heart attack and had to retire. Then Joe Ellis became Financial Clerk, Bob Brenkworth became Assistant Financial Clerk, and I became Chief Bookkeeper. I don't recall that date.

**RITCHIE:** It was 1953 when you became Chief Bookkeeper.

**RIDGELY:** Yes, but I don't remember when in 1953. It was about a year or so and then the tragedy of Joe Ellis' suicide occurred in August 1954. Bob Brenkworth became Financial Clerk then.

**RITCHIE:** Was Ellis having personal problems?

**RIDGELY:** I don't know.

**RITCHIE:** It was nothing connected with his job, I assume.

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**RIDGELY:** No, not that I know of It was just a tragedy,

really.

**RITCHIE:** What type of person was Ellis?

**RIDGELY:** Very easy going. Although I found out he had quite a temper. I was out at his house on election night in 1952. He had invited a group out. And boy when that election started tilting in favor of Eisenhower, when it was all over Joe was just livid. He was so unhappy it wasn't funny. Apparently he had quite a temper when it got generated. But as far as his tragedy is concerned, I don't know, I don't know.

**RITCHIE:** So you had a series of sudden shifts from Oco to George to Ellis to Brenkworth in a relatively short time. Did that change the operation of the Disbursing Office at all?

**RIDGELY:** Not right at first. You have to bear in mind that when Bob became Financial Clerk he'd only been there six years; and when I became Assistant Financial Clerk, I'd only been there five years. But we took over and we kept things moving right along, right at the same pace. We're talking about 1954. The war ended in 1945, you figure that was nine years and the activities started to build.

It was after Bob became Financial Clerk that a few changes started to be made. For instance, we had gotten away from writing the checks by hand--we obtained a book keeping machine that would

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write our checks. We got at least to a point of the records being posted mechanically. That was a change. All the changes that occurred really were done because the volume had started to move and things had to change. You had to pick up the slack, because the staff was limited, even though it grew some. The space was more limited than the staff, you might say. There was no way to move on either side. We were really land locked in. On one side of us was the Minority Leader and on the other side were senators offices. It took a number of years before there were some retirements from the Senate and we were able to pick up another room, and that eased the situation. But all of these things were because of the volume, staff started to grow, vouchers started to grow, the record keeping started to grow.

In September 1954, life insurance came into being. It wasn't long after that that health insurance come into being. Then came State withholding tax, which I was responsible for. I had made a commitment to our Appropriations Committee on that. This happened when we automated our system. So we went from withholding only Federal income tax and optional retirement to adding on the life insurance, which

was optional, to health insurance, which was optional too, and during the open season they could make changes, so you had a lot of activity in there. In open season there's nothing like getting five or six hundred changes in health insurance. All of these things created a lot of extra paper work.

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**RITCHIE:** Who would initiate changes like this? Like deciding that you could provide life and health insurance options?

**RIDGELY:** Well, the fact that when a law came into being on life insurance, whether it included the Senate was what dictated what we had to do. And in cases like this they would not exclude the Senate. We always say we're not under Civil Service, but we have the privilege of participating in all the programs other government employees do. But it's all on an optional basis. You can waive life insurance and you can decline health insurance, and you don't have to sign up for retirement. Of course, retirement has become a much bigger thing too. More people are signed up for retirement now on a percentage basis than when I first went to work here. If I said when I first came to work here that maybe half of the people were signed up for retirement I'd be generous in that. Right now it would run way above that.

**RITCHIE:** How did your responsibilities change when you became Chief Bookkeeper and Assistant Financial Clerk?

**RIDGELY:** As Chief Bookkeeper I was in charge of what we call the "back office." I had to see that all the accounting got done, all of the payroll work got done, and everything else was done. I was overseeing all of the staff that was back there at the time, which would have been maybe seven or eight people. We operated the payroll and took care of the retirement records. It was my job to

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see that everything back there got done. For instance, when I was Chief Bookkeeper, Joe Ellis was Financial Clerk, Bob Brenkworth was Assistant Financial Clerk. They were out front taking care of the business as it always had been done. So it was up to me to see that everything in the back got taken care of without worrying them. If there were any problems I would talk to them about it.



Then when I became Assistant Financial Clerk, of course, I moved out front with Bob Brenkworth and he took care of all the business out there, and our Chief Bookkeeper, Bob Malstrom, did the same in the back. And during all this time things were growing. The staff was getting larger, and of course every person that came on the payroll impacted the Disbursing Office. We did everything in that office that in the Executive Branch they may have three or four offices to handle, and we were giving the Senate that service. As things needed to be changed, Bob as Financial Clerk would make the determination. If we'd do it administratively, held touch bases with the Secretary of the Senate, who is by law the Disbursing Officer of the Senate--we always kept the Secretary apprized of everything that was going on in the Disbursing Office. If something had to be done and you had to get authority to do it, then of course the Secretary would be apprized of it, go to Appropriations Committee, and provision would be put into the Legislative bill to take care of it. Or sometimes you could go to Rules Committee and get authority to do it, if it affected the Contingent Fund. Rules Committee more

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than likely could take care of it, although sometimes you'd need legislative authority even in their case.

**RITCHIE:** How active was a Secretary say like Felton Johnson in watching over what was happening in the Disbursing Office?

**RIDGELY:** Well, he had a lot of confidence in Bob Brenkworth; and without being egotistical, myself also. He knew that Bob and I were working hand-in-hand to see that that office functioned as it always had, that the service didn't diminish in any way. He had a high regard for both of us, which both of us appreciated. So "Skeeter" really left it up to Bob. Bob kept him apprized of everything, he had no problems with that, and so he let Bob go ahead and run the shop. As I say, we were maintaining that autonomy, because even whether it was a Democratic Secretary or a Republican Secretary they maintained the shop that way. They kept that autonomy of it being non-patronage and non-political. But "Skeeter" was interested in everything that went along. He didn't interfere with it. He could have gone around there and directed traffic any time he wanted to, but he didn't do that. I suppose he felt that Bob was capable of doing the job and was doing the job, and that was it.

**RITCHIE:** Does the Disbursing Office prepare the Secretary's annual report on the expenses of the Senate?

**RIDGELY:** Yes.

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**RITCHIE:** I guess that is a major function of the office.

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes. It's less now than it was, because when I first went to work there, in order to get the copy down to the Printing Office (everything was set in hot lead at the time), all of these vouchers had to be trimmed and edited and sent down to the Printing Office. You got the galleys back and all of it had to be proof read. It was a horrendous job, it really was. But it's better now because it's semi-automated. It was when I was Financial Clerk that we automated the payroll and personnel system. We cranked the Secretary's Report into this.

My goal was to knock down that huge peak that was created at the end of every six-month period to get the Secretary's Report out, and spread it out over the whole six months. We developed it to the point that as vouchers were paid they were put into the computer just as they would be printed out; and at the end of six months they would print that out, go down to the Printing Office and it would be photographed and printed. The vouchers were paid today, entered tomorrow, proof read the following day. We'd get a print out every day of what was put in yesterday and proof read it and make corrections. So we didn't have to go back and do any proof reading from the Printing Office, because they took pictures of our original copy.

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One of the other things we cranked in was as we put vouchers with the dollar amounts that were paid, it added up those figures to a total, so when we came to the end of the six months it came off with a dollar figure that could be checked against our official records of the appropriations account. If they hit we were guaranteed that the figures were right. They were probably more accurate than they were when we were proof reading it. It developed very nicely and it did do just what it was supposed to. There's always extra work to be done on the Secretary's Report, but not to the extent that we used to have--because that report was running 800 to 900 pages every six months. And there's no way to get rid of it.

**RITCHIE:** It's been going since the nineteenth century.

**RIDGELY:** Since Year One, if I may use that phrase, because I've seen some of the old ones. It's very interesting to see the things that they purchased and paid for back in the early years.

**RITCHIE:** Is every expense of the Senate included in the Secretary's report?

**RIDGELY:** Every official expense, yes. It accounts for all of the money that the Senate receives and all that it spends, yes.

**RITCHIE:** Is the Secretary's report required by law?

**RIDGELY:** Yes.

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**RITCHIE:** And the Clerk of the House has a comparable report?

**RIDGELY:** Yes, they do their's differently. They do not include their payrolls because they make their payrolls available over-the-counter. They'll summarize it in the Clerk's report. But we I ve never had the space nor the manpower to be able to have the general public and the press be able to come in there and peruse different payrolls.

**RITCHIE:** Is the press ever interested in coming in to do that?

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes. They come in many times wanting to see the payrolls. They would say: "It's going to be in the Secretary's report isn't it?" I would say, "Yes." "Then why can't you show it to me?" I said, "Because the law says that this [the Secretary's report] is the way to make it known to you, rather than me give it to you."

**RITCHIE:** So they have to wait until it's published.

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes. And there's quite a clamor for it. I remember one senator came in one day and said something about the "Green Hate Book." I don't know whether he was referring to himself or some other member but he said that there were two girls on the Senate payroll that lived together but worked in different offices. As soon as that book came out, one of them looked and saw what the other one was getting paid and went back to her senator and asked for

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a raise, because apparently they were doing similar work. That's how it apparently got the nickname the "Green Hate Book." I don't know whether it's used any more like the story I just mentioned.

**RITCHIE:** A senator gets a lump sum for staff salaries, and can divvy it up among his staff, is that right?

**RIDGELY:** That's right, except he has some limitations on what he can pay and how many he can pay at the higher levels.

**RITCHIE:** But basically there is no set salary for any particular job description?

**RIDGELY:** No, because that's always been left to the individual member, I think recognizing that the members have to run their offices as if they were private businesses, according to their own needs. I've often said that you could have two senators from one state that could have offices in the same building in the same city on the same floor, across the hall from each other, and yet their constituent needs would be entirely different--and they could be of the same party. I think this is really the way it works. It's based on the population of the states, so the two senators from the same state get the same amount to operate their offices. Sometimes you will see where one maybe doesn't use all of his money and maybe the other one does. It all depends.

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**RITCHIE:** Now if they don't use all of their money, what happens?

**RIDGELY:** It goes back to the Treasury.

**RITCHIE:** A few senators make a big publicity thing out of turning back their check at the end of the year.

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes, they do.

**RITCHIE:** Senator William Scott of Virginia every year turned back a large percentage of his staff salaries.

**RIDGELY:** A lot of them put it in the *Record* and some would even get it in the newspapers.

**RITCHIE:** But stationery allotments they're allowed to keep what's left?

**RIDGELY:** Oh, no, not any more. That went by the board many years ago. As a matter of fact, that went out of the picture even before the consolidated office expense allowance came into being. You know commutation of the stationery allowance always got its due notice in the papers too, so it was stopped. A lot of the members wouldn't take it toward the end, they declined it. So eventually it was stopped entirely.

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**RITCHIE:** This raises the question of abuses of funds. It seems to me you would be in a funny position, even though you were a non-patronage office, you did work for the Senate. What did you do if you had a Senator's office that seemed to be abusing or improperly handling the financial accounts?

**RIDGELY:** Well, you say abusing . . . in their office allowance accounts they have certain categories of expenses which they may use this money for, right now, under the present set-up. They can spend any amount, not limited. It used to be they had six or seven individual allowances. There was long distance telephone, telegraph, stationery, air mail, special delivery stamps, home state office expense, rental of the home state office, and newspapers and subscriptions, that is seven. We used to have to maintain individual accounts on each one of these for a hundred members, to see that they didn't exceed these particular amounts. When the consolidated allowance came along, what they did by law was to take all of these seven allowances and put them into one lump sum.

There had been some complaints, members saying "Western Union has gotten so bad I don't use that any more, but I could use some extra money for telephone calls or stationery." So the Appropriations Committee considered a proposition of consolidating the allowances. They took the same dollars for the senators and put them together as a lump sum, and said "OK, you now have a lump sum

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allowance you may spend it for these seven categories in any way you see fit, but you may not exceed this total dollar figure." I think it was at that same time too, when they had the individual allowances, they had an allowance for travel--there were eight allowances, I forgot travel money. Each senator got a different amount, because it was based on the mileage to his home city and state. So when it first became a consolidated allowance, we had one hundred different allowances.

Then, I think it was through us in the Disbursing Office, it was after Bob Brenkworth left--as a matter of fact, it was when I was Financial Clerk that the consolidated allowance came into being. We had a hundred accounts, which meant that the two senators from each state had different amounts. The only time they'd have the same amount would be if by chance they came from the same city. So then I recommended to the Appropriations Committee to consider making this rather than a "Senatorial" allowance, to make it a State allowance. We developed a formula to change the office allowance from the one hundred individual allowances to fifty figures. Both senators from the state got the same amount. We developed a formula that made sure that nobody lost any money on it. The Appropriations Committee did this, and then they fixed up an item for their allocation of home state office space requirements, and so forth, and worked all that out.

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As I say, it's a matter of what was happening and all of the growth that was going on that these changes were coming about. It was helping the accounting end of it and the processing of all work, it simplified things. It's like when I was Financial Clerk, I made a recommendation to the Rules Committee. All of our committees and subcommittees had to prepare vouchers every month, big payroll vouchers, submit them to us, and we had to get them before the 15th of the month, because we were paying off on the 20th. We had to correct them, any changes, terminations, appointments, we had to add them on. All of these had to go to the Rules Committee and be approved before we could finally pay them. So I came up with the idea of working this on a basis of processing a six-month print out for Rules Committee to approve, and I worked out all of the procedures and presented it for approval. And boy, after it was approved I think I could have gotten a hug and kiss from all of the committee clerks because the monthly payroll really was a hair shirt, for them and for us too.

It was more work for us than it was for the committee clerks. They had to get the chairman's signature before they sent it over to us, and if it happened to be a time when the chairman was away, we'd have to get the copies and work with copies until they got the original, signed. So when we worked this out, it worked like a dream and

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was a big help to everyone. It saved the committee clerks a lot of work, but the fact is, it really saved the Disbursing Office more work than it did anybody else.

**RITCHIE:** Well, what would you do in a case where you had problems with a senator's office accounts? Would you take it to the senator's office, or to the Rules Committee? Who buffered for the Disbursing Office?

**RIDGELY:** Well, the Financial Clerk would take care of these matters. Usually we would have a contact in an office, with each senator's office or each committee. When we had a problem we'd talk to whoever was responsible and handle it that way. But it would be very difficult to say if it was an abuse. If he was buying stationery or stamps, or paying for telephone calls, all of these are authorized. But we have had vouchers come through for things that we would have to bounce. We'd just call up whoever was handling the vouchers, not only for a senator's office but for committees, and tell them we couldn't pay the expense. A question of course would follow: "Well, how can we pay for it?" "Well, there is nothing to permit it, and the only ones that can do it is the Rules Committee." So then they would have to go to Rules Committee. If Rules Committee wanted to make an exception, that was up to them. If it was Contingent Fund money they could do it.

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The Disbursing Office and Rules Committee always worked very closely together on this. Rules Committee would always look to the Financial Clerk for advice and counsel on this, and the practical aspect of whether or not they should do it. Would it create a precedent? Would it become a problem in the future? What would happen to it? They tried to analyze the real practical approach to making an exception to something. In many cases they did this, when the circumstances were legitimate.

For instance, registration fees for conventions: it seems to me, if I recall correctly, the first time that this came up was when someone put a registration fee on their voucher. They were authorized to attend a seminar. We bounced it. Appeal was made to Rules Committee, and Rules Committee at the time came up and said "OK, we will pay it, but the rule hereafter is that the traveler must request the person that invites him to either reduce or abate the fee since they were a Senate employee going there on official business." If the traveler could then substantiate that it could neither be reduced nor abated, then they would pay it. This, of course, is something that's a standard thing. It used to be you could attend these meetings, ect., for nothing in most cases, but now they have registration fees just about for everything. So that's an example of one thing that wasn't paid at one time, they made an exception, and it's become part of the routine.

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**RITCHIE:** So the two committees that the Disbursing Office would most directly deal with would be the Rules Committee and the Legislative Appropriations Subcommittee. One to appropriate the money and one to define how the money could be legitimately spent. Was there any kind of auditing process by either of those committees or by any other institution?

**RIDGELY:** The auditing of the vouchers before payment was done by Disbursing. They went to Rules Committee for approval. Once all of the accounting is done, all of these vouchers go to the General Accounting Office. While on the contingent fund items the law stipulates that once a voucher is approved by the Committee on Rules and Administration, it is binding and conclusive on all officers of the government- -which means that the General Accounting Office can look at it but can't do much about it. I've said that we could even pay for something illegally and GAO couldn't do much about it, except the moral and ethical approach to this. I know Bob and I worked with GAO particularly on travel.

One time GAO was checking the public transportation systems as to whether or not they were over charging government for travel on airlines and railroads. I know that the person that was assigned to the Senate from GAO came up to the office one day with some vouchers that had to do with rail and air transportation, and was asking Bob about them. Bob kind of coyly pointed to the vouchers and said "You

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see that signature on there, don't you?" He said, "Yes." Bob said, "You know what it means, don't you?" He said, "Yes." But Bob didn't blackjack him with the fact that Rules had approved it. We did check it out for him. We thought it was right to do that. We would audit those things with a fine tooth comb to begin with. If they give you a stub of an air flight or something with an amount on it, and it matches up on a voucher, there's no reason for us to question it. But GAO was looking a little beyond that point, which is fine and dandy. Bob just figured, well, sure we'll cooperate with and develop whatever background information we can, because if GAO is going to get some of these people for over charging, fine and dandy, But by and large they know that we handle and run a pretty tight audit on these.

It's even better now because the Rules Committee has an assistant chief clerk for auditing, and he has an assistant. We, the Disbursing Office, have an audit section of four or five people, editing vouchers, checking them out, and then they go to Rules Committee, and they are gone over also over there. Any



vouchers that the Disbursing Office has any question on, you may have four or five items on a travel voucher, with transportation, per diem, and other travel items that are legitimate, and you might have one maybe say "taxi fares" that might look a little high. We might just pin a little note on that and say, "cab fares a little high?", coordinating and communicating the audit process between Rules Committee and

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Disbursing. We maintained that working relationship and it did a good job. They get a double-barreled shot at this on the audit.

Disbursing, of course, is the only place that certain parts of the audit can be performed, that is: is the person on the payroll, in the office in which the expense voucher is being processed, and during the period of time in which they traveled or incurred the expense. Nobody else can check that. They then go on and check the rest of it: signatures, and all the other things; and it goes to Rules as a group, ready for approval by Rules Committee. They look all right to us, but those two people over in the Rules Committee now look them over extensively, particularly where there is special authorization by Rules Committee. They've always gotten a good audit here. I'm not going to say that something didn't get by, because with the volume that it eventually got to, what was moving through there in 1977 let's say, something may have slipped by. We've caught our own mistakes, though; several times we've caught items where we erred. People always are receptive to that too, even if it meant in some cases that somebody was underpaid, or in some cases overpaid.

**RITCHIE:** I know in our office, if there's the slightest mistake in any of our vouchers we get a telephone call from Disbursing right away: please correct what you've done. And I would assume that in most offices it's relatively routine and that it's to people's advantage and credibility not to abuse these privileges. But every once

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in a while you get flamboyant characters, and I wondered how the Disbursing Office dealt with them? I understand, for instance, that Joe McCarthy was famous for sending telegrams in huge numbers; and I've heard about Lyndon Johnson building his "Taj Mahal," his hide away office in the Capitol. How would the Disbursing Office deal with that sort of senator?

**RIDGELY:** Well, speaking of the telegrams of Joe McCarthy, back in that time they had a telegraph allowance which the Sergeant at Arms controlled. If he exceeded his allowance, what the Sergeant at Arms would do would be to return the charges to Western Union and tell them that the senator had exceeded his allowance and he's to be billed directly. At the same time, the senator got a memorandum from the Sergeant - at-Arms on this also. They did this on long distance telephone calls at the time too. Then there was direct billing, after a certain point, right to the senator. As far as Lyndon Johnson is concerned, talking about his private office, the expenses of refurbishing, renovating comes under the Architect of the Capitol. We would not have known anything about it.

**RITCHIE:** Under the Architect's contingent fund?

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**RIDGELY:** Yes. The only things that we paid for were carpeting and drapes and those kinds of things, but as far as the structural end of it, changing an office around, maybe redoing walls, that was the Architect's. The Sergeant-at-Arms had funds appropriated to take care of carpeting and drapes and so forth.

**RITCHIE:** Everyone I've talked to who worked here in the 150s always has stories about Lyndon Johnson, about how he was a great one for getting things done . . .

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes.

**RITCHIE:** And being very insistent upon things getting done. Did you deal at all with him when he was a senator?

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes. One thing I always said to myself, and I think Bob Brenkworth probably would have agreed with me: Any time Lyndon Johnson calls you up, never question him why, do it! Just get it done for him. He called up one time and he was in his car--he was a great one for calling up and saying "This is Lyndon Johnson." He wouldn't say "Senator Johnson." That kind of thing always caught you off guard, because your response is to swing right back with the first name. He called up this one day from the mobile telephone in his car. He said he wanted something and he'd like to have it by the time he got to the Capitol, and let me know how soon he would be there! It was some figures on his payroll which we could get without

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too much problem. I said, "It'll be there." But he was that kind of a fellow. He got a heck of a lot done. He apparently had enough IOUs in his hip pocket to take care of things.

**RITCHIE:** I understand that he could be as complementary and as nice as possible on one occasion and chew you out on the next.

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes. He was a long hour worker; he worked a long day. I remember people complaining about that. As a matter of fact, one fellow who worked on our Armed Services Committee went down to the White House when Johnson became President. After he left there he came up here and I was talking to him. He told me: "You just can't believe it, he [Johnson] was unbelievable as to the hours he would work. He would call you up anytime." He said, "I'm going to tell you something. I got sick and was hospitalized, and Johnson had a special telephone installed beside my bed while I was hospitalized!" He was known for that up here too. But he got things done.

**RITCHIE:** We talked a little about Bob Brenkworth. I never met him, but I've heard a lot about him from other people, and he sounds like he could be quite a character too.

**RIDGELY:** Bob was a good supervisor, if you want to put it that way. He ran a tight ship in the Disbursing Office. There was an understanding that he had, I certainly had it, that there were services that the Disbursing Office provided the Senate, and they were

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expected by the Senate. I think one of the nicest things that I could attach to the Disbursing Office, and I learned this not too long after I went to work there, was that the Disbursing Office had an enviable record of doing things for people, almost to the point that if the people couldn't find something out anywhere else they'd come to the Disbursing Office and knew that they would get an answer, and if they got an answer it was going to be correct. If the Disbursing Office didn't know the answer they'd find somebody who could give you the answer and they wouldn't be battered from pillar to post locating somebody knowledgeable. We had a reputation for that.

People would come in there and talk to the Financial Clerk about things that were not related to Disbursing Office matters. I know when I was Financial Clerk they did this. One day we had a request in the Disbursing Office and I handed it to one of the people in the office to do and they asked me, "Why are we doing this?" I said, "Because they can't get it anywhere else; they don't know where else

to get it. We have the information; we can give it to them without giving away any trade secrets." I said, "As far as I'm concerned, this is part of our bread and butter here in the Disbursing Office, helping people when they can't get help anywhere else." It did have that reputation, but, going back to Bob, he ran a tight ship and he expected everything to be done. He was kind of rough on some people,

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but Bob had a lot of savvy. He was practical, and he knew what the Senate needed, wanted, and he tried to meet it. He did the job very well. He was a good Financial Clerk.

**RITCHIE:** Now the Financial Clerk reports directly to the Secretary of the Senate, but it is important for him to have contacts or allies among the senators, say the chairman of the Appropriations Committee?

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes. Our dealings in the Disbursing Office, more so when Bob was Financial Clerk, and when I was Financial Clerk, the contacts with senators was far greater than it is now, I think. There is always contact between senators and the Financial Clerk. A senator will call up and like anybody else when he wants to talk to someone he wants to talk to the head man in the office. They come by to see him and talk about things. I know it happened to me any number of times. They'd come in and talk about the financial matters of their office and maybe even some personal matters. We go back to the business of the Disbursing Office being non-political, non-patronage, and you're dealing with senators who are in a political arena. You have to know when they ask a question if something can be done or be ready to say no to them. It's not the easiest thing to do, but you do have to say that. Tell them: "I can't do it."

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**RITCHIE:** It seems to me that when it comes to money in the Senate the chairman of the Appropriations Committee is sort of the end of the line. Is it important to have the confidence of the chairman of the committee?

**RIDGELY:** Of the Legislative Subcommittee particularly, and the committee chairmen, yes. I know that we had a good relationship when Senator [Carl] Hayden was chairman of the Appropriations Committee, a good working relationship with him and other members of the Legislative Subcommittee.

Not only the chairmen, but also the ranking minority members. If you had something that you wanted to get done, you really looked for their blessing also, not only of the Legislative Subcommittee, but also the chairman and ranking minority members of the committee, that they were well versed, because they're the leaders of the committee. I used to keep a rapport with the chairman and the ranking minority member on things.

**RITCHIE:** I've heard that Brenkworth had a good relationship with Allen Ellender . . .

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes.

**RITCHIE:** As Hayden got quite old there towards the end. And what about Hayden's chief clerks, Smith and Scott?

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**RIDGELY:** Everard Smith was chief clerk of Appropriations when I first came to work, and he was still chief clerk when Bob became Financial Clerk. Since the Financial Clerk was the budget officer for the Senate too, they had that working relationship getting the budget for the Senate moving. Tommy Scott was Everard's assistant, and he eventually became the chief clerk of the committee, and Bob and I both worked very closely with both of them in developing the Senate budget and getting it all ready. Both of them were very fine men. Bob and I used to help them put the legislative bill together in all aspects. It was just one of those working relationships that developed that was no real problem for Bob and I to take some of our time and work with them to get the budget of the Senate together and get it ready for report.

**RITCHIE:** It seems like there was a long continuity of staff there, particularly in the 1950s and '60s, the same people were there for years. Apparently you were able to build up long-term relationships with people.

**RIDGELY:** Yes, definitely.

**RITCHIE:** There wasn't a lot of turnover.

**RIDGELY:** That's right. One of the things back in the '50s and '60s, Everard as chief clerk and Tommy as assistant chief clerk and eventually chief clerk, they handled the legislative bill, but then

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when Tommy retired, they assigned one of the professional staff members of the committee to work on the legislative bill, and the chief clerk did not do that any more. That change took place in the '70s, because when I became Financial Clerk, Tommy was still there, and I was still Financial Clerk when the change took place and one of the professional staff members took over the bill.

**RITCHIE:** Well, I think we should stop at this point, before the period in which you became Financial Clerk, we can begin with that in our last session. I have a lot more questions, but we've been talking for over an hour and a half. This has been very educational for me.

**RIDGELY:** I'm sure there are a lot of little things that come into the picture, once you start talking there is a lot of backing and filling that occurs. For instance, after I came to work here I heard that Oco Thompson had locked horns with Senator Eugene Milliken of Colorado, who was chairman of the Finance Committee, and that the situation was so hot they recommended Oco take some leave. That's hearsay but you do hear things like that. You think of the things you've heard about, and I'm sure that there may be others that as we talk about them my memory will be refreshed. I've never kept a diary or anything. Somebody said you should have kept a diary.

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One time when I remembered the Secretary's report, that was always a bone of contention with the members. I referred to it as the "Green Hate Book," and it probably had many other titles too that couldn't be written down! But the press used to drive some of the members crazy on this. I can remember one day that Styles Bridges, Kenneth Wherry of Nebraska, and William Knowland of California, Leverett Saltonstall of Massachusetts, four or five of the Republican senators came in to talk to Oco. This was during the Republican Congress too, by the way, the 83rd Congress. They wanted him to do something about the Secretary's Report. They did not want the names and individual amounts of salaries printed in the book. That came about and it happened one year that they printed the list of staff people but only the total amount expended for the office, no salary figures or anything. Apparently they had been getting a very bad time on this, and they tried to find a way that they could comply with the law, making the reports of expenditures, and still avoid this kind of thing.

**RITCHIE:** But it didn't last?

**RIDGELY:** No, it only happened one year, that I can recall. But the press is always giving them a bad time, always.

**RITCHIE:** Have you ever had any problem with leaks in your office?

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**RIDGELY:** No.

**RITCHIE:** Then you're probably the only office in town that's ever been able to control it!

**RIDGELY:** No. I think all the employees were well informed as to all of this. We told them that when they came to work here it was a non-political and non-patronage office, that we were working for a hundred senators, regardless of their political affiliation. We have knowledge that maybe somebody would like to know about in another office, and I said "That's one of the reasons the Senate apparently doesn't want this on a political basis. Because if somebody is in here from the Republican side and they see something on a Democratic member, or vice versa, this is what they don't want." And I said, "This is the last place that that kind of information should come from. If it should come from anybody, it should come from the senator himself. If he wants it known, he can tell them." And that's the way it ought to be.

I think this is probably one of the things that put the office, as I call it, in an autonomous position, non-political within a political arena. Our employees knew that if anything like that ever happened they wouldn't be there five minutes. The Secretary of the Senate was always confident enough in the decisions of the Financial Clerk to sign off on his requests. We promised people a decent job, and a permanent job, and this was part of the employment policy. But

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it's all worked very nicely as far as I'm concerned. I know of no leaks, even during the Bobby Baker era. Reporters called and they wanted all kinds of information.

**RITCHIE:** About Bobby Baker?

**RIDGELY:** Yes, and anybody that worked for him, anybody close to him, I guess you might say. It was quite a time.

**RITCHIE:** This has been a first-rate session. You've turned to the cold flow charts and made it all very real and understandable.

End of Interview #2

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## Automating the Senate's Finances

### Interview #3

Thursday, October 28, 1982

**RITCHIE:** We've discussed your years as Assistant Financial Clerk of the Senate. Then when Bob Brenkworth left you moved up to become Financial Clerk. In going back through the reports of the Secretary of the Senate, I've come across material about Brenkworth becoming "Comptroller" of the Senate. On November 1, 1969 he was appointed Comptroller. That was the first time, and as far as I can figure the only time, that the Senate ever had someone with the title

**RIDGELY:** That's true, it was.

**RITCHIE:** What was the reason for creating that post at that time?

**RIDGELY:** Well, at the time, if my memory serves me, this was something that the Appropriations Committee was interested in, and Bob of course with all the time that he had put in in Disbursing as the Financial Clerk and Budget Officer of the Senate, working with the Appropriations Committee and everything, I sometimes wondered if their thinking was the possibility of maybe the Disbursing Office coming from under the Secretary of the Senate. As it is, you know, the Secretary by law is the Disbursing Officer of the Senate. And then, of course, the operation of the office is handled by the

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Financial Clerk and the Secretary just gives him, you might say, carte blanche authority to take care of these things. And it might have been that particular thing at the time, because the Disbursing Office had, in its activities and size, grown considerably with all the things that had transpired over the years, and with what they had to do, and with the quantity of work that had to be done by the office, its activities with the Appropriations Committee, with the Rules Committee. I don't know what they would have called the office if they had done such a thing, but when they first created it, it was created as a position under the Secretary of the Senate.

So Bob was transferred from the job of Financial Clerk to the Comptroller's position. He maintained the same status, running the Disbursing Office, that was under the Secretary. And then, later on, a year or more, I don't know exactly the time frame, they changed it so that the Comptroller came under the office of the President Pro Tem of the Senate. Bob then, in 1970, was transferred to that position,

appointed by the President Pro Tem, and set up his office to do certain things. It specified in the law what he was to do. Then I was put in the position as Financial Clerk. He was then outside of the Disbursing Office with certain duties prescribed by the law that created it, and I was there running the Disbursing Office which was still under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Senate. You know, the committee reports on that might give you some background on that, or the hearings. If you need to look at that, the Disbursing

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Office has that in their files, because some explanation was always required for these things. I think that's really what they were thinking about at the time.

**RITCHIE:** At that time, Allen Ellender was chairman of the Appropriations Committee and President Pro Tempore, wasn't he?

**RIDGELY:** Yes.

**RITCHIE:** So was that the reason for bringing the Comptroller under the President Pro Tem? You said the Appropriations Committee was particularly interested in this.

**RIDGELY:** Well, I think it was to take that position out from under the Secretary of the Senate. I guess you might say they had a choice--they had a choice of setting it up as an elected officer of the Senate, such as the Sergeant at Arms, etc., or putting it in as an appointed position under the jurisdiction of somebody. This was the first instance that the President Pro Tem had something like that. The Office of Legislative Counsel is under the President Pro Tem, and always has been, but this was the only other time that anything like this was created under the President Pro Tem.

**RITCHIE:** Well, was there some difficulty between Senator Ellender and the Secretary of the Senate, Frank Valeo?

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**RIDGELY:** No. But there was a problem between Bob [Brenkworth] and the Secretary. Definite personality differences there.

**RITCHIE:** So when they created the position of Comptroller, he in effect had all the same responsibilities at first that he had when he was Financial Clerk?

**RIDGELY:** That's right, while this position was under the jurisdiction of the Secretary, yes.

**RITCHIE:** But then when he was switched to the President Pro Tem, the job changed?

**RIDGELY:** The duties changed, yes, because he could no longer, and did not any longer have access to Disbursing Office files and records. And he was required to do some auditing and other work as the Comptroller. There was the Comptroller and the position of secretary was established for the office, so there were only two people doing this work.

**RITCHIE:** So he was sort of an auditor then?

**RIDGELY:** Yes, but you have to recognize the fact that in auditing the vouchers in the Disbursing Office there is no other place in the Senate that can audit them to the extent the Disbursing Office can, because there are certain basic things that must be checked and verified before that voucher can move. For a person

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submitting a voucher for reimbursement or for payment of an expense incurred, they have to be checked to see that they indeed were on the payroll at the time they incurred this expense and they worked in the office for which they incurred that expense. Those two basic things, nobody else can verify that from official records, because as you know the official payroll records are only in the Disbursing Office. But what happened was that we continued to do that work, and the vouchers then were sent to Bob Brenkworth, and he checked them over and then they went to the Rules Committee.

**RITCHIE:** It was adding an extra layer, in effect.

**RIDGELY:** Yes, it really did happen that way.

**RITCHIE:** Now, at first, when he was still under the Secretary, you remained as the Assistant Financial Clerk, but then when he moved to the President Pro Tem you became the Financial Clerk in 1970.

**RIDGELY:** That's right, because the Secretary didn't need two heads of the office, and rightfully so.

**RITCHIE:** Did all of this change over create any difficulties for you?

**RIDGELY:** For me?

**RITCHIE:** Yes, in dealing on one hand with the Secretary and on the other with the Comptroller and the President Pro Tem?

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**RIDGELY:** Well, first of all, the one thing that I had to do, when the Secretary put me in the position of Financial Clerk, I had to let him know, in no uncertain terms you might say, that I was working for him and not for anybody else. If I say there was bad blood between the Secretary and Bob, I guess that's one way of putting it, it was really a personality difference. Of course, he knew that Bob and I had been associated for so long, at least twenty years, working together--more than working together, we just ran the thing and he and I were in consort on just about everything. So with this difference that came up, I had to just let the Secretary know in whatever way I could, or whatever fashion, that I was the Financial Clerk under the Secretary of the Senate and that I would pursue my job in the way that it had always been pursued, and that no one was going to interfere with that. And I had my opportunity to do that on a couple of occasions, to assure the Secretary that this was the way it was.

As a matter of fact, I got my back up once and I just had to let him know where I stood, and from that point on Frank and I got along very well. As a matter of fact, I developed a working relationship with Frank Valeo as good as it could have been with any Secretary. Because I think once he felt comfortable with me, then of course we go from there, and that's the way it worked out. I know I helped him

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on a lot of things that the Financial Clerk and Budget Officer would normally do for the Secretary, and there were no problems once this was all settled.

**RITCHIE:** I only worked with Mr. Valeo briefly, but I had the opinion at the time that he was the type of person who once he had confidence in you delegated responsibility to you.

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes.

**RITCHIE:** And pretty much let his staff work on their own.

**RIDGELY:** Right, he did, and as I say this is exactly what happened in this case. On the budgeting and other matters there were no problems. In other things, when problems would come up, he was calling me around for whatever I could give him, advice, counsel, or whatever it is, a direction of some kind where he was not aware of it. But it worked out to a good relationship.

**RITCHIE:** Now, when you say that Valeo and Brenkworth disagreed, did they disagree on policy matters, or was it strictly a personality difference?

**RIDGELY:** I think it was more personality. Both of them were very strong. Bob, of course, did an excellent job as Financial Clerk--I mean he worked for the Senate and watched out and protected the Senate in whatever way he could from where he was located. He

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ran a good office; he ran a tight ship too. But he was fair to everybody, and held be the first one to champion his employees. So those kind of things, it was just a personality clash between him and Frank. That actually occurred, I think, before Frank became Secretary.

**RITCHIE:** So this had been going on for some time. Valeo became Secretary in 1966, so this had been going on for several years then, until 1969.

**RIDGELY:** Yes.

**RITCHIE:** Felton Johnson left in 1965, then Emery Frazier stepped in and Frank became Secretary in 1966.

**RIDGELY:** Yes.

**RITCHIE:** At the time you became Financial Clerk in 1970, someone named Orlando Potter did a study of the Disbursing Office. Who was Potter and what was the whole nature of that study?

**RIDGELY:** Orlando worked for the Senator from Rhode Island, Mr. [Claiborne] Pell, and then Frank brought him in as administrative director, if my recollection serves me. This was the kind of thing he did.

He studied the Stationery Room, he studied the Disbursing Office, and I think the Document Room, these kinds of things he was

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doing, making a study of them. He left there and went down and became director of the Federal Elections Commission after a bit. But this is what he did.

**RITCHIE:** Now, in looking over the report that he filed at that time, he listed several areas where he thought that the Disbursing Office had assumed functions that were not necessarily their functions. The ones that I found were: "intrusion into Stationery Room receipts, processing of election certificates, briefing new senators, and appearing before the Appropriations Committee to testify and handle matters for the Secretary."

**RIDGELY:** This was an intrusion of the office?

**RITCHIE:** This is what he cited as intrusions in his report.

**RIDGELY:** Well, first of all, we were involved in the Stationery Room because in not only selling their merchandise to the office on official accounts, or selling it over the counter as they do, and have always done, the Secretary is the Disbursing Officer and he is responsible for that money. So it was the Secretary who brought the Disbursing Office into the picture. Skeeter Johnson, I think was responsible for that, because he wanted to make sure that the Stationery Room was clean. There were inventory practices that were developed, other things that were done, and the Secretary brought us into that. What was the second one on there?

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**RITCHIE:** Processing election certificates.

**RIDGELY:** Processing of election certificates?

**RITCHIE:** Maybe he meant the oath books.

**RIDGELY:** Well, yes, if you talk about the official oath books, yes. The reason we have them, as far as I knew, was that they considered it such a valuable thing that they had no other safe keeping place but the Disbursing Office safe.

**RITCHIE:** It had something to do with when a person went on the payroll, didn't it? When they signed the oath book?

**RIDGELY:** Not individuals, only members [of the Senate]. The oath book is limited to the Members, the Vice President, and the oath of the Secretary goes in there.

**RITCHIE:** Does the Vice President sign an oath?

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes. His is not one of the pages in the book. He signs the oath and then we put it into the book and it is kept.

**RITCHIE:** Oh, I see. Then the other two were briefing new senators and appearing before the Appropriations Committee to testify and handle matters for the Secretary.

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**RIDGELY:** Well, briefing new senators, of course, was a very integral and important facet of the Disbursing Office because when new senators came in we would make appointments to have them come in before they took office, so we'd have some dedicated time to them. We would have representatives from the Sergeant at Arms, the Secretary's Office, the Rules Committee, and the Secretary for the Majority and Minority, depending on whether they were Democratic or Republican senators. Also included was the Stationery Room and the Printing Clerk. The Secretary would be there, kind of chairing the meeting, and held take them one-by-one, always leaving the Financial Clerk for last because the Financial Clerk needed as much time as all the rest of them, because we had to go over his salary and his personal items, plus his payroll allowance, what he could do with it, and all of his other office expense items, and it did take time. How he can say we intruded on that, I just don't know. I'm sure I read that report, but I didn't remember reading that.

**RITCHIE:** When I read the report, it struck me that they were probably all functions that had evolved rather than been specifically assigned at any one point, and I wondered if that's what it might have been.

**RIDGELY:** We weren't intruding, we were invited! We were invited to these things. You know, they'd call us up and we had a working arrangement with the Secretary's office because as soon as

someone was newly elected to an office, right after election day as quickly as we could get their address and know that the election was firm we'd get them information. We were the first and the Secretary's office was probably right behind us getting information to them as quickly as possible. We had a working arrangement with the Secretary's office. If a new senator called them and arranged an appointment they would let us know, and vice versa we did the same thing with them. We had a good working relationship. I don't know how you could call that an intrusion.

**RITCHIE:** So, in other words, all those functions continued on after 1970 as well as before?

**RIDGELY:** Oh, absolutely, yes. I would say that it even became more important after that because of the changes that were being made. It used to be that the operation of the offices was relatively simple compared to let's say what it is today in the way that the allowances are set up and things that they are able to do, as compared to then. I would consider it something that if you didn't do it you were being negligent really, it would be a disservice. And appearing before the Appropriations Committee--the Financial Clerk is the Budget Officer of the Senate! I don't know whether he was indicating that possibly someone else should do that, but the Disbursing Office is there, they are handling all of the appropriations, paying all of the expenses of the Senate, maintaining the official

record and ledgers of all of these expenses. Who else really knows better than the Financial Clerk, the Budget Officer? Of course, you could give somebody else this. But the Secretary went down at times and testified, but it was on his behalf.

The testimony of the Financial Clerk was as Budget Officer. He prepared the budget, submitted it to OMB, and it came back up here in the Budget Document, and then when the Subcommittee had its hearings it was expected that the Financial Clerk be there and go over the whole thing, and explain the increases that appeared in there, or changes, whatever the changes were. But on new positions, or salary changes, each individual person had to go down, the committee called them in. If the Secretary wanted to create a new position or two, or wanted to up the maximum rate on an existing position, he goes down and justifies that, not the Budget Officer. The Sergeant at Arms is the same. If senators' offices want more money, then they have to come in. Of course, letters of explanation would come in



on that. It was up to the Committee who they called in on these things. This was the way it worked.

But the primary role that the Financial Clerk played in this was going through that whole list, all of the items of the Senate, with an explanation--not a justification but an explanation--of what's in there. The only thing the Financial Clerk would justify was the cost of living increases that were granted and had to be cranked into the

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following year. That was well recognized. And that was being done before I even came to work here. I remember Oco Thompson used to do it, so it was nothing new, it was something that always had been done.

**RITCHIE:** Another thing that the Potter report indicated was that there was no use of computers in the Disbursing Office before 1970.

**RIDGELY:** That's true.

**RITCHIE:** And there was a feeling that since the budget had gotten up to \$60 million and with some 5,000 people on the staff that the time had come for computers. Why was it that the Financial Clerk's office hadn't adopted computers by that time?

**RIDGELY:** Well, first of all, even back then you have to recognize that computerization of payrolls and everything was not necessarily something that was tremendously tried and true. I think we were leading up to that all along, because we had gotten in a bookkeeping machine that did a lot of our work that had to be done manually, as I referred to earlier. When I went to work there everything was done with pen and ink, everything. There was no mechanized operation at all at that time. Then it developed and we wound up, when Bob Brenkworth was Financial Clerk that we got in this

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bookkeeping machine and started using that on our ledgers. Then that was updated later on to take care of the expense allowance accounts of senators.

Then, after I became Financial Clerk--I can't speak for Bob as to whether he would actually have gone into computers per se, if he had still been Financial Clerk--but I got a call one day and they asked me if I would be interested in talking to someone about automating the payroll. I said, "Hell yes." I said, "I'm not going to make any commitment but I'll talk to anybody who will help us out in something that will improve it, and if we can afford it." So they sent around two young fellows from a company. They started talking to me, they had a presentation of course, and they gave me a copy, and I sat and talked to them for hours. My prime response to them, if we did consider to automate or computerize the payroll, was that the system we brought in would have to be as good or better than what we were doing manually. I would use the word manually because we weren't automated.

I gave them a prime example while they were sitting there. I said, "Now if a senator walked into the office and asked me for a list of his staff, and what their salaries were, what his unused balance was," I said, "I can get that to him in a minute." Well, they were taken aback. They didn't believe it could be done. So I went out, I said, "110K, just hold on a minute," I walked out into the

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front office, picked a list with what I considered a large staff at that time, and within a minute and a half I was back and I said: "OK, now if you'd been Senator V--and I didn't show them any names or anything--and came in this is what I'd give you." Well, they thought that was quite good. But we had developed ourselves a nice little system manually. So I said to them again, "Now this you have to match or do better on."

They kept saying, "Well the computer can do anything. If the logic is put in correctly it can do anything." And so we went from there and got to talking further on that. Then, of course, to get automated we had the Rules Committee and the Appropriations Committee involved: Rules to authorize it, the Appropriations Committee to give us the money for it. Of course, the Secretary was involved in this in terms of giving the green light on it. So we started into it. The Rules Committee was involved to the extent of putting out, I forget what they called it, like a prospectus, and farmed it out to companies to make bids on the software part of it. They held hearings, they interviewed all of the people from the companies, and then they awarded the contracts, and then we went from there.

From that point on, I suppose that I put in a solid three years before we had it to a point where we said, "OK, we'll no longer run the parallel setup. The only thing I could think of in this whole thing was: it's got to be right before we do it, because all we have

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to do is foul up the thing that is dearest to everybody in the Senate, or in the world for that matter, and that's their paycheck. That was the one thing that was foremost in my mind. So with all the work that was done on it, and all the hassling that we went through, I spent days and weeks at a time with these people from this company, sitting down, documenting all of the procedures and the way things are done and the way they had to be done.

One of the first things they said to me was, "Well, the Social Security number will be the primary identification." I said, "Just a minute, now, we don't work that way around here. The first way we identify people around here is by their name, the second thing we identify them by is their payroll number because that is our control. Now, whatever you do with the Social Security number after that, that's OK with me." But I said, "If you want to put it in there, we must be able to have the ability if someone walks in and asks for information about their deductions to be able to get them by name, or if they show us their payroll number from a slip, we can use that, or the Social Security number." I said to them, "How would you like to be standing at that counter and a United States senator walked in and he said he would like to know something about his deductions and you say, "Well, sir, I must have your Social Security number before I can do that." And they caught on real quick. And, of course, it was done this way.

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As I said, there was a lot of work involved, there was hassle, there was backing and filling, and finally we wound up, by the time we turned this over completely on the automated system, we had what I considered at the time a highly sophisticated payroll personnel system. It was doing a lot of things automatically that we had to do as a separate step, when it came to the allowances, the salary allowances for the offices and everything. We ran that thing parallel for one year by keeping the manual system and running it on the automated system and checking the automated system to the manual system. The second year, before we turned over, we ran it on the automated system, and verified that with the manual pay records. We had a guarantee that it was going to be right when it rolled over. But it was a very interesting experience. I didn't know anything about computers, I can really say I don't know anything today on it. But I got a liberal education about automation!

**RITCHIE:** Well, I suppose as the Senate was growing in size the need for something like this was becoming increasingly obvious.

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes. It's true, no question about that, because it wasn't just the payroll that was increasing, and the number of people coming on the staff, but other things were growing too. Our staff was limited because if we needed to hire a couple extra people we had no place to put them. The space was limited, everybody knows

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that space has been terribly critical here in the Senate. So we were suffering through that like everybody else. It's true, we were. So, that's the way she started.

**RITCHIE:** Beginning August 1, 1970 you were the Financial Clerk of the Senate?

**RIDGELY:** Yes.

**RITCHIE:** And you served in that position until 1977. When you became Financial Clerk, did Mr. Valeo suggest things that he wanted done in that office? Was he interested in what was going on and set any priorities? Or was it basically continue as the office had been?

**RIDGELY:** Continue as the office had been.

**RITCHIE:** And he gave you pretty much free rein?

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes. He didn't have anybody looking over my shoulder, no, he didn't have. I suppose that with that not happening, having someone look over my shoulder, he was probably satisfied to see how things were developed. Of course, it meant not only what I did to develop a relationship but also meant that he had to come around, because--I repeat myself--the association of Bob Brenkworth and myself for so many years naturally may give him pause.

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**RITCHIE:** As Financial Clerk, I assume you probably worked most closely with the Rules Committee and the Appropriations Committees, and presumably with the chairmen of those committees. Were there any other senators whom you worked closely with? The Majority Leader?

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes.

**RITCHIE:** Who does the Financial Clerk deal with, other than the Secretary?

**RIDGELY:** Oh, with the Leadership, yes, they were involved. All of the senators, whether it was through committees or otherwise. And there were other committees that we would get involved in. Occasionally Government Operations, when it came to--well, go back before Government Operations, when Post Office and Civil Service Committee was still in existence. We were very close to them, because it involved not only the salary structures but the benefits, retirement, life and health insurance for employees. So we worked with them, and I would have to say that we were close to that committee also at the time. Then when that committee was dissolved and placed under Government Operations, we worked with them then. Another committee was the Committee on Finance, because taxes were one thing involved in that. We had some relationship working with them. But I would say by and large we had some dealings with all of the committee chairmen at one time or another. But Rules and Appropriations were the two primary ones, as far as that part is concerned.

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**RITCHIE:** Did you feel that the working relationship was a good one with those committees?

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes, definitely. We had a good working relationship with all the offices. Every once in a while, you know, somebody would get their nose bent out of joint, but this is a normal thing. They would incur an expense that maybe we couldn't pay, and if they wanted to pursue it they'd have to go to the Rules Committee. And, you know, busy offices, they didn't want to have to go through all of this, call it red tape or whatever it is, but that's just the way it had to be done, that's all there is to it. But I would say that the working relationship would be classed at the highest part of ten, if you put it on that scale. Yes, we did, because we were there for service and we did things for them that they needed to have done.

**RITCHIE:** How did the Disbursing Office work when you were Financial Clerk? I mean, what was the structure of the office? I know Bob Malstrom was your assistant clerk; how were responsibilities divided up?

**RIDGELY:** Well, first of all, the Financial Clerk and Assistant Financial Clerk were out there in the front office chiefly. That was until Bob Brenkworth was able to get a little office built within our office for the Financial Clerk. Then the Assistant Financial Clerk was out front with one other staff person to help him out, and that was rotating so more than one in the office knew that front office

operations. So Bob was there running the office, working up the budget and everything, as a first step. The Assistant Financial Clerk was backup. When Bob was Financial Clerk I was Assistant Financial Clerk, held work up the budget, I would take it and go through it and check it out, very independently of what he did, because that's what he wanted me to do. If I didn't see anything that looked right I was to say something, and I did. We made sure we had a good one. It may not have been a perfect budget, but it was a correct version of what the Senate needed.

That was one of my jobs, the other job of course was maintaining the front office and seeing that the people who came into the office got their needs taken care of. And of course, overseeing the office when the Financial Clerk wasn't there, or even doing that while he was there sometimes, for that matter. Then we had the chief bookkeeper, who was in the back office, and he was overseeing all the rest of the operation. We had the payroll section, the audit section or voucher section, we had the accounting section, and the benefit section, and there was a supervisor or head of each one of those sections. The chief bookkeeper was overseeing them. Of course, his responsibility was to the Assistant Financial Clerk and to the Financial Clerk.

**RITCHIE:** When you became Financial Clerk your relationship with Bob Malstrom was the same; in other words he did the same functions as you had done as Assistant Financial Clerk?

**RIDGELY:** Yes.

**RITCHIE:** And the positions stayed pretty much the same?

**RIDGELY:** Yes.

**RITCHIE:** But I suppose the Financial Clerk was the one who dealt more directly with the senators.

**RIDGELY:** Yes, I think in most instances when someone in a position like a senator comes in they will want to talk to the head man in the office. But of course, a lot of times they did come in and deal with others, Bob Malstrom and some of the other people in the office.

**RITCHIE:** What types of services would a senator look for? Why would a senator come into the Disbursing Office?

**RIDGELY:** Well, first of all he would come in there and maybe review his payroll. Now most of them would designate somebody in their office to handle their payroll and other matters. But some of them did not and they would come into the office and they would want to see the list of their staff and would sit down and review it and maybe ask you, for instance maybe somebody they were considering

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giving a raise to, "When's the last time this person got a raise?" We'd give him that right there on the spot. Then he'd make up his letter of authority to us, right then and there, and we'd have the secretary type it up, and he'd sign it and be on his way.

Retirement was a big thing, you know, knowing the circumstances of retirement, service that is creditable, and all of this. Their health insurance, they would come in and talk to us about their needs, particularly anytime when there was a change, when they'd first come on, and when the open seasons would come along, they would want to take a review and see what our thoughts were, because they knew we kept pretty close to these things. Life insurance was pretty cut and dry. The only thing to check on that was who they had designated as beneficiaries. These things they would check on, but their office allowances and their expense allowance, all of these things they would come into the office periodically and address.

**RITCHIE:** You mentioned that during your time as Financial Clerk, the office computerized, that was probably the biggest change. Were there any other changes? Were there any other things you tried to do to change the procedures?

**RIDGELY:** Well, in terms of automating the payroll system, we followed it up with a couple of other things. The one thing that was a problem--it was just one heck of a job--was the Secretary's Report. All these vouchers flowing through, and in quantities of 24,000 to

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30,000 a year, we were accumulating copies of all of these vouchers. At the end of every six months

we had to send them down to the Printing Office, the GPO, and they set it all in hot lead. It would come back to us in galley. We would have to proof read it and then send it down for corrections and get the page proofs. And we had to proof read that because we couldn't trust them: the figures had to be right, or else there was no way you could accept it. This was a burdensome job because the Secretary had sixty days after the close of each six month period to have that printed and available to the general public. So this was one thing.

I said to myself: if we could only knock that big peak down! I got to thinking about automating that. This was at a point in time when our Senate Computer Center had grown to the extent where they were capable of handling something like this. So I got to talking to them and gave them all of the background, all the things they needed to know to make an evaluation. They came back and said, "yes, it can be done." We developed that in such a fashion that each day as vouchers were paid, they were put into the computer, word for word, just as they were going to be printed in the Secretary's Report. We'd get a print out the next day and it was proof read that day, and corrections put into the computer. That was locked in and was there. No more proof reading to do. This went on for six months.

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What we did, we knocked that semi-annual horrendous peak down to where it was leveled off to a six month job that we could do throughout the six months. At the end of the six months we got a print out from the Computer Center. It was sent to the GPO, they shot pictures of it, and that was it. Not only that, as we entered vouchers into this computer system, it added the amounts and at the end of the six months we got a report that we checked against our official ledgers as proof. As I said, it's been more accurate since we did that than before because we never did any adding, we read figures. But that did work out.

**RITCHIE:** Previously you referred to that as the "Green Hate Book," that some of the senators used to call it that. In the mid-1970s there was a group that went through the Secretary's Report and tallied up all of the women's positions in the Senate, how much they earned, and what jobs they held, and published a report that got in all the newspapers, showing that women earned less money than men did on the Senate staff. Did that cause any problems for you at the time?

**RIDGELY:** No. It really didn't, because the only way they could get it was by doing that kind of a job on it. It's like somebody called me up once about something that was in the Secretary's Report and asked me to do it. I said, "I can't do that for you. This is a research project." I don't know whether it was a newspaper person or



whoever it was, but it was a research project. I said, "You know, if I sat down and did this it would take my time and it's the same job you can do just as easily as I can--maybe more easily because you might have more time than I have to do it. That particular thing, no, it did not. The only place they could get that was from the Secretary's Report.

Of course, that was always a hair shirt for people because there was always a lag. For instance, the Secretary's Report as of June 30 of a given year is due by August 30, sixty days later. Well, by the time somebody gets started and does research of any kind, and particularly if it's one like you said about all of the women and taking their salaries, they are talking about past salaries. They are past October 1 in their research project and they are going to be talking about salaries in the first six months of the year and the salaries have already changed in October and which, of course, wouldn't be out until the end of February the next year. So that time lag there was always a problem for people who wanted to do research from it. The document that they used was factual for the time. I wouldn't try myself to tally that kind of thing, that's quite a research job. To do it manually would be a considerable task to label offices and salaries, because every salary in there they'd have to multiply by two to get an annual rate of salary.

**RITCHIE:** All the salaries of senators staff were all set by the senators themselves, is that right?

**RIDGELY:** That is correct.

**RITCHIE:** They had an office budget and could divide it up as they saw fit?

**RIDGELY:** An office would have a lump sum allowance that was geared to the population of the state. This lump sum allowance had no restrictions as to the number of people they could employ, but it did have some restrictions as to salary limitations at the top level. He would have maybe three or four limitations for the top staff, and then all others may not be paid at a rate not to exceed a certain level, and that would be a stipulated amount. So from that point on he could pay anything that was within that allowance, to as many people as he could get out of it.

**RITCHIE:** So someone doing work for one senator might not necessarily be paid the same amount of

money as someone doing the exact same type of work for another senator?

**RIDGELY:** Correct. Yes, and that 's been known to be so. They just paid differently, depending on the philosophy of each office, each member.

**RITCHIE:** Is that still continued?

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**RIDGELY:** I'm sure it is. I do not believe the basic structure of that allowance has been changed. I don't know what else you could do to that, except take all limitations off and say OK, you can pay anybody up to X number of dollars a year, which would be the maximum for anybody. The only other thing you could do . . . well, you could do many things with it, but it certainly wouldn't in my opinion serve the purpose that it's serving. He's got free rein now. As you were talking about a situation where there might be one person in one office and another in another office and both of them doing the same job but getting paid different salaries, that's the same way as senators from states with the same population, one may use all of his money, the other one may not use his allotment. There were several states in one category of under three million population, and they all got the same allowance, yet the use of that money varied so much. Some would need it to serve their constituency, others maybe with not so demanding a constituency, wouldn't need so much staff, and they would be able to save some money, which many of them did.

**RITCHIE:** Earlier we talked about special committees, like the Kefauver Committee and other investigations. When you were Financial Clerk the most important investigation was the Watergate hearings in 1973 and 1974. I know that was a big committee, they had their own computer operation and special needs, did they create any special headaches for you as Financial Clerk?

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**RIDGELY:** No, no headaches. All it did was to impact the volume of work. A committee with the staff the size they had, and of course with all that was going on and expenses incurred, more vouchers, the impact it had on us really was limited to the administrative end of it. The rest of it there was no problem. But it just creates more activity, because whenever one additional employee is put on the staff, the Disbursing Office is affected.

**RITCHIE:** But with a special committee like that, everyone's there for only a limited period of time, and there is a lot of coming and going.

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes, you do experience in the administrative part of it, where we were located, taking care of the payroll and processing the vouchers for payment of witnesses and employees traveling and other expenses incurred by the committee, it does create more work, no question about it. The impact is felt.

**RITCHIE:** Well, looking back on your years as Financial Clerk, what would you say was the most memorable event, or the most interesting work that you did?

**RIDGELY:** I think there were several things that took place that had a definite impact and improvement as far as the Disbursing Office is concerned and as far as the Senate is concerned. In automating the payroll it certainly saved time and saved money, because if we

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had continued a manual payroll system we would have had to have more, and while we had a large initial outlay to automate, dollars to go out, over the years I just can't tell you . . . I guess if I thought it out, I might be able to give an estimated figure of what I would consider the savings.

One of the things that happened, in addition to automating the payroll, the Secretary's Report, and other things along with our computerized system, was when we went from paying cash twice a month to check twice a month. Even I couldn't believe it when I estimated the time saving to the Senate that occurred by this one, small thing--it was bigger than small--because I estimated that other than the Disbursing Office itself it saved the Senate in excess of 18,000 man days a year. Just by figuring one hour twice a month for each employee that had to be paid and multiplying that factor, I came up with a figure in excess of 18,000 man-days. I couldn't believe it. I had somebody check my figures on that. But I think that that had a very rewarding feeling about it. That didn't even include the time that it saved us, the hours that it saved us in the Disbursing Office. It gave us that much more time to take care of other things.

But I think the computerization of the payroll and the Secretary's Report and changing over to the check system, also starting state income tax deductions for the people. I committed the Disbursing Office to state withholding once we got the payroll

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automated. We cranked that all in as we developed the automated system. So when we got to the end of it we went to the Appropriations Committee and got a provision of law put in authorizing the Secretary to do this. Then we went from there and it worked beautifully.

We cranked in that first year and the first month 3,300 employees, if I remember correctly, and didn't have anything happen. There was just a beautiful take up in that whole thing. It worked beautifully, it really did. It's a good feeling when that happens. There was enough blood, sweat, and tears in getting this automated system working, I'll tell you. But to have this work the way it did it was really neat.

**RITCHIE:** I suppose you were waiting for that first angry employee who didn't get his check.

**RIDGELY:** Well, it was not so much for the first angry employee, it was waiting for that first payroll to come out with that in there and see what happens. It was very nice. It worked so beautifully. You get a good feeling when it does happen that way. And if something had gone wrong, we would have just had to reckon with it, that was all there was to it. We worked hard to have it come out that way. Well, I suppose those were the major things that happened.

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Oh, one other thing happened when I was Financial Clerk, that I developed along with the Rules Committee was eliminating the monthly payroll vouchers of all of our subcommittees. Before we got to the system that was developed, the committee clerks had to submit a payroll voucher, a large sheet with all the names of the employees, their salary, and the breakdown for the month. It had to be signed by the chairman before we could do anything with it. And we had to get this in by the tenth of each month. Well, by the time we got it in, we'd gotten letters maybe terminating people, maybe appointments putting new people on, so when we get it we have to update it. This has to go to Rules Committee before we can pay it, once we get the chairman's signature on it. So I developed a proposition which I presented to the Rules Committee, and that was to bring off the automated system a six month payroll that would be sent to Rules Committee for approval rather than going back to the monthly vouchers (each one of them had to be approved by the Rules Committee before we could pay). We were paying on the 20th of the month, you see. Then all the changes that took place between the time when we received it on the 10th of the month and the end of the month there were sometimes a great number of changes. A busy committee, you had many changes. And it really got to be a problem. Our committees

were growing.

So I came up with this idea and presented it to the Rules Committee. I checked with GAO, and everybody, to find out if there

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was anything to prohibit us doing this. They said no, so I made the presentation to the Rules Committee, got the provisional law changed, so that this could be implemented. Boy, I'm telling you, I've never had a happier bunch of committee clerks in all my life when that happened. They were just tickled to death. It saved them a lot of time and a lot of effort. But the big thing was that it saved the Disbursing Office even more work and effort. Individually it saved the committee clerks, but collectively this is where the big savings was. That was a good change too, because the effect was felt by everybody on this. Those are the changes that took place that I think really moved us along and got us on the track of using the automated system. When I left the office there were still some things that could have been done, they may have been done already, but by and large we had all of the basic things in there and working as it should be.

**RITCHIE:** It sounds like the Financial Office became a modern office, having gone from the days of the handwritten ledgers.

**RIDGELY:** I have often referred to it by saying that during my time there we went full circle from the Bob Cratchitt in "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens, style of bookkeeping to a sophisticated, modern record keeping system. When I went to the Disbursing Office we used to have--if you can visualize Bob Cratchitt in the story, at his desk with the green visor and his armband--a similar type of

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bookkeeping desk there. There was a safe under it where we kept all of the books that were done in pen and ink. I always kidded about me at the desk sitting on a high stool, like a bar stool, with my little visor hat on, and bands on my sleeves keeping the records of the United States Senate. I used to kid about that. But it was true, we did. We went a long ways in bringing it around, but it had to be done. Otherwise, I told the Appropriations Committee that if we had not automated the way we did, that I would have guessed that the Disbursing Office staff would have had to double.

**RITCHIE:** Did you ever find any resistance from the Appropriations Committee or the Rules Committee against such modernization?

**RIDGELY:** Oh, no. No, I will have to say, and I don't mean to pat myself on the back, but our presentation with them was a good presentation. We tried to check everything out so that when we presented it to them they had the story there and could explain to them all of the things that we wanted them to consider and approve for us. We succeeded in all of those things.

**RITCHIE:** In 1977 you retired as Financial Clerk. Was there any particular reason why you decided to leave at that time?

**RIDGELY:** Yes, I had reached age 55. I had gone past thirty years of service. And I looked at everything, particularly the Disbursing Office: there were five employees there, senior employees,

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who were all on the threshold of retirement within a certain number of years, including myself. And I said to myself: If I stay here another three, or four, or five years--and there was no pressure from any quarter for me to leave there--I said when I leave here and two, three, or four of them follow me, all of the experience in the office is going to be coming with me, because as long as I stayed there everything stayed in place, unless one of them retired before I did. So I figured, if I retired, people would move up and it would give the younger employees in the office three years minimum to start learning more about the office. Continuity was what I was thinking of, because unless somebody changed it that would continue as it always had. That's really the reason I left then.

**RITCHIE:** But you stayed on then as a consultant to the Senate. I remember you had the office across from Dr. Floyd Riddick just off the Rotunda in the Russell Building. What were you doing as a consultant?

**RIDGELY:** Well, first of all, when I decided to leave the Disbursing Office I had no job offers and no commitments to anybody. I really hadn't even looked. I will have to say, though, that at the time, Stan Kimmitt was Secretary and he asked me if I would be interested in a position that, let me say, would be in terms of "Assistant Secretary for Financial Operations," or something similar to that. He asked me to think about that, and I did. I went back to

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Stan and told him that I appreciated the offer but that I felt that if he was satisfied with the people who were running the Disbursing Office and the Stationery Room, and they were doing a good job, neither one of them needed anybody breathing down their neck or looking over their shoulders. So I declined.

Then I was asked if I would come on the payroll as a consultant and so some work for the Secretary and the Sergeant at Arms. Two of the things that I worked on was the revision of the longevity system, I improved that, and I also developed the merit compensation program. That was limited to the Secretary and Sergeant at Arms offices. And I did some work for the Rules Committee at the same time. I also did some things for the Appropriations Committee during that time, and that was for a year and a half. Then of course, coming along in February of 1979 we had that real heavy snow storm. Art Kuhl was the Assistant Secretary and, as you may recall, in walking from his home over here on 8th Street, N.E., to the Capitol, he had a heart attack and died in that snow storm. Then Stan asked me if I would consider the Assistant Secretary's job. So I did. I came off the retired rolls and into the Assistant Secretary's job.

**RITCHIE:** Did you have any hesitation about taking it?

**RIDGELY:** No.

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**RITCHIE:** It was an interesting job that you looked forward to?

**RIDGELY:** Well, yes, because in the Disbursing Office, being the Financial Clerk and Budget Officer, that is a mainstream of one sort, *one* sort let's say. And while it was an administrative office, it was a service office, and got involved in many things, you know so many things not really related to Disbursing Office activities, but you just helped people in whatever they came and asked you. Looking at the job of Assistant Secretary, it was a different mainstream, more of an administrator's job, as I've referred to it. It involved work on the floor. Of course, as Financial Clerk I always had privileges to the floor and did have to go down there, particularly when the Appropriations Committee was working, I was expected to be there. So I was familiar with the floor, but as the Assistant Secretary it would be different entirely than what I had been in. I learned a lot, too, during the couple of years I was Assistant Secretary, a heck of a lot more about the Senate, particularly in the legislative end of it. I was pretty familiar with that anyway, being around here so long and working with the Appropriations and Rules Committees and learning about the process of bills and what happened to them, and you know you get

a good feeling for that. But as the Assistant Secretary I got a little bit closer to that.

**RITCHIE:** What are the Assistant Secretary's responsibilities on the floor?

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**RIDGELY:** Well, first of all, as you remember, in days gone by that position was Chief Clerk of the Senate--and I've heard many people say they think that that is a more appropriate title than Assistant Secretary of the Senate. But the Chief Clerk of the Senate is really the number one man at that desk in the Senate Chamber. This chair is still designated for the Assistant Secretary and is the first chair. You know the set-up at the desk. When Emery Frazier was Chief Clerk he did all the work that our Legislative Clerks do now, Bill Farmer and Scott Bates. He was there, he was calling the rolls, he was reading the titles of the bills and everything else. The Assistant Secretary's position now has come back into more administrative work, insofar as the office of the Secretary is concerned, for all the departments that he has under him.

When I was Assistant Secretary, if something would come up in one of the offices, Stan would ask me to check it out. He'd give it to me, and really, that's the way it ought to be. The Secretary shouldn't have to check into every nitty gritty thing that goes on there. I guess he had a feeling that if I found something he should be aware of, he'd know about it. Well, whether it was little or not, I would always keep him updated on it, tell him everything is taken care of and in good shape, if nothing more than that. And he should know this. The job of Assistant Secretary changed to this, I guess I can say this occurred after Emery Frazier left. Darrell St. Claire came into it, and then Art Kuhl, and then myself. Of course, the

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change had taken place long before I got in there. I continued doing what the Assistant Secretary had been doing. It was at that point that I got involved in the IPU, as Assistant Secretary.

**RITCHIE:** In the office you would be handling the administrative details for the Secretary?

**RIDGELY:** Yes.

**RITCHIE:** Worries over personnel, hirings, and salaries . . .



**RIDGELY:** Problems of the department heads and so forth, yes.

**RITCHIE:** But what was your relationship to the Senate floor itself? What would call you onto the floor to deal with the senators?

**RIDGELY:** Well, as you know, each day when the Senate opens the Secretary escorts the presiding officer and the chaplain to the dais. That was the job, as far as the floor was concerned, and the need for me to be there, that was my job when the Secretary was not there. I did it many times. It's just impossible for any one person to be there every day, day in and day out. But I made it a practice to be there at the opening of every Senate session that I could. It was not a matter of exposure, I was personally interested in this, in seeing and knowing what was going to happen during the day, when the Majority Leader, first [Robert] Byrd and then [Howard] Baker would

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address the Senate in opening remarks every day. I would spend maybe fifteen or twenty minutes there, and sometimes during the day, depending on the legislation, I'd go out there and sit at the desk and pay attention to what was going on, and did indeed learn something.

**RITCHIE:** Did you keep an eye on the other clerks who worked there?

**RIDGELY:** Yes, but they're pretty much on their own. They know what they have to do and they do a very good job. They take care of things in a good way, yes, they do very well. The Legislative Clerks, the Journal Clerk, the Parliamentarian, those are the four that man the desk there. Then there are the other people, like the Enrolling Clerk, the Bill Clerks, they are there and moving around keeping tabs on things. They do a good job.

**RITCHIE:** Would senators come to you as Assistant Secretary with problems?

**RIDGELY:** Not so much then. They would come to me and ask me about things that well, once again related to something I was no longer involved with.

**RITCHIE:** Financial matters?

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**RIDGELY:** Yes, oh yes. Retirement. They'd see me, they would have remembered talking to me about retirement, and if they saw me on the floor they would call me into the cloakroom or into the lobby and sit down and talk about things like that, yes. But that's about the extent of that kind of thing. That kind of thing diminished as time went on, but I still have some of that, in the hallway I get stopped two or three times going to and from the Capitol. People stop to talk and ask a question. Most often I really have to refer them to Disbursing because it's been five years since I've been in Disbursing and there have been some changes in some of these things. They have to go over there to get the right answers. Basic information I can answer and save them some time and some steps.

**RITCHIE:** Well, what types of problems would you have dealt with when you were Assistant Secretary? Were there some major issues that you tried to straighten out for the Secretary?

**RIDGELY:** I guess the biggest thing that I got involved in was changing the Stationery Room over, in developing that into a more modern and more efficient operation. And Stan did get me involved in that, and I worked very closely with the Stationery Room and the Architect in the design of that sales room, just to make it work better. To give people better service and to put the goods right in front of them. It was another thing that if you didn't do something like this it was going to cost you more manpower. Because when you

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have a counter and as the people on the other side of the counter coming in increases, to maintain the service you'll have to have more people to run the store.

**RITCHIE:** I remember the old system: you took a number and stood at the glass counter until a clerk could wait on you and bring your order; before it became self-service.

**RIDGELY:** Well, the Stationery Room was really a stepchild. I don't know why. But Stan took a definite interest in that, and he deserves credit for moving ahead on it and getting done what was done, because it really improved it a great deal. And it turned out nice. That was the biggest thing; other things you'd get involved in would be, as I say, problems, there's the Library, The Document Room, and the Stationery Room, you've got the Printing Clerk, and the Public Records Office, all of this under the Secretary. Problems would come up and they'd come and talk to me, and if there was something that needed to be done, maybe needed a policy decision right from the top, I'd take it in to the Secretary, or I'd take the person talking to me in to the Secretary. We'd sit down and talk about it, iron it out and get

it taken care of. It was an administrator's type of operation.

**RITCHIE:** So the Assistant Secretary is sort of the nuts and bolts type of person who handles the day-to-day operations and tries to relieve the Secretary.

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**RIDGELY:** It really should be that. The Secretary should have that because he is involved in a lot of other things with the members of the Senate. He should not have to be hog-tied with a lot of these nitty gritty things that somebody else can take care of for him.

**RITCHIE:** Did you as Assistant Secretary have much dealing with the Majority and Minority leaders, and the party Whips?

**RIDGELY:** Not too much, no. Except for whatever I'd get involved with on the floor, and that was not that much.

**RITCHIE:** Were you there at all times the Senate was in session? Was that part of your responsibility? For instance, if they were in late sessions at night and on weekends, did you need to be there?

**RIDGELY:** No. Stan always felt that he should be there. I stayed sometimes, but most often he'd say, "No sense in both of us staying, you go on home." Some nights it might be 5:30, 6:00, 6:30, 7:00 o'clock before you could really tell what was going to happen. There was a number of times that he would let me know that he had a commitment somewhere, and if they're in late, you've got it. I'd say, "I got it." And I would stay. It was worked out that way and there were no problems at all.

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**RITCHIE:** You inherited then the International Parliamentary Union responsibilities from Art Kuhl when you became Assistant Secretary, and that had become a function of that office.

**RIDGELY:** Right. That involvement, when I became the Assistant Secretary on March 1, 1979 happened to be the first time that the House was to take care of the financial and all other arrangements

of the United States delegation. As a matter of fact, Stan asked me before I even became Assistant Secretary if I would audit the records of the IPU that Art had taken care of, the bank account and everything, and get it ready to turn over to the House, which I did. I did this while I was a consultant. I got it all set, the records that they should get with the checkbook and everything, and I turned it over to the Clerk's office. From that point on I was involved in taking care of things for the Secretary, rather than him doing it.

**RITCHIE:** The IPU always seems to be one of the more interesting parts of that job, would you say that?

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes, because you have to remember at that particular time I had worked thirty-eight, thirty-nine years, including my military service, and during that time there was no need for me to travel for the government. So after all this time I stepped into this role, not only having to handle the financial arrangements but to make the arrangements for the transportation and to travel with the group each time. It was something very new and very different.

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**RITCHIE:** It was obviously a benefit that you knew finances so well, since such a large part of the job was overseeing the finances; but did you find that taking over the travel arrangements and hotel reservations and all that created great troubles at first?

**RIDGELY:** Strangely, no. What I did was to go through the most recent trip that had been completed and just boned up on it. I got a fairly good idea of what went on. But we have to go back, before I did it myself you have to bear in mind that the House did it for two years. They got it cold turkey, because they had never done it before. They would have had difficulties even if I had started right there, because at least I had records. They had no records or anything. As it has developed, they did that, and I'm sure--I'll say this and they probably wouldn't deny it--they probably had to struggle that first trip to get everything in place. But they had a lot of help. They had some of the members over there on the House side who had traveled on a number of trips before and had at least a working knowledge of it. I'm sure the Clerk's office got a lot of help from that standpoint. That trip went off good, and the other trips they handled also came off good.

Before it came back to the Senate in 1981 we had developed a real good working relationship between the Senate and House, the Clerk's office and the Secretary's office. Cables that they would send out or get in connection with a trip, they gave us a copy so we

could follow everything. Information that would come in from IPU headquarters, we started doing then and we still do it, I'd check with the Clerk's office and ask them if they got it. If they get it, they call me to make sure that each of us are getting all of this information. For some unknown reason the IPU headquarters in Geneva has both the Secretary and the Clerk's office listed over there, but we never know to which one of them they're going to send something. Sometimes they'll send it to one, or the other, and then other times they'll send it to both. So we had to develop this, because when they send this information about the meetings that are coming up we have to make sure the members are informed. We know which members are interested and will get them a copy of the information.

The first trip was strange in a way. First of all, I had never traveled with a congressional delegation, as a matter of fact, I hadn't traveled for the government at all. Of course we had a military escort, we used a military aircraft. Everything is taken care of for you. The embassies do a big job for you on this, and they do a good job. They get things all in place, they get your transportation needs. You have to authorize everything; they won't do anything unless you authorize them in a cable to do it. But they find out what the schedule is and wire that information to us, and we can develop what we need to pass on to the members and other people who are going. We have a nice procedure to follow to do this. IPU meetings are pretty much rote. That makes it easier, really.

**RITCHIE:** But that first trip you worried about?

**RIDGELY:** I won't say worried, it was just that I didn't know exactly what role I'd be playing in it. Well, as it was, Ted Henshaw, who was the Clerk of the House, was on the trip. He knew that I had been involved in the finances of the Senate, and Ted has never been involved with that. He's the Clerk, and the payroll of the House comes under the Clerk's office, but he didn't get involved in it any more than the Secretary of the Senate does, but he knew I'd been in the Disbursing Office for many years, and he knew that I had done that on the Senate side. I don't know if he recognized the fact that this was my first trip, but he at least knew that I was familiar with it and had a working knowledge of it. He, I won't say leaned on me, but he and I worked together real good on that trip. He'd ask me what I thought we should do and things like that. He learned, and I learned. We complemented each other in that way, and everything worked fine.

**RITCHIE:** Has there ever been any trip of the IPU that has given you more problems than others?

**RIDGELY:** Cuba. All of them have been easy compared to that one. That was unique in itself, in that we couldn't use the military aircraft, and we didn't have a military escort. A military escort is good because they take care of so many things for us. We always have help on the other end. The embassy will have a truck there for us,

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and some people to help getting the baggage to the hotels. We always get the room numbers before we go so they put tags on the bags with the room numbers here, before we even put them on the airplane, so when we get there it makes it an easy distribution for them. With Cuba we had to charter airplanes to go down there, we had to charter airplanes to bring us back; and all the things the military did we had to do ourselves.

Well, it was more difficult because we don't have an embassy down there. We have personnel down there. We have a U.S. interest section working out of the Swiss embassy, but they don't have the status of an embassy and cannot get things done as an embassy can do it where we have diplomatic relations. Not having diplomatic relations with Cuba, of course, caused problems. There were things that caused us grief, yes, no question about that. More so than any of the other trips. I can't think of any other problems that we had that were anything like the Cuban trip. But by and large, except for the extra things we had to do, and our supplies and everything, where an embassy can provide us with certain things in the country that we're going to, it just wasn't available on that trip. The problems that we encountered on the trip to Cuba were different. They were problems that we do not incur in other places.

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**RITCHIE:** I just talked to someone who came back from a trip to Italy. When they arrived in Rome and went to their hotel it was surrounded by Italian police with machine guns. They inquired at the desk what was going on and were told "the International Parliamentary Union is meeting in Rome and the American delegation is staying in this hotel." So it sounded like you got very good service and protection while you were over there.

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes. As you know, they've been having some problems over there. They were concerned about the Red Brigade. There are probably embers still burning with that, and they have other problems over there, and I'm sure they didn't want anything to happen. It was just like when we went to the Philippines. We had round-the-clock guards in the hotel there, because they have terrorist groups down there too. Not on the island that Manilla is located, but on the outlying islands. When we went to Caracas we had the same thing, because when the IPU met in Caracas it was only a month or so after that American businessman had been found, after being a captive of terrorists for three and a half years. So that place was alive with police and military. They were very careful in Rome, yes, to make sure that everything was taken care of.

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**RITCHIE:** In the election of 1980, for the first time in twenty-six years, the Republicans took control of the Senate from the Democrats. Stan Kimmitt stepped down as Secretary and Bill Hildenbrand was elected. You stayed on for a few months to handle the transition. Were there any particular problems of transition when one party succeeds another party after such a long period of being out of the majority?

**RIDGELY:** No. I didn't see any particular problems. You knew changes were going to come about. The first thing that happened with me was that people learned that I was here and was working here when it happened in the 83rd Congress, when that Congress went Republican. So they were coming to me and asking me what's going to happen? What was it like then? Well, the big thing that I told people was that people were concerned about their jobs, and rightfully so, and the only thing I could tell them was that with the change in the leadership and the control of the Senate, everybody, no matter where they were situated, had to have some thoughts that they could lose their jobs. Every one of us is here at the will of the Senate.

I said: "The only thing I could suggest is that you go back to your job, keep your nose clean, and wait and see." I said: "I don't expect to see any wholesale changes taking place" Looking at this change, I said: "You have to think back to the 83rd Congress when I recall that just about everything changed." The whole police force

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was patronage, believe it or not. The whole force changed, not a hundred percent but in terms of the

police force you could almost say it was the whole force. Even the clerks at the desk in the Senate changed. My recollection was that they didn't call them minority and majority clerks then, but they'd be Democrats and Republicans.

Let me give you an example, suppose they had in the 83rd Congress a Legislative Clerk and an Assistant Legislative Clerk. Well, in the 82nd Congress the Legislative Clerk would have been a Democrat and the Assistant would be a Republican. In the 83rd Congress the Legislative Clerk would have been the Republican and they switched back and forth. There was patronage in the Secretary's office like that. But in the twenty-six intervening years, with the activities of the Senate going from a part year institution to a full year institution, all of these jobs that had been patronage came off the patronage list and were made permanent positions. The people had to be there all the time.

You might say that no longer could the Senate afford this kind of thing in certain positions. I said, "But you have to remember, too, that these positions came off the patronage list while the Senate was under the control of the Democrats, and I would dare say that they could go back on the patronage list just as quick as they came off." But I said, "Myself, I don't see that happening." I told them, "I don't think that the changes will be wholesale. Whatever

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changes happen they're going to be slow. Some things will happen right away, others will happen later on as they get the feel for it." I said, "I think the change over is just as traumatic for the Republicans as it was for the Democrats." It was probably the biggest surprise of this century in the Senate. Well, I really don't know that it was that big a surprise, but it took everybody by surprise.

**RITCHIE:** I remember Senator [Howard] Baker saying on the floor that he'd been taken by surprise. He couldn't get used to the title of Majority Leader at first.

**RIDGELY:** Someone was telling me the other day, he said: "Stan Kimmitt couldn't believe it when it happened." Bill Hildenbrand walked into the office the third of November, the day after the election, and he was just stunned. He said, "No way would I have ever believed that this was going to happen." And it did happen.

**RITCHIE:** Well, did Hildenbrand ask your advice when he was setting up his office?

**RIDGELY:** Well, yes and no. He and Stan not only were good associates as far as the operation of the Senate but they were good friends too. Stan got together with Bill and I think all that Bill got, Stan passed on to him. Of course, I was there if he needed me. He had asked me what my plans were. Well,



my plans were that I

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was going to stay in the Assistant Secretary's job for two years. I hadn't told Stan that I would take it for any particular period, but in my own mind I had set a date. It was going to be March 1, 1981.

Then when Bill took over he asked me what my plans were, and I said, "Well, you know, I'd retired from the Senate once and I can still retire, and plan on doing that." I said, "I had planned on doing it before this." He said, "I'd like for you to stay on at least to take care of this next IPU trip." I'd already started the planning. In fact, that was the first trip that I handled, that was the first trip after it came back from the House side. He knew I'd been on the trips and was experienced in them, so he asked me to stay on as Assistant Secretary and take care of that trip for him. Because he'd never been on one. I said, "OK, but one thing we have to crank into this is that there are certain things that have to be done after the trip to get cleaned up and everything." He said, "OK, that's fine. You determine what you need in time and let me know what the date is." So I cleaned up things after that trip and set a date of June fifth. Then I went off the payroll.

Then Marilyn Courtot was appointed Assistant Secretary. She had never been on IPU trips, and was never involved in it. So Bill came to me one day before I left and said that Senator /Robert/ Stafford would like me to handle the arrangements for the IPU trips during this Congress while he was president of the U.S. group; because he

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had already been elected. I thought about it, and I said, "Let me think about that." I had no other commitments, I had no other offers, and really was interested. Then I went home and talked to my wife and she said, "Well, how much time will it take.?" I sat down and figured out how many days would be involved and came up with the figure, and she said, "Well, OK." And I said, "It will not be full time except when I travel with the group," or maybe a week or so when everything is coming down to the departure. As it is, with the involvement and all I've been doing, I really underestimated my time, not by too much but it has worked out very well. I'm delighted that I could do what I did for the Senate on this. What I'd learned of the trips, while the House was doing it, paid its dividends when I handled it during this Congress for the group.

**RITCHIE:** Now that you've completed it, it's gone back to the House, and will give Marilyn two years to catch on to it.

**RIDGELY:** Yes. She has traveled twice with the group and seen some of the things, and I presume that she will be in on some of the things like I was involved in with the House, creating a working liaison. I think the important thing that all of them have to remember is that this is a Congressional delegation. It's not a House or a Senate delegation but a joint delegation. You have to work with members on both sides. As it is, they have been excellent groups.

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**RITCHIE:** All in all, you've spent some thirty years working for the United States Senate. You talked about how the Disbursing Office changed from the green visor to the age of the computer, how would you say that the Senate as a whole has changed during the period you worked for it?

**RIDGELY:** Well, first I'd say that it's gone from a part time institution to a full time institution. But I think the biggest change is that--and I guess this is a personal thing--I can recall back during the time that I was Assistant Financial Clerk, I suppose that Bob Brenkworth and I when we were handling the front counter, we knew *everybody* who worked in the Senate. We could identify them by name, face, and office. You take that number compared to the number we have today, there is no way you could do it anymore.

The big change from paying cash twice a month to mailing their checks to the bank or to their home. They don't come in there twice a month. The only time they come in the Disbursing Office is when they have something to take care of as far as the payroll or other things are concerned, maybe how to make a voucher out, or things like this. You have to remember, we were a real family type of place when we were paying by cash, because everybody had to come to the Disbursing Office and get paid. You got to see them. You really made friends with everyone and you got to know them by their first names. This is a big change. You lost this. You know, there are people

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working here today, I would say the majority of people working here today I don't know. They're all new. That doesn't shake me up or anything, I know it's there, but it just makes it very different.

I sometimes wonder, and maybe I'm being a little critical, but I think of the dedication of today's employee of the Senate compared to the dedication of the people who worked here say thirty years ago. There's so many things that enter into it, our societal changes of course have changed a lot of things, the way people think. But the Senate is different. It's certainly more active. There are more people, more legislation, more of everything. It's been a big change over thirty years that all of this have happened.

Back in 1949, you might have a handful of senators who were national figures. Today you've got a hundred of them that are national figures, and rightfully so, too. You might say, right now with the things that have to be taken care of, they're not just taking care of matters for a particular state, they're involved in the nation. But that's our society that has changed. The demands on the Congress itself by the people themselves has created a big change.

**RITCHIE:** Also looking back over those thirty years, who would you say were the most memorable people that you dealt with?

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**RIDGELY:** Well, going back to the early years, where I was involved in a particular thing, personally involved position wise and otherwise, Senator [Carl] Hayden and Styles Bridges. I point to them back as far as 1954, those two members of the Senate. I think they both were grand people. Senator Hayden, he was the "work horse" and not the "show horse." I just read a little article about him the other day. In the first fifty years of his service in the Congress he gave one press conference. He and Styles Bridges, because they were on the Patronage Committees at the time. This is where my involvement came into it. I think both of them were grand people, rare people.

**RITCHIE:** It's interesting you mentioned them. Carl Hayden is one of those people whom people who worked for the Senate had a great regard for, and yet people outside the Senate really knew very little about. What was it about him that made him so admired?

**RIDGELY:** He was the kind of person that you felt very comfortable with. If you needed to see him you'd go to him, you didn't feel intimidated. I'm not saying that any of the senators really intimidate you, but you do run into persons every once in a while that you get that feeling of intimidation, but Senator Hayden would never make you feel uncomfortable. He would listen to you. If

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you needed something that he could help you with, held listen to you. He never made a big noise about anything, but held get it done for you. He was that kind of person.

**RITCHIE:** Now, Styles Bridges I think of as a more partisan figure, but I really don't have a very sharp image of him. What type of person was he?

**RIDGELY:** Well, of course, my involvement with him was back in '54. It involved a position in the Disbursing Office, and he was on the Patronage Committee, chairman of the Republican Patronage Committee and my position was involved with that at that time. My recollection and attitude as far as he was concerned was that he was a very fair person, and knowledgeable about the situation, well versed in what had to be done. The decision was one that he and Carl Hayden made together.

**RITCHIE:** The Disbursing Office was considered to be a non-patronage office.

**RIDGELY:** Right.

**RITCHIE:** Was there an effort to bring someone in under patronage?

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**RIDGELY:** Yes, there was. And it was because of the tragic events that happened. You have to remember that the Disbursing Office moved to that location in the Capitol in 1935. The Financial Clerk then was--I forget his name--but Colonel [Edwin] Halsey was the Secretary of the Senate. The Financial Clerk, this is what I was told, went down to Haynes Point and jumped off. He didn't drown but died of pneumonia as a result of that. Tragedy number one. Oco Thompson succeeded him, and Oco had a heart attack during his term as Financial Clerk. He retired and his brother George succeeded him. He had a heart attack during his term as Financial Clerk. Joe Ellis succeeded him, and Joe Ellis took his own life. I guess this bothered some of the people, who said "Hey, what's wrong with that position?"

Bob Brenkworth had already been appointed as Financial Clerk, so it was the second position, Assistant Financial Clerk, they were looking at. The senator from Idaho, Herman Welker, was the one pushing to bring in somebody from the outside, an accountant. Well, Bob Brenkworth's contention was, "I've got accountants coming out of my ears, graduate accountants." There was myself, Bob Malstrom, Jerry Northern, Jack Duncan. Four of us were graduate accountants. Bob said, "I don't need any

accountants." Of course, he pushed the fact that to bring anybody from the outside would be to make the office political. Now, my own thinking in this was this was probably what Senator Hayden and Senator Bridges were thinking about when they

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decided no. That's really what they said: No, promote from within. I was moved into that position from Chief Bookkeeper at the time. So this is where I came in.

Of course, I had some other dealings with Senator Bridges because he was on our Appropriations Subcommittee, the Legislative Subcommittee, and I used to go down to the hearings with Bob to assist him however I could. I got to know him and I respected the man very much. His first impression made a good impression on me, even though I was a young fellow at the time and he was older and certainly more in tune with the political arena that is here in the Senate. He impressed me in the decision that was made then. For me, I say it was good, but I think for the Senate it was good. It did keep the office in a non-partisan, non-patronage situation. And that's the way it ought to be.

**RITCHIE:** Well, you pointed out that the Financial Clerks had a string of tragedies, but it seems to me that you spent a long career there and came out doing pretty well. Whatever the curse of the others was you seem to have broken it.

**RIDGELY:** I don't know what it is, but I have to say that I've never had any yen to die with my boots on. I've always said that I walked out of there in sound mind and good health, and I'm grateful.

**RITCHIE:** Well, I think that's a real tribute to you.

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**RIDGELY:** It was just a tremendous experience, from the first day that I came to work here to the day I left. It's always been interesting because never do you get one day that is a shadow of another day. They just don't work that way. It always kept the job that interesting.

End of Interview #3

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Appendix A

**HAMPTON MISTRESS BUILT A ROMAN BATH**

**By Louise Hubbard  
(Washington Post, March 5, 1960)**

In 1949 Governor William Preston Lane participated in ceremonies which dedicated Hampton, patrimonial home of the Ridgelys for 150 years, a National Historic Site. He paid tribute to a former squire of the great mansion, Maryland's governor in 1816-1819, and referred to the home as "part of the fabric of the Nation's Heritage."

Hampton was saved for posterity by the Government because it represents an important phase in the history of American architecture. A mid-Georgian classic, it was built between 1783-1790 by Charles "the Mariner" Ridgely from the profits of his iron furnace and shipping enterprises. Charles probably designed the house but delegated the execution of his plans to a master carpenter whom he paid more than 3,000 pounds sterling.

The gates of the estate open from Hampton lane, less than a mile from Towson, Maryland. A driveway curves in front of the homes situated on the highest point of extensive grounds, once part of a 2,000 acre holding. The height of the structure is accentuated by a large octagonal cupola in the center of a roof decorated with urn-shaped finials, carved cornice, and framed dormers.

The walls are native stone, stuccoed on the outside and plastered inside, separated by an air space 2 feet wide. The main facades have double-galleried porticoes, with Chinese chippendale railings across the fronts on the upper level. These porches also have windows in enclosed sides, making them ideal summer living rooms. Blue glass fanlights above double entrance doors bear the family coat of arms, a deeper blue shield with a red band containing three white stars.

Hampton is one of the largest houses of its period measuring 175 by 55 feet. The central Great Hall runs the full depth. Approximately 22 by 53 feet in size, with a ceiling almost 14 feet tall it often doubled as a dining room. Fifty guests could be seated with ease and an invitation list of 300 persons was not uncommon.

When we see the exquisitely carved woodwork and hand planed walnut floors in the elegant drawing room, dining room, music and sitting rooms we should think of the hordes of workmen who came from

great distances to do the jobs. Daily these artisans rode through the forests from their homes and in the winter had to be dismissed by 3:00 o'clock so as to have daylight protection from bands of hungry wolves.

A modest stairway, rising from a small stairhall, halts on the second floor in a very elaborate middle hall. All the bedrooms open from this hall which has a rare convenience--four shallow closets for clothes storage. The third floor, divided into 10 low-ceilinged rooms, was the children's domain. A steep circular stairs winds up to the cupola or "doom," as it is described in the deed.

The wings which flank the main section of the mansion are attached by closed hyphens. In one is the old kitchen where present-day visitors may enjoy lunch or tea at tables set around a huge cooking fireplace, wall oven and brick warming stove.

The other wing was originally a laundry, with a school room above. For a while one of the later mistresses of Hampton converted the laundry into a Roman bath. Returning home from a trip to Italy she had cubicles installed here, taking advantage of the pump and well installed in one corner.

Many of the windowpanes have become wavy and clouded through the centuries, but still bear legible names scratched by diamonds. Crystal chandeliers blaze in rooms furnished with possessions of the Ridgelys and others. Portraits of members of the family, President Monroe and the Duke of Wellington hang on the walls. Books brought from England in the 1600s share bookcases with editions acquired by succeeding generations. The gardens are lovely in every season--surely an inspiring place to spend a day.

## Appendix B

### HAMPTON MANSION: A STANDARD FOR MAGNIFICENT

By Susan Stiles Dowell  
Maryland, XIV (Autumn 1981)

When Rebecca Dorsey Ridgely arrived at the "Large, New Building" which was to be her home, she was overcome by "a desire to be more Devoted to the Lord . . ." and promptly went to prayers.

Subsequent manor mistresses proved no less taken with their colossal abode. Eliza Ridgely embarked on a lifelong shopping spree which netted wall-to-wall "Turkey" carpets, chandeliers, and priceless European artwork. Margaretta Ridgely entertained 1,500 for tea, and Helen Ridgely, who likened the mansion to "the castle of some feudal lord," helped organize a hunt cup on the lawns.

Since 1788, Hampton Mansion has set a standard for magnificence in American manorial living. Not even the 20th century passing of the princely Ridgelys from Hampton's halls has diminished its reputation. Superlatives still apply.

The National Park Service, which owns and manages Hampton National Historic Site, states in its Historic Structure Report of 1980 that Hampton Mansion "is one of 71 outstanding examples of Georgia architecture still in existence in the United States. Its opulence has survived to the present, virtually intact . . . ." Also noted is the startling fact that at the time of its sale to the National Park Service in 1948, the mansion and its original outbuildings were a "superb and unaltered example of a great southern slave plantation."

The sight of Hampton mansion on its Baltimore County hilltop, surrounded by 45 acres of garden and grassy turf, is a shock for the unsuspecting motorist meandering along the suburban lanes north of Towson. If its grounds appear prodigious today, the incredulous on-looker might try imagining it with its original boundaries. It is said that Captain Charles Ridgely, builder of Hampton, could ride 27 miles across his property. At the time of his death, he had amassed a total of 10,000 acres in Baltimore County alone. A century later, descendants were still inheriting land in Baltimore City and Harford County.



Captain Ridgely was fourth in a line of enterprising new-world Ridgelys. Beginning with Robert, deputy secretary of the colony in St. Mary's County in 1671, the Ridgelys managed to be in the right places at the right times throughout Maryland history. Charles the Planter was ensconced in Anne Arundel County when that county was the richest in the Province. Charles the Merchant bought into Baltimore Country when it was frontier. Captain Charles the Builder capitalized on vast deposits of Baltimore County iron ore.

For 100 years after Captain Ridgely's death, iron ore was the source of Ridgely wealth. The Northampton Furnace supplied the Continental Army with armaments and became the keystone in a successful family mercantile business. Its profits built Hampton Mansion, and when the iron ore ran out, Northampton Furnace, now covered by the waters of Loch Raven Reservoir, provided a spectacular view from the mansion's north portico.

At the time of its construction, 1783-1788, Hampton Mansion was called "Ridgely's Folly." Wolves roamed the wilderness. The nearest neighbors were cabin dwellers who could not afford the price of a warming stove. A paucity of local gentry discouraged the influx of fashion; yet Captain Ridgely was a tycoon. His burgeoning wealth could easily underwrite the building of a palace in the boondocks.

Until recently, the majestic cupola atop Hampton Mansion was thought to be a replica of the octagonal dome on Castle Howard in England. Charles Ridgely, so the legend goes, displayed his kinship with the English Howards by copying their cupola. More probably, the idea originated with Ridgely's carpenter-architect, Jehu Howell. On a flyleaf of a 1787 accounting book, Ridgely wrote a note: "When I gave Mr. Howell leave to put on the Dome on my house, the expense, to me was not to exceed 180 pounds . . . ." Charles Ridgely indulged in luxuries, but flamboyance had a limit.

Jehu Howell may have been the architect of Hampton. Captain Ridgely, himself could have been the architect. Since the original plans for the building were lost many years ago, the identity of the master is a mystery. Whoever he was, he designed one of the largest houses in America, a record which stood until the mid-19th century.

His design, alas, did not earn him kudos. Diminutive wings and bulky porticos have categorized the architect as an amateur. Whatever his breach of Georgian architectural etiquette, he built a house that would accommodate the Ridgelys for six generations.

The new house was not yet painted when the Captain died. He was 57 and childless. His heir apparent was his nephew, a brother-in-law and business associate, Charles Carnan. Thirty-year old Carnan had

only to satisfy one condition in his uncle's will in order to inherit a fortune: change his name. With alacrity he obliged; by an act of the Maryland legislature of 1790, Charles Ridgely Carnan became Charles Carnan Ridgely. Aunt Rebecca, Captain Charles' wife, was still alive, and she had inherited the house. Only persistent wheedling and a fair portion of young Charles' fortune convinced her to relinquish Hampton Mansion.

By then, the new heir had become General Charles Carnan Ridgely. He and his wife celebrated their acquisition of Hampton Mansion by beginning work on the formal gardens. At a time when Jefferson was instituting the European mode of natural landscaping on the grounds of Monticello, General Ridgely moved tons of earth to create old-fashioned parterres on the south side of Hampton. It is said that construction of these three terraces involved movement of one of the largest volumes of earth in any early-American garden project. The result of his efforts, embellished by later generation, inspired one visitor to write: "it has been truly said of Hampton that it expresses more grandeur than any other place in America."

The General, a genteel man and superb host, lived well. A British guest in 1800 reported that Ridgely reputedly kept the best table in America; his stables housed the fastest thoroughbreds of the time; his fields were models of cultivation. His slaves numbered 312 and at his death in 1828, most of them were free. His will decreed that all slaves over 45 years of age were to be "provided for comfortably during their old age at the general charge of my Estate, to be borne in equal contribution by all my children and grandchildren."

The good General's term as Governor of Maryland from 1815 to 1818 gave Hampton Mansion its finest hours. One of the belles of the ball may have been a young lady who would become Hampton's most famous mistress. Eliza Ridgely married the General's son John when he was 38 and she was just 25. Her likeness, after a portrait by Thomas Sully (currently in possession of the National Gallery of Art), adorned calendars and playing cards of the time. Her considerable fortune, lavished on her by a doting father, brought to Hampton Mansion as quality of furnishings that could only be found on long, leisurely trips to Europe. A family legend recounts that she played the harp for the Marquis de Lafayette. Later in life, she and John Ridgely visited Lafayette at his home in France.

The ambience created by Eliza still pervades Hampton Mansion. The drawing room is filled with her Baltimore-made Empire furniture. An account she had with Scalandre of New York City was recently researched and a duplicate order filled for drawing room draperies. Her "Turkey" carpets and chandeliers furnished several rooms, and her harp graces the music room. In the garden, twelve marble urns which

she had purchased in Europe still decorate the walkways. Her innovative coleus garden is gone, but the quaint orangerie has been reconstructed.

Perhaps Eliza's greatest bequest to Hampton was the magic of her own likeness. In 1948, Alisa Mellon Bruce, fascinated with Sully's portrait of Eliza, "The Lady with the Harp," was prompted to learn more about her. Her inquiry led to the discovery that Hampton might be sold. Mrs. Bruce promptly formed the Avalon Foundation to purchase the house and 42 acres of its grounds in order to present them to the United States Government as a National Historic Trust property.

Today, Hampton is preserved as the stately antebellum plantation it was during Eliza's day. Her children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, even great, great grandchildren, were born and raised at Hampton. The Civil War, the loss of slave labor, and the increasingly pinched economy taxed the resources of those later generations, yet they managed somehow to preserve the beauty and character of their ancestral home. With the 1980 purchase of 14 acres from the adjoining Ridgely farm, Hampton National Historic Site has annexed a number of the original plantation structures, some of which predate Hampton Mansion. Given sufficient time and funding, the National Park Service may one day be able to present the public with a complete picture of one of America's oldest working plantations.

Appendix C

**STANDING STUDY COMMITTEES OF THE  
INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION**

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Committee on Political Questions,  
International Security, and Disarmament

Committee on Parliamentary,  
Juridical, and Human Rights Questions

Economic and Social Committee

Committee on Education, Science,  
Culture, and Environment

Committee on Non-Self-Governing  
Territories, and Ethnic Questions

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