National Park Service (NPS) History Collection

NPS Oral History Collection (HFCA 1817)
Harpers Ferry Center Employees Oral History Project, 2015-2019

Linda Meyers
September 18, 2019

Interview conducted by Angie Faulkner and Lu Ann Jones
Transcribed by Teresa Bergen
Edited by Linda Meyers
Digitized by Teresa Bergen

NPS History Collection
Harpers Ferry Center
PO Box 50
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425
HFC_Archivist@nps.gov

National Park Service Oral History Project
Harpers Ferry Center

Linda Meyers

18 September 2019

Interview conducted by
Angie Faulkner and Lu Ann Jones

Transcribed by
Teresa Bergen

The narrator has reviewed, corrected, and amplified the transcript by adding new material.

START OF TRANSCRIPT

START OF FILE 1

Lu Ann Jones: So I am going to start out just by saying that today is what we decided is September 17th—

Angie Faulkner: Eighteenth.

Lu Ann Jones: Eighteenth. September eighteenth. And we are here with--

Linda Meyers: Linda Meyers.

Angie Faulkner: Angie Faulkner.

Krista Pollett: And Krista Pollett.

Lu Ann Jones: And this is Lu Ann Jones. And we are recording this interview for our oral history project for the National Park Service. So thank you so much for doing this. And do we have your permission to record?

Linda Meyers: Yes, you do.
[January 2020 UPON REFLECTION: I appreciate the NPS Oral History Project for asking my input. And for giving this opportunity to amend for clarity, edit for literacy, and include some memories and observations that may be of interest. Thank you.]

Lu Ann Jones: Great. Thank you so much. So I'm going to turn it over to you, Angie.

Angie Faulkner: Okay, Linda Ruth Meyers. (laughter) When and where did you grow up and attend school?

Linda Meyers: I was born in South Bend, Indiana. I maybe had a bit of an unusual elementary education in that I went to Wagner School in German Township, a three-room schoolhouse with eight grades. After the first two years, the baby boom generation increased enrollment at Wagner and they took the seventh and eighth graders into South Bend Central Junior High. I continued the next four years with two grades to a room in the three-room schoolhouse. I went then to Central Junior High and on to Central High School, and I graduated in 1963. I was accepted at Ball State Teachers' College in Muncie, Indiana, which fortunately for me changed to a university status by my junior year. I had no intention of being a teacher.

Linda Meyers: I graduated with a Bachelor of Science in art, a minor in sociology and enough elective courses in the areas of city planning and urban government to almost have a second minor, but I didn't pursue that.

Linda Meyers: Then, in 1967, I had a contact here in Washington. She told me that there was going to be a vacancy at the Office of Resource Planning, and suggested I try to get an interview.

Lu Ann Jones: Is that the Park Service?

Linda Meyers: Yes. I got an interview with the chief of the office, who was Ed Peetz. That office was responsible for general development plans, the very beginnings of what makes a park a park. What I don't know is whether the restructuring that happened at that point was a result of Mission 66, or whether it just kind of happened. There had been planning offices in Denver, in Philadelphia, and in Washington. There may have been an office in San Francisco. But the NPS decided to create an Eastern Service Center in Washington and a Western Service Center in Denver. And as with all reorganizations, some people find other jobs, some retire, and some just quit. And that left a vacancy.

Linda Meyers: I interviewed with Mr. Peetz and he was interested in hiring me. But I had to take the Civil Service test, and I had to get on the Federal Register, and then I waited. And waited. That was in March. In August, they called me and they said, “We want to hire you. How soon can you get here?”

Linda Meyers: I said, “Is next week too soon?” And they said no. So, I came to Washington and took a job as a visual information specialist with the Office of Resource Planning for the National Park Service (NPS).

Linda Meyers: At that point, NPS publications, and most other government publications were one or two colors. We did brief public documents. Our professional planning staff would do the research and writing. They would do the planning aspect of what the NPS proposed doing with a piece of property, or how they wanted to alter a piece of property that already existed to expand on the possibilities of interpretation and presenting the park story to the visiting public. It was a very interesting job. The folks responsible for this very small publishing effort were an Editor--Heath Pemberton, Designer--Dick Moy and production aide, me. It was fairly fast-paced, because we were doing things for public meetings. A presentation would be scheduled and the booklet had to be printed and in the hands of whoever was going to give it out. I don't know whether it went to a congressional office, whether it went to just NPS people for the public presentations, or whether it was just handed out, possibly to any interested person. The Service was interested in presenting a visualization of what was there and what it could possibly be. The booklets were square formats. Now this one, for Gateway in New York City, actually used for its mapping and diagrams three colors—maybe even then four, but it wasn’t four-color process printing. They were flat colors. But most of the

documents were just two-color printing, black on the inside and two colors for the diagrams and the cover.

Linda Meyers: I make the distinction because the kind of mapping done in the ‘60s and early ‘70s were diagram maps. It was a far cry from cartography. Even when I went to the Publications Division in 1971, we were still doing two-color printing. Some people might remember the mini folder, which folded to three and a quarter inches by four inches, and printed in two colors with diagrammatic maps. Included was an overview of the site for its history, or natural history purposes. As a line item in the Federal budget we were challenged by Congressional direction to provide access information and health and safety information for people who were visiting the park.

Linda Meyers: Then along came the Bicentennial, which was a wonderful occurrence because we also had a chief of the Division of Publications who, in my opinion, was five years ahead of everybody else. He saw the potential of the Bicentennial allowing us to expand our publications program.

Angie Faulkner: What was his name?

Linda Meyers: Vincent Gleason. He began by contracting with R. R. Donnelley and Sons for mapping services. The primary task was to create a compilation, and that compilation would present the NPS all the kinds of cartographic contents that we could choose to include in our site-specific brochures. It would then be up to the publications staff, who did the production of the maps, to select the most important aspects of those compilations, scribe it, create peel coat windows and specify color tones. You can do a lot more with four process colors than you can with two or three flat colors.

Linda Meyers: And this opened the door. If you use process-color printing on one side of your piece of paper you might as well use it on the other side of the paper. So, we were able then to print full-color photographs, do historic recreative artwork and illustrate ecosystems that added to the content of the brochures. At that point, we had staff who would use scribe coat to create the linework. We had sources that could expose peel coats for area coloration and strip films for map labels. But the production assembly of the overlay and type positioning was done in-house. That was the beginning of the unigrid program.

Angie Faulkner: And that was during the Bicentennial year?

Linda Meyers: Yes, and a year or so before 1976. I know one of the first unigrids that we did was a two-color production. It was for Clara Barton National Historical Site. It was red and black. But then at that point, we were also working on Everglades National Park, which is complicated. There are ecosystems, water areas, development areas, roads, different kinds of

jurisdictions--city versus county-- and Park areas. It required a lot of different tones to do that. That was one of our first full-color unigrid brochures.

Linda Meyers: The unigrid just didn't happen, though. This is where Vince Gleason, again, contracted with Massimo Vignelli.

Angie Faulkner: Vignelli.

Linda Meyers: Vignelli was, a well-known graphic designer out of New York. Some of his work was with Knoll. And I think he did some work with Eames, another furniture designer.

Angie Faulkner: And he did the subway map.

Linda Meyers: Yeah, for New York City.

Lu Ann Jones: What is Knoll?

Linda Meyers: It's a furniture company and major manufacturer of what was then cutting-edge designs for chairs and office furniture. Vignelli came to us with a plan called the unigrid. What it did was take out of our hands as staff designers, the intricacies of the fold. What you could do is spend an inordinate amount of time deciding how you wanted to fold up that piece of paper once you decided how big it should be. And that eliminated that.

Linda Meyers: [The unigrid single panel, 110mm by 99mm, could increase a brochure's size by adding panels—usually three to six panels. The six-panel size was 110mm wide by 594mm long. It accordion folded to the single panel size. The two-panel wide brochure was 220mm by 99mm. Increases in size were achieved by adding two-panel units—usually three to six units. The six- panel brochure measured 220mm wide by 594mm long. Once accordion folded a final angle-fold made it the same size as a single panel brochure unit. The brochure or multiple printing plate exposures of a brochure fit standard sized press sheets with very little waste to be trimmed away. Of course, the black title band became a branding element that is recognized by all park visitors today.] Did we have any two-panels back then?

Angie Faulkner: I don't know.

Linda Meyers: I don't remember. But the best part about the unigrid concept was that we could then concentrate on the content of our brochures. That led us into a whole new impact for NPS printing, because at that point we had at least 300 parks, a few more than that. We didn't do them all at once. We had the unigrid for new areas. We had a few updates of unigrids. We had some

four- by nine-inch regular folders, the mini folder and a slightly larger midi folder. We had multiple printing contracts through the Government Printing Office (GPO) for all of these sizes. We tried to keep the printing in the general Washington area, because we would do our own press inspections rather than ask GPO to do them for us.

Linda Meyers: I was a Visual Information Specialist at the time and worked primarily on design and production much as the graphic designers do today, except without the computer. That was a whole era of historic proportions. I mean, graphics are just not done that way anymore.

Lu Ann Jones: Can you describe that process of what you're talking about?

Linda Meyers: Briefly, once the design and text were approved, we would make a mechanical for each side of the brochure. You'd start with a piece of illustration board. You would measure it out for the finished size of your brochure plus margins for instructions to the printer. A manuscript would be specified for typesetting—face, size, column width and line leading, bold headings, italic uses—by a typesetting contractor. The manuscript was set as specified and galley was provided to Publications for proof reading, edits were made if necessary and returned to the contractor. Changes were made as necessary and reproduction quality galley pages were sent to Publications. It was proofed and the designer would trim it, place it into position on the mechanical. You would accommodate by creating rubylith windows the placement of graphics that you wanted to bring to the content, either photographs or drawings and maps, or the diagrams. That had to work in such a way that you could print both sides of the folder with columns and positioning of elements working with the trim size and folds. You introduced a flat color or a percentage of the flat color, with art overlays done with amberlith. You cut it by hand, very carefully. All the overlays had to register. It was time-consuming and required a certain amount of dexterity to do it. That was the production end.

Linda Meyers: The designing end was fun because you were trying to present a folder as you had designed the story to unfold. The mechanicals were then submitted to a printer. All the elements were photographed and made into negatives. The printer stripped the graphics--negatives into place--and composited them into a film for each color. And, of course, the negatives were exposed to press plates for each color needed for the press.

Linda Meyers: The printing industry in the late, well, the eighties and early nineties began to change radically. It started, we first noticed in the color separation process. The old way to create color process film for printing was to shoot through filters with a camera to get yellow, cyan, magenta and black films. It was very subjective, because the separation house (or printer) had to

proof those films that came from that process, and sometimes the color presentation wasn't exactly as it had been in what was being copied. So, they'd have to reshoot various negatives to see if they could get closer to the color. Then they would submit proofs to the client, which was the NPS at that point. [Proofs were compared with the transparency, slide, or original art under 5000 kelvin temperature lighting—also used by the separation houses—bringing a degree of standardization to the review process.] And we brought more subjective qualities to it. And they would have to reshoot to adjust the color. It's very time-consuming and costly for the printers to do it that way.

Linda Meyers: Along came scanning, and what scanning did was eliminate more of the variables. If you have a reflective piece of original art, you can get various results based on the pigments that the artist used. We had one artist who used as part of an underlay paint, and also as highlights, something called China white. It did not photograph like other white pigments. As a result of that, and the best example is the North Cascades panorama poster art that Heinrich Berann illustrated.

Linda Meyers: The separation is awful. (laughs) The color representation doesn't come anywhere near Berann's original. And they couldn't get it through the process. What I wished, later, after we had those original art pieces photographed to professional quality color transparencies, was re-separating that art. We should have done that. It would have been a much better poster.

Linda Meyers: Converting reflective art to transparent art also eliminates the pigment problem. Because color transparency film has a standard set of variables built into the dyes of those colors. With those standard measurements the content is going to scan in a standard way. There is less trial and error when you scan the transparency to get a good process-color reproduction into four films that when it is put on a printing press, gosh it comes out looking like it's supposed to look. That was the first step.

Linda Meyers: Thinking back, I'm not sure whether it was the printing industry itself that orchestrated the change in the printing industry, or whether it was the different aspects of the printing industry that saw the changes coming and tried to marry into it.

Angie Faulkner: When you say changes, you're saying like technology evolution?

Linda Meyers: Technology. Most of it also was in response to volatile chemicals in the press room. Press inks had been oil-based. Anything that was used as a cleaner or a thinner had volatile chemicals in it. They tried to take that out. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) wanted to take that out of industries as much as they could. The printing industry changed from oil-

based inks to water-based inks, which meant that they had to use a vegetable oil. That was fine, and it was much easier for them to clean the press and just clean up after a press run was done. But the printing paper that was being made at that time didn't like the water-based inks. We had a period there, even in NPS publications, where the visual quality was not up to the visual quality we had been used to with oil-based inks. And there wasn't much we could do about it, because—

Lu Ann Jones: I'm going to ask you to be aware of that—

Linda Meyers: Because we were not able to control the paper source part of it. That was up to our contract printers. They didn't want a bad product. The NPS didn't want a bad product. And it was necessary for them, then, to go to their paper manufacturers and say, "What can you do about this?"

Linda Meyers: The other thing that came into that was the advent of using recycled paper. All this kind of hit between a five- to ten-year span of time.

Lu Ann Jones: You're talking about like the nineties, early 2000s?

Linda Meyers: The late nineties, I would say, were the times of the biggest change. And it all had to do with electronics. How shall I say this? The processes that were changed ultimately were for the better. The pressman could stand at the control panel, instead of needing to go up onto the press, add ink to the trays by hand, and turn the ink keys every time one of the ink fonts got low. The industry had introduced a console. And you could tell by the little lighted dots if one of those ink fonts was getting low on ink. The pressman just turned the appropriate ink color knob, pushed the button a couple of times to adjust the ink flow. All of a sudden you had an even flow of ink across the whole printing surface. Much easier on the pressman and much faster to control.

Linda Meyers: The paper went through several changes. Using virgin paper means that most of the fibers are longer fibers. The paper is stronger. Some of our printing was done on a web press. Going through a web press at the speed it does, you wonder how any web of paper holds together. Recycled paper makes much more use of short fibers, not as strong. The other thing that is affected by the fiber length is that some papers don't fold as well. We had a major problem for a while where our folders would come in for approval looking just fine. If you took a hold of them and gave them a tug, they came apart at the folds. We had several visitors come back to the visitors' centers and say, "Your folders have fallen apart. Can I have another one?" Most of the parks were free enough to give them another folder at that time. But that was soon to end. But that was the industry: paper changes, ink changes, press changes, color reproduction changes. They all

happened very, very quickly, but progressively. One thing led to another which affected the end product for several years.

Angie Faulkner: And typographic.

Linda Meyers: And typographic changes. We got to the point, that's a whole other story. [Typesetting in the late '60s and early '70s was through a contract using linotype equipment for hot metal slugs. Phototype was in development—the Office of Environmental Planning and Design made an investment in in-office equipment. Text was coded for font, size, leading, column width with additional codes for bold and italic images. Copy was keyboarded to paper tape, and the tape was fed electronically to a drum around which was a film strip of font-specific letterform images. As the tape was read by the spinning drum, letterforms were exposed to a photo sensitive paper. Professional level phototype-equipment replaced linotype machines. The Division of Publications continued to specify manuscripts for our typesetting contractor (Harlowe Typographers). Publications made no effort to make a capital investment for in-house typesetting. There was neither staff, funding, nor time to produce as many manuscripts to repro-quality galley to meet the publishing schedule.

Linda Meyers: How, or if, type designers were compensated for the use of typefaces that may have been copyrighted into these other mediums, and ultimately to computerized fonts is part of the industry evolution of which I know nothing.]

Linda Meyers: We started out in publications with the unigrid, using the Helvetica and New English type fonts. Today?

Angie Faulkner: No, we use Frutiger.

Linda Meyers: I remember that change now. Again, the Helvetica was a rounder face and took up a little more real estate. Some of these other faces are more narrow in their development and probably a little bit easier to read as a word, rather than an image or a letterform. But that was one of the reasons that I can truly say that no one year in my 45 years of working for the NPS had ever been the same. It just changed. There was something about every year that changed.

Angie Faulkner: You saw a lot of technology come along and I wonder what that was like. Because you talked about the North Cascades reflective art. Can you briefly say what reflective art is?

Linda Meyers: Sure. Reflective art is actual original artwork. It can be watercolor, it can be oils, it could be acrylic, it could be gouache. [Various artists use various bases like watercolor papers, canvas, illustration boards, or even

wood. Most artists use acid free substrates for long-term preservation reasons.]

Angie Faulkner: You can shine light on it, and it reflects, and light coming through it is a transparency, like a slide.

Linda Meyers: When artwork is viewed or photographed light bounces back to the eyes or camera lens—therefore its reflective nature. Good point, thanks Angie. Art was done in varying sizes too. I mean, you could have a small piece relatively easy to handle in a photo lab, or you could have a huge piece, which required special equipment to copy and much more space in which to do it. The reflective pieces were also more fragile. I often worried about the way we were keeping them.

Linda Meyers: Which gets into another area that I encouraged Vince Gleason to some degree to deal with. When I first went to publications, there was a one room office and a closet down at Main Interior as an in-town space. And the artwork that had been commissioned was in that closet. There were no controlled conditions, and they stored it in there and closed the door. Well, Main Interior wanted that particular room and that particular closet for other offices. So, they moved Vince's downtown office to another room and asked that we clear out the closet. Which was a good thing, because when I began to see what was there, I said to Vince, "We need to do something a little better with this." What we did, which was still not the best, was move it to another room in our Harpers Ferry Center (HFC) office which was dedicated to some of our archival items and contained artwork, archival printed material and book printing films and printing packages.

Linda Meyers: The other thing that we needed to do was record the conditions under which this art had been contracted. I thank my lucky stars that Vince was a paper keeper like some of the others of us in the office, because we were able to go back and find those contracts.

Linda Meyers: At that time, art purchased by the NPS was public domain. Anybody could use it any way they wanted anytime they wanted. It was an economical way to tell a story visually. Our artists began to increase their costs. That's when some of the photographers began also to increase their costs.

Linda Meyers: So that's when the whole issue of copyright and ownership became important. Art was a wonderful way to add content to our brochures that were being produced in today's very visual world. Higher costs were offset by granting the retention of copyright to the artist. That meant the original wasn't public domain art anymore. If we were going to grant the artist ownership of the original piece of art, then the NPS would return the original to the artist. The NPS would contract for unlimited NPS use rights

of the image. All these agreements had to be recorded so that when a request from an outside source came we could say, "I'm sorry, that's not in the public domain. If you wish to use it, you'll have to contact the artist."

Linda Meyers: An example was Casa Grande Ruins National Monument artwork. The current tribes that are descendants of the original inhabitants preferred that aspects of their historic environment and their lifestyle not be visualized by artwork. Somehow, somebody convinced them that they should allow the artwork. And so they agreed. With the tribe's concurrence, that lifestyle was depicted. And it's a great piece of art. It takes you back almost to prehistory, in a way. There was a land development company that was using some adobe-like structures and design-like lifestyle structures in something that they were going to build. They wanted to do an advertising brochure that said this artwork is our inspiration. And this visual just sets the tone for the kind of development they wanted to create. They came to us and asked us if they could use that art. I told the lady "I have to get back to you on that. I've got to check the contract."

Linda Meyers: Checking the contract, I discovered that only the NPS had been granted permission to use that art. And only in the brochure. I also called the park and I talked to them. They said, "Yes, that's true. We can't authorize anybody else to use it."

Linda Meyers: Calling the company back I said, "I'm sorry, but there are use restrictions on that particular art. And I hope you can find something else that's suitable." They came back to us again and again. Still trying to convince me, they sent me a digital copy of their mockup for the advertising booklet that they wanted to print. The credits in the back, were worded in such a way that it could be construed that not only did the NPS allow the use of this piece of art, but it might indeed be construed as an endorsement of the product, which, of course, the NPS can't do.

Linda Meyers: Consulting our contracting officer, I said, "Here's the situation. The development company can't use it. What can we do?" The contracting office went to the solicitor's office, and they came up with a very good solution. If the development company wanted to contact the tribes and could get their permission to use it, then the NPS could make the digital image available to them. The tribes only met once a year--they had just met. And these people wanted to get this advertising piece out immediately. Because they realized then that; one, the tribes were not going to give their approval, and two, the NPS could not allow itself to be perceived to endorse this, they might as well just forget it as a bad idea. That was the end of the story.

Linda Meyers: So, there are a lot of things that come into play with copyright and ownership and use restrictions that are put onto it by our Park and Publication people. They know the park, they know their people, and they're definitely in control of what is said about their parks. I believe it was under Mott, when he was director, who wanted to encourage private industry to help fund the printing of the parks' brochures. I think he was thinking in terms of a grant from a major industry. But then there was also the question, what about that private-sector inn or business that's just outside the park? Are they going to want to contribute to that park's brochure? Because the NPS was considering giving a credit line in the brochure, again, you have an issue of endorsement and advertising. Again, we don't advertise in our brochures.

Angie Faulkner: Conflict of interest.

Linda Meyers: A conflict in part, but more misplaced endorsements of private business. The only thing that bothers me is this little logo to the National Park Foundation that is now included. I don't know whether they are contributing to the cost of printing or not. That has bothered me from its inception. But it may have been a political decision rather than an economic one.

Linda Meyers: The economic decisions may have been an outgrowth of some of the political movements at the time. I do know that there was a question on sustainability. The NPS was trying to put together a report for the facilities of the Service and how they were sustainable and how they could be modified if necessary for that. They readily agreed that the publications were not a facility, but they wanted to explore the possibilities. I was asked to answer that question on NPS publications and the process. I gave them a pretty clear view of how we did it and what we contracted for and what we didn't. Ultimately, I believe they decided that they would not consider it in their sustainability report or plan that they were putting across. Could the Foundation's logo inclusion have been an economic sustainability solution?

Linda Meyers: The biggest aspect of our procedures is that the NPS doesn't print. We contract the printing through the GPO. Contracts are advertised for each format needed and are awarded to the lowest bidder or to the company that can meet the contracts requirements. It is through those contracts and totally out of our control, except for the contract terms and press inspections, that the printing is done. So, sustainability in that respect had pretty much been addressed because the industry itself had changed so much. It has been interesting all the changes that have occurred.

Angie Faulkner: I'm going to go a little bit back again and ask you, your first office was in Main Interior?

Linda Meyers: No, it was in Rosslyn, Virginia. The first two years, the Office of Resource Planning was in a building on Lynn Street--until the wall fell in. (laughter) The fourth floor was office, and half of the second floor was office. Half the second floor was a parking level access. The third floor was a parking level. It was open to the wind. They couldn't keep the fourth floor warm, and they couldn't keep the second floor warm. It was a rental building. So the owners of the building came in and built a cement block wall. They did not, however, tie it into the building itself. We had a tremendous wind or something one day, and the cement blocks buckled and fell. It was shortly after that that they moved our office up to Wisconsin Avenue in the District of Columbia.

Linda Meyers: About the same time, or shortly thereafter, they changed the name to the Office of Environmental Planning and Design. It still had the same mandate to produce general development plans. We did that for another couple of years there. And then, another reorganization occurred. They decided to merge this particular aspect of NPS planning in Denver's Western Service Center. And that's when I declined to take my job. I had worked on occasion for Vince Gleason in NPS Publications. Those were back in the days when there was an administrative change, you did briefing books, you did storyboards. It was Saturday and Sunday work, and you worked like the devil because you had a limited time to do a lot of work. The figures and facts that they wanted to represent were still coming down from upstairs at main Interior. It was fun. But it was exciting, and it was taxing to do it. I don't remember how many of those occasions there were. I know Vince would call Mr. Peetz and say, "Can we have her?"

Linda Meyers: I went over to the group doing those presentations all except for one time. Mr. Gleason knew my work so when the Office of Environmental Planning and Design decided to move to Denver, I called Mr. Gleason and said, "I'm not going. Do you by any chance have a vacancy that I could fill?"

Linda Meyers: He thought about it for a while and he had one of his staff call me back and said he could offer a 700-hour appointment. I said, "I'll take it. Understand I'm going to continue looking for a fulltime job, because I have to work." Before my 700 hours was up, he offered me a fulltime position in the Division of Publications. That's how I made the jump from the Environmental Planning office to the Publications Division.

Angie Faulkner: And where was that office?

Linda Meyers: That office, well, that was in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia by that time.

Angie Faulkner: Okay. So you came in after the opening of Harpers Ferry—

Linda Meyers: Yeah, it was the fall of 1970, about a year and a half after the center opened.

Angie Faulkner: --when he was the person who sort of got that whole movement going.

Linda Meyers: He was. Yeah. And I'm hoping you can find that letter that Vince Gleason wrote advocating the consolidation of interpretive services. Because Vince was instrumental in getting Harpers Ferry Center (HFC) built and established. And I thought I had a copy of it. But I don't. I think I know where one is, and I've told Angie where to look.

Angie Faulkner: So what was that like, leaving DC and coming out to the sticks of West Virginia?

Linda Meyers: Absolutely wonderful. And I say that because the NPS owned the building that I was moving into! We weren't renting it through GSA. And we weren't subject to having to move because a lease was up or the building fell apart. I mean, moving and reorganization, for a government office, is disruptive. You lose continuity of what you're doing. You lose at least three to four months of real work time just moving out of one space and into another and getting geared up. It's very disruptive. When I went to HFC, I knew that I was going to be there for a while. (laughs) So that was very comforting. I'd only been in the NPS four years, and I'd moved twice. I just didn't want to do that again. Which was kind of one of the things that, when I retired, we moved out of the top floor of the building because some major renovations were going to occur at HFC. I kept telling people, "This is a one-way move for me."

Linda Meyers: I know my immediate boss confronted me the next morning and she said, "We just had a review of your work yesterday and you didn't say anything about retiring. When are you going to do this?"

Linda Meyers: I said, "You know, I can't tell you when I'm going to retire. But I'll tell you what I've told everybody else. This is a one-way move for me." When they finally decided that the building was ready for us to move back into, I decided that it was time to go. (laughs)

Angie Faulkner: So what do you remember when you came to work at Harpers Ferry Center? What was the workforce like?

Linda Meyers: We had three cartographers. We had five designers. We had a clerical staff of two, plus one person who was a liaison with the printer. She did print orders and verified the print packages so the jobs we produced actually got out the door. Which was kind of interesting, because even when I was with Resource Planning, the printing was done through Vince Gleason's

office. The print orders that were done were done by the staff in Harpers Ferry's Publications because they went through GPO. So, the continuity there between how things worked was pretty good. It worked pretty well.

Angie Faulkner: I'm curious, though, also, what was the gender ratio when you came in?

Linda Meyers: Oh. Hmm. That's interesting. In the late '60s and early '70s, it was mostly male, both in Resource Planning and in Publications. We had acquired a few editors from the field. They came into Publications when HFC was established. Part of the impetus behind the center was to get interpretive services all together. Some were in the field in regional offices and some were in Washington, and HFC brought them all together. Cartographers were all male at that time. Secretarial staff, the support staff, were all female. There were, including me when I came in, two designers who were women. The other three were men.

Linda Meyers: Eleanor Calhoun was an editor and had previously headed the publications division. She was the one who reviewed all the print packages before they actually left the building. She was very good. She didn't let anything go unresolved. I remember one day she called me into her office. She had a printing package that had come from the Western Service Center, it had started in Environmental Planning and Design at the Eastern Service center before it moved to Denver. It was *Plants, People and Environmental Quality,* a publication that Gary Robinette and Dave Wright had wanted to put out. It talked about screen planting, how plants and their locations can affect the environment, the views, and even temperatures around structures. It is a fun book. She was looking at the package and she said, "Linda, can this be printed?"

Linda Meyers: I looked at it and I said, "Well, no. There are things missing." What we eventually had to do was get one of the graphics people back to help finish that book. Get Dave Wright in to make sure that editorial corrections were made. Again, this was a publication produced in another office that went through Vince Gleason's access to GPO printing contracts.

Linda Meyers: But all of the rest of the editors at that point were men. And I'm trying to think how many we had, maybe seven?

Angie Faulkner: Wow.

Linda Meyers: Maybe seven editors at that point. After a few years a couple fellows retired and two women writer/editors were hired. And Tracey Rissler filled the position that Mac Hess assumed after Ms. Calhoun retired. Eleanor, Mac, and Tracey--contacting the parks, determine updates needed, quantity, and delivery needs—was absolutely necessary to the production results of the Publications operation.

Linda Meyers: One funny story I remember from the day I went on staff at Resource Planning was when I was introduced to everybody. And I came to Hobie Cawood. I said, “Hobie, you’re the only person whose name I’m going to remember tomorrow morning.”

Linda Meyers: And he looked at me and he said, “Why?”

Linda Meyers: And I said, “Because you’ve got on a blue shirt.” Everybody in there was a sea of white shirts and ties. It was mostly men. I mean, there was only three women in the visual information specialist group, and one sociologist in the planning group and the two clerical staff were women. But all the others were men. I don't remember how many people we had in Resource planning.

Angie Faulkner: Yes. Because we only have three editors now.

Linda Meyers: I know. Publications has reduced its staff considerably as time has gone on.

Angie Faulkner: Our entire office is female, except for one cartographer.

Linda Meyers: That’s incredible. I personally feel an office benefits with a healthy mix of genders. Subjects are approached differently and effectively by mixed perspectives,

Angie Faulkner: It is really amazing how that’s changed.

Linda Meyers: Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: So what did you think about working for the NPS and its particular mission?

Linda Meyers: I’ve always said that the NPS was one of the best places to be. Because to be a park visitor, you didn't have to be pink or purple, black or white. You didn’t have to be a certain religion. You didn’t have to be a certain class of people. Anybody can go to a national park and enjoy it just like anybody else. There were efforts in the NPS to even broaden that, so that more urban people would want to go to parks. That was really one reason for some of the urban parks like the Gateways, and the little vest pocket parks that are in metropolitan areas--in New York I think there’s a couple of small areas that were started just as green areas that people could go to. They were welcome to go.

Linda Meyers: I grew up on five acres of land and I always liked to go out and just wander around. I liked the fact that the country was preserving these vast

amounts of landscape that had various and interesting backgrounds. I worry a little bit today about trying to reduce that. I mean, it's just sometimes what exists should be left alone. But that's kind of my feeling about it. I think the parks are probably one of America's greatest assets.

Angie Faulkner: I agree.

Angie Faulkner: So you've mentioned Vince Gleason, that he was the head of the division. And he brought about a big vision for this unified media center.

Linda Meyers: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

Angie Faulkner: So what was he like?

Linda Meyers: An irascible individual. You either liked Vince or you didn't. And that's unfortunate. Because when you got to know him, he was ahead of the game. You didn't always understand where he was going with something, because he didn't share his vision so much. He just steered the division in the direction that his vision would take the office. He was instrumental in creating not only the unigrid folder system, that met the mission congress created our appropriation for, but he was instrumental in starting a new handbook program (old existing handbooks were reprinted by GPO when parks wanted them for sale by their associations or friend's group—those films were in our office.) and the poster program. And both of those were off budget. Vince was incredibly able to find other funding. He was always able to go to other offices, particularly at the end of the fiscal year.

Lu Ann Jones: Let's hold on here for a minute. [pause] We're back recording now.

Linda Meyers: Right. Okay. The end-of-year money from other offices, had to be spent. But because other offices had to create contracts for a lot of what they did, at the end of the year it's almost impossible to get a contract through in a short period of time. Vince would go to these offices. "I can spend that money tomorrow." Usually we would have in our pipeline, a handbook that was ready to go to the printer. Or a poster that was ready to go to the printer. Or one of each. Sometimes, a couple of handbooks. We could spend legitimately appropriated money from other sources. They just had to transfer it to us. So that's how our handbook program was managed financially.

Angie Faulkner: So you always just had like a handbook waiting in the wings—

Linda Meyers: Just about.

Angie Faulkner: --if someone showed up with some cash.

Linda Meyers: Vince would come in the door and say, "Okay. Do the print order." because he had managed to get funding changed downtown Washington. That's why he kept his Washington office and he kept in contact with the various NPS offices down there. Those handbooks and the posters were a moneymaking endeavor. We did, at essentially no extra cost, the design and writing. The handbook size was made up of unigrid components for press size paper-use economies. Some of the contracts for the art, often used in the unigrid brochure program, came out of our regular budget as did the production for them and reproduction rights for the photographs that we printed. When the book was submitted to the GPO, at least 90 percent of the print run, went to GPO for sales. We got administrative copies. The parks got a few copies. The Park Service associations and the Friend's groups would buy copies from the GPO. Say you had a Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument Association. They would buy the Custer handbook, or buy a large quantity of it, and sell it at the park to the visitors. The association, then, donated a percentage of money back to the NPS. Money that they used to buy the books out of the GPO went into the U.S. Treasury. And money that came back to the NPS was then reallocated for other NPS uses. So it was a wonderful economic revolution of funds. I'm sorry that it's not happening anymore.

Angie Faulkner: I was sad to see the handbooks not being printed anymore.

Linda Meyers: Yeah. The trouble is, as with most handbooks, the information gets dated or changes in time. The parks discover new information and it's necessary for them to want updates. Then the updates became an expensive issue. Because we had to do those with appropriated funds or with contributed park money. And everyone's appropriated funds kept going down. Use rights for some photos had to be re-acquired. One-time use meant one print run. That was a problem.

Angie Faulkner: Yeah, that's true.

END OF FILE 1

START OF FILE 2

Lu Ann Jones: So let me just say that this is our second, we're beginning a new recording at this point.

Linda Meyers: Okay.

Lu Ann Jones: So why don't we take it from there?

Linda Meyers: Okay. I was just looking here at some things I wanted to touch on. One of them, when our budget was cut, I would say that there weren't any direct

political ramifications. What hit us were budget changes. And there were efforts to try to find other money. Some were not so successful.

Lu Ann Jones: Are we talking about a particular time period here?

Linda Meyers: I would say this happened periodically over the 45 years I was in the NPS, but most noticeably in the years between 1995 and 2013. The budget reductions ultimately required some changes. [I believe it was during the Reagan Administration in the 1980's when the NPS Professional Publications office was closed. They did books like *Badger House Community* at Mesa Verde, *Middle Missouri Archeology* and *Casemates and Cannonballs* about archeological investigations at Fort Stanwix. What became of the printing films from the professional publications group I have no knowledge. Reagan seemed to think that there were too many government publishing offices.]

Linda Meyers: Publications used to print an entire park's brochure need. If Yellowstone needed 400,000 copies or more, we printed all the copies they needed. And we paid for it. The park paid for the shipping, and only the shipping. So, when the truck got there, they were given the bill for the transit, but not any of the development or printing costs. When they began to cut our budget, we had to begin cutting back on the number of quantities we supplied each park. And what is it now, maximum fifty thousand?

Angie Faulkner: Mm hmm.

Linda Meyers: Okay. That's remained fairly stable, then.

Angie Faulkner: So the park has to come up with the extra funds—

Linda Meyers: If they want more.

Angie Faulkner: Fill the rest of their order.

Linda Meyers: Sometimes they can fund additional copies, and sometimes they can't.

Angie Faulkner: But just for context, Yosemite gets a million unigrids a year.

Lu Ann Jones: Wow.

Angie Faulkner: So from 50,000 to a million, that's an enormous amount.

Linda Meyers: Right. And the effort is still to give at least every carload of park visitor's a brochure, because that's the mandate we have, to provide access and safety information. Some make the argument that it's on their website. I don't have a web access, and I'm sure there are other people in my age

bracket that have nothing to refer to electronically. And I'm not sure where that's going to go since several parks are so remote that there is no internet access. Because as long as Congress appropriates money for publications independent of operating funds for the NPS, some tend to look at that and say, "Well, that unit can get along without that money." There have been several attempts over the years to take Publications out of the budget as a line item. Having Congressional backing is important. I used to think it gave us too much visibility to be a line item in the budget. But I don't think so today. I really think that it's important that we stay a line item. I think it's a lot harder to eliminate a line item than it would be to just reduce the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) budgetary amount for ONPS funds. So that's important.

Linda Meyers: I want to go back a little bit to creating the system of cataloging our art collection. When I began to realize how much value there was, I realized that an Inspector General's recommendation that we needed to make other arrangements for it was valid. Eventually we did move it from our office space to another building in Harpers Ferry that was temperature controlled and more secure. It was easier to appropriately hang large pieces, package and store smaller units, use flat file drawers and secure it. But what I had always wanted to do was make sure that we had the contract information that went with each of those things. So I kind of did two things. If it was a reflective piece of work, it was professionally photographed, and where possible, color separated from the transparencies rather than from the original art. That made sure that the artwork itself did not get damaged. We did have one piece that got folded in half--Lassen Volcanic National Park by Lloyd Kenneth Townsend. There was a copyist that recreated that piece of art for us. And it reduced all of those pigments, which I spoke of earlier, to a controlled film base. It was easier and more cost effective to color separate it.

Linda Meyers: We had not only the original piece of art carefully preserved, but we had a transparency. So if something did happen to either one or the other, we had a backup. We had an investment, and it was our obligation to make sure that the investment was safe and archived, and that we had paperwork and everything to cover any discrepancies that might arise. So I guess I fell into that particular job because I don't think anybody else wanted it. (laughs)

Angie Faulkner: Well I have to say, you're my hero for recordkeeping and archiving. I want you to tell these folks the story about Russell Cave. Because I just recently re-did a Russell Cave brochure. And I went back to the transparency and had this discovery.

Linda Meyers: (laughs) It was a view of the interior of the cave peopled by several of the inhabitants during the period. And, is that a Glanzman piece?

Angie Faulkner: Mm hmm.

Linda Meyers: Okay. One of the principal characters was a lady and she was bare-chested. She was in a seated position. And not anything pornographic or crude about it. She just was sitting there.

Angie Faulkner: Weaving a mat.

Linda Meyers: Doing what one does in a cave in that period of time. There was a complaint. And I forgot where the complaint came from. But anyway, the park objected to the nudity and the artwork was changed by the artist and re-photographed.

Angie Faulkner: And made into a young man.

Linda Meyers: Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: When I went down to Russell Cave, they liked to joke that they were the first sex change in the Park Service. (laughter)

Linda Meyers: I'm glad they're laughing about it. We thought it was a little bit over the top to change history that way.

Lu Ann Jones: That's interesting.

Linda Meyers: That was one change that was made. I was trying to think if there was another one. Oh! I just got a copy of the new Tonto National Monument folder.

Angie Faulkner: Okay.

Linda Meyers: We had as part of the original illustration a young brave, large scale and in a transparent-like form. I mean, you could kind of see through him.

Angie Faulkner: Ghosting.

Linda Meyers: Ghosting. Part of the artwork--it wasn't added--a part of the original scene of the cave and the terrain. Several year's brochures were printed, but the park came back and asked us to take that figure out. We asked why? They said, "Well, all the visitors ask where the statue is." I guess I began to realize how literal people sometimes take things. And we took the statue out electronically. (laughs) The new folder's quite nice, though. I like it. So these kinds of things happen. These changes, as Angie found out when she went back to look, are documented. They're there. It's important that

that be part of our record. I'm kind of hoping that maybe Wade Myers can give some sense of value to the collection that we have.

Linda Meyers: I know at one point a suggestion was made to move some of the art to other repositories, the Berann pieces didn't move to Library of Congress, did they?

Angie Faulkner: They might have. They have a map archive there.

Linda Meyers: They might have done it. Heinrich Berann was a preeminent illustrator of landscapes. He did four or five aerial-like panorama landscapes for the NPS of the mountains and surrounding terrain. He took a little bit of artistic license in shifting a mountain so you could see what was behind it. And they averaged around $40,000.

Angie Faulkner: For each?

Linda Meyers: Or at least the average amount was in the $35,000 range. We were not supposed to contract with foreign sources. Our work with Berann was done through a subcontract let by R.R. Donnelley and Sons to Berann to give the NPS these wonderful pieces of art and to extend the cartographic integrity of visualization techniques. Vince found a way to get what the NPS needed from good, reputable artists. That's why our collection is as good as it is. It's just really wonderful. I don't want to see the Service let go of it. But I can see someday when it might end up at either the National Archives or some other place. But it shouldn't. What I'm worried about then is any agreements that we have will not be honored. And that could be a problem. Because there has to be somebody who understands why that piece is where it is and what it's doing and what any constraints are on it. But I just wanted to make sure that copyrights are honored, ownership is important, and not everything that the government bought is in the public domain.

Linda Meyers: [The booklet *Mud & Guts* is a great example of honoring the copyright. In 1978, on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the encampment at Valley Forge, the NPS contracted with Bill Mauldin to both write and illustrate this booklet. He retained copyright on both text and artwork. A plan came from GPO in the early 2000's to scan this entire book and make it available on their website along with other NPS titles. The Office of Publications asked them not to scan photographs from some of the titles on their wish list because only one-time print reproduction rights had been obtained and the Mauldin book was fully copyrighted by Mauldin. He is deceased now, and the copyright is part of his estate—only the estate can authorize or repurpose any or all parts of the publication.]

Angie Faulkner: So, for publications, how do you think the staff changed over time? In the beginning, when we were doing print packages, they were big, bulky things that we would send out with slides and copy and mechanical boards, all these things. And then, in the end, we're just handing a disc over to the printer.

Linda Meyers: That's it in a nutshell. I mean, the electronics changed everything in this country. It changed what people walk around with in their hand and aren't watching where they're going. It changed the way technology is working. It's going to change driving one of these days. I'm not sure I want to be on the same road with a driverless car. (laughs) I'm just amazed at how electronics has taken over things. The industry that's creating the electronics makes you think that they're doing it for you. No, no, no, no, no. In my opinion, they have an incredible number of ideas in mind. They're a little bit like Vince Gleason. They've got plans for five-, ten-years of new products that they want to bring out. It's going to benefit--not you and me--but it's going to result in something that's going to make them money. I'm not so sure that's the best way but that's what's going to happen.

Linda Meyers: I think some of the publication production work is faster. I'm not so sure the design work is faster, because there's still intense research and discussion with the parks and trying to come to an agreement with the park for what the content's going to be. And then with our office for a visual appearance. That still is probably our greatest value to the park system is that we bring to it a lot of upfront thought. The printing is incidental. We get it done. In most cases, we're on time with our delivery. We've had a few glitches over the years. Again, not necessarily NPS's fault. It might have to do with a printer having technical problems. It might have to do with a shipper getting delayed in bad weather.

Angie Faulkner: [unclear]

Linda Meyers: Yeah. I mean it's just all kinds of things that we can't control. Whenever I'm talking to people about NPS things, I say, "Have you been to a national park?" They say yeah. I say, "Well, did you get a brochure with a photo and a black band across the top?" Oh, yeah. I say, "Well, we produced that. It's nationwide. It's system-wide." That particular branding has lasted much longer than I really expected it to last. I know if our Publication's management ever changes significantly, somebody's going to want to change it. I think that would be a mistake. The NPS has a very good reputation out there. To lose that brochure identity would be wrong. Even though we're doing what we did then with a lot less people, the product is still a quality product, very definitely.

Lu Ann Jones: Can I ask, so you were talking about your value, or the value of your group, was what you brought upfront. So could you describe that process? Is there an example for like dealing with a park and kind of the negotiations that went on with them about what the brochure was going to look like, for example? Or whatever example makes it—

Linda Meyers: I can't talk as much about that. Our designers, our editors. and our division chief was more involved in those kind of negotiations with the parks. Some park staff are very involved. I would guess that in later years they've been less involved, because they have less people and less time. But I'm not sure. Each park has a unique story and unique management issues. That's where Publications comes in to tie them together with a unigrid interpretive effort, rather than an individual park unit. You have strong superintendents and strong interpretive staffs. Some of them are very amenable, and some of them are not. But that's human nature. And that won't change. Maybe an editor or a designer could speak better to the cooperation between the park and our office than I can.

Lu Ann Jones: Okay. Thank you.

Angie Faulkner: So you experienced in your career many reorganizations. And do you think that helped or hindered? Or what was your perception of these things? Incidentally, we're getting ready to go through another one.

Linda Meyers: How nice.

Angie Faulkner: A business transfer plan or something like that.

Linda Meyers: Oh, that sounds ominous. (laughs) Well. Okay. Reorganizations are disruptive. They have a benefit in that some of the people that maybe are less effective in the organization may not stay with the organization. They have a disadvantage in that some of the people that are integral to the workings of the group tend to leave. They're the ones that are going to find jobs faster and easier than other people. There are some things in reorganizations that are absolutely foolish. Name changes which require the redo of all of your correspondence letterheads and reestablishing an identity are disruptions. That's an absolutely foolish expense. It's time-consuming, and it diminishes your visibility to the public. If all of a sudden you change your name, well, who are you? I know just going from the Division of Publications to the Office of Publications was a little bit foolish. But we did it anyway. The Office of Publications indicated that we were part of something else. Division of Publications indicated we had our own money, and that was an important factor. At least in some people's mind. If you're an office, you belong to something over and above, budget-wise.

Linda Meyers: We had an effort where the center wanted to use our money. And they attempted to merge it with the Center's operating funds. [My memory is sketchy on how we got it back. As I was recalling some thought lightbulb came on. Near the very end of the saga, Mr. Gleason, by then retired, asked me to review a draft of a letter. It outlined all the advances that the line item budget provided parks and made an appeal for the funds to be restored to the Publications Office. I remember reading it very carefully and found four items which were absolutely correct, but if read by folks unfamiliar with the office's history might be misunderstood. The best response from Mr. Gleason in all matters was no comment. That's because he heard my thoughts, considered them relevant, and I knew he would act accordingly. By whom, or how the situation was brought to his attention I do not know, but am grateful for the information being passed to him and for his acting on it. Shortly afterward that letter went to Don Kodak at HFC, the Director of the Park Service, and I believe to the Secretary of the Department of Interior.]

Angie Faulkner: Oh, you don't.

Linda Meyers: Just the account added above. I know that we had a meeting one day. Don Kodak stood up in front of the group as a whole, this was the whole center. I knew with the first few words out of his mouth that they had lost their fight to hold our money, and that we were once again operating with our own budget.

Angie Faulkner: So this is something they were siphoning off from the Publications budget and using for the entire center—

Linda Meyers: Mm hmm. Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: --as like salary and things like that.

Linda Meyers: [Other HFC's functions were park funded, even to time billed to specific projects. The center was allocating some of Publication's funds] for anything that they thought they could, and that was because the center's budget had been cut. I'm not sure who was instrumental in bringing it to Washington's attention that this was happening. I know Vince was involved in sending a letter. By that time Mr. Gleason had retired, but retained some influence where it counted.

Angie Faulkner: See, I thought he was. And I thought you were involved in that.

Linda Meyers: I was involved only in reviewing Mr. Gleason's draft letter.

Angie Faulkner: It's a mystery.

Linda Meyers: The whole story is unknown by me. That letter should be in the Center's Manager's office files. Vince was involved in it. It got reversed in nothing flat. Bob Grogg may remember more about that than I do. But this is how politics kind of played, it affected us money-wise. Not policy-wise or anything like that. That was interesting.

Angie Faulkner: So there was a time when Publications went through the A76 process. (Linda Meyers laughs) What is A76 and what was it like to deal with that?

Linda Meyers: If I recall, that was an effort to contract out a greater part of government work. Someone had come up with the thought that it might be more cost-effective if we just did away with the Publications Unit and contracted the whole thing out. That's what we did that study for. Okay.

Linda Meyers: [Publications had invested their appropriated funds in economical steps: the cartographic efforts generated accurate map compilations and contents; the unigrid development reduced design and production decisions on standard elements. Our dedicated work then concentrated on park contents, interpretive continuity and a well branded presentation that had taken several years to refine. To ask the NPS publications essentially to start over by writing a well-crafted contract, to release our files and resources to a one-year renewable contract source, and to expect a contractor to continue the print program with the same continuity without publication's oversight could be duplicating the work. Existing brochures were archived and reactivated for straight reprints or updating as needed. Only new brochures required full research, design, text, image acquisition, artwork proposals and illustration contracts with cost agreements, map compilation and production, and generation of an electronic file.] We were asked through a series of questions and answers and reports, to indicate what ramifications and estimated costs would be. Of course, because all government printing is done through GPO or printing contracts let by GPO, a contract company's efforts would end when the final print-ready file was turned back to the NPS for approval and the print order to GPO. A Publications Office should exercise oversight of the contractors work and prepare the GPO print order paperwork. Someone in the NPS would be needed to approve the end result. GPO could have done our press inspections for us, but we did our own.

Linda Meyers: It's important to the NPS that reproducing pictures of birds or different kinds of flora and fauna, be the right color. If you're at the printing press and you see something coming up that's greenish-blue instead of a more teal blue, you've got to get the pressman to alter those colors, so it's the right color variety and the right species. A contract design firm may not choose to take the time to match important colors and they would not have the authority to stop the press without GPO approval.

Linda Meyers: So when you figure that they'd have to do all the work that staff did on government salaries, would have to do all of the extraneous things like doing the press inspections, making judgments on the proofs that are given to us in the interim, managing thirty or forty projects at the same time, and then bring everything to a dead end while it goes off to be printed by a contract printer who's contracted for by another government agency, it was not cost-effective. Most contract bids include the estimated costs plus a 20 percent profit. Our group figured that moving NPS publications from in-house design and production would cost 50 percent or more than our appropriated budget.

Angie Faulkner: I didn't get to see the results of that study. I was just glad you were on that team going to bat for us, because all of us were in there as professional designers, editors, writers, cartographers—

Linda Meyers: Right.

Angie Faulkner: --and we would have been just managing contracts after that, for other people to do the Professional level work.

Linda Meyers: [The unfortunate thing is that the government classifies only employees with licenses like architects and higher degrees like PhDs as professional. That had an effect on the salary figures we could attach to the services required for the contract functions. Diluting staff work to contract compliance could very well eliminate avenues for staff's future advancements. I remember that we were not to discuss the study during its development and there was no stated reason that it was not shared with the office upon its conclusion.]

Linda Meyers: One interesting thing Susan Barkus said to me, after, I think we were just about done with it--she said, "Linda, I couldn't have done this study if you hadn't been on the group." I looked at her, I said, "Why?"

Linda Meyers: She said, "Because I didn't know how all the parts came together." I started to think about that and she's right. Everybody knew the job they were supposed to do, but they didn't know which hole that plugged into in the process as a whole and how it got back to them. I would say if there's one thing the Service needs to do, is clue their people in on how their aspect of the job fits in the whole picture. Susan didn't know about some of the contracting aspects. I mean, I wrote the contracts for the GPO to let. GPO edited me once in a while, but that's okay. They had a broader perspective. We changed them occasionally because our technology changed, so we had to incorporate that kind of thing in the contracts. The other thing we wanted to do was make sure that our specifications were such that local area printers were qualified to bid on the contract because we didn't have the money to travel for press inspections at a distance.

Now a provision can be put in your contract that if the agency wants to attend a press inspection, the printer has to pay travel and lodging. We were doing press inspections on fifty or so brochures a year. Printers aren't going to pay for fifty trips to remote locations.

Linda Meyers: The thing I had at my back was the entire GPO supporting me. I had an instance where we were doing a reprint of a poster. We had lost our local area poster printer that year. A company that was out in Saint Louis won the contract. Vince says, "You better go out there with this one for a press inspection." It was a poster by artist Jerry Pinkney and it had a lot of flat tone areas in it.

Linda Meyers: The printer put it on the press, and there was this streak that appeared across it. I pointed it out. They moved the plates. I said, "Well, the streak that was down there is now up here." The printer couldn't hide it.

Linda Meyers: So they said, "Well, we want to try something else."

Linda Meyers: I went back the second day. I went into the customer lounge. They had a number of other large advertising pieces on their wall, and I began looking at them. That same streak was in all of those, in different places. I said to my customer service rep, "You've got a press problem out there. "See that streak through there?" I said, "Now the subject matter is such that it's so textured and everything that you don't see it. You can't hide that streak on my poster. There's just no way to hide it." They even tried turning it the other way and running it sideways through the press instead of vertically. And it was still there.

Linda Meyers: I called Vince and said, "Vince, they can't print this." I said, "What do you want me to do?"

Linda Meyers: He says, "Come home."

Linda Meyers: So I refused to approve it. I got back at HFC and called our GPO representative in the printing office and I told him what happened. He says, "Okay. We'll get them to do something and reschedule it."

Linda Meyers: So, a GPO representative, John Kennedy, went out for the second round of press inspections. He left here in beautiful fall weather. Got out there and it snowed. He also would not approve it.

Angie Faulkner: They still had the streak?

Linda Meyers: They still had a press issue. There was a problem with their press. It wasn't something in their plating. It wasn't something in how they hung it. They had a mechanical problem with their press and there was no way to

print the poster without that streak. GPO eventually pulled the print order from them and it was printed somewhere else.

Linda Meyers: But these are the kinds of things that a contract design firm couldn't have dealt with. You'd still need a publications office, for which the government would still be paying. Maybe not as many people as we had, but you would still need government oversight to approve the product for the government.

Linda Meyers: We won our A76 report. They backed off on contracting it, thank goodness. Because I'm sure that any contract design firm would have wished to walk away from the unigrid approach as well. I'm not sure about that, but I think they would have wanted to. To make it their own. [Any contract would have to be so well-crafted, so detailed, and so specific that the design elements allowed little room for variation. I must say that the visual approach to the ungird has evolved, and matured, yet retains its identity. A true test of staff professionalism and growth.]

Lu Ann Jones: About what time was that happening?

Linda Meyers: Hmm?

Lu Ann Jones: About what period was that starting to happen?

Linda Meyers: Oh, 2007 or eight.

Lu Ann Jones: Oh, that recently?

Angie Faulkner: Really?

Linda Meyers: Yeah.

Lu Ann Jones: Wow.

Angie Faulkner: It feels like longer ago.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, that is twelve years ago, so. (laughter)

Linda Meyers: Yeah, it is. So that was just another instance where somebody downtown thought they had this brilliant idea. And they don't think the process and government requirements through. They don't understand the process enough to know that there are glitches along the way. And fortunately, Mr. Gleason had started the development of economic processes that worked out a lot of the pitfalls that could have jeopardized the entire program. His vision for the office, in my opinion, is why it exists today.

Angie Faulkner: So, moving on, what advice would you give to a new employee walking into Harpers Ferry Center?

Linda Meyers: Well, that is a toughie. Depending on their role, I would say that they need to learn as much about the organization as quickly as they can. I'm going back to what Susan said about understanding where they fit in the whole picture. Often when a new person comes in, they're given a job, and they're given an assignment and they do it and they get along fine. But unless you understand how what you do works over here, and what you do works over there, and how it can come back around to you, you might do it differently to begin with. It's one of those things where the more you know, the better off you are.

Linda Meyers: The other thing, too, is that in today's workplace society, you're probably not going to be in that job or in that office for 45 years. To move up, you almost have to move out and move on. I would hope that the NPS would find a way to take the talent, encourage it, and keep them interested enough to stay. Because they're the ones that are going to understand the whole picture in the long run. As the political climate changes, which it's doing, definitely, being able to support the concept of the mission and the agency to the fullest is probably the safest way to go. It's not an easy thing to do because a lot of people aren't willing to share everything that they know. The other thing is that I would hope that when you bring a new person in, that there is an on-site mentor.

Lu Ann Jones: I was going to ask you.

Linda Meyers: Because they can explain things the way management can't. It gives the new person a better perspective. When Wade Myers joined our office, I got him involved in the art and its preservation. An inspector general came into HFC wanting to see how we were treating our art. They made some recommendations, purely legitimate. As a result, we made some changes in the way we kept our art, and it resulted in something better. But I think in the process, Wade understood the importance of our art. I would say that I left the art in good hands when I retired. I think Wade is doing a good job with it. But mentoring, not just from the standpoint of the job you're doing but relating to the unit as a whole and how it works. And maybe outside of the individual office, understanding how publications plugs into interpretation. How interpretation plugs into the park visitor. The park visitor is why we work.

Angie Faulkner: I think that's an unsung thing that we all carry with us is being a visitor advocate.

Linda Meyers: Yeah. Absolutely.

Angie Faulkner: That's just like a concrete core of our jobs.

Linda Meyers: Yeah. And the visitor's going to change, too. Tomorrow's visitor is going to expect different things. I don't want to walk around a park looking at the park on a handheld device. I'm there because I want to see the vistas, the environment including the reactions of other visitors. I'm not sure how you're going to get this new generation away from the electronic devices.

Krista Pollett: Luckily many places are too remote. (laughter)

Linda Meyers: That's very good. The fact of the matter is maybe a few that have service shouldn't. (laughs) I'm not sure, too, whether the visitation level in the parks is going to go up or down. I mean, if you can bring up the whole park on your screen in your living room, why go? I think there's a lot of real life experiences that some of the younger generation ultimately will miss.

Angie Faulkner: Earlier you mentioned the political climate and how as an office we responded to it. What do you think about the political climate today?

Linda Meyers: Dangerous. We now have administrators at the higher echelons who do not seem to appreciate what nature has to offer us. The climate's changing. I knew that twenty years ago when things in my yard in the spring started sooner than they did three or four years earlier, and when things in the fall started dying sooner than they did three or four years ago. Now, it's almost two weeks earlier. Am I convinced that it's all manmade? No, I'm not. I think there may be things going on inside the earth that are warming things up. This is purely speculation on my part. But when you have things like the Hawaii volcano that erupted spring of 2019, that's internal inside the earth. There's lava and plates moving around down there, and you can't tell me that it's not hotter than it was before. Is it having a role in the climate? Sure. Are the number of cars that we drive having a role? Sure. Unless we have a leadership in this country and in the world, because America alone can't do it, to want to preserve the world we have for as long as possible, they ought to do some of the simple things to help it preserve itself. Plant more trees, if nothing else. I mean, it's just a foregone conclusion that if you want the trees to absorb the carbon dioxide, plant them, so they will. Don't clear-cut. Try and find a way to stop the forest fires. There's the all-important things that they need to do. So yeah, politically, I think that you need more sensitivity on the part of the people running the world. Preserving parklands are critical to this earthbound sustainability. The NPS is front and center in that stewardship.

Angie Faulkner: I thought you were going somewhere else with that.

Linda Meyers: No. I just think it's a hard problem. And you're never going to get everybody on the same page. As a government office the economics of standardized sizes, folds, and specialized source contracts were all innovations to a sustainable process started by a forward-thinking division chief as early as the mid '70s. It is the things done by groups and offices that are little steps in the bigger goal and is a response to the moving political climate.

Angie Faulkner: Because our values are so different.

Linda Meyers: Exactly. But, I would say everyone can do something.

Angie Faulkner: So if somebody was coming into the Harpers Ferry Center today, would you recommend that they joined a federal employee advocacy group?

Linda Meyers: I belong to the National Active and Retired Federal Employees association (NARFE). I did not learn about it until just before I was getting ready to retire myself. I heard it from an employee who had recently retired. It is a lobbying group. As a federal employee, I couldn't lobby. I couldn't contact my congressman or my representative. I certainly shouldn't be a whistle blower when things don't reach that level. But if you've got a concern and you're a member of NARFE, and you let them know what your concerns are, they can lobby. They're on the Hill almost every day, and they're fighting for things like our benefits, pay schedules, and working environments. They can answer all kinds of questions. They're just a phone call away, in many instances. The Washington headquarters, it's now in Alexandria, you can call them and ask them almost any questions about retirement, about benefits. Some of the things that are so intricate in government are just unbelievable. There's a section in their magazine which comes out monthly, questions and answers. Some of the questions people ask you think are straightforward and simple. The answer is just unbelievably complicated. You have to qualify for this, or qualify for that. Or if you do it this way, you can't do it. If you do it this way, you can. Congress is responsible for some of these rules and regulations, or the people that they interact with on a regular basis.

Linda Meyers: So, yes. I would say that NARFE ought to be part of a training session that is invited into any organization to present the plan and lobby the staff for new members. The new NARFE president, Mr. Kenneth Thomas, said that they don't have access to some of the government buildings. They can't get in the door. So many offices don't have HR groups anymore. They've all consolidated themselves off-site somewhere. And there's a misconception that NARFE is a union--it's not. The efforts, union versus a lobbying group, are very different. I would say that the first time you walk in the door as a federal employee, you should become a member of NARFE. There's a national membership for which you pay forty dollars

annual membership fee, and you get a monthly magazine. You have access to their websites and their webinars. You can call them at any time. And then there are regions and there are areas that have chapters.

Linda Meyers: As a retiree, I enjoy the chapter. Because they have luncheons, and offer new friendships. Everybody there, of course, is retired, because it's during the day. I keep saying to the group, we ought to have something that is in the evening or on the weekend, so that our working members can come. They haven't come to a solution on that one yet. But yes, definitely. You should be a lifelong member of NARFE. (laughs)

Angie Faulkner: Well, I have one last question for you. And it's been a few years since you retired.

Linda Meyers: It has.

Angie Faulkner: What are the things that you miss the most, and what are the things that you don't miss at all?

Linda Meyers: Oh! (laughs) I don't miss the computer. Changing my password so frequently was a pain in the butt! (laughs) Excuse my language, but that just got to me. It's probably one of the primary reasons that I decided to retire when I did. I miss the people the most. I worked with a very good group of people. They were talented, they were smart, they were friendly. They were like a family. I spent more time with them than I did here at home with my mom. And I miss the challenges. As I said earlier, no one year was like the year before. It keeps you fresh. It keeps you current.

Linda Meyers: I got a big kick out of something Vince told me a few months after he retired. Retirement frees the mind. Boy, does it! You wake up the next morning after you've retired, and all those things that were crammed in your head that you did not dare forget, because you had to deal with them the next day, they were gone! They didn't matter anymore! Then, of course, you've got to find something else to fill your mind.

Linda Meyers: But when you all of a sudden have that freedom to rebuild your day, to rebuild your life, in essence, it's quite freeing. And it's challenging. One of the things I most like is I don't have to get up in the morning and hit the deck running. I had an hour and ten-minute ride to work from Fairfax, VA to Harpers Ferry, WV every day. And my mind would start when I got out here past Chantilly. What I had to do and what I wanted to accomplish. Then I'd get to the office and something else would be on my desk that required immediate attention. So you're constantly bouncing the balls back and forth to keep track of it. I don't have to do that anymore. If I want to do something today and I don't get to it, there's always tomorrow. (laughs) That part, I enjoy.

Linda Meyers: I enjoyed my NPS career. I really did. I think when I retired, I said that it was more than a job. It was a career. I never dreamed when I took art as a major in college that the whole field would open up for me like it did. I just didn't imagine. Because I'm not an illustrative artist type. I make a few sketches, and that's about it. But all of the things that go into design--there isn't a thing in this world that exists that wasn't designed. Somewhere, somebody, decided how it was going to be, how it was going to work, how it was going to look and how it was going to function. And I think the field of design is probably one of the broadest that there is in our society.

Lu Ann Jones: When you joined the Park Service, did you have the idea I'm going to build a career? Or was there a point where you realized, okay, I'm here to stay, and therefore there's certain things that I want to accomplish and where I go from point A to B to C?

Linda Meyers: I took the government job with the intention of staying two years and then going back home. I had interviewed in South Bend for a job with a social service agency, my sociology would have qualified me for that. I'm glad they didn't select me. There weren't a lot of other things in South Bend at the time. Studebaker's had gone out of business at that point. As the Vietnam War came to a close, Bendix lost its government contracts for some military equipment and they downsized considerably. There were other smaller manufacturing businesses in South Bend. But nothing that I really qualified for.

Linda Meyers: So I came out here and got involved. I did go back in 1970. I had a couple of interviews then and I left some resumes in Fort Wayne and South Bend. But nothing ever came of them. The chance for advancement and interesting jobs was more prevalent in the Publications Division than it would have been for me in Resource Planning or Environmental Design--although there were aspects of that work that were interesting from my sociology standpoint and my urban planning standpoint. But the printing industry affiliated work just got more interesting the longer I stayed. (laughs) So I guess it was the things that happened that kept me there rather than any grand plan on my part.

Lu Ann Jones: Well it's been fascinating to listen to your story today. (Linda Meyers laughs) You're a great narrator. Are there other things that we didn't talk about today that you'd like to cover?

Linda Meyers: Ah, gee, I don't know. Let me see. Let me just check my little list here.

Lu Ann Jones: Do you have anything, Krista?

Krista Pollett: No.

Linda Meyers: No? Okay. I think we've covered just about everything that I can think of.

Lu Ann Jones: Well you said, Angie, that Linda was one of your heroes. (Linda Meyers laughs)

Angie Faulkner: Yeah.

Lu Ann Jones: So I was thinking, why don't you comment on that?

Angie Faulkner: Well, I think Linda and I are not necessarily on the same page when it comes to politics and things like this. But we found a common ground in gardening, believe it or not.

Linda Meyers: Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: Then I just started to learn that she knew way more than I ever, ever suspected. I started gleaning that from her. I realized, this woman has eons of experience on me, not only with being in the government, but dealing with printers. She's the person that gave me the authority to walk in and go, "Stop the presses." I mean, I would have been terrified to make that kind of decision. But you're like, I'm a representative of the government, this is taxpayer money, and you're going to get a good product.

Linda Meyers: Yeah. Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: And now I feel like I can actually say that. But I didn't—

Linda Meyers: But you do it carefully. I mean, stopping the press is not something you do—

Angie Faulkner: But if it's got a streak on it no matter which way you turn it. (laughs)

Linda Meyers: Right. It can't be printed. I got a call one night about ten o'clock at night. Atlantic Research had our folder program. They were reprinting the Midi folder for Adams National Historical Park. That was another intermediate size along the way.

Lu Ann Jones: For unigrid.

Linda Meyers: Short-lived size before unigrid, yeah. I had the pressman on the line and he said, "I can't print this. I can't match the proof." It was the old Adams NHP folder.

Linda Meyers: And I said, "Well, tell me what you've done."

Linda Meyers: So he told me. And he said, "I still can't get the colors to come up."

Linda Meyers: And I said, "Well," I said, "I certainly am not going to take you off the press, because those are the films that printed it the last time." I said, "It's got to be there." I said, "Are you sure you've got the right plates on the right color?"

Linda Meyers: And he said yes. He said, "That was one of the first things I checked."

Linda Meyers: So I said, "Okay." I said, "I can be there in about 45 minutes." They were down in Alexandria. So here I am getting dressed. (laughs) Got on the road, went down there, and they let me in the back door, because it was a secured building. We went in. And it took us a couple of hours. But they did some packing of the plates underneath so it would hit harder, have better contacts, and tried to even it out over all the place. We finally got to something that was very, very close to what it had printed like before. I said, "Okay. Keep it that way and print it. I'm going home." (laughs) I think it was like one, 1:30 in the morning. But I wasn't going to take it off the press. There was no reason that they couldn't print that. They just had to come to a technology. This was in the early days, when they were still managing the ink flow in the fonts on the press itself.

Angie Faulkner: But judging that stuff is so subjective.

Linda Meyers: It is.

Angie Faulkner: So I've had some press, some representatives come out to me and go, "Oh, don't you see this is happening? It's happening now."

Angie Faulkner: I'm like, "No, I don't see any yellow in that. And I need more yellow." So I feel like you gave me the confidence to go, "Not until I see it will I say okay."

Linda Meyers: Right. And that's your prerogative. That's what makes you a government employee. (laughs)

Angie Faulkner: Well, thank you for that.

Linda Meyers: No. I mean, the press company's representative wants to get it on and off their press as quickly as possible. That's money.

Angie Faulkner: That costs money. Right.

Linda Meyers: Yeah. And the customer representatives have a marginal interest in how good it looks. They want something that you'll approve.

Angie Faulkner: So do you think they saw you coming and went, “Oh, lord, it’s Linda Meyers!”

Linda Meyers: (laughs) Some did. But some didn’t. I had a real good working relationship with most of the pressmen. The pressmen have an interest in their craft and good print results.

Angie Faulkner: I would hear them say “scosh” to me later. That’s one of our words.

Linda Meyers: (laughs) Yeah. And I don't know about other press inspection customers, but they’d let me go back in the press room. Which was an invaluable experience. I wouldn’t know about adjusting the ink fonts by the keys or about packing the blanket underneath the press plate. I wouldn’t know about water content and how it affects the way the ink looks if I hadn’t seen it. Because usually those kinds of things are taken care of by the pressman before they bring the sheet out to you, because they recognize the problem. I had pressmen say, “Oh, I’ve got to change the water content. Got a problem with the water.”

Linda Meyers: I’d say, “Well, show me.” And they were wonderful at explaining all that. So I had two educations. Not only in publications with design and production, but I had press-side experience. They didn’t let me run the press, (laughs) but I could certainly watch them do it.

Linda Meyers: And even in color separation, we did color separations for some Berann artwork up in Milwaukee at MCP (formerly Mueller Color Plate). They had a camera that they could get far enough away from the copy board to shoot these humongous pieces of art. And they also had a good reputation. I could be in the camera room with them when they did it. [Printing reduces everything to lines or dots. Color separation uses filters to optically eliminate the other colors except the one of the four-color process inks that the exposure is to capture. A dot pattern is introduced at a specific angle and an exposure is made. Then other process-color films with appropriate screen angles are exposed. When proofed or printed a color image is composed of a dot pattern rosette.] Their copy board--and screens rotated to standard angles--avoided funny moiré patterns when printed. They had a copy board where you didn’t have to move the art, you just rotated the screen.

Lu Ann Jones: Oh, wow!

Linda Meyers: It’s fascinating, the stuff I learned. (laughs) I didn’t learn this in college. Heck, no! (laughs) You know, I learned silk screening, ceramics, and craft-like arts in college.

Angie Faulkner: I think that's still relevant, because printing is still an art form.

Linda Meyers: It is.

Angie Faulkner: It's not been digitized to craziness and back like design has.

Linda Meyers: Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: There's been so many steps taken out at the beginning to the end process. I'm my own typographer, I'm my own stripper, I'm my own photo manipulator, you know, all these things, and those things are all gone. But you take it to press and you're still talking about ink, paper, humidity, what time of year it is, what time of day it is. You get different results.

Linda Meyers: Yeah. It's a fascinating business. You said something about the address labels smearing. Well, most of those address labels are ink-jet printed. They don't hold up like being printed with ink would.

Angie Faulkner: I might have given you the wrong address, because her label smeared on me. She told me, "Oh, well they found me, but the letter you mailed had a four on the end, not a one."

Linda Meyers: Yeah. Yeah. But that will happen. Those address labels are only so good for one or two times, and then they smear.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, we got here okay.

Linda Meyers: I'm glad. (laughs) So that's the story.

Lu Ann Jones: Well, thank you so much. I appreciate it. This is going to be a great addition to the Harpers Ferry Center collection. So thank you so much.

Angie Faulkner: Thank you guys so much for coming out and joining us here. And thanks for having us.

Linda Meyers: Oh, that's fine.

Lu Ann Jones: Absolutely.

Linda Meyers: I figured we couldn't talk at a restaurant. It's too noisy.

Lu Ann Jones: No. You wouldn't want to come into Washington, so this is perfect.

Linda Meyers: Yeah, yeah. That's what I thought. Come out and fill up my living room for a while. (laughter)

END OF FILE 2

END OF TRANSCRIPT