SS: You ask how much the Gates report cost and who put up the money -- as I recollect the cost was estimated to be in the neighborhood of $20,000. Mr. Gates made it a condition of accepting the chairmanship of the commission that the city would pay half or a flat $10,000 and it cost a full $20,000 and some more partly because some services weren't paid for out of that $20,000. As I recollect, Logan, former Budget Secretary of the State, our research director, was on the general Institute payroll and of course my time, which was quite extensive, was never paid for. So my guess is that if you count all of the hidden costs, it was in the neighborhood of $35,000, of which the city paid $10,000 and the balance was paid for out of the Institute's grant from the Fels fund.

WMP: Did the Institute in those days make other governmental studies of similar scope at the local government level or at the state level?

SS: Yes, particularly at the local government level. I think we've already mentioned the fact that Rollin Posey was first employed by the Institute, was immediately assigned to the charter commission, which I think was called the charter commission of 1937 and he worked full-time with the charter commission. That commission issued a number of rather extensive and I think very perceptive reports on city government organizations, taxation, finance, generally, and Posey and I worked together on this with him running it from commission end but Sweeney doing a lot of recruiting of people at the university, like William Loucks, and Carl Scholz and others of that type -- very able men who were glad to get the work because we were still in a depressed situation as far as extra employment and pay of college professors was concerned.

WMP: May I inject another question at this stage? The 1938 charter campaign was assisted by the studies that you had made for the charter commission, which drafted the charter. Did the Institute do anything to help the citizen's committee chaired by Thomas Rayburn White?

SS: No, as I remember the Institute as such started right then by staying somewhat aloof from what you might call pressure organizations or organizations actively engaged in bringing about reform as such. We helped most of those organizations with special studies but did not participate in promoting the passage of the charter, except the extent that Posey was asked to talk about the studies in different meetings and at times I would get involved in discussing some of the studies we made.
WMP: Steve, just a general feeling about how much of the resources, time and money and staff went into services and studies of state government as compared to local government and also as to the local government, what percentage of local government efforts or services were directed to Philadelphia as distinguished from the outlying communities?

SS: Always Philadelphia was the most important governmental unit from a purely opportunistic standpoint, not from other standpoints because there was the unit that we were rubbing shoulders with and in which we had an increasing number of acquaintances if not friends. We invited the heads of different departments out to our seminars and things of that nature and after the 37-38 charter commission study, we knew the Philadelphia governmental situation pretty well, but you must remember too that my own personal interest had been in state government, where I had been a number of years before coming to the Institute and so naturally I looked to state government as a place to make significant studies and particularly studies that might be involved in strengthening local government, so that in our first year I see here by the record of what we did - we worked with the joint local government commission, we served as a catalytic agent for a study among Penn State, Temple University, and the University of Pittsburgh on the relation of state to local units and the construction of roads and streets, distribution by the state to the county of the ½ cent liquid fuels tax, distribution by the counties to city boroughs and townships of the liquid fuels tax, abatement of penalties and interest on dilinquent taxes. While we thought that that fitted in with our basic interest and the interest of these other units that I've mentioned. But about that time they were attempting to broaden the only merit system they had in the State government, which was in the liquor control board and they set up an employment board for the department of public assistance, which set up a merit system, and a member of our board, Shippen Lewis, was on that board and we worked closely and extensively with them in connection with the merit system examinations and the procedures which they were establishing. We set up the merit system examination procedure for them. I actually went back to the Department of Labor and Industry and we developed training courses for factory and building inspectors and then we worked on a state-wide program of inservice training for governmental employees under the George Dean Act. That resulted in the Public Service Institute being created, I think it was about 1938 and in the beginning we loaned the principal and the assistant principal. Rollin Posey and fellow named George Townsend, after Posey finished with his work with the Philadelphia Charter Commission -
SS: Maybe I should give you a few illustrations of some of the things we did for the charter commission. You could get illustrations of what we did for the advisory finance commission out of the copy of that report which I'm going to give you, but for the charter commission we analyzed the city controller's income estimates and compared with actual receipts in those years, sort of background for the charter, did research on the duties of city officials to ascertain by historical records if the duties were constitutionally statutory. We developed legal formuli which the city controller must use in estimating municipal receipts, and we analyzed that. The court records of domestic relations, the women's misdemeanants division of municipal court were analyzed. We compiled the statutes and ordinances affecting the city government. We made descriptions of real estate parcels in selected wards. As I recall, this was also the beginning of estimating the cost of what is now the Independence Mall set-up.

We made a series of extensive studies on the following subjects for the City Charter Commission. One on city-state relations, 65 pages. One on real property assessments in Philadelphia, 44 pages. One on city planning, 58 pages. Administration of penal treatment in Philadelphia - this was prepared by Thorstun Saline, one of the outstanding experts in this field, as were the other ones I've already mentioned prepared by similar authorities in the Wharton School.

I don't know who did the one on city planning. At first I thought it was Bacon, but as you say he wasn't around here yet. I'll look that up and let you know later who did that.

And now I think we'll finish up listing the other two studies - tax exempt property in Philadelphia, 55 pages, and historical survey of county offices, all of these being done to guide the writing of the 1938 charter. Most of the writing was done by Rollin Posey of our staff, loaned to that charter commission without compensation by the commission to the Institute for Posey's services.

WMP: Let's go on to some of these other questions now.

SS: I got one of the worst chewings out I ever got from anybody from Joe Clark when he was running for mayor. I think I probably told you that, when he wanted somebody to make a speech and I said we didn't let any of our staff make speeches that were in any way political. He acted as though I was some pussy-foot, but I think I told you that nobody fought harder or more openly than I did in the early '30's against the Grundy machine, and they hated us, and that sort of thing. Joe could never understand it--Ed Bacon could never understand it - I have a gem of a letter where Ed Bacon tells me how to run the Institute, my way of running it wasn't what Mr. Fels conceived, etc.
But it all goes back to the initial decision made that I referred to that we would not as a part of our operation loan people for promoting reform as such.

We loaned them to the Public Service Institute, which trained policemen, firemen, local assessors, and correctional workers throughout the state. Leon Stern was very much interested in correction work and helped train the correctional workers, along with Otto Reineman. We gave correction workers the only training they had in the area of Philadelphia and while the Public Service Institute continued to grow and really trained thousands of local government employees and was in existence until Mr. Wilcox went to Harrisburg and became the head of the Department of Community Affairs a couple of years ago and had legislation introduced which abolished the Public Service Institute and transferred the function over to the department of community affairs, which incidentally was what Tom Davy's thesis recommended. Davy wrote his doctor's thesis under me on the operations of the Public Service Institute, making a survey which covered a period of about 15 - 20 years, and felt that it was better to have that over in a unit like what was then the Department of Internal Affairs - a unit that was directly concerned with the strengthening of local government.

WMP: What studies were the most outstanding during the 1930's period -- what were the most important studies you did in the 1940's, leading up to the Clark-Dilworth reform which began to take place in the late 1940's - the Greater Philadelphia exhibition and formation of the Greater Philadelphia movement, and others such as the revival of the Bureau of Municipal Research, all of those were contributing forces to the build-up of reform feeling and public acceptance of what Clark and Dilworth stood for. Tell me about your role in rejuvenating the Bureau of Municipal Research.

SS: To go back, as I read our record here, going back to 1942 and 43 and I guess that '43 was the first year we really began extensive studies for the Philadelphia City Planning Commission. In 1942-43 we revised the finances and brought up-to-date the better part of the Philadelphia Advisory Finance Commission Study of 1937-38. Bob Mitchell was in there too, I think, at that time and we had a very close working relationship. We had students down there who worked under the close supervision of our staff and reaching for some other illustrations, preparation of job specifications and functional chart for the permanent administrative organizations and for the city planning commission. You may remember that that was absolutely unique as far as an organization of the City Planning Commission is concerned. As I remember right from the start, we had in there at an important
level, an economist who approached planning from the finance side and it was always one of the difficult jobs to fill, but Bob Mitchell and I had extended conferences on that and our staff felt that was an important thing.

WMP: At Mr. Hopkinson's request, you had a number of city planners come here for a conference, and you selected people to come to that conference who might be invited to be the executive director of the then newly formed city planning commission. How did you happen to invite Bob Mitchell, a man who asked to be chosen?

SS: We got in touch with the people that we knew in the planning field and got the best names from them and I forget just how we screened them out, but even though Bob Mitchell was far away in Washington, he had established a reputation with what I think was called the National Resources Planning Board, he was working on in Washington. And we brought him up, and we had other people who were not interested or who would not be eligible for the job. I think we brought in one of the leading members of the New York City Planning Commission, the Detroit Planning Commission, and I think Ed Bacon was in on that conference, although he had established enemies. It would have been impossible for him to have gotten the job then. Luckily, Mr. Hopkinson and Mr. Yarnell who was the deputy chairman of the Commission had an almost spontaneous meeting of the minds between the afternoon and the evening session of our somewhat contrived seminar which was really a search operation to find a director. I happened to be standing alongside of one of them and the other one came up and said, "I think I've got our man." The other one said, "who's that"? And he said, "Bob Mitchell." And Hopkinson said, "That's my man, too." And so then we arranged for them to interview all of the candidates because we wanted to make it look as a really objective job. Some they interviewed between the afternoon session and dinner and some later on and came to that understanding.

As I remember, that was our regular procedure - to have interviews going on while the evening discussion was going on. Which took some of the people out. We did the same thing, if you'll remember, for the Civil Service Commission, and for the selection of the Director of Finance and a number of other jobs of that caliber.

WMP: Would you say that Robert B. Mitchell turned out to be a very successful city planner in Philadelphia?

SS: Well, I was fairly close to that situation and followed some of the other men who were considered, and my own feeling is that
Bob Mitchell was probably the best that could have been selected for that time - partly because he got along all right with that Public Works man, whose name I forget - John Niessen, and his successor, Buckley, and also of course was admired greatly by Hopkinson and Yarnell. At this time Bob made hay while the sun was shining. He got Hopkinson interested in setting up a planning department at Penn, and Hopkinson pushed it as a trustee and that's how Bob drew up the first plans - he and I discussed them, I think, and then Hopkinson took it from there with the trustees.

WMP: Well, as a Dean of Public Administration, which you are Steve, would you say that Bob Mitchell did a good job in setting up the planning commission staff for Mr. Hopkinson?

SS: I would say he did the best possible job under the circumstances, and I'm not meaning to minimize it in any way by saying under the circumstances, but I can't imagine a better job being done by anybody that we had under consideration. The war was part of the problem. We tried to help him with supplementary staff in making these studies. He didn't have much money, and we were then in a position where we had free money and we could make studies free.

WMP: Let's go on to the subject of the Bureau of Municipal Research - you, the Institute was in a very closely related activity to the Bureau and you were a trustee of the bureau and played a big hand in resusitating the Bureau and having the Bureau contribute to the general foundation for reform, which was being built even back while the war was still in process.

SS: Well, I can remember we had monthly meetings of the Bureau of Trustees and they were attended by only three people. Later on by only two. The three people were Peter Williams, until he went off in the service, and Percy Clark, and myself - we sort of huddled around Bill Beyer's desk to keep the thing alive. It was part of my job to keep Mr. Fels interested so that he would continue his rather substantial contribution to the Bureau which was on hard times financially. I think it struggled along that way for the good part of the war period. Then we felt that there ought to be a survey made of something done to have it looked at from the outside and I think my timing is right - about that time we brought in Harold Alderfer, who had started an Institute of Local Government at Penn State, but I think he was in charge of Municipal Service program in the Pennsylvania Department of Internal Affairs. He came down and made that study, I think it was financed entirely by contributions of the members of the Bureau board, including you yourself, Walter. I think we chipped in something like $25.00 or $50.00 each, to
make that study and then we used that as sort of a springboard. The Bureau kept on with its typical studies and just to tell one brief story, it indicates to what extent an outfit like that could develop a lot of dry rot - one of my colleagues, Harry Loman, was the University appointee on the Harrison Foundation Board, and they used to get a report out regularly on how the bureau was spending their money, and Harry said to me "If so and so comes in and tells us once again that there is still a study of Refuse Collection going on we are all going to raise hell."