

Memorandum

To: David
CC: Jeremy
From: Tom
Date: August 8, 1996
Re: Dallas April 30-May 2, 1996 Follow-up

Introduction

This memorandum describes the status of matters related to the trip to Dallas we took in late April/early May and makes suggestions for action.

Sixth Floor Museum

Dallas Trip Action: You, Jack and I met with Sixth Floor Museum representative. The Museum agreed to send us an inventory of their holdings.

Status: As you are aware, the Museum has not sent us an inventory of their holdings. Any further internal discussions with regard to the Museum is not really possible until the inventory is provided to us.

Suggested Action: Request the list from the Museum again. In addition, we want to make arrangements to get a complete set of photos from the defunct Dallas Times Herald. These photos are controlled by the Sixth Floor Museum.

Dallas Municipal Archives

Dallas Trip Action: I met with Cindy Smolovik, the Dallas Municipal Archivist, (214) 670-5270, and reviewed the collection of Dallas Police Department photographs related to the assassination of President Kennedy. The originals are "retired" and in special storage. I reviewed the copy collection that an archival photographer put together. For many reasons, this collection is better than the collection of originals. For example, for some photographs there were no negatives, for some negatives there were no photographs and with some negatives the Dallas Police did not print all of the information. In addition, the original negatives have deteriorated and would not produce the best photographs. The Dallas Municipal Archives worked with the archival photographer to put together as complete a set of photographs as possible.

Status: The City Secretary Robert Sloan agreed that we could have the Dallas Police Department photograph collection duplicated for inclusion in the JFK Collection at the National Archives. We, or the Archives, would have to pay for the cost of the Dallas Municipal Archives to send someone (probably Smolovik) to accompany their duplicate collection to Washington. It is up to us to decide what we want to do.

Suggested Action: We should have the appropriate person at the National Archives talk to Smolovik about how the Dallas Municipal Archives made the duplicate collection. The National Archives representative may also want to talk with the archival photographer who did the work. Richard Trask had provided me with some questions to ask and concerns to raise with the Dallas Municipal Archives regarding whether or not using the duplicate collection was adequate from which to make a copy collection for the National Archives. Although I am not an expert, Smolovik gave what I considered to be more than adequate answers to questions and concerns that I raised with her.

Following the conversation(s) between the National Archives representative and Smolovik (and possibly the archival photographer), and assuming the National Archives is satisfied, I suggest that arrangement be made for the copying be done to get a set of the Dallas Police Department photographs into the JFK Collection at the National Archives.

Fort Worth Star Telegram

Dallas Trip Action: I met with Larry Price, the Photo Editor, (817) 390-7400, who arranged for me to review their photographic collection related to the assassination. Price was very cooperative. I took notes on what they had and highlighted photographs that I thought should be in the JFK Collection.

Status: Price said that we could contact him regarding what photographs we want reproduced. We would bear the cost. It is up to us to decide what we want to do.

Suggested Action: I suggest that we contact the newspaper about ordering copies of the photographs we want. Price was about to take a new position at the newspaper, but I am confident he would assist us in getting copies made. The prints that the newspaper would make from the original negatives would suffice because even if the Archives had access to the original negatives, they would have make prints first to make negatives.

Dallas Morning News

Dallas Trip Action: Librarian Judy Sall, (214) 977-8953, arranged for me to review the newspaper's collection of assassination photographs. The collection was very disorganized and as Richard Trask, who has also been through the collection, noted, it is in desperate need of an archivist's care. I took notes and have identified some that I thought we should obtain.

Status: Because Sall was not that easy to deal with, I did not discuss with her that we might want copies of some of the photos for the JFK Collection. However, in a letter written to her after I returned from Dallas, I advised her that "We will get back in contact with you after deciding whether or not the Review Board will request copies of certain photographs." It is up to us to take the next step.

Suggested Action: I suggest that we contact the newspaper about ordering copies of the photographs we want.

Marilyn Willis

Dallas Trip Action: I met with Willis, (214) 328-1560, the wife of the late Phillip Willis, the amateur photographer who took some important pictures in at the time of the assassination. I reviewed a complete set of prints made from the original slides, which she did not show me, but has in safekeeping. Willis said that the photographs are copyrighted until 2039.

Status: Willis said that she had not decided what to do with the original slides. She said that if the Board paid for her to come to the National Archives to accompany her original slides, we could have copies made from the originals for the JFK Collection. Trask had mentioned that it was important to take the slides out of their frames when making copies to get all of the information they contain. Willis said she had no objection to that being done. The next step is for us to contact Willis to make arrangements for getting copies of the original slides.

Suggested Action: I suggest that we contact Willis about having copies made from the original slides and have a complete set of first generation copies in the JFK Collection at the Archives. Because the subpoenaed Groden collection has Willis materials in it, what the Board decides to do with the Groden materials may impact any decision on whether or not to pursue making copies from the original Willis slides.