The John F. Kennedy Memorial Library has opened to scholars and researchers the first selection of its 15 million pages of documents and manuscripts, including transcripts of 300 oral-history interviews with such figures as Nikita S. Khrushchev, Mike Mansfield and a White House upholsterer.

A study of the documents at the library's temporary home, the Federal Records Center in Waltham, Mass., found that the bulk consists of White House correspondence and other, less important papers, but that the interviews add to the historical record many details of the President's attitudes and policies, particularly on foreign relations.

The interviews—representing only a minor selection of the oral-history program initiated soon after Mr. Kennedy's assassination in November, 1963—disclose accounts into his thoughts about US foreign policies.

During the 1960 Presidential campaign and after his election, for example, Mr. Kennedy and George A. Smathers, a close friend then in the Senate, who had long been interested in Latin America, frequently discussed ways to overturn Premier Fidel Castro, including a possible assassination attempt. According to the FBI, the idea was considered by the President.

In the Berlin crisis of 1961, Gen. Lucius D. Clay, the President's personal representative in the beleaguered city, long believed to have been at odds with Mr. Kennedy over the use of stronger measures to counter Soviet pressures—said, “I had very distinct feelings that the President had greater resolution than most of his associates.”

General Clay recalled in an oral-history interview that his plan to send fighter squadrons to escort American transport planes that were being buzzed by the Russians was not opposed by the President but by the Defense Department.

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Archivist at work on Kennedy papers in Waltham, Mass.

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Senator George A. Smathers of Florida leaving the White House after a breakfast meeting with President Kennedy in 1960. They often discussed plans to overthrow Fidel Castro.

United Press International

Eisenhower's aide, the Senator's satisfaction with the speech was not shared by Mr. Stevenson. Mr. Attwood, now the editor of Look, recalled that in a telephone conversation with Mr. Kennedy in October 1960, Mr. Stevenson sharply objected to a memorandum from the staff implying that Mr. Kennedy should support an invasion of Cuba by exiles.

"Stevenson, who was due to make a television appearance on this subject the next day, called Kennedy and wanted to know what the position was," Mr. Atwood said. "I was also on the telephone. Kennedy was upset by this memorandum. I remember, and said Stevenson to get back on the high ground" and say that Cuba was a problem more for the O.A.S., which Stevenson did.

Mr. Smathers recalled that when the Kennedy administration had proposed during the election campaign, he said the President showed him a secret memorandum from Secretary of State Rusk endorsing the idea but pointing out other officials in the department opposed it. "I don't know if the dates could be reconstructed," Mr. Smathers said, "but I told the President that I was pleased and I thought Rusk was smarter than I had previously thought him to be. I didn't know Rusk at all, but I can say that I have since come to the conclusion that he is a very able man not only on this but on all other matters."

Ted Stevens, who worked with the United States naval base at Guantanamo Bay, on the eastern tip of Cuba, as a pretext for a military strike.

"I did talk to him about a plan of having a false attack made on Guantanamo Bay which would give us the excuse of actually foisting a fight which would then give us the excuse to go in and do the job," Mr. Smathers related.

"He asked me to write him something about it. And I think I did. I don't know if he ever kept any memorandums I wrote him or whether he just threw them away."

Mr. Smathers recalled that he first counseled Mr. Kennedy to take a hard line against the Castro Government before a speech in Miami during the 1960 campaign, at a time when Adal E. Stevenson and other advisors were urging that the candidate play down Cuba in favor of helping the rest of Latin America to fight poverty and build democracy.

"Just prior to the speech while riding in the car," Mr. Smathers recounted, "I told him that he should talk about the importance of Cuba in our whole international relations problem, to recognize that it was a danger and a threat to the rest of Latin America and so on."

Mr. Kennedy, the Senator said, replied that he had a "pretty good speech" for his appearance in Miami and proposed to make "the big Latin American speech" later in Tampa, which at that time had a larger Cuban population than Miami.

According to a statement by William Attwood, a campaign aide, the Senator's satisfaction with the speech was not shared by Mr. Stevenson. Mr. Attwood, now the editor of Look, recalled that in a telephone conversation with Mr. Kennedy in October 1960, Mr. Stevenson sharply objected to a memorandum from the staff implying that Mr. Kennedy should support an invasion of Cuba by exiles.

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The 1961 Berlin Crisis

President Kennedy's response to the Soviet pressures on West Berlin in the fall of 1960, in which the President interpreted as the first move in an effort to weak- en the United States position in Europe—was described by General Clay in an interview on July 1, 1964.

"Discouraging his first meeting with the President in April 1961, when the Administration seemed divided between advisors such as Dean Acheson, President Truman's Secretary of State, who favored tough military measures, and a White House staff committed to the quest for diplomatic solutions. General Clay said:

"'First, there is no mistake, at least in my thinking, that the President had already made up his mind that the Berlin crisis was going on and that we're going to be firm in Berlin. Secondly, he was very eager to display sufficient firmness to restore the morale of the West Berliners, thirdly, that he hoped to convince the Russians that any further steps they took would be very dangerous.'"

Mr. Reinhardt, in an interview in the fall of 1961, in which he reminisced, discussed one of the quiet struggles between President Kennedy's dynamic staff and the professionals at the State Department. Mr. Reinhardt's principal target was that of Mr. Schlesinger's effort to seek active negotiations with the United States and with the United States' allies in Europe.

"I Love to Have You Over"

Early in 1962, he recalled, the President told him: "George, I love to have you over, I want you to come over, but I want you to do me a favor. I like to visit with you, I want to discuss things with you, but I don't want you to talk to me anymore about Cuba."

Mr. Smathers said he followed that injunction until the President invited him to an informal dinner.

"I remember the President was actually fixing our own dinner, and I raised the question of Cuba and what could be done so on," he related. "And I remember that he took his fork and just hit his plate and bit cracked and he said, 'Now, damnit, I wish you wouldn't do that. Let's quit talking about this subject.' I said, 'All right, it's just fine with me. I appreciate the opportunity to come over and visit with you, and this subject I won't bring up again'—and I never did."

Details of how the State Department's second echelon had been bypassed on the Bay of Pigs plans were outlined by Mr. Attwood, now a Deputy Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs, in an interview 200 pages long and dated April 24, 1964.

"There was, in my judgment, a divorce between the people who daily or minute by minute, had access to information, to what was going on and the people who were making plans and policy decisions," Mr. Hur- with said. "This divorce is one which has cost us, as history has shown."

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As They Say, It Depends Upon Your Point of View

A number of interviews in the John F. Kennedy Memorial Library's oral-history program disclosed considerable discrepancies in individual recollections of the same event. Typical of these were interviews with 15 state Democratic leaders on the 1960 West Virginia primary. Each gave his own colorful, less than modest account of how he helped Mr. Kennedy defeat then Senator Hubert H. Humphrey.

That is one of the hazards of oral history," said John E. Stewart, acting director of the library. "When the microphone is there, some people like to take all the credit for victories and blame others for defeat. But then this is the raw material for historians, and when all is sorted out we'll get a pretty good lively picture of what actually happened."

According to Mr. Stewart, accounts of the President's domestic programs tended to be more positive than many contemporary evaluations. They came from such labor leaders as George Meany and from the Democratic leaders in Congress, including Representative Carl Albert, the House Democratic whip, and Senator Mansfield, the majority leader, who said, "Despite comments which have been made about the lack of cooperation between President Kennedy and the Congress, there was close cooperation and there was mutual respect." In another interview, James McGeorge Burns, Woodrow Wilson Professor of Government at Williams College and biographer of Franklin D. Roosevelt, conceded that he had been too harsh in his 1959 biography, "John Kennedy: Political Profile," which portrayed the Massachusetts Democratic as a skilled statesman more inclined to short-run pragmatic solutions than to deep moral and ideological commitments.

Professor Burns said, "I do not think I really realized the greatness of this man, and I think this was a great man, by