

Oral History Interview
with
EDWARD D. MCKIM

Served under Capt. Harry S. Truman, Battery D, 129th Field Artillery Regiment, 1917-19, and, subsequently in the U.S. Army Reserve Corps with Mr. Truman. Chief Administrative Assistant to the President (1945) and Administrative Assistant to the Federal Loan Administrator (1945); member of the Board of Directors of the Panama Canal Company, 1950-53; and close personal friend of Mr. Truman since World War I.

Phoenix, Arizona
February 17, 1964 and February 19, 1964
by James R. Fuchs, Harry S. Truman Library

The Harry S. Truman Library
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[1]

FUCHS: Mr. McKim, we might start by your giving me a brief autobiographical sketch of yourself, when you were born and where and how you happened to come to your present situation, to your retirement in Arizona?

MCKIM: You want me to go through sixty-eight years for you right quick?

FUCHS: Just briefly, mainly your education and your moves.

MCKIM: I was born in Evansville, Indiana, on the 20th of October, 1895. At a very early age, probably six months, I was taken by my mother to my grandmother's farm out near Frankfort, Kansas. The doctors had given up on me, had said that I couldn't live. My grandmother prescribed the old-time remedies and brought me through. We later moved to Kansas City, Missouri and I went to school there at old St. Patrick's School at 8th and

[2]

Cherry Streets. Later I spent four years at De LaSalle Academy at 16th and Paseo, graduating from De LaSalle in June 1915. In 1916, I spent eight weeks at Rockhurst College as a special student. I think the specialty was football. I spent one football season at Rockhurst. There are people who say I got kicked out of school but that isn't the truth; I got kicked out of the clubhouse! After that, in 1917, I joined the 2nd Missouri Field Artillery of the Missouri National Guard, which was being organized. At that time, the Artillery National Guard consisted of A Battery in St. Louis, Missouri; B Battery in Kansas City, Missouri; and C Battery in Independence, Missouri. These three batteries were to be enlarged into a regiment. The regiment was formed and was inducted in the Federal Service on the 5th of August, 1917. Upon induction in September, the regiment became the 129th Field Artillery of the 35th Division. In September, we were sent to Camp Doniphan at Lawton, Oklahoma for training. At that time Charles B. Allen was captain of Battery D, the battery to which I belonged, and Harry Truman was then a first lieutenant in F Battery, commanded by Captain Pete Allen. We did all of our training there and we did a lot of firing for the School of Fire, which

[3]

was located over at Fort Sill across the "Horseshoe."

There was an advance detail sent to France early in 1918 and Lieutenant Truman was in this advance detail, known as "The Overseas Detail." The rest of the regiment followed in May. Shortly after arrival in France, I was sent out on a horse detail, gathering up horses for the American Army. We had been forced to leave our own horses at Fort Sill due to the lack of shipping. We had to use the culs of four years of warfare in Europe for our stock. The French would hold a requisition in a town and all of the farmers in that area had to bring in all of their horses. We would take what we wanted, and give them a requisition for it. We would then ride the horses back. The schedule seemed to be a day's ride out from our base at Le Mans on the train, to the town of the requisition, and then we'd spend close to a week riding them back. It had to be all bareback.

FUCHS: What section of France were you in?

MCKIM: We were up around in Brittany and Normandy at that time.

While I was out on that detail, we got word from

[4]

the battery that our captain, John H. Thacher, had been promoted to major and made adjutant of one of the battalions, and that we were to have a new captain, Captain Harry S. Truman. I had met Truman in the early days when we were organizing the battery and I didn't care much for

him. I didn't care much for the idea of going through a war with a man I considered a "sissy," and I began to think of ways and means of transferring out of the outfit, but then I thought all my friends were there and I had better stay with them.

FUCHS: Why did you consider him a sissy at that time?

MCKIM: Just my impression of him at that time. But he certainly, after he became captain, got us out of that idea right quick.

FUCHS: What was your first actual meeting with Mr. Truman?

MCKIM: Well, the first time I saw him in France was the morning he took command of the battery.

FUCHS: I'm thinking of in the United States when you were organizing in Kansas City?

[5]

MCKIM: Well, at the time it was being organized, we had a bunch of fellows who would go down to the Board of Election Commissioners and go through the records there to see fellows who were within the draft age. We had six batteries to form and we'd take the names out of the election records and then the Flying Squadron would go out and try to talk the men into enlisting rather than waiting for the draft. We were both doing some of that work and that's where I first met him. I had no close association with him at that time.

FUCHS: Is it your recollection that he was actually more active in organizing the battery and building up the regiment than most of the other people?

MCKIM: I wouldn't say more so. I know he was interested in it, as were we all, but as to whether he was more or less, I didn't have much contact with him at that time and I couldn't tell you for sure. I know that he'd been in Battery "B" for a great many years. I think he'd been in since 1905.

FUCHS: Well, actually, he was in two hitches, from '05 to '11, and then he dropped out, and the story is that

[6]

when he came back he was very active with Major Miles in building the regiment up.

MCKIM: That's right. In fact, there were quite a number of people that were interested in it at that time. I wasn't up in the top brass. I couldn't tell you just what all was going on then. I was lending my volunteer efforts to help with the battery.

FUCHS: He was not an officer when you first met him?

MCKIM: No, in those days the National Guard elected their officers. Everybody knew who the officers of the Regiments were going to be, and they were elected in the National Guard and

when they were inducted in the Federal Service they held that rank to which they had been elected by the men.

FUCHS: Well, did you feel when you met him, even though you thought he was a sissy, that he was going to be an officer?

MCKIM: I knew he was going to be. Sure, that was in the slate. But after we were in France, Truman was -- well, he was the boss of the outfit. He not only commanded

[7]

the outfit, he owned it. He was the first captain we had that we felt knew what he was doing. No, that first is not correct because Captain John Thatcher knew what he was doing; I couldn't say as much about the other two.

FUCHS: Who were they?

MCKIM: Captain Charlie Allen and Captain Rollin Ritter, who had been an engineer officer.

FUCHS: Why didn't you think much of them?

MCKIM: Well, I thought a lot of Charlie Allen, but Charlie got himself involved with a red-headed woman and our mess fund seemed to disappear. Charlie was cashier of the fund. He went up before what they called the "Benzine board" and Charlie was washed out of the army. Afterwards, he went back to Kansas City and I think entered the SATC (Students Army Training Corps) stationed at St. Mary's, Kansas. He was the first football coach at Rockhurst College. I played under him there. In fact, I was supposed to get twelve dollars a week for going to school, playing center, and coaching the

[8]

line, but I never got the twelve dollars a week.

FUCHS: This would have been what year?

MCKIM: That would have been 1916. No, I've got to go back. This was before. Charlie was the first coach in 1916 and it was after the battery was formed and after he was cashiered at Fort Sill that he went back to St. Mary's. I think he was a reporter or did some reportorial work for the old *Kansas City Post*. I lost all track of him after we came back from service. I understood that he was in some veterans hospital and died in a veterans hospital, but I played football with Charlie Allen, sort of semi-pro football, for years before.

FUCHS: Well then, if I understand it correctly, you would say that he was not relieved there because of an inability to handle the men in the battery?

MCKIM: Well, first of all, I thought that he took on too big a job in being captain of a battery. Charlie Allen had been a corporal in Battery B in the Mexican border affair in 1915, and I thought he bit off quite a chunk to go from a corporal to a captain. However,

his main trouble was a red-headed woman and the absence of our battery mess fund which we had built up.

FUCHS: What about Captain Rollin Ritter?

MCKIM: Well, I don't know much about him except that we just didn't get along very well.

FUCHS: You mean, you, personally?

MCKIM: Personally. Do you want me to tell the story about it?

FUCHS: Anything you know about him.

MCKIM: The only thing I know about him was that he was supposed to be an engineer officer who had been transferred to field artillery. He knew nothing at all about mounted drill, and on one occasion on a cold, frosty morning when the horses were a bit frisky, I was acting first sergeant and he gave a kind of weird command (the commands were all given by arm signals) and the men didn't understand it and I didn't understand it. I blew the whistle and stopped the battery, which the captain didn't like one little bit. I rode up and he said, "What's the matter, sergeant?"

[10]

"Well, sir, I didn't understand your command and I don't think the men did and I blew the whistle."

He said, "I gave the command for so-and-so."

I said, "Well, begging the Captain's pardon, the command for that is..." and I gave it to him. He went on again and gave another weird arm signal and about that time it threw the whole battery into confusion and one of the men in my section, the 2nd section, a fellow named Blankenship, was thrown from his horse; he was driving a wheel pair, and the carriage ran over him. I thought he was killed. We stopped the maneuvers right then and called the ambulance and took him to the hospital. We all thought he was dead; and I thought it was the fault of the Captain. The Captain and I had a few choice words out there on that bald hill and he ordered me to report to his tent after it was over; I reported. He said, "Sergeant, I have a good notion to bust you."

And I had already started my stripes that were sewed onto my shirt, and I reached up with both hands and tore them off and laid them on his table.

He said, "You'll keep them on until I tell you to take them off."

[11]

So I picked them up again and slapped them back on.

He said, "I've got a good notion, Sergeant, to treat you as man to man."

"Well," I said, "if the Captain dares."

I think he would have pulverized me because he must have weighed a good two hundred and twenty pounds and I weighed about a hundred and seventy-five.

So, I guess it was within two or three days that the order was posted that I was reduced to the rank of private. From then on I remained a private. In those days a private got thirty dollars a month, a first-class private got thirty-three, a corporal got thirty-six, a sergeant got thirty-eight, and a first sergeant got forty-four, and I couldn't figure that it was worth eight dollars a month to be a sergeant. So I told them from then on they'd look for me. I always kidded Truman after the war that he owed me three dollars a month for the duration of the war because he wouldn't make me a first class private. He probably felt I didn't deserve to be.

FUCHS: What happened to Captain Ritter?

[12]

MCKIM: I don't know. He faded out of the picture. Captain John Thacher replaced him as battery commander and I don't know what happened to Ritter. He left the regiment.

FUCHS: Why was he replaced?

MCKIM: I don't know. I wasn't in the confidence of the colonel of the regiment.

FUCHS: Did you think it was partly because the men in the battery gave me a lot of trouble?

MCKIM: No, I just think that they found out that he was just no damned good.

FUCHS: Captain Thacher then took over

MCKIM: Very, very fine man, Captain John Thacher. We boys used to call him "Cryin' John," but he was a very, very fine gentleman, a fine officer and we thought a lot of him, just an awful lot. He was moved up to be battalion adjutant and Truman was promoted to captain and given command of D Battery. At that time, Truman felt that he was promoted and given charge of D

[13]

Battery because he felt that the colonel was trying to break him, because D Battery was kind of a hard battery to handle, a tough battery to handle.

There's a story that most of these men were graduates of De LaSalle. There were only two, however, who had ever gone to Rockhurst and that was a fellow named Fred McDonald and myself. We were the only two who had ever gone to Rockhurst out of the whole battery. There were quite a number, however, from De LaSalle.

FUCHS: Was Rockhurst a full four-year college at that time?

MCKIM: No, Rockhurst at that time was just a high school.

FUCHS: It was a four-year high school?

MCKIM: Yes, a four-year high school.

FUCHS: How did they come to call it a college in so many of these...?

MCKIM: They started off calling it a college and the buildings sat there for a number of years with just the concrete work up until they could get enough

[14]

money to complete the building.

FUCHS: Do you have any other memories of Lieutenant Truman at Camp Doniphan?

MCKIM: No, because at Camp Doniphan he was in another battery.

FUCHS: You didn't have occasion to come into contact with him?

MCKIM: I had no occasion to come in contact with him.

FUCHS: What about in the canteen, do you recall seeing him there?

MCKIM: He and Eddie Jacobson ran the canteen. I'd see more of Eddie than I would the Captain, because he had not only his battery duties to perform but he had the canteen duties. The canteen that they operated was the only successful one at Camp Doniphan, and they ran it and they ran it well.

FUCHS: Did you ever see Lieutenant Truman actually selling things in there or did you think of him just as a PX officer as we had...?

[15]

MCKIM: I think more just as PX officer. It may be that he was selling things in there. He never sold me anything so I couldn't say.

FUCHS: Would you say that there was as many as one-third of Battery D that had gone to De LaSalle Academy?

MCKIM: No, I wouldn't say that many. I would say that probably there may have been, oh, fifteen or twenty that had gone to De LaSalle; I could run down the list and pick them out, but that would be a long list to go through. [Mr. McKim later supplied the following list of Battery "D" members who attended De LaSalle: Francis A. Brannon, William H. Breen, Francis L. Conboy, Riley E. Dobel, Fred H. McDonald, Daniel L. Flaherty, John J. Higginbotham, Edward D. McKim, Albert A. Ridge, Ernest L. Schmidt, Joseph W. Sherlock, John J. Uncles.]

FUCHS: Yes. Then, when Captain Truman took over the battery, what is your recollection of his first appearance on the scene?

MCKIM: He took command of the battery on a cold, frosty morning at Camp Coetquidon, which was an artillery training center, and my recollection of him was that his knees were knocking together.

FUCHS: You could see that visibly?

MCKIM: Yes, you could see that he was scared to death.

[16]

After that he came right out of it.

FUCHS: Do you recall anything that he said?

MCKIM: No, I don't recall. It was just the usual speech of an officer taking over command of an outfit.

FUCHS: Was there any talk among these so-called tough boys in Battery D that they were going to see what his caliber was right away?

MCKIM: No, we had one fellow who had served with Truman in old Battery B, by the name of [Edward L.] Ed Sandifer. Ed Sandifer had been a sergeant when Truman was a lead driver. Sandifer was a blacksmith in our battery and he kind of gave us the tip off on the new captain. There was no trouble whatever when Truman took command.

FUCHS: In other words, he let you know that he was a pretty good man?

MCKIM: Yes, he let us know he was Boss!

FUCHS: What was the significance of the Orchard at Cheppy? You mentioned this in a letter to Mr. Truman when you were planning a trip to Europe.

[17]

MCKIM: Well, the Orchard at Cheppy was the morning of September 27 of 1918. We had been in a little thicket called Forêt de Hesse; we had been there for three or four days fixing our gun emplacements and getting ready for the big push which we knew was coming. Truman had made a little speech to us about the battle line was to extend from the English Channel to the Vosges Mountains. The barrage was to start at the channel and progress. We were to take part in it, starting at four o'clock in the morning, to roll a creeping barrage ahead of the infantry. We fired for four hours. We then hitched up and pulled out following the infantry. We had to cross the Kreimhilde Stellung Line and it was the next day, the 27th, that we pulled into the Orchard at Cheppy. We went into position there and Truman went out ahead with his telephone corporals and sat in a shell hole. He spotted two German batteries that were pulling back into position. Well, the old saying was that "A battery seen is a battery lost" and we caught them before they

got into position, as Truman sent back the data. We went into action and he said, "Fire at will; fire as fast as you can," and we just poured them in there. While he was out there the

[18]

infantry retreated and left him there, but he got back all right. We knocked out those two batteries there and that stopped their counterattack.

FUCHS: Was this the instance where he was reprimanded for firing outside his sector?

MCKIM: It may have been, I don't know. Sector or no sector there were batteries moving into position and they made an awfully good target.

FUCHS: What about "Our top sergeant at The Battle of Who Ran?"

MCKIM: That was the first sergeant we had named Meigs Woolridge, and the "Battle of Who Ran" was up in the Vosges Mountains. We had moved into position on the reverse slope of a hill to fire across at the next hill and the Germans fired back. Meigs Woolridge lost his head and hollered, "Run for it men, they've got a bracket on us." And that's when the boys took him at his word. He was standing right close to the Captain and they figured it was the Captain's command. I wasn't there but this was the report that I got.

[19]

I was on the regimental switchboard down in the town of Kruth.

FUCHS So what happened?

MCKIM: That was the Battle of "Who Ran."

FUCHS: And the Captain turned them?

MCKIM: The Captain turned them and got them back, he got the gun carriages out. Our barrage was finished, you see. It was after that when they retaliated.

FUCHS: It says, "He who saved the National Army at La Beholle"?

MCKIM: That was a French reserve camp and we moved into after the Armistice, and we were there for several months. Now who saved the situation there I don't know.

FUCHS: What was the situation there? Was there any particular problem that you know about?

MCKIM: No.

FUCHS: "Our Colonel from assassination on the drive to

[20]

Nancy." Was there a joke about that?

MCKIM: Yes, there was a joke about that. The Colonel wore one of these yellow slickers and our chaplain, Father L. Curtis Tiernan, also had a slicker the same color. I think the Colonel might have been assassinated that night because he doubletimed us up Toul Hill from midnight until about four in the morning, I think that somebody might have shot him in the back but they were afraid to shoot because Father Tiernan had the same color slicker.

FUCHS: This was Colonel who?

MCKIM: Colonel Karl D. Klemm.

FUCHS: You say that was Toul Hill. That was a long hill?

MCKIM: It was a long hill at double time carrying a pack, and it was senseless.

FUCHS: What was your overall impression of Colonel Klemm?

MCKIM: Well, my overall impression was that he was a crazy man. Does that answer your question?

FUCHS: Did you think he was a good soldier?

[21]

MCKIM: He was a graduate of West Point and I've seen him out on the plotting board figuring out firing data with shells bursting around him and he never looked up. But I say he was a crazy man because he afterwards committed suicide in his office in the Commerce Trust Company.

FUCHS: You don't know of any particular reason that brought him to that state?

MCKIM: No.

FUCHS: What about "Corporal Hoffman from gas at Cheppy?"

MCKIM: Corporal [Frank G.] Hoffman was, I think, the only man in D Battery that was sent back. At Cheppy -- well it wasn't at Cheppy, but it was just off the road from Cheppy, between Cheppy and Varennes -- we were on a hill there and in battery position; Hoffman was awfully hard to find. He was usually over in some dugout. When we'd have to fire, somebody would have to go find Hoffy. Hoffman was sent back; he didn't fit into the picture at all.

FUCHS: He was relieved by Captain Truman?

[22]

MCKIM: Yes.

FUCHS: It says here "Mechanic Wooden when peering into the wrong end of a 75mm"?

MCKIM: Well, McKinley Wooden was the battery mechanic; he was a big, tall, rangy boy, and a very, very good mechanic. We always felt that if anybody knew the secret of the French 75mm, that he did. He was very able.

FUCHS: What was "The night section at the barracks battle of Coetquidan"?

MCKIM: Well, there was one of our drafted men, a fellow who was not in the original battery, but was sent to us as a replacement, came in one night a little bit stiff. He had the bunk next to Ed Sandifer. Sandifer told him to pipe down and a little argument developed and the fellow pulled out a razor. Sandifer ran out the front door and waited. Just as this guy came out, he hit him and broke his jaw. Sandifer was just a poor man to fool with because he was a heavyweight prizefighter, and he was a horseshoer and he could hit like Joe Louis.

[23]

FUCHS: Was Mr. Truman in command of the battery at that time?

MCKIM: He was commander of the battery at that time.

FUCHS: Did he have anything to say about this, did he take any action?

MCKIM: Nobody knew who hit the guy, but I'm sure that Truman must have known that when a guy's jaw was broken with one punch, it had to be Sandifer.

FUCHS: Who was Colonel "Smack" Evans?

MCKIM: "Smack" Evans was the guidon of the battery. He is now vice-president of a bank in Louisville, Kentucky, and that colonel is from the "Kentucky colonel." In those days he was known as Milton R. Evans and his nickname was "Smack," but now he calls himself Robert Evans; but he's on the state boxing commission and vice-president of one of the banks in Louisville.

FUCHS: Do you have any other recollections of Harry Truman in combat?

MCKIM: I have a lot of recollections in combat.

[24]

FUCHS: Any incidents that historians might like to know about to help show the way he handled himself?

MCKIM: Oh, no, not particularly. I think the episode at Cheppy when he spotted those two batteries moving in was probably the most important. While he was out there, we were strafed by a couple of German planes. They came over and the German would lean out of the plane and throw these potato mashers at us -- these grenades that looked like potato mashers; had a handle on them. When Truman came back to the battery he gave orders to hitch up and pull out. We got up the road probably a hundred yards and where we had just left, boy, the shells were just raining

in there. We would have been caught but we were a hundred yards away by that time -- just intuition on his part that we got out of there. Otherwise, I wouldn't be here talking to you.

FUCHS: Do you recall the Captain countermanding an order when the battery was ordered to double time on one occasion?

MCKIM: That morning we had to double time up Toul Hill,

[25]

Truman took us off the road and we laid down and slept for a while, right in the ditch at the side of the road. Then we got up and Klemm came back looking for us and he said, "Captain, where have you been?"

And Truman said, "Carrying out orders, sir."

I don't know of any countermand that he ever gave, because that wouldn't have worked, a captain countermanding the Colonel's orders.

FUCHS: Well, since they were ordered to double time but he took you off the road and let you rest...you didn't hear any repercussions from that?

MCKIM: No.

FUCHS: You came back on the same boat with the Captain?

MCKIM: Yes.

FUCHS: Do you recall anything that happened aboard ship in relation to Mr. Truman?

MCKIM: No, they took up a collection from the crap games, on board, and we wanted to get him a trophy and our idea of a trophy was a big one. We got him a great, big loving cup and the thing must have stood three or

[26]

four feet high. We had it inscribed to him. He's got that somewhere. It used to be in the old haberdashery store. It was right on exhibition in its own glass case. I don't think any other captain in the AEF got one of those.

FUCHS: Do you know who started the idea?

MCKIM: I don't know who started it.

FUCHS: What about the "Battle of Argonne and the money order"?

MCKIM: Well, a couple of hours before we were to start

the barrage in the Argonne on the morning of September 26th, the mail had been delivered. An aunt of mine had sent me a money order for ten dollars and when the Captain came along I said, "Captain, will you cash a money order?"

And he said, "Sure, if you can find a place to spend it."

Jiggs Donnelly had me endorse the money order, in case I got killed he could have it.

FUCHS: How close were you to the Captain when you returned in 1919?

[27]

MCKIM: Oh, about as close as the rest of the boys. We all used to kind of hang out around the haberdashery. "Cushionfoot" Teasley who had been a first lieutenant in the battery at Fort Sill, (he was an old regular army man and had both of his ankles or insteps broken as a sergeant in the army) and after the war was the crossing cop right at 12th and Baltimore. But we'd all drop in there some time during the day. It was the hangout.

FUCHS: Did you go to his wedding in June, 1919?

MCKIM: I wasn't there; I was in Texas at the time.

FUCHS: You took a trip to Texas...

MCKIM: I went down to the oilfields when I got out of the army. I went down to Ranger, Texas in the oilfields. I worked as a tool-dresser and as a rigbuilder and as a general flunky around an oil rig.

FUCHS: How long did you stay in Texas?

MCKIM: Oh, six or eight months, something like that.

FUCHS: Then what did you do when you came back?

[28]

MCKIM: When I came back I went to work for the Foamite Fire Foam Company traveling in parts of Missouri and Kansas, selling fire equipment for oil fires.

FUCHS: Were you in the reserve corps at this time?

MCKIM: No, I went in the reserve corps about 1922. Captain Truman suggested that I go to school one night a week up at old Central High School in an army reserve program. So I attended those classes and then took an examination and passed that; and then the fitness examination with a board of three officers. I passed that and was commissioned. That's how I got started with the reserve corps.

FUCHS: You became a second lieutenant about 1922?

MCKIM: Somewhere right around there.

FUCHS: And from that time on, did you attend summer camps?

MCKIM: Not right away, because I moved to St. Louis, and then I moved to Louisville, Kentucky. It was when I moved back to Kansas City from Louisville, Kentucky.

FUCHS: What year did you return to Kansas City?

[29]

MCKIM: I went back about 1925 to Kansas City and I was traveling then for the Insurance Field of Louisville, Kentucky; and it was about then I started going to camp at Fort Riley with the then Colonel Truman.

FUCHS: Did he make his suggestion to any number of other men in the battery, former members of the battery, that they go to school?

MCKIM: I don't recall that he did. He may have, but I think I was the only one who did.

FUCHS: Do you know what the Triangle Club was in Kansas City, that Mr. Truman was said to have been a member of?

MCKIM: I think it was one of these luncheon clubs. I didn't know it.

FUCHS: While you were in Kansas City did you get out to Independence much?

MCKIM: Once in a while.

FUCHS: Did you get around the poker club they had out there?

MCKIM: No.

[30]

FUCHS: The Harpie Club?

MCKIM: No. I think I played poker with them one night out at one of the lakes. One of the fellows had a home out there and I was there one night at a poker game.

FUCHS: It was probably Lake Lotawana.

MCKIM: Edgar Hinde, I know, was in the game.

FUCHS: What are your recollections of the haberdashery?

MCKIM: Well, it was just an economic problem. It was a good haberdashery and they sold good merchandise, but the depression of the 20's came along and caught them with high priced

merchandise on hand and it wasn't worth what they paid for it. They had to take bankruptcy, which was the only thing to do. Truman paid back every cent and I think he paid back what Eddie Jacobson owed, too. In other words, the creditors all got paid and there were no debts remaining.

FUCHS: What are your recollections of Eddie Jacobson?

MCKIM: All very fine, all fine. I like Eddie very much

[31]

and admired him. He was always a happy-go-lucky individual. Eddie and a fellow named Francis Barry of "F" Battery ran a little blind pig on the front line one time. They found a case of tomatoes that somebody had snatched off of a fourgon wagon and they set up a blind pig in a dugout and traded the tomatoes to the Frenchman, who loved tomatoes, for a lot of wine and cognac. Business was so good that Eddie and Frank stopped the proceedings for a while, watered the stock and then opened up again.

FUCHS: I'm not familiar with this phrase, "a blind pig."

MCKIM: A bootleg joint. They set up a bar.

FUCHS: Do you recall Al Ridge being around the haberdashery?

MCKIM: Oh, I recall Al Ridge over many, many years. Al Ridge was a De LaSalle boy; he was in school when I was, behind me in class, however. But I knew Al very well. Al was in the battery all the way through.

FUCHS: Did you become acquainted with a man named Kelsey Cravens?

[32]

MCKIM: No.

FUCHS: Did you often notice Mr. Truman reading around the haberdashery?

MCKIM: No, not around the haberdashery. He didn't have time to read around there.

FUCHS: What do you recall of any of these battery reunions that might be of interest, any particular incidents starting with about 1921 when I believe you had....

MCKIM: I was the toastmaster that year and that was the only time that Jiggs Donnelly was not the toastmaster. It was held at the Elks Club, which was then down at about 7th and Grand Avenue. Everything was going along fine until a little brawl started. Somebody asked somebody else to pass the soup and he airlined it. And then they started throwing rolls and pretty soon they were throwing dishes, and I know about that time I went under the table. They were flying my way, too. I was doing fine until somebody skipped a sugar bowl down this tile floor. I ducked

that one. But it ended up in quite a brawl. Somebody sent a riot call to the police and they sent down two policemen, and one

[33]

of them happened to be George Brice who had been in the battery. They proceeded to practically undress him. Well, we finally got them calmed down and subdued. I know I had to take one guy home, Hunter Sherman, a big, long, gangling guy who lived way out in the northeast part of town. I drug him up to his front door. He was out cold and I kind of leaned him against the doorjam and he fell against the door. It opened and I rang the bell and nobody answered, so I dragged him in and laid him out on the divan, loosened his collar, and tried to make him comfortable. About that time his mother and sister came in and his mother screamed, "Oh, you got my boy drunk." Boom, she started in; I had a derby hat on and she crowned me, she put that derby hat right down around my ears. I said, "Lady, I didn't get him drunk but I brought him home." It was quite a night.

FUCHS: Do you remember Mr. Truman that evening?

MCKIM: Well, I remember Mr. Truman had to pay the bill right afterwards, not that night but the next day. I don't remember what the bill was. It ran up into important money, a couple of hundred dollars as I

[34]

recall, for the damage done.

FUCHS: Did this come out a treasury you had?

MCKIM: No, it was out of his personal pocket.

FUCHS: Did you ever take up a collection to reimburse him?

MCKIM: Not that I know of.

FUCHS: You don't know if he went under the table that night -- or was he throwing things.

MCKIM: No, he wasn't throwing, and I don't know whether or not he was under the table with me. I know that Colonel Karl D. Klemm was under there with me.

FUCHS: Any other choice reminiscences about battery antics at these reunions, particularly something that might...

MCKIM: No, they began to tone down after that as they got a little older and got a little smarter, I hope -- I trust. I'll give them credit for it anyway. But they've all been rather staid affairs since then.

FUCHS: Are you a member of the American Legion?

[35]

MCKIM: Yes.

FUCHS: Did you attend the convention they had in Kansas City in 1921?

MCKIM: Yes, I was in charge of transportation for the wounded soldiers at that convention. The battery was supposed to march but, as I discovered, about half of them decided that they were wounded soldiers and expected transportation from me. About half of them walked and the rest rode in cars.

FUCHS: Do you remember what Mr. Truman's part was at that convention?

MCKIM: No, I don't.

FUCHS: Did you go to any other national conventions with Mr. Truman?

MCKIM: Yes, I went to the one down in St. Louis. When was that? I think that was in 1935. We had a suite of rooms at the Statler Hotel. I was supposed to bring Gov. Roy Cochran of Nebraska down with me in my new Chrysler car, but Roy and I had had a little squabble and I told him to get there the best way that he could.

[36]

I really didn't expect him to show up.

FUCHS: Over politics?

MCKIM: Yes. So we'd just gotten in there when Truman had to go back to Kansas City or St. Joseph. He and Fred Canfil took my car and drove back there. And while they were gone, Roy Cochran wired me he was coming in. So he moved in with his adjutant general, Major General Bert Paul, who was then also the commander of the 35th Division National Guard outfit. Truman came back, so we were all in there. We had two bedrooms and a parlor and I know that one day the Mayor of St. Louis, Barnard Dickmann, and Mayor LaGuardia of New York were up there. I arranged a deal with the Mayor to go to the ball game. The Cardinals were playing the Cubs and it was getting along late in the season, so Dickmann told me to get ahold of his secretary and get fire department cars to take the whole crowd to the ball game. Governor Clyde Herring of Iowa was in the party. We went to the ball game and Paul Dean pitched for the Cardinals and lost the game one to nothing when Phil Cavaretta, the first baseman of the Cubs, hit a home run.

FUCHS: Mr. Truman went to the game?

MCKIM: He went to the game.

FUCHS: Do you think he was called back to Kansas City or St. Joseph on senatorial business?

MCKIM: I don't recall. But I know that driving back he pulled into a filling station, got a little close to one of those curbs, and loused up my running board. He never said anything about it. Fred told me and he said, "Don't mention it, he's mad as a wet hen about it."

Well, after that, when the convention closed, Truman and I drove over to French Lick Springs, Indiana, to the French Lick Springs Hotel. Senator Joe Guffey of Pennsylvania was there and we had a little business to talk over with Joe. We left late in the afternoon and got there that night and went to bed. We had breakfast with Joe Guffey the next morning. Then, Joe said that President Roosevelt was coming through the state and young Tom Taggart and he and Truman drove over to meet the train. I think they met it at, oh, I don't know, up from French Lick someplace and were going to ride on to East St. Louis. Well, Truman didn't have an overcoat and I had a big, tan camel's hair coat.

[38]

So I gave Truman the coat to wear because he was going to be riding in an open car and it was raining. So I got in my car and drove down to Louisville and did a little business after telling him, "I'll meet you in East St. Louis." So I raced the train and met them in East St. Louis. Truman was wearing my coat and he was laughing because he sat in a compartment with Harry Hopkins and Ickes waiting to see the President. When the word came for him to go and be presented to the President, he picked up the coat, my coat, and went in there. When he got in there, he discovered that Hopkins and Ickes had put a quart bottle of whiskey in it and it was sticking out of the pocket. I imagine it was Hopkins because I don't think Ickes would part with a quart of whiskey.

FUCHS: Would you care to say what the discussion was with Joe Guffey?

MCKIM: My company had been trying to be admitted to the State of Pennsylvania and hadn't been successful, and I wanted to talk it over with Joe to see what we could do to get in. We got in but it was not through Joe Guffey's efforts.

[39]

FUCHS: Mr. Truman, of course, was quite close to Joe Guffey.

MCKIM: Oh, yes, yes.

FUCHS: He wasn't able to help you much on that score?

MCKIM: Well, he introduced me to Guffey and I told my story and Guffey was very sympathetic about it. However we were approaching the situation from several angles. We did get into the State of Pennsylvania; we're in there now and we do a tremendous business.

FUCHS: Do you recall anything about the high jinks in Kansas City in connection with the American Legion in 1921, and did Mr. Truman participate in any of this?

MCKIM: Well, there was a lot of high jinks going on but I don't know of any high jinks that Mr. Truman participated in, except he probably looked out his haberdashery store door and would

see some of the ladies' negligees floating down from the windows of the Muehlebach Hotel. They used to lodge on the trolley wires, but that's about all of any high jinks that he might have participated in.

FUCHS: Did you know Harry Vaughan at this time, in 1921?

MCKIM: Yes, I knew Harry Vaughan in 1917. Harry Vaughan, when I first knew him, was a sergeant in the 128th Field Artillery, which was the St. Louis outfit. Harry had gone to Westminster College and he played football there. He was playing center on the 128th football team and I was playing center on the 129th football team. Some of the fellows on my team had played against Harry in Missouri college ball, so they warned me to look out for him, that he was a pretty tough monkey. Harry, then, probably weighed 200-210 pounds; I weighed about 175 pounds. I noticed Harry in practice, and he had a little, gimpy leg, had a little drag to it. I thought I'd try out the leg and on the first play I crashed into it and down went Mr. Vaughan. And Mr. Vaughan went down the second time. He got up and he said, "Look, McKim, I know you've got a bad leg, too. You know, we're not getting paid for this. Why don't we make a deal? I won't hit you in the leg if you won't hit me in the leg."

Well, I started to laugh and we shook hands on

[41]

it and we've been very close personal friends ever since.

FUCHS: Did you have anything to do with getting the steer in the lobby of the Hotel Baltimore?

MCKIM: I did not. I heard about it, but I had nothing to do with it.

FUCHS: Did you have any advance idea that Mr. Truman was going to enter politics around 1921-22?

MCKIM: I had no advance idea of it except I was going up Baltimore Avenue one day and he was behind me and called to me. I waited and he told me then; he said, "I'm going into politics."

And I said, "As what?"

And he said, "I'm going to run for judge of the Eastern District, Judge of the county court.

And I said, "You're nuts; you're crazy; you don't belong in politics."

So he said, "Well, I'm going to do it. I've just come from 1908 Main Street and I've talked it over and I'm going to run. I think I can win out there."

So that was that.

[42]

FUCHS: Why did you feel that he didn't belong in politics?

MCKIM: Just felt that he didn't. I felt he was more the business type, but he said things hadn't been going too well in the haberdashery and he was going into politics. I think he'd always had a hankering for politics. He'd been a precinct worker out in the county, where he lived. He was a natural for it. When he ran for re-election, he was defeated. I remember I was in Raleigh, North Carolina when I heard that he'd been defeated, and I sent him a wire of congratulations, that I hoped he'd stay out of politics. But he didn't.

FUCHS: Did you participate in his campaign in 1922 in any way?

MCKIM: One small part. There was a fellow named Clarence England ran a garage about 14th and McGee Street. I think that Clarence had been a flyer in World War I. Anyway, he had one of those old jenny planes that was held together with bailing wire, and at Truman's suggestion, I made a deal with Clarence to take Truman up and drop some leaflets over a picnic at Oak Grove, Missouri. Well, we got them started off and got the leaflets loaded in, took off from the pasture, and

[43]

circled around this picnic at Oak Grove. Then they were to come down in a pasture right next to the picnic grounds. They came down all right but Clarence had a little trouble stopping the plane and it ended up about three feet from a barbed wire fence. Our candidate got out and draped himself over this barbed wire fence and gave forth with a lot of things I know he didn't eat. He was as green as grass. I think it was his first flight, but he mounted the rostrum and made a speech.

FUCHS: What did you think of his speaking ability in those days?

MCKIM: I didn't think he had any. He was a very poor speaker, but he developed.

FUCHS: Did you remain in Kansas City long enough in '22 to vote for him?

MCKIM: No. I did not. That's when I moved to St. Louis. In fact, I never voted for Harry Truman until he ran for Vice President, when I voted for him and Roosevelt, and then again in '48.

[44]

FUCHS: Was there any special collections taken up through the battery for Mr. Truman, that you recall, for campaign expenses?

MCKIM: None that I know of, at least I wasn't asked to participate. Which campaign are you talking about?

FUCHS: Well, I'm talking about '22.

MCKIM: I don't know of any. I couldn't have contributed anyway.

FUCHS: Or any of the campaigns for county judge. Did they ever solicit in the battery?

MCKIM: No. I was away from there all that time.

FUCHS: You had a story about your son and Margaret being born around the same time?

MCKIM: No, they weren't born at the same time.

FUCHS: Well, I've forgotten just how that story did go.

MCKIM: Well, Truman and Mrs. Truman came out to our apartment. We had a little kitchenette apartment at 3515 Paseo. They came out one evening and we sat around

[45]

and played a little bridge; at that time, my oldest boy, Eddie, was just a baby. We had a nice evening and, oh, I suppose, a few weeks later, we went out to their home in Independence, 219 North Delaware. I know we put Eddie on a pillow on the davenport while we played bridge. I guess it was several weeks later, I was going up Baltimore Avenue, Mr. Truman was behind me and called to me, and I waited for him. When he came up he looked mad. I said, "What's the matter with you?"

And he said, "I'm awfully tired of you high-toning me."

I said, "What do you mean, high-toning you?"

He said, "You've been high-toning me just too long and I'm not going to stand for it; I'm not going to take any more of it."

And I said, "Well, what in the hell is the matter with you?"

"Well," he said, "you and that boy. I just want you to know that I'm going to have a boy, too."

The boy turned out to be Margaret.

FUCHS: Do you remember anything about Mr. Truman and the Ku Klux Klan around 1922?

[46]

MCKIM: I knew that something happened there, but I was not around to get the firsthand information about it. I was present, however, in the 1944 campaign when we were in Chicago and the story broke in the papers that Spencer Salisbury who had been captain of E Battery of the 129th had given out the report that Harry S. Truman had belonged to the Ku Klux Klan. Well, Matt Connelly and I had been out to dinner and as we came back to the special train -- the special car was sitting on the siding there -- the place was alive with reporters. They wanted to wake Truman up to find out if he'd ever belonged to the Klan. We wouldn't stand for that because it was around 11 or 11:30 at night and they said, "Well, what do you know about him belonging to the Klan?"

"Well," I said, "I couldn't imagine Harry Truman belonging to the Klan because first of all, in World War I he commanded a battery that was mainly Irish Catholic boys, and another thing, there are two Irish Catholics traveling with him on this trip, and if he's a Ku Kluxer he couldn't have that."

FUCHS: Does the name Harry Hoffman mean anything to you?

MCKIM: Harry Hoffman? No.

[47]

FUCHS: Do you have any knowledge of Mr. Truman's interim jobs or businesses from the time he was defeated in '24, during the years he was out of office?

MCKIM: I think that he represented a Good Roads Association in the interim period. I think also he was representing some building and loan association, but my mind is a little vague on that period of time.

FUCHS: You were in Louisville until about '27 and then you went...?

MCKIM: No, I left Louisville the latter part of '25 and came back to Kansas City, and in September of 1927 I moved to Omaha. I went with Mutual of Omaha at that time.

FUCHS: You weren't able to vote here in '26, though? You hadn't been a resident long enough?

MCKIM: No.

FUCHS: Do you remember anything about that '26 campaign that stands out in your memory?

MCKIM: No.

[48]

FUCHS: Did you ever discuss Mr. Truman's oil ventures with him?

MCKIM: No, I never did. I just knew he was in business with a man named Morgan and that's about all.

FUCHS: What about Spencer Salisbury? You probably know that there seems to have arisen some sort of a feud or at least some differences between them.

MCKIM: Well, I don't know whether I should say it right out for the benefit of this recorder, but in my opinion, he's an eighteen caret crook. We used to call E Battery, which he commanded, "Carranza and his forty thieves," that was the nickname of his battery, the captain and his battery. Nobody had any respect for him at all. He came out to reserve camp a couple of times. I knew he used to bring a half-pint of whiskey with him and he'd take home a half-pint. One time he arranged a snipe hunt. He picked on a fellow named Captain Calhoun who looked like a big

yokel, and he was going to take him on a snipe hunt. So. Cal told me about it and we framed a deal. We let Calhoun go along and play the part. "Carranza" and his mob

[49]

took him out and planted him with the sack while they were going out to herd the snipes in. In the meantime, Frank Fisher, "Cokey" Cohagen, and myself stole their horses. Carranza was a little mad when he had to walk back from those hills around Fort Riley!

FUCHS: Did you ever discuss Salisbury's activities in connection with the Community Savings and Loan Association in which he was associated with Mr. Truman?

MCKIM: No.

FUCHS: Do you recall Mr. Truman announcing or talking about, in 1931, his being a candidate for governor?

MCKIM: No, but I thought that he would be. I thought that probably he would have been in there in place of Governor Park, I think it was. In fact, I felt sure. I think there was a candidate, Wilson wasn't it, who suddenly died right in the middle of the campaign?

FUCHS: I know who you mean and I can't think of his name.

MCKIM: Anyway, I was in St. Louis and I dropped off at Kansas City. I called up Mrs. Truman and laughingly

[50]

told her I thought Harry might be picked to be the candidate for governor, and I said, "I want an invitation to the inaugural ball."

FUCHS: What did she say?

MCKIM: Well, I don't recall what she said, but I think it was at that time a Judge Park from up in Northeast Missouri was picked and was elected.

FUCHS: You went to reserve training camp in Minnesota one time, I believe it was 1932?

MCKIM: Yes, Camp Ripley.

FUCHS: Do you recall anything that occurred in that particular session?

MCKIM: Oh yes, a lot occurred up there at that session. John Snyder was ordered there; Ted Marks was ordered, and I was ordered. Truman was there. Harry Vaughan was not ordered there that year, but he lived in Milwaukee and drove over to spend a couple of days with us. I know I was recuperating from two broken ribs and when Vaughan came in he stuck his hand out: "How are you, you old so-and-so," and I went to shake hands with him

[51]

and he dug his right arm right into my ribs and cracked them all over again. We had a poker game there one Sunday morning and it was quite an affair. In one particular hand, Truman sat there with a pair of sixes (it was stud poker). Vaughan had an ace, king showing; I had an ace in the hole and a king showing; and the fellow on my left, a second lieutenant named Henderson, had a pair of deuces showing. The others around the table -- I don't know, they didn't have much of anything. So I thought it would be a good time then to run a whizzer. Truman bet out and the fellows on my right stayed and I raised. Well, the deuces stayed, and Vaughan down at the other end said, "I don't think you've got anything," so he raised me. Truman stayed once and when it got around to me I raised again. The deuces dropped out (we had a limit of three raises anyhow) and Vaughan stayed and Truman dropped out with a pair of sixes. That left just Vaughan and me. Well it got down to the fifth card and Vaughan and I each had an ace, king, and then some smaller cards. My fifth card was an 8 over his 7: So we had a lot of fun kidding Truman about dropping out with a winning hand. At the regimental dinner, John Snyder and I cooked up a

[52]

little deal. We went into town and got one of those miniature decks of cards and took the identical pair of sixes that he had out of the deck. Then we wrote out a special order and we called it "The Military Order of the Flying Coat Tails." We got some blue ribbon and pasted these two sixes onto the blue ribbon and we decorated the Colonel with "The Military Order of the Flying Coat Tails." He still has that.

FUCHS: That would be a very interesting item to have for our museum.

MCKIM: Well, he's got it.

FUCHS: I hope we'll get it some day. Did anything else happen up there that...

MCKIM: Oh, we used to go to Breezy Point. It was run by Captain Billy Fawcett. Do you remember *Captain Billy's Whiz Bangs*, or are you too young for that? Well, it was a magazine, kind of a spicy little magazine called *Captain Billy's Whiz Bangs* (Now Fawcett Publications -- *True Magazine*). It was near Nisswa or Pequot, Minnesota. We went up there several times for dinner. Captain Billy was quite a shot with a shotgun. He was

[53]

on the American Olympic team at one time and he had some traps out there, so we did a little shooting with him. He had a couple of guests, one of whom was Dr. Joe Mayo, the son of Dr. Charlie Mayo. Dr. Joe was killed a few years later in an automobile accident. He was the brother of Dr. Chuck Mayo who just retired from the Mayo Foundation. We did a little trap shooting at that time, but we went up there almost every night for dinner. It was a thirty-five or forty mile drive.

FUCHS: It was on a lake?

MCKIM: Yes, it was on Pelican Lake.

FUCHS: Did Mr. Truman trap shoot?

MCKIM: Well, he did that once, but he was more successful with playing the slot machines. We stopped at a barber shop at Brainerd going up, and he hit the jackpot in a machine in the lower lobby of the hotel. And then he hit the jackpot up at Breezy Point the same night.

FUCHS: Did you ever hunt with Mr. Truman?

[54]

MCKIM: No.

FUCHS: You also attended the summer encampments at Fort Riley, Kansas with Mr. Truman?

MCKIM: Yes.

FUCHS: Do any of those stand out in your memory?

MCKIM: Oh, not particularly. I thought it was a lot of fun.

FUCHS: What about Jake Vardaman, was he in the Reserves?

MCKIM: Jake was originally an artilleryman and in World War II he went into the Navy where he was a Beathmaster. Truman had him come back from Okinawa and made him a captain. In fact, I helped pin his "chickens" on his shoulder. Harry Vaughan used to call him the "picket line Navy," because he was an artilleryman turned Navy man. Jake was the naval aide to the President while I was there.

FUCHS: Where was it that he became acquainted with Mr. Truman?

MCKIM: That I don't know. The first time I knew Jake he

[55]

was head of the RFC office in St. Louis. He was the son of old Senator Vardaman of Mississippi, but I didn't know Jake in the army. I knew him afterwards in St. Louis. Truman later appointed him to the Federal Reserve Board for a fourteen year term. I haven't seen or heard of Jake since.

FUCHS: Was he quite a capable man?

MCKIM: As far as I know he was. I didn't have any particular contacts with him.

FUCHS: Mr. Truman was finishing his second term as presiding judge in '34 and decided to run for senator. What do you know of that?

MCKIM: Well, all I know about that is that I was in St. Louis one night and I was headed back to Omaha. When I got down to the train to take the Wabash to Omaha our manager in St. Louis met me there and said the Home Office had called him to find me and direct me to go to

Atchison, Kansas. Our agent out there had failed to send in the premium money that he had collected. So, I switched my reservation and went to Kansas City. I got in and I went to the President

[56]

Hotel, and I started calling for Mr. Truman and found him in Independence. The court was sitting in Independence that month. I asked him if he had a car I could borrow and he said, "Yes." He said, "Where are you?"

I said, "I'm at the President Hotel:"

"Well," he said, "the Board of Equalization is meeting and I'll be down there pretty soon. What's your room number," and I told him.

In about a half an hour or so a knock came at the door and it was Mr. Truman. We exchanged greetings and talked for a little bit, and I said, "I've got to go up to Atchison; our man up there apparently has gone south with some money. I've got to go up and see if I can find him."

He had the keys dangling on his finger, so I took them and I said, "Where's the car?"

And he said, "Out the 14th Street side of the hotel."

As we walked through the lobby I said, "Where can I leave you off?"

And he said, "Oh, I'm going with you."

I said, "What's happened to the Board of Equalization?"

[57]

He said, "They're still in session; they'll be there when we get back."

So, we drove up to Atchison and I looked all around for our man but he'd really gone south. He was nowhere to be found. So, driving back we were talking politics and Truman said, "What would you do? Here's the situation. I will have had eight years as county judge and under the system of the Democratic organization, that's all I can have there. The only other job, the best paying job in the county, is county collector. I've talked to Tom Pendergast and Tom says that I can have that job for eight years, and it pays about \$20,000 a year. On the other hand, there is a new congressional district that's right out in my part of the county, and that job pays \$10,000 a year. Tom says if I take that, I can have it the rest of my life. Now what would you do?"

And I said, "Well, if you took the collector's job at \$20,000 a year and you have it just eight years, when you finish you're still a young man and you're through politically. There isn't any other job in the county that you can have. On the other hand, if you take the congressional job, it pays just half as much money,

[58]

but you can keep it the rest of your life. You'll be going to Washington; you'll be in the big swim there and nobody can tell what will happen. If I were you, I would take the congressional job."

"Well," he said, "you're telling me what I want to hear."

"Well," I said, "I don't give a damn what you want to hear. You asked me and I told you." So, I told him then, "I'm going to file for the Nebraska legislature."

He said, "When are you going to file?"

And I said, "By the way, who's going to be the senator from Missouri?"

And he said, "Oh, Jim Aylward. Jim's been a party wheel horse; he's been state chairman and national committeeman and all, and he's picked to be the senator."

So. I guess it was a couple of weeks later or so, I got a long distance call from Mr. Truman and he said, "Did you file for the legislature?"

And I said, "I sure did."

"Well," he said, "I was down at Jeff City today and I filed."

I said, "Good."

[59]

He said, "But I filed for the Senate."

I said, "What happened to Jim Aylward?"

"Well," he said, "Jim has a very lucrative law practice and he felt that he couldn't afford to be a senator. So Tom told me that if I was so hell-bent on going to Washington to run for the Senate. Jim Pendergast, I think, put the bee in his bonnet. Anyway, I filed for the Senate."

"So," I said, "Good luck to you."

So that is what I know about his decision to run.

FUCHS: You didn't hear anything of his aspirations to run for governor?

MCKIM: No, no, I thought in my own mind that that was what he would do, that he would be governor instead of senator, but he filed for the Senate and he had Jack Cochran, a Congressman from St. Louis, and "Tuck" Milligan, as opponents. Truman got out in his car and just made every county seat in the state. He talked to the courthouse crowd and he could talk their language. He won in the three-way fight.

FUCHS: Were you around any in that campaign?

[60]

MCKIM: No, I had a little campaign on my own.

FUCHS: How did you come out in that?

MCKIM: Well, on the day after election, my opponent called me up and congratulated me and I said, "What's the score?"

He said, "Well, all but one precinct is in and you have a lead of fifteen votes."

And I said, "Let's wait and see what happens when that precinct comes in." That precinct came in and gave him a majority of fifteen votes and it was a tie. We had to wait about two weeks until they counted the absentee ballots and I won by fifteen votes. My opponent's name was Mike Flannigan.

FUCHS: It sounds like you were pretty close friends.

MCKIM: We weren't. In fact, we didn't know each other before we got into the campaign. We have been since, though.

FUCHS: What had been your political experience in Nebraska that led up to your running for the legislature?

MCKIM: None. I just decided to do it.

FUCHS: You were known through your business or certain

[61]

activities or...?

MCKIM: Oh, yes -- well, I was known in my district and I was the first and only Democrat elected in that district. After I was elected, in my session of the legislature, the unicameral legislature came into being. The Constitutional Amendment creating it was carried in the same election in which I was elected. Then I was on the unicameral committee in the legislature which set up the number of seats in the one house legislature. So, I was elected to a job and then they railroaded the job right out from under me. They had to change the districts all around, and it didn't make any difference, anyway, because I moved out of my district. Then I ran for lieutenant governor in 1938 and I was defeated.

FUCHS: Were you defeated in the primary?

MCKIM: In the primary. I was defeated by a fellow named Terry Carpenter who had been a congressman and had run for the United States Senate two years before. He had also been a candidate for governor and when Terry got into the race, there were eleven in it. Terry ran first and I ran second, but they didn't pay off for

[62]

second place. Mr. Truman came out from Washington and made a radio speech for me.

FUCHS: Oh, is that right?

MCKIM: Yes.

FUCHS: I wonder if that was recorded anyplace?

MCKIM: It was over radio station WOW. Harry thinks it helped defeat me, but I don't think it had any bearing on it whatever. I was defeated anyway, when Terry Carpenter got into the race.

FUCHS: Did he go on to become the lieutenant governor?

MCKIM: No. He was the Democratic candidate for lieutenant governor and the people split their tickets and elected a Republican lieutenant governor, with a Democratic governor.

FUCHS: Who was the governor?

MCKIM: Roy Cochran.

FUCHS: What other assignments did you have in that last bicameral legislature?

[63]

MCKIM: Well, I was secretary of the Committee on Committees; I was chairman of the Miscellaneous Subjects Committee; I was a member of the Finance Ways and Means committee. I was the Democratic whip.

FUCHS: Very interesting.

MCKIM: I handled the parimutuel bill in the House for Ak-Sar-Ben, which is a civic organization in Omaha, which backed the parimutuel law. I handled it in the House.

Senator Sam Howell from my same district in Omaha, handled it in the Senate. So, I was kind of a co-father of the parimutuel law in Nebraska.

FUCHS: Do you know who managed Mr. Truman's campaign in 1934?

MCKIM: No.

FUCHS: Had you met Fred Canfil up to that time?

MCKIM: Yes, I used to meet Fred at Reserve camp. Fred was a cavalryman. That's where Truman met him, too, I think.

FUCHS: Is that right?

[64]

MCKIM: Yes. Then he and Fred got to be pretty thick. Fred was kind of his right hand man on building the Jackson County Courthouse in Kansas City, Missouri.

FUCHS: Do you recall anything else of interest about Fred Canfil?

MCKIM: Well, there's just so much about Fred Canfil. He was just Fred Canfil and quite a character in his own right. He was rather mysterious. He kept his private life pretty much to himself.

FUCHS: Why do you say that?

MCKIM: Well, I don't know yet whether he was married. I haven't any idea. I knew Fred very well, but I don't know whether he had a wife or not. I don't know where he lived. He was pretty closemouthed about a lot of things.

FUCHS: Did he seem to be a capable man?

MCKIM: Yes, I think he did a tremendous job in helping Truman build the courthouse. Truman depended on him an awful lot. I think he was then the superintendent of it after it was opened and completed, before he was

[65]

made United States Marshal.

FUCHS: Did you know a Paul Dillon from St. Louis?

MCKIM: I've met Paul Dillon, yes. He claims to have been a campaign manager for Truman. I think he did some work in St. Louis. I didn't know him well.

FUCHS: You don't know anything about the relationship between him and Mr. Truman?

MCKIM: No, I don't know a thing about it.

FUCHS: You mentioned in a conversation that we had the other day that Margaret Truman had a heart condition. Can you elaborate on that please?

MCKIM: Well, I know that when she was a small girl the Boss was quite concerned about her. She had this heart condition and was very sickly and they tried everything. Finally Harry sent Mrs. Truman and Margaret down to a place between Gulfport and Biloxi, Mississippi. They lived with a family down there right almost on sea level. The idea being that sea level conditions would break up the heart condition, and apparently it did. I understand that they lived there about a year, because

[66]

afterwards when Mr. Truman and I started on the campaign in 1944, we drove out from New Orleans to visit this family. Also, on the same trip, he had a nephew who was in the naval training station at Gulfport and we visited with him.

FUCHS: Would you recall the family's name?

MCKIM: No, I wouldn't.

FUCHS: Was this when he was senator?

MCKIM: This was when he was a senator.

FUCHS: Had they been living in Washington prior to this or had they stayed in Independence?

MCKIM: No, now wait a minute. Let's see. Whether it was in the last years as county judge or whether it was in his first years as senator, I wouldn't say which, because I don't know the years. But I know they were down there because the Boss was quite concerned about her. I was with him in St. Louis one time and put him on the train for New Orleans. I know we walked up and down the station platform at Tower Grove Station in St. Louis, and talked about the situation. He was worried then,

[67]

but he was going down to see how they were getting along.

FUCHS: You say you are sure he was senator?

MCKIM: I'm pretty sure he was senator.

FUCHS: Does the name Dave Berenstein ring a bell with you at all?

MCKIM: Not at all.

FUCHS: There's a story about a practical joke you played on Harry Vaughan. Can you date that rather closely and recount it?

MCKIM: No, I can't date it. I just don't know what year it was. The way it started was, I was in Washington and the Senator said, "Instead of going direct to Omaha going through Chicago, why don't you come with me to St. Louis. Then you can go to Kansas City and then on to Omaha. The fare is the same whichever way you go."

So, I said, "All right, I'll go with you to St. Louis."

[68]

So we got on the B & O. The train was due into St. Louis sometime in early afternoon of the next day and I cooked up a deal with the Senator. I reminded the Senator about the time at Fort Riley

when the regimental picture of the 77th Field Artillery was being taken. Major Vaughan was the commanding officer of the 77th Field Artillery, known as the "Sleeping 77th," and I was the adjutant. Anyway, some chairs had to be brought out for this group picture and I didn't sit in one of the chairs, I was standing. Vaughan, then, after the picture-taking ceremony was over, ordered me to carry his chair back to the barracks. Well, I objected strenuously, but I finally ended up carrying the chair. So, on the train coming out I told the Senator about the episode and I said, "I'm going to make that Vaughan pay for that."

He said, "John Snyder is going to meet the train."

And I said, "If John Snyder meets the train Harry Vaughan will be with him." I said, "You play along and don't pay any attention to me."

And he said, "What are you going to do?"

I said, "I'm going to play drunk and make that

[69]

Vaughan take care of me."

So, Truman got off the train first and Snyder met him. I got off and I was hilarious. I was a drunk of the old school. Snyder looked at me and he said to Vaughan, "Harry, you take care of that. I'll get the Senator out of here. We can't let him be seen with that McKim."

So, Snyder hustles Truman on out to the taxicab area in the St. Louis station, leaving Vaughan to take care of me. Well, I became quite a problem for Vaughan. We got in the cab, the four of us, and all the way down Market Street I was waving to everybody on the sidewalks and having a hilarious time. Snyder was very, very much put out with me and Vaughan didn't know whether to hit me or throw me out. Well, when we pulled up in front of the Missouri Athletic Club, Snyder said to Vaughan: "You take care of him and I'll get the Senator in and register. Then when you see us at the elevator, you bring him in."

So, I was quite a problem to get in there. Vaughan waited until they'd signed in and been assigned a suite, then he got me into the elevator, and it was about eight floors up. Where the elevators stopped, there was a

[70]

big, long hall; when you got to that you had to go to the left the same distance down to the corner suite. Well, just as the elevator stopped, I pitched out onto the floor right on my face. Well, Vaughan said, "What a mess this is." So he has to pick me up. Snyder hustles the Senator down to the suite. Vaughan picked me up and he had to carry me the whole length of that hall and then as far again down to the corner. He got in, threw me on the davenport, and he said, "There, sleep it off, you drunken so-and-so."

And as soon as I hit the davenport I stood up and saluted him, and I said, "Thanks, Harry, for the ride. You will make me carry that chair, won't you."

You never saw such a look of astonishment on Vaughan's face. Then Snyder just busted out laughing. Truman couldn't contain himself. He just sat down and almost cried. Well, Truman has told that story around Washington. I know he told it to Admiral Leahy, and Leahy said, "I think that's the funniest story I ever heard." And Truman has told me since that, "Vaughan is still laying for you on that trick."

In this Steinberg's book he claims that I weighed 235 pounds. Well, I never weighed near that in my life.

[71]

I think at the time I did weigh about 185 pounds. But that was still a pretty good load for Vaughan to carry.

FUCHS: It's a good story. Did you know Victor Messall?

MCKIM: Yes. I didn't know him until after he'd become secretary to Senator Truman. He'd been secretary for some congressman down in Southern Missouri. The Senator needed a secretary and he hired Vic Messall. I knew Vic during that time.

FUCHS: Do you know what caused him to leave Mr. Truman?

MCKIM: No. I don't know what caused it. I heard some things but it would be purely hearsay on my part, so I wouldn't be competent enough to advance any ideas on it.

FUCHS: You haven't discussed it with Mr. Truman?

MCKIM: No, I have no.

FUCHS: Did you participate in the 1940 campaign in any way?

MCKIM: No, I did not.

[72]

FUCHS: Did you from your political experience and knowing the situation, probably, in Kansas City, feel that he would or would not win?

MCKIM: Oh, I thought he'd win, and he did. It was a pretty tough fight, though, with Maurice Milligan.

FUCHS: Yes. Did you know Maurice Milligan?

MCKIM: No, I did not.

FUCHS: What about Barney Dickmann, the mayor in St. Louis? Was he always...?

MCKIM: Well, I don't know whether he was always a Truman supporter or not. I've heard that he kicked over the traces a few times. I don't know; I know Barney and I liked him very much. In fact, my youngest daughter and his adopted daughter were in school together and I see Barney every now and then, and I like him. I think that, at one time, the St. Louis outfit kind of went the other way. I gather it was a little of the doublecross, but I think Bob Hannegan kind of saved the day there in the final analysis.

FUCHS: How did Mr. Truman become acquainted with Dwight

[73]

Griswold?

MCKIM: In Reserve camp. Dwight was from Gordon, Nebraska. He was a banker and also a partner in the newspaper there. His partner in the newspaper was a Colonel Joe Leedom. Dwight had been a member of the House of Representatives in Nebraska, was a colonel of artillery, and we met him at Reserve camps. Dwight and I were very good friends; in fact, when I was in the legislature I was the Democratic whip in the House, and when Dwight came along as a Republican governor, I could do more with Dwight as a Republican than I could with the Democrats. Then when I was running for lieutenant governor, I made a swing out through the state and I got out to Gordon, Nebraska, and I checked into the hotel. I was shown into a room in the hotel, and when they opened the door there was Joe Leedom and Dwight Griswold sitting there waiting for me. They said, "We can't be seen with you, but we've got all the Democrats coming up here to see you pretty soon." I liked Dwight very much.

FUCHS: Do you recall a date you and Mr. Truman made with him in 1932 at Camp Ripley?

[74]

MCKIM: A date?

FUCHS: Yes, it's mentioned in a letter. When he was governor of Nebraska in November, 1940, he mentioned that you and Mr. Truman hoped to keep a date that you'd made in 1932 at Ripley.

MCKIM: As I recall we were going up to the state house and visit him in his mansion, but we never got around to it.

FUCHS: In other words, as early as '32 you were thinking that he might be governor some day.

MCKIM: Dwight had run for governor and missed, so he ran again and made it later.

FUCHS: In November, 1940, in a letter to Senator Truman, you mentioned that "Chick won by 16,000 votes in the Nebraska election," and Mr. Truman replied that it was "certainly a grand thing that Chick won." Who was Chick?

MCKIM: Charles F. McLaughlin was the congressman from Omaha, 2nd District in Nebraska.

FUCHS: Was he a close friend of Mr. Truman's?

[75]

MCKIM: No, he was a good friend of mine and he had met Truman through me. In fact, when Truman came up there when I was running for lieutenant governor, Truman made the rounds one Sunday with me to a lot of political meetings, picnics and all, and Chick was along. He was making the same tour that I was. Chick was defeated later, and I think Roosevelt appointed him to the Mexican Claims Commission. He was on that commission for quite a while, and Truman later appointed him a Federal judge in Washington. He was a very capable man.

FUCHS: Did you have a part in that?

MCKIM: In what?

FUCHS: In his getting the appointment. Did he ask you to recommend him?

MCKIM: Oh. I don't think Chick needed any recommendation. Truman knew enough about him, because after Chick was elected in Congress they got to be pretty good friends.

FUCHS: You mentioned matters about the war, the poor draft law, England's entrance into the war, and so forth, in March, 1941. I just wondered how Mr. Truman felt,

[76]

as you remember, about the situation?

MCKIM: What situation?

FUCHS: Well, about England. That was before we were in the war. Did Mr. Truman, as you remember it, in discussing things with him, feel that we should do everything to stay out of the war...

MCKIM: I don't recall anything about it, whether we even talked about it or not.

FUCHS: You don't remember ever talking about it.

MCKIM: Of course, being Irish, I distrusted the British on any point. This latest episode bears me out.

FUCHS: You have reference to what?

MCKIM: You know what I have reference to. That they're going to deal with Cuba regardless of whether we like it or not.

FUCHS: Yes. Who was Bill Kirby?

MCKIM: Bill Kirby was, oh, I think he was a councilman in Kansas City one time. Bill was a Reserve officer.

[77]

He was out at a couple of camps where we were. Truman knew him very well.

FUCHS: You wrote Mr. Truman that he [Kirby] was the subject of a discussion at a battery meeting in March, 1941, and said that he had doublecrossed Truman once before.

MCKIM: I think he had but I don't recall the circumstances of it.

FUCHS: You don't recall anything about this doublecross or the previous doublecross, if there was a second one?

MCKIM: No.

FUCHS: What does the name Edward Burke mean to you?

MCKIM: Edward Burke was the senator from Nebraska and he was elected to the United States Senate the same time that Truman was elected from Missouri. Burke was the one, I think, who coined the phrase the "New Deal." He used that in a speech up in South Dakota. Burke's senatorial office was right across the hall from Truman in the Senate office building. They got to

[78]

be pretty good friends. After Truman was elected he came up to Omaha and I took him over to Burke's office and introduced him. Neither had been sworn in. This was in the interim between elections.

FUCHS: He was a Democrat?

MCKIM: He was a Democrat. Then I helped him in his campaign for re-election. He was defeated and then turned Republican. He's practicing law in Washington now.

FUCHS: Why did he turn Republican?

MCKIM: I don't know.

FUCHS: In a letter of March 14, 1940, you mentioned the Battle of Dugny. What is the significance of that in World War I history?

MCKIM: Well, Dugny was a railhead close to Camp La Beholle, and after the Armistice we took all of our guns down there and put them in a gun park close to the railroad station. Later we had to go down to clean up those guns. They had been sitting out there for quite a while, and while we were doing this work some Frenchman came along with a five gallon demijohn full of cognac, which he started to peddle

[79]

and some of the boys got pretty high. So we knocked off for lunch and went into town. There was a headquarters of some infantry outfit there and some fights started. One of our fellows who was pretty tight suddenly left the group, ran over and started slugging some strange soldiers. So, the fight started there and pretty soon the whole battery was in it. Our boys went into this headquarters and threw papers, records -- they just tore the place apart. Well, Vic Householder was the first lieutenant and the officer in charge. I've talked to Vic since about this but he doesn't remember. But I remember because I had the job to do. I hadn't had a drink, not one drink, so I was sober. So, while all of this brawl was going on,, Vic called me around behind the building and he said, "You go out there and get them and line them up and we'll take them home."

And I said, "I'm not in charge of this detail; I'm not a non-commissioned officer."

"You go out there and do it. "

I said, "I don't have a whistle."

He said, "Here, you take my whistle."

I said, "Well, lieutenant, why don't you go out

[80]
there and do it yourself?"

He said, "They're liable to tear me apart, too." He said, "You take this whistle and you go out there and line these boys up."

Well, I went out as I had done in hundreds of times before; I just cut across the street, blew the whistle, "Fall in," and they came to just like that. They fell in and Householder came out from behind this building and I saluted him, "Battery's in order, sir." And up the road we started. Well, we were picking up drunks all the way for the next mile. We had a fourgon wagon, and we had to load some of them in the fourgon wagon; they were just out stiff.

FUCHS: What kind of a wagon is that.

MCKIM: Fourgon, it's a French cargo wagon. So, anyway, they all got extra duty the next day except me.

FUCHS: I didn't quite follow you, you say that Vic Householder doesn't remember this?

MCKIM: I brought it to Vic's attention the one time that I talked to him here, but he has no recollection of it at all. He remembers the Battle of Dugny, but he doesn't

[81]
remember calling me back in behind that building and saying, "Here, you form them and you get them out." He doesn't remember that. It's nice not to remember!

FUCHS: I've seen in some letters, I believe they were from Householder to Mr. Truman, where he said, "May the spirit of Dugny never die." That would be in reference to that battle.

MCKIM: Yes. He put me in a hot spot there. I was not a non-commissioned officer; I had no business out there, but I was the one who had to get them together. They fell right in with it. They were a little too drunk to know whether I had any authority or not.

FUCHS: Mr. Truman wrote you in 1940, in May, that Vic Messall and he had just gotten their headquarters set up at Sedalia, and he also said that it looked as if "our boys with their illegal hunting in Nebraska are really up against it." What did that have reference to?

MCKIM: I think some of the boys were up there and they got caught either out of season or over their limits and their guns were confiscated.

[82]

FUCHS: Who would that have been?

MCKIM: I don't know. I don't recall. I know there's some correspondence on it.

FUCHS: Yes. Do you know if they got them back?

MCKIM: I don't think they did.

FUCHS: Mr. Truman seemed a little bit more than interested in it, concerned about it.

MCKIM: Yes.

FUCHS: Do you know Ed Condon of Maryville?

MCKIM: Yes.

FUCHS: Who was he?

MCKIM: Ed Condon was a private in D Battery. He ran a drugstore; well, I guess he still does up at Maryville. We used to see him when our Reserve camp would be at Riley, usually the Missouri National Guard would be

[83]

there about the same time. Then Ed went back to Washington where he was a colonel attached to the National Guard Bureau there. He is out now and retired, and the last time I saw him he was back running the drugstore.

FUCHS: He was fairly close to Mr. Truman?

MCKIM: Yes, I would say so. One of Truman's boys, if you put it that way.

FUCHS: You don't know how active he was politically?

MCKIM: No, I don't.

FUCHS: In August, 1940, in reference to the primary election victory you said, "It looks like Vaughan got you in bad, or does the Hatch law apply to those senators who voted against it." Do you recall what that had reference to?

MCKIM: No, I don't remember now.

FUCHS: Mr. Truman said in September, 1940, that he had had a lucky break having been assigned as one of the senators to attend the funeral of the Speaker. I assume he meant

[84]

the Speaker of the House who had died, and I can't remember who that would have been in 1940. "He died at an opportune moment for me. As you know, we always have a grand time on these state funeral parties."

MCKIM: Who was it, it was the one before Mr. Sam.

FUCHS: You don't recall anything about this though, why it was particularly favorable to him?

Who was "Cue Ball?"

MCKIM: "Cue Ball" -- Harry Whitney of Kansas City. He was a private in D Battery. I think he is a magistrate in Kansas City now.

FUCHS: Close to Mr. Truman as one of the boys?

MCKIM: Quite a character -- one of the boys.

FUCHS: Quite a character you say?

MCKIM: Oh, yes. Quite a character.

FUCHS: Any anecdotes relating to him and Mr. Truman or yourself that you recall?

MCKIM: No. He had a bald dome, that's why he was called

[85]

"Cue Ball."

FUCHS: Apparently you had some opinions about Leon Henderson and Harold Ickes and Mr. Truman said that he would talk to you about them some time. Do you recall anything of his feelings?

MCKIM: I don't know whether we ever got around to talk about them or not.

FUCHS: What were your feelings about them?

MCKIM: I didn't think much of either one of them.

FUCHS: You didn't.

MCKIM: No.

FUCHS: Did you know them?

MCKIM: No. I met Ickes later when he was a member of the Cabinet, as Secretary of the Interior. He was the old curmudgeon, you know, but I would prefer that anything along that line, anything that I would know would be strictly hearsay and you can get a much better picture of him from Mr. Truman. I understand that when Ickes would come out of Cabinet meetings, he would immediately

[86]

relay any pertinent information to Drew Pearson. They planted one on him one time, gave it only to him, and Drew Pearson had it, so they had him pinned down on it.

FUCHS: Do you know where you heard this?

MCKIM: No. I was there when it was going on. They suspected that Ickes was the fellow that was peddling the information to Pearson.

FUCHS: Oh, this was when you were in the White House?

MCKIM: I was there, yes. So, I think the Boss planted a piece of information with Ickes only and it got to Pearson, so he knew damn well it was Ickes who did it.

FUCHS: That's interesting.

In Mr. Truman's second term as senator, I think you expressed, several times, opinions about labor unions. What do you think...?

MCKIM: I think about labor unions...that the idea of labor, union labor, is fine, but some of the leaders they've got are just hoodlums. That's still my opinion of them. I think that this Hoffa is a threat to the whole United States. That's just my opinion.

[87]

FUCHS: What did Mr. Truman think about that?

MCKIM: Oh, now, I don't know about that; you'll have to ask Mr. Truman.

FUCHS: I thought perhaps you'd talked it over because in one letter he refers to the power being concentrated in the hands "of a few men who handle these sheep who make up labor unions." I thought perhaps...

MCKIM: No, I guess that was just in our correspondence. I don't think there was any...you know, at this late date it's pretty hard to form any opinion of what Mr. Truman said to me or I said to Mr. Truman or what particular event of the times would cause me to make a comment like that.

FUCHS: Well, that was his comment but I understand you. Sometimes, though, when you mention something it rings a bell, but I don't expect you to remember all these things; I'm certain that I wouldn't.

You and Mr. Truman went to an all Star -- Chicago Bears football game in 1942. Do you recall that and did anything memorable happen there?

MCKIM: Well, 1942?

[88]

FUCHS: Yes, August 28.

MCKIM: Yes. We went there; we stayed at the Ambassador East Hotel and let's see...we went to two of them up there, I don't know just which -- different things happened, but I think at that particular time we went out to the ball game and it was so foggy that we were right down at, about the third row and we couldn't see to the sideline. It was terrible. I made the remark that "between the fog and the grog, I can't see the ball game."

FUCHS: Did Mr. Truman like to have a little drink at a ball game?

MCKIM: This was before the ball game. We had a few before dinner.

FUCHS: I see. You frequently refer to the "L.A. Colonel". I have an idea who that might be.

MCKIM: Well, that's it; your idea is correct.

FUCHS: That's Vaughan?

MCKIM: Vaughan.

[89]

FUCHS: What do you know of Jerome Walsh?

MCKIM: Oh. I've known Jerome Walsh since he was a little kid. He was the son of Frank P. Walsh, quite a famous criminal lawyer in Kansas City who became famous in the famous Hyde Case, Dr. Hyde. Later Frank Walsh, I think, was a member of the labor board in Washington. Jerome was one of his sons; he had a son Frank, the oldest boy, who died, oh, along about 1923

or '24. There were two other boys, John and Jim. Jerome became a lawyer. I think he went out to California one time and defended a fellow named Hickman, a famous criminal trial. Jerome then became a congressman, I believe, and he's still around Kansas City, I think, practicing law.

FUCHS: Was he particularly friendly to Mr. Truman?

MCKIM: I don't know; I never saw them together.

FUCHS: What about Dick Duncan? How did he and Mr. Truman become acquainted?

MCKIM: Dick Duncan was a congressman from St. Joseph, Missouri, and I think that being a Missourian and a member of the congressional delegation from Missouri,

[90]

that Truman got to know him very well in Washington. Duncan is now a Federal judge in Missouri.

FUCHS: Did you know him?

MCKIM: Yes, I know him.

FUCHS: Did you favor his appointment as a judge?

MCKIM: I thought so, yes.

FUCHS: Did you have any contacts with the Truman Committee in a business way?

MCKIM: In a business way, no.

FUCHS: Any of your friends in business talk to you about it?

MCKIM: No, none at all. The only contacts I had with the Truman Committee, out in Los Angeles one time at the Biltmore Hotel, Senator Harley Kilgore, who was a member of that committee, was out there and I met him. He had a fellow, Colonel Art Wilson, with him, I think, who was doing some work for the committee; and then Charles Patrick Clark, who was an attorney with the

[91]

committee, was there.

FUCHS: You met him there?

MCKIM: Yes. And then another time, Truman called me and asked me to take care of a few of them who were coming into Omaha. Harley Kilgore was one of them and Senator Ferguson of Michigan was another and Major General Lowe was also with them in the party. They were checking on something, I think, at the Martin Bomber Plant or something of that sort. But

Truman called me and asked me to look after them and see that they were properly taken care of, which I did.

FUCHS: Did you know Bill Boyle?

MCKIM: Yes, I knew Bill very well.

FUCHS: Do you know how he happened to become associated with Mr. Truman in Washington?

MCKIM: Well, Bill was, I think, police commissioner in Kansas City at one time or on the police board. He was one of twins; he had a brother, Russell Boyle, I knew very well. Russell stayed in the army and became a

[92]

colonel. I don't know whether he's alive yet or not. Bill, oh, I think, Bill was active in Democratic politics there and I think that when Harry Vaughan was called back in the service (he had been Truman's secretary), I think Bill Boyle was given the job then, as secretary to Mr. Truman. This Colonel Art Wilson, that I mentioned who had done some work with the Truman Committee, was over in Australia on MacArthur's staff and he called for Harry Vaughan to come over there. Vaughan was a lieutenant colonel then. Truman called me from Washington one time and said that he and Vaughan was going to be on the Union Pacific train going through Omaha and why didn't I get on and go to San Francisco with them? I did; I met the train at two o'clock in the morning and got on and we went to San Francisco and put up at the St. Francis Hotel. Then we got a car the next morning and took Vaughan over to Fort Mason to see him on board the ship. And we both looked at each other and Truman said to me, "You know we both ought to be going with him."

And I said, "I know it; I think we ought to."

And we went back to the hotel. We were going on to Los Angeles and we figured that we'd better find

[93]

a way to fly down there, so, I called up the Presidio where Lieutenant General John DeWitt was the general commanding officer and arranged for Truman to come out for a visit. The General sent a car. We went out and I was supposed to judiciously bring the subject up of how we were going to get to Los Angeles. The General fell right in with it -- "Why, take my plane." And that was just what we wanted.

FUCHS: Were you a friend of the General's?

MCKIM: No, no, I never met him, just that once. So, the next morning, we went out to Hamilton Field and we were flown down to L.A., courtesy of the General. It was a funny thing going down there. Right from Hamilton Field there was a fog over San Francisco at the time. So we just circled and circled right over the field up to about eight to ten thousand feet and then

headed out to sea. The fog stopped almost at the water's edge. We flew down close to the water. Truman and I got in a two-handed poker game and I won a little money because I caught him looking out the window a lot.

FUCHS: Were you still holding a commission in the Reserves

[94]
at that time?

MCKIM: No, my commission expired in 1938.

FUCHS: Expired? You could have renewed it?

MCKIM: I didn't renew it.

FUCHS: You would have had to continue a certain amount of summer training?

MCKIM: Yes.

FUCHS: Do you happen to know why Boyle went to the Democratic National Committee in '44?

MCKIM: No, I don't. I know that after that he was National Chairman.

FUCHS: Do you know anything of Vic Messall's association with Senator Truman after he left?

MCKIM: No, I don't.

FUCHS: What are your first recollections of Mr. Truman being proposed as a vice-presidential candidate, and did you favor it?

[95]
MCKIM: That's going to be too long a story; I don't want to continue today. We can start there tomorrow.

[96]
Second Oral History Interview with Edward McKim, at his home in Phoenix, Arizona, February 19, 1964. By J. R. Fuchs, Harry S. Truman Library.

FUCHS: All right, Mr. McKim, if you want to go ahead with that story on the vice-presidential candidacy.

MCKIM: Well, in the latter part of June or the forepart of July, 1944, Mr. Truman had suggested to me that I arrange to be at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago as he said he was having John Snyder and me there to block any attempts to make him the vice-presidential nominee. I had made my plane reservations and on the evening of July 12, which was the

wedding anniversary of my son, Ed, and my daughter-in-law, Franny -- Ed was overseas -- we gave a little dinner for Franny at the Blackstone Hotel in Omaha.

During the course of that dinner, I got a long-distance call from Mr. Truman telling me to be sure and be at Chicago; that the pressure was getting a little greater on having him become the nominee, and he didn't want it. I assured him that I would be there Monday morning of the convention, as I had my plane tickets in my pocket at that time.

I arrived in Chicago that Monday morning, went

[97]

immediately to the suite in the Stevens Hotel. There was quite a bit of political activity, of course, all during that day. And during the day, John Snyder and I went into one of the bedrooms and discussed the situation. It looked to us like Truman was the only one that could be nominated. We decided that we'd better tell him about it because we didn't want to be in the position of blocking something that would interfere with a man's destiny. So we told him how we felt, and he said, "No," he still didn't want it. Then on, I don't recall whether it was Monday night or Tuesday night, about 11 or 12 o'clock, Roy Roberts, publisher of the Kansas City *Star*, talked to me and he thought that Truman should be the nominee because it was all in the cards for him to be. At that time, you may recall, that there were three candidates that came out to Chicago each thinking that he had the blessing of President Roosevelt. Jimmy Byrnes, when he arrived, thought he had been tapped, and he asked Mr. Truman if he would make his nominating speech for him and Mr. Truman agreed. Then Mr. Barkley arrived and he thought that he had the nod from the President. Later, Mr. Wallace arrived and he thought he had the nod from the President. Mr. Truman didn't

[98]

want to get mixed up in a deal of that sort. Here were three men apparently having the blessing of the President. Mr. Truman didn't want to get mixed up in a deal of that sort. Here were three men apparently having the blessing of the President of the United States to be his running mate. Mr. Truman had already agreed then to make the nominating speech for Jimmy Byrnes. It put Truman in kind of a fix. But from all the reports that we were getting, labor would not have any part of either Byrnes or Barkley. They wanted Wallace. However, Bob Hannegan, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, had made a tour around the United States prior to the convention, and the consensus of the state chairman around the country was, "Wallace won't do; he'll have to go! It will have to be somebody else."

Well, we knew this, but Truman was still a little wary of giving his assent to running for the vice-presidency. I think it was either on Monday night or Tuesday night that Roy Roberts, John Snyder and I got Truman in a room and it was around midnight. We explained the situation to him and he said, "I'm still not going to do it."

We all three urged him to get into the race, but

[99]

he refused. Finally, I said, "I think, Senator, that you're going to do it "

And he got a little belligerent with me and said, "What makes you think that I'm going to do it?"

I said, "Because there's a little, old ninety-year old mother down in Grandview, Missouri, that would like to see her son President of the United States."

And with that the tears came in his eyes and he stomped out of the room; he wouldn't speak to me.

FUCHS: Did you say "President of the United States?"

MCKIM: I said, "President of the United States," because it was the consensus of opinion at the whole convention, that whoever was nominated for the vice-presidency, would be the President of the United States.

FUCHS: Was this talked of?

MCKIM: This had been talked of in party circles all around. Everybody felt that whoever was nominated for the vice-presidency, would be the President.

So, all the next day, Tuesday (I think it was Tuesday), Mr. Truman refused to speak to me. I think

[100]

it was late that afternoon that I got him in one of the bedrooms and I told him, I said, "I don't care whether you ever speak to me again or not; I merely told you what I believed, and I think you should take this nomination. I think you're the only one that can be nominated. If that's the way you want it, why, let's call it quits right now."

And he said, "Well, I apologize for my action; I was mad at you, but I'm still not going to do it."

I said, "Well, now, my wife has tickets for the play *Oklahoma* on Thursday night. I want you to tell me whether I got to see *Oklahoma* on Thursday night or whether we go to work."

"Well," he said, "I can't tell you now. I'm going to have breakfast with some of the boys in the morning and I'll know more about it then."

The next day, I keep thinking it was either Wednesday or Thursday -- one or two days in there, they escape me at the moment...

FUCHS: Excuse me, was Tom Evans up there at this time?

MCKIM: No, not at that time.

FUCHS: Did you know Tom Evans then?

[101]

MCKIM: Yes.

FUCHS: How long had you known him?

MCKIM: Oh, I'd known him for several years before that.

FUCHS: On a first name basis?

MCKIM: Yes. Fred Canfil was there; John Snyder and myself;

Senator Carl Hatch was wandering around there quite a bit of the time; Senator Lister Hill -- oh, lots of the senators came in to say hello to Senator Truman.

The next morning, anyway, Senator Truman went to breakfast with Sidney Hillman and some of the labor leaders. Bob Hannegan showed Truman a note that he had from President Roosevelt and he said, to Hannegan, "Truman is the man." And Truman still wouldn't believe it, and they got Franklin D. on the phone and he confirmed it.

FUCHS: Did you see the note?

MCKIM: No, I didn't see the note then.

FUCHS: You did see it?

MCKIM: I did see it, but it was several years afterwards,

[102]

when Bob was postmaster general, he showed me the note.

FUCHS: Did Mr. Truman talk to President Roosevelt on the phone?

MCKIM: I wasn't there, but I understand that he did, because this meeting was held over in another hotel. So, I think it was Thursday afternoon, or Thursday morning, Wallace was to come in. He hadn't planned on coming to the convention, but his campaign manager in Chicago was Senator Joe Guffey and Joe got ahold of him and suggested that he better get out there to the convention; things weren't going too well for him. So that's the time that Wallace left his Wardman Park Hotel and ducked some reporters, I think, had a little altercation with some photographer, and headed for Chicago. Well, an amusing thing happened. I was sent over to the Sherman Hotel, which was to be Wallace's headquarters, to observe what was going on. What actually happened was, Joe Guffey organized quite a demonstration of young people and the liberal element carrying placards and everything, and it was to meet Mr. Wallace at the railroad station. Well, the reporter for the *Times* got on the train at either South Bend or one of the prior

[103]

stations to Chicago, and talked to Mr. Wallace and told him he knew of a quick way to get Mr. Wallace down to the Hotel. He talked him into taking a car at the 63rd Street Station with him, and brought him into the Sherman Hotel. All of his welcoming delegation was down at the railroad station!

I saw him when he came into the hotel and he looked like a man in a daze; he didn't know what had happened to him. Then it made Joe Guffey a little mad too, that his well-laid plans were loused up by his candidate.

So, I reported back, and that afternoon the Wallace delegation tried to stampede the convention. That was when Bob Hannegan, and mayor Ed Kelley, had Senator Jackson, who was the permanent chairman, adjourn the meeting. And that left the Wallace campaign high and dry.

On Friday, Truman was nominated on the second ballot, and I was sitting in the box there with them, and I was kind of keeping a tally of the states, but it went pretty fast.

After the nomination, Senator Truman came back to the box, and we all cleared the way with policemen

[104]

to get Mrs. Truman and Margaret and the Senator out of the hall. We all took cars down to the Stevens Hotel. While we were there, the Senator had another suite of rooms over at the Morrison Hotel, and he asked if I would take Mrs. Truman and Margaret over there. He went first to the Morrison Hotel, and I took Mrs. Truman and Margaret down in the elevator; and they were unknown to the general public at that time, I took them in a taxicab over to the Morrison. We went up to this particular suite and there were quite a number of policemen and Secret Service men, I presume, and they were halting everybody that came through. And I said, "We want to see Senator Truman."

And the officer in charge said, "He's receiving nobody."

And I said, "I think he'll receive these people; may I present Mrs. Truman and their daughter Margaret."

They got in. So that's that story.

FUCHS: There was a reception in the White House for the cast of the movie, *Woodrow Wilson*, and I believe you attended that?

MCKIM: Yes, I was in Washington at the time. It was after

[105]

the nomination, and Truman asked me one morning, he said, "What are you going to do today?"

And I said, "Well, one of the first things I'm going to do is go to the barbershop." And I said, "I may go to see one of our congressmen or senators."

But he said, "I want you back here this afternoon. We're going over to the White House, to a tea, and I'm taking you."

So, I think the time of the tea was around 4 o'clock. Anyway, we drove over there and we walked up the long walk to the West Executive entrance. Right ahead of us were two men, one in uniform, and the other one in civilian clothes stopped and introduced himself as Governor Jimmy Davis, of Louisiana and his adjutant general. We all went in together. Bob Hannegan and Ed Pauley, who was then the national treasurer, were kind of overseeing things there. The President sat out on the South Portico, in a wheel chair, and the cast of this picture, *Wilson*. The leading lady was Geraldine Fitzgerald. The leading man who played the part of Wilson was not there. Darryl Zanuck, the producer of the movie was there.

Anyway, after meeting President Roosevelt, I stood

[106]

over against the wall, and for an hour or more I had a chance to observe his physical being, and he laughingly asked me if Mr. Truman owed me any money.

And I said, "Yes, Mr. President, he owes me three dollars a month for the duration of World War I."

He said, "Why was that?"

And I said, "Because he wouldn't make me a first-class private, and I'm hoping, Mr. President, that when he gets this new job with you, that he'll have enough money to pay me off."

Well, Roosevelt laughed at it. When we left we walked down to the other gate and that's when I stopped Senator Truman and told him to turn around and take a look at that place; that was where he was going to be living.

And he said, "I'm afraid you're right, Eddie." And he said, "And it scares the hell out of me."

We went on then to discussing the thing. We went on then over to a cocktail party which I think was given by Vic Messall. Anyway, we met the famous or infamous Drew Pearson there.

From there we went, the Senator and I, went around to a little French restaurant and had dinner, then over

[107]

to this movie house where the premier of the picture *Wilson* was to be shown. While I was in there I thought, "This is the funniest thing. I'm sitting right next to the man who may have the same problems that Wilson had. He's going to inherit a couple of wars." Because looking at Roosevelt at that time -- he didn't look good to me. The questions that entered my mind then, "Will he live long enough to be inaugurated?" We would have had a proposition there, "Here's the man that is the nominee for the vice-presidency; we have another man who is the Vice-

President, but who had been rejected for re-election and there was always the possibility that between the time of election, even after they were both elected and before they took office, what's going to happen." Naturally, in that time, Wallace would have become President, if it was before, until -- it's still a question, "Who's going to be President?"

FUCHS: Do you recall anything else about that party that Vic Messall gave?

MCKIM: No, it was just another party. The only thing that I recall about it was that we met Drew Pearson there.

FUCHS: Did he seem to be on good terms with Mr. Messall

[108]
at that time?

MCKIM: Who?

FUCHS: Senator Truman.

MCKIM: Yes, yes.

FUCHS: What do you recall of the campaign in '44? I believe you went on the tour with Mr. Truman. Who was there and so forth?

MCKIM: Well, the original idea of that campaign was that, Senator Truman told me, he was to go to the West Coast and make three speeches. And he said, "Why don't you get on the train with me at Omaha and go out to California" -- I had some business interests out there at the time and it would have been very easy for me to consider it as a business trip -- and he said, "I'll come through Omaha on such-and-such a date and you get on the train and we'll go out and I'll make the three speeches, and we'll have a little fun together."

About that time the St. Louis Browns and the St. Louis Cardinals won their pennants in their respective leagues and they were to play the World Series in St.

[109]
Louis. I figured that I could see two or three games of the series there, and get back to Omaha in time to meet Senator Truman, and go to the coast with him.

I went down to the games taking only enough clothes for a two or three day trip. I went out to the ball park and the first person I ran into was Senator Truman. "Say," he said, "we're going to New Orleans."

I said, "Who's going to New Orleans?"

He said, "We are."

And I said, "Why are we going to New Orleans?"

He said, "The trip starts there."

I said, "What trip? You were going to come to Omaha in a few days and I was going to join the train there and we'd go to the coast and you'd make three speeches."

"Well," he said, "that's been all changed now. The train is being made up at New Orleans and we're going."

And I said, "Senator, I don't have enough clothes to make a trip like that."

"Well," he said, "we'll go back to the hotel tonight and we'll call Mary up and we'll tell her to

[110]

send your clothes down to the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans."

So, that's what we did, and I got to see another game. He had to leave and go down to this annual shindig at Cape Girardeau, Missouri. Fred Canfil drove him down there. I think that that must have been on a Saturday or a Sunday. Anyway, I said, "I'll meet you in Memphis on about Monday morning." I saw another game and I took the night train out of St. Louis for Memphis and met him at the Peabody Hotel the next morning. Fred drove us on down to New Orleans then. We had time to go over to that strip between Gulfport and Biloxi and visit the family with whom Margaret and Mrs. Truman stayed that year on account of Margaret's health. We also stopped at a Naval Base down there and saw one of Mr. Truman's nephews who was in the Navy there. Then we went back to New Orleans. We had been assigned a room and a parlor at the Roosevelt Hotel and the manager, after we were in the room, came up very apologetic and wanted to move us to another room. It seems a mix-up had occurred and that room was reserved for Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau. We had to move into some other suite.

[111]

The train -- it wasn't a train -- we had a private car called the "Henry Stanley" and attached to this car was another Pullman car for some newsmen. Now, Tony Vaccaro of the Associated Press, Eddie Lockett of *Time* magazine, a fellow named Bell, from one of the New York papers, the *Herald*, I think, and Harold Beckley, who was in charge of the press room of the United States Senate, were in this other car. In our car we had two stewards and a cook. The trip started in New Orleans and headed west through Louisiana, Texas, and we got in Texas and Mr. Truman suggested that I somehow get in touch with former Vice-President, John N. Garner at Uvalde. From one of the stations there, I don't know which one, I sent Mr. Garner a wire and signed the Senator's name to it and when the train pulled into Uvalde, Mr. Garner was there. So the two of them got on our special car and had to have a little "Bourbon and Branch" to celebrate the occasion, and we held the train a little while longer there so they could have a little more of a visit.

From there, we went on our -- understand that almost every place the train stopped, the Senator was making back platform talks, you know, people would come down.

[112]

We had a loud speaker system set up on the back platform with microphones so he could make a nice little talk there for whoever showed up and goodly crowds were on hand all the way through. I know his favorite speech was to get up to the microphone and grin at people and say, "It's awfully nice of you folks to come down to see the next Vice-President of the United States."

We went on to Los Angeles and we had a big meeting in the Shrine Auditorium there. George Allen joined us there. From there we went on up to San Francisco, had a big meeting up there and went all around through Chinatown. From San Francisco we went up to Oregon; and at Portland, Mon Wallgren, who was then governor of Washington, came down and joined us for the trip back to Seattle. We went on to Seattle and from there we went to Spokane and at Spokane, Judge Schwellenbach, who had been a senator from Washington, sworn in at the same time with Mr. Truman, met the train. From Spokane we went to Butte and from Butte on over, oh, we went through North Dakota. Somewhere up in there, I think it was at Bismarck, the Sioux Indians made Senator Truman a chief, and I don't know how to spell it, but they gave him the name of Wa Ha

[113]

Chan Kahopi. I don't know what it means, but he was Chief Wa Ha Chan Kahopi.

Then, we went into Minneapolis to some meetings there and from there to Milwaukee. From Milwaukee to Chicago, and from Chicago down to Peoria and through the caterpillar plant.

I might digress for a moment and give the names of the other people on this private car. There was Hugh Fulton, who had been counsel for the Truman Committee; then there was Matt Connelly, who had been an investigator for the Truman Committee. At Los Angeles, George Allen joined the party. From Peoria, we doubled back to Detroit and from Detroit we went into New York at Albany. From Albany, we went into Boston and we spent about a week touring around Massachusetts with Maurice Tobin, who was running for governor of Massachusetts at the time. We appeared in, of course, Boston, Worcester, and we went over to Providence, Rhode Island, and then down into New York. There was to be a big meeting in New York of the ADA; I think it was the ADA; anyway, it was David Dubinsky's political organization that was staging a meeting in Madison Square Garden. This, as you might recall, was

[114]

the organization which was really the backbone of the Wallace movement. Truman didn't want to go into New York, but President Roosevelt ordered it. This was really Wallace's home ground and we would have to play according to his rules. We were asked to present ourselves at the front door of Madison Square Garden at a certain time. We allowed ourselves sufficient time to leave the hotel and be at the Garden, so that the police escort and all would take over. We were ushered back into the offices of the Garden. The Garden was filled with the crowd, but no Mr. Wallace. They were trying to find Mr. Wallace at his hotel. They had the whole New York department looking for Mr. Wallace, and they finally located him over at a little political meeting in Brooklyn. The police, knowing that he was to make a scheduled appearance, at the Garden,

wanted to take him in the police car direct to the Garden, "No," he said, "I got over here on the subway and I'll go back the same way."

Well, they followed him, and then he had to walk from the subway to his hotel, then he had to walk from the hotel over to the Garden. Well, all this time, we were holding the crowd there in a kind of a state of

[115]

flux as it were. David Dubinsky wanted Truman to go on, but George Allen said, "No, Mr. Truman goes on when Mr. Wallace goes on;" because we thought it was the idea of that crowd to, right in the middle of Mr. Truman's speech, to have Mr. Wallace come down the center aisle and stampede the meeting. But we refused to go on until Wallace came in. Finally when Wallace came in and was shown back into the Garden offices, he was mad as a wet hen. The only one he spoke to was Truman and he was in a very sour mood. Finally they walked out through the entrance onto the platform, arm and arm, and smiling at each other, but I think they were about ready to cut each other's throats.

During the meeting, Frank Sinatra appeared and made a little speech, and so did Bill Robinson, the dancer. I nudged Truman and said, "It's time we got out of here."

He said, "Do you think we can make it?"

I said, "We can make it. Come on."

So we went out, and we got in a cab and drove down to the station where our private car was parked. We talked over the events of the evening and Truman asked me, "Do you think that thing was planned, staged deliberately? "

[116]

And I said, "I think it was."

"Well," he said, "that's a funny deal, but it didn't work."

From New York we went down to Washington. Harry Vaughan was down at the station to meet us, and Mrs. Truman and Margaret got on then, and we went down into West Virginia, Clarksburg, and from there over to Pittsburgh. I got sick at Clarksburg and I missed the parade and meeting at Pittsburgh entirely. I was laid up. Anyway, we got back to Kansas City the night before election, and I took the night train from Kansas City into Omaha and got to vote the next day. So the newspapermen said I started out to go to the World's Series and it ended up being the longest World's Series in history.

FUCHS: Was Tom Evans on this train?

MCKIM: Tom Evans joined us, but I don't know just where -- and his wife. I know they were at Clarksburg because Tom Evans went to a drugstore and got me some medicine; but that's been

twenty years ago and my memory is not too fresh on just every little incident that happened. But they were on the train and they ended up in Kansas City.

[117]

FUCHS: They didn't start at New Orleans?

MCKIM: They didn't start in New Orleans.

FUCHS: What were the capacities or duties of these people you've named, as nearly as you can remember?

MCKIM: Well, I was supposedly in charge of the train, and I was also kind of in charge of Mr. Truman. I had to see that he got to bed on time, that he ate the proper food, and when he would go out meeting the crowds, I always walked to his left and immediate rear, the idea being that so many of these politicians have the idea that they've got to slap the candidate on the back. Well, after a few of those during the day, you know, you can knock a fellow out. And I got rather adept at knocking off those big hands in air. Another thing, I usually wore a top coat and, of course, a vice-presidential candidate is not entitled to any Secret Service protection. I always carried one hand in my left pocket with the knuckle sticking out like I had a gun there, and nobody knew whether or not I was a Secret Service man; but I was along for the protection of the candidate, to keep him from being hit. You

[118]

get up in that Northwest country, some of those big lumberjacks, they've got hands like hams. Two or three of those, and a candidate would be hors de combat.

FUCHS: What about Tom Evans?

MCKIM: Well, Tom didn't join the trip until later. George Allen knew a lot of the politicians along the way. Hugh Fulton was assisting with the speech-writing. In fact, I think that was his main function. Matt helped with it. That was about the general arrangement.

FUCHS: Was Leonard Reinsch on the train?

MCKIM: Leonard Reinsch? We picked Leonard up somewhere along the line, just where I don't know. He was looking after the radio coverage.

FUCHS: Does anything stand out in your memory about the inauguration, which I assume you attended?

MCKIM: I did attend. I had a suite of rooms at the Statler with Fred Bowman, who had been a sergeant in D Battery and was then vice president of Wilson's Sporting Goods Company. He and his wife and my wife and I had a suite

[119]

of rooms there. We attended the inaugural on the south grounds there. President Roosevelt was wheeled out in the custody of his son, Jimmy; and it was a cold day; there was snow on the ground. Afterwards, there was a reception inside with Mrs. Roosevelt and Mrs. Truman in the receiving line. That was it. I got to know the Massachusetts crowd pretty well, when we were up in Massachusetts, so that that crowd kind of made our suite their headquarters. Maurice Tobin, "Sonny McDonough," who was the head of the CIO, and Roy Green, who was the secretary of the city council of Boston (whatever it's called), and Eddie McLaughlin, who was an insurance man there, former pitcher for the Boston Red Sox -- Bill Burke was collector of the Port of Boston -- and those people that we had met on the trip through Massachusetts. We got to see them all again.

FUCHS: Did President Roosevelt look better to you on this occasion than he did in September at the reception?

MCKIM: No, he was wrapped up in a cape, and had on his old gray hat. No, he didn't look too good, he was getting rather gray, getting a gray pallor then.

FUCHS: Will you recount the events of April 12, 1945, as

[120]
you remember them?

MCKIM: Yes, I had been in St. Louis and I had taken the B & O to Washington. I went over to the Senate Office Building...

FUCHS: For what purpose were you going to Washington at that time?

MCKIM: I had a little business up there of my own, I was on a business trip. So, in the morning Mr. Truman said, "What are you going to do today?"

And I said, "Well, I think I'll go over and see some of my Republican senators and congressmen from Nebraska."

He said, "I think that would be a good idea." So he said, "I want you back here at 12 o'clock."

I said, "What's on?"

He said, "Well, we're going to lunch over in Les Biffle's office."

Well, I was back at 12 o'clock and we went over there to lunch in Les' office. Senator [Alben] Barkley was there, and Senator [Allen Joseph] Ellender, and Senator [Donald Hammer] Magnuson of Washington -- oh, I don't know, half a dozen more. I think we had a

[121]

drink or so before lunch. Then going back from Les Biffle's office to what President Truman then called his "gold-plated office," which was the Vice-President's office right behind the Senate Chamber, he said, "Don't you think we ought to have a little game tonight?"

I said, "Yes, I think so. Where do you want to play?"

He said, "Down in your room."

I said, "The room I've got I have to have a shoe horn to get in it myself; it was the only thing I could get, but I'll go see Bill Davis, the manager of the hotel, and see if I can get some bigger quarters."

"Well," he said, "you do that."

And he gave me a list to call to get them for the game.

And he said, "How's your whiskey supply?"

"Well," I said, "it's non-existent."

"Well," he said, "I've got some new whiskey over in the Senate Office Building office," and he said, "you go over there and get what you think we'll need. There's a case of Scotch there that Jimmy Cromwell sent me" (he was then the ambassador to Canada), "and there's a case of bourbon there," and I think he said

[122]

it was Barney Baruch who sent it to him.

Anyway, after I left Vice-President Truman there, I went over to the Senate Office Building and got the liquor and took a cab down to the Statler Hotel. I went to the manager, Bill Davis, and told him my story, and that I'd have to have more room. So, he gave me a suite. He sent a bellboy up to transfer my stuff from the room I was in. He sent up a green poker table, I got all the mix and the ice and everything up there -- got all set for it. Then a friend of mine, Fletcher Neal from Omaha, quite an ardent Democrat, came by to see me and was sitting there, and we were talking over the events of the day. So, Harry Vaughan called me and he said, "The V-P says to tell you that the Senate has adjourned. He is going over to Sam Rayburn's office, then he's coming over here to the Senate Office Building and sign the mail. He's got a call from the White House, he'll have to answer that, and after that we'll be down, but we'll be a little bit late."

So that was O.K. I was sitting there talking to Mr. Neal when the phone rang again, and it was Bill Davis, the hotel manager. And he said, "I don't want

[123]

to start any rumors and I don't want to spread any. I just thought I'd tell you that one of our maids was cleaning up the room of a Government man, he had a short wave radio and it could be that you won't have any party tonight."

Well, then the thought struck me, "He had a call from the White House."

And Davis said, "If there's anything to it, it will be on the radio."

And when I put down the phone I walked over and turned on the radio and they're swearing in Mr. Truman at the White House, because the White House had caught him in Sam Rayburn's office and hustled him right down there. So I want to tell you, I got the jitters right then and right quick. I tried to get Neal to take a drink with me, but he wouldn't, but I took a good stiff one. In a little while, Neal left and Harry Vaughan and Matt Connelly came in. We're sitting around there wondering what to do. We had to make some calls and call off all the poker party and finally my phone rang another time, and I was getting a little fed up with answering the phone, having the jitters anyway, and this voice said, "Eddie?"

[124]

And I said, "Mr. President. "

He said, "I guess the party's off. They've got me fenced in out here. Have you seen Matt or Harry?"

And I said, "They're both sitting right here."

He said, "Well," he said, "I want one of you to go over and take charge of the Senate Office Building office tomorrow, and I want the other two of you at the White House."

I said, "We've discussed that and Harry Vaughan will go over to the Senate Office Building."

And he said, "You and Matt show up at the White House at nine o'clock."

And I said, "How do we get in?"

And he said, "You'll get in."

So Matt came down to the hotel the next morning and we walked over there together. Incidentally, we had no trouble getting in.

So we were shown into the Presidential Office and the President got up from this big desk and walked over to me and he said, "Eddie, I'm as sorry as hell about last night."

And I said, "Why?"

[125]

He said, "Well," he said, "you've been in on everything else and you missed the big event, and I thought somebody had called you but nobody had."

And I said, "Well, Mr. President, it doesn't count what's gone before, what counts is what happens now."

So he walked back to his desk and sat down and I stood right where I was.

He said, "Do you have to stand there?"

And I said, "Well, Mr. President, I suddenly find myself in the presence of the President of the United States and I don't know how to act."

And he said, "Come on over here and sit down."

I sat down and he said, "Do you have to go home?"

And I said, "Well, you know that I was leaving this afternoon for Omaha."

"Well," he said, "I need you. Stick around awhile; I need some help."

I said, "O.K. sir, I'll stay here as long as you want."

So, that was that.

FUCHS: You said you turned on the radio and they were

[126]

swearing him in, did they announce that?

MCKIM: They announced that he was being sworn in.

FUCHS: They announced it, they didn't actually have the swearing in ceremony?

MCKIM: They had a swearing in ceremony.

FUCHS: But not on the radio?

MCKIM: No.

FUCHS: What happened next? For instance, Hugh Fulton, they...

MCKIM: Hugh Fulton, when I went into the President's office that morning, Hugh Fulton was already sitting in there. He had come down from New York and I think that he was the first one who saw the new President. What transpired, I don't know.

FUCHS: You don't have any idea why he never took a position in the White House?

MCKIM: I have no idea.

FUCHS: Do you have any vivid recollections of President

[127]

Truman's first days in the White House?

MCKIM: Well, those were hectic days. For me to try to recall twenty years later just everything that happened there, I just couldn't do it. Some things stick out in my memory, and others, we'll just have to gloss over.

FUCHS: Did you know about the atomic bomb before it was exploded?

MCKIM: No, I did not.

FUCHS: I noticed that your papers showed that you had a poker game with Mr. Truman the night of the false V-E Day, which occurred in 1945, and also at one of the George Allen parties. Do you recall anything about those games?

MCKIM: Yes, I do. The night of the false armistice, we had a little poker game up on the third floor of the White House. Present, of course, were the President, Harry Vaughan, Frank Walker, Bob Hannegan, George Allen, Steve Early, oh, several others. I know we were going along pretty good. I had a pair of sixes back to back on the first two cards, and I was about

[128]

ready to do a little raising when Jonathan Daniels burst in the room and said the report was out that the Germans had surrendered. Well, we knew that negotiations were going on, but we felt that we would know about it before anybody else. Daniels said there were a lot of reporters outside the White House clamoring to get in; they wanted a report on whether or not the rumor was true. Well, you never saw a poker game break up so fast in your life. We left the cards just as they were and we all went down to the President's office, and they let the newspapermen in. Truman, of course, scotched the story, that there was no truth in it. After they had filed out, we sat there for a few minutes talking and finally the President said, "Well, I'm not making any money here;" so, we went back to the game just as we left it. And I started to do my raising with my pair of sixes back to back, and I never helped them. Well, it just so happened that the President had sevens back to back; that's another pot that I lost. That's about the end of that story.

FUCHS: Do you recall anything about the party that George Allen gave, when that would have been?

[129]

MCKIM: Yes, that was on a Sunday afternoon after I had left Washington, but I was back there on a trip and the President said, "What are you doing tomorrow afternoon," that would have been a Sunday.

I said, "I'm available. Where's the game?"

He said, "Never mind where the game is. Harry Vaughan will pick you up around three o'clock," which Harry did, and we drove out to the Wardman Park and up to George Allen's apartment. I think I was the only one in Washington that didn't know where the game was being played because certainly everybody around the hotel knew that there was something going on, on account of all the Secret Service men around.

Well, we had a nip or two and started the game. It was one of these wild games, dealer's choice, and I know at one time the game was "Spit in the Ocean" where there's a wild card out in the center and you get four cards. Well, I happened to have an ace among my four cards, so I threw three away and drew three. The President was sitting just across the table from me. Well, about that time, John Snyder came in with General Eisenhower, and the General pulled up an ottoman and sat right at my left to kibitz the game. So,

[130]

without even looking, I just passed over my four cards to him and I said, "Here, General, you provide the strategy and I'll do the tactics."

And somebody on my left started out and opened with openers and the President said, "Have you looked, yet?"

And I said, "No, I haven't looked."

So, he said, "I'll bet two dollars."

So, they got around to me and I said, "General, how do they look?"

And he said, "Well, if it was my hand it would be worth a raise or two."

And I said, "That's all, don't tip my hand off, I'll just raise it two dollars."

It got around to the President again and he said, "Have you looked yet?"

I said, "No, the man said it was worth a raise or two, that's why I raised."

He said, "Well, I'll raise you right back."

They stayed and it got to me and I said, "Well, the third and last raise, 'worth a raise or two,' and here's my second raise."

He said, "What have you got?"

[131]

And I said, "General, show them our four aces." And Ike got up and just laid the cards out in the middle of the table -- four aces. And I said, "General, stick around here. I think we've got a bunch of chumps in this game; we can do pretty good here."

The President said, "Ike, you get away from him. He's doing all right on his own hook, and if you don't, you're going to be a corporal tomorrow."

FUCHS: You held one and drew three?

MCKIM: Yes. I held one and drew three."

FUCHS: And you had the one in the center wild.

MCKIM: Yes, I got another ace and I got a wild card with my down card.

FUCHS: Do you recall talking to Mr. Truman about the representative to the Vatican, whether he felt that we should reappoint a representative to the Vatican?

MCKIM: Well, the only time we ever talked about it was when I was going to Europe; I told him I was going to go see the Pope, anything he wanted to find out, or anything that I could do, and he said, "No, not in

[132]

particular except I would like to know one point," and that one point I took up with Pope Pius XII and I don't think I should mention what it was.

FUCHS: This was in '50?

MCKIM: This was in 1945.

FUCHS: You went over there in 1945 and saw the Pope. You mainly went over on a...?

MCKIM: I went over on several points. I went over attached to the Army and Navy Surplus Property Board which was then headed by Thomas McCabe, President of Scott Paper Company. There was a lot of surplus property in Europe after the war and this Board was set up to dispose of it. The European manager of it was to have been Jim Knowlson, who was president of the Stewart-Warner Company in Chicago, and a group went over and I was attached to them. My purpose really was to report back as to just what that Board was doing, and when I got back -- of course, in the course of it, I flew down to Rome and saw the Pope. I had a forty minute private audience with Pope Pius XII. We discussed those things which the President asked me to discuss and which the ban of

[133]

silence had been put on me -- on them.

FUCHS: This was after you served with John Snyder in the Federal Loan Administration?

MCKIM: Yes, I was over there temporarily, just for a while.

FUCHS: Were you considered a Government employee at that time?

MCKIM: Yes.

FUCHS: When you went to Europe?

MCKIM: Yes, I was. And when I got back it was around -- well, I retired from Government employment on September 1.

FUCHS: What were you considered then? You weren't a member of the Board; were you a special representative of the President?

MCKIM: Well, when I got back from there, I reported to the President my impressions of the Army and Navy Surplus Property Board and what they were doing, which was absolutely nothing. There was a lot of surplus property in

[134]

Europe; it could not be brought back to the United States because of the original agreement with the manufacturer. We were the guests of Charlie Sawyer, who was then the Ambassador to Belgium, at the Embassy in Brussels, one of the evenings when we were in Europe. The Minister of Economics of Belgium were there at the time, also a guest. He took me aside and told me that Belgium needed a lot of rolling stock, a lot of trucks, and it was his idea that we could appoint a commission of a number of men from Belgium and from the United States, who would decide on the prices for certain types of trucks, would place them in about three categories of "good," "fair" or "poor," also to agree on a price for the replacement parts and on tires. They also needed a lot of Bailey bridges because all of the bridges in Belgium, practically, had been blown out. And I said, "O.K., what are you going to use for money; how are you going to pay for this?"

He said, "Well, it may surprise you to know, that the credit balance is in our favor of a hundred and fifty million dollars."

And I said, "Mr. McCabe over there is the man you can talk to. He's head of the Army-Navy Surplus Property

[135]

Board." Well, he talked to McCabe, nothing ever came of it.

But that to me was a chance to really do something for Belgium, a war-ridden country who needed this stuff and needed it right then, and we needed to dispose of it. But on the other hand, they had a number of employees in the Paris office and they were just sitting around and doing nothing and taking sightseeing trips, for the reason that neither the Army or the Navy would declare this property surplus. They had nothing to do about it until it was declared surplus. And the Army and Navy said, "Well, we've got to inventory it first before we'll turn it over." Well, they were just reluctant to turn it over and I don't know whether it was ever turned over or not. When I came back, I rendered my report to the President, as to the personnel of that property board and also as to what, if anything, they were accomplishing. I told him that I felt the chairman of that board was a dodo. I told him, furthermore,, that they were doing absolutely

nothing and that we were maintaining them over there for no purpose whatever. I told him that the Army and Navy were both reluctant to declare any of this property as surplus. And he said, "Well, I

[136]

want you to tell that to John Snyder."

So, I got ahold of John Snyder and we went to lunch up in John's office. He was then Federal Loan Administrator, and Stu Symington was also present. I gave them the whole story at that time. And I said, "Now that I've told my story I'm going to Omaha; I'm all through, see."

So, they wouldn't believe what I had to say about the chairman of that board, and he was afterwards appointed chairman of the Federal Reserve System. Since then, they have agreed that it was a great mistake and that they should have taken my word for it.

The next morning after that luncheon, about seven o'clock I got a phone call and it was Stu Symington, and he had been appointed the new Surplus Property Administrator. And he said, "Are you going to Omaha?"

And I said, "Yes."

He said, "Do you want a ride; I'm going to Chicago. I'll take you as far as Chicago."

I said, "Fine."

He said, "Meet me downstairs in an hour."

And he picked me up and we drove out to the field and we took off. At that time, I gave Stu a further

[137]

briefing on the surplus property situation in Europe, and he suggested that maybe I would go back and run it over there.

And I said, "No, not for me; I've had a bellyfull. I'm going for home."

And I left Stu in Chicago. He had some business to transact, I think, with Sears-Roebuck and I caught the next plane out of Chicago for Omaha. I terminated my connection with the United States Government.

FUCHS: Who was the administrator that Symington succeeded?

MCKIM: Former Senator Guy Gillette of Iowa.

FUCHS: Would you care to comment on the story in the *Congressional Record*, where [Charles A.] Halleck said

there was undue influence exerted on a Montana election from the White House?

MCKIM: Yes, there was undue pressure, probably, and it was all created by Senator Mike Mansfield, who is now the Majority Leader in the Senate. Mike was then a congressman. There was a district out there and Mike kept besieging the White House about a veterans hospital. It was the question of whether it was going to be located

[138]

where there is plenty of outside medical facilities to take care of these boys.

FUCHS: You mean where there are doctors and consultants?

MCKIM: Halleck called me up about it, and I said, "Well, a telegram was sent, and I sent it." Afterwards I guess the President didn't remember telling me that; anyway, I took the blame for it.

FUCHS: This was the telegram saying...

MCKIM: The Veterans Administration advised that the location probably would be in Montana. Mike Mansfield was using that for publicity purposes to elect a Democratic congressman in a Montana district and the Democratic candidate was defeated.

FUCHS: They hadn't as yet made any decision or advised anything?

MCKIM: No, and I don't know if it was ever built in either place. It made no difference to me where it was. I had no interest in the matter.

FUCHS: Who were your mutual friends, Albert Chow and Bob

[139]

Kenny?

MCKIM: Albert Chow was the "king of Chinatown" in San Francisco. He was head of what they called the six companies or rather, it's really the six tongs. Albert was quite a Democratic politician among the Chinese, and as I say, as head of the tongs there. But you looked him up in the phone book and he was listed "Albert Chow, Notary Public."

And Bob Kenny at that time was Democratic attorney general of California, later a candidate for governor, and was defeated.

FUCHS: They were both friends of yours and Mr. Truman.

MCKIM: Yes.

FUCHS: You mentioned that Frank Pace had written a mean letter about General Pick in 1953, and I think back through the correspondence over the years, there was considerable about General Pick? Just what was the story there, as you recall?

MCKIM: Well, General Pick was a very close, personal friend of mine. I knew General Pick when he was a colonel in charge of the Missouri River Division for the Corps of Engineers and located in Omaha. General

[140]

Pick then was sent over to the Far East in World War II. General Pick is the man who built the Ledo Road. That was the road to circumvent the Burma Road, as you recall, which was in Japanese hands. That was a terrific job. I don't know how many bridges they had to build, and they had to build everything under gunfire. Oh, I think the road ran a thousand miles or so -- something like that. They built it right through the jungle. General Pick was not a West Pointer; he didn't belong to what we officially refer to as the WPPA, known as the West Point Protective Association. General Pick was given that job, as he told me later, "when all the West Pointers were looking out the window." None of them wanted that. Well, he built that road and he came back; and he was then the Division engineer in Omaha, and then was busted back from a major general to a brigadier general. General Pick was in charge in Omaha at the time of "Operation Snowbound." I don't know whether you'd recall that or not, but it was a terrible disaster for Nebraska, South Dakota, all through that area.

FUCHS: What year was that?

MCKIM: Oh, you got me now; I don't know. Val Peterson was

[141]

governor of Nebraska at the time. The day that everything had been cleared up on "Operation Snowbound," well, before that, General Pick called me to his office and asked me to come up, and he said: "Ed, we're facing a disaster here. Everything is snowbound. The state of Nebraska authorized \$500,000 disaster fund, but that's gone already. The job isn't started to be done. I would like for you to get in touch with the President and have this area declared a disaster area."

He got Governor Val Peterson on the phone and I talked to Val, and I called Washington and explained the situation to the President. Pick had had so many contacts with contractors all through that area that he had them all ready with their tractors, bulldozers, and everything else ready to go in there. Out in Colorado, for instance, they started an operation airlift, airlifting hay to drop it to these cattle; the cattle were frozen standing up. There was another case where the Burlington Railroad went into a cut with a snowplow and stopped it, just grinding, and they went in there to see what it was and there were a lot of cattle chewed up, and they backed off and over a

[142]

hundred head of cattle came out of that cut that had been all covered over with snow.

Pick was ordered to Washington, then, and I gave a party for him the night he was to leave; and as he came down the street to the dinner I was giving, he said, "Ed, the job is done," and he left for Washington the next morning.

Then President Truman wanted Pick to be Chief of the Corps of Engineers, and at that time General Eisenhower was Chief of Staff, and Ike brought over a bunch of names for the President to select one, and the President looked at it and said, "Well, where's General Pick's name on here?"

"Well, Mr. President, his name isn't on there."

Well, the reason his name wasn't on there, he wasn't a West Pointer. So the President handed the list back and he said, "Bring me back a list with General Pick's name on it." He didn't like that. Then he sold him on the idea to let General "Specs" Wheeler stay one more year on the job.

FUCHS: Eisenhower sold Truman on the idea?

MCKIM: Yes, sold Truman on the idea of leaving "Specs"

[143]

Wheeler on the job for one more year. He was a lieutenant general. I guess the President agreed to that but the next list that came over he said, "General Pick's the man." He appointed him and he was made a lieutenant general then and Chief of the Corps of Engineers. Then later I was on the board of the Panama Canal Company and General Pick was appointed to that board upon his retirement as Chief of the Corps of Engineers. We were the first two Democrats fired from the board when Ike took office. In fact, we were the only two Democrats on the board. Pick did wonderful work on the Panama Canal Company too.

FUCHS: What would the letter that Frank Pace wrote...?

MCKIM: I don't recall that now. I don't remember what it would be about.

FUCHS: Do you recall a "doublecross by Royall," which would have been Secretary of the Army, [Kenneth C.] Royall, I presume.

MCKIM: Yes, it was Royall, but I don't recall the incident now.

FUCHS: You mentioned that you had read George Allen's

[144]

article in the *Saturday Evening Post* and got quite a chuckle out of it, and you said that coupled with Jim Farley's story, you thought you ought to write a book. Do you recall that?

MCKIM: Yes, that's the time I said, "Mine will be just all blank pages." I have Jim Farley's story here and I think I've got George Allen's book here. His book was *Presidents Who Have Known Me*. I think President Truman finally caught up with George Allen.

FUCHS: Can you elaborate on that a little bit?

MCKIM: I won't elaborate on it. I think that George Allen was quite an opportunist, one of the best. I know that when Truman announced that he wasn't going to run for re-election, I think it was John Snyder made the remark that the scuttlebutt around Washington was that if you want to know who the next President is going to be, just find out who George Allen's running around with. He seemed to have the faculty of picking them.

FUCHS: In 1948, you wrote Mr. Truman, the President, about a War Assets deal in connection with eighty-seven DC7 caterpillar tractors. Do you recall anything about that?

[145]

MCKIM: Yes, I don't recall so much about it now. I think they were out somewhere in a field in California and somebody was going to buy them for damn near nothing, and I got the scuttlebutt on it and I said, "For that kind of money, I'd buy them; I don't know what I'd use 87 tractors for;" but there was a lot of that stuff that went on, a lot of it was pure rumor (scuttlebutt as we call it), and some of it was in fact. What was needed, really, was another Truman Committee after the war.

FUCHS: You don't recall the outcome of that tractor deal?

MCKIM: No, I don't.

FUCHS: In June, 1948, when Mr. Truman was making his so-called non-political tour and came to Omaha, what is that story as you remember it?

MCKIM: Well, that was an unfortunate happenstance there and I think it started to be fouled up right in Washington. I was in Washington on a visit and talking to Harry Vaughan and he said, "What are you fellows doing out in Omaha for the President's visit?"

[146]

I said, "When is he coming to Omaha? I don't know anything about it?"

He said, "Well, he's coming out there for the 35th Division Reunion to be held in Omaha."

I said, "This is the first I've heard of it." So I said, "I'll go home and find out."

Well, I found out that the reunion was to be held in Omaha. Then two representatives, a fellow named Colonel Joe Nickel and another fellow from Kansas came up. The other one of them was the publisher of a newspaper, publisher of the 35th Division newspaper or booklet or whatever it was, and they wanted quite a sizeable sum of money to bring the convention here. I said, "Well, hell, take the convention some place else if we've got to pay you fellows that kind of money." But I got ahold of the Chamber of Commerce and explained the situation, and I said, "The President is coming out here and it's purely a meeting of the old soldiers, the old Division, and he's going to fly out in the morning and fly back that night. It's non-political."

Well, I don't know whether you know it or not, but the Chamber of Commerce in Omaha is mainly Republican and all of the money in Omaha is Republican

[147]

money. So, I got pledges; I got enough money pledged to stage the convention, and then I got word from Matt Connelly. He called up and said, "While the President is there, I think he should make a trip out to Boy's Town." Father Flanagan had just died and he said, "It would be pretty good politics for the President to lay a wreath on his tomb." Then they went on talking about the speech he was going to make there, that it would be one of his major campaign speeches. "Well," I said, "I thought this was non-political?"

He said, "No, we've changed it."

Well, they changed it after I had assured everybody that this was a non-political visit, coming there just for the old soldiers.

So, I went back to the Chamber of Commerce, then, and they appointed a fellow named Bob Drum, who was president of the Metz Brewing Company and a former 35th Division man. In fact, he was a captain in the 128th Field Artillery. We were made co-chairmen. If I had had any sense, I would have said, "No, make Bob the chairman, or make me the chairman, but none of this divided responsibility."

Well, the divided responsibility went haywire. Bob

[148]

was doing a lot of things that I knew nothing about. In fact, he hired a man, one of his army buddies, who had been recently discharged from the army, to handle some affairs. He gave him \$500.00 and after he gave him the \$500.00, he said, "It's all right isn't it, Ed, if we have Jim McCrory look over all of this stuff. I gave him \$500 out of the fund here to look after things.

Well, we had paid an advertising agency in Omaha to publicize the affair. I don't know whether it was malicious or not; I wouldn't want to say even at this late date, but sufficient unto itself was the fact that they put a young fellow on handling the publicity and they goofed it up someway. All of the entire day was marvelous; it was estimated by the Omaha *World Herald*, which was a predominately Republican paper, that there were at least 180,000 people lined the route of march to see the President. On the trip out to Boy's Town that afternoon, the crowd lined the highway both ways for the ten miles out there and back to see the President. That night at the Ak-Sar-Ben Coliseum I drove out with the President and I noticed the lack of cars around (it should have been jam packed) and I said, "Mr. President, there's no crowd here;" I said, "I don't know what's happened." Later I discovered

[149]

that none of the radio stations or the newspapers had mentioned specifically that the meeting was open to the public. They left the impression, throughout, that the meeting was confined to the members of the 35th Division, the old soldiers. The President said, "Eddie, I don't give a damn whether there's nobody there but you and me. I am making a speech on the radio to the farmers. They won't be there; they'll be at home listening to that radio. They're the ones I'm going to talk to."

Well, *Life* magazine, of course, went way out. They had pictures of everything, the lack of people in the hall. Later, in fact, just about a year ago, the President told me, "That was one of the best things that happened to me in my whole campaign. It made a martyr out of me."

And also shortly after that, the head photographer of the Omaha *World Herald*, John Savage, told me, he said, "Ed, I'm going to tell you something, but if you ever quote me on it, I'll call you a damn liar. Henry Doorly, the publisher of our paper, called the reporters and the photographers in and said, 'Truman is coming to town; don't write a good story, and don't take a good picture.'" And if John Savage is alive yet and that is brought up, he'll call me a damn liar. I took

[150]

the brunt of it. As co-chairman of it, I took the brunt. I never bothered to explain to anybody; it happened, and what the hell good is an explanation. I never bothered to explain it to the President. I started to on one or two occasions and he said, "Eddie, it made no difference at all." He just brushed it off.

FUCHS: He stayed overnight in Omaha, didn't he?

MCKIM: Yes, he stayed overnight in the Fontenelle Hotel in Gene Eppley's suite. Gene was the owner of the Fontenelle Hotel. He had that whole floor, the fifth floor, for the staff and the Secret Service men accompanying Truman. And later a columnist on a Minneapolis paper wrote a story to the effect that no hotel wanted Truman or his party there because they had to cut off the floors above and below for the President, and that it was all on the cuff and they made no money on it and they didn't want the Presidential parties. I answered this fellow. I sent the letter to the managing editor of his paper. I explained to them that there were no vacancies above or below; that the Truman party had one floor, and I said, "Furthermore, with the exception of Gene Eppley's private

[151]

suite, which Gene gave to the President, the rest of it was paid for and I paid for it. You can call Joe Dailey, the manager of the Fontenelle and verify this. You'd better be sure of your facts when you published a story of that sort."

He did print my letter, then, the columnist; but the *World Herald* had picked it up when it was first printed, but they never printed the retraction.

FUCHS: Did you join the campaign tour there?

MCKIM: No. I didn't go any farther. The President that same day dedicated Memorial Park, which was a park dedicated to the dead of World War II from Omaha, and there was a big crowd out there for that. He was out at my house for a brief visit. I wanted him to take a nap for an hour or so but there was just too much going on and he wouldn't do it.

FUCHS: Did you go on any of the campaign with him in '48?

MCKIM: No. He was the President then; he could get all the help he wanted.

FUCHS: I gather you were in Omaha on election night?

[152]

MCKIM: Yes. Some folks have said I was with him in his suite in the Muehlebach Hotel, but I was not.

FUCHS: Good. There is in your papers a vote tabulation, one column headed "HST" and the other column headed "T.D.," Tom Dewey, I assume. It's on White House stationary and the states are listed and placed under...

MCKIM: Well, that was coming back from Boy's Town on this trip. He told me, "Eddie, I'm going to be elected. I'm going to give them some of those big states," and he started outlining all the states and counted up and he said, "I'm going to be elected; this is the way it's going." Later -- I think somewhere I have the letter, but I've been unable to find it -- I was in Washington and the President was out of Washington; I was to leave the same afternoon he was coming in. I left a little note on his desk and I said, "Keep punching. They can't beat a man who won't be beaten." I got a reply to that in which he expressed regret that he wasn't there when I called. He found the note and he said, "You know and I know, that no election is ever won or lost until all of the votes are counted. The complacency

[153]

with which the Republicans are entering this campaign will be their downfall."

And that was dated about the 20th of October, 1948. Somewhere I've got that letter, but I just can't find it now. It's probably with some stuff that I left in my daughter's home.

FUCHS: What was the approximate date of this undated vote tabulation and when did you receive it?

MCKIM: I thought I received it from him; no, I guess I got it from Harry Vaughan later, but this was essentially what he had sketched for me driving back from Boy's Town, that he could give them some of the larger states and still win.

FUCHS: I believe you attended the inaugural in 1948. Does anything stand out in your memory about that?

MCKIM: Oh, yes, sure. I was going to it and Governor Val Peterson called me up and he said, "Ed, are you going to the inaugural?"

And I said, "I am."

He said, "Well, I can't go. Would you fill in for the Governor of Nebraska?"

[154]

I said, "I certainly shall. Send me all the papers."

He said, "I can't send them to you. I'll send them to the President."

I said, "Well, you send them and I'll act as the Governor of Nebraska in the official ceremony."

So, the Battery was back there to act as honorary guard for him, which they did, but I had a couple of cars assigned to me with chauffeurs and a naval aide, who turned out to be a pretty good friend of mine. He's a retired captain in the Navy living over in France.

FUCHS: What was his name?

MCKIM: Captain C. A. Messenheimer. He got to know the French area over there when he was on duty; he was the chief supply officer, G-4, I think it is, of the Mediterranean Fleet, the 6th Fleet. After retirement he just stayed over there. He was a boy, I think, from Lawrence, Kansas, originally. He was a fine fellow. He made a very good aide for me. He'd been an aide for an admiral and you never got to see the bottom of your glass. We made a lot of official functions together and my friend Major General Everett Hughes was

[155]

throwing a party out at Fort McNair and invited me, and I told him I had these others and he said, "Bring them along."

So we were just a little bit late getting in, but Everett went in and he said, "Ike, come on out. Ed's finally gotten here."

And Ike came out and he said, "You holding any four aces?"

FUCHS: Do you think there was anything political about Governor Val Peterson not being able to attend?

MCKIM: No, no, none of that. It was just that he was unable to get away at the time. But I didn't ride in the parade; I marched with the Battery. Messenheimer rode.

FUCHS: In May, 1949 , you wrote the President about some ad lib remarks that Governor Peterson had made in a De Kalb, Illinois speech. Do you recall anything in connection with that?

MCKIM: Yes, I do. Val was making a speech over there at a Republican rally, and he made some reference that the President was born and raised in the sewers or the gutters

[156]

of Kansas City, tainted by the Pendergast machine; and I took exception to the gutter and sewer remarks, and I called him up and I said, "Val, what in the hell is the matter with you making a speech like that?"

And he said, "Ed, I don't know; I don't know what got into me. It was an ad lib and I should never ad lib, but I said it. Will you apologize to the President for me?"

And I said, "No, I will not; you'll do your own apologizing to the President about that."

Well, Val was a reserve officer in the air corps and he was up for a promotion to brigadier general. And he called me up and said, "Ed, my commission as brigadier general in the air corps has been turned down; do you suppose the President had anything to do with it?"

I said, "Val, I don't think he ever knew you were up for promotion."

He said, "Do you think he would hold it against me, those remarks I made?"

I said, "I don't know. Did you ever apologize to him?"

He said, "No, I never got around to it."

[157]

And I said, "You better get around to it. First of all, regardless, the man you spoke about was the President of the United States. There's no use dragging stuff down into the gutter and you know it. It's all right to play politics, and that's the way the game is played, but no sewer politics." Whether he ever apologized, I don't know.

FUCHS: Was he quoted correctly in the paper?

MCKIM: He said he was. At least he didn't deny that that's what he said.

FUCHS: What do you know of Carl Rice from Kansas?

MCKIM: I don't know Carl Rice -- didn't know him. I think he's dead now, but he was the Democratic National committeeman from Kansas and he made a remark one time that Truman was not fit to be vice-presidential candidate; in fact, that he was not fit for any office. And, of course, that was widely quoted in the newspapers. Later, I think Mr. Rice wanted to be a Federal judge out there, but I don't think he made it. You know, the things you don't say are the things you don't have to take back.

[158]

FUCHS: Is there anything that might be of interest in regard to your position on the Board of Directors of the Panama Canal Company?

MCKIM: Not particularly. I was the President's representative on the Board. Originally I was appointed to the Panama Railroad Company; at that time the Railroad company handled all of the commercial aspects within the Canal Zone -- operated the railroad and also all the commissaries, exchanges, etc. Before that, Congress used to allocate the funds for the operation of the Canal so that there were two separate entities. Then they decided they would combine them and the Railroad Company had the United States charter, owned one share of stock (that's

all there was). The Canal and the Railroad were combined and made the Panama Canal Company. And we had the job then of combining it. There were two sets of books and neither one of them were worth a damn. For instance, neither in the Panama Railroad nor the Panama Canal did they ever capitalize any expenditures under a thousand dollars. So these "birds" down there used to make a lot of expenditures under a thousand dollars and didn't have to put it in capital

[159]

expenditures. On the Board at that time was T. Coleman Andrews, who was afterwards collector of Internal Revenue and later was a third party candidate for President. Coleman was a certified public accountant and we worked together pretty well on getting the Panama Canal Company on a businesslike basis. There was one item that they had down there, an eighty million dollar housing project for the Panamanian or what they called the "silver" labor. In the old days they used to pay the American laborer in gold and the rest of them in silver, so they were the "silver" labor. There were East Indian Negroes, there were some Panamanians in there, the unskilled workers. Well, eighty million dollars is a lot of money. And Panama at that time was complaining that there were too many of these people living within the zone when they should have been out on the economy of Panama; they wanted their trade out there. Of course these people had relatives outside the zone, and they used to trade in the commissaries and cart the stuff into Panama. So Panama had a legitimate gripe there. I was in favor of putting them all out on the economy of Panama because when you have them inside the zone, you have to provide housing for

[160]

them, you have to provide recreational facilities, you have to provide schools, and it ran up the cost. If Panama wanted them, I was in favor of giving them back, but of course a lot of them were not Panamanians. They were the descendants of West Indian labor that was brought in there.

FUCHS: You made several trips to Panama?

MCKIM: I made several trips. I was on not only the Board but I was a member of the three man executive committee of the Board which consisted of Karl R. Bendetsen, who was Under-Secretary of the Army, and T. Coleman Andrews, and myself. We were on the executive committee of the Board because we could meet pretty fast, you see. I made trips to Panama and I was on the Board about four years. I was down there at least twice a year. It was a no-pay job, I might also add. When the President appointed me on there he called me up and caught me in Kansas City, and he wanted to know where I was and I said, "I'm in Kansas City."

He said, "What are you doing there?"

And I said, "Well, I'm getting fitted out with some golf clubs."

[161]

He said, "I just called to tell you that the Panama Canal is going to hell."

I said, "What's the matter with it; what happened?"

He said, "I just made you a member of the Board of Directors."

I said, "What's it pay?"

He said, "Nothing."

I said, "I'm worth every cent of it."

FUCHS: There is some discussion in your correspondence with the President about the President-elect, Colonel Jose Remon, I suppose it is

MCKIM: Yes, "Chi Chi" Remon.

FUCHS: ...and his proposed visit to America. Whatever happened to that?

MCKIM: The time wasn't right for him to visit us. He wanted to come very much. He wanted to come in the summertime. He was a great baseball fan. "Chi Chi" -- I got to know "Chi Chi" very well. He was the strong man of Panama. He had been chief of police and the chief of police in Panama really runs the country. They have no army but they have a police force of

[162]

about 3,000 men who are armed only with handguns. "Chi Chi" made and unmade presidents. He was built like a Notre Dame fullback, but he was on our side. He used to get these Communist agitators when they would come in by plane, loaded with a lot of propaganda, and he'd take them off the plane, destroy the literature, and put them back on the next plane out. He didn't let them light. He was very much for the United States; but he was assassinated at the race track and the ringleader of the crowd that knocked him off was the Vice-President. The Vice-President of the country was tried for it and convicted, and I think was given a six month sentence on the basis, now you mind this, on the basis that it was his first offense. There's no capital punishment in Panama.

FUCHS: I noticed that after November 9, 1950, in your correspondence with the President in your files, you addressed him as "Dear Mr. President," where previously it had been "Dear Harry."

MCKIM: Well, in the meantime he had become President of the United States. I still call him "Mr. President." Once in a while he'll sign a letter to me as "Captain

[163]

Harry," which he says is one title that he really earned. You just don't -- we dropped that Harry stuff the day he became President. My kids still call him "Uncle Harry," you know. I think he gets a kick out of it.

FUCHS: Do you have any clear recollections of the farewell dinner in the White House on December 18, 1952?

MCKIM: I was there. Nothing startling happened. It was a dinner given for anybody who had ever served on his staff, and I went back to Washington and sat next to George Allen. George Allen was very much for Eisenhower. He had picked the right man, again.

FUCHS: Do you recall Matt Connelly at that dinner?

MCKIM: Matt was at the dinner, sure.

FUCHS: You don't remember any anecdotes other than George Allen being for Eisenhower?

MCKIM: I sat next to George at the dinner.

FUCHS: Did you go to Chicago in 1956?

MCKIM: What was that?

[164]

FUCHS: That was the second nomination of Stevenson when Ike was running for a second term.

MCKIM: Oh, yes, yes I was there. In fact, I took one of my daughters, Jane, with me, and she acted as receptionist in Truman's headquarters in the Blackstone Hotel. Yes, I remember that very well. We had a parade of celebrities in and out of there all the time, but Paul Butler was then chairman of the National Committee and he was very much a Stevenson man. I thought Paul's treatment of Truman was disgraceful. He didn't give him very many tickets, in other words, just almost totally ignored him. Well, Truman had come out for Averell Harriman there and, of course, I don't think Averell was the man either, and I certainly couldn't give Stevenson very much, can't yet.

FUCHS: Who would you have favored in '56?

MCKIM: I don't know. Whoever I would have favored wouldn't have had a chance. Truman took an awful licking and I got pretty disgusted with the whole Democratic Party about that time, including Mr. Stevenson and particularly Paul Butler. I do recall that Senator John F.

[165]

Kennedy came up one afternoon, and Truman wasn't in, and I ushered him in the front parlor and sat down and talked with him a while until Truman arrived. He was a candidate then for Vice-President and almost made it; he almost beat Kefauver. In fact, if Tennessee hadn't gone for Kefauver, Kennedy would have been nominated for Vice-President because the peculiar thing about it was the Tennessee delegation didn't want Kefauver, but they felt pledged to go with him.

FUCHS: What was your impression of Senator Kennedy at that time?

MCKIM: Well, I thought he was a nice young fellow. He had had a good record; he'd been hurt in service; he had a bad back. They put on a movie film to the convention that was absolutely a marvelous piece of work and that is what practically stampeded the convention, nominating him for Vice-President. It was really a marvelous piece of work. I hope that that film has been saved.

FUCHS: You mean the Kennedy backers put this on about Senator Kennedy?

[166]

MCKIM: Well, I don't know who put it on, but it would have had to have been thought about a long time, before it could be made; but it was a marvelous film and it was narrated by John F. Kennedy. Somebody spent some money on that film; it almost stampeded the convention. He lost to Kefauver by just a narrow margin.

FUCHS: Did you have any advance idea or knowledge that Mr. Truman would not run again in '52?

MCKIM: He told me that he wouldn't.

FUCHS: How early did he tell you that?

MCKIM: Before he announced it, and I was at the dinner in Washington when he did announce it, much to the consternation of a lot of Democratic office holders.

FUCHS: You were at the convention in '52?

MCKIM: No, in Philadelphia?

FUCHS: Yes, when Stevenson was nominated the first time.

MCKIM: No, no. When Stevenson was nominated...no, I was there the second time. Stevenson couldn't carry Illinois.

[167]

FUCHS: Mr. Truman made a visit to Creighton University...

MCKIM: ...a year ago last April. An honorary fraternity, Alpha Sigma Nu, had invited him up and invited me and I went up. I flew up from here as sort of an advance man and Truman came up with Wally Graham, Dr. Wallace Graham. The Jesuits put on quite a party; they had a guard of honor out at the airport to meet him on a Saturday afternoon. I was invited with Wally Graham and the President to a cocktail party and dinner in the Jesuits' Community House that evening. Then from there, there was a cocktail party at the home of Tom Walsh, president of the fraternity. There were a lot of people invited. Early the next morning they were there to take the President up to see their new library and to visit around Creighton University. He talked to the members of this honorary fraternity.

Then he was to make his main speech that Sunday afternoon at Joslyn Memorial Hall, it's sort of an art museum and auditorium. I think they can seat about 1,200 people in that auditorium but there were over 3,000 people there, hanging from the rafters. He spoke on the duties and responsibilities of the Presidency.

[168]

Then they scheduled him for a receiving line . Well, he had had a hard day. He had a hard night the night before, and he'd had a hard day up until then, so I stood behind him in the receiving line. Finally, he said, to me, "Eddie, get me out of here."

So I told Father Lynn, President of Creighton U., "The President is tired and I've got to get him out."

And he said, "Well, there's 2,800 people here who haven't shaken hands with him."

And I said, "Well, they can wave at him as he goes by because I'm taking him out." They had some R.O.T.C. honor guards there, and I had them form a flying wedge and got him out. I took him back to the hotel and -- oh, before that, we had lunch out at Boy's Town and Monsignor Nicholas Wegner had us out there for lunch. I knew that Archbishop [Gerald T.] Berg of Omaha was not scheduled to be there; they felt he'd be out of town. I was in another room when I heard him come in and he went over to the President and said, "Oh. Mr. President, it's a great pleasure to meet you; I've heard so much about you from our mutual friend, Ed McKim. It's a shame that he isn't here to see it."

[169]

The President looked at him and said, "Well, he's standing right behind you."

Then there was another Democratic reception at the Fontenelle Hotel that Sunday night. Truman made an appearance there, made a little talk, and shook hands with a lot of people. Afterwards, Governor Frank Morrison of Nebraska came up to the room. We still had the same old Eppler suite. It was a hard day. I put him to bed about 10:30, and I told him, "Now, stay in bed. There's no use of you getting up, prowling around here at the wee, small hours of the morning. We don't have to get up until about seven o'clock."

There was about half a bottle of bourbon and about a half a bottle of scotch on a little bar that Gene had in his suite. The door to my room opened right almost into this bar. The President's room was through the living room and then to the right down to another bedroom.

So, about -- oh, it must have been about five o'clock in the morning, I left my door open a little bit, and I heard somebody fumbling around out there in the semi-darkness, and I looked through the door and I said, "What are you doing out there?"

[170]

The President said, "What did you do with that bottle of bourbon?" I had taken it the night before and hid it.

I said, "What do you want with it? It's early in the morning; it's five o'clock."

He said, "Oh. Ed, I've had a hard day, let's have a little nip of that bourbon."

So. I said, "All right."

He said, "Aren't you going to have one?"

I said, "Well, I'll have one of the scotch."

He was all dressed. He'd been up and shaved, bathed, and dressed. I said, "I'll shave and bathe -- do you want a little breakfast?"

He said, "Well, I don't think we can get any."

I said, "We might be able to get some orange juice and coffee."

So, I called downstairs and they said, "No, there's nobody in the kitchen until six o'clock."

I said, "The President wants some orange juice and coffee."

And they said, "Well, we'll do our best to get it up there. They had it up there in about fifteen minutes."

[171]

So, I rode with him to Kansas City. As he went through the airport terminal, I said, "Let me have your tickets and baggage checks." I checked his baggage and I had his ticket, so when he went through the gate, he just went right on through, just like he was used to doing as President. So, the stewardess and, I guess, one of the airport employees kind of looked at him, and I said, "Pay no attention to him, here's his ticket right here."

So, we got up and got seated and the plane took off and the stewardess came up and apologized for not recognizing him.

And he said, "Oh, that's all right. I'm just a Missouri farmer now."

She said, "The boys up front -- we're all Democrats -- the boys up front would like to have you come up at your convenience."

He said, "Tell them I'll be up there pretty soon. How about that breakfast we're supposed to have?"

So, she brought some breakfast right quick.

Finally, he turned to me and he said, "Let me out."

He was sitting next to the window. He started

[172]

up front and he turned around and he said, "Fasten your seat belt; I'm going up front and run this damn thing."

He came back in about five minutes and he said, "Everything is all right; everything is under control. The pilot is from Moberly, Missouri. Everything is all right."

FUCHS: I believe you mentioned to me a visit you had overseas with General [George S., Jr.] Patton, after the war. Could you recount that?

MCKIM: Yes, I was in the George Cinq Hotel. Major General Everett Hughes, who was afterwards Chief of Ordnance of the Army, was then commander of the Seine Base. He called up one afternoon and he said, "What are you doing?"

I said, "I'm just waiting for you to call me."

He said, "Come on down. There's a friend down here that I want you to meet."

I said, "I think I know who it is. I've got a bottle of Haig & Haig pinch I'll bring along with me."

And I went down, and it was General Patton. So

[173]

we had a little cocktail party. General Patton had a nephew there with him named Fred Ayer, who I think was either with the CIA or FBI, or one of those organizations. Ayer went downstairs and he came back up with a newspaper, a Paris edition of one of the papers, announcing, "MacArthur Made Supreme Commander."

And Georgie Patton had a high, squeaky voice and he said, "Look at that, look at that. Well, I'll say this, there's one s.o.b. who'll show Hirohito how to be an emperor." And he did! I think Georgie was killed just a few months after that.

FUCHS: Didn't Drew Pearson come into your conversation?

MCKIM: Yes, yes, Drew Pearson came in. Drew Pearson had taken a pop or two at me in his column and, of course, he had publicized that slapping incident on Patton, and Patton had no use for him. I had no use for him either, but in a joking mood I said, "I think, General, we should propose a little toast to Drew Pearson." He shied away from me and I said, "I'll give the toast."

He said, "I'll trust you, but I wouldn't trust him."

[174]

So, I gave the toast; I said;

"A man may kiss his wife goodbye,

The rose may kiss the butterfly.
The sparkling wine may kiss the glass,
And you, Drew Pearson -- happy days."

Patton said, "I'll drink to that."

FUCHS: How have you looked on Mr. Truman as being on the scale running from liberal to conservative?

MCKIM: Well, he's a liberal Democrat. He's more of a liberal Democrat than I am, but he played the game as he saw it, and that's all you can do.

FUCHS: Do you think he became more liberal in philosophy after he became President?

MCKIM: I don't think so, not necessarily. He had a lot of advisers around him that were really liberal. I won't say a lot, he had some.

FUCHS: I'll put it the other way. Would you say he was more conservative as a senator than as President?

MCKIM: No. I wouldn't say that, I wouldn't say that. I think when he took office, he followed President

[175]

Roosevelt, and he felt somewhat of an obligation to carry out some of the things that were started by Roosevelt. It was perfectly natural that he would do that. I told him, I said, "People are not going to remember how you carried out Roosevelt's policies; they're going to figure on the Truman Administration. I think you better do what you think is right to do."

He said, "That's what I'm going to do." And he did. I think he believed in everything he ever did in the White House, or any time in his life. At the time he did it, he was absolutely right. History may come along and say, "Well, he was wrong here and he was wrong here." That may be. Neither Ty Cobb nor Babe Ruth ever hit a home run every time at bat. What most people seem to overlook is the fact that the President, after all, is a human being. And there's no chance in the world for any man to ever train for the Presidency; there's just no school for that. He's got to have the experience in other lines. He's in the greatest job in the world and I say, I've said this before, that if you take the smartest man in the world, and everybody agrees that he is the smartest man in the world and you put him down in

[176]

the Presidential chair, he's going to be there a couple of years before he knows where he's sitting! There are no minor problems that come to his desk; they are all major. Each day President Truman saw many delegations; I think every fifteen minutes. Everybody was there on appointment, they had to be there on a major problem or they wouldn't get in. Now in fifteen minutes he'd have to find out the answer, and every one of those problems was a major problem and there was no two of them alike. That's the Presidency.

FUCHS: You ran for lieutenant governor in '38?

MCKIM: In '38.

FUCHS: Then what was the rest of your career. You stayed in Omaha for some years after that?

MCKIM: I stayed until I retired seven years ago.

FUCHS: You retired in 1957, and you came here.

MCKIM: I came to Phoenix -- this is my fourth winter here.

FUCHS: You stayed in Omaha until '61.

MCKIM: Yes, came out here January of '61.

[177]

FUCHS: Well, that's all I have.

MCKIM: That's all I have. I guess you've picked what few brains I have.

FUCHS: Well, I've enjoyed it very much and I thank you.

MCKIM: Well, I can go back to my golf game now?

FUCHS: Yes, sir.

[178]

INDEX

Allen, Captain Charles, 7, 8, 9

Allen, Charles B., 2

Allen, George, 112, 118, 127, 128-129, 144, 163

Allen, Pete, 2

American Legion Conventions:

in 1921, 34-35, 39

in 1935, 35-36

Andrews, T. Coleman, 159,..160

Army and Navy Surplus Property Board, 132, 133-136

Aylward, James P., 58, 59

Barry, Francis, 31

Battle of Dugny, 78-79, 81

"Battle of Who Ran" (World War I), 18-19

Bendetsen, Karl R., 160

Berg, Archbishop Gerald T., 168
Board of Election Commissioners, 5
Bowman, Fred, 118-119
Boyle, William, 91-92
Brannon, Francis A., 15n
Breen, William H., 15n
Brice, George, 33
Burke, Edward, 77-78
Butler, Paul, 164
Byrnes, James F., 97, 98

Camp Coetquidon, 15, 22
Camp Doniphan, 2, 14
Camp Ripley, 50, 73, 74
Canfil, Fred, 36, 37, 63-65, 110
Carpenter, Terry, 61, 62
Central High School, 28
Cheppy Orchard (France), 17-18
Chow, Albert, 139
Cochran, Governor Roy, 35-36
Conboy, Francis L., 15n
Condon, Ed, 82-83
Connelly, Matthew, 113, 118, 124, 147
Creighton University (Omaha.), 167-168

Davis, William, 121, 122, 123
DeLasalle Academy, 2, 13, 15
Dickmann, Bernard F., 36, 72
Dobel, Riley E., 15n
Donnelly, Jiggs, 26, 32
Doorly, Henry, 149
Drum, Robert, 147, 148
Duncan, Richard, 89-90

Early, Stephen, 127
Eisenhower, Dwight D., 129, 130, 131, 142, 155
England, Clarence, 42
Eppley, Eugene, 150, 151
Evans, Milton R., 23
Evans, Tom L., 100, 101, 116-117, 118

Fawcett, William, 52-53
Fisher, Frank, 49
Flaherty, Daniel L., 15n
Flannigan, Mike, 60
Ft. Riley, 29

Ft. Sill, 3
French Lick Springs, Indiana, 37
Fulton, Hugh, 113, 118, 126

Garner, John Nance, 111
Griswold, Dwight, 72-74
Guffey, Senator Joseph, 37, 38-39

Hannegan, Robert E., 72, 98, 101, 127
"Henry Stanley" (railroad car), 111
Higginbotham, John J., 15n
Hoffman, Frank G., 21
Hopkins, Harry, 38
Householder, Victor, 79-80, 81
Hughes, Maj. General Everett, 172

Ickes, Harold, 38, 85-86

Jackson County (Mo.) campaign and election of 1922, 42-44
Jacobson, Edward, 14, 30-31

Kansas City *Post*, 8
Kennedy, John F., 164-166
Kenny, Robert, 139
Kirby, William, 76
Klemm, Colonel Karl D., 20-21, 25, 34
Knowlson, James, 132
Ku Klux Klan, 45-46

Truman, McCabe, Thomas, 132, 134-135
McDonald, Fred, 13, 15n
McKim, Edward D.:

- Army and Navy Surplus Property Board, 132, 133-135
- and 1944 Democratic National Convention, 96-104
- and 1956 Democratic National Convention, 163-164
- demotion in rank, World War I, 11
- Foamite Fire Foam Company, 28
- insurance field, 29
- Jackson County (Mo.) campaign and election (1922), 42-43
- Lt. Governor of Nebraska, candidacy for, 61
- Missouri National Guard, recruitment for, 5
- Nebraska legislature, files for, 58
- Nebraska legislature, election to and service in, 60-61, 63 oilfields, worker in, 27
- Omaha, moves to, 47

- as poker player, 51
- Truman, Harry S., advice to, on candidacy for Congress (1934), 57-58
 - Truman, Harry S., April 13, 1945, visit with, 124-125
 - U.S. Army Reserves, commission expires, 94
 - U.S. Army Reserves, commissioned in, 28
 - Vice-Presidential campaign tour of 1944, duties in, 117-118
 - White House, visits with Vice President Truman, 105-106
 - World War I, service in France, 78-81
- McLaughlin, Charles F., 74-75
- Madison Square Garden rally (1944), 114-115
- Mansfield, Mike, 137, 138
- Marks, Theodore (Ted), 50
- Messall, Victor, 71
- Messenheimer, C.A., 154, 155
- "Military Order of the Flying Coat Tails," 52
- Morrison, Governor Frank, 169

- Neal, Fletcher, 122, 123

- Oak Grove (Mo.) picnic, 1922 campaign, 42-43
- Omaha, President Truman's 1948 campaign appearance in, 145-151
- Omaha, visit by former President Truman to, (1962), 167-171
- 129th Field Artillery, Battery D:
 - reunions of, 32-33
 - role in Truman campaigns (1920's), 44
 - in World War I, 2, 12-13, 15-26

- Panama Canal Company, 143, 158-161
- Patton, General George S., Jr., 172-174
- Paul, Major General Bert, 36
- Pearson, Drew, 106, 107, 173-174
- Pendergast, James M., 59
- Pendergast, Thomas J. (Tom), 57
- Peterson, Val, 140, 141, 153-154, 155-157
- Pick, Lt. General Lewis A., 139-142, 143
- Pope Pius XII, 132
- Presidential campaign (1948), 152-153
- Presidential inauguration (January 1945), 118-119

- Reinsch, Leonard, 118
- Remon, Colonel Jose, 161-162
- Rice, Carl, 157
- Ridge, Albert A., 15, 31
- Ritter, Captain Rollin, 7, 9-11, 12
- Roberts, Roy, 97
- Rockhurst College, 2, 7, 13

Roosevelt, Franklin D., 37-38, 105-106

St. Mary's College (Kansas), 7, 8

St. Patrick's School, 1

Salisbury, Spencer, 46, 48-49

Sandifer, Edward L., 16, 22, 23

Savage, John, 149

Sawyer, Charles, 134

Schmidt, Ernest L., 15

Schwellenbach, Lewis, 112

2nd Field Artillery, Missouri National Guard, 2

77th Field Artillery, 68

Sherlock, Joseph W., 15

Sherman, Hunter, 33

Sinatra, Frank, 115

Snyder, John W., 50, 51-52, 68, 69, 70, 129, 133, 136

Symington, Stuart, 136-137

Taggart, Tom, 37

Teasley, "Cushion foot," 27

Thacher, Captain John, 7, 12

35th Division reunion (1948), 146

Tiernan, L. Curtis, 20

Tobin, Maurice, 113, 119

Truman Committee, 90-91

Truman, Harry S.;

- airplane, first ride in, 42-43

- April 12, 1945, events of, 120-124

- baseball game, World Series (1944), 108, 109

- Battery D, assumes command of, 15-16

- Battery D.reunion, pays for damages, 33-34

- commander of Battery D, saves lives as, 24

- Democratic National Convention in 1944, nomination for vice-presidency, 96-104

- estimation of, 174-176

- farewell dinner (1952), 163

- football game, attends with Edward McKim, 87, 88

- France, service in, during World War I, 3,4, 17-26

- as a hunter, 53, 54

- Jackson County judge, decision to be candidate (1922), 41-42

- McKim, Edward D., first meeting with, 5

- McKim, Edward D., socializing with, 44-45

- Omaha, Presidential speech in (June 1948), 145-151

- as a poker player, 51, 127-128, 129-131

- Presidential campaign of 1948, remarks on Republican complacency, 152-153

- promotion to Captain, 12-13

- Roosevelt, Franklin D., meets with, 38

Senatorial campaign of 1934, decision to be candidate, 55-59
 speech on radio, for McKim's candidacy, 62
 trophy, from Battery D (1919), 25-26
 Vaughan, Harry, accompanied to West Coast by (World War II), 92-93
 vice-presidential nominee, campaign tour (1944), 108-118
 as Vice President, visits White House with Edward McKim, 105-106
Truman, Margaret, 65, 66
Truman, Mrs. Harry S. (Bess), 49, 116

Uncles, John J., 15n

Vardaman, Jake, 54-55
Vatican, representative to, 131-132
Vaughan, Harry, 40-41, 50-51, 67-71, 92-93, 122, 124, 127
Vice-Presidential nomination, 1944 Democratic, 96-104
Vice-Presidential campaign, 1944 Democratic, 108-118

Walker, Frank, 127
Wallace, Henry, 102-103, 114-115
Walsh, Jerome, 89
Whitney, Harry, 84, 85
Wilson, Colonel Arthur, 92
Wooden, McKinley, 22
Woodrow Wilson (movie), 104, 105, 107
Woolridge, Meigs, 18