

Oral History Interview
with
EDGAR G. HINDE

Lifetime friend of Harry S. Truman; fellow officer in the 129th Field Artillery Regiment in World War I; and former postmaster of Independence, Missouri.

Independence, Missouri
March 15, 1962
by James R. Fuchs, Harry S. Truman Library

The Harry S. Truman Library
Independence, Missouri
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FUCHS: Well, Mr. Hinde, were you born in Independence, Missouri?

HINDE: Yes, I was born here in about 1890 and lived here all my life. My folks had lived here about a hundred years. I've spent most of my life in Independence.

FUCHS: I see. You've occupied a number of public positions in Independence, haven't you?

HINDE: Well, only two. One was with the county, when President Truman was county judge, I was first superintendent of parks of Jackson County and started the park program and then I went from there to the post office and I stayed there until I retired in 1960.

FUCHS: I was thinking I'd heard you were in the recorder's office at one time.

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HINDE: Oh yes, I was a deputy recorder when I was just a boy about twenty-one years old. That's the only other public office I was ever in.

FUCHS: That would have been around 1911.

HINDE: It was 1911, when I went in there; and stayed there for seven years, until 1917, and then I went into the Army. Called in the service in the army -- in World War I.

FUCHS: Were you in the National Guard or the Missouri Guard?

HINDE: I'd been in the National Guard for about twelve years and then on August 5 we were called into service and our two batteries here in Independence, which were "C" and "E", was expanded into the 129th Field Artillery. The other batteries were taken out of Kansas City -- they organized over there, and that's how President Truman came into the organization. He went into "F" Battery and was later transferred to "D" Battery as commanding officer, and he carried that battery through the war.

FUCHS: What battery were you in most of the...?

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HINDE: I went in "C" Battery and then was transferred. to "A" Battery under Keith Dancy, who was a Veteran's Administration officer after the war, and I spent most of my time with "A" Battery.

FUCHS: Were you on the border with Ted Marks?

HINDE: Yeah, I was on the border in 1916. I was in "C" Battery and Ted was in "B" Battery. We were there from June 19 to about December 23 of 1916. Then we came home and stayed on 'till August, then went into the Army -- after the war was declared.

FUCHS: You were an officer with "A" Battery?

HINDE: I was a -- you mean on the border or...

FUCHS: Well, on the border or -- well, you weren't with the "A" Battery on the border.

HINDE: I was a second lieutenant in "C" Battery then, and then when we were called back into service on August 5, 1917, I was first lieutenant and executive officer of "C" Battery and I went to Fort Sill, Oklahoma and was down there ten months -- then we went overseas and we were over there eleven months. After getting

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over into France, I was transferred to "A" Battery and I was with them 'till I went to the French artillery school at Saumur, France and then I came back to "A" Battery and came home with "A" battery after the war.

FUCHS: Well, you're about six years younger than Mr. Truman.

HINDE: I'm just about -- approximately six years younger than he is. I've known him all my life but we were more intimate -- that is we got more intimately acquainted after we went into the Army. I'd known Harry and his whole family -- well -- always, but after we went into the Army we were more closely associated and have been ever since. That's been over a period of a good many years -- forty-five years.

FUCHS: Did you live close to his family?

HINDE: No, I lived over in the southeast part of town and he lived over in the northwest part of town. 'Course, that wasn't such a long distance in those days 'cause the population wasn't over about 5,000 people. But I've known his family and my family had known

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them always -- they're old families around here -- both of 'em -- and we had been acquainted over the years.

FUCHS: Then you were in grade school of course, he would already have entered high school.

HINDE: Yes, he was in high school. I went to the old Noland School out in the southeast part of town and I think possibly he went there a while, I'm not sure. He went to Columbian School. That was over where the L. D. S. Auditorium is now. But, he was in high school when I started school 'cause he's about six years ahead of me.

FUCHS: What is your earliest recollection of Mr. Truman -- as a boy -- or a young man?

HINDE: Well, I don't know of anything particularly that reminds me. He was -- everybody liked Harry -- e didn't take much part in athletics or anything like that but he was a good student and I don't know -- I can't remember anything particular about him at that time. 'Course, after we were so much more closely

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associated in the Army, why, so many things about Harry that you remember. It's hard to take one out and...

FUCHS: Now what year did you go into the Guard?

HINDE: I went in the Guard in 1907.

FUCHS: Do you remember him?

HINDE: Well, he was in "B" Battery in Kansas City and I don't know what year he went in but...

FUCHS: He went in in 1905.

HINDE: Well, I went in in 1907. It was an old Company "F" of the Third Infantry at that time. I was about sixteen years old, I think, and then afterwards it was expanded into -- or changed over to artillery and then as I said, after the war started in 1917, it was expanded into a regiment. But, he was in the old Battery "B" of Kansas City. At that time, they had "A" Battery, "B" and "C" Batteries -- only had a battalion -- "A" Battery was at St. Louis and "B" was in Kansas City and "C" was in Independence. Then when the war came along, why, we took "C" Battery

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and expanded it into two batteries -- "C" and "E". And then "A" "B" "D", and "F" came out of Kansas City and they took the old "A" Battery, which had been in the National Guard from St. Louis, and they expanded that into the 128th Field Artillery -- but, we were in the same division - the 35th Division.

FUCHS: Well, he was in the Guard until 1911 and then he -- by that time had gone back to the farm and he was discharged from the Guard. Now, I believe he is said to have come up to Independence to visit Bess Wallace during those years; do you recall anything of seeing him around Independence in those years before the war?

HINDE: Oh, I probably did, Jim, but I don't remember anything particular about -- I knew he used to go with Bess and call on her -- oh, as far back as I can remember. I don't know that he ever had any other girl friend -- not that I know of if he did -- I never heard of him going with anyone else.

FUCHS: Nothing that stands out in your mind about this period?

HINDE: No, nothing in particular. I remember his old car.

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I believe it was an old Jefferson. It was quite an automobile. I used to see him driving it -- I believe it was a -- a Jeffries -- I guess it was -- wasn't it?

FUCHS: I don't know -- he had a Stafford.

HINDE: Stafford, Stafford -- that was it. It was made over here in Kansas City. I remember seeing that. It was quite an automobile in those days. I remember the car but I don't -- there's nothing particularly stands out during that time. I don't remember of anything that would be of interest.

FUCHS: Do you have any pronounced recollections of the period when he came back in, just prior to going overseas and was in the service at Fort Sill?

HINDE: Well, I don't believe he came back into the service until they organized the regiment in Kansas City. Then he went in and he was assigned to "F" Battery, which was a battery that was composed of a lot of boys from the stockyards down there, and he stayed with them quite a while. We got down to Fort Sill and we had "D" Battery there which was composed of boys -- I think about ninety per cent of them was from Rockhurst High School and

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Rockhurst College out there -- Catholic boys. They were a pretty wild bunch of Irish I'll tell you that. They had one captain named Charlie Allen and they had two or three others there, none of them could handle them, and finally they assigned Truman to command the battery. He was a thirty-third degree Mason in a Catholic battery and we thought he was going to have a pretty rough go of it but he made the best success of any of them. They all fell for him -- he got along fine with the battery and he was sent overseas in an advanced detail to go to school over there at Coetquidan, I believe the name of the town was. They had a school there and we sent a detail over there to go to school. And then he rejoined the outfit after we got to France and then he commanded "D" Battery all through the war.

FUCHS: Do you have any recollections of seeing him in action in France?

HINDE: I never saw him in action. I was in this Saumur School when they were in action. I missed that. I was detailed, or sent to this French artillery school there. It was kind of a finishing school. I don't

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know why they ever picked me because it was a rough son-of-a-gun, I'll tell you that -- unless they wanted to get rid of me. They were sending boys that graduated from West Point over there to this Saumur School -- that was the kind of competition I had. I just had a high school education. There was five, I believe, West Point boys in my class and then I didn't get to see him anymore until we got to a little town called Vavincourt -- that was right back of Verdun.

I reported back to the battery there and from there we went to a little town of Courcemont near Le Mans -- then we came home from there. I was sent from this town of Vavincourt by Colonel Smith, who was then commander of the regiment. I went ahead, as a billeting officer, to this little town of Courcemont and from there I went to Le Mans and from there to Le Havre, France as billeting officer. Then we came home from there. We were together -- pretty closely associated there -- had our usual poker game every night. That was about the only recreation.

FUCHS: In what town did you play poker with him or was that in a number of places?

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HINDE: Oh, we played every time we got together. There was a bunch of us -- Father [L. Curtis] Tiernan, who was chaplain; Harry Jobes, captain; Roger Sermon, a captain; Ted Marks; and myself, and Major John L. Miles -- we used to play poker pretty near every night.

FUCHS: In other words, all the officers from Kansas City and Independence.

HINDE: We just had a friendly game. It was just about the only recreation we had.

FUCHS: Did you go to Paris with him by any chance?

HINDE: No, I didn't get to go to Paris with him. I was still in Saumur. When I graduated down at that school, they put me on the staff there and I stayed there 'till the first of February and in that time -- why -- a bunch of them left and went to Paris and took in Paris. No, I didn't get to go, but I guess they had quite a time. I got to Paris after that for a couple of days but not with them. Then, when the school finally closed I reported back to Gondrecourt which is right back of the old front and it was a combat replacement camp. I went from there down to a little town of Vavincourt, where

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I rejoined the regiment -- then I stayed with them until I came home from there.

FUCHS: Did you get to the Folies-Bergère and find it a "disgusting spectacle," as Mr. Truman remarked?

HINDE: Well, I didn't have the opportunity to see it. I don't imagine I'd have looked on it like Harry did. I'd kind of enjoyed it I think. No, I went up there with a fellow from this school I was in and we were barred from Paris at that time and we got a pass to a little town named Mons -- that was the other side of Paris. We got in Paris one night and stayed all night there and all the next day we went around seeing the town. Then we had to get on the train and go to Mons and come back so our pass would be good back to this town we were in. We weren't supposed to be in Paris but we just changed trains in Paris. 'Course, it took us twenty-four hours to get the train out but we had a little "hurry up" time -- we didn't get to see as much of Paris as we wanted to.

FUCHS: Why was the restriction on against entrance into Paris?

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HINDE: Well, they'd never lifted it. During the war, you see, nobody could go to Paris, that is just on a pleasure trip. And at that time they hadn't lifted it. They later lifted it. I think the President went after that was lifted but when I was there, no soldier, unless he was assigned there, was supposed to be in Paris. As I say, we took our pass to this little town of Mons which was about thirty minutes the other side of Paris. We just rode down there and checked out of Paris and went down to Mons and checked back in. That gave us twenty-four hours more in Paris. We did a little finagling there and got to see the town.

FUCHS: Well then, you would say that when Mr. Truman wrote publicly in his *Memoirs*, I believe, that the Folies-Bergère was "a disgusting spectacle" that he was sincere and that just wasn't something...?

HINDE: Oh, yeah -- the show was a little risqué, I'd say. And, he never did care much for that stuff. Just like -- you read so much about Harry drinking bourbon, you know, during that campaign -- why, he can make a highball last longer than anybody I ever saw. I've seen him take one highball, and -- all evening that would be all he'd take but he'd drink with everybody that'd

come in. That always amused me -- how much Harry Truman drank. Well, he didn't. I never saw him when

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he was anywhere near under the influence of liquor and I never saw him drink very much.

FUCHS: Even when he was in the service, back before he was President?

HINDE: Yeah, back in the Army and when he was out in parties. Why, I've seen him stand there with a highball in his hand and he'd drink with you or me or [Dr. Phillip C.] Brooks or anybody else come in but he'd still have that same highball. That was awful disgusting to me because I knew he never drank very much. But the papers come out what a heavy drinker he was -- he always had to have his bourbon and branch water -- that was all poppycock.

Personally I think Harry is one of the cleanest fellows -- and I'm not saying that because he's a former President -- but he's one of the cleanest fellows morally that I ever saw -- or knew. I never saw him do anything out of the way that would be questionable in the way of a moral situation. He was clean all the way through. I always admired him for that quality and you know when a man's in the Army why, his morals get a pretty good test.

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You know that as well as I do. He never deviated from the "straight and narrow" as far as I know and I was pretty closely associated with him for about 18 or 19 months. We were very close together and I've been associated with him since then and I know it held good in civilian life as well as it did in military life.

FUCHS: Did you come back on the same boat with Mr. Truman?

HINDE: Yeah, we came back on the old -- it was a captured German boat -- the steamship "Zeppelin." We still had the German officers on the boat -- they brought the boat back and it was a rough son-of-a-gun. He wasn't much of a sailor. I've often wondered how he stood this sailing on the Presidential yacht and all these sea trips he took, because when we came back from France, why, boy, he couldn't take it -- made him seasick.

FUCHS: He really did get seasick?

HINDE: Yeah, he got seasick, but I guess possibly he got used to it. I don't know -- he's traveled a great deal later. But, that was a rough boat. I think it was

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about a 14,000 ton boat and they loaded it heavy in the front end, for some reason or another, and we hit a storm and that thing would go down, the bow would go down and go clear under water - - then she'd lay over on one side and this side. We had a rough go there for about two or three days but we made it all right. Took us eleven days to come home -- took us sixteen days to go over. We went clear up around Greenland going over there, dodging subs. It was on an old boat

called the "Saxonia" -- it was an old Cunard liner boat, I don't know, about thirty years old and we had 1500 and some odd men on it.

Then, we landed in London and went from there to Winchester, England and from there to Southampton. The night we crossed into France, they had the little old stern-wheeler channel boat there and we boarded that boat about dark and made France about eleven o'clock. They were having an air raid across the channel and when we started out on that boat it was so crowded that a fellow couldn't lay down. They had just those little old narrow short boats and they just stood up. We had the whole regiment on the thing. When we was in the harbor

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at Southampton, I think we counted twenty-six ocean-going boats that was sunk. They'd got that far and you could just see their stacks sticking out of the harbor all around us. The submarines were coming in, the British submarines, and then we started across the channel. They took an old destroyer and he started out ahead of us and we followed him like the devil all the way across there. I remember I was leaning against the smoke stack sleeping and I looked up when we got to the dock and there was a great big hospital there, and I never saw as many wooden-legged and one-armed men in my life as were on a big balcony they had on this hospital. I thought this is a fine welcome to France! It was a rough son-of-a-gun.

FUCHS: You say you landed in London -- you mean London or...

HINDE: Tilbury Docks, London -- that's on the Thames River -- and then we took a train there and went to Winchester. They had a camp there. I don't know why we ever stopped there -- they wasn't ready to take us across, I guess. Well, we stayed there three or four days. That was old King Arthur's territory, you know. We didn't get to see anything of London.

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This dock -- I never have -- in fact, I've never even looked it up on the map, but it must be quite a ways out of the city that is, where you come in. We took the train there and went to Winchester and stayed there three or four days and then went on down to Southampton.

Then we crossed the channel and landed at Le Havre and proceeded to Andard by train. Andard is right out of Angers, France and we stayed there for, oh, I guess a month, maybe. Then we went on up to a little town named Guer, where we had gunnery practice. From there we went up to St. Mihiel, and I left the outfit at this town of Guer. I was in the hospital and I didn't get back with them until after I'd gone on through that school, so I missed out on the fighting.

FUCHS: Did you see Mr. Truman after you got over there, before he went into action?

HINDS: Oh, yeah, we were together up to the time we left this little town of Guer. Camp Coetquidan was the name of the camp -- Guer was a little town there -- and they went up into the Vosges Mountains when they left there, and then they went to St. Mihiel. They were in reserve at

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St. Mihiel and then on the 26th of September, I think it was, they went into Argonne. That's where they had their rough going.

But, that was a lucky regiment. I don't think we lost over fifteen killed in that whole outfit. That was a marvelous record and they were in pretty rough going.

FUCHS: Now, he experienced seasickness on the way back, do you ever recall him mentioning he was air sick? Of course, he probably didn't fly very much until he was a senator? Do you recall him ever being air sick?

HINDE: No, I never did. No, I don't think he flew any over in -- oh, he might have been up once or twice in a plane, but I never did hear him say he was ever air sick. But, he was seasick.

FUCHS: Did you get to New York when you came back?

HINDE: Yeah, we landed in New York on Easter morning, 1919. Went from there to Camp Mills and stayed there a few days and then was shipped from there to Fort Riley, Kansas. That's where we were discharged, Fort Riley, Kansas.

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FUCHS: Did you get into New York proper?

HINDE: Yeah, we had a young fellow in our battery -- fellow by the name of [Herbert P.] Betts, he was a first lieutenant. His father was director of Cunard Liner Company and he came to us as a second lieutenant and finally made a first. He came home earlier some way. He got some kind of a deal where he left the regiment over in France and came home and he met us out at Camp Mills and took us in and showed us the town. Of course, none of us had ever been there before -- had quite a trip.

FUCHS: Was Mr. Truman with you?

HINDE: No, he wasn't with me. There was Roger Sermon, who was mayor -- he and I went in together. But we did go in one night. There was Harry and old Dr. [Charles E.] Wilson -- Major Wilson (he was our old regimental physician), and Father Tiernan who was a chaplain, and this Captain Jobes and Roger Sermon, myself and I don't know who else; we all went in -- had an evening in New York. Went up to the roof garden on the old Amsterdam Hotel. I remember that because we couldn't buy any drinks, you know. So, we ran into a commander in the Navy that some of them knew,

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and this guy ordered ten or twelve drinks and set them on the table. 'Course, we got our drinks that way but the Army couldn't order any drinks while they were in uniform.

FUCHS: Think Mr. Truman had more than one on that occasion?

HINDE: I expect he did; I don't remember.

FUCHS: Was there any dancing there?

HINDE: No, no dancing. Oh, they were dancing, but we didn't do any dancing. We just went up there to eat. No, he wasn't much of a social butterfly. I don't know whether he even dances or not. I don't believe he does.

FUCHS: I've never heard.

HINDE: I don't think he dances. I've never heard of him dancing. He used to like to get out and - I know when he was up here in the courthouse things would get tough, you know, get worrisome; he'd get three or four and get in the car and go down to the Ozarks and stay three or four days and unlash and come back. He liked to make those trips.

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FUCHS: After you were discharged, what did you take up then?

HINDE: When I was discharged, I went in the automobile business. I got caught in that depression in 1921 -- lost my shirt! I finally went to work with Atlas Cement Company on the road -- stayed a little while and he appointed me as superintendent of this park system that we started. That was in '27 and I stayed there 'till '35.

FUCHS: Mr. Truman appointed you?

HINDE: Yeah, he was county judge then and he appointed me what they call park superintendent. We started building these parks.

FUCHS: In 1927?

HINDE: In 1927. And I stayed there 'till I -- 'course he'd been elected senator then -- he appointed me (well, I got my appointment February 1, 1935) to the post office. The fact of the business, I think I was the first appointment he made when he got to be a senator. Then I stayed there until '60. I'm getting ahead of the story though.

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FUCHS: I was wondering now -- you went into the automobile business around 1919, shortly after you came back?

HINDS: 1920. It was 1920. It was right after -- we got out in 1919 and I was down at the stockyards for just a short time. My father-in-law was down there, and I went down with him for about eight months; and then I went into automobile business. I was selling cattle down there for him. I stayed in the automobile business until about 1925, and then I went to work for this cement company. Then in '27 he appointed me to this job and I took that and stayed there.

FUCHS: You stayed in the automobile business until about '25, even though you had rough sledding after '21, '22?

HINDE: Oh, it was rough -- it was rough, boy, I'm tellin' you -- it was awful. But, we couldn't get out.

FUCHS: What line of cars did you handle?

HINDE: I had the old Willis Knight and Overland at that time.

FUCHS: You became active in the American Legion soon after the war?

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HINDE: Oh, yeah, I joined the Legion -- I was one of the charter members of this post here. We formed that in 1919, I believe it was. I believe I was the fourth or fifth commander and I've been a member ever since. I've been a member for forty-three years. I think I was the oldest commander up there the other night. They was calling on commanders. I was a commander in 1922 -- that was, they call it '22 -- I started in September, '21. That was when they had the first legion convention in Kansas City and boy that was a rough one. They were full of pep, you know, and they tore that whole town up. They had Hotel Baltimore there at 12th and Baltimore right catty-cornered from the Muehlebach over on the northeast corner. Some of those boys went down the stockyards and they got a steer and brought him up in that Baltimore Hotel and put him on an elevator and took him up to the fifth or sixth floor. They paraded around up there -- that was the roughest thing you ever saw in your life. Why they turned cars over and the darndest things -- they were just full of pep.

FUCHS: Did Mr. Truman participate in any of these pranks?

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HINDE: Oh yeah, he was mixed up in it. He was quite active.

FUCHS: Did he become a charter member of the post at Independence?

HINDE: I'm not sure. He belonged to a post in Kansas City and I don't know whether he was a charter member here or not -- I'm not sure.

FUCHS: He did belong to a post in Kansas City?

HINDE: Yeah, he belonged to some other post up there. I can't even remember what post it was, but he also belonged out here. They always call this his home post and he may have been a charter member. I know up on our old charter up there we've got all the names of charter members on the back of it written in ink -- they signed it. But I'm not sure. I'm pretty sure he was a charter member up here. It's been so long ago.

FUCHS: I've observed that his name didn't seem to come into the story here in the newspapers, in relation to this local post too much, until around '25 or '26, I would say.

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HINDE: Well, that may be -- I'm not sure.

FUCHS: I thought he might well have been a member?

HINDE: I can't remember whether he was a charter Member or not.

FUCHS: Was he ever commander of this post?

HINDE: No because he was -- see, from '22, he was in politics -- that is, elective office and no elective officer can hold a post in the American Legion. Consequently, he was never eligible to be a commander because he went from the county court to the Senate and the Senate to the presidency so, thank goodness, he was in politics from '22 on. He went in -- started to run in 1921 for eastern judge and was elected. Then the next term, why that was when this old Henry Bundschu filed this fellow Rummel -- old Judge Rummel they called him, Henry Rummel -- filed him for eastern judge against Harry Truman. The Democrats had a split between what they called the Pendergast faction and the [Joseph] Shannon faction; of course Harry was in this Pendergast faction. The Shannon faction went for the Republican candidate and beat Truman. And that was the only time he was ever beaten.

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Everybody thought it was a joke when they filed this old man Rummel 'cause he'd never been in politics, never took any interest in politics, and they tried to get him to withdraw after they filed him and he wouldn't withdraw and he beat him -- with the help of the Democratic Party -- and then he came back in '24 and ran and then he was elected.

FUCHS: I believe that was in '26.

HINDE: Yeah '26 -- and then he was presiding judge -- I don't remember the years he was presiding judge.

FUCHS: '26 to '30 and then he was re-elected in '30 and served through '34 when he became senator. Now, going back just a bit -- in 1921, when you say the Legion held their first national convention, he was in business in Kansas City as he had started the latter part of 1919.

HINDE: Yeah, he had a store right there north of the Muehlebach Hotel, about where the entrance to the Phillips Hotel is now. He had a very nice haberdashery store there and they were in business. I don't know just how long they were in business; he got caught in the depression too.

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FUCHS: Until the beginning of '22 when he then ran for county judge. Now, do you recall going into that store, say in 1921 when you went to Kansas City for the Legion convention?

HINDE: Yeah, I was in there quite often. He had a nice store there. Yes, I've been in there and it was kind of a hang-out for the old 129th Field Artillery. They all kind of made that headquarters.

I think Judge Ridge did most of his studying there -- the judge of the United States Court of Appeals now, Al Ridge, I think that was his study hall there. He stayed there most of the time.

FUCHS: Did you ever observe much business there?

HINDE: Well, yes, when they first started they apparently had a nice business. But, like everything else in that time (that 1921) everybody got caught in the depression, you know. Just like it was in 1933, only not near as bad. People didn't have any money, stock prices dropped, and I think that's what got him. They had a big stock of merchandise and the bottom fell out of it and there they were. He was just like a lot of

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other business men; he was hooked. They made such a big hullabaloo about that haberdashery store. It was a nice store, and he was just a victim of circumstances like all the rest of us were. I know at the time I went broke -- I went broke in '22. The Ford dealer and the Buick dealer and several others, they all went broke and they all had more money than I did. It was rough, I'll tell you it was rough!

FUCHS: You didn't file bankruptcy?

HINDE: Oh no, no sir.

FUCHS: You stayed in the car business?

HINDE: I stayed in the car business and I never filed bankruptcy, and I paid off what I owed. I know, when I bought this place here, I had to get an FHA loan and that was one reason I got the loan, simply, because I hadn't filed bankruptcy. No, I didn't file it; they wanted me to file but I wouldn't do it. It took me a long time to pay off -- but I got it paid.

FUCHS: Mr. Truman didn't file bankruptcy either.

HINDS: No, he didn't either and he paid off. His partner

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had to file bankruptcy. He was trying to make a living. (That was Eddie Jacobson.) Every time he got a job somebody would garnishee him and consequently he'd lose his job, and finally he had to file for bankruptcy. Then he got fortunate and went back into business. Somebody backed him and Eddie made a lot of money and paid off what he owed. I know Harry Truman told me that he came into his office there in the White House one day and just laid a check for \$20,000 down on his desk. That was the amount that Harry had paid off and Eddie felt that was his share of it, whatever it was. He just gave him a check for \$20,000 bucks.

FUCHS: Let's see now, in filing bankruptcy -- just one-half of a partnership, in that way -- did Mr. Truman assume all the debts or just half of the debts?

HINDE: No, either partner's liable. You take a partnership and either partner's liable for the debts. That's the sad part about a partnership. He assumed the debts -- he paid them. I know Harry kept himself broke for years paying on that thing. He was pretty badly involved, but he finally got it paid off. And then, Jacobson paid him part of it -- I don't know whether it was all of it

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or not. Because Eddie was a pretty honorable man and a pretty straight shooter, I imagine it was all of it. I know Harry thought the world and all of him.

See, where he got connected with this, Eddie Jacobson was at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. when we were down there in 1917. We started what they call a PX; we called it "canteens" in those days, and we had just a big general store. The Colonel put Harry Truman in charge of running this canteen and he got ahold of this fellow Jacobson, who had been in the mercantile business in Kansas City. Eddie, actually handled the thing and Harry looked after the finance; and it was very successful, and I think that's where they got the idea of going into this store. They made about \$15,000 net there in about ten months off of that store down there, and when they came out, why -- I believe that's what sparked the idea of them going into the mercantile business. They did a wonderful job on that -- 'course, the money that they made on that thing went into our mess fund, you know. We lived pretty high on the hog off that store. It was all right.

FUCHS: Then, in early 1922, Mr. Truman came out for county judge. There are various stories of course, of how

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he happened to do that. I wonder what you recall about that

HINDE: Well, I think they were looking for somebody that had a background that would get votes, of course, and we had a young fellow, Jim Pendergast, who was in the regiment with us. He was a nephew of T. J. Pendergast, the old political boss in Jackson County, and his father's name was Mike Pendergast. They were talking one day about getting somebody to run for eastern judge so Jim suggested that they run Harry Truman.

FUCHS: You don't know where this conversation took place?

HINDE: No, I don't know. I did know; but I don't now -- I couldn't state definitely -- it was in Kansas City. They asked him if he would go and he said "yes"; and he filed, and he won by a nice majority. But, I will say one thing for Harry Truman, he ran that office just as honestly -- they never could get anything on him at all. I know they tried two or three times to find something that wasn't exactly according to Hoyle, but they never could.

I know one grand jury -- well, they started when they

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was building the roads here -- this highway system. They kept rumoring around and rumoring around that they was going to have the county court before the grand jury, you know. So, finally

Harry wrote them a letter and demanded a hearing and he also sent one to the *Kansas City Star*. They finally called him and he loaded his brief case with all his statistics and went before that grand jury; and they gave him a clean bill of health -- which they had to do. Because when he started this road system, he demanded that they'd let him appoint a non-partisan board of engineers, which was composed of old General [E.M.] Stayton, who is now dead (he was a Democrat) and Tom Veatch of Black and Veatch, who was a Republican. They supervised this whole process and consequently, they got, I think it was about thirty some-odd miles of road more than they contracted for (or more than they anticipated, rather) and had about \$230 -- \$240,000 left out of the funds. So there wasn't anything too crooked about it.

It was a wonderful system. In fact they voted six and a half million bonds, the first one, and then they put up another bond issue of three and a half million,

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and that went over bigger than the first one did. People had confidence in him.

He had an agreement with the politicians here that when these contracts were let, they'd be let to the lowest and the best bidder, regardless of who they were or where they were from. Up to that time, why, they had a little clique of contractors got all this road work; and they were very unhappy because, I think, there was only one firm that ever got any of this Jackson County road business. They were all out-of-state contractors. And, I know they went to old man Pendergast and kicked on it. He called Harry and he said "I'm giving it to the lowest and best bidder, Mr. Pendergast."

And he said "That's what I want you to do." And he told the contractor, "He's the stubbornest man in Jackson County -- you can't do anything with him," That's the way it went.

But, he backed old Pendergast, you know. He got a lot of unfavorable publicity and, of course was a politician, but he did a wonderful lot of good; and there's one thing about him -- if he told you anything, you could go home and go to sleep -- it was just that way -- there

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wasn't any chain on it.

He was good to Kansas City, of course he got rich out of Kansas City. But, they got some of the best improvements up there that they ever got. While he was in power up there, they got this Municipal Auditorium, they got the courthouse, the city hall and a lot of other paving of stuff there. They had a lot more improvements than they've ever gotten since.

But he didn't bother Harry Truman when he was county judge. What I mean is, he let him run it. He knew just exactly how he was going to run it. He was going to run it one way and that was the right way and he didn't bother him any. They got along fine. I think the old man had a lot of respect for Harry.

FUCHS: We know that Tom Pendergast had a concrete company, did he also have contracting companies, that you know of?

HINDE: Oh, he was mixed up in them, yes. I didn't know just what all. He was mixed up in everything. But, he had this ready mix concrete -- of course, he sold that to pretty near every contractor in Kansas City, naturally.

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But, he did make good concrete. I found that out when I was with this cement company -- they had the cement association -- you know, that's where they test everything made of concrete. And his company was one of the highest rated companies in the country. He made good concrete. I think he was mixed up in contracting firms and material business. He had this ready mix, they call it, but he was the first one around here to have a ready mix plant where they sold the ready mix concrete. Of course, there's several now. But, he had a good outfit. But, he never sold any of that on this road program -- they never sold any concrete on that. I think the only contractor that ever had any of that road work on this county program was W. A. Ross -- I believe it was Ross -- he had one little strip of road and the rest of them were all out-of-state contractors.

FUCHS: Do you think Mr. Pendergast was connected with Ross?

HINDE: Oh, yeah, I think they were connected. I think the Pendergast daughter (I believe it was one of his daughters) married Ross's son -- I think I'm not positive about that. But I know he never put Truman in any crack,

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what I mean is, he never demanded anything from him that was not on the up and up.

FUCHS: You think Ross made a legitimate bid and did a good job?

HINDE: Oh yeah, Ross was a good contractor -- Bill Ross his name was; he'd been in the contracting business up there for years, and he was a good contractor. There wasn't anything crooked about him.

FUCHS: In other words, in your opinion, in the county road building program from about 1927 to 1933, Mr. Pendergast didn't reap any great amount of profit?

HINDE: I don't think he did. I don't think he got a thing out of that, no. In fact, I'd pretty near gamble he didn't. He had nothing to sell them. He couldn't sell them this ready mix concrete because it was foreign contractors in there, and they had their own mixing plants right along the road. No, I don't think Pendergast got anything out of the county. He mostly operated Kansas City.

FUCHS: Do you recall what year this grand jury was called and who might have instigated that?

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HINDE: No, it was along '27 or '28 -- sometime along in there.

FUCHS: Not too long after the program had started?

HINDE: No, it was after that, too. When did that program start? Do you have that date?

FUCHS: Well, he assumed office as presiding judge on January 1, '27 -- then of course, the bond issue and so forth required time.

HINDE: Right after that. Well, it must have been -- I'd say around -- between '27 and '30, possibly. As near as I can pin it down -- I don't remember. Of course, they had me over there before that grand jury, you know. I was supposed to be making \$6,000 a year and had a Buick automobile to drive, and I had five men on my gang had Buick automobiles; and the fact of the business was, I was making \$300 a month and was driving a Ford. So, they had all that. I've forgotten who instigated all that stuff, but they were trying to get something on the Democratic administration, that is what they were trying to do. And I went over there and they gave me a clean bill of health.

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right after that he demanded a hearing and they had to give him one. It was a political frame up. It was a little rougher in those days than they are now.

FUCHS: Just prior to Mr. Truman's election as Eastern District judge in '22, I believe there was quite a few Republican officials in the county. How did that happen to come about?

HINDE: In '22, that was when he was first elected, wasn't it?

FUCHS: This court could have been elected in '20 and served '21 and '22 -- then Mr. Truman was elected in '22 and served '23 and '24, right?

HINDE: Yeah, '23 and '24. Well, the only way a Republican ever got in office in Jackson County, was the Democrats fell out among themselves, the two factions split, and that's been so long ago I don't remember. But that's possibly what happened because they were fighting among themselves or they never would have beaten him. Then they didn't elect anybody else for several years after that.

FUCHS: Well, I did notice that even when Mr. Truman was on

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the court and it was predominately Democratic, there seemed to be a Republican treasurer, coroner, assessor, and Leo Koehler, the county surveyor, who was ex-officio county highway engineer.

HINDE: Then, Alex Sachs ran as county engineer and defeated Koehler.

FUCHS: But Koehler had been elected for three terms. Was there any particular reason for that or...?

HINDE: Not that I know of. I don't think he was much of an engineer. I know he was engineer when they started this road program. That was one reason Truman demanded this bipartisan board of engineers to supervise. He didn't think Leo Koehler was competent to engineer a project that big, so they had this fellow Stayton and Veatch, and of course they had their own corps of engineers that they had as supervisors and inspectors; and Koehler, who was then county engineer, he didn't have very much to do with the program. They just let him sit on the fence.

He was engineer when Harry was first elected, too, because I remember they had the controversy over who was

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running the garage down here. I was in the automobile business down there and Truman called me one afternoon and said, "Have you got room for storage of some trucks."

And I said, "Well, yes, I can take care of some trucks."

He said "I'm going to bring some up," and in about an hour, why, here he came driving a great big truck (I don't know whether it was a two or five-ton) -- it was about six or seven county trucks he'd just gone down there and taken away from Koehler and locked the garage up.

FUCHS: He was driving one personally`

HINDE: Yeah, he was driving one himself. He brought these five trucks into my garage; they set there for, oh, I don't know, a week or so. They were having a controversy with this Republican engineer and he just went down and cleaned out the trucks; they didn't have anything to work with. Of course, they didn't have the equipment they've got now. They finally got that straightened out.

I think Koehler and Truman got along pretty good after that, but he was the boss, I'll tell you that! He ran the county.

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FUCHS: There was some talk about the automobile situation, I know, when Mr. Truman became presiding judge; that is that there were too many cars allotted to county officials.

HINDE: Yeah, they either furnished a car or give them a car allowance, they called it. I had a car allowance. I furnished my car but I was driving -- I had the whole county! But they allowed me \$50.00 a month for the use of my car; of course that took in the gas and oil I used, the depreciation and everything else. Of course, now that would be suicide. But, at that time it wasn't so bad. But there was some of them had cars that didn't have any use for them, no doubt about that.

FUCHS: Did the county court judges each have a car?

HTNDE: I don't think they did. If I remember correctly, they had an old -- I'm sure they didn't at that time -- they had an old Packard touring car there for years. They had a chauffeur, and he

would drive over to Kansas City and get the two county judges over there and bring them out here when the court was here. Or he'd take Truman over there. And they made all of their inspections in this old Packard. No, Harry didn't have a

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private car, I know, and I don't think the -- well, I know the other two judges didn't. They just had this old Packard car. After that, I think all the judges got their own car; I don't know whether they have now or not; I haven't paid any attention to it. But, I know Harry had an old four-cylinder job of his own that he drove most of the time.

FUCHS: Getting back to the 1922 announcement by Truman that he was going to run for county judge, the first mention in the Independence *Examiner* that he might be a candidate was in January; then, on April 20 a notice appeared in the paper on the want ad page (as was the custom in those days), that he was a candidate, along with George Shaw who had filed some days earlier. There is a story I've heard, that Mr. Truman later came into your garage. Do you recall just when that would have been?

HINDE: Well, that would have been right after he filed the day he filed, I think it was. I don't remember what month it was. Did you say April?

FUCHS: April was when...

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HINDE: Well, that's probably when it was, because he came in there and he set down, and he looked at me and kind of grinned and said, "What would you think if I told you I was going to run for eastern judge?"

I said, "Well, I'd think you're crazy."

"Well," he says, "I got to eat."

And I said, "O.K.," I said, "I'm going to do everything I can for you!"

I had a boy working for me -- fellow by the name of Russell Gabriel, young lawyer (he just was studying law) so, I turned the car over to Russell and he drove him, did a lot of his campaigning with him -- took: the car and drove all over the county.

FUCHS: What kind of a car would that have been?

HINDE: Well, I think it was an old Star, at that time -- made by Durant -- and he used that old car quite a bit over the county. With that and his old Dodge, he had an old four-cylinder Dodge -- you know how hard they used to ride. He drove that, and then this boy drove him quite a bit.

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He made a pretty good campaign.

I never will forget the first speech he made -- that I ever heard him make -- was down at Sugar Creek one night. Bess and my wife and I were sitting there -- it was outdoors -- sitting on kind of a bank in the park there. Boy, it was about the poorest effort of a speech I ever heard in my life; I suffered for him. But he got better as he went along. I don't think he's such a hot orator yet, as far as I'm concerned; he makes a good talk, but I wouldn't say he's an orator by any means.

FUCHS: How long did he talk on that occasion?

HINDE: Oh, I imagine about 30 or 40 minutes. It was just a campaign speech.

FUCHS: You rode over there with him?

HINDE: I don't remember whether I did or not -- I was down there -- I don't believe I went with him though, no. That's been so long ago it's kind of hard to remember that stuff; but I think he made an announcement of his entering the race at Lee's Summit, down there in the Legion Hall, if I remember correctly. And 'course all the bunch that was in the Army with him, we all got out

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and worked for him -- did everything we could for him.

FUCHS: Would that announcement in Lee's Summit have been after he talked to you?

HINDE: Yeah, yeah. But, that old bunch of Army boys, they went out and they hustled, I'll tell you. Both here and Kansas City.

Way back yonder then, you know, the old veterans stuck together pretty close. Right after we came back, out of the Army, we had a young fellow here named McCoy [William S. McCoy, named as Mayor of Independence, 1920-21] ran for mayor of this town; he was a Republican. He'd been in the Army and was wounded and all the old soldiers got out and worked for him and beat the Democrat. I've forgotten who the Democrat was they beat, but they put this young Republican in there as mayor right after the war. He served four years and that was all.

But, the bunch that was with Truman, they all got out and worked for him. He was well liked -- everybody liked him.

FUCHS: How would you have participated in that campaign?

HINDE: Oh, I was running around, working at different

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precincts -- drove all over the county -- do little odd jobs -- take him places -- just whatever there was to do.

FUCHS: I know he told that he had voted for a Republican, John Miles.

HINDE: Old John Miles, yeah. John ran for treasurer. Well, a lot of us voted -- I think I voted for old John, too. They were in the Army together. He never made any bones about it; he told everybody he voted for him, and I think old John voted for him several times too.

FUCHS: The battery boys who were known Democrats however, wouldn't have gone out and worked for Miles?

HINDE: Oh, no, none of them worked for him -- they did on this McCoy though -- this young fellow who ran for mayor -- they all got out and hustled for him. Of course, there were none of them interested particularly in politics at that time. But on Miles, that happened a few years later. I don't remember just when it was he was sheriff; all of us voted for him.

He died about a year ago. You know, the most pitiful thing that I think I ever saw -- that old fellow lived around here all his life, and he'd been prominent in politics and military circles; and when he died I don't believe there was fifty people at his funeral. And, we went out to the cemetery -- I happened to be one of the pall bearers -- and there wasn't a single relative out there that I saw, that I knew was a relative. I don't believe there was ten people out there. I just thought, "look what a difference a few years makes." Of course, he was up in his eighties and a lot of his old friends were gone. Truman was at that funeral, but the funeral home was half empty. You'd think a fellow who had been as prominent as Miles was -- he'd been county sheriff and he'd been chief of police of Kansas City for a time and been prominent in military affairs -- you'd think there would have been a mob down there, but there wasn't.

FUCHS: Does anything stand out in your mind about that '22 campaign in regard to the other candidates in the primary?

HINDE: This old man George Shaw ran, and there was, I believe, another fellow named Compton, Jim Compton ran, if I remember correctly.

FUCHS: That's correct and there was also a Mr. Montgomery from...

HINDE: From Blue Springs. That's what beat him -- that guy. He was a Shannon man and the Shannon men voted -- well, you mean no, I'm getting ahead of my story.

FUCHS: In 1922.

HINDE: A fellow by the name of Parrent, I think -- Tom Parrent from Oak Grove.

FUCHS: That's right.

HINDE: There was about three or four of them. He beat them. None of them were politicians. This old Shaw was a road contractor and Compton was a -- oh, I guess you'd call him a financier -- he didn't do much but buy and sell real estate; and Montgomery was a banker in Blue Springs; and this fellow Parrent, he was a farmer, had been a road overseer, I believe. I think they -- I don't know whether they all stayed in there or not, it's been so long ago. But, I think they did.

FUCHS: I believe they did.

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HINDE: They split up the vote there and then when he ran the next time, that was when he got beat; when this fellow Montgomery, not Montgomery, but Rummel...

FUCHS: 1924?

HINDE: Yeah. You see, they wanted somebody to file on the Republican ticket and Henry Bundschu filed this old man Rummel. Then they went down and tried to get him pulled off and the old man wouldn't pull off. He just stayed on there. He wanted to run -- he got a taste of politics. The thing so happened that the Democrats split on Truman, and the old man was elected for two years. And made a pretty good judge, I think. He was an old harness-maker -- had a saddlery store on the north side of the square about where Helzbergs is now.

But those were pretty lively times back there. That was about the time the Ku Klux started after us. We had quite a wave of Ku Klux around here at that time and there are so many stories on Harry joining the Ku Klux Klan. I was instrumental in that thing. Some of us had joined to see what it was, to see what was going on, you know. So they got after me to get Truman to join the Klan.

FUCHS: You were a member?

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HINDE: Yeah -- I was to several meetings. Some of my good Catholic friends, every time we'd have a meeting, they'd say, "Well, I saw you out at the meeting the other night." They didn't know what we were doing in there; it was kind of a Counter Intelligence Agency deal. But, they got after me to get Harry to join. So, I talked to him and he said, "All right. " So, I took ten dollars and went down to this organizer, and he took it and then they wanted to have a meeting with him over in Kansas City, at the Hotel Baltimore. There was a fellow by the name of Jones, who was an organizer; he wanted to talk to Truman and see what his intentions were.

FUCHS: Do you recall his first name?

HINDE: No, I don't, but he didn't belong around here. And, when he went over there, this fellow Jones wanted him to agree that he wouldn't give a Catholic a job if he was elected; and Harry told him no, he wouldn't do that. He said he commanded a battery of artillery that was about ninety percent Catholic and if any of those boys wanted a job -- needed a job -- and he could give it to them, he was going to give it to them. Jones said "Well, we can't be for you." So, that was it. And they gave

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me the ten dollars back.

FUCHS: You were at this meeting?

HINDE: No, but I mean the fellow, this barber up here -- fellow by the name of Vincent, I believe; he was kind of secretary to the thing. No, I didn't go to the meeting.

FUCHS: You weren't at the meeting with Mr. Truman, then?

HINDE: No, no. But they turned him down.

And in that election, why, all over town, where they had any church bells, the Ku Klux Klan kept tolling those bells all day. I never will forget it. Out here around Englewood, where Englewood is now (it used to be called Maywood out in there), they had a church; and a fellow by the name of Charlie Jones, who used to be a good friend of Harry Truman's, lived out there, and he was kind of a precinct captain. He came up there and he says, "I'm going to get out of there. They're tolling that bell on me, it's driving me crazy." They just tolled it all day long, this Ku Klux outfit. They finally kicked us out of the Klan. They found out that we weren't

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very loyal. I know one -- well, it was Thursday night before that election, they had a meeting. They had a hall right down here on Winner Road. There was a bunch of us went down there and they had an organizer from Atlanta, Georgia there. He got up and made a big speech and told them about how un-American Harry Truman was, you know -- not a "hundred percent American." So, I got on my feet and said "Where were you during the war?"

And he says "I was in Atlanta."

I says, "Were you a physical wreck?"

And he says, "No.

I says, "Why weren't you in the Army?"

And he wouldn't answer me. And I said, "Anybody who says Harry Truman's not a hundred percent American is a liar."

And they jumped up and hollered, "throw him out."

Boy, they commenced to mill around there. There's a big fellow named Jack Toliver who lives out at Grandview (he's a good friend of Harry's); I looked up and

here came old Jack down the aisle -- he was about six feet and had shoulders about like that, you know. He says, "Anybody throws that boy out throws me too; let's get started." Boy, they commenced to cool off and by that time our own bunch got to milling around. Boy, I thought we were all going to get thrown out.

FUCHS: This was just prior to the election?

HINDE: The Thursday night before the Tuesday when they had the election. So, they banished us. They kicked us all out of the Klan -- all of us took part in that.

FUCHS: That would have been in 1922; the story, generally, is that the Klan played a part in defeating him in 1924. Do you think that is...?

HINDE: Yeah, they did. But, that was about the end of them. That was the last time they ever operated -- the people got wise to it. It was just a racket. You paid ten dollars to join the thing and they'd have these meetings out over town. I went to one or two of them. I know Truman went out there -- we went out there together one night -- never went in the meeting -- just went by. They'd

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burn a cross, you know. They just had a bunch of radical fools -- ignorant -- and the biggest part of it was fellows that -- oh, I wouldn't say the biggest part, but a lot of them go in there to protect themselves. Deadbeats, crooks and everything else belonged to it. I know right after that, they sent word they were going to come out and tar and feather me, but they never did.

FUCHS: Now, Mr. Truman gave you the ten dollars to join and you took it to whom?

HINDE: To a fellow named Vincent.

FUCHS: And then he took it to this...?

HINDE: To the organizer.

FUCHS: Mr. Jones? Then they arranged the meeting...?

HINDE: Harry never did belong to the Klan. Salisbury, he told it all around he belonged to the Klan, but he didn't he never did join, I know. I know what I'm talking about there; because I was instrumental in the whole deal.

FUCHS: I believe Spencer Salisbury says that he joined around 1920, is that right?

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HINDE: Yeah. But he didn't though. Spencer got soured on the world there. I don't know what all happened, but Harry took pretty good care of him -- jobs. Then he turned against him and there wasn't anything too nasty to say about him. But, he never belonged to any Klan, I know that. Fact of the business, he didn't even want to be considered when we talked him into it.

FUCHS: Now, going back just a little bit, Mr. Truman came out for judge in the newspapers in April of 1922. There is an article in the paper which says he had announced a few weeks earlier in Lee's Summit, Missouri. An article in the *Independence Examiner* on April 26, 1922, referred to a meeting that Mike Pendergast had held in Independence in the Eagles Hall about ten days previously, which would have been about April the 16th.

HINDE: Yeah, I remember that meeting!

FUCHS: You were there?

HINDE: Yeah, I was there. That was when he told -- old Mike Pendergast -- I'd forgotten about it, though, until you mentioned it; but, Mike was president of what they called the Eastern Jackson County Democratic Club at

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that time. We had a Rural Democratic Club and there was two or three other fellows wanted to run who belonged to the organization. But I remember Mike Pendergast, got up and said, "We've decided that Harry Truman's going to be the candidate for eastern judge." I remember that meeting now. I think there was a fellow named Charlie Latimer, who was one of them wanting to run. I can't think of the others (there may have been some others); but, I do remember that meeting now. I'd forgotten about it.

But, they used to meet in the old Eagles Hall and that was right there -- you know where Hood and Shelton is on Lexington Street? [At 209 West Lexington] It was right above that, up there in that upstairs. The eagles had a room up there. Fact of the business is, I think they had all that upstairs to the alley.

FUCHS: Well now, this article stated that the meeting was attended by about one hundred of the faithful but, quote, "The various candidates for Eastern Judge were discussed and others suggested so that the Kansas City end would know who to select. No definite decision was reached

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and the only thing accomplished was an understanding that when the campaign got that point, the word would be passed down the line."

Do you think there was, possibly, another meeting where Mike Pendergast said that Harry Truman was a candidate, or do you think the reporting was not accurate:'

HINDE: I think that it was told at that meeting that they decided on Harry Truman, that is, the committee had decided on Harry Truman. That's my recollection of it and I may be wrong. You know, it's been a long time ago. But there were some others who wanted to run but they picked Truman. Of course, Truman never had been -- the only political job I think he'd ever had at that time, he'd been a road overseer maybe; and I believe he was Postmaster at Grandview for a little while, but that was just a little third or fourth class office at that time.

FUCHS: Well, part of this questioning is brought about by the fact that the *Independence Examiner*, on several occasions, and specifically on April 21, said that Truman had consulted no one -- "no political director," as they put it -- in regard to his coming out as a candidate for

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eastern county judge; and, of course, that is not exactly in line with what has been told down through the years.

HINDE: No, no -- well, old man Southern [William Southern, Jr.] , you know, he used to run the *Examiner*; he thought he was quite a power in politics. He was a fine old man; I used to think a lot of him, but he didn't exert any influence in politics. Of course, he wanted to be for Harry Truman, but he didn't want to be for Harry Truman if Mike Pendergast wanted him. I think that was the whole story. But, Harry didn't just jump out in the open and say, "I'm going to run for eastern judge." He consulted the organization before he filed; if he hadn't, he never would have been elected. In those days, you had to have the organization behind you and there wasn't any such thing as an Independent ever being elected. They had such a strong organization you either got the endorsement or you didn't run, that was all. No, he was endorsed and picked by the organization to run.

FUCHS: In other words, you would say that he didn't announce first and then the organization considered and decided they would support him, as Mr. Southern and his paper indicated.

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HINDE: No I wouldn't think that at all. I think that before he announced he had the "go" signal or he wouldn't have announced; he's too smart for that (I think he's a pretty astute politician) -- no that's not true, I know.

FUCHS: Had he been active in any way in the "Goat" organization or in politics -- political campaigns?

HINDE: No, not particularly, he hadn't been. As I say, I think it was brought about by Jim Pendergast, who was a son of Mike Pendergast. Jim was in the Army with us and we were all good friends. I think they were talking about a candidate and Jim suggested that they run Harry Truman. He figured he had a good military record -- and at the time of course (right after the war), everybody was strong for a veteran -- and could be elected. I think that's the way it happened.

FUCHS: In other words, he had no more direct interest in politics, prior to that time, than the average citizen who took an interest in voting and...?

HINDE: Oh, I think he had a little road overseer's job out here, but I don't think he was too active in politics

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until he was elected county judge. I can't remember of ever hearing about him in politics, that amounted to anything before then. Of course, he was interested, as you say, as an average citizen. He was always interested in politics but he wasn't too active, I don't think.

FUCHS: I've heard and read of an incident that took place in Fairmount during that election day. Do you have...?

HINDE: Yes, that was the election where that fellow Rummel ran against him, I believe or...

FUCHS: No, this was the '22 election as I...

HINDE: This was when Montgomery ran against him, I think. In Fairmount they sent a bunch out from Kansas City that was going to try to steal the ballot boxes. They had gotten a rumor on it -- they heard that they were going to do that, and they had some deputy sheriffs...

FUCHS: What faction was it that was going to do this?

HINDE: That was the Shannon faction that was going to take the ballot boxes.

FUCHS: They were supporting whom?

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HINDE: They were supporting Montgomery. They had some deputy sheriffs who were under John Miles (he was the old Republican sheriff) and they started in there to take those boxes. One of the deputy's names was John Gibson, who was in our outfit during the war. He pulled his gun and told Shannon to get out and the whole bunch took off and left. He'd have shot him; this Gibson was a wild-eyed boy. They tried to take those boxes -- they'd gotten a rumor that they were going to come out here and so they called and had those sheriffs out there -- this fellow by the name of John Gibson and George Miles, who was the brother of the sheriff. They were both deputies and they were there when this outfit came and they just pulled their guns and these boys took off, and that was the end of that deal. And I don't know if that's the same election they tried to kidnap Margaret -- you heard about that, didn't you?

FUCHS: Just heard it mentioned.

HINDE: She was going to the Bryant School over there, and some fellow went up to the teacher and told her, her folks wanted her at home. This was Mrs. Madeline

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Etzenhouser; she lived right down on Delaware Street and she kind of smelled a rat, you know, and she wouldn't do it. Somebody called up headquarters, where Harry was, boy, I don't know how many of us started out looking for this bird. We never did find him. He took off and we don't know who it was, but we thought it was a frame-up, to get people out looking for Margaret, and this girl was smart enough that she wouldn't let the child go. Oh, they pulled off a lot of stuff.

FUCHS: Margaret was in Bryant School at that time?

HINDE: In Bryant School, yes.

FUCHS: That must have been a later election because Margaret wasn't born until around '24. So that would have had to have been later.

HINDE: Oh, yes. I've forgotten what year that was, but you'd heard that story hadn't you about..

FUCHS: I just heard mention of it, briefly.

HINDE: I don't remember the date it's been so long ago, but I think the idea was to divert the boys attention from the election, looking for Margaret, you know. They

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didn't know what they were stirring up. I've forgotten what year that was. Of course that's right -- Margaret wasn't born until '34 -- no...

FUCHS: I believe it was 1924.

HINDE: '24, because my youngest son and Margaret were about the same age -- '24, yes. So, it must have been about '30, because she was just a little girl in school.

FUCHS: There was a club known as the Harpie Club, which, it has been said, played some part in the campaign announcement in 1922. Do you...?

HINDE: Well, yes, we formed this club -- we played poker. It was composed mostly of boys -- friends of Harry's -- most of them worked for the county at that time and we had a room uptown there. We played poker every Monday night -- just a ten cent limit game. And that thing has been in existence -- still is in existence -- and I think it was formed about '22 or '23, somewhere around that time in there. He was a member and the club's still active.

FUCHS: Where did it get its name?

HINDE: Well, that was a funny deal. They were raising some

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money to start a club, and they had put on a show down in one of the picture shows; and they had an old fellow up here by the name of Port Sampson -- he was about half-cracked, but he could play a harmonica.. So, one of the boys who belonged to this club, a fellow by the name of Marino Phelps could play "Home Sweet Home" -- that was the only thing he could play. So they put on a contest one night down at this picture show. and of course, when Marino played, everybody just clapped -- this other fellow who could play pretty good, why, then everybody set on their hands, you know. Of course, Phelps won the contest. They started to call it the Harmonica Club, and that's the way they got the name of Harpie Club. It's been called that ever since.

FUCHS: How did they get "Harpie" from harmonica?

HINDE: Well, a harmonica is a French harp -- we used to call it, you know, the French harp; so they just called it the Harpie Club. That's the way it got its name.

FUCHS: Were those mostly veterans?

HINDE: Yes, most all of them were veterans. Pretty near all of them -- in fact I think every one of them was.

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Until later on some outsiders came in, but most of them were all old soldiers.

FUCHS: Mr. Truman was a member then?

HINDE: Yes, he was a member. He used to come over and play. We met every Monday night. Fact of the business is, up until just two or three years ago, we still met; well, it meets yet, but it's dwindled down, so many of them are dead.

FUCHS: You didn't take in new members and continue it in that way`

HINDE: Not for a long time. Just the last few years we took in some new ones.

FUCHS: Where did you meet in those early years, the first years it was organized?

HINDE: Well, the first year we were organized, it was -- you know where Davis paint store is over there next to Bundschu's up on the third floor? We had a room at the back of that old building.

FUCHS: What was downstairs at that time?

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HINDE: It was a bank and offices on the second floor. Used to be what they called a Farmer's Merchants Bank in there.

FUCHS: There wasn't a drugstore in there`?

HINDE: No, no. And later on, we went over on the south side next to that shoe store there where Brogan's Drug store used to be. I don't know whether you remember that or not. Then we went up there.

FUCHS: That was in several years?

HINDE: Yes, that was upstairs over that building and then finally we wound up over Bunting Hardware store on the third floor.

FUCHS: Bunting was already there?

HINDE: No, there used to be a restaurant there at that time, Mavel's Restaurant, I think. But, that's where we started, over there on the east side. That was quite a club.

FUCHS: Well, now did they play any part in Mr. Truman's coming out for the candidacy?

HINDE: Well, no, that was formed after he came out. They

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were just fellows that were friends of his. All of them were friends of his; most of them belonged to the same outfit as we did, that started that club. Of course, a lot of them had county jobs. He took care of a lot of those old soldiers, you know -- biggest part of them were county employees.

FUCHS: You say he had already announced for the judgeship race before that club was ever formed?

HINDS: Yes.

FUCHS: The reason I ask is because there is one story that they played some part in deciding that he'd be a good candidate.

HINDE: No, I don't think so. It wasn't really a political club, it was just a bunch of fellows; we got up there and played poker. No, I don't think they -- I don't think that club started until '24 or '25, if I remember correctly. No, they didn't have any part in deciding he would run for judge.

FUCHS: Do you recall anything in that first two years that he served as a judge, when he was judge from Eastern

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Jackson County -- criticism of him, or was it mostly run by, I believe, [Elihu W.] Hayes as presiding judge and [Henry F.] McElroy as Western District judge?

HINDE: Well, I don't remember any criticism particularly. I think that first two years he sort of got his feet on the ground. Of course, old man Hayes wasn't a very strong man. Now McElroy was a pretty sharp old boy, and I think he and Truman got along pretty well.

After he got to be presiding judge, why, he ran the court. I know they had a western judge there by the name of [Battle] McCardle; the old man was originally a Mississippian, and he was a nut on the Civil War, you know -- he liked to talk about the Civil War. Any little controversial thing that would come up there, Harry would get him started on the Civil War and he'd push the paper over and say, "Now Judge, you sign this," and the old man would sign his name and keep on talking about the Civil War. He didn't know whether he was signing the "Declaration of Independence" or what -- but, he was a fine old fellow. He was the one who told Harry,

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when he ran for senator -- he came into Harry's office that morning after he'd been elected and he said, "Harry, I want to congratulate you."

Harry said, "Well, Judge, I don't know if I've got enough sense to be a senator or not."

And the Judge said, "Well, Harry, the first two years you'll wonder how you got there, and the next four years you'll wonder how in the hell the rest of these damn fools got there." That was his summation of the Senate race.

But, Harry dominated the court after he got to be presiding judge. Of course, I think that first two years, he kind of felt his way, but he didn't sit there like a dummy; he got a good deal done.

FUCHS: Now, in 1924, apparently the "Goats and the Shannon Rabbits" split, as you have indicated before, and they ran this Rummel, whom you and most everyone refers to as "old man Rummel," and I wondered...?

HINDE: Well, he wasn't too old, Jim. We say "old man Rummel" -- he was a good deal older than we are. We can't realize that we're getting old also, but the old man, at that time, I don't imagine he was over fifty-five or sixty

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years old. Of course, we were a good deal younger. Pretty nice old man! He died here just a short time ago about ninety; and that was in '24, that would have been thirty-eight years ago. He was around in his fifties I'd expect.

FUCHS: I believe that he was born in 1866, which in '24 would have made him fifty-eight.

HINDE: Yes, that's just about his age. Of course, we were all a good deal younger -- around thirty. Of course, Truman was about thirty-six or thirty-seven. He was an old man to us; we wouldn't think so now, probably.

FUCHS: Mr. Truman in '24 would have been forty.

HINDE: Yes, forty. That was the time they split up.

FUCHS: Do you recall the specific trouble in 1924?

HINDE: In the faction in the party? Oh, I don't think it was anything more than factional strife. I've forgotten what they couldn't agree on.

See, back in those days, why, they had what they called the "Rabbits" and the "Goats" -- Pendergasts were the Goats and the Shannon men were Rabbits. They'd say,

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"the rabbits will take eastern judge and the recorder and the assessor and something else -- and the Shannon people will take the treasurer, the county clerk and the assessor. They'd split up the offices.

Well, I've forgotten what the trouble was that year but evidently they had some argument about division of the offices and that caused the trouble. I don't remember, it's been so long ago. But, they had a lot of strife. Generally they got together. They'd have a fight in the primary and then,

by the time the election came, they'd all get ironed out, and they'd slit it up. Take like the county clerk's office, why they'd have so many Goat and so many Rabbit appointments; that is, maybe they had twenty-five people, there'd be twelve Rabbits or twelve Goats and the rest of them the other, and all the other offices the same way. They split the patronage in the offices. But, I don't remember just what the trouble was on that. They couldn't get together, I know, but it's been so long ago, I've forgotten. I haven't thought much about it.

FUCHS: Did Mr. Truman conduct an aggressive campaign?

HINDE: Oh yes, yes. He worked hard at it. He never missed

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a place in the county, and he got well known all over the county. That first two years he was in as judge -- his hobby of course, was roads -- he would travel the county all the time. You could see him out in the county pretty near every day. he'd go around all over the road system. Of course, this road system was his idea. He originated that. But, he made a good eastern judge. Of course, at that time there were a whole lot more farmers out here than there are now. This county's almost suburban, you know now. But, at that time we had lots of farmers, and he was very strong with farmers. He looked after the business of Eastern Jackson County.

FUCHS: Do you think he anticipated being defeated in '24?

HINDE: Oh, I think so, yes. Whenever they split like that, Jim, there wasn't any chance of being elected. The other side went the other way, you know. It was pretty close -- whole lot closer then than it is now.

FUCHS: He conducted just as aggressive a campaign in '24, you'd say, as he did in '22 even though...?

HINDE: Oh yes, yes. I think he did. It was just the circumstances beat him. See, he had this faction of Democrats

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and they were pretty evenly divided. 'Course we always thought Pendergast had just a little edge out here, but Shannon had quite a following all through the country. You take that and add it to the Republican vote, why, you were gone, that's all. That's the only way they ever won here, is agreeing to go along with each other. And they kept it that way for many, many years.

FUCHS: Now, you were a member then of what was known as the Rural Jackson Democratic Club. Is that the correct name?

HINDE: Yes.

FUCHS: And in Kansas City, it was the Jackson Democratic Club. Now, Mr. Truman was a member of this club over here?

HINDE: Yes, and over there too.

FUCHS: He belonged to both -- paid dues to both.

HINDE: No, I belonged over there, too.

FUCHS: Oh, you belonged over there. Was that customary for

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most...

HINDE: Yes, most of them belonged. I think our dues were six dollars a year. I believe that was what it was. Yes, I belonged there for a long time. They didn't have this monthly lug like they claim they got now. I don't know whether they have or not. Our dues were just yearly dues. We paid six dollars and that was it.

FUCHS: Was Mike Pendergast nominal head of this club -- president? -- or did he just actually run it and they had another nominal head?

HINDE: No, as I remember it :he was the president of the club. See, Mike Pendergast kind of looked after the rural part of the county for the Pendergast organization. Of course, he listened, more or less, to the leaders out here like Truman and Purcell and a fellow by the name of Phelps -- old Nick Phelps. A lot of these old farmer boys had been mixed up in politics for years, and they took it more seriously then than they do now. But, he was the head of our organization out here.

FUCHS: You say that you think Mike Pendergast was actually the head of this Rural Jackson Democratic Club, then did

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he come to all your meetings over here

HINDE: He was generally out there every time we had a meeting. He was the president of that club. That is, I don't know whether you'd call him president or not. There was a fellow by the name of W. S. Gabriel who was president for a while, but I think when they first organized it, Mike was president of the club and Gabriel took over. He was president and I was secretary of the club along about '25. Then I don't remember who was president after that. I know I went to Florida in '25, and I had been secretary of the club and Gabriel was president at that time. I don't know who was president after that. But Mike Pendergast was kind of the -- I guess you'd call him the chairman of the board. He kind of ran the club.

FUCHS: Mr. Truman went out of office then in January of 1925, and he had a few activities before he ran again in '26 for presiding judge. Do you recall anything of those years and his activities?

HINDE: I think that was when he worked with the Automobile Association getting memberships, and he got quite a bit.

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He had an office, if I remember correctly, up on West 10th Street there in Kansas City. He worked for them several months there, getting memberships in the Automobile Association. The AAA, I guess it was. But I think that's about all he did.

FUCHS: Now, there was supposed to have been organized, in late 1924, the Community Savings and Loan Association'

HINDE: Yes, he was president of that for a while. That was when he and Robert Barr and Spence Salisbury and Arthur Metzger -- I think they were the originators of the Community Loan Association. I think he was the president and I don't know what Salisbury was. But he had an office.

FUCHS: Was Barr associated in that?

HINDE: Barr was originally associated in that, but I think he got out though. He wasn't in very long, neither was Harry. I don't know how long they were in that thing, but Harry got out.

FUCHS: I think he was in it up until the thirties, but he was not too active.

HINDE: I don't think he was too active.

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FUCHS: I have seen advertisements of a Truman-Barr insurance agency. Do you know anything of that?

HINDE: Well, I think that was in connection with this Community Savings and Loan. I don't remember much about that.

FUCHS: That was a side line of theirs?

HINDE: Yes, a side line.

FUCHS: Spencer Salisbury has indicated that he was sort of the originator and man who took Truman into this Community Savings and Loan Association. Would you say he is correct in that?

HINDE: Well, I couldn't answer that because I'm not sure. I know Salisbury was in it, and he was apparently the active head of it. He ran the business and it's possible that he did; I don't know.

FUCHS: He has also said that he helped Mr. Truman with selling the automobile club memberships in that he had previously been connected with the Internal Revenue Service and

that he had suggested to Mr. Truman that he consult the income tax lists for possible members. Have you

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ever heard of that?

HINDE: No, I've never heard that story before. Salisbury is a little careless with the truth.

FUCHS: That's what I was wondering. It has been said -- since Mr. Truman was President and Salisbury came out against him quite strongly -- that he has been careless with the truth. Was that evidenced when he was overseas?

HINDE: No, they were very friendly overseas and Salisbury, I don't know, he got...of course, Truman gave him a job. He was assistant purchasing agent of the county for a long time, and finally they got into some kind of controversy; I don't know what finally caused them to have trouble. But, Salisbury is a funny -- he's a funny sucker.

FUCHS: Was he generally considered a truthful person when they were in the Army?

HINDE: Well, we always figured he was just a little "slick," you might say. He pulled stuff that you or I wouldn't do. He was a little loose ethically. He'd pull stuff, like when we were in Fort Sill, we used to have a Saturday morning inspection of corrals, haysheds and quarters and stuff like that. While they were inspecting

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some other outfit, he'd have some of his boys go down and throw a lot of haywire on top of the next battery's hayshed. When they got down there he'd call the attention of the Colonel that "Captain Allen seems to have some haywire up on top of his shed." That kind of stuff. He'd pull anything.

But as far as any trouble between he and Truman when they were in the Army, I think they got along very well. In fact, I think they were very good friends. And when they came back he worked for the county under Truman for a good many years. But he was one of these birds -- he'd take advantage of you if he could.

He got mad at me one time here, several years ago. He didn't speak to me for ten years, and I don't know to this day what got the matter with him. He's just as friendly as he can be now; but, by golly he just quit speaking to me. I'd meet him on the street and he'd look me right in the face and wouldn't speak to me, and why I don't know.

FUCHS: Do you still see him?

HINDE: Yes, I saw him just a short time ago. Just about two weeks ago up here at the funeral home one night, there

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was one of the boys from the old regiment died and I was up there, and he was up there. But, he's a very peculiar cuss. He's one of these bitter sort of birds. He'd try anything. If he didn't like you, why he'd pull anything on you. I think a lot of this stuff he's told on Truman is a bunch of lies. Smart, he's smart as a whip.

And when they had that Community Loan Company or Community Savings and Loan up there (that was after Truman had gotten out of it), he was running it and he got in some kind of trouble there -- he got to borrowing money from it himself. Of course, when they liquidated it he came out all right; but he served some time, you know. He served about fifteen months in Leavenworth Penitentiary, but Salisbury was smart.

He was one of these fellows -- he'd rather make fifty cents off of you "slicking" you some way, than make a dollar doing it honestly. He'd rather pull some sharp trick on you and make fifty cents and then laugh at you. He got a big kick out of that kind of stuff. I don't know why he and Truman fell out. You know Truman, he never talks to you very much about that. Anybody who's ever been a friend of his, you better not say anything

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against, because they've got to hit him right in the face before he'll drop them. And I think that's one of Harry's big faults. He stays with some of these boys who are throwing him some curves and he should have let them go. That was the way with Salisbury. Salisbury, he looked out for Salisbury, and he didn't care anything about Truman or anybody else. But, as far as I'm concerned, he's no good.

FUCHS: I believe the story is, that Mr Truman, after he was senator, had it brought to his attention (don't know whether or not he knew some of this because of his prior connection with the Loan company), that Salisbury was being "loose" with the organization and he felt that it was his duty to call it to the attention of the authorities, the state examiner, I suppose. You know of that?

HINDE: I don't remember about that. It may have been that, that caused the trouble.

FUCHS: You've never talked to Mr. Truman...?

HINDE: No, I've never talked to him about it. I've always been very careful not to talk to him about any of those kind of deals because he's very peculiar. If you want

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to say anything to Truman about a friend of Truman's, why, you better have something pretty concrete or he won't listen to you. The same with this Salisbury when he was purchasing agent up there for the county. Two or three of us went to Harry and talked to him about some things that he was pulling, and Harry says, "Aw, you guys are just prejudiced. He's my friend and he wouldn't do anything like that." And that was the way he'd turn you off. He'd get out of humor with you about it. If he's ever been your friend it takes a lot to get him off of you.

But, that may have been possible that he might have had the examiners check that thing. I don't think Salisbury was doing anything criminal. I don't think there was any criminal intent there, but it was just an unethical proposition. I don't know just what the charges were against him, but I think he'd been borrowing some of this money, which was secured, as far as that is concerned; but there was some technicality where an officer of the company can borrow just such a per cent of the capital. I don't remember just what it is, but he'd over-reached that, you see. And, they got him on a technicality. I know Henry Bundschu was his lawyer

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at first, then Salisbury dropped him and picked up some country lawyer down here at Blue Springs. Henry told me, "If he'd just gone along with me he never would have gone to the penitentiary." It was just a technicality there that they could have ironed out. But, the company eventually paid off dollar for dollar. Nobody lost anything and that's the Independence Savings and Loan now, that's the same company. They took over their assets and organized the Independence Savings and Loan Association. I'd heard something about that, but I don't know anything about it though; whether Harry ever turned the thing over to the examiners or not. Chances are they'd caught it anyway because they make periodical examinations just like the bank examiners; these "buildings and loans" are subject to the same proposition.

FUCHS: You know of nothing that happened, say, when they were associated in business, that would cause Mr. Truman to do this out of vindictiveness? In other words, you think if he did it, he did it solely because he felt it was his duty?

HINDE: I don't think Harry would ever do anything vindictive like that. I never heard of him, doing it. I know, he would lean too much the other way. He'd lean too much

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the other way in a lot of cases, I think, where people have pulled some tricks on him that he just overlooked.

I know, way back when he was running for senator, you take Bob Hannegan (used to be postmaster general under Harry Truman) and Bernard Dickmann, who was postmaster at St. Louis for fifteen or twenty years. Those two birds were double-crossing Harry when he was running for senator in 1940. Now, if it hadn't been for Roger Sermon, who was then mayor of Independence, they would have cut his throat in St. Louis. They were running a man named Larry McDaniel for governor and Jackson County had agreed to go for McDaniel if they'd go for Truman. So, Rog called Larry McDaniel, who was running for governor, and told him, "You better get your boys Dickmann and Hannegan right, or we're going to cut your throat in Jackson County." Of course, we had a pretty big Democratic majority in Jackson County at that time. And McDaniel, he begged him not to do anything until he heard from him; and finally he called back, and said he had them straightened out.

Well, then Harry appointed Dickmann as postmaster and Hannegan as postmaster general -- why he ever did it I never could say -- never knew, and I wouldn't have asked him. But, I know that it's a fact that they tried to cut his throat in 1940.

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FUCHS: Do you know how they were going about it?

HINDE: Yes, they had their organization (this Hannegan was quite an organization man in St. Louis), and they were supporting a man named Milligan, that was running against Harry. They had their sample ballots out in all the wards there that they controlled, and Milligan marked the people to vote for. This Roger Sermon finally get wind of it, and they run off some more ballots and went for Truman after that; but they did it to save their own man, McDaniel.

FUCHS: Do you know why they were supporting Maurice Milligan against Mr. Truman?

HINDE: No, no -- just friendship, I guess. I don't know what the connection was there. Of course, Bennett Clark, he was against Truman you know, and he was from St. Louis. He was a great friend of Milligan's. Might be they had some connection there, I don't know.

But, I never could figure why he put Bob Hannegan in as postmaster general, and I never asked him...or this Bernard Dickmann as postmaster in St. Louis. I never did have any use for that bird. I used to see

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him around at these conventions, and he knew I didn't like him. He stayed away from me too. And I told him why I didn't like him. I know it was noticeable because I had postmasters from all over the state come up to me and say, "What's the matter with you and Barney Dickmann?" I'd tell them what I thought of him; and I didn't pull any punches. He was a finagler. But, that's what happened down there; and, as I say, if Harry had been vindictive, he wouldn't have given any of those guys anything down there -- he wouldn't have given anybody in St. Louis anything.

FUCHS: In that interim, when Mr. Truman sold memberships in the automobile club and he started in with Salisbury in the Community Savings and Loan Association, he also was going to law school. Did he ever talk to you about any of his experiences in the Kansas City Law School?

HINDE: No, I never did talk to him about that. He didn't finish. He started and he didn't finish. I think it was just too heavy a schedule. He was working all day and trying to go there at night -- just didn't work out.

FUCHS: There is also some indication that he went to Spaulding's Commercial College. I believe he said that at

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one time. Do you remember when that was?

HINDE: No, that must have been early, though, before he went to work possibly. I've heard it mentioned that he went to some business school up here, but that was way back yonder. That would have been before the war, when he was younger, a good deal. I think he did go to some commercial college, Spaulding's -- there used to be an old Spaulding's Commercial College up there.

FUCHS: When he came out for presiding judge, as the story goes, he was supposed to have asked Jim Pendergast for the county collectorship. Do you have any first hand knowledge of that?

HINDE: Yes, he wanted to be collector, which paid more money, naturally. County judge, I think, paid about six thousand a year at that time, and in the collector's office they were making thirty or thirty-five thousand. It was on a salary and a fee basis. And he asked T. J. if he couldn't run for that, and he claims he promised this fellow by the name of Harrington, I believe his name was. Have you got in your notes there, who was the collector? [John R. Ranson was collector 1927-34; George Harrington was collector in 1935-36.]

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FUCHS: No, I don't. I have heard. It just slips my memory right now.

HINDE: I believe it was Harrington. Anyway, he was a Kansas City politician, and they wouldn't give it to him.

FUCHS: They wouldn't give it to Mr. Truman? Did he talk to you about this? Did you know that at the time?

HINDE: Oh yes, casually it was talked. I never sat down in any private conversation about it but it was generally known. He didn't make any bones about it -- he asked for it. He wanted a job that would pay him some money. He wasn't making any money out of this county judge job. But, it was generally known that he asked for it, and they turned him down. Then he ran for presiding judge.

FUCHS: Of course he has said so since, but I wondered if at the time it was known he wanted it, and you say it was?

HINDE: Oh yes, it was known. Then he wanted to run for Congress, and they turned him down and ran Jasper Bell. Then they let him run for senator. He always thought that they thought maybe he was getting a little too big for the organization, and they were getting a little

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afraid of him; and they thought he'd be defeated for senator and he fooled them -- he was elected. He was taking over the organization, really, because he had more following than some of the rest of them did..

FUCHS: He did have, in a sense, an organization of his own then? You would say from about what year?

HINDE: Oh, from the time he got established there after '22, he had an organization from then on. He controlled the eastern part of Jackson County. If you wanted anything, you had to go to Truman to get it. He was, I think, the most popular political leader we ever had here.

FUCHS: Did -- say along in '24 on -- did you still have meetings of the Rural Jackson Democratic Club?

HINDE: Yes.

FUCHS: And was he an officer in that group?

HINDE: No, he never was an officer.

FUCHS: Was he a leader in the meetings?

HINDE: He was a leader in the meetings -- he ran a political

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organization out here. Of course, Mike Pendergast was supposed to be the leader. It was kind of delegated to him to watch out for Eastern Jackson County, but Harry Truman called the shots.

FUCHS: Was Robert Sermon a member of this organization?

HINDE: Yes.

FUCHS: What was the relationship between he and...?

HINDE: He and Rog were very close friends for many, many years.

FUCHS: You say he was more influential in this organization than Roger was?

HINDE: Yes, yes. As far as the county went. Of course, Rog Sermon built up a city organization that was tops. It kept him in office for about twenty-six years, you know, so he had to have a pretty good organization. Fact of the business, it was a good organization until Bill got a hold of it. Then he got it fouled up. Of course, Sermon always went along with Truman. They were very close friends, and they worked together all the time. And the same way with Harry on city elections,

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he'd have his boys help out in city elections the same as Roger helped out the county with his city organization. Yes, they got along fine.

FUCHS: Then, Mr. Truman was really calling the shots in the rural areas, but he still would have to consult with the Eastern Jackson Club -- Pendergast -- because of the big vote of the city for anything like congressman or collector.

HINDE: I think they went along with most anything he wanted though because he was not unreasonable and he proved himself a good politician. No, I know he wanted to be collector. That was an awful good job in those days -- \$35,000 a year back in '24, '26 and '30 was a lot of money.

FUCHS: You think at that time, they refused him primarily because they had promised it to someone else.

HINDE: They claimed they'd promised it to this other fellow who was a Kansas City man.

FUCHS: By '34, you think they refused him and took Bell [C. Jasper Bell]

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for Congress because...?

HINDE: That was before '34 -- that must have been...?

FUCHS: Well, that was in '26 that he wanted to run for collector and they made him run for presiding judge.

HINDE: Yes, that was when he wanted to run for Congress.

FUCHS: In 34?

HINDE: Yes, and they turned him down and let him run for senator.

FUCHS: But, you think that they turned him down then partly because he was becoming too strong, rather than that they were so much for Bell?

HINDE: That's my personal opinion. I think he was getting too influential for them and they'd like to have dumped him, I think. He was running the organization instead of the Kansas City bunch, that's the way I feel about it (and a lot of other people feel the same way), and so they let him file for senator. I think they thought he couldn't be elected. I may be all wrong on that deal, but that's my own personal opinion of it.

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FUCHS: How well do you think he was known outside Jackson County and the immediate adjacent area?

HINDE: He was pretty well known all over the state. He was very active in this Old Trails association thing. He went all over the state on that. After he started campaigning for senator, well Lord, he made an intensive campaign all over this state -- every little old town, village, and city in the state. I imagine he was as well-known as any senator that ever represented the state in the Senate. He made an intensive campaign; he just covered the whole state every time he ran.

And he had connections with the Masonic lodge. He was in the Grand Lodge, an officer in the Grand Lodge; and, of course, he had those Masons scattered all over the state that belonged to the Grand Lodge or the Masonic lodges and they knew him. He was quite active in that. He had a wide acquaintance.

FUCHS: Were you active in the Masons?

HINDE: No.

FUCHS: Did you have meetings of postmasters throughout the state in those days?

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HINDE: Yes.

FUCHS: Was Mr. Truman pretty well discussed and liked?

HINDE: Well, in those days, we couldn't discuss him. They'd turned it into Civil Service, you see. I remember one time in Kansas City, fellow by the name of Fred Platt of Jefferson City was a strong admirer of Harry Truman and also in the Grand Lodge, he got up and made a motion -- that was while he was a senator, I believe -- that they would commend him for something he did in the Senate, you know. Boy, he liked to started a riot up there. Of course, they had Republican postmasters and Democratic postmasters. They weren't supposed to have any politics in the meeting. This old fellow, he was just a red hot political postmaster and -- no, I never was at a meeting where Truman was ever...

FUCHS: I just wondered if he were well-known, say by all postmasters around the state?

HINDE: He appointed a whole lot of them.

FUCHS: They were predominately Democratic?

HINDE: Yes. Take back in '35, when I went in, you know, it

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was a political job. The Republicans, why they just booted them out and put a Democrat in. When Roosevelt changed it over to Civil Service, that changed it. When the Republicans got in they tried to kick all the Democrats out.

They took after me up here, you know. Boy, they had me charged with everything from rape to arson, I think. They went so far as to send my retirement all made out for me to sign.

FUCHS: What year was that?

HINDE: That was 1953. I sent it back to them and told them to fire me if they could, and I beat them. It was just a trumped up proposition. Well, like all jobs -- like Vivian Truman -- he was the head of Federal Housing Agency and they asked him for his resignation and he quit. Mize Peters was with the Treasury Department -- the bond division -- he quit. They came to me and I says, "To hell with you. Fire me if you've got all this stuff on me." So I got to talking to some of my friends uptown. (I've still got my photostatic copies of them, too.) They didn't get to first base. They recommended that two inspectors come here to check me out and they recommended

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that they leave me alone. Then, about a year or two after that, they came back and made an inspection of the office and they found a lot of little technicalities like you will, you know. You can't keep up with all those regulations. Then they charged me with violating the postal laws of the United States because I didn't enforce some of these things about so many days returning a letter or something like that. Hell, I didn't know anything about it. So, this inspector came down and handed me these charges and he was so embarrassed he didn't know what to do; and I just looked at them and read them and I commenced to laugh. I said, "Well, Jim, if that's all they got on me, tell them to crack their whip, let them go." I never even answered the charges -- didn't amount to anything. Finally, I got a letter that said they had reconsidered and that they weren't going to fire me.

It was all political stuff -- trying to get rid of me. One of the charges was that the clerks, when they delivered the stamps to the patron, pushed them through the window with the glue side down, which was unsanitary. Now that was one of the very terrible things that I was doing in my office -- such stuff like that -- why it was

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ridiculous. I've still got the charges up there someplace.

FUCHS: Barr, I believe he was called Major Barr at the time, ran with Mr. Truman and was elected in 1926 as judge from the Eastern District. He was a World War I veteran and, I believe, associated with Mr. Truman, at least in a military way. Is that correct?

HINDE: Yes, I think they belonged to the reserve corps together. Barr was a West Point man, and he had resigned from the Army, and he moved out east of town out here and had a beautiful home -- a dairy farm. He was kind of a gentleman farmer. I don't think he knew anything about farming. But, an awfully nice fellow and when World War I happened, he got back in the Army, and he was in poor health after that. He had a severe case of pneumonia at Fort Riley, Kansas. He had a pretty rough time of it for several years and finally died, just a comparatively young man. I don't know just how old Barr was, in his forties maybe. He was a perfect gentleman. Just as nice a fellow as you'd ever want to meet.

FUCHS: Do you think Mr. Truman had something; to do with

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getting Barr to come out as candidate for eastern judge?

HINDE: Oh yes, I think so. I've forgotten the circumstances, but I'm sure he wouldn't have come out unless he had Harry's endorsement on it.

FUCHS: In other words, you think Mr. Truman was definitely a factor -- even though he had lost in '24 -- he was by then a factor and remained a factor in the county politics in the Eastern District.

HINDE: He was a power. There's no doubt about it. He was a power in politics around here. Because everybody respected Truman. They knew he was absolutely honest and everybody had a lot of respect for him. He ran the county in the proper manner and he conducted himself in the same way. He had a lot of power, I'll tell you. He had a lot of followers. And Barr was an awfully nice fellow. I always thought a lot of Major Barr. He was always a good friend of mine. He and a fellow by the name of -- western judge...?

FUCHS: Vrooman? [Howard J. Vrooman}

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HINDE: Vrooman, yes. He was a character, that fellow, but he made a good judge. They had a good court when Harry was presiding judge, Vrooman was western judge and Barr was eastern judge, and they all got along fine together. Now, Vrooman was a Shannon man and Barr and Truman were Pendergast men. But, they got along fine and got everything done.

FUCHS: Of course, their big, initial program was the road program. Do you think that they cooperated very well and that Shannon's man, Howard Vrooman, didn't oppose...?

HINDE: No, he went right along -- he went right along with Truman on all that stuff. No, they got along fine. They didn't have any of this bickering like they have now. They've got, as far as I'm concerned, about a fifth rate court up here now.

FUCHS: Why in the subsequent election, in 1928, did they drop Vrooman and run a Mr. Bash, Thomas B. Bash, I guess?

HINDE: Well, that came under the Shannon end of it. I don't know why they changed that. Bash had been sheriff -- or was he sheriff after that? He was sheriff at one time over there. Now, whether he was sheriff before he was

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judge or judge before..?

FUCHS: I believe that was subsequent because he was the one involved in that shooting.

HINDE: That shooting out on Linwood Boulevard -- some of those "dago" gangsters over there. He killed one of them out there, I think. I don't know why they changed. Vrooman, at one time had plenty of money -- I don't think he wanted to fool with it. He was in the investment business, real estate business.

FUCHS: Investment business?

HINDE: Yes. He used to own that old St. Regis Hotel, at the corner of Linwood and Paseo, on the northeast corner. I always liked Vrooman. He was a heck of a nice guy. He was a friend of mine; I wasn't in the same faction as he was, but he was always for me in everything I wanted.

FUCHS: Did you know Stayton who was, I imagine; a friend of Barr's?

HINDE: General Stayton, you mean?

FUCHS: Yes.

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HINDE: Yes, he lived right down here on the corner. Oh, I've known Stayton all my life. He was the second captain I ever had in the National Guard way back in 1910 or '11. Then he was Captain of Battery "C" when we organized that. Oh yes, I've known him all my life.

FUCHS: He was well-liked and generally accorded to be a competent engineer?

HINDE: Oh yes, he was a good engineer. He was an arrogant old devil -- egotistical. He was pretty smart, but very egotistical. Old man William Southern, used to be editor of the *Examiner*, lived right over on the next street, and he was about the same way. He was egotistical and I used to get a kick out of them. I'd pick up old Stayton down here going to town and I'd say something about Southern. Stayton would say, "Now, Bill's a fine fellow but he's so damned egotistical." And I'd get old Southern the next day and I'd bring Stayton up, and he'd say the same thing; and they were both right. And both of them were efficient and successful men. I always thought a lot of both of them.

FUCHS: He was associated, of course, with Veatch on....?

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HINDE: Yes. At the time Truman appointed him on that, he was the City member of the board of control of the Kansas City Transit Company. I've forgotten what they called it -- it used to be the Metropolitan Street Car Company and then they changed it. I don't know what the name was at that time, but they had a board of control. I think the company had so many men on there, and the mortgagee had a man, and the city had a man and Stayton was the city member on the board. He was on that board for several years. Then he spent about four years on this road system, he and Veatch, Tom Veatch. Yes, he was a good engineer; he had quite a reputation. He belonged to the American Society of Engineers.

FUCHS: I guess the major campaign discussion in 1926 revolved around the roads and the road program.

HINDE: Yes, the road program and the courthouse. The courthouses -- they had built them about the same time, too. They had a bond issue to build a new courthouse in Kansas City and remodel this one up here. And that's another deal that Truman put over, and there never was any scandal on the building of those courthouses -- never any question about it.

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FUCHS: Was there any talk at all that you recall about the road program, other than this one grand jury investigation?

HINDE: No, I think that was all there was and that was just political.

FUCHS: That was instigated, you think, by the Republicans?

HINDE: Yes, no doubt about it. As I said, they've got, I've forgotten how many miles -- seems like thirty-two miles -- more than they agreed on, and they had over \$200,000 left in the fund. They got everything accomplished that they said they would do, when they asked for this bond issue. The reason I say everybody was satisfied, was because the first bond issue was for six and a half million dollars, and then they asked for three and a half million more for more roads and that went over with a big majority, too. There was no question about it passing. So, evidently they had confidence in the handling of that fund or they wouldn't have voted that additional three and a half million dollars.

FUCHS: Then there probably wasn't, or was there, any of this talk, "Well, somebody's getting rich off of this."

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HINDE: Oh well, yes, I suppose you'd hear some of that. No matter who -- if it had been God Almighty in charge of it, somebody would have accused Him.

FUCHS: Was it common knowledge that Pendergast had said that he would leave Mr. Truman alone, or was that something that came out in later years?

HINDE: There was a thing came up on that deal, these contractors went down to Pendergast and commenced crabbing about not getting any contracts and -- I think I told you part of this before - - Pendergast called Harry in and asked him about it. And Harry told him, "Mr. Pendergast, you told me to run this thing on the up and up, and whoever was the lowest and best bidder would get the contract. These boys haven't got the low bid and it's going out of state and that's the way it's going to be."

So, Pendergast said, "All right, Harry, that's good enough for me." He called these contractors in and said, "If you boys want this work, bid on it properly and at the right figure and you'll get it 'cause I can't do anything with Truman. He's the pigheadest man in Eastern Jackson County."

That was the end of it. They never had any more trouble about it.

FUCHS: Was that publicized at the time?

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HINDE: No, Harry told me about that. No, it didn't come out in the papers, but the fact that none of them got any contracts except, I think, this fellow Ross (I'm pretty sure I'm right on that) got one little contract...

FUCHS: Do you recall any incidents during the '26 campaign that stand out?

HINDE: No, I don't know of anything in particular. After he'd been in there for a while, it was just routine electing him. He didn't have much trouble from then on. No, there's one thing about

Truman -- during all his political career here in Jackson County, especially, there never was any logical reason for them to question his honesty because he was absolutely honest in everything he did. I think the county got everything it was entitled to, and he certainly didn't get anything because he never had any money. He was broke when he went to the Senate. He didn't have a dime and he had all the opportunity in the world; he could have walked out of that office with a million dollars on that road contract. You know that would have been the easiest thing in the world. He could have gone to one of these contractors and said, "I want ten per cent." Why you know they would have given it to him like a flash, but he came out of there with nothing.

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FUCHS: In 1930, he was elected again to his second four year term as Presiding judge. Was there anything that came up in that campaign?

HINDE: No, I don't remember of anything. You know, I say that after that one time in '24 when he got beat, after that it was just kind of a routine. He'd come up and they'd re-elect him. There wasn't anybody who filed against him who amounted to anything.

FUCHS: There was a slight movement started, I believe, in Odessa, Missouri (by I suppose, the newspaper) to boost him for governor in 1930. Do you recall...?

HINDE: Yes, there was some talk of that, but it didn't amount to very much.

FUCHS: Did you ever speak to him about it?

HINDE: No, I don't remember that I ever did -- probably did, but I've forgotten. Oh, I think he could have run for governor if he'd wanted it very badly. What was that old man's name down there -- old Adair, wasn't it who run the paper at Odessa? I think if the publisher's name was Adair, he was quite an old-time political editor.

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This Adair Park is named after some of his ancestors.

You know, Harry Truman was the father of this park system in Jackson County. He was the one who instigated that. Of course, the time I had it, he didn't have any money to spend on it. All the money we ever got was just allocated out of a general revenue fund. Now they've got a three percent park tax, you know. They get an ungodly amount of money on it now. They're doing a beautiful job down there at that Jacomo Park.

FUCHS: You served as superintendent of county parks?

HINDE: Yes, they called me secretary of the park board. (I believe that was what my title was), but I was in charge of construction -- in fact I was everything. They had an honorary park board that served without pay. They didn't pay any attention to it. Herb Woolf of Woolf Brothers, he was one of them and a fellow by the name of -- a real estate man over in...

FUCHS: What about a man named H. H. Halvorson?

HINDE: That's the guy I was trying to...

FUCHS: Mr. Truman, according to the newspapers, brought him

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out as his personal candidate for chairman of the county park board.

HINDE: Yes, he was chairman of the park board when I worked for them. He was a real estate man in Kansas City. I don't know whatever became of him -- I haven't heard of him for years. I guess he's still alive.

FUCHS: How did Mr. Truman happen to be so strong for him?

HINDE: I don't know what the connection was -- they were friends. But he didn't amount to anything, just like Herb Woolf. I never heard of Herb Woolf. The only time I saw Herb Woolf was when the park department made these gold badges for the members of the park board and I took one down to Herb Woolf. He thanked me for it and said the only other one he had was a courtesy badge from the police department, and the first time he wore it downtown he got arrested.

FUCHS: Well then, actually, the position you occupied was similar to the one William Landahl has now as operating head of the parks. And you held that from 1927 until...?

HINDE: 1934.

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FUCHS: 1927 until 1934.

HINDE: We didn't have any money to operate on; we were just working on a shoe string. Of course, they're really developing a wonderful park system in this county. It's wonderful.

FUCHS: Yes, it is. Mr. Truman ran for senator in '34 and was elected. Do you have any recollections of that campaign?

HINDE: That was in '34 -- no, it was just about a normal campaign. He didn't have too much trouble that year. He had more trouble the next year.

FUCHS: Was that the campaign where he got involved in an incident with you at the hotel? The story you told...?

HINDE: That hotel deal happened back when he was county judge. He got a mysterious call over there one day. Somebody wanted to see him over at the hotel, and I happened in and he wanted to know if I'd ride over with him, which I did. We went up in this hotel and knocked on this door and there was some beautiful blonde opened the door in a negligee, and he took off down the hall;

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that's the last I saw of him until he got back down to the lobby. We always figured some bird was trying to frame him on some kind of a deal, you know. That was when he was still county judge. He just took right on out.

You know that's one thing about that fellow. I've been around Legion conventions with him. He'd have his own room there, naturally, everybody would kind of gravitate to his room. If some fellow brought a woman in there, or his wife even, I've seen him pick up his hat and coat and take out of there and that would be the last you'd see of him until those women left. He just didn't want any women around his room in a hotel. And I've seen him do that dozens of times. He had a phobia on it, and I guess he was right. Of course, he may have been thinking about that deal we got into that day.

FUCHS: What hotel was that?

HINDE: That was the old Baltimore, there at 12th and Baltimore. It used to set on the northeast corner of 12th and Baltimore, right catty-cornered from the Muehlebach. But, I think some bird framed that on him -- thought they would

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get him in a compromising position. I think that was still when he was county judge; he may have been running for senator then, I don't remember. But that campaign was a pretty normal campaign, but the next time he ran, that was the rough one. They put Stark (ex-Governor Stark) and this fellow Milligan against him and they pulled some pretty rough stuff.

FUCHS: I believe he ran against Milligan's brother in '34.

HINDE: Yes, "Tuck" Milligan. Then Maurice ran the next time. That was in '44, I guess, wasn't it?

FUCHS: 1940.

HINDE: Yes, 1940. It was rough, I'll tell you. I remember the election night, I was uptown with him, and he asked me if I'd take him over to Kansas City. And I said, "Sure." We drove over there and went down to see Jim Pendergast, and there wasn't anybody in Jim's office except John Cook, one of the circuit judges; and then we went on down to his office, which was in the Federal building and nobody was there. Everybody figured he'd been beaten. It first came out that he'd been beaten. So, I took him on home, and at that time he was about

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seven or eight thousand votes behind, according to the radio. I drove in the back driveway and let him out, and he said, "Well, Hinie, I guess this is one time I'm beaten."

And I said, "Aw, it's a long time till morning; you're not beat yet." I figured he was, too, to be right honest with you I figured he was gone. And long about two or three o'clock in the morning

St. Louis turned loose some returns it had been holding back, and he won the election. But, I tell you when I let him out that night, I thought he was beaten, too; because I'll tell you, they took after him.

FUCHS: Did you stay up that night -- did you hear it change?

HINDE: No, I went to bed when I came home.

FUCHS: Do you think he did?

HINDE: Yes, he did. Yes, he sat up and listened to it.

FUCHS: He did stay up, so he knew before morning that he...

HINDE: Yes, he knew before morning that he was all right. But she looked pretty rough there. That was about eleven or twelve o'clock when we got back up there. But

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that's politics you know. It looked like he was losing. Now, if he had been winning, both of those places would have been jammed full of people. But they thought he was losing and they all went home; they didn't have the time to sit around -- that's your luck of politics, of course. Everybody wants to be on a winner.

The last time (1948) he ran nobody thought he had a chance. I know Rog Sermon wrote and begged him to get out of it, and I think I wrote him a letter or two. 'Course he didn't pay any attention to us. Bennett Clark wanted him to get out -- they had it arranged where he was going into the Interstate Commerce Commission at about fifteen or twenty thousand a year. But he was going to run -- he said he had to run. So election day we went out to Rockwood Country Club -- Rog Sermon had a little dinner for him out there -- and I sat next to him and said, "Harry, are you going to win this election?"

And he said, "You're damned right I'm going to win this election." So, there was a fellow up town here -- one of these Childer's boys who run this Childer's Prescription Shop -- Bud, he's a Republican; Petey, the one who runs this one out here in Englewood, he's a Democrat. Bud was betting eight to one against Truman.

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Well, I didn't take any of it because I thought -- hell, I figured he was going to lose. So after he told me, "Yes, I'm going to win -- now, you watch," I just slipped out to the phone and I called my secretary up at the post office.

I said, "Listen, you get a hold of Bud Childers," and I said, "you can tell him you're Charlie Binaggio's secretary or whatever you want to tell them, but get me a hundred dollars worth of that eight to one money."

Well, she chased him all over the county -- he lived on a farm down here in the country -- never could get him and I never got my hundred down.

So I went up to the Harpie Club that night and there was a fellow up there named Lewis -- good friend of Harry's; and he got pretty tight and he'd bet a hundred dollars on that guy, and he was sitting there with his ear to the radio. And I went in and says, "Bill, how's the election."

"Oh," he says, "it looks terrible."

And I says, "Well, I'll take half of your bet."

And he says, "You will like hell -- I'm going to win eight hundred or lose a hundred and you aren't going to get any of it." And by God, he won it.

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Harry was confident, you know, and he told me the reason. When he started out from Washington, Eddie Jacobson was on the train with him -- or Eddie told me this, Harry didn't. And he asked him, "Mr. President, why do you think you're going to win?"

"Well," he says, "when we get out here to a certain town, I want you to watch. " And he said they got in that town about six o'clock in the morning, and there was at least five thousand people down there in that railroad yard waiting for his train. He went out and they were applauding, and he said, "Now you wait until we get a paper. We'll get a paper later on down the road, and they'll tell people that I had a very few people there." They picked up a paper at La Porte, Indiana, I think, and it said clear across, "Five Hundred People" at this other town (I've forgotten whether it was Indianapolis or something) -- "Five Hundred People Out To See President Truman Go Through." And Eddie said if there was one person, there was five thousand. He said it was the damndest mob you ever saw at six o'clock in the morning. And he said that held good all the way to Independence. He said every town they went through -- and Harry says, "Now, Eddie, that's the reason I'm going to

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win, because everybody is against me but the people." And that's what won. He's a pretty astute politician.

FUCHS: What was the general consensus around Independence -- friends of yours? Did most of them not feel so confident as Mr. Truman?

HINDE: Oh no, we didn't -- none of us felt confident, no. Like I said, Rog Sermon wrote him two or three letters begging him to take -- I think Bennett Clark, who was then a senator, said he'd help him get a job on the Interstate Commerce Commission. I think they appoint them for several years. I've forgotten how long. But he said, "No, I've got to run, whether I get a vote or not, I've got run to vindicate myself; because everybody would say, 'Well, he was scared to run.'" Which they would have said. No, I was scared to death, I thought he was going to lose. [This reference was to the 1940 campaign for senator. See below.]

FUCHS: Do you know anyone who really thought -- this was in '48 -- he was going to win and always talked it up around here?

HINDE: There was none of them around here. And old Tom Evans didn't think so either, regardless of what he said.

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Tom Evans didn't think he was going to win anymore than the rest of us did, I'll tell you that. I don't think anybody around here, that I know of that was interested in politics, thought he would win. But, by golly, he had the confidence.

FUCHS: Now, the Pendergast trial and sentencing was really around '39, wasn't it and that was just prior to his running for senator.

HINDE: Running for senator -- yes. And they didn't want him running for senator either, on that account.

FUCHS: Who do you mean?

HINDE: That is, the boys around here that were interested in politics. They thought that would backfire on him on account of Pendergast. That was when he said that he had to run to vindicate himself, rather than this '48. I kind of got my dates mixed up. That was also when -- I was telling you about Bob Hannegan and the postmaster down there at St. Louis -- they were against him until Rog Sermon put the heat to them. They were going to cut his throat down there.

FUCHS: He didn't say that he had to run in '48, I mean, it

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was just a foregone conclusion, is that right?

HINDE: Yes. No, I was wrong on those dates. He just figured he was going to run.

FUCHS: Well, do you know anyone who tried to discourage him in '48?

HINDE: No. Unless somebody back in Washington -- of course, I don't know anything about that, but around here, he didn't pay any particular attention to us around here.

FUCHS: Well the letters that you and Sermon wrote then were in the 1940 campaign.

HINDE: That was in '40, yes. But, he had his confidence. You know, I still say he was one of the most astute politicians that this country's ever had because he knows what's going on, and he knew how to handle it. You talk about Roosevelt being such an astute politician; I think this bird was a better politician than Roosevelt, because anybody come out of that '48 campaign like he did, he had something on the ball -- I don't know what it was. Because, Roosevelt was a wonderful man. I'm not discounting him any.

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FUCHS: There was a farewell dinner when Mr. Truman was elected in 1934 by the citizens of Independence. Were you at that dinner?

HINDE: Yes, I guess I was, but I don't remember much about that, though. I imagine I was there. Where did they have it? Up here at this auditorium?

FUCHS: Well now, I can't say for certain. I know such a dinner was held.

HINDE: I don't remember, but I imagine if there was, I was there. When he was elected senator, you mean?

FUCHS: It was a farewell dinner before he left for Washington and quite a number of different people around town spoke about various phases of his life.

HINDE: Oh I probably was there, I don't remember.

FUCHS: You don't have any distinct recollection of that?

HINDE: No, I remember several dinners; but the last one we had was when they brought that bell here from France.

FUCHS: You went to that?

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HINDE: I was there at that dinner, yes.

FUCHS: Then he went into the Senate in '35 and you were appointed postmaster by him and you think that was, perhaps, his first appointment?

HINDE: I think that was the first appointment he made, yes.

FUCHS: There was no opposition to the confirmation of that?

HINDE: No, never had any opposition at all I don't think anybody else applied for it. Yes there was, too. Salisbury had a man who applied for it. A fellow by the name of Johnson. He was a tailor. Salisbury put his name up, and one other fellow -- fellow by the name of Holtzen, I believe, he filed. Harry had already promised me.

FUCHS: Do you think Mr. Truman and Salisbury were still friendly at that time?

HINDE: No, they weren't. That's the reason he put his Johnson up, you know. He knew Harry was for me and he thought he'd get this boy Johnson and muddy up the water a little bit, but he didn't have my luck.

Oh yes, there was another fellow by the name of

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Short -- June Short. He ran a foundry over here; he was after it. He was a Milligan man. That was before Harry was elected. He met me up on the street here one day and said, "Now, I don't want you to get mad at me. I'm going to get that job as postmaster up there."

And I said, "Now June, if you do, that will be fine; I'll be the first man to congratulate you, if you make it. "

They hadn't even considered him. You have a lot of fun out of politics, but you wonder some times why you mess with it. The worst thing about politics now is that you can't depend on anybody. I'm talking about local politics. You can't depend on anybody when they tell you anything. It used to be -- like I said about old T. J. Pendergast -- if you went over there and talked to him about something he would say, "Yes, I'll do that," you could come home and go to sleep and the old man would do it. If he told you "No," he'd tell you "No. " But now, you don't know whether they're going to be for you or not.

Just like when I filed for county judge up here

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that time here last December. I didn't want to file and I did. I got tangled up with the Shaffer boy [James W. Shaffer], and as far as I'm concerned Jim's a nice fellow. He's always been nice to me, but I was never connected with him in any way. He wanted me to file to keep somebody else from filing. Well, after I got to thinking about the thing and thinking about the setup and checked into it a little bit, I wanted to get out of the damned thing. I'd talked to some of these other boys who had been my friends. It was a Sermon organization; I never belonged to his organization. I talked to them and they just brushed me off; they wouldn't talk to me. It made me kind of sore and I thought, "well, I'll just file anyway," because I think anybody can beat this guy Snyder. He's no good. But after I got into the thing I decided, well, here old Rufus Burrus is a darned good friend of mine -- lives next door to me; he and Snyder are brothers-in-law, and why get in any fracas for something that would give me a lot of headaches? So I thought the best thing for me to do was to get out. I just withdrew. I could have beaten him -- I'd bet a thousand dollars I could beat the sucker. No, I'm tickled to death that

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I'm out of it, Jim. Just like Harry Truman says, they worry you to death.

FUCHS: Do you recall anything of the campaign in '44 that stands out in your memory, when he was running for Vice-President with Roosevelt?

HINDE: Well, the only thing that I can remember about that deal -- why of course, he went to Chicago, and Frank Wallace. (Did you ever know Frank, his brother-in-law lived right back of him?) Frank and I were mighty good friends, and Frank -- it came out in the paper that they were thinking about running Harry for Vice-President -- came up and said, "I want you to call him up and tell him not to do it."

I said, "Frank, you call him up -- I'm not going to call him up!" I says, "He'll be telling me to go take a jump."

He said, "I don't want him to run for that."

I said, "Well, you call him up."

But, they went ahead and he was nominated and I'll never forget when he got back here, he used to wear -- I don't know whether he wears that big Masonic ring yet or not -- but anyway, he pulled it off (he had a knack where

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he'd pull that off and tap it on the desk) and he looked at me and said, "Hinie, what if that old man would die, wouldn't I be in one hell of a shape."

And I said, "Brother, you sure would." And it wasn't but a few months you know. I never will forget that. He didn't want that job.

FUCHS: Why do you think Frank Wallace came forward like that?

HINDE: Well he just didn't want him to take it. He wanted him to stay a senator. He just figured, like everybody did, that the Vice-President -- you just were buried when you got that job. That's the way it used to be, you know. And he just didn't want him to take it.

FUCHS: In other words, he thought he would be giving him good advice for his future career.

HINDE: Of course old Frank, he wouldn't call him, and I knew darned well that I wasn't going to call him -- shoot!

FUCHS: Did you ever visit Mr. Truman when he was senator in Washington?

HINDE: No, I never did get back there at all. I never did

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go back. Either when he was President or senator. I started once and then I decided that I wouldn't go. Everybody was running back there. I don't go out there (to the Truman Library) once in a month. So many people just trot out there, you know, just worry him to death; and as I say, if I could sit down and talk to him comfortably, I'd like to go out maybe once every two or three weeks because I enjoy talking to him. You're under too much of a strain -- shoot!

FUCHS: Is there anything that stands out in your memory during his career as senator or President that might be interesting to illustrate his character?

HINDE: No -- well, a little funny thing happened once way back yonder when he was a senator. No, when he was President, by golly. I needed a truck, so I went over to the head inspector over

here in Kansas City, and I told him, I says, I've got to have a mail truck." I had an old Essex up there that was worn out -- only one truck in those days.

He said "you're not going to get it," and said, "the only way you'd get it would be to write the President of the United States. He's the only man who could

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give it to you. If you ever tell him what I told you, I'll tell him you're a liar."

And I said, "O.K."

So I came back home and sat down, and I wrote him a letter and I said, "I've got to have a mail truck." I wrote direct to him.

In two or three days, the old Fourth Assistant Postmaster General called me and. says, "Listen the President tells me you need a truck out in Independence."

I said, "Yes sir, I need two trucks."

"Well," he says, "I'll tell you, if you promise not to take the President joy riding in that truck, I'll order the postmaster in Kansas City to give you two trucks." And by golly, I got two trucks.

Shortly after that I met Jess Donaldson, who was the postmaster general then, over here at a postmaster's convention in Kansas City. Somebody introduced me to him and he said, "Oh, you're that bird that wrote the President personally to get two mail trucks."

And I said, "Yes sir, I was and I got them." And he laid back and laughed. I often have thought about the idea of an old country postmaster calling the President of the United States to get a truck. But

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this old inspector in charge over there -- an old fellow by the name of Halleck -- he got the biggest laugh out of that. I called him up and said, "Boy, I did what you told me to and I got my trucks."

FUCHS: Well, this is a first class post office isn't it.

HINDE: Oh yes.

FUCHS: Was it then?

HINDE: Yes. But you know Jim, there was one thing I tried never to do while I was postmaster -- take advantage of the friendship I had with Harry Truman. And I've had the inspectors come in my office and tell me -- I know George Carpenter, who was inspector in charge over there before they had a change in administration -- he was a Republican, but he was a darned good friend of mine. He says, "You know in all the years we came out here, I never saw you yet take advantage

of your friendship with the President." He said, "That's one reason I like you." And I think it was, too, because I never took advantage of him. And I'll tell you, there is a lot of these people who are not as well acquainted with him as I am, Jim, who do take advantage of him. I could

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name you several, if that tape thing wasn't running.

FUCHS: Well, that's all right. You can close that part.

HINDE: But, it aggravates you so. You know there are a lot of us around here, who have been with Harry Truman politically ever since he got into politics; but when he got to be a senator, why, he had more friends than you ever saw. But where were they when he needed them most, they weren't there. The same way in '40 and the same way in '48. I know one of them who was very active. They wanted him to raise some money, and he thought it was a pretty convenient time for him to go to the hospital to have a little operation.

FUCHS: Who was that?

HINDE: I wouldn't tell you that, Jim.

FUCHS: That's for history.

HINDE: I know it! But it might backfire and -- anyway, he didn't get out and hustle, but he's been very active lately, the last few years. I haven't got any use for a guy like that. I'm either going down with a bird or going up with him.

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FUCHS: Any other problems that came up while you were postmaster, that the President was able to help you with?

HINDE: No, that's the only time I ever asked him for anything. We got along fine. Of course, after he got out and the Republicans got in, they filed those charges on me in '53, he helped me. He helped me a lot. He even had old Harry Darby, who's ex-senator from Kansas -- he went to bat for me. I know I went over there to talk to him as soon as I got those charges, and he said, "Let's go over to the Kansas City Club for lunch."

So we went over there and Tom Evans was there. And after we got through talking, Harry called Evans and we went in the other room and he let him read those charges they had on me. And he said, "You got any good Republican friends that can help this fellow?"

Tom says, "Sure -- Harry Darby."

Harry says, "He's been wanting to do something for you." Of course, he did it on Harry's account, not on mine because Harry Darby doesn't know me -- or didn't at that time. He says, "You see if you can get a hold of him, see what he can do for this boy."

So I came on home, and I hadn't hit my office good

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until my phone rang, and it was Harry Darby's secretary. She wanted me to read the letter I got from the department to her -- said Mr. Darby was calling Washington. I read it to her, and it wasn't but a few days until I got a letter saying that they had decided to hold the charges in abeyance. That was the last I ever heard of it. But Harry Darby, he was a finance man for the Republican party out here -- he raised all the finance; and he sure went to bat for me and I appreciated it. But of course, at that time (I met him afterwards) I didn't know him; he was doing it for Harry Truman because Harry had done him several favors. He was an old Army man, too. But when I got the trucks, that was the only time I asked him for anything while he was President.

FUCHS: Did Mr. Truman, as senator, take pretty active part in politics back here, behind the scenes?

HINDE: While he was senator?

FUCHS: Yes, did he have pretty much to say what went on in the county?

HINDE: Sure, he carried a lot of weight but he didn't get too aggressive in it. Of course, he had a lot to say

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under cover or behind the scenes. But he didn't take too much active interest in it while he was senator, that is, local politics I mean. Of course, we all knew where he was.

FUCHS: It was charged in his first term that he was errand boy or office boy for Tom Pendergast?

HINDE: Well, that was baloney. If it hadn't been for Harry Truman, Tom Pendergast wouldn't have gotten along as well as he did in the last few years, I'll tell you that. Because Harry Truman had the confidence of the people here -- they knew he was honest. And Pendergast knew he was honest and he respected him for it, and I think that put confidence in them. No, "errand boy" -- I've heard that -- that's just bunch of hooey, because I know very well that Tom Pendergast didn't try to tell Harry how to run that court -- what to do. Of course, he might have gotten some jobs, naturally, you expect that; but I mean, the operation of the court. Pendergast didn't tell him what he should do and shouldn't do and all that stuff. Nobody did, he did that himself. No he wasn't any errand boy for T. J. Pendergast, and I don't think Pendergast thought of him that way. He had

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a lot of respect for Harry Truman.

Pendergast wouldn't have gotten in the jam that he did, I don't believe, if he hadn't been slipping mentally. He'd had this cancer, you know, and he was worried to death over that -- that was one of those colostomies, I believe they call it, where they go through your side, and you wear a

rubber bag for your elimination. And that had been working on him, and I know Harry always thought he was slipping mentally when he got into all that stuff. When he got to betting on all those races, why he'd bet \$25,000 a crack, they tell me, on one race. He was too smart a man, if he'd been in his normal condition. Then he got messed up in that insurance thing which was caused by lack of money, I imagine, that he'd lost. He'd lost a fortune on those race horses, you know.

But, he never influenced Harry too much on the operation of his office. When he went back there as senator, they came out two or three times that he got word to vote a certain way and he voted exactly opposite to what they said he was going to vote, that is, the way T. J. Pendergast was supposed to want him to vote.

I think on the vote for the leader of the senate

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there, that is, the floor leader or whatever they call it (I've forgotten who was running), there was two of them running, and Harry was for Pat Harrison.

FUCHS: That was when Barkley was against Pat Harrison.

HINDE: Is that it? Well, he went for Pat Harrison, and I think Pendergast wanted him to go for Barkley; but afterwards he and Barkley became very good friends. That was one of the times when they claimed Pendergast told him what to do, and he did opposite to what he wanted him to do. So I don't think -- of course, I'm guessing -- because I never asked him (you couldn't ask a man that), but I don't think Pendergast ever dictated him what to do.

FUCHS: You said that you never did get to the White House when he was President. Do you recall anything about what occurred when he came back to Independence several times when he was President -- any interesting events?

HINDE: Oh I don't know of anything -- no, I don't know that there was anything particularly interesting about it -- of course, we got together with him. He came up to the Harpie Club once or twice when he was President.

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FUCHS: He did?

HINDE: Yes, had his Secret Service men all around. I know *Look* [This refers to photographers for the *Look Magazine*.], when he was elected President, *Look* came there one time -- came down to my office, rather, and wanted to go up there and take some pictures of the Harpie Club. Well, if you've ever seen the Harpie Club it would look like a north end saloon of some kind. All they had up there was a poker table and an ice box and a beer pump. That was about all that was there -- and chairs; because that was all we did, play poker once a month. So, he wanted me to take him up there and show him this club and I wouldn't do it.

"Well," he said, "I'll get in."

And I said, "I bet you don't because if you try it you're going to get thrown out of that thing."

They never did get a picture of the inside of the club. Why, good gosh, that would have been pitiful.

FUCHS: Was this when it was above Buntings?

HINDE: No, that was when it was over on the east side there, next to Bundschu's. Those guys, they tried their best to get up there and take a picture of that.

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FUCHS: It must have been there for a long time, then?

HINDE: Oh yes, we were there for, Lord, I don't know how long -- up until just four or five years ago.

FUCHS: That was your first location, then, and then you wen to...?

HINDE: We moved across the street and then we moved back. Then we moved out, and we moved down on South Main Street in the last four or five years they've been down there. They've got a little building back of that cleaner there on South Main Street fixed up. They just go down there and play poker. That's all it amounts to, a place to play.

FUCHS: After Mr. Truman was back and the Library was built, I believe you went over there with your sister one time?

HINDE: Yes, I took she and her husband over there. She hadn't seen him for years. She lives in Wheaton, Illinois; it's a suburb of Chicago. She hadn't seen Harry for years; so I took her into his office to see him, and she wanted to see the Library. We started out and he started out with us. He took her all over the place. And when we got through, she says, "Well, I can well see why he's a

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successful politician. If he takes that much trouble showing everybody this Library, as he showed me, why no wonder he's popular." Of course, he doesn't go with everybody that way.

FUCHS: Was that an older sister of yours?

HINDE: No, she's a younger sister of mine, she's eleven years younger than I am. She's lived in Chicago for about thirty years.

FUCHS: He didn't know her too well, then?

HINDE: No, she was just a little girl when Harry -- well about fifteen years old -- of course she married -- but she was away at the university -- she's lived up there, I think, thirty years now. So he wasn't acquainted with her. Oh, he knew her, but he wasn't around her any.

But boy, they're red-hot Democrats. They live right in a nest of Republicans up there in that town of Wheaton, you know. It's an old steel town. The Garys and the Wheatons and all of them mixed up in the steel industry up there; and it's a town that's got a lot of money in it, but they're going to keep it. It's just a typical suburban town, there's nothing in it. I wouldn't live in it if they'd give it to me. But, it's strongly Republican.

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There's a lot of money there, and they sit right in a nest of them.

FUCHS: Did you know this Victor Messall that was...?

HINDE: Yes, I knew Vic. He was quite a character.

FUCHS: Was he a local man?

HINDE: No, he came from Joplin, and he'd been a congressman's secretary. I don't know how Harry ever got ahold of that fellow, but he'd been back there as a secretary to some congressman. I can't think of his name. I want to say Clark, but it wasn't Clark. But anyway, he hired him to go back there as his secretary, and he stayed with him several years. Then he opened up a public relations office as a lobbyist for somebody, and I guess Vic really went to town -- they tell me he did all right.

I don't know what happened. I know one time when the President was over here at the Muehlebach, I met Vic Messall downstairs, and he wanted me to ask the President if he'd see him. I asked the President and the President said, "No!" That was all that was said. I don't know why. He never did get in to see him, and I didn't ask any questions.

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I don't know what happened between he and Vic, but something happened there and he let him go.

FUCHS: What about Bill Boyle, did you know him?

HINDE: I just knew Bill -- I wasn't acquainted with Bill that is, I just knew him to speak to him. I knew his brother but I didn't know him. I think Bill was a pretty good secretary. Of course Vaughn -- did he come in after Boyle or before Boyle? -- after Boyle, I guess? Of course, I think Harry Truman kept him around for laughs more than anything. He was a pretty witty sort of a bird. He was a good mixer. And there's a fellow the press took after every time they had a chance, they'd tell about what a booze fly he was. Well, Harry Vaughan never took a drink. He didn't smoke, and he taught a Sunday school class in the Episcopal church there in Alexandria, Virginia. But, they'd have about the drinking parties he'd be on, come out in the paper, and I don't think Harry Vaughan ever took a drink. Of course, he was one of the Missouri gang, they

called it, around the White House there. He was all right. He was a happy-go-lucky sort of a bird, and he had a lot

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of wit about him; I think that's one reason Harry liked to keep him around, he kept him laughing. He'd pull off some stunt. He came back here one time right after he was made President and Rog Sermon -- lived right up the street here -- had a dinner for the old bunch out of the 129th Field Artillery. Vaughan came out with him and he was a colonel when he got on the plane, and Harry promoted him up in the air. He said he was the only colonel ever promoted to brigadier general five or six thousand feet off the ground. I got an old picture -- let me see if I can find them? It had all the old officers of the old 129th Field Artillery, and then his press secretary, Charlie Ross, and Vaughan and the Naval aide, Vardaman, and some other fellow. I don't know who he was.

FUCHS: This was where now?

HINDE: Over at Rog Sermon's house.

FUCHS: Where did he live?

HINDE: Right up the street here. That long brick on the east side of the street.

FUCHS: On Proctor?

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HINDE: Yes. He had a dinner there that night, and I can't remember what year it was, but it was shortly after he went in as President. I don't know what the devil I did with those pictures.

FUCHS: Well, unless you have something else you think we ought to cover, that's about all I have to ask, at least at this time.

HINDE: Well, I don't know of anything, Jim.

FUCHS: Do you think we've covered the ground pretty well?

HINDE: Well, I hope so. I hope it works out all right.

FUCHS: Thank you very much, Mr. Hinde.

HINDE: All right.

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