

Oral History Interview
with
EDWARD T. FOLLIARD

White House correspondent for the *Washington Post*, 1923-67.

Washington, D.C.
August 20, 1970

by Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library

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HESS: Mr. Folliard, to begin, we're primarily interested in your relationship with President Truman. Just what was that relationship and when did it begin?

FOLLIARD: Well, I was the White House correspondent for the *Washington Post* for many years. I really began covering the White House for the *Post* in the Coolidge administration, not as a steady thing, but at least I covered Mr. Coolidge's press conferences.

HESS: One question on that, sir. Did you find Mr. Coolidge as silent as they say -- "Silent Cal?"

FOLLIARD: Well, I never was an intimate of Mr. Coolidge, I don't know how he was in private, but people who were his intimates said he could sometimes become downright garrulous. But at any rate, I then covered President Hoover for most of his administration. Then I covered Roosevelt. I covered Roosevelt steadily from 1941 until

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the autumn of 1944 when the *Washington Post* sent me to Europe to cover the war. Then I came back to Washington after the victory in Europe. I came back right after V-E Day. After a vacation down at Hot Springs, Virginia, I was reassigned to the White House. By that time, Roosevelt was dead, and Mr. Truman had taken over the Presidency. Charlie Ross who was then White House Press Secretary, took me in and introduced me to Mr. Truman.

HESS: Was this the first time you had ever met him?

FOLLIARD: Really it was, I suppose. I had seen him when he was Senator Truman presiding over the Truman Committee looking into the war effort. I saw him at least once when as Vice President he called on President Roosevelt. I think they had lunch out on the south grounds of the White House, but as you know, President Roosevelt saw very little of Vice President Truman, and I always thought it was a shocking thing that Roosevelt didn't confide more in Truman. For example, it later came out that he never ever told Truman about the atomic bomb, the work being done on it. But that's beside the point.

When Charlie Ross took me in to introduce me to President Truman, I told him that I was going to be covering him from there on. That was really my first

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meeting with him. It started off very well. He told me he had been reading my war dispatches from Europe. That made me feel pretty good.

HESS: Regarding Mr. Truman's press conferences that he held, he usually held a press conference every Thursday, what do you recall about the press conferences, and do you think that Mr. Truman's handling of them was adequate?

FOLLIARD: Yes, I don't remember that President Truman ever ducked any questions unless it may have been something involving national security. He always answered questions readily and adequately.

HESS: Sometimes, he was accused of "shooting from the hip," answering without fully thinking about what he was saying. Did you find that to be true?

FOLLIARD: Yes, that remark about his "shooting from the hip," it meant he just fired in a wild sort of way. I got to thinking about that one time. I remember my early movie heroes who shot from the hip, William S. Hart and others. They usually shot the villain right between the eyes from the hip. But it's true that Mr. Truman's was impetuous. There's no question about that. And

sometimes after he had made a statement at a press conference, Charlie Ross, his Press Secretary, had to

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issue what was called a "clarification." But no great harm ever came from any of his shots from the hip, none that I can recall.

HESS: Mr. Truman's first Press Secretary was Charlie Ross. What kind of a man did you find Charles Ross to be?

FOLLIARD: Well, he was a man I admired very much. He was older than me. He had, for many years, been the Washington correspondent of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*. He was a highly-trained newspaperman. Of course, the reason he became White House Press Secretary was that he was not only a man who was well versed in national affairs, and a crackerjack newspaperman, but he had gone to school with Mr. Truman in Independence. In other words, they were very dear friends. Ross was just devoted to Truman and their relationship was much more than boss and subordinate. I remember Truman saying when Ross died, he felt as if he'd lost his right arm, and I'm sure he did. I thought Ross was first-rate as a Press Secretary.

HESS: Mr. Ross died on December 5, 1950. Shortly thereafter, Joseph Short was appointed Press Secretary. What kind of a job did he do in that position?

FOLLIARD: Strangely enough, not a good job, I don't think. He was a great friend of mine, Joe Short.. In our travels

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we would share drawing rooms on trains, and share hotel rooms. But he lost all detachment once he became White House Press Secretary. He got emotionally involved. Take a man that he had been close to as a newspaperman; if he wrote something that Short thought was critical of President Truman, Short blew up. Consequently, he lost a great many of his erstwhile friends. I think nowadays they would use the vernacular and say, "Joe lost his cool," when he became Press Secretary. But he was a grand fellow, and I had to go through the experience of seeing him die on the job. I don't ever recall anything like that.

HESS: Can you tell me about that?

FOLLIARD: He died the same way as Ross, of a heart attack. The only difference was that Charlie died in the White House, Joe at home.

HESS: He died in September of 1952. What do you recall about the events around his death?

FOLLIARD: Well, I just don't know what brought on the heart attack, except that he was under great tension and great pressure. The strange thing is that he suspected that he might have heart

trouble, and he went out to Walter Reed and had a cardiogram made. It showed that he had no heart trouble. A night or two later he was having

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dinner with his family down in Alexandria, Virginia, and he toppled right out of his chair, fell to the floor, dead from a heart attack. So, maybe the cardiogram isn't always a good indicator.

HESS: At that time, Roger Tubby and Irving Perlmeter took over both as Acting Press Secretaries. That was a very important time, because it was during the campaign of 1952. What do you recall of Roger Tubby and Irving Perlmeter?

FOLLIARD: I thought Roger Tubby was the Press Secretary.

HESS: He later had the full title.

FOLLIARD: Permeter was his deputy. I thought Roger Tubby was very good as Press Secretary. He was a very calm fellow, and we got along very well with him.

HESS: Any particular incidents or stories that stand out in your mind that might illustrate how those men carried out their jobs? Take Charles Ross first. Anything that stands out in your mind about Charles Ross? Perhaps dealing with the campaign?

FOLLIARD: I don't know whether I can recall precisely now what happened in connection with one incident in the '48 campaign, but it was very embarrassing and Ross was involved. We were someplace -- oh, what's the name of

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of that resort in Idaho?

HESS: Sun Valley.

FOLLIARD: Sun Valley. We had spent a night there, as I remember, and were to go on the next day. President Truman was to dedicate an airport and Charlie Ross had talked with the mayor of the town, and he got the name of the person for whom the airport had been named. He got it wrong. It was a name that was susceptible to being taken as either masculine or feminine. I wish I could think of it.

HESS: Carey, Idaho was the place

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FOLLIARD: And Charlie Ross misunderstood the mayor over the telephone, and thought it was being named after some young man who died in the war. Well, he gave Mr. Truman the misinformation. When we got to this place, the President started making a speech praising this young man who had given his life for his country. I may be wrong about this, but as it turned out, I think it was a girl who had been killed and killed flying in a plane on a joyride, hedgehopping or something like that. Somebody interrupted Mr. Truman in his speech to tell him about this

mistake, and of course, he was embarrassed. He tried to make the best of it, but it all grew out of poor Charlie Ross' misinformation that he gave to Mr. Truman.

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HESS: And you were there at the time?

FOLLIARD: Oh, yes, and we wrote about it.

HESS: That was during the trip in June of 1948, the so-called "pre-convention trip."

FOLLIARD: Yes, I can tell you some things about that trip. There were two trips Mr. Truman made across the country and back in '48. They really explain his victory. There was nothing flukish about his victory, as so many people think. The victory came out of hard work. I think it was on that trip in June that we went to Omaha and there was a reunion of the...

HESS: 35th Division Association.

FOLLIARD: 35th Division Association, in which Captain Harry Truman had served in World War I in France. Well, as always, he marched with Battery D, and for a city like Omaha, a good-sized crowd turned out downtown along the streets; a crowd of, oh, I suppose, 150,000. Well, that evening, President Truman was to make his speech in some Shriners' hall, I've forgotten the name of it. It's on the outskirts of Omaha, well outside the city. A shockingly small crowd turned out for this speech, and the photographers made pictures of all the empty seats and practically the whole balcony was empty. I remember

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Time magazine played up this picture of the empty hall and attached great significance to it. Some of the reporters attached significance to it. What they overlooked, was that people had seen Mr. Truman on the street that day, marching along with his old Battery D, and they were able to hear him on radio that night, so why bother to go out to this particular hall. As it turned out, of course, it was not significant at all. That's one of the incidents I remember on that trip.

Another was, on the way to Los Angeles, in Fresno, I think, Mr. Truman excoriated some Republican Congressman. He said he was the worst Congressman in the House of Representatives, something like that. Later that day, I was in the press room in the hotel in Los Angeles writing my story, and I felt somebody behind me and I looked around and it was the President. I said, "Oh, Mr. President, I was just writing what you said about Congressman So and So."

He said, "Well, probably, I've re-elected the son-of-a-bitch."

Well, it turned out that the man he had excoriated was defeated. It's too long ago for me to remember names, but I remember the incident very well.

HESS: Not long after the June trip was when the convention

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was held in Philadelphia. Did you go to the convention?

FOLLIARD: Yes, yes, I was there. It was a thriller.

HESS: Did you think that there was a very good chance that the Democratic Party might not re-nominate Mr. Truman that year?

FOLLIARD: Well, as you know, his political stock had been very low all that winter of '47 and the spring of '48. I've forgotten the things that had lowered his political stock, but I know that the Roosevelt boys, Jimmy and Franklin, Jr. were trying to, as the politicians said, "dump him." They wanted Ike, but Ike wanted no part of it. There was a substantial "dump Truman" movement up until the time of the convention, in fact, right through part of the convention. By this time, there had been a revolt against Mr. Truman in the South.

I'd like to interrupt myself here for a moment. A lot of people seemed to think that the civil rights movement began with Roosevelt, and I just don't believe that. He did do something about Federal employment, I've forgotten what it was, but I'd like to remind you that Roosevelt never lost a Southern state in an election. But we did have this revolt against Mr. Truman in the South, because, well, he had appointed a commission to look into the matter of civil rights. He had also started

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integrating the troops in the armed services. At any rate, the South thought, as they would put it, that he was a "nigger-lover" and they couldn't understand why he was doing it, because they knew that his grandparents had fought in the Confederacy. I remember that some Governor in the South called him a "dead Missouri mule."

Anyway, there was this attempt to dump him, and of course, it got nowhere. It might have gotten somewhere had Eisenhower agreed to take the Democratic nomination, but as we learned later he was a Republican at heart. After his nomination, Mr. Truman made an electrifying speech there at the Philadelphia convention.

HESS: Do you recall if there was an effort made by Alben Barkley to get the top spot?

FOLLIARD: No, he was delighted to get the second spot. No, the only man I remember trying to get to first spot was Senator Claude Pepper, "Red" Pepper, and he got nowhere. But even after Mr. Truman got the nomination, people thought that he was a long way from getting the victory in November. I also covered the Republican convention, which nominated Governor Thomas Dewey of New York.

I don't know how to account for it now, but I just made up my mind that Dewey was going to win. I had no

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politics. I wasn't Republican or Democrat, but I got caught up in some chain delusion, and made up my mind somewhere around July that Dewey was going to win, never changed my mind, although I saw the whole campaign as closely as anybody possibly could. I traveled with Mr. Truman most of the campaign, went with Dewey towards the end. I saw the crowds that turned out for Mr. Truman; I heard the cheers. When I went with Dewey I noticed the crowds were smaller, the cheering less enthusiastic, but I still thought Dewey was going to win. I told President Truman about it later.

Oh, I was going to tell you about a little incident on the second trip that President Truman took across the continent in September. Those of us who covered him had a closer relationship with him than we had with any President, because he was always willing to talk to us. He let the Secret Service men know that he liked to talk to us, not to sell us anything but simply because he was a friendly man. So we were getting ready to leave Washington on this September trip, and of course in those days we traveled by train, which in my opinion is the only way to campaign.

HESS: The only way to go.

FOLLIARD: Well, campaigning. And we were standing outside President Truman's private railroad car, it was called the Ferdinand Magellan. His running mate, Senator Alben Barkley, came up to say goodbye to him, and he said, "Mr. President, I want you to go out there and mow them down."

And Mr. Truman said, "Alben, I'm not only going to mow them down, I'm going to give 'em hell."

Well, there was born an expression that became part of the political language of America, a "give 'em hell" campaign. And he did wage that kind of campaign. I'm always looking back on it. I think President Truman won because he worked harder than Dewey. For example, he was in and out of the State of Ohio at least seven times, and don't you think he didn't pick up votes on these trips. At a whistle stop (as Taft sneered), you have all kinds of people turn out. Lots of them have never seen a President before, and in the crowds that gathered at these whistle stops were Democrats, Republicans, and independents, and Mr. Truman was a very effective speaker from the rear platform of his train. Clark Clifford and the others who boast of being his ghostwriters had little to do with these rear platform speeches. These were pure Truman. He talked a kind of language that people wanted to hear, down-to-earth, sparkling with

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humor, and the people were often surprised at his appearance. Somehow, they had gotten an idea from the newspaper photographs they'd seen that he was sort of a gray, very ordinary man who was over his head on this job; when they saw him firing away from the rear platform of that

train, they saw a man, a good-looking man. Mr. Truman always had a good color, and in his own way was very eloquent, particularly talking to crowds such as would turn out at whistle stops.

Well, I mention Ohio, because it would be a good example. As I say, I know he was in and out of Ohio at least seven times on these trips in June and September. I don't think Dewey went there once. I think Dewey took Ohio for granted. Well, Truman carried Ohio by about 7,000 votes margin. I'm not sure of this, but I believe he swayed enough Ohioans to give him the margin in these sorties.

HESS: And as you will recall, during his acceptance speech at the convention, he announced that he was calling the 80th Congress back into special session.

FOLLIARD: Yes.

HESS: And during the campaign he hit out quite hard at the so-called "Do-Nothing 80th Congress." He seemed to make

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the 80th Congress more of a target for his blasts than he did Mr. Dewey himself.

FOLLIARD: Well, I don't know -- that was an astonishing performance. The truth is the 80th Congress was quite a Congress. It did not do the things that he wanted them to do, and I've forgotten now just what they were. I think he wanted price controls, something about housing, things like that all in the domestic field. But the 80th Congress, as you know, authorized the Marshall plan, which I'm sure saved Europe and possibly halted the Communist tide from overrunning all of Europe. That Congress authorized NATO. The idea of NATO came from Senator Arthur Vandenberg who was a Republican, and, oh, the so-called Truman Doctrine, which may have saved Greece and Turkey from being overrun by Communists. It was a great Congress. And yet...

HESS: When you're speaking of foreign affairs, it was a great one, wasn't it?

FOLLIARD: Yes, but he got away with calling it a "do-nothing" Congress. You can call it demagoguery or whatever you want, but that's the way he saw it.

Incidentally, once we were in Spokane, Washington and since I worked for a morning paper, I didn't really have to get going until the afternoon. In the morning

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Truman was talking to some reporters in Spokane and he said that the 80th Congress was the "worst" Congress in American history. Well, I heard about that. As I say, I wasn't there, it wasn't necessary for me to start that early. So later that day we went up to the Coulee Dam. Joe Short, who also worked for a morning paper, the *Baltimore Sun*, the two of us wanted to check and see whether he had really said it was the worst Congress in history. So we asked him and he

hesitated and said, "Well, no not the worst. The worst Congress was the Thaddeus Stevens Congress." He meant the Congress dominated by Thaddeus Stevens at the time that our Civil War ended, which brought about the reconstruction, the carpetbaggers, and all that. Mr. Truman never used the word "worst" after that. He usually wound up by saying it was the "do-nothing, good-for-nothing 80th Congress."

I remember I smiled one day. We were in Lexington, Kentucky. This was late in the campaign, must have been October, just before I switched and went with Governor Dewey. We had a great race horse that year, a horse that won what they call the Triple Crown. His name was Citation.

HESS: The horse that died just the other day.

FOLLIARD: Yes. Citation won the Kentucky Derby, the Preakness,

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and the Belmont, the Triple Crown. And of course, in Lexington we were in horse country and it was the scene of all these great breeding farms and Truman told the crowd, "I'm going to run like Citation." We all liked Mr. Truman. We just smiled; we knew that he was going to be an also-ran. I was just thinking about that the other day when I read about Citation dying at the age of 25.

HESS: You mentioned Mr. Clark Clifford. Do you recall speaking with Mr. Clifford during the campaign? Did you often have occasion to work with or speak to Mr. Clifford, who was the Special Counsel?

FOLLIARD: Oh, yes. These men who were associated with Mr. Truman in the White House were always available and helpful. I remember one conversation I had with Clark Clifford about ghost-writing. You see, Clifford came to the White House as an Assistant Naval Aide. I just don't know how he got into speechwriting, but he did, and I think he wound up as Counsel.

HESS: Mr. Truman's Special Counsel, was the title.

FOLLIARD: I went in to talk with him one day about writing speeches for the President, and I must say that Clifford, although not ordinarily a modest man, was modest this day. He said, "Well, really, it's his speech when I finish

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with it. I'll write a speech and then he [meaning the President] will write in between the lines, write changes out in the margins, then I'll do it the second time. Sometimes I have had to write a speech seven times before he's satisfied. In the end it's really his."

That would be true, I think, of almost all Presidents, with possibly one exception, Eisenhower. He usually just took what the ghost wrote and used it, so they told me.

Mr. Truman was quite capable of writing his own speeches. In fact, his most eloquent speeches were those in which he had no text, when he just fired away.

I'd like to call your attention to something else. I told somebody this, I think they were interviewing me in connection with an oral history on Eisenhower. If you went back and looked at transcripts of press conferences or speeches, off-the-cuff speeches, you'd be very much impressed by Mr. Truman's syntax, his rhetoric in general -- it marched. He didn't clutter up his speeches with adjectives or adverbs. He was a man who liked nouns and verbs. It would be hard to find a grammatical error in any of his remarks, either in press conferences or off-the-cuff speeches.

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HESS: Mr. Clifford left the White House in 1950 and then he was replaced in the position as Special Counsel by Charles Murphy. Did you also work closely with Mr. Murphy?

FOLLIARD: Well, I knew him. I don't remember having much -- I don't ever remember interviewing him about anything. I had very little to do with him. That must have been rather late.

HESS: Were there any other White House staff members that you knew particularly well? What about Matthew Connelly, who held the position as Appointments Secretary?

FOLLIARD: Well, I knew Matt very well, and was terribly sorry to see him get into trouble later on. I had one experience with Matt Connelly that might be worth relating. It might have been right about the time that Charlie Ross died. Margaret Truman, the President's daughter, appeared at a concert

HESS: The same day

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FOLLIARD: Was it the same day? And Mr. Truman, although he was saddened by Ross' death, didn't want to disappoint Margaret, so he showed up at this concert. Early the next morning he picked up a copy of the *Washington Post* and read a review of the concert by Paul Hume, the *Post's* music critic. It was really not a harsh review. Hume

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said that Margaret made a very nice appearance, but he went on to say that she didn't sing very well.

Again I'll interrupt myself here. Mr. Truman was a very old-fashioned man. Young people in America today would never understand how he felt about women. To use an old-fashioned expression, he "put them on a pedestal." There were three women in his life: His mother, his wife, Bess, and his daughter, Margaret. They were all on pedestals, and you just couldn't say anything about them, even as mild a remark as that Margaret didn't sing very well.

So, Truman sat down and really shot from the hip., He wrote a letter. Later, Paul Hume showed me this letter. He didn't believe it was from President Truman. It was handwritten, and he showed it to me, and I said, "Yes." I knew Mr. Truman's writing and I said, "That's his." He told Hume -- I've forgotten exactly now -- but he said something like, "If I ever meet you, I'm going to give you a black eye, bloody nose, and you'll need a supporter for below," or something like that. The *Post*, of course, had no intention of ever making the letter public. The publisher, who was then Phil Graham, wouldn't think of it.

Well, a strange thing, an incredible thing happened.

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Hume showed this letter to a fellow who wrote music reviews for the Washington *Daily News*, Milton Berliner. Berliner had a remarkable memory. He made no notes. He just read this thing and then as fast as he could, he sat down and wrote it out as he remembered it. He had it almost word for word. They published it in the Washington *Daily News*. That left the *Post* in a very awkward situation as to just what to do about it. So the *Post* reproduced what had appeared in the *News*.

Phil Graham, the publisher of the *Post*, called me in and told me to go and see Steve Early. Steve Early had been Press Secretary to Roosevelt and when Ross died he was called in just to pinch-hit for a while. Graham wanted me to see Steve Early and tell him that the *Post* had never intended to reproduce this letter and embarrass the President, but had felt compelled to publish something about it when it appeared in the Washington *Daily News*.

So I went up to the White House, went into Steve Early's office and told him, and he said, "Well, I'm not the one to talk to, Eddie. Go in and see Matt Connelly."

So I went in and saw Matt Connelly and gave him Graham's message about the only reason we printed this letter was because the *Daily News* had done it. He said,

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"He mailed it early today before I could get a look at it." Mr. Truman never fretted over things after he had done them.

Which reminds me of something which was said by John L. Sullivan, who was the Secretary of the Navy in the Truman administration. He once said of Mr. Truman that -- how was it -- oh, he said, "He swallowed the lions, and he choked on the gnats." Well, the gnats were letters such as he wrote to Paul Hume, the music critic, and the lions were, of course, the Marshall plan, going into Korea, and firing MacArthur, really bold and tremendous decisions. I thought that summed him up pretty well.

HESS: Do you recall anything particular about Joseph Short? Any incident that comes to mind when you think of Joseph Short?

FOLLIARD: Well, I heard this story about Short when he was a reporter covering the White House for the Baltimore *Sun*, well before he became Press Secretary. He got into a poker game with President Truman and some of the President's cronies, and he lost four hundred and some dollars, which is a rather substantial sum for a newspaper reporter. Mr. Truman really didn't like to win. I don't mean he didn't like to win, he didn't like

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to win in a way that would hurt anybody. But he couldn't very well offer to give Short back the money, that would have been offensive, but I was told that Short's editors somehow heard about his loss and told Short to add a little bit to his expense account every week until he made up the four hundred.

HESS: Until he made up his losses.

FOLLIARD: Yes.

HESS: Did the two men handle the duties of the job in any different manner? Or does it make any difference about who is running that particular post?

FOLLIARD: Oh, I think it makes a difference, but much depends on how much leeway the President gives his press officer. Eisenhower delegated chores more than any President I have known; in fact, he was criticized for delegating too much authority and leeway to John Foster Dulles, his first Secretary of State. Nevertheless, when John Foster Dulles died, Ike in effect became his own Secretary of State, and I thought he did all right. It was not his fault that Khrushchev broke up a summit meeting in Paris in May 1960. That was no fault of Ike's; it was a simply bad break that grew out of that -- what was it -- that U-2 spy plane crash.

HESS: Gary Francis Powers.

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FOLLIARD: Just a bad break, but Ike gave Jim Hagerty great leeway and Ike didn't -- he was so famous even before he became President that he was not interested in getting his picture in the paper. So if there was a statement to be read, he'd have Hagerty read it in front of the cameras. It didn't make much difference. Hagerty did things, made statements, that other Presidents might have insisted on making themselves, but Ike just didn't want to be bothered.

I don't mean that in an invidious way at all. No harm came of it. Other Presidents restricted their press officers on what they had to tell the press. No use in naming them. You know who they were. It's rather a delicate job.

When Charlie Ross died, I heard that President Truman was considering me for Press Secretary, it would be awfully hard to say no to a President, but I certainly was glad when he didn't offer it to me. In fact, when I heard he was thinking of two men, Joe Short and myself, I went around booming Short. It might be all right for a newspaper reporter, starting at the beginning, say if

there was a prospect he'd be Press Secretary for 8 years, but at this time -- what was the date of Ross' death?

HESS: December the 5th of '50.

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FOLLIARD: Well, the Truman administration didn't have long to go.

That reminds me of an experience that I had with Ross just before his death. I was having lunch down at the National Press Club one day, and we were talking politics, and looking ahead to the 1952 campaign. I happened to remark that I didn't think President Truman would run for another term. Everybody at the table challenged me: How did I know? Why did I think so? I didn't know, I just had a feeling about it.

HESS: This was back in 1950 when you felt this way?

FOLLIARD: Maybe a month before Ross died, or a matter of weeks before he died. Well, at that time, we were still under the spell of Roosevelt who had run four times; we had gotten the idea that men would always run and run and run. Although Congress had brought about a constitutional amendment limiting a President to two terms, they had excused Mr. Truman. He could have run again. I just had a feeling that he wouldn't run.

So, a few days after I made this remark at the Press Club I got a telephone call from Dick Wilson who represented the Cowles papers, and also the Cowles magazine, *Look* magazine, and he said the editor of *Look* magazine wanted me to write an article predicting that Truman wouldn't run

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in '52. I said, "Well, I just don't know. It's just a judgment on my part."

"They want you to do it, and it's worth a thousand dollars," Wilson said. Well, I had an operation coming up about that time and I could use the thousand dollars. So I went later that day -- Wilson had called me in the morning -- later that day I dropped in on Charlie Ross and I told him that *Look* magazine wanted me to write an article saying that President Truman wouldn't run in '52. To my astonishment he said, "Well, why don't you do it?" It almost made my hair stand up. As I say, I had no inside information. Well, this was almost telling me that I was right, that he wasn't going to run.

I found out later that by this time Mr. Truman had confided in his intimates that he wasn't going to run, but I didn't know that at that time. At any rate, I talked to Charlie Ross at some length about it. He told me that Truman would feel that although he had only served part of Roosevelt's fourth term, and the four years of his term, he would consider it a third term if he ran again, and that -- this was news to me -- he said that Truman had been opposed to Roosevelt's third term, didn't oppose it openly, but in his heart was opposed to it. Being a party regular he went along with it.

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So, I talked to some others, and I told *Look* magazine that I would write it, but I wouldn't put the head on it that they wanted. They wanted me to say bluntly, "Truman Will Not Run in '52." I said, "Hell, a war could break out. Something could lead him to change his mind." So we settled on something that was derived from a famous Coolidge statement: "Truman Does Not Choose to Run in '52." So I wrote it.

Oh, first, I felt that anything I had I owed to the *Washington Post* first. After all, that's how I made my living, and so I told the editor, Russell Wiggins, what I was going to write, and I said, "If you want it for the *Post*, I'll just have to give it to you."

He said, "You're wrong, Eddie. He's going to run."

I wrote it and it appeared and then the Associated Press and the United Press all picked it up, and then President Truman had a press conference the day the magazine appeared, and he was reminded of this article and asked if it was true. He wouldn't say yes or no, but when asked, "I will say Eddie wrote a nice article about me."

So that was maybe January when it appeared.

HESS: In '51.

FOLLIARD: In 1951.

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HESS: Going back just a bit. We've mentioned Steve Early. He was in the White House at the time when Mr. Roosevelt died, and Jonathan Daniels had recently been made Press Secretary. Were you here in town at the time of the announcement of Mr. Roosevelt's death?

FOLLIARD: No, I was in Germany covering the war. I first heard about Mr. Roosevelt's death when I was in Frankfurt, Germany. Our troops had just captured Frankfurt a short time before that, and I saw this in the *Star and Stripes*. Later -- it may have been that same day or the next day -- went down to visit the 42nd Division, the Rainbow Division, which was moving toward Munich, and they had a memorial service for Roosevelt, very impressive. No, Jonathan Daniels was always an old, good friend of mine, but he was not Press Secretary by the time I went back to the White House right after the war ended in Europe. By that time Ross was Press Secretary.

HESS: Do you recall the name of J. Leonard Reinsch? He had been brought in for...

FOLLIARD: Yes, yes, I knew him well, but I knew him as a fellow who handled arrangements for national conventions, particularly broadcasting. I think his headquarters were in Atlanta, Georgia. A very nice fellow.

HESS: Mr. Short died, I think it was on September the 18th

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of 1952, and then Roger Tubby and Irving Perlmeter took over, which was during the campaign. Did you travel on the campaign in '52?

FOLLIARD: I traveled with Eisenhower and Adlai Stevenson. First I covered the conventions at which they were nominated and then traveled with -- we still were using trains, but that year we used both trains and airplanes.

HESS: And you prefer the trains, is that right?

FOLLIARD: Well, yes. I'll tell you why I preferred campaigning by train, and why I think, it was to the advantage of the candidate to travel by train. When we campaigned by train we had one railroad car turned into a pressroom on wheels. Each of us had a space where we kept our typewriter, and always there was a Western Union man along and you wrote your story, you handed it to the Western Union man, and he'd drop it off at the first stop, sometimes within minutes after you gave it to him. Or sometimes, he made arrangements to throw it off so it would be picked up by Western Union men along the line.

Traveling by plane, first it's very difficult to write in a plane; you're crowded, some guy next to you, he's always elbowing you, and you're elbowing him, very narrow space, typewriter on your lap, and then you fly for hours, and there's no Western Union office up in the

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skies.

Literally, I've gone for as much as five and six hours after writing a story before I could turn it over to a Western Union man to send it to my office. The story is just no good until it gets into your office.

Now, from the candidate's standpoint, well, first, let's say he travels by airplane. He stops at an airport, a crowd comes out there, but always a crowd at an airport is a partisan crowd. If the candidate is a Republican, the crowd that gathers out there is going to be a Republican crowd. It's already sold on this candidate. He's not going to make any converts, whereas if he travels by train and stops at what Senator Taft called the whistle stops, you'll get all kinds of people out there. You can make converts, as I think I've told you Mr. Truman did. Also, I found after a night or two you can get used to sleeping on a train. Well, of course, some people complain about baths, but every once in a while we'd go to a hotel, and you could get cleaned up.

HESS: How would you compare the two campaigns of 1952? Adlai Stevenson's and General Eisenhower's?

FOLLIARD: I admired Adlai Stevenson very much, and I knew Ike, I had met Ike during the war, met him first at his headquarters at Versailles, and like everybody, was just charmed by him. I didn't meet Adlai Stevenson until the

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convention in Chicago in '52. I just thought he was great. But he came along at the wrong time. He was one of the finest orators I ever heard, and having traveled with both Adlai and Ike I noticed something: Crowds would turn out for Ike, but they wouldn't stay for his speeches. They wanted to see him, this great man, this famous soldier, this hero. You could see crowds, see people drifting away when Ike was speaking. It didn't mean he was a bum speaker; the crowds primarily were interested in seeing him. The crowds that gathered to hear Adlai almost always remained, because he was a very compelling orator. But he had no chance, and to make a long story short, I'll just quote what he said after it was all over. Poor Adlai said it was like running against George Washington.

HESS: Rather difficult to do.

FOLLIARD: He had everything except luck, and it's useless to say, to talk about what kind of a President he would have been, whether he would have been a better President than Ike. That's just a waste of time. It's like saying what would Jack Kennedy have done about Vietnam if he had lived. I don't know whether - well, he probably wouldn't have done anything much differently than was done.

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HESS: I found an indication in Cabell Phillips' book, *The Truman Presidency*, that you were along on the trip that the President took back to Arkansas and Missouri early in the administration. To Caruthersville, I think it was.

FOLLIARD: Yes, to Caruthersville.

HESS: Was it the American Legion Fair?

FOLLIARD: Yes. It was a revelation to me. As I say, I had covered other Presidents, and I just never had been with any President like Mr. Truman. He was determined to be himself. He had none of what the English call "side." He never tried to pretend to be anything than what he was. And what was he?

After he had left the White House, sometime, oh, whenever Chief Justice Vinson died, he came to Washington for the funeral. Ike was then President. I always called on Mr. Truman when he would come back to Washington after his Presidency. So I went around to see him at the Mayflower, and I said, "Mr. President, it was a great privilege and honor to have covered you in your years at the White House. They were great years."

He smiled and he said, "They were all right for a Missouri clodhopper, weren't they, Eddie?" Well, he was no clodhopper; he was just Harry Truman.

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HESS: He was from Missouri.

FOLLIARD: The first trip I took with President Truman was out to Independence, Missouri. He had gone to San Francisco for the opening of the UN. I didn't go to San Francisco. I went to Independence and was there when he came back. I remember that that was when he announced that he was going to make Jimmy Byrnes Secretary of State.

Well, the first extended trip I took must have been in October of '45. It seems that for years, especially when he'd been United States Senator, he'd gone to Caruthersville for some annual affair. It had something to do with the American Legion. So, we went there, and stayed in a little hotel there. I think the next morning he got up at 5:30 in the morning, took a walk along the banks of the Mississippi, dropped in to the Western Union office, talked to the Western Union man, wanted to know how many words they'd sent (meaning how many words we'd written about him), and then he went to a Baptist Church. Then we went to the horse races. He stood up in the judge's stand. All this was on the Sabbath, but he saw nothing odd about going to church and then going to the horse races. Later that evening in the hotel, he sat down at the piano and he played something

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composed by Padrewski, and he told us that this was a piece that he had played for Stalin in Potsdam.

I wrote a piece about the day's events, and I was a little ashamed of it later. I didn't mean any disrespect, but after narrating all these things held done I said, "He did everything except get himself shot out of a cannon." That was uncalled for and I particularly felt disappointed when I noticed that the Republican National Committee picked up my story, had it reprinted and sent out by the thousands thinking that it made this fellow look ridiculous. That isn't what I meant at all.

Then on the way back, we stopped at some place where there was a new dam being dedicated, and he made a speech. He dealt with one of the first problems confronting him. There were a number of strikes going on at the time. I think there was a big strike at General Motors. Instead of using a lot of fancy jargon, such as they use nowadays, about priorities, and options and all that bunk, Truman said, "I think it's time for all of us to cut out the foolishness and all go back to work." Always down to earth. I decided then that this fellow was going to be different. He also was going to be a great newsmaker, as he was.

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HESS: And you went down to Key West several times, is that correct?

FOLLIARD: Yes.

HESS: What comes to mind when you look back on the days of the Key West trips?

FOLLIARD: Well, it reminds me that Mr. Truman knew how to relax without ever picking up a golf club or a fishing pole. He pretended to fish sometimes. He's not interested in fishing, or horseback riding, or any of the things you want to mention, sailing boats -- he never did any of these things. He played poker. You say, "Well, is that really a vacation?" In his case, yes. He loved it. It was one way he could go as far as most men can go, most Presidents, in forgetting the problems that assail every President. He just loved poker.

He loved the society of men. He was not much around women, you know, except -- I told you about the three women in his life. He liked the society of men, he liked rough talk, and engaged in it, and just had the time of his life playing poker. I don't know how his accounts ended up, whether he won or lost, it didn't make much difference. As I say, I don't think the stakes were very high. He loved that and he loved walking.

I learned something about our trips to Key West, how the visits of a President, what the impact could

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be on a community.

When we first started going down to Key West, it was a quiet place. We knew that Hemingway had lived there. There was a naval base there, but not much in the way of tourism. Well, the picture, after a while -- we went down there, oh, time after time - I've forgotten how many times, the pictures of Truman wearing these loud Hawaiian shirts and walking along. The next thing you know, motels began to appear, and the tourists began pouring in. I don't have any chamber of commerce figures, but that just brought about a transformation in Key West. The number of tourists just doubled, tripled, and quadrupled and went on beyond that. I haven't been there since the days when I used to go down there with him, but I would imagine that Key West is now quite a haven for tourists.

HESS: Where were the newsmen housed at Key West, at the Bachelor Officers' Quarters?

FOLLIARD: Yes, some of us, and then some of us were in a hotel, I've forgotten the name of it. You had your choice.

HESS: And he quite often held news conferences down at Key West, too. Sometimes, I understand outside. Sometimes at the BOQ.

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FOLLIARD: Yes.

HESS: Did he seem to be during his press conferences at Key West in somewhat of a more relaxed mood, more informal than the ones here in town?

FOLLIARD: Really, he never...

HESS: Never was formal.

FOLLIARD: No, and he wasn't awed by a press conference. He was quite a match for any reporter who thought he could get smart-alecky with him. The smart aleck quickly found that he had taken on the wrong man. Looking back on those days, Mr. Truman had -- I don't know how to put this -- a keen antenna. He knew what was going on. He knew what was being said. He had an awful lot of ups and downs, more than most Presidents. When he first became President after Roosevelt's death, at first people were shocked; they knew very little about him. But Truman took over, made a good impression with the remarks he made -- I mean the remarks that he felt like the moon and the stars had fallen on him, or like a ton of hay, or a bull, and asked people to pray for him. All that was pure Truman. There was nothing studied about it. Those were things he blurted out. That's the way he was. And people relaxed. The end of the war helped, of course, the end of the war in Europe. [George]

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Gallup took a poll about that time and found out that Truman's popularity was the highest of any that Gallup had ever recorded; it was higher even than Roosevelt's had ever been. Then time went on. I thought Truman did a great job in making the transition from war to peace, that is, a great job from an economic standpoint.

HESS: Reconversion standpoint.

FOLLIARD: Yes. There had been predictions of millions unemployed, but nothing like that happened at all. We just got along very well. But he got into trouble about '46. There was a meat shortage, a severe meat shortage, and then Henry Wallace, who was Secretary of Commerce, began preaching, "Go easy on Russia," and there was a quarrel between Wallace and Secretary of State Byrnes, and Wallace was forced out. But the meat shortage, I can't remember what brought that about. It made housewives and others very angry and Truman's political stock just plummeted. I remember that year the *Washington Post* sent me around the country to size up the congressional elections. None of the Democratic politicians wanted Truman around as an orator. They thought he would hurt rather than help. In fact, nobody even thought of him as an orator at all. They were using old phonograph records of

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Roosevelt's speeches and the Republicans had a very good slogan that year; it was simply, "Had enough?" And of course the Republicans captured both the Senate and the House.

Mr. Truman told me later that that was the lowest point in his years in the White House. Then I remember sometime along in there, it must have been in a private conversation, the question

came up about his stature. It was being said of him that he wasn't big enough, and he knew that. I remember his saying, "Well, who is big enough?"

Then, of course, we're getting to the stage we covered earlier, 1947 and early '48, and the talk about dumping him; in other words refusing him nomination for a full term. He got up at a Democratic dinner in the Mayflower Hotel, as I remember, this was May, 1948. I don't think I ever admired a man so much in my life. He said, "There's going to be a Democrat in the White House for the next four years, and you are looking at him." I would have bet a week's salary that he was wrong, but, gosh, he certainly was admirable that night.

HESS: On the subject of Key West, what did you enjoy doing down at Key West? Just how was your time spent, the time that you were not writing stories and filing them

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for the paper?

FOLLIARD: I spent my time the same way the President did.

HESS: Playing poker?

FOLLIARD: Playing poker, yes. I'm not much of an activist. There was no beach there, really. The President had a beach and he occasionally invited us to it, but I don't know, this is generally overlooked; traveling with a President is not always a lark for a newspaper reporter. Even on a so-called vacation, your editor still expects stories from you. You really had to be around. You never know when the President might drop in at the pressroom, as he often did, and he always blurted things.

HESS: And you had to be ready.

FOLLIARD: You never knew what he was going to say.

HESS: In 1950 there were some interesting events, starting in the latter part of June with the invasion of South Korea by the North Koreans. Where were you when you first heard the news?

FOLLIARD: I was on my vacation. I was up at Rehoboth Beach.

But out of order I'll tell you something. I suppose it is pretty well-known. It has to do with President Truman's ranking among the Presidents. He always said, and he's told me this more than once, that he didn't think historians ought to or could size up a President

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and assign him his place, his ranking among the Presidents, for at least fifty years after his death. Well, I suppose you could call Winston Churchill a historian; I would, one of the greatest. He wasn't willing to wait fifty years. I've forgotten, sometime after the Korean war, it was during the

Eisenhower administration, Churchill wrote an article and said he thought that Mr. Truman's handling of the Korean war, what he called his celerity, his swiftness, in moving in, his courage throughout that, entitled him to be considered one of America's greatest Presidents. So much for that. That could be the answer to those who said he wasn't big enough, but that was a terrible period for Mr. Truman.

HESS: What is your personal opinion of that? Do you think we should have handled the Korean matter at that time as we did, and go into Korea with such force?

FOLLIARD: Well, certainly. I don't know who it was, I believe it was Ike once said (this was before Ike ever got into politics), he was talking about the Russians, that to deal with aggression that you had to show people, aggressors, that they couldn't pick up real estate cheap. If we had not stopped North Korea, I don't know what the consequences would have been. If we had not tried, it would have been a signal that, well,

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the whole of Southeast Asia was there for the taking. You know what the situation was before, that when the war ended, there were two spheres there, Russia was given North Korea and the United States, South Korea, not given, but were given supervision. North Korea became Communist, South Korea became republican, democratic, whatever you want to call it. And there's no question in my mind, I don't suppose in the minds of Mr. Truman or anybody else, that the North Koreans charged over the border there on a signal from Moscow. I don't think they would have dreamed of doing it unless they had the help of Russia and China. So, there are people that to this day think that nothing was accomplished in Korea. Well, all that Mr. Truman tried to do there was to show that aggression didn't pay. MacArthur used to say, what was it, "There's no substitute for victory."

Truman called Korea a victory of peace. The war ended where it started. Nobody gained a square mile out of that thing, and that's the way it remains. In other words, the reason we got the truce in Korea, and it will be the reason finally that we will get peace in Vietnam, is that the Communists in North Korea finally decided that there was nothing to be gained by further

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fighting. So they quit. And it was the Communists, you know, who asked for a truce in that thing, not us. Someday North Vietnam, I hope, will decide there's no further profit in fighting, and the war will end. And I think it will end just as Korea did, but now I'm getting into the most dangerous of all fields, that of prophecy. It's just what I hope will happen.

HESS: There are those who say that the United States should not engage in a land war in Asia, but we did engage in a land war in Asia. What is your view on that? Is this something that we should not do?

FOLLIARD: Well, where do you demonstrate that aggression does not pay? We don't have to demonstrate it on our border with Canada or our border with Mexico. This is the one place we

could demonstrate it. And if you are going to let it go -- I think those who say that if we don't make a stand there it could lead to a greater war, a really great war. I think there's something in what they say.

HESS: What would you like to add here about Korea?

FOLLIARD: Mr. Truman told me in a farewell interview that I had with him just before he gave up the Presidency, that going into Korea was the hardest decision that he had to make. He had been a soldier, he had seen men die when he was with the AEF in France, and he knew what it meant.

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Some people would say, "Well, wouldn't the decision to drop the bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, wouldn't that have been the hardest decision?" He never thought so, you know. He told me -- I was talking to him after a press conference one day, we were talking about Korea, and he said it had caused him some sleepless nights. Sometime before that I had asked him, before Korea, I asked him if the job didn't get him down sometimes, and if he didn't get depressed.

He said, "Eddie, I don't depress." That might not be grammatical, but I do think he was depressed while men were dying in Korea.

HESS: In September of 1950, Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson was replaced by General Marshall. What do you recall about the replacing of Louis Johnson with General Marshall?

FOLLIARD: I remember Mr. Truman telling us, and I think this was in a private conversation, how wonderful General Marshall was about this. General Marshall had gone through some tough years during the war, he had gone out to China as the President's personal envoy to try and bring about some kind of a settlement between Chiang Kai-Shek and the Communists, a mission in which he failed and was bound to fail, he had been Secretary

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of State at this point, hadn't he?

HESS: Yes, sir.

FOLLIARD: And really had served his country beyond the call of duty.

HESS: He had earned his retirement.

FOLLIARD: Yes. And Mr. Truman called him up to ask him to take the Defense job, felt like hell doing it -- he was an old guy and needed the rest and all -- and Truman said that Marshall said, "Yes, sir." In other words, the Commander in Chief was asking him to do something and no argument.

HESS: What do you recall about why it was felt necessary to replace Louis Johnson?

FOLLIARD: Well, Louis Johnson had been advocating retrenchment, cutting down the size of our armed forces and he was just wrong, that was all.

Louis Johnson got in good with the Truman administration as a money raiser in political campaigns, as I remember it. He had no particular qualifications for that job as Secretary of Defense, a job of immense importance.

Speaking of General Marshall: It was several years after Mr. Truman left the White House, he was here at the Mayflower (and as usual, I went around to

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call on him), and I always enjoyed these talks with him. I just thought that knowing Mr. Truman and having the relationship I did with him enriched my life. I never felt any awe around him. He didn't want me to. And, of course, like everybody I continued to call him "Mr. President," as we should, but he always made me feel so comfortable.

And some of his reminiscences were very revealing to me. I hardly ever wrote anything about these talks. Oh, occasionally, I'd ask him if I could quote him on things. It was up to him. But this day, we were talking about World War II, and great men. I always respected Mr. Truman as a historian. I think he was the best read president I ever talked to. He knew more about American history than any president that I've ever known; maybe Wilson knew more, but at any rate, Mr. Truman said that there were two great men in World War II, and I said, "Who were they, Mr. President?"

He said, "General George C. Marshall and Winston Churchill."

Then I started to say something like, "What about Roosevelt?" but I didn't, because I knew by this time that Mr. Truman usually said exactly what he meant; and if he didn't include Roosevelt he didn't intend to

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include him.

Sometime before that, we had, oh, about ten or twelve of us had dinner with Mr. Truman in the White House. They were what we called the "White House regulars," the reporters who covered the President day in and day out, and I happened to be sitting on his right, and he said, "Eddie, the Russians are living in the 9th century."

I said, "Did you say the 19th century, Mr. President?"

"No, I said the 9th century."

Well, he meant it. That's one reason why when he said that two great men came out of World War II, Marshall and Churchill, I didn't say anything about Roosevelt. He usually meant exactly what he said. I have often meant to go back and find out what the world was like in the 9th century, especially what Russia was like.

HESS: That was a long time ago

FOLLIARD: But after Truman, all of our Presidents were very delicate in their dealings with the Russians, but I remember Truman once -- oh, he said it more than once -- he said that Stalin was the worst tyrant since Ghenghis Khan and Tamerlane. And then when people talked about a summit meeting, he always scoffed, he said, "Well, if

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Stalin wants to see me let him come over here. Be glad to see him."

But no President after that ever talked about Stalin the way he did. Yet, to our astonishment in a speech in Eugene, Oregon in the 1948 campaign, he said something about Stalin; he said, "I like Old Joe, but he's a prisoner of the Politburo."

Well, years later, in one of these talks I had with him at the Mayflower when he was no longer President, I said to him, reminded him about this speech in Eugene, Oregon, and I said, "Why did you say, 'I like Old Joe?'"

He said, "Because I did like him. So did Roosevelt and Churchill. I've seen their private, secret cablegrams. They always referred to him as 'Uncle Joe.'" He didn't go beyond that, but it's obvious that Stalin, although he was a monster, must have had some attractive qualities. Of course, you can like a guy but dislike very much what he does and what he stands for. I don't suppose that's such a contradiction as it might seem.

HESS: September of 1950 was the date of the Inchon landing in Korea, when General MacArthur took the troops in, and the following month in October was the occasion when Mr. Truman flew out to Wake Island to confer with General

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MacArthur, and I believe you went along, is that correct?

FOLLIARD: Yes, I did.

HESS: What do you recall about that?

FOLLIARD: Well, when we took off we didn't know where we were going.

HESS: How much warning had you had that there was a trip coming up?

FOLLIARD: I've forgotten now, but usually we have very little warning about these things.

HESS: You keep a bag packed?

FOLLIARD: We eventually found out that we were going to Honolulu, Charlie Ross told us that. Then, I suppose, when we got to Honolulu we were told we were going to Wake Island.

I remember, oh, a couple of things about that trip. One was that we were out at the airport at Wake Island -- I should explain to you that the press plane went ahead of the presidential plane. In those days we didn't have jets. We had the old propeller planes. We got to Wake Island ahead of the President, and General MacArthur was already there, and we went out to the airport to await the arrival of the President. But another plane came in ahead of the President's, and aboard were General Omar Bradley, who was chief of staff, and General Joseph

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"lightning Joe" Collins, I've forgotten what he was, some high rank, and some other brass.

But at any rate, MacArthur didn't bother to go out and greet them, although technically Bradley was his boss as Chief of Staff. He didn't go out, in other words, until the President arrived. It gave me the impression that while MacArthur was a great soldier and had served this country well, he was also a very vain man. And, of course, he was finally there when the President got off the plane.

We were not present when Mr. Truman had his conference with MacArthur, this strategy meeting, but a *New York Times* man and I hurried over there to the place of the meeting as soon as we could, went over in a jeep, and we saw MacArthur coming out of this building and asked him what he could tell us about what happened and he said, "You'll have to talk to the President's press agent."

HESS: Press agent.

FOLLIARD: Meaning Charlie Ross. I remember how friendly the two men seemed when Mr. Truman gave MacArthur a decoration, I don't know whether it was an oak-leaf cluster, Distinguished Service Medal or something. It was all very cordial. Later, of course, we found out that MacArthur had assured Truman that the Chinese would not intervene. This was in October.

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HESS: October 15th.

FOLLIARD: I think it was before that month was over that the Chinese came charging across the Yalu River and we had a real major war on our hands there. Then, of course, when was it that he fired MacArthur?

HESS: In April.

FOLLIARD: The next April, yes. Well, I know that Mr. Truman must have hated doing that and I'll tell you why. He had great admiration for soldiers. You see, he had hoped to go to West Point, and would have gone to West Point had it not been for his poor eyesight. But, as I say, he admired soldiers, especially famous soldiers like Ike and MacArthur. But he also knew that he could never allow any change in our system under which the military is subordinate to civilian rule, and MacArthur really, apparently, I'm just guessing now, but I will just have to conclude that MacArthur kind of looked down on President Truman. I just have to feel that way because he got many warnings, you know, about the speeches that he was making, the statements he was making, which were in direct conflict with administration policy. Finally, Mr. Truman just decided to can him. It must have been the shock of MacArthur's life.

HESS: What is your personal opinion? Do you believe his

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dismissal was justified?

FOLLIARD: Oh, heavens yes. I don't want the military taking precedence over our civilian leaders. After all, the President is the Commander in Chief, civilian though he is. I know of no high ranking Army officer that ever defended MacArthur on that. What I'm trying to say is that General Marshall, General Bradley, all the other generals around Washington at that time thought that Mr. Truman had no other course. I sometimes have thought that President Roosevelt would have handled that differently. I just don't know how he would have done it. If possible, he might have made MacArthur ambassador to the Court of St. James, or something like that. But that wasn't Truman's way. He didn't want to hurt MacArthur, that wasn't it, but he had to assert civilian supremacy, just had to.

HESS: One point about the 1952 campaign that we did not cover deals with the campaign trips Mr. Truman took that year. Did you go on any of the trips that Mr. Truman took in '52?

FOLLIARD: No, no, I was either with General Eisenhower or Adlai Stevenson, but I know something about it. This has to do with the so-called Truman-Eisenhower feud. It's a long story and I don't want to stretch it out, but I'll

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try and compress it.

We knew before that campaign was over that what had been a really very nice friendship between Truman and Eisenhower was finished, and Eisenhower was just furious with Truman. I once asked Mr. Truman -- again, I had more talks with Mr. Truman after he left the White House than I did when he was in the White House. I asked him one time, oh, it may have been '54 or '55, I don't know when it was, I said, "What caused the feud between you and Ike, Mr. President?"

"Oh," he said, "Eddie, I wouldn't call it a feud. But I'll tell you what made Ike mad." He said, "It was a speech that I made at Colorado Springs," and he had the date, October something, 1952. He said, "You go back and look up that speech, and you'll see that I skinned old Ike from the top of his bald head to his backside."

So, I did. Fortunately I found the text of Mr. Truman's Colorado Springs speech in the files of the *Washington Post* and in this he berated Ike for his failure to stand up for General Marshall. If you'll remember, Marshall had been -- some very mean things had been said about him, reflecting on his patriotism, said by Senator [William E.] Jenner of Indiana and Senator Joe

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McCarthy of Wisconsin. Truman thought that Ike should have defended Marshall, because it was Marshall who recommended Ike for the post of Supreme Commander, which, of course, made Ike a world figure. And Truman in this Colorado Springs speech said that Ike's failure to stand up for General Marshall made him unworthy to be President of the United States.

Well, whatever Mr. Truman, however he felt about Ike, he always had great respect for the Office of President, and something happened in Ike's first year as President that had it been handled better might have ended what I called the "feud."

Ike went out to Kansas City to make a speech before some farm outfit, I think it's called the Young Farmers, or something like that, and Truman, although he lived in Independence, felt that Kansas City was his hometown. It's only about 15 miles away. So he felt that no matter what had happened between them, he should pay his respects to President Eisenhower.

At that time, Mr. Truman had an office in Kansas City, and one day I was in the lobby of the Muehlebach Hotel, and a fellow named Ed Woods, who was a reporter for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, came in and he was all excited and he said, "The old man," [meaning Truman] "tried to see Ike and he was snubbed."

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What had happened was, we later found out, that Truman, not his secretary, he himself called the Presidential Suite at the Muehlebach Hotel where Ike was staying, and said he would like to come around and pay his respects to the President. He was told that the President's calendar was filled and that he couldn't make an appointment.

We never found out who answered the phone. Usually you have a switchboard run by the Signal Corps, but we never could find out who told Truman that. I had a hunch, probably a good hunch, that whoever answered the phone thought that the man calling, the man who said he was Harry Truman, was a practical joker, maybe a crank, and just kissed him off that way.

Well, later, George Allen, who was a crony of Ike's, told me that when Ike heard about this, he ordered an investigation made to see if Truman had really called. Allen said he never found out

what the result of the investigation was. Whoever answered that phone was never going to admit that he answered it, that's certain.

In the 1960 campaign, I traveled mostly with Jack Kennedy, but part of the time with Vice President Nixon, and at that time, Vice President Nixon lived down the street here, so he gave me a ride home from the airport

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after one of our trips and I told him about this incident, about Ike ordering an investigation, and he said, "Oh, that was wrong, the President should have called up Mr. Truman and told him he was sorry, and that would have ended the whole thing," and so it would.

I never have told that story about Nixon before. I wasn't talking to him for publication, it was just a private conversation, but it's too bad that President Eisenhower didn't just take it for granted, or accepted the story that Truman had called and called him and thanked him and say he was sorry that there was a mix-up.

As it was, this estrangement went on from 1952 to November 1963, a very sad day. The funeral of John F. Kennedy. I don't know who was responsible, but he was either a blunderer or a genius at protocol, arranged for Truman and Ike to be in the same limousine to go to the funeral, first to St. Matthew's cathedral, and then to Arlington. Ike had his Mamie with him, and Mr. Truman had Margaret with him. I don't know why Mrs. Truman didn't come, but that's the way it was.

But at any rate, the limousine brought them back from Arlington on this sad day, and drew up at Blair House where Mr. Truman was staying. President Johnson had arranged for him to stay at Blair House, and Ike at that time, of

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course, was living at his farm estate in Gettysburg., Well, as Truman got out of the limousine, he turned around, and said, "Ike, how about coming in for a drink?"

And Ike looked at Mamie and she seemed to agree, so they went in. I got all this from General Harry Vaughan, who used to be Military Aide for Mr. Truman. So they went in and they had a few drinks and, oh, talked about old times, and finally when it was time to go, Mamie Eisenhower thanked Mr. Truman for something he had done just before Ike's inauguration in 1953. Truman without consulting with Ike had arranged for John Eisenhower, their son, to be sent back from Korea. He ordered him back here for the inauguration. Mamie thanked Mr. Truman for that and then kissed him. That was the end of the feud, and they once again were the friends they had been for many years.

I remember long before the '52 campaign, Truman was just lavish in his praise of Eisenhower. I remember once in a press conference he said Ike was the most dutiful man he'd ever known. And of course, when Truman called on Ike to head up NATO, what was that, '49 or '50 -- of course, Ike never hesitated. But that feud could have been ended in Kansas City in October of '53.

HESS: Early on.

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FOLLIARD: Yes.

HESS: One general question, were there any particular staff members, White House staff members, during the Truman days that you could go to for inside information, inside news tips, other than Charles Ross and Joseph Short, the press men?

FOLLIARD: Yes, there was one. Bill Hassett, who was also a White House secretary, he was the...

HESS: Correspondence Secretary.

FOLLIARD: ...Correspondence Secretary. He used to write letters for Mr. Truman. No President could possibly write all the letters that have to be written. That was Hassett's job, and I had known him since I was a boy in short pants, and he often helped me. I had to protect him, of course, I never told the source. He gave me the first story anybody ever had about the difference between President Truman and then Secretary of State [James F.] Byrnes.

Byrnes had gone to Moscow to see Stalin, and came back, and the day he came back, Truman was on his yacht, *Williamsburg*, somewhere down on the Potomac, and when Byrnes arrived at the airport, he announced that he was going on radio and report to the nation. Truman heard about it and summoned Byrnes to the yacht *Williamsburg*, and Hassett was there when the two men met.

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Hassett told me that there was quite a chill in the meeting, and that Truman had reminded Byrnes very sharply that before he started making reports to the nation, he ought to make a report to the President of the United States.

So, I told the managing editor of the *Post* about this, a fellow by the name of Alexander "Casey" Jones, who was not only a fine editor, but a hell of a patriot. He had been a soldier in World War I, now he would be called a flag-waver; patriotism is not as popular as it used to be. He said, "Well, Eddie, these are pretty grim times. I don't think we ought to write a story about the President having a quarrel with his Secretary of State. It wouldn't do any good, and it could do some harm, especially abroad. Just keep it in mind. If there's some real good reason to write the story, then go ahead and write it."

Well, sometime later at a press conference, a reporter said to President Truman, he said something like this "Mr. President, do you agree with the State Department's policy in Argentina," or Chile or something like that, and Mr. Truman's eyes flashed.

He said, "It isn't policy until I approve of it! The President makes foreign policy." He was so vehement about it that I decided the time had come to at least

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write a restrained story. So I did. I said there was a rift -- I think that was the way I put it -- a rift between President Truman and Secretary of State Byrnes. Well, the story appeared on the first page of the *Post*. That same morning, Secretary of State Byrnes called a press conference, and I was there, and he denied this story, denied that there was any rift between him and President Truman. Of course, the *Post* printed that, and at my suggestion, put it right in the same spot on page 1 that my story had appeared on about the rift.

Well, eventually, of course, it turned out to be correct. They didn't get along, and Hassett told me that what Truman didn't like was what he called, "Jimmy Byrnes' go-it-alone policy." Byrnes really forgot that the President of the United States made foreign policy, that the Secretary of State just voiced the President's policy. Eventually, Byrnes, of course, quit and went out, I remember, and made a speech down at Washington and Lee University, a very bitter speech in which he said Truman was leading the country down the road to the welfare state.

But Truman made up with him. Truman made up with everybody he ever quarreled with. He didn't like -- he was very friendly, one of the friendliest men I've ever known in my life. He made up with Byrnes, he made up with John

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L. Lewis after taking him to court when the United Mine Workers were socked with a terrific fine, and Lewis himself was fined. Years later, when Mr. Truman used to come here every year for a birthday party, Lewis was there. Mr. Truman made up with Harold Ickes, with whom he quarreled. I've told you how he made up with Ike. He made up with Nixon. He once said that Nixon had called him a traitor, but he made up with him eventually, and that ended up with Nixon giving him the old Steinway that he had used in the White House.

Two people he never forgave, and never will forgive (he told me this himself): Clare Booth Luce, and what's the name of the Congressman from Harlem...

HESS: Powell, Adam Clayton Powell.

FOLLIARD: Adam Clayton Powell. Clare Booth Luce, as I remember this, once made a sneering remark about Mrs. Truman having worked in the then Senator Truman's office. She did. She was on the payroll. What Mrs. Luce didn't say was that Truman went bankrupt in a haberdashery business and vowed that he would pay every cent he owed to anybody as a result of that debacle, and while he was still Senator, he was still paying off these debts. Eventually he paid off dollar for dollar. That's one reason Mrs. Truman was on the payroll.

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Well, Adam Clayton Powell criticized Mrs. Truman for going to a Daughters of the American Revolution ceremony in Constitution Hall after the DAR had denied the use of Constitution Hall to the woman who was then his wife, I think her name was Hazel Scott. He said something critical about Mrs. Truman. Well, as I told you earlier, you could not talk, you could not criticize the three women in Mr. Truman's life: His mother, his wife, or his daughter. He'd forget what you might say about him. He could handle himself in the political arena, and very few men had rougher things said about him than he did, but that was different. But to criticize any of these three women was unpardonable and he never forgave Mrs. Luce and Powell. He announced one time that they never would be invited to the White House as long as he was there, and they weren't.

General Vaughan told me that Henry Luce went to the White House one time and had an audience with Mr. Truman and asked him frankly why it was that he would not invite Mrs. Luce to the White House. Truman told him and Luce said, "Well, I asked you for a frank explanation and you've given it to me. Thank you, sir." And he went out.

HESS: Were there other times that Mr. Hassett gave you an inside tip on what may have been going on, other than the

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James Byrnes episode?

FOLLIARD: He told me in advance -- almost told me -- that Truman was going to fire MacArthur, but I didn't write it. It was too delicate.

HESS: When did he tell you that?

FOLLIARD: Oh, a matter of three or four days before it happened.

HESS: You say he "almost" told you?

FOLLIARD: Well, I could have deduced from what he told me that something terrible was going to happen to MacArthur. I think Hassett said that MacArthur wanted a bigger war than he had; the war wasn't big enough for him.

HESS: Were there any other White House staff members who may have given you news tips at one time or another? What about General Vaughan?

FOLLIARD: Well, Vaughan tipped me off to the fact that the President was going to take John L. Lewis into court, and it happened. He also told me that Lewis had tried over and over again to get Truman on the telephone and Truman wouldn't take the call. That was a mixed-up business. As I remember it, the Interior Department had taken over the coal mines, or something like that, so that a strike that Lewis called was a strike called against the Government in effect, something like that. It was very mixed up.

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But it was a very bold thing that Truman did.

Truman more than any of the others, I think, meant it when he used to say that, "I am President of all the people." He had the support of labor, organized labor, in '48, but I don't think he courted labor at the expense of business. I remember Roosevelt did court labor, and he used to denounce what he called "Economic royalists." I don't know, I guess I'd be an economic royalist; I have a few shares of stock. But Truman was always conscious of the fact that he was President of all the people: White, black, brown, red, the working man, the banker.

HESS: On the matter of civil rights, some people say that Mr. Truman's pronouncements on civil rights were made from the standpoint of political expediency and that he really was not as liberal as what he was saying, or really didn't mean what he said. What do you think about that?

FOLLIARD: Well, I'll point to the election results. I think I told you awhile ago that Roosevelt in four political races never lost a single southern state, unless you can name one. I don't think he ever...

HESS: It used to be called the "Solid South," back in those days.

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FOLLIARD: It was the Solid South. Truman in 1948, as a result of his racial views, lost, let's see, there was that Dixiecrat Party...

HESS: J. Strom Thurmond's Dixiecrat Party.

FOLLIARD: North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, I know he lost those four.

In other words, it could have been a very serious thing had he not carried states that he wasn't expected to carry like Ohio, Wisconsin...

HESS: Iowa. Were there any other people who used to give you some news tips? Matt Connelly ever help out on anything like that?

FOLLIARD: We didn't mix with Matt Connelly very much. He seemed to disappear when we were on trips. I don't know where he went. He was kind of a likeable fellow, but I remember some men used to come in to see him at the White House. I used to call them the "Polo Coat Boys." They all seemed to wear polo coats, if you know what I mean, those yellow...

HESS: Who were they, do you recall?

FOLLIARD: Well, they were the people who got him in trouble. They used to come in there and then take him to lunch at the Mayflower or the Occidental or someplace like that. I've even forgotten now what his trouble was. I just know

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he was convicted of some sort of dishonesty. I felt sorry for him.

HESS: You mentioned the *Williamsburg*. Were you ever on board the *Williamsburg*?

FOLLIARD: Yes, just to visit. Whenever the President traveled on that, we would charter a yacht, unless it was a long trip, then we'd use a Navy destroyer, but he was on the *Williamsburg* and it was anchored off of Quantico, Virginia, one time, and we had got the loan of a yacht owned by Chrysler, the automobile man, a beautiful thing.

HESS: He could afford one.

FOLLIARD: Yes. And we were invited over to the *Williamsburg* for drinks. So, I chatted with the President briefly. I didn't like to monopolize him, so I left him and walked over and talked to Admiral Leahy. Then I went back to the President. I got there just in time to see him hand Felix Belair of the *New York Times* a medal, a holy medal. And Tony [Ernest B.] Vaccaro of the Associated Press said, "Oh, Mr. President, Eddie's going to be jealous. He's a Catholic, too."

I didn't know what this was all about, but somebody was always giving President Truman things, holy medals, St. Christopher medals, and all, and he just happened to give this to Felix Belair. And, at any rate, when I came

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up, the President said, "Oh, I'll keep Eddie in mind. I'll get him a medal." I didn't attach any importance to it. I thought it was just a pleasantry.

Well, months passed, and one day Charlie Ross called me into his office and handed me a box, I opened it and it was a beautiful rosary. He said, "Eddie, the President promised you something one time, and he had Monsignor [L. Curtis] Tiernan get this for you in Rome. It was blessed by the Pope." I think that was then Pius XII.

Well, here's a man, lord, with all of his concerns, in fact, with the fate of the world at stake, remembering something like that. I never got over it. Of course, I've cherished that rosary. I wrote the President a note thanking him.

He was about to make some important speech, and there was some saint, I can't even pronounce his name, St. John Chrysostom or something like that, who was known as "Golden Mouth," and officially or unofficially recognized as the patron of orators. So I told Mr. Truman that I would pray and ask "Golden Mouth" to intercede for him so that he would make a good speech. I've forgotten now whether it was a good one or not. But I mention that just to remind myself, really, of his thoughtfulness. I guess

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you gather from all this that Mr. Truman was a sort of a hero to me.

HESS: I gathered so.

FOLLIARD: He was and is!

HESS: One general question about the transfer of the site of the press conference. It started out and for the first several years was in his office, the Oval Room.

FOLLIARD: Yes, and had been for other Presidents.

HESS: That's right, and then the move was made over to the Indian Treaty Room.

FOLLIARD: Yes, Mr. Truman ordered that change. For one thing the Washington -- I'm a native of Washington, and this used to be a very quiet, southern town -- and earlier Presidents held press conferences and the presidential news conference was started by Woodrow Wilson, and it didn't work out very well. He finally abandoned it. At any rate, in his last years, as you know, he was paralyzed. Harding renewed the press conference and it was held in his presidential office, and Coolidge continued, but not very many people showed up for these press conferences. At any rate, after Harding pulled a boner, gave the wrong answer on some foreign policy matter, they required reporters to submit written questions and then the President could choose to answer

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any questions that he wanted to answer and ignore the others. Very unsatisfactory. Then Roosevelt abandoned that business of the written questions, and just had a free-for-all exchange with reporters. Mr. Truman continued that.

In the meantime, Washington was becoming more and more important as a world capital, and what is called the corps of Washington correspondents increased immensely. Not only did more and more newspapers send their own correspondents here, but foreign newspapers. Today, if you go to a Nixon press conference, you'll find reporters there from almost all over the world, including the Russians representing *Tass*. I think the Japanese have more reporters here now than any other country. At any rate, the thing got too big while Mr. Truman was President.

Then there were some things: People couldn't hear who were jammed up against the wall in the back, and it was also discovered that reporters were shaking their fountain pens sometimes and getting ink all over the carpet. So they looked around over the State Department and found a room over there known as the Indian Treaty Room, much larger than the President's office. So they arranged it, put seats in, and that was used for the press

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conferences. Ike used it, then they began to put the cameras in for TV, and Kennedy found it was too small, and he used a much larger room there in the State Department. I've forgotten the name of it, but it was like a big hotel ballroom almost. But Kennedy attracted an enormous number of reporters. Johnson didn't like the televised news conferences. He didn't have many of them. I thought he handled himself all right.

HESS: During President Johnson's first months in office, several of his news conferences were given while walking around the grounds, is that right?

FOLLIARD: Well, they weren't supposed to be news conferences.

HESS: Were you on any of those?

FOLLIARD: Oh, yes, but I had trouble walking, and I had to drop out. I hurt his feelings one day. I was walking alongside of him, and I said, "I'm getting tired, Mr. President, I'll have to stop."

He was so full of vigor, he couldn't imagine anybody, even if they were in pain, passing up his golden words. I think he was offended.

But I must tell you I was never among those who disliked President Johnson. I've always had great sympathy for the man holding that office. Not that it's what it's

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sometimes called, a terrible burden and all, it's a very nice job. A lot of things are done for a President to make that job nice, and the pay isn't bad either. But the responsibility is just terrific, and I have great respect for any man who holds that job, and also for the office itself. But I disliked this very much, this walking around and around and around out there on the south grounds, and people fighting to get alongside of President Johnson to hear what he had to say, then writing it down, on the run. It was a mess. We all had to get together later and exchange notes.

HESS: I understand one man broke his nose when he ran into a tree.

FOLLIARD: I'm not surprised. I retired before the Johnson administration was over, but I must say that I got along very well with President Johnson. He invited me to lunch several times, and he granted me one private interview late in the day over there in the little room next to his office. He gave me quite a shock in the course of the interview. It's understood when you see a President under those circumstances that you don't quote him. If he's agreeable you can write what he thinks, but no quotation marks. So when I went in to see him, I just erased everything from my mind to try to make it a clear slate so that

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I could remember what he had to say, and we had been talking a few minutes, and he said, "Eddie, don't you want to make notes?" He handed me one of these yellow lawyer's pads and a pencil.

HESS: You didn't have to remember all that after all.

FOLLIARD: I didn't have to remember a thing. I put it all down.

But I have a view of the Presidency after covering so many of them, Coolidge through Johnson, and I also happen to know President Nixon pretty well.

We've been very fortunate in our Presidents, I think. We've never had a President who could be called evil. We've had a couple, at least, who didn't use good judgment in the choice of friends, Ulysses S. Grant and Warren G. Harding, but none that you would call a rascal. So, I think we ought to feel pretty good about it, when you consider the kind of kings and kaisers and czars that some countries have had to endure.

HESS: One other general question: It is sometimes said that a majority of the working press are Democrats, or vote the Democratic ticket. Do you agree?

FOLLIARD: I imagine there was a time when most of them were Republicans, but beginning with the New Deal you could say that most of them were Democrats. I'm not sure that

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it makes a great deal of difference what a reporter's politics happen to be, that is, if he's an honest reporter. I'm making a distinction between a reporter and a commentator, or a columnist. If a President says something, or does something, the reporter writes a story telling what he said and what he did. If he works for a paper that is blatantly partisan, the reporter may be encouraged to get in a sneer here and there, but there are not many newspapers like that. I remember -- I know it's not a true story, but there was a story told about a Chicago *Tribune* reporter, I'm sure this was a joke...

HESS: Are you sure?

FOLLIARD: Yes. The *Tribune* was violently against Franklin D. Roosevelt. But the story is about this particular Chicago *Tribune* reporter, who was traveling with Roosevelt, and he started off his story this way: "Lying as usual, President Roosevelt today...so-and-so and so-and-so."

HESS: Their bias was obvious right at the first.

FOLLIARD: What most reporters -- good reporters, I have to say are objective, and I know all reporters who ever worked with me on the *Washington Post* were told that it was our job to give the reader the facts, and assume

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that the reader could make his own judgments; if the reader wanted any help, why, he could read the editorial page. That's the owner's page. That's where the owner has his say, and nobody should quarrel with that. But if the owner lets opinion creep into news columns, if I find a paper like that, I won't read it. I always assumed the reader was smart, and that given the facts, he could make a judgment.

HESS: You mentioned having a private interview with President Johnson. Do you recall the time that President Truman had a private interview with Arthur Krock?

FOLLIARD: Yes, I do. And some of the -- what we call the White House regulars, the reporters that covered the White House were very angry about it. I wasn't. Krock is a very distinguished journalist, and I later found out the circumstances and I think the private interview was justified. Krock was at some party, a party that was attended by President Truman and some of his Cabinet officers and intimates, and the President said something, made some remarks and Krock turned to one of Truman's associates and said, "Why doesn't the President let the public know how he feels about these things as he's made very clear here?"

And the President's associate said, "Well, maybe

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I can arrange for you to see him," or something like that. Maybe Krock told Truman that or something, I've forgotten, but it wasn't the first time. Krock had had private interviews with Roosevelt, I think.

I always liked and admired Krock. We are both members of the Gridiron Club, and that had something to do with it. I could never get angry with him. And Truman became angry when these reporters showed their anger. He made it very clear to them that he would talk to anybody that he chose to talk to. That was the end of that.

HESS: At the next press conference.

What would you see as the major accomplishments of the Truman administration?

FOLLIARD: I think we can see visible evidence of what he accomplished. I don't want to make sweeping assertions here that I can't back up, but had it not been for the Marshall plan, I just don't know what the situation in Europe would be. I know that West Germany would not be the booming country it is now, and would not be a very important factor in NATO. I just know that. I don't think France would be as well off. I don't think any of the countries of Europe would be in the shape they

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are now. I'm not saying that some other President might not have done what Truman did, but Truman happened to be there at the time, and it was a very bold thing, helping not only our allies, but our erstwhile enemies Germany and Japan.

Something else that is visible is NATO, what Ike called the "Wall of Peace" in Europe. People seem now to be losing interest in NATO, but I'd like to remind you that the Red army has never stepped outside the Iron Curtain since NATO was founded. I'd have to say it was a success.

The armed services now are integrated; remember I was in the Navy in World War I. We had some Negroes in the Navy, but they were all what we called mess attendants. They waited usually on the officers' tables. Now you have Negroes who not only are commissioned, but have high rank, warrant officers, chief petty officers. In the Army you have a Negro who retired recently as a lieutenant general, I believe. But you have Negroes all through the Army as commissioned officers, top sergeants, all the way through.

Truman left the economy in good shape. It used to be said -- I'll tell you who said it -- it was Frank Kemp of the *Baltimore Sun*. He was a great political writer. He said

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that "Prosperity absorbs all criticism." But there are exceptions. If prosperity had been a decisive factor, Adlai Stevenson would have won in '52. We had come out of the war very well, made the transition, the conversion. But as Adlai said, he couldn't beat George Washington.

Going back to Mr. Truman's achievements. You have the Department of Defense, which I think is an improvement over what we did have. We had a War Department, a Navy Department, and a Secretary of War, a Secretary of the Navy, and great rivalry between them. There's still rivalry. I'm not sure that's a bad thing, but at least they're all over there in the Pentagon, and there is a boss man.

When World War II started, we had no intelligence organization to speak of. They had G-2 in the Army, but we had to depend on the British for our intelligence for most of the war. So after the war, Truman set up the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Atomic Energy Commission.

We've been disappointed, of course, but one of the first things he did after becoming President was to announce that he was going to San Francisco to help launch the United Nations, and he did. In that connection,

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I heard him say more than once that had the United States joined the League of Nations, right after World War I, that a League of Nations strengthened by the United States might very well have headed off World War II. That's one of those unprovable things, but that's the way he felt about it, and who can say he was wrong.

I'm sure there are other things I could point to, a list of achievements. But I know one thing, Churchill is not the only historian who thinks Truman will rank very high among American Presidents. The *New York Times* took a poll of seventy-five historians, and they rated Truman -- I think they called him one of the "near-greats" along with one of Mr. Truman's heroes, Andrew Jackson, and Theodore Roosevelt. He was right in that layer. He never worried too much about this.

Roosevelt was very conscious of his place in history, he had what I call "niche trouble." But he made it. These seventy-five historians that I told you about, they put him right up there at the top with Washington and Lincoln.

Truman used to tell us about this inscription over a grave in Tombstone, Arizona, "Here lies Jack Williams: He done his damndest." He said, "That's all I'm trying to do."

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HESS: What is your estimation of Mr. Truman's place in history?

FOLLIARD: Oh, I'd certainly rank him near the top. A lot depends on what happens in a President's administration. I suppose you could have a Pericles in the White House, but after eight quiet years, he probably wouldn't be ranked very high.

There have been a lot of changes in ranking. Historians have, after research and reflection, have moved Presidents up or down. I think one man that they've pushed up higher is Polk.

I remember in my reading of history that when he ran for President, the opposition had the slogan, "Who is James K. Polk?" Well, I know that he was denounced at the time for starting the war with Mexico, but our country would be much smaller if it hadn't been for that.

HESS: Any other thoughts on those very eventful days of '45 to '53? What else comes to mind that we haven't covered dealing with your duties in the White House?

FOLLIARD: I must say that you're quite an inquisitor, and I think you've done very well. I think I've talked entirely too much.

HESS: I don't think you've talked too much, and I thank you very much for your time.

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FOLLIARD: I enjoyed talking to you, Mr. Hess.

HESS: I think that's about all for one day.

FOLLIARD: And if you should get back out to Independence, please give my best to Dr. Brooks, and especially to Rose Conway.

HESS: I certainly will. Thank you very much.

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