

Oral History Interview
with
GAYLON BABCOCK

Neighbor and longtime friend of Harry S. Truman

Longmont, Colorado

February 12, 1964 by J. R. Fuchs, Harry S. Truman Library

The Harry S. Truman Library
Independence, Missouri
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By J. R. Fuchs, Harry S. Truman Library

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FUCHS: Well, Mr. Babcock, we might start out with asking you to give us a brief sketch of your career, your life, where you were born, who your parents were, and your background in Missouri, and your subsequent activities up to date, just briefly.

BABCOCK: I was born near the little town of Waldron, Missouri in Platte County, just a few miles out of the city limits of Kansas City on August 7, 1887. I was born on this farm near Waldron in a log house. I had three sisters. My father was farming on shares the farm where I was born and working for the owner of the farm cutting wood and logs.

Several years after I was born, my father and mother were able to buy this farm; after purchasing my sisters' shares it is now owned by me. In 1904,

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Mr. Whitely, from whom we bought this farm, prevailed upon my father and mother to move to a farm that he owned, located in Jackson County, Missouri, now a part of Kansas City, Missouri. We went to that farm after Mr. Whitely had made my father a trustee for the part of his estate which controlled this property. My father had been prevailed upon by Mr. Whitely to take over this farm some two years before he actually did. However, my father refused to do this, because at that time, Mr. Whitely had a living son that my father thought perhaps Mr. Whitely should put on this farm rather than having my father do it.

FUCHS: Can you locate this farm by present-day landmarks, approximately?

BABCOCK: Yes, it is known as the Ruskin Heights area located one-half mile east of Hickman Mills, Missouri in Jackson County.

FUCHS: You moved to that farm, then, and resided there for a considerable time?

BABCOCK: Yes, as I say, we moved there on March 2, 1904. My father lived in the main house -- there were two other houses on this farm. The principal house, which was a rather large house, was occupied by our family

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until 1911 when I was married; I moved to a smaller house on this farm and my father and mother and sisters continued to live in the main house. My father was killed in an automobile accident in Tennessee in December, 1925; my mother continued to live in that house for another year and I continued to live in the smaller house.

FUCHS: Was that considered a lease at that time in 1904?

BABCOCK: Well, actually it is a rather hard thing to describe. Mr. Whitely had made and delivered, a warranty deed to this farm of 640 acres. This deed was made to my father and Mr. Whitely's four grandchildren and my father was to act as trustee. The division or partition was not to be made until the youngest child of these grandchildren became of age. But, suit was brought to set this aside; it was not settled entirely at the time of my father's death.

FUCHS: The point I was trying to bring out there -- Mr. Truman has told me that your father, at one time, leased a farm which was close to his farm, and I was wondering if that was this farm or another farm that he had in mind.

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BABCOCK: No, it was this farm. Let me correct one thing. When this warranty deed was written, in the description it was set out that my father was either to use it himself and pay the ordinary running rental of the neighborhood or to lease it out. You see, he had that privilege.

Now, that is probably where you got this lease arrangement. He had that privilege, and he chose to use it all and he rented other farms around. He was a fairly big operator for that time.

FUCHS: Actually, then, it was a slight misconception that your father was actually leasing this farm.

BABCOCK: Simply as a lease, that's right. He had the privilege of going either way, you see. And yet, that wouldn't have changed the intent here of the future ownership of it -- whether he leased it; he was to get a reasonable amount for handling it, see. He never made a charge in cash for serving as a trustee for the others, because he said in farming, "Oh, there are always things that you can't accept money for and you can't charge for." It's a going custom on farms that maybe things that have not a cash value do have a value to the person on the farm,

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don't you see! And, all those things entered into it.

Now, while I know that my father had done many things to justify his getting the fourth interest in this place and I know we did many things after that that an ordinary tenant would not do, my sisters and I were very comfortably fixed for a living, so that we chose not to go ahead and try and appeal these cases and try to hold our fourth interest that was set out for us.

FUCHS: In other words, the other heirs were contesting your right to a fourth interest and you decided to give that up. I want to come back, of course, to your life on the farm and your relationship to Mr. Truman, but, to go ahead, then, what did you do after you...

BABCOCK: Between the years of 1904 and 1925, there were various suits brought by different heirs in the Whitely estate because he had quite a big estate. The heirs were scrapping among themselves for certain things; they were trying to claim some of the things that one branch of heirs had inherited, don't you see, and break the will, and break, in this case,

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case the deed.

So, my father actually entered into some of these suits. I mean, he was named in the deed, and he joined the heirs that held this property jointly with himself and actually spent some of his own money on this. Some of these suits pertained to dislodging my father from this property, and changing the rental agreement and many things. And, it was in these suits, that we had, as witnesses, a number of our neighbors who were familiar with how the farm was handled by my father and the rent that was paid by other farm renters in the area. And Mr. Truman and Vivian

Truman, along with other neighbors, were always willing to work with us and help to see that we got justice in these suits.

FUCHS: What was the year of these suits, approximately?

BABCOCK: Mr. Abner Whitely, who owned this, died in 1908; the first suit was brought within a year and then there were numerous other suits at different times until the estate was settled.

FUCHS: Do you know if Harry Truman appeared as a witness?

BABCOCK: I do not recall if Harry ever appeared as a

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witness. I think he was never, probably, as far as I know, asked to appear. I think that Vivian and his father, J. A., especially Vivian, were more familiar with the farm operation than was Harry.

FUCHS: Was their appearance primarily in the role of character witnesses or to give testimony as to actual operation of the farm -- things that might interest the court in other ways.

BABCOCK: I think it was probably both; as a character witness and as a farm operator. I think it was how the farm was operated, whether the rentals were at the going rate of the area, and the type farmer my father was.

FUCHS: This evidenced, then, rather a close relationship, would you say, between your father and John Anderson Truman and Vivian Truman?

BABCOCK: Yes, that's right. And, of course, other neighbors of my father's, many other neighbors. Of course, we exchanged work at thrashing time, each and every year, with a circle of neighbors there, of which the Trumans were one. We were the best of friends and everything was agreeable; we never had a cross word with the Trumans. They were fine to

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work with. I know my father was with Harry in a business way more than I was, because I was some four years younger than Harry.

I know my father lent Harry money, different times. I handled my father's estate and I recall I saw some old checks that he'd given Harry for money that he'd lent him; and I found no place in closing this estate where Harry had not paid what he had borrowed -- that's where he had borrowed directly. I did find and did know about one unpaid note that Mr. Truman had endorsed in 1914 and guaranteed paid for another endorser. I personally went to Harry, after my father was killed, and talked to Harry about this, and Harry said he would see Mary Jane and Vivian and would take care of it right away.

FUCHS: Who was the other endorser on this note and what was the purpose...

BABCOCK: The name was Brauner. He worked for the Kansas City Auto Club.

FUCHS: Kansas City Auto Club, now that was in...

BABCOCK: That was located just west of Hickman Mills, a short distance.

FUCHS: That was their headquarters for their main activity?

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BABCOCK: No. I think they had it in Kansas City. This was over where they had the golf club. I've done a lot of business with the golf club. I owned two places of business in Hickman Mills.

FUCHS: How did John Anderson Truman and Mr. Brauner happen to be associated together in such a note?

BABCOCK: My father and J. A. Truman, Harry's father, were the best of friends. They were men who worked hard and they were the type men who enjoyed fellowship. Frankly they liked a good meeting where they could have a good nip of old Kentucky whiskey once in a while; both of them did. And at the Auto Club, this man, Brauner, as I recall, did have charge of the bar there and I would imagine that they were spending a little time there. Now, neither one of the men was a heavy drinker. They did not drink to excess, but they did enjoy a little fellowship of that type.

Now, while I was not there when the note was made, I know it was made. I have it now. I had talked to my father some about his papers. He was not a rich man but he did have quite a number of small loans out. In fact, he was a sort of banker

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for the neighborhood. In that neighborhood if a man needed a small loan, my father would lend it to him as my father liked his interest; and I have found many small loans that were not paid at all, or not paid in full. He trusted many people -- just about everybody. And, getting back to this one note...

FUCHS: What was the approximate date of this note, the year?

BABCOCK: It was not too long before his death. It was in May, '14. And, I think Mr. Truman died not too long after that; that probably was the reason it wasn't settled directly between the two men, because Mr. Truman was a man who paid what he owed.

FUCHS: He was really the co-signer on this?

BABCOCK: Yes, he was the co-signer and the other man either died or refused to pay. The reason that my father evidently asked Mr. Truman to sign it was that he didn't fully trust the other man. Co-signing is a common thing; this I do all the time now in my bank.

There is quite a long story on this particular note. My father could have bought some property at the time that Mr. Truman's personal property was sold at a farm sale, but my recollection is that he and Harry sort of had an understanding that Harry

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would take care of it later. For some reason it wasn't taken care of and it may have been because my father didn't demand the money, because my father was a man who refrained from dunning a man, who he thought was honest and would pay. That too, was a common practice, especially at that day and age.

But when it fell in my hands as administrator of my father's estate, it became necessary to see the signers of all these papers and the people who handled them and try to collect. And, it was in that way that I went to Harry's office in Kansas City and had a talk with him, after I had tried to collect from him earlier.

FUCHS: This would have been about what year?

BABCOCK: It was in January, 1927. That's when Harry told me that he would see his brother and sister and they would take care of it. A few days later, I got a very short, curt letter from Harry setting out that that was between my father and his father and he wasn't going to do anything about it. Now, I didn't like that at all, but, if he was going to say that to me, I felt he should have said it to me when I was in his office, rather than tell

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me that he would take care of it as soon as he saw Vivian and Mary Jane. Now, unto this day, I do not have the good feeling toward Harry that I'd like to have. I feel that once anything is owed, it is owed till it's paid.

FUCHS: Why do you think he changed his mind?

BABCOCK: I have no idea. I have dealt with people who would be nice to your face and get you away from them and then have the courage to say things they didn't have the courage to say. That is to me, the lowest type person. Now, whether it's that, I don't know, or whether he talked with his brother and sister and they refused to do anything, but I can tell you, I knew the Trumans for many years. I just do not believe that the brother and sister would take that attitude if they thought that their father had agreed to do something and it wasn't carried out. I knew it wouldn't be their wishes. I just can't believe it, especially true of Mary. Mary's my favorite.

FUCHS: Then you think that perhaps he didn't even bring this to their attention?

BABCOCK: Yes, if I had one guess, my first guess was that he actually never took it up with his brother

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and sister because there had been many years of ill feeling along money matters between Vivian and Harry. I knew Vivian well. I've talked many times with Vivian about the money matters in their own family. Vivian had a deep hatred toward Harry about Harry's having had his mother put a mortgage on her farm and he used the money and apparently didn't pay it. Vivian had talked to me a number of times about it and had said some very mean things about Harry in connection with this very act that Harry had done.

FUCHS: Can you remember any of those things that might point up the matter a little bit more precisely?

BABCOCK: I think, perhaps, Vivian had talked to me more about this because, first, he wanted to get it off his chest; he was mad at his brother for having had his mother mortgage her farm and maybe, for all I know, loaned him other money that came from other sources, from her personally. But, as I say, I think maybe that he realized that Harry had been borrowing some money from my father in connection with his operation of the haberdashery in Kansas City, and some other

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deals and as I recall some oil venture; the one check that I could find that I have now in the amount of \$1500, that my father had loaned Harry, on the corner in my father's handwriting, it was marked for loan (spelled "lond"). Now, I do not know the background of that...where those funds went or for what purpose.

FUCHS: What was the date of that check?

BABCOCK: That date was January 14, 1914. Now, I think the one time that we were talking about this money matter between Harry and Vivian, the most venomous remark Vivian ever made in my presence about this matter was when Harry returned from the First World War. Vivian and I were together and the morning paper, as I recall, set out that Harry and some other boys from our area were to return to Kansas City by train. I remarked to Vivian, "I see by the morning paper, that Harry's coming back this morning," and Vivian's remark was...he stomped his foot down and said, "Well, hell, you couldn't kill some people."

Well, that, of course, shocked me no end.

FUCHS: He said it in all seriousness?

BABCOCK: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Vivian and I were the best

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of friends and very close neighbors because at the time this happened, the farm that he was renting was only -- well, it joined the farm that I was living on. We lived less than a half mile apart, you see.

FUCHS: Was your farm contiguous to the Truman family farm? In other words, were there common fence lines?

BABCOCK: No. The Slaughter farm was between the farm that we were living on and the farm the Trumans were living on, owned by the Young estate.

FUCHS: This was what direction from the Truman farm?

BABCOCK: Our farm was northeast from the Truman farm. Well, part of the Truman farm was directly south of the farm we had.

Well, Harry Truman, now, and I never had a cross word, not one. Harry gave me some of my lodge work. I still belong to No. 618 at Grandview, Missouri, where he'd served as Worshipful Master; Harry was a very good lodge man. In fact, I have quite a number of times told people, in talking about Harry, that I think one of the things that helped develop him as a speaker and made it possible for him to get acquainted and become President was his Masonic work.

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FUCHS: Well, Mr. Babcock, you were telling, before I interrupted, a little bit about your close relationship with Vivian Truman. Would you elaborate a bit on that?

BABCOCK: Vivian and I, well, there was just two years' difference in our ages; we mingled with a young group before we were married. In fact, we went with sisters for a time. Of course, I was with Vivian more than with Harry and I think I knew Vivian's disposition as well as I knew the dispositions of my own folk; and I was with Harry and around him in working at his home, enough to know his disposition. I think Harry's disposition was more like that of his mother; well, Harry's and Vivian's dispositions both, were more like that of their mother than their father.

Mr. J. A. Truman was a very likeable man. Now, as against that, I think Harry's mother's disposition was rather short and caustic; and I can see in his remarks his mother's influence, bloodline, or something coming out all the time. I think it's showing more all the time in Harry's disposition.

When I refer to this sarcastic trait, that seems to run with the Youngs -- Mrs. Truman, Harry's mother,

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had been a Young. I knew Harry's uncle, Harrison Young, from having exchanged work. While Mr. Young did not work with us in our harvesting and thrashing, he was on the premises and we

were spending some time, especially around mealtimes with him, and I got acquainted with him and his disposition in that way.

FUCHS: How did he spend his time?

BABCOCK: Well, he seemed not to work. Now, he was getting up into years, you understand, Harrison was. I knew him by being with him there; I knew him better, maybe, from hearsay, because he'd been around in the country and so many of my neighbors had known him. He was known for being rather sarcastic and, well, I don't know whether the word's quarrelsome or not. But the most extreme case that I heard of -- now, I do not know this is true -- was that he and some of the neighbors got into an argument -- as I understand, each was on horseback.

FUCHS: Do you recall who the other neighbor was?

BABCOCK: No, I do not, because that was before we went down there. And, as I recall, either Harrison Young or the other neighbor attempted to shoot the other one. And, the one who was being shot at jerked the

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reins of the horse and the horse raised his head in the line of fire, and the horse was killed.

Now, I think that both Harry and Vivian had this kind of disposition more than did Mary. I think Mary was and is an admirable person.

FUCHS: Do you remember Harrison Young as being, would you say, quick-tempered?

BABCOCK: Yes, and a little on the bullish side. I say that, as I recall, he had a very good opinion of himself and of the entire family, and I think he carried it on his shoulders. I think he felt that maybe they were justified in a little more respect than the average person was justified to.

FUCHS: Would you say that Martha Ellen Young Truman, Harry's mother, was -- you say caustic, would you say she was dogmatic, rather opinionated, is that what you mean or am I putting words in your mouth?

BABCOCK: No, not necessarily. They were given to that a lot, you know, just sort of belittling you, you know, I hope you know what I mean. And, John Truman was just the reverse; instead of trying to embarrass you, he would try to make you feel comfortable and compliment you.

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I remember the last year that I worked with Mr. Truman, very well; and I think it was the last day on their farm, he had a little wager, probably in a joking way that I would be the first one in the field to go to work that morning; that is, the first one other than their own people that were on the

farm. And, sure enough, I, just fortunately, was the first one. We all had regular jobs then. I was a bundle hauler.

FUCHS: You're speaking now of the last harvest.

BABCOCK: Last thrashing on the Truman farm and Mr. Truman bet -- I don't know whether there was any money or not -- that I would be the first one.

FUCHS: Would this have been the fall of the year he died?

BABCOCK: It was in the summer, probably in July or August prior to the time he died, yes.

FUCHS: 1914?

BABCOCK: Yes, and, if you did a good job, he would compliment you. In a crowd, he tried to make it easy for everyone. Instead of not noticing maybe a water hauler or a child, he would notice them. And if you did a good job, he would compliment them. He made you want to do a good job. That's Mr. Truman.

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FUCHS: Now, on this thrashing crew, you say you were a bundle hauler. Now, what were some of the other jobs and did Harry have a job on this.

BABCOCK: The last time I worked with Harry, he was driving a bundle wagon. It was on our old home farm, the last time I worked with him. Harry looked after many things around when they were farming for themselves at their farm, you see. Harry's mother did not help in the dining room or kitchen when I was there being served at dinner. Harry and Mary, invariably, waited on the table for us when we were there as harvest help.

FUCHS: Would that be about the only time of the year that you would be on their farm?

BABCOCK: In their home, yes. That's right. At the harvest time.

FUCHS: Did you visit there sociably at other times?

BABCOCK: No, sir, I did not, not sociably. Vivian and I were, as I told you, in the same young crowd, but for some reason, we were never in their home in a young crowd. I do not know why. Now, they were at our house many times. I had three sisters and we had many parties and a lot of activity in our home; and

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frankly, Mary, if she ever had a boy friend, I never knew of it, never. And, she's single to this day.

FUCHS: Why do you think that's so?

BABCOCK: I think it wasn't because she was not attractive enough. You know, some girls are just so doggone fine, that for some reason or other, boys stand aloof, you know. I don't know. If Harry ever had any sweethearts other than the woman he married, I never knew it. Because, you see, his wife lived in Independence; at that time it was quite a distance from where we lived and where Harry lived, and I expect most of his courtship, no doubt, was over in that area.

He seemed to be more interested in National Guard work and in reading, and in music. When we were exchanging work at his home, if he had a little time prior to the serving of the meal, instead of coming out and associating with us men, who were waiting for a short time before we ate, he played the piano. It was very noticeable. Mr. Truman and Vivian, who were just the opposite disposition from Harry, seemed to have different interests.

FUCHS: Did you ever discuss this with other men there or...

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BABCOCK: Yes, we did. It could not help being noticeable.

Yes, I have been around the Trumans in many ways and I do recall one rather unusual occasion. There were eight of us men from around Hickman Mills and Grandview that went to Havre, Montana, on an Indian land drawing in the fall of 1913. The eight were the following men: Harry Truman, Vivian Truman, J. A. Truman, Leslie Hall, William Hall, Stanley Hall, Dr. Young, and myself. Eight men, four Democrats, four Republicans.

FUCHS: Who's Dr. Young?

BABCOCK: He was a veterinarian.

FUCHS: No relationship to the Youngs?

BABCOCK: No relationship to them. He was a man that had grown up in the area and had gone to school to be a veterinarian, and I had been in school with him in the Ruskin High School.

FUCHS: Do you recall his first name?

BABCOCK: Yes, Edward.

FUCHS: How did you go to Montana?

BABCOCK: We went on the train. I recall I was not together with these men after we returned home, but I do know that one of the Halls drew a claim. It's

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my recollection that my father lent Leslie Hall some money; and the son, William, accompanied an immigrant car with some livestock, machinery, and equipment from Grandview to Havre, Montana, to prove up on his claim. I think it was about two years later, he returned from there. It did not work out. It was a financial loss to him. That was not unusual in the case of these pioneers. As I recall, my father lent Mr. Hall some money to finance this project. Mr. Hall and my father, and Mr. Truman, were the best of friends. I am sure the Halls paid any money back to my father he may have gotten from him, because Mr. Hall was that type man and I find no record in my father's estate showing otherwise.

FUCHS: Did you say your father went with you?

BABCOCK: No.

FUCHS: Just you. Well, now, Harry Truman's name would have been in the drawing, and would his father's name have been in the drawing, too?

BABCOCK: Yes.

FUCHS: All eight would have been in. What was the intent, if you remember, say, if Harry Truman had drawn an allotment?

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BABCOCK: Well, now we discussed that. Of course, we had not seen this land. We had not driven out over it. We did get a car; we did go out, not all of us in the same car, of course, but I think, as I recall, Dr. Young and one of the Halls and I got in one car and drove out over some of this area to see what it was like. As I recall now, we decided that the land was unquestionably good soil, but we were dubious about the rainfall and about the winters and about the crops that were adapted for this, because much of the corn that we saw growing, not too far from this area, was very short corn and very different from the type crop that we were used to. And, had I drawn a claim, I'm not sure that I would have tried to have proven up on it. And William Hall did prove out to be a failure; I do not know whether it was altogether because of the possibilities there or it may have been because of the lacking of judgment, stability, stick-to-itiveness on the part of William Hall. That I will not know.

FUCHS: Five years was required?

BABCOCK: I think so, as I recall. Five years, yes; it was an Indian reservation. I'm not sure whether it was Rosebud Indian Reservation...I'm not sure which

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tribe of Indians it was.

FUCHS: I believe in the preliminary conversation, you said Fort Peck.

BABCOCK: Fort Peck Indian Reservation, I believe that's right.

FUCHS: You think that was correct?

BABCOCK: I believe it was. Of course, you know, that's a long time ago.

Now, there's another thing I remember about this trip. I think it was in the law that a former serviceman could have someone register his name in the drawing; as I recall, Harry was registering the name of a Spanish-American serviceman into this drawing. The name I do not know; but as I recall, one of the men there said that this serviceman could not go for some reason, sent his name for Harry to register, and Harry was getting half his trip paid for, for doing this for the serviceman.

FUCHS: I see, but he was also registering his own name?

BABCOCK: Oh, yes, and registering his own name.

FUCHS: And, his father was registered?

BABCOCK: Oh, yes we were all registered.

FUCHS: You don't know if this would have been a neighbor

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there or close relative?

BABCOCK : No. I do not know. He was a resident there, but I do not know.

FUCHS: Perhaps someone just asked him to do this. Do you know, if the intent -- say if J. A. Truman's name had drawn or Harry Truman had had his name drawn, was one or the other or both going to prove the thing out?

BABCOCK: That was never discussed. You know, in a drawing, it just almost couldn't have happened to have two or three in the same family -- there were, as I recall, some restrictions on this. Of course, that was something that would probably have to be worked out later, as Halls worked their case out. Now, I do not know what Harry, Vivian, and his father would have done, or what they planned to do. I doubt that they'd known until the drawing had taken place.

It's inconceivable to me, though, knowing Harry's disposition and his likes and dislikes, to have gone up and proven up on a claim. While maybe my judgment in the matter wouldn't have been good, I could hardly conceive of that. Now his father, and Vivian, I would judge to be more the rough, tough pioneering type,

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because, as I told you, Harry liked his music, he liked his lodge work. Frankly, I would say he was a little less rugged in his likes and dislikes. Now, you would not compliment me to say that of me, because I'm a rough and tough. All my life, a cowboy has been my greatest hero in the country. He still has to be a man, has to think on his feet for himself, has to fight his own battles, and that's what I like.

FUCHS: That's very interesting. Now, one more point. If, for instance, John Anderson Truman had had his name drawn, could that be transferred to another person?

BABCOCK: No. No, you cannot sell that. You cannot. You've got to prove up on it.

FUCHS: What about within the family? In other words, if Harry's name had been drawn, would he have had to prove it up?

BABCOCK: As I recall, it would have to have been kept in his name. Now, his father or his brother, probably, could have actually lived on it and kept it in his name and complied with the requirements such as maybe a building or some fencing or a well dug. Now that was my understanding.

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FUCHS: That's what I was wondering. If the name in which the allotment was made, if that individual had to actually reside there or if someone else could reside there and then the deed be issued in his name.

BABCOCK: Well, let me tell you this. Prior to our leaving Platte County there was a land run to Oklahoma Indian territory. My father and three other men drove from Waldron, Missouri, down to that area. I remember it very well, they had a spring wagon. And, as I recall, one of the men drew a claim, a man named Branum. He was a man with little or no means. And, as I recall, he was the man who owned the thrashing machine that thrashed our wheat in Platte County. My father lent him some money to do some work on this claim; my father attempted to take this claim as security for this money, or in some way obligated this claim so that there was some discrepancy in the regulations of the filing. Someone in searching the records found this discrepancy and jumped the claim, and they lost this claim because of that. Now, that was the last run in Oklahoma.

FUCHS: You say he drew a claim. You mean he rushed for the claim?

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BABCOCK: They rushed for the claim. That was the old drawing days, see. I do remember that. Of course, it was quite a time ago, I was pretty young, but I remember it. I hoped some day I could go down there. But, I don't know what the discrepancy was, but that happened. Over the years, it has been the practice of some men to search the records of the claims, hoping to find a discrepancy that has been made in proving up on them so that they can jump the claim and become the owners.

FUCHS: But, these allotments in Montana, they drew your name; then did they draw for a specific allotment?

BABCOCK: Yes, you didn't run for them. I think you drew a claim. It was all in sections, you know, let's say the NE, the NW, 16-36-14, and so on, so on. I think the earlier ones you ran and you saw an area you liked and you put your stake down and that was yours. But this was not that way.

FUCHS: How long did that trip take to Montana?

BABCOCK: We went by the way of Minneapolis and St. Paul. I think four or five days. We got there in the morning and took a drive out over the land. We then went through a line for the drawing and a train left

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that evening or night for home.

I remember coming back, I had a pair of shoes on that were hurting me. They just about killed me.

FUCHS: Do you recall any other incidents?

BABCOCK: Yes, I do. I remember an incident. At that time, Mr. Truman was having some stomach trouble. In fact, he'd been looking rather bad physically for a year or two, thin and, you know, like a man who had ulcers. He had been doctoring with a Chinese doctor in Kansas City and I remember on this trip, he showed me some medicine that this Chinese doctor was giving him. It was not a capsule or a pill. It was more in the form of a fruit, a cured, a dried fruit, more like a piece of dried prune; he gave me a taste of it, a taste unlike either a prune or a fig or a date -- evidently some dried herb or root from China or some oriental country.

FUCHS: By Chinese doctor, do you mean, an accredited medical doctor?

BABCOCK: He was a Chinese. I never saw the man, but he was a Chinaman. Now as far as having a state license to practice as a physician, I do not know,

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but Mr. Truman simply referred to him as a Chinese doctor. Now, evidently, Mr. Truman had been having some trouble for some time, because he had tried other doctors and had become dissatisfied with the treatment or the results he was getting. He was probably just trying anyone that he had heard of that had cured other people, maybe in cases that he thought were similar to his. I think that was more common than it would be now.

FUCHS: It was on this trip, that he did let you try this oriental herb or fruit?

BABCOCK: Yes, that's right. I think another incident that I remember so well -- that on this trip, we stopped at a news stand, in Minneapolis, and Mr. Truman got a small basket of the largest, finest peaches I've ever seen in my life, the most edible. Mr. Truman was a good farmer, liked to grow things, see them grow; he kept some of the seeds from these peaches and told me that he was going to plant them on their place. I know he must have done this, but I didn't get to talk to him about whether or not they sprouted, because he lived not too long after this, as I remember.

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FUCHS: Do you recall who initiated this idea of going up there?

BABCOCK: Actually, I'm not certain on this, but I think Harry did. I did not read about this, and my thinking now is that Harry was the first one to try and organize us, you know, to get together to go make this drawing.

FUCHS: The Halls were who?

BABCOCK: The Halls owned a thrashing machine for years that did the thrashing for both Truman's and our crops. They were neighbors there and lived in Grandview. They owned these thrashing machines and engines which did custom thrashing and other power work for the Trumans and us and other neighbors.

FUCHS: What would have been the principal farm implements that the average farmer, such as your father, or Mr. Truman would have had?

BABCOCK: Well, we owned our own binders, plows, harrows, discs, corn planters, drills, and other small implements. In fact, we owned all our, own gear except the threshing rig. After we bound the wheat, we went along and put it into shocks and let it dry out for some ten days or two weeks; then from

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there, we pitched it onto these bundle wagons.

Let me digress a little bit here. During the first war and following it, we had an organization of Communists in this country and that's the first I knew; we knew them as IWW's, Industrial Workers of the World; their slang name was "I Won't Work." Now, when we needed extra work in this harvesting and thrashing, my father would go to Kansas City to an employment agency and get extra help to come and pitch these bundles and do this work. There was one great big bully, red-headed, insulting man that we knew from his talk was one of these IWW's. He started his bullying and troublemaking. We had a fellow by the name of Charley Washer pitching bundles; that's the work this big red-headed IWW man was doing. He started to bully Charley Washer. Charley had been the captain of the Missouri University football team not too many years prior to this and was a huge powerful man, not a troublemaker, but a trouble settler. Well, he tore into this big red-headed guy, and the red-headed guy tucked tail and ran and we never

saw anymore of the IWW. I remember that so well. So that was my first knowledge of such a group of people known as Communists.

FUCHS: They were referred to as Communists?

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BABCOCK: Not then, they were known as the Industrial Workers of the World, but they were a part of the communistic movement, you see. Communism started many, many years ago; but not as Communists in this country. It was on Truman's farm where this happened, where this big red-headed guy was in the crew.

FUCHS: We were discussing the type of implements that might have been owned on your farm and on Mr. Truman's farm; evidently, a tractor was something you always hired?

BABCOCK: The steam or oil powered tractor simply provided the power for the thrashing machine. You understand, a thrashing machine represented a pretty big investment, and it was something you used only a few days in the year. Well, each farmer couldn't afford to own a thrashing machine, so it was owned by a party who made that a business. It was customary for each farmer to own his own binder, a machine that cut and bound his wheat, and for us to put it into the shock, and then pay so much per bushel to have it run through the thrasher. The owner of the thrasher employed and paid the man who operated the engine, and the man who operated the thrashing machine. All the other help was

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supplied by the land owner for whom he was thrashing wheat. That's where the Halls came in. They owned the thrashing machine, you see.

FUCHS: There is a Hall, who comes into the picture as having been a lady who ran the post office when Mr. Truman was postmaster, and he was supposed to have given her the salary.

BABCOCK: Ella Hall was her name.

FUCHS: Was she related?

BABCOCK: To the Trumans?

FUCHS: To these Halls you're speaking of.

BABCOCK: Oh, yes, she was their daughter. Ella was a sister to Cecil and young Bill and Stanley. Stanley was another brother.

FUCHS: Was Cecil in the post office also?

BABCOCK: Yes, I think he was at one time. And Cecil actually helped, you see, too, as a boy, on the machine owned by his parents, and young Bill, too.

FUCHS: So, Mr. Truman's acquaintance with these people, who lived in Grandview came about, probably, through this.

BABCOCK: Yes.

FUCHS: Do you recall Harriet Young, Mr. Truman's grandmother?

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BABCOCK: No, I just know the name, his grandmother.

FUCHS: Well, as I remember (I think I'm correct), she didn't die until 1909. She lived with...

BABCOCK: Yes, I believe that's right.

FUCHS: You don't have any vivid recollections?

BABCOCK: Not vivid. But I do know...she did live with them, didn't she? You know, I believe she did.

FUCHS: Yes.

BABCOCK: I remember her sitting in one of the rooms across the hall from where we'd go into the front. I think I do, yes. I do. I hadn't thought of that.

FUCHS: Well, of course, when she died -- the farm was really in her name, because her husband, Solomon, had died some years before, and you may recall, she left the farm to her daughter and to Harrison Young and there were a certain number of contests of this. Do you recollect any?

BABCOCK: No, I'm not familiar about that. I'm really not familiar about the division of the land. As far as my knowledge, Mrs. Truman got the entire tract there that I'm familiar with, which was around 700 acres. I thought after Harrison Young's death (I had the understanding, I don't know how I got it, that that was

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inherited 50-50 by Harrison and Mrs. Truman, brother and sister), that she got it all. Now, that's merely hearsay. I wouldn't know how authentic that is, I don't know; but Vivian and they all spoke of it as Uncle Harrison's and Mother's -- not Mother -- what did he call his mother?

FUCHS: Mama.

BABCOCK: Mama -- that's it. I remember it was very unusual for grown people to say "Mama." You know it is. Now, I called my mother, "Mother," and a lot of them said "Mom," or something like that, but for a grown...kinds say "Mama," but they drop it.

FUCHS: We always used "Mom" in our...

BABCOCK: Yes, sure. Now that's one thing that I remember I'd forgotten. You just prompted me on that. I know Vivian said "Mama" all the time. As I recall and Mary Jane, as I remember, referred to her mother as "Mama." I know Vivian did.

FUCHS: Well, of course, I am sure you know that Harry did.

BABCOCK: Oh, yes, sure.

FUCHS: Because he's written these, what they call "Dear Mama" letters.

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BABCOCK: Sure, all the time Mama, Mama, Mama, and she'd say...she used to have certain little sayings...she used to say "fiddlesticks" and stuff like that, you know, because I know by some of his business ventures that he would need to be reminded to be on his guard, to be a good boy.

FUCHS: One reason, I asked about anything you might remember of his grandmother was I wondered if this same trait had been noticed by you that was evident in Martha Truman, his mother?

BABCOCK: Yes, that's right. Now, I'll tell you. Now, that you mention that, I can remember now of having seen her, but she was senile. I never heard the woman speak. I never heard her say one word to any of them. Now, I wasn't in her presence or near there any length of time. She just sat there, motionless, in her chair; you knew she was there when you saw her, that's all. I had forgotten that.

FUCHS: Well, apart from your visiting during thrashing times, you did go to the farm to get Vivian to go out. Were you around the farm anytime other than that?

BABCOCK: Oh, I had been on the farm other than that, but only on rare occasions. Yes, only on rare occasions.

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FUCHS: Do you recall John Anderson Truman being hurt in 1914 in connection with his activities as a road overseer?

BABCOCK: I knew him well as a road overseer, because at that very time, in a district where I lived, I had a road drag furnished me by the county. When the road needed dragging, I did it and was paid a small sum for this.

FUCHS: You didn't have the title of a road overseer?

BABCOCK: No, no, I did not. I was working under another road overseer. Yes, that's right, but not to Truman.

FUCHS: Oh, you weren't under John Anderson...

BABCOCK: No, it was under another road overseer. That's right. And, I do not recall Mr. Truman having had any accident.

FUCHS: A road overseer would have a district and in a township there might be more than one district?

BABCOCK: I think that perhaps there were more than one because it was done by horses mainly and you couldn't go that distance, you see, to cover much area.

FUCHS: Was it customary for a farmer to take this position or was it customary for someone who lived in town and needed a job to take it?

BABCOCK: As far as being customary, I would not say that

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there was any fixed custom in this thing. It was not a full-time business, you know.

FUCHS: It was a paid job?

BABCOCK: Oh, yes. It was considered a political job. Yes. They earned all they got, if they did a good job, and Mr. Truman did a good job. But that, as far as I know, was Harry's first venture into a political job. I'm satisfied it was, and his father ahead of him.

FUCHS: Do you recall anything of Mr. Truman's activities in connection with the road overseer job which he succeeded to after his father died?

BABCOCK: You mean Harry's?

FUCHS: Yes, any incidents?

BABCOCK: Well, I do not remember any incidents. I do know that Mr. J. A. Truman and my father often sort of joked about politics. They were the best of friends and while nationally and locally, too, Mr. Truman was a Democrat, I know Mr. Truman used to sort of electioneer for certain county officials, like judges. My father always supported Democrats in local county jobs,

because it was almost impossible to get a capable man to run on a Republican ticket since there was so little chance of being elected. So, they worked together a lot in

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harmony in the state and county. When Harry first ran for eastern judge in Jackson County, I voted for him.

FUCHS: That was in 1922?

BABCOCK: Was it? I've forgotten. There were factions in the Democratic Party in the Kansas City area at that time. Harry was supported by the Pendergast machine, and I felt it was not promoting the best candidates. That was when I fell out with him and I never again voted for Harry Truman for anything. I voted locally for Democrats in the state and in the county; I supported Governor Stark and Milligan, who were in another faction. It was like two parties. The faction Harry was with and that faction were actually further apart than the Democrats and the Republicans.

FUCHS: Did you consider yourself a member of one of the factions?

BABCOCK: No, sir. No, I never was, and, I got the appointment of postmaster under a Republican, you understand, because nationally we were Republicans.

FUCHS: You followed the same political leanings as your father did?

BABCOCK: Yes.

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FUCHS: But you didn't feel that it was wise to vote Republican locally?

BABCOCK: No, for the reason I told you. So seldom a capable man ran on the Republican ticket in our area because there was so little chance of being elected, he couldn't afford to give too much time to that.

FUCHS: Did you vote straight Democratic locally then?

BABCOCK: Oh, no, I market my ticket. There were cases, yes. Now I will tell you something. Even today, in Butler, Missouri -- now I vote here of course -- but in Butler, Missouri, where I voted just a few years ago, why, naturally, I would support some of our local Democrats because they were the best men in many cases. But everything else being equal, I am a Republican here, there, and yonder, and I am now a stronger Republican than I ever was because I think the Democrat party could just about be called a socialist labor party. And, I want that to go in here.

FUCHS: It's in. You don't recall anything about Mr. John Truman's health and confinement just prior to his death that might be of interest to us?

BABCOCK: Mr. Truman was an outdoor man, hearty; and

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prior to this probably cancerous condition, he was a very hearty man, not a big, strong man, but just about a 150-pound man, and muscular...yes, outdoor man and, I thought, of good health prior to this.

FUCHS: Do you remember whether Harry had his leg broken?

BABCOCK: Yes, I knew of it. I knew of it, but I didn't know the details. I do recall, but I couldn't tell you the year or the details.

FUCHS: Do you remember Mr. John Truman having a leg broken?

BABCOCK: There again, I knew it happened, but I do not know whether it was on the road work, on the farm, or whether a horse kicked him, I do not know.

FUCHS: Did you ever hear of a lady coming there in buggy and having the buggy overturn and her being hurt?

BABCOCK: No. I did not.

FUCHS: Did you ever hear a rumor that the Young farm was jinxed because of this series, of leg-breakings, so to speak?

BABCOCK: No.

FUCHS: Did you ever hear it said that Harry Truman was so good at castrating pigs that when he sharpened his knife, the pigs ran out to pasture?

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BABCOCK: Nothing could surprise me more than that. I knew his father was good, I knew that Vivian was good, but actually I never knew that Harry ever castrated a pig; and I'll tell you, this I know, Harry did not have the reputation of being a strong man. This I know, because I worked with him. As Vivian often said, "If we have to move a heavy implement, like a rack, on which you haul bundles off the gear, I would go to one end of the rack and my father and Harry to the other," because Vivian was strong, very strong for his size. I told you some ill feeling (I've referred to it), between Harry and Vivian existed because of money matters. When Harry got ready to go to the First World War -- well, I saw Vivian every few days then -- Vivian said, "I don't know how in the world he ever got it. Take his glasses off, he wouldn't know me across the fence." You see, his eyesight was that bad. I remember that remark so well.

FUCHS: Well, did Vivian ever remark about Mr. Truman's activities in the National Guard, Missouri National Guard?

BABCOCK: Oh, yes.

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FUCHS: What did he think of Harry participating in that?

BABCOCK: This was just one of the activities that kept Harry away from the farm, and it was his being away from the farm work that Vivian objected to. Actually Vivian and Harry just never got along too well. I mean there was just that feeling well, they had different likes and dislikes.

FUCHS: You don't recall any specific developments?

BABCOCK: No, I wouldn't say so.

FUCHS: What about Harry's ability to stick a calf or cow for bloat?

BABCOCK: I never heard. I would say that Mr. Truman and Vivian, either one, would qualify as fair to good farm veterinarians. And, that's the kind we used to know. Harry would be the last one that I would think of to be good at that, because I've never seen him do any of it. I've never seen him do any of it. I've never seen him talk about it. I've never seen him show any interest in it.

FUCHS: Did the average farmer stick a cow for bloat?

BABCOCK: Oh, I've done it myself, using a trocar.

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A trocar is an instrument that you use to stick a cow for bloat. Now, I learned from my father and my grandfather to make my own trocar as follows: I would run the small blade of my pocket knife through the pith of a section of a corncob, allowing about three-quarters of an inch of the blade to protrude from the cob. This I would use to pierce the bloated animal. The area to be pierced was determined by measuring from the hip bone to the rib structure. I have lost a number of cattle from bloat, but I don't recall having lost any that I found in time to use a trocar on. Both my grandfathers were farmers, who lived in Platte County, where I lived as a boy. My grandfather Babcock and my grandfather Naylor were both the veterinarians in their respective communities.

I sometimes went with them to treat the animals or was at their homes when animals were brought to them for treatment. The one treatment that I best remember was the bleeding of a horse; this was usually done in the spring. It seems that in winter the horse became rundown, the hair appeared dead, and the skin rough. It was thought that the horse needed a good portion of old blood let out of the veins so that it could replace

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this with new blood. To do this, they had a surgical instrument about the size of a large pocket knife. This instrument had 4 different sized lances which folded into it. They had a choice of using the lance, depending on the depth the incision should be. The vein in the neck was cut, and from this the blood would spurt out as much as two feet in some instances and was allowed to drain until the horse began to quiver and seemed about ready to fall. And then my grandfather would use his index finger and thumb to close this gash until the blood coagulated. Actually the blood-letting treatment was given to people.

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FUCHS: You wouldn't give much credit to the story then that he was an expert at sticking a cow for bloat?

BABCOCK: No. To Mr. Truman and Vivian I would give the credit for being able to and doing this work. Harry's father had been a dealer and trader in livestock and had handled quite a number. Vivian was interested and had considerable ability in this. I think Harry was given undue credit for a lot of these things. I think I have just reason for making that remark. I think somebody was actually trying to build up something

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for Harry which really belonged to his father and his brother.

FUCHS: What did he usually do on the farm, for instance on the thrashing crew? What were his specific jobs?

BABCOCK: I believe I told you the last day I worked with him, he was on a bundle wagon, but that wasn't ordinarily his work. In fact, he had no set place to work, I mean, he may be doing that job one day and maybe something else on another day. He was not known as a bundle wagon man. Or, he might drive a grain wagon, you see. Frankly, he didn't stay on the job very steadily. I'll tell you that.

FUCHS: Even when they were thrashing?

BABCOCK: No. He was doing different things. For instance, he might be arranging to have railroad cars available to be filled with grain -- a necessary item. I believe I told you, he might be considered more of a utility man to fill different places. I'm not trying to belittle the man. In fact that's somewhat of a compliment, you know, to be able to fill in in different things.

FUCHS: Did he have any particular means he sometimes

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employed to get cars when they were scarce?

BABCOCK: Yes, I think he knew that most of those railroad men like a quart of good whiskey at a time when whiskey was so hard to get and hard to come by; and he could use that pretty readily and did.

FUCHS: He was resourceful

BABCOCK: Yes. I believe I told you that when he was at their home place, that he invariably helped in the house at noon and some days throughout the day. It was a pretty big chore to make and serve these big dinners. And, he did help a lot in his own home. And, I believe I did tell you that it was his habit, if we had some extra time around noon, not to be out with the men, joking and talking, but to go and play the piano. Something like this was more appealing to him.

FUCHS: What do you think of the statement attributed to his mother that Harry plowed the straightest furrow?

BABCOCK: The Trumans were just one of a group of the better farm families of the community and yes, his work was neat. His father was a very neat farmer; and I do know, had he been working on the farm when his father was there, his father would have seen to it that he would have plowed a straight row, if a straight

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row was the best kind to have, because his father was a good farmer. He inherited that trait from his father, perhaps. He didn't necessarily develop on his own because he had a good example ahead of him.

FUCHS: Did you ever observe him plowing in the field?

BABCOCK: I have, yes sir, and they did have their crops in straight rows. They were good farmers.

FUCHS: How long was Vivian on the farm there, after you knew them?

BABCOCK: I'd say Vivian was on the farm after I knew them maybe five or six years.

FUCHS: Did he work a different farm after he got married?

BABCOCK: I distinctly remember at least 3 different farms he farmed after he got married.

FUCHS: The point I was making, you went there in 1904 and then Mr. Truman went back to the farm in 1906 and I was wondering when the major farm load would have devolved on Harry and John Anderson after Vivian left?

BABCOCK: Since Mr. John Truman died in 1914, I think it would have been only about two years.

FUCHS: It's hard to remember the exact time. Well then, Vivian would come back at thrashing time?

BABCOCK: Yes, he did, actually. It was very little time

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that the real farm load was carried by Harry, because Harry was away a lot. I'm quite sure of that.

FUCHS: He was on the farm there from '06 until '17 when he went to the Army, which was ten or eleven years.

BABCOCK: Yes, I know it, but, I'll tell you, Vivian was always available to his mother on that farm. While I always thought Harry was his mother's pet, I think, without a doubt, that at all times, they were counting on Vivian more than Harry as a farmer.

FUCHS: Even after he left the home place?

BABCOCK: Yes, that's right.

FUCHS: One writer has pointed out that Mr. Truman became sort of a pioneer in scientific farming. I'm speaking of Harry Truman, and he increased productivity there by things that we know of as crop rotation, soil conservation, weed control and the neighbors scoffed at his attempts to keep records of actual cost per acre on his various crops and so forth. Would you have any comment on this?

BABCOCK: Farming practices were changing a lot during this period, and the better farmers were all more-or-less following the same practices. And since Harry was more

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of an inside man than most farmers, I would guess that he would be more interested in keeping a set of books that would show the exact results than most farmers would. But this fact would in no way make any difference in the actual profit and loss. I have no reason to believe that Harry Truman's method of farming was one whit better than the methods that his father or Vivian used. Harry Truman's first interest was not farming. I had sources of information that went to prove he was not a profitable farmer.

FUCHS: Do you think that he introduced labor-saving equipment which other farmers were not doing at that time?

BABCOCK: The Young farm, which they were farming, was one of the few of the larger farms -- about 700 acres. Naturally the smaller 80 and 160 acre farms could not support larger, labor-saving equipment; but of the large farms in the community by 1906, all that I knew had larger and more modern equipment. In fact, we had these in 1904. Actually my father worked with the John Deere Plow Company test proving some of their modern machinery.

FUCHS: Would you say that this is a fair statement, that

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others in the community sort of looked askance at or questioned Harry Truman's use of labor-saving equipment instead of employing more farm hands?

BABCOCK: Many people made comments on this then, but perhaps not so much as they are today, I think this will always be so.

FUCHS: What I was getting at, this one writer has indicated that some of the old people, presumably the old people, who were more set in their ways, were concerned that he would employ labor-saving equipment instead of employing more farm hands. In other words, providing more work. Do you ever recall hearing anything to that, sir?

BABCOCK: No, sir, not directed to Harry Truman or anyone else in particular. It is, and has been, a short-sighted viewpoint. As you well know, because of union labor's strength, this has led to featherbedding.

FUCHS: I was just wondering if you had heard anyone criticize him on that score and say, well, Harry should be hiring more people, instead of using those gang plows. You never...

BABCOCK: No, sir, I did not. But, I'll tell you what he did do. This I know. When he was running for office, he was advocating combining two or three or four

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counties throughout the state and having one county seat cover each area because of the use of the automobile to replace the old horse and buggy.

FUCHS: He advocated reducing the number of counties in the state.

BABCOCK: I was for it. But when he became the county judge, as I recall, he advocated having two county seats in Jackson County, where he was serving. This was the comment you often heard; but really this was practical to have two county seats, one in Kansas City and one in Independence.

FUCHS: There's an article which states that he helped to organize the Jackson County Farm Bureau in 1913. Do you know of that?

BABCOCK: I think that's true. I was approached by a Mr. William Palmer to become a member when it was organized -- Mr. Palmer and others who were helping in this organizational work. And I did take out a membership.

FUCHS: Does the name Brownie Huber mean anything to you?

BABCOCK: Yes sir. Brownie, they called him. He worked for the Trumans on the farm. I remember him well. He helped with the thrashing.

FUCHS: Was he a neighbor down there? Did he have a farm?

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BABCOCK: Oh, I don't think he farmed on his own. I think he simply worked there as a hired man, as I remember.

FUCHS: Do you recall any incidents involving him?

BABCOCK: I know he used to drive a team for them. I know he was very...well, he was a working Democrat. He wasn't particularly skilled in any way and not a very deep thinker. I would classify him as this: Just Hank, the hired man, you know.

FUCHS: Did he live at the farm?

BABCOCK: I think he lived either off the farm or in a tenant house on the farm.

FUCHS: How old a man was he?

BABCOCK: Well, as I recall, he was younger than Harry; yes, I think he was even younger than Vivian. Kind of a slender fellow. I have a mental picture of him.

FUCHS: Do you recall about how many years he was there?

BABCOCK: Oh, I think he helped them quite a while. I wouldn't know for how many years. I don't think he was on steady all the time for over that long a period, but when they needed him, I think he was there over quite a period of time. Yes, he worked there and I remember him very well.

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FUCHS: He worked at times other than thrashing time?

BABCOCK: Oh, I think so.

FUCHS: Would he have been the only one that would normally have given them farm aid there, except at thrashing time?

BABCOCK: I expect he would have been, other than thrashing time, not maybe just the only one, but I think they would depend on him more and over a greater length of time than any other one that I know of.

FUCHS: Were there a great number of hired hands -- that's aside from the neighbors who came in to help; I assume they came in on a mutual exchange basis.

BABCOCK: That's right. Not a great number, no.

FUCHS: There would be some hired hands at thrashing time?

BABCOCK: Oh, yes. But you mean as other than thrashers?

FUCHS: No. I'm speaking now of thrashing time.

BABCOCK: Well, as I told you, we did have extra men. My father, as I believe I told you, would go up to the employment agency and get some extra help for us and maybe a couple of extra men. We had one old Negro we kept all the time and two white men we kept all the time, regularly.

FUCHS: But it was usual for the other neighbors to come and

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help each other thrash?

BABCOCK: Yes.

FUCHS: And, then there'd be a certain number of hired hands?

BABCOCK: Yes. We had some. It depended on the size farm you operated, you see. If you had four times as much grain or acres to harvest, you'd expect to have four times as much help or pay the difference in money.

FUCHS: Would you class him as a successful farmer?

BABCOCK: Now that would depend on your definition of success. Some people would say you'd look only at the bank account to determine whether or not the man is a successful farmer. Another man might look at the farm, the condition it was in one year, and then five years later. If he'd improved its condition, its fertility, built fences, filled hollows, he'd put his success in that. So, I think you have to consider everything. And, if I had to consider everything, I would hesitate. I think Harry probably was not financially a successful farmer. I think he would take good care of the farm, maybe. And, I think he would take good care of his teams and his stock, yes.

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But I doubt that he'd make much money.

FUCHS: You think that had something to do with his father becoming a road overseer and his subsequent taking over that position?

BABCOCK: I think perhaps it did. But in addition to that, this overseer job was a political one and it was one way to keep active in politics. And this certainly carried a lot of weight with the Trumans.

FUCHS: It could have been a matter of utilizing spare time and also an interest in supplemental funds.

BABCOCK: Yes. They did not neglect the farm work to take care of the road work.

FUCHS: Do you recall Mr. Truman's father serving as an election judge in the Grandview precinct?

BABCOCK: No. I don't. Because we voted down in the Hickman Mills precinct.

FUCKS: Do you recall anything in connection with Harry, as far as serving as a clerk in the election?

BABCOCK: No, but since they were interested in politics, I expect you'll find them wherever there's anything political.

FUCHS: When did you leave the farm?

BABCOCK: In 1926. I kept on farming after I was in

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other things. I think it was in '21 or '22, I bought this business in Hickman Mills but I continued to live on the farm.

FUCHS: That was your first other interest than the farm?

BABCOCK: No. I was interested in this bank in Kansas City before I bought the business.

FUCHS: Oh, is that right?

BABCOCK: Oh, yes. I told you I was dabbling in different things.

FUCHS: What bank was that?

BABCOCK: Well, it's now the University Bank, 63rd and Brookside. I recommended and helped employ the present president of that bank, his name being Logan Wyrick. He was formerly with the Park National Bank at 47th and Troost, where I had banked.

FUCHS: Was he acquainted with Harry Truman?

BABCOCK: I never saw them together. I wouldn't say whether they were acquainted.

FUCHS: When did you become associated with the Lodge in Grandview, the Masonic Lodge in Grandview?

BABCOCK: Offhand, I'd say about '23.

FUCHS: Who brought you in?

BABCOCK: Who what?

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FUCHS: Who influenced you in joining the Masonic Lodge? Did somebody ask you to join?

BABCOCK: No, you don't do that in Masonry.

FUCHS: You don't?

BABCOCK: No, you petition for membership. I'll tell you who influenced me to join, my mother. Her people were all Masons. Anyone of any importance belonged to a Mason Lodge out in those areas in the early times. Well, to her, if you weren't a Mason, you weren't much. I'm not a lodge man; I do not attend. I do keep up my dues. I went in it mostly to satisfy my mother. A man by the name of Palmer, who was a rural carrier, a wonderful man and a farmer, outside of my mother, was the next influence. He gave me my work, coached me. You know you have to memorize the work. I think it was the third that Harry gave me, as I recall.

FUCHS: What do you mean, gave you a degree. Do you mean he did the coaching for that degree or he examined you?

BABCOCK: Yes, examined me.

FUCHS: What year was that?

BABCOCK: I was trying to think. Well, I believe it was '23.

FUCHS: Does anything stand out in your memory about that?

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BABCOCK: Yes, I attended lodge then a number of times; and Harry would come in (I think he wasn't there all the time), and he did a good job in the lodge work. Excellent. He was an excellent director. If things weren't going right along smoothly, Harry would come in and get them to going. He was a good lodge man.

FUCHS: You'd say he's a pretty good organizer?

BABCOCK: Yes, yes, I think he's a pretty good organizer. He could do better at organizing and handling people like that than Vivian could, even though I liked Vivian much better and his father better than all the rest of them.

FUCHS: Do you know of a man named Jerry Culbertson?

BABCOCK: I cannot recall a Jerry Culbertson.

FUCHS: Mr. Truman was associated with him in an early venture in a lead or zinc mine.

BABCOCK: Oh. I remember that venture. You don't know what year that was?

FUCHS: Well, that was probably about '15 or '16, I've never had that pinned down as to exactly what year that was.

BABCOCK: By golly, I had a venture in lead and zinc, and the man I was with was Haley. And, I'll tell you,

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the name Campbell; you know I told you that Vivian married a Campbell, daughter of Curt Campbell. Curt Campbell and Bill Campbell -- do those names mean anything to you?

FUCHS: No.

BABCOCK: They had large farms, nice big farms right north of Hickman Mills, right north of where we lived. Someone came in and paid them a high price, a lot of money to them in that day coming in cash. What did they do? Like everyone else who gets a large amount of money when he's not familiar with having all that cash on hand, he is duped by somebody who finds out about it; and there's always somebody out to get it. A contractor was building a road there and got them interested in buying stock in a lead and zinc mine out of Joplin. And they got my father interested. The two Campbells and this contractor (Davidson, I believe), bought an interest in this mine. Gee, they were getting a check for several hundred dollars a week. So the Campbells wanted my father and me to go to Joplin and inspect this mine, and they'd sell us an interest in it. We went. We went down in the mine; there was about a twenty-six foot vein of lead and zinc with not too much overburden, you see. Oh, it

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was rich, gee whiz, I mean, they were getting just massive amounts of money out of that thing for the day.

At that time I had \$2,625 in cash in the bank. My father, I think, put in \$5,000, and I put in \$2,500. We hadn't been working that vein but for a few days till the sheriff came up there and stopped the thing. I wasn't there; I was up on the farm. All right, you know what happened? This Haley, that owned this, the biggest crook in the world, had mined this mine out. They were actually, at the time they sold us and the Campbells, mining on another property. Well, the owner of the other property, suspicious or something, found it out and got an attachment, see, and the sheriff stopped the working of the mine. We lost all the money we put in it.

FUCHS: You mean they'd just left this one seam there to show people?

BABCOCK: No, they were actually working it, but they were working off of their property onto the other property underground. You see, they had an overburden of say 30 or 40 feet. That's what they did to us. That's another experience of life I had. There were

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all kinds of things going on back there.

FUCHS: In other words, you bought into a mine that was mined out?

BABCOCK: That's right. Just a rube deal, that's what it was; getting into something you didn't know anything about.

FUCHS: Did the name David Morgan come into your ken?

BABCOCK: No, sir, I don't remember Dave Morgan.

FUCHS: Do you know anything of the oil venture that Mr. Truman was involved in?

BABCOCK: Nothing other than what my father mentioned just offhand and what Vivian had mentioned about him losing that money. It was pretty generally known in the community, though, that he did get in...I think that was a sizeable amount of money.

FUCHS: You never were in the offices of that company in Kansas City?

BABCOCK: No, I was not.

FUCHS: Did you ever discuss politics with Harry when you were on the farm together?

BABCOCK: No, sir. Not with Harry.

FUCHS: Did you ever see Bess Wallace on the farm, down on the farm? Did she visit there, do you know?

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BABCOCK: I never saw her on the farm. No. I never did. But, I can tell you what I have seen and know of her family, I think she's a wonderful person. I think she handled herself well when she was in the White House. She stayed, I think, where a lady would stay. She never pushed herself. You know that. That's a matter of record. I think she was a good influence on Harry.

My sister and Harry's sister were together a lot for years and still are. They were in the same crowd. They'd go to Eastern Star together.

FUCHS: This is your youngest sister?

BABCOCK: My youngest sister, Mrs. Roy Moore. Yes, she lives in Hickman Mills. And it was through Harry Truman that my brother-in-law was appointed postmaster at Hickman Mills. He had served under me as assistant postmaster prior to the time of his appointment.

FUCHS: Was this when Mr. Truman was President?

BABCOCK: He was Senator; but anyway, he got his appointment through Harry. And, Roy Moore, my brother-in-law, was always very strong for Harry.

FUCHS: Your sister, what was her first name?

BABCOCK: Clara.

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FUCHS: And she was a good friend of Mary Jane?

BABCOCK: Oh, yes, the best. They are today. They go together a lot now, many places.

FUCHS: Eastern Star is an auxiliary of Masonic and she would have gotten into that through her brother, then?

BABCOCK: Yes, Mary Jane would through Harry or Vivian either.

FUCHS: Vivian's a Mason too?

BABCOCK: Oh, yes. He too had served as worshipful master at Lodge No. 618 at Grandview, Missouri.

FUCHS: John A. Truman was?

BABCOCK: I don't think so. If he was, I didn't know it

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FUCHS: Do you remember when Mr. Truman was about to open the haberdashery? This would have been after the war. Now what contacts did you have with Mr. Truman after the war?

BABCOCK: That was after the war. He opened that with a fellow named Jacobson, a Jewish gentleman. The wife of one of our next door neighbors in Kansas City was a sister to Mr. Jacobson. My father lent Harry some of the money with which to buy into this haberdashery. He also lent Harry money at different times for various

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purposes.

FUCHS: Did you ever go into the store?

BABCOCK: Yes, I have been into the store with a mutual friend of Harry and me. They had a nice looking store there, a good location, but as you know, it didn't work out. It just plain failed, that's all. They just didn't make it.

FUCHS: They've always attributed that to the Harding administration and that period of depression.

BABCOCK: Well, that's sort of like luck. If you get along, you take credit for it. If you fail, you say it's bad luck; you don't take the blame for it. It's just a condition. So. I think that would apply here. All people didn't go broke then, and a lot of people made money. It's just as I told you, a good operator usually makes some money all the time and quite a bit in good times.

FUCHS: Do you remember talking about his failure there, at the time?

BABCOCK: Oh, general conversation is all I know. A rather typical remark was, "There goes Harry again." I wasn't too much surprised or disappointed because I had no reason to believe that he was any whiz in finances.

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That's about all I've got to say about it.

FUCHS: You didn't think that he was a great man for business?

BABCOCK: I had no reason to believe he was.

FUCHS: Did you have any reason to believe he wasn't?

BABCOCK: Well, as I told you, they were farming at a time when they could have made some money, and they may have made more than I thought they made. But I have reason to believe that he personally wasn't doing much. Because I told you my father was financing him some. And, I remember an article that he had written and he was always saying; "Well, the bankers, you always had to pay." Well, if you're making money, you don't take that attitude. You know, "That the bankers you have to pay." Most people in business have to borrow money, it doesn't worry them. They don't even mention it. But, if you say, well, they always have to be paid, it

usually means you're under strain, see. So. I have quite a few reasons to think he wasn't making money and none to make me think he was. When he was a Senator, he invariably said he was the poorest Senator in Washington.

FUCHS: Do you recall his working for the Auto Club of Kansas

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City?

BABCOCK: Yes, but I do not remember the date.

FUCHS: Well, that was 1925 and '26.

BABCOCK: I remember calling him in 1926 regarding a note that Mr. J. A. Truman had endorsed for my father and which my father had said that after Mr. Truman's death Harry would take care of out of the estate. But since I heard no more from him, I went to see him in 1927 about this note; he was then with the Community Savings and Loan Association. I had learned his telephone number, but I did not know the company or the location of the place I called.

FUCHS: He never tried to sell you a membership. This is what he was supposed to have been doing.

BABCOCK: No.

FUCHS: What do you know of his venture in the Community Savings and Loan Association?

BABCOCK: I recently have found a letter from him under date of January 18, 1927. The stationery shows him to be general manager of this Association and Spencer Salisbury as treasurer. I stated that I had called him sometime in '26 regarding a certain note, and this written reply I received very shortly after I had called

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on him at his office. The note I referred to was one given my father dated May 11, 1914, payable in two months, in the amount of \$200, signed by A. D. Brauner and J. A. Truman. My father had explained to me that A. D. Brauner had actually received the money; J. A. Truman had endorsed the note together with Brauner since my father didn't know Mr. Brauner very well and Mr. Truman did and was willing to guarantee payment. Brauner did not pay the loan, and Mr. Truman died in 1914, leaving the note unpaid. Harry Truman was handling his father's estate; my father told him that he would buy something at his farm sale and take the amount of the note out of the estate. Harry told him that was not necessary, that he would take care of it. My father was not a man who would press collections and especially when he was dealing with friends. My father died in 1925, and this note was still unpaid. I finally called on Harry and presented this note on or about the middle of January, 1927. He was friendly and we discussed the note. He

said he would see Mary, his sister and Vivian, his brother, and this would be taken care of. Within a very few days I received a letter from Harry, reading as follows:

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Dear Gaylon:

I have yours of the 14 instant, and I see no reason why I should assume any responsibility in the situation. Frankly, I don't intend to. This was a transaction between your father, my father, and old man Brauner. You might just as well get the idea out of your head as far as I am concerned, because I do not intend to do anything in the matter.

Yours very truly, Harry S. Truman

FUCHS: I believe when he was in the oil venture, it seemed to me they were in the Board of Trade Building; but I'm not certain whether the Community Savings and Loan was. Later on he did have an office in Independence, too. He became presiding judge and gradually worked out of it.

BABCOCK: The letter I received from him will straighten out a little of this, pertaining to the location. How did he get out of this Association, and why?

FUCHS: Well, that's something that we don't actually know.

BABCOCK: All right, forget it. I don't know, but I think it was there when I saw him last.

FUCHS: Does the name Spencer Salisbury mean anything to you?

BABCOCK: Yes, I know the name. I do not remember the

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man personally, but I do remember the name. I sure do.

FUCHS: What about the Citizens Bank of Englewood? Do you recall anything of that?

BABCOCK: I do have some faint recollections that the name Greenlee was involved. Seems it was some county politics financing.

FUCHS: When Mr. Truman came back from the war, I believe at that time you were president of the alumni association of Ruskin High School.

BABCOCK: Yes, that's right. I was president then. I remember very well, when he, together with some four to six of our neighbor boys who had served with him, returned to Kansas City, I

saw to it that we had a program. We got Harry as part of our program to make a talk on his experiences in war from which he had just returned.

I introduced Harry as the speaker and I remember a few things that I said in the introduction. One of them was that I thought that it would be well for us to keep in mind that Harry had gone through his part of the war without losing a man in action, indicating that he would be a safe man to be with and under; and,

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I thought maybe if a storm should be approaching, we should get in his company for safety's sake. I remember that very well. And, Harry made a good talk, not too long; Harry wasn't given to long talks. When he was speaking, he was curt and brief. He was not trying to build up any heroism in his talk on their part in the war. He said much of it was not too different from being at home -- not that there was no danger, but they tried to live as calmly as possible and keep good order. Well, we were glad we had him as a speaker because he had with him some of the fine boys from our county, too, and they all liked his leadership during the war. I know they couldn't have played a big part in the war, because they did not lose a man, but no doubt did a good job of what their part was. And, that's about all I have to say about that.

FUCHS: Was this meeting held in the Ruskin High School?

BABCOCK: In the Ruskin High School building, that's right.

FUCHS: Do you remember him being back on the farm at all after the war?

BABCOCK: Oh, yes. Let's see, that would be what year?

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FUCHS: 1919, when he came back and got married then in June.

BABCOCK: No. I just can't say that I do remember, because that was two years later than I thought. I was beginning to get involved in other things.

FUCHS: Did you go to his wedding?

BABCOCK: I did not. I was not invited.

FUCHS: That was in Independence?

BABCOCK: Yes, I think it was.

FUCHS: Do you recall anything about the Ku Klux Klan and especially in connection with Harry Truman in the postwar years?

BABCOCK: I remember about the Ku Klux Klan. I remember about it, but not in connection with Harry. I do remember this. They held a meeting in the lodge hall in Hickman Mills; notices were sent out that there would be an interesting meeting and inviting all the citizenry around there to attend. And, the notice was worded in such a way that it would create your interest. There had been talk on Ku Klux Klan prior to that around there, and you could have some reason to believe that maybe it would be a Ku Klux, but we didn't know it necessarily. I did go to that

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meeting. Vivian Truman and I sat together at that meeting. When the men who opened the meeting got up to explain what their meeting was about, they said if there were any foreign-born people there, and any non-Protestants there, which I took to mean Catholics, or any husband who had a wife that was non-Protestant, meaning Catholic, and a few more qualifications, they would suggest that they leave the room. Well, immediately, a bunch of us left, and Vivian and I were together and we left. It was a Ku Klux meeting.

FUCHS: In other words, it was not advertised as a Ku Klux meeting and you left, not because you were non-Protestant or foreign born but because you recognized...

BABCOCK: I wanted no part of it, and Vivian and I got up and left. Now, Harry wasn't at that meeting. Vivian and I sat together and this I remember very well.

FUCHS: You met at the meeting, you and Vivian?

BABCOCK: We didn't go to the meeting together, but we got together downstairs and went up to the meeting and sat together. A few years later I bought that same building. They were not having the meetings

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then, but those old robes were still there, you know. One or two are in this house today. Mother kept one of those things just for the ridiculousness of it to show some of the kids; she showed some of the grandkids just this year. That's today. Now, isn't that an interesting thing?

FUCHS: Yes, it is. You have no other memories of the Ku Klux Klan activities?

BABCOCK: Oh, yes, there was quite a bit. One of our mail carriers down there was a fellow named Chrisman. You see, of the three mail carriers I had under me, he was a Ku Klux Klan man and one of the leaders. Also a fellow named Colton was a leader, and I knew it was going on there all the time, you see. Now, in fact one of those men asked me to go to Kansas City with him one night, and I did and it was one of those meetings again. They were trying to get people out and to the churches lots of times, in the Protestant churches.

FUCHS: Did you know what kind of meeting it was, when you went at that time?

BABCOCK: No.

FUCHS: What happened at that meeting? Did you get up and

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leave that one too?

BABCOCK: Oh, yes.

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

BABCOCK: Yes, it does, but I can't recall it. Was he a labor man?

FUCHS: I have heard that he was in some way connected with the Ku Klux Klan in Kansas City. What did you think when Mr. Truman first announced he was going to run for judge and what do you know about his announcing as a candidate for eastern judge in 1922?

BABCOCK: Well, very little. I believe the first information came through Vivian, his brother. I told you that I voted for him the first time he ran; but that's the only time I voted for him because it was just without any question that he was directly involved with the Pendergast bunch which was getting pretty wicked then, you see. They'd been there for quite a while and I wanted no part of it.

FUCHS: In the subsequent elections for presiding judge, you didn't?

BABCOCK: No, sir. I either voted against him or I didn't vote.

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FUCHS: Is there anything that stands out in your memory about that first candidacy of Mr. Truman's?

BABCOCK: No, there isn't. But I do remember a meeting that I went to. Mr. O. V. Slaughter conducted the meeting at Hickman Mills, and I remember a statement that he made recommending Harry. It was a very unusual statement, not senseless, but unusual; he made the statement that it gave him a good deal of pleasure to recommend Harry for this job. He said that he had known Harry all Harry's life -- he was a good deal older -- and in fact, he said, "I knew him before he was born. I knew his parents, see, and I knew his mother's people well; they were all good citizens and active and respectable and capable." That's the first time Harry ran for political office. The Slaughters and the Trumans were neighbors and apparent friends. I never heard the Slaughters say one thing against the Trumans; they supported them in elections. I have never heard any family of people, meaning the Truman family, make as many really nasty remarks about another family as the Trumans did about the Slaughters. The Slaughters were very frugal people, and they were a little eccentric.

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Most of that came from the fact that they were much smarter and much better educated than the Trumans, and I think the Trumans were jealous of them. If they wanted something done that took intelligence in the community or something in the bank or in the church, they'd call the Slaughters, because they had the ability. I think the Trumans were jealous of them; they seemed to take great sport in downgrading the Slaughters. We were extremely friendly with the Slaughters and had great respect for them.

FUCHS: Do you recall any specific incident about the Slaughters, the Trumans might have participated in?

BABCOCK: Well, the Slaughters -- they were quite a big family. They were capable in music; they were capable in many fields. The oldest boy, Homer, got an appointment to West Point and made a fine record. Other boys and girls came along and made fine records. One of the boys, John, became a county agent. They had a registered herd of Jersey cows and were delivering grade A milk to a hotel in Kansas City, the Coates House, at a good price because of the quality of the milk. Now, here's a thing. One very cold morning,

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John was milking and he was very cold. Since there was a concrete floor in this new, modern dairy barn, he actually built a fire in the barn on this concrete floor, back of the cow he was milking. A spark from this fire caught in something in the barn and burned the barn down together with the contents and, I think, twenty-four head of registered Jersey cows. It was a terrific loss in money besides the terrible thing of burning the cows alive. A day or two later, Vivian and I were together and he was talking about that "Damn fool John Slaughter, educated at the University of Missouri" and having no more sense than doing that. He said, "That's simply a typical Slaughter stunt. All they know is in the books." And he went on as they always did. I remember that incident very well. You asked for a particular incident. The Slaughters were certainly one among our best farmers.

FUCHS: That's pretty good. It wasn't good for the cows, though. Did you know Tom Pendergast?

BABCOCK: Not personally. I have seen him and certainly know him by reputation with J. C. Nichols Real Estate Company in Kansas City. Prior to my working for them, they had built a home for him. It was a fine home

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in an excellent location. I understood that some of the doors were equipped with gold doorknobs. The biggest thing that most of the down-and-outs say, "Oh, well, he gave us a turkey dinner around Thanksgiving." You know, he would give the people a dollar and take a thousand from them. It was bad for the city. When I was working for J. C. Nichols it got to the point you could hardly get an industry into Kansas City because of his corruption. Because of the hold he had on the city government they couldn't build without going to him and buying his stuff. It was just that

bad. Would you expect me to support a man who would do that? And he built Harry Truman. Harry Truman stayed by him.

The worst thing about Harry Truman was that he was loyal to the point, it was a curse on him and the country. When Harry Truman was President, he would hold up for any persons guilty of corruption or Communist connections, even after they had been convicted, if they were his supporters. Now that is the worst thing I could say about anybody, especially when it came to your country's loyalty. That's why I don't like Harry Truman's overall period in the White House.

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Pendergast had developed one of the strong city, state, and national political machines in the country, and Pendergast had developed Harry Truman. Pendergast was convicted and served time in the Federal Penitentiary at Leavenworth, and still Harry Truman remained loyal to him. This is a matter of national record. I cannot see why or how a good citizen could uphold this.

Now, both our son and son-in-law were in the service so we, of course, were concerned, because each one had a child. We wanted this war to end, of course. I certainly want to give Harry Truman credit for one most important decision that he made, and this was the use of the atom bomb as he did. My viewpoint on this is: Why hesitate to use it? Everything considered, there are fewer deaths and less misery through the use of this than by using the conventional military tactics. And of course we all know this ended the war almost instantly. There were, of course, many reports coming out regarding the effects of these bombs, some of them conflicting. I became very much interested in wanting to know the facts.

So as soon after the war as we could get away, my wife and I went to Japan and spent a month. Two of the

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first places we went to were the places where those bombs had been dropped so we could make observations. There was no place in the islands that I went that I was treated better than at both of those places. We saw MacArthur come and go from his headquarters a number of times. The Japanese citizens -- to a man -- showed all the respect in the world to MacArthur. Without exception my wife and I were treated in a most courteous manner. For all concerned, I think there was no doubt that that was the proper way to bring that war to a close.

FUCHS: What year was this?

BABCOCK: The war was over in '45, wasn't it? I believe it was '50. I know we were the first people -- does the name Mt. Osso mean anything to you? Well, that's a recreational area of hot springs, spas they call them, you know; and the report was that we were the first people from America that were entertained there. We were all over Japan from Hokkaido way north to the Nagasaki area; we spent all our time traveling all around. And I want to tell you something; if this country goes on as I think it's going (I hope I'm wrong), I think our form of government will change pretty

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fast. I honestly wonder whether it might not have been better for the Japanese to have won this war, and I'll tell you why.

The Japanese are very intelligent people, pretty farsighted; when they won the war with Russia, they were pretty easy to deal with on terms of peace, reasonable. I'd rather try to make an agreement and expect it to be kept with Japan than I would with Russia. It's not too far-fetched to think that we may have to deal with Russia under similar conditions some of these days, the way things are going.

FUCHS: You mean with them the victor in the war?

BABCOCK: Yes.

FUCHS: Why do you think it would end up in such a position?

BABCOCK: Well, in the first place, nothing's impossible. In the next place, I think they're gaining more of the world on their side than we are; and I think they have unquestionable leadership in loyalty and in ability and in dedication. It's pretty hard to beat that combination. And listen here, you see this book?

FUCHS: *Guide to Subversive Organizations and Publications.*

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BABCOCK: From our government. I just got it the other day. Look at that in our country.

FUCHS: Are these all existing ones or is this a historical compilation?

BABCOCK: No, this is true -- existing. Now, if Russia knew it had subversives in the country, it would shoot them. Now just keep this in mind: Russia has dedicated every man to one thing, to win for communism, every man. They have that advantage. We are so liberal as actually to let them have a Communist party in our country when they are out, unquestionably out, to destroy our form of government. They claim that; they'll tell you that. Yet we'll let them be protected under a Constitution that they're trying to tear up.

FUCHS: But, of course, the argument that's used, is "that's democracy." We have the Communists register and those who deal with these things feel that it's better to have them above ground than underground, where we can observe them and keep track of them.

BABCOCK: Now, one of the things that Harry used to say and I buy, "Let's apply some common sense." Is it common sense to let these subversives run around here and let these protesting kids act as they do? Is it common sense to let people rape people? When I was a

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boy, they were hanged and were mobbed; the trouble was stopped. We're too soft, I think, too soft in every respect. I would add another alphabetic formula: 3 F's -- firmness, fairness, and fastness.

FUCHS: Well, we've discussed one of Mr. Truman's decisions, that on the atomic bomb; if you'd like, what do you think of some of his other decisions such as the decision in 1950 to go into Korea?

BABCOCK: Well, from what I know about it, I'll put it this way. It so happened that my wife and I were sailing on a ship for Japan at the very time that Truman was meeting MacArthur not very far from where we were. Of course, I knew the background of Harry Truman very well and had observed all of MacArthur's victories throughout the war period. He had directed the Pacific war almost alone and had made such an outstanding success that I could find no criticism in his decisions. He undoubtedly knew the Oriental mind better than, or as well as, any other American. No man in our country knew military strategy any better, if as well. This was his life. Harry Truman had had only a smattering of exposure in this field with practically no experience. When you consider the

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background and integrity of the two men, how can you question that MacArthur's plan was superior?

Prior to this time Truman had not questioned MacArthur's judgment in handling military affairs. Truman had even sent MacArthur via the battleship *Missouri* to Japanese waters to sign the peace treaty with Japan -- proof that he had trust in MacArthur's judgment.

A good part of Harry Truman's life and experience had been politics. He said many times that he had no use for statesmen but that he admired politicians. Politicians know that if the economy is good while they're in power, they'll usually stay in power. Politicians know that war creates business. While no political party wants to be known as a war party, "Let's look at the record" (as Al Smith often said). To make a summary of this, I think Harry handled it wrong.

FUCHS: You mean the relief of MacArthur?

BABCOCK: Yes.

FUCHS: What about the decisions to intervene in Korea in 1950 when the northern Koreans first invaded South Korea across the 38th parallel?

BABCOCK: Don't you think we could have won that thing?

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FUCHS: Do you think Mr. Truman made a right decision though, to intervene there and send MacArthur into Korea?

BABCOCK: Yes, I do. I think that's right. Of course, I'm telling you I don't think everything was wrong, but I think certain things were wrong.

FUCHS: But, you think he should have let MacArthur go into...

BABCOCK: I do. Let him go on in and follow through. Yes, sir, I sure do, and do you know one thing before we get off this...Now wait a minute, are we getting too far from Harry?

FUCHS: Well, this is tied in with what you think of his decisions and I'm interested in hearing....

BABCOCK: No, no, what I'm about to say is not tied in with Harry. It begins before that...I don't think there'd be a place for it in here.

FUCHS: What do you know of Fred Canfil?

BABCOCK: I attended a meeting in Kansas City and that's one of the last times I saw Harry; I think it was some sort of farm meeting in the Municipal Building in Kansas City. I went out and I met Vivian and Mr. Canfil and some other Kansas Citians. We ate dinner together

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that day. Harry was at the meeting; but we did not eat with Harry. I recall that Mayor La Guardia made a talk. One of the things I got out of this meeting was Harry's typical performance. Harry never sat still a minute; he was always running here and there, trying to get things organized. During the entire day, I kept thinking that this type of activity was probably one of the big contributions to his becoming a politician. He actually just plays politics in organizing people and getting them together.

Living in Platte County, of course, I had known Henry Dillingham and had admired him. He had been a good worker in the Democratic Party. In fact, his entire family had worked in the Democratic Party and unquestionably were respected persons, but anti-Pendergast. Up until that day I had not met Canfil, but knew of his standing in the party. He was slated for Dillingham's job as U. S. Marshal.

Now Harry was the one that did the replacing, see. And I believe I told you, that the last time I called on Mr. Dillingham at his home, he told me that one of the things that he got the most satisfaction out

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of, was the time that he personally, with another man, took Pendergast right down the road in front of where we both lived to Leavenworth to put him in the penitentiary. I'm not surprised at Henry saying that, because he'd been trying to get it done for some time. You can see why Harry

would want to get rid of him, because Harry was dealing with a man who had built him up; Henry Dillingham was dealing with a man who was trying to get Dillingham out of the way.

FUCHS: What do you know of Fred Canfil's background?

BABCOCK: I just had heard of him. I really do not know. I had heard many things about the man. I do not know just when he came into the political picture. I just knew of some of his performances afterward, which I heard criticized. One of the extreme cases was the time he got into some argument down in south Missouri at a meeting. The people with whom he was talking claimed that he should not do certain things because of the Constitution. He openly made the remark, "To hell with the Constitution." His being a United States Marshal and making such a remark as that was just too much for me.

FUCHS: Do you recall anything else that you've heard about him?

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BABCOCK: Not specifically, just generally. Many of the comments were not complimentary; most of them were not. I think that Harry made a mistake when he put him in that position.

FUCHS: You spoke of this meeting where Mr. Truman and Canfil were both present, Mr. Truman seemed to be moving about quite a bit, organizing things, what year was that? Can you place it? Was Mr. Truman a judge at that time?

BABCOCK: No, he was U. S. Senator. La Guardia, mayor of New York City, was there to make a talk. La Guardia was one of my national heroes; I admired the man very much. At this meeting he was giving his time and his thought to inform the people and get over his point. Harry was giving all his time in Kansas City to playing politics. And that very thing sort of typifies the two men as I study them and know them. In other words, they both acted as I would have expected them to act.

FUCHS: Are you acquainted with Rufus Burrus of Independence?

BABCOCK: I am not, just heard the name. That's all.

FUCHS: Do you know Maurice Milligan?

BABCOCK: Yes, sir. I've met with him at his office. When

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I was with J. C. Nichols, I showed his wife a suburban property which we had for sale located north of Kansas City; I think it was in Clay County rather than in Platte County. They did not buy the property; I've forgotten what came up. Anyway, I had talked politics with Mr. Milligan. I never knew, never talked with a man for whom I had more respect, and his record would justify that respect. He was, of course, not supported by Truman, but he was the right man and the man

that I would have voted for, regardless of who was running against him and regardless of politics. There have been a number of Missouri men in the Democratic Party that I certainly would support; he was one of them, as was Governor Stark. I'll tell you the smartest resident that Kansas City ever had and one of the best thinkers ever in the Senate in my time, one of the men that I believe in 100 percent, and one of the men that Harry Truman fought the hardest at times. That was our Missouri Senator, James A. Reed. Harry Truman defeated him as Senator in Missouri. You can't compare Jim Reed with Harry Truman; there's no comparison there. Jim Reed was just head and shoulders, not only above Harry Truman,

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but above any other political figure who came from Missouri in my lifetime, in my judgment, in either party.

FUCHS: Did you vote for Reed?

BABCOCK: I was for Reed all the way. Now, any man that wasn't for Reed just didn't know him, his ability, his capacity. He's the man that kept us out of the League of Nations during the First World War, and I never was for it. I'm just very much opposed to any of those things like the United Nations; I think is a ridiculous playhouse. I think it's causing us no end of trouble; I think it's killing the Monroe Doctrine. The League of Nations is sort of...oh, it's like a couple...

FUCHS: You mean United Nations?

BABCOCK: Either one. United Nations or League of Nations. You'd expect similar results to come out of a church meeting, unworkable things that are nice to talk about but impossible to do, I mean to work. That's the way I feel about it.

FUCHS: Well, now did you know Tuck Milligan in the 1934 primary? He ran for the nomination against Mr. Truman along with John Cochran. Now he was a brother

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of Maurice Milligan.

BABCOCK: Yes, I knew there was such a man, but personally I did not know him.

FUCHS: Well, in the '34 primary you wouldn't have voted in that primary as a Democrat, you would have been a registered Republican.

BABCOCK: Yes, I would have been a registered Republican.

FUCHS: Then you probably voted for Patterson in '34?

BABCOCK: Yes.

FUCHS: Well, in 1940, you were a strong supporter of Milligan, did you not participate in the Democratic primary that year when he and Stark ran against Mr. Truman -- Mr. Truman, of course was running for the renomination in 1940.

BABCOCK: Well, I supported Milligan, I'll put it that way, anywhere I could. That's right. I was a believer in him. But my life has been more or less complicated, you see, in and out of different places; but I had pretty strong beliefs and kept up on these people.

FUCHS: Did you know Lloyd Stark personally?

BABCOCK: Not personally, but certainly by reputation, and it was good. Record was good.

FUCHS: Do you recall anything of a movement in 1931

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to run Harry Truman for Governor of the state?

BABCOCK: No, sir, I do not.

FUCHS: There's a letter in our files written in 1950 by you to Mr. Truman, in which you mentioned Ambassador Dick Patterson, who was a mutual friend, and he said that he had just seen the President and the President said remember him to you.

BABCOCK: Yes, I remember the letter. I got some correspondence at different times, but I didn't keep it because I thought that I'd never need it. A lot of it I didn't want to be reminded of too much.

FUCHS: How did you first become acquainted with Ambassador Patterson?

BABCOCK: Through the J. C. Nichols Company. The Pattersons, who lived in New York, owned a number of properties in Kansas City, Missouri, in Kansas, and in Colorado. The J. C. Nichols Company handled these properties. The management and sales of these properties were handled in the department I was in. Mr. Patterson was Ambassador to Yugoslavia and served in this capacity when Tito was in power and during World War II. Mr. Patterson made some trips back to Kansas City to inspect these properties; I took him on these inspection

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trips. These trips lasted several days and covered considerable distances. And on one trip (the first trip after his return from serving in Yugoslavia), he worked in a speaking tour. These speeches concerned his working in a communistic country. Time and again on this trip he would ask me to stop when we came to any big store -- grocery, general, etc. We would go in and inspect the place. He just marveled at the many items for sale. Having lived for so long where so little was offered, he was impressed by all this. He talked to me so often about Tito himself, and I

think he admired Tito as an individual. He said Tito was frank, fair, and brave. He predicted that not even Russia could push him around. This has proven true.

Mr. Patterson and Mr. Nichols were personal friends; and since Mr. Nichols had served as a \$1-a-year man, I wondered whether they might have become acquainted when Mr. Nichols served in Washington, D.C.

I so well remember quite a number of belittling comments that Harry and Vivian made about these \$1-a-year men. Here again some traits of the Trumans were revealed. The \$1-a-year men were chosen not because

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of their politics but because they were practical business men.

FUCHS: Did you ever attend one of Mr. Truman's political campaign speeches or rallies?

BABCOCK: No, not a rally. I told you about being at that first political meeting when Mr. Slaughter introduced Harry.

FUCHS: No subsequent one?

BABCOCK: No.

FUCHS: How would you characterize Mr. Truman on the scale from liberal to conservative? Where would you place him?

BABCOCK: He was serving as Vice President under Franklin Roosevelt, who in my opinion was a liberal. As soon as he became President, he vowed to continue the policies that Roosevelt had advocated. When he was in the Senate, he was decidedly pro-labor. Yes, his entire record would brand him as a liberal.

As I feel today, I feel that the liberal element in the Democratic Party has contributed to the major part of the troubles in the whole world. In other words, I think that we should have stayed out of the First World War; and no doubt, Germany would have

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won that war. Germany, France, England, those countries, have warred for centuries. Somebody wins and they live peacefully awhile. They probably would have done the same and have kept the old leaders in Germany that were there when the war started. Instead of that, we threw them out. We left Germany without a leader, so they naturally would follow almost anyone. They followed Hitler. Hitler came in and we all sat by and let him build up until he nearly conquered the world. What did we do then? We got into that. We joined Russia; we built up Russia in four years more than it possibly could have been built up in a hundred years by itself. So now, we have the Communists. We built them up, and they're taking over many, many countries, one by

one. We're letting them do it. So the whole world has been in trouble. We got in the United Nations through all this mix-up. We are now implicated in all these things. Our hands are tied in many ways, in ridiculous ways; so, actually, I'm going to blame the liberal element in the Democrat Party. Now, here's one thing I'd like to interject. What has Khrushchev done? Khrushchev purged Stalin, not by killing millions of

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their people as Stalin had, but by making a complete change. Now what are we doing? Instead of purging some of the people that led us off like that, meaning Roosevelt and his bunch, what are we doing? We're still idolizing the very thing that ruined us and in my judgment, directed us wrong. It's the political divisions in our politics that have been weakening our country, meaning that the leaders in their parties seem to be more interested in the strength of their party than in the strength of the nation.

I notice Russia is sending men to our country to learn our methods in agriculture and many other things. They see to it that their citizens make extreme sacrifices to contribute to the growth and strength of their nation. Military strength is, of course, number one with them. Foreign trade is important in their plan for world leadership. If the two countries follow the courses they are on, it could be disastrous. I plan to get over to Russia as soon as one can get permission to cover the country fairly well. I think Roosevelt should have cooperated more with Mr. Hoover between the time of the election and the time of Roosevelt's inauguration. I was following it very closely and he absolutely refused to do it. I think the

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bank guarantee law is unnecessary. I think it only protects the people because they need protection from bad bankers, and I think that bad bankers are kept in business at the expense of good bankers. The whole thing is financed by a premium paid by the banks rated on the deposits in the bank. The bankers in turn have to get this back some way or other, and it's largely through service charges, which the depositors pay. So, really, I cannot understand why it's necessarily a good thing. To prove my point: Many, many banks stayed open during the holiday and immediately following because they were in good condition, because they'd had good management.

So, one of the things that the Roosevelt administration is complimented most for by more people, in my judgment, is not necessarily a good thing. I couldn't help but notice Mr. Kennedy's inauguration speech. He was praising the great Roosevelt. When I heard this, I knew we'd probably have a continuation of the Roosevelt policies. These I think we should get away from.

FUCHS: What about the Truman policy?

BABCOCK: Well, Truman policy was more or less a continuation of Roosevelt.

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FUCHS: You think that he was in the liberal element of the Democratic Party, though?

BABCOCK: Yes, I do. As I said, I think that his tie-in with labor would be the best proof of his being considered in the liberal element. I think you can pretty well judge a man's economic sense of balance by the group that he ties up with. I do not like the expression, "tying up with a group" or "joining a group." I do not like for any man to make a division in people. I think they should be considered as a whole. In fact, that's one reason I'm not a Democrat. It seems to me, as I look back, that Democrats are forever talking about the "little man," and there is no such "little man." Now, here, I think the people in the Republican Party are usually better businessmen than the people of the Democrat Party. Let's go back to Thomas Jefferson, a great man, who did a great deal for this country. But, let's take a little better look at the man. He inherited a lot of land, a lot of property. He gave a great deal to his country, a great deal of thought and time that was wonderful; but having been given all of this property, not having had a lot of sickness, not having raised a big family,

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not having any just reason for not at least holding these finances together, what happened? He got himself into such a bad financial position that his friends had to come to his rescue to keep his whole home from being foreclosed upon. He was a poor economist, poor businessman; to me if you're going to have a good country, it's got to be in good financial condition. You can't have a happy home, even, without that. I stress that every day. I deal with many people and I know. As I've said before, I've been in many countries; and I find that if the finances of the country aren't strong, the country is not strong, the government is not strong. That's why I dwell on it so much.

FUCHS: Would you say that Franklin Roosevelt was a good economist?

BABCOCK: No. He inherited all his money. I'll tell you something. I would never have voted for that man, if I had been following what he had been doing in his own state prior to the time he ran for President, because he didn't manage it well -- I mean financially. Finances are a must.

FUCHS: What about Harry Truman? Would you say he was a good economist?

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BABCOCK: No, no, no. All this string of failures? I told you, he had a string of them.

FUCHS: What about President Kennedy?

BABCOCK: No. His own father said he could not interest any of his boys in economy. That was enough for me. Just another rich man's son whose father was trying to elect him to the highest office in the land. Up to this time he had demonstrated no real ability at anything; his experience in business had been nil. The family had revealed that they were simply a power-hungry group who were very wealthy and were using their money to further their personal desires. Such ideas as the Peace Corps pretty well represented his thinking, and we certainly know that that has not

been a practical program. I think this kind of program would fit in better with church missionary work.

When I was in South America, I met and spent some time with a former serviceman, who was from near Cheyenne and northern Colorado and knew my town very well. It was in La Paz that I met and spent some time with him. He said the particular Peace Corps program he was working on at the time was with the natives, and they were attempting to improve their

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dairy practices.

The dairy was some 65 miles out from La Paz in a backward part of the country; most of the inhabitants were Indian and Spanish. In reply to my question as to how he was getting along, he said he was in La Paz to try to sell the butter they were producing. But he said he'd been unable to sell it at the price they'd have to have. He told me it was costing them 92 cents a pound to produce; but he said the hotels and other outlets had told him that they could buy imported butter which was just as good at a cheaper price. This Peace Corps man and I talked about various ideas that he had, but it seemed that none of them were workable or practical.

It just so happened a few days later at an airport in a South American city I saw two men that I knew to be from the United States. It developed that they were church missionaries -- I think from the Presbyterian Church. When I inquired as to how they were getting along, the older man said, "I'm leaving. I've been here two years. I've been working with these people, but I'm leaving."

And the other fellow said, "Well, I'm going to stay

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a while; I don't know how long. We find it awfully bad. The Peace Corps come in here, and the government can pay those men much more money to go around here among these people than the church can pay us. The Peace Corps men must stay with these natives, and our government pays the native \$45 a month in cash. The way the whole thing works the church is unable to carry on its work in competition with the Peace Corps."

I asked the Peace Corps man, if it was difficult for them to find places to stay. He replied, "Oh no, they want to get that \$45 a month."

We've really been proving for years that the best way to help a backward country is to let one of our proven corporations or businesses set up a branch, utilize the raw materials, and employ the native people. Wherever you go and wherever this is tried, this procedure proves the most practical. For it is perfectly natural for the religious organizations and benevolent groups to follow; then, after this come schools, hospitals, etc.

I think there is no doubt that the Catholics and other religious organizations have prevented progress

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and good government in a number of countries in both hemispheres. When a certain organization practically controls up to 80 percent or 90 percent of the people, it usually works toward their own detriment. Here again is a splendid argument for competition and our form of government. We do have cases when aid is sent to a country for the people, but it is directed more toward a particular organization than toward the people at large, as it is meant to be.

FUCHS: You mean when the Catholics send money in?

BABCOCK: No, no, when our Government sends aid to another country.

FUCHS: You're thinking of the Peace Corps or other things?

BABCOCK: No, not the Peace Corps, aid to the government of the other country for its immediate relief and general health, including the military strength of the other country.

FUCHS: You said that of the three Presidents, the, last three Democratic Presidents, you prefer Mr. Truman, why?

BABCOCK: Largely because of his background. Because of the way he's lived. I think he's much closer to the

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life of the so-called average American since his background was like that of most of us. I would put Kennedy at the bottom. His background is that of such a small percentage of our people -- his environment, his lack of any firsthand experience. This, accompanied with the known fact that his father was dead set on having his sons in government positions and certainly was promoting them in many ways with his vast wealth. If you are not familiar with the way Joe Kennedy, Sr. acquired his wealth, I suggest you make an investigation of this. I think you'll find the Kennedy family ran roughshod over their best friends in order to get what they wanted. If you will investigate the first build-up of Johnson and Truman, you will find some similarities in voting irregularities; but as I consider the good and bad for our country in the two administrations, I think Truman no doubt made the better showing.

Now as we all know; nothing is all bad. There are, and have been, some outstanding, fine, honorable men in both parties. I know the records of quite a number of men in the Democrat Party, such as Byrd of Virginia, and I personally know one man in Washington

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that I have all respect for.

FUCHS: For the record, who was this?

BABCOCK: Rex Whitten. He was administrator of the Highway Department. I'd like to work with him. Rex Whitten and I grew up in the same neighborhood. I, of course, knew him and his parents well. While I am older than Rex, we graduated from the same high school. I visited him when he was in the University of Missouri. He went directly from college into the Missouri State Highway Department and stayed with it until he went to Washington, D.C. He did an outstanding job in the Missouri Department, which, as far as I know, could never have been given any just criticism. I think we'd all like to contribute something that in some way would help to solve our highway traffic problems. And I do believe that Rex Whitten, with his vast experience in this thing and his good judgment and his reasonableness, would go along on any program that would work

FUCHS: What did you think of Mr. Truman, as a strong or weak President?

BABCOCK: Well, I want to be fair to him. Sometimes you can jump in and do too much too fast, change too many

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things, without necessarily improving conditions. I don't believe overall that I'd be too hard on Harry on that. I think he upheld some men that he shouldn't have. As I told you before, I think that was a great failing of Harry. He's too loyal to people who have supported him.

Here's another thing. I think both Truman and Johnson are guilty of developing a strong "crony" political organization; this, of course, is dangerous and expensive, and it cannot be justified. I think Johnson carries it much farther than Truman. But I think that Truman could have dropped some men that were proven to be disloyal and were proven to be dishonest. I think it would have been to the nation's interest -- our interest and his interest -- if he just didn't want to say anything against them, just drop them.

FUCHS: Do you have some in mind?

BABCOCK: Well, wasn't it this fellow [Alger] Hiss. Didn't he uphold him after he was proven to be a doubtful character? He never did downgrade the man, did he?

FUCHS: Well, he didn't get into it, only indirectly. He never denounced Acheson who refused to turn his

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back on Hiss, and, of course, a lot of criticism fell on Acheson then and Mr. Truman continued to support Mr. Acheson. And, of course, he did say that the case was a "red herring" -- the Communist charges.

BABCOCK: Yes, which proved that he was wrong. He never apologized for that, which he could have. A big man will do those things. You've got to be big to come out and apologize when you're wrong, and especially when you're before the whole world. That's a test of a man. And I would have thought a lot more of him had he done that. Actually [Richard] Nixon had an apology coming on that deal, you know.

FUCHS: Of course, Mr. Truman has always claimed that Nixon called him a traitor and that's been the principal bone of contention.

BABCOCK: I know. If you uphold a man who is proven to be subversive, you're verging pretty close on it.

Are there any other questions that you're thinking of?

FUCHS: Well, while we're making comparisons, how would you compare Mr. Eisenhower and Mr. Truman?

BABCOCK: Well, Mr. Eisenhower is his own man. Mr. Eisenhower is not a politician at all. No one knew his

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politics. He did a wonderful job, I thought, in handling his war work. I don't believe that anyone could even think that he was dishonest and disloyal. That isn't in his making. I listened to all his speeches, went to both inaugurals, and followed him very closely. It would be hard for me to criticize Mr. Eisenhower. He was always talking "fiscal responsibility, integrity, decency" which I'm hepped up on. That is the foundation. He was working more on the foundation all his eight years than he was on the super-structure. I think maybe your great man from Ohio would have been a wonderful President.

FUCHS: You're thinking of Taft?

BABCOCK: Oh, yes. Most of our men in the Republican Party wanted him. Of course, he died, but he could have made a better President -- he could have. I certainly would have been for him. I doubt his being able to be elected. As you said yourself, "You've got to give and yield a little to be elected." Well, if you've got a sure thing in a man like Eisenhower, I think you may make a mistake in trying to get another man elected even though the latter might make a better President. Now, I think that that's just

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probably good politics and good thinking. And I think that's the situation that the Republican Party was in. I think it split the party pretty badly and I think those wounds haven't healed yet; I know they haven't, because I've talked to some people. I told you that I contribute to the party. I go to many \$100-a-plate dinners. I go to them because I think it's my duty. Summing it all up, I think, perhaps, Taft might have made a better President, overall, than Ike. But I was very well

satisfied with Ike. I'll tell you what he could have done. His last year in office, if he'd have played just plain politics and pumped a lot of money into the economy which he could have done, and had a lot of public spending going on, which he could have done, and employed more people, why, he could have set that thing up. And the Republicans all knew it and they were mad at him for not doing it -- the leaders, the politicians -- but he would not do it. Now, that's bad politics and it lost the election. I don't think there's any doubt. But the election was close at that, and I'm not so sure that two or three big cities didn't use their opportunity to take some votes that weren't theirs.

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It happened in Kansas City -- it used to happen; it can happen; and I told you today, that I think the theft of one vote is a bigger sin than the theft of a million dollars. Would you sell your vote for a million dollars; would you?

FUCHS: I probably would, but I don't want that to go in the record.

BABCOCK: But should you?

FUCHS: No, you shouldn't.

BABCOCK: I'm telling you, I wouldn't. I wouldn't hesitate a minute.

FUCHS: Thank you very much.

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APPENDIX

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Letter from G. E. Babcock, August 30, 1974.

Enough time has elapsed since this interview of February, 1964, that there is no doubt in my mind that one could believe that Harry Truman was actually the best Democratic President to serve in this century. Although my background and beliefs are Republican, I supported Franklin Roosevelt in 1932. But I now think I made a mistake in supporting him, because I had not fully analyzed his record as governor of New York and the plans of Herbert Hoover for resolving the Depression. I am satisfied that if anyone has followed the course of events in Harry Truman's career, he has found that Truman's underlying philosophy is that of a "crony" government. His Presidential hero was Andrew Jackson, who is known as a great proponent of the "spoils system" government.

Harry reminds me of a boy who is involved with his cronies in stealing apples from an orchard. He does not actually take the apples, but watches the gate while his henchmen perform the act.

In summary of the record of Harry Truman, I would like to draw two conclusions. To a Democrat, he might be considered the best President of the century; to a Republican he might be thought of as the “best” of the “worst Presidents” of this century.

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