

Oral History Interview

with

JOHN E. BARRIERE

Member of the staff of the Research Division of the Democratic National Committee during the 1948 presidential campaign and of the House Banking and Currency Committee, 1948-65.

Washington, D.C.

December 20, 1966

by Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library

The Harry S. Truman Library

Independence, Missouri

October 1967

#### NOTICE

This is a transcript of a tape-recorded interview conducted for the Harry S. Truman Library. A draft of this transcript was edited by the interviewee but only minor emendations were made; therefore, the reader should remember that this is essentially a transcript of the spoken, rather than the written, word.

#### RESTRICTIONS

This oral history transcript may be read, quoted from, cited, and reproduced for purposes of research. It may not be published in full except by permission of the Harry S. Truman Library.

Oral History Interview

with

JOHN E. BARRIERE

Washington, D.C.

December 20, 1966

by Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library

HESS: Mr. Barriere, for the record, would you give me a little of your personal background, where were you born, where were you educated, and what positions have you held during your career?

BARRIERE: I was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, December 8, 1919, and I was educated in the public schools of Worcester; and I graduated from Clark University with an A.B. degree in 1942, and with a major in history. After the war, in 1946, I went to graduate school at the University of Chicago in the Department of Political Science. I was there for five quarters June of '46 through

[2]

September of '47. From September of '47 to May of 1948, I was an intern with an organization called the National Institute of Public Affairs, which was financed by the Rockefeller Foundation. The objective of this organization was to interest young men and women in permanent careers in the Federal Government. The bulk of the people that were selected by this organization were of this type, but they always admitted two, or three possibly, each year who were interested not primarily in a permanent career with the Government, but rather who were interested in teaching political science; and I came down on that basis. I planned to return to the University of Chicago in 1948 and complete my work for a Ph.D. My first placement was with the National Labor Relations Board, my second with the Senate Banking and Currency Committee, and that was the start of my connection with the 1948 Truman presidential campaign. The Republicans were in control of the Senate at that time, but Senator [Robert F.] Wagner

[3]

of New York who was the ranking minority man had a minority staff employee, Mr. Joseph P. McMurray, who at the present time is president of Queens College in Queens County, New York. When my second placement was about to end in the spring of 1948, I told McMurray that I was interested in some type of temporary employment for the summer. As I wanted to wait and go back to Chicago for the fall quarter around the first of October, and just perchance, he said that a Mr. William Batt, who has been recently Area Redevelopment Administrator under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, and at that time was the research director of the Democratic National Committee was coming to see him that afternoon and he said he would give Batt my name. A couple of weeks later I got a telephone call from Batt who asked me to come down, and he said that he was assembling a research organization, that he had not completed his establishment and they had a rush job to help the President get ready

[4]

for his so-called nonpolitical trip to the Pacific Northwest; and as I recall he was leaving Memorial Day or the day afterwards, and this was approximately ten days before that, and he hired me on a purely temporary two week basis to do research for that trip. I was to prepare a one page memorandum on each of the towns, and Batt gave me an itinerary he had got from the White House as to where the President was going to stop on this trip, and I was on my own from

that point. While I did make use, to some extent, of newspapers that we had in the office from various areas, and also a few memorandums that Batt had secured from some local people, the chief source was the WPA guidebooks.

HESS: Was that your idea to use those?

BARRIERS: Now, I'm not certain. I know I wound up at the Washington, D. C. public library looking at the WPA guidebooks. We did not have them in the office at that time, although later Batt did get

[5]

a set of them. My mind is blank as to whether it was my idea or Batt suggested I go there. If I remember correctly, I think the President was gone for ten days or so and we got about half of the material ready before he left, and the other half was sent to some point where it was picked up before he started back. The trip was a train trip, as you recall, and I think everybody agreed, at least according to newspaper accounts at the time, that the trip was a success; it gave the President a lot of publicity and he got to see and talk to a lot of people. Batt then continued me doing similar work on a temporary basis until I think up to about the time of the Democratic National Convention that he went to see Senator McGrath and got an okay from McGrath that I could stay on for the campaign. At that time, I thought it would probably still be until just the first of October when I wanted to go back to school. I think that is probably enough in the way of background.

[6]

I think we can proceed to questions now.

HESS: Did you or any of the other members of the Research Division help on the speeches for the June trip?

BARRIERE: I did not help on those speeches.

HESS: Your duty was the research and the background material on the stops, is that right?

BARRIERE: That's right. Later on, Batt gave me orders to prepare duplicates of this stuff, that is, there was a set to go to the White House that was to be included for the trip, but there was also to be a set for the office to be used by the fellows that were writing the speeches. I am sure this was not done at this stage, and I don't remember anybody in the office other than Batt himself, although I am sure there were some. I have a remembrance that there were others there, but who they were, and what they were doing, and just what they did for the trip, my mind is completely

[7]

vague.

HESS: During the campaign, did the Research Division help with the speeches and the whistle-stop speeches?

BARRIERS: Oh, yes, yes. On the whistlestop speeches, these very short ones, particularly later in the campaign, the speeches were generally used exactly the way the Research Division prepared them. On the longer speeches, I think, the general practice was that a factual statement on a subject was prepared in one of the departments or bureaus in the executive branch of the Government. It then came to us and our speechwriters prepared a speech draft and then it went to the White House for final polishing; and generally (just from my memory, I didn't hear many of those speeches, but I did read them in the *New York Times*), if I remember correctly, generally there was some of the material that came from our shop that was preserved in there, but the style generally had gotten a major rewrite when it went to the White House.

[8]

HESS: Did you personally write any of the speeches?

BARRIERE: I wrote no major speeches, and I wrote none of the short speeches until the very end of the campaign when I think the President was campaigning in the Eastern area where there were more stops and they had to have a large supply of these things, and I was pressed in, oh, maybe the last ten days, to do a few of these; and I remember consulting that little book that Senator [Frances J.] Myers brought out shortly after the election, and I found one of my speeches, not in the community I had written for -- it was given someplace else.

HESS: The research that you did during the campaign was bound and put in as the "Files of the Facts," is that correct?

BARRIERE: Yes. Besides working on the memoranda for the President's trips and to help the speechwriters when they were writing for the President, I also did research on what the 80th Congress had done in various areas. I did not write any of those, that

[9]

I recall now, putting them in final form. I would assemble the factual information and one of the other staff would prepare the product.

HESS: On number six of the "Files of the Facts," "The 80th Congress and the Lobbies," it is indicated that you and Frank Kelly were the authors.

BARRIERS: Well, I can't be dogmatic about this, but my recollection of this thing is, that I was the only one who had had any practical experiences on the Hill, and I think I did a considerable amount of research work on that one, and Kelly thought I did a very good job and as a reward, he put my name on it. I don't think I did any of the actual writing.

HESS: On that subject, in Mr. Truman's campaign, he attacked the 80th Congress far more than he attacked Mr. Dewey, why did he do that?

BARRIERS: Well, the only thing I can give you is general opinion that the 80th Congress had an extremely

[10]

conservative, vulnerable record and, of course, its record was in marked contrast to Mr. Dewey's relatively progressive record as Governor of New York, and also a rather relatively progressive platform the Republicans had adopted at their convention, and somebody, the President or someone advising him decided that it would be good strategy to zero in on the 80th Congress.

HESS: Many historians like to point out that the 80th Congress really wasn't all that bad particularly on foreign affairs, and many of the things Mr. Truman will be remembered for were passed by the 80th Congress; the Greek-Turkish Aid Bill, the Marshall plan, and things of that nature. What is your reaction to that?

BARRIERE: Well, I have a general thesis on this that goes beyond the 1948 election, that I don't believe except in the case when you're in a shooting war and mothers and fathers are seeing their boys drafted, foreign policy plays a major role in the usual election, and it certainly didn't play a

[11]

big role in the '48 election. World War II was far enough behind us, both as an immediate conflict and, also, the irritations that had played a role in the 1946 election, and Korea was ahead of us, and 1948 was an election which was fought out on purely domestic issues. The Truman Doctrine on Greece and Turkey and the Marshall plan may have been great things for our country and what was needed in the world, but I doubt if they lost or gained a vote for Mr. Truman in the 1948 election.

HESS: What were the big issues in the '48 campaign?

BARRIERE: Housing was one of them. It wasn't just a matter of the social welfare aspect of housing. I am sure that the people who drafted material on housing stressed this aspect -- and a lot of the things the President talked about were orientated towards social welfare, which culminated, of course, next year in the Housing Act of 1949 -- but,

[12]

you also had a very practical bread and butter issue in that there was actually an acute shortage of the number of housing units. This had been hid for many years by the depression and by rent control during the war and when the dam broke, you had all of this long-term demand, plus that large number of returning veterans who were either married or soon got married; and this, in my opinion, was a real bread and butter issue in the urban parts of the country in 1948.

HESS: What were some of the other big issues that you particularly watched as a member of the Research Division?

BARRIERE: Well, we watched the development of the farm issue. The Republicans had botched up that thing. In the first place, the Republican Congress had refused to provide adequate storage facilities for grain in the Middle West, and it was clear that the Republicans were at fault there, the President and the Secretary of Agriculture had

[13]

recommended this. And even conservative farm organizations, as I recall, like the American Farm Bureau Federation, pointed out the need for this storage; they were opposed to mandatory price controls for the long haul, but they felt that we were faced with a practical situation and private enterprise couldn't do it and the Government had to provide the storage facilities.

HESS: Did the members of the Research Division pay any particular attention to the polls that were running heavily against the President?

BARRIERE: Well, you must remember, of course, that this was a long time ago, and polls weren't as perfected as they are today. I don't think that there was a feeling of confidence in the Research Division that the President was going to win but I think probably that they were hopeful, but they were not confident he was going to win, and I think that is about all I can say on that. I think I would have to transfer to my personal feelings

[14]

at this point. I felt that Truman was nowhere as bad off as the polls indicated.

HESS: Did you think he would win the election?

BARRIERE: I thought it was possible. I thought it was quite possible. You recall, in 1948 Gallup was still using that system by which, even though he had a very small sample, he was giving individual states, and we had information which indicated that the Republicans were in bad shape in the Middle West, but Gallup kept giving most of those, if not all of those Middle Western states to Dewey. My feeling was that if it weren't for Thurmond and Wallace, Truman would win. I felt that Wallace was going to cost us a considerable number of states in the South, maybe more than he actually carried. I thought that we were going to do rather well in the farm belt and I thought that, for example, he was going to carry my own state of Massachusetts, which I believe Gallup was consistently giving to Dewey.

[15]

HESS: Which Mr. Truman finally pulled.

BARRIERE: That's right.

HESS: What particular attention was given to those two gentlemen by the Research Division -- to Mr. Wallace and Mr. Thurmond?

BARRIERE: Well, I think that as far as Thurmond was concerned, I think the general consensus in the Research Division was that, quite apart from the right or wrong of the morals involved, that after the adoption of the Humphrey-Biemiller amendment to the platform at the convention, that you had no choice but to pursue a strong civil rights position and hope that this would enable you to bring out a big minority vote in the key urban industrial states and enable you to carry them; and that there was no point at that junction of trying to placate the South, that is, for better or worse you had taken the fork to try to get the Negro vote and that you just had to take your chances with the Southerners, you couldn't double

[16]

track at that point. It seems to me, that once that amendment had been adopted the issue was settled.

About Wallace, I think the general idea was that the more liberal and the more aggressive the President was at hammering at the bread and butter issues, the more he would be likely to undercut Wallace's support. I don't think there was any discussion in the Research Division, and I am sure there was none in my presence, about attempting to suggest that the President should trim his sails on foreign policy to get the left back in.

HESS: What could President Truman have done to have cut former Secretary Wallace's drawing power enough to keep him from taking New York away from the Democratic column? Was there something that could have been done; was there more that could have been done by the administration, or by the Democratic National Committee?

[17]

BARRIERE: I don't know.

HESS: You mentioned the Humphrey-Biemiller civil rights plank. Do you think that Mr. Truman was basically for or against the more liberal plank; the Humphrey-Biemiller plank?

BARRIERE: I can just give you an opinion. I would suspect that he was probably opposed to it, but once it was adopted, he recognized he had to live with it, and he might as well try to exploit it, that would be my guess.

HESS: Well, some historians point out the fact that in the previous October, I believe in '47, they brought out the civil rights *To Secure These Rights* report, and then on February 2nd, of '48, he had sent his rather strong ten point civil rights message to Congress, and then came the convention and he seemed to be supporting the more conservative plank that did not make it, and some people think that perhaps he really was for the Humphrey-Biemiller

[18]

plank but did not want to come out for it at that time.

BARRIERE: I was not there, so this is just secondhand information. Joe McMurray, I think, told me once, that he attended a meeting the night before this happened and all the powers that be, like Senator Myers and Senator McGrath were there, and they were all supporting the milder, compromise version. I can't imagine them doing this if President Truman felt strongly the other way on the subject. I suspect that his advisers advised him that this was tactically the best thing and he acquiesced in it, this would be my guess. You have probably consulted the roll call. I think you would find that most of the people who were ordinarily associated with Truman, unless they are under real heavy guns from Negro constituencies, supported the milder plank on the roll call.

HESS: How important did you think the Negro vote was going to be in that election? Was there going to

[19]

be a "Negro vote.?" Was this being watched?

BARRIERE: Well, we hoped that there would be -- the President's recommendation coupled with the Humphrey-Biemiller plank, coupled with the fact that Thurmond had walked out, we hoped that there would be a reaction in our favor on that basis, but I think that is about as far as I can go. You must remember always, that I am sure there were discussions that took place between Batt and the White House and maybe some of the senior members of the staff, that I wasn't privy to.

HESS: Was it thought back at that time that any particular colored leader could deliver a bloc of votes?

BARRIERE: I never heard the subject discussed.

HESS: Back to the convention -- Mr. Truman ended his acceptance speech by calling the Congress back into special session. Do you know where that idea came from?

[20]

BARRIERE: I don't know where it came from, I know it was discussed in the Research Division by the whole staff before the convention. Now, whether Batt or somebody else on the staff thought this up, or whether the idea came from the White House and they sent it over to us for our opinion, I don't know; we had a meeting and everybody was present. I know Batt vigorously supported the idea, and everybody else there with the exception of myself either supported it or at least didn't raise any objections. I was not enthusiastic about it and I raised some objections to it. I felt that the Republicans would embarrass the President because of the fact that the Democrats in Congress wouldn't support the President or the platform. Now don't forget that the Democratic Party being in the minority in the Congress at that time had a rather high proportion of southerners in its membership, and, of course, they had most of the senior positions in the Congress. I felt that they would, of course, oppose us on civil rights,

[21]

housing and etc., and this would embarrass the President.

HESS: What I have just handed Mr. Barriere was the memo from the papers of Samuel I. Rosenman entitled "Should the President Call Congress Back?" dated June the 29th, 1948. Have you ever seen that before?

BARRIERE: I can't say that I have.

HESS: But you thought it was an error to call Congress back?

BARRIERE: Yes, and I was one hundred percent wrong.

HESS: Do you think it was a fairly valuable thing in the final analysis?

BARRIERE: Yes, I do. I think that it crystallized things -- it was sort of the frosting on the top of the cake -- it actually dramatized the split between Mr. Dewey and the Republicans in the Congress.

HESS: How was the liaison between the Research Division

[22]

and the White House carried on?

BARRIERE: Mr. Batt, insofar as I know, handled all this himself, and I think that he talked to Clark Clifford and to Charlie Murphy, and probably other members of the White House staff.

HESS: Did any members of the Research Division travel on the campaign train that you recall?

BARRIERE: Not that I recall. David Lloyd possibly might have toward the end but I am sure that the others didn't.

HESS: Did the Research Division ever get back any reports from the President or over the President's signature, so to speak, giving his impressions of the value of the Research Division; what kind of a job they were doing, anything of that nature?

BARRIERE: I don't know.

HESS: Did you meet Mr. Truman during the campaign?

BARRIERE: Just once.

[23]

HESS: Would you tell me about that?

BARRIERE: It, was rather late in the campaign. I am sure it was after the first of October because Hoeber had already left, and I recall that we picked him up at the gate of the White House before we went in; and if I remember correctly we went into the President's office first and, I think, that our host was Mr. Daniels of the Raleigh paper...

HESS: Jonathan Daniels.

BARRIERE: ...Yes, and I think he handed us pens and pads as souvenirs. Then he took us, by a roundabout method, to the lower level of the White House, and I remember passing the swimming pool because I could smell chlorine; and, I think, this program was sponsored by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union; it was a brief, not more than a fifteen minute broadcast, and, I think that Mr. [David] Dubinsky was there, because I remember meeting him afterwards. My mind is sort

[24]

of vague -- I met the President afterwards, and shook hands with him. Someone introduced each of us, and said we worked in the Research Division and the President thanked us for what we were doing, and so forth, and that was it.

HESS: You'll recall we discussed this briefly the other day. I looked it up in the *Public Papers* and that was on October 21, 1948.

BARRIERE: It was. By the way, did you ever check about Tallulah Bankhead? Somehow I think she may have introduced the President. Am I right or wrong?

HESS: This is the note to that particular item: "The President spoke at 10:05 p.m. from the White House. During his address he referred to former Representative William B. Bankhead and former Senator John H. Bankhead, both of Alabama, actresses Tallulah Bankhead and Ethel Barrymore, and Representative Fred A. Hartley, Jr., of New Jersey. The address was carried on a nationwide radio

[25]

broadcast." October 21.

BARRIERE: I don't recall meeting her, but maybe I did. I remember Dubinsky and the President.

HESS: Did the President have any words of encouragement? Did he say he was going to win the election or anything like that? Do you recall? What seemed to be the President's attitude that night? Confident?

BARRIERE: Well, Jonathan Daniels said that the President thought he was going to win -- I remember him saying that. Daniels made an interesting comment, he said, "When I am around the President I think he is going to win, then when I get back to North Carolina for a week or so, I don't think so."

HESS: How were the general relations between the Research Division and the regular Democratic National Committee? Do you recall anything along that nature?

[26]

BARRIERE: I don't think they were very friendly. We didn't have very much contact with each other. I used to use their library; but we didn't even go down there to get our pay, I remember they used to have a messenger that used to come with our pay checks every Friday. I think that the division was strictly the White House's idea and that Senator McGrath only tolerated it because the President wanted it.

HESS: Did you ever hear him make any statements along that line.

BARRIERE: McGrath?

HESS: Or anyone down there? Sam Brightman, Jack Redding?

Barrier: No, I heard from other members of our staff that they had heard -- that somebody had reported to them at the club, or something, that Redding had said something.

HESS: Second, third, and fourth hand.

[27]

BARRIERE: That's right.

HESS: Looking back, what do you think was the major campaign mistake on the part of the Republicans; or mistakes if there were more than one? What did they do wrong?

BARRIERE: Well, that is kind of a hard thing to answer. I think that they were overconfident. The Republicans were overconfident. I think that Dewey did not conduct as aggressive a campaign as he might; but I think, basically, it was what the President and the Democrats did about activating the Democratic votes rather than the mistakes the Republicans made that made the difference; plus, I think, that if the election had been held early in the summer, I think, Wallace would have done much better. I think his campaign sort of fell apart.

HESS: Why did his campaign fall apart, any particular reason?

[29]

BARRIERE: Well, I think that the fact that he geared his campaign almost entirely to foreign policy, and that his campaign in October almost reached a hysterical stage; and on the bread and butter stuff, which was -- remember this is my theory and I think it's true -- on what the people were interested in '48, Truman was as liberal as Wallace, he was saying the same thing, and more often. And so, I think, when Truman campaigned in an all-out liberal platform, and then, I think the people, the marginal liberal voters, more and more hesitated to vote for Wallace, with the idea that the Republicans might get in, and they couldn't bring themselves to do this.

HESS: Where was Wallace drawing most of his strength? Who voted for Wallace? Were there any particular blocs, or groups of people?

BARRIERE: I really can't answer that. I think it was mostly people who were disturbed with the trend of foreign policy and weren't appreciative of the

[29]

threat of the Communists. I think that at one time there was a possibility of Wallace getting a larger Jewish vote but, I think, the recognition of the State of Israel helped Truman in that area. I don't think Wallace had specific blocs, I think the bulk of his votes were from well-intentioned, vague general citizens. Of course, some were Communists, but not many.

HESS: When did the Research Division disband?

BARRIERE: We disbanded about a week before the election, if I remember correctly; a few days before the election.

HESS: I have a list of the members who were on the Research Division. I wonder if you just give me a capsule comment on who these people were, what you knew about them, and why they were brought in for this particular operation? William Batt, the director?

BARRIERE: Well, as I understand it, Batt had done something

[30]

on a more modest scale of organizing research material for the municipal election in Philadelphia the year before when [Joseph Sill] Clark and [Richardson] Dilworth had run unsuccessfully for comptroller and district attorney, and in some manner this came to the attention of Clark Clifford and I think he was instrumental in getting Batt in on this.

HESS: Johannes Hoeber.

BARRIERE: I think that he came in because Batt had known him in Philadelphia, and felt that he could handle some of the social welfare type of material.

HESS: Kenneth Birkhead.

BARRIERE: I don't know whether Batt knew him before or not. Birkhead had been active in liberal movements, and his father was well known in the area of civil rights and civil liberties, and I suspect that probably because of AVC Batt knew him beforehand, but I can't say for sure.

[31]

HESS: Phil Dreyer.

BARRIERE: I don't know.

HESS: Frank Kelly.

BARRIERE: Birkhead and Kelly, I think, had known each other before, they both came from Missouri, and it may be that is how Kelly got in there, I don't know.

HESS: David Lloyd.

BARRIERE: Lloyd was the legislative representative for the ADA, and they ran out of money -- the ADA -- they couldn't pay his salary. You know Lloyd came with us much later than the rest. I think Jim Loeb talked Batt into hiring him.

HESS: Did he do a pretty good job?

BARRIERE: He was a very good writer. He could write very well.

HESS: I have heard that a research division was set up

[32]

again in 1950 and 1952, do you recall anything about that?

BARRIERE: Oh, just slightly. In '50, Dreyer and Birkhead set up a research division and just what they did, I don't know. In '52 they brought in Bert [Bertram M.] Gross who had been secretary of the Council of Economic Advisers, and he started, I think, to do a lot of sophisticated research on attitudes, and so forth; but all of those Truman people who had been hired by [Frank E.] McKinney were all canned when the Stevenson people took over.

HESS: Anything else to add on the Research Division shut down, where did you go from there?

BARRIERE: I went home for a brief time and then I came back here. I stopped in Philadelphia on the way back and saw Batt. I thought that as Truman had won I would stay in Washington. And Batt told me when I got back to Washington to go and see Charlie Murphy, and I did that and told him I was

[33]

looking for a job, and he made appointments for me in some different places to go. I remember one was the legislative reference section of the Budget Bureau, where I met Mr. Elmer Staats, and we didn't hit it off at all. In the meantime, Congressman [Brent] Spence, who was the incoming chairman of the House Banking and Currency Committee, either spoke to the President, and the President talked to Murphy, or Spence talked to Murphy directly. Spence was interested in getting some young man to come to work for him on the staff of the Banking and Currency Committee. And Murphy got ahold of me -- there was some time lapse in all of this. I lived in a rooming house and the landlady wasn't too good about giving messages. By the time I got the message, I think, Spence was out of town or something, so I think it was after the Christmas holidays by the time I actually got up to see Spence; he interviewed me, and his secretary then called me back a week or so later and told me to come up again. He told me I had

[34]

the job and that I could come as soon as he took over as chairman, which was right after inauguration day. By the way, Spence had checked me out with Joe McMurray.

HESS: How long were you on that committee?

BARRIERE: I was on that committee until September 1, 1965.

HESS: One of the categories we are trying to find information on at the Library concerns White House-Congressional liaison, and drawing on all those years of experience, I'd like for you to fill me in on what you know about White House-Congressional liaison. Just who from the White House saw who upon the Hill? How was it carried on? To start off, could you pick a specific bill that was worked on, and using that as an example relate just how the liaison was carried on?

BARRIERE: I want to tell you before I start this, there was no form of organized, sophisticated type of congressional liaison as the type that [Lawrence F.]

[35]

O'Brien has carried on under Kennedy and Johnson, everything was sort of done on an ad hoc basis. But, to get to specific examples: The first major bill that hit us, and this was shortly after I came up here, was rent control. Rent control was scheduled to expire on April 30; and the rent control agency itself was a very weak one; they couldn't get top-flight personnel because everybody thought the place was about to die, and was always working on a year to year basis. So, Charlie Murphy took this thing sort of under his wing himself and assigned David Lloyd, who by that time had gone to work for the White House, to handle this. Now Lloyd wasn't really very good at congressional liaison, but the reason that Murphy gave him the job is he thought because of the fact he had been congressional liaison for ADA, that he could do a good job. I worked with Lloyd; the chairman told me that one of the chief jobs would be to work with the White House, and he would even send me down before the bills came up to find

[36]

out in general what was going to be in them, when they were going to come up and how they were going to be handled and if there was a question as to whether it would be likely to go to the Banking Committee or some other legislative committee. I worked with Lloyd, and Lloyd reported to Murphy on that bill, and we had a problem in that Tighe Woods, who was the head of the agency, didn't have the confidence of the pro-rent control groups. For example, one of the chief supporters of rent control was the housing committee of the CIO, Leo Goodman was the secretary of that committee, and he ran it; and he and Woods were always at dagger points. So you had this problem that the agency and its constituents weren't in harmony, and in addition to that Woods was one of those gentlemen who likes to compromise without knowing what he is going to get in return for it, so he would be trying to give in on some point, when it wasn't absolutely certain that: (a) it was necessary; and (b) if you did, it would be any

[37]

advantage. So, when Woods would come up to the committee prepared to cave in on something, I would report back to Lloyd, and then the White House would whack Woods on the head and keep him in line. It was a useful thing in that sense. As far as going around and lining up the votes for the passage of the thing the way Larry O'Brien and his staff do, that wasn't done systematically, that was pretty much left up to Sam Rayburn. Another bill that was important that year was the Housing Act of '49, which reactivated the public housing program which had been dormant, and, also, passed Title One, slum clearance, which has now come to be known as urban renewal. There you had a strong agency, and Mr. [Raymond M.] Foley who was the administrator of that agency, carried out the President's program in housing without any second guessing from the White House. When Foley wanted to see the President about something major, he went to see him and if it wasn't something that he felt he had to take up with the President he made the decision himself and the White House backed

[38]

up his decision. He turned the congressional liaison over on that to his congressional liaison man, Nat [Nathaniel S.] Keith and his general counsel, B. T. [Berchmans T.] Fitzpatrick, and the White House never got directly involved in that at all. In the committee we drafted the bill, and modified it and compromised it, in cooperation with the people from the housing departments as to what chairman Spence or I or some of the other senior members of the committee thought was necessary to get a saleable product for the floor. Once again, as far as doing the type of work that O'Brien's shop has done and that I have done in later years about getting votes lined up on the floor, just how that was done under Truman, I don't know. I think it was pretty much left up to Sam Rayburn.

HESS: He was one of the "Big Four", and every Monday the "Big Four" would go down to the White House. Is that the time that Rayburn and the other three members of the "Big Four" would get together with Truman at this once a week meeting?

[39]

BARRIERE: Well, Frank Kelly, you know, who was with us in the Research Division went to work for Senator Lucas afterwards, he was the majority leader in the Senate, and this is secondhand, but Kelly tells me that Lucas told him that they didn't do a damn thing at those breakfasts except swap stories; that nothing much was accomplished at those meetings. The real work would be done in a private conversation between the President and Rayburn, either in person or over the telephone.

HESS: So, it was really between the President and Rayburn, and the other three members of the "Big Four" were not as important?

BARRIERE: I assume that when there was something to be done in the Senate the President had a method of doing it, but at least, according to Lucas' account, the breakfasts were just social. Now, that is secondhand; I have no personal knowledge of it.

HESS: Drawing on your experience up there, did you ever

[40]

get any phone calls; ever have any dealings with people like Clark Clifford, Charles Murphy, Dave Bell?

BARRIERE: Not from Clifford. I would get calls from Murphy, and nearly always, if I picked up the phone and called Murphy, I could get him, and if I couldn't get him he would make sure that somebody like Neustadt particularly -- to some extent Bell -- I think he was there most of the time -- somebody to whom I could relay a message with authority, they might not be able to do anything about my complaint, but I could get a hearing on it. Actually for a fellow who had no experience, Mr. Spence used to give me a great deal of leeway in these things. I knew, in general, that, unless there was some particular local situation involved politically in Kentucky, what the President wanted was what Spence wanted, so I didn't have to check with him; and if I thought that somebody on the committee was getting out of line, or the agency wasn't behaving the way they should,

[41]

or they were not really supporting the President, I would report this and would report it vigorously to Murphy or one of his subordinates, and it was up to them if they could do something about it. [Paul] Brown was always a problem. Brown was the number two man on the Banking and Currency Committee. He was extremely conservative. He was from Georgia. The key fact was that often in conference we would have bills that were controversial. Generally speaking, the Senate would bring a version to conference which was more in line with the President's program than the House; and, of course, the three Republicans -- we always had four Democrats and three Republicans as conferees -- and the three Republicans would always be against us, and generally speaking, Spence, Patman, and Monroney would support the administration, so that gave Brown the swing vote. I know many occasions where I would call the White House about him; and they gave him special treatment, and at least on one occasion I know the

[42]

President called him himself.

HESS: Did Matthew Connelly have very much to do with congressional liaison?

BARRIERE: Not that I know of.

HESS: Did Harry Vaughan ever phone up on the Hill?

BARRIERE: He never called me.

HESS: Later in the administration in 1949 and in 1951 there were three men that were hired on the White House staff with a specific title "Legislative Assistant." Could you tell me about these men?

BARRIERE: They never came to see me, I know that.

HESS: Joseph G. Feeney, Charles Maylon and John A. Carroll.

BARRIERE: I met Feeney later.

HESS: Was this during the administration, or later?

BARRIERE: After -- when he was at the Railway Express Company. I never had any dealings with him at all

[43]

during the Truman days.

HESS: Did you hear anyone on the Hill make an evaluation of any of those three men?

BARRIERE: Well, the only thing I have, is once again, going back to Kelly. He said the only thing that they ever did was bring speeches which were about two weeks old that Truman had given, up to Lucas to put in the appendix of the *Record*, that's all.

HESS: That's about all they saw of them?

BARRIERE: That's right.

HESS: How influential was Leslie Biffle in White House-congressional liaison matters?

BARRIERE: I think that would be strictly on the Senate side. I wouldn't have any knowledge of that.

HESS: Did you ever hear of Frank N. Parks?

BARRIERE: No.

[44]

Kelly might be able to give you some insight about what happened on the Senate side, or I think it would be worth your while to take a trip up to New York and see McMurray because, while in title he was only the staff director of the Senate banking committee -- he stayed on after Wagner left. [Burnet R.] Maybank kept him as staff director -- he got into a great deal of this stuff and he was an older man, he had more experience, and he could probably tell you a lot more about the workings of say the relationship of a fellow like Biffle to the White House than I could; and what role, if any, the Vice President played; McMurray didn't get along with Lucas, but he was very close to [Francis J.] Myers, the whip. Maybank was the kind of guy -- you know, Spence was satisfied with talking with Murphy -- but Maybank was the kind of guy who wanted to get a call from the President himself.

HESS: When you wanted to contact somebody in the White House, would you call Murphy? Is that who you had your liaison with? Even when these other men -- even

[45]

after 1949 -- that's when you went to work for the committee.

BARRIERE: That's right.

HESS: Even when these men were down there with the official title, legislative assistants.

BARRIERE: I never had anything to do with those fellows at all. I called Murphy or Neustadt. There was a fellow named Spingarn.

HESS: Stephen J.

BARRIERE: ...and he was brought in about 1950, I think, and I did some work with him on the Defense Production Act.

HESS: Did you ever work with George Elsey?

BARRIERE: Yes. Yes. Elsey was very much interested in the Export-Import Bank; and I recall one time, after I made a trip with the banking committee to Europe and the Near East, to examine some of

[46]

the projects that had been financed by the Bank, and we were going to have a committee report, and Elsey, I remember, called me and said he would be very interested in that. I assume he didn't want us to say anything detrimental to the Bank; and I remember bringing that report down and letting Elsey read it. He also worked on the part of Point 4 which was to have been handled by the Export-Import Bank.

HESS: Did you ever have any dealings with David Stowe?

BARRIERE: No.

HESS: John R. Steelman, The Assistant to the President?

BARRIERE: No.

HESS: Philleo Nash?

BARRIERE: No. I got to know Nash later, but I didn't know him at that time.

HESS: That's about all of my questions. Do you have anything else that we have perhaps skipped that I

[47]

haven't asked a question on regarding the White House-Congressional liaison matters?

BARRIERE: No.

HESS: I think it's been covered quite well.

BARRIERE: I will just say it was a very intimate relationship that we maintained, more intimate, I think, than I have ever had since.

HESS: They don't have this type of working relationship now?

BARRIERE: I don't believe my relationship with either the Kennedy or Johnson people at the White House has ever been as intimate as it was with the Truman people.

HESS: Think we have covered the subject pretty well?

BARRIERE: I think so.

HESS: Thank you very much.

[48]

INDEX

Agriculture, 12-13

Americans for Democratic Action, 31, 35

American Farm Bureau Federation, 13

Bankhead, Tallulah, 24

Banking and Currency Committee, House, 33-41

Barriere, John E.:

- Batt, William L., Jr., first meeting with, 3-4

- biographical data, 1-4

- Democratic National Committee, Research Division, appointed to staff of, 3-4

- duties as staff member, Democratic National Committee, Research Division, 5-9

- duties as staff member, House Banking and Currency Committee, 33-41

- 80th Congress, opposition to calling special session of, 20-21

- "Files of the Facts," research for, 8-9

- House Banking and Currency Committee, appointment to staff of, 33-34

- House Banking and Currency Committee, trip to Europe and Near East as staff member of, 45-46

- Presidential campaign, 1948, issues discussed by, 11-13

- Presidential speeches, drafting of, 1948 Presidential campaign, 7-8

- Truman, H. S., election prospects, 1948, opinion regarding, 14-15

- Truman, H. S., meeting with during 1948 Presidential campaign, 22-24

- White House staff, working relationship with, 47

Batt, William L., Jr.:

- Barriere, John E., appointment of to staff of DNC Research Division by, 3-4

- DNC Research Division, appointment as director of, 29-30

- DNC Research Division, as director of, 1948 Presidential campaign, 6

- DNC Research Division, organized by, 1948, 3-4

- 80th Congress, supported calling special session of, 20

Bell, David E., 40

"Big Four", 38-39

Birkhead, Kenneth, 31, 32

Brown, Paul, 41

Budget, Bureau of the, 33

Civil rights, 15-16, 18-19

Clark, Joseph S., 30

Clifford, Clark M., 30, 40

CIO housing Committee, 36-37

Daniels, Jonathan, 23, 25

Defense Production Act of 1950, 45

Democratic National Committee, Research Division:

- Democratic National Committee, relations with, 25-26

- members of, 29-31

- organization of, 1948, 3-4

- reactivation in 1950 and 1952, 32
- Truman, H. S., election prospects, 1948, opinion of staff re, 13-14
- White House Staff, liaison with, 21-22
- Democratic Party platform, 1948, civil rights plank, 15-16, 17-18
- Democratic party, influence of Southerners in, 1948, 1S-16, 19
- Dewey, Thomas E., 10, 14, 21, 27
- Dilworth, Richardson, 30
- Dixiecrats, 14-15, 19
- Dreyer, Philip, 31, 32
- Dubinsky, David, 22, 25
- 80<sup>th</sup> Congress:
  - and the farm question, 1948, 12-13
  - as an issue, 1948 Presidential campaign, 9-11, 20-21
  - record of, 10-11
  - special session, 1948, 19-21
- Else, George, 45-46
- Export-Import Bank, 45-46
- "Files of the Facts," 8-9
- Fitzpatrick, Berchmans.T., 38
- Foley, Raymond M., 37-38
- Foreign Affairs as an issue in political campaigns, 10-11, 27-28
- Gallup poll, 14
- Goodman, Leo, 36
- Gross, Bertram M., 32
- Hoeber, Johannes, 23, 30
- House Banking and Currency Committee, liaison with White House staff on pending legislation, 33-41, 44
- Housing, 11-12
- Housing Act of 1949, 37-38
- Housing Expediter, Office of the, 35-37
- Housing and Home Finance Agency, 36-37
- Housing, public, 36-38
- International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, 23
- Keith, Nathaniel, S., 38
- Kelly, Frank, 9, 31, 39, 43, 44
- Lloyd, David D., 22, 31, 35
- Loeb, James, 31
- Lucas, Scott W., 39, 43, 44

Maybank, Burnet R., 44  
McGrath, J. Howard, 5, 18, 26  
McKinney, Frank E., 32  
McMurray, Joseph P., 3, 18, 34, 44  
Monroney, Mike, 41  
Murphy, Charles S., 22, 32-33, 36, 40-41, 44, 45  
Myers, Francis J., 18, 44

Negro vote, 1948 Presidential election, 15-16, 18-19  
Neustadt, Richard E., 40

Patman, Wright, 41

Presidential campaign, 1948:

- Agriculture as an issue in, 12-13
- civil rights as an issue in, 15-16, 18-19
- Communism as an issue in, 28-29
- 80th Congress as an issue in, 9-11, 20-21
- foreign affairs as an issue in, 10-11, 27-28
- housing as an issue in, 11-12
- Negro vote, 18-19
- Progressive party, 28-29
  - public opinion polls, and, 14
- Republican party campaign strategy, mistakes in, 27-28
- Research Division, Democratic National Committee, role in, 6-7
- speechwriting for, 7-8
- Wallace, Henry A., campaign errors, 28-29
- western trip, President H. S. Truman, :June 1948, 3-4
- WPA guidebooks, use of in drafting Harry S. Truman's whistle-stop speeches, 2-3

Progressive party, 1948, 15-16, 28-29

Public opinion polls, 14

Rayburn, Sam, 37, 38

Redding, John M., 26

Rent control, 35-37

Republican party, conduct of 1948 Presidential campaign, 27-28

Spence, Brent, 33-34, 38, 40

Spingarn, Stephen J., 45

Staats, Elmer, 33

Thurmond, J. Strom, 15, 19

Truman, Harry S.:

- and "Big Four" meetings, 38-39
- civil rights, advocacy of, 17-18
- civil rights, attitude toward, 1948 Presidential campaign., 17-19
- civil rights plank, 1948 Presidential campaign, and, 17-18

- congressional leaders, liaison with, 38-39, 41-42
- 80th Congress, special session called by, 20-21
- 80th Congress, utilization of as issue, 1948 Presidential campaign, 9-11, 20-21
- International Ladies' Garment Worker's Union, address sponsored by, October 21, 1948, 23-25
- Israel, recognition of, 29
- public opinion polls, and. 14
- Rayburn, Sam, relationship with, 38
- speechwriting for during 1948 Presidential campaign, 6-8
- western trip, June 1948, 3-4

Wallace, Henry A., 15-16, 28-29

Woods, Tighe, 36-37