

Oral History Interview
with
JOHN K. HULSTON

Attorney in Springfield, Missouri; Chairman, Greene County Democratic Central Committee, 1946-48; and Presidential Elector, 6th Congressional District in 1948.

Independence, Missouri
January 11, 1988
by Niel M. Johnson, Harry S. Truman Library

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JOHNSON: I'm going to start out the way I usually do, by asking you to give us your full name and the date and place of your birth and the names of your parents.

HULSTON: My full name is John Kenton Hulston, and I was born March 29, 1915 in Dade County, Missouri. My father was John Fred Hulston and my mother was Myrtle King Hulston.

JOHNSON: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

HULSTON: No brothers, no sisters, no deceased brothers or sisters; I'm an only child.

JOHNSON: Do you want to summarize your education for the record?

HULSTON: I went to a country school, Limestone School No. 39, in Dade County. We moved to Ash Grove, Missouri in 1924,

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and I finished grade school and high school at Ash Grove, Missouri. Then I went to Drury College for four years, graduating in 1936. Then I taught school for two years at Ash Grove, taught history and coached the basketball team. In 1938 I entered the University of Missouri at Columbia Law School, where I graduated in 1941.

JOHNSON: I know that some of this basic information is in the books, the two autobiographies that you have written. Let's mention the titles of those right now.

HULSTON: I wrote *An Ozark Boy's Story*, which covered my life from 1915 to 1945, and that was published by the School of the Ozarks Press at Point Lookout, Missouri, in 1971. The next book was *An Ozark Lawyer's Story*, which covered the years 1946 to 1976, and that was published by the Western Printing Company of Republic, Missouri in 1976.

JOHNSON: If we're fortunate we'll probably get some confessions from you that are not in the two books. There is one question before we leave the subject of education;

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in your elementary and high school years, was there any particular teacher that you think influenced you in your later career?

HULSTON: In the high school?

JOHNSON: Yes.

HULSTON: And in elementary school. There was an eighth grade teacher named Miss Lena Runyan. She was a maiden lady and she influenced me greatly because of the imposition of study habits. I became interested in using the school library that was used primarily then by the high school students. I think that she was responsible for my introduction to the use of books and a reasonable amount of sustained effort, and not deviation from study.

In high school, I had some good teachers, but the one that influenced me most was a vocational agriculture teacher named Joe C. Moore. I wasn't an agriculture major in high school, but he, with his conversations and at the drug store meetings for a Coke, and that sort of thing, sort of sowed the seed for me to go on to school.

Then there was my high school coach, Forrest Abbott.

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I played basketball at high school, and of course, you are always greatly influenced by your coach, especially if you make the team. He had very good habits and he instilled good living habits in all of the students and I think that was a great help.

JOHNSON: What subjects did he teach?

HULSTON: He taught business subjects. He taught business subjects and I learned to type under him, and I learned to keep books and know the difference between a debit and a credit under him, which has been very helpful.

JOHNSON: You had a high school history teacher?

HULSTON: Yes, we had a high school history teacher; his name was Russell P. Robberson. He is now a lawyer in Austin, Texas, and he was...

JOHNSON: He's still lawyering?

HULSTON: He's still lawyering. He may be retired, but his name still appears in *Martindale Hubbell*. Of course, we used Muzzey's history of America. The interesting thing, Niel, was that in our class we had a relative of

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[David] Muzzey, who wrote the history book. She was a descendant from John Chandler, who with his father was one of the few father-son combinations (six, I believe) according to an authority on Lexington and Concord -- that fought in both the skirmish at Lexington and the Battle of Concord. So we were very fortunate to have classmate Mary Chandler Galbraith there to tell us about the Muzzey-Chandler relationship in Colonial days.

JOHNSON: Your father's occupation when you were growing up was what?

HULSTON: First he was a farmer. Then he was a small town general merchant in a store at South Greenfield, Missouri, three miles from our farm, which handled food and dry goods, farm implements, furniture and the whole thing. In 1924, a man named Orville L. Howser persuaded him to join Howser in the Ford agency for Model-Ts at Ash Grove, Missouri. That's when we moved to Ash Grove, Missouri. My father and Mr. Howser were the Model-T agents, and it proved to be a great boon because people at that time in that area of the country were converting from

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old "Dobbin" and mules to the Model-T. Most of them could afford one, because the popular Ford Touring car sold for in the neighborhood of \$390.

JOHNSON: How long did he have a Ford agency?

HULSTON: He had the Ford agency until 1933 when he decided that Chevrolet was making a better car. Ford had put out a V-8 car, and it used a quart of oil with every fill-up of gasoline. The competition was killing my father because they would say to the prospective buyer, "Will eight hogs eat more than six?" My father couldn't answer that question, so he decided he would join his competition rather than to meet it, and he became the Chevrolet dealer in Ash Grove.

In the meantime, he had purchased Mr. Howser's interest, and Mr. Howser had moved on to Mount Vernon, Missouri.

JOHNSON: So you grew up essentially in Ash Grove.

HULSTON: In Ash Grove. The business was on the Main Street, in the Ford agency first and then the Chevrolet agency next.

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JOHNSON: How big a town was it?

HULSTON: Ash Grove at that time was about 1200 people, and had the Ash Grove Portland Lime & Cement Company. It was headquartered in Kansas City but this was their home plant. They are now very large and remain head-quartered in Kansas City.

JOHNSON: You mentioned the library. Did they have a public library, or was the library in the high school?

HUSTON: No, just the high school. It was a pretty good one; they had lots of encyclopedias. The ones with the statues of naked men in Rome -- you could open the book, and it would just fall open to those.

JOHNSON: Your father got into politics apparently around 1934. Was that his first involvement?

HULSTON: No, that wasn't his first involvement. His first involvement was voting for Woodrow Wilson in 1912. When he was in Washington Township in Dade County, he was the Committeeman of Washington Township. That's Democratic, but Dade County is about four-to-one Republican over the Democrats, so he was in the minority. He became

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well acquainted with a lawyer named Benjamin M. Neale, who was the county chairman, and he was a good worker for Mr. Neale. Mr. Neale, in the meantime, had moved on to Springfield, Missouri, because he became a very prominent lawyer, together with his partner Charles F. Newman. They moved from Greenfield, Missouri, 40 miles east, to Springfield, Missouri the county seat of Greene County, because they had become well-known over the whole area. I think it was Ben Neale who got my father interested in politics and caused him to run for the committeeman of Washington Township. Then, when he moved to Ash Grove, he found that Ash Grove was still about the same proportion, about four to one, or at least three to one, Republicans to Democrats. But he maintained his interest, and he had only been there I think two or three years until he was committeeman from Boone Township, named for Nathan Boone, the youngest son of Daniel Boone. So he was interested in Democrat politics, I'd say, from about 1928 as a committeeman.

JOHNSON: That's when he became committeeman, you say?

HULSTON: In Greene County.

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JOHNSON: I see, and he had already been committeeman in Dade County.

HULSTON: In Dade County, in Washington Township.

JOHNSON: So presumably he was supporting Roosevelt and Cox in the twenties.

HULSTON: Yes, he always supported the Democrats' Presidential nominee.

JOHNSON: But those two counties are Republican, Greene and Dade?

HULSTON: Yes, they are. They are now in the gerrymandered Seventh (former Sixth) Congressional District that sent Dewey Short to Congress term after term after term, because they had decided to put all of the Republican counties in Southwest Missouri in that district and just gave up on it. Dewey Short for many, many terms was the lone Republican Congressman from Missouri.

JOHNSON: Just briefly, what accounted for them being Republican? What were the historical factors?

HULSTON: That's very interesting. I have gone into it.

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You see, most of the people in Missouri, in part of Missouri, the Ozarks, came from Tennessee, or Kentucky, or North Carolina. Those, you see, are all southern states, for the most part. Tennessee was split a little during the Civil War, and so was Kentucky, but generally speaking, those are southern states. The question would be, if all those people came to Southwest Missouri from three predominantly southern states, why would they be Republican?

I think the answer was that the people that came were poor people. They came to buy land for \$1.25 per acre, or whatever, and they didn't have any slaves. They weren't prejudiced in favor of slavery and against the Union at the time of the Civil War. Most of the people came in the 1840s and '50s, ten and twenty years before the war. I think the reason was economic; I think they were free thinkers. They weren't beholden to slavery, there weren't any slaves to speak of, and when they came they didn't bring any slaves with them to speak of, and they didn't have slaves when they were there.

Then I think another thing was that during the Civil War in Missouri, Missouri was a divided state,

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very much so, and the Confederate Armies who had control of the Ozarks during a majority of the war commandeered their feed and their horses and their teams, their mules, and the hams and the bacon in the smokehouses. I think that the people just turned against the Confederates during the Civil War because of the fact that it was total war as far as they were concerned and it was a severe war and they suffered economically. They didn't receive any benefits from the

concessions that they took from them. I think that was the final blow and I think that that was the reason why Southwest Missouri is still predominantly Republican.

JOHNSON: Would you say that they were probably more anti-slaveholder, or anti-big planter, than they were anti-slavery?

HUZSTON: The slaveholders and the planters homesteaded from the southern states, primarily from Virginia, along the Missouri River. They had the good sense to take on the fertile bottoms, because they had slaves, and they cultivated them [the fertile bottom soils]. The ragtail "Bob Muffin" people that came to Missouri didn't have

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any slaves; they wanted wood and water. They wanted wood to build their cabins and keep their fires going, and they wanted a spring to furnish good water to drink for animals and for themselves, and do their washing. The people in Southwest Missouri looked for timber and a spring, and they didn't have any slaves and didn't have any fertile ground for most of them to till.

JOHNSON: Are they the ones that are called, fairly or not, "hillbilly" types?

HULSTON: Well, "hillbilly," you know -- they resent that very much down there. I think that a better term, and a term that I think we all accept down there in the Ozarks, in the old days was that we were Applachian-type people. But you know, Table Rock Dam was built down there in Taney County, and Norfolk Dam was built to the south of that, and the tourists have come in there and it is hard to find a hillbilly now. A lot of them have come from Chicago and just stayed. Now they're coming from Nashville, for country music, and staying.

JOHNSON: Is Branson, for instance, in one of those counties?

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HULSTON: Branson is in Taney County. The county seat is Forsyth, but Branson is the leading city. I suppose Taney County is the archetype Ozark county in the eyes of Vance Randolph and the people who have become authorities on the Ozarks.

JOHNSON: Such as the book, *Shepherd of the Hills*.

HULSTON: *Shepherd of the Hills* is laid at Compton Ridge just outside of Branson.

JOHNSON: So some of your interest in politics came from your father. Did your party loyalties come also from your father's influence?

HULSTON: Yes, in my day if your father was a Democrat, you were a Democrat. That's changed now I understand. If your father's Democrat, you're liable to go to school and come out a Republican. But in my day, you took your father's politics and your mother's religion, usually.

JOHNSON: In 1934, your father was still a committeeman?

HULSTON: Yes, he was committeeman in Greene County. He was the committeeman for the western half of the county.

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In addition to being a committeeman for Boone Township, he was chairman for the west half of the county, underneath the county chairman.

JOHNSON: Why, he was one of the leading Democrat activists so to speak.

HULSTON: He was the leading Democrat activist and he took it very seriously. But the people that traded with him, most of them were Republican; yet they respected him because he was the loyal minority. He was not an overbearing politician; he would laugh with them, and he crossed the lines for the local people, and the county people.

JOHNSON: Were Hiram Chinn and Ernest Scholten the other leading Democrats?

HULSTON: Yes. Hiram Chinn -- we all called him "Diggy," or "Dig;" I think it's because he came from Diggins, Missouri which is east of Springfield on the railroad -- I would say he was the number one politician, Democrat politician, in Springfield. Ernest H. Scholten, a member of the County Court at that time, was the number

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two. Sam M. Wear probably was right along beside them.

JOHNSON: Sam was from where?

HULSTON: Sam was a lawyer in Springfield, Missouri, and his father, Hunter Wear, had been a lawyer in Springfield before him.

JOHNSON: You mentioned Ernest Scholten being a member of the County Court; that was a three-member court like here in Jackson County?

HULSTON: Exactly the same.

JOHNSON: Patterned all over Missouri. That means they elected a Democrat to the County Court; was he the only one of the three that was a Democrat?

HULSTON: He and another one on the County Court had ridden in on Roosevelt's coattails in '36.

JOHNSON: Did they give a majority to Roosevelt in that county in '32?

HULSTON: Yes, and they did in '36. In '32, it was 4,000

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but in '36 he carried it big.

JOHNSON: Did they elect any more Democrats to the County Court in the thirties that you can recall, besides...

HULSTON: Yes, in '32 they organized the County Court by electing all members.

JOHNSON: In '36?

HULSTON: Yes, two of three, with E. H. Scholten the presiding judge of the County Court.

JOHNSON: I thought maybe I would just ask you to characterize some of these people that you've mentioned in your books, but perhaps haven't characterized. Lester Cox was another important figure that comes up in the records.

HULSTON: I did not know Lester Cox in 1934, but I became very well acquainted with him in 1946 when I started practicing law in Springfield. In 1951 he hired me as his lawyer for his 29 corporations. I remained his lawyer throughout his life, and was the lawyer for his family. I assisted in settling his estate, and I still represent his son and grandson.

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JOHNSON: I see, so it's been passed down.

HULSTON: So I knew Lester Cox as well as I had known anybody I guess, but not in 1934.

JOHNSON: Okay, let's take a look at 1934. Even though you have written this up in your book, would you want to recount again your first meeting with Harry Truman

HULSTON: Oh, yes, I love to tell that story, Niel, and I'm awfully glad to get to tell it in this context.

I was home from Drury College as a sophomore, finished my sophomore year. It was on July 28, 1934 and I was at the garage on Main Street. I was in my father's office, which was a very small office, and he received this telephone call from Springfield. It was Judge Scholten on the phone. I found out later from my father that Scholten and Dig Chinn had suggested to Harry Truman, who had come to Springfield to make a speech that evening at Grant Park which is in the north part of Springfield, that they should go out into the county that day and meet some people out in Greene County. So Scholten called my father, and that

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was the telephone call asking if they could bring Harry Truman out to Ash Grove.

Of course, I think that's the first time my father had heard of Harry Truman and he wanted to know who he was. I think he used the words, "Who the hell is he?" Then Dig Chinn got on the phone, according to my father, and told that Harry was a very fine county judge in Jackson County, and that he had Tom Pendergast's support, and that he was going to be the next Senator of the United States and that he'd like to bring him out there to meet my father and let my father

take him up and down Main Street and meet some of the people in town. So my father said, "Bring him on out here, but," he said, "the best place for us to go is down to Everton."

Now Everton is about seven mile, or eight miles west of Ash Grove, and Ash Grove is very close to the Dade County line. Everton is over in Dade County, which as I told you before is four-to-one Republican. So, the arrangement was made that they'd drive on down. They did and the drove up in, I think it was, a Dodge coupe. I asked Judge Scholten's grandson recently, who is a retired U.S. Army colonel, if his grandfather

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had a coupe. He said, "Yes, my grandfather had an old Dodge coupe. I remember it." Incidentally, the grandson is named Ernest Ferguson. He's named after his grandfather Ernest Scholten. Scholten had a daughter who married a Ferguson.

So they drove up in front of the garage about 11:30, I would say, in the morning. It might have been closer to 11. Anyway, my father took Harry Truman up one side of the street and down the other. He took him in to meet the banker, John H. Perryman, who incidentally was a Democrat, and Mayor Clark Spencer, who was a Democrat, but he didn't have very many Democrats to introduce him to in Ash Grove on Main Street. He got that tour done in time to get to Everton a little before 12 o'clock. We had a demonstrator; all dealers had a demonstrator, which always was a four-door, because they wanted to open the back door and let people in the back seat, the women folks and all. We had a black demonstrator and dad said to me, "John, you drive the car and Harry and I will get acquainted." Judge Scholten and Dig Chinn went in Scholten's car; they followed us in the black coupe. It's only seven miles, I think, from Ash Grove

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to Everton. My dad and Harry were in the back seat and I was in the front seat driving. But you ask my impression of Mr. Truman. When he walked in, he just looked like all the people that traded with us that wore a suit and tie. He had what I considered a very delicate handshake, whenever I shook hands with him.

JOHNSON: Did he wear a hat, by the way?

HULSTON: Yes, he had a hat.

JOHNSON: He wore a hat even as hot as it was.

HULSTON: Yes, even as hot as it was. I know I was impressed with the fact that he had his coat on and a tie and a white shirt. I want to tell you about the weather, and I think I'll stop and tell you about that now if I may. I have checked the records in Greene County', and in July 1934, every day except one, for the thirty-one days, the heat went over the 100 mark. There was only one day out of the month that it didn't go over a hundred, and the heat was at least 90 degrees when they got to Ash Grove. But Harry Truman was dapper as I remember. But I'm sure he had on a very light suit, because Mr. Truman knew how to dress.

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Well, anyway, we started out for Everton. Of course, my dad was trying to get acquainted with him because he knew he was going to introduce him, and he wanted to say something about him. So, they talked a little bit. At that time we drove our cars, most of them from Kansas City, from the Leeds Plant out here in Kansas City; we drove them to Ash Grove. My father would bring up a drive-out team and most of the people he brought were men that had bought the car and they wanted to drive it, from the time they got it.

JOHNSON: Right off the assembly line.

HULSTON: Make sure, as they said, that somebody hadn't burned the motor out. So my father started talking to him about driving out those Model-Ts. He found out that Harry had been a farmer at Grandview, and he said, "Why, we always drove those old Model-Ts right out to Hickman Mills before we stopped." He said, "I've come by your place there many times." [Route] 71 was a gravel road then. He talked about it and asked him where the land laid. He asked, "It goes over all the way to the railroad?" And Truman said, "Yes." They talked about that, and how he stopped at Hickman Mills and checked these Model-Ts for water and oil, and see if they were too hot. We could only drive

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a Model-T fifteen miles an hour until we got out to Belton, and then you could step it up to 20 or 25. So they made pretty good conversation. And then my father told us, of course, that he was a Mason at Melville, which after they burned it during the Civil War became Dadeville, in Dade County. And I remember the President mentioned to my father that he was a member of the Lodge at, I believe, Belton. I think it was Belton.

By the time we got down to Dyes Park at Everton which was on the south side of a little creek called Sinking Creek, which the railroad follows it, why he knew him pretty well. It was noon and people were standing around the church stands, eating fried in hog-lard hamburgers and fish sandwiches, and drinking red lemonade and red soda pop. There was a man in charge of the loudspeaker there by the name of Dr. Pharis. Believe it or not, he had been a medical doctor for the indigent people in Independence, under the County Court, when Harry Truman was County Judge his first term. So, believe it or not, Harry Truman met Dr. Pharis, who was a strong Republican, but I guess it didn't make any difference up there, because they had to hire a doctor. He was very happy to turn the microphone over to Harry Truman and my father. Because they had quite a crowd around the stands and because for the noon hour

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it was a pretty good crowd, for a midday that hot, why they went right ahead with the speaking. My father introduced him. In short, you know, I just remember him saying that Harry Truman was a farmer and everybody at the picnic, of course, was a farmer, practically. My father said, "Now, you folks will want to be for this man because he's a farmer just like we are." Then he concluded by saying, "You know, his hands fit a plow handle just like an owl's claws fit a limb."

That just went over pretty big, and there was lots of laughter. Then Harry Truman said a few words. He acknowledged that he was a farmer and that he understood the farmer's problems and that he was a war veteran, that he had been overseas. He told them a little bit about Kansas City,

Jackson County, and the County Court and how he had built some good roads up here, and he knew the people liked to have good roads. That's about all I remember. I think that Mr. Truman probably spoke 10 or 12 minutes, 15 minutes maybe. Then we went on back to...

JOHNSON: About how many people would have been there?

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HULSTON: It's hard to say. As a kid, you know, if there were a hundred people, I would imagine that there were 500. I would imagine that it was somewhere between 100 and 150 maybe. It looked like an awfully big crowd to me.

JOHNSON: Some of them would have had mules and carts, or wagons there, or they all had automobiles?

HULSTON: By that time most people were driving either model-T Fords, or had a Chevrolet. Practically every car was a Ford or Chevrolet, except Benton Wilson, the banker in Dade County, I think, had a Buick.

JOHNSON: Your father must have been a good salesman.

HULSTON: He was a good salesman.

JOHNSON: To populate the county with Chevrolets.

HULSTON: Strangely enough, in 1941, the year before Pearl Harbor, he sold more Chevrolets in Ash Grove than the Chevrolet dealer sold Chevrolets in Springfield. The significant thing of that is that the 1946 quota because they quit letting the car dealers have passenger cars in '42 to 1946 -- in 1946 his quota of new cars

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from Chevrolet was based on the number of cars he sold in 1941.

Johnson: Well, that helped.

HULSTON: The Chevrolet dealer in Springfield complained about that bitterly. He said, "Its terrible that a man out in Ash Grove would be getting more cars, more Chevrolets, than the dealer here in the city of 47,000," at that time.

JOHNSON: Well, I get the impression that the Depression didn't really affect your family very much.

HULSTON: No, we were fortunate in that we had a car dealership and everybody was trying to buy a car. They'd sacrifice nearly anything to buy a car. We were very fortunate in that we had a dealership with Chevrolets, which had become the leading car. In those days, pickup trucks did not sell. Hardly anyone had a pickup truck. The farmers bought...

JOHNSON: From where did farmers get most of their income? What was their crop?

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HULSTON: In that area at that time the chief income was the milk cow.

JOHNSON: Oh, dairying.

HULSTON: Yes. Greene County and Lawrence County were very prominent milkshed counties for the whole state. The MFA and the Kraft people had plants in Springfield that took all of the whole milk and cream. I've heard it said that six Jersey cows for a farmer were equal to a paycheck -- the average paycheck -- that a man got working for wages. So, you see, nearly every farmer had a paycheck.

JOHNSON: Yes, well, there's a fairly steady market I suppose for milk. Prices may be a little more stable for milk than for other products.

HULSTON: Milk was fairly stable because that's one thing that people in the cities need -- milk, cream, and cheese.

JOHNSON: It was all hand milking I'll bet.

HULSTON: Practically. Well, the milking machine had come in, and if anybody had over a dozen cows, most of them would have a milking machine.

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JOHNSON: Did they have electricity out there in the rural areas?

HULSTON: Yes, we had electricity. I think we got it in '33.

JOHNSON: That wouldn't have been REA then.

HULSTON: No, we had electricity; the Empire District Electric Company of Joplin had service to our area, so that some farmers had electricity. You see, Greene County is not a hilly county. Greene County -- part of it -- is on the so-called Ozark Plain, which is almost prairie. Greene County is a very fertile county.

JOHNSON: Good pasture land, then.

HULSTON: Yes, good pasture land. And nearly everybody had a few cows to milk. Then, of course there were beef cows and hogs and chickens. And a few people in the county up in our area, Ash Grove, worked for the Frisco Railroad in Springfield, because they had their main shops there. The Frisco shops were in Springfield. They took care of the building of all of the flat cars

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and the box cars and the locomotives and the cabooses; they were all built in Springfield, Missouri.

JOHNSON: Do you have any idea how many cars they might sell in a year there?

HULSTON: No, I really don't. I know that on the 4th of July if he didn't sell six to eight new cars on the 4th of July, he felt like he had had a bad day.

JOHNSON: I notice this is July 28, 1934, that day you met Truman for the first time. That was my third birthday.

HULSTON: Oh, I see.

JOHNSON: So I'm sure I was celebrating that day too.

HULSTON: I guess I was 18 that day.

JOHNSON: To finish up that day, after that Everton talk...

HULSTON: He went back to Springfield. I don't have personal knowledge but I do know what happened from my father. I didn't go, but my father went to the speaking in Springfield which was at the Grant Beach Park, they call it, in north Springfield. Believe it or not, on that same

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day, J. L. "Tuck" Milligan was in town, and he spoke at the southside park, Phelps Park.

JOHNSON: Just a coincidence?

HULSTON: I guess. I don't know who was following whom. But anyway it split the two Democrat factions. The Wear and Scholten and Dig Chinn faction was in favor of Truman, and of course, the so-called Dickey-Greenwade faction favored Tuck Milligan, because they were friends of Bennett "Champ" Clark our senior Senator. He was sponsoring Tuck Milligan as the other Democrat candidate for the nomination.

JOHNSON: You didn't mention Fred Canfil. Was Canfil there? He was chauffeuring Truman around wasn't he?

HULSTON: We all know, that read Truman, that Canfil was his chauffeur, but since Scholten brought him down, I suspect -- this is just a supposition -- but I suspect that Harry Truman told Canfil to get some sleep. He was driving Harry Truman at night, and I imagine after that meeting in Springfield, if Canfil was there, he drove back to Kansas City, or to Independence that

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night. They stayed at the Colonial Hotel, and I imagine that Fred Canfil was sleeping, while Harry was campaigning.

JOHNSON: Do you have any record of either of those two speeches, the one at Everton or the one in Springfield?

HULSTON: The one at Everton of course, was not recorded, and even the county newspaper, the *Vedette*, doesn't have it. The one at Grant Beach that night is mentioned in the Springfield paper. But no record is made of what he said.

JOHNSON: So the newspapers didn't quote...

HULSTON: They didn't quote. They told about who was for whom.

JOHNSON: He was promoting New Deal policies, there?

HULSTON: Yes, he made it very clear that he was Roosevelt's New Deal man, and of course, so did Tuck Milligan as far as that was concerned. But Milligan was running on his war record, primarily because he had been quite a hero, I think, under Bennett Clark, and he and Clark

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were very close. But Harry Truman had built his fences too with the Veterans, the American Legion. The American Legion was very prominent in Greene County.

JOHNSON: Well, I think probably by this time in 1934 the New Deal programs for farmers had already started, so that maybe there had already been some parity payments, or subsidy payments.

HULSTON: I think they were buying up old cows by then, so the farmers could cull out their old cows and have a little bit of cash on hand. I really don't remember what else they were doing for farmers, except their morale was higher. But you see, farmers can be hurt worse by a drought than they can be hurt by low prices. A drought is a thing that farmers in those days dreaded more than anything else because that meant that they didn't have anything to sell.

JOHNSON: There was a drought in '34?

HULSTON: Yes, there was a drought in '33 and a drought in '34. Thirty-four may have been the worst drought year so far this century, because everything "burned up" as we say,

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in July. All of the pastures burned up in July and they didn't have a hay crop, and they didn't have pasture to feed their stock through the summer and they didn't have hay to harvest. Usually you know they want two cuttings; they want a cutting in May or by June and then they expect another cutting in September. So they got their first cutting, I think, that year and they had some grass up until about the first of July. But then they had no grass after July and no hay crop after July. And that hurt the farmers worse than anything that year.

JOHNSON: So they were, on July 28, really...

HULSTON: Despondent. Very despondent. But the Everton picnic has by now already celebrated its hundredth year I think, so they still took time out to come to the Everton picnic.

JOHNSON: Did you get the impression that they did figure that the New Deal was their best bet for survival as farmers?

HULSTON: Yes. President Hoover had the name of doing

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nothing, except saying prosperity is around the corner or something like that. And people had become very disillusioned with him. In Dade County, for example, I think it's safe to say that by 1934 a fifth of Dade County -- at least a fifth -- of the population had gone to California.

JOHNSON: Like *Grapes of Wrath*.

HULSTON: Like *Grapes of Wrath*. That's laid in Oklahoma, the dust bowl. Those that hadn't gone by 1934, another fifth had gone by 1936.

JOHNSON: You're helping your father, at least in your off hours, helping him with the business there?

HULSTON: Yes, I was the gasoline attendant, and...

JOHNSON: So he had a gasoline station there, too.

HULSTON: Gasoline pumps in front, two, high-test and low-test. I watched after the gasoline pumps, and washed cars in the back once in a while and helped get old cars ready to sell, clean them up as we'd say. Then once in a while I'd be permitted to sell an old car, provided it wasn't over \$50.

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JOHNSON: After that meeting with Truman I suppose he just said a few words to you. Can you recall?

HULSTON: Oh, no. I remember shaking hands with him and that his hand, I remember, was a delicate hand. You know, most people's hands that you shook, at that time, were horny-handed. I got ahold of this hand, and it made a difference.

JOHNSON: Well, if a politician shakes thousands of hands, perhaps he learns not to grip too tightly. I don't know.

When would have been the next time that you would have met him?

HULSTON: The next time that I actually saw Harry Truman was when I was in the Army. I was married. I was stationed at Ft. Lee in Virginia at Petersburg, and we drove up from Petersburg to Washington to the inauguration.

JOHNSON: Ten years later, so it was ten years between.

HULSTON: That was the inauguration they had on the White House lawn there. I don't think they had any celebration.

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JOHNSON: How about 1940? Were you or your father politicking?

HULSTON: My father then was Postmaster at Ash Grove.

JOHNSON: What year was that?

HULSTON: That would have been in '38 I guess. Roosevelt made him Postmaster, but both Harry Truman and Bennett Clark recommended him. So, the Hatch Act took my father out of politics. He attended the Jackson Day dinners, and freedom of speech let him tell people what he thought, but he couldn't make a contribution and he couldn't let his name be on any printed thing.

JOHNSON: Would that mean that he hired someone to run his auto

HULSTON: Well, in those days you could have a business as well as being Postmaster. He did hire a man to run it, but he still kept his finger in the pie.

JOHNSON: But he couldn't involve himself in partisan politics.

HULSTON: Not under the Hatch Act. And he respected that;

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first of all, it gave you an avenue just to withdraw, if you wanted to.

JOHNSON: But I guess the others stayed in the game, so to speak, Chinn and Scholten.

HULSTON: Chinn and Scholten and Sam Wear, and [C.W.] Greenwade became a supporter of Harry Truman's and....

JOHNSON: Yes, you mentioned these two factions.

HULSTON: Most of them switched over to Mr. Truman. Mr. and Mrs. Clark Howell switched over to him. Mrs. Martin -- I guess she had been the supporter for Jack Cochran in that '34 campaign.

JOHNSON: What was her first name?

HULSTON: Ethel Martin. She was a friend of Congressman Cochran from St. Louis, Jack Cochran they called him. She was his supporter. And I think I'm right about this, Niel; I think Jack Cochran carried Green County, and Truman was a very, very close second and Tuck Milligan just fell on his face. He was way down there. And then there was another guy named Longstreet Cleveland,

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and I don't think he got over 40 votes. There were four people in that campaign, four Democrats.

JOHNSON: The primaries were in August in those years.

HULSTON: That's right; the primaries are in August.

JOHNSON: And whoever won the Democrat primary in Missouri was almost a shoo-in in the general election.

HULSTON: That's right, Roscoe C. Patterson was the incumbent Senator, a strong Republican. Everybody knew that when Harry Truman got the nomination that Roscoe Patterson was gone.

JOHNSON: We've got apparently more information on Sam Wear in our collection than on any of these other names that have cropped up.

HULSTON: Yes, because as you know, President Truman made Sam Wear a United States District Attorney for the Western District of Missouri.

JOHNSON: Do you recall when they first got acquainted? Was it the '34 campaign, or was it earlier?

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HULSTON: Oh, I'm not sure. I suspect that the first time they got acquainted was in '34. I'm sure that Sam Wear's connection with Truman came through Dig Chinn. I'm just positive. That is, I'm sure that Dig says, "Let's be for Harry Truman, Sam."

JOHNSON: Sam Wear -- was he kind of a leading lawyer then in Springfield?

HULSTON: He was a leading criminal lawyer; he had been a very vigorous prosecuting attorney. I believe that he had trained with Roscoe Patterson. I think that they were the two leading criminal lawyers. So they were very close friends. Sam Wear thought as much of "Ros" Patterson nearly as he did anybody, but Sam Wear was a Harry Truman man and that's it. If you were Democrat, you were a Democrat all the way.

JOHNSON: Was your father acquainted with Sam Wear?

HULSTON: Yes, he knew Sam Wear because Sam Wear would come out to Ash Grove once in a while and try a case in the Justice of Peace Court. My father liked Sam Wear.

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JOHNSON: You attended some court sessions, too, didn't you as a teenager?

HULSTON: Yes, I went as a teenager when I was in Drury College. I attended court frequently because the Federal Court, for example, was just three blocks from where I lived. They had the Federal Court sessions in Springfield in October and in April. I just took off from school and when Judge Reeves came to Springfield, Albert L. Reeves, I went to the Federal Court and stayed two days and listened. All the lawyers in southwest Missouri would come in because the judge was only there twice a year. Those are the only court sessions I attended in Springfield.

JOHNSON: Did you attend with other college classmates, or was this pretty much your own doing?

HULSTON: Oh, once in a while some boy that was going to go to law school like myself, would say -- I'd say to him, or he'd say -- "Let's go to the Federal Court and listen to the cases."

JOHNSON: When did you decide to go to law school?

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HULSTON: Well, I guess I decided to go to law school when we were in South Greenfield. I would go up to the Dade County Court House which was just three miles north of South Greenfield. South Greenfield was really almost a part of Greenfield. You see, the main line of the Frisco Railroad went through South Greenfield, and that separated Greenfield from the main line of the Frisco. So they started South Greenfield and then they ran a stub line from South Greenfield up to Greenfield. At one time South Greenfield looked like it might become the leading town.

JOHNSON: Well what year are we talking about?

HULSTON: About 1923 and '24. I was just a little boy. I'd go up to the Court House. At that time, you know, we didn't have television; we didn't even have radio, and didn't have talking movies. The court sessions were entertainment for the whole community. The court rooms were packed, people standing out in the halls, to hear the lawyers as they said "plead the case."

JOHNSON: And they probably put a little drama into it, a little extra drama?

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HULSTON: If it was a murder case, or a rape case, or even assault and battery, why that was high drama; that was our television.

JOHNSON: Sort of like that movie "To Kill a Mockingbird?"

HULSTON: Yes, or more like some of these television series we now have, "L.A. Law."

JOHNSON: Or what's his name -- Matlock?

HULSTON: Yes, Matlock. That was our television in those days. A day in court was a day of television. Ben Neale and Charlie Newman were the leading lawyers and they were still in Greenfield then before they moved to Springfield. Everybody listened to them.

JOHNSON: Sam Wear -- you heard him plead cases when you were young?

HULSTON: Not when I was a young man. I didn't hear Sam until I went to the Federal court in Springfield in 1933, '34, '35, and '36.

JOHNSON: You went to Drury College, an Episcopalian, right?

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HULSTON: Congregationalist. It had a Congregational endorsement then.

JOHNSON: Did you belong to a church, or did your family?

HULSTON: My mother was a Campbellite, she said, which was the Christian Church. My father didn't belong to any church. I was baptized at the Christian Church but transferred to the Presbyterian Church in Ash Grove because it was right across the street from me and because they built a tennis court. They induced me.

JOHNSON: So you are a Presbyterian going to a Congregational college.

HULSTON: Yes.

JOHNSON: And it had a good academic reputation, I suppose?

HULSTON: Yes it did.

JOHNSON: How is it rated among the private colleges of Missouri academically?

HULSTON: I don't really know. Dr. Nadal, the president of the college always said that Washington University,

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which he looked to as his mentor, said that Drury College and William Jewell were the two best four-year liberal arts coeducational colleges in Missouri.

JOHNSON: Now, Westminster had a good reputation?

HULSTON: Yes, but it was male only, and Lindenwood was female only. So they talked about coeducational. That distinguished, I guess, Westminster and Lindenwood.

JOHNSON: Again, you apparently had some influential instructors at Drury.

HULSTON: Dr. L. E. Meador, who was called the father of the Missouri Constitution, which was written as you know, during the war years. I think it was written in '43 and '44, and he was voted by the media, I think, as the outstanding man at this Constitutional Convention. He was the chairman of the Charter Commission that wrote the city charter for Springfield in 1953 that transferred it from a commission form of government to a City Manager form of government, and he was teacher of political science and economics and several other courses at Drury. I took 28 hours under him. He influenced my

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life more than any other teacher I've ever had, including those in law school.

JOHNSON: Did he tend to favor New Deal politics?

HULSTON: He tried to be objective on everything, and he pointed out the weaknesses of the New Deal and the advantages of it, and let us make up our mind. But he was a Republican, very conservative.

JOHNSON: I interviewed a John Meador here near Grandview.

HULSTON: Yes, but I don't think that there's any relation. Dr. Meador came from Cassville, and he went to the University of Chicago. Then, he went to Columbia University, which was unusual.

JOHNSON: Studied probably under rather prominent historians.

HULSTON: I guess so. Nicholas Murray Butler was there then, and Merriman and some of them. But anyway, he not only influenced me, but he had influenced dozens and dozens and scores of men, primarily men, because women didn't do much towards going on in those days. Bankers and lawyers and businessmen -- they just all sing his praises.

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I guess his most important protégé was Ernest R. Breech, who became Chairman of the Board of Ford Motor Company after Edsel Ford died, and who became Chairman of the Board of Transcontinental World Airlines. He has said publicly, and I heard him one time and have read it in his autobiography, that Dr. Meador was the man in his life that turned him around. He came to Lebanon, got him to come to Drury and got him a job. That, he said, was the turning point in his life. He said, "I might still be down at Lebanon if it hadn't been for Dr. Meador."

JOHNSON: You were a pre-law student, majoring in history?

HULSTON: I majored in political science at Drury. Federal and state government and local government and that sort of thing.

JOHNSON: So you thought you were well prepared when you went to the university to law school?

HULSTON: Well, I felt smug about getting through Dr. Meador's courses because he had a reputation at Washington University and at Missouri University-Columbia, that no

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major of his had ever failed to graduate from law school, or pass the Bar the first time he took it. So when I went to the University of Missouri Law School, I interviewed with Dean Glenn A. McCleary, and he said, "Well, Mr. Hulston, you shouldn't have any trouble because none of Dr. Meador's majors have ever failed up here." So I felt pretty good about it.

JOHNSON: Well, there's some correspondence, especially with Sam Wear during the early '40s. I thought I would check some of these names with you. I know that part of this time, a large part of this time, you were in the military.

HULSTON: Yes, I went into the military late in '41, in August '41. But in 1938 and in '39, and in the spring of '40, I was living in the same law fraternity house with Sam Wear's son, Bill Wear. So I was in pretty close contact with Sam Wear through Bill, up until we graduated from law school in June of '41.

JOHNSON: June of '41 is when you graduated from law school.

HULSTON: Yes. I took the Bar in June, passed the bar in August, and enlisted in the Army two days after I passed

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the Bar, for three years, in the Regular Army. Now that wasn't a patriotic move necessarily. Pearl Harbor hadn't happened yet. If you enlisted in the Army for three years, you could say where you wanted to go train. If you were drafted for one year, why, they'd send you where they wanted to send you. I had a 42 draft number which meant that I had to be deferred to take the Bar. Howard Hannah was chairman of the committee, Selective Service Committee in Springfield, and he gave all the law graduates a deferment so they could take the Bar.

JOHNSON: You were stationed most of the time where?

HULSTON: Well, the reason I enlisted was that I could be stationed in Springfield at O'Reilly General Hospital. That's where I chose to be stationed, and that's why I enlisted and went to Jefferson Barracks and came back. Then I hadn't been back but a couple, three months until they dropped the bombs.

JOHNSON: Yes, Pearl Harbor.

HULSTON: Then we did what everybody else did if you had a college degree; I applied to become an officer, and was

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sent to Officer Candidate School in Virginia. By spring I left.

JOHNSON: You became a second lieutenant?

HULSTON: Yes, became a second lieutenant.

JOHNSON: In what outfit.

HULSTON: In the Army Service Forces, Camp Lee, Virginia.

JOHNSON: Then you were stationed...

HULSTON: I went on the Carolina maneuvers and then we came back to Camp Lee for assignment. A fellow named Robert L. Blewitt was looking for lawyer officers to train recruits. He was a lawyer from Philadelphia and he chose lawyers to come to his company and be platoon leaders, and train recruits. Once we got into that, why they decided it was kind of like teaching school, although we trained them on the rifle range and all that, they decided that they better leave the cadre, as they called us, intact, because we'd all become experienced teachers.

So I stayed there two and a half years as an

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instructor and worked my way up to be a company commander.

JOHNSON: At Fort Lee?

HULSTON: Yes. They called it the Armed Services Forces Training School at Ft. Lee. I became a battalion commander, but not promoted. Then the word came out that they should send all of us overseas, which was all right. We should go. So I took a heavy transportation company and we went to Seattle and embarked. We went to Honolulu, waiting for the invasion of Japan. While we were there waiting to go, why they dropped the bomb and Japan surrendered. So I had about three or four months in Hawaii waiting to come back home.

JOHNSON: So the atomic bomb saved you from...

HULSTON: Saved me from going to wherever it was.

JOHNSON: Meeting the Japanese face-to-face on their own soil.

HULSTON: That's right.

JOHNSON: Okay, just to clarify possibly some of the people

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that are mentioned in this correspondence between Sam Wear and Harry Truman, Senator Truman.

HULSTON: Is this in the forties, early forties?

JOHNSON: Yes. For instance, he mentioned in October 1941 a Mrs. Lucas as being recommended for Postmistress and apparently this thing was delayed and held up and there was a little controversy that went on about that. Did you know Mrs. Lucas or do you know how that came out?

HULSTON: No, I really don't.

JOHNSON: Did she end up as Postmistress?

HULSTON: I really don't.

JOHNSON: And then Reuben Wood.

HULSTON: Yes, I knew Reuben Wood.

JOHNSON: Sam Wear asked Truman to sound out Reuben Wood on a candidacy for Wear for Congress?

HULSTON: Yes, because Reuben Wood at that time was head of the AF of L of Missouri. At that time had he been to Congress?

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JOHNSON: I'm not sure.

HULSTON: He became a Congressman, but I can't remember just exactly when it was, probably 1932 when all ran at large. But I'm sure that if Sam wanted Reuben Wood sounded out, it was because Reuben Wood was a labor leader.

JOHNSON: In January of 1942 Sam Wear writes to Truman that he had filed as a candidate for Congress, and that Temple Forrest had filed also with the backing of a Dr. Parker. Then, also there's mention here of Truman trying to get a radio school for Springfield. This was in February of 1942. Do you recall a radio school ever being set up in Springfield?

HULSTON: I'm not sure it was. I wonder if Lester Cox was behind that. Lester Cox was interested in radio and television stations and had owned half of KWTO; and half of KCMO with Tom E. Evans.

JOHNSON: But you don't know of any radio schools being...

HULSTON: No, I don't, but I do know that Cox was very

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interested in radio school and it could be that that emanated from him.

JOHNSON: In August of '42, it appears that Sam Wear was going to be running against Congressman Bennett.

HULSTON: Yes, Marion T. Bennett -- no, Phil Bennett, Marion's father.

JOHNSON: Bennett, it is mentioned, was elected in 1940, apparently because of an anti-labor vote against Wood. Yes, against Reuben Wood, so now, he had....

HULSTON: He had alienated the labor people?

JOHNSON: He had alienated some of the farmers there, I guess, who felt they weren't all that pro-labor union.

HULSTON: Yes, I suspect that it was the farmers and not the labor unions.

JOHNSON: And then Wear lost the election.

HULSTON: Yes, he did, to Phil Bennett, which was unusual, because Roosevelt was still so popular a wartime President. But, once again, you go back to what we

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said here in the beginning of our interview -- that district is normally three to one Republican, so that Sam Wear had to overcome that gerrymander.

JOHNSON: Well, then there was a special election afterward and it doesn't say exactly why, but did something...

HULSTON: Phil Bennett died in office.

JOHNSON: Oh, so there was another special election and Sam Wear was telling Senator Truman in January 1943 that the farmers didn't favor promoting labor unions, but the labor union people wanted more promotion, more publicity, and so he was kind of caught between the two. He said he thought it would be best not to even bring up the subject or avoid promoting this platform that they apparently had written up. Truman seemed to think that he had to run on a platform, on certain principles. At any rate, Wear was beaten again in that special election.

HULSTON: That special election, that's right.

JOHNSON: It mentions that eight to ten of the most prominent lawyers in Greene County had made speeches for Wear on

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radio and had mentioned his high standing in the Bar and his integrity. This is a letter from Chinn to Truman in January 1943, and he said he thought that Wear ought to be recommended for a Federal judgeship, or he would recommend a Federal judgeship for Wear, if Duncan was

going to be dropped. But I think Duncan was appointed as a Federal judge, and then Sam Wear later was appointed attorney, District Attorney.

HULSTON: Yes, Sam Wear was appointed District Attorney in the Western District of Missouri, because Truman wanted to get rid, and did get rid, of Maurice Milligan. Sam succeeded Maurice Milligan. Well, Milligan's brother had opposed him in '34, and then I think Maurice Milligan himself opposed Truman in '40 didn't he, as I remember.

JOHNSON: Yes.

HULSTON: But that wasn't the reason, because in the '40 election it might have been a blessing that Milligan did enter, because he split off some of the Stark votes.

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I think the real reason was because of the Pendergast prosecution and the vindictiveness of Milligan towards the Pendergast machine and people that were Pendergast Democrats.

JOHNSON: Wear did indicate he wanted a Federal judgeship, but he didn't get it, I guess because that went to Duncan and there just wasn't an opening. Do you think he would have become a Federal judge if there had been an opening?

HULSTON: I think that Judge Richard Duncan was closer to Harry Truman than Sam Wear was. And he [Duncan] was from St. Joe. They were very close, closer than Sam was, I'm sure. That's my opinion.

JOHNSON: What is your recollection of April 12, 1945?

HULSTON: Well, I was on a troop ship at Seattle, the *Robert L. Howse*, getting ready to embark for Hawaii. We didn't know where we were going. My whole company was there. We had gone by troop train from Virginia to Seattle,

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4,000 miles, getting ready to go another 4,000 miles, I guess it was. Of course, we were up in the top deck where the officers were. Some fellow came up and said, "One of our guys that reads wigwags just reported that he read a wigwag message across the harbor that President Roosevelt is dead."

Well, first of all, we thought it couldn't be. You know, nobody could believe it. We just couldn't imagine a man like Roosevelt going. Some of us knew he was sick. This cast a gloom, especially if you had been on a troop ship getting ready to go overseas for the first time and then find that your Commander and Chief had died. It was pretty gloomy.

JOHNSON: But you were probably the only officer there that had met Truman and knew him.

HULSTON: They said, "What do you Missourians think of Harry Truman?" I said, "Well, my father thinks a lot of him, and if my father thinks a lot of him, I do too."

JOHNSON: After the war, you became chairman of the Greene County Democratic Committee?

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HULSTON: Yes, I came back. I was a lawyer and they wanted a lawyer, and they had to have a veteran. So the old gray beards that said, "Now, we want to turn things over to the veterans," came to me. Arch Johnson and Sam Wear, and Dig Chinn and John Farrington, and Frank B. Williams, and Clark Howell, and Ethel Martin and Mazel Mann -- I guess all of the leaders -- came to me. I had my office in the Landers building with two Republicans, H. T. Lincoln and Lewis Luster. They said, "John, you can be unanimously elected if you will just give us your name." They said, "Your dad should have been county chairman but he never has been and we want you." I said, "Let's go."

JOHNSON: You're practicing law by yourself?

HULSTON: In the Landers Building.

JOHNSON: Had your own practice.

HULSTON: And I had an office in Ash Grove.

JOHNSON: Oh, you had two offices?

HULSTON: Yes. I opened an office in Ash Grove Monday, Thursday and Saturday.

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JOHNSON: But you were on your own, or did you have another lawyer with you?

HULSTON: I was there, in my office.

JOHNSON: What year was this?

HULSTON: It was 1946. It was the pre-runner to the '48 campaign.

JOHNSON: Okay, just in time for the big '48 campaign.

HULSTON: It would be August '46.

JOHNSON: That you became County Democratic Committee Chairman.

HULSTON: Of Greene County.

JOHNSON: I guess you were getting ready for that '48 campaign and you did end up for the first time introducing Harry Truman to a crowd.

HULSTON: Yes. I think it was a political speech. There has been some controversy over that. President Truman was very loyal to County Chairmen, even if the County

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Chairman was John Hulston, a young fellow, just out of the Army and starting out in law. He had people that had years and years of experience, and friends of his for years, such as Wear and Fairman and Chinn, and Farrington and so forth, but he always recognized the County Chairman as his spokesman when he came to that county. It was kind of humorous, of course, to see maybe a young man like myself in the forefront with Harry Truman, with all these people behind that he knew so well.

Anyway, I wrote to him that I heard that he was going to dedicate the statue of Bolivar, of Simon Bolivar. That had been worked on down there by editor Frank Stufflebarn and Mayor Doctor Doyle McGraw for years, because Bolivar, Missouri, is the largest Bolivar in the United States. Therefore, they thought it only fitting that the statue to the great South American liberator should be put in Bolivar, Missouri. Of course, that was one of the understandings that when Harry got to be President that that would happen. And it did happen. So I heard about it and I wrote the President and asked him if he would be kind enough to make a speech in Springfield in connection with his

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dedication of the statue to Simon Bolivar at Bolivar, Missouri. He wrote back, a very nice letter, and said he never got to do things like he used to do, and he would love to make a speech, but he was advised that they were going to go from St. Louis to Bolivar by train, and that since the train didn't go from Springfield to Bolivar he would have to decline. His transportation expert had overlooked the fact that there is a high line that runs from Springfield to Clinton that goes through Bolivar. They call it the high line; it's not a spur, it's a good road.

So, I wrote back and said, "Your transportation expert is amiss on this thing. There is the high line that runs from Springfield to Bolivar, and you can very well go from Springfield to Bolivar, and you can come from St. Louis to Springfield on the Frisco and stay on the Frisco and go to Bolivar." What I didn't tell him was that there was no turntable at Bolivar, and that if you went to Bolivar on the train you'd have to back up when you came back to Springfield.

JOHNSON: So the *Magellan* became the front car rather than the rear car.

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HULSTON: Yes. The turntable was at Clinton. So he wrote back and said that that's fine; he would make a speech. So, we all put out the word that he was going to make a speech, at 8 o'clock on the morning of July 5 at the Frisco station. There was a pretty good crowd there. You know, I can't estimate crowds, but I think there were 400 people there. Matt Connelly was his aide for that occasion, and he took me right into the Presidential car, which was the *Magellan*, one of those Frisco executive cars. They called this one the *Magellan*. We shook hands and he asked about my father. My father didn't die until 1955. I said, "Well, he'll be at Bolivar." Truman said, "I hate to disappoint you, John, but I can't make a speech this morning." He said, "It would be political." And he said, "I'm going to Bolivar and that's not a political event." He

said, "I'm just as sorry as I can be that we weren't together on this thing." Of course, I was just crestfallen. I guess he could see it, and he knew what he was going to say. He said, "That won't be the case when I come back through here about 6 o'clock." I said, "Well, we'll get you a crowd." Then Matt Connelly ushered me out; he wanted to get rid of me I'm sure.

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Then Connelly said, "Now, the County Chairman always introduces the President. I want you to be prepared to introduce him."

I was ten feet high. So instead of going to Bolivar, I stayed in Springfield to get out a release to all the radio stations and afternoon newspaper, try to get a crowd, and to write my speech about Harry Truman. I did some research on it and I had a pretty good speech written. He got back there about 6 o'clock and he and his staff had been served on the car; they ate their supper there at the Frisco Station in Springfield. About 7 o'clock I was invited into the car and so was my father and mother. We were all seated in Harry Truman's special car, in nice soft chairs and sofa, I think, visiting. My father and Harry visited about old times; so finally it came time to make the speech. I don't know whether it was 7:30 or 8:00, still daylight, sixteen hours of daylight on July 5. Matt Connelly came over and said, "Now, some of these County Chairmen make very long speeches, and we have a kind of a rule that it's all right if you just say, 'Ladies and Gentlemen, I'd like to present the President of the United States,' and just sit down."

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I had in my coat pocket a rolled up speech. But I was pleased to walk out on the back of the car with Harry Truman and introduce him to the crowd, and he made a speech.

JOHNSON: How about this introduction you had written up? Do you still have that?

HULSTON: Yes, I've got it someplace. I've got it someplace.

JOHNSON: Well, if you can dig it up, why don't you send us a copy?

HULSTON: All right, I'll do it. It's probably pretty corny.

JOHNSON: At least we'll have what you intended to say, and he probably would have been flattered.

HULSTON: The important thing to me was that later I discovered that by Harry Truman's own admission it was a political speech. He wouldn't make a political speech at 8 o'clock in the morning, but he said that rule didn't hold that evening.

JOHNSON: After he got the niceties out of the way at Bolivar.

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HULSTON: Plus the fact that he did walk out on the back end of the *Magellan* and make a speech, and....

JOHNSON: Has that been recorded anywhere?

HULSTON: The Springfield newspaper carried the incident, but I don't think they carried much of a speech.

JOHNSON: Was it off-the-cuff?

HULSTON: Oh, yes. I'm sorry to say it was. It wasn't a major address.

JOHNSON: As far as you know, nobody recorded that?

HULSTON: As far as I know.

JOHNSON: The radio stations...

HULSTON: They didn't record then. They didn't have remote. Oh, they'd take a man down on the square and let him interview people. I read later that some man writing his dissertation said that the first whistlestop speech was made at Grand Rapids, Michigan on September 5, I believe, 1948. I take the position that the first whistlestop speech was made on July 5 at Springfield,

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Missouri because it has all the earmarks. Now Bess and Margaret didn't walk out on the back of the platform with him, but...

JOHNSON: Of course, he had been on that so-called non-political speech trip to the West Coast in June.

HULSTON: In June; I had forgotten about that, that's right.

JOHNSON: And had made speeches there of course from the train. I heard him on September 18 in Rock Island.

HULSTON: That's pretty close, that's one of the first ones.

JOHNSON: It was on the day he was at Dexter, Iowa, for the bit farm rally.

HULSTON: Dexter, Iowa, was when, at least when I got the message, as county Chairman, that all the experts might be wrong.

JOHNSON: Oh, there were 100,000 farmers there, and that farm vote proved to be crucial, in that election.

HULSTON: I guess you'll ask me about the September 29 speech when he came back through Springfield from the

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whistlestop speech in Oklahoma. That's the next time I saw him.

JOHNSON: Yes, how about that event?

HULSTON: Well, it was very similar to the one on July 5th except he didn't come from Bolivar; he came from out of Texas and Oklahoma. He had made a dozen whistlestop speeches that day and the day before already in Texas and Oklahoma, and he made a major speech in Muskogee at the fair grounds. He also had made a major speech at the Skelly stadium in Tulsa, already, on his way back to wherever he was going. I got a letter from someone stating that as County Chairman I would have the opportunity to board the train at Neosho and ride in with him to Springfield. The charge would be \$3.50, I think it was, because there was a lot of flap about people riding free.

So, I wrote back and said that my father had known Harry Truman a lot longer than I had and had done more work for the Democrat party than I had and I would like to substitute my father to board the train at Neosho, instead of me, and that was permitted. He had

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an awful good ride, and was in the car next to Harry. Harry came in and talked to him and Howard Hannah and some others. That's recorded in one of my books, about my dad's trip back from Neosho to Springfield.

My dad always said that when Truman walked into the car where they were, talked to them, that he walked right up to Howard Hannah. Howard Hannah had kind of a pot. Truman took that middle finger, jabbed in Howard's navel and said, "Suck it in, buddy." I don't think that Howard had been in Battery D, but he was in the 35th [Division]. Howard lost part of a leg in the Argonne, and he was a favorite of Harry's in the beginning but Harry turned against him later on. There's a letter to Ralph Truman in the Library here in which Harry Truman agrees with Ralph that Howard Hannah was not the person to be Postmaster at Springfield.

Anyway, they made an impromptu stop at Monett where they asked Harry just on the spur of the moment, as I understand it -- someplace on the railroad, in a wire or something -- if he would stop and dedicate the new American Legion Home at Monett, from the back of the car. So he stopped there to dedicate that.

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JOHNSON: Impromptu.

HULSTON: So he got into Springfield a little late. He had planned on being there thirty minutes before, but the Monett stop delayed him. But you never saw the like of people in your life; I guess it looked like a little Dexter, Iowa. They were just hanging all over the buildings and boxcars and lined up for maybe a half a mile alongside the tracks down to the Union Station where there was a big crowd. He had Margaret and Mrs. Truman with him. This was the speech that he made most places, and that was that labor and the farmers ought to lock arms, because the labor man bought what the farmer produced and the labor man had the money from his job to buy it. And they were silly if they didn't go together. He lit into the 80th Congress too. Then he

brought Margaret and Mrs. Truman out, arm in arm, to the back. He said, "I'd like you to meet my family." It was the full show.

He left there about 10:30. I guess he got through about 10:30.

JOHNSON: Did you have much chance to talk to him?

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JOHNSON: Not much at that meeting. I talked to Margaret. Some of the young ladies at the University of Missouri-Columbia that I knew when I was in law school were her best friends. There was a girl named Mary Shaw, from Independence. I talked to her about Mary Shaw, and some of the others. She had a suitemate in a sorority house from Springfield, named Suzanne McDonald, and I talked to her about Suzanne. And the Pi Phis. My wife is a member of the Pi Phi Sorority, and they gave Margaret a corsage in the wine and blue colors of the Pi Beta Phi Sorority. Margaret loved that.

JOHNSON: Did you meet Truman again after this occasion? Was this the last time you actually got to talk to him?

HULSTON: No. This was the last time I met him during the campaign. The next time that I met him after the September 29th Whistlestop in Springfield was when I went to Washington to the inauguration as Presidential elector from my district. That is the district where Harry Truman was born, because Barton County is in that district. of course, I met him two or three times at the inauguration.

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JOHNSON: In '49.

HULSTON: Yes, in '49.

JOHNSON: You mention in '45 at that inauguration you were there to see the swearing in of President Roosevelt, on the grounds of the White House. You had to have a special invitation.

HULSTON: No, we saw it from the outside.

JOHNSON: Oh, from the outside.

HULSTON: Yes, we were not inside the gates.

JOHNSON: You could hardly see Truman I suppose.

HULSTON: At the 1945 inauguration, January 20, Ruth and I were there, but not as a guest of Harry Truman. We were fortunate enough through a friend to get a hotel reservation in the Carleton Hotel. It was a late checkout, or somebody didn't show up. That evening we went down into the lounge of the Carleton Hotel. People were in a jovial mood, and we were talking

to some guests that had been there for the inauguration. That was the first time that I heard it speculated that

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Harry Truman would be President within a matter of a few weeks, that Franklin Roosevelt was not long to be there. That thought had not crossed my mind until that night, but after that night, why it stuck in my mind, "Is it really true that Harry Truman is going to be President in a few weeks?" As it turned out, it was less than three months, wasn't it?

JOHNSON: Yes, it was about 80 days that he was Vice President.

HULSTON: But I did not see Harry Truman any more until after the September 1948 whistlestop, until I went to Washington as a Presidential Elector, in January 1949. That was a very interesting trip.

JOHNSON: Yes, you have described that event in your book, about the electors' dinner and having a center table right in front of the head table and getting in on that.

HULSTON: We understood that a lawyer from St. Louis by the name of Clark Clifford had made it possible for the Missouri delegation to have a good seat. He had a

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great deal to do with that election. As you know he probably was...

JOHNSON: He was chief speechwriter.

HULSTON: I think it's maybe in print that Harry Truman pays him high tribute for the whistlestop phase of it.

JOHNSON: Sure. And you got to hear him mock Kaltenborn.

HULSTON: Yes, Harry Truman made the best speech that night he's ever made in my opinion, for several reasons. One, there was the atmosphere, of course; it was just great you know. It was still sort of a crusade, and of course, the magnums of champagne that the French Ambassador had put on each table helped a little. But anyway, he didn't have a single note, and he lit in on Harkness, I guess, Richard Harkness, first. But then the highlight was when he mimicked H. V. Kaltenborn about "The election returns are not conclusive and wait until the farm vote comes in." Of course, it just crescendoed into just pandemonium.

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But I really thought the best part of his speech was not the mimicking of Kaltenborn, or the chewing out of Harkness; I thought the best part was the human interest he told about the man from his home town that went to Baden Baden to take baths to cure what they called rheumatism then. I guess they called everything rheumatism then that they didn't know what it was. The old fellow -- I guess he was old -- according to the President, was running out of money. So he talked to his doctor and he said, "I just can't continue these baths here; I've been here for weeks.

Is there any place in the United States where I could continue this and could afford it?" The fellow said, "Well, I'll make an investigation." He came back and said, "Well, there's one place in the United States that has the same kind of water, and the same kind of treatments. I don't know where it is, but it's a place called Excelsior Springs." I don't know how far it is from Independence to Excelsior Springs, but it's just across the river, isn't it?

JOHNSON: That's where he stayed overnight, of course, on election night, at the Elms.

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HULSTON: Did he get Jim Rowley up over there, or did Jim get him up?

JOHNSON: Well, Rowley was supposed to let him sleep, but I think he was waking about every half hour or so to listen to those returns. I think he finally told Jim Rowley, "It's time for us to go back to Kansas City."

HULSTON: "It looks like I've been elected."

JOHNSON: Yes.

HULSTON: Well, he brought the crowd down with that story. All off-the-cuff. I personally never thought Harry Truman was an orator, and when he read a speech he lost his crowd sometimes. But I think that as an off-the-cuff speaker, I think Mark Twain would be proud of him.

JOHNSON: Unfortunately, though, some of those off-the-cuff speeches we don't have.

HULSTON: You don't have them do you?

JOHNSON: No, we don't have them; we don't have the script so to speak.

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I notice you said that you felt that his Inaugural Speech in '49 was not one of his great speeches.

HULSTON: Because he read it.

JOHNSON: But, on the other hand, an inaugural speech, being heard by almost everybody around the world has to be pretty accurate and closely crafted doesn't it? In other words, he would have risked something if he had tried to be off-the-cuff.

HULSTON: I don't blame him for reading it. Of course, when it was interpreted in the United States and around the world, and the people that interpreted it saw the Point IV program -- which we people sitting out in the audience there on the bleachers missed -- it ranks among the fine inaugural addresses of history.

JOHNSON: The Point IV didn't really hit you at that point?

HULSTON: Didn't hit me at all.

JOHNSON: I guess it was assumed that we were going to do something like the Marshall plan for other countries.

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It was sort of an extension of the Marshall plan, or that idea, to the Third World countries, wasn't it?

HULSTON: Yes.

JOHNSON: That was kind of an historic event for you. What kind of a seat did you have?

HULSTON: We were very head-on to the President, and quite a ways back. The television cameras, believe it or not, were right on our bleacher. That's the first time that I'd ever seen a television camera. They dropped one of them; it went all the way from the top to the bottom.

JOHNSON: Good thing there was nobody underneath there to catch it. Cameras were big in those days.

HULSTON: It was a very cold day, but the sun was out, and it was bright.

JOHNSON: And there was this huge parade, that went on and on.

HULSTON: Oh yes, and we just turned around in our seat. When we turned around in our seat, we were right above

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the parade, so we had choice seats.

JOHNSON: And they had the overflight, by what, B-36s?

HULSTON: Yes, those are huge planes.

JOHNSON: So you stayed there through the whole parade, I suppose.

HULSTON: Through the whole thing; through the whole thing.

JOHNSON: You mentioned Lester Cox getting well acquainted with him in 1946. I guess the next event that's brought up is this visit in 1952.

HULSTON: Yes, June 6, 7, I think.

JOHNSON: In 1952. Cox apparently had been lobbying for a VA hospital in Springfield, and they didn't get it. Truman said it was going to be up here in Independence, or I suppose it's the one in Kansas City.

HULSTON: That's the one in Kansas City. You see, O'Reilly General Hospital, which was going to be abandoned because it was built just for World War II, was, according to Cox, an ideal place for it. All they had to do was to convert the temporary buildings into permanent buildings.

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JOHNSON: So Cox was disgusted at that point. But they remained friends apparently, didn't they, from then on?

HULSTON: Oh, I think that General Truman wrote Harry Truman a letter or two that Cox was bad-mouthing the President. I think they are in the archives here. I think that Ralph Truman drove a wedge between Harry and Lester Cox after that June 6-7 meeting that never healed.

JOHNSON: In fact, this is the next thing that I was going to ask you, about your research. You've been researching Ralph Truman for quite some time?

HULSTON: I had my eleventh interview with Olive last night, at the Grandview nursing home. I found Olive in as good a shape last night as any interview I've ever had. I came expecting that I wouldn't even be able to do anything but just tell her "Hello" and "Good-bye." I was surprised. I either caught her at a good time, or she's taking the right kind of medicine, or she's recovered. I don't know which.

JOHNSON: When did you start this research on Ralph Truman?

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HULSTON: Well, I started it when he was in Springfield. Ralph Truman lived in Springfield from 1920 to about 1929. His son Louis went through high school there and part of grade school and two or three years at Southwest Missouri State College before he went to West Point. Ralph was there with his first wife, from about 1920 to 1929. I didn't know him then, of course. Ralph died in '62. He came back about ten years before he died, which would be '52. I got acquainted with him because at that time I was working very strongly to get a National Battlefield Park at Wilson's Creek. Ralph joined that movement, because he had been a Major General. He told me that his studies of the Civil War had disclosed to him that if the Union Army hadn't held the Confederates at Wilson Creek, that the Confederates would have taken Little Rock and St. Louis and the whole complexion of the war might have changed. [He was also interested] because Harry Truman had definitely had one uncle there with Price and maybe two, in Price's army. Of course, they were not on the Truman side. They were Aunt Matt's brothers; she was not a Truman, she was on the Young side.

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But anyway, Ralph Truman was very interested in that, so I was chairman of that commission and he came to my office periodically, maybe once a month. He had his shoes shined down close by and ...

JOHNSON: So he was retired and living in Springfield at this point?

HULSTON: He was retired, as far as the Army was concerned. He was still working for the underwriters, insurance underwriters, oh, I don't know in what capacity, as a lobbyist, or consultant. He was still on their payroll at that time.

JOHNSON: In '52.

HULSTON: Yes, or at least he was attending meetings and talked about them. The first time that I got interested in him, and started working on his life, was when he told me that the summer that Harry Truman graduated from high school at Independence, that he had returned from his tour of duty in the Spanish-American War which had taken him first to Cuba and then to the Philippines. He was wounded in the Philippines by a sniper. He was mustered

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out, I guess, or his tour of enlistment ran out, and would that be, what, 1901?

JOHNSON: About then, yes.

HULSTON: That was when Harry Truman wanted to see some of their relatives in Texas. Ralph had a sister in Texas. Ralph's father was in Texas, and he hadn't seen his father, I guess, in years. In fact, his father had abandoned him, I think, according to Ralph.

JOHNSON: What was his father's name?

HULSTON: He was John Truman's brother. Will, Will Truman. Ralph as a baby had been adopted out to a Johnson County family named Gray, but he hadn't been adopted legally, when he was just a baby. He never really saw his father, I don't think, until he was 10 or so.

But anyway, Harry had been to Illinois after he graduated to see some relatives, and now he wanted to go to Texas with Ralph, or Ralph wanted him to go to Texas with him, I don't know which, to see some relatives. There was sister Grace Truman, who was married, and I think one of them lived at Dallas perhaps

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and one of them lived at Lone Oak. I think Lone Oak was where Grace lived; I'm not sure about that. But anyway, they went to Texas.

JOHNSON: Took the train, I suppose.

HULSTON: According to Ralph, they had very little money and that some of the trip was done as bums. They just hopped the freights.

JOHNSON: I see.

HULSTON: That struck me as being a real human interest story, and I wrote it down, what Ralph told me. Still have it. I've got it, and I'll send it to you if you want it. The amazing thing

was that when I read Truman's autobiography, the first copy, he made no mention of that trip. But then there's letters in the Ralph Truman-Harry Truman correspondence in which Harry alludes to that trip, and says, "I guess you still think I'm a sissy for the way I behaved." And that has all kinds of implications. It boggles the mind what Harry meant by that, but Harry must have turned down something that was bad. You see, Ralph was a kind of a Spanish War hero. He had been

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wounded, and he had been to Cuba and he had been to the Philippines, and he was four years older than Harry. Harry was 17 or 18 I guess and Ralph was 22 or whatever. My guess is that Ralph kind of lorded it over Harry on that trip.

But anyway, in that letter that I read in the archives, they were there together, according to the President, when he wrote to Ralph at the very day that McKinley was assassinated. Harry Truman alludes to that in his letter. I don't think you'll find any allusions to that trip, although he alludes to the one in Illinois, and he alludes to one that he made with his father down in the Current River country.

JOHNSON: Do you think that he deliberately omitted it?

HULSTON: Yes, I do. I think that that trip stuck in his mind as something that he'd like to erase.

JOHNSON: How long was he gone, do you think?

HULSTON: Ralph stayed and got married.

JOHNSON: So he stayed in Texas.

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HULSTON: Yes, and Harry came on back alone. I don't know the exact number of days, but I take it they were gone close to a month perhaps.

JOHNSON: This was in, what, the fall of 1901?

HULSTON: Well, let's see, if we knew when McKinley was shot.

JOHNSON: Yes.

HULSTON: He was shot in September wasn't he or....

JOHNSON: It was after Truman had been probably to the summer school; you know he went to Spalding Business College that summer.

HULSTON: Yes, either right after or he came back and entered, I don't know which. Perhaps he came back and entered; I don't know.

JOHNSON: I think we have a typewritten letter from Spalding in July, so this would have been after that.

HULSTON: After he got out of Spalding.

JOHNSON: So you did get to talk to Ralph Truman a number of times before he died.

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HUSTON: Yes. Oh, for a long time. See, Ralph Truman was probably more instrumental in bringing the 35th Division's July 6 and 7, 1952, event to Springfield than was Lester Cox, although Mr. Cox was the general chairman and undertook to underwrite it financially. It was Ralph Truman that persuaded Harry to come, I'm sure.

JOHNSON: I remember he'd write about him giving this kind of impromptu speech, and he couldn't remember the name of the one that...

HULSTON: No, that was not at that meeting. That was at a subsequent one. Harry Truman came to Springfield as President three times. [First was] July 5, 1948 -- what I call the first whistlestop; then September 28, 1948, the second whistlestop; and finally the third trip as President was that June 6-7, 1952, 35th Division Reunion. Then Harry Truman came three times after that, when he was not President. He came once, November 10 and 11, 1958, to make a major speech at Armistice Day. He came the next time on May 3 to Ralph's funeral, in 1962. And then his last trip was May 9, 1963, the day after his birthday, 79th birthday, to a dedication of an armory in Springfield,

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dedicated to Ralph. That's when his memory failed him, and I'll tell you about that one later.

But continuing the June 5-6 meeting of the 35th Division, the last year that Truman was President: Harry Truman stayed at the Colonial Hotel, but he was in Ralph's home to a dinner, or reception that Mrs. Truman and Ralph gave mostly for the 35th Division dignitaries that were there. The funny thing about that, and I confirmed this with Olive Truman last night -- and as I say, she was in awfully good shape -- and I said, "Now, I want you to tell me about that group you had over on the night of June 6, because I'm going to be speaking with Mr. Niel Johnson tomorrow and I want it to be exactly accurate."

"Well," she said, "when I made up the list of invitees, I had Ronald Reagan and Nancy Reagan on the list. But Ralph talked to Harry, and Ralph came back and said that they didn't want any of that Hollywood 'rifraf' at this party."

Now, why were Ronald Reagan and Nancy Reagan there? First, Ronald Reagan at that time was a Democrat, sponsoring Truman. He'd been for him. But that wasn't the reason he was there. The reason he was there was that as a part

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of the celebration, the Gilloiz Theater, which was the leading movie theater in town, had persuaded the supplier [to furnish] the movie called "The Winning Team," which was the story of the 1926 St. Louis Cardinals that won the World Series, in which Grover Cleveland Alexander, "Old Pete," came in after being drunk the night before, and having won the game the day before, came in in the 9th inning with the bases loaded, and struck out the side. Ronald Reagan played that part, and the world premier showing was held at the Gilloiz Theater....

JOHNSON: On that same day.

HULSTON: On that same day; and Ronald Reagan came out with other members of the cast, Virginia Mayo, and some others, to be present for that showing.

JOHNSON: And someone suggested that Truman should invite Ronald Reagan and Nancy to a reception?

HULSTON: Ralph Truman and Olive Truman gave a reception for some people on the night of June 6 in their home, after Truman had attended a meeting at the Shrine Mosque in which most of the public that wanted to come, could come.

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JOHNSON: So he had taken this idea of inviting Ronald Reagan and Nancy to the reception, and President Truman said, "We don't want Hollywood rifraf at this party."

HULSTON: According to Olive.

JOHNSON: That's certainly interesting.

HULSTON: Olive was unclear about who had suggested they come.

JOHNSON: So at least they did not meet apparently. As far as you know, the Reagans and Trumans did not meet?

HULSTON: Now Harry Truman did not speak those words to Olive but Ralph reported to her that they -- Olive's interpretation of "they" meant he and Harry had talked it over -- and they didn't want any Hollywood rifraf at this party. And she's very clear about that.

JOHNSON: Anything else about that? You mention Cox as being involved, and then being disappointed, thinking that perhaps Truman had even gone back on his word on this VA hospital.

HULSTON: Yes. On the morning of June 7, at the Shrine Mosque

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there was a hillbilly breakfast for Harry Truman, in which Cox invited all of the people that had worked on getting ready for the event, largely just honor them with red-eye gravy and ham and potatoes breakfast. Of course, Battery D were the honored guests too, and they had a special table for them and Harry sat with them at that breakfast. I was president of the Springfield

Chamber of Commerce that year, and it was our pleasure to present him with what's called the "Ozark Hillbilly" medal, which he gave visiting dignitaries. He was the most famous one we'd ever given one to.

But anyway, after that breakfast, Harry Truman got in the car with Lester Cox. Lester Cox was the driver of it, and Harry Truman was in the front seat with him. Of course, they had the Secret Service ahead of it and behind it. The mission that Lester Cox had was to drive Harry Truman out to O'Reilly General Hospital on Glenstone Avenue and let him see it, and how it would be a natural, just a natural, to convert to a permanent VA hospital. And Carl Gray -- I guess he was the then head of the VA -- had assured Ralph Truman, according to Lester Cox, that they would put it in Springfield. Now there's

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some doubt in Cox's mind later, that Gray had assured Ralph and that Ralph was giving him what Gray said. But as they drove by, and before they drove by, Mr. Cox felt that it was a sure thing, just a matter of showing the President where it was going to be.

I guess that was before Omar Bradley was head of the VA, because Gray's name was mentioned as the one. Carl Gray, you know, came from Springfield. His father was a railroad man and so he and Cox were long-time friends.

But anyway, they drove by, and when President Truman got the idea from Cox that it was a sure thing, why, according to Cox, Truman said, "Lester, you know when a man gets in this office, he has to do a lot of things that he thinks maybe are for the best interest, but it will hurt some of his friends when he does them." And he said, "The hospital is not going to go here."

JOHNSON: This came as a shock to Cox apparently.

HULSTON: Of course, Cox's position was that it was put where it was more advantageous to the President, and that the speech he made him about doing things that he

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thought was right and hurt some of his friends should be turned back on him. But he felt that the President's word had been broken. My position would be on that that unless the President had actually told him, or written him, that his word wasn't broken and that there was a lack of communication between Ralph Truman and General Gray. Whenever somebody wants something to happen, you will seize at any kind of a straw that it's going to happen, and from then on you have somebody's word that it's going to happen.

JOHNSON: Wishful thinking, I suppose. This is second and third party too.

HULSTON: Right.

JOHNSON: But then you mentioned a wedge that you thought that Ralph Truman had helped drive between Cox and Truman?

HULSTON: I think it was over this. I think that after this, Lester Cox got together with Ralph Truman and hashed this thing over and said bad things about the President and maybe said bad things about Ralph, I

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don't know; I wasn't there. But after that, I do know there's a letter in the archives in which Lester Cox had written Harry Truman stating that he was going to take a trip to Europe, and he'd like to have -- what do they call it?

JOHNSON: I guess a letter of introduction.

HULSTON: Something, whatever it was.

Harry Truman had written Ralph Truman a letter which is in the archives, that Lester Cox owes me nearly everything that he is, and if he's in effect going to be not on our team, why, let him go. And that letter's in there. You might question what did he mean when he said that everything that Lester Cox has got he owes to me. What did he mean, what was his implication? One thing I could think of was that Lester Cox got a television and radio station in Pittsburg, Kansas. Lester Cox and Tom Evans owned KCMO radio and television, 50-50, half and half.

JOHNSON: Here in Kansas City.

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HULSTON: Yes. Lester Cox got a television station in Springfield. Lester Cox had gotten a radio station in Springfield, KWTO, and Lester Cox had gotten a radio station in East St. Louis, Illinois.

JOHNSON: These are all granted by the FCC?

HULSTON: And the implication would be that Harry Truman had something to do with some of those, if not all of them. The other thing that I could think of was that Lester Cox was a distributor for Ford Tractor for four or five states, right after World War II. Ford needed a terrific allocation of steel in order to make tractors. And it was a good thing, of course, because the farmers were desperate for tractors.

JOHNSON: That kind of reminds me. Ferguson was going to England -- oh, this has to do with a man named Kais.

HULSTON: Kais; he was with General Motors eventually.

JOHNSON: According to this letter, he was president of the Harry Ferguson Company, that made the Ford tractor.

HULSTON: That's right.

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JOHNSON: He was going to England. He actually wanted to visit with the Prime Minister.

HULSTON: Okay, that's the steel implication, that maybe Truman helped Ferguson get steel for the Ford tractors at a time when the War Production Board, I guess, was doing allocation, weren't they?

Anyway, I know that Lester Cox went to a demonstration that Ferguson put on for Harry Truman, and Henry Ford himself was present at this demonstration, attempting to show what a great tractor it was, I guess, and how much needed it was by the farmers who had been without tractors for a long time.

JOHNSON: In fact, we got a Ford-Ferguson, the last year we were on the farm; that was way back in '43.

HUSTON: In '43. I'm sure they slowed their production down during the war years, and then they wanted to come back. Ferguson and Ford eventually split, you know, and there was a big law suit over the patents and the name.

JOHNSON: Yes. You mentioned this Wilson Creek project. You finally did get more land into a historic district?

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HULSTON: It is now 1,734 acres and a national battlefield park, under the National Park Service of the Secretary of the Interior.

JOHNSON: The dedication of Wilson's Creek -- what year was that?

HULSTON: Well, they had two dedications; they had a dedication at the 100th anniversary in 1961, because the battle was fought August 10, 1861. That dedication was when the first bit of land, Bloody Hill, was deeded to the United States of America. Then the final dedication was, oh, I'd say it's been approximately 20 years ago, when the remainder of the 1,734 acres was turned over to the United States of America.

JOHNSON: Was Truman invited to those events?

HULSTON: Truman was not invited to the first one because it wasn't very much of an event. Truman was invited to the bigger of the events, but he didn't come. Truman was invited to the Congressional hearings in Springfield Federal Court Building as to what they should do with the bill that had been introduced to make Wilson's

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Creek a national battlefield part. Truman wrote a couple of letters that he was in favor of the park, but he couldn't come. At that time he was in Kansas City; he was not in the White House, he was up here.

JOHNSON: I notice you asked for an appointment with Harry Truman on January 30, 1965. I didn't check that out; did you ever get to meet with him?

HULSTON: No, no, I never got to meet with him.

JOHNSON: You never did meet with Truman here in his office at the Library?

HULSTON: Never did.

JOHNSON: I notice that he also got a number of invitations from both Drury and Southwest Missouri State College to be commencement speaker or to speak at other special events. Especially with Drury, he indicated an early interest in coming down there and giving a talk, but apparently he never did at either place. I was just wondering if you have the feeling that he wanted to avoid college audiences, or did it make any difference?

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HULSTON: I really can't address that. I suspect that the Drury invitation came through Lester Cox, who was a long-time trustee of Drury. I do know that Mr. Cox wanted a National Guard unit at Drury. I think there was some hope that Truman would help him get one at Drury and Westminster both, because Cox's son was a graduate of Westminster.

JOHNSON: Truman did write a letter of congratulations to President Finley, on his retirement as president of Drury after 24 years. I think his successor in particular tried to get Mr. Truman down.

HULSTON: That would be a fellow named Brandenburg. Ernest Brandenburg, his successor, but I don't know anything about that.

JOHNSON: Back, I think in '53, Truman in a letter to Crockett, a man named Crockett, said he thought very highly of the college.

HULSTON: Crockett was a minister, Presbyterian minister in Springfield, who at one time I think, had been resident of the School of the Ozarks, but who returned to Springfield.

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JOHNSON: You see as early as '53 he was trying to get the President to come down to talk to the people at Drury.

HULSTON: Yes. In '53 Cox and Truman didn't have that warm relationship that they had had prior to that, so you could say that that was coming from somebody other than Cox. Anything after June '52..

JOHNSON: Oh Ralph Truman, you are preparing a draft for a book on Ralph Truman?

HULSTON: Oh, I've got rough notes, and I think it's worthy of a book.

JOHNSON: Do you have enough to write a book on Ralph Truman?

HULSTON: I think so. Yes, I've researched every year of his life. I've had 11 interviews with Olive and, of course, I've used the Library. I have every available letter that transpired between Ralph and Harry Truman and Olive and Harry Truman.

JOHNSON: Harry called him "Snapper."

HULSTON: Yes.

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JOHNSON: Do you know how he got that nickname?

HULSTON: I know what Olive Truman told me. Olive said that when Ralph was a detective on the Police force here in Kansas City, and I'm not sure what time frame that is, but I would say that would be after he returned from World War I, that on every Friday -- Ralph was not a Catholic -- but every Friday, he would come in from the fish market with a brown-paper wrapped red snapper that he loved so much. Pretty soon, they....

JOHNSON: So he ate snapper on Friday.

HULSTON: Yes. Now prior to that explanation of Olive's, I had assumed that members of his Army company, or command, whether it was a platoon or a company or a battalion, had hung that moniker on him because he snapped at them.. But Olive...

JOHNSON: Was he kind of a snappish type?

HULSTON: Yes. He was a snappish type person. But Olive gives the red snapper fish the reason rather than the other.

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JOHNSON: Who was the s.o.b. that "cashiered him?"

HULSTON: That's a good story. He was speaking to General Louis Truman at the time of the dedication of the armory to Ralph. Ralph had been dead just a year or so. And that's when Harry Truman couldn't remember Ben Lear's name, and he said, "Louie, Louie, who was that s.o.b. that cashiered old Snapper?"

JOHNSON: It was a general that fired him?

HULSTON: It was a Lieutenant General Ben Lear who was his immediate commander of the 5th Army. Lear was commander of the Fifth Army, and the 35th Division was one of the divisions that made up the Fifth Army. The headquarters were in Memphis.

JOHNSON: Do you know why he fired him?

HULSTON: It was after the Louisiana maneuvers, which were held in the summer of '41. I think that after the Louisiana maneuvers, the high command, possibly under General Marshall, I don't know, decided that they better replace some of these National Guard division commanders with West Pointers.

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JOHNSON: Do you think he was still thinking World War I? Do you think they felt his thinking was a little out-dated?

HULSTON: I don't know; I'm not privy to the reports. I do know the Louisiana maneuvers were disastrous. They were strung out all the way across the mid-southeast center of the United States.

JOHNSON: So he got sort of hung with that too. Was it Lewis or Louis?

HULSTON: Louis. Sometimes addressed as Lewis by HST.

JOHNSON: And they called him Louie?

HULSTON: And they called him Louie. His friends called him Louie, but his name was Louis Watson Truman.

JOHNSON: And he became a major general?

HULSTON: He became a lieutenant general.

JOHNSON: So he followed in his father's footsteps.

HULSTON: Well, Louis was of course, a West Pointer, and a War College graduate, whereas the general came up through

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the ranks and the National Guard, and was not even a high school graduate, I guess. Maybe not even a grade school, I don't know.

JOHNSON: His son was better trained obviously.

HUSTON: Oh mercy, yes. I'm sure his son and the general had many pleasant discussions over the National Guard or the Regular Army, what should be the priorities in appropriations, et cetera.

JOHNSON: So Louis Truman figures into this? It's a biography of Ralph Truman ...

HULSTON: No, Louis would not be figured in except incidentally. He may be the subject of a full-scale biography by someone else. You see, Louis Truman might have been Chief of Staff but for the fact that General Lemnitzer elected to stay an additional term. I think Louis Truman

was right in line to be chief of staff when that happened. My friend Bud Cox had a bet with Louis Truman that he would be chief of staff.

JOHNSON: Now Bud Cox, is he...

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HULSTON: Lester's son.

Bud tells the story that he drove Harry Truman to the airport after the armory was dedicated in honor of Ralph Truman, on May 9, 1963 in Springfield. Lester "Bud" Cox, son of Lester E. Cox, was Truman's aide [at the event] and knew him real well. They were good friends. This was several years after Lester and Harry maybe departed ways. In driving to the airport, just the two of them, Lester said to the President, "I've got a bet with Louie that he'll be chief of staff." I guess that was about the time that the thing was coming to a head. According to Bud Cox, the President's response was, "I'd like to see that; that would be nice." But it never materialized.

JOHNSON: The relationship between Ralph and his cousin, Harry, was a friendly one through the years?

HULSTON: Well, it was not after that 1934 primary election, because in the 1934 primary election that we've spoken about, in which Tuck Milligan and Jack Cochran and Harry Truman and a fellow named Longstreet Cleveland were fighting it out for the nomination, Ralph Truman was the

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campaign manager for Western Missouri, I believe, not just Jackson County, but Western Missouri, for Tuck Milligan. But that happened before Tom Pendergast ever selected Harry Truman as his nominee. See, Harry Truman was at least third choice in that '34 election, as you know. There were two others ahead of him, maybe three. But by the time that Harry Truman was selected, Ralph Truman had all of his organization in place for Tuck Milligan. And the Tuck Milligan thing is war-related because Tuck Milligan was under Bennett Clark and they were all in the 35th Division. Ralph Truman was in the 35th Division, and Ralph Truman was a friend of Tuck Milligan and a friend of Bennett Clark. When Bennett Clark said, "I want you to manage Tuck's campaign," he did it.

Well, during the campaign, the records show that it became rather heated. During the campaign Ralph Truman was quoted as saying that Tom Pendergast was supporting Harry Truman with underhanded methods, and gathering funds by bagmen, that sort of thing. Harry Truman resented that greatly, that Ralph Truman, his own cousin, having the same name and a lot of people thought they were brothers, would be engaged in making

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a press release of that nature against him.

Now, Olive Truman says that Harry Truman, the night he was nominated in the '34 campaign, that he drafted one of those letters, similar I guess in spirit to the letter he wrote to the critic [Paul

Hume] of Margaret. Olive says she read that he said to Ralph Truman, "If your name wasn't Truman, you'd never have gotten as far as you have. You've ridden on my coat-tails." And according to Olive, Ralph wanted to reply to that, in which he said he had a better war record, had a better National Guard record, and had had a lot more influence in the Western part of Missouri than did Harry Truman, and that maybe Harry Truman was...

JOHNSON: In other words, you say that Ralph had dictated this letter to the effect that his cousin was riding on his coattails instead.

HULSTON: Right, and so according to Olive, she persuaded Ralph to destroy the letter. It was not sent. The letter that Harry sent has never surfaced, although Olive has given to the Library all of the correspondence.

According to Olive, they didn't speak for about a

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year or a year and a half, and that this worried Bennett Clark a great deal because he liked Harry Truman, Bennett Clark now did. Harry was now a Senator and they made peace right off. So they were all down at Nevada, Missouri at Camp Clark, on summer maneuvers -- the 35th Division. Harry Truman was a colonel, I guess, in the Reserve or working up to be a colonel. Ralph was a colonel, in the 35th Division, National Guard. Bennett Clark was, I suppose, maybe still in. He was there that summer. According to Olive, Bennett Clark told her to have Ralph in his hotel room at a certain place there in Nevada at a certain time. He said, "I'm going to bring Harry in and I'm going to make those two mule-headed s.o.b.s shake hands." At the appointed time, Bennett Clark showed up with Harry and Ralph was there waiting, and Bennett Clark said, "Now, I want you fellows to shake hands and stop this craziness." They shook hands and that was about 1936 I guess, '35 or '36, and after that Ralph and Harry were like brothers again. I think that's an accurate account of it.

JOHNSON: But did they really see very much of each other?

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HULSTON: I don't think so. Ralph made many trips to Washington, according to the archives. Usually, they had a lot of correspondence, but I don't think they ever saw each other much, except that when Harry came home as President he usually tried to see Ralph sometime. And they usually tried to get together on their birthdays. See, Harry Truman's birthday is May 8, and Ralph's is May 10, I think, so they had lots of joint birthday meetings.

JOHNSON: Did they have any children other than Louis, or Louie?

HULSTON: Yes, Ralph had three children by his first wife, Nannie Watson Truman, and the oldest one was a daughter.

JOHNSON: What were their names?

HULSTON: I forget the oldest one, Henrietta, I believe. Louis was the second one, I believe; I'm sure of that. Then, the third one was Corbie Truman, and he was the youngest one. His mother was never able to take care of him. She died a year or so after his birth, and he was reared by another family that was related to the Trumans.

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He was a graduate of West Point. He became a full colonel in the Army, and he's retired. I believe he's living in McKinney or Tyler, Texas, and I believe the daughter is living in Amarillo, Texas.

JOHNSON: Did Olive have any children?

HULSTON: Olive had no children. Olive and Ralph were married when she was about 35 years old, and I guess he was ten or twelve years older than she.

JOHNSON: So you're still working on this....

HULSTON: Working on the Ralph E. Truman-Harry S. Truman relationship. I don't know whether it's worthy of a book, but it's certainly worthy of an article.

JOHNSON: You are going to try at least to get an article published on this. When do you think that might happen?

HULSTON: I don't know. If I'd quit practicing law I could do it in a year. If I continue to practice law, it might take forever.

JOHNSON: Are you planning to retire from practice?

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HULSTON: Well, I'm going to slow down, effective this year. January 1, I made some resolutions that I would only take probate estate cases and real estate cases, and look after my banks and let the younger lawyers take everything else. So if I stick to that I may get back to Ralph and Harry right away.

JOHNSON: I think you mentioned your wife and your marriage in 19 -- what was it?

HULSTON: In 1944.

JOHNSON: Okay, and then you have just one child?

HULSTON: Have just one son; he lives here in Kansas City and...

JOHNSON: What's his name?

HULSTON: John L. Hulston.

JOHNSON: If there's nothing else, or if you think of anything else, we'll get it on the record right now. Otherwise, I guess we're near the end of this.

HULSTON: We've talked about Ralph's funeral and Ralph's

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armory dedication. At Ralph's funeral, Olive says that Harry sat with her at the funeral and squeezed her hand, and made the statement that Ralph was just like a brother to him. Another time that Truman came to Springfield, in addition to the ones we've mentioned, was on November 10 and 11, 1958, to make a major speech at the Kentwood Arms on Armistice Day, November 11. I attended that speech. I was not privy to the things that I'm going to talk to you about but I'd like just to mention them if you don't mind, to show his vigor.

He drove down from Kansas City on the afternoon of November 10, and as he approached Springfield, there's a town called Glidewell, which is about twenty miles, maybe fifteen or twenty miles outside of Springfield towards Bolivar. As he drove by Glidewell, there's a public school there, grade school. The kids were all out on the grounds and he told his driver, "Let's stop here and see these kids." He stopped and spoke with them, and said a few words.

He went on to Springfield, and he stayed with Ralph on this trip. Olive was not home; she was someplace and Ralph and Harry were together. The Marine Corps

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Reserve was having a dinner out at Hickory Hills on the night of November 10; that would be 1959. You may remember that while he was President, Harry Truman had made a statement in connection with the Marines, that when they took an island, or words to that effect, that they were well equipped with photographers and public relations men. You may remember that. That had gotten all over on the wire, of course, and he was getting all kinds of letters and calls from the Marines calling attention to their great tradition all the way from the Halls of Montezuma to Iwo. I think Harry regretted that he had said what he said.

Well, in 1958 a fellow named Bill Cantrell in Springfield, who was a clothing merchant, called Truman and introduced himself at the Library, I guess. He said, "I'm an old haberdasher, and I'd like a favor of you." He said, "You're coming down here to make a speech at noon on November 11. Would you be kind enough to come out to the Marine annual dinner at Hickory Hills Country Club and just say a few words to us?" It somehow hit Harry Truman just right and he said, "Well, I'll do it." So, he told Ralph, "I want you to take me out

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there now." Ralph Truman took him out there and they brought him in. According to Cantrell, they had a very elaborate program -- "slicks" -- and one of the privates in the marine company came up to him to autograph this program. Cantrell came up. He was acting kind of as Truman's aide-de-camp, and Cantrell said, "Now, Mr. President, you don't have to put up with this. You're here to make a few remarks and that's all." By that time three or four more had come with their programs, and he said, "Oh, Bill, it's all right. It's just like one dog pissing on a fire hydrant. If

one of them does it, they're all going to do it. Let them come." And he stood there and autographed all of them.

Well, all right now, he's made the speech at Glidewell, and now he's made the speech at Hickory Hills to the Marine Reservists. The next morning, at 8 o'clock, he went to the Colonial Hotel and spoke to the annual meeting of the American Legion that had had a meeting on the morning of Armistice every year since 1919. He had spoken to them before. He spoke to them. The Chamber of Commerce got wind that he was in town and they had a meeting across the hall, just for him, and he came over there

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and spoke to them. At 10 o'clock he went out to the Living Memorial Park, which was being dedicated on South Glenstone, and made a speech to the people out there. At noon he came back to the Kentwood Arms and made a major address that was carried in the press.

JOHNSON: You mentioned the problem Truman had with the Marine Corps, comparing them apparently to Stalin's propaganda machine. That, as I remember, occurred during the unification issue -- the unification of the Armed Forces. They wanted to be separate from the Navy, apparently, to have their own department. So that happened, I think, around 1947.

HULSTON: I don't recall.

JOHNSON: But this incident, the incident you're talking here, in 1958

HULSTON: His speech to the Marine Corps reservists was on the night of November 10, 1958.

JOHNSON: So that would have been about eleven years later.

HULSTON: Yes. Well, that's about all that I can recall

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from my experiences with the people we've talked about particularly.

JOHNSON: Oh, maybe one final question. You know, Truman had some great reservations about career generals, career Army generals...

HULSTON: I think he was weighted to the National Guard, and the Reservists, all the way through.

JOHNSON: Do you recall if Ralph Truman had any reactions to the President firing General MacArthur?

HULSTON: Oh, yes. Yes, I do, based on what Olive has told me, not on what anybody else has told me. She said that the only real military decision that Harry Truman ever made that Ralph Truman didn't know about, and the President had not talked to him about, was the dropping of the bomb. Ralph Truman knew absolutely nothing about that. She did say that he called Ralph

Truman before he decided to fire MacArthur and told Ralph Truman what he was going to do. Ralph Truman's reaction was, "Well, you should have fired the son of a bitch a long time ago."

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JOHNSON: You mean the same as the Joint Chiefs of Staff in other words. That's interesting.

HULSTON: Well, I think that he felt that he ought to tell old "Snapper" about it. He probably knew that Snapper hated MacArthur.

JOHNSON: Is that right?

HULSTON: Well, you know, people either loved MacArthur or they hated him.

JOHNSON: But there is evidence that Ralph didn't think that much of MacArthur then?

HULSTON: Well, from that statement -- he said, "a long time ago," so I don't know how far back that goes.

JOHNSON: Fifty-one, April '51.

HULSTON: I mean I don't know how far back. He couldn't have fired him before 1945. He couldn't have fired him before April, April 12, 1945.

JOHNSON: Was there any evidence that Ralph Truman did not like General MacArthur before this?

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HULSTON: Not to my knowledge, just that statement, "Why you didn't do it a long time ago."

JOHNSON: That sounds like General Marshall. Marshall, I believe, said that to the President too, after he had read the record and so on.

HULSTON: Let's see. There's another general in there ...

JOHNSON: Well, General Bradley.

HULSTON: General Bradley, Omar Bradley.

JOHNSON: He was chairman of the Joint Chiefs, I believe.

HULSTON: Right. Omar Bradley and General Marshall. I think there was a third one, and maybe a fourth one. But after they went over the record, they were unanimous, and that's when he decided to do it.

JOHNSON: What was your opinion of that event?

HULSTON: I'm not enough of a military man. I wasn't privy to the records, but I'd certainly abide by the decision made by Omar Bradley and George Marshall.

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JOHNSON: So it didn't upset you; you didn't send one of those scorching letters to the White House?

HULSTON: No.

JOHNSON: Well, thanks very much for your time.

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