

Oral History Interview
with
JAMES P. AYLWARD

Attorney; Chairman, Jackson County Democratic Committee, 1918-1936; Chairman, Missouri Democratic State Committee, 1934-1940, and Committeeman from Missouri on Democratic National Committee, 1936-1944.

Kansas City, Missouri
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by James R. Fuchs, Harry S. Truman Library

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FUCHS: Mr. Aylward, I wish you would give me, sir, a brief autobiographical statement--when and where you were born, your schooling, and so forth.

AYLWARD: I was born in Peoria, Illinois, 1885. My father and mother were Irish immigrants. They brought me to Kansas City when I was six months of age and I have lived here continuously ever since. All the other members of the family were born in Kansas City, Missouri--some twelve brothers and sisters. I went to parochial and public schools until the fifth grade and then I got a job. I was a newsboy, newspaper carrier, Western Union messenger boy, a cash boy in the department stores; had jobs of a similar character, office boy for a merchandise brokerage here. About 1899 I was in an office in the

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West Bottoms and transferred from there to the New York Life Building. There I met Mr. Frank P. Walsh, who was a very prominent lawyer, and became fascinated with his career and reputation and ability, and wound up as his office boy. Frank Walsh was actively engaged in local and state politics--he was a member of the state committee and prominent in politics for his own crowd, the Shannon organization in Kansas City as opposed to the old State House crowd that was in power at that time. That was Governor Dockery and Allen who was treasurer, and Sam B. Cook, who was Secretary of State, and Joel Stone who was in the Senate--who really dominated and controlled the politics of Missouri at the time.

There was a controversy over the leadership and a division in the party. Joseph Folk of the City of St. Louis was the circuit attorney and prosecuted the boodlers in St. Louis; those who had received and accepted bribes or solicited bribes for the support of franchises granted to suburban railroads and other utilities; and he made an enviable reputation for obtaining convictions of members of the council and other leaders from the outside who had any connection with the bribery scandals. He became a candidate for Governor, and he established a statewide

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reputation as a law enforcement officer, the leader of the party in St. Louis; and he ran against Mr. Harry Hawes, who was the leader of the Jefferson Democratic Club in St. Louis and who was aligned with Ed Butler, the boss of the City of St. Louis, for Governor of the State of Missouri. He won the primary election of the delegates to the state convention--the majority of them--and he was nominated over Hawes for Governor of the State of Missouri.

FUCHS: And this was what year, sir?

AYLWARD: 1904. Walsh supported Folk and so did Shannon, and they became the dominating leaders in Jackson County, Missouri on account of the Folk election. As far as patronage is concerned, why, they were in control of practically all of it.

Well, during those campaigns, as office boy I kept track of all of the charges and the debates, that is an account of them carried in the newspapers, concerning all the personalities in these

campaigns, and from then on I kept a scrapbook, for every year thereafter I assume, about politics. So that's my introduction to

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politics, and I was a member of the Shannon organization, faction in those days. I was unanimously selected by the leaders of the Democratic Party in Jackson County in, oh, say 1920 or maybe prior thereto, as chairman of the Jackson County Democratic Committee; and I continued in the office of chairman of the county committee for a period thereafter of sixteen to eighteen years. I was engaged in organizing the Democrats in the party into one unified and harmonious group, so that we could present a united front to the Republican organization, and we set up all the latest departments for accomplishing that effect. We perhaps had the strongest, the most powerful, and the most efficient political organization in this state at that time--all that time up until past the election of Truman.

FUCHS: Were you ever affiliated with the Shannon organization?

AYLWARD: I was affiliated originally with the Shannon organization.

So the leaders, Pendergast and Shannon and others, agreed that I should be selected as chairman of the Democratic County Committee and that was done and, as I

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say, I was the man who was selected every two years thereafter. I used my good offices to keep the so-called bosses together. When they'd have a controversy, why, I did everything I could to bring about a rapprochement to prevent disunity, so that we could continue to win. There were many good experiences of that type.

FUCHS: You were practicing law all this time?

AYLWARD: Practicing law at this time, I was a partner of Frank Walsh--started as office boy and wound up as his law partner. He supported Woodrow Wilson for President and he was named by Woodrow Wilson as chairman of the Industrial Relations Commission in Washington to set up an investigation of the labor practices, the labor situation, and conditions throughout the country for the purpose of introducing legislation to correct evils that they encouraged in industry such as child labor, sweatshops, wages and hours, and sanitary conditions, and so forth; so he went from here to New York and Washington and opened an office in New York and Washington and I continued to practice law here in Kansas City and attended his office. He remained away for practically the rest of his life. He

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came here occasionally. After his service on the Industrial Relations Commission he was appointed, with William Howard Taft, as co-chairman of the War Labor Board during the First World War. He served until Wilson went out of office in 1920.

I said I continued to manage the executive organization and to set up all the departments, I don't want you to think I did it all on my own. I had plenty of cooperation and help from the party leaders and the workers and the precinct captains and every person who was a member of the organization. We built this organization to the zenith of its power and we had I'd say 7,500 persons who were directly interested in winning elections for the Democratic Party. We had plenty of precinct workers--ten or twelve people to a precinct. They were not all jobholders; we didn't have that many jobs. We set up a registration department and polling department. We polled every householder, every voter in the community--this hasn't been done here for some twenty years. We knew from day to day who the voters were and what their predilections were, their selection of candidates in either party, or if they were independent or irregular. Whenever we polled

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a voter and he manifested some doubts, why, we didn't put him down as doubtful, we put him in the Republican column. So that we actually had a substantial, accurate, truthful poll, and, as I say, it covered the entire city and most of the county--the townships out in the county. We had that kind of a working organization. We had all the various committees usually operating in an election; speakers' committee; habeas corpus committee to take care of members of the organization who were arrested for some violation of the law, when they really weren't violating the law, just to get rid of them, get rid of their services in the precinct. So we managed to get them out of jail so they could continue to work. In those days, from 1920 to '32, for twelve long years the Republicans were in power in this state. Hyde was elected Governor in 1920 and Baker in '24 and Caulfield in '28; so we had considerable opposition at that time and we were out of office almost out of the county and city until '26, when there was a charter election. There was a conference among the leaders of the party as to whether or not we should support this charter that was prepared and drafted by a political committee who were not close to the

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Democrats. We believed that it was dominated by the Republicans. Prior to the adoption of the charter we had a councilmanic form of government. We had sixteen wards and sixteen aldermen in a lower house and sixteen in an upper house, and a mayor, and comptroller, and treasurer, and an auditor. That was the old form of government. So that was scrapped but the question for the leaders to decide was whether or not we should support this charter or be against it--what would be best for the party organization--whether we could live viably under it--continue to be a success as a political unit in Jackson County and Kansas City, particularly. So Pendergast and Welch after a conference decided they'd support the charter, and Shannon decided he'd be against it; so the charter was adopted.

FUCHS: That was Cass Welch?

AYLWARD: Cass Welch on Fifteenth Street, yes. He was the leader of the second ward in those days and he became aligned and affiliated with Pendergast, and we were all friends. Part of the Shannon crowd then departed from Mr. Shannon and joined Pendergast in support of the

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adoption of the charter and thereafter in the election to nominate the candidates to office. After the charter was adopted, there was a primary election and we filed candidates for all the offices. The twelve councilmen and mayor--perhaps at that time they didn't have that many but that was the setup--one from each district. There were four councilmanic districts--one from the local district and the other four at large and a mayor, so that's nine. Shannon filed a ticket in the primary and Pendergast and Welch, and the others who went along with Pendergast, they supported the Pendergast slate in that primary, and the Pendergast slate won. Shannon was defeated by a substantial majority. Then the question arose what we were going to do about the division that would occur because of Shannon's defeat. So I waited a few days until after the election and then I went to see Mr. Thomas J. Pendergast; and I suggested to Pendergast that something ought to be done to induce Mr. Shannon to support the ticket in the general election because there was great danger of suffering a defeat if he didn't go along, if he bolted the ticket it had been bolted before and then been defeated. Well, he said, "Nobody can talk to him. You can't make deals with him."

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I said, "Well, don't despair about it. I've got a suggestion I'd like to make to you."

He said, "oh, what is it?"

"Well," I said, "why don't you agree to give him once third of the patronage if we win, and two members of the nine directors to be appointed by the mayor or city manager, in a city manager form of government."

"Oh," he said, "he won't do that, you can't induce him to accept it."

"Well," I said, "you never know until you try."

I came uptown from his office at 1908 Main, and the Shannon organization had headquarters in the Law Building on the second floor, 9th and Walnut; and I went into the club's office and there was only one person there that morning and that was Peter J. Kelley, who was one of the first lieutenants of Mr. Shannon. Of course, they were in the doldrums, they were much disappointed, and despairing about what was going to happen to them politically, because it was either quit or bolt the ticket to try to beat the Democratic ticket. Of course these candidates did not run under any party label; they were just filed by organization but the candidates

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we filed were all Democrats. Well, I said to Kelly, "I've got a suggestion I'd like to make to Mr. Shannon and I'd like to have you confer with him and transmit this suggestion to him."

And he said, "What is it?"

I said, "Assume that Pendergast and the crowd with him would consent to give Shannon a third of the patronage and two of the nine directors, don't you think it's a matter of justice and fairness in a division of the patronage that Shannon should support the ticket?"

Well, he said, "There's nothing we can do now but bolt."

Well, I said, "If you bolt, you're through forever-never come back at your age and that probably goes for others, too."

He said, "They won't do that."

I said, "You never know what they'll do until the effort is made;" I said, "You go and see Mr. Shannon."

So he went over to see Shannon and of course Shannon laughed at him. He contacted Mr. Shannon and Mr. Shannon called me on the telephone. He said, "Pete Kelley is in my office and he tells me that you called

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on him this morning at the Law Building and made certain suggestions to him what might be done to induce our organization to support the ticket."

I said, "Yes, that's true."

He said, "Well, I'd like to see you."

I said, "I'll come over to your office."

He said, "No, I'll come over to yours."

He sat down and he looked me over very carefully and critically, and asked me about this proposal and I said, "Well, now, I'm not committed to make that proposal to you but I'm willing to suggest that it be done, if it's satisfactory to you. I think it's fair and just and if you're reasonably minded, you'd accept it, because if you go out of politics now, you're through, and that may be true for Pendergast, too. You're both in the same shape although Pendergast is much younger than you."

He said, "I believe if Pendergast were to agree to do that I'd go along."

Well, I said, "Let me call Mr. Pendergast here in your presence." So I called Pendergast on the phone and I said, "Now, Mr. Shannon is in my office and I've been talking to him about consenting to support the slate in

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the election."

And I suggested that this be done and that be done and he said, "Well, I told you that was all right."

I said, "Well, now take it easy. I want you to tell Mr. Shannon over this telephone that you're willing to consent to this arrangement," and I said, "Don't hang that telephone up after you've finished talking to Shannon because I want to talk to you in his presence." So I said to Mr. Shannon, "Here's Mr. Pendergast. Let him make his statement to you direct."

He did. Shannon agreed. So I said, "Don't hang the phone up. I want to talk."

So when they finished their conversation I said, "Now, Mr. Pendergast, in the presence of Mr. Shannon I want to say to you in order that there not be any misunderstandings as to the arrangement which you've agreed to, so that neither one of you can ever charge me with making any misrepresentations as to this matter, I want you to reconfirm it in person tomorrow some place. Make an appointment now where you can both meet." So I put Shannon back on the phone and he said, "All right." They met out on Hospital Hill out here in the car and reconfirmed it.

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So we went on to do battle with the Republicans, who controlled the other side. Al Beach was mayor and he was running for reelection, and certain members of his council were running under this new charter setup for reelection for office. We won by 309 votes. The fifth man was George Goldman, who was in the jewelry business--he's still around here. And it was very close, too close for comfort. That gave us the majority of the council and the power under the charter provisions to appoint a city manager and the board of directors. Ben Jaudon, who had formerly been treasurer and made a good reputation with the voters and the tax paying people of the city, was our candidate for mayor. He was defeated by 500 votes by Beach, the former mayor who was running for reelection.

FUCHS: He was really a Republican?

AYLWARD: Oh, yes, oh, devout Republican, you understand. One of the old, most intense and bitter Republicans that ever held the office, and so were all the others--Langworthy had been mayor, was one of the leaders in the writing of this charter. Langworthy was one of the leaders of the Republican Party and all of the old line Republicans who

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took an interest in national, state and local politics. There wasn't any question about it being a genuinely Republican setup as against the Democratic setup without labels.

Well, we had a law on the books that permitted the opening of the ballot box, if an affidavit were filed containing charges to the effect that irregularities had been committed in the voting in the precincts, which is a very general law and it was unconstitutional, in our opinion. Well, they proceeded to open the boxes in the Goldman contest in an attempt to count him out. We always appeared before the election commissioners; we had had to fight to keep our Democrats from being stricken from the rolls, the registration rolls, the voting roll. At times they filed against every naturalized citizen in this community, and we had to bring them down and stand them in line. We had lines with 1,500 people in them. We fed them during the day, took care of them until they got straightened out on the rolls. These were the troubles we had. This was all in the newspapers. You can read it. And we had an election committee that appeared before the election board--I usually went over there myself. Well, when these affidavits were filed to count

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the votes in the tenth precinct, Edward Curtain, who was a Democrat and formerly assistant prosecutor, and a prominent lawyer--we went over and had a conference with the election board which was dominated by the Republicans. See, this was in '26. Billy Bucholz was the chairman of the committee, Hiller and the other members--there was four men--two Democrats and two Republicans. Of course, the Democrats were picked by the Republicans, lukewarm Democrats. We made an argument to the effect that they didn't have the constitutional right to open these ballot boxes and of course they said the law is on the books and we have a right to open them and we're going to do it. Well, I said, "Let's be fair and reasonable and practical about this." I said, "If you'll agree to open these boxes and count the ballots in these ten precincts that are now tallied and to stop after you've finished the count in the ten precincts, we'll not take any legal action to prevent you from doing this, if you'll certify that either candidate is elected unless the vote is materially changed to the extent to give the Republican candidate a majority, you certify Goldman's election."

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They said all right. So we waited around there and the count was made and we were ahead, didn't change the vote substantially, and then they filed fifty more affidavits to open fifty boxes more. It was then about six o'clock in the evening and I said, "Well, I've got some other things to do tonight. I don't want to stay around here " and suggested we adjourn. They agreed. Then we prepared a petition for a writ of prohibition against the election board to prohibit the election board from making this count on constitutional grounds. Under the constitution ballot boxes could only be opened in an election contest or a grand jury investigation, so under our construction of the law they had no right to do this, but they were doing it. And we also prepared a petition for Writ of Mandamus that compelled the election board to certify that Mr. George L. Goldman was duly elected a member of the council from the district in which he was a candidate. I went out to see Judge Willard P. Hall, who was the Circuit Judge in Independence--he was a Democrat--at his home--he lived out around 28th and Tracy. We presented the legal question to him and he said, "oh, I don't think you're entitled to the writ."

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I said, "Judge, don't be so summary about it. Give us a chance to present it to you." I said, "I've got some petitions here that hold we're entitled to this writ." I said, "Let me make a suggestion about the matter. Will you give us a stop order and if you do, we'll travel tonight to Jefferson City to the Supreme Court of this state and in the morning we'll file a petition for a writ of prohibition to prevent them from counting Goldman out and a petition for an extraordinary Writ of Mandamus to compel them to certify that he's been duly elected. Following the decision of the Supreme Court I'll have one of my assistants dismiss this case from your court so that you will no longer have jurisdiction."

He said, "All right. Under those circumstances I will issue the order," which he did.

Then he drove to Jefferson City--an all night trip--and went to see Judge Walter W. Graves, who was the chief justice of the Supreme Court, and members of the court who had been empowered to pass on whether these writs should be granted or denied. I presented the matter to him and he read the decision and he issued the writ.

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So, he set the case down for briefs and argument in the Supreme Court fifteen days after we saw him. Then I filed an election contest against Beach challenging his right to the office of mayor, claiming that he didn't receive a proper, legal vote. They voted them out of the jail, the poor farm, and military establishments; we set it up and set out the facts so as to make that kind of case against him. Well, they got fighting about that. of course, we were determined to do so until the Supreme Court passed on the question of Goldman's right to the seat in the council. I served notice to take depositions--kept that alive time to time and they were frightened. Charlie Blackmore who was a solid Republican and Gilmore, who was former police commissioner, and others were representing the Republican candidates in this fight, that's Beach and all the rest of them. So Blackmore jumped up and said, "Oh, I'm busy today. I can't take those depositions next Tuesday and I'd like to have it continued," and so forth.

I said, "All right, how much time do you need?" So it was continued.

Well, we argued and presented the case to the

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Supreme Court and the Supreme Court unanimously held that the law was unconstitutional and void, and prohibited the election board from counting any more ballots in the precincts that were challenged, and issued a writ compelling them to certify Goldman's election to the council. So, I stalled around and played with them for awhile in this election contest and they were afraid. So, after stalling around with them I came in one day and they said they wanted another continuance, and I said, "Now, I'm going to end this."

So, we dismissed the election contest against Beach and he became mayor of Kansas City, and then we had a five to four council and we ran the government. Shannon got his two directors and one-third of the patronage, and Welch got about one-sixth, and they proceeded to elect members of the council and the mayor every election thereafter, until they fell from grace. If certain leaders in the party had behaved so as not to bring about any scandal, the Democratic Party would have been in forever. We were electing these tickets by 25-30,000 normal majorities. We even elected members of the council from Republican districts. So, the debacle occurred in

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1939 on account of vote frauds and other things that reflected upon party leadership. We were driven from power. The ill feeling and hate for each other was such that they couldn't get together. If we'd been together that time, we could have won. John B. Gage was elected by about 10,000 votes. He was a Democrat running with the mixture--Democrats and Republicans--and that is the way it's been ever since, with the exception of one term; and we had a knockdown drag-out fight. Shannon and Pendergast had a ticket--that's Jim Pendergast--and I ran a ticket.

But it was no place for us. They just moved us out. The ticket supported by my friends and myself received about 19-20,000 votes in that primary.

FUCHS: What year was that?

AYLWARD: 1940 I think it was. They nominated Robinson, a lawyer, who was a very fine person against Gage who was a lawyer; and I made a speech supporting Gage in that fight after the nomination and Gage was elected. So, the Democrats were out thereafter and are still out in city hall. And there were other times along the road

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where they were about to break up and I negotiated with them to stay together and kept them together; otherwise we couldn't have won.

FUCHS: What is your first recollection of Mr. Truman?

AYLWARD: Well, Truman was a member of the county court.

FUCHS: You had never met him until he became a judge?

AYLWARD: No, I didn't know him. He was affiliated with the Pendergast organization and he lived down in Independence in Jackson County; and then I got to know him around the courthouse.

FUCHS: You knew him when he was eastern judge?

AYLWARD: Yes. He was elected eastern judge first, presiding judge later, and another time he was defeated because the Shannon crowd bolted him in the election.

FUCHS: That was in '24.

AYLWARD: And this charter election was in '26. Well, the effect of that was to bring all of the feuding factions together and we had harmony and unity from that time on

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until the debacle occurred, as they called it. Well, then in 1932 we were supporting Francis Wilson for governor. He'd been nominated four years before and defeated by Folk. He'd been a member of the state senate and he was United States District Attorney and he was a popular person. He had the skill and ability and capacity to serve as governor, so he filed in '32 for the nomination for governor and he defeated Russell Dearthmont. Russell Dearthmont was the candidate from Cape Girardeau in southeast Missouri. Wilson informed me that he wanted me to serve as state chairman in the event he was elected governor and I said I didn't have any particular desire to be state chairman. There were many other persons that were better qualified than I was. He said, "No, I wanted you in '28. Smith was a Catholic and you were a Catholic. I thought it would be better to have someone who wasn't a Catholic as chairman."

Well, one morning I got a call from Francis Wilson about five o'clock and he said, "I hope I didn't get you out of bed."

I said, "Well, where do you think I've been all night." It was five o'clock in the morning.

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Well, he said, "Something terrible has happened to me--this is in the primary fight."

Well, I said, "Did someone excoriate you for your political misdeeds, something like that happen to you?"

"No," he said, "worse than that."

I said, "Well, what happened?"

He said, "Get your morning paper and read it, would you please."

I said, "Now, after I read the morning paper what do you want me to do?"

"Well," he said, "I wish you'd use your good judgment and try to help me."

I said, "Would you have any objection to me issuing a vitriolic, excoriating statement against the man who made these ugly charges against you, whatever they may be. I don't know what they are, but then if I determine to do it with your permission, can I do that?"

He said, "Yes."

I got the morning paper and Dearmont had said he was a "tool of the boss," you understand. Was made to order. He'd do their bidding and he was running under the camouflaged representation that he was decent and

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pure in politics, when in actual fact he wasn't. He was representing the interests for years and so forth. So after I read the paper I prepared a loud scream to these newspapers in which I said that Russell Dearmont represented the big interests of the state, particularly the utilities, and made a fight to obtain a franchise for a utility in southeast Missouri so they could increase their rates; that he was supported by big business and all of the representatives of the big interests--the railroads, the utilities, and so on, and named them, these persons, because they were in politics. One was the mayor of St. Joe, the lawyer for the Frisco in Springfield, and the lawyers for the other railroads in St. Louis and the other public utilities. Well, anyway, it created quite a stir. So, Dearmont had to admit that he was in these fights, and that was enough to murder him. So, Wilson was nominated for governor, and so was Bennett Clark for the Senate. Well, Bennett Clark didn't want me for state chairman, someone from the western part of the state, too closely aligned with the Pendergast organization, although I supported Clark for the Senate against Charlie Howell who was supported by Pendergast. At that time Howell wasn't a very popular person. He'd been state chairman

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for years and he'd been representing these different insurance companies being reorganized.

FUCHS: Now at this time you were considered more or less a right-hand man for Mr. Pendergast.

AYLWARD: Not necessarily. I never was a member of the Jackson Democratic Club. Never a dues-paying member. I advised him--never was an active member of the club. I did everything I could to keep these leaders together, to keep them from fighting each other unto the death, politically.

FUCHS: Were you Mr. Pendergast's lawyer?

AYLWARD: No, I wasn't. Never was. The lawyers who represented Pendergast in the proceedings against him for violating the income tax law were: John Madden and R.L. Brewster of Madden and Burke, and Julius Shapiro represented him in some civil matters for many years.

FUCHS: The reason I said that was one writer has said that, in writing of the 1934 primary, that you were Pendergast's lawyer and his right-hand man and his ablest organizer.

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AYLWARD: Well, I was never his lawyer and I've read those books and they are filled with misstatement and improper conclusions and inferences and falsehoods.

FUCHS: That's what we want to get, your story.

AYLWARD: I'll point them out to you as we go along.

FUCHS: Fine.

AYLWARD: Even in Reddig's book some of the facts are not true. Now the truth is that at the time of Wilson's death, Pendergast wanted me to run for governor and I declined. "There must be someone else to run for governor; now this is the opportunity." We'd been out for twelve long years and it looks like a Democratic year. Roosevelt's running for President. He looks like a cinch to win--he carried the state by several hundred thousand. So we had to get a candidate for governor.

Well, getting back to Mr. Wilson. He came to see me and said, "I want you to be state chairman."

"Well," I said, "if that's what you really want, why, I'll do it."

We went over and talked to Bennett Clark and Bennett Clark said I want Rubey Hulen for state chairman.

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Jim's all right and so and so, but I want Hulen and I think I'm entitled to name the state chairman because I'm running for the Senate and you're running for governor." Well, it has always been traditional for the governor to name the state chairman but it didn't make any difference to me. So, I got a call from Wilson one evening and he said, "I'm down at the Baltimore Hotel and I'm here with Bennett Clark and we'd like to have you come down."

"Well,. I said, "now, I've got a hunch that Bennett Clark doesn't want me for state chairman. That's what you want to discuss with me." So I said, "Just forget it. I'm still for you and for Bennett. I don't care who's state chairman."

"Oh," he said, "please come down," so I went down and that's what it was all about.

I said, "All right," and Rubey Hulen was elected chairman of the state committee by the state committee; and then he came up here to see Mr. Pendergast and asked Mr. Pendergast if he would not request me to become the executive director of the campaign--a member of the state committee under Hulen.

Well, Pendergast called me up and said, "I'd like to see you." Hulen was down there. I went down to see

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him. He said, "Now, Hulen would like to have you go along with him."

I said, "He doesn't need me. He's got plenty of persons who are better qualified than I am to do this job."

He said, "Oh, go on and accept it."

I said, "All right," so I became executive director. So I managed the campaign in western Missouri and he took it in eastern Missouri. Well, anyway, we nominated Park for governor--that's another story, part of this background; otherwise Truman couldn't have been nominated and elected for the Senate.

FUCHS: Wilson died, is that correct?

AYLWARD: Wilson died. I get a call about nine o'clock in the morning from Leedy. C.A. Leedy was later judge of the Supreme Court--just retired a year ago--and he said, "Jim, something terrible has happened."

Well, when he said that to me I just had a premonition that Wilson had died. He said, "We'd like to see you. We're out at Wilson's home," which was out east in Kansas City. I walked up three flights of stairs to the landing

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and they were standing by the door of the apartment and told me that Mr. Wilson had died. Maury Wilson was his half brother and they said, "We can hold the announcement of his death if you want us to."

I said, "I don't think that will be necessary." I said, "I extremely regret to know that Mr. Wilson passed away. You have my sympathy, but we haven't got very long to select a candidate for governor--we were within twenty-five days from election--so under the law in order to get the candidate's name printed on the ballot it had to be sent in fifteen days before the election for general circularization. So, I had a taxicab and I went over to see Pendergast in the Ready Mix office. I informed him about the bad news of Wilson's death. He said, "What are we going to do?"

"Get a candidate for governor, that's what we're going to do."

He said, "What do you have in mind?"

I said, "Well, you ought to have men that measure up in ability, good reputation, experience and one who is popular among the people of the state, if possible, to attract their attention and support as candidate for governor."

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"Well," he said, "what do you say? Who do you suggest?"

I said, "Well, what about Judge Ragland, a member of the Supreme Court, or Frank Harris, lieutenant governor?" There were many others--the former Ambassador to Russia was to be in St. Louis--and two or three others, prominent lawyers and businessmen.

He said "I don't know any of these people."

I said, "Well, I assumed you'd say that, but," I said, "we've got to have, a group of candidates. We don't want to cause all of our opposition in the party to believe you're trying to dominate the selection of a candidate for governor; if we do, you're not going to make the grade."

"Well," he said, "I'll tell you what you do. You come down to my office [this was near noon]--have your lunch and come back to my office with a candidate for governor."

Well, that was no easy matter to select a candidate for governor out of the clear sky; so Charlie Howell--we'd moved over to his office at 1940 Main--I came up to the office going through directories, you understand, trying to pick a candidate for governor. Someone that was

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close enough to him that he had confidence in that he'd support, and I'm getting calls from my friends all over the state urging the organization here to support Stark for governor--Lloyd Stark, who was later governor--Tony Buford from St. Louis, a prominent lawyer and Democrat; and the bankers here were all for Stark--Swinney and Kemper and even McElroy, the city manager, and they were doing their best to influence Pendergast to support Stark for governor at this time--the Wilson camp. So, I went into this file room here adjoining my office and on top of the filing cabinet is the record or bill of exceptions in a law suit I tried before Park at Platte City; and I said, "There is the candidate"--his name came to my mind--"the gentleman who ought to be nominated or governor. He comes from Wilson's home county; he has been a follower of Wilson's for years; and he's supported by the entire Wilson crowd. He ought to make a good governor being a circuit judge and a country judge, getting away from the cities where they can't say that the city politicians were trying to dominate the selection of the governor." I returned to Pendergast's office at 1:30, and Charlie Howell was in there at the time talking to him about

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Stark. (Charlie Howell was a candidate for senator, you know; he'd been former state chairman of the party.) And he said to Howell, "Well, I'm glad to see you, Charlie, but I've got an appointment with Jim Aylward. It's very important and I've got to see him right now so I wish you would retire." He did. Then he said, "Well, now what have you got to suggest?"

I said, "Well, I think Judge Guy B. Park of Platte City would make an ideal candidate for governor and can be elected."

He said, "How close are you to Park?"

I said, "I'm not very close to Park. I've known him as a jurist on the bench. I just tried a lawsuit before him. That's why he comes into my mind." I said, "You ought to know more about Park than I do." I said, "He's related to the Wilsons and all that crowd up there--the Dillinghams--they're all in the same political camp."

He said, "Well, let me make a few calls." So he made a few calls in a few moments. He said, "Get ahold of Jim." We got ahold of Jim Pendergast. He came into the office and he said, "Now you two Jims go up and ask Park to run for governor."

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FUCHS: Was Tom personally acquainted with Park?

AYLWARD: Well, I'll tell you. He had a racetrack operating in his county--Riverside--and they made these charges in the St. Louis *Post Dispatch* later, you understand; that Green Hills was a gambling joint, open gambling in the judge's county. Well, of course, that embarrassed him-but some of his friends knew Park--they were close to him, you know. He then requested Jim and I contact Park and suggest that he become a candidate for governor. I said to Jim, "I don't want to travel up to Platte City, it's fifteen or twenty miles from here." I said, "Let's make some inquiry around Kansas City. Maybe he's in town, and I think we ought to call Leedy who was his court reporter. He may be in his brother's office," who was a lawyer in the Federal Reserve Bank Building, and we called over there and informed Leedy that we desired to see Park, and he said, "I'll have Park in the office in a half hour."

So in a half-hour we went over to the Federal Building and we proposed that he become a candidate for governor, and facetiously he said, "Why don't you run Leedy?"

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I said, "Judge, this is a serious matter and it's imperative that we obtain a candidate within the next few days because the state committee is going to meet Monday. This is Friday. We have to select a candidate for governor and we can't waste any time and if you're not a candidate I know four hundred other persons who'd like to run."

He said, "I'll run."

So then it was up to us to sell the state committee, to nominate the candidate for governor and that's some job. We went to St. Louis--used the phone to contact members of the state committee in every manner possible. Had some of my friends do it, too, that knew them and had influence with them. I'm down at the Union Station, and George Wallace was the reporter for the *Star*, a political writer and reporter, I tell him what's going to happen. I said, "Now, I'm convinced that Guy Park is going to be nominated and I'm going to give you a scoop--a real one." I said, "Keep it under your hat until it actually happens. I don't want to be exposed or

ruined." So I get a call in the station--a telephone call--I'm ready to board a train there at midnight and it was from Tony Buford in St.

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Louis. He said, "I understand you're coming to St. Louis."

I said, "Well, I thought that was top secret. I don't know who told you but it's an actual fact. I intend to be in St. Louis in the morning and I hope you'll keep it confidential."

He said, "I'd like to have you talk to Stark when you're down here."

I said, "All right--at some convenient place. I assume that we'll have many conferences in the morning after we arrive there and it will be noon before I can get down to the Jefferson Hotel." I said, "You have him come down there and I'll see you out in front." So we got off at Pilot Grove station in order to avoid reporters at the Union Station, and we went over to Hulen's suite in the Park Plaza Hotel and called on him about seven in the morning--7:15, just off the train. He said, "Well, it's terrible. It's shocking, the death of Wilson, to believe that he's dead. What are we going to do?"

I said, "We're going to get a candidate for governor. That's what we're going to do."

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He said, "Have you got any suggestions?"

I said, "Yes. There's Ragland and Harris, lieutenant governor and the Supreme Court's Dave Francis, former Ambassador to Russia, and so-and-so and so-and-so, and Guy Park."

He said, "I've never heard of Guy Park. Some of our friends are in a suite around here--Harry Hawes and Bennett Clark and Glen B. Arnold and Tuck Milligan, in Congress and a friend of Clark's, who was a candidate for the Senate, and they're discussing the situation. I'd like to have you and Jim come around and discuss it with them if you will."

I said, "All right."

So, I said to Jim, "Now, be careful and don't make any statements in here. We've got to be cagey here. We don't want to upset our plan."

So we went in and discussed the situation and gave them all these names including Park. They said, "Who is Park?"

He's a judge up there in Platte City. He's a well known judge in western Missouri." I said, "You've got the senatorial candidate from eastern Missouri; western

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Missouri ought to have some representation; but any of these men are available and acceptable to us."

So, they were about to break up and Hawes said to me, "What are you doing to do now?"

I said, "We're going to contact every member of the state committee that it is possible for us to talk to."

He said, "Would you mind coming back here tonight and giving us a report of your canvas and what you anticipate the judgment of the state committee might be about the selecting of a candidate for governor?"

I said, "Yes, we'll come back."

So, I'm on my way out and Tuck Milligan took me by the arm and pulled me in the bathroom and he said, "Say, hell, you know Guy Park can't be elected governor, don't you? Nobody knows him up there. Nobody likes him."

He was in his district, you know; he was elected congressman in his district because he didn't like him politically.

Well, I said, "If the Democrats of this state want him and if the state committee will support him, I'm satisfied that he can be elected overwhelmingly as a candidate on the ticket. You're just mistaken."

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So I walked out and got on the elevator and rode down to the first floor and [Aaron] Benisch, who is a political writer for the St. Louis *Star Times* caught me in the lobby and he said, "Are you Jim Pendergast?"

I had warned Jim to be careful about making statements. I said, "There's a time and place for that." I said, "No, I am not, sir," and I had Jim by the arm and we were walking out through the entrance to get in a cab, and by the time we got to the cab then he said, "Are you Jim Aylward?"

And I said, "Yes, I am."

He said, "Oh, I'd like to talk to you."

I said, "I'm going down to the Jefferson Hotel. I have an appointment."

About that time Duke Shoop drove up. He was the ace political writer for the *Kansas City Star*. He says, "Oh, Jim, I want to see you. "

I said, "Well, I'll be very happy to see you but I've got to go to the Jefferson Hotel,." so ten or twelve of these reporters got themselves cabs and followed us down. We had a procession coming to the Jefferson. So, I get down to the Jefferson Hotel and Tony Buford and Stark are out on the curb and the newspapermen surround me

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and they want to know what I know about the situation and I proceed to tell them--as discreetly as possible--the situation is that we're willing to support any Democrat that has the capacity, ability, the honor, and integrity to serve the state. These men are all acceptable and available and they're all good men and so forth. So, I got rid of the newspapermen and then I went over to talk to Tony Buford and I said, "It would be embarrassing for us to talk to Stark here on the sidewalk. Have him go into the Jefferson and get himself a room and give us the number and we'll go up and talk to him," which he did.

Well, I'd already made up my mind about who was the best candidate. I was for Park all the way and I wasn't for any other candidate if it was possible to nominate Mr. Park and I had my own opinion about who would be the best candidate between Stark and himself, and I said to Jim Pendergast, "Now, we're going to talk to Stark and as a practical politician, you ask Mr. Stark any kind of a question that you deem necessary that will give you the information to satisfy you whether he's the best qualified candidate for the office and don't be bashful about it. Even embarrass him to the extent of asking him about

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patronage appointments and distribution and so forth, and I'm not going to ask him anything." I said, "I'm not for or against him. I want you to be satisfied after you interrogate him."

Well, he asked him about patronage and he agreed to give him everything without stint or limits--no qualifications. I don't ask him anything. I'm just courteous. So we finish the conference and get outside the door in the Jefferson and Jim says to me, "He's made to order--"

I said, "Keep still. Let's walk down the hall."

So we walked down the hall and I said, "Now, Jim, we're for Guy B. Park. We're not for Stark, and," I said, "What convinces me that you ought to be against Stark is when a man agrees to give you every appointment of any value, the best and the greatest and the highest appointments within his capacity," I said, "I doubt whether I'd want to be for a man like that because that's impossible."

He said, "He's a good man."

I said, "There's nothing wrong with his honor and integrity but practically speaking, I don't think we

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should support him and," I said, "from now on we're for Park."

So we went downstairs and I got on the telephone and I called Bill Igoe. He was one of the leading leaders in St. Louis. He'd been a member of Congress; he'd been state chairman, a man of influence in the St. Louis organization, and I said, "Bill, I'd like to see you a few moments."

"Oh," he said, "I'm on my way to lunch."

"Well," I said, "I haven't much time and it's very important that I see you." I said, "Couldn't you postpone your lunch or delay it a little while?" I said, "The matter that I want to talk to you about is one in which you're personally interested."

"Well," he said, "I'll wait for you."

I said, "I'll be over there in five minutes."

I got a cab and went over to his office. So I tell him what the situation is, that we want to nominate Guy Park for governor.

He said, "Hell, that's too good to believe. How do you nominate him?"

I said, "Well, let's not talk about that now. It's

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going to be done. What we need is votes." I said, "Do you know anybody on the state committee that will vote for Park that I can talk to?"

He said, "I don't know anybody."

I said, "Do you remotely know somebody that I can contact?"

"Well," he says, "I know Lottie Walsh."

I said, "Will you call Lottie Walsh up and tell her that I'd like to see her? I'm in downtown St. Louis and I'll meet her in any of the hotels."

She worked nearby the Mark Twain Hotel, I think it was. I said, "Tell her I'll meet her in the lobby."

He gave me a description of her.

FUCHS: She was on the committee?

AYLWARD: She was on the committee. So I went over to see Lottie and after discussing the matter with her she agreed to vote for Guy Park for governor.

So, before I left Igoe's office he said, "Where are you going from here?"

"Well," I said, "I'm going to see the other members of the state committee who live in St. Louis, the environs,

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and in the counties adjoining, if I have a chance. Now tonight"--it was Friday I think, yes, Friday, and Wilson's funeral was Saturday--so I said, "I'm going to see Kinney and Brogan."

"Why," he said, "you know Mike Kinney and [Joel Brogan would never support Park."

They were in the Senate down there. They were members of the state Senate and they were usually against the organization here. They were for their own local favorite son candidates.

He said, "You'll never get Kinney and Brogan to go along."

I said, "My real purpose is to give them an opportunity to say whether they want to or not or to demur or to courteously say I'll consider it. I don't want to put them in a position where they can ever say that I didn't call on them."

FUCHS: Were they on the committee?

AYLWARD: Yes, they were on the committee. They had a vote. Well, they were very gentle and courteous about it. They didn't decisively say they would, but indicated that they might support Park. Well, then I went out to see Johnny

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Burns who was the constable in Jimmy Miller's court. Jimmy Miller was the justice of the peace and he was on the state committee, and we had him pledged to support Guy Park; but he and the constable didn't get along politically. They disliked each other. Well, when I got down Burns wasn't there, and I wrote him a note and I said I'd be at the Marquette Hotel, which was the Democratic headquarters, at four o'clock and I'd like to have him come down. It would be to his advantage to see me. So a thousand persons were milling around the lobby of the Marquette Hotel. Shocked by the death of Wilson and wanting to know what we're going to do and so forth--all the prominent politicians who had an interest in politics were there. Ernest Green and Julian Freihant from Cape Girardeau were in the lobby, and they contacted me and said that they'd like to discuss the qualifications of Russell Dearmont for the nomination. Well, I couldn't say no, if they planned to do that.

I said, "Get a room in the hotel because I'm busy here talking to these politicians and members of the party, and citizens, who are all interested. I don't want to be discourteous."

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So, they got a room. About that time Jimmy Burns the constable comes in and he's red faced and an Irishman and rough and tough and he said, "What in the hell do you want to see me about?"

I said, "Selecting a candidate for governor."

"Well," he said, "What is the situation?"

So I outlined it to him. I said, "It looks like Park is going to be nominated."

He said, "Who in the hell's for Park?"

I said, "Practically everybody but you, but you will be, I'm sure."

He said, "Is Jimmy Miller for Park?"

I said, "Yes."

Well, he said, "I wouldn't be for Park under those circumstances. I'm not going along with Miller."

I said, "Take it easy." I said, "All you want is a fair break in your district so far as patronage is concerned. Well, now," I said, "you're going to get that despite the fact that you don't get along with Miller. He's not going to control it. Will you accept my word that you'll be fairly treated, and that's all you're entitled to."

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He said, "All right, I'll vote for Park."

So then I went up to the room where Green, an attorney in St. Louis and a friend and Julian Freihant, another friend from Cape Girardeau, were going to have a speech about the unique qualifications of Dearmont for governor and proceeded to read it to me.

I said, "Now as far as I'm concerned he is qualified to be governor. He has unquestioned ability, capacity for public service, but he's been defeated in the primary and we're opposed to him. Some other time, maybe, but right now I can't see where it's possible to elect Dearmont."

So then we contacted others. Jim saw some on his own and I saw others. So, we come back to Kansas City-get here Saturday morning and we go over to Pendergast's office, the Ready Mix office. It's about 7:30 in the morning, eight o'clock, and in a few moments the door opens to Pendergast's office and out walks Lloyd Stark. Pendergast said, "Major, come in here a moment. I want you to hear what I have to say to these two young men."

So we went back into the office and Pendergast informed us that Stark had just informed him that he was

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going to retire from the race as a candidate for governor. "He said held like to have my support in four years if I could see my way clear to do so, and I'm saying to you I promised to support him in four years, and if I'm not around that if you two gentlemen have anything to do with politics and your in a position to help him, I'd like to have you do it."

While we were sitting there informing Mr. Pendergast as to what progress we had made--by that time we had a majority of the state committee agreed to support Park for governor--and we continued our efforts to convince the others to make it unanimous for Park. Well, while we were sitting there talking to him about the situation, Lloyd Stark called Pendergast on the phone and he said, "Colonel"--he called him Colonel Tom--he said, "Colonel, I'm up here at the Muehlebach Hotel and my friends around the state tell me that I've got a good chance to get elected by the state committee as the nominee for governor, and I've decided to stay in the race."

He said, "All right. "

Well, then Pendergast phones us and says, "You don't have to keep my word to him. This nixed it."

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Well, Harry Hawes was here, and Bennett Clark to attend the funeral--the funeral was on Saturday--and Kinney and Brogan and the Milligans and every Democrat of any importance was in town and we're still contacting them and talking to them and receiving discouragement from those that can't vote and [Wallace] Crossley, who was formerly the lieutenant governor, from Warrensburg; he was opposed to Guy Park. So, we went over to the funeral and Stark and Pendergast were talking about some matter--I assume it was politics--you couldn't hear them. But the newspapers took a picture of them when he was pointing his finger at Stark, as much to say this is that--they don't know what the conversation is--but the inference was he was telling Stark, "I'm not going to be for you," you understand. I don't think that ever happened but that is the implication that can be drawn from the picture. Oh, yes, I told you that we reported back to Hawes and Milligan and Park that night. We did report and tell them what the situation was, that apparently Park was the front-running candidate for governor and that we were going to obtain the nomination. I warned Jim; I said, "Now, be careful what you say up there. We don't

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want to expose anything that might be detrimental to the situation. We'll tell them what the facts are but don't give the information as to who's going to support Park. Don't tell him the congressional districts that are going to support him, because they might change their minds; go to work on them and get them to change their minds.

Well, we got in there and sat down and I didn't have much to say. I just said that from my canvass the majority of the state committee is going to support Park for governor, and then Hawes said, "What particular congressional districts are going to support him?"

"Well," I said, "I'm not at liberty to say."

So, Jim said this district and the other district are supporting him. Well, then Hawes gave the story to his friend on the *Globe Democrat*, Joe McCauley, and Joe prints the story and he credits the story to Jim and I as having given him an interview. Well, I hadn't given the interview to the political reporter of the *Globe Democrat*. His name was Roberts, I think, a good friend of mine; so after the funeral--this is Saturday evening--I called on Bennett Clark and Hawes--they were getting

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ready to leave, and Walmsley's in there and he proceeds to denounce me. He said, "Why, you can't think that Pendergast's organization controls this state and can select a candidate for governor. Well, I want to tell you right now, it's not going to happen; if it does you'll be defeated."

Oh, I said, "Walmsley, there's no need for you to get excited. After all, the Pendergast organization doesn't select the candidate for governor; the state committee does--the members of the state committee. They have the power. You mean to tell me that the Pendergast organization is influential enough to dictate to the members of the state committee who they should support for governor? Do you want me to tell the members of the state committee that you made that statement?"

Well, then he backed off. That afternoon the papers in St. Louis carried a story that Guy Park was being considered favorably for the nomination and printed a story that a race track was running in the county and Green Hills gambling joint.

FUCHS: How did Green Hills come into this? Did Park have an interest?

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AYLWARD: Oh, no, he had no interest in it. It was just located in the county in which he lived. Hell, no--pardon my language--he didn't have. Well, Henry Dillingham, who was later marshal, the late Dillingham, who was for Wilson, he's sitting in the lobby of the Baltimore Hotel when I walked in there that afternoon on the way up to see Hawes and Clark and the others. He said, "Have you seen the St. Louis papers?"

I said, "No, I haven't seen them."

"Well," he said, "this is terrible. This is awful."

I said, "Quit worrying about it." I said, "We're going to nominate Park and he's going to be elected by several hundred thousand, so quit worrying."

I went up to see them and Walmsley started to shout. He was awful mad. I did the best I could to leave them friends. Then I went to see Kinney and Brogan. They were over in the Continental and I urged them to support Park and they said, "Well, we probably will."

I said, "You made me a half-way promise, didn't you?"

"Well, not all the way."

And Mort Levi is in there from Moberly and he said,

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"Get him on the line, Jim. If you don't, they may not go along."

"Oh," I said, "Mort, you've known them longer than I have. They'll be with us. They'll be with the bandwagon because this is a bandwagon operation."

So, then we removed our base of operation from Kansas City to Jefferson City--on a Sunday--after we buried Wilson, and we proceeded to do everything possible to keep our friends, the friends of outstate Missouri, members of the state committee. But I'm getting ahead of my story. While I was talking to Green and Julian Freihant about Dearmont's nomination, George Wallace of the *Star* called me and he said, "Pendergast wants to talk to you."

I said, "I can't talk to him now, George." I said, "When I finish this conference, I'll go down to the lobby and call you on the phone."

So I called George at the *Star* and George said, "I understand you're in trouble. Duke Shoop called up here and said they're all for Ragland."

I said, "You remember when I informed you Saturday night that Park was going to be nominated?" I said, "He's still the horse in front and he's going to be

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nominated and I'll tell you how that statement comes about." I said, "I met Duke Shoop down in the lobby of this milling crowd and he said out loud, 'Well, has Ragland got a chance?'"

I said, "Anybody's got a chance that's been mentioned." I said, "That's all I said."

He said, "Well, he told me Pendergast is worrying about something."

I said, "Oh, tell him not to worry."

The next day we went back to Jefferson City and the hotel was filled with Democrats, and the streets--everybody interested in state politics was there--all the politicians, all the workers and jobholders. I saw the reporter who attributed the story printed in the *Globe Democrat* to Jim and I as being the author of it, and I said, "Well, I read your story today under your byline. You know that's a damn lie, don't you? I didn't give you the story, did I? Jim Pendergast didn't give you the story either, did he?" Now, I said, "I've been your friend for years and I'm going to say to you, it may not be of any importance to you, but I'll be damned if I ever give you another story." I said, "I've been kind to you."

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So he said, "Well, I'm sorry," and walked away and in a half-hour he comes over to see me. Now he said, "Jim, of course I know you didn't give me the story. This is how the story reached Joe McCauley; Senator Hawes gave him the story and put my name in there as being the writer of the story."

"All right. Everything's forgiven."

Well, Otto Higgins was down there. He used to be commissioner of the police department at city hall under McElroy. He contacted me and he said, "I wish you'd talk to Dearmont. I think you can get him out of the race."

I said, "Otto, I don't want to offend anybody, but I'm not talking to anybody about getting out of any race. I don't want to embarrass either. I don't want any conversation about this situation." Although about eight o'clock that night Sam Wear, who was a member of the state committee and later U.S. District Attorney here, he came around to the suite--my room--and he asked me if I'd talk to Howard Cook, the banker, and Charlie Mayer, the lawyer in St. Louis who represented the Daugherty interest, you know, the St. Louis Power and Light and

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others--political leaders, men of influence. I said, "yes;" I went around to their rooms; they were on the same floor and they said, "Well, how are you getting along?"

I said, "All right, up to now."

They said, "We've been talking to Dearmont and we're satisfied that we can induce him to withdraw from the race."

"Well," I said, "that's fine."

"But," he said, "Dearmont is not going to make any statement in which he will publicly say he's going to support the ticket."

I said, "Don't you think that's an unfortunate mistake for him to make? A young man of his age who has political ambitions, why, if he makes that kind of a statement, well, I'm afraid that his

future ambitions will be at an end because the Democratic Party is not going to support a person like that. We've been out for twelve years. We're trying to elect a Democratic ticket and now is the greatest opportunity we ever had, and if he plays the dog in the manger it's just going to be too bad for him."

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"Well," he said, "he's not going to do it."

I said, "Oh, I'm sorry to hear that."

He said, "Are you going to nominate Park?"

I said, "Yes. I think unanimously."

"Unanimously. How come? You haven't got the thirteenth district." That's the Dearmont district.

I said, "I'm now in a position to inform you that I have asked the committeeman from the thirteenth district to nominate Judge Guy B. Park in the committee conference tomorrow morning and he has agreed to do so. The first district will yield to the thirteenth so that he can nominate him early."

Well they said, "Howard Cook, can you believe that?"

I said, "Believe it or not, it's a fact." So I said, "Thanks gentlemen for your good offices."

I had other fellows that wanted to get out of the race and they wanted me to write a statement and I'd prepared a statement that would withdraw them, and they said, "Will you call the newspapermen and give them the story?"

I called Harvey Wirtz, who was with the St. Louis *Star Times*, and I said, "Now here's a statement from the gentleman from St. Louis county out there." He'd

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been a candidate for governor.

He said, "Hell, he's never been a candidate for governor."

I said, "Well, he wants me to issue a statement of withdrawal."

He said, "We're not even going to print it."

FUCHS: At that time did you actually have the thirteenth district committeeman?

AYLWARD: Yes, we had him. We had other persons working with us. Judge Ernest Tipton of the Supreme Court, he was in there pitching for us too. I'll tell you some stories about him later; but he knew the member from the thirteenth district so I had him contact him and ask him if he wouldn't nominate him or suggest it—one way or the other—that's how it comes about—he had contacted him. So the next morning I got a telephone call, about 5:30 in the morning, and it's from Pendergast. And I said, "where are you?" It was a surprise to me. Quite a surprise to have him call me at 5:30 in the morning.

"Well, I'm in town." He says, "I'm over at the Madison Hotel barber shop and I'd like to see you."

Well, I said, "I want to see you. I'll be over."

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So I dressed and I came down to the lobby, and in the lobby were two members of the state committee—one held a proxy and the other was a regular member--Wilson Bell and Colonel Bouchard, who runs the paper-at Flat River, Missouri, and they had informed me the day before they didn't want to support Park because they didn't like the Pendergast organization. It was venal; it had a bad reputation; it didn't keep its word, etc. And I tried to convince them that those were falsehoods, lies and untrue. We did keep our word and would if given, and they informed me that they'd like to meet Pendergast sometime.

I said, "If you're ever in Kansas City, I'll be very glad to introduce you to Pendergast."

When I got down to the lobby, they're there in the lobby, so I said, "Come with me."

They said, "What do you want?"

I said, "I want you to meet somebody."

So we went over to the Madison Hotel and Pendergast was in the barber's chair and I saw Bill McClory there and I said, "Where is Mr. Pendergast?"

He said, "He's in the chair."

About that time he said to the barber, "Take the towel off." I went over there and he said, "I understand

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you're in trouble."

"What kind of trouble?"

"You're not going to be able to nominate Park."

I said, "I told you yesterday that he was nominated. Now you're going to upset the applecart. Please get out of town will you before you ruin it?"

He said, "All right."

I said, "Don't be seen in town. Drive away." I said, "I want you to meet two men here. I solicited their vote. They don't have much confidence in your organization I can tell you that. I've done everything I could to dispel that impression and I think I've got them about convinced. They want to meet you and I want you to tell them that whatever they do will be rewarded if reasonable and honorable to do so by way of patronage in their district."

He said, "All right. I'll do it." He did it and they said, "All right, we'll vote for Park." So Pendergast left the city.

The meeting was to be at 10:00 in the Senate lounge. Well, my friend Joe Shannon was over there. He was out in the hallway just outside of the Senate chamber, and he caught me and he proceeded to excoriate me--tell

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me what a wiseacre I was, you know, to be doing these things and get by--you're not going to get by with it.

"Oh," I said, "take it easy Mr. Shannon. We've been friends since I was a boy. I haven't anything against you. Park is going to be nominated and you'll need help, so there isn't a thing you can do to upset the situation. You don't control any votes on the state committee, so settle down and let's all be friends, and he'll be unanimously nominated by all of them."

So, that was all the opposition I was meeting with from time to time. So, we nominated Park. We got his name printed on the ballot. He had about a fifteen-day campaign, and we dragged him over the state and I continued to canvass the state, contact the Democrats in various counties, towns and hamlets and villages. I knew them all, you know, personally acquainted with them, as director of the campaign for the state committee and others--not only the active Democrats, but other persons in the state--and Park was elected along with Roosevelt by 250,000. By reason of the election of Park, why, Pendergast became a statewide leader. He was in a position to obtain jobs for members of the faithful not only here but all over the state, and thereby build up

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a statewide organization that would go along with any reasonable program suggested to them; and that's how he became powerful enough to be in a position to offer a candidate for the Senate and had more than a reasonable chance of nominating and electing the candidate to the United States Senate. Well, he wanted me to run for the United States Senate--this is early--seven or eight months prior to the primary and I informed him that I did not wish to run, and apparently

he believed that I wanted to be cajoled into this, you understand, but I didn't. I definitely made up my mind that I wasn't going to be a candidate, and Maurice Milligan filed in January for the United States Senate under the sponsorship of Bennett Clark who was the United States Senator from Missouri. He was a war buddy of Clark's and in Congress at the time. Now the St. Louis organization voluntarily agreed to support me for the Senate-Bill Igoe and Hannegan and all the other prominent Democrats down there that had anything to do with organizing.

FUCHS: Was Bernie Dickmann prominent at that time?

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AYLWARD: Yes, he was prominent and so was Johnny Nangle. Bernard Dickmann was mayor of the town. Nangle was treasurer of the state committee, I think, afterward national committeeman. But I had the prominent leaders in the Democratic politics and I informed them that I was not going to be a candidate for the Senate. Bill Igoe was talking to me on Saturday night and I said, "Bill, I appreciate from the bottom of my whole heart everything that you are willing to do for me urging me to run for the Senate, but I'm not going to be a candidate for the Senate. Now," I said, "I want to offer a suggestion to you. If you have in mind filing anyone for the Senate, well, you might as well go ahead and file him. It's not going to be me. We've got to get a candidate. I don't know who our candidate is going to be."

"Well," he says, "then I'll file Cochran."

So, they filed John Cochran, who was a member of Congress and had been for years, succeeded Igoe in Congress, was close to him and was a very popular member of Congress and popular in the city of St. Louis. Well, that's about April, so about a week after that I went to Pendergast and I said, "The last day to file is in June. If you don't have a candidate for the Senate, you'll be out of

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state politics. You'll be finished."

"Well," he said, "you're going to run."

I said, "I am not going to run. I definitely told you that."

He said, "Do you have any suggestions?"

I said, "Yes, I have some suggestions." So I gave him the names of ten persons, business and professional, Democrats who all qualified to live up to the proud traditions of Missouri's representatives in the Senate.

He said, "I don't know any of them."

FUCHS: Who were they?

AYLWARD: Well, I just gave him the names. Some of them have gone out of my mind but they were all prominent Democrats. So I said, "What kind of a Senator do you want?"

He said, "I'd like to have someone I can talk to--close enough to talk to."

I said, "That's reasonable."

Jim Pendergast is sitting there, and I said to Pendergast, "Well, why don't you run Harry S. Truman for the United States Senate?" I said, "He's a former soldier. He soldiered with Jim here, your nephew. He's a member

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of the Masonic order; he's a Baptist; he's been active in affairs around here."

He said, "Nobody knows him. He's an ordinary county judge and not known outside Jackson County." He said, "Do you mean seriously to tell me that you actually believe that Truman can be nominated and elected to the United States Senate?"

I said, "Yes, at this time. We're in a position to do it because we have all the contacts. We know all of the politicians in this state--everybody who's interested in state, county, and town politics. They're all our friends and they're willing to go along but they're becoming committed to Milligan or Cochran, and unless you do something about it there'll be an exodus from our crowd into the other crowd and we'll be in bad shape."

He sent Jim and I down to ask Harry Truman to file. Harry Truman was out in the state making speeches in support of a state bond issue that was to be used, in the event of its adoption, the funds were, for the rehabilitation and building of eleemosynary, charitable institutions.

So, we assumed that Harry Truman was in Jefferson City and we drove down to Jefferson City and discovered that

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Mr. Truman was not there but was in Warsaw. So, I called Mr. Truman on long distance telephone and talked to him at Warsaw. I said to him, "Judge, Jim Pendergast and I are in Jefferson City and it's very important and imperative that we see you almost immediately, at least during the day."

And he said, "Why do you want to see me? What do you want to talk to me about?"

I said, "We can't discuss it on the telephone."

He said, "Is it politics?"

I said, "Yes."

He said, "You know I'm a candidate for county collector."

I said, "I don't want to seem offensive to you because I have no control over your ambitions, but from this day forward we'd like to have you run for a different office--another office that you don't have in mind."

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

I said, "Let's not argue about it over the telephone. When can we see you?"

He said, "I'll be in Sedalia tonight at the Terry Hotel at six o'clock."

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I said, "Jim and I'll drive back to Sedalia [that's sixty-five miles from Jefferson City] and we'll wait there for you."

So we waited in the lobby and he came in with his troop--Doc Williams, who was a friend of Clark, was with him--he was a dentist over in Excelsior Springs, and Scott Wilson, I remember, who was a member of the highway department under Clark, and one or two others--I can't recall to mind their names right at the moment.

So, when he came in, others were seated around there--politicians in Pettis County. They said to me, "We're all for you for the United States Senate."

And I said, "I'm not going to run for the United States Senate."

He was the political boss of Pettis county. Well, he said, "Who is going to run?"

I said, "Well, if you wait around here for a half hour, I'll point him out to you."

Truman came and Jim and I sat down and proceeded to talk to him, and Truman said, "Now, I've been promised the support for county collector. It's a good office. It pays fees of \$50,000 a year, and," he said, "my heart was set on running. I can't win as a candidate for the United

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States Senate. Nobody knows me and I haven't got any money. I'm not equipped to make a campaign."

I said, "We'll help you financially. We'll raise the money necessary some way, among friends, and you file and I am convinced that you can be nominated and elected to the United States Senate, particularly this time." I said, "We're in a position to have all of the politicians--Democrats of any influence throughout this state--to support you, but we've got to do something

now. We've got to start a campaign. We only have about a thirty-forty day campaign here and we can't let this go down the drain."

FUCHS: Had Pendergast made a commitment to Mr. Truman about county collector?

AYLWARD: I don't know whether he had or not but I'm just telling you that's just what had to be.

FUCHS: I thought he also had some aspirations for the congressional seat.

AYLWARD: Well, that was prior to that time. There was some talk about it. He offered to support me for Congress, too, Pendergast did, years prior to this. Anyway, after

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discussing the matter with him he agreed to file for the Senate; so we went upstairs where they had every evening a dinner and listened to their discussion as to the good reasons why the voters of the state should support the bond issue. Well, after the meeting I said to Truman, "Now, we've got to outline plans for this campaign. After you file I'll meet you in Jim Pendergast's office at 1209 Commerce (that's on this floor--he was around there in those days) and we'll discuss the manner of conducting this campaign and what shall be done towards raising sufficient funds to finance your campaign, and whose services we might obtain to aid and assist us in doing so."

Well, the next morning, or the morning thereafter, we met in Jim Pendergast's office at ten o'clock, and he came in with Fred Canfil, whom he later appointed United States Marshal. Canfil was a swashbuckling fellow, you know; had been a soldier of fortune in the Boer War and so forth--this was part of his background--a nice person. He was a loyal, close personal friend of Truman's.

FUCHS: Do you have any idea of how Mr. Truman became acquainted with him?

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AYLWARD: No, I don't. It might have been in the Army. Perhaps that's where he met him, in the Army.

So, I requested my brother to meet with us, Charles Aylward, who was the president of the Columbia National Bank, and I asked him if he wouldn't act as his treasurer, which he agreed to do. I said to Truman--judge I called him--it's more respectful than Harry--I wasn't that familiar, to call him Harry. "Oh," I said, "you've been in politics about twenty-five years. You should have saved some money. I assume you can contribute something to the funds necessary to defray the expenses of your campaign."

He says, "I'm broke. I haven't got any money."

So I said to Jim Pendergast, "I never backed a candidate for public office who wasn't broke. He's no exception. We've got to keep our friend looking decent and respectable as a candidate." I said, "If you'll give him \$500, I'll give him \$500 now," which we both did. Then my brother solicited our friends for funds to keep the Truman campaign alive and the show on the road. We engaged a sound truck. We associated with it some of the foremost men in the newspaper business, whom we collaborated with in the writing of the Truman speeches.

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We had John P. Gilday of the *Kansas City Star*, who was a man of letters. He wrote the "Friends from the Bookshelf." He was one of the leading literary geniuses. We had Bill Harvey, who was then on the *Kansas City Journal* and the *Kansas City Post* and had been with Washington newspapers. I made him director of publicity of the state committee, and we had Holloway who had formerly been with the *Kansas Post* and was then in Jefferson City, and others.

FUCHS: Did you write speeches, too?

AYLWARD: All of us. We all collaborated together, furnished our own ideas, wrote them and prepared them in advance so that he'd have a copy of the speech a day before it was to be delivered. And he read them and he didn't do a very good job of reading, but he read them; but he could make a good speech later. Canfil was a courier, our messenger, that carried these speeches from our headquarters in Kansas City to the points where he was to deliver them.

FUCHS: Where was your headquarters?

AYLWARD: In the building where the library is now at 12th and Oak Street. James R. Lillis, who owned the building or

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was the agent for it--he owns the Lillis Building down there--he provided the headquarters for us free, without charge.

FUCHS: Canfil was a courier and not as one writer has said, the campaign manager?

AYLWARD: No, I managed the campaign.

FUCHS: Both for the primary and the general election?

AYLWARD: Yes. I was state chairman in the general election and covered the state. As I say, these speeches were prepared, we decided what issues were to be discussed--foreign and domestic policy, and he was strong for the Roosevelt administration and its policies all the way. He was running against Roscoe Patterson of Springfield who was Republican U.S. District Attorney.

FUCHS: Mr. Pendergast was not necessarily too strong for Mr. Roosevelt. How did he feel about Mr. Truman running on a "support Roosevelt" ticket?

AYLWARD: Well, he didn't have much to say about that and he was willing to leave judgment about that matter to us, which he did. As I say, we did our level best to present

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the issues from the Democratic standpoint, and we delivered to the editors of the newspapers and the metropolitan centers a copy of this speech to be delivered by Truman the day before it was to be delivered. I think we're the only ones who did that kind of work. The others were indifferent about it. On one occasion I got a call from the city editor of the *Post Dispatch* and he complained that Truman didn't deliver his speech in Hannibal that we sent down there representing that it would be delivered, and they weren't going to print anymore of these speeches and I beseeched him not to do that. I said there was a breakdown in that connection and it will never happen again, and I hope you'll continue to print the speeches.

Well, he said, "Under those circumstances we'll continue unless something untoward happens to cause us to change our mind." So, Canfil didn't reach Hannibal on time.

FUCHS: What happened? Did he leave later or have a car failure?

AYLWARD: Something happened to him. He got there while Truman was improvising his speech--extemporizing; he decided to

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deliver his speech in Hannibal. Well, we made all the answers to the charges that were made by Patterson and the other candidates running against us--Milligan and Cochran. As I say, Walter Miller, who was the county assessor of Jackson County, and William Hart, who was in politics here and Harry Sandler, Sandler Coal Company--they took their turns in driving me over this state. I called on all the prominent Democrats that I could contact--Republicans whom I knew; businessmen; all the newspaper publishers; every person with any prominence in the county that I could approach about the Truman campaign for the Senate. We had a difficult time in the raising of money. We didn't have many affluent contributors. Tommy McGee gave \$1,000 and perhaps another \$1,000, and W. T. Kemper gave him \$1,000; but anyway we raised the munificent fund of about \$35,000 which this campaign was conducted on. We were charged with spending a half a million dollars to nominate Truman to the United States Senate--a charge made by Milligan and his brother was the United States District Attorney at the time.

FUCHS: How did Ralph Truman come into that charge?

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AYLWARD: Well, Ralph Truman was his cousin. He was for Milligan. I don't know how he came into the charge, but however this is the way I handled it. I had the county committee here

and the state committee, and I contacted all these committees and all these counties and made them an organization speech throughout the state--started in Jefferson City. I informed them how to get out the vote; how to influence the vote; how to induce the voters to take interest in politics. Talked to all the members of the committee and all the political organizations throughout the state. Here I used to appear before this committee every week, prior to that time--all the time I was county chairman. That was my soundboard and I'd call in the newspaper reporters and I'd make a speech so that they could publish it. Well, I made a radio speech in which I charged the Milligan campaign managers of putting out a malicious charge that we had spent or were spending \$500,000 to nominate Truman to the Senate. I said we do not possess the bankroll that the other candidates have--ours is very modest; and I said Tuck Milligan's brother, Maurice, is United States District Attorney and I call on him now to call a grand jury and

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conduct an investigation. He hasn't got much time in which to do it. If he believes there is any truth in those charges, he ought to do that now. I deny it and I charged that they were spending several hundred thousand in their campaign to elect a United States Senator.

FUCHS: Was there any limitation? If you could have raised the money . . .

AYLWARD: Well, there was the corrupt practice act. They don't respect it any more apparently. They now spend this money through committees that they set up and they claim the committees -are not required to report the expenditures of funds. We were required to report it to the clerk of the House of Representatives.

FUCHS: That act had been passed by that time, then?

AYLWARD: You understand?

FUCHS: Yes.

AYLWARD: Now, that report says. Now I may not be accurate in these figures, but I don't think we had more than \$35,000; and I'll tell you we had plenty of trouble

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keeping the contest moving. I'd get a call from down in southeast Missouri that the truck was in the mud and unable to move and needed repairs and we'd have to go out and borrow enough money from our friends or get someone to contribute to repair the truck to keep it moving. One morning leaving Jeff City--whenever we were near Jeff City--within fifty miles--we drove in there because the accommodations were much better than they were in other places in the country--and Walter Miller and I drove in on this evening, and Colonel Casteel, who was a Milligan supporter and held a job under Clark, he saw us, he was sitting in front of the Madison Hotel, and Miller said to me, "There's Cap Casteel."

I said, "Yes."

He said, "Shall we invite him up to the room?"

I said, "Sure, invite him up to the room. He'll want to know what's going on. Maybe we can engage him in a little gossip." So he came up and we offered him a drink which he declined, and he didn't give out much information. So the next morning--we carried two black bags, our luggage--and the next morning on the front page of the *Times* there was a little story about two men

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carrying two black bags who were campaigning for Harry S. Truman, registered in Jefferson City last night and departed this morning--they were referring to us. A little facetiousness you understand. Well, that morning I walked up to High and Madison intersection and standing on the corner is Judge Ernest Tipton of the [Missouri] State Supreme Court, and he said, "Jim, where are you going today?"

Why I said, "I'm going to northeast Missouri. I'm going to travel over to Mexico, Callway County, Louisiana, Bowling Green."

He said, "I'd like to go with you."

I said, "Judge, you're a member of the Supreme Court and the people of this state have a high respect for you--integrity and honor--they believe you to be an eminent jurist not a politician. Don't you think it might embarrass you if you rode along with me? It's well known that I'm campaigning for Harry S. Truman for the United States Senate. The papers have published that from day to day, and I fear that if you ride with me, the St. Louis papers will tear the hide off your bones."

He said, "Well, I'll be glad to go if you'll let me and accept me."

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I said, "Judge, get in, let's go."

FUCHS: As you said, the implication of the "two black bags" was that you were carrying money, but were these bags in addition to your regular suitcases or...

AYLWARD: Yes, you know an ordinary sized bag.

FUCHS: They were just what your clothes were in?

AYLWARD: Yes, that's all. That's all we had in the bags--didn't have any money to spend otherwise. I was paying my own expenses and there wasn't any kitty out of which that was coming.

FUCHS: This initial \$1,000 that you gave Mr. Truman, was that earmarked for anything in particular when you said you wanted to keep the candidate "looking decent and respectable?"

AYLWARD: No. He had to get around--spend some money and starting without any. No, no earmarks on it. As I said, I spent my own money making the campaign. It didn't come out of any political treasury or fund.

Now, I'll get back to this. He gets in the car and the first stop is at Auxvasse, Missouri, across the

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river, a little town, to call on the general merchant--he was a notary public, and the undertaker and he sells hardwood and implements, implements and groceries, oh, everything for the family--mankind. So I introduced myself to him and I told him that I was there in the interest of Harry S. Truman, and we'd like to set up an organization in the county and township, and that I was convinced that Mr. Truman was the best qualified candidate in the race. He would represent your people--the downtrodden, the oppressed and the farmer and the businessman, etc. He said, "Well, I don't know." He said, "My preacher over here is for Cochran."

I said, "To what church denomination of religion are you a member--do you belong?"

He said, "I'm a Presbyterian but I don't believe my preacher knows that Cochran is a Catholic."

I said, "Would that make any difference around here?"

He said, "Oh, yes, it would make quite a difference."

I winked at Tipton. Well, I said, "Would you use your good offices with your preacher? Would you attempt to change his views about the matter and induce him to support Truman for United States Senate?"

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He said, "Well, I'll make that effort."

I said, "I'll be back here in about a week to see you."

Well, he set up a Truman organization. We did this in all the counties. Now, we're traveling along and I stop at all the newspaper offices, call on all the publishers to see if there are any Democrats in the county, and the prominent Republicans that I know or that I have been informed that would be friendly. I called on Stark at Louisiana on the way over and he wasn't there at his nursery; and I went into Louisiana and on the street is Andrew J. Murphy, Jr. He holds a job under Clark in the land department, and he's for Milligan, and he sees me and he says, "What are you doing in Louisiana?"

I said, "I assume you suspect what I'm doing. I'm doing what you suspect. I'm trying to set up an organization for Truman to induce the voters of this county to join us and vote for Truman."

He says, "Why, you can never do that down here. We're natives. We know what's going on."

I said, "Your father, Andrew Murphy, Sr., is for Truman. He held a job in Jeff City in the Unemployment Compensation Division. He's for Truman." I said, "I

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don't think you out rate your father in influence in this county. I think he can obtain more votes than you."

He said, "I think you're mistaken about that."

I said, "I'm not going to argue with you about that;" so I called on five or six persons. He followed me down the street, checking up on me, following along. So finally I got up to the main intersection of town and there's a law office on the second floor of this frame building. The name of the firm is May and May. I'm going to talk to them about the Truman campaign and ask him if he wants to act as chairman of the Truman Speaking Committee and introduce Truman at his speech in Hannibal. So, he follows me up the staircase and he said, "Are you going up there to see those persons?"

I said, "Yes, I'm looking for votes."

He says, "You know they're Ku Kluxers, don't you?"

I said, "It makes no difference to me who they are, I'm looking for votes--qualified voters--anybody who has a right to vote I'm soliciting."

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So, he says, "Here's where I leave you."

I said, "All right," and May did introduce him and that's where Canfil fell down. He didn't get the speech over there; however, Truman improvised and got by. So then we went into Bowling Green, and the county seat of Pike County. That's where the Clarks were born and reared. Old Champ Clark was a member of the House for years and its Speaker and a candidate for President against Wilson in 1912--almost broke his heart because he didn't get that nomination--it was set up for him, but Bryan beat him--he finally outmaneuvered him and obtained the nomination for Wilson. So, I called on the county officials--oh, it's 3:30 in the afternoon, four o'clock. Tipton is there with me and he's standing on the corner, up to this moment I hadn't been curious enough to say to him, "Now, really, why are you traveling with me?"

So I'd been gone about twenty minutes and he said, "Aren't you going to see the newspaperman over here--the *Bowling Green Times*?"

Why, I said, "Tipton, I haven't passed up a newspaperman in any county through which I've passed, have I?"

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He said, "No."

I said, "Do you know the newspaperman?"

He said, "Yes."

I said, "Let's go and see him." So we went up to the office on second floor of the frame building—the *Bowling Green Times* was the name of the paper, and the owner, editor and publisher I believe his name was Freeman. So, I make my pitch. I tell him what I'm there for, in the interest of Harry S. Truman for United States Senator and he proceeds to tell me immediately that he's a friend of the Clark family, that he has been a true, loyal, steadfast friend of the Clarks his entire lifetime; that the paper has supported the Clarks in season and out of season and is going to continue to be loyal. Well, I said, "I commend you for your loyalty and your faithfulness to your friends." I said, "Perhaps some time in the future we may see eye-to-eye on some candidate for a state office that we can get together on." I said, "Thank you for the privilege of meeting you and seeing you and I bid you good-bye and good luck." And I'm on my way out and he said, "Say, maybe you could help me."

I said, "What do you have in mind?"

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He said, "There's a vacancy here in the office of probate judge and I'm interested in a young lawyer, who's honorable, ethical and qualified, and I'd like to have him obtain that appointment."

I said, "My friend, I'd like to help you but you're against Truman and therefore I'm not going to help any of your friends who'll be against Truman. Under the circumstances, I exceedingly regret to say to you that I can't help you."

He said, "It might make a difference."

I said, "How much difference would it make?"

"Well," he said, "I'll give you the support of the paper."

I said, "Now, you're talking business." I said, "If you'll give us the support of this paper, I'll endeavor to get your friend appointed."

He said, "Fine."

I said, "Can I use your telephone?"

He said, "Yes."

So, I called Governor Park and I tell him what the situation is and he said, "Can you trust that fellow?"

I said, "Yes, I think he's all right."

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He said, "All right. Tell him that I'll appoint his friend. I'll send the certificate of appointment down there by special messenger. It will be there in the morning."

FUCHS: Would you care to say who this man was?

AYLWARD: I've forgotten, but he was appointed. I didn't know him. He was a friend of Freeman's. Well, two years later they had a meeting of the national committee in New York. I think it was at the Roosevelt Hotel, and Clark was there and so is Truman--members of the Senate meeting with the committee, and I'm there as a member of the national committee. So, at noon we adjourned and as we walked out Clark said to me, "I'd like to buy you a drink"--it was the Biltmore Hotel--so, I went into the bar with him and while we were partaking of this drink Clark said to me, "Could you inform me how Truman managed to obtain fifty percent of the vote in Pike County--my home county?" He said, "That's something I could never understand. I just wondered how that happened."

I said, "Bennett, did you know there was a vacancy in the office of probate judge in Pike County?"

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He said, "Did that so-and-so sell out for that appointment?"

I said, "That's practical politics, my friend. I don't think he sold out. He was just taking care of his own situation politically."

Well, afterward that fellow, while Truman was in the Senate and had something to say about the appointment of postmaster, was an applicant for postmaster of the county and Truman wouldn't appoint him. Of course, Truman didn't know about this. I don't believe he knows about this to this day. I never told him. But, we had various things like that happen.

FUCHS: That's a very interesting sidelight. Can you recall any others like that?

AYLWARD: Well, we met stiff opposition in the "Bible belt" down through central Missouri. I went to Pendergast and I suggested that we should open Truman's campaign in Columbia, Missouri--the educational and cultural center of Missouri where we were despised--didn't have

any friends--the so-called "Bible belt" in "Little Dixie." He said, "You're not foolish, are you? How are you going to get a crowd there?"

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I said, "We'll have the support of the crowd. We'll send them over there by truck and bus and train and automobile." I said, "We'll send a crowd out of Jeff City thirty miles away--all those job holders--we'll carry them from St. Louis and Kansas City and the other places around. We've got to make a real impression on rural Missouri that we're in front in this fight and we're going to win."

So, they had Truman make his speech from the platform of a truck, and he had his mother along with him who was eighty-two years of age--sitting on the truck--and he read his speech; and he amassed a crowd of some 2,500 people about the public square in Columbia; and it did make a real impression and we did deliver the crowd. Well, after the meeting I gave a reception for the newspapermen, and they were all against Truman. They told me that I was wild and out of my head and so forth; he'd never have a chance to win--nobody knows him; never heard of him before. So I'm talking with them and they're enjoying themselves and most of them stayed around there until two or three o'clock in the morning. I got closer to them, knew who they were. Some of them were

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from out of the state of Missouri, and had got their slant on what was going to happen. I went into every county--the counties I didn't go into Jim Pendergast went into, but I covered most of them, and Truman won by 35,000 votes, I think, in that primary. Jack Cochran, who was running last when we started, was catching up with us. If this campaign had been delayed two weeks, we'd have had trouble with Cochran. He might have defeated us. Milligan ran 150,000 votes behind us, something like that. I may not be perfectly accurate about it, but that's my recollection.

FUCHS: You've read the books, as you say, and you've probably seen the account in which one professor said he thought Cochran entered as a stalking horse for Truman in a deal with Pendergast.

AYLWARD: Yes, a "conspiracy." Why, that is so untrue it is unbelievable. Now, how could you practically enter into a conspiracy with a group of political leaders in the city of St. Louis to run one of their favorite sons for office and expect them to agree with you to get so many votes for him so that we could nominate Truman for the

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United States Senate. Why, you know that's foolish--it's unbelievable. Way out! Crazy! It couldn't be done. They couldn't control it even if it was undertaken. How could that be done?

FUCHS: He based this on some letters from a man named Foree who had this theory.

AYLWARD: It's a lot of malarkey. Why, they were sincere and honorable and loyal to their friend. They wanted him elected. They spent their money and he got 100,000 votes in the city of St. Louis, which we had to offset. That wasn't any just pretend fight on his behalf. They went all out trying to nominate him and got mad about it. That's a wild one. Yes, that was a genuine fight.

FUCHS: What about the various lists that had been given of potential candidates who were approached by Pendergast, including yourself, to run for senator before Truman was reached?

AYLWARD: Well, I'll tell you. He talked to Joe Shannon because Joe Shannon was his associate in politics, the head of another faction, and he suggested to him that he might

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run, never expecting him to accept and there wasn't any chance for him to, because he was a political boss--he didn't want to make a statewide fight. He didn't contact anyone.

FUCHS: What about Jim Reed?

AYLWARD: No. He was for Reed in Chicago--got him into a lot of trouble. I talked to him there at the Congress Hotel and I said, "You have an opportunity here to get on the bandwagon supporting Roosevelt. You will be the most powerful man in the state of Missouri."

He said, "We've been with Reed for forty years and I'm going down in the ditch fighting for him, and I know he's going to be defeated."

Well, he got into a wrangle with Gene Gualdoni of St. Louis who was on the delegation, and Randall Wilson of Betheny, and one or two others who voted in the caucus on the unit rule and refused to go along with him and voted for Roosevelt. Well, that of course infuriated Roosevelt and embittered him against Pendergast.

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Second Oral History Interview with James P. Aylward, June 19, 1968, Kansas City, Missouri.
By James R. Fuchs, Harry S. Truman Library.

FUCHS: Well, that's fine. I'm glad to have you start here today. Would you go ahead with the story of your background, which you just indicated you hadn't completed in the last interview.

AYLWARD: I was in a law office practically all of my life. Then I studied law in the Law office. I went to night school at the Kansas City School of Law which is now the University of Missouri at Kansas City, and I was admitted to the bar in 1908 and I've been practicing ever since--engaged in general practice of the law. I was elected Supreme Justice of the Phi Alpha Delta law fraternity, which was the leading legal, fraternity in the United States at that time, in

about 1912. I was also Vice Chairman of the Democratic National Committee under Farley for four years or longer. I also lectured on Insurance Law at the Kansas City School of Law for a few years.

Now, I also seconded the nomination of Franklin D. Roosevelt at the national convention in Philadelphia in 1936. Truman was there as a delegate-at-large; and I

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remember we had our pictures taken with Farley, Pendergast, and the national committeeman from Massachusetts. I think his name was Fitzpatrick. I used to have the picture; I don't know where it is now.

FUCHS: Do you recall anything in particular about Mr. Truman at that convention in '36?

AYLWARD: Well, he was there as a delegate. I saw him frequently.

FUCHS: What were Mr. Pendergast's feeling about Roosevelt?

AYLWARD: Oh, he got along all right. He was attempting to. He didn't have any feeling against him. of course, Roosevelt entertained an unfriendly feeling toward Pendergast because of his controversies with certain members of the delegation to support Reed as long as it appeared to be reasonably probable that he had a chance to be nominated, which he never had at any time; and that's what brought on the ill feeling between Roosevelt and Pendergast. I think I told you before about this. One of the members of the delegation was Gene Gualdoni of the city of St. Louis and Randall Wilson of Bethany, who was really aligned with Clark--no control over him--and one or two others whose names I cannot now recall.

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FUCHS: Was Gualdoni always a supporter of Mr. Truman as far as you know?

AYLWARD: Well, I assume he was. I don't know. He was a St. Louisan and he had a job under the organization down there. He was Park Commissioner in charge of the auditorium at one time. He was active in politics and one of the leaders out there in his section of town.

Getting back to my travels over this state for Truman in the 1934 primary campaign, we called on a Mr. Robert Armstrong, who was the owner, publisher of the *Armstrong Herald* located at Armstrong, Missouri, about seven o'clock in the evening and this was during the month of July, as I recollect.

FUCHS: In what section of Missouri is that?

AYLWARD: It's in Howard County. It's in central Missouri across from Booneville and west of Columbia.

FUCHS: That's in the "Bible belt?"

AYLWARD: Yes, that's considered to be in central Missouri down through Howard County, Fayette is the county seat. And the temperature was 120 in the shade--I want to tell you

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about that--it was a hot summer and the corn was burning up in the fields and the grasshoppers were eating it. There were no leaves on it--you could even smell it burning from the highway, so it was a torrid summer. So, I called on Mr. Walton--went up to his home--Walter Miller was along with me; he was driving me; he was the county assessor in Jackson County and, by the way, he was an officer of the State Assessors Association--he had contact with all the county assessors throughout the state. Mrs. Walton, I assume it was, came to the door, and I introduced myself and she asked us to come in, and in a few moments, why, Mr. Walton appeared--I'd never seen him before--I never had the pleasure,--of meeting him. So, I introduced myself and I told him about our mission and he told me that he was preparing an editorial in which he was going to endorse Milligan for the United States Senate. He liked Bennett Clark, and Milligan, and he thought that the organization in Kansas City was boss controlled and it didn't represent the real, genuine Democratic principles of the party and he proceeded to give me a lecture about it. So, modestly and timidly, I tried to refute everything he said by argument and suggestion, and finally we settled down to a point

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where he said, "Well, I'm beginning to reconsider the situation in view of what you've said."

And, of course, I said to him, "Well, now Truman's going to win. We've got a more powerful organization in the field than the other candidates and they're more experienced and they can produce the votes--deliver the vote sufficient to nominate him, and you ought to be with us. The day will come when you may want some aid and assistance politically or otherwise and it will be forthcoming if you do."

He said, "All right. I'll go along with you and I'll tear up the editorial," which he did. As far as I knew, he supported Truman.

Then I went from Armstrong, Missouri over to the county seat of Howard County--Fayette--and I was trying to locate a Mr. Kelly who had an automobile agency, and he was the county assessor of the county, as I remember. So, we went to this business establishment and it was closed And we went to his home and he wasn't there, and we went back to the public square and I said to Miller, "Let's stop eight or ten persons here and tell them that we'd like to see Mr. Kelly and say we're waiting for him on the square and," I said, "within a few minutes I think

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Mr. Kelly will appear." It was a country town and they knew everybody.

FUCHS: Why did you particularly want to see Mr. Kelly?

AYLWARD: I wanted him to support Truman for the United States Senate. He had some influence there and he was a young man, perhaps in his thirties; and in about ten minutes he did appear and we introduced ourselves and proceeded to tell him what the mission was and how to set up an organization if he was willing to go along. He said, well, Pendergast had some adherents there in the county that he didn't like. One was a man by the name of James DeNini who was a druggist, a pharmacist. He said, "He's active in politics down here and we don't like him."

I said, "I'm here without any connections in this county and it makes no difference to me who this gentleman might be. We have no contact with him. We're not asking him to do anything for Truman. If you'll go along, you'll be the recognized leader so far as the Truman organization is concerned in this county."

So, he said, "All right," and then we proceeded to tell him how to organize. Get a crowd together and

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form a "Truman for Senator Club," how to get out the vote and so forth, which he proceeded to do. He became an active member of the state organization and he set up the Truman club in Howard County.

FUCHS: Do you know who told you about Kelly? How did you know that Kelly had influence?

AYLWARD: I knew he was the county assessor. He must have had some influence or he couldn't be elected assessor of Howard County. Then he belonged to the assessor's association and, Walter Miller was a member of it, so he knew of Kelly and told me about him.

Then in Columbia we had a young man by the name of Levy, I think his name was Henry, and we had members of the bar and some businessmen. I can't recall their names right now but one of them introduced Truman at Columbia, my recollection is. So, we had Mort Levi over at Moberly--he was a member of the state committee--formerly from St. Louis--went to Moberly to live and was in business there, and the Kellys of Moberly who operated the Merchants Hotel, and members of the bar and other professional men--I don't remember their particular names.

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In Ralls County Mr. Hulse was the head of the Truman forces. He was in the egg, grain and feed business on the public square--a well-known Democrat--he was active in politics in Ralls County. We supported a young man by the name of Robert Winn for state treasurer. Judge Tipton suggested to me that we ought to obtain support for him if we could. He'd like to have him file for state treasurer and, of course, by filing him that offended the establishment that his friends had been talking about. The bankers in the state they were particularly interested in the selection and election of a state treasurer, because he controls the state's money, and he parcels

out and distributes the money for deposit in the banks; and for a period of, oh, I guess, sixty, seventy, eighty years--oh, from time immemorial, until recently, and the state did not receive any interest on these deposits. So it was a very lucrative business for the bankers and they usually controlled the nomination and election of a state treasurer, even to the extent of nominating a state treasurer candidate on each ticket, so there wouldn't be any opportunity for them not to be in a position to obtain that money for deposit in their banks. Well, of course, this is the first time that that ever occurred, and he was running on the ticket and we

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beat the candidate of the establishment. They did it twice. Not only that time but later we supported Wilson Bell who wanted to run. He wasn't a member of that banker's organization, and we elected him.

FUCHS: Did it effect a change in the...

AYLWARD: Well, not much. They all live in the capital city and they become socially, if I understand, associated with each other and things change--but they all got along. But, I didn't know what a lucrative plum this was for the bankers until that time when it came about in this way. Mr. William T. Kemper was national committeeman for twelve years prior to the time I was elected to the committee. In fact, he resigned so that the state committee could select me before the time for the regular election of the members of the national committee. Pendergast became ill and he was in the hospital here--Menorah Hospital--and Kemper had gone up to see him to ask him if he wouldn't use his good offices with Bob Winn--this young man who was elected state treasurer--to keep and retain on deposit in the Commerce Trust Company some twenty million dollars--I don't know what the real amount was,

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but it was in the millions--of state deposits. Well, Jim Pendergast and I had been out there to see Pendergast at the hospital, oh, say five or ten minutes before Kemper appeared, and Mr. Thomas Pendergast said to Kemper, "Well, the two Jims were in here to see me. If I had known you were going to make this request, I would have had Jim Aylward ask Bob Winn to keep that money on deposit in your bank, and I suggest to you that when you get back to the Commerce Building--he's in the same building where your bank is located--you get in touch with Jim and tell him that I'd like to have him request this to Winn, to favor Mr. Kemper by keeping the state deposits in his bank."

Well, Kemper got back and called me on the phone from his office downstairs and he said, "I want to see you."

I said, "I'll come down and see you."

He said, "No, I'll come up to see you."

I said, "All right."

So he came up and he informed me of the situation--his conversation with Pendergast.

I said, "Well, I'll call Bob Winn on the long distance telephone while you're here, and I'll try to make an

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appointment with him to come to Kansas City so he can discuss this."

So, I got Winn on the phone and he said he'd be in Kansas City the next day, and I said, "Well, you come to my office when you arrive. I want you to meet a certain gentleman who's interested in a bank account."

So, he arrived here and I took him down to see Kemper, and Mr. Kemper made the request and Winn proceeded to comply with his request. Well, Dick Nacy and Howard Cook and that crowd from Jeff City, and the big banks--they control the situation--I'm a little ahead of my story--but after the primary campaign for Truman, Bennett Clark was senator. He came from Bowling Green and the eastern district, and that was one of the arguments we made about supporting Truman. He comes from western Missouri and that one section is entitled to representation--one of the minor ones. Well, I said to Bennett Clark--I wanted to please him, to get along with him, we beat his candidate for United States Senate, and we would promote harmony, unity among the Democratic organizations and Democrats generally throughout the state. I told him I was going to appoint Dick Nacy chairman of the executive committee of the Democratic State Committee. He says, "Well, I'm opposed to that."

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"Well," I said, "do you have any suggestions?"

He said, "Yes."

I said, "What is it?"

He said, "Well, I want Rubey Hulen appointed chairman of the executive committee;" and Rubey Hulen was state chairman ahead of me. He was Clark's selection.

I said, "All right. I'll be very happy to do that but now I want to inform you that I'm going to create a new committee. I'm going to appoint Dick Nacy as Director of organization for the state committee."

He said, "All right."

Well that happened; now, Nacy's son married Jim Pendergast's daughter. Well, Nacy was state treasurer at one time, he was active in politics, he canvassed this state many times--he canvassed the state after the primary with me. We went into all of the counties presenting arguments in

support of Truman, met with the county committees. First we started off in Jeff City with a general meeting of the Democrats while they were there at a state convention, particularly the members of the county committees so as to set up a plan to organize the state, and to advise them how to do it, how to get out the vote, how to produce it, which we did.

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FUCHS: What responsibility and authority and influence would Hulen as chairman of the executive committee have in relation to you as state chairman?

AYLWARD: Well, I was in charge of the campaign. He was under me, you understand, and he helped out in the country. He was from Columbia. Clark later put him on the Federal Bench; he was a U.S. District Judge in the City of St. Louis.

FUCHS: What did Clark expect to gain by having Hulen instead...

AYLWARD: Having representation on the state committee; having somebody know what's going on, how the campaign was being conducted; whether his crowd was being recognized and so forth. We recognized everybody. We were trying to win.

But Hulen was on the bench and he became a very sick man before the end of his career and died.

FUCHS: Do you think he committed suicide?

AYLWARD: Well, that's what they say. I don't know. I don't know whether he did or not. All I know is what I read in the newspapers.

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FUCHS: To go back a minute, on this banking situation. Had Winn expressed an interest in removing funds?

AYLWARD: No. I assumed that he didn't even know what the usual process or custom was because I didn't know until then that such a situation existed. I didn't know then why the bankers were so eager to nominate a candidate for state treasurer on each ticket so that they could control the distribution of the funds of the state to the various banks throughout the state. Of course, the larger banks got the larger amount of money and then they let some of it filter out to the country banks to keep them in line, you understand, in each county.

FUCHS: Kemper was just meeting the situation before it arose.

AYLWARD: Yes, because here was a new deal, you understand. He didn't see what was going to happen.

FUCHS: I see.

AYLWARD: As far as I was concerned, I had no personal interest-I didn't even know anything about it until that happened. Now, it was said that the bankers always financed the campaign for the state treasurer, too, and--this is all

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hearsay with me. I'm not testifying directly--but all of the lobbyists for the railroads and utilities companies, and the insurance companies, and the breweries, they aided and assisted each other in the passage of favorable legislation or resisting hostile legislation and with the various groups they'd pay the filing fee and finance candidates for the legislature so that they could control the legislature. This went on for years, so I'm told, and that happened for many years.

Now, also, setting back to the Truman primary, my recollection is we had a congressional primary election in which all of the congressmen ran at large because they failed to redistrict the state in accordance with the law. Well, that gave us an opportunity to support or not support the candidates and there were some twenty or twenty-five running, thirteen offices, so most of them beat a path to Pendergast's door to obtain from him his support if possible. Running at large they knew he was in a position to control or deliver a large vote that might aid or assist them in obtaining the nomination.

FUCHS: Mr. Truman has said, you know, that he was interested in that congressional seat before he was chosen to run for the Senate.

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AYLWARD: Well, it could have been. That year Frank Lee from the seventh district which is always Republican--Dewey Short's district--he was nominated and elected because he ran at large; otherwise he couldn't have been elected. And by the way, Truman later appointed his secretary as one of his administrative assistants.

FUCHS: Did you have something to do with that? I have read that you went to the office with Mr. Truman to approach Lee about hiring Messall.

AYLWARD: I did not. The fact about the matter is that I never was for Messall--didn't even know he contemplated appointing him. He had promised to give the job to Bill Harvey during the primary and later to Bob Holloway--these two newspapermen that I had mentioned--so they said, and he employed Messall. He became a "five percenter" around Washington later. I didn't know Messall in those days. He was down in Joplin.

FUCHS: Who was Pendergast's candidate for the congressional seat here?

AYLWARD: Jasper Bell. He'd been on the circuit bench and a member of the council--lived down in Independence--had a

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farm down there. Maybe he was in Congress at the time running to succeed himself. That would be one of the reasons why Pendergast declined to support Truman, I suppose.

FUCHS: Wasn't it a new seat to be filled that year?

AYLWARD: Well, we have the fourth and fifth districts, you know, in this county. The fifth is in the western part of the county and the fourth extends out into the country district. Randall is now the congressman from the fourth district. Richard Bolling is from the fifth district.

FUCHS: One other point about the candidates for that senatorial seat, one writer said that Charles M. Howell who had lost for governor in '32, I believe it was, was approached by Pendergast and declined to run. Do you know about that?

AYLWARD: No, he never was approached by Pendergast and declined to run. I don't think Howell was interested in running for congressman. He was the attorney for the Reciprocal Insurance Company. In fact he organized them originally-set them up, and he had plenty of legal business with respect to the insurance company, and for a long time was powerful in the state. He'd been a state chairman,

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as I said, and he was a candidate for United States Senator. He nominated Reed in Houston in 1928. They were friends. In fact, he'd been a member of Reed's firm at one time. It was Reed, Gates, Atwood, Atchison, Howell and Hardy.

FUCHS: Now, Mr. Truman, I believe in his *Memoirs*, has said that it had been suggested that he run for the Senate--presumably by Pendergast--prior to Mr. Pendergast's approaching the other people including yourself.

AYLWARD: Well, that isn't true because it never occurred to Pendergast to urge anyone to run other than myself. He didn't even think about Truman until I suggested it to him, and I told you I had suggested the names of ten persons whom I thought were uniquely qualified to be a United States Senator from Missouri, to live up to the proudest traditions of the past in the Senate. We had many an able senator in the United States Senate from the early days. He might have labored under that impression, but I don't know why because it hadn't occurred to him until we called him on the telephone in Warsaw, and then I didn't tell him on the phone until he got to Sedalia.

FUCHS: Why do you think the story has come down that it was at the Bothwell Hotel?

AYLWARD: Well, that's a mistake as far as I know.

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FUCHS: Any number of accounts say that it was the Bothwell. Of course, one man writes it in the first place and all the rest follow.

AYLWARD: The Terry Hotel was the Democratic hotel thirty, forty years ago. I could be mistaken but I doubt it because Terry was a Democrat and most of the Democrats gathered at the Terry Hotel and that would be one reason for us to go to the Terry Hotel. The Bothwell was run by another crowd and was a newer hotel and more modern, hadn't been erected long before this time. Well, that's my recollection anyway.

FUCHS: Well, I wanted you to comment on those points just for the benefit of scholars who are interested in detail.

AYLWARD: Of course, I'm not saying that I'm infallible.

FUCHS: We like to have a difference of opinions. It's up to the people who use these things then to decide.

AYLWARD: Yes. Truman also said that the Aylwards contributed about \$215 to his campaign in the book *The Man of Independence*. Of course, all we did was go all out to do everything we could to raise enough money to nominate him for the Senate.

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My brother, as I say, was treasurer and our resources were very meager.

FUCHS: What was Roger Sermon's part in that? I thought he was finance chairman or something like that.

AYLWARD: No, my brother was chairman of the finance committee in the primary campaign. He served all the way through and contacted our own friends to raise this money; and we had a difficult time, as I told you. Julian Freihant, who comes from down in the "Bootheel," I think he's from Cape Girardeau, he was appointed by Roosevelt Assistant Secretary of Agriculture. He's the man that with Ernest Green, who was a lawyer in the city of St. Louis, contacted me about supporting Dearmont after the primary elections--wanted to run the time Park was elected--and by the way, one of the other candidates considered in that group that I was telling you about--Ragland and Harris--was Stark. He was qualified, acceptable, would support if nominated, you understand.

FUCHS: What were you saying about Julian Freihant?

AYLWARD: Julian was the chairman of the county committee in

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southeast Missouri, and he called me on the phone and he told me that his committee had funds in the bank and the bank had closed its doors--become insolvent--they were out of funds--I think this was after the primary, and he said, "Jim, we need \$500. If you can send it to us, we'll go all out to support the ticket."

Well I said, "You're already committed. I assume you're a regular Democrat." I said, "I'm not going to argue about that. I'll get you the \$500," so we wired him the \$500. The sound truck had broke down in rural Missouri in the mud and we had to get it repaired and we were so short of funds I'd have to go out and raise enough money and my brother did, to get sufficient funds to wire it down there to take care of the sound truck--keep it moving on the road.

Now, these organizations here--the Pendergast organization was the Jackson Democratic Club. The principal club was located at 1908 Main Street, and they had an organization in practically all the wards and townships throughout the county. Now, Shannon, his Democratic organization was the Regular Democratic club and they had a club in each and every ward in practically all of

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the townships throughout the county. Now, Judge Welch, his club was the Jeffersonian Democratic Club and it was out there on 15th Street. It controlled those wards back and forth in that locality.

FUCHS: Now, was the club moved to a more central location? In a recent publication the author said that the Jackson Democratic Club moved to a more central location and you were placed in charge of organization, and you, the other day, told me you never belonged to the club.

AYLWARD: That's right. And one of the reasons for not belonging to the club or any of the clubs was that I was recognized around here as the arbitrator or peacemaker to umpire these disputes and controversies that might arise between the leaders; and so as to not be, tainted with any degree of prejudice or bias one way or the other that was one of the reasons I didn't become an active member of these organizations.

FUCHS: Would you have been in charge of organization then?

AYLWARD: I was anyway because I was chairman of the county committee. In fact, I managed all the campaigns for

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sixteen years around here, and wrote most of the advertising collaborating with others, and speeches for the candidates. A lot of them didn't know where they were coming from. Judge Bryce Smith was elected mayor of Kansas City succeeding Beach. Well, in that campaign the *Kansas City Star* informed Mr. Smith that they'd be glad to print on the front page of the *Kansas City Star* a statement as to his views on the issues that affected the people of Kansas City every

Monday morning, if he'd furnish them with a statement. So, Smith contacted me and I got in touch with John Gilday and some others, and we prepared these statements for print--to have printed in the *Star* each Monday morning. Gilday prepared the first one and I said to Smith, "Now, you'd better submit this to Pendergast and Shannon and the others who are supporting you around here so they can read it and advise you whether it's the thing for you to do. They might have some objection to what you're saying here. It might not be in accord with their views."

Well, he did that and it wasn't in accord with their views so they appointed a committee to censor this, and one of them was Alfred Gossett who was a member of the

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council, one of the leaders. He'd been a member of the legislature and the constitutional convention, a prominent, able lawyer, and John Barker, formerly attorney general, and others, and they agreed that it might hurt the cause, hurt Smith's candidacy or the election of the ticket and they proceeded to censor it. So, they struck out parts of it and added language of their own and substitutions for the language contained therein. I was close to all the newspapermen--knew them all by name on all the papers practically--the big papers anyway, the metropolitan papers--and they were always friendly looking for a story. So, I told Ned Swain of the *Kansas City Star* that I'd deliver the first statement to him so he could have it on Sunday for the Monday morning paper; so he called me about four o'clock in the afternoon and he said, "Jim, I haven't received that statement and furthermore I don't think that you're going to send that statement to me because they've been working on it, I understand, and modified and changed the language therein and they changed the discussion of the issues. Smith's not going to send that statement in here."

I said, "Well, I think you're mistaken; however, I'll find out."

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So, I get in touch with Mr. Smith out at his Red Bridge farm and I tell him what's going on, and I say, "Now, you'd better go down to the Kansas City Club where Gossett is and tell him you want that statement, and also inform him that you're not doing to consent to any modification or change in the contents thereof." So he did, and I said, "You take that statement to the *Kansas City Star* and give it to Swain as it was originally written." Which he did and it was printed.

So, we continued to prepare those statements. Well, Shannon was miffed and piqued about it, and he saw me in a restaurant one day at lunch and said, "Who's writing those statements for Smith?"

"Well," I said, "I assumed he's got a professional advertising agency."

"Why," he said, "you know that's a lot of malarkey."

I said, "Is it? You think so?"

So, that continued on and the statements were printed. I prepared them, with Gilday and others-- I don't want to take all the credit and tell you how big I am, I'm not that big. We needed a lot of help and we had a real organization of men of skill and ability, acumen, sagacity, learning. So, I called Smith in here the Friday

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before the election and we prepared for him his victory statement to make after the election. Ned Swain was coming and George Wallace and the other reporters and Middleton of the *Post*-- Middleton was on the *Kansas City Post* and Swain and George Wallace were on the *Star*. Of course, I mentioned Duke Shoop. He was the *Star's* Washington correspondent. Ted Alfred was in Washington in charge of the bureau; Jack Williams who just retired the other day was with the *Post* in those days. Well, now getting back to this, so we prepared this victory statement and Swain was out in the office at four o'clock in the afternoon, and I called him in and I said, "Now, here is the victory statement that Bryce Smith is going to make."

He said, "How in the hell do you know he's going to win?"

What?" I said, "We're going to win."

He said, "I want to tell you something. There has never been anything like this happen in Kansas City. You're handing me a victory statement that Smith's going to make after the election several days before it happens."

Well, Smith came in and I said, "Here it is. Swain wants your victory statement," and he gave it to him. That's what occurred.

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FUCHS: In relation to the '34 primary, was Robert Holloway a speechwriter?

AYLWARD: Yes, after the primary for our headquarters in Jeff City. He gave us some help.

FUCHS: He did help on speeches?

AYLWARD: Yes, and publicity generally.

FUCHS: Who was the primary man, would you say, on speeches for Mr. Truman after he was nominated?

AYLWARD: Well, I'd say Bill Harvey wrote most of them and wrote most of them in the primary--William H. Harvey. He'd been with the *Kansas City World* and the *Kansas City Post*; he was a professional newspaperman; he was publicity director for the state committee while I was state chairman. Cance Pool was with us, too, in those days. His father Jerry Pool had a newspaper down in the early days--this was fifty-sixty years ago and he's now got a boy down there in Jeff City. I think he's a lawyer. But Cance was head of the publicity department. After

the election of Truman to the Senate, Roy Roberts asked Truman and me to accompany him as his guests to attend the Gridiron dinner in Washington, and we both accepted

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and I went back with him, because at that time Truman was going to take the oath as United States Senator from Missouri. So, we went over to John Garner's office. Bennett Clark was along and while we were in there Van Nuys of Indiana walked in there with Minton, who had just been elected to the Senate from Indiana as the junior senator, and they're there to take the oath from the Vice President. The Vice President was very congenial, and he said, "Men, before we enter into these ceremonies I'd like to have you all join me in striking a blow for liberty." So he got a jug that looked like corn liquor and we all partook thereof. Well, Truman and I were around Washington there for several days and we attended the Gridiron dinner and he went over to have his picture taken at Underwood and Underwood, who was the official photographers for the members of the Senate and Congress. I had my picture taken at the same time.

FUCHS: Do you recall anything at the dinner that was of interest--an anecdote?

AYLWARD: No, I don't.

FUCHS: Is it right that you and Mr. Truman as Senator-elect

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were both presented to FDR by Senator Clark?

AYLWARD: Well, it might have been. I had met Roosevelt earlier when he ran with Cox in 1920. I was the chairman of the committee here. He made a speech across the river in Kansas City, Kansas at the Riverview Skating Rink, and I went over there to contact him and bring him back to the Isis Theatre where he was to make a speech; so I met him at that time.

FUCHS: You were chairman of the committee for this occasion at that time in 1920?

AYLWARD: Yes, the county committee. I introduced Cox in Convention Hall in 1920 where he was a candidate for President. Oh, he could have introduced him and I would of course have been happy for him to do so, but I knew James Farley. I'll tell you about that. My partner Frank Walsh was practicing law in New York in 1932. That was the year of the campaign "Roosevelt for President," and Farley was interested in obtaining the nomination for Franklin D. Roosevelt for President. He was, I think, chairman of the New York State Democratic Committee at the time and he was a prominent member of the Elks, a

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member of the Elks Benevolent and Protective Organization. Well, there was a convention of the Elks being held in Portland, Oregon and Farley was going out to the coast to attend the convention, and to do everything he could to build up support for Roosevelt on his way,

conversing with politicians and persons who were interested in politics--particularly Democrats. So, he contacted my partner in New York, Frank T. Walsh, who was a great Roosevelt admirer, and adherent; in fact he was on the Power Authority under Roosevelt in New York, member of it. So, my law partner wrote me a letter and he told me that Farley would be in Kansas City on a certain day and that he'd appreciate it if I would tender a luncheon--a dinner of some kind and invite persons to attend it who were prominent in state politics or who were interested in politics in Missouri. So, I proceeded to do that, and I invited all of the Democrats in Missouri that had been active or inactive and prominent or otherwise, who were enemies politically toward each other or didn't feel kindly to one another, from all sections of the state; and I had a cross section at this luncheon held in the Muehlebach Hotel of practically all the factions and all of the officeholders and politicians. Of course, we didn't have many

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officeholders at that time, except in certain counties, because the state had been Republican for twelve long years. Roosevelt carried this state by over 200,000 in '32. Bennett Clark was there and Charles Hay who was the prohibitionist and dry advocate--he made a race for the Senate. Reed retired and Colett of Keytesville, Missouri was the candidate supported by Pendergast, Reed, and the others. He got beat for the nomination and then Charlie Hay was defeated in the election. Well, I had persons like that at this dinner. Plenty of politics was discussed. They were all interested--been out for twelve years. Farley informed me that he didn't receive any encouragement on this trip until he got to Kansas City and we had this turnout for him, and he was very much pleased and amazed and he made a lot of friends here, and the *Star* gave him a very favorable write-up and called him the traveling Elk. They had a cartoon on the front page of the paper, "Traveling Elk Seeking Votes for Roosevelt."

FUCHS: Was Mr. Truman invited to that dinner, do you recall?

AYLWARD: I'm sure he was. We didn't pass up anyone; we had them all there. We had conferences with him and Farley

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met Pendergast at that time. Wilson was there, the then candidate for governor; and, as I say, every Democrat big and little in state politics attended. My brother, Charles, he and Harry Woodring were tellers in the Southwest Bank here in Kansas City prior to this time; and Harry Woodring was governor of Kansas--strong in Kansas politics--so my brother arranged for Farley and Louie McGee and Jerome Walsh to meet Woodring in Topeka to talk to him about the Roosevelt campaign and get him lined up for Roosevelt. Farley wrote a book *The Battle of the Ballots* and I think he mentions this. We became close friends. He put me on the national committee. He appointed me vice chairman of the national committee. I saw him in Washington several times. On one occasion while I was there he informed me that Truman was opposed to a certain bill and it was a very meritorious bill and he was personally interested in its passage, and he asked me if I wouldn't ask Truman to reconsider the matter and if possible support the bill. I discussed it with Truman and he said, "Well, all right."

FUCHS: You don't recollect what it was about?

AYLWARD: No, I can't.

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FUCHS: Did you frequently see Senator Truman when you went to Washington?

AYLWARD: Not very often. You see the Pendergast crowd became mad at me, you know, and disgruntled about my situation; they didn't like my attitude. They got in trouble violating the voting law.

A lot of them were indicted for vote fraud and they requested that I represent these persons. I said, "I'm not going to do any such thing. Here I am county chairman and state chairman and national committeeman and at every public meeting we have ever had I've always admonished them to follow the law, obey the law faithfully, thoroughly read the instructions, carry them out to the letter and not commit any violations of the law, in respect to voting or the elections." I said, "I did that on every occasion,"—talks or speeches if you want to call them that; at all the public meetings when we had all the judges and clerks and we had all the workers—sometimes as many as 7,500 in attendance at a meeting at the Armory, the Latter Day, and because I declined to do that they got terribly mad at me.

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I suggested to Jim Pendergast when he called on me, I said, "What you ought to do, in my judgment, is to raise sufficient funds to hire a very capable and able lawyer who has the ability and capacity to properly defend these persons and pay him a reasonable fee to represent them for the duration of the litigation."

FUCHS: What year was this?

AYLWARD: It was '36 or '38, I guess.

FUCHS: The frauds were in '36, I believe. It would be shortly after that.

AYLWARD: A year later or some time because they'd have to make an investigation. So, then they, instead of hiring somebody who was outstanding and capable and able to represent the persons who were accused of violating the law, they called upon volunteers--lawyers. Mr. William Boatwright, who had been aligned with Shannon for years, he went down and volunteered to represent them, and then they contacted various lawyers who would defend them from time to time. They suffered great disappointment--most of them were convicted.

FUCHS: In your opinion these lawyers were just not...

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AYLWARD: I'm not saying that. I didn't say that either. They were willing and they were doing their best to give them proper representation. They were admitted to the bar and so the presumption is that they were capable. Otherwise they wouldn't be members of the bar. I'm not saying that. They all got proper representation. Maurice Milligan was the district attorney, the brother of Tuck Milligan, who ran against Truman for the Senate. Sam Blair was one of the assistants who was later city councilman and judge of the circuit court in Cole County--that's Jefferson City--and later on the Kansas City Court of Appeals and he resigned from the court of appeals a few years ago. Well, anyway the results were bad and most of the Pendergast group didn't have any kind of a feeling for me. Of course, they didn't know all the facts. I had a contract with the employees of the Kansas City Water Department to file a lawsuit to obtain back pay which hadn't been paid to them over a period of years; so the gentleman who headed the committee who employed me came to see me and he said, "Now, we've been told by Pendergast representatives that if we continue with your employment, we're all going to get fired."

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Well, I said to my friend Frank Mildred who came to see me, "I'll make it easy for you. I'll just tear up the contract. You're under no obligation to go along with me. It's fine that you employed me originally and I wish you good luck and so forth and be on your way."

So they employed Boatwright to represent them and there were numerous cases like this. The city had to pay by judgment, oh, I'd say thousands and thousands of dollars for back pay for employees over a long period of years. Well, they imagined they had grievances against me, which I never thought they had; however, we became reconciled eventually--Jim Pendergast and I.

FUCHS: What about Tom Pendergast at this time? Had you maintained good relations with him?

AYLWARD: Tom Pendergast had been indicted for violating the income tax laws and held been convicted. He might have been in the penitentiary then.

FUCHS: He went to the penitentiary in '39 but I was wondering, between '36 and '39 when you said that the Pendergast party was disenchanting....

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AYLWARD: I didn't see Pendergast very often, believe it or not. The only time I saw Pendergast was when I had some political matter in which he might be interested to discuss with me. I didn't show up down there or hang around the club where most of the members of his organization were at different times during the day--would visit and sit down and talk; but we were friends--Pendergast.

FUCHS: Did you go to Washington frequently, even though you didn't see Mr. Truman?

AYLWARD: I was there a few times but I didn't have any ill will toward Truman. He didn't have anything to do with this situation. I'd see him on the street here. We were always friendly.

FUCHS: What would your comment be on a statement that has been made that Mr. Pendergast would take torn pieces of, I guess, brown grocery bag and write his requests to Mr. Truman on those and pass them along that way?

AYLWARD: I have no idea. How would he pass them on to him? By messenger? It seems to me that he wouldn't have to do that, if he wanted to talk to him he'd call him on the

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telephone and make an appointment if it's real personal and didn't want anybody to know about it. Well, anyway, I don't have any knowledge about it.

FUCHS: What do you think were Mr. Pendergast's true motives and thoughts about Mr. Truman in 1934? I'm sure you've read the stories that he once said he did it half as a joke and half to show his power and to show that he could elect anyone senator.

AYLWARD: We were trying to elect a United States Senator and it wasn't any joking matter, it was very serious; and we went all out to get everything we possibly could to nominate him to the Senate. Now, setting back to this book by Dorsett--Professor Dorsett, in which he implied that there was a conspiracy between the Pendergast organization of the Kansas City Democratic organization and the St. Louis organization to run Cochran against Truman for the purpose of dividing the votes and thereby make it possible for the nomination of Truman, which his statement refutes itself and is so absurd and ridiculous and impractical and impossible of accomplishment or achievement. Let me say this to you. How could you so control the number

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of votes to the extent that you would positively know that your candidate in eastern Missouri would get less votes than Truman throughout Missouri and particularly in St. Louis. Now you take Mr. William Igoe. He was formerly a member of Congress; he was a candidate for mayor in the city of St. Louis in the days when it was going Republican. He was an active, interested Democrat all the years of his life; he represented the most responsible clients. He's been appointed to the police board in the city of St. Louis as chairman by Governor Park, so you know that he wasn't going to enter into any such a nefarious scheme, plan or conspiracy. He was doing his best to nominate and elect Cochran. So were all the others associated with him--all of those in St. Louis who were in power at the time--Nanale, and Dickmann, Hannegan, Wester, Dwyer, all the committees that were interested in city politics.

FUCHS: Who was Wester?

AYLWARD: James A. Wester is a lawyer. He was a member of the election board and a partner of Mark Eagleton, and by the way, Mark Eagleton is one of the men who called on me, before Truman was elected as senator, when I was in St.

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Louis and urged me to run for the Senate. He proceeded to give me a long discussion about it and I told him that I didn't intend to run for the Senate. He was a member of the school board and he also was candidate for mayor. Mark Eagleton was the father of the present Eagleton who is running for United States Senator. Prior to '32 he was a Republican. He became a Democrat--supported Roosevelt--and he was a very prominent lawyer, very active and very successful.

Well, I conversed with all these fellows from time to time. They knew me because we were associated together in making a statewide fight politically, and they were all my friends. I didn't seek their aid or assistance, because I never intended to run for the office.

FUCHS: Why did you not want to run for the Senate?

AYLWARD: Oh, just personally I didn't want to run. I was satisfied, I was practicing law and I was young and had a family to support, rear, and educate. I determined that I'd be more happy here at home than I would be in Washington,

FUCHS: What would your response be to the statement that has

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been made that your principal reason for not running was that you didn't want to take the abuse that would fall upon you because of your association with Tom Pendergast? You've read that, of course?

AYLWARD: Well, I've read most of it but can't remember all of it. Well, that's somebody else's conclusion. That never entered into it. Pendergast was friendly with me and I didn't start with him in politics. I told you I was aligned with Shannon because my partner Frank Walsh was a personal friend and associate and advisor of Shannon. I never entered into it, and I have no vain regrets because I didn't run.

FUCHS: That's been said, of course, too.

AYLWARD: Oh, yes. Now, you take Bill Igoe. He was a very pious man--a Catholic--and he was head of the St. Vincent de Paul Society which was a department that took care of the downtrodden, the impoverished and the poor--a charity organization. So, I know that Bill Igoe wasn't going to enter into any such scheme to aid Truman in the nomination. He was against Truman all the way to the very best of his ability, and while we're on that

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I want to say this to you: Governor Park was a very close friend of Bill Igoe and I went to see Park and I told him that Truman was going to be the candidate; I guess he'd filed at that time--I talked with him, and he said, "Well, I'm not very enthusiastic about this-supporting Truman. I'd rather be for John Cochran the person who succeeded Igoe in Congress. He was his friend; he was associated with him down there in his office."

I said, "Governor, Truman is a candidate of our crowd in western Missouri. We're going all out; we're going to try to nominate him. I think you ought to go along." I said, "You know he supported you. If it hadn't been for our supporting you when they were saying unkind things about you, you would never have been governor of this state. I think you ought to consider it seriously. I think you ought to support Truman." I said, "I hope you won't make up your mind to the extent that you're going to make a public announcement for Cochran. That wouldn't help us any."

He said, "No, I won't do that."

Well, I said, "You consider the matter and I'll come back and talk to you again sometime. You're busy now;"

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so I saw him a second time and he was still reluctant to support Truman, and I bowed out as courteous as possible, obeisantly, and I said, "I'll be back again to see you the latter part of this week. I'll be out in Missouri trying to organize this campaign for Truman." So, I went back a third time and he'd mellowed a little, but not much and I finally said to him, "You don't owe St. Louis anything. You owe everything, politically, as far as you being governor of this state, to your friends in western Missouri. If you don't want to go along with us, we'll just suffer the consequences. I think we can win anyway, but we'd like to have you; we need you; it's imperative that we have you."

He said, "All right. I'll go along."

Well, he was very loyal and he became an active supporter of Truman. He did everything he could to help him obtain the nomination and to prove this to you, I want to call your attention to certain incidents that happened. There were members of the State Highway Commission and there were some eastern Missouri friends of the St. Louis organization who were out supporting Cochran. Well, in my canvass of the state, why, I came

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into possession of this information. I gained the names of these officials who were actively campaigning for Cochran. So I went to Park and I said, "Now, Mr. So-and-So over here is not active in the campaign in support of Truman--a member of your official family "I think he ought to be toned down a little bit."

He said, "All right. I'll get in touch with him," and he did and he was silent from that moment on. We had other incidents like that. Now, as far as it was practical, we induced all of the employees of the state who were friendly to us to support Truman actively, and the head of the department would distribute literature, actively campaign for him, put that literature in the rural mailboxes out in Missouri, traveled over the state making personal contacts. The secretary at the head of the Fish and Game Department, he made a wide canvass; and they all did everything they could to aid Truman to obtain the nomination for the Senate, and they contributed immeasurably to his success.

FUCHS: Was there any law against such participation at that time in Missouri?

AYLWARD: Law against what?

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FUCHS: Members of the government participating in campaigns.

AYLWARD: The Hatch Act?

FUCHS: Yes.

AYLWARD: No, didn't have any rules at that time--wide open. Everybody did his part for his man. And, by the way, talking about Jim Wester, Igoe became piqued and took a dislike to Wester because of his activities on the election board, and he went to Park and asked him to fire him. Wester called me on the phone, in the doldrums and downhearted about it. He asked me if I'd talk to Park about it. He fired Wester.

FUCHS: One of the things that Dorsett points out as part of the conspiracy, based on the Foree letters to Mitchell, was that you as chairman of the state committee had the right to appoint a man to the vacant spot on the congressional representative's ticket after Cochran had lost. Would you comment on that?

AYLWARD: Well, I didn't have anything to do with it. He was selected by the congressional committee of the district. They induced the candidate to withdraw and he

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was placed on the ticket--now I assume by the St. Louisans-Igoe and Dickmann and Nangle and Hannegan and Jack Dwyer. They control that situation. I didn't know anything like that was going to happen. I had no connection or knowledge of it. I was glad they put him back on the ticket, because he was the best congressman from Missouri in the Congress, and a very popular man; and I want to tell you, he rendered a really genuine service to the people of Missouri, and particularly of St. Louis, as a congressman and that's why he was elected in season and out of season.

FUCHS: Did you travel extensively with Mr. Truman on his speaking engagements?

AYLWARD: No. No, I didn't. I traveled practically alone with a driver, but, as I told you, all these Speeches were prepared and delivered to him. Now after the primary we moved the principal base of operation to Jeff City. So, we had an organization there. Holloway was down there, and the publicity director for the state committee, and all of the members of the state committee organization that had been appointed by me as state chairman--they functioned out of Jeff City; and we had speechwriters--a number of

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them, you know, and counselors and advisors. Duke Shoon was back there in Washington with Roberts, and so was Alfred, as members of the Star staff. Down there in Columbia at the opening of the campaign--of course all of these Democrats from Kansas City were down there; I could give you some names but I don't know--Jim Pendergast was there, of course, and all of his organization; Harry Sandler who had been a member of the city council and he was the leader in the second ward, he was there; and Gil Bourke, who was Cass Welch's lieutenant, right-hand man, he was there; and Walsh was there; Martin Crow, who was in the bakery business, a very prominent Democrat and had been county marshal, he was there; and Chick Gillespie who was the clerk of the justice court. Well, there were thousands of them there from all over the state. I told you how they arrived there. Now Mr. Omar Robinson, who was a lawyer here, a prominent member of the bar, he represented the creditors in the bankruptcy proceedings that were filed against Eddie Jacobson and Harry Truman, and during that campaign, "Truman for Senator" campaign, he came to me and he told me that unless some \$9,000 in indebtedness was settled, compromised or paid

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off, that he was going to expose Truman's failure to pay the bill. So, I said to him, "You go right ahead and expose him as far as I'm concerned. I'm not interested. It's already been settled in the bankruptcy court. The public knows all about it. All you're going to do is refresh it and they say plenty of things about us anyway. We're not going to let that deter us from going ahead with this campaign to the best of our ability and nominate Mr. Truman."

Well, when he left me, he got in touch with others and some of them became panicky about it. I think Fred Boxley, who was the county counsellor under Truman, he got excited about it and he got a group together, and I was informed that they raised enough money to compromise the claim.

We, as I told you, attempted to establish an organization in all the townships in the state, except in those heavily populated Republican townships, although we always had some representatives even in those counties in the Ozark Mountains down there; and in St. Louis County, why, we had to select a representative in St. Louis County and he was difficult to find because Cochran was a St. Louis

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candidate and everybody was against us, practically. So, we finally called my friend Paul Dillon who lived in the county to head up Truman's organization in St. Louis County.

FUCHS: Who was Paul Dillon?

AYLWARD: He was a lawyer in St. Louis. His father was an early day prominent lawyer and author, I think, of certain legal treatises; but he was well known around there and he was a friend of Truman's all the time.

FUCHS: Had he been a friend of Mr. Truman's prior to that?

AYLWARD: Well, I don't think he knew Truman prior to this time. Some of our friends in St. Louis induced him to go along and to represent Truman. Now, the other day I was talking about Hannibal where May, of May and May, introduced Mr. Truman. Well, that's in Marion County. I should have remembered it but didn't. Now, there's one reference in there about Murphy bidding me goodbye when I went up the staircase to see May and May, be careful about that. I don't want it to reflect on anybody.

FUCHS: Well, that can be closed.

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AYLWARD: I don't know if that was true or not. It didn't make any difference to me because, as I told you, I was looking for support from qualified voters--persons who could vote in the election. I didn't care about their previous conditions of servitude or their paternal connection, religious, otherwise, or ethnic origin. This fellow Hulse in New London sponsored Bob Winn with Ernest Tipton of the [Missouri] Supreme Court. Pendergast suggested that I go to the national convention as a delegate-at-large, and I told him that while I appreciated the honor being a delegate-at-large I think it would help us more if he selected somebody from the country

FUCHS: Now this is '36?

AYLWARD: '36. So, Hulse was selected as a delegate-at-large. To give you a little of the history of Ernest M. Tipton, the judge of the Supreme Court, he went to Columbia and he graduated from Westminster at Fulton, Missouri. He came to Kansas City after his admittance to the bar and practiced law. He was close to Charlie Howell and gave him a little business now and then. We all tried to help him. So, he came to me and informed me that he'd

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like to run for judge of the Supreme Court at the time Clarence Burney was a candidate supported by Pendergast and a member of Pendergast's organization. He'd been the police judge here and circuit judge for years. Fitzsimmons in St. Louis, who was a commissioner, he was a candidate for the Supreme Court, and Charles Henson of Springfield, Missouri is a candidate for

the Supreme Court. Pendergast is already committed to Burney and Fitzsimmons wants his support, so at Tipton's suggestion, I took him with me down to see Pendergast and I asked Pendergast if he didn't have any objection, we'd like to have Tipton run for the Supreme Court. He spent all of his time out in the country and could make an active race, didn't have anything else to do but run for the Supreme Court. I said that was his ambition. He wanted to achieve it, so Pendergast tells us his story and I said, "Well, if you just lay off, I think we can nominate Tipton in a four-horse race."

He said, "All right. I'm supporting Burney."

So, he filed and he wins, along with Burney, elected to the Supreme bench. Burney, he qualified, went on the bench and thirty days after he qualified, or forty

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days, he died and so Park appointed Leedy his court reporter and his manager--the fifteen day campaign was really managed by the rest of us--to the Supreme bench. I'm telling you what the set-up was--so we had a lot of friends who were influential and tried to help us.

FUCHS: There's a letter in Mr. Truman's Presidential papers, written after Mr. Truman became President in April of '45, from a Newt Gardner, who was reminiscing about the '34 campaign, and he mentioned the value of getting the vote of Pemiscot County.

AYLWARD: Pemiscot County. That's in southeast Missouri down in the Bootheel.

FUCHS: Down around Caruthersville?

AYLWARD: Yes.

FUCHS: He said they got the vote switched from Cochran of St. Louis to Truman in the '34 primary which resulted in Mr. Truman becoming a senator. Do you know anything about that?

AYLWARD: Well, I knew those fellows, I met them from time to time; but I can't call to mind now whether I met this

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gentleman. I was in southeast Missouri; I talked to all of them. I knew what they were going to do in some of those places in southeast Missouri; those politicians who favored Pendergast were defeated. So, after the primary I went down there with Dick Nacy who was then director of organization. We canvassed this state together. We appeared before all of the committees of the parties--that is, town, hamlet, village, county committees, and congressional committees. We had them assembled in each of the thirteen districts of the state, so they could all be together so that we could address them as to their duties and outline what they could do to get out the vote; and at those times I would run into Democrats who were for the Pendergast organization who had been defeated down there, who were mad at the other crowd, bitter against them. So I

proceeded to iron out the troubles as far as possible to reconcile them. That happened down there. But Nacy and I canvassed the state after the primary, in the general election, and made this same arrangement. I've got to see if I can find it here. Publicity director for the county committee here kept it over in headquarters.

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FUCHS: I wonder what happened to that. That would be very good for us to have.

AYLWARD: It would. You see, I used the county committee as a sounding board. I'd call them together every week and I'd make a speech on the issues or I'd challenge the opposition. I'd call their attention to the misrule of the administration--their extravagance, excessive taxation, anything that I thought was germane to the situation to call attention to their inefficiencies and incompetencies, to induce the Republicans and Independents to vote the Democratic ticket. I always closed the campaign by making the radio speech over WDAF. Here is a campaign speech for the primary election. [This and other manuscripts donated by Mr. Aylward have been filed in a collection of the James P. Aylward Papers deposited in the Harry S. Truman Library.]

FUCHS: I would like to know who wrote that speech? Was that by you or did you . . .

AYLWARD: Oh, no. I collaborated with Mr. John P. Gilday who was a man of letters.

FUCHS: And you delivered that.

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AYLWARD: I delivered it over the radio. Yes. I've got to suspend now right here.

FUCHS: Thank you very much.

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Third Oral History Interview with James P. Aylward, June 27, 1968, Kansas City, Missouri. By James R. Fuchs, Harry S. Truman Library.

FUCHS: I guess we got down to the point where you were discussing the windup of the primary with that speech.

AYLWARD: Well, I have some other matters here. But I want to make it clear for the record that I was never unfriendly to Mr. Truman at any time, despite the fact that you asked me if I had been in Washington on several occasions when I didn't call on him. Well, it wasn't due to any unsocial disposition on my part. The President had thousands of persons who would have liked to see him. I had no business with him. I had my own particular business to attend to and I got in and got out of Washington. When he returned to Kansas City I saw him on numerous occasions, in public places, at public gatherings, on the street, in the bank (the Columbia

National, where he is a depositor and my brother is the president), and we were always cordial and friendly and passed the pleasantries of the day, and remain so up to the present time.

Now, with respect to the Pendergasts, I was always friendly with the Pendergasts, despite our political differences. There was a period there for about ten years

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when there was an unfriendly attitude due to the political encounters we had, fights in local politics; but for the past ten years of Jim Pendergast's life, we were very good friends. He was a tenant in this building; I saw him almost every week, and we were very close friends, so far as I know. He was always friendly toward me. In fact, we made several political fights together during that time while there was a division in the party, supporting a slate of candidates against the opposition. I knew his father, Michael J. Pendergast, who was one of my early friends. He was the leader of the 10th Ward, the 11th Ward, the democratic club for the Pendergasts. In those days there was quite a rigorous rivalry between the Shannons and the Pendergasts in that particular ward. He was in the circuit clerk's office when I was a boy, office boy for Walsh, and I visited the courthouse on many occasions, and in fact, he was also license inspector. He was one of the leaders of the Pendergast organization and as a boy he invited me to attend the Pendergast meetings in the 10th Ward and to make political speeches, when I wasn't so very good, you know. He took a chance on me coming out there, fumbling around. So I considered him one of my best friends.

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FUCHS: In Jonathan Daniels, book, *The Man of Independence*, it is stated that Truman told Daniels, "Aylward was a fine person, but he was against me in 1940 and has never been to see me since. He knows that if he had been for me then he would have been national chairman in place of Hannegan."

AYLWARD: I want to say this about that. I wasn't against him in 1940. Some of my friends wanted to be against him and I reasoned with and I induced them to support him. That is the actual fact. Now some of my mischievous friends peddled that kind of gossip to him and he believed it. He didn't get any information from me, didn't seek any inquiry with me as to where I stood, and that year he won by about 7,500 votes. It was a close election between Stark and himself. As I remember it, a few weeks before that campaign, Dickmann and Hannegan, so it was said, intended to support Stark for the Senate and they changed in the last few weeks of that campaign. That made it possible for Truman to win. So he's been misinformed about me all the time.

Now, I want to say this about the national chairmanship. He is a little presumptive about that. How does he know that I would accept the national chairmanship if it

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were tendered or if it was offered, because it was such a high and glorious honor that I'd be attracted to it? Why, I was offered the state chairmanship by Forrest Smith and I declined it and many other honors I've declined. Now not to prove the fact that I want to be mentioned as a great politician, I don't. I'm just an ordinary, mediocre guy trying to get along, but I've been successful, due to the help and cooperation of my many friends of intelligence and ability, and they were outstanding men, that collaborated with me in the preparing of speeches and the administration of the affairs of the campaign. It's management and so forth; and that's why I assume we were successful.

FUCHS: You didn't have any aspirations to be national chairman?

AYLWARD: No, I had none, had none, never manifested any to anybody, never expected to be. In fact, I nominated Hannegan when he was selected as national chairman, because I was a member of the Democratic National Committee. Well, it was the proper thing for me to do coming from Missouri. Bennett Clark was there and his many other friends in Washington at the time that happened. Well, Hannegan and I had been friends for, oh, ten years or more.

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He was the city chairman in the City of St. Louis. I associated with him when I was there; I attended several political meetings, addressed them on numerous occasions at his request, so we were friendly.

FUCHS: What do you feel induced Hannegan to switch his support from Stark to Truman late in the 1940 senatorial primary campaign?

AYLWARD: Well, I don't know, I assume it was due to the pressure of practical Democrats in that community who felt that they had some obligation to go along with the Truman fight, but I don't actually know. But that's what I understand happened. I want to tell you something else about that since we're on it. The Truman campaign financial committee was practically insolvent and without funds. Going into St. Louis in the closing days of that campaign they didn't have enough money to defray the expenses for their advertising campaign. Now this is all hearsay. I understand they contacted Mr. Joseph McGee here in Kansas City and that he advanced \$5,000 to defray the expense of getting out that publicity.

FUCHS: Was that a loan, do you know?

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AYLWARD: I don't think it was a loan. I think it was a campaign contribution. I don't think so.

FUCHS: Did Senator Truman take an active role in county politics during his first term as senator from '34 to '40?

AYLWARD: Well, I don't think he did. He came back here on several occasions. I don't know that he made any speeches in the campaign, perhaps he did; he made some in support of the state ticket. He could have. He was in Eastern Jackson County and they had the Eastern Jackson County Democratic Club that was headed up by the Sermon crowd in those days. It was affiliated here with the Pendergast organization.

I want to say this also about young Jim Pendergast. I call him young, he was a little younger than I was and he's now dead and gone. But he was a member of the bar and he was a good lawyer and capable. He had been assistant city counselor and he represented good clients, had a good clientele, and he was a good citizen. About President Truman, I think he was one of the greatest Presidents the country has ever had and I think he'll go down in history recorded as such.

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FUCHS: Do you know anything of the relations between Jim Pendergast and Mr. Truman after Mr. Truman returned to Jackson County after his presidency?

AYLWARD: Well, they were very close, cordial relations for a number of years. I don't know how they were in the latter years of his life. But he made many trips to Washington, and I understand that they saw each other on numerous occasions.

FUCHS: What about the relationship between Senator Truman and Senator Bennett Clark, especially during the first term?

AYLWARD: Well, I want to tell you about that. Clark controlled all the Federal patronage during the time he was in the Senate and the Truman group didn't get any patronage. He wasn't in any position to get any jobs for his friends for several years after he was in the Senate, because Clark was in control of all the jobs; and it even got to the point where Truman was becoming piqued and disappointed because, I understand, of the position of the President on patronage and he was showing some resistance. But Vivian Phillips, whom I suggested to you that you see, he was active in this second campaign for the Senate

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for Truman and he informed me that Truman was in Missouri making some speeches and he saw him at Jeff City and he had received a telegram from President Roosevelt, that held like to have him return; he wanted to see him about a very important matter concerning legislation in the Senate. Truman indicated to Phillips that he wasn't interested in returning, that he had been unfairly treated in the matter of receiving recognition as a United States Senator from western Missouri, representing the entire state with Bennett Clark, and that Bennett Clark was getting all the jobs. It was something to this effect--this is pure hearsay, but you can get it from him. And Phillips encouraged him to return to Washington. In fact, he prepared a telegram and had it for him to sign, and finally induced him to sign this telegram and he sent it to the President saying that he would return. And one of the reasons for this was that Phillips had suggested, "Now, if you go back there and find out what's on the President's mind, and if you are in a position consistently to go along, why, you'll get some recognition by way of patronage."

So, he went back there and lined up with the President, and thereafter he received many Federal jobs.

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I think one of them was the appointment of Judge [Richard] Duncan to the Federal bench. He had been trying to get Duncan appointed as Federal judge and it finally came about. That's what I get from Mr. Phillips.

And also I want to say to you that Phillips told me that he kept the files on that campaign, and if you'd get in touch with the executor of his estate, they might be in a position to give you the files.

FUCHS: When did he die?

AYLWARD: He died about six months ago.

FUCHS: What do you recall of the instance where Mr. Pendergast was supposed to have asked Mr. Truman, at President Roosevelt's request, to vote for Barkley for Democratic Majority Leader, and Mr. Truman said he was already committed to Pat Harrison. And I believe that it's been said that you were supposed to have been asked to make a phone call on that occasion. Do you have any recollection of that?

AYLWARD: No, but I have a recollection about this. My brother, a banker, who was the treasurer of the Truman campaign,

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he sought an appointment to the Federal Reserve Board and Bennett Clark supported him in his attempt to get him appointed, but Truman was for Pat Harrison's candidate from Mississippi. He said that he had already made a commitment and had to go along. Well, that incident happened. But I have no recollection of urging him to vote for Barkley.

FUCHS: It's been said that this incident that you spoke of perhaps caused an alienation between you and Mr. Truman, because he would not support your brother for the Federal Reserve Board?

AYLWARD: Oh, I wasn't that thin-skinned. I've been in politics all my life, you know, and I was used and accustomed to so-called disappointments, if you want to put it on that basis. I know that they can't be for everybody. They are going to be for some particular applicant and he had his own personal reasons. Now while others might have felt he was under a personal obligation I didn't so consider it. It didn't make any difference to me. However, I would be for my brother certainly. But that didn't have anything to do in causing any rift in our friendship, so far as I was concerned.

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As I told you, Jim Pendergast took part of the state in the campaign, Truman's campaign, contacting persons who might be of help or aid in obtaining votes for Truman. One of them was Tom Bodine. Tom Bodine was the publisher of the *Paris Mercury* in Paris, Missouri. This was one of the famous Missouri Democratic newspapers. He was a scholar, and he published a literary newspaper, classical style. He went along with us in the fight and supported Truman; and many others whom Jim kept in contact. That's one of them I remember.

I told you that when we were to meet Truman after contacting him at Warsaw, Missouri concerning filing for the Senate. We met him at the Terry Hotel--the others say it was at the Bothwell--and Frank Monroe, who was one of the leaders of Pettis County, that's in Sedalia, he came into the lobby of the hotel while I was sitting there and he said, "Well, Jim, we're all for you for the United States Senate." I proceeded to tell him that I wasn't a candidate and didn't intend to be a candidate to the United States Senate, and he said, "Well, we've got to have a candidate."

And I said, "We'll have one." I said "Within the half hour I will introduce you to the next United

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States Senator from Missouri"

He said, "Who is he?"

I said, "When he arrives I'll introduce him to you." So, Truman came in with his group of speakers who were making the state campaign with him, and after I talked with him a few minutes, as I told you, he said he couldn't win, didn't have any money, wasn't equipped to make the campaign, he was unknown and so forth. I finally convinced him that he ought to file, that this was the time, that he could be elected, and we'd do everything we could to properly finance the campaign for him. Then we proceeded up to the second floor where this banquet was.

FUCHS: Were you in a hotel room when you talked with Mr. Truman about filing? You didn't do this in the lobby?

AYLWARD: I did, personally, with him sitting over on one side in the lobby.

FUCHS: It's been written that you spent most of the night in a hotel room trying to get him to accept this.

AYLWARD: No, no, this happened in the lobby. We went over to one corner of the lobby and sat down: Jim Pendergast,

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Truman, and myself. We presented the matter to him and he offered us all of the excuses that a person could offer in attempting to avoid running for the Senate. We convinced him he ought to do it and he accepted.

So, after that, we walked up to the second floor to the banquet room where this dinner was being given under the auspices of the local Chamber of Commerce or some organization; and Frank Monroe walked along with me and Truman was about five paces ahead of me and I said to Judge Monroe (he had been a county judge), "There's the next United States Senator from Missouri."

He said, "You mean Harry Truman?"

I said, "Yes."

He said, "Jim, you know he can't win. Nobody knows him."

He went off and had some forcible discussion about it and I said, "Now, listen, Judge, Truman's going to win and some day you'll be glad that you supported him because you will want --- recognition in Pettis County. You'll need jobs, too, for your friends around here who are members of your organization, and you won't be a leader around here very long if you can't furnish the army with some food and fodder."

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And he said, "All right."

After Truman was elected he appointed Judge Monroe as head of the WPA in Pettis County. At that time they had a lot of jobs of that nature and, of course, it added to his influence and prestige in the county.

Oh, yes, another thing you asked me. I didn't mean to imply when you interrogated me about the defense of the persons charged with vote frauds, that they were incapably or inadequately defended, because they were defended by some of the most able and brilliant members of the bar. One of them was Mr. John Madden who was a Rhodes scholar and afterwards represented Pendergast in the defense of his income tax case, he and [R.L.] Brewster. And [William G.] Boatright was an outstanding, capable lawyer and he was in charge of the defense of all of those cases, and many others. So they got a real capable defense according to the law and the evidence. Everything was done possible to give them proper representation.

FUCHS: Although Bennett Clark supported Milligan in 1934, Mr. Truman came back and supported Clark in 1938. Have you any thoughts about that?

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AYLWARD: Well, they became friends after that. Pendergast supported him, too. Oh, from that time on, he got his fair share of appointments, Federal appointments, under Roosevelt, and they got along as good friends.

Prior to the filing of Truman for the Senate, Mr. William Hirth, who was the head of the Missouri Farmers' Association, a cooperative organization that operated grain elevators and gasoline stations and sold corn and grains, wheat and rye, oats--all sorts of livestock foods, and other commodities--he called on me and he informed me that he would like to run for the United States Senate. Hirth was a friend of Clark's and Ruby Hulen was the attorney for the cooperative. He was from down at Columbia. And he urged me to use my good offices to induce the Democratic organization here to support him for the Senate. Well, I frankly told Mr. Hirth that I wasn't in any position to do that, that I was certain that the organization of Democrats in western Missouri would want some candidate from western Missouri and not from rural Missouri. Bennett Clark came from the eastern part of the State and the Democrats ought to have a senator from the populous district in western Missouri, and I regretted that I wasn't in a position to do it.

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FUCHS: How did he accept that?

AYLWARD: Well, he went out of here all right. Later he wrote an article about it.

FUCHS: Do you recall the gist of that?

AYLWARD: No, I don't. But he was a powerful person in politics. He had this great membership in the Missouri Farmers' Association, and among the farm group he was a powerful and influential person. He supported Clark.

Now, about Clark being supported by Pendergast later, and Truman. There was a vacancy on the Federal bench, and I discussed the matter with Clark a year or so prior to the time of the vacancy, and I urged that he support Judge Albert A. Ridge, who was on the circuit bench here at the time, and he indicated to me that he would support him; he'd recommend his appointment. He was in the Army with Truman, a bugler in the famous 129th Field Artillery, overseas with him. So Clark came to Kansas City to confer with Pendergast and they discussed this appointment to the Federal bench and Pendergast suggested that Clark support Caskie Collett for the appointment. Caskie was on the Supreme bench at that time,

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I think, having been appointed by Judge Park, and Clark is alleged to have said, "Why, I thought you'd be for Judge Ridge. Jim Aylward has recommended him."

He said, "No, I'm for Caskie Collett. You know, Ridge was formerly in Aylward's office. You'd like to have your own partner on the bench, too, wouldn't you," or some such statement to that effect.

And Clark agreed to support him and he was appointed.

Well, this was during the holidays, Christmastime, and Clark called me at my house after his conference with Pendergast--I think it was on Christmas Day, or New Year's maybe. He said, "I'd like to see you."

So, I said, "Well, I'll be down in about an hour," and he was over at the Muehlebach Hotel and I went over to see him. So he relates this conversation which he had with Pendergast and he said, "Why, I thought you were going to be there?"

I said, "How could you anticipate that I would be there when I had no knowledge of what was going on. It's all right, you're running for the Senate, you did what you could under the circumstances, you want to be supported. You took care of yourself all right."

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I had written him letters about this. Afterwards, I gave one of these letters to Judge Ridge. He's now dead and gone. I really called his attention to it before he committed himself, several weeks before this meeting took place. But those things happen in politics.

FUCHS: When was Ridge in your office?

AYLWARD: Why, Ridge was a member of the Pendergast organization and in the 10th Ward he was a precinct worker. Michael Pendergast, the father of Jim Pendergast, who was the head of the ward organization, gave him a job in the circuit clerk's office. He worked in the clerk's office for about four years and we suffered some defeats around here, and the jobs were becoming more scarce; we didn't have enough to go around, and Mike Pendergast told Judge Ridge that he would have to take care of some of the older members of his organization and he'd have to resign the job that he had; because he intended to give it to someone else, not because he was displeased with Ridge's services, but others were entitled to recognition, having been longer members of the organization. So Ridge resigned and he met me in the court house lobby and told me about

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his plight, and he said he had just been admitted to the bar. And he said, "I'd like to go into some law office, preferably yours if you'd see your way clear to permit me to do so."

I said, "Well, come on up and we'll practice law with the crowd I have up there and if we make it, we'll divide, enough to get by on." So he came in here. And he remained in the office for about ten years, and actively practiced law; he was a good trial lawyer. And then he was appointed to the bench by Judge Park, circuit bench. He was, I believe I said, a bugler in the 129th Field Artillery, a friend of Truman's all the time, clear down to the time of his death. He was later elevated to the United States Circuit Court of Appeals. He was one of our outstanding, foremost judges, among the most brilliant that ever sat on this bench around here; his opinions show it, evidence of the fact. They are printed in the book. You see, we didn't, for years, receive any Federal patronage in this district. We carried this state by over 200,000 votes for Roosevelt,

and he lost the state of Kansas. The Roosevelt administration favored the Kansans with all the jobs around here. They filled them up. And I complained about that to him on one

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occasion back in Washington in the latter days of his public life. And he said, "Well, I'm not in a position to give you the reason now. Someday I'll tell you." Well, I never got around to the point where I knew what the reason was.

FUCHS: Roosevelt never gave you the reason.

AYLWARD: No, he didn't live long enough, and I didn't see him.

FUCHS: You don't think it was connected with his relationship with Pendergast, the feeling about Pendergast?

AYLWARD: Well, it might have been. I don't mean that his feeling was animated by reason of the discussion that Pendergast had with Gualdoni over his failure to support Reed for President, but other things that might have happened thereafter. And I want to say this to you. You asked me -what Pendergast's feeling or disposition was towards Roosevelt. Well, no candidate for public office in Missouri or elsewhere who didn't support Roosevelt's policies, foreign and domestic, could ever be nominated or elected to public office. So it wouldn't

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have made any difference how he felt. We were all for Roosevelt, all the way without inner limits, qualifications, or exception.

Now, during that campaign, they had a meeting of the State Democratic Committee in Columbia at the same time the Missouri Press Association was meeting. So, I, under the auspices of the Missouri Democratic State Committee, arranged a banquet for the Missouri Press Association. At that banquet I addressed the gentlemen of the press, promoting better relations with the press. That happened at Columbia during that campaign for Senator.

FUCHS: Do you remember the date of that?

AYLWARD: I think it was the day I was elected to the National Committee upon the resignation of Mr. William T. Kemper. I know there's a speech I made up there, but it doesn't have any date.

FUCHS: Could we copy that?

AYLWARD: Yes. [A copy of this speech is now in the Truman Library's collection.]

FUCHS: Do you know if you wrote this entirely by yourself or did someone collaborate with you?

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AYLWARD: Well, I had somebody collaborate with me, Mr. John Gilday, one of the most learned men, brilliant, I've ever known. I never did anything without getting some advice or counsel; I wasn't taking it on my own to assume all the responsibility. I tried to do the best I could under the circumstances.

FUCHS: Yes. Researchers are always interested in knowing, if possible, who worked on a speech.

AYLWARD: Well, that's who did, and he was the best in the business.

FUCHS: Very good.

AYLWARD: Here's a speech that I made during the Roosevelt-Hoover campaign, which discusses the issues of the times, and particularly those pertaining to conditions in Missouri, and it sets forth the current issues that were being discussed at the time. It also refers to the fact that for the first time, owing to the neglect of a Republican governor, the voters would have to select their Congressional representatives at-large.

FUCHS: Was this a radio address?

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AYLWARD: Yes, it was a radio address.

FUCHS: We would like a copy of that, too.

AYLWARD: I'll let you have this one too. I'm just trying to give you some idea of what it's all about. Here you are.

FUCHS: I'll return that to you.

AYLWARD: All right. One of those speeches sets forth the issues that were discussed in the Truman campaign.

FUCHS: Yes.

AYLWARD: It gives you a synopsis of what we're talking about, what the campaign was about.

Here's one about the registration back here when the candidates were running at-large for Congress.

Now, here's a copy of the synopsis of the election laws of 1936, which was officially issued by the election board of the county, delivered to all the judges and clerks, with the request that each judge and clerk read it carefully and take it with them to the polling place.

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And at every organization meeting that I had in which I talked about getting out the vote and the value of one vote, an extra vote in the precinct was in many cases sufficient to elect a President of the United States or a governor or a member of council. To read the law and to follow the law and to obey the law and as this admonishes, in each case read the law, know the law and guess at nothing; so they knew what the law was, with respect to their obligations and performance of their duty in all of the precincts, the four hundred and sixty-odd precincts in the city.

FUCHS: Would you like to put this in the Library?

AYLWARD: Sure, put it in there so they'll know what it is.

Now, I talked about the so-called establishment, the bankers in Missouri who usually controlled the nomination and election of the state treasurer because he was in charge of the exchequer of the funds of the taxpaying citizens of the State of Missouri. And at that time they were depositing those funds to the favored banks, and under the law the bankers are not required to pay any interest. After that came to light there was considerable agitation in the political forum to require the bankers

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to pay interest on these deposits. So during the next ten years there were laws passed requiring them to pay a reasonable amount of interest, and they're now paying interest on the deposits, which are comparable to the interest paid on United States bonds, around four percent. I wanted to get it straight on that.

FUCHS: Do you know anything of the meeting in the Hotel Statler in early 1940, probably January, in which Truman decided to file again for Senator?

AYLWARD: No, I don't.

FUCHS: What of William Boyle and his association with Mr. Truman?

AYLWARD: Well, Boyle had a political job here in the early days in the county court house. He was affiliated with the Pendergast organization. And after the Democrats were defeated, Bryce Smith became mayor and continued as mayor of the city, and they had a home rule police department and some of my friends became interested in having Boyle appointed chief of police. So upon their suggestion, Bryce Smith, whose campaign I managed in season and out

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of season, appointed Boyle chief of police. His mother was a member of the county committee and she was a very active worker in the Democratic Party and a friend of Truman. Later he was selected as chairman of the Democratic National Committee. That's part of his background. His brother was a lawyer and at one time was assistant county prosecuting attorney here. He later went into the Army and became a colonel or a major general. I think if he's alive he is still in the Army.

FUCHS: Is he a twin brother? I believe I heard that.

AYLWARD: I believe he is. I believe so.

Now, I'll give you these. The Democracy Publishing Company published these magazines or periodicals or whatever you want to call them. Now, there's one about me and I'm not giving this to you to play it up, but here's what he has to say about it. You can have that. Here's a partial biography of Stark and other Democrats at that time who were around here.

FUCHS: I haven't seen these before.

AYLWARD: This is not published anymore; it was then. And by the way, during the period of these campaigns, we had

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a local publication here known as the Missouri Democrat. It was strictly a Democratic newspaper. It was published by . . .

FUCHS: That's been referred to as Mr. Pendergast's personal organ.

AYLWARD: It could have been. It could have been. James Bradshaw was the publisher of it. He had been in state politics for years and at one time held a state office. And Percy B. Sophie, the editor of *Democracy* here, was one of the editors on his newspaper.

FUCHS: Are they both dead?

AYLWARD: They're both dead. Sophie went out to Portland, Oregon and died, I think. But this will give you the names of a lot of the leaders of the party and their activities at the time. You can have this one and here's another one on Stark. This carried a prediction by me that Major Stark will be nominated for governor the second time, I mean, the second time after he was a candidate, and here's a description of Missouri's next governor, Percy B. Sophie. You can have that too. Here, I'll put them in here.

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FUCHS: Fine.

Who was Colonel Frank Erhart? He was supposed to have gone with Victor Messall to file for Mr. Truman on February 3, 1940. Do you know who he was?

AYLWARD: No. Truman had some friends down there around Joplin and Carthage who were prominent in his campaign. I always thought they induced Truman to appoint Messall. I don't know how he got the appointment.

FUCHS: No, this was when they had decided in 1940 that Mr. Truman would run.

AYLWARD: Yes, I know, at the time that he got into politics he was secretary to Frank Lee. Frank Lee wouldn't have had a chance to have been elected to Congress, had it not been for the fact that the election was being held at-large, because in southwestern Missouri it was impossible to carry, that was a Republican district, it was so heavily Republican. Dewey Short was a Congressman from there for twelve or fourteen years continuously, and others prior to that time.

FUCHS: Do you think that this thing I read you the other day about you going with Mr. Truman to see Messall at Frank Lee's office never happened.

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AYLWARD: Never happened. Never happened. I didn't even know him. I didn't know him. Naturally, I would have been for Harper. He was my--I say "my"--he was the publicity director for the state committee operating under my direction. This was early and he worked like a Trojan, writing speeches, collaborating with us about plans for the campaign, day and night, close to Truman. He traveled around with him, too, on occasion. of course, I was out in the state campaigning personally for him, so as to spread our activities around, be more effective. No, I had nothing to do with it.

FUCHS: By 1940 you, of course, were no longer state chairman but you were national committeeman. Did you take any particular part in the campaign for Mr. Truman in 1940, that you recall?

AYLWARD: Well, I'll tell you, in 1944 I was urged by the Democrats in rural Missouri to continue as a member of the national committee. They wanted me to stand in for the office, and I wasn't at all interested; Nacy and some of the St. Louis Democrats wanted Bob Hannegan to become the national committeeman from Missouri, though I was positive that I could be reelected to the

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national committee if I wanted to make the fight. Senator Kinney was in Jefferson City--we were down there to attend the convention where the members of the national committee were to be selected--and he told me that Jim Pendergast was going through the lobbies of the hotels telling everybody that if they couldn't get anybody to run against me that he'd run himself. Well, I said to them at a conference, "Now, if Hannegan wants this job, it's all right with me, but he's

going to tell me he wants this job. I'm not anxious, you see. Kinney, I can beat him, I'm satisfied, but I don't think it would have a very good effect on the chairman of the Democratic National Committee if he suffered a defeat here for a member of the national committee. That wouldn't look too good. But rather than have that happen, if he tells me that he's a candidate for the office and wants it, I'll stand aside, but he's got to do it." And he called me on the long distance telephone and that's what he told me. So I was not a candidate. But despite all the bickering and all the antipathy and enmity that's stirred up by reason of our political differences, I still had sufficient friends in the State of Missouri who were in a position to have reelected me to the national committee, in my humble judgment.

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Now, another thing about the national committee. In St. Louis, Missouri, in 1940, I was chairman of the state committee and a candidate for reelection to the national committee and I had assurances from an overwhelming majority of the delegates that they favored me for reelection to the national committee. Hannegan was prominent in St. Louis politics. We held this convention at the Kial Auditorium in St. Louis. Hannegan saw me in the lobby of the auditorium and he informed me that Jim Pendergast didn't know that I was a candidate for membership to the national committee. Well, I said, "The newspapers have carried the story for weeks. Everybody knows it."

He said, "I'd appreciate it if you'd tell Pendergast that you're a candidate."

"Why," I said, "I'll be very glad to do that."

So I accosted him out in the hallway and I said, "Jim, I'm a candidate for reelection to the national committee."

He said, "Well, I'm glad to know it. I'll vote for you."

I have enough votes with him, but I didn't want to

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be discourteous to him. But after this we became close, warm, personal friends and remained so for ten or twelve years until the time of his death.

FUCHS: In April 1940 in connection with Truman's senatorial campaign, there were what we might call perennial charges concerning a slush fund for Truman. Do you know anything about that?

AYLWARD: No. Well, I know in our day the funds were very, very meager. We didn't know from day to day how much we were going to have in the till, whether we could keep the doors open, continuing as an organization actively in support of Truman. However, we were fortunate and survived the situation. Here's a statement from a local paper. I just happened to see it here:

"Tuck Milligan is going to take the democracy of Missouri into his confidence Friday night. With Cochran and Truman on his trail he'd better be good. How about those campaign contributions from the deserving Democrats who hold Federal jobs"-congressmen and so forth.

Now, I could tell you some other things, but I don't know they're germane, whether I ought to tell you or not.

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FUCHS: Scholars would probably be interested in almost any comments about Missouri politics. There is a lot I don't know about.

AYLWARD: Well, you're a stranger here. You wouldn't know. Well, now, Mr. Todd George, who lives out around Lee's Summit, Missouri--and he's in his nineties now--he was actively engaged in politics for years; one time he served as a county officeholder. He told me this story in the presence of John Miller--I think held tell it to you--it isn't exactly in confidence. I don't know that it makes much difference. But Truman was a candidate for election to the county court as county judge, and the members of the Klan were against him, the Ku Klux Klan. Out at Grandview they had a klavern council, whatever they called it in those days; and he became disturbed because they were against him on the grounds that Pendergast was a Catholic politician and they weren't going to support him. So Truman and Roger Sermon and Vivian Truman contacted George, who was not a member of the Klan, but he had a close relationship with the Grand Kleagle, the person in charge of such klaverns, and they asked him if he wouldn't use his good offices

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with the kleagle to induce him to support Truman for county judge. So he agreed to go out and make an effort and discuss the matter with him. So they drove from Independence out to Grandview where this Klan lodge was located, and they were to wait for Todd George while he went upstairs to talk to the klansman about supporting Truman. And he went up the staircase and he rapped on the door and they had one of those small keyhole peepholes, and the inside guard came to the door and he said he wanted to get inside to see the Kleagle. The guard said, "Are you a member?"

He said, "No, I'm not."

He said, "Well, you can't come in here."

He said, "Pardon me now just a moment, just hear me out." He said, "He's a friend of mine, and if you tell him I'm here and would like to see him, I believe he'll let me in."

So he said, "Just a moment." He came back and reported by opening the door and said, "Come in."

George said he remained there for an hour and a half arguing with him, furnishing him with reasons, good reasons why he thought they should support Truman, and

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they agreed to support him. So he came down and it was midnight then and his friends had disappeared with the transportation, and he had to arrange to get himself back to Lee's Summit any way he could.

Now, he also said that *Collier's* offered him ten thousand dollars for the story but he wouldn't permit them to publish it. Now, he's still alive.

FUCHS: Todd George?

AYLWARD: Yes. They're all friends.

FUCHS: Mr. Truman, you know, was accused of being a member of the Klan in the '22 election. There's a story that he was taken to a place to pay his membership fee, but then he didn't go into it, he never became a member. Do you know of that?

AYLWARD: Well, I know that there was a rumor that he was a member. I thought that he said later that he didn't actually believe in their principles, but he just became a member for political reasons.

FUCHS: Well, the story is that he didn't become a member because he had all these Catholics in his Battery and

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if he couldn't support them and give them jobs, why, he wasn't doing to be a member of the Klan.

Did you have anything to do-with Jesse Donaldson's career in this area?

AYLWARD: No, but he was a very fine person, very capable, competent, honorable. He was postmaster here and later was made Postmaster General.

FUCHS: How would you assess Mr. Truman as a politician?

AYLWARD: Well, I'd say he was a very good politician. He got around, met the voters, as many as possible. He has been very successful in the many campaigns. That ought to be proof of the fact that he was a good politician.

FUCHS: Did you go to the inauguration in 1945?

AYLWARD: No, I did not.

FUCHS: Of course, that was when Roosevelt--it wasn't much of an event during the war.

AYLWARD: Well, there were numerous persons that were agents in this campaign throughout the state, 114 counties. I can't remember all of them.

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FUCHS: Yes. Did you know Phillip Welch, who was vice-chairman in 1940?

AYLWARD: Yes, he was mayor of the city of St. Joseph. He had been active in politics up there. He was one of my supporters, Phil Welch and others.

FUCHS: Another vice-chairman in 1940 when he was campaigning for renomination was John Farrington of Springfield.

AYLWARD: Yes, Farrington of Springfield. He was a prominent lawyer down there.

FUCHS: What about James R. Wade of Sullivan, Missouri? Did you know a Delmar Dail?

AYLWARD: From Richmond?

FUCHS: No, he was from Marcelline, Missouri. J.V. Conran?

AYLWARD: Yes, he was from New Madrid, in southeast Missouri. He's still in politics, active. He must be eighty.

FUCHS: What about this chairman of Mr. Truman's Negro Division, Dr. William J. Tompkins?

AYLWARD: He was a very prominent Negro, a very capable and able person, intelligent and educated. He was active

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around here and he was later appointed recorder of deeds of the city of Washington by Roosevelt. He was a friend of [Roy] Wilkins. He and Wilkins were out here connected with the *Kansas City Call* in those days. Wilkins started from here before he became president of NAACP. He was around here. And Wilkins, as everybody knows, is an outstanding, capable, brilliant, intelligent Negro. He has done a very capable job, I believe, as head of the NAACP. William J. Tompkins.

FUCHS: Are you acquainted with Roy Harper who is now a judge?

AYLWARD: Yes, in southeast Missouri. He was on the state committee at one time I think.

FUCHS: Well, that's about all I have unless you can think of some other things we should talk about.

AYLWARD: Oh, I want to correct this. I mentioned that David R. Francis, who had been Ambassador to Russia and mayor of the city of St. Louis, was considered as a candidate for governor at the time Park was elected; well, he wasn't. The person that was considered along with the rest of them

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was Stark, with Harris, the lieutenant governor and Ragland and Park and one or two others, who we said were all qualified, capable, and representative of the Democratic Party and if they were acceptable to the other Democrats in the state, certainly we'd go along from our part of the state.

Well, I guess that's all for the time being. I might add a bit about the lawyers who defended Pendergast in his income tax evasion case, Madden and Brewster.

FUCHS: Who was Brewster?

AYLWARD: R. L. Brewster. He was a candidate for senator against James A. Reed; a Republican, from Kansas City, prominent in Republican Party politics, was one of the leaders for many years, one of the most capable and brilliant in the organization, or as a member of the bar. They defended him in the contempt case and in the tax evasion case. Well, Madden and Burke, after Pendergast was sentenced to the penitentiary, became owners of the Ready-Mixed Concrete Company and the Midwest Paving Company and the other companies that were formerly owned by Pendergast. And they are now operated by Burke, Ready-

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Mixed and Midwest and others. Well, that's just a sidelight.

FUCHS: How did that come about?

AYLWARD: Well, I don't know.. Maybe Mr. Pendergast wasn't able to pay the fee. I'm not sure. I wouldn't know.

FUCHS: What was Burke's first name?

AYLWARD: James Burke.

I said that I suggested that one of the Mays of May and May introduce Truman in his senatorial campaign in Hannibal. Now, I don't know that I actually did that, that might have been arranged by somebody else; but I did call on them in that campaign early, and they agreed to go along and support Truman. There may be some other inaccuracies.

FUCHS: Well, you can correct those as you wish. Thank you.

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