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Oral History Interview
with
MAY (MARY FRANCES) WALLACE

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

NOTICE

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JOHNSON: You were born Mary Frances, is that right?

WALLACE: Mary Frances.

JOHNSON: Mary Frances Southern?

WALLACE: Southern, yes. My father was the *Independence Examiner* publisher.

JOHNSON: And his name was?

WALLACE: William, Bill.

JOHNSON: William Southern. Was it "junior?"

WALLACE: Yes. He had to be a junior because he had a cantankerous old uncle that was a senior.

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JOHNSON: When and where were you born?

WALLACE: In Independence, Missouri, out on the Old Procter place.

JOHNSON: And what was the date?

WALLACE: My birthday is in July, the 9th. I was born in '94, 1894. My sister was born in '92 and I was born in '94.

JOHNSON: What are the names of your sisters and brothers?

WALLACE: Well, I just had one sister, and she is Caroline. She is Bill Carnes' mother. One of the grandparents was Caroline, and so she was named Caroline.

JOHNSON: There were just two children in the family?

WALLACE: They lost a little girl younger than I, and my father always wanted a boy, but . . .

JOHNSON: Never had one.

WALLACE: He didn't get one.

JOHNSON: What was your mother's maiden name?

WALLACE: Procter.

JOHNSON: What was her first name, your mother's?

WALLACE: Emma.

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JOHNSON: Now her father was a famous Independence citizen wasn't he? Your mother's father? What was his name?

WALLACE: Yes, he was a very famous minister.

JOHNSON: And what was his first name?

WALLACE: Alexander.

JOHNSON: Alexander Procter.

WALLACE: They came here; they came up here from St. Louis about 1860. They had a place for him here. They wanted him to come here. That was in about 1860, and he preached until almost the end of the century.

JOHNSON: And that was the Christian Church, is that right, the First Christian Church of Independence?

WALLACE: Yes. Disciples of Christ we call ourselves.

JOHNSON: The First Christian church had already been established, had it not, in 1835?

WALLACE: Yes. My father was a Presbyterian, and he and my mother went to separate churches all their lives; neither one of them wanted to go to the other one.

JOHNSON: Is that right?

WALLACE: So it was right funny.

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JOHNSON: How about your father's father. William Southern's father, what was his name?

WALLACE: [John N.] Grandpa Southern--they lived out in the country east of here, and he was injured in the Civil War. He fell off his horse and a Yankee kicked him. He walked with two canes all the rest of his life.

JOHNSON: So he followed the Confederates?

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: What states did the Southerns and the Procters come out of?

WALLACE: The Southerns were from Tennessee.

JOHNSON: Both families came from Tennessee?

WALLACE: Well, the Procters came up here from St. Louis, but I don't know exactly where they had been before that. He was called here--Alexander Procter--and preached from 1860 until he died close to the end of the century.

JOHNSON: So they were here during the Civil War, of course.

WALLACE: I suppose now, of course, they could have fixed Grandpa Southern and he wouldn't have had that, but he limped. He walked with two canes, and his office was up in the Square [where the Turner Music Company is

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located in 1988], on the corner up there. There were steps, just like that, and that old man just walked up those steps.

JOHNSON: What was his occupation?

WALLACE: He was a lawyer, a very fine lawyer. They said that he didn't have to write it out; if he made a statement, that was right. So I have a pretty good heritage.

JOHNSON: Yes. But his son, your father, William Southern, decided not to go into law apparently.

WALLACE: No. He ended up running a newspaper.

JOHNSON: Your father was a writer?

WALLACE: And interested in people. I can see him now; he had a yellow folding paper. You'd see him pick that up and start to limp; then you knew he was thinking about something.

JOHNSON: He'd have a yellow folder or papers, you say?

WALLACE: Yes, folded twice or three times. He was just as devout a Presbyterian as Mom was Campbellite.

JOHNSON: Did he graduate from high school here, your father?

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WALLACE: No. Where did he go to high school? He may not have gone; it was during the war.

JOHNSON: When was it he established the newspaper, the *Examiner*? Was that in the 1890s that your father established the newspaper?

WALLACE: In the very last part of the century [1898]. He always did want to be a newspaperman. He had a great uncle, who was a meany, and so pop always put "Junior" on his name, William Southern, Jr. because it distinguished him from the old man.

JOHNSON: Did he ever tell you why he wanted to start a new paper, a newspaper?

WALLACE: No, I think it was just born in him. I don't know.

JOHNSON: Did he want to promote Democratic party politics?

WALLACE: Oh yes, yes.

JOHNSON: He was a strong Democrat all those years, your father?

WALLACE: He was a died-in-the-wool Democrat, but he never did admit that. He took the side of the man that he thought was the best.

JOHNSON: He had another newspaper to compete against, I

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suppose.

WALLACE: Yes, although he was Uncle Billy.

JOHNSON: Oh, his uncle had the other paper?

WALLACE: He was kin, but it petered out, and Pop's stayed. But they always said it was kind of "slim pickins" there for a long time.

JOHNSON: Do you remember when your father first met Harry Truman? Did he ever talk to you about Harry Truman, meeting Harry Truman?

WALLACE: Well, he and Harry, they had quite a lot of dealings later, but I don't remember his first.

JOHNSON: According to one of the books, your father tried to talk Harry Truman out of running for Eastern Judge in 1922, but Harry kept insisting he wanted to run. So finally your father decided to support him. According to Daniel's book *Man of Independence*, your father went to a man names Phelps, Nick Phelps. Does that ring any bells with you, the name Phelps?

WALLACE: No.

JOHNSON: He was apparently one of the Pendergast people here in the county.

WALLACE: Oh yes, Pendergast. He was the boss; Pendergast

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was Kansas City boss.

JOHNSON: And William Southern went to Nick Phelps to tell him that Harry Truman wanted to run, and that helped get him acquainted with the Pendergast people.

WALLACE: But my father was a man that if he believed something, that's the thing that he supported. I mean he didn't do things just to be casual. He was an awful good father.

JOHNSON: What things did he feel strongly about? What kind of issues, or what kind of things, did he feel strongly about?

WALLACE: He believed that people all should have a say of their own. He was just a regular newspaperman. As I told you, he carried this little yellow thing and he'd get it out and write things on it.

JOHNSON: Where were you educated? Where did you go to school?

WALLACE: Independence High School, and then I was a year in Columbia, at the university (University of Missouri). My sister and I just went one year down there. Then she went on and was a kindergarten teacher. She was very interested in children's work.

JOHNSON: What is your sister's name?

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WALLACE: She was Caroline. Same as Caroline Carnes.

JOHNSON: What grade school did you go to here?

WALLACE: Ott. Over across from the Catholic Church.

JOHNSON: Oh yes.

WALLACE: We walked a lot of the time from where we lived out there. We live where Bill lives now, out at 638 Procter Place. We walked, and took our lunch, of course.

JOHNSON: They call it Procter Place?

WALLACE: The thing was, when my grandfather died, they gave each one of the children some of the property, and where Bill lives now was part of my mother's.

JOHNSON: Well, I suppose you had some of the same teachers that Harry Truman and Bess Wallace did. Was Mrs. Palmer still teaching in high school?

WALLACE: Mrs. Palmer, Oh yes. She was a very fine teacher.

JOHNSON: Was Tillie Brown still teaching high school?

WALLACE: Miss Brown taught me everything I know about. Tillie Brown, yes. Then there was another one, Miss--Miss Maggie Phelps.

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JOHNSON: Miss Phelps. Now, Miss Brown, did she teach English or history?

WALLACE: English, but she got the history in too. Yes, she was a fine teacher. Miss Phelps taught history.

JOHNSON: When did you first meet Harry Truman?

WALLACE: Well, now that's a question. I guess maybe when he went to war. See, he and Bess were sweethearts, if that's what you want to call them. See, he was over in the war for how long, two or three years?

JOHNSON: From 1917 to the spring of 1919, yes, two years. He was coming to what was then the Wallace home to visit Bess.

WALLACE: Oh, yes, across the street, he had two cousins, Miss Nellie and Miss Ethel Noland. Yes, he'd come there.

JOHNSON: Did you ever see him when he came to visit his cousins, the Nolands? Did you ever see him or meet him then when he was visiting the Nolands?

WALLACE: I don't remember. After he and Bess got to courting each other, we used to go on picnics. Have you ever seen that picture of Harry carrying the basket?

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JOHNSON: Yes.

WALLACE: Well, that's one of the picnics we went on; we walked out the River Road.

JOHNSON: Okay, that was River Road. Did you ever go on picnics, or do you know if Harry and Bess ever went on picnics at Cave Spring? Do you know where Cave Spring is?

WALLACE: No.

JOHNSON: Do you remember ever going on picnics out to a place called Cave Spring?

WALLACE: I can't remember. We used to walk out on the River Road.

JOHNSON: You'd go up here to River Road and then walk down to the bottoms there? Or to the river? Would you go down to the river, or to the water works; that was another place.

WALLACE: Yes. I have some pictures someplace, at the water works, and all of us standing out in front of it. You see, Frank Wallace, the older brother [of Bess], and his wife, lived next door, and we used to take our lunch. I've got that picture someplace, of Harry carrying the lunch basket.

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JOHNSON: I've seen that. And you were on that picnic.

WALLACE: Oh, yes.

JOHNSON: What did you do at these picnics, what kind of food did you fix?

WALLACE: Oh, we ate and we played. It was a nice place to play hide and seek or anything. It was down by the river.

JOHNSON: What did they like to fix to eat for picnics in those days?

WALLACE: Oh, we made sandwiches.

JOHNSON: What kind of sandwiches? What did you put in them?

WALLACE: Oh, there was something Harry didn't like that we always had to avoid, and now I can't think what it was.

JOHNSON: What kind of sandwiches did you like to fix in those days?

WALLACE: That's a long time ago, mister. Harry didn't like onions, that was the point. He wouldn't eat things that had onion in it. He was kind of a, well, I won't say a cranky eater, but he knew what he liked.

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JOHNSON: What about watermelon? Did you take watermelon with you for picnics?

WALLACE: Watermelon, yes.

JOHNSON: Or muskmelon, cantaloupe?

WALLACE: Bess liked watermelon.

JOHNSON: I remember a picture of a watermelon feast over there, yes, at the house. Were you in on that?

WALLACE: Oh, I expect so. I was usually around when there was any food.

JOHNSON: On these picnics, did you go boating?

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: We have a picture of Harry and Bess in a boat.

WALLACE: Yes. She loved to fish, and Harry didn't care anything about it. Of course, his eyes weren't very good ever. So he'd take his book, and sit down on the bank and read and let her fish.

JOHNSON: Did you ever play baseball, or softball, or any games?

WALLACE: Well, my husband was George, and the other brother was Frank, and they both were frantic ball players of every kind.

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And then when my sister and I were graduated from high school--that's a long time ago--my mother gave us a choice. Most of the girls were getting diamond rings and fancy things like that. We wanted a tennis court. Well, when my grandmother died, they divided the property, and my

mother got the one where Bill lives now on Park Avenue. There weren't any houses down there then, and so when my sister and I graduated from high school, instead of a diamond ring or anything like that, we wanted a tennis court. So they built us a tennis court down there on the end of the street. You know where that big school is across the street down there? You go clear down Park Avenue and then there's another street, and across the street is a big school.

JOHNSON: What is the name of the school?

WALLACE: It's Procter School [named after Alexander Procter] and so they built this tennis court for us.

JOHNSON: When you graduated from high school?

WALLACE: When we graduated from high school.

JOHNSON: What year was that?

WALLACE: We graduated in 1912. And then we went down to Columbia for a year, down at the university. Then, when we came back my sister wanted to be a kindergarten

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teacher. She loved to teach children, and so she learned to be a kindergarten teacher and she taught kindergarten until she was married. Well, I think [we] kids were kind of--oh, I don't say we were wild--but we liked to run around and do things, and I think they figured if they had us a nice tennis court, maybe they could keep track of us. My father was crazy about beans, green beans, and mother was always shelling beans. She'd leave her beans on the stove and come down there, and invariably burn up the beans before she got back. Oh, you're not interested; this is all silly. What else do you want to know?

JOHNSON: This reminds me of some of my mother's recollections, you know. Your sister, Caroline, who did she marry?

WALLACE: My sister? Edward Carnes.

JOHNSON: So you had this tennis court for a while.

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: Did Bess ever get to play on it?

WALLACE: Oh yes, Bess was a good player. There was one young man that played. A lot of people went down there and played. Of course, we asked them and we enjoyed

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it. This man would say, "You get it Bessy; you get it Bessy." And she would get over there. She was a good tennis player.

JOHNSON: Had she started to date Harry Truman at this time, do you know?

WALLACE: It doesn't seem to me that Harry came into the picture quite that early; it was more after the war. She had several beaux.

JOHNSON: When did you start dating your husband, George?

WALLACE: Oh, we were married in 1916. I guess it was about 1912 or something like that.

JOHNSON: How did the two of you meet? Were you in high school together?

WALLACE: Well, just because the families were close, I think. And Bess had these three brothers, Frank and George and Fred. George, my husband, was the nicest one, and he was the middle one. We were married in 1916, and we went all the way to St. Louis on our honeymoon. We only had about three days and my father, Mr. Southern, at that time was in the newspaper business, and he got train passes for us to go down there. We went to Kansas City because we thought the kids would all get down to the station, you know, and

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throw rice and stuff at us. So we got on, and George had a cravenette raincoat; that was the style then. So we wanted to put it up on the shelf, in the old car. Bess and Natalie, Frank's wife, had filled the pockets of his raincoat with rice, and when he put it up there, it just flooded out. Oh, we were so embarrassed, and of course, the whole group just roared. But we had lots of fun.

JOHNSON: They were living here on Delaware; the Wallaces were living here, and you were living at the Proctor Place, so you weren't all that close together. You weren't living next to each other, of course, at that time. When did George graduate from high school?

WALLACE: No, he quit.

JOHNSON: Oh, he quit. Do you remember when you first met Bess, when what would have been?

WALLACE: No.

JOHNSON: Do you remember the first time you were in her house, the Wallace house?

WALLACE: Yes, she had a group of George's crowd, I think, there for a picnic one time. Grandfather [George

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Porterfield] Gates was a great joker. What was it he used to tell us? It was a play on words, and then he'd just laugh. Grandmother Gates, she was a tiny little woman and a very, very wonderful person.

JOHNSON: So you knew him?

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: An outgoing person?

WALLACE: See, I've been here; I'm 93 years old.

JOHNSON: You've been around a while.

WALLACE: I've been around. I've seen, well, two wars, and all the things that have happened, my goodness.

JOHNSON: From horse and buggy to rockets to the moon.

WALLACE: Yes. We went through all that, from 1912 up through all kinds of . . .

JOHNSON: Do you remember how that house looked in the very early days? The color of the house?

WALLACE: Yes, it wasn't white; it was more of a cream color.

JOHNSON: Cream Color.

WALLACE: Yes, that's as I remember it.

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JOHNSON: Was it painted dark on the borders?

WALLACE: Didn't have that back porch on it.

JOHNSON: Didn't have the back porch.

WALLACE: It had just a little narrow porch all the way around the house.

JOHNSON: It was cream, but was it trimmed in another color, like red or something?

WALLACE: Well, I don't remember that.

JOHNSON: Do you remember it being gray or mauve, or any other color except cream, and white?

WALLACE: I think it was gray; I'm not sure but I think it was gray.

JOHNSON: Later it was painted gray? But you remember it first being painted kind of a cream, not white.

WALLACE: It wasn't white until in later years. And then they built that porch on the back. They had lights out there, and they used to sit out there on the porch at night. You could look up there, and Harry always had a book.

JOHNSON: He was a good reader.

WALLACE: Yes.

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JOHNSON: Inside the house, now there are portraits of Margaret and Bess and Harry and so on. Do you remember if they had paintings on the wall, or pictures on the wall, anything about what they had hanging on the walls?

WALLACE: Yes, well they did over the house. The parlor, which is on the north, was quite an interesting room. There was a fireplace, a mantelpiece, and then the mirror above that.

JOHNSON: Okay, there was a mirror above the fireplace.

WALLACE: Yes. That was in the north room there. Now, in the big room-well, Fred kind of ruined it, to me, because he wanted to modernize. Well, he was quite an artistic person. Well, that old mirror came from the house.

JOHNSON: This round mirror here?

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: That used to hang in the Wallace house?

WALLACE: And it has a wooded back.

JOHNSON: Yes, that's a nice one. Where did that hang? What room did that hang in?

WALLACE: It was originally in the parlor.

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Well, Fred, I thought, ruined it because it had a little thing that went up, and cute little . . . And he wanted to modernize it. And of course, Fred was kind of the baby of the family and he did about as he pleased. In the north room, the little things are still left in there.

JOHNSON: What kind of things were these?

WALLACE: Well, they were mahogany shelves, with things, little . . .

JOHNSON: Do you remember what they had on those shelves, what kind of things they would put on those shelves?

WALLACE: No. No, I wouldn't remember that. That's where the family gathered most of the time. Then there is a step that goes upstairs. Then they enlarged one of those big rooms, when Margaret got big enough to want a room of her own.

JOHNSON: You mean upstairs on the second floor?

WALLACE: Upstairs, yes.

JOHNSON: Now the room with a fireplace and a piano . . .

WALLACE: Yes, that's the north.

JOHNSON: The north room. Is that what you call the parlor?

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WALLACE: Yes, I guess that's the parlor.

JOHNSON: That grand piano that's there now, was that the one that was bought for Margaret and she wanted a train instead?

WALLACE: Yes, I guess it was. She was so disappointed. And Harry just thought he was giving her the moon, you know, when he got her that. And she was just crushed because she wanted a train.

JOHNSON: She did get a train eventually didn't she?

WALLACE: Yes. They had a cousin, an old cousin, that lived in Kansas City, and he had a train up there in the attic. It just fascinated Margaret, because it just went all over anything. She was about 10 or 11 years old, and she wanted a train.

JOHNSON: Was there a piano in there before he bought this one for Margaret? Had there been a piano in that room?

WALLACE: Well, Mrs. Wallace had a piano, but it wasn't a grand piano, though.

JOHNSON: It probably was an upright.

WALLACE: Yes, I guess.

JOHNSON: Was it in the same room, though? Was it in the same room where the piano is now?

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WALLACE: Well, now you've got me. Are the little things over the fireplace in there now, the little shelves and things?

JOHNSON: They might be; I'm trying to recall.

WALLACE: In the north room. They always were so attractive.

JOHNSON: But the piano that was there when Bess was young, was it in that room as far as you know?

WALLACE: When Bess was young? I don't remember that.

JOHNSON: Did her mother play the piano? Bess didn't play the piano, I guess, did she?

WALLACE: No.

JOHNSON: Did Bess' mother play?

WALLACE: Yes, Mother Wallace had been to a very fine girl's school in the east, and she played. She did all of the things that a young lady was supposed to do.

JOHNSON: A finishing school, sort of.

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: Now I know you'd be awfully young, but would you have remembered anything of Bess' father, David Willock?

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WALLACE: No, but my father did; Mr. Southern. And he, David Wallace of course, killed himself. George, my husband, went in and found him; he heard the shot. He went in there and I really think it did something to his nervous system, because they adored their father. He was a man that was, well, a good fellow, and he worked up here in the courthouse. But, I think old "mister liquor" got the best of him.

JOHNSON: Did your husband ever talk about that episode?

WALLACE: No, my father is the one that told me about it. No, they never talked about it. And Mother Wallace, just after his death, she just became a recluse really. She moved her family to the Gates house [what became known as the Truman home on Delaware]. She just pestered the kids to death, because she wanted to keep track of every one of them. It's interesting. Then, the people across the street, Nellie and Ethel Noland, you see were kin of Harry, and he used to come and stay there when he got to be courting Bess.

JOHNSON: He brought over that cake tin, didn't he?

WALLACE: Oh yes, the cake.

JOHNSON: What have you heard about that? Did Bess ever tell you about that, that episode when he brought the

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cake tin over? Did she ever talk about that?

WALLACE: No.

JOHNSON: Was Frank Wallace married before you got married?

WALLACE: Yes, but not very much before [in 1915].

JOHNSON: Then that left just Bess unmarried?

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: Do you think that Bess' mother really wanted to see her married?

WALLACE: No, I don't think so. Mother Wallace was a selfish person, and she wanted to keep the kids all to herself. Mrs. Frank Wallace, that lived over here, came over to me one morning and she said, "I'm going to Kansas City." The streetcar ran to Kansas City. "I'm going to Kansas City, and I'm not going to do anything I shouldn't, but if I go, I'm going up to Pleasant Street and get the car, because if I go through the door she'll want to know where I'm going and why." Well, she didn't bother me, and I loved her. She was a sweet person and awfully good to us.

JOHNSON: Who helped keep the house over there? Did she have a maid all the time?

WALLACE: Well, they always had colored help.

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JOHNSON: Did they have one or two maids that helped them out?

WALLACE: Well, not two, as I remember. It was more just a good Negro in the kitchen, and then . . .

JOHNSON: But they didn't live in the house, the help?

WALLACE: No, they lived over in "nigger town."

JOHNSON: That's what they called it.

WALLACE: Vietta [Garr] was one of them.

JOHNSON: When did she start working for them, do you know?

WALLACE: When Margaret was a baby. Margaret called her Pete. She couldn't say Vietta, so she always called her Pete. She always brought Margaret little sacks of candy and things like that.

JOHNSON: The Blacks lived in one part of town . . .

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: Where was that? Where did they live, the Blacks?

WALLACE: Over here, about that way?

JOHNSON: Toward the Library?

WALLACE: Right across, yes. Clear across and down that alley. Vietta used to come up . . .

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JOHNSON: Oh, just a block or two away from here, down by what is now the Truman Library.

WALLACE: They were the houses more on Pleasant Street, down on the . . .

JOHNSON: On Pleasant?

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: South of 24 Highway, or north?

WALLACE: On this side of the highway.

JOHNSON: On the south side, on this side of 24 Highway. So she always had some domestic help. In other words, Bess did not have to do too much of the house work?

WALLACE: No. She didn't like housework. Before Grandfather Gates died and before they moved up here, they lived on the street down here [608 Delaware--later renumbered 610.]

JOHNSON: Yes, where her father died.

WALLACE: Down near where Sue Gentry lives.

JOHNSON: I understand that house was replaced in the 1920s, and another house was built there [610 Delaware Street].

WALLACE: Yes.

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JOHNSON: She talked about playing under a big oak tree there. Remember anything about that?

WALLACE: No, but I've forgotten a lot of things.

JOHNSON: What else do you remember about the Gates?

WALLACE: Well, Grandfather and Grandmother Gates, I think, came to our wedding. No, we were married in 1916, and he used to tease us; he was quite a tease. His wife was a little bit of a woman, and--well, she wasn't snooty, but she was conscious of her own importance. She was a very dignified little woman, but Grandfather Gates liked to joke.

JOHNSON: Okay, let's repeat that one. You say that Grandfather Gates gave you horseradish?

WALLACE: Yes. He came out there and he said, "Do you want something to make you smart?" And of course, we said, "Yes." So he gave us this horseradish that nearly took the roof off our mouths.

JOHNSON: So you remember some things about George Porterfield Gates. Well, that's interesting. When was your house, the house we are in now, built?

WALLACE: Before we were married. We built this house. Well it was just four rooms. This divided here.

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From here over to the wall was the living room; this was a dining room, and there was a door over there that went into the kitchen

JOHNSON: This would be on the east side of this living room, that went into the kitchen. So it was just four rooms to start.

WALLACE: Yes, just four rooms.

JOHNSON: But it was built the year you were married?

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: Was it on land owned by George Porterfield Gates?

WALLACE: Yes. He gave us the property. He gave Frank Wallace 50 feet, and he gave George 50 feet. They had built their house. George was quite a fixer. I mean he could do things, but this was all little. Come back here, and I'll . . .

JOHNSON: Are the two houses alike?

WALLACE: Well, no not exactly. Now, you see, this went to here. And we had a curtain here, and this was our bedroom, if you can imagine that.

JOHNSON: Which is now sort of a dining room.

WALLACE: Yes. And then we built on, we built the . . .

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JOHNSON: Oh, I see, in the back portion here you have a bedroom?

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: Yes, this was added on to the original house.

WALLACE: At that time, we didn't have air conditioning like we do now. These windows, then George built them, there's a thing that folds back and they could all go down, and that whole space could be opened.

JOHNSON: Like shutters? Were there shutters on the outside?

WALLACE: No, they weren't shutters. We'd just let the whole thing down.

JOHNSON: You're not talking about the shades or the blinds?

WALLACE: Now you see, this side . . .

JOHNSON: You have storm windows on them now.

WALLACE: They're permanent now. You see, those little blocks there came out, and they went down and you could open this whole . . .

JOHNSON: Oh, I see, so it would be like a sun porch.

WALLACE: Yes. And we needed it in those days, because it was hot.

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JOHNSON: No air-conditioning.

WALLACE: Frank used to sleep out in the back yard before any of us had cooling. He built my cabinet there; he was quite a fixer.

JOHNSON: The corner cabinet. He liked to work with wood, a woodworker?

WALLACE: Yes, he loved to work with wood.

JOHNSON: How about this cabinet here?

WALLACE: That came from up at the house.

JOHNSON: This is from the Gates-Wallace home or what we now call the Truman home. And that was built in the 1800s I would bet. Do you have any idea how far back it goes?

WALLACE: No.

JOHNSON: How about this silver service here?

WALLACE: Well, they were mostly wedding presents, when we were married, when George and I were married.

JOHNSON: From the Wallace family, and the Southerns?

WALLACE: I think they were just bought outright and given. I don't think they're heirlooms at all.

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JOHNSON: Oh, okay.

WALLACE: But Grandmother Gates gave us this set.

JOHNSON: It's pretty.

WALLACE: They hold three on that.

JOHNSON: You say Grandmother Gates did?

WALLACE: Oh, yes, we always called her Grandmother Gates. That's an old family heirloom, that came from up there.

JOHNSON: Oh, the salt shakers?

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: And crystal; look at that crystal.

WALLACE: And it's the devil to clean.

JOHNSON: I'll bet. But that's one of the Wallace family heirlooms? Do you think it originally was in the Gates family?

WALLACE: I suspect, but Mother Wallace gave it to me. And there was a whole bunch of these up in the attic. It must have been liquor things.

JOHNSON: Some kind of canister?

WALLACE: Yes.

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JOHNSON: Those were in the attic of the Wallace home over here, the Gates home?

WALLACE: Yes. I asked for two of them and they gave me two of them.

JOHNSON: And here this teapot, or whatever it is.

WALLACE: Yes, that's old.

JOHNSON: Was that a wedding present?

WALLACE: Yes, that was a wedding present.

JOHNSON: That's not a family heirloom?

WALLACE: No.

JOHNSON: Yes, those are very nice.

WALLACE: Come back here; I want to show you something. This belonged to my grandmother, and she had a whole set like that.

JOHNSON: This china picture with roses, or flowers?

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: Okay, and that was from your grand . . .

WALLACE: My Grandmother Procter. And that is supposed to be a very handsome thing. Margaret brought it down to me one day and she said, "Do you want this thing, Daw?"

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She always called George, "Daw." She said, "Daw wants that thing; I think it's ugly."

JOHNSON: This is kind of a Chinese pattern, and it's black, looks like black on white--a china platter with Chinese scenes.

WALLACE: Yes. And these are old too. These were all Wallace things.

JOHNSON: Those are beautiful. That's got this really fine China painting on there.

WALLACE: Yes. Mother Wallace gave it to me. She kind of liked me.

JOHNSON: Oriental scenes. And that came from Mother Wallace.

WALLACE: From Mother Wallace, yes.

JOHNSON: From Bess' mother?

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: And when did she give that to you?

WALLACE: Oh, I don't remember. That's an old thing, too, that old plate up there. But that belonged to my Grandmother Southern.

JOHNSON: A dark brown plate with some floral things and a

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calf and kids.

WALLACE: My name is really Mary.

JOHNSON: Oh yes, that green cut glass there?

WALLACE: My sister had the red one with "Caroline" on it. Now these things are interesting, too.

JOHNSON: Okay, black china or porcelain vases.

WALLACE: They came up from the house. And there were two of these shelves.

JOHNSON: Did they come out of the Wallace home?

WALLACE: No, they were a Procter; they belonged to an aunt of mine.

JOHNSON: But these black vases came out of the Wallace-Gates home?

WALLACE: Yes. But these shelves--I have one here with a clock on it. The clock doesn't run anymore.

JOHNSON: Oh, yes, that old clock over there, pendulum clock. And that wall shelf, did that come from the Wallace house over there?

WALLACE: That shelf? There were a pair of them, the one

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that's in there and the one that is in here.

JOHNSON: Oh I see. Yes, very pretty.

WALLACE: And these--the little . . .

JOHNSON: The red glass?

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: There's a little red glass there with two handles, a handle on each side, and a swan on top.

WALLACE: And that little . . .

JOHNSON: A kind of paperweight here, with this crystal.

WALLACE: That is old, yes. But this is old. They were Southern things. My aunt Southern . .

JOHNSON: These end tables here. That's kind of an end table next to your loveseat here.

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: And here is what I call a settee or loveseat.

WALLACE: Mother Wallace gave us that for a wedding present to help our house, the settee.

JOHNSON: Yes, that's really pretty.

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WALLACE: It's had several coverings since then.

JOHNSON: Yes, I imagine it has. Has it always been that color more or less?

WALLACE: No, it's been changed two or three times.

JOHNSON: But still the framework is in fine condition isn't it?

WALLACE: Yes. These two chairs Margaret brought down to me when they turned the house over to the Park Service. She had somebody bring these down and she said, "I want you to keep these, because if they get lost up there, I'll never see them again."

JOHNSON: They're really pretty. Now that one is without arms; it's a round chair without arms, and kind of a reddish-purple covering, kind of a velvet-like, and this is sort of velvet-like.

WALLACE: No, come on over here. Are you getting tired of hearing all my stories?

JOHNSON: Oh, no.

WALLACE: These belonged to my Grandmother and Grandfather Procter.

JOHNSON: The two vases with the real elaborate lip around them.

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WALLACE: She carried them when they came back here from.... We always wondered that some of these things didn't get knocked off.

JOHNSON: Like butterfly wings on each side, aren't they?

WALLACE: I took them over to somebody in Kansas City to see if they could locate them, where they were made, and they could not.

JOHNSON: These are valuable antiques, and those are Procter heirlooms.

WALLACE: No, wait a minute, and I'll show you . . .

JOHNSON: You've got a yellow, kind of a clamshell . . .

WALLACE: No, you look. Isn't that pretty?

JOHNSON: Those little flowers are painted inside. It's a porcelain . . .

WALLACE: That was my mother's.

JOHNSON: What would they call that? What would they use that for? Could it be a candy dish?

WALLACE: It could be.

JOHNSON: Just almost anything?

WALLACE: These things came from Europe.

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JOHNSON: The Arch de Triumphe.

WALLACE: This is [a picture of] my father.

JOHNSON: You have another picture there?

WALLACE: Would you know who that is?

JOHNSON: Who do we have here?

WALLACE: That's me and that's my sister.

JOHNSON: Is that right? You're only about five years old or so, is that right?

WALLACE: And I was mad. I didn't want my picture taken, and so I pouted.

JOHNSON: Yes, it sure looks like it all right. That's a cute picture.

WALLACE: What's that man's name here in town that made this for me, that's always making something.

JOHNSON: Oh, Bill Curtis, maybe?

WALLACE: Yes, Bill Curtis. He had that made for me. He found it out at Miss Pearl Ward's one time.

JOHNSON: So that's Caroline.

WALLACE: That's Bill's mother.

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JOHNSON: That's a good picture. A few more questions here. So you remember when Harry Truman was in the war? Did your husband serve in the Army?

WALLACE: He was just ready to go, you know, when they quit.

JOHNSON: I see. You attended the wedding, I would imagine, attended the wedding of Bess and Harry's wedding in 1919?

WALLACE: Oh, yes.

JOHNSON: Do you remember anything about that?

WALLACE: Well there ought to be some things connected with it.

JOHNSON: I suppose you gave them a wedding gift. Do you remember if you gave them a wedding gift?

WALLACE: Yes, I know we did, but I don't remember what it was. We probably all went in on it. The family probably gave them something. They went to live out at Grandview, you see, and that was the summer that Mother Wallace had this serious illness. Bess had to come home, and she never got away again.

JOHNSON: They actually did move into the farm house there for a few days, or . . .

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WALLACE: Yes, just weeks.

JOHNSON: Did she ever say anything about the farm, whether they liked to visit down in Grandview?

WALLACE: Well, now if you tell anybody I said this--well, what shall I say, the Wallaces were very much impressed with their own importance.

JOHNSON: They were considered socialites, I suppose.

WALLACE: Yes. Well, Mother Wallace didn't want Bess to get married in the first place. I think that was the point. And then you see, Harry went to the war and then he came back. But Harry went to the war and then he came back. But Harry was a sweet person. The Noland sisters lived across the street, you know, Miss Ethel and Nellie Noland. He would go over there and stay and then come over.

JOHNSON: How well do you remember Harry Truman's mother?

WALLACE: Yes, very well. She was a grand old lady.

JOHNSON: Did she ever visit in the home? Do you ever remember her visiting in the home here next door, the Wallace-Gates home?

WALLACE: No, I don't know that she did.

JOHNSON: Or Mary Jane; do you ever remember her visiting there?

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WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: But they would not invite the Trumans over much then, your Grandmother Wallace would not . . .

WALLACE: I don't know; I shouldn't even say it. I think the Wallaces, all of them were a little bit snooty, about their own things. I think they were just a little bit that way, but don't put that down on your paper; I'd get arrested and put in jail.

JOHNSON: We can erase it if we have to. Did your husband ever buy clothing from the haberdashery? Do you remember him patronizing the haberdashery?

WALLACE: No.

JOHNSON: Do you have any souvenirs or anything from the haberdashery?

WALLACE: No. What was his partner's name?

JOHNSON: Jacobson. Eddie Jacobson.

WALLACE: I don't know. I really think when he got into politics and had a good job, that's probably the best job he ever had. He was a sweet person; I just loved him.

JOHNSON: Do you remember when he was trying to mine zinc down in Oklahoma?

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WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: Trying to make money, you know, so he could get married to Bess. Do you remember Bess ever saying, "I wish we would get married," or did she ever indicate a desire to marry before he left for the war?

WALLACE: Bess was a very private person.

JOHNSON: But you did go with them on picnics?

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: Did you ever go to any shows with them down in Kansas City?

WALLACE: Oh yes.

JOHNSON: You went to some shows with them?

WALLACE: Oh, yes.

JOHNSON: What kind of shows did they seem to like best?

WALLACE: Musicals; and of course Harry liked any kind of music, and . . .

JOHNSON: Did Bess enjoy them too?

WALLACE: Well, yes, I guess she did.

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JOHNSON: How about movies?

WALLACE: Oh, we all did movies. Well, Margaret liked the movies. She was getting to the age where somebody had to take her, and we drew most of it. George and I also took her to the circus and all kinds of things. She called him "Daw," for George. She was running down here one day and she fell; that was gravel out there where it's paved now. She fell down, and when she got up, her little knees were skinned just all over, and she said, "Daw fix. Daw Fix." She thought he could do anything.

JOHNSON: Now, you went to picnics, you went to the theater, to musical shows; anything else that you did together? Do you recall?

WALLACE: Harry had a great big two seated car, and he used to pile us all in and take us all out in the country here someplace, and we thought we were having a good time.

JOHNSON: And you were invited to go along?

WALLACE: Oh, yes, and he had some little cars too, didn't he, afterwards, didn't he?

JOHNSON: He had a Dodge. I think he liked to drive Dodges.

WALLACE: The Dodge is the one I was thinking of, yes.

JOHNSON: Do you remember riding in that Stafford, that

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first car that he had? Do you remember riding in it?

WALLACE: I rode in all of them

JOHNSON: That was kind of a bumpy ride, I suppose, in those days. Rough roads. A lot of rough roads, bumpy rides?

WALLACE: Oh yes, oh mercy, the River Road and places, they'd be mud.

JOHNSON: Did you ever have to get out and push to get out of the mud?

WALLACE: Well, I never did push anybody. Probably somebody did.

JOHNSON: George did maybe. They said, "Let George do it?"

WALLACE: Yes, "Let George do it." Well, George was the family fixer.

JOHNSON: He was the handy man.

WALLACE: He was the handy man. Frank Wallace--that didn't appeal to him. So whenever they wanted anything done up there, why that's when Margaret said, "Daw fix." When he fixed her knees you know, she said, "Daw fix."

JOHNSON: So he did a lot of fixing in the house up there?

WALLACE: Yes, he did. George could do anything with his

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hands. He worked for a big sash and door company, when we were married, out between here and Kansas City. It was a great big place, where they used to have all those sashes and things.

JOHNSON: Sash and door. What was his job there? What kind of work did he do?

WALLACE: Well, he was doing clerical work then, but he loved to take a plane and a hammer; he loved to do that kind of thing.

JOHNSON: So he worked for them for many years, did he?

WALLACE: Well, several years, until they went broke, you know. It was Hutig Mill, that's what it was. They were a big family in Kansas City, and this Hutig plant was out in Fairmount. He rode a streetcar. Then he'd get the mail and walk across over to the mill.

JOHNSON: What work did he do after that? What job did he have?

WALLACE: Well, Harry got him a job with the county, and he worked down at the county garage; did clerical work down there.

JOHNSON: A maintenance supervisor?

WALLACE: Yes.

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JOHNSON: He did that for, what, about 35 years was it?

WALLACE: Well, it was a good while, I don't remember.

JOHNSON: Until he retired?

WALLACE: Yes, until he retired. He killed himself with cigarettes. I think he started when he was about ten years old; you know, that was the smart thing to do when they were growing up, to smoke.

JOHNSON: Sure. Yes.

WALLACE: They don't seem to be the temptation they used to be.

JOHNSON: A lot of preaching against it nowadays, yes. Do you remember the musical tea, the Good Samaritan class of First Christian Church?

WALLACE: Oh yes, I remember. My mother taught the Good Samaritan Class at the church for a long time.

JOHNSON: In 1920, not long after they were married, Bess invited the class over to the house for this musical tea. Do you remember that?

WALLACE: Oh, just vaguely.

JOHNSON: What kind of parties do you remember over at the house? What kind of parties did you have over at the

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Truman-Wallace house?

WALLACE: Well, they mostly had dinners in the dining room. We went there on Thanksgiving and Christmas and times like that. Grandfather Gates--as I told you--was a great joker.

JOHNSON: Very sociable?

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: How about the card parties, or anything like that, bunco or . . .

WALLACE: Harry liked to play poker with the boys, and he never would learn our ordinary games. But Bess liked to play. George and Bess, and Frank and Natalie, I guess, we'd get a card game and play up there on the porch sometimes. That porch was narrow all the way around, you know, until they made that big living porch there on the back.

JOHNSON: What kind of games, card games, did you usually play?

WALLACE: Bridge. We had bridge and there were two or three different kinds of bridge that we played. Frank never would play. Bess and George and I would sometimes rake somebody in. Bess liked to play bridge.

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JOHNSON: Well, now, you remember that bridge club. Recently, there was a little reunion, at the Library, of the bridge club.

WALLACE: The bridge club that went to Washington?

JOHNSON: Yes, you went to Washington. Do you remember that?

WALLACE: It was a long time ago. It was when Bess was in the White House. We went there and she took us to the circus, and just did everything for us. That's where George had to paint his shoes. Margaret was going to have a party, a dress-up party, and she wanted Uncle Daw to come. He never wore anything but brown clothes and shoes, but he could get on one of Harry's suits, fancy suits. He said, "I'll fix it." So he went out and bought a thing of black polish and came back in there and sat down on the floor in the White House and painted his shoes black, just to please Margaret, so he could go. Oh, they would have stood on their head for that gal.

JOHNSON: What else did you do? Do you remember some of the things you did there, when you were there?

WALLACE: Oh, yes, we did a lot of things. We went to a circus there, I remember that, and the clown tried to get kind of funny with Bess. I mean she was down on a

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front row, and they had a little bit of subduing to do to him.

JOHNSON: What else did you do besides the circus?

WALLACE: Well, we ate.

JOHNSON: Were you out there on the White House grounds? There was a picture I think of people around a table, under a magnolia tree.

WALLACE: Yes. We just had a good time.

JOHNSON: Did you ever picnic on the White House grounds?

WALLACE: No, I don't think we did, because there was too much good food inside

JOHNSON: And this was when the bridge club went to Washington?

WALLACE: Well, George and I went, and the four of us went several times from the bridge club. Over at the Library the other day, they called me, and they had a Bess Truman Day, that day of her birthday. They had some pictures over that that--did you see them? They were over there in the corner.

JOHNSON: Yes, I did.

WALLACE: Those were about that time that we were there.

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JOHNSON: Were you there at the inauguration in January of 1945 when Harry became Vice President?

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: You were there on the grounds when they had that small inauguration?

WALLACE: Yes. We went every chance we got.

JOHNSON: Do you remember that inauguration?

WALLACE: Yes, now that you mention it, it comes back.

JOHNSON: And they were living in an apartment, I believe, on Connecticut Avenue.

WALLACE: Oh, yes, that was before they got in the White House.

JOHNSON: Then, when he became President you went back several times, stayed overnight in the White House?

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: What room did you use? You slept there overnight in the White House?

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: Do you remember what room that was?

WALLACE: There was a long hall, and then it was on this

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side of it. I can't remember the name of the room.

JOHNSON: Do you remember what color, the color of the room or anything?

WALLACE: No. One funny thing that happened--we were there and Bess and I were shopping downtown. Bess wore very nice clothes, but very simple clothes; she never did wear anything very fancy. We were on the elevator, and some people were behind us. They didn't know we could hear them, and one of them pointed to Bess, and said, "Seersucker." Mrs. Truman had on a seersucker dress. The lady thought she ought to have something like . . .

JOHNSON: Like silk or something.

WALLACE: "Seersucker."

JOHNSON: President Truman wrote a letter, but he didn't send it to your father, in 1949, and apparently he complained that your father was not mentioning Harry in his columns.

WALLACE: They had a little trouble about that, but I don't . . .

JOHNSON: Do you remember any reason why your father apparently didn't mention Harry in the 10 or 20 Years Ago column?

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WALLACE: Wasn't it a third term or something that father didn't approve of?

JOHNSON: Well, apparently he was opposed to Roosevelt running in 1940 and '44.

WALLACE: I remember there was quite a little . . .

JOHNSON: Was there a little friction between your father and Harry?

WALLACE: Well, not friction, because they didn't fight, but they had a hard feeling about it. I think my father was just as stubborn as all of these old Missouri boys were, and when he thought it was the thing for him to do, then he did it. Harry came to ask him to do something that he didn't want to do, and he didn't do it.

JOHNSON: But he did support him in 1948, didn't he?

WALLACE: Oh yes. Of course, my husband just worshipped Harry; he just thought he was King of the cannibal islands.

JOHNSON: Did your father like Roosevelt? What was his attitude?

WALLACE: I don't believe so. I believe that was one of the things they came . . .

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JOHNSON: Disagreed on, the New Deal.

WALLACE: Pop was very decided about what he thought.

JOHNSON: Was he conservative? Would you describe him as conservative?

WALLACE: He was conservative.

JOHNSON: Your father was conservative in politics.

WALLACE: He lived through some mighty short times himself.

JOHNSON: Did he believe in the WPA and the CCC? What was his attitude towards those?

WALLACE: I don't remember about that.

JOHNSON: But they did disagree on some policies?

WALLACE: Yes. My father was born in Tennessee during the war. He always said he was the most unwarlike person that ever was, but he was born during the war.

JOHNSON: I notice Margaret Truman in her *Letters From Father*, says, "Aunt May was always my favorite aunt. She called me Tootsie in her letters and I called her Buffie, rhyming with Spooifie."

WALLACE: Aunt Buffie; she still calls me that.

JOHNSON: ". . . because she was always spoofing. My

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childhood nickname for her clowning around somehow stuck."

WALLACE: She called me up the other day, and she said, "Buffie, I'm a grandmother!" She sounded like she was 100 years old because her children are having children. "I'm a grandmother!"

JOHNSON: You don't call her Tootsie anymore?

WALLACE: No, but she calls me Buffie.

JOHNSON: Your father apparently wanted to rename Van Horn road here, to Truman Road.

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: The President wrote to your father in 1946, and said, "I have no desire to have roads, bridges or buildings names after me." Of course, Harry's a modest fellow, but your father did help lead the drive to rename the road out here. Is that right?

WALLACE: Yes. My father was just as determined in his ideas as Harry was in his. I'm kind of that way myself.

JOHNSON: In a letter to Bess in 1939, there's mention of her sending Guatemala lunch cloths to Christine, May and Natalie. Do you remember anything about a

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Guatemala lunch cloth that Bess would have given you, or that Margaret would have given you in 1939?

WALLACE: It was probably something she brought home from Guatemala or something.

JOHNSON: You don't remember?

WALLACE: No, I don't remember.

JOHNSON: Okay, we're getting pretty close here to the end of this interview anyway. Anything else about your visits to the White House that comes to mind now that you're kind of pondering the past? Anything else about . . .

WALLACE: No, we just had a big time.

JOHNSON: Did you visit the Capitol? Did you see Congress when it was in session?

WALLACE: We went up to see Congress, and . . .

JOHNSON: Did you ever hear Harry give a speech, or see him give a speech in Washington when he was President?

WALLACE: No, I don't think so.

JOHNSON: You listened to him on the radio? Whenever he gave a speech on the radio, did the Wallaces get together or did they just listen separately in their

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own homes?

WALLACE: My husband would be glued to the thing; he just adored Harry, and wanted to hear everything he said. We used to use it so much more; I mean things were . . .

JOHNSON: Sure, that was before television. So you listened to all of his speeches on the radio, and then when Margaret began singing in 1947, you apparently wrote her a very complimentary letter, about the first time you heard her on radio. That was quite an event, wasn't it, listening to her sing over the radio.

WALLACE: I wrote a story once about my life history, and I said that I thought I'd lived through the most interesting part of the world's history.

JOHNSON: Do you have that write-up?

WALLACE: Yes. I think I have it right over here.

JOHNSON: Are you going to give it to the Library? Could the Library have it?

WALLACE: Oh, the Library wouldn't want it?

JOHNSON: Why, sure we would. Could we copy it, and give this back to you?

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WALLACE: Yes, if you want to, if it's worth doing. I consider myself an especially privileged person to have lived in the greatest time of this earth's history. But don't lose it; I don't have another.

JOHNSON: We'll return this one to you. We'll make a copy and give this one back so you will have it.

WALLACE: I used to do quite a bit of writing, but I'm lazy now; I don't do it.

JOHNSON: Do you have anything else you've written? Did you ever keep any diaries?

WALLACE: No. No, I quit those early in the deal, because they've always got something in there.

JOHNSON: How about letters from Bess and Margaret and so on, do you have those letters still?

WALLACE: Well, I don't believe so. I did have some of Margaret's that I kept, but I don't know where they are.

JOHNSON: How about Harry Truman's letters?

WALLACE: He never wrote me; he never wrote to anybody but Bess. Wait a minute; I'll show you something.

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JOHNSON: All right.. This is a photograph of a Christmas tree, a big Christmas tree.

WALLACE: We all went up there and put our things around, and we had quite a commotion at one time; I mean there were more of us. Now we're all gone, separated.

JOHNSON: Do you have any idea when that was? What Christmas that might have been?

WALLACE: No. It was before my husband died.

JOHNSON: It was around 1960 then?

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: We're about done for today, but I'm going to take another look at this, and maybe ask just a few more questions on one more visit.

WALLACE: If I'm supposed to say it, it ought to be put down while I'm still here, because I'm not going to be here forever. I'm going to stay as long as I can.

JOHNSON: That's the way it should be. So, like I say, we'll get together once more, and we'll finish it up.

WALLACE: Did you ever talk to Sue Gentry?

JOHNSON: Yes. The final question, since you mentioned Sue

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Gentry. Did you know Mary Paxton Keeley?

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: You were a friend of hers?

WALLACE: Oh yes, her younger brother was quite a beau of my sister's. The Paxtons had a surrey, and Eddie Paxton was kind of sweet on my sister and so we used to get a ride. And the Swoopes had a nice thing. We had a lot of nice times down there.

JOHNSON: At the Swope mansion?

WALLACE: Yes. I've been there a lot of times. You know, the old man that lived with them, Uncle Thomas; he's the one that had all the money. We got to making so much noise, he pounded on the ceiling; he told us to quiet down, we were making too much noise. And Mr. Hunton, you wouldn't remember him, but little Mr. Hunton used to sit up by the bank and take Uncle Thomas home every Sunday. He's get off, not at the bank, but the Presbyterian Church. He'd come down on the streetcar, and he would wait for him there, in his little surrey, and take him home. Oh, I've been to the Swope house lots of times; we had a lot of fun down there.

JOHNSON: Did Bess and Harry ever go the Swope house? Do

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you remember them going down there?

WALLACE: We.. they were not the right ages to be with us. He came one night and wanted to take Bess for a ride.

JOHNSON: Harry?

WALLACE: Chrisman Swope; and he asked Bess if she wouldn't go for a ride with him. He was taking some produce over to market in Kansas City, and Bess just about died, laughing.

JOHNSON: Was this in a horse and wagon then? Was this a truck or a horse and wagon that he was driving?

WALLACE: I think it was just a big car with a big back that he could put some things in. We kidded her a lot about going to market.

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Second Oral History Interview with May Wallace, February 23, 1988 in Independence, Missouri, by Niel M. Johnson, Harry S. Truman Library.

WALLACE: Is this in the White House?

JOHNSON: Yes, that's the Christmas tree in the White House. They're kind of dark, but you'll notice . . .

WALLACE: That's all of us, but we're so dark. That's me, and that's Natalie, who lived next door.

JOHNSON: The photo number is 83-119-1. What do you remember about that Christmas week there in the White House?

WALLACE: Well, it was quite an experience.

JOHNSON: I imagine, yes.

WALLACE: I think I told you about my husband polishing his shoes.

JOHNSON: Oh yes.

WALLACE: Really, it was quite an experience to be in the White House and be with all of them there. Mrs. Truman was such a wonderful person. She didn't want to go. She didn't like publicity, but when it came to her duty to do it, she did it.

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JOHNSON: Did they exchange gifts? Did you have gifts under the tree, or did you exchange gifts, have a gift exchange?

WALLACE: Yes, but we never exchanged extravagant gifts; there were too many of us. We'd get something we thought they'd like, you know. I remember this dinner.

JOHNSON: Okay, that's another photograph.

WALLACE: That's my husband, that's Frank, that's Harry, Fred Wallace and Christine.

JOHNSON: Remember that?

WALLACE: Yes, I remember that.

JOHNSON: What are you doing there?

WALLACE: We're eating. If we couldn't do anything else, we'd eat.

JOHNSON: Do you remember what kind of menu they had there at Christmastime?

WALLACE: Oh no; just the way a family would have it on Christmas. I'm sure they had turkey. Frank Wallace was the oldest, and he always had to do the carving. Well, it's just a day gone by, but we enjoyed it a lot.

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JOHNSON: This Tuesday bridge club that you were an original member of, did Bess Truman start out as a member of that club, too?

WALLACE: Oh yes, she was a charter member of that club.

JOHNSON: And you're the only surviving charter member of the bridge club?

WALLACE: I think I'm the only one. I don't believe there's any of those left.

JOHNSON: Do you have any idea when they started, when that club was formed?

WALLACE: Well, I couldn't tell you the day. But then they called it "the bridge club that went to Washington."

JOHNSON: Was it formed in the 1930s, before Truman became President?

WALLACE: Yes, it must have been.

JOHNSON: And you did have games here at your house?

WALLACE: What?

JOHNSON: You had bridge games here in your house?

WALLACE: Oh yes.

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JOHNSON: Did you ever play bridge at the dining room table in the Truman home?

WALLACE: We had our eating parties in there sometimes. And they had lots of teas, you know, and things like that. They's fix it up pretty.

JOHNSON: Did Harry Truman pick out the wallpaper in the kitchen? That's the story.

WALLACE: Now, that I never heard. But he might have; he liked bright things.

JOHNSON: The kitchen's a little old-fashioned, I guess, isn't it?

WALLACE: Oh yes.

JOHNSON: And that's the way they wanted it.

WALLACE: Oh, yes, they've got a sink, and there was one little stove in there, that you could light in the wintertime. Then there is a back stairway going upstairs in that kitchen, clear at this end of it.

JOHNSON: Oh yes.

WALLACE: That's the way we used to go at night. You see, when we were first married, for a number of years the grandmother and grandfather were still

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alive. So they really used the lower floor of the house. I mean they had the living room and dining room and all of the parlor. So, for Mother Wallace, they fixed up a room upstairs over the kitchen. She had her sewing machine in there and we'd go up there at night, and go up the back way and visit with her. Oh, that was about all; we just did like everybody else.

JOHNSON: Did she sew quite a bit? Did Bess' mother like to sew?

WALLACE: Yes, she liked to sew. I used to go up there. I didn't like her sewing machine; it was one of these automatic things. But she'd do the sewing if I'd tell her where to pin it and tell her where I wanted it; she'd do it.

JOHNSON: Did she do any embroidery?

WALLACE: I think Bess did some embroidery. I did some.

JOHNSON: Any crocheting?

WALLACE: Yes, oh, yes, I crocheted. And during the war we made things for the soldiers.

JOHNSON: You made doilies? Did you make doilies in those days for the furniture?

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WALLACE: Well, some. Yes, I still have some. In the cedar chest I expect.

JOHNSON: Did Bess sew?

WALLACE: No, she didn't--she wasn't much of a sewer.

JOHNSON: She didn't care for sewing, or cooking?

WALLACE: Mother Wallace liked to sew, and Bess liked to read. She always had a book.

JOHNSON: She and Harry both liked to read.

WALLACE: And she liked to play tennis, and play golf, and play things outdoors. She was very active.

JOHNSON: Did her mother make any of her clothes for her? Was she good enough to make . . .

WALLACE: I expect she did in the early days, because you couldn't just go out and buy anything you wanted, you know. By the time we were growing up, Mother Wallace had a funny machine. It was a funny little one that we had to let her use; I couldn't use it.

JOHNSON: Is that sewing machine still in the house?

WALLACE: I have no idea. It was up in that back room over the kitchen; that's where she sewed.

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JOHNSON: You didn't pedal that one, or did you?

WALLACE: No, it must have been electric.

JOHNSON: There's a letter from your father to Harry Truman the day after he became President, April 13, 1945. He says, "There were prayers for Harry Truman at our house last night," to help him, you know, meet the responsibility he had as President. Were you with your parents the day he became President, April 12? Were you there with your parents at their house?

WALLACE: No, I was at home; I was putting up fruit.

JOHNSON: When you heard about the death of Roosevelt? What was your reaction?

WALLACE: Well, we were just kind of stunned, you know. You couldn't take it in, because it was just something that none of us ever expected.

JOHNSON: Your father apparently wrote a religious column.

WALLACE: He taught a Sunday School, a men's Sunday School class. He was a Presbyterian, I told you, and my mother was a Campbellite, and they stayed that way. They never did change.

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JOHNSON: Did they ever talk about mixing politics with religion? What was his attitude toward mixing politics with religion?

WALLACE: We never discussed it very much; we just tried to kind of live it.

JOHNSON: Yes. You apparently were down at Bolivar for the dedication of the statue, in Bolivar, Missouri.

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: A very hot day.

WALLACE: Oh, it sure was!

JOHNSON: President Truman wrote you after that, and he said that he was glad that you liked the donkey. Did he sent you a donkey, or something, about that time? Do you remember getting any donkey from President Truman?

WALLACE: I don't remember, but he probably did.

JOHNSON: What do you remember about the event down there? You remember it was hot.

WALLACE: Oh, it was hotter than the hinges.

JOHNSON: I think Harry kept his hat on, or maybe he

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took it off. He almost always had his jacket on, even when it was warm.

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: He usually was pretty dressed up, wasn't he?

WALLACE: Oh yes, you had to dress up in those times to impress people.

JOHNSON: He wrote you a letter about Alexander Campbell, too, I notice.

WALLACE: Yes. He used to tease me about that. I'm the only one in the family that belonged to that church. Of course, Harry was a Baptist.

JOHNSON: Oh, the Christian Church? You were the only one that belonged to the Christian Church?

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: He said, "Well, your grandfather was, as you know, one of the partners of Alexander Campbell in the founding of the Christian Church."

WALLACE: Alexander Procter. I remember him as a big man walking around in this garden which he loved. He died when I was 6 years old.

JOHNSON: He's considered one of the founders of that

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church?

WALLACE: Oh yes.

JOHNSON: Do you remember a Sam Gross, Jr.?

WALLACE: Yes. And there was a woman, a female Gross, too; do you have her name?

JOHNSON: Well, Truman wrote you a letter in June 1952 and he mentioned that he was looking into the situation of Sam Gross, Jr. Now, I don't know what the situation was.

WALLACE: I don't know either.

JOHNSON: Okay. And then apparently visited the White House when Gerald Ford was President. Do you remember that?

WALLACE: Yes, yes.

JOHNSON: Do you remember anything he said to you; President Ford?

WALLACE: No. He probably was just introducing me as sister-in-law of the late President.

JOHNSON: The Truman portrait behind you there. Did you actually get into the Oval Office, into his working office in the White House when you

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visited?

WALLACE: Oh yes, I was in every piece of the White House from the basement to the attic. I'm one of these curious people; I have to see.

JOHNSON: Well, sure. Did your father write up your visit in the paper? Did your father write up about your visits to the White House for the *Examiner*?

WALLACE: I expect so. I don't know anything specific.

JOHNSON: Did he ever ask you for information about your visits to put into an article?

WALLACE: I don't remember that, but I imagine he did.

JOHNSON: Did he ask you about your visits? Did he talk to you about them?

WALLACE: Oh yes, and I wrote back home. I don't know whether he kept any of the letters or not.

JOHNSON: What happened to those letters? Do you know what might have happened to them?

WALLACE: Oh, they probably got burned up.

JOHNSON: Did you get your father's papers? After he died did you get the letters, or the papers that

[73]
he had in his estate?

WALLACE: Well, I expect my mother did.

JOHNSON: Your mother lived for several years as a widow?

WALLACE: She lived about five or six years after he died. She wouldn't live by herself though. She never would stay by herself at night, so we got a woman that came every evening and got her dinner, and then stayed all night. Then, after breakfast she'd go home and tend to her own things. Of course, my sister and I went back and forth a lot.

JOHNSON: But you don't know what happened to the letters and things that your father had accumulated?

WALLACE: You talk with Bill Carnes; he is living in the Southern house, and he may have some things there in the attic or in the things that were . . .

JOHNSON: I'm sure the Jackson County Historical Society would be interested in that sort of thing.

WALLACE: Yes.

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JOHNSON: I thought perhaps you would want to say a little bit more about some of those things you showed me last time. Could I take pictures this time? You know, you were showing me the vases and some of those things. Maybe I could take a picture of them so we could see what they look like, while you're describing them.

WALLACE: All right. If there's enough light in there.

JOHNSON: I've got a flash here that I can use. I think on the mantle here you had some things.

WALLACE: I told you about the vases.

JOHNSON: Okay, I'll take some pictures here.

WALLACE: The story is that my grandmother carried those in her lap from when they came up here from St. Louis.

JOHNSON: Yes, those are the ones with the butterfly-like wings on the side.

WALLACE: The mirror is one that came from up at the big house.

JOHNSON: Okay.

WALLACE: My husband stole that.

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JOHNSON: Well, he knew what to take.

WALLACE: And here's a picture of that I didn't show you the other day, that I think is awful sweet of Mary and Margaret.

JOHNSON: Yes, it sure is.

WALLACE: And the yellow dish that my father brought back from Oregon. Did I show it to you? It's pretty inside.

JOHNSON: Oh, yes, yes, I like that design. He brought that back from where?

WALLACE: He went out to Oregon. One of my mother's sisters was married and lived in Oregon, and just before they were married he decided that he might like to go out there and establish himself. He went out there and stayed a year, but he came back to good old Mizzou. I think he spent all the money he had saved on this dish.

JOHNSON: Now this chair, you say, came out of the Truman house, right?

WALLACE: Well, this one did.

JOHNSON: Do you want to stand over there right by it?

WALLACE: That big yellow one did, that you were

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sitting in; it did too.

JOHNSON: Okay.

WALLACE: That one over there; Margaret brought these down when they tore up the house.

JOHNSON: Sure. And this love seat; we talked about it, didn't we?

WALLACE: Mother Wallace gave us that for a wedding present. It's been covered a time or two. I was married in 1916 so you know it's an antique.

JOHNSON: Was that in the family, or did she buy that new at the time? Do you have any idea?

WALLACE: It was newly bought.

JOHNSON: Okay, then it wasn't a family heirloom.

WALLACE: No.

JOHNSON: Also, I think in the other room here you have a knickknack shelf. Okay, you may want to explain again what you have there.

WALLACE: That little black piece, that's one Margaret brought down. That's a very fine piece; Margaret said it's awfully ugly, but I'm afraid it'll get broken up there. And those vases up there came

[77]
from the house.

JOHNSON: This came from the Truman house?

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: And that platter there you say . . .

WALLACE: Yes, Margaret brought that down because she didn't want it to get broken, but she said, "I think it's ugly."

JOHNSON: Well, now is there anything else that came out of the Truman house that you have?

WALLACE: These two thing did.

JOHNSON: Oh, down at the bottom here.

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: You say you never saw Harry Truman without his glasses?

WALLACE: I don't think so.

JOHNSON: Did he ever do any chores around the house? Do you know?

WALLACE: Not much.

JOHNSON: He never mowed the lawn that you can recall?

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WALLACE: No, they always had somebody to do that. He used to get up early in the morning. Bess didn't like to get up early, and he used to get up early and come out and walk around. He'd pick up things that had blown into the yard, but that was about as heavy work as he did.

JOHNSON: Did he ever trim the bushes?

WALLACE: Oh, no, he never did anything like that. You know, I don't mean he wasn't welcome and that Mrs. Truman didn't love him and all, but I don't think he ever felt like it was his home, you know, because he was living with them. When they were first married, they went out to the farm, and they were going to stay there, and that's when Mother Wallace got so very ill that they had to come back and they never got away, again.

JOHNSON: At least he didn't have to pay rent.

WALLACE: No, that's right. Well, he was a lot better off.

JOHNSON: Is there anything else here that we could take a picture of while we're at it?

WALLACE: I don't know.

JOHNSON: Let me take a close-up again of this platter.

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WALLACE: These are old, old--they don't ring anymore. Can you make them ring?

JOHNSON: Okay, if you'll hold it, I'll . . . [rings].

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: Where did they come from?

WALLACE: I think they came from the Southern house.

JOHNSON: I see.

WALLACE: But that big old plate up there . . .

JOHNSON: This one up here on top?

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: That came from the Truman house?

WALLACE: Yes. I don't think there's anything down in here that's interesting; it's just dishes. Those are all modern. Aren't they pretty?

JOHNSON: Yes, they sure are. They've got the little, what do they call that, scallop?

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: Yes, that is pretty.

WALLACE: I have big dishes and little, and all.

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I don't use them anymore, but when I was at my best, cooking and having parties, I used them. That old chest, I told you before, that came from up at the house.

JOHNSON: What room was that in up there, do you know?

WALLACE: I think it was not used. I think it was put away and that's why they gave it to me. This thing belonged to the Wallaces.

JOHNSON: Yes, put your hand up toward that again, will you? Do you want to point to it? There we are.

WALLACE: Yes, and this was George's, what he drank his milk out of. I mean what they put their milk in, on the table.

JOHNSON: The pitcher, yes.

WALLACE: And these, I found up in the attic up there [the Truman home]. There was a whole group of these glass things.

JOHNSON: Decanters, I guess they are.

WALLACE: There must have been 8 or 10 of them, and I said, "Can I have some?" "Take all you want." So I took two of them. And this is an old one. And this was a wedding present of mine, to me

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and George.

JOHNSON: This was your wedding present here?

WALLACE: Yes, this was a wedding present. It's sterling silver, too.

JOHNSON: I wonder if I can move that just aside a little bit, and I'll get a picture of this in the middle here.

WALLACE: This is the only original; it has the little speck in it, you know.

JOHNSON: Oh, okay, do you want to hold that a second?

WALLACE: Can you see that? That's old.

JOHNSON: Little bubble in there.

WALLACE: Yes, a bubble. These were just fillers-in, and these are old, they came . . .

JOHNSON: Oh yes, original.

WALLACE: Yes. And they're the deevil, divel, devil to clean.

JOHNSON: I'll bet. Would you want to hold this? Do you have some light coming in through the window? If you could hold it by a window, I'll use the sunlight.

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WALLACE: This came from up at the house. [Points to small 4-legged table].

JOHNSON: Oh, okay.

WALLACE: I'll tell you a story about it when you get through taking the picture [of glass bottles or decanters on a silver-like, three legged stand].

JOHNSON: That's fine. Do you know where this [table] would have been in the old house? Do you have any idea where that would have been?

WALLACE: I don't remember.

JOHNSON: Oh, okay, it folds out.

WALLACE: It twists around some way, and then I think that goes back.

JOHNSON: Okay, that leaf comes out like that . . .

WALLACE: Yes, and makes a table. Now there was something at the very end of this thing, because we found something and we were finding a treasure. Oh, I know, it twists, I believe.

JOHNSON: Let's see, there is something underneath here, a compartment.

WALLACE: Yes, and this opens.

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JOHNSON: Yes, there is a compartment there. What have you got there?

WALLACE: We opened it, and found that thing. Oh, George thought he had found . . .

JOHNSON: What did that prove to be?

WALLACE: We thought we'd found money when we found that, but there wasn't any money.

JOHNSON: Oh, I see, it holds money, coins. Do you have any idea about who made it?

WALLACE: That came from up at the house; I have no idea who made it.

JOHNSON: And that just swings around, swivels around like that. Yes, that is clever. You would never know just by looking at it. There, that fits in like that.

WALLACE: Now, I can't swear where it came from.

JOHNSON: But that's been in the house since you were married? Since the house was built?

WALLACE: Oh yes. You see, in our first house, this was the living room here [west side] and then that was the dining room over there [east side], and

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then this was the bedroom.

JOHNSON: Okay, this little dining room here.

WALLACE: Yes, that wasn't there, because, you see, that back part of the house hadn't been built.

JOHNSON: And the kitchen was back here?

WALLACE: The kitchen was there. There was a door over there, clear on the corner there, that went into the kitchen.

JOHNSON: Who chose the design for the house?

WALLACE: I expect my husband did. He was quite an architect.

JOHNSON: Now these books you have in the bookcase.

WALLACE: Those are mine. I collect old books.

JOHNSON: Those weren't Bess' or Harry's?

WALLACE: No. No, they are all mine.

JOHNSON: Now these little vases here, that look like salt and pepper shakers . . .

WALLACE: They don't have any story to them. I told you the big vases do.

JOHNSON: The arch there and that lion? They were both

[85]

brought from Italy by your mother, is that right?

WALLACE: Yes. And I told you Pop brought that to her when he went out to Oregon.

JOHNSON: Yes. And that mirror hung up in the Truman house.

WALLACE: Yes, and that mirror belonged up there.

JOHNSON: That's interesting.

WALLACE: Fred Wallace, as I told you, wanted to fix over the living room up there and he took this [mirror] down. George said, "Well, if you're going to take that down, I want it." It has wood on the back of it.

JOHNSON: Yes, that's a nice one; it's in beautiful shape.

WALLACE: I don't think I have any other curios.

JOHNSON: Well, it's been interesting. After the Truman's came back, when he left the White House, then I suppose you visited quite a bit didn't you? With them living next door to you.

WALLACE: Oh yes, we went back and forth. And [there was] Mother Wallace's death, of course. She was

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an old lady, but you're never ready to give up your mother.

JOHNSON: That's right. And so when they came back, of course, Mother Wallace wasn't with them. She died in 1952 in the White House. So they had the house to themselves, didn't they?

WALLACE: They brought the body back here.

JOHNSON: What did they do with her former bedroom, do you remember? Did they change it over into anything? Would you tell us about Mother Wallace's room?

WALLACE: Oh yes, they put her downstairs later [in life]. You see the big room on that side belonged to Grandmother Gates.

JOHNSON: You're pointing to the left, to the south side of the house?

WALLACE: Yes. There is a big room there. Before Grandfather Gates died, Mother Wallace and the rest of them all slept upstairs, but after Grandmother and Grandfather Gates were both gone, why they fixed those rooms downstairs, which is now the parlor, and the room back of it.

JOHNSON: Had they been used as bedrooms at one time?

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WALLACE: Grandmother Gates and Grandfather Gates had that whole side of the house, the bedroom, and there's a bath back there, and the big living room.

JOHNSON: That's on this side toward this side of the house?

WALLACE: Oh, no, no, on the other side, the south side. The kids, you know, can't stay where old folks are all the time, so that's one reason that they all allowed them....and Bess had a beautiful big room over on the south side. She and Harry lived in it as long as they . . .

JOHNSON: How about the fences here. Did you have fences around your house before they fenced the Truman home, or did that happen at the same time?

WALLACE: I don't think we had any fences for quite a while, but that's when they fenced it all in, when he was made President. There were people, awfully cozy, that came around peeking in, you know.

JOHNSON: Did the Secret Service ever bother you over there?

WALLACE: No, I was real cozy with them. They fixed a place out there by the big barn where they could sit and where they could

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watch the home, and then they'd make their rounds around there and all.

JOHNSON: Didn't they get the house across the street? The Secret Service bought the house across the street?

WALLACE: I think they did, on the corner, and they lived in there some.

JOHNSON: On the corner, yes. But you say they had a place up here by the garage?

WALLACE: Inside that old barn.

JOHNSON: How long had that barn been there, do you know? Has it been there ever since you remember?

WALLACE: Oh yes.

JOHNSON: Is that where they had the horse and buggy, the horse and carriage?

WALLACE: Yes. Horse and carriage; that's what it was for, you see. That's what they're trying to put it back to look like. To look like it did, originally.

JOHNSON: Do you remember when they had a carriage, a surrey, or whatever?

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WALLACE: Oh no, no, that's before my time.

JOHNSON: Are there any pictures?

WALLACE: Grandfather Gates bought that big automobile if Bess and George, my husband, would learn to drive it. And so he did, and then Fred did afterwards; he was the younger one. Harry always had some kind of car. Of course, he had to, to go clear out to Grandview and places where he had to go.

JOHNSON: Did you think he was a safe driver? Did you ride with him when he drove? What kind of a driver was he?

WALLACE: He was a good driver; he was a fast driver.

JOHNSON: But fast.

WALLACE: Have you ever seen those pictures over in the Library of Harry and all of us going on a picnic?

JOHNSON: You remember that do you?

WALLACE: And then we walked. There's a picture someplace of Harry carrying [a picnic basket], and we walked out to the river.

JOHNSON: Did he ever go into the ditch when you were in the car?

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WALLACE: No.

JOHNSON: Never ended up in the ditch?

WALLACE: No, he was a fast driver, but he was a good driver.

JOHNSON: That was before hard roads. That was before the paved highways.

WALLACE: Well, this was mud. The day we were married, that was in 1916, it was so muddy...

JOHNSON: The street out in front here.

WALLACE: It was still mud. They had broken the street through, and eventually they paved it, but they hadn't paved it by then. We were married at my mother and father's; that's where Bill [Carnes] lives now, you know. It was really--oh, it was a mess. But they all came, Grandmother and Grandfather Gates, and all. I had three preachers.

JOHNSON: Is that right.

WALLACE: I wanted the preachers that I wanted, and I didn't dare ask one of them without asking the others.

JOHNSON: So who were they? Who were the three

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preachers?

WALLACE: They were Christian Church preachers that we had at the time. One of them was Mr. [L.J.] Marshall. I can't even remember their names now. We had about 100 people in the house that night.

JOHNSON: For that wedding.

WALLACE: I wanted to be married in the church, but that ornery George Wallace, he wasn't going to be married in church, so we had it at home. The steps come down this way and this way and turned, and we came down to get married in the middle of the living room.

JOHNSON: So you had the staircase, and you came walking down the staircase.

WALLACE: Came down the staircase with them playing on the . . .

JOHNSON: I guess I asked you about the Truman wedding, Bess and Harry's wedding up here, didn't I?

WALLACE: Yes, that was nice. It was very small. It was beautiful weather, and so we had a lot of doings outdoors up there.

JOHNSON: Do you remember the colors that the

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bridesmaid and the bride wore? Was it yellow?

WALLACE: Of course, Bess' was white. I don't remember.

JOHNSON: Were you in the wedding party?

WALLACE: No.

JOHNSON: Did they have a bridesmaid?

WALLACE: She had two cousins, one from Kansas City and one from Platte City, Helen Wallace and Louise Wells, I believe their names were, and they were her bridesmaids.

JOHNSON: Do you remember if they had a reception after Harry and Bess were married?

WALLACE: I guess they did, because everybody had receptions in those days.

JOHNSON: Now, after they were home--after he left the Presidency--you socialized quite a bit, you say. did they go out much actually after he came home, or socialize much?

WALLACE: Oh yes, just normally as people would.

JOHNSON: Would he come over here, and walk over here and visit with you in the house?

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WALLACE: He came down every night and closed those back gates.

JOHNSON: Oh, back here?

WALLACE: Yes. And then everything was locked in.

JOHNSON: But that gate opened up into your property didn't it?

WALLACE: Yes.

JOHNSON: The back gates opened into . . .

WALLACE: Well, he always asked me if he could. We didn't go out much at night.

JOHNSON: Did you go over at night and visit with them and play cards?

WALLACE: Oh yes, we went up there pretty nearly every night when Margaret was a little thing.

JOHNSON: When she was small.

WALLACE: Went up and spoiled her.

JOHNSON: I understand that Fred, the youngest Wallace, lived in the house for a number of years. In the 1930s he actually lived in the Wallace, or the Truman home over here, do you remember that?

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WALLACE: Yes, I think they came back here; I think they did live up there for a while. His wife was awfully nice. She's still alive as far as I know.

JOHNSON: Your husband had an automobile, had a car?

WALLACE: Well, he always had a car. And Harry always had a car.

JOHNSON: Was it your husband who introduced Harry to Rufus Burrus back in 1922?

WALLACE: No, that was Frank. Frank was a politician, George never was.

JOHNSON: He never went out on a campaign?

WALLACE: He liked to play golf, and he loved woodwork. He worked for the Hutig Mill. He was working there when we were married, and then it went broke and we went broke with them.

JOHNSON: A lot of businesses went broke around then.

WALLACE: Then Harry got him this job with the county and he worked with the county for the rest of this life.

JOHNSON: Well, you were very popular with Margaret and I'm sure with the rest of the family, and he did write you a few letters. I found some here in the

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Truman Library, some letters that he wrote you, four or five of them, when he was President.

WALLACE: Well, they're relics now.

JOHNSON: Well, thanks very much.

WALLACE: I've enjoyed visiting; I've learned a lot and you've learned a lot.

JOHNSON: Right.

WALLACE: So, we've swapped.

JOHNSON: And if you think of anything else, please add it to this transcript.