

Oral History Interview with

MILDRED LEE DRYDEN (Mrs. William J.)

Participant in Harry S. Truman's first campaign for the Senate, 1934, and Senator Truman's personal secretary, 1935-45.

Washington, D.C.
September 26, 1963

by James R. Fuchs, Harry S. Truman Library

The Harry S. Truman Library
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MR. FUCHS: Mrs. Dryden, when did you first become acquainted with Harry S. Truman?

MRS. DRYDEN: I wouldn't be able to tell you that because I've known him, I suppose, ever since I can remember; I am from Independence.

FUCHS: You knew him long before he came into politics, or became county judge?

DRYDEN: I knew him when he was first county judge. I knew him through my father.

FUCHS: I see.

DRYDEN: My father was in politics and that is the way I happened to know him.

FUCHS: Was your father a lawyer?

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DRYDEN: No, no. He was just interested in politics. He didn't even hold a political job of any kind. As a matter of fact, he was leader of one of the wards in Independence -- Democratic ward.

FUCHS: Did he belong to the Pendergast organization?

DRYDEN: Yes.

FUCHS: He was of the "Goat" faction?

DRYDEN: Yes, very much so.

FUCHS: When did you become associated with Mr. Truman?

DRYDEN: When did he file for the Senate -- it would be in 1934.

FUCHS: Yes.

DRYDEN: I went to work for him just the day or the day after he filed for the Senate, and I think that was in the spring, some time in May. I thought it was going to last about six weeks and I was just going to be in the campaign. As a matter fact, I'd never been in a campaign; I didn't know what in the world I was supposed to do. When I started out I was the only one he had at first and we had headquarters across the street from the courthouse in a

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little place called Puckett's Vegetable Stand and I was in there by myself several weeks. Then they opened up headquarters in Kansas City, at 12th and Oak. Then, of course, we had a lot of other people there.

FUCHS: Who were some of them?

DRYDEN: That is where I met Fred Canfil and, well, to tell you the truth, I don't remember any of the other names. But, of course, I wasn't associated with them after the campaign and after he won the nomination. I didn't see those people any more. They were just people from Kansas City who worked in the headquarters. I think most of them were volunteers but we had a few paid employees. But, my association with Fred Canfil went on from that time -- I knew him up until the time he died. But the other people I just don't remember.

FUCHS: There have been several accounts which stated that you worked as a secretary for Mr. Truman as county judge.

DRYDEN: That is wrong, because I didn't. He was county judge when he filed for the Senate, of course, and had been for a number of years. After he won the nomination, there was an interim. The primary was in August and then I

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worked in the general election until November. At that time I went to work for the county auditor. It was just sort of a fill-in job for me. That is when I knew I was coming to Washington, so I worked for the county auditor, Fred Mayer, up until the first of January -- I came up here the third of January. I was the first one up here and I think the President came the next day. I came on the train and I don't remember how Mr. and Mrs. Truman traveled -- maybe they drove. We had our office at 248 Senate Office Building. It was a small office, but we were quite fortunate. Another senator, I believe he was a Republican, had been defeated and we were able to get his suite of rooms down the hall -- Room 240.

FUCHS: Mr. Messall had actually been employed prior to January?

DRYDEN: No, not for Mr. Truman. He was with Congressman Lee, of the 7th District, prior to that time.

FUCHS: I thought perhaps that the account was straight that Mr. Truman had made a verbal agreement.

DRYDEN: Perhaps.

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FUCHS: He did have a verbal agreement prior to January 3rd when you came in...

DRYDEN: Just as soon as he was elected he immediately started looking for a secretary, but Mr. Messall did not actually go on the payroll until January; none of us did.

FUCHS: Then it's not true that you had previously worked for Mr. Truman as his secretary. My understanding of these accounts was that through the years you had been a secretary to him as a county judge; I just want to clarify the record on this.

DRYDEN: No, that is wrong because I wasn't connected with him at all until he filed for the Senate in May, '34.

FUCHS: Could you give me a small autobiographical sketch of yourself, your background, where you were born and worked before you came into Mr. Truman's employ?

DRYDEN: I wasn't working when I went to work for him. I had worked before at the Pantages Theatre in Kansas City -- I've only had three jobs.

FUCHS: You were born in Independence?

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DRYDEN: Yes. I worked down on film row for a short time for Educational Films and then I went with the theatre, and I was with them until they closed the theatre.

FUCHS: Did you have secretarial training in Kansas City?

DRYDEN: Yes, just about two years, I guess, before I went to work for him.

FUCHS: You went to one of the business colleges in Kansas City?

DRYDEN: Yes. The Dickinson Secretarial School.

FUCHS: Did you ever hear him speak of going to a business college?

DRYDEN: No. I don't know that he did; he might have, but I wouldn't know about that. He went to law school.

FUCHS: Yes. Did he ever talk about his experiences there?

DRYDEN: No. I don't remember that he ever talked about it at all. There wouldn't be any occasion. As a matter of fact, I think he sort of planned when he came to Washington to continue his study of law, but he was so busy he didn't have time for it.

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FUCHS: He did mention that?

DRYDEN: I don't remember that he ever mentioned it to me personally, but it was sort of talked about that he -- I think, perhaps, I even read it in the paper or something. That's about all I remember about it.

FUCHS: Your maiden name was Latimer, wasn't it?

DRYDEN: Yes.

FUCHS: Are you related to "Honey" Latimer?

DRYDEN: Yes, I'm about a third cousin.

FUCHS: I see. I know that Mr. Truman has bought motor cars from Honey when he was in the Dodge Motor Car business.

DRYDEN: He used to buy them from my cousin before that -- my first cousin, Charles Haines, who has the Haines-Hodges agency for the Buick now. At that time it was Chrysler.

FUCHS: Then he switched. Well, he did have Chryslers, of course, and he did buy some Dodges from Honey. But he was just a third cousin of yours.

DRYDEN: Just a third cousin. I only have one first cousin and that is Charles Haines.

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FUCHS: I see. This first headquarters in Kansas City, you say that was across from a vegetable stand?

DRYDEN: No, that is wrong; it was in Independence.

FUCHS: In Independence, excuse me.

DRYDEN: It had been Puckett's Vegetable Stand. It was all open in front, no doors or else they were wide doors and they would have them open so the whole front of the store was completely exposed. Of course, that was in the summer. The first week I was there I didn't see Mr. Truman. He was out making speeches and I sort of dreaded having him come in because I didn't know what all the work was going to entail and I didn't have many visitors -- some of the men from the courthouse would come over, because we'd just started; we were not in operation at all. I just spent most of the days waiting for someone to come in. I was all alone. That lasted two or three weeks, I guess and then, of course, they were organized, and knew what they were going to do so they opened headquarters in Kansas City. We had several floors there. There was a women's division, entirely separate from ours. It was the Democratic Women's organization in Kansas City

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and they had their own floor. Our headquarters were actually where Mr. Truman was. The Women's Division didn't have anything to do with our work. During that time, I actually worked for Fred Canfil because Mr. Truman would be out of town all the time. He would come back and forth but I took dictation from Fred Canfil most of the time.

FUCHS: What was Canfil's title?

DRYDEN: I suppose he didn't have any title. I can't think what it would be...

FUCHS: Was he considered the campaign manager?

DRYDEN: He was the campaign manager at the headquarters.

FUCHS: What type of an individual was he? What were your first impressions of Fred Canfil?

DRYDEN: He was a character all by himself. It would be hard to describe him. He was very loud and blustery and most people when they first met him would be a little afraid of him. But that was just all a front; he wasn't that way at all after you knew him. I was always very fond of Mr. Canfil, very fond. It's too bad he is gone, because

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he could tell you a lot of things. I have had the impression from reading different things (I hope I'm not being too outspoken about this), a lot of people who claimed to know Mr. Truman quite well didn't know him nearly as well as they said they did. Now that is really -- I guess I should say that off the record, but I guess that happens with every person in public life, especially a President or someone important. All of a sudden people know him real well, however, Mr. Canfil did know him well.

FUCHS: Yes. Well, that's a very interesting observation. I wish you could say such things on the record and then if you want to you can put them off the record for any period of time, but I think this has a certain amount of importance.

DRYDEN: That has always amazed me. It seemed to me right after he was President people were just climbing all over each other to get an interview to tell what they knew about him, and actually the exaggerated a great deal.

FUCHS: Who were some of these that you recall?

DRYDEN: Oh, my goodness, I'm not going to tell you. I'm not

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going to tell you that.

FUCHS: Well, that would be interesting. Someday the historians...

DRYDEN: I'd make a lot of enemies if I told that.

FUCHS: But that wouldn't necessarily have to be known. You could close that until fifty years after you're dead, if you wish. In other words, if you know certain people that say they knew Fred Canfil and they maybe did harm to Fred Canfil's reputation, why, you'd be doing him a favor by someday opening this and saying that this individual didn't really know Fred Canfil.

DRYDEN: At that particular time, I will say this, Mr. Canfil suddenly came on the scene in 1934, but he had known Mr. Truman a good many years before that. I think it started probably when they were in the war together, the First World War.

FUCHS: Was he in Mr. Truman's battery?

DRYDEN: I think not; no, he wasn't, because most of the men in the battery didn't know him. When we opened our headquarters all of a sudden Mr. Canfil just sort of appeared

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on the scene. People used to say little mean things about him. It was just because they were jealous of him; they wanted to be in his spot because he did a magnificent job for Mr. Truman.

FUCHS: Was he sometimes referred to as "Major" Canfil?

DRYDEN: Yes, he was a Major.

FUCHS: Was he in the Reserve Corps?

DRYDEN: I think he was, yes.

FUCHS: Did you ever see him in uniform?

DRYDEN: Did I ever see him in uniform? No. I don't remember that I ever saw him in uniform.

FUCHS: I just wondered if he had participated in the Reserves with Mr. Truman.

DRYDEN: Well now, he might have. That part I wouldn't be able to tell you. I don't know.

FUCHS: Any particular anecdotes that you remember about Mr. Canfil and Mr. Truman in the campaign there that stand out in your memory, that would be of interest or add a little

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footnote to history?

DRYDEN: I remember one thing, it has nothing to do with Mr. Truman, but Mr. Canfil would be so busy, and he'd have all the mail to dictate, and I'd be at the courthouse and he'd come out there -- this is the Independence courthouse; we have two courthouses, you know, which is quite unusual in the County Seat. He would come out to Independence, and on the way back to Kansas City he'd dictate to me. I remember that quite well; it made me feel right important.

FUCHS: Why would you have been out to the courthouse in Independence?

DRYDEN: Now you know, that is a funny thing; I cannot remember why I was out there.

FUCHS: This was during the campaign?

DRYDEN: This must have been after the primary that I did that. I don't mean that I did it every day, but occasionally we'd be out there and on the way back to town -- it was sort of like a movie, you know, like these impossible things you see in the movie where the girl or woman is taking dictation under impossible circumstances, well, that's the way it was.

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FUCHS: You took shorthand and you'd do it in the car while you were driving back?

DRYDEN: Just a few times. But that sort of stayed in my memory.

FUCHS: Do you recall Fred Canfil doing a lot of driving for Mr. Truman?

DRYDEN: Yes, he used to drive quite a bit for him, back and forth.

FUCHS: Do you recall him taking Mr. Truman around to various towns in the campaign? Or who did Mr. Truman's driving, perhaps I should put it that way? Did he drive himself, or...

DRYDEN: I don't know about that. Mr. Canfil used to do quite a bit of it but I think that would be, perhaps, over the weekend, when we didn't have our office open, say maybe they would go out for Saturday evening or something. But he did a lot of driving, yes. I remember that because he used to drive so fast.

FUCHS: What about Mr. Truman's driving?

DRYDEN: He used to drive pretty fast, too. He made mighty

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good time from here to Independence when he would have to go back, but he was a good driver, not reckless I mean, but he drove fast.

FUCHS: How did Mr. Canfil happen to come to Washington to be an investigator for the Truman Committee?

DRYDEN: I don't know. I guess Mr. Truman just wanted him, so he came. That is all I know.

FUCHS: Do you recall who the woman was who was principal leader of the woman's division of campaign headquarters there?

DRYDEN: Yes, I do. It was Mrs. William M. Boyle, Sr. She lives right here in Washington now. If you'll remember, Mr. Boyle, William M. Boyle, Jr., was chairman of the Democratic National Committee. He has passed away but she lives here on Connecticut Avenue. She's quite old now, but she was head of the Women's Division, and that's about all I know about that because I didn't know anything about their work.

FUCHS: You don't know if she'd been a particularly close friend of Mr. Truman's?

DRYDEN: Well, in a political way, I guess she was.

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FUCHS: Mainly it was that she was interested in Democratic politics?

DRYDEN: That's true.

FUCHS: Do you recall a William P. Harvey?

DRYDEN: William P. Harvey...now what did he do?

FUCHS: Well, it's my understanding that he was publicity manager for Mr. Truman in that campaign.

DRYDEN: Is he still living?

FUCHS: That I can't tell you.

DRYDEN: Because there was a man that was in publicity but the name Harvey doesn't mean a thing to me. You see, that was back in '34 and that is quite a long time ago. My main concern was to see that he was elected. The name Harvey does sound familiar though. I know there was a man that used to work in the office. He was sort of heavy set like Mr. Canfil, but he's passed away, if that's the one.

FUCHS: Do you think he was writing speeches, or who did write Mr. Truman's speeches in that campaign for the nomination?

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DRYDEN: He wrote a lot of speeches himself. All through the years he wrote his own speeches -- most of them, until he formed the Truman committee and then when it became quite burdensome, you can understand that, he wouldn't have time to; oh, naturally, he edited all of them, but he wouldn't have time to sit down and write a speech after he got into the committee. Of course, that was quite a long time after that. I would say that he wrote a lot of his own speeches and other than that I don't know who participated in them.

FUCHS: Do you think someone else did, on occasion, help him write speeches in that campaign?

DRYDEN: Any campaign like that is such a whirlwind, and especially after the primary, because before that you're more or less on your own, but once one wins the primary and one is working to be actually elected, one wouldn't have too much time to devote to writing speeches. One wouldn't have enough time left to get out and make them. So at that time he had help, but I don't recall who they were. I just don't.

FUCHS: Do you remember that he did more campaigning for the

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primary nomination than he did for the actual election against the incumbent Republican?

DRYDEN: No, I wouldn't say that he did more. It was just about the same.

FUCHS: Did you attend any of the speeches that he gave?

DRYDEN: No. I was working in the headquarters; I didn't have much time to hear any speech.

FUCHS: Did you observe anything about Mr. Truman's cousin, Ralph Truman, during that campaign?

DRYDEN: Yes, I can tell you about that.

FUCHS: We'd be very happy to have you do so.

DRYDEN: I was amused. I recently read an article about him in our [Independence] *Examiner*. We take the *Examiner*. The other day, it seems that they had some sort of a ceremony out there. Well, I can remember a time when they didn't even speak. You know he was against Mr. Truman, Ralph Truman was, very much so. Mr. Truman was quite bitter about that at that time. Naturally he would be, his first cousin against him. But I think that was all forgotten in after

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years.

FUCHS: Could you elaborate on that to any extent, in that campaign, Mr. Ralph Truman's participation?

DRYDEN: He didn't participate in ours at all, he was against him.

FUCHS: Yes, I understand that; I understand that he managed "Tuck" Milligan.

DRYDEN: Yes, he did, so you see there was quite a breach there.

FUCHS: Did Mr. Truman have some kind words to say for him?

DRYDEN: No, he didn't; he didn't have any. As a matter of fact, I don't know, maybe I shouldn't tell this. After all the poor man is dead now, but Mr. Truman wrote a letter after he won the election -- quite a bitter letter. I know because I took it. I don't even know why I should remember this -- I didn't know there would ever be occasion to remember it -- and said he never wanted to see him again, or words to that effect. It was quite a letter just cutting him out of his life at that time, but you couldn't blame him.

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FUCHS: No.

DRYDEN: At the same time, this makes me think about that, Mr. Canfil was accused of having a slush fund that he carried around in a little black bag. Well, we had a lot of fun out of that because he didn't have anything in that bag, but it was just one of those things that mushroomed and built up. You know, I think the *Star* -- you could probably get this out of the *Star*, or some of the newspapers, about Fred Canfil and his little black bag and there wasn't a word of truth in it, there really wasn't.

FUCHS: If there wasn't money in it, what did he carry in it?

DRYDEN: I don't know. He might have had a little money; I mean, everybody has campaign money, but he certainly didn't have any slush fund; we didn't have very much money.

FUCHS: Do you recall the charges that Ralph Truman made in regard to a slush fund?

DRYDEN: No, only just what I've just now told you. If I had read it in the paper I could recall at the particular time and the reaction that Truman had to it, because it was quite a dreadful accusation when it wasn't true. And

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as I've said, we needed money. I remember one thing, I just don't recall his name at all, but he was one of the paid employees. If you'll remember, that was during the depression, and a lot of people that we had up there were desperate for money and so they were paid, not very much, but paid employees -- they had to be paid to live, and this particular boy ran out of gas and he didn't have enough money to pay for it until he got some more by coming back to the office. So, as I remember, he lived out south someplace, and it was down hill most of the way to where he lived and he used to try to coast as far as he could in order to save his gas because he was making such a small salary. So you can see, we didn't have any slush fund, we couldn't possibly have had. Many times we ran out of stamps, and we had a hard time getting stamps. It was really -- we had financial worries.

FUCHS: What was the source of most of your funds and who did most of the fund raising, as you remember?

DRYDEN: I don't remember who did it. Just various ones in the various Democratic clubs, men that were interested in politics. I do remember how it started out, however. We'll have to go back to Independence now -- the headquarters

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there, when it first started out.

The men around the courthouse -- we always called them the "boys around the courthouse" -- of course, that was just a term, got up a fund, for one thing, to pay me; I was the only one they paid at the time. They didn't have any payroll, but they would be the ones who would pay me. A man by the name of Cleveland was the one that paid me.

FUCHS: Do you recall his first name?

DRYDEN: I think his name was Bill; I don't know whether he's still alive. At that time he was custodian of, I think he was custodian of the courthouse in Independence.

FUCHS: Who were some of the others who participated in the initial fund raising there?

DRYDEN: Edgar Hinde was one...do you have any of the names of the men in Independence then, I can tell you. If I could just see the list of names from Independence.

Whatever it was it was just a small campaign fund.

FUCHS: And that started it off.

DRYDEN: That started it off. Then when we went to Kansas City,

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naturally, all the Democratic clubs over there, I assume, perhaps donated, or at least were instrumental in getting more money, but we didn't have any money to start out with. The vegetable stand, I keep calling it that, was donated, or at least the men around the courthouse arranged for that. They probably paid some rent. Of course, we didn't have it very long. I wish I could think of more people. Edger Hinde is one of Mr. Truman's closest friends and incidentally was one of my father's closest friends.

FUCHS: What about Rufus Burrus?

DRYDEN: No. I should say not. I don't remember Rufus Burrus doing anything about the first campaign, not a thing. Now he knew Mr. Truman. He was active in the Reserves, I think, but he didn't have anything to do with any fund raising that I know of. I don't remember seeing him. I've always known Rufus too.

FUCHS: What about Polly Compton?

DRYDEN: Yes, Polly Compton was active.

FUCHS: Dexter Perry.

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DRYDEN: Oh. Dexter Perry. Yes, Dexter Perry was very instrumental in it, and all those boys that were in what they call -- the poker...

FUCHS: The Harpie Club?

DRYDEN: The Harpie Club, yes. All of those would be the ones that could be named as assisting in the first campaign.

FUCHS: Do you remember any of the other members of the Harpie Club or do you have any other knowledge of the Harpie Club that might be of interest?

DRYDEN: No. I don't.

FUCHS: Where were they meeting at that time?

DRYDEN: It was on the south side of the square upstairs. My father used to belong to it, but it wasn't called the Harpie Club then. This was after my father passed away -- my father passed away in '28, so it was after that. I wish I could remember some of those men. I'd like to give them credit for it, because quite frankly so many people are taking credit who do not deserve it.

FUCHS: Just precisely where was this vegetable stand in relation to present day buildings, do you know?

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DRYDEN: Well, I would say it's about three doors from the -- let's see, it would be the southeast corner of the courthouse. The east side is Main Street and right on the corner, there was a little Jewish store -- I can't remember the name of it now. And about two doors up, on what would be Lexington Street, and it was just right across the street from the courthouse on the south side of the square. As I've said, I was in the headquarters by myself, most of the time, only all the boys from the courthouse came over occasionally, but I used to sit there and look out and wonder when Mr. Truman was coming in. As I said, I was sort of frightened, because I didn't know just what we were going to do -- I had never worked in a campaign before. Now you understand this is before anything started, the first week; but he was out of town making speeches all week and then when he came in he called me over to the courthouse where he had his office, you know as judge. So from then on, I was all right; I sort of got my bearings, period. It is funny how I can remember the first week I worked for him and I can't remember anything in between for the next eleven years.

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FUCHS: Well, what were your specific duties when you went to work in Washington in Senator Truman's office?

DRYDEN: I was his private secretary.

FUCHS: Did you just take dictation and type letters?

DRYDEN: I took dictation and I made all of his appointments; I answered the phone, let's see, what else did I do, oh, I distributed the mail and selected what I thought he should see, and things like that.

FUCHS: Many of the letters you handled yourself?

DRYDEN: Yes, matters about legislation you write one letter. We would receive hundreds of form letters that have all been just taken out of the telephone book, you can send the same letter to them...I mean, there's only one way to say something about a piece of legislation, you're either for or against it.

FUCHS: He would normally sign all those?

DRYDEN: Oh, yes, he signed practically everything. Yes, he saw all the mail.

FUCHS: Did your duties change much over the years?

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DRYDEN: They didn't change at all that I can remember. No, they didn't change.

FUCHS: You didn't do the filing?

DRYDEN: No, well, now I'll take that back. When we first started out, each one of us did our own filing. We had another woman in there by the name of Jane Taylor, just the first year; she left to go back home to get married.

FUCHS: Where was she from?

DRYDEN: She was from Kansas City, but she was employed after he was elected; her father got her in.

FUCHS: Who was he?

DRYDEN: James Taylor. I don't know if he's still alive or not.

FUCHS: Did he have particular significance to Mr. Truman or...

DRYDEN: I don't know, I never heard of him until he started coming up to the headquarters and just talking to us and the first thing I knew he had his daughter in Washington.

FUCHS: Her principal duties were?

DRYDEN: Well, she was -- I guess you'd call her -- I hate to call

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anyone a stenographer -- we were all secretaries, but I was Mr. Truman's personal secretary.

FUCHS: Jane Taylor is still living?

DRYDEN: Yes, but I don't know where and I don't even remember her married name. I couldn't tell you about that.

FUCHS: She wouldn't be a particularly good source of information?

DRYDEN: No, she was just there a year.

FUCHS: Could you tell me more about Victor Messall?

DRYDEN: Well, he was Mr. Truman's secretary for the first six years.

FUCHS: You were his personal secretary and Victor's title corresponded with what contemporary title?

DRYDEN: Well, at the moment you would call him -- if we were on the Hill now -- I believe he would be called "administrative assistant." You see, they have a different set-up from what we used to have. He answered a lot of the mail, post office matters, and so on.

FUCHS: Did he organize the office -- systematize the work?

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DRYDEN: Yes, I would say he did, because he had had that experience over in Congressman Lee's office.

FUCHS: What is your opinion of Victor Messall? Was he a good administrative assistant, to use the new term?

DRYDEN: Yes, I think he was quite good.

FUCHS: What principally occupied his day as you remember it?

DRYDEN: Oh, answering the mail...just the regular office work that we have in any Congressional office. We didn't have any speeches to write. I understand now that the administrative assistants write the speeches and he didn't; of course, Mr. Truman didn't make as many speeches in those days as he did later on, or not as many as the men up on the Hill do now because they do a great deal of traveling around and making speeches. Mr. Truman would make speeches occasionally, but it isn't anything like the way -- as a matter of fact, I don't know how they get away from their work on the Hill the way they do, because Mr. Truman certainly didn't. He was too busy. When he was Grand Master of the Masons, that took a lot of his time; I don't mean away from his Senatorial work, it didn't do that, but he made speeches at that time, just for

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that one period; I think it was a year, or something like that. But he wrote all those speeches.

FUCHS: You don't recall, am I correct, Mr. Messall writing any speeches, working on any speeches?

DRYDEN: Well, I would hesitate to say, because I just don't remember that part. Now he might have helped, yes. But as I've said, there just wasn't that kind of work during those days that Mr. Truman had later, when he became chairman of the committee. Now, of course, when he went on the committee, the staff, for instance, Hugh Fulton, and a man by the name of Herbert Maletz and Bill Boyle and, let's see, who else...Rudolph Halley, wrote the speeches. I mean they participated; I won't say they wrote they wrote the speeches. They participated with Mr. Truman. But at that time, of course, there was a lot more speech-making than there was in the first term.

FUCHS: You would say that Mr. Truman was around his office a great part of the day, generally...

DRYDEN: No, he would be in committee meetings. Oh, he was meticulous about going to committee meetings. He would come in early in the morning and I was supposed to come in

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before the rest of them did to take his dictation. But he was there much earlier than I was.

FUCHS: What time did you start?

DRYDEN: About 8:30. And then you see, we would be there without any interruption. That would be the time that he did most of his dictating to me. And then, of course, the committee meetings always start at 10, and in the meantime, he would have appointments, he would have people to see; that was my duty, to see that people who called to make an appointment didn't all crowd up together. You cannot tell a man to come in at 10 o'clock and then maybe have ten others coming in at the same time -- the appointments had to be staggered. The committee meetings were at 10 and 10:30 a. m. and he always attended his committee meetings.

FUCHS: Did you keep an appointment calendar of a certain type?

DRYDEN: I kept his appointments on a memo pad. Just the names and time of appointment;

FUCHS: You don't think there would be anything existing of his appointments over the years that you worked for him?

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DRYDEN: No, there wouldn't be anything like that.

FUCHS: How did you find Mr. Truman as a boss?

DRYDEN: He was the best man I ever worked for. I've never been able to reconcile the man I worked for and the man I read about in the paper. For instance, his salty language and losing his temper, and so on. Never in all the years that I worked for him did I ever see him lose his temper. He was always soft-spoken and very considerate to his office staff. So. I don't know. If he ever used any profanity -- you read about it all the time -- it was either something that developed later or he might have used it when he was talking to men, you know. Most men are prone to that -- just like slang with them; but never in front of any of us did he ever use any profanity, and I just don't quite like to hear people say "Oh, he certainly does use a lot of profanity."

FUCHS: Were you acquainted with James Aylward?

DRYDEN: Oh, yes, he was National Committeeman at that time.

FUCHS: Was he in evidence around Mr. Truman's office to any extent, or is there anything you recall in connection with

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Mr. Aylward?

DRYDEN: When Mr. Aylward had business with the Democratic National Committee in Washington he usually dropped by our office, too. He was quite influential, you know, back home, and they were quite good friends at that time. I suppose he's not in politics as much as he used to be. That I wouldn't know. But at the time, he was a very important man, at least I thought he was. I guess everybody else did because he was National Committeeman from Missouri.

FUCHS: Mr. Truman came in early and then he had you come in a little bit early to take dictation...

DRYDEN: Yes, that would be about the only time in the day that he had time, of course.

FUCHS: What time did you leave in the evenings?

DRYDEN: Well, I didn't have any regular hours. We'd leave around 5:30, 6:30 -- lots of nights we worked.

FUCHS: Did he usually stay after you left?

DRYDEN: Lots of times he was there -- if we left, say, around 5:30, many times he was there after we left.

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FUCHS: How did he get to the office, do you recall?

DRYDEN: Well, he drove his car and then there would be times when he'd walk quite a distance and then take a bus. He liked to walk, you know, even in those days. He really liked to walk. He did a great deal of it, but he also drove his car.

FUCHS: He didn't, as you recall, normally ride down with Vic Messall?

DRYDEN: I don't remember.

FUCHS: The reason I asked is that one writer has said that was the case and I just wanted to establish whether you remembered that.

DRYDEN: No, I don't remember that part about it at all.

Oh, to go back to the way his day would start out, he would get down there early -- I suppose he was just about the only Senator, then, who would be there that early -- and he'd always read the *Congressional Record*. When I walked in he was either reading the *Record* or writing a letter to his mother and his sister. Now that was every day, practically. I remember one time, when I came in I said, "You make me feel ashamed," because he

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wrote home so much and I'd probably be owing a letter home, you know

FUCHS: Did you see him reading other things around the office?

DRYDEN: Oh, yes, his mail and other material.

FUCHS: Did you see him read books there?

DRYDEN: What kind of books do you mean?

FUCHS: Well, I mean, history books, or did he do most of that at home?

DRYDEN: Well, I think he did a great deal of that at home, but he had that quiet hour, you might call it, before anyone came in, when he had time to concentrate and do things that he wanted to catch up on.

FUCHS: Do you have any recollections of his first days in office as a senator that stand out in your memory?

DRYDEN: The first days?

FUCHS: The first few days, when you first started in Washington?

DRYDEN: No. I wouldn't be able to put that in words because we were all so excited and busy getting the office in operation. I remember how nice he looked in his morning

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suit.

FUCHS: You went to the swearing in?

DRYDEN: Oh, yes.

FUCHS: Who else was there?

DRYDEN: Oh, his family -- everybody in the office, and some friends.

FUCHS: Who else was in the office at that time?

DRYDEN: Well, just the ones that I named. Bud Faris was only there a year.

FUCHS: Who was Bud Faris?

DRYDEN: He was from Kansas City and his father was a good friend of Mr. Pendergast.

FUCHS: Was his father in politics in Kansas City?

DRYDEN: Yes, I would say he was right active. Jane Taylor, whom I've already mentioned, Vic Messall, and myself made up the office staff.

FUCHS: Was that the first year?

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DRYDEN: The first year. Oh. I've forgotten one -- Catherine Bixler -- her name is Rohde now. She worked for Congressman Lee, with Vic. When you open an office, you don't know just how many people you need. So Catherine came in on a temporary basis because she'd had experience, but stayed on as a regular employee.

FUCHS: Immediately?

DRYDEN: Yes, within the next few days. She had had experience in Congressman Lee's office and naturally we were a new office being set up and she had worked for Vic over there and so she came in.

FUCHS: Was she a young girl?

DRYDEN: Yes, at that time she was. She was there the rest of the time. She resigned about a year before I did.

FUCHS: What were her principal activities?

DRYDEN: Well, it will be easier to tell what she did. She had the Post Office appointments to take care of and Annapolis and West Point -- those were her main duties.

FUCHS: She kept the files or typed the letters in relation to those or...?

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DRYDEN: Yes.

FUCHS: Did you have the filing broken down in certain segments like that?

DRYDEN: Yes. We had general correspondence, and, as I said, we had what we more or less called -- well, letters that had to be handled by Mr. Truman himself, a great many of them. And then the Post Office and West Point and Annapolis, those three were sort of set off to themselves so that it would take one person to work on those, and she also worked on general mail, too, you know, like legislation, veterans' matters, etc.

FUCHS: But she would type most of the letters in relation to those subjects and then do the filing on that and then you might take dictation and type letters related to general correspondence and you would do the filing on that or...?

DRYDEN: We each did our own individual filing in those days.

FUCHS: It was all one large file but you kept your individual subject matter...?

DRYDEN: Yes, this is correct.

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FUCHS: What was Mr. Faris' principal occupation while he was there for that one year?

DRYDEN: He was an assistant secretary. A year later he went to work for the Bituminous Coal Commission.

FUCHS: A Government job.

DRYDEN: Yes.

FUCHS: Why did he leave Mr. Truman?

DRYDEN: Well, I would say, actually, we didn't need a secretary and an assistant secretary.

FUCHS: You're speaking of him as an assistant to you or as an assistant to...?

DRYDEN: No, as an assistant to Vic Messall.

FUCHS: He didn't type letters?

DRYDEN: No, and we actually didn't need that particular position because they could all be covered by Mr. Messall's work.

FUCHS: Did you have an experiences with Mr. Truman's penchant for writing letters that were a little less than discrete

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such as occurred when he was President? I have references to such letters as the music critic letter...

DRYDEN: No.

FUCHS: Do you recall typing any letter that, in your opinion, would have been better left unwritten?

DRYDEN: No letter that he might wish he could get back. No, he didn't write those kind of letters. He used to write quite a few postscripts on letters, however. It gave a personal touch to his mail, and he liked to do that, but he didn't write any letters he later regretted.

FUCHS: Would you recall any that stood out in your memory, postscripts...?

DRYDEN: No, just, "I'm glad to hear from you again," or "Hello," or just some little personal thing like that.

FUCHS: Did he keep his own counsel pretty much when he was planning to make a speech or to take some action?

DRYDEN: Yes, I would say he did.

FUCHS: Did he consult with Mr. Messall, to your knowledge, for advice?

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DRYDEN: Well, I wouldn't know about that.

FUCHS: For instance, when he made a rather vituperative speech on the Senate floor about Maurice Milligan being reappointed, did you have prior knowledge that he was going to make that speech?

DRYDEN: Well, just in a general way. In other words, I was in the office and I was working quite closely with him, so I would have to know a little bit about it.

FUCHS: Was that speech typed?

DRYDEN: I think it was; I don't remember. I just couldn't remember whether it was typed or not. We typed so many things I didn't know I would ever have to recall again as long as I lived.

FUCHS: When did Reathel Odum come to work?

DRYDEN: She came the next year after Jane Taylor left. Jane's marriage and departure left a vacancy in the office. Reathel was working in what they called a "closed bank" in St. Louis for John Snyder.

FUCHS: Was John Snyder in and out of Mr. Truman's office frequently?

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DRYDEN: He lived in St. Louis at that time, but he was a very close friend of Mr. Truman's. I would say that John Snyder was one of his closest friends.

FUCHS: He didn't visit Washington too frequently in those days?

DRYDEN: Not like he did later on, in the next three or four years. He visited, yes; there was quite a bit of business that brought him up here.

FUCHS: What kind of person was Reathel Odum?

DRYDEN: Oh, she was a very nice person and a very efficient girl, very efficient.

FUCHS: She stayed with Mr. Truman right on through then.

DRYDEN: Yes. When I resigned and went with Mr. Ferguson, that left a vacancy in the office, so she took over my work, and then that left a vacancy in her position. That is when Rose Conway came up here. She had been working for Vivian Truman in the FHA back home, so she came up here to fill that vacancy.

FUCHS: Reathel had been a typist and a file clerk up until that time or a stenographer?

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DRYDEN: Yes, but as I said, I don't like that term, stenographer -- it's secretary. Just the general mail, which was quite difficult. She was very efficient.

FUCHS: Then she took your position and Miss Conway came and took...?

DRYDEN: And took hers.

FUCHS: That was in early '45. Do you recall Harry Salsbury?

DRYDEN: Harry was on our patronage; he worked in the Senate Post Office. He wasn't connected with our office in any way, only as one of Mr. Truman's patronage boys.

FUCHS: Did he work with you in the 1940 campaign?

DRYDEN: Yes, he did. We went out -- Reathel stayed here; we had to have someone stay here, you know, because we kept this office open. We had our state headquarters in Sedalia and Harry and Catherine and I went down there, and we opened up our headquarters in Sedalia. But I was only there a very short time because it became apparent that St. Louis should be the main headquarters, so Mr. Truman sent me up to St. Louis; and we had a whole floor in the Midland Building donated to us, by whom I don't know, but

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anyway, we had it. So that's where I worked during the campaign with the exception of maybe two or three weeks. And Harry and Catherine worked in the headquarters at Sedalia sending out publicity and so on.

FUCHS: Would Harry Salsbury be a good source for history of Mr. Truman? What would be your judgment on that?

DRYDEN: No.

FUCHS: I want to go into the 1940 campaign a little bit later. I'm trying to, generally, keep this chronological, but it's perfectly all right to skip ahead if something occurs to you.

DRYDEN: It is the custom for the senators, I assume they still do, to bring boys up from their state to fill what patronage jobs they have. They have elevator jobs, they have post office clerks, guards, and so on, but those boys are all supposed to go to school. Harry was up here for that purpose, to go to school and work in the post office.

FUCHS: He was in the Post Office Department or the post office...?

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DRYDEN: The post office at the Senate Office Building, which is completely separate from what you would call the Post Office Department.

FUCHS: In other words, he was an employee of the Senate?

DRYDEN: He would be on the Senate payroll, yes, as an employee of the Senate Post Office.

FUCHS: What did Mrs. Truman do at the office?

DRYDEN: Well, I would say that she gave him a lot of very good advice.

FUCHS: Well, of course, he said that he had her on the payroll and I wondered when she started there and if she came in frequently?

DRYDEN: That was many years later. She wasn't on the payroll the first term.

FUCHS: How do you think Mr. Truman looked at his job the first year, was he entirely satisfied with being a United States Senator.

DRYDEN: Oh, yes, I think he was. And I know that he took it very seriously. He was an extremely hard worker, very hard

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worker. He didn't have much to say on the floor at that time because, I think now, so many of these new ones come up here and they're anxious to talk which is really a mistake. They should be quiet and listen. That used to be the -- I guess you would call it the tradition of good sense, and not be so active the first year, just sort of get their bearings. A lot of them came up here, as I remember, that young Senator at that time from West Virginia (I don't remember his name); he was, I think, the youngest senator ever elected to that office. The reason he was so well-known was because he was so young and, just barely in the age limit. Naturally that gave him a lot of publicity, but he started doing a lot of talking on the floor that first year, I remember that part about it and they didn't like it. He only served the one term. But Truman really approached his job in a very serious manner and just kept quiet and studied that first year. I would say even maybe into the second year, which is what they all should do.

FUCHS: There's been a story that Mr. Truman selected his appointments for West Point, at one time at least, by a method in which he favored the underdog. Do you recall

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anything about that?

DRYDEN: Yes, that is quite true. One boy I remember quite well. He was an orphan in a Masonic home, I think in St. Louis (I'm not sure about that), and he was one of the few that made good. There are so many who receive appointments and then fail. A lot of times it would be, maybe color blindness or they failed in mathematics or for other reasons.

FUCHS: You would say that he quite frequently took someone who didn't have quite as many recommendations, and so forth?

DRYDEN: Yes, not a lot of political recommendations; he didn't particularly favor that. He liked for the boy, naturally, to have a good background. Then one time he appointed twins -- I think that was to West Point. I believe that they succeeded, but I am not sure about that. The examinations are quite stiff.

FUCHS: What do you recall of Senator Truman's relationship with Senator Burton Wheeler?

DRYDEN: That would be when he was so active on the railroad

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legislation. They were quite close friends, and they conferred with each other a great deal because at that time Senator Wheeler was the chairman of the committee.

FUCHS: That was the Interstate Commerce Committee?

DRYDEN: Yes.

FUCHS: Did Senator Wheeler come into Mr. Truman's suite frequently, or did...

DRYDEN: Yes, back and forth. I remember he was in our office quite a bit.

FUCHS: Did they confer in what was known as the "Doghouse?"

DRYDEN: Yes, always, I mean when anyone like that would come in, he nearly always took them back to what we called the Doghouse. It was quiet back there.

FUCHS: How was the entire suite arranged -- the layout?

DRYDEN: I think it was the best suite up there, at least we always thought it was. I don't know of anyone else who had what we called the Doghouse. If they did I didn't know about it.

FUCHS: Was there just one entrance to the suite of offices

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from the corridor?

DRYDEN: No, we had an entrance to the Doghouse and one to Mr. Truman's office, and to ours, and then to our back room, but they were seldom used. Sometimes he would come in through his own office.

FUCHS: Through the Doghouse.

DRYDEN: No, his own private office.

FUCHS: Oh, he had an entrance into that and then another entrance into the Doghouse directly from the corridor?

DRYDEN: Yes, but it was never used; he always came in either through his own private office or through our office which was right next door.

FUCHS: How many were in that office?

DRYDEN: Well, all of us were in that office:

FUCHS: In one large room?

DRYDEN: Yes. We had our files in the other office. We just had our files in there and had our desks out in front.

FUCHS: There was Victor Messall and Faris and Jane Taylor...

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DRYDEN: ...Jane Taylor and then later Reathel and myself.

FUCHS: Were there four desks in there?

DRYDEN: Let's see...we had five desks in there. It was quite a large room.

FUCHS: Then Mr. Truman had an office and there was the Doghouse and this other office where you kept the files.

DRYDEN: Yes, that was on the other side of us.

FUCHS: So, you actually had four rooms.

DRYDEN: Yes, it was quite nice. As I said, I don't know of anyone else up there who had the same arrangement.

FUCHS: By the other side, you mean you had to go through Mr. Truman's office to get into the files?

DRYDEN: Oh, no.

FUCHS: I see. The files were to the right as you came in from the corridor into your office and then Mr. Truman's office was to the left and beyond that was the Doghouse. Well, that's interesting, I've always wondered what the arrangement was. There was just one suite number -- 240?

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DRYDEN: Yes, 240.

FUCHS: Do you recall anything specific about Senator Wheeler's relations with Mr. Truman that might be of interest?

DRYDEN: Well, no, because I didn't have anything to do with the committee work; it is an entirely separate organization, but he would come in to talk about the committee work. I would never be in there; I wouldn't have occasion to be in there when they had conferences.

FUCHS: You know of Max Lowenthal?

DRYDEN: Yes. He worked very closely with Senator Wheeler and Mr. Truman at that time. He was an expert on that type of legislation and he was in there quite frequently, during that particular period when that legislation was being studied. He was a very fine man.

FUCHS: Do you recall his introducing Mr. Truman to Justice Brandeis?

DRYDEN: No. I don't remember that particularly, but it's quite possible that he did.

FUCHS: What was the relationship, at least initially, between

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Senator Truman and Senator Bennett Clark, the senior senator from Missouri?

DRYDEN: They were never very close, only the fact that they were both from the same state and Senator Clark was the senior senator and Mr. Truman was the junior senator. They were always friendly, but I wouldn't say that they were -- he wasn't as close to him as he was to other senators he became acquainted with. For instance, like Senator Hatch and Senator Guffey.

FUCHS: Did he come into Mr. Truman's office?

DRYDEN: Once in a great while; not too often.

FUCHS: Do you know how they worked together in regard to patronage in Missouri?

DRYDEN: No. I really don't recall that.

FUCHS: What about Mr. Truman's brother Vivian? Was he much in evidence in Washington?

DRYDEN: Only when he would come up after he became connected with the Federal Housing Administration and was up here on business.

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FUCHS: Do you know how he came to get that job?

DRYDEN: No. I don't. I imagine Mr. Truman recommended him; I really wouldn't know; I don't know about that. I always liked him. He was a very fine man too. He was really nice.

FUCHS: Is there anything that stands out in your mind when Mr. Truman was heavily involved with the railroad inquiry?

DRYDEN: No. I wouldn't be able to tell you about that because, as I said, we had nothing whatsoever to do with the committee work and about all I would know about it would be the fact that it was time for him to go to the committee meeting, and everything about that would be discussed over in the committee room.

FUCHS: Did you have to do much typing of letters in regard to that work or was that done in another office?

DRYDEN: No, that was done in the committee.

FUCHS: They had a committee office?

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DRYDEN: Yes.

FUCHS: Any. particular legislation about which you recall receiving the largest volume of mail?

DRYDEN: Yes, the holding company legislation. The mail on this legislation came in great piles of sacks, fifteen or twenty at a time.

FUCHS: Were they all answered?

DRYDEN: We answered those by form letter, we had to. After all, we used to say, "We can't keep up with the press." I suppose, you know how those things are done. One letter is written with a hundred names on it, you know, or they will have one letter typed and maybe a hundred or even two hundred people sign copies of the same letter and send them from different parts of the country or state.

FUCHS: Did you ever hear Mr. Truman express his mind about this pressure mail?

DRYDEN: Well, he recognized it for what it was, of course.

FUCHS4 Did he read much of it?

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DRYDEN: It would be a physical impossibility to read a great deal of it; he read some of it. In other words, we selected the ones we thought he should read.

FUCHS: Do you recall his ordering the destruction of that mail?

DRYDEN: The destruction of it?

FUCHS: Did you retain all that mail or was some of that destroyed that was obviously...

DRYDEN: I don't remember that we destroyed any of it, no.

FUCHS: Probably the same would hold true in regard to the writing of the Civil Aeronautics Act of 1938.

DRYDEN: Yes. That mail was quite heavy, but none of it was as heavy as that first big mailing we had. I think that holds the all time record so far as I know.

FUCHS: Is there anything that stands out about his work on the Civil Aeronautics Act?

DRYDEN: No, he was quite active on it, but I couldn't tell you any particular thing.

FUCHS: Do you remember a Clarence Lea, a Senator from California,

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visiting him in his office?

DRYDEN: Not too much. Let's see, he used to be a Senator from Oklahoma -- oh, no, wait a minute. I'm wrong about that. There was a Lee from Oklahoma -- are you sure it's from California.

FUCHS: Well, this is L-E-A.

DRYDEN: No. I don't remember that. There was a senator, I think (I'm quite sure) he was from Oklahoma, that eventually became head of the Civil Aeronautics. That is who I thought you had in mind.

FUCHS: What about visitors from Missouri? Were there any that were frequent visitors either on legislative matters or...?

DRYDEN: Yes, we had lots of visitors from Missouri. I couldn't recall any one that came in any more than any other, particularly.

FUCHS: Who were some that you do recall?

DRYDEN: I just don't -- if I could see a list of names who claimed they'd been in there a lot of times, I could tell you whether they were or weren't.

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FUCHS: Do you recall Tom Evans visiting him?

DRYDEN: In later years I did, but not the first years. He was up there pretty often on business during the second term.

FUCHS: Did Mr. Truman take an active role in Jackson County politics while he was in his first term? Do you recall?

DRYDEN: No. I wouldn't say that he did. He was too busy with his senatorial work. I wouldn't say that he was too active back there.

FUCHS: You don't recall any meetings or any great amount of mail that related to Jackson County situation...

DRYDEN: Just purely Jackson County, no.

FUCHS: ...or Kansas City or Independence?

DRYDEN: Occasionally he'd go back and make a speech, but I wouldn't say that that was one of the...

FUCHS: Could you comment on his relationship with some of these people: Lou Holland?

DRYDEN: Yes, Lou Holland used to come in. That was when he was

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with the Small Business Administration. I believe he was the first administrator of the Small Business Administration and naturally had occasion to come in quite often.

FUCHS: Do you remember how he came to be appointed to the Small Business Administration?

DRYDEN: No, I wouldn't be able to. I assume that he obtained Mr. Truman's recommendation and I'm quite sure several others, but I don't know just how many. He was a very able man.

FUCHS: Does the name J. C. Nichols mean anything to you?

DRYDEN: He didn't care for J. C. Nichols.

FUCHS: Did Nichols visit in the office?

DRYDEN: He was never in our office in his life that I remember. He might have been in there once or twice but -- no, I think not.

FUCHS: What was the basis of his antipathy for Mr. Nichols?

DRYDEN: I don't know. I've always had the impression that J. C. Nichols wasn't too well liked by a lot of people. Now I could be very wrong about that, but I can say this,

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I know he wasn't very close to Mr. Truman. I would have known a little bit about that.

FUCHS: What about Tom Van Sant?

DRYDEN: Yes, he was one of the men we call our "key men" down in -- what is the name of the town where he...Vandalia, I believe. Well, I wouldn't be able to say the name of the town now. I should know it, but my goodness, it's been so long ago.

FUCHS: Fulton?

DRYDEN: Is it Fulton? Let me see that. *

FUCHS: I think the name is down here. Van Sant is here someplace.

DRYDEN: Yes, it was Fulton. This helps me a lot.

FUCHS: This, of course, is the 1940 campaign and I want to take that up, but I wondered if Mr. Van Sant means anything to you in relation to the first term primarily, now?

DRYDEN: Yes, very much so; he was quite active. Yes, he was.

FUCHS: By "key man" you meant what?

*This is in reference to a letter head of the 1940 Truman Renomination committee which was shown to Mrs. Dryden.

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DRYDEN: Well, in certain parts of the state we had men that were managers of that particular section and he was one of them.

FUCHS: You're not thinking in terms of just a campaign?

DRYDEN: No, not necessarily, after the campaign.

FUCHS: You're thinking in terms of recommendations for...?

DRYDEN: Like a Democratic Committeeman.

FUCHS: Did Mr. Van Sant come into the office in Washington?

DRYDEN: Yes.

FUCHS: Do you recall any particular matters that came up that he might have come in on?

DRYDEN: No.

FUCHS: What about Tom Evans? Did he come in in the first term, that you remember?

DRYDEN: He might have, but I don't remember that he did. It might have been toward the last that he came in. I just couldn't say.

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FUCHS: What about Jim Kemper? Does that name mean anything to you?

DRYDEN: Yes, but I don't remember that he came in either. The Kemper family was a very prominent family back there, however.

FUCHS: Sam Wear?

DRYDEN: Yes, he was another one that came in quite a bit. Sam Wear -- Mortimer Levy, Judge Frank Monroe, from Sedalia. That is where we had our state headquarters. He was very active and quite close to Mr. Truman. Dr. Brandon was quite close, but not as much as Judge Frank Monroe.

FUCHS: How did Frank Monroe become close to Mr. Truman?

DRYDEN: Well, I guess it must have been during the first campaign. However, I didn't know him until after we came up here because Sedalia is not very close to Independence.

FUCHS: Was Dick Nacy in the office?

DRYDEN: Dick Nacy was there, yes.

FUCHS: He used to visit Mr. Truman in the office frequently?

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DRYDEN: Well, I would say pretty regularly. Now Roy Harper has been up a lot. He's from...

FUCHS: This list, of course, is of the committee for the '40 renomination. Was Roy Harper in the office in the first term?

DRYDEN: Oh, yes.

FUCHS: What about Colonel Stayton? Did Mr. Truman have a close relationship with him?

DRYDEN: None whatsoever.

FUCHS: You know who I'm referring to?

DRYDEN: Yes.

FUCHS: Of course, he was one of the engineers that planned the road with N. T. Veatch.

DRYDEN: I know, but that was before my time, but not after he was senator. I don't remember him ever being up here. [P. L.] Shackelford was another good one.

FUCHS: What was his profession? How did he come into the picture?

DRYDEN: Well, it says on here that he was chairman of the

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veterans' division. Judge Farrington was another one that came in. Well, of course, they all were. Also Neal Helm and John Ferguson.

FUCHS: Judge Farrington. Where was he located?

DRYDEN: Springfield.

FUCHS: Now were most of these gentlemen in to Washington on occasion or did...?

DRYDEN: No, they didn't have occasion to come to Washington much. Now, for instance, if Mr. Truman would go out to Missouri and go down to -- we'll say to -- this is just an example -- Sedalia, perhaps the first person he'd see down there would be Frank Monroe. That is the way it worked. J. V. Conran was another active one.

FUCHS: Anything in particular that stands out in your memory about Conran?

DRYDEN: Only that he was one of the leading political workers down there. C. L. Blanton.

FUCHS: Where was he?

DRYDEN: He was from Sikeston. Then there was the one that

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was the district attorney in St. Louis* that used to come in our office quite frequently. But the reason for that was because he had business up here. Henry Riedel, I remember him.

FUCHS: What was the name?

DRYDEN: Riedel, I just happened to see it -- Hannibal. I guess he was active at that time. My goodness, here is my name.

FUCHS: Yes, that letterhead has the whole...

DRYDEN: Oh. David Berenstein was head of the headquarters in St. Louis. He was quite a character.

FUCHS: Well, in regard to that '40 campaign, Berenstein was given the title of "director general" and Messall was called "campaign chairman." Now which corresponded to campaign manager?

DRYDEN: Well now, that would be rather hard to explain. Mr. Berenstein had never been in politics in his life when he was appointed. He was in charge of the campaign headquarters in St. Louis, but he wasn't really a politician. To tell you the truth, I never did know how he got in there.

*Harry C. Blanton, U.S. Attorney, Eastern District of Missouri, son of C. L. Blanton.

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FUCHS: You don't know why he was appointed?

DRYDEN: No, and a lot of people sort of wondered about him. He did a good job; he worked himself practically to death, but he didn't have a political background at all.

FUCHS: You don't know how Mr. Truman came to know him?

DRYDEN: I think perhaps through Mr. Snyder, but I don't really know. I imagine that is the way he met him.

FUCHS: What was the relationship between the two offices, the one in Sedalia, which I've always understood was the headquarters, and then this office in St. Louis?

DRYDEN: Well, it was state headquarters, but the one in St. Louis was where we handled all the financial matters, and where we sent out a great many letters; and then the Railroad Trainmen had their office in there to help out; League of Women's Voters -- well, I suppose, looking back, we just needed two headquarters to handle the state.

FUCHS: Was there a larger staff in one than in the other?

DRYDEN: Oh, there was just Harry, Catherine, and Vic down in Sedalia. I don't remember anybody else, but, of course,

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after I left I am quite sure they must have had some volunteer workers. We had a whole floor in St. Louis.

FUCHS: How does the Railroad Trainmen come into this now?

DRYDEN: Well, they just donated their time.

FUCHS: They had members of the union that came in and worked in the office?

DRYDEN: Not in ours; they had a separate set-up for us. And I wouldn't be able to say just what they did, but I am sure it was the Railroad Trainmen. I was never even back there but once or twice. I was too busy in our own part.

FUCHS: What do you mean -- this was a separate set-up of the state...?

DRYDEN: No, it was a separate set-up of their own -- the Railroad Trainmen.

FUCHS: Were they working just for Mr. Truman or were they working for other candidates as well?

DRYDEN: I think they were working just for us. They might have been working for other people, I don't remember.

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FUCHS: How early did they have that set up?

DRYDEN: How early?

FUCHS: Was it there when you got there?

DRYDEN: The whole thing was set up just about the same time. And then we had to have quite a few paid workers. We didn't pay them very much; we didn't have the money, but in a large headquarters you can't possibly have all volunteers. If they are volunteers they might be here today and tomorrow they might not. They're not obligated to come back and we had so much work to do, we had quite a few we had to pay.

FUCHS: Do you recall much about raising the money in the campaign in 1940?

DRYDEN: Yes, we had a terrific time raising the money. There were several times when we didn't have money enough to buy stamps; now, I'm talking about the second campaign we were very hard up for money.

FUCHS: Who do you recall as being the principal finance man?

DRYDEN: I don't remember now. I guess you might say that

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Berenstein was.

FUCHS: Harry Vaughan was treasurer, I believe.

DRYDEN: I don't remember much about that. I don't want to comment on that.

FUCHS: And the official chairman of finance was Roger Sermon. Do you recall anything about his activities?

DRYDEN: Well, you see, he was back in Independence; he was Mayor of Independence. I'm quite sure that he was able to raise quite a bit of money.

FUCHS: Well, do you know anything of the part that Tom Evans played in that campaign?

DRYDEN: No.

FUCHS: His title was chairman of radio broadcast.

DRYDEN: Well, he might have been, but, you see, he was in Kansas City and I didn't come in contact with him at all. I didn't have anything to do with that. Mrs. Mary C. Chiles, was National Committeewoman for the National Democratic Committee, and she was quite influential with the women; and she was in St. Louis with me. She

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was in charge of the women's division. She still lives in Lexington. I see her every Christmas when I go home.

FUCHS: I would like to come back a little bit later for more about the 1940 nomination, but I want to mention a few other things now. What about Mr. Pendergast? Did he ever visit Mr. Truman's office? I'm speaking of Tom.

DRYDEN: Never at any time. I know who you mean, never.

FUCHS: What about Jim Pendergast, his brother's son?

DRYDEN: Yes, he came in.

FUCHS: What about requests by Mr. Pendergast?

DRYDEN: Well, so far as I know, he never made any. He just never made any.

FUCHS: You don't recall any correspondence?

DRYDEN: No, we never had any correspondence with him.

FUCHS: One writer said that he, rather than writing letters or sending telegrams, sometimes would tear slips from grocery bags and make brief notes on them requesting something.

DRYDEN: And sent it to the office?

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FUCHS: I wondered if any of that ever came to your attention.

DRYDEN: No, I would like to know who made that statement. If anything like that ever happened, and I think it didn't because I'm quite sure that Mr. Truman wouldn't be that underhanded about anything, it would have had to have gone to his apartment because I opened the mail. I saw everything that came in that office, that was part of my work, so that is definitely untrue. I would like to read that. What is his name again?

FUCHS: Well, the book is *The Man From Missouri*, by Alfred Steinberg, and he came to the Library and did some research, but he talked to a great many people.

DRYDEN: I'd like to just read it because I've heard that it wasn't quite accurate. Dr....the man from Columbia, Missouri, who was writing a book on...

FUCHS: Schmidtlein, Gene Schmidtlein, he did research in the senatorial papers.

DRYDEN: Well, he was up here to see me, you know. I believe he is the one who told me about that book and I was amazed. I hadn't heard of it and I would just like to read it out

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of curiosity to see how many mistakes he did make. That certainly isn't true. That certainly is not true.

FUCHS: Then you recall no requests that Mr. Pendergast forwarded by letter, telegram, or grocery bag slip to Mr. Truman's office?

DRYDEN: No.

FUCHS: Do you recall the Pat Harrison-Alben Barkley contest for majority leader in the Senate?

DRYDEN: Yes, now that is the one request that Mr. Pendergast asked -- he just merely suggested really -- he didn't ask him to...

FUCHS: By what means did he do that?

DRYDEN: Well, I don't remember now. Perhaps it was one time when Mr. Truman was back in Kansas City, because I don't remember just how he did it but I know he did. And Mr. Truman didn't take his suggestion but that didn't turn Mr. Pendergast against Mr. Truman.

FUCHS: Of course, as you undoubtedly know, the story is that Mr. Pendergast did it at the request of Franklin Roosevelt. Do you recall Mr. Truman making any statement about that?

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DRYDEN: No. I didn't know about that part of it.

FUCHS: You don't recall any summons to the White House or any visits that Mr. Truman made or any correspondence that might have occurred?

DRYDEN: No. I wouldn't say that he didn't, but I, quite frankly, couldn't tell you.

FUCHS: How did Mr. Truman get along with the press and who were some of the members who were particularly close to him?

DRYDEN: Oh, wonderfully well. Mr. Helm, Charlie Hazlett, Tony Vaccaro, Bell...

FUCHS: Jack Bell?

DRYDEN: Jack Bell, yes. And even with the man from Kansas City -- Ted Alford, who was head of the Kansas City *Star* Bureau here. Then I think he died and the man who took his place. I can't remember his name now, but he's dead.

FUCHS: What about Bill Helm?

DRYDEN: Well, Truman always seemed to be very fond of him, very fond of him.

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DRYDEN: I don't know how you would describe his being close to him as a friend; as a reporter he was. He was in our office practically every day. They all were -- all these men I've told you about.

FUCHS: They came in in the first term; they would pay that much attention to the Senator from Missouri?

DRYDEN: Oh, yes, from the very first, with the exception of Tony Vaccaro. I would say he came in later.

FUCHS: Was there a man named Ray Brandt?

DRYDEN: Well, now, he was head, I think, of the St. Louis Bureau, and it would be the man that was his assistant that came in our office. In other words, Ted Alford was head of the Kansas City *Star* but he didn't come in our office; the other man...isn't that terrible, I can't think of his name. He used to come in. And then there was a reporter from the St. Louis paper that came in all the time.

FUCHS: What about Duke Shoop?

DRYDEN: Duke Shoop, that is who I'm trying to think of. He was always very friendly with Mr. Truman although he

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worked for the *Star*, which, of course, is a Republican paper. He was quite friendly with him.

FUCHS: You say Ted Alford didn't come in?

DRYDEN: Well, he was head of the bureau and I think he didn't...

FUCHS: In Washington.

DRYDEN: Yes. But he talked to Mr. Truman a great deal.

FUCHS: How did the press treat Mr. Truman in general?

DRYDEN: Very well, very well, with the exception of Charlie Ross.

FUCHS: Oh, yes?

DRYDEN: Oh, my goodness. He used to write terrible things about Mr. Truman. Just terrible, and I was just amazed when he...of course, those things, I guess they finally work themselves out. After he became President, the first thing I knew, Charlie Ross was over there as his Secretary of the Press. But I suppose those things were all forgotten. After all, that was Charlie Ross' job for a Republican paper, and [Pierre] Salinger is now -- but they

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had been old friends. It was just one of those things. He was a brilliant man, very brilliant man.

FUCHS: Was he ever in Mr. Truman's office?

DRYDEN: No, not during those days; he wouldn't have been welcome. He wouldn't have been welcome at that time.

FUCHS: Do you recall anything Mr. Truman had to say about him?

DRYDEN: Well, I can't remember any exact words; no, but he definitely didn't like him. I didn't like him either, for the same reasons.

FUCHS: Who were Mr. Truman's closest friends in the Senate, particularly in the first term I'm speaking of now?

DRYDEN: I would say Senator Hatch, Senator Guffey, Senator Kilgore. If I had a list of the senators at that time I could tell you.

FUCHS: Did he see much of Schwollenbach?

DRYDEN: Oh, yes.

FUCHS: And Mon Wallgren?

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DRYDEN: Yes, they were his closest friends, too. I would say they were closer than Guffey -- I mentioned Guffey because he was close but not as close as Hatch and Schwellenbach and Wallgren.

FUCHS: Would you say he was close to Barkley?

DRYDEN: No, not in the way that he was with them.

FUCHS: What about Sam Rayburn?

DRYDEN: Oh, yes.

FUCHS: In the first term?

DRYDEN: No, I wouldn't say right away. It was a friendship that sort of grew, although he never came in the office. I don't suppose he every had time to go to anyone's office. Everybody went to see him, you know.

FUCHS: Was Mr. Truman one of the "inner Club" of the Senate?

DRYDEN: Well, it's just like any other -- we'll say a school. You have your friends and other people have their friends, just a little circle of friends. And the group we just mentioned I would say was his circle of friends over there.

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FUCHS: What about Harry Hopkins? Did he ever come around?

DRYDEN: Oh no, I never did see him. No, I didn't even know him. I've never seen him in my life, only at the inauguration or something like that, just from a distance.

FUCHS: What about Senator Pat McCarran -- did Mr. Truman ever speak of him?

DRYDEN: Well, I suppose over on the floor, but he wasn't one of the Senators who came in our office.

FUNS: Was Mr. Truman connected with John Snyder's becoming the Director of the Defense Plants Corporation in 1940?

DRYDEN: Well, I would say he probably recommended him, yes.

FUCHS: You don't recall anything specific about that?

DRYDEN: No, I don't, but I'm quite sure he must have had some influence in recommending him because they were such close friends and Mr. Snyder is a very capable man.

FUCHS: Do you have any other impressions of Mr. Snyder?

DRYDEN: Of Mr. Snyder?

FUCHS: Yes.

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DRYDEN: Well, what do you mean?

FUCHS: Well, judgments of his ability and his...

DRYDEN: Oh yes, I'd say he was a very able man; he still is. He is still active. Yes, I would say he was one of the top ones. I would almost go so far as to say that he would head the list of Mr. Truman's friends, at that time, still is.

FUCHS: Did Senator Truman ever discuss personal matters, such as his difficulties with his mother's farm and her problems there in relation to politics in Kansas City?

DRYDEN: Yes, he did. That is where Charlie Ross comes in, because Charlie Ross wrote quite an unkind article about the farm out there. I remember that distinctly. Mr. Truman was quite troubled about it. His family finally moved to town -- his mother, and sister, Mary Jane. After moving into town his mother fell. Mr. Truman was very bitter about the accident. It would not have happened if she had not been living in unfamiliar surroundings.

The whole situation came about on account of all the publicity on the farm matter, and his mother and Mary Jane moved into Grandview. I think Mr. Ross' article

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touched off the whole chain of incidents. Mr. Truman was more upset about his mother's accident than anything I ever saw during the time I was with him. He was very bitter toward Mr. Ross. I was too, incidentally.

FUCHS: Do you recall Governor Stark coming into Mr. Truman's office on any occasion?

DRYDEN: No.

FUCHS: Anything that Mr. Truman ever said about Stark?

DRYDEN: Oh, he disliked him intensely, my goodness, yes.

FUCHS: He is supposed to have one time made a trip with Stark and Victor Messall to New York to see Tom Pendergast, and you don't recall first hand that that did occur?

DRYDEN: I don't recall and if it did happen (which I doubt very much, although I don't know -- I just don't know) it would be one of the things that I was never told.

FUCHS: Did you know of Mr. Truman being offered a job with the Interstate Commerce Commission towards the end of his first term?

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DRYDEN: No. I don't know about that.

FUCHS: What about the meeting that was held in January in 1940 at the Hotel Statler in St. Louis? Do you have any knowledge of that?

DRYDEN: No.

FUCHS: Mr. Truman has been quoted as saying he wrote some thirty letters inviting various politicians in the state of Missouri to plan for his possible campaign; do you recall writing any of those letters?

DRYDEN: No. I don't remember writing those letters; if I did, I don't remember at this time about them. It's possible that I did write them but I don't remember.

FUCHS: Did Vic Messall have to resign his job when he took over as campaign manager in 1940?

DRYDEN: No, that was before the Hatch Act or right about the time the Hatch Act passed. No, that wouldn't have had anything to do with it anyway, because he wouldn't be considered a Government employee. However, I wouldn't want to comment on that because I truly don't remember.

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FUCHS: Do you know of a Colonel Frank Erhart?

DRYDEN: Oh, yes. He was another one of Truman's good friends. Yes, he used to come in the office a lot.

FUCHS: Who was he?

DRYDEN: Well, he knew him in the First World War. He was in the Veterans' Administration. I don't know whether he's still there or not. That has been a long time ago. Yes, he was a close friend of Mr. Truman.

FUCHS: Did Mr. Truman help him get a job here?

DRYDEN: Well, I'm quite sure he was instrumental in it, yes. They were close friends.

FUCHS: The reason I ask is that it's been said that he went with Vic Messall when Mr. Truman's name was entered in the race -- they went and filed his name together and I don't know much about him.

DRYDEN: Well, that would be true, yes. They went down to Jefferson City.

FUCHS: What about Senator Clark coming out for Mr. Truman in 1940? Do you have any first hand knowledge of that?

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DRYDEN: No. I don't. I wouldn't be able to say anything about that..

FUCHS: What did you think of his chances of: being reelected in 1940 when he finally did announce that he was filing?

DRYDEN: Well, of course, we were very hopeful, but we weren't confident, by any means. For one thing there was a lack of money. It takes a lot of money to run a campaign. That always amazes me about all these slush fund stories that come up. The publicity about slush funds when a man is desperately trying to raise money to run a campaign. Of course, along about half way we become more confident and the men from the "Boot" were certainly helpful.

FUCHS: People in the Boot Heel.

DRYDEN: Southeast Missouri -- we call it "The Boot."

FUCHS: Do you know how James Vardaman entered into the picture?

DRYDEN: Yes I do, but I don't want to comment on it.

FUCHS: How did he happen to become a friend of Vardaman, do you know?

DRYDEN: Well, as I remember it, it must have been back in the

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First World War some time, maybe in the Reserves. There were quite a few men who weren't in politics that I'd never heard of until we came up here, and, naturally, I didn't know all of his friends. I never gave it much thought because he was from St. Louis.

FUCHS: There have been a number of stories as to how Maurice Milligan came into the primary race in 1940. Do you have any ideas about that? Have you ever heard accounts that you recall?

DRYDEN: No.

FUCHS: How about Philip Welch?*

DRYDEN: I don't remember ever seeing him but he was a friend of Truman's. you know, in that particular section.

FUCHS: You're talking now about Philip Welch, the Mayor of St. Joseph, who was a vice chairman in the 1940 campaign. He didn't come into Mr. Truman's office.

DRYDEN: No.

FUCHS: Frank Lee, of Joplin, Missouri?

DRYDEN: Well, now that was Congressman Lee I was telling you

*Reference is here again being made to the list of names on the letterhead of Truman's 1940 renomination committee.

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about a while ago.

FUCHS: What about John Farrington, who was he?

DRYDEN: About the only thing I remember about him was that we used to write letters to him when we wanted to find out something in his part of the state.

FUCHS: I believe you said Dr. Brandon was a key man in Poplar Bluff.

DRYDEN: Yes, all those men listed there, I would say, were all our key men.

FUCHS: Delmar Dail, what did he do?

DRYDEN: Delmar Dail, oddly enough, I don't remember him.

FUCHS: Phil Graves, from Neosho?

DRYDEN: Yes, he would be the one that we would write down there if we wanted anything.

FUCHS: Do you know what his profession was?

DRYDEN: I believe he was a lawyer, I'm not quite sure about that.

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FUCHS: Here's a name -- Sterling McCarty from Caruthersville?

DRYDEN: I don't remember him. This being the very beginning, a lot of them through the years dropped out, you know; perhaps they died, I don't know.

FUCHS: What about this Dr. William J. Tompkins, who was chairman of the Negro division?

DRYDEN: Now that is another story. At one time the Recorder of Deeds, by law, was a Negro, and he was (I think his profession was a lawyer in Kansas City) quite an influential Negro in Kansas City, and incidentally, well, of course, he was here long before we came in here.

FUCHS: As Recorder?

DRYDEN: As Recorder of Deeds, yes. When I said long, I meant several years. And I think, as I recall, Mr. Pendergast was the one who recommended him for that position. He used to come in our office once in a while.

FUCHS: The campaign, as I understand, opened at Sedalia and quite a bit of the speech was about Negroes, civil rights. Do you recall that Tompkins had a part in that decision and why did they take that up in Sedalia?

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DRYDEN: You mean in '40?

FUCHS: In 1940.

DRYDEN: I don't remember that it was taken up there; it probably was. And I don't remember that Dr. Tompkins was down there. I don't remember any of the speeches, and civil rights, at the time, didn't mean anything to me.

FUCHS: Do you recall a Horace Deal?

DRYDEN: Yes. He was a big contractor.

FUCHS: Where?

DRYDEN: I think in St. Louis. I think during the war he came in our office, and that was when I first knew him.

FUCHS: That's about all you remember of him?

DRYDEN: Yes.

FUCHS: You don't recall anything about his contributions to the campaign?

DRYDEN: Well, yes, I think he was instrumental in contributions, but up to that time I didn't know him. I mean, quite frankly, I would say it was just expedient for him to

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contribute.

FUCHS: Why was it expedient?

DRYDEN: Well, he thought perhaps Mr. Truman could help him obtain business. Of course, he isn't the only one; they all have an ax to grind. I think he isn't in Missouri any more. I think he's in New York, or maybe he isn't living.

FUCHS: I don't know.

DRYDEN: What did you have on him?

FUCHS: Well, there's an account that he gave a contribution of \$1,000 and Mr. Truman, I guess, saw him outside the Capitol and he wrote a check out on the running board of his car or of Vic Messall's car -- I've forgotten which -- and I just wondered what you know about it. It's in one of the books.

DRYDEN: And he gave it back to him?

FUCHS: No, it was a legitimate contribution, but I just wondered who he was an...?

DRYDEN: Well, that would be the first recollection I have of

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him, and it is a fact that he came up here like thousands and thousands of other businessmen trying to obtain business. Of course, there isn't anything wrong with that. And trying to get Mr. Truman to help him, you know, make telephone calls, and so on.

FUCHS: The coupon or dollar contribution campaign...?

DRYDEN: Oh, that was a terrible thing.

FUCHS: Who conceived that?

DRYDEN: Mr. Berenstein, and that is the reason we had to use so many stamps, because we sent out those "dollar letters," and by the time you send out thousands of letters asking for a dollar, the first thing you know, it runs into a lot of money just for the postage. And there wasn't much response. Mr. Truman didn't like it at all and I don't blame him, because it was a cheap way of trying to raise money, at least we thought it was. I didn't approve of it at the time, but Mr. Berenstein thought it was all right. And, as a matter of fact, I think it was one of his own ideas he did on his own and it was discontinued.

FUCHS: You wouldn't say that it was a success?

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DRYDEN: It wasn't a success; we lost money on it.

FUCHS: Do you have any knowledge of Dan Nee?

DRYDEN: Yes, he was head of the Internal Revenue in Kansas City. He was a good friend of Truman's, and he was up in our office quite a bit because he would have to be in Washington in connection with his work.

FUCHS: He was influential with Mr. Truman, you believe?

DRYDEN: Well, in what way...?

FUCHS: Well, I don't know much about him and I was trying to find out. He comes into the picture along the way and he was, I believe, a politician in Missouri...

DRYDEN: Yes, he was a politician and then he finally received an appointment as -- I don't know just what the exact title of it would be -- the Director of Internal Revenue, I suppose, in Kansas City, which is considered quite a good appointment.

FUCHS: You don't recall any specific matters that came up or any anecdotes?

DRYDEN: No.

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FUCHS: Do you have any ideas as to Bob Hannegan's reason for switching his support to Senator Truman in 1940 after he first came out for the other candidate, Stark?

DRYDEN: No, not unless it would be the fact that he perhaps met Mr. Truman and changed his mind. I didn't know Bob Hannegan before that. I knew him very well later. After he came up here as head of the Internal Revenue, of course, I used to see him quite often and I knew him; but I don't know what made him change his mind at the very beginning.

FUCHS: What about Gene Gualdoni?

DRYDEN: Oh, I can tell you about him. He was the only political leader in St. Louis who did come out for Mr. Truman. I wonder if he's still alive. I would be curious to know, because he was our one ray of hope in St. Louis. He was an Italian and he controlled a lot of Italian votes. So we should always be grateful for Gene Gualdoni.

FUCHS: He was a strong Truman supporter?

DRYDEN: Yes.

FUCHS: Had he frequently seen Mr. Truman in the first term?

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Did he come into Washington?

DRYDEN: I think he was up here for the inauguration. I'm speaking now of the time right after Mr. Truman filed for the Senate.

FUCHS: In the first campaign?

DRYDEN: Yes, in '34, that is what I am talking about. He was the very first one to come out for Mr. Truman in St. Louis. You see, Mr. Truman wasn't known in St. Louis at that time, by very many people. He might have had friends there but I'm speaking of political connections.

FUCHS: Was he active in the second campaign?

DRYDEN: Oh, yes, he was active all the time I was there.

FUCHS: Do you have any recollections of election night in 1940? Does anything stand out in your memory about the way the returns were going, the mood or the atmosphere?

DRYDEN: Yes, because that was when I was in the Midland Building, as I told you. I think I wasn't out of the office all day from the time I went down there in the morning. I sent out for breakfast at the drugstore,

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I sent out for my lunch, and my dinner, and at a certain time (I'll say seven o'clock, but I believe it was earlier) they would turn the air conditioning off and you know how a room gets when the air conditioning is off and the windows are closed. It was just terrible. I used to work until twelve or one o'clock out there. We had to, we absolutely had to. And election night, I don't recall too much about it. I guess there was too much excitement, but I just did the usual work and listened to the returns coming in. After it started coming in pretty good, then we were confident and elated...but that is about all I remember about it.

FUCHS: Was Mr. Truman around?

DRYDEN: Not in St. Louis. I think he must have been home, out in Independence. But he wasn't there. Just the people that worked in the headquarters were there. And then a lot of friends in St. Louis, or a lot of the politicians came up there, just like you'd do at any election. You'd always go around to the headquarters.

FUCHS: Did you have a celebration afterwards?

DRYDEN: No, no, we didn't have any. You mean like a party

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or something like that?

FUCHS: Yes.

DRYDEN: No, we didn't.

FUCHS: How did Victor Messall come to leave Truman after working so hard in the 1940 election?

DRYDEN: Well, I think he always had in the back of his mind he would go into public relations work -- what do they call them, public relations counsel, I guess, is the word. I think he thought that would be the time to do it. I suppose it was, because he was quite successful for a long time.

FUCHS: Had you known he was going to leave, before the re-election?

DRYDEN: No, I know that he had mentioned through the years that someday he would like to open up a public relations office, but there wasn't anything definite about it at all.

FUCHS: Then who replaced Messall in the same job?

DRYDEN: Harry Vaughan did.

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FUCHS: Harry Vaughan took the same job.

DRYDEN: Yes.

FUCHS: Do you think to did as good a job as Messall did?

DRYDEN: Well, I thought he didn't and I think that was the consensus of all of us.

FUCHS: Had he been around the office much up to that time?

DRYDEN: No. I don't know what he did out in St. Louis. I believe he worked for some tie -- when I say tie, it was a railroad tie company, but all I knew about him was that he had been with Mr. Truman in the First World War. He wasn't in politics.

FUCHS: Do you recall, after Mr. Truman was reelected (I suppose it might have been late in 1940 or early 1941) that Mr. Truman took a trip around to these construction sites?

DRYDEN: No. I don't recall that.

FUCHS: You don't recall that.

DRYDEN: It is probably true but I just don't remember.

FUCHS: What do you recall of the inception of the Truman Committee?

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Did you home into the negotiations to hire Hugh Fulton in any way?

DRYDEN: No. Suddenly a lot of men started coming in our office looking for a job on the committee and that is just about all I knew about it. You see, when a new committee is formed, word gets around on the Hill -- men that more or less make a career of being investigators for any committee that comes along, and they hear about it. For instance, like Matt Connelly and

Charlie Clark. They came in looking -- well, I wouldn't say looking -- to apply for a job with the committee. But now, how Hugh Fulton came into the picture I don't know unless Truman heard about his ability. I really don't know, because he had never worked up there before. He was a lawyer in New York and a lawyer here, too.

FUCHS: Did he impress you the first time you saw him?

DRYDEN: Yes, he did. I liked Hugh Fulton. He was one of the smartest men I ever knew. He really was. He was brilliant.

FUCHS: Was he around your office quite a bit?

DRYDEN: Oh, yes, he came in the office, I would say, practically every morning. He was chief counsel and necessarily had to

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have a lot of conferences with Mr. Truman. I don't know what they talked about; it wasn't any of my business as far as that goes, and I had nothing to do with the committee anyway. But they would have conferences before a committee meeting, just Hugh Fulton and Mr. Truman.

FUCHS: They had a committee office, didn't they, but they would still come to Mr. Truman's office for conference?

DRYDEN: Well, Hugh Fulton would.

FUCHS: The others didn't come.

DRYDEN: No, oh occasionally they'd come up but not like he did. Well, it was his place to come up. He was over the committee staff. Their office was way down, as I remember, in what you could almost call the basement. It wasn't near us at all.

FUCHS: Did Matt Connelly come in much?

DRYDEN: He did later but not at first. I remember when he came over to apply for the position, and he and Charlie came just about, I believe the same day.

FUCHS: Charlie?

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DRYDEN: Charlie Clark. Incidentally, his office is right across the hall here from me.

FUCHS: Charles Patrick Clark.

DRYDEN: Yes.

FUCHS: How did you rate them comparatively, as administrators -- of course Connelly was an investigator.

DRYDEN: And so was Clark.

FUCHS: Did Clark start as an investigator?

DRYDEN: Oh, yes.

FUCHS: Do you think that one had more ability than the other? What are your ideas about those two gentlemen?

DRYDEN: Well, I wouldn't know much about their committee work. I assume they were about the same, I wouldn't know. But of course, Hugh Fulton just stood out because he was the head of it, and then after Hugh Fulton, came Rudolph Halley who was equally as good, I would say, as Hugh Fulton. But he was an assistant. He was Hugh Fulton's assistant and the others were investigators.

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FUCHS: How did Clark happen to get on the Truman Committee or become associated with the Truman Committee?

DRYDEN: Well, he was one of the men, as I said awhile ago, that almost make a career of committee work. They go from one committee to the other.

FUCHS: When did William Boyle come in?

DRYDEN: About the same time, just about the same time, I would say.

FUCHS: He worked on the committee.

DRYDEN: Yes, he heard about the committee and so he wrote a letter applying for it.

FUCHS: Then when did he come up to Mr. Truman's office?

DRYDEN: Well, he was always on the committee, but he came up there to, let's see -- I don't know how to work that. He was never on Mr. Truman's office staff.

FUCHS: Didn't he succeed Harry Vaughan when...?

DRYDEN: Yes, he did, but he was still on the committee payroll.

FUCHS: Oh, he was?

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DRYDEN: He was never on our payroll.

FUCHS: Even though he carried the title of secretary to Mr. Truman?

DRYDEN: Yes, he was never on our payroll.

FUCHS: Why did he leave to go with Hannegan, do you have any idea about that?

DRYDEN: Poor Bill is gone; Bill and his wife eventually became my closest friends here, which has nothing to do with this.

Well, I'll tell you how that happened. Harry Vaughan was in the Reserves. So, when war was declared, he had to go in the service. That left a place in the office, so Mr. Truman brought Bill up there to fill in. Then when Vaughan returned, well, Bill was there, so it was rather an embarrassing position. Bill was on the committee payroll, but he was still in our office. It was just like having two wives in the home. Well, that was the situation. Two men for the one job, that is the way I will put it. It was quite nerve wracking. Bill, incidentally, was a very, very capable man. And so we could just see how it was going to be. There would just be friction all the time, an embarrassing friction. When I say friction, everything looked

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all right on the surface, but it necessarily wasn't; it was just a bad situation to have two men trying to fill one job. So. Bill became quite well acquainted with Bob Hannegan and Bob Hannegan offered him a job, so he thought it would be the best thing to accept it. He was unhappy on account of the situation, and that is the reason he went over to the Democratic National Committee.

FUCHS: About how long did they work there together?

DRYDEN: At the committee?

FUCHS: No, two men in one job, as secretary?

DRYDEN: Several months.

FUCHS: He left to go with Hannegan.

DRYDEN: And that relieved the friction in the office.

FUCHS: Mr. Truman fairly recently stated that he was frequently in and out of the back door of the White House and I assume this was after the Truman Committee work began. Do you know?

DRYDEN: I would say it was, because up to that time he was a junior senator and not well known. He hadn't been here

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long enough. You have to establish yourself, you know, and he wasn't head of any committee; he worked on committees, naturally, but he wasn't chairman of a committee. And there are just lots of senators that are not well known for that reason. You have to be a chairman of a committee and get a lot of publicity before you get called to the White House, because, after all, the President cannot just call every senator. He doesn't have that much time.

FUCHS: Do you know that he did go to the White House frequently?

DRYDEN: No. I don't know; I don't know about it. I will say it is possible, but I don't remember any specific time that he went to the White House. After all, it wouldn't be very good policy for one to say, "Well, I went over to the White House today." It would be a confidential meeting and one just does not advertise those things, not even to one's own office staff.

FUCHS: Mr. Truman and Hugh Fulton seemed to have sort of a parting of the ways...?

DRYDEN: That is a mystery. I don't know of anyone who really knows why. If they say they know they have made it up, because I don't know how they could have known. It happened

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just like that.

FUCHS: When?

DRYDEN: When Roosevelt died. Because Hugh Fulton was very close to Mr. Truman everyone would have assumed he would have been right next to him in the White House, but the first thing I knew, there was a rift. I think what happened -- now, this is just a conjecture on my part and by a lot of others. The morning, I think it was, or whenever it was Roosevelt died, or maybe the next morning, Hugh Fulton rushed out to the apartment and I think, perhaps, unconsciously was too forward, took charge too much. And perhaps Mr. Truman resented it, because, after all, he was President. Now I don't know. He might have tried to tell him what to do, or perhaps tried to give too much advice.

FUCHS: I know what you mean. You think that might have been it?

DRYDEN: Well, I think so, and a lot of other people think the same way, but none of us really know; we just don't really know. I've had so many people say, "Well, what happened to Hugh Fulton?" And if I did know, I wouldn't have told them, but I don't know.

FUCHS: Exactly when did you leave Mr. Truman?

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DRYDEN: I left him in March of '45. I left there before Roosevelt died. I think he died in April, well, I left just about a month before.

FUCHS: He died April 12, 1945. Why did you leave Mr. Truman?

DRYDEN: I had a better offer from Mr. Ferguson. Incidentally, this is an odd thing, I guess, for me to say, but our feeling in the office at the time -- I remember it so well, so many people would stop us in the corridor and congratulate us because Mr. Truman was now Vice President. People I didn't even know, and they thought, oh, it was just wonderful to work in the Vice President's office. It isn't nearly as nice working in a senator's office.

FUCHS: Why not?

DRYDEN: Well, it is hard to explain. In the first place, when you are in a senator's office -- now Mr. Truman probably would have been in the Senate for the rest of his life. All of us would have been perfectly content, but in a Vice President's office you only have a secure position for four years. And then I had a better offer of salary, which is a consideration, a much better paying position. Of course they now pay quite good on the Hill; at that

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time it wasn't nearly as good as people thought it was.

FUCHS: How did your work change after you became secretary to the Vice President?

DRYDEN: Oh, in this way. So many people started coming in from other states. We lost our identity as Missourians. I felt that more than anything, I believe.

FUCHS: Do you think that bothered the other staff members?

DRYDEN: It bothered all of us, yes. It was just like working in a different office. The type of our work changed. It wasn't as -- well, as I said, we sort of lost our identity as Missourians and all these strange people came in. There seemed to be so much more pressure and, well, I just didn't like it.

FUCHS: Did you observe any change in Mr. Truman?

DRYDEN: No, I did not observe any change in him even after he became President. He has always been just the same.

FUCHS: Who was Mr. Ferguson? I believe you said he was a friend and in and out of Mr. Truman's office.

DRYDEN: Well, yes, he was one of the key men in Missouri during

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the first campaign and a politician in Southeast Missouri. When Mr. Truman was elected senator, he was instrumental in getting Mr. Ferguson on the Missouri Public Service Commission, and naturally he would have business here in Washington. When he was in the city he came in the office. So that is the way I knew him, over the years.

FUCHS: When did he come to this company?

DRYDEN: In '45. Mr. Ferguson had just been appointed Executive Director of our Association, which had just been organized at that time.

FUCHS: You didn't have any misgivings after he so quickly succeeded to the Presidency?

DRYDEN: No, I didn't. For one thing, when you work in an office in the White House it is just like working in any other office. You don't have fried chicken dinner every Sunday at the White House; you just work there as an employee. They have lots of employees over there. No, I never did regret it.

FUCHS: Did you hear Mr. Truman express himself about the possible nomination for the vice presidency in 1944?

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DRYDEN: No, he didn't want it.

FUCHS: You didn't hear him personally ever say anything about it?

DRYDEN: Well, when we went to the convention and it was in the wind, he didn't really go after it very hard at first. It was just one of those things that sort of mushroomed, you know.

FUCHS: Did you go to Chicago?

DRYDEN: Oh, yes, I was right there; I was there when he was nominated.

FUCHS: You don't have any first hand knowledge of the various activities regarding Hannegan and his machinations. and...

DRYDEN: All the machinations. No, I wasn't in on any of that. I wouldn't have had any place in that at all. As a matter of fact, I would have been out of place.

FUCHS: How did you participate in that campaign?

DRYDEN: Well, this is another thing that we didn't have any indication of. Some of us were up all night making banners and the paint was still wet -- when I say making banners,

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tacking the banners on to sticks for the demonstrations -- that was how late we were getting ready for the demonstration.

FUCHS: After he had allowed his name to be....

DRYDEN: Oh. I remember that well because it was daylight when I got back to the hotel we had had to do the work in such a hurry.

FUCHS: These painted banners, they came to you wet?

DRYDEN: Yes.

FUCHS: From a signmaker?

DRYDEN: Yes, they were actually wet.

FUCHS: Was there a large number of them?

DRYDEN: There must have been a lot; I wouldn't be able to say how many. I didn't have anything to do with ordering them. A man by the name of Barringer ordered them. We certainly had a lot to tack on those sticks.

FUCHS: That was Lew Barringer?

DRYDEN: Yes.

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FUCHS: How did he come into the act?

DRYDEN: I never did quite know. He knew all the cotton people down in Caruthersville and southeast Missouri. I really wouldn't be able to say just how he did get in, only that he was a good promoter for his own business, you know. I think he thought it was expedient to do it. Although I will say he was certainly helpful.

FUCHS: Why do you think Hannegan was so strong for Truman to be Vice President?

DRYDEN: I don't know, I just don't know that.

FUCHS: Did you and Mr. Truman, or did you ever hear Mr. Truman, discuss Spencer Salisbury?

DRYDEN: Yes. He certainly disliked him and it was for good reason, because Spencer Salisbury was against him, and he even had the nerve to open up -- I'm going back to Independence now, when we had our little headquarters across from the courthouse in Independence -- over on the other side was the Farmer's National Bank, I think, right next to Bundschu's or near there, and he opened up a headquarters for Milligan. But that wasn't the reason. He didn't fall out with him about that because they were enemies before that.

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It had something to do with the loan association that they were both with -- let's see, how was that?

FUCHS: The Community Savings and Loan Association.

DRYDEN: Yes. They fell out in that, as partners of that, and of course, I wouldn't know the reason for their fall out. But that was it, and he never did like him.

FUCHS: You don't have any other specific information about Spencer Salisbury that might help resolve the question?

DRYDEN: No. I'm quite sure it must have been, well, just a falling out -- two partners falling out in business. He didn't like him. They must have been good friends at one time because they wouldn't have gone in business together.

FUCHS: There are a number of stories about Mr. Truman's drinking habits. What did you observe?

DRYDEN: Now, that is all blown up. That is another thing I don't like. I don't like to hear about all the profanity he uses and the drinking. He was a very moderate drinker, just a social drinker, once in a while.

FUCHS: You didn't observe a great deal of that around the office?

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DRYDEN: No, no, not at all.

FUCHS: Did you ever see any bottles labeled "From the Private Stock of Tom Pendergast?"

DRYDEN: Goodness, no. Who said that?

FUCHS: It's in one of the books, I believe, Steinberg.

DRYDEN: Well, it certainly was not in our refrigerator.

FUCHS: Is that where he kept the bourbon?

DRYDEN: Yes, we had it in the Doghouse.

FUCHS: In a refrigerator?

DRYDEN: Yes. Not a large stock, just like -- it's a common practice in most all offices. That story was certainly blown up; I didn't like that at all. Of course, it makes good reading, you know.

FUCHS: You think Senator Truman was a good administrator?

DRYDEN: You mean when he was county judge? Yes, he was a very good administrator, very good.

FUCHS: Do you think he made a good legislator?

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DRYDEN: Yes, I do.

FUCHS: Well, unless you have some other thing that stands out that you think we should record, why, that's about all that I have at this time.

DRYDEN: I can't think of anything.

FUCHS: I certainly appreciate it very much.

DRYDEN: You're quite welcome.

FUCHS: I've been happy to have you do this.

DRYDEN: After it is all over, I will probably think of a lot of things. I have often been amazed when I've read a book -- well, for instance, I will take as an example someone who writes a book about their position at the White House. Such books make good reading, you know. How can they possibly remember everything. In the first place, I wouldn't write a book because I feel I held a confidential position. And of course they do it just for the money. I have never thought that was right at all. And I don't see how they remember everything unless they take notes every day and who has time to take notes if you are doing a good job in your work.

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FUCHS: Some of them seem to do it, but I think they often embellish the facts.

DRYDEN: Oh, they would have to. No one has a memory that good. They just couldn't.

FUCHS: Thank you very much.

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