

Oral History Interview
with
MARTIN L. FRIEDMAN

Special Assistant in the White House office, 1950-53.

Washington, D. C.
December 5, 1963
by Charles T. Morrissey, Harry S. Truman Library

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[1]

MORRISSEY: Let me ask you, Mr. Friedman, about your relationship to Mr. Truman and the Truman Administration. What was this relationship and when did it begin?

FRIEDMAN: Well, it began largely through one of Mr. Truman's administrative assistants with whom I'd served in the Air Force named Donald Dawson. After Dawson became an administrative assistant, from time to time, I was borrowed to do odd jobs to help Donald; and particularly in 1949, I was borrowed from the Defense Department where I was then employed and advised him and helped him in connection with pay legislation. That specifically is what I remember.

MORRISSEY: Could you give me a little biographical background

[2]

on how you got into World War II and your relationship with Donald Dawson that began then?

FRIEDMAN: Well, I had come out of college to the Labor Department and then from the Labor Department to the then War Department, as it was called, and worked for the Secretary of War, and my field of specialty was in job analysis and in wage work. Thereafter, when I went into the Army and after OCS I was detailed to the Air Force and I was put back into wage determination work which became my specialty. Dawson was the Director of Personnel for the Air Transport Command and along the line he picked me up as a member of his staff and I was in charge of job classification and wage administration for him. Then when he needed some help in the White House in these pay areas, I was borrowed. In 1950, the extent of the loan became so long that both the Defense Department and the White House agreed that it would be more realistic for me to transfer over, and I did. At that time I was doing much more work and over a much broader area.

[3]

MORRISSEY: May I ask where you went to college?

FRIEDMAN: I went to Rutgers in New Jersey.

MORRISSEY: Could you give some dates for these things you've just talked about?

FRIEDMAN: Well, let's see. I was graduated from Rutgers in 1939; I was a graduate assistant there from 1939 to 1940 and I came to the Labor Department in '40 and transferred to the War Department in '41. I went into the Army in December of '42 and came out as a captain in February of 1946.

MORRISSEY: Who was the Secretary of War that you worked for?

FRIEDMAN: When I first went into the Office of the Secretary of War, it was Mr. [Henry L.] Stimson. Actually, most of my work, even though I was on the payroll of the Secretary of War, was in the Office of the Under Secretary's office. The Under Secretary, whose name shouldn't escape me now except

[4]

for your machine, was Judge [Robert] Patterson, a very, very able man.

MORRISSEY: How long were you on loan to the White House?

FRIEDMAN: Well, in '49, sporadically, for jobs that I could do at my own desk if I wanted to, and in '50 for several months until I transferred to the White House payroll because it became a long term loan.

MORRISSEY: What month in 1950? Do you remember that?

FRIEDMAN: That the actual transfer took place? I'm not sure -- May or June.

MORRISSEY: How long did you stay on?

FRIEDMAN: I stayed on until Inauguration Day in 1953.

MORRISSEY: Did you have a title?

FRIEDMAN: Yes, I was a Special Assistant in the White House Office.

MORRISSEY: Did you work closely with Mr. Dawson throughout this time?

[5]

FRIEDMAN: Very closely.

MORRISSEY: Did you work for anybody else?

FRIEDMAN: Occasionally, yes. I would do work for other administrative assistants and for the President's Special Counsel, Mr. Murphy, and a lot of work was independent. There came a time when I did a lot of work directly for the President. Our organization, as you undoubtedly have learned, was a very informal one.

MORRISSEY: Could you specify some of the work you did directly for the President?

FRIEDMAN: This is hard. I'll just tell you first what we were engaged in generally with Mr. Dawson. We were concerned about getting the best possible people we could for top presidential appointments. When I first came in, we had a "little cabinet" committee set up and as I recall it, Eugene Zuckert, the present Secretary of the Air Force, was a member of it; the Assistant Attorney General in charge

[6]

of Anti-Trust, H. Graham Morison, who subsequently became a law partner of Charlie Murphy's, was a member of it; the Assistant Secretary of Labor, Phil Kaiser, who is now an ambassador to Ghana, I think, was a member of it, Carlisle Humelsine, Assistant Secretary of State, and one or two others. It was our job to put together some scheme for keeping tabs on able people who might be willing to work in Washington. We devised a method and for some period of time after that I operated this -- this sifting machinery -- and when a major presidential appointment came I would pull our file on that position, generally talk it over with Mr. Dawson, narrow it down to a few choices. Sometimes, he would take it to the President, sometimes we would both take it to the President and if for any reason he was unavailable, I would take it to him alone. As time went on we also became responsible for liaison with the Democratic National Committee and there were a wide variety of duties that we performed in connection with keeping the

[7]

Committee informed and keeping informed of what the Committee wanted. We also got many, many recommendations from the Committee as to personnel, and that was another fact -- to see that people were not only technically competent, but politically acceptable.

Then a good part of what I did and sometimes directly for the President had to do with security files. I got the FBI files, read them, wrote an evaluation of what should be done with a particular prospect. Sometimes, it was open and shut. There was no question about it, but if there was a question—any kind of security question—then we had to decide whether we would forget him or whether we would have a supplementary investigation made of whether in our evaluation of the report he was acceptable. Most of the work I did directly with the President—and I'll tell you now since we're going to edit this tape that this is what I'll close—had to do with Congressional investigations. There was a period of time when the

[8]

White House staff was getting hit by [Senator Joseph R.] McCarthy and by others on the Hill, and Dawson was one of the objects of this attack in connection with RFC investigation. And since he was a target, he couldn't very well be his own lawyer and the President asked me to follow this, to keep him advised, and he got through me a careful analysis of day-by-day developments. After this occurred there was a whole series of other attacks on personnel and I became a sort of unofficial defense counsel for people on the staff who were being shot at by various Congressional committees, particularly Mr. McCarthy's committee. In this connection, as I say, I worked directly with him. Matt Connelly sometimes acted as an intermediary but generally just to tell me when he was available. Finally, I think, we wrote and sent to the Library—it wasn't the then Library—but we wrote and sent to Independence a final analysis of the attack on the RFC because of Dawson's particular interest in that. In that case, there was a young lawyer named

[9]

[Franklin] Frank Parks, presently at the Atomic Energy Commission, and Frank came in and acted as a consultant—worked with me in putting that analysis together.

MORRISSEY: Do I understand that this final analysis of the attacks on the RFC was written after Mr. Truman left the White House?

FRIEDMAN: No, it was written in the last months of the administration and we wanted a cold, lawyer-like objective report on what had happened. So we wrote it for the President and sent it out to Independence with him.

MORRISSEY: Could you elaborate in any other ways on your concern with the attacks on Donald Dawson?

FRIEDMAN: Yes, I thought that they were in many ways like the attacks by Mr. McCarthy, except that instead of having McCarthy we had a highly respected senator who was behind it. But from a lawyer's point of view, they were atrocious because of the attacks

[10]

were made before the hearings. Interestingly enough, the report came out which was a vicious attack on Dawson and his wife and his former colleagues at the RFC and there was nothing behind it. Mr. Truman, having conducted an investigation himself as chairman of the War

Investigating Committee, resented it greatly. I remember very well sitting in on a pre-press conference. We had, as you have learned, what we called pre-press where the President went around the room and people told him what was likely to come up. Mr. Truman on that particular date said to Joe Short, who has his Press Secretary, "What have you got Joe?"

And Joe said, "One of the things that's going to come up is this RFC report from Mr. [Senator J. William] Fulbright."

And the President said, "That's asinine." This was a pre-press.

And Joe looked at him and said, "Well, it may be, Mr. President, but I don't think that's the thing to say. If this comes up at the press

[11]

Conference I think it would be better for you to say you want to wait and study the report."

Mr. Truman said, "All right, that's what I'll say. But the thing to do is to have your investigation first and then write your report, not write a report and say 'Here it is,' without having had any testimony or any evidence. Well, the inevitable happened. He got over to the press conference and the first thing that they threw at him was the question of the Fulbright report. And he just instinctively said, "That's asinine." Then the fat was in the fire and you said what could I tell you more particularly about this report, and it's clear to me as a lawyer that the committee then set out to have a hearing to prove what it had already written, which is the cart before the horse. And I think that is atrociously wrong. And I think that when the record was in, at least so far as our staff members were concerned, it was clear that there was nothing to it. But it caused an awful lot of trouble.

[12]

MORRISSEY: Let me ask you about the attacks on two other White House staff members, namely, David Lloyd and Philleo Nash. Were you concerned with these?

FRIEDMAN: Yes I was.

MORRISSEY: Could you tell me something about them?

FRIEDMAN: Well, they were, in Mr. Lloyd's case, absolutely baseless from the evidentiary point of view. In Mr. Nash's case, from the evidentiary point of view, it would have required further investigation. When further investigation was made, the most you could possibly say about it was that he exercised poor judgment and in neither case could anyone conceivably, honestly, attribute disloyalty or even say seriously that they were security risks.

MORRISSEY: Why were you the one chosen to do this sort of work?

FRIEDMAN: Well, because that's the way things happened

[13]

around there. If you got an assignment once your were likely to get it again and again and because I had been chosen to follow the RFC investigations and following that the investigations relating to General Vaughan and John Steelman. It just happened that way.

MORRISSEY: Could you comment on these investigations of Boyle, Vaughan, and Steelman?

FRIEDMAN: Well, by the time I got there, the big stew about Vaughan had already passed. There were some minor nuisance things that I can't even remember. I think the same is true of Steelman, just some little flare-ups. The Boyle matter, my present recollection is that it was under the Hoey Committee, and it related to the circumstances under which he severed his connections with his law firm. We were only interested in that he was the chairman of the Committee.

MORRISEY: In your work, did you have any direct dealings with people on the Hill?

[14]

FRIEDMAN: Yes, we did. We had some help from time to time.

MORRISSEY: Would you want to specify what kind of help and who these people were?

FRIEDMAN: Well, yes, subject to the condition that this is closed. Particularly [Senator William] Bill Benton who would attempt to develop our point of view. In other words, we needed counsel too.

MORRISSEY: When the White House had business with people on the Hill, would White House staff members deal directly with these people?

FRIEDMAN: Yes. There were certain kinds of things that were left to liaison officers, but they were things like postmasterships and the appointment of U. S. marshals -- they weren't very significant. On the other hand, in program areas, the White House staff man in particular area tended to go to the senator -- chairman, from the Senate Committee or the House Committee that was most vitally concerned.

[15]

MORRISSEY: Who were these liaison officers you just referred to?

FRIEDMAN: We had a General [Charles] Maylon, and I think he covered the House; and Joe [Joseph G.] Feeney who was a retired Naval officer, and he covered the Senate; and John Carroll, former Senator Carroll, after his defeat for election to the Senate, he ran for the Senate after having served in the House and he initially was defeated, and then joined our staff and was liaison officer for the Senate. And in order to get a good picture of our operation, I think, though, it's very important to know that the liaison organization and activity wasn't any where near as elaborate as it was in either the Eisenhower Administration or the Kennedy Administration. It was just a token.

MORRISSEY: Why?

FRIEDMAN: I don't know. I think because again it just grew that way. I don't know how much of a legislative liaison team Roosevelt had, and I would suspect

[16]

without knowing, that he didn't have a very elaborate organization and Truman just carried on the same way.

MORRISSEY: Would the President involve himself sometimes in these negotiations between White House staff members and people on the Hill?

FRIEDMAN: The President involved himself in legislative matters and when he did, the staff members were distinctly subordinate. He just carried it on himself, but he frequently on such matters as -- the things that I remember -- price control legislation at the time of Korea, wage control legislation -- he just stepped into the picture and took it over.

MORRISSEY: Let me go back a bit and ask about this "little cabinet" that you mentioned a few minutes ago. When did this first start to operate?

FRIEDMAN: The little cabinet committee met and had a series of meetings very early in 1950. The system

[16a]

went into operation, the system that they recommended, went in operation in May or June, I think, of 1950. We had thought for a while about publicizing it quietly and we decided not to because a lot of the truly political people in the organization, I mean out around the country, and also the Democratic Nation Committee looked at it with a somewhat jaundiced eye.

MORRISSEY: How were relations between the little cabinet and the National Committee?

FRIEDMAN: The little cabinet committee and the National Committee? There weren't any. They recognized the committee's problems, but they were separated. It was up to us to clear whatever recommendations they made with the Committee and we didn't really do it. We just advised them.

MORRISSEY: Why was this little cabinet committee set up in 1950 and not before?

FRIEDMAN: I don't know. I suspect because it was getting

[17]

tougher and tougher to get good people all the time.

MORRISSEY: Could you elaborate on that?

FRIEDMAN: Yes, I think that by that stage, a lot of the magic had worn off; there was a long period of Democratic administration; there was, as you know, a feeling as we approached '52 that there was no chance of another Democratic victory; and I think that this made it all the more difficult to get good people, so some extraordinary effort had to be undertaken.

MORRISSEY: You mentioned three people as members of this little cabinet committee, Zuckert, Morison, and Kaiser.

FRIEDMAN: Yes.

MORRISSEY: Any reason why they were chosen?

FRIEDMAN: I think because they were young men, on their way up, bright, vigorous, not afraid of new ideas,

[18]

they did not particularly come out of a political milieu and I think those are the reasons.

MORRISSEY: Let me ask you about these pre-press conferences that you sat in on. How were they handled?

FRIEDMAN: Well, I didn't sit in on all of them. I sat in on some and not on others. But they were handled in a fairly standard manner. The President would start with his Press Secretary and he'd say, "What have you got today?" And then the Press Secretary would tick off the things most likely to come up. Now, if in connection with any of those matters, let's say it was a labor matter, it was necessary for Mr. Steelman to brief the President, and he would pitch in and brief him. When the Press Secretary got through, the President went around the room and asked whether there was anybody else that had anything. And by the time he got around the room, he generally looked at his watch and it was time to go over to the press conference. President Truman's habit was to

[19]

take the whole staff over there and I've noticed that President Eisenhower and President Kennedy simply took the Press Secretary over. I think that the theory of taking the whole staff over there was that it might be necessary, even at the press conference, to give him some further information, but this very rarely happened.

MORRISSEY: Did the President consider allowing his press conferences to be either broadcast or televised live?

FRIEDMAN: I don't know whether that ever came up.

MORRISSEY: Would the people who attended these pre-press conference sessions be pretty much the same people that attended the daily staff meeting?

FRIEDMAN: Yes.

MORRISSEY: Tell me about Mr. Truman's habits of operating -- the characteristics of the way he handled his job?

FRIEDMAN: Mr. Truman, in my opinion, was a man of tremendous

[20]

innate intelligence, not as polished as Mr. Stevenson in the sense of formal education or Mr. Kennedy in that same sense, but he had tremendous native intelligence and he had a tremendous amount of courage as you well know, and the most impressive thing about him to me as a President was his quality of being a decisional President. There were no monkeyshines about who was making the decisions, nor was there any long and aggravated soul searching. He would get his staff work done, reports were made to him at a conference, and he would say "This is what we're going to do." And the decision was made.

Also, he was a very, very easy man to see, which is important to the staff. Staff members never made appointments. I noticed in the Eisenhower Administration they did. Now that may be good, I don't know, but actually if any of us wanted to see "The Boss" we would just slip around and ask Matt Connelly who was with him and when he might get out or whether he was alone and then just

[21]

slip in for a few minutes, do our business and get out. So, this was a source of satisfaction. As I said, he was very smart, he was quick on decisions, he was easy to see, and he listened too. Then I think that it must be very clear if you're talking to any number of his people, that he had a quality that endeared him to his staff because he sort of adopted them, and if you were a member of his staff, you were one of his people and he had tremendous loyalty to his people. All of those are qualities that come to mind. Now, there's one other one that I think shouldn't be overlooked in discussing this man, and that is that he was tough. He didn't scare easily; he wasn't afraid if he made a decision of what the consequences might be. I remember, one of my early education with him was that I had received a call from a staff member on the Internal Security Committee, I believe it was, and I don't even recall his name but there had been a long hassle about refusing to give up executive files and I knew what our position was,

[22]

what our policy position was, we believed in the doctrine of executive privilege and we were not going to let executive files go over to the Congress for security investigations or any other kind of investigations. Well, this man called me one day and he said that they had noticed a tremendous increase in the number of White House personnel. Well, this was true because we had long had the habit of borrowing people as I mentioned in my own case, and at one point in time, we just decided that this was silly business because we couldn't tell how much the operation was costing us. So, in one fell swoop, everybody was just transferred over and put on our own payroll and we had our own budget and we just knew how much the White House staff amounted to. But it did make an awfully big jump, an apparent jump, in the White House payroll because people who were on the Defense Department payroll, Commerce Department payroll, but actually physically at the White House, were then transferred to the White

[23]

House roll. And he said, "Now, you fellows haven't been very cooperative with us in letting us see the files and we're just not going to let you have any money, for your payroll. If you won't cooperate with us, we won't cooperate with you."

And I said, "Well, you know what our policy is. I'll be glad to explore it further if there's anything we can do." I got a little excited and I went down and slipped in to see the President. He was busy signing a lot of papers and I told him the story about this call, how they were going to cut off our money for all these people.

And he grinned and he said, "Well, you call him and tell him that we'll just use whatever money we've got and when we run out of that we'll close up." And I thought that was just a wonderful, Trumanesque response. He didn't worry about it at all. He kind of laughed and went on signing his papers.

MORRISSEY: Did you forward the President's response to the person on the Hill who made this threat?

[24]

FRIEDMAN: No, I simply didn't respond at all.

MORRISSEY: Can you recall any other examples of these qualities you just mentioned?

FRIEDMAN: I recall one time at staff meeting when John Steelman told him that the Mine, Mill and Smelters' Workers Union was Communist dominated and that they were causing trouble and were about to strike or did strike and that the Joint Chiefs were very worried, because of lack of ammunition. And his immediate response was, and it wasn't a very good legal response, "Put them in jail." The instinctive response was that if these people were Communist dominated, they're going to hurt the war effort which was Korea—just slap them in jail. I think Mr. Steelman must have had a tough time convincing him later that there were legal processes and that there were other ways of approaching the problem.

MORRISSEY: Any other examples come to mind?

[25]

FRIEDMAN: No, not particularly. I guess if I thought enough about them I could scribble out a lot of them, but unfortunately I haven't had a chance to.

MORRISSEY: Were you concerned with the loyalty security issues?

FRIEDMAN: I was concerned with the loyalty security machinery and worked with the Justice Department in trying to improve the program so that it would protect the Government without hurting the individual. This was a very great problem. We kept that up until the very end and at the very end when we were moving out of the White House, Mr. Eisenhower had sent Joe Dodge as an advance transition man, and we delivered into his hands a paper, which was a critical

analysis of our own system and a proposed reform of our own system, and we were hopeful that the Eisenhower people would pick it up from there. In all frankness, I don't think they did. They just put it on the shelf and they started playing what's referred to as the "numbers game" with the security program.

[26]

MORRISSEY: Did you write that report?

FRIEDMAN: I worked on it -- wrote a good part of it, but I think that Mr. Murphy's office was in it very deeply and the Justice Department was in it in depth.

MORRISSEY: Was there any one person at Justice that you worked closely with on this matter?

FRIEDMAN: I can't remember. I think there must have been, but the name escapes me.

MORRISSEY: Let me ask you some questions about the transition from election day in November, '52 to the inauguration in January, '53. What occupied your time mostly during this period?

FRIEDMAN: Largely windup -- that was about it. There were still occasional speeches. There were still executive orders, even reorganization plans. I got into the development of reorganization plans where they affected personnel structure, but that's about it.

[27]

MORRISSEY: Did you work on speeches throughout your tenure at the White House?

FRIEDMAN: Yes, some pieces of speeches because whenever a speech was being written, various people would have an interest in particular parts of it. Now there might be a speech, let's say, solely on agriculture and I wouldn't get into it at all. There might be a speech that was broader and, let's say, had something to do with the Civil Service system. We'd get a paragraph or two in that speech. There were speeches -- one where, I know, I recall, that I drafted from the start and then -- it was the other way around -- Murphy's office picked it up then from the first draft and that was an address the President made to the -- I think it was the National Civil Service Assembly. In that case, it was different from getting a draft from Murphy's office and slipping in a paragraph or two. In that case, I wrote the draft and gave it to them and they worked it over.

[28]

MORRISSEY: Were you involved in any speechwriting chores during either the 1950 or 1952 campaigns?

FRIEDMAN: Yes. That's one of the things, of course, that kept us busy. I spent a great deal of time writing what we called "whistlestop outlines." They were just very brief, terse outlines of matters affecting a particular town in a particular state and the President could put them in his notebook and look at them while the train was between stops and that gave him enough so that when he got out on the back platform, he could talk for a while. Sometimes he'd read them, if

they were complete enough and sometimes he'd just use them as a point of departure. And we ground out quite a few of those things, some on the train and some in the White House.

MORRISSEY: Who did you work with on those outlines?

FRIEDMAN: Mr. Murphy. He was the -- actually, he was the boss. He'd either use them or discard them or change them.

[29]

MORRISSEY: Did you ride any of the campaign trains?

FRIEDMAN: Yes.

MORRISSEY: Do you remember which campaign?

FRIEDMAN: In '52 I went out with him, through New Jersey -- well, we went to New Jersey by train. Then we picked up a car and we drove and then we picked up a train in Philadelphia and whistled to Pittsburgh, and we were up all night, writing these outlines, getting out in front of the platform, trying to listen to the people and getting their reactions.

MORRISSEY: Could you tell me about that?

FRIEDMAN: Yes. Most of the people that came down to the trains were friendly. I don't think they would have come down otherwise and they just wanted to see Harry -- "Give 'em Hell Harry" -- and we had a lot of that stuff. I didn't hear any hostile comments. We generally had a bunch of kids sitting up on trees and telephone poles and some of them

[30]

tossing eggs. We had that, too, but by and large there was a curiosity to see this man and to listen to him. The crowds were generally in a holiday mood.

MORRISSEY: Would you report these reactions to the President?

FRIEDMAN: If you had an opportunity. The President, on the train, had what I thought was a very nice custom of inviting a few staff members to each meal. He had a tiny little dining room. They had a regular roster and so he would have staff members -- some for dinner, maybe for breakfast, or for lunch. And as the opportunity presented itself, we would report reactions that were picked up if we thought they were significant. But it was very difficult on the train. He was pretty well occupied.

MORRISSEY: As you recall, before the election, what was the outlook for Stevenson chances for success?

[31]

FRIEDMAN: Well, it depended upon the person that you talked to. Some were extremely optimistic and some felt that there was no real chance. My senior partner* here, who was then

Secretary of the Interior, felt that the chances were excellent. I felt that they really weren't, because you were running against a national hero.

MORRISSEY: Were you close to the President at the time Governor Stevenson's opponent made the famous "I will go to Korea" statement?

FRIEDMAN: I don't think I was physically close, no.

MORRISSEY: I ask because I wonder about the response within the White House staff group to this.

FRIEDMAN: They were very angry and he was quite angry.

MORRISSEY: The President?

FRIEDMAN: I think so, but this is second hand. But he

*Oscar Chapman, Secretary of the Interior, 1949-1953.

[32]

felt that if Mr. Eisenhower had anything he could do in Korea to stop the bloodshed he had a duty to come to the President and tell him.

MORRISSEY: Do you recall anything about the relationship between Mr. Truman and his entourage and Governor Stevenson and his campaign group in Springfield?

FRIEDMAN: Dave Bell was assigned to work with them, and there may have been one or two others, but aside from that we were a pretty independent operation.

MORRISSEY: The press at the time spoke of conflicts between these two groups. What's your viewpoint on that?

FRIEDMAN: I didn't see any conflict, but I didn't see any close coordination either.

MORRISSEY: Did you go to Key West with the President?

FRIEDMAN: I went once.

[33]

MORRISSEY: Were you there when he told his staff that he wasn't going to run again in 1952?

FRIEDMAN: No.

MORRISSEY: Did you know he had made that statement?

FRIEDMAN: I knew it only a matter of hours before he announced it, because there were a very limited number of people on the staff to whom he told that and they kept it pretty well. I rode out to the Armory with Murphy and somebody else and I think it was on the way out he told me that he was going to make the announcement.

MORRISSEY: Were you involved in the selection of Mr. Truman's successor as the Democratic nominee for the Presidency in 1952? Specifically, were you involved in the selection of Governor Stevenson?

FRIEDMAN: I was not involved. I had a very high regard for him.

MORRISSEY: On this matter of finding people to fill

[34]

jobs as they opened up, to what extent would you be bound by geographical representation in making selections?

FRIEDMAN: It was a considerable factor; a factor that I think may very well be overrated as a practical matter. In other words, it's traditional that the Secretary of Interior is from the West. Now suppose we had a Secretary of Interior that was not from the West. Would the Westerners really rebel? I don't know. I just don't know. I just don't know, but traditionally you're looking for a Westerner. On various commissions we would try to balance out the commission. Let's take one like the Federal Power Commission. We would like to have some people from the Eastern consumer states; some people from the producer states; some people from the far-western states where they are concerned with the public power questions. So there was a very definite attempt to keep the balance, yes.

[35]

MORRISSEY: To what extent would ethnic or racial considerations be taken into consideration?

FRIEDMAN: They were always taken into consideration but they weren't determinative; but they were certainly considered.

MORRISSEY: Would you confer with state committeemen sometimes when you were about to make a decision on who would get some job?

FRIEDMAN: Do you mean a state chairman, for example? It depends on the state. If there were Democratic senators, that was the channel, but if the state had two Republican senators, then we would look to the state chairman.

MORRISSEY: Would a state chairman hold veto power over some of these possible candidates?

FRIEDMAN: Oh, he would have to be awfully, violently opposed to stop it. By and large, the state chairmen didn't care about jobs in Washington. They

[36]

were interested in jobs in their own home state. They were interested in judgeships, which are very important to a political organization, and so far as we were concerned, on judgeships, we had only a paper pushing job to do. The Justice Department really selected the people and submitted them to the President and the President's staff was only in on it in a very tangential way.

MORRISSEY: Would people -- state committeemen, state chairmen, for example -- tend to go to the President and try to get around you or your little cabinet committee if they thought a decision was about to be made that wasn't agreeable to them?

FRIEDMAN: No. On the other hand, a Cabinet officer, if he didn't particularly like what we were doing in an area in which he was interested, almost always went to the President, and he almost always prevailed, and this was particularly true at State and Defense.

MORRISSEY: To what extent were political affiliations

[37]

recognized in staffing jobs of a diplomatic character?

FRIEDMAN: I think that you can find documentation on this, that there was a growing tendency to use career people, and that the political ambassadorship was disappearing very rapidly. By the end of the Truman Administration, this was, I think, minimal, and I think the same trend has continued throughout the next administrations, Eisenhower's and Kennedy's. As foreign affairs became more and more important, there was an increasing reliance on the professional.

MORRISSEY: How highly did the President value bipartisanship in regard to making appointments?

FRIEDMAN: In the area of State and Defense, it was considerable, and you'll notice that from his appointments, they were largely Republicans.

MORRISSEY: Did he ever speak about this?

FRIEDMAN: He spoke about it in a very general way. He

[38]

felt about it, in a sense, that in these areas, he was concerned about people and the quality of people and not about political affiliations. When you realize that that's a good part of the Government, then I think you also realize that the pure partisan politics of appointments isn't as important as it sometimes appears to be.

MORRISSEY: Actually, how much patronage is there to be dispensed?

FRIEDMAN: There's a tremendous amount of petty patronage to be dispensed, but I don't think it means anything. I think that patronage as a vehicle of Presidential control and Presidential

power is vastly overrated and overestimated. I don't think many people care very much who the postmaster is in a particular place. Certainly it's not going to have a political impact.

MORRISSEY: I've heard that for every job that's awarded there are nine or ten people who are disappointed.

[39]

FRIEDMAN: Well, that's true and that's because in terms of Presidential appointments, you get nine or ten people seeking a job and the ones who are seeking it are frequently the ones you can't use, and you might go after two or three, and be able to get one, so the ones who are actively looking for the job are disappointed.

MORRISSEY: To what extent did the vote of the Dixiecrats in '48 have an effect on appointing people from Southern states?

FRIEDMAN: I don't think it had any effect unless there was a personal reason for it. For example, Mr. Truman appointed Millard F. Caldwell as the first Civil Defense director. He was a Southerner with Southern convictions. On the other hand, he was a governor who was the head of the Governors' Conference, and well-liked by the governors and this had to be a state program. And when he came up to see the President, he said, "I just wanted you to know that my outlook on civil rights and

[40]

yours are not the same and I can't change my outlook."

And the President told him, "Now I'm going to appoint you for your skills as a Civil Defense administrator and your ability to get state cooperation, and not for any other reason."

He, in turn, recognizing the exigencies of the problem, adopted as a member of his Advisory Board, a prominent Negro whose name I can't recall now, so he was flexible too.

MORRISSEY: Would an appointment like that one be made solely by him or would you people become involved in it?

FRIEDMAN: Well, we recommended to him a panel of names and the governor just happened to be one of them. Now there were many times when we might recommend three or four names to the President as what we thought were the most fruitful possibilities, and he might say, "Well, the Attorney General was in

[41]

today and he's got a couple of names. Check them out." And we would end up with one of those. Or he might say, "Dean Acheson was in today, and wants so-and-so for the job, and I told him 'all right.'" Well then the decision had already been made before you even got into the discussion.

MORRISSEY: To what extent would minority group affiliation be the determining factor in some appointment?

FRIEDMAN: Well, there are some that were traditional minority group positions. I don't know how the custom grew up, but for some reason the Recorder of Deeds in the District of Columbia is always a Negro. And the Negro community expected that. In situations like that, which are few and far between it was determinative, then ultimately, of course, that position was taken out from under Presidential appointment, and put under Civil Service and I think there's probably good reason for this; it's not a policy-making position.

[42]

MORRISSEY: Did the President have any special affinity for people from Missouri?

FRIEDMAN: No. In an old friend and social way, I suppose, yes, but not in terms of appointments.

MORRISSEY: Were you also responsible for Civil Service matters as well as political appointments?

FRIEDMAN: Yes, we had two hats. We were responsible for Civil Service regulations, and in that connection we worked closely with the chairman of the Civil Service Commission, and with the Bureau of the Budget.

MORRISSEY: Were there any difficulties in wearing these two hats sometimes?

FRIEDMAN: Sometimes.

MORRISSEY: Could you expand on that point?

FRIEDMAN: Well, there were times when, for example, the Secretary of Commerce might have a regional

[43]

office and wanted it filled with a particular man he thought might fit his needs, but the incumbent had Civil Service status and there was just no way of getting him out. And I always felt that the Secretaries should reflect Presidential policy and his key aides, his regional aides, should reflect his policy and that there should be a way of transition, if you got a new secretary or if you had a new party. But the Civil Service system isn't built that way, so conflicts would arise. There was really nothing we could do but ride it out and wait for an opening.

MORRISSEY: How concerned were you with appointing women as well as men to some of these jobs?

FRIEDMAN: Well, we didn't lie awake nights and worry about it and make a point to appoint a woman, but when a qualified woman showed up, we were glad. We had Frieda Hennock on the Federal Communications Commission; that one comes to mind.

[44]

MORRISSEY: How important would a person's involvement in fund-raising activities be in trying to find people to fill some jobs?

FRIEDMAN: It wouldn't be too important in terms of major substantive jobs. Now, many of these people, however, would like to have appointments that gave them some recognition, so that they might be put on the Assay Commission that once a year weighs and measures coins at the mint -- or there might be other little ways you could give these people recognition. By and large that's all they wanted.

MORRISSEY: Was there any feeling on the President's part that appointees should represent a Fair Deal viewpoint on current legislative issues?

FRIEDMAN: Oh, yes. That was the real criterion. He had to have a team that would carry out his program, and once in a while we missed, but for that reason, he personally talked to every single major appointee before he went on the job.

[45]

MORRISSEY: I think I'm running out of questions. Do you have any points that you'd like to bring up?

FRIEDMAN: No, I think I talked more than I thought I could.

MORRISSEY: Well, let's stop here. We're almost at the end of the tape anyway.

FRIEDMAN: All right.

MORRISSEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Friedman.

[46]

INDEX

Assay Commission, 44

Bell, David E., 32

Benton, William, 14

Bipartisanship in Presidential appointments, 36-38

Boyle, William H., Jr., 13

Caldwell, Millard F., 39

Carroll, John A., 15

Chapman, Oscar L., 31

Civil rights, 39-41

Comunism, internal threat of during Korean War, 24

Congress, liaison with White House during Truman Administration, 14-16

Congressional investigations, conduct of, 8-13

Congressional investigations of White House staff members, 8-13

Connelly, Matthew J., 8, 20

Dawson, Alva (Mrs. Donald Dawson), 9

Dawson, Donald S., 1, 4-5, 6, 8-10

Democratic National Committee, 6-7, 16-16a

Dixiecrats, 39

Dodge, Joseph M., 25

Eisenhower, Dwight D., 32

Executive files, 21-23

Executive privilege, 22-23

Federal Bureau of Investigation, 7

Federal Civil Defense Administration, 39-40

Federal Communications Commission, 43

Federal Power Commission, 34

Feeney, Joseph G., 15

Friedman, Martin L.:

- biographical data, 1-4

- civil service matters, White House assignment regarding, 42

- Dawson, Donald, work with as White House staff member, 1, 4-5

- Democratic National Committee, responsibility for liaison between White House and, 6-7

- job classification and wage determination, as specialist in, 2

- Key West, Fla., visit to as member of the White House staff, 32-33

- "Little Cabinet" committee, work with, 5-6, 16-17

- loaned to White House by Department of Defense, 1, 2, 4

- loyalty-security program, report by suggesting changes in, 25-26

- National Civil Service League, preparation of HST's address before, 27

- Presidential appointments, responsibilities in connection with, 6-7

- Presidential campaign, 1952, participation in, 28-32

- Presidential transition, 1952-53, role in, 26

- reorganization plans, preparation of, 26

- security clearance of Presidential appointees, responsibility for, 7

- special assistant in the White House office, appointed, 1950, 4

- speech writer, as a, 27-28

- told of HST's decision not to run for President in 1952, 33

- transfer from Department of Defense to White House staff, 1, 4.

- Truman, Harry S., evaluation of as President. 20-23

Fulbright, J. William, 10-11

Government employees:

- Corruption among, 8-14

- executive positions, difficulty of obtaining for, 16-17

- loyalty of , 11-12

Henlock, Frieda B.. 43

Hoey Committee, 13
Humelsine, Carlisle H., 6

Internal Security, Senate Subcommittee on, 21-23

Joint Chiefs of Staff, 24
Justice, Department of, 25-26, 36

Kaiser, Philip M., 6, 17-18
Korean war, 31-32

"Little Cabinet" committee. 5-6. 16-17
Lloyd, David D., 12
Loyalty-security program, report suggesting changes in, 1952, 25-26

Maylon, Brig. Gen. Charles, 15
McCarthy, Joseph R., 7-9
Mine, Mill, and Smelters Workers, International Union of, 24
Morison, H. Graham, 6, 17
Murphy. Charles S.. 6. 26. 27, 28, 33

Nash, Philleo, 12
National Civil Service League, 27

Parks, Franklin, 9
Patronage, political, 34-43
Patterson, Robert P., 4

Presidential appointments:
 awarding of, 38-39
 Cabinet members, .influence of in connection with, 36
 Cabinet members, recommendations of concerning, 40-41
 Democratic party officials, clearance with, 35-36
 diplomatic appointments, 37
 effect of Civil rights question on during the Truman administration, 41
 ethnic factors, consideration. given to during Truman administration, 35
 Fair Deal program, agreement with a requirement during the Truman administration, 44
 Federal judges, appointment of during the Truman administration, 36
 geographical considerations regarding, 34
 large campaign contributors, recognized by, 44
 "Little Cabinet" committee, influence on, 5-6, 16-17
 minority groups, as a consideration in, 41
 racial factors, consideration given to during Truman administration, 35, 41
 security clearance in connection with, 7
 women during the Truman administration, of, 43
Presidential campaign, 1952, 28-32
Presidential press conferences, preparation for, 10-11, 18-19

Presidential transition, 1952-53, 25-26

President's Committee on Executive Reserve, 5-7, 16-17

Price control legislation, Korean war, 16

Reconstruction Finance Corporation, Congressional investigation of, 1951, 8-10, 13

Recorder of Deeds, District of Columbia, 41

Reorganization of Government Departments, 26

Senate Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments, Senate Investigating
Subcommittee, 1949, 13

State, Department of, 36, 37

Steelman, John, 13, 24

Stevenson, Adlai E.:

Presidential election, 1952, chances of winning, 30-31

Truman, Harry S., relationship with, 1952 Presidential campaign, 32

Truman, Harry S.:

accessibility to members of White House staff, 20-21

announcement in 1952 that he would not run for a third term, 33

Civil Defense Administrator, appointment of Millard F. Caldwell as, 39 .

Congressional liaison, role in, 16

Communist domination of labor unions during Korean war, reaction to, 24

crowds, rapport with in 1952 Presidential campaign, 29

decision maker, as a, 19-20, 21

Eisenhower promise to go to Korea, 1952 campaign, reaction to, 31-32

Fair Deal legislative. program, appointment to office of those-agreeing with, 44
intelligence, 20, 21

loyalty to members of the White House staff, 21

Missourians, not partial to in making Presidential appointments, 42

personal traits, 19-23

President, evaluation of as, 20-23

Presidential campaign, 1952, role in, 28-32

Presidential appointments, bipartisanship in making, 37-38

Presidential appointments, effect of Dixiecrat movement on, 39-41

press conferences, conduct of, 19

press conferences, preparation for, 18

Reconstruction Finance Corporation, reaction to Congressional investigation of, 10-11

speech, National Civil Service League, May 2, 1952, preparation of, 2 7

whistlestop speeches, 1952 Presidential campaign, 28-30

White House staff, reaction to Congressional threat to cut size of, 21-23

White House staff, relationship with, 20-23

Vaughan, Harry H., 13

Wage control legislation, Korean war, 16

White House staff:

Attacks on member of by Congressional committees, 8-13
Congress, liaison with during the Truman administration, 14-16
Congressional threat to cut size of, 21-23
Democratic National Committee, liaison with regarding Presidential appointments, 6-7
Eisenhower promise to go to Korea, 1952 campaign,
reaction to, 31-32.
Friedman, Martin L., joins, 1, 2
Truman administration, increase in size of during, 21-23
Truman administration, informal working conditions during, 5
Truman, Harry S., relationship with, 20-23

Zuckert, Eugene M., 5, 17