

Oral History Interview
with
PERRY R. HARDIN

Clerk in the file room of the White House, 1945-1952.

Independence, Missouri
May 8, 1991

by Niel M. Johnson, Harry S. Truman Library

The Harry S. Truman Library
Independence, Missouri
July, 1992

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JOHNSON: Mr. Hardin, I'm going to start out just by asking you where and when you were born, who your parents are.

HARDIN: I was born on March 4, 1928 in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. My mother's name was Adelle Hardin, and my father's name was Lafayette Hampton Hardin.

JOHNSON: Do you have any brothers and sisters?

HARDIN: I had four older brothers and three older sisters.

JOHNSON: You're the youngest.

HARDIN: I am the youngest in the family.

JOHNSON: I've said this before, but it seems like I've been interviewing the youngest son or daughter more often than not.

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HARDIN: I have one brother who is living and I have two sisters who are living.

JOHNSON: So you were educated in Tuscaloosa?

HARDIN: Educated in high school in Tuscaloosa. I finished high school just as I had turned 16 years of age. I went to two summer schools so I could finish high school earlier, and that was during World War II. At that time the high school was really an eleven year school. So I finished high school in ten years by way of going to summer school two years. I had a sister working in Washington, D.C. at the time.

JOHNSON: What year are we talking about?

HARDIN: This is in 1944 that I graduated from high school. I had visited my sister in Washington, D.C. when I was in junior high school and it was my desire to come back and work in Washington, D.C., and take all the Civil Service examinations, or something I thought I could pass.

So, when I graduated from high school in May of '44 I immediately got on a train and headed out for Washington in June of '44. Arriving in Washington, I took several examinations for Civil Service work. Clerical was my highest score; I believe I scored 94 or 98, something in that range, and I chose to apply as a

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Civil Service clerk. The Secretary of Agriculture's department employed me. That was my first job with Civil Service.

I was employed there in the Secretary's file room for six months, from June until December of '44.

JOHNSON: Was that [Claude] Wickard who was Secretary of Agriculture at that point?

HARDIN: I think he was the Secretary of Agriculture at that time; I'm not positive. I would have to look that up. My supervisor called me into his office one day and said they had an opening in the White House for a file clerk. He said that he would like to recommend me to be detailed to the White House, if I was interested. Of course, my eyes probably got large as saucers. And it meant a grade promotion all the way up to Grade 3 -- probably around \$1,200 or \$1,400 a year.

So I was detailed to the White House in January, around January 3 of '45, if I remember correctly. When you got on detail to the White House, they keep you on, I guess, a certain amount of probation period. They've got to decide if they want to keep you or not, or send you back to the agency that you came from. So, they picked me up on the White House payroll probably after six months, to the best of my recollection.

JOHNSON: On detail for six months.

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HARDIN: That's right, and then they considered that I was no longer detailed to the White House. After the probation period, I was transferred to the White House payroll.

JOHNSON: Who did you report to when you came to the White House for the first time?

HARDIN: My supervisor was Joseph Nash, but, of course, the executive clerk was William Hopkins. Mr. [Clarence E.] Ingling interviewed me for employment in the file room, and then Mr. Joseph Nash interviewed me for employment in the file room. They accepted me, and training began at that time in January of '45. Now, Franklin Roosevelt was President at this time, because his last inauguration, I think, was January 20 of '45, on the South Portico of the White House. He did not go to the Capitol Building for his last inauguration.

JOHNSON: You had already been detailed, right?

HARDIN: I was there.

JOHNSON: What was the date that you were detailed to the White House?

HARDIN: I think it was January 3 of '45, and President Roosevelt was inaugurated January 20, '45. We all witnessed the inauguration from the grounds, the south

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grounds of the White House. That's where he and Vice President Truman took their oaths.

JOHNSON: Was that the first time you saw Harry Truman?

HARDIN: The first time I ever remember seeing him and the first time that I remember seeing President Roosevelt. Roosevelt at that time was very ill. I'm not positive, but I think it was Chief Justice [Harlan F.] Stone who administered the oath of office.

JOHNSON: That's right.

HARDIN: President Roosevelt was so ill at the time that I remember that they had to literally pick him up, pick his chair up, to face the Justice for his oath of office. He was very ill.

JOHNSON: Where were you standing, do you remember?

HARDIN: I was standing down on the grounds along with everyone else, on the south grounds.

JOHNSON: Were all of you White House people grouped together in the same group?

HARDIN: Right. The staff was grouped together. They issued invitations for different groups to be in different locations on the south grounds. I was assigned to the staff group. But we did have a very

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good vantage point for the inauguration, because this was not an inauguration of a President as we know it today.

JOHNSON: Right.

HARDIN: Due to President Roosevelt's illness, I'm sure. And possibly the war going on had something to do with it.

JOHNSON: Yes, that was one of the reasons they cited for that. It's a memorable experience seeing that. And then you had to go back to work. Or did they give you the day off?

HARDIN: That was a holiday. We did not work, that's right. At that time when I was first employed I had to make several trips over to the East Executive Office, and I had to go by what was then a swimming pool, indoor pool. It had louvered shutters along the walkway there, and I recall I heard some splashing going on. I stopped and peeped through the little shutters there, and all of a sudden I heard this voice behind me say, "Hey boy, move on." I looked around, and I found out that was a Secret Service agent who was standing somewhere in the vicinity of the Rose Garden. It was President Roosevelt who was in the pool at the time.

JOHNSON: You see on this layout, here's a swimming pool.

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This is attached to the West Wing. It shows it here, I guess, on the first floor.

HARDIN: Yes, it was right on the first floor. The President's office was over in here. And here's the walkway right here.

JOHNSON: Yes, there's the Portico.

HARDIN: And I was coming from over here, from the elevator . . .

JOHNSON: You were coming from the west side.

HARDIN: Took the elevator up to the first -- the ground level -- and was walking across ground level.

JOHNSON: So you were walking east there.

HARDIN: Right.

JOHNSON: Past the pool.

HARDIN: Really, my business on the east side at that time was just to have some further paper work accomplished, as the best I recall.

JOHNSON: Where was it that they first stationed you in the White House. Where was your work area? Here's Hassett's office, down here in the corner, in that southwest corner of the West Wing, first floor. But

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were you in the basement, did you say?

HARDIN: I was in the basement.

JOHNSON: You said you were under the Oval Office?

HARDIN: Well, approximately under the Oval Office.

JOHNSON: Now, the Oval Office was over here.

HARDIN: No, it would be under this area here.

JOHNSON: Under [Matthew] Connelly's office perhaps?

HARDIN: Right. Perhaps right here.

JOHNSON: Now, here's the Chief Clerk.

HARDIN: Hopkins was upstairs.

JOHNSON: He was right above you then?

HARDIN: This is on ground level here; we were under the ground level.

JOHNSON: Right.

HARDIN: We entered our office from the West Executive Avenue.

JOHNSON: That west entrance.

HARDIN: West Executive Avenue entrance. We stepped down a few steps after going in there. My office was

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approximately in this location.

JOHNSON: Right under the Appointment's Secretary, under Connelly's office.

HARDIN: Right.

JOHNSON: That was a file room?

HARDIN: That was a file room from here up to here.

JOHNSON: Okay, under the Fish Room.

HARDIN: The messengers had a room, and duplicating rooms were over here on that same level that we were on.

JOHNSON: Down below in the basement.

HARDIN: Down below in the basement.

JOHNSON: That would be toward the west side there.

HARDIN: That is correct.

JOHNSON: Okay, you can keep that as a souvenir, and you might just keep that handy.

HARDIN: Thank you. I do not have a floor plan.

JOHNSON: This was in *Life* magazine, in the December 13, 1948, issue. Well, perhaps I should keep one handy here too for reference. Okay, so that's where you started work. Would you just briefly describe what

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kind of duties you had? What were your responsibilities there?

HARDIN: Well, my first job was in the alphabetical files; any information that was cross-indexed, it would be underscored and then we would have to file it under that. If they were writing about apples, they would underscore the word "apple." Then make a copy for the name, and any topic they were speaking about.

JOHNSON: Did they call it the White House Central Files? Is that a term they used at the time? White House Central Files?

HARDIN: I believe that's correct.

JOHNSON: This would have been the General File, what we call the General File now?

HARDIN: The General File, alphabetical by name.

JOHNSON: And then sometimes by subject, but mainly by name.

HARDIN: Now, they made a record, the clerks, the clerk-typists in the office that I was in; they would record the topic or the name and then they would mimeograph a certain number of copies and we would file them. If they wanted any information about apples, and if someone had written in about apples, we'd look up apples. If we had the person's name, and if they said

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they had written to the President before, then they would look up the name; of course, starting with the name first. But we did have subject matter involved with that too.

JOHNSON: I notice in that file that sometimes they would abstract, or summarize, the content of the letter.

HARDIN: Right. They would summarize that.

JOHNSON: And then they'd say the letter went to the War Department or State Department, or wherever.

HARDIN: Right, and then they would reply to the person writing the letter, telling them they were referring this letter to the War Department or Agriculture Department, depending on what the subject matter was.

JOHNSON: A record would be there in that General File, alphabetical file. Do you remember who did some of that abstracting, some of the summarizing of those letters? Do you have any idea who was doing that?

HARDIN: Miss [Edna] Rosenberg was in charge of the people who were doing the abstract work for the alphabetical files.

JOHNSON: All the mail that came to the White House came first to this file room, is that right?

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HARDIN: To the mail room.

JOHNSON: To the mail room. All right, then who would start the sorting of it?

HARDIN: The mail clerks in the mail room would do that sorting and decide where it should go from that point.

JOHNSON: When you say where it should go, you're talking about . . .

HARDIN: Within the office.

JOHNSON: Oh, you mean within the mail room?

HARDIN: Within the file room. The mail clerks would make the determination of what to do with the correspondence first.

JOHNSON: For instance, what if it was something that was to go to the President's Personal File, or to the Official File, or even to the President's Secretary's Files -- that is what apparently went to Rose Conway, and she handled it personally. You're aware of the President's Secretary's Files [PSF], that went to Rose Conway and she put that in a special area?

HARDIN: Right, the President's Personal File, which we called PPF.

JOHNSON: But that was part of the White House Central

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Files, and the PSF was not considered part of the White House Central Files.

HARDIN: That's right. Not everyone had access to personal mail. That decision was made by, I think, Rose Conway. But I do not know that. All I know is what I received later. She had to have made the determination what to release to us and what not to release to us.

JOHNSON: But somebody down in the mail room, if they were getting all the mail there, they would have to decide whether to open it, or . . .

HARDIN: They would have routed it . . .

JOHNSON: Would they open up every piece of mail first?

HARDIN: I don't know that.

JOHNSON: How about Secret Service men? Would they take a look at the mail that came in? Did the Secret Service have any involvement that you recall?

HARDIN: I can't recall at this point to what extent they did check the incoming mail.

JOHNSON: Do you recall getting any threatening letters to the President?

HARDIN: Oh, yes, there were threatening letters.

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JOHNSON: And that would be routed over to the Secret Service?

HARDIN: Probably routed through them.

JOHNSON: But you had nothing to do with examining the mail that came in.

HARDIN: Oh, no, I knew nothing about what . . .

JOHNSON: The mail that you got had already been through the hands of . . .

HARDIN: Proper authorities, or whoever should handle that particular letter.

JOHNSON: I am trying to figure out who filtered this mail that came in, who sorted it, and decided its ultimate destination in the White House. But you got the mail for the General File, the alphabetical file. I mentioned the President's Personal File, the PPF. Did you . . .

HARDIN: Now, I did not receive the mail personally. I received the mail after it had been through the other chains. Whatever they decided to put in the PPF, then I received that after I was promoted from the alphabetical file to the PPF file.

JOHNSON: Oh, okay.

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HARDIN: From an alphabetical sequence to a numbered sequence file.

JOHNSON: When did that happen, do you recall?

HARDIN: Probably when I returned from the service. I would say that would have been in '48 or '49.

JOHNSON: Okay, you went into the service in what month and year?

HARDIN: May 1st of '46 was my first active day.

JOHNSON: In the Army?

HARDIN: Into the Army; I was drafted at 18. On November 3 of 1947 I was discharged. At that time we had the option of requesting our old job back if we wanted it back. They would give it back to us.

JOHNSON: What rank did you reach in the Army?

HARDIN: I reached the rank of corporal.

JOHNSON: You didn't feel the White House gave you any special privileges?

HARDIN: Oh, no, absolutely not. I was not exempted from the draft, just because I worked in the White House. That was the old World War II draft law that was still in effect. When you were 18 you go, if you're

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physically able to go.

JOHNSON: So, from January of '45 until . . .

HARDIN: April of '46.

JOHNSON: You were in the White House file room?

HARDIN: That's right.

JOHNSON: Handling the alphabetical file, General File.

HARDIN: That's right, General File.

JOHNSON: You weren't doing anything with the Official File, the OF or the PPF.

HARDIN: No, not at that time.

JOHNSON: Then you came back from the service and were promoted. Does this mean a grade promotion to a four?

HARDIN: I believe I was promoted to Grade 4.

JOHNSON: Which would pay at that time . . .

HARDIN: Maybe \$1,620 a year. That figure rings a bell.

JOHNSON: How did your duties differ, or was there any difference really in what you were doing?

HARDIN: Well, it was a lot easier, because there was less mail to the PPF compared to the alphabetical files.

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JOHNSON: By the way, who was helping you? Can you just remember a few names who were helping you file these?

HARDIN: William P. Connors was filing also along with me, but shortly after that I filed all the PPF files every day, unless I was off ill and then someone else had to do it, of course.

JOHNSON: Did someone else put the numbers on?

HARDIN: Yes, the numbers were put on by somebody else.

JOHNSON: Were already on. So, all you had to do was to find the folder that it belonged in?

HARDIN: That's right.

JOHNSON: The file drawer and the folder that it belonged in. Did the most recent go in the back or the front?

HARDIN: That's a good question, because that's very important. You could check your files and find out. But it had to be the back to front of course, but . . .

JOHNSON: Well, you know, as archivists we try to maintain the original order entirely, if there's an order to it. And, of course, we've reboxed those. A lot of those original folders are still there. We're trying to replace them with acid-free. Well, you noticed some of those old folders, didn't you. They looked familiar to

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you I suppose.

HARDIN: Right.

JOHNSON: And so somebody would stamp PPF and the number. Do you recall who did that? Who decided the number that it would fit under?

HARDIN: That was not decided in the file room. It wasn't even decided by my supervisor of the file room, the numbers.

JOHNSON: Okay, it comes in the mail room, let's say, and it's going to end up in the PPF. Where would it go from the mail room? To whom or to what area?

HARDIN: An office of about ten clerks and their supervisor, adjacent to the file room. One section of the clerk-typists (Miss Rosenberg's office) handled the alphabetical files; their mail was routed through there. But another section handled the PPF files. I don't know what that section was called.

JOHNSON: The location of what we call the White House Central Files -- which is the General File, the PPF, and the Official File -- were they all in the same area in the White House? Kept in the same room?

HARDIN: They were in the same room when we were in the White House proper in the west office.

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JOHNSON: In the West Wing. Here's the mail room. Where were the files actually kept?

HARDIN: The files were kept on . . .

JOHNSON: Here's the Oval Office, and you're under here, you're on the basement floor, in this area here.

HARDIN: We had files up this area, along this wall.

JOHNSON: All right, now you're talking about the southwest -- in other words, to the west of your mail room. West of the mail room.

HARDIN: Right. And we had files along this wall.

JOHNSON: Okay, and this is right under the waiting room? Yes, it says waiting room, I guess here.

HARDIN: Well, that was upstairs.

JOHNSON: Yes. Underneath there. You also had files there. So all the White House Central Files were in this area under the chief clerk, Hopkins, and the greeter, [William D.] Simmons, and under this waiting room on the basement floor.

HARDIN: That is correct.

JOHNSON: And you never had to worry about moisture or leakage, water leakage?

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HARDIN: Well, we didn't have any problems that I can recall. I do recall President Truman coming down through that office, shortly after Roosevelt died. He walked through our office and noticed that it was so well constructed. Well, of course, the war was still going on, and he just observed and remarked and laughed, "Well, we're pretty safe down here, in case they bomb us." So that was interesting that he made that observation.

JOHNSON: Well, when was the first time you actually shook his hand or met him face-to-face?

HARDIN: Face-to-face and shook his hand would probably have been in December of '45, at Christmas time when he received the staff.

JOHNSON: Okay where did he receive them?

HARDIN: He received the staff upstairs. It was not in the Oval Office. It was right outside, probably in the Press Secretary's office or someone else's office, in a little hallway . . .

JOHNSON: Did you just file past him, get in line and file past?

HARDIN: We'd just file past in line, and he wished us all a Merry Christmas. He presented us with some little

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memento every year.

JOHNSON: Like a card mainly?

HARDIN: A card, or something signed, autographed by himself or by him and his wife Bess.

JOHNSON: Do you still have those items, at least some of them?

HARDIN: I still have some of them at home, that's right.

JOHNSON: And you brought one of them today. A 1945 Christmas card.

HARDIN: One of the Christmas cards was a picture of the Blair House.

JOHNSON: Yes, I remember seeing that.

HARDIN: That was the home of the President during reconstruction years of the White House.

JOHNSON: And these are autographed usually?

HARDIN: That one was not autographed. The picture of the Blair House was not autographed to us. But President Truman and Mrs. Truman did autograph one. I'm trying to think of the year that they both autographed one. It was 1950.

JOHNSON: You remember him remarking that it seemed to be

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safe down there from bombing and that sort of thing. Did he come down very often?

HARDIN: No. He did come down during the March of Dimes years; that was usually in January if I recall correctly, on President Roosevelt's birthday. A lot of movie stars would always visit the White House, and the movie stars would come down into our office. He had come down into the office with some of the movie stars before, to mingle with them while they were chatting with us. We were allowed to talk to different movie stars at the time and get their autographs. I wish I had all the autographs, but I don't have them.

JOHNSON: Well, why is it they would come down to see you people? Any reason.

HARDIN: Oh, just on their tour of the White House. In connection with the March of Dimes.

JOHNSON: Do you remember Tallulah Bankhead?

HARDIN: Oh, yes, I remember Tallulah Bankhead because she was originally from Alabama, I believe.

JOHNSON: That's right. She was a real fan of Harry Truman.

HARDIN: Alan Ladd I recall. I talked to Alan Ladd; he was so short. I made a remark. I patted him on top of the head and said, "Gee, you're not very tall at all." And

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he just remarked with a little laugh.

JOHNSON: He wore elevator shoes I think.

HARDIN: I did have the opportunity to meet a lot of movie stars.

JOHNSON: These are some comments in an article in the *Baltimore Sun*, February 12, 1948. The heading is "Besides Truman, 503 Others Work 'At the White House.'" Just to check on how accurate this seems to be, let me cite a few lines from this article. It says: "If you write a letter to the President, the mail room sees it first and dispatches it to the officer who decides whether Mr. Truman shall ever read it." Do you know who that officer might have been?

HARDIN: I do not know.

JOHNSON: "This mail force is composed of R.T. Smith, chief, who has been doing this and other executive mansion jobs 50 years, nine White House clerks, twelve clerks loaned by the city post office and four uniformed drivers." Now, this was in '48, "The mail room and the file room have moved across West Executive Avenue to the basement of 'Old State' to give them breathing space. The file room is in charge of Clarence E. Ingling, who is assisted by 35 clerks." Do you remember when you moved out of that original location?

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HARDIN: Definitely. I remember moving twice. Before we moved into the Executive Office Building, we were moved temporarily into a temporary building behind the White House -- close to the Ellipse.

JOHNSON: Oh, down that direction.

HARDIN: Behind the White House. It was down around West Executive Avenue. We were down there in a temporary war building for a little while before we moved into the Executive Office Building.

JOHNSON: Well, the renovation hadn't started yet had it, when you moved?

HARDIN: Oh, no, we were just moving for more space.

JOHNSON: You were down there by the Ellipse?

HARDIN: Right. For a short time.

JOHNSON: Are you talking about a few weeks?

HARDIN: A few months. I don't remember exactly; maybe it was up to a year.

JOHNSON: And then they had to cart all of that mail up to the White House?

HARDIN: Well, they had messengers that went back and forth from there, because this is two separate buildings

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we're talking about, from the White House to this old temporary building.

JOHNSON: So then you'd have to truck the mail to the White House from this mail room?.

HARDIN: They had to have messenger service run it back and forth.

JOHNSON: Was that after you came back from the Army? Or before you went into the Army?

HARDIN: That was before I entered the Army, that they were in that temporary building behind the White House, well, the end of West Executive Avenue. Really, that building was behind the Executive Office Building, which was the old State Department Building. I think it was directly behind the Executive Office Building. I'm sure it is torn down now.

JOHNSON: Do you know why they moved there?

HARDIN: For more space at the time until they could probably get something ready in the Executive Office Building, which at that time housed the State Department.

JOHNSON: In other words, the amount of mail that came in continued to increase over the years.

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HARDIN: Yes, it continued to increase.

JOHNSON: And it was just getting to be too much to handle in the space that you had.

HARDIN: We didn't have the space. We did not have the space available.

JOHNSON: So you moved over to the Old State-War-Navy Building or the Executive Office Building, as it was known then. Were you in the basement there?

HARDIN: That's right. Well, ground level. Right now, you can walk across West Executive Avenue into a little driveway, on up the driveway to ground level, and then our office was immediately to the right as soon as we got to the top of the driveway.

JOHNSON: Was that on the south and east side of the building?

HARDIN: Yes, the south and the east. And we were alone on the ground floor. The mail room was immediately to my right as I went in and then we went down the hallway and the file room was located there. Then if you went on farther down that same hallway you would have the clerk-typists, the ones who prepared the mail, cross-indexed it and so on.

JOHNSON: Were these three and four-drawer filing cabinets

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that you were filing the material in?

HARDIN: Well, actually I do not recall a three-drawer cabinet, maybe some five.

JOHNSON: Four and five-drawer filing cabinets, for all of the mail that went into the General File, PPF and the OF (Official File).

HARDIN: That's right, and the PPF file was the only file at that time that we kept locked. We had to lock that every night with a plunger up to the top of the . . .

JOHNSON: Oh, each cabinet had to be locked.

HARDIN: Each cabinet had a lock.

JOHNSON: The PPF.

HARDIN: That's right.

JOHNSON: Do you remember the Confidential File that was part of the White House Central Files that had classified material? Did you ever see classified material and how it was handled?

HARDIN: Not that I can recall. The only thing I can recall was what we call the PPF and that was about as high as I handled while I was there.

JOHNSON: You didn't handle any Official File, or OF?

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HARDIN: Well, now, you say OF, just official files? Well, I handled some official files from foreign dignitaries . . .

JOHNSON: Papers for the President's Personal File were filed in salmon-colored folders. Do you remember that?

HARDIN: I remember a different color code, but I cannot recall what it was.

JOHNSON: The PPF was in a salmon-colored and the OF was in manila folders. There was a color code.

HARDIN: I've forgotten.

JOHNSON: But you maybe filed in both then, OF and PPF, as you recall.

HARDIN: Right. But I know we did secure the PPF file.

JOHNSON: Do you know where Rose Conway kept the PSF, the President's Secretary's Files, which has FBI reports, CIA reports, National Security Council materials, correspondence with MacArthur, Winston Churchill and so on?

HARDIN: I'm not familiar with that. I have seen some correspondence from MacArthur, Winston Churchill, Bob Hope, but I didn't see all of that. There were too many of them.

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JOHNSON: If it was with other heads of state, that would not go to the PPF or the OF, would it; it would go to Rose Conway for the PSF. Is that the way you remember that?

HARDIN: At times. At times possibly we would get some, but I don't recall that many.

JOHNSON: If you had doubts about any of the mail being filed where it was to be filed, who would you go to to check it out?

HARDIN: I would go to my supervisor.

JOHNSON: Who was?

HARDIN: Joe Nash.

JOHNSON: And his supervisor was . . .

HARDIN: Ferris Daniel Boone. No, his assistant was Ferris Daniel Boone.

JOHNSON: Was he a direct descendant, do you think, of the Daniel Boone?

HARDIN: No. No way. Joseph Nash's supervisor would have been Mr. Ingling, and Mrs. Elizabeth Bonsteel, who was Mr. Ingling's assistant at that time. That was the chain of command.

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JOHNSON: Bonsteel replaced . . .

HARDIN: Ingling.

JOHNSON: You brought a couple of photographs showing people in the Oval Office, the staff people, really hurrahing and shouting with joy, with the victory of Truman over Dewey.

HARDIN: Right.

JOHNSON: How was that organized? Do you remember how that was put together?

HARDIN: Well, yes. At the time, President Truman was not there and our supervisors just told us that our presence was requested in the Oval Office; let's all go to the Oval Office. So, when we got into the Oval Office we found official photographers were in the Oval Office and they just told us to group around the President's desk and "dust it off, because he was going to be using it four more years," you know. That was when they were so sure that Dewey would defeat President Truman. So just appear that you're dusting off the desk, which we were doing, and grabbing pictures off of the desk, holding them up high, Margaret or whoever's picture we could find on the desk, or any object if you were close to the desk. That's how that was arranged. Everyone was thrilled at

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the time, and the photographers told us to let out a big shout and that's why in the picture there you'll see practically everyone's mouth open at one time, shouting about the victory.

JOHNSON: And Truman wasn't back yet; he was on his way back.

HARDIN: That is right; he was not in the White House at the time.

JOHNSON: So would it have been Connelly who allowed them in?

HARDIN: Probably Mr. [William D.] Simmons or Connelly at that time. I remember Mr. Simmons more than I remember Mr. Connelly, because I had my brother visit me in Washington, D.C. at one time and I was allowed to take him into the Oval Office through Mr. Simmons, because President Truman was out of town. My brother sat down in the President's chair and . . .

JOHNSON: What's his name, by the way, your brother's name?

HARDIN: Lowell. I remember him looking up at Mr. Simmons and rearing back in President Truman's chair, and he made a remark to Mr. Simmons, "Well, it's beneath the dignity of the President of the United States of America to have to sit in an uncomfortable chair like

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this." He said, "If I was President, I would have me a comfortable chair." He liked the glory, but he did not like the chair.

I want to ask you a question. I saw that chair in the replica of the office down there; that looked like the same chair that President Truman had in his office.

JOHNSON: According to our records, it is.

HARDIN: I remember that built-up back on it and I remember that it was black, and . . .

JOHNSON: Did you ever get to sit in it yourself?

HARDIN: Oh sure.

JOHNSON: You did?

HARDIN: Sure.

JOHNSON: How did you do that?

HARDIN: Well, when the President wasn't there. One time was when my brother was visiting. Another time was when we would go up to watch television if the President was out of town.

JOHNSON: Now, who authorized this? Mr. Simmons?

HARDIN: For us to go over?

JOHNSON: To sit in the Oval Office.

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HARDIN: Well, one of his secretaries would allow us to come over there and watch the President throw out the first ball at the Washington Senator's baseball game, or . . .

JOHNSON: On the TV set.

HARDIN: On the TV set.

JOHNSON: In the Oval Office.

HARDIN: Right.

JOHNSON: And who else would be there then. Who would they invite to see that?

HARDIN: Just the staff.

JOHNSON: Just about anybody that wanted to come up.

HARDIN: Anyone that wanted to; and most people on the staff did go up to see it.

JOHNSON: So you had quite a group in the Oval Office watching Truman throw out the first ball.

HARDIN: That's right.

JOHNSON: Apparently, as you have indicated, we do not have that TV in our collection. You looked at that blonde oak, and then there was a floor model, with a dark finish, but neither one apparently was used in the Oval

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Office. You remember a dark . . .

HARDIN: I remember a darker colored wood.

JOHNSON: Was it a table-top or a floor model?

HARDIN: That I could not be sure of.

JOHNSON: It may have stayed there for Eisenhower. It may have been kept there, I suppose. But you just don't know?

HARDIN: Right. I'll tell you something else that we did sometimes when the President was out of town, when he was vacationing, or out of town on business. We were allowed to alternate taking days off without being charged leave for it. Now this was authorized by someone higher up, of course, but when the President was out of town for an extended length of period, they did not need all of us to work so we would alternate taking days off. This was, I suppose, a show of gratitude for the work that we were doing, as best I know. Of course, if anyone offered me a free day off I took it.

JOHNSON: After you filed all of this material, was it used much for reference by speechwriters or whatever?

HARDIN: Well, I would think so. The requests for previous correspondence would come down through Mrs. Bonsteel's

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office, who relayed it to Joseph Nash's office, who is who I worked for. She would tell him, "Secretary so and so wants to see the file on such and such." Then, of course, I would get my instructions from Joseph Nash and I would look up the previous correspondence, and seal it in an envelope and call a messenger.

JOHNSON: Would you pull it out of the folder or would you pull the whole folder?

HARDIN: Pull it out of the folder and put a charge-out card in the folder for it.

JOHNSON: Was that a salmon-colored charge-out card.

HARDIN: It was a charge-out card, but I don't recall what color.

JOHNSON: We still have a few of them in there, and we don't have the document.

HARDIN: Then they never returned them. Whoever it was charged to never returned the document then.

JOHNSON: Whatever came back, you would put in that folder and pull the card.

HARDIN: Pull the charge card out, that's right.

JOHNSON: And then that charge card maybe would be reused. Eventually, I suppose, it would be filled up and

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discarded.

HARDIN: When it was filled up, the card was discarded. If not filled up, we would line through them, who it was charged out to, and reuse them. Periodically, when we were not that busy we would have to go through and search the files to see if we had any missing files, or try to get these copies back that were charged out. Of course, I didn't make too many requests of the Presidential secretaries to return their files. I could tell my supervisor that this was still charged out and the date that it was charged out; that was their decision.

JOHNSON: You would check the files once in a while to see what cards were in there.

HARDIN: Periodically.

JOHNSON: Of course, you didn't have Xeroxing machines. You didn't Xerox these, so you had to give them the originals.

HARDIN: No Xerox. That's right. We had to give them what was there.

JOHNSON: If you wanted to make copies, how would you do that? If you wanted to make extra copies, how would you do that in those days?

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HARDIN: Well, I don't know, because we didn't have a copy-making machine in our office. I don't know.

JOHNSON: But you mentioned these speeches. In the '48 campaign . . .

HARDIN: Right, whistlestops.

JOHNSON: You had some involvement in organizing these press releases.

HARDIN: Just assembling speeches for press releases or whoever else should get them. I believe those were mimeographed by the staff in the copying office, the mimeograph office.

JOHNSON: Where was that relative to the mail room, all these mimeograph machines.

HARDIN: Well, at the time when we were in the White House proper, it was in close proximity to the file room. I don't know, but maybe it was equivalent of fifteen, twenty yards.

JOHNSON: Who was in charge in that area? Do you remember?

HARDIN: I do not remember who was in charge.

JOHNSON: But it was mimeographed. Do you remember any ditto machines?

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HARDIN: Ditto and mimeograph.

JOHNSON: Ditto and mimeograph. Were those the only two methods of duplicating?

HARDIN: That's the only two type methods that I can recall.

JOHNSON: Was it mostly a mimeograph, or ditto?

HARDIN: Most of ours was mimeograph, where there was stencil paper.

JOHNSON: And somebody had to type those stencils.

HARDIN: And then load them up on the machine.

JOHNSON: There was a clerk-typist somewhere in that area?

HARDIN: A clerk-typist would type it and then the copying group in the copying department would mimeograph them.

JOHNSON: Then you mail room people sometimes would help assemble them.

HARDIN: The file room people. The mail room people did not help assemble his speeches. I cannot recall the mail room helping us assemble the speeches. I can recall messengers helping us. I can recall the file room people helping us assemble. Back in those days it was rush, rush, rush; it was hectic getting these speeches prepared, assembled, and stapled and ready.

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JOHNSON: For whom?

HARDIN: For the President's staff.

JOHNSON: How about the newspaper reporters who came in for the press conferences?

HARDIN: I do not know what time they handed those out to them.

JOHNSON: You're still in the file room.

HARDIN: Right.

JOHNSON: That's where you stayed during your career in the White House?

HARDIN: That's right.

JOHNSON: With the same title, job title so to speak.

HARDIN: Mail, file and records clerk.

JOHNSON: Okay.

HARDIN: That was the title for that job.

JOHNSON: The campaign of '48, was that your busiest time, or was there some other time?

HARDIN: The busiest time was during the firing of General Douglas MacArthur. We had correspondence we could not handle, that we just had to put in boxes. We did have

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time to separate the "pros" and "cons." The pros support the President firing him and the cons are against firing him. Of course, at that time the cons exceeded the pros on the firing of General MacArthur. We filed them, but we didn't have time to cross-reference every one of them. Those were put in boxes, and if I recall correctly they were in cardboard boxes along the walls. We'd just stack one on top of the other until we had time to do something with them. Personally, I don't recall that these were ever fully processed, other than keeping a number of the pros and the cons.

JOHNSON: Yes, there was a count made.

HARDIN: A count was made on the pros and cons.

JOHNSON: And then just filed alphabetically by name, the name of the sender?

HARDIN: Probably, and that was probably all. Pro, con, and the alphabetical name of the sender.

JOHNSON: Before you leave, we'll have to be sure to give you one of the souvenir letters out of that.

HARDIN: I'd love to have one.

JOHNSON: I've copied a few myself. I suppose you people were supposed to be neutral, politically?

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HARDIN: We were definitely neutral, politically.

JOHNSON: In other words, if Dewey had been elected in '48 you felt you still would have had a job?

HARDIN: Oh, definitely. We would have remained. Even the people in charge, Mrs. Bonsteel, her level, they always stayed. Mr. Ingling, he always stayed regardless of whether the President was Democrat or Republican.

JOHNSON: He was Civil Service?

HARDIN: Right.

JOHNSON: Were there any obvious preferences? That is, were they happy that Truman was elected, or did it make any difference to the workers in the White House?

HARDIN: At that time we were extremely happy that Truman was elected and that he had defeated Dewey.

JOHNSON: Why was that?

HARDIN: Well, Roosevelt was President for 12 years. I think he was in his 13th year, the White House probably had a lot of Democrats around it at that time, during that 13-year period.

JOHNSON: Did you consider yourself a Democrat?

HARDIN: I was a Democrat at the time. I considered myself

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a Democrat.

JOHNSON: Were there Republicans that you know of whom you worked with there?

HARDIN: Yes, one. One that I recall worked in the file room. There was one Republican definitely, because he considered himself a Republican. All I called him was "Mac;" I can't remember his full name right now.

JOHNSON: So what was your feeling about MacArthur, that he deserved to be fired, or that he didn't?

HARDIN: Yes, I think he deserved to be fired because a military man in this country should never have the right to tell the President of the United States what to do and when to do it. That's the only reason our country is as strong today as it is, because that is the way that our Government is set up. If it was set up under a military government, then MacArthur would have been right, but our government is not set up that way, thank goodness.

JOHNSON: But the majority of those who wrote into the White House didn't necessarily agree with that, did they?

HARDIN: That's right. And that I could not understand.

JOHNSON: Almost everybody was sympathetic to Truman that you knew of there in the White House on that issue.

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HARDIN: Right. I really do not understand why we had so much con mail as we did on that firing. As a matter of fact, if I recall correctly, I think there was a time during that period when MacArthur's plane was circling and President Truman's plane was circling and they were going to meet someplace out on some island in the South Pacific.

JOHNSON: Yes, the Wake Island meeting, but that apparently is reported incorrectly in Miller's book, *Plain Speaking*, because that contradicts Truman's own record in his memoirs and other sources too.

So that just almost swamped you, that particular episode.

HARDIN: It did. It definitely swamped us.

JOHNSON: Was there anything else that kind of stands out in your memory while you were there at the White House, working in the file room, filing all this material? Can you think of any anecdotes, any happenings, that kind of stick in your memory?

HARDIN: There was a lot of mail protesting the addition of the balcony. Also, I do remember a lot of court martial cases, of military people who were sentenced to death, and people writing to the President about that situation. Then, they would have a complete history of

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the hearing, and I did have occasion to read some of those.

JOHNSON: Perhaps there were hardship cases where they wanted to get the military serviceman out of uniform, for special reasons.

HARDIN: Right, I remember hardship case requests.

JOHNSON: Do you recall if those were honored usually, or were they ignored, or do you have any idea what the ultimate disposition was on those kinds of requests?

HARDIN: Well, the court martial cases, of course, were referred to the proper authorities, to the Justice Department I'm sure, for their review. It was their decision to make, but I do not know what the results were on the hardship cases.

JOHNSON: Now, did you get in on some of the events out in the Rose Garden, as for instance when Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of York were there for a visit to the White House, and the President gave a little talk out there in the Rose Garden. Did you ever get a chance to get out and meet, or see, any of the visitors?

HARDIN: I did not meet them personally, but to my knowledge any time, for any event that was held in the Rose

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Garden, the entire staff was invited out to witness it. And we were out there quite frequently.

JOHNSON: Did you see General Jonathan Wainwright, for instance? Did you see the event which is pictured in this photograph that you have?

HARDIN: Yes, I saw that event.

JOHNSON: General Wainwright getting a medal from the President.

HARDIN: I'm pretty sure that's a CMH medal. I wrote that on there from trying to recall it from memory. That Master Sergeant was his orderly, and that was right after the war when he was released as a Japanese war prisoner.

JOHNSON: General [George] Patton came to visit Truman there at the White House too. Did you ever see Patton?

HARDIN: I don't know if I was there for that or not. I can't recall, but there were so many people that came to the White House and we had so many events going on in the Rose Garden, that today, I'm very sorry that I did not keep a diary of whom I saw and when they came. I just do not recall who it was. I had been entertained in the East Room before, by people that entertained the President. His staff was invited to be

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a part of that, and to be entertained in the East Room with them.

JOHNSON: You mentioned, who was it, Hildegarde?

HARDIN: Hildegarde, I remember her. She and the President were cutting up and playing on the piano, and singing and so on.

JOHNSON: And you were sitting there in the second or third row, whatever.

HARDIN: I was sitting there behind President Truman that night. He was on the first row and I was right behind him.

JOHNSON: I suppose he was enjoying himself, was he?

HARDIN: Yes, he was having a great deal of fun joking and carrying on with Hildegarde, because she kept him laughing and he kept her laughing. She prompted him to get up to play the piano.

JOHNSON: Oh, is that right.

HARDIN: So, he did play the piano that night himself.

JOHNSON: Did you ever get into the personal quarters, family quarters, of the White House?

HARDIN: Of course, they were not there, but I did get the

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opportunity to visit the entire White House living quarters, and to see things that other people do not normally see.

JOHNSON: Did you get out on the balcony, on the Truman balcony?

HARDIN: I looked out on the balcony when I was upstairs, but I did not go out on the balcony.

JOHNSON: Do you remember the . . .

HARDIN: I remember the correspondence on the balcony too, when he wanted to build the balcony. We got a lot of correspondence on that. Some people thought he was building it for a poker room. Well, maybe he did play poker out there, I don't know, because I know President Truman did play poker.

JOHNSON: Do you think it improved the appearance of the White House?

HARDIN: Oh, definitely it did improve the appearance of the White House in my estimation. It was just what it needed.

JOHNSON: So generally, would you say the staff was pretty much sympathetic to Truman's decisions in almost every case?

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HARDIN: Most every case, right.

JOHNSON: You can't think of any exceptions to that?

HARDIN: To . . .

JOHNSON: Where he might have had some criticism by anybody in the White House?

HARDIN: Anyone in the White House?

JOHNSON: Yes.

HARDIN: Yes, this one friend I called Mac, I think his last name was McCrea, and he was a definite Republican. He didn't like anything any Democrats did, Roosevelt or Truman. His name was Philip McCrea. We called him Mac.

JOHNSON: Well, they called MacArthur, "Mac," too.

HARDIN: Yes. But McCrea was extremely critical of all Democrats.

JOHNSON: Were you working 40-hour weeks?

HARDIN: Forty-hour weeks.

JOHNSON: What were the hours, working hours, in those days?

HARDIN: I don't know if I remember correctly, but it may have been 9 to 5, probably 9 till 5. We also rotated

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working on Saturday, if the President or any of his secretaries was working. They requested previous correspondence from the File Room, and some of us had to be there.

JOHNSON: Were you married when you were in the White House?

HARDIN: I had been married for two or three years, when I resigned in '52. I was married at that time. No children. Now, I do recall when the Puerto Ricans attempted to assassinate President Truman when he was living in the Blair House. Our office at that time was in the Executive Office Building, the Old State Department Building. We heard the shots ring out, and I did run upstairs to the Pennsylvania Avenue entrance to the Executive Office Building, and I looked straight across at the Blair House from that point. I remember seeing [the aftermath]. I remember Leslie Coffelt, who was a friend of mine. I bowled with him on the White House bowling league, on the Brunswick alleys that they gave to President Truman. He was killed. [Joseph H.] Downs, another White House policeman, was shot up pretty bad. He did not die, to my recollection. But I do remember a couple of Puerto Ricans lying where they had been hit, one near the guard house there at the entrance to the Blair House.

JOHNSON: And one on the steps.

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HARDIN: On the steps.

JOHNSON: You stayed in the building, or did you go over to the site of the shooting?

HARDIN: Oh, no, I stayed up on the top of the steps to the second floor of the Executive Office Building looking across Pennsylvania Avenue. I did not go any further. Downs was a policeman

in civilian clothes. He usually delivered the groceries to the Blair House. Now, all these policemen are not guards at the White House; they were actually Metropolitan D.C. policemen, who were detailed to the White House. They are all policemen. If I recall correctly, Downs usually wore civilian clothes and he drove the grocery truck for security reasons, to make sure that food was not contaminated. He happened to be making a delivery probably at the time the Puerto Ricans attempted to assassinate President Truman.

JOHNSON: Floyd Boring was the Secret Service man who wounded [Oscar] Collazo. Do you remember Floyd Boring?

HARDIN: I recall those names now.

JOHNSON: You mentioned the Brunswick bowling alley. Where was that installed?

HARDIN: The head pins, and I assume that they are still

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there, are sitting right where my desk used to sit. In the basement level.

JOHNSON: When was it that that was installed?

HARDIN: I think that was in '46.

JOHNSON: So that's when you moved out.

HARDIN: We were moving to the temporary building. Maybe that's why we had to move, so they could install those two lanes.

JOHNSON: Oh, okay.

HARDIN: Maybe that's why we had to move, and the Executive Office Building was not ready yet for our occupancy, so we probably had to go to this old temporary war building, behind, for maybe a year.

JOHNSON: President Truman walked, took his strolls in the morning.

HARDIN: Oh, yes.

JOHNSON: He swam. Did he bowl?

HARDIN: I never saw him bowl. I never did see the President bowl.

JOHNSON: But this was for the President. It wasn't just for his staff?

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HARDIN: It was a presentation from Brunswick to President Truman.

JOHNSON: How many alleys?

HARDIN: Two alleys. Ten pins.

JOHNSON: Did staff people use it?

HARDIN: Yes, we had our own White House staff bowling league.

JOHNSON: You did, and you were bowling too then?

HARDIN: I was in the league. We had our own teams. The policemen had some teams, the office people had teams, and we had a little league all of our own. We were authorized to bowl in it, in the evening hours.

JOHNSON: In an evening tournament, in the evening hours.

HARDIN: Evening hours only.

JOHNSON: What night of the week would they usually bowl?

HARDIN: I've forgotten. I don't know.

JOHNSON: The swimming pool, was that open to anybody but the President and his immediate staff?

HARDIN: It was not open to us.

JOHNSON: The bowling alley was the only recreational

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facility in the White House that was open to the staff?

HARDIN: Yes, that was open to the staff after working hours. I think they covered that swimming pool in later years.

JOHNSON: They did. Yes, I think President Nixon did that.

HARDIN: I think it was covered.

JOHNSON: I remember seeing pictures of President Nixon bowling, so they probably were the same alleys that Truman used then.

HARDIN: That's the same two then, for sure.

JOHNSON: Was there a White House cafeteria?

HARDIN: No, no White House cafeteria.

JOHNSON: Where did you people eat? Where did you go to eat in those days?

HARDIN: In the Old State Department Building, the Executive Office Building they had snack bars there and a cafeteria. We would either eat in the snack bar or the cafeteria or bring our own lunch.

JOHNSON: You never got to sample the cooking in the White House.

HARDIN: Oh, no. No.

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JOHNSON: Okay, anything else before we close up here?

HARDIN: That's all that I can think of.

JOHNSON: When did you resign?

HARDIN: November of '52. It was after the election of '52. I was interested in studying accounting at Ben Franklin University. I was going to night school at the time, studying accounting.

JOHNSON: This is a business college?

HARDIN: Yes. It was for priming you for a CPA. It was business law and accounting. I got into the accounting field. To get into the accounting field I resigned my job as Civil Servant and went into private business.

JOHNSON: Well, were you a P-4 or whatever they called it at that point?

HARDIN: CAF or whatever it was at that time, Grade 4 I believe.

JOHNSON: Grade 4 was the final grade that you had.

HARDIN: I believe that's the final grade. There was no room for promotions in that area.

JOHNSON: So your reason for quitting was to . . .

HARDIN: For the advancement of myself.

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JOHNSON: It wasn't because Eisenhower came in?

HARDIN: Oh, no. It had nothing to do with Eisenhower coming in in January, absolutely nothing, because I had already made up my mind that I would like to study in the field of accounting, and I went to school for that.

JOHNSON: Had you applied for anything else while you were there at the White House?

HARDIN: At one time I tried to transfer out, but for some reason I didn't get a transfer so I stayed. Then I just kept working with my accounting until I could get out.

JOHNSON: So when you got out you did what?

HARDIN: Went to work as an accountant's assistant in a business that supplied food to restaurants, mostly restaurants. I stayed with them for some time, gaining experience in accounting. That mostly was why I was doing that. Then I found out there was an opening back in my home town of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, at B.F. Goodrich tire plant. I was getting tired of the Washington, D.C. area. Well, I went into credit union work too in the field of accounting. At the time I left Washington, D.C. I was with the Pentagon Credit Union, as supervisor of the accounting department. I got tired of commuting in the snow back and forth,

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because I lived 25 miles away from the Pentagon. I decided I think I'll go home to roost. So I came down to Tuscaloosa, Alabama to see if I could find a job. There was a job opening for an accountant at the tire plant. I worked for B.F. Goodrich for 20 years. Now I'm retired, on disability, actually.

JOHNSON: I appreciate your coming by.

HARDIN: This has really been an experience for me.

JOHNSON: Oh, I recall before the interview that you said you did get back to the White House. I believe it was in the Nixon era.

HARDIN: I had three children at the time, and I wanted to take a tour -- let them tour Washington, D.C. -- and I did contact a friend or two at the White House, in the file room. They were still there.

JOHNSON: What year was that?

HARDIN: I would say that was in 1971.

JOHNSON: That was the first time since '52, that you went back to the White House?

HARDIN: To the White House to visit, right.

JOHNSON: Do you remember who they were in the file room that were still there, those friends?

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HARDIN: Let's see. Ed Fauver was there, William Frank Matthews was there. McCrea was gone. Thomas Beury was still there, also.

JOHNSON: Did these fellows comment at all about any differences between, let's say 1971 under Nixon, and when they were working in the Truman White House?

HARDIN: Oh, no, there was no difference, because it was non-political.

JOHNSON: They were still filing?

HARDIN: They were still filing; some of them were still filing. One of them had been promoted. I think that was Frank Matthews. He had been promoted. That's the only one that I can recall being promoted.

JOHNSON: But they had changed the filing system by that time, right?

HARDIN: I don't know if they had changed the filing system or not.

JOHNSON: Did they ever brief you very much on the filing system, when you began working there?

HARDIN: Oh, yes, they briefed me. We had our filing rules that we were supposed to go by.

JOHNSON: These were written rules?

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HARDIN: Written rules, right.

JOHNSON: I wonder if we have a copy of those. Do you still have a copy?

HARDIN: I don't think so.

JOHNSON: And the substance of those was what?

HARDIN: Well, alphabetical and numerical systems were separate, and it showed you how to file. It told you how to file alphabetically. We had sorters, pre-sorters, low little buckets on wheels, and little dividers like you have in your filing cabinets today, with hangers. We would pick up our papers and sort them in there. We knew the dividers so well; they were alphabetical dividers, two, three and four letters, you know, A to K and L to Z was the split in the alphabet, I do remember that. A 50-50 split. But you would have A and then Ad, and then Af -- little dividers that were placed in the tubs. Now, that was the presort. Then, we'd pull each one of those groups out and line them up strictly by alphabetical order, and then file them.

JOHNSON: These were filing tubs you say.

HARDIN: Little filing tubs. We'd file in those first.

JOHNSON: Get them all organized and then you'd . . .

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HARDIN: We'd have them on a clip board and clip them on the handles to the drawers as you would file.

JOHNSON: So that was your presort. From there you put them on clip boards.

HARDIN: And hang them on the drawer handles, and open the drawer and thumb through folders until you found the right place. Of course, if you had misfiled one before that, then your next one could be misfiled.

JOHNSON: Yes.

HARDIN: And then the next one after that, and so on -- if you did not check your filing system, check your files, every now and then. We had to go through those periodically and make our corrections.

JOHNSON: About every . . .

HARDIN: Three months maybe.

JOHNSON: You'd go through and make sure they are in the proper order.

HARDIN: Checking the files.

JOHNSON: You had to bring in filing cabinets for all this material coming in, right? There is something like 5 million pages of Truman material. Does that mean you had to add filing cabinets while you were there, buy

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some every so often?

HARDIN: We had to buy some new cabinets while we were there, but all I remember was one purchase of additional cabinets when I was there. Some used cabinets were "borrowed" from other Government offices.

JOHNSON: Of course, they had emptied them of the Roosevelt material I guess.

HARDIN: Right. The Roosevelt material was all packed up and sent to Hyde Park if I remember correctly.

JOHNSON: Were you involved in that?

HARDIN: Yes. I had a part in packing his files.

JOHNSON: So you had to pull out . . .

HARDIN: Boxing those up and having someone ship them. My job in that was in helping pack them in boxes, in preparation for shipment.

JOHNSON: Those were the White House Central Files, so that emptied a lot of cases right there.

HARDIN: Right.

JOHNSON: Well, thanks very much.

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