HOPKINS, WILLIAM (OH-494) 386 pages OPEN

Member, White House permanent staff, 1931-1971; Executive Clerk, 1948-1971; Executive Clerk, 1948-1971.

DESCRIPTION: Interview #1. [April 13, 1974; pp. 1-88] Background. Entry into government service, 1929. Bureau of Naturalization. Transfer to White House, October 1931. Previous Executive Clerks: Rudolph Forster, Maurice Latta. Hopkins’ appointment as Executive Clerk, 1948. His assistants: Rita Ridenour, Herbert Miller, Wayne Hawks, John Ratchford, Noble Melencamp. Duties of the Executive Clerk. Organization of the permanent White House staff: (1) White House Mail Room: volume of mail; postal employees detailed to White House; screening and sorting of mail; indexing of mail in Central Files. (2) Correspondence Section: preparation of replies to routine letters; Lillian “Rusty” Brown; treatment of mail from government agencies; role of the Staff Secretary. (3) Telegraph Office: receipt of telegrams; preparation of replies; tabulation of comments; role of the office in handling White House transportation; relationship with the Press Secretary; exaggeration of telegram volume by the Press Secretary; separation of telephone and telegraph offices; sending of classified transmissions. (4) White House switchboard: duties of operators; movement from White House to Executive Office Building; log of phone calls. (5) White House Records Office: recording official presidential actions; preparation of executive nominations; detailed account of procedures for having President sign or veto Congressional bills; role of the Special Counsel to the President; use of cards in Records Office to index presidential actions. (6) White House Central Files: existence of individual office files; the Ann Whitman File; use of thermo fax; Eisenhower’s dislike of large files; Betty Bonsteel; change of files at end of administration; the precedent file; retrieval of items from Central Files for staff. (7) Accounts, Purchases and Personnel Section: Frank Sanderson and Eisenhower’s Sunday inauguration, 1957; selection of personnel; attitude of permanent staff toward their jobs; attitude of new administration to personnel hired under previous administrations; Truman-Eisenhower transition; Eisenhower-Kennedy transition. (8) Messenger and Miscellaneous Services Unit: mimeographing and messenger duties.

Interview #2. [November 14, 1974; pp 89-164] Comments on Eisenhower White House staff. Sherman Adams: his character; interest in personnel matters; records of positions requiring presidential appointments; Truman-Eisenhower transition; Adams’ attitude toward White House Central Files; his demand for decisiveness from staff; detailed account of Adams’ conduct of daily staff meetings. Jack Z. Anderson. Phillip Areeda. Evan Aurand and Edward Beach: display of military paintings. Detailed history of the White House mess: creation under Truman; transfer from White House to Navy control; use by the staff. J. William Barba. Stephen Benedict. Paul “Pete” Carroll: creation of staff secretariat; location of office space; Carroll’s character. Earle Chesney. Dale Crittenberger. Robert Cutler: White House staff parties; Cutler’s temper; Sherman Adams’ attitude toward liquor and cigarettes: Fred Dearborn. Joseph Dodge: use of President’s emergency fund; creation of special projects group. William Draper. John Eisenhower: location of staff secretary’s office; drafting and editing of letters by the


[Eisenhower Library Oral History Project, interview by Maclyn Burg, 1974-76]