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EDWARD A. McCABE

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Edward A. McCabe
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INTERVIEW WITH
Edward A. McCabe

by

Maclyn P. Burg
Oral Historian

on

July 1, 1975

for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

This is an interview being conducted with Mr. Edward McCabe in Mr. McCabe's offices in Washington, D.C., on July 1st, 1975 and present for the interview are Mr. McCabe and Dr. Burg.

DR. BURG: May I start by asking you where and when you were born.

MR. MCCABE: I was born in Ireland, March 4, 1917. As a matter of fact, this day, July 1st, is the anniversary of the date on which my parents brought me and my brothers and sisters to America.

DR. BURG: For Heaven's sake.

MR. MCCABE: July 1, 1928. I landed in New York this very day, 1928.

DR. BURG: Now were you living in Northern Ireland or in Eire?

MR. MCCABE: We were living in Eire, the northernmost county of the Irish Free State, about four or five miles from where the border line is drawn today, still drawn between Northern Ireland and Southern Ireland.

DR. BURG: What was your father's work?

MR. MCCABE: My father was a farmer. I was born in the very house that he and his father had built, and it still stands over there. We were there to see it several times in the last few years. We brought our children over--a bleak, watery, kind of hillside area. But it's home and we wanted them to know their origins. My mother's from the very same part of Ireland--the two families about a mile

apart. My mother had come to the United States as a young girl about fifteen, sixteen years old, been a nurse in New York, went back to Ireland. She and my dad were married there shortly before the outbreak of World War I--had intended to come back to America but the war interfered with that. The turmoil that followed in Ireland, one of the many unhappy episodes, really went on into the '20s. My dad was able to get away, came to Philadelphia, put enough money together to go back home and gather up his family and bring us all to the States. Came here, as I say, July 1, 1928, just in time to get the family embroiled in the Great Depression.

BURG: Had he served during the first World War in the British army?

MCCABE: No, he had not been in any military service.

BURG: What approximate size would this farm have been?

MCCABE: Twenty acres.

BURG: And growing what, Mr. McCabe, do you remember? Peat, I suppose.

MCCABE: I really don't--yes, there was some peat produced, but growing just food staples. In those days and to some extent it still applies, people raised the food they ate and sustained themselves. Some cattle, a few horses.

BURG: Almost subsistence agriculture.

MCCABE: Yes, subsistence-type agriculture.

BURG: Very little for cash crop.

MCCABE: Very, very little. And, you know, it's a poor country. It was much, much more so then and that's, that was the start.

BURG: Now, you would have passes through some of your early education there in Ireland.

MCCABE: I did go to early grades in Ireland. You see I was eleven years old and I had passed through six grades of elementary school when--

BURG: Did they have, in Ireland, as I believe they had at that same time in England, the so-called elevenses?

MCCABE: I don't recognize the term.

BURG: Well, if I have it straight, it would be a point, and I believe it comes at age eleven, where on the basis of examinations, in effect your future's determined. Those who show academic promise, great promise are directed off towards the path that leads to higher education.

MCCABE: Probably something equivalent to that but it didn't apply in my case, though I had an older brother, have--he's still living in Philadelphia--who would have been involved in that because

he's two years older than I am. I do know, however, that the opportunity for higher education was available. And if you were a bright kid, you could be moved along to it. I don't know how they arrived at the formula for doing it.

BURG: There would be certain kinds of scholarships--

MCCABE: Yes.

BURG: --even the children of the poor. And maybe I assume that your father, with a farm of that size, was not among the well-to-do?

MCCABE: That's right. We were given the education, whatever the children of the poor would have been entitled to.

BURG: Now he came ahead then to Philadelphia.

MCCABE: Came ahead in 1924 and worked, as I say, just to put together enough money to have the passage for the family. He went back home to Ireland in 1927, toward the end of 1927. And in what time it took to get affairs organized and let us finish the school year there, we came abroad and went out by way of Belfast and Liverpool, on a trans-Atlantic boat. Great adventure.

BURG: And during the period of time that your father was over here, your mother, your older brother, you--others in the family?

MCCABE: Well, the others were younger.

BURG: Yes, but you kept the farm going.

MCCABE: We kept the farm, kept it going.

BURG: What kind of work had he done here during that three-year period?

MCCABE: He worked for the Philadelphia Transit Company, a street car company, just as an ordinary, well, factory-hand type worker. He had no special training. A big strong fellow with a lot of energy and willingness to work, but no training of any sort. This was really the last, in a way it was the last, of the great migrations. I think, you know, thirty, forty years earlier there would have been a thousand of him for the one that came in 1924. Maybe those numbers are off, but--so he was sort of the tag end of the great influx.

BURG: Well, the heaviest waves, I think, by then coming out of southeast Europe were arriving in the early 1900s, I would say prior to 1911 or 1912.

MCCABE: I would guess so. I should remember better from history of things like that. But it comes to mind in this sense that he, having no training other than the skills he'd acquired as a farmer and working with what little farm machinery was available, he would be very much, job-wise--in terms of being trained for a

job--he was very much like the earlier generation of immigrants who had come from all over central and northern Europe and the British Isles.

BURG: And even earlier, yes, from Ireland. The ones who were deemed quite logical choices to put down railroad ties, lay iron on and spike it in.

MCCABE: Yes. And they were delighted to do it because there was the opportunity for an income that they didn't have over there and a chance to educate the children. Also the belief he never lost and my mother never lost that this is truly a great country. And in their attitudes, they were rather aggressive defenders of the United States.

BURG: Now, he had given up, I assume, the job he had in Philadelphia to come back over and pick you up.

MCCABE: Yes.

BURG: When you arrived in the United States, I presume he took you then to Philadelphia, an area that he knew.

MCCABE: Yes.

BURG: Did he then apply to the transit people for a job again, and was he able to get one?

MCCABE: He didn't go back to work with them. There was some retrenchment reason that I long lost sight of if I ever truly knew, and he went instead to work in a factory manufacturing radios, the Atwater Kent Manufacturing Company. This again, I believe, was a case where a cousin or a friend or someone said, "Well the place to work is over there. Atwater Kent's looking for people, and right now the street car company is in one of its lower employment curves". And, of course, in '28 I'm sure jobs were very plentiful. They weren't a year later.

BURG: Yes, indeed. Well, the manufacturing of radios would have been, if my recollection is right, would have been the equivalent of getting in to the manufacturing of computers today. It was just on its way up. I think the first real radio programs were coming out in the late 1920s. Now, was your father's job with the Atwater Kent a skilled job?

MCCABE: No, it was not. And I really don't know what exactly he did. He was probably part of the group maybe doing such simple things as moving materials around rather than the fellows who would tinker with the radio assembling--he would not be a skilled worker in that regard.

BURG: Now, you yourself, would have entered an American school. Would they have had at that time a junior high school?

MCCABE: Well, not by that label, but I did enter parochial school in Philadelphia in the seventh grade. And I took some placement tests to find out where I would fit in.

BURG: Did you have the Gaelic?

MCCABE: Yes, but not a great deal. Gaelic was the second language in Ireland. We used to read it and write it, and we spoke a little bit of it, but only as a student learns it. We were not in one of those areas of Ireland where Gaelic was then still spoken. There are some corners of Ireland, I suspect, where it is still a language among the older people, but it wasn't there. Well, I could write it and I could read it and had whatever fluency attaches to an eleven year old.

BURG: Did you fit into this American parochial school without too much difficulty?

MCCABE: No difficulty at all. I don't remember any difficulty. Maybe you're awfully pliable at that age and, of course, we had no language barrier, which I've often thought served the immigrant Irish in great stead.

It tended to permit a movement out into society, particularly for me, for the youngsters. I can imagine the predicament I'd have been in had I come from Greece or Italy or Germany with a language already built in, problem of learning English, and the added problem of getting along with a lot of other eleven and twelve year olds who in any country, at that age, are never noted for their charity.

BURG: Cruelty would be the word we'd use to describe--

MCCABE: Oh yes, we got a little of that. I think very quickly I lost whatever brogue or dialect that I'd had as a child. I guess I learned later that I do have a pretty good ear, and I find that I communicate rather well. I pick up the local idiom very quickly no matter where I am. And I think I did that, and it's a defense mechanism too but I could just breeze right into the school system and--. We had always been pushed and encouraged by my parents--my mother particularly in those few years, three years or so my dad was here in America and mother was very much inclined to reading to us and getting us interested in reading. We didn't have anything to speak of in a material sense, but we had the inspiration from her to dig in and--.

BURG: Were you residing in an area of Philadelphia that was pretty much Irish in its background?

MCCABE: Not really. There was a good mix. Again, an area that reflected the immigration of the prior twenty, thirty, forty years. We lived on a street, I should go back in memory sometime and add up the different nationalities reflected in the houses. We had an Armenian on the corner who ran a grocery store; we had a couple of Czechoslovak families; we had Polish; we had a Jewish family down at the other end of the street. These were immigrant families. We had also eight or ten first generation families on the street, you know, whose children were our ages and who themselves were bilingual. And on the side I learned a few words in a least a half dozen languages by the time I'd reached thirteen. I didn't know what a lot of them meant, and I'm not sure that they were all properly usable, but I had them. That was a great community, hard-working people.

BURG: We're talking about that era in that place in Philadelphia prior to juvenile gangs and some of the things that, unhappily, our society now has.

MCCABE: This is so, and an awful lot has been lost by, well, the worsening of conditions in places like that. You know, it was a great area to live. Of course, the Depression came along and for the following three or four years, it was a hand-to-mouth existence for nearly everybody.

BURG: Was your father laid off?

MCCABE: Yes, he was laid off early in the Depression. He then had various jobs. I don't know whether they included some of the WPA-type jobs, that were generated in those years. But he had short-term jobs and periods of unemployment too. He was very energetic. God knows there weren't enough jobs for people. I guess we were like everybody else. We didn't know we were poor because we didn't know anybody who was in any different circumstances then we were. A bit like the old story of the fellow whose wife never knew he was a drunk until one night he came home sober. These people were all in the same economic boat.

BURG: Yes. I remember that feature about it, too. There was really no way--

MCCABE: They were very tough times for the parents of the likes of us. The parents could realize what they were going through. We couldn't. Our friends didn't know what their parents were going through either.

BURG: No, I remember we had nothing to judge by.

MCCABE: That's right.

BURG: These were the normal conditions as far as I was concerned.

MCCABE: Yes, compared to what?

BURG: Yes. Yes. I was going to ask you now, you would have moved on to a parochial school for your high school.

MCCABE: Yes, I did. I went to a four-year high school there, a parochial high school in Philadelphia.

BURG: Your older brother would have passed in that same school.

MCCABE: He'd gone ahead, that's right, and I graduated there in 1934. I still am pretty close to that group of priests who ran the school there, a French order that originally came to run the schools a generation before and were big in the Wilmington-Philadelphia area. The oblates of St. Francis de Sales. I'm a trustee of a college which they run, a lovely place called Center Valley, Pennsylvania, where I've enjoyed going to board meetings for the last six or eight years. I also serve on the advisory board of one of their seminaries, here in Washington. They're great people. Education was free; in Philadelphia the parochial education was free. The likes of us, we wouldn't have been able to

go were it not for the fact that the parishes assessed themselves and ran these schools. I believe they are and were great elements of education. They keep a little of that diversity we need. The quality of their education was very high and, as far as I know, still is.

BURG: Did you partake in high school athletics?

MCCABE: I did to some extent. I was not too good at anything, though I was a pretty fair baseball player. Played a lot of baseball later. I was small while in school and so I wasn't much good for any of the bigger sports, but I plunged right in with everybody else. You know, the biggest thing in life was the school team or the intramural team, and I did play intramural baseball and basketball.

BURG: Were you also holding down any kind of a job, part-time job or any--

MCCABE: Newspaper route. My brother and I had a delivery route for the paper.

BURG: So did I.

MCCABE: I think everybody my age did some of that.

BURG: In those days. Liberty magazine and the Journal and Saturday Evening Post were door-to-door.

MCCABE: Yes, we did that, too.

BURG: Now clearly you recollect your high school as having given you a pretty decent education. What now stands out in your mind--we could think both of subject and instructor--those who may have, as you now look back, have had a great deal of interest for you and a great deal of influence on you.

MCCABE: Probably, subject matter-wise, I'd say Latin.

BURG: Interesting.

MCCABE: And maybe I profited more from that than any other study in high school. It's just been such a great base for language, for English, for my work today and, all my adult work. I find that several years of Latin did a great deal for me. I had everything else too, just sort of the pedestrian high school courses. Algebra and English and history and biology and chemistry, the full routine.

BURG: Do you think it was the orderly nature of that subject or, if you had a four-year course, I presume before too long you were reading Latin rhetoric, Latin historians, in Latin. Wonder if the subject matter was getting to you. That is, that kind of thing, the things that were conveyed by the language itself.

MCCABE: I don't think anything was getting to me at the time. I come up with Latin now, looking back on all the courses, as the one that perhaps was a greater contributor to what I did later than any other. I was a pretty fair student. There was little nonsense brooked in the school. They ran a tight ship.

BURG: I would suppose so.

MCCABE: And again--like the Depression and whether anybody felt that he was suffering because of the Depression--we didn't know any other way to do it except get that homework done, and if you didn't you're going to hear about it.

BURG: Somebody rapped your knuckles.

MCCABE: Yes, we got it at home and school, too: so that was good for us.

BURG: You graduated in that splendid year of opportunity 1934.

MCCABE: Marvelous year.

BURG: And your father in and out of employment. What was your course then?

MCCABE: I went to a business school because, I think probably wrongly so, the family felt, that we just couldn't afford even on a partial scholarship to go to college at that time.

At that time there was a business school in Philadelphia that was drumming up a fair amount of business, doing a lot of word-of-mouth advertising among the high school graduates. And after the summer had gone by and there seemed to be no job opportunity anywhere I enrolled in business school--learned typing, filing, business practices.

BURG: So the family had to find that tuition money somewhere.

MCCABE: Well--I'm glad you brought that up--the real big attraction there was that tuition was deferred until you got a job and paid it back afterwards.

BURG: I see. I see. Had your brother, by the way, taken--

MCCABE: He did exactly the same thing. And he later went to the University of Pennsylvania at night. Graduated from the Wharton School.

BURG: How long was the course at this business school? Was it a one year-affair or--

MCCABE: For me it was about a year and a half roughly, and it was geared to your achievement rather than a measured time period.

Some people could do whatever they needed and do it in a great hurry. Others had more thumbs I guess, less talented. But I got through that, got some kind of a certificate of completion in--from 1934--it would have been getting into 1936, somewhere into the early months of 1936.

BURG: Did the school place you?

MCCABE: School did. The school located jobs and I had a couple of jobs in, offices, factory offices in Philadelphia. I took a civil service examination and got an appointment out of that and came to Washington the end of 1936. A couple of my friends had come here earlier and had found the opportunities here great for going to school at night. They still are.

BURG: Places like George Washington and Gerogetown.

MCCABE: All over, Georgetown, George Washington, a number of law schools were actively going here that have now been merged and a good number of schools at the undergraduate level. I came here the end of 1936.

BURG: Was there a job lined up for you when you came down?

MCCABE: Oh, yes. I responded to an appointment. I had an appointment at the Treasury Department. So I took a suitcase and came down here to go to work. This was in December of '36.

And I've been here ever since, except for nearly five years away from here during the war.

BURG: You were single at this time.

MCCABE: Yes, I was. I was nineteen years old.

BURG: Now let me ask, in what department or branch of Treasury was this job?

MCCABE: It was in something called the Division of Loans and Currency. I don't know if that's still a part of the government, but this was the place where the old World War I bonds were being redeemed.

BURG: The old Liberty Bonds.

MCCABE: Liberty Bonds, that's right. In fact I was in something called the Liberty Loan Building. And that too was a great adventure. I had a great time doing that and scouting around to line up some opportunities to go to school. I enrolled for evening classes in 1937, took some evening courses at American University, not enrolling there for a degree. I really had my mind pretty well set that I wanted to go to law school.

BURG: Do you remember now why you chose that particular profession?

MCCABE: No. I didn't have any great--

BURG: Parents didn't push it.

MCCABE: No. There was no inspiration there, although I had worked, I had seen some lawyers at work in Philadelphia in one of the jobs I had, short-term, but I had no particular reason. It's just something I thought I might like to do. I've not regretted it. Had a lot of fun doing it ever since. And there was a small school here that no longer exists-- Columbus University, it's been merged into Catholic University since. They had a junior college, school of law and a school of accountancy. And in the District of Columbia, in those years, a fellow could go to law school without having an undergraduate degree.

BURG: I didn't realize that.

MCCABE: That was changed in the early 1940s. I went to junior college after taking some courses at American University, enrolled at Columbus University Junior College. In the meantime I got a job in the post office. Again, everybody I knew seemed to be doing the same thing. Worked all day, went to school in the evening and didn't feel particularly heroic or put out about it because everyone else was doing the same thing.

BURG: Was that post office job a step up in pay?

MCCABE: It was a step up in pay by, if I remember, the munificent sum of a couple of hundred dollars a year. And I worked in the office of the postal inspectors. It was an old line federal investigative agency. These fellows concerned themselves with thefts from the mails, keeping an inspection system going so that all post offices are audited. I was a clerk in the Washington, D.C. division. This covered a territory of Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, one of the Carolinas--North Carolina. There were these inspectors operating out of this headquarters who covered these areas. And all kinds of fascinating things kept happening--like somebody holding up a post office and the police and postal inspectors tracking him down; also, thefts from the mails. All which I found fascinating, plus the fact that it helped pay tuition. I was twenty, twenty-one years old, red-haired and everybody's favorite around the place. That was easy to take too. These older men, of course, took great interest in us younger fellows and knew a number of us were going to school too. And then I was drafted into the army in 1941.

BURG: From that job.

MCCABE: From that job at the end of the school year, 1941.

BURG: Now had you completed--

MCCABE: I had already entered law school at that time.

BURG: You'd finished the junior college portion.

MCCABE: Finished the junior college portion, had finished two years of night law school at that time when my number was called and I went into the army.

BURG: In '41, you said.

MCCABE: Yes.

BURG: Now were you caught in that pre-Pearl Harbor draft?

MCCABE: Yes, I was.

BURG: Supposedly for what was it, a year of service?

MCCABE: For a year, and then it got extended a little bit for-- maybe it was to two years--and then all of a sudden it became the duration, which again was what happened to everybody else.

BURG: When did they get you in 1941?

MCCABE: August 6, 1941. I was inducted at Camp Lee, Virginia, went through basic training there and was assigned to the 5th Infantry Division at Ft. Custer, Michigan, and stayed with that organization for training until early in 1942.

BURG: You were a rifleman at that stage?

MCCABE: Yes, I was just a regular, ground-pounding soldier at that stage, assigned to a Quartermaster unit. I went through the training that everyone else did. But I was separated from the division shortly before it moved out to Iceland and was assigned to what was then the Army General Headquarters. I stayed there for a couple of months--that was preparatory to an assignment in the Army's Counterintelligence Corps.

BURG: Was Army General Headquarters here in Washington, D.C.?

MCCABE: In Washington, at what is now Ft. McNair.

BURG: Oh, yes.

MCCABE: It was, in a way, just a waiting period until whatever investigation was being done on me, brought me into the army intelligence corps.

BURG: Had you applied for that kind of work in the 5th Division?

MCCABE: No, I hadn't applied, and I think I really got in by accident. I think it was a case of mistaken records that perhaps indicated that I was a law graduate. Something must have gone askew with the old manual records, because the Army CIC [Counterintelligence Corps] was very busy recruiting lawyers and people who had been in some kind of investigative work. But I was flushed out or dredged up, or whatever, as potential for it and then got through their investigation, and I was assigned to CIC.

BURG: It could have been the amount of law work that you had had to that point and it could also be that this post office investigation title--

MCCABE: I think once they got into the investigation they probably said, "Well, here's a guy who has been around something like this, and he isn't quite a lawyer yet, but, well, maybe he seems like a reasonable risk." So--

BURG: What was your rank, by the way, when you made the move to Army GBQ?

MCCABE: I think I was a PFC. Lots of rank.

BURG: Yes. I had that rank, too, for quite awhile as a matter of fact.

MCCABE: That was impressive, that first stripe--

BURG: Yes, indeed. Now, they held you here only for a brief period of time while they went ahead with checking you out presumably.

MCCABE: Yes.

BURG: You, by that time, knew what they had in mind for you.

MCCABE: Oh, I knew what they had in mind and had indicated that it was fine with me. I really didn't know quite what it was. But it was described to me as the army's equivalent, and the navy had its similar service--

BURG: The United States Marine Corps.

MCCABE: --the equivalent of the FBI. They did a lot of investigative work. I'd be willing to tackle anything, and I was assigned then for, let's see, 1942--I spent the better part of a year here in Washington, D.C. It was the Washington field office of the Counterintelligence Corps. I also went through a school in Chicago for a couple of months, training school, where we did everything from firing handguns to trying judo, and learning basic investigative techniques. And then I was moved out. People were regularly rotated in and out of one office or another.

I was assigned to the air force unit, a counterintelligence unit, attached to the Flying Training Command down south--Alabama, Georgia, Florida. We didn't accomplish an awful lot looking back on it, but we worked hard at what we did.

BURG: You were uniformed.

MCCABE: No, we were not. We were in civilian clothes.

BURG: After you'd finished your training in Chicago, you then moved into civilian clothes.

MCCABE: Yes. In civilian clothes while I was assigned to the Washington field office and later at the air force unit down south for about a year, I worked in civilian clothes. We did such things as running personnel checks on people, the kind of simpler investigative work the FBI does. We also had some security assignments protecting gatherings of generals--strategy huddles or whatever, when groups of high-ranking officers got together. I remember a fascinating kind of three- or four-day assignment here in Washington where about thirty or forty of us were assigned to protect General [Henri H.] Giraud who was part of the French government in exile at that time.

While he was here, Giraud stayed in the Blair House and he visited President Roosevelt and other notables. We escorted him at high speeds around town, and kept little knots of excitable Frenchmen from breaking through security lines, to get to (or maybe get at) General Giraud.

BURG: Would this have been fairly late in '42 or perhaps early in '43?

MCCABE: It was about the summer of '43, I believe. I was assigned to the Counterintelligence Corps in April of '42 after that short period in the Army General Headquarters. Then maybe a month later went to school for about two months and then back here, assigned here. And then probably in the late part of '43 went out on this air force assignment. Left that one in early '44 for an assignment, in uniform, with the Air Transport Command, flying on the North Atlantic route of the Air Transport Command. And all the time I was a sergeant, this was my rank. I had a couple of extra stripes and I became, as it was called then, as you may remember, a tech sergeant. That was--

BURG: Two rockers.

MCCABE: --two, two rockers under the stripe. And I decided I wanted to go to OCS [Officer Candidate School], and I did. I went through the chemical warfare school, of all places.

But this was aimed at becoming an intelligence officer for the Chemical Warfare Service. They had their own. Some other fellows from the CIC had gone in there. I did apply for OCS and went through the ninety-day course--but this is not an intelligence officer course. It was a regular OCS course by which--

BURG: You qualified.

MCCABE: --you qualified. Near the end of the war I graduated from OCS and was assigned to the Chemical Warfare Center as an intelligence officer, at Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland. I stayed there until the end of the war, discharged Christmas Eve, 1945.

BURG: What was the nature of your work as an intelligence officer with chemical warfare?

MCCABE: Just running the post intelligence office at Edgewood--great deal of time worrying about clearance of visitors and just ordinary, work-a-day staff officer duties of a middle-sized post like that.

BURG: I suppose that there was, at that point, still a fair amount of security-classified work being done.

MCCABE: There was.

BURG: You were, by the way, then a second lieutenant?

MCCABE: Yes, I was.

BURG: And discharged as a second lieutenant?

MCCABE: Discharged as a second lieutenant.

BURG: Oh, I see. Right. Now, you would have come out with GI Bill educational benefits I would assume.

MCCABE: GI entitlement.

BURG: Had you married while you were in the service?

MCCABE: No, I had not. And I came out, as I say, Christmas Eve, 1945. In fact while I was in Edgewood, my last couple of months in the military, I had so little to do--the war was over and it was just a case of waiting to be processed out--I signed up for a couple of courses at the University of Maryland law school in Baltimore, picking up some courses there.

I did a full semester at Maryland law school and then came back here and re-enrolled in the spring term of 1946 at what then had become--my old school had been merged into Catholic University--what's now known as the Columbus Law School of Catholic University. So I re-enrolled, began to patch the courses together that I needed, and finally finished up there in 1947.

BURG: Now by that time the rules and regulations had changed somewhat.

MCCABE: But I was grandfathered in. Rules had changed in that anybody newly enrolling in law school would have had to have by that time, a four-year undergraduate degree. But, you know, a standard that applied to someone prior to military service --in almost any endeavor--he carried after he got out.

So, I took the 1946 bar exam. And that was the kicker in the new rules--you couldn't take a bar exam without the new pre-legal education qualifications. But I, of course, and others similarly situated, could take the bar exam under the pre-war rules--even though it was the late '40s, 1946 in my case. We could take the bar exam then on the same conditions as before the war, with veterans' special treatment.

BURG: And you would be passing the District of Columbia bar.

MCCABE: Passed the District of Columbia bar, the only bar exam I ever took. Took it in June, 1946. I finished my law work at night, law school at night--and went to work at the Senate---

BURG: Oh, while you were doing this work, while you were doing the law courses at night.

MCCABE: Prior to the war I went to law school at night and worked at the post office. When I came back from the military I didn't do anything except go to school while I was at the University of Maryland. I had no job to worry about. But when I picked up with the spring semester here, in Washington again, at Columbus Law School, I was in school in the evening again. At about the same time went to work as a staff assistant in one of the Senate Offices. A senator from Minnesota, since retired. In fact, Hubert Humphrey beat him in 1948. A great fellow named Joe Ball.

BURG: B-a-l-1?

MCCABE: B-a-l-1. He's retired and living now at Front Royal, Virginia. Cut quite a swath for himself as a senator in those days. One of my classmates in law school was his secretary and they were looking around for a new guy in the office and I was looking for a job and that's how the thing got pieced together. I went to work in the Senate in April 1946. Worked there and took the bar exam in June of '46 and finished up what straggling couple of courses I had left to round out the degree requirements. Did that in '47.

BURG: During your law training did any particular aspect of the law appeal to you?

MCCABE: No one more than any other. I did not feel any great attraction to be an anti-trust lawyer or a tax lawyer or any other specialty area. It was a way to get into a profession which attracted me. To do that, I had to finish law school and be admitted to the bar--and that was the goal. I had no set notions of any kind of specialty in law.

BURG: Now you had headed for that kind of goal prior to the war and then the war intervened and then it was perhaps a year and a half or so before you were able to finish the course work. You still had that same feeling for the law.

MCCABE: Yes.

BURG: Hadn't changed over those many years.

MCCABE: Hadn't changed at all.

BURG: Still felt drawn to it.

MCCABE: Yes. And maybe most important, it looked like the best chance to make something of myself if I worked at it. I felt I could do it.

BURG: Now, as you finished off the last of your law courses, studying for the bar exam, you were also involved, when I say involved, you were certainly cheek-by-jowl with a senatorial office.

Did that begin to divide your interest and your attention?

MCCABE: Well, it did in the sense that I developed a new interest. I had a long standing interest in--I wouldn't say political affairs so much as I would say governmental affairs. I didn't have a great interest in elective politics. What intrigued me was the business of running the government. That may not be the most apt description of governmental affairs versus political affairs, but I think for our purposes it makes the distinction.

BURG: You had not belonged to the Young Republican Club or anything of that sort.

MCCABE: No. Never belonged to any kind of organized political grouping like that. But I wasn't too different either from others. I cast my first vote when I got out of the military; I could have voted in the military, but I just was maybe never at the right place at the right time to get the ballots. And from my first interest in the subject I found myself to be something of a political conservative. I'm probably pretty average, right in the middle of the Republican party.

BURG: You never felt drawn to enroll in political science courses.

MCCABE: I would have, I'm sure, but the fact is I really didn't do an awful lot of formal studying other than the legal work.

At junior college, two years at night, you don't do an awful lot.

BURG: You didn't want to branch too far away from your main line.

MCCABE: I think that had I taken a regular, structured, four year undergraduate degree, I might well have majored in political science or history, perhaps history.

BURG: Now, when you do have the law degree in hand, what was your next move?

MCCABE: Well, I--

BURG: You've passed the bar; I should mention that.

MCCABE: I passed the bar and I was getting involved in the work at the Senate. Senator Ball and Senator Taft, Robert A. Taft, Sr., were themselves producing what later became known as the Taft-Hartley Law, and I worked as kind of a caddy for them. I carried the books and went to the meetings and watched the senior lawyers do the work. I was functioning as an assistant. I wasn't a lawyer as such, and, of course, I had no special background for that kind of special work. But I was assigned to work at what currently would be called a legislative assistant.

They had no such title then. It was just all staff members in the senator's office. And I was the one who worked most closely with Senator Ball on his legislative endeavors. Others, of course, worked with such things as constituent relationships, running the office, keeping the mail going and so on. I had the better job where I was off watching the prime movers make the legislation. And it was great education; just a great exposure, to be sitting around watching the likes of Robert A. Taft. Also Claude Pepper of Florida, still serving in the House, with whom I now play golf occasionally at the Burning Tree Club. He was a young man in those days, on that Senate labor committee. There was Congressman Hartley of New Jersey, long since dead. Charley Halleck too, a very able legislative leader. Just to be around them and to watch the process, a great thing. I prize that time very highly. In 1947 there was a committee established by the Taft-Hartley law called the Joint Committee on Labor and Management Relations. It was chaired by Senator Ball and had seven senators and seven members of the House. Ball was chairman, Fred Hartley was the vice-chairman, party lineups were adjusted, and I became the executive assistant to that committee. I was the Chief Clerk with a high-sounding title. The committee did a number of case studies on how labor management relations

were being conducted in various industries around the country under the new Taft-Hartley Law--an effort to see how some of the provisions of the law were working in practice. We completed that job, and I left the committee in 1949 to be a legislative counsel for the United States Chamber of Commerce. This was a new job the U.S. Chamber created. They wanted a lawyer for it, analyzing legislative proposals in which the business community had an interest and which the Chamber would monitor.

BURG: Did they contact you on that job or did you hear it was open?

MCCABE: They did. They contacted me, and which was a natural enough thing because in the work I did at the Senate, people from the Chamber and from every other organized group were, of course, in regular contact with this committee. This was an opportunity for me to meet people and for them to see me and I liked the offer they made to me and I accepted it and worked there for about a year. Then I got another opportunity to become the Washington in-house counsel for the American Hotel Association--this was a big trade association of the hotel industry--and there to work with a great variety of problems that the industry faced in its relationships with both the Congress and with the executive departments and agencies. Korean war price and wage and salary controls came

in there. And I also had an arrangement with the hotel association that permitted me to practice law to the extent that there was no conflict either in substance or in time with my principal employment, which was for the hotel industry. I did that for two years.

BURG: When you say counsel, Mr. McCabe, do you mean it in the legal sense of counsellor at law or counsel in perhaps a broader kind of sense.

MCCABE: It's a broader context that included the at-law characterization, because we were working very heavily on regulations, the development of testimony on proposed regulations coming out of various agencies of government. Many government programs impacted the hotel industry. I mentioned wage and price, salary, controls; and there were myriad regulations coming out in the Federal Register prescribing the way you do things. That was a war-time economy, of course, the Korean period.

BURG: And there would be, I suppose, shortages of critical things-- metal perhaps for new hotel construction.

MCCABE: There would be much of that. There would be great problems with one hotel pirating away the prize chef from another by inducements which, often enough, would violate the regulations.

BURG: You mean that would fall to you, too.

MCCABE: Well, yes, we would serve the industry in that capacity. It was an unusual time here in Washington. Governmental controls without the weight of a big war on the country, as World War II was. The Korean War was a first class mess for those who were in it, obviously, as all wars are. But here at home people in general weren't too concerned with it except those with people at the front.

BURG: So it would have been a most intriguing situation here.

MCCABE: It was.

BURG: You wouldn't have the wholehearted dedication to the war that you had just seen in World War II.

MCCABE: As a people I think we regarded it as a small war, not fully realizing--I think we see that now looking back over Vietnam as well as Korea--that we didn't have a national commitment to win the war as we did in World War II. Maybe as a people we were subconsciously pulling away from it. We didn't need another war; we weren't ready for another war and, except for the families of the poor guys who were in it most of us, I suspect, closed our eyes to the fact there was a war going on. We thought we'd had our war and this was somebody else's. But the impact on the country of Korea war-time regulations was substantial.

BURG: No, nothing like the rationing and various economic measures that had been taken during World War II. Well, you stayed then with the American Hotel Association--

MCCABE: Through 1952. In 1953 I had the opportunity either to be counsel to the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare with Senator Taft or counsel to the House Committee on Education and Labor, chaired by Congressman Sam McConnell of Pennsylvania. My first impulse was not to take either one of them because I wanted to leave and get out into the full time practice of law with a regular law firm. But I did finally go to the House and become counsel for the Education and Labor Committee there. I spent three years at that, the first year on hearings aimed at amending the Taft-Hartley labor law. This was the big attraction, to be involved in possibly reshaping a major law. But we never got that done while I was there. It was done later, though, while I was in the White House.

BURG: May I ask, who contacted you for these two possible jobs in early '53?

MCCABE: Senator Taft's former counsel contacted me on the senator's behalf, and I went up to see him. Chairman McConnell asked me to take the job with him, on the recommendation of my old friend Gerry Morgan who was then White House Counsel to President Eisenhower.

INTERVIEW WITH
Edward A. McCabe

by

Thomas Soapes
Oral Historian

on

March 2, 1977

for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

3/22/77
#2

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Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interview of

EDWARD A. McCABE

In accordance with the Provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, Edward A. McCabe, of Washington, DC, hereinafter referred to as the donor, do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title and interest in the tape recordings and transcripts of personal interviews conducted on July 1, 1975; March 2, 1977; October 7, 1977 and June 22, 1978 and prepared for deposit in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library. This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

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Edward A. McCabe
Donor

October 16, 1989
Date

Chandra J. Neuman
Archivist of the United States

12/27/89
Date

This interview is being conducted with Mr. Edward McCabe in his office in Washington, D.C., on March 2, 1977. The interviewer is Dr. Thomas Soapes of the Eisenhower Library. Present for the interview are Mr. McCabe and Dr. Soapes.

DR. SOAPES: Okay. I think as we were saying on the last interview Dr. Burg got up to about 1952 or '53. Had you participated in the '52 campaign at all?

MR. MCCABE: Not worth mentioning. I was in Washington at the time and had a substantial interest in political affairs, but was not into the Eisenhower end of the campaign. In fact I had been in the Taft camp because I had known Senator Taft. I did help form what became known as the Ike and Dick Clubs (for Eisenhower and his running mate Richard Nixon). Small things like that brought me around the edges of the campaign. Acquainted with it in that sense, but not a real participant.

DR. SOAPES: You were doing that here in Washington?

MR. MCCABE: Right.

DR. SOAPES: Was there much reluctance on the part of the Taft people that you knew to support Eisenhower?

MR. MCCABE: There was a lot with a few people, but with most of the Taft supporters there really was very little or none. Some people I knew who were early Taft supporters were just bitter

about the loss. They felt the better man had not been nominated, and they just weren't about to go along. I suspect they all voted for General Eisenhower, and as time went on, they would grudgingly agree that he had been a good President. There was, as I said, with some people a lot of resentment. But with the vast majority there was the approach of "Let's go, get in, help out." And that's where I fit.

SOAPES: Now at this time you were with the American Hotel Association.

MCCABE: I was working as a lawyer in the Washington office of the American Hotel Association.

SOAPES: And then you moved to the Hill.

MCCABE: I did. Early in 1953, early in the 83rd Congress-- March or thereabouts of 1953--I agreed to go to the Hill as general counsel for the Education and Labor Committee in the House. I at first--it's interesting--first turned that job down or rather turned aside the chairman's inquiry on it. And also turned aside the same inquiry to go to the Senate side to work for Senator Taft on the Senate Labor Committee. Both committees were intent on reviewing and updating the Taft-Hartley Labor

Law, and I was enjoying myself pretty well in the work I did, and I thought at first I didn't have much interest in going to the Hill. But on reflection and in talking with some people, including Gerald Morgan, who died last year by the way. Gerry was a partner in this present law firm and had been my friend and cohort for many, many years--mostly at Gerry's urging I reconsidered. We were not working together then downtown, but at his urging I reconsidered the job. Had three very exciting and good years as counsel for that committee. Then left there to come to the Eisenhower White House.

SOAPES: You said their principal concern was the revision of the Taft-Hartley.

MCCABE: That was the principal thing this Republican Congress saw ahead as it moved into the session that began in January of 1953.

SOAPES: What types of revisions were they looking at?

MCCABE: The law was a very contentious subject. It had been on the books for five years then. It had been much involved in the political oratory of every campaign since it was passed in 1947--two Presidential campaigns, and the Congressional campaigns as well. People talked a lot about it. It was still a big political issue. Labor unions and many Democrats wanted to repeal it. There wasn't

any disposition among Republicans, who then controlled the White House and the Congress, to dismantle it. Depending on what industry you talked to, you'd have this or that amendment that was important. It was that lure of activity on a major subject that convinced me I'd like to go back to the Hill and tackle the job.

When your not literally looking for a job, which I wasn't, then you're going to be attracted by an opportunity to be involved in something substantial. If you're a tax specialist and you're going to have a chance to be involved in rewriting some major segment of the tax law, that's a sort of professional attraction for you. And that's where the opportunity and the interest lay for me.

SOAPES: Were there other subjects that the committee was considering that are memorable to you?

MCCABE: It turned out that way, though there weren't any on the horizon as I looked at the assignment. But education became quite an important subject. There were no education laws of any consequence while I was there. It took maybe ten years after I left before Congress got into education in a big way. But the subject of federal aid, the question of federal aid for education was just beginning to be a sturdy one--and even though there were no laws

passed, there were hearings held. There was a lot of political infighting, too, in and out of Congress. And the committee put in a fair amount of time on education. Political decisions were made and attitudes took shape.

I stayed with that committee for three years. The first year was devoted almost entirely to public hearings on the Taft-Hartley Law. It was a major airing of that subject. Part of the second year was given over to drafting of amendments. Nothing became law because the votes were just not there to carry any one approach. All that took a part of one year, good half of one year.

We got into some investigations, too, that became memorable items later on. Labor racketeering was just identifying itself as a problem. The House Labor Committee teamed up with the House Government Operations Committee and we ran joint hearings, real investigative hearings, on charges of racketeering and financial abuse in a number of unions. We had some very colorful characters as witnesses. I think we did a lot of good work done there. We began a lot of good work; it was later taken over--I use that term kind of loosely. The Senate investigating committee, Senator McClellan's committee, some years later with Robert Kennedy as its counsel picked up where we left off in those early days. They ran a pretty thorough going investigation, with great television publicity. And that publicity

I think more than any other single factor, brought about the passage of the Landrum-Griffin Labor Reform Law. That law was passed in 1959 and it brought me full cycle, because by then I was working in the White House and I drew the assignment as the Eisenhower Administration's point man with the Hill on this legislation. The Landrum-Griffin assignment was a major undertaking for a couple of years, through 1958 and most of 1959.

SOAPES: I want to get into that one later in some detail. I do want to pick you up on a couple of points, you said.

MCCABE: Right.

SOAPES: In regard to education, you said that there were some political decisions made and some attitudes formed. Could you give me some more insight into that?

MCCABE: Political decisions, well, I suppose a good way to describe that would be to say that there were those in Congress who believe the time had come for federal aid to education. There were others who felt just as strongly that this was the last bastion of local rights and responsibilities, and that the federal government ought to stay out of it. The latter were more numerous in Congress at that time, yet the divisions were close, the numbers were close. The Eisenhower administration did recommend a form of federal help for education that was not passed. There was still hanging heavy

over Congress the question of segregation, whether any education law could be passed that would apply equally to all races. It seems odd to sit here in 1977 and look back to the early 50's to see that this was then a very major problem for Congress. And I think it's fair to say that up to about that point in history, a sure way to kill any bill for federal aid to education would be to tack an anti-segregation amendment to it.

Forces on the Hill were, as I said, fairly evenly divided, regardless of party, with opponents of federal aid still in the majority, but not by much. So it was a nervous division. And emotions ran high. People got excited about the subject.

The question of aid to church-related schools would assert itself every once in a while. It was not really the basic question. The basic question before Congress, before the whole country I guess, was will the federal government get into the business of putting tax money out to help schools or will we leave that entirely up to states and local communities? The church-school issue was a part of that, though not nearly the big part segregated schools were. And while the wrangling, and politicking, and finger pointing heated up, the Supreme Court's Brown vs. Board of Education decision came down in 1954. But that didn't turn the corner with Congress. I think it raised more problems than it settled insofar as getting legislation passed. Nobody could say with any certainty whether

federal school aid would under the Brown case require equal treatment of races. It probably took the better part of ten years for that thing to finally wear itself out. It wasn't until the middle '60s, long after Ike had left government, that the federal establishment got into education aid in a big way and, of course, we're in it, we the people, are really in it now.

SOAPES: You said that the parties themselves were fairly evenly divided. Among the Democrats was there a northern-southern division that was supporting and opposing federal aid and Republicans--

MCCABE: Yes, it was essentially the more liberal northern Democrats who would favor it; it was the more traditionalist, the old Southerner, the Western members, west-southwest, with varying degrees of intensity who were not in favor of it. And the Republican Party was split maybe the same.

SOAPES: Eastern Republicans for; the Western Republicans--

MCCABE: Yes, the so-called Eastern liberal was pretty much inclined to go along with something; the more traditional, conservative (regardless of where he came from) didn't think the federal government ought to be in it.

SOAPES: Okay. I'd like to turn now to your White House service. How did your move to the White House come about?

MCCABE: I mentioned Gerry Morgan earlier. Gerry was part of the Eisenhower White House staff, a lawyer with the title of special counsel to the President. In the Eisenhower White House the counsel had a broad-ranging charter. He not only processed papers inside the White House which called for some legal knowledge, but he also got into the legislative program. And this was Gerry Morgan's function. In late 1955 it was felt in the White House that they needed somebody on the staff with a special knowledge of Congressional processes, a lawyer who could counsel on Congressional investigations. There were a great many Congressional investigations of executive departments and agencies. Departments were being whipsawed one against the other, and it was decided that the White House should coordinate executive branch responses to this tactic. The White House would not be out front in this. Departments would still reply on their own, but there'd be an effort to coordinate so that department A wouldn't undercut department B to the detriment of the whole administration. So that one agency would not, in effect, try to save its own bacon at the expense of the others. This was the function I moved in to try to handle at the White House as associate special counsel to the President. Came in, as I said, a moment ago,

at the initial suggestion of Gerry Morgan. He talked to me about it. I was intrigued by it. I was ready to leave the Hill. I had been talking to a couple of law firms and to a couple of private companies about getting out of government--either to private law practice or going out into the business world. And so this inquiry came at an apt time for me. I went to the White House shortly after the first of the year in '56. Stayed there for the remaining five years of the Eisenhower Presidency: one year of the first term and the full four years of the second term.

SOAPES: Now your title did change at some point along the way there. Did that mean the duties changed?

MCCABE: The duties changed, too. The first two-and-a-half years I carried the title of associate special counsel to the President. I was heavily involved in these investigative matters I just spoke of. I also was drawn into a variety of general legislative work. And there was an element of general troubleshooting. To illustrate that, there were a few situations where members of regulatory commissions, circumstances where people at sub-cabinet levels were publicly charged with indiscretions, they allegedly abused their office or misused prerogatives and privileges. This

became a problem for the President when the individual involved was a Presidential appointee. I got into those, to find out what the story was, and along with others who were senior on the White House staff develop a recommendation on what action the President ought to take. There were perhaps half a dozen such things, and they tended to be time consuming. That's the sort of troubleshooting kind of thing. But my work over-all was heavily related to Congressional activity.

For the second half of my White House time my title changed from associate counsel and I became one of four or five administrative assistants to the President. That was after Sherman Adams left. The staff was restructured. The legislative work for the White House then became the assignment of Bryce Harlow, myself, Jack Anderson (a former California Congressman) and Clyde Wheeler. There were others who helped us out from time to time, but we were the main Congressional liaison team. We did the work with Congress on legislation for the White House. This included the Landrum-Griffin Law, a big one that commandeered an enormous amount of my time for nearly two years.

SOAPES: Before we get into the Landrum-Griffin, I'd like to talk a little bit about the mechanics that you operated under. As said earlier, you dealt a lot with labor legislation. Did it tend that you and Harlow and Wheeler and the others would have various subject

areas that were yours, or various members, or various committees that were yours?

MCCABE: Yes, there was a good bit of that. We were a small staff over-all. I don't know how you compare today's numbers or the numbers in recent years with what the Eisenhower Staff amounted to. We might have had twenty-five or thirty people, like myself, who came and went with the President. This whole staff operation was pretty well sorted out among those twenty five or thirty people. And with four or five of us tuned in on legislative matters, the tendency was to pull a guy into something he knew about. If he knew the subject area better than the next fellow, well, you put him into it without too much rigidity.

We worked as a team. Jack Anderson had been a member of the House. He really knew and understood the workings of the House better than any of us. He had come out of the Department of Agriculture to the White House. He had been Secretary Benson's legislative man for a couple of years. There were major agriculture bills moving in Congress and Jack would just be moved in. He tended to work mostly with the House, but there was some overlap.

Similarly Bryce Harlow had a special background in military affairs. He had been Staff Chief of the House Armed Services Committee, and had served in the Defense Department congressional liaison in World War II. He didn't need special training when a military bill came up.

There was a major piece of work done in Eisenhower's second term, the reorganization of the Pentagon, and Bryce drew that assignment. Well, he's a very able guy to start with, but he also had the background that specially qualified him for legislation on military matters.

We tended to follow a competence we might have had. We tried different things, though. We once thought it made sense to assign certain committees to different individuals, and organize the process that way. At one time we tried a division where Jack Anderson and Clyde Wheeler would cover the House, I would cover the Senate, and Bryce Harlow would sort of be the overseer of all of it. He was the official in charge of Congressional liaison those years. I don't know whether a system broke down, or if it reorganized itself. A subject, like Landrum-Griffin, for example, came on, and I ended up carrying the whole assignment. I knew the subject and worked on it with both the House and the Senate. Similarly, Jack Anderson did that on agriculture matters. Bryce himself, Bryce Harlow did on military reorganization. So there was a flexibility, but a semblance of this category approach too. It was anything but rigid, and we found that whatever it was it worked to the President's satisfaction.

[Interruption]

SOAPES: Why don't we turn to the Landrum-Griffin since it's a landmark piece of legislation. Why don't I just open it up and you can

just narrate how you started working with it and what the principal concerns were, particularly from the White House point of view, in regard to the bill.

MCCABE: I mentioned earlier that the House Labor Committee when I was there had started the labor rackets investigation. Well, some notable characters, Jimmy Hoffa, for example, was a witness before a couple of our hearings. We recommended that he and several others be held in contempt of Congress for refusing to answer questions we thought were pertinent. I should add he came back in and furnished the information, purged himself of the possible contempt.

On that groundwork, the McClellan committee launched its effort, and they did it right. They had a topnotch staff. Able and persistent investigators. I mentioned Bobby Kennedy whom I got to know quite well in those years. He had a staff of professional investigators, many former FBI accounting specialists. They were very useful because we're talking primarily about the manipulation of money. Great amounts of money were coming into some union welfare and pension funds, with charges of abuse of those funds. It all called for persistence and great skill in investigating.

The real value, though, from a legislative point of view was the publicity, the visibility that those hearings gave to the need for reform. You may remember, they were on television. And in every

home in the nation virtually every evening came a parade of union people being asked to explain why it was that they acquired immense personal bank accounts, the use of a yacht for life, a plush home in the Florida Keys, this kind of thing. The public got excited. Why had these things, it was asked come out of union funds? Was all this done for the benefit of the union membership? And so on.

We had the whole question of labor racketeering, extortion, failure to represent the membership, as well as siphoning off union money for personal use. This was all laid bare before the public. And as it happens every so often, the public get exercised. And the public was exercised because the televised hearings of that Senate committee went on I don't know how long, but for quite a while. With this expose of racketeering and financial shenanigans by a number of union leaders there also was strong evidence that several major areas of the country's main labor-management law, the Taft-Hartley law, needed to be strengthened. The question of boycotting, the question of picketing, strangers picketing your place of business because your employees wouldn't join their union. This kind of thing. These were technical amendments, but they were capable of being dramatized so the public got exercised about them--because they were abuses of power by many of the same leaders in organized labor who were already shown to have siphoned off union funds and deprived rank and file union members of every imaginable right inside their unions. In 1957 the President

recommended a package of amendments that dealt with union money management, rights for members inside the unions, and with these necessary reforms of labor management law I referred to--picketing, boycotting, and the like. These recommendations were presented to Congress, hearings were held, and in 1958 a bill passed the Senate but did not pass the House. President Eisenhower would have vetoed it in the form in which it passed the Senate. It was captioned a labor reform law, but didn't really address the problems. It had the label of labor reform, but that was essentially where its resemblance to the President's recommendations ended. The House shared that view as it turned out, and roundly defeated the bill. That was the Kennedy-Ives Bill, named for Senator John Kennedy and Senator Irving Ives of New York, a Republican member of the Senate Labor Committee. It had that bipartisan veneer, and it was a major effort to bring it through the Senate. I've telescoped a lot of time in there. There were, endless ups and downs as it moved along, and some very interesting political by-play. Though the Kennedy-Ives bill was defeated in 1958, public interest remained strong. The President spoke out against Kennedy-Ives.

A monumental amount of work goes into one of these things, you're at it all the time, and when you look back on it, someone says, "What exactly did you do?" You're hard put to say exactly what you did do, except that you lived with the subject all the time. You lived

day in and day out with the people who were the prime movers on the Hill, and you had to because you never knew when something would break loose, and you needed to be on top of it. The President was thoroughly interested in this subject. Concerned about it. He knew a lot more about it than most people gave him credit for. They generally assumed it would be foreign to his background. But he felt strongly about individuals being abused--you belonged to the union and didn't have the right to speak up without getting punched in the nose. He took a dim view of all that. And he wasn't reluctant to say so. So he kept me at it all the time. Well, I shouldn't say all the time, but it was never off his agenda. Sure, there was other major legislation, a housing bill or a rivers and harbors bill. We worked on all of them, but labor reform was a big overriding subject for about two years.

I think most careful analysts will say that during the last six years of his Presidency there were only two major areas where Eisenhower scored the way he started out to score against Congress. He was faced with an opposition Congress for those final six years of his term, but he pretty much got his way on labor reform; and he pretty much got his way on reorganization of the Pentagon. But on virtually every other major issue it was a matter of doing the best we could, staving off disaster, vetoing bills. But only in those two, of the really major legislative areas, did he have what I would regard as a total affirmative success--getting out of Congress essentially what he asked for--on a highly charged big issue.

SOAPES: How would you account for those two exceptions of labor reform and Pentagon reorganization? How was he able to get his way on those when he wasn't on other things?

MCCABE: Well, on labor reform I think we were able to capitalize on this public attitude I referred to earlier. And General Eisenhower was a credible and beloved individual. He had a great personal tie to a big majority of the country. He came out on television, and he talked about labor law reform. And people were concerned to begin with; they didn't know the details but they knew the broad outline. They knew something was fishy, something was going wrong. And then here was a President with no personal ax to grind, whom they believed. He came out and said, "Let's do this about it." That put Landrum-Griffin over the top, I believe.

Reorganization of the military is a more esoteric thing than labor racketeering--quite a bit more. But I think his credibility and his personal military standing were the difference on that legislation. There he capitalized on them very well. I don't recall right at this minute whether he talked to the country on television and radio about reorganization of the military--he did about Landrum-Griffin. And that was well-timed, carefully worked out with the Congressional leaders so that he would go before the public when there was just enough lead time before the vote for people to make their views known, and they did; Congress responded.

So in effect he went over the head of Congress, turned the public loose on Congress, and Congress responded--not to him but to the public. He couldn't have done it had the subject not been one in which so many people were already interested. The McClellan hearings, in which Senator Kennedy and Robert Kennedy played such a part, oddly enough turned the tables on Senator Kennedy. He wanted a different kind of bill and his political constituency, of course, included the leaders of organized labor. The bill we produced in Landrum-Griffin was not acceptable to those leaders of organized labor. So it was an interesting commentary on the times. And President Eisenhower's personal involvement was critical to it. After all he's the one who could command the audience. People listened to him, and they acted after they heard from him.

Now I jumped a moment ago from the Kennedy-Ives Bill of 1958. The process started all over again with the new Congress in 1959. My involvement was the same; only more so--as 1959 went on my personal involvement got to be heavier. One of the reasons for that, and I say this as carefully as I know how, is that the Secretary of Labor at that time, Jim Mitchell, had very great interest and properly so--might have won the election--he had great interest in being a 1960 vice presidential nominee. His constituency, of course, included organized labor so he was treading a very careful political path.

The administration generally, the President specifically, were pushing for what labor leaders regarded as too tough a law. Some of the prime movers on the Hill were people whom organized labor did not regard well at all: Barry Goldwater; Senator Dirksen; to a great degree Senator McClellan; on the House side Charlie Halleck, who was the Republican leader; Judge Smith, Howard Smith of Virginia, who was probably the most influential member of the House in those years, the chairman of the rules committee; and Graham Barden of North Carolina, who chaired the House Labor Committee. All of these people were on the other side of the fence from organized labor and, of course, these were the people with whom the administration had to work. We had to work with everybody across the political spectrum, but to an intense degree we had to work with these because these were the men in positions of power and influence. They were shaping the policy up there, and Secretary Mitchell could not work with them. He didn't share their views; and to his credit he was very direct about that. He made no bones about what he thought. And he was fearful that these guys would carry the ball too far in the direction of what could be easily captioned an anti-union or anti-labor amendment.

So it fell to my lot to work this legislation for the President because the Labor Department for all practical purposes was out of the decision making. Furthermore, I knew all these Hill people well,

had worked with them before, had an easy rapport with them, and there's real value in that in legislative work. You know, there's a mutual trust that's essential. So I got more and more center stage as 1959 wore on and the legislative battle lines shaped up.

The Senate produced still another bill, this time known as the Kennedy-Ervin Bill; that second Senator this time was Sam Ervin of North Carolina. In our view that new bill was as unacceptable as the earlier Kennedy-Ives Bill. I'd say that they were pretty much cut from the same cloth. And then the House Labor committee produced a bill that was not much better. So it became necessary then to develop-- the old classic maneuver that works so well in the House--to develop a substitute. And we did, and that substitute became known as the Landrum-Griffin Bill.

That substitute, by the way, is one various people now claim to have authored. Probably because it succeeded. We heard that various special interests, or their lawyers, had written it, but the facts are different. All one has to do is look at the bills from which Landrum-Griffin was assembled to see that it was really a cut and paste job assembled in my White House office--from various other bills that had been around for months. To illustrate, I believe there were six titles, six sections in the bill that passed the Senate. Those six sections dealt with financial affairs of unions,

and a greater voice internally for the rank and file membership in unions. The decision was made by Judge Smith, Charlie Halleck, Chairman Barden, and me, as to what changes we would make. I recall Judge Smith saying, and the rest of us nodding agreement "When you get this substitute ready, be very sure we make as few changes in those first six titles of the Senate bill as we can stand, as we can get away with." And I think we ended up with two or three changes of wording. But they were major changes in impact, like changing a "have" to a "have not". The impact change was major but the word change was skillful and very narrow. Judge Smith and Halleck and Barden, when the thing got into House Floor debate, were able to say, 'Now we are taking that Senate bill lock, stock, and barrel, except look on page so-and-so, line 22, the words are changed. Two or three such places in six titles. That's all still there, for anyone who takes time to look. So much for the claim that some sinister special interests did it. Your ten-year old nephew could do it. That portion of Landrum-Griffin was really written by Senator Kennedy's staff. But we butchered it for him, a few fellows who knew that if you changed a "have" to a "have not", and a "may" to a "shall", you've changed day to night. That's how it was done on the first six titles of a seven title substitute.

The final title of the bill, Title 7, if those numbers are correct, was the portion that dealt with the Taft-Hartley Law amendments.

And those, while the wording was beaten around quite a bit, were essentially the recommendations President Eisenhower had made first in 1957 and again in 1959. That part was in type, in public, for a couple of years by then. Again, so much for those sinister scribes.

The whole bill was a cut-and-paste reassembly of ideas that had been lying around in public in legislative form for months. There was nothing new about it. The only thing new was that suddenly there was the voting power to pass it.

And I grow a little bit--well, I'm not impatient, I guess I should say by now I'm understanding of the claim that it was all written by the National Association of Manufacturers, or by varied other special interests. Most of those credited with writing it no doubt supported it. But when it came to the bill itself, it was put together in the fashion I described.

What followed was one of the most interesting exercises I think I have ever been involved in--picking the sponsors. How do we pick sponsors? How did we? When the President sent his recommendations to Congress in 1957 for labor law reform, they were introduced as is always the case by the senior Republicans on the two committees. Senator Goldwater on the Senate side at that time, and Congressman Kearns of Pennsylvania on the House side.

So from January we had a Kearns bill and a Goldwater bill; they were the Eisenhower recommendations. The Landrum-Griffin Act was passed late that summer. About midway in the summer Congressman Kearns, much to my distress and over the objection and pleadings of Charlie Halleck, the House Republican leader, and me--we got together with him several times, tried to dissuade him from introducing still another bill of his own which we knew didn't have a snowball's chance of going anywhere, but he was enamoured of it. It was a very involved restructuring of the labor management agencies in government. We thought we had pretty good assurance that he wouldn't do it, but Congressman Kearns, Lord rest his soul, he's now dead, had other troubles. He drank more than he should have. One day, when he had more alcohol than he needed, he introduced his new bill. So here we were. Everybody knew we'd have a substitute bill. I said a while ago--that's the classic House maneuver. The committee comes out with a bad bill, and you build up a little head of steam under a substitute, which is proposed as an amendment on the House floor, and if you have the votes, you win it. You can do that in the House; hard to do in the Senate. But it was the most open secret in town that one of these days the administration would come up with its substitute bill and Carroll Kearns, as senior committee Republican, would introduce it. Standard procedure. Further, Kearns could not credibly be tagged anti-union. He was a natural. So when he popped in this other bill everyone

thought "here's the administration's substitute." Well, it was nothing of the sort. But finding Kearns in the position where he has now authored two bills, we concluded it didn't make sense to have him come up with a third one. We had enough confusion on our hands already. Had he not introduced that second bill of his own he would have been the sponsor of the substitute. Landrum and Griffin would not have gone into the history books as they did. It would have been the Kearns Labor Reform Act. Regrettably for him, he made certain himself that this was not to be.

And we had told him, Halleck and I, said, "You've got to stay loose; you've got to be ready to introduce the administration's substitute. The votes are there, that is what will pass. This will be the Kearns Law." And this of course is the route we wanted to travel, because he was well liked in the House, very well liked, popular fellow. Unions had no hard case against him. And we needed the appearance of moderation too. But he was out of action, by his own move. The other senior committee people were just anathema to organized labor; and we didn't want to borrow more trouble than we had. We had Clare Hoffman of Michigan, who was next in line to Mr. Kearns on the Republican side and who very much wanted to be the author of corrective legislation. But there was such an anti-union aura, an anti-labor history with him, rightly or wrongly, he was known as such, we decided we couldn't put that on our hod to carry, too. So Hoffman was out. Mr. Barden, the Democrat chairman, had

the same problems. We couldn't involve him. So we shopped around a bit, looked over the committee--when I say we, it's primarily Halleck and myself--and out of those discussions we came to the point where it was Phil Landrum, a Georgia Democrat, and Bob Griffin, a Michigan Republican, both of them then young, alert guys on the Labor sub-committee. Suddenly we were bi-partisan.

So we took this patchwork bill out of the bottom drawer and gave it to them and got it going. They announced they were moving legislation as a counter to the bill the committee was producing, which was, as I said a while ago, as bad as the Senate bill. They introduced their bill and then the publicity began to build up.

[Interruption]

MCCABE: Landrum and Griffin introduced identical bills, there were two bills, but it became known popularly as the Landrum-Griffin Bill, and this gave us the extra leverage of the bipartisan approach. And Judge Smith as chairman of the rules committee, as I indicated, regulated the legislative traffic flow. We knew then when the bill would reach the floor, and President Eisenhower had said all along--the subject, by the way, came up regularly--he had said all along that he would go to the public at the right time and advocate the kind of law he thought would serve the interest of the public and union members, management and unions as well.

I said it came up all along, by that I mean week after week the President met with the legislative leadership, the Republican legislative leaders. Talked about the subjects at hand, the issues that were coming up for votes week after week, and labor law reform was discussed often and in some depth. So he was quite familiar with it. He understood what the problems were, and he knew the progress of the legislation, and he was ready when it came his turn to add this extra element which was so important, that is, going to the public. So once the Landrum and Griffin bills were introduced we knew then that the time was at hand to stir things with the radio and television audience.

And one other very interesting item intruded along about then. And that was the, well, it didn't really intrude because I mentioned earlier the House was producing a bill. The House committee had produced a bill, and there was a lot of backing and filling about when that would be brought out of committee, when maybe the committee would hold back and frustrate this effort to orchestrate the publicity with the Landrum substitute. But the chairman somehow prevailed and moved the bill out of committee even though he didn't approve of it, so it could be scheduled for House floor action, and when it was, of course, the Landrum-Griffin amendment came along, an amendment in the nature of a substitute, which was passed and, of course, became the vehicle from then on, became the House bill.

But the President said, "All right, I'll go on television." Jim Hagerty saw to the television arrangements, and I was instructed to go and hide and come up with a draft of a talk, which I did. And which you, I think, will find somewhere in the Library out in Abilene.

SOAPES: There is a speech file.

MCCABE: There are drafts, there were several drafts and I remember turning those in, before I left the White House, turning them in for the Library. I brought the first draft to the President, and he read it and kept it for maybe a day and then got back to me. He made some changes, not major editing, but added a couple of new thoughts. I spoke earlier about Secretary Mitchell and his sort of, well, really being left on the sidelines on this whole exercise. Of course, he was still very interested as he should have been. It was his major area, and he came to the White House to look over the draft text.

I remember Jim Mitchell saying, "I don't think this opening paragraph is worth anything. That has to come out. I won't have the President saying that." And he was testy about it. I said, "Jim, why?" And he said, I don't see why anybody would say that this is not a bill about certain other things--labor standards or

whatever." And he said, "Why is that in there?"

And I remember saying, "Well, Jim, those words were put in there by the commander-in-chief himself. If you want them out, we'll have to go to him." So that's when he subsided. But the President made changes like that, and they helped adapt it to his own style.

But there were probably three drafts that you would find out there at Abilene, and each one of them, I am quite sure, would have some of the President's own editing. And we talked maybe a half dozen times about it. He'd get an idea, and inquire about it, but he was very respectful of the technical side of it. For example, it talked about a boycott and blackmail picketing. Then, of course, we had to give an example in words sufficiently clear that the average listener would understand it. But it was, well, he'd see that he might want to change a word around or remove something from one line to another, but he wanted to be very sure that in doing this he wouldn't come out describing something that wasn't accurate.

So he was very involved in that talk. And when it came time to deliver it, it went over very well. It created quite an "avalanche", a good word, of mail the telegrams to the White House and to Congress. I might say, too, then getting back for a moment to the changes we made--if you look to see that, I'm sure maybe I have it somewhere around the office in some old files here--but the text as released

early to the press is different from the speech as actually delivered, in some minor particulars. That is only because on--really as he went through dinner, probably that night before he went on television, he made some further changes, tinkering with the words.

Landrum-Griffin passed the House, and the vote was tremendous. It was sort of a bone-breaking situation. There were more members of the House on hand to vote on that bill than had ever voted in the history of the House before. I think there were four hundred and thirty live bodies recorded. There may have been more on votes since then, but up to that point in history there were never that many. The critical vote carried by a margin of fifteen. Then there was a pro forma vote on final passage. The bill cleared the House and went to the Senate and then on to conference. A final comment on that critical vote where our side won by roughly fifteen votes. This was in a House of Representatives that was at least two to one--I don't remember the precise numbers, but it was roughly two to one against us. Against our side, against the Republicans, against the President, a House heavily beholden to organized labor.

That's a wonderful example of how Congress responds to the public. But the public has to be worked up; the public has to understand the issue so it can assert itself to Congress. And there was just enough of a ground swell running, all going back to the McClellan

hearings. Senator John Kennedy's and Bobby Kennedy's part in that was very important, although they and their union friends were totally opposed to Landrum-Griffin. But their televised hearings had built up this public aversion to what was going on, and over-all our side was able to capitalize on it, and it worked.

The conference between the House and Senate was a tough one. Of course, I didn't get into that, although I lived up on the Hill all the way through it. I mean lived up there--morning and night I was in a room off the House floor, and the friendly House conferees met there before and after each session, reviewed our strategy. And that was an exciting time, it went on for about ten days.

It was during that conference that one other very interesting problem came to the White House, which--and reflects a little bit of the, on the sturdiness of President Eisenhower. I, by this time, was certainly well known to organized labor. I was clearly the guy from the White House who was involved in producing this bill they opposed. And it was clear that Secretary Mitchell, who was friendly to unions, was not in on it.

The unions were well aware things were not shaping up well from their point of view. They were aware that the White House was in league with these forces on the Hill that were producing this bill, and they knew that I was going up to the Hill early in the morning and

coming back late at night, and I was meeting regularly with all these people who were doing these things. And somebody, or several people, in the hierarchy of organized labor came to Secretary Mitchell with the request that he do whatever was necessary to remove me from the operating end of things on the Hill. And he did come to the White House with that. He didn't talk directly to the President on it. He did talk to the chief of the White House staff, General Persons, made this request and Persons, of course, said No. I stayed on the assignment. But the unions were playing hard ball. I took a lot of heart from the fact that the unions were worried enough to try this through Mitchell. It made me think that their sensing of things might perhaps parallel our own and that the votes were there to pass our bill and not theirs. I don't know, but I have the impression from something General Persons said to me later on, that he did not mention this item to the President. Anyhow, all systems were go. I was to keep on doing what I was doing. So the bill became law, the President signed it without much fanfare, and then we went on to other things.

SOAPES: As you were working through on this bill, did you have frequent need to seek guidance from anyone else in the White House or were you really very much on your own?

MCCABE: Well, both. I was very much on my own, but I kept people apprised of where we were. Bryce Harlow was immediately ahead of

me in the chain of command; he was aware of it but he took no role in it. He needed to be generally apprised of where things were. He and I worked so well and so closely together that I don't think he ever had any feeling that he needed to be involved to monitor what we were doing. General Persons and I and Bryce Harlow, we all had the same relationship with each other, but it was a big issue on which we perhaps talked two or three times a week as we'd assess the big issues we were scuffling with. And in this sense there was kind of a constant communication, but on the technical side of it and on the step-by-step strategy area of that, inside the White House I was looked to as the guy to call those shots.

I mentioned also that we'd met on a weekly basis--we, the White House legislative staff--met with the President and the Republican legislative leaders and on that front the subject came up, came up often, and it was invariably Mr. Halleck and I who would talk about it.

So that's why I say the answer to your question is to me it was both. I was left very much on my own in one sense, but we were all so much a part of a small team keeping each other apprised that everybody was up to date. I guess by and large nobody had any great question about it; nobody had any question about the general direction in which we were going. And we were able, really, to assure people all along that what we were pushing for, what we hoped

to come out with, would be something very close to what the President had recommended in the first place. And that really is what happened.

There are some differences, of course, but in the main the Landrum-Griffin bill, and the President's recommendations for legislation, cover the subject of financial management, accountability for union funds, kind of bill of rights for union members--so that, as I said earlier, you won't get belted in the nose when you speak up in a union meeting. Maybe you do, but you're not supposed to, and if you did you now had a right to redress your grievances internally. There was some rein on the extent to which some union leaders were able to use union funds for personal things. Kick backs of all sorts were ventilated in those McClellan hearings, and they were covered both by the President's recommendations and by Landrum-Griffin. And then generally the basic recommendations for Taft-Hartley reform, boycotting, picketing, and the like I mentioned, they were covered. So we came out about where we went in. And when you're in that posture, inside the White House, nobody's getting nervous. You're not carving out a whole new concept of law so, you know, the policy decision had long been made that these were correctives that needed to be legislated and so that's what we were working on. We knew what we were doing.

So it was a relaxed air. And, I might add, an air of some real enjoyment. It was quite a battle, and we all got into the spirit of the thing. And people from the President right on down enjoyed it, and

you enjoy it especially, of course, when you win. We weren't winning too many big ones in those days. I enjoy winning; and I enjoyed the attention that came with this one.

SOAPES: My next question is more to the spirit of your actions on this--it's been described by commentators as a punitive labor bill. From your point of view was that your objective, to be punitive?

MCCABE: You can always strain at words. I know, first of all, it was not our objective to be punitive. It was not our objective, really, to be in any sense harsh or unfair to anybody. We were looking at abuses; Congress was looking at abuses that needed correction. Now that sounds kind of, that sounds self-serving to say that, but I would add to that that I don't think the legislation is punitive. I don't regard it as punitive, say to you and to me as union members that we now have a right to question a decision of our union leadership and to be safe from reprisal for having questioned it. I don't think it's punitive to say that if you and I are union leaders we ought to be held accountable for the management of the union's money, and that there ought to be a reporting of our stewardship to the union. Or when a union member is called in, for example, as a witness in a hearing before the National Labor Relations Board, he ought not to be subject to punishment by his union if he simply tells the truth in a government hearing. Things like that.

Now, there were some unions that didn't honor these kinds of things, didn't do these things, and you know to that extent they may say,

"Well, this is a punitive thing to do to us." Let them say it, but I think they're talking nonsense. If they were behaving as the new law required, then the new law didn't hurt them. For those who weren't behaving, employees and the public needed the protections the new law provided. The law certainly hasn't inhibited unions. And pro-union Congresses and pro-union Presidents haven't tried to change it. Union influence in politics, in the economic affairs of the country as well, have grown and been solidified, so I think that the record since will show that they haven't been hurt. And I think the words like punitive and anti-labor and terminology of this sort is more in the political oratory category than anything else.

SOAPES: Would it be accurate to say that the Eisenhower administration saw a dichotomy between the interests of labor leadership and labor union members?

MCCABE: Very much so. Very much so. But I would qualify that in terms of union leadership. Abuses were pervasive, but not all union leadership needed new regulation. But there were enough of the top leadership in organized labor involved in the things we regarded as bad practices that there was that dichotomy, and this is a thing the President was always careful in making any public statement about it. It reflected his private statements, too. He didn't tar everybody with one brush; and there were bad guys along with the good guys, and we just had to go in and protect those who were the victims of the misconduct that did exist. And if we do that and don't do any more, we're

not hurting anybody. That is, we're not putting a requirement on anyone that's unfair or in any way onerous. I would have to say that label of punitive or unduly restrictive or anti-union is not appropriate here.

SOAPES: In the conference committee you recall any major sticking points?

MCCABE: There were some, there were several. I'm just hard put this minute to recall what they were. They were more technical than broad concepts though. There was, for example, a real sticking point on some provisions--the so-called free speech, or the picketing, sign, you know, signpost carrying that goes with picketing. There were some things in there that were important in the world of clothing manufacture, the clothing unions, and that was a sticking point for maybe a couple of days. There were language problems on various points. Lots of argument on the big concepts, of course. But they always became up or down votes, and we won those. On all these arguments in conference, I worked closely with the House conferees. That's where--let me back off a point here.

You'll remember that conference committees vote as a unit. The House conference was made up of nine members, and there was a majority of five for what I call here "our" view; two Democrats and three Republicans. Barden and Landrum were the Democrats who were for Landrum-Griffin. Kearns, Ayres of Ohio and Griffin were the three Republicans

who shared the view. There were four others on the committee, on the House conference group, who didn't agree with us. So the House group was divided five to four on every issue that came up. And our goal always was to hold that unit intact, so the House would not fragment itself; the House unit would not fragment itself.

And we were careful, as I started to say before I digressed there, we wanted to be very careful that we didn't let a small point break up the conference. Because if you break up a conference, and the conferees cannot agree, they go back to each House for instructions. You're in danger of starting all over again; and the work of several years could have been dismantled overnight. So we monitored that very, very carefully. We worked with it. And I want to add there that when I say we monitored it, I mean again my own working with the leaders of the House group, and Halleck and Judge Smith working with these conferees too. And nobody wanted to rock that boat by, you know, sticking on some narrow point where you win that battle, and lose the whole war if you break up the conference on a thing like that.

So there were a few little things on which we might have seen a storm cloud like that on the horizon and we'd say, "Well, let's go with it." We don't need that all that much, so something small would be jettisoned in the interest of getting the whole bill through. But these were very minor things because the big issues were clear, and there was no way the conference could fail to produce on those issues. And they did.

The final version of the bill, as I said a while ago, is essentially what the President had gone in to get. We were lucky to come out with it. You know, you don't devise and plan and scheme something like this and carefully shepherd it through three years--just doesn't happen that way. You have to have some good breaks going for you, and we did. We had some awfully able leadership up in the Congress. I remember one day shortly before the vote on the Landrum-Griffin substitute in the House, having a cup of coffee with Halleck and Chairman Barden in his office and Judge Smith came in.

[Interruption]

And the big question--how many votes are for and against, and the unions were around the Capitol in force. They were really up there lobbying. They were bringing them in from all over the country, as they should have. And I remember--and these fellows, Halleck, Barden and Smith, had a great personal relationship. They'd go fishing together and had known each other for years and worked together, great needlers. And I remember Halleck saying to Smith, "Judge, how many votes you think you're going to have on your side?"--the Democratic side. And Smith sort of looked over his pipe a while and then in his slow, quiet way he said, "Oh," he said, "I think somewhere, we're going to fall somewhere between ninety and a hundred." There were a lot of guesstimates flying around at that time. But Smith knew pretty well. It turned out to be a ninety-six.

Halleck, in another setting, I remember, saying there were, I think there were a hundred and forty-three House Republicans, and he had it all, just all framed out in his own thinking. He knew that there were a hundred and twenty-some [that we] were absolutely sure of. There were four or five others who would come along and vote if their vote was needed, but he and his interest, his job as a leader, his interest in them individually, had said to them, "All right, why don't you vote on the second roll call. You wait until the second and if we need you, then you vote with us. But if not, I mean you vote 'no' because that's going to be politically useful to you at home." So (inaudible).

These were guys who just knew this area so well, and this was a great part of the success of our venture. There were consummate pros running it on the Hill, and there's no way to beat that. And it was probably the last of the various high water marks, if we can use that term, of that kind of thing, that working together. The Republicans teaming up with the southern Democrats in the persons of Halleck and Smith and Barden to put this thing together and put it over. But they knew what they wanted to do. They tailored their approach in the House as closely as they possibly could to what the Senate had done, so they would be in a position of not confronting the House with a whole new set of words and phrases; and they knew where the votes were. And they knew that the President would be a great help and worked hand in glove with him on the timing of his going to the public. Because he

was the attention getter. He rang the bell with the public. Put it all together that way. Just a great exercise to be a part of.

INTERVIEW WITH
Mr. Edward McCabe

by

Doctor Maclyn Burg
Oral Historian

on

October 7, 1977

for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER LIBRARY

Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interview of

EDWARD A. McCABE

In accordance with the Provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, Edward A. McCabe, of Washington, DC, hereinafter referred to as the donor, do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title and interest in the tape recordings and transcripts of personal interviews conducted on July 1, 1975; March 2, 1977; October 7, 1977 and June 22, 1978 and prepared for deposit in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library. This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

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Edward A. McCabe
Donor

October 16, 1989
Date

Christine J. Neider
Acty Archivist of the United States

12/27/89
Date

This interview is being taped with Mr. Edward McCabe in Mr. McCabe's offices in Washington, D.C. on October 7, 1977. Present for the interview, Mr. McCabe and Dr. Maclyn Burg of the Eisenhower Library staff.

DR. BURG: Tom was quite happy with what was accomplished on your White House period. He did suggest to me that he thought it would be a good idea if we could get you to discuss some of the personalities that you worked with at the White House. What he had in mind was Bryce Harlow, Jack Anderson, Clyde Wheeler, Persons, Sherman Adams as a matter of fact. What I have in mind is, let us take each of these men for the period of time that we have. What would you say was the strongest point in Bryce Harlow? What did he bring? What particular qualities did he bring to the administration as you think back on those times?

MR. MCCABE: I would say with Bryce there were and say it with everybody else there, there were a number of things in each man's makeup that could be called strengths and contributions. But focusing for the moment on Bryce, he had extensive Washington experience. He understood the governmental system and had a real awareness of how the executive branch and the Congress worked together and what the operating relationship really is between the two branches. It's quite a trick to discover that, and some never do, or somehow refuse to believe it. It's an adversary relationship, and the two branches sort of bump together and grate on one another all the time. And it's there even when the President's

Party controls Congress. Not to the degree, of course, that exists when the Parties aren't the same. Yet that adversary condition needs to be taken into account, always. There is invariably the language of cooperation and the appearance, and in many cases there's the reality of cooperation--but there's always this wary, watchful thing, and Bryce understood that and knew how to work with it. And this was a great, great contribution. There were other things. He knew the importance of clarity in communication with the Hill; also, when you give your word, make a promise, you'd better honor it. If you ever failed there, you were dead. Bryce is very bright, quick. A grand human being, thoughtful to others, generous. An exceptional writer.

BURG: I don't like to use the word weakness, except it happens to be an appropriate word I suppose--I know myself I can evaluate the strengths I have and I think I recognize where my weaknesses are. I try to stay clear of those areas where I would be playing from my weakness. How about in Bryce's case? Was there any area where he was, in your estimation, less effective?

MCCABE: Oh, there probably are some. A little hard to pick any out.

BURG: We might think--did he lack patience, for example?

MCCABE: As a matter of fact it could be that a weakness might be he had too much patience.

BURG: Oh, really?

MCCABE: Perhaps he could have got things done with less wear and tear on himself, if he'd been more pushy with people. He was perhaps more considerate of Hill feelings than he needed to be, yet not seriously so. I would rather err on that side than on the other. It's hard, really, to think of as we used the term, weaknesses, in Bryce's handling of his assignment there.

BURG: You had no doubt of his intellectual capacities?

MCCABE: No, no doubt of that. And on that general point, I've developed a view over the years that you don't need,--and are perhaps better off without people in the White House who are characterized as brilliant, genius, just so far ahead of the rest of us mortals that you expect great things from them all the time. Public relations kinds of descriptions. You get those from most new administrations. This one on the new staff or that one, and of course the new President himself, whoever he is, coming on the scene new--. If you really let yourself believe all you read about them, you know, they're all just extraordinary folks coming in to take over. But I don't think there are any. And I think that some people get to believe some of such things they read about themselves, as to

their remarkable intellectual capacity--as though they can out think or outsmart either the system or the opposition, or the Congress, or the media. I'm reminded of the plaque that says "If you're not worried you just don't understand the situation". And they come a cropper every time, every last one of them. I just can't think of anybody who has ever successfully been the "brilliant" individual. I think what we need in any White House are able people who have an awareness of their place, an awareness of the White House place in the government scheme, and as I said in respect to Bryce, a deep awareness of how the system works and a proper touch of humility. If you have all that you're going to realize you can't run roughshod over anything or anybody--but neither can they run over you. Assert your prerogatives correctly. And, if you're--oh, you can't be a dummy, but, there's I think a need to eliminate this notion that somebody or some group are just so brilliant that, we hardly need light when they're around. People like that are accident prone. Dangerous. They don't do any good for the President or the White House, just as people who might be dumb wouldn't do any good. I think we should peel them off both ends of that--

BURG: You don't want the unorthodox, then? By and large.

MCCABE: That might be a good way of putting it. We need good, able, alert, trained people who are willing to work and who have, well,

integrity is a good label. You need to be faithful to your charge, whatever your job, and you've got to be smart enough not to play tricks on anybody or not to have tricks pulled on you. Don't ever try to be slick or cute because you're going to outsmart yourself the first thing. You need people of real substance in those jobs.

BURG: Yes. It's interesting, your response interests me because there had been a mild, I think I want to put it no stronger than that, a mild criticism of the Eisenhower administration and the White House staff particularly, that one of your strengths was the team spirit, the similarity of all of you, that you were very much of a type. And the question then arose, in this particular scholar's mind, that very thing that gave you strength, loyalty, team spirit, might also have denied the President solutions that lay outside the kinds of solutions that a staff of such similarity would come up with. Now I don't know that he went so far as to say denied you brilliancy; perhaps that was in his mind. But your thought is, too much brilliancy is an unorthodox approach, is not a good thing in a White House staff. Do you think that you did deny him any wider solutions that might have been possible?

MCCABE: Might have. It's hard to know. You know, we were what we were, and I believe we did a solid job. I just doubt that White House staff assistants, though, can or should try to come up with

brilliant, innovative, ingenious solutions to very complicated problems. Government problems at that level are, first of all, likely to have an intractable aspect. Very difficult or they'd be solved long before they reached White House level. Invariably, they call for the expertise of Departments and the operating people. If you have a great idea, give it to the people who run that area of government. If it's brilliant, they'll make it work. I guess I just view the staff role differently. If you hope or expect White House staffers to solve big problems with brilliant stropes, why do you need a Cabinet, or Departmental experts. But as to the thought that the scholar you referred to advances, I doubt that we missed a great deal by the lack of, you know, this seeming flair for brilliance in the staff.

BURG: You make the point, too, Mr. McCabe, if he had the time. That, I presume, might be a very strong problem mightn't it, that you might have brilliance--

MCCABE: I think so.

BURG: --if they can study it thoroughly, but most of you were hard pressed with full days, day after day, where does the time come for leisurely study of issues?

MCCABE: That's right. But I keep coming back to the question of what's the most useful function or role of White House staff people and how is the President going to use the Departments and agencies that are expert in different areas. That to me is a key question, and I think Eisenhower organized it all very well.

In congressional relations, what an administration can get through Congress, it really won't turn on anybody's brilliance because there isn't anything going to be all that new. You're trying to get the President's programs through, and you have to know how to get along with people, how to bring diverse factions together on the Hill, to know whom to try to get together with whom, how and when to compromise, and so on. You really have to know and understand that system and it's kind of methodical, hard work. It's a little bit like what used to be the line play in football, as distinguished from a flashy halfback who might pick up a loose ball and, make his own play and run the rest of the way. I suppose you might find that sometime, the inventive nature of somebody in the White House but you better not figure that in as any major part of your system. I wouldn't count on it, and I'd stick to basics.

Your reference to time, you do need time to think about things, but you'd better also have a lot of experience. This is why I--I don't know Henry Kissinger, and I'm certainly not expert enough to assess

his performance, but here's a fellow who made foreign relations and its intricacies his life's work. So he not only, if he had the time, assuming that while he was in the Nixon White House he had time to sit and let things simmer and come up with bright, new ideas, he also had the experience to know--. Be one thing for me to sit around looking out the window and daydream up a bright, new idea which would probably be idiocy because I have no knowledge of foreign relations. You've got to put experience and ability along with the time to do it. And even then, you better keep the operating people in the Departments fully wired in or your heading into trouble.

BURG: Well, I think, too, the time required to gain knowledge of how you must function on the Hill from your position in the White House, the long time to gain that experience and knowledge is time that is not spent in other things. And we run up against the old economic principle of more beer, more potatoes. The time given to knowing how to maneuver, how to work, is not time spent peacefully in your study poring over tomes that will teach you the intricacies of government philosophies and other things.

MCCABE: No. You just keep on polishing your skills and you're adding to your knowledge of how, again how the system works. I think that's the real key.

BURG: How about Jack Z. Anderson as a practioner of these arts as you think back to his performance? How would you contrast him with Harlow, for example?

MCCABE: Very different individual. A very effective guy, very useful, again using your word, of the team, very useful member of the team. Jack very carefully excluded himself in his own mind and in everybody else's mind from what he called the technical side. He didn't purport to be a technician on housing matters, even on agriculture matters where he had come from the Department of Agriculture, or on labor relations or foreign relations, or anything else. He said, "I'll leave that to the specialists." In fact his strength was his knowledge of the House of Representatives and in an extra way his love of the House of Representatives. He literally loved the institution, was intrigued by the way it operated, and focused himself almost entirely on contacting, being in touch with people. I don't think there ever was a day on Jack's White House service that he didn't spend most of his time in the House of Representatives.

BURG: Physically there.

MCCABE: Physically there. In the lunchroom, in the gymnasium, and as a former member, of course, he knew a lot of people. He was careful not to intrude himself on the Floor, although as a former member

he had Floor privileges. I'd be surprised if Jack ever ventured onto the Floor just because it wouldn't look good--a little bit much for a White House assistant, who was interested--in effect lobbying the legislature, to be out there on the Floor. But Jack just moved around the House all the time. He learned an awful lot of what was going on just being there, and so much of the legislative process, certainly in those days--I suspect it's still so--was moved on a handshake, an understanding, your word was your bond up there. You didn't need a commitment in writing from Congressman X or Senator Y that he would go along with this or that or make a certain motion at the proper time. If he said so, you relied on it and you knew it. And so there's an awful lot of just awareness that Jack brought to the White House--what was going on. But he didn't have much time for the Senate. He recognized it as the other legislative body, but he was really a House man from the beginning and a very good one. He didn't purport, as I say, to be aware of the niceties of the substance of a legislative program. Some of the rest of us from time to time did, like Bryce in the defense area and I in labor legislation. Jack would not claim to be a writer of any consequence. Bryce, of course, was and is a gifted writer, a fine wordsmith. Jack's strengths were in the areas I described.

BURG: A kind of man, then, who's very effective in dealing with these people. Knew them well, knew what it was to be in that body, knew how

it worked, and seemingly, well in your own words--loved being there and with them which would enhance his effectiveness no end.

MCCABE: It brought a dimension, too, the White House staff needed. I can't think right off of a specific, although I'm sure there were many, a specific example of how it was useful to us. But you get a small staff as we were talking about a problem, worrying something through, thinking about a strategy or techniques, and it would help, did help, many times help a great deal to have, in the meeting, just the awareness Jack Anderson brought as to what current attitudes were in the House. We were in constant touch with the Republican Hill leadership, of course, but it was very nice too to have our own man in residence. And Jack was aware if this or that idea one of us might have, well, would it fly or wouldn't it in the House, or would it need to be modified in this way or that way. Again I'm talking not really in terms of substance of a particular program, but the concepts we would have, the ideas and the timing of legislative moves. It was great insurance, the kind of thing Jack Anderson brought, great insurance against missteps, wrong assumptions, well, pratfalls of all kinds that can easily attend White House relationships with Congress. And--

BURG: Which implies he knew the Democratic side of the House pretty well, too.

MCCABE: Oh, he did. Yes. You know, he lived up there for whatever it was, fourteen or sixteen years he'd been a member of the House. There's a great club atmosphere up there, and Jack was a gregarious fellow to begin with, sort of like Will Rogers, never met anyone he didn't like. I suspect that there were not many people who met Jack without liking him. And he was aware of what was going on, both sides of the aisle.

BURG: And I gather, if again we use that word I brought in, of weakness, from what you've told me it would sound as though Mr. Anderson was well aware of his limitations.

MCCABE: Yes, he didn't try to be something that he didn't feel fully equipped to be.

BURG: He stayed with that thing in which his skills rested and performed well in your estimation.

MCCABE: Yes, That's right, and I think that here again, and this is my own notion of the purported strengths or weaknesses, there are so many things to do in that kind of assignment that if you can do well the things you're equipped to do, your absence of activity in these other areas wouldn't, in my judgment, amount to a weakness at all. Really it's a form of strength in knowing where you can do your best work, and applying yourself.

BURG: Well, I concur.

MCCABE: And it rounded off rather nicely the kind of team that we had.

BURG: What does Clyde Wheeler bring to that team? Because I think he's another man that you know.

MCCABE: Yes. Clyde was a relative short-termer in the White House. He had worked as a staff assistant in a Congressional office, House of Representatives office, had worked as a legislative aide in the Department of Agriculture, and he supplemented Jack Anderson in that primary function. He was to help Jack sort of cover the House and to bring a little extra knowledge on agriculture programs. We were into some agriculture legislation during those years.

But Clyde was well informed, an all purpose legislative man who, very quiet, self effacing, had what I regard as the right degree of respect for the institution he was working with, that is working with the House. And on some special matters as Jack Anderson would occasionally be, rarely, but they'd end up working also with the Senate say on Agriculture matters where they both had a, a background and a depth of experience the rest of us didn't. But Clyde also brought a thoroughness. People on the Hill who worked with him knew that he was not given to extravagant descriptions of things, that he was factual.

He was direct, he was low key, and you could rely on him. I mean if he told you something, you knew he wasn't guessing about it; that if he didn't know what the President was liable to do, he, you know, had the humility to say, "Well, I don't know. I'll find out."

BURG: Still comes across that way to me. And still a seeker of information. A man who has an idea of where to go to find out the things that interest him and may need to know. I didn't have the opportunity to meet General Persons. Tom did. He would not talk on the tape, but Tom, I think, talked with him for an hour, an hour and a half, just a long conversation, a fascinating conversation. What can you say about him?

MCCABE: Oh, golly, he really was the spark of that White House staff. He was the, well, he was the center of activity, in the sense of--I don't quite find the words--or the wellspring of understanding of all we were trying to do. He more than anybody understood Washington. He'd been in it, it was sort of a life work with him, fascinated him. He understood the President. You know acquire that over time, but Jerry Persons had it from the beginning. And that, I was not there in those first couple of years, that must have been a very steady influence of this new staff. You know, where you had a Persons who knew that your bright idea would just be something the President would not do, would not be interested in. He knew, he understood the President's mind, his way of working, his thinking, and his approach to the job.

BURG: Did the staff have a habit of checking with Persons?

MCCABE: Oh, yes, very much so. His door was always open, and his phone was always answered, and he made his own phone calls to the Hill a lot. He didn't feel that he was too big to do that. He could engage in small talk, somehow without wasting time at it, he still got his job done.

But more than anything else I'd say that he understood Washington in great depth, he had a feel for Washington. That is, what can happen to you in Washington, and he understood how a White House Staff should conduct itself with the rest of Washington. He understood Congress awfully well. People up there knew him and liked him. He was busy, in touch with people on the Hill all the time. He's a, again a very gregarious, friendly fellow, funny, most amusing and entertaining. He could lighten the heaviness of any meeting, a good sense of humor, and he could laugh at himself. But he wanted to get the job done and he did. But understanding the executive branch was important, and he just had an instinctive awareness, I think, of where the State Department might be taking aim at the Defense Department and vice versa, or Interior taking a shot at Agriculture. He kind of knew--he used the term, knew where all the bodies were buried. He just had a lot of wisdom in his bones about Washington.

He also had great regard for the job the press had to do. I don't mean by that that he agreed with everything he read; he could snort as much as anybody else at a column or a news story that he thought might hit us on the wrong side, but he didn't get carried away with the idea that somebody was out to do us in. He saw that they had a job to do out there in the media, and he also recognized, this is so vital I think to any administration, that it isn't just Congress that can do in the executive but the media can--and the public.

You have to look all around you in Washington, and you find all the intrigue and the cross-currents and the infighting of the executive branch, including an unwillingness at times even in Cabinet Departments to work thoroughly with the President, a certain sliding away from positions, quietly lobbying against the White House. You just need to be aware that this goes on. There are institutionalized organizations that go on like Tennyson's brook--they go on forever, Presidents come and go. Persons knew and understood this...

[Interruption]

MCCABE: --respected the job Congress had to do. And pretty quickly it was known all around that this was the kind of man he was, and he brought the staff together. He was careful that we didn't get cross-wise with the cabinet officers and that the staff didn't decide to take to itself, you know, the function that was properly in the

President's mind delegated to cabinet officers. So he was a great leveler, a great influence for stability all the way through. And I think if I had to single out anybody, I'd say he was the most important member of the White House staff.

BURG: Really. That's an impressive thing to hear about him. More so than Sherman Adams?

MCCABE: Yes.

BURG: Yes.

MCCABE: Well, he--you know, he was there for the full eight years; Sherman Adams was very, very impressive performer, and he had to leave, he left I think after, well, he was gone for the final two and a half years which is a good chunk out of an eight-year term. Jerry Persons moved into that senior slot when Adams left, he shared it in the organization concept with my old friend and mentor, Gerry Morgan. But Persons was the mainspring of the operation all the way through, and I know that in my time there with the two of them, that is when Adams and Persons were there together, that in matters where I was involved, and the two of them were involved, Persons was not a second-place man and Adams wasn't a first-place man. There was a great team, that's an overused word, I don't mean just this team spirit which really can conjure up a wrong impression, but there was a sharing and a recognition in each of them that the other brought important capabilities

to whatever it is that we were trying to do together. And I never felt that say Persons was number two man and Adams was number one. I knew Adams really was number one because he was the chief of staff, and Persons knew that and Adams knew that, but there was this working together in the two of them that I thought was just admirable and in many cases--.

Of course, this moves me over to a thought about Adams. Adams was often perceived to be a martinet, a give orders guy; that was not my experience with him at all. He was a good listener, he wanted to know what you thought. He didn't waste a lot of time in coming to a decision himself, but there were many times when I discussed things with him and he wanted to know, "What do you think we ought to do? You've been into this." He'd look to you to produce. He had assigned you something, and he felt that you ought to produce, and he would listen, and he might come onto a meeting, not so much with a preconceived notion in the way of orders he was about to issue, you know, snap his fingers and issue a bunch of directives. He would always have a good awareness of what it was you were working on. You'd lay the case out to him, and he'd want your analysis and your idea of what should be done. He'd want to know why and you'd talk about it. He gave you his full attention. He valued your views. That's the sort of experience I had with him.

BURG: Well, his disinclination to waste time probably, which caused a certain abruptness I think, led to this other view of him as martinet and hard-driver.

MCCABE: Yes. Unfortunately it did.

INTERVIEW WITH
Mr. Edward McCabe

by

Maclyn P. Burg
Oral Historian

on

June 22, 1978

for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER LIBRARY

Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interview of

EDWARD A. McCABE

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Edward A. McCabe
Donor

October 16, 1989
Date

Chandra J. Neider
Archivist of the United States

12/27/89
Date

This is an interview with Mr. Edward McCabe in Mr. McCabe's office in Washington, D.C., on June 22, 1978. Present for the interview are Dr. Burg of the Eisenhower Library staff and Mr. McCabe.

DR. BURG: We had finished off on our last session your comments on a number of people that you had known in the White House, particularly Bryce Harlow, Jack Z. Anderson, Clyde Wheeler, General Persons. We talked some about Sherman Adams. Tom Soapes, who did one of the interviews with you, asked that you be queried about your remembrances about certain personalities in the Congress, and he was particularly interested in your impressions over time of, first of all, Charles Halleck from Indiana. When did you first encounter him, for example?

MR. MCCABE: I first saw Halleck, but not really to know him, first saw him at the time the Taft-Hartley law was being debated and that was in the 80th Congress, when I was just a junior helper around the Senate and still in law school. In the early '50s, the first year of the Eisenhower Administration, I became Counsel to the House Labor Committee. I was by then a lawyer and took this appointment, and Halleck was the Republican leader at that time the Majority Leader of the House. Joe Martin was the Speaker. And I--because of the subject area of that committee, the labor area--I had the opportunity to be in regular touch with Halleck. When I moved to the White House in the end of 1955, I was involved from then on in general White House legislative

activities and as such had a literally, almost a daily contact with Halleck for those five years. Wouldn't literally talk to him every day, but there was rarely a day that I wasn't involved in some legislative undertaking in which he, too, was involved, I was in countless meetings with him. Some major planning and strategy sessions too--as with the Landrum-Griffin Labor Law reform bill, in the late 1950s. You know, the exercise went on for a couple of years as we discussed earlier. I got to know Halleck well, I'm happy to say I was one of his favorites around the White House. Along with Bryce Harlow, and Gerry Morgan, and Jerry Persons. I think we were the people with whom he felt most at home. We saw a lot of him. We invited ourselves up to lunch in his office many, many times. Just had a great rapport. So I'd say I knew him well.

I have to say that Charlie Halleck was one of the ablest, most astute legislators I have ever seen, and I've seen an awful lot of them. He stood out among, I mean, among others who themselves were standouts. He just had great, great instincts for the kind of legislative results that could be brought about. He was no visionary; he was a tough, hard-working legislator, and he knew what the probabilities were going into a fight. And he just could put the combinations of voting blocs together to bring it off more successfully and--I'd say more often, but we didn't have

that many successes--[laughter] but he did it more effectively than anybody I've ever seen. He could do more with those smaller numbers that he had to work with than anybody I've seen. But Halleck was the tops. He was well regarded by his colleagues. There was always that jousting for position, of course. Every leader, Halleck included, from the day he's chosen leader has about six or eight others who are quietly, and with a great deal of surface politeness, they're taking dead aim at his job, and he had that situation as every leader does. But even those who would like to have unseated him just had to know and had to admit that as an operator on the hill he was tops.

BURG: You actually heard that expressed by other Republicans?

MCCABE: Yes. Oh, yes. Not on the whole frame of reference that I use on it. There were people who to my certain knowledge were aspiring to be the leader and would like for their own ends--their own ambitions--to have replaced Halleck. I've heard them comment in the middle of some tough legislative squabble, how good this guy really is.

BURG: Did you ever know him to fail on one of these tasks for reasons over which he had control?

MCCABE: No.

BURG: I can imagine him running into tough combinations that simply couldn't be broken down.

MCCABE: Oh, yes, sometimes you can't manage the arithmetic, the votes are not here.

BURG: Exactly.

MCCABE: But no. I never saw any situation where--perhaps another way of saying that would be--where Charlie Halleck mismanaged his assets.

BURG: Yes, yes. Now how about the President himself. Did he share your view as far as you could tell of Charlie Halleck?

MCCABE: Well, yes. I would say he did. He necessarily didn't know Halleck in the detail that those of us did who spent hours with him compared to, let's say minutes the President spent--that kind of comparison. But the President knew him, enjoyed him, and had a great respect for Charlie Halleck. He was comfortable with Halleck, much more so than he had been with Joe Martin.

BURG: May I ask you why?

MCCABE: I think it was first a matter of personality, plus an obvious feeling that--not a feeling, but the obvious intent on Halleck's part to cooperate with the President, to support

the President and make his programs work on the Hill. I don't mean by that to suggest that Joe Martin really ever failed to help the President or to push a Presidential program. But there's something in the willingness you show by your, well your, zest for battle. Martin was more standoffish, perhaps more skeptical of the White House. To some extent he didn't quite have the easy-- well, shouldn't say to some extent, he just didn't have the easy style of working with people and working with us who represented the President in legislative matters that Halleck did. Martin was maybe more identified in people's minds, and perhaps even in his own mind, as something of the old, you know, the pre-Eisenhower Republican days.

BURG: The Dewey-Taft-clique--

MCCABE: More of the old Taft group. And I use that just as a label because Senator Taft was himself a real help to the President, and was sorely missed after his untimely death in 1953. But, you know, when President Eisenhower was elected in 1952, the easy labeling became fashionable. Eisenhower Republicans, Eastern liberals, old line conservatives, people falling into groupings of that sort, loosely labeled mostly as the "Taft camp" and the "Eisenhower camp". Looking back now, it was kind of pointless.

BURG: Yes.

MCCABE: But Martin was of an older school, a bit suspicious of this new crowd in the White House and not giving his full enthusiasm to pitching in on all fronts with this Republican administration. Senator Knowland was of the same stripe. So you had Knowland and Martin as the number one men in the Republican hierarchy in the House and Senate in those early Eisenhower years. Halleck and Dirksen were then the number two men. In the later years of the Eisenhower presidency Halleck and Dirksen were the top men. And those years were much more congenial, easy going--people were loose, as between the White House and the Hill. There was much more of an openness and a trust and a feeling of working together than there had been earlier.

And this brings me back--I wandered off the point a bit--it brings me back to the reason why the President, at least as I saw it, felt comfortable with Halleck. He had the same feeling about Dirksen. I think he felt without question that here were a couple of guys each doing his own job on the Hill but, you know, they're pitching in there along with me. We're able to work together, and I don't have to worry. I never heard the President say anything like this; I'm paraphrasing the thought. But you never had to worry that Halleck and Dirksen were ever going to be less than full throttle on things we were working on together. And Halleck and Dirksen--there was never any doubt--they were going to go for broke. If they made the move on a legislative maneuver, you knew

they were going to do it first of all very skillfully, and then if it failed, it wouldn't be for lack of ability or enthusiasm on their part. So this attitude that Halleck exemplified was a great part of the good feeling of those last several years in the late '50s when the Republican numbers in the House were so low.

BURG: I was going to ask you if you thought that made up in a sense for the fact that your numbers had dwindled.

MCCABE: Well, I think it did. But didn't make up for the lack of a majority, you know.

BURG: Yes.

MCCABE: But you know the difference between 140 some and 170 Republican votes in the House under, well, less aggressive leadership, I'd put it that way. You could say 170 votes under a somewhat so-so leadership as against 140 some under really gung-ho, aggressive, able leadership; I'd take the smaller number. You wouldn't want it much smaller than 140 because then you're out of luck.

BURG: Yes.

MCCABE: There's just a point below which you can't go. I think we got as low as 143, and we never had quite enough with

straight partyline voting to sustain a veto. We always needed a few Democrats.

BURG: Yes, you bet.

MCCABE: So our numbers were that few. But Halleck was great on that. I'd say one other thing about Halleck. A lot of people, I shouldn't say a lot of people, a number of people, particularly people, who as I have listened over the years who didn't know Charlie all that well, were critical of Charlie's drinking. Charlie could take a couple of snorts with the best of them and enjoy a belt or two with his dinner or before his dinner or after his dinner, but I--and I've thought about this and some of us, Bryce Harlow and I and others, you know, we ruminated around this thing. Well, I have known Charlie Halleck even close to being disabled because of drinking and in handling his legislative responsibilities. He was just top-notch. I can see where Charlie would stand around having a drink, and somebody pour another one, and he'd have another one. Somebody else seeing this, you know, would say, "Well, gee, this guy shouldn't be drinking. He's got a major legislative job on his hands tomorrow." But the proof of the pudding to me was that Charlie was always in control in the legislative scene. And having brought the subject up, I'd have to add that Charlie was anything but a drunk. I don't mean to suggest that he was, but I throw

the word in there because we're talking about the subject, and I know other people have talked about it. To me the real difference is that while Charlie might have been better advised, you know, not to have that extra martini at some dinner or some other function--the fact is--and I watched this carefully and was involved in much legislation with him, I have never seen him even close to having his ability impaired or having any adverse result from drinking, which some people liked to point to.

BURG: Well, this is a town where bourbon and branch water flows fairly freely--

MCCABE: Oh, it is and you've got a lot of people though who have done first-rate jobs and in various important roles who have a martini or have a bourbon, and nobody ever thinks about it because they don't have the second or they won't have the third one or they'll go to a party and will go home. You know, they'll behave a lot more--with a lot more reserve. I think of Gerald Ford, Mel Laird, who's my close neighbor and long-time friend too. And here are a couple of tremendously able legislators, those two. And neither one of them will back away from having a drink and sitting around and enjoying a conviviality of a good crowd, but it would never occur to anyone to suggest that either one of them would have impaired himself from having a few drinks. And that's correct. They just aren't that type. I think Charlie

could lay claim to having consumed a great deal more of the spirits than either of them, maybe even both of them, but the important thing to me is that it never was allowed--he never allowed it to affect his performance. I think that's something--

BURG: What generated the talk about him then? Was it that when he did have some, say in the evening, that he would become obviously loud and happy, or did people simply notice that that's the third one?

MCCABE: I suppose that's it. Charlie would have his few drinks, and I suppose in an evening you could sense that Charlie had had a few drinks, not in the sense of ever being to my knowledge, you know, falling down under the influence or--

BURG: Obnoxious.

MCCABE: --Obnoxious, but, well, you know, he got a little fat, too. And Charlie had kind of a bulbous nose, and there's just so many things about him that would suggest that here's a guy, particularly, if you saw him having a few or you knew that--. And he always kept a good supply for visitors in the little Capitol office of his, and little groups of Congressmen would stop in to "Charlie's clinic" as it was known, "come in and have a toddy."

The talk can begin and it circulated. It did circulate. Lord rest her soul, Mrs. Halleck had a drinking problem. These things all add up, but I think in any evaluation of Charlie Halleck, this is a subject that has to be faced, has to be talked about. I used to hear it from some of the fellows in the White House who didn't do any legislative work, didn't know Charlie but they maybe overheard at a party somebody saying, "Well, what kind of leadership you Republicans got up there?" Maybe somebody had seen Halleck party somewhere and thought he was drinking too much. The references would get around. They do about a lot of people up there, as you suggested a while ago. But this feeling, well, gee, you know, you've got a fellow who drinks-- it's a little bit like, who was it, Lincoln said when someone complained that General Grant was out drinking in the field. I don't know whether President Lincoln really said this, you historians can tell me better, but isn't he supposed to have said, "Well, looking at the results and what some of the others are doing, we should find out his brand, and I'll supply it to the others." But I think this is an important element in looking at Halleck. People have talked this way about him. The origins of it, where it began? I'm not able to say whether it was justified or not. But I can say that from careful scrutiny and close working with him, and I'm quite sure that Bryce Harlow, who

among those living, probably of our group would be the one other who knew him best and worked with him most, would say exactly the same thing. That while we might've wished, because we liked the guy so much, that people wouldn't talk that way about him, nevertheless we were fully aware that it never impaired his effectiveness; he didn't let it.

BURG: It goes without saying, I assume, that it was not a circumstance wherein you, or I, Jack Martin, or anyone else who had to go from the White House up on the Hill, you didn't find yourself then being invited to take part in little drinking sessions in that office of Halleck's?

MCCABE: No, not in a drinking session. If--

BURG: He might offer--

MCCABE: Yes, in fact if we had a meeting up there of some kind in the evening or go up there before lunch, if someone felt like mixing himself a drink, he could go over to the refrigerator and get some ice and go ahead and make one.

BURG: Right. But you didn't find Charlie Halleck sipping? Having sipped all morning and into the afternoon.

MCCABE: Oh, not at all, not at all. And, of course, that very circumstance would automatically have said that you had somebody on your hands up there who wasn't going to be any help.

BURG: Exactly.

MCCABE: We always had a sharp, able, skillful, tough fellow ready for the war. Never a doubt about it.

BURG: Let me ask you this about him, to the best of your knowledge, what was his view of the President's political savvy?

MCCABE: He would, I'm sure, give the President very high marks for general political savvy. That would be qualified to some extent by the awareness that there were many areas of civil government that the President wasn't all that well informed about when he came in. Agriculture, for example. Housing programs and things that are of a purely domestic kind. And Halleck had his differences with administration programs and with administration proposals that were examined with Congressional leaders before they were finally locked in and sent to the Hill. For example, a housing program or an agriculture program, or public works, or the rest would come up from one of the departments, and Halleck would have differences with it, with the wisdom of it. But these were normal kinds of disputes that arise within a party. I believe, that didn't really get to the point of how did he view the President and the President's political attitudes, political instincts, philosophies, and so on. He had great regard for the President's personal political instincts, his tendency to come up on the correct side of an issue, and I

don't mean correct in the expedient vote-getting sense but in the sense of a sound position. And I think that he--Charlie--felt that without question the President's political judgment was very, very good. I mention these other things where you have a dispute over a program. That's not uncommon.

But once the decision was made that we--we being the President and the Congressional leadership--decided that for a whole combination of reasons we're going to go with this program, whatever area, then you know full well that Halleck would be out there working like mad for it. He really always wanted to know what does the President want. Is this program say coming out of HEW? Is that something the President really wants, or is this something that's been up through the bureaus and that the secretary or the under-secretary is advocating and kind of drawing the President in as a supporter of it? And those were important distinctions to Charlie. They should be distinctions to any leader, because not every issue that an administration sends to the Hill is what I would call a Presidential issue. A lot of things have come up through the departments and agencies that are generally desirable, and we have administration support overall, and the bureau of the Budget says that we're in favor of that--it fits in with the President's program. However, there are a great many of those things that are not make or break issues. The White House won't fight, bleed, and die over

each one. But there are a number that the President really does want and whenever there was one of those, there were always a few, Charlie would go all out. But even on some of those others where he had differences with department heads, some of these particularly so in HEW's area, which I guess is the lot of all Republican leaders to contend with. Charlie never made any bones about where he stood on it. Everybody knew he was either for it or against it. Certainly he never came out and opposed any administration program.

Now there were some things--you might go play golf some afternoon when a program of little consequence was up where he just as soon would not vote on it. He may have done that. I can't think of one, but I suspect he did. But whenever you had a Presidential issue, a White House issue of concern to the President, Charlie went all out on it. He had a great regard for the President personally and a very good respect for the President's political instincts. There was never any doubt in Charlie's mind that the President was "a good Republican." Of course, a lot of the President's early critics within the party liked to think--sour grapes following the convention where one side loses and the other wins--that well, you know, the fellow might just as well have been the nominee of the Democrats.

BURG: Especially if your man was Mr. Republican.

MCCABE: That's right. Even though, as I said earlier, one of the finest supporters the President had in the very few months that were left to him after the election was Senator Taft.

BURG: Yes. Yes, I've noted that, too.

MCCABE: A lot of Taft supporters were much more adamant and strong headed about things than he was. Also, he took his defeat gracefully and pitched in immediately to help the--

[Interruption]

BURG: Let me ask you if in your opinion looking back on these things, did Ev Dirksen share Halleck's opinion of the President's political instincts or was he more reserved about that?

MCCABE: I think Senator Dirksen wasn't as generous in his assessments as Halleck. Now let me explain what I'm thinking when I say that. Dirksen was Halleck's equal in the legislative situation. Nobody worked any harder than Dirksen to support and score on the President's requests on the Hill. He viewed it as his job to get that program through or that particular recommendation through, doing the very best he could with it, beat out the best compromise he could, and he never backed away from a battle. He never flinched

for an instant no matter how tough the assignment when the President wanted something done. Dirksen was a welcome relief, too, from the kind of reserved and standoffish role that Senator Knowland played before him. I think he and Halleck were a great pair. Maybe two other guys could have done the jobs equally well for the President and with him, but they happened to be the ones in the spots in those several years. They did their jobs awfully well, and Dirksen surely was Halleck's equal, as I said.

I think, though, that while Dirksen never flagged in his support that he just didn't have the same inner level of acceptance of the President that Charlie Halleck did. Halleck was very enthusiastic about the President. Dirksen never showed an absence of enthusiasm, but I think Dirksen just as a human being he was a little more analytical of people, more of a--wouldn't say a deep thinker, these are both bright people, they just come at the situation a little differently. And I think Dirksen was maybe a--don't know quite what the words would be to describe him--not skeptical, that's not really it, but maybe I said it better in the beginning, less generous in his characterization of someone than Halleck. I think that he would have been a step behind Halleck in giving the President high marks for general political instincts and attitudes.

BURG: Is this anything that can be associated with the Senator's own ego, his own view of himself?

MCCABE: I doubt it. And I may be wrong in my reading of this thing. Dirksen was a very relaxed individual. He was certainly in those years--he had made it as far as he was going to go in the political world, and he had a certain tranquility about him because of that.

BURG: Odd, because the view I have of him, and, of course, I was a very young man at the time, is one of this rich, fruity voice, flamboyance, the dramatic turn at the convention, and--

MCCABE: Oh, he had all of that. Yes.

BURG: --as though he'd studied in the Abbey Theater. And I wondered if there was perhaps then in his makeup an inward confidence, an inward flamboyance that caused him to view with reserve and perhaps even a bit of disdain the army officer who had come up and reached the position that he had reached. Not the practical politician at all who come up through those ranks.

MCCABE: I think not, but I don't quite know why not. I think not. There was another side to Dirksen that was most revealing. I think maybe even going back to the earlier question here he's a highly analytical fellow who maybe kept the analytical process

going all the time. And he would probably be a little more inclined to--dissect the President's political thinking, in his own mind. Where Halleck, not being of that same turn of mind, but being a very bright guy, too, wouldn't waste his time doing that. He'd just say, "All right, this is it. We go ahead with it."

BURG: Might take more on faith than Senator Dirksen--

MCCABE: Or just not be bothered to over-analyze something. Where perhaps with that tendency to quietly in the back of that head of his, Dirksen maybe would keep sifting and dissecting and reassembling things. Halleck just wouldn't see any point in getting to that point. He just would go ahead, and earlier he would have accepted the President's programs.

BURG: Halleck might see that sort of thing as an interesting mental exercise, if he had time to do it, but it didn't really have anything to do with the case in point.

MCCABE: I would--

BURG: Let us move on and never mind trying to understand the nuances of it.

MCCABE: Right. It would be that sort of distinction. It's a fine distinction to make to put a difference at all between Dirksen and Halleck in their relationship with the President.

I think of the differences--the two of them had their differences from time to time with the administration. They were differences by and large with programs, whether it be a housing program, or a farm price support program, or a foreign aid thing at that time where they would take dead aim at times on some thing being developed in one of the departments. And that could lead to some scuffling and squabbling around inside the White House before an administration program would be finally arrived at. But broadly speaking they were each others equal in running the show on the Hill and in supporting the President. Appointments and designating, you know, maybe whether it be judges or ambassadors or selecting Cabinet officers and all of this kind of thing, that forever stirred up problems with everybody in the party. And I really don't put that category of dispute in the philosophical--what's your political attitude and what's mine kind of text at all. I think these are the nuts and bolts of running the show as you go along.

BURG: The ladies at the bargain counter fighting over the--

MCCABE: There's a lot of that. Yes. And that could get Dirksen going straight up, the White House or one department or the other would fail to notify him about something, somebody'd drop the ball, and those were unfortunate episodes. I see the present incumbents are doing some of that too.

BURG: Yes. [laughter]

MCCABE: The next ones, whoever they are, will have those, too. They go on.

BURG: Yes.

MCCABE: They vanish in time. The things that shine through in retrospect, the skills of these two fellows, their willingness to work with a President and the administration, and their openness with the President and with each other on legislative strategy and tactics, and their abilities, the two of them-- Halleck and Dirksen--each in his own house, and to some extent they reached across the Hill to the other house where they were all well known, of course. The leadership of both parties are well known to one another, but what I'm thinking about is the capacity these two fellows had to put combinations or coalitions, groupings of voting blocks together. They were really very good at it. Halleck was a standout. He was one of the chief architects for all the years that I've been aware of--architects of all of those Republican-southern Democrat coalitions that from time to time have banded together to get things done. And the ability, I think, of a legislative leader to do that is more his personal acceptance by others in power than it is anything else. I think the coalitions tend to be personal rather than--.

You can't rule out the philosophy in the broad sense but there are people of like philosophies who couldn't put their own two votes together, let alone two hundred. It takes a special kind of fellow and Charlie Halleck was one of those.

Some of his counterparts on the Democratic side in the House, People like Judge [Howard W.] Smith of Virginia, [Graham A.] Barden in North Carolina, [Carl] Vinson in Georgia, [F. Edward] Hebert in Louisiana, others, and, of course, Mr. Sam Rayburn. At times there were some things that they got done together, although necessarily Charlie and Mr. Sam were adversaries most of the time. These people around whom others relied on and whose judgment as well as integrity people learned to rely on.

BURG: Let me leave that theme then. I had a question about Judge Smith, but I believe that your comparisons and contrasts between Halleck and Dirksen are especially valuable to us. And I don't want to take all of your time. Let me get to the matter of your continued contact with the President after 1961. How did that come about? I believe that Roemer McPhee also in a sense shared that continuing contact.

MCCABE: Yes. He did to some degree. Of course, the President after he left the White House lived in Gettysburg, and there were

several of us here in Washington, Gerry Morgan, Roemer, myself, Bryce Harlow, Jack Martin for a while, Jack Anderson stayed around for a little bit, Dave Kendall was here for a while. There were some. Occasionally, not often and not with any regularity, we'd take a run up to Gettysburg to see him, just dropping in to say hello and have a cup of coffee and indulge in some general idle talk and go away. It was really a way of paying our respects. Bryce Harlow, because of the nature of the work he was in, was maybe a little more free than others, was more free. His company, I guess, in those days could make him available to work with the President on various things--speeches and the like. And, of course, Bryce was the President's favorite scrivener, and I mention Bryce because he is the one man who was much closer to Dwight Eisenhower in the years after we left the White House than anybody else that I know. By far.

BURG: I see.

MCCABE: Then the most regular visiting that I did at Gettysburg was several years after the President left office. And this would be oh--just as a guess--three times or so a year. Halleck, Harlow, Morgan, and I would call up and invite ourselves up to see the boss. So we'd go up and visit. This was part of a continuing close contact with Halleck that Gerry Morgan and I

and Bryce Harlow had. I mentioned earlier--along with Jerry Persons, of course, who left Washington--we were probably the four people for whom Halleck, he said it publicly as well as privately, he had that regard for us as individuals. And so we were pretty close there, and we'd go to see the President on these occasions.

Then in 1963 at a time when Barry Goldwater was gearing up to be the candidate, Goldwater asked me if I would lend a hand in some of his early work. And I was agreeable. But the first thing, before I did, I went up and told the President I was going to do it. I knew my helping Barry would generate a news story, "Ex-Eisenhower aide part of Goldwater's--

BURG: Right.

MCCABE: You know, there was no news value in me personally, but as an ex-Eisenhower aide I would draw some media attention. So I wanted to tell him myself, before he read it. During that two year period then, '63, part of '63 and '64, and some lesser extent through '65, I saw the President often and talked with him about political things that were developing in the nomination exercise and during the campaign itself, and later on too. I made a number of trips up to Gettysburg to see him,

and took Senator Goldwater up a few times. Bryce Harlow and I made a good number of trips, the two of us together. Usually trying to make sure that Goldwater's position--in some of the political infighting, statements being made by one candidate about the other, and so on--we wanted to be sure that we kept the President fully apprised of where things were, and he was always most cordial and gracious and helpful. And I was always pleased to find that he was happy to see me, and willing to discuss things with me in Goldwater's stead occasionally. And never a question at any time I wanted to see him, call up, come up and see him, I could just come up to say hello. I usually had something to do, to talk about, and in that setting I saw a great deal of him in those two and three years. Much more than I had in the earlier visits where I say that primarily Halleck, Morgan, Harlow, and I would get in Charlie Halleck's limousine and drive ourselves up there and have a visit with the president. Some nice afternoon. And on a few occasions Gerry Morgan, Roemer McPhee and I have gone up, too. But we all tended not to run up there so often as to wear out our welcome.

BURG: Yes.

MCCABE: After all, we didn't have a great range of things to talk about. We had a special and current political legislative subject matter interest there with Halleck. When we'd go up--

Gerry, Roemer, and I--on the few occasions we did--just a matter of a few former staffers going up to pay our respects to the boss. The meetings where we really had something important to talk about, like during the Goldwater campaign, those were different; more fun than--yeah, they meant something to him because he had a live interest in why we were coming.

And then after the Goldwater nomination, there were a number of meetings between Eisenhower and Nixon, Goldwater and Miller, who was Goldwater's running mate. Now these wouldn't be formalized gatherings. I remember going up there and having lunch with the President and Mr. Nixon, and Goldwater and Miller, Harlow and myself. Six of us, sitting around through a luncheon, you know, a couple of hours there in the President's dining room--at the Gettysburg farm. Other meetings, smaller groups, Goldwater and the President, Harlow and I. A couple of times Bryce and I did some writing where we wanted to be sure everybody was agreed on positions. I also put together a big meeting once--at Hershey, with Governor Scranton of Pennsylvania as the host--with the President, Nixon, all the sitting Republican Governors, the elected Republican leadership of the House and Senate, prior to the 1964 election. The idea (which didn't work all that well because of a few unwilling governors) was to project a show of Republican unity. I say I put the meeting together. What I

mean is it was my idea, the President thought it was a good one and became a leading participant. Likewise Goldwater, Nixon and Scranton. From there the campaign staff did the logistics. Harlow and I wrote the statements and releases. As I said, it was a reach for a show of unity that didn't work too well.

So I had a lot of opportunity then to work with him on things of substance, and was happy to find I had a very nice rapport with him; he was just a very gracious, kindly, thoughtful man. He really was, in his own way, he could be very unassuming. He could sit and talk with me and, you know, after all that was fifteen years ago, I was that much younger. And we could talk seriously back and forth about some of the issues that were developing--cast of candidate, points of the platform and other things--and I'd like to think that those talks were helpful. I know they were helpful to me, and they were helpful to the campaign, though there wasn't much that could really help that campaign. But he was always gracious, always cordial, and I just thought those were great times in my life, you know, to be involved that way.

BURG: So you're describing then a man who several years after the Presidency, now several years older himself, is still mentally alert, bright--

MCCABE: Oh, yes. Yes. In 1964 he was four years out of office, just as sharp as could be, interested as could be, and then, of course, the fallout after the election--the election was a disaster. And the intra-party squabbling was immense and--

BURG: Yes.

MCCABE: --that's what kept me in kind of a continuing contact with him and with Goldwater and some others for the year or so following. I was kind of a handy set of legs and arms and so-on-- not so much, not a go-between--but, well--

BURG: A bearer of "balm in Gilead."

MCCABE: Well, yes, sometimes a messenger boy and happily I seemed to be welcome at all these ports of call. [Laughter] It was good, but I guess I value those years as highly as any time frame in my exposure to the President. Because I was into things of substance more with him than I could ever have been at the White House.

BURG: I see. I see. It's interesting. I'd had not expected to hear that from you.

MCCABE: Because I was a junior guy at the White House, and while I was into the legislative end, I was more of an old hand

on the Hill because that was an area I presumably knew something about and had been around it. And yet among what you'd loosely call the so-called senior staff at the White House, I probably was the youngest guy on the senior grouping within the staff.

BURG: Right.

MCCABE: And as such, I didn't have all that much contact with the President. I had a lot of contact with him during the Landrum-Griffin exercise.

BURG: Right. Now let me ask you this. Were his meetings with Senator Goldwater cordial?

MCCABE: Very.

BURG: The two men tended to see eye-to-eye on lots of things--

MCCABE: Well, they were very, very cordial. You know, they're very different, but there were interesting similarities. They tended to say what they thought. And that trait could get them into trouble at times. For instance, when someone asked Goldwater in that campaign, "What would you do about Castro cutting off the water to Guantánamo?" He said, "I'd send the Marines out to protect the water station." What a ruckus that started. But that was exactly what President Eisenhower had done back in the early days when Castro was running around the hills, and the

water station was in some--. I don't mean to put the two of them on a par as military men. By no means. But where--couldn't get a yawn out of the public when General Eisenhower would do a thing like that, but when you get a Goldwater talking of it everybody got uptight; and it was an unwise thing for him to say, politically. But each one just had that ability; if someone asked a question, generally they answered it. So there was a directness about each one that was remarkably similar.

Yet in saying there was this similarity--this tendency to be direct--there was also, on that very point, one very significant difference. Under the enormous pressures of the Presidency, Ike was a master in responding to press questions. He was often very direct, even blunt, but he could ignore questions he didn't want to answer, or he could talk about another subject, and so on. Barry Goldwater could also be direct, even blunt, in answering questions from the press; of course we'll never know whether as a President, he could have been as skillful in this regard as Eisenhower. In any case, I did want to add this qualifier to my earlier comment about their direct answers.

A further thought here, for what it may be worth as a footnote to history--at least as I saw it. A half dozen people campaigned actively in 1963 and 1964 for the Republican presidential nomination. There was a lot of pressure on President Eisenhower to make an

early endorsement, before the Nominating Convention. He wouldn't do it. In fact, he said that to me when I went to Gettysburg to tell him I was going to be involved on Goldwater's campaign. He also said that he would support whoever was the Republican candidate after he was nominated, and would campaign as much as he was asked to and as much as his doctors would let him. He stuck to this all the way through--even though he was pushed, pulled, tugged at, buffeted, lobbied, etc. by various candidates who were trying to head off Goldwater. Interestingly too, when I talked with the President to tell him of my pending work for Goldwater, he said that as he saw things then nobody was likely to head off Barry for the nomination, and that it was going to be very hard for any Republican to win the general election in 1964. That was in the late Summer or early Fall of 1963, and it turned out to be an accurate set of predictions. But the real point I want to make here is that even though Eisenhower and Goldwater had a lot of similar views on government and politics--not all views alike, of course, but a great many--and they were two very likeable personalities who got along well together, nevertheless, if Ike had been picking a Republican nominee from the beginning I never thought Barry Goldwater would have been his first choice. Granted, he didn't endorse anybody else even though he was under great pressure to do so, and he did support Barry after the nomination.

But in my view, it would be a mistake to let all that lead one to the conclusion that Barry would have been his first choice-- had he made a first choice. Who would have been, I don't know. I would say not Rockefeller, not Lodge, not Romney. Maybe Bill Scranton. Most likely though in my humble opinion, it would have finally turned out to be Richard Nixon, who as things did turn out, would become President four years later. Let me emphasize that President Eisenhower never told me all of this nor did I ever hear it responsibly attributed to him. It's just a feeling I have from those years, as a close-in observer and participant in more high level political meetings and conversations that I can now sort out.

I've probably digressed too much here. But in describing cordially Eisenhower and Goldwater got along during that Presidential campaign, I want to make clear that I'm not also suggesting that I think Barry would have been number one on Ike's list had he been picking a number one from among those many Republican aspirants.

I remember one time being up there at Gettysburg with Bryce Harlow, and I've forgotten what it was, but Goldwater had said something in response to some question that was out there on the campaign. And the way it came out, it would have, his

answer seemed to throw a lot of cold water on Eisenhower. Maybe on foreign policy, or whatever--I've forgotten the subject, doesn't really matter. But I remember I was back here when I heard about it. I thought, "Oh, Oh, there we got some blood on the rug. We gotta go clean it up before somebody quotes this to the President, and the thing gets all out of wack." I quickly found out what happened, what was behind it, and so on. Talked to Bryce. This was sort of an arrangement we had; the two of us trooped on up there to Gettysburg. You know, Nelson Rockefeller and others were still vying for this nomination. And, of course, every time they could possibly drive a wedge into anything to get the President to come out and indicate a preference against Goldwater, they were trying to do it. Wearing out the roads between New York and Gettysburg paying attention to the boss. Anyhow, Bryce and I drove up to see him, and we talked about this. It was kind of a foolish thing. It shouldn't have been said, but it wasn't as bad as it first looked. But there it was. And we talked about it. The President was his usual jovial self, and under the circumstances had a laugh or two. Well, he understood, you know, where things were, what was being done, no harm was done, and so on. But I remember this thing Bryce said, "You know, Mr. President," he said, "It's often occurred to me, and in fact Ed and I talked about this coming up here," he said. "If you had had Barry in the Army, you'd have had another General Patton on your hands!" [Laughter]

The President roared, and he agreed this was about right. And here was a guy who--Patton in the military apparently had a great capacity to stir things up, get people excited--but whom the President liked and respected.

BURG: Yes.

MCCABE: And there was just some of this in Goldwater.

BURG: Hoof and mouth disease.

MCCABE: Sure. And, you know, Barry Goldwater is one of the most likeable human beings ever to come down the pike. Of course, so is Dwight Eisenhower and on a personal basis they seemed to hit it off together, yet there was a little of this elbowing over philosophies and programs. They weren't all that different from one another though in their general basic beliefs.

I'll share one other quick reminiscence about the President and Senator Goldwater. In the White House, it was our practice that before a new session of Congress, we'd bring in the senior Republican on each of the major committees and visit about what the President was planning to recommend. You know, get his thinking, and so when the programs were recommended to the Hill you wouldn't be greeted with loud silence or opposition. And so Barry came down. I brought him down as part of my assignment at the time,

and I guess we had breakfast with the President. And we're talking about a variety of things, and this is a week before Christmas and looking toward January. Programs are pretty well set. We're talking about recommendations in the labor area. And the President was going along, and everybody whacking away at the ham and eggs, and talking about the business of the morning. As an aside, it developed that the President was annoyed with the paperwork and the records-keeping requirements for the Fair Labor Standards Act. Seems he had recently discovered on the farm that you can get into all kinds of trouble if you have your sixteen year old son or nephew caught running the tractor for you. This is a dangerous child labor condition--you're violating the law, and you'll file endless reports.

BURG: Yes. Right.

MCCABE: --and this is absurd and so on. And the way this came on, he said, "My God, Barry, I think we ought to repeal that damn law." Well, of course, it hit Goldwater like this. He thought for a moment--you could just see him--I needled him about it later. You could just see he thought here's the President coming up with this thing, he's going to make this politically impossible proposal, and I'm his guy on the committee and he expects me to carry it out. He said, "My God, Mr. President, you can't do that."
[Laughter] Well, I thought, here's a real case of man bites dog.

BURG: Yes, yes.

MCCABE: One thing Goldwater would dearly wish would be the repeal of the Fair Labor Standards Act....but he knew, of course, that even for him it would be a political "Pickett's Charge." Well, as I said, it was an aside in the morning's work--was never done, and never contemplated. But we did have our lighter moments.

[Tape Ran Out]