

Processed by: EWH
Date: 8/23/93

HARLOW

HARLOW, BRYCE N. (OH-214) 144 pgs. w/index PRCQ (M)

Special White House Assistant 1953; Administrative Assistant to the President, 1953-58; Deputy Assistant to the President, 1958-61.

DESCRIPTION:

PART I: Background experiences on Capitol Hill; arrival in Washington (1938) as Assistant Librarian of House of Representatives while working on MA in political science (Univ. of Oklahoma); thesis subject—the history of the Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives; army service (1941-46) spent in General Marshall's office, Legislative and Liaison division, under General [Wilton Burton] Persons; functions of division; problems concerning black troops, individual and troop assignments, deferments, German POW treatment; involvement with Inter-Allied Conference of 1942; NAACP, Hamilton Fish, and black troop use; John "Jack" H. McCoy; development of the new House Armed Services Committee; appointment as professional staff member to Committee (1947); appointment to work under General Persons to establish a Congressional staff for the Eisenhower White House; initial resistance to appointment; comments about rewards of such a position; the Harlow Publishing Corp. in Oklahoma City; work with Eisenhower administration, 1953-61; Eisenhower's background for the Presidency and the creation of the White House secretariat; problems inherent in carrying out White House business with change of administrations; system before 1953; Carter Burgess; function of secretariat; Eisenhower's interest in reorganizing Cabinet function; Harlow's comments on organizing any President's administration; Eisenhower's prior experiences with staff work and executive decisions; advantages of procedures involving a general staff system; pressures on the White House staff; John Stedman's (Truman White House staff) advice to Harlow; Harlow's concept of realistic White House staff expectations; Presidential burdens and new uses for Vice-Presidents; Presidential contacts with Congressional leaders; Eisenhower's schedule with legislative leaders; scope of Harlow's job concerning Congressional relations for the President; confidentiality and the White House; the National Security Council and handling classified material; the relationship between a President and Congress; problems of working with a Congress led by opposing political party; Eisenhower's relationship with Congress generally and with Democratic leaders specifically; Republican attitudes toward Eisenhower; Eisenhower as a "non-conventional" politician; Eisenhower as a campaigner for the Republican party; Eisenhower's attitude toward the Presidency; the public's perceptions of Eisenhower and of Presidents generally; Eisenhower's handling of McCarthy affair as an illustration of his attitude toward the Presidency; demagogues as "escape valves;" Eisenhower's attitude toward constitutional structure of government.

PART II: A normal week in the White House with President Eisenhower: Tuesday, leadership meetings; Wednesday, the press conference; Thursday, National Security

Council meeting; Friday, Cabinet meeting; Monday, appointments; numerous miscellaneous affairs throughout the day; rest periods; 2:00-5:30 office hours; dinner and evening engagements; usual day schedule, 7:30 a.m.—11:00 p.m.; disruptions of schedule; Eisenhower as early riser; Eisenhower's newspaper reading; briefing the President; Presidential contacts; Eisenhower's influence as a military expert; preparation for the weekly press conference: collecting material from various Departments and agencies, staff assessment of probable areas of interrogation and ways to handle, briefing the President; pressures of the press conference; press questioning techniques; press responsibility; dangers of press conferences; problems of semantics; Louis Filler (The President Speaks); Eisenhower's use of language (as a military leader, as President, after a stroke, as an editor); need for conciseness in providing documents for the President's attention; oral and written communication with the President; preparation for weekly Cabinet meetings: preparing the weekly agenda, scheduling items for Cabinet discussion several weeks before, debriefing after a Cabinet meeting; Harlow's role at State of the Union messages; preparing a State of the Union message: steps involved, Eisenhower's feeling about length of the messages, deciding the major emphases for the message, political implications of the message, Presidential-Congressional relations preceding the delivery, length of time involved in preparation, effects on President's schedule, Presidential editing to the message; ironies inherent in outgoing Presidents preparing "irrelevant" State of the Union messages, Budget Messages, and Economic Reports for incoming Presidents; general speech occasions for the President: non-prepared speeches, notes-but-no-text speeches, prepared-text speeches, miscellaneous problems associated with speech delivery; researching a speech for the President; speeches as group efforts; influence of individual speech writers; necessity for accuracy; Harlow's thoughts on how Eisenhower and leaders generally think about their places in history.

PART III: Eisenhower's speech in April, 1953, to the newspaper editors (shortly after Stalin's death); Emmett Hughes, Presidential speech writer; Harlow's involvement with Congressional affairs as a White house staff member under General [Wilton Burton] "Jerry" Persons; the Bricker Amendment, Gerald Morgan, and Jack Martin (Harlow's replacement on Congressional Relations staff); Secretarial appointments, the Senate, Jerry persons; the nature of Congressional-White House struggles (tax subjects; 1953, and the Defense Reorganization Act of 1958 as examples); procedures for presenting the President's agenda to Congress; resultant power struggles (Bricker Amendment as example); Congressional support, patronage, and Presidential popularity; Eisenhower's sensitivity to political bargaining; the 83rd Congress and the House Rules Committee (Chairman Leo Allen); the role of the National Chairman of the party in legislative affairs; Harlow's comments on the following: specific speechwriting assignments, being a Presidential speech writer, his access to President Eisenhower, studying Eisenhower's speech mannerisms, audience reactions to Presidential speeches, Eisenhower's dynamic effect on people (in Harlow's assessment, based on personal appearance, personality, modesty), public affection and trust in "Ike," Eisenhower's ethical beliefs; Harlow's role in preparing the "State of the Union" speech (1954); the importance of the 1954 "State of the Union" message in articulating Eisenhower's program for his Presidency.

A name index is located at the end of the transcript.

[Columbia University Oral History, interviews by John T. Mason, Jr., February 27, 1967, March 27, 1967, May 1, 1967.]