# ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

# WITH

# ROBERT E. LOCKWOOD

JUNE 26 & NOVEMBER 11, 1985

INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI

INTERVIEWED BY PAM SMOOT

ORAL HISTORY #1985-1

This transcript corresponds to audiotapes DAV-AR #3069-3070

HARRY S TRUMAN NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## EDITORIAL NOTICE

This is a transcript of a tape-recorded interview conducted for Harry S Truman National Historic Site. After a draft of this transcript was made, the park provided a copy to the interviewee and requested that he or she return the transcript with any corrections or modifications that he or she wished to be included in the final transcript. The interviewer, or in some cases another qualified staff member, also reviewed the draft and compared it to the tape recordings. The corrections and other changes suggested by the interviewee and interviewer have been incorporated into this final transcript. The transcript follows as closely as possible the recorded interview, including the usual starts, stops, and other rough spots in typical conversation. The reader should remember that this is essentially a transcript of the spoken, rather than the written, word. Stylistic matters, such as punctuation and capitalization, follow the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th edition. The transcript includes bracketed notices at the end of one tape and the beginning of the next so that, if desired, the reader can find a section of tape more easily by using this transcript.

Pam Smoot and Jim Williams reviewed the drafts of these transcripts. Their corrections were incorporated into this final transcript by Perky Beisel in summer 2001. A grant from Eastern National Park and Monument Association funded the transcription and final editing of this interview.

## RESTRICTION

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## ABSTRACT

Robert Lockwood was first assigned to the Truman detail of the United States Secret Service for more than a year in 1967 and 1968. Lockwood then served as the special agent in charge of the Secret Service unit assigned to protect Bess W. Truman from 1973 to her death in 1982. In the first interview, Lockwood provides a detailed description of the yard and its maintenance processes. In the second interview, Lockwood describes the relationship between the Secret Service and Mrs. Truman and the layout of the home during her last ten years. In a room-to-room survey, he describes the movement of furniture and placement of smaller artifacts as Mrs. Truman's health deteriorated and nursing staff entered the home.

Persons mentioned: Bess W. Truman, Harry S Truman, Edward Hobby, May Wallace, Lewie Matune, Rufus Burrus, Robert Adams, Doris Miller, Muriel Humphrey, Hubert H. Humphrey, Louis "Polly" Compton, Thomas P. Melton, Margaret Truman Daniel, Velma (James) Simmons, Trudy (Worden) Johnson, George Miller, Winston Churchill, Stanley Woodward, Jr., Don Hardysinger, and Geraldine Peterson.

# ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS WITH

# ROBERT E. LOCKWOOD

HSTR INTERVIEW #1985-1

[Editorial note:No tapes exist for this June interview of Robert Lockwood. This transcript was apparently made by Pam Smoot.]

On June 26, 1985, at 10:00 a.m., Mr. Bob Lockwood was interviewed on the Truman lawn, Independence, Missouri, by [National Park Service Midwest Regional Office] seasonal historian Pamela A. Smoot while discussing the grounds.

PAM SMOOT: When did you first work on the Truman detail?

ROBERT LOCKWOOD: I began working on the Truman detail in 1967 for fourteen months. I became permanent in March 1973 and retired in March 1982.

SMOOT: When you began working on the Truman detail what was your first impression of the grounds?

LOCKWOOD: It was a nice yard, but I was not impressed. I am from the country where there are a lot of weeds, dandelions, and shrubbery. Being from Indiana that is what I am accustomed to. The commonness and simpleness of the lawn is impressive.

SMOOT: Did the Trumans have any gardens?

LOCKWOOD: No, they did not have a vegetable garden, but I am really surprised that they did not have any tomato plants. There were flower gardens, of peonies, roses, daffodils, tulips, jonquils, and surprise lilies.

SMOOT: Who planted the flowers?

LOCKWOOD: Bess may have taken care of the roses, which were her favorite, and Reverend Hobby basically took care of what was already here.

SMOOT: The shrubs around the front porch have been there for some time. Were they trimmed on a regular basis, not to exceed a certain height?

LOCKWOOD: Usually the spireas were the height of the railing but had a tendency to come over the sidewalk and people couldn't walk through. They were trimmed by Reverend Hobby.

SMOOT: I have noted that there were bushes along the fence close to the alley and hardly any on the Truman Road side of the property. Has it always been this way since your employment here?

LOCKWOOD: Yes.

SMOOT: Do you know if there was a particular reson for this?

LOCKWOOD: There was no particular reason for it.

SMOOT: There is a tree stump just above the flagpole. Do you remember what type of tree stood there?

LOCKWOOD: An elm tree was there. It suffered severe damage because of a windstorm and had to be taken down. I think it was taken down by Bill's Tree Service.

SMOOT: There is a brick area in the backyard. Do you know what possibly grew in that area?

LOCKWOOD: No. There is a birdbath here, but I used to keep the grass cut in the brick area. I do know that it was part of the rose arbor.

SMOOT: There is an area in the backyard along the driveway that indicates flowers grew there. Was that area here when you came?

LOCKWOOD: It has been there since I've been here. Those were daffodils.

SMOOT: Do you have any idea who planted the flowers?

LOCKWOOD: No.

SMOOT: Did Mr. or Mrs. Truman decide what flowers were to be planted, or where to plant them?

LOCKWOOD: Mrs. Truman decided what flowers were to be planted. Bess may have taken care of the roses or flowers. I took care of what was already here—peonies, daffodils, jonquils, lilacs, and a variety of roses.

SMOOT: Do you know of hollyhocks growing on the premises?

LOCKWOOD: Maybe alongside the garage or the fence. Maybe on May Wallace's side.

SMOOT: To your knowledge, were there ever any overgrown bushes?

LOCKWOOD: There were weeds along the fence, they grew out of proportion—so did the protection. [laughing]

SMOOT: Did Reverend Hobby, the Trumans' gardener, have his own tools or did the Trumans provide them?

LOCKWOOD: Reverend Hobby worked alone inside and outside the house. He polished the silver and cursed out the Secret Service. The Trumans provided the tools, but his were more primitive—hoe and spade.

SMOOT: Was Reverend Hobby responsible for the entire grounds or only specific areas?

LOCKWOOD: He was responsible for specific areas—shrubs, roses. The vegetation and other things most important to Bess were maintained by Reverend Hobby. Sometimes he picked weeds between the stones of the walkways.

SMOOT: Do you remember how often he worked on the grounds?

LOCKWOOD: Reverend Hobby usually worked on the grounds once a week. He would assume his responsibilities inside the Truman home first, and then the outside or yard area afterward.

SMOOT: Are you familiar with the pergola?

LOCKWOOD: No.

SMOOT: Are there any trees on the grounds that were here when you first began working for the Trumans that are not here any more?

LOCKWOOD: There was an elm tree [pointing to right corner of yard, Delaware and Truman Road] that was damaged by a windstorm and taken down by Bill's Tree Service.

SMOOT: As far as the grounds were concerned, did you have any responsibilities?

LOCKWOOD: My son, Mike, helped me on the grounds once per week in 1979-1980.

SMOOT: Did the Trumans ever have the soil treated or call in a professional lawn service?

LOCKWOOD: Yes, Raytown Lawnmower and ChemLawn on 61st and Blue Ridge, Lewie Matune. The service was used after Harry's death. It costs about

$200 and it was too expensive for Mrs. Truman. The service was first used in 1978.

SMOOT: Was the lawn well maintained?

LOCKWOOD: It wasn't manicured. It didn't look like a golf course, and it shouldn't have around the house. I mowed the lawn once a week. The lawn had a rustic look like old time America.

SMOOT: Have the grounds changed considerably since your retirement?

LOCKWOOD: I retired in 1982, but it looks the same. The hackberry tree in the backyard is still there. The weeds near the Wallace house and the borderline peonies, red, white, and pink, on both sides of the driveway are the same. The lilac bushes on the right side of the driveway alongside the fence are still there. There were no weeds immediately inside the fence like there are now. The lawn had a lot of clover in it, but there was more before. The windstorm in 1979 and 1980 destroyed many of the plants and trees.

SMOOT: Do you know why there is a pitchfork in the backyard near the garage?

LOCKWOOD: I put the fork there in 1980 to protect the water pipe from the lawnmower.

SMOOT: Was there always vegetation growing alongside the garage?

LOCKWOOD: The bushes were about six feet along the garage. Hobby trimmed the hedges when he felt well. He was slow, but thorough.

SMOOT: Were there any grapevines on the Truman property?

LOCKWOOD: Yes, they grew along the light wires of the back porch.

SMOOT: [pointing to rose bed] Is this the regular pattern of the rose bed?

LOCKWOOD: No. It didn't look this good. Reverend Hobby bunched them up. It was sort of remote and tulips were interspersed between the roses. They were imported from Holland.

SMOOT: Since your retirement in 1982, would you say that the grounds look basically the same?

LOCKWOOD: Yes. It appears in its natural state. This hackberry tree [pointing to a tree near the Wallace house] has always been here. These weeds near the Wallace house are the same.

SMOOT: What types of flowers are these [pointing to flowers along the driveway]?

LOCKWOOD: Along the borderline are peonies, red, white, and pink were on both sides of the driveway. Behind the peonies [on the right side of the driveway near the Wallace house] are lilac bushes alongside the fence. The dead wood would be cut out by Reverend Hobby. He sometimes pulled the wood out for the trash man.

SMOOT: Has this [pointing to excess growth] always been here? [Truman Road side of yard almost no path.]

LOCKWOOD: No, this growth was not here.

SMOOT: Were there any evergreens on the property?

LOCKWOOD: Maybe one or two.

SMOOT: Do you know who planted them?

LOCKWOOD: Reverend Hobby probably planted them. He used to plant them in the most ungodly areas. [laughing]

SMOOT: What kind of tree is this [pointing to the tree on far right corner of yard Delaware]?

LOCKWOOD: That tree is a silver maple. This is a shingle oak [pointing to largest tree on alley side of yard], and lilacs always grow around this tree. The shingle oak is also lightning prone. The lawn is a combination of bluegrass, clover, and fescue. There were a variety of roses and they were planted 4-2-4.

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## ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NOVEMBER 18, 1985

STEVE HARRISON: It's November 18, 1985. We're in the Truman home at 219 N. Delaware Street, Independence, Missouri. This will be an interview between Robert Lockwood and conducting the interview is Pamela Smoot, historian with the National Park Service in the Midwest Regional Office in Omaha, Nebraska.

PAM SMOOT: Mr. Lockwood, would you state your full name and address, please?

ROBERT LOCKWOOD: Robert Edwin Lockwood, 11800 E. 60th Terrace, Kansas City, Missouri, 64133.

SMOOT: When is your birth date?

LOCKWOOD: 12/12/31.

SMOOT: Are you a native of Independence, Missouri?

LOCKWOOD: No, I'm not.

SMOOT: Where are you from?

LOCKWOOD: I'm originally from southern Indiana—Marengo, Indiana.

SMOOT: And how long have you lived in Independence?

LOCKWOOD: I've lived in this area since—first stay was thirteen months in '67 and '68, and then since then I've lived here from March '73 to the present.

SMOOT: Mr. Lockwood, what was your association with the Truman family?

LOCKWOOD: In '67 and '68, I was a special agent of the U.S. Secret Service, and from 1973 to 1982, I was special agent in charge of the U.S. Secret Service detail that took care of Mrs. Truman.

SMOOT: When did you first begin your career as a Secret Service agent?

LOCKWOOD: 1959, in Louisville, Kentucky.

SMOOT: How would you describe Mr. Truman?

LOCKWOOD: At the time I knew him, he was up in years. I would describe him as polite, courteous. At that time, he appeared to be bordering on a little senility; sometimes he would have a hard time remembering. It seemed like he could remember well politics, but other incidents or other factors, he could not remember quite as well. I found him a very interesting man to be around. I wasn't around him too much. I did take one or two walks with him.

SMOOT: How would you describe Bess Truman?

LOCKWOOD: She's the type of lady that you had a great deal of respect for. She, again, was very gracious, kind lady, had a good sense of humor, and she was the type of lady that you would definitely not take advantage of. She was what I would call the boss, as he called her the boss, and you would do things for her that, well, should I say, you would definitely not try to take advantage of her, even though she was up in years. She was the kind of lady that you would do everything in your power to take care of.

SMOOT: What were your responsibilities in terms of providing protection for the Trumans?

LOCKWOOD: Well, the responsibilities was to maintain the integrity of the property, number two. The primary responsibility was to protect the well-being of Mr. and Mrs. Truman. I also had a number of men in the protective detail that I had to supervise and make sure we had proper protection around the perimeter of the Truman residence at all times. Do you want me to go into elaborate detail on—

SMOOT: If it's permissible.

LOCKWOOD: Oh, yes, it's permissible. We had a number of alarms set up around the house, the perimeter of the house. Also, we had fire and smoke detectors inside. During the early days of protection, Mrs. Truman didn't want us in the house, so we had to protect from the outside. As she became older, we moved into the inside of the house after a certain hour, after she had gone to bed, and we kept one man in the house at

all times after dark, which was normally after dark. Of course, in the summertime, she went to bed a little earlier, and we moved into the house. But we were mainly interested in the after-dark protection, because this area around here, is extremely poorly lit, expecially in the summertime, when all the trees have their vegetation.

The Trumans often went out and in the early stages of protection, we just furnished a followup car. After Mr. Truman passed away in December 1972, we drove Mrs. Truman, and we also had a followup car at that time. She did not go out of the house without our presence.

SMOOT: How many men did you supervise?

LOCKWOOD: The protective detail here varied from eight to ten men.

SMOOT: Do you remember the name of the gentleman, the Secret Service agent, who spent the night in the home after Mrs. Truman went to bed?

LOCKWOOD: Every agent spent a night in the house. It rotated, and the midnight shift, even I spent several nights in here.

SMOOT: When the agents spent the night in the house, where did they sleep, or did they sleep?

LOCKWOOD: They didn't sleep.

SMOOT: What time did Mrs. Truman usually go to bed? You said the agents would come in after she went to bed.

LOCKWOOD: That varies, but I would say between 7 and 8 o'clock, that she went to her room and we would—an agent would come from across the street over into the house around then.

SMOOT: What room did she sleep in during that time?

LOCKWOOD: During the early stages of protection, right after he passed away, she did maintain a bedroom upstairs in the—let's see, get my directions straight here—in the southwest corner, if I'm not mistaken. I may be mistaken on that. But after it became very difficult for her to go up the stairs, especially with a walker, she stayed downstairs and slept in the southeast bedroom, just off the living room.

SMOOT: When the Secret Service agents drove Mrs. Truman around, was it in a government car or did you use one of the Truman cars?

LOCKWOOD: We used her car, her Chrysler. However, on certain occasions, if her Chrysler wasn't performing properly, she would sit in a government-leased automobile.

SMOOT: Where was some of the places that the Secret Service agents drove Mrs. Truman?

LOCKWOOD: Well, in the fall of the year, we drove her around Jackson County, just to look at the vegetation, the foliage, because it was so pretty. Sometimes, we would go to Lake Jacomo, but oftentimes, we'd drive her to the beauty parlor, which was about three blocks from the house, and other times we'd go out to lunch, either Stephenson's Restaurant . . . We also went to Medlin's Restaurant on Blue Ridge [Medlin's

Colonial Inn, 5100 Blue Ridge Blvd.] and Hong Kong Tea House on Sterling, and there were a few other restaurants that we took her to.

SMOOT: Were those some of Mrs. Truman's favorite places?

LOCKWOOD: I would say so, yes, especially Stephenson's, was her favorite.

SMOOT: When you took Mrs. Truman to the beauty parlor, did you escort her into the beauty salon or did you drop her off? How did that work?

LOCKWOOD: We escorted her in, helped her out of the car, took her into the beauty parlor, and then an agent would remain adjacent to the beauty parlor in the barber shop. It was a barbershop/beauty parlor combination.

SMOOT: Where did Mrs. Truman sit in the car?

LOCKWOOD: I'm trying to think about that one. She would sit in the right rear.

SMOOT: Was there any particular reason for her being on the right side of the car?

LOCKWOOD: Let me think that one out a little better. Well, at the beauty parlor, that right rear, as we pulled up there, would be easier for her to get out. We didn't have to unload her on the street side. I could be mistaken on this. That question I didn't expect. [laughter] But I'm trying to think of just how we did get her out on occasion. I think most of the time, we put her in the right rear, because it would be easier for her to get out.

SMOOT: Were there any other agents, with the exception of the driver, in the car?

LOCKWOOD: Yes, we usually had one other agent in the right front seat.

SMOOT: Did Mrs. Truman ever give you or any of the other agents a difficult time about taking her places?

LOCKWOOD: No, she was very considerate if we made a bad turn, or something like that. She would understand. She didn't give us a bad time. One time she gave me a bad time for blocking the sidewalk at the beauty parlor, which inconvenienced a passerby, but the passerby smiled and she understood. I backed the car into—across the sidewalk—so we'd have an easier time getting her out. She didn't particularly care for that.

SMOOT: Were there ever any security problems?

LOCKWOOD: Never. I had no security problems. The biggest security problem that I can think of, was, really, it wasn't one, but we tried to move around without creating a stir with the news media, and we'd slip around occasionally, so we wouldn't have a bunch of photographers or news media bugging us.

SMOOT: Who were some of the visitors who came to visit the Trumans? Were you ever around when people—

LOCKWOOD: Oh, yes, I was around quite often when they came. Rufus Burrus, a longtime friend, who is an attorney in Independence, still alive, and Bob Adams, who was the administrator of Research Hospital, he's still around. They would come weekly, normally on Saturday, to visit with Mrs. Truman. There were quite a few others. Doris Miller, her beautician, would come in to—if Mrs. Truman couldn't get out of the house. Then, there was a Mr. and Mrs. Bostian. I don't recall their first

name. He was from Kansas, and they were longtime friends. If there was any dignitaries in town who had known her from the time she was in the White House, they would often come around—Muriel Humphrey came in, Vice President Humphrey, and some of the others in that category.

SMOOT: When they came to visit, were the Secret Service agents, were they reinforced? Were there more?

LOCKWOOD: No, not normally. Not unless the dignitary had a protective detail with him. If he was still in office, then those agents would come in, but as far as me bringing any additional agents in, it would only be with the president come in or maybe a vice president. I might bring in a few more agents in, especially with the president. But anybody else, we didn't have any additional agents.

SMOOT: Mr. Lockwood, was the garage door kept up or down?

LOCKWOOD: Kept up.

SMOOT: Was there any particular reason for that? Was that part of the security measures?

LOCKWOOD: No, it was no particular reason. It was just extremely difficult to raise and lower.

SMOOT: Does the Secret Service have much contact with the neighbors here in the community?

LOCKWOOD: Well, I did. I don't know about the others, but I think there was a good relationship of several of the agents with various neighbors around.

SMOOT: Do you remember any of the neighbors, in particular, who you felt the Secret Service had good relations with?

LOCKWOOD: Polly Compton, who lives about a half block from here. Of course, Mrs. Wallace, Mrs. Truman's sister-in-law, the Millers, and Reverend Melton across the street. We had good relations with our neighbors.

SMOOT: So did Mr. Truman—how did he feel about having the Secret Service around? I remember you telling me how Bess felt, but how did he feel?

LOCKWOOD: Well, in the early years after he got out of office, he thought they were sort of a nuisance, and he may have been right at that time, because when the law was passed allowing this type of protection, the Secret Service did come in, and they came in with a little too much force for former President Truman, and he told them to get out, and the Secret Service did leave at that time. They abandoned any hopes of having a detail, so a few months later, they put an agent over in the Truman Library to maintain a liaison with President Truman and Mrs. Truman, and eventually, they allowed a little more protection.

The protection was half way, as far as I was concerned, because in '67 and '68, when I was here, we had a detail, but we'd just come around the house about every hour and look around, which is not protection. But we were hoping that eventually we could come in with full-time protection. Around 1970, we were able to rent a house across the street and that allowed a little closer protection. And as he and she became older, they allowed a little more. They realized the advantages

of some of it, even to the extent that it helped them get around. We furnished drivers and whatever other services we thought applied to protection. Although in some of this protective details, you get into non-protective duties and that's a—we performed those as a courtesy.

SMOOT: Could you describe what a non-protective duty is, please?

LOCKWOOD: A non-protective duty, for instance, if Mrs. Truman called and they were having electrical problems or something like that, I would call an electrician. That's non-protective duty, and a lot of details, they feel that that's the protectee's responsibility, but you have to remember the Trumans were alone. They didn't have a bunch of servants and people looking after them after, all the time.

SMOOT: Did you also take Mrs. Truman to the grocery store? Who did the grocery shopping?

LOCKWOOD: Mrs. Truman did most of the grocery shopping until she was unable to get around. We'd take her to the grocery store. She'd push the cart around, and we'd walk around with her. And when the groceries were bagged, we'd carry them out to the car. That again is a non-protective duty, carrying groceries. I realized that, but you have to give and take a little in this.

SMOOT: Did you have any responsibilities inside the Truman home other than protective services?

LOCKWOOD: No. No. Other than protective service, we had no responsibilities, although I took a few responsibilities now and then.

SMOOT: Such as?

LOCKWOOD: Well, for instance, if there was trouble on the attic, which we had, and we thought it was squirrels. It was actually raccoons, and they were tearing up the house. We set a trap and apprehended the raccoon. Another one was the drain on the front porch stopped up, and you had about a foot of water on that front porch roof, and with that kind of pressure and weight, you could have had the roof collapse. I recall on a couple of occasions, I had to get out on the roof and unstop the drain. But that, I didn't feel like that was any great inconvenience.

SMOOT: Has anything in the house changed since you first worked on the Truman detail?

LOCKWOOD: No, it looks about the same to me. The table was set with china and silver. I had never seen that, although I imagine that they had quite a few functions in the house requiring silver and china.

SMOOT: So, would you say that the music parlor, is the furniture in there the same?

LOCKWOOD: It looks the same to me, yes. Well, I haven't . . . it just looks nice and tidy. It looks about like the way she kept it.

SMOOT: Would you say the living room was also the same?

LOCKWOOD: Yes, I would.

SMOOT: Has any additional furniture been added at all to these rooms?

LOCKWOOD: I see none that I'm familiar with.

SMOOT: Are you familiar with the furniture arrangement in this downstairs bedroom?

LOCKWOOD: I think I would be, yes.

SMOOT: Maybe we'll take a look. [Lockwood looks into bedroom then returns.] So, Mr. Lockwood, what do you think of the furniture in the downstairs bedroom?

LOCKWOOD: It looks the same as I originally know it. Of course, in later years, there was a hospital bed moved in there when she was having difficulty.

SMOOT: On which side of the room was the hospital bed located?

LOCKWOOD: It was on the southwest corner. More to the center, it was moved a little more to the center than the double bed is presently in there.

SMOOT: Are those the same beds that were in that room when you first began working in the Truman detail?

LOCKWOOD: Yes.

SMOOT: So has that room changed at all?

LOCKWOOD: No, it looks the same.

SMOOT: Are there any new additions?

LOCKWOOD: None that I know of. I recall, as far as the beds are concerned, I can recall we moved those beds at one time. I helped the Reverend Hobby, who worked for Mrs. Truman, move the beds. I'm not absolutely sure that there were twin beds, but to the best of my recollection, there were.

SMOOT: Where did you move the beds from?

LOCKWOOD: We moved them upstairs. We moved them from upstairs downstairs when she came down. That's right.

SMOOT: Do you remember when you moved the beds?

LOCKWOOD: No, I don't know. It was probably around '76, '77, somewhere in there.

SMOOT: What room did those beds come out of?

LOCKWOOD: To tell you the truth, I don't know. I was thinking they came out of the bedroom directly above the living room. They may not have.

SMOOT: Did anyone other than Reverend Hobby help you bring the beds down?

LOCKWOOD: No, he and I did that.

SMOOT: What happened to the beds that were in this room before you moved these beds down?

LOCKWOOD: I don't know. Reverend Hobby would probably remember that one very well. I know they were heavy. [laughter]

SMOOT: Was any furniture in the Truman home ever disposed of while you were working on the Truman detail?

LOCKWOOD: There was one chair in his reading room that was reupholstered, if I'm not mistaken, or it was disposed of. Whether it was permanently disposed of or not, I'm not for sure.

SMOOT: Was that bureau always in this downstairs bedroom?

LOCKWOOD: As I recall, it was.

SMOOT: So when you moved the beds from the upstairs bedroom to the downstairs bedroom, did you move any other furniture down with those beds?

LOCKWOOD: I can safely say I didn't move anything else. I just recall moving beds.

SMOOT: Who decided that the beds should be moved?

LOCKWOOD: Well, it was Mrs. Truman's decision when she could no longer go up the steps. Mrs. Daniel had some say-so about that.

SMOOT: Do you know what Mrs. Daniel's say-so was?

LOCKWOOD: No, I don't. I know it became, it was becoming very hazardous for her to climb those steps, up and down the steps as infirm as she was. We were afraid she would fall and break her hip.

SMOOT: Why do you think she wanted these beds to come downstairs?

LOCKWOOD: I don't know.

SMOOT: So do you remember any of the names of any of the nurses who worked here?

LOCKWOOD: A few. Velma James. Trudy Worden. There was a number of them. I should have remembered all of them. Can you refresh my memory? [laughter]

SMOOT: No, I just wasn't here.

LOCKWOOD: A gal by the name of Peaches Coleman*. That's all I can remember right now.

SMOOT: Mr. Lockwood, after Mr. Truman's death, did Mrs. Truman spend any time in the study?

LOCKWOOD: Very little, if I'm not mistaken. I don't—she may have—but I don't recall her spending a lot of time in there.

SMOOT: Do you remember where she spent most of her time after his death?

LOCKWOOD: No, I don't. She moved, on this first floor, she moved back and forth between the kitchen and bedroom, and I know when she met guests, of course, it was in the living room, and birthday parties or things like that would take place in the dining room. But I don't recall where she spent a great deal of time.

SMOOT: Were you ever present at any of the birthday parties?

LOCKWOOD: Yes.

SMOOT: Whose birthdays were they?

LOCKWOOD: Mrs. Truman's. I forget the year, but we had quite a birthday party for her.

SMOOT: Can you sort of rehash what happened during this birthday party?

LOCKWOOD: The nurses got together and got a cake and invited some guests. My wife came, I came, the nurses, George and Doris Miller, and we had a nice little party in the dining room.

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[*] The editor has not been able to verify this name.

SMOOT: Was there any music?

LOCKWOOD: I think they did sing "Happy Birthday to You," but there was no music, that I recall. But she seemed to be very pleased about it.

SMOOT: Did she get many presents?

LOCKWOOD: I don't think there was too many presents. I don't recall if there were any presents, off hand. I know we had a nice cake and everything. Cards, there was cards and flowers. She always received a lot of cards and flowers on her anniversary and birthday.

SMOOT: Do you remember what kind of flowers they were?

LOCKWOOD: An amalgam of everything. All types of flowers and plants. I recall one year she had so many flowers and plants that I made deliveries to some of the nursing homes around here with some of them.

SMOOT: Was Mrs. Daniel present at the birthday party?

LOCKWOOD: No, she wasn't.

SMOOT: Did Mrs. Truman have candles on her cake?

LOCKWOOD: I don't specifically remember that. I imagine she did, but I don't remember. I know some of the gals would remember. They remember things like that better than men do.

SMOOT: So Mrs. Truman, would you say that you and she were very good friends?

LOCKWOOD: Yes. I would say we were very good friends.

SMOOT: Mr. Lockwood, I think this will conclude our interview.

HARRISON: Shall we walk around the house now?

[End #3069; Begin #3070]

[walking from room to room]

LOCKWOOD: This is a recliner, isn't it?

SMOOT: Yes.

LOCKWOOD: Okay. That's the one we got for her. I don't think she liked it too well, but we kept it. We went out and shopped for that one.

SMOOT: Do you remember roughly when it was purchased and where it was purchased?

LOCKWOOD: No, I don't. I was thinking that we'd tried at La-Z-Boy over on Highway 40 for that particular chair, if I'm not mistaken.

SMOOT: Why was the chair purchased?

LOCKWOOD: Well, she just wanted a chair to sit in. I know that was one of the purchases made while I was here. Could I ask you a question? It seemed to me like the upholstery on it, like the covering, was different than it is now. Maybe it's the same.

SMOOT: So was this chair purchased sort of around the time when she was really sick?

LOCKWOOD: Not real sick, but she was not moving around too well, but she wasn't sick. It was purchased before she became bedridden. She could still get around.

SMOOT: Does this bureau bring back any memories?

LOCKWOOD: Not a whole lot. That one, that one, it does.

SMOOT: Do you remember anything specific about this one?

LOCKWOOD: No, nothing specific. No, I sure don't. [sounds of footsteps] This I remember very well, this bookcase.

SMOOT: Were these some of Mrs. Truman's or Mr. Truman's favorite books?

LOCKWOOD: I don't remember whether they were or not. I just remember looking at them occasionally.

HARRISON: We need to, while we're walking around—what are you laughing about?—tell what we're looking at and what room we're in, so that will be on the tape.

SMOOT: Now we're in the music parlor.

LOCKWOOD: The music parlor I spent a lot of time in. I remember everything in here, just about. It looks the same: the piano, all the pictures on the piano are just as I remember them, the gold coins on the piano. There was a mark on the piano where a Secret Service agent set a cup of coffee. Looks like it's not there any longer. The water marks on the corner back here, I remember, because we had a leak up on the roof of the front porch. Everything looks the same here. The Zenith television set that was purchased from Ken and Will's [Television, 12004 E. 47th Street].

SMOOT: Ken and Will's? Is that a local appliance store?

LOCKWOOD: That's local, yeah, at 47th and Blue Ridge.

SMOOT: Do you remember roughly when it was purchased?

LOCKWOOD: Oh, I think that was probably purchased around 1970, somewhere in that area.

SMOOT: Did Mrs. Truman watch a lot of TV?

LOCKWOOD: She watched a little TV.

SMOOT: What about this loveseat? Are there any special stories about this piece?

LOCKWOOD: None. I can remember it, but I don't know of any special stories.

HARRISON: The water stains in the corner. Do you remember roughly when that happened? Was that your first detail here or the second?

LOCKWOOD: No, not the first. I didn't come in the house on my first detail. It would have been my second. It would have been in the middle '70s.

HARRISON: Did Mrs. Truman ever talk about her first lady portrait?

LOCKWOOD: No. Never mentioned it. Never mentioned it. As far as the paintings in the house, she never mentioned any of them. This is a Churchill, isn't it?

HARRISON: The Churchill used to be here. That was taken up to the library.

LOCKWOOD: Whose is this?

HARRISON: That was done by Stanley Woodward, Jr., who was the son of Truman's chief of protocol.

LOCKWOOD: Right around the corner here is a—is it still here?

HARRISON: No, it was taken to the library.

LOCKWOOD: All right.

SMOOT: We're now in the study of the Truman home.

LOCKWOOD: It doesn't look the same in a lot of respects.

SMOOT: In what respects?

LOCKWOOD: We used to have a lot of books stacked on the floor in here, and they were that way for years. Books stacked two feet deep around the table. The chair we had was sort of dilapidated. That one has either been reupholstered or it's a new chair.

SMOOT: This reclining chair in the corner?

LOCKWOOD: Yes. That was not here, that I recall.

SMOOT: Were the books only stacked around the table? Were they stacked anywhere else?

LOCKWOOD: Well, they had them stacked—you could still move around in this room without stumbling over books, but they were stacked in various locations. There were just many more books in here than what there are now, not unless they've been put on the shelves in better order, but as I recall a lot of the books that came in, evidently he looked at them or she looked at them, then they stacked them on the floor.

This table in here, I don't recall that that was the specific table here. It may have been because when you get a lot of stuff stacked on something, it's pretty hard to see it clearly. But the bookracks, they look about the same, as I recall. I spent a lot of time browsing through the books. Some of those midnight shifts, that's about all you had to do.

HARRISON: Where did the agents usually spend time in the house?

LOCKWOOD: Right here.

HARRISON: Right in that reclining chair in the study.

LOCKWOOD: Right here. Right there, yeah.

HARRISON: Was that an assigned location in the house, or a preferred location?

LOCKWOOD: No, it wasn't an assigned . . . that was a preferred location.

SMOOT: Were there ever any flowers in that pot?

LOCKWOOD: Not that I know of. I don't recall ever seeing any flowers. We had a window air-conditioning unit back here, also, a small window air-conditioning unit. I think when Mr. Truman was alive, he spent a lot of time in here. In the wintertime, when it was still dark early in the morning, this light would be on. You'd see him in here reading the newspaper or reading a book. He read quite a bit in this particular room—was his favorite room. The painting was here. Remember that one—

HARRISON: The Audubon print?

LOCKWOOD: The Audubon, yeah.

HARRISON: Was the air conditioner, if you recall—that was in here while Mr. Truman was alive?

LOCKWOOD: As I recall—a small window unit.

HARRISON: Was that left in year-round?

LOCKWOOD: No, it was taken out: put in in the spring, taken out in the fall. Reverend Hobby did that.

SMOOT: Do you remember when it was first put in?

LOCKWOOD: No, I don't. There was also a kitchen unit that we put in and out, as I recall, too.

HARRISON: Do you ever recall anybody listening to the hi-fi?

LOCKWOOD: No, I don't recall that ever being on. She had another small unit that was in there. That was given to her. It think it was given to her by Bob Adams, that she may have listened to a little.

SMOOT: Where was it located?

LOCKWOOD: It was sitting right over here.

SMOOT: In the dining room?

LOCKWOOD: Yes. Where it is, I don't know. It was sitting right here. It was a modern unit. It sort of looked out of place in the dining room, but it was here. I don't recall that unit in the study ever being used. The dining room looks the same with the exception of the little stereo missing, plus I don't recall ever having seen the dining room table set with the china and the silverware. Everything else looks the same in here.

HARRISON: When Mrs. Truman was able to get around, do you recall where she had her meals? Maybe you weren't in the home at mealtimes.

LOCKWOOD: To be honest with you, sometimes we took her meals to her in the living room, as I recall, and she was very precise about the way we had the platter or the tray set. Most of our guys didn't know which side to put the knife and fork on, and that sort of irritated her a little. But we went out there for quite a while, I didn't like it, but we went out and got food for her. We'd go to Kentucky Fried Chicken, down to the restaurant in the Independence Sanitarium and get food, or Treacher's

Fish & Chips. It was not a very satisfactory thing to do, but at least we kept her eating.

SMOOT: Were there any cooks around?

LOCKWOOD: Cooks just came in at specific times. There were times when she didn't have anybody to cook for her. So we'd go out and get her food, and then we'd set a tray out here with a napkin, silverware, and this and that, and take it to her, which is totally out of protective responsibility. But we did it. It sort of, in a way, it's self-preservation. We could have set back, and she wouldn't have eaten properly and then end up in the hospital or something like that. But it was a—a lot of the agents did not like it. I didn't really like it that well, but I said, well, "Let's keep her alive." That's why we did it. But we went out many times, to get her meals and plus, we had a special officer that like to cook, and he'd come over here and cook a little himself.

SMOOT: What was his name?

LOCKWOOD: Don Hardysinger. He is now, he is passed away. He died in San Clemente of a heart attack.

SMOOT: Is that Brian Hardysinger's dad?

LOCKWOOD: Dad. That's about all I can think of about the dining room.

HARRISON: Let's go to the kitchen.

LOCKWOOD: Looks the same. This plate here was cherished by Mrs. Truman. As I recall, a corpsman—when he was still alive, they had four Navy corpsmen here that came through one night, and that thing hit the

ground and it burst, broke, and we had to have it pieced back together. That's the June 20, 1919, plate. That's when they were married, right?

SMOOT: Yes.

LOCKWOOD: We almost destroyed that one.

HARRISON: That was done by a corpsman?

LOCKWOOD: Corpsman, Navy corpsman. All right! The kitchen. Gas stove that would never light. Looks the same. I can't see much difference in here, except the rug. The linoleum, it didn't show that kind of—she had this put in while we were her. It's fairly recent.

HARRISON: So it was put in in the 1970s?

LOCKWOOD: Yes.

SMOOT: What about this wallpaper?

LOCKWOOD: This was wallpapered then, also.

SMOOT: This is the same wallpaper?

LOCKWOOD: This is the same wallpaper. You could never forget this wallpaper. And the green cabinets, it's the same. The stove was purchased during the '70s. It's a Hartwick. The old stove, is it still in the garage? It was put out in the garage.

HARRISON: It's still out there.

LOCKWOOD: Yes, that's it. That's their old stove.

HARRISON: So the one that is out in the garage now—

LOCKWOOD: Used to be in here.

HARRISON: —and was replaced by this Hartwick.

LOCKWOOD: The space heater—that's been here all along. The refrigerator, I think that was fairly new. It was replaced in the '70s.

SMOOT: Was there an air-conditioning unit in here?

LOCKWOOD: I'm pretty sure that there was one in this window. And then the one in the—the one we'd take out in the spring and fall was in the drawing room, in the reading room. This one if I'm not mistaken, left it permanently. It was a pretty heavy unit.

HARRISON: It's a 220. I wouldn't have been moving it.

LOCKWOOD: No, it was a heavy unit that we had to leave. Everything else looks the same in here, even the old clock.

HARRISON: Is there any particular objects in the home that Mrs. Truman would—that you recall her talking about or telling any stories about?

LOCKWOOD: No, I sure don't.

HARRISON: Let's go upstairs.

LOCKWOOD: Wait till you have to change a light bulb here.

HARRISON: Me and the tall ladder.

LOCKWOOD: The Truman Library has a pole that has a hook on it here. I'd have to go to the Truman Library to get a pole. This room is on the southeast corner. I don't remembered too much about this at all.

HARRISON: This room we call the Truman bedroom.

LOCKWOOD: To the best of my memory, it looks basically like it was when I was here. I don't recall a whole lot about it. I didn't spend too much time

up here. And the time that I did, I was just in and out. I didn't really make any mental images of it.

SMOOT: Do you remember the furniture that was in the downstairs bedroom before you moved that furniture down there?

LOCKWOOD: No, it's just a little too far back for me to remember. It looks the same—the downstairs bedroom.

HARRISON: This is what we call the master bedroom.

LOCKWOOD: I was in here on several occasions. The—I think this was the room Margaret, Mrs. Daniel, stayed in when she visited. I'm sure it is. It looks basically the same. Again, I can't be sure. I just can't. [walking noises] Yes, this room looks the same. There are a few items in here I don't recall. This went out, this goes over by the stairwell.

SMOOT: This desk.

LOCKWOOD: Yes.

HARRISON: And this little couch, both. We're in the guest room.

LOCKWOOD: The furniture looks the same, as I recall. It was a little more modern [than] some of the other rooms, as far as the furniture was concerned. This was where I would go out on to the roof, through this window, to unstop the drain, if the water was backed up.

HARRISON: That's the west window.

LOCKWOOD: Right. [walking noises] This was his room back here.

HARRISON: This is the Truman dressing room.

LOCKWOOD: Yes. This looks about the same. He had all the clothes. I can't see much difference here. I don't know whether you want to go up into the attic or not?

HARRISON: No.

LOCKWOOD: This room, I can't tell you a thing about this room. I know I've come by here and glanced in, but I just don't recall too much about it.

SMOOT: This is Mrs. Truman's room.

HARRISON: Well, her dressing room.

SMOOT: Her dressing room. [walking downstairs, pause] Do you remember, during what period, just roughly when there was no one here to fix Mrs. Truman's meals?

LOCKWOOD: No, she had a gal that came in by the name of Geraldine Peterson. Geraldine was just here specific times. I know that Mrs. Truman was without any service on Sundays.

END OF INTERVIEW

# APPENDIX

1. "Mrs. Truman Staying Home—as Usual—on 93rd," *Kansas City Times*, February 13, 1978, p. 4A.

2. "Mrs. Truman Is 94 Today," *Kansas City Times*, February 13, 1979, p. 2B.

3. "Still 'the Boss': Privacy, grace part of Bess Truman story," *Kansas City Times*, August 30, 1980, p. A-1, A-4.

4. "Small party to celebrate Bess' 96th," *Kansas City Star*, February 12, 1981, p. 4A.

5. "Bess Truman celebrates 96th birthday in quiet way," *Kansas City Times*, February 14, 1981, p. B-6.

6. "Confidants recall a quiet, gracious lady," *Kansas City Times*, October 19, 1982, p. A-1, A-4.

7. "Agency to end its protective service here," *The Examiner*, October 19, 1982, p. 14.

8. "Truly superb," *The Examiner*, October 19 or 20 [?], 1982.