

INTERVIEW WITH
Louis M. Hacker

by

David Horrocks
Oral Historian

on

May 15, 1975

for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library



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This is an interview with Louis M. Hacker at his home in New York City. This is David Horrocks of the Eisenhower Library. May 15, 1975.

MR. HORROCKS: Dean Hacker, could you summarize your background?

MR. HACKER: My personal background?



MR. HORROCKS: Right.

MR. HACKER: I'm a New Yorker. I was educated in New York grade schools, and one of the best high schools in the country at that time. It was one of the high schools known as a Latin school along with the Boston and the Philadelphia Latin schools, and in consequence I got a first-class education. I had four years of Latin. I had three years of French. I had four years of English, composition and literature. I studied biology and chemistry. I had four years of mathematics. This was the Brooklyn Boys High School which is now in the center of the so-called Bedford-Stuyvesant area and unhappily its high estate has almost completely disappeared. When I graduated from high school in 1916--I should say, I was born in 1899 in New York--when I graduated from Brooklyn Boys High School, I went to the

dean of admissions for Columbia College--a man--I've forgotten his first name--a man by the name of Jones who at the same time was a professor of philosophy and I brought my diploma. And he said, "You apparently have done well at high school and we need no further credentials from you because we know of the high repute of the Brooklyn Boys High School and we'd be delighted to admit you." I entered Columbia College then in the fall of 1917 and was in residence, commuting from Brooklyn where I then lived, to Columbia for two years, which took us to 1918 and the outbreak of the war. My father was a small shopkeeper. He wasn't doing particularly well, so I dropped out. I sought jobs and got them around the city and came back to Columbia College, after having been married in the interim, and resumed my education, obtaining my degree in 1922 instead of with my class in 1920. I had been so widely educated in the Brooklyn Boys High School that a good deal of the undergraduate work at the so-called junior college in the first two years didn't interest me any more. But the great advantage of going to Columbia was that one had access to some of the great professors on the campus where we'd go and listen to them--not necessarily as a



registered student--in fact as an undergraduate you couldn't but you could listen to them and you'd know the things that they were familiar with. At the same time I had begun to write and to publish in some of the current weekly journals being published in New York--a learned article also appeared in the Mississippi Valley Historical Review and decided that I would take an M.A. at least and took an M.A. in 1923. I should say it was largely as a result of my outside writing, and it always amused me, that I was elected Phi Beta Kappa rather than on the basis of my performance as an undergraduate because, as I said, I wasn't particularly very interested in what was going on in the college. That was 1923. I tried to get assistance to continue my graduate work, but Columbia wasn't particularly interested in me despite my outside activities. The consequences was that from 1923 up to 1935-- this takes us right to the depression of 1930 - '35--I was able to support myself in modest fashion on the basis of my writing. My wife had become a school teacher and between us we made a modest income. My first child was born in 1929, that was my son Andrew, and in 1929 I was asked by one of my old teachers at Columbia if I wouldn't be interested in reading a manuscript in American



history that had been done by a professor. And I went through the manuscript--I should say that the name of this man was Benjamin B. Kendrick--he was born in Georgia and had come from Georgia to teach at Columbia. I said to Kendrick. "This manuscript is not worth redoing. Would the publisher, despite the fact that I have no academic connection, be interested in my writing a book de novo." And Kendrick said, "We'll ask the editor of the series"--who was Harry M. Barnes--I think he's still alive--and Harry M. Barnes who knew my writings in these various other places, he said, "I'm perfectly willing to take a chance." The consequence was--the depression was already full-blown-- in 1930 I sat down to write a new book. I wrote it because I was a young man and a skilled writer and desperate at making income; I wrote an enormous manuscript in eighteen months and took it to Kendrick. I said, "I have discussed this with Barnes and Barnes says it would be a good idea to have an academic name on the title page." I said to Kendrick, "Would you be interested in reading this manuscript and coming on with me on the title page. It would have to be Hacker and Kendrick--alphabetical order."



And Kendrick said, after he had read the manuscript, "I approve this completely, but there were three chapters that may need rewriting." Kendrick was a Southerner. He was interested in the Civil War and the period of Reconstruction. He said, "I will rewrite those three chapters, but I insist that the foreward say that I, Kendrick, wrote three chapters and you, Louis Hacker, wrote thirty." He was a decent and honorable man. One doesn't treat a young fellow that way usually in the academic world.

And the book came out in 1932, and was received very favorably. It was even reviewed in the New York Times and the consequence was that I was able to get more writings; more magazines began to call on me for work; I wrote for Harper's Magazine. You see I was thirty-two. I wrote for Scribner's. I wrote for the North American Review. Encyclopedias asked me to contribute to them. That was another source of income for my writings. I did a good deal of writing for the first edition of the Columbia Encyclopedia. There was one form of journalism that was available to writers like me at that particular time and that was the Sunday supplements of newspapers.



Most newspapers had their own Sunday supplements. Today they are largely syndicated. So I did a good deal of writing there. I served for a year with the Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences as assistant editor during this period from 1932 to 1935. I wrote another book--I wrote two books in that interval. I should say that my name is on at least twenty books at the present time, and I regard myself first as a professional writer and then also as a scholar. And my scholarly interests of course became involved with my writing. The consequence was that in 1935, when I was thirty-six and my second child [Betsy] had already been born, I was asked to become a lecturer at Columbia College in economics--not in history, but in economics--at the princely salary of \$3,000 a year. My wife had carried both children and couldn't work anymore, but I was able to supplement from this outside writing. I continued then my career at Columbia. Promotions were very slow. I didn't become an assistant professor until 1942, continuing to write books and articles. I didn't become a full professor until 1948. Today young people with promise become full professors in their thirties. But it was a different world.



HORROCKS: At least before very recent years.

HACKER: Yes. Right. Up to, quite, up to 1973.

HORROCKS: Well, when did you first meet General Eisenhower?

HACKER: In 1940, I had published what has become a distinguished book called The Triumph of American Capitalism. This has been translated into German, into Spanish, and interestingly enough into Japanese. The Japanese were interested in what I was doing. Four of my books have been translated into Japanese.

HORROCKS: After the war?

HACKER: Oh, yes. Because they saw their sudden development from 1867 on, when Japan had become modernized, as being somewhat similar to the career of the United States and looked to me as a kind of person who could interpret in scholarly fashion this rapid jump from an agricultural into an industrial nation and Japan was going, as I said, through the same metamorphosis. The consequence was that 1948--and incidentally I had an excellent reputation in Britain--in



1948 I was invited by Oxford University to become what was known as the Harmsworth Professor of American History. The electors were a rather interesting group. One of them was the American ambassador to the Court of St. James', and the other electors were members of the general staff of Oxford. I became a fellow of Queen's College; my wife came along with me. Both children came along. My daughter became educated in an English girls school, my son to go to St. Andrews in Scotland. But my wife and I were in Oxford living in one room in a little hotel. And on the basis of the familiarity that the Oxonians had with me--my work, my willingness to speak before all kinds of groups, my acceptances as I said of invitations from colleges and outside bodies--they asked me if I wanted to stay on. It was then that Columbia suddenly discovered that well, maybe I was a pearl beyond price, we ought to have him back here.



HORROCKS: Now, was this Columbia under Nicholas Butler and--

HACKER: Nicholas Murray Butler, although he had nothing to do with this, Nicholas Murray Butler had established a committee for the purposes of selection of what was then known as director of the School of General Studies. It

was a committee that made the nomination and Butler accepted it, and on that basis I was asked to return. That was in '49. Ike already was in residence for a year. I returned in the summer of '49. It was from the summer of '49 through '50 that Ike and I became good friends. So, what else do you want to know about me?

HORROCKS: Well--

HACKER: You see this is an unusual career and this is one of the ways of getting into the academic world through unusual channels. It was on the basis of the reputation that I had established that I was asked--

HORROCKS: And a lot of hard work.

HACKER: Well, you can imagine--I don't know if you can understand--only a person who has gone through it--you can imagine how hard it was trying to support one's self during the depression as a free-lance, and that made me pretty tough and I suspect that Ike realize that I was cut from about the same cloth that he was--a child of poor parentage who came up the hard way, by dint of hard work.



HORROCKS: Did you ever discuss this sort of thing with the General?

HACKER: Did I ever what?



HORROCKS: Discuss this.

HACKER: I may have. I think he was interested in me. I'm sure I must have, and I'm sure that I struck a responsive cord because his childhood and youth had been very much like mine.

HORROCKS: Well, what was your relationship with Eisenhower as president of Columbia and you as the dean of General Studies?

HACKER: Unfortunately, as I have told you before, Eisenhower was unduly and unhappily shielded from the great generality that makes up a university, that is to say the teaching staff and the students. It was pointed out to Ike, but there was a group of deans, I among them--I should say that I finally got the university to accept my program of a faculty and a deanship in 1952, after having taken over this directorship in '49. I had to work pretty hard to get them

to consent, but this was finally done. The result was that there was a company of deans who really laid down academic policy for the university--a kind of informal council under the head of the then vice president who was the distinguished physicist [George B.] Pegram, after whom the physics building was named and who was one of the original founders of the so-called Manhattan Project that took place here at Columbia in the development of atomic fission and ultimately the atomic bomb. Pegram was the vice president. There were about a half dozen of us who met with him regularly to discuss the academic affairs of the university and make the budget of the university and so on. Eisenhower knew of the existence of such a group and he was perfectly willing, despite the efforts of his immediate military entourage to keep him virtually isolated, he was willing and pleased to welcome them immediately into his company to hear their problems, to discuss them with him and the rest. It was on that basis that I was able to establish this friendship with the General. I had to tell him what the School of General Studies was, what this program of adult education meant, how it meant the creation of a--if you please--a second chance for



persons who had not gone through educational careers in one jump, who had like myself been dropouts and then had decided to return and so on. He was fascinated by the existence of such a program. I told him at great length what I planned to do, what my faculty approved. He would listen with great interest, and, after hearing me out, he would say, "Well, I think you're on the right track. I like what you're doing. You go ahead and keep on seeing me and telling me what's going on in your division of the university." And I accepted that invitation. As I say, we became quite friendly. He learned to call me by my first name; he could see me years later and identify me. And apparently he welcomed this kind of close relationship.

HORROCKS: You had ready access to General Eisenhower then while he was at Columbia?

HACKER: Yes.

HORROCKS: Why have there been such complaints from faculty and others that they were unable to establish much contact with Eisenhower?



HACKER: First, the faculty. He was in effect, by the watch-dogs in the anteroom, the faculty in effect was barred from seeing Eisenhower. They wouldn't make appointments for them. They in fact, not frightened them off, but antagonized them.

HORROCKS: This is [Kevin] McCann and [Robert] Schulz?

HACKER: Yes.

HORROCKS: Why did they do this? Why were they so protective?

HACKER: A misguided assumption that they were doing it for his own good.

HORROCKS: Isn't that the sort of thing that Eisenhower himself could have seen happening and overcome if he had really wanted to?



HACKER: Perhaps if someone had told him what they were doing.

HORROCKS: Did you ever try to tell him what Schulz and McCann were doing?

HACKER: No. He never asked me.

HORROCKS: As president--

HACKER: Now let's take other deans, you mentioned those-- you said faculty. I think they did not seek out the general as I did. In other words, they weren't acute enough, because he was the president, to acquaint him with their problems, their difficulties, the fact that they were being thwarted in what they were trying to do. It was their error. Had they known what my experiences had been, and I'd tried to tell them that, perhaps they would have tried to break the barrier too.

HORROCKS: The General's door really wasn't shut, it just needed a little push to open it, right?

HACKER: That's right. The General was very friendly. He was fascinated by what he heard from me.

HORROCKS: Was he knowledgeable of university affairs?

HACKER: The trustees--not in their wisdom--their stupidity, I think, said that the General, after having left the army, needed a platform and a public forum. In other words, the



reason why the trustees--and I think one of them was [Thomas] Watson, the original founder of IBM--the trustees wanted to groom Ike for the presidency of the United States and wanted a platform from which he could make public statements and from which he could be heard. That was their only interest in Ike as president of the university.

HORROCKS: Did the trustees say this to you?

HACKER: Did they what?

HORROCKS: Did a trustee ever say this to you?

HACKER: No, but after all, we knew what was going on. I assumed, common knowledge, that this was one of the reasons why Watson had proposed that the General be made the president of Columbia University.

HORROCKS: Did General Eisenhower ever speak to you along these lines?

HACKER: No. I have a feeling simply that he knew what the score was. And he had a perfect right to be interested in the presidency of the United States.



HORROCKS: Surely.

HACKER: He had a perfect right to understand that two years of silence, '48 to '50, might make him only into a father image and not a potential candidate for the presidency.

HORROCKS: Did you ever speak to him about the 1948 presidency or Thomas E. Dewey?

HACKER: No.

HORROCKS: He was especially interested in citizenship education, in education of youth; did he--

HACKER: He was interested through me in the education of adults.



HORROCKS: That's my question.

HACKER: Because I say, he wanted to know in great detail what we were up to, and I would tell him of many of our great successes in helping people pick up the pieces of thwarted or broken educational careers and resume in a university the first class education and the Columbia

University degree that could open doors if they had ambitions into graduate and professional schools without question. The consequence was that the General signed all of the diplomas. I'll tell you an anecdote in this respect.

My wife--my second wife, my first wife, the mother of my children had died--and my wife, the lady I married in '53 was a nurse and had become a regular member of the U. S. Army in the nurses corps and she had served in India, and that was a hard assignment, for two and a half years. She had become partially disabled as a result of India. She had got amebic dysentery. She has perhaps got malaria. I don't see how she could avoid it. She had developed varicose veins in one leg. And when she retired from the army, she was hospitalized for a time, and it was discovered that the G.I. Bill of Rights would permit her to continue her education. Her previous education had been that of a nurse, which meant graduation from high school and also obtaining nursing certification from a teaching hospital in Worcester, Massachusetts--she had come from Worcester, Massachusetts. She had returned then to New York; had been hospitalized in one of the army hospitals on Staten Island; knew about the



GI Bill; learned about the School of General Studies and came to the School of General Studies. This was in 1946 when she was forty-seven years old, her last previous formal education having terminated at the age of twenty. And these were the people that we were interested in among others in the School of General Studies. She was encouraged to--not to matriculate--we had a kind of probationary grade called nonmatriculation. She was encouraged to become a nonmatriculated student to try out her capacity for further formal learning. She attended the School of General Studies like many other women, at the same time nursing at the Presbyterian Hospital. Many of my people did that. Housewives who had children and people who worked, but they could come. The consequence was that she was graduated from the School of General Studies in 1950 at the age of fifty when Ike was president and I was the director of the School of General Studies and I used to twit her by saying, "You have two fascinating names on your diploma--one was to become the President of the United States, and the other was to be your husband." So Ike attended our ceremonies. Whenever there were public meetings as I told you over the telephone, I would



invite Ike to sit at the speaker's table, to speak or not as he pleased, to become familiar with our procedures, the kind of faculty we had, the kind of educational problems we were grappling with.

HORROCKS: Outside of his presence at ceremonial functions at the School of General Studies, did he ever take an active role in developing the School of General Studies program or did he ever come to you and suggest, "Dean Hacker, I have this idea"?

HACKER: No, no. It may very well be due to his insecurity, his unfamiliarity with the elaborate mechanism of a university. He would listen to me very carefully and tell me whether or not he liked what I was doing. Usually he liked what I was doing and to go ahead with his blessing.

HORROCKS: And so really as far as it affected your work with General Studies, he left you a lot of discretion and leeway and he himself played a rather passive role.

HACKER: Not exactly, for he listened carefully and gave his counsel judiciously. He was a wise administrator, and he showed that subsequently when he was President of the United States. Previously he had showed that when he was the commander-in-



chief of the allied forces. There was one thing that Ike knew and that was to pick, as Marshall had picked him, trusted advisers and give them their heads. That was my feeling about Ike, and the same was true of the presidency. He picked [Sherman] Adams as his closest and immediate adviser, and he picked--what's his name again--as the secretary of state.

HORROCKS: [John Foster] Dulles.

HACKER: He picked Dulles, and he had the greatest confidence in both of those people.

HORROCKS: Now, at Columbia did he leave a lot of administrative work up to Grayson Kirk, for instance.

HACKER: No.

HORROCKS: What was their relationship?

HACKER: It was a curious one. Pegram, I think, retired as vice president and a successor was necessary. It was a man by the name of Davis--I've forgotten his first name.



HORROCKS: Paul? Paul Davis?

HACKER: Paul Davis--that was he--who was employed as a financial adviser, as a raiser, if you please, of funds for the university, and Paul Davis and I became very friendly. And Paul Davis said to me, "Pegram is leaving and we need a successor. Can you suggest some names?" And among those that I suggested was Grayson Kirk.

HORROCKS: Excuse me, was Grayson Kirk a successor then to Pegram and not to Albert Jacobs?

HACKER: There was an interim appointment, that was Albert Jacobs.

HORROCKS: O.K.

HACKER: That's correct. I'm glad you called that to my attention because it was Albert Jacobs who was the vice president of the university who asked me to return from Oxford. That's right. No, no, Jacobs preceded Pegram.

HORROCKS: O.K.



HACKER: Jacobs preceded Pegram and then when he was offered the appointment of a presidency--that was Denver College--he accepted that and that left that slot and Pegram was made the vice president. It was with Pegram I worked. I knew Albert Jacobs, but he left almost immediately after I returned, you see. So it was Grayson Kirk who succeeded Pegram to the vice-presidency. Now Grayson Kirk--he had had other commitments. I remember the first summer he was almost entirely abroad; so he didn't play the role that Pegram had, initially at any rate. And the consequence was, that deans had very much their own heads. But they were good people. And they had long experience as academicians, all of them, and as administrators. And the university from the academic side was able to function. Paul Davis did what presumably a president was supposed to do--try to raise some money for the university. And I don't know whether Paul Davis was close to Ike or not. Paul Davis is still alive--you can ask him. I think he's in--



HORROCKS: In California.

HACKER: --in California, yes.

HORROCKS: So you and Dr. Pegram discussed Grayson Kirk's appointment to be the vice president.

HACKER: I don't know. I don't know whether this was discussed with Pegram or not, maybe it was just Davis who consulted with the president--with Ike. And Davis was told that Grayson Kirk had a good reputation as a professor. He had never had previous administrative experience, and it was on that basis that he was named vice president.

HORROCKS: So Grayson Kirk really was not a choice that Eisenhower himself sought out, but was rather someone suggested to Eisenhower.

HACKER: It was Paul Davis who suggested it. I don't know how many names he suggested, but I know that Grayson Kirk was on the list. And I know that, and Paul Davis may remember this, that Grayson Kirk's name came from me.

HORROCKS: Now what was the relationship between Grayson Kirk and President Eisenhower at Columbia?

HACKER: I don't know. You'd have to ask him; I don't know.



HORROCKS: Why did Davis leave? He left Columbia shortly after Jacobs did, I think.

HACKER: Immediately after Jacobs?

HORROCKS: Not--

HACKER: Well, no, no, he was there you see when Grayson Kirk was appointed. There were years--there several years in the interim.

HORROCKS: But Davis left while Eisenhower was there.

HACKER: Yes. Right.

HORROCKS: And was there any pressure on--

HACKER: I don't know. I wasn't familiar with this. I don't know. I think that Davis was a skilled fund raiser, and I'm sure that he did his best. The difficulties about Columbia vis-a-vis fund raising are largely these: Its graduates are not well-to-do people for the most part. They came from the lower middle class, largely. They were busy in trying to go about their own business and professional positions. They're not similar although they are devoted to



Columbia similar to the alumni corps of Yale or Princeton. Columbia alumni were not in that grade. Davis had to raise his money largely from the foundations like the Harkness Foundation and the Macy Foundation. I don't know how much Watson gave to the university--no building is named after him so probably he didn't give very much.

HORROCKS: Did Eisenhower ever discuss with you his fund-raising activities?

HACKER: No. May I tell you why?

HORROCKS: Yes.

HACKER: An interesting reason. The School of General Studies was so successful because we were interested only in education qua education. We told our students, who were adults, that they didn't have to have student clubs; they didn't have to have student newspapers. If they wanted these things as adults, they could find them elsewhere. We were just interested in giving them the best education we possibly could. The consequence was the School of General



Studies made two million dollars net a year for the university. Now this is unheard of in the academic field.

HORROCKS: Now, I saw in the files [Dwight D. Eisenhower Papers 1916-1952] a memo, I think from Kevin McCann, to you about the college finances and putting the college on a pay as you go basis, making students pay for their education rather than subsidizing them.

HACKER: This was an idle thought. Undergraduates require an elaborate infrastructure. They want sports; they want their fraternities maintained; they want newspapers; they want decent dormitories. In other words, the overhead costs of a college are enormous and this was--if Kevin McCann said so--this was an idle wish. It was out of the question.



HORROCKS: Do you recall any of this?

HACKER: No. Did you say a memorandum from him to me?

HORROCKS: I believe it was to you.

HACKER: You mean he was seeking my advice? He knew of my success in putting the School of General Studies on a

completely independent financial footing.

HORROCKS: I don't know, but I imagine it would have been a good basis for the memo, yes.

HACKER: Yes. Probably that sort of thing. Well, I had to explain to him there was no infrastructure as far as I was concerned. I didn't want any. I wanted to get the best educational experience for these hard-working people, many of whom were coming on a part-time basis.

HORROCKS: Was there ever any attempt to coordinate the School of General Studies and adult education with ROTC type training or veterans education specifically, or training of officers?

HACKER: You couldn't. Most of them were not full-time people. They were working for a living, or they were women with families to maintain. I completely approved of the existence of the ROTC because, to me, it was another phase of the educational program of the defense department along with its training of soldiers in rank, in its training of young officers, and in its training for promotion of



superior officers. So I completely approved of the ROTC because it did two things. It took young fellows, who couldn't support further education, and financed them on a contractual basis that they were bound to serve a term in the reserve and it enrolled them in two schools. This was, by the way, a naval ROTC. It enrolled them in two schools only at the university--the School of Business and the School of Law. The result was, the young fellows who couldn't afford financially this further education and got this at, in this case, the navy's expense and turned out excellent people for the reserve.

HORROCKS: But there was no special program for the School of General Studies. I'm thinking of Eisenhower as a military man being interested in universal military training and veterans.



HACKER: No. He knew the kind of students I had, and they were not the material that one sought for the officer corps.

HORROCKS: Many of them were, though, veterans.

HACKER: Yes.

HORROCKS: Right.

HACKER: Yes.

HORROCKS: Was he particularly interested in veterans' educational benefits?

HACKER: Yes, yes, he approved of the GI Bill. He knew that many of the people like my wife were able to continue with further education in the School of General Studies. The reason why veterans sought the School of General Studies instead of the college was, one, they were older; two, they had matured, and the undergraduates were neither. So they went to the School of General Studies and did not seek entrance into the college.



HORROCKS: Are you familiar with Eli Ginzberg?

HACKER: Certainly.

HORROCKS: Of the Human Resources Project?

HACKER: Certainly. I know of him, why do you ask me?

HORROCKS: Beg your pardon?

HACKER: Why do you ask me?

HORROCKS: Did he have a close relationship with General Eisenhower?

HACKER: Not to my knowledge. I don't know. I don't think so. His interest in and what he is doing currently, his manpower studies, came only after the end of World War II and even considerably later than that.

HORROCKS: Right. Well, sir, I was thinking, wasn't that Conservation of Human Resources Project--

HACKER: Started that early.



HORROCKS:--started under General Eisenhower with Eli Ginzberg?

HACKER: I don't know.

HORROCKS: Oh, O.K.

HACKER: I don't know. Not to my knowledge. I don't think that this conservation--

HORROCKS: Of human resources.

HACKER:--human resources really became an interest until very much later. Eli Ginzberg was in the School of Business.

HORROCKS: Right, under Phillip Young, who was dean, right?

HACKER: Under what?

HORROCKS: Phillip Young was dean?

HACKER: Who?

HORROCKS: Phillip Young.



HACKER: Phillip Young, I know him very well. Phillip Young was the son of the founder of General Electric, as you know, and, what was the old man's name? What was Phillip's father's name? In any case, Ike knew the father and I think the appointment of Phillip Young as the son of his father--although he had had no previous academic experience--came with the knowledge and the approval of the General.

HORROCKS: Did you ever have a chance to discuss any of your writings in political and economic history with the General?

HACKER: I think he asked me.

[Interruption]

HORROCKS: You were talking about the time when he went to lecture a class of students in the School of General Studies.

HACKER: Yes. And he accepted the invitation. I don't think he got many. But he accepted the invitation. I've forgotten what particular kind of class it was. He spoke with ease, with fluency and he did very well, and the students were very pleased with him. I think they also were chagrined that they didn't have more frequent rapport with him.

But I was going to tell you about an anecdote vis-a-vis the students. He used to meet them. He walked around the campus. He used to meet them and they knew him. They hailed him; they stopped to talk to him. And once a student said to him, "We have a party and we would like to raffle off something that's part of you. Could we have one of your uniforms to raffle off?"

And the General said, "It's against regulations, but I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give you a suit of my



underwear. Will that do?" And they were delighted.

HORROCKS: Of his underwear?

HACKER: Yes. And they were delighted, you know, a t-shirt and shorts. And they were delighted with the idea. And that was raffled off instead of one of his uniforms.

HORROCKS: After this lecture experience, he recounts [in At Ease] that the students really grilled him with questions after his lecture.

HACKER: As students will.

HORROCKS: I take it you can't picture the particular--

HACKER: I can't recall, I can't recall. But it's authentic. I'm certain it happened, and I'm certain that that was the character of the lecture and the question period and he was able to handle himself as I've said with fluency and with complete mastery of the situation and that pleased the students.

HORROCKS: If he wanted to really get into close contact with the students, which he professed to want to do, why



really didn't he do this sort of thing more often. It apparently was a very rare occurrence.

HACKER: Let me explain the character of the university in that particular, and I'll start with Butler. Butler was a man of great achievements in the university and a man of national repute. Butler had his office in what is called the Low Memorial Library now--that building that's in back of the statue of the alma mater--and Butler had a private elevator from the main floor to his office on the second or third floor. Anybody could ring the bell and go up to see Butler. Nobody was stopped. No secretary, no functionary in that office stopped the person, faculty or student, by first inquiring his business. Because the elevator was immediately at the door of the general room, all you had to do was go in there and press the bell and the elevator would take you up and Butler would see you. This was true of all the deans at the university. They always had open offices, any faculty or student could come in. I attribute the failure of more complete communication between the president and the students to his isolation by his immediate entourage.



In other words, when a student came in and saw Schulz, who was there, or saw Kevin McCann, the answer would be no, for both faculty and students. It wasn't the general's fault. The general was a friendly person.

HORROCKS: If a dean wanted to get in, he could though.

HACKER: Oh, yes. They wouldn't dare bar a dean.

HORROCKS: In summary, would you say that Columbia particularly benefitted from the General's presidency?

HACKER: As an influence on it as an educational institution?

HORROCKS: Yes.

HACKER: No. As a personality, he was good to have in there, but by the same token he could have been the president of a foundation or the president of a public corporation.

HORROCKS: I guess one last question--unless you can think of something that I've missed--what was the relationship between faculty and deans and the trustees at the time Eisenhower came in? Was it a good relationship?



HACKER: No. Faculty had no access to trustees. Deans had no access to trustees unless they conveyed their messages through Grayson Kirk or his vice president--a man by the name of John Krout. But trustees sought me out because of the unique things I was doing. I got to know the trustees on my footing rather than theirs. And this was not true of the relationship of other deans with the trustees and I again point to this unique experience. I was a money raiser for the university.

HORROCKS: They would appreciate that.

HACKER: Yes. At that time, the university, for its outside financial funds, was dependent upon foundations--not government, government wasn't giving any money to the universities then--foundations or individual benefactors. And to suddenly encounter that there was a division of the university that could turn in a cool two million dollars every year, meant something in those days. So I knew the trustees.

HORROCKS: So when Eisenhower came in as president, and he was a creature of the trustees as president, he was their



choice, just by virtue of being a creature of the trustees right there he had something of a problem with the deans?

HACKER: No.

HORROCKS: No, that's not--

HACKER: No. I don't know what the trustees talked about when the general was in the chair. Usually it would not be about academic affairs. It would be about the management of the university vis-a-vis fund raising and budgeting and so on.

HORROCKS: Well, is there anything that I've missed in this interview that would be helpful for historians of the Eisenhower administration or biographers of General Eisenhower?

HACKER: Nothing that occurs to me. I'm simply repeating what I've said before. I was able to establish myself on a friendly footing with him because I sought him out. And as I said, and I repeat, I was never stopped in the ante-chambers. They knew better than to stop me.



HORROCKS: Well, I thank you very much.

HACKER: I don't know. Have I been of help to you?

HORROCKS: I think so.

