

recently you made passing reference to your years in DC for the first time. Any other  
eventful in them.

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# 26

Dear Js,

Good thing I'm not really superstitious because there is no end to the return of my past these days. The attached obit on an old and very good friend is another peg for what should be a journal for which I have yet to establish a separate file!

I have forgotten how I met Casey. She was then Mellett's assistant in the Office of Government reports, the overall of the agencies marked in the margin. I also knew him, was an infrequent guest in his palatial place in Alexandria, tried without success to interest him in activist lobbying before WWII.

I suppose I could have had almost any job I wanted there but I didn't want any. I did place a number of friends through her. Not one was a hack. All did beautifully. Only one remembers with any appreciation, however, and we have remained friends since. I spent most of the time I was trying to get WW published in his home. He also fed me then. When I had brought him to Washington it had been the other way around. He is the one of many who has never forgotten this.

I also helped Casey in political jobs. I never got or needed writing help from her, but what I did get was sage counsel about character, including about some who have since become prominent and were then as evil as now, the difference being they are now powerful. I did a number of small chores for the White House under FDR.

One of the more disillusioning was when Wallace ran for veep. His two closest, both respected as liberals, were Jimmy LeCron and Paul Appleby. On day-and remember, I was a kid, even by today's standards - they asked me to meet them for lunch in the old and now gone Willard. What could I do to help the Wallace campaign? What did I have that I had investigated that they could use? I had some really good and hot stuff connecting top Republicans, of whom I still remember Senator Homer Capehart, with the tops echelons of domestic fascism. Their reaction was hell, we've got the anti-fascist vote. Got something that can help us get the fascist vote? One learns this way. I did nothing more I can remember in that campaign, but if there was anything Casey wanted of me, I know I did it.

She remembered my story predicting Pearl Harbor. That was a Sunday and I heard of it before announcement by pure accident. My sister-in-law had a then boyfriend who worked in the National Airport tower. I took her out to see him. She came down aghast at the unannounced news that has past like a forestorm from tower to tower from Pearl Harbor. So, before ~~the~~ the beginning of the Sunday working day I was in her office, and I think then into Mellett's, with all my research, all my raw materials, including map tracings, and they did use them. I never got a single scrap back. In fact, I never asked for it. As this stuff was used in the columns and news stories there was, naturally, no attribution.

Casey never remarried and I never asked why. The euphemism on her WWI career is for the old Creel committee. She knew her propaganda but remained principled. But after WWII and FDR's death, she was never treated other than shabbily, although she remained in full possession of her excellent and natural faculties. At the Demo committee she was like an outcast. She never accumulated any wealth. She was treated in the same way when she worked for the Patman committee. You know how unkind people can be to others just because the years have crept up.

In recent years I remained out of touch on the fear that bringing back the happier days of the past would be a needless pain in the unhappy ones. I guess her attitude toward me was in many ways like mine of today to some of my younger friends, partly maternal. If I can recall no single incident, I am sure I must have learned from her. Society tends to throw such skills and talents away on no better basis than age, and society loses from it. In her case the Democratic Party did. Remember the India Edwards (I also knew her pretty well) bit for LBJ vs JFK and his health? Pretty rotten stuff. If Casey ever pulled anything like this, it was never to my knowledge.

Now that I look back on it, for the first time it strikes me as strange that I never used her and others like her to get me a cushy wartime job or to get me a decent thing to do in the Army (I could have stayed out and wouldn't). I should have pulled strings to have been other than an MP, which I'd have remained had it not been for the mumps. But it never occurred to me. I did get others decent assignments. In no case not earned, in no case not followed by excellent performance. One is now as high a civil servant as there is outside political appointments. In later years it was a curse to him. The wonder is that he survived my recommendation. He has to have enormous ability to have survived the existing record of my sponsorship. In that case, Truman accepted it and nothing else and fought generals over it. They wanted to retain this man who did their work as a sergeant!

Sic transit, etc.

AW

Nicknamed 'Casey' by FDR

*Post 9/17/72*

# Katherine Blackburn, Ex-U.S. Aide, Dies

Katherine C. Blackburn, a one-woman press office who was nicknamed "Casey" by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, died Tuesday at George Washington Hospital. She was 80.

Miss Blackburn, who was born in Litchfield, Conn., had served in high government positions for a number of years. She had attended Eastman College in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., and also studied in Geneva, Switzerland.

During World War I, she was with the committee on public information of the Foreign Press Bureau. Then she toured the country for the League to Enforce Peace, of which William Howard Taft was chairman. This group organized citizens in 3,000 counties to support a peace program.

After work in the motion picture industry, including her own office known as Artists Representatives, Miss Blackburn became executive secretary of the Woodrow Wilson Founda-



**KATHERINE C. BLACKBURN**

tion, where she served for 11 years. It was during this time that she became associated with Mr. Roosevelt.

In 1932, during his campaign, she was director of research for the Democratic National Committee. A year

later, she was special assistant to the Assistant Secretary of State at the London Economic Conference.

Mr. Roosevelt then asked her to organize the Press Intelligence division, a central clearing office for government information that later became a part of the Office of Government Reports.

There Miss Blackburn was assistant director and then director, handling a staff of 800. The office included the U.S. Information Service, Press Intelligence, Advertising Liaison, Surveys and Motion Pictures.

Miss Blackburn returned to the Democratic National Committee in 1948, where she was assistant to India Edwards, director of women's activities. Miss Blackburn later served on the staff of the House Small Business Committee, retiring about 10 years ago.

She lived at 802 Massachusetts Ave. NW.

She is survived by a sister, Mildred Steinmetz, of Washington.