

having talked about the disposition of the typewriter with her husband "a day or two prior to my being in the grand jury" (on December 10)—in short, after Hiss told Davis the machine had been given to the Catletts. Priscilla Hiss also later said she talked about the whereabouts of the "old machine" with her husband after his December 4 FBI interview but prior to her own December 7 statement.⁶⁰

A possibility remains that while discussing the Woodstock's disposition with his wife during this period Hiss did not inform her about Haring's findings. Moreover, Priscilla Hiss had already heard about the report of McLean's investigator concerning a Woodstock during her December 6 meeting with the FBI, but she may have felt that the news from her father's former office was too imprecise to be conclusive. After being confronted by the FBI agents with the 1933 letter typed on the "old machine" on December 7, she denied having typed it (the following year she would admit this). Both to the FBI and to the Grand Jury three days later Priscilla said she did not know the make of the Fansler machine. Of course, she may have been so troubled by the case, or so forgetful, that she did not remember either the 1933 letter, the typewriter's make, or how she had disposed of it.

More likely, McLean and her husband both shielded her from knowledge of the damaging information in Haring's analysis of the January 1933 letter, at least while she underwent the FBI and Grand Jury interrogations. Hiss had insisted throughout this period that Priscilla and not he had typed all of the Hiss-family letters from the 1930s. Hiss's claim would have suggested, especially in the light of Haring's conclusions, that Priscilla had probably typed the stolen documents. Under the circumstances, both Hiss and McLean may have felt that the less Priscilla was told about the defense investigation on December 6 and 7, the better it would be for all. At the very least, Priscilla Hiss must have known more than she admitted about the family's typewriters when testifying to the FBI, to the Grand Jury, and even to her own attorneys.

But Alger Hiss certainly knew about the Fansler Woodstock. Donald Hiss, judging from Davis's December 28 letter, had been told about the typewriter and had begun searching for the Catlett family.* Donald's familiarity with the Catletts remains particularly fascinating in the light of a cryptic memo filed by Harold Rosenwald two days after Hiss's phone call to Davis: "Mr. Hugh Cox [Donald's lawyer] called me on the telephone at home early this morning. He said that 'they' had found the typewriter. He did not know anything more about it. He said that he received his information from 'down south.'" That same day a Woodstock Typewriter Company official in Chicago named Delmar DeWolff told the FBI about a phone call

* Yet when Donald Hiss phoned Harold Rosenwald to discuss the typewriter question on December 13—six days after Alger Hiss phoned John F. Davis about the Catletts—Donald Hiss stated (according to Rosenwald) that he "has no recollection of Alger's machine at all." "Re Typewriters," Dec. 13, 1948, Hiss Defense Files.

he had received earlier in the day from Hiss's chief investigator, Horace Schmahl, in which "Schmahl intimated that he knew [the] present location of [the] typewriter."⁶¹

Did "down south" refer obliquely to the Catletts, who were blacks? Had Donald Hiss or another representative of his brother tracked down the Woodstock's location within the Catlett family's circle months before the defense went through this process openly to recover the machine? Or did Cox's phone call refer only to another of the rumors that the FBI had found the Hiss machine? If so, what reason did Cox have for his cryptic remarks about "they" finding the machine "down south"? Whatever the meaning of his call, both Horace Schmahl and the FBI agents continued their separate searches in Philadelphia and elsewhere for the Hiss machine, occasionally crossing wires, to the embarrassment of Schmahl and to the annoyance of the Bureau.⁶²

Both Schmahl and the FBI agents spent much of the week of December 7 checking on the Fansler Woodstock in Philadelphia, where Priscilla Hiss's father had run an insurance agency prior to his retirement in 1931. Fansler had taken on a junior partner in 1927 named Harry Martin, whom Schmahl located a day after the FBI. Martin seemed fuzzy on dates, whether about the year the Woodstock had been purchased or other matters.* Throughout its investigation in December, the question of dating the purchase also troubled the FBI, which remained uncertain about the exact year. But one memo from the Philadelphia office's special agent reported: "The Woodstock typewriter in question was obtained by the partnership at a later date, probably sometime in 1929, at which time the [firm's] Royal typewriter . . . was disposed of." A December 10 report from an agent named Boardman, who coordinated the search in Philadelphia, also asserted that Grady "sold the Woodstock to Fansler-Martin probably during 1929."⁶³

* Thus Martin told Schmahl inaccurately that Fansler took the Woodstock home in 1937—in fact he acquired the machine upon retirement six years earlier—and that Fansler died in 1938 (he died in 1940). Although Martin informed Schmahl that he had purchased a new Woodstock for the firm in 1928 from a Philadelphia salesman named Thomas Grady, Martin had told the FBI the previous day that he bought the machine in 1927, and "that this typewriter was the only one in the partnership office during the entire [four-year] life of the partnership." But when FBI laboratory experts tested letters typed in the Fansler-Martin office in 1927, they found the material had been produced on a Royal, indicating that Martin's memory of a 1927 Woodstock purchase date was erroneous. Also, both Martin and Grady fixed the Woodstock purchase date to the presence at the firm of a stenographer named Anne Coyle, who started work there in the fall of 1928, which meant that the machine had been bought either late that year or in 1929. However, since Grady quit the Woodstock company in late 1927, a 1928 or 1929 purchase date would also have been puzzling.

† One theory favored by Grady held that two Woodstocks had been purchased by Fansler-Martin during this period, one in 1927 (or earlier) and another in 1929. But such suggestions proved impossible to verify by December 1948, since the Woodstock distributorship's records for the 1920s had apparently been destroyed by fire. Agent Boardman shifted his guess as to the machine's purchase date from 1929 to 1927 by December 20. The following year Boardman settled—erroneously, as it turned out—