

my wife, I remembered that we had given an old upright piano to Timmy's music teacher and a used radio to the son of our maid, Claudia Catlett"—but he mentioned no other gifts such as the Fansler Woodstock, which he had mentioned to Davis days earlier.<sup>51</sup>

That machine was the vital piece of missing evidence in the case. If the typewriter could be located, FBI experts could establish whether or not Chambers's stolen documents had been produced on it. Hiss would later assert that the defense first learned the whereabouts of the typewriter in late January 1949 when Donald Hiss was visited by Raymond (Mike) Catlett, one of Claudia Catlett's sons, who told Donald that the FBI had asked him several times earlier that month about the Hiss typewriter and he had denied all knowledge. Mike then told Donald that his family had in fact received the machine and he offered to help to find it. With the assistance of defense lawyers, Mike managed to do so a short time later.

Alger Hiss has always denied what the Davis letter shows to have been a fact: that he had an "independent recollection" of the Woodstock's whereabouts almost two months before Mike Catlett came calling on Donald Hiss. "I say I know [about the machine]," ran one of Alger Hiss's many statements on the point in 1949, only "from what the Catletts have told us."<sup>52</sup> He said also that he had not been informed by defense experts about the identification of his Woodstock typewriter as the one which typed the stolen documents, despite McLean's memo describing his conversation with Hiss about Haring's identification on December 6.<sup>53</sup> Throughout the critical last ten days of the Grand Jury's term in December 1948, however, Hiss withheld the significant piece of evidence that the Catletts had received his old Woodstock.

But was the "old machine" Hiss mentioned to John F. Davis on December 7 really the Fansler typewriter? Hiss's FBI and Grand Jury testimony that month resolved doubts about this. Both he and Mrs. Hiss told the FBI that the Fansler machine had been in their possession throughout the 1930s until sometime after 1938, when they acquired a Corona portable, although in December 1948 neither Alger nor Priscilla even mentioned the existence of that Corona—only Timothy Hobson had remembered it. Mrs. Hiss testified on December 10 that they had owned "an old office typewriter" throughout the 1930s: "My father had given it to me from his office when he retired." And Hiss pinned down the identification of this "old machine" more precisely on December 14 for the Grand Jury:

Q. How many typewriters did you have in your home over . . . that period of time . . . when you were changing from the Department of Justice to the Dept. of State [1936]?

A. I remember the old typewriter I have testified about before and you have examined me about.

Q. When you say the "old typewriter" you are referring to the typewriter—