

Introduction

Wayne Coy in History: Literature Review

As mentioned in the Preface, Wayne Coy is mostly remembered in the historical and academic literature for one incident, FDR's memo to him to "step on it!" regarding military aid to the USSR (Burns 2006, 115; Bennett 1990, 32–33; Heinrichs 1988, 140; Herring 1973, 14). Beyond that event, Coy has only a minor presence in the literature, mostly limited to walk-on bit parts. He is mentioned in passing in published research, usually focusing on a particular policy issue or subject. They include (in reverse chronological order) the disabled (Jennings 2016, 235n75–76), overtime policies (Lee 2016, 107), African Americans (Lucander 2014, 33–36; Kryder 2000, 59–62, 74), civil defense (Roberts 2014, 359; Steele 1985, 93), labor unions (Sparrow 2014, 264; Lichtenstein 2003, 99, 168), OEM's Division of Information (Lee 2012, 132–33), war bond sales (Kimble 2006, 36), New Deal lawyer Edward Prichard (Campbell 2004, 77, 95), conscientious objectors (Robinson 1996, 25), science R&D (Owens 1994, 534), the Philippines (Brands 1992, 371n19–21), biological warfare (Bernstein 1988, 292), price controls (Bartels 1983, 11n11), antitrust (Heath 1972, 309), postwar reconversion (Bernstein 1967, 163n7), arms production (Gulick 1971, 46), and headquarters-field relations (Carey 1944, 33). While fleeting, the catholic scope of these topics provide a strong indication of the multitude of issues in which Coy was personally involved, hinting at his role and suggesting to some degree his important, or at least active, presence at the crossroads of public policy in all those areas.

Coy is also relatively invisible in postwar memoirs and biographies. In Byrnes's two memoirs, he mentions Coy in only one of them and then only in his capacity as Bureau of the Budget (BOB) assistant director (Byrnes 1947;

1958, 164, 184). Admiral Emory Land, head of the Maritime Commission and OEM's War Shipping Administration, does not mention him (1958), nor do Attorney General Francis Biddle (1962) and production overseer Donald Nelson (1973). The memoir of White House aide Grace Tully (1949) does not mention him, and Sam Rosenman makes only one passing reference in a list of eight people who sometimes gave him suggestions for speech drafts (1972, 301). A biography of one of the early important figures in the arms mobilization, William Knudsen (Beasley 1947), does not mention Coy, and Sherwood's in-depth look at the close working relationship between FDR and Hopkins (Coy's mentor) only mentions Coy as a source, but not in the text (1950, xvii). Some key figures in the early professionalization of public administration who had formal or advisory positions in the war are also silent about Coy, though some make passing references to OEM (Gulick 1971, 76; Brownlow 1958; Fesler 1946, 11, 19).

Rationale for Book: Was Coy a Public Administrator?

While largely ignored by the historical literature in public administration, Coy consciously and explicitly identified himself with the nascent practitioner profession of public administration and its academic discipline. He was active in the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA). For example, Arthur Flemming, recently appointed by President Roosevelt to the US Civil Service Commission, invited Coy to attend early organizational meetings for the proposed Society for Public Administration scheduled to take place during the annual conference of the American Political Science Association (APSA) in DC in late December 1939.¹ In 1941, Don K. Price, managing editor of the new *Public Administration Review* (*PAR*), asked Coy to review a draft article on the organization of the national defense effort to be sure it reflected the most up-to-date information.² Three weeks after Pearl Harbor, Coy participated in a roundtable session on administration of the war at the joint ASPA/APSA annual conference in New York.³ In 1945, he was elected president of ASPA's Washington, DC, chapter.⁴ A year later, Coy was appointed to ASPA's National Council.⁵ At ASPA's 1947 annual conference, he was on a panel discussing "The Chief Executive and Departmental Policies."⁶

Coy also participated in several public administration-oriented panels at other APSA conferences, including the truncated conference in January 1943 and the next one in January 1944.⁷ After the war, he participated in

a symposium on reorganization of the federal executive branch by contributing an article to the *American Political Science Review (APSR)*. He argued that a president's leadership of the executive branch required strengthening both the policy and management capabilities of the EOP. In particular, he advocated for creating an EOP office to mesh these separate policy and management perspectives when presenting options to the president for decision making (Coy 1946b).

His association with public administration also extended beyond ASPA and APSA. For example, as LOEM, he occasionally attended meetings in DC of the Committee on Public Administration of the Social Science Research Council (CPA/SSRC).⁸ In April 1942, Louis Brownlow came to Coy's office to meet with him.⁹ He was also on friendly terms with Professor Joseph Harris, who had been the staff director of the Brownlow Committee, and he corresponded with Harvard's Carl Friedrich.¹⁰

Coy's active interest in public administration was not limited to the academic side of the profession. In speeches to nonacademic audiences, whether practitioner-managers or lay citizens, Coy promoted this emerging new profession and sought to enhance its standing. Before Pearl Harbor, he delivered two addresses explaining his view of public administration. In September 1941, Coy spoke to the Society for Advancement of Management in Washington on "Organization for National Defense." It was subsequently published in the society's national journal, *Advanced Management* (Coy 1941d). The next month, he addressed a convocation at the University of Indiana on "The Men of Government: Keeping the American Government Democratic." He discussed what public administration meant and its differences from business administration. His talk was considered so significant that it was published in *Vital Speeches of the Day* (Coy 1941c).

After Pearl Harbor, Coy spoke to a special student convocation at Purdue University in March 1942 on "To Win the War and the Peace" (Coy 1942a). In it he talked about the importance of public administration. A few months later, he revised and expanded that speech into an article in *Atlantic Monthly* on "Teamwork in Washington: Conversion to War" (Coy 1942b). He argued that wartime public administration could not be perfect and that government would invariably make mistakes. The key was to focus on what was getting done, not what the relatively minor botches were. The article sparked extensive press coverage as a statement by the administration and led to editorial commentary as well. In August 1942, he spoke at another meeting of the Society for Advancement of Management on "Better Management in Wartime Government."¹¹

Coy was comfortable discussing management in the abstract, sometimes presenting his philosophy of organizing management during the war. In 1942, he spoke to a conference of educators on the importance of organizing the federal government for war and staffing it with “trained public men.” He said that OEM had gradually evolved through “trial and error” and that there was a need for the war organization to engage in further “adaptation and development.” At this stage of the war, he argued, there was a need to shift the managerial focus from the reflexive orientation of US national needs to those of the United Nations as a whole (Coy 1942c). This pivot was needed as a counterpart to the new principle the allies were adopting in every war theater of one unified command. The supreme commander would have authority over all military formations regardless of country and service.

Later in 1942, the president ruminated out loud with Coy about the difficulties of running the civilian mobilization effort. At the time, these efforts were splintered between many OEM agencies, such as the War Production Board, the War Manpower Commission, and the Office of Defense Transportation, along with many executive branch departments. After thinking about it, Coy sent FDR three memos proposing appointing a presidential manager over all those agencies. This officer would have direct line administrative powers and would exercise them in the name of the president. The new position would be the counterpart to James Byrnes, then the czar for economic stabilization; Harry Hopkins, who coordinated relations with the allies (especially Lend-Lease); and Admiral William Leahy, whom FDR appointed as his chief of staff for White House military matters. Coy suggested that a possible title for that position would be chief of staff of the Executive Office of the President. Again, he was trying to see the big picture and identify the abstract managerial needs for improving the civilian war mobilization (see chap. 10).

After the war, Coy continued identifying himself with public administration. In 1951, in the formal biography he submitted to the US Senate when coming up for a reconfirmation hearing for another term on the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), he stated that he had “outstanding public administration experience” (US Senate 1951, 1). Similarly, in 1950, Somers described Coy as “an experienced public administrator who has held important posts in the Executive Office” (1969 [1950], 217). All these activities indicate that Coy viewed himself as a professional public administrator and he approached his governmental roles in that framework. In that respect, he is one of the group of Roosevelt’s senior administrators who were practitioners of the new profession in the post-Brownlow report

era and who were building a template of the practice. Yet Coy's contributions have largely been ignored by, or lost to, public administration history.

The old orthodoxy of early public administration was about a politics-administration dichotomy. The only thing public administrators were supposed to do was to execute and implement policies adopted by the political and elected institutions as efficiently as possible. After WWII the line shifted, with a new postwar consensus that administrators inevitably were, and should be, involved in policy making, not just implementation. Coy saw reality as going further. Without ever saying so specifically, he understood that part of the job of senior public administration was *politics*. To the theorists of public administration, this was strictly taboo. The normative exhortation of the literature expressly stated that politics was not something the ideal practitioner should do. Coy seemed to understand how impossible it was to separate them. As manager of a governmental organization, everything he was involved in had some element of politics embedded in it.

Therefore, in part, this is an inquiry into what Coy actually *did* as a professional public administrator—not just in management or even beyond that in policy, but also in politics. For him—and, for that matter, any person operating at his level—policy, politics, and management were so inextricably intertwined that they could not be separated. This book recounts what for him was this trinity of the real world of public administration in his work in the prewar and wartime civilian mobilization.

For example, in the rubric of public policy, did he seem to contribute to decision making, or was he merely yet another stop for a piece of paper moving toward the president? If so, then merely a paper shuffler? Was he only putting a light thumbprint of his own on proposals? Or, more substantively, was he a policy maker? A developer of policy options for the president? A coordinator of policy proposals? Perhaps sometimes, even the final policy decider (in the name of the president)? For this inquiry's focus on Coy's policy roles, a clarification is that this is *not* a study of the entirety of the scores of policy issues that he was somewhat involved in. Similarly, it does not track every substantive issue that crossed his desk, no matter what its gestational stage was at the moment, anywhere from incubation to final conclusion. Rather, the goal is an assessment and generalization of what role, if any, he had in policy.

In particular, the focus is on the practice of public administration near the fuzzy boundary between policy and administration. In general, the field of public administration, especially as taught to graduate students seeking a professional degree, it is often presented as covering just about all levels

of the management of governmental organizations, from entry-level junior managers and front-line supervisors all the way to the very top. And where does that top of professional and apolitical public administration end? At the highest level of a classified civil service position, the top of the permanent bureaucracy? Or the highest policy-making level serving at the pleasure of the chief executive of that agency? Or the very top of the pyramid, including elected officials (holding executive offices)? The professionalization of training programs in public administration in American universities seems to view public administration as largely synonymous with civil servants. Yet Brownlow and other earlier leaders in the effort to professionalize public administration were mostly interested in government management at the highest level possible, the *president's*. If so, Wayne Coy was a public administration professional in the Brownlovian sense, working in the stratosphere of the public sector. He was their kind of guy. What exactly did he do? And, looking back, how did he do?

While public administration has been insistent that in the real world of government, policy and administration cannot be separated, it has also asserted that professional public servants needed to stay as far away as possible from politics. A neutral civil service should be the tool of elected officials of the executive and legislative branches, not more than that. That was the role Harold Smith, FDR's longtime BOB director, advocated for and claimed he took. He asserted that he and the staff of BOB were limited to serving the institutional presidency, not the partisan and political aspects of an individual president. Smith was influential in determining the values of the new profession of public administration. He considered himself a public administrator, was very active in the founding of ASPA, and was its second president. Before that, he served on the Committee on Public Administration of the Social Science Research Council.

But Smith was not pure as the driven snow. For example, when he kept urging FDR to make a decision about reorganizing the wartime PR apparatus, his strongest private argument to the president was that the issue was about to explode *politically* (Lee 2005, 150–51). On another occasion, testifying on the BOB and EOP budgets before the House Appropriations Committee, Smith argued that as a presidential agency, the Office of Government Reports (OGR) qualified for direct appropriations and did not need to be authorized by Congress (67–68). This was essentially a political argument that he and FDR had developed beforehand to acquire funding for a politically controversial agency. In retrospect, and especially after historians

read summaries of Smith's near-daily conferences with FDR, the argument that BOB was an apolitical agency of public administration professionals is, at best, a hair-splitting absurdity. In the reality of presidential budgeting, Smith's claimed role was really not a viable conception. However strained Smith's assertion of BOB serving the presidency and not the president might be, an important difference between Coy and Smith was that Coy was a line administrator (albeit with fuzzy powers), while Smith was *staff*. Being out of that line of fire, it is easier to assert that staff services such as budgeting, HR, and auditing could be apolitical and merely responsive to whomever the political system installed at the head of the government and the appointed head of a department or agency.

Even though the concept of a politics-administration dichotomy has descended into the arcane and Jesuitical arguments of the academy in the theoretical literature, the basic normative division is alive and well in the day-to-day reality of government. Yet the higher one gets in the bureaucracy, the closer one is to politicians and, invariably, political activities. Riccucci emphasized that her paradigmatic "execucrats" needed to have political skills along with six other characteristics (1995, chap. 8). Downs described the ideal bureaucratic statesman as the highest rung of public administration, just under that of pure political appointees (1994, 111). Where was Coy on this spectrum? Because he was a special assistant to the president, one would assume he would have some involvement in politics. Yet he also was the manager of the civilian war effort, so one would expect that he would seek to place OEM as far away from politics as possible. Just about everything Roosevelt did was controversial with the vocal conservative coalition on Capitol Hill; and to protect the integrity of the prewar and war effort, one would expect that Coy would try to stay as far away from politics as possible. Or maybe public administration at the highest levels of government is inherently about politics, ideology, and values? If so, how did Coy handle it vis-à-vis his duties as a public administrator? Also, from the perspective of public administration, did he try to be a more *active* manager and coordinator of OEM (unlike his predecessor, McReynolds, and successor, Byrnes)? How did he go about any effort to oversee the behemoth? What did he get involved in and what not? Was he merely a passive reactor to whatever got referred to him? Or perhaps was he an active manager trying to coordinate OEM? Did he truly manage OEM? This is a focus on bureaucratic politics and organizational management at the highest level, from the White House outward.

Why Has Public Administration History Overlooked Coy?

There are likely several reasons for the historical neglect of Coy's professional record as a public administrator. First, Coy's title of liaison officer for the Office for Emergency Management sounded at the time (and since then sounds to historians) innocuous and weak. That was exactly what FDR wanted. As part of his management style of ambiguity, duplication, and competition, he was a master of misdirection and misleading titles. For example, the WWII civilian intelligence agency was headed by the *Coordinator* of Information. (It later became the CIA.) When he wanted to create an exoskeleton for the executive branch to lead the prewar arms production effort, he called it an advisory commission. It did not even have a chairman or a presiding officer. On another occasion, FDR appointed McReynolds to head the Liaison Office for Personnel Management, hardly the title of someone who was to be the Civil Service Commission's de facto boss (Lee 2016).

Similarly, Coy's title sounded like he was little more than a postal forwarding station. It did not come across as an impressive title, and it did not sound like it was a policy-making position. For example, in early 1942, the Office of Civilian Defense (OCD, an agency within OEM) employed three civil service categories for liaising purposes: liaison officers, a principle liaison officer, and a man with the formal title of "Liaison Officer (Federal, State, and local relations)" (US Congress 1942a, 940, 942). At about the same time, OGR employed five liaison officers in its Liaison Section (US Congress 1942b, 1220). In terms of executive branch-wide statistics, the 1942 edition of the *Congressional Directory* listed eighteen other federal officials with the title of liaison officer and another four who worked in liaison offices. Using slightly different standards for listings, the *US Government Manual* in spring 1942 named thirteen liaison officers and four other liaison offices. Finally, the 1942 annual report from the Civil Service Commission to Congress of federal employees and officials it categorized as holding "administrative and supervisory positions" identified sixteen liaison officers and one more in a liaison office.¹² If there were so many of them in the federal government, then surely they could not be very important.

Being OEM's liaison officer sounded similarly unimpressive. One reporter stated that Coy's role as head of OEM was "only in a bookkeeping sense."¹³ Another quoted Coy claiming that his new job was merely "a minor clerk in a major way."¹⁴ A magazine profile noted that his position was "somewhat nebulous" and he was only "technically" the supervisor of all the agencies within OEM.¹⁵ A year after Pearl Harbor, a *Washington Post*

columnist stated that “in no sense is it [OEM] capable of giving centralized direction of our war effort.”¹⁶ After the war, Hobbs asserted that Roosevelt considered that any advice from McReynolds or Coy “could be ignored with impunity and was most of the time” (1954, 187). This viewpoint has seemed stuck in nearly all subsequent historical and academic treatments of the subject.

Second, Coy’s predecessor, McReynolds, indeed treated this liaison role as a nearly ministerial and informational one, largely as a passive observer who merely kept open the channels of communication between FDR and the prewar arms production effort. One news account referred to Coy as merely the “secretary” of OEM, parallel to McReynolds’s initial title and role at NDAC in 1940.¹⁷ Koistinen wrote generally of OEM’s “ineffectiveness” and blamed it squarely on the precedents McReynolds set. The post-McReynolds OEM continued to be “relatively unimportant” and “gradually became inactive after Pearl Harbor” (2004, 17). As a result of his conclusions about McReynolds and the early OEM, Coy is practically invisible from Koistinen’s history of the prewar and wartime economic mobilization. Similarly, after the war, Fesler characterized both McReynolds’s and Coy’s position as “merely” doing liaison (1946, 9). At most, OEM was a “super-coordinating” agency (11).

Third, a seeming consensus of the academic and historical literature has been the view that OEM itself was unimportant. It was viewed as having no inherent or real hierarchical power traditionally associated with bureaucracy and organization charts. OEM was variously described as merely a legalistic “holding company” (Relyea 1997, 270; Harris 1946, 1146), a “fiction” (Hobbs 1954, 186), “a specious organization” (Sander 1989, 38), “a legal device” (Morstein Marx 1947, 21), and an “administrative sky-hook” (Rossiter 1949, 1209). According to Brownlow, it was an agency “which was to do little or nothing on its own” (1958, 457). Somers called it a “legal convenience” (1969, 208). To Emmerich, OEM was only a “tent device” to give an administrative home or outer skin to the many and fast-changing prewar and wartime agencies that FDR created, revised, and terminated through executive orders (1971, 60). At most, it was a “service agency” (71) housing some administrative specialists in such areas as HR and budgeting. Furthermore, OEM’s liaison officer “had no authority and could not act, either in his own name or in that of the President” (Somers 1969, 43).

The true action, historians and public administrationists seemed to think, was in the work of particular mission-based agencies within OEM, whether they were focused on production, rationing, manpower, transporta-

tion, or housing. The implication from the literature was that OEM per se was an unimportant administrative technicality. Immediately after the war, Gulick's verdict on the administrative lessons of the war was that OEM was merely a "scheme," evidently not meriting any further analysis (1948, 76). It was a flat and influential dismissal from a leading voice in the field (including serving on the Brownlow Committee). Thirty years later, Cuff pointedly observed that Gulick's study "was not followed up" by any subsequent scholar (1978, 260n25). A biographer of one of Coy's top lawyers sarcastically conveyed the unimportance of OEM, stating that Coy was "in charge of *something* called the Office of [sic] Emergency Management" (Parrish 2010, 58, emphasis added). A somewhat more textured assessment of OEM came from Grundstein. Yes, the original 1940 OEM "had only vague and insubstantial liaison and information clearance duties." But in 1941 FDR revised OEM's mandate, "establishing it as the parent agency through which he would coordinate, supervise and direct national defense activities" (1961, 45).

The derogatory characterization of OEM as a mere holding company also deserves closer attention. The term, common in the business world, had a very different meaning from the way the literature has used it regarding OEM's role in the public sector. In the for-profit world, a holding company had the power over and control of its subsidiary companies. Its unique feature was that the ownership of the holding company itself could be quite modest, yet it could control subsidiary corporations that individually were vastly larger financially. In fact, one of the fierce and successful battles of the New Deal was a law to limit the powers of holding companies of utilities (the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935). Therefore, if OEM is to be viewed as the public administration equivalent of a business holding company, then the term should suggest a connotation of power and control. This has not been the consensus historical view of OEM, which presents an assertion that a public sector holding company was not the counterpart to its powerful role in the corporate world. This book argues that Coy's record as OEM's leader suggests otherwise.

The fourth likely reason that Coy and his service as LOEM have been relatively unacknowledged in the literature may be in part that he kept a relatively low visibility in the news media, although he was occasionally quoted and cooperated with several reporters seeking to write a feature on him. Generally, he was the kind of discrete presidential aide the Brownlow Committee had called for, a man (as they all were in those days) with "a passion for anonymity." In mid-1941, a newspaper reporter described Coy as

“little known to the public.”¹⁸ A year later, another reporter used Brownlow’s term to describe Coy as the “most ‘anonymous’ Roosevelt assistant” because, in part, he was very “tight-lipped” (Kiplinger 1942, 448). Another reporter focused on his low public profile, calling him “a White House confidant.”¹⁹ Coy did not seem to be motivated by gaining power over others or in court intrigues. He wanted the public administration of the defense effort to work efficiently and effectively, but he was not a micromanager and did not insist on being recognized as the boss of all OEM agencies. Rather, somewhat similar to his successor, Byrnes, Coy focused on problems. He was pragmatic and end-results oriented.

After Roosevelt’s death, unlike many other FDR aides, Coy never sat for a detailed oral history interview. In two cases, he agreed to other historical interviews.²⁰ In 1943, while still LOEM, he was interviewed by a historian at the Foreign Economic Administration (in part, the successor agency to the Lend-Lease program office) about his actions to implement FDR’s mid-1941 order to expedite military aid to the USSR (Milton 1943). In 1946, Herman Somers interviewed him for his dissertation (and subsequent book) on OWMR. Understandably, most of the interview focused on OWMR, particularly BOB director Smith’s frosty relationship toward Byrnes (Somers 1946). Nor did Coy write up his reminiscences, even though he was asked to do so in 1948 for the nascent FDR library. He pooh-poohed his contribution as not deserving much attention compared to others higher up in the Roosevelt White House: “I am very afraid that what I observed in the Government in those years is nothing more than a worms-eye view. Like most everyone else, I was inclined to think that I was the biggest ant on the log but I have discovered that many other people made very great contributions to the more important things that happened.”²¹ His only postwar writing on his wartime record was a two-page article in the *New Republic* on FDR’s order to rush aid to the USSR (1946a). Coy also wrote a more general article about the presidency in the *American Political Science Review*, but it understandably focused on the larger and somewhat abstract subject and was not a memoir per se (1946b).

Fifth, Coy has received little attention because the historical consensus has been that the prewar and wartime mobilization was an unwieldy mess, an awkward Golem failing at efficiently harnessing the business sector and the civilian world. At the time, it was constantly under public criticism from the conservative coalition in Congress and by news commentators. That it was frequently reorganized by the president seemed to be confirmation of its failings. The phrase “the mess in Washington” became a shorthand that

included the generalization of OEM as a failure. After a while, the term went from being a political criticism and accusation to a self-evident truth that needed no further documentation. Reflecting that historical consensus, Brands wrote that “the insufficient coordination of America’s war production impeded the efforts of the armies of the Grand Alliance” (2008, 819). Case closed. Why even study something when the historical verdict has already been settled and sealed? Elsewhere I have argued that the then-political criticism has simply echoed down into history as accurate even though the economic mobilization was much more successful than those allegations. In particular, OEM *looked* complicated because the American political economy *was* complicated (2012, 202–6). In 2007, a non-American historian of WWII presented a revisionist conclusion, namely that the US was more successfully mobilized economically than Germany or England. Davies observed that “nothing could compare to the miracles achieved by the wartime economy of the USA” and that this was “spectacular” (2007, 34). Surely his conclusion can be interpreted backward to include giving *some* credit to OEM.

Finally, it is possible that OEM’s legal status (and, consequently, Coy’s as LOEM) has led to an assumption about its relative unimportance. OEM’s existence did not derive from a law and had no statutory authorization. This was in stark contrast to its eventual quasi-successor, the Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion (OWMR). OEM was established by an executive order that a president could subsequently change with the stroke of a pen. This was not a particularly strong or impressive anchoring in terms of formal status. It is little more than a short, facile jump to conclude that it (and he) could not have been very important substantively. Given the way the literature has downgraded the LOEM position and Coy’s record, there are also some published mistakes about it and him that writers should not have made. For example, Morstein Marx stated that “no successor was appointed” after Coy resigned as LOEM in 1943 (1947, 21). Similarly, Hobbs named the only LOEMs as McReynolds and Coy (1954, 186). Both are incorrect. FDR appointed Byrnes as LOEM, an office Byrnes held from June to November 1943.

The purpose of this book is to revisit the heretofore unexamined premise and conventional wisdom that OEM as an administrative entity was unimportant, that the position of liaison officer for emergency management was similarly unimportant, and, in particular, the record of Wayne Coy as LOEM. The contention of the book is that a deeper examination of these questions suggests that public administration history had gotten it

wrong. Historiography is practically revisionist at heart. It involves a new and fresh look at what has been accepted as the consensus and conventional wisdom. Concerning a wholly different aspect of WWII history (Nazi camp guard war crimes), Douglas made the argument that “a textured, granular analysis” was at the heart of good historical research, in particular if seeking to overturn the given narrative (2016, 226). Old generalizations may hold up, others may fall. Either way, new details add a fresh view of past events. In particular, the historical verdict on the unimportance of OEM and Coy’s service seems to have been frozen into the literature based on the hindsight of the first decade after the war. Then the subject seems largely to have been dropped, as though authoritatively finished. This historical inquiry reopens the question and examines if the short-term hindsight after the war got it right.

It appears that the routine dismissal of OEM as a mere fiction, an administrative holding company, or little more than an organization chart on paper seems to have been maintained by an echo chamber of public administration historians accepting the conclusions of predecessors. With the verdict seemingly closed and done, there did not seem to be any justification to wade through thousands of pages of files in archival collections. As an outgrowth of that conventional wisdom, if OEM was unimportant per se, then that would carry over to whoever was theoretically at the top of the OEM pyramid, the liaison officer for emergency management. This inquiry tries to reopen this basic question and evaluate whether the given verdict has been accurate. It is an effort to develop a historical perspective from the ground up, from actual practice and documentation. Only then can generalizations be more than mere assertions.

Research Approach

History is what we in the present choose to remember of the past. That leads to a tendency to read history backward (Lelyveld 2016, 11). Knowing how a particular story turned out, how do we assess a person’s record under the historical microscope? In the long run, were they right or wrong? These historical verdicts can be fluid and dynamic. For example, the retrospective views of Truman’s and Eisenhower’s presidencies have risen in the more recent historical evaluations than in the first few decades after they left the White House. Lelyveld’s observation also conveys how much history cherry-picks what it tells us. Historians focus on narratives of what is *now*

considered important, as opposed to the larger range of issues that were being dealt with at the time. We microscopically examine evidence (or even straws in the wind) in minute detail of matters that later turned out to be of great significance. This approach is sometimes called back-shadowing. We skip lightly over everything else. It is almost as though we deliberately omit and then forget what we do not consider important at the current moment. This historiographic approach conveys a false sense of inevitability to the events that eventually occurred and the lack of any other possible path events could have taken.

In particular, by reading history backward, we lose the benefit of a different perspective, namely of how things looked *at that time*. Given what a participant knew (or did not know), were his or her decisions about as good as one could expect when looking over his or her shoulder decades later? Were those decisions understandable, systematic, and as fact based as possible? Were they, to use Simon's term, satisficing? Were they proceeding in a manner that was satisfactory and sufficient, albeit not perfect, because it was (and is) impossible to be 100 percent rational and have all the facts at hand (1997, 118–20)? Lincoln is famously quoted as saying that his approach to decision making was like that of a riverboat captain who navigated "point to point," of being limited to what could be seen at that moment. Whatever might come around the bend politically and militarily was unknown and could only be dealt with after it came into sight (Donald 1995, 15). Cesarini's revisionist history of the Holocaust was based on trying "to give the reader a sense of the contingent and chaotic course of what we know as history, but what was experienced at the time as a bewildering present and an uncertain future" (2016, xxxix). It is this perspective that I have tried to include when examining Coy's work and record.

Specifically, what, exactly, did he *do*? What, if any, were his contributions to the larger national and international goal of winning the war? In particular, given what he knew at that time, did he appear to make good decisions or bad? Was he adding value to the complex decision-making process that often landed on the president's desk? Coy was part of an enormous undertaking, so an overall verdict on the totality of the prewar and wartime civilian mobilization cannot be placed solely and exclusively at his feet. Nonetheless, for a person near the top of a complex administrative machinery, does his record more than half a century later look creditable and constructive or mediocre and lamentable? Does he deserve historical attention or not? A good grade or a failing one?

Given this methodological focus and the modest attention that the secondary literature has given Coy, I greatly benefited from three original and contemporaneous sources that—unlike secondary literature—are untainted by later perspectives, the imperative for narrative coherence, and histories built on the hindsight that authors had after the war ended. The contemporary sources I mostly relied on were archives, official federal publications, and journalism. By using a triangulation approach, those three sources helped reconstruct Coy's role in the prewar and wartime civilian mobilization, sometimes on a day-to-day basis, even hour by hour in a few instances.

A large collection of Coy's personal papers was at the Roosevelt Presidential Library. It consisted of thirty-seven boxes, mostly from his EOP years. Another major collection was at the National Archives II, the depository for historical federal records. The holdings for the Office for Emergency Management (Record Group [RG] 214) included twenty-two boxes of the office records of the Liaison Officer for Emergency Management. Almost all of them related to Coy's time in that position (even though two other people briefly held the same position before and after he did). That record group also included documents from the Division of Central Administrative Services (CAS), the entity under his direct supervision that provided staff services to almost all agencies in OEM. One referencing limitation related to Coy's large number of memos to FDR. He rarely provided a subject line ("Re:") identifying the issue at hand. The same was the case of almost all memos that FDR dictated for Coy. Therefore, for citation purposes, I was limited to the date of the memo and its location in the archives. It was slightly more common to find nonpresidential memos to or from Coy with the subject of the memo listed in its title. When it was available, I included it in the endnote.

The papers of Sidney Sherwood at the Truman Presidential Library included his diary for the early months of 1942, while he briefly served as assistant liaison officer for emergency management. It is a compelling narrative of the thoughts and actions of Coy's deputy, especially his comments about Coy himself. Because it is housed in the Truman Library (when his public service was higher profile), it appears that previous FDR researchers have overlooked Sherwood's FDR-related material. The Roosevelt Library also had valuable material in other collections, including FDR's Official Files (OF), the President's Secretary's File (PSF), President's Personal File, Harold Smith Papers, and the Henry Morgenthau diaries (also now online). The Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress had the original (long)

version of the Harold Ickes diary. Another primary source was Coy's public statements, such as speeches to public audiences or articles he wrote. These, too, are contemporaneous sources that are valuable for reconstructing events and decisions.

The second source was that of official federal documents, including formal presidential documents and congressional reports. In particular, congressional hearings conveyed a vivid sense of the times. Coy occasionally testified before Congress as LOEM, as did two of his senior staffers, the head of the Division of Central Administrative Services and the head of his legal staff. These hearing transcripts give a kind of "you are there" feeling of being in the room as they were happening: what issues were pressing at the time, how unfolding events looked at that moment, and the political thrust-and-parry minuet that occurs between the testifiers and committee members. At times, the issues being raised were institutional and reflected the inherent different perspectives of the executive and legislative branches. At other times they reflected political and ideological alliances and enmities or were about the "golden rule," namely that whoever controls the money controls the rules for spending it.

A third source was journalism. I realize that traditionally newspaper and magazine coverage is not viewed as a primary source of information. This, it seems to me, is a mistake. After all, coverage of events by the news media reflected how things looked *at that time*. Reporters had no way of knowing how the story would turn out eventually. This gives media coverage a fresh, at-the-moment perspective. Also, while reporters and syndicated opinion columnists might not have had access to all relevant information, public officials often did not either. Everybody was satisficing. Sometimes figures such as Coy were *reacting* to media coverage, making journalists more than merely being passive observers. Therefore, an effort to see Coy's work in the present tense is reflected in contemporaneous news coverage and commentary. Certainly journalism is not an original source in the sense that archival and official documents are, but reportage is not a secondary source either. Generally, a secondary source would be a treatment that *retrospectively* investigates a subject matter, such as when the historian knows the rest of the story. This can distort a depiction of how things looked at the time, especially based on available information, politics, and public opinion. Journalism (including commentary) can be a helpful primary source of information, even if not an original source.

Personal memoirs (or edited diaries) could allegedly be treated as primary sources, though, in a sense, they are secondary because they were

written after events happened. While they can be helpful, they are subject to after-the-fact self-justification. Therefore, they need to be treated cautiously and with a certain amount of skepticism, in particular regarding controversial matters or the centrality of the teller to the events recounted.

Scope of the Book

OEM encompassed practically the entire civilian effort in WWII from civilian defense to transportation to control of natural resources. It was just about everything the federal government did in WWII except the uniformed services. Therefore, it was important to determine clearly the scope of this inquiry. This is not intended to be a comprehensive history of OEM and all its line agencies per se. That would be tantamount to a complete history of the war effort sans the military. Rather, the focus is on the liaison officer role, although this inevitably slides into some discussion of OEM. The center of attention is the somewhat odd position of liaison officer for emergency management. (Sometimes in formal correspondence the title was listed as “Liaison Officer, Office for Emergency Management.” Some other documents used the term “Office of the Liaison Officer.”)

In particular, this is a review of the person who held that title the longest, Wayne Coy. Given that Coy defined himself as a practitioner of the new profession of public administration, what specifically did he do in the spheres of policy, politics, and management? Coy had a predecessor and successor, neither of whom approached the job with the same energy and commitment that he did. Therefore, there is presented also a brief discussion of the first and third LOEMs. Coy had a small personal office, but directly supervised two horizontal OEM agencies. CAS provided routine staff services to most of the OEM agencies and the Division of Information (DOI) furnished PR services to most OEM agencies. When relevant to the story of Coy’s work, his supervision of these two horizontal silos is discussed. But this is not a comprehensive history of CAS, and I have separately written a biography of DOI (2012). Given the broad scope of OEM’s agencies, Coy inevitably was involved in most of the issues that arose in the civilian mobilization, both before Pearl Harbor and after. When identifying his roles in those policy areas, the focus is on what he did (or did not) do, rather than a comprehensive history of that particular substantive area. As presented at the beginning of this introduction, there is a decent literature of many of those specialized subjects. The question to be examined here is what his

contact with that subject matter was and if that involvement was more in the nature of policy, politics, or management. Coy was frequently in touch with President Roosevelt. In those cases, the same question is examined: was he engaging in policy, politics, or management?

With the focus being on the LOEM position, the period when Coy was both LOEM and assistant budget director (May 1942–June 1943) seeks to distinguish between his BOB work and his LOEM activities. In terms of clarity, I have adopted a “hat” metaphor as a shorthand way to convey this and to prevent confusion. During that time period, he wore two hats. That meant a study of his LOEM record would need to try to distinguish between his two-hatted roles, trying to tease out what he did wearing his LOEM hat. Sometimes that was easier said than done. There were other two-hatted people at the time. In 1941, FDR appointed New York City Mayor Fiorello La Guardia to direct the Office of Civilian Defense (OCD). La Guardia continued wearing his mayoral hat as well. In fact, he was running for reelection, which was very important to him. Harold Ickes was another example of wearing two hats. Before the war, he was interior secretary and head of the Public Works Administration (PWA), a wholly separate agency. During the war (after losing PWA), he was the petroleum coordinator. Coy’s predecessor and successor also were two-hatted. McReynolds was LOEM and liaison officer for personnel management. Byrnes was both LOEM and director of the Office of War Mobilization (OWM). In a study of President Nixon’s 1973 super-secretaries, I also used this terminology (2010). Each wore two hats, as the secretary of a Cabinet department and, separately, as counsellor to the president with an office in the White House complex.

Disciplinary Foci and Audiences for the Book

The audiences for this book are likely to be primarily those interested in American history, political science, and public administration. Some of the topics that the book addresses would be categorized as fitting in subdivisions of these disciplinary silos or as cross-disciplinary studies, such as political history, the presidency, presidential staffing, and history of the federal government. Other more specialized research areas that the book covers include those interested in the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt and in WWII history.

A relatively new practitioner profession and academic discipline is emergency management. Nowadays it is common to use the term, to see it mentioned in the media and in everyday use. The Federal Emergency

Management Agency is a high profile and well-known agency (for good or, sometimes, bad). Most states, counties, and cities have emergency management departments and emergency management directors. In the academy, there are several peer-review academic journals, such as *International Journal of Emergency Management*, *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, and *Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management*. In 2008, I contributed a chapter on emergency media relations to a *Disaster Management Handbook* (Lee 2008a). The ASPA has a Section on Emergency and Crisis Management, which is a mix of professors and practitioners.

As a relatively young field, emergency management does not yet appear to have a substantial historical literature. In the context of the gradual emergence of the field, FDR's OEM and Coy's service as LOEM are likely seminal events, showing the initial appearance of an activity called emergency management, even before WWII. Given the sparse literature, it is difficult to state definitively, but it appears that FDR and Brownlow should get the credit for inventing the term "emergency management," that OEM was likely the first government agency with the term in its name, and that Coy probably was the first full-time government official with the term emergency management in his title. (His predecessor, McReynolds, wore two hats and served only briefly as LOEM.) If these tentative assertions are accurate, then this book covers the *birth* of emergency management in American government.

Structure of the Book: Chronology of Coy as a Public Administrator Involved in Policy, Politics, and Management

The art of storytelling, since time immemorial, follows the sequential structure of a beginning, middle, and end. This recounting of the position of liaison officer for emergency management and the overlapping career of Wayne Coy is a good fit: what happened in 1941, what happened in 1942, and so on. But there were also some difficulties with a plain chronological narrative. One was of parallel story lines occurring at about the same time and not overlapping or being closely related to each other. Second, some stories did not respect a clean division of events by year or any other similar boundary. They extended over, say, both the beginning and the middle stages of the narrative.

I have tried my best to cope with this historical messiness in several ways. For events on different subjects that occurred around the same time,

there are separate, but parallel, chapters. The creation of the Office for Emergency Management (1939–40) and the invention of the position of liaison officer for emergency management (1941) were unrelated to Wayne Coy's early career in public administration. Therefore, these are dealt with in separate chapters, respectively chapters 1 and 2. Those two story lines converge in chapter 3, when Coy became LOEM in April 1941. The book then divides his LOEM career into three chronological periods: chapters 4 to 6 cover his service before the US entered WWII (April–December 1941), chapters 7 and 8 cover his LOEM record for the first half-year of the war, and chapters 9 and 10 relate his work from mid-1942 to mid-1943, when he wore two hats, as LOEM and as assistant BOB director.

The chronological chapters on Coy's LOEM record are structured based on the analytic foci of policy, politics, and management. For someone at Coy's level, many of his activities would surely overlap with and be interconnected to one or both of the other categories. Therefore, I have tried to recount Coy's work by categorizing them roughly in these three rubrics. Understandably, sometimes it would be difficult to tease out this distinction. Generally, I tried to perceive any particular subject as being predominantly policy, more edging toward politics, or mostly as relating to some kind of managerial role in a large government organization. Generally, the rubric of public policy comprised substantive subjects of governmental attention. For problem X, shall we do this or shall we do that? Coy was deeply involved in such occurrences in various roles such as policy development, policy clarifier, policy monitor, or policy maker. As a result, his participation in policy was sometimes as a coordinator, sometimes as an honest broker between the president and executive branch agencies, and sometimes as a decider. At other times, it was evidently some kind of policy role, but his contribution to it was fuzzy in terms of facile categorization.

The category of politics could be equally fuzzy. Politics, of course, is about elections. From time to time, Coy overtly participated in events that were election related. But is it politics to advise a president? Is it politics when interacting with senators, members of Congress, or governors? With the exception of shepherding key policy legislation through Congress, most interactions Coy had with elected officials (excluding the president) are treated here as fitting in a political role. However, the political realm is more than campaigns and elected officials. For example, Coy gave speeches and wrote articles that were widely covered and assumed to be statements of the administration that overtly or covertly sought to influence public opinion. Similarly, even though he was not a publicity hound compared