

## INTERVIEW I

DATE: October 7, 1981  
INTERVIEWEE: VERNON R. ALDEN  
INTERVIEWER: Michael L. Gillette  
PLACE: Dr. Alden's office, Boston, Massachusetts

Tape 1 of 1

G: Let's start with your own background and what led up to your being tapped to work with the Job Corps program.

A: All right. As an undergraduate I had gone to Brown University. After World War II--I was in the Navy during the war--I went to the Harvard Business School and then worked there for twelve years. In January of 1962 I became president of Ohio University. Because my wife and I were relatively young--I was thirty-eight at the time--and we had come from John Kennedy country in Massachusetts, we received a lot of press coverage. We were doing unusual things in the conservative State of Ohio. When I arrived in Ohio, I discovered that Ohio State University was banning speakers from their campus, people with communist or socialist backgrounds or very liberal points of view. Early on in my administration I publicly stated that our campus was open to speakers, which I considered essential at a first-rate academic institution. And we were launching unusual programs, such as involvement with the concerns of Appalachia. Ohio University is located in southeastern Ohio, in one of the twenty-eight depressed counties that comprise Appalachian Ohio. As a result, we received national newspaper and magazine publicity. Time magazine ran a

feature article, The Wall Street Journal had a long side column, and Life magazine devoted about twenty pages to a young president trying to turn a campus around.

Along the way I got acquainted with Sargent Shriver, because we were the first college to grant academic credit for Peace Corps service. Sargent Shriver took a good deal of interest in our university and in me in particular.

G: Excuse me. Did you initiate the Peace Corps credit program, or were you approached by the Peace Corps to do it?

A: No, we initiated it. I had brought several very young people to serve as interns in my office, men and women just out of Ivy League or West Coast colleges. I wanted to make our rather large state university really different. I thought that too many large state universities were moving young people through in lock-step progression, piling up credit hours but not really providing an innovative curriculum or experiences that were unique. I was able to place the young men and women attracted to our administration in various offices on the campus. Some of them had been Peace Corps volunteers. As I met regularly with this young team, they came up with several interesting ideas. We were the first Ohio college, private or public, that recruited in predominately black high schools, for example. We had in the early sixties a much larger black population on our campus than Ohio State, although they were three times our size. I credit one of the young people in our group with the idea of giving laboratory credit for Peace Corps service. I think that may be what initially brought us to

Sargent Shriver's attention.

When I was at Harvard Business School, I helped to start an organization called the Young President's Organization. Members were company presidents who had arrived at their positions before the age of forty in companies that had annual sales of two million dollars or more. I was invited by YPO in the winter of 1964 to Hawaii to speak at their annual convention. It seemed like a marvelous quasi-vacation, because I had been going at my job eighteen hours a day, seven days a week. I looked forward to giving my speech and relaxing on Waikiki Beach for four or five days. I had given my speech and had been on the beach no more than half an hour when I was paged for a call from the White House. I picked up the phone and, after a long wait, President Johnson came on with an invitation to fly immediately to Washington. Then he said, "I'd like to have Mr. Shriver explain what this is all about." Sargent Shriver said, "We want to talk to you about being part of an exciting new program we're developing." I replied, "Well, yes, I can be in Washington next week sometime." Shriver said, "What do you mean next week? We expect you tomorrow." I said, "I had planned to stay here a little bit longer." He said, "No, you've got to come right away. After all, it's the President of the United States inviting you."

So I got on a plane and flew all the way back to Washington and then sat around a day and a half waiting to be seen by Lyndon Johnson and Sargent Shriver. They said they wanted me to drop everything at the university immediately and come to Washington

to chair the task force planning the Job Corps portion of the War on Poverty. I responded, "Look, I've been at this university only two years, and we have a number of very substantial programs just beginning. I just can't run out on people." Shriver said, "Well, maybe you can be part of the task force for a period of time and then you'll be able to leave and join us full time." I replied, "That's not possible. I really doubt whether I can take any time at all, even spending a day or two a week in Washington."

Sargent Shriver then flew down to Florida and talked to the chairman of the Ohio board, who was John (Wilmer) Galbreath, not the John (Kenneth) Galbraith from Harvard. John owned a very large development and construction firm in Columbus, Ohio, but was better known as the owner of the Pittsburgh Pirates and three Kentucky Derby winning horses. A very fine gentleman, he is in his eighties now, but in those days he was in his late sixties. At Galbreath's winter place in Florida, Shriver told him that it would be important to the university that I chair the task force. John Galbreath called me and said, "You know, I think this will be difficult for the Board of Trustees and for the people of Ohio to accept, being as conservative as they are. But if you feel that you really want to do it and should do it, I think the board would okay your going there for maybe a couple of days a week for the next three months or so." He went on to say, "I gather from what you said to Shriver that there's no way that you'd leave the university to take on the full-time responsibility as head of the Job Corps." I said, "That's true. I will make whatever inputs I

can to the task force and I will do those things that Mr. Shriver described to me, but obviously I am not going to be a candidate for the directorship of the Job Corps."

So with that I began to commute to Washington. The university had several airplanes that I had persuaded corporations to give us. We had two Beechcraft, a couple of DC-3s, and several smaller planes as part of our aviation program. We offered non-credit navigation and pilot training programs that students in business administration or engineering could take. At the same time the planes were very useful to our administration, because we were able to move around fairly freely with support from research contracts and grants from various corporations. So I flew to Washington a couple of days a week for a period of about three months. I would get up about five in the morning, fly to Washington, work all day long, talk with Shriver until well in the evening, and then work all the next day before flying back to Ohio late at night.

I would guess that the reason Sargent Shriver asked me to become involved was that I had gone to the Harvard Business School and had worked there on the faculty and in the administration for twelve years. I also served on some corporate boards and knew the business community very well while being a member of the academic community. He apparently wanted somebody who was comfortable in both worlds, because the Job Corps looked to him to be a combination of the practicality of business with the research and teaching inputs that the academic world could give.

I did not get too deeply into the detailed planning of the Job Corps camps or the logistical work that had to be done with the Departments of Defense or Labor. Bob McNamara and Pat Moynihan were both friends of mine from Harvard days, so in the initial meetings I took our small team over to talk with them. But then John Carley or Wade Robinson or other members would carry on the day-to-day detail work with their staffs. I perceived my role, and I assumed that Sargent Shriver agreed, as an outreach to the business and academic communities. I also knew several leading sports figures who could help us make the Job Corps camps attractive to young people. I spent some time running around the country talking to business leaders, to academics, to the press, inviting them to share their ideas with the Task Force. You mentioned an article that Fred Hechinger had written; Fred had been a long-time friend of mine. When he wrote that piece in The New York Times, it was very helpful because we got a flood of letters from academic people and business leaders who began to take an interest in the War on Poverty.

Many Republican-oriented businessmen were skeptical of the War on Poverty. I visited several business leaders, trying to explain that the Job Corps was practical, businesslike, and focused on the problem of poverty. I shall never forget my interview with Neil McElroy, the Chairman of Procter and Gamble. Because he was a graduate of Harvard and the Harvard Business School, I thought that he would be one of the more understanding and liberal businessmen. I was wrong. I argued, "Do you have any

idea how much money we're spending on kids who have dropped out of school, have gotten into lives of crime, and are now locked up in prisons or detention homes? We are spending millions, even billions of dollars on these lost kids. What if we had a program that would take unemployable youngsters out of predominantly black neighborhoods, or hollows of Appalachia, and first of all bring them up to a decent condition of health. Then give them some basic skills, so that they could at least read and write and learn how to use a telephone or cash a check--just those elementary skills that we take for granted. Now, what if we were able to take these kids out of their dead-end environments, and as Lyndon Johnson said, no longer give them a 'handout' but give them a 'hand-up?' What if a million of them could be made employable, find jobs, and have spending money? How much more Crest toothpaste could you sell? It's a very practical problem. We plan to take these lost youngsters off welfare, out of detention homes, out of dead-end situations, and make them employable." McElroy's response was, "Well, I've heard from President Eisenhower and others that this is a boondoggle, so that's good enough for me."

But, happily enough, there were several businessmen who took an interest; and, as you probably know, we set up an advisory board of business leaders. Have you seen the roster of them?

G: Yes.

A: I helped Mr. Shriver put together that list, and we invited them to meet with us from time to time in Washington. They served as

an advisory group, but more importantly they were emissaries to the rest of the business community.

When we began to talk about where the Job Corps camps should be located and who should run them, we discovered early on that academic people wanted to use them as research laboratories. They were looking for grants from us, so they could study these kids like specimens. We were disappointed that few academics had practical ideas for meeting our goal: making unemployable young people healthy, skilled, and useful to society. So we decided

that several Job Corps camps would be run by business corporations. There was a business recession in 1964 and in many companies there were sophisticated Ph.D.s who really didn't have an awful lot to do or were about to be laid off. It occurred to me that running a Job Corps program could be attractive to Xerox, Litton, CBS, or other companies. Looking at the record, some of the best Job Corps camps were run by goal-oriented, well-organized business corporations.

Maybe I should stop and see whether you wanted to ask--

G: Well, there are a couple of things. First, that meeting that you had with President Johnson, is that right, when you came back from Hawaii, do you recall what President Johnson said to you at that meeting and the circumstances of the meeting?

A: It was not a long meeting. It was in the so-called Fish Bowl Room. With the President were Mr. Shriver and a black man. I've forgotten his name, but I don't think he ever became a member of the task force. He probably was a visitor whom the President was



trying to impress with his plans for the War on Poverty. President Johnson reminisced about his youth, his teaching experiences, and his very early concern for poor people. He said that he had been dirt-poor himself; that he had always wanted to do something for poor folks. He went on to say that he had talked with Sargent Shriver about a program that would eradicate poverty in our lifetime. He described various elements of it--Community Action, the VISTA volunteers, and a job-oriented program that would be modeled after the CCC camps--only they would be better. He spoke in generalities. It was a brief meeting, and then I went off with Sargent Shriver to the first building we occupied. In less than two months we must have been headquartered in four different borrowed buildings. I've forgotten which one it was, but it was where Shriver had his office.

G: The Peace Corps Building, wasn't it?

A: Yes. We talked some more and I said, "I really have to think this through. It's very important that I discuss this with our board." It was then that Sargent Shriver said, "I'd like to talk to the chairman of your board," and he went ahead and did it.

G: This was before he talked to Mr. Galbreath?

A: Right.

G: I see.

A: Since John Galbreath was a dyed-in-the-wool Republican, I did not expect him to be terribly excited about a Lyndon Johnson-sponsored program. But Shriver, as you know, does a superb job of relating to conservative businessmen as well as liberal Democrats.

G: Did President Johnson talk about his days as an NYA director and running that?

A: Yes.

G: Did he relate it to Job Corps at all?

A: Yes, he did. I can't remember the details of the conversation, but I remember he mentioned that.

G: Do you recall the date of that meeting with the President or the date of your speech in Hawaii, or anything that would--?

A: My speech in Hawaii was in February of 1964. I've forgotten the exact date of my February meeting with the President and Sargent Shriver. My appointment as Chairman of the Task Force was March 25, 1964.

G: Now let me ask you also about your teaching experience at Harvard, at the Business School. What was your specialty there?

A: I was the full-time Associate Dean of the Harvard Business School, involved in internal as well as external administration. I was responsible for our academic budget, for fund-raising, for recruitment of faculty, and so on. Most of my teaching was done in the summertime in the Business Policy area, or in a course called "Business Responsibilities." For example, I taught for a couple of summers in the Advanced Management Program in Hawaii. Then I taught for two summers in Japan. The president of Keio University had asked us about the possibility of establishing a graduate business school at Keio. As a first step, we conducted a three-week summer program for Japanese business leaders. Then we invited several Keio faculty members to the Harvard Business

School for periods of about eighteen months to teach them to write and to lead business cases.

G: Had you had any expertise in manpower programs at all, manpower training?

A: No. I had a keen interest in the problem of poverty, because I had read Michael Harrington's book [The Other America] even before I met Sargent Shriver. One of the main reasons I accepted the Ohio University invitation was the challenge of the environment there. On my first visit to meet the Trustees, I was struck by the beauty of the place. It looked like an Ivy League institution, tucked away in those rolling Appalachian hills. But just outside of town were abandoned coal mines and poverty shacks, with no decent highway access, no good airports nearby. Having been on the boards of a couple of companies that were part of the development of Massachusetts' high technology highway, Route 128, I thought, wouldn't it be exciting to take a medium-sized state university (we had about 8500 students then and I knew that in that decade we would have to double our size) and make it a pace-setter for state universities? Wouldn't it be great if we could turn the area around economically? We were ravaged by annual floods that isolated the campus. There were no challenging jobs for youngsters in Southeastern Ohio, causing an out-migration of young talent to Cleveland, to the East Coast, or to other parts of the country. The challenge for me was to see whether we could create a different kind of university--and whether that university could have a positive impact upon the region.

So one of the selfish interests I had for being involved with the War on Poverty was that I could have access to people who were developing the Appalachian program. Later I became chairman of the Educational Commission of Appalachia. And our University benefitted from funds earmarked for area development. For example, we were able to reroute and harness the river that had annually flooded, ravaging the University and the community.

We persuaded our Governor, who was Republican, to become involved in the Appalachian program. He had been outspokenly opposed. I pleaded with Governor Rhodes that he would deprive our depressed twenty-eight counties of significant funds if he didn't join the program. President Johnson needed to have one more conservative governor on board. With three-days lead time, we planned a meeting in our university ballroom of community leaders, mayors, and business leaders. Four hundred and thirty-two people showed up at the meeting. When Governor Rhodes saw that all these citizens in Southeastern Ohio wanted to go into the program, he said, "Well, now, how can we get hold of the President and tell him that we'll be on board?" I put a call in to the White House to Jack Valenti, whom I had known at Harvard Business School, and I said the Governor wanted to speak to President Johnson. Valenti said, "He's now in a helicopter on his way to Andrews Air Force Base, but what sort of message did you want me to pass on to him?" Governor Rhodes told Jack that Ohio would come into the program, giving the President the conservative state needed to ensure passage of the Appalachian Act.

As a result, we were able to begin work on the Appalachian Highway, improving access to our part of the state and benefitting the university enormously. We got the flood control project I mentioned a moment ago. When the War on Poverty was funded, we received a large grant from the VISTA program. We established a VISTA volunteer training center within our school of business administration. Sargent Shriver came out to give a speech in nearby Marietta, Ohio. Since I was speaking in another part of the country, my wife went over to Marietta with the dean of the school of business to accept the grant--I've forgotten how much it was, \$580,000 or something like that--to develop a Community Action Program within our university. This enabled our students to have real-life experiences in community action. Even as undergraduates, they could be volunteers, helping to teach deprived youngsters, helping poor people in the area, and receive academic credit for it. Appalachia was a "living laboratory" for our students and teachers. For many years, I had been convinced that the university world was too isolated from the real world. Young people could go to a university like ours located in the middle of poverty, right in the middle of Appalachia, and not know what it was like. The Community Action grant gave them an opportunity to see and to work in an environment that many of them believed did not exist. This was another innovative program that made our university distinctive in the mid-sixties.

We were celebrating the one hundred and sixtieth anniversary of Ohio University in 1964, and I wanted to do something unusual

to underscore the significance of that anniversary. So I called up Bill Moyers and asked, "What are the chances of getting the President to come out here?" Bill replied, "We've had it in the back of [our minds]. We're planning a trip to the Appalachian area, and maybe we can key it into visiting Ohio University. How much lead time would you need?" I said, "Well, less than you do." So he called me up one Sunday morning, very, very early and said that he was coming out the next day to Lockbourne Air Force base near Columbus and would come on down with some Secret Service people to look over the campus with the expectation that the President would be there on Thursday. The President did come to the campus in May and announced the Great Society Program, although the University of Michigan claims to have been the place where the program was first announced.

Well, I didn't come away from all this completely unscarred. I don't know whether Sarge told you that one of our Ohio Congressmen accused me of improper lobbying. The Columbus Citizen-Journal and [the Columbus] Dispatch carried huge front-page articles quoting Congressman Abele to the effect that I had twisted his arm trying to get him to vote for the War on Poverty. He claimed that what I did was unethical and illegal and that the trustees ought to fire me for mixing up my university responsibilities with lobbying activity. I responded by calling my own press conference: "Well, yes, I did talk to Congressman [Homer "Pete"] Abele, but I don't think what I did was improper." I said that I was speaking for the citizens in our part of the

state when I asked him to support the President's program. I enumerated about a dozen programs that would have benefitted our part of the state which Abele had voted against. "I don't want you, Pete, to vote once more against a bill that would really help the people in our part of Ohio." The papers in Ohio gave my statements full play. Congressman Abele ran for re-election the following year and was soundly trashed by his Democratic opponent.

G: Well, let's talk a little bit about the task force itself. Who was working on the task force, or the Job Corps component of the task force when you arrived?

A: There was a young Army colonel named John Carley, who was in and out of the office on loan from Bob McNamara. When I first arrived, there were only Adam Yarmolinsky and Sargent Shriver, and another fellow who was, I think, a legislative liaison for the Peace Corps.

G: Wilson McCarthy?

A: Yes, Wilson McCarthy. Initially, they were the only people around. We borrowed people from other agencies, from the Labor Department and the Defense Department primarily. John Carley became the chief of staff of our Job Corps activity; he was the person who went out begging and borrowing people, equipment, and space. He put together a group of people who wrote position papers and did the major planning for the Job Corps.

G: Was the War on Poverty task force divided into subgroups, or did you ever meet as a group as a whole and discuss all facets of the War on Poverty, Community Action, VISTA, et cetera, or did you

focus exclusively on the subject of Job Corps?

A: In the first two or three weeks, Glenn Olds came on board from Springfield College to chair the VISTA volunteer program, and labor leader Jack Conway headed the Community Action Program. Almost every day during those first two or three weeks Adam Yarmolinsky, Sargent Shriver, Glenn Olds, Jack Conway, and I would meet and talk about general strategy for the whole program. Since I was in Washington only one or two days a week, John Carley actually directed the staff, developed the position papers, and assigned people certain tasks. I assume that John continued to meet with the staff people involved with VISTA and the Community Action Program. I was involved in very little of the detailed planning for the Job Corps program. I spent most of my time trying to open doors for Carley and others. For example, we called on Don Hornig, who was then the President's Science Adviser. I had known Don when he was a professor at Harvard. John Carley and the staff drew on Hornig's staff for information and assistance. I also put the staff in communication with Bob McNamara and Pat Moynihan.

G: What was the Labor Department's position in the War on Poverty task force?

A: I wish I could remember the issues that concerned us the most. I recall that we were concerned that the Labor Department would try to co-opt the program, or that Defense would take it over--giving the Job Corps an unfortunate military personality.

Are you going to talk to John Carley?



G: Sure.

A: Can you find him?

G: We'll see.

A: Yes.

G: Willard Wirtz, did he, for example, want to run the Job Corps program?

A: I don't know.

G: You never met with Wirtz?

A: No.

G: How about any representatives of the Labor Department: Pat Moynihan or Eric Tolmach or Samuel Merrick?

A: The only person I met with in the Labor Department was Pat Moynihan, and at the time we met I did not get the impression that Pat was trying to take over the program. We needed to borrow people; we needed to live off other people's funds. Because we would have no budget unless a bill was passed by Congress, I arranged the meetings to seek money and people. So the interdepartmental struggles that I heard about, I did not witness firsthand.

G: What was Moynihan's contribution to the task force, do you recall?

A: He philosophically was well versed on the problems of poverty. One of the issues that he and I talked about was whether labor unions would be cooperative. We were afraid that with restrictive entry into certain trades, union rules would prevent entry of Job Corps graduates. It would be like a closed shop to them. So we

talked a bit about that, and I think Moynihan recognized that as a problem, but . . .

G: Sure. Was there any feeling that the employment service was not suitable for recruiting Job Corps enrollees?

A: I don't know.

G: You don't recall any discussion on this?

A: No.

G: Was there a feeling that the existing Cabinet departments were not focusing on the poor?

A: I'm sure that Sargent Shriver and Adam Yarmolinsky felt that in order to have a successful program there had to be a new agency with the "gung ho" spirit that the Peace Corps had. In some of our conversations we talked about how stodgy and bureaucratic some agencies were. Maybe the Defense Department or the Labor Department could have a piece of the action, but what we needed was a whole new thrust if the War on Poverty were to be won.

G: Do you know how the task force arrived at having two manpower programs, or job training programs I should say, one the Job Corps and the other the Neighborhood Youth Corps that was delegated to the Labor Department?

A: I don't know how that came about, but early on we talked about the need for rural camps where kids would have an opportunity to get out of cities and into an environment that was different--a more healthful environment away from their families and away from their gangs. We also thought that we could deal with larger numbers of youngsters in rural areas. I suppose--and this all

took place after I was no longer a member of the task force-- that once the camps got going there was the practical problem of needing job training centers right within the city neighborhoods. But how the division of responsibility developed, I don't know.

G: Initially there seems to have been an emphasis on the fact that so many youths, particularly minority youth and impoverished youth, were being rejected by the draft as either physically or mentally unfit. Do you think this was, in part, a factor that contributed to the creation of the Job Corps, to improve the mental and physical health of these [youths]?

A: I remember Bob McNamara talking about how appalled he was at the number of youngsters who had to be rejected for physical reasons or because they couldn't pass the basic aptitude test. Although we couldn't talk about it publicly and explicitly, we did agree that the Job Corps would create an opportunity to upgrade people so that they could qualify for military service.

G: Well, now, initially the military was going to play a much larger role, I think.

A: Yes. Right.

G: They were going to help with the training, the logistical support and all of this, and that approach was shot down; it was sketched. Do you know what happened to it, how it was rejected?

A: Have you asked Shriver that? Because my recollection was that Sargent Shriver felt that it might kill the public relations of the program if we were tied too closely to the military.

G: Well, there was some opposition.

A: Yes, yes. But that's an area that he and Adam probably discussed at great length with McNamara, and I was not really a part of it.

G: The Labor Department had its own youth labor program in the hopper, I understand. They called it the Youth Opportunity Bill or something like that.

A: Yes.

G: Do you recall the relationship between this and the Job Corps proposal?

A: I can't remember. Was the Labor Department program superseded then by the Job Corps, [put] on the back burner?

G: My impression is that originally it was, but then they later had a very abridged version of it.

A: Yes. But I don't remember the details.

G: Another proposal that was considered by the task force was a massive jobs program. Do you recall that?

A: You mean of the CCC type, where they do road building or timber cutting?

G: Actually, I think it was more of a manpower training, but a massive program that would generate training and jobs on a much larger scale rather than having Community Action and VISTA and all these other--

A: When did this come up? I don't remember.

G: I think it was in the early stages, and there was some talk that it should be funded by a tax on cigarettes. Do you recall [that]?

A: No, I don't.

G: Did the White House have any input on the deliberations of the

task force that you recall?

A: During the time I was on the task force I saw President Johnson only four times. The liaison with the President was handled by Sargent Shriver. So I don't know what conversations took place between the President or other people in the White House and Sargent Shriver. The only times I saw the President were, once, when he initially talked to me briefly about serving. Secondly, one time Jerry Ford, Representative Ford, attacked the Job Corps on the floor of the House, calling it a boondoggle and a waste of money. Sargent Shriver was told about it by Wilson McCarthy. I happened to be in Sarge's office at the time, so he grabbed me and said he was going over to the White House right away to talk to the President. We were ushered into the President's Office, and Sarge was hopping mad about Gerald Ford's attack. That's when the famous statement was made: "Don't worry about Gerald Ford because he can't fart and chew gum at the same time." Whether the President said it on other occasions, it was polished up and reported as: "Gerald Ford can't walk and chew gum at the same time." Maybe the President said it again in a different context, but I was in the office when he said that, trying to calm down Shriver. Sarge felt that Ford's speaking out against the program could be a mortal blow in those early stages.

The other time I saw the President was when my wife and I were invited to a White House dinner. Lady Bird went up to bed about midnight while President Johnson stayed on and danced until about three-thirty. I was so fascinated by the evening that my wife and I stayed on until the President left. I heard that he went directly to the airport and on to Dallas. I was amazed at the tremendous energy of the guy, being able to dance most of the night and then get on a plane and arrive for another active day in Texas the next morning. The last time I saw him was on our campus when I introduced him by mentioning three major educational initiatives launched by the Federal Government. One was the Morrill Act, the land-grant college bill which provided practical educational opportunities. A second was the GI Bill opening up access to higher education to a wide range of young people. I predicted that the Great Society programs would be the third great watershed development, one that would provide opportunities for thousands of youngsters who had been deprived from secondary and higher education because of poverty. I had an opportunity to visit with the President after his speech, but those four occasions were the only times I actually saw the President. The rest of the time the liaison was carried on between Mr. Shriver--

G: Who carried out the liaison at the White House? I mean, which staff member do you recall dealing with the most?

A: Well, I don't know whether Wilson McCarthy did that or whether he worked primarily with Congress. But clearly he was a key person, because he knew the President so well. Adam Yarmolinsky appeared

to be shy and very low key, but I know that he had his contacts in the White House as well and was very effective.

G: Was Bill Moyers active in--?

A: With Shriver he was. Bill Moyers was on the phone quite often with Sargent Shriver. I knew Bill, but I did not interact with him when I was on the task force.

G: Do you recall how the name, the Job Corps, evolved?

A: I don't. Have you asked Sarge that?

G: Yes.

Let's see. Do you have any insights on the other programs, Community Action Program? Did you sit in on any important meetings in which those programs were thrashed out, Community Action, say?

A: Only in the very first days before really they took shape.

G: VISTA, do you recall any of the--?

A: Glenn Olds, who was president of Springfield College, and Jack Conway and I gave speeches in various parts of the country, trying to gather support for the programs. We talked and wrote articles about the concept of the War on Poverty, the theory behind the VISTA volunteers, Community Action Program, or the Job Corps. As the task force developed specific plans, we were able to provide more details in our presentations. Glenn Olds and I had returned to our institutions before the bill was actually passed.

G: Was there discussion on what kids the Job Corps was trying to reach, the kids, for example, who were really at the bottom of the scale in terms of motivation and employability on the one hand, or

kids who stood a reasonably good chance of making a success of themselves.

A: We were concerned that the public would think that this was a program only for black kids, for ghetto kids. So we emphasized in all our speeches that there were hundreds of thousands of young people trapped in the hollows of Appalachia or in other rural areas, and that this was not just a black program; it was a white and black problem. We were afraid also that the public would believe that the Job Corps was designed primarily for youngsters with prison records, with juvenile delinquents or drug pushers. We planned to take kids with poor records, but they were not going to be the only ones in the program.

We also talked about the poor health of kids. We discovered that many were going to need an awful lot of remedial work on their teeth, for example. We talked about the number of young people in high schools who could not read at grade school level. We invited representatives of publishing firms to discuss the teaching tools that would be needed.

I hope that you will talk with some of the alumni of Job Corps programs. There is a young fellow who now works for The Mead Corporation in Atlanta, a very attractive black man who as a teenager was placed in a detention home because of petty thievery. Fortunately, he was placed in the Camp Kilmer Job Corps program. There they discovered he had talent as a boxer. With help from supervisors in the camp, he became a Golden Gloves champion in the state of New Jersey. When he left the Job Corps, he earned his



high school diploma and went on to college. He eventually got a job with Mead, and now he's a fairly senior executive with the Atlanta Packaging Division.

It would be interesting to find out how many similar success stories there are.

G: Now, how were the conservation projects added, do you recall?

A: They were part of our very early discussions. We read a lot of material on the CCC and their useful projects such as cleaning up the country and improving the national parks, et cetera. Not knowing much about the CCC, I was impressed with what the program had accomplished. I felt that taking kids out of Harlem, Watts or the Hough district of Cleveland and into a national park or the wide open spaces of the U.S. would be a very good element of the program. The conservation corps aspect was included from the very beginning of our discussions.

G: There's some suggestion that there was a compromise made with the conservation lobby in Congress, Congressman [John] Saylor and others, to stipulate that 40 per cent of the enrollees be sent to conservation camps. Do you recall that?

A: Yes, I remember. I did not take part in those discussions, but I heard about them. At the time I wondered what the fuss was all about, because the conservation aspect of the program was going to be an important element all along. I didn't see any reason why there had to be bargaining sessions over the proportion of the program that would be devoted to conservation.

G: Do you recall how Phillip Landrum became the sponsor of the

Economic Opportunity Act?

A: I don't.

G: Initially the Job Corps seems to have been exclusively for men. Do you recall that when the--?

A: Yes, and Edith Green played an important role.

G: Do you recall how that decision was made to include women?

A: I can't remember how often we met with Edith Green, but I know that Sargent Shriver and I met with her and with Jeanne Noble. I learned a lot from Jeanne Noble about the problems of black young women, and I became convinced that it was awfully important to have a Job Corps program for women. I give Edith Green credit for having pushed as hard as she did. She told us that if we were to have her support there had to be a program for women.

G: Yes. She was rather adamant about that point, wasn't she?

A: Yes, indeed.

G: There was also some addition that she made, I think, requiring certification by a local school board before a drop-out could be enrolled in the Job Corps, here addressing the fear that the Job Corps would attract students away from school.

A: Yes. Because Edith Green was one of the great supporters of education budgets, she did not want to do anything to harm the educational system. There certainly was justification for her raising that question.

G: Yes. Now, did criticism regarding the cost of the Job Corps per--

A: Yes.

G: --corpsman cause the the planners to expand the size of the

program beyond what could be reasonably operated and planned?

A: Yes, there was criticism of the cost, and detractors said to us: "We could send a boy to Harvard for less money." That statement got in the newspapers and became one of the favorite wisecracks of conservative Congressmen and Senators. That criticism may have led to expanding the size of the Job Corps camps.

G: Yes. Did you yourself do any work on the Hill to advance the program? You mentioned talking to this one Congressman.

A: Yes. I knew Wayne Hays very well, because he was from our area of Ohio. Wayne was on board already, and he was helpful with other people. I called on Bob Taft, Senator Taft from Ohio. He was very polite and listened to me but was noncommittal; I've forgotten how Bob Taft voted. I covered most of the Ohio delegation. I became acquainted with Senator Phil Hart of Michigan, who was a close friend of Sarge Shriver. We had dinner the night that Lyndon Johnson told Sargent Shriver that Sarge would not be his Vice Presidential candidate. You may recall that there was a lot of newspaper speculation about Johnson's second-term Vice Presidential candidate. He had previously called in Bobby Kennedy to tell him that he would not be selected. Sargent Shriver and Phil Hart and I spent much of the evening discussing that topic. Phil Hart was a strong supporter of the Great Society, a friend of ours.

G: There were some other members of the Ohio delegation who were on that House Education and Labor Committee. One was William Ayres. Do you remember him, Republican Congressman?

A: Yes. I probably telephoned him, but I can't remember his response.

G: John Ashbrook also was [on it].

A: Yes.

G: Did you have any--?

A: I don't think I called on John Ashbrook.

G: Okay. I know that you testified in behalf of Job Corps.

A: Yes.

G: Anything significant here about that?

A: Who did we testify before, do you remember?

G: Well, the House committee.

A: Did we testify before a Senate committee?

G: I think that there were some brief Senate hearings. Whether you did or not, I'm not sure.

A: Chuck Percy had been a friend of mine for a long time; I knew him when he was head of Bell and Howell. He was a Republican. I can't remember whether it was at a hearing on the Job Corps, but Chuck Percy was very supportive of me and the program, which kind of surprised people. They thought a Republican would be against the program.

G: Sure.

(Interruption)

Then did you see your role as primarily drawing in educators and people from the business community and selling the program to them?

A: Yes. I played the role of Mr. Outside in promoting the program

with the business community, with the academic community, and with publishers, reporters, and sports figures. When we began to lobby the bill, I worked a bit on the Hill.

G: Do you think that there was a shortage of people on the task force working day-to-day on the actual planning of the Job Corps, the logistics, the nature of the training, developing the curricula, all of these things that had to be done before centers could be opened?

A: Yes, ideally we should have had months and months of work with a larger number of people, but we had no money. We had to borrow people. If I wished to have an academic person help on curriculum, there was no way he could be paid. Whatever was done had to be on a volunteer basis.

G: But you did spend some time working on curriculum and other things?

A: Well, not really working on the curriculum, but exposing people, the John Carleys and the others, to experts in the field. For example, people came down from McGraw-Hill and other publishing firms. They all had a stake in the program because they wanted to sell materials to the Job Corps.

G: Sure. Was there any particular industry that had experience in this sort of manpower training of largely unemployables? Or were you able to draw from any model, say, in the private sector that you could either draw personnel from or ideas from in terms of setting up your own [program]?

A: I persuaded Roger Sonnabend, the head of Sonesta Hotels, to become

a member of our business advisory committee. He volunteered to share his experience and staff members who had trained dozens of cooks, waiters and cleaning people in the hotel-motel business. He made the point that it was a darn shame that he had to recruit all of his waiters and cooks from Europe, because there were not enough people sufficiently trained or motivated in this country to take those jobs in his hotels.

G: How did the business advisory group function, do you recall?

A: In the early stages of planning, the group was called together two or three times by Sargent Shriver. He always attended as well as his top assistants, Glenn Olds, Jack Conway, John Carley, and so on. We had general discussions about what we hoped to do, eliciting suggestions from the members. We hoped that they would be emissaries to the business world.

G: Were they? Did they function as such?

A: Yes. When I reviewed the list the other night, I was surprised at how many of these fellows were conservative businessmen who were willing to spend time with us. One fellow in particular I invited from the Cabot Corporation in Boston. He had been a famous full-back at Yale, Ferd Nadherny. He became so excited about the program he left his Cabot job to become Sargent Shriver's right-hand aide once the program got underway. He's now the president of one of the large executive search firms in Chicago, Heidrick and Struggles.

G: Why didn't you become director of the Job Corps?

A: I faced that issue from the very beginning. I said very

explicitly to Sargent Shriver that I would not and could not take the job, because I had been at Ohio only two years. Because I had spent a lot of time running around the state giving speeches, raising money and trying to turn the university around, many people thought I had political ambitions which I didn't have. Had I taken a job in Washington after two years at Ohio University, anything that anybody had said about me would have been justified, that I had used the university as a stepping stone. I sent Sarge a letter suggesting categories of individuals who ought to be considered for the director position. I'll give you this copy of the letter, which also suggests some specific names. [See attached memorandum.]

G: Did Shriver try to get you to reconsider after the legislation went forward?

A: Yes. He asked me again, but I reminded him that I could not and would not take the job.

Here's another memo I would like to give you. Adam Yarmolinsky became impatient and felt that there wasn't enough specific planning being done for the Job Corps. He probably was getting flak from Shriver, who loved to take his five briefcases home at night and read all the plans and proposals. I don't know why the secretary didn't date these memos, but here's a copy of a memo I wrote to Sarge in answer to Adam's concern about the status of planning for the Job Corps. [See attached memorandum.]

G: Good. Would you like copies of these back?

A: No, I have extra copies.

- G: Okay. Do you know how Otis Singletary was chosen to head the Job Corps?
- A: Otis at the time was president of the University of Kentucky.
- G: Yes.
- A: Otis was not on the original list of people I gave to Sarge. I knew Otis, but I thought it would be impossible to wrest him away from the University of Kentucky. I think that Sarge must have gotten his name from one of the Representatives or Senators from Kentucky. Sarge asked me about Otis, and my response was that I thought Otis was a fine fellow but he probably couldn't be persuaded to take the job. But Shriver talked him into it.
- G: Was there, do you think, a feeling on Shriver's part that the Job Corps director ought to be a college president?
- A: Yes.
- G: Why was this?
- A: Shriver felt all along that the program had to have prestige. I noticed in your notes that there was a question about "Should a Ph.D. be required?" I don't think that was the issue. I think the issue was that Sarge wanted the program to have prestige in the eyes of the public. The Job Corps was not going to be just another outfit where we would get a government veteran from the bureaucracy to run it. He wanted to have the Job Corps identified as an educational opportunity for people. He could have had a school superintendent or a school board member, but I think that Sarge really wanted to give the program a little bit of distinction by saying a university president would run it.



G: Yes.

A: He did talk to me initially, because he thought that I had an outreach to business, I had some acquaintanceships in government, and I was a university president. I think he wanted to have a college president with those characteristics. Otis Singletary did not have the outreach to business that would have been desirable. But I got the impression that Sarge really felt that to give the program a certain amount of class and prestige he had to have quote, "a university president" as director. In those days people were much more in awe of university presidents than they are today.

G: Yes. Well, during the planning there seems to have been not as much focus on all of the Job Corps proposals that were sent in by the private sector, by industry. Is this the case? Did you anticipate all of these applications that you received from the private sector?

A: Well, I was doing a lot to stimulate requests from the private sector. Because I had pretty much completed my work with the task force after two or three months, I was not around when the actual assignments were made. The really heavy planning took place in the summer of 1964, and the contracts were appraised and awarded during that summer. Since I was not there, I can't tell you why more attention wasn't paid to some of those proposals.

G: Do you know why vocational schools were not tapped any more than they were?

A: I really don't.

G: Is there anything else on your participation here in the task force that we haven't discussed?

A: I haven't had an opportunity to do as much preparation for our interview as I would have liked. That's why I'm vague in some of my answers.

G: Sure. Well, you've been extremely helpful.

End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**TO: Sargent Shriver**

**cc: Adam Yarmolinski**

**FROM: Vernon E. Alden**

**SUBJECT: CANDIDATES FOR DIRECTOR OF THE JOB CORPS**

As you suggested I am reviewing the efforts I have made during the past few months to identify the person who can serve as the full time director of the Job Corps Program. My feeling is that the director should be fairly young — in his mid-forties — a person with great energy and enthusiasm. He should be an excellent speaker, a promoter and a person who doesn't get discouraged too easily. The director should have an understanding and hopefully experience in education but should not be too much of an "academic." He should be an innovator, one who has had experience in developing new programs, he should have a feel for the young people with whom he will be working, and should have humanitarian instincts so that the Job Corps Program would be "a mission."

Thinking about candidates I have considered:

1. University Administrators
2. Secondary School Administrators
3. Young Business Executives
4. Administrators of Welfare Agencies
5. People Now in The Government Services

**1. University Administrators**

As you may know, Professor Robert Merry and I have conducted at Harvard for 10 years seminars for college administrators. We have worked closely for periods of 8 to 10 days with 382 college and university presidents, 310 academic deans and 450 student personnel administrators. We have extensive biographical information on this group of 1142 college administrators. I have combed these lists to find a candidate to head the Job Corps. I have also talked privately with such people as Frank Keppel; Jim Perkins, President of Cornell; John Millatt, President of Miami; Barnaby Keeney, President of Brown; Felix Rebb; Glenn Olds and others.

Among the people I have considered and interviewed are Dick Sullivan, President of Reed College; John Summerskill, Vice President of Cornell; Ed Graham, Chancellor of the Finger Lakes Colleges in New York; Gordon Lippitt, head of the National Training Laboratories in Washington; Ron Lippitt of the Social Science Foundation at the University of Michigan. Jack Everitt, former Chancellor of the City College of New York; Fred Bollman, former President of Franklin and Marshall College; Malcolm Knowles, Boston University; John Munro, Dean at Harvard; Howard Brooks, Vice Provost of Stanford; Edmund Cleazer, Executive Director of the Association of American Junior Colleges; David Knapp, former Dean at the University of New Hampshire; Eldon Johnson, President of the Great Lakes Association of Uni-

versities; Felix Robb at George Peabody College; Glenn Olds and Earl Bolton, Vice President of the University of California (recommended to us by Fred Dutton) and, of course, Wade Robinson of Harvard. Finally I have also considered Jack Wilkas, former President of the University of Oklahoma City and now the Mayor of Oklahoma City.

From the list of more than 1150 candidates whom I know personally I would recommend for serious consideration Wade Robinson, Earl Bolton or Dick Sullivan. If you or Adam have the names of any other people in institutions of higher education I am sure that I can have them checked out. As a matter of fact, the odds are that many of them will have attended our University Administrators Institutes.

## 2. Secondary School Administrators

I have met informally with groups of principals and head masters in Ohio and in the greater Boston area. Among the possible candidates for Director of the Job Corps I have considered Mr. Levinson who is leaving his position as Superintendent of Schools in Cleveland because of a quarrel over the race issue; Martin Essex, the Superintendent of Schools in Akron; Frank Brown, the Principal of Melbourne High School in Florida; Harold Howe, the former Principal of Scarsdale High School -- now with Terry Sanford's program in South Carolina; and Dick Meehan, Principal of Newton High School. None of these people in my opinion would be as strong as Robinson, Bolton or Sullivan.

## 3. Business Executives

I have carefully gone through the Harvard Business School alumni directory especially the classes from 1945 on. I have also reviewed the list of 1800 presidents of companies listed in the YPO Directory. I have considered Bob Hensberger, the President of the Boise-Cascade Corporation. Bob is a graduate of Harvard Business School who took the Boise-Cascade Corp. from \$50 million in sales to around \$250 million in the past five or six years. Bob would be a great Director of the Job Corps but I doubt that he would leave Boise-Cascade.

## 4. Administrators of Welfare Agencies

I have interviewed Ray Hilliard from Chicago, Charlie Shapps from New York and Jack Goldberg from Washington. Each of them would be helpful as resource persons but in my view would not be candidates for the Director of the Job Corps.

## 5. Administrators In Government

Adam and I have talked about Fred Dutton as a possible candidate, but I understand from my conversation with you that there are other plans for Fred.

I shall try to make arrangements to have Dick Sullivan and Earl Bolton fly in from the West Coast so that you can meet them sometime in the next week or so. I really do not know whether Bolton or Sullivan would be interested in leaving their present positions. I do think you could persuade Wade Robinson to stay on.

**TO: Sargent Shriver**

**cc: Adam Yarmolinski**

**FROM: Vernon R. Alden**

**SUBJECT: JOB CORPS PLANNING**

From conversations with Adam yesterday afternoon I gather that there is concern about the status of planning for the Job Corps. May I make three observations.

1. As you know so well, a Job Corps program of the contemplated size and shape has never been tried before. The young men and women who are in our target population have not been reached by our traditional educational system. No one really knows at this point how best to change the attitudes of these youngsters and make them constructive participants in our society. If we had all of the answers and a "cut and dried" program at this time I would be deeply concerned if I were you. We must stay flexible and continue to be experimental and creative even while the Job Corps Program is underway. We must adapt and adjust and tailor the program as we go along.
2. Although no money has been available for planning we have learned quite a bit about our target populations from experienced people who have been willing to go to Washington at their own expense to talk with us. Clearly we can learn much more about this population when we have some money and can launch a massive survey.
3. I believe that we are further along in our planning than you may realize. By this time I hope you will have seen the "tentative outline for a Job Corps Training Center" which we plan to send to several university presidents this coming week with your approval. A week and a half from now Wade Robinson will turn over to you a comprehensive report on educational plans for the Job Corps.

Our objective has been to develop a program which will command the respect of educators, of thoughtful businessmen and other interested people. We have made every effort to avoid giving the impression that we are developing a quickly contrived politically-oriented program.

Along with our planning there have been concerted efforts to reach the educational and business worlds through meetings and publications. I do appreciate your willingness to meet with the business leaders, the leading sports figures and the textbook publishers. I know that these influential people have been impressed with the thoughtful way you have gone about planning and preparing for the launching of the program.

Thanks to the magnificent volunteer efforts of Daniel J. Edelman and his associates we have had unbelievably good press and magazine coverage on

- 2 -

our plans for the Job Corps. Last week I sent you photostatic copies of the major articles which have appeared in Business Week, Wall Street Journal, New York Times (Fred Kochinger's very helpful piece in the Sunday Education Section), and the syndicated columns by John Chamberlain, Myron Fainsilber, and an unidentified AP writer. My mail at the University and in Washington assures me that these newspaper and magazine articles have reached influential people all over the United States and have created the impression that we are planning the Job Corps Program well.

VRA/jo

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION  
LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON LIBRARY

Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interview of Vernon R. Alden

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, Vernon R. Alden, of Boston, Massachusetts, do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title and interest in the tape recording and transcript of the personal interview conducted on October 7, 1981 at Boston, Massachusetts, and prepared for deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

(1) The transcript shall be available for use by researchers as soon as it has been deposited in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

(2) The tape recording shall be available to those researchers who have access to the transcript.


(3) I hereby assign to the United States Government all copyright I may have in the interview transcript and tape.

(4) Copies of the transcript and the tape recording may be provided by the Library to researchers upon request.

(5) Copies of the transcript and tape recording may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Donor

11/25/85  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Acting Archivist of the United States  
December 18, 1985  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date