

INTERVIEW II

DATE: April 8, 1981
INTERVIEWEE: PAUL BOLTON [with occasional comments by Dolly Bolton]
INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE
PLACE: Mr. Bolton's home, Austin, Texas

Tape 1 of 1

G: Mr. Bolton, let's start today with some of the events in Lyndon Johnson's life in the 1940s. Do you remember the Buck Taylor campaign in 1944?

B: Well, such as it was. Lyndon always took the position that if he had an opponent, why, he was going to campaign, and he campaigned just as hard as if he had had a real opponent. But Buck, of course, was not a real opponent. As I said in my previous statement, the best you could say of Buck was that he was nobody. He was just a sort of a political hanger-on around Austin. If he had any occupation I don't know what it was. Everybody knew Buck, everybody in Austin. I don't suppose that he got outside of Austin in his campaign. But it was a campaign of vilification against Mrs. Roosevelt and Johnson's friendship with the Roosevelts. So Johnson was pictured as a nigger lover, which was fatal in those days. We had no trouble with him, but Mr. Johnson did make a campaign just as he always did, went out and talked to the people.

G: Did Buck Taylor have some backing that you know of?

B: Well, of course we don't know who it was, but he was bound to have had some backing, because he had no money of his own. That was in the Democratic primary, you understand. These flyers, handbills, cropped

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up all over the district. They cost money to get such things as those printed. I think I described it before. It was a picture of Mrs. Roosevelt shaking hands with some Negro, I don't even recall now who it was, and then some reference to the friendship between Mrs. Roosevelt and Johnson. I think that was about the only campaign document. There may have been some other little stuff, but that's the only one I recall.

G: The files seem to indicate that in 1944 and then again in 1946 that Johnson's adversaries tried to get someone more prominent to run against him and failed. Were you aware of that?

B: Well, we thought that they must have failed, to get a nobody like Buck Taylor to run. They had a considerable opponent named Hardy Hollers in 1946. Wasn't it 1946?

G: Yes.

B: He was, of course, a somewhat prominent lawyer. He had served on one of the war crimes--

G: Nuremberg, I guess.

B: Nuremberg? I'm not sure where it was, but on one of the war crime cases, and was a local attorney of considerable repute. In fact, he still is at this time.

G: Was there anyone in 1944 of prominence who was dissuaded from running who originally considered running against LBJ and backed out that you remember?

B: Not to my knowledge. Of course, I joined up with the Johnsons in 1944 and hadn't paid too much attention to the ins and outs of politics up

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to that time. I'm not prepared to say much about the events leading to the Buck Taylor candidacy.

G: Let me ask you about LBJ's relative in Johnson City, Tom Martin.

B: Tom Martin. Well, Tom was a member of the [Texas] House of Representatives for a time, I believe. I don't know whether they got along or not. What leads to that question? Why?

G: Well, he seems to have been interested in politics.

B: Well, he may have been interested in politics but as far as my contacts are concerned, he had no--he may have had, but to my knowledge he didn't have.

G: He wasn't a factor in any of these campaigns?

B: No, not that I know of. I knew him in the House of Representatives, just like I knew Judge [A. W.] Moursund in the House of Representatives, when Judge Moursund was a stripling, very, very young man.

G: The Homer Rainey controversy I guess boiled over in 1944. Do you recall Lyndon Johnson's position in that?

B: I don't know what Johnson's personal position was, but the position of KTBC's news department was I'm afraid a little biased in favor of Rainey, not the political campaign, but all the other stuff leading up to the political campaign.

G: Why do you say it was in Rainey's favor? Were there any particular--?

B: Because I considered he had gotten a raw deal. While I didn't say so in so many words in my news reports, why, I don't think anyone had any doubts as to where I stood.

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G: Generally on these sorts of policies would the Johnsons influence you as to what stand you took?

B: No, excepting I knew their position on most things. I assume that if the news department had not pleased them they would have spoken out, but they never did.

G: They never did?

B: No, sir.

G: Later on, of course, I guess in 1946 Homer Rainey ran for governor against [Beauford] Jester.

B: Yes, that's right. That was the political campaign I spoke of that-- there's one episode in that campaign. You know, I told you before that my memory is in bits and pieces, little pictures. The man who had been attorney general was running against Rainey for the office, I cannot recall his name. But he had been attorney general, and he made a speech over in East Texas and he had a copy of the book USA. Have you read USA?

G: No. Was this Grover Sellers?

B: Grover Sellers, that was his name. He put on a pair of gloves, I don't know whether they are cotton gloves or rubber gloves, because he wouldn't touch that book with his bare hands.

G: Oh, John Dos Passos' book.

B: Yes, John Dos Passos' book. I've got it right over there someplace. I did have it. I don't know, maybe I've given it away, but I had it. Haven't read that one in several years. Sellers should read some of the literature today, shouldn't he?

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G: Do you recall LBJ's position in that race?

B: I don't think he took a position.

G: Did he favor one over the other?

B: I think that he probably favored Rainey, but I don't think he took a position in it. A politician in office cannot afford to get mixed up in someone else's race, at least that has always been my concept of a politician. Just the other night I heard the senator from Austin refusing to take a stand for anybody in the city council race here in Austin, and he stated the same fundamental [principle], that you are too busy running your own affairs, not to get mixed up in anybody else's. Not openly at least. Now whether they did it privately, I don't know.

G: LBJ went to Europe in 1945 on an inspection trip. Do you recall that? [He] went to Germany and France.

B: No, I had nothing [to do with that].

G: Right at the end of the war?

B: No, I don't, I don't recall that at all. In fact, it sounds brand-new to me.

G: He organized a post-war planning conference toward the end of the war, also, in Austin. Do you remember that conference? It had a bunch of business leaders and people like that.

B: No. No, I don't. Sorry.

G: In 1945 the files seem to indicate that he was considering running for governor the following year.

B: Who indicated that?

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- G: The files. There is correspondence indicating that he was entertaining the notion of running for governor in 1946.
- B: That's news to me, too. I don't believe that he ever intended to run for governor of Texas.
- G: Did he seem contented as a congressman?
- B: Oh, he didn't plan on staying in Congress. He was going to be a senator. I think that was his ambition from the day he became a congressman.
- G: Did he ever express this?
- B: That was just my conclusions. I don't know that he ever expressed it in so many words. Certainly nobody was surprised when he announced for the Senate.
- G: Let me ask you about LBJ in the district when he was congressman from the Tenth District. What did he do when he came home to the Tenth District?
- B: Well, he usually made the rounds and talked to his people, his supporters in all the larger towns of the district, like Mayor [Will] Rogers down at Bastrop and the County Judge at--what's the new oil town downstate [Giddings?]? The Mayor of Brenham [Reese Lockett] was one of his supporters. And he usually contacted all of his supporters and friends over the district when he was [home].
- G: Did you ever travel with him?
- B: I have during campaigns.
- G: Not during these?

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B: Not during the interims, no. I always took a leave of absence from my job as news editor to travel with him in the campaigns, so that it would not be conflict of interest.

G: Sure. There is some indication that he would go out to Buchanan Dam for relaxation. That he would get a number of his friends around him and they'd go out there and spend the weekend or something like that. Do you recall any of those occasions?

B: Only the one that I have talked about when he had the staff of KTBC out there and told us all that if we got down and worked real hard that we'd all be playing golf in a few years. None of us ever did. That was the only one I know of personally. Now there may have been others; I have no doubt there were.

G: Now in 1946 I guess John Henry Faulk came to KTBC. Is that right? Was that when he first [arrived]?

B: Well, there was some talk of hiring John Henry Faulk. I don't think it ever did work out. John Henry had all those troubles up in Washington. Now I really am not qualified to discuss all of that. If you want any facts concerning that, I suggest you talk to Cactus Pryor because he and John Henry were close personal friends. I do not know all of the facts about it. You must understand that being news editor at KTBC was a full-time job. I wasn't trying to keep up with all the stuff that Johnson was doing.

G: I understand.

B: I understand. You're trying to get anything I know, and I appreciate your questioning me.

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- G: These are just to jog your memory, and I realize that some of them are going to be wide of the mark. What about the strike [at KTBC] in 1946 by the IBEW workers, the communications [workers]?
- B: I can't recall the details of that, but it seems to me that we were in Washington at that time. That I had gone to Washington with Mr. Johnson--I can't recall now what for. But that there was a lot of long-distance telephoning between Austin and Washington about that strike. Boy! I know it didn't last very long.
- G: They were picketing the station, I guess, and the transmitter, too.
- B: Engineers. They were lead by some--well, he didn't amount to much. Anyway, I don't know enough about it to talk about it.
- G: I have a note here that Mayor [Tom] Miller helped to settle the strike.
- B: Is that right?
- G: Yes. Do you recall anything about that?
- B: No, I do not.
- G: And that perhaps labor was retaliating for LBJ's vote on labor and legislation.
- B: Well, that's possible, but the fact of the business is--I'll indulge in a little hearsay that I don't know personally. The fact of the business is that while Johnson was anti-labor in his public comments and his speeches, he actually was supported by national organized labor. I really think that he probably received contributions from their political action committee. Of course, as I said at the beginning, that's hearsay and speculation on my part. But I think it's true.
- G: Is there anyone I should talk to about that?

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B: No. I don't know of anyone that knows anything about it, but that recalls to me--what the hell convention was it?--the convention in Dallas [1956 state convention]. There's too many of these conventions, and they're all running together. But in this particular one I had tried to organize my precinct. Will Edward Odom was my candidate for chairman of the precinct. This precinct, at that time--I don't know what its boundaries are now, but at that time it included the area down to the east and south along Sixth Street and down in there. We were just soundly whipped at the precinct convention by the labor forces. Will Edward didn't get hardly any votes. So we went on to Dallas. That is the convention when Lyndon tried to make Lloyd Bentsen's wife [Beryl A. Bentsen] national committeewoman. I was an official delegate. My wife was with me. We were assigned, of course, to a section of the seating arrangement. Much to my disgust, because I thought we had settled all of our arguments locally, when the vote came on Mrs. Bentsen's nomination, Jerry Holleman, who was then the head of the AFL-CIO in Texas, was walking up and down the aisle giving the thumbs down signal, and the Travis County delegation voted against Bentsen at that time. Now that's one of the things that [I remember], but I think that on the national level that organized labor was for Johnson.

G: Didn't organized labor support Johnson in that convention fight when he challenged Shivers?

B: I believe that was the fight and they were supposed to. That's why I said I thought everything had been settled on the local scale. That

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was when Mrs. [Frankie] Randolph of Houston, I believe, was elected national committeewoman.

G: They had two, I guess. Byron Skelton was the [national committee] man.

B: Byron Skelton was Lyndon's man.

G: I thought he was the liberals' man and then LBJ would pick the other.

B: Well, I don't recall, there were so many of them, but I know that Byron Skelton was Johnson's man. I know it because in preparation for the 1956 national convention when we were fighting Shivers, we had a regular campaign set up and I was writing speeches for Byron Skelton to deliver over radio every day. After that fight was over Skelton was appointed to some sort of federal job which I suppose he still holds if he's still alive.

G: I want to go into that whole 1956 business in some detail--

B: Oh, dear!

G: --when we get to it. Let me ask you some more about 1946 if I may. Who supported Hardy Hollers?

B: You mean persons?

G: Yes.

B: I don't know. I mean, I don't know their names.

G: Is Dan Moody one, do you think?

B: Well, I would think he would because he was always opposed to Lyndon.

G: Why was that?

B: Damned if I know. Did I tell you the story about Mrs. Moody coming down here to ask me to--I can't remember what year it was, but it was the year Dan announced for the Senate. I don't know. He must have

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been an ignorant s.o.b., because he had no one helping him prepare a statement for the newspapers. So Mildred and I had been friends and she came down here to this house, and we sat right out here in this back yard and talked. I told her, "Now Dan doesn't like me, but if you want me to I'll write you out a statement that he could use for his formal announcement." And I did write him out a statement and delivered it to her. She told me later that Dan would not have anything to do with anything that Paul Bolton had done, although the statement was perfectly innocuous. It was just a sort of a formal statement that newspapers could use, in newspaper style. But she tried to get us together. He didn't like me. He didn't like me because I was Lyndon Johnson's--what was I?--hired help.

G: I wonder why he didn't like LBJ.

B: I have no idea what the background of their--it's the same sort of situation. I went to a party one time--these bits and pieces of memory--at Jim Nash's house. Among the guests were Allan Shivers and John Connally. They had been engaged in a great fight with Ralph Yarborough. Ralph Yarborough had been a friend of mine since the days when he was assistant attorney general. They were standing there talking together, and I walked up to them and said, "Why is it that you all don't like Ralph Yarborough?" They just sort of laughed. Neither of them had made any statements, but both of them detested Yarborough. Why, I don't know. I don't know that Yarborough ever did anything to them, excepting be ultra-liberal. So, some people just don't like some people.

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G: What sort of a campaign did Hardy Hollers run?

B: I don't recall much about it. I think he ran a pretty good campaign though. I think he made a lot of speeches. I really don't remember much about his campaign. But the popularest thing then--that was in 1946, wasn't it?

G: Yes.

B: The popularest thing then was to say that Johnson had a financial interest in everything, all construction work, because materials were so hard to get, and you had to work through him to get them. I think one of the big cases was that little old Gordon Fulcher got out of the newspaper business and got into contracting right at the wrong time. He subsequently lost his shirt at it. But his first big job was to build an apartment house just off 19th--it's not called 19th Street now--about three blocks down from Congress on 19th, right in there. Of course, the word all over town was that Johnson owned that apartment house with Gordon Fulcher. I interviewed Gordon for this oral history series and asked him about it specifically, and you'll find his answer on your tapes. But that was just one example. I don't remember any other specific examples. But anybody who was building anything, why, Johnson had an interest in it, according to the popular reports. I'm sure that that had a lot to do with Hardy's campaign.

G: It seems like one issue was that triplex on Dillman Street, 1901 Dillman Street.

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B: I don't know whether it was an issue or not. That was reportedly built by a San Antonio millionaire.

G: Warren Bellows.

B: I don't know him personally. I mean, I've never met the man. But he's supposed to have built that for his private and personal use. How Lyndon got hold of it, why, that's between him and Bellows. I don't know. Was it a triplex?

G: I think it was.

B: I know the Johnsons lived upstairs and there was only one apartment upstairs. There may have been two downstairs, I was never downstairs.

G: Evidently Johnson developed a strategy of having all of his financial records available at the platform on his opening night speech at Wooldridge Park. Do you remember that?

B: No. I wrote the speech, but I don't remember what was in it.

G: You don't recall the evolution of this strategy or who thought of it?

B: Oh, no. No. I'm sure that Johnson thought it was his idea. I know we labored long over that damn speech.

G: Did you feel that it was successful in blunting the criticism?

B: Well, if I don't remember what was in it, I can't say that I [do].

G: One problem during that campaign seems to have been that Johnson had to go back to Washington, had to go back to vote or participate in some important proceedings. Did this impair the campaign?

B: No, I don't think so. No. I think it helped the campaign. It showed that he was attending to his business.

G: Anything else on that 1946 campaign that you--

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B: --that I recall?

G: Yes.

B: Well, I remember sitting in Will Rogers' kitchen drinking whiskey, but that doesn't have anything to do with the campaign. I was sitting on the floor. I remember that though, there weren't enough chairs to go around. No, I don't remember anything of any consequence.

G: Let me just ask you to elaborate on some personalities and their association with Lyndon Johnson. Alvin Wirtz, to start with.

B: Well, Alvin was his great and good friend, and sort of his mentor. I'm sure that on many an issue that he accepted Mr. Wirtz' advice. I don't know what else I can say excepting that he had helped Lyndon get through school by giving him jobs, and they had been close friends ever since then. One thing was, Alvin was a great friend of the LCRA, believed in it, and there was a state senatorial investigation of the LCRA way back there. Have you got into that at all? The Texas Senate investigated them.

G: Right.

B: Alvin was I guess the attorney for the LCRA in that investigation. That was before I was associated with Lyndon. I sat through many a session of hearings and was bored stiff by all the facts that were brought out. You know how an investigation goes. That's when I first became an admirer of Wirtz myself because of his ability as an attorney. He was so sincere, he believed in it so utterly that it shone through his conduct as an attorney. I think that that probably is where Lyndon got most of his inspiration for building

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this series of dams on the Colorado River which have meant so much to--well, not only to this district but to the entire state of Texas, I think. I don't know that I can say anything more about their personal relationship. I do know that--you see, Jim Cain that we have spoken of, the doctor at Mayo's, married Alvin Wirtz' daughter [Ida May]. That's how they became so close, Dr. Cain and Mr. Johnson. Now Dolly probably could think of lots of things to tell you about them.

G: Was Senator Wirtz sort of like a father to Lyndon Johnson?

B: Well, I think you could say that.

G: Was LBJ deferential toward him? Did he treat him like an elder or more like a colleague?

B: I don't recall seeing them together. So you ever recall seeing them together, [Dolly]?

DB: No, but he definitely needed a father figure, since his father had died.

B: Yes, that's true.

DB: And he admired Senator Wirtz so tremendously that I think he did bow to him. That time you all were in Dallas writing those speeches, you said he deferred to his wishes. He and Ida May were like brother and sister. She just gets going and talks and talks.

B: The Cains are going to be down here in April, you ought to interview them.

G: When are they coming?

DB: We're going to be with them next week.

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- G: The week of the thirteenth. Good, I'd love to.
What were Alvin Wirtz' politics?
- DB: He was a Roosevelt Democrat, has a dam named for him.
- B: That's true. His interest in the water development was the only politics that I know that he was really interested in.
- G: He was under secretary of the interior for a while.
- B: Yes, he was under secretary of the interior under Roosevelt. I don't know what the years were.
- G: 1940-41, I think. I gather in addition to raparian rights that he also knew a good deal about oil and gas law.
- B: That is probably true. He probably had some big oil companies as his clients.
- G: But you wouldn't say whether he was liberal or conservative or a civil libertarian on the one hand?
- B: I don't think you could classify him under those terms of liberal and conservative. I think he was a middle-of-the-roader, but as Dolly pointed out, the fact that he was appointed by Roosevelt would indicate that he was a Roosevelt man.
- G: I was just wondering from your personal association with him, say when you were writing those speeches.
- B: I think as far as I'm concerned he was a middle-of-the-roader and was willing to do whatever was necessary to get his protege elected to the Senate. As far as his personal political views are concerned, they didn't enter into it.
- G: Was Charles Marsh also one of Johnson's mentors?

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B: Charles Marsh was before my time. I didn't know Charles Marsh at all, never met him.

G: I gather that was one of their papers, the Marsh-Fentress [papers].

B: Yes.

G: What about Edgar Perry?

B: Well, Edgar Perry, didn't he run--no, no, Edgar Perry, Jr. was the candidate for city council. I really don't know. I think they were friends. Now I base that on some conclusions. The architect who built the Perry-Brooks Building, Max Brooks, was Edgar Perry's boy. He and his then-wife were strong Johnson supporters. So I assume that Perry was a Johnson supporter, too, on that basis. And Perry bought some advertising at KTBC for his subdivision, which was out here north and west of us, which was quite a subdivision at the time.

G: Everett Looney?

B: What about Everett Looney?

G: Was he also an influence on [LBJ]?

B: Oh, Everett Looney was our great and dear friend. Everett was the senior partner in that law firm, Looney, Clark, Moorhead. I don't know when their friendship started. But it had to be, of course, after [Jimmie] Allred because they were Allred people first, all of them. I do know that--of course, Everett handled all of the details of the eighty-seven vote investigation. He and Johnson were great domino players. They would have endless games of dominos at the LBJ Ranch. Everett had a conviction that a lawyer could not afford to be sick, never let his clients know that he was sick. So when

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he had his stroke, why, he tried at first to keep it a secret. But he not only had a stroke, it affected his mind. Anyway, while he was still in possession of all of his faculties, his son, Bob Looney-- do you know Bob, have you ever met him?

G: No.

B: He was sort of erratic. At somebody's request, the Johnsons' request, I gave him a job as a reporter for our news department. When the circus came to town, I sent him out to do a feature story on the circus unloading, and he came back with a long story about the elephants at the circus. It was wild. He didn't last very long as a reporter. But he's still practicing law around here, been married several times.

G: Became a lawyer, huh?

B: He became a lawyer.

G: Was Everett Looney more conservative than Wirtz?

B: No, I don't think so. I think Everett was an Allred man and Allred certainly was not any conservative. But I think he represented his clients. You know, he was president of the state bar at one time.

G: It seems like that firm represented some of the power companies, whereas Wirtz was a big advocate of public power.

B: I'm sure that that's true.

G: This didn't indicate any philosophical difference?

B: No, it didn't. Again now, you get one of my little pictures. Everett and Charlie Green--you remember Charlie Green? Was he before your time?

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G: Yes, but I know who he was.

B: Well, he was editor of the [Austin] American-Statesman. Charlie was the originator of the Headliners Club. To get the corporation papers on it they had to have three signatures. So he and Everett got together and called me up and put me on as the third member of the corporation. I'm the only survivor. That plaque hanging in there in my bathroom, they honored me one year as their headliner of the year. I told them all you had to do was just live long enough, that you'd be most anything.

I don't know any more about any philosophical leanings, although I'm sure it would be a liberal, as we defined liberalism in those days.

[Edward] Clark was a conservative, still is. You know Clark?

G: I've met him.

B: Well, you ought to get acquainted with him. He's a great man.

G: Let me ask you about some of the journalists during this period.
Bill Kittrell?

B: Was Bill Kittrell a journalist? I've often wondered what he was. When I came here in 1930 there were lots of people who appeared to be very important people. Among them was Bill Kittrell and Edmunds Travis. Kittrell didn't live here; he lived in Dallas or Fort Worth, which was it? But he was a lean, brown-faced, grinning sort of a guy who knew all the politicians. I think he was at one time probably secretary of the Democratic Executive Committee. That's a distant memory. But I never did know what he did for a living.

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G: Perhaps he was not. For some reason I always associate him with newsmen.

B: You do, you associate him with newsmen. He would come strolling into the pressroom--you know, we had two pressrooms then. One was called the INS pressroom, and the other one was the general pressroom. He would come strolling into the pressroom with this big grin on his face, joke with all of us, talk a while about politics, whatever was happening at the time, legislature and whatnot, and then stroll out again. When I went to San Francisco to cover the United Nations organization, [I] walked into the hotel where they were registering the correspondents. The first person I saw was Bill Kittrell behind a desk taking registrations from reporters. Now how he got that job I have no idea. But he had it. It certainly surprised me to see him sitting there.

G: You know, more people have told more stories about him showing up at unlikely, remote places.

B: That was the most unlikely place I could imagine him to be. I guess that Tom Connally got it for him. I can't think of anybody else that would have. I assume that he was a friend of Tom Connally.

G: Was he a friend of Lyndon Johnson's?

B: I don't know. I really don't know.

The other man you mentioned, Harry Benge Crozier, was a correspondent for the Dallas Morning News; then became executive secretary of the American Petroleum Institute where he served many years. I don't know when or why he returned to Texas but he was an intimate

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of the then-Governor Coke Stevenson and was appointed by Stevenson as chairman of the Texas Employment Commission. You ask if he was active in the 1948 campaign. I assume he was, but did not keep up with who was and who wasn't active for the opposition in that campaign. Later he turned up as a reporter for the Long News Service in the Capitol. Some time during this period he developed a throat cancer and died. That would have been in the early sixties, I believe. He is buried in the state cemetery.

G: He worked in Coke Stevenson's campaign, didn't he?

B: He may have, I don't know.

G: Are there any other reporters--I know you talked about Stuart Long-- that are significant during this period? How about Walter Hornaday?

B: No, he had no significance that I know of. Lyndon was somewhat, I think, frightened is not quite the word, but skittish about the Austin press. He would urge me to talk to the boys up at the Capitol and in effect develop a better image for him, for Lyndon, among the Capitol correspondents. I knew that such a thing was impossible and I never even tried to do it. But I'd put him off with something. I did talk to all of them, but not about Johnson. I knew them all.

G: How did they feel about him?

B: I think that they didn't like him too well.

G: Why was that?

B: I don't know. I don't know just why it was. Maybe they considered him too pro-Rooseveltian. Of course, Dawson Duncan and the Dallas News was a very conservative paper. The AP and the UP would not

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have had any preferences one way or the other. It may have been that Lyndon was somewhat arrogant at some time with some of them. He had a tendency to be that [way], you know.

Let's see, who else was up there at that time? Bo Byers was a youngster who's now a veteran up there with the Houston Chronicle. I don't think he showed any--Bo is a very liberal boy--I don't think he showed any signs [?]. This doesn't particularly refer to Lyndon, but a boy named Bill Carter succeeded me as the INS man in their bureau there. George Christian succeeded Bill Carter. That's just a sidelight.

G: Buck Hood was on the scene a lot during this period I guess.

B: Well, yes, Buck Hood, as I commented elsewhere, he moonlighted. But he was a great Bill McCraw man. Bill McCraw, as you may recall, was attorney general, a real genuine war hero. I think he was a PT boat commander. He wanted to be governor in the worst way. Buck was his press agent, even though he was also the editor of the Austin Statesman. They permitted it. At one time he almost enlisted me to assist him, but I finally backed down and turned my friendship to another man who wanted to be governor, Ernest Thompson. Of course, Thompson and McCraw and several other people ran for governor against Pappy O'Daniel and got the hell beat out of them, all of them. That ended Bill McCraw's career. Thompson, of course, was the railroad commissioner and kept on being railroad commissioner. He was a friend of Johnson's. I don't know of any intimacies between them, but I know he was a friend of Johnson's. At that time I didn't care one way or the other

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who was Johnson's friend and who wasn't. Thompson knew more about oil than I think anyone in the United States. He guided the Texas oil industry through the first days of proration, euphemistically called conservation, when the price of oil dropped to ten cents a barrel. Unbelievable to you younger folk who think of oil in terms of the 30-plus dollars a barrel.

G: He was a frequent witness, I guess, in the committee hearings on oil legislation.

B: Well, I'm sure [he was].

Oh, I know a man that you haven't even mentioned, a newsman of some prominence. But I don't know that he ever had anything particularly to do with Johnson. That's Paul Wakefield. Have you got anything on Paul Wakefield? Do you know about him? He was Ross Shaw Sterling's right-hand man and a close personal friend of Jesse Jones, I guess, he always said he was. And [he is] remembered best by me for having constructed the French chateau in South Austin on that high cliff overlooking what is now Riverside Drive. Good friends of ours, the Morris Schwartzes, had a house right next door to Paul's. After he moved on they made it into an apartment house or rooming house for students, and it got to be a place where wild parties [were held] over there, according to what the Schwartzes told us. But Paul was everybody's politician. He was supposed to be a newspaperman, but if he ever wrote a line in his life I never did see it. He was a close friend of Vann Kennedy and very active in any political campaign that came along. How he made his living is something else

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I'm not too sure of, after Sterling left. But he may have been on a pension. He was supposed to have been a decorated newsman in the war. But his relations to Johnson, if he had any, I don't know what they were.

G: Buck Hood seems to have epitomized this style of journalists who would cross over into the political arena with great frequency and without severing his newspaper ties. Was this common at the time?

B: It was with the American-Statesman, yes, it sure was. For instance, when we were publishing the Observer, at different times Buck worked for us, Gordon Fulcher would work for us. We didn't pay very much either, five or ten dollars a week. Homer Olsen would work for us. We published a daily oil journal up there, a mimeographed oil company report that we had to have extra help for, for the mechanical work of getting it out. We used all of those boys from time to time. Those were in depression days when you earned what you could. As an example, I went to work for Kennedy for five dollars a week. I had a daytime job as press agent for the Department of Agriculture at a hundred and fifty dollars a month, and I went to work for Kennedy for five dollars a week. That would make me a hundred and seventy dollars a month. So, you worked where you could and for what you could in those days.

G: What about Johnson's relationship with some of the publishers? I've asked you about Marsh. Let me ask you about Amon Carter.

B: I don't know anything about it.

G: Really? Or Jesse Jones?

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B: I don't know. Was Jesse Jones very active as far as publishing was concerned?

G: Well, I assumed he owned the paper.

B: He owned the paper, but that's different. I do know that there was a great to-do--this again was before my days with Johnson--when the Browns, Brown & Root, got an award for turning out those boats-- what kind of boats?

G: Ships. I think they were building destroyers, weren't they?

B: No, they were small ships of some kind. But Sam Rayburn came down and Johnson came down and I think Jesse Jones was there. I know all the newspapers in Houston gave it a big spread. A carload of us went down from Austin, reporters. I assumed his relations with Jones were at least amiable.

G: Did Jones support Stevenson in 1948?

B: I don't know.

G: You were a friend of Houston Harte's, so you would be in a position to elaborate on his association with Johnson.

B: D. B. Hardeman told me that he and Alex Louis, who had been correspondents for Houston Harte's papers, that when Johnson announced for the Senate, that they went out to San Angelo, where Harte lived, and made a big pitch for the Harte-Hanks papers to support Johnson. Now I interviewed Harte in a series of oral interviews I did and I'm sure that I recalled that story to him, and I can't recall whether he verified it or not. But it seems fairly sound.

G: Wouldn't it be his natural inclination to support Johnson?

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B: Yes.

G: Anything else on Houston Harte and Lyndon Johnson?

B: Well, I know that Houston Harte felt that Johnson had helped him on several occasions when they had minor crises about closing up Goodfellow Field and the naval air station at Corpus Christi. They were very close. I know that Johnson helped--well, I'm sure that he did it himself--recommended me to Houston Harte as their Austin correspondent at the time when I went to work for KTBC. So I know they were close, and they continued close through to the end.

G: So you did both? You did KTBC and Harte-Hanks, is that right?

B: Yes, I did a weekly--oh, two or three times a week column for the Harte-Hanks newspapers.

G: Let me ask you about Lyndon Johnson and his attitude about civil rights during this period.

B: He was always a great believer in civil rights. I don't know that I could recall any specific episodes, but I do know that he--well, after you say that you know the man was for civil rights, what more can you say? I know that he got all those measures through the Congress and some of them were prior to Kennedy, too.

G: One interviewee described Johnson as being like a creature from another planet in that he was without personal prejudice.

B: Kennedy did?

G: No, somebody else described Johnson as being without racial prejudice. Is this correct?

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B: As far as I know it is. I know that at the KTBC Christmas parties as long as I can remember, in addition to [KTBC staff]--every Christmas we would have a big party and usually Bird and Lyndon would both come--the hired help at the LBJ Ranch were among the guests at all these parties each year. And that would include the cook and oh, three or four Negro women and the man--what's his name, I know him well. We went to New York one time on a sales trip and he went with us.

G: James Davis?

B: James. James Davis. As far as I know Johnson had no personal prejudices. Now, he swore at all of his employees, white or black. You understand that. He was a hard taskmaster. At that time--this is another one of those speculative stories that I just have to tell you what my speculations were rather than what I really know--that at that time there was a talented Negro singer, a man, a well-educated man I'm sure, who lost his job out at Huston-Tillotson [College]. He had I think applied for a job, a butler-type of job out at the LBJ Ranch. My hearsay information is that they wouldn't give it to him because he was too damn well educated and Johnson couldn't swear at him like he would at the rest of them. He was sort of intimidated by the man's superior education and background. Now that is hearsay with me. Of course, you know, his contacts with Mexicans at that school down in the Valley, wherever it was, when he taught--

G: Welhausen at Cotulla.

B: Yes. [That experience] certainly erased any feelings he may have had about Mexicans. I never did have any about Mexicans either.

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I had a few biases about Negroes, still have. But as far as I know Johnson had no biases about Negroes or Mexicans either. I don't think he did.

G: You talked about Johnson and his treatment of people that worked for him. I just wonder how he was able to retain the loyalty of these people as he apparently did.

B: Well, he did it by coming to them when they were in trouble and offering to help them. It's like he came to me. He was a patriarch, he wanted to be a patriarch. He couldn't stand it when somebody that he liked at the station wanted to go to some other job. He would do everything he could to keep them there.

G: Can you think of an example here?

B: I was trying to think of an example. But I know that it's true. Well, I just don't think of any right now, but it was something that we noted at the time.

G: Well, let me ask you how he helped you, how he came to your [aid] when you had a personal problem.

B: Well, that's when my daughter [Beverly] was operated [on] here in Austin for what turned out to be thyroid cancer. We didn't know whether the operation was successful or not. We didn't think too much of the surgeons who did it. But Lyndon came out to see me-- that was right after the 1948 campaign--sat right there where you're sitting and said to me, "Now, if this was my daughter I would immediately send her to Mayo's [Clinic], get her up there and let them look at her, and see what she needs and do whatever is necessary to be

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sure she's through this ordeal. Here's a thousand dollars as a bonus for your work in the campaign." That was a lot of money in those days. It's not much today but that was a lot of money. I told him I would take his advice. Then he called Jim Cain and made an appointment with him. Within forty-eight hours, Beverly and I were in Rochester. They decided she had to have another operation and went in there and determined that the cancer had not progressed into the other glands in that area and treated her with radioactive iodine. She was one of about, oh, four or five up to that time that had been treated in that fashion. She was cured up entirely--1948, 1958, 1968, 1978--more than thirty years ago. She is, as far as we know, well, and God knows what would have happened if we hadn't gone. Because the doctors up there told us that it had not been a very good surgical job here. So naturally I'm loyal to him.

When my mother was terminally ill out here in Seton Hospital, he sent her a great big color portrait of the whole family with his personal greetings from all of them on it. Well, of course that pleased the old lady. She was in her eighties then.

The profit-sharing plan that he and Don Thomas worked out together, I think I made the point in my previous statements that it was such a liberal plan that no other similar plan has been approved since by the IRS. They approved it only after Don had spent hours arguing with them about it. I think the Capital National Bank's was the next up and it was modeled on ours, and they wouldn't approve it. That's a little hearsay. I do know that there has been

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no other plan as liberal as that one approved by the IRS since that time. The fact that he sold some of his key employees stock in the company, so that they could have a little bit more than their salaries to live on, all those things--that's when I talk about him cussing his employees, why, it was nothing personal. What I mean is, he's just a hard-driving sort of a guy and he expected everybody else to work as hard as he did.

G: Well, I think this is a good place to stop. I really appreciate your taking as much time today, and I hope we can continue either later this week or next week if it's convenient.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview II]

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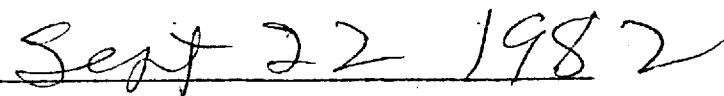
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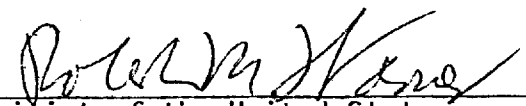
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