INTERVIEW I

DATE: January 10, 1978

INTERVIEWEE: RUSSELL MORTON BROWN

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE

PLACE: Mr. Brown's home in Palm Beach, Florida

Tape 1 of 3

G: Let's start with the circumstances under which you met Lyndon Johnson in 1934.

B: The date was September 19, 1934. I am able to particularize that date because it was the first evening of law school at Georgetown Law School in Washington. I had come to law school. The Depression was on, and I decided I would enroll in what they called at Georgetown then the late afternoon classes, which were geared to the government employees who got through work at four-thirty in those days and could be in class by five o'clock. So we attended class from five to seven.

Since I was kind of an eager beaver kid, twenty-one years old, I sat in the front row. This big tall fellow from Texas sat right beside me. He looked over at me and he said, "I'm Johnson from Texas." I said, "I'm Russell Brown from Rhode Island." He was cordial in sort of an impersonal way. He sat back and listened to the professor, and so on.

One night he said to me in class, "How is it you always know the answer to these questions?" You know, when the professor would ask questions I'd put up my hand and discuss the cases and so on,

which many of the fellows didn't do because they possibly hadn't read or prepared the class work. The law school ran on the case book system. You read the cases. Then the cases were discussed in class, and the professor would comment and so on and you'd make notes. So when he'd say, "Will somebody tell us what such and such a case is about?" I was always eager to get involved, and if somebody else recited on it I would ask a question or discuss it or something.

He said to me, "How is it you're always so well prepared in these classes?" I said, "Well, I haven't got a job, and I don't own any law books." I had not invested my money in books, because the books were expensive. I said, "But I use the books over in the Library of Congress when I'm not out pounding the pavement looking for a job. I do my job hunting in the morning, and then I read the books in the afternoon. If there are any collateral references, like a reference to another case or a law review article or something of that sort, they're all right there on the shelf in the Library, and I go get them and read them. I've made good notes." He said, "My gosh, you don't have to do anything but study. I never get a chance to study. I'm working all the time, evenings as well as in the daytime." I said, "Well, if I don't get a job I'm going to have to quit studying and go home." He said, "Now, don't do that. I've got a job for you. You come by my office in the morning. I work in a congressman's office, and I've got a job in the office for you, but tonight I want you to come [and] go eat supper with us to tell us what this is all about."

fellows in the class had not had a chance to prepare the course work, so they wouldn't know what those words were. For example, the word "feoffment" was one means of transferring land at early common law. This sort of puzzled the fellows who hadn't read the cases, so we talked about that. Lyndon was pleased, and we asked questions and talked back and forth. L. E. Jones and I were the same age, but Lyndon was five years older than we were.

G: Why hadn't he entered law school before that year? He'd been up there for several years, and yet he just matriculated in the fall of 1934.

B: I think Lyndon came to Washington with the initial term of Richard M. Kleberg, who had been elected to Congress from Corpus Christi. That had at one time been part of the same congressional district with San Antonio. They had split off this Nueces County with several other counties on the coast to make a new district, and Dick Kleberg ran and was elected. My best recollection is that he came to Congress January 1, 1933.

G: No, it was earlier than that. Lyndon Johnson went up there I guess the first time in December, 1931, and then came back for the full term in January, 1932. So he was there for a considerable time.

B: Well, that may be, Mike. I don't have that information.

G: He never indicated to you why he just decided to do it this semester when you were there?

B: Oh, well, we talked about that. I sort of assumed that he wanted to be a lawyer and practice law. Lyndon had indicated that he was

really a schoolteacher. He said, "I'm really a schoolteacher, came up here with Congressman Kleberg." Incidentally, it might be of interest to remember, he pronounced it "Kleeberg," but the family called it "Klayberg," the Klebergs called it "Klayberg." The Congressman used to call the office from the House floor sometimes. He'd say, "Russell, this is Dick Kleberg." It always impressed me that he didn't say, "This is Congressman Kleberg," or anything. But he did say "Klayberg," he pronounced it, but Lyndon called it "Kleeberg."

However, he said something to the effect that being a congressional secretary--we called him the secretary at the time, I mean that was sort of the designation; it later became administrative aide--being in the Congressman's office had made him conscious of the need to have a knowledge of the law, and he had become aware that you could attend these classes in the late afternoon after the day's business was done. He said, "The only trouble is I have to go back to the office and work late at night." I think the reason he hadn't earlier gone to law school is that he hadn't previously considered being a lawyer. He hadn't been aware, possibly, of the importance and value and direct relationship of law school training to helping the Congressman. As he became aware of it, he decided he'd get some law school education and training.

G: Did you live at the Dodge Hotel at the time?

B: Not at that time. I had my pre-legal education at Brown University in Providence, and I came to Washington with the purpose of financing this myself. My father had worried himself about the family's

financial situation. He said, "Just think, at this time in life I've got four boys in college at the same time." With all the business affairs in a turmoil during the Depression, I decided that I ought to do this law school thing myself.

When I came to town I hunted around, and I found a room at 15th and P Streets, NW, upstairs over a meat market. This was a three storied building, and the family that ran the market lived in the middle floor and rented out about four rooms on the top floor. They were occupied by students--some Georgetown students. There was one fellow who worked at the Treasury Department, who was at George Washington University going through college and that sort of thing. So I didn't live at the Dodge then, I lived upstairs over the meat market.

At the end of that year, or toward the end of that year, I had gotten my brother Norman to come to Washington, and we got him started in law school. L. E. Jones and Lyndon both insisted that we ought to move over to the Dodge Hotel where we'd all be closer together and nearer to the law school. It was near the Capitol, so they could walk back and forth. By that time I had a job, thanks to Lyndon, and I could afford to live at the Dodge. Up to that time I couldn't.

But when I first met Lyndon, as you asked me, and L. E. Jones, I was living upstairs over the meat market. We did some of our studying there. They used to come over. As I say, I didn't have a job for part of the time, and I was making good notes, real good notes on studies. We all studied from those notes. I think that in

all candor I should say that Lyndon's attendance at the law school was, to say the least, sporadic. He didn't get a chance to come to every class.

G: What was his performance like when he did come, in terms of recitation?

B: I would say as a matter of fact Lyndon never once recited in class. He had the kind of a mind [that] he could sit there in the class and listen and absorb it, that is, to the extent that the language was understandable language. You don't learn technical terms. He absorbed it. Then after class we would have these bull sessions and talk about it. He had a mind like a sponge, quick and alert and very perceptive, but I think he didn't ever read the books because he just didn't have the time. The reason that his attendance wasn't better was that he was probably running congressional errands for the Congressman or meeting with people and setting up arrangements, making political alliances and friends. Actually, I had some knowledge at the time that Lyndon was preparing to strike out on his own and planning at some convenient time to leave Congressman Kleberg's staff and do something on his own.

G: What, for example, was he thinking of?

B: What leads me to that conclusion was that one day somebody had written a letter to the Secretary of the Treasury, who was then Henry Morgenthau, Jr.--it was over Lyndon's signature--for one of our constituents who needed information or something, and it has been addressed "Dear Henry." Lyndon was going to sign it, and I remember him saying,

"Look, I can't call him Henry. There's going to come a day when I will, but it's not now." And the letter had to be rewritten, "Dear Mr. Secretary."

But I can remember hearing Lyndon say after sombody had said he was assistant to Mr. Kleberg [that] he kind of objected to being classified as an assistant because, he said, "I'm not the assistant type. I'm the executive type."

G: So he used the term secretary, is that right?

B: That was customary at the time. The man in charge of the congressman's office, or whoever it was, was designated as secretary. But Lyndon had very close friends all through government. He specialized in making friends of everybody who was in a position to have any influence. He deliberately cultivated these connections, so that if anybody in Texas wrote Congressman Kleberg about getting something done for them in any government agency Lyndon could get on the phone and call somebody who would really move and make it possible for us to help our constituents.

G: Let me ask you some more about the law school activities. Did he like some courses better than others? Did he seem to have an aptitude in one of his courses?

B: Lyndon's interest really was not in the law school curriculum as such. For example, we were taking one course that first year in criminal law; I don't think that he had a bit of interest in that. And I think he was a little bit impatient with the course in real property. You know, [that] was historical study of the feudal

system and where modern real estate concepts come from, and I think he was a little bit impatient with that.

G: Did he say anything to indicate his impatience that you recall?

B: I can't recall a specific comment, but I think that we were pointing toward studies in constitutional law, for example, and this was a matter that absorbed him. He knew the legislative process inside out. He knew all the committees of the Congress and their functions. For example, I can remember specifically we were talking about one of the cases that involved an attempt by Congress to control child labor by taxing the products of child labor as they moved in interstate commerce. Lyndon mentioned that this kind of legislation had been pending before the interstate commerce committees of the House and the Senate, and he knew a lot about it. I'm not exactly clear in what context, but this was the kind of thing that interested him: the legislation, the constitution, the public affairs, the relationship of government to the people.

I can remember specifically, and this is one of the more significant things about Lyndon's early years, he said, "Look, we train people to be lawyers and we train them to be doctors and professors, but nobody is specifically schooled and trained to be a government official or to perform government work or government jobs. We don't have a school for diplomacy. We don't have a school for government executives. I feel that this is something that is very important. It's just as much of a profession as being a doctor or a lawyer." He seemed to feel that there should be such a school

and that he would like to take an interest in that kind of school where, for example, a fellow could study government without having to study criminal law or having to study divorce law, domestic relations, and real property, or which would have only peripheral connection with public office and with governmental affairs. He had an absorbing interest in public affairs.

It was about that time that he started, I think, to clip articles out of the newspapers. There were various newspaper columnists who were particularly impressive. He used to read what they had to say and then talk about it with some of his newspaper friends. It seems to me that Walter Lippmann was one he read frequently. I can't say that he always agreed with Walter Lippmann. I kind of got the impression that he felt that Walter Lippmann was being highly theoretical and philosophical. While he didn't use the word, I would characterize Lyndon's reaction to Walter Lippmann that he felt Walter Lippmann was being pretentious. I think he used the word "putting on airs."

There was a columnist at that time on the Washington Star, and I could be wrong about the name, but it seems to me it was Raymond Clapper, who was extremely well liked and well thought of. He was more oriented toward the New Deal and the President's programs. At least he spoke without too severe criticism, if he did at all, and he tried to explain and elucidate in popular terms what the administration was doing. I think we all liked him particularly. I can remember hearing Lyndon speak well of his work.

G: Who were his newspaper friends that he would talk with about these columnists?

B: The one I particularly remember was Bill White--William S. White of Texas. Bill came to the office almost every day. The thing I remember especially about Bill White [was] he was the only one I ever knew who called him Lyn. I called him Lyndon; Luther Jones and Gene called him "Chief," but Bill White called him Lyn. He was there very regularly. About that time there was a fellow we got to know much better later, but he was Drew Pearson's leg man, you might say. He was up there collecting information for Drew Pearson, named Tom McNamara. I think Tom has retired now, but Tom and I later became very good friends. Tom was a very eager beaver type to get information for Drew Pearson. There were many others, but I don't have their names in mind. I would say that those two were our most frequent callers and the ones we knew best.

Talking about the newspaper men though, shortly after Lyndon and Bird got married I can remember hearing him call Bird on the telephone and say, "Get the furniture insured for Friday night. I'm having a bunch of newspapermen out there, and they're going to be delivering several cases of whiskey to the house. We'll have a wild evening." But he cultivated the press very assiduously.

G: Even then?

B: Oh, very much so, very, very much so.

G: How so?

B: Well, one example would be that Lyndon was very friendly with the people in Senator Tom Connally's office, Arthur Perry, whom you know

about, A. C. Perry, and Bob Jackson, who was in the Senator's office. Whenever there was an announcement of some new development in our district he was competing with them to be sure that the announcement came from Kleberg's office rather than from Senator Connally's office. He could always get the press to take his story first. For example, one time there was a CCC camp to be established in one of the counties in Congressman Kleberg's district. Lyndon learned about it through friends of his downtown, and he called the papers and said, "Now, I want you to be sure you remember you got this from Congressman Kleberg's office first. Senator Connally's office isn't trying to take care of you fellows first. I am."

He always made it a point to have lunch with them. If they wanted information about pending legislation they could call him and he would put us all to work to get it for them. I can remember one day he had me running over to the House Document Room, where they had all the legislation, to pick up copies of some legislation and some bills for the newspapermen. He made up a package of these things and had three or four of the newspapermen come into the office, and he said, "I want you to understand we got this together specially for you fellows so you could write your stories. Nobody else is giving you this kind of service up here on the Hill."

G: I gather that he would sort of sponsor competitions between the telegraph services. Whichever delivery boy would get there first would get to send out a telegram announcing this or that. Do you recall anything here?

B: My only recollection is this: our offices were at 1225 in what was then called the New House Office Building. It's now known I think as the Longworth Building. We were on the south side of the building. On the front side, on the north side of the building, there was a Western Union telegraph office. I never heard of any competition along those lines because all we had to do to get a telegram off was to call. We would type the telegram in the office, and they would send a boy up to pick it up. That was all there was to that. I never heard of any competition.

G: I see. Did this practice of announcing projects ahead of Senator Connally's office create any difficulties with Senator Connally?

B: Not with Senator Connally personally, I'm sure, because Senator Connally was a senior statesman. He wasn't interested in competing with anybody, and he didn't have to compete with anybody. But Lyndon took a great deal of joy and pleasure in outdoing Bob Jackson, for example, who was a friend of his. But he'd say, "Did you see our announcement? Did you see we announced the new CCC camp?" or "Did you see we announced a new project?" or "a new road?" or "Did you see where the port of Corpus Christi is going to get a big appropriation? It was announced by us." He took a great deal of delight in beating them to the punch and making announcements that related to our district. If it was a big statewide project, why, he didn't try to beat them at that that I know of. But he was always interested in promoting Congressman Kleberg, first and foremost, and

making the people at home realize the Congressman was really working hard for them.

G: Let me ask you a couple of more questions about the law school situation.

B: Have I answered that adequately?

G: Yes. Oh, sure. Were there any professors that he particularly admired?

B: We had some very fine professors there at the time. One of them was a young, relatively recent graduate of Georgetown who is still practicing in Washington, D.C., and that was Al Kane.

G: Did Mr. Johnson have him for a class?

B: Yes. He taught torts in the first semester. He had a very good style of speaking, good voice, friendly, informal, and good-humored.

G: Did you ever hear LBJ comment on him?

B: Oh, yes. Yes.

G: What would he say about him?

B: He mentioned that he was an excellent teacher and that he got the message across in a very readily understandable fashion. He said, "It's a relatively complex subject, but he makes you understand it the way he puts it over."

G: Now if LBJ never recited in class he must have been virtually annonymous to these professors, though.

B: As a matter of actual fact I think that's an accurate statement. If I can get ahead of our story a little bit I'll tell you why I say that. When we were in law school the real head of the law school

was known at Georgetown as the Regent. He was a Jesuit priest named Francis E. Lucey. Now Father Lucey was just a perfectly marvelous human being. He let me and a lot of other boys of the day go along when we couldn't keep our tuition payments current. One boy, particularly, I remember, said to him when he gave him permission to go along, "But Father, you know I'm not a Catholic." Father Lucey said, "Well, I guess boys who are not Catholics need an education just as much as those other boys who are, so go ahead. I didn't think you were a Catholic. In fact, I knew you weren't, but that isn't one of our considerations here now." That boy later became a very successful and well-known lawyer in the insurance field. He left Arkansas with three cents in his pocket to come to Washington to go to law school, climbed on a freight train, had been a schoolteacher there. The county couldn't pay the salaries, so he came to Washington to go to law school.

When Lyndon became President Father Lucey had, I think, retired. I was one of the beneficiaries of Father Lucey's kindness in letting me go to school. I got paid up before graduation, but thanks to him and Lyndon I was able to get that far. So I gave a dinner at the Federal Bar Building for the whole class, including Lyndon. I got from Lyndon a photograph of him as President autographed for Father Lucey, "With warm regards, Lyndon B. Johnson." Lyndon couldn't come to the dinner, but Father Lucey spoke briefly and he mentioned the fact that he knew Lyndon and remembered him only very vaguely. He said, "If I had known he was going to be President, I would have had

my picture taken with him," or something. But he didn't remember Lyndon well.

As a matter of fact, I think that in all candor I would have to say that while Lyndon started school with the best intentions in the world, he quickly realized in that first year that it was going to require a great deal more time and dedication than Lyndon was in a position to give to it to [be] successful.

G: Was his health a problem at that time?

B: No, sir, not a bit.

G: He wasn't ill off and on?

B: Never.

G: I get the impression that you were sort of an informal tutor to him.

B: Well, I wouldn't want to claim that, but let me outline it this way. You know, it's sort of presumptuous on my part to say a thing like that, but let me give you the facts. Okay? Everybody had said that this real property course was a killer, and that a lot of fellows flunked out of law school on account of [the] real property course or that they didn't pass the real property course. It is a difficult course with a lot of very strange concepts and language and all that, especially as it was taught then. I think today they may have modified the emphasis on the sources of our real property laws, which come from the year 1066 when William the Conqueror successfully invaded England and had the so-called Domesday Book compiled showing the ownership of English land and set up a whole

system of courts to judge titles. Since William the Conqueror had come from France, a great deal of French terminology was injected with the Latin and the Anglo Saxon terminology and so on.

I got myself a copy of Tiffany on Real Property, which is a classic textbook. I went through it very carefully and prepared myself in advance, you might say, so that when these things came up in class, why, they were thoroughly familiar to me and I could relate them to Tiffany on Real Property. For example, in class we would be reading a case where there was litigation about a title. Well, I could tie it in with the text material that I had read in Tiffany. The one I really was tutor to, more than to Lyndon, was L. E. Jones. L. E. wrote shorthand extremely well. That's why Lyndon brought him to Washington. And he typed with great speed. Lyndon had a great deal of confidence in L. E.

(Interruption)

You asked if I was sort of an informal tutor to him. I had excellent notes.

G: You talked about this. You were talking about how you were more of a tutor for L. E. Jones, who could type well.

B: Well, yes. Lyndon would meet with us, and we would talk, but he was very, very busy in the Congressman's office. He was also undoubtedly engaged in making friends for Lyndon and establishing lines of communication and influence and friendship with people. So that to the extent that he took any interest in the law school, why, I contributed because we would talk about things. In a sense,

you might say, it was a tutorial sort of thing, because I knew what it was about and he hadn't had a chance to read the material.

G: Did you help him beef up before exams, say?

B: I have to say this, I am also 100 per cent sure that we studied for them, and about that time Lyndon learned that he was going to be returning to Texas, so I don't think he took the exams. You see, the way the law school operates, you attend these lectures and recite and so on, but there were no exams until the end of the semester. I think that at the end of the first semester, which came sort of toward the end of February, we sat around and talked and reviewed some courses, so that to that extent it might be. But if you were to ask me, I would be inclined to guess that Lyndon did not take the exams.

G: It's been said that he was too impatient for law school, that he just didn't have the patience to sit down and absorb all of these theoretical, abstract concepts.

B: Let me apply the Socratic method for a moment there. Who told you?

G: Oh, I couldn't remember.

B: Just generally?

G: Yes.

B: I would say that that would be a very shrewd and accurate appraisal of Lyndon Johnson's approach to this sort of thing. I remember particularly that there was some Latin phrase used in some of the English cases; that was sort of standard practice. Latin has become sort of legal shorthand in some areas. I don't think Lyndon ever had any Latin in school. I can remember hearing him say, "Why don't

they stick to the plain English?" We got to talking about it, and he said to me, "You understand that?" you know, in sort of a challenging way. I said, "Well, of course. This is what it means, and this is where it comes from, and this is why they use it." He said, "Do you think that all the lawyers that practice law know about this, Russ?" I said, "I don't suppose they know about it when they're practicing law because they don't have any occasion to refer back to it, but this is where it comes from. They possibly studied about it in law school and knew it when they were in law school and then forgot about it." But he said, "You don't have to know that to practice law, do you?" I said, "I don't suppose you do. I'm sure you don't. But it's a good idea to know where it comes from." He said, "Well, I'm going to let you know about it." He wasn't going to get involved in learning the Latin or anything of that sort, and he wasn't interested in the historical development and the philosophical background of some of these things.

G: The jurisprudence involved.

B: Yes. For example, there is an English statute known as the mortmain statute. It means dead hand. It's from the French, and it referred to a conveyance that was made to the church. The mortmain statute was designed to prohibit conveyances to the church, because the dead hand of the church, as they said, never let it go. They withdrew it from commerce, and it was taken out of the course of trade. We were talking about it, and I can remember somebody saying, "That's the mortmain statute. That's the old French and Latin phrase for the

dead hand, meaning the dead hand of the church." Lyndon said, "There we go again with that Latin."

There was a good story that somebody told about that time, and I think Lyndon may have told it, about this fellow who was trying a case. He used a lot of Latin, and the other lawyer said to the judge, "I don't understand all that Latin, Judge." The judge said, "Neither do I, son, but it sure has played hell with your case." I can't be sure, but I think he told that story as sort of a joke.

But the analysis of Lyndon's approach to the law would be accurate in the sense that he was not a real studious kind of fellow. He was interested in going and doing and arranging and creating. He had scant patience for sitting down and reading an extended judicial opinion and then going and looking up the cases they cited and the authorities they relied on; then reading a bunch of law review comments on it. This is totally alien and foreign to his disposition and make-up. On the other hand, if somebody told him the rule is such and such, he'd remember that.

G: Why did he drop out of law school?

B: I would say this, that [there were] probably two factors: in the first place, I feel confident that Lyndon had made up his mind that he was going to make his career in politics, that is in public office. And second, I think that he was not comfortable psychologically with the dedication and complete devotion that law school requires. He had probably never intended to practice law as a lawyer. He wanted the law school background just because it would make him

more effective in public life and give him a better understanding. But he was impatient with such courses as real property law and [what] you might call domestic relations: marriage and divorce; or wills and administration, that sort of thing.

G: Let me ask you. What was his room at the Dodge Hotel like?

B: That's a good question, and I can tell you, but I have to describe the Dodge Hotel a little bit. The Dodge Hotel was built on the hillside of E Street going toward the Capitol. That is it fronted on E Street and had an exit on the Capitol Plaza, facing the Union Station. It's sort of a moderate hill. When you got halfway up the hill there was an entrance to the Dodge Hotel with maybe six or eight steps to the front door up. You were then in the lobby of the Dodge--very nice, well-appointed, sedate, comfortable, and quite elegant in a way. Off to the left there was a big lounge with a great big fireplace at one end where we used to have our Christmas party, run by the Hotel. They would pass out these little drinks, and they called it the "sugaring off," which is sort of a New England tradition at Christmas time in the maple sugar country. Somebody had inaugurated it. I had never run across it before. They had a piano in that room and beautiful rugs. It was a very large room. That was to the left of the lobby.

You walked through that and out a door into a garden. There was a little teahouse out there in the garden, and at one time there were ping pong tables there. But it was available for parties, and we used to attend parties. In fact, I think the Texas State Society

had a party there once. You walked out of the garden, and you were out on the Capitol Plaza and faced the Union Station on the left and the Capitol and the Senate Office Building on the right. Now that was on the left-hand side of the lobby.

As you came in, to the right was a dining room, a very elegant dining room with elegant food. I'll have to tell you about his comment on that. But then you went down the stairs to the right, and the floor below the lobby was called the B floor. The B floor was made up of rooms. They were reasonably good-size rooms. Each room had a semi-private bath that it shared with the room on the other side. If you were using the bathroom you simply locked the door to the other side, so you would have the bathroom to yourself if you wanted it. If the other party on the other side was in it, he'd do the same. Other than that, when you weren't using the bathroom you simply locked your door and that was that.

Lyndon lived on the B floor. The B floor rooms were semi-private bath. At least he lived there when I first remember him. The rest of us--all young men--lived on the "A" floor, which was below there. That's where John Connally and I were roommates. These rooms had a wash basin in them. At the end of the corridor there were bathrooms with showers, might be three showers and maybe two or three toilets in there. There weren't many rooms down there. There were about twelve rooms, as I recall it. In fact, I'm quite sure there were twelve rooms.

As I say, Lyndon lived on the B floor, which was only one floor below the lobby; A floor was two floors below. His room was a nice room, fairly good-sized. It was furnished, of course, by the hotel. It had a good bed, wooden beds they were but they were nice and they were very well kept. The hotel was just immaculate. He had a wash basin in the room and then the adjoining bath to which he had access. He had a desk and a chair in there. There was probably some kind of an armchair that you could sit in and a lamp. It was very plain but perfectly adequate.

G: Any pictures?

B: If there were any pictures they were hotel pictures. Oh, he had pictures of some of the people he knew on the wall, autographed to Lyndon Johnson. This was sort of a customary thing among all of us. That picture I have of President Franklin D. Roosevelt was one that I got and had on the wall in our room. Lyndon had pictures of Congressman Kleberg. I remember one picture he had of Senator [Alvin] Wirtz. It was inscribed. I'm not sure that he had this picture at that time, but I remember he had a picture of Senator Wirtz inscribed something to the effect, "To Lyndon Johnson, Whom I admire and love with the same affection as if he were in fact my own son." That is the general tone of it. Have you seen that picture?

G: I think I have. I'm not positive.

B: I'm not sure Lyndon had it at that time, but he had a picture of Senator Wirtz. Now he also had a picture of Welly Hopkins. I think he had a picture of Senator Connally on the wall autographed

to him. The autograph was an important part of it. It was sort of a status symbol.

G: What was his comment on the hotel? You remember you were going to tell me when you were describing the lobby.

B: It wasn't so much about the comment about the hotel.

The hotel dining room, as I say, was very elegant. The Dodge Hotel, as I understand it, had originally been built by one of the Rockefeller family in honor of a woman named Grace Dodge, who had been very active in, let's say, Baptist church affairs, particularly related to prohibition, the prohibition amendment. I think at one time that property where the Dodge Hotel was had a clause in the deed to the effect that there was never to be any liquor sold on the premises, and there never was during our time. They had no bar or anything. But they had this very elegant dining room.

The hotel was originally exclusively a woman's hotel. Then they had these two floors below the lobby which they opened up to these young men who worked at the Capitol. You know, it was a good thing for them to be close to their jobs. The Dodge then changed from a woman's hotel to a general hotel. The people that lived there were a very interesting group. For instance, Senator George W. Norris of Nebraska lived there with his wife. Supreme Court Justice Harold Burton, who was from Ohio--had been mayor of Cleveland I think--lived there with his wife. There were quite a few others of that caliber. There were a couple of other senators--Senator

[Charles] Tobey, of [New Hampshire], whose wife died and he married the lady that ran the newsstand. There was a little newsstand where they sold newspapers, cigars and candy and so on.

G: What was LBJ's comment, though?

B: Let me tell you, meals in the dining room were not terribly expensive. The cheapest one was a dollar. Then they went up from there, but I think probably the most expensive meal was three dollars in those days. We used to make it a practice at one time to have--

(Interruption)

We would have Sunday dinner there, and it was a dollar. At the Dodge it was very interesting. One of the stewards would come around with a brass warming tray around his neck, and he would dish you out these rum buns with tongs and so on. When I had my sixtieth birthday I got a letter from Lyndon. I'm sure it's in the Library. He told about his birthday after he'd had a heart attack, and a man who came to see him had left him a book called Life Begins at Eighty. Lyndon said, "Don't feel like you're getting old"--this was his letter. He said, "If we were in our youth we'd be living in the basement of the Dodge Hotel, eating in the drugstore around the corner and leaving nickel tips." The Continental Hotel was right next door, and they had a soda fountain lunch-type operation. We used to eat there frequently. He mentioned that we would be eating there.

My niece wrote him a letter, and he then answered her. She said, "Did you really pay twenty dollars a month rent?" He said, "That's right, Heidi, and we couldn't afford to eat in the hotel restaurant

because meals there were a dollar. We used to eat in the little drugstore around the corner. We'd leave nickel tips on the fountain."

G: Did he have much of a social life at that time? Did he date much?

B: So far as I am personally aware that was very, very minimal. Lyndon was not at that time interested in social life as such. He was interested in political life. If he had a free evening I think Lyndon's program would call for him to ring somebody he knew in one of the government agencies who was important and influential or going to be, and he would schedule an evening visiting with him rather than with girls.

G: When were you first aware of his courtship of Mrs. Johnson?

B: I don't think I was really aware of their courtship, because as I recall it now he was introduced to Bird by a woman named Gene Lasseter. Have you ever heard of her name?

G: Oh, yes. He met Mrs. Johnson in September of 1934 and exchanged letters with her that fall when you were up with him at the Dodge Hotel. I'm just wondering if you were aware that this correspondence was going on and that he went back a month or so later and saw her? They got married in November.

B: I would have to say I don't think I was ever aware that that was going on. Now I did meet her when she first came up of course, but I don't think I--

G: Well, that was after they were married.

B: Yes. Yes. Now I think I did learn at some time that he met her through Gene Lasseter. Gene Lasseter was with the Texas Railroad

Commission. I didn't know her well, but she was one of the names.

G: Was he still active in the Little Congress by the time you were up there in 1934?

B: He was still active, but I don't think he was Speaker anymore. Do you know the Huey Long story?

G: I was going to ask you about that next. How did Huey Long happen to come and address the Little Congress?

B: I'm quite sure that Lyndon arranged that.

G: How are you certain? Do you have firsthand knowledge of it?

B: I'm trying to be sure. What I have in mind is that Arthur Perry had been very active in Little Congress. Arthur Perry was instrumental with others in "packing" the Little Congress so Lyndon could be elected Speaker. His purpose was to get prominent people in government mostly, and in Congress particularly, to come over and speak. Now let me ask you a question. Do you know whether Lyndon was speaker in 1934 and 1935 or not?

G: No, I don't know.

B: I'm not sure. Whether he was speaker or not, he had been speaker before that and he was very active in Little Congress. I can remember hearing him talk to Senator Huey Long's secretary on the telephone. This would be the spring of 1935, to the best of my recollection.

G: Now he would have been in . . . .

B: This was the spring of 1935. I can fix some of these dates concretely.

G: And making the arrangements for this speech?

B: Yes.

G: Were you there when Long spoke?

B: Yes, I was. Yes, I was. I'll tell you why I'm so positive it's 1935, because Lyndon's father died in the spring of 1935, and Lyndon had gone down there to the funeral. When he came back he was sitting at his desk, and he was just rubbing his forehead, looking at the desk. This was uncharacteristic of him, because he was always up and moving and doing and running and all that; lots of talking on the telephone. I think he and I were there alone, as I recall it at the moment. The others had gone off someplace, and he was just sitting there with his head down thinking. I said, "What's the matter, Lyndon?" You know, to see him sitting there like that you'd be surprised. He said, "By God, Russ, I owe five thousand dollars." He meant his father's debts and the funeral expenses and all that.

G: Now his father didn't die until 1938, I believe.

B: Oh, no. Believe me, it was 1935. I am in a position to assure you of that.

G: No, that's not right, because his father was still alive when he was elected to Congress in 1937.

B: Tell you what I'll do, I'll bet you a dollar his father died in the spring of 1935. I'm positive of that because I relate it to this story where he said, "I owe five thousand dollars." I said, "Well, we'll get it paid." He said, "Yes, I make three thousand dollars a year." I said, "Well, we'll make more." He got up, and he actually had tears running down his cheeks. He wiped his eyes and he put his

arm on my shoulder, and he said, "We better, buddy, we better," and he walked out. He was very much concerned about that.

Now I want to go off the tape for a minute, Mike.

(Interruption)

G: Can you describe the Huey Long occasion?

B: Yes. Yes. I remember particularly that Lyndon was talking with Huey Long's office. I wouldn't know who, but arranging for the Senator to be there.

G: It would probably be Earle Christenberry.

B: Well, that could be. That name sounds familiar, but I don't know for sure. It was announced publicly I guess that Huey Long would speak to Little Congress. Now you have to have the context of the times. Huey Long had been widely publicized as the Kingfish. He was very critical of Roosevelt. He had his own program of "Every Man a King." We used to parody it by saying there are two queens for every king. But he had this "share the wealth" aspect of things. I don't know whether he used those words or not, "Every Man a King" and so on. There had been two or three incidents where the post office had allegedly discovered bombs being sent to Huey Long. We sort of discounted that and thought it was a publicity stunt on his part.

But the Little Congress meeting, as I recall it, was held in what was then known as the caucus room on the ground floor of the Longworth Office Building or the New House Office Building. I went over there early to be sure to get a good place to sit or something, and the place was just crowded with newsreel cameras. Pathe News

and Metro News and all that were the things of the day. There was no television in those days. When you went to the movies there would be a film of news of the day. These were the people, Pathe News and so on. They were all loaded up, and there were lights all over the place, these movie lights. A tremendous number of reporters were there, cameras and all that.

Now I've forgotten exactly who I went with, but my guess would be it was L. E. Jones. L. E. was really a studious kind of a boy. He was working very hard. He and I used to study together. We ate together and were together all the time, so I would guess that he and I went over there together. Maybe Gene Latimer was with us, but possibly not. The place was really filling up. Huey Long was a real front page figure at the time. He was going to run against Roosevelt he said. These photographers were crowding up around him to take his picture. He came in with a group of people that were said to be his bodyguards. And we thought that was more dramatics, although in view of the fact that he was assassinated that summer it wasn't so unreal.

But he stood in front of a long, low table. There's a long, low table up in front of the room behind which presumably committee members would sit and hear witnesses and that sort of thing. He had his back to the table, and these reporters were crowding up close. They used flashbulbs, and one of the flashbulbs kind of exploded with a bang and Huey Long looked like he was going to jump over the table. He was just terrified. We thought that was a part of the dramatics

of the moment. But he started speaking, and he had a pre-arranged routine where he would hold up his hand in a particular gesture and they would take his picture. He had apparently clued the press to take his picture in these various poses which he apparently was led to believe were especially dramatic. It was sort of obvious that he was striking these poses for press.

But he told a story that night, and if you haven't heard the story it's well worth knowing. I am not sure that Lyndon presented him or introduced him. I don't seem to remember. But I can remember seeing Lyndon shake hands with his administrative assistant and with Huey Long and with some of the men who came in with him. Huey Long shook hands around with the people in the room. He started to tell this story, and he said, "We've got to rearrange things in this country. We've got a situation where 15 per cent of the people have 90 per cent of the wealth." I don't remember if those are the exact figures but something like that. Senator Long spoke in the Louisiana Bayou dialect, exaggerated. He said, "Now, if we were to go to an ice cream sociable and there was a hundred people there and fifteen people went off with all the food, what are we going to do? Let them go? No, sir, we're going to go pinch them by the neck and say, 'Come back here with that grub you ain't got no business with.' Now that's what we've got to do." Well, everybody roared.

He said, "You know, when I was a little boy growing up on a farm down in Louisiana I was youngest of eleven children," or something like that. I don't remember precisely. He said, "You couldn't go to school unless you had money to pay for school books. I saw my

brothers grow up and be hitched up to a plow and pull a plow just like an animal on the farm. I made up my mind that wasn't going to happen to me. I was going to get an education. As soon as I was old enough I went down to Baton Rouge, and I got a job selling soap. They loaned me an old beat-up car worth about ten dollars. I went out calling on the country stores with these cases of soap; I had it loaded up with cases of soap. The soap was three dollars a case. I couldn't sell any of it. I went to every country store I could come to or find or think of, and I couldn't sell a case of soap."

"I came back in after two days, and I was hungry. I thought, 'What's going to become of me? I'm not going to be able to sell any of this soap.' I laid awake and thought, 'Well, maybe if I cut the price. But if I cut the price I'm not going to make any money. I can't do that.' I finally decided, 'I'm going to raise the price.' I raised the price to five dollars a case, and I went out calling on these storekeepers, and I said, 'Now this soap is great soap. It's five dollars a case, and if you buy two cases I'll give you one free.' I sold out the first day. I couldn't sell them three cases for nine dollars, but I could sell them three for ten if they thought they were getting one for nothing. That's my first lesson in politics. American people want to feel like they're getting something for nothing."

Well, I remember that evening, as everybody was amused and entertained. He was a very great speaker, and even though he had the most humble origins, I've been told that Chief Justice [William

Howard] Taft said that he was one of the finest constitutional lawyers to appear before the Court in his time.

G: Was Lyndon Johnson attracted to Huey Long, do you think?

B: I think he admired his abilities very greatly.

G: Did he ever discuss Huey Long with you?

B: I can't say he discussed him with me individually, but I can say I was in a group.

G: Did you ever get a feeling for his admiration for Franklin Roosevelt during this period?

B: Yes.

G: Did he ever talk to you about Roosevelt, or can you recall any particular conversations that he had about FDR?

B: Yes, I think I can tell you some things about that, Mike, one of which is partly hearsay, but you can verify this through L. E. Jones, I'm sure. I was party to a conversation that we had later on with Lyndon about it. When the Agricultural Adjustment Act was going to be voted on in Congress--now that's the AAA, do you know what I'm talking about, cutting down production and so on? Dick Kleberg was against it. He was preparing to vote against it and had said he would vote against it. I think you realize that Dick Kleberg, while he was a Democrat nominally, actually was more oriented toward the Republican philosophy of government than that of Franklin Roosevelt. He had a lot of friends who came in the office who were big business people.

Lyndon was worried about Congressman Kleberg voting against this bill. This had to be in 1933 before I knew him. That's why I'm

saying it's hearsay. But Lyndon felt that it was up to Kleberg, since he'd been elected as a Democrat and all, to support the President, and he told him so. Kleberg said he wouldn't do it. So Lyndon told him that he thought it was unfair to the people at home who had sent him to Congress that he wasn't going to support the President, and Kleberg laughed and went off to play golf.

That afternoon when he got back, it was just about dusk, Lyndon was cleaning out his desk. Congressman Kleberg said to him, "Well, what's the matter?" Lyndon said, "I'm going home." The Congressman said, "What do you mean you're going home?" He said, "Yes, sir, Mr. Dick, I've got to quit. I can't work for you." Kleberg was shocked, because Lyndon ran the whole office. That made it possible for Kleberg to go off and play golf every day.

He said, "My gosh, Lyndon, you can't go off and leave me." And Lyndon said, "Well, Mr. Dick, I feel like the folks back home sent us up here to support the President, and that's what we've got to do. If you don't do that, they're bound to think I'm not supporting him either, and I just can't face them. I don't want to go home and let them think that I was a party to throwing down the President on this bill, because our folks at home want it." He went to the files, and he got out--Lyndon used to classify all the mail that was for and against legislation, and he had a file of letters from the people in the district who were for it. He said, "Our people are for this legislation by ten to one or more."

Kleberg said something to the effect, "Well, they don't have the capacity to judge what's the best kind of legislation. They just think it's going to give them some free money," or something like that. Lyndon said, "Well, Mr. Dick, I just feel like you're up here to speak for them and for what they want, and they want this. You're on the President's team. You got elected as a Democrat, and that's the way we've got to go. He's the captain of the team." Kleberg said, "Lyndon, you don't have to go home over this. I'll take the responsibility. I'm going to vote the way I think I ought to vote. I'm going to be responsible." Lyndon said, "That's true, Mr. Dick, but I came up here to help you. I can't help you if you're going to vote against this bill."

So Kleberg said, "Lyndon, you can't do this." Lyndon said, "I've got to do it. And I'll tell you one thing more, Mr. Dick, this bill is going to pass. I've polled the House, and it's going to pass with about 80 per cent of the membership voting for it. Even some of the Republicans are going to have to support it. It isn't going to be a strict party line division." I don't know that he said 80 per cent, but he said it's going to pass by a big margin. Kleberg said, "The hell you say." Lyndon said, "Yes, sir, Mr. Dick, it's going to pass. There isn't a chance for it to be defeated." They sat around and talked a while, and Kleberg finally agreed he was going to vote for it. Lyndon was going to leave him if he didn't.

Now, what I was going to bring up was later when I got to know Lyndon this story came up and was being repeated. We were talking

about philosophy of government and the obligations of party politics, and Lyndon said if you're a member of the team you've got to stick with the team. He said, "Obviously if there's something illegal or immoral or actually wrong, you're not obligated to go along. But if it's just a matter of political policy, of government policy, of philosophy of government, you've got to go. I can't claim to be an expert on these farm problems. I can't claim to be an expert on a lot of things that go on, but if the President and his staff and everybody responsible that is an expert has studied it, and they've laid this down as the program of our party, of the Democratic Party, then it's up to me to go along with them. I've got to go. That's why I wasn't going to stick with Kleberg." It later came up, as I recall it, when the court packing plan came up, the idea of enlarging the Supreme Court, and Lyndon said, "Look, the President is the captain of the team." *See page 36a.

G: Did he also urge Congressman Kleberg to support the soldiers' bonuses? Do you remember that?

B: Yes, I can tell you a little story about that that just came to mind when you mentioned it. I don't really remember what Congressman Kleberg's position on it was, but I think he was against it. Lyndon said that he thought that from a political standpoint, getting elected, it was absolutely vital. Congressman Martin Dies was in our office, the Congressman, and several others. I can see them all sitting around there. Congressman Kleberg I think was there. Anyway, Lyndon was there. I'll tell you who else was there, Roy Miller--do you know who

Insert to page 36 of Russell Brown Interview:

On that score, Lyndon was announcing one of his life-long beliefs: loyalty. He meant not only party loyalty, but national loyalty, and personal loyalty, too. His words were plain, but they expressed his true temper. He said something like this on a much later occasion, that led me to recall the A.A.A. dispute with Congressman Kleberg. "The first and greatest quality a fellow can have is loyalty. If a man is brilliant, and industrious, and lacing in loyalty, I can't associate with him, because I wouldn't know who he's being brilliant and industrious for."

This concept of loyalty to the Party would later be the reason that led Lyndon Johnson to surrender his office as U. S. Senator and Majority Leader of the Senate, to be Vice President when John F. Kennedy was the presidential candidate in 1960. All of us knew Lyndon would have preferred to remain in the Senate, but John Kennedy said he couldn't get elected without Lyndon on the ticket. As a matter of historical fact, if Kennedy had not carried Texas, he would have lost to Richard Nixon in that election. More on his loyalty later.

he is?--and some of the other "lobbyists." There was one fellow named Horatio H. Adams. He was the General Electric lobbyist. They called him "Raish" Adams; he played golf with Mr. Kleberg.

The President had just vetoed the bonus, and the question was whether they were going to override the veto. Lyndon, my recollection is, felt that you've just got to go that way because this is the way the constituents at home wanted you to vote. He said, "If you're going to have any kind of representative government you've got to take stock of what the people want. I've got the correspondence here all classified, got so many for and so many against. Those who [are] for it are fifteen or twenty to one in favor of it."

Martin Dies leaned back--I'll never forget this--[and] said, "Lyndon, I've got to agree with you. You know I came up here as a congressman to represent my people. I think I've got some good ideas for the government of the United States. But they're not going to be worth a damn if I'm not elected. I've got to get elected first before I count for anything. My people down there want me to vote for this bonus, and that's what I'm going to do. If it was up to me alone I would probably not be for it. It's an obligation that doesn't come due for a number of years. I agree with the President's viewpoint in vetoing it, but I've got to get elected, and Dick Kleberg's got to get elected." Lyndon said, "Look, that's the name of the game. If you don't get elected, you could have the best ideas in the world and they're not going to help the country."

He mentioned that you have to "represent your people. That's being loyal to them.

Now, does that help, Mike? Now I can remember particularly Martin Dies sitting there saying, "I'm going to vote for it."

G: What do you remember about Mr. Adams?

B: Very little.

G: Do you remember that LBJ was considering going to work for him in New York?

B: No. No. I don't think I ever heard about that.

G: How about going to work for Roy Miller in South Texas? Had you ever heard anything there?

B: I can't say I ever did. Roy Miller was a wonderful, wonderful human being, one of the nicest kind of people. I remember him very, very kindly. I'm perfectly willing for this to be on tape. I think if the facts were actually fully developed--and I don't know whether they are or not--Roy Miller was Dick Kleberg's campaign manager, or one of them; and I think Roy Miller was the one man that you could say induced Dick Kleberg to bring Lyndon to Washington. Does that accord with your [information]?

G: Yes.

B: All right then, I'm not far off the beam. Because he knew Lyndon's Daddy, I think that was it. But he had gotten to know Lyndon and formed a good opinion of him. I can remember Roy Miller. Roy Miller was in the office much more than Dick Kleberg.

Tape 2 of 3

G: We're talking about Roy Miller and the fact that he was in the office more than [Dick Kleberg].

B: Well, what I was going to say about Roy Miller was: Roy Miller would call from Texas, for example, and this made a real impression on me. If I happened to answer the phone, he'd say, "Russell, I need a copy of such and such a bill. If you could manage it I would be very grateful." I'd run over there and get the bill and put it in the mail to him. Or he would call and say, "I'm going to be in the office in the morning." It always was quite a thing that he'd call from Texas on Monday and be in the office on Tuesday, because he'd come up with his private airplane. Now airplane travel was not nearly the everyday thing that it is today. In fact most people did not travel by air at that time. But Roy Miller would come up, and [if] Dick Kleberg was out Roy Miller sat in the Congressman's office, used the telephone, made appointments, saw people, just as if it was his own personal office, and we worked for him just as if he was the boss.

G: Did you get the feeling that he was sort of a mentor for Kleberg?

B: Partly so. He was more of a mentor for Lyndon Johnson.

G: Oh, was he?

B: Yes.

G: Did they spend much time together?

B: I can't say about time out of the office, but he was in the office a lot and he was with Lyndon a lot. I know he thought the world of Lyndon, he really did. He didn't agree with Roosevelt and the Roosevelt policies at all.

I would have to say that Lyndon was really getting himself oriented politically at the time. I think Lyndon's earliest orientation

was on the conservative side, you know, with Kleberg and Roy Miller and those people. He didn't become a great liberal until quite a bit later. I know at one time though he got to associating with a lot of New Dealers. At one time he voted with that liberal bloc in the House on some legislation or on some legislative move, and Tom Connally called him and said, "Lyndon, you're a Texan; you're a southerner; you've got a great career ahead of you, but you've got to stick with your own crowd." I remember when that happened.

G: How did you hear about it?

B: I think one of the fellows in Tom Connally's office told me about it.

G: Do you recall what the issue pertained to?

B: Yes, it was one of these civil rights things. I don't remember precisely what, but it had something to do with the rights of the blacks.

G: Let's talk about the relationship between Lyndon Johnson and Dick Kleberg and the Kleberg family. You mentioned that Lyndon Johnson was in fact the congressman.

B: That's true.

G: That Kleberg spent a lot of time playing golf.

B: Every day that he possibly could.

G: Was Kleberg pleased with this arrangement of having a young man who was willing to take all of the responsibilities of running the office?

B: He was not only pleased, he was undoubtedly just thrilled to death, otherwise he couldn't have played golf. He would come to the office in the morning if we had Texas visitors, and he would pretend to be very busy with legislation and all that. Lyndon would usher these

people in, say, "The Congressman is very busy, but I'll arrange for you to see him " or "He wants to meet you and see you." If they were not terribly important people Lyndon would go in there and get Mr. Kleberg to come out in the outer office where we were sitting. He would shake hands and talk with them standing up and then say, "Please excuse me, I've got to talk to the Secretary of Agriculture. He's waiting for me on the telephone. I'd really love to see you. Lyndon's going to take you to lunch," or "One of the boys" or something like that. Or "I'll arrange for you to have lunch over in the House dining room," or just "Please excuse me, I've got to go. Have you got a pass to the House gallery?" And they'd make out a pass to the House gallery that said they were his guests.

But if they were important Lyndon would usher them into the inner office. They'd sit down, and then Kleberg frequently would say, "Bring in that bottle, we'll strike a blow for liberty." Have you heard about that? That was John Garner's phrase, meaning no prohibition. They'd have a drink and all that. But Kleberg was tickled to death that Lyndon took all the responsibility because Lyndon studied the bills, and Lyndon talked with other people about the legislation. He'd talk with committee clerks and other congressmen's secretaries and all that.

G: I guess he spent a good bit of time in Corpus when the Congress was out of session, too.

B: Yes. That would have been politically necessary because in the home district there are always people coming around to see the Congressman

and who want to see the Congressman, and of course Kleberg was not in a position to see them and talk with them because he didn't know what was going on. Lyndon would meet them and talk to them. Every once in a while somebody would come in who would not talk to Lyndon and say, "I want to see the Congressman personally." Somebody felt that he was seeing some high-priced clerk. Lyndon would say, "Well, the Congressman isn't here, but I'll be glad to tell him you came in. If it's important--" The fellow would say, "No, I've got to see the Congressman personally." Lyndon would say, "Well, I don't expect him today." The fellow [would say,] "I'll wait." Lyndon would say, "Well, you're perfectly welcome to wait." He'd sit down and wait maybe two or three hours and the Congressman never showed up, and everybody knew he never was going to show up. But that didn't happen many times. Most of the time Lyndon could persuade them to tell him what was going on, and he'd handle it.

G: Did LBJ spend much time at the King Ranch?

B: This is an area on which I'm not well informed, but my recollection is that he did not and he would not. Unless it was a matter of the utmost urgency he wouldn't go there, because he was not on social terms with the family. I'll revamp and restate what I told you when we were having breakfast this morning about Mrs. Kleberg. Is that all right?

Mrs. Kleberg, whom we called Miss Mamie, was a very great lady. She was quite a handsome-looking woman, and she had real grace and charm. She and the Congressman lived at the Shoreham Hotel at the

time, which was the elite and elegant residence. Mrs. Kleberg at first had adopted the attitude that she was entitled to call on the congressional office staff for anything she wanted. At one time, or maybe several times, she asked Lyndon to run errands for her or have somebody in the office run errands for her or drive her someplace, and Lyndon flatly refused. He said that we had responsibilities to carry out for the Congressman as a Congressman and as a representative of the people back home in Texas. He didn't have time to run errands for her or to drive her or provide her with a driver, and the money he had in the office was little enough to do the job. They didn't have any money for chauffeurs. I remember hearing him laugh about it one time.

She called one time and wanted something for her daughter Mary Etta. Somebody had to go pick her up at the train or some errand of that kind, and bring her to the Shoreham, and Lyndon wouldn't have any part of it.

G: He really argued with her over the phone?

B: He didn't argue with her. He just said he wasn't going to do it. He was polite, now, please don't misunderstand me. He wasn't rude to her at all, but he was very firm. He called her Mrs. Kleberg. He didn't call her Miss Mamie like the rest of us did. He said, "Mrs. Kleberg, I really have to take my orders from the Congressman. This is his office, and I work for him. If he asks me to do something, I'll certainly do what he asks me to." One day I think Mary Etta Kleberg

called and asked Lyndon to send a car for her or something, and Lyndon refused. He just said, "We don't have any chauffeurs here."

Lyndon wanted to do the best possible job for the constituents, and this was, in his mind, a sacred obligation. It wasn't that he was uncooperative or anything, but he felt, as I told you this morning Mike, that every letter that came in had to have an answer that day. For example, if some farmer down in Nueces County wrote, "I'm not getting my cotton payment," Lyndon would write him a letter, or somebody would write him a letter. Lyndon didn't do a great deal of dictating. He'd say tell them so and so, and we would compose the letter. We'd write this fellow and say, "Dear Jim," if we knew him to call him Jim. We called everybody by their first name. That was a Lyndon Johnson characteristic almost. "Dear Jim, We have your letter about the cotton payments, and we're taking it up today with the Secretary of Agriculture. We'll let you know as soon as we have information. If there is anything further we can do for you, or you need us at any time, just holler." That was the way we used to write those letters. He could sign the Congressman's name perfectly, and we all could. He didn't look at all the mail but most of it.

G: Did this series of impositions on his regular duties by Mrs. Kleberg and the daughter create problems for him in his relations with the job?

B: I would say that it probably estranged him from the Kleberg family as distinguished from the Congressman himself. They didn't ever invite him socially, for example. I don't think he ever was invited

to have dinner with them at the Shoreham. I am just thinking out loud, but he was never included in their social activities, and they had many of them. But for that matter none of the rest of us were either that I remember.

G: Do you think Mrs. Kleberg tried to prevail on the Congressman to fire LBJ?

B: That would be speculation on my part, but I'm sure she must have told him that Lyndon was uncooperative and probably asked the Congressman to tell him to do what she wanted to. If Mr. Kleberg, the Congressman, ever mentioned it to Lyndon, Lyndon told him he didn't feel that he ought to be asked to do that. Lyndon was a very independent minded individual.

G: But this is just speculation, is that right, or you don't recall any particular . . . ?

B: No.

G: You know there's a story--

B: Excuse me, Mike. I do know that there was what you might call a very, very frigid coolness between Mrs. Kleberg and Lyndon. She didn't care for Lyndon, and he didn't care for her. You were going to say there's a story.

G: One explanation of his leaving is that Mrs. Kleberg persuaded her husband, either because of these impositions or because of a genuine fear, that Lyndon Johnson had ambitions of his own and was going to run against Dick Kleberg and finally persuaded her husband to get

rid of him to keep this threat from being realized. Have you ever heard that?

B: Well, let's put it this way, I never heard that before. I have been asked why Lyndon left Kleberg, and I think I can assure you that that story is completely without foundation in fact. I'll tell you why. In the first place, anybody who knew Lyndon or had anything to do with him would know that under no conceivable set of circumstances would he ever have run against Dick Kleberg, no matter what the fallings out or anything else. I want to tell you one of Lyndon's statements that I've always remembered was something like this: that loyalty is the most important of all human virtues and qualifications. He said, "If a fellow is brilliant and energetic and smart and he's not loyal, then I don't know who he's being brilliant and energetic and smart for, and I haven't got room for him around me." Now by the same token Lyndon would have felt that way toward Mr. Kleberg. Now I know why he left.

G: Do you want to elaborate on that?

B: Sure. Lyndon had his own ideas of what a congressman should be and what an elected public official's duties were, and they certainly did not embrace answering the call of the House to show you're present and then going out to the golf course every day. I am sure he didn't ever criticize Mr. Kleberg to his face, and I never heard him say anything derogatory about Mr. Kleberg. But I know that he didn't feel that Mr. Kleberg was representing his constituents.

Have we got time for me to tell you about this? There was a time we got a call one day from a Mexican woman, a Latin American woman

down near the border. It was a woman named Hinojosa. Her son, as well as I recall it, was Jesus. He was born there in our district someplace. He had gone over to Mexico, and when he was coming back he didn't have proof of citizenship with him and they arrested him and detained him as an alien. His mother got word, and she called our office. My recollection is that she spoke only Spanish, and my Spanish at that time wasn't good at all. Gene Latimer, though, spoke Spanish like a native, and he talked with her on the phone and learned what had happened. Lyndon was out of the office at the time. Lyndon's Spanish was never good. I mean he had a few phrases, but he never studied it. He never had any interest in it.

Gene told him what had happened, and Lyndon got on the telephone and called somebody at the Department of Labor. Immigration Service was in the Labor Department at that time, not in Justice as it is now. I think I'm correct about that. He called one of our friends, and he said, "Look, we know these Hinojosas, and we know that Jesus was born down there. Get him out of the jail down there." This fellow called, and he got him out, so he could go home.

Well, a couple of days later Congressman Dick Kleberg was down in some southern part of the district, and this Mrs. Hinojosa came running up to him with her rosary beads and she's praying over him in Spanish and thanking him. He spoke Spanish perfectly, you know, and he called up and he said, "Hey, what did we do for the Hinojosas?" He had no idea what she was being so grateful about.

G: That's a good story.

B: Isn't it a great story? As my recollection is, I answered the phone when he called. He said, "This woman is thanking me and blessing me and praying over me. I don't know what we did for her." So I had to tell him about the time her son was in the jail down there.

G: While we're on some of these cases here, let me ask you about some more. Do you recall getting pensions for retired Texas Rangers, federal assistance for retired Texas Rangers?

B: I don't think I had any connection with that. I remember hearing the conversation, but that would be all.

G: Also, over there in one of the border areas was an old customs official, I think, who was beyond retirement--they had a mandatory retirement [age] and he was above that but was evidently very competent and needed the money. LBJ went and talked to a member of the Civil Service Commission, or his wife, and got an exemption for this old fellow. Do you recall that at all?

B: No, no.

G: Okay.

B: Are you familiar with the story about Arthur C. Perry and his civil service exam?

G: No.

B: Well, Arthur Perry was working for Senator Connally, as you know. Now Arthur was older than Lyndon; I can't tell you how much older, but five or six years anyway and maybe a little bit more. But he and Lyndon became good friends. He had been active in Little Congress, and he and Lyndon were active together. He helped Lyndon get to be

speaker, see. Now I know this because when Arthur was getting on in years and his health was failing he and I used to walk together at noontime. We'd have lunch and take walks, and he'd tell me about the old days. I was very fond of Arthur. He told me the Little Congress story, how Lyndon got to be Speaker and so on.

But Arthur didn't want to stay with Senator Connally. Now Arthur's desire to leave Senator Connally is on a parallel--don't let's get off the subject of why Lyndon left Kleberg, because that's very important and it's been terribly misstated. But all these congressional secretaries who have merit and qualities and qualifications and strengths of their own, they want to accomplish on their own. They want to be their own man.

Arthur Perry was a lawyer. He felt that he had the ability to be a lawyer, and he had exhausted the value of being a senator's right-hand man. The Civil Service Commission had openings for attorneys at the Federal Communications Commission. This would be, say, 1934 and early 1935. The Federal Radio Commission, later the Federal Communications Commission, whatever, was set up in the twenties, and they hadn't effectuated an organization, so they were doing so and they needed lawyers. They gave a non-competitive civil service examination, and there were maybe eight or ten positions open. I don't remember how many. But Arthur Perry submitted his qualifications.

Now when I say noncompetitive, you submit a statement of your qualifications for the job, and they examine them and evaluate them and pick the ones they think are best. Well, on Arthur's statement

was a lot of this congressional work, which the Civil Service Commission did not evaluate as legal work. You know, representing constituents they considered political, even though I'm sure the record showed that Arthur had drafted legislation and helped with the legislative process and presented the legal problems of some of their constituents to government agencies. But I don't think Arthur had ever practiced law the way an ordinary lawyer hangs out his shingle. So they found that others were more qualified than Arthur, and Arthur was not going to get the appointment.

Now this is of my own personal knowledge. Arthur and Lyndon talked about it. Arthur came over to Kleberg's office, and he was kind of downhearted because he had his heart set on this. This was a new agency in a relatively new industry, and he felt that the opportunity was a very great one, and he would like it and enjoy it. Lyndon sure wanted to help him, and they sat around brooding about what they could do. I think Lyndon checked all of the political avenues, and there was no way you could get him a higher grade through political influence.

So somehow or other the subject came up, I guess Lyndon said, "It's too bad you weren't in the army. We could get you a veteran's preference of ten points." Arthur said, "Well, it isn't my fault, Lyndon. I enlisted but they didn't let me. They didn't want me as a soldier. They made me work as a secretary to a general." So Lyndon said, "You mean you were secretary to a general?" He said, "Yes, I worked in the General's office." Lyndon said, "Well, were

you in the army or not?" Arthur said, "I never wore a uniform." This is the best I recollect. He said, "I never wore a uniform, but I worked for the General, and I worked on army problems and all that." Lyndon said, "How did you get paid, do you remember?" He said, "I got paid with a check." He said, "Was it an army check or not?" Arthur Perry said, "I don't know. I don't remember anything about that, Lyndon. You know, it was a long time ago," and he wouldn't be apt to remember the kind of check he got.

They talked about it, and Lyndon said, "I'll bet those records are downtown at the General Accounting Office." So he got on the telephone, and he called down there. They referred him from one place to another, and finally he got a fellow on the telephone whose name was [F. L.] Yates. Here I am going back a long time. This fellow Yates--I've forgotten his first name now--but Lyndon talked to him. You know Lyndon was a good, polishing kind of a talker and persuasive. He said, "I've got to get you to help me." He used to tell everybody, "I've got a problem. This is Lyndon Johnson, [from] Congressman Kleberg's office. I've got to get you to help me." Sometimes he would say it was Congressman Kleberg but not frequently, unless it was important. Anyway, he said to this fellow, "I've got a friend, and he took his civil service exam. We need to get him some veterans preference if he's eligible. We can't find out if he's eligible or not unless we know what payroll he was on."

This fellow Yates wanted to help, and he said, "Well, give me his name and all the information." So Lyndon said his name is A. C.

Perry, and he's from such and such a place in Texas and so on and so forth. This fellow said, "You mean Arthur Perry?" Lyndon said, "Yes," He said, "Why, he's an old friend of mine." Hadn't seen each other in years, but they were acquainted. I think maybe Yates came from Texas someplace. He pulled all the records. He said, "They're in storage, but I'll get them out of storage." He got them out.

I'll never forget, Lyndon and I were sitting there in the office, and he picked up the phone. He wouldn't let me answer the phone that afternoon, because he was awaiting that phone call. He'd pick it up a couple of times, "Maybe this is it, Russ." "Maybe this is my boy, Russ." Toward the end of the afternoon he picked up the telephone when it rang. He said, "This is it, Russ." I'll never forget that. He said, "By George! By God!" He slammed his hand down. He said, "Well now, I'm going to get copies of all these things, right?" And he said, "Yes." "And you'll certify?" "Yes." Turned out that he was on a military payroll, and they had classified him as a private first class or something like that. He got a certificate for the Civil Service Commission, took it down, and Arthur Perry got the job.

G: That's great.

B: Isn't that?

G: I hear there was also an effort to dislodge Dan Quill as postmaster down there in San Antonio, and LBJ prevented this from happening. Do you recall that?

B: No. I think you've got the story, but I think it's a kind of a reverse. When that office became vacant Lyndon wanted Dan Quill to

have it and of course persuaded Kleberg to support him or supported him in Kleberg's name. Anyway, Kleberg didn't care. There was some competition for that spot, very serious competition. Now I'm reaching a long way back but this ought to put you on the trail. Is Dan Quill still alive? Well, Dan will be able to tell you. I think there was a civil service question, an examination, and they felt that Dan Quill didn't qualify or something of that sort, or the appointment had to be made out of the top three on the list. That's the best I can do for you. There were others that were theoretically entitled to the appointment ahead of Dan Quill, and Lyndon put on a first class war. I mean he went all out, with all guns blazing. I don't know what the issue was exactly. Now I know in Arthur Perry's case what the details were, but I wasn't familiar with the Dan Quill details. But he eventually got the appointment.

G: But were you in the office when this was going on?

B: Now I think this happened before I was in the office. I think my information on this is hearsay, but it was recent. I was hearing about it from the boys in the office. But as far as any effort being made afterwards to dislodge Dan Quill, I don't think that happened. At least I never heard of one.

G: Let me ask you to go back to the question of his leaving Kleberg.

B: Yes. Yes. You see, Lyndon Johnson was early in life endowed with a good opinion of his own abilities in competitive society. In other words, he recognized that he had qualities and strengths and abilities that fitted him for a competitive society, and naturally, with his

father's background, he was politically oriented and looking for a life in competitive politics. When he was able to manage he got the job with Kleberg. He could have stayed down there teaching school if he wanted to, obviously. But he wanted to get into the political arena, and he arranged to do so. Now when he came up here to Washington the best example of his applying that motivation would be the teamwork between him and Arthur Perry whereby he became speaker of Little Congress. He made friends with everybody he could.

Now here's my situation, Mike, and this illustrates it. I needed a job. Lyndon didn't have any money on the congressional payroll to pay me. He had used all the money. And that's typical of the reason he wouldn't have anybody driving Mrs. Kleberg around or her kids. He needed everybody. At that time Gene Latimer was not on the Congressman's payroll. He was on the payroll of the House. Gene Latimer used to get up at five o'clock in the morning and carry the mail around to the offices and then come to work at nine o'clock and work all day in the office. But he got paid for carrying the mail. He didn't get paid for being secretary to Kleberg. Now L. E. Jones I think was on the congressional payroll. Carroll Keach at one time was on our payroll for one thing or another but something other than secretary. I myself, he had me on the payroll for a little while there, tending the door of the House, and I got paid on the Speaker's payroll. But I'd go over there at noon time. I'd come into the office, say, at nine in the morning and work until noon, then go over to the Capitol. They'd only sit for maybe ten minutes some days and then I'd come right back and

work in the office. So Lyndon didn't have any money for secretaries.

He got me a job downtown at the Department of Agriculture where I could make some money. I'll never forget that he said to me, "Go over to the Senate garage, Russ, and get Mr. Kleberg's car." And I went over to the Senate garage, which was on the Senate side, it's under the Plaza there, and I got Mr. Kleberg's car and drove it over. We went downtown to the Department of Agriculture together, Lyndon and I, and we went into the office of Julian Friant--that's an important name, J-U-L-I-A-N F-R-I-A-N-T. Now Julian Friant was Jim Farley's patronage man. You know who Jim Farley was? We had a particular friend in Friant's office named Vincent Maguire. M-A-G-U-I-R-E. Mac was Gene Latimer's drinking buddy. They used to get drunk every night of the world. Off the record--not off the record, but poor Mac is gone now, and it was directly traceable to his alcohol. But Gene has quit drinking. And Gene, thank the Lord, is in good health and living in Denton.

But we went down there and we saw Mac. Mac was from New York. Lyndon said, "Mac, I got to have a job for Russ here." I knew Mac through Gene. He said, "I got to have a job for Russ." He said, "There were so many spots available to us and we've used up so many, and I want one of these for Russ." So Mac said, "I can arrange it, Lyndon, but who's patronage?" He said, "Put him on our patronage." You know, they had a list. And I was to get one of the jobs. Mac

said, "That's great, Texas helping Rhode Island." So Lyndon said, "We're in school together." So Mac said, "Yes, I know."

Mac said, "Would you want to say hello to the boss?"--meaning Friant. We walked into Friant's office, which was down the hall, and we just shook hands, and Jim Farley--FDR's campaign manager, then Postmaster General--walked in. Lyndon said, "How do you do, Mr. Farley. I'm Lyndon Johnson, [from] Congressman Dick Kleberg's office." He didn't know Farley well at the time, although I think he had met him, but he mentioned his name. Farley was very affable and shook hands. Lyndon said, "This is my friend Russell Brown from Rhode Island." Farley said, "Are you Charles Brown's son?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Well, you have a very distinguished father." Friant told him that I was going to be going to work at the Department of Agriculture on the Texas patronage list, and Farley said, "What are you doing helping a Republican?" You see, Mike, I was really a strong New Dealer, but everybody assumed that because of my father I was a Republican, which wasn't true at all. But he said, "What are you doing helping a Republican?" Lyndon put his arm around me, he said, "He's my Republican." And we all laughed about it.

I remember coming back Lyndon said, "I was glad to get to meet Mr. Farley today. I met him before, but he's a real kind of an operator I'd like to be someday." He admired Farley and said what a great political manager he was and how he had helped Roosevelt. He elected Roosevelt.

Lyndon had a pet idea I think I've mentioned, [but] it's not on the tape. He had a pet idea that there should be a special school

to train people, or special courses to train people for work in government. He said, "We have professional schools for lawyers; we have professional schools for doctors; we have special schools for preachers and for teachers, but we don't have any kind of a special course to train people for government. And I feel that we ought to. I hear that they do have such schools in Europe and England and in some of the other countries. We don't have any here and there ought to be one. This is one of my projects. If I ever have anything to say about it we'll set something up like that. Most of the people who have come to Congress, they've learned it by working in government. They know their jobs and so on, but they don't have any scientific background. They don't have any real organized training for it and they ought to."

G: Let me ask you this. Did Lyndon Johnson leave the Kleberg position before he got the NYA appointment?

B: No.

G: Was there a period in there when he did something else?

B: He had made up his mind sometime to get out on his own. Of course nobody will ever know when he reached that conclusion in his mind. But I do know that--at least I feel sure--during that first year in law school he came to the conclusion that he should find himself a means of making his way on his own and in his own name. I can remember hearing him say one time--I think he was talking about somebody else who had left one of the senators' offices or had run to succeed his boss, you know, one of the administrative assistants

whose congressman died, and he ran and was elected--"That's the route to follow. You got to be your own man if you're going to amount to anything. I'm not the assistant type."

G: Did he ever have a job as House doorkeeper while you were up there?

B: I heard him say that when he was leaving.

G: What did he say?

B: He made a speech to the Congress. You know, they gave him that evening, and he said that he once tended the door there. If he ever did it was before I came here. And please understand me, it's not at all impossible that he did, but I'll say this for the record. I'm sure that if he did it was only for a day or two at a time because he was not that type, Mike. He had a definite job in Kleberg's office when he first came to Washington.

But coming back to this NYA thing for just a second. I think that during that first year in law school he had his lines out. He probably could have gone to work for federal housing down there in Texas. He could have gone to work at other places. You remember Aubrey Williams. Does that name mean anything to you? He was head of the National Youth Administration. I'm sort of taking an educated guess here, maybe you can run it down. But Aubrey Williams and Abe Fortas were very close friends, and Abe Fortas and Lyndon were very close friends. I think that what happened--I say I'm taking an educated guess, part of this is information and part of it I'm filling in the spaces.

G: Well, let's distinguish between the two.

B: I know that Abe Fortas was in the picture and Aubrey Williams was in the picture. They were going to set up--and I think Lyndon may have been responsible for this in part--an NYA office in every state. Or maybe there already was but there needed to be somebody in charge of NYA for each state to give it a local complexion.

There's another factor here, too, Mike, that I'm sure entered into it, and that is this: in a very general way I remember hearing Lyndon say that this business of getting these people jobs is really the nucleus of a political organization for the future. In other words, here is the federal government under a Democratic administration, setting up job opportunities for young people who couldn't otherwise get an education. And he was education minded. Believe me, if there was any one thing in the forefront of his mind it was the importance of schooling. So he undoubtedly recognized the political role. He said he recognized the political implications of setting up this kind of an organization. And then through channels of his own, to which I was certainly not privy and about which I know nothing, he arranged to get himself designated by Aubrey Williams as state director for the National Youth Administration in Texas.

Now that had to occur in the spring of 1935. My best recollection is that Lyndon left in the fall, and I'll tell you why. The utility holding company bill came up in Congress that summer. That summer, just because of that, Congress stayed in session through August, which was just unheard of before that. You know, normally Congress would adjourn in May or June and go home, but they stayed

in session through August. I must have typed over a thousand letters answering telegrams that we were getting from Texas for and against this legislation. I remember Lyndon was eager to get out of there, but he wouldn't leave until the Congress' business was pretty well wound up because Congressman Kleberg needed him. I know of my own knowledge that there was no ill will on parting at that time. So if anybody tells you that there were any hard feelings between Mr. Kleberg and Lyndon Johnson when Lyndon left, I can only say it was never evident. I certainly had every reason to believe it was otherwise.

G: You did indicate that some friction developed later. Do you want to repeat the circumstances?

B: Sure, sure. Lyndon went back to Texas and opened the NYA office. L. E. Jones had been in Washington and had finished his first year in law school here and he made good grades. He took the exams and made good grades. L. E. decided that he didn't want to work and go to school. He got imbued with the enthusiasm of studying law, and he persuaded his father to finance him in law school at the University of Texas. Little did he dream that Lyndon was going to be coming down there at that time as NYA administrator. Lyndon just drafted him. He knew what L. E. could do, and he had confidence in him and all that. So he drafted L. E. and he made L. E. work in the NYA office. Did you see the--no, that's another picture of John Connally there. But there were some pictures of the NYA around that I've got in some old files.

But that's what happened. Lyndon was running the NYA and then the Congressman died, Jim Buchanan. Now Lyndon left Washington in 1935, and I guess it was 1937 when Buchanan died. There were a lot of people that announced they were running or going to run for election to his seat. Now that election is a special kind of election in which you do not need a majority and there is no run-off. At least that was the circumstance then. You just needed a plurality; the highest man was elected. So Lyndon considered running and thought that he would run.

Mr. Kleberg was among a group of congressmen who were friends of the late Jim Buchanan, and they didn't want anybody to run. They wanted Mrs. Buchanan to be elected to succeed her husband. Mr. Kleberg talked to Lyndon and asked him not to run. Lyndon kind of objected to this kind of interference in his personal affairs, although I'm sure he had a lot of respect and affection for Mr. Kleberg. But he felt that he ought to be permitted to make his own decision. He talked with Senator Wirtz, Alvin Wirtz, about it, and Senator Wirtz confirmed Lyndon's feeling that he was under no obligation to Mr. Buchanan. Now if he had felt any obligation to Mr. Buchanan he might have stepped out of the race. But he had no relationship with Buchanan. He got in the race, and Alvin Wirtz urged him to do so. He was of course duly elected.

G: I gather Kleberg's recommendation stemmed from a desire to get financial aid for Mrs. Buchanan?

B: Not so much financial aid, at least I don't know that. Oh, you mean by electing her.

G: Yes. Gainful employment.

B: Yes. Oh, yes, yes, that's true.

G: That was the motivation.

B: I think that at the time Mr. Buchanan died he didn't leave her a big estate. She probably needed the job.

G: Now let me ask you if you recall an occasion at which Lyndon Johnson made a presentation before the Civil Service Commission involving credit for the legal interpretations on the Hamilton Dam Project.

B: I don't think I have any information at all on that, Mike.

G: Let me ask you about Lyndon Johnson's parents. Did he talk much about his father and mother?

B: Right offhand I would have to say no. But there were occasions when--no, I started to say he would quote his father, but I think that relates to after he--he'd quote his daddy. But I don't think he did in those days.

G: Did you get the feeling that he was much closer to his mother than he was to his father?

B: Well, I didn't get that feeling from anything he said, but I saw correspondence coming in from his mother, but I never saw anything from his father. I knew that his father was away from home a good deal because he had been in the legislature and he worked at Austin for the state government. I think Lyndon was very much influenced to be successful and make his way in the world by the example of his

mother, who was a former schoolteacher. She imbued him with all the homely qualities and virtues that we like to think of as being typically American.

G: Let me turn this off for a second.

(Interruption)

B: Elmer Pope of Corpus Christi was an old time political factor in Nueces County and represented Nueces County in the state legislature. He was extremely important and powerful politically and was instrumental in Congressman Kleberg's getting the Democratic nomination for Congress. I'm sure that he was a good friend of LBJ's father, who had been in the legislature, and probably supported Lyndon's aspirations to come to work for Kleberg.

After I went to work in the office with Lyndon, Elmer Pope came to Washington several times in connection particularly with the matters pertaining to the port of Corpus Christi and the navigation matters that the South Texas area, and particularly Corpus Christi, were interested in. I remember particularly that Lyndon saw to it that a memorandum was prepared in the office, and I worked a little bit on it, to present to the Committees on Interstate Commerce of the House and the Senate, so that they would support the legislation that Elmer Pope was interested in. He was one of the early friends that I remember coming to Washington to Congressman Kleberg's office when Lyndon was in charge. And he always thought very highly of Lyndon and expressed himself to us that way in the office. He said, "This boy is going to go far." That's Elmer Pope from Corpus Christi.

Now we mentioned Sam Fore and Elmer Weinert and we can talk about them. There was another fellow named Newton Crain of Cuero. Does that ring a bell? He was active in local politics down there, though my connection with him was just minimal. But he might have some information on LBJ that would be of value. His son, Newton, is practicing law down there someplace and was at one time Assistant United States Attorney.

Sam Fore, if it's all right, I'll just tell you what we know about Sam Fore. Sam Fore had that newspaper over there in Floresville. He was a very, very big man and we all did a lot of joking with him. He was a very good humored sort. He was one of Lyndon's early admirers and supporters. Lyndon was very fond of him. I remember him and the connections, but I don't remember any specific details or any business we had with him except that he was very congenial and all that. Of course his daughter Marian is married to Carroll Keach and lives in Robstown now.

G: Did you see Senator Wirtz much in the office?

B: Oh, yes. Yes.

G: Do you recall any instances of their being together or any interaction or anything that reflects on the relationship between Lyndon Johnson and Alvin Wirtz in 1934?

B: I remember seeing Senator Wirtz almost right from the beginning. He came up, and in those days he was identified particularly with

Congressman Kleberg. However, due to the fact that he would call--now I'm trying to remember accurately, but it seems to me that Senator Wirtz called, at one point, several times for Mr. Kleberg and couldn't get him. Lyndon was out of the office one time when I answered the phone. He laughed and he said, "Do you suppose if I called the Burning Tree Country Club I could find our Congressman?" I said, "Well, I just don't know where he is, Senator Wirtz." He said, "I know. I know," and that was that. He said, "Lyndon isn't there, is he?" and I said, "I think he's gone over to another office." He said, "Would you ask Lyndon to call me when he comes in? I know he'll call me." I think it was after that he stopped asking for Congressman Kleberg and he always called for Lyndon.

G: What sort of matters would he call about?

B: I don't think I would really be in a position accurately to remember now, if I knew then, and I may not ever have known. But Senator Wirtz was very active in Texas politics generally, and he would have had an interest in legislation. Another thought that occurs to me is if anybody in Texas had a legal problem with the federal government they might have gone to Alvin Wirtz,and Alvin Wirtz would have called up to Washington to get the Congressman to help or to develop information or find out what we could do to help. He would have called Congressman Kleberg. [He] probably called other congressmen, too, but I think he came to the conclusion very early in the game that instead of calling any congressman he ought to call LBJ. LBJ

thought very highly of Senator Wirtz. He made it a practice to turn out all the forces he could to help Senator Wirtz.

Now Senator Wirtz had a daughter. Do you know her first name? I'm trying to think of it.

G: I believe it was Kitty Mae, wasn't it?

B: No.

G: His wife was either Kitty Mae or Ida May and his daughter was the other.

B: Well, the Mae part of it strikes a response. Ida May I think was his daughter.

G: Could be.

B: And she might be able to fill you in on this, Mike, because she was up here and she had some dates with some of the boys, a very pretty girl and very attractive and was very popular.

Senator Wirtz though gave Lyndon a picture now, a photograph of himself which he inscribed with words to the effect that, "This is for Lyndon Johnson, Whom I admire and respect and for whom I bear the same affection as if he were really my own son."

G: Did Lyndon Johnson think of him more or less as a father?

B: Well, there was quite a spread in their ages. I think Lyndon looked up to him very greatly and respected him and his opinion and had found that he was a very warm and affectionate kind of a man. Lyndon found a great deal of strength in Senator Wirtz's friendship.

G: Was Welly Hopkins a close friend at this point?

B: Yes. As a matter of fact, Welly Hopkins and Lyndon Johnson were especially close friends at the time, and I can remember Welly coming into the office. He had been a state senator down in Texas. My recollection is that he and Lyndon, at one point, went to Mexico together on a trip. I don't know exactly when and it may have been before I was there, but I heard about it. Welly Hopkins and his wife--I think her name is Alice--were very warm friends of Lyndon's. Of course I was personally very fond of Welly, though I doubt that Welly would even remember me today. You know, I didn't see him frequently or often but I remembered him because of Lyndon. But then he came up and he went to work for the coal miner's union.

G: Right. Well, first the Justice Department.

B: Yes.

G: In November, of course, he married Mrs. Johnson, and they came back and lived at the Kennedy-Warren Apartments. Did you see much of them?

B: Yes. At first they didn't live at the Kennedy-Warren; they lived across the street. It may have been 3000 Connecticut Avenue, although I'm not sure. But it was later that they moved into the Kennedy-Warren, quite a bit later, in fact. You asked if I saw much of Mrs. Johnson?

(Interruption)

G: --particularly in that it foreshadows a lot of her historic tours when she was first lady.

B: Exactly.

G: Okay, do you want to [continue]?

B: Yes. When Bird first came to Washington, she set for herself a program of familiarizing herself with the city of Washington and its history and the historic places around Washington and the country's history. She made it a point to acquaint herself and familiarize herself with these things. In order to do so she organized weekend tours. A good example would be one that we made, I think, to Gettysburg.

Now Lyndon had a car at the time and we didn't. Among the people who were involved in these tours would be: Mary Rather and Dorothy Jackson, who is now Dorothy Nichols, and Bird; I was included in some of them; L. E. Jones, I think was on at least one; George Prowse, who is a Corpus Christi lawyer, P-R-O-W-S-E, was on at least one of them; and John Connally. What we would do would be to drive to these places and generally have dinner and look over the historic places and talk about the historic values and related history and so on, that sort of thing.

(Interruption)

G: One to Gettysburg?

B: Yes, there was one to Gettysburg. There was one in particular that I think you'll enjoy hearing about. We went to Gettysburg and we went to several other places. One in particular that I remember especially was a trip we made down to Old Point Comfort, Virginia, by boat. This Potomac River Line had a boat that left Washington and went down to Old Point Comfort. You left Washington at night and you got to Old Point Comfort in the morning. So our plan was to go down by boat,

take the car, and get off the boat in the morning at old Point Comfort and then drive back. On our drive back we were to stop at Monticello, which was Jefferson's home, and at President Monroe's home, which I think is called Woodlawn [Ash Lawn]. It's not far away from Jefferson's.

We left Washington, oh, say five-thirty or six o'clock and had dinner on the boat. Now the people on that trip, I'm almost sure, were: Lady Bird and Mary Rather and Dorothy Jackson; John Connally and I were on that trip I'm sure, and I'm not sure who the third man was, if there was a third man.

(Interruption)

I don't remember who the third man was. If there was a third man it could have been George Prowse or L. E. Jones. We had dinner on the boat. I specifically remember we played cards afterwards. We were playing twenty-one, and John Connally was the dealer. At one point he said, "Come on now, cards to the gamblers, cards to the gamblers." It's sort of amusing to remember John in that vein.

John and I and this other fellow had one stateroom, and the gals had another one. There was a lower berth and an upper birth and some kind of a third birth. But we flipped coins to see who would get the choice of bunks. I somehow got the lower one and John got an upper one. I am sure John had never been on a steamship in his life before, and these riverboats were kind of rough and they go, "uh-uh-uh-uh, uh-uh-uh-uh, uh-uh-uh-" you know, [they] shake and all that. I said to John, "How do you feel, John?" He said, "I feel like I'm sleeping on a peanut thrashin' [sic] machine." Well, I got hysterical at this reflection of Johnson's early days.

We got down to Old Point Comfort in the morning. That's southern Virginia. We drove back through Monticello. Someplace in all my papers I have some snapshots of Lady Bird and Mary Rather and Dorothy Jackson at Monticello. We looked that place over and got a brochure about it, and Lady Bird had read up on it. She could tell us a lot about it by that time, how Jefferson designed the house and all the layout. She knew all about the gardens and how he planned the house. I said, "You've really been doing your homework." She said, "That's the way to get the most out of these trips."

We then drove over to President Monroe's home, which is a very nice, country squire type of place, with big wide spaces and shrubs and drives and all that. She had learned all about that, too. Then we came back on into Washington, got back in Sunday night, as I recall it.

Now she used to do this with a fair amount of regularity. I remember one trip to Williamsburg. John Connally was on that trip, and there were others. But she set herself a task of being well-informed on all these matters that pertained to Washington and the history of Washington. She did a real good job to make herself effective and useful and knowledgeable. While I don't really know this, Mike, I think she undoubtedly did the same thing with regard to many of the foreign countries that they went to, because this is a pattern in her life.

There is a little sidelight here that would be completely lost to history if I didn't tell you about it now. I ought to tell you.

When they lived out on Connecticut Avenue, and as I've said, Lady Bird is an intellect, a real thinker, and she has tastes that are of an intellectual nature. She's always been a great theater lover and a theatergoer, and of course this is something I like. I've been in a lot of dramatics myself and all that sort of thing, so I like to go to the theater. I had an old maid schoolteacher aunt here who was born in the District of Columbia--I say here as if we were in Washington. But my Aunt Clara used to buy tickets, and we'd go to the theater together. We'd see Lady Bird there every once in a while.

One season she had bought tickets for the Theater Guild. You know they have about four performances a year. They sell the tickets in a group. She had these tickets. But it developed that Lyndon's program was such that he couldn't possibly go to the theater with her. And his disposition is not such as to sit through that sort of thing. Later on, much later on, when he was President, I happened to sit behind him at a Jackson Day Dinner. They had the New York City Ballet there, and I looked at him watching the ballet and I said, "He'd rather be anyplace else but watching this ballet." Because this is just not in his field of interest.

Anyway, it turned out that I was the one who took Bird to the theater that season to those Theater Guild plays. Now what happened was: I didn't have a car. This was still in law school. I would meet Lady Bird and Lyndon at the National Theater. He'd bring her to the theater. He'd probably take her to dinner and then bring her to the theater, and I'd go inside with her. I was always prepared to

see her home, but she never would let me do so. She always went home by herself, on the Connecticut Avenue bus, which in those days wasn't considered anything of any danger. Today you wouldn't let it happen at all. But I went to the Theater Guild that season with her. I remember he used to bring her and say, "Now I'll see you later," and so on. She'd spend the evening at the theater, which I was delighted to do. They were fairly expensive tickets and so on. But he wouldn't go to the theater.

Now we've talked about the tours and the way she organized those tours. She really did prepare herself to learn all she could about Washington and the history. I think that later on he began to realize what a great asset this was. In fact I think I told you this morning, I might as well put it on the tape, that when some of these self-seeking women were publishing books and telling stories about how he was in love with them and all that sort of thing I was at the White House and I told Lyndon, "The best day's work you ever did was the day you got her to marry you." We were admiring her poise and composure in presiding over this big White House function. I said, "The best day's work you ever did was the day you persuaded her to marry you." He said, "Russ, I know it every day. I know it better every day." And that's at the very time that people were indicating that he was interested in somebody else.

G: Did you meet Aunt Effie?

B: I don't really remember, unless she was at the White House.

G: No, she was dead by then. But that first year that they were married I think Aunt Effie spent some time with them in Washington.

B: Well, it could have happened, but I don't have a recollection of it, Mike. I heard about Aunt Effie all my life, but I don't think I remember meeting her.

G: As long as we're on the subject of relatives, do you remember anything about LBJ's uncle, George Johnson, who was a teacher in Houston.

B: No.

G: One of the stories I wanted you to repeat on tape is the discussion between Mr. Johnson and Gene Latimer about letter writing, particularly writing to his mother.

B: Oh, yes, yes, good. If I may I'd like to tell you about Gene for just a second. Gene was one of Lyndon's students at Sam Houston High School, I think it was, in Houston. He and L. E. Jones were state championship debaters that Lyndon coached. He coached that team and they competed for the state championship. Both of them wrote shorthand and typed very well, so Lyndon brought them to Washington to work in Congressman Kleberg's office.

L. E. Jones was a very sober-minded, serious kind of fellow. He had a good sense of humor, but Bird said about him once, "To L. E. life is real and life is earnest." That's true. He's very much interested in accomplishing his purpose and getting ahead. But Gene Latimer, on the other hand, was sort of a playboy type. He started law school but didn't finish it. The best-humored little guy you ever saw. He's a short little fellow. Have you met him? Gene's short, and something about him makes all the women want to baby him. He's got that kind of a look. He's a lot of fun, and I love

Gene dearly. We talk on the telephone regularly. He lives down there in Denton, Texas, now. He has two boys. His wife has passed away. But Gene was sort of a junior league ne'er-do-well when he came up here.

One day--I'll never forget this--Lyndon said, "I want to see Gene Latimer. As soon as he puts his face in this door, you tell him I got to see him." So Gene came in, and Lyndon sat him down beside his desk and he said, "Mr. Thurston"--I think that was the man's name who had a laundry and dry cleaning establishment right in the Capitol neighborhood--"tells me you owe him over two hundred dollars for laundry. Is that right?" Gene said, "Well, I guess so." So Lyndon said, "Sit down here, son." And he sat Gene down there and he got out a pencil and paper and he said, "You write down for me all the money you owe to everybody in this town." Well, Gene said, "I can't do that. I owe a lot of money and I know that."

So Lyndon said, "Well, I'll tell you what, do you admit you owe this man two hundred dollars?" He said, "Yes, sir." He said, "I'm going to give you twenty-four hours to get me up a list of all your bills. Meantime, you got any money with you?" Gene said, "Well, I got about twenty dollars." Lyndon said, "Hand it over." So Gene handed over the twenty dollars, and Lyndon gave him back a dollar. He said, "Now I'm going to pay your rent over there at the Hotel, and I'm going to give you a dollar a day to eat on. And I'm going to pay your bills. When your checks come in, you're going to endorse them over to me and I'm going to pay your bills. I'm

going to give you twenty-four hours to get me a list of all your bills." So Gene sat there, you know, and he's just ready to bawl. He said, "You mean I'm not going to get any money for whiskey?" He said, "No, sir, you're not going to get any money for whiskey. You can sponge whiskey off of your friends, but I'm going to pay your bills." So he took Gene's money and he paid Gene's bills. He wasn't going to have him running around on him that way.

Let's see, we were heading for something else about Gene.

G: Oh, writing letters.

B: Yes. Gene is a gifted letter writer. He uses the language beautifully, and he's got beautiful ideas. He's a very sensitive and wonderful person himself and it comes through in his letters. He writes you wonderful letters. Even if he's doing a lot of kidding, why, you get the feeling that it's with the best of warmth and good will. I can remember distinctly one day being in the office there and Lyndon says to Gene, "Now, by God, one of your jobs every week, you've got to get off a letter to Mama. Mama expects a letter from me and you got to get off a letter." Gene would say, "Okay." So he would write her letters.

I can remember letters that Gene would write. He would dramatize everything for Mrs. Johnson. I remember particularly one letter that Gene wrote, and my best recollection of it was something like this, he wrote, "Dear Mama, This has been the busiest day of my whole life. I went with the Congressman over to the floor of the House of Representatives today and saw a lot of the famous people that we read

about in the newspapers. Then I had to go over on the Senate side. I saw the Vice President, and Congressman Kleberg introduced me to him." This was John Garner, you know. "He asked me if I was Sam Johnson's boy, and he spoke so well of Daddy. I knew you would want to hear about it and he asked me to give you his regards."

Well, this was all Gene's invention, see, but Lyndon's mother just loved it. He'd invent stories about how he was working on a bill that would improve country life in Texas, for example, and help the farmers. "We're trying to do so much for the farm people who have lost their money on crops. I've been working with the committee clerks on this, and I think the bill will pass. President Roosevelt is trying hard to do everything he can for us. I knew you'd be glad to hear that I had a little part in all this. Mama, I think of you often, and I love you very dearly. I want you to know I have tried to live up to all the good things you told me when I was growing up. Your devoted son, Lyndon."

G: Were these letters typed?

B: Oh, yes, yes. They were typed. You know, Lyndon didn't type. And Gene wouldn't write them out longhand because she would know it wasn't Lyndon's handwriting. They were typed letters. Of course, Lyndon signed them. Not only did he sign that kind of letters, but I remember one time young Dick Kleberg, the Congressman's son who was at Virginia Military Institute down here, VMI, he wrote, "Dear Daddy, I need some money," or something along those lines. So Lyndon had us go hunt through the files for a letter that his daddy had sent or

the kind of letters he had written him. Lyndon had somebody write him a letter, "Dear Dick, I'm sending you the money you want and I hope you're getting along all right and behaving, and give some time to your studies." I think Gene wrote the letter. Lyndon found in the files someplace the way Mr. Kleberg signed his name and he wrote, "Dad" on there, and sent the letter off with a check. And he signed the check.

G: Did he really?

B: Oh, yes. He could sign his name and the bank paid him on Lyndon's signature.

G: In later years LBJ became known as a great mimic, and I'm just wondering if you ever heard him do mimicry of other people in this early period.

B: Now, I think, now that you mention it, that he did a little of it. But not to any extent that I remember specifically.

G: Did you think of him then as having a good sense of humor?

B: Oh, yes, yes. I'll tell you an interesting thing that happened one day, talking about a good sense of humor. He had a great sense of humor. Somebody wrote us a letter, one of the people from Texas was writing the Congressman, "Dear Dick," about something. He had on there a phrase, "I hate to wart you, but I really need help." And I got to laughing; I couldn't stop laughing at the idea, "I hate to wart you." Lyndon came over to see what I was looking at and he got to laughing. He said, "Well, a wart is a worry. That's pretty good." But he really got a charge out of it. He did have a good

sense of humor. He had a lot of good stories in those days as well as later.

I was asked to tell about him here not long ago and I was going to write down to the Library. The've got a set of slides with a tape of him telling stories and I was going to buy one. They're for sale and I was going to buy one and use it up here when some of the people around here talk about him. That would make a good way to--

G: I'll send you one.

B: You know, his stories and so on, they're great. But he had a good sense of humor, and I'll tell you another thing, he liked to kid people. Now I think I told you about the Martin Dies story. He was kidding Martin Dies pretty strongly about that. "Throwing down your principles. You're going to vote for this bonus. You told me it was against your principles, Martin," and so on. He did a lot of kidding. He had an excellent sense of humor, especially when you were out with him in the evening and there was a little scotch flowing around.

I can remember one night being in their apartment. We had a big crap game going, and he was losing a lot of money. One of his friends, I think it was one of the newspapermen--I was in the game, but I was only a minor participant; I didn't have any money to be shooting craps with. But one of these fellows had won thirty or forty dollars. Lyndon wouldn't let him quit. Lyndon said, "No, sir, by God! You ain't going to walk out of this game with my money!" And they kept on playing until Lyndon won all of his money back and then some.

We really had a lot of laughs. He enjoyed life really very much. The general public doesn't see that side of him, that's why I'd like to have that set of jokes that he told. I've told some of his stories around here and they have been well received. But he loved people and he was very warmhearted.

As a matter of fact, Mike, if you were talking about Lyndon and legislation, he did a lot for the blacks and he did a lot for a lot of others, but I think, and I could be wrong, but at least at one time he was particularly proud of his part in the legislation that's known as the Rural Electrification Administration. I'm sure you know that he masterminded the thing through the Congress. But do you know why he was so proud of it? He felt that kids on the farm, young men and women, have to work hard during the day with their farm chores and all that. Then when it gets dark and they have to quit working outdoors, they come in the house and they don't have light to read by; they don't have electricity to study by. Their mothers work so hard; the housework is three times as hard without machinery. He just determined that they were going to spread the electric power lines out to the farms so that the kids could study. He said, "Then they can make something of themselves. They can study and have lights to read by. The farm women will have refrigeration to put up foods and preserve foods, and they'll have washing machines so they don't have to break their back on the scrubbing board." I really felt that's the real Lyndon Johnson--

Tape 3 of 3

G: I believe you had just finished talking about the rural electric co-ops.

B: Yes, the rural electric. I think that of all the legislation that he was responsible for he took most personal pride and gratification in that, because he felt it was widely beneficial. I guess you know the whole story of the civil rights legislation and how he kept the Senate in session.

G: I was going to ask you about his--in this early period, particularly in 1934--you were from Providence?--

B: Rhode Island, yes.

G: --and he was from the South, Southwest. Did you get any hint of prejudice? Did he seem to reflect the prevailing racial attitudes of his region?

B: None whatever. As a matter of fact Lyndon came from a part of Texas that was not really an active part of the Confederacy. Were you aware of that, Mike? He didn't inherit any racial prejudice against the blacks or against the North. I think that Lyndon's area of Texas was largely outside the war area. Not many of the Texas people that I know of participated in the war or were in the Confederate army even. I don't know. I've talked with some people down there about it, and that's the impression I get.

When he came to Washington he was, in a way, like an individual from another planet. He had no prejudices, he had no feelings. Everybody was just people, just individuals, and that's all there was

to it. He didn't reflect a particularly southern attitude; he was just an American, a citizen of the United States, and that's about the way he looked at it.

G: Do you recall any particular occasions in which he had traffic with blacks?

B: Well, I do, but not in the early days. I'd like to tell you about one little item that may be of interest. A great deal of this is not in a continuum, but we can relocate it.

As I mentioned, I was at the White House one night when the Prime Minister of England was there. Naturally they had invited the entire diplomatic corps, which included the emerging nations, the new black nations. Their ambassadors were there with their wives and all that. I'm trying to pinpoint the day, but I don't have it accurately in mind. However, this was at a time that Lyndon was dancing a lot. You know, he went through a stage when he was interested in dancing, And of course he danced with the diplomats' wives. I looked up, and here he was dancing with a black woman whose husband was undoubtedly an ambassador. I just thought to myself, "Just to think that you could live long enough to see, in the city of Washington, a southerner as President of the United States, dancing in the White House with a black woman." It's unbelievable. Why, when I came to Washington blacks couldn't even eat in white restaurants. They wouldn't let them go to the theater with white people. And here what a revolution there was. Here he was dancing with this black woman.

He had overcome any possible shadow of discriminatory feeling. The one I think was responsible for that is Bird. I know that Lyndon originally came up with, let's say, an expectation that--oh, I say I know this, I feel this. He expected to be discriminated against because he was a southerner. He found himself fully accepted and readily accepted,and this went a long way to make him feel much more at home. There was no discrimination at all against him, as a southerner. Then when it came to the blacks I don't think he ever had much connection with them politically in Washington.

I do remember in South Texas, in the 1941 election, there was a fairly good-sized black population down there in Corpus Christi. I hope I said 1941 election, I think I did. 1941 was his first race for the Senate. There was a particular individual who was very powerful, in fact, all-powerful in the black community, and I went to see him.

G: Who was that?

B: My recollection is his name was Chapman, Atlee Chapman.

G: Where was he?

B: In Corpus Christi. I can't swear that my recollection is accurate on that. I went to see him and he said, "We're going to support Johnson. He's the only one that we can feel reasonably sure of, and we're going to support him." And they did. You know, that's kind of one of those block votes in South Texas. The blacks go all together, the Mexicans go all together.

G: Well, to the extent that they voted in 1941.

B: In Corpus Christi there was no limitation on voting on an ethnic basis.

Yes, well, that was one of the things that Lyndon was finding fault with me about and one of the reasons, when this Luis Salas said that Lyndon was down there in Jim Wells County in the 1948 election, I knew it wasn't true, because I was talking to Lyndon on the telephone from Corpus and he was giving me the dickens because we didn't turn out all our vote. You see, what happened was that primary election took place on a Saturday. It turned out to be a beautiful day and everybody went fishing. I never dreamed that they were going to leave before they voted or anything.

G: There are a couple of things here on the Kleberg years that I want to pick up. One is the story about the suit.

B: Oh, yes, about our charge account.

G: Right.

B: Yes. When I came to Washington, Mike, it was during the depths of the Depression. There were a lot of homeless people around and farms were being foreclosed. I had occasion to see one foreclosure when a bunch of farmers stood around with shotguns. I asked what were they doing there. One of the fellows told me anybody that attempted to bid on that farm would have gotten killed. Well, we were on the verge of very serious civil disorders I felt. I was conscious of this when I started law school.

I had come from Providence, Rhode Island. I guess I didn't have a big wardrobe. In those days--I went to Brown University--we used to wear corduroy slacks and a sweat shirt, that was all you needed. So when I came to Washington I guess I had maybe one suit and an extra

pair of pants and a jacket or something like that. There was a store here in Washington called Grosner's. G-R-O-S-N-E-R. It was a good store and they had very nice clothes. Once a year they used to have a sale.

One day the fellows in the office, Luther Jones and Gene Latimer and maybe somebody else, were going down to Grosner's, and they were going to buy some suits on sale. I was working in the office on some papers and they said, "Come on. Won't you come with us? [They have] good suits." I said, "Look, I haven't got any money for suits. I've got to pay the law school." Clarke Newlon's got this in his book. I said, "I've got to pay the law school." And Lyndon said, "Why don't you go along, Russ? We'll get you caught up with your law school somewhere." I said, "I hadn't better do that, Lyndon. I'm trying to stay even, they've been nice to me down there." So he said, "Look, I've got a charge account. Go down there and charge it to my account. This is a good sale and they have good clothes. [It's a] good chance to buy a good suit." So I said, "Well, I don't want to charge it to your account, Lyndon. I don't know when I'll get to pay it." He said, "They give you ninety days to pay it." Which was the truth, at that time you had ninety days to pay for any purchase. They expected you to pay a third a month, I guess, or something.

I finally went down there. I bought a suit, and it was charged to Lyndon's account. I made my payments; every time I got paid I paid a little bit on it. One day Lyndon called me in, he was there

in the office. He said, "Hey, did you ever get that suit paid for?" I said, "I've got one more payment due, which will be in a couple of weeks or something like that." He said, "Let me know as soon as you get it paid for, I've got to get myself one." So we laughed about it, and I told Clarke Newlon about it and he put it in his book.

G: Was Lyndon Johnson a good dresser in those days?

B: Yes.

G: Natty dresser?

B: Well, I don't know whether you'd call it natty, but he was a careful dresser. He was very conscious of the effect of the appearance that he made, and he was very careful about his clothes and about being well shaved and all that.

G: He was quite thin then, wasn't he?

B: Yes, I think he was. Of course he was, always, all the time I knew him. He was tall, six feet three, I guess, or so. He was very slim at that time. You've seen that picture in there, that was in the law school days.

G: Let me ask you about the Texas State Society? They would have parties and events, and I guess you all participated in that.

B: Yes, good, yes. The Texas State Society was supposedly composed of members of the Texas group in Washington.

(Interruption)

G: The Texas State Society.

B: Yes. All the states have state societies here where the people get together and meet the congressmen and the senators and so on, and it's

a very pleasant sort of affair. Texas has always had a particularly good state society, very active. Texans are politically minded anyway, and everybody turned out to meet the congressmen and their staff and shake hands and all that. As a result we always made it a point to go to the Texas State Society dances. One of the funny things about it was--I've forgotten who was in charge or who was the president, but at one or two of those I was working at the door, taking tickets. Some of the people came in and said, "How does a fellow from Rhode Island get to be collecting tickets here?" I said, "I'm an adopted Texan."

We always tried to make it a point to see that the girls who worked on the Hill that we knew--and some of them lived at the Dodge Hotel--got a chance to go to these dances, that they had an escort. Even though we weren't particularly connected with them, we weren't sweethearts or anything, we'd take them to the dances. Lyndon would show up at these dances. I don't remember his ever taking a girl, but he would dance with all the wives of all the congressmen and cabinet officers and all the people. Somebody said, "Lyndon's campaigning for something." Somebody else said, "He never quit campaigning. He's always campaigning." They said, "Do you notice he ignores the young, pretty, single women; he's dancing with all the wives." Somebody else said, apropos of that, "Lyndon goes which way the wind blows." Somebody made the remark, "Yes, but he'll be there before the wind is." We thought that was pretty good. But this was the kind of activity he engaged in.

I think you might be interested to know that one night I had a date to take Dorothy Jackson, of Lyndon's staff, to the Texas State Society. I was working at the Department of Justice at the time, and one of my colleagues at the time, or associates, was Philip Nichols, Jr., of Boston, whose father had been the author of a treatise on eminent domain, which is an American classic, Nichols on Eminent Domain.

Phil had come to work at the Department of Justice from Boston because the Department was preparing a similar treatise on federal eminent domain as it applied to the United States government. Through L. E. Jones--L. E. had gotten a job at Justice through Lyndon's intervention. Then L. E. went to work at the Supreme Court for Justice [Pierce] Butler so he was instrumental in arranging with Lyndon for me to get his job at Justice. That's how I got to know Phil Nichols.

I was having a few drinks of scotch that afternoon with Phil, and then we had some dinner. We'd had had a lot to drink and I said to Phil, "Are you busy tonight?" And he said, "No." I said, "How would you like to go to the Texas State Society?" He said, "That's great." I said, "Well, go home and get your tuxedo on, I've got a date now. I'll go to the Dodge Hotel and change." I picked Dorothy up and brought her to the dance, and I introduced her to Phil. From that time on they were going steady, and ninety days later they were married in Lyndon Johnson's apartment at the Kennedy-Warren Apartments, and Lyndon gave the bride away. Isn't that interesting?

Phil Nichols later was appointed by Lyndon to be Commissioner of Customs and then a Judge on the Court of Customs and Patent Appeals.

Now he's Judge on the United States Court of Claims, and he and Dorothy have four children, I think.

Now these Texas State Society parties, just to conclude, were always a lot of fun. You got to see everybody from Texas that was in Washington. It was a great party.

G: Did you get any reading on Lyndon Johnson's relationships with first Sam Rayburn and then Wright Patman during the period that he worked for Kleberg?

B: I think I could say that they were both friends of his father's, particularly Sam Rayburn.

G: But did you see, or do you have any first hand knowledge of that relationship?

B: No. No. So far as I am aware I never knew of any particular contact or connection. That doesn't mean that there wasn't any, but I didn't see it.

G: How about his association with Maury Maverick?

B: Oh, yes. Maury Maverick was from San Antonio, which had once been part of the same district as Kleberg's district. Maury Maverick came up to Washington on--the first time as far as I know was just before New Year's Day of 1935. He had just been elected I think. Maury had been badly wounded during World War I and had had some major surgery to remedy the crippling effects of his war wounds. That New Year's Day, 1935, we all had breakfast together, the whole crowd that lived at the Dodge Hotel. And we walked through the alley between two hotels to Childs Restaurant, which was over on

Mass[achusetts] Avenue, facing the post office. I can remember Maury Maverick dragging his legs, holding onto Lyndon's arm and somebody else's arm as we walked through the alley. Maury was very coherent, even belligerent in his conversation, had a gruff kind of a voice and was a very quick-witted sort of fellow. He walked through the alley holding onto Lyndon, and we had a nice visit and a nice breakfast. I can remember Lyndon talking to him about what would be his position on things in sort of a jocular manner. You know, "You going to be able to go along with this?" "You going to throw down the President on this?"--that sort of thing. And Maury was very jocular about it, too. It was a pleasant and friendly thing.

I didn't see Maury for about sixty days after that. I was over on the House floor, and he was strutting around like a little bantam hen. He had gotten over his operation and was in good shape.

G: Did you have the impression that Lyndon Johnson had helped him get elected in that 1934 election, had worked in the election for him?

B: No. I didn't know anything about that.

G: Okay. They didn't talk about that.

B: No. His administrative assistant was named Malcolm Bardwell. Malcolm Bardwell's chief claim to fame was his beautiful sister. She was a rare beauty. If she's around anyplace I'd like her to hear this tape. We weren't big buddies; we saw her every once in a while at one of the parties or someplace, but she was a rare beauty, and a fine little girl. Malcolm, I think, actually was the major domo

in Maury's campaign, and since it was out of our district I'm inclined to think that Lyndon didn't have anything much to do with it.

Maury and Lyndon were very good friends. I think I remember Maury calling the office after he was in Congress and talking to Lyndon about legislation. A lot of people did this, Mike. Congressmen and their assistants would pick Lyndon's brain about legislation and what the effects of it were going to be and what the sentiment of the House was. "What kind of mail are you getting?" Because they knew that he kept careful tabs on the mail. He was very sensitive to the viewpoints expressed by the folks back home. He used to tally the House himself; he'd find out what their positions were and what they were hearing from their constituents.

G: I was going to ask you about LBJ's friends in the New Deal during the Kleberg years? I assume that he had traffic not only with people in Jim Farley's office but people in Interior and other [departments].

B: Well, the principal one at Interior was Abe Fortas, who was, I think, counsel at the time we first knew him and then became assistant secretary.

G: You did see him in the office or know of him?

B: Oh, yes.

G: During the Kleberg period?

B: Yes, yes. He was one of Lyndon's early friends. I'm trying to think of the others who were around at that time. Tommy Corcoran was one of Lyndon's particular friends. Tommy comes from Pawtucket, Rhode

Island, which adjoins Providence, and he went to Brown, where I went to school.

G: Was there a Bill Bray who worked for Farley?

B: That sounds familiar, but I don't think I knew him.

G: Who in Agriculture would he talk with?

B: Well, I'm trying to think. Actually this Vincent Maguire was down there in Agriculture.

G: I thought he was in the Post Office.

B: I think that was later. You see the big patronage agency in those early New Deal years was Agriculture, because it was non-civil service. Mac's office, I'm almost sure, was there. Mac later moved to the Post Office, which was a patronage agency. Then Mac wound up his career in the Veterans Administration I think. But I don't think I particularly or specifically have in mind anybody at Agriculture.

G: I guess a lot of your day by day case work involved aiding veterans in service connected disabilities.

B: Well, there wasn't a tremendous amount of that, really. Our business would be this kind of thing: somebody in, let's say San Patricio County, which adjoins Corpus Christi there, would write a letter, "Dear Congressman, I haven't gotten my cotton payment yet and I need the money to buy some seed. I would really be very grateful if you would see that they send it along." Just as an example.

Somebody would get that letter like Gene Latimer, for example, and he'd write, "Dear friend Jim, it was sure great to have your

letter, and I'm sorry those people at Agriculture haven't been treating you right. I'm taking it up with them right now. You can be sure I'll have word for you soon as I can. If there's anything you need, please holler." That was sort of a standard conclusion, "Please holler." "Anything I can do for you, please holler." Then he would send a letter down to Agriculture that said, "Enclosed herewith is a copy of a letter from Mr. Jim Smith of San Patricio County. Please furnish me as quickly as possible with information upon which to base a reply." See? Well, generally we'd have the guy's payment out to him before the week was out, or we'd call down there if it was that important. [We were] on the telephone all the time.

A lot of activity took place in the Federal Housing Administration. This is one thing that is little known about the Roosevelt days, and I knew about it then but I've become even more sensitive to it today. Before Roosevelt, Mike, if a person wanted to buy a home he had to have about one third of the purchase price. That's the way the banking system was set up. You had to have a third of the purchase price and they'd lend you two thirds, but they had it set up so that your mortgage only ran for five years. Now it might be that the payments were interest only, or very low, or not designed to retire the whole mortgage at the end of five years, maybe to pay off a third of it or a fourth of it in five years, but then the whole balance came due as a balloon payment. And if you had kept your payments up to that point, and you still had a job or income and didn't have any reason against you, they would renew your mortgage. Now what they would do was charge you a refinancing fee and

a fee for title search and all that, which was outright thievery. It was just a terrible thing, the way the banks gouged the poor people with this sort of thing.

Well, when Franklin Roosevelt became president they set up this Federal Housing Administration where a person could borrow money on a twenty-five year mortgage and put 10 per cent down, reducing the balance every month, especially if it was an owner-occupied home. At one point there you didn't need any down payment. He made us a nation of home owners instead of renters, and it upgraded the whole community and the whole civilization.

This was the kind of thing that Lyndon Johnson understood better than Dick Kleberg did. Kleberg was a Democrat in name only. He was a wealthy man, and he associated with wealthy people and he had no feeling for the needs of the economically underprivileged in the community. This was not part of his background, and he hadn't trained himself to think about it or to worry about it at all, whereas Lyndon could see what the President was doing and Lyndon was much more of a realist than Kleberg.

For example, take the utility holding company bill. I don't know whether that means anything to you, but let me run through it. The utilities would be owned by a parent company which would own other companies. Then a parent company would own that, and there would be a whole vertical chain and a horizontal alliance and all that. The Roosevelt Administration felt that this was very bad. It duplicated charges and pyramided costs. It was inefficient in every way.

G: And unstable to boot.

B: Of course. We had the vision of Samuel Insull of Chicago, whose companies folded up and he fled the country to avoid criminal prosecution. Of course the whole New Deal was staked on erasing some of these things. Dick Kleberg was going to vote against the legislation. In fact, I think the record would show that he did vote against it. I remember typing telegrams to people who were supporting the legislation and asked him to support it. The telegram read something like this: "We're very grateful for your telegram [supporting] the utility holding company act. However, my study indicates that this legislation is not in the interest of the country. Please be assured I am always glad to hear from you and want to represent your interests whenever I think it's in the public interest." Something like that. But we definitely told them that we were not going to vote for it. I mean that was the telegram and I was typing it. There were thousands of them coming in, and some of them were inspired by the utilities people who'd get people to write us that they were against it. We'd write them back and say, "Thank you. I agree with you and we're going to vote against it," and so on.

But Lyndon was always able to see the New Deal side of things, and he associated with people who saw the New Deal side of things. He even voted early in the game, as I think I may have mentioned--I'm not sure it's on the tape--on one of the civil rights bills in favor of the civil rights aspect of things. Senator Connally got him off to one side and said, "Look, you're a southerner, and if you

want to get ahead in this Congress you better vote the southern position."

G: Do you recall any other associations he had with either Senator Connally or Vice President Garner during this period?

B: Well, I think during this period he was closely in touch with Senator Connally. That is, he was the junior congressman. Lyndon always recognized where the power was and where the strength was, and Senator Connally was a senior senator and very powerful and influential in the Senate, as well as in the state of Texas. So Lyndon was very close to the people in his office, like Arthur Perry and Bob Jackson. Did you run across the name Blaine Holliman. Blaine Holliman was younger than the others, and he worked in Senator Connally's office at the time. Blaine, a very fine and high-class citizen--I've lost track of him, but the last I heard of Blaine it seems to me that he was in Hawaii someplace, however, I could be wrong. But he was one of Lyndon's good friends and associates. He did whatever he could to be helpful to us. He lived at the Dodge Hotel and was one of the group we used to eat with.

Have you run across the name Warren Cunningham, Judge Warren Cunningham? He just died, you know. Warren was one of Lyndon's protegees at the Department of Justice. Warren came from Austin at the time. He had graduated from the University of Texas and went on to Harvard and got a master's degree and then came back, and Lyndon got him a job at the Department of Justice. He worked on the

prosecution of Ford and General Motors and Chrysler for anti-trust violations.

But I was saying Blaine Holliman was one of the group that worked in Senator Connally's office and with whom we had close connections.

G: You indicated before we turned on the tape that he early on saw the usefulness of compiling lists of constituents by counties, constituents that they had done favors for in the office. Do you want to repeat that?

B: Sure, sure. Oh, yes. One of the first jobs that Lyndon gave me when I came into the office was to go through the files--this was in Kleberg's office--of people from whom we had correspondence and who needed help with various things, for example, with the farm payments. We had tried to help them,and when we did help them they'd write us and thank us. If somebody had a son or a daughter get into trouble--sometimes there was trouble at the border on immigration matters with the Latin Americans and just all kinds of family problems that could come up. We made a list, county by county by county, of people who had written us and asked for help. I made entries on a card file system. He would have me note on the card what they said, thanking us for example, "If I can ever be helpful, let me know," "I'm sure to vote for you next time," or "I want to be on your team," or "I want to help you when you need me," and "I'm grateful." We made lists of those things county by county.

Lyndon was laying the foundation for future elections. To compile a list of the names of people who were important politically and

influential in each county, not only in each county but almost in each voting box, we had a complete card file of all of the constituents who had written to us and asked for that sort of thing. I can remember one day when Welly Hopkins was in the office he showed Welly what he had done, compiling this list, and Welly thought it was very, very great. But you know, this was the way he would keep in touch with them.

Oh, he also made it a point--let me see if I've got this. He also made it a point to note birthdays and things like that and write them. This was not unusual because other congressmen used to do this, but Lyndon tried to keep up with that sort of thing and note people's wedding anniversaries and that sort of thing, especially among the people he knew.

G: Well, now, he was succeeded in that job as Dick Kleberg's secretary by his brother. Why don't you give us some insight into Sam Houston Johnson.

B: Well, I think everybody that's been around Lyndon at any time knows the true facts about Sam Houston. Since we're compiling this for the limited and qualified purposes that are involved, I think I can say that Sam Houston was always an excessive drinker. He was a boozer. He didn't pay very much attention to the office business. Bills would come in, and instead of methodically compiling them and getting them paid like Lyndon used to do he would throw them away. One of the results was that one of the school districts, I think it was down there in Corpus Christi, filed suit against Congressman Kleberg for

some unpaid school taxes. Mrs. Kleberg was terribly upset about that and highly critical of Sam Houston and of the way the office was being run.

I remember distinctly some man came in and he said the Congressman owed him over two thousand dollars for automobile tires. It was a running account of some long period; they had several cars and so on. It may not have been two thousand dollars,but that's what I have in mind. He said, "Isn't there any way in the world to get this paid for? I tell you what, Mr. Brown, I'd be glad to reward you financially if you could help me." I said, "Well, good Lord, don't even talk about that. Let me see the bills." So he gave me the bills. I think that I gave them to Gene Latimer, and I said, "I don't know what to do with these. The man can't get his bills paid."

It turned out, and I don't think this is any secret either, the Kleberg's were wealthy people but they didn't have a lot of cash. In those days they didn't have a lot of cash, and Lyndon had to parcel out the income to keep everybody happy with a part payment. But when Sam Houston took over he stopped paying anybody, and that's what caused the problems.

Lyndon didn't have a lot of money to work with for Kleberg. I remember, I think, that we ran up a very large bill with the Sergeant at Arms at the House. Kleberg would go over there and eat lunch and sign the checks, and then never worry about paying it. Lyndon would sit him down and tell him, "Look, I got to have so much money to pay this bill, and so much for that bill," and so on. They were living

far beyond their income by living at the Shoreham. They had chauffeurs, the girls were in private schools, and young Dick was at VMI.

Lyndon had tried to keep the bills paid, but Sam Houston didn't try at all. The result was that the Congressman got sued, and I think there were other claims and things like that. I'm inclined to think that it was a result of that that Sam Houston got fired by Kleberg. He then had a chance to get various jobs, but he had given hot checks all over the country and there were outstanding claims. In particular I remember a custom tailor here in town had a bill for a very substantial amount for suits he had made for Sam which never were paid.

G: This was in Washington?

B: Yes.

G: I think you indicated that he was up for consideration in a position in the Federal Housing Administration.

B: Yes. There was an occasion when he told me he was going to be appointed administrator of the Federal Housing Administration, I think, for Puerto Rico. When it was announced in the paper, and publicity was given to it, his creditors began really protesting, and he didn't get the position. He talked to me about it one time to see if there was anything we could do about it.

G: What did he suggest then?

B: He suggested that he would get out of debt by going through bankruptcy. I said, "Well, that's going to destroy your credibility and

your acceptability. You could never be administrator of anything if you were a former bankrupt." But he thought that it would be a good, shrewd way to do things until I talked him out of it.

Amusingly enough, he said he had made a terrible mistake giving those hot checks. He should have just charged things and not paid for them, then he couldn't have gotten into any trouble. They could just sue him, but they couldn't bring criminal charges against him. But with the hot checks they could file criminal charges.

G: I think you were going to talk also about the relationship between Jimmy Allred and Lyndon Johnson.

B: Yes, yes, good, I'm glad you reminded me. Jimmy Allred and Lyndon were very, very warm friends. Now I think, without being positive, that Jimmy--in fact I'm quite sure. Well, I can't be positive. Jimmy Allred was governor of Texas, I think, before Lyndon came to Washington. He had succeeded Ma Ferguson. You may remember Pa Ferguson was governor of Texas, and he was impeached and removed from office. Then his wife, Ma Ferguson, ran for election, and she got elected. Then Jimmy ran against Jim Ferguson when he ran again, I think, and Jimmy was elected.

Now I think Lyndon was probably pretty young at that time, but through his father and his father's friends he knew Jimmy Allred. Now Jimmy was older, but they were friends. I can remember Jimmy Allred, but I am not really clear about the connection in which he was in touch with us in Kleberg's office. One reason that I am so clear on it is that when I was in, I don't know, maybe college,

before I had come to Washington, there was a picture of Jimmy Allred in Time magazine. It told about his campaign against the Fergusons. I was really quite taken with it, and then seeing him made quite an impression on me.

But he was a great admirer of Lyndon. Later on, when I was in the Department of Justice, Jimmy Allred was on the U.S. District Court down there in South Texas, and I got to know him very well. We used to talk about old stories. Of course our connection was through Lyndon, and he'd always talk about Lyndon and ask what I'd heard from him.

G: Did he ever talk about the time President Roosevelt was down to Galveston?

B: You've seen the picture, haven't you?

G: Right. But did Allred ever tell you about that?

B: Oh, yes.

G: What did he say about the occasion?

B: You mean during Lyndon's first campaign?

G: Well, it was after the campaign.

B: Oh, was it after the campaign? He said that he felt that Lyndon had the organizing ability and the personal capacity and the handshaking ability to go as far as he liked in Texas. He said, "I think he could be governor if he wanted to." I remember him saying that. You know, very few people dared to say they could be President, but he said he could be governor if he wanted to.

G: Now, LBJ's father had been an old Ferguson supporter back in the early days, and he himself had this populist trace. Yet he was attracted to Allred. Did you ever get any insight here?

B: One of the interesting things about Jimmy was his talking about his early campaigns. He told me about when he came home from the navy, in World War I. He used to like to do it; he'd dramatize it. There was a fellow named Tom Hunter. Do you know who Tom Hunter was? Tom Hunter was a candidate for governor or something, wasn't he? Am I right?

G: Later, yes.

B: Yes. Well, Jimmy Allred would say, "And here I stood up and I said I came home from the Navy. I didn't have any money. I didn't have any place to go. I had my little sailor hat in my hand, and this great man, Tom Hunter, came out of that hotel and he brushed by me. He didn't even say good evening. I said, 'Good evening, Mr. Hunter.' He didn't even tell me good evening." He campaigned, [Laughter] and he loved to relive it. And he'd get up and strut around the room and tell you. Now I never did know who Tom Hunter was. But he'd tell you how he beat Tom Hunter. Then he'd talk about the Fergusons and the campaign against them and all that. You know, he ran for the Senate against [W. Lee "Pappy"] O'Daniel.

G: 1942.

B: Yes, I guess so. He was the one in the 1941 election who first alerted me to the fact that we were going to get out-counted. Here's what Jimmy said--

G: Did he call you?

B: My recollection is not perfectly clear on that. He wouldn't have called me--well, maybe he did, because he knew I was working for Lyndon.

G: He would have been in Houston, I assume, at the time.

B: Yes. Yes. He was in Houston, and he was on the U.S. District Court at the time. He may have been holding court in Corpus at the time though, that's why I'm not clear. You see, in those days the Houston judges--there were two judges in Houston--traveled to Corpus, to Brownsville, to Laredo, back to Houston, to Benavides, they even sat--no, I don't think they ever sat at Benavides. They didn't have a federal court there. But [they did at] Laredo, and Corpus Christi and Brownsville. He could have been holding court in Corpus at the time so I'm not positive.

But he said, "You fellows got any friends up there in East Texas." I said, "Well, I'm sure. We've got lots of friends all over, Judge, why?" He said, "Well, you better watch that counting up there. Those fellows in the piney woods, they're out to beat you." We had a twenty thousand vote lead election day in 1941 that evening, and the Texas Elections Bureau had said Johnson was the winner. He told me, "They're going to out-count you." I said, "Well, how can they do that?" He said, "Well, they got lots of ways. The county judge is the judge of the election [in] little towns up there." Sure enough, little towns that you never heard of, like Pine Tree or Pine Hollow or something like that, would have eighteen votes for

O'Daniel, none for Johnson, and so on. Four days after the election we were declared the loser by a thousand votes.

I talked to Jimmy about it. He said, "Those fellows didn't give a hoot about O'Daniel. They didn't care whether he was senator or not. They wanted to get him out of the state so Coke Stevenson could move up from lieutenant governor to be governor. That's why they did it. They wouldn't have done it for O'Daniel, but they did it to help Coke become governor. And they told me about it." He actually, literally, said they told him about it. That's how O'Daniel got to be Senator.

Now in the 1948 election nobody knew what was what; it was up and down and up and down. And this guy Salas, who said that Lyndon talked of putting in two hundred votes, on his face it's the most ridiculous thing you ever heard of, Mike, because the reports would be two hundred ahead, four hundred ahead, this one's up five hundred ahead, Johnson's ahead by a thousand, and then Stevenson comes into the lead. Nobody had any remote idea of how many votes you'd need or where or when. Lyndon certainly never set foot in Jim Wells County, because everybody was calling him in Austin. I mean everybody was calling the man. We were talking to each other around the state.

I had a good friend, one of Lyndon's strongest supporters, named Lloyd Croslin--his name ought to be in the files there someplace--from Lubbock. Lloyd had gone to Georgetown Law School with us, and in fact he was George Mahon's campaign manager out in the Lubbock area. He was a stocky farm boy and very bright and able. Lloyd Croslin had done a terrific job out there. He was calling me and I was calling

him to find out what was going on around the state. Lyndon was in Austin all the time. He never left Austin, because you could always reach him. He was calling me, and he was really raising hell because the Corpus vote didn't turn out. Of course he was 100 per cent right. Of course I wasn't in charge of the group down there, you understand; I was just one of many. We had some people down here who claimed to be experts and who turned out to be something less than experts.

G: Let me turn off the tape at this point.

[End of Tape 3 of 3 and Interview I]

rec'd 4-14-80

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April 10, 1980

Mr. Michael Gillette
LBJ Library
2313 Red River
Austin, Texas 78705

Dear Mike:

You may recall in my oral statement about LBJ and Georgetown University, you asked me if LBJ had any particularly favorite professors, and I mentioned Professor Al Kane. He liked the way Al Kane presented the courses in real property and torts, said he got more information from those lectures than any others, even though the material was very difficult.

Professor Kane has furnished the enclosed letter of March 27, 1980, recounting some of his LBJ recollections, and I am sending it along for your files, together with my acknowledgment which corrects his recollections as to roommates.

I felt sure you would want this letter for the Library's records, Mike, since it bears upon Lyndon's very early days and formative years.

Also enclosed is a copy of my letter to Merle Miller whose book on Lyndon will be out shortly. This letter was written at Merle's request and details the much controverted events in L.A., when Lyndon became Jack Kennedy's vice-presidential running mate on the presidential ticket. This is some of the material we did not cover in my oral interview, and I think, Mike, there has been so much distortion of the transaction it should be buttoned down by those who were present in Los Angeles.

Please give my warm regards to all our friends at the Library and every good wish to you.

Faithfully,

RUSSELL MORTON BROWN

RMB:acb
Encls.

cc: A. P. Kane

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June 9, 1980

Mr. Michael L. Gillette
Chief of Acquisitions and
Oral History Programs
Lyndon Baines Johnson Library
Austin, Texas 78705

Dear Mike:

Thanks for your good letter of May 28, 1980. Glad you liked my letter to Merle Miller regarding the 1960 convention. Please feel free to make any use of this you see fit. You may certainly attach it to my interview.

Likewise, my letter of April 2, 1980, to Professor Al Kane. I am sure he will be glad to have his letter included in the library files. He was the one professor LBJ particularly enjoyed. He said he could "get the message across" better than anyone he had seen in a long time.

Count on me if there is anything I can do to help. Regards to all our friends, I am,

Faithfully,

RUSSELL MORTON BROWN

cc: Al. Philip Kane

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June 9, 1980

Mr. Michael L. Gillette
Chief of Acquisitions and
Oral History Programs
The Lyndon Baines Johnson Library
Austin, Texas 78705

Dear Mr. Gillette:

In response to your request contained in your letter of June 2, 1980, I wish to advise you that you have my permission to make whatever use you feel is desirable of my letter to Russell Morton Brown, Esquire, dated March 27, 1980 with regard to the brief law school experiences of the late President, Lyndon Johnson.

Very truly yours,

Al. Philip Kane

Al. Philip Kane

APK:dg

Note: As a public matter I once heard Mr Johnson state that he had received a "B.A. from Georgetown for being attendant"

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March 27, 1980

Russell Morton Brown, Esquire
Law Building
315 Third Street
West Palm Beach, Florida 33401

Dear Russell:

You have asked me to record my recollections of Lyndon Johnson as a law student and as a person.

Johnson entered Georgetown Law School in September, 1934 as a student in the late afternoon section of the first year class. You were also a member of that class and, as I learned later, you and he (and was it John Connally) were roommates.

That was my first year as an instructor at the Georgetown Law School. I was not much older than most of my students. I had been engaged in practice for three years and I made a particular effort to attempt to determine what the students' problems were and how those problems should be approached.

I recall that one evening during the break between two class sessions, I had a conversation with this tall, lanky young man. I asked him how he liked the law and the Law School. He replied that he enjoyed my class in Torts and was getting a great deal out of it. In the course of our conversation, we began to discuss Reverend Francis E. Lucey, S.J., then Regent of the Law School and Professor of Jurisprudence. It should be noted that Father Lucey was strictly a Natural Law scholar and did not think much of Justice Holmes, particularly of Holmes' approach to moral issues. The young man's comments were "That Father Lucey can certainly talk. He knows his material and puts it over to the students. But I can't go for that Natural Law stuff".

One evening, a short time later when I had become better acquainted and was able to identify him as Lyndon Johnson, he walked with me to where my automobile was parked and remained to discuss one of his own personal problems.

It appeared that he was employed at the Capitol in the office of Representative Kleberg of Texas. Of course Representative Kleberg was well known in Washington and was frequently referred to as the Congressman from the King Ranch.

Johnson told me that one of the congressmen from Texas - it may have been Sam Rayburn, because I remember that his name was mentioned in our conversation, - had recommended that he return to Texas and run for Congress.

He asked me what I thought about the proposal. I told him that I thought it was a good idea, that, if he was elected, he could continue his law studies at Georgetown and that the study of law would add to his qualifications as a congressman.

I specifically remember telling him that William Connery, of Massachusetts, had attended law school at Georgetown while serving in Congress, and that he had risen to become one of the most influential members of Congress. He thanked me for my observations and we parted.

On a Sunday afternoon, a good many years later, I had occasion to go to the home of William J. Dempsey, Esquire, an old friend, in the 4900 block of Linnean Avenue, Northwest, in Washington. I lived at 4807 Thirtieth Street, about a block from Dempsey's house. J. Edgar Hoover's house on Thirtieth Place was almost directly behind the Dempsey menage.

The library or den in the Dempsey house is to the right of the main entry. As I entered it I saw that there was another man present casually dressed and wearing sandals (as I remember) without socks. Dempsey said to the other man "You know Al. Kane". The other replied "Of course". We spent the next half-hour or more telling stories and sipping drinks. There was no discussion of politics, although Dempsey's father, who had been Governor of New Mexico and a member of Congress, was then Under Secretary of the Interior. Finally, the third man said "I guess I will have to go and finish cutting my grass".

After he had left I said to Dempsey:

"That fellow seems to know me pretty well. Who the devil is he?"

Dempsey replied, "Lyndon Johnson. He's a Congressman from Texas."

And then I remembered Johnson's rather short career as a law student. His home, at that time, was located diagonally across the street from Hoover's residence.

I saw Johnson occasionally at public affairs after that, but I do not engage in politics or lobbying, and the times we met were few.

He (or his daughters) had two beagle hounds. My son, Matthew, had a spayed female of the same species. Matt's dog "Katy" liked the

companionship of the Johnson dogs and whenever "Katy" obtained her freedom, which was often, Matt knew just where to go to retrieve his "Katy".

The last time I saw Lyndon Johnson socially was at a Georgetown Alumni Dinner in the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, just a week or so before John F. Kennedy was assassinated and Johnson became President of the United States.

These are just a few nuggetts, but I hope that they are useful to you.

My kindest regards,

Al.

Al. Philip Kane

APK:es

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September 28, 1979

Mr. Merle Miller
Sherwood Hills Rd.
Brewster, N.Y. 10509

Dear Merle:

Great to talk with you yesterday by telephone. Delighted your book is on the home stretch.

I thought we had talked about the California convention in 1960 when LBJ was nominated for Vice-President. Apparently not. The Kennedy group has greatly distorted the matter and I have read a wide variety of stories which were far from the truth.

If John Kennedy had not been nominated on the first ballot, we had excellent prospects and commitments from New York delegates to support LBJ on the second ballot. They were bound by the unit rule on the first ballot in New York City and could not support him initially. Other states were in the same fix and LBJ would have made it much more of a contest after the first ballot. His failure to do so was directly attributable to the fact that John Kennedy had been spending the previous four years preparing, campaigning, and running in state primaries. On the other hand, LBJ had felt himself bound to stick to his job as Majority Leader of the Senate. In that position he was responsible for the entire legislative program and, with Speaker Sam Rayburn in the House, carried the entire burden of Congressional action and accomplishment. It is well-known that President Eisenhower looked to LBJ more than any other individual for practical guidance and counsel on presidential programs, and when he was in need of a spokesman to address the United Nations on international uses of outer space he selected LBJ as his representative.

Moreover, LBJ recognized that other Senators, e.g., Hubert Humphrey, Stuart Symington, etc., were presidential aspirants and he actually said in words that if he were an active candidate for the nomination he "would destroy the leadership in the Senate." He would not permit any active campaigning on his behalf at any time. The result was that John Kennedy came to the convention with many states committed to him by the primaries, and LBJ was greatly handicapped by his own devotion to duty.

As a result, John Kennedy was nominated on Wednesday of the convention and the LBJ group was salvaging its pride. Some said Kennedy could not win because he would not be able to carry the South. His big support was labor and metropolitan ethnic groups which were alien to Southern power blocs. The accepted report on Wednesday evening following the Kennedy nomination was that Stuart Symington of Missouri would be the Vice-Presidential candidate. I remember having coffee with some of the New York delegates at four in the morning at the Beverly Hilton Hotel where all these matters and the forthcoming election were being discussed. Some of the LBJ group said we wouldn't help Kennedy; just go home and "sit on our hands." After the election they would start organizing for 1964.

The next morning, Thursday, the LBJ group congregated in the Johnson suite at the Roosevelt Hotel. Sam Rayburn was there, Tommy Corcoran, Perle Mesta, and ten or fifteen others. A number of delegates who had supported LBJ came by to shake his hand and assure him of their admiration and confidence in him. A little after 9 o'clock Bob Kennedy came by and went out to the bedroom to have a private talk with LBJ. He stayed about ten minutes and we learned he had said John Kennedy wanted LBJ to be the candidate for Vice-President. LBJ had told John Kennedy, and Bob, too, that he wanted to stay in the Senate as Majority Leader; that the Kennedy support in organized labor, and the far left in Americans for Democratic Action (A.D.A.), would be opposed to him.

Later that morning John Kennedy called, and LBJ said he should talk with the labor people, the state leaders in New York, Philadelphia, and other eastern states, about a candidate.

About twenty or more reporters, radio, and television people had gathered outside the door of the suite and were insistent on interviewing LBJ. He was very reluctant but finally he was prevailed upon to see the press, which he did by going out to the hallway where he stood on a chair in the midst of this group. The television people held their cameras up in the air to record his appearance and comments. The radio men held their microphones out and the others surrounded him with their note pads and pencils.

They asked if he would campaign for John Kennedy and he emphatically assured them he would appear in every state if John Kennedy wanted him to. He further stated with great enthusiasm his confidence that John Kennedy would be elected and would be one of the truly great presidents in American history. He left no doubt of his wholehearted support of the ticket.

One of the reporters asked if LBJ wanted to be Vice-President and he firmly said "No, no, no." He emphasized his responsibility in the Senate and his loyalty to his Texas constituents who had sent him there, saying his best contribution to the national interest would be in staying in the Senate and helping John Kennedy be the greatest President. He pointed out that the Vice-President voted 15 or 20 times in any session of Congress while he, as a Senator, voted that many times in a single afternoon. In a memorable phrase, he said "I never would trade a vote for a gavel."

With a smile, he stepped down from the chair and returned to the Johnson suite.

We were generally aware that LBJ was in the bedroom, conferring with various political figures who wanted to see him. Part of the suite, as I recall it, was a sunroom with a television where various commentators were discussing the convention, reporting various views on the prospects of Kennedy for election, and interviewing miscellaneous personalities. I had wandered out there and was standing next to Lady-Bird. Perle Mesta was there and several others. Suddenly the program was interrupted as the announcer said in an excited manner "We interrupt to bring you a new announcement from the headquarters of the Democratic nominee, John Kennedy. The Senator has chosen as his running mate on the Democratic ticket, Senator Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas." We later learned John Kennedy had called LBJ and said he had talked with everyone he wanted to, and LBJ was his choice. He had already told the press.

You may be sure, Merle, that there was no great rejoicing in the Johnson group. Sam Rayburn came out of the bedroom shaking his head sadly. He seemed to be on the verge of tears, saying, as he shook his head from side to side, "He didn't have any choice."

Lady-Bird was as surprised as anyone else, and she said sadly that we had not only lost the nomination but would now have to go out to campaign and elect John Kennedy. She later was interviewed on television, and said "I feel a pang in my heart because Lyndon will not be representing our Texas friends any more." She was not at all in favor of his being Vice-President.

The understanding was that John Kennedy had insisted that LBJ be his running mate because he felt sure he could not otherwise be elected. This was fully confirmed by the election results which gave the victory to John Kennedy, but he would have been defeated if he had not carried Texas.

By the time we left the suite, it was fully controlled by the Secret Service agents designated to guard the Vice-Presidential candidate. We were all given indentifying pins and could enter without clearance. When LBJ started out for the convention hall, he was surrounded by the agents.

This is set forth here on a first person basis, Merle, because there have been so many untrue versions of how Lyndon became Kennedy's running mate. You can take the above for the gospel. I have never written this down before, but it is purely a factual account of a still obscure transaction. I have reviewed the main facts with others who were there, and we agree on the above outline.

All the best.

Faithfully,

RUSSELL MORTON BROWN

RMB:jmm

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October 17, 1979

Mr. Merle Miller
Sherwood Hill Rd.
Brewster, N.Y. 10509

Dear Merle:

If you intend to use anything about the LBJ-Kennedy transaction at the convention in Los Angeles, California in 1960, please check my recollection that both candidates had offices at the Roosevelt Hotel. It may be that I have the wrong hotel though I don't believe so. The LBJ forces were spread out in the Renaissance Room.

Sincerely,

RUSSELL MORTON BROWN

RMB:jmn

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Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interview of Russell M. Brown

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, Russell M. Brown of Palm Beach, Florida 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 January 10, 1978 at Palm Beach, Florida 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

December 5, 1979
Date

acting James E. O'Neill
Archivist of the United States

December 31, 1979
Date