INTERVIEW I

DATE: February 5, 1987

INTERVIEWEE: W. STERLING COLE

INTERVIEWER: Michael L. Gillette

PLACE: Congressman Cole's residence, Arlington, Virginia

Tape 1 of 1, Side 1

G: Let me ask you to begin by discussing with me the trip to Europe at the close of World War II. Germany, I believe, had just surrendered and the trip was in May, I think, mid-May, [1945].

C: Yes.

G: Can you tell me the purpose of the trip?

C: Well, because of the surrender of the Germans and the termination of the war, the immediate problem was what to do with the tremendous mass of equipment--naval equipment, armament that was scattered around in various spots in the world, what to do with it. Chairman [Carl] Vinson was very able, extremely able; he was the boss of the Naval Affairs Committee and we looked to him for leadership. He discussed with us this problem and he said, "I think that we should [have the] subcommittee here go over to the bases and measure this problem, determine its size and potential methods for disposal of it." So that was the objective. We went to--I forget the number of all the places--the naval bases principally. Naples was one that stands out principally in my memory.

G: How was it decided who would go? Was it just a subcommittee that was already set or did. . . ?

C: Oh, I don't know. I don't remember the details of the selection. I don't think that in those days we had many subcommittees. The full committee did all the--problems of the subcommittee. So this would be an ad hoc committee that was appointed by the Chairman. [Special committee to study naval properties in the British Isles, Europe and North Africa]

G: So you began at Bermuda, is that right? Bermuda was the first leg of the trip?

C: Yes.

G: And then the Azores?

C: The Azores. I wish I had that book with me, I could refer to that [inaudible]. You've got it there and you can tell me what it is. [F. Edward Hebert's book, I Went, I Saw, I Heard]

G: You met Admiral [Harold] Stark, I understand, at--

C: Yes, [Inaudible] Stark.

G: At London.

C: He was over there at London, yes.

G: Any impressions of London while you were?

C: Oh, there must have been, but I don't recall them now.

G: Yes.

C: Oh, yes, London was pretty much devastated with the bombing. When was this--1945?

G: Yes.

C: Yes, the bombing. . . .

G: And then you went from there to Paris and stayed at the Hotel Rafael, had a tour of the city.

C: I don't recall. I don't have a copy of the program of the itinerary in front of me and--

G: Would you [like to see this]?

C: No, no. My eyes are bad, [inaudible].

G: Well, in Paris I see that you met with General Eisenhower and [Lieutenant General] Lucius Clay.

C: Yes, out at the little schoolhouse.

G: Can you describe that meeting? Can you recall?

C: Nothing, nothing in particular except that our attention was called to the fact that--I'm sure you've heard of this before--that meeting was attended by two future presidents of the United States. I'm sure that you've heard that tale which I hadn't realized until, I don't know who it was, Hebert I guess it was that brought that to our attention. Lyndon and General Eisenhower.

It's always referred to as "The Little Red Schoolhouse."

G: Is that right?

C: And always immediately comes to my mind a picture of a little red schoolhouse but, of course, it wasn't. It was a tremendous big bombed-out office building, grossly mistaken as a little red schoolhouse.

G: Did Eisenhower have any thoughts on the. . . ?

C: Oh, of course he did but I don't remember them.

G: Anything on the relationship of LBJ and Eisenhower during this time?

C: So far as I recall, I'm sure it was not forcibly evident except that it was the finest relationship between Eisenhower and Lyndon as one would expect that it would be. Lyndon was a friend of everybody.

G: I have a note that you met with Paul Porter, FCC chairman.

C: Paul Porter was a great friend of Lyndon's, I guess, but not of mine. I didn't know him except he had some big government job. I don't know what it was. I don't remember.

G: FCC, I think.

C: Is that right?

G: And that you went to the Folies-Bergere that night.

C: Well, don't expect anybody to go to Paris without going there. If not the first night, well, at least the second night while you're there.

G: Any impressions of that? Any recollections of the group?

C: Yes. Nothing in particular except that one would expect the dancing girls pretty much stark, but not offensive. It was quite a display of femininity--dancing and jokes and so forth. The part of it that I recollect with the most assurance is being seated in the front row in an overstuffed leather armchair. So there we were with these choice seats with comfort and location.

G: Anything on Lyndon Johnson that night?

C: No.

G: Then I have a note that the following day, Sunday, you met with the American ambassador, Jefferson Caffery, and dined with Vice Admiral Alan Kirk.

C: I remember the occasion but that's all. Later on we saw Caffery at another post where he was ambassador--was that. . . ?

G: Then on Tuesday you flew to Germany, to Bremen, and visited a submarine yard. Do you remember that?

C: No.

G: Any first impressions of Germany when you were there?

C: Oh, yes. Ruins, complete ruins. The people along the street--bones, skin and bones. Very few people outdoors, staggering out dazed. But everything was in ruins. Rubble everywhere. I don't think any one city was more damaged than [another], outstanding in the damage, not in my recollection. They were all pretty well levelled to the ground.

G: Is that right?

C: Yes. From my memory at this stage, [almost] ffty years later. My memory has not been refreshed by anything in particular except for--

G: Did it have a profound effect on your group, do you think, seeing this kind of wholesale devastation?

C: Of course it did. Which brought further question, "What was the next thing? How to deal with this devastation." That was the basis for eventually the Marshall Plan. Our trip led into the Marshall Plan. Although initially it was to determine what to do with the naval armament, how to dispose of it, it was also to observe the extent of the damage and what course of action our government should take to deal with this tremendous vacuum of government.

G: Did you make recommendations?

C: Well, with respect to disposal of the armament, yes.

G: But in terms of the devastation?

C: The Marshall Plan. No. I don't have the report. The report must speak for itself. I don't know whether there is a copy. I doubt if there is one available. Have you found or seen a copy of the report?

G: Yes, I did see one.

Now, then I understand you went to Marseilles.

C: Yes, I don't think we were there more than a day or two at the most. My recollection at this very late date without having reviewed any memoranda is that it was badly devastated. Being a port city, you would expect it would be.

G: Then Naples after that.

C: Naples was not so damaged, as I recall. That's not very clear, not even a faint impression of bombing, bombed buildings. But an explanation for that is I don't recall.

G: From there you went to Rome and had a sightseeing tour of Rome.

C: Oh, I don't have any recollection.

G: Nothing significant that you recall.

C: Except to visit with the Pope which I've told you the outstanding incident.

G: The incident you refer to is describing the group's dilemma wondering whether to shake hands or kiss the papal ring and the problem was solved when the Pope presented both hands. Is that--?

C: No, no, no. You missed the whole damn thing.

G: I'm sorry. Would you--?

C: Well, I demonstrated to you. I had thought that the papal ring would be on the left hand.

G: I understand. It was on this hand.

C: What am I going to do if he puts out--there's the ring, there's my hand. If I want to shake it, am I going to push it aside?

G: But the ring was on the other hand.

C: This is the hand he put out and the ring was over here.

G: I see. I'm glad you clarified that.

C: Well, it was no problem. We were all very impressed with the Pope's remarks. I wish I could recall Pope Pius XI [XII?], I think it was, but he has another name. I don't think [Edward] Hebert--yes, he did mention it in his book.

G: Any particular memories of Lyndon Johnson on this phase of the trip?

C: Well, I've been trying to think of such things and actually the only thing that comes to my mind was some dinner meeting with some high official. Just where it was located, I don't recall, but I was not the ranking man. Hell, yes, I was, too. I think I was the senior Republican over there. Anyway, Lyndon said to me before that meeting, "Stubbs, now I want you to sit on the right side of Ambassador, whoever it is, because you are the brightest guy of any one of us and I want you to ask him the toughest questions you can think of." Who it was, I don't know. But I remember I was quite nonplused to have that thrown at me. I don't remember how well I succeeded. Fifty years laters it doesn't make a damn bit of difference. But that was

his bent of sharing the spotlight with other members of the committee. He was a very, very good chairman of that subcommittee.

G: Then you flew to Palermo and then to North Africa.

C: I don't think the Palermo visit was more than one night. It was a pretty dirty, dismal, pretty much typical Italian city. The dirt was not entirely due to war, it was just natural from the use of it. Then we went across to some place in Africa, I don't know what it was. Bizerte?

G: Bizerte. Yes, you did go to Bizerte and Oran in North Africa.

C: Oran. I don't know why we went to Oran, except that was a big naval base. In Oran I think was the big cemetery. Faint recollection of seeing the big cemetery there.

G: You ultimately drove to Casablanca. Any recollections here?

C: No.

G: And then back to France.

C: Back to the Folies-Bergere probably.

G: Did you make two trips there, do you think, to the Folies?

C: Well, as you said, I went back to France. Seems like there was another source of entertainment similar to Bergere. I was in France several times, but this time I don't know that we went to other than the Follies.

G: Okay, then on Monday you went to Munich and visited Dachau.

C: General--he was the head of the 150th Army [inaudible]. Does it show there?

G: Not in my outline, no. Head of the 150th?

C: Army, yes. I should be able to speak his name. He was a young fellow. We were at his quarters. Oh, yes, we were told when we went to this General's for lunch that we should be very careful and not try to abscond with any of the silverware because a previous congressman had visited Fredericks--Fredericks?--and when he left they discovered this congressman had smuggled away a boodle of the supper tableware.

G: That's amazing. (Laughter)

C: So we were alerted not to try to do it. The consequence was that when we sat down to the table--beautiful, engraved silverware--after we had finished, the soup spoon, just a silver spoon, was taken as well as the bowl. So when the dinner was over, there was nothing left to steal anyway. They weren't going to allow temptation to expose us to the same thing that our predecessor had done. I used to know the man, the congressman. I don't know him now, don't have any recollection.

Fredericks, I'm sure it was General Fredericks.

G: General Fredericks.

What do you remember about visiting Munich?

C: Nothing except, oh, yes, I think it was this trip, the autobahns were staggering, amazing autobahns. These fast four-lane--two strips of highway each four-laned bringing up [inaudible]. They were used by the Germans for landing fields in the war, but they were bombed out badly so they were not usable for highway purposes. I think it was that trip that we went to Berchtesgaden, didn't we?

G: Yes.

C: To Hitler's hideout, way up [inaudible]. I think we went there from Munich.

G: And you went to the concentration camp at Dachau.

C: Dachau, yes. Awful, awful. As I recall--

(Interruption)

C: My faint impression of it is it was surrounded by high wire fence all the way around where you entered. And, of course, all I remember is going to the old barracks. Yes, other things. What do you call them? Bunks, four persons high. I don't recall us going around in back. I recall they referred to the aisle in between the bunks where we went down, looked from right to left, it was very narrow and we could see the person, haggard, skin and bones, bulging eyes looking out at us from the--what were they called? Not bunks. What were they called? The word for high level beds. You should know it. Barracks after barracks were just filled with these starving human beings. Then I recall the outside of the barracks where there was a ditch a hundred feet or so long, vast sloping ditch up to a bank on the farther side. That was the place that the prisoners were required to go down to the bottom of the ditch and they were blindfolded and they were shot from the back of the head and there they tumbled over.

Also we went into the gas chambers which were a room about the size of this room, twenty by thirty feet roughly. Walls, white plastered walls, no evidence of any hardware, any plumbing of any sort except there were places where obviously gas came into the room. I don't have any clear recollection of it because it was not very

strikingly visible. It didn't need to be, just a small pipe because there would be more than several of them around. I think, as I recall, the prisoners were told that they were going in there for a meetings or discussion of some kind. After they got in, the doors were closed behind them and then the gas was turned on.

Then the furnaces, oh, yes, that had to be in connection with the gas chambers. Yes, indeed, my memory isn't too bad. Adjacent, close by to these gas chambers, were these, I think, rows of four furnaces with open doors where the body would be put onto an iron trolley and pushed into the oven and incarcerated. That isn't the word. What is the word you use when your body is--

G: Cremated.

C: Cremated, that's the word. Cremated. We didn't see any of that. None of this was done when we were there. That was just the aftermath, the relics of it. I never will forget the most striking thing was the expression on the faces of these prisoners who were unable to get out on their feet.

G: Well, they were being cared for, I assume.

C: Well, they had a place to lie flat, but they weren't getting much feed judging by the gaunt bones and skin and bones that they had. I don't remember about the food aspect and how they were fed. We were just led through and we didn't dwell too long on that aspect of our visit.

G: One question I had about this aspect of it. The photographs at Munich and Dachau don't show Lyndon Johnson and Don Cook and I'm wondering if they did not go on this leg of the trip.

C: Well, there are many photographs where I wasn't shown, but I was there. I don't think their absence from the photographs indicates that they didn't go. I don't think that is a proper conclusion.

G: Do you have any recollection of him actually being at Dachau?

C: No. Nor to any other place. But I'm fairly confident that he was there. I don't recall of any instance when he wasn't.

G: Any conclusions on how this sight of the concentration camps impressed the group?

C: Well, of course, we were all--that's a hell of a question--horrified to think this brutal sort of activity could be conducted by human beings. It was atrocious.

I remember making the observation to my colleagues, which I shouldn't repeat, that if anything could be said of the Germans, the facility, efficiency of the Germans in dealing with problems was the way they got rid of the bodies of the people they had killed. The furnaces, gas chambers and furnaces and so forth. That was a big problem, how to deal with prisoners: just kill them.

I didn't finish--have you finished Berchtesgaden?

G: No. You went from there to Berchtesgaden--Hitler's hideout. Do you have some recollections of that?

C: Oh, of it, yes. It was a rather--you have to picture the location at the top of the highest mountain near Salzburg in Austria. But this [inaudible]. What was that name? [Eagle's Nest?] The name of his hideout--it was actually in Germany. There was a two-story cinder block type of house with a large, six by ten feet picture window where

you could stand and look out down over the valley of Germany. Of course, when we were there the window glass was all blown out of it and damaged. The whole house was pretty much a shambles, but my best recollection is from this house it was connected to a passageway which went down into the mountainside. I remember going quite a ways down, and down in the mountainside there was a layout of a hospital and a library and a social room, dining room--a full complex where the people who were up there if there was an attack or bombing could go down underneath. Of course, down there was stored an enormous quantity of paintings, valuable paintings that [Joseph] Goebbels--was he the airman? Goebbels. No, he was the propaganda man. General--the air force general of the army. He was the man that stole most of the paintings in the Louvre and all art and they were stored down there. Down there is where, ah, yes--there were books all over the place--I remember picking up a book with a Hitler autograph to Eva Braun.

G: Really?

C: I don't know what became of that. I know it was a treasure, I should have--I don't know where it went to. They had a lot of books. I don't know whether they read them or not.

Do your notes tell about this hospital aspect of it?

G: No, I didn't know anything about that. And I assume that that area was occupied by American troops?

C: Oh, it must be a fair assumption because it was damaged so badly from deliberate internal damage, as breaking the plate glass window. That wasn't a war except as the invaders came in and damaged it. I think

that the American troops did it. Down there where they lived, in their living quarters, where the books and so forth [were], that was strewn all over the floor. That was the captors, Americans I hope.

G: From there you went back to Paris and then to London. Then Scotland.

C: Isn't there a man--who was the American ambassador to London? Caffery was the first time. There was another time of visiting London when the American ambassador and I had a very good rapport. He was the former governor of New Hampshire. I don't know why that man comes to my mind except there does come to my mind the fact that when Churchill was in Washington he made a speech at a joint session of the Congress which was held in the Senate Chamber because the House Chamber at that time was undergoing some repairs. The person in charge was a [House member] from Maryland; his name was [William] Cole, a very prominent Marylander. The Cole House in Maryland University was named after him. I got an autographed picture of Churchill while I was on another trip. This trip we did not see Churchill so what I was about to tell you had nothing to do with this trip. At a later time I saw Churchill.

G: Then you flew back to Washington and filed a report.

C: Yes. It is too bad that [Donald] Cook is not living because he had a good fine mind and I'm sure a good memory. What caused his death? I know he had--did he have a heart condition or something?

G: I think it was a heart attack.

Did Lyndon Johnson ever talk to you about this trip? Did he ever reminisce about the trip with you in later years, subsequent years?

C: No, except that I should report that I do recall the day or so before we went on this trip he had invited to his house--it was right soon after Lady Bird gave birth to the eldest daughter--invited Ramsey and the boy who wrote the book--

G: Eddie Hebert.

C: Eddie Hebert. Johnson had all of us and [William] Hess out to his house for a get acquainted because he had not been on Naval Affairs Committee for a long time, so he didn't know us very well. I don't know--how long had he been on the committee?

G: He came on in 1937. He was elected in the middle of 1937.

C: Maybe ten years, we'll say. But it was to get acquainted with the staff as well as--and the Don Cook aspect. Lyndon was very impressed with Don Cook's job that he had done on some other committee--I don't recall what it was--and so insisted on Cook going along as our rapporteur. I remember I wasn't too happy with that arrangement. I don't know why now in retrospect because he was a good man. I didn't have anything against him. He must have offended me in some fashion, I don't know.

G: Any conclusions on what kind of impact this trip had on Lyndon Johnson in his subsequent career?

C: No, because you see it was fairly soon after that trip that he went to the Senate.

G: 1948.

C: 1948? So I never saw him again after that. Rarely. I'd see him in the hallways of the Capitol and say hello but our paths never

crossed, very rarely crossed. So there wasn't any opportunity to sit down and visit.

G: Let me ask you to describe what the Naval Affairs Committee was like under Chairman Vinson? Under Carl Vinson?

C: I can't find one word that could describe it except that it was an extremely conscientious [group], composed of very conscientious members. We were all greatly impressed with the talent of the witnesses coming before that committee from the navy. They were damn smart, shrewd guys, all of them. I mean I feel sure that my admiration for the witnesses was shared by all the other members. The result being that Chairman Vinson had a--he didn't need to sell us on the proposals that were legislation before us because the witnesses did that. His job was just to guide the procedures of getting it approved by the committee and before the Congress and passed.

But he had very little opposition very, very rarely and--did he have opposition? I recall it comes to my mind one case but this was after the committee was organized with the Armed Services, became Armed Services. I voted against extension of the draft and that irks me and makes me furious when I read in the paper that so-and-so voted against extension of the draft. I forget the year. There never was a vote against extending the draft. There never was a vote in Congress of whether to extend the draft or not. You remember this, and if you ever see that, you just tear the damn paper up. The vote was on whether the period of service of those who were inducted should be three years or two years. The vote was on the time of service in the

draft, it was not the extension. It never was that. Grossly misleading to the people who voted. I voted--I don't remember how I voted. I don't remember. I think I would have voted to reduce the period from three to two years because we didn't have any place for those men that we were bringing in at that time. We didn't need them for two years. We didn't have any guns to drill them with. So I guess I must have rationalized this, that two years was enough at that time. But it never was whether we would extend the draft.

G: That's an important clarification.

C: You bet it is. I'm extremely disappointed that none of the knowledgeable people have raised a voice of protest. Of course the answer is there are not many of them living. Only one or two.

G: Yes. Another issue at the time involved the fortification of Guam.

C: I don't recall. I rather think I would have voted against fortification of Guam.

G: Any recollections of this issue and. . . ?

C: Right at the moment I can't think of any reason why I would have voted against fortification of Guam. I wonder what date--does that occur to you when that was?

G: Let's see. I think it was 1938. Is that. . . ?

C: 1938? 1948 maybe. We didn't own Guam. [U.S. acquired from Spain in 1898]

G: 1939 I believe it was.

C: Didn't we get Guam from the Japanese? [U.S. possession until 12-7-41 and retaken from Japan 7-44]

G: Any insights on the relationship between Carl Vinson and Lyndon Johnson?

C: Oh, they were best.

G: Were they? They'd be close?

C: Yes.

G: We've always heard stories that Vinson ruled that committee with an iron hand. Very powerful chairman.

C: Oh, he did. I thought I explained to you why it was possible for the committee to let them be ruled is because they were convinced of the justification of the navy's position just as we all had been. So he had an easy class, committee to rule. Very rarely did the committee file a minority report, very rarely. But he was a good leader.

G: Was he fair to the Republicans?

C: Yes. Very fair. Sure he was.

Lyndon didn't smoke, did he? Smoke cigars?

G: No.

C: Well, Vinson did.

G: Did he?

C: Oh, yes, smoking and chewing on a cigar. He was a cooney, smart, shrewd commander. See him looking out over his bifocals. But he was not autocratic as a chairman at all. He would yield today any protest to try to find an accommodation until it reached a point when what the objector, the fault he was finding, Vinson couldn't accept. Of course, he resisted it, but he always won on the floor.

Tape 1 of 1, Side 2

G: Well, you had an opportunity to observe Lyndon Johnson in committee. What sort of a congressman was he? How would you assess him as a member of the House?

C: I'm not sure I can find the adjectives to describe him. He was a--conniver comes to my mind but that gives a connotation that I don't mean. He was a schemer, a planner, an intriguer, which is all right if you have that talent to do that sort of thing to accomplish whatever your ends might be. I don't mean it was dishonest or improper but he was a--maybe you can think of a better word.

G: Can you give me an instance in which he exercised these traits?

C: No. No, I can't.

G: Was he partisan? Was he deeply--?

C: Very partisan. Yes, yes. Except on basis of the personal. There was no between party--Lyndon and Cole, there was nothing, we were very good friends. And he had many friends [inaudible]. But when it came to issues on the floor, he was a different man.

G: Was he regarded as someone who was close to the Roosevelt Administration?

C: Yes. He was close to a Congressman from Texas. What was his name? You should be able to tell me. He was clerk to that Congressman. That Congressman was a very, very good friend to me as a Democrat. I had more Democratic friends in the Congress when I was there as a Republican--not more, but I had many. Most of my friends were southerners. I wish I could think of that Congressman's name. Can't you think of it?

G: He was a Democratic congressman from Texas? I could name some.

C: Lyndon Johnson was his clerk, worked in his office.

G: Oh, Dick Kleberg.

C: Dick Kleberg. Yes, yes. Oh, yes, the committee went down and visited Dick Kleberg's ranch. I don't know whether Lyndon was there or not; probably he was. I don't remember. But it was Dick Kleberg.

G: Was this in connection with that Corpus Christi Naval Air Station down there?

C: Could be. Could be. I don't have any recollection of that.

G: There was one incident before World War II that I want to ask you about when Walter Winchell as a lieutenant commander in the navy was being criticized by people like Burton Wheeler, and evidently Lyndon Johnson was one of those that--

C: Supported him.

G: Johnson supported Winchell where Wheeler--do you recall that episode. Do you remember what happened then?

C: No.

G: Okay.

C: I don't recall now. What was the argument about Winchell?

G: Well, he was evidently making political speeches while he was a lieutenant commander in the navy and I think they objected to this dual status.

C: But Lyndon supported him.

G: Yes.

C: A naval officer didn't have any business making statements like Walter Winchell used to make. I can't agree with Lyndon.

G: Lyndon Johnson introduced a work-or-fight measure. Do you recall that?

C: Vaguely, yes. Either be drafted or fight. Yes. Nothing ever came of it, I'm sure. I don't recall. What did it provide? Allow yourself to either volunteer for service or get a job in a munitions factory?

G: I think it really addressed an absenteeism issue, too. People who were working in plants but weren't showing up for work.

C: Why wouldn't they show up for work?

G: I don't know.

C: Well, they just didn't show up for work. They didn't get paid, did they? I don't remember the provisions of the bill. I remember the title indicated what was the objective.

See, I've had many, many trips, congressional trips. See, I was on Joint Atomic Energy Committee [inaudible], then the Armed Services, subsequently the navy. It is pretty hard to, at this stage--I go down to the Congress now, I resigned in 1957--thirty years [ago]. So I wasn't far off when I said when you are fifty years older than you [were in 1945], it all goes.

G: Do you recall the Elk Hills investigation on the petroleum reserve?

C: I recall driving around in an automobile through the Elk Hills and seeing the oil pumps, rockers, but the issues I don't remember except I was very strong for maintaining the naval reserves under the navy auspices. I was strong because the witnesses representing the navy

viewpoint had a good case. But I don't remember Lyndon--he wasn't involved in that. That was before Lyndon goes on the committee, wasn't it? The Elk Hills controversy.

You say Admiral or Captain whatever his name is is not living, [the one] that went on the trip with us, as staff man.

G: Don Cook?

C: No, the navy man. Captain.

G: Oh, let's see, who was that? Donald Ramsey?

C: Donald Ramsey.

G: I don't know if he's living or not.

C: But who is the marine?

G: Knighton. Joseph Knighton.

C: Knighton, that's it. He was a good guy. He was a good one. Good officer. Colonel Knighton, Joe Knighton. I think he was on other committee trips, but the captain in the navy is the only one I remember, Ramsey.

G: Any other insights on your service with Lyndon Johnson during those years?

C: No. Not that come to my mind.

G: Was he well liked by his colleagues? Was he not well liked by his colleagues?

C: Oh, I must say yes, sure. I can't say no because then I'd be asked why and I can't think of a why. Because, you see, my association with him was only during his House membership and I think his work was--I can't say it was any different, but that was his work in the Senate

was where he became a conniver [inaudible] to get the Democratic position in the Senate promoted, advanced. He was a damn good Democratic majority leader in the Senate. So I'm sure he was very well liked, very well liked. I'm not aware of any close friendship that he established. Mine was as close as anybody so far as the House is concerned. I don't know about his personal relationships to Senate members. But we had a very, very good personal relationship. No, I can't think of anything.

G: Anything on his relationship with Sam Rayburn during those years?

C: Not that I would be aware of. They wouldn't come to my attention anyway. Everybody loved Sam Rayburn.

G: Did they? Why was that?

C: Well, he was such a good, fair man in dealings with the Congress as a speaker. He treated the Republicans with the same deference that he treated the Democrats. He was very, very fair. I don't know how many speakers I served under but he was by far the best. I don't remember how many. John McCormack. Did you run across him?

G: Yes.

C: Democrat from Massachusetts, was a very good man but not the same as [Rayburn].

G: Well, I really appreciate it. You've been very helpful and I thank you for your--

C: No, I haven't. I haven't.

End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I

July 10, 2013

W. Sterling Cole died March 15, 1987, before signing a formal deed of gift for his oral history interview. As of July 10, 2013, Tina Houston and Claudia Anderson have determined that Cole intended the interview to be unrestricted per instruction to Michael L. Gillette, and all restrictions can be lifted from the interview at this time.

Nicole Hartmann Hadad

AC 88-5-25

June 28, 1988

W. Sterling Cole - Interview I - February 5, 1988

The Library is making this interview available without a signed legal agreement because at the time Mike Gillette interviewed him, Representative Cole requested that this be done and it be opened without restrictions or revisions.

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