INTERVIEW I

DATE: December 17, 1985

INTERVIEWEE: DANIEL C. GARCIA, SR.

INTERVIEWER: Ted Gittinger

PLACE: Mr. Garcia's office, Cotulla, Texas

Tape 1 of 1, Side 1

TG: Mr. Garcia, give me a little of your personal background. You were born here in Cotulla.

DG: Yes, I was born here; actually I was born here just about four or five blocks south of this place were we are making this recording, Dan's Furniture Store. I was born in 1914, September 1. I was raised about two or three blocks north of here, in the community here. Then my father and my brother--my own brother and my father and myself--we started a little grocery store way back in 1934, a little butcher store, you know, meat market and groceries. Just a tiny one, just to make a living back in those days. There was a Depression, real hard Depression. A year before that I was working with Paul Cotulla as a delivery boy in a Piggly Wiggly with the Cotullas, the founders of Cotulla. Paul Cotulla, he still lives. He was mayor for about seven or eight years, and I was seven years a city councilman with him for a long time there. We have had our controversies, of course, but we always get along fine. Later on we were both businessmen.

I've been a businessman ever since I got back from the service. I served in the army from 1941 to 1945, the last of 1945. I was three years in Europe, two years here in the states. Thank God, the health has kept me up. I have my wife, three daughters, and a son. My son is the one that is manager and in partnership in the furniture [store] we incorporated

in 1980. So far, it has been a blessing as far as the city and my life, my imagination of Cotulla.

But I always have thought as a young fellow, ever since when I was with Lyndon Johnson, I was just a student of him. But a lot of [inaudible] I picked up with him, as a young fourteen-year-old boy. It was very interesting because he was one of the first man teachers, and interesting and challenging. He was very active in sports and so forth, and I picked up a lot of young instincts from him. The way he used to walk from the main part of town to the Welhausen school, which is about eight or ten blocks, or fifteen blocks, kind of with a big straddle, swinging his arms around, a young man around nineteen years old himself; I was fourteen. He was working under a permit, the permit that they used to give young teachers working their way through college.

Of course, I am pretty well satisfied, enchanted in a way, with the city of little Cotulla, since I was born and raised here, and thank God, I've got lots of friends all around. God has blessed me that I wound up as a businessman, and thank God that I made it go, to educate my family to the best of my ability. We are still doing fairly well, thank God again.

TG: Tell me what you remember about when you first encountered Lyndon Johnson. When did you first see him? Do you recall that?

DG: Yes, I recall a few of the things, yes. I recall him coming over; he came over around December, kind of at mid-year, and he took over 1928 or 1927 in January, the teachers at the Welhausen school. And he was a young fellow with lots of aggressive ideas and a lot of push, a lot of sports--baseball--indoor baseball was very strong at that time.

TG: Indoor baseball?

DG: Not actually indoor baseball, I would say softball, that great big one, you remember that one that we used to be [inaudible]? He was very strong. Then later on after that season passed on, we went into regular hard baseball. He would play with those out there in the yard with us, and kind of get us--"Get on the ball, Daniel"--he used to call me Daniel--"Go over there and play second fielder or left fielder" or what have you. But he was a very likeable personality, Lyndon. Of course, we visited him a few more times at the Pedernales ranch, two or three times. He would have us in a list and give us a special invitation to visit as old acquaintances or schoolteacher activities and stuff like that.

He came back here. I jump quite a bit, because that's my imagination, you know, I just jump from one thing to another. But he made a speech, the national education speech here in Cotulla. He called me first here one Sunday afternoon about twelve or one o'clock at home. I talked to his private secretary who told me that Lyndon Johnson wanted to make a speech on Monday, and he was talking on Sunday, but they didn't want too much publicity. So of course I got in touch with the Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Landrum, at that time.

TG: Landrum, was it?

DG: Landrum, Mr. Landrum. He is retired, he went to the east coast, here to East Texas. So he gathered the whole--surrounded the whole school and got schoolteachers and everybody, [inaudible] that whole Mexican Welhausen school. They even had to put the car for rewiring because the wires, the electrical wires there, were just too small for those big

broadcasting, national broadcasting hook-ups that they make, because it was going to be a nationally televised speech.

So by the time that afternoon came around, I got myself all ready and set up, and, sure enough, about two o'clock in the afternoon, here he comes to the airport. And of course, I'm pretty well known in the town, it's just a small community. But there were some young fellows that kind of kid and cat around for Democrats and Republicans. "Well, where is Mr. Daniel C. Garcia?" he said. They were just kidding. But at the same time, he actually wanted to see me, because he wanted me to ride on his station wagon and Lady Bird and somebody else, Ambassador of the United Nations I think that came with him at that time.

We came over by the hotel, LaSalle Hotel in the city of Cotulla and then another little place down the street that he used to come to the Welhausen. He was all thrilled because I was kind of telling him a few things that I could remember. And he would inquire and so forth, he could recognize [from] when he was nineteen or twenty years old. And it was a thrilling, human story, real beautiful. A lot of people cooperated. We must have had about two or three thousand people, and there are less than two thousand people in town. He had about three or four thousand people down there to listen to his speech, the national education speech.

TG: You said he encouraged sports, how about football?

DG: Well, football at that time was kind of weak. They were playing it in high school, but in the grammar school they were not practicing it a lot. But they were practicing the regular baseball, high jumping, broad jumping, low hurdles, high hurdles. He actually committed

himself with the rest of the schools. We used to have about seven schools in the county, Millett, Gardendale, Artesia Wells, Encinal, Fowlerton, Los Angeles, and Valley Wells [?]. We had a bunch of little tiny schools back in those days, so they made a county meeting, what they call a county meeting session, competition.

They had other counties come over. Some of them had speech declamation. I was one in speech declamation, and then I was playing baseball. I used to jump, also, high jump. There were a lot of activities like that and competition, and it was beautiful way, way back at the time. He started that same half-year that he came over, and then the following year in September he came over as a teacher again, as a substitute teacher, but actually he was acting as a principal of the school. And of course there was the principal, Miss Mamie Wildenthal [?], at that time. Miss Mamie Wildenthal, she passed away a few years ago.

But the thing was that there was always a little friction with the local and with the outside teachers; just like everywhere else, there's always a little friction. Not to a great extent, but you could still feel it, and even though I might notice it more myself now that I know a lot of things about a lot of things than at the time. At the time you couldn't hardly tell anything was going on. But there was friction, and, of course, with Mamie, she was one of the Wildenthal family that's well known around the community and county. Barney Wildenthal used to be sheriff, and John Wildenthal used to be justice of the peace, and then some other [Wildenthal] was a judge or something. So the Wildenthals were fairly well known and appreciated here, so there was no trouble about that. The only thing [was] that

there was resentment about incoming people, but that is just a human tendency, a human deal.

TG: Now, Mr. Donaho [?] was the superintendent then, is that right?

DG: I believe so, I believe I've heard that name, but I don't remember the superintendent of the school at the time because I was only in the fourth or fifth grade. We seldom ever go up to the high school, familiarize ourselves with the high school. I went to high school to the ninth grade, but there was somebody else at that time, by then.

TG: Now, there is a story that he got into a little difficulty because he insisted that the teachers supervise the recess.

DG: Yes, there was a little squall, this is just hearsay that I heard myself as a young kid. I just heard that he didn't want the schoolteachers to sit down or be smoking and don't participate in the recess. There was a little friction on that. I can remember the isolated incidents like that. But this is just hearsay that I heard at the time, but my age, fourteen years old, not too much emphasis.

TG: You spoke Spanish at home.

DG: Yes, yes.

TG: And most of the kids did.

DG: Yes, yes.

TG: Well, how was he on that in school? Did he insist on English?

DG: He insisted--for the first few months that he came, he actually made a ruling himself and in the school, a tentative ruling, that he was going to fine or spank someone that would speak Spanish in the background. He was really an enthusiastic leader, enthusiastically trying to

get the Mexican kids to speak Spanish [English] so they could learn more, and there wouldn't be so much broken English. They would always play in Spanish and kid in Spanish and everything else. So he gave that order. He held it for a few weeks only, and then everybody, including himself started speaking Spanish again. He knew a few words in Spanish.

TG: Did he?

DG: Yes. He used to visit another friend of mine, Juan Gonzales [?], I think it is, that lived from the school, about two blocks south of there. His mother was a good cook and she would make tortillas. He would go by there and see Juan Gonzales, and then his mother would ask him to come in, then show him the tortillas and make him some tacos out of flour tortillas. He would enjoy them and speak a little Spanish, and then half a block down the line was the janitor, Tomás Coronado. Tomás couldn't speak any English, but he [Johnson] could speak enough Spanish to communicate back and forth with him. He was the janitor of the school.

TG: I heard stories that he also tried to teach the janitor to read English?

DG: I don't doubt it, because he did talk many times with him. And we knew that the old man Tomás Coronado didn't speak hardly any English at all, and we knew also that Lyndon spoke a few words in Spanish. Yes, yes sir.

TG: Did he emphasize public speaking and declamation?

DG: That one year, I think it was 1928, that he first came, either in the fall of the year or at the end of the school year, we had teachers with a little Spanish dramatic scenes and speech declamation. And we had mathematical problems on there, too. He was a well-rounded

individual with lots of ego for a lot of things at the time. That was a little while ago, but he was really--.

TG: What kind of a town was Cotulla in those days?

DG: It was a real, real, real, real old town, and to my estimation, I can estimate and at the time and put it in perspective, I would say that it was definitely a divided town between Latins and Anglos. East of the railroad track was Latin, and west of it usually was Anglo. Of course, there were lot more Anglo people. Now, it is quite a bit the other way around, 80 per cent of them are Latin people, but they are more educated.

Back in those days our fathers--well, my father is an exception, he had good school years up to the sixth or seventh grade in Mexico, which is equivalent to eight or ten here, good mathematics and good speech. My mother also was a schoolteacher in Guerrero, Mexico, the border town, Zapata. But a lot of other people, they couldn't hardly even write, some Mexican people at that time. And of course their kids would normally speak Spanish with their fathers and mothers. But it was definitely divided up to some extent, you know what I mean. There were always fights and quarrels, or what have you, and little discussions of the PTA mothers of the Mexican school with the PTA, not actually PTA but the administration of the schools.

My mother, I remember one time that she got pretty excited because our class, or the year before my class, was promoted to the eighth grade, when they passed to the eighth grade they would go to the eighth grade in the Anglo section, the high school. And when they went up there, at the time one of the principals or superintendents, they made a squabble about the boys not being qualified enough to be in the high school. So they tried

to demote them back to the eighth grade, eight on the Welhausen, and there was no eighth grade in the Welhausen. So the PTA got hard about it, all of the mothers and fathers, so they got in a big squawk about it and they went up there and started making speeches that they had certificates to attend the eighth grade school, and so forth. So they finally accepted them, but they wanted to keep segregation going up and up and up. And, of course, if you never break the barriers there is never going to be--you know, it's stabilized to an extent.

But there was always some little discretions going on like that, but so forth it has turned pretty evenly now. There is a lot of the same thing going on, on the Anglo side for the Mexican-American peoples. And vice versa, they respect each other, and they play sports. Everything is on the up and up, just like a big city that ain't got no racial barriers on it.

TG: Did LBJ ever exhibit any feeling about the Mexican people, one way or the other?

DG: No, at the time he made some remarks that I can recall that the Mexican people were not quite up to standard because of the lack of opportunity, or because of the deficiencies that they were poor, and they were taken to the cotton fields to work early or afterwards or they came late or what have you--migrant people. But he did make some remarks about that in the way that he wanted good, wholehearted American citizens to have the same opportunity as far as they could possibly be. Not the same specifics that they have been saying lately, but just trying to recall his aims at the time. He wouldn't blame a Mexican kid because he was low, dumb, a fool, because there were too many things against him, you know, too

many things against him already. So naturally he by himself wouldn't be able to break through. So he was a pretty broad-minded thinking American, very broadminded.

TG: Some writers have written that there was no lunch period because people didn't have lunch--they were that poor. Is that right?

DG: Right, absolutely so. They didn't have enough food for lunch. Some of them didn't get no breakfast either, some didn't get no breakfast. The standard of living at that time was poor, even for the United States. And take these people that were sons and daughters of the immigrant people, and they were low in salaries and earning power, and that made it worse, and worse and worse. They didn't have enough to take lunch at all. So it was a hard thing all the way around for a young kid; what I can recall.

TG: There is a story that he spent some of his first paycheck to buy toothpaste. Do remember that?

DG: Well, not exactly in those words, but he did cooperate in various things, like, for instance, sometimes there was a glass--or we were pretty short on tools to play baseball--and there was a mitt lost, and they were trying to see if there was some way. And he would put some money of his own to buy a bat or two, or a mitt, or glove. On the sports side, he would go out like that, because he was really whole-hearted; a young man with a lot of strong emotions.

TG: Did all of the children like him, do you think, or were there some who--?

DG: I would say that most of them liked him a great deal, most of them. Of course there was always isolated--a few kids, mean kids, those guys that would just go over to the river to dip in the water out there after school and come late, there are always those particular ones.

He was strict with them. He was strict with those fellows that violated some of the commendable rules [inaudible].

TG: What would he do to them?

DG: He would either spank them or put them on two or three days suspension or he would tell their fathers [inaudible], some kind of a disciplinary manner in that form. To me, of course, he made that particular spanking, [inaudible] I told it on "I've Got a Secret," you've probably read it somewhere in different books. It happened when he was teaching school at Welhausen, and of course, that actually renovated itself when he was vice president.

Of course, when he was running for vice president, he and President Kennedy came to Laredo for a Democratic fund rally, and I happen to went because I said I had a card--one of the schoolteachers, somebody gave me a card where Lyndon was there at the time in 1928. And I looked at it, the more I looked at it, I said, "Yeah," I saw myself right there, holding the sign right in front of me.

TG: The class picture.

DG: Yes, the picture that appeared. They've got lots of pictures of them at the university there. About that time I was fairly young and active. I must have been around fifty-four or so. I went to the convention and I handshaked with the candidates, because he himself introduced me to them. Then I told him, "Mr. Johnson, I have a picture that I would like for you to autograph." He said, "Let me look at it," old tall Lyndon. He looked at it, "Is that you?" I said, yes, it was mine [inaudible] and somebody had given it to me. Yes, it's mine. "I certainly do." He put it on the board and signed Lyndon Johnson and the date, and "Many regards to Daniel C. Garcia." Of course, he remembered me well. And he

looked at it again. And then--what's his name, the President?--John Kennedy came over, just a little smaller person, and he said, "What you got there, Lyndon?" He said, "This pupil of mine back in 1928 has got this," and he showed him the card. Golly, they're just kind of reminiscing a little bit, and just talked back and forth. I was fifty-four years old. I was actually a little local politician a little bit in a way, just promoting the voting rights and so forth. And, of course, he had known about me a little bit.

I think he wrote me a letter within about a week or so and asked me about that postcard and told me that if I could lend it to him that he would like to amplify it and make copies. So I collected that for him; I sent it to Washington. The place, and they call me by phone. I was a pretty good correspondent with his secretaries. So I sent them over there and he sent me a big bunch of them, about twenty or twenty-five of those pictures. He said, "I'd like for you, Daniel, to give to each one of the fellows that stay there one of these pictures." So I did, most of them. There were two or three that I couldn't locate, but the rest of I did, one in [inaudible] and quite a few in San Antonio, and a few in Fowlerton, and quite a few around here. Maybe a few in Artesia Wells or Encinal. Anyway, where I could locate those people; I knew practically all of them with the exception of two or three of them. And then one time he sent a reporter or someone out of his office to ask me for the right addresses of all of those people there. So I gave them to him to the best of my recollection and knowledge. He was pretty well appreciative. He sent me a letter, very thankful for all of that information that I had given him. And he was really thrilled.

So they went ahead into the fall of the year elections, and in November when the general elections came up, they told me that they were going to send me a few pamphlets to

distribute here. It was a publicity action, publicity [inaudible] from Chicago, the Democratic national headquarters somewhere up there. They sent me about three stacks of like newspapers about this high, three of them! The freight came over to unload them. I said, "My goodness, what am I going to do with all of that paper?" I would deliver it the best I could, you know. It was about four or five pages, [inaudible]. The only little stories that were going on at that time--emphasizing that Lyndon certainly was a qualified vice president running for John Kennedy. It was a great, great thrill. I said, "Jeepers creepers," a kind of high attitude for me. But we did the best we could, and he always had thanked me, written me some letters. I had lots of letters from him, or Lady Bird would sign some of them.

One time I visited him. He came over here one time when he was the vice president, he came over to a wedding of his niece. His niece, I think, lives in Carrizo Springs or Crystal City, somewhere in one of those two towns there. She was getting married one Saturday night.

(Interruption)

So he came over in a plane; he came over one Saturday night. County Judge J. W. Martin called me up, he was an old man at the time, and said, "Hey, Dan. Old Lyndon was just in town here. He went to the wedding, came over to the wedding for his niece, and he wants me to take him by your place." I said, "That's perfectly all right, I'm here, I don't close until nine o'clock or so." So everything came all right. He came over with this person's help.

It was highlights and thrilling, thrilling experiences for a country boy like myself, you know, from a small community. He was really thrilled about lots of things that just coincided with his viewpoints. He was a very strong advocate of education, national education for the United States, and being the vice president--running for vice president, he was very strong on it, and of course all of those things jibe. You didn't even have to form anything, just say what it came out and it came out just right. So he was a pretty strong candidate on school, school activities.

TG: Yes, he said he wanted to be known as the education president.

DG: Right, he certainly did.

TG: How did you get on "I've Got a Secret?" How did that transpire?

DG: That transpired kind of peculiar, too. My second daughter, Linda, she was about sixteen years old or seventeen, in high school. They called up from the White House and she answered the phone here at the store; she was helping us. She said, "Daddy, you have a long distance call from Washington. Somebody wants to speak to you from over there." I said, "Ooo la la, I wonder who it is." So I came over and called up over there and it was one of the operators trying to locate a fellow that had some kind of memories or some kind of experiences or circumstances with the president; at the time he was vice president. He was president, but actually he was just a few days from December 22 [November 22], that they killed John, to January 6 when I appeared on the "I've Got a Secret" program. So they called Chicago, said there were a lot of people from Cotulla in Chicago. So they called there--there was a fellow that knew about some of the acquaintance that I had with Lyndon.

So he said, "There is a fellow in Cotulla by the name of Daniel C. Garcia that was his pupil." Somebody just guided him like that.

So the operator called over here and talked to me the first time, and they asked me, "Are you Mr. Daniel C. Garcia?" [I said], "Yes." "Well, do you have any acquaintance or any relation, any stories with Lyndon?" I said "Yes, sir, I certainly do have one. He gave me a good whipping in his private office while he was my teacher." So I just throwed them that and they got a big kick out of that. She kept on calling me for a couple of days, every day she always called me and I wasn't in. First the operator connected me to the Garry Moore staff. And, of course, the secretary to Garry Moore kept on getting the story. I just kept on telling them what I knew. "Tell it to me and see what happens." She probably made a recording or just told him the whole [inaudible] tale. The following day they called me up and said if I was interested in visiting New York, "I've Got a Secret" program in the fifth studio or something like that. I said, "Yes, I am. I certainly will." [They said], "Would you be willing, Mr. Garcia, to come and appear on the 'I've Got a Secret' program?" I said, "I'll try, I'll give it a good try."

To tell them about the same story when I got caught talking to the class where I was where he was teacher and I was clowning and I was actually imitating Lyndon Johnson in the class. Then he came over and peeked through the window. He used to come over and peek through the window. That particular time he probably didn't peek, he just came around and came down the hall, just sneaking, without making any noise. And there were two or three of them talking; there was Juan Ortiz, and there was somebody else, Miguel Castillo, and then myself. We were all imitating different things about Lyndon. And for

the other two that were more sharp, they saw him through the door, so they quit. Then I kept on talking, I was right in the middle of the class and right in front, and I noticed that everybody quieted down, and I said, "What's happening around here." Then I turned around, and here was Lyndon Johnson right by the side of me. He said, "Well, what else happened?" And I was surprised and pretty well *asustado* [badly scared], you know. He said, "Well, let's go to my office." He took me to his office halfway down the hall, and he gave me a spanking. He just put my head right between his legs and then with two hands on the back of it. I was just a junkie and I just have faint memories. And then when I appeared on "I've Got a Secret," I went ahead and told them about that story.

Lyndon Johnson broke all the rules of the Radio City network; he called the studio, Garry Moore, and said he wanted to speak with Mr. Garcia, or one of his [Moore's] secretaries. And somebody said, "There's nobody supposed to call any private person that is appearing on a program because we're not supposed to interrupt them." He said, "Just tell the manager there that this is the President of the United States that wants to speak to Mr. Garcia."

(Laughter)

Ooo la la, that was [inaudible]. Sure enough, they gave me a phone and said, "Mr. Garcia, you are supposed to call this number. The President wants to talk to you." They had asked me if it would be all right to mention it to the President, Lyndon, at the time. It was only twenty years [days] after he had been president because, right before he was just vice president, but after the murder of John Kennedy. And then of course people were kind of in a trauma at the time. Sometimes you get enthused and you don't realize, but there was a

lot of [inaudible] unforeseen things that could happen for anything, could get flared up. So, "Do you think it would be all right if we tell him?" I said, "Yes, he knows me very well because I've been a couple of times to his place since he's been vice president." And I knew that he knew me so very well. So they sent him a telegram. And he had three networks connected to see that program, "I've Got a Secret." So the Garry Moore program that particular night went up real high in audience.

TG: So you talked to him?

DG: I talked to him. The first thing he said, "What time [inaudible]." I said, "No, it's the first time." He said, "Daniel, how are you?" [I said], "Fine, Mr. President, fine, thank you, sir." He said, "Daniel, does it still hurt you?" "Of course not, Mr. President, I treasure those memories." He said, "What time is your plane leaving tomorrow?" [I said], "I didn't have any special schedule, but I was thinking about leaving about eleven o'clock." He said, "I want you to stop by Washington, to the White House, and there will be someone there waiting for you. I want you to visit me at the White House." Just like an order. (Laughter) I said, "Yes, sir." I was shaking in my boots. I said, "I have to go." So I did go, and sure enough, there was a limousine there waiting.

And the secretary of Garry Moore was supposed to accompany me, but she got busy, so I had to make the Boston connection out there from New York to Washington, and on the same plane [airline?] there were two routes, one for Boston and one for Washington. So then I bought the ticket on the plane and the [inaudible] everything like that; too new for me, you know. I was just guiding myself and inquiring, about the ticket on the way up. And when I landed, of course, there were a bunch of photographers there,

because they had heard about it. One of them even asked me if I would bend over. "Okay, just don't overdo it," I said.

(Laughter)

So I bent over the way he spanked me. That was a real human story, a fellow was admitting an old memory, getting spanked by the President of the United States. It was real thrilling all the way around.

TG: He had you over to the White House, then?

DG: Yes, he did.

TG: How long did you stay?

DG: I stayed a couple of hours. Actually talking with him was about thirty minutes, forty-five minutes, but a few minutes before they put me there, and of course his secretary they kind of separated--they were checking and double-checking. Of course, Lyndon himself didn't worry about me, but the ones who were supposed to take care of him, they didn't know me, so they had to check and double check. So they did check me for a few minutes before. Then we went back of his office and exchanged a few words back and forth. Personal matters, and I got a bunch of telegrams from the local people here, the Chamber of Commerce, and the people in town, the mayor.

TG: Did you know Juan Gonzales?

DG: Yes, very well, very well.

TG: There is a story that LBJ took him back home for a summer or something for extra tutoring or something.

DG: Yes, he did. I recall the actual action. I didn't actually see it, but I knew that summer--I don't even remember where I went to work or what I did that particular summer, but I knew that he had gone with Juan Gonzales to give him tutoring or something in school [work]. Yes, I heard about that. And I was a good friend of his, too. That's the one I mentioned to you, Juan Gonzales, his mother gave him some tortillas [inaudible].

TG: Let's see here's a name: Maclovia Segovia [?].

DG: Maclovia Segovia, yes, I know him. He is a younger fellow than me.

TG: There is a copy of a letter, he refers to, he said, "Some of the fourth graders took off to the creek about three blocks from the school, and you spanked us for it."

DG: Who did?

TG: Maclovia Segovia. That's a letter that he wrote to LBJ.

DG: Of course, he was a younger fellow, he was about, I would say, at least four or five years younger than I was at the time that I--if I was fourteen, he would have been about ten years or so.

TG: Let's see, he mentions the name, John Adame [?].

DG: John Adame? Yes, I know him very well. He was about my age. He was also a competitor of mine as far as the sports was concerned, in high jumping. He passed away a few years ago. John Adame, very high jumper.

TG: You mentioned that he organized these meets with the other schools and so forth. How did you go? Who provided transportation?

DG: Actually, the way I'm putting it is that he actually got, of course, permission and assistance with the superintendent of the school, which is the Anglo side. And then they got to where

he himself was representing the Welhausen as the principal, or acting principal, you know. And Mamie Wildenthal was, at the time, the principal, but he was actually acting at it, because he was promoting and emphasizing sports and different activities of the school, the only man teacher we had at the time. And he actually got together with the superintendent of the school. And of course they had telephone communication with [inaudible]. They had their own way of going about it, forming this county meeting. The county meeting is a real--that particular year, the reason I emphasize the county meeting, on baseball, and all those races and so forth, is because he himself was new, and of course he jibed with that particular year that he activated it, and quite a few of the activities from the Welhausen school went to the Anglo school to be in the county meeting--baseball and so forth, different kinds of activities--the hundred-yard dash and relay. We had a team for relay running and so forth.

TG: Would he take, let's say, the baseball team to play a baseball team at one of the surrounding communities?

DG: Well, either that, or someone else did. But sometimes he did. But he himself would coach at the school that he was teaching, at the Welhausen. I don't recall him going to individual towns with that particular--but, he was actually representing the school, but he was actually coaching and teaching the team at the Welhausen.

TG: He said, at one point, that Welhausen had the best baseball team. He said, we beat the other teams. Do you remember?

DG: Yes, we were pretty good, we were pretty good, we were pretty good about it.

TG: What position did you play?

DG: Well, I used to play either left or right fielder, sometimes first base, and second or left fielder on baseball.

TG: You said he used to play with you sometimes?

DG: Yes.

TG: What position would he play?

DG: Well, he would play either one there was way lacking, like to put an example of it. He would say, "Stay over there for a few minutes," and he would play that. Just a little, maybe ten or fifteen minutes, just to show them how to do it, how to shoot the balls and so forth and stuff like that. He would coach both sides always then, because actually both sides were from the same school.

TG: Sure.

DG: He would emphasize both sides but he would generally try to uphold everybody, individual efforts.

TG: Did he have favorites in the students? Did he have any pets?

DG: He had some. I would consider myself a little bit of a favorite, in some kind of things. He would favor me in certain things, accidentally or what have you, he would kind of emphasize to me to go to left field or right field, or--. He would hit me on the back, you know, "Get over there, Daniel," and stuff like that. He had some other pets, also of other particular things. Not that I was any number-one student in sports, but I liked it and liked the way he went about it, and I used to obey. I like to obey someone that thinks he is right. (Laughter)

TG: Let's see what else we have here. He said he had a Columbus Day program on September 17, 1928, and was going to have an Armistice Day program. Do you remember any of those things?

DG: No, not very much. I don't remember exactly those specific things. I knew he was always good for activities like that, but I don't remember that specific thing. No.

TG: There is a story that he used to room with the high school coach, and that coach got fired for smoking.

DG: I heard some hearsay about those things, either read them or heard them, but I knew that he was--Miss Marshall--I think she's still living in town because he--

Tape 1 of 1, Side 2

TG: Do you recall him teaching you to sing? Did he have--?

DG: Oh, yes, absolutely. That's a very personal memory on that because he used to teach us when he was teaching that--at the time they had two or three grades with one teacher, like if they had English or geography or what have you, they had two or three grades together. Maybe three or four kids belonged in another grade, but they were in that particular class. In that class that I recall, he used to emphasize a great deal--pledge allegiance to the flag was one of the first things that we used to do in the morning. Then he would go on to teach us besides all the songs we used to sing like, "How do you do, Mr. Johnson, how do you do? Is there anything that we can do for you? We will do it if we can, we will stand by you to a man, how do you do, Mr. Johnson, do and do." Some there--the words, used to let us sing it and he would get a thrill in his throat every time he'd hear because we would sing it greatly and enthusiastically. I was thinking about the majority of the feeling at the time

for Lyndon. Mr. Johnson, of course, at that time was the first man schoolteacher that we had known. Most of the time we'd get ladies, you know, girls.

TG: How much difference did it make to have a man teacher, do you think?

DG: Well, for me, as a boy, a boy fourteen years old, I admired [him] a great deal. It is a psychological thing that when a man teaches you something--and this is an individual expression, you know--it seems like it is more of you doing it if you want to learn it the way he says it, than if a lady tells you how to do something. She is not a man. If they tell you how to play ball, how to run, how to fight, or what have you.

Sometimes there were fights in the school grounds, and you would have to take [inaudible] schoolteachers, kind of hard. She would just tell you, "Behave," or whatever, or you could be whipped or you could be what have you. But if a man was to teach you geography, like he was teaching geography, or arithmetic, or anything else, you would kind of imagine more because he is a man and you are a man. A girl over here probably wouldn't feel that way, that same about it. But you have a psychological thing, that a man would be more right than a lady. That's the wrong expression, but--

TG: Do you mean more authoritarian?

DG: More authoritarian and more of an example. When you hear a fellow saying, "Do as I say, don't do as I do." Well, if Lyndon would say that we figure that he would do the same thing. Because he was a man doing the same thing. It was interesting, challenging, [inaudible] the whole school was pretty proud of him as a man. The first man teacher that we recalled.

TG: You said there were fights--well, there would be fights on any school grounds.

DG: On any school.

TG: Well, how would he handle that? How would he break that up?

DG: Well, he would stop the fight, definitely, [he] would run up there and would try to stop the kids from fighting. He would try to [inaudible] find out exactly what was going on. He would either send one to his room, if they were from separate rooms--there were five or six grades around there. He didn't have too many of them, though, because he was pretty active. He was all around, just looking around, he was on the up and up, you know. Yes, he was pretty active.

TG: Did you ever see him around town after school or on weekends or anything like that?

DG: Seldom, but I did. Quite often on Friday afternoon a lady friend of his would come from I think it was either Fowlerton or Tilden--

TG: Was it Pearsall, perhaps?

DG: It could have been Pearsall at that time, I couldn't tell. But it was one of his favorite girls.

TG: You don't know her name, by any chance?

DG: No, by any chance, no I don't. I don't think it was Lady Bird because that would be a little too far away from the same people. But it was a good close friend that he had that came over from either Tilden or Pearsall--not Fowlerton--the rumors at the time, what I can recall--on Friday, and they would disappear for the weekend somewhere, and we wouldn't see him until maybe Sunday afternoon or Monday morning the following week.

TG: So he didn't spend much of his spare time here in town.

DG: Not to my knowledge, not to my actual knowledge. Of course I was just a young fellow.

TG: Well, what was the reaction then when he didn't come back?

DG: When he didn't come back from where?

TG: Well, you know he finished that year--

DG: Oh, well, that half year he taught school and then the following year he came over. Like for instance, he came in either 1927 or 1928, midterm in January.

TG: Oh, really, I thought he had started in September of 1928.

DG: Well, my recollection could be wrong. My recollection is that he taught a year a half, which would be the half of one year and then one early September coming over--it could have been one early September, then he left in January, and he never did come back. It could have been the other way around. The one year school year first, and then the one half year later. But, according to recollections and if we can match dates there, we can figure out that it was 1928 when he took all those pictures. I must have some pictures somewhere around there still left over from the--

TG: I think I saw some up front of the store when I first came in.

DG: Yes, I believe so, right on.

And the school was made in 1926, the Welhausen school. So actually 1926, 1927, 1928. I even went to that other school over here, a yellow school made out of lumber in the same street out toward town. They used to call that the Yellow School. It was painted yellow; that's all it was. There was a creek in the back of it. Maclovia said about going to a creek.

TG: That is the creek that they--

DG: Yes, but there was nothing there. They tumbled down that building when they built this Welhausen school. That is a beautiful building they made back in 1926.

TG: It is still there?

DG: Yes, it is still there and in very good shape. The latest I heard was that the agency of the country clinics, that's some kind of country clinic outfit that is operating from the local designated [?] hospital, is going to move over there. There are going to rent per day or per month, every day, every month, so much. From one agency to another, just a token rent. But they need it over here, it would be nice. Right there they have two clinics; they have the independent clinic [called] the local doctors' clinic. Then they have this other rural clinic. And of course there was just a little friction between them, the free enterprise and the state deal. But otherwise it is going pretty well.

TG: So, what was the reaction then, when LBJ didn't come back, or did you know all the time that he was only here on a one year--?

DG: Well, we knew he was teaching on a permit basis, and we knew that one of these days he wouldn't be coming down. The recollection of the latest readings or pickup of information that we'd pick up, I think he taught either a half year in Pearsall, and then I think he taught one year in Houston, the way I recollect, after he had been here, I believe. The first year or the first year and a half he taught here in Cotulla, then in Pearsall, then in Houston, he taught one year, I believe, in Houston. Then, of course, he got his degree and started winding up with the Kleberg representative from Kleberg County over there for Washington activities and so forth and this and that. Then he was named in 1937, I think, by Roosevelt, United States youth coordinator at the time, way back.

TG: That was the NYA, I think.

DG: Oh, the NYA, something to that effect, yes. That's a long time ago. I used to read the papers about Japan fighting Manchuria way back in 1938 or 1939. Then in 1941, I was drafted, 1941, war.

TG: Did you have any connection with him then in his later congressional years?

DG: Of course, I was a Democrat and pretty active in registration and movement with the local [level], not on a national or district or anything like that. But I was pretty active in politics. I was a city councilman myself for seven years. In fact, I ran one time [inaudible] for mayor of the city and another Garcia, another fellow Garcia, supported by La Raza Unida beat me with all those bunch of votes around there. I myself beat him for [inaudible] what I knew. I said the best thing was to run middle of the road deal, be fair-minded, and fair thing for everybody. But when La Raza Unida took over, they knocked me down. In fact Garcia is still commissioner, he is so strong in this county, precinct three. He is so strong that 85 per cent of the county here in precinct three are Latin people. I would say 85 per cent of those votes, vote for him, or practically. There's not too many for being in this county. Right now we have a fellow by the name of Lilola Martinez [?] who is a county judge, and he is a friend of the Raza Unida still yet. He is finding out you have to be a little more conservative, because he finds out that not everybody thinks the same way, like he wants them to think.

TG: Tell me about the times that you went to the Ranch, on the Pedernales.

DG: Oh yes, I went a couple of times, I believe, there. One of the times that I went there was when the daughter of J. W.--the lady that has the museum there--this lady is the daughter of J. W. Martin, the county judge, pretty well acquainted. And Roy Martin is the county

Democratic chairman. I was the chairman for about five years, also, there. I finally quit when that Raza started taking over. I said, "No, I'm just dingling here, I'm not contributing anything to these tortillas [?] here." So I quit three or four years ago.

But it happened that this Stetson hat man was selling Stetson hats to the husband of this fellow [lady] that I was telling you--Newman [?]; he passed away, by the way, a few years ago. The Stetson hat representative was at the store there, and he wanted to make some kind of publicity. And of course, the Stetson Company would go along with something like that. But there was the class of 1928 of Latin American people here for Lyndon Johnson, he himself being the vice president at the time. Frank Newman was the sheriff. Ludeman--that's the one I always forget--was the husband of the daughter of the judge. Anyway, Ludeman called me and said the Stetson hat man was there, and he wanted to give a hat to Lyndon Johnson, the vice president at the time, at his place if he would welcome us. And he offered him a hat, and of course Lyndon Johnson at the time, you mentioned Cotulla, Cotulla was one of his pet cities. He said that there was a class in 1928 that the Stetson Company wanted to give him a hat. Of course, we had a bunch going. We went up there, we don't know too much about some of those high politics, but when you go up there, he opened up a closet about halfway full of hats, all kinds of Stetson hats and [inaudible] hats and what have you. He was very nice, of course, he accepted it and welcomed us.

He talked to me. He asked me to go ahead and endorse those cards that he issues out for passes into the White House. When you go to Washington you want to visit the White House, you have a pass like that. So he asked me if I could put the names of the

people there. I knew most of them, so I went ahead and put all of them, and gave a card to each one of them. There were about eight or ten in the group: the sheriff, the judge, and a bunch of other people. Then he got his hat and thanked the people, the reception and so forth. I was quite close to him when he opened the door so I could see that he had a bunch of hats in there.

TG: Did he throw that hat in there?

DG: He actually put it on the shelf, he didn't throw it, he just put it on a shelf. In other words, meaning actually that he does lots of that, it is part of the game, part of his status.

So, anyway, we visited him that particular time, and the next time that we visited him we were invited to a speech when he inaugurated a law, not the national education speeches, but they passed a law about the federal lawman's helping out all of the schools to be educated.

TG: National Education Act?

DG: Something to that effect. I don't remember the specific words of it, but it meant financial help to the local schools in the United States, and he was going to sign it right there in the little house where he had been a pupil, right close to Fredericksberg. We went out there to visit him; it was an honorary invitation, so we made a trip, three, four, five of us went there. There were a few from San Antonio, people from different parts of the country. They had a lot of friends. They had a big crowd, two or three thousand people. They had a lot of FBI, Secret Service. Actually we went out there; we got to shake hands with him. But it was a big affair. We were very glad that we did [go]. So there were a couple of times we visited his place up there. It was a good affair.

TG: Did he feed you when you went there?

DG: I don't recall right off whether they gave us--I think they had sandwiches. I think they had a table there, a table for sandwiches, people that would like to go. Of course, Fredericksburg is right close to there and there was another little town right close to it, too. They just had recently inaugurated that park, that Lyndon Johnson Park; it's a federal park. It was different.

He didn't last too long after he got out of [office].

TG: Four years.

DG: Just four years? He quit 1970 or so?

TG: January 1969.

DG: So January 1969 he bowed out. Three or four years later he passed away with a heart attack or something. Yes, he was pretty young. He should have lasted ten or fifteen years more, at least just to see his results. Because he was a great president for humanitarian reasons in more ways than one. A lot of people see him as some other thing, but to me there is no room for that. Of course, nobody's a saint in this world, but at the same time, we have to evaluate the good.

TG: Have many people come to talk to you about Lyndon Johnson? Writers, or reporters or--?

DG: Right after I appeared on "I've Got a Secret" I had a bunch of them. I would say about a half a dozen from different studios and different places, and writers and so forth. I would say maybe about five or six or so in the next year or so. And then they died down, and once in a while every four, five, or six years one would appear. And that's a long time,

because that's about twenty years ago at least. Now what we're talking about, we're talking about fifty years ago, I guess. 1928 and fifty makes 1978. We're still shy on there.

TG: What is your most lasting memory of 1928 and Lyndon Johnson? What thing sticks in your mind the most, do you think?

DG: There are a few things of course. There are a few things all in general, and I have mentioned them different times, in different places. One of the first times that I mentioned it was when I was relating it to the "I've Got a Secret" program, and I was relating it, and then I had to make a speech. When I made a speech I got a little trembling there in the fifth studio, I think, of CBS, and I almost forgot to relate the story. I was about to start moving out when some assistant said, "You were supposed to relate the story about the way you got caught and then spanked." Then I said, "Oh, yes of course." Then I'd pick it up and tell them about it.

There were a lot of people there, a few young kids in New York with a paper and they wanted me to sign it. Garry Moore and one of his lady staff there of the board and one more man, I think it was Collins, and someone else--two or three fellows with Garry Moore and they invited [us] to a drink to a restaurant there. And we went up there to drink a drink. I was kinda nervous. It was too sophisticated, too sudden for me. Of course, once I had a drink I started kidding around, and this and that. Garry Moore just laughed and laughed. I said that I'd like to have a picture for my kids, my kids were from sixteen or seventeen years down. So he gave me four pictures, and he autographed them. He is still going pretty strong, I think, Garry. He's up in years, of course.

TG: As far as I know.

DG: He's at least ten years older than I am, so that would make him pretty close to eighty or so.

TG: What happened to all of these activities that Lyndon Johnson had organized at the school when he left? Were they able to keep them going, more or less?

DG: Some of them, yes, and some of them, no, they dropped. A different kind of administration, school administration, especially. Either they [inaudible] or emphasis from federal guidelines, and so forth. Like, for instance, a few years ago they gave a lot of emphasis to the school activities, and rounding up school kids or for school to be sports-minded. Just like we're seeing now the other way around. Now we are emphasizing the three Rs. Governor White is pretty strong on that now; he makes speeches once a month emphasizing that he feels very strong on if you pass your academic subjects, you play, and if you don't pass them, you don't play; be it football or what--musical or anything else. I think it is very logical because, well, it's nice. I remember the time very distinctively and of course I should change mind a little bit. Way back, when I was a young kid I remember they were pretty strong on being a well-rounded individual, instead of being a calculating machine or something of that kind, you know. Our education way back was emphasizing an American, rounded up individual; he would know a lot of little things, and maybe a lot about one thing or so, which was very logical and very sound as an American principle way of thinking. Little by little, they started emphasizing the sports a great deal and the special curriculums; music, art, and what have you. They started laying down on the real fundamental subjects of arithmetic, reading, writing, comprehension, science. So naturally we went to the other side. We shouldn't leave those academic subjects, because even though we cannot be chiefs of staff on everything that we study--

Einsteins all over the United States--but we should know our reading, writing, and arithmetic.

TG: What kind of emphasis did Lyndon Johnson have? You've mentioned math, and you've mentioned geography.

DG: Yes, geography, spelling, and Texas history, and mathematics. The problems that he used to give us, he himself actually came over and looked it over. He would rejoice looking at this blackboard about four by ten or twelve long. He would put us one-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight-nine-zero, and then one-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight-nine-zero the other way. Now multiply it and come out with the addition. You had to multiply it by memory, there were no calculators at that time. You would come out with a very long answer. And I remember that me and [Juan] Ortiz, I think it is, another fellow that was good in mathematics, came out close to the answer or right with the answer. We were taught those tables of multiplication in Spanish, actually, when we were kids. Our mother and father taught us those. So when we grew up and we went to American schools, we learned to patch it up. We knew quite a bit of it, the mathematics. We used to emphasize it more, and we were pretty keen on mathematics, like multiplication. Algebra--I hate to brag anything about myself--but there was a family, a cousin, a brother, and a sister--Daniels; Doris Daniels, Gerald Daniels, and Frank Daniels, and myself. There was one [other], Barks, there was one lady by the name of Barks, Evelyn Barks. Any one of those four were always at the top of the algebra subject in high school in ninth grade. Back in those times eighth grade was ninth grade because we finished with eleven grades. I always rejoiced myself, looking at my--sometimes it was

number one, sometimes number two, sometimes number three or four. If I came on number four out of the twenty-eight or thirty numbers that were there, I was really thrilled, thrilled because a Mexican guy there, way out there with everybody mixed up, with high grades, that was a thrill by itself. That's what Lyndon did as far as mathematics and history, of course; history was also strong.

He would even give a little bit about current events, and we were only in the fourth or fifth grade. Current events on the Declaration of Independence, the Texas Constitution, and the history of the United States, as far as the freedom rights. He would mention the fact that he himself said it right in front of us, he said that any man, born and raised in the United States who would educate himself, regardless of what race, or how poor, or how rich he was, he could very easily wind up being the president of the United States. He said that, actually. That is an outstanding memory of things that did happen and did jibe with actual history. We used to remember him saying that two or three times during the week, he would mention it, because he was a very broad-minded thinker, lots of view, lots of horizon.

TG: Let me ask you something about Texas history. How did he relate to stories of the revolution, for example, he is talking to a bunch of kids who are related by blood to the Mexican people.

DG: Yes, well actually, the way I recall it, he wasn't teaching Texas history in the school. There was somebody else that was teaching that. But, for instance, Texas Independence or the Alamo, that must have been on the second history. Because we read a little bit about the Alamo and Santa Anna, Fort Sam Houston, and so forth, but it was not thoroughly

explained. They would just mention it and stick to the textbooks, but they would not elaborate. But they would elaborate about national freedoms and national opportunities, constitutions and so forth. But the Texas history of the revolution, there are too many stories, one way or the other. I, myself, am weak on Texas history, but I have picked it up by experience, actually reading mementos and monuments. But I don't remember him describing too much of that.

End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I

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