

## INTERVIEW I

DATE: May 24, 1969  
INTERVIEWEE: E. B. GERMANY  
INTERVIEWER: DOROTHY PIERCE McSWEENEY  
PLACE: Mr. Germany's offices, Sherry Lane, Dallas, Texas

### Tape 1 of 2

M: Mr. Germany, as president and chairman of the board of Lone Star Steel, you have long been a very prominent citizen of Texas, and throughout your career you have been actively interested in Texas politics. This of course has been a very fascinating era that has produced some outstanding national leaders, notably John Garner, Sam Rayburn and Lyndon Johnson. This is the period I would like to discuss with you: your associations with the young Mr. Johnson and his rising political career and the trends and developments of Texas politics that set the scene for his ascendancy to the presidency.

First, I would like to have you tell me a little bit about your background, how you became interested in state politics and up to the point when you first met Lyndon Johnson.

G: Well, as to my background, I'm a country boy from East Texas. Raised on a farm. Taught school in Grand Saline for six years. My wife and I worked at the salt plant at night to pay for our first home.

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M: My goodness.

G: From that time on after my school-teaching period, I went into the oil business as a geologist having had only two years at Southwestern University. But I managed to successfully discover an oil field or two for my company, the Godley Oil and Gas Company. The geological knowledge that I had enabled me to locate one or two successful wild-cat wells and many dry holes, but I always managed to hedge against the dry holes with contributions from major oil companies to where we didn't go completely broke, although partially broke many, many times.

We moved from Grand Saline to Dallas where I was elected mayor of Highland Park and served eight years. I had never had any political responsibility except that. During that time I went on the delegation to Beaumont and Port Arthur for the State Democratic Convention. I had no dream of any political aspirations further than that. Governor [W. Lee] O'Daniel named me to the chairmanship of the [State Democratic] Executive Committee. He was not interested in politics nor executive committees nor anything else, but as a matter of precedent he had to name somebody. So he picked me. I presume he did because I knew the least about politics, which he hated. After that convention, I was chairman of the state committee through two governors: Governor O'Daniel in all of his terms and Governor Coke Stevenson through his terms. I was very close to both of them but much closer to Governor Coke Stevenson. I was surprised that

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Governor Coke Stevenson asked me to continue because it isn't customary for a governor to select an executive committee chairman from his predecessor's group. [I was] very happy to work under Governor Stevenson. I thought he was one of the most honorable men I had ever been with. He let me run the committee, but he was always fair about everything that I took up with him.

During the meantime I got to watching the recent President Lyndon Johnson when he was secretary at first to Mr. Kleberg, the congressman. Later on because of his real fine work in that capacity, he was elected without any problem to the Congress from that district. He's always been an interesting person to me, although I disagree with him on a lot of his political thinking. He, in Congress and prior to Congress, was very close to President Roosevelt.

And President Roosevelt and I didn't agree on anything except closing the banks. He did save the country from a bank disaster. But his general philosophy of politics which Mr. Johnson seemed to embrace completely was abhorrent to my way of thinking as to how the people should be handled, especially people in poverty straits. I figured they should be given jobs and be allowed to work, but that handouts would destroy the morale of the nation. I didn't really believe the people wanted handouts. I thought they wanted a place to work. And, in that line, Mr. Roosevelt did cause to be created laws which enabled people to work in the WPA and other places that were not desirable jobs and aren't the jobs that they would

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pick, but it did save their pride. That has drifted since that time into almost complete socialism in the United States. We feed anybody that doesn't want to work now as well as those that are willing to work. We have handouts for them.

I have disagreed with Mr. Johnson's program as well as many of the others ahead of him on that situation. When Mr. Johnson was majority leader of the Senate and also very actively through his congressional era, I supported many of his measures but always opposed him on these give-away programs. [As] majority leader of the Senate, I got to know him real well.

That brings up the question of how he got into the Senate, which I thought was a very disastrous situation. In fact, I think he could have waited. Since he had such a close vote, he did not have to accept votes that we fully believed, and most Texans believe, were illegitimate votes cast in one of the southwest counties.

M: Mr. Germany, before we go into that, may I back you up a minute because I want to ask you some very detailed questions about that election. I would like to ask you if you recall when your first meeting with Lyndon Johnson occurred and what the situations were?

G: I can't recall the first meeting or the situation. I had met him several times prior to this situation. But I hadn't admired him because of his so closely following of the philosophy of Mr. Franklin Roosevelt.

M: How would you characterize him as you recall him in those very early days?

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G: He was always a man very much interested in young people. He would strain a point to help those who were trying to go to school. In fact, he'd been through all that himself. He hadn't had a lot of money and he knew the difficulties they had. And that portion of him, I admired very much.

But when it came to the Senate race after Mr. Coke Stevenson had appointed me for the second time to the [State Democratic] Executive Committee, unusual as it was [to do so] I felt very close to Mr. Stevenson. And for the first part of that campaign I was strongly for Mr. Stevenson and urged Mr. Stevenson to support the Senate's Taft Resolution about labor. Mr. Stevenson said that he would come out with that but he would do it later. And in that race Mr. Johnson beat him to it, and came out in favor of the Taft-Hartley Act. Mr. Stevenson was left hanging high and dry. I told him driving back from Tyler that night that he was beat. We heard Mr. Johnson's statement and I said, "Mr. Johnson is going to beat you." He didn't think so. He thought that he would announce it in a little while, and he did come on later, but it was too late. Johnson had already captured the business and industry vote.

M: And AFL had endorsed Mr. Stevenson, right?

G: Stevenson. And that was a terrible blow. Anyway, the vote was very close which for an immediate past governor to lose to a young man like Mr. Johnson was embarrassing to me as chairman of the State [Democratic] Executive Committee. Of course, I remained loyal, however, to Mr. Stevenson until the election was over and the votes

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were counted. There was such a close margin and all the difference in the vote, Stevenson had won that election except for that vote down in that southwest county. It was close, but he had won it and those eighty-three votes or eighty-nine--I have forgotten the exact figure--determined that Mr. Johnson should be in the Senate. There was so much suspicion of foul play down there, not Mr. Johnson's arrangement or not because of anything he did, but he was getting the election, I felt, by fraudulent election practices in that area. And for that reason I felt that there should be some adjustment made. I asked the then past Governor Dan Moody to represent Mr. Stevenson and told him that I wanted him to demand a recount. [I said] if the recount didn't work out satisfactorily, if it showed any fraud, then to go ahead and sue for the election to be held over again or something, thrown out, or maybe for Mr. Stevenson to be the senator if we could throw out enough votes. We lost in the courts but I guess, probably, I'm not sure, that I was one of the first ones to sign a petition asking for this recount. I went with Mr. Moody, an attorney, around to various places trying to work up interest and to develop that lawsuit.

From that time forward I considered that Mr. Johnson wouldn't have a very good feeling for me anyway. But he was my senator. Long about a little while after that--now if I get to skipping anything you want, you stop me.

M: Well, I would like to ask you some questions on that.

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G: All right, go ahead.

M: Were you surprised when Mr. Johnson came out and favored the Taft-Hartley Bill?

G: Oh, boy, it like to have knocked me over. Mr. Johnson had been strong; I thought he was a strong labor man. I had an idea that the labor people supported him. I must have been mistaken about that because, unless they thought it was good strategy for him to do it and advised him, I never did suspect him of being influenced by labor to that extent. I figured that he'd made up his own mind about it and that he believed in it. Later on he proved that he believed in it because the Section 14 of the Labor Act that we support now strongly--in fact it's still an issue before the Congress today--

M: The right-to-work clause.

G: The right-to-work law. We had a right-to-work law in Texas immediately. Soon after that we got a right-to-work law in Texas that gave us the right to enforce 14b. That is, we passed local state laws that would supplement 14b. We considered from then on that Mr. Johnson was an industry-minded man. He had to be fair to industry. I didn't think he was unfair to labor, but I did think that labor was trying to take advantage of him and hold that over his head. And for a long time we used him strongly in 14b.

M: Mr. Johnson delayed in announcing for this campaign. Do you recall why?

G: I don't know why he delayed announcing it.

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M: Were you surprised when he did that?

G: I think that he figured that [out when] he got tipped off that Stevenson was going to come out for 14b. He is just that smart a politician. He had more courage to jump over the line. I think he expected if the thing didn't come up or didn't get into the picture he would have had labor's vote. I'm pretty sure of that. And he may have gotten a lot of it in spite of it, because not all laboring people are opposed to 14b. But anyway 14b was an afterthought at that time; it wasn't in the picture. But the sentiment relating to 14b, that an employer and a laborer could get together without the support of the union if they wanted to, [was]. If a man wanted to hire me and I wasn't a member of the union, he ought to have a right to do it and I ought to have a right to accept it.

Now I think Mr. Johnson still deep down in his heart believes in that thing, that the laboring man has the right to determine whether he wants to affiliate with a union or a Baptist church, or Methodist church, or a Presbyterian. If he thinks it's best for his profession to join anything, he has the right to join it, but he has an equal right to reject it. And had it not been for 14b, our right-to-work law in Texas would not have stood up.

Anyway, I'm getting things mixed a little bit for you.

M: No, I like that elaboration on it. Let me ask you if you felt that there was any political pressure brought to bear on the decision of the appeal of the injunction that Governor Stevenson won on the election?



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G: Now I didn't understand you.

M: Did you think that there was any national political pressure on the appeal of the injunction that Governor Stevenson had gotten. In other words, did the Truman Administration come in to play so that Johnson--?

G: At the time I thought so. I don't believe now that Mr. Johnson would have had a part of it.

M: Were you surprised that he took it to the Supreme Court to get the decision?

G: No. (Laughter) He's a fighter, you know. He doesn't hold any punches when you get in a fight. I've been in a fight with him and against him, so I know.

M: In thinking back, how would you describe that campaign between Governor Stevenson and then-Congressman Johnson?

G: It was not a vicious campaign at all. It looked like they both were kind of being nice and temperate and all that, but they were both good politicians. They were both smart and good speakers. As far as the oratory was concerned, I felt like Mr. Stevenson just beat him all to pieces on oratory. Johnson was a little amateurish at that time. But he won the people and that's what counts.

M: Why, in your mind, was he able to go from a position as a congressman which is a limited geographic area to a statewide office with even coming as close as the eighty-seven vote margin?

G: One of the main things was the Roosevelt influence and support, the

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that he had been the fair-haired boy with Mr. Franklin Roosevelt was a big issue. It was important to a lot of people. It wasn't to me because I had already lost my illusions about Mr. Roosevelt. But I know that that had a lot to do with the close vote. Had it not been for that, I think Mr. Stevenson would have beat him. Being an ex-governor, past governor with two terms behind him, and all that pressure and all that influence of the Governor's Office and supporters, Stevenson should have won. But I think Mr. Roosevelt's influence had a lot to do with the election.

Off the record completely, I'm glad it did. I think Mr. Johnson has gone further than Mr. Stevenson ever could have gone and he has been a great president.

M: Mr. Germany, I would like to go back on some areas. Okay? Let me just ask you: back in 1937, when he was first elected in the campaign [in] which I think there were ten or eleven candidates altogether for this special election, he was the only one who came out in full support of the administration at a time when there was becoming a great split of the Democratic Party over the court-packing issue.

G: That's right.

M: Why do you think he was able to win in this on this sort of a campaign at that period in Texas?

G: Well, there are two reasons. But I think the first reason that I'd suggest is that he was always close to people. From the time that a man supported him the first time, he became a lieutenant the next

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time. He pushed his supporters and things happened in their areas. Things that they wanted done, Johnson was able to deliver, and it built up his power and influence a great deal. I think that's the main thing. He was also considered more conservative towards business than the newspapers and people usually gave him credit for. Although he was Mr. Roosevelt's fair-haired boy, he was reasonable in his handling of situations concerning business. He realized that business had to have a chance to go and the public knew that, recognized it. Later on I'll tell you where it fit in with my program.

M: All right. I have heard that you had quite an involvement in the 1940 campaign and the issue of the third term for Roosevelt.

G: I was very much against Mr. Roosevelt's third term.

M: Could you tell me what the political situation is where you had three fairly powerful Democratic leaders here in the state, Garner, Johnson, Rayburn, and where they stood in this and how the issue developed?

G: Well, I was chairman of the state committee at that time, and the state convention had a hassle in the first place down at Waco, I believe it was where we had that convention.

M: I think, I'm not sure. We can check that.

G: I'm not sure, but I know that we had quite a hassle going on between the pro-Roosevelt third term people and what we considered a bunch of very left-wing people and police departments and the mayor of San

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Antonio and the mayor of Houston came up there with bodies to wreck the convention.

We had determined to nominate Garner and put Garner in for candidate for president. I was Mr. Garner's national campaign manager. Of course, being from Texas and being his campaign manager and chairman of the executive committee, it was quite a responsibility to me because if that convention did anything to embarrass Mr. Garner, then we didn't--we knew we didn't have a chance anyhow. But we did want him to go to Chicago as the nominee and we wanted Texas to nominate him, which we did. We managed to have a man from Houston [nominate him]. I can't think of his name now. But, anyway, he placed Mr. Garner in nomination at the convention, but we never could get Mr. Garner to do anything about it.

I'll tell you something that Jim Farley and I talked about--that was when we got to Chicago, Mr. Farley told me, "The newspaper people are going to try to cross us up, so let's get together on our stories." Now, of course, that isn't exactly what he said, but that we must understand what each other is going to say. Anyway he related to me a thing Mr. Garner had already told me that he and Jim, John and Jim, had got together and they went to Mr. Roosevelt. And he promised them he would not run for a third term if they would run. Mr. Farley told me that and Mr. Garner told me that, so that the stories were exactly alike. So when we

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got to Chicago the newspaper people came in. Of course we couldn't get Garner to Chicago at all, but Mr. Farley went and exhibited himself. But we knew that we didn't have a chance, either one of them to get the nomination, even if Mr. Roosevelt got in but he wasn't in when [this happened], you see. They both told me long before the convention that he was going to be a candidate. It was going to be forced on him and he was going to arrange to force it. Now that was just about the substance of the meeting we had. When we got together in Washington, I was staying at the Sherman Hotel and he was staying over at--I can't think of the name of it. But, anyway, he said, "The newspaper people are going to come see you and they are going to come see me. Let's get together and tell them they will have to see us at one place." So Mr. Farley and I met over at his hotel room and suite. When the newspaper people came in, by previous agreement, I answered his questions and he answered mine. And they were really in the stew. They didn't know. They would ask Mr. Farley a question and he would say, "Yes, I'm a candidate and I'm going to stay in there." I'd say it for him--"he is a candidate and he is going to stay in there." They would ask me what I thought about Mr. Garner being a candidate and staying in there, and Jim Farley would answer and say, "John is going to be in the race, he will be a candidate; he will be nominated." But of course, Mr. Roosevelt was on the spot. He couldn't let anybody nominate him unless it was just forced on him, you see. Well, they knew it was going to be forced on him and we even discussed who was going to

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do it and how they were going to do it.

M: Where did Lyndon Johnson and Sam Rayburn stand in this? Had they been at the state convention?

G: Sam Rayburn and Johnson both supported Texas. They couldn't do otherwise, but they didn't make a lot of fuss about it. Mr. Rayburn was in our delegation, and he was loyal to John Garner. They were real good friends, and he was loyal to him as vice president and all the way through. He was a Garner man, but he did not particularly oppose Mr. Roosevelt. When the question came up as to the fact that Garner and Farley didn't either one have look-in, why, then, Mr. Rayburn went over. He didn't go over physically and make anything [happen], but he just lay low and let it happen.

M: Was Mr. Johnson at the state convention?

G: I don't think he was there. If he was there--I don't see how he stayed away, but I don't remember seeing him at the state convention.

M: Did he bring any pressure to bear to not have Garner nominated at this point?

G: No, as far as I know he [didn't]. Well, he owed a lot to Mr. Rayburn and Mr. Garner both. They had used him and worked together a great deal. But, as far as I know, Mr. Johnson did not openly oppose Mr. Garner.

Of course, I was riding a big, pretty horse and rode into the hotel and registered at the hotel, had the horse pick up the pen and make some marks on the hotel register. We carried on publicity.

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We had plenty of money. We had two very rich people, Mrs. Clara Driscoll and another man whose name I won't mention. I can't remember it clearly; he was from down at Jefferson, Texas. [They] had a lot of money and they financed us. Mrs. Driscoll just gave me a check for \$250,000 just like that one day when I was hard up for money.

M: Was this an indication of how strong people felt in Texas about Roosevelt?

G: Yes, people from Texas were very strong. The San Antonio mayor and the Houston mayor both fought us hard. They had contesting delegations at the convention, but they didn't get anywhere. We got good treatment at the convention.

In fact, Elliott Roosevelt was on my team and was one of my delegates. He sat with me all during the preliminary when we were working, and he voted for Garner when the time came and all.

M: How would that come about?

G: Well, they hadn't actually had the ballots. You see, he was supporting the vote for Garner and working for it because he had been in the state convention and he felt that he was obligated. He says, "It hurts me to work against my daddy, but I came up here. Mr. Germany, what would you do?" I said, "I'd support my daddy." He said, "You would?" I said, "Yes, I would." He said, "I don't think it would be right." He stood right by my side and when the parade started in the convention hall for Roosevelt, he just said, "I'm

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just not going to get in that parade." I said, "Now, Elliott, when they come by here, you get in that parade. I don't want your daddy to see a picture of that and not see you in it."

M: That's interesting.

G: Elliott got in. But anyway, that's beside the Johnson point. As far as I know, I don't know of anything Mr. Johnson did, for or against, in the convention.

M: Mr. Germany, very soon after this in 1941, Mr. Johnson made his first bid for the Senate in a race that he lost against Governor [W. Lee] O'Daniel.

G: Yes, I supported O'Daniel.

M: Could you tell me a little about that campaign and that election? I believe that was a case where the first returns had indicated that Mr. Johnson had won, and then four days later he had lost by, I think, roughly around one thousand votes or something.

G: O'Daniel had proved a disappointment to me. I supported him because I was on his committee, but he proved a disappointment in that he had disavowed any relationship with the State [Democratic] Executive Committee. He said, "I don't want any pro-politics and I don't care anything about this committee. We've got to have one, I guess, but we got it." Well, when they nominated Garner for president at Waco, I made a speech to the convention when I took over. My



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main topic of my speech is that a politician is a necessary part of our government and that anybody that disavows any relationship to either political party or to any political party and has no choice at all is not capable of administering the affairs of the state. Well, the Governor was sitting out there in the anteroom listening, and I said, "In the place of cussing politicians, this chairman of your committee is responsible. Every good thing that I know of that has happened in the state of Texas is been due to the political activities of some few people who kept the Democratic Party alive." Of course, that didn't suit the Governor a bit, and we had a right smart tilt over that afterwards. So when he ran for the Senate, I didn't have a very enthusiastic attitude.

M: Were you the least bit surprised that Mr. Johnson chose to run in this campaign for the Senate?

G: No, I wasn't.

M: He wouldn't have been too well known by that point.

G: He wasn't too well known, but he organized. We knew, I knew, that he had a good organization, and all he had to do was to tap the Roosevelt people and that they were in the majority in Texas. I felt like he would win by a real big vote. I was surprised when O'Daniel got the election.

M: Was there anything unusual about the fact, in your mind, that the late returns turned the victory around?

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- G: No, I think that was legitimate. There was enough votes difference to where one or two boxes couldn't have controlled it. If it had been controlled by that group down in the Valley who all voted for Johnson, and if O'Daniel had had the control of that group then, I would have been just suspicious as I was when Mr. Johnson was elected.
- M: You didn't see any basis for Mr. Johnson contesting that election at all?
- G: No.
- M: Do you think Mr. Johnson learned any lesson from that particular election and his defeat?
- G: I don't know. He learned about everything. There never was anything that happened in politics that he didn't learn something from.
- M: Had you talked with him personally yourself at this point about his political career? This would have been when he first ran for the Senate.
- G: No, I hadn't. I wasn't close to him. You see, I never had been very close to him because I didn't like Mr. Roosevelt, and I knew he did. We couldn't hardly talk without getting on the subject.
- M: Do you recall who some of Mr. Johnson's close associates were in Texas for his campaigns and his organizations?
- G: No, I don't. That was a wide open campaign with so many people in it, you see, that there wasn't any particular group that I was tied to. I just simply told the Governor that I would support him.

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That's all I had to do. As chairman of the committee, I pretty nearly had to.

M: Governor O'Daniel was a very unusual man in our Texas political history. I wonder if you could just elaborate a little bit on him.

G: My mother listened to O'Daniel's morning talks every morning. She was then seventy-eight years old. Every day every time I went home she would tell me about what Mr. O'Daniel said that morning. When he announced for governor, I was by there and she said, "There's the man now. You must support that man for governor." She called him Pappy, she said Pappy O'Daniel. And I figured, now, if there is a man that is getting that much influence over people like she is that had no political ambition whatever, then it was just simply because she liked him, Ten Commandments and help the old people and things like that, I figured there must be a lot of them doing the same thing.

So he came out with an announcement two or three days after that that he had fifty thousand letters supporting him and that he had them in tubs if anybody didn't believe it, come over and count them. Mr. Carr Collins and I got together and we said, "Looks like that's a winner, maybe we better get--and Bill McGraw was the man that was running and we didn't either one like Mr. McGraw's politics very much. He and I were real close personal friends, but I thought he was too close to Bill Clark. Bill Clark was Tom Clark's brother, and Tom was a real good friend of mine and his other brother. But

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we thought Bill was tied to Bill McGraw, but Clark and McGraw were too close together and McGraw was attorney general. Things were getting bad. McGraw was running against O'Daniel.

We went over and counted about two tubs of those letters and they were positively for him, anything, money. "We'll send you some of our allowance." "We'll do all kinds of things." "Here is two dollars." "Here is five dollars." Mrs. O'Daniel just stood there and said "Help yourself. Just count them. If you don't think there's fifty thousand supporters in there, just keep on counting around these tubs and you'll find them." Of course, she didn't pick out the tubs, she just said, "Go in there and find you a tub and start counting." Well, we didn't tell O'Daniel that morning, or Mrs. O'Daniel either, but when we got in the car and started back home Carr says, "How much will you put up?" I said, "I'll put up twenty-five hundred dollars." He said, "I'll do the same thing. Let's come out right now for O'Daniel, so that he won't have any doubt about us being for him."

So we announced the next day that we were for him, and Mrs. O'Daniel announced that she had gotten this five thousand dollars from two important citizens in Dallas and that would make up for a lot of the widows and orphans that had answered these letters that couldn't support him [financially].

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G: He was for the old people. That was his main topic, and the Ten Commandments. He would repeat the Ten Commandments and they'd sing a religious song. Every time he got up he had those things in the [program]. His platform was the Ten Commandments. Every old lady and old woman and a whole lot of young ones evidently supported him on that account. He didn't have anything political to offer. He didn't believe in politics. He was against it. He thought political parties were bad, but he was going to run for the nomination on the Democratic ticket because that was the way you had to get elected.

I'll tell you some of his character: he was looking for everybody that voted for him to come up down there and ask him for something. And I never did go down and ask him for a thing in the world. Tom Clark was then a young lawyer and he wanted an appointment in California. He had already been sent out there as some kind of assistant to the Attorney General's Office, but he wanted a higher promotion. And O'Daniel just wrote a note to the President and said, "He is personally obnoxious to me and I don't want him." Of course, in the Senate, well, that ends it. So the Clark boys came to me. One of them had married the daughter of one of my real good friends. That gave him an excuse, and they lived just a block away. So they

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came to me one day and said, "We want Tom to get that appointment and O'Daniel won't let him have it. And he can't get it unless O'Daniel will write a letter to the President and ask him to withdraw his objection. They wanted me to go up there. They said, "We will pay all your expenses if you go up there and talk to O'Daniel and see what you can do with him. Nobody else can do anything with him." I said, "Well, all right, I'll just go, but I don't want the expense money. But I want to go to Washington anyhow." So when I got up there I went in to see O'Daniel and he said, "Now, what have you come after? You've never asked me for anything since I've been elected governor the first time. You've never even been into my office to pull for anybody. Now what do you want?" I said, "Well, that's the very reason I'm here. I want you to write a letter to the President withdrawing your objection to Tom Clark's appointment out in California." He said, "Well, that's asking a whole lot." He said, "You can ask whatever you want to, but don't ask me to do that." I said, "Now, Mr. O'Daniel, do you think that's absolutely fair to me? Everybody has been pulling your leg except me, and I'm not asking this for Gene Germany, I'm asking for Tom Clark. Tom Clark's daddy lives just a half a block from me. I think he's a good lawyer and I think he's a smart lawyer, and he will someday go on up from this position. I think he is ultimately, really actually, he is a

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conservative." He said, "Well, just for you, I'm going to do it, but I'm going to put in there specifically that it's because you asked me." So he did. Mr. Tom Clark and I--Justice Clark and I--have been real good friends all the time; in fact I helped him when he got his high promotion in Masonry. I sat on in the initiation team. And we have been real good friends ever since, but that's O'Daniel's characteristic. He wouldn't do it for Tom Clark to save him from hell, but he did do it for me because I never had tried to pull his leg. I hadn't ever asked him for anything personally.

He and Mrs. O'Daniel sent me a great big funny looking deal as a gift that year, and we've still got it hanging up in our back porch.

M: What is it?

G: It's a big bronze something or other. I don't know what you'd call it. It looks like a big pan, but it's about this big around, has some engraving on it.

M: This is very interesting, Mr. Germany.

G: It doesn't relate to the Johnson Administration. It relates, of course, to--

M: To the period.

G: The period.

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M: All right. Yes.

G: O'Daniel, when he came out of the Senate, came back here and isolated himself completely. He had never been a member of the church or active in any church work prior to his running for office. He jumped on that theory of the old folks and the Ten Commandments, and that elected him. After he came back, as far as I know, he never went to any church. I never heard of it. And his son, when he started running this last time--for governor, I believe, yes, he had run for governor--came out on the same platform that his daddy came out on. He wrote me a letter, didn't ask me if I was going to support him; he said, "How much contribution can I get? What can I expect from you?" I wrote him back and told him he couldn't expect anything--that his daddy ran for office and you are running for office on the same platform, neither of you, as far as I know, has done any civic duty outside of your politics. As far as I know, you are not members of any civic organization in Dallas, YMCA, or any of the rest of them. You don't support them, and I won't support you because you have been inconsistent and your father has been more inconsistent than you have because he was calculated to lead people. Heaven Insurance Company--and he should have lead people into civic duty, righteous acts." (Laughter) I said, "I'm just not going to support you, and I'm going to do everything I can to defeat



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you." And of course he never got to first base. Other people saw the same thing.

M: Mr. Germany, this is a time in Texas, this mid-forties post World War II [period], when the political base of Texas was shifting from agriculture to oil and gas and industry and resulting in a politically conservative trend. How was this affecting the various Democratic leaders in the state and, of course, this would include Mr. Johnson-- particularly him with a reputation as a New Deal liberal?

G: They didn't take any serious position against Mr. Johnson because Mr. Johnson understood that the 27 1/2 per cent depletion allowable was given to the oil people to create new discoveries. And Mr. Johnson did that because he felt like the country had to keep its production up. If we ever got in any war, we could use up all our oil and then we'd be dependent on other people. The oil people, while they didn't like President Johnson particularly, couldn't afford to take a serious position against him. He wasn't president then; it was Senator Johnson. He couldn't take a serious position against them as long as they didn't take a serious position against him.

M: Was Mr. Johnson moving to the right in his political philosophy?

G: We hoped so. We felt considerably helped by his support of the depletion allowance program that the oil people were just beginning to enjoy and, of course, our production in the United States on

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account of that went way up. We were way high. So that when the war broke out--Mr. Johnson has called my attention to this one time--and people got uneasy about oil in Europe to support our airplanes and our other activities. Of course, all those discoveries hadn't been made over there then, but when that all came about, well, there wasn't anybody in the country more happy about the situation than the oil people and Mr. Johnson because all our wells had to do was just open up. We had been conserving our oil under proration, and proration sounded terrible to other people, but it was a tremendous asset because we jumped our production in the United States more than four times in two weeks.

M: Oh, my gosh. I hadn't realized that. Did this necessitate Mr. Johnson to sort of reassess his political base in order to attract this growing trend and to secure his political future?

G: Well, I think it did. I don't know. I don't know what influenced Mr. Johnson. He had a very definite, analytical mind and still has.

I might forget it later--I want to say it right here that the biggest thing that any president ever did was to take the act that he did when the war was so great that he couldn't afford to have politics enter into his decisions.

M: You are speaking of the March 31 withdrawal?

G: That is the biggest thing that I know of any president ever doing. That was a personal sacrifice because he thought he could be elected and I did, too. You don't turn a man down for a second term

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in electing the Democratic Party. The Democrats would have nominated him and I think he would have been elected because he is too smart. But he knew that he couldn't properly administer, and he told me he couldn't properly administer, the Office of President of the United States and run for office at the same time, under the trying circumstances that we were under.

M: I'd like to go ahead and ask you how you became closer associates and friends with Mr. Johnson, seeing as how you did oppose him in 1948.

G: Well, the first time I really had to try myself out was when I went to Washington to get money to build Lone Star Steel. We had bought the plant from the government for 6 1/2 million dollars, the old plant. But it was losing money and it wasn't going to pay unless we got a steel mill. It took 89 million dollars to get it. We made several attempts at lower amounts, and finally we got his support and we got it up to 89 million. And we built a steel mill. It's furnished over three thousand persons employment, and has more than a 3 1/2 million dollar a month payroll, ever since except when it was on strike. That's over 30 million dollars a year payroll in a community that was already designated as a distress area when we got this plant going. Well, anyway, we had to have this money to build that steel mill and the only place that we could get it--the insurance companies wouldn't lend it to us, we'd tried them, all of them, and they wouldn't, so we finally went to Washington to get it from the RFC. We had Mr. Patman's complete support, but we didn't know anything about what Mr. Johnson

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was going to do. He was chairman of a committee--I've forgotten the name of the committee--

M: Defense Preparedness.

G: Yes, I believe it was. This country was in a serious situation in that if the Germans should block the Suez Canal, then production in the Great Lakes area would stop. So the government had to do something about it and they were helping build plants around different places, so we went up there for this additional money to make a steel mill out of this one so it would pay. It was losing money as just a pig iron plant. Well, we almost bought the airlines, going back and forth from Washington. We had to have three approvals--RFC and two more. Johnson's committee was one of them. No, it was another committee, but I've forgotten which one, but anyway, geological people and business administration. They had each one promised that it was all right with them, all right with me, all right with us, over here, but every time the RFC couldn't get a letter from all three of them going along. It was the RFC and two more. The RFC said they would go along if the other two would. We had just worn ourselves out. Finally I went into Mr. Johnson's office and told him, "We are just up against a bad situation and I want you to help us." He looked at me right straight in the eye. I don't think I want this in the record because it might reflect something. He pulled a letter out of his drawer and he said, "When I was running for the Senate, I believe you wrote this letter and sent it out all over

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Texas." I said, "Yes, I did." He said, "You want my support?" I said, "Yes, and I expect to get it." He said, "Why?" I said, "Because you love your state and your country too much to turn it down on account of me." (Pause) He said, "Gene, you've got me. Of course, I was going to support you anyhow. I think it's the proper thing for the government, it's the proper thing for Texas and it's a good loan that you'll pay back." To prove that, I had the pleasure of writing him a letter the day we paid off the government the 89 million dollars.

M: What year was this when this happened, Mr. Germany?

G: I don't remember. I can look those dates up in my files. I don't remember the date, but we were a year trying to borrow that money.

M: In the fifties, though?

G: Yes, it was in the fifties. We had built a little plant and borrowed the money from local banks to build it to make cast iron pipe, but we still weren't making enough money to exist. That's when he [Johnson] proved to me that we had the right man.

M: From that time forward you became closer and closer with Mr. Johnson?

G: Well, I knew that he didn't have any reason to do anything for me at all, but he couldn't turn his people down.

M: Mr. Germany, in 1952 Shivers was governor of Texas and, of course, Eisenhower and Stevenson were the candidates for the presidential office. Was there any move afoot or suggestion of Mr. Johnson to be a vice presidential nominee, [that he] would be a candidate

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at that point in Texas? This would have been in 1952.

G: No, I don't remember that there was, but I did not support Mr. [Adlai] Stevenson. I sort of wished I had after they treated him so ugly down here in Dallas. He was a great man.

M: Well, this was a beginning of a political development in the state in that Rayburn did get the Shivers delegation seated and then of course they bolted the convention.

G: That's right.

M: Do you recall what happened in the circumstances surrounding that?

G: There's another time when I don't remember seeing Mr. Johnson. I know he and Mr. Rayburn were together on the whole thing and they had a time getting us seated. In fact they almost threw us out twice. But I don't recall. Let's see now, what is it you want to develop out of that?

M: Well, anything about where Mr. Johnson stood on this issue. This was kind of a tenuous thing for his own political base because it was going for Eisenhower.

G: That's right.

M: He probably couldn't publicly come out too strong but I was wondering what had been [his position]. He was in a powerful [position].

G: As far as I know, he was in complete support of the party, the Democratic Party. I wasn't. I supported Mr. Eisenhower.

M: Mr. Germany, in 1956 Texas politics really went through an upheaval. This was the second election for Mr. Eisenhower. In the state there was sort of a three-way pull between the Shivers people, the

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Johnson and Rayburn people who wanted to keep the state party in support of the national party. Then at the state and governors convention the liberal-liberals came into play. I wonder if you would tell me what your activities were in the state convention and the governors convention in 1956.

G: I'm not sure that I had anything to do with the Democratic convention that time. I was a Shivers man and whatever Shivers wanted me to do, I did. I strongly supported Mr. Shivers. In fact, I never had occasion to oppose Mr. Shivers on anything. I don't recall exactly how that convention went. But it seems to me like--no, it was the next convention when we endorsed Johnson, wasn't it?

M: No, he was a favorite son at this one. I believe that that was the strategy to take the political control over in the state--was to have Johnson become chairman of the delegation and the favorite son.

G: Well, I think he was. However, I don't remember the details of that. I was not on the executive committee and wasn't paying much attention to it. I was leaving everything up to Mr. Watson from then on. He was my man.

M: Since you brought it up--I was going to at a later time--I would like to ask you how it came about that Mr. Marvin Watson, who was a very close friend and associate of yours, became a very close associate of--

G: The first time I ever heard of Mr. Watson was when he was secretary of Chamber of Commerce at Daingerfield and we were trying to get the Lake O' the Pines water for the area, so that the local towns

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would have an interest in the lake. And we got the statute through in which the towns could organize and form a water district area and purchase an area--an interest in the United States Government Flood Control project. Marvin was very helpful in that program, but he was still secretary of the Chamber of Commerce down at Daingerfield and was head of this water district that has now proved to be a very profitable and fine institution. Of course, I got to know him there as a manager of business pretty well, but I didn't know how much ability he really had until Mr. [Wright] Patman called me one day and said, "We are about to lose Marvin Watson out of the plant area." That plant is in Mr. Patman's district. He called me long distance and he said, "You better do something about it." I said, "What can I do?" And he said, "Can't you offer him a job?" I said, "We don't have any jobs. I don't know anything about him. What can he do?" He said, "Well, he is just a good boy and smart." You can cut out a lot of this.

M: No, this gives me this association.

G: So I asked Mr. Patman, "Well, when is he going?" He said, "He is fixing to go right now to Gainesville to take a job. You'll have to call him on the telephone." So I called him on the telephone and I said, "Marvin, I've been watching you on your water district and I want you on Lone Star's team. I understand you are about to go to Gainesville to take a job." He said, "Well, yes, I'm going over there to accept it. That's the best thing I've had offered me." I



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said, "Well, you meet me at Lone Star Steel's airstrip. I'll fly down there and be there in thirty minutes. Bring your wife with you. I want to talk to you. Then, if you still want to go to Gainesville, I'll take you over there in the airplane and bring you back, but if I can talk you out of it I want to do it." So we couldn't have a job. Why, Red Webster--I hadn't even seen him. He was out of the state, gone to Russia or somewhere, and I couldn't consult him. He was head of the public relations, and that's the only place I could see to put Marvin. So we got over there and I said, "Marvin, I'm going to offer you a job. I'm executive vice president of the Red River Water District, Red River District. I'm going to offer you a job with them in public relations and we'll pay you five thousand dollars a year and your expenses. That's more than you are getting over in Gainesville."

M: How much?

G: Five thousand dollars a year and your expenses. And he said, "Well, that sounds interesting." This was all after I got over there at the airport, you see, sitting in the car and talking to him and Marion together. One of them, I don't know which one of them it was, said, "I thought you wanted me with Lone Star." I said, "I do, and by the time you serve a year over there with the Red River Valley, I'll have a place made for you." And I said, "We'll pay you a lot better salary than that. Red River Valley can't do it, but that's as good as you'll get in Gainesville. And you've got a guaranteed job

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with Lone Star Steel as soon as I can open it up." Didn't tell him what it would be, but I had seen him operate in politics. I didn't know him real close personally. I knew that he had a lot of ability. So the result was that we got over there, we talked it over and he said, "Well, I'll have to go over there and tell them that I'm not going to take it." I said, "There is a telephone right there in that booth right at the end of that airstrip. Just pick it up and call over there and it won't cost you a cent. Tell them you have accepted another job, that I've offered it to you. If you tell them that, they'll know there is no use bidding against me because you have got Lone Star Steel behind it." He said, "Well, I'm going to take you up." I don't know whether he went in there to telephone them or waited till he got back to his office. He may have wanted to make up another story. But, anyway, he did go to work for us, and I've never seen a more efficient man in my life. He just moved right on up.

I was chairman of the Texas Industrial Commission at that time. Price Daniel had appointed me and when Price appointed me we had to have the law changed. We had a constitutional amendment in Texas where the state could not appropriate any money for advertising purposes, and an industrial commission without any advertising would just be nothing. So Marvin said that we could get an amendment passed, and we got Price's permission to offer it and got him to put it before the Senate and the House, and Marvin and I campaigned the

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state. That's my real introduction to his ability. We campaigned the state and carried it by a big vote. And, of course, the amendment to the constitution allowed us then to have money. The state legislature didn't see any use in giving us over twenty-five or thirty thousand dollars to run the thing with and it takes about a half million dollars a year to run it and do any good. So Marvin said, "Now we can keep it alive for two years on public donations if you'll lead off." Well, of course, Lone Star had to lead off and then the Humble Company followed and then the power companies followed. For two years the support was nearly all public donations. I think that there was \$20,000 or \$27,000 from the state. Then the legislature finally woke up at Marvin's suggestion and his handling of the bills and everything down there, even helped them write them [the bills] in Austin.

M: Mr. Germany, did you help bring about his introduction to Mr. Johnson?

G: Oh, yes.

M: Could you tell me a little bit how that came about?

G: I don't know that I brought about his introduction, but when Mr. Johnson decided to run for president on the Democratic ticket--

M: In 1960?

G: Yes, he called me in and said that he needed Marvin and I said, "Well, we can't spare him for anybody else but you can have him, with the understanding that we keep him on the payroll, pay all of his expenses, and you don't take any money for his expenses out of the Democratic

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campaign, that he is still our man, he is on our payroll, and we are sending him along as our public relations man to see what happens to our candidate for president." Well, we got out and supported him for president like everything and Marvin was right in the airplane with him. Every time he went from one state to another, Marvin knew all about the people that were in that state and what people they were picking up in this state to take back home. He knew all about them and briefed the President before they ever got in to see him.

During that campaign, I campaigned on the theory that we will either have a majority leader re-elected to the Senate or we'll have a president, one or the other. We won't have any vice president, and I got pretty good assurance that he would not accept the vice presidency from Mr. Johnson. He didn't come out and say that he would actually turn it down, but he said, "I'm not interested in the vice presidency and I'd rather be majority leader of the Senate." Well, I was writing a column then for about twenty-five or thirty papers or something like that carried my column. I campaigned right straight through for Johnson either for president or majority leader of the Senate. I got pretty rough on him when he accepted the vice presidency.

M: Did you ever have any reaction from these, Mr. Germany, from Mr. Johnson?

G: I sure did. The nicest thing that ever could have happened to

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anybody. That shows how big he is. He was traveling in the airplane and of course all these gals--secretaries and correspondents--were in there, so some of his own secretaries came running in with one of my articles that I had written where I was giving him a fit, and laid it down on his desk in the airplane. He said, "Well, I've read these. I read all of them. Marvin gets them for me." (Laughter)

Now this, of course, is quoting from Marvin, I didn't hear it, but [he said Johnson said] "I want to tell all of you right now that Gene Germany is my friend. Why do you think Marvin Watson is on here?" We didn't take him away from him when he accepted the vice presidency. We let him keep Marvin. It would have been terrible because Marvin had built up all the contacts, you see, so it wouldn't have been fair. Then he said, "Besides that, if Gene Germany wants to say these things, he has got a right to say them and I respect him for having the courage to do it."

M: Back before the convention, Mr. Germany, did you really truly feel that Mr. Johnson had a chance?

G: I did. There was no question in my mind but what he had the nomination.

M: Why do you think he delayed so long in announcing. They say that hurt him.

G: Well, do you mean announcing that he would accept the vice presidency?

M: No, delayed in announcing his candidacy for the office in 1960.

G: For president?

M: Yes.

G: I don't know. I just guess he wanted to be sure that he was going to have enough finances to go along. It takes a lot of money to run for it and, of course, Texas furnished a whole lot of it and other people did, too. He didn't have to depend on Texas. He had

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money coming for the campaign from everywhere. Of course the oil men in Texas owed him a debt and they paid it.

M: What organization was being set up in the state, and what was your role in this?

G: I was a member of the American Iron Steel Institute and I had sold Johnson to the institute as a conservative, and I wanted to make good. There were only thirty steel companies and thirty directors. Mr. Ben Fairness and I had a long talk about it. He said, "I'm going to support Mr. Johnson, I don't care what party he is in." We had a lot of friends like that. The Iron Steel Institute, I'm sure, furnished some money. I didn't ask them for contributions because it would have been most too direct and they don't do it that way anyhow. But I'm sure that they furnished some of the money for the campaign. Now that's just my idea. Nobody has told me that except I know that I never went to a board meeting--every month we had a board meeting--that they didn't ask me, somebody would say, "How is our man Johnson going?" right in the meeting.

M: I believe you went to that convention, didn't you, in Los Angeles?

G: Oh, I went to that convention and took the airplane and took a lot of other people with me in the airplane. We stayed there and we just worked as hard as any group ever did work until the Kennedys bought the convention. Now they bought it. Mrs. Germany has a lot more courage than I have and, when a bunch of the newspaper people sat down at this table where we were eating lunch, she said, "I want to know why all of you fellows are prejudiced in your writings in favor of the Kennedys," right to this whole bunch of men. One of them spoke up and said, "Mrs. Germany, who do you

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think has been feeding us for the last five years?" (Laughter)

M: You thought that whole convention was pretty much controlled by them?

G: It was rigged. It was the most terrible thing that ever happened in a free election, free convention, where everybody is supposed to have equal rights. Whenever a question of voting came up or a man was introduced, the galleries were full of Kennedy-paid supporters. And the galleries voted. They hollered out and hollered out for it. Of course, you are not supposed to pay any attention to what the galleries do, but nobody tried to control them. I don't think Jack had anything to do with it, but I think if Bob Kennedy had been in proper spirit, he would have kept his supporters quiet when they were taking votes and ballots, but they drowned out all of the no's.

M: Made it look like a bandwagon.

G: It was a bandwagon deal, and those people were paid. I don't know how many of them that I talked to said, "We are paid to stay in here and root." You just couldn't get around it. And of course the newspapers admitted that they had been fed privately; they admitted the correspondents had been fed and they were well taken care of in the Kennedy camp. Well, we couldn't do that. In the first place, we didn't sell whiskey. (Laughter) We didn't have that much money,

M: Did you pretty soon after getting out there realize that Mr. Johnson could not get the nomination?

G: We didn't realize it until we followed him around to several delegations and they would cheer him and be nice to him and all that. They were

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very courteous, but we had somebody else watch when Kennedy would walk into the delegation, they would give a lot more demonstration. However, we still thought Johnson had a chance until they started the balloting and states that we had counted on went against us. I stayed until after the voting was all in and never dreamed that Johnson was going to accept the vice presidency. Of course, I knew that there was some pressure, that they were talking it around there, that, well, we are going to support Mr. Johnson for vice president.

M: Rayburn was against it, too, wasn't he?

G: Oh, I'll say Rayburn was against it. He was just like I was. He couldn't stand that pressure. But, anyway, it was just a mob convention, and the mob was in the galleries. They'd have all kinds of admission tickets we couldn't get hold of for any of our supporters. They just had beaucoups of them. They had bought off the ticket handler and gallery ticket handlers. I've probably said some things I can't prove.

M: We want your opinions. Well, let me back this up. Did Mr. Johnson really have a national base or was he still geographically more or less [limited]?

G: He was selected for two reasons. One reason was they couldn't win the election. They couldn't carry Texas and the South without him. Texas would have gone strong against him if he hadn't had Johnson and so would most of the South. That was the strategy to win Texas and Alabama and Mississippi. Maybe some of the rest of them were



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dependent on it, too, but that was the strategy of the Kennedys. Bob Kennedy didn't like it. He didn't want it to happen. He didn't want them to make any conciliation at all or concessions to Texas and the South. He and Jack had a big [fuss]; rumor around is all we got that they were having a big fuss about it, about offering it to him. We knew, of course, that they were likely to offer it to him, but we didn't have any idea that he was going to accept it.

When they took the ballot and we saw what had happened, I gathered up all my crowd in my airplane and took out for Texas. I didn't even wait to find out who was going to be his vice president, because I knew I wasn't going to support the Kennedy crowd. So we landed at Abilene to let somebody off that was riding with us and I ran into the station from the airplane to see the TV and it said Johnson had accepted the nomination for vice president. I came back to the airplane and somebody said, "What did you find out?" I said, "I'm just too sick to tell you." And one of these congressmen from Texas who was riding with us said, "Johnson accepted the vice presidency." I said, "He sure did." He said, "I'm sick at my stomach." I'm not going to call you his name.

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- M: It was perfectly logical that he would progress step by step even after eight years as vice president.
- G: That's what he thought, you see. He would move up. It would be a natural thing for him to move up just like they tried to move Humphrey up.
- M: I think that, just in the readings of it, Mr. Johnson had such a strong identification with the South that he did need to take on a more national--
- G: Kennedy couldn't have won without him.
- M: I agree. Absolutely.
- G: You can turn that back on if you want to.
- M: The state of Texas politics during this campaign did get pretty rough.
- G: Yes, it did.
- M: Can you tell me what your assessment of the campaign was? What you recall about it?
- G: Of course, you know Eisenhower got such a tremendous vote that that's about the only comment there is to make.
- M: Nixon, you mean.
- G: Nixon. I get it mixed up. Yes, Nixon had more votes in Texas than he did this last election.
- M: Were you here in Dallas when the Adolphus Hotel incident occurred with Bruce Alger and some of the Republicans?

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- G: I was here, but I didn't know anything about it until I read it in the newspaper. Yes, we've lived here a long time.
- M: Just to go forward chronologically, could you tell me what you thought was the sort of the tenor of Texas' appreciation for Mr. Kennedy in 1963 before this fateful trip that he took.
- G: They were strong for Mr. Kennedy. They thought he had done a good job as president. There were some few people that acted ugly, said things and did things. But a great majority of the people of Texas felt like he was making them a real good president. The only thing that held him back was his daddy and his family. They [Texans] just couldn't go along with the way he got the nomination and that prejudice still remained, but he did win a lot of friends because he said some awful smart things when he was president. His public utterances were just not bad.
- M: Mr. Germany, this was a period, though, when his popularity was declining.
- G: Yes, it was going down some.
- M: We did have a problem here--or at least so it was said--with our Democratic Party in the state between the liberals and the conservatives. There seemed to be a little bit of--
- G: The trouble about it was we couldn't tell who was who. The Yarborough crowd were always Democrats regardless of whether it was right or wrong and there were many conservative Democrats that saw

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things going reasonably right with Kennedy. I didn't particularly admire him. I couldn't like him because I didn't like the family. I just never would and the trade that I saw made out there in California was one of my main prejudices. It kept me out of the feeling that he was making a real good president. But there was a thought in Texas among a lot of good conservative people that we hadn't done so bad and, of course, he went just like all of the rest of them. I think his brother influenced him more than anything else in the Attorney General's Office. If it hadn't been for his brother, he would have been a very popular president, but his brother pulled so many rough things and took over in so many different spheres of activity that didn't particularly belong to the Attorney General's Department. When he named him to his attorney generalship that was another bad thing he did for himself. We don't believe that people ought to [do that]. We are sort of like the school board, you know; you can't elect any of your cousins if you are on the board, you can't elect a cousin to a school in Texas.

M: Did you think that the trip to Texas was a necessary political fence-mending in order to--?

G: It was an attempt, I think, to get Johnson and Yarborough off the spot. That was part of it.

M: How do you mean?

G: The whole country was disturbed because the Governor, Connally now, but early part he wasn't governor--but there was a hiatus

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between the Governor, and Kennedy was losing ground and he wanted to gain some of it back so he would play into the hands of the Governor and, without taking too much sides, get the Governor and Yarborough in better relationship. And [it was] also to get Mr. Johnson in better relationship because things were going haywire down here, even among the Democrats. I don't hold much to the theory that Kennedy was so much interested in the Democrats as he was in preserving a kind of unity down here among the radicals.

M: Do you think his re-election was in jeopardy?

G: Yes, I think it was. It would be in jeopardy anyhow any time you have a fight like we did with Johnson when the people got so mad because of two reasons: Johnson accepted the vice presidency and the other reason was that they figured that it was maneuvered and manipulated by a group of people in California. I don't know much about that particular phase of it.

M: You seem to know quite a bit. I was really trying to get a feeling for what the state of Texas politics was at that period.

G: Any Republican who was a conservative in his nature and more conservative than Mr. Kennedy would have been popular among the people who think and talk and say things important. Of course, both of our governors were strong Democrats, but they were conservative in their thinking.

M: Mr. Germany, did you talk to Mr. Johnson or see him very soon after the assassination when he had assumed the presidency.

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G: Only just one time. I just shook hands with him one time and told him that I sympathized with him in his having to take over this responsibility at this time. I assured him that there was no bad feeling in Dallas that caused this thing to happen. It was not a thing that was in the air down here particularly. I think he agreed with me that Dallas got a bad black eye when they were not entitled to it. Actually some of the Democrats tried to persuade them not to have this long parade, some of the Dallas people, because [there were] so many opportunities. Well, of course, it later turned out that this communist is the only one that had anything to do with it, and it gave him a perfect opportunity, although Garrison and all his crowd tried to prove it was conspiracy. It may have been a conspiracy, but it wasn't a conspiracy of Texas people. If it was a conspiracy, it was born and nurtured in New Orleans. If Garrison had any truth about his program, he was getting it from a class of people that were not reliable or responsible and who wouldn't even be respected in decent society.

M: Did you become involved in the 1964 campaign in the convention? I believe this was an occasion where you again let Mr. Watson help Mr. Johnson.

G: Let's see, that was the last campaign you are talking about?

M: Before the convention in Chicago, yes.

G: Yes.

M: In Atlantic City.

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- G: Yes, I don't remember much about that. I was at Atlantic City, but I've forgotten all that and that is a good place to be.
- M: Well, they did have a credentials fight with the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.
- G: Yes, they sure did.
- M: And they had some housing problem, and I have read that Mr. Watson was very instrumental in straightening out the arrangements for the convention.
- G: Is that the convention where they had the monument built of Mr. Kennedy, bust or something set up there, and Marvin built a brick wall around it?
- M: You've got me. I don't know that one.
- G: Well, I won't tell you then. Anyway, you can ask Marvin about it.
- M: I wish you would.
- G: He was handling the convention.
- M: Yes.
- G: And the Kennedy crowd got a bust of Mr. Jack, the president, and put it up right in front of the stage. Well, it is wonderful for them to love him that well, but it wasn't a Kennedy convention. It was a Democratic convention. Now Marvin hasn't told me this, but my story is, and I think it's true, he was handling the arrangements at the hall and in place of letting that bust standing up there in front of everybody, he decided he would protect it so he built a brick wall around it. (Laughter) Afraid somebody would

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desecrate it or something, you see. That's the kind of thing he is capable of.

M: Mr. Germany, before I can round up on some questions, I wonder if you would kind of go over with me on some of your meetings that you had with Mr. Johnson over the years. Times that you have either been with him up in Washington or . . .

G: My most recent meeting with him was when we met to see Marvin get to take the oath of office as postmaster general. That was a very nice affair, a beautiful occasion. Mrs. Johnson was a very gracious hostess, took good care of us out on the garden and everywhere and had a receiving line. I think the security people got a little concerned about me at that time because they made a lot of pictures of me right there while I was shaking hands with the President. I took a little more time than usual because at Mr. Patman's first wife's funeral when Mr. Johnson was leaving the grave, everybody gathered up along where they could see where he was going on his path to the security car and when I got up there and Mr. Johnson came along, it never occurred to me to say, "Mr. President." He said, "Hello, Gene," and I said, "Hello, Lyndon." And so when we got into the receiving line at the Marvin Watson party out on the White House garden, when I walked up to him I said, "Mr. President, how do you do?" and he said, "What's the matter with that, Gene?" I said, "Well, I wanted to apologize for that. You are so personal a friend and so on that I just forgot when we went to the funeral



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and embarrassed you and a lot of your friends by calling you Lyndon." He said, "Forget it, Gene, let it ever be Lyndon."

M: Mr. Germany, have you ever had occasion to discuss with Mr. Johnson the domestic developments or political programs or foreign policy, just in a personal, friendly way.

G: I don't think it would be proper for me to comment on that. When he was president, I visited with him a few times in Washington prior to these last two occasions, but when we discussed things like that it wasn't published and I'm sure that there was some reason for it, so I'm not going to do it now.

M: All right. I have a few things that I have marked down as something you became very active and interested in. I wonder if you could tell me what Mr. Johnson's assistance was in his help in accomplishing these projects. One is the Red River Project and the other is the Arkansas River Navigation Project.

G: The Arkansas River? I wasn't in on that. The Red River Project, I've been in on it all the time, and I've worked with them. But the Arkansas project was indirectly related to Texas because whenever they took the water out of the Red River and protected the Red River, why, they were protecting Texas because it is a big part of the boundary of Texas. We are, of course, still trying to get navigation on the Red River and on the Sabine and on the canal running up to Lone Star Steel Company. Of course, our tonnage is so great that it is an attractive thing to barge transportations,

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revenue [inaudible]. But I've never put any pressure on him in that. I realized all the time that we had his help and his support and there wasn't any need to discuss that particular question with him. Senator Kerr, of course, was looking after the Arkansas River deal and he did a good job. Of course, he and the President were always very close together. Senator Kerr was a very close personal friend of mine, and I didn't see any occasion for me taking any part in it.

M: Did you ever discuss with Mr. Johnson his election possibilities for 1968? This would be prior to his withdrawal.

G: I'm afraid I shouldn't comment, but I did encourage him. If I made a mistake there again and called her Lady Bird to him [it was] because we've known her long before they ever married, but, anyway, I said, "If Lady Bird, Mrs. Johnson, approves, then I think it is all right. Your health is the important thing." His health was considerably better than it had been in a long time and I was assured by her that the decision was not on account of health. The decision was just what he said it was.

M: The tape is about ready to run out and I have one question a kind of summary question that I would like to ask you about. What would you say-- (Tape fades out)

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M: Mr. Germany, by way of concluding, I would like to ask you if you will tell me what you think have been Mr. Johnson's significant contributions both to his state and to the United States during his public career. You have been on the scene and inactively involved in this area.

G: Although Mr. Johnson and I have disagreed on many questions, fundamentally we have been in almost complete agreement. The method by which he pursued things and got them done was probably not one that I would have carried out, but I don't think that the United States has had a better president, more unselfish, more energetic and more interested in the welfare of the whole United States than Mr. Johnson. No president has ever had that situation [that he had].

I think that the crowning thing [was withdrawing for consideration for election in 1968] and, if he had not done it, all the glory that I'm about to give him would not have been as easy or spontaneous as it is. Mr. Johnson and I both felt that he could be re-elected without any difficulty. I'm sure that he felt that he could. And I'm sure that Mrs. Johnson felt that he could.

She was the greatest first lady that this country has ever had. Knowing the entire family, her family, I must say, that she has surprised even we Texans in her ability to handle the office of wife of the president, first lady, in such a way that we put her

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on top.

As far as he is concerned, although we disagreed on many, many things, there was one fundamental agreement that we both had: that he was completely loyal to the United States, he was loyal to Texas. Regardless of the fact that we would not have done things the same way, the fundamental thing that we did, or would have done, that I would have done or he would have done, was always in good conscience. Nobody questioned his integrity. But when he crowned it all by casting aside the possibility of being the again elected president of the United States, he bestowed on Texas another first for the United States. He is the first president that took the same situation. Calvin Coolidge, you know, did not choose to run one time, but that was not in a stress like he was in this time. This is purely patriotic inspiration that brought it about. If Texas ever has another president, and this is the first one, of course, they'll never have another one that will surpass Lyndon Johnson in his clear, clean thinking and in his honesty and integrity to carry out the things that he thought were right.

M: Mr. Germany, from what you know of Mr. Johnson now and when he was a very young freshman, has there been much change in the man? Have you seen much?

G: I think so. One of the things that we noticed is that he is not only a good politician, but he is a good grandfather. That will change any man. It is too bad that he didn't have a son, but he couldn't have had more devoted daughters.

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- M: His very great popularity in his election in 1964 declined considerably by 1968, and, of course, he ultimately did withdraw. To what would you attribute this loss of national popularity and support?
- G: To the fact that he was true to his conscientious beliefs. Things that should have been done, he did them regardless of the effect that they might have on his political career.
- M: What do you think has been in Mr. Johnson's nature in his handling of things, his strength and his weaknesses? What do you think in Mr. Johnson has been his main strength and his weaknesses?
- G: I think his devotion to principle and friends has been his greatest strength. His willingness to go as far as he could for those that were friends of his without in any way violating his conscientious obligation to his country. Now his greatest drawback, if any, was his own problem--that was the way he mistreated his health. I think that he could have been a lot stronger. He did get stronger physically after a certain period, and that was due largely, a whole lot, to Mrs. Johnson's supervision and care. She didn't try to take over his thinking and responsibility as a politician, but she was responsible for his taking care of his own bodily health. He couldn't have lasted through the presidency had it not been for that, because he has tremendous energy, didn't know when to go to sleep. He would just work all the time. One time when he was running for the Senate she was over at our plant

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and we picked him up somewhere en route. The first thing she said to him, "Get over in that back seat, Lyndon, and go to sleep." And he did. (Laughter)

M: Before we close out, Mr. Germany, I wonder if you have any sort of memories of meetings or occasions where you were particularly struck by Mr. Johnson's talents and his ability just over the years--kind of things and what position he may have taken?

G: Well, as to his ability, I think his ability to get us the 89 million loan from the RFC and his faith in us that we would pay it back.

M: I wonder if there is any other occasion where you just in a recall now of being with the President where you have some fond recollections of what took place?

G: My mind is not clicking. When you get to be seventy-seven years old, honey, you'll understand what I mean.

M: You've talked about a lot of different things, Mr. Germany. Is there anything that you would like to add on to anything that we talked about or is there anything we haven't covered?

G: No, I'll think of those on my way home.

M: That is true. We can always put those in the transcript later. Let me just kind of ask you by way of conclusion, final conclusion. How do you think the history will regard Mr. Johnson?

G: It will take a writer twenty years from now to properly appraise the difficulties that he went through and the tremendous thinking

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that he did in taking care of them. Immediate history will record mistakes. It is easy to do that. Ultimate history will record what he did for the country in ways that are not now open to discussion. I think that his handling of the delivery of the presidency over to Mr. Nixon was one of the greatest things that's ever been accomplished.

Of course, being a church man and thinking in church terms, I think that when he introduced the Bible and the scripture into his inaugural speech was--while Mr. Eisenhower had done almost something similar to it, he--the feeling wasn't in it, but it was in when Mr. Johnson took it and elevated the Bible to its high place it belongs in the United States government, despite the Supreme Court's action.

M: Mr. Germany, I have no further questions. I would like to thank you.

G: Well, I thank you and thank you for being so liberal with me, and easy. When you send me a copy, I'll imagine I'll find some things that I shouldn't have said.

[End of Tape 2 of 2 and Interview I]

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