INTERVIEWEE: WALTER HALL

INTERVIEWER: DAVID G. MC COMB

June 30, 1969

M; Let me identify the tape, first of all. This is an interview with Mr. Walter Hall in Dickinson, Texas. I am at the Citizens State Bank at 2801 Main Street. The date is June 30, 1969. It is 10:45 in the morning, and my name is David McComb.

Mr. Hall, first of all, I'd like to know something about your background. Where were you born, and when, and where did you get your education?

H: Dr. McComb, I was born in Houston on May 30, 1907. But I've lived practically all my life in League City in Galveston County. That's a small community, up now perhaps to 10 or 12,000 people. When I first knew it, when I entered the first grade it was probably 7 or 800. After attending school, a year or two in Houston, and the balance of my grade school in League City and three years in high school in League City, I took my final year in high school in what is now Sam Houston High in Houston. It was called Central High at that time. In the fall of 1924 I entered Rice Institute, now Rice University, in Houston and got a B.A. degree from there in 1928. I studied principally the humanities there with what economic and other business administration courses Rice had at that time. There were not many. I had the great good fortune of having some outstanding instructors, and our classes were small. I think perhaps some of my contacts there led me to develop an interest in what goes on around me.

After graduating I went to work for a major oil company and worked a couple of years in central Texas at a clay mine as cashier of that mine, and then returned to League City to become cashier of this bank. It was then located in League City and was later moved to Dickinson. It was called the Citizens State Bank of League City, and I went to work for it in 1931, early in the year.

M: Had the Depression started at that time?

H: The Depression was in full swing when I entered the banking business, and while our area was never hit as hard as some, we of course knew that times were pretty tough. The bank was quite small, total assets of less than $75,000. A great many good things happened to the area, starting shortly thereafter, however. They discovered the Dickinson oil field in '34, and we moved down here on January 1 of '35.

Then the Texas City industrial development had started in '35, I believe it was. Then the League City oil field was discovered in '39. Then Camp Wallace was built nearby. Later the Hitchcock blimp base. So a great many things with a very genuine importance economically took place. I'm sorry to say that I can't claim any credit for any of them, but I was around to benefit from them.

We acquired the controlling interest in this bank in 1943, and since that time our business interests have expanded into the majority ownership in four additional banks and some insurance operations, a life insurance company and one thing and another, which are really not significant to this interview, but it does give something of a background picture of my own interests.

Let me say that my early interest in political affairs came into focus in November 1928, when I was living in this small town in

Fayette County. I was one of the very few in that town who voted for Al Smith. I have been a Democrat, not particularly by inheritance but by interest in what has seemed to me ever since studying American history under Dean Caldwell at Rice--incidentally he later became minister to Portugal and to Bolivia and also dean later at MIT. He was a great historian and a great teacher. So I was an Al Smith Democrat for my first vote, and it brought some interesting reactions because I've always been a bit on the loud side. That's speaking mildly.

Then after coming back into Galveston County, it was soon clear that a great deal needed to be done in our community, in our county. You know of course the reputation of Galveston County perhaps; it was pretty well under the economic influence of organized gambling though it was illedal. We just had a multitude of problems and I was not satisfied with some conditions, as it were, and so I started taking an interest in them.

Incidentally, the first political speech I ever made was in behalf of Senator Tom Connally when he was running against little Joe Bailey.

M: When was that?

H: I believe that was in '34 or '36. That's a long time back.

So to kind of further explain my interest in politics I saw no way to bring about some things that the mainland of Galveston County needed, except through political activity. The city of Galveston at that time had about two-thirds of the vote in the county, the mainland about a third, and of course we didn't cut much ice except in races that were closely contested. We soon learned that there was a way for us to make our voices felt.

I'm afraid I'm talking too much about myself, but if I'm not, if you

want me to continue along this line I'll explain it.

M: That's good background.

H: The first time that we had anything that could be called a political interest in national affairs occurred in behalf of FDR. I had voted for Al Smith, but I was active in behalf of FDR in the 1932 election and in the '36 election. And in 1940 we came pretty close to capturing our county convention in behalf of FDR when the establishment in the city of Galveston was for Jack Garner. I believe that effort was led by the Liberty Leaguers.

It soon became clear to me that our county was of such comparatively small size, that is the mainland, which was growing far more rapidly than the city of Galveston, that by organization we could soon come to have a consequential political effect in this county, and thereby change some political conditions in the county, all for the good.

I think I'd better go ahead now, with that background, and say that my interest was largely because of the lack of roads for my friends and my customers; a very poor school system in many parts of the county; a neglect of the mainland by the establishment of Galveston who knew we didn't have enough votes to run the show. And so we were kind of a frustrated minority that sought means to do something about it, and this group soon came to be called the Unorganized Organization. It consisted of organized labor groups in Texas City and LaMarque and some in Galveston on certain issues; of rural people, namely dairy farmers and a few other types of farmers--cattlemen, that is, on the mainland; small businessmen who were in the small towns or the communities.

M: Did you have any influence in Galveston itself?

H: As we became more and more successful and our votes determined the election

for county judge. Of course, you know, in politics success attracts adherence. And so organized labor and a few intellectuals and liberals in Galveston came to feel apparently that our efforts offered the most hope for some changes in Galveston. We endeavored to elect Jim Simpson, now a prominent attorney in Texas City, as county attorney to break the back of organized gambling in Galveston County, and he was counted out in a box in Galveston where they ran in 200 seamen who were not eligible to vote. But the election laws in Texas the, and I might add now, are such that when you use voting machines it's almost impossible to contest an election because if you get a man who admits that he had no legal right to vote or if you show he had no legal right to vote and you get him on the witness stand and ask him how he voted, he can deny that he voted for the man he did vote for and say he voted for the other one and there's no way to idenify his ballot.

To the everlasting credit, let me say, of Jim Simpson for having led that fight--and we came within I think 20-odd votes of winning as it was--it made it clear that organized gambling did not have the political power that it had contended that it had.

M: So even though you lost, this encouraged you.

H: And then the effort was continued, again under the leadership of James P. Simpson. And Will Wilson, the Texas attorney general, developed a technique of putting out of business gambling housing by obtaining an injunction. And gamblers didn't object much to being raided and being fined, but when the district judge or judges, and in this case it was wone, so far as my memory goes, granted injunctions on actions brought by Attorney General Will Wilson against specific locations, enjoining them from carrying on gambling operations, then of course if they did gamble in those spots they were in contempt of court and would go to jail. And gamblers don't like to go to jail.

M: Do you remember the name of that judge?

H: I think it was Judge Donald Markle, and that could be checked of course in the records.

Now of course your purpose here, Dr. McComb, is to get an idea or rather a record, as best I can recall, and I'm somewhat embarrassed that I don't have any consequential records about my contacts with Lyndon Johnson. But I have attempted to give you something of my own development of a political interest. Our bank was of the conviction early that we should participate in the measures that were recommended by FDR. This little bank had the distinction of making the first FHA Title 2 loan, and the first FHA Title 1 loan of all the banks in this area. Later on, I might add, we made the first GI loan to a man still living in League City who had been captured on Corregidor, and we made him a residential loan upon his return. His name is Wylie Sloman.

I soon became regarded by the establishment in Galveston and, to a small degree of Houstonians, as something of a liberal when they were kind, a radical when they were irritated, and a communist when they were mad as hell, non of which bothered me in the least because I recognized that it was a long hard fight to get some things done here.

In 1943 due to the desperate lack of industrial water supply in Galveston County, I was appointed to the San Jacinto River Authority as a director and immediately made president of it. We were attempting to bring a domestic water supply not only to Huston but into Galveston County. Shortly after becoming involved there, former Governor James Allred became our attorney and made a significant contribution to the

success that our district had. When we started there it had been a paper organization for several years, it had been financed originally by a tax remission by the State of Texas but had done nothing. And through good luck and the ability of Jimmy Allred, we were able to purchase from the Federal Works Agency a water supply system that it had built, and made contracts with the City of Houston and with Humble Company that have brought about earnings and other developments that now are going to result in the first big dam that the San Jacinto River Authority will build at Conroe. It's, in effect a joint effort between it and the City of Houston and with the Humble Company and other industrial users.

I mention that because it is significant as it relates to Jimmy Allred, who is the person who first caused me to have an interest in Lyndon Johnson. Of course, I was aware of the lack of interest in water development by what I call the business establishment in Texas. Like practically every major issue in Texas, they give great lip service to dealing with the problem, whether it's education, mass transportation, better highways, air pollution, water pollution, or whatever. You get great speeches by the leaders of the industry, whatever part of the establishment it may be, but when the chips are down and the legislation is introduced into the legislature, of course it soon dies or is amended to be meaningless.

I had had an encounter with Governor Coke Stevenson as a member of an executive committee made up of members of the various river authorities and others who had tax remissions from the state. Under the law that prevailed, during the war the state had not been able to spend money and, accordingly, had a surplus and therefore there was no legal basis for a tax to be levied. The Tax from which our remissions came

could not be levied in the usual manner. We were faced with a dire problem. There were some twenty-five or thirty of us who organized ourselves, all public bodies, all holding jobs at the hands of the governor or of the State Board of Water Engineers or whoever. We were trying to get the governor to call a special session to deal with the problems by special measures.

Our executive committee met with the governor and when he declined to call a special session to deal with this problem, many of us--not the San Jacinto River Authority, but some of the others were faced with the failure to meet their bond that they had issued, depending upon the taxes that were to be remitted by the State. It was clear to me and to all of us that the governor was not going to call a special session. I asked him if he had any advice or counsel that he could give me to take back to by board of directors about how to plan for the coming year in the absence of money, how to plan to proceed with things we desperately needed to do such as the acquisition of rights-of-way, the enlargement of canals, small pumping plants, and things of that nature. I remember so vividly Governor Stevenson, who was personable in many ways, but he sucked on a pipe pretty much and he had a very cold, calculating--some would say, a mean steely eye. He did not like to be asked the questions for which there were apparently no good answers. And when I asked him that question, he cocked his eye over at me and he sucked on that pipe a time or two, and, believe it or not, he said to me, "Oh, Hall, those questions usually take care of themselves."

That was such an utterly absurd comment coming from a governor of a great state that I immediately arose from my seat and told the attorney and the others who were there--the attorney was not Jimmy Allred, it was the attorney of this association group that we had formed--that I

felt we had imposed upon the governor long enough and we ought to be leaving, so we promptly left.

Now that was the background of how I felt about Coke. I didn't think that he really understood the problems of Texas, and that he was so conservative that he was not willing to do anything consequential about the problems, no matter how dire they might be.

So, Jimmy Allred, being our counsel, was a good friend of LBJ's and at one time I'd thought that I ought to divorce myself pretty well from statewide political efforts if I was going to continue as president of the San Jacinto River Authority, but my encounter with Governor Stevenson caused me to reexamine that. And then when the race started between Coke and Lyndon, and I soon found out from Jimmy Allred because I asked him if he knew anything about this young congressman personally--I had known of course what I'd read in the papers--he though very highly of LBJ.

I said, "Well, we've got hell in our county to do much for him because our county is still pretty conservative and they think Coke Stevenson is a great man, but we'll do what we can."

I was able to start a little effort in Galveston County. It's very interesting now to recall that only two businessmen of prominence and willing to be actively identified with the Lyndon Johnson effort came forward to help in that. There was Maco Stewart, who had served on the State School Board under an appointment from W. Lee O'Daniel. Maco and I had never agreed on anything much politically. But when he found out that I was going to do what I could for LBJ, he called me and asked if he could come up to see me. I, of course, was always glad to see him because while we had not been political allies, and indeed we had been adversaries on some things, I considered him a personal friend. He came in with utter candor, said:

"I want you to know right now that I want to help you any way I can to beat that goddamned Coke Stevenson. It's not because I love Lyndon Johnson, but you know I wanted to be reappointed to the State School Board, that same job that O'Daniel appointed me to, and Coke wouldn't do it, and I'm going to try to help you beat him if I can. I'll be either for him or against him publicly, whichever you think will do the most good."

I said, "Maco, I don't want you for him publicly because that wouldn't help. But I'll tell you what you can do. We'll need some money."

He said, "I'll pay one-half of every dime that's spent to beat Coke Stevenson in Galveston County."

I said, "Okay, we'll leave it that way. I may call on you for some advice and counsel," which I did during the campaign, "as to some folks who would give us a little under-the-cover support one way or another."

The other man was Jim Bradner, who was the owner of radio station KGBC in Galveston. Jim Bradner is now deceased. Jim had organized the radio station, he was an engineer, a very progressive, liberal-minded man, and he held Coke Stevenson in utter contempt because he'd had some contacts with him and found that he was, according to Jim, not only unconcerned but uninformed about some very basic Texas problems.

So LBJ came into Galveston County and Jim Bradner and I were the only two men wo met--and I believe he came in by helicopter. We took him around in Galveston without much enthusiasm on the part of those he called on, but he was received courteously by some of the folks because I had business contacts there with the men who were gentlemen even if they didn't go along with the man that I happened to be supporting at the moment.

We brought him over to Texas City, and LBJ made a very effective campaign--very brief, but he went up one side of the main street and down the other, shook hundreds and hundreds of hands, showed what a great campaigner he was, and that evening--this is a very significant thing to me--we had a rally at LaMarque. They have pretty well gone by the board now, rallies have, but they were of some consequence at that time. Nearly every community would have one at least in every campaign. They would usually start off with the candidates for minor offices making their speeches, and then you'd come to the major office seekers last.

So LBJ made his speech there. I really hadn't had a chance to talk to the man, to use a country town, oil field expression, to "swab him out", on how he felt until going back from LaMarque to Galveston that night. And so I felt that before I could really go all-out for a man like I felt I should do, before I could properly explain my position to folks that I was identified with who felt keenly about certain things, that I ought to have it straight from him how he felt.

So I raised a number of very basic questions. I then felt that our treatment of the Negro was vile and that it should be changed. I felt that the old people were getting a raw deal from the standpoint of what medical care was costing. I ran into that, being just a country banker when the old people would come in, and sons of daughters who were taking care of their parents, and would tell me of the high cost of hospitals, of medicine, doctors, etc. In many cases it was a terrible problem for these people to receive reasonably good medical care. I felt that our educational system, particularly in Texas, was lousy. I knew what difficulties our graduates were having in staying in the better universities. On various things like water development, there of course I had been close

to that. I had been the first president and organized the water district to provide water and sewer systems in the town I lived in, League City, and helped in several others in Galveston County.

So I had become aware of these things, and I wanted to know how a man who was seeking to be senator from Texas, really felt. I asked as piercing questions as I knew how. I remember Lyndon asking me, "Jimmy Allred has told me something about you, Hall. He said that I could depend upon your treating in confidence anything I tell you."

I said, "Well, Jimmy's right about that. Just what do you mean?"

He said, "Well, you've asked me what is my basic political philosophy about the pressing questions." He proceeded to then tell me. I think Lyndon Johnson was telling me the truth. I've always felt he was telling me the truth. I think he had a burning compassion for unfortunate people, irrespective of their color. I think that he wanted to do something about it. He was confronted with the problem of how he could go about that. He dealt with this very frankly. How could he go about that, coming from a state that as yet had shown no signs of being as liberal or progressive as he would like to see it? I want to make clear he made no specific commitments to me about what he was going to do if he became senator. He convinced me though that if he ever got in position of real power to where his own political life would not be sacrificed on the altar of liberal legislation he would act. I am too pragmatic to expect <u>any</u> politician to sacrifice himself--I've known too many of them. After all, you can't do anything unless you are in office. I was convinced that once that man got in real power, that he would bring into reality legislation that would deal with the problems that I felt were so basic to the welfare of this nation.

Now there have been times when his conduct has caused me to wonder, but never more than wonder. I always felt that he was doing what he felt was absolutely necessary to, shall we say, stay alive politically, or at least stay alive from the standpoint of any influence.

Let me tell you about--I think it was his maiden speech in the Senate. I think he called it "The Right of Unlimited Debate," which to me means nothing more nor less than the filibuster. I am constitutionally opposed to the filibuster. He sent me a copy of that speech with a little handwritten note. He said, as near as I recall, "This is my maiden speech in the Senate. I felt you might like to see a copy. Lyndon." I of course had read about it in the paper. I was completely unimpressed by the logic or lack of it and by the whole proposition of the filibuster, and so I wrote on the bottom of that little note he sent to me, and he has laughed about it later, "Dear Lyndon, I'm sorry you think more of your right to speak without limit than you do another man's right to vote," and I sent it back to him.

We continued to have contacts, one way and another. Usually I'd be writing to him about some problem of some of my friends or people in the area.

M: Let me ask you something here. When he convinced you about his compassion for people in 1948, as you just mentioned, do you think that the legislation that has come out while he was President in the area of civil rights, welfare, education, etc., do you feel that that bears out--?

H: I think without any question that that man in 1948, that his heart and his mind were speaking to me and telling me the truth as to how he felt. I felt it at the time. He was on the level with me. Now as I look

back and see what that man brought into reality in the way of legislation on these great social and humane legislative efforts, I think it is clear beyond question that he did believe that, and that he had to bide his time which, knowing Lyndon, must have been extremely painful to him, to have to bide his time to keep the support of the Southern Bloc in order to become Majority Leader, in order to do some of the things that he wanted to do, that he had to take them one step at a time. I think that that delaying period of his life must have been extremely painful to him. Look at the record! When he got in the saddle, when he got in the White House, he was able to take and did take legislation that had been thought of by some others, as well as himself, but had not been able to become enacted, and it became law due to, I'm convinced not only his great dedication to the objectives but of course his tremendous skill of knowing how to get legislation enacted.

But I look back now and feel that I have been fully justified in believing what he told me in 1948 as to how he honestly felt about the basic problems.

Now let me point out that there have been times when our relationships were strained. As I say, he has told me since that he thought I was a little rough when I charged him with support of the filibuster, but he knew of course that's exactly what his first speech was. Then we got along pretty good in the various political contacts we had which were not major. I would not want anyone to think that I was one of Lyndon Johnson's real close friends or political advisers or anything of that sort. That isn't true. I always supported him without any exception, but we had our problems.

The most extreme one was after we helped him, and by "we" I mean the liberals and labor to a small degree, some minority groups, lined up with him and supplied the strength by which he beat Allan Shivers in the May convention--the first convention in 1956, which gave him control of the delegation to the convention that year.

M: What's your motivation in helping Johnson there? To get rid of Shivers?

H: Yes, I consider Shivers as having been one of the most disastrous things that ever happened to Texas in politics. Allan was very bright, personable, effective as a speaker, and he had the opportunity there to take Texas down a highly progressive trail because of his influence and his other qualities that I've mentioned. He did not do that. Allan came from modest circumstances like a lot of the rest of us did, and I always gathered the impression that he had far too great a respect for money. He aspired to great wealth, which I understand he has acquired. He started out as a senator, being elected by liberal laborers from the Beaumont area. As lieutenant governor, we thought we were going to have a somewhat progressive administration. But it soon became clear, to me at least, that we were going to get a rather conservative reactionary administration.

And then of course you know the history of the land scandals and the insurance scandals which in dollars were far, far more important than the veterans' land scandals. And I wanted no part of Allan Shivers. I had supported Ralph Yarborough against him, and incidentally we had been very successful in our area in that respect.

I will say that my personal feelings were that many folks supported LBJ for different reasons. Some, like myself, believed in LBJ, believed that if he ever got into top power, not that I ever visualized him then as

President but I did visualize him an an extremely powerful senator, that conditions might come about to where some of these things that I felt so deeply about could be brought about. So I was for LBJ just because of LBJ's qualifications. In addition to that I was highly enthusiastic in doing anything that would minimize and reduce the power of Allan Shivers.

LBJ had never had, so far as I could tell, a precinct-wide type organization in the state. The liberals did. We never had enough to win until Ralph Yarborough came along, but we did have a semblance of an organization. It was strong enough, together with the power that LBJ had in some various places and some high spots of one type or another, to beat Allan Shivers pretty handily at the May convention.

How I seconded the nomination of Frankie Randolph in that convention. She was put in nomination by Judge Andrews of Houston--Jesse Andrews--and LBJ didn't like that. He made a statement to me, "Well, we're giving you Byron Skelton." There's no better Democrat than Byron Skelton, but we didn't feel that Byron was the logical solution to the entire problem. We wanted Frankie Randolph to be National Committee-woman, and she was made National Committeewoman. We felt then and there that LBJ was anxious to head that delegation, and certainly it was understandable why he should be, and Sam Rayburn was anxious for him to head that delegation. So, we felt with great optimism that with the help of LBJ and Sam Rayburn we had the means to have the Democratic Executive Committee take the liberal road, and we also felt that once that was done, if LBJ and Sam Rayburn would identify with our group, that in having those two men with us who were so prominent in most liberal measures of a national level, that we could get the same thing going for us in Texas.

Well, it didn't happen. In September, I believe the date was, and I didn't go to the September convention because I had some business arrangements that prevented it, and besides, I couldn't believe that the same coalition that had supported LBJ would not continue to control the convention. History has spoken clearly on that, and I was quite angry about it. As soon as I could I talked to Sam Rayburn about it. I could never bring myself to be bitter and use rough language and that sort of thing with Mr. Sam, but I did have to get his feeling about that because he had played a strong part in helping LBJ and the conservatives take over the September convention after the liberals had taken the May convention for Lyndon's benefit.

Mr. Rayburn made a very interesting remark to me. Incidentially he was one of the greatest feather-smoothers I guess that ever lived. He calmed me down. This occurred in his home at Bonham. I was highly critical of what had transpired and told him of my bitter exchange with LBJ.

M: Was this shortly after September?

H: This was after the election in November. In spite of my disenchantment over the thing that occurred in September, I had done everything I could under Mr. Rayburn's direction and leadership and request, just as I had in '52, in behalf of the national ticket.

Let me go back a moment. Fagan Dickson and I were in Sam Rayburn's office shortly before the '52 convention. I told Mr. Rayburn that Allan Shivers was going to bolt the party; that it didn't make sense for him to destroy his place in the conservative structure in Texas by not bolting the party. Mr. Rayburn looked at me and said: "Walter, I can't believe the Governor of Texas would tell me an unadulterated lie. He sat in that chair you're sitting in and told me recently (I believe he said the

day before) that no matter what happened, he would not bolt the party."

I said, "Mr. Sam, I think he's lying."

To get back to the Sam Rayburn affair--.

M: Of course he did bolt it.

H: He did bolt. Parenthetically, let me state that after the two conventions were held Mr. Rayburn called a little meeting in '52 at his sister's home, Mrs. Bartlett in Dallas, and he asked me to come up. There were eight or ten of us--Bill Kittrell and Byron Skelton, I think, and I don't know who else, some of the old hard-rock Democrats. Mr. Sam opened that meeting with this comment:

"Well, our governor of Texas snowed a lot of people, but he sure as hell wasn't able to snow this country banker."

But getting back to the '56 affair, when I was up at Mr. Rayburn's home and I was expressing my deep disappointment he said something like this. He said, "Walter, here's what you've got to keep in mind. No politician can operate both on a state and national level with the exception of Harry Byrd. He runs Virginia and he's also an influential senator. But every other national politician has to look upon his state as a base of operations. He cannot get involved in the local controversies in that state; otherwise, he would so crystalize the opposition that he would probably not be elected. You've got to recognize that Lyndon is a national politician, and he cannot engage in these things down here in Texas on the basis that you people want him to."

I differed with Mr. Rayburn then and I still think that Mr. Rayburn was wrong on that score. I feel that had Lyndon Johnson and Mr. Rayburn not prevented a liberal state Democratic Executive Committee in 1956, I think most of the political direction of Texas would have been changed

and I think it would have gone along more liberal routes.

M: Why did they allow the breakup of that '56 coalition?

H: That is very hard to say. When I later talked to Lyndon about it, and we had very strong differences of opinion, he was vague about it. But I gather that pressures came to him from some of the people who had been very important to him in his campaigns, financially and otherwise, who felt that it was not in their best interest or in the best interest of Texas or in Lyndon Johnson's political career to have "screeching liberals," a term that one man applied to us, in the saddle in Texas. I think Lyndon after great mental turmoil and intellectual struggle on the thing bought that, and I think he was wrong. I want to make that clear. I think that we could have gone down a much more progressive trail starting then and there.

M: Apparently after Frankie Randolph was not seated with that Harris delegation in the fall of '56, a lot of the liberals turned against LBJ.

H: There is no question about it. I was denounced personally by letter and I guess in many other ways because I continued to support LBJ.

M: Why did you do that?

H: That is a very good question and I did it for this readon: I felt that he probably had, and particularly after Mr. Rayburn talked to me, a better understanding of the statewide political structure than I had; he felt that it was necessary for him to have the support of Texas in order to return to the Senate; and that he could not accomplish anything unless he did return to the Senate; and he felt that he would have to sacrifice the liberal element, shall we say, the liberal forces in order to better secure his own base of operations here in the state. I am convinced that was his thinking, I am convinced that was Mr. Rayburn's

thinking, and I'm still convinced they were both wrong on that issue. I think that the state was balanced enough at that time that had we gone the other route, we would have had a somewhat different story here in Texas.

M: Did that '56 event mark the ebbing in liberal strength? That seemed to be a high point.

H: I think it did. I think that that was such a keen disappointment, I think it weakened many of us as leaders because we had gotten our people to win precinct and county conventions, and then we'd had, the term that was used so commonly, the "big doublecross" in September. It's pretty hard to get your troops back in force once that happens.

M: Apparently Frankie Randolph lost her precinct strength after this, slowly, by 1960.

H: The whole movement began to ebb, I don't think there's any question on that. Incidentally, there have been some interesting things to follow that. I still was convinced, however, that LBJ was following his own deep conviction that he was doing what was best to maintain his own source of power, namely as being a senator from Texas, and that he would still come through with major liberal legislation and influence. I grant you that a great many disagreed with me, and, as I say, I was denounced by a good many folks.

I was in Washington, I don't recall how quickly after '56, it may have been '57, I just don't recall. But in any event I was in Mr. Rayburn's office. The matter was closed, as far as the '56 affair was concerned. I had said my spiel, Mr. Rayburn knew exactly how I felt even though I had not indulged in anything that could have been called discourteous to Mr. Rayburn. As I started to leave, he said, "Are you going by to see

Lyndon?" I said, "Mr. Sam, after the things that have happened since '56 I don't think Lyndon is particularly anxious to see me."

"Oh," he said, "you've got Lyndon all wrong." He picked up the phone and called John Holton and said, "Get Lyndon on."

Shortly, he said, "Lyndon, I've got a Texas Democrat here that might come by if you have time." And of course I don't know exactly what Lyndon said, but when Mr. Rayburn hung up he said, "He'd like to see you right now if you've got time." I said, "Well, I'll take time. I'll be glad to go over there."

I went over there, and of course he was in his office there and they ushered me right in. That's the only tim e, as a matter of fact, that I've ever had what you'd call the Johnson treatment. He came up and disarmed me pretty completely, telling me how wonderful it was to have people who would still be for him even when he had to disagree with them. And so I felt we ought to clear the air. I didn't want Lyndon to think that I had changed my feeling about the matter, so I told him not with any unkindness, quite frankly that I wanted him to know that I still felt that his part in the '56 affair was a grave mistake and I hadn't changed my thinking on it.

He said, "Let's don't go back to that. We've got problems ahead of us. I want you to know that I think it's a real test of friendship when a man will continue to support you when he differed so bitterly with you about some things."

I said, "Well, I applaud very much of what you're doing up here, and I'm not going to spend my energies in the past."

That was about the nature of the conversation.

He always had a tremendously effective staff. I could write to him about a problem of one of my friends and the thing was taken care of so

promptly and so effectively that it was always very impressive, and I always felt the man was a highly effective senator. The record of course is clear on that.

When it became clear that he was serious about the '60 nomination, I felt that it would be wise for us to afford him a forum down here to get some national attention. I was in Washington, I went by, I suggested that we have a dinner at the M-ody Center in Galveston. I said, "Now we'd want to do this to do two things. We want to raise you some money, and we want to get you an opportunity to say whatever you want to say in behalf of your efforts for the nomination."

He looked at me with that piercing eye of his, and I could tell that the idea struck a spark. He said, "Let me think that over," or words to that effect. "You may have something there."

I said, "Now you see, that's close enough. We can get a bunch of your Houston friends to come down, and we can get some of the boys from the Beaumont-pPort Arthur area; we can get a few from Brazoria County and down the line there, and we can put on a good show. And the Moody Center is a good place."

He said, "Let me think about that. I want to think about that."

It may have been two or three weeks, I've forgotten just how long, but in any event Clif Carter came down to my office here in Dickinson. He said, "The Senator likes what you've suggested. He wants to call it, however," and this shows how astute LBJ was, instead of having a kind of silk stocking dinner he wanted to call it the Gulf Coast Hamburger Party, and that's what we did.

So we put it on. We sold some tables where we could tap the silk stocking crowd, and we tapped them pretty heavily. I think it was $800

for an eight-seat table, and it was kind of a buffet affair. And it was highly effective.

M: But you took in a lot of the other folks too?

H: Oh, yes. We had a good crowd. He was delighted over the whole affair. We had good newspaper coverage, we had him on local radio stations, and it was just exactly what he wanted, so he said.

As you know, we were having static with Mrs. Randolph. Mrs. Randolph is my warm friend, we had been in the fights together, and the one advantage I've had over some people is I do not live long with vindictiveness. I'm too busy for it and it's not quite my nature. When a fight is over, it's over, as far as I'm concerned. That's not true with Mrs. Randolph. Mrs. Randolph remained exceedingly bitter, and I knew it was a problem for the national committeewoman to not be supporting the senior senator when he was seeking the nomination.

We had arranged for a squite of rooms for LBJ in the Galvez Hotel. I told him I had to talk to him after the shindig, and he said he wanted to visit with me. So in due course we got together that night. I said, "Lyndon, we ought to try our damndest to compose this problem between you and Frankie."

He said, "Well, what have you got in mind?"

I said, "I don't know whether this has any merit to it or not, I don't know whether you'll buy it, I don't know whether she'll buy it, but what would you think of this? Suppose that Frankie Randolph would say that 'everyone knows (we'd give a press release) that I've had my difficulties with Senator Johnson, but inasmuch as I'm convinced that he is the overwhelming choiee of the people of Texas for the Democratic nomination I think I should respect the wishes of the majority of the people of Texas, and therefore I am not going to oppose the Senator's efforts. In fact, I'm

going to be for him at the convention.' Now if she will say that, Lyndon, then would you come out with something like this? Would you say, 'I am deeply pleased and appreciative of Mrs. Randolph's pledge of support in stating her position. Certainly she has been the most effective Democratic committeewoman in the history of Texas, and I hope that she remains in that capacity.'"

Lyndon looked at me, again with those very intelligent eyes, and he said, "You might have something there. I think well enough of that, privately you go to Frankie and see what her reaction is. I think that's the most logical thing that might be worked out."

I wanted to make it clear, he didn't say cold-turkey that he would buy it, and I've been around politicians enough to know that he was not making any commitment. But I also know that he thought well of the idea or he would have immediately vetoed it.

I went to Frankie Randolph and of course she exploded! She said, "No, indeed, I'll not make any deal with him now or later." So that closed the matter. History of course is quite clear on what happened thereafter.

M: Did you go to the '60 convention then?

H: No, I did not go to the '60 convention. Instead of being chosen a delegate-at-large, I was chosen as alternate-at-large, which doesn't mean anything. I had some very important business problems and I didn't see where I could do anything out there.

Incidentally, since you mention that, let me tell you what happened out there, I believe it was a Sunday. Zack Lentz, a good friend of mine and a good Democrat from Victoria, called me from California and said, "The Senator wants you to come out." I said, "Well, what in heaven's

name could I do!" "Well," he said, "we need you to go to some of the more liberal state delegations, for instance, North Carolina." I said, "Zack, Terry Sanford is running that show and he's a Kennedy man like horseradish." "Yes, but we don't have anybody with liberal credentials and he'd like for you to come."

John Connally had run that state convention and I happened to know that Clif Carter urged him to make me a delegate-at-large after our own caucus had turned me down, and indeed also turned down Clark Thompson until the Senator sent word back that if they didn't reconvene and name Clark Thompson as a delegate, that LBJ forces were going to kick off the caucus named delegate on the convention floor. I told Zack, "Clif Carter knows all the story. The Senator permitted John Connally (John didn't like me politically, we got along pretty well on other bases, but we've never been friends politically) to make me an alternate delegate-at-large which is utterly meaningless. For you or anybody to assume that I could have any influence with any delegation out there is unrealistic."

And then I said to him, "Zack, honest Injun now, how do things look for us out there?"

He said, "I'm sorry you asked me 'honest Injun,' Hall, but frankly this Kennedy crowd has got us blocked at every corner. They've got so many people working around here and they know so much that's going on, we've got a hard, hard row to hoe. It looks to me like we don't have much of a show."

Shortly thereafter, that same day, Jake Pickle called me. Jake said that the Senator wanted me to come out there. I told Jake virtually the same thing that I had told Zack; told him I could not go. I had made

commitments to some other folks for the following week on some business matters, and I couldn't devote all my time to politics. I said, "Besides, it's unrealistic to assume that I could have any effect whatsoever out there on any delegation or a single vote in that convention."

The only thing that's interesting, it seems to me, about it was Zack Lentz's appraisal of the effectiveness of the Kennedy crowd and how accurate he was about the situation.

M: Were you surprised that Johnson took the vice presidential position?

H: Frankly I was surprised. I was quite surprised because it was hard for me to believe that he would go to a place where there's not much power and abdicate one where there is tremendous power. I've always admired Lyndon Johnson's taste for power. I think that a person who wants to change things, where a man sees injustices and he sees things that are wrong, if he doesn't want to change them then he doesn't have my respect to the degree that one has who does want to change them. And obviously it takes power to change things. So I always admired LBJ on that count.

He had made a few remarks, too, along in our various conversations that struck me as being very logical. And being a pragmatic person, and of course you don't stay in the banking business for 38 years unless you're rather pragmatic--let's face the facts on that. He made the statement to me once that's worth repeating, I think. He said it seemed to him that the logical use of political power was using your power to accomplish the good that was possible.

You know, he never was very much at tilting at windmills. He kind of held his fire until he thought the use of his influence and power could be productive, and I don't criticize that. The reason I criticized the great thing in '56 is because I think he was wrong in his appraisal. I

think that had he chosen the other route, the whole trend in Texas could have been different.

[interruption]

M: In time in chronology we ended up about the 1960 convention. You had mentioned Lyndon Johnson's philosophy of how to use power, that being to use it in a practical manner where something could be accomplished. We had talked about the '60 convention and whether or not you were surprised by this. That's where we were in time. You mentioned right before we cut off that you had some further contacts with Lyndon Johnson.

H: I think I indicated I had some further contacts about Lyndon Johnson. One or two things that I think might have a little amusing interest came from Sam Rayburn on one of my trips to his home in Bonham. This particular one, I was up there and I don't know now what caused me to go up, but we were eating there and about finished and I said, "Mr. Sam, do you know whether or not Mr. Truman is going to run for another term?" He said, "No, I don't."

I said, "Well, I hope he does because I think that history is going to show that on the major issues he has had to decide, from the dropping of the bomb on down to the creation of strength in western Europe to stop the westward march of communism, or whatever the major problem has been, that on most of those history is going to show him to have been right."

Mr. Rayburn said, "Oh, no question about that in my mind. He has been right on all of the major issues." And then with a little twinkle in his eye, he kind of smiled and said, "But can't he foul up the little ones!"

After he kind of broke the ice a little on that, I said, "Mr. Sam, there's a story going around Washington I heard a year or so ago that relates to you and your comment to Mr. Truman shortly after he became President. I wonder if I could run that by you and find out if there's any truth in it."

He said, "What story are you talking about?"

"The story goes that a day or two after he was sworn in as President, he called you and asked if he could come by your office and talk about some legislation, and of course you said, 'Sure.' He came up there and visited awhile and pretty soon he looked at his watch and the time had gone faster than he thought. He said, 'Will you have John call my car? I need to get back to the White House.' You said, 'That's not necessary. My car is waiting downstairs and I'll just run you by.' He said, 'Fine.'

"So you walked on down to your limousine, you got in the limousine and you said something like this: 'Now Harry, I'm not going to call you Harry any more unless it's a slip, because you're going to be Mr. President to me. I've served with, as you know, a good many Presidents. I know what's happened to them when they get down there at the White House. They get a big staff; that staff and all of these people from all these states come in there and they want things that you can grant them; these emissaries from these foreign powers know you've got a lot of money, and they start telling you what a great man you are. They'll start telling you that you're the greatest President we ever had, but, Harry, don't you believe them! Because you ain't!'"

Mr. Rayburn's eye just twinkled a little and he said, "Well, I'm not denying nor confirming that story." But it was very clear from some other things he told me about Mr. Truman and the vast courage that

Mr. Truman had shown that Mr. Rayburn felt that Mr. Truman had as clear an understanding and appreciation of the mood (I believe that was Mr. Rayburn's term), --"the mood" of America as any President that he had ever served with. He had made it clear to an English journalist who asked him two very pertinent questions about how he felt about serving with Presidents and about a prominent Republican. I didn't ask him to confirm one of them because I think that would have been a little bit out of order, but I did ask him about one.

That was when a British journalist asked him now many Presidents he had served under and he said none, he had served with five.

The story that I didn't ask him about was the question of the journalist, "You've served with many, many people in Congress. How many would you say that you've served with since you first came here?" And Mr. Rayburn is supposed to have said, "Oh, several thousand. Three or four or five thousand maybe." The journalist said, "Did you ever have any contact with any one of them or several of them who you felt were personally dishonest?" Any Mr. Rayburn said, "Yes, one." The journalist said, "Whatever happened to him?" He said, "He's now Vice President." That was when Mr. Nixon was Vice President.

You know, one of the few times that I ever saw Mr. Rayburn become angry almost beyond measure was when he was telling me why Nixon was an impossible person. It related to a speech that I believe Nixon made in New Orleans when he charged the Democratic party with being the "party of treason." Mr. Rayburn apparently never forgave him for that.

Mr. Rayburn also told me about why W. Lee O'Daniel did not run for a second term as senator. I asked him very pointedly if he knew and he

said, "I don't know that I have the answer, but I think I know some of the reasons." He said: "It doesn't matter what you say while campaigning if you're a member of the Senate or sunning for the Senate. What you say about the Senate when you're out in the huskings campaigning, out speech making, doesn't matter. But you don't get up in the United States Senate and denounce the United States Senate. And W. Lee O'Daniel's first speech in the Senate was a denunciation of the Senate. The senators who were there got up and walked out, and thereafter when W. Lee O'Daniel would start speaking the senators would get up and walk out, and he couldn't take the treatment." And he said, "Now I think that may have had something to do as to why he wanted no further part of the Senate."

M: Since you knew Sam Rayburm rather well, is it true that he had a great fondness for Lyndon Johnson?

H: I think Mr. Rayburn had a fondness for Lyndon Johnson superior to any he had for anybody so far as the persons I knew who he had any contact with. He would not permit a denunciation of Lyndon. He was irritated when I was talking to him so bitterly about what happened at the Cow Barn incident in Fort Worth. He loved Lyndon, I think, as an older man loves a younger one. There had been that connection between Lyndon's father and Sam Rayburn when they were both in the Texas legislature.

He admired Lyndon as a "can do" man. Mr. Rayburn liked results. I saw him in high indignation and anger when he came off the House floor one day when the agriculture bill had been defeated. He told me the circumstances. He was made, he was using profanity because some Republicans who had told him that they would vote for an extension of the bill had had pressure put on them by President Ike and had voted against the bill, and the bill had lost by a very few votes. He did not like

to run with a bill until he had the votes to pass it. He respected and admired people that could produce, and he of course recognized those abilities in Lyndon Johnson.

And then I think that Lyndon Johnson leaned very heavily upon him for advice and counsel, particularly in the early years of LBJ's being in the House and then in the Senate. And I think that endeared him to Sam Rayburn, and it also showed Lyndon Johnson's good sense to call upon such a well of information.

You see, Lyndon had this going for him, this being so close to Mr. Rayburn. He knew far better than to ever propose a consequential piece of legislation unless he felt that it was going to have success in the House, because, there again, his philosophy that using what power he had for accomplishing the good that was possible would come into play. If Mr. Rayburn would tell him without any conditions that he thought that bill could get through the House or he would check in with the appropriate committee chairman and find out, if you'll just look back in history not many of the major bills that Lyndon Johnson sponsored, either in the Senate or later as President, were defeated. He usually knew where the votes were coming from, and that was characteristic of Mr. Rayburn.

But it was a combination there of respect of his ability, his aptness as a pupil, and then just a sheer unadulterated affection that I think they had for each other. Based upon the contacts that I had with the two of them, that would be my evaluation.

M: Another miscellaneous question. You mentioned an incident with CBS, to be sure to ask you about it.

H: That is off the record. I'll tell you that when we go off the tape. I want to tell you that, you'll get a kick out of that.

But getting back to LBJ, after he became Vice President, I had a very interesting experience with him one time. A friend of mine had a very considerable business venture in Mexico that had been bogged down through what appeared to be official resistance on the part of Mexican officials to comply with a contract that they had entered into with these friends of mine. I mentioned it briefly one day when I was reporting to LBJ in Houston, after checking out for him an individual who was being considered for some appointments.

After we got through, I asked him if it would be all right for me to come to Washington and talk to whomever he'd delegate about a matter of major concern for some friends of mine. He said, "Come up when you like and see Walter." (Walter Jenkins) After he said that, he looked at me kind of oddly, I thought, and he said, "Walter, why don't you ever ask for anything for yourself?"

I was taken aback a bit and I said, "Well, it just never has occurred to me as yet. Maybe the time will come when I will. I've never particularly avoided it. I just haven't needed anything."

He said, "Well, if you do, you know where I am." Then he kind of paused and said, "Hall, you're unique."

That struck me as being a bit odd. Let me add parenthetically that I did go to Washington and I did see Walter Jenkins, he did arrange for a conference with the Mexican Amba-sador, which was rather unproductive. Finally a man by the name of Boonstraw, one of the right-hand men to-- I believe Tom Mann was our Ambassador to Mexico at the time, and with the help of Boonstraw and the State Department and from Senator Yarborough, who assured us that he would make the appropriate request in the Senate at the proper time to invoke the amendment that had been passed that prohibits

aid or grants to countries exappropriating American property without payment--I believe they call it the Hickenlooper Amendment--with a combination of all of those things my friends finally got their money. Without the help that we got, starting with LBJ when he was Vice President, frankly I don't believe we would ever have gotten it.

After he became President I was in the White House several times visiting with some of his aides whom I knew well, and visited with him briefly one day following a press conference. He was kind enough to invite Mrs. Hall and me to a couple of parties, and one night we spent the night there. He invited me to a stag party for, I think, the King of Saudi Arabia. I believe they don't think enough of their womenfolks to ever bring them to a party because this was pure stag.

I had a visit of no consequence with him one morning up there. It was just small talk there in his bedroom. We also had a few visits with Mrs. Johnson whom I've known almost as well as I have LBJ. She is of course a very considerate and highly intelligent person, and we've always enjoyed the contacts. There again I want to emphasize they have been limited but enough for me to have a very genuine respect and admiration for her.

I'm trying to think of any other communications. I do want to tell you about this. Not that it isn't done from time to time by other senators and Presidents, but it's revealing of the man's heart, I think. Underneath that hard, rocky countenance of LBJ there is a sensitive nature that he is not enough of an actor to always fully conceal. These friends of ours by the name of W.O. and Lucille Cooper of Dallas--incidentally Bill later became administrator of the Economic Aid Program of Sudan and is presently executive general of the International Veterans

Association and lives in Paris.

Bill and Lucille Cooper had a Chinese friend who was a restaurant owner in Dallas. This Chinese and his wife were going to adopt a relative of theirs, a little boy; I think he was 6 or 7. The boy had started from China when for some unexplained reason, the man and his wife died--it looked like maybe a murder and suicide. But in any event, they both lost their lives. Lucille and Bill couldn't stand the idea of that child arriving in San Francisco with no one to meet him. They flew to San Fransisco, met the child, and went to Washington. Bill was a good friend of LBJ's. Like myself, (and there are not too many of us around) Bill had, with out exception, eventhough he had differences at times with LBJ, always supported him and had also always supported Ralph Yarborough.

I might add that LBJ never had anything but the highest praise for Ralph around me, and I mentioned one time that it was a little bit difficult for some people to understand how I could support them both and his only comment was, "I don't see why, because it looks like we're both for the same things." That would be a typical LBJ remark, you see.

To get back to the story, they took this boy to Washington and went to LBJ and he got a special act through Congress, granting citizenship to this Chinese boy. The boy is now a young man; he is in Taiwan at the moment. This last spring he was elected president of the student council of his college, Alfred University. His name is Don Cooper. He has, I think, one more year to go, and he's spending the summer trying to re-capture his Chinese language which mostly he has forgotten.

I mention that because I think that for the Majority Leader to interest himself in a thing like that, certainly shows that he had a concern

for people. I've contended from the very night he talked to me in 1948 that he did have a great heart. He had a great concern for people, the people in the mass, the people who could not help themselves. I recall now one thing he said that night, that the baisc thing that people had to do was to get the vote; if they got the vote the other issues would be much easier. And the second most important thing to the vote was education. I recall him pointing that out. Any you know, that has become crystal clear.

M: What did he mean -- education?

H: You know what the rate of illiteracy is in Texas. And he felt that if the Negro--you see, it was very difficult here for the Negro to get to vote in Texas for many years, and that's true in many southern states, and it is true to a degree even now in many southern states. And his voting rights bill reveals his attitude on that. In '48 that was one of the things I recall, and I've mentioned to many liberals that his philosophy included getting the vote. And if the vote would come, then the education. I didn't explore it in any great detail with him because it seemed to me that what he was bound to have meant, if 40 percent of a largely illerative community votes, it's going to vote for people who will bring about better education. That's the only logical reasoning I could attach to his thinking about that.

M: Did he often consult with you about appointments? You mentioned this one incident.

H: No, I can't say that he did. I think the reason for that is because Lyndon wanted--I think history is going to show that he wanted to take to himself all the vast powers of appointment. I think that history is not going to be too kind to him in the footnotes about he he treated,

for instance, Senator Yarborough in the matter of appointments here in Texas. I talked to one of his closest advisers about this and pointed out that the President did not take the same position in other states; that the Democratic senators had much more power in appointments in other states than they did in Texas. I think it was a basic part of his nature that down here where so many of Yarborough's warmest friends had not been enthusiastically behind Lyndon in many cases, that there was that cleavage. And as you know it wound up in most cases--if there were two appointments to make one would be obviously a Johnson appointment and one would be obviously a Yarborough appointment. In each instance they would both agree not to appoint a man, so it seemed to me, who had been bitterly against the other. Of course that sometimes narrowed the field. But I feel that had he been more magnanimous towards Yarborough in the matter of appointments and, as some people said, had not been so hungry for the last ounce of power, it would have saved him much criticism in Texas and would have revealed him historically as a man who was perhaps using more of his energies on greater problems than who was going to be a federal judge or district attorney, or even down to United States Marshal. It just seemed to me that it got down to that level.

M: There has been some criticism of Lyndon Johnson that as President he did not do much to develop the Democratic party in Texas.

H: I think that is a fair criticism. As a matter of fact, I think you'll have to recognize that as President he did not do much to develop the Democratic party anywhere. And I think that's a minus on his side.

M: What could he have done?

H: I'm glad you asked that. There is something that was so clear to me and I complained so bitterly about it to two of his closest aides that I was

hopeful something would be done. This Presidents' Club that John Kennedy started and that Lyndon Johnson expanded, was made up of people who would give $1,000 a year to the Democratic party, or to the Presidents' Club to use for political purposes. That made a lot of sense in a practical political way. In the first place there were an awful lot of people around who obviously felt that LBJ had the potential for a great President. They also know it takes money to maintain a party organization. The response to invitations to join the Presidents' Club was very, very sizable. Nothing was promised. It's true that he would come into town and have a cocktail with maybe 75 or 100 people.

The tragedy of that thing was that the mechanics of the office management, the simple matter of keeping records, was allowed to degenerate to a point that sometimes--for instance, my own son sent in, and for him $1,000 a year was of some consequence--would not even get an acknowledgment that his $1,000 had been received.

Many people that I invited to join the club, and did, never had anything but maybe a form letter. Maybe the next year when the dues, shall we say, were due, they wouldn't even be billed. And they didn't expect, at least those that I invited to join, and many whom I knew had entered because somebody else invited them, were not there expecting any multimillion dollar contract--of course a good many were, I'm sure, expecting some sort of favoritism and perhaps some of them got it. But a silk stocking financially elite group that recognized that the head of the party, as well as the head of the nation, would require money to expand and build the party was happy to be a party to this Presidents' Club thing. It existed not only in Houston, buy it was successful in many, many parts of the nation. And it was allowed to go down the drain. It never did reach the point where its potential indicated it

would go, and it was a tragedy because our party is in debt now, our party was in debt at the time.

I was told by two of his right-hand men that LBJ recognized that shortcoming in the mechanics of the thing, and that they were taking steps to put somebody in charge who would give prompt acknowledgements, who would advise members when the President was going to be in the area, and would encourage members to participate in political activities of one type or another. But it never materialized, and in my view, my view being that of a small-town politician recognizing that it takes money to function, it was a tragedy. The party generally was let go down the drain, and that's one thing that's against LBJ's record. It's there.

M: Could he have done anything else to help state politics?

H: By "down the drain," I'm talking about national politics. As far as state politics were concerned, he passed the point of no return in my judgement when he made the decision at the Cow Barn incident in Fort Worth in '56. That showed clearly he was not going to involve himself in state politics. Now it's true that he arranged, it seemed to me -- and this is pure supposition--for what he says is his closest personal friend John Connally to be appointed Secretary of the Navy so he could get a running start to be Governor of Texas. That shows that friendship can surmount many ideological differences, because LBJ basically is a progressive, liberal-minded man, and when he got in positions of power where he could exercise that philosophy without undue risk of his own position, the record is clearly there.

On the other hand, the man that he in effect apparently urged to be governor, John Connally and helped him get the momentum underway, is not a liberal by any sense. He is a rank conservative. He had many characteristics in common with Allan Shivers. They each had a grand opportunity to lead Texas down a progressive trail. That's one thing they had in common. Secondly, they were both bright; they were both very personable over TV and otherwise. Then they had a background factor in common; in common, I might add, with LBJ and a lot of people. But they had been born to, shall we say, at best modest circumstances. And like so many men born to modest circumstances--I mean by that now Allan Shivers and John Connally--they were far too much impressed by wealth. And the classic comment that was made by the President on that very score when he was chiding John Connally on one occasion, "John, you don't act like you're comfortable around anybody unless he has on a $300 suit and $75 boots." Now LBJ was born to modest circumstances financially, but he was completely at ease with fellows, whether they were barefooted or whether they were in full dress. John Connally and Allan Shivers reached a point they were not comfortable with people who were in very modest circumstances financially. It reveals Lyndon Johnson's great personal affection for John Connally in spite of their vast differences in political philosophy, which simply in my judgment can be explained only in terms of the closest kind of personal affection for each other.

M: We're getting down to the end of this tape.

H: I've about shot my wad. Have you got any other questions?

M: No, but let me thank you for the interview.

H: Okay.

(more)

H: I would like to add as a part of the tape that The Texas Observer carried an article on February 16, 1968, "What's Right With LBJ," that was written by me for the purposes stated in the article. I would like to also suggest that there be taped or made a part of some record the article that I wrote in The Texas Observer approximately eight years earlier--I've forgotten exactly when, but the article appeared in the Observer, and I believe the title of it was "A Liberal Looks at Lyndon," and that gave my reasons for supporting LBJ for the presidency. And for any significance that my own evaluation of his talents at that time could have, it would be best revealed in that article.

M: Thank you.

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1. Title to the material transferred hereunder, and all literary property rights, will pass to the United States as of the date of the delivery of this material into the physical custody of the Archivist of the United States.

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3. A revision of this stipulation governing access to the material for research may be entered into between the donor and the Archivist of the United States, or his designee, if it appears desirable.

4. The material donated to the United States pursuant to the foregoing shall be kept intact permanently in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

Signed _____

Date 12/16/74

Accepted _____
Director, Lyndon Baines Johnson Library for Archivist of the United States

Date January 13, 1975