INTERVIEW I

DATE: February 26, 1969

INTERVIEWEE: D. B. HARDEMAN

INTERVIEWER: T. H. Baker

PLACE: Mr. Hardeman's residence, Washington, D.C.

Tape 1 of 1

B: Would you begin by just briefly summarizing your background and career to give a kind of checkpoint?

H: Well, I was born in Goliad, Texas, and I went to the University of Texas, B.A. degree in English in 1933; then two years of graduate work in history and government. Then I went to work as a newspaperman. I had been editor of the Daily Texan at the university and worked at the State Capitol from 1935 until 1941. Then I went back to law school on a part-time basis in 1939-40, 1940-41, took the bar exams in 1941 and passed them. Then went into the army for a little over four years. Came back out of the army.

I had been active in politics as a manager of two statewide campaigns before the war and then came back after the war and managed the campaign of Dr. Homer Rainey for governor in 1946. Then I established a public opinion survey and public relations service which led me unexpectedly to North Texas, to Denison and Sherman, where we established a fishing and travel magazine. I had a public relations and advertising agency for roughly ten years. And I went to the legislature for two terms from North Texas.

In the meantime I had been working on national politics. I was organization manager for the state of Texas in the Adlai Stevenson campaign in 1952. Then in 1953 and 1954, I worked part-time for the Democratic National Committee under Chairman Stephen A. Mitchell and Speaker Sam Rayburn in trying to rebuild our shattered Democratic Party in Texas, the organization work and fund raising. So then I went to Europe, doing some writing and traveling in 1955, and when I came back, the Stevenson people asked me if I wanted to join the Stevenson staff getting ready for the 1956 convention, which I did. I spent most of my time before the convention in the South. Then during the campaign itself, after the conventions, I was an advance man for Stevenson.

I came to Washington and started work on a biography of Speaker Sam Rayburn. Eventually in 1957 I went to work for him, worked for him from July 1, 1957 until his death. Shortly after his death, I became administrative assistant to the Democratic Whip, Hale Boggs of Louisiana, and stayed there until July 1 of 1965, when I quit to start doing some teaching and hopefully to finish this Rayburn biography. I've been teaching on a part-time basis ever since.

B: Yes, a biography of Sam Rayburn is badly needed, I think.

H: Well, I think there are several people working in the field and I always told Mr. Rayburn that the more that could be written about him, the better for his place in history. I never felt any competition from anybody because no one can tell the whole story anyhow. And the more that is put on paper, the better for his reputation and his place

in history and also for the scholar and the reader. So I hope there'll be several biographies in the next few years.

B: In anticipation of your biography, we'll try to concentrate in this on Johnson and we'll talk about [what part] Rayburn plays in his relationship there, but that's not to exclude anything about Mr. Sam, for goodness sake. In this process, particularly in this involvement with Texas politics, when did you first meet Lyndon Johnson?

H: I don't know. I knew Lady Bird in school. I think I met Lady Bird probably about 1933, because I was going with a girl who lived in the same boarding house with her, and I knew all the girls in the boarding house. I did not meet Lyndon Johnson until after he came back as director of the National Youth Administration. I suspect it was not long after he came back because Austin was a small town in those days and those in the political world all knew each other pretty well. I know that I did not know him at the time that he was appointed for the reason that I needed a job and I made application to the NYA and I was not hired. I did know Dr. Wiley, Mary Margaret Wiley's father, an economics professor, and asked him to try to help me. But I did not know Johnson himself. I'm sure I met him shortly, I'd say within a few months after he came back to Austin. I'm not sure what month--the spring of 1935, I think.

B: While he had that NYA job, was it pretty generally thought around Austin that this was one of Franklin Roosevelt's bright young men, or did he attract that much attention?

H: Well, he attracted attention, of course, because this was a very important program through the college community, to the students. And he had a reputation for being a very energetic, a very able young man. I did not have any thought at the time that he was--I'm not sure that I even thought that he knew Roosevelt and I'm not sure that he did know Roosevelt at the time. No, the first identification with Roosevelt himself was after his election to Congress.

D: Did you participate or observe his first election to Congress when he ran for the vacant seat?

H: I didn't participate; I observed it; I was living in Austin at the time. And, as you know, it was a free-for-all. The state was very divided over the Court-packing plan, and he of course was outstanding because he came out all the way in support of the Court-packing plan, where most of the candidates were riding the fence on it. A few were firmly against the plan; most of them were trying not to say anything about it. But Tom Connally had come back to Texas and delivered a stirring speech in the House chamber that I heard, attacking the Court-packing plan and breaking with Roosevelt. So the state was very deeply divided over this issue. And the Austin district then was more of a New Deal district than most districts in Texas. I didn't watch too much of it; I read about it of course. And I don't recall hearing him speak in the campaign. I don't know whether I heard any of the speeches in that campaign or not. Probably radio speeches, but I didn't take any particular interest in it at that time other than follow it.

B: In the years after that, did you become better acquainted with then-Congressman Johnson?

H: Oh, yes, it was one of those gradual things. You know, I'd see him around town. As I said, it was a small political world. Austin then was divided into three groups: the downtown business and social group, the college group, and the Capitol political group. And I was still being a Mario Savio on the campus, although I was out of school. I was going back raising hell about the censorship of the Daily Texan and things. So I was still in the college world, but I was at the Capitol as a newspaperman and in the political world, so it was a gradual thing.

Then I can't remember the year, [but] the greatest amount of time I ever spent with Lyndon Johnson was either 1938 or 1939, probably 1939, maybe possibly 1940. He asked me, for a fee, to research and write I think eight articles on accomplishments in his district as a young congressman. And then he sent these out. I ghost-wrote the articles and he sent them out to all his papers under his own name. I remember I did one on the world's biggest REA. I remember I did one, my recollection is it was on Negro and Mexican public housing in Austin. I think there were about eight of them. I spent a great deal of time with him at that period, just in conversation with him, talking about his ideas and his dreams and things of that nature. And that's when I first really got to feel that I knew the man.

Then when he ran for the Senate in 1941, as soon as Morris Sheppard died, as soon as we got word, my newspaper partner Alex

Louis, who now has a public opinion survey business in Dallas--he was for many, many years equal partner with Joe Belden and they finally split up; we were correspondents for the Harte-Hanks chain of papers at the Capitol--said, "Now, this is going to be a very split-up race in this special election. And if Houston Harte will throw his weight completely of all his papers behind one man, he can elect him." So my recollection is that afternoon he called Houston Harte and told him what he thought. And Harte said, "I agree with you. I think we ought to do this." He said, "There are four people I can support. There's Dan Moody, former governor; Jimmie Allred, who was a former governor and then on the federal bench; Gerald Mann, attorney general; and Lyndon Johnson. I can support any of the four. You and D. B. find out who's going to run and what they're going to do, and do it quick."

So Alex went down and talked to Dan Moody, and as usual, Dan Moody couldn't make up his mind. You know, this is digressing, but the story was when Dan Moody was governor, they started building a building out west of the Mansion, according to this story. A fellow stopped and watched the carpenter and said, "What is this going to be?" "Well," he said, "This is going to be a 'Chic' Sale outhouse," and [the fellow] said, "Well, what is it going to be--a two-holer or a one-holer?" "Oh, my Lord, it's going to be one-holer because if it was a two-holer, before that Governor could make up his mind, it would be too late!" Well, Dan Moody proved this again in this case. Moody had been a New Dealer up to this time and later became violently anti-New Deal, but Moody temporized and did not run.

So Alex and myself drove to Houston and spent the night with Jimmie Allred. I had been a young man rather close to Allred, and we spent the night with him until two o'clock in the morning. And Jimmie finally got so fired up that he was walking the floor, making anti-O'Daniel speeches. It was obvious that [W. Lee] O'Daniel was going to be the man to beat. So we went to bed that night and we said, "Well, he's going to run." The next morning he knocked on our door--it was, I think, in April--and he said, "Let's go for a walk before breakfast." So we went out and walked around these graveled walks out in that suburb. And he said, "Well, last night when I left you I was prepared to resign from the federal bench and run. But Joe Betsy put her foot down flat." She said, "You're just about to get out of debt for the first time in your life, you have some security for your family, and you cannot do it." So he said, "That's it."

So we came back. I had been doing some work for Gerald Mann on old records in the Attorney General's office and was very close to Gerald Mann. He thought he was going to run for governor. I was not in any way committed to him, but I was on a very close personal friendship basis with him. So I was rather agonized about what to do. By that time it was clear that Johnson was going to run and that Gerald Mann was going to run. I was with Gerald Mann's administrative assistant upstairs at the Stephen F. Austin Hotel one afternoon and we came out of the side entrance, the 7th Street entrance of the hotel, and there was Ed Clark and Lyndon Johnson and, I don't know, Claude Wild and two or three others standing there. Apparently Lyndon

Johnson did not know Bill Cason [?], the man I was with. Anyhow he whirled around and saw me and said, "You little son-of-a-bitch, I've been looking for you. You're going to travel with me and handle my publicity." And he threw his arms around me. I said, "Well, Lyndon, that's very flattering, but I can't do that. I'm going to support Gerald Mann." And I never will forget the look on his face, you know. He took his arm down right quick and he said, "Well, you little son-of-a-bitch!" So I supported Gerald Mann. My partner Alex Louis supported Lyndon and traveled with him part of the time handling press relations on part of that trip.

B: How did the Harte chain come down in the election?

H: They came out all the way for Johnson. The Harte chain, the individual editors always had a great deal of leeway and Harte, perhaps in this race--they all supported Johnson. I'm not sure of that, but frequently, say, Paris and Wichita Falls would perhaps diverge, or maybe Abilene would diverge on a certain race. Harte, maybe, would carry six of his papers and two or three would go off in another direction.

B: Do you know how Harte ended up making the decision?

H: No, I don't know how the decision was made. I suspect--well, I shouldn't say this, because I have no facts to back it up--that Lyndon Johnson did a selling job and Gerald Mann probably did call him. He was very fond of Lyndon Johnson, but he was also very fond of Gerald Mann. But it was not a surprise to me that he supported Johnson.

B: That series of articles you talked about in 1938 and 1939, was that pretty obviously designed to be a preliminary for the senatorial campaign?

H: Oh, no, it had no connection. It was designed for his re-election to Congress.

B: To Congress. You said that to back up--

H: He had no dream, as far as I ever had any indication; as far as I can recall, there was no mention of the Senate because Connally was in, it looked like he was good for years, and Sheppard looked like he was good for years. And they were both unbeatable. He was ambitious, of course, but he was thinking about getting 51 per cent in that district because he had been elected with, what, 28 per cent of the votes, something like that. So he was trying to nail down his district.

B: To back that up a little, you said that at the time you talked to Johnson some and you talked about his dreams and what he wanted. Was he thinking in those days about becoming a House man? Staying in the House and--?

H: I don't know that we ever talked [about that]. I wouldn't have known what a House man was in those days. I knew nothing about Congress. We never discussed it as far as I know. But he was ambitious politically. He intended to make politics his career, but I suppose I assumed that he did intend to be a congressman the rest of his life unless something better came along.

B: That 1941 senatorial election was the one that Johnson lost.

H: That's right. It was stolen from him, I always thought.

B: Stolen?

H: Yes. Joe Belden did some very interesting surveys--I think the Johnson people paid for them--of some of the counties in East Texas. And I have always believed, and the Belden re-survey after the election seemed to bear this out, what happened--now, this is my feeling about it--Jim Ferguson didn't give a damn about O'Daniel, he had a great contempt for him, but he wanted Coke Stevenson, who was then lieutenant governor, to become governor. So he wanted to kick O'Daniel upstairs and get him on to Washington so Coke could become governor.

There were still some Ferguson machine counties in East Texas over generally in the Lufkin area. And my belief has always been, and the Belden survey indicated this, that they held the count out in about ten of those counties. Martin Dies of course was very popular in that whole area, some of those counties were in his district, and when it became obvious that he was a hopeless fourth, they took some of the Dies votes and put them over in the O'Daniel column. I couldn't prove that in a court of law, but that's what I believe. Of course, if Johnson had protested at the time, I think he would never have been senator, but he took it like a man because there were many people who felt that it had been stolen. But he didn't cry out and make a fuss about it. He took it on the chin.

B: You mean if he made a fuss that that would get the Texas political powers against him?

H: Well, I think the fact that he took his defeat with good grace just as Richard Nixon did in 1960 when he probably had some grounds to make a loud cry--I suspect that Nixon wouldn't be president today if he had made a fuss about the Kennedy election in 1960. Politically, you've got to learn to be a good loser and Johnson understood that.

B: Rather than have the image of a whiner.

H: That's right. Even though you may have all the grounds in the world for complaining, you better go ahead and take your lumps and hope for another day. And that's what Johnson did. He was a graceful loser in a very close election.

B: The war years intervene here next right after that election. I don't suppose your path ever crossed Lieutenant Commander Johnson's in early 1941 or 1941?

H: No, I'm sure I was gone. Oh, the early part of the war, I may have seen him on the street in Austin or something of that nature, but I don't recall it. Certainly then I was out of the country for a little over two years and I did not see him until the war was over.

B: Did you get back any kind of personal relationship with him immediately after the war?

H: Yes, a casual relationship. He was in the hospital out at Seton Infirmary, and I remember going out there one night, I think with Paul Bolton. I remember coming away from there with a very firm feeling, although he didn't say so in so many words, that he either had voted or was going to vote for Rainey. As I said, he didn't sign any statement to that effect, but what he said that night. . . . Then I

saw him, oh, a number of times after that, you know, but I was busy on the Rainey campaign and then in December of that year after the campaign was over, I went to Denison and lived in Denison and Sherman for the next ten years. So I'd see him, oh, at a banquet or something of that nature.

B: The Rainey campaign was a pretty bitter one, wasn't it?

H: It was the bitterest I've ever watched. It really separated the people. There's still bitterness in Texas.

B: I've heard about it. Did Mr. Johnson take any kind of open stand in that campaign?

H: No, he did not. Mr. Rayburn, also, with his family, all voted for Rainey. Because it was more or less a New Deal-anti-New Deal campaign underneath all the other more controversial issues. It was a straight liberal-conservative split. No, Johnson--of course, congressmen, as you know, don't normally take any part in the governors' campaigns.

B: Then, did you play any part in the election of 1948? The election that put Johnson in the Senate.

H: None whatsoever. He came into Denison and landed on the school grounds in a helicopter and I thought the rotor was going to cut off the heads of some of the kids. And I saw him there. I went to his speech, went out to see him, and I voted for him. But I was busy and I was traveling a lot at the time, and, oh, maybe I was telling, urging my friends to vote for him, something like that, but I had no contact with his headquarters.

B: Including after the election, did you have any part in the state machinery that was wrestling with the certification?

H: No, I got disgusted with the conventions and I didn't go to that state convention that year. I was new in Grayson County, was not in politics at all, I was nursing my bruises from the Rainey campaign. So I didn't have any part at all, and being away from Austin, I didn't know all the detailed maneuvering that was going on.

B: In 1952 you said you managed Stevenson's campaign in Texas?

H: No, Mr. Rayburn was the manager. The state officials, except for John White, either supported Eisenhower as [Allan] Shivers and Price Daniel did, or they ran for cover, they'd go to a hospital, couldn't reach them, or something. John White was the only statewide state official that came out for the tickety. So Mr. Rayburn had to come home and take the campaign over, nobody else to do it. Well, he'd never managed a campaign in his life, not even his own, knew nothing about it except just his own political horse sense, and he didn't know who to get to be sort of the detail manager, so. . . . We had had a big fight against the gas company, the pipeline companies, in the legislature in 1951. Our group, the Gashouse Gang, was very close friends.

So Maury Maverick, Jr. started bombarding Mr. Rayburn, "You must get Jim Sewell to manage the campaign; you must get Jim Sewell to manage the campaign." Jim is a blind man from Corsicana, had been the author of the Sewell notes, tax on pipelines. Mr. Rayburn, I suppose out of desperation--he'd never met Sewell--sent word to Sewell to come see him, and he just fell in love with Jim and asked him to be the--I

don't know what the title word was. Mr. Rayburn was the campaign director, I think Jim was the campaign manager. I had managed three campaigns previously, so Jim phoned me and asked me to come down and work on organization. So I was organization director; Jim was the campaign manager, and I think Rayburn was called campaign director. We lived in the Adolphus Hoel and did what little we could, which wasn't very much.

B: Was that the first time you'd been thrown into a close relationship with Mr. Rayburn?

H: Yes. I had met him and had voted for him up in the district, but I had never had any conversation with him. I had shaken hands with him two or three times in big receptions or something like that, but I did not know the man. But during the campaign, we became very, very close friends. I found him very easy to work with and always did find him easy to work with. And so it was out of that that my later relationship grew.

B: That campaign left some bitterness in Texas, too, particularly with Allan Shivers.

H: Yes. Because the Stevenson people felt that it was more than politics. It was a matter of honor involved in it. And the bitterness, of course, had been growing. I suppose the major factor of Rainey getting fired was Rainey's own part in the convention to select delegates in 1944, when you had a rump convention and Rainey walked out with the rump delegation. The national committee stupidly seated both delegates, you know, which didn't prove anything. And that was really

the first open split in the state along the liberal-conservative lines. And it got worse every year. It was a shorter campaign, for one thing, but the bitterness was nothing compared to the Rainey campaign, because the Rainey campaign had the very heavy undertone of not only anti-labor but anti-Negro. Because the Negroes for the first time were able to participate in the Democratic primary.

B: I was going to ask if--the Shivers' stand, at least publicly, was predicated on the tidelands issue, but were there other factors, too, race or anything else involved in it?

H: Oh, I don't think Allan cared a thing in the world about race--he could teach it flat or teach it round. I don't think he's racist at all. I think that Allan might conceivably have gone along in 1952, but his meeting with Stevenson was badly handled, as was the whole Stevenson campaign. It was an Alice-in-Wonderland performance except for Stevenson's own individual performance. Your intellectuals who knew nothing about politics all rushed to Springfield, and so you had the Arthur Schlesingers and the Dave Bells and the John Kenneth Galbraiths and fifty others moved out there and built a cordon around Stevenson and wouldn't let people through to him who knew something about politics. And Stevenson didn't know anything about politics. He later became pretty good at it, but in 1952--his election as governor had been kind of a fluke, although he worked very hard at it. It was an accident really. He was not expected to win.

So the divided campaign with the national committee here and his campaign headquarters out there--well, he didn't have many people who

were behind that fence who knew anything about politics. And they didn't know how to handle Allan, and Allan went up with kind of a chip on his shoulder anyhow. But I've always thought that with a little more diplomacy, it's possible that Shivers--I don't think he would have supported Stevenson, but he probably wouldn't have supported Eisenhower. He might have just kept quiet.

B: Did Rayburn try to make a person-to-person appeal to Shivers to either stay in the Democratic Party or at least stay quiet?

H: No, no. I don't think so, because the thing was too far gone by the time Rayburn got into it. It was all over as far as the Shivers part was concerned. You see, the Shivers convention had endorsed Eisenhower and the Shivers committee endorsed Eisenhower. When we started our campaign down there, they wouldn't even give us a mimeographed list of the county chairmen. If we wanted to know who the Democratic county chairmen were in the county, we'd have to phone the newspaper or somebody in that county and say, "Who's your county chairman?" That's how much bitterness there was. By the time Rayburn got there--which was late, I don't know, it was up in September as I recall--it was too late for that sort of thing.

B: Did Mr. Johnson play any part in the campaign in Texas that year?

H: Yes, my recollection is he introduced him in Fort Worth; I heard him introduce him in Dallas. I don't remember whether he rode on the train that Stevenson took from Dallas to Uvalde to see old man Garner and then came back to San Antonio. It seems to me that Johnson may not have been at either San Antonio or Houston, but that you'd have to

check. I don't remember. I was at San Antonio. He didn't introduce him in San Antonio is my recollection, but he did introduce him at the Fair Grounds in Dallas, and I think he introduced him in Fort Worth.

B: That campaign in Texas was an uphill battle all the way.

H: It was a hopeless battle. It was a hopeless battle. The people wanted Eisenhower to start with, they wanted a change, and then the tidelands thing gave a lot of people an inflammatory excuse. It could never have been won.

B: And as you say, the lack of organization. The Shivers people taking over the machine.

H: We didn't have any money until about the last two weeks of October when the Gallup Poll showed Stevenson moving up, then the money came floating in too late to do anything with it, and we ended up with a surplus. We had money we couldn't spend.

B: Was that people hedging their bets at the last minute?

H: Yes. And about fifteen hundred dollars worth of checks were stopped after Stevenson lost. But the money came in, as it frequently does, when a man--you know, people hedging. Some of it was people putting up additional money, [people] that were already for Stevenson. But most of it, I think, was a little insurance money. But it was too late to do anything with it. If we'd had a million dollars, we couldn't have carried Texas that year and I think we all knew it.

B: In the four years after that, between 1952 and 1956, the Democratic organization in Texas didn't improve any.

H: We started building. We had to start from scratch, because the state committee had endorsed Eisenhower. Shivers was still very strong, and so we concentrated on two things: local organization and fund raising. Texas had a quota of seventy thousand dollars for the national committee and we met that quota in 1953 and we met that quota in 1954. Since the machinery was all in the hands of the Eisenhowercrats, Shivercrats, we set up an ad hoc committee called the Democratic Advisory Committee, patterned after the state committee. The national committee, Steve Mitchell, ignored the state committee, and Wright Morrow, who was then national committeeman and had supported Eisenhower, worked with the Democratic Advisory Committee. And we raised that money, most of it by having dinners for ten dollars, five dollars a ticket. And we brought in a great number of new people who had never been in politics before, but you had to go into the community and just start from scratch. That didn't help Stevenson in 1956. The chief beneficiary of that effort at that time was Ralph Yarborough, because many of those people then moved into the Yarborough--I guess all of them moved.

B: I was going to say, because in those years what you had at least beginning was what later became the extreme liberal faction becoming active.

H: We started in 1953 and 1954, you see, to work out a peace, a modus vivendi, between the loyal moderate Democrats and the liberal Democrats, to get them to live together. There were a lot of people who were not for organized labor, we'll say, who still were loyal

brass collar Democrats. And so in this Democratic Advisory Council, in the selections for this council and so forth, what we tried to do was to rebuild a coalition that would have 51 per cent of the votes. It's very difficult. Always when you're defeated, everybody is blaming everybody else. And then there was the illusion that a lot of people had that you could build a coalition of the Negro, the Latin American, the labor man, the loyal Democrats, and the liberal intellectuals, and you'd have 51 per cent. Well, of course, it was an illusion; it is an illusion, and yet people fight for their illusions. The two achievements were that we raise this money, which the national committee needed very desperately, and we did bring a lot of new people into the picture who later on became very useful to Ralph Yarborough.

B: Were Mr. Rayburn and Mr. Johnson active in this, too?

H: Of course Rayburn was. Rayburn was in the middle of everything, every tiny little move was coordinated with Rayburn. Johnson had no part in it that I can recall. He wanted as little to do with it as possible. He had his own problems; he was coming up for re-election in 1954, you see, and he was worrying about that. He just tended to his own knitting.

B: Was the idea that he could only hurt himself by getting involved in the thing?

H: Well, of course, it was obvious to him that this was still a minority in the state. He couldn't rely on this group and if he had a strong opponent be re-elected. And he'd had the scare of his life, of

course, in 1948. And he had supported Stevenson. He was criticized by a number of the liberals as not doing enough for Stevenson in Texas. He made speeches for him all over the country. They said, well, he should have done it in Texas. Perhaps it was his own political fortune that had a part in it, but maybe it was his judgment that Texas was lost and he might carry Wyoming or Montana or some other place, you know. But he'd had the fright of his life and he hadn't had a test since then. And the state was definitely pro-Eisenhower, and the state was more conservative than ever. So he had a very legitimate worry, I think, about 1954 if he had a major opponent.

B: Did that create any resentment among the loyal Democrats in Texas that he was staying out of it?

H: Oh, among a lot of liberals, yes. They'd never gotten along with him; they'd gone with him, say, against Coke Stevenson because Coke was less palatable. But, you know, it's just like the Goldwater people on one side or the liberals on the other--they want you to be simon-pure and belong to them and them alone, you know.

B: I was going to say, some of the extreme liberals in Texas like Mrs. Randolph appear to have intensely disliked Johnson for personal and philosophical reasons.

H: Well, I've always thought that the Frankie Randolph thing, while she never would have trusted Johnson because of ideology and so forth, her real deep bitterness, I suspect, came out of that convention in 1954.

B: 1956.

H: When, 1956?

B: With the national committeewoman?

H: Yes, where she was national committeewoman, but her delegation from Houston had not been seated and they were challenging it before the credentials committee and she stayed with them. Then she felt that although she was national committeewoman, they wouldn't admit her to the convention. There again, I suspect it was a bunch of hot-headed people on both sides that created a needless situation. She never was a Johnson Holy Roller; it wasn't in the cards for her to be. But I suspect that she would not have been so bitter, but, like so many women in politics, she was a great organizer, and so many women in politics are great pros for eight and a half innings and then the last half of the ninth inning, they turn into an emotional female. And that's what Frankie did. She took it not as a political blow, but as an insult to her as a lady. And Johnson is hot-headed, you know, and impetuous, too, and I suspect, as Texas tempers get at all conventions, this was something that cooler heads might have avoided to where they could at least stay in the same party, but they didn't.

B: As it turned out, of course, Johnson had practically no trouble at all in 1954.

H: I don't even remember who ran against him.

B: Dudley Dougherty in the primary, which apparently was sort of a whim.

H: Oh, yes, well, somebody made some money out of Dudley, and Dudley had no more chance than. . . . But he had the money to indulge himself if he wanted to do it, you know. Yes, I don't remember.

Of course, the worry was that Shivers might run, you see. And Shivers, if he didn't beat Johnson, he would come very, very close to it, and he might very well have beaten Johnson. But I always believed that Shivers never did want to be in this thing. He had a free ride for the Senate in 1952 and turned it down, so I don't think Shivers--he doesn't want to be one of a hundred people; he wants to be kind of the walk or nothing. But obviously Johnson couldn't be sure of that. And Shivers probably would have been unbeatable. Johnson might not have been able to beat him in 1954. I don't know how it would have turned out. It would have been a very mean, hard campaign.

B: And Eisenhower was still very popular.

H: Eisenhower was still very popular and Shivers was still very popular. Shivers had not lost any popularity at that stage of the game, obviously. He was re-elected governor. And so I think Johnson had quite a legitimate worry about Shivers running against him, or if Shivers backed a candidate running against him.

B: Next comes along the 1956 state convention and national nominating convention. Was there a time there in 1956 where it looked like Shivers might set himself up again as a loyal Democrat and take the lead of the state group, the state delegation to the national convention?

H: Well, of course, he wanted to control the delegation, obviously. He did everything he could to get control of the delegation. But as a loyal Democrat, that's something else again. No, I don't think Shivers would ever have supported Stevenson. I don't think there was

any thought of supporting Stevenson. And it was quite likely that he certainly wouldn't support Kefauver. No, Shivers, by that time, had crossed the Rubicon and if he had taken his delegation to the convention, it would have been in the role of spoiler. He wouldn't have been there to promote the chances of the Democrats in November.

B: The delegation that went from Texas was a loyalist delegation with Lyndon Johnson as a favorite son candidate.

H: Yes. Mr. Rayburn, I have always believed, shoved Johnson into the water and they had that knockdown-dragout fight with Shivers over the control of the May convention and selection of the delegation. Johnson said at one stage there, one speech, that "I either had to fight or run," and he chose to fight. And, as you know, they had this terrible statewide battle and they defeated Shivers by a pretty good margin. Rayburn thought up this idea of Johnson to have both roles, as chairman of the delegation and as favorite son. He knew that our Stevenson crowd couldn't win the battle, but you put with that Johnson's other friends and you might win, which is what happened. But they had this terrible fight with Shivers right down to the wire, and it took everything everybody had to win it. Shivers was formidable.

B: Was there any indication there at that 1956 national convention that maybe either Mr. Rayburn on behalf of Mr. Johnson or Mr. Johnson himself had any ambitions to be more than just a favorite son candidate?

H: Oh, Johnson definitely wanted the nomination. Absolutely.

B: For the presidency.

H: For the presidency, yes. I don't know the exact point at which Johnson decided to become a serious candidate. I had the feeling then that this decision was probably made on Sunday when Harry Truman arrived in town and came out for Averell Harriman as his candidate to head off Stevenson, and that Johnson may have decided then that this is going to be a wide-open free-for-all. And "If it's going to be a wide-open thing, I'd have as good a chance as anybody, so let's get busy." So they worked all night, I'm told--I was still on the Stevenson staff--raising money to finance a drive and the printers worked all night and printed these tags "Love that Lyndon." And he made a serious effort. Well, the Truman thing didn't amount to anything. Stevenson had it blocked up.

B: I was going to say, did the Truman announcement scare the Stevenson camp badly?

H: Oh, yes, sure. It would scare anybody, because you just don't know what effect it will have. But the lines held.

B: I was going to say, you already had a good many votes going up to that stage.

H: Had a lot of votes, but it's always a question, you know, will they stay with you? Will they stay with you past the first ballot? Roosevelt had a lot of votes, too, but yet it came within a few minutes of getting away from him. That's the terror of these conventions, that your delegation will leave you without any notice. Sure, it scared the Stevenson people, it didn't panic them, but they worked

very hard to be sure they had the things nailed down, which they did have.

B: Anyone from the Johnson camp come to see you personally to suggest that if Johnson was an active candidate, that's where you ought to be?

H: No. Mr. Rayburn's suite and Adlai Stevenson's suite were on the same floor of the Conrad Hilton Hotel. I know I went in and got Stevenson and took him to the Rayburn suite for them to have a talk. And I saw Lyndon Johnson a number of times there and we'd be standing around talking. He knew, of course, that I was working. I was a paid employee of Stevenson and had been for nearly a year. I would feel a little embarrassed at times, you know--be standing in a circle there and everybody would have on a "Love that Lyndon" tag except myself, but he never showed any feeling. I'm sure he didn't like it; he always wanted all the votes like every politician does, but he never said anything. He never said, "Why in the hell aren't you for me?" He knew that long before he ever got into it at all, I had already become a part of the Stevenson staff.

B: Arthur Krock's memoirs that have been published just recently say that after Stevenson was nominated, you and John Connally were emissaries from Rayburn to Stevenson to suggest Lyndon Johnson as vice president. Is that correct?

H: I never heard that. I haven't read the Krock memoirs, I read the Saturday Evening Post abridgement, but I have not read the book. No.

B: Was there any thought--

H: No.

B: --from the Stevenson camp of Johnson as vice president?

H: I don't think so. I never heard it if there was. Let's see, he had--

B: Kefauver was running hard for it, and so was Kennedy.

H: And Albert Gore and Frank Clements and God knows who else! I think it was that--I never heard that before.

B: I'm pretty sure that's reasonably [accurate]. That's not an exact quote, but it's the burden of the essays.

H: I think Arthur Krock is mixed up on that. We had a meeting in Hale Boggs' office in, I don't know, 1962, 1963--Arthur Krock and Tommy Corcoran and Ed Foley and Hale Boggs and myself, I guess. John Holton, Mr. Rayburn's administrative assistant, was invited, but he had to be out of town, in which we talked about this. Hale told Arthur Krock at the time something that I never heard before or since. That Rayburn indicated to him that he ought to go to see Stevenson and feel Stevenson out about Rayburn being on the ticket. I don't want to cross Hale up, but there are always a lot of things in politics you don't know even if you're in the same room, but that just doesn't add up to me. I think he misunderstood what Rayburn was trying to tell him. So he said he went to see Stevenson, and Stevenson said, "Well, there's nobody I have more warmth for or admiration for than Sam Rayburn, but we've got this age problem now. One of our assets against Eisenhower is the fact that he has had a heart attack and he's an old man; and here's Rayburn up here in his middle seventies. They turned [Alben] Barkley down four years previously because he was too old. It just won't do."

B: Would Mr. Rayburn have even considered the possibility?

H: Well, Hale thought he was telling him to go see Stevenson and see if Stevenson would "take me on the ticket." But it didn't ring true to me. I think he misunderstood what Rayburn was trying to tell him, I think he misread the signals. Because I had talked to Rayburn before I went to work for Stevenson. I said, "Now, Mike Monroney and a number of them are talking about pushing you as a favorite son. While I'm very strong for Stevenson, if you're going to be a favorite son, I don't want this to get in this crossfire. I'm going to support you naturally." Mr. Rayburn said, "No, indeed! I'm going to shut Mike and the boys up. I appreciate what they're doing, but it's completely unrealistic. I've had a medical exam, and the doctor tells me my heart's good to ninety-five or a hundred, and I told him I'd take a hundred. I feel in wonderful shape and all, but, my God, over half of the people in the United States, half the voters in the United States, are under forty years of age. And they think anybody forty-five is an old man. I'll be seventy-four years old, and it just doesn't make any sense at all. No, Stevenson ought to be the nominee. He's the best we've got, and he ought to be nominee and you go to work for him." Now, of course, politicians change their minds, you know. He might have decided. . . . But I just don't think Rayburn would have traded the speakership for the vice presidency at any time in his career.

B: Could Rayburn have been hinting at the possibility of Johnson on the ticket?

H: Well, I don't know. Yes, I think he would have liked to have seen Johnson on the ticket. Sure. He was trying to promote Lyndon Johnson every way that he could and it certainly would add strength to the ticket in Texas. Whether Johnson wanted it, who knows? He insisted he didn't want the nomination in 1960, but he finally ran very hard for it. Then, of course, there was no chance of his taking the vice presidency, but he took the vice presidency. So you know what a man says and what secretly he feels are often two different things.

B: Of course, that 1956 convention ended up with Stevenson, rather than choosing, designating a vice presidential nominee, throwing it open on the convention floor, with the subsequent Kefauver-Kennedy--

H: That's right. John Sharon sold him on that idea.

B: I was going to ask you how that idea came about. It sounds a little quixotic.

H: I have always understood that John Sharon, who was a young lawyer and a very fine man, later Clark Clifford's law partner, was the one who had the idea and sold Stevenson on it. It was the sort of thing that Stevenson might very well be attracted to; it saved him from choosing. He sort of needed Kefauver and yet Kennedy had nominated him. Kennedy had a lot of loyal followers. And if there was any Johnson problem, it got him off the Johnson problem, you know. And it was something new in politics. Rayburn, I know--I was told, I was not at the meeting at the Stockyards Inn where they had this fight just before Stevenson made this announcement. But as we were walking over--I was outside the building--here were all the dignitaries going to the

stage. Hy Raskin, who was deputy chairman of the national committee, had been up to the meeting and he said to me, "My God, is the old man mad?" He denounced this idea as a bunch of the biggest dam-foolery he'd ever heard in his life. Stevenson was adamant about it, and he finally grabbed Stevenson by the arm and said, "All right, Adlai, if that's what you want, let's go on and get it over with. I'll take you over."

B: The "old man" in that is in reference to Rayburn?

H: Rayburn, yes. And Johnson told Kennedy when Kennedy talked to him about the vice presidency, "One thing--whoever you want, you be prepared to fight for him and put it through. Don't do what Adlai did to you and to Estes, and let you all inflict a bunch of needless scars on each other. You mustn't do that!" So I assumed from that--now, whether Johnson was in this meeting at the Stockyards Inn, I don't know. I don't know who was in it. But I never heard any challenge to the assertion that John Sharon was the one who sold this to Stevenson.

B: Did Rayburn have any choice between Kefauver and Kennedy, or did he just not like the idea of opening up a floor fight?

H: Well, it would have been opposition to having another blood bath inside the convention, of having a blood bath inside the convention. At that time, he was still unhappy with Kefauver for the way Kefauver had promoted himself in 1952 at the expense of the Democratic Party. But on the other hand, he had no admiration for Jack Kennedy. He liked Kennedy, but Kennedy made no impression in the House of Representatives and didn't matter too much. You know, he was

attractive, all this and that and the other. But I don't know. I don't know who Rayburn would have been for. I doubt that he had a choice. You know, he had a great quality that he didn't make decisions that didn't have to be made. You say, well, he's stalling. Well, he wasn't stalling. That was something he had to decide. That saved him a lot of wear and tear, deciding things that never come to pass. And I doubt that he had a candidate.

B: I've heard it said that neither Kefauver nor Kennedy at that time was particularly popular among the professional politicians.

H: No, no, they were not. Kefauver, because many of the pros felt that Kefauver had dirt-daubed the Democratic Party and had beaten a number of Democrats with his crime investigation to glorify himself; that he was a selfish politician, putting himself above the party's welfare. They hadn't gotten over that in spite of the fact they all recognized that Estes Kefauver was a man of tremendous ability and tremendous courage. Kennedy, on the other hand, had just gotten through with his actions up in Massachusetts in helping to defeat the Democratic governor, Foster Furculo, to take care of Jack Kennedy.

And that night after Kefauver was nominated, I was with Steve Mitchell and his wife and son Tony. We walked off the convention floor. Just as we were going through the door to the outside, here came Jack Kennedy. I guess that's the first time I ever met Jack Kennedy. Steve introduced us and he said, "Quite a day today," or "That was a close one today," or something, you know. Said, "Jack, do you want some good fatherly advice?" And he said, "I sure do!" He

said, "Then, suppose you go back to Massachusetts and try to elect some Democrats there besides yourself." Kennedy said, "That's darn good advice!" It wasn't a very politick thing for Steve to say to a future president, but he did say it.

And that was fresh in the minds of many. Kennedy would have been nominated, in my opinion, had he not knifed Furculo in Massachusetts. But if he'd do it to Furculo in his own state, he'd do it to somebody else--that's the way a lot of the pros felt. And I think there was just enough in that very close situation to make the difference. Now, there are all sorts of things about Rayburn wouldn't recognize this one, Rayburn wouldn't recognize that one, but I don't think there was any conspiracy.

B: I was going to ask about that. It has been said that Rayburn slammed a pretty fast gavel there to--

H: Oh, you can always interpret. Maybe he did. Rayburn, even in 1960, felt very strongly that a Catholic could not be elected. He had campaigned very hard for Al Smith in 1928. And as he often said, "When people don't want to be reasoned with, you can't reason with them." And this was the issue. This religious issue in 1928 was one that you couldn't reason with people on. I think he felt that the Catholic issue was still strong enough even in 1960, you were probably going to be defeated if you nominated a Catholic. Now, whether he felt that in 1965, I don't know.

He recognized Governor Raymond Gary of Oklahoma at a critical moment there, but Raymond Gary was a good friend of his. Mr. Rayburn

was known as the eighth congressman from Oklahoma; he worked on Oklahoma problems a great deal; he knew all the Oklahoma politicians. It may not even have been that. He may just--you know you've got a sea of screaming people out here and one, for a reason that you don't know, catches your eye and you recognize him. And Gary then switched the votes, his votes, to Kefauver as I recall. But I've read various accounts about John McCormack was on the floor signalling Rayburn, "Don't recognize him, but recognize him." I said to Tom Hennings of Missouri--I happened to wander over to the Missouri delegation while all this madness was going on, and Tom Hennings, who was a friend of mine, was up on a chair screaming at his delegation, saying, "We can't go for him. We'll lose the whole state." He said, "Jack has voted against every farm bill since he has been in the Senate. We'll lose everything in Missouri if we back Jack."

B: You mean Jack Kennedy?

H: Kennedy, yes. So there was as usual a jillion different angles, depending on the state you were from, the district you were from, and how it would affect you in your own district. And this Furculo thing. On the one hand, Kefauver and his operations in 1962, and his challenge to Truman, you know. It was truly a wide-open convention, there's no question about that.

B: Incidentally, I think we perhaps ought to make this clear now--Mr. Rayburn's views on the possibility of a Catholic being elected. They represent, I assume, political judgment rather than his own religious prejudice.

H: As far as I could ever detect, he had absolutely no anti-Catholic prejudice at all. He had been an admirer of Al Smith's, campaigned very hard for Al Smith. It was simply a matter of political reality, I think. He just thought that was too big a hurdle to jump. If he ever had any trace of religious intolerance, I could never find it.

B: What part did he play in the subsequent campaign?

H: I was an advance man for Stevenson. I set up the meetings in Miami, in San Diego, Detroit, I guess that was all.

B: [Did] Mr. Rayburn and Mr. Johnson play an unusual part in the campaign?

H: No, they were not at any one of the three. I think they both--Rayburn made a lot of trips, and I think Johnson did, too. That's a matter of record. I was not in any position to watch and see what they were doing, because I wasn't seeing any Texas papers or anything like that.

B: You didn't do any advance work in Texas in that campaign?

H: As a rule, you don't send a man into his own state. Because whoever you send has a lot of scars, and he has partialities between politicians in his home state. If he doesn't have political experience, you don't want him. But if he does have political experience, he has already formed attachments and alliances that will show up in the advance work that he does. Now, there was one exception to that, but it was a very marginal thing. In 1960 I had a major part in setting up the rendevouz of Johnson and Kennedy in El Paso. But El Paso's hardly Texas. I had never worked in El Paso; I didn't know the politicians--I knew a couple of them; I'd never been in any kind of a

battle in El Paso. Actually what we were working on, what I went out to work on, was Arizona and New Mexico, and the El Paso thing was a very marginal thing. So that was a little exception to the rule, but they would never have sent me to Austin, I wouldn't have gone to Austin. I would have said, "No, it doesn't make sense to send me to San Antonio or to send me to Houston--I'll have no part of it."

B: You mentioned a while back that by this time Stevenson was a better politician.

H: He learned very rapidly. And Bill Blair learned very rapidly. There's a story that we might insert here because I think it illustrates what we're talking about--the people around Stevenson. Steve Mitchell got a call--he was the national chairman here in Washington, he had been hand-picked by Stevenson--and he said he got a call from Bill Fulbright. And he said, "Steve, on my way to Springfield I want to come by Washington and have you fill me in as much as you can on what my duties are going to be." He said, "What's that?" "Well," he said, "I got a call from Springfield telling me to come immediately, that I was going to travel on the plane with Adlai. But they were a little hazy about exactly what I'm going to be doing and what's expected of me, and I'd like to come by and have a good talk with you." He said, "All right, come on by and I'll see what I can find out about it. I've never heard of it."

So he phoned Springfield; I don't know who he talked to. And they said, "Yes, that's right. When we got to making out the roster of the people to travel with the candidates, we had the labor liaison

man all selected, and had the farm liaison selected, and the NAACP liaison man, and the veterans liaison man, and so forth. Suddenly, looking at our chart, we realized that we didn't have anybody as liaison for the practical politicians, so we asked Bill Fulbright to come up." That was rather typical of the 1952 campaign, all well-meaning people but Stevenson's judgment was better than that. But he was hemmed in to a very large extent by these people who just moved in, as they do, as everybody tries to do in campaigns. You try to throw up a fence to keep all the people with views other than yours away from the candidate, you see.

B: And by 1956, that grew. Although so far as I know, most of them were still with Stevenson, but by that time the professional pols--

H: Well, Stevenson in 1952 decided on Steve Mitchell. Steve Mitchell had no political experience; he had been one of the three men that more or less drafted Stevenson into public life and had raised money, worked very hard to get him elected governor, but he had not come up through the ranks of politics. So Stevenson said, "Steve Mitchell will be national chairman," which was a shock to all the pros; they never heard of Mitchell. And he said, "Wilson Wyatt will be my campaign manager." Wyatt had been a very good local official, a very able, a fine man, but again a man not of great savvy on political tactics and strategy I think at that time. He [Mitchell] liked Wyatt, always liked Wyatt. Stevenson said, "Now, I'm going to have my headquarters in Springfield because I've got to go on being governor, but the national committee operation will be in Washington." So Steve said to

him, maybe with Wilson Wyatt there, "Now, Adlai, how is this going to work between Wilson and myself?" Stevenson said, "Oh, you're just going to work together, you know." [Mitchell] said, "I know, but who is to be responsible for what, and who is to be responsible for something else? How's it to work?" "Oh," he said, "you know, we just run the campaign." Very airily. Well, Springfield never knew what Washington was doing and Washington never knew what Springfield was doing.

So, it was Stevenson's own speeches, of course, those marvelous speeches were the redeeming feature of the campaign. But the party was all to pieces anyhow and Truman was in very low esteem at the time. Somebody on Stevenson's staff either signed his name, or he signed it without realizing what he was doing--the Republicans had been yelling about the mess in Washington--and then Stevenson signed a letter out in Oregon, which was made public, in which he referred to the mess in Washington, which of course just infuriated the Truman people. There was bad blood already. But it was an amateurish campaign.

By 1956 techniques were much better, except you had a tired man who was desperately hoping to be elected. In 1952 I've always felt that he didn't think until October that he had any chance to be elected; he did not want to be nominated; he was genuinely drafted. And I've always thought he said to himself, "Well, I'm going to run this campaign on a high level, and we can't win, but we can make a fine record." And then the last part of the campaign, the Gallup Poll

picked up, I think he got buck fever maybe for a few days. But in 1956 he desperately wanted the nomination and he desperately wanted to be elected. And he tried. He lost some of this glamour that he had had as being the man above the race that was so appealing in 1952. But technically the campaign, from a strictly political point of view, although it didn't get as many votes. . . . He had Jim Finnegan running the campaign and Jim Finnegan was the best man on the city campaigning in the country; he was a real pro. And he had a lot of other good people. He had learned; Bill Blair had learned, and he had a more professional group around him. But he didn't do as well.

B: Does that mean that the professional group had managed pretty well to isolate the Schlesingers, Galbraiths--?

H: No, but Stevenson had learned by that time how to keep all sorts of people on tap but not on top, to use an old Rayburn expression. He had learned how to make use of the talents of a Walter Reuther without Reuther dominating him, or the use of an Arthur Schlesinger without Schlesinger dominating him. And he was much more at home with the professional politicians. He had gotten to be very good at meeting with professional politicians by that time. He had learned to talk their language and for them to be at ease with him, you know. He had four years of tireless speechmaking and campaigning over this country. He learned very quickly; he was a brilliant man, and he learned very quickly, and so did Bill Blair. Bill Blair was good in 1956. In 1952 he was just a young, innocent, rich boy, very excited about this boss that he adored, but he really just didn't know anything. He'd never

been in a campaign before. I don't think he'd been in Stevenson's governor's campaign. Maybe he had, but he certainly didn't have any major role in it.

B: Did Mr. Rayburn ever play any kind of elder statesman advisory role in the campaigns, just chatting with the candidate, like with Stevenson in 1956?

H: Oh, sure. Before the campaign, people, of course, were always coming to see him, phoning long distance, you know, and sometimes something would come up and he might phone them and volunteer his advice. Oh, yes, because I think most of the pros had a very high regard for not only his judgment but his candor. And he was not a competitor of anybody's and he put party first, he wanted the party to win, so, yes, I would say he was constantly being--

B: Would his advice be general, or did he have a detailed political knowledge of the separate state situations?

H: He knew the states very well. When I got ready to go to Florida to try to--they sent me down to Florida in late October in 1955 to survey the situation. And at that time, I think I'm right, they were not sure that they would go into any primaries. Then they decided that they would go into only about five about the time I went to Florida. Mr. Rayburn said to me, "When you get to Florida"--I didn't know anything about Florida, I knew three or four people there--"the first man you look up is Congressman Bob Sykes down there." Well, I did exactly that. The result was that Bob Sykes became our campaign manager and without Bob Sykes, Kefauver would have beaten Stevenson in

Florida. He barely won it anyhow by about, I think, twelve or thirteen thousand votes. And that whole margin came out of Syke's congressional district. "Daddy Bob," as they called him. "Daddy Bob" was the right man to tie to, not some character in Miami, but Sykes was the solidest man in the delegation. Rayburn knew that, and his advice--of course, I followed it. So I got down there, and I found out that in my judgment Stevenson had to go into the Florida campaign because the law at that time was that a slate of delegates is pledged to a certain candidate to be put on the ticket, and that was it. So I decided that if Stevenson did not pick out his own slate and run it, that the Kefauver people would put the slate pledged to Stevenson which would be a dummy slate. And Kefauver then would knock this dummy slate down and say, "We beat Stevenson in Florida."

So I went back in Chicago and I had a big meeting one night. And I outlined this--that I thought there was no choice but to go into Florida. They didn't want to because they were short of money and this was going to be very expensive and it was a state that Stevenson didn't really fit into. But they agreed that he had to go. It was miserable, but I think he had to do it. I think Kefauver would have put up a dummy slate and would have defeated him in a fake contest. The people didn't want Kefauver and they didn't want Stevenson; they wanted Dick Russell and he wasn't running. It was a miserable campaign from every point of view.

But Rayburn was like that on almost every state. He knew the politicians; he knew who was reliable, whose judgment was good. He

wouldn't interfere in every state, of course. But they'd ask his advice about people and he'd give them a very frank opinion about "this fellow here talks big, but he can't deliver; this fellow over here doesn't say anything, but he knows how to get the job done." And he not only knew the states, but he knew most of the congressional districts. He knew more about them than many people holding the job. Because he had watched them for fifty years. This was his business, and he was good at his business. So he would know what a man from a certain district could vote for and what he couldn't vote for. He might not vote that way, but Rayburn would know that a man could vote against Taft-Hartley and survive in District X, or he'd know that he could not vote against Taft-Hartley and survive in District X, or he'd know that he could not vote for lower tariffs in District X. And he knew about a great number of districts in this country. He knew not only the incumbent, but he knew everybody that had preceded the incumbent congressman for the previous forty-five years.

B: After the 1956 election, you moved on to Rayburn's staff then. How did that come about?

H: Well, I took off a year. I got to Washington in June of 1956, thinking I was on my way to New York to look for a job. I knew I didn't want to go back to Texas. I had always wanted to live in New York. So I stopped off here actually just to spend a day or so. George Ball, who was a former partner of Stevenson's, had been in Florida working on the campaign and we got to be great friends. So George said, "Why don't you try to get to Washington in time for the

California primary? We'll listen to the California returns together." So I timed it to get in to Washington the afternoon of the California primary. I went out to his house and we sat up all night drinking his whiskey and using his telephone credit card calling California. We were listening to Stevenson's great victory out there.

So, of course, I went to see the Rayburn people. Hale Boggs had been the southern manager for Stevenson. When I went to work for Stevenson, I didn't know Boggs and before this was comsummated, he told me to fly over to New Orleans so he could meet me and size me up. So I flew over there and we hit it off fine. He's the one who sent me to Florida immediately. And so, of course, I wanted to see Boggs and meet the Boggs staff. I knew some of them, and I didn't know the Rayburn staff. I wanted to get acquainted with them.

I was working on an article on Shivers for Harper's and it had been dragging along for months. And I thought, "Well, this is a pleasant place. I'll just settle down here and finish this article here, the revision of this article." Then I got an idea to write an article on Rayburn for Harper's, and Jack Fisher said, "No, we've had too many Texas articles. Why don't you write a short biography of him?" Henry Allen Moe up at Guggenheim Foundation had been after me to get a biography of Rayburn written. Why don't you take a little more time out?" Well, that intrigued me. So I asked Rayburn if he'd cooperate and he said yes, he would. So, when I wasn't out campaigning I got a study room over at the Library of Congress--I spent a year over there researching on the Rayburn thing.

Then I ran out of money and I was broke in the middle of 1957. Well, they set up a committee here to investigate the regulatory commissions. That had been a field in law school and I'd had Emmette Redford as a professor, and then in law school, this administrative law was the thing I seemed to do best at, more sensitive, and so I applied for a job on the staff. And John Holton said, "You'd better tell the Speaker; he doesn't like to be surprised." And I said, "Oh, I don't want him getting into it. I want to do this on my own." And he said, "No, you'd better tell him. You don't have to get him into it, but you'd better not let him be surprised." So I went in and told Mr. Rayburn, and he said, "That's fine. I want you to have one of those top jobs over there. By God, you're a lawyer and you're a newspaperman and so forth, and I want you on that staff." Well, he couldn't swing it. He didn't have enough influence to swing it. So there was a great fight. They brought Dr. Schwartz [?] down from NYU or CCNY, and it turned into a God-awful mess before everybody got through with it.

But he called me in one day and he said, "Why don't you come to work for me?" I'd never dreamed of working for Rayburn, never had any desire to work for him. He said, "I need another man on my staff. Why don't you come to work for me?" And I said, "Well, I don't know, Mr. Speaker. I haven't even thought about that." What was worrying me was whether working for Rayburn would ruin my judgment on working on the biography. So I talked to several of his friends and mutual friends of mine about it, and they uniformly said, "My God, two

reasons. In the first place, this old man needs help. He needs everybody that he can to pitch in and help him. You'll always be proud that you helped, for this is one of the great Americans. You'll always be proud that you had some part in the last years of his life. In the second place, by working for him, whatever you may lose in impartiality, you will more than make up by being with him all the time and really getting to know the man. You ought to take the job."

So in about ten days I went back and told him okay. And I've never had any regrets. He didn't know what he wanted me to do and I didn't know what was expected of me, and it took about two years before I finally was able to figure out where I could best fit into the operation.

B: I was going to ask you what niche you eventually found. I realize a staff like that isn't specialized, but did you--?

H: People would say, "Now, what does she do?" Said, "She works for me." "Well, what does he do?" "He works for me." "What do they do? Exactly what do they do?" He looked surprised and said, "Well, they do whatever had to be done!" John Holton said, "What title do you want on the payroll? The Speaker doesn't have any titles. You've got to put something on the payroll!" And I said, "I don't know." So we figured out a title of Research Assistant, which I guess was as good as any. And so I really didn't know what to do, but gradually--and he didn't know either. Lyndon Johnson told me--I asked him Rayburn's weaknesses, and he said, "Well, one of them is he doesn't know how to

use a staff. He runs everything out of his back-ass pocket," which was very true.

So finally--like all good politicians, he was ravenous for information--I learned that I could be useful to him in sort of being additional eyes and ears and getting to him maybe a little thing out of the New Leader over here or the Wall Street Journal over here or something somebody had told me, gathering news for him about the world in which he lived, the political world in which he lived. And so then I started clipping things for him. And I'd either lay them on his desk or I'd go in and summarize them for him. I did a lot of speech writing eventually, got to where I did all the speech writing for him.

Then he started using me on other things. When the Griffin-Landrum labor bill came up, of course, he didn't know the ins and outs of labor legislation and certainly I didn't. He appointed me to work with the Kennedy people, the Jack Kennedy people; there was Archie Cox from Harvard Law School, Ralph Dungan who was later in the White House and ambassador to Chile--those were the two principal ones--and Ted Sorensen once in a while, to work with them and become thoroughly familiar with the movement on the Griffin-Landrum bill so that I could answer the best I could any questions that he had. Because he had to make a lot of decisions about the strategy on the bill. So I did. I worked on that with him.

He'd have me sit in on conferences from time to time with different people as, I don't know, protection, I guess, or maybe he wanted to talk about it later--I don't know about that. And he'd take me

with him sometimes on his speaking trips or conventions. It was just like he said: you do whatever has to be done. And it was frequently not the same today as it had been last week or yesterday.

He didn't worry about protocol. Nobody in the office had any authority to give anybody else in the office an order. That includes secretaries. Everybody worked together. And I never worked in an organization that was as happy and as smooth in my life, because everybody just did whatever had to be done. There was no rank; there was no status. He might ask one person to do this today and tomorrow he'd ask somebody completely different to do the same thing, you know.

B: You mentioned in passing one intriguing thing. There was a time when you asked Lyndon Johnson for an assessment of Sam Rayburn's strengths and weaknesses.

H: Yes. I asked him what his shortcomings were?

B: Did he mention any others besides the one about the use of the staff?

H: Well, that was one. The other was that Rayburn's weakness was that he did not go out and anticipate future trouble. He handled a situation when it became troublesome. But he did not go out and anticipate something six months from now that might be a crisis. I think that's a very fair judgment of Rayburn. I think Rayburn's defense of it would have been that "you spend all your time trying to anticipate; 90 per cent of what you are worrying about is not going to come to pass. The main thing is to be able to handle the situation when it arises." Well, this is the difference in temperament between people. Other people spent all their time worrying about Nigeria fifteen years from

now; Rayburn didn't live like that. He worried about [things when they happened]. Johnson told me one time he was down at the Board of Education having a drink with him, and he said, "Mr. Speaker, we've really got our tail in a crack now. That monkey's right on your back! It's right on your back, Mr. Speaker!" And Rayburn tinkled the ice in the glass and said, "Yup, that's right. Know what I'm going to do? First thing in the morning, I'm going to reach up and get that monkey and put him down!" And [LBJ] said he did.

Rayburn's idea about government, one of his ideas about government was that when things are moving all right, leave them alone, don't always be tinkering with an automobile that's running right. He liked Calvin Coolidge. He thought Calvin Coolidge was a pretty good president because things ran without much crisis atmosphere while Coolidge was president. He wouldn't have phrased it this way, but he himself was a social engineer, he was a legislative engineer. When you started having a knock in a part of the motor, he'd try to get the knock out of the motor; but he wanted as little controversy as possible. If you had to have it, then you had to have it. But you didn't go looking for it. And a lot of politicians create about half of their own worry, their own problems. They stir up trouble; they send out a questionnaire to all their constituents. "What do you think about this, that and the other?" It comes back and you have to make a decision. "Well, 40 per cent, Rayburn said, you're going to have at the minimum. Ignore the judgment of 40 per cent of the people that have answered, and they're going to be mad at you. You ask them what

to do, and then you didn't do it. Hell, I'd rather argue with them after I vote than before and after," he said. But many politicians don't do that, you know. They stir up mail. They try to get a lot of mail coming in. Rayburn, the less mail he got, the happier he was. If he didn't get any mail, that meant everybody was pretty content. But this was just part of his method of operating. He certainly knew that Johnson was quite a different operator.

B: I was just going to ask the reverse of my previous question. What would Sam Rayburn's estimate of Lyndon Johnson in those days have been?

H: Well, I think he thought he was probably one of the greatest legislative and political geniuses he'd ever known. And, particularly, Rayburn thought that the basis of success in life was not brilliance, but it was hard work. Certainly on that score Johnson was one of the hardest workers of anybody he'd ever seen in Washington, day and night. He was smart, he was a fine strategist normally, and he worked like the devil. He liked him, he admired him. He recognized him early for what he was--a man of enormous talent.

B: Did Rayburn see any weaknesses in Johnson?

H: Oh, he'd get irritated and I think the chief thing that he was probably critical about was Johnson's attitude toward the press, Johnson's extreme ultra-sensitivity to any criticism. And Rayburn just didn't--Johnson would read something that had ninety-nine nice things to say about him and one uncomplimentary thing and he'd just hit the ceiling about the one uncomplimentary thing. I read Rayburn

an article once out of the Progressive magazine, just raking the House leadership over the coals as being old and tired and ossified. I thought he ought to know it, know what was being said, and I read him this article. Ended up, he said, "That's a pretty good article; it's a little more favorable than unfavorable." He'd play for 51 per cent any day, but Lyndon Johnson wanted to have everything perfect, you know. But this was the difference of the temperament of the man. He'd say, "Those newspaper boys, they admire Lyndon Johnson; they want to help him, but he always goes in with his guard up against them."

B: Did Rayburn ever try to help Johnson with the press; that is, talk to reporters about "Don't worry when he gets mad at you" and so on?

H: Oh, I'm sure he did. I don't recall any specific instances. He wouldn't look up somebody; it wasn't his job. If somebody said something to him critical of Johnson, why, he'd undoubtedly try to straighten them out and say, "Now, what you don't see is this, that and the other." In the first place, he didn't go up in the press gallery. But he didn't go arond trying to put out fires for Lyndon Johnson. As he used to say, "All these people are grown people. I believe in helping everybody, but I don't believe in coddling anybody. They're mature, grown people when they get here, and it's got to be their primary responsibilities as to how they get along." That would apply to Johnson; that would apply to his nephew; that would apply to his staff and everybody else. He wasn't always trying to pull the fat out of the fire for somebody else except that he wouldn't let anybody say something about anybody--Johnson or anybody else--that he thought

was untrue. He'd say, "You don't know what you're talking about," or "What you don't know is such-and-such."

That was one thing about him--if he was for a person it didn't make any difference. Justice [William] Douglas told me that when Tommy Corcoran left the White House, left the government, and started making money, Roosevelt got very furious with him, and so all the New Dealers started picking on Tommy. They'd all been running around kissing his foot for years before that when he was in power, but it became the vogue at all the cocktail parties here to run Tommy Corcoran down. Justice Douglas said he saw it time after time. Everybody in the place would be running Tommy Corcoran down. Mr. Rayburn would say, "Now, wait just a minute." And he said, "You know, people--the King says so and so, we'll mouth what the King says." He [Douglas] said, "That added more to my admiration of Rayburn than any other single thing, the fact that Tommy was out of favor and Rayburn stood up for him in the face of hostile crowds every time it came up."

B: That brings up an almost idle question. Did Rayburn make the social circuit much?

H: In his latter years, yes, after his eyes got so bad. He didn't particularly like it; he preferred to go out as little as possible. There are a lot of things you have to go to, especially the speaker. Every organization in your district has a national banquet here and you've got to go eat the damned sorry food and listen to the tiresome speeches. So you've got enough that's obligatory. So then there were a few people that he really enjoyed going to their homes, but he much

preferred to go home and listen to the radio or watch television or read. He loved to read. But later on, by the time I came to work for him, he was an old man by that time and he was going out more. There were more demands and he was lonesome. Fred Vinson, the chief justice, had been perhaps his closest friend. While Fred Vinson was alive, they tell me he'd go by two or three afternoons a week and have a drink and maybe stay for supper and spend an evening talking with Fred Vinson. Well, Vinson died, so that was a change. And so he went out more and more. Then in 1959 he lost the sight of one eye, and his other eye got so bad that he couldn't read and it was hard for him to watch television. So instead of sitting at home in the darkness, he got to where he'd go out nearly every night, but he liked to go home early. He just didn't care for the social circuit per se.

End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I

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