

INTERVIEW I

DATE: September 27, 1968  
INTERVIEWEE: HOUSTON HARTE  
INTERVIEWER: PAUL BOLTON  
PLACE: Mr. Harte's office in San Angelo, Texas

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B: Mr. Harte, we would like to get a few notes about the gentleman with whom we are talking. Can you tell us something about your career in the newspaper business in Texas?

H: I came to Texas in January, 1920, after having owned the Knobnoster Gem at Knobnoster, Missouri, and later the Boonville Republican and Boonville News at Boonville, Missouri. I purchased the Standard from J. G. Murphy, one of the founders.

B: That's the San Angelo Standard?

H: Yes, the San Angelo Standard. Mr. Murphy founded the paper with Mr. J. W. Guthrie. Guthrie was a Scotchman and Murphy was an Irishman. These two Anglo-Saxons came to this country about 1878. They worked as printers and then established the Standard.

B: Was that a daily or a weekly?

H: Weekly. They published it in partnership until Murphy and Guthrie became interested in providing a waterworks and electric power company for San Angelo. Many times, utility companies have been the owners of newspapers. In the case of the Standard, the Standard was the owner of the utility company! It became quite a business, and although Murphy and Guthrie had established a daily, the San Angelo Evening

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Standard, they continued in the utility business. I do not know the exact date, but at some date in the early nineties, the partnership was separated to the extent that Mr. Guthrie became the active manager of the utility company and Mr. Murphy continued as the publisher and editor of the Standard, although Mr. Guthrie's name remained on the masthead of the Standard.

B: Now, with this newspaper owning the utility company, how did you happen to come down to Texas?

H: I met a man who was selling an advertising service to me at Boonville. I bought the service and gave him a list of eight or ten other Missouri weekly paper publishers who I thought might be interested in buying the service. In a week he came back and told me that he had signed all but one and thought he would get that one. He stayed over the weekend with me. I lived, at that time, at the Fredericks Hotel. We got well acquainted for having known each other such a short time, and he said, "I know a town in Texas where an old man runs a paper and it is a so much better town that I don't see why you don't go there and look at this paper." He told me in detail about his visit to San Angelo. San Angelo, at that time, had built the Trust Building which was occupied by the Central National Bank. The St. Angelus Hotel, which was a good hotel for those days, had a hundred and fifty rooms in a building seven stories high. He painted a very good picture to me for the area and the city. I had had several offers from other people in Missouri for the Republican and News. I sold the papers in December, 1919, and got cash for the papers. They gave me a little over \$30,000. With that

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I came to Texas on January 28, 1920, met Mr. Murphy and signed a contract to purchase his paper.

B: You started in San Angelo in 1920 with the San Angelo Standard. It is my understanding that you now own a number of newspapers in Texas, I believe some of them in partnership with the late Mr. Bernard Hanks?

H: All in partnership with Mr. Bernard Hanks except the Abilene Reporter-News which the Hanks family owns, and the San Angelo Standard which the Harte family owns.

B: Where are those papers located?

H: They are located in Greenville, Commerce, Denison, Paris, Marshall--

B: Corpus Christi?

H: Big Spring, Corpus Christi, San Antonio, Corsicana, Bryan and Huntsville. Two are weeklies which we expect will become dailies--Commerce and Huntsville.

B: That largest newspaper in this group--

H: --is the San Antonio Express and Evening News.

B: You acquired it comparatively recently?

H: Six years ago in February, 1962.

B: You also own and operate some television stations?

H: With the San Antonio Express we acquired TV station KENS at San Antonio and my sons bought and acquired KCTV, the television station at San Angelo.

B: Now, Mr. Harte, our principal purpose in making this tape is to tell something about your knowledge of Mr. Lyndon B. Johnson. Can you tell us where you first got to know Mr. Johnson? Where and when?

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H: I met Lyndon B. Johnson in Washington when he was the secretary to the late Richard Kleberg.

B: Mr. Kleberg was a congressman at that time?

H: Dick Kleberg was congressman from the long district along the Rio Grande to Brownsville. Lyndon Johnson, Arthur Perry, secretary to Senator Tom Connally, and Robert M. Jackson, who was the assistant secretary to [Congressman Robert] Ewing Thomason of El Paso, had a room in the basement of the Dodge Hotel in Washington. It was in the time when the RFC had just been organized and there were a great many people going to Washington for relief from the forced payment of their debts.

B: That would have been in the 1930s?

H: 1932.

B: And the RFC was the Reconstruction Finance Corporation?

H: Right.

B: And you had gone up there in connection--

H: I had gone up there in connection with a loan for the Wool Growers Central Storage Company from San Angelo. The Wool Growers was a sizeable financial institution for a city like San Angelo. Its business was financing particularly sheep, and in addition, cattle and goats. Jesse Jones of Houston had only a few weeks before been appointed a member of the board of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation of the federal government.

B: How did you come to meet these three young men in the basement of the Dodge Hotel?

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- H: I couldn't get a room in Washington and I went to them to explain my situation. They said, "Well, fine, we'll put another cot in our room."
- B: Did you know any of those boys?
- H: Of course I knew Bob Jackson and I knew Arthur Perry, and I knew who Lyndon Johnson was because he had been teaching school in South Texas and had worked for the Kings and the Klebergs for a year or so on different matters. He was very much interested in the campaign of Dick Kleberg for Congress. Roy Miller of Corpus Christi, as I recall, was the campaign manager for Dick Kleberg. Miller used Lyndon Johnson as the real spark plug of the campaign.
- B: At this time when you first met Lyndon Johnson in this Dodge Hotel basement room, do you recall or do you have any impressions of the young man that you met?
- H: I didn't have an opportunity to form any judgments of my own because Arthur Perry and Bob Jackson were so enthusiastic about him and his ability that Helen Dowty, who was to become Bob's wife in a few years, told us and anyone who would listen that some day Lyndon Johnson would be president of the United States. Helen, who had worked for the San Angelo Standard-Times along with Bob Jackson before going to Washington, was so certain she knew what was going to happen that she impressed all who would listen to her, whether they knew Lyndon Johnson or not.
- B: Now, you had known Bob Jackson previously to that time?
- H: Robert M. Jackson came to the San Angelo Standard upon graduating from the University of Missouri. Here he served first as a reporter and then as a night editor of the San Angelo Morning Times, which the

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Standard had started. Bob Jackson and Helen Dowty both worked at the Standard.

[Congressman] Thomason pleaded with me and with the late Robert T. Neill, his old El Paso law partner, to let him have Bob Jackson in his office in Washington because he was a new congressman and did not know the people of San Angelo as well as he should. I promised to let Bob go for three months. The three months dragged on for about ten years. When Jackson went to work for the Associated Press in Washington, I asked him if he wouldn't like to come to Corpus Christi. He said he would. He is now the editor of the Corpus Christi Caller and Times and has been for twenty-five years.

B: Okay. Now, to return to your contacts with Mr. Johnson. Did you take any part--first of all, did you know Mr. Johnson when he had been appointed as National Youth administrator?

H: I knew who he was. I had no contacts with him other than the contacts that ordinary newspapermen would have with an official of the United States who resided in Austin.

B: How far is Austin from San Angelo?

H: Austin is two hundred and thirty-five miles by road--in those days, dirt road--and it took the better part of six or seven hours to drive from San Angelo to Austin or vice versa.

B: Well, there was not a great deal of reason for you to have had any contact with him at that time?

H: No.

B: Were any NYA projects carried on in the San Angelo region, do you recall?

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H: None of any consequence, other than the routine taking care of young people.

B: Now, in 1937, there was a vacancy due to the death of Congressman Buchanan in the Tenth Congressional District, which includes Austin, and Mr. Johnson was one of the candidates in that election. Did you have any part in that election?

H: I was interested in it, of course, but my partner, Bernard Hanks, was in the Stephen F. Austin Hotel on the day Johnson opened his headquarters in that hotel. As I recall, Walter Jenkins and John Connally, who afterwards became governor of this state, were working in the office on the mezzanine floor putting some banners around there and sort of getting some furniture and setting up an office on the mezzanine. Bernard instinctively felt that we should do anything we could for Lyndon Johnson. He became our candidate that day. Bernard went up on the mezzanine floor and talked to Walter Jenkins, and then, I believe, met and talked to John Connally. He said, "I would like to give some money to the Johnson campaign." And one of them said, "That is wonderful! You will be the first person who has made a contribution to this campaign." This was a smart thing to say, I think, because normally Hanks would have given a hundred dollars but this time he gave two hundred and fifty! Of course, I was billed for one hundred and twenty-five dollars of it, which was the way it should have been. I am certainly glad to know that I had a part, through that gift by Bernard, of the first campaign money Lyndon Johnson received in his race for Congress.

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- B: During the period when Mr. Johnson was congressman from the Tenth Congressional District--of course, that did not include the San Angelo district or the Abilene area--I wonder if you had any contacts with Mr. Johnson?
- H: We had many contacts with him, both Bernard Hanks and I. Having started out with him and having worked as we could in any area during the campaign, we had an especial attachment to him and learned through experience that his advice was valuable on any matter. We contacted him on any problems that came to us either in San Angelo, Abilene, Big Spring, Corpus Christi, Paris or any place, and always found him willing to give advice or to tell us how he thought we should proceed in trying to get our point over.
- B: Do you recall any specific instances of advice that he gave to you during that period? Any specific problems that arose?
- H: Of course, they arose over many problems. They arose when the naval base was located in Corpus Christi and when he told Grady Kinsolving, who was at that time the publisher of the Corpus Christi Caller and Times, and Maston Nixon, who was a great civic leader in the area, how he would proceed if he were working on the same thing. He was on the Naval Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives and, of course, he had access to the ears of some of the admirals and some of the people who would make the decision. I don't know anything that he told them, but at least I can say that the naval base was established there, and he was one of the first men who was invited to come down to the dedication by the citizens of Corpus Christi.



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B: In other words, the citizens of Corpus Christi were made aware that he had had a considerable hand in getting the base established?

H: That's right. His advice was sought and given on many, many problems that confronted any of the communities in which we published newspapers. By experience we had seen enough of how he worked to be vitally interested.

B: Let me clarify one point in that connection. As publisher in those areas, your interest was in the development of the communities. Is that right?

H: That's right. Anything that would help the town would help us.

B: That's right. Of course, the naval base was a great project for Corpus Christi. Do you recall any other areas of work that the Congressman did for you or for your communities?

H: He was tremendously influential in deepening the ship canal through Aransas Pass and into Corpus Christi Bay. Deepening the ship canal about fourteen feet made Corpus Christi, or gave it the opportunity to become, a real port, one of the big ports on the Gulf. He knew how to present the facts and who to present them to. This made it possible for Corpus Christi to get the ship canal, which cost a great deal of money, to be deepened. That perhaps was the greatest economic boost Corpus Christi ever had. It enabled it to become a major cotton export port. It enabled it to become a great grain port, not only wheat but milo maize and all of that type of grain. It made it possible for the Tex-Mex Railroad, which tapped a great number of iron, lead and zinc mines of Northern Mexico, to get into the first deep seaport

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it could reach to move these minerals in world commerce. It was his work on one project after another that had such a great effect upon the economy of Corpus Christi and of the port itself.

B: As a matter of fact, it would seem to me, and I have not thought of this before, that it would help the economy of the entire state.

H: Of course it did. Of course it did. Because it enabled San Angelo, for instance, to send its cotton to Corpus Christi, to send its grain to Corpus Christi, then to go there and pick up many of the items that had been imported from the East through the Atlantic into the Gulf, with its destination Corpus Christi.

B: You have a military installation here--Goodfellow Air Force Base. Did the Congressman have anything to do with this?

H: Lyndon Johnson had more to do with it than any other person. He knew how to advise us as to what we should do in order to keep it. At the time it was established, the air force was just looking for a place where they could establish a base, or a place that would welcome one. San Antonio was close. Those air force people came in here and knew we had a dry climate. We didn't have a lot of rain, there would be a great many flying days, and all that sort of thing. Those things perhaps had as much to do with it as anything else.

But when it came to preserving the base, when the Department of Defense wanted to get rid of bases, he was the man who really saved Goodfellow Field for us. We sent a committee of three men to Washington to talk to Secretary Douglas of the air force. Of course, they took O. C. Fisher, our congressman, with them. He talked to them, and they

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told him what they were up there for, and Secretary Douglas, who, a few days before, had been appointed assistant secretary of defense, said that there was no mission for Goodfellow Air Force Base. The men came home and made this report. We were very much disturbed. They said when the mission was over at the end of June, that was it. I was asked to go back to Washington, and the only reason I was suggested was that they felt that I could talk to Lyndon Johnson who was, at that time, the majority leader of the Senate. I telephoned him when I got in town. He said he'd come by and pick me up at eight in the morning and take me to his office. At eight he and Congressman Homer Thornberry were in the Majority Leader's car and picked me up.

B: Homer succeeded Lyndon Johnson when he was elected to the Senate?

H: He was the congressman who succeeded Lyndon as congressman from the Austin district. They had been talking at breakfast that morning, which apparently Homer had had at the Senator's residence, about the vote that was going to be taken Tuesday or Wednesday on some sort of a civil rights bill. The report had been circulating that only three or four of the Texas congressmen were going to vote for it. Senator Johnson thought it would be a reflection on the Speaker--Speaker Sam Rayburn--and it would be a reflection on him, if Texas did not support the measure. It was a mild civil rights bill, but it was the first of any kind that had really come before the House and Senate. On the way up to the Hill, he made a list of the people he was afraid would not vote for the bill, and he asked, "Who do you know in those towns who have any influence on these congressmen?" I said, "Well, all right,

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I'll think and I'll go to work." When I got to his office I was put in a side room with a telephone and my telephone credit card and I went to work. I stayed there that whole day and talked on the telephone to every person I knew in those towns who I thought would have any influence on these Texas congressmen. I told the person I called what a black eye it would give Senator Johnson and Speaker Rayburn if the Texas delegation didn't support this measure in the House.

The vote was not taken until Wednesday. About four in the afternoon it was passed. When the Senator walked into his office he asked for me and before I could get into his room he had called the Speaker and congratulated him on what a fine showing he had made and so forth. Then he turned to me and said, "Houston, I haven't heard a thing about what you came here to talk about. Tell me what it is."

B: Well, now, before you tell him what it is, how did the Texas delegation vote?

H: They voted for it. The majority of them voted for it. You're darned right! I don't think all of this was due to my work, but due to everybody's work.

B: Well, you can claim part of the right, then, for passing the first civil rights bill.

H: Yes. It just so happened I was there and did what Senator Johnson asked me to try to do. When he turned to me, he said, "Now, tell me what you want," I said, "I want to save Goodfellow." He said, "What's the trouble?" I told him what Secretary Douglas had said, "Well," he said, "Douglas comes up here to see me at least twice a

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week. He's a wonderful man. I'm going to take him down to the Ranch to shoot doves. You come down there and see him."

Well, Secretary Douglas came to the Ranch. I didn't go, but other members of the committee went down, and they talked to him. They found that he knew more about what Goodfellow had and what it didn't have than they did. They couldn't give him any arguments, any new arguments, about Goodfellow. In the wind-up, Douglas wanted to do something for the Majority Leader of the Senate who had done a lot of things for him in the Eisenhower Administration. The Majority Leader told him, "I want a mission put on that field that will grow whether we've got war or whether we haven't, whether you've got flying machines or whether you haven't got them." Douglas said, "Well, of course, what you need is a security service mission." He said, I know a base that's not getting along very good with its community. That may be the thing." And that was the thing, and we've had it ever since. [At this point nine lines were deleted.]

B: In other words, Goodfellow is possibly of greater importance now than it used to be?

H: Well, of course, of course.

B: Mr. Harte, we've gotten somewhat away from our chronological list. To return to that for a moment, I believe that in 1941 Mr. Johnson decided to try to run for the United States Senate. Did you have any knowledge concerning that campaign?

H: The only thing I know is that we put on a very strenuous campaign in West Texas. As I remember, W. Lee O'Daniel was the candidate against

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him. He had no hold on the people in this part of the state except that they ate biscuits and bread and used flour, but we knew if we had Lyndon Johnson in the Senate, we would have a real senator. We all worked for him.

The election was very close. We started out to have somebody in every one of the thirty West Texas counties from Abilene down to Austin and way out west as far as we could go. This we did. We got volunteers, young lawyers largely, who went to these commissioners courts and sat in and watched them count the votes. They made suggestions about the ballots when there'd be any question about them. It showed how careful Johnson was in not taking anything for granted. He had somebody on the ground who would protect his interests. Of course, I feel that it is a reflection on the newspaper industry that when it found out there was a tight sheriff's race in Rusk County--they stuffed, I forget the number, 1500 or 3000 votes in the sheriff's race. . . . To make the vote look right they had to vote for somebody else, they couldn't just vote for sheriff. Those ballots were voted for W. Lee O'Daniel and against Lyndon Johnson. There wasn't any contest. Lyndon had said, "Well, I lost the election, and that's all there is to it, because of about 1500 votes." He accepted the verdict. O'Daniel had been in the Senate two years before the contest over the sheriff's race was decided by the appellate court. It showed that Johnson had been robbed of the election by about 1500 votes.

B: The Rusk County case?

H: Yes, that he had been robbed of the election. We talk about the

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87 votes that Johnson won by in the 1948 race when he ran against Governor Coke Stevenson.

B: 1948?

H: In 1948. But everybody has forgotten and nobody talks about how he was beat several years before. It was proved beyond a question of a doubt that he had been elected and Governor O'Daniel actually was defeated. I understand, although I have no eyewitness or authentic information, that the same situation existed in the same election in Brown County--

B: The 1948 election?

H: --in 1948 in Brown County where a local candidate, I believe the county judge's race, was elected by votes being stuffed in the ballot box and that if it had been challenged by litigation, it would have revealed these facts, that about the same number of fraudulent votes would have been shown cast for Governor Stevenson and against Lyndon Johnson in that county which were actually not voted.

B: Now to return to the days when Mr. Johnson was a congressman. Do you recall any anecdotes of that period that might be of interest?

H: I am not sure when this happened--whether Mr. Johnson was still secretary to Richard Kleberg or whether he had been at that time elected to Congress. In any event, Maury Maverick, Sr., from San Antonio came rushing into Senator Tom Connally's office, picked up a telephone and called his secretary. The secretary told him that such and such a delegation was in his office wanting to talk to him about some purely San Antonio project. Maury, without taking much time about making a

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decision, said, "Tell them I won't see them. I know what they want and I'm opposed to it." The secretary then came back with something I couldn't understand. Maury banged the telephone down. He turned to me and said, "Houston, you know that damned secretary of mine told me to go to hell!"

I recall when Lyndon B. Johnson was either secretary to Richard Kleberg or director of NYA, and happened to be in Washington at that time. He made an appointment with President Franklin D. Roosevelt and went to the White House with an editorial which the late Frank Grimes, the editor of the Abilene Reporter-News and a leading editorial writer of our newspapers, had written urging Lyndon B. Johnson to run for Congress from the Austin district.

B: The Tenth District?

H: Tenth District.

Armed with that, he made the appointment with President Roosevelt. He went to the White House where he asked the President for his support. As something to show he had support at home, he showed the President the editorial which I had sent to him. I did not write the editorial, although I talked to Bernard about it and to Frank Grimes about what I thought it should say. The President took the editorial as a sign of support around his district, not in his district, and thought that if a newspaper outside his district recognized his merit, it would be logical to think that a number of newspapers in his district would support him. Upon this and other material he received the assurance of President Roosevelt that the President would do anything he could



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to support him.

B: That brings up another point, a political point. Were your papers supporting President Roosevelt?

H: Oh, sure. Oh, yes.

B: Well, that's not such a far-fetched question. I remember in 194--

H: Of course not. I think the Dallas News even supported Roosevelt then.

B: But in 1944, why. . . .

H: Oh, no, they weren't supporting him then. They were getting away.

B: But your papers did have a record of supporting the Democratic nominee.

H: Yes!

B: Mr. Harte, we've sort of skipped around, but generally that brings us around to the 1948 campaign for the United States Senate. I have heard a story from a couple of my colleagues, two boys named D. B. Hardeman and Alex Louis, who seem to want to take the credit for the fact that the Harte-Hanks newspapers supported Lyndon Johnson in the campaign. They told me at one time that they came out here and had a long conference with you about it and at that time you agreed to support Mr. Johnson. I'm sure that they were not aware that you'd had many contacts with Mr. Johnson prior to that time. Do you recall anything about such a visit?

H: I've visited a number of times, many times, with Alex Louis and D. B. Hardeman. Both worked for us. Alex here and D. B. at Denison. Alex worked for us for five or six years, and has done work for us ever since he moved to Austin, either as a newspaperman or as a public opinion surveyor.

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B: He's in Dallas now.

H: Of course, he lives in Dallas.

I don't recall specifically any visit that D. B. and Alex had relative to the 1948 campaign of Lyndon Johnson for the Senate because we had supported Mr. Johnson in every campaign that he had made in this state, as far as I can recall, and it is difficult to see why, if we had supported him against W. Lee O'Daniel, we wouldn't support him against Coke Stevenson, although Coke Stevenson lived in this congressional district and was a reasonably good friend.

B: Did Mr. Johnson talk with you prior to making up his mind about running in 1948? Did he ever talk to you about making the race, in other words?

H: I don't recall. With the association we had, I sort of took it for granted that he would run.

B: In any event, with your papers having had this long contact with Mr. Johnson, you did support him in the 1948 race, is that right?

H: Certainly, certainly!

B: What do you recall of the 1948 campaign? Any particular difficulties or troubles that arose?

H: I recall no difficulties except some of our more conservative readers and more conservative people had a sort of fixation in their own minds that Mr. Johnson was a big liberal, that he didn't know anything about the ranch business or the sheep business or the cattle business, as Governor Stevenson did. We had supported Governor Stevenson a number of times in his race for lieutenant governor and in his races for governor. Our feeling was that our experience with Mr. Johnson

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during all of these years indicated that he knew how to present our problems and to help us solve them more than other members of the Senate or House with whom we had discussed our problems.

B: Mr. Harte, your statement a few moments ago concerning the opposition to Mr. Johnson brings up a point that, if you feel disposed to discuss, I would certainly like to have your judgment. That is, what do you consider to be Mr. Johnson's political philosophy? Your statement was statement was the fact that some people around here felt that he was a "dyed-in-the-wool liberal," so to speak. Do you feel qualified, through your long friendship with Mr. Johnson, to discuss what you think his philosophy was?

H: Well, I don't know whether I'm qualified or not, but I would say that I never at any time in my life and as far as I know, neither did Bernard Hanks, have a feeling that Mr. Johnson would vote for or advocate any premise which he did not believe in and which he did not feel was in the best interest of the great majority of the people.

He is now, of course, a wealthy man. He made the money himself. No one gave it to him. He was in Congress many years before he had any money other than his salary. Mrs. Johnson did inherit some money from her father, her mother and her aunts, but Mr. Johnson felt this was Mrs. Johnson's money and not his. I think all of the dealings of the family that I have known anything about have been on that basis. He expected to be the provider for his wife and his daughters, his brothers, sisters and his mother to the extent that he was able to do it.

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I do not look upon him as a person who prided himself in being for costly government spending, although I realize that due to the times and circumstances in which he served as president of the United States, the requirements of the government were much more than they have ever been at any time in my life. I cannot say that I agree with every program his administration advocated or adopted, but I do feel that he was thinking about the country and not himself in anything that I know he did, from the time I knew him until Sunday night, March 31, when he said, "I do not choose to seek re-election and will not let anybody talk me into it," or something to that effect. And I believed--I thought then and I believe now that he made that sacrifice because he felt it would do more for the country and for him if a just peace could be arranged in this terrible war in Vietnam. If Vietnam could be solved during his administration, he would rather have that than any other thing that could happen to him.

B: Well, Mr. Harte, again we've wandered somewhat from our chronological presentation, but we had been talking a little about the 1948 campaign. I am presuming that the Harte-Hanks newspapers supported Mr. Johnson in that campaign as they had in previous campaigns. That is correct, is it not?

H: Yes.

B: Do you recall any particular struggles or incidents of that campaign?

H: We had an Ira C. Eaker, E-A-K-E-R, Day in San Angelo for Lieutenant General Ira C. Eaker, commander of the Eighth Air Force in England and Fifteenth Air Force in North Africa. He came back to Washington

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as deputy commander of the air force under General Spaats. We brought him back, as other generals had been brought back to their home communities at the close of the war, and had a big celebration in his honor. We had been very proud of General Eaker because of many things, but particularly because of his first mission over Europe when he was a brigadier general. He had made a trip to England to look over the situation, see the Eighth Air Force and make up his mind what he felt, et cetera. He had flown not just across the Channel but before he sent any men over to Europe he piloted the first Eighth Air Force plane over France and Belgium and back to England, I'm glad to say successfully without any people being wounded in the plane which he piloted and without the loss of a plane. I had kept in close contact with him throughout the war.

In the campaign of 1948 General Eaker had written asking me if there was anything he could do in the election for Congressman Johnson. Knowing that he, with his families, lived in Eden and Concho County, that he was familiar with Concho and Pecos Counties where a brother lived and that his father had lived in Runnels County, I asked him if he would make some speeches in this area. He gladly accepted and spent a week or more in this country, visiting friends and speaking at political rallies for Lyndon Johnson.

B: Now, Mr. Harte, on this 1948 campaign you say that all your papers did support Mr. Johnson for the Senate. Do you recall any other incidents of that campaign, any difficulties that you had or any stories in connection with that campaign?

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H: All I remember is that it was conducted like all of Johnson's campaigns I had anything to do with; namely, nothing was substituted for work and money and that we spent all our time working or raising money. None of us were able to give or to raise any large amounts of money, but in the aggregate it seemed almost sufficient.

The morning after the first primary of that campaign the President and Mrs. Johnson flew from Washington to Fort Worth. I met them at the Texas Hotel in Fort Worth. Mrs. Johnson was trying to get a nap in another room. The President was taking a shower and talking to me. I recommended that as he had been defeated by 70,000 votes and as he was so far behind, I thought it was an insurmountable lead and recommended to him that he did not have to give up his seat in the Tenth District, that he call it a day and not enter the second primary. He convinced me in fifteen minutes that I was crazy and that he could and that he would win the run-off.

B: Mr. Harte, I imagine that as a result of your long acquaintance and friendship with Mr. and Mrs. Johnson that you have been entertained in their home? Were you ever out at the LBJ Ranch?

H: Yes, I've been there a number of times with my wife and with my sons.

B: Do you remember any particular times that you were there?

H: When Adlai Stevenson was a candidate for president and Senator Stuart Symington of Missouri was a candidate for senator from Missouri, a Mr. Stephens who was, as I recall, the campaign manager for Governor Adlai Stevenson, called the Ranch and after talking to Mr. Johnson, talked to Speaker Sam Rayburn. The conversation actually took place

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in the east room of the house. Stephens had asked a question which Speaker Rayburn needed information on. He came into the room where we were sitting and sought the answer to the question. Symington handed the Speaker a tablet where he had marked out in big letters information which read something like this: "DO NOT TELL HIM I AM HERE." Then on another page he said, "DO NOT LET STEVENSON SPEAK IN ST. LOUIS AND IF POSSIBLE, IN MISSOURI." Speaker Rayburn held the telephone away and said to Symington, "Why don't you want him to speak in Missouri?" Symington said, "Because I can carry the state but Stevenson can't." Everyone agreed that that was a good reason for Symington not wanting Stevenson to speak in Missouri! In the room were Homer Thornberry, Lyndon Johnson, the Speaker, Senator Symington and myself.

B: Mr. Harte, you've know, of course, Mrs. Johnson quite well, I'm sure. Can you tell us what sort of person she is or is that asking too much of a gentlemen?

H: Well, she is a wonderful woman and has, in my opinion, great political sagacity. I recall one time she took after me vehemently because I had proposed that we raise the money to pay the telephone bill of the first campaign for the Senate. My recollection is that the Bell Telephone Company claimed that Johnson's headquarters owed it \$48,000 to \$50,000 for service in the 1948 campaign. I proposed that fifty of us put in \$1000 apiece, let nobody tell who gave the money, get it out of the way and get it off Mr. Johnson's mind. I knew it was worrying him and that he was afraid the Bell Telephone Company might do what it had

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said it would do: sue him for this account. Mrs. Johnson was very opposed to any such maneuvers. She said it could never be kept and it shouldn't be kept and it would be the worst thing that could happen to her husband. I thought she was wrong and told her so at the time, but within a few months the same sort of situation was revealed about Richard Nixon in a campaign for the vice presidency when he was running with President Eisenhower. I knew then how sagacious Mrs. Johnson was and how much smarter she was politically than the rest of us.

B: Thank you, Mr. Harte.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I]



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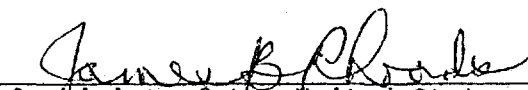
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