INTERVIEW I

DATE: October 5, 1971

INTERVIEWEE: BROOKS HAYS

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

PLACE: Congressman Hays' home, 314 2nd Street, S.E., Washington, D.C.

Tape 1 of 1

F: I'll make a little introduction here, just for identification. This is an interview with former Congressman Brooks Hays.

H: As I indicated before we went on the tape here, I presume that everything that has been said about our coffee and otherwise could go on the tape. We were talking about my having to guard against a certain feeling against Texas politics. I'll try to talk very freely, and I suspect that some of the comments that I would make negatively about Texas politics Mr. Johnson himself would agree with. I'm sure there are times when he suffered from the very pathology that I want to mention, and it's relevant because--

F: We're in one of those times right now.

H: Yes, we are. I remember the story of the two fellows that met, two strangers in a hotel lobby in Toronto, Canada, and the Texan said, "Where are you from?" He said, "Saskatchewan. Where are you from?" He said, "I'm from Texas." "Well," he said, "tell me. What kind of country is Saskatchewan?" The Canadian said, "Well, a whole lot like your state except friendlier to the United States."

The old secession psychology sometimes, I think, is revitalized there more than any other state. Although lately, Joe, I think we've

been giving way a bit on this score. You see some other states--I think of two states now that have a sort of rebelliousness, Alabama and Oklahoma, two of Texas' neighbors. Even my state of Arkansas suffered from it. I was defeated in 1958 largely because of this dissident feeling of my opponent who said during the campaign, "Mr. Hays is a national Democrat and I am an Arkansas Democrat. Mr. Hays is a Harry Truman Democrat and I am an Orval Faubus Democrat."

F: And never the twain shall meet!

H: That experience, of course, is beside the point, except that it brings us together in this matter of geography.

F: I think New York City is beginning to get something of that complex too--that it's out of phase with the remainder of New York and the nation et cetera, and I think that feeling maybe it ought to form its own state and go its own way is real.

H: There's no question about it, and yet I'm hoping that the sober side of the city will assert itself and that we won't have that contingent ferment.

F: Our Governor Preston Smith is not altogether noted for deep wisdom, but we had a ceremony there that I attended about a month ago in which the French had named an honorary French consul. We had enough French students coming to the University and one thing and another that they decided that maybe they ought to have one. They had a well-to-do lawyer who was in military government, France in World War II, and who has been back practically every year since, so they named him honorary French consul and they brought the Consul General in to

bestow the honor. This was right after Preston Smith had gone off against John Connally and the price freeze business, you may have been aware of that, and he said--actually he wasn't there but he had one of his assistants read his speech for him--"I am now in a position from certain statements I have made on national TV and to the press of looking as if I may lead the state into a secession again. All I want to say without getting into that, Mr. Consul General, is that if I do, my first act as head of the independent state of Texas will be to remove the excise tax on French wines." (Laughter)

H: I would hope that the record of the printed word could record the twinkle because that's the kind of thing that may--

F: Yes, come back sometime and haunt him.

H: That's right. Because of course that's the last thing that's going to happen to any of the fifty states, thank God we've come through that!

F: I think we've settled that.

H: And yet you have the feeling of this spirit in speeches by men like George Wallace, who's quite a different person from Texas' governor, but it's something to ponder.

Talking about speeches by governors, the worst thing that can happen to a governor is to have a ghost-written speech and not have time to digest it, become familiar with it. I think one of the best along that line, and if I were still in the White House with Mr. Johnson I'd give him this one and I'll bet you he could use it and

would use it: Jim Folsom--you remember Jim?

F: Yes.

H: Incidentally, a big lovable kind of fellow. I always appreciated one thing about him--apparently he never exploited the race issue. He probably avoided saying anything of the liberal classification, but still he was rather sensitive on--

F: He didn't heed it.

H: That's right. Anyway, he was making a speech to a group of teachers one time and had had to have somebody prepare the speech for him. It was thrust in his hand just before the meeting started. Jim was reading away the script that he wasn't familiar with. He came to this question of discrimination against rural children. He said, "Our rural children are not getting a fair break. The allocation of funds for the education of rural pupils is distressingly low. Alabama is at the very bottom of the list of states in this regard; even Mississippi makes a more generous provision for its rural students than we do. Well, I'll be damned! I didn't know that!" (Laughter)

F: Good. How does one become a southern moderate? The term means different things at different periods, but it meant something very definitely to you at one period.

H: Yes, it did. It took of course the racial drama to bring it out, to focus on it; and yet there were other areas in which I pulled back from the usual traditional flow of political ideology, of political movement in the South. I was a sort of crusader for moderation of

the old rebelliousness and the anti-Yankee and the provincial feeling of the South. I always had it in my blood, and to some extent geography influenced that. I grew up in a part of Arkansas that was not under the contagion of war, although there were skirmishes in my county.

F: Which county is this?

H: It's western Arkansas, Pope County--Russellville. It's in the Arkansas River Valley halfway between Little Rock and Fort Smith. We had a good-sized colored population, I would suppose about twenty per cent of our people in the town were black. And it had that challenge, that is, to liberal ideas and we didn't develop much liberalism there. But I had a rather strong ingrained feeling about it. I say "ingrained"--here my parents probably influenced me more than I have been aware of. My mother's father was a Baptist preacher from west Tennessee, and a Republican. Now, you were accustomed to finding plenty of Republicans in east Tennessee, but when you found a Republican in west Tennessee the chances were that it was by conviction. And it was in his case, this Baptist preacher, who incidentally was a medical doctor, graduate of Vanderbilt Medical School. He ministered to their bodies through the week and to their souls on Sunday, but opposed secession and opposed slavery. He was one of six brothers, five of whom went on the other side. So my family had that history. That even entered into my early campaigns for office. I was referred to as the grandson of a Republican, and it wasn't to do me any good that I was so referred to in 1928.

My mother said to me once--I never saw her father, he died a couple of years before I was born--when I expressed some views that were rather unconventional on the race question, "Your grandfather and you would have loved each other. That's just sort of peripheral, but since you asked about my moderation, I think perhaps the seeds of my growing liberalism or moderation were planted a generation before I came along. I always had a certain pride in that, and it of course flowered in later years when I became a part of the Roosevelt New Deal about the time Lyndon Johnson did, or earlier. I antedated him. I didn't get to Congress before him, but incidentally I was elected to Congress before he was and was deprived of my credentials by some election frauds. I was really elected to Congress in 1933, and on the same kind of platform that he drew such national attention to.

At that time I was Democratic national committeeman from Arkansas. I went on the national committee and was a Roosevelt man very early. I was the youngest member of the national committee. I hadn't reached my thirty-fourth birthday when I was elected. I was thirty-three.

I don't want to make too much of that failure to get to Congress when I was really elected, but one county turned in for my opponent two hundred more votes than there were voters in the county. Outside that county I was six hundred votes in the lead so it was well-known that it was a fraudulent election. But at the same time, I mention it to show that in the period in which Lyndon Johnson was rising to

influence and power from a Texas base, I was rising much less prominently from a smaller base but still on the Democratic National Committee with a New Deal coloration.

F: I wondered about one thing, and you can point out enough exceptions in this to shoot holes in it, but without trying to sound pious at all, in both cases you had mothers who were strong in the Christian precepts and I wonder if that didn't influence you toward a certain liberalism and acceptance of all kinds of people as God's children.

H: I'm sometimes asked about that, because I have enjoyed, and I use the word enjoy advisedly, a certain recognition in the Baptist circle. President Johnson used to enjoy that, having a little fun at Brooks' expense. I remember once when he was greeting a group of Baptist ministers, and he said that he always relied on Bill Moyers and Brooks Hays for any advice regarding Baptists. He said, "I study the same Bible they do, but they're always quoting scripture and I'll quote a little this morning." Then he quoted some. I just have a sneaking suspicion that he had asked Bill Moyers to give him the exact language because of course Bill was always accessible to help him in that regard, as I was in some respects. But I was away from Washington at that time and I read it either in the paper or in a Baptist publication. But he said, "I'll quote a little scripture here. The Bible says that the young man's strength is in his--" whatever the language is, and I've forgotten it at the moment--"and the old man's beauty is in his gray hair." And that is in the Bible. "The old man's beauty is in his gray hair, and poor Brooks is losing

his beauty." But he enjoyed that kind of thing and of course the Baptists enjoyed it, too.

But back to the origin of this little departure here. Your suggestion that maybe a mother who believed that even in politics the teachings of the church and the Bible ought to be taken seriously, there's no question but that in my case that was very profound. And it was matched, strangely enough, by my father's genuine piety. My mother had been anything but an institutional Baptist before her marriage, in spite of the fact that her father was a Baptist minister. She had gotten absorbed in intellectual pursuits and was the only one of her family to go away to college, and was, I think, a real gifted school teacher, and had just put off joining the church. My father, on the other hand, had had a genuine case of religion from the time he was about eighteen, in his adolescent period.

F: He had been on the Road to Damascus?

H: He had been on the Damascus Road, there's no question about it, and it's sort of a reversal of the usual experience. Father brought Mother into the church. She was baptized in the Baptist Church after I was born, but it didn't mean that she had had any real reversal of character and had suddenly become interested in religion. It merely meant that she had not given it an institutional expression. That's of no consequence except that she did then make up for lost time and became a Sunday School teacher, and I was brought up and nurtured in the same kind of domestic atmosphere that Lyndon Johnson had been. So we found ourselves in a congenial relationship,

although, of course, his people were Disciples [of Christ] rather than Baptists. But he used to talk about it, as you know, and this of course has been publicized.

F: He has got a lot of Baptist forebears.

H: George Baines was a Baptist minister in Arkansas. Was it his great-grandfather or his grandfather? I believe it was his grandfather.

F: It was his grandfather.

H: Yes, it was his mother's father. So he used to make reference to it as his grandfather's preaching background in Arkansas. As a matter of fact, his grandfather was a member of the Arkansas legislature.

F: One of his mother's forebears--it may have been her grandfather--was president of Baylor, which is right next to the throne in heaven.

H: Sure.

F: I know he went back not too long ago to Ruston, Louisiana, to dedicate a centennial plaque of a Baptist church there where his grandfather or great-grandfather had been a minister.

H: Yes. I'm sorry that I have to be a little vague, but then of course the history books are very clear on that--it was one or the other.

Then of course, the relationship theologically, ecclesiastically, between the Disciples, or the Christian church, and the Baptists is very close. There's not a great deal of difference. They use the same methods of baptism; they have their local government concept, and so on. I've taken more time to answer your question than--(Interruption--telephone)

F: Did you know Lyndon Johnson then in Congress?

H: Yes, I did. I was elected in 1942. He came in 1937, a special election.

Of course I had known of him. I don't believe I had ever met him until my freshman year in Congress. We used to meet in social gatherings.

F: After you got deprived of that first election, what did you do, just bide your time?

H: No. I accepted an appointment as assistant to Rex Tugwell, and during part of that period I was doing a little lobbying. It was before the passage of the Hatch Act, and I could continue as Democratic national committeeman. Rex Tugwell and Dr. Will Alexander, who succeeded Rex and who was his assistant at the time, wanted me to use this, what I called a door-opener. The national committee membership gave me access to senators and congressmen, so I came up and lobbied for the Bankhead-Jones Bill and got acquainted during that period with several congressmen. I may have met Lyndon, but it was a rather casual relationship. I probably did meet him.

My chief activity was with Marvin Jones, and then the Agriculture Committee, on both sides of the Capitol. But I knew him as a young New Dealer, a fellow, congenial New Dealer. And then of course I became better acquainted with him during our association in the Congress. We were never close and intimate. The Texans had their own fraternity which didn't require so much outside relationship, although I don't mean that they were isolationists or that they were exclusive. But still the Texans had a large enough delegation that they didn't need much support.

F: Right. It's sort of like a fraternity. Even where they

didn't care for each other personally, they still represented Texas. I know in those Wednesday caucuses they have and so on.

H: You bet. When you touched that Texas pride, you were dealing with something pretty potent. I remember this, one of the rather clear impressions, even though it's negative in character; I was rather surprised that I didn't hear him speak more often. I can only remember hearing him speak one time during the years that we were together in the House. And of course you had a complete change of practice and operations in the Senate. But in the House he was rather quiet, and that seems anomalous to me because I knew of this crusading character. But it was a part, really; it was a part and parcel of this strong natural talent of Lyndon's for political effectiveness. He is a political animal. He has a great professionalism in politics. He probably sensed the fact and since he was an apt student of Mr. Rayburn's school of politics, he sensed the fact that you don't lose anything by speeches you don't make. It's speeches you do make that give you trouble. (Laughter)

F: It reminds me of something I heard fairly recently from a former White House staffer who had, coming out of private life, accidentally leaked something by talking off-the-record, and he'd explained to President Johnson that "Well, I told this fellow off-the-record and then he went ahead and published it," and Johnson said, "What you don't say don't leak."

H: That's right. There's a typical Johnson expression, a typical bit of political philosophy, because from the standpoint of technique of

political operations he was the old maestro.

F: The House is sort of like a small men's college in a way, four hundred and thirty-five people. How long do you have to be around before you begin to know congressmen? I was intrigued by an episode: coming up on a plane for this interview, I came through Dallas, there were several congressmen who had been down to see the Washington Redskins-Dallas Cowboy game. And particularly one, who I would guess was pretty junior, was being introduced to other members of Congress, none of whom seemed to know him.

H: It varies from individual to individual. I would say that on the whole the southern congressmen are far more gregarious than the northern, and there is less ideological cleavage among the southerners and the westerners than among the strong partisans of the North and East and to some extent the West. And this is increasingly true of the South with the development of the two-party system. But you take the Chicago delegation. Now the Chicago delegation would seldom coalesce or have a meeting ground or meeting arrangements, Republicans and Democrats. They'd be meeting as the Democratic wing of the Chicago delegation, and the Republican wing of the Chicago delegation. And of course in the case of the Republicans it would be Chicago plus downstate, because most of the downstaters were Republicans.

So it varies from individual to individual. I had resolved when I came here to know by name and countenance every member of the House, and I did it within a few months.

F: You worked at it.

H: I worked at it. Mr. Rayburn knew me before I came. Incidentally, I had gotten acquainted with him in this Democratic National Committee relationship. He mentioned when we were welcomed as new congressmen at a little dinner they were giving for us, he said, "Only two of you I have known in the past. I'm getting acquainted with the rest of you mighty quick. I remember Jim McCord, this new member from Tennessee, because I've heard him auction cattle. He came down to Texas and auctioned cattle. Welcome, Jim." "There's Brooks. I knew him working in the Democratic National Committee. I welcome these two old friends."

So I had that advantage, and I made good use of it. But Mr. Rayburn used Jim McCord and me perhaps to preside before he used any other new men because he knew us. I was one of the few men that presided in his first term, not for any length of time but I sat in the speaker's chair, thrilled to death. And it was good that I had done as I responded here, because when somebody rose on the Republican side and said "Mr. Speaker," I didn't want to have to turn to Lew Deschler, the parliamentarian, to say, "Who is this guy?" I'd say, "The gentleman from Michigan is recognized." That was quite an asset then.

But I remember one day, I was sitting over on the Republican side there for a few minutes and Charlie Gifford, a Republican congressman from Massachusetts with whom I served on the Banking Committee, sat down by me and he said, "Brooks, who is that man on the

Democratic side there holding a cane on the front row on your side?" I said, "Mr. Gifford, that's Congressman [Zebulon] Weaver of North Carolina." "Well," he said, "I've seen him around for years and I just never did get acquainted with him." I believe it was Gifford, I could be wrong about that, who it was. But I remember it was Mr. Weaver. Both of them moved exclusively in their own circles. It's far from typical but it does illustrate that to be acquainted, you've got to cultivate it. You get acquainted with the men on your committee, you get acquainted through various other channels, but I would say it's definitely a minority of the membership that systematically cultivates broad friendships.

F: Was Congressman Johnson known as Sam Rayburn's boy in those days, or did that come after he moved to the Senate?

H: I think he was known as a Sam Rayburn protege, even in those days.

F: Did that give him any kind of special clout?

H: Sam was very much of a favorite with the Democrats and respected by the Republicans. Naturally, they didn't warm to him but they all respected him. I'd say, yes, I think it was generally known that Lyndon was one of Mr. Rayburn's favorites. He never allowed any favoritism to get the best of him. I think he held it under restraint. He tried to be helpful to everbody. Sam had very few what you would call enemies. I would say that the only person that I knew that Sam just must have had--and I never heard him say so, but he must have had a dislike for John Rankin, because John was so offensive toward him. John would never hesitate to say something to embarrass

anybody who was on the other side, and every now and then through a ruling or something Mr. Rayburn would anger Rankin, and then in turn Rankin, through some ejaculation would irritate Mr. Rayburn. And particularly if it was a suggestion that the chair was not fair, because Mr. Rayburn took great pride in being exaltedly non-partisan in his rulings. That was one of his strengths. I saw him get so mad one day, I think if he hadn't been able to control his temper he would have thrown the gavel at Mr. Rankin. I don't remember the circumstance.

F: Was Rayburn a particular target of Rankin, or was Rankin like this toward everyone?

H: He was probably a special target because of the position that he held, but I remember hearing one member say--he was characterizing Clare Hoffman of Michigan, who had an acid tongue--"the only difference between Hoffman of Michigan and Rankin of Mississippi is that in the exchanges on the floor Hoffman does distinguish between friend and foe. Rankin makes no such distinction, he's insulting toward both."

F: Did Johnson have that penchant for lapel-grabbing and finger-jabbing when he was a congressman, or did that develop later?

H: That must have developed later. I don't recall any of that. I recall him just as a rather quiet, modest--what we would say in Arkansas in rural circles--a gumshoe. Did you ever hear that expression?

F: Yes.

H: I'll bet he was effective on the committee.

F: You never served on a committee with him?

H: No.

F: Did you see anything of him after he moved over to the Senate?

H: I happened to be among those who went to the airport to greet him when he came in from his victory. Of course there was once when he wasn't victorious, but then the election that he won--

F: How did you happen to do that?

H: As I reflect on it now, it must have signified that the Texas men regarded me as one of the lodge, not the hard-core but the fringe branch--an associate member--or I wouldn't have been there. They just said, "Brooks, be sure and come down and welcome Lyndon." He saw me in the crowd. It seems to me that I recall faintly some reference to it later; said "appreciated your showing up."

F: He never would have forgotten it, I know that.

H: When I shook hands with him I think he realized that he was getting somebody besides Texans, and it was one of those little things. No, I don't think he forgot it. We're getting ahead of the chronology here. Do you mind?

F: No.

H: When my appointment was sent as a member of the board of directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority--Mr. Eisenhower appointed me, I believe in June of 1959 after my defeat for Congress--when the appointment came up for a vote the Majority Leader, Mr. Johnson, stood and said, "Mr. President,"--you'll see why I wouldn't forget

this, I think I can recall his exact language--"This is one of the finest appointments that President Eisenhower or any other president has ever sent to the United States Senate."

F: Your memory is good. That's June 20, 1959.

H: Oh, you have the record there?

F: Right. Did you have any suspicion in those early Senate days that you might have more than a senator coming out of Texas?

H: Well, yes. If it became a matter of speculation, I probably recognized, as most students of national politics did, that he would have a hard time getting the nomination for president. And of course the manner in which he came to the presidency is entirely consistent with that appraisal. But I recognized his extraordinary talents as a parliamentarian and as a political strategist.

F: You continued in the fifties to be very active in national Democratic circles.

H: In what period did you say?

F: In the 1950s, in the national Democratic circles. I know that the warming up of the 1952 convention which first named Stevenson that you had that problem of the FEPC [Fair Employment Practices Commission] plank and your compromise on that, that the Labor Department would act by persuasion instead of compulsion in developing the FEPC. Did you ever come into contact with Mr. Johnson at these 1952 and 1956 conventions?

H: No. I don't recall that I did. But if the question had been raised, I would have immediately responded that when I was talking with Mr.

Rayburn I was talking to Lyndon Johnson.

F: They were that close on issues?

H: That's right. I was throwing the tennis ball against the same wall. I'd get the same bounce, the same response. And of course Mr. Rayburn was probably responsible for my going on the platform committee, both in 1952 and in 1956.

F: In 1956 you had that horse race between young John Kennedy and Estes Kefauver for the vice presidency, and Johnson shook a lot of people by taking Texas for Kennedy instead of for Kefauver. Were you privy at all to his thinking or strategy in this, or do you have any comments on the reaction of the other southern delegations?

H: No, except Arkansas was somewhat in the same posture. As I recall those alignments, we had Bill Fulbright, I believe, plugging for Humphrey, and he was influential in the Arkansas delegation. Faubus was governor at the time and was not dominating the delegation. He was apparently sort of rolling with the punch and playing it carefully. I'm trying to recall as the showdown came and finally Mr. Kennedy was out-voted-- Mr. Gore withdrew. I remember Mike Monroney rushing down the aisle and saying to me, "Brooks, why in the world are you all not lining up with Albert here! Can't you do something with Arkansas? They should be helping our friend Albert Gore." But you'll remember Gore was hard-pressed because Kefauver had gotten into the picture much earlier. This is all beside the point in a way, but I'm trying to recall some of these details.

I had forgotten really that Mr. Johnson did throw the Texas

delegation to Mr. Kennedy. But I think Arkansas was sort of on the sidelines in that because they had worked with Fulbright, and as I recall, his choice was Humphrey and Faubus didn't try to check him. That was before the cleavage between Faubus and Fulbright developed.

F: Did you ever have any opportunity to observe Fulbright's relationship with Johnson?

H: No. I do remember hearing Fulbright tell me one day when he and Mrs. Fulbright had invited my wife and me out to dinner one evening at their home here in Washington. It was in this period in which Mr. Johnson was at the peak of his Senate power as majority leader. And the only thing I can recall in the way of a reference to Lyndon was that Fulbright said to me--and you can see how pleasant the relationship was--"I declare! We've got an amazing majority leader, utterly amazing! His capacity for hard work! He called me at seven-thirty this morning, and that's the reason I'm a bit tired tonight. He called me at seven-thirty and he was already in his office out at the Senate Office Building and he said, 'Bill, get out here as quick as you can. I've got some chores that I just need you badly on." I had to go out there before I really had time to read my paper and enjoy a cup of coffee, as I generally do in the morning. I had to hurry out there because Lyndon Johnon in this relentless way of his was calling his troops in." I thought that was rather interesting.

F: What about Johnson's relationship with [Senator John] McClellan? He was a different stripe from Fulbright.

H: Yes. I don't recall anything on that.

F: Did you ever talk with Johnson in those days on House and Senate legislation?

H: No.

F: Tell me something about your poetry writing.

H: (Laughter). Where did you get any idea about that!

F: Around.

H: You talked to me, then! I have no gift in that regard except I think I've had a sort of haunting desire to produce something that has literary quality. The first thing I ever did was in blank verse, and it showed up in the little volume, "The Congressional Anthology." It embarrassed me very much. It was entitled "My Office is a Chapel." I made no pretention ever at that time of being a poet. I was not a student of structure and rhythm. I simply wrote it out one day before I was elected to Congress, and it got into that anthology, along with three other poems by members of the House--there were only three of us who were given a place in the congressional section, really the volume was devoted to the favorite poems of members of the Senate and House. But Congressman [Frazier] Reams of Ohio had seen this little poem of mine, so he submitted it and it showed up without my instigation.

Then later on I wrote a few little things. If I had a favorite of my little efforts I would say it was a bit of doggerel, my little tribute to my wife, "To a Patient Wife." But I've never taken time out to stimulate this. I have a few, I would say altogether not over a dozen, things that would be worth taking a couple of minutes to read.

F: In all of this Central High School problem that came up, you've written pretty extensively about that and we don't want to duplicate particularly, although I don't mind, but did you ever see Mr. Johnson's hand in this at all? Or, as far as you know, did he and Orval Faubus ever have any relationship?

H: I don't believe so. There are some blank pages at this point and I would say, looking back at it, that he was a captive of the provincialism of the South. If I might just indulge a bit of analysis-psychoanalyzing, he probably didn't take time out to struggle with it, and I wouldn't have, except for these special influences that were, I would say rather unusual. I hope I can say that with some honesty, it's a part of the history of Little Rock, of Arkansas, and of southern politics. I have written a good deal on it.

But reverting to this question you asked about the FEPC--and Mr. Johnson, as I recall, was following very much this same theory--I think that while some of my southern colleagues were denouncing my Arkansas compromise, I don't recall that he ever gave vent to any such feelings in order to feed the prejudices of any southern voters of the reactionary point of view. I don't recall that he ever indulged that. I'm sure that in that period if anybody had asked him about it, he would have said what Mr. Rayburn said, "Well, Brooks has got a good program. It's the kind of thing we ought to do." But nobody does that until he gets some support, local support for it. I was adventuring a bit, of course, but I felt strongly enough about it.

I love to reflect on those experiences because, if I might just

put a little footnote here on the FEPC thing, which was of course the chief focal point of controversy in the platform committee, what we finally came up with was very much what I had advocated in the Truman Administration beginning in 1949, or 1951. It was while Mr. Truman was still president that I advocated what we called the Arkansas Compromise Plan. I had an FEPC of my own because I thought that the South owed it to its minority racial group, not just to say "No" to Mr. Truman but to say, "Yes, we think something ought to be done, but we believe this will do it a little better.

When we finally got something, and what we have today is pretty much what I advocated. That isn't to defend it, except within the period; the context of conditions that they were at that time, it was the only workable plan. It was not only the only politically viable thing, it was the only workable legislative approach. Because you would have had all sorts of ugly reactions if you had started to jailing employers who didn't fit just exactly the federal envisaged pattern for employment, and had been throwing them into jail or fining them. You had to leave the coercize side out at that stage. That doesn't mean that I would have persisted in that point of view. I think the time has come for us to add to the sanctions against discrimination.

But I really can't help taking the stump at this point for that very reason. I think history has confirmed what we've had to say. Of course there are other phases of that. But Mr. Rayburn, I think, felt good about what we did. He was under great pressure, being in the middle himself, you see, and with more friends that had to be for an

all-out civil rights program. John McCormack--and John was only one of many in the North that had to live with an entirely different political situation. And Mr. Rayburn, being so eager to hold the party together, saw the possibility of a contribution from me in this healing, and a practical compromise.

I remember in 1956 when the fight got real hot and we had finally been after serious and vigorous efforts to avoid a floor fight and had failed, the real militant proponents of the all-out civil rights program just would not take our watered-down plan, but it really wasn't so watered down. He called me off. I remember I was on the floor and the page came down and said, "Mr. Rayburn wants to see you." I went back of the platform. He'd turned the gavel over to somebody and he said, "Brooks, have you gone as far as you can? Have you pulled the southern boys into as much of a concession as you can?" I said, "Yes, I have, Mr. Rayburn. We've gone pretty far. We're going to have to fight at home to defend what we've done on it, and I think that you'll agree." So I just pulled out the platform provision and showed it to him, and I'll never forget his reply. He said, "Jesus Christ and Andrew Jackson!" He was not an irreverant man and I sort of hesitate to quote him on that. I may want to cut that out.

F: That's a beautiful expression. In that Faubus-Eisenhower controversy--you can call it whatever you want to--do you know whether President Eisenhower ever sought the advice of the Senate Majority Leader since in a sense he was from that part of the world? Or do you think this was handled strictly out of the White House?

H: You mean President Eisenhower's civil rights program?

F: Yes.

H: You're asking if he--

F: [Inaudible] use of the federal troops, the disdaining of federal marshals and so forth.

H: I doubt it. I think that President Eisenhower had some Texas advisers. Here you're leaning on a broken reed. I just wouldn't be a good authority on that. But on that point, something that I remember surprised me. Max Rabb called me on the phone one day and said, "I want to see you. Meet me in John Heselton's office. Heselton was a Republican congressman from Massachusetts. Max Rabb was one of the White House staff for Mr. Eisenhower. When I went around there he said, "Mr. Eisenhower wants your advice, Brooks. He's holding a press conference this afternoon"--this was long before Little Rock--"And he knows he's going to get a question on civil rights."

F: This was after the ruling though?

H: Which ruling?

F: The Supreme Court ruling.

H: Yes, I'm pretty sure it was. That was in 1954. Yes, I think it was after that. He said, "Mr. Eisenhower asked me to come out and get your judgment as to what kind of answer he ought to give to this question." That was quite a challenge, you know. I said, "Well, Max, you haven't forgotten, and I'm sure he hasn't forgotten which party I'm a member of." He said, "Brooks, he knows that you wouldn't ever be influenced on a matter of this solemnity by a party line."

And I knew that too. Actually I asked it only as a pleasantry; I just was wanting to induce a smile and sort of distill a little pleasure because he was asking for Democratic help. But I thought that was significant. The fact that Eisenhower had been impressed enough with the potentialities of my compromise approach to want to know how to deal with it on that basis. I had become, in other words, sort of a prop to his kind of moderation. I doubt that he was sending Max Robb to anybody else at the same time because this seemed to be a little special mission that he had made out there from the White House to talk to me.

F: Did you sign that Southern Manifesto?

H: Yes, I did, and I wish I hadn't. I was wrong about it. There's quite a story on that. But I don't feel smitten; I don't think it's anything to haunt me from a moral standpoint. You'll remember that every member of the House from seven states [signed it]. That's sometimes overlooked, the fact that you had there not a legislative action, this had nothing to do with legislation, this was a political strategy. If I had been voting on a roll call, it would have been an entirely different thing. But when they first submitted it to me I said, "No, I won't sign it. I don't care what it costs me politically, I will not sign a document that puts the blessing and approval on interposition." That's another word for nullification. I said, "Neither will I sign something that doesn't call on the people to make their protest on a perfectly legal and non-violent and non-provocative basis."

You know, they made those changes? I wasn't the only one who was raising that question. Price Daniel and Bill Fulbright were two that I remember that took exactly the same position over on the Senate side.

F: Were there any mutterings because Johnson didn't sign?

H: No. I think he had a certain immunity by that time.

F: As majority leader he didn't have to?

H: Right. No, it would have been a grave mistake for him to sign. I didn't hear any muttering. I think it was a part of his wisdom. By that time you had had, I think, not only a new sense of responsibility from the national standpoint on his part, but in material thought conceivably. I hope this is true. A maturing, as we all were experiencing, an awareness of the neglect of the black man. I would like to think, and I think that other observers and there are senators, other men--it's amazing how far we've come. I should think that he would derive a great deal of satisfaction in these later years from being a part of that change, that altered political viewpoint.

Now I don't want to take any more time on the Manifesto except that I do think it belongs in the picture that Orval Faubus learned that Jim Trimble and I had held out and wouldn't sign. He came up here, I don't know that he came for that particular purpose, but he devoted an afternoon to talking Jim Trimble and myself into signing it. He brought Oren Harris with him, whom we all respected and appreciated as a fair-minded person but conservative. Oren wouldn't

have hesitated a minute; Oren was of that particular mold and was perfectly sincere. He was just as sincere in his feelings as I was in mine.

Jim Trimble was in the Bethesda Hospital, so we went out there. The three of us sat there by Jim's bed and talked it over. I remember how vigorous Orval Faubus was in urging us both to sign. I had made the mistake of saying to Jim that I sort of felt that it was a compact that we ought to go together. He and I as the two most liberal members of the Arkansas delegation should either stand out for good reasons against it or go ahead with an explanation with them if we were convinced that we should. I remember how disappointed I was when Jim said, "Well, give me your pen. I'm going to sign." I felt then that I was honor-bound. But I was about ready to dig in and refuse. And I was tortured by this thing because there was some validity to what Faubus was saying. He was saying, "Gentlemen, if you don't do this, the feeling in Arkansas is such that our whole political establishment will be turned over to the White Citizens Councils and Ku-Kluxers and the rabid, extreme kind of segregationists. You ought to do this to save the state from that kind of political leadership."

In the present context I can see that I shouldn't have done it because it didn't spare us much. I think we could still have saved the political leadership of the state from those extremists, but the threat was powerful enough that I was influenced.

F: I think Faubus could have saved the state from it.

H: Faubus could have saved the state. This is the saddest note in the political history of Arkansas, since the Arkansas convention in 1861 decided to secede--the saddest political development.

F: I personally think, trying to place myself in context, that I would have voted for Faubus the first time he came out of the chute in 1954.

H: Yes, we all thought of him as a very sincere, plain-spoken man of the people, a sort of modern-day populist.

F: And this later development just caught everybody off guard.

H: Oh, yes. I'm occasionally asked about Faubus, and someday I must take time to write out with some care and precision my feelings about him, because I have no feeling of bitterness toward him, none at all.

F: Just a kind of sadness.

H: That's right, a wistfulness. He made the wrong turns. The weaker part of his nature prevailed, and he acted ignobly, but I still say that the sad thing is that he didn't rise to the heights there because he could have immortalized himself.

F: In 1956 there was a pre-convention caucus of southern Democrats before the national convention to talk about the civil rights plank. Do you recall that?

H: No. You see, I would not have been invited to that. As I remember, the three or four of us in 1952 that had to carry the battle in the platform committee, in the pre-convention committee--you see, we had the drafting committee in 1952 and I was on that. John Battle of Virginia--I may be a bit confused here about the two years because

I was active in both 1952 and 1956--and there was a young businessman from Atlanta and a businessman from Houston, or a political leader, but Battle and myself were looked to from the political side. These other men were non-officeholders--I'm sorry I've forgotten their names. But I think it was in 1952, I'm pretty sure it was, the man that gave us the most trouble, the most violent resister was a young circuit judge named George Wallace.

F: Even then he'd surfaced, huh?

H: Right.

F: You had the problem all during the fifties, it started before then, that it was misnamed "Federal Aid to Education." I know you offered a compromise bill on federal funding of school buildings.

H: Yes, I thought that was the way to get it done. Of course I would have been for any kind of aid. I was forthright. I don't recall that I ever pulled punches on the federal aid thing because I felt very strongly.

F: Schools were needed, you were for [that].

H: You bet I was! And this matter of race didn't bother me a minute. I would take whatever handicap that came along on it. I'm glad you reminded me of that, because I'm trying to work on my memoirs now and I must put in a paragraph on that. My theory, and strictly my strategy, was that here on aid to buildings you bypassed all of these fears of federal dictation over curricula.

F: Do you know whether the White House appreciated your efforts?

H: What year was that?

F: 1956.

H: You know, I ought to be getting your help in my [memoirs].

F: We'll send you a transcript.

H: I mean, in this outline that you have because that would be very helpful to me in my memoirs.

F: I'll send you a Xerox copy of this.

H: Would you do that? I'd be very grateful.

I think perhaps some of the administration people--yes, my recollection is that I had help on that. Does anything in your record there indicate otherwise?

F: No.

H: My recollection is, yes.

F: Is there anything that we ought to say on the Faubus-Central High School fiasco that you haven't covered and don't intend to cover elsewhere?

H: I don't think so because it's quite remote from Mr. Johnson's relationship. I think that you'll get it in very clear utterances from more reliable sources, more authoritative sources. There's a lot to say, and I will be writing my memoirs which probably you'd want to get a copy if I can find a publisher.

F: Yes, right. Did Mr. Johnson ever express anything to you over [Dale] Alford's defeat of you?

H: I don't recall if I had a note from him.

F: It must have hurt.

H: Yes, it did hurt. It was the one place really--I must speak frankly but with complete accuracy--where I felt Mr. Rayburn let me down. He proceeded on that cold, pragmatic philosophy, it was not furtive but deceptive, it was a part of his grand strategy. He would say, "Brooks, you are a practical man; you ought to know. It's the case of the king is dead, long live the king! You've got a new congressman, and we work with whomever they send."

F: Did you have a forewarning that this was going to come off, or did it just spring at you in that last--?

H: It sprang at me in the last ten days. I had a day or two's warning about the announcement, but it was a coup.

F: It must have been organized pretty well to have gone that fast that quickly, organized in advance.

H: Oh, yes, it was organized very, very quickly, there's no question about it. But in the mood of the state at that time and in the tightly held control of the politics of the state by Orval Faubus' group, it could be done. One thing that I ought to check out and I don't have clearance from the man involved, but one of the men that Orval Faubus discussed plans with in a midnight trip to one of the counties outside of Little Rock, spent a good deal of time telling the Governor, this local leader did, that he was making a great mistake. The Governor listened very attentively. This was after the plans had all been laid and the Governor had gone out there merely to tell these local leaders what was happening and what

to do. So this local leader, who was also a very warm friend of Faubus', as well as a political friend of mine, just implored the Governor not to do it and walked to the car with him as the Governor and his escort started back to Little Rock. As I recall, this was about two o'clock in the morning, it was around October 25, along in there, about ten days before the election, and the Governor said, "I'm convinced you're right about it. I oughtn't to knife the nominee. I'll go back to Little Rock and pull the dogs off."

And when the dogs were not pulled off, we wondered what had happened. As a matter of fact, I didn't wonder but they did--the men who were privy to this conversation wondered why the dogs weren't pulled off. Months after, maybe years after, this particular leader said to Claude Carpenter, who was the lieutenant of the administration movement--I say he was the lieutenant, he became the generalissimo, he was one of Faubus' lieutenants but he became the leader in this particular stroke against me. You see, Faubus had simply released his men to do it. And so this friend of mine said to Claude Carpenter, "Now the Governor told me that morning, after midnight, that he was changing directions. Didn't he go back to Little Rock and tell you not to do this?" And Claude said, "That's right, but we didn't pay any attention to him because it had gone so far that we knew that he was utterly helpless to change direction."

F: The dogs were already out in the field.

H: The dogs were already in the field, and you couldn't pull them back

and change direction, and that's the story. Now it all sounds very valid to me.

That doesn't make the Governor look any better in the political books because if he'd been a man of courage and conscience, he would have told them publicly that he was renouncing--

F: He could have gone on statewide TV.

H: He could have saved my position as a fellow nominee. He was able to do this because he had gotten rid of his opposition in the August primary. Incidentally, in that August primary, ten thousand more votes were cast than in the election in which I was unseated. The primary was the decisive thing. We assumed, and traditionally that had been that the primary determined it, because that was long before the Republican or Independent spirit built up any political strength. I received twelve thousand more votes against my segregationist opponent in July of 1958 than Dale Alford received in his twelve hundred majority defeat of me in November. 71,000 votes were cast in the July primary, and only 60,000 in the November election when Alford was their write-in candidate. So the real decisive vote was back there in July when we had a posing of the question. I got a lot of segregationist votes from people that didn't approve of my race position, and yet they had a sort of feeling that I was trying to do the best I could for my city and for the country.

F: Did the Southern Baptist Convention show any interest in this?

H: Yes, they did. There's a heartwarming experience. I was defeated in November of 1958. I had been elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1957 and had been re-elected in Houston in May of 1958, so I had a few months to serve yet in my second one-year term as

president of the convention.

The convention in May of 1959 met in Louisville, and I remember walking into a basement meeting of the leading Baptist church of Louisville, a meeting attended by about four hundred foreign missionaries who were home on leave and for the convention. Someone else was speaking, but when I walked in it just broke loose--a tremendous ovation. I didn't know what was happening. I thought something had happened on the platform that I had been unaware of, and as I just walked up to the head table to take my seat which had been reserved for the president of the convention, they just kept cheering, cheering, and cheering!

F: It must have brought tears to your eyes.

H: It was one of those very deeply moving experiences. I said to someone sitting there, "What's the occasion?" "This is for you, Mr. Hays." "For me?" He said, "They see your wound stripes. This is for you. They appreciate what you did in Little Rock."

Now of course these were foreign missionaries, and there is the difference. But on the other hand, that same spirit in the same degree went through the whole convention because while many of them from the Deep South--Mississippi and Alabama--would have said, "Brooks made a mistake. He should have protected our society and our Southern practices, our way of life," many of them at the same time I think felt that regardless of those differences I had acted in an independent--

F: You acted on your principles.

H: I acted on my principles, and I think that there's something rather encouraging about that. In other words, the Baptists, with all of

the pulling back, had at least created a forum for me, and that came out in some rather interesting experiences. Down in Mississippi, for example, during all of this tension I was invited to address the Mississippi State Baptist Convention. Six Baptist congregations, prodded by their White Citizen Council members of those churches, passed resolutions asking the State Baptist Committee to cancel the invitation to me, but they held their ground. I went to Jackson to speak; [there was] great tension too because you could see that the police had been alerted. I had had bomb threats and of course had had to have a bodyguard in Little Rock at one time, so there was great tension when I reached the airport and then when I went into the crowded church convention meeting place. But it turned into a very fine experience. I handled it the best way I could and let them know that I was not retreating from what I believed to be right, but then talked about our work in the world.

One of my friends told me later--he was on the platform--he said, "I watched the countenances of this group, these vigorous citizens' council people, and I watched your use of Arkansas folklore, Baptist folklore sort of melt them down. They didn't want to laugh at first."

Well, that's a response to your question about the Baptists.

F: Is the belief valid that Faubus to a certain extent manufactured the Central High School incident to get himself re-elected?

H: What happened, I think, is this: the advisers, his strategy team, panicked, and they told him that he had to join the other side.

Now I am not convinced at all, though my information is a bit meager, that he manufactured it. I think that, having decided that it was explosive enough politically--you see, that sort of cast the die and he had to blow it up as much as possible. But I will say this as a concession to the other side--it was explosive enough that he had to be confronted with some decision-making. And having decided that he was joining the other side politically, then he had to make it look even more serious than it was. That's my analysis, if that makes sense.

F: Well, the convert always has to be a little extreme.

H: Exactly. He capitulated. He simply abdicated responsible and moral leadership. There of course came the breaking point. One thing that I've never seen in print and it will get into my memoirs, I will say that the thing that will linger in my memory is that he said later, apropos of the Central High School violence, "Who would have thought that Amis Guthridge"--that was the segregationist leader--"was right and Brooks was wrong?" And of course when he said "right" and "wrong", he was talking about politics and not about social morality.

F: When you were named as director of the TVA in 1959, you had to be confirmed by the Senate.

H: Yes.

F: Was there any problem?

H: Not at all. It was done by voice vote and not a single dissenting vote.

F: You told me what Johnson said on that occasion. Did you have any other relationship with him insofar as your return to Washington was concerned?

H: I don't remember. I think that I wrote him a note of thanks for that gracious statement, but I don't recall talking with him. I think I was conscious all the way along of the great pressure he was under and I didn't try to divert him just for social purposes.

F: When you come down to 1960, I guess you're skewered by the Hatch Act from playing any political role?

H: That's right.

F: So that it just went on without your participation, except as a voter.

H: There was a little talk of my being placed in nomination for vice president, I don't know whether you knew that.

F: No.

H: That was true. Gerald Johnson, formerly of the Baltimore Sun, wrote a long editorial in the New Republic, quite a statement on "Baptist Brooks for Vice President." Of course that's just one journalist, however a very brilliant journalist.

F: Brilliant and a national following.

H: Right. His thesis was rather interesting. He said, "If the nominee for president is a Massachusetts senator, a New England Catholic"--he either said Massachusetts or New England Catholic--"what better running mate could he have than a southern Baptist?" Then he said, "On the other hand, if it's Mr. Stevenson, a northern Unitarian, why wouldn't he

want the respectability that an orthodox religious body could give him." It was interesting.

One of Mr. Johnson's young friends, Luther Holcomb--do you know him?

F: Yes.

H: He was at that time, I think, the executive director of the Dallas Federation of Churches. [He] went out to the convention, the Los Angeles convention. He knew about this talk. I did utterly nothing about it. In fact, I dismissed it, after talking with Colgate Darden, former governor of Virginia, who was a warm friend of mine. I had served at the UN with him, again under one of Mr. Eisenhower's appointments; I went to the Assembly in 1955 as a delegate and Governor Darden was another one of the delegation. He was ambitious for me, in order to sort of find some atonement by the country for what Arkansas had done to me. He talked a little about it. He said, "I'd love to see you vice president." Something came to his attention. But a little later on he said, "Brooks, you just oughtn't to be encouraged. There isn't a chance in the world, and I hope you won't let them put you in nomination." I said, "I won't be put in nomination. I won't be placed in nomination."

Of course at that time we thought it might be like the 1956 convention, where you had an open convention, but it developed that Mr. Kennedy, as the nominee, wanted to make his choice. I doubt that Gerald Johnson's editorial ever came to his attention or that he gave any thought to my being his running mate.

F: The man he picked was somewhat like you.

H: Yes, you had that same axis geographically. Of course Mr. Johnson had an advantage that I certainly didn't have. He came from a tremendous state; a member of the Senate, he had a base. I had no base. All I had was a lot of goodwill and a lot of very favorable publicity, which was two years old, and those things dissolve pretty quickly.

But Luther Holcomb called me from Los Angeles to tell me what was happening. I think it was more of a friendly gesture toward me to let me know that while he was all for what Mr. Rayburn and Lyndon had decided to do, he was apparently in the corridor there with them, and in the room with them. You know, Luther is the kind that you enjoy having around; he loves politics, so Luther just called to say, "It's gone to Mr. Johnson," and I said, "That will be fine. I certainly didn't expect it." I had already said, "Just don't let them put me in nomination."

But it's just one of those little interesting footnotes, because if Mr. Johnson had declined, who knows! Somebody might have said, "Have you thought about this old Baptist over there! Tennessee Valley Authority! There's a good southerner." And my TVA--my work down there for a year, nearly two years.

F: It's an interesting thing to play "what-if" with.

H: That's right. But I think Mr. Johnson and Mr. Rayburn made the right decision.

F: Do you think Mr. Johnson had any role in your being named assistant secretary of state?

H: No, I don't think he did. I think that probably originated with Jack Kennedy.

F: Had Jack Kennedy had a chance to observe you as congressman?

H: Oh yes, we served together. Do you remember what year he came? At any rate, I was there when he came.

F: In 1948, I believe, or 1946.

H: It was in 1946. I know it was in 1946 because he made a speech against the Taft-Hartley Bill that influenced me to vote against the Hartley version of the Taft-Hartley Bill--the House version. I voted against it and only a few southerners did. I remember there were about a half dozen of us, maybe more, but not over a dozen. It was Jack Kennedy's speech that influenced me, and he was a freshman member at the time. But he was on the Labor Committee and he had done his homework well. He laid out the three weak places in that bill. I can remember two of them right now. I said, "I just can't go with this." I would have been defeated the next day if there had been an election in Arkansas because my people wanted that bill. I thought that labor needed new regulations, but I wasn't going to make it a vengeful, punitive thing.

F: Right.

H: At any rate, he and I had been acquaintances in the House, not close. But he was apparently very much moved by my defeat. They tell me that among the telegrams that reached my office here in Washington the next day after my defeat that the first one was from John Foster Dulles and the second one was from John F. Kennedy, and they

used that in the office as a symbol of the bipartisan reaction.

F: I remember Richard Nixon said publicly that it was a tragedy.

H: That appeared in the Herald Tribune on November 24, 1958, his open letter, and I read it in the Herald Tribune before I got his letter. He released it at once and said, "Dear Brooks: Your defeat was among the most tragic of all the election results in 1958." So I had a lot of ointment poured in my wounds.

F: You still had the wounds but--

H: But Mr. Kennedy, you see, was interested in my position in the Little Rock thing. I don't know how much detail to give you, but Adlai Stevenson had called me after his appointment had been announced as the ambassador to the UN to tell me he wanted me to be one of his two deputy ambassadors. I went to New York to discuss it with him; told him I would accept it. I was almost ready to leave, at the door, when he said, "By the way, you'd better stop in Washington and talk to Dean Rusk. I think he has other ideas for you." I did stop and went in to see Mr. Rusk, and he said, "Come on over here," and he was at his desk, said, "Let's sit over here in the corner." We went over and sat on the couch in the office that the State Department had made available for him and he said, "I've just come from Mr. Kennedy's Georgetown office and he asked me to say to you he wants you to be assistant secretary of state for congressional relations." We tied it up in a hurry. I said, "Well, I had other ideas, but if that's what the boss wants, that's what it'll be."

And that was all there was to it.

F: You probably had ambivalent feelings on it.

H: I would have much rather gone to New York as deputy ambassador.

F: Did you see much of Vice President Johnson during those days?

H: No, I didn't. My work was chiefly with the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House and the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate, the chairmen of those committees.

F: Did you get a feeling that Mr. Johnson was also doing sort of congressional liaison work?

H: Oh yes. But, you see, there was no occasion for his working with me particularly. Where foreign affairs were involved he had Larry O'Brien, he had the White House staff, and that prevented procedural trivia. He just went straight to the boss or to O'Brien.

F: Did you get any feeling of resentment toward Johnson as still having too heavy a hand in senatorial affairs, that he still thought of himself as a kind of an ex-post-facto Senate majority leader?

H: You mean as vice president?

F: As vice president. I've heard that accusation and I wondered whether it was real or whether it was just--

H: I don't think I can throw much light on that. I think that undoubtedly you had a problem there. I remember only on one occasion when I sensed it on the part of Mr. Kennedy, that is, a feeling to put it down and to allay it and to disarm any feelings that might have been generated. I remember when I was sworn in as special assistant to

the President on December 1, 1961. You see, I had come first to the job we mentioned and then nine months after that the President asked me to come over to the White House and have an office there as a special assistant. They made a little ceremony of it; they invited some people in to see me take the oath of office. At the conclusion of the oath, the President asked me to say a few words and I did. And then in a few moments there emerged from the group standing there the Vice President, and before he could shake hands with me the President said, "Lyndon, I didn't know you were here. If I'd known you were here, I'd have called on you to say something." I think it was an embarrassment, you see, that he hadn't called on him. I knew then that that might have been inspired--just the way he said it so appealingly, as if he used these words, "Lyndon, don't feel that I neglected you." Do you follow me on that?

F: Yes.

H: Mr. Johnson--I had had no indication that anything he had said or done called for that. At any rate there must have been some talk around the White House [about] Jack and his feelings for Lyndon, a desire to dispel anything of that kind. I'm sure that that indicated something because I never had any feeling in conversations with either President Kennedy or Robert Kennedy that there was any feelings on that side, nor did I have any indication--I probably wouldn't have had, so I just can't throw much light on that, except that I think perhaps that gossip has overplayed that perhaps.

F: Evidently President Kennedy was having extreme sensitivity to how Johnson might be feeling and tried to counter it.

H: Oh, yes. Here were two men versed in the ways of high level politics and statecraft, both products of the Senate and both products of rigorous political life, or veterans [of it], both eager in the interest of the country and the party. I think whatever differences people have about these personal alignments, I think people would recognize that underlying it would be a devotion to the party and to the country. So I don't think that you're going to find a whole lot in the study that you make. There are certain people who are far better informed than I am on it.

F: We're coming up to the end of the tape, and we're also coming up to the noon hour. Do you think we had better quit?

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I]

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