INTERVIEW WITH CHARLES HERRING

PB: This is October 24, 1968. We are in the office of Attorney Charles Herring, also State Senator Charles Herring. Charles, tell us something about your practice. You are Senator and Attorney as well, are you now?

CH: Yes, I've been practicing law in Austin for about thirty years, and have been in the State Senate for twelve years, having been first elected in 1956. I am now nominee of the Democratic Party for re-election the fifth of November this year.

PB: Running for re-election in 1968. Now, I happen to know that you were quite active in some of the political campaigns which President Lyndon Johnson had in years past and particularly for the Senate. From what period does your friendship with the President date?

CH: I first became interested in Lyndon Johnson in 1937. I was a mid-law student in the University of Texas at that time and he announced and ran for Congress of the United States from the Tenth District that year. I was impressed by him; I liked what I saw. He had a number of opponents in that special election, and so I contributed some work to it, not in his official campaign headquarters, but as a law student I was interested in going out and passing out stickers and nailing up placards and doing the menial jobs

of the campaign.

PB: Was that the first campaign that you were even in?

CH: First one that I was ever in. Since that time I have been interested. I think my interest was activated by the record he made after he was elected. I've been interested in government ever since. So, whatever I do in government I attribute to his starting me in it. I hope that whatever record I make will be a credit to him.

PB: Well, that's commendable. Now, what other campaign did you first take an active part in?

CH: I took some part in the 1941 campaign when he ran for United State Senator against W. Lee O'Daniel, the Governor of Texas. It was a fast moving campaign and another special election. I was not, again, an official part of his headquarters, but I did work with some of the people like Jake Pickle and John Connally and the other group that more or less headed up and carried on that campaign. It was a distressing one in the sense that we always felt that he won the campaign, but that wasn't the way the final results came out and we were disappointed.

PB: What do you recall of that campaign now? That is one of the blank spots in the interviews that I've done so far. I've had no one so far that was really familiar with the 1941 campaign. What did you do in that campaign? How did it all originate, do you recall?

CH: Well, you know a special election came up because of the death of a United States Senator.

PB: Yes.

CH: And W. Lee O'Daniel who was then Governor of Texas announced and so did then Congressman Johnson, for United States Senator in this special election.

PB: Was that prior to the time he entered the Navy?

CH: This was prior to the time he entered the Navy, yes. And I remember that he said in that campaign that if he ever voted to send the boys of this state overseas he would go himself. And he did go later on that year. It was a fast moving campaign, as I said. We had our headquarters in the Austin Hotel, and the time was short. Although Mr. Johnson was known throughout the state, he wasn't as well known as W. Lee O'Daniel because he had been representing the Tenth Congressional District primarily. So, it was a tough hard campaign to make. He worked very hard and all of us did, and I thought we had it won but it didn't turn out that way.

PB: It was lost by a very narrow margin, though, wasn't it?

CH: Very, very narrow margin. As a matter of fact, as I remember, the election was on a Saturday, and the Sunday Dallas News came out with big headlines that Lyndon Johnson had been elected to the Senate. That was before all of the East Texas votes finally came in that changed the results. Monday morning or Tuesday, some of the East Texas boxes started coming in

and they overcame the lead that he had. Governor O'Daniel won by a small margin, but in a political campaign, that's all it takes.

PB: That's all it takes. That's right. Subsequent to the 1941 election he did run for re-election to the Congress in . . . well, it would have been in '42, I guess.

CH: Yes , he ran in '42, '44 and '46. My acquaintance with him continued throughout the period of time after he had run for the Senate and was defeated, and he went into the service in the Navy in the Pacific for a period of time. I remember so well the correspondence that I would get from his office was signed by Lady Bird. She was running his office while he was overseas in the Navy. He came back and in 1946 he had a rather difficult campaign in the sense of it being kind of a mean campaign. He won handily, but it was a tough one in the sense that he was subjected to embarrassing accusations and things that often happen in a bitter campaign.

PB: That was the campaign against Hardy Hollers, wasn't it?

CH: Yes, Hardy Hollers had been overseas. He was a Colonel in the Army and he came back and ran against Congressman Johnson in 1946. I think I was the first person who notified the Congressman that Colonel Hollers was going to run against him. I had a friend in England who knew Hardy Hollers who wrote me on my ship in the Pacific and told me that Colonel Hollers was considering and he thought he would run for the Congress as soon as he returned after the war. I wrote the

Congressman in Washington and told him that this was what I was looking for and thought it would happen, and it did happen that way.

PB: You say you were on a ship in the Pacific. Were you in the Navy then?

CH: Yes, I was in the Navy. That's sort of an interesting sidelight, too. I was acquainted with Congressman Johnson and I decided that I wanted to go into the Navy. I was married and had two children and was not subject at the time to the draft, but I felt some responsibility and an urge to get in the service. I remember meeting Congressman Johnson one afternoon in Ed Clark's office here in Austin. I had been with that firm when I first started practicing law and they were good friends of mine and also good friends of his. At that time the firm was composed of Ed Clark and Everett Looney; they were the only members. And I had worked for them as their only associate for a period of time. But one afternoon I saw the Congressman there in the office and told him I wanted to get in the Navy. He picked up the phone and called a commander in Dallas and told him that I wanted to get in and where should I apply. He set up an appointment with me in Dallas two days later, and I went up and was interviewed, took my physical examination and volunteered for the Navy as an ensign. Later on, and before I was called into active duty, the Congressman asked me if I would come to Washington as his administrative

assistant while I was awaiting my orders to go overseas. And I did do that. I went to Washington and lived part of the time in the Dodge Hotel which was a hangout in those days for the employees of his office and also of other congressmen. We lived in the basement, I remember so well. But after I had been there awhile, he insisted that I move out to his home, which I did. Bill Deason was living there then. He was in the Navy and stationed in Washington and so he and I shared a room together out at the Congressman's home off of Connecticut Avenue several blocks, and I lived in, I guess what you'd call the attic of his home until my orders came through to go overseas, or to go into the Navy on active duty. And I did go in and served about two and a half years, most of it in the Pacific aboard a ship. My duties were primarily assault landing in the Pacific during the last two years of the war. I made nine of those assault landings including Iwo Jima and all the others that we went through out there. As a matter of fact, I made the first landing on Okinawa at the end of the war. My ship was hit by a Kamikazi plane and we came back to San Francisco and decommissioned it and soon after that the war was over and I was released from active duty.

PB: I'm interested in that attic. I have the impression that that attic housed many young Navy officers over a period of years. Do you happen to know of your own knowledge of some of those people?

CH: Oh, Jake Pickle was in the Navy at that time, you know, and

when he'd come to Washington, maybe before he left, . . .

PB: That's the present Congressman.

CH: Yes, the present Congressman from the Tenth District, and whom I predict will be re-elected this year against formidable opposition. But Jake Pickle was there, Bill Deason was there, John and Nell Connally were living in Washington at that time, off and on in an apartment and they'd come over often. Many of the old crowd of young people that Johnson had encouraged so much, did from time to time live there. I remember so well, the floor of this attic room creaked when you'd walk across it. If you came in late at night, and you always did if you worked for Congressman Johnson, because his hours were long, you walked across the floor and it would creak. His bedroom was just under this attic room and he kept a broom in there by the bed and if you woke him up he would hit the ceiling of his bedroom with the broom handle to let you know you were disturbing him.

PB: I seem to recall that you also could hear from that attic room when the Congressman woke up in the morning, too.

CH: You could certainly hear it. Yes. He'd let you know when he was awake, and he'd want everyone else awake.

PB: And his business started right there in that bed, didn't it?

CH: It started as soon as he opened his eyes or became conscious in the morning, his business started. The telephone would start ringing, he would start calling people and he expected

the people who worked in his office to be at the office by sun-up, if possible. So I'd leave his home in the dark of the morning and catch a bus and get down to the office as quick as I could.

PB: You didn't ride down with the Congressman.

CH: No, no. He didn't go down as early as he expected me to, which was understandable. I'd catch a bus . . . in those days you'd catch a bus part of the way down town, change to a streetcar and finally get up to the Old House Office Building where his office was.

PB: I believe in that house on Connecticut Avenue there was only one bathroom, is that right?

CH: One bathroom upstairs and you had to sort of be sure that you got there at the right time, because there was a little congestion. There were two rooms up there that people who worked for and helped the Congressman, and who he helped more than they helped him, would stay from time to time, such as you, Paul Bolton, and Walter Jenkins and others over the years when they were beginning their careers in Washington. It was an interesting experience to live with the Congressman for many reasons. One was, I suppose, that you met alot of important people in this country there, because he would always include you in the dinners that he had in his home and other things. I remember J. Edgar Hoover lived not too far away. And he would often come down to eat or maybe for a drink with the Congress-

man. They were good friends. And I met people like him and many of the Senators who are no longer in Congress. Some of them are dead and gone. But I met most of the important people in Washington while I was living there.

PB: How long did you live there?

CH: I suppose a total of several months. Then I was called into active duty and left for my duty in the Navy.

PB: Did the Congressman have any particular rules about . . . about office routine? For instance, someone has told me that he demanded that every letter received be answered on the day it was received.

CH: Oh, yes, that was an order that he didn't let be violated if he ever found out about it. He insisted that we not leave our office, whatever it took, until every letter that came in got some kind of an answer and went out that day. And I tried very hard when I was there never to let one go over to the second day, and if I did, I didn't let him know about it because he had a very strict rule. You know, we got several deliveries of mail every day, and he probably was one of the most popular members of Congress anywhere, and it was during the war time and he received letters from overseas from many servicemen he had helped over the years and from other people throughout the country. We answered those and on Sunday mornings he would insist that we go down and do the same things we did during the week. He had another rule that I thought was a

good one . . . every letter that he received that was written in longhand he wanted to read himself and maybe dictate an answer to it. And on Sunday mornings he would not go down to the office sometimes but I would go down, open the mail, call him and review the mail, so that he could take any action that he needed to. Then we'd go ahead and process the mail and get it out Sundays just the same as we did on Mondays.

PB: Do you remember some members of the staff who were working at that early date?

CH: Oh, yes. Of course, Mary Rather was there; she'd been with the Congressman for a long time. And Glynn Stegall who is now dead. He was one of the best office men I've ever known as well as being a fine gentleman and a very knowledgeable man. I remember when I was working there, I would dictate most of the mail myself and he would take it down in shorthand, he or Mary one, and see that it got out before the day was out. His wife, Mildred Stegall , is still in Washington, a very fine lady. She was then working for the Reconstruction Finance Corporation downtown, and they were a wonderful couple. I've always been glad I knew them, because they were such kind and gentle people but the hardest working people I've ever known.

PB: I believe Mrs. Stegall later went to work for Mr. Johnson, didn't she?

CH: Yes, she later went to work for Mr. Johnson. When he was Vice President, she worked for him and I believe she works in the White House now.

PB: Can you recall during the 1946 campaign some of the charges that were made against the Congressman?

CH: Oh, the charge that I remember best I suppose had to do with an apartment house at 1901 Dillman Street, here in Austin, Texas. And I knew that one best because the lady who owned it died and had designated me the executor of her estate. Part of my responsibility after her death was to dispose of all the property that she had and divide the money up between the beneficiaries of her will. One of the assets was the house at 1901 Dillman. I tried for a long time to sell it. Finally, the Congressman looked at it and decided that he would like to buy it and he did buy it. He paid more than anyone else had ever offered. But he was accused of using his influence in acquiring it, I think primarily because I had later gone to work for him in Washington. His opponent tried to put some emphasis on that. He was accused of many things in connection with his service in office. I remember he answered all these charges at a rally held in the little park across from the County Courthouse here. He had documented every charge.

PB: Wooldridge Park.

CH: Wooldridge Park here in Austin, Texas. I remember the speech he made. He had a big brown envelope which he carried to the

podium with him. He took these charges one by one and not only answered them but documented his answers. And he won his race, of course, very handily.

PB: As I recall, those particular years Johnson was charged with owning practically every apartment house in town, too.

CH: Oh, yes, he was accused of owning property that he'd never seen or heard of. But you know, when charges like that are made in a political campaign, they hurt. They make you feel bad personally but also they influence voters because the general public doesn't know the difference often. There were charges made against his ownership of property, his wealth that he had acquired. Actually in those days he wasn't a wealthy man at all. But he was accused of being wealthy and his friendship with many important people in Texas such as Herman Brown and George Brown, who were very close personal friends of his, was brought in. They had one of the biggest contract firms in the country, had done a lot of work in Texas during the war for the Federal Government. His opponent accused him of using his influence to get contracts for his friends and things of this sort, but nothing was ever established and as a matter of fact, he was able to answer successfully every charge that was made against him.

PB: I seem to recall that bidding for work that Herman Brown was interested in was either on a cost-plus basis or on a bid basis and one of the answers that was made in those days was to the effect that it was either a cost-plus . . . either he

was drafted by the government for the job or . . . or it was on a bid basis.

CH: Oh, yes, there were a number of cost-plus contracts let during the war and the government did that because they needed the work done on a crash program basis. It was an extra rush job every time they had one and Brown and Root, which was the name of the firm at that time, was one of the best performing contractors in the country. So the government often did hire them on a cost-plus basis. Their books were audited by the government and the government even had the right to renegotiate the contracts after they had been completed. So there was no chance of any sort of favorites of that sort in government contracts. The others that weren't on a cost-plus were on a low-bid basis. Whoever bid on the job and submitted the lowest bid would get it. Congressman Johnson was able to dispell that accusation very easily.

PB: Now we come to the 1948 campaign and I believe that you did take an active interest in that.

CH: Yes, in 1948 ClaudeWild was the official campaign manager for the Congressman. I remember in early spring the Congressman was trying to decide whether to run. We had many meetings at the Driskill Hotel where he was staying temporarily. He finally made his decision to run and John Connally and I opened headquarters in the old Hancock house which is about a couple blocks from Congress Avenue here in Austin. It was a beauti-

ful old two-story home, but it was vacant then. We rented the entire house and opened our headquarters there. We started in about March and we kept the headquarters on through until the September State Democratic Convention that year.

PB: What was your job there, Charles?

CH: Oh, I had many jobs. Primarily, I suppose, I was helping John Connally. He was everything from finance chairman to seeing that the signs got nailed up and seeing that the helicopter that the Congressman campaigned in had the proper gasoline at the right places and sending out advance people all over the state to keep up with his campaign tours -- everything that goes with a scattered campaign.

PB: There are two questions that occur to me right there. Number one is, quite early in the campaign I believe, Mr. Johnson became ill with a kidney stone and had to go eventually to Mayo to have the stone removed. Are you familiar with the period in there where there were doubts as to whether he was going to continue in the campaign?

CH: Oh, yes. He came down with this acute attack of kidney stones and the doctors here tried to do something about it without an operation but it wasn't possible. He had to go to Mayo's for a short time right in the heat of the campaign. We were all running around in circles trying to keep the campaign going the way it should go, not knowing whether he would be able to come back and campaign. I remember so well that he had major

speeches scheduled in various parts of Texas during the time he was gone. I made some of them and John Connally made some of them for him. We'd go wherever he was supposed to be and explain his absence and make his speech. We tried to keep the campaign moving just as fast as we could. He wasn't gone long; he came back rather quickly and was back on the road.

PB: That was one of the questions that I had in mind, the effect of the illness on the campaign. Maybe we can come back to that in a moment. But the other thing was, you spoke of keeping track of advance men. I've been told that possibly this 1948 campaign saw the first use of the advance man in a campaign. Do you know whether that's true or not?

CH: It's the first campaign that I know of in which they were used in the way that we used them. It worked quite well and it was the President's own idea. We would send the advance men ahead of the candidate all over Texas. They were working voluntarily without pay. The best that we could do was furnish them an automobile to go in and we usually borrowed those together with expenses. They would go into towns and communities where he was going to be and line up crowds, make the arrangements, see where he could land his helicopter, line up all of the details of speaking that you might have such as microphones, podiums and all these things. Often the ones in the rearguard had to travel from town to town as fast as the helicopter could get there because they needed to be there

when the candidate arrived. I remember so well one instance where a campaign advance man left a town and he had had his oil changed the night before in his car and the garage forgot to put oil back in it. He got out of town about a mile and the car just came apart. Of course, he was driving in excess of the speed limit I'm sure all the way, trying to keep ahead of the campaign . . . or the congressman. The campaign as a whole was run on less money I suppose for what we did than any campaign I've ever seen. Often I'd get collect long distance calls from advance men who were stuck in a town and no money to get out with. I'd wire fifty dollars or whatever I could scrape together so they could get to the next town. We just barely stayed ahead of the wolves, so to speak. We couldn't pay our bills, we didn't have any money, it was hard to get. The public seemed to think that Governor Stevenson was going to win the campaign and money was a difficult thing to raise in those days. Often we'd stay down there till the sun came up in the morning, John and I would, trying to keep up with all the details that had to be kept up with. We often stayed all night long working at the headquarters.

PB: I brought that subject up because I believe in the current issue of Time magazine, there was quite a discussion of the fact that in the present campaign for the presidency the advance man is sort of taken for granted and has to go into every town where a candidate is going to speak and make all those arrangements, and I thought it would be a very interesting

commentary on our political system in general if it is true that this was the first time.

CH: It's the first time that I've ever known of it or heard of it really, and he was moving so fast, the candidate was, that he certainly had no time to do anything after he got to a place. All he could do was get there and get out, because it was the first campaign I've ever heard of that a helicopter was used in, and he tried to make as many places as he could; he'd make ten, twelve, fifteen stops a day. I remember so well, once he was down in South Texas flying in the helicopter and he saw some section hands working on the railroad track and there was a road nearby. He insisted on landing there on this public road in his helicopter, got out of it, went over and shook hands with the section hands and asked them for their vote, told them who he was, talked with them a few minutes, got back up in the helicopter and took off again. It was almost a door-to-door campaign by helicopter.

PB: Your big problem then seemed to be raising money. Someone has told me that you had a difficult time sometimes in avoiding people who had a debt they were trying to collect from the campaign.

CH: Oh, yes, I remember so well. When people would come to collect for bills that had been incurred for printing, travel and all that sort of thing, they would finally end up seeing me, and I had no money to pay the bills with. One of our creditors here in town had done some printing work for our campaign and

and came over to the campaign house to collect his bill; it was long overdue. When the telephone girl told me he was downstairs I climbed out of the window so that I wouldn't be there when he came up. Instead of coming up the stairs as he normally would do, he went out on the front porch and caught me just as I came down from the upstairs window.

PB: How did you come down from the window?

CH: Well, I climbed down onto the little roof over the porch there. I climbed down on that and then I was going down one of the support posts on the porch roof and he walked up and he said, "You're just the man I want to see." It was Bill Petri; he's a good friend of mine and we often laugh about that occasion. I couldn't pay him. We didn't have the money.

PB: There was another aspect to this campaign. I guess it was not the first time but certainly one of the first times that there was a wide dependence upon public opinion polls. Are you familiar with that aspect of it?

CH: Oh, somewhat. We tried to take opinion polls wherever we could, either on a state-wide basis if we could finance them or on a regional basis to try to find out where the weak spots were and where the strong spots were and where he needed to go. The opinion polls were important to us and were very successful really. Sometimes they didn't pan out but they would give you a good indication of where your weakness was and what you could do to improve on it. It was the first time that I

know of its being used in that way. We'd often take a poll of a county, for example.

PB: I also seem to recall that during those early days, Johnson's ranking in the polls was very, very low when he started out.

CH: It was very low when he started out and that was the reason it was so hard to raise funds to finance his campaign, because so many people didn't give him a chance of winning. The polls were very low, and as you recall in the first primary he was trailing Governor Stevenson by a substantial vote. I remember so well one Sunday afternoon after the first primary vote was counted and he was behind, and he was wondering if he could ever overcome it in the runoff. We met out in the backyard of 1901 Dillman Street here in Austin. I remember Everett Looney, Alvin Wirtz and many of his old friends were there discussing what we needed to do. John Connally, of course, was there. John and Nellie were living in one of the apartments there. We talked all afternoon. The Congressman was pretty low; he didn't know whether he could make it or not. He was physically exhausted and he was trailing substantially in the vote and he . . . one of his low times, you know. All of us were of the opinion that he could win and encouraged him. We told him that he owed it to the people to go out and run the second part of the campaign, which he did. And, of course, as you know, he won by a very small margin in the second primary.

PB: In this second primary did you discern any appreciable dif-

ferences in campaign methods as compared with the first primary?

CH: Not necessarily in his own activities. In the headquarters office we did do a good deal more telephoning and keeping up with people throughout the state and all the counties and precincts that we could and used the telephone night and day, all of us there did, to try to keep people active and keep them working and keep them encouraged so that they would continue their work. We created enough interest I think among the people who were helping us throughout the state to cause them to work harder in the second primary than they did in the first. And the results proved that when it was over.

PB: We might put in right there the fact that in that particular era we had no television and the candidate leaned heavily on radio for state-wide speeches.

CH: That's true. We didn't have television then.

PB: And it was a somewhat different approach in radio then in that every speech a candidate made had to be approved by an attorney before it could go on the air.

CH: That's true. We had to check them all.

PB: Do you recall any instances when you had difficulties?

CH: Yes, there were some times when we had to change the script of a speech before the radio stations would let us run them. The guidelines we had . . . or radio station had, for approving speeches of political candidates were rather flexible and if

the radio manager didn't like you he could change your speech considerably. I had had that experience. I had represented K T B C radio here in Austin, also K N O W, as an attorney, and they often brought speeches to me during those days to approve or disapprove, so I knew what they could or could not do with it. We did have some difficulty with some of the stations throughout the state that were not supporting Congressman Johnson. They would make it a little difficult for us at times, but we usually worked it out to where he could say almost what he wanted to. At least, we made out.

PB: Of course, rules have been changed by the Federal Communications Commission since that time and as I understand it, a station has no right now to make any change whatsoever in a candidate's speeches.

CH: That's right, they're not responsible for libel under the Federal Communications rules at the present time, so you don't have that much anymore. Occasionally, you do where a speech is just obviously untrue and unfounded and you know it. I still do a little work that way and occasionally do something for K T B C still.

PB: Following the 1948 campaign . . . by the way, I have always considered that that 1948 campaign was sort of crucial in the career of the Congressman; that's why I have wanted you to talk about it. If he had not been elected Senator in that particular campaign he would never have been President, I believe.

CH: I think that's true. And it wasn't over in the second primary either, because you recall there were all kinds of contests on voting, vote counting throughout the state. There was an effort made to keep him off the ballot in the November election. We had some law suits about that all over the country. A Federal District Judge, for example, appointed Bob Smith of San Antonio, as a Master to go down and investigate some of the voting in South Texas. This went on through the September State Democratic convention when he was finally approved by the convention and put on the ballot as the nominee of the Democratic Party. Many of the charges were unfounded; the feelings were high; people in the other candidate's campaign were disappointed, of course, and a lot of them were mad and they were doing everything in the world to keep Congressman Johnson's name from going on the ballot in the November election. But it came before the committee - - -

PB: State Democratic - - -

CH: State Democratic Executive Committee of the State Convention held in Fort Worth in the Blackstone Hotel, as I recall. The committee voted by a narrow margin, actually, one vote, to put his name on the ballot. And it was nip and tuck until that vote was finally taken. I remember one or two of the votes were cast by proxy because some of the members of the S. D. E. C. weren't there. It was very close and it WAS won by one vote and that meant that his name would go on the ballot.

PB: Following Mr. Johnson's election to the Senate, what was your next contact with him?

CH: I'd see him and visit with him from time to time but I didn't work for him and he didn't have any hard races coming up then -- he was elected for a six-year term. John Connally went to Washington with him in January and stayed a year as his administrative assistant before he came back home. But my next connection with him was prior to 1951. He came to see me one day, or called me when he was in town and I saw him and he wanted to know if I would consider an appointment as United States District Attorney for the Western District of Texas when the office became available. I was then in private practice with Herman Jones who is a State District Judge here in Austin now. I told him that I would be interested and he wanted me to take the appointment if it came about. So in 1951 in about May I received a phone call one day from him saying that President Truman had appointed me as United States District Attorney for the Western District of Texas. I was confirmed by the United States Senate about ten days later and went into office. And I remember so well that after I was sworn in I saw him in the courthouse, the Federal courthouse where his office used to be here in Austin, Texas, and went down to talk to him. He said, "Well, I've got one thing I'd like to ask of you. You've been a friend of mine a long time. I want you to be the best U. S. attorney the district's

ever had." And he never asked me for a favor in the full four years I served. He was complimentary and after I had resigned from office about four years later, he wrote me a letter and told me that I had done what he asked me to. I had been appointed just in the last year of President Truman's presidency and President Eisenhower took office in 1953. It was the custom throughout the country, or had been, that all U. S. attorneys would submit their resignations to the Justice Department if there was a change in administration. So I called Senator Johnson and asked him what to do and he said "Don't do anything. You're doing a good job down there and I don't believe that President Eisenhower will ask you to turn the job over to a Republican." So I did stay in office for about two years after President Eisenhower took office. I remember one day Herbert Brownell, the Attorney General under the Eisenhower administration, called me on the phone and said, "You know, we're getting a lot of pressure down in Texas to appoint a Republican to your place, and we haven't asked you to resign and don't want to, but we are in a spot, because our own party can't figure out why we don't replace you. You're the last U. S. attorney of the Democratic administration left in office." I told Mr. Brownell that I appreciated his calling and that I would do whatever Senator Johnson asked me to do. And that's the last I heard of it until I resigned in 1955 of my own choice.

PB: Senator, your next active work for the Congressman . . . or the Senator now, it is, was when? in 1960?

CH: In 1960. That was the year that President Kennedy was seeking the nomination of the Democratic Party and a movement started to try to get Senator Johnson, who was the Majority Leader, nominated instead of President Kennedy. We formed an organization, and again John Connally was more or less the head of it in many ways. He opened an office in Washington at a hotel there, called me and asked me if I could travel some in this effort to see the delegates that were going to Los Angeles that year. We wanted to see if we could get enough delegates lined up to nominate Senator Johnson as the presidential nominee. I ended up traveling from about March of that year until the convention in the fall. I was gone most of that time; I'd get home maybe once every two or three weeks for a day or two, but I'd go back on the road, flying all over the country. I traveled in about fifteen states seeing delegates. Later a group of us at the request of Governor Connally went to Los Angeles ten days, or two weeks before the convention, to try to be there and court the delegates, so to speak, as they came in. Some of them came early and some didn't. We'd meet them, invite them to breakfast, to dinner, to lunch and every other thing to pursue our cause, to try to get enough votes for his nomination. This was a very interesting experience in my life; I met people all over the United States, in the midwest, the

far west, and some of the eastern states, people that I still know, still hear from, still friends of mine. He was not nominated and he accepted the Vice-Presidency, and of course, after the tragedy of President Kennedy, he was the logical one to be selected for the '64 convention. And I did work some in the '64 convention. I primarily worked North Carolina. I was asked to go there to see if we could organize the state. The Democratic nominee for governor was sort of on the spot; he didn't feel that he was in a position to endorse President Johnson and his state was pretty well split up and torn apart with the Ku Klux Klan and many other elements. So I went to North Carolina and with the help of David McConnell and a few other well-known people of that state, we organized a complete campaign of our own, from the ground up. I spent a number of weeks there and then before the convention I went to Atlantic City and spent three or four weeks before the convention started, helping Marvin Watson and Cliff Carter and others organize the convention. And I stayed through. I guess the most trying experience I ever had was being put in charge of all the credentials and tickets to the convention. I had the duty and responsibility of turning people down for tickets because the crowd was so large, we couldn't have enough seats for them. We had several contests on delegations on credentials. I had many important people in the country say some unkind things, but I had a job to do and I did it in the best

and fairest way I knew how. We were up night and day. Doris, my wife, came to the convention and I didn't see her until she had been there three days, because she was always asleep when I'd get through and still asleep when I left early in the mornings.

PB: Senator, in view of your long association with Mr. Johnson, I know that whatever you say will probably be biased in his favor, but we do like to get the personal assessment of the man from the person I'm interviewing. Could you give me such an assessment?

CH: My assessment I suppose is prejudiced, because I never met a man that I thought was more dynamic, that had more compassion for people. His popularity of course, in this year of 1968, is pretty low throughout the country. And strangely enough -- and sometimes I get rather provoked about it -- the people that he's done the most for are the people who criticize him. It's not his enemies who have destroyed his image temporarily, but it's his own friends and people that he's worked so hard for and done so much for over the years. I am disturbed at this. Of course, we have a lot of problems in this nation, but they weren't of his making. I don't think any man, living or dead, could have done more about them than he has done, or tried to do more about them than he has tried to do. But he's caught in one of those times when circumstances are against him. And that is the reason for his temporary lag in popu-

larity. But I have a strong conviction that before the history is finally written, people will recognize the tremendous contribution he's made, the influence he's had on the course of this nation, and he will go down in history as one of the outstanding and most intelligent, most effective presidents we've ever had. I believe that very strongly.

PB: Thank you, Charles Herring. You have been most helpful.

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By Charles F. Herring

to the

Lyndon Baines Johnson Library

In accordance with Sec. 507 of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended (44 U.S.C. 397) and regulations issued thereunder (41 CFR 101-10), I, Charles F. Herring, hereinafter referred to as the donor, hereby give, donate, and convey to the United States of America for eventual deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, and for administration therein by the authorities thereof, a tape and transcript of a personal statement approved by me and prepared for the purpose of deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library. The gift of this material is made subject to the following terms and conditions:

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Date October 24, 1968

Accepted Harry J. Middleton for
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