INTERVIEWEE: WELLY K. HOPKINS (Tape #1)

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

November 14, 1968

F: This is an interview with Mr. Welly K. Hopkins in his office in Washington, D.C., on November 14, 1968, by Joe B. Frantz.

Mr. Hopkins, to begin, briefly tell us something about yourself. Where do you happen to be at this moment in life?

H: Well, I had my point of origin, as you probably will recall, in Southwest Texas, having been born in the county seat town of Gonzales. I went through the University of Texas kind of the hard way, obtained my law license in 1923 by taking the Bar, being one of those individuals who thought it was a little late in life to start practicing, and one ought to get to work and earn a living. After a few years of practice there, I came to Washington in 1936 at the request of the then-Vice President Garner who suggested that a tour of government duty was possibly indicated for young Texas lawyers under his aegis. I indicated at first that I had no particular desires along those lines, but it added up finally that I did. And as I said to him at the time, "Well, Mr. Vice President, I'll come to Washington at your suggestion; I know it'll be a good experience and I'll enjoy it, but I'd like to do it on the basis of a limited stay. I'll come for a period of two years."

F: It has been a long two years.

H: Yes. And so I became special assistant to the Attorney General in the Department of Justice--the Attorney General at that time being Homer Cummings.

F: Where had you become acquainted with Mr. Garner?

H: Well, basically through inheritance, I guess you might say. He happened to have been a friend of my father. I lost my father at an early age, but I'd heard my mother and others speak of him. In the campaign of 1932, I participated rather actively in the preconvention days and then as a delegate to the national convention in Chicago, long with Alvin Wirtz, Roy Miller, Frank Scofield, and Bill St. John and any number of political--Bob Holliday from El Paso and others.

F: You served in the Texas legislature for awhile, didn't you?

H: Yes, sir. I had gone to the House in 1928 as representative of Gonzales County and had gone to the Senate in 1930, representing the Nineteenth Senatorial District.

Going back just momentarily, my two years in the Department of Justice extended to a period of 1936 to 1940 during which time I had the pleasure of representing the government in various cases around the country. Upon the invitation of Mr. Lewis, whom I had never met, I visited with him in the spring of 1940 and much to my surprise he opened up the initial interview with a suggestion that the Mine Workers International Union and he needed a new general counsel, and would I consider it? It was a long far cry from anything, that I'd ever anticipated up to that time.

F: You didn't exactly have a mining background in Gonzales Texas, did you?

H: No, quite the contrary. Until the time I was a grown man, I suppose I didn't know local union, or walking delegate, or a picket line, or would understand the terms. But in the course of the cases in which I participated for the government, I had been on the edges of labor problems in the sense that the government saw fit and very proper in those days to institute certain indictments involving labor and

men involved in the coal mining industry. Out in southern Illinois in the original instance of 1937 I prosecuted a mass indictment there. Incidentally, the largest mass conviction that later went to the Supreme Court and was affirmed.

Later on, I was in the Harlan County Kentucky cases and it involved the background of labor, particularly the coal miners. And I assume that it was in that frame of reference perhaps that my name may have come to Mr. Lewis' attention. I found him such a fascinating person and after some considerable reflection on the matter, I agreed to go over there. Incidentally, as a backdrop to the decision, at the time the present President (if I may call him Lyndon for the sake of brevity in the course of this discourse)--

F: You've known him long enough.

H: I visited with him a great deal pro and con. I recall a number of occasions, one in particular on a Sunday afternoon when he and Lady Bird and Alice, my wife, and I took a long ride up towards Harper's Ferry over in West Virginia. We spent the whole afternoon and into the evening just riding the countryside and talking about this. Lyndon, in his typical fashion, was very much in favor of his friend doing anything that was beneficial to his friend, but he was raising questions as he would see them then of what might be the potentials--not necessarily in opposition, but sort of the devil's advocate.

I remember, among other things, he finally turned to me and he said, "Well, what would you do if John L. should tell you on a given occasion after you get over there to go out and make some speeches for this, that, candidate or the other?" And as I recall, I said, "Well, Lyndon, I don't think he's that type of man. He would have his own

views, but I don't think he'd impose them upon those that were working with him; but if he did, I think that he would respect a man who would react appropriately." And I think Lyndon kind of reluctantly agreed--"Well, that was something they hadn't anticipated, but go ahead and do it and see how it works out." So I think I had, if you might want to call it that, his blessings or approval at the time, although it was a long step off into the dark.

F: It was a rather major corner-turning for you, wasn't it?

H: Well, it was. It was probably one of the most major, if not the major decision I had to make. My first, of course, I assume, was to break away from Texas to come to Washington, thinking at that time I'd be here a short time and I'd go back to political life perhaps in Texas--kind of being half intrigued by it at the moment. But fortunately the political bug hadn't bittan me too deeply to where I was able to shed it off. That was the first major decision; and this one, leaving Justice to go to Mr. Lewis certainly was because from then on I was much committed to a life that would be along those lines. Then as the years passed, I realized, being practical about it, that one could not go back to his native state after a long lapse and pick up the threads that he might theoretically think he could.

So, that was the decision, one of my major ones, in which I am pleased in retrospect to say that the President participated. And I might say that Lady Bird and Alice had their little exchanges of views at the same time. It has always been, in retrospect, a great kind of source of solace--of comfort, if you want to put it that way, through the passing years, particularly after I went with Mr. Lewis

and all the problems that developed in '41 and '43 and '46 and '48, and again in '50. Even though the President through the years may have had his differences that I might point out, if you like, later on, with reference to Mr. Lewis, I always knew that fundamentally in spite of some of his votes in the Senate and House and some of his public pronouncements during campaign times, that he was a friend of mine and I knew Lewis was an admirer of Lyndon.

I might get ahead of myself just a little bit to say that in later years and as of now Mr. Lewis, the public character that he is, is a real friend to Lyndon Johnson and has been a long time--much prior to the time than Lyndon realized perhaps. I think that his notice of Lyndon, of course, stemmed primarily from the fact that he, Lewis, was a public character and Lyndon was a rising young Congressman and into the Senate and so on. But independent of that, Mr. Lewis, I think, admired him from afar. So far as I know, he never met Lyndon until perhaps some time possibly in the war days--'45 or '46.

I know Lyndon came over very appropriately, I think it was around in '40 maybe, a year or so after he came to the Congress when the Democratic campaign committee functioning through its representative in the House was in deep trouble. Some very fine Congressman, I think from Virginia, was supposed to be in charge of the Democratic campaign for reelection of those members of the House. But it was in trouble and I never knew whether it was through Rayburn or who it was, but the suggestion was made to the then-President Roosevelt that he'd better do something about it; "They're going to lose a lot of representation in the House, and you need them." So, they selected Lyndon

right off the bat in a summary sort of fashion, much to his delight I'm sure, but he took hold in a hurry and I recall he hadn't been in the place more than twenty-four hours when he called me and said he wanted to see what the mine workers could do toward helping the campaign.

Well, fortunately that was before the Smith-Connolly Act and it was before Taft-Hartley and there were no inhibitions as against appropriate contributions. So I suggested that he ought to talk to then-Secretary-Treasurer, a man named Tom Kennedy, now dead, a former lieutenant governor of Pennsylvania, a fine gentleman and a long-time coal miner who knew practical politics. I went and introduced them when Lyndon came over. The results of the visit I don't know about. I think he went away satisfied as far as the responses that the miner workers made. I'm wandering a little bit.

F: That's all right. It's all pertinent and interesting. Let's finish you up to date. You stayed then as the general counsel through '66?

H: That is right, sir, and at that time, having had twenty-six years of experience over at the International Union and Mr. Lewis having retired as the President of the union in January of 1960, and having devoted his full time thereafter, as he does now, to being chairman of the trustees in administering the Mine Workers Welfare and Retirement Fund, right out of a blue sky again as it had been in 1940, Mr. Lewis called me up at my home in Alexandria one Sunday afternoon along in May or June of '66 and asked me to come visit with him. He told me surprisingly so, that the then-counsel to the trustees had resigned. Mr. Lewis looked at me and after a bit he said, "Well, I want you to come and help me." And I said, "What do you mean?"

And he said, "I want you to come over and be counsel to me and to the trustees for awhile." Well, I told him that that was one I'd have to think about, but give me a bit of time. I thought over it on the weekend and we visited in my family over it. And I finally gave him my answer a few days later; in substance, "Well, I started out with you twenty-eights years ago. I'll be pleased to finish with you." So I came over to the trustees fund at that time and have been their counsel up until this given moment.

F: When did you first meet Lyndon Johnson?

H: A long time ago, but a short time in a relative sense. I remember it very, very vividly, Dr. Frantz. I had occasion incidentally, as you probably know, to relate some of those experiences to Miss Craddock in her book, but I'd be pleased to refer to them now because of the very fine, pleasant recollections that stem from it. It was in 1930 and it must have been along in May or thereabouts, maybe June--I had become a candidate for the State Senate inasmuch as Alvin Wirtz had voluntarily retired. With Wirtz's knowledge and actually with prior visiting with him, I had announced my candidacy and he had put me in touch with his supporters around the district--that was the 19th Senatorial District, at that time I think it had six counties: Gonzales, Guadalupe, Caldwell, Hays, Comal, and Blanco.

And among those that he put me in touch with and I met for the first time was Lyndon's father. I saw him from time to time in the early phases of the campaign; he told me that he had a boy named Lyndon that was a student at Southwest Texas State Teachers College at San Marcos. But I had no occasion to run into him until I went up to a political gathering somewhere along the line of either Hays and Blanco or Hays and Travis County--a little community called

Henley, I believe it was. It was a typical meeting ground; it was very typical of the region and of the days in the political era that we were in then, and a nice grove of liveoak trees was there, and a regular kind of outdoor, all-day--

F: That used to be our summer entertainment. I came from Parker County.

H: Well, you're familiar with the same type thing that I tried to describe. It had the atmosphere kind of camp meeting, although no religious facets to it, but it was a picnic on the ground all-day affair. It was customary for local candidates and state candidates or their representatives to come and address the audience and show cause why they ought to be reelected, or elected, and their candidacy should be favorably considered; and I was one of those at that time--my opponent being a fine young lawyer, a little older than I, from Lockhart named Tom Gambrell. I don't recall that Gambrell was present that day, but I was. And the speaker's stand that was used was a wagon in this grove and under one of these trees. I think that the presiding person that day was either Judge Stubbs, I believe they called him--a lawyer in Johnson City, or it may have been one of the Casparises, I'm not sure. Casparis was sheriff then and there were several Stubbs around.

But in any event, he called from time to time, standing on this little wagon with the tailgate down under the tree, for those to come forward and make their presentations. Well, it came my time and I climbed up and after awhile, I thought I had demonstrated as best I knew how why I should be nominated--receive the Democratic nomination. I stepped down and was back in the trees in the audience somewhere; there were probably some two or three hundred people there during

the day--lunch on the ground and that sort of thing. Other speakers spoke, I don't recall whom, but I do recall this. Down in the middle of the afternoon the presiding officer called out the name of Pat Neff. And no response. And he called it out again. Then he finally said, "Won't anybody here make a speech for Pat Neff?" He was then running for election as Railroad Commissioner, he having been previously appointed, I believe, and he was running for his first term after his original and initial appointment.

And he was about to go by default, Dr. Frantz. I heard a voice out in the audience say, "Well, I'll make a speech for Pat Neff." And here through the crowd came this tall, brown haired, bright-eyed boy, kind of, with a bushy-tail attitude of vigor. And he repeated it. He would make a speech for him, so the master of ceremonies handed his hand down to him and pulled him up on the tailgate, and Lyndon, I believe, made the first political speech of his life, so far as I know, and I've thought about it often--it was the first political speech he ever made. He spoke maybe five to ten minutes in a typical fashion, a little bit of the oratorical effect, and a good one, some of the arm waving that I guess I'd indulged in some too. But he showed pretty good cause why Pat Neff should be reelected, and was favorably received.

F: You and I were probably both brought up on the idea that Pat Neff was Texas' greatest speaker at one time.

H: There's no question about it in my mind. I would make only one reservation--that in the initial instance of Neff's election receiving the Democratic nomination for governor when Joe Bailey ran, I was a Joe Bailey man by inheritance, but I recognized through the years

Pat Neff's great ability along those lines and he certainly was an outstanding orator in Texas.

I sought Lyndon out within a very few minutes after he left the wagon and made myself known to him. I asked him why he had made this speech [which I believe typifies Lyndon and his later political life in many respects] and his reply I've never forgotten. It was in substance--"Gov. Neff once gave my Daddy a job when he needed it, so I couldn't let it go by default." We became friendly-familiar, you might put it, within a very short time. Before the afternoon was over, I asked him if he wouldn't try to help me in my campaign. He very readily consented; he may have had some visit from his father before--I don't know, but he being politically inclined anyway was good enough to take up my cudgels and--

F: He was obviously eager to get started in politics.

H: Yes, sir, he certainly showed it that very early date--a flair for it and and interest in it, and a touch of know-how in the sense as an early fellow apparently kind of steeped in political lore, maybe by inheritance of circumstance and environment and otherwise.

So, I kind of turned my campaign over to him in the sense of Blanco and Hays Counties, and he did a magnificient job for me. He set up an informal but very active working group. I remember Wilton Wood and Bill Deason who, I think now, is on the Interstate Commerce Commission--

F: I saw him election night.

H: Well, I haven't seen him for some time.--and others. And they got out literature on their own steam, maybe using some of the printing presses at the Normal--I'm not sure. I had very little money; I contributed a little bit. Lyndon traveled with me from time to time. We worked Blanco County in and out; I guess I was up every branch of the Pedernales and every dry creek bed there was.

I remember on one occasion he had me make a speech to a group of three up around Cypress Mills. There was a family named Wehnmos. Some of the earlier German families had come in that Fredericksburg area. This Mr. Wehnmos had with him some members of his family--I think it was his wife and maybe a brother or nephew or someone. Anyway, Lyndon felt sure that I ought to meet them because he and the votes up in that Cypress Mills' area. So with Lyndon I stood in a dry creek bed and for about ten minutes or so undertook to interest them in what was known as Senator Small's river bill that had been introduced, dealing with the transfer of mineral rights in streams to the state, or trying to define them. I've thought about that many times as a small incident, but basically I rode all the by-ways in Blanco County with Lyndon and followed his judgment in Hays County almost completely because he had a favorable standing with the local people in San Marcos, had dominated the area--

F: He'd already made friends as a student--

H: He certainly had and was a student leader and was respected by the editor of the paper. I remember Mr. Bass who ran the corner drug store there was a power, and some of the others. Lyndon already knew the Birdwells over around Kyle, I think it was. So I followed his lead completely. He arranged a mass meeting for me at New Braunfels on the night before election day and within an hour afterwards, he had a big one scheduled at San Marcos, both of which I kept. I always felt that he was the real balance of the difference as to whether I'd be elected.

F: This was your first term as Senator?

H: Yes, sir. I don't recall whether I carried Blanco County--I did carry Blanco County. I think later on Dick Kleberg may have lost

Blanco in the first race.

F: Of course, Blanco is still primarily a rural county, but in those days you must have hit some real back-country roads in both Blanco and Hays with him.

H: Very much so. There were very few paved roads, as I remember. Most of them were caliche roads, and those that were graded were just down by county work. There was very little state work in that area at that time.

F: You'd have to spend a lot of time between houses.

H: That's right. Many a night we'd be out until ten or eleven o'clock, and I'd drive from the top end of Blanco County back to Gonzales, arriving three or four o'clock in the morning. But that was a typical way of a campaign in those days. So, Lyndon through his efforts was able to find support for me inside the Normal itself through Dr. Evans and some of the other professors whose names slip me now.

That same summer Lyndon graduated. As I recall, I met him by prior appointment the night of his graduation, and I watched his graduation ceremonies as one of the audience. He and I then slipped off--I think I had something like a hundred dollars maybe saved up, and we took a trip to Mexico together for the first time I'd ever been down in there, and I think so far as I recall the first time he had.

F: Where did you go?

H: To Laredo and then to Monterrey. The hundred dollars didn't last too long, but that was a pretty good-sized sum of money in those days. So when he came back then, as you will recall, he started going to Cotulla that year to teach. Shortly after that, as I remember, he

was offered this place in Sam Houston High School at Houston as debating coach, and he went down there and I know he lived with his Uncle Jordan (?), whom as you well know he was exceedingly fond of and who he exceedingly respected in every way and consulted in many, many ways through the years on many things. So I followed Lyndon at afar. He brought his boys, when he got out on the road with his debating team in the interscholastic tournaments--Interscholastic League. Every time he came close to Gonzales, if he had L. E. Jones or Gene Latimer with him, he'd stop by and see my mother of whom he was very fond, who lived alone there except for me when I was at home. So I naturally followed him with a great deal of interest.

It was in the early summer of 1931 that a testimonial dinner was given for Lyndon and his debating team in recognition of his activities, his very successful activities. I think he invited myself and Pat Neff, as I recall, to come down to be the speakers and as his guests, and I went. Neff was unable to keep his appointment for some reason, and M. E. Foster, the editor of the Houston Press--everybody called him "Meefo" in those days--as I recall, substituted for the Governor. He and I made speeches at that occasion.

Then the summertime came along. I don't recall at the moment any particular activities between us except occasional visits during the summer. But in late October or early November of that year, if you will recall, Harry M. Wurzbach, who had been a partner incidentally of Alvin Wirtz at Seguin, a long-time Republican Congressman, died very suddenly. Very shortly after his death, a special election having been called, Kleberg either came to see me or through Senator Wirtz we were in contact with him, and I became

fascinated with Dick as a man. I liked him. He was a scintillating sort of individual, and there were many pleasant facets of ability and personality.

So I interested myself in his campaign, because that congressional district at that time, while it didn't include Gonzales County--my own county, I was in Joe Mansfield's district--it did include Guadalupe, Comal, and Blanco, as well as Bexar County. Bexar County, of course, together with Nueces--his home county, was the focal point. But he needed help, and his main opposition for the nomination was a man named Carl Wright Johnson of San Antonio, a brilliant lawyer, who had the support of Mack Chambers, the then-mayor, and all of the city machine, as they called it. Roy Miller became Dick's campaign manager and seemed to welcome my suggestion that I'd be glad to help if I could. I made a number of speeches for Dick in New Braunfels--I think I made two or three of them; in Seguin, I know, one. Finally I took my secretary, although I don't know that we called her that in those days--I wasn't that affluent, but the young lady who worked in my office--

F: Helped now and then.

H: Helped. Incidentally, her name was Deason. I think she may have been a distant relative of Bill's. Took her to San Antonio to the Gunter Hotel where Roy had set up his headquarters for Dick. We spent the last week there, she doing clerical work and I with Roy trying my very best to line up--

F: You had a real problem in those days with San Antonio and that district, didn't you?

H: Yes indeed. You know, the conflicting interests--the Citizens League,

I believe it was, headed by John Boyle, of which Maury Maverick was an integral part, was opposing this Mack Chambers machine; and they finally endorsed Dick. That spelled the difference in the election. In that election I told Roy that we ought to pay some attention to Blanco, as he well knew we should, and he asked me who and I said, "Lyndon Johnson's father." He didn't know Sam Johnson. As I remember, Mr. Johnson came to San Antonio one time and then we were in touch with him a couple of times; he made a number of visits, so to speak, on his own time unofficially, I guess, although he was an employe of the Railroad Commission at the time. But on his own time he made a number of trips into the various counties that included Dick's district.

F: Did Mr. Sam Ely have that same sort of aggressiveness that the boy had?

H: As I recall, yes and no. He certainly had a keen, intimate knowledge of politics--country politics, if you want to call it that, that pertained to his area. And he was a man of determination. But as I recall him, he wasn't the fast moving physical man that Lyndon was. He had the same general desires and persistency, but I don't know that he had the same sparkle and the same push.

But in any event, he was very helpful to Dick. As you know, Kleberg came to Bexar County with a tremendous lead from Nueces County; he carried Comal County, Guadalupe County. I think he failed Blanco by a few votes. It was either that campaign or his campaign in '32 for reelection that he lost Blanco. It may have been on the second one. But in any event, everybody recognized Mr. Johnson's help at that time. I don't recall how Lyndon figured in that; he probably did at his father's suggestion, but I don't recall having any direct--

well, I know he couldn't have, because he was then engaged in his duties in Houston, so that accounts for the fact, I guess, that I wasn't in touch with him directly.

But in any event, to shorten my remarks a bit, I felt that Dick coming up here as a new Congressman would do well to have a young fellow like Lyndon with him. He had never met Lyndon. So, I've forgotten just how I did it, whether by direct call to Dick or not--I think I had one talk with Dick about it possibly, but my initial move as I thought best to do--I went down to Houston where Roy Miller had an office there representing the Texas Gulf Sulphur and talked to him and told him about Lyndon. He had never met him. Evidently it appealed to him that Dick might need a new young face here, and somebody that would have a political touch in the district. So he agreed to recommend Lyndon to Dick. And he did do that. Before he did it and while I was in Houston, I went and told Lyndon what I had done and told him I didn't know how it would turn out, hopefully godd.

I've forgotten the timetable involved but within a matter of a couple of days or so after that, I remember I was at home in Gonzales and Lyndon called me long distance. I think he was at that time maybe in Johnson City, or maybe he was in San Marcos. He said he and his father were going to drive down that afternoon or evening to Corpus at Dick's suggestion by a telephone call, I think, previously made to Lyndon to talk about possibly becoming a secretary.

So they drove through Gonzales and stopped and visited with me a little bit and were on their way. I think it was the next night that Lyndon called me from Corpus and said very enthusiastically that

Mr. Kleberg had offered him a place, and he was taking it, and he was going to go back to Houston and try to wind up his work there. They were going to come to Washington because of the "Lame Duck" session that was about to come on. I was just about as enthusiastically pleased over it, I guess, as Lyndon. So that's that. That's the way it came about as far as I know and recall. Of course, when he came up here as Dick's secretary, through the years by telephone but basically by mail, I stayed in touch with him on different problems that Dick was having down in our area.

Then there came a redistricting--a reapportionment. Of course, that was a push-and-pull proposition according to the desires and inclination and the friendly relationship of the voting members of the legislature who were the then-sitting Congressmen. I was in Joe Mansfield's district, but I remember with his consent because of the population move and more basically because of the gerrymandering that was going on, I agreed to let Gonzales County be changed over into Dick's district.

Now, wait a minute. I agreed at that time to put Blanco County into Dick's district--No, again I'm confused in my recollection; I hope the tape will forgive me. I agreed that Blanco County be taken out of the old district that Dick represented and be transferred to Buchanan's district, that was a shoestring district that ran previously from Austin way down into southeast Texas. That was it. Blanco County was taken out of Dick's district. But I was in touch with Lyndon for those reasons during those days. I've occasionally thought in later year what might have been the sequence of events if that move fortuitously hadn't happened by rare chance because at the time Lyndon

ran for Congress the first term after Buchanan's sudden death--he, of course, was National Youth Administrator at Austin, but I have the recollection at that time that he still claimed Johnson City and Blanco County as his home base. Well, it fit in perfectly to his running for Congress within the confines and geographical limits of the district.

F: It would have changed his timetable if he had remained in Congressman Kleberg's district because, of course, he never would have run against him.

H: That's correct. Actually, being there as the National Youth Administrator was the threshold approach and the base from which he stepped off into this election, but if he had not been in that district--

F: Did you have any particular relationship with him while he was National Youth Administrator in Texas, or anything to do with his moving into it?

H: Well, yes and no. I have some recollections in reference to it. After the '32 elections, Lyndon didn't go to the convention in Chicago, but I had and I had become very enthused about the chances of Roosevelt, although I was a Garner man like the whole Texas delegation. After he released it, I became enthusiastic for--Through Lyndon's approach to Sam Rayburn, who was then the head of the Speaker's Bureau for the National Committee in New York, I went out to New Mexico and made a series of speeches there for Roosevelt and Garner just before election time. I've never forgotten it. It was still bilingual everywhere I went. I had an interpreter standing beside me. I'd speak a few words in English, and then he'd translate with gestures in Spanish. So I was in touch with Lyndon then.

I made my first trip to Washington, I think it was on a piece of legal business that I had; I think it was in the late summer of '33 or the fall of '33, maybe in the early spring of '34, before Lyndon married. Of course, I went to Dick's office. And Lyndon was helping me with what the little piece of work was--I think it had to do with an RFC loan I was trying to get for somebody. In any event, Lyndon and I made up my first trip to New York together over a weekend. I don't know whether it was his first or not; it may have been. But anyhow, as I remember, we went up on a Friday evening and stayed at the Hotel New York. We didn't have too much money in those days, but we had a few dollars for a little outing. We stayed there Saturday and Saturday night; and on Sunday morning, before we came back on the train Sunday evening, he and I both thought it would be a good idea if we could have a glimpse at the surroundings down around Fulton Fish Market because we had talked about our admiration for Al Smith. I had made speeches with Smith in '28, I guess it was. So a little sidelight I recall, having decided to do that, we hailed either a taxicab or an open car with the top down that was for hire in those days. The cabbies were kind of competing for business, you know; there wasn't much around. We wound up, the two of us, on the back seat of this car on a beautiful Sunday morning seeing Fulton Market and all that part of New York. A couple of hours cost us the magnificent sum of $5.00.

That was either in '33 or '34. And Lyndon, I believe in '35, left Kleberg to come back to Texas to become National Youth Administrator. And he talked to me about it. He likewise, as you would well know, talked to his friend Alvin Wirtz. He decided to come, but he had been

offered prior to that time by Roosevelt, to whose attention he had already come to some degree, a place as the manager of superintendent or whatever you may call it of the then-proposed Harnessing of the Tides at Passamaquoddy, Maine. I know I took rather a dim view of it trying to put myself in Lyndon's shoes, and told him I thought he'd be shunted off. I think Wirtz more or less talked to him the same way.

But he made the record as NYA Administration, as you well know, that was magnificently good. I saw him a few times during that period of time. I remember being in his little office in the old Scarbrough Building. I remember one or two little things there that I wouldn't burden this record with here, but were rather amusing I thought.

F: Could we have them? You don't burden us.

H: Well, this really has no interest other than I think it's kind of typical of the President's sense of humor and his quick wit and knowledge of people. If I recall, it was late one afternoon just before dark that I was in his office there. A colored employee of the Administration, I don't know whether he was a field man for Lyndon or whether he worked around the building or whatnot, came in and said he wanted to see Mr. Johnson. And so they showed him into the little cubbyhole of an office. I was with Lyndon, and Lyndon asked him what he wanted. He said, "Boy, what do you want?" Well, he said he wanted to borrow five dollars. "Well, what do you want it for, boy?" Well, he said he just needed that five dollars; he kind of tucked his head and shuffled his feet a little bit in typical Negro fashion, I thought--said he just needed that five dollars. I could tell the President was going to let him have it, but he was

just a little bit amused. And he said, "Well, what is it you want it for?" He said, "Well sir, I just tell you that I needs it." He said, "Why?" "Well," he said, "I wants to be married, and I need the money." Lyndon said, "Well, that's fine. Do you love the gal? Are you getting married because you love her?" He kind of shuffled his foot and said, "Yes sir, Mr. Johnson, that and a few other little things." So Lyndon let him have the five dollars and he went off rejoicing. My contacts with him of course were not too often. I had in the meantime come to Washington myself.

F: Could we break into this continuity just a moment? You're in a good position to tell us something. Alvin Wirtz, of course, was all over the place, but no one ever describes Mr. Wirtz. He was a big influence in these days and some days thereafter. What kind of a man was Mr. Wirtz?

H: Well, I was a great admirer of Senator Wirtz. I always referred to him as The Senator, and I think Lyndon and Lady Bird through the years did. He was good to me as a young fellow. He gave me the opportunity to succeed him in the Senate. And when I was in private practice both before I went to the Senate when I was his supporter and afterwards when I was in private practice, he was helpful to me. He was a man of unusual legal abilities. Physically, as I recall, he was a rather tall man but heavy-set. Deep brunet, as I remember. He had a rather slow, not a drawl but a slow mannerism of speech, very effective however. He was a most effective member in the Senate and a most influential one. He was not slow in movement but deliberate in movement, perhaps illustrated by his signature. I can see it now. He wrote a rather large hand and a very deliberate one. "A. J. W."

He was sincere in his advice and counsel and assistance to Lyndon, just as he was to me. He was a man of parts, respected in the legal and the political sense.

I know, for instance, of this little incident that I think would show his integrity and prove his friendliness. There was a bill up in the legislature at the time I was in the Senate, as I recall, having to do with oil proration. I got the idea as a country lawyer that there was a good deal of legalistic reasons why it was not proper or appropriate. I had ideas as to its constitutionality, vague as they may have been. I was a little vocal, I guess, in my expressions of opposition. Wirtz came to me one day and told me that there was a great deal of interest in seeing that it was passed. He at that time very appropriately had the employment from time to time by business interests that concerned legislation in a very proper fashion. He came to me and said, "Welly, I want you to know that I have been employed by X group to try to help pass this bill. I know your feelings about it, and I hope you'll vote the courage of your convictions. You just will not offend me in either way you want to go." I was much touched by the very frank way in which he approached me, and I knew it was a sincere way. I wound up voting against the measure, and I faced the fact that I knew he was for it and had an interest in it. But that didn't bother him one iota, and I always thought that some people perhaps would have continued to be friendly but not let their interest be known ahead of time, but he did.

When I married, he bought my wedding suit. He offered to let me be married in his home. It so happened we married in the Methodist Church. Kitty Mae, his wife, was just as gracious as she could always

be, and his one young daughter who is now the wife of the doctor out in Mayo, Ida Mae, was just a youngster then. Wirtz had had a tragic business in his law practice; I think it was my first term in the Senate. He was representing a group of Chicago financial interests in the promotion of the building of certain hydroelectric projects up and down the Guadalupe River, which in fact were forerunners to his interest in the Colorado River development. I had acted at his request as the local counsel in Gonzales in representing him in dondemnation proceedings for the land that were requisite to the basins to be overflowed, and things like that. From time to time, the representative of the investment house in Chicago, I've forgotten the name of it, but it was headed up by a man named Peck, would naturally come down to Texas to view the progress being made. On this given occasion he was in Texas in Wirtz's office. As a point of information to describe the surrounding situation, those kind of projects, while they had their proponents in the community, they had their opponents too--those whose lands were being condemned frequently thought that it was wrong, and the communities got divided.

Well, they were very much divided in Guadalupe County and to some degree in Gonzales County on the issue, and feeling ran very high, particularly when it came to condemnation of one's land. Peck was in Wirtz's office on this occasion, as I learned later. The Senate was in session in Austin; I was called off the floor for an urgent long distance call, and when I took it, the Senator was on the line in Seguin almost in tears. In a rather tragic voice he said, "Welly, they've shot Peck. Come on down here." And I said, "Just as quick as

I can get there." I hung up the phone without any further details, got in my little Chevrolet, and drove down there, and they had killed Peck. A man named Holleman whose lands were involved in the condemnation proceeding had come in to see Wirtz at the time that Peck was there, ostensibly telling Wirtz's office help that he wanted to talk about some phase of it. As I learned from Wirtz, they had said, "Well, send Holleman in," and as he came through the door in the inner office where Peck and Wirtz were--Wirtz behind the desk, he pulled out a six shooter and started shooting. He killed Peck almost on sight and tried to kill Wirtz, but he fortunately could get over the desk and wrestle him down and take his pistol away from him. So that's what had happened when I arrived there. I stayed with him that afternoon and evening and spent the night with him at his home.

But it was those kind of things that made me very, very close to the Senator. And, of course, later on when he came up as Under Secretary of the Interior, I was pleased about it. As you know, no doubt, Lyndon was the moving force that brought that about, Lyndon having previously very appropriately in the long range, thinking, I guess, but just instinctively as a politican--he had laid his lines not only from President Roosevelt's office down, but into Ickes' office and the various agencies here. So, when Wirtz came up, I was still with the department and I was very pleased and happy. In fact, Alice and I, even on our meager earnings in those days--salary not being too large, we gave a little welcoming reception for him over at the Carlton Hotel--the Senator and Kitty Mae, and invited the various people in political life that would be associated

with Wirtz and some of whom he already knew through Lyndon, some he didn't.

Part of the time Wirtz was here, he rented a house over in Alexandria just about two blocks from where I lived; and he and Kitty Mae stayed there and we saw a great deal of them. But from beginning to end, from the time I first knew Alvin Wirtz until the time of his tragic death, my regard for his ability and his loyalty and his integrity and his genuine spirit and character will always shine bright in my memory. One final word. I recall when he died of his heart attack as I learned in Austin, Lyndon called me. I've forgotten whether Lyndon was in Austin at the time--I don't think he was with Wirtz at the football game when it occurred. That's the first I knew of it, and I took the call at the National Airport--I was within an hour of going out to Montana and out into Alberta on some litigation involving the issuance of natural gas pipelines certificates under the Natural Gas Act and importations, natural gas from Canada and Alberta fields; I could do nothing about it--I was committed. So I didn't go to Texas then, although I would have otherwise. But I'll never forget the feeling that I carried with me when I got aboard that plane. I wired Lyndon a message for him to represent me.

I would have every reason to believe, by observation and otherwise, that Wirtz's interest in Lyndon was equally genuine as it was with me. As you know, after that incident occurred, that I related in his office--it was in a few months after that and he visited with me about possibly moving. He told me that Ben Powell had made him an offer of some sort, and I think either Jim Elkins or Judge Vincent from Houston, knowing Wirtz's ability, had possibly suggested

it, or in any event they vouched for the Senator, and he formed the firm of Powell, Wirtz, Rauhut, and Gideon, Sim Gideon having previously been in Wirtz's office in Seguin. Went back to the river development of course--that led Wirtz into the development of the Colorado River Authority. And I had the pleasure, while still in the legislature, to be the sponsoring patron for the bill that Wirtz of course drafted that created the Colorado River Authority. I recall some of the difficulties that arose in the course of its enactment. It had its opposition, as reflected in the legislature too, most of it arising from the upper reaches of the Colorado River than in the Austin area or downstream--it was upstream. I remember in order to try to help it out, Wirtz, through Lyndon's assistance I think, got the general counsel for PWA down to Austin to testify in behalf of the bill. I've forgotten his name now, but he was a former mayor of Cincinnati, I believe. I introduced him to a joint session of the legislature just to try to create friendly interest, and he testified.

And I've never forgotten in later years this little angle to it. We passed it in the Senate as I recall; it was having its problems in the House. And when this counsel for PWA was down there, two voting members of the House undertook to spearhead the opposition, and as part of their way of doing it, they persuaded this gentleman--his name slips me, to go with them on kind of a little jaunt over to San Antonio at a time when he was supposed to possibly have been testifying before the House committee. One of those two voting members was a man named Penrose Metcalfe from San Angelo who later, I think, possibly became a proponent of some of the Colorado River

development; but at that time he was for some local political reason, I guess, was opposed to it. And the other one was Sarah Hughes from Dallas. And I never could quite understand Sarah. She never did quite explain why she did it, but she was a roadblock there for quite some time.

F: She was a pretty formidable roadblock when she chose to be too.

H: There was no question about it as her later abilities proved. I had various experiences with Wirtz--all pleasant, all profitable to me. And during the times I was in the department, before he came up here and after he left to go back to Texas before his death, we nearly always had a pleasant visit together. When he was back in Washington on business and whenever Lyndon was in town, the three of us were together very, very often.

F: Let's come back to NYA days; I think we've about wound that up, but let's pick up the thread there and come forward now. We were approaching that first campaign.

H: Well, at the time Lyndon announced I was, as I recall, in Tampa, Florida, trying to complete the windup of some old criminal cases for the government. I heard about Buchanan's death. I don't recall whether Lyndon called me first or whether I learned it through mutual friends of Lyndon's. Maybe it was Wirtz. But in any event within a matter of a very few hours, maybe twenty-four hours after he announced or thereabouts, I had a call from Charlie Marsh of the Austin American, whom I had known slightly in Texas before I left and whom I had seen around Washington a good deal and into whose company I had from time to time been thrown for various sundry reasons. And he asked me about Lyndon. I don't think he had ever met him.

What kind of fellow he was; if you knew Marsh, you knew the very abrupt way in which he did business and the very blunt way in which he talked. I told him what I thought about Lyndon, told him I thought he ought to support him, and I thought he ought to go all out. He averred that he'd think about it. And as I very soon afterwards learned from another mutual acquaintaince, he had fully committed himself. He put the Austin American right behind Lyndon. I'm not sure about it, but I think he created the Belden Poll at that time, or thereabouts.

F: This was a little early for that.

H: Well, anyhow, he used the Belden Poll very, very successfully in Lyndon's behalf. The outcome of the campaign, of course, we all recall. I do remember this instance when he came up to be sworn in. He came up by himself. Alice, my wife, and I were living out on the Volta Place--

F: You didn't have any part in the campaign? You were up here all the time?

H: Well, I did not go down there. I undertook as best I could through various remaining political connections--friendly connections, that I had in and around the area to do at long-range what I could, but I did not go down and campaign, as I remember. Now, I always thought the best help I could have possibly given him was the friendly assistance and the real assistance that I think I was partly, maybe directly, responsible for him getting from Charlie Marsh.

F: Incidentally, Ray Lee was teaching me in a class at that time and quit to work in the campaign. Of course, we all thought he was crazy, giving up a steady job to go do something like that.

H: I remember Ray Lee. Wasn't Charlie Green there then, or did he come later?

F: Yes. Charlie had come.

H: Well, that's about the way it happened except this is a little highlight. When Lyndon came up to be sworn in, he came by himself and he came out and spent the night with me. I know we talked late into the night.

F: Mrs. Johnson didn't come?

H: No, as I remember, he was alone. And I know the next morning I said, "Lyndon, do you want me to go up there with you?", just kind of half facetiously. And he answered in the same vein, "Oh, no, Welly, I don't think so. Mr. Sam's going to vouch for me," which of course he did. So I didn't go up to his swearing-in ceremony. I don't know why; I assume duties in the office were such that prevented me, but that was the '37 campaign. And that was my connection with it. Of course, up until the time I left the department and after Lyndon came up here, we saw a great deal of each other.

As a matter of fact, I noticed something here--you spoke of Terrell Maverick. This is typical of Lyndon. He wrote me a letter on June 7, 1939. You might take a look at it; it's so humanly written and so typical of Lyndon and his keen political judgment in character and his desire to be friendly to his friends--you might take a look at it. It involves Maury. I think the letter's typical of the fashion in which Lyndon wrote, and it exhibits his friendliness for his friends and he promoted it, because that little thing was really a promotional party. Maury wanted something out of the department, as I recall--it may have been in the early days of the development

of the San Antonio River, I don't know just what it was.

F: That's good.

H: But I think Lyndon had the Secretary and Abe Fortas and others present at this little party. That would bring us up to about 1940. There wasn't much interchange of correspondence between us in those days--some.

F: In this first campaign, did you have any knowledge of his agonizing over whether to try for the seat or whether he could afford to run or anything like that?

H: Not at the time, no. He was in Texas and I'm sure they were agonizing times. He related some of his thoughts about his decision later on, but I was not a party to them. I'm sure Wirtz and others on the ground were.

F: When he ran against Pappy O'Daniel in '41, he was already up here. Did he talk with you about that?

H: Yes, sir.

F: This was a big step and an expensive one.

H: And an expensive one. He was stepping off into the unknown. Yes, briefly he did. He went, of course, immediately back to Texas, as I recall. I don't know whether he made his announcement from there or up here. I think he made it down there. And I tried to be of active assistance to him in that campaign. In some degree I helped, and in some degree, possibly my presence hurt, without my realizing it.

F: That's something I wanted to get into because one of the issues, as you will recall, which was perfectly legitimate politics--whether it was fair is something else, but O'Daniel was trying to make it look as if the Washington crowd was pushing Johnson and, "Do you want Eastern

interest, particularly New Deal and labor interests to select a Senator from Texas, or do you want Texans to select him?" And so I would like some elaboration on this.

H: Well, I made two trips to Texas from Washington in that connection. I was, of course, by that time over with the mine workers and I wanted to be as helpful as I could and yet I wanted to be politically circumspect as far as possible. So I made two trips down there. In the meantime, though, I made a political mistake in a way. I wrote a rather personal letter, as personal as I knew how, to a large number of my former political friends, personal friends, of various and sundry hue in maybe twenty different counties for Lyndon. I put it on the Mine Workers letterhead which, of course, I shouldn't have done, although I didn't want to hide my support of him because it showed the Mine Workers affiliated with the CIO. Well, I was in Texas on my first trip when I realized that this letter of mine was going to be capitalized upon by Jerry Mann. Mann was on the radio reading it. He got out a kind of circular on which he reproduced the letter, blanking out the names. I later discovered the one of my friends who had turned the letter over to him. But fortunately, I was in the Austin Hotel in Lyndon's headquarters with Wirtz and others and John Connally, when my secretary that I had left up here forwarded me some mail that had arrived that day. And in it, without her realizing it, there was one of these form letters that said, "Dear Welly," signed "Gerald Mann," asking my support, and urging me to help him in every way. So that was a perfect antidote, we thought, for that. We turned it over to Harold Young.

F: I haven't seen him yet; I've got to.

H: Well, don't miss him. He's a storehouse of recollections of various and sundry kind. You know Harold?

F: Yes.

H: Well, I needn't describe him to. But Harold went on the radio that night and read Jerry Mann's letter to me. And I never have forgotten--I can almost see him--he was saying, "Are you listening, Jerry? Are you listening, Jerry?" I was able to help by solicitation among some people up here other than the union, because at that time I felt that the union could not afford to come financially contributing to Lyndon's campaign.

F: As far as you know then, the union did not--?

H: The Mine Workers Union did not to my personal knowledge. However, I did go to others who were not in the labor movement that I knew in and around Washington and was able to raise a fairly good-sized sum for those days--a few thousand dollars. It wasn't a magnificent sum, but I took it down to Texas and it was appropriately turned over and spent in his behalf. I don't think Lyndon ever personally knew a damned thing about it. But while I was there on my first trip, I learned from Wirtz and others that there was a record of some speech, I think, made by O'Daniel and maybe another one by Mann. But O'Daniel had been tape-recorded. It was highly critical of some of the people in Washington, Ickes among others.

F: I also recall that even Senator Wirtz was a villain at this time.

H: You mean at the hands of O'Daniel and Mann?

F: Yes.

H: Oh, yes, there's no question about that. This tape though, as I recall, was so plainly illustrative of the vindictiveness towards

the Administration in Washington and others that I brought it back up here and played it to a number of people here to enlist their interest. Among others, I played it for Jim Rowe and Tommy Corcoran because they were Lyndon's friends, and they had entrees there. With that knowledge of the vindictive way in which people were being criticized, I knew it would be helpful, and it was. I think some additional assistance came as a result of that. I didn't personally take it, but I went back to Texas on the second trip. I arranged through Sam Rayburn to have some people that Wirtz and John Connally had thought would be helpful that were up in and around some of the Congressional offices here who were maybe Texans to come back and work in the campaign; I arranged for that.

I remember that I was so enthused in believing that Lyndon could make the grade that I met him at Waco, he was coming through there on a fast morning trip, and I gave him a very erroneous optimistic view of what might be the total number of votes that he would get out of certain labor groups, with Phil Murray's consent. And I had contacted down there informally, and they had been very responsive, but they overestimated their ability for delivery of votes in those days. They didn't have large numbers. And that would be the only labor support, such as it was, that came to Lyndon through my efforts.

F: Texas labor, from a political standpoint, has never really been disciplined, has it?

H: No, I think not. I think it has been highly fragile, so to speak, highly independent. If it has never followed national leadership, as such, in bloc, it was never known to me. Well, I bet my last

hundred dollars on Lyndon, and I for some time thought maybe I'd won it. Realized that I hadn't. Well, that was my participation in the '41 campaign.

Lewis didn't become a point of controversy in that campaign, per se, but unfortunately he did in '48. I went to Texas in '48 just informally and quietly as I could to do what I could, but I purposely stayed away from Lyndon's headquarters because by that time Lewis had become quite a public character. And Lyndon, from his viewpoint on those days for political reasons, was excoriating him by name. I remember I drove down on that occasion, and I was just driving into Texarkana about noontime when I heard Lyndon on the radio. He was saying things that kind of hurt my ears, and I hated to hear. I later took a trip on August 18, 1948, in which he quoted--and that was part of what I had heard--referring to Lewis as the coal mine dictator who had let the nation freeze; associated him with im Petrillo and Harry Bridges, whom he denominated as a Communist and when he said he had voted to deport to Australia years ago. I knew the political reasons for it, but it made me feel a little badly.

F: Well, now, he had one sound political reason for that, regardless of whose making it was, and I think we might pick that up. Did you have any contacts at all with Congressman Johnson during the time that the Taft-Hartley Bill was under consideration?

H: I followed it very closely. And with Mr. Lewis' full knowledge and consent, he and I together a number of times in his office were in touch by phone and otherwise with various voting members of the Senate. I do not recall we contacted Lyndon as such. I don't think we did. My recollection is that we realized, I think, his general

learnings; we devoted our activities to the members of the Senate that we thought might be somewhat amenable to our views or be friendly or have a friendly turn towards us. I remember quite actively we were on extended telephone for a period of several hours on the day that Truman's message of veto went up--called people from New York to San Francisco almost to see if we couldn't get a vote or two here and yonder that would vote to sustain the veto, if not absent themselves from the Senate. But we didn't contact Lyndon. I don't recall it; we may have, but I don't remember.

F: You had that peculiar situation, of course, of Coke Stevenson having the endorsement of labor?

H: Oh, I realize that. And that was always an oddity to me. In that connection, I visited with Lyndon about it later on. And if you think it's appropriate I could refer here to--

F: Yes, I'd like that.

H: --an incident that illustrates my hurt at the moment. It was not attributable to Lyndon as an individual because I knew the context and frame of reference in which he was making these remarks.

F: Everybody jockeyed himself into really an untenable position at that time.

H: That was so, and it was right close to the election day. I later made a little personal memorandum about it. I was down in Gonzales, as I say, having previously come there with no formal approach at all and no physical presence around Austin to do what I could. The press picked up my presence there, I think it was the Dallas News and others called me. I told them that Lewis had no part in the campaign, I was down there only as an individual to visit my

family etc. And I was out at the little airport with my brother-in-law, going to fly down to Galveston. While I was just about to get into this little plane, a plane flew in from Austin. This you can take out--these remarks--if you want to, because I again don't mean it in any way to be derogatory of Lyndon, because he understood it.

F: No, we'll make it a part of it.

H: And he in later years understood thoroughly my position. Connally flew down there and caught me just as I was about to leave. And he had in his hand a piece of paper that had typewritten up at the head of it, called "Statement", that he presented to me and asked me if I would sign it. When the Dallas News reporter called me, that would be the interview he was purporting I would give. He asked my purpose in my visit in Texas. I stated I was visiting with my family; that my being in Texas was purely for that purpose. When the reporter insinuated that I might be here in connection with the race for the United States Senator, I told the reporter that I was the attorney for the United Mine Workers, which has no members in Texas and which is not interested in Texas politics. The story in the newspaper indicated that this newspaper was attempting to make a political issue out of my family visit. In order to clear up the record I would say that "I was a friend of Congressman Johnson's; he has recently been denouncing the President of United Mine Workers, and he voted for the Taft-Hartley Bill, which that organization opposed. I'm an old friend of Coke Stevenson and judging by the official record and platform of the two men, I have no hesitancy in saying that if John L. Lewis and the United Mine Workers were taking any interest in Texas politics, they would support Coke Stevenson."

I resented that. And without trying to relate it, I think I can best outline what happened by the note that I put in longhand on that paper within a matter of a few days thereafter.

F: You didn't sign it?

H: I did not. "The above proposed statement was presented to me by John Connally at the airport in Gonzales on the morning of Wednesday, August 25, 1948, with the explanation that it had been dictated by Senator Wirtz in Lyndon's behalf; and that he, Connally, had flown to Gonzales for the express purpose of seeimg me and asked my consent to the issuance by me of this statement." I stopped there to say that I always was uncertain in my own mind as to whether Wirtz actually prepared it. I always thought maybe Connally prepared it, just to be quite frank about it, maybe with Wirtz's knowledge and blessing--I don't know. "I had previously on Tuesday answered the telephonic inquiries from the press by saying that my visit to Texas was purely personal; the UMWA was not a political organization, and that neither it nor Mr. Lewis or any of its officers or I had any interest in and were not taking any part in the Senatorial campaign." I meant that in the formal sense and not the personal sense.

Later on Tuesday Wirtz had called me from Dallas and asked me to issue a statement, not this one--just a statement. I had refused, saying I would watch the press and if any additional statement other than what I previously made to the press was required, I would make it in my own way and reflect the true position of my client. I therefore told Connally that I was disinclined to make any additional statement, but that this one he proposed I would not make, because

it did not speak the truth. It was an untruth. And to tell Wirtz and Lyndon that I would make my own statement if any were to be made. I told him I had purposely refrained from taking any interest in the campaign and had not, until that time, been requested to take any interest; that if Mr. Lewis and the mine workers were an issue in the campaign, Lyndon and not I or Mr. Lewis had made them the issue.

I told him further that I had heard Lyndon's radio broadcast from Dallas on the preceding Wednesday or Thursday, August 18th or 19th; and that Lyndon had unfairly and untruthfully referred to Mr. Lewis and made misstatements of fact in reference to Mr. Lewis and the mine workers, and I was disappointed in Lyndon for so doing. Connally apologized for these speeches, saying that Lyndon was forced to make them--I think he meant politically--and had made them in the reading over the radio of the script prepared for him by someone else, the content of which he was unaware before radio speaking time. And I interpolate to say that I'm sure that was true to some degree. Lyndon had been advised by him and others to make no more such speeches or statements, and would make no more, and I think literally that's what happened.

Connally said the race was close and urged me to sign the proposed statement and issue it, or to revise it and then issue it. All this I refused to do and told him I was disinclined to make any statement. But if circumstances required one later, I would make it in my own way and state fully and truthfully the position of both Mr. Lewis and the mine workers and myself. Connally's special flight to Gonzales resulted in the above outlined discussion held

at the airport, where I was proposing to go to Galveston, the whole talk covering about thirty minutes. He flew off and I made the trip to Galveston and returned and heard no more from Connally or Wirtz or the press on this subject.

Now, I might add there in fairness, in later years I talked to Lyndon at length. He raised the subject with me. And I'm thoroughly convinced that he had no personal feeling in the matter; it was purely a political thing with him; it was expedient and necessary from the standpoint of his advisers. And frankly I don't think he ever knew about Connally's flight down there until I told him. So I know that he was not aware of this writing of this statement; and in fact in later years, he expressed keen personal disappointment to me about it, and I think it was a genuine disappointment. I referred to it only because that was the only time since I've known Lyndon that we had a sort of direct confrontation on issues. It was temporary; it never changed my feelings toward him one iota, and I don't think it changed his feelings toward me. In truth, I lived to see the day when he honored Mr. Lewis in many ways, both privately and publicly.

F: I want to go back just a minute on this. Congressman Johnson was one of the three Texas Congressmen who supported the original Wages and Hour Bill.

H: I think that's right, sir.

F: The other two get defeated. One was Maury Maverick. In fact, I think they may have been the only three Southern Congressmen who supported it.

H: I don't recall.

F: Now, this would have been before you were connected with the United Mine Workers while you were still at the Department of Justice.

H: That's right.

F: But I was wondering if you had any memory of that, of whether this brought Mr. Johnson to labor's attention, to John L. Lewis' attention, where Mr. Johnson first made his labor contact?

H: You mean at the time of the vote on the Wage and Hour? He probably made labor contacts as a result of that, so far as I know and recall in response to your question. I don't think any contact was made with Lewis stemming out of that, because as I think I previously said, I don't think Mr. Lewis had ever met Lyndon until some time later on in the forties or maybe in the fifties after Lyndon was in the Senate, and maybe at the time he was Minority or Majority Leader.

F: You don't have any clear memory of when Senator Johnson and Mr. Lewis first got together, or why?

H: No, sir, I don't. I know that Lewis was before the committees any number of times during those years. I know he was before the Truman subcommittee. I don't know whether Lyndon was on--no, he couldn't have been; that was later. No, I can't say just when or where--may have been actually a meeting at one of these typical Washington gatherings of cocktail parties, or dinners, or things of that sort. I really don't know when they met, but I do know that I lived to see the day in later years after he became President--to go to Mr. Lewis over there, and in the Cabinet room with other representatives of the coal industry to visit with the President in a very intimate fashion. By that time the President had learned, as many other people did both in politics and in and out of governmental life as well as

business, the value of Mr. Lewis' position through the years and had come to praise and acclaim him rather than to criticize him. The President was most pleasant to Mr. Lewis on that day--I remember, using a little off-color phrase to some degree, when the meeting was over and the other people were coming in for another conference, the President very purposely held Mr. Lewis and me there for a moment; then he very vehemently and pleasantly introduced him to some of the newcomers, saying, "This man here is the outstanding American today; in fact, he's the great stud-duck of labor."

Of course, later on he conferred on Mr. Lewis public recognition of his services.

So to go back, I never let that incident interfere with my feelings, and it certainly didn't with Mr. Lewis. I don't know that he paid too damned much attention to it because as I previously remarked, Lewis was Lyndon's friend long before he met Lyndon. I know he was long prior to the '60 campaign, and that he participated informally through me in a good many ways in helping and assisting Lyndon.

F: I wanted to ask you about that. As you know, there was this sort of abortive attempt to get the nomination in '60. You and I both probably know reasons why it didn't come off, but I'd like to know whether you had any involvement or just a friendly interest.

H: I was present at the convention in Los Angeles. I went out at Lewis' suggestion. Kennedy had already gone out there, Tom Kennedy had, as a delegate from Pennsylvania, his home state. I went out at a sort of last minute decision because about two or three days before the convention opened, I previously having had some personal talks with Lyndon about his ambitions and one or two talks with him

just before he went out to Los Angeles, particularly the turning on how the Pennsylvania delegates might turn. After Lyndon left, I--well, in fact, when I last talked with Lyndon, I asked him if he would be amenable if he got the nomination of accepting David Lawrence as a running-mate.

After he left I went over and had a visit with Sam Rayburn at Sam's office. It so happened when I went over to see him David Lawrence was in the office with him and the politico, former Tammany head from New York whose name slips me at the moment, C. DeSapio, I believe, you'd know it well if I could call it, were in with Rayburn. I went in there and visited with him and told him of Lewis' willingness to be helpful in any way that he could. Oh, yes, McCloskey was coming out of his office too--Matthew McCloskey. And I know Sam said to me, "Well, why don't you see what you can do maybe with the Pennsylvania delegation?" and other general talk. I told him that I'd be pleased to.

I came back and reported to Lewis and he caught Tom Kennedy in Chicago and told him that I was going to fly out there and I'd tell him why. And I did go out there, and I did see Kennedy. Up until the time of the caucus of the Pennsylvania delegation on the morning, I guess it was, or the morning before nominations started, there was some reason to believe that there might be a last minute gambit made there--that if it came out to where they could get away from the Kennedy influence and perhaps through Lawrence that they might be put in Lyndon's column. I talked to Tom Kennedy before the caucus and afterwards, and I learned, of course, afterwards that he wasn't able to put it over although he tried. And I had him go with me to

tell Rayburn the outcome of it.

F: Lawrence was at least temporarily committed to Johnson?

H: That's right, in that fashion. I was there during all the balance of the convention, and I worked at rare intervals on some facets of it with Joe Fowler and Jim Rowe and once, I think maybe, with Corcoran, but basically through Jim Rowe. I was in touch back here back and forth. But I had no way of trying to be helpful other than that, and I didn't undertake to go into any other delegations or exert any influence or carry any messages to so-called labor leaders out there.

F: The John Kennedy group just had too much of a headstart on you?

H: Exactly right. They had so thoroughly oiled the machinery of the convention, use that in the proper sense, in the way of preparation, that in retrospect, I realized that Lyndon didn't have the chance for the nomination we thought he did, and that I think Mr. Sam thought he had--the Speaker thought he had. But I must confess I was astounded and surprised at the offer of the Vice Presidency to Lyndon. I didn't have any reason to be around him on the morning of the hours that he was considering that. So I had no point of contact with him about it.

F: Frankie Randolph--you know her?

H: Yes.

F: Frankie tells me that she was sitting in the Kennedy suite when Sam Rayburn came in--this goes against anybody else's story--Sam Rayburn came in and said that, "either Johnson as Vice President, or there'll be no major bills passed by my Congress." And he rammed Johnson down John Kennedy's throat. Is this Frankie, or do you have

any idea on that? The general feeling, you know, is that Rayburn opposed his taking the Vice Presidency.

H: I think he did too in the original instance. Randolph's version of it, of course, is her version. I have no direct knowledge, but I would certainly have a different version. I don't believe it happened that--

F: Of course, Mrs. Randolph, you know, is not an advocate of Mr. Johnson.

H: Well, I know that, and I'm trying to be graceful in my reference to the lady. No, I don't think it happened that way. I think it was more or less his own decision arrived at the first blush, the reaction of Rayburn being no. And while I've never talked to Homer Thornberry about it--I've read versions of his advice back and forth--I think that more or less the Thornberry version would be the correct one, as I have read it. I have never had it directly from Homer.

F: You said that Mr. Johnson as Senator honored Mr. Lewis. In what way?

H: I've forgotten the exact description of it, but several years ago--I think shortly after Lewis left the office of president of the International Union, the President issued to him a certificate as an outstanding American. There is a certain civilian award there with a certificate attached to it, as I remember seeing--I wasn't present at the ceremony at which he presented it to Mr. Lewis at the White House, but it was full recognition on the record, I thought, of the value of Mr. Lewis and recognized most sincerely by the President who had come through the years, as I said a moment ago, to the same views that many of Mr. Lewis' business, professional, and political adversaries had come to, towit: that he was a man to a great degree ahead of his time in the labor field; a man of courage and conviction, honesty and integrity,

and they recognized it.

F: Do you think that Mr. Johnson sort of grew to this viewpoint, or do you think that he was--of course, a politican's first necessity is always to remain in office, or otherwise he has no forum--in other words, do you think he waited until he freed himself of local feelings--Maybe you can't separate it.

H: Well, perhaps, but I think it was--

INTERVIEWEE: WELLY K. HOPKINS (Tape #2)

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

November 14, 1968

H: --a thing of gradual maturity, so to speak, in the sense of being an outstanding man in public affairs, successful as he was, having been adverse in some respects in the legislative sense. He came to realize that there was perhaps more merit in some facets of the labor movement and some of the things they espoused, than he first realized. And I think it was a matter of maturity and education. I think he came about sincerely to where--I don't think there's any question in my mind that as a result of those mutations and whatnot through the years, that his public expressed views on labor and the things that were good legislatively for labor, both past and present, are very sincerely arrived at.

F: You watched him through a long stretch of his life, and as you know, he put through the first civil rights bill in the Senate in about a century, and then of course he has had two landmark bills at least as President. He has been accused of being a Johnny-come-lately to civil rights or as being just a practical politician with no real heart for what he's doing. Can you elaborate on that from your own knowledge?

H: Well, I don't know how successfully or to what it would add other than in general terms. My own analysis of his attitude on those matters--again, let me put it this way. When I first knew him as a young man, he just, as I probably would have, had maybe some hostile feelings, or at least lack of enthusiastic feelings, for such movements or political positions. But again, I think that through the years he

matured. I think that as he rose to places of importance, and certainly after he became President, he most sincerely recognized what he believed was a weak and a sore spot in our body politic; and he genuinely espoused things and the measures he thought would be helpful to render the remedy of those things. I don't think it was arrived at quickly; I don't think it was arrived at in the way or that the positions he finally took was as a result of advice from any one person or group of persons, or as a result of any feeling that he owed something to the group in labor and otherwise whose cause he espoused any more than he did arrive at a position of supporting the views or trying to help the lot of the so-called minority groups. I can't, in my own thinking and judgment of the man, attribute it to anything other than a gradual mutation of position based upon his observations, his experiences, and his willingness to admit the existence of such problems and try sincerely to face up to some solution of them.

F: When he was Senate Majority Leader, did you have any contact, either personal or official, with him?

H: A few times. A couple of times by telephone just prior to a vote in which he was telling me about where he stood on his head-count. And I asked him about one or two or three--

F: Did he deal with labor matters as a rule, matters affecting labor? Of course, everything affects labor.

H: Well, I was thinking about the civil rights program. I don't recall any direct communication between us as to the espousal or non-espousal of labor legislation. I do recall that he was very friendly inclined to assist in passing what we called the Mine Safety Act that had a hard, hard time through the years getting through the House; and

finally it did and died in the Senate a couple of times. I know on one occasion he told me that when he was, I think, Minority Leader, or just after he became Majority Leader, that he thought he could put it over. And I talked to him about it one evening informally at a little party that young Bill Francis was having out in Georgetown.

F: Is that Charlie's boy?

H: No, that was Bill's boy--Charlie's nephew. Bill Francis was former general counsel of Magnolia Oil Company a few years ago. Charlie was very, very fond of young Bill, though. He was then either the Minority Leader or the Majority Leader--I've forgotten which--I talked to him. And occasionally we were on the phone. I know he came out to my house and visited with me a couple of days before he was elected Majority Leader to talk about certain members of the Senate that he thought he could have their support--he wasn't sure and he reviewed his situation with me.

After he became Majority Leader, we were in occasional communication, but the intimacy very obviously involved for reasons of time and circumstance--position, was one of casual contact. He never openly, or so far as I know, as Majority Leader solicited Lewis' support of this, that, or the other, except I think it was, first civil rights. He told us where he stood, and asked us about certain Senators. He told me, I remember he said, "I've got them. I'm just going to pick my time to call them. That's when I'm going to put it to a vote." But you asked the basic question as to whether he was advised with us on labor matters--no, sir,

F: Did you always find him pretty accurate on these head-counts?

H: Exceedingly so. Sometimes when I had some little knowledge of my own

in a general way about certain Senators, but more aptly my observation was based on my general information without points of contact with him, in the outcome of the end result--he was damned accurate.

F: On the Civil Rights Act of the latter '50's, what could you do to help?

H: Nothing more than to speak with some two or three Senators that were voting members of the Senate.

F: Who, as a rule, came from mining states?

H: That's right. Basically from mining states. We did not participate actively otherwise. I don't know that Mr. Lewis felt it was proper to do that. I'm speculating a little bit here and there. But fortunately in those years, I enjoyed Mr. Lewis' personal confidence as I trust I still do, and he very intimately talked to me about some of his thoughts from time to time. If I recall correctly, he exhibited no affirmative desire to participate in the shaping of that legislation, not that he wouldn't have agreed with it--I think that he did basically, but I'm not too sure that he felt it was perhaps entirely appropriate from where he sat at the time to try to--the formality to put the organization into a political battle.

F: The United Mine Workers of America have never had the slow integrating problem that the building trades, for instance, have?

H: No, sir, they never have had. When I first went to the Mine Workers in 1940, I know I was surprised and later on pleasantly surprised to realize that there were a large number of Negro men who lived in localities of the mining areas--West Virginia and Alabama, Virginia, and a few in Illinois. So there has never been a racial problem or feeling of difficulties in that regard. I recall through

the years when they'd have the policy committee meetings over there, a group of some two or three hundred men that would be brought in under the procedure of the mine workers to discuss contracts or to approve contracts--came right straight from the picks, as they call it, from the face of the coal. The average working man. There were always Negro delegates present. They weren't a majority obviously, but there never was a problem involved so far as I know in the working force among the mine workers as to working conditions or feeling of working together or the rights of the so-called individuals. And there was never any internal trouble in the mine workers stemming from race.

F: Has the fact that Mr. Lewis has been a kind of on-again-off-again Democrat created any problems particularly as far as your relationship with the President is concerned?

H: Not at all. I think basically Mr. Lewis was a Republican. I've always understood in his general background that he was a Republican by political faith, so to speak, until his relationship with Roosevelt, and then his breaking with Roosevelt, as you will recall, and his espousing of Wilkie in 1940 shortly after I had been over there.

F: This was really just a return home?

H: I think so, and I of course have always voted the Democratic ticket. In that instance, he knew I was going to vote for Roosevelt, and I did. And I actually don't think he was too successful in that particular campaign, as I recall, in having the miners follow him into the Wilkie camp. I've forgotten what the popular vote in the coal mining states were, but I don't know that they went Wilkie. But basically, he has been a Republican, although he has had admiration

for different Democratic figures, as I've outlined in the case of the President. And I know that he would have liked to have seen him nominated in 1960, of that I'm quite confident.

F: Have you had much relationship with Mr. Johnson since he became both Vice President and President?

H: Not too often. I've been in communication with him many times by little interchange of notes between us on personal affairs.

F: What kind of personal affairs--if you don't mind my prying?

H: Well, I don't know that I can describe them too accurately, but he asked us to the White House on a number of occasions. We used to go. I went up to Camp David with him a few times--a couple of times. At different times around his birthday or other occasions, I would write a little note to him and send it over there by calling Jack Valenti or maybe Mrs. Roberts in recent years. He in turn has written various little notes to me. But they've been on the personal things; there has been no attempt on the part of either one of us to discuss or influence the other insofar as--

F: He hasn't used you as a pipeline to labor, for instance?

H: No, sir, and I haven't expected it. Actually, I think he was rather wise not to.

F: What do you think of him as a President? You've had a long background of watching him develop, and you share being New Dealers together. There are some people who say, you know, he's the last of the New Deal Presidents.

H: Perhaps so. I don't know hardly how I could observe too well on that or be too articulate. I would say, in my judgment however, that time will be good to the President, just as I think that time has

been good to Truman in the sense of properly appraising him in retrospect. I've observed through the years on occasion that historians have, and the people in generations to come will, read the account of Truman days and the days of Roosevelt--I don't know but what Truman might in the public estimation maintain his place of prominence maybe more than Mr. Roosevelt. Applying that, at the moment I would say that something akin to that might be said of the President now. They all know by the press and otherwise and by our own knowledge the difficulties that have ensued during his Administration have led to diminishing, perhaps momentarily, the estimate of his worth in the public mind. But I think those that will write the records and read the records in the future might very well begin to find him back in his proper place, more or less at the head of the list of some of the great Presidents. Seeing the allegorical way that I've compared Truman to Roosevelt--I hate to see him leave.

F: You felt like I did on March 31st, that we'd come to the end of an era?

H: There was a lump in my throat listening to his statement that night.

F: You were listening?

H: I was. And I must confess that I was startled almost to the point of physically being moved. When he came to his last words stating his nonavailability, I scarcely believed that it meant exactly what it said or that I had heard it right. When I read it the next day, I realized. On reflection I can, I think, understand why he came to that decision. While I had no knowledge of its impendency other than my own speculation--he never visited me about it, there was no reason to--but the few times I was with him in the last several

years--on a few times, I left, as I now have reason to realize, him feeling that there might come a time when he would want to shed the burdens of his office. He never said so to me. He never intimated it to the degree that I was very astounded when it came. I rather thought he would stand for reelection--renomination. But I can understand now why he did it, and I'm convinced at the moment at least it was certainly the best thing for him as an individual. And I feel quite confident that it met the longing and the desires of his family. And I believe in the political overall sense that time will prove that it was a wise decision.

F: Did you do anything more than vote as a citizen in '64? Did you lend any sort of active support or advice?

H: Well, not much more than that. It was so well known that the sweep was going to be large. I wrote the President a letter, as I remember, in which I went out on a limb; I wrote it about a week before election and told him that if I were going to try to do a Jim Farley in 1936 that I'd say that he'd lose only two, and it would be Mississippi and Alabama, but I was a little off base. I think he lost five, maybe.

F: You weren't far.

H: But it was so obvious to me, not from the standpoint of a person associated or identified with labor, but in the general sense. I heard it from every corner of this part of the country. The business associates of people that I would meet in different places. I remember a conversation with a lawyer in New York, the old Bill Donovan firm, just a few weeks before election, that I knew normally was a Republican. And he was enthusiastically--and voluntarily

suggested to me why Johnson should be elected. And it was that sort of thing that had long convinced me before election day that there was no question about the outcome.

F: In this period of declining popularity, he has held at least officials of the labor movement support--how do you account for that?

H: I think they recognized the sincerity of the man. As I said, Lewis long ago became personally attracted to him and convinced of his sincerity. The other leaders of labor like George Meany may have had their own reasons for becoming his advocate. You asked the question in frame of reference of his decreasing popularity, as to why they have remained?

F: Yes. This has been one base of his support.

H: I think that they believed in the man, and I believe that they felt that his suggested successor Humphrey was the right man from their viewpoint. They certainly went all out, in my observation. I know I was out at Denver as an observer because of my connection with the fund at the Mine Workers convention, and there was no doubt about the sincerity of their actions. Of course, I had previously had occasion on one time to be active, you might want to put it that way, in his race for the President.

You asked me awhile ago about '64. I did make a public presentation and speech before the Mine Workers convention in Miami that was about to slip my recollection. Willard Wirtz had come down there to carry a message from the President, and they played a recorded message to the convention. But I wrote the resolution for adoption by the convention and made a speech in his behalf there. The convention just most enthusiastically did endorse him just as they

did later on in 1968 for Humphrey. I never visited with the President about that; I had a little note from him afterwards. I think I should also mention the fact that after the convention in October, I believe I arranged a conference for the three officers of District 50 (which had about 200,000 members in approximately twenty states) with the President at the White House and later helped bring about their public endorsement. For some strange reason I had difficulty in getting past Jack Valenti to arrange this.

But you asked me the question of why the labor leaders followed his line of thinking and supported him in his days of adversity. Generally, because I think that they felt he had been a friend to labor and had recognized their needs even though in the earlier stages in his earlier years they may have counted him without understanding their problems. Then they became convents, and I think sincerely so.

Back before Pearl Harbor Lyndon was desirous of getting a possible commission in the Navy Reserve, in the Navy as a reserve officer, and he talked to me about it. And at that time I had had some passing relationship with then-Secretary of the Navy Charlie Edison. So I wrote to the Secretary and later visited with him on the commission issue. I've often thought in retrospect about how that fitted in so neatly after Pearl Harbor. As you know, the President went to Roosevelt and asked for an assignment in a matter of days. I remember I talked to him on Pearl Harbor Day. I was down in Kentucky just going to trial the next day. I talked to him on Sunday. On a murder trial to defend a couple of fellows that were in difficulty there. I had extreme doubts as to whether I could afford to go to trial before a state mountain jury there. They were acquitted.

But the point of my story was he, within a matter of days, left with Admiral Ghormley. He flew out to the South Pacific and I had a little note from him--I don't know where it is now, written the night before he left which was on or about the 9th or 18th of

December, or something like that, shortly after Pearl Harbor, saying that by the time it reached me he would be somewhere en route to the South Pacific. I followed him during those days and then had a wire from him when he was going to land back in San Francisco, saying that he would arrive such and such a day, and gave me his itinerary about when he hoped to be back in Washington.

F: He didn't though, just in a bit of emotion from Pearl Harbor, join the Navy? He'd already started this process before?

H: Yes, sir. And I remember that John Connally went with him. Connally called me that night that he left--I think he and Lyndon left together, or maybe Connally left a day or two afterwards. But more response to your question, there was the most sincere gesture in the world about his going to the service. He did, and as a matter of fact, when he came back in the spring of '42, there was an utterance publicly made by Roosevelt about wanting the Congressmen who were in the service to come back and remain in the Congress.

F: He ordered them back.

H: He ordered them back and I had some little talk with Lyndon about it. I think I had a letter or so at one time and we compared notes, in which I was saying I hoped he would take the admonition from the President and come back. He had done his tour of duty and that sort of thing.

During the whole thirty-odd years that I have known him, nearly thirty-one years since he first came to Congress, I never unilaterally undertook to make suggestions to him about appointments or throw out seeds like a lot of his friends do, advocate desires of this man or the other, starting when he was the Majority Leader on up to the present day, but I never did do that. I felt the President, if he

wanted my advice on anything, he'd solicit it, which he did on a few occasions, not but very few. I refused all these attempts to suggest this man for that and the other.

I never made but one to the President, and that was in recent time. I felt pretty keenly about it from the standpoint of what I feared was going to be a nomination which would hurt him. And so for the first time unilaterally I made an affirmative suggestion.

F: You mean you suggested someone in place of--?

H: Yes, that was the unfortunate, I think, nomination of Abe Fortas as Chief Justice. I had reason for that.

F: You mean you suggested to him Mr. Fortas, or you made the affirmative suggestion?

H: No, sir, I didn't speak myself very clearly. His nomination of Abe Fortas I regretted terrifically, because I thought I could foresee some of the difficulties that would arise, and some which were probably known ahead of time to the President, some perhaps weren't. He didn't advise with me at all, but I took the liberty of writing him a note and saying in substance that in all the thirty-odd years I had known him, I'd never unilaterally without his solicitation made a suggestion. But I suggested that he ought to name Henry Fowler. And I did it for several reasons that I outlined to him. I thought Joe Fowler, as they call him, was geographically right as a Virginian. I knew he had been loyal to the President, and I knew his impeccable reputation; and I knew that he'd be acceptable in my views without trouble from the Congress--be acceptable to all segments of the business community--

F: He wouldn't have run into the Southern opposition?

H: That's right. The President had Mrs. Roberts call me up the day before he publicly named Fortas and said in substance that the President wanted me to know that he shared my admiration for "the Virginian," but that "he had a long outstanding prior commitment," which confirmed what I inwardly felt was a mistake. And as it turned out, I think it was a mistake; and it has been one of the factors that has led to the general public's perhaps feeling towards the President at the moment--disagreeing with him.

I had reasons more than that. I'd known Abe Fortas almost as long as the President had. In fact, I met him through the President in the early days of '34, '35, '36, when Lyndon was up here with Dick. Abe was then just a rising young lawyer with the Public Works Administration. I had occasion to be with Lyndon and with him and Corcoran and others on occasion. But as the years went by, in my book, I had the feeling that the friendly relationship that the President was enjoying with Fortas was genuine on the President's part, but I always had the feeling that there was a long-range desire on the part of Fortas to some day capitalize upon his friendly relationship with the President.

F: You're sort of taking a calculated guess here.

H: Yes. And when the President asked Goldberg to leave the Court, I thought Art did it reluctantly. I don't think Art wanted to do that. And when the President named Fortas, I thought that was the end of the commitment--I don't mean commitment in the bad sense, but in the feeling of obligation. So when I was told that he unfortunately couldn't do anything other than to recognize "the long existing prior commitment," I thought that had been discharged by the original

appointment rather than the Chief Justiceship. I knew in addition to that through the years in my dealing with Abe, and by observations with other lawyers over the country that I knew that had dealings with him and some of their clients had been his clients, that there was always a high regard for his professional ability and his scholarly approach to things and his very successful career as a practitioner and his rise in prominence, and it was self-earned and justified.

But there was always a little bit of uneasiness in the minds of some of those people and certainly in mine as to whether Lyndon was using him or he was using Lyndon. And very privately, I have regretted that appointment; I've never given voice to it publicly. I wouldn't. I've said nothing to the President; I have no reason to. But as the troubles develpped on the Hill, I certainly regretted that he hadn't been able to take another look at Fowler or somebody else. That nomination hurt the President in the minds of the people particularly, even though they recognized that the original opposition from Senator Griffin and others was political.

F: It set off this string of refusals to confirm lesser appointments like Barefoot Sanders--

H: That's right. It confused that whole spectrum. It is one of the latter days of his latter political life that unfortunately, even though motivated by the best of good reasons as he saw them, was most unfortunate. I regret it. Some day, if I ever visit with the President in later years and time and opportunity allows, we might talk about it, but I haven't to this point and wouldn't.

F: Did you ever do any legal business for the family?

H: No, sir. On one occasion about 1938-1939, however, at Lyndon's request,

I drafted a deed from his brothers and sisters to him and from him to his mother conveying to her their undivided interests in their home property which I believe was then in Johnson City, Lyndon paying off the existing indebtedness. Copies of these documents and pertinent letters are in my files, all of which I proposed to tender to the Library.

F: In the early days before he had the staff, did Mrs. Johnson help him with his speeches? Do you know?

H: I have no direct knowledge on it.

F: She had good taste in such things.

H: I don't believe she would indulge in an attempt to write the speech or that sort of thing. I have no doubt that he talked his ideas over with Lady Bird from time to time through the years. And I always thought her influence was good. But I have no direct knowledge on that, Doctor.

I've enjoyed this opportunity to visit. I hope--

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE

Gift of Personal Statement

By Welly K. Hopkins

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, _____, hereinafter referred to as the donor, hereby give, donate, and convey to the United States of America for eventual deposit in the proposed 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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