INTERVIEW I

DATE: August 14, 1970

INTERVIEWEE: WALTER JENKINS

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

PLACE: Mr. Jenkins' office, Austin, Texas

Tape 1 of 1

F: Walter, let's go back. You came out of North Texas, right?

J: Yes, sir, my home is Wichita Falls.

F: How did you happen to get into the orbit of Lyndon Johnson? Where did you ever meet up with him?

J: I was a student at the University of Texas and had just completed my work there when Dean Parlin, who I worked for at the University, and Max Fichtenbaum, who I also worked for, asked me if I was interested in a job in Washington. They did not identify it as to who it would be with.

F: When was this?

J: This would have been in, oh, I'd say September of 1939, or October perhaps.

F: This was when the Congressman then had been elected in a regular election.

J: He had been in office two years--first in a special election and then had been re-elected in one regular election.

F: Up until that time had you taken any great part in politics, either campus or otherwise?

J: I had been active in campus politics in behalf of the campaign of John Connally for president of the student body. I had taken no part in any political matters around Wichita Falls other than quite some interest in some of the local candidates.

F: No more than just the concerned citizen?

J: That's correct.

F: Go ahead with your story.

J: I indicated that I would be interested. The first call I got was from Willard Deason, who was state deputy director of NYA, and asked me if I would come down and be interviewed. I was interviewed by Mr. Deason, was led to believe that I was being considered for a job with the Office of Government Reports. A few days later I had a call from J. C. Kellam, who was the state director of NYA, asking me to come for an interview. A few days later I was asked to come for an interview with Ray Lee, who was the postmaster of Austin.

F: By that time you were getting a little confused, weren't you?

J: That's right. Then finally I was asked to be interviewed by B. Frank White, who was head of the Office of Government Reports, still under the impression that that was the job that I was being considered for. I felt like I was sort of being over-interviewed.

Then one night about six o'clock I got a call from Bill Deason, asking me if I would like to go out to Johnson City and meet Lyndon Johnson. Since I was from Wichita Falls and didn't follow politics too carefully, the name was not familiar to me, and I said, "Who is Lyndon Johnson?"

F: John hadn't joined him yet?

J: John had joined him, but I didn't know it--just very shortly before that. I was told that he was the congressman from this district, and I said I would be glad to go out. He picked me up. We drove out to Johnson City and had dinner at the Casparis Cafe with John Connally, who had been with him a month or so, and Mrs. Johnson and Bill Deason. That was the first indication to me that that was the job I was being considered for.

After dinner, John and Mr. Johnson and I walked up and down the streets of Johnson City for thirty or forty minutes, and I was asked questions about whether I would like to go to Washington, what sort of work I could do, and so on. At the conclusion of the walk, Mr. Johnson asked me if I would like to go to work for him, and I asked what the salary would be. He told me eighty dollars a month. I was making seventy-five in the dean's office, which in those days was not too bad for a kid.

F: In those days, it wasn't too bad to have a job.

J: So I said that I would, but I'd need a little time to notify Dean Parlin to give him a chance to get somebody else. This was on a Thursday night, and he said, "All right, be out here to work Monday morning"--which allowed two days notice, or three days notice. I started the following Monday morning in the Congressman's office at the Pedernales Electric Co-Op Building in Johnson City.

F: Did you stay in Johnson City for a while, or did you go right on to Washington?

J: We were in Johnson City through November and December because Congress was not in session, and went back to Washington on the first of January when the January 1940 session commenced.

F: Where do you think the Congressman picked up your trail?

J: I don't know for sure, although I've heard that he asked Max Fichtenbaum to look for some young man or men around the University and make a recommendation.

F: And Max had him underfoot.

J: I was working in Max's office.

F: What was the office like in 1940 when you got to Washington? I judge it was always hyperactive, wasn't it?

J: It was extremely active, perhaps more active in those days than it ever became later. It was small. There was John Connally, Dorothy Jackson--now Dorothy Nichols--Herbert Henderson, who is now dead, and I. By the way, I do want to interpose here that I was never paid eighty dollars a month. At the end of the first month I was paid a hundred, although I was hired at eighty.

When we got to Washington there was a vacancy on the Capitol police--patronage job, that paid a hundred and thirty-five dollars a month, and Mr. Johnson asked me if I would like to earn a little additional income and go on the Capitol police and work in the office on the side. In those days, and perhaps it's still true to a degree, the patronage jobs around the Hill were assigned to various congressmen and senators in order to sort of let them add to their staffs. The patronage people were expected to contribute some work in the office of their

sponsors. So I was a Capitol policeman from four till twelve at night and worked in the office from eight till four in the daytime, and normally took a typewriter and letters to answer and so on to my police desk assignment and worked during that period on office business.

F: Where did you live?

F: I first lived in the basement of the Dodge Hotel.

F: It was just sort of another headquarters for Johnson people, wasn't it?

J: That's right, where John Connally lived and where several people that had been associated with Mr. Johnson [lived], some of whom were still on the Hill and some of whom had gone to government agencies, young lawyers and people around Washington. I stayed there a few months and moved to a rooming house over on 3rd Street, S.E.--because I needed to save money [and] the Dodge was a little more expensive--where a good many young Capitol Hill employees lived.

F: Still close in.

J: Three or four blocks from the House Office Building.

F: You actually didn't have much time to spare to get home and get a little sleep and get back.

J: That's right.

F: What were your duties in the office?

J: Primarily my duties were to answer mail and to take dictation, type, compose letters.

F: Incidentally, you're rather rare in the profession as a man that I've always heard was good at shorthand and had all the stenographic skills. Did you do that in anticipation of something like this? Did you do it

back in high school just to piece out a curriculum? Where did you pick this up?

J: I took shorthand in Wichita Falls Junior College--that's now Midwestern University--in summer school, and more or less to sort of fill out a curriculum, although I had some interest in learning the skill. I didn't have firmly in mind that I was going to be a stenographer. By the way, I'm not an expert one by any stretch of the imagination, but I use it, as you see, every day.

F: That is the remarkable part about it. So many people, you know, where it's not their life profession, learn it and forget it.

J: I don't believe I could keep up with all the things [without it], particularly when I was with President Johnson. He talks rather rapidly and will give you a list of seventeen things to do. I believe I would have missed half of them if I hadn't been able to get down notes.

F: So you've spent a good portion of your life with pad in hand.

J: That's correct.

F: Was there anyone, in a sense, who was senior in the office, or was everybody more or less equal in those days? What I'm trying to get at is, below the Congressman, was there some kind of a normal flow of work, or did everybody just parcel it out and try to stay up?

J: There wasn't any question about who was the boss outside of the Congressman. It was John Connally. He was in charge of the office and in charge of assignments. But as the mail came in in the morning it was sorted, and the things that it was felt like the Congressman needed to

see went to him and the rest of it we'd parcel out among each other to prepare replies.

F: Did the Congressman develop a kind of a style that you could fit into? If I had written the Congressman at that time, I presume that even then he was always insistent on immediate answers to all mail.

J: One of his rules was, and it was one of the reasons we stayed there pretty late many nights, that every letter was answered the day it came in. That was not so bad on Tuesday and Wednesday because those were the days that letters were written in Texas on Saturday and Sunday. For some reason people prefer to write letters on somebody else's time rather than their own. But on Mondays and on Thursdays and Fridays and Saturdays, that was quite a heavy flow. I believe we averaged about a hundred letters a day in those days, which was heavy for a Congressman. Mr. Johnson promoted mail; he asked for it; he advertised for it, because he felt like, I think, that every letter he was able to write to someone was a tie to that person.

F: Did he, in a sense, censor your answers, or after you once proved yourself as at least an adequate letter writer did he leave you alone on more or less routine answers?

J: He pretty well left us alone on routine answers after he was satisfied himself we could handle them. All of us, I believe, learned our styles from Herbert Henderson. I don't know how much you know about Herbert.

F: No, I don't, and I'd like to know something about him.

J: Herbert Henderson was a man who had been, I believe, editor of the Daily Oklahoman and perhaps at one time the San Antonio Light, and had

held a very high staff position on a national magazine which is now defunct. It wasn't the Literary Digest--Today was the name of it, Today magazine. He had had some difficulties because of alcohol and had lost some of these jobs. I can't tell you where his association with President Johnson started because I don't know. But he probably was the most capable man I've ever been associated with as far as writing. He could turn out thirty or forty letters a day, each one a beautiful one, so he had written a style book for us. Any sort of letter we got, we could look into his book and get the kind of answer that he knew Mr. Johnson would approve. Mr. Johnson was very fond of Herbert. He probably put up with things from him that he would never have put up with from anybody else.

F: He's the one, I gather, that in later times became impossible, but Mr. Johnson more or less just kept him on and out of sight just as long as he could.

J: Not entirely out of sight. Herbert was a great speech writer. I can remember in the 1941 campaign against O'Daniel, Herbert flying everywhere with him with the typewriter sitting on his knees in the airplane writing out speeches just before they landed to make them at the next town. And you wouldn't particularly need to keep him out of sight because he'd be great for four or five or six months. Then he would go off on a tangent and you wouldn't be able to find him for two or three weeks, and then there'd be no telling where you would find him.

F: You have got all the public press about his [Johnson's] great rages and

so forth, but I judge toward his employees and colleagues there's a great sense of loyalty and tenderness.

J: I believe that's true, and I believe it's true of his employees certainly, with only one or two exceptions. I think there are two or three things that caused it: one, because of the tremendous admiration for his ability to do a job; perhaps second, because no matter how hard you worked, you always knew he was working harder; and third, because he could be on occasion so good to you, while on other occasions perhaps get you a little angry because of the way you might be treated. Let me say this, his temper was never one that flared over something big. When you made a big mistake, he was always understanding. It was the little, annoying things that would cause him to flare.

F: Did you have the feeling in these early months that you had hooked up with a man who was going to be more than just another congressman?

J: Yes, sir, I felt that almost from the beginning.

F: Was this a general kind of an office attitude, as far as you could tell?

J: Yes.

F: That no matter how hard you worked, something was going to come out of this?

J: Yes. I think everybody felt it.

F: When you come down to 1941, you have of course the rather unexpected race coming up for senator, and you do have the fact that you have a congressman who is confined to one district against a man who is a statewide name, or even goes beyond the state, in Pappy O'Daniel. Was there much talk in the office about whether Mr. Johnson should offer

himself for the Senate and what all of this would involve? Was there much hesitation, or when it became known that there was going to be a race was everybody more or less saying, "Let's go to it"?

J: I think all of the members of the staff were more or less, "Let's go to it." The Congressman himself was a good deal more cautious and talked to an awful lot of people, not only in the district, because I think he felt that he needed to go out of the Tenth District with a large majority if he had any chance, but also the various people that he knew in other districts who might be possible leaders in the campaign. By the way, there wasn't just one statewide name in the race. There was Martin Dies, who had very much of a statewide name, had been head of the Dies Committee. Then there was Jerry Mann, who had been a very popular attorney general and football hero. So there were three men who had statewide reputations, and Lyndon Johnson's name was not generally known outside of the Tenth District.

F: There were other people who had asked the same question you had a couple of years before.

J: I think the man whose advice he followed more than any other one person was Alvin Wirtz.

F: Did it seem to be, from your vantage point, a difficult decision for the Congressman to make?

J: Yes, I think it was a very difficult decision for him to make. But I think he judged the temper of the times and reached the proper decision to make the race.

F: Was Mrs. Johnson much in evidence around the office in these days, or did she stay in the background?

J: She was much in evidence, but not in the same way that she became later, really out in front. Mrs. Johnson has done a remarkable job of making herself ready to be the wife of a president. In 1939-1940 she was rather a shy, retiring person, who while greatly admired and respected by all who knew her was not generally considered to be a leading type individual like she became later after she took public speaking several times and Spanish and worked so hard to make herself the person she wanted to be.

F: What did you do as far as the campaign in 1941 was concerned? Did you come back to Texas, or did you stay in Washington?

J: I stayed in Washington, pretty well ran the office as far as keeping up with the mail and getting all the things done. I'd get calls from Mr. Johnson and John every day with various things they needed to facilitate the campaign. If they went to a town in East Texas and were told by the local leaders what they really needed there was the approval of some PWA project or something of the kind, then I'd get a call immediately that that would be very helpful in that section. I firmly believe that President Roosevelt, who was very much interested in Johnson's victory, had instructed the various agencies of the government to expedite, within proper reason, nearly anything that we felt like we needed and wanted to be helpful.

F: The Congressman was noticeable enough by this time that if you called

other offices up you could get through without much trouble? You weren't brushed off?

J: He was known much better in Washington than perhaps he was in Texas because of his friendship with Roosevelt and with the leading members of Roosevelt's Administration--Harold Ickes, Tom Corcoran, and so on.

F: When did you begin to think that you just might win this? Were you optimistic from the beginning? Because it was uphill.

J: I felt the odds were strongly against him at the beginning. As we went along, in the first poll as I remember, now I'm not sure this is right, but it was very low, 4 or 5 per cent. He was running fourth. As the campaign went along and the polls began to show him right in the thick of it, I began to feel he had a chance.

F: Where were you on election night?

J: I was in Austin. Perhaps ten days or two weeks before the election I was called to come down here and help the last few days in the campaign headquarters.

F: Did you get the feeling in a sense that the election had gotten away from you? The history of those last few hours, and particularly of the counting of votes, is well known. But I've often wondered what the atmosphere was around Mr. Johnson's place, at both the headquarters and out there. He was living on Dillman at the time, as I recall.

J: Well, the atmosphere the first hours after the election were extreme elation because we were well ahead.

F: I thought you were in.

J: I think everybody else did. I believe it's the only time in the history of Texas that the Texas Election Bureau has conceded a victory which turned out to be different. As I remember, when there were forty thousand votes left to count, Mr. Johnson was twenty-five thousand ahead. With four major candidates, that was almost a cinch to be victory. That lead began to dwindle as the outlying counties' votes came in. But I wasn't concerned because I thought we were so far ahead that we couldn't possibly lose. Mr. Johnson told us to all pack up, get in our cars and drive back to Washington and be back on the job as soon as we could get there. I drove with Ray and Juanita Roberts.

F: You left before the final--?

J: All of us did, I believe. I was driving through East Texas on the way back to Washington when I heard the report that there was five thousand votes left to count and we were still three thousand ahead. I still wasn't concerned. But the further we went along, we'd get the reports that it dwindled to where it was practically even.

F: It must have been almost unbelievable.

J: It was unbelievable, and crushing to all of us who had worked so hard. I'm sure it was to Mr. Johnson, too, but he never showed it.

F: Was there ever any real serious consideration of a contest?

J: There was a lot of consideration of a contest on the part of Mr. Johnson's advisers. I do not know that he ever entertained seriously the possibility of doing it. I believe it was John Connally who had a little study made as to where the last votes were from, and so on. In fact, I believe they sent a polling group in there to determine, if they could, whether

there had been any fraud. It indicated by asking people how they'd voted and so on that our percentage was just about what we got in these eight or ten deep East Texas counties in the Martin Dies area, and that Mann's percentage was about what he got. But Dies' percentage was much lower than he actually received, and O'Daniel's was much higher. So if there was a change of some kind, it looked like a substantial number of votes perhaps switched from Dies to O'Daniel in that area.

F: Did Congressman Johnson then ever get on very close terms with Senator O'Daniel?

J: I don't believe they were ever on intimate terms at all. O'Daniel was in the United States Senate, and Johnson was in the Congress. It's standard for senators and congressmen to make their announcements jointly on projects. We'd done it with Senator Connally for years, but Senator O'Daniel never cared to participate in those arrangements with the Congressman. He either made a separate announcement, or he just failed to make an announcement--ignored it. I don't believe they ever at any time were close.

F: They weren't considered political enemies though of, say, the kind of the Yarborough-Connally caste.

J: No, because they were not cutting at each other. It was not O'Daniel's style to do that, and Mr. Johnson, I expect, refrained from doing it. After the election was over and so many of his friends and advisers felt there should be a contest, he made it clear he thought you never really win something by a contest even if you should win the contest, that you go in with a cloud as to whether you actually had won or not. He kept

telling us all, "Go on back to work and do your job. There'll be another ball game to play some day."

F: You had the feeling this was not the end of senatorial ambitions?

J: Much to the contrary, that it was only the beginning.

F: That he would be back. The next big event around Washington insofar as the Congressman was concerned was Pearl Harbor, and the immediate aftermath insofar as Congressman Johnson was concerned was he was the first congressman to put on the uniform. Pearl Harbor, of course, was not anticipated, but did Mr. Johnson hesitate on this, or did he immediately decide to activate himself?

J: Well, I was gone into the service by that time, so I would have to speak by hearsay only. But some time in 1940 Jim Forrestal, who was secretary of the navy, came to our office and told Mr. Johnson that he would like to see him take a commission in the naval reserve, that they needed young, able, aggressive men. Mr. Johnson indicated an interest in it, although the application was a major job in those days. You had to go back and write your life history from the beginning. I don't think it's quite as bad now.

F: I know. I applied.

J: He told Secretary Forrestal that he was interested but that he didn't have time to work up that application, and if I would get most of the information from his mother, who was there in Washington in those days, and would fill out the application for him, he would file an application. I worked on the application for some time, getting most of the information from Mrs. Sam Johnson, President Johnson's mother. The application

was filed and was approved. Then they asked John Connally if he wouldn't follow up and become a naval reserve officer, and he was so busy I did his application for him, too. Then they asked me if I wouldn't like to. I believe Mr. Johnson was a lieutenant commander, and John was a lieutenant. So I went through the procedure again in making another application for myself and was approved.

F: You knew how by now, anyway.

J: I had become an expert. I was granted the commission as an ensign, or was offered a commission as an ensign just at the time that I received my draft notice. I labored over the decision very seriously and finally reached a conclusion to go into the service as a private through the draft rather than take the naval commission. That was in September of 1941.

F: Other than Forrestal's intervention, was there any reason for going the navy route? There's no particular sealoving or seafaring background, is there?

J: No, except that he had already served on the Naval Affairs Committee in the House for four years. He went on the Naval Affairs Committee as soon as he got into the Congress, so he had become quite interested in the navy.

F: Was there an awareness, in the sense of his sponsorship by older people, I'm thinking of men like Congressman Carl Vinson who did give him an assist along the way, or did Mr. Johnson more or less make these opportunities for himself?

J: It was a combination of both. President Roosevelt called Carl Vinson, I believe, and asked him to take him on the Naval Affairs Committee. President Roosevelt did not know Mr. Johnson particularly other than-- I'm going back now to 1937--when he ran in 1937, as you well know, he ran and the main issue was the Supreme Court packing plan. That, of course, interested President Roosevelt, I'm sure. I'm sure that his first interest in President Roosevelt was occasioned by that campaign where he ran an all-out pro-Roosevelt campaign.

Then right after the election President Roosevelt was off Galveston in a ship and invited him to come in and meet him. As I understand the story--again, this was before I joined the staff--President Roosevelt was impressed with him and when he got back to Washington called Carl Vinson and said, "I've got a young man I'd like you to put on the Naval Affairs Committee." I believe one thing that occasioned its being the Naval Affairs Committee is that I think President Roosevelt asked him if he had, as the country's newest congressman, any recommendation for him. And he said, "Yes, I think that Texas with its long coastline needs a major naval base here," which perhaps was the birth of the Corpus Christi Naval Station.

F: The closeness of the Roosevelt-Johnson relationship has been somewhat overstated, I gather, by lots of people.

J: Well, in a sense, yes. Because people used to say he'd go down and have breakfast every morning and fry his eggs on the White House stove. None of that, of course, was true. On the other hand, he was very close to the group around Roosevelt. I think Roosevelt was personally

fond of him, and I think he had access to Roosevelt whenever he needed it and wanted it.

F: When did you come back from the service?

J: I came back in October of 1945.

F: Did you go right back to Mr. Johnson?

J: I had not really planned to. Of course, I had rights under the G.I. Bill, but I didn't want to ever be guilty of imposing those rights on anyone. While we had corresponded all through the war, I had not been asked to come back particularly or any point made of it. I was at the processing station in Richmond, Virginia, where I was getting out of the service along with thousands of others, going through the processing, when I was paged to come to the telephone, which scared me because I didn't think anybody knew where I was. It was Congressman Johnson saying that he wanted me back and wanted me back right away. I told him I had agreed to get married and I was getting married on October 4, which was a few days later, and that we wanted to take a honeymoon. So he said, "Well, get here just as soon as you can."

While I was on the honeymoon in New Orleans--we'd planned to have two weeks--he called me again and said, "I need you badly, can't you cut it short?" I did cut it short. So we concluded our honeymoon and headed for Washington.

F: It wasn't the last interruption you were going to get, was it?

J: That's correct.

F: You went right to work then. Your staff situation had changed in the intervening four years?

J: It had changed a good deal. There was no one on the staff who I really knew. Everybody from the old group, all of the people we had had with us before the war, had gone into the service. I guess the only person who was still there was Dorothy Jackson from the older days. Mack DeGeurin, an Austin attorney, was the administrative assistant, and Dorothy Plyler was one of the secretaries. I don't remember who else. But Mack was anxious to come back to Austin, which probably occasioned the fact that they were looking for me. He'd agreed to come for a brief period and had particularly been helpful through the time when Mrs. Johnson acted as the congressman in every form but casting a vote.

F: Was there a backlog of work, or had things stayed up?

J: Well, they had stayed pretty well up because Mr. Johnson would not have permitted there to be any great backlog of work. He had brought in some other help. For instance, Irving Goldberg, who is now on the United States Circuit Court, was working in the office helping answer mail to keep it up. But help was needed, no question about that. So Mack came back to Texas, and I pretty well became the administrative assistant.

F: Did the Congressman give you pretty much of a free hand in the way the office was operated, or did he look over your shoulder on lots of details?

J: He always kept his hand into nearly everything that went on. It was amazing he could do as many things as he could. I don't mean to imply that he wouldn't give you responsibility. He'd give you all that you'd be willing to take.

F: And more than you sometimes wanted.

J: Often more than you wanted. On the other hand, he knew what was going on in nearly every field, including some of the rather routine and less important matters.

F: Did he have a conscious policy of having you and others get out and meet other people, your counterparts in Congress and other congressmen and so on?

J: Very muchly so. He felt that we could do a much better job for his constituents if we were active in the Congressional Secretaries Club, in Little Congress, and particularly if we had friends in the government departments who we were calling on in behalf of constituents every day.

F: He had a pretty rugged congressional campaign, in some ways except for the first one his worst, against Hardy Hollers in 1946. Did you get involved in that more than just ordinarily?

J: Yes, very muchly so, and it was a mean campaign.

F: So many of the charges that were used against him in later years really stemmed from this particular campaign.

J: That's correct. We spent that campaign answering charges which were untrue, but in each case a good deal of time had to be spent going back to the records to establish what the facts really were. That's what I spent a great deal of my time on.

F: You really became kind of a researcher.

J: That's correct.

F: Then the Congressman would take these facts and bolster his own record?

J: That's correct. I believe he answered the charges one by one. If I remember correctly we started from the beginning, and we called the first

one "Lie number one," and we went through "Lie number one hundred," perhaps, I don't remember how far. In each one we tried to establish the exact proof that the charges were unfounded, and I think succeeded pretty well because, as I remember, the election was about 75-25, or perhaps 66-33. He won overwhelmingly.

F: One of the things that was to haunt him later also was his refusing to go along with President Truman on the Taft-Hartley Bill, or Truman's veto of Taft-Hartley. Did he, as you recall, at this time agonize over how he ought to vote, or was this a pretty clear-cut issue to him?

J: I think he realized that it was one of the really serious votes of his career and did agonize over it and did a lot of studying over it, and I think conscientiously reached a conclusion that he was casting the vote that was in the interest of at least the majority of the people. We got, I suppose, as much mail on that vote as we got on nearly any subject, other than perhaps the firing of [General Douglas] MacArthur. We answered thousands of letters.

F: Were they fairly evenly divided in sentiment, or were they weighted on one side?

J: Well, the organized letters, the ones that were alike, seemed to have come more from the people who were against the Taft-Hartley Act, but there was a great amount of mail on both sides.

F: When you get ready to run for the Senate in 1948 you have a different pot of fish than you had in 1941 because you're going to have to surrender your congressional seat. You had that to fall back on in 1941 in case things didn't work out. Was this decision to run in 1948 a difficult one?

J: Yes. There was a lot of thought given to that, too.

By the way, you mentioned a moment ago that his Taft-Hartley vote was one that would continue to give him trouble through the years. I personally think that it was that vote that elected him to the Senate. I don't think he would have won except for his vote on the Taft-Hartley law.

F: It reassured lots of people in Texas who looked on him as a little bit too liberal for them, I know.

J: I'm sure it caused some problems for some of his liberal associates in Washington.

F: It took away, in a sense, one of the campaign possibilities that Coke Stevenson would have had because organized labor--I always thought that was the most peculiar situation--was working for Stevenson, who was so much more conservative than Johnson, but simply because Stevenson hadn't had to vote on the Taft-Hartley Act.

J: Stevenson tried to ride the fence on Taft-Hartley all through the campaign with Mr. Johnson hitting him several times a day, demanding that he tell them where he stood, and finally when he was smoked out took the same position in a weaseled sort of way.

F: When Stevenson came to Washington on that trip, sort of to be educated, were you in Washington, or were you in Texas?

J: I was in Washington?

F: One thing that I've always wondered: did Congressman Johnson's office sort of alert people that Stevenson was coming and more or less suggest

questions it might be good to ask him? Because as you know, he really made a fiasco out of that trip.

J: What do you think! (Laughter)

F: I just wanted to get--

J: The answer is obvious. We did our best to manage his appearance in Washington.

F: Take the initiative away from him really.

J: That's right.

F: And you got, I gather, complete cooperation from people.

J: Yes, I think completely. I think as far as Washington was concerned, at least. I don't know anybody that was for Stevenson in that election in Washington, although I'm sure there were some.

F: Did you at that time feel that you had in a sense crossed a big hurdle, that this was what gave you the real momentum?

J: Yes, it certainly helped, and it got a lot of attention through the state, his two-day education program.

F: Where did you get the idea for the helicopter?

J: I don't remember. It may have been John Connally, but I'm not certain. Somebody suggested to him that if he had any chance of winning he had to really become a statewide figure, because just as in 1941, while he'd had a statewide race in 1941, he'd then again represented a district for six years. He had to do something startling and exciting and bring the people out, that would be a contrast to Stevenson's rather slow, deliberate operation.

F: The fact that Stevenson, without getting into the merits of the case, had left the state with a surplus was a good talking point.

J: Yes, that's correct.

F: The fact that he couldn't spend any money was beside the point, but it was something to talk about. Was there more than just normal concern over the danger over the helicopter, which was not quite as common then as now?

J: There was some concern over that, but I don't think that anybody considered it a matter of major concern. We contacted the helicopter companies and were assigned a top pilot by Bell, who is by the way now one of the executive vice presidents of the company. I belive once Mr. Johnson made up his mind that he was going to make a helicopter campaign he just put aside that consideration.

F: This put a different burden on the people who were working with him in the campaign because one, you increased his mobility so much. In one sense, you didn't have quite the time to get things done. Did this bother you in your operation at all?

J: It certainly bothered the people who were charged with the responsibility, and while I was not directly in that field, I was sort of over the people who were. The logistics became a major problem because--I don't know about now--in those days helicopters were a little uncommon. They required a type of gasoline that you couldn't get in most places, and they didn't hold a whole lot of gasoline. So we had to have a fleet of trucks scurrying around on the ground to meet him at various stops so that the helicopters could be refueled. The logistics of keeping that

helicopter in the air were almost the toughest thing of the whole campaign. And it didn't always work. We had a few problems.

F: You had the feeling though that the helicopter was doing what it was supposed to be doing--that was, it was getting the attention.

J: No question about it. It was bringing out crowds. It's hard to remember now, I think, but most people had never seen a helicopter, and certainly never had seen one up close. We were getting a thousand people in a town of a thousand, and Coke Stevenson would come there and meet with ten in the lobby of a hotel. Mr. Johnson, I think, had the feeling that the helicopter got them out, and perhaps didn't get any votes, but it gave him an opportunity to try to get their votes.

F: Did you ever make any of the helicopter hops with him?

J: No, I didn't.

F: As much as he likes to be doing and the status of helicopters at that time, I wondered just what he did between times since you really couldn't talk, couldn't work. You just had to stay there.

J: I've always heard from the pilots and others of his remarkable ability to take a nap, because he worked such long hours and people wondered how he was able to make the sometimes twenty appearances a day. If he had fifteen minutes, even though the sound of the motor was loud and so on, the pilot told me that he could put his head back and get twelve minutes of that in a little nap.

F: Well now, has this always been a characteristic of his? When things are really breaking around him can he close them out for a few minutes, or does he have long, sleepless nights sometimes?

J: He has quite a good ability to get rest, although he does carry things on his mind and can wake up and take care of something and then go back to sleep. I know how many nights in Washington after he was president that he went down to the Situation Room at three o'clock in the morning to see how many planes didn't come back. But I really never felt that he was having long sleepless nights. He just knew that that was the time that the reports came in, and he'd wake up and go down and see and go back and perhaps go to sleep again. He has had a remarkable ability to lay the problems aside and to get his rest.

F: There was just barely a run-off in this 1948 campaign.

J: That's correct. We almost lost without one.

F: Right. So you knew you had a tremendous uphill fight when it got down to a two-man race. Did you consider pulling out after the results of the primary were in?

J: Oh, I don't think at all.

F: You were in it to stay?

J: I don't think he ever gave a thought to pulling out. I think he gave a thought to redoubling the efforts to some way switch it around. We abandoned the helicopter, if you remember. The helicopter, he felt, had done its job. It had gotten him into the rural sections of the state, where he probably perhaps made five or six times the number of appearances he could have made without it. He spent most of his time during that run-off period in the five or six largest cities.

F: You had the problem in there also of his getting ill.

J: Yes.

F: Did that involve you more than just as a very interested--

J: It involved me to the extent that at that particular point I was back in Washington running the office, and he became ill--

F: I rather gather he and John Connally got at cross purposes.

J: Very muchly so. Mr. Johnson felt that that would be the end of the election if it were generally known that he had any sort of serious illness and that he was going to try to get over it without anyone knowing about it. John--and I think John was right, by the way--felt very much to the contrary, that that first would be impossible, and second, that it was not the best political strategy. They differed rather violently about it.

Mr. Johnson flew to Mayo's with Jackie Cochran. John made the announcement that he had gone without authority to do it. For a few days it was very strained, and they were not speaking to each other. Mr. Johnson would talk to me in Washington, and I would talk to John in Texas and relay messages between each other. But they worked it out after a while, and I think Mr. Johnson came to realize that John was right. I think perhaps if he had not been under such terrific pressure and so many public appearances, that he would have reached the same conclusion John did. But he was so close to it and he felt so strongly that this was the straw that was going to make it impossible. I think he wanted to see if he couldn't be gone three or four days and be back right on the campaign trail without anybody knowing he was gone.

In the meantime, appearances were scheduled on the hour that either had to be canceled or somebody else appear. I remember the night

he went he was to speak in Wichita Falls. John's position was, "What are we going to say to several thousand people that are gathered in Wichita Falls to hear him." They have differed on occasions because they both are strong-willed people, but I don't believe I ever remember them differing quite as strongly as they did over that one thing.

F: Were you in Washington when the results came in?

J: No, I was down here.

F: That was a tense one, as you know. Just what was your role that evening?

J: I was with Mr. Johnson, getting reports to him from all over the state and giving him the reports that we got from all the counties. We had key men in each county who were calling in. We felt we had better information than the Texas Election Bureau.

F: I was going to ask you, what changes [had you made]? You lost a squeaker in 1941 that, in a sense, just kind of eroded away from you. How did you kind of shore up things between 1941 and 1948 so that you could keep a little tighter hold on it?

J: Well, perhaps the same thing could have happened in 1948 that we at least think happened in 1941 if we had not become a little more experienced. In 1941 Mr. Johnson was anxious for the headlines to say he'd won. So in the counties where we had strong leads we urged them to get their votes in as quickly as they possibly could, which perhaps accounted for the fact that he showed the strong lead. In 1948 we learned better, and we didn't rush the people in the counties where we had strong votes. We rather hoped that they would hold back, so if

there was any desire on anybody's part to have any sort of fraud they wouldn't know how much they needed in order to win. Because some of our votes would come in late, too.

F: When did you know that you had won?

J: I felt we'd won on about Wednesday following the election, because we were getting the calls from the counties, and I was keeping what I believed to be the best tabulation anybody had. I totalled it up, what was reported to me to be the final vote from every county, about Wednesday or Thursday after election--I don't remember the day; we were staying out at Dillman--and told Mr. Johnson he had won by one hundred and fifty-seven votes.

F: So you came down pretty close.

J: He then went on statewide radio and said he had won, which later was one of the problems when the contest came. How could he say he had won when the Texas Election Bureau showed him behind? But we had each one of our county key leaders give us a certification that the information was accurate. Now, the famous figure is eighty-seven, but it actually was a hundred and fifty-seven. There were two errors made in the reports to the State Democratic Executive Committee which when we appeared before them in Fort Worth we tabled. We filed a protest but tabled it until the end of the check. When we were still ahead by eighty-seven, we didn't contest it.

For instance, in Jack County they had given Stevenson eight ninety-seven and us eight seventy-nine, just reversed what the figures actually were. I was following my list, which I felt I knew to be accurate.

When they called Stevenson 897, Johnson 879, I had our people raise up and protest that. My figures were correct. In typing it in Jack County they had reversed them. Well, that made a difference of thirty votes. Then there was another error of forty in Dallas County, I believe it was. In both cases, we were right. So while that figure eighty-seven has become a famous figure, it wasn't actually eighty-seven; it was one fifty-seven.

F: If you came out with the certified lead at the state canvass, did you really anticipate you could have any difficulty getting past the convention as the certified candidate?

J: Yes. We knew there would be a problem because the reins of the party were in the hands of Stevenson.

F: What were you doing to counteract that, just talking?

J: We were doing our best to meet and know all the members of the State Democratic Executive Committee, and then beyond that, the leaders of the delegations at the convention themselves.

F: Did it take much of a change of mood on the part of the delegates? Did you get the feeling they were going to stand by whatever the canvass showed?

J: Certainly we had some people who knew and liked Mr. Johnson on the state executive committee because they had been selected through district caucus. But the top people were entirely Stevenson people. We did our best to present the facts to those members. We knew it was going to be close. But it was by one vote, as you remember.

F: Were you greatly concerned over the court contest, or did you have a feeling that you, by this time, were getting an airtight case?

J: Well, of course, Mr. Johnson was concerned. Everyone was concerned about the court contest.

F: Could you do anything except just wait?

J: We did a lot of things to try to get our case ready for presentation at the court.

F: For instance?

J: We thought it was rather peculiar that a fellow who talked so strongly about states' rights all during the campaign would try to go into a federal court to present an election contest. I've never understood for sure why he did, because I think his attorneys might have well reached the conclusion that the courts would determine that it was a state matter and not a federal matter--which, as you know, they finally did.

I've always felt that he didn't go into a state court because he felt that he would have no chance of success there. You may know that in connection with another election in the same campaign there was a contest in Brown County which was resolved but did not affect our race individually. But the resolution of the ballots which were thrown out would have increased our margin by some five hundred votes if it had been abjudicated in connection with our race. We always felt that if we could go into a statewide contest in the state courts that our margin might be increased substantially because we knew about different things that had taken place in counties.

For instance, we got a call one night during all this period from a telephone operator. I'm sure she was violating her regulations, but she said, "I shouldn't be telling you this, but I just listened in to a telephone conversation. They're going to take two hundred votes away from you in Eastland County tonight in a revision of these votes in Eastland." So the call came to me. I reported it. Mr. Johnson said, "Well, that doesn't seem possible to happen, does it?" We didn't think so.

So we called our key man up there and told him about it, and he said, "Oh, it's impossible. It couldn't possibly happen. We've gone over all of these, and the votes are right," and so on. About midnight he called back and said, "Well, it has happened. They've determined that there was a mistake in addition in Johnson's column, and he has got two hundred and twenty-five less votes than had been reported." Mr. Johnson said to him, "Now, it couldn't be." "But I think probably it is truly a mistake." Mr. Johnson said, "How could it be a mistake? People don't know ahead of time, several hours ahead of time, that a mistake is going to be made." We had gone into that particular situation and felt like if we could go into a statewide contest we could retrieve two hundred and twenty-five votes there.

We had a file, as I remember, on twenty-five or thirty. We called it the voting irregularity file, where there had been certain irregularities. If you'll remember, Mr. Johnson kept inviting Stevenson to go into a statewide election contest in a state court, an invitation which he did not accept. It put us in a rather anomalous position. We were

refusing to give information to the federal court and not answer the charges. It made us look like we had something to hide. But we had briefed the attorneys, and particularly Abe Fortas, who was advising, had strongly suggested that if we ever answered anything in the federal court we were accepting the position that they had a right to be there. I remember how hard it was on Jimmie Allred, who was sitting with the battery of lawyers when the case was heard. Some various flagrant things were presented that he felt had no right to be allowed in court, no right to be heard, and he would jump up to try to answer them. I can't remember who all the lawyers were, but we had some very fine ones.

F: You had Cofer, and you had Crooker.

J: Crooker was one of them who would get his coattail and pull Jimmy down, because Jimmie just couldn't stand to see these things said and not be answered, because he had the answer right on the tip of his tongue and a good answer. But the conclusion had been reached that we must not answer it no matter what they said, no matter what they charged, that to try to answer it in that particular forum would be an admission that there was a possibility that that forum had the legal authority to hear the case.

F: Your position was that, really, there was no case for a federal court.

J: That's right, that he had no right to try an election contest in the United States Court.

F: Since he doesn't, you don't answer.

J: That's right.

F: That takes discipline.

J: It did. It took a lot of discipline, and it took a lot of chomping, holding back what you wanted to say because [of] some of the things that were done and said.

F: Did the Congressman attend these hearings, or did he stay away and leave it to the lawyers?

J: He did not attend, but he was mighty close by and getting hour-by-hour reports.

F: The telephone rang ever so often. Was there any kind of celebration when Justice Black finally resolved the thing, or did you just get to work?

J: I don't remember any particular celebration. We were mighty happy about it, but we had a general election race with the Republican opponent. We went back to work.

F: You've gone back to Washington, and he's senator. Of course, you've got to close out his congressional career. You don't have much time to do that, and I don't presume that was more than any routine closing of one office, moving to another. Now, he's very junior again, in both age and position. To what do you attribute his very quick rise in the Senate, which is generally a pretty slow body.

J: I think part of it goes back to the fact that he had either consciously, with the knowledge that he might well be in the Senate, or just because it was his nature to do it, cultivated friendships with some certain key members of the Senate, largely getting the opportunity through his association with Sam Rayburn. Mr. Rayburn had a little room that he called the Board of Education where he gathered a few of his intimates

to have a drink most afternoons. Very often there would be people like Senator Russell, who was a strong leader in the Senate, and Senator Kerr. Not Kerr, I take that back, because he wasn't in the Senate; Kerr came later. But some of the older heads that were particular friends of Speaker Rayburn's. Mr. Rayburn went out of his way to help Mr. Johnson and to promote him and put him forward. I think when he reached the conclusion that he was never going to be president himself, he decided he'd like to see Lyndon Johnson be president and spent a lot of time and effort and energy in helping in that direction. So he had quite a number of people that he knew fairly well in the Senate, and people who were in positions of some power.

Then the race drew a lot of attention, so he was received there with a good deal of enthusiasm. I don't believe a great many of the senators were hoping Stevenson would win. They knew enough about Mr. Johnson, had been around him enough, that at least the Democratic members, I think, were strongly in his corner in that election. So he came in sort of a hero with the excitement of the close race and the court fight. It had been on the front pages all over the country for several months then. Well, that didn't hurt.

Then his own personal ability to take a position of leadership with people. There was a little bit of a need for some leadership in the Senate on the Democratic side. With all due respect to Senator McFarland, a wonderful man, he never was a strong, driving leader, and never really sought or wanted that position, I don't think. But Senator Johnson went right on to the Armed Services Committee, which was a little unusual.

Of course, his long service on Naval Affairs in the House had more or less prepared him for that. He just started out and went to work and tried to accommodate and be nice to everybody that he could be helpful to. The first thing you knew he had a group of people much senior to him but who didn't really aspire to Senate leadership who were for him and grooming him.

F: In those rather junior years, while they lasted, was he a good committee member. Did he attend faithfully, or was he into too many other things?

J: No, he was extremely conscientious about his committee work.

F: Did he do his homework?

J: He did his homework, and he very often would assign his own staff people to do committee-type work for him. He got himself made chairman of an investigating subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee that turned up a good many inefficiencies on the part of the military during the years.

F: Did the rise of Joe McCarthy give him much trouble, or did he stay pretty clear of that?

J: He stayed pretty clear of it. He was never close to McCarthy, but I think he felt that it was not a matter of concern to him as a new senator from Texas. I think he was concerned about McCarthyism very much, and some charges that were made. But I don't remember that he ever had anything to do with the McCarthy situation until he was Senate leader and the case came up and he took a firm position which resulted in the censureship of McCarthy.

F: Was he prepared to support Senator Richard Russell for minority leader, or did he indicate? Or was it foregone that Russell would not take it? From the beginning, did he sort of know that Russell was going to push him?

J: I don't think Russell would have taken it on a bet. Certainly if Russell had wanted it, I'm sure that Mr. Johnson would have supported him all the way. But Russell never aspired to it. Whether he knew that Russell would support him or not, I'm sure he had hoped that he would. And he did of course.

F: Did his selection as the minority leader make any difference in your own operation?

J: Well, it broadened it a bit because we were accorded another office and another staff, and it was more or less also under my general supervision.

F: I was going to say, did you sort of coordinate the two?

J: Yes.

F: Did you keep their duties fairly separate?

J: Yes.

F: You could do that?

J: Pretty well, although I worked in both fields. But I don't believe much of anyone else did.

F: Was one staff better than another?

J: That's tough to say. I would say the staff of the Minority Leader was a fine staff. With all that has been said and written about Bobby Baker, he probably was as capable, efficient a staff man as you could have found in the United States. He'd grown up in the Senate as a page

since he was thirteen or fourteen years old and had a remarkable political acumen. While we didn't hire Bobby--we inherited him--he very soon was very close to Mr. Johnson, and everybody had a great deal of confidence in him. He did a great job of coordinating positions with the Democratic senators and so on.

F: Within the staff did you have much in the way of office tensions or jealousies, or did you just stay too darned busy?

J: If we did, I didn't know about them. We had a larger staff now in the Senate, quite a large staff. In the House of Representatives everybody had the same size staff. In the Senate it depends on the size of your state, so we had, outside of New York and California, one of the largest staffs. I'm sure there were some petty jealousies and so on.

F: It was not the kind of thing that surfaced to become a problem for you?

J: It never became a problem except once that I remember. There was one of the girls in the office who just could not stand Lloyd Hand, (Laughter) and it was a problem between keeping--. She was probably the most efficient girl we had, and we didn't want to let her go. On the other hand, we couldn't go along with--but that is a small thing.

F: Yes, I'm supposed to see Lloyd this afternoon, incidentally.

J: Is he here?

F: Yes, at least he was going to be here. I haven't heard anything out of him. But I'm going to California to see Governor Brown and Robert Komer and so on and had called thinking I could interview him out there. The secretary didn't raise any eyebrows, but then she called back in

about two days and said that, "He'll see you in Austin on the afternoon of August 14, if you're available."

J: That's good. Tell him hello for me.

F: I'll do that.

J: I think he'll call me anyway. He usually does.

F: When did you decide to run?

J: In January of 1951 Robert Anderson, who was probably one of the more prominent citizens in the Thirteenth Congressional District, was manager of the Waggoner Ranch in Vernon, told me on very much of a confidential basis that he had been instrumental in getting an offer made to Ed Gossett, who was the congressman from that district, to be general counsel of Southwestern Bell Telephone, that it was not known whether Gossett was going to take the position or not and this must remain in confidence, at least for the time being. But that he felt that I ought to know because this was January 21, as I remember, and the final date for paying poll taxes was January 31. He said, "I think you ought to do nothing about it other than quietly tell all your relatives and friends to be certain that they pay their poll tax." Which I did.

F: And you be sure and pay yours in that district.

J: That's right. That is correct. Because that became one of the issues in my campaign, the fact that I had paid it here for some time. I believe I had already been paying it in Wichita Falls after Mr. Johnson got to the Senate. I paid it in Austin during the years he was in House because I wanted an opportunity to vote for him. But as soon as I had

an opportunity to vote for him in the Senate I returned my residence to Wichita Falls, which I always had considered to be my residence anyway.

Then the matter was dormant for a few months, weeks anyway, and then the announcement was made that Gossett was going to take this position, I immediately counselled with President Johnson, who more or less advised me against running but was careful not to make any strong statement one way or the other.

F: Do you think that's because of the pitfalls of running, or he hated to lose a good staff man?

J: Oh, no. I hope he hated to lose me, but I don't believe that was in his mind. I think he felt that I would have very great difficulty in winning, and that it would be an expensive, tough race. I think he knew, as I knew, that Frank Ikard was a strong, popular judge who had been active in every civic enterprise that had taken place in that area for years, and Wayne Wagonseller was a senator who maybe was not so strong and not so popular, but quite a speaker and campaigner.

F: A flamboyant sort.

J: That's right. But you know, once you get that bug it's pretty hard to get rid of it. I took a long time to make the decision, was maybe a little late in announcing. Bob Anderson agreed to take on the job for me of more or less polling the Baptist ministers--he had some connection with some of their leaders--as to how they would feel about a Catholic running in a rather Bible-belt area and how they thought their membership would feel, and particularly one who had grown up as a Baptist. He came back with the report that most of the preachers themselves would

not be particularly concerned over it, but that they almost to the man felt that their memberships would be strongly influenced by the religious issue.

F: This would be an issue, in a sense, whether it surfaced or not. It would be in their minds.

J: And it surfaced. Wayne Wagonseller made it the issue. Frank Ikard never did. It surfaced immediately.

F: What do you do in a case like that, just say, "I am--"

J: Well, in my first speech where I announced my campaign over radio in all the radio stations in the district, I had reached a conclusion that I would state the fact and then try not to make it an issue after that. When I was telling my history of where I was born and where I was raised and where I had worked and so on, I threw in the sentence that "I'm a member of the Catholic Church and feel strongly that everyone has the right to practice religion as he chooses,"--and rather incidentally--hoping that I would never have to say any more about it, because I felt very strongly that it should not be an issue.

During the middle of the campaign, or late in the campaign somewhere, Jimmie Allred came to Wichita Falls. He was by then a federal judge. He called me and asked me to come to the hotel to meet with him. He said, "Of course, I'm not taking part in the election. I can't take part in an election. But this is my home district, and I know this district." He said, "You're losing this election. You're losing it over the religious issue because you're not doing anything about it. This is a special election. You just have to get one more vote than the next man, and

there are eight candidates. What you want to do is make it the issue and just talk about nothing else. Say, 'If you believe in religious freedom, you be for me. If you don't, why, you can go be for one of these other seven.' Just make it the issue yourself, and it'll be enough for you to lead." I couldn't bring myself in conscience to do that. I think he probably was right. I think I probably could have won. But I just felt so strongly that it should not be that I didn't follow his advice.

F: Did you get much in the way of advice from Mr. Johnson? I'm sure he was both interested and concerned.

J: Yes. He called me frequently with long conversations and suggestions and advice. He told me when I ran that, of course, he was going to follow his long-time position of not taking part in the primaries, which as far as I know he never has, in any one besides his own. But that he would make a sizable contribution when I left his staff, and he would write me a letter setting forth what he thought about me. He wrote a beautiful letter which I used all during the campaign.

The race was largely over two issues: one, that I was Catholic; and one, that I was a carpetbagger, that I wasn't really from that district, that I'd been in Washington for thirteen years and that I voted in Austin. There was some merit to the latter position. I hadn't been there much.

F: But you were an old Wichita Falls boy.

J: That's right. I was born and raised there, and that was my home. They used that issue rather effectively, although the fact that I had been gone

is the only thing that made it possible for me to be a candidate at all. I wouldn't have been qualified to begin with. But it was a good race, and it was a close race. Ikard won by less than a thousand votes, and that was all in Wichita County, where he was.

F: What did you do then?

J: I had made up my mind not to go back, because that had sort of been an issue in the campaign. Some of them would say, "Well, if he loses he'll be right back up there. He's just down here--Johnson's boy. Johnson's trying to have a seat in the House and a seat in the Senate both." That was absolutely not true. I had resigned.

F: You had cut clean.

J: I had cut clean, and I had said that I would not plan to return. After the election Mr. Johnson prevailed on me to return. I told him that I just did not feel that I could do it, that I had said I was not going to, and that I had made my plans otherwise. He said, "Well, I want you to." And I said, "I don't think it would be a service to you for me to be there and Frank Ikard to be in the House and make it difficult for you to work with him. You've got to work with him as well as all the other Texas congressmen." He said, "Do you object if I talk to Frank about it?" And I said, "Well, no, you can talk to him."

So he called me back and said that he had talked to Frank and Frank not only hoped that I would come back, but that he would very much like to work with me in the Senator's office. Frankly, I've always had a high regard for Frank Ikard. We never had any problem during the campaign. As a matter of fact, right in the middle of the campaign he called me

and asked me if I would meet with him, which was rather unusual. So I met him in a downtown cafe. I'm sure people wondered what in the world the two of us were talking about. But he said, "I want you to know that neither I nor any of my people are taking part in any of this religious material that is being printed and published"--that I didn't believe in public schools, that I'd have to check with the Vatican before I cast my votes, and so on and so forth. "And we're not only not participating in it, we're opposed to it and we're ashamed of it." I believed him.

F: On the matter of staff for a minute, you've raised one question in my mind that I've wondered about. Mr. Johnson, with his inordinate energy and with his vast attention to details and with his terrific impulse to contact people directly and to get into things, I would think, as both congressman and senator, could have overspent his office budget. He could have just driven it clear out of sight. How did you handle that, or was that your problem?

J: It was more or less my problem because almost from the beginning--

F: In other words, I would gather Lyndon Johnson could have used eighty-nine thousand people in the office and found something for all of them to do twelve hours a day.

J: That's correct. Almost from the beginning I was charged with the responsibility of keeping his financial records, and have done so until this day--still do. He was always wanting more people, particularly during the days of the House of Representatives when our allowance was very small. We at various times paid certain of the employees out of his pocket in those years. It has turned out now to sort of be a

disadvantage to them, because while they worked for the government they find that instead of having twenty-five years toward retirement they have twenty-two because they weren't on a government payroll. But we weren't thinking about that in those days. But he always paid in the early years. Then we used to full advantage the patronage people that were assigned to us, and we were always out trying to get them to give us another one or two, and sometimes getting them. Then after he got into the Senate we had a little bit of staff with part of the Armed Services Committee and part from the Minority Leader's office. We were more able to take care of our problems then.

F: Could you pretty well hold him in check? In other words, if he wanted something, could you just say, "Senator Johnson, this won't work. We can't afford this"?

J: I never did that.

F: You just found some way?

J: I always tried to find some way to do it. I was very fortunate in being able to sometimes tell when he really meant something and when he didn't. Sometimes he would say to do things on the spur of the moment that he didn't really, after due reflection, mean.

F: He really does a lot of thinking out loud, doesn't he?

J: That's right. Occasionally I'd just try to forget one or two of the instructions I got. I've forgotten what your question was.

F: The original question was this matter of how you managed the budget.

J: Certainly I never told Mr. Johnson no, he couldn't do anything. He's not the man you tell no, you can't do something, to. I occasionally have

reasoned with him, and when you do he's very reasonable. I believe of all the people that he has had around him perhaps Mrs. Johnson has more of an ability to reason with him and to be convincing to him than anyone else.

F: When you had a hard nut to crack that involved him and you couldn't get the satisfaction out of him, did you or members of the staff ever go to Mrs. Johnson to try to get her enlisted on your side?

J: Yes. I remember one occasion specifically when he told me in Atlantic City in 1964 that he was going to fly up there the next morning and announce that he wasn't going to be a candidate for re-election, and I told him he absolutely could not do that, he just could not. He said, "Well, I've made up my mind, and I'm going to do it. It's all set, and I'll be there to make the announcement tomorrow morning." I went immediately to Mrs. Johnson.

F: We'll get back to that later, but I'm trying to keep--

J: You asked about that. But that's one occasion. Yes.

F: You went on back then and picked up as before in the Senate?

J: Yes. By the way, I had left out the fact that John Connally had left the staff of the Congressman to come down here and practice law and become a member of the board of the Lower Colorado River Authority. So when I came back from the service I became the administrative assistant. But when he was elected to the Senate he prevailed on John to come back as the administrative assistant, and during the first year in the Senate I stepped down a notch to John's assistant. Then John left, and I came back up to administrative assistant.

F: Did this cause any difficulty in the Senator's mind, potential difficulty, in a sense that you had brought John back in over him?

J: It never caused any problems with me, and I don't believe it did with John. John and I've always worked together very well and very closely. In fact, I was delighted that John was willing to come because I was skittish a little bit with going into a much larger staff and into a senatorial room.

F: When did you begin to suspect that this might might get beyond--this adjective is not as demeaning as it sounds--a mere senatorship, that you might really have a national person on your hands?

J: I think I had that feeling of possibility almost from the beginning. I think when he became minority leader, after only having been in the Senate a couple of years, I began to have it very strongly, although Mr. Johnson, if he had it himself, continued to indicate that there was no possibility of--

F: He was going to die in the Senate.

J: --a man from this part of the country ever being president.

F: He never talked to you about his possibilities of making it, but only in a negative sense that he was ruled out by--

J: If he ever felt that he had any possibilities, he indicated to everyone to the contrary. Even after he had announced his candidacy in 1960 at Los Angeles, he privately indicated that he never felt he had any chance.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I]

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON LIBRARY

Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interviews of

WALTER JENKINS

BROMBERG bjb

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, Beth Jenkins, of ~~Austin~~ DALLAS, Texas, Executrix bjb of the Estate of Walter Jenkins, do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title, and interest in the tape recordings and transcripts of the personal interviews conducted with my father, Walter Jenkins, on August 14, 1970, August 24, 1971, September 23, 1976, May 13, August 12 and September 16, 1982, January 18, July 22, September 22 and October 6, 1983, and on April 18, April 25, July 12, July 19, and August 30, 1984, in Austin, Texas, and prepared for deposit in the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library.

This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

(1) The transcripts shall be available for use by researchers as soon as they have been deposited in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

(2) The tape recordings may be made available to those researchers who have access to the transcripts.

(3) I hereby assign to the United States Government all copyright I may have in the interview transcripts and tapes.

(4) Copies of the transcripts and the tape recordings may be provided by the Library to researchers upon request.

(5) Copies of the transcripts and tape recordings may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

Beth Jenkins Bromberg — 9/4/07
Donor — Date

Assistant Archivist for Presidential Libraries — 10-30-2007
Date

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON LIBRARY

Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interviews of Walter Jenkins

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, Beth Jenkins of Austin, Texas, Executrix of the Estate of Walter Jenkins, do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title and interest in the tape recordings and transcripts of the personal interviews conducted on August 14, 1970, August 24, 1971, September 23, 1976, May 13, August 12 and September 16, 1982, January 18, July 22, September 22 and October 6, 1983 and on April 18, April 25, July 12, July 19 and August 30, 1984 in Austin, Texas, and prepared for deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

(1) The transcripts shall be available for use by researchers as soon as they have been deposited in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

(2) The tape recordings shall be available to those researchers who have access to the transcript.

(3) During my lifetime, I retain all copyright in the material given to the United States by the terms of this instrument. Thereafter, the copyright in the transcripts and the tape recordings shall pass to the United States Government. During my lifetime, researchers may publish brief "fair use" quotations of the transcripts and tape recordings without my express consent in each case.

(4) Copies of the transcripts and the tape recordings may be provided by the Library to researchers upon request.

(5) Copies of the transcripts and the tape recordings may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other then the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

Beth Jenkins
Donor

2-5-87
Date

Frank G. Burke
Archivist of the United States

2-19-87
Date