INTERVIEW I

DATE: April 13, 1984

INTERVIEWEE: JOHN E. LYLE, JR.

INTERVIEWER: Michael L. Gillette

PLACE: Congressman Lyle's office, Houston, Texas

Tape 1 of 1

G: I want to begin by asking you to sketch very briefly your background and explain how you first came to be associated with Lyndon Johnson.

L: I first met Lyndon in Corpus Christi in either the latter part of 1934 or the first part of 1935. I had gone there at the age of twenty-two or twenty-three, I think, to practice law in Corpus Christi. Although Lyndon was two years older than I, he and I became friends. We were contemporaries, we were both interested in public affairs, and we both knew the same type of people, such as Governor [James V.] Allred and most of the officials. I think that at that time Lyndon had left Congressman [Richard] Kleberg's office.

G: That was in 1935 was the year that he left.

L: Yes. As I recall, he was still working with Kleberg when I first met him, but he subsequently left.

G: Do you recall the substance of your first encounter with him? Was it something having to do with the district?

L: No, I really don't recall that. But then from then on, we

became very closely related because I was interested in the state dilemma, more than in national politics.

G: Yes. Now you were elected to the [Texas] Legislature I believe it was 1934, is that--?

L: No, I was elected to the legislature, as I recall, about 1939. By that time of course Lyndon and I were very active--Lyndon was then in Congress. When did Lyndon go to Congress?

G: 1937.

L: 1937; he was already in Congress in 1939. We saw each other fairly often.

G: Did you have any contact with him when he was NYA director?

L: No.

G: Anything on his association with Governor Allred?

L: I only have vague memories about their association. But I do recall that Governor Allred was very fond of him. Lyndon did a great deal for Governor Allred.

G: What did he do, do you know?

L: When Governor Allred quit the governorship, he came to Houston and attempted to practice law, but he was never happy as a lawyer. It wasn't the kind of challenge for him that he had been used to all his life. He had been an assistant district attorney and a district attorney, as well as attorney general and governor. He was also the type of man that enjoyed, as he put it, the sirens. I remember that when I told Governor Allred, who was then judge, that I was not going to run for re-election, he said, "Oh, Johnny, please don't quit. You

will miss the sirens." But he was unhappy, so he asked several of us to help him get appointed as a federal judge, and Lyndon was responsible for his appointment. Of course, since Roosevelt knew Governor Allred and liked him, it was not difficult to have him appointed when a vacancy occurred.

The bill I passed that created that bench had an unusual provision in it. Although the bench was in the Southern District of Texas, that particular judge had to sit in Corpus Christi, while the others--not very many, actually--were sitting here in Houston. But Lyndon was instrumental in Governor Allred's obtaining the appointment.

G: Was that the occasion on which Tom Connally's son was also appointed?

L: No, I also had created, at the request of the judiciary and friends, another judge seat in the Southern District of Texas, and Judge Connally wanted his son [Ben C. Connally], who was a brilliant Houston lawyer, appointed to that seat. We had very little difficulty in getting him appointed, because he was such a good lawyer. As I recall, there was some question at that time as to whether I wanted it or not, but I was very young and certainly did not want to be a federal judge.

G: Now, in 1940 the Texas delegation was divided and you had the issue of the third term here. One group supported John Nance Garner, and LBJ and some of the New Dealers were supporting Roosevelt. Do you recall that issue, the stop-Roosevelt forces?

L: Yes, I do, but I had very little participation in it. At that time, I was in agreement with Lyndon's position, which is to say that I was a great admirer of Mr. Roosevelt. I think he saved this country from anarchy and from near-bankruptcy, and I enthusiastically supported him for his third and fourth term.

G: What was LBJ's role in the development of the Corpus Christi Naval Air Station?

L: That was a period during which I believe I was in the Texas Legislature. Lyndon was virtually in command of whatever he wanted, and he was able to influence its selection because he was very well liked not only by the Secretary of the Navy at that time but also by the President. I would say, in recollection, that he had as much to do with it as anyone.

G: Roy Miller was often thought of as one of the mentors of LBJ during this period. Since you were from that area, I want to ask you to just describe him, tell what he was like, what he [inaudible].

L: Roy Miller was brilliant, as well as one of the most physically handsome, one of the most charming people you would ever know. He was what is now called a lobbyist, and he wielded great influence. Everybody in public life, as far as I know, liked him, respected his judgment, sought his advice, and followed it if it was consistent with their own views. I would say that he probably did not have as

much effect on Lyndon at the time as he probably did on Dick Kleberg and others in Congress.

Lyndon had a peculiar trait, he was always seeking information. He was the only man I ever knew who could speak with somebody for an hour or two and know as much about anything that interested him as that person did. He could take your thoughts and translate them into his own mind more quickly and more effectively than any man I ever knew in my life. If he was interested in a subject he sought the people who knew the most about it and interviewed them; by the time he was finished, he had acquired all the information that they had taken a lifetime to learn, and he used it effectively. I think that that ability was Lyndon's great strength as a legislator.

G: Can you remember a particular example in which he did this?

L: Yes. Lyndon knew comparatively nothing about the oil and gas industry at the beginning of the hearings on Leland Olds. He sought expert advice from everyone whom he thought might know about the production of gas, the exploration problems, the costs, the failures of oil, the part that the Federal Power Commission played in the regulation of oil and gas, the good it did, the harm it did and various other things. He continually questioned and probed, and after a few weeks he was an expert on exploration, production, and regulation.

The amount of information that Lyndon was able to

retrieve from the experiences and the minds of various people is unbelievable. That was true of everything that Lyndon undertook. The reason I said that I questioned how much influence any one person ever had on him was that he had an inquiring mind and he was never satisfied with somebody else's judgment, preferring to make his own. Although he was quite respectful of many of the leaders and other prominent people of the time, he generally had more information when he was entering into a subject than they did.

In discussing Lyndon Johnson, I have to mention that he was such a complex man that probably few people other than Mrs. Johnson understood him. I knew him favorably and very well, having been with him a great deal, and pursuing many of the same goals. But I never understood all of the things that made Lyndon what he was. Lyndon wanted to be appreciated for what he was, his ambition for the country, his feeling for the poor, his respect for private enterprise, and his feeling that government should have more to do than simply to be idle. He had a driving desire, more than almost anyone I have ever known, to contribute something unusual and outstanding to the world. And, in my opinion, it was most unfortunate that he was never able to get the public to fully appreciate the real Lyndon Johnson. One reads such cruel things about President Johnson now, all of which are probably based upon some minor issue or another, but all of these remarks ignore the fact that Lyndon Johnson was

a sincere [man], much more able than people realize. But Lyndon was so sincere in his efforts to contribute to the betterment of the country, that he was hurt when he saw people who were hungry, ill-housed, and in need of medicine. He could not be happy as a member of the government while such a situation existed. He was never a national socialist; in fact he was never anything except a strong advocate of free enterprise; but he believed that government had an opportunity and an obligation to make it possible to create a forum and an atmosphere where everyone could better his position. I greatly admired Lyndon Johnson, even if I never understood much about him.

G: Did he seem contradictory to you at all?

L: I'm not sure what you mean by "contradictory," but I always knew where Lyndon stood, if that is what you are asking. Nor was there ever any question in his mind about where he stood. I would say that he may have been contratory in the sense that to those who did not know him, his public appearance sometimes may have been different from his inner self. He was intense and he was impatient with stupidity and delay, but Lyndon had a lot of courage in politics. I don't mean that he stupidly tried to create unnecessary controversies, but rather that he stepped up and met those issues that were indeed there.

G: Sure. He ran for statewide office against W. Lee O'Daniel in 1941.

L: Yes, and I supported him. I was in the legislature, and I think that Governor O'Daniel was even more difficult to understand than was Lyndon. I never did understand O'Daniel, whose words did not accurately reflect his thoughts.

G: Well, let me ask you to recall what you can about that race and your role in it.

L: I was surprised when Lyndon decided to run against him, but when he called me and asked me if I would support him, I said yes, and so I became rather active in his support.

G: Was there anything that he had done before that that had solidified your support of him? Had you all worked on something together that--?

L: No, it was purely personal. I liked him, and I felt that we had a lot of the same ambitions, hopes and desires. Lyndon and I were both a little naive in that we both felt that public service was an opportunity to make the world a better place. I'm not really sure now that we weren't kidding ourselves, being completely unaware at the time of the many professionals, forces and issues from all over the world that were against us. But this is one of the reasons that I was always ardent in his support, and besides I liked him personally.

G: Well, what did you do in the campaign?

L: I've truly forgotten. I must have made speeches and gone throughout my district supporting him, but I don't recall. That was a long time ago.

Let me give you an example of how difficult it is to recall things. I have been casually acquainted for some time with Ronnie Dugger, who is a very good, albeit controversial, newspaperman, although I do not recall how long we have known each other. Ronnie called me about a year ago and said that he was in the process of finishing a book and wanted my help in clearing up some matters. He said that George Parr's widow had said that there was a period during which Lyndon would not speak directly with George, but that rather he would come to me and tell me what he wanted to say, and I would proceed to act as intermediary between the two of them. He asked me if that were true, and I told him that I couldn't remember, since the alleged incidents to which he was referring took place thirty-five years ago. But I did tell him that if Lyndon had asked me to talk to George, or vice-versa, I would have been pleased to do so. However, I could not recall Lyndon's being unwilling to talk directly to him. At the most, it would have been purely a matter of his being busy, and incidentally seeing me and asking if I were going to see George or if I would give him some message or another. Lyndon was never hesitant to do those things that he felt he should do, especially if he was in support of somebody--and of course George Parr was a very controversial personality. In all of the twenty-five years that I assume that Lyndon and I knew George, I doubt if we saw him twenty-five times. But concerning Ronnie's question, I told him to write anything

he wanted to write in his book, and that I couldn't deny what he was asking me because I could not remember such details. This is both the difficulty and one of the advantages of what you are doing here today, in that you are preserving some of the human elements of people such as Lyndon Johnson by means of oral recording that has escaped the mind.

G: Now of course you were elected to Congress-

L: In 1944.

G: --and you were still overseas, weren't you, when you launched your campaign?

L: Yes. I was nominated in July, and I came home, as I recall, in December.

G: Did LBJ help with your candidacy?

L: I would say that he did nothing to hurt me, but I'm sure that his loyalty to his former employer, Congressman Kleberg, was such that he would not have done anything to embarrass either Kleberg or himself. Still, I think that he was pleased when I was elected.

G: How did your candidacy originate, with you being away?

L: While I was in the legislature, I decided I should go into the service, and I'm pleased that I went, although there were many times when I wished that I had not. At any rate, several people had come to the conclusion that Mr. Kleberg was not the kind of representative that they wanted; thus, they proceeded to ask quite a number of prominent people who

had always supported me if they would support me as a candidate for Congress, and they received positive responses, at least according to what I have heard. They then went to my wife and suggested to her that I run. She was not very enthusiastic about the idea, but they proceeded with it anyway. Then, after the campaign was underway, she became enthusiastic about it, because several people had come to her and said, "Mrs. Lyle, you don't want to embarrass John. You know he can't beat a great man like Dick Kleberg." That aroused her interest, and so she became very active in the campaign, so much so, in fact, that by the time I came home, I think that she was better known in the district than I was. I would say to people, "I'm John Lyle," and they would answer, "Oh, yes, I know Mrs. Lyle. You're her husband."

G: Were any of the people that started this grassroots movement associated with LBJ?

L: I would say that almost all of them were supporters of Lyndon.

G: Who were they, do you remember?

L: Yes; the most important ones were: Bob Wilson, the originator and one of the owners of LaGloria, the great oil and gas company; Eddie Singer, a very successful young man who still lives in Corpus Christi; and who is now on many boards, including the board of the First City National Bank; Jimmy Young, from Kaufman, Texas, whose father had

been in Congress, who himself was a very effective lawyer in Kaufman, and who was probably the spearhead of this entire campaign; and a newspaperman named Harrison. In addition, there were hundreds of women. I think I was elected to Congress because the women in town, many of whom had children, husbands or brothers in combat, seized upon my wife's campaign as an emotional release. In my judgment, I would not have been able to defeat Mr. Kleberg had I not been a soldier and had the war not been going on. I think that the circumstances, more than anything I did myself, won the election for me.

G: Had Roy Miller's support waned any for Kleberg?

L: No, but it was not as effective. While Roy Miller was still a highly respected man, he had been away from Corpus Christi for such a long time that his influence in local politics, never great to begin with, had waned.

G: My impression is that by this time there was a strain between Johnson and Kleberg.

L: I don't know, and I do not recall discussing it with Lyndon. However, I do know that he was glad that I was elected.

G: Now in 1944 there was another fight between the conservative wing of the Democratic Party and the liberal wing at the convention. Do you remember that?

L: No, I was in Europe.

G: You were still there. Okay.

Was Johnson at all helpful to you in getting settled in

Congress?

L: Oh, yes. After I was nominated, which was equivalent to election because there was no opposing candidate, General [Mark] Clark called me out of the infantry, asked me a number of questions, and told me that he was somewhat afraid that I might get hurt; so was I, for that matter, as I told him. He wanted me to apply for relief to go home, but I told him that since I was a soldier first, I was not going to make the application. On the other hand, I reminded him that he, as a general, had the ability to send me home, if he wished to do so. At that time, Lyndon was in the navy, although his duties were such that he was constantly on the move. He went to the Speaker and had the Speaker talk to the Secretary of War, and I was ordered home through the Secretary's intervention. At that time, I had not met Sam Rayburn and did not know him other than by reputation, so Lyndon was very helpful in that regard.

Then when I went to Washington he and Bird were very gracious to Gertrue and me, and helped us in every way. We were in their home at least once a week.

I was visiting with the Texas delegation last week and they tell me that the camaraderie we used to have no longer exists. I remember that we would meet every morning at the chamber, shake hands as if we hadn't seen each other for a month, spend the morning, eat lunch together, finish the day and generally go to somebody's house and have another

meeting at night. We had a strong, powerful delegation. Lyndon was very helpful in every respect during that period.

One of the interesting things that I remember from that period was that Bird had a tubular pregnancy that was causing her great difficulty. One day, while Lyndon and I were walking from the Capitol to the House Office Building, he was telling me about it and he said that he was having some difficulty in finding the type of blood that she needed. I said, "Well, that's my type," and he asked, "How do you know?" So I showed him my dog tags, which I still carried in my pocket. Of course, we immediately went to the hospital and I gave blood to Bird. I've often reminded her that her difficulty has been that she was not only married to a statesman but also had the blood of one.

G: This was right after he came back from Europe I think and that trip that he took with Edward Hebert and the committee.

L: That is very likely.

G: Did he talk about that? Just at the close of the European war. Did he talk about that?

L: Well, we all talked about it a lot, as it had been a very traumatic experience for Lyndon, for myself, and for others. Most of the members of Congress at that time had not been participants in World War II for the reason that they were much older men. I think the average age of a congressman,

when I was elected, was almost sixty years. I, on the other hand, was thirty-three or thirty-four, and Lyndon was thirty-five or six; we were quite young, in other words. We had experienced the horrors, the damage and the trauma of war, and we spoke of it often. Lyndon was on what I believe was called the Navy Committee at the time. We subsequently combined the various committees representing the army, the navy and the other branches of the military into The Armed Services Committee, and Lyndon was very active on that committee. Yes, we discussed on almost a daily basis such matters as, how to handle the peace, how to prevent another war, and what things might possibly be done to enable a greater participation in world affairs on the part of the Congress and of the people.

G: I'm wondering if he talked specifically about that trip and how that might have affected him. He saw a lot of the devastation, the bombing. Do you think this had any kind of--?

L: Oh, I'm certain it did; it could not have done otherwise because I myself had just come from there, and I know how difficult it was to tell people what had happened. Lyndon had been in the navy and although he had made a number of air missions, I believe, over combat zones, I don't think he had been very closely associated with the destruction of Europe. The troops would move into a

town and, by the time the leader arrived, it had been completely destroyed; for example, there were bathtubs hanging out of the windows, pieces of clothing scattered about, and lots of rubble. It was a frightening experience.

G: You must have had a chance to observe Lyndon Johnson and Sam Rayburn together.

L: Oh, yes.

G: Let me ask you about their relationship.

L: Mr. Rayburn was probably more fond of Lyndon than he was to any other member of Congress. He was very close to me also. Mr. Rayburn had no children and yet he was a great family man who had tremendous love for his sisters and his brothers, and who always spoke affectionately of his mother and father. I think Mr. Rayburn felt that we were the kind of men that he would like to have had as sons, particularly Lyndon. And Mr. Rayburn was so fond of Bird, maybe even more than he was of Lyndon. But he and Lyndon were together every day.

G: Really?

L: Yes. Almost every afternoon, after Congress adjourned, Lyndon and I were with Mr. Rayburn in his little room below the--

G: Do you recall anything specifically that Rayburn did to help LBJ?

L: He did anything that Lyndon asked of him. Please keep

in mind that every day there was something that Lyndon and I wanted to accomplish, and if we were not able to do it on our own we would go to the Speaker and ask him to help us or to speak to whomever might be able to do so, even if it were the President. As I mentioned, this sort of thing happened every day.

G: These would be things for your district typically?

L: Yes, they were ordinarily things that we were handling at the time. I was really more district-oriented than Lyndon, who had already started thinking in terms of the state. I don't mean to say that he was then planning to run, only that he was so effective that people from all over the state were asking for his help. He was already starting to act almost as though he were a United States senator.

G: Sure. Well, during this period that you're talking about, the midforties, he seems to have been very tired of being a member of Congress. He seems to have wanted to move on to something else. Did he express this to you?

L: Yes. I'll think that such is true of anyone who is as able as Lyndon was, and whose mind was as good as his was. Being in Congress is a frustrating experience because while one has all of the obligations that are possible to take on as a national legislator, there are very few opportunities to do anything about it. It is very frustrating, and Lyndon constantly stymied; felt constantly; he needed to do

the things that he wanted to do, he needed to do the things that he saw needed to be done, both on the domestic and on the international level, he needed to have more opportunities, and he knew that the opportunities are far greater in the United States Senate than they are in the House. Yes, he often expressed that sort of idea to me.

G: Did he?

L: Yes, and I might say that I felt likewise, and I eventually did quit because of the frustration. Not that I didn't enjoy being a public official; on the contrary, I loved running for office, and I enjoyed serving. I had a happy district, and I think my people were generally satisfied with me. But there were so many things I felt should be done, but there was not an opportunity at that time for me to run for the United States Senate. Well, there was one opportunity, but I would have had to run against my friend Senator Connally, and I would never run against a friend.

G: Did you ever go to the Board of Education at Rayburn's?

L: I missed very few days in the ten years that I was a congressman.

G: Really?

L: Yes.

G: Let me ask you to describe that, what it was like.

L: Well, it was a beautiful room, which had been the room of the Committee on Interior. In the early days there was only one office building, so many of the congressmen had no

office. They received their mail at home. There just was not enough room. So, with a few exceptions, the committees all met in the Capitol at that time. Mr. Rayburn, had a beautiful little room. It measured 20 feet by 15 feet, with high ceilings, beautiful paintings and so forth. He had a desk and chairs, and a refrigerator on the other side. I was there every day, with few exceptions. Lyndon was there as often as he was able to. Later Wright Patman, who was probably Mr. Rayburn's closest friend of his generation, came from time to time. Subsequently, after Lyndon had gone to the Senate and Homer Thornberry had taken his place, he was there every day. Mr. Rayburn was very fond of Homer.

G: Were the people who came Texans? Were there non-Texans there as well?

L: Well, there were three or four of us that he asked every day. He expected us to be there, and if we were not, he would call our offices.

G: Really?

L: Yes, and he would frighten our secretaries. He'd say, "This is Sam Rayburn." (in a gruff voice) "Can I speak to him?" And then, when we had come on the line, he would say "Why aren't you over here?" "Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry. I got tied up. I'll be over in a few minutes." He liked a few of us to be there each day. He did most of the talking in there, unless he was asking questions. Sometimes Lyndon, as he became leader of the Senate, would come by

and give us a briefing about what was going on in the Senate and various other things, which was quite interesting. Mr. Rayburn would sit down behind his desk, pull out a drawer, uncork a bottle of bourbon and take a sip of it, and then he'd pull out the other drawer, uncork a bottle of Scotch and take a sip of it. Then he would decide: "I believe I'll have bourbon today," or "I believe I'll have Scotch today." We were all then privileged, if we wanted to, to have a drink. Some of us did and some did not. I believe Gene Worley was there a lot, although I've forgotten now. But there were not very many people that were there regularly.

G: What about John McCormack or other--?

L: John was very, close to the Speaker and he would just drop by for a minute or so, quite often.

G: Was that office used during the day at all?

L: No. Mr. Rayburn was the only one who used it; and I never asked him to let me take anybody there. I don't know whether the others did or not. It was a rather sacred place.

G: Did staff members go at all?

L: There were no staff members there. Occasionally Mr. Rayburn would invite one or two members of the press, but not often. And everything in there was completely off the record. As I recall we were there when they notified the Speaker of Mr. Roosevelt's death. I remember being there

but I'm not sure whether Lyndon was.

G: Well, now, Truman was also there supposedly when he got the word.

L: I don't believe that's--

G: Really?

L: I don't recall. He was there from time to time, since he was very close, but I'm not really sure whether he was there when we learned of Mr. Roosevelet's death. I've read that he was, but I don't recall it.

G: You don't remember?

L: No. I do not recall it. After all, over a period of ten years we had a lot of meetings in there.

G: Did this serve any practical function?

L: Yes. Mr. Rayburn would tell us what the program was going to be, what he hoped to present, and other things that he would not announce to the Congress as such. I was then on the Committee on Rules, I think, and, yes, it served a very useful purpose. Occasionally he would ask the secretary of state, the secretary of war, or the secretary of navy to come by for a few minutes. It was a place where Mr. Rayburn taught us a great deal. He told us why many things came about, how they came about, and why they should not be allowed to continue. The Texas delegation was a tough delegation. It had many different ideas about the economy, about foreign policy and about presidents. None of us particularly liked the presidents because they often interfered

with what we wanted to do, and Mr. Rayburn used that as a means of calming us down. As he used to say to me, "Johnny, I wish you'd quit doing whatever you're doing to make Harry Truman mad. He calls me before breakfast and says, 'Your man allows this and that.' Now whatever it is, quit doing it." This is the type of thing that he would do.

G: He and Truman were quite close.

L: Oh, yes. Truman was, I believe, the only president that he really liked; he didn't dislike the others, but Truman was the only one with whom he had any close, personal association.

G: Now let me ask you about Johnson's 1948 Senate race when he ran against Coke Stevenson.

L: All right.

G: What was your role in that?

L: I probably supported him more actively than I should have, considering that I had to run for office myself. It is not that I disliked Coke; I had served in the legislature with him. But I thought that Lyndon would make the type of senator that we ought to have. And besides, he and I were very close personal friends. So I did everything that I possibly could. I campaigned throughout the state. As I recall, when I introduced Lyndon in San Antonio on the closing night of the primary, and my speech had been censored, because it was a little rough.

G: Is that right?

L: Yes, they cut out some of it, although I've forgotten which

parts. But it was a dramatic moment. I think Mrs. Johnson had been in a car wreck on the way down from Austin.

G: That's right.

L: At any rate, I was very active in that campaign wherever I felt I could be effective, either outside of the district or in the district, and I drew considerable controversy and a lot of criticism from some of the people in my district as a result.

G: In the first primary he was about seventy thousand votes behind.

L: Yes.

G: Did you feel that he would be able to catch up?

L: I can't remember, but I probably felt that he could not. We all felt at the time that it was an uphill battle, although we were told that we had the backing of President Roosevelt.

G: Well, now, Roosevelt was dead by 1948.

L: Was this 1948? Well, then, this was originally, wasn't it?

G: In 1941 I guess he had the President's [support].

L: Yes, I guess that's when it was.

G: What efforts did you make to pick up George Peddy's support? Remember, he was the third [candidate].

L: Yes, I remember him, but I don't recall the efforts we made to obtain his support. I know that I didn't try at all. If anybody did, it was probably John Connally, who was very close to Lyndon in that race. During that period, much of my contact was with John.

G: Is that right?

L: Yes. We were coordinating a lot of things.

G: You mentioned earlier about a discussion involving George Parr. Let me ask you to recall anything you can about George Parr in that campaign, the aftermath.

(Interruption)

L: You were asking about the part that many of us played during the election. It became apparent that the election was very close, but I do not remember who was ahead or who was behind.

G: It seems like it would shift back and forth.

L: We were getting a lot of reports about people changing their votes in West Texas and about boxes not coming in from East Texas, and we were being told in general that somebody was trying to steal the election from Lyndon. Throughout the day and the night of the election I was in touch many times with Manuel Raymond, who was a very outstanding leader in Webb County during his lifetime. He had great influence in South Texas, far more than George Parr ever had, in my judgment. I was also in touch with George Parr and with the Lloyds in Alice; in fact, I was in touch with whomever I thought might give me information as to how many votes were out, how many boxes were out, how many of the uncounted votes we might expect, and what the final tabulation might be.

During that period I do not recall that I spoke to

Lyndon at all. I felt that [there was] nothing that he could have done about the situation, that there was nothing he should do about it, and that he had all the problems he needed merely trying to tabulate and figure out what was happening in the state. So I didn't speak to Lyndon, nor did he come to South Texas, during that time at all. As far as I know, he had no meetings with either Manuel Raymond or George Parr during that period. There was never any suggestion by anybody to illegally change any votes. As far as I recall, there were no votes put in after the balloting had closed, although I seem to recall that the accusation was made, particularly with regard to Box 13 in Jim Wells County, a county that adjoined Duval County. George Parr had a lot of friends there, but they were very honorable people, many of whom were members of, or leaders in, the bar, and they would not have done anything illegal even if anybody had asked them to do so. But as far as I know nobody ever asked that of them.

G: It seems that there were fairly pronounced pro-Parr and anti-Parr factions--

L: Oh, it was very bitter.

G: Why was this?

L: South Texans do not take politics lightly. It wasn't, and isn't now, particularly a gentleman's game. Whoever was not with the Parr faction was considered to be with the anti-Parr faction. At any rate, I had never met Mr. Parr at the time I first ran for office. My district included the coun-

ties of Nueces, Duval and Jim Wells, and I seemed to be doing very well in Nueces County and had been told by both the so-called Parr and anti-Parr factions I would do well in Jim Wells County. I was running against Elmer Pope, who was then the dean of the Texas Legislature and had been there for many years. Now, it's impossible to stay in office that long, without dissatisfying a lot of people, so someone told me that I had better go over and meet Mr. Parr. I went over to his office, introduced myself and told him that I was running for the legislature and that I would like to have his vote. He asked me to tell him something about myself, such as who I was and what I stood for. After I did so, he said, "Well, let me think about it and I'll talk to you. We've always supported Mr. Pope."

Some weeks later, I was trying a lawsuit in Corpus Christi, when I received a telephone call from George Parr who said that they had decided to support me. So I expressed my gratitude and offered to go to his district and campaign, and he said, "What for?" I didn't get a chance to reply, as he continued, "Do you have all the votes in Nueces and Jim Wells?" I told him that I did not, and he said, "Well, when you get all of them, then you come over here. I told you that we were going to support you." As it turned out, I got a tremendous vote in the district. Elmer Pope filed suit against me and various others as a result of this vote, which had always gone to him.

G: Let me ask you, why was the vote always so one-sided down

there?

L: They had respect for Mr. Parr, whose father had been so very good to them. At the time the Mexican-[Americans], who were descendants of Mexicans, liked that type of politics. They wanted a patron, a leader, and George, as his father before him had done, took that need to heart and, as a result, they went to his office by the dozens. The day I went over to introduce myself to Mr. Parr, there must have been fifty people there waiting to see him. They talked to him about their illnesses, about their children, about needing money, about having to have somebody sign a bank note, about anything that was troubling them. George listened to them and he responded. When they were hungry he saw that they had food. When they were sick he saw that they had medicine, and he took care of them.

G: Well, simply the mechanics of getting word to that many people that George Parr preferred--

L: It was just as in the army. The commander calls in the generals and tells them what he wants, and they tell the battalion commanders, and they tell the company commanders, and they tell the precincts and it goes on down the ranks. It was really quite beautifully--

G: I see. Okay. It was basically word of mouth then?

L: Entirely, yes.

G: Well, what did George Parr want from you or from Lyndon Johnson?

L: Nothing. I only recall George Parr asking two things of me in all the years that I was in Congress. He asked that we send some food to the area during a drought-related effort, and I was able to do that. He also asked me to appoint, or recommend appointment of, somebody as postmaster, which I was pleased to do. I don't know what George asked of Lyndon, but he never asked me for anything. It's said that he supported Lyndon and me because he wanted a pardon. I'm not certain that I knew that George needed a pardon during that time, but, as far as I remember, he never spoke to me about it. I will say that the first time I saw him after Truman had pardoned him, he said to me, "Thank you for that piece of paper," and I wasn't certain what he meant. I don't recall recommending a pardon for him, but if he had asked me, I would have done so, and I feel that if he had asked Lyndon, he would have done so, as well.

G: How close were LBJ and Parr, do you recall?

L: They were not close at all. I doubt very much that they saw each other ten times during their entire lives.

G: Anything else on that election itself and the events that--?

L: That election created a lot of false information. Instead of votes being stolen, as they said, I think that what happened was that when the votes were recounted some ballots were thrown out because the judges felt that they had been mutilated. The whole controversy concerned Box 13, but I don't remember the details, nor do I remember whether it came out in favor of Lyndon or in favor of Coke.

G: I think the problem in retrospect seems to have been the appearance of fraud, simply because it seems like so many efforts were made to get rid of this box or that box or these ballots or that ballot.

L: I don't recall if there were such efforts or not. However, I think that all of the ballots were inpounded.

G: But then when they would open them there would be [nothing there], and again--

L: There were some leaders in Jim Wells County who violently--and they may have had very good reason to do so. These were very, very fine men, men for whom I had a lot of respect for and men whom I liked personally, such as Jake Floyd and a group of others. Jake's son had been killed under brutal circumstances. As far as I know George had nothing to do with it; I certainly hope that that was the case, because I never thought of Him as being anything other than a patron. I was very surprised when he killed himself. I had been completely out of touch with Mr. Parr for twenty years.

But my recollection of the vote-stealing question is that almost everybody took sides, either that Lyndon stole the election or else that he didn't. Then, whenever anything came up that they didn't like, such as Lyndon making an unpopular vote, then they brought up the matter again.

G: Trotted it out.

L: Yes. They still do the same thing against me to this day. If something happens, they'll rerun the episode of Box 13, the Parr machine, Lyle and Lyndon, and all the rest of it.

G: Well, now, were you on the campaign train when Truman came through this [inaudible]?

L: I was.

G: Let me ask you to describe that experience and if Parr was at all involved there.

L: I don't remember Mr. Parr being there at all. As I recall, I got on the train with Mr. Rayburn in Bonham, and I'm sure Lyndon was there and I stayed with the train until it arrived in San Antonio. It did not go past San Antonio, as I recall. But if Mr. Parr had asked to be presented to the President, I would have been pleased to present him, and I think Lyndon would have, also. Parr was a very influential man in Texas during that period of time.

Let me tell you something else about George Parr. He never gave money to politicians, as far as I know. He never offered me any money; but, when I ran, his county voted for me. I think that's true of Lyndon also.

G: There is the story that during that campaign, when it stopped in Bonham, that Rayburn called Hugo Black that night, or that Rayburn and Truman called Hugo Black and talked to him about this Coke Stevenson appeal. You know, he had filed suit in federal court to keep LBJ's name off the ballot. And that they called Justice Black. Do you remember anything about that?

L: No, but I doubt that it's true. It's out of character for Mr. Rayburn, who was the most straight-laced human being I ever saw in matters of protocol and law. He simply would not

have done that, in my judgment. If he did, I certainly don't know about it.

G: Okay. You never heard anything like that?

L: No, I never did.

G: --never saw?

L: Did Mr. Black have something pending before him at that time?

G: Well, he heard it in chambers I guess and made the decision to allow LBJ's name on the ballot.

L: But I doubt very much if Justice Black would have taken a--well, I guess he might have taken a call from the President, but I don't know for certain. That surprises me. I will say that we were very anxious to get him on the ballot, but I don't remember anything happening such as you describe.

G: Now let's talk about the Leland Olds [controversy]. Of course, he [Johnson] was elected. First I want to ask you, now he had a statewide constituency instead of a relatively liberal Central Texas constituency. Did Lyndon Johnson become more conservative after he went into the Senate?

L: Lyndon was always conservative in this respect. He had great respect for the conservation of resources, and he did not enjoy spending people's money. He was very conservative about appropriations and such. Lyndon had a different viewpoint, however, when it came to the part that government should play in the lives of people who were without means, who had no electricity in their homes, who were hungry, who were sick, and who had to do without necessities. In that respect, he

was liberal; he wanted people to have a better life. But concerning your question about whether he became more conservative, I don't think he did. I think his apparent change simply showed that Lyndon was then under the spotlight as a state and a national leader, and his personality and his political philosophy came through, but I don't think he really changed. We all, from time to time, changed our ideas about certain matters, because of the forces that were presented to us. I was accused of being a liberal, when I was actually very conservative.

G: Well now, others have indicated that LBJ really didn't have much support from oil and gas in Texas and that Mr. Rayburn didn't have much support.

L: Rayburn had very little support. It was a very sad thing to realize that the oil and gas industry accepted Mr. Rayburn's favors, that Mr. Rayburn prevented the passing of much legislation that would have hurt oil and gas, and, yet, that when somebody ran against him, he received all of the financial support that the oil and gas industry could afford. Now he did have some friends in oil and gas; J. R. Parten who was probably the leading supporter for Mr. Rayburn in the oil and gas industry, was one of them. And there was some support here in Houston. But I don't recall there being any in Dallas. Perhaps there was.

G: Was Sid Richardson a supporter?

L: Yes, Sid was always supportive of Mr. Rayburn, but Sid did not get interested in politics until later. However, when-

ever he came to Washington, Mr. Rayburn invited him to the little room, and we would always have dinner with Sid in his suite. Mr. Rayburn, Lyndon and I went to the island every year, and we often took others, such as Dick Russell one year, and Stuart Symington another time. But we were there together a great deal.

I'll tell you an interesting thing about one trip over there. We were having some problems in the oil industry in those days, and Mr. Richardson's income had apparently been cut rather drastically. His salary dropped, say, from a million seven hundred fifty thousand dollars a month to a million two hundred thousand dollars or so a month.

G: Gosh!

L: He was trying to discuss some of the problems involved, and finally he just said, "Hell! I'm not going to talk to you, Lyndon or Rayburn anymore about money. You never had enough of it to know what the hell I'm talking about!"

G: (Laughter) That's great.

L: But yes, he was very supportive of Mr. Rayburn, although I don't know what, if anything, he did for him financially. Mr. Richardson did offer me help one time, but I didn't need it. I think it insulted him that I didn't accept it, because he never offered me money again. If I had thought about it I would have taken it; imagine he felt that I thought he was not offering it properly, but that wasn't the thing, I simply didn't [need it]. In those days it cost very little to run for office. If you spent ten to twenty-five thousand

dollars, you spent a lot of money. A statewide race then cost two hundred fifty thousand dollars or less or, at the most, half a million, and now it costs many millions. I understand some of the congressional races run close to a million dollars. But as far as I know the oil industry did support Lyndon. There were some individuals in the industry who didn't like me or who didn't like Lyndon. But neither of us ever failed to have the support, as I recall, of the industry as a whole.

G: Why didn't they support Rayburn?

L: Because Rayburn was associated with Mr. Roosevelt in the passage of most of the pro-labor legislation that helped the country to get back on its feet. So when the nation was no longer suffering the threat of complete bankruptcy, anarchy and revolution, the industry became very secure, and adopted the attitude that it wouldn't have been faced with fair standard labor, or with SEC, or with similar occurrences, had it not been for Roosevelt. The industry never even stopped to consider the fact that without Roosevelt we might not even have had a country.

G: Did this bother Rayburn, that they didn't support him?

L: Yes, it did. He couldn't understand it. He could not understand why they didn't realize that the depletion allowance would have been discountinued in the forties had it not been for Mr. Rayburn going before the committee and speaking in its defense. In those days the Speaker was very influential; he truly appointed people to committees, although the processes

were different. If the Speaker didn't want someone to be on a particular committee, that person wouldn't be on that committee. He had great influence with the committee chairmen, who in those days ruled everything subject to Mr. Rayburn's approval, and even then they were sometimes tough opponents. But, yes, it did hurt Mr. Rayburn. He couldn't understand disloyalty; he couldn't understand how people could come up to Washington and dine with him and then go back to their hometowns and cut his throat.

G: Well, let me ask you to tell me a little more about the oil industry. Was there a more moderate element in the oil industry that would support you or support LBJ?

L: As far as I know, they all supported me; none of them opposed me.

G: How about LBJ?

L: While I'm sure there were individuals who probably didn't like Lyndon, I don't recall any in particular; for the most part, the people that I knew in the oil industry supported Lyndon.

G: But you had H. L. Hunt on the one hand and J. R. Parten on the other.

L: Yes, but H. L. Hunt was not a force in politics.

G: Really?

L: No. He had a great deal of money, but he was not really a force. He may have been in some local races--I don't remember--but none of us really cared that much about whether he supported us. Congressman [Joe] Pool told me one time that H. L. Hunt had invited him to come to his office and that he was thrilled

because he could imagine that H. L. Hunt was going to say to him, "I'm just so pleased with your service up there that I'm going to give you this twenty thousand dollars to run on. You've got a race here now." So he went to Hunt's office and, after they had visited for a while, Hunt asked him, "How are you getting along?" and Pool answered, "I don't feel too well, Mr. Hunt. I've just got so many porblems." So hunt pulled out his drawer and Pool could just see those greenbacks; then Hunt took out some vitamins and tossed them to him and said, "We make those out here in West Texas. They'll help you to feel better," and that's the most he ever got out of him.

G: That's great.

L: But he did not have a strong following anywhere in Texas. I can't speak concerning the present Hunts. I don't know either of them, or if they wield any influence.

G: Did the independents seem more supportive than the major oil companies?

L: Well, when I speak of oil company support I'm speaking generally of independents. I had very little contact with the major companies as such and I didn't know what they were doing. They probably had people on both sides; I don't know. The only head of a major company that I knew of was Gardiner Symonds, head of Tennessee. He was fairly active, and, as far as I know, he always supported me and Lyndon. I don't know what he did otherwise, and I don't remember anything about the other majors. Now, concerning the independents, it's likely that there were some who didn't like Lyndon, or

me and said as much, but I don't recall who they were. I was never too concerned about my enemies; it was my friends that I was trying to help.

G: Now, the Natural Gas Act was a big issue in the legislature.

L: Yes, it was a big issue. Actually, it has been a big issue all along, from the forties until today. Dingle's House committee yesterday voted on a matter affecting gas.

G: Roll back.

L: Yes.

G: Now let me ask you to recall the Leland Olds nomination in as much detail as you can and the orgin of your role in it and LBJ's.

L: I had completely forgotten about that issue until about a week or two ago when someone sent me a transcript of the Leland Olds matter. When it became evident that Truman was going to nominate Leland Olds, in spite of the fact that Mr. Rayburn, Mr. Johnson, myself and others had gone down and talked to him.

G: Well, now, let me ask you to recount that meeting if you can, the discussion with Truman.

L: Generally in a discussion with the President, the other party did the talking and he listened and then said only, "Thank you for coming by." That's about all that ever happened.

G: He didn't say why he insisted on nominating Olds?

L: I'm sure he said that he thought that Olds was an able man; and he probably also told us that he resented the fact that we were bringing up things about him. Truman was pretty

straightforward. But we saw Truman fairly often in those days because Mr. Rayburn would have Mr. Truman, as well as Fred Vinson, the chief justice of the Supreme Court, Lyndon, Tommy Corcoran, Gene Worley, and me, over to his apartment fairly often. And then Lyndon would have us all over to meet regulary at his place, so we saw each other more than occasionally.

But it became evident to us, although I don't recall the details, that Truman was going to nominate Olds anyway. So I asked Lyndon to help me, and he said, "Well, I don't know that much about what your're talking about. I've got to know more about it." So I called in Hayden Head, as I recall, Maston Nixon, some of the TIPRO people, and various independents that were interested in regulation under the Federal Power Commission, and I asked them to let Lyndon talk to them. As I indicated to you a while ago, he had the capacity to learn from somebody in two hours everything about a subject that it had taken that person a lifetime to find out, and then he could translate that information into an effective weapon. He became convinced that we were correct, so he said, "All right, I'll go with you." He then suggested that we bring in various experts. One of them was Abe Fortas--I'm positive about that--and we also called in several of the brilliant young lawyers who were associated with Lyndon at that time in various other matters, and together we began a series of very thorough research. We sent clerks and others to the congressional library, and they examined every newspaper that had come out during Leland Olds' period. We made copies of

every statement that he had made and every article that he had written. I asked Lyndon to give me time to present my opposition to the committee, but, as I recall, Lyndon was not on that committee.

G: Oh, I think he was.

L: Was he? Well, at any rate, Ed Johnson from Colorado was Chairman, as I recall.

G: Well, he was chairman of the entire committee I think.

L: That's what I meant.

G: LBJ was chairman I think of the--

L: Subcommittee?

G: --particular subcommittee [of the] Commerce Committee.

L: Yes. I've forgotten the details. But the Senator from Arizona--

G: [Ernest] McFarland.

L: --McFarland. Now, these men, frankly, were not particularly interested, in the Federal Power Commission, because their states were not as vitally affected as were Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Arkansas. It was not easy to get people to oppose the President under such circumstances, because he was popular, he was powerful, and he could seriously damage a congressman's career. But we decided to proceed because we felt it was right, and I felt it would be tragic, at that time, to have such a man as Leland Olds in there.

G: You had an impression of Olds before this nomination came up--well, he had been on the commission.

L: Oh, yes, we had his entire record.

G: But how had you regarded Olds' service up to this time?

L: I saw him as a national socialist who didn't believe in the private ownership of natural resources, who believed that either Congress, the federal Power Commission, or a bureau should govern their use and that people didn't have the right to use their product as they wished. As I recall, the gist of most of his statements was that usage should be allocated to where it would do the most good for the most people without regard to market price or market demands. I became disillusioned with him to the extent that I felt obliged to risk a whole lot. It isn't pleasant to take on the president of the United States, and not only was I taking on the president of the United States, but the liberal press and the media, as well, who in turn treated me cruelly. They went to my district and launched an extensive investigation into my years in politics.

But the interesting thing was that in spite of all of the presure that was being put upon Lyndon by the President of the United States and others, and in spite of the effect that his actions might have upon him as a national leader, he remained convinced that Leland Olds was bad for the country. As a result, he faced this barrage of criticism without wavering and, in fact, he even became more interested in the matter. So we spent hours and days discussing it and finally, as I recall, I presented the opposition to the committee.

G: You researched and found all of these old writings of Olds'. At one point in the hearings I think LBJ asked him or another senator asked him if he would repudiate these writings that

he'd written as a relatively young man some twenty years before--

L: Yes, some of the writings. Actually I remember that there was a question of whether we were being fair in asking him if he now repudiated the statements.

G: And he said no. What if he had said yes? Do you think--?

L: Oh, I think he might have been confirmed.

G: Do you?

L: Yes. I'm not sure, but I think that the committee would have looked more favorably upon him had he said, "Yes, I was foolish. I shouldn't have made these statements. I don't believe in those ideas anymore. I believe in free enterprise." After all, there were a group of fairly substantial people on this committee.

G: Yes. Well, I have sort of had the impression that LBJ's opposition to Olds stemmed not so much from what he had written in the 1920s as how he had voted in the previous four years.

L: There wasn't any question about that. I think it was my idea, probably at the suggestion of some of the people who were doing research, to present his background so that the committee would have some idea of what brought Olds to the point of voting as he was now doing. I think that there was some question on Lyndon's part of whether it was proper or even fair to present such information. But I thought that our background research presented the picture of the man; it showed what made him what he was, as well as how he would behave in office.

G: There's one thread along the anti-Leland Olds position that

is basically that he was sympathetic to communism.

L: I think he was. At that period, a lot of the intellectuals who had sought and been accepted into positions of government were dissatisfied with it in its present form. They felt that it was too people-oriented, that people had too much to do with the selection of leaders and the running of the government. They felt that it ought to be concentrated in Washington and that the ideas and views that prevailed in South Texas shouldn't have any effect upon the national policy. Olds subscribed to that line of thought. There were some, not a lot, who did. Frankly I didn't feel that Leland Olds was really very sympathetic to the economic set-up as it then existed and that he was more inclined to the national socialism of--

G: Well, I have a hard time sorting out these two elements. Let me rephrase it and ask you. It seems that on the one hand you were taking an anti-communist tack in opposing Leland Olds.

L: Yes. Of course you remember that that was very popular in those days.

G: Right. On the other hand, there's a lot of evidence that he had the support of a lot of the big northern and eastern utilities.

L: Oh, I think he had the support of almost all of them.

G: Why would they support someone that was sympathetic to communism?

L: Well, because the utilities felt that they were at war with the producers, and they thought that the cheaper they could buy our product, the more they could control our product, and the better off they were. This was essentially the same problem that

came about years ago when we were great raisers of such goods as cotton and corn. The manufacturers felt in those days that we should not have free trade, that they ought to be able to control it. And to this day the same controversy is very much in evidence. The major utilities and many of the major oil companies today are at war with the ideas of the independent producer.

G: But these seemed like the biggest capitalists in the country.

L: There was no question about it. Let me call your attention to the fact that there are very few statesmen in industry; I hope that we'll be getting more. But, be that as it may, the industrial leaders looked entirely at the bottom line; and it made no difference to them whether the Federal Power Commission was staffed by communists or not as long as their profits were favorably affected. Now, I know that that's a pretty strong statement, but I know of what I am speaking. I'm completely unimpressed with the leadership of industry at that time and with their true patriotism to the ideals of free enterprise. They were very much in favor of free enterprise unless it affected their balance sheet.

G: Well, it seems to me that utilities were able to define the argument as regulation versus no regulation or cheap natural gas prices rather than--

L: That's correct.

G: It seems that they must have had some public relations victory over you in the fight.

L: I'm telling you that they had tremendous pressures, unlimited pressures, that they could bring to bear. They especially

made use of the radio and the newspapers.

G: Now, you mentioned Drew Pearson.

L: Yes.

G: Let me ask you to elaborate on the kind of pressure that was exerted on you and Lyndon Johnson at this point?

L: I'm sure the same pressures were on Lyndon as were on me, probably even more, in fact, but they were indirect. The journalists would go down and interview all of the people in the banks and in the law firms, to see who--and I had resigned from my law firm and had never drawn a dime from them from the moment I was elected. The little law firm with which I had been associated had a lot of oil and gas practice, of course, and much of that had come to me. But the newspapers still published unflattering articles about us; and various other things of that sort were done.

G: Well, LBJ said in a speech during this time, for example, that a very prominent lawyer who had been a high government official earlier came to him and told him that if he didn't support Leland Olds that he would in effect have very strong opposition in Washington.

L: I'm sure that's true, and I'm sure they said the same thing to me.

G: Who were these people, do you recall?

L: No, I don't; I'm sorry I don't, because, as I told you, I had completely put that issue out of my mind. The only thing I wonder now is whether I did Leland Olds an injustice. I don't think I did; I'm sorry if I did do him an injustice by bringing up his past, but I thought that was the only way one could

completely understand the present.

G: Did you really think that he was a communist or communist [sympathizer]?

L: I'm sure I did. There would have been no reason for me to present the information had I not thought so. I wasn't urged by the industry into this fight, not at all.

G: Okay, that was my--

L: No, the industry did not urge me into this fight. Rather, I felt that the regulation of natural gas as it was then being proposed would devastate an industry that was supporting our schools, our roads, and a great part of our state. There were not twenty-five people in the entire Congress who understood the oil and gas industry. I would guess not even more than half of the Texas delegation really did [inaudible].

G: The industry did not take a leading role in Olds'--?

L: Not originally; in fact, I don't remember how much even they supported us.

G: Really?

L: No, I really don't. I remember that Hayden Head, who was an outstanding young lawyer in Corpus representing Southern Minerals at the time, was very supportive. Maston Nixon, who could be considered an independent company of sorts, was very helpful to me; he came to Washington and stayed from time to time and took a strong part in our campaign. Guy Warren, who just died last month, was one of the leading independents, and he was very helpful. But, as I recall, no one came to me requesting that I involve myself in the affair. I'm sure that I must have received hundreds of letters, telegrams and tele-

phone calls either complimenting or condeming me on what we were doing.

G: Alvin Wirtz was a key adviser to Lyndon Johnson during this period.

L: All of his life Lyndon had a great respect for Alvin Wirtz; he was one of the finest men who ever lived, a stable man and a good adviser.

G: Did Wirtz help with this?

L: Oh, I'm sure he did, but I don't recall his particular part in it.

G: Anything else on the Leland Olds controversy?

L: I think not; however, I do want to say that I think it proved to me, and it should prove to others, that Lyndon Johnson took courageous stands on matters that he strongly believed in, even if he didn't have to; it was against his interests as a national leader to do so, but he was willing to take the heat, and many of the people that had been very good to Lyndon were bitter about it. So I admired him greatly.

G: Did Truman hold it against him?

L: I'm sure that he probably did, but Truman was an astute politician, an able man. When I say that he held it against him, I mean that he resented it at the moment but I'm sure he didn't try to punish anybody about it.

G: Okay. That was what I meant.

L: No, I don't think he ever tried to punish Lyndon, he certainly didn't me. Of course I never asked very much of Mr. Truman. I did talk to Lyndon and to the Speaker about the Kerr-McGee [Kerr-Thomas natural gas] bill that we eventually spent so much

time debating, and they suggested, since I was so very interested in it, that I talk to the President, about it and I did. And he said that, as far as he knew, he could sign it if we passed it; I had told him that I was a realist and didn't want to fight that bill through the House only to have him veto it once it got to his desk, but that's exactly what he did.

G: Didn't he also tell Rayburn that he would sign it?

L: Yes.

G: Why do you think he changed his mind?

L: I knew at the time, but I've forgotten at the moment. But, as Mr. Rayburn said, "Hell, that's not a reason, that's just a damned excuse!" I've forgotten what his excuse was.

G: That's great.

L: It's hard to jump back thirty or forty years and recall a lot of these things, especially since we were involved in some sort of battle every day. The Texas delegation was a powerful delegation. I was involved in everything that was worthwhile, and Lyndon was leading the pack.

End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I

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