

INTERVIEW II

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INTERVIEWEE: GEORGE D. McCARTHY

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE

PLACE: Mr. McCarthy's residence, Bethesda, Maryland

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G: This is a good place to start. I'm asking why Sargent Shriver didn't resist the appointment of Bert Harding.

M: He didn't resist it because he requested it. There was a task force that was put together. At that time there was a lot of criticisms of OEO [Office of Economic Opportunity], and they said that the management was bad over there, that the thing was an administrative nightmare. There were crazy kinds of allegations that are made against any high visibility program, and of course the President had to protect himself. And they put together a task force to make an analysis of the administrative competency of OEO, and Harding was on the group. He was put there by then-chairman of the Civil Service Commission--what's his name?

G: Macy, John Macy.

M: Macy, John Macy. I think Macy was also wanted and a guy by the name of John Forbes [?] was also--

G: BOB [Bureau of the Budget], yes.

M: Yes, BOB. They made rather a scathing report on the administration of OEO. When some of the people inside OEO looked at it, they could see it was a real hatchet job. So

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they said, well, you know, if these guys are so damned smart, why not bring one of their smart guys aboard and let's see how good he can do. And really, that's the way Harding came aboard. I don't know whether I should be saying this for history, but that's as I understand it.

G: Did Harding have a different mentality about how the poverty program should be run?

M: Well, I think Bert was probably a good administrator as far as government programs are concerned. He was what you would call a professional bureaucrat administrator; he loved to come to work at nine in the morning and leave at five. Everything should be neat piles and neat decisions. But when you're running a program like OEO, you couldn't run it on an eight-hour day. You had to be seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day, because it was a complicated program. You couldn't run it in that neat, orderly, compact way that administrators like to run old-line programs. This was a new, dynamic, ever-changing kind of program that required shifting and hauling as you went forward.

Of course Bert and I didn't get along too well. He thought that he should make a management analysis of how I ran congressional relations, and it was too sensitive a program to allow any bureaucrats into, and I refused. It caused quite a consternation between he and I and Shriver, but he never did while I was there make a management analysis of congressional relations.

G: Shriver then supported you, backed you up on this issue; is that right?

M: That's right. He said at the time, "Why don't we wait until all the tough battles are over?" Because we were up to our neck in alligators and to take time off at that particular time to go through a leisurely management analysis of how we handled the mail flow and the

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congressional calls and the announcement system. Because they were all very sensitive areas, and I had a lot of commitments, a lot of balls in the air. I knew where they all were, but they weren't things that you wanted to commit to writing. They were not things that you allowed a management team in, and it was not things you wrote memos about.

G: Now one of the criticisms of Shriver was that he was not a good administrator. I'm wondering if Harding's tenure there improved administration.

M: Well, you could say that was maybe a criticism of Shriver, an alleged criticism from outside. Of course, I don't buy that criticism. I think Shriver was a guy that got a lot of people unhappy because he didn't run an organization in those clean lines. What he did--and it was almost brilliant the way he did do it--is he gave more than one guy the same job to do to make sure the job was done, and as a result the job finally got done and did get done right. Now, it caused some conflict in the process, but again, the thing was so complicated you almost needed that kind of competition in order to solve whatever the difficult problem was. Shriver had an intense interest in the program and every facet of the program, and as a result of that intense interest he cut across organizational lines to find out what the hell was going on. Because I saw, as he saw, that when you were sitting there at the top and something went wrong, who is the first one they called? It was Shriver. It could be something wrong in VISTA [Volunteers In Service To America]; it could be something wrong in Job Corps. It could be something wrong in one of the many programs in Community Action, and there could be a senator or congressman on the phone, and he'd want immediate answers. Otherwise he was going to take to the floor and denounce the program or something. So what do you do, we had to go immediately

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to--if one of the directors of that particular program was out of the city that day, he had to go down to the guy who was in charge and get the answer and get it in a matter of minutes. So I think that's where a lot of those kinds of charges evolved from, rather than the alleged mismanagement. Far from it, I think he probably was a fantastic manager. Because he put in the hours and the dedication.

G: Did Shriver spend more of his time running the agency or selling the agency on the Hill?

M: I think Shriver was one of those rare kind of guys that did both. The story in Washington is you're Mr. Outside, Mr. Inside. Of course I think he did both jobs equally well. Of course, he was a fantastic salesman, probably the best congressional witness this town has ever seen.

G: Let's talk about the legislation in 1967. This was a real crisis year.

M: That's right.

G: At the outset it was not expected to be renewed.

M: Well, that's what you said before, and I believe I told you that I didn't accept that fact.

G: You felt that it would pass; is that right?

M: Yes, because I felt we had the momentum, but not only that, I knew we were going to organize a campaign that we would win by. And let me tell you, we did put together a campaign. We didn't miss a base. We covered industry. We not only covered the Hill--the Congress and the Senate--but the elected officials throughout the country, the governors, the mayors, the commissioners, private industry, and non-profit corporations. We went through the--were you going to say something?

G: I was just going to say, what did you do with regard to industry?

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M: Well, of course we had a lot of industry working in OEO. We had the contracts to run some of the Job Corps centers. We had others that were participating in some of the Community Action programs in job placements and whatnot. We identified every major corporation and minor corporation that had any involvement at all. We identified who the movers and shakers in that corporation were. Then we identified where all their plants were throughout the country, identified all their congressmen. Then we got to each of those individual corporations and where they were committed. Then we asked them to contact those congressmen and senators--not by themselves directly, but by their plant managers and the people that were in their plants and in the congressman's district.

We did the same thing with the governors; we did the same thing with the mayors and with the city council and with the commissioners. We went out all over the country. I got special groups in, and we organized certain people. School districts, we brought a fellow in from--oh, I can't even remember what his name was, but he was one of the leaders in the National Education Association. We brought him in for a while to help us organize, to get all of the people involved in the public education system behind the program.

So it was a year-long campaign that culminated in that fall when we passed it in the House. It's hard to go back and say it, but at the time I don't think we missed a beat anywhere.

G: There was a shift in the 1966 congressional elections. About forty-some odd Democrats were defeated.

M: That's right, that's right.

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G: Did this mean that you would concentrate on some of the newly-elected Republicans?

M: Yes. We concentrated on some of them that came from what we considered moderate districts, and that's where we used that combined private enterprise, local officials, non-profit corporations to work on those members of Congress that we felt were attuned to our position. And of course there was a lot of politics involved. The Republicans then, as they are now, were pretty good at keeping discipline in their ranks.

Our major chore, the major chore in 1967 was to defeat the substitute bill. Now that's the bill that [Charles] Goodell and [Albert] Quie and the Republicans on the House Education and Labor Committee put together.

G: The Republican Opportunity Crusade.

M: I forget what the heck, but the main thrust of the bill was to spin off the program. Well, we had all this coming in from all over the country, and then we met with the House Education and Labor Committee and we gave each member of that majority a job to do. Like [Hugh] Carey, the present governor of New York, had Head Start; his job was to defend Head Start. So we supplied each member of Congress on his particular job. We had him so loaded down with statistics and ammunition to answer the questions. Then we had southerners like Joe Waggoner, I told you the last time about that speech that he made.

That was the thrust, that was the big move, was to get that substitute bill. Well, that lost. So then their thrust was to spin off the various programs. We were well organized so that not once did I think we were ever going to lose. I say we never thought we were going to lose, but I think the thing that helped us win easier was--what's his

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name--Mel Laird was really the leader there in those days, and he was the strategist behind the Republicans' alternative. And let me tell you, he was about as tough an opponent as you could have. The day before the bill came to the floor, I believe it was his brother or some relative of his got killed in Wisconsin and he had to go home for the funeral. It left it in the hands of Gerald Ford. And when they left it in the hands of Gerald Ford, we knew we had it won. A terrible thing to say, but he wasn't anywhere near the legislative tactician that Mel Laird is, or was.

G: That's great. Well, the Edith Green amendment.

M: Now which Edith Green amendment are you talking about, the Job Corps amendment or the Community Action?

G: No, the Community Action, which would give the mayors control over it.

M: That amendment was really Joe Waggoner's. Don Baker--and you interviewed Don--Don was so mad at me for a while; he said I gave the store away on that amendment. He said, "Did you offer that amendment?" I said, "No." Gee, he was madder than hell at me. But we got it settled. Meeting with some of those southerners and some of the big city congressmen, and after my contacts with mayors and local officials, I could see we were in trouble unless we did something in regard to that attack on local government. And I came out of local government; I had served in local government. I tended to agree with them, that there should be something done. I didn't think we should have a revolution overturning our cities and county form of government. Edith Green offered the amendment, but that amendment really came out of Joe Waggoner of Louisiana. Then they talked with [Sam] Gibbons about it, [Roman] Pucinski of Chicago, because Pucinski

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was more or less getting criticism from [Richard] Daley in Chicago. So I think among the men they decided that Edith was the one to offer the amendment, and then it got the Green amendment name. The origin of it was not Edith Green.

G: I see. Joseph Loftus in writing about how the bill passed that year, in talking about the Green amendment says, I quote, "an essential part of the strategy was to maintain an appearance of adverse relationship between Mrs. Green and the anti-poverty agency," that in effect it was necessary to make it appear that OEO was much more opposed to the Green amendment than they actually were.

M: Well, let me just say, I remember Joe, and I remember having lunch with Joe Loftus, and I saw his story afterwards. So he didn't just talk to me. There were people in the agency that were totally opposed to that amendment. They thought it would completely destroy the program. There were others of us that welcomed the amendment.

G: Loftus' version is that these southern Democrats that you mentioned went to Shriver and persuaded him that it would sell the bill and that they needed to go along with the amendment.

M: They didn't go to Shiver. I dealt with this.

G: Okay.

M: In fact, the day the bill was up we got Sarge out of town for fear that he'd give some of it away.

G: Is that right?

M: Yes, he went to Chicago.

G: For fear that he wouldn't support the [amendment]?

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M: Well, no, but that was the only failure Sarge had, if somebody put the heat on him, he'd start trading right away. The day the bill came up, I felt we had everything going our way and I didn't want to trade any more than what we'd already traded. I knew the Green amendment was coming down, and I figured that that was all we needed.

G: The Loftus article also describes almost daily meetings with you and Shriver, Don Baker, and--

M: Yes, the other top people in the--

G: Charlie Holmes [?], your assistant.

M: Yes, the top people in the agency. We had a meeting every morning at nine o'clock.

G: What was the thrust of these meetings?

M: Well, you know, when it was coming up to the legislative thing it was report on what the daily head count was, where the problems were, who had to do what, where in the agency--was Community Action giving us a problem with a certain member, or was Head Start or was Job Corps? Was there something that we could do with somebody to get to somebody else to do something? And of course all of the other management problems were also brought up.

G: Did Edith Green modify or ameliorate her own stance on the Community Action?

M: Yes. I think once she submitted that amendment to the bill, what the heck, she got her way. Although she was also an antagonist, and I shouldn't even use that word, she wanted a point in the Job Corps about increasing the slots for the women in the Job Corps. I'd lined up Wayne Hays to be the--remember Wayne Hays of Ohio? I'd lined Wayne up to be the defender of Job Corps. I told him that Edith was going to come out

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with this amendment that would legislatively say that there had to be so many spots for women in the Job Corps. It was written in the language generally, but it would have made it overbalanced. His job was to defeat Edith in that amendment. So in the floor debate on the Job Corps, why, Edith offered the amendment and Wayne got up and opposed it. I could see her looking over at him, and he had all the reasons why he opposed it and made a very eloquent statement. I saw Edith call him over and he went over and she talked to him for a few minutes, and she threw her hands up in the air and ran out of the chamber. I was sitting up there in the gallery and Wayne looked up at me and he motioned for me to come down. I went down. He said, "She's very difficult to get along with." I said, "Well, what the hell happened?" He said, "Well, first of all, she comes over and said, 'Well, Mr. Hays, why are you opposing me on this amendment? I've always supported you on many things and you shouldn't oppose me on this amendment.'" He said, "Edith, I just can't agree with you on this. You're trying to run the Job Corps like you do a brothel, and you can't run the Job Corps like you do brothels." He said with that she threw up her hands and screamed.

G: What was Perkins' role this year in the legislation?

M: Carl Perkins, that year?

G: Of taking over the--

M: Yes, Carl was really the strong guy. We met with Carl continually. Carl had just opened up the committee, and we had complete access to the chairman and complete access to the committee and the staff. In addition, Carl worked the southerners like a trooper.

G: Who did you have for the defender of Community Action this time?

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M: Let's see, who the heck did we have for Community Action? Let's see, now, Joe Hagan [?] was our legislative guy in Community Action. You know, I can't remember; I should remember, but I don't. I'll have to go back and see who it was. It wasn't just one; we had two or three because Community Action was broken down into its component parts, too. We had somebody for legal services; we had somebody for the migrant program. We had somebody specifically for the Community Action Programs, and I think it was [John] Dent of Pennsylvania, but I'm not sure. And it could have been the chairman himself, too. (Interruption)

G: There were some other developments that year. One, Wilbur Cohen tried to arrange essentially I think the operation of OEO by HEW [Health, Education and Welfare]. Do you remember?

M: I don't know whether Wilbur did that or not. That was a part of the Republican bill, was to spin off a part of OEO to HEW and to other agencies of government. There was talk about Head Start going to HEW, Upward Bound to HEW. What do they call the grandfather's program or whatever the hell it was? [Foster Grandparents] But there were a number of them. But I don't remember Wilbur being the author of that.

G: Now, Shriver did recommend that year that the Labor Department take over the running of Neighborhood Youth Corps and the Adult Work Program.

M: Well, they were running them.

But not only the delegated function, but also evidently the administrative and monitoring--for all practical purposes, they were doing that. The Neighborhood Youth Corps was a completely delegated program. The money came. I can't even think of the

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guy's name who headed up the Neighborhood [Youth Corps].

G: Jack Howard.

M: Yes, Jack Howard headed up the Neighborhood Youth program. It was run at Labor. I remember being at--in fact, I went to the hearing with Willard Wirtz when he testified in 1967.

G: Another provision was one that would require the local input on Community Action to be in cash, 10 per cent in cash.

M: Yes. Yes. That was by [Sam] Gibbons of Florida, yes.

G: And you opposed that. Do you recall what happened on this?

M: Again, that was programmatic opposition from the people in the program. We asked what would happen to the program if the contribution had to be all in cash, and they were fearful that certain parts of the program, and I forget which, wouldn't continue to operate in the volume it was operating because they felt that the local communities were going to have a very difficult time raising that 10 per cent cash when they had to raise it for a lot of other federal programs. But as it turned out, that wasn't the case, as in many things. I think it may have made it more difficult for the locality just to come up with the cash, but they did, and I don't think it hurt the program in any shape, manner or form.

G: There was also the addition of the National Advisory Council, which was the external War on Poverty board. Do you recall how this was added?

M: No, let's see, wasn't there a Republican amendment to do away with that and substitute it with a three-man board or something? But we did that. We had advisory boards right from the start. I remember there was some kind of an amendment. So many of these

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amendments didn't bother me, because I didn't see how it was going to hurt or affect the program, except people that are so professionally involved; any changing of the program at all bothers them. But I think the people that worked with me in the legislative, congressional area felt that some of the changes weren't going to affect the program that badly. And some of those amendments, we didn't give a damn whether they passed or didn't pass.

G: Let me ask you about Senator [Joseph] Clark's job creation bill? You know, there was a [Joseph] Califano memo that was released to members of the committee but not to Senator Clark himself. Do you recall that?

M: Oh, do I recall that, yes.

G: Please go into detail on this and explain the whole thing.

M: Well, they opposed Clark's bill.

G: You mean the White House?

M: Yes. We had a meeting over at the White House, and we were to contact every member of the committee. We went back over to the office, I remember, and I split up the tasks and I even checked with Mike Manatos on how we were going to handle the whole process. But the key to it was that--and, you see, this happened just before Clark was going to bring the full committee together and make a report. We wrote up an analysis of the bill; I guess it was Clark's bill we wrote up the analysis of it, and I checked with Joe and checked with Mike. We all wanted to be speaking from the same tune. It's one of the few times that I wrote something out and just didn't keep it in my head. We all had a copy of that and we all had our assignments. So everybody talked to everybody, except

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Clark. And Clark was assigned to Joe Califano.

Well, then all the committee members started coming in and saying, "Has anybody contacted you on this yet, Joe?" And of course, by the hour he was getting furious. All his committee members had been contacted. I'm around up at the Senate and I'm hearing that Clark's going to really blast the administration if he isn't contacted. I think I told you that story. I called Joe Califano six times and made a note of each time I called him, "Be sure and call Clark." I said if he didn't call Clark, when Clark called that committee in session, he was going to blast us. And Joe never called him.

G: Why didn't he?

M: I don't know why he didn't, and he kept saying he was going to do it. He was busy, busy. And I just said, "Joe, if you don't . . ." That afternoon it was headlines in the evening *Washington Star*, "Secret LBJ Memo Bared," and it was this talking paper that we had put together the evening before. And the--I told you the story--Joe blamed the whole incident on me with the President, and it took a little while for that to get straightened out.

G: Did you ever consider talking to Clark yourself about the matter?

M: No, we had laid out very clearly who had the responsibility to speak to whom, and Joe said that his responsibility was Clark, nobody else's. In fact, in the morning when I called Mike Manatos back, I said, "Mike, you'd better call Clark." He said, "No, I wouldn't dare, because that's Joe's responsibility."

G: How was the matter straightened out, do you recall?

M: As far as the President was concerned, the brouhaha in the Senate didn't get straightened

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out. You know, it's just one of those things that go down in history as a foul-up. I got straightened out as far as the President was concerned by Marvin Watson.

G: Who informed him that--?

M: That who and what the details were. I wrote a detailed memorandum over there, which you saw.

G: Do you recall any of the details of Roman Pucinski and the vocational bill? He was very interested in the vocational education bill.

M: Yes, he passed an amendment to the bill, the Job Corps bill, that would allow--I forget exactly how it went, vocational education.

He changed the age brackets I guess it was. God, I remember how that thing was, and I forget it now. But it was a change that he made that would expand the vocational educational program of in-residence vocation-training program around the country. It was rather a significant change, and a lot of communities and states could have used it. But it was never funded, and finally several years later when they redid the whole education authorization bill it was dropped.

(Interruption)

G: Let me ask you about the evaluation capability. When we were off tape we were discussing the fact that there were significant criticisms that the evaluation function, particularly of Job Corps, was inadequate for providing meaningful data.

M: Yes. Of course it goes more than just the evaluation function. By the time Otis Singletary left as the director of Job Corps, they brought a fellow in by the name of Johnson.

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G: Franklyn Johnson.

M: Franklyn Johnson. Franklyn Johnson was over his head. As a result there were some pretty strong administrators in each of the various divisions within Job Corps. It required somebody in that director's job that brought those disparate parts together and made them work together and bring some central administration out of all those disparate parts of Job Corps, including evaluation. I don't know what Franklyn Johnson's background [was] besides coming out of that presidency of that school in California [California State University], but my experience with him even on the Hill was a disaster.

G: Really? How so?

M: Well, I remember we went up and met with some senators, and God, he'd start visiting about things that I knew that senator opposed 100 per cent, things that you really didn't bring up when you were conversing with that particular senator. I remember I went back and told Shriver, I said, "Get him out of the town. I don't want him on the Hill again. He'll blow everything on us." He was a decent guy, but he just was naive.

So during that period, the Job Corps really got into shambles. We were getting criticized all over. When you talk about evaluation, there was lack of knowledge about where they were sending enrollees. They had more enrollees ready to go into camp. Finally when [William] Kelly got in, he straightened out many of those problems and, based on going out and doing evaluation, changed a lot of the criteria on placement of enrollees into various camps. [He did a] better job of evaluating the enrollee's background and where he should go. He drew up some requirements about length of distance from a home, where they should go, how long they should stay. Bill did an

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excellent job on that.

G: Did Franklyn Johnson pretty much confine his activities to traveling around the country?

M: After about three months, then they sent him on important out-of-town inspection functions where . . .

G: Did this leave the actual administration of the Job Corps to someone else?

M: Well, that's what I said. There were strong underlings in there and then they tended--each of them then wanted to build an empire and it became a very difficult thing to get hold of and it required somebody that was a strong, tough administrator like Kelly to pull the damn thing back together.

G: There seems to have also been a controversy over the Women's Job Corps director?

M: Well, Bennetta [Washington] was there right from the start, and she had Maggie Mays [?] and I forget the other women with her. The Women's Job Corps--and I can remember right from the start, because I was in the program, and then when I followed, and I probably was closer to Job Corps than I was any other within OEO. But the Women's Job Corps was always brought along by the director. I mean, when Otis [Singletary] was there, he filled in for Bennetta. Where there was a deficiency, he made sure that that deficiency was filled. So that the Women's Job Corps center was administratively and management-wise and technical-wise supported by the director of Job Corps. I guess during Franklyn Johnson days that wasn't true.

G: Do you know what the circumstances of Kelly's appointment were?

M: No, I don't know exactly. All I know is that--I think Squire, wasn't Squire, Dave Squire [?]-?

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G: Yes.

(Interruption)

M: Dave Squire was deputy, and of course they were looking for Dave, I remember when Johnson was in there, to fill in for Johnson. Dave was an able manager in private enterprise but he was up against some tough kind of bureaucrats and professional, educational-type bureaucrats that I don't think Dave could fathom. As I remember this, Job Corps was starting to become a real problem and yet it was the program that really was most needed and one that had originally the most support on the Hill. It was felt that there had to be some changes made in order to bring it back to where it originally was. How Shriver selected Kelly, I'm not familiar with.

G: There's some indication that perhaps Bert Harding opposed Kelly and Shriver enlisted Bill Moyers' aid--

M: I'm not familiar with it, but I would have to say that I would expect that Harding would have opposed Bill [Kelly], because Bill was probably a tougher manager than Bert Harding was and a more innovative kind of manager.

G: Do you recall the instance in which James McCrocklin [then-president of Southwest Texas State University, now called Texas State University] toured Job Corps sites doing some sort of survey with some sort of indication that he might be named the director of Job Corps?

M: --ever remember that at all.

G: Was there too much reliance on having a college president as head of the Job Corps?

M: Oh, I don't think so. I think college presidents are like any other kind of manager; some

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are competent and some are incompetent. Some are able to take on any kind of a management task. Otis was one of those kinds of guys, tough, willing to make tough decisions, wouldn't get pushed around. I think [they're] the same qualities that you have in any good operator of a program. I think Shriver probably wanted a college president there because it gave it more visibility and brought up the level of the program.

Otis was an especially competent guy. I don't know whether you interviewed Otis yet or not, but the President liked Otis personally.

G: Anything on the Labor Department's attitude toward Job Corps?

M: Of course, Labor was charged with the recruitment and the placement. Labor was also running the Neighborhood Youth Corps, and I think there was, again, a professional or a bureaucratic jealousy within Labor. Job Corps was receiving all the publicity. I think Labor felt that the Neighborhood Youth Corps program, which was a really great program, didn't receive the same visibility that Job Corps did. But of course they were directed to two different kind of clients, Job Corps taking residential kids into a program whereas Neighborhood Youth Corps was aimed at those students that could stay at home and could be assisted by a non-residential kind of program. I think probably among the bureaucrats there was some sniping at Job Corps. I know that's true in any program where one agency has got the lead and the other agency is supporting it and they think they probably could do a better job.

G: Did the Labor Department lobby on the Hill for more appropriations for Neighborhood Youth Corps?

M: Yes, I believe that's true. I forget the name of the guy who was the lobbyist for Wirtz in

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those days. But he was very difficult--

G: Sam Merrick?

M: No, it wasn't Sam Merrick. It could have been. I forget what his name was. He was very difficult to work with I know. I had a very difficult time working with him. It was one of the few that I couldn't get total cooperation with.

G: You mentioned last time the controversy in Yorktown, Virginia. Do you recall any more of that?

M: In the Women's Job Corps centers?

G: No, I think it was just a general Job Corps, a men's Job Corps center.

M: We had problems with Job Corps centers, various kinds of problems all over the country. But again, as I said the last time, it took time to learn how to--and there was a whole bunch of problems that were created by lack of knowledge of what the enrollees were like, where they should be placed. There was even in the early days a lack of training of the staff. A lot of them weren't really prepared to go in and give the kind of training and supervision to the enrollees, because the enrollees astounded some of the teachers and supervisors.

Then the other thing that was lacking in the early days was the community relations aspect of it. All of those were brought in, as I said the last time, [so] that today Senator [Orrin] Hatch of Utah got the Job Corps program expanded. So it's all a part of the learning process.

G: How did the Job Corps deal with the situation in New Bedford, Massachusetts? Do you recall this, where the mayor was trying to support the Job Corps and there was an internal

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fight there in the community?

M: No, I'm not familiar with that.

G: You did talk about recruitment last time and the Employment Service. (Interruption)

Did the dropout rate improve significantly?

M: Yes. You know, when they first started--let me tell you, one of the problems, and some of this is becoming clearer--I think it was June 30 of 1966, which would have been the first full fiscal year of operation, they were trying to get all of the camps filled to capacity. I remember Chris Weeks was then acting deputy to Otis Singletary, and they had a big blackboard and they were marking day-by-day the filling of the camps. One June 25 they got fully filled. Well, that was probably one of the greatest errors that was made, because they were looking at numbers in filling the camps rather than the criteria of who should be going into those camps. That probably was the reason for the next year they had so many problems, because the proper screening wasn't being conducted, and as a result they had a lot of misfits or a lot of, not so much misfits of the individual, but putting them in the wrong camp under the wrong training under the wrong supervision. And of course they paid a price for that. Again, I say that was a part of the learning curve.

G: How do you account for the difference in the attrition rate among the different centers? Some of them had very low dropout rates and others had extremely high rates?

M: Yes, again you have to look at the program in its separate parts, conservation centers versus the training centers. As I believe I said the last time, the training centers were mostly contractor-operated. The conservation centers were agency-operated by either

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one of the divisions with Interior or Agriculture. They were smaller, a hundred to two hundred and ten, whereas the training centers went anywhere from five hundred up to twenty-five hundred. I guess the training centers you would have to say were a more difficult operation to manage than the conservation centers, just on sheer numbers. So you would expect that there would be some variety of performance because they were all operated somewhat differently. They tried to have some general guidance for the training centers, as they did for the conservation centers, but one or the other tended to have a different mix of training or vocational education than the other. As a result they had various people out of the companies working.

As you know, if you went back and looked at some of the history, some of the operators of the contractors were not capable of really managing them, and I believe Southern Illinois University was one. Then we had one in Indiana--this is the one I think maybe you're referring to. We had an AFL-CIO-sponsored center in Indiana. Or if they didn't sponsor it, they were strongly supportive of the organization that operated the camp in Indiana. I forget the name of the camp in Indiana, but it was turning into a disaster. The decision was made that they were going to cancel the contract and bring in another contractor. Now this was in the middle of a contract, [they were] going to cancel the contract. So we made an arrangement with the Indiana delegation to meet with them, and we met over in the ranking member's office, and he was a House member. I can't remember his name; he was later defeated, an elderly gentleman. The two senators came over in the office. Birch Bayh was senator then and, boy, he just came unglued when we told him what we were going to do. There was nothing he could do about it, because the

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decision was made. But we wanted to notify them all at once. But I remember it was a pretty hairy scene.

G: The closing of centers seems to have been completely unrelated to politics, closing the centers in the states of some of your strongest supporters.

M: Yes, now, I had left the program in about June of 1968. Closing didn't take place until that fall, but I was close enough to the people over there and was still in fairly close communications with them to know that there was a lot of heat. I believe these are the closings you're talking about, because of a reduction in funds in 1968 during LBJ days. I think, which is true, that it probably had some--well, if I remember just from my conversation with the people, they selected what centers should be closed on the basis of performance, first of all. Then they went in, looked at the politics of it, then it was kicked upstairs for the ultimate decision. And Bert Harding himself made some of the decisions. He closed that one camp in Oregon.

G: Fort Benoit, yes.

M: Of course, old Senator [Wayne] Morse, the one hair shirt of the Senate that he shouldn't get crossways with--and I believe he was told ahead of time, if I remember rightly, that Morse would oppose the closing of that center. Of course, Bert was of a nature that he didn't give a damn what the politicians thought, that what he decided, that's what it was going to be.

G: This was Harding?

M: Harding, yes. So he closed it. Well, Morse took the floor of the United States Senate and ripped Harding up one side and down the other, and Harding had been appointed by

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Johnson to be the director, I guess, of OEO. Morse wouldn't stand for it, and he never did get appointed. And Morse was the guy that [blocked it]. Again, this was Bert's own problem in that we live in a political world. The bureaucrats alone can't make the decisions that require some political support for many of the decisions that we make in this country.

G: The private vocational schools seemed to have been largely untapped by Job Corps. Why was this?

M: Well, because it was an entirely different process. The vocational schools--and when you say largely untapped, a lot of people who went to work for Job Corps came out of a vocational education background. But your local school boards that have vocational training, it's all non-residential. It's like manual training in your grade schools. It's your automobile, it's your traditional kind of vocational training that they have in community schools. Well, all of these in the basic education program had already failed the candidates that had to go into Job Corps and be retrained. So it was an entirely different procedure that they had to develop in order to take students that had already failed or were not inspired or were not able to train in the local education or local vocational training programs.

G: Was there more of an emphasis on vocational-type training and on-the-job training as the Job Corps matured?

M: Well, again you have to say the difference between the two centers again, training centers and conservation centers. In the training centers I think that some of the contractors that had manufacturing components in their program and knew some of the skills and could

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move some of the ordinary workday experiences, put some of that into the training of those students. In the conservation centers the only on-the-job training was that which the enrollee learned during his conservation work, out working in the forests, clearing the brush, building the trails, building the bridges.

G: Would more money have helped the Job Corps?

M: Oh, I don't know. Everybody says more money will help everything, but there was a limit to how much money could be spent. I think they were at about the right level in 1967. I think that reduction in 1968 probably hurt. But at about 1967 level, that's about what they were capable of spending prudently in those days.

G: Did you feel that industry ran the centers better than universities did?

M: Oh, yes. I don't think there was any doubt about that. Again, except in the case of Camp Gary, and I told you that last time. It was the best training center in the country.

Yes, the universities again, their experience was in higher education, their experience was teaching teachers to teach in vocation and education centers that had already failed these type children or enrollees. So they couldn't very well be capable of administering or developing programs that would meet the needs of the enrollees.

G: Did you have any opportunity to observe LBJ's own view of the Job Corps?

M: Yes, LBJ went up to Camp Catoctin, and myself and Otis Singletary met him up there. I think he was genuinely pleased with what he saw. He went around, he saw all the enrollees, he went through some of the various training aspects of the program. And it was more than just a media event, because he really wanted to see what the hell was going on. I remember when he was leaving, we were standing over to one side, and he

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said, "Hey, Otis, come over here." He called Otis over and told him what a good job he thought Otis was doing, that he should get on and get more centers opened and get this thing going, really giving him a pep talk.

G: Did he have any other recommendations?

M: Oh, he may have, but I sort of forget. That goes back quite a while.

G: I wonder if he ever drew the comparison between the Job Corps and his own experience as a National Youth Administration director back in Texas.

M: He probably did, but I'm not familiar with it. Otis would know.

G: Did you have a problem initially getting governors to accept Job Corps centers?

M: Oh, yes, there were some that were opposed but equally there were some that supported and wanted Job Corps centers, like, oh, what was the then-governor of Nebraska [Frank B. Morrison, Sr.]? His son is Supreme Court justice in Montana now. In fact, he's moved to Montana up at White Fish. He was the Democratic governor of Nebraska in the sixties. But he came to Washington and urged the establishment of a Job Corps center there in Nebraska. We made the announcement when he came to Washington. So he was one governor that sought Job Corps designation.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview II]




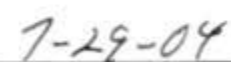
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